

CRANFORD MONTHLY_{NJ}

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CRANFORD POLICE OFFICER DELIVERS BABY BOY

Submitted by Detective Lieutenant Davenport

Patrolmen Thomas Bell and James Knight were on patrol around 8:33 a.m. on December 20, 2020, when they were dispatched to a 9-1-1 call for a pregnant woman in labor. Cranford resident Gina Chaves had gone into labor in her Cranford home when her water suddenly broke and the baby's head had begun crowning.

Patrolman Bell, a 21-year veteran of the police force, quickly assessed the situation, making a determination that their time was limited and the delivery would need to occur in the home. During the delivery, Patrolman Bell soon discovered that the umbilical cord had wrapped around the baby's neck. Patrolman Bell was fortunately able to remove the cord from around the baby's neck and deliver the baby boy, shortly thereafter. Everyone, including the newborn's parents, were relieved when the baby began to cry. Patrolman Knight took part in comforting the new parents until Lucas was turned over to the Cranford First Aid Squad to assess the newborn and monitor Gina's condition.

The Cranford First Aid Squad took baby Lucas and his mother to Saint Barnabas Medical Center, Livingston for evaluation. The proud parents, Gina and Noberto Chaves of

Cranford are now home and said, baby Lucas is "healthy" as they expressed their gratitude to the responding officers and EMT's for their actions.



(above) Patrolmen Thomas Bell and James Knight recently visited the Chaves family.

CRANFORD FIRST AID SQUAD AIDS IN BABY DELIVERY

Submitted by Kent Lucas

On an early morning in 2020, the Cranford First Aid Squad crew of EMTs Julia Connolly, Gianni Matadial, Jake Thompson and Brian Waldner was dispatched for a woman in labor. The sleeping crew members, who always stay overnight at the CFAS building in order to have the quickest response possible, jumped out of bed and quickly headed to the scene to meet the Cranford Police Department.

Upon arrival, the baby's head was starting to appear and it was evident that the birth was imminent. There would be no time to transport to the nearest emergency room and the decision was made to deliver the baby at home.

As the delivery progressed, it was found that the umbilical cord had wrapped around the baby's neck. This is called a nuchal cord, and it occurs in roughly 20% of all births. Usually it is not a threat to the health of the baby, as the cord can be slipped off the neck as the head is delivered, and fortunately that was the case for this baby.

Paramedics soon arrived on scene and accompanied the First Aid Squad crew, transporting mom and baby to the ambulance. Both were taken to the hospital and were perfectly healthy.



(above) Cranford First Aid Squad EMTs Julia Connolly, Brian Waldner, Gianni Matadial and Jake Thompson.

Photo by Cranford First Aid Squad

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Court Administrator	908-709-7242
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CRANFORD'S LITTLE FREE PANTRY IS NOW OPEN FOR ANYONE IN NEED

Submitted by Susan Caruso Green

Drive by Cranford United Methodist Church and in the parking lot (shared with the Cranford Library) you will see the new Little Free Pantry. Built by Boy Scout Josh Schwartz, the pantry is open 24/7 for anyone who needs food, or wants to donate food for families in need.

Take what you need, leave what you can – no

questions asked.

If the pantry is full, there are extra bins available for your non-perishable food donations. The pantry was created by Josh to enable neighbor to help neighbor in the spirit of community, charity, justice and sharing. Thank you, Josh, and thanks to everyone who is making this community service possible.



(above) Boy Scout Josh Schwartz built a community pantry where neighbors can help each other. Located in the parking lot of Cranford United Methodist Church (corner of Walnut and Lincoln Avenues), it is available to pick up and drop off 24/7.

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CRANFORD'S TOWN WIDE GARAGE SALE APRIL 10

Cranford's Town Wide Garage Sale hosted by Project Home of Cranford is scheduled for Saturday April 10, 2021 rain or shine. This is a great opportunity for residents to clean out items they no longer need and turn them into cash and most importantly help support township residents in need. Winter is the perfect time to start your spring cleaning early and to plan your sale.

Those who register will have the address of their sale and brief description of what they have to offer for sale included on the listing that will be posted on the Project Home website and on Facebook for shoppers looking to find sale locations. On-line registration will be available through April 6, 2021, mail in registration must be postmarked by April 2, 2021.

To participate in the Town Wide Garage Sale registration is available on-line through the Project Home website: cranfordprojecthome.org, or by mailing in the completed registration form, which can also be found on the website or send a note with your name, address, telephone number and brief description of what you are selling, along with a check for \$25 to Project Home of Cranford, PO Box 724, Cranford, NJ 07016. Note, only your address and what you are selling will be posted to the site for shoppers to see.

All participants are requested to follow the current health and safety guidelines relating to COVID-19 while running their individual sale.

Since March and the start of the current COVID crisis Project Home of Cranford, through Cranford Family Care has assisted over 25 families with housing costs. It is through fundraisers like the Town Wide Garage Sale that we as a community are able to lend a hand to those in need when unexpected financial crisis impacts our neighbors.

For 25 years Project Home of Cranford, a 501(c)3 charity, has been working through Cranford Family Care to keep Cranford families in crisis in their homes. The Town Wide Garage Sale is one of the events that Project Home runs to raise funds for Cranford Family Care. For questions about the garage sale or just find out more about Project Home and our mission please email us at info@cranfordprojecthome.org, visit us at cranfordprojecthome.org and Like us on Facebook ProjectHomeOfCranford.

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DON'T BLAME THE ARROW FOR MISSING THE TARGET

Just like tens of millions of other Americans, you were looking for relief from your chronic knee pain. You thought Viscosupplementation injections might be the answer, but the results were disappointing and painful. Don't assume the treatment wasn't right. That could very well be like blaming the arrow for its path to the target when the problem might be the archer. If you didn't get the pain relief you were hoping for, chances are your injection treatment was off target. Unlike blind injections or even ultrasound targeted treatments found elsewhere, **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** uses diagnostic fluoroscopy to make sure the area that needs treated is the exact area where the injection goes. This is the most advanced method of delivering this pain relieving treatment with 95% accuracy to give you the results you're looking for. The use of Fluoroscopy guided injections sets **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** apart. The end result is you living pain free from your chronic knee pain. You can avoid the lengthy and painful road of knee replacement surgery. You can avoid the endless trial and error assortment of potentially addictive prescription medications. This treatment, using fluoroscopy guided injections has seen a success rate of above 85% in those suffering from knee pain related to osteoarthritis, and that includes people with bone on bone involvement. You've suffered from chronic knee pain long enough. Call **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** now for a RISK FREE consultation.



If Knee Surgery Sounds Scary, It Should

Have you have been told you are facing knee replacement surgery? Have you been told about all the downsides you could be facing? First and foremost, there are NO guarantees that knee replacement surgery will be the answer to your pain, but let's look further:

- Surgery is costly, regardless of the percentage of services covered by insurance.
- Surgery requires lost time from work and typically requires a regimen of rehabilitation and medications.
- With surgery, there is always a risk for unwelcomed complications. And you could be back to where you started, or worse.
- Medications will be required for relief from surgery and you have been down that road before. Additions to these pain medications can cause potential side effects, something you do not want to experience.
- Rehabilitation can take years.

Consider This Alternative To Surgery

Northeast Spine & Wellness Center offers you a real opportunity and a painless way to say goodbye to your knee pain without any surgery. Here are just a few of the important benefits you should consider?

- Diagnostic fluoroscopy accurately targets the pain, unlike blind injections.
- Guided fluoroscopic injections are virtually pain free, unlike blind injections.
- No lost time from work or family.
- No expensive or time consuming rehabilitation.
- No potentially addictive prescription medications.
- Recovery time is almost instant, not months or years.

How Does This New Treatment Work?

Relief begins almost as fast as it takes to pronounce the treatment. It's called Viscosupplementation Therapy. To begin with, it starts with **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** investing in the use of diagnostic fluoroscopy. This enables them to target the exact location of your knee pain with pinpoint accuracy. What follows is a simple injection that causes little to no pain, especially when compared to what you may be living with daily. That explains what you will see on the surface of this revolutionary treatment. What's taking place below the surface is how and where the natural healing process takes place. The injection of a Hyaluronic acid called Hyalgan. This gel-like substance was approved by the FDA in 1996. Hyalgan is a natural substance that mimics the synovial fluid that is already produced by your body in your joints. Osteoarthritis sufferers in particular see a reduction in this much needed synovial fluid in their knee joints. Without that cushioning layer of protection, the cartilage in your knee can begin to wear away leading to the rubbing of bone on bone. Through Viscosupplementation Therapy, this natural substance immediately goes to work reducing the swelling and inflammation in the joint and adding a coating layer of protection. Think about Dorothy taking the oil can to The Tin Man. You'll begin to feel that same kind of relief and quite possibly feel like you're ready for a dance down the yellow brick road to recovery yourself. And with a success rate of over 85% in alleviating pain associated with osteoarthritis, it's easy to see why this treatment is so readily covered by Medicare and by most major insurance providers. Diagnostic fluoroscopy to target the pain, Viscosupplementation Therapy to relieve the pain. Simple, fast and no surgery!

Do you Suffer from any of these Symptoms?

There are a number of reasons why you developed Osteoarthritis pain. It can develop with age or because of heredity. It could be from repetitive stress from a job or some glory days in athletics. Of course your concern is with the symptoms you face daily and how to make them end, hopefully without surgery or the use of potentially addictive medications. **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** understands the symptoms you have been living with and can help. If you have any of the symptoms below, please call us today. Relief is a phone call away.

- **Pain** - Whether it's a sharp aching or maybe a burning sensation, the pain can range from irritating to debilitating.
- **Swelling** - This can cause tenderness and soreness to the entire knee area, making walking or going up and down stairs painful, getting in and out of bed or bathtubs difficult and dangerous just name a few activities affected by swelling.
- **Stiffness** - Getting up out of bed or after sitting for a period of time gets more and more difficult. This loss of mobility can be more than a hindrance. It can be dangerous if you need to move quickly.
- **Loss of muscle strength** - This can lead to balance issues and the strong possibility of falling.
- **Joint deformity** - Not just unsightly, but painful as well.
- **Creaking Joints** - Can be painful and a sign of more discomfort to come.
- **Sleepless nights** - Losing sleep over your suffering is not just irritating, but potentially dangerous because of so many other health concerns that can be affected by loss of sound sleep.

Let Me Show You Targeted Relief From Your Knee Pain

Every day, I see patients suffering from knee pain due to arthritis, osteoarthritis, sports injuries or other conditions. Many have been told that they are in need of knee replacement surgery. Other patients say they have been prescribed various prescription medications to deal with the pain.

Something else I see almost every day, are patients that have tried viscosupplementation knee injections elsewhere and found it to be a painful and ineffective experience because the injections were not administered using fluoroscopic guidance. Instead of using the incredibly accurate diagnostic fluoroscopy we use at **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** these patients experienced a blind injection technique, which can be as inaccurate as playing pin the tail on the donkey.

Once I am able to explain to my patients about the pin point accuracy of using diagnostic fluoroscopy and the amazing results viscosupplementation can provide, they are thrilled to get started. They are even more thrilled when they feel the relief. Please contact **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** today to schedule your RISK FREE consultation.

Call 732-827-0800

Scot Paris MD, FACS



Here's what our patients have to say

"I'm dancing without pain. I can move with no problem whatsoever. I can go up and down steps with no pain."

- Patricia G.

"Over 85% relief for the first time in 15 years, suffering with knee pain. My life is getting back to normal."

- Perry O.

"After only four visits, I have absolutely no pain! The staff is "top-notch."

- Quenton L.

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- Requirements for volunteer drivers are:
- Licensed Driver over the age of 18
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 - Minimum commitment of one time per month

To apply for a volunteer driver position for the Cranford openings:

- Go to the Mobile Meals website at mobilemealsofwestfield.org
- Click on VOLUNTEER in the upper right hand corner of the home page
- Click PRINT VOLUNTEER APPLICATION at the bottom of that page
- Print completed application and submit to: MOBILE MEALS OF WESTFIELD
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For more information, call 908-233-6146.

RECREATION & PARKS WINTER VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

The Cranford Recreation & Parks Department would like to announce that registration for Virtual Winter programs is still open, with availability in all programs. All programs are listed in our online brochure, which is posted on the website, cranfordnj.org/recreation-parks and the social media pages of Facebook at facebook.com/CranfordRecreationAndParks and Instagram at instagram.com/CranfordRecreationAndParks. Registration for all classes may be done online

through Community Pass. Online registration will enable you to register 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to make payment by credit card and to receive the latest program updates as they occur through your account. You may access your existing account or create a new accounts by visiting register.communitypass.net/cranford. If you would like assistance to register online or have any other questions, please call the Recreation Department at 908-709-7283, Extension 2.

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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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SCHEDULE YOUR COVID VACCINATION

The County of Union opened an online registration system at ucnjvaccine.org for those eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccination.

Please note the registration system will only log those who are eligible to receive the vaccination. Those who are ineligible to receive vaccinations will not be allowed to pre-register, and must wait until they are eligible.

Those who are eligible to receive the vaccine include paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials and long-term care residents and staff, and also sworn law enforcement personnel and

fire professionals. Residents 65 and older are also eligible to receive the vaccinations, as are those between the ages of 16-64 with medical conditions, as defined by the CDC, that increase the risk of severe illness from the virus.

The county is offering the Moderna vaccine. The vaccination clinic is located at Downs Hall at Kean University in Union, and is currently open five days a week from 3-7 p.m. Once more vaccines are available, the county is planning to offer the COVID-19 vaccine in different areas of the county.

To secure an appointment for the COVID vaccination visit ucnjvaccine.org.

NAMI UNION COUNTY “CIRCLE OF FRIENDS”

The Union County chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) invites area residents to join its Zoom “Circle of Friends” for a free informal evening of discussion on Feb. 23, from 7:30 - 9 p.m.

The format will be a panel discussion with Joyce Benz, LCSW, Director of Intensive Family Support Services of the Mental Health Assoc. in NJ as moderator along with other NAMI members. The panel will explore various topics affecting persons with mental

illness and offer insight from their own experiences in dealing with these problems. Join us and bring your questions and concerns. This is an opportunity for information sharing with others who have a common interest.

Please register for this evening at naminj.org/support/affiliates/union/UpcomingEvent. Click on the “Register Here” link which will not be available until a few days before the event.

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WINTER WALK AND COFFEE WITH A COP 2/13

CRANFORD MONTHLY • Page 9 • February 2021

On Sat, Feb. 13th, from 1 – 3 p.m., the Cranford Police Department Outreach Officers and Cranford Riverwalk Restoration and Preservation Alliance, in partnership with the Cranford Downtown Management, will be hosting Coffee with a Cop and Winter Walk on the Riverwalk. Cranford residents of all ages are invited to pick up complimentary hot chocolate or coffee and walk Cranford's historic Riverwalk while having a casual conversation with officers at the Cranford Police Department. The goal of the walk is to allow the Cranford Police Department to interact positively with the citizens they serve each day, as well as build relationships with the community.

Participants can pick up a complimentary beverage offered by the Cranford Police Department at the Cranford Heritage Plaza, located at the intersection of South Avenue East, Lincoln Park East and Centennial Ave. Everyone will then be welcomed to walk the paved one-third of a mile Riverwalk along the Rahway River from the Heritage Plaza to Droescher's Mill Park and waterfalls on Lincoln Avenue.

"Coffee with a Cop is a way for members of the Cranford Police Department to interact positively and proactively with the citizens they serve, building relationships and addressing community concerns through casual conversations," Chief Ryan Greco of the Cranford Police Department said.

Officer Ali Muhammad of the Community

Outreach Division highlighted the benefit of this upcoming event in light of this past year. "COVID-19 has been devastating to our nation, so this opportunity to once again interact in a safe manner while informing others of the good works of the police and community members has us hopeful for a brighter 2021," he said. "We will have informational handout pamphlets regarding safety and new programs coming in the future."

"One of the valuable aspects of Cranford's historic Riverwalk, which is part of the Union County parks system, is the central location," explains Michael Mason, president of the Cranford Riverwalk Restoration and Preservation Alliance. "It is an easy place for Union County residents to gather, and its rich history and beautiful scenery lends itself to social walks such as this. We are honored to have the Cranford Police Department use our walk for their outreach efforts."

The hopes of the Cranford Riverwalk Restoration and Preservation Alliance is that more individuals will be interested in walking the Riverwalk, learning about Cranford's unique past while helping to work restore it at their monthly restoration days, held the second Saturday of each month from March until November.

All ages are welcomed. Masks are required. Social distancing will be enforced. The Cranford Police Department will have pamphlets available to inform participants of the many activities the Department offers to residents.

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The teachers and staff of Brookside Place School arrived to a wonderful sight recently thanks to the efforts of the BPS PTA and its families.

Dozens of handmade signs of thanks formed a garden of gratitude on the front lawn. The

heartfelt expressions recognized the efforts of the teachers and staff during these unusual times. The initiative also served as a fundraiser for the PTA with the funds supporting their mini-grant program. The surprise was appreciated by all!



Photos by Cranford Public Schools

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HOW TO BE A GRANDPARENT DURING PANDEMIC

SAGE Eldercare and Your Decisions Matter will host a live zoom event featuring New York Times bestselling author and Ph.D. Michael Thompson on February 9th at 4:00 p.m. “Grandparents are missing their grandchildren; grandchildren want to see their grandparents, and the parents in the middle are missing the support and connection across the generations,” explained Thompson, who himself is a grandparent of three.

While Facetime and Zoom allow for face-to-face communication, the technology can feel awkward and unsatisfying to older adults. Thompson will discuss this and the stress of being separated from families, the yearning to be in touch and the unique difficulties grandparents are experiencing during COVID-19. He will also share alternative modes of connecting that can help.

Thompson is the author or coauthor of nine books, including the New York Times bestseller *Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys* as well as *Best Friends/ Worst Enemies: Understanding the Social Lives of Children*, *The Pressured Child* and *Homesick and Happy: How Time Away from Parents Can Help a Child Grow*. He also works as a clinical psychologist and school consultant. He is presently the supervising psychologist for the Belmont Hill School in Belmont, MA and has worked in over

700 schools in the U.S., Asia, Africa Europe and Central America.

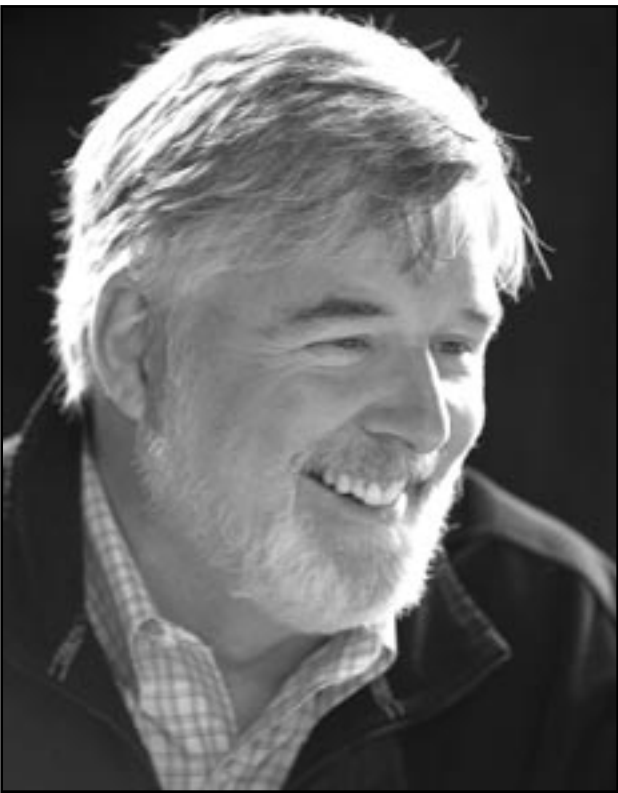
“We are excited for SAGE to offer this very informative program,” said Nina Tiger, Coordinator of Your Decisions Matter. “We know the difficulty older adults are facing during this unprecedented time and one of the biggest issues they are voicing is that they miss their grandchildren terribly. We’re hopeful this program will offer them helpful solutions.”

Register here: bit.ly/SAGEEldercare.
For questions, more information or help using ZOOM - email: yourdecisionsmatter@sageeldercare.org or call 908-598-5511.

Your Decisions Matter is a community initiative funded by Atlantic Health’s Chilton and Overlook Medical Centers’ Community Advisory Boards whose goal is to encourage families to talk with their loved ones about end-of-life care and decision making.

Since 1954, SAGE Eldercare has been helping make the communities it serves amazing places to age. The non-profit organization provides a wide array of information, support, and services designed to help individuals lead the most independent and active lives possible.

For more information, please call 908-273-5550 or visit sageeldercare.org.



(above) SAGE Eldercare and Your Decisions Matter will host a live zoom event on February 9th at 4:00 p.m. with New York Times bestselling author and PH.D. Michael Thompson. The topic will be “How to be a grandparent during the pandemic”. Register here: <http://bit.ly/SAGEEldercare>. For questions, more information or help using ZOOM - email: yourdecisionsmatter@sageeldercare.org or call 908-598-5511.

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(above) The Ayala Family of Cranford

Submitted by Gretchen M. Boger-O'Bryan

A recent Friday morning had special meaning to five Union County foster youth celebrating an end to living in foster care as adoptions into their forever families became finalized. Union County's Family Court celebrated National Adoption Day on Friday, Nov. 20, ahead of the national Saturday Nov. 21 festivities, as five youth ranging from two to 11 years old, along with their foster families, met on Zoom with Judges Marc R. Brown and James Hely to make official what each already felt – they were home.

Although COVID-19 required the day be different than prior years, the excitement was as palpable as ever. A car parade included judiciary staff, CASA of Union County staff and interns, fire trucks, police cars and a band of superheroes from Heroes 4 Heroes, a volunteer organization of corrections officers that don superhero costumes and visit children facing adversities. The parade included stops at each adoptive home – Cranford, Elizabeth, Linden, Newark and Union – with sirens blaring, horns honking and rounds of applause.

Each family received a gift basket from CASA of Union County, with collaboration from David Brearley Middle and High School, Live or Tie Dye, Two Park Princesses, Kappa Alpha Theta of Westfield, Division of Child Protection and Permanency and Catholic Charities, Girl Scout Troop 40042 of Cranford, and Scotch Plains Girl Scout Lauren Cunningham, Union County Bar Association, and many generous community members who heeded the call for donations. Each family fun-themed basket contained board and card games, puzzles, fleece blankets, teddy bear for each adoptee, themed picture frame for the first official family photo, jars of popping corn, movie candy, Delice Macarons, ShopRite and WalMart gift cards and a welcome mat declaring, "There's No Place Like Home." Adoptees and siblings received tie-dye sweatshirts from Live or Tie Dye and books handpicked by Kappa Alpha Theta's Westfield chapter. At each parade stop, Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan, Development and Communications Manager at CASA of Union



(above) CASA staff interns at parade step off at Union County Courthouse

County, took photographs of each family as they emerged from their homes and were greeted by superheroes, the symphony of honking horns and applause, and received balloon bouquets from A Birthday Wish. A hot breakfast – sponsored by Union County Surrogate James LaCorte – was delivered to each family by DCPD staff and Cranford resident Robin Johnstone.

Adoption Day began 20 years ago when a coalition of The Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Alliance for Children's Rights and Children's Action Network encouraged nine cities to open courts the Saturday before Thanksgiving to allow adoptions to be finalized and celebrated. Today, more than 120,000 nationwide need a permanent home, with an average wait in foster care of four years. Each year, 23,000 youth age out of the system without a family or safety net in place.

ABOUT CASA OF UNION COUNTY

Since 2005, Court Appointed Special Advocates of Union County has been recruiting, training, supervising and supporting community volunteers to advocate for abused, neglected and abandoned children placed in foster homes or residential facilities. CASA volunteers ensure children's best interests remain the priority while working toward establishing a safe, stable and permanent home for each child served.

For details on CASA of Union County and becoming an advocate for a foster youth, contact Walia at wworrill@casaoofunioncounty.org or log on to www.casaoofunioncounty.org.

Photos by CASA of Union County

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Community Hope's Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program is currently providing assistance remotely. Urgent community-based services such as critical supplies and veteran wellness-checks are provided in person.

The increase in support services to veterans and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic is possible thanks to funding from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

To make a referral, please call the referral hotline at 1-855-483-8466 or email SSVF@communityhope-nj.org, or email Gema Diaz at gdiaz@communityhope-nj.org.

Community Hope is a nonprofit that helps individuals, including veterans, and their families, overcome mental illness, addiction, homelessness and poverty. Learn more at communityhope-nj.org.



ROGER, FOR NEW JERSEY VETERAN COMMUNITY TO FIND SUPPORT

ROGER, a search platform for New Jersey veterans, launched on November 9th, just ahead of Veterans Day 2020. The platform was created by Backpacks For Life founders Brett D'Alessandro and Alexa Modero. After serving the Veteran community for 6 years, they found many inefficiencies and convoluted systems that prevented veterans from getting the care they need in a quick and efficient way. From lengthy intake processes to outdated information on organizations' websites, the Backpacks For Life team knew there was a better way to get veterans the care they needed.

ROGER allows veterans and their family members to search for programs, resources and care by a variety of factors such as zip code, branch of service, discharge status and income. With these customizable search features, veterans will see only the programs that they qualify for. This helps mitigate time wasted for not only veterans searching for programs that fit their needs, but also the service providers to ensure the

veteran is a good fit for them.

"Navigating through resources is hard...we get it. As a veteran myself, I was often running around in circles trying to find programs that I was eligible for and that fit my needs. When we're working with veterans, every minute matters and with ROGER we can work more quickly to get veterans what they need. We're excited to bring ROGER to the NJ veteran community." - Sgt. Brett D'Alessandro, Retired US Marine & President of Backpacks For Life

To explore ROGER, visit www.roger.vet or contact the ROGER team at roger@backpacksforlife.org

Backpacks For Life is a 501(C)3 nonprofit organization that serves the homeless and at-risk veteran community. By regularly distributing backpacks filled with essentials to veterans on the streets and providing mentorship to at-risk veterans and their families, Backpacks For Life aims to bridge the gap between veterans and the resources available to them.

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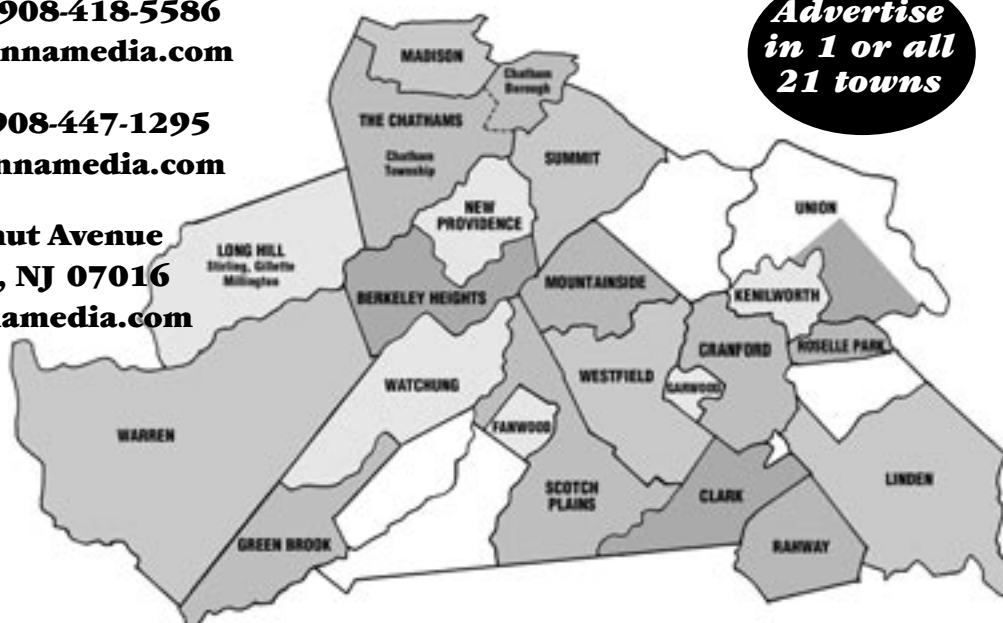
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Submitted by Steven Saltzman

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Many homeowners have already purchased these distinctive plaques and have commented about what it means to them to participate. For instance, Suzanne and Mara, living in a home built in 1890, wrote that they “wanted to support the project and [were] excited about the prospect of having [their] home “identified” as contributing to the historical character of Cranford.” Remo, whose house dates from 1750, “wanted to note to others the value of a historic home.” Another couple wanted to “preserve Cranford history.”

If you are interested please visit our website, preservecranford.com, to see if your home qualifies and place your order.



(above) A bronze plaque recognizes your home’s historic contribution.

UNITED WAY OF GREATER UNION COUNTY

As part of its transformation to continue providing programs and services, United Way of Greater Union County (UWGUC) recently announced that it has modernized their comprehensive approach to their family strengthening model. The organization is collaborating within its community resources network and its affiliated initiatives to provide a series of virtual webinars that will provide families and individuals with continued access to services, leadership and career focused initiatives, and ways they can advocate in their communities.

Building Resiliency Empowering Parents, Families and Individuals, the themed focus, serves to provide continued support to residents who are facing educational, health and economic barriers, and ensures services are provided in both the traditional and virtual (online) setting. During the Coronavirus pandemic, UWGUC saw an increase in the number of families struggling to meet basic needs such as buying food, paying rent and utility bills, and having access to

healthcare. The unemployment rate in Union County went from 4.5% in January to 16.4% in June 2020, resulting in more than 81,000 unemployed residents, 3,100 evictions filed and 9,000 food stamp applications filed in Union County.

The organization, through donations of fresh and nonperishable food from Amazon Logistics and the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, also hosts weekly food distributions, where 900 families are served on average each week, since the pandemic began. In addition, during the summer, UWGUC organized and held a virtual back-to-school drive serving more than 400 students with backpacks and school supplies.

UWGUC is also calling for volunteers who are experts in their field to host a workshop or webinar that could help those in the community. The virtual workshops and webinars are free and open to the public. Interested persons can access them through the United Way of Greater Union County website at uwguc.org/virtualworkshops.

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