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LOVE AND CARE: FROM OUR YOUTHS TO OUR NURSING HOMES

Submitted by Dr. Marcia Davis-Dawkins

On Friday, February 21, 2020, Students from Grover Cleveland's Student Council, Students Taking Action Results in Success (S.T.A.R.S.), visited Alaris Health at Riverton, 1777 Lawrence St., Rahway, NJ. Student Advisors, Dr. Marcia Dawkins and Mrs. Carmen Green are teaching students that they should value all ages in our community, from the very young to the very old.

The oldest in nursing homes and assisted living facilities who suffer from dementia and Alzheimer's often feel isolated and excluded. Developing stronger connections between older adults and students in the community can have tremendous benefits for both residents of these facilities and students. The student council of Grover Cleveland Elementary School was involved in The Cuddle Care Project, which offered students the opportunity to make a difference in an older person's life, while instilling respect for elders, sensitivity for others different than themselves or in need, and lessens self-centeredness. This was accomplished by providing patients with therapy dolls that will become an integral part of their lives.

As many as 90% of seniors with dementia or Alzheimer's struggle with some sort of distress, due to the disease. Caregivers try to ease the burden by giving patients life-like dolls to love and care for. The dolls become an integral part of a senior's life and caring for the doll as they would care for a baby becomes a major part of their day-to-day responsibilities. Doll therapy, also known as cuddle therapy, may bring back some happy memories of early parenthood and help seniors feel useful and needed. Studies demonstrate that this therapy can be used to increase positive behaviors and decrease negative behaviors in users and is an effective approach in caring for seniors afflicted with dementia. Baby dolls can calm someone who is upset, provide endless hours of hugs and smiles, lull a person to sleep, create a distraction from an upsetting event, provide a tool for interaction, regenerate warm, nurturing feelings and make it possible for someone totally dependent on others to care for someone else.



(above) Grover Cleveland Students visited Alaris Health at Riverton, with life-like dolls and spending time with the seniors.



Students read *The Sunsets of Miss Olivia Wiggins* by Lester Laminack. This is the touching tale of a woman who resides in a nursing home and who seems to live more in the past than in the present. This book gives voice to the often silent tragedy of watching a loved one slip into the clutches of Alzheimer's. A discussion was followed focusing on the needs we all have regardless of age: to feel useful, needed and wanted, targeting the relevance of these needs among individuals who are elderly.

Students were then introduced to the project. They prepared dolls for distribution to elderly. Students dressed dolls, wrapped in receiving blankets and placed in carry all. They also chose an extra outfit as a change of clothing for the elderly to utilize on the doll. There were eight dolls, five of which were provided by the Rahway National Council for Negro Women (NCNW), presented to some residents of the Nursing Home.

This project exposed students to the informational topic of Alzheimer's, which can be dry and clinical when solely read about. The doll project, visitation, and subsequent discussion brought the subject matter to life. This project also presented an awesome opportunity for intergenerational relationships, and is a great way for students to get a different sense of

Photos by Rahway Public Schools

(continued on page 2)

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Over 12,600 papers are printed monthly, and mailed to every businesses and home in Rahway.

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LOVE AND CARE (continued from page 1)

perspective and context of history through communication with elderly. When students visited Alaris Health at Riverton, they were able to interact with some of the patients and made crafts with them. The smiles on the patients' faces spoke volumes when they received the dolls to cuddle. Patients were particularly happy since they rarely received visitors.

Students also asked patients, if they could give advice to a younger them what would it be? To which one of the patients responded that he would tell them to be a leader not a follower because they could end up in jail. Another student asked, "What was your fondest childhood memory?" One patient response was that, "She enjoyed visiting her grandmother's house."

The students learned how to interact with

people other than their peer group and learned responsibility and civic duty. While their work on the doll project remained anonymous to the residents, it instilled in them the value of making a difference in someone's life and emphasized the importance of volunteering.

When asked what was his favorite part, one student responded that a beautiful woman at the Home was asking him questions about what he was going to do in the future that told him stories about her life. "She had a big smile on her face. She was also very strong."

According to one of the Activity Aides, "The residents are very happy because they were engaging – they used their tactile, visual, verbal and a whole lot of love. Patients loved the interaction and the special attention they received." This was also therapeutic for them. It also showed students that it is good to be compassionate to everyone – both young and old.

To quote President Obama: "We celebrate the selfless individuals around our country who channel their civic virtues through volunteerism... devoted to a cause bigger than themselves... Volunteers help drive our country's progress, and day in and day out, they make extraordinary sacrifices to expand promise and possibility."

If you are willing to help or sponsor a doll for the project, please contact Dr. Marcia Davis-Dawkins at mdawkins@rahway.net or 732-910-3125.



Photos by Rahway Public Schools

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THREE RAHWAY RESIDENTS GRADUATE TRINITAS NURSING SCHOOL

One hundred and nine students received their nursing diplomas at the Trinitas School of Nursing 161st Convocation Ceremony held recently at St. Michael's Church in Cranford. Including Rahway residents Brittany N. Darrow, Jennifer Datus, Julie Jusu, and Tonya M. Ward.

Surrounded by family, friends, and staff that supported their efforts every step of the way, 99 women and 10 men proudly accepted their pins and became eligible to sit for the registered nurse licensing exam.

"The Trinitas School of Nursing is so proud of the 109 graduates- the first graduating class of the new decade, the Class of January 2020," said Dr. Rose Santee, Dean of the Trinitas School of Nursing, a collaborative nursing program with Union County College. "The graduates receive a diploma in nursing from Trinitas School of Nursing that will authorize them to sit for the RN licensing exam and Union County College awards the graduates with the Associate in Science degree. Their determination and hard work has paid off. It's exciting for the administration, faculty, staff members, and their families when our students graduate. We will miss them, but more, we are full of the satisfaction that we have guided yet another group of capable nurses who are now ready to join the nursing workforce."

Trinitas School of Nursing, operated jointly

by Trinitas Regional Medical Center and Union County College, currently holds full accreditation from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), and the New Jersey State Board of Nursing. The National League for Nursing has awarded the School of Nursing a third designation as a Center of Excellence in Nursing Education status for the years 2015 - 2020 for Creating Environments that Enhance Student Learning and Professional Development. The School also holds a 20-year, 40-class national licensing examination (NCLEX) passage rate of 86.30% on first writing.

ABOUT TRINITAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER:

Trinitas Regional Medical Center (TRMC), a major center for comprehensive health services for those who live and work in Central New Jersey, is a Catholic teaching medical center sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth in partnership with Elizabethtown Healthcare Foundation. With 12 Centers of Excellence across the continuum of care, Trinitas has distinguished itself in cardiology, cancer care, behavioral health, renal care, nursing education, diabetes management, maternity, wound healing and sleep medicine. For more information on Trinitas Regional Medical Center, visit: www.TrinitasRMC.org or call (908) 994-5138.





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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS AND GIRL SCOUTS JOINED FOR "VOTER GIRL"

On March 7, 2020 the League of Women Voters (LWV) and Girl Scouts worked together to present Voter Girl. Four of these events were held at the same time in four different New Jersey locations including Plainfield, Woodland Park, Brick Township and Pitman NJ.

Over 100 League of Women Volunteers from New Jersey and 50 elected officials participated as well. Numerous volunteers from the Girl Scouts and troop leaders rounded out the group that helped to bring this event alive for the over 500 Girl Scouts who participated.

This collaborative program between the LWV and the Girl Scouts provided a one-day class for Girl Scouts of all levels to earn citizenship badges through learning about civic engagement and advocacy. League of Women volunteer workshop leaders and a variety of elected officials who volunteered to participate empowered Girl Scouts to act on their right to vote, engage in civil debate and learn to be counted in the 2020 census.

An introduction piece to the event was

provided, questions were asked of a variety of elected officials who volunteered to appear for the event.

Each age level then attended a workshop where the Girl Scouts completed a Citizenship badge including Behind the Ballot, Celebrating Community, Finding Common Ground and Inside Government.

At the Plainfield location, thanks to the Union County Board of Elections, the Girl Scouts cast ballots on the actual voting machines used in Union County. The girls voted (depending on their level) on issues dealing with the most important constitutional amendment, how to increase participation on election day, the best

way to arrive at a decision, and the most important branch of government. All groups voted on whether to ban single use plastic bags in grocery stores.

A variety of community service groups also set up and distributed information for general knowledge including the US Census Bureau, local historical groups and the local Board of Health.

This was a wonderful opportunity for girls and women of all ages to see women who are actively engaged in making democracy work. This coincided with the 100th Anniversary of both the League of Women Voters and the passage of the 19th Amendment.



(above) Girls Scouts earned badges, met local elected officials, and learned about civic engagement and advocacy

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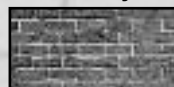
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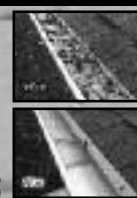
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POEM BY RAHWAY RESIDENT JILL GUZMAN

It is always wonderful to remember the miracles and Blessings of God, especially in times of distress. This poem is dedicated to our Creator, with Love in our Hearts.

We thank you God for autumn
With its' reds and greens and golds.
For the sunrise as it chants to us..
That a brand new day unfolds.

We thank you for the newborn child
Whose first cry is our song.
For the white haired man who smiles
As his years have made him strong.

We thank you Lord for crystal sand
We feel beneath our feet
For the foamy salty flowing waves
That refresh us from the heat.

We thank You for the Mother
Feeding child with her breast
For the chirping of the Orioles
Who today have found their nest.

We thank you for that special love
That love that never ends.
As we feel the licks upon our face
Our dearest canine friends.

You create the winter beauty
With flakes of ivory falling
Reminding us of miracles
And of your voice that's calling

The little schoolboy on his way,
With lunchbox in his hand
His eyes so wide with eagerness
Only You can understand

We're holding out our hands to You
To feel your Blessed touch For all you give
So we may live
We thank You Lord so much

NJ PRIMARY ELECTIONS MOVED JULY 7, 2020

Executive Order 120 postpones primary elections on Tuesday, June 2 to Tuesday, July 7 in response to ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Includes primaries for President, US Senate, US House of Rep, 25th District NJ Legislature, county and municipal elections.

Union County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi advised voters at risk to plan ahead and use a Vote-by-Mail ballot to participate in the upcoming Primary Election, in accordance with guidance from health officials regarding the coronavirus COVID-19.

“Persons at risk are being advised to avoid crowded situations and maintain social distance,” said Ms. Rajoppi. “With the outbreak of COVID-19, there is all the more reason to use a Vote-by-Mail ballot and ensure your voice is heard on Election Day.”

Under New Jersey state law, any eligible voter can use a Vote-by-Mail ballot. There is no requirement to provide a reason.

“Every Vote-by-Mail ballot is counted in every

election, the same as for in-person voting,” Ms. Rajoppi said.

Voters are advised to use Vote-by-Mail as a matter of routine, to avoid any unforeseen circumstances that could prevent them from voting in person on Election Day.


Voters who have never used a Vote-by-Mail ballot can apply for one now, by visiting the County Clerk’s elections website at unioncountynotes.com for a downloadable version. To have an application sent by mail, call the County Clerk’s Elections Division at 908-527-4996.

After the Vote-by-Mail application is approved, the voter will receive their ballot prior to Election Day. This year, the Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, June 2 in New Jersey. The General Election will be held on Tuesday, November 3.

For more information about all County Clerk programs and services, visit online at ucnj.org/county-clerk or call 908-527-4787.



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PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A Realtor's Open Letter

Spring is here and yet four months ago I expressed well wishes for a great 2020 for many, and a special happiness for those in their new homes, apartments or commercial ventures which together we found and obtained.

Now so much has changed as we all continue to put plans on hold or on a slow track and that is ok! Our concentration must continue to be in protecting ourselves, our children, families, and especially senior family members, our friends & neighbors. We need to look out for each other and work through a crisis that may be leveling but is still unlike anything we thought we would ever face.

Last time I noted that now may be an excellent time to plan for the future. There can be a positive side if you were hoping to sell your home. Why not use the time you and your family have at home together and start decluttering, sorting and completing re-painting projects or minor repairs. Clean up, trim and spruce up the yards, paint the rails or trim. Put on your gloves and make it all a fun family project!

Even if you as a buyer cannot personally view homes, together we can research, analyze and view potential homes in the safety of your home on line.


Continue to be cautious—wash those hands, practice social distancing and avoid large venues. Be carefull about misinformation. When we care about each other, then together we will make it safely through these difficult times. I frequently wash my hands for 20 seconds and keep working from home and keeping in touch with my clients. I wish you and your families, safety and health. Please do not hesitate to call if you need any help, or advice on how to prepare for possible buying or selling in the near future.

God bless you all and especially all who put their lives on the line for of us everyday.

Matt Dobrowolski
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FIND GOOD READING FROM THE PENS OF RAHWAY AUTHORS

Submitted by Al Shipley, City Historian and Rahway Library Research Consultant

Reading a good book might be one productive way to help get through these difficult and unusual times as we remain in the confines of our homes and apartments in an attempt to stem the spread of the coronavirus. As an avid promoter of all things “Rahway,” I thought it might be an interesting idea to present a list of authors, all of whom have a connection to the city, and also offer a few titles. It should be pointed out that of the twenty-five authors, eighteen of them are graduates of Rahway High School. The year of graduation for each is in parentheses after their name.

Joe Bost (class of 1974) – A retired Rahway policeman turned novelist, his mystery novel, *Behind the Blue*, is filled with details of police investigatory work as could only be told by a career officer.

Catherine Brooks – A vocalist, dancer, writer, poet, historian, and lecturer, she traveled extensively in Europe, Africa, the West Indies, and the United States in search of Black History. *Turn the Other Cheek* is one of her books of poems and lyrics.

Jessica M. Brophy (class of 1997) – A poet and creative writing professor, her poems are poignant memoirs where she explores family, nature, the body, and spiritual identity. Her works include *The Paper Girl* and *Firemark*.

Camille Cusumano – An author of Sicilian descent, she has written articles for many publications on a variety of subjects including food, travel, and fitness. Her novel, *The Last Cannoli* is a memoir of growing up in a Sicilian family in Rahway and the Peterstown section of Elizabeth.

Tricia Dower – This prize-winning author has received first prize awards for both fiction and creative non-fiction. Her novels include *Stoney River*, *Becoming Lin*, and *Silent Girl*.

Milton Friedman (class of 1928) – Winner of the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1976, his economic theories are recognized throughout the world. He was awarded the National Medal of Science (1988) and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1988). His theories are detailed in *Capitalism and Freedom* and *The Theory of Consumption*.

Michael Hartnett – An established illustrator turned novelist, his novel *Tales of Alamucha* is a fantasy saga which combines mystery, romance, science-fiction, and humor. His illustrations are placed throughout the story.

Richard G. Hartnett – An ordained Jesuit priest, he served the Jesuit Order in both North and South America. He was the author of many inspirational and self-help articles and publications including two books, *The Three Inner Voices* and *Sobriety and Inspiration*.

Andrea Hollander Budy (class of 1964) – A published poet and winner of two National Endowments for the Arts Fellowships and several other awards, she has an extensive body of collected poems. Her titles include *House without a Dreamer*, *Poems That Talk to Other Poems*, and *Landscape with Female Figure*.

James Horling – A retired program manager,



project engineer, and maintenance officer in the aerospace industry, he worked on projects for both the government and the military. Using his experiences in this highly sensitive field, he has written novels that contain mystery, intrigue, and thrilling suspense. His titles include *The Falcon's Revenge*, *An Evil Among Us*, and *A Light Shines Bright*.

Janis Karpinski (class of 1971) – A retired career officer in the U. S. Army Reserves, she wrote *One Woman's Army*, a personal account of her experiences as the commanding officer of the forces that operated the infamous Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq (2003-2004).

J. P. Kenna – An author of historical novels, his two-book series, *Cinders over the Junction* and *Beyond the Divide*, creates an Irish American saga that covers 175 years of family history.

Adele Kenny (class of 1966) – Author of twenty-three books of poetry and non-fiction that have been published world-wide, she is a recipient of two N. J. State Arts Council Poetry Fellowships and the International Book Award for Poetry. Her collections include *What Matters*, *At the Edge of the Woods*, and *Not Asking What If*.

Charles Knight (class of 1965) – A best-selling cookbook author and former TV cooking show host on the Food Network aired out of Tampa, Florida, his titles include, *Healthy Meat and Potatoes* and *I Don't Believe I 8 the Whole Thing*.

Leslie Micone (class of 1962) – A self-employed author, her novel titles include *Josephine* and *Murder on the Waterfront*.

Kenneth R. Miller (class of 1966) – A cell and molecular biologist and Professor of Biology at Brown University, he has written many articles and books opposing creationism and the intelligent design movement. He is the recipient of many awards and medals for his work in the fields of science and evolution. His titles include *Finding Darwin's God* and *The Human Instinct*.

Ira Nadel (class of 1961) – An American/Canadian biographer, literary critic, and James Joyce Scholar, he is a professor at the University of British Columbia. He was awarded the UBC Medal for Canadian Biographies (1996) and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. His works include books on 20th century modernists, biographies on Ezra Pound and James

Joyce, and books on Jewish-American writers.

Frank Roberts (class of 1965) – Author of several novels, he combines local history with encounters with the paranormal. His titles include *The Haunted Hardware Store* and *The Brick House*.

Carl Sagan (class of 1951) – Famous Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences at Cornell University and winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Literature (1978), he was the author, co-author, or editor of more than a dozen books. Most noted for his book *Cosmos*, on which his award-winning television series was based, he also wrote one novel, *Contact*.

F. Alex Shipley (class of 1966) – Rahway City Historian and writer of four books and hundreds of articles on local history, his fourth book was *The Case of the Unknown Woman*, an account of the famous unsolved Rahway murder mystery of 1887.

Earl Reed Silvers (class of 1908) – Connected with the administration at Rutgers University for most of his life including serving as Dean of Men, he was the author of twenty-seven novels and more than 1,000 stories most involving high school and college student-athletes. Some of his titles are *The Spirit of Menlo*, *Son of Tomorrow*, and *If This Be Forgetting*.

Frank Thorne (class of 1947) – Internationally acclaimed cartoonist and author, he wrote several autobiographical works that are memoirs of his life growing up in Rahway. His works include *The Crystal Ballroom*, and *How to Draw Sexy Women*.

P. Roy Vagelos (class of 1947) – Retired scientist, CEO and Chairman of Merck and Co. Inc., he was at the helm of Merck when the company became the world leader in the pharmaceutical industry. He is a member of the National Academy of Science, The American Academy of Arts and Science, and the American Philosophical Society. He is the author of *Medicine, Science, and Merck*.

Carolyn Wells (class of 1886) – Considered the most popular mystery writer in the years between the 1920s and 1940s, she wrote over 170 books. After starting out as a writer of playful poetry and children's novels, in 1910 she became fascinated with the structure of the mystery story. *The Radio Studio Murder*, *The Killer*, and *The Gilt Edged Guilt* are just three of her seventy mystery titles.

Christian Williams (class of 1961) – Journalist, television writer, and former Washington Post editor during the Watergate era, he is author of three books. His book, *Lead, Follow, or Get Out of the Way*, is a biography of media mogul Ted Turner and the 1981 founding of CNN.

Unfortunately, libraries remain closed due to the virus pandemic, however, most of the titles can be found by searching websites such as Amazon, Goggle, EBay, etc. Enjoy your reading, and above all else, stay healthy and stay well.

Also, please note: If there are other “Rahway connected” authors who should be added to this list, please contact me as I would be very interested in learning about them and their works. Email rahwayindian66@verizon.net.

NJ YOUTH SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES VIRTUAL AUDITIONS VIA ZOOM

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) announced that it will hold virtual auditions for the 2020-21 season from May 18–June 5 using the video conferencing platform Zoom. Audition registration for NJYS’ 15 ensembles including strings, winds, percussion, jazz, chamber music, and three full orchestras is available online now through May 10. Audition requirements and more information can be found at NJYS.org. Interested candidates with specific questions can also send an email to info@njys.org. The deadline for audition registration is Sunday, May 10, 2020.

Said Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen H. Cha-Pyo, “I believe looking to the future is important in this time of uncertainty, not

only to maintain a sense of normalcy, but also because it is healthy for our young musicians to have goals to work towards.”

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), founded in 1979, is a tiered orchestral program offering ensemble education for students in grades 3-12 across New Jersey. NJYS has grown from one orchestra of 65 students to over 500 students in 15 different orchestras and ensembles, including the internationally recognized Youth Symphony. NJYS ensembles have performed in venues including the New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Carnegie Hall, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. NJYS has received numerous prestigious awards for its

adventurous programming from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and has had six European tours, including participation in the Summa Cum Laude International Youth Festival and Competition (Vienna), winning First Prizes in July 2014 and 2017.

Now in its 41st season, NJYS continues to achieve musical excellence through intensive instruction and high-level performance. Under the guidance of a talented team of conductors, coaches, and teaching artists, students are immersed in challenging repertoire, learning the art of ensemble playing, and exploring their potential in a supportive and inclusive environment. NJYS remains committed to programming works by diverse composers and featured 20th century African-American and women composers such as Duke Ellington, George Walker, Yvonne Desportes, Emma Lou Diemer, Julia Perry, and Florence Price this season.

The New Jersey Youth Symphony is a program of the Wharton Institute for the Performing Arts. Wharton is New Jersey’s largest non-profit performing arts education organization serving over 1,500 students of all ages and abilities through a range of classes and ensembles. In addition to the New Jersey Youth Symphony, programs include the Paterson Music Project and Performing Arts School.



(above) Audition registration for New Jersey Youth Symphony’s 15 ensembles is available online now through May 10.

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RAHWAY FOOD FOR FRIENDS SUPPORTS COMMUNITY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Rahway Food for Friends would like to let the community know we are here for you. If you need food, please call our office at 732-381-7201 to make an appointment to pick up food. Due to a smaller staff, our schedule has changed to the following Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 a.m. – 12 noon, location 1221 New Brunswick Ave, Rahway NJ. Our Soup Kitchen is also available every Saturday between 11 a.m. – 12 noon, location 1731 Church St Rahway NJ.

We would like to thank Mayor Giacobbe, First Presbyterian Church, and Seventh Day Adventist Church for their continued support. We appreciate you.



RAHWAY GARDEN CLUB

Merchants & Drovers Tavern

1632 Saint Georges Ave. at Grand Ave.

Next Meeting Is

Scheduled For May 21

E-mail us for updates in May

Dstua74567@aol.com

When gardening at home remember to take precautions.
Keep a mask handy in case neighbors walk up. Make lists before going to garden centers to cut down on trips.

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IS IT DIRT OR IS IT SOIL?

The word "dirt" is so ingrained in our common language that people say it all the time, but say dirt to a gardener you will make them cringe. The usual response is "It's not dirt, it's soil."

So, what is the difference between dirt and soil? The answer is dirt has no nutritional value to support healthy plant life. Once organic materials are added dirt begins its transformation into soil. The experts say "Soil is alive, but dirt is dead."

In forests and fields nature takes care of this process. Leaves and organic matter fall on the ground where weather, critters and insects begin to break it down. The tiny pieces work into the ground producing a food source for insects and micro-organisms which break it down even future until it can be absorbed by plants and trees, beginning the process over again. This is a major part of the circle of life.

Some plant life such as sea grasses have evolved to survive with a minimum of organic matter. High tides and flooding wash a wealth of algae and minerals that seep into the sand where it is utilized by the plants.

Luckily for us, humans are able to speed up this process by amending the soil ourselves with chopped leaves, compost and fertilizers and other products. Nowadays we count earthworms as a sign for productive soil. Amazingly earthworms are not native, but micro-organisms did the job.

EARTHWORMS (*Lumbricus terrestris*)
 The reddish-gray-colored common earthworm, often called a night crawler in the United States, is familiar to anyone with a fishing rod or a garden. They are indigenous to Europe, but are now abundant in North America and western Asia.

Earthworms are vital to soil health because they transport nutrients and minerals from below the surface via their waste. Their tunnels aerate the ground. An earthworm can eat up to one third its body weight in a day. A 'healthy' garden soil should have approximately ten earthworms per square foot.



(above) A pot of pansies by your front door will add a cheery welcome when you get home. For pansy care visit Keanegardener@blogspot.com



(above) Past President of The Rahway Garden Club, James Keane, has been researching and answering garden questions since 1995.

Visit 'Keane Gardener' blog at:
keanegardener.blogspot.com

Earthworms burrow during the day, typically keeping close to the surface, but are capable of digging down as deep as 6.5 feet

Contrary to playground legend, if a worm is cut in half, two will not grow. Therefore, you are better off leaving your earthworm undisturbed to get the best results. Amazingly earthworms can live up to six years in the wild.

Worm castings, also called vermicast, worm humus or worm manure, is the end-product of the breakdown of organic matter by an earthworm. These castings have been shown to contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients than do organic materials before vermicomposting.

To encourage as many earthworms in your garden as possible add organic materials such as compost to your soil. Scatter it on top or rake it in and the worms will do the rest. This practice adds nutrients to your garden which is as good for your plants as it is for your worms.

Most importantly limit the use of pesticides and insecticides as they can harm or kill your earthworms as well as your intended targets.

The next time you dig up an earthworm while gardening, remember how essential they are and rather than just tossing it to the side, cover it back up. Earthworms wither and die quickly when left in the sun.

Happy Gardening,

James

THE GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA TO OFFER NEW BLOOD PRESSURE SELF-MONITORING PROGRAM

The Gateway Family YMCA is offering a new session of the YMCA's Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program throughout 2020, designed to help participants with hypertension lower their blood pressure by following an evidence-based program that combines blood pressure self-monitoring, nutrition education seminars and personalized support. This program will be offered at The Gateway Family YMCA – Wellness Center Branch, 1000 Galloping Hill Road, Union, NJ. The program is also being offered at the Rahway Branch, 1654 Irving Street, Rahway and the Elizabeth Branch, 135 Madison Avenue, Elizabeth, as well as in collaboration with local community groups.

The Y developed this program to help individuals better manage hypertension and improve their overall health. According to the American Heart Association, more than 80 million Americans have high blood pressure, but less than half have it under control. Research shows that the simple process of checking and recording blood pressure at least twice a month over four months may lower blood pressure in some people with hypertension. In addition, evidence shows that proper nutrition, particularly with a reduction in sodium intake, may help reduce both systolic and diastolic blood pressures.

“The Gateway Family YMCA is proud to continue to support the Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring program,” said Krystal R. Canady, CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. “The Y is the leading community-based organization

dedicated to improving the nation’s health and this program is a great example of putting that commitment into action.”

As part of the Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring program, participants will measure their blood pressure at least two times a month for four consecutive months—a minimum of eight times—and record their blood pressure readings in a self-selected tracking tool. A nutrition education component will encourage the participants to practice healthier eating habits, including reducing sodium in their diet.

The program is facilitated by Healthy Heart Ambassadors, appointed and trained by the Y, who will show participants how to use a blood pressure monitor, encourage self-monitoring and facilitate monthly nutrition education seminars.

The Gateway Family YMCA is looking for adults with high blood pressure who could benefit from participating in this program. Benefits include: simple, evidence-based program that may lower blood pressure; personalized support from a Y Healthy Heart Ambassador; tips for maintaining cardiovascular health; easy-to-use, portable self-tracking tool; and heart healthy nutrition education seminars.

Participants must meet the following criteria to participate in the program: must be at least 18 years old; must be diagnosed with high blood pressure; must not have experienced a recent cardiac event; must not have atrial fibrillation or other arrhythmias; and must not be at risk for lymphedema.

There is a small fee for the Blood Pressure



(above) Participate in The Gateway Family YMCA's Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring Program to improve your health.

Self-Monitoring program and financial assistance is available to those who qualify. In addition to the program, The Gateway Family YMCA will be providing weekly Nutritional Seminars that are free open to the community.

For more information contact Mike Johnson at BPSM@tgfymca.org or 908-249-4809. To register for the program, visit tgfymca.org or The Gateway Family YMCA branches in Elizabeth, Rahway and Union.

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KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SUPPORTS STRUGGLING FOOD PANTRIES

On Thursday, April 9, 2020, the Knights of Columbus donated \$50,000 to Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark, one in a series of donations to food banks and food distribution programs totaling \$1 million across 18 U.S. cities, part of their Order's efforts to help those in need during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

One of New Jersey's oldest and largest social service agencies, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark helps over 60,000 individuals and families each year to improve the quality of their lives and enhance their self-worth and dignity. The donation from the Knights of Columbus will be used to purchase food to be distributed to Catholic Charities' Emergency Food and Nutrition Network, a program that coordinates the bulk food collection and distribution through a network of 80 volunteer-run food pantries and shelters throughout the Archdiocese. This donation comes at a vital time, as many of the food pantries are reporting an increase in demand. With these funds, Catholic Charities will be able to purchase food in bulk and distribute the packages to food pantries throughout the Archdiocese of Newark, and will provide over 8,600 households with approximately 36,000 meals.

According to John Westervelt, Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Charities, "We are grateful to the Knights of Columbus for this most generous donation. As the days go by, more and more families are going without pay. We anticipate that the demand at food pantries will only keep increasing, and from people who might never have sought out help from a food pantry before. This donation is a true blessing for people in need during the coronavirus pandemic."

ABOUT CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NEWARK

Tracing its roots to 1903, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Newark is a not-for-profit social service agency of the Roman Catholic Church within the Archdiocese of Newark. As one of New Jersey's oldest and largest agencies, Catholic Charities serves over 60,000 individuals

and families each year in over 87 programs. Catholic Charities as a ministry of the Archdiocese of Newark participates in the Church's social mission by recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of all people and responding with sincere Christian compassion to the corporeal needs of the poor and marginalized. The service of Catholic Charities is inspired by faith in Jesus Christ, Sacred Scripture, and the continuing exposition of Catholic social teaching. Through these activities, Catholic Charities strives to assist individuals in need, strengthen families, and provide those it serves with an experience of God's mercy. Catholic Charities'

programs provide shelters for the homeless, food to the impoverished; care for the elderly and mentally ill, and education to children with developmental disabilities. Catholic Charities is a concrete illustration of the Church's commitment to ease suffering and bring social justice and hope to all, without regard to religion, race or culture. Last year, the Emergency Food and Nutrition Network provided over 164,000 pounds of food to over 27,000 households.

For more information about Catholic Charities or naming opportunities, please contact Catholic Charities at (973) 596-4100, or visit our website at www.ccannj.org for more information.



(above, l-r) Catholic Charities staff including John Westervelt, Chief Executive Officer; Sharon Reilly-Tobin, Director of Volunteer Services; John Blomquist, Esq. General Counsel & Chief Administrator of Human Resources, and, Elizabeth McClendon, Associate Executive Director

CARING CONTACT CONTINUES TO ANSWER CALLS DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

With residents of New Jersey being asked to stay home to fight the spread of Covid-19, many people find themselves feeling isolated and experiencing high levels of anxiety. Caring Contact, a local listening and crisis hotline, continues to help individuals during this difficult time. As a member agency of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Caring Contact cares for those who are in crisis in central and northern New Jersey and acts as a backup to other Lifeline agencies throughout the country. Additionally, they operate a local "warm" line to assist individuals who may not be in crisis but are experiencing stress themselves, with a family member, friend or co-worker.

Approximately 90 volunteers answer the phone lines at Caring Contact. "It has been a challenge during this time to ensure that volunteers are kept safe", stated Executive Director Janet Sarkos. "All business operations were moved remotely in early March. We've altered our hotline operations so that only one listener at any a time is in each of our phone rooms. We are working together as an organization to ensure each phone station and

other "common touch areas" are cleaned thoroughly between listeners, to further protect against contamination. It is vital that we continue to answer calls during this time of heightened anxiety".

But even with these office precautions, Caring Contact has updated their telephone and IT systems so they can now transition many of their volunteers to answer both the Lifeline and the local warm line from remote locations. Call volume is up. We took 2,986 calls in the first quarter last year as compared to 4,012 this year. We've been tracking COVID-related calls. In the middle of March 20% of our calls were COVID-related. From 3/29 - 4/12, it had risen to 32%.

If you are interested in learning more about Caring Contact please visit their website at caringcontact.org. If you, or someone you know, is in crisis please call 800.273.8255, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. If you are feeling isolated and need to talk to someone please call 908.232.2880, 7 days a week from 7 a.m. - 11 p.m. (based on volunteer availability). We are here to listen.

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SUCCESSFUL FINANCIAL LITERACY: FRESHMEN APPLY FOR CAR LOANS

Submitted by Rob Kinch

Relax, parents. No, the state of New Jersey has most certainly not lowered the driving age to include fourteen-year-olds. These teens have, however, raised their collective awareness of all the necessary components that go into successfully securing that much needed loan to help finance (at long last) their goal of transportation freedom. Dispelling their hopes of securing that magical ‘co-signer’, much like those fruitless hopes of a snow day on the eve of a major Math test, the realities of such foreign concepts as credit scores, debt-to-income ratio, and interest rates would now have to be recognized and seriously addressed in their collective financial planning, to ensure that comfortable faux-leather seated reign behind the wheel.

Tasked with the challenge of applying for and receiving approval for automobile financing, eighteen Rahway High School 9th graders, students from one of the high school’s Freshman Seminar classes, quickly discovered there was considerable investigative work to be done before putting hopeful pen to paper. The premise was established that they were 22 years old, living on their own, maintaining full-time employment (with a realistic salary), and carrying a reasonable amount of student debt. Students then researched college tuitions, student loans and their respective repayment structures, housing and food costs, day-to-day expenses, auto insurance costs and the like. Armed with an arsenal of pertinent information, they were then ready to take the next step and secure a financial ‘partner’. But who?

Their hopeful link to the open road (and to reality) quickly arrived in the persona of a savvy, supportive, and surprisingly endearing representative from the black and white world of banking. Ms. Dhana Reynoso, Manager of the Fair Lawn Branch of Columbia Bank, visited their class to review their painstakingly prepared applications and to proclaim, albeit amusingly, her official thumbs-up or down to their respective financial requests. As students sheepishly volunteered to have their applications reviewed

before the class (along with their high school Principal and two Vice Principals sharing their trepidations on the sidelines), Ms. Reynoso took this excellent opportunity to impart a lesson on the necessity of maintaining a healthy personal financial profile while offering insight into the concept of the ‘debt to income’ ratio utilized by banks in making loan decisions. (Students can now tell you it’s 43%.) After being enlightened by their banker’s step-by-step explanation, students clearly understood why only 2 out of their class of 18 would be able to head post haste (figuratively speaking of course) to a dealership!

“Before this experience, I had no idea of the different attributes that went into purchasing a car or even applying for a car loan,” admits freshman Joshua Munoz. “Learning how to calculate your own debt-to-income ratio will definitely stick with me.”

Devin Torres honestly offers, “I was afraid for my future and how I was going to hold up against the struggles.” He adds, recognizing the value of Ms. Reynoso’s advice, “When Dhana walked into the room, she showed us an easier path to success.”

The value of her financial insight was also underscored by Emily DeBello. “The whole class was lucky enough for this experience because, during Ms. Dhana’s presentation, she said she wished she had had this type of information when she was in school!”

Jaydin Lopez most definitely agrees. “Opportunities like this don’t appear for many, so this experience is really a once-in-a-lifetime thing.”

As part of Columbia Bank’s corporate mission to provide outreach to students to promote financial literacy, Ms. Reynoso was eager to engage Rahway’s high school students in constructive dialogue to heighten their awareness of the crucial need to prepare themselves for the financial responsibilities they must assume going forward.

“Having such a warm and welcoming reception by the students and seeing their appetite for learning, gave me even more of a desire to

provide them with the knowledge to help them succeed,” admits ‘Ms. Dhana.’ She continues, “Each person I met at RHS treated me with such kindness and with such an open heart; I was especially touched by how the students truly embraced the experience.”

Having been an integral part of the vision and development of the Freshman Seminar Program at RHS nearly 10 years ago, current Vice Principal Maria Hennessy found Ms. Reynoso’s presentation “very informative” while adding, “Her knowledge about the topics at hand reinforced recent classroom discussions about budgeting practices. This ‘real life’ example was a true demonstration of where our students will be in a few years, post high school.”

Vice Principal Chey Rivera complimented ‘Ms. Dhana’ on her ability to “truly connect with the students”, citing that the students “walked out with the firm knowledge that ‘money doesn’t grow on trees’ and that even when one has a solid income, adult financial responsibilities can be eaten up with the mere day-to-day necessities of living!”

RHS Principal John Farinella offered Ms. Reynoso his sincere appreciation for her presentation, making sure she knew a return visit would definitely be a most welcomed one.

Content in the knowledge that only he and another classmate were granted approval, if only in theory, for financial lending, freshman Ibrahima Diawara did not miss a beat to acknowledge what he considered the definite down-side of his fortune. “Now this gave me one more thing to worry about...my debt to income needs!”



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CALLING ALL GEEKS, NERDS, AND GAWKERS

Renna Media is putting a call out to the Geeks among us to appear on their podcast Mind Your Own Local Business. The show will showcase local businesses and people who are starting or growing a business, especially those in creative fields or doing something they have a passion for. Owner, Joe Renna, started his business in 1984 as a graphic designer that grew his studio into a marketing and advertising company. Now, along with his wife Tina, publishes 21 community monthly newspapers mailing out 135,000 to every home and business.

Joe says “I started my business right out of college and thought I would get a job if it didn’t work out. Its been thirty five years and I never looked back. I thank all those who mentored me along the way, experienced business owners who were generous with their time and taught me best practices in running a businesses and the pitfalls to look out for.”

As a way of paying it forward, Joe offers business and advertising advice to local business. This service is the focus of a new YouTube show. Joe Renna’s Hyper Local Network is the YouTube Channel of Renna Media. Mind Your Own Local Business is the prime show. Its first episode will feature Katya Stec of Clark, New Jersey who launched her production company All Ages of Geek. Katya has teamed up with Renna Media made her platform, with over 100,000 subscribers, available to Renna Media advertisers and organizations.

Renna Media is recruiting businesses to participate, If your a Geek or just Geek curious, a variety of advertising opportunities exist, from product placement to fully customized shows. All online advertisers will also be featured in the Mind Your Own Local Business column in 135,000 newspapers!

To learn more call Joe Renna at 908-447-1295 or email him at joerenna@rennamedia.com.



HOW TO SUCCEED DOING-WHAT-YOU-LOVE
A guide to best practices in starting and growing your business

Featured on Renna Media's YouTube Chanel: Joe Renna's

HYPER LOCAL NETWORK

KATYA STEC LAUNCHES ALL AGES OF GEEK

Geek culture knows no bounds. It crosses every social barrier and unites an eclectic group of people who share specific interests. The label, which usually is thrust upon a person, is now worn with pride. Geeks who historically existed at the fringes of the pop culture are now main stream. Their ranks are filled with regular folks. And the nerds of the baby boomer generation have joined the ranks.

The internet has given rise to a secret society. The image of a nerd playing video games in his parents’ basement has been shattered. Geeks are among the masses, living, working, and playing next to regular folk. All Ages of Geek is a multi-media production company that speaks to them.

Katya Stec is a self-proclaimed geek from Clark, New Jersey who formed All Ages of Geek in 2019, with the core focus of producing content in tandem with the geek culture. She has been creating videos for eight years and has over 700 episodes posted on her website and on YouTube. She now has over 100,000 subscribers clocking over 20 million views!

Katya, who is a talented voice over artist and writer, is a product of home schooling where she was able to cultivated her interests. Now, at 26 years old, she has a career, doing what she loves.

Throughout 2020 All Ages of Geek will be traveling to several geek culture events, conventions, and expos. They aim at making some of the best high-quality content. At the same time, mass awareness and promotion campaigns would be in swing to set the base for their big launch in January 2021.

Katya has built a team of talented, creative fans who work together in producing podcasts and shows. All Ages of Geek has an article section on their website titled “This Just In.” Their writers, who are from all parts of the world, submit weekly articles covering geek

culture events, topics and all forms of creativity.

Currently, they are also producing several video series and podcasts. The company is hopeful of churning out some of the best content and gathering a good base of loyal fans that would engage with the whole community and keep sharing their content to help them amass even more views, exposure, and popularity.

Katya says “Geek culture is what brings the world together. Despite our differences in race, religion, sexuality, and background. One thing is certain about geek culture, it unites us. All Ages of Geek’s mission isn’t just to entertain; it’s to unite the geeks of all ages as part of an interactive community.”

The company has a strong interactive community on YouTube and Twitch. The sense of community is both important and powerful and it does wonders when it comes to promoting the firm in the long run.

Their content spans different genres and caters to kids and adults alike. No doubt, if their vision manages to take the due shape, they are likely to become a massive hit among people, especially anime, video games and Dungeons and Dragons fans alike who would finally feel like they too truly belong.

All Ages of Geek has plenty of free content but viewers can access a lot more features by becoming paid members on Patreon or Twitich. They have over 300 members to date with a goal of 1,000 by 2021. They offer advertising opportunities, and their production team can produce original content for businesses and organizations.

To learn more about All Ages of Geek visit: allagesofgeek.com/

Email-id: pr@allagesofgeek.com

Website: <https://allagesofgeek.com>

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(above) Katya Stec on set in her home studio in Clark, New Jersey, where she produces shows for her All Ages of Geek broadcasts. Photo by Tatiana Szewczuk.

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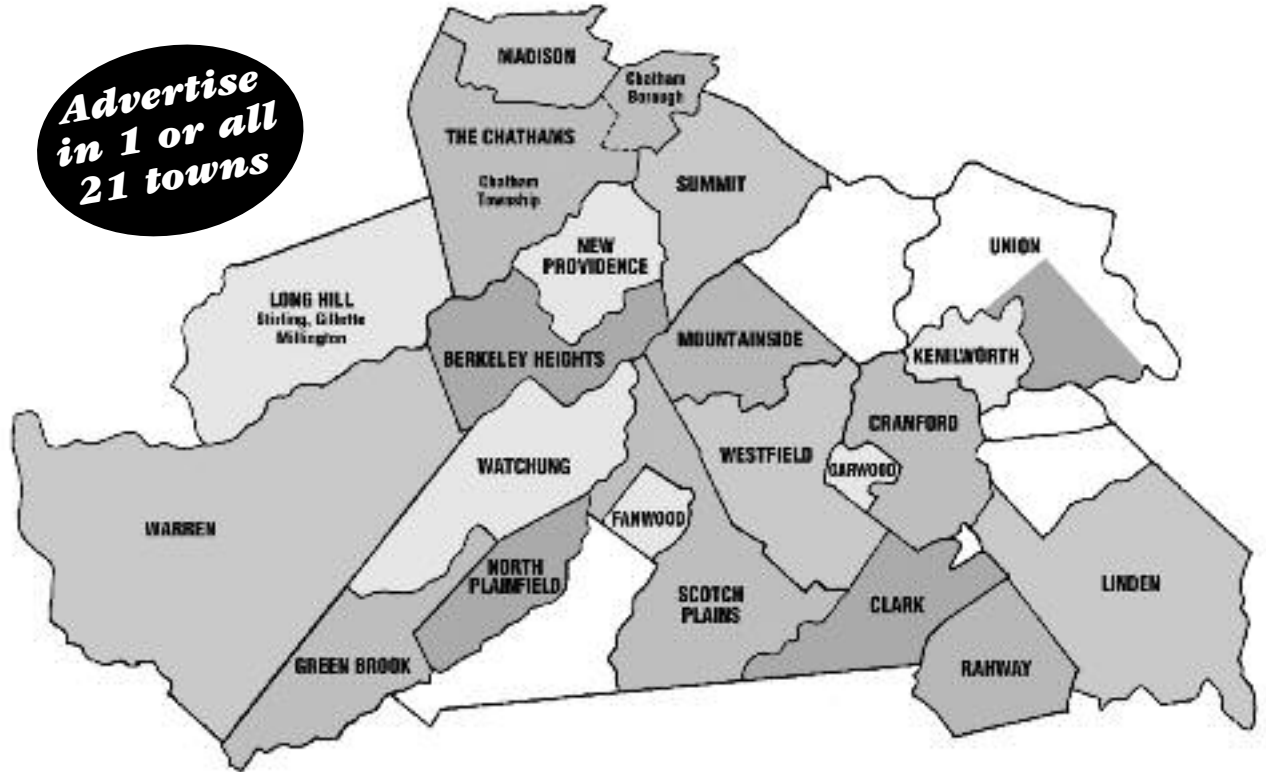
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RENNA MEDIA COLLABORATES WITH ALL AGES OF GEEK

Katya Stec reached out to Joe Renna of Renna Media when she was a teen exploring opportunities to express her creativity in his newspapers. Renna Media publishes twenty-one community newspapers and has an active web presence and social media network. Through the years, Katya has developed her own online media production platform and made her service available to Renna Media's readership and advertisers.

Renna Media has been in business since 1984. The focus of its publications is to promote community service organizations to a hyper-local market. Joe and his wife Tina deliver marketing, advertising and publishing services to local businesses and organizations, in-print and on line. They have joined forces with NJlocalinfo.com to offer website, SEO and social media services. By collaborating with All Ages of Geek they are able to offer video production and hosting.

Joe admits he has Geeky tendencies and shared "I have many Geeks among the folks I deal with on a day to day basis. The Geek culture is prevalent and is revealed when you get to know colleagues on a personal level. It would be fun to showcase businesses and people in my newspaper and in video. It is a great marketing tool and an ice breaker to connect businesses to like-minded customers."

Renna Media and All Ages of Geek has developed a simple inexpensive menu of production services for businesses to make a foray into online marketing. The all inclusive packages are:

- Product placement \$250
- 30 second commercial \$500
- 3 minute spot \$1,000
- 30 minute show \$1,500
- 3 hour shoot - \$2,000

All videos will also be blasted through the an extensive social media network and the business will be featured in the newspapers, driving readers to the websites. The approach follows the model of Renna Media's newspapers: Delivering hometown community service news to a hyper-local audience, at affordable rates.

Businesses or organizations who would like more information or help with their marketing plans can call Joe Renna at 908-447-1295.

Email joerenna@rennamedia.com
 Visit: RennaMedia.com
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