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GIRL SCOUTS CREATE HOLIDAY CARDS FOR VETS AND TROOPS

Submitted by Kerry Rokicki

Members of the Girl Scouts of Cranford, Service Unit 48, kicked off the holiday season by creating hundreds of holiday cards for members of the United States military. More than a dozen troops encompassing the Daisy, Brownie and Junior levels gathered at the Cranford Community Center on Saturday, November 16, 2019, for the “Cards for Troops” event to craft handmade cards which were filled with well wishes and gratitude. At least a dozen more Cranford troops made cards at their own meetings to contribute to the project. The cards will be delivered to all branches of the military serving overseas.

This is the fifth year that Girl Scout Senior Troop 40071 has coordinated this event which has grown to the point of filling two sessions this year. In addition to card making there were raffles, dancing, singing and team building games. The following Girl Scout Troops participated in the community service event: Daisy Troops 40042, 40334, 40511, 40558, 40826, and 40886; Brownie Troops 40376, 40455, and 40844; and Junior Troops 40013, 40098, 40194, 40665, 40836, and 40686.

“We are so proud of how this event has grown. It began with making cards with one younger troop, and as it got bigger the Troop wanted to add team building activities, then a raffle, and now it is a day-long event that produces close to 300 holiday cards for both active service military and veteran groups,” explained Mrs. Lauren Ramsay, leader of Troop 40071. “This event supports the ideals of Girl Scout as it provides the troop the opportunity to exercise skills of leadership, collaboration, organization, follow through, and community outreach. One of the best parts is when the troop reads out loud some “thank you” letters from military recipients because hearing the writers’ voices affirms for everyone in the room that the activity at hand does lead to the outcome we all want - that these cards will bring some holiday cheer to members of our military who may not be with their families this season and that we are indeed thinking of them and honoring their sacrifices.”

The Girl Scouts of Cranford is an organization dedicated to building G.I.R.L.'s (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)TM of courage, confidence, and character who will make the world a better place.

The Girl Scouts of Cranford Service Unit 48 is a part of the Girl Scouts Heart of NJ Council which is part of the Girl Scouts of the USA. For more information on the Girl Scouts of Cranford, go to cranfordgirlscouts.com.



(above) Troop 40071 poses with some of the holiday cards they created.



(above) Cranford Girl Scouts made 300 holiday cards for both active service military and veteran groups.



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VETERANS VISIT BROOKSIDE

Submitted by Christina Miskewitz

During the Veterans Day assembly at Brookside Place Elementary School in Cranford on November 11, 2019, family members who served in the United States Armed Forces were given the opportunity to share their stories.


"It allows the students and staff alike to hit

pause on the busy lives each of us lead to express our tremendous show of thanks for individuals whom we owe so much to," Principal Michael Klimko said. "Hearing the stories of their service in one or more branches of our Armed Forces provides such a wonderful example for our students (and staff alike) to reflect upon."



(above, l-r) Veterans pictured are, back row: James Washington, Stu Rosenthal, Timothy Pentimone; front row: Herbert Sieh, William Blessing, Thomas Lygate, Seymour Mendel, Michael Maguire, Jeffrey Zlotnick, Ronald Niemsyk and John Passmore. Not Pictured: Fred Reingold.


Photo by Andrew Feldman, BPS PTA



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Submitted by John J. Doolan

The Cranford Knights of Columbus held their 15th Annual Golf Outing at the Galloping Hill Golf Course in Kenilworth in September. 77 Golfers attended and helped raise funds for our Worthy Charities. At the November General Meeting, the Council donated \$5,000 to the Stephen Siller Tunnel to Towers Foundation, which is an organization that helps injured Service Members, fallen First Responders and Gold Star Families with mortgage free homes, smart homes and much needed other services in their time of need.

The Cranford Knights of Columbus is a Catholic Fraternal Organization dedicated to our Four Core Principles, Charity, Unity, Fraternity and Patriotism. The Cranford Council supports

many charities and civic causes locally, state-wide and nationally and is committed to being a viable part of our community. For information

about joining the Council, please contact Membership Chair John Caprio at 732-306-5634 or visit cranfordknights.org.



(above) Pictured presenting the check are Grand Knight Jim Feehan, Deputy Grand Jerry Conheeney and Golf Outing Chair John Doolan to retired FDNY Battalion Commander Jack Oehm, who is also a Board Member of the Foundation.



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PROJECT HOME SEEKING MEMBERS

Looking for a way to give back in 2020, want to find a way to help your Cranford neighbors in need or just looking to get involved in the Cranford Community? Then come to the Project Home of Cranford Prospective Member Meeting on Wednesday, January 8, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. at the Hanson House on Springfield Ave. This is a great opportunity to hear about how we help and meet some of the members. Lite refreshments will be served.

For over 30 years Project Home of Cranford has been helping Cranford Families who are faced with financial crisis due to job loss or critical illness remain in their homes. Working through Cranford Family Care Project Home assists Cranford Families who are in need. Truly Neighbors Helping Neighbors!

Project Home of Cranford is a 501(c)3 charity that works through Cranford Family Care to keep Cranford families in their homes. Project Home has several fundraisers throughout the year to raise the funds needed to fund their mission. All funds raised remain in the community and are directed to Cranford Family Care.

If you have any questions about the meeting or the Project Home please email us at projecthomeofcranford@gmail.com. More information about the organization is available on our website projecthomeofcranford.org.

“MEDICINAL PLANTS OF THE CIVIL WAR” AT THE CRANFORD COMMUNITY CENTER

Submitted by Jenna Doscher

Please join the Hanson Park Conservancy on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. at the Cranford Community Center as we welcome Garden Historian Lesley Parness for a very special presentation, “Medicinal Plants of the Civil War.” Could plants have played a role in the outcome of the Civil War?

Learn how important plants were in every aspect of this conflict, on battlefields and home fronts of both the North and the South. Over 30 plants will be discussed and their medicinal properties noted. "Receipts," or recipes are included for popular herbal remedies such as horehound lozenges and witch hazel tonic. Audiences are often surprised to learn how many "Civil War" plants they are already growing, and the haunting historic images create a compelling tale of interest to history buffs as well as gardeners alike!

Lesley Parness is the retired Superintendent of Horticultural Education at New Jersey's Morris County Park Commission where she oversaw programming at The Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Willowood Arboretum and Bamboo Brook Outdoor Education Center. She is a member of the Herb Society of America, The Council on Horticultural and Botanical Literature, and Garden State Gardens, a consortium of New Jersey's public gardens of which she is a Founding Member.

The Cranford Community Center is located at 220 Walnut Ave. in Cranford, NJ. The program is free and open to the public. No registration is required, but seating is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. This presentation is sponsored by the Hanson Park Conservancy.

To learn more please visit our website, hansonparkconservancy.com or like us on Facebook.

CRANFORD FAMILY CARE ASSOCIATION CHRISTMAS DONATION THANK YOU

Submitted by Kathy Willis

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Cranford Family Care and the families we serve, I wish to thank everyone for your generous gifts, cards and monetary donations for Christmas. Your kindness will be remembered thru-out the year. Holidays can mean so much to some and

for others it can be a hardship. Your donations can make life a little brighter and warmer for some who struggle every day. Our heating fund is where your donations are needed most. May the Blessings of Christmas be with you now and in the New Year!



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GIRL SCOUTS KICK OFF HOLIDAY SEASON WITH TRADITIONAL TREE DECORATING CEREMONY

Submitted by Kerry Rokicki

The temperatures were cold, but the hearts were warm and hands were busy at the annual decorating of the town holiday tree which was hosted by Brownie Troop 40455. More than 400 Girl Scouts of Cranford participated in the event which was held Friday, November 29 in Mayor’s Park. The decorating of the tree by Girl Scouts of Cranford troops is a tradition that spans several decades.

“Our girls were thrilled to lead this fun and festive event for the other troops,” explained Troop 40455 co-leader Mrs. Angelica Valenza. “It is a wonderful tradition for our town. Not only is this a time for us to come together as an organization, but it is wonderful to see all the

different and creative hand-crafted ornaments. The girls and their leaders put a lot of time and effort into creating their decorations.”

The morning activities included The Pledge of Allegiance led by Troop 41267, the singing of The Star Spangled Banner by Girl Scouts Cecilia Imhof and Maddie Coons and a food drive to benefit the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. Girl Scouts from Daisies in kindergarten up through Cadettes and Ambassadors in high school participated in the event.

The tree in Mayor’s Park is located across from the township municipal building at the corners of Springfield and North Avenues. The tree decorating event was part of a full agenda sponsored by the Cranford Chamber of Commerce that culminated with the tree lighting ceremony in the evening.

The Girl Scouts of Cranford is an organization dedicated to building G.I.R.L.'s (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)[™] of courage, confidence, and character who will make the world a better place. The Girl Scouts of Cranford Service Unit 48 is a part of the Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey Council which is part of the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. For more information on the Girl Scouts of Cranford, go to cranfordgirlscouts.com.



(above) More than 400 Girl Scouts of Cranford participated in the tree decorating ceremony.

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MEET GUNNER'S MATE 2ND CLASS PATRICK P. CASTALDO, USS INDIANAPOLIS CREW MEMBER, ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86.

By Don Sweeney, research by Stu Rosenthal, military proofreading by Vic Bary and editing by Janet Ashnault.

The novel *In Harm's Way*, by Doug Stanton, is said by many to be the most extraordinary written account of the US Navy's worst open sea disaster. It tells the harrowing tale of the USS Indianapolis, a 610-foot Portland-class heavy cruiser that was hit by two Japanese torpedoes in WWII and sunk in just twelve minutes. Cranford High School graduate, Patrick Castaldo of 103 Lincoln Avenue was on board the Indianapolis on that fateful day. The strike occurred in the early morning darkness and of the 1,197 men on board, only 317 would be rescued four and a half days later.

As our mission continues to provide a face and a story for every name on the bronze tablets at our Memorial Park, we are honored to tell the tale of yet another brave young man who answered the call to duty, never to return to Cranford to enjoy the freedom that his courage delivered.

Patrick P. Castaldo was born in Bayonne, NJ on October 3rd, 1924, the ninth and youngest child of Italian immigrants, Assunta and Pasquale Castaldo. He went to Bayonne schools until he reached high school. His father was not happy with the crowd with which Pat was surrounding himself. Pasquale reached out to his eldest son Neil, a young doctor starting a practice in Cranford, and asked if Patrick could come to Cranford and live with him. Neil and his young wife Loretta welcomed younger brother Patrick with open arms and enrolled him in Cranford High School. At the time Dr. and Loretta Castaldo had a one-year old daughter, Patricia, with whom we have been in contact with since the Cranford 86 project started three years ago. Patricia Castaldo Hobbie has vivid memories of her uncle as he was her babysitter throughout his life in Cranford. She told us about her Uncle Patrick's unique nickname that was given to him by her dad, Dr. Castaldo. Her dad said that Patrick really perked up at the sight of food, especially when nearing the refrigerator. Therefore, to everyone in their household, her uncle was known simply as "Perk", and was rarely called by any other name. It was just Perk,



Patrick P. Castaldo as he appeared in the 1942 Cranford High School yearbook the *Golden C*.

not Uncle Perk nor Perky.

The living arrangements crafted for Patrick by his dad seemed to work out wonderfully. Patrick assimilated nicely into Cranford and became a good student at Cranford High School. He was active in sports as the track and cross-country manager throughout all four years, and then played on the varsity basketball team as a senior. Patricia was only age 4-6 during this time, but amazingly she was able to remember many personal details about her uncle. She recalls Perk as being a good-looking, fun-loving guy with a great personality. She told us that Perk's girlfriend, Carol Nielsen, would sometimes join him in his role as her babysitter. Patricia grew up to become a teacher at Sherman and Hillside Avenue schools. Her uncle's story was not the first time that she contributed information to the Cranford 86 project. As a teacher to Joseph Minnock, Vietnam War veteran and the first Cranford 86 honoree, she provided priceless input about Joe's early life.

Patrick was a graduate of CHS Class of 1942, making him a senior when the attack on Pearl Harbor took place. Some 60 percent of the men

and many of the women from that class enlisted after graduation or before. Patrick Castaldo did so on September 3rd, 1942 and was shipped out for training to Great Lakes, IL, before heading to Mare Island near San Francisco for two weeks. Since the attack on Pearl Harbor, over three million military personnel had passed through Mare Island. It was said to be like a Wild West town where much steam was released by soldiers and sailors on liberty. Patricia recalls late-night phone calls from Perk, likely placed from Mare Island during that time. Her uncle would ask her dad to send money and would be promptly denied. It would be Patricia's mom, who was very fond of her brother-in-law, who would secretly wire him the cash. Patricia mentioned that her uncle was known to love a good time and she had no doubt that he was at the center of all the fun that Mare Island had to offer.

On November 8th, 1942 Patrick Castaldo set sail on the USS Henderson, a transport ship. He arrived at Pearl Harbor on November 26, where he was assigned as an apprentice seaman to the USS Indianapolis (CA-35), the flagship of the 5th Fleet. Interviews with Indy survivors tell of the awe they experienced upon first seeing the Indianapolis. We can imagine Patrick was taken with similar emotion when first approaching this prestigious ship. Since 1932, the Indianapolis had escorted President Roosevelt on three international tours. Now a bona fide war ship, it had just returned to Pearl Harbor after receiving its first battle star for action in New Guinea. In total, the Indianapolis received 10 battle stars and Patrick Castaldo was an active combatant for 9 of them. The Indianapolis's main role was anti-aircraft defense of carriers, and bombardment of islands which served to soften defenses in support of amphibious landings. At this point in the war, the island-hopping campaigns were focused on the paths that led to Japan's mainland.

Seaman 2nd Class Castaldo's first mission on the Indy was in March of 1943 in the Battle of the Aleutian Islands. Go to Cranford86.org to see the list of all the battles in which Patrick and the USS Indianapolis were involved.

In June of 1944 Patrick moved up to the rank of Gunner's Mate 3rd Class just in time for the Indy's participation in the landings off the Mariana Islands in the Philippine Sea. Due to the disproportionate loss ratio inflicted upon Japanese aircraft by American pilots and anti-aircraft gunners, the aerial part of this battle was nicknamed the "Great Marianas Turkey Shoot". Japan's carrier force and air power were forever eliminated there. 410 Japanese planes were downed, many falling victim to the guns of the Indianapolis.

In July of 1944 the Indy played a role in the Invasion of Tinian; its capture would play an important role in ending the war. She then proceeded to Iwo Jima to participate in the battle which resulted in the Marine's famous landing



Patrick Castaldo, in his junior year at CHS, is pictured with the Mathematics Club, holding an enormous slide rule.

(continued on page 10)

PATRICK P. CASTALDO (continued from page 9)



(above) Described by his family as a fun-loving, good-looking guy with a great personality, this photo seems to capture those qualities in Patrick.



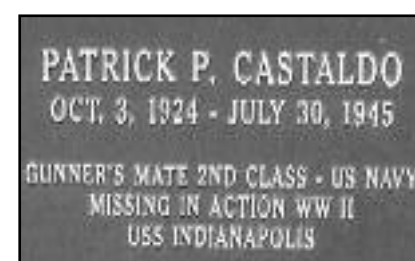
(above) In Patricia Castaldo Hobbie's Westfield backyard, a memorial to her uncle still stands, nearly 75 years after the Indianapolis tragedy.



(above) As the eldest of nine children Dr. Neil Castaldo poses next to the memorial that he created in memory of his youngest brother. The seahorses not only represent the nature in which Patrick was lost, but also his love of his adventures at sea. Five of the nine Castaldo siblings served during WW2.



(above) In Patricia Castaldo Hobbie's Westfield backyard, a memorial to her uncle still stands, nearly 75 years after the Indianapolis tragedy.



(above) The plaque that memorializes Patrick, located in his native city of Bayonne, N.J.

there in February 1945. After Iwo Jima became the first of the Japanese islands to fall, a landing of D-Day sized proportions was being planned for the island of Okinawa. Essentially, every Allied Naval warship was assembled around the second Japanese island to be targeted. The Japanese army's ability to defend itself by conventional means had now all but been eliminated. At this point the use of suicide pilots was their last desperate tactic at defending their homeland. On March 31st, 1945 during the 7th day of the Indianapolis's bombardment of Okinawa, she was struck by a Kamikaze plane delivering a 500-pound bomb. The plane pierced the bow, penetrating several decks and the bomb exploded in the dining area, killing 9 and injuring 29. Our Cranford 86 hero Patrick Castaldo was one of the wounded.

Badly damaged, the Indianapolis limped for 6,000 miles to Pearl Harbor and then back to Mare Island for repairs. The crew was relocated to land accommodations or returned home for leave until repairs were completed. Patrick returned to his parents' home in Bayonne to convalesce from his injuries.

Initially, it was estimated that the Indianapolis would spend four months in dry dock and then be sent back to the Philippines to prepare for the inevitable attack on mainland Japan. Repairs were mysteriously sped up with work continuing around the clock, completing the repairs in less than 60 days. It seemed that there was a plan for the Indy. Captain McVay was called to headquarters in San Francisco and given orders to ship out in 96 hours. Hundreds of telegrams went out across the country to recall the crew, most of whom were home on leave. Patrick, feeling better, received the call. He felt the need to join his brothers on the Indy and rushed cross country to reach his ship in time for its departure.

It was July 17th, 1945.

Now with the rank of Gunner's Mate 2nd Class, Patrick was a battle-seasoned member of the crew and was most likely known to most of the men on board. At 20 years old, he was older than most of the many new recruits who were 17 or 18. Captain McVay, while underway, opened his orders as instructed. The Indy was to pick up top-secret cargo at Hunter's Point, just north of San Francisco, and then steam at full speed to Tinian in the Mariana Islands. The orders stated that every hour they saved on this trip would mean one less hour of war.

Ironically, just one year earlier, the crew of the Indy with Patrick Castaldo, was part of the attack that captured Tinian, and now this island was the site of the newest and largest air base in the world. It was from Tinian that the Enola Gay, a B-29 Superfortress bomber, would take off for Hiroshima carrying the "Little Boy" bomb that would end WWII. The Indy was to be under strict radio silence and would have no destroyer escort as was usually customary. There were two items that were loaded carefully at Hunter's Point. One was a 5' by 5' by 15' wooden shipping crate which was placed in a spot on deck that usually held a small observation seaplane. The other, which was stowed in a vacant officer's quarters, was a 12" diameter black metal cylinder, about 2' in height. Rumors of the containers' contents were rampant throughout the ship and ranged from champagne for General McArthur's victory party, to Marilyn Monroe's underwear. Orders were given that, in case of an open sea emergency, these two items should be put in separate life rafts before any personnel attended to their own safety. What no one onboard knew was, that the large box held the components of the atom bomb "Little Boy" and the metal cylinder contained one half of the

world's supply of enriched uranium.

The Indy set a naval speed record to Pearl Harbor from San Francisco, 2,405 miles in 74.5 hours. Stopping there only for fuel, she immediately set out for Tinian. The dock at Tinian was lined with Marines at attention, holding automatic weapons and more military brass on it than anyone had ever seen. The crew knew that whatever they had on board; it was very important. The secret cargo was carefully unloaded. It was July 27th, 1945.

The Indy received orders immediately to set out for Leyte in the Philippines to prepare for the attack on the Japanese mainland. Captain McVay was assured that there was no Japanese submarine activity in the area. He requested a destroyer escort but was denied, told that all destroyers were assigned to rescue efforts of downed planes from the attacks on Japan. A destroyer had the electronic systems that gave protection from submarine attacks. A heavy cruiser had limited radar and no sonar. But, with no submarines reported, a destroyer was not deemed necessary for this straightforward journey.

The Indianapolis was ordered to follow a zigzag course during the day and to use their discretion at night, depending on visibility. It was late on July 29th when Captain McVay retired from the bridge to his sleeping compartment. Zigzagging was terminated as the night was pitch black. Six miles ahead was something that reports said was not to be, a Japanese submarine. The war was almost over, and the sub's commander, Lieutenant Hashimoto, had not yet had a "kill", this was the moment that he had dreamed of. He submerged and was able to get unbelievably close to the Indianapolis. The submarine I-58 was armed with Kaiten torpedoes, 48-foot-long

(continued on page 11)

PATRICK P. CASTALDO (continued from page 10)

Kamikaze torpedoes manned with suicide pilots. However, Commander Hashimoto decided to spare the life of the pilots because he was so close, he felt he couldn't miss. He fired six traditional torpedoes just three seconds apart. Each 1,210-pound torpedo had enough explosives to level a city block. Two of them hit the Indianapolis, one at midship that blew a hole 60 foot in diameter on the starboard side, destroying the power plant. The other hit the bow, breaking it completely off, which caused water to rush in as the ship was travelling at 20 MPH. It was 12:04 a.m. July 30th.

The Captain was awakened, and he took command. It was pitch black as all power had been lost. Even the emergency generators failed. The officers in charge could not even see each other as they tried to assess the damage. In order to stop the surging water, they needed to kill the engines, but no communication was possible with the engine rooms or to anywhere else on the ship. They weren't sure if they had been rammed by a destroyer, hit a mine or were torpedoed, but they knew that the Indy was damaged badly, and it started to list in the water. Flames were raging throughout the ship but controlling them was impossible as all water pressure had been lost. It is believed that many men were killed instantly, and many others were trapped alive in the hull of the ship as compartments were sealed off to control the flooding. Despite all the damage, the radio operators were able to begin sending distress signals with the ship's coordinates.

The situation was deteriorating quickly; the Indianapolis was sinking. Just eight minutes after the torpedo strike, Captain McVay ordered abandoned ship. With the ship already listing at 60 degrees and absolute chaos on board, an orderly abandon ship was not a possibility. The lifeboats could not be lowered, and only half of the life rafts could be taken from their mounts on the bulkheads. Most crew members were jumping over the side rail with a simple life vest or less. Many were badly burned or had broken limbs from the explosions. In the last minutes of

the Indianapolis's existence afloat it stood at 90 degrees to the water line. Soon it would find its final resting place nearly three and a half miles below the surface in the deepest ocean on earth. Nothing was left behind but scattered debris and 900 men bobbing in the water. It was only 12 minutes since the torpedoes had struck her.

As I write the details of these fateful moments, my thoughts are with our Cranford 86 member Patrick Castaldo. This horror was his reality. I find myself continuing to think, where was Perk at this moment?

More than 400 American war ships were sunk in WWII. Ships that sunk before the Indy were usually in a task group or at least with an escort ship. Some fatalities were expected when a ship went down, but survivors were usually quickly scooped from the water by a team of vessels that streamed in to assist. Due to the nature of the mission she had just completed, the Indianapolis was all alone, 300 miles from land. Her survivors' only hope was that the distress signals were heard, and that help was on the way. Sadly, that was not the case.

Every sailor and officer in the water was covered by the thick fuel oil that was everywhere. There was limited water and food to sustain the hundreds of men who were clutching to flotation nets and life rafts, trying to just stay alive. Groups of survivors were being formed by officers. Captain McVay survived and was commanding one of the groups. By the end of day one, the injured and weak survivors were perishing. As the hours and then days passed, some sailors would start to drink saltwater, which resulted in organ shutdown and eventual death. Those suffering from severe dehydration and hypothermia were losing consciousness. Crew members began losing their minds and turning on each other. There were actual killings between men once considered brothers. Some men would just give up, releasing their life jacket to voluntarily sink below the surface in a drowning suicide. The life vests started becoming

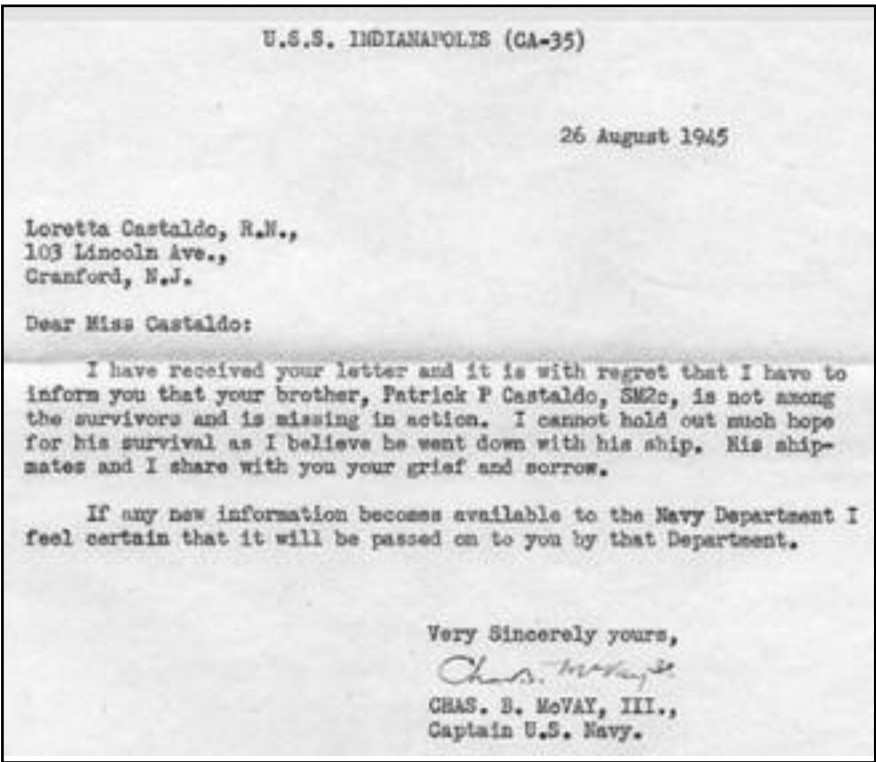
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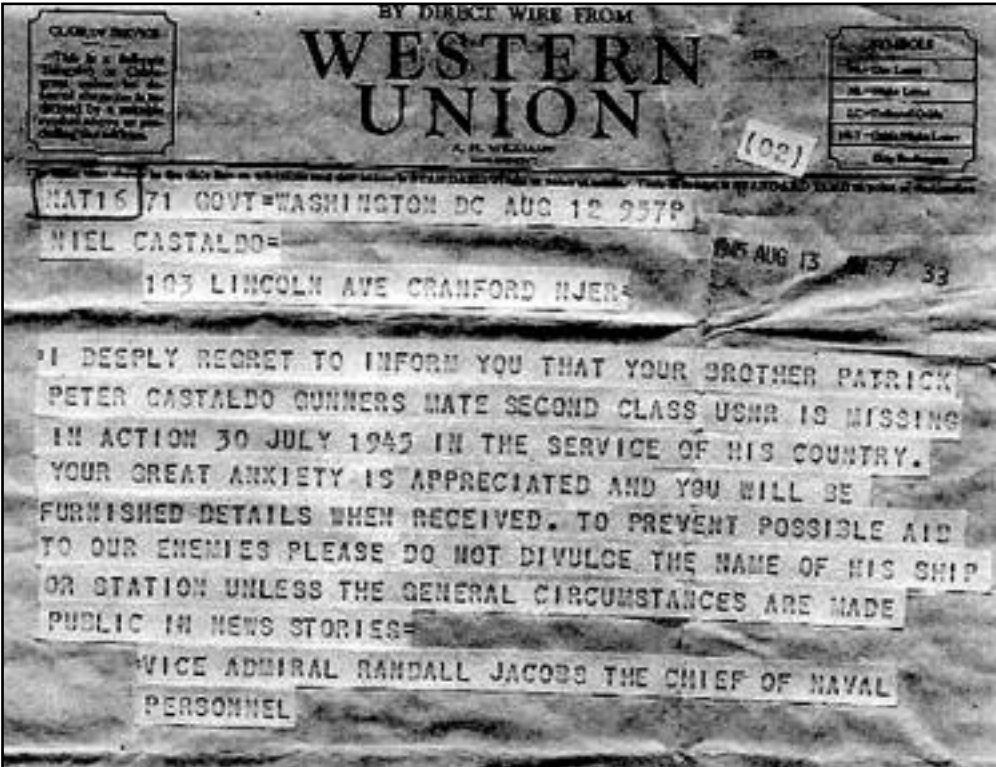
Patrick Castaldo's home at sea for nearly 3 years, the USS Indianapolis (CA-35) was a 610-foot heavy cruiser. Note the nine 8-inch guns that could hurl 335 lb. explosive shells seventeen miles. Her top speed of 37.6 mph was the reason she was selected for the top-secret delivery of the atom bomb "Little Boy".



Shown in its pine packaging crate, "Little Boy" was the atom bomb that would be dropped on Hiroshima. It was transported by the USS Indianapolis to the island of Tinian. This photo was taken on Tinian before the bomb was loaded onto the Enola Gay aircraft.



The hand-signed letter from Captain McVay, the commanding officer of the USS Indianapolis.



Th is is a copy of the telegram that uniformed sailors delivered to the door of 301 Lincoln Ave. on August 12, 1945.

PATRICK P. CASTALDO (continued from page 11)

waterlogged and lost their buoyancy, they were only designed to work for 48 hours. Time was not on the survivor's side.

As the water started to clear of the oil slick, a new threat arose, sharks. There were hundreds and they were always present but would only feed at dusk and dawn. A lone survivor made the easiest target, but no one was safe from the random attacks. Hundreds of men were lost to the marauding fish, making this the largest recorded shark attack in history. This incident was made famous by Captain Quint's soliloquy in the Steven Spielberg movie, Jaws.

A couple passing planes at high altitudes gave hope to the dwindling survivors, who by day three were estimated at half of the original number. With still no report of a missing ship, they were not noticed by the passing high-speed aircraft. Halfway through day five, the keen eye of Lt. Chuck Gwinn, flying a PV-1 Ventura bomber, noticed the oil slick. Lt. Gwinn was on a routine search and destroy mission looking for Japanese submarines and was shocked to see 20 or 30 floating men, waving and splashing to get his attention. Not knowing what he was seeing he came in for a closer look. Hundreds of bobbing men now became visible and he radioed for rescue vessels. From above, the schools of sharks were visible. Gwinn knew this was an emergency that needed immediate action, but help was still hours away. He dropped water and additional flotation devices but could do no more. What

would follow would be the largest open sea rescue in American Naval history. Amazingly it wasn't until the first survivors were brought onto a rescue ship that it was known that the sailors were from the USS Indianapolis. It was August 3rd, 1945.

On August 6th, the Enola Gay dropped the "Little Boy" atomic bomb on Hiroshima. Then three days later on August 9th, "Fat Man", the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Japan surrendered six days later.

On August 12th, 1945 the doorbell rang at 103 Lincoln Avenue. Six-year-old Patricia Castaldo rushed to answer it. Two uniformed sailors were standing on their porch, telegram in hand. They asked to speak to her parents. It was the family's first notice that Perk's ship had sunk and that he was lost at sea. A letter, hand signed by Captain McVay himself arrived later that month, confirming the same sad news. (See the telegram/letter at Cranford86.org) Patricia told us that the family held out hope even after this news. Patrick was an excellent swimmer and they thought that this fact may have saved his life. Sadly, that was not to be.

Loretta Castaldo, Dr. Castaldo's wife, started writing to survivors to ask if anyone had memory of seeing Perk during the disaster. At first all the letters told the same story. No one remembered seeing him and that he must have been one of the 300 who never made it off the ship. Then, a letter came from a sailor who knew Patrick. He told of being with him in the water with a small group of men after the Indy sank. He said that Patrick was severely burned, was in terrible pain and had spiked a high temperature. The sailor went on to explain that he was hallucinating, as many of the men were, and had swam off because he thought he saw an airplane. He was never seen again.

Much controversy swirled as to who was to blame for the USS Indianapolis tragedy. The facts released by the Navy put the responsibility largely on Captain McVay and his decision to not use the zigzag technique to defend from submarine attack. He was court-martialed quickly for endangering his ship and crew. Some thought

that he was made a scapegoat, in a plan to manage a situation that could interfere with public opinion of US military competence, following an unconventional act that ended a long deadly war. As a tormented man he committed suicide in 1968. At first, the public as well as the families of the crew members held Captain McVay responsible for their loss. Years passed and additional information about the myriad of errors and mistakes in judgement that led to the demise of the Indy came to light, causing feelings toward Captain McVay to turn around. Patricia Castaldo shared with us that their family's feelings followed that same path.

Finally, in 2001, Congressional hearings which were spurred by surviving crew members, resulted in a proclamation by President Clinton clearing Captain McVay's name. The details, although interesting, are too lengthy to be included here. Go to Cranford86.org for links to many YouTube clips to hear the entire story. Much of the facts used to write Patrick Castaldo's memoir were taken from In Harm's Way. I also listened to the audio version several times. The entire heart-pounding drama is acted out with the appropriate passion to recreate each moment. It is based on survivor interviews, which ensures the accuracy of these incredible accounts.

Patricia said her uncle sincerely loved the USS Indianapolis, Captain McVay and all the crew, whom he considered brothers. She told us that Perk's plan after leaving the Navy was to continue his education and become a dentist. His brother Dr. Castaldo served Cranford for 50 years as a physician, he had a monument created that depicted a sea horse with his little brother's name engraved on it. Patricia still has a monument in her Westfield backyard. A monument honoring him also stands in his native town of Bayonne, NJ.

Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Patrick P. Castaldo and the USS Indianapolis fought many battles together, and they both played such an important role in the victory of WWII. Patrick was an American patriot, one of our Cranford 86, and has earned our undying gratitude.

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SOUPER-BOWL SOUP 'N SERVICE DAY - FEB. 1

CRANFORD MONTHLY • Page 13 • January 2020

Cranford United Methodist Church invites you to our Souper-Bowl Soup and Community Service Day. On this day, the church will host a Blanket-Making for the Homeless event in combination with its annual Souper-Bowl Soup and Chili sale on Saturday, February 1, 2020, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Location: In the education building of the Cranford United Methodist Church, corner of Walnut and Lincoln Aves. in Cranford.

Pick up some of the best soup and chili in town. There's nothing quite like a bowl of chili or hearty soup on Super Bowl Day. Back by popular demand, six fabulous homemade soups and chilis will be available for take-out at the church kitchen on February 1, 2020, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Pints and quarts of a variety of soups and chilis will be available for \$5 and \$9 each. Advance orders are recommended. Download the order form: cranfordumc.com, enclose your check payable to CUMC and mail it to: Cranford United Methodist Church, Souper-Bowl Sale, 201 Lincoln Ave. East, Cranford, NJ 07016. Pre-paid advance orders must be received by mail or

dropped off in the church office by Monday, January 27th. If you can't order in advance, walk-ins are welcome but we do sell out so arrive early! Pick up your soup and then stay for blanket making in the same location.

BLANKET-MAKING FOR THE HOMELESS

Join us as we create fleece blankets to be donated to people in need of warmth and love. No sewing skills are needed because these fleece blankets are tied, not sewn. If you can tie a knot, you're good! Come with your children – this is the perfect project to model caring for people in need! Contact Holly Walker, hewalk99@aol.com to sign up. Contributions to help cover the cost of the fleece would be appreciated.

Blankets made at the event will be donated to Operation Open Heart, a project of the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless.

So, join us to warm up for the Super Bowl -- warm your stomach with soup and warm your heart by making a blanket for the homeless!

Questions? Please call Angela at (908) 276-0936 or send an email to office@cranfordumc.com.

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MATTHEW BIERMAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP OPEN FOR DONATIONS

Submitted by Megan Carolan

In 2019, the inaugural Matthew Bierman Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Sabrina Perla, a graduate of the Union County Magnet High School (UCMHS) who is now attending the University of Southern California majoring in Business Administration and minoring in Applied Analytics. The scholarship fund is now open for donations from community members looking to support its continuation in future years.

Matthew Charles Bierman was a Cranford resident and graduate of the UCMHS Class of 2005 who passed away too soon in 2016. Not one to seek the spotlight, Matt's legacy for those who knew him in high school was of a kind, dedicated student who was equally ready to lend a helping hand or crack a joke to relieve the pressure. He was also dedicated to a range of interests outside the classroom, including the school's Robotics and French clubs. Matt also played viola in the New Jersey Youth Orchestra and the NJSO Youth Orchestra and attained the rank of Eagle Scout.

After high school, Matt attended the University of California, Berkeley for both his Bachelors and Masters, becoming a transportation engineer. While at Berkeley he was leader in the Sigma Phi Society. While Matt's many accomplishments speak for themselves, he is remembered in particular for the good-natured attitude he brought each day and his understated humor.

Sabrina Perla, the first recipient of the scholarship, was unanimously selected by the review committee in 2019, with her nominator writing that Sabrina, like Matt, likes to “fully exercise her intelligence and be challenged. In

return, she challenges teachers, in the sense of being curious and wanting to truly understand information.”

Ms. Perla, an Elizabeth native, said “I am truly grateful for the Matthew Bierman Memorial Scholarship and the love and support his family and those involved in the scholarship have provided me with. Like Matt, I plan to follow my dreams in California and make a meaningful impact in people's lives. Thanks to this scholarship I was able to buy my flights to LA and back home for winter break, school supplies, and dorm necessities. Once I graduate I hope to contribute to this scholarship fund to continue Matt’s legacy and values in future generations.”

The scholarship fund was established by classmates in his memory to be awarded to a graduating senior of UCMHS each year. The recipient is nominated by a teacher who identifies a student as embodying the values of kindness, dedication, and intellect demonstrated by Matt Bierman and is chosen through a review committee. The fund organizers work to raise contributions annually in order to ensure years of grant-making to come.

The scholarship is funded by individual donors and administered by the UCMHS Parent-Student Association. As such, all donations are tax-deductible as the PSA is a 501(c) nonprofit tax-exempt organization.

Donations can be made online at magnetpsa.membershiptoolkit.com/packet/11764947.

Questions regarding this scholarship fund, or inquiries to help support fundraising, may be directed to Megan Carolan a classmate of Matt Bierman - megan.carolan@gmail.com

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(above) 2019 Scholarship Recipient Sabrina Perla with her family, Matt Bierman's mother and aunt, and a scholarship organizer.

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ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE 2020

St. Michael's School in Cranford, celebrating over 90 years of academic excellence, will host a series of open house events. Parents and prospective preschool through grade eight students are invited to visit during two sessions: Thursday, Jan. 23, from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 26, from 10:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. The school is located at 100 Alden St. in Cranford.

Parents and students will have the opportunity to tour the school and enjoy conversation with Principal Sandy Miragliotta. Parents and current students will be assisting with each tour. Teachers will also be available in their classrooms to answer questions.

Any family that registers during one of the Open House sessions for the 2020-2021 academic year will receive \$50 off first child's registration and \$25 off registration for each additional child.

St. Michael School, established in 1929, is a thriving, faith-based school where children become independent thinkers and grow into responsible young adults grounded in Catholic values

St. Michael School is a member of the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA) and accredited by the Middle States Association Commission on Elementary Schools. Primary, elementary and middle school curriculums are based on guidelines set forth by the Archdiocese of Newark to prepare students for high school and beyond.

Controlled class sizes and average 16:1 student-teacher ratio fosters individualized attention and offers students the ability to engage in classroom inquiry, discovery, and learning.

The early childhood education program offers pre-kindergarten 3 & 4 (full and half day) and full-day academically-based kindergarten. On site before and after care is also available.

Extracurricular activities include instructional and competitive sports programs, instructional music, drama and Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts.

For more information about St. Michael School, please contact the school at 908-276-9425. For a copy of the St. Michael's School brochure and for more information about the school, visit: smscranford.com

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(above) The adoptees, each wearing superhero capes, ready to pose for a picture with their favorite superheroes.



(above) Union County Assignment Judge Karen Cassidy, an adoptive mom herself, making a speech.

ADOPTION DAY IN UNION COUNTY: AS SIX YOUTH JOIN FAMILIES, LOVE TEEMS

Submitted by Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan

On the morning of Friday, November 22, 2019, more than 25 youth gathered to celebrate the long-awaited end to living in foster care with adoption into a forever family.

National Adoption Day is the Saturday before Thanksgiving every year; Union County's Family Court celebrated on Friday, November 22, as six youth ranging from one to nine years old, entered the courtrooms of Superior Court Judges Richard C. Wischusen or James Hely as foster youth — accompanied by their foster families and other loved ones — but left as official members of their new family. More than 20 other recent adoptees returned to participate in the program.

Adoption Day is a national movement to raise awareness of children in foster care awaiting a family. Since its inception 20 years ago, more than 75,000 children have found that permanency. Still, more than 125,000 youth in the United States need a permanent home and the average wait is four years. For more than 23,000 youth nationwide, that permanency doesn't happen before they age out of the system and must face life on their own.

The family courts see complex issues fraught with loss or discord nearly every day, yet Adoption Day is eagerly anticipated by all at Union County's Family Court, as fresh starts and ample smiles fill the courthouse. Festivities

included balloon headwear creations donated by nonprofit A Birthday Wish; super-human Heroes 4 Heroes, an organization of area corrections officers in costume seeking to brighten the lives of children facing medical and other adversities; photo booth area for children to select a superhero cape and mask gifted by family court personnel, pick photo props and pose with family and their favorite superheroes. Approximately 30 students from Elizabeth's Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy A Cappella Choir performed pieces they selected especially for the occasion.

Each adoptive family received a gift basket from CASA of Union County, with collaboration from David Brearley High School's Bears that Care, The Race Matters Alliance and Peer Leadership Groups; Seton Hall Law Professor Kevin Kelly; and the Union County Bar Association. Items included board and card games, blankets, jars of popping corn, movie candy, bowling passes and WalMart gift card. In addition, every adoptee received handpicked books by Kappa Alpha Theta's Westfield Chapter and bike certificate redeemable by the Albanese family of Plainfield's Dairy Queen.

For details on CASA of Union County and becoming an advocate for a foster youth, reach Courtney at 908-293-8136 or log on to casaofunioncounty.org to learn more.



(above) The Heroes4Heroes group, a nonprofit comprised of corrections officers who dress as superheroes and visit children.

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(above, l-r) CASA staff and their table of gifts for each adoptive family: Courtney Green, Recruiter/Advocate Supervisor; Natalie Deo, Program Director; Kim Stocco, Advocate Supervisor; Lisa Poris, Trainer/Advocate Supervisor; Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan, Development and Communications Manager and CASA's Adoption Day Committee member; and Abby Gallego, Advocate Supervisor.



(above) The Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy A Cappella Choir came to perform two songs they picked especially for the event.

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SHAYNA HOLLANDER QUALIFIES FOR OLYMPIC TRIALS IN SWIMMING

Mount Saint Mary Academy has revealed that a member of its 2018 graduating class, Shayna Hollander, has qualified for the 2020 Olympic Trials in swimming.

"I am happy to announce that my superlative from senior year has come true and I will be heading to Olympic Trials in Omaha, Nebraska this coming June in preparation for the 2020 Olympics!" shared Shayna, a native of Cranford, NJ who is studying at Duke University.

"My first year and a half at Duke University has been a whirlwind of terrific experiences that I am very grateful for. Qualifying for and getting the opportunity to compete at Olympic Trials has always been my highest goal, so to see it come to fruition surrounded by my teammates is very special."



(above) Mount Saint Mary Academy graduate Shayna Hollander, has qualified for the 2020 Olympic Trials in swimming.

Shayna's swimming career began at 7 years old when she joined the Jersey Gators, a club team.

"Ever since I was little, I have always enjoyed the challenge swimming presents and the dedication it requires," she said.

During her years at the Mount, she set 6 individual school records and was a part of the Prep-State Champions team her Freshman year. To conclude her high school career, Shay won the State Champion title in the 100 back at the Meet of Champions and in this, set a new NJ High School State record.

Shayna shared, "At Duke, I plan on majoring in Psychology and Global Health while on the pre-med track, with the goal of pursuing a career in the medical field."

This past semester, she was accepted in the CAPE (Collegiate Athlete Premedical Experience) Program, which is comprised of 30 female athletes from various sports and years at Duke.

"The main goal of CAPE is to gain exposure to the medical field by developing relationships and shadowing physicians of different specialties throughout the Duke University Hospital, as well as provides the opportunity to intern at the Brain Tumor Center during the summer before graduation," explained Shayna. "The CAPE Program also supplies me with a supportive environment of girls with similar interests, fostering friendships with other athletes who I may not have crossed paths with otherwise."

"In the coming months to gear up to head to Olympic Trials, I will continue to train with my

team throughout the remainder of the school year and into the summer under the guidance of my coaches," she said. "I will be competing at Trials alongside a few of my teammates, which makes for a very motivating and fun training environment leading up to the meet."

"A typical day starts with being at the weight room for practice starting at 6 a.m., where we complete our workout and then head to the pool for the remainder of our practice that ends at 8 a.m. Our second practice of the day is from 4 to 6 p.m. in the water, where each day we focus on different events and strokes. In between practices, I complete the bulk of my classes (and try to sneak in a nap!). After practice in the evening, I meet with my tutors to catch up on work I have missed due to travel for meets and get ahead on new information," shared Shayna.

"Although hectic, my days here at Duke are kept entertaining thanks to my teammates who make school and swimming so much more enjoyable and rewarding," she said.

A highly-accomplished swimmer at the Mount, Shayna received MVP status and credited her Coach Megan Decker and Director of Athletics, Denise Materia, for their support and encouragement.

Ms. Decker said, "I remember having a conversation with Shay one day during her junior season at the Mount and I said, 'I'll be watching you in the Olympics one day!' It will be so amazing and well deserved if she earns a spot on the U.S. Team. She has such natural talent and a very strong work ethic, so I can see her dreams coming true in 2020!"

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SANTA DELIVERS A RECORD YEAR OF CHEER

More Than 1,700 Toys Collected for Charity and More Than 1,500 Presents Delivered

Santa Claus came early to Cranford again this year by way of the Cranford Jaycees' Santa Deliveries and Toy Drive. Over the course of two nights, Santa made stops at 620 homes to deliver a total of 1,514 presents, escorted by flashing lights from a Cranford Police or Fire Department vehicle and a team of elves.

The visits were part of a toy collection drive where parents donate a present for families in

need throughout the region. The parents can then have a wrapped present delivered by Santa to their home on a weekend night. The drive netted more than 1,700 donations.

The tradition started in the early 2000s by the Cranford Police Department and has grown in recent years under the leadership of the Cranford Jaycees. With the number of gifts swelling from 611 in 2014 to almost 1,400 last year, the event

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outgrew its previous home at the Cranford Fire Department. The Jaycees credit Mayor Patrick Giblin and Steve Robertazzi from the Cranford Recreation and Parks Department for facilitating the use of the former MHS Tennis Academy as the staging location.

"The volunteer manpower can't be overstated: literally 50+ people putting in hundreds of hours," said Cameron Andre, Internal Vice President for the Jaycees and co-chair of the event with Jaycees President Mike Bond. "It's an unbelievable show of community support that staggers me every year."

Mr. Andre noted that in the event's early years, a few devoted police officers worked tirelessly over the course of several nights to deliver gifts to Cranford homes. "Now that it's gotten so big," Mr. Andre continued, "We've had to assemble seven or eight teams--each with a Santa, a first responder escort, a team of elves, and a vanload of gifts--to handle dozens of stops each night. It takes a lot of effort, but I think it's the most fun we have all year."

The visits have become a favorite tradition locally, and social media was awash in photos of Santa with smiling children in numerous homes across town.

"It was our first year participating, and we couldn't be more grateful," said Erica Bonanno of Lexington Avenue.

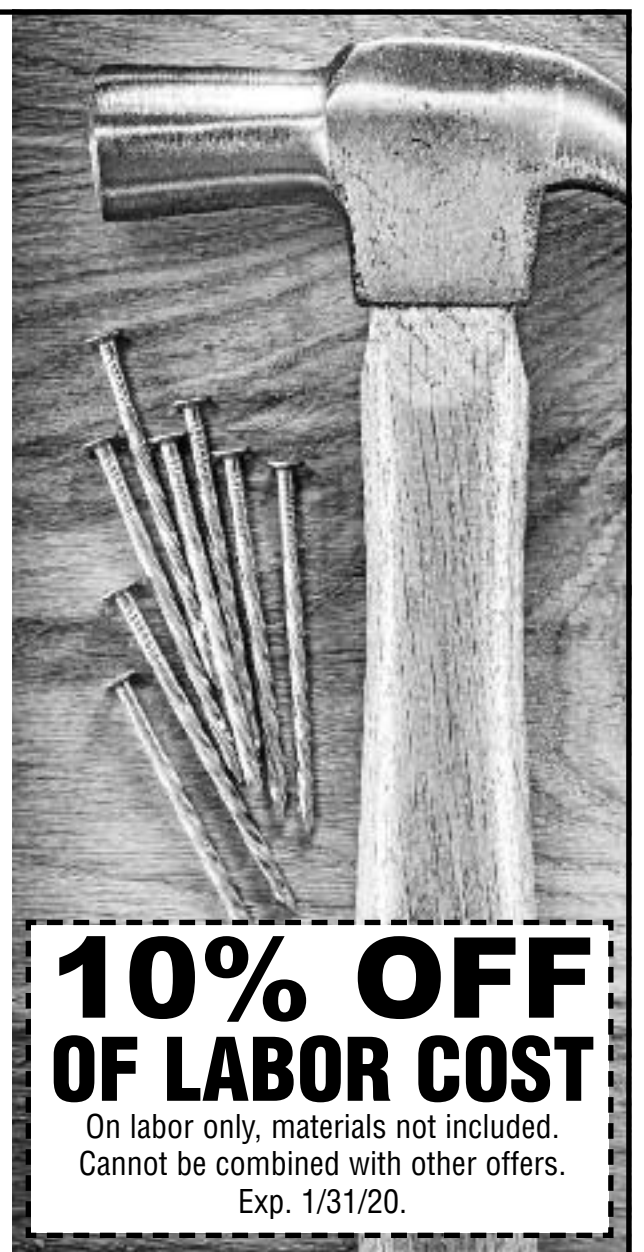
"Not only for all the hard work to make this event even happen, and of course Santa visiting, but also for the whole donation aspect. I couldn't be more proud to call Cranford home."



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STUDENT-VETERAN GETS K-9 SERVICE DOG FROM REBUILDING WARRIORS

A special Veterans Day ceremony was held on Kean University's Union campus as senior Jason Pryor, a U.S. Army veteran, introduced the K-9 service dog that he received through an on-campus fundraiser.

Pryor, a senior from Elizabeth majoring in exercise science, did tours in Iraq and Honduras and suffers from PTSD. He received the K-9, named Keen, at the start of the Fall semester as a gift from the Kean Office of Student Government.

"Being with Keen has taught me to be more patient," said Pryor, whose dog accompanies him to class. "Keen is used as a measure to help prevent me from going through the symptoms and effects of spiraling down, by me tending to his needs and having him tend to me."

Kean is ranked first in the nation among large public schools for its programs supporting student-veterans, according to the Military Friendly Schools survey.

Student Government raised nearly \$20,000 to support service dogs through Rebuilding Warriors, a volunteer non-profit organization whose mission is to provide trained service dogs to veterans. The bulk of the funds raised went toward training Pryor's dog, and the rest was donated to Rebuilding Warriors to help train other K-9 dogs.

At the ceremony held outside Miron Student Center, Vito Zajda, director of Veteran Student Services at Kean and a U.S. Coast Guard veteran, called Pryor a remarkable student.

"He has been a big support and influential person in our program," Zajda said. "He has

helped open our eyes about how the University can best support its vets."

Vice President of Rebuilding Warriors Jeff Mullins, also a veteran, said post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a condition that can't be seen by others. "It's invisible, stays with you your entire life, and it's not easy sometimes," he said. "Our goal is to provide veterans and first responders with a service dog to help them achieve their new normal."

The University's Veterans Day event included a color guard, a performance of the national anthem by the Kean Gospel Choir, and the presentation of other honors.

Juan Leon Torres, a senior from Spotswood also studying exercise science and a U.S. Navy veteran, received the 2019 Kean Veteran's Award for Outstanding Mentor. He develops transition opportunities and initiatives, and mentors a student-veteran each semester.

"Being a veteran and going back to school is super hard because you go from one community to a different lifestyle," Torres said.

Zajda noted that it is important to support veterans at all times. "The importance of Veterans Day is to recognize that it's 365 days a year, as veterans go through different highs and lows in their lives," he said.



(above) K-9 Keen, the service dog accompanying student-veteran Jason Pryor (left of center), is part of the Kean University community. The Kean Office of Student Government raised funds to donate the dog.

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CHESS CLUB DRAWS MEMBERS FROM FAR AND WIDE

The Kenilworth Chess Club has kicked off its 2020 season with a new slate of officers. Jack McCorkell of Cranford is incoming President. Outgoing president Dave Lazarus of Fanwood will serve as Vice President. Treasurer Geoff McMauliffe of Dunellen and Webmaster John Moldovan of Garwood will continue in their positions. Trustees are Pat Mazzillo of Union and Greg Tomkovich and Joe Renna, both from Cranford.

The club was formed in 1972 amid the chess craze in America, spearheaded by Bobby Fischer's march to the world championship. For 47 years the club was a force to be reckoned with as its member roster included many Master level players, including State Champions.

The club has a reputation for being friendly and accommodating. It welcomes non-members with no obligation or cost. It's a place where beginners can learn in a casual setting without being intimidated. Strong players are generous with their time in analyzing and giving instruction.

The club's website, kenilworthchessclub.org, is well read and features an award-winning blog by Michael Goeller and other instructional features. Players are welcome to just pop into the Kenilworth Chess Club with no formalities every Thursday evening at 8 p.m. at the Kenilworth Community Center, located next to Borough Hall on the Boulevard and the corner of 24th Street.



(above, r-l) Kenilworth Chess Club President Jack McCorkell, Vice President Dave Lazarus, John Moldovan, Treasurer Geoff McMauliffe, Web Master John Moldovan, Trustees Ed Selling, Greg Tomkovich, Pat Mazzillo, and Joe Renna.

AUTHOR TIFFANY D. JACKSON TO VISIT CRANFORD LIBRARY

The Cranford Public Library will host acclaimed author Tiffany D. Jackson, author of Monday's Not Coming, Allegedly, and Let Me Hear a Rhyme. Ms. Jackson will be part of the library's opening ceremony for the brand new, redesigned teen space. Ms. Jackson will be speaking from 1:00-3:30 starting in the Cranford Community Center on January 11, 2020. Teens and their parents are welcome to attend and ask questions.

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MADRIGAL SINGERS POST-CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Madrigal Singers will present their annual "Last Chance at Christmas" Concert, "A Child is Born", on Sunday, January 5, 2020 at the United Methodist Church, 17 Kent Place Boulevard, Summit, New Jersey at 4:00 p.m. General admission, available at the door, is \$15; admission for students and seniors is \$10.

The program will feature music by Melchior Franck, Jean Mouton, Tomas Luis de Victoria and many others, along with traditional favorites and Christmas Readings.

The Madrigal Singers are an a capella choral group specializing in Mediaeval and Renaissance music.

The group, founded in 1948, is currently under the direction of John Sichel, and is comprised of sopranos Martha Desmond and Amy Wechsler; altos Donna Brumbaugh, Roberta Lichtenberg, Jennifer Melick, Holly Hartline and Sarah Riffel; tenors Richard DeVany, Christopher Ferro and Thom Reese; basses Greg Hartline, Scott Hobson, Kirk Robbins and Gordon Rowan. Kirk Robbins will perform the readings and flutes will be played by Eugenia Cline and Clarissa Nolde.

BAND SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

The Township of Union Municipal Band is seeking new members to join the band. "Musicians of all ages are welcome," says director Howard Toplansky. "If you are a high school musician looking for extra practice or a retired professional who wants to get back into music, the municipal band is a perfect fit." The band is looking for new members who play any instrument, however there is an immediate need for low brass, woodwinds and percussion.

The band rehearses on Monday evenings at Hannah Caldwell School in Union, NJ and performs ten concerts throughout the year. Musicians who are interested in joining the band should contact the Township of Union Recreation Department at 908-686-4200.

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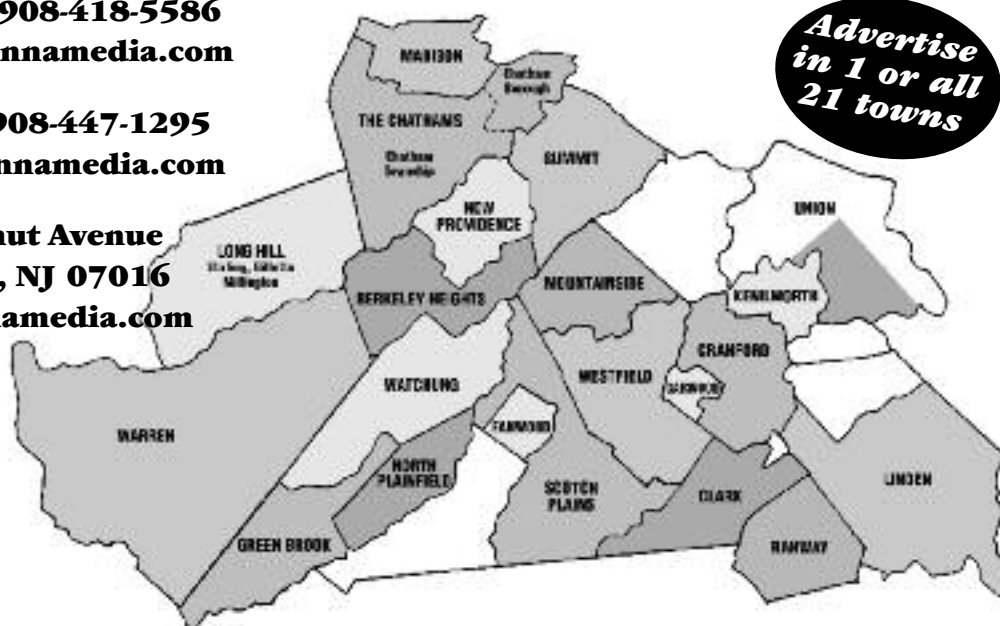
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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION AND ITS INSPECTOR GENERAL ANNOUNCE NEW ONLINE REPORTING FORM FOR IMPOSTER SCAM CALLS

Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security, and Gail S. Ennis, the Inspector General for the Social Security Administration, recently announced the launch of a dedicated online form at oig.ssa.gov to receive reports from the public of Social Security-related scams. These scams—in which fraudulent callers mislead victims into making cash or gift card payments to avoid arrest for purported Social Security number problems—skyrocketed over the past year to become the #1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission and the Social Security Administration.

To combat these scams, Social Security and the OIG will use the new online form to capture data that will be analyzed for trends and commonalities. The OIG will use the data to identify investigative leads, which could help

identify criminal entities or individuals participating in or facilitating the scams. Ultimately, these efforts are expected to disrupt the scammers, help reduce this type of fraud, and reduce the number of victims.

“We are taking action to raise awareness and prevent scammers from harming Americans,” Commissioner Saul said. “I am deeply troubled that our country has not been able to stop these crooks from deceiving some of the most vulnerable members of our society.”

Commissioner Saul and Inspector General Ennis encourage the public to use the new online form to report Social Security phone scams including robocalls and live callers, as well as email, text, and in-person scams. The form allows people to create a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN), so if OIG contacts

a person about their report, they will know the call is legitimate.

“Awareness is our best hope to thwart the scammers,” said Inspector General Ennis. “Tell your friends and family about them and report them to us when you receive them, but most importantly, just hang up and ignore the calls.”

Social Security employees do occasionally contact people - generally those who have ongoing business with the agency - by telephone for business purposes. However, Social Security employees will never threaten a person, or promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for information or money. In those cases, the call is fraudulent and people should just hang up.

Generally, the agency mainly calls people who have recently applied for a Social Security benefit, someone who is already receiving payments and requires an update to their record, or a person who has requested a phone call from the agency. If a person is not in one of these situations, they normally would not receive a call from the agency.

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- Demand that you pay a Social Security debt without the ability to appeal the amount you owe.
- Promise a Social Security benefit approval, or increase, in exchange for info or money.

If there is a problem with a person's Social Security number or record, in most cases Social Security will mail a letter. If a person needs to submit payments to Social Security, the agency will send a letter with instructions and payment options. People should never provide information or payment over the phone or Internet unless they are certain of who is receiving it.

The Social Security OIG will also continue to take reports of fraud, waste, and abuse in Social Security's programs and operations. A separate online form for those reports remains available at their website link:

ssa.gov/fraudreport/oig/public_fraud_reporting/form.htm



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CALENDAR EVENT: \$20

Block of 20 events \$200 (\$10 per event)

Events get posted on RennaMedia.com calendar
and included in weekly newsletter shared on our Facebook network

ONLINE PRESS RELEASE: \$130

Block of 20 PRs \$1,200 (\$60 per PR)

Ad gets its own indexed web pages on NJLocalInfo.com and RennaMedia.com
Searchable through search engines and shared on our Facebook network.

DISPLAY ADS (12 months)

Banner Ad (500 x 100 pixels) **\$240** on RennaMedia.com

Column Ad (300 x 200 pixels) **\$960**

Column ad appears on all pages of on RennaMedia.com and NJLocalInfo.com

WEBSITE / SEO SERVICES

- **Website Audit/Analysis and recommendation plan: \$250**
- **Website creation/update: \$2,400** (Cost for average website: 12 pages, contact form, SEO friendly, responsive design)
- **Website Hosting: \$300 per year**
Includes website hosting, software updates, monthly website content updates
- **SEO Services - average cost \$1,000 - \$2,000 per month**
Custom tailored solutions: Google Ranking, Local SEO, Social Marketing
- **Blast your online ad or press release to a targeted market \$100**
- **National Press Release Distribution to 300 to 500 news outlets.**
Budget choice from \$300 to \$500.

CONTACT JOE FOR DETAILS 908-447-1295

joerenna@rennamedia.com

Visit RennaMedia.com or NJLocalInfo.com



Cranford Park

REHABILITATION AND HEALTH CARE CENTER

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

DEDICATED STAFF ...AN EXTRAORDINARY TEAM ...A UNIQUE APPROACH



CRANFORD PARK LOOKS LIKE HOME AND FEELS LIKE HOME

At Cranford Park, we offer a home-like ambiance with a level of care you won't find anywhere else. We are located on scenic historic grounds, nestled in tranquil Cranford Township.

Cranford Park Rehabilitation and Health Care Center takes pride in treating each resident with care, compassion, warmth, dignity and respect. Our goal is to provide the highest quality of professional services, physical, emotional and social well-being to all of our residents.

PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL CARE

- Sub-Acute Rehabilitation
 - Short Term Rehabilitation
- Long Term Care
- Respite Care
- Hospice Care
- Alzheimer's and Dementia Care

PROVIDING THE FOLLOWING SERVICES

- Physical / Occupational / Speech Therapy
- Cardiac Services
- IV Antibiotics
- TPN / PEG feeding
- Bariatric Services
- Post-Surgical Care
- Wound Care / Wound Vac
- Orthopedic Therapy
- Hospice Services
- Dialysis
- Secure Dementia Unit
- Skilled 24-hour nursing care
- On Site Nurse Practitioner
- Pain Management
- Psychological / psychiatric services
- Podiatry Services
- Dental Services
- Optometry / Ophthalmology services
- Daily Recreational Activities
- Transitional team assistance

We accept most insurances.

For More Information or to Schedule a Tour

**Contact Teri (908) 868-3569 | email TLee@cranfordparkrhcc.com
600 Lincoln Park East • Cranford, NJ | www.cranfordparkrhcc.com
*We're Here When You Need Us.***