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UNION RESIDENTS HONORED BY NJ VETERANS NETWORK

On Veterans Day the New Jersey Veterans Network hosted its first team awards ceremony at the Union VFW. Over 50 contributors were honored during a ceremony that practiced social distancing protocol.

Those that were in attendance and honored from Union included Leo Graf and Bob Johnsen, Union VFW, Dr Wali Rasheed, Director Islamic Center of Union; Rev Richard Starling, of the Culture Changing Christians Church; Gerard Schemel commander of the Union High School Army JROTC; Debbie Bernard Union Township Police Chaplain; Paul Carvalho owner of Paul's Garage; and Joseph Montes, owner of The Red Cadillac restaurant.

The New Jersey Veterans Network is a volunteer mobile outreach team that aggressively seeks out veterans and their families members in need.

In the last few years the NVN has saved over a dozen lives, donated 20 cars, 400 business suits, and during covid the team provided over 3,000 meals and thousands of PPE items for disabled veterans and active servicemen.

The Team is fully backed by the NJ VFW, NJ American Legion, NJ PBA, NJ FOP, NJ FMBA, multiple service groups, and several elected state officials.

Former VFW State Commander Barbara Hagemann presented over 30 NJ VFW Award Commendations.

NJVN President Michael Boll presented all the members in attendance with NJVN team plaques in recognition of their contributions. Each member also received a proclamations

from the New Jersey Senate and Assembly.

Congressmen Tom Malinowski presented the Presidents Volunteer Service Award with a Gold Medal and a Congressional Commendation to the team's executive board including Michael Boll, Sara Abraham, Frank Schupp, Bob Johnsen, and Leo Graf. Frank Schupp was presented an American Flag that was flown over the Capital Building in his honor. Schupp is the mobile outreach program director. He was awarded for his outstanding work mentoring veterans during Covid and organizing an effort to feed over 3,000 veterans.

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.

(continued on page 4)



Photos from this and other events can be found online at rennamedia.com and on Spirit of Union page on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) Feel free to "Like," "Tag," and "Share."

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Spirit of Union is published by Renna Media. 5,500 newspapers are printed monthly and 5,000 are mailed free to businesses and residents in Union and distributed free at distribution sites throughout town.

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

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BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS WELCOMES AMIR YOUSSEF



(above) Amir Youssef has been appointed to the Boys and Girls Clubs of Union County Board of Directors.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Union County is pleased to announce the appointment of Amir Youssef to the Board of Directors. Amir Youssef has been heavily immersed in all aspects of the hospitality industry such as creative design, business development, marketing, public relations, business operations, growth projections and concept strategies since 1997. He began his journey into the hair care services realm after co-founding The Chop Shop Barbershop in New Jersey and Florida, the first ever “concept barbershop” in those areas. Amir’s invaluable knowledge of the industry and his passion for helping the youth while promoting true change led him to develop his own concept that is now known as Buzz it Forward.

He has since worked with rural and inner-city kids as well as non-profit organizations, youth centers, community centers, sports teams and celebrities. After taking all 22 years of his

experience into consideration, Amir decided to incorporate Buzz Boxx USA and has since successfully promoted it’s growth through several initiatives and partnerships including Overtown Youth Center, Boys & Girls Clubs, Adidas, Virgin Trains and ESPN, to name a few.

Amir’s passion to create, coupled with his ability to envision a goal, work hard towards achieving it, motivate to accomplish it and relentlessly pursue perfection has led to countless sponsored hair care services and impactful mentor-ships for children from coast to coast.

“Amir is a great addition to our team, and with his passion for helping youth, we can truly make a difference in helping our members prepare for future success”, said Russell Triolo, CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Union County. “I look forward to working together to bring new and exciting ideas to benefit our Clubs and members”.

“Virtual School” and After- School programs registration is now open for our Union, Elizabeth, and Plainfield Clubs. Contact us at 908-687-2697 for information and registration. Aquatics, stroke development, and water safety instruction are available at our Union Club. Teen Leadership Club programs are available in Plainfield, Elizabeth, and Union. Teen members participate in character, leadership, career preparation and community service activities throughout the year.

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After graduating from medical school, Dr Somma served his internship in Internal Medicine at Trinitas Regional Medical Center. He then completed his residency in Internal Medicine at Seton Hall Post Graduate School of Medicine, where he was elected Chief Resident of Internal Medicine in his final year.

Dr. Somma has been in practice in Union and Middlesex counties for over 20 years, with an emphasis on excellence and compassion for his patients. He has served as the physician for the Elizabeth Fire Department, the Board of Health of Hillside and has served the Board of Education for Woodbridge NJ. He was granted the Humanitarian of the Year Award by Trinitas Health Foundation in May 2014, for his dedication to the community and his outstanding service to the goals of the Foundation.

Dr. Somma has special interests in various fields of Internal Medicine, including diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and arthritis/rheumatology. He has represented to major pharmaceutical companies, such as Schering-Plough and Pfizer, in a consulting and educational role for his peers. Dr. Somma has been a clinical educator for Seton Hall’s Physician Assistant Program as an Associate Professor of Medicine for their Internal Medicine program.

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NJ VETERANS NETWORK HONOREES (continued from page 1)



(above) Leo Graf and Bob Johnsen
Leo Graf is Commander of the Union VFW and he plays a major role with the NJVN support team. He sets up various fundraisers and charity events. Bob Johnsen- board member bob is the union vfw vice commander and plays a major role with the support team. Bob sets up numerous fundraisers and charity events . also he speaks at numerous ceremonies and other events.



(above) Rev Richard Starling, of the Culture Changing Christians Church, is a team Chaplain for NJVN. Rev Starling assists and speaks at numerous charity events and has organized food and clothing donations for disabled veterans.



(above) Paul Carvalho, owner of Paul's Garage in Union, has donated and repaired numerous cars for disabled veterans. Paul has also hosted a few fundraisers and charity events for the team.



(above) Dr Wali Rasheed, Director Islamic Center of Union, is a team Chaplain for NJVN. R. Rasheed assists and speaks at numerous charity events, and has organized food and clothing donations for disabled veterans.



(above, left) Joseph Montes, owner of The Red Cadillac restaurant in Union, was honored for feeding veterans. He has provided food for veterans shelters and homes, and events.

Monthly he welcomes veterans to his restaurant for NJVN program 'Feed A Hero' program.

(above, right) Debbie Bernard is a Union Township Police Chaplain, as a NJVN board member she serves as liaison with the VA and assists with various charity events and functions.



(above) Gerard Schemel is the commander of the Union High School Army JROTC. Schemel and his cadets have assisted with many NJVN events and ceremonies.

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1ST ANNUAL TRUNK OR TREAT WINNERS ANNOUNCED

The Township of Union Police Department hosted their 1st Annual Trunk or Treat event.

The People's Choice winner for Most Creative Car:

The Adam's Family – Congratulations!!

The winning vehicle/family received gift cards to both Kohl's and Target along with a UPD trophy to display proudly. Great Job Adams Family! We hope to see you again next year and look forward to seeing how your display expands or if you come up with something new! Either way, the Union Police Department thanks you for participating in this year's event.

We'd also like to acknowledge the runner up because they came very close to stealing first place: the Spaceship / Astronaut Trailer – Congrats!! The children enjoyed the interaction of your display! Well, who are we kidding? The adults did too! We hope you return next year and bring more joy to our Halloween event.

For those of you who missed out on the fabulous event, we encourage you to come by next year and enter into our costume contest and our most creative vehicle contest. For those awaiting to hear the costume 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners, please give us sometime as we have hundreds of entries to browse through and multiple UPD judges. You will hear from us soon. Stay Tuned!

A most special thank you to all of those who entered their vehicles in our event. We want you to know that we understand you took time away from your daily activities and families on Halloween to donate your vehicles, your time, candy and your creativity to help make this event

successful. Without you, the public, this event wouldn't have been what it was. UPD thanks you and salutes you for bringing hundreds of children and adults a smile on this Halloween.

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WELLNESS, INDEPENDENCE, AND SOCIALIZATION FOR SENIORS

Submitted by Colleen Clayton

The Gateway Family YMCA was awarded a \$20,000 grant from the Grotta Fund for Senior Care of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest NJ in support of their Virtual W.I.S.E. (Wellness, Independence, and Socialization for our Seniors) program during the global pandemic.

“The W.I.S.E. Senior Services program has served our community for over 35 years, providing specialized care and services for a unique demographic,” stated Krystal R. Canady, CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. “During the global pandemic, we recognized the strong need for a supportive program like ours, that cares for seniors with Alzheimer’s or dementia and also provides their caregiver with assistance. Through the support of the Grotta Fund for Senior Care of the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater MetroWest NJ, we are able to continue this critical service in the Virtual W.I.S.E. program when it is needed more than ever before.”

The Virtual W.I.S.E. program provides daily activities and support for members with Alzheimer’s and/or dementia and their caregivers. This includes daily activity emails, weekly social work support, weekly live virtual Zoom activities and support groups, home drop-off of activity supplies and meals and 24/7 telephone availability of W.I.S.E. staff.

“These programs have provided D. and her

family the support and encouragement needed on a daily basis,” said one of our Virtual W.I.S.E. Caregivers. “The emails have been inspirational. We have even learned a lot of good facts about life, events and people. We even have found ourselves laughing out loud! What a good feeling! We need this and look forward to these programs to get by each day! Thank you for providing them. We appreciate it very much!”

“Caregiving can be one of the most rewarding, yet stressful of life’s tasks. It is our belief that assisting the caregiver is just as important as assisting their loved one,” stated Melynda A. Mileski, EVP/COO. “Our specialized staff team is dedicated to these families, providing daily contact, information, socialization activities, support, counseling, home visits and meal delivery.”

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 about The Gateway Family YMCA or the Virtual WISE Center adult program, visit tgfymca.org or contact 908-349-9622.

*Names of WISE members and caregivers have been changed for privacy.



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Spirit of UNION • Page 9 • December 2020

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Contact Community Access Unlimited at info@caunj.org to inquire about this program. Landlords or any person who knows a renter who is struggling are encouraged to let tenants know about this program.

CAU is a Union County-based, statewide nonprofit that works to integrate people with disabilities and youth at risk into the general community through comprehensive supports.

Funding for this program has been provided by the City of Elizabeth and Union County.

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 4,000 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 www.caunj.org or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ 07202.

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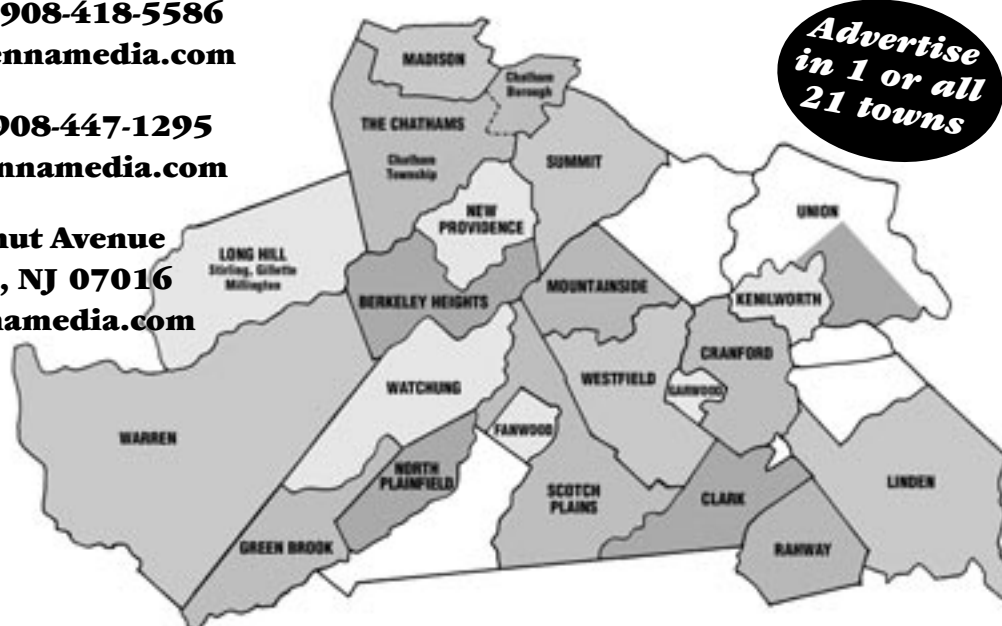
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4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700
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9 HALF PAGE	6.5" x 9" or 10" x 7"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1300	\$1600	\$1900	\$2200	\$2400
12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000
2 PAGE SPREAD	21" x 14"	\$700							
BACK PAGE	10" x 14"	\$500							
FRONT PAGE BANNER	8.25" x 2"	\$320							
FRONT PAGE BOX	1.5" x 4.5"	\$240							

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UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY DECEMBER 2020 VIRTUAL YOUTH PROGRAMS

WEEKLY PROGRAMS

Virtual Biographical Storytime

Tuesdays at 7:00 PM

| All ages | No registration necessary

Learn all about important figures from the past and present, broadcast on Facebook Live and subsequently available on Instagram!

Virtual Storytime

Wednesdays at 10:30 AM

| All ages | No registration necessary

Spend this special time listening to a story and singing songs & rhymes, broadcast on Facebook Live and subsequently available on Instagram! NOTE: The 12/2 and 12/16 storytimes will be presented by special guests. More information under 'Additional Programs'.

Virtual Storytime

Fridays at 10:30 AM

| All ages | No registration necessary

Spend this special time listening to a story and singing songs & rhymes, broadcast on Facebook Live and subsequently available on Instagram! NOTE: There will be no storytime on 12/25.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

Sew It! Take-Home Project

Throughout December

| Ages 8 - 18 | No registration necessary

Give the gift of restful sleep this holiday season (or enjoy catching some zzz's yourself) by making a soothing sleep mask! No previous sewing experience necessary. An on-demand instructional video for this project will be available throughout December. Please email childrensdepartment@uplnj.org to receive the URL. Pick up a project supply kit by calling 908-851-5450 ext. 4.

Available while supplies last.

Virtual Music & Movement with Boogie Woogie Babies

Wednesday, 12/2 at 10:30 AM

| All ages | No registration necessary

Enjoy a virtual music & movement class led by Boogie Woogie Babies! This program will be broadcast on Facebook Live and subsequently available on-demand for one month.

Club Teen Virtual Check-In

Wednesday, 12/2 at 6:00 PM

| Ages 14 - 18 | Registration required

Catch up with your pals at Club Teen without leaving the house! This program will take place on Zoom.

Construction Zone Virtual Challenge

Monday, 12/7 at 4:00 PM

| All ages | Registration required

Challenge yourself to design new creations with your own Legos and blocks! We'll set the challenge and a timer, and you'll put your building skills to the test! This program will take place on Zoom.

Kids' Paint-Along

Wednesday, 12/9 at 4:00 PM

| Ages 5 - 13 | Registration required

Grab some art supplies and join us for this month's virtual paint-along! This program will take place on Zoom.

Bendy Bookwork Yoga Storytime

Wednesday, 12/16 at 10:30 AM

| All ages | No registration necessary

Club Teen Virtual Check-In

Wednesday, 12/16 at 6:00 PM

| Ages 14 - 18 | Registration required

Catch up with your pals at Club Teen without leaving the house! This program will take place on Zoom.

Virtual Bedtime Storytime

Thursday, 12/17 at 7:00 PM

| All ages | No registration necessary

Get ready for bedtime with a great story, broadcast on UPL's Facebook Live and subsequently available on UPL's Instagram! Don't forget to wear your coziest PJs!

Anime & Manga Drawing Workshop

Friday, 12/18:

| Ages 8 - 18 | Registration required Learn from comic book writer and artist Doug Baron how to draw your own anime and manga characters!

ZOOMS IN WITH MUSIC, DINERS, CRAFTS AND MORE

Celebrate December with Union Public Library's (UPL) exciting virtual events adult programs. All are free and open to the public. For more information, and to register, check out our new website at uplnj.org. All programs are on Zoom.

Broadway Deconstructed:

"I'm the Greatest Star" Part One

Tuesday, December 1 @ 4:00-5:00pm

Presented by Sam and Candy Caponegro
Join Sam and Candy Caponegro as they show us clips and explain how some famous and not so famous Broadway shows were put together. The Caponegros have worked in all aspects of theater for over 30 years.

Virtual Beginner Flow Yoga

*Thursdays, December 3, 10, 17,
6:00 - 6:30 pm*

Presented by Crystal Dodson, Owner and C.E.O. of EnVizion Wellness, Inc.

Experience the foundations of yoga postures, body awareness and alignment, relaxation of the mind and a connection with the breath and improve muscle strength and flexibility specific to your mind and body.

Virtual Paint Night for Adults

Friday, December 4, 2020, 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Max of 20 people

Paint a colorful winter themed painting in acrylic paints on canvas with Express Yourself Studios and de-stress, have fun and be creative. No experience required. All materials provided. You must pick up your kit from the Vauxhall Branch Library BEFORE you register. Call 908-851-5451 to schedule a pickup.

Broadway Deconstructed:

"Can't Say No" Part Two

Tuesday, December 8, 4:00-5pm

Presented by Sam and Candy Caponegro
Join Sam and Candy as they show us clips and explain how some famous and not so famous Broadway shows were put together. The Caponegros have worked in all aspects of theater for over 30 years.

Pick up a program supply kit by calling 908-851-5450 ext. 4.

Available while supplies last!

Construction Zone Virtual Challenge

Monday, 12/21 at 4:00 PM

| All ages | Registration required

Challenge yourself to design new creations with your own Legos and blocks! We'll set the challenge and a timer, and you'll put your building skills to the test! This program will take place on Zoom.

Holiday Break Boredom Busters

Week of 12/28

From Monday through Wednesday, we'll be offering a different winter-themed take-home activity each day! Reserve an activity kit by calling 908-851-5450 ext. 4.

Available while supplies last!

More holiday break programming to be announced!

Recruiters: The Inside Information

Wed., Dec. 9, 1:00-2:00pm

Presented by Ed Han

Learn what role employment agencies and recruiters play in your job search including what they are looking for, what matters to them and when you should step away.

History of Christmas Carols

Thurs. Dec. 10, 4:00-5:00pm

Presented by

The Museum of Early Crafts and Trades
Trace the evolution of Christmas Carols from pagan solstice songs to the wide range of carols played and performed around the wintertime holidays today. Participants can sing along while exploring the histories of songs.

Food, Diners, New Jersey and So Much More: A Conversation with Peter Genovese

Mon., Dec. 14, 11:00am-12:30pm

Peter Genovese, food and features writer for nj.com and The Star-Ledger, eats, lives - even dreams - New Jersey. The author of Jersey Diners, The Great American Road Trip and many other books, he has driven more than one million miles around the state in the past twenty years with and without the Munchmobile.

Ed Goldberg's Odessa Klezmer Band Hanukkah Concert

Tuesday, December 15, 2:00 - 3:00pm

Co-hosted with YM-YWHA Union County
Enjoy a live concert featuring the Odessa Klezmer Bandleader, Ed Goldberg who has performed at Carnegie Hall four times. The band received an award for their Best Klezmer Album "Who Stole the Kishka?"

Off The Shelf Book Group

Thursday, December 17, 7:00pm-8:00pm

Led by Marie Boin

Off The Shelf Book Club members discuss a different title each month! Titles are available for free download with your library card on Hoopla! New members are always welcome.

December title: The Queen's Secret
by Karen Harper



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Introducing Our Expanded Union County Team

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