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MICHAEL NAYA PRESERVES THE HISTORIES OF WWII VETS

Submitted by Margaret McCorry

Michael Naya hopes to be a history professor one day. While the Kean University freshman pursues that professional dream, he is doing the work of a historian, recording the military experiences of World War II veterans from around the country.

Since the age of 14, Naya has interviewed more than 100 World War II veterans to capture their oral histories of the war and one day preserve them in a book. Now 18, the history major from Kenilworth is a founding member of the Young Historians Program through the group D-Day Squadron.

"I want you all to remember the thousands and millions of people who served in World War II. These were the quiet heroes," Naya said. "Every Memorial Day, we honor those who died, and their stories are often widely known, but we very rarely remember those who came back from the war and built our communities."

Naya said getting a book about the Titanic in first grade ignited his interest in history. Then, when he was 14, he watched a video about two World War II veterans reuniting after 70 years.

"I looked over at my mom and said, 'Mom, I want to interview these veterans,'" he said.

His mother connected him with a family friend, John Rembish, who served in World War II, and Naya's passion for interviewing veterans from the Greatest Generation flourished. By reaching out to veteran-related associations, he has talked with veterans across the country.

One of them is 95-year-old Chuck Brown of SeaTac, Washington, who saw combat with the 12th Armored Division in Alsace, France, and helped liberate concentration camps during his three years in the army. He calls Naya a "close friend."

"I think the world of him. He is 18 years old and in his first year of college. I am 95 years old, but we talk on equal terms. For me, it is a wonderful experience. I can't get enough of the guy. There is no age difference when we speak," he said.

Brown, who was drafted at 18, shared with Naya his recollections of the fear, the "terrible cold" and the lack of sleep that dominated his time in the war.

"The only reason that a guy like myself served was for the 12 guys in the squad. You weren't serving for some Hollywood reason," he said. "You were scared to death, and the only thing that meant anything to you were the guys next to you. You would do anything for them."

Through the D-Day Squadron, a group of owners and operators of Douglas DC-3 vintage



(above) Kean University freshman Michael Naya of Kenilworth poses with veterans of World War II and the Korean War. Naya has interviewed more than 100 World War II veterans about their military experiences.

aircraft and World War II veteran airplanes, Naya is developing the Young Historians Program.

"They want to educate young children, teenagers and young adults on World War II through peer outreach, and I find that to be a great idea," Naya said. "It's our job as the next generation to carry on the torch of preserving that memory."

Lyndse Costabile, director of corporate relations, communications and marketing at the D-Day Squadron, said Naya brings experience, innate talent and a passion for history to the Young Historians Program.

"He's very persistent and passionate. That persistence is what sparked our interest in him. He is very charismatic, just a genuine, good-hearted person with a great soul, and those are the types of people we like to surround ourselves with and involve in our efforts," she said.

Naya hopes more Kean students will get involved in the project, something that Adjunct Professor John Lestrangle, who has Naya in his World of History class, endorses.

"I absolutely wish that more students were involved in projects like this. Oral histories like what Michael is conducting are very important primary sources, and there are so many historic events that we can record this way," he said.

With plans to become a high school history teacher and, ultimately, a college history professor, Naya said he chose Kean because of its outstanding reputation for educating teachers. While he hasn't yet set foot on campus this semester as he learns remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic, Naya said he is having a great experience. "I absolutely love it," he said.

Right now, Naya is focused on finding and interviewing survivors of the attack on Pearl Harbor, which launched the U.S. into the war.

"There are still so many men and women out there in our own communities who've never told their stories. They never wanted to talk about it. They came home. They put their duffel bags away. They folded up their uniforms, and they put the war behind them," he said. "I'm glad that I'm able to keep in touch with these eyewitnesses. How many people my age get to say they spoke to a World War II vet? I think it's a privilege and an honor I get to do work like this."

BUSINESS + LIFE KENILWORTH

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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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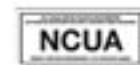
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KENILWORTH'S OLDEST BOY SUCCUMBS AT AGE 100

Eugene Coppola oldest native son remembered

Kenilworth icon Eugene Victor Coppola passed away quietly at home of natural causes on Friday, December 19, 2020. Born at home at 21 N. 20th St. on March 3, 1920, he was one of six children of Amedeo and Rosa Coppola who came to Kenilworth about 1912.

Gene, as he liked to be called, was very proud of being the oldest male resident ever born here to still be living in town. And proud of being among the last of local students who attended Roselle Park High School and to be in the first graduating class in 1938 from the then new Jonathan Dayton Regional High School in Springfield. With enthusiasm he shared stories of growing up in Kenilworth and was eye witness to many historical events taking place here.

On the occasion of his 100th birthday last year he recalled, "As a boy I helped my father in his vegetable store on N. 20th St. It's Morabito's Pharmacy now. My father and sister Sally saw John Kennedy come into the store after the war looking for a girl who lived on N. 22nd St. My father drove a Model T pick-up truck to Newark to get vegetables, sold them from the store, and we delivered them to homes all over. The only paved street in town was the Boulevard. There were practically no houses south of the Boulevard when I grew up. Kenilworth was small; everyone knew everyone else."

"My father was a fireman. I went with him in a snow storm to the Flats Fire [1927] on Passaic Ave. The fire hydrant was frozen; the building burned to the ground. I went to the site of Jimmy Doolittle's plane when [1929] it crashed on Faitoute Ave. There was a big crowd at the scene. It wasn't much of a secret during Prohibition where speakeasies could be found in town. During the Depression marathon dances were held in the fields on Galloping Hill Road. Boys picked water lilies to sell from Jackson Pond that was behind Harding School. It was the Depression and making a few dollars here and there for your family was important."

"Kenilworth was a big baseball town. One of the ballfields was where the Methodist Church is on the Boulevard. Small planes used to land there and later the airfield was moved up to where the Kenilworth Diner is today."

"I saw the Ku Klux Klan march up to the old Upsala College campus. I worked at the Kensington Riding Stables where the Wells Fargo Bank is, and also at Neville's Stables off the Boulevard near N. 9th St. Polo matches, rodeos, and air shows drew thousands of spectators. The shoot-out at the old borough hall in 1940 caused a tremendous stir in town. When I first saw my future wife, Evelyn, I knew I wanted to marry her. We married during the war in 1943 and have a beautiful daughter, also

named Evelyn. I am a very lucky man."

Gene, a WWII US Army veteran, was honorably discharged as a private first class. He served on the planning board, rescue squad, as president of the fire department, as president of the Homeowners' Association, as secretary of the Married and Singles Club, and member of VFW Post 2230. After many years of working at local factories, Gene established in the 1960s his own lunch truck catering business which was well known throughout the Kenilworth region.

In addition to his daughter, Evelyn, Gene is survived by her husband, Gary Delatush; sisters Sally Brokaw and Doris Picaroni; grandsons Lee, Todd, and Scott; great grandchildren Kaitlyn, Nathan, Greyson, and Griffen; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased in 2020 by his wife of 76 years, Evelyn, and earlier by brothers Vincent and George, and sisters Elmina DeGatano and Lucy Pepe. Funeral arrangements were by the Opacity Funeral home with participation from the VFW, the Fire Department, Rescue Squad, and the Police Department. A funeral Mass, December 30, at St. Theresa's Church, was officiated by Rev. Giovanni Rizzo, pastor. Burial was at Graceland Memorial Park, Kenilworth.

Article composed by Walter E. Boright, Ed. D., long-time family friend.

(photos on page 5)

ANNOUNCING THE NEW OFFICE OF DR. EDWARD SOMMA IN BERKELEY HEIGHTS

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Edward Anthony Somma, MD
Internal Medicine

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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(above) Gene Coppola, 18, member of the first graduating class from Jonathan Dayton Reg. HS, 1938.

Source: Coppola family



(above) Gene Coppola, 94, revisits site of Doolittle's 1929 Kenilworth plane crash, 2014.

Source: Source: Historic Signs, Inc.



(above) Pfc Gene Coppola, 24, on a Pacific island off Panama, WWII, 1944.

Source: Coppola family



(above) Evelyn and Gene Coppola out for the evening, 1989.

Source: Coppola family



(above) Gene Coppola, 62, in his catering truck, 1982.

Source: Coppola family



(above) Gene Coppola Kensington Riding Stables, Blvd. and S. 19th St., 1937.

Source: Coppola family



(above) Gene and Evelyn Coppola, 74th wedding anniversary, 2017.

Source: Historic Signs, Inc.

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SEA SCOUT SHIP 228 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE

Are you interested in boating, sailing, or mechanics? Come check out Sea Scouting and let the adventure at sea begin! The crew of Ship 228 will be hosting a virtual open house, taking place over Zoom on Saturday, March 13 at 4:00 p.m. and featuring various activities that are bound to pique a young adult's interest in scouting.

Sea Scouting is open to both male and



(above) Whether you're steering the vessel from the wheelhouse, learning engine room repair, or visiting a new location on one of the many trips, there's something you'll enjoy in Sea Scouting.

females ages 14-21 who have graduated the 8th grade; we also have a new Maritime Explorer Club for younger youth in 6th to 8th grade. Adult volunteers with maritime experience or captain's licenses are needed too. Join us for a day on the water and bring a friend! Visit our website for more information ship228.com.

Ship 228 is proud to host the virtual open house. The event will include a tour of the ship's main vessel (the 65' Sea Dart II, one of the largest Sea Scout vessels on the east coast), an introduction to the Sea Scout program, appearances from current Sea Scouts, a lively Q&A, and more.

To register, please provide your name, email address, and phone number (which is optional) in an email to Ship228.SeaDart@gmail.com.

Sea Scouts from Ship 228 operate the 65' vessel Sea Dart II, along with a fleet of smaller vessels (including sailboats) from their picturesque base located in Linden, New Jersey. Sea Scouting (which is part of the Venturing Program of the Boy Scouts of America) offers young adults the opportunity to travel and learn skills that could be useful in future careers. Whether you're steering the vessel from the wheelhouse, learning engine room repair, or visiting a new location on one of the many trips, there's something you'll enjoy in Sea Scouting. So, try something different, check us out, and prepare yourself to set sail for a real adventure.



(above) Sea Scouts from Ship 228 operate the 65' vessel Sea Dart II, one of the largest Sea Scout vessels on the east coast, along with a fleet of smaller vessels (including sailboats) from their base located in Linden, NJ.



(above) Adult volunteers with maritime experience or captain's licenses are needed too. Visit our website for more information ship228.com, or email Ship228.SeaDart@gmail.com.



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GIRL SCOUT AIMS TO PROMOTE WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Submitted by Liv Meier

As the saying goes, when women support each other, incredible things happen. At Union County



(above) Sarah Kossor, a Gold Award Girl Scout from Kenilworth, used her project to create a women in leadership and service club at Union County Magnet High School last year.

Photo by Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey

Magnet High School, girls have a new, weekly opportunity to reaffirm their power, thanks to Gold Award Girl Scout Sarah Kossor.

In an effort to create a safe and supportive environment for girls to gain confidence and knowledge at her high school, Sarah, a resident of Kenilworth and now a Magnet High School alumna, formed a Women in Leadership and Service club during her senior year.

As part of her Gold Award project plan, Sarah and her team worked with school administrators to create the club, recruited new members, and then conducted weekly meetings that involved guest speakers, discussions on global women's issues such as education, and the creation of informational posters to display around the school.

"Knowing the importance of supportive friendships, I wanted to create this environment for girls to have the chance to come together and raise each other up whenever they needed it," said Sarah.

Despite being an outgoing senior last year, Sarah's vision, and the new club will remain sustainable beyond her involvement through commitments from younger club members and the club's advisor.

Sarah, who has been a part of Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey (GSHNJ) Troop 40128 for 13 years, said being a Girl Scout has taught her the value of selflessness and that anyone is capable of making the world a better place.

"Being a part of a Girl Scout troop has also

taught me the power that girls have when we come together; because when we do, we always make a positive change," she added.

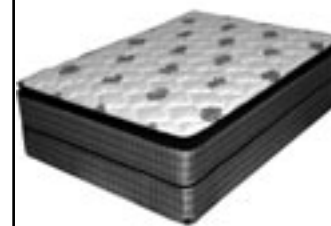
The Women in Leadership and Service club is currently hosting virtual meetings to support girls within the school during the global health crisis.

"It is so wonderful to see our Gold Award Girl Scout using this project as a way to support other girls within her community," said GSHNJ CEO Natasha Hemmings. "GSHNJ is an organization based on women supporting women and Sarah's project is a perfect example of that."

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Veterans and their families who are experiencing a housing crisis may be eligible for emergency assistance such as motel/hotel stays, security deposits, rent, rental arrears, groceries and utilities through Community Hope.

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](mailto: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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'HERBS FOR THE TEAPOT' VIRTUAL PROGRAM

The Kenilworth Historical Society's new "Herbs for the Teapot" virtual program offers participants an opportunity to learn about, blend, brew and enjoy a variety of herbal teas this winter in the comfort of their own homes.

Program registrants will be sent a link to a prerecorded presentation by professional clinical herbalist and proprietor Susanna Reppert Brill, who discusses various herbs, their many uses/benefits and demonstrates how to blend them for tea. For a registration cost of \$20, they will receive, along with the presentation link, a packet containing a variety of herbs, blending supplies and tea cookies. In addition to viewing the program anytime at their leisure, registrants will be able to participate in a virtual group showing of the presentation on Sat., February 27 (2 p.m.), at which time Brill will be on hand to answer questions.

For further information and/or to register for the program, please call 908-709-0434.

Proceeds from the "Herbs for the Teapot" program will benefit the Oswald J. Nitschke House "living history" museum and cultural arts center by helping the Kenilworth Historical Society pay building and general operating costs.

The program is being presented in memory of Darlene Meyers Perry, beloved certified tea specialist and long-standing friend and consultant of the Kenilworth Historical Society, who introduced its members to the practice of tea blending and conducted various beneficial programs for the organization over the years, including Teapot Tales, an African Tea Ceremony and a Chinese New Year's Celebration. Perry passed away last fall and is greatly missed.

Susanna Reppert Brill is a professional clinical

herbalist, herb purveyor, consultant and manager of The Rosemary House & Gardens in Mechanicsburg, Pa. (therosemaryhouse.com), a family-owned herb and spice specialty shop that she operates with her husband David. A graduate of Penn State University, Brill completed a course in herbal medicine at David Winston's Herbal Therapeutics School of Botanical Medicine. Her extensive knowledge of herbs and their many uses has been shared throughout her 40 years in the business established by her mother, Bertha P. Reppert, in 1968.

To learn more about "Herbs for the Teapot" and other Kenilworth Historical Society programs/activities, please visit the organization's website at kenilworthhistoricalsociety.org and follow the organization on Facebook.

The Oswald J. Nitschke House is one of Kenilworth's few remaining original 19th-century farmhouses. Notably, it is the only museum of its kind in the area to portray and interpret everyday life in the early 1900s, particularly the inspiring story of late 19th/early 20th-century immigrants in a developing suburb.

Although unfortunately COVID-19 has prevented the Oswald J. Nitschke House from opening on a regular basis, small group tours of the site may be arranged by calling 908-709-0434. The Kenilworth Historical Society appreciates everyone's continued interest and support, especially during these difficult, uncertain times, when the organization has been unable (due to COVID-19 restrictions) to hold its usual fundraisers/social events for the Nitschke House. For information about how to donate to the non-profit Kenilworth Historical Society in

order to help the Oswald J. Nitschke House "living history" museum and cultural arts center survive and thrive, please consult the organization's website and Facebook page.



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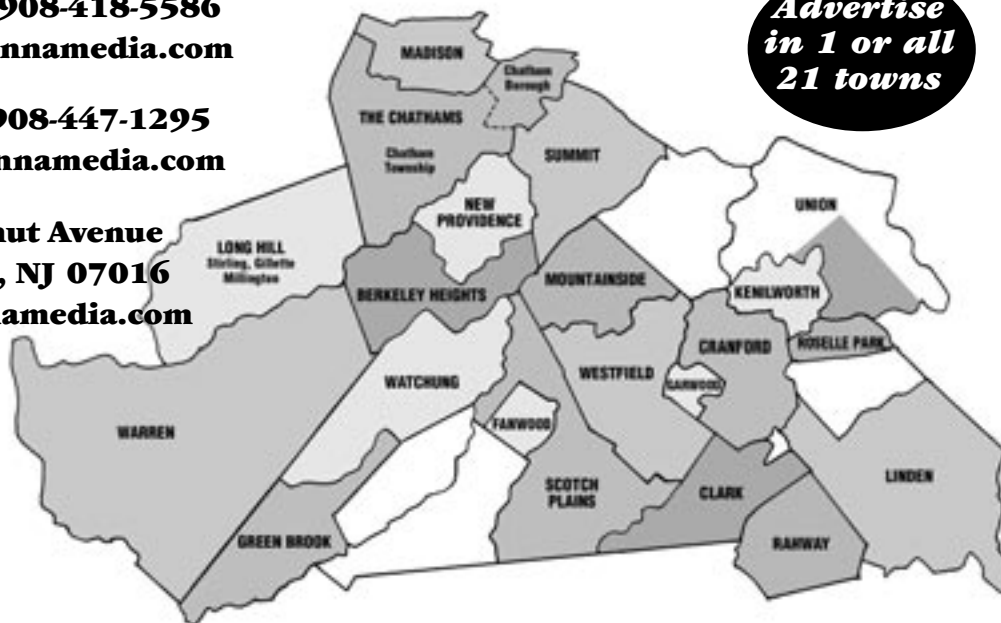
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LIBRARY AWARD CELEBRATES YARNIES GROUP

The Kenilworth Public Library received a New Jersey Library Association Public Relations and Marketing Award. The New Jersey Library Association "Surprise Us" award, was given to the Kenilworth Public Library in recognition of our "Yarnies" yarn skeins. We gave out these mini yarn skeins during last year's yarn tasting event, and they also serve as a type of business card used to promote our "Yarnies" group.

According to the NJLA website "The NJLA Public Relations and Marketing Awards are open to New Jersey academic, public, school, and special libraries, as well as consortia".

We can't wait until we can meet in person again, but in the interim, check our Creativebug a free database available through the Kenilworth Public Library.

Visit creativebug.com/lib/kenilworthlibrary to enjoy this great resource.



KENILWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY FEBRUARY PROGRAMS

548 Boulevard, Kenilworth, NJ 07033
908-276-2451

www.kenilworthlibrary.org/
facebook.com/kenilworth.public.library

Kenilworth Public Library is offering the following virtual programs during the winter season. Programs can be viewed on the library's open Facebook page: facebook.com/kenilworth.public.library. Participants do not need to have a Facebook account in order to view these programs.

The Winter Reading Club concludes on Friday, February 19.

CHILDREN'S VIRTUAL PROGRAMS

Lap Sit for ages 0 - 24 months

Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.

January 5 - February 16

Toddler Time for 2 year old children

Wednesdays, at 10:30 a.m.

January 6 - February 17

PJ Story Time for children ages 3 & up

Thursdays, at 3:30 p.m.

January 7 - February 18

Valentine's Grab n Go craft ages 4-8

Beginning Monday, February 8

Check out a children's book from the Kenilworth Public Library's collection and pick up your Valentine's craft kit. Kenilworth residents may call the library to schedule a pick up time; Kenilworth and out of town residents may call February 11-12 to schedule a pick up time. Crafts are available while supplies last.

Any questions please feel free to call us at 908-276-2451.

Contact the library for more information about virtual programs and to find out when programs will resume inside the library.

START CLEANING OUT YOUR CLOSETS FOR CLOTHING DRIVE

The David Brearley High School Class of 2022 will be hosting a "Clothing Drive" on Saturday, March 20 from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. in the Harding Elementary School parking loop located on the Boulevard. They will accept donations of gently worn clothing of all seasons (men's, women's, and children), accessories (such as belts, shoes, handbags, ties, backpacks, etc.), and linens (such as blankets, sheets, table cloths, curtains, towels). Please note they cannot accept household items (books, electronics, appliances, furniture, dinnerware, sports equipment, toys). You can drive up and they will unload the donations from your vehicle for you. Please contact the Class of 2022 at dbmhclass2022@gmail.com if you have any questions.

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