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MOLLIE YANG TO ADVOCATE FOR LOCAL FOSTER YOUTH



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Submitted by Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan

Shortly before Covid-19 emerged, took hold and shelter-in-place orders were ordered, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Union County trained 18 volunteers to serve as child advocates for youth removed from home due to abuse, neglect or abandonment. It is the only organization serving as extra eyes and ears for family law judges in an effort to protect best interests of youth in foster care.

While gathered inside a courtroom at Union County's Family Courthouse, class members simultaneously raised their right hand as Judge Thomas K. Isenhour administered their oath before thanking them for committing to our community's vulnerable youth and emphasizing the value of volunteerism.

Among the new advocates are Mountainside's Mollie Yang. Yang shared her motivation for becoming a child advocate: "The African proverb 'It takes a village to raise a child' strikes a chord with me and, through CASA, I hope to make a positive contribution to the life of a child during a difficult, challenging period."

After a final step of court observation, advocates are assigned to foster youth by court order, which provides access to the youth, foster parents, doctors, caseworkers, therapists and teachers to determine outstanding needs or concerns. Advocates regularly report and make recommendations to the judge.

Volunteers with varied backgrounds make successful advocates and this class, ranging from their 20s to 70s, is no exception. Each brings diverse experiences, including having been a foster youth themselves, immigrants, nonparents and parents, retirees, homemakers, full- and part-time employees. Professional backgrounds include education, business owners,



(above) Mollie Yang of Mountainside

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(above, l-r) Joining Judge Thomas K. Isenhour, center, are Union County's newest child advocates. They are, front row, Jade McEvoy of Elizabeth, Mollie Yang of Mountainside, Karen Lange of Westfield, Mike Loeloff of Summit, Fernando Porras of Cranford, Judge Isenhour, Teresa Pupo of Elizabeth, Martin and Susan Shulman of Cranford, and Angela Williams of Roselle; back row, Lisa Kalichman of South Orange, Christine Holloway of Scotch Plains, Towanna Garba of Roselle, Renee Finan of Clark, Christine Carroll of Warren, Suzanne Carreno-Powers of New Providence, Bob Bridgeman of Westfield, Meg Berry of Rahway and Janice Beckmen of Summit.



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PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

Community service organizations, schools and sports teams are encouraged to submit news of upcoming events or highlights and photos from recent events.

Organizations who are interested in submitting content, please email: editor@rennamedia.com

Mountainside View is online at www.rennamedia.com like us on facebook.com/ Mountainside View

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF SUMMIT CELEBRATES 90 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

Submitted by Dana Felmet

Junior League of Summit is celebrating its 90th Anniversary of service to the community this year. The success of the League can be attributed to hundreds of dedicated volunteers, supportive community partners and the trust of the community throughout its nine decade tenure.

The primary source of income for the League is the Junior League of Summit Thrift Shop located at 37 DeForest Avenue in Summit. The Thrift Shop was established in 1933, making it the oldest retail business in downtown Summit. All profits generated by the shop are used to support and develop local interests in the form of grants, scholarships, projects and programs. Earlier this year, the Junior League awarded over \$65,000 in grants and scholarships, which is in addition to the funds provided to support the League's signature outreach initiative, GRACE (Giving and Receiving Assistance for our Community Essentials).

The Thrift Shop manager, Marie Avigliano, has been at the forefront of the shop's success since she joined the team in July 2010. Marie has brought the shop into the 21st century by creating various events and sales incentives throughout the year, increasing revenue by \$120,000 over her 9-year tenure.

A major renovation in 2015-2016 allowed the staff to sort and process merchandise more efficiently, which increased sales. The shop recently underwent a basement underpinning which created additional storage space for donations. Marie relied on her previous retail experience to design the shop to be organized and aesthetically pleasing to the shop's dedicated customers, many of which are on a first name basis with the shop staff.

In addition to the shop's incredible sales history, the shop has donated items such as books to start libraries in communities in Africa and South America through local ministries, clothing to natural disaster victims, and baby items for mothers that are not able to otherwise provide for their children.

"It's super rewarding and heartwarming to

have such a great experience at work," says Ms. Avigliano. "I am just grateful to have the opportunity to be connected with the community in the way the shop connects. We have shared so many experiences with our customers from the birth of a baby to even the loss of some of our elderly patrons. It's all very meaningful to me and I feel blessed to be a part of it."

The Junior League is incredibly lucky to have Marie at the helm of such an important part of the Junior League's legacy in the community and looks forward to what the future holds.

The Junior League of Summit is a nonprofit, charitable, and educational organization of women who are committed to promoting voluntarism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.

For more information about the Junior League of Summit or to inquire about becoming a member, please visit the website at jlsummit.org or contact the office at 908-273-7349.

Those interested in donating to the League, please visit jlsummit.org/?nd=donate_summary.



(above) The Junior League of Summit Thrift Shop, located at 37 DeForest Avenue in Summit, is the oldest retail business in downtown Summit, having been established in 1933. The Thrift Shop is the primary source of income for the Junior League of Summit.



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ST. JOSEPH'S EXPRESSES THANKS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Submitted by Bernadette Murphy Dear friends,

We are more grateful than ever for your support of St. Joseph's and we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Your assistance since the pandemic began has been incredible. People have stepped up to help in so many ways.

Your generous contributions of food and funds have had a tremendous impact. With your help, we have distributed over 5,000 bags of food to families since the end of March. We have also shared thousands of sandwiches, toiletries, and



(above) Food distribution line at St. Joseph Social Service Center

personal protective equipment.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the many people in Westfield, Cranford, Mountainside, Berkeley Heights, New Providence, Roselle Park, Union, Elizabeth, Warren, and Edison, among other towns, for your overwhelming response to our appeal for emergency food bags. So many people have

contributed that we can't possibly list them all.

We hope you will stay with us as the economic fallout from the pandemic is just beginning, and together we can help our community survive and thrive. If you would like to donate food or funds, please visit our website at sjeliz.org for details. With heartfelt thanks and appreciation,

The Team at St. Joseph Social Service Center



(above) Food being distributed at St. Joseph Social Service Center.





HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY TONY!

On July 19th friends and family members held a drive by celebration for the 100th birthday of Tony Inguaggiato.

Tony has been a Mountainside resident for 66 years. He and his wife Josephine raised two daughters in town. He served in the European Theater during World War II.



(above) This photo is posted on the Mountainside Borough Facebook page with the message "We hope you enjoyed celebrating this wonderful milestone. We thank you for your service to our county. Mountainside is proud to have you as a resident for 66 years!"

MOBILE MEALS OF WESTFIELD NOW OPEN

Mobile Meals of Westfield continues to provide lunches and dinners for those unable to provide meals for themselves. The organization serves the communities of Clark, Cranford, , Garwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains and Westfield.

All state and CDC protocols are in place to ensure the safety of clients, staff and volunteers. Delivery will be to coolers at client homes rather than face-to-face.

For questions, or to receive the service

or to volunteer, email

mobilemealswestfield@hotmail.com,

or call 908-233-6146,

or visit the website at

mobilemealsofwestfield.org

where donations are accepted online.

ABOUT OUR MEALS

Our meals are reasonably priced, and unlike other meal delivery services, Mobile Meals has no financial need requirements. Our customers come from all walks of life and financial situations. If you know of anyone who could benefit from receiving daily meals and personal contact, or if you have any interest in volunteering, please contact Mobile Meals of Westfield at (908) 233-6146.

We operate 5 days a week, Monday through Friday. All our meals are prepared by a trained cook and packaged and delivered by volunteers. Our well-balanced menus change daily.

Mobile Meals serves a hot meal and an optional cold meal. The hot meal consists of soup and crackers, an entree of meat or fish, a vegetable and a starch, bread and butter, a dessert and a beverage (milk or juice). The cold meals consist of a sandwich, a dessert and a beverage.

Our meals are low salt and we will take dietary requirements into consideration as much as we can. We offer sugar-free products, as well. Our food is delicious, never frozen, and attractively presented in microwavable trays. All containers are easily disposable.

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Anyone may apply directly for Mobile Meals, or may be referred by a relative, friend, clergyman, physician, nurse or other interested consultants, or through any welfare department, health agency, social agency or hospital. Our customers come from all walks of life and financial situations.

For more information call (908) 233-6146 or visit mobilemealsofwestfield.org.



SUMMIT OLD GUARD AUGUST ZOOM EVENTS

The Summit Old Guard's weekly Tuesday meetings have continued through the use of ZOOM, and have attracted more than 100 viewers each week. Our August meetings will prove to be informative and enlightening. There is little limitation to our dynamic presentations as the viewers have, as before the virus, chances to ask questions of the presenter at the end of the meeting. To gain access to the programs send an email to info@summitoldguard.org and check our web site summitoldguard.org for more information.

AUGUST 4TH

Kavneet Singh, the national resource of the American Sikh Council, will discuss the Sikh heritage He will cover an overview of the Sikh religion from its founding about 550 years ago and include information on the founders, their teachings, the Sikh identity, and the contributions of Sikhs to interfaith dialogue and harmony.

AUGUST 11TH

Don MacGowan, volunteer program coordinator for 'The Seeing Eye', will discuss 'The Seeing Eye's' highly regarded breeding program, describing why certain breeds are

selected, how dogs are screened and selected for breeding, the science behind the process, and what puppies experience early on to prepare them for their roles.

AUGUST 18TH

James Miller, Ph.D. a professor of earth system science at Rutgers University. He will provide an update on where we are now on the science and impact of climate change both locally and globally. The talk will put climate change into the larger context of our current social, economic, and political discourse.

AUGUST 25TH

Nolan Asch, an Old Guard member, will describe Eleanor Roosevelt's important contributions to our society. He will discuss how she spent most of her life fighting for the underprivileged as a true pioneer in the fight for civil rights. He will also relate how she blazed an effective and trail for women's rights and continued her work through the UN.

For more information, contact James Hewitt, Chairman, Membership Committee, (908) 233-5507, info@SummitOldGuard.org. You can also visit summitoldguard.org.



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CANCER SURVIVORS AND THEIR CAREGIVERS NEED YOUR SUPPORT

Submitted by Ruthanne Brown, American Cancer Society (Northeast Division) Media & Publicity Senior Volunteer

I'm a volunteer for the American Cancer Society, writing on behalf of cancer survivors and their caregivers. I write out of concern for this sector of the population because of the effect Covid-19 has had on them. Eleven percent of New Jersey's Covid fatalities have been individuals who were already battling cancer, then later contracted the virus. This pandemic has caused a myriad of obstacles for cancer patients who've been recently diagnosed or who require continued long-term care.

87% of cancer patients are experiencing disruptions in treatment and testing regimens. This crisis has made it difficult to maintain contact with health care providers, all of whom are overwhelmed and overworked at this point in time. Regular access to treatment is difficult to come by, which increases the probability for cancer cells to spread or even return in some patients. A number of research studies have been temporarily suspended; not a good thing when time is of the essence. All of this, plus the financial burden of paying health insurance premiums and medical co-pays is causing widespread anxiety for patients and caregivers alike.

We collectively, must stand together to protect Check back often for our most vulnerable members of society. We related information.

must make this a priority. We must NOT leave cancer patients behind.

I implore readers to make a contribution to the American Cancer Society. Over the past three months, gifts from donors have decreased dramatically. Many ACS fundraising events have been postponed or cancelled. However, please know we are ALWAYS here for you with cancer help and information when you need it. Call us ANYTIME day or night at 1-800-227-2345 or visit us on the web www.cancer.org.

Your generous donations are graciously accepted to insure that cancer patients receive services they need NOW, and continue to have their needs met in the future.

We at the American Cancer Society are optimistically looking toward the future. Our dedicated volunteers are working on a safe social distancing plan so we may host community events soon. We are especially excited about "Bark For Life of Central NJ", our statewide Dog-Walk & Festival to raise funds and awareness in the fight against cancer. Visit our webpage

www.RelayForLife.org/BarkCentralNJ to make your donation to the American Cancer Society. Check back often for event updates and cancer related information.

CARING CONTACT CONTINUES TO ANSWER CALLS

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 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 COVIDrelated. 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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