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TREE LIGHTING AND FESTIVITIES KICK OFF THE HOLIDAYS

Linden's Annual Holiday Tree Lighting was held on Friday, December 6, 2019 in front of City Hall. Visitors were treated to live entertainment, holiday music, and horse-drawn carriage rides! After the tree was lit, Santa Claus arrived and Linden children and their families were invited to the JTG Center to meet with him and have their picture taken.













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LIFEin LINDEN

Life in Linden is published by Renna Media in cooperation with the Linden Chamber of Commerce, an affiliate of the Gateway Regional Chamber of Commerce.

17,400 newspapers are printed monthly. and are mailed to every postal patron in Linden.

Although great care has been taken to ensure the information contained within is accurate, Linden Chamber of Commerce assumes no liability for errors or omissions.

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SEND US YOUR NEWS

Did you or someone you know accomplish something amazing? We are interested in hearing about your latest achievement (accomplishment, honor, award, etc.). Do you have an event that you need help publicizing? Then send Life In LInden your news!

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POLICE PET SCANNERS HELP FIND LOST DOGS

Linden patrol officers are now better able to help lost pets return home thanks to the purchase of two Home Again Universal World-Scan Pet Chip Scanners.

Previously, pets were not scanned until they reached the shelter, so pet owners would be saddled with fees to bring their pets back home. Now a quick, painless scan of a micro-chipped pet will provide officers with the owner's information so we can get the pet home quickly and safely.

The purchase was made possible by a GoFundMe campaign initiated by Councilman John Roman last year. Thanks to some incredibly generous donations the page quickly surpassed its goal and raised \$800 in less than 24 hours.

Microchipping your pet is one of the best ways to increase their chances of getting home if he or she is lost or stolen. Ask your veterinarian or local animal shelter for microchipping advice and prices, and remember to keep your pet's microchip information up-to-date; otherwise the scanner could be rendered useless to reunite you with your pet.





Photos by Linden Police Department



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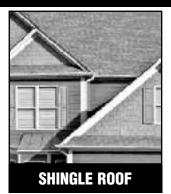






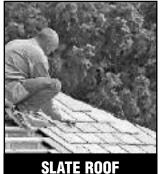








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YOUTH COMMISSION, FMBA & REC DEPT. WERE SANTA'S HELPERS

Santa's Breakfast was held on November 30, 2019 at the JTG Recreation Center on Helen St. With the help of the Mayor's Youth Commission, Linden FMBA Locals 34 and 234, and the Linden Recreation Department, over 200 breakfasts were served, and each child got to visit with Santa and received a toy.











Photos by City of Linden



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TWO LINDEN TEACHERS CHOSEN AS EXEMPLARY EDUCATORS BY STATE

Submitted by Gary Miller

Two Linden teachers have been chosen as Exemplary Educators by the New Jersey Department of Education for demonstrating exceptional teaching and leadership abilities.

Anthony Fischetti of Linden High School and Peter Citera of Soehl Middle School were among only 85 teachers selected statewide. They were deemed to have a positive impact on students, colleagues, and the community.

"The Department of Education couldn't have chosen anyone more deserving than Mr. Fischetti and Mr. Citera," said Interim Superintendent Denise Cleary. "Both of these men have a true love of teaching and of their students. They work hard every day to make sure their students' time

Photos by Linden Public Schools



(above) Peter Citera, right, teacher at Soehl Middle School in Linden, with Board of Education President Gregory R. Martucci after he was honored at the board's Nov. 26 meeting for being chosen as an Exemplary Teacher by the New Jersey Department of Education.

in school is rewarding and engaging. Their students' reactions to the news says it all about how they feel about these teachers."

Both Citera and Fischetti were surprised in their classrooms with the news on November 21. Cleary read the announcement over each school's PA system while school administrators and colleagues entered the class to congratulate the men. Students in the classrooms enthusiastically applauded the honor for their teachers.

"When I heard the news about the award, I was shocked," said Citera, who is in his fifth year and teaches eighth-grade world history. "To think of how far I have come since my first day as a teacher and what an unbelievable journey it has been. Sharing that moment of celebration with students and staff was unforgettable and the highlight of my career."

Fischetti said the honor is a reflection on the "wonderfully dynamic" district.

"This distinction highlights the opportunities I have been given and the various ways that I have been able to grow as an educator," said Fischetti, a 14-year veteran who teaches Italian and Introduction to Education, and is coordinator of the school's academically robust International Baccalaureate program. "The surprise was genuine and I was lucky enough to be able to share it with friends, colleagues, and students."

Both teachers were also honored by the Board of Education at its November 26 meeting.

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(above) Linden High School teacher Anthony Fischetti with Board of Education Vice President Katarzyna Kozak after he was honored at the board's November 26 meeting for being chosen as an Exemplary Teacher by the New Jersey Department of Education.

WE'RE GETTING BETTER, TOGETHER



STUDENTS CONGRADULATE AWARD WINNING TEACHERS





(above) Linden High School teacher Anthony Fischetti, center, surrounded by students after learning he was chosen as an Exemplary Teacher by the New Jersey Department of Education.

(above) Peter Citera, top center, teacher at Soehl Middle School in Linden, surrounded by students and school administrators after learning he was chosen as an Exemplary Teacher by the New Jersey Department of Education.

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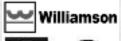
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WINTER PROGRAMS AT THE YMCA

Submitted by Colleen Clayton

The Gateway Family YMCA Winter Program Session registration is underway visit online at tgfymca.org. Winter programs begin January 2, 2020, and includes family wellness programs, youth sports, swim lessons, active older adult programs and chronic disease self-management. In addition, The Gateway Family YMCA is



(above) Check out your local YMCA's upcoming programs and offerings.

offering a membership special through January 15 including No Joiner Fee when joining in person or online for all membership types. The YMCA is also offering an Open House January 4-5, free to the community.

"Providing a place where families come together in a safe and healthy environment, creating shared memories is at the heart of our mission here at the Y," stated Krystal R. Canady, CEO. "Throughout the year we provide financial assistance to ensure that everyone has access to programs and services to ensure the Y is available for all."

"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 together," stated Melynda A. Mileski, EVP/COO. "We provide programs to meet the needs of the communities we serve, including opportunities for our youngest members in childcare, swim lessons and parent/child programs, through the continuum of youth and

teen programs in the arts or sports, through adult group exercise, chronic disease programs and adult social day services."

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 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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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

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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KIWANIS CLUB HONORS DR. THOMAS BEJGROWICZ

Submitted by June Lazaro

Tom Bejgrowicz, M.D., FAAP graduated St. Peter's Preparatory and St. Peter's College, New Jersey in 1963. He received his medical degree from Seton Hall College of Medicine and from University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. He served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps. at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Dr. Bejgrowicz opened his private practice in pediatrics on North Wood Avenue where he served for more than 33 years.

Dr. Bejgrowicz was a practicing pediatrician and attending pediatrician at Rahway, St. Elizabeth and Elizabeth General Hospitals. He currently is an Emeritus at Rahway Hospital and is also honorary staff at Trinitas Hospital where he serves on the Board of Directors.

Tom was also an active member of the Knights of Columbus in Linden, where he assisted as a Fourth – Degree Knight.

Tom joined our club in 1968 when his father-in-law, Richard Canavan Sr., sponsored him. Tom's sister-in-law, Roberta Canavan, joined in 1987 and is still an active member. She and her deceased husband, Richard, both were members and served as our Club's Past Presidents. Tom has been married to Marguerite for 56 years. He

is father to Thomas (a past member of our Club), Ann Beth Stebbins, and Dr. Karen Tennyson. He is a proud grandfather of Kayla, Sara, and Robert

Tom's commitment and dedication to our organization is most indeed appreciated. He served as Secretary and Past President, and currently serves on our Board of Directors. His participation as a Linden School #1 Advisor and his presence at so many events always kept me smiling. I recall his signature Thermometer Project where our Club gifted thermometers and educated the K-Kids about temperature readings. He also chaired 50/50s and assisted at prior pancake breakfasts, pasta dinners, and our Taste of Linden event.

At our 2019 - 2020 Installation Dinner in which he was honored, a slide show was presented, and memorable pictures were gifted to Dr. Bejgrowicz. Sabrina Elson presented Marguerite (Tom's wife), a well-deserved, bouquet of flowers for her continual support.

Tom stated, "The Kiwanis Club of Linden works for our children by sponsoring the K-Kid programs and through sponsorship of awards at the Middle Schools and scholarships at the High School."

For information about membership, please contact June Lazaro, at 908-930-8310 or junlazaro@verizon.com.¬



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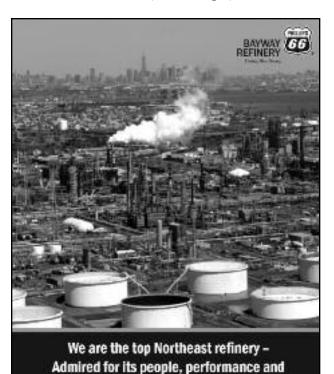
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(above) Longtime member of the Kiwanis Club of Linden, Dr. Thomas Bejgrowicz (seated right) was honored with a lifetime membership.



commitment to the community



KONANTIQUES



(above) Terry Foppert Awarded Union County Superintendent of the Year

TERRY FOPPERT AWARDED UNION COUNTY **SUPERINTENDENT OF THE YEAR**

Submitted by Maureen Wakeman

Ms. Terry Foppert, Superintendent of Union County Educational Services Commission, has been selected as Union County's 2019 Superintendent of the Year. "I am humbled and honored to be named Union County Superintendent of the Year. This award reflects the commitment and dedication of our staff, administration and community partners, working collaboratively to improve the lives of students with special needs." said Superintendent Foppert.

Ms. Foppert has served as Superintendent of Union County Educational Services Commission (UCESC) since August 2013. Under her guidance, UCESC, a public school district for students with special needs, has expanded services and become a leader in special education. The innovative programs that have been introduced over the past six years have improved student outcomes including increased graduation and employment rates.

UCESC offers rigorous academic and therapeutic support to students with special needs

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ages three through twenty-one. Crossroads School, Westlake School, Lamberts Mill Academy and the Work Readiness Academy are uniquely designed to meet the needs of students who have autism spectrum disorders, multiple disabilities and emotional/behavioral disabilities.

In addition, UCESC operates two alternative high schools serving students from Elizabeth, provides supplemental instruction and related services to students who attend non-public schools and coordinates over 800 transportation routes for districts throughout Union County.

Ms. Foppert is proud of the services provided by UCESC and passionate about her work. According to Ms. Foppert, "We strive to make a difference in our students' lives. Everyone deserves an education and everyone should be given an opportunity to achieve their goals. It is our mission to create school environments and services where students can work hard and go beyond expectations."

Please visit UCESC.org to learn more about our schools and programs.



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THE ARC OF UNION COUNTY RAISES MORE THAN \$60,000 **IN HONOR OF 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

community supporters, The Arc of Union County celebrated 70 years of service to the community on Thursday, October 10, 2019. Supporters and vendors from throughout Union County together raised more than \$60,000, which will be invested in programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Attendees enjoyed raffles donated by more than 50 vendors throughout the county, including a wine pull raffle, a cash prize 50/50 raffle and a Bermuda cruise giveaway, along with unlimited food and drinks. A favorite local band, TreeOh!, performed decade favorites that highlighted the 70 years of our past, while a lively and enthusiastic crowd danced and celebrated a successful seven decades of service.

At the event, Executive Director of The Arc of Union County, Frank X. Caragher, spoke of the importance of the "lifespan of services provided by the agency," and the "longevity that families

decades." More stories of families and staff of The Arc of Union County were shared through video throughout the evening. Highlights of these stories can be viewed on The Arc's YouTube Channel. The mission of providing services to individuals and families of those with special needs has become a mission that our community embraces together. A supportive community helps individuals with special needs to be empowered to live their best life, while being included in opportunities for employment, building greater independence in their residential homes and neighborhoods, accessing education, recreational and social opportunities, and being supported in realizing a full, productive and enhanced life.

David Light, Board member of The Arc of Union County, shared a message about the importance of getting involved in the mission, what it means to his family and how getting

Along with more than 200 families and of The Arc have come to rely on for seven involved in this community has made an impact on his life. He highlighted the fact that The Arc has grown to support more than 1,000 families throughout Union County and surrounding areas each year.

> Thank you to all of the sponsors and supporters who helped make this event an unprecedented success, especially Presenting Sponsor, Investors Bank and Investors Foundation. Thank you to the community and families of The Arc for your continued support and making this evening a celebration to remember.

ABOUT THE ARC OF UNION COUNTY

The Arc of Union County is a non-profit, headquartered organization Springfield, NJ, dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals of all ages with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The Arc serves more than 1,000 families throughout Union County. To learn more, please contact 973-315-0000 or visit arcunion.org.



(above) The Arc of Union County celebrated 70 years of service to the community and raised more than \$60,000, which will be invested in programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.







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ADOPTION DAY: 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.

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 with 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 A Cappella Choir performed.

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. 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.





CHESS CLUB DRAWS MEMBERS FROM FAR AND WIDE

The Kenilworth Chess Club has kicked off its McCorkell of Cranford is incoming President. Outgoing president Dave Lazaruus 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 is well read and features an award-winning blog 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 2020 season with a new slate of officers. Jack 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, 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 McAuliffe, Web Master John Moldovan, Trustees Ed Selling, Greg Tomkovich, Pat Mazzillo, and Joe Renna.



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Come to a Pancake Breakfast, hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary - Unit 102, on Sunday, January 19, 2020 at the American Legion Post 102, located at 112 West Elizabeth Ave., from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Donations: Adults \$7 Seniors & Children \$6 / Ages 5 & Under Free.

So come out and enjoy a home cooked breakfast, including this month's special Taylor Ham!

PANCAKE BREAKFAST **AT THE VFW #1397**

Come one, come all to our Pancake Breakfast on Saturday, January 25, 2019 at the VFW #1397, located at 20 Pennsylvania Railroad Ave., from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Donations: Adults \$7 / Seniors & Children \$6 / Ages 5 & Under Free.

This event is open to the public, so come out and enjoy a home cooked breakfast!

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FIRST MEETING: 7 PM, TUESDAY, JANURARY 21 Snow Date: January 23

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