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Issue 125 • August 2020

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DRIVE-THRU GRADUATION CELEBRATION AT LINDEN AIRPORT

Submitted by Rebecca Tattoli

On Wednesday, June 17, 2020 the entire Linden High School Class of 2020 was invited to participate in a drive-thru post-graduation celebration at Linden Airport which was transformed into a grand venue.

The Covid-19 Pandemic canceled in-person graduations for all graduates this June, but Linden Mayor Derek Armstead along with the Mayor's Youth Commission and Linden Municipal Airport Manager, Paul Dudley provided an alternative for the graduates and their families to celebrate their achievement.

"We knew we had the space to do it, that we could bring cars in and they could sit in their cars and take part in a post-graduation celebration and stay socially distanced," said Mayor Armstead.

"This Covid-19 has basically cheated children out of a graduation, a prom, and all the other activities that a graduating class is accustomed to," said Mayor Derek Armstead. "We felt that we had a facility to be able to accommodate and pull something like this off."

As television news helicopters flew overhead the event began with a parade of cars, decorated like mini-floats with the graduates poking their heads out of windows and sunroofs and riding in the beds of pick-up trucks. Pastor Pamela Jones did the invocation to start the program, followed by a speech from Mayor Derek Armstead.

Tyler Ferrar, the Senior Class President said "I am happy to embark on a new journey and I'm ready to change the world."

Salutatorian, Laura Robert-Ubaechu said, "During this stressful time, we have had to learn to cope with different obstacles that have taught us valuable lessons."

Valedictorian, Sarah Mostafa spoke about effort. She said, "Master Sgt. Gombocz once told me that grades are a reflection of effort, not intelligence. After thinking about that statement, I realized that we put effort into everything we do in life, but it is the amount of effort we put in that determines our success in life."

Yelena Horre, Principal of LHS rounded out the speeches thanking all and wishing her graduates the best that life can offer. She said, "I really

feel that the distance hasn't been a factor for these kids, I think that there is going to be a bond that will endure forever."

Graduate, Naomi Borjmatta said, "I think that this is going to be unforgettable, it is a great feeling to have a graduation in this pandemic." Another graduate, Smarter Bowser said, I feel like this was a good experience, and I am happy that we had something instead of having nothing."

The post-graduation celebration, which was organized by Mayor Derek Armstead and the Mayor's Youth Commission, was the first time that the students were all together – albeit in their cars – since the schools closed on March 13.



(above) On Wednesday, June 17, 2020 the Linden High School Class of 2020 gathered for a drive-thru post-graduation celebration at Linden Airport.

Photos by City of Linden

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LIFE in 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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POLICE SEEK HELP IN SOLVING THE MURDER OF AMBER DUNCAN-WILSON

At 11:55 p.m. on July 9, 2012, Amber Duncan-Wilson was fatally shot and killed on the 500 block of Husa St., Linden, NJ.

Eight years have passed since her killing, but sadly, her case remains unsolved. Anyone with information regarding this tragic death is urged to contact the Union County Prosecutor's Office Sgt. Andy Dellaquila at 973-274-5771

or Linden Police Department's Sgt. Travis Kozioil at 908-474-8542.

The Union County Crime Stoppers are offering a reward of up to \$10,000 for information leading to an arrest and indictment in this case, tips can be given anonymously by phone at 908-654-TIPS(8477) or online at www.uctip.org.



**UNION COUNTY
HOMICIDE TASK FORCE**

Docket No



PD Case No
2012S-111





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BY THE UC HOMICIDE TASK FORCE**

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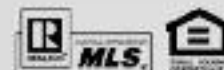
**ON July 9, 2012, AMBER DUNCAN-WILSON WAS KILLED IN FRONT OF 514
HUSSA STREET, LINDEN, NEW JERSEY**

**Anyone with any information pertaining to this incident
should contact the UC Homicide Task Force; Sergeant
Andy Dellaquila 973-274-5771 or Linden Police Sergeant
Travis Kozioil 908-474-8542.**

**You can also contact the Union County Crime Stoppers at
908-654-TIPS (8477), by texting "UCTIP" and the message
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21 Market Watch

Real Estate news for those on the move

Real Estate Blogs Every Buyer & Seller Should Read

- Home Improvement Tips of the Month by House Logics
- Are you Ready for the Summer Housing Market

For the full story visit our blog at njrealestatemarketwatch.com

LINDEN MARKET UPDATE - June 2020

SINGLE FAMILY

Key Metrics	2019	2020	% Change
New Listings	52	40	-23.1%
Closed Sales	40	28	-30.0%
Days On Market Until Sale	33	43	+30.3%
Median Sales Price	\$290,000	\$349,950	+20.7%
% of listing Price Received	99.3%	99.8%	+0.5%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	136	71	-47.8%
Months Supply of Inventory	4.0	2.4	-40.0%

MORE ON THE WEB



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EASTERN UNION COUNTY MARKET UPDATE - JUNE 2020

SINGLE FAMILIES	Rahway	Roselle	Roselle Park	Elizabeth	Union	Hillside	Clark
New Listings	41	28	14	36	82	25	36
Closed Sales	20	19	7	22	38	11	13
Days On Market Until Sale	65	83	27	60	62	45	78
Median Sales Price	\$365,000	\$285,000	\$338,000	\$291,000	\$350,000	\$318,000	\$530,000
% of listing Price Received	99.6%	99.7%	102.7%	98.1%	98.9%	100.7%	97.6%
Inventory of Homes for Sale	42	48	16	75	98	49	41
Months Supply of Inventory	1.7	2.2	1.5	3.5	2.1	3.0	2.7

*Does Not account for sale concessions and/or down payment assistance! Percent changes are calculated using rounded figures and can sometimes look extreme due to small sample size! Current as of July 20, 2020. All data from the multiple listing services in the state of New Jersey. Margin of error for reported statewide numbers is +/- 4% at a 95% confidence level. Report © 2020 ShowingTime.

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CITY OF LINDEN SUMMER CONCERT SERIES FOR LINDEN RESIDENTS ONLY

The City of Linden Summer Concert Series will begin on Tuesday, July 7th. While we are looking forward to having the concerts, this summer will be very different than previous years due to COVID-19. There are several NJ Department of Health Guidelines and State Executive Orders that we are required to adhere to in order to have the concerts. Some of these restrictions and guidance include:

Limited capacity per concert.

Check in by 7:45 p.m. or we reserve the right to cancel your reservation.

Registration is required for EACH INDIVIDUAL ATTENDING and must be done by 4:00 p.m. the day of the concert. LINDEN RESIDENTS ONLY. Registration can be done through Community Pass, or by calling 908-474-8600. Bring Photo ID to check in.

Face Coverings must be worn upon entering the Promenade, utilizing restrooms and in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained.

Social Distancing throughout the Promenade will be required and encouraged throughout the park by our staff.

NO DANCING ALLOWED.

Restroom occupancy will be monitored throughout the concert by an attendant to encourage social distancing.

Cleaning and disinfecting high touch areas will be maintained frequently throughout the concert.

Patrons are encouraged to wash hands frequently and utilize hand sanitizer provided throughout the Promenade.

Patrons who have symptoms of COVID-19 should NOT come to the concert.

All other rules and regulations normally enforced at the Promenade still remain intact including No Alcohol permitted.

The City of Linden has developed the required COVID-19 Operation Prevention Plan that complies pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order.

Patrons that do not comply with the Governor's Executive Order pertaining to attending the concert will be removed from the Promenade.

Due to the ongoing and changing nature of COVID-19, the City of Linden reserves the right

to modify the concert schedule, regulations and amenities daily in regards to public health.

An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to severe illness and death. According to the Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and guests with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable. By coming to the concert, you voluntarily assume all risks related to exposure to COVID-19.

IN CASE OF RAIN THE CONCERT WILL BE CANCELLED. Call 908-474-8604 after 4:00 p.m.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the Parks and Recreation Department at 908-474-8600. We look forward to seeing you!!

AUGUST CONCERT DATES

Tuesday, August 4 - Motown
Sensational Soul Cruisers

Friday, August 7 - R&B/Pop
American Rapture

Tuesday, August 11 - Rock
Mush Mouth - Cover Band

Tuesday, August 18 - Jazz/R&B
Karickters

Friday, August 21 - 60's-90's
The Kootz

Tuesday, August 25 - Doo Wop
Sounds of the Streets - Johnny Maestro Tribute

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 Pan Fried Wontons in our signature Spicy Garlic Sauce

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COCONUT SHRIMP APPETIZER 9.95

CRAB RANGOON DIP 8.50

DUMPLINGS 6.50

Steamed or Fried, Pork or Vegetable.

THAI CURRY SAMOSAS (5) 6.50
 Pastry Filled with Vegetable and a sweet curry.

SCALLION PANCAKE 5.50

B.B.Q. BEEF KABOBS 8.50

CHICKEN IN FOIL (4) 5.50

NEW! HONEY SESAME WINGS 8.50
 Lightly Breaded Wings with Honey Sesame Sauce, topped with sesame seeds and scallions.

B.B.Q. APPETIZERS

Spare Ribs ½ 9.95 / whole 16.95
 Boneless Spare Ribs, sm 8.25 / lg 14.75
 Boneless BBQ Chicken 8.50

PU-PU PLATTER for 2 17.50
 +8/each setting

Appetizer Sampler of our BEST appetizers
 Mini Eggrolls, Shrimp Toast, Ribs, Beef Kabobs and Chicken in Foil.

SOUPS

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 Hand-rolled Pork Wontons in a sweet & salty Wonton broth.

EGG DROP sm 2.75 lg 4.75
 Traditional soup with seasoning and drizzled egg into our house stock.

HOT & SOUR sm 4.75 lg 7.95
 A mixture of Chicken, Pork and Bean Curd with vegetables in a savory yet spicy broth.

HOUSE WONTON sm 4.75 lg 7.95
 Chicken, Shrimp & Pork with Mixed Vegetables and Hand-Rolled Pork Wontons in our Wonton Broth.

SEAFOOD sm 4.75 lg 7.95
 Shrimp, Crabmeat, Scallops & Vegetable in House Stock Broth.

CLASSICS

EGG FOO YOUNG
 CHICKEN / PORK / VEGETABLE / TOFU
 8.95 or Combo 12.95
 BEEF / SHRIMP
 9.95 or Combo 14.15

KUNG PAO / CHOW MEIN
 CHICKEN / PORK / TOFU
 Sm 7.45 / Lg 12.45 / Combo 12.45
 BEEF / SHRIMP
 Sm 8.65 / Lg 14.65 / Combo 13.65

BROCCOLI / STRING BEANS /
SNOW PEAS / BEAN SPROUTS /
or MIXED VEGETABLE

CHICKEN / PORK / TOFU
 Sm 7.95 / Lg 12.95 / Combo 12.95

BEEF / SHRIMP
 Sm 8.95 / Lg 13.95 / Combo 14.15

SELECT SAUCE
 White / Brown / *Spicy Garlic* / Curry

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GRAND MARNIER

Chicken 15.95 / Shrimp 16.95 / Tofu 13.95
 Combo 13.95 / Combo 14.95 / Combo 12.95

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 CHICKEN / PORK / VEGETABLE sm 6.85 Lg 11.85
 SHRIMP / BEEF Sm 7.85 Lg 12.85
 CRABMEAT FRIED RICE Sm 9.95 Lg 13.85
 House / Young Chow 13.75

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 Sm 7.65 Lg 12.65 Com 11.95 | Sm 8.65 Lg 14.65 Com 13.65

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 Large Shrimp, Scallops, and Crab meat with Mixed Vegetables,
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BEEF AND SCALLOP DELIGHT
 Tender Beef and Scallops served with Mixed Vegetables 22.95

WOR GAI
 Breaded white meat chicken, sliced Roast Pork, and 2 pc Jumbo Shrimp
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THREE KINGS
 Beef, Shrimp and Chicken with Mixed Vegetables 22.95

LAND

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 Shredded Steak and Vegetables in a spicy Garlic Sauce 17.10

TA-CHIEN CHICKEN
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 Tender Filet Mignon bathed in oil and wine, sautéed and served with
 Mixed Vegetables. 23.95 add Shrimp +\$5.95

DOUBLE HAPPINESS
 Chicken with Sliced Steak & Mixed Vegetables in Brown Sauce 19.95

PEPPER STEAK
 Sliced Steak with Pepper & Onion, in Brown or Black Pepper Sauce
 13.25

ODDS AND ENDS

WHITE OR BROWN RICE
 Sm 3.30 lg 4.60
HOT OR ICED HOUSE BREWED TEA
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CHICKEN FINGERS W/ FF
 4 Piece Chicken Fingers with FF 9.95

HAPPY ENDINGS

LONO'S BANANA
 Fresh Banana with Cannoli Cream, wrapped in a flour shell, deep
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 sauce. Served with a scoop of Vanilla Ice Cream. 10.95

S'MORE'S PUPU
 HERSHEY'S Chocolate Bar, Graham Crackers and Marshmallow
 with a flaming center to roast. 10.50

ICE CREAM
 Vanilla, Chocolate, Strawberry, Butter Pecan, Pistachio,
 or Orange Sherbet. 3.25

LINDEN INDUSTRIAL ASSOCIATION APPOINTS NEW OFFICERS

*June Lazaro will serve on board following two years as president;
Bernie Kordelski named new president*



(above) June Lazaro will now serve on the board of trustees for the Linden Industrial Association after two successful years as the organization's president.



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Submitted by Jonathan Supranowitz

The Linden Industrial Association (LIA) announced the appointment of its new officers at a recent virtual meeting. Bernie Kordelski of Total Specialties USA, Inc., has been named president of LIA following Primerica's June A. Lazaro's two successful years at the helm. LIA recently celebrated its 85th year of promoting cooperation between member businesses and the City of Linden as good corporate citizens, seeking an open and responsible exchange.

LIA also named A&M Industrial's business development specialist Kathleen Burke as first vice president and Cox Printers & Digital Media's senior account representative Janet Miller as second vice president.

"LIA has stood by and supported the business community of Linden and, as president, June Lazaro has led the way," said James K. Estabrook, LIA's secretary and partner with prominent law firm Lindabury, McCormick, Estabrook & Cooper, P.C. (Westfield, NJ). "During the past two years, she oversaw expansion of membership while fostering an environment of excellent communication on current business and political issues, acting as an associate emissary between the community and the mayor's office. We thank her for her strong

and loyal leadership of our organization and welcome her to a new role on the board of trustees."

Mr. Estabrook added, "We trust that Bernie Kordelski will now lead us well, moving forward, for the next two years."

As a regional leader, June Lazaro focuses on individual wealth management and retirement planning for Primerica, the largest independent financial services marketing organization in North America. An entrepreneur in financial services for more than 20 years, she utilizes her extensive nursing background by listening to and caring for people. In keeping with Primerica's mission, Ms. Lazaro works to help families earn more income and become properly protected, debt free and financially independent. A long-time Linden resident, she is deeply committed to the local community, holding leadership roles with the Friends of Linden Library, Kiwanis Club of Linden, and Linden Chamber of Commerce.

Bernie Kordelski is a manager for Total Specialties USA, Inc., a major energy company committed to supplying affordable energy to a growing population. He was most recently LIA's first vice president and has served as a member of the board of trustees since 2016.

CANDOR HOMES

Photo by Linden Industrial Association

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*We are temporarily closed for renovations,
and will be back open by the middle of August.*

*Our renovations will include new family-size bathrooms,
complete with a baby changing station. New hardwood
oak floors throughout. Yosh has even found space
for new 4k TVs.*

*Please follow us on Facebook, or Instagram
(Linwood-Inn-Taphouse) for updates on the exact
re-opening date. If the in-house dining is still not an
option when we re-open, we will continue with take-out
dining. We hope that you are all safe during this crisis.
We are looking forward to seeing all of you soon!*

Closed for renovations - Reopening mid August



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DON'T FALL FOR SCAM CALLS AND EMAILS IMPERSONATING IRS

The IRS is urging the public to be aware of suspicious individuals claiming to be from the IRS.

Thousands of people have lost millions of dollars and their personal information to tax scams. Scammers use the regular mail, telephone, or email to set up individuals, businesses, payroll, and tax professionals.

Scammers and cyberthieves continue to use the IRS as bait. The most common tax scams are

phone calls and emails from thieves who pretend to be from the IRS. Scammers use the IRS name, logo, fake employee names and badge numbers to try to steal money and identities from taxpayers.

Taxpayers need to be wary of phone calls or automated messages from someone who claims to be from the IRS. Often, these criminals will say taxpayers owe money and demand payment right away. Other times, scammers will lie to taxpayers and say they're due a refund. The thieves ask for bank account information over the phone. The IRS warns taxpayers not to fall for these scams.

Below are several tips that will help filers avoid becoming a scam victim.

IRS EMPLOYEES WILL NOT:

- Call demanding an immediate payment. The IRS won't call taxpayers if they owe taxes without first sending a bill in the mail.
- Demand payment without allowing taxpayers to question or appeal the amount owed.
- Demand that taxpayers pay their taxes in a specific way, such as with a prepaid debit card.
- Ask for credit or debit card numbers over the phone.
- Threaten to contact local police or similar agencies to arrest taxpayers for non-payment of taxes.
- Threaten legal action, such as a lawsuit.

If taxpayers don't owe or don't think they owe any tax, and they receive an inquiry like this, they should:

- Contact the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration. Use TIGTA's "IRS Impersonation Scam Reporting" web page to report the incident.
- Report the incident to the Federal Trade Commission. Use the "FTC Complaint Assistant" on FTC.gov. Add "IRS Telephone Scam" to the comments of your report.

In most cases, an IRS phishing scam is an unsolicited, fake email that claims to come from the IRS. Some emails link to sham websites that look real. The scammers' goal is to lure victims to give up their personal and financial information. If the thieves get what they're after, they use it to steal a victim's money and identity.

For those taxpayers who get a phishing email, the IRS offers this advice:

Don't reply to the message.

Don't give out your personal or financial information.

Forward the email to phishing@irs.gov. Then delete it.

Don't open any attachments or click on any links. They may have malicious code that will infect your computer.

For more information visit www.irs.gov or call your local police department non-emergency number.

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












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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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On July 18, 2020, Alfredo and Wendy Gonzalez from Linden, NJ, planned a different kind of adoption fundraiser. The Gonzalez family and a team of volunteers worked on the home of Rose, a widow who lives in Rahway, NJ. Rose's husband died unexpectedly 2-1/2 years ago. She is currently living with her daughter and together they are raising her daughter's son and two other grandchildren. She needed help with home maintenance and improvements, including landscaping.

Volunteers not only helped this widow, but also raised funds to offset the cost for the Gonzalez's adoption. They are in the process of adopting a newborn through Adoptions from the Heart in Cherry Hill. They have not yet been matched with a child but expect to be bringing home their baby in the next couple months. For more details visit:

<https://bothhands.org/project/gonzalez-686>.

Both Hands' mission is "to serve orphans, widows and adoptive families." Both Hands helps families fundraise for their adoptions. A family gathers a team of volunteers and Both

Hands coaches them to coordinate a service project fixing up a widow's home. The family and their team send letters to raise sponsorship for their day of service. It's very similar to raising sponsorship for a 5K race, but instead of running, the team is serving a widow. The funds raised help an orphan become adopted into a forever family. Both Hands – one hand for the widow, one hand for the orphan. Committed to fundraising support for its operating expenses through private donors, no funds raised by a family and their team are deducted for Both Hands' administrative costs.

Since 2008, Both Hands projects have raised over \$12,500,000 for adoptions and orphan care. Through 930 Both Hands projects in 42 states, 1100+ widows have been served, 1250 orphans are closer to forever families, and over 20,000 volunteers have served their communities.

Businesses and individuals may join hands with this team by donating supplies for this project.

Please contact Alfredo & Wendy Gonzalez at awgonzalez2012@gmail.com for more info.

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The Community FoodBank of New Jersey (CFBNJ), the state's largest anti-hunger and anti-poverty organization, would like to extend its gratitude to Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, which has contributed a generous donation and helped to continue the FoodBank's statewide aid efforts amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. These funds will be instrumental to CFBNJ in its efforts to continue to serve neighbors in need, helping to further daily operations for the FoodBank in this difficult and uncertain time.

While CFBNJ continues to strategize new ways to help in real-time with state agencies, it is also maintaining its daily operations, distributing food to a network of agency partners to keep vulnerable individuals and families fed – work that would not be possible without the help of companies like Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery. The generous donation has also enabled CFBNJ to pivot in real-time to create its new Emergency Meal Kits, of which dedicated staff and select pre-screened volunteer groups can produce up to 2,000 per day – enough to support 80,000 nutritious meals daily. Because of this critical funding, CFBNJ has been able to distribute

lifesaving food to help those in need during the COVID-19 crisis.

"We are so grateful to Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery for their help and generous donation in these trying times," said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey. "On behalf of the entire Community FoodBank of New Jersey team, I would like to extend a sincere thank you to Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery and all the corporate partners – and so many others – who have helped fund our work throughout this outbreak. We would not be able to do what we do and feed so many food insecure people throughout the state without your help."

In addition to funding from corporate partners like Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, CFBNJ is also relying on donations from community members to benefit the many neighbors in need who are being hit the hardest during the pandemic. Beyond simply spreading the word about

CFBNJ's mission to friends, family and colleagues, a donation of any amount helps the FoodBank provide continued support now more than ever before. For additional details, visit CFBNJ.org/coronavirus.

Stay informed by visiting cfbnj.org and checking the Community FoodBank of New Jersey's Facebook (@communityfoodbankofnj), Twitter (@cfbnj) and Instagram (@cfbnj). Those in need of food can visit cfbnj.org/findfood to locate a FoodBank partner near them. Neighbors seeking additional nutrition assistance can receive help applying or recertifying for SNAP over the phone by calling 800-609-3663.

For more information on other NJ food banks and CFBNJ's Partner Distribution Organizations visit: Food Bank of South Jersey, foodbanksj.org; Fulfill Monmouth & Ocean, fulfillnj.org; Mercer Street Friends, mercerstreetfriends.org; NORWESCAP, norwescap.org; Feeding America, feedingamerica.org.

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YMCA EXPANDS VIRTUAL PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

PROGRAMS INCLUDE SUMMER CAMP, MARTIAL ARTS & GROUP WELLNESS

As the global pandemic continues, and parents are making individual decisions on social and wellness opportunities for children, The Gateway Family YMCA has expanded Virtual Programming to include additional classes geared for children, tweens and teens. Virtual Program opportunities include Summer Camp, Martial Arts and Wellness programs – all providing a mix of enrichment, wellness and socialization in an age-appropriate format.

The Gateway Family YMCA has served the local community for 120 years, and remains open for 24-hour Housing and Social Services in Elizabeth and Plainfield, NJ. In addition, the Y continues to provide virtual programs, community outreach, socialization and support.

“When our facilities were forced to close for wellness activities and programs in mid-March, we immediately pivoted to continue programs virtually, with an immediate focus on continuing our chronic disease programs, even opening them to the greater community,” stated Krystal R.

Canady, CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. “As the pandemic has continued, we expanded our online platform, Your Virtual Y, to over 35 live programs per week and continue to add variety for all ages.”

This July and August, The Gateway Family YMCA is offering a Virtual Summer Camp for Children entering Grades 1-3, allowing them to experience Summer Camp from Home. Designed to keep kids busy while social distancing, the Virtual Summer Camp will provide weekly themes, activities and daily Zoom sessions – as well as a host of at-home fun like scavenger hunts, craft activities and active fun.

“We understand that many parents may not be comfortable with an in-person program this summer for their children. Our goal was to provide a format that will allow children to have fun and learn, and socialize with children their own age, all from the comfort and safety of their home,” stated Melynda A. Mileski, EVP/COO, The Gateway Family YMCA.

For children interested in Martial Arts, Virtual Tae Kwon Do classes are available for ages 5-12 at a Beginner and Intermediate Level. As a continuation of in-person learning, the YMCA instructor provides a small group virtual program designed to teach the basics of Tae Kwon Do. Tae Kwon Do is the essential discipline of the mind, body and spirit. Within each class, students learn the skills of self-defense by managing six tenets: Power, Speed, Focus, Balance, Relaxation and Control. Throughout their time within the program students practice and work to achieve belt levels by embracing new skills and enhancing those previously learned. Each level consists of the powers of concentration, self-discipline and timing. Students will become sharper and highly developed as coordination improves.

Wellness Group Exercise programs specifically for ages 5-12 include Get Fit Kids and Yoga Kids. Virtual Get Fit Kids is designed

for youth to experience a group exercise class in a fun way. The class provides a full-body workout that incorporates both cardiovascular exercise and light weight training, designed in a fun specific to their age, and using props that are easily available at home. Virtual Yoga Kids is a fun, creative and relaxing class, combining movement with the basic poses of yoga. The Y instructor will work on balance, flexibility, coordination and body awareness. This class introduces yoga terminology, poses and breath work in age-appropriate exercises.

All remaining Group Exercise programs through The Gateway Family YMCA’s portal “Your Virtual Y” are available for ages 12 and up, including teens and adults. These traditional wellness programs are adjusted for a virtual format, including Y favorites like Yoga, Zumba and Barre, as well as targeted exercise programs like Back to Abs and Butts and Guts.

“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. Through our virtual programming, we are meeting community needs, improving health and promoting virtual connection to those at home,” added Melynda A. Mileski.

The Gateway Family YMCA is a leading 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization committed to strengthening community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose and each other. Working locally, the Y focus on empowering young people, improving health and well-being, and inspiring action in and across communities. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives and generations, the Y ensure that all have access to the opportunities, relationships and resources necessary to learn, grow and thrive.

For more information on The Gateway Family YMCA or Virtual Programs, visit tgfymca.org.



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COVID-19 CREATES A CRISIS FOR RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH IN NJ

Submitted by Erin Jerome

The COVID-19 pandemic is straining resources for programs serving runaway and homeless youth that were already in short supply prior to the crisis. The primary causes of homelessness among youth are family conflict or severe economic hardship, making these programs more critical than ever to ensure young people who need aid do not slip through the cracks.

Youth programs at Community Access Unlimited (CAU) transform lives and are comprehensive to meet individual needs. From emergency housing to semi-independent and supported housing, CAU ensures that members have a safe home as well as training and education to prepare them for a stable, self-reliant adulthood. Services also include crisis intervention, counseling, recreation services, and leadership and advocacy opportunities.

Natalie Flores, 18, is one Transitional Opportunities Program member who is celebrating her accomplishments this year. A



(above) CAU member Natalie Flores graduated from Essex Valley School on July 9 as salutatorian and class president.

2020 graduate of Essex Valley High School, Flores was class president and salutatorian.

"Coming from a challenging environment and not having a typical support system was a struggle," Flores told her classmates. "To start high school and fail all your classes and then to graduate with a 3.6 GPA and be a member of the National Honor Society and be salutatorian is a tremendous accomplishment because I myself had doubts about my own success."

Flores will attend Union County College in the fall and plans to major in education to pursue her goals of teaching math to children in a juvenile correctional facility.

"I've been there and I want to make a change, I want to help another kid out," Flores said. "I want to set up my own program where I try to get kids off the streets and put them in their books. I want to help them focus in school and be ready."

"[My staff] have seen my growth and how difficult it was," she added. "They kept trying to lead me in the right direction. They were guiding me in telling me what the real world is out there. They also taught me about credit and budgeting."

Homeless youth face particular risks during this time. An average of 25 percent of youth accessing runaway and homeless youth programs have a chronic or pre-existing health condition like diabetes, asthma or HIV, according to a recent survey of programs coordinated by the Coalition for Homeless Youth. Youth living on the streets are also at high risk for victimization and assault, mental illness, substance misuse, juvenile justice system involvement, and human trafficking, all of which increases the likelihood of perpetuated homelessness in adult life.

CAU youth programs include the Transitional Opportunities Program (TOP) which provides comprehensive residential services to youth ages 13 to 21, as well as the Union County Youth Shelter and federal Runaway and Homeless Youth Basic Center Program and federal Transitional Living Programs. These programs provide safe shelter and supportive services that address the experiences and needs of these youth to mitigate their risks and put them on a better life outcomes trajectory.

Youth enrolled in the TOP day program participate in an employment training workshop, a GED program, or volunteer job practicum for a minimum of 30 hours per week. TOP members may receive 24-hour supervised residential living, community services, daily living skills training, case management, advocacy and outreach, education in accordance with the NJ Approved Life Skills Curriculum, and drug and alcohol awareness education.

Eligible youth in any county can become a TOP member through the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency, Children's System of Care, referral by local schools, community organizations or local agencies, or self-referral.

To learn more about CAU, visit caunj.org or follow the agency on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Learn more about supporting the agency and become a monthly donor at caunj.org/support-us/.

ABOUT COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED

Community Access Unlimited (CAU), celebrating more than 40 years in 2020, supports people with special needs in achieving real lives in the community. CAU provides support and gives voice to adults and youth who traditionally have little support and no voice in society. CAU helps people with housing, life skills, employment, money management, socialization and civic activities. CAU also supports opportunities for advocacy through training in assertiveness, decision-making and civil rights. CAU currently serves more than 5,000 individuals and families, with the number served growing each year. For more information about CAU and its services, contact us by phone at 908-354-3040, online at caunj.org or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202.

COVID-19 SCAM WARNING

The New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs is alerting consumers to be aware of a number of apparent scams related to COVID-19. To avoid this and some of the tactics being reported as possible scams, the Division recommends:

Don't let CDC imposters into your home. Representatives from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are not going door-to-door seeking information or conducting surveillance on COVID-19. Imposters should be reported to local authorities and the Division.

Don't fall for fake cures. Beware of in-store or online advertisements for products that claim to cure or prevent COVID-19 or other similar offers. No cure or preventative medicine has been approved for sale.

Look out for phishing emails. Cybercriminals may take advantage of global concern and interest in COVID-19 to try to convince email recipients to open links or attachments that may direct them to malicious websites or deliver malware. Stay away from COVID-19 related information that does not come from a trusted source, to avoid exposing your personal information.

Keep in mind not everything online may be factual. The internet is full of information, but be mindful of its accuracy. As false reports spread regarding the origination and spread of COVID-19, rely only on trusted sources for information.

Be wary of unsolicited calls. Whether they are offering health insurance, including to supplement Medicare or Medicaid benefits, or a cure or treatment for COVID-19, refrain from sharing your personal information over the phone, unless you have initiated the call.

Avoid internet adoption scams. Scammers are falsely misrepresenting themselves as CDC employees, and asking victims to send money overseas to adopt a pet being held at a quarantine station. The CDC does not quarantine pets or would not ask for payment to bring an animal into the U.S.

For more information please visit njconsumeraffairs.gov/.../C19-Scam-Warnings.aspx



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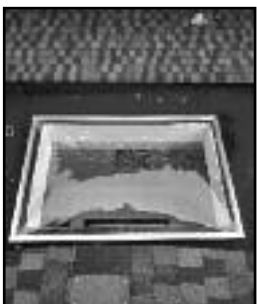
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LITERACY NJ CELEBRATION HIGHLIGHTS ADULT ESL STUDENTS' SUCCESS

On June 4 over 120 students and volunteer tutors came together via Zoom to celebrate a year of commitment and success in learning English. Literacy New Jersey's English as a Second Language (ESL) program provides free classes to adults who want to improve their language skills in order to find jobs, help their children in school, and become more involved in the community.

Thanks to the generosity of Literacy New Jersey volunteer tutors, the celebration included a raffle of \$1,700 in gift cards, with students earning raffle tickets based on the number of

ESL classes they attended. The raffle was the highlight of the night for students, many of whom have faced difficult challenges due to Covid-19. Students also received award certificates for 50+ instructional hours, with some students completing over 100 hours in the program.

The majority of students attended classes at the Elizabeth Public Library until closure due to Covid-19. Not to be deterred, students and tutors quickly transitioned to online platforms such as Zoom, Skype, and Whatsapp to finish out the year and successfully complete their studies.

Literacy New Jersey generally provides daytime and evening classes at libraries throughout Union County. In addition to English classes for immigrants, Literacy NJ offers GED prep classes and support for adults who struggle with reading and writing.

Online classes are planned for the fall semester. For more information about the Literacy New Jersey program, or becoming a volunteer tutor, please contact Barbara Bagger, Program Director at 908-486-1777 or bbagger@literacynj.org or visit the website at literacynj-unioncounty.org.



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UNION COUNTY POSTMASTERS SHARE TIPS FOR RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

Last year 169 letter carriers were victimized by dogs in New Jersey, including 16 in Union County. The 15 postmasters serving the 21 municipalities in Union County are therefore raising public awareness of the importance of responsible pet ownership in helping prevent dog bites.

To prevent dog bites, Union County Postmasters recommend the following responsible pet ownership tips:

- Obedience training can teach dogs proper behavior and help owners control their dog in any situation.
- When the letter carrier comes to your home, keep your dog inside, away from the door, in another room, or on a leash.
- Dogs can be protective of their territory and may interpret the actions of letter carriers as a

threat. Please take precautions when accepting mail in the presence of your pet.

- Dogs that haven't been properly socialized, receive little attention or handling, or are left tied-up for long periods of time frequently turn into biters.

By following these few simple tips, pet owners can significantly improve neighborhood safety for everyone.

The Postal Service has a short animated dog bite video available on its YouTube site, USPS TV at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpqmrNBJAos&feature=youtu.be>.

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NJ VETERAN COMMUNITY GIVES BACK DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Submitted by Jesus MiroQuesada and Angie Abbot, NJVN

A group of veterans and veterans' organizations are making a huge difference during New Jersey's Covid-19 pandemic. The New Jersey Veterans Networks' "Operation: Helping Heroes" project has two objectives including providing meals and groceries to veterans, and protective equipment to first responders. Food and PPE have been delivered to first responders, hospital workers, and activated National Guardsmen throughout the state.

They have distributed almost 3,000 hot meals and groceries to veterans, National Guardsmen and essential frontline workers at 61 different drop-off locations. The NJVN also provided personal protective equipment and helped distribute over 10,000 gallons of hand sanitizer to hospitals, EMS squads and police departments, and provided over 2,000 protective masks. This all happened during a crucial time when things like food, masks and hand sanitizer were very much needed, but hard to find.

The New Jersey Veteran Network has truly lived up to its name and partnered with a rich network of almost a dozen other organizations in order to fulfill their mission. Non-profits like the Samaritan Outreach Services, Operation Jersey Cares, the CSM Robert Gallagher Charitable

Foundation, and Milltown VFW 2319, worked tirelessly to contribute to the Helping Heroes effort by either supporting heroes and first responders working through the crisis, or helping veterans whose health and finances were affected by the pandemic.

Doc Schupp who created the Helping Heroes program had this to say "We were only able to reach and help as many people as we did because we are working with some of the best and most passionate organizations and people in the state. People like James Ludolph, would drive for hours dropping off food to sick and quarantined vets only to ask me what the next mission to help was, or 2319 VFW Commander Bob Kolesare, who would personally go out to help fill veterans' pantries."

NJVN Outreach Director, Frank "Doc" Schupp organized the hot meal and groceries portion of the program in collaboration with VFW 2319, Operation: Jersey Cares and Samaritan Outreach Services. Food was donated by restaurants including Jim Dandy of East Rutherford, Marinelli's and 55 Main both of Flemington, Amici's of Linden, Burnett BBQ of Union, and Applebee's of Garfield. Donations were delivered to National Guard units, hospital workers and veteran shelters such as Operation Valor in Newark and Vet Haven North.

Home deliveries of food as well as social service assistance, in coordination with Catholic Charities and PACO agency, were also provided to assist veterans who were quarantined at home due the COVID-19 crisis.

The protective equipment distribution was managed by NJVN President Michael Boll in collaboration with Ashland Chemical who sponsored the hand sanitizer, and Backpacks for Life - a veterans' organization who has created a full-scale operation to create masks to give to first responders and hospital staff. Protective

equipment was given to hospitals including Holy Name of Teaneck, the East Orange and Lyons VA Hospitals, Jersey City and New Bridge Medical Centers, and police departments including New Providence and Florham Park.

Both the food distribution and PPE could not have been made possible without the volunteers who took the time to pick up and distribute the goods. Great people like James Ludolph, Robert Bouthille, Dana Black, Juan Peris, Jamel Dobbins and Michael Salermo (with the team Mascots Shadow and Mush) and many others made this project happen! Many good people came together and were able to make a positive impact on the community during a difficult time. All of this was done by strong partnerships, unpaid volunteers, and sponsored through donations.

Perhaps, VFW 2319s Commander Bob Kolesare said it best, "VFW 2319 really enjoyed taking care of our vets. We hope that we were able to brighten their days just a little bit during this crisis."

ABOUT NEW JERSEY VETERANS NETWORK

We are a group of veterans and volunteers dedicated to helping our veterans and their families live better lives. Our team is raising awareness of our veterans needs by organizing public speaking engagements, meeting with business and political leaders across the state and sponsoring fundraising events. Our mission is to identify veterans and connect them with resources and programs designed to meet their unique set of needs. To ensure that EVERY single one of our veterans, who have sacrificed so much for this great country, receives the resources that they require and deserve. If you are interested in joining our team, would like us to speak at your event, or contributing to our mission, call 973-332-1556 or email mdbollio@optonline.net. To learn more visit njvn.org.



(above) NJVN President Michael Boll dropping off masks and gloves to a care facility.



(above) NJVN Outreach Director Doc Schupp and sidekick Shadow dropping off hot meals to National Guardsmen.



(above) NJVN President Michael Boll, Outreach Director Frank "Doc" Schupp and Reverend Richard Starling dropping off food and snacks for the Senior Veterans of Menlo Park.

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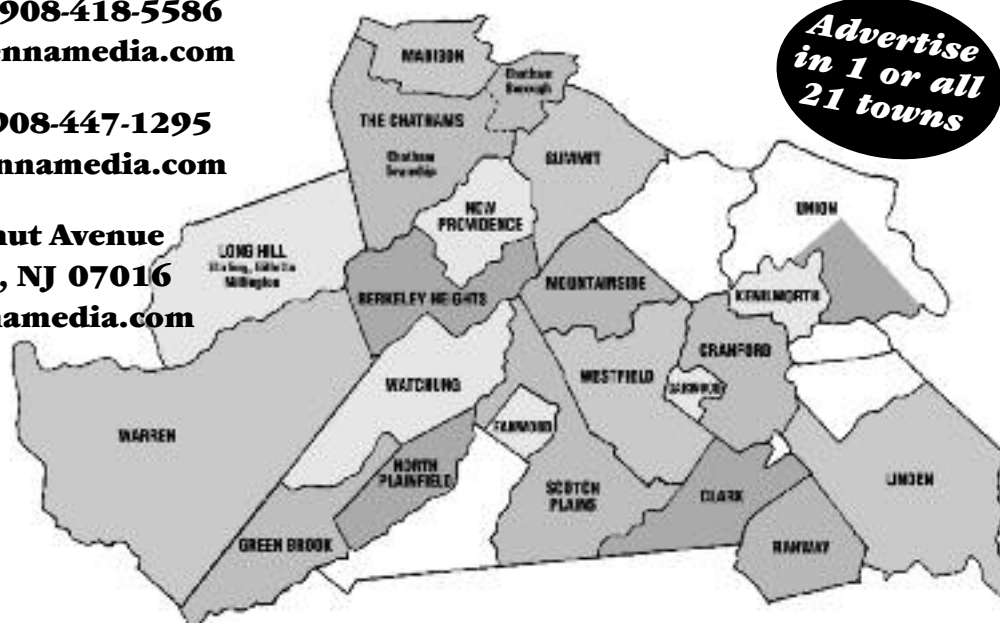
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