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JESSICA WOODS OF LINDEN NAMED NJCAA ALL-AMERICAN

For the 2018-2019 academic year, Union County College had six student-athletes named All-Americans by the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA). Yamel Abreu of Union, Chisom and Nwaneka Chinedu of Freehold, Josh Fitts of Roselle, Maya Lawler of Cranford, and Jessica Woods of Linden all had excellent performances in their respective sports to be named to an All-American team, the highest honor awarded to a student-athlete at a community college.

Yamel Abreu, a guard/forward on the women's basketball team, had a spectacular second year. In addition to being named a First Team All-American, she was the NJCAA Region XIX Division II Player of the Year. She passed her 1000th point mark and averaged 16.7 points per game. She was also named Garden State Athletic Conference (GSAC) Player of the Year Award.

Sisters Chisom and Nwaneka Chinedu were both members of Union's Track and Field team. Chisom was named to the First Team All-American in the 400m hurdles and to the Second Team All-American in the 100m hurdles. Nwaneka was named to the First Team All-American for the high jump. Chisom and Nwaneka are part of a set of triplets and their sister Tochi were all members of the team.

Josh Fitts was also a member of the Track and Field team and was named to the Second Team All-American in the 100m. He received an Honorable Mention placement for his 200m performance.

Maya Lawler, a defender on the women's soccer team, was named a First Team All-American. For a second year she was also named the NJCAA Region XIX Division III Player of the Year. This past season she had 23 points with 10 goals and 3 assists. She helped bring the team to a national third place finish this year. Maya is the first player for a Union team to be named to an All-American team for two consecutive years. In 2017, she was named to the Second Team All-American.

Jessica Woods, a center for the women's basketball team, joined Yamel and Maya as a First Team All-American. She grabbed her 500th career rebound and averaged a double-double with 14.3 points and 11.7 rebounds per game. For her excellent performance, she was also named to the All-Region Team as a First Team member and to the GSAC Division II All-GSAC team.

"Congratulations to our six All-American student-athletes. We are



proud of your achievements," stated Union's President Dr. Margaret M. McMenamin. "By pursuing athletics at the collegiate level, these students have learned about leadership, time management, organizational skills, and how to handle success and adversity with grace and humility. Their experiences at Union County College will help them succeed after graduation in life and in their careers."

For the 2019-2020 academic year, Union has added women's bowling and men's wrestling to its list of NJCAA teams. To learn more about Athletics at Union, go to unionowls.com.



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MAYOR URGES FULL PARTICIPATION AS 2020 CENSUS PREP GEARS UP

As preparations for next year's decennial U.S. Census kick further into gear, the Mayor of the City of Linden stressed the importance of full participation by all residents.

"The importance of a complete and accurate 2020 Census cannot be overstated," Mayor Derek Armstead said at the City of Linden Council Meeting, held August 20, 2019 in the Council Chambers located at the City Hall of Linden, New Jersey.

Proclaiming Friday as "2020 Census Full Participation Day" in the City of Linden, Mayor Derek Armstead noted that Census results help decide how more than \$675 billion in federal funds are spent across the country, how Congressional districts are allotted and how state legislative and school district lines are drawn.

Failure to achieve a full count, he added, could deny the county federal funding for each person not counted, and many missed funding opportunities.

Armstead's statements came as he presented a proclamation of appreciation and support to Jose Aguiling, a partnership specialist assigned to the

City of Linden by the US Census New York Regional Census Center.

Aguiling told the Mayor and Council members that he has been crisscrossing Union County, meeting with municipal officials and others to advocate for full participation in the 2020 Census and to organize volunteer Complete Count Committees in The City of Linden to work toward that goal.

"We appreciate your commitment to inform and motivate the people of the City of Linden to engage in the Census questionnaire," Aguiling said. "It's easy, it's safe, it's important and, for the first time, you'll be able to answer the questionnaire online, by mail, or by phone."

Aguiling said the City of Linden residents should expect to be seeing more promotional and informational material about the Census, and that by the middle of March 2020, residents will begin receiving invitations by mail to respond to the Census questionnaire via one of the available methods.

"You can shape your City," he said. "You can shape your future by completing the 2020 Census form."

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THREE LINDEN SENIORS HONORED AS PREMIER SCHOLAR ATHLETES

Submitted by Gary Miller

Linden High School senior athletes Samuel Aristizabal-Sanchez, Brooke Beyer and Kyle Lipscomb were honored in the spring for excelling on the field of play as well as in the classroom.

Beyer and Lipscomb were honored by the Union County Interscholastic Athletic Conference, and Aristizabal-Sanchez was honored by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association.

“These three epitomize the term scholar athlete,” said Athletic Director Steven Viana. “They share similar characteristics in that they are truly gifted athletes, but what strikes me the most is how well-rounded, humble, and respectful they are. Their accomplishments in the classroom and on the fields of play are impressive, but what is most gratifying is what great young adults they have become. We couldn’t ask for better representatives to carry the flag for Linden athletics.”

Lipscomb is one of the state’s top competitors in the shot put and discus, having captured multiple county, conference and state championships. He holds the school record in both events and is attending Rutgers University on a track and field scholarship.

Beyer graduated as captain of the soccer, swimming and softball teams. She also played

one season of varsity basketball, making her a rare four-sport athlete. She is a member of the National Honor Society and key performer with the Linden Dance Company. She is attending the Muhlenberg School of Nursing.

Aristizabal-Sanchez is a two-year starter on the football team’s offensive line, and three-year

member of the indoor and outdoor track and field teams as a shot-putter. He was a member of the National Honor Society and carried a heavy course load in the rigorous and prestigious International Baccalaureate course of study. He attends Rutgers University in Newark and majors in business finance.



(above) Linden High alumni Samuel Aristizabal-Sanchez, Brooke Beyer and Kyle Lipscomb were celebrated by the Interscholastic Athletic Association for being premier student athletes.

Photo by Linden Public Schools

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GLORIA MONTEALEGRE RECEIVES COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD

Plainfield Public Schools Community Engagement Liaison and Linden Resident Gloria Montealegre was awarded the Community Partner Award by Rutgers University Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math-Sciences Pre College Program at Rutgers-New Brunswick.

The presentation was made by Jackasha Wiley, Director of the Upward Bound Program, during a reception held on Wednesday, June 5, 2019, in New Brunswick to celebrate the Upward Bound Graduation that included 22 Plainfield Public High School students who are members of the Class of 2019.

“Our Community Partner Award highlights the contributions of people who have supported our program and continue to support us to help us meet our mission and objectives,” said Ms. Wiley. “For the past four years Ms. Montealegre, as community liaison for Plainfield Schools, has assisted us in recruitment and has supported our access week during Read to the Youth Literacy Campaign, to make sure our TRIO Programs (literacy program) take place at seven to 10 schools in the district. She helps make things happen for us.

“This is a small token of our appreciation. Your hard work and commitment to Plainfield Public Schools does not go unnoticed.”

For more information, please call 908-731-4333.



(above) Gloria Montealegre was awarded the Community Partner Award by Rutgers University Upward Bound and Upward Bound Math-Sciences Pre College Program.



(above, l-r) Ezio Intriago, Program Coordinator, Gloria Montealegre, Plainfield Public Schools Community Engagement Liaison, and Jackasha I. Wiley, Director of Upward Bound and Pre-College Initiatives, Student Access & Educational Equity - Undergraduate Academic Affairs, President-Elect - The Association for Equality and Excellence in Education (AEEE).



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4TH ANNUAL BACK PACK TO SCHOOL GIVEAWAY

The City of Linden, in collaboration with the Mayor's Youth Commission and the Department of Parks and Recreation, would like to thank everyone who attended and volunteered their time for this awesome back pack giveaway that was held at the Raymond Wood Bauer Promenade on Wood Avenue on August 29, 2019. Over 980 back packs went like hot cakes, and there was not a single back pack left over!

We would also like to give a special thanks to our sponsors and vendors for this event, which includes: A&M Industrial, Chemiclone Inc., John Samsel & Associates, VFW Post #1397, Fire Chief Joseph Dooley and the Linden Fire Department, Linden Public Library, 2020 Census Bureau, Wayne Zuba's Hot Dog Hut, Total Specialty, Brown & Brown Metro, LLC, Linden Airport Management Corporation,

Communities in Cooperation, Greater Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Columbia Bank, Wieland Auto Coach, Ditto Copy Systems, Inc., Northfield Bank, Linden's Department of Transportation & Parking, and also our Summer Student Interns. We appreciate all the support and hope to see everyone again next year for another successful giveaway to benefit our youth of Linden.



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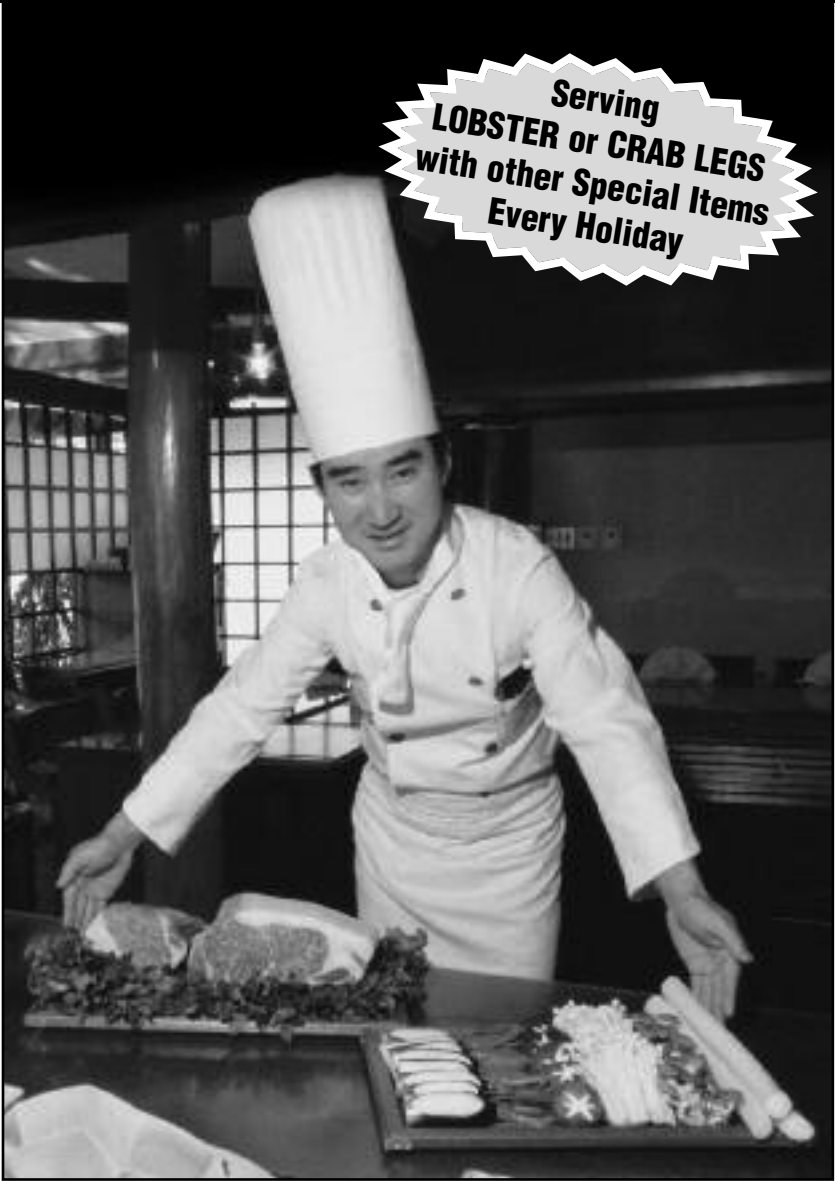
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HELPING HOMELESS VETERANS WITH BACKPACKS FOR LIFE

Submitted by Michael Boll, New Jersey Veterans Network

For the last few years our charity racing team, Operation Rebound, has been sponsored by Backpacks for Life (BFL). This amazing charity is responsible for providing thousands of homeless veterans backpacks full of essential toiletries and personal items. Also, the BFL will seek out veterans in need and help them with housing, food, employment and any other service that will help them live a better life.

The founder of the BFL, Brett D'Alessandro, is a United States Marine Corps veteran and started this outstanding charity shortly after he returned home from his tour of duty in Afghanistan. Brett recalls living out of a backpack during the war and felt a backpack can be a life-saving tool. In just a few years, Brett and the BFL are responsible for making thousands of backpacks for our homeless veterans.

The BFL doesn't just do backpacks, they are committed with helping our disabled veterans with providing them with the necessary resources and life-saving services by participating in various health fairs and PTSD groups. The BFL estimates about 350 disabled veterans have benefited from their resources and outreach. The BFL feels it's easy for a veteran to feel lost in the system. There are amazing resources out there, but it can be overwhelming trying to navigate it alone, so the BFL is there to help and guide the veteran through this agonizing process. What makes the BFL special is they invite veterans into their home and help with filling out paperwork, draft resumes, apply for housing, or whatever

else is needed to help the veteran.

The future looks bright for the BFL. They're excited to expand their backpacks distribution and reach even more homeless veterans. As they connect with more veterans' organizations across the country, they will equip even more communities with backpacks.

Their mentorship and coaching process will soon be accessible online. In this exciting development, veterans from across the country will be able to utilize the organization despite their location. Through this growth, the BFL focus remains on bringing hope back into the lives of veterans.

The BFL is out there every day making a difference and the Operation Rebound Racing Team is lucky to be a part of this incredible charity.

If you are interested with helping the

Backpacks for Life please visit their website backpacksforlife.org.

For more information about New Jersey Veterans Network visit njvn.org.

About Operation Rebound

Operation Rebound is a mobile outreach team of mentors who help at-risk veterans and first responders to live a better life. For the last two years, our team has made huge strides with suicide prevention simply by building trust and cementing friendships with people in need. It's most important to be honest with each person in crisis and follow up with ways to help them regain purpose in life. Setting goals motivates them to stay on a positive track. If you are interested with joining the Operation Rebound Racing Team please feel free to contact Michael Boll at mdbollio@optonline.net or call 973-332-1556.



(above) Brett D'Alessandro, Founder of Backpacks for Life



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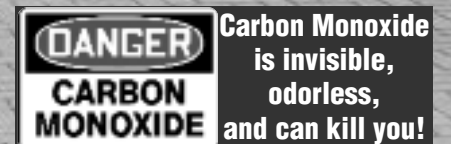
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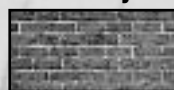
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NEW LINDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL HAS PUT HER HEART INTO SOEHL

Submitted by Gary Miller

Isabella Scocozza has Linden – specifically Soehl Middle School – in her blood.

She is going into her 21st year at Soehl, first as a sixth-grade language arts and social studies teacher, then for 14 years as the vice principal and director of the 21st Century Community Learning Center after-school program.

And now she is taking the helm as principal.

“I am very grateful for this new opportunity and very fortunate to be able to stay here at Soehl,” she said. “I’ve gotten to know and work very closely with the staff and students, families and community members. I’m just very excited to be in a different capacity and a leadership role.”

She expects it to be a seamless transition as she takes over for Richard Molinaro, who is moving into a district administration position as director of math, vocational and technology.

“I’m fortunate to be in the same school,” she said. “It makes a world of difference. I’m very familiar with the staff, the students, the families here. I have a lot of experience working in the after-school program that I would like to bring to the regular school day.”

Interim Superintendent Denise Cleary feels Scocozza is the perfect fit for Soehl.

“Ms. Scocozza brings an abundance of experience as an educator and administrator who would do well in any school we place her in,” she said. “But the fact that she has poured her heart into Soehl for so many years makes this the perfect fit. We know she’s going to do a great job.”

Scocozza is a lifelong Linden resident who attended School No. 8 and McManus Middle School and graduated Linden High School in 1994.

“I’m part of this community and that makes a difference, too,” she said. “That’s why I’m so proud to be here in this capacity. To have my career here is really a blessing.”

And those Linden roots include her longtime friendship with Vice Principal Gwendolyn Long.

“We went to high school together, so I’ve known her most of my life,” Scocozza said. “She is such a strong administrator. I think we’re going to be a great team together.”

Among her goals for her first school year as principal is maximizing academic achievement, effective use of team time to allow teachers to collaborate, and parental outreach.

“My message to all of the parents would be that it’s a privilege to be able to come to work each day and work with your kids,” said



(above) Isabella Scocozza is the new principal at Soehl Middle School in Linden, after spending 14 years as vice principal and director of the school’s after-school program.

Photo by Linden Public Schools

Scocozza, a graduate of Kean University with a master’s degree in educational administration. “I want them to be comfortable and to know that their children are in a safe and nurturing environment where they are going to receive the best education possible. We have a wonderful faculty here.”

Under her leadership, the school has undergone a number of beautification projects this summer, including new hallway and cafeteria murals, inspirational sayings on ceiling tiles, new door signs, renovation of the teachers lounge, and a new banner in the lobby that shows a tiger paw for the district mascot and says “Welcome to Our Home.”

“I thought that message was meaningful because this school is a home away from home,” Scocozza said. “Our staff and our students, this is like an extended family. So as visitors, community members, parents come into the building, I’m hoping it has a lot of impact, the way that message makes me feel.”

Perhaps the biggest project is the long-awaited major renovation of the school’s auditorium. The project was delayed in the past because of other upgrades that were necessary, but it has been under way all summer and should be completed not long after school starts. The progress has been extraordinary.

“It’s stunning,” Scocozza said. “It looks like a real community theater. It’s breathtaking.”

After she was appointed as principal in July, Scocozza sent out an email to staff members to let them know of the change, and the response was overwhelmingly positive.

“I was so grateful that just about every staff member reached out to me in some way. And we’re talking in the middle of summer,” she said. “I was very touched by that. Email, text, phone call, even flowers. Just words of encouragement really made me feel even more welcomed and appreciated. It really meant a lot.”

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IN LINDEN TEACHER'S TED TALK, THE PUSH FOR EQUITY IS PERSONAL

Submitted by Gary Miller

Fatema Sumrein was an all-American girl.

She grew up in Linden, taking part in sports and school activities. She was the daughter of a National Guard sergeant and was taught by her parents to value education, her religion, and her



(above) Fatema Sumrein, a language arts teacher at McManus Middle School in Linden, delivered a TED Talk at a New Jersey Department of Education conference on equity in the classroom. She focused on her own battle against discrimination as a child.

heritage.

But when the world was turned upside down by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, everything changed for 10-year-old Fatema. She was suddenly treated as an outsider because she had been born to Palestinian parents and wore a hijab, the traditional headscarf worn by Muslim women.

"One student came up to me and said," Sumrein recounted, banging her hand on the desk, "'You can't sit here! This is the American table!'" As young and naïve as I was, I giggled and said, 'Good thing I'm American.'"

But more students joined in. "'Your uncle is the reason my uncle has to go to war. Your people are the reason we have problems here.'" As a 10-year-old, I couldn't do anything. I was defeated. I put my head in my hands and I cried."

But there are heroes in this story: her principal and a teacher. They reached out to her to give her support and encouragement, and to let her know that it was OK to be who she was.

Now, almost 19 years later, Sumrein is a language arts teacher at McManus Middle School in Linden, and she tries to use those educators as an example of how to reach out to students in her classroom, in her building, and throughout the district.

She shared her childhood story in a TED Talk on July 31, 2019 at The College of New Jersey. It was part of a New Jersey Department of Education conference on equity in education, the idea that every student should be given an equal chance at success regardless of their background.

TED Talks are short, influential speeches given at conferences nationwide from expert speakers on education, business, science, tech and creativity. The TED organization, a non-profit that started in 1984, teamed up with the Department of Education to help selected educators to share their stories.

Sumrein, who is starting her second year at McManus after teaching in Hillside, said she got involved when she saw a link on Twitter asking for anyone who had a story to share to apply. She didn't realize the program was affiliated with

TED until she was one of 19 people chosen to work with TED representatives to refine and sharpen her story to make it the best presentation possible.

She was then one of eight people selected from around New Jersey to speak at the conference. She and the other New Jersey speakers are now in the running to speak at the national TED Ed conference.

"It was a really good experience," Sumrein said. "It shows that teachers are more than just teachers in the classroom. We're changing things."

Sumrein was excited for the opportunity to get involved with TED, but was nervous about sharing such a personal story.

"That was something that was really hard," she said. "The first two times I presented my talk, I cried. It's emotional. I'm always a funny, happy-go-lucky type of person, so for me to show my vulnerability was a big thing for me."

"My biggest fear is letting those children down, honestly," she said. "I think this is a good thing because I want the kids who don't have someone to act as a voice for them to see that there is hope for them. I definitely feel that I want to be their inspiration, and I'm hoping that I can be. I'll be humbled if I am."

In addition to the TED Talk, Sumrein will be working with the New Jersey Department of Education this year to create standards for equity in the classroom and with Union County College to set up a program on equity. She was also selected as a "Face of the NEA" and will appear in promotional materials for the National Education Association.

"I think this is going to be an exciting year. Equity is becoming a serious situation," she said. "We always talk about it, but we need to take that next step. This is going to show a lot of teachers that we do have an opportunity to change things. We shouldn't see ourselves as just educators within the classroom, but beyond that. Teaching beyond the borders."

"The more you give to these kids, the more they will give you back."

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BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS - OCT 6

On Sunday, October 6, 2019, at 2 p.m., the Episcopal Church of St. John the Baptist, located at 2018 DeWitt Terrace in Linden, will observe the traditional blessing and thanksgiving for animals in honor of St. Francis of Assisi, whose

feast occurs on October 4.

All pets and their owners are invited to assemble for a short service and blessing. For further information, call the church office at 908-925-1535.

2019 ANNUAL SEASONAL INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

The Linden Health Department is currently registering Linden residents for their Annual Seasonal Influenza Immunization program.

While no definite clinic dates have been set, you should register to receive a "flu shot" by calling the Linden Board of Health Office at (908) 474-8409. Once registered, you will be

notified of the seasonal flu clinic time and date.

All Linden residents age 60 and older and all Linden residents with chronic illnesses are encouraged to be vaccinated against Seasonal Influenza. Linden residents should call the Health Department at (908) 474-8409 between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to register for a flu shot.

'MARKET FAIR' OCTOBER 11 AND 12

The Episcopal Church of St. John The Baptist will host a flea market on Friday and Saturday, October 11 and 12, 2019 (rain dates: October 18 and 19). Hours are Friday from 12 noon to 3:00 p.m.; and Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Items for sale include clothes, shoes, jewelry, household, knick knacks, toys, CDs & DVD's and holiday items. This Market Fair is an indoor event. The parish hall will host 'Heart to Heart' Jewelry. Come and shop our thousands of items

at great prices!

The 'Market Fair' will be held at The Episcopal Church of St. John The Baptist, located at 2018 DeWitt Terrace, Linden, NJ. For more information, call the church office, 908-925-1535 or email: carlmarketfair@yahoo.com. All proceeds of the 'Market Fair' support the ministries of The Episcopal Church of St. John The Baptist. Come for the sale – go with great treasurers!

HOME COOKED PANCAKE BREAKFAST, OCT. 26

The Auxiliary to VFW Post #1397, located at 20 Pennsylvania RR Ave., Linden, NJ, will be hosting a home cooked Pancake Breakfast fundraiser on October 26, 2019 from 8 a.m. till 12 noon. It's not only pancakes you can get eggs, bacon, sausage, home-fries, toast, coffee, tea and juices, as well as pastries.

Donations: \$7.00 for Adults, \$6.00 for Seniors and Children, ages 5 and under free. Take outs are available.

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FAMILY FUN & FITNESS DAY AT YMCA

Submitted by Colleen Clayton

This fall, The Gateway Family YMCA branches in Elizabeth, Rahway and Union will celebrate a family wellness event, Family Fun & Fitness Day. Family Fun & Fitness Day is designed with activities to engage both children and their parents, and is open to all ages.

A Family Fun & Fitness Day event is scheduled for October 5, 2019, at the Rahway Branch, 1564 Irving Street, Rahway.

The Gateway Family YMCA branches will be hosting events that are open to the community, including free family group exercise programs, indoor playstreets, healthy snacks, nutrition information, community vendors and fun games.

"Providing a safe and positive environment for the community, where families come together in a healthy environment, sharing experiences and creating memories is what we do here at the Y," stated Krystal R. Canady, CEO. The Gateway Family YMCA offers family programs and events to support healthy family living in the communities throughout Eastern Union County and Northern Middlesex County, including Early Learning Readiness (ELR) a school-readiness community program for preschoolers and their

caregivers.

"Serving families has always been at the heart of the Y. We have a fundamental desire to provide opportunities for every family to build stronger bonds, achieve greater work/life balance, become more engaged with their communities, and have fun," stated Melynda A. Mileski, EVP/COO.

The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers dedicated to strengthening the foundations of community and stands For Youth Development, For Healthy Living and For Social Responsibility. The Gateway Family YMCA impacts the community by providing quality services to people of all ages, races, faith or incomes. The Y doesn't just strengthen bodies – it strengthens people, families and communities.

For more information about Family Fun & Fitness Day, or programs and services provided by The Gateway Family YMCA, visit tgfymca.org or contact the Elizabeth Branch at 908-355-9622, Five Points Branch 908-688-9622, Rahway Branch 732-388-0057, Wellness Center Branch 908-349-9622, WISE Center Branch 908-687-2995 or Youth Development Branch 908-355-3061.

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(above) The YMCA will host a Family Fun & Fitness Day event on October 5 in Rahway.

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The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) recently launched, "Into the Cloud," a brand new online safety product for children in grades K-5. This includes an animated web series and video game. Using data from actual NCMEC CyberTipline reports, each episode focuses on a different element of online safety, from strategies for handling cyberbullying to recognizing and reporting unsafe/inappropriate interactions and content. Additional episodes will be available throughout the year.

"Into the Cloud" presents important safety information in an age-appropriate and entertaining manner! All the resources are free!

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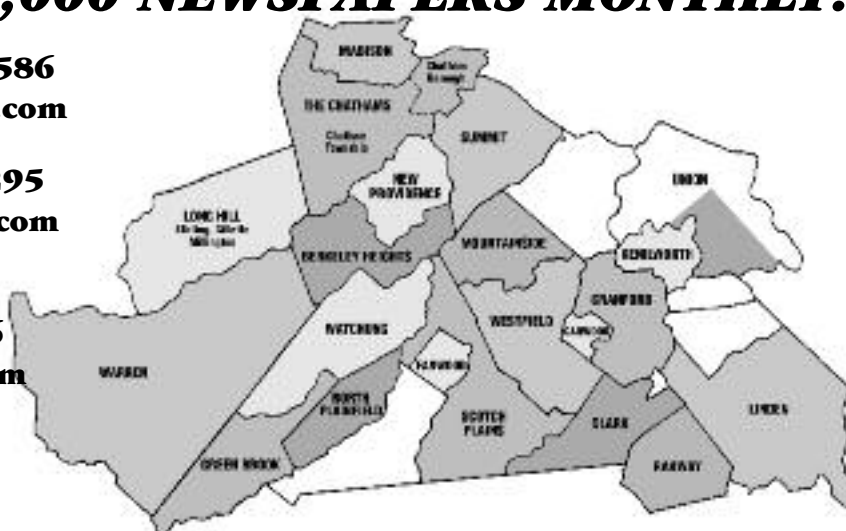


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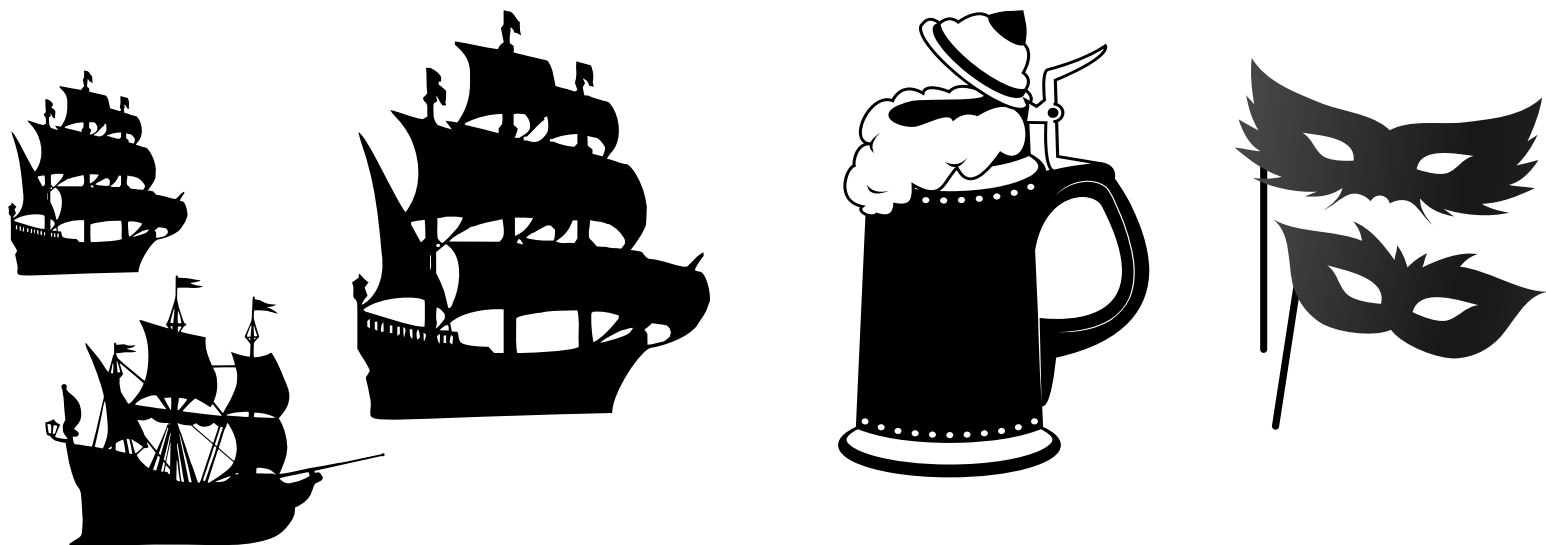
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