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ALJ ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE STUDENTS LEARN REMOTELY

Students in Mrs. Suzanne Nagourney's Environmental Science Class at Arthur L. Johnson High School in Clark were visited by James Leitner founder of MissionCleanWater, an organization committed to providing clean drinking water and sanitation to under-served communities.

Leitner, a Scotch Plains resident, joined a Zoom session with the students in June. He shared his educational background and how he became interested in environmental science specifically on people's accessibility to clean water.

He discussed depletion with students as well as accessibility including how far people have to travel to obtain water. He showed students water sources that some people rely on that differ greatly from the water students are accustomed to drinking.

Leitner shared that he began raising awareness about clean water by first committing to run a marathon a month for a full year carrying 45 lbs of water above his head. He said this symbolized what people have to go through everyday to access clean water.

He then shared pictures of his 3,250 mile journey from New Jersey to California where he walked carrying 10 gallons of water. The 143-day journey was meant to show the distance people in Africa had to walk every year just to get water for themselves.

Students had the opportunity to ask Leitner questions like what inspired him to begin his crusade for clean water. Leitner explained it really began with trips to visit his family which sparked his interest in nature. He wound up switching career paths in college to follow his passion of helping others which eventually led to founding MissionCleanWater.

Ms. Nagourney stated, "James is very passionate about the goal of MissionCleanWater to provide clean drinking water and sanitation to underserved communities. I thought that inviting James to share his inspiration and passion would be a good way to close our Water unit in my Environmental Science classes. Students were able to hear first-hand about his authentic experiences and motivation for transitioning his



(above) Leitner, the 27-year-old founder of MissionCleanWater, kicked off his ultra-endurance fundraiser, 30 Days for Clean Water, on July 1, 2020. He ran 30 miles a day every day at Tamaques Park in Westfield, NJ in an effort to raise \$30,000 to fund a clean water system for the St. Elizabeth's All-Girls School in Uganda. He completed his final mile on July 30th at Tamaques Park in Westfield, NJ. As of this writing, James has raised over \$33,000.

passion for environmental science into the development of a nonprofit organization that provides a service to others." To learn more about Mission CleanWater visit missioncleanwater.org/.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO HELP AT BLOOD DRIVES

New Jersey Blood Services (NJBS), which supplies blood to hospitals throughout the state, is in need of volunteers to help at blood drives. The blood drive volunteer is an integral member of the blood collection team whose task it is to assist donors with registration and/or at the refreshment area. No medical background is necessary. Volunteers should have the ability to relate to the public, be able to perform different jobs as needed and have the willingness to follow the rules. For additional information contact,

- Monday to Thursday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
- Manager of Volunteer Services Sharon Zetts at 732-850-8906.

To apply on line as a blood drive volunteer, please go to: nybc.org/support-us/volunteer-nybc/volunteer-application

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mailed free to every home and business in Garwood. Reserve space in the next issue. Call Tina today at 908-418-5586 or email info@rennamedia.com

Garwood Times • Page 2 • September 2020 GREEN TEAM INSTALLS NEW WATER FOUNTAINS



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announce that Garwood has new water fountains at the Rec Complex. The Green Team applied for and was awarded a non-matching grant from NJ American Water to replace the two water fountains at the Rec Complex.

Both the indoor fountain inside the Rec building and the outdoor fountain by the turf field have been replaced with water bottle



(above) The Green Team was awarded a grant to replace two water fountains at the Rec Complex.

The Garwood Green Team is happy to refilling stations that are more environmentally friendly. We'd like to encourage our residents and visitors to use refillable bottles and reduce waste.

> The Green Team hopes everyone will enjoy these two new water bottle refillable stations and would like to thank NJ American Water for providing the funds to make Garwood a more sustainable Borough.



(above) The new water fountains are equipped with water bottle refilling stations, encouraging residents to use refillable bottles.





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A CRABAPPLE TREE GROWS IN GARWOOD

Recently the Garwood Green Team was able to obtain one of the 80 crabapple trees that the county made available to Union County community organizations as part of the County's Arbor Day celebration. While these trees are usually made available to county schools, this year they were made available to community groups as the schools were all closed on Arbor Day, which was April 24.

The Green Team decided to plant this six-foottall specimen at the Spruce Street entrance into the Garwood Athletic Complex. Crabapples are known for beautiful white spring flowers and small apple like fruit in the fall, which is a favorite of many bird species. Hopefully, with plenty of watering during this hot summer, the tree will thrive and after approximately 10 years, obtain a height of 15-20', with a similar spread.

Garwood traditionally holds an annual Arbor Day celebration at Lincoln School, and many of the trees currently growing at Lincoln and Washington Schools were originally planted through this annual celebration. The Green Team looks forward to returning to this annual program next year. In the meantime, we recommend that all Garwoodians take a look at the town's new seedling and watch it grow!

If anyone is interested in joining or learning more about the Garwood Green Team, please email GarwoodGreenTeam@Garwood.org or call Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock at 908-337-7726.



(above) The Garwood Athletic Complex is home to a new crabapple tree.





GARWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

IMAGINE YOUR STORY BOOKMARK WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Garwood Public Library has selected the winners of its 2020 Bookmark Contest. Garwood students in grades K-8 were challenged to submit original bookmark designs around "Imagine Your Story," this year's Summer Reading theme celebrating mythology, fairytales and mythical creatures.

The five winning artists are Avery Lee, Tyler Lerouge, Chelsea Peniche, Blake Trentacosta, and Kendall Trentacosta. Copies of the winning designs are available for the public at the Library.

K.C. BREE WINS PHOTO HISTORY CHALLENGE

The Garwood Library would like to thank everyone who took part in July's Photo History Challenge. Participants were asked to snap a picture in Garwood of an image that represents the impact of the pandemic on our community. There were some great entries.

You can view them all on the Library's Facebook page. On July 31 the Library staff selected K.C. Bree's image of a virtual graduation as the winning photo. K.C. was mailed a \$50 Amazon card for her efforts.



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For more information and to register for programs, call 908-789-1670 or email garwoodlibrary@garwood.org

The Garwood Library is now open to the public in limited capacity. The hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Tuesday, Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Five people are permitted in the library at a time for thirty minutes. No computer, bathroom, water fountain, or photocopier will be available. The staff can assist with copying and faxing. All programs will continue to be virtual. Of course, masks and social distancing are required. We encourage no more than one family member in the building at any one time.

For those who wish to remain outside the building Curbside Pickup will be available on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Please call the Library and request the items you wish to borrow. Patrons can check out five items at a time per person. The items will be ready within thirty minutes of the call time. Items will be placed in bags with the patron's name on it on a cart at the main entrance. If you have any trouble at the time of pick up, please call the Library for assistance. Books will be available for all cardholders in good standing. All items checked out including DVDs and Audio material must be returned to the Library book drop.

The Library and Historical Committee continue to help document history. The Library has teamed up with the Historical Committee to document the impact of Covid 19 on the people of Garwood. Between now and whenever the

quarantine ends, we ask those who live and or work in Garwood to share their personal experiences through pictures or words (1,500 words or less) by sending their submission via email to garwoodlibrary@garwood.org

The Garwood Library **Board of Trustees Meeting** Wednesday, September 2, at 7 p.m. Meeting in the Library.

Lego Zoom

Every Thursday in September Join us at 3:30 p.m. each Thursday for a new build. Check the Events section of Garwood Public Library's website for the Zoom link.

Adult Trivia Night

Tuesday, September 15, at 7 p.m. via Zoom. The winning team will receive a gift card prize. Check the Events section of Garwood Public Library's website for the Zoom link

Virtual Adult Craft

Tuesday, September 22

Supplies for the craft will be available September 21. A craft tutorial will appear on Facebook Premiere on the Library's Facebook page on September 22 at 3 p.m. The video will be available for viewing thereafter. Registration is required and is limited to 10 participants. Sign up online on the library's website events

calendar or by phone.

Don't forget about the library's digital service. Hoopla offers thousands of digital books, audio books, comics, music, movies and more. Patrons may check out 5 Hoopla items a month. All Garwood Middle School Reading Fiction Books are available on Hoopla.



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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



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

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have a safe home as well as training and 13 to 21, as well as the Union County Youth 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 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

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 cauni.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 cauni.org or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202.



I AM MY BROTHER'S KEEPER! ARE YOU?

A few years ago, I was approached by a friend and co-worker of mine who expressed how extremely depressed he was and that he wanted to take his own life. Initially, I was completely shocked because this guy always seemed to be upbeat and happy all the time. Immediately, I asked him to come with me to a private office so we could talk about his awful situation. This was the first time in my life that I had a friend talk to me about suicide, and I knew I had to really do my best to help him get through this horrible ordeal. We spoke for a few hours and I listened closely to everything he said. I was able to convince him to immediately get some help and we went to the hospital. I stayed with him at the hospital and met with him when he was released. I did everything to show my friend that I had his back and because of this he is alive today. This awful situation inspired me to do whatever I possibly can to help others in need and shortly after we created our mobile outreach program.

In today's day and age, most of you have known a veteran or first responder that has taken their own life. Every day we lose nearly twentytwo veterans and approximately three hundred first responders every year to suicide. Even with all the awareness and new anti-suicide programs available, this number has not changed and, in some cases, has increased. The Veteran Hospitals' PTSD and mental health programs are packed with patients and unfortunately, they continue to grow. More of our first responders state programs being offered. So many people want to help and put an end to this crisis but sadly there isn't a foolproof program available that will stop this ever-growing crisis from destroying our uniformed heroes and their family's lives.

For the last two years our team has been working tirelessly with other charities to come up with a better solution to help prevent this epidemic from continuing. Personally, we believe our "Mobile Outreach Team" is really making a difference and everyday it helps our uniformed heroes live a better way of life.

The first thing we learned is to lose your "EGO" and seek out other groups and organizations that are looking to save lives. Then we find the right volunteers who are committed and dedicated with being a mentor to a person in crisis. Volunteers are extremely valuable because they want to be there, and they usually care more than the people who get paid for their services.

To date, we have been able to change and save countless lives because of the incredible commitment from the volunteers and other supporting groups.

Our approach is to aggressively seek out and contact a veteran or first responder in crisis. Our goal is to immediately work on building trust by being completely honest with the person in crisis. Using our network is wonderful, but it's more important to show the person in need that

are also seeking help and utilizing some of the we are there for them and won't give up. Usually, we go out and meet with those in crisis and spend whatever time is needed to help them get in a better frame of mind. Bottom line "Human Contact" and "Friendship" is the key to saving a life.

> Our Mobile Outreach Team is unique because it consists of mentors from all over the state that are willing to do whatever it takes to save and change a life.

> If you are interested in joining our team please feel free to contact me at (973)-332-1556 or email mdbollio@optonline.net. To learn more visit njvn.org.

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 call 973-332-1556 or email mission, mdbollio@optonline.net. To learn more visit njvn.org.



(above) Operation Rebound if one of the outreach programs of the New Jersey Veterans Network. It is a mobile outreach team of mentors who help at-risk veterans and first responders to live a better life. The team has made huge strides with suicide prevention simply by building trust and cementing friendships with people in need. It's most important to be honest with each person in crisis and follow up with ways to help them regain purpose in life. Setting goals motivates them to stay on a positive track. If you are interested with joining the Operation Rebound Racing Team please feel free to contact Michael Boll at mdbollio@optonline.net or call 973-332-1556.

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NICK RENNA'S BIBLE REVIVAL

By Joe Renna

My brother Nick is known as 'The Voice of Union County', best known for announcing high school sports. When I created the Hyper-Local Network YouTube channel, we planned on producing a local sports show. The idea was lingering but went completely dormant when the coronavirus put a halt to school altogether.

Nick is not a technical person so any attempt to broadcast would have to be facilitated by someone. That person came in the form of his pastor, Jerry Rittenhouse, who was impressed by Nick's participation in Bible study sessions and thought Nick should be sharing his knowledge of the Bible, his devotion to Jesus, and his gift of gab.

Nick was not plugged into social media. But his fear of big brother was over taken by his love of God. Pastor Jerry created a Facebook page under Nick's name and has been recording him in an impromptu manner. Pastor Jerry has been uploading a video each day since Nick's birthday on August 4th. His videos have been getting a few thousand views each, and he has maxed out his friends list at 5,000.

I'm encouraging Nick to continue his mission, and am loading his videos onto his 'Renna's Arena' playlist.

SCAN QR CODE TO OPEN OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL



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