

Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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BECOME A MEMBER OF THE SCOTCH PLAINS RESCUE SQUAD

Submitted by Susan Baldani, a life member of the SPRS

Our members are your neighbors. Our organization consists of men and women, teenagers and senior citizens, who devote their time to helping others. Please consider joining our team on its life-saving mission, and making our community a better place to live and thrive.

MEET CHANG YARAMOTHU, A MEMBER OF THE SCOTCH PLAINS RESCUE SQUAD

WHEN DID YOU JOIN THE SCOTCH PLAINS RESCUE SQUAD? HOW OLD WERE YOU?

I joined in May 2008 when I was 16 years old.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO JOIN?

When I was younger I wanted to pursue medicine and wanted to experience the various aspects of providing care. Before joining the squad, I used to volunteer at the former Muhlenberg Hospital. and after spending a year there wanted to make a greater impact in patients' lives and help the community as a whole. Joining the squad when I was old enough seemed like a natural progression for me.

HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN ACTIVELY RIDING?

I've been actively riding for the past 12 years. My participation dwindled a bit when I was in college, but I always made time to come back and give some hours during the school year, especially when we had standbys or special crews like snow crews.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT IT?

In the beginning, it was just about gaining some experience and helping the community the best I could, but my purpose with the squad evolved the longer I stayed involved. Through training and experience, we have skills that can help others during the toughest days of their lives. Additionally, I like the fundamental mission of the SPRS where we help people in a medical emergency and never send them a bill. In today's expensive medical world, it's reassuring to know our efforts mean those that need medical assistance have one less bill to worry about. The need for volunteers has especially been highlighted during this pandemic. This is the best avenue to help the community I grew up in.

WHAT'S YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CALL?

One of the hardest calls to deal with are those that involve children, and the younger they are the harder it is. The first pediatric call I had was for a 14-day-old unresponsive and I feared the worst. I went on scene and a frantic new mother put that child in my hands, who immediately started crying. In our world, a crying child is one that is breathing and has an open airway, both of which are great signs. I don't remember the rest, but, I will never forget my relief when I heard those cries and the mother's face slowly lighting up.

DO YOU HOLD, OR HAVE YOU HELD, ANY OFFICER POSITIONS?

IF SO, WHICH ONE(S)?

I've been the Cadet Supervisor, heading the cadet corps, for the past few years. I've also held the positions of Trustee and Vice President.

WHAT IS YOUR PAID PROFESSION?

I'm an Assistant Professor of Engineering Technology and Biomedical Engineering (University Professor) and also serve as a co-founder and chief technology officer of a biotech startup.



(above) Chang Yaramothu,
a member of the Scotch Plains
Rescue Squad.

WHY SHOULD SOMEONE VOLUNTEER WITH OUR SQUAD?

There are plenty of ways to help your community and neighbors. Our squad is one of the best ways to do so. The pandemic has shown how the healthcare system has been overwhelmed. Every single call we take is less stress on the paid services and more ambulances that are available to help all the people. The number of people volunteering across the United States has been decreasing over the last decade and there is a national shortage. If you have always wanted to donate some of your time and are looking for an opportunity, our doors are always open for new volunteers.

Please reach out if you would like to join your neighbors and become a part of our organization.

Go to our website at www.scotchplainsrescuesquad.com email scotchplainsrescuesquad@gmail.com, or call 908-322-2103.

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Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

Scotch Plains Monthly is published by Renna Media. 9,500 newspapers are printed monthly and mailed to every business and resident in Scotch Plains.

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PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

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

Organizations who are interested in submitting content, please email editor@rennamedia.com or call 908-858-4012

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9,500 papers are printed monthly and mailed to every household and business in Scotch Plains.

Reserve space in the next issue. Call Tina today at 908-418-5586 or email info@rennamedia.com

COMMUNITY HOPE CONNECTS VETERANS AND THEIR FAMILIES WITH HOUSING, SERVICES

CALL THE REFERRAL HOTLINE FOR ELIGIBILITY

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, 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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SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION APPLICATIONS

Submitted by Michelle Wyrwa

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Scholarship Foundation is currently accepting applications for high school seniors graduating in 2021 who reside in Scotch Plains or Fanwood, and those residents attending college or other post high school institutions for scholarships.

The numerous scholarships offered by the Foundation range in criteria; some awards are need-based, while others have criteria such as the intent to pursue an education focused on teaching, nursing, mathematics, veterinary science, foreign language, music or fine arts, among many others. The major criterion for eligibility is that the applicant resides in Scotch Plains or Fanwood; an applicant need not be a graduate of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

Applications can be found through the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School counseling office and on spfscholarshipfoundation.org. In addition to the application, the Foundation requires a personal essay from the applicant, a letter of reference, and an official high school or college transcript.

The Foundation recognizes that COVID-19 has presented many challenges to students, and wants applicants to know that the unique circumstances of this year will be taken into account when applications are reviewed.

Submissions must be domestically postmarked

by February 13 and mailed to SPF Scholarship Foundation (Attn: Screening Committee) PO Box 123, Fanwood NJ, 07023 in order to be eligible for consideration. Applications postmarked after February 13 will be returned and incomplete or unsigned applications may not be considered. Applications may be completed on the Foundation's website, spfscholarshipfoundation.org, but must be printed and mailed as directed for consideration.

Since its inception in 1966, the Foundation has awarded over \$3,500,000 in scholarships to 3,310 deserving recipients. Scholarships are funded through a community-wide appeal for donations to the Foundation's Dollars for Students program. Other scholarships are administered by the Foundation, but are funded by community organizations; for example, every Parent-Teacher Association in the district funds at least one scholarship.

Given the challenges posed to students amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation recognizes that the need for scholarship assistance is greater than ever, and encourages all eligible students to submit their application.

Applications are reviewed by a Screening Committee consisting of at least four Trustees from the SPF Scholarship Foundation and PTA representatives from the public schools. For further information, please visit spfscholarshipfoundation.org.

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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BRINGING HOME BABY: HOW TO BE A UNIFIED PARENTING TEAM

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains-Westfield Here2Help Mental Health Coalition is pleased to present Bringing Home Baby: How to be a Unified Parenting Team on Tuesday, February 2 from 7:00-8:00 p.m. via Zoom and Facebook Live.

Sixty-nine percent of new parents experience conflict, disappointment and hurt feelings as they navigate the postpartum weeks and months. Learning to co-parent amid sleeplessness and fluctuating hormones is no easy task. But there are proven ways to weather the transition that are backed by years of research. In this informational session Jennifer Perera, LCSW, will highlight how to restore friendship and intimacy to your relationship, navigate conflict more effectively, foster the development of your child during the postpartum months, and create healthy social, emotional and intellectual development in your children.

To register visit [eventbrite.com/o/here-2-hlp-31322635307](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/here-2-hlp-31322635307). This event is free but space is limited. The Zoom access code will be emailed the day before the event.

Jennifer Perera is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with over 10 years of experience. She specializes in working with parents during the prenatal and postpartum periods and those coping with a pregnancy loss or infertility. Her passion is helping new parents find their joy through

individual, group and couples counseling. This Here2Help event is ideal for couples planning or expecting a baby soon and couples with a child under the age of 3. Attendees will have an opportunity to ask Ms. Perera questions at the end of the presentation.

Originally organized by the Westfield and Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCAs, the mission of

the Here2Help Mental Health Coalition is to improve community awareness and understanding of mental health issues through education, basic skills training and resource information and to help break down barriers that prevent people from seeking care. Information about Here2Help can be found at here2helpnj.org.

THRIFT SHOP OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League Thrift Shop, 1741 East 2nd. St., Scotch Plains, is open for business on a limited basis. Due to the pandemic, the shop is open Tuesday, Thursday, 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

For our volunteers' and customers' safety, all donations must be new or gently used, clean, no missing parts or pieces. Donations are accepted in the rear parking lot, off Willow Ave. If the shop is closed, please hold donations until the shop is open. Under current circumstances, volunteers cannot take donations left outside. It is a burden for volunteers to dispose of these donations.

To keep our customers and volunteers safe, COVID protocols are posted on the front door. The number of persons entering the store is

limited. Masks are required. Children cannot come in, social distancing is required. When shoppers are waiting to come in, only one shopper per party may enter.

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that has served the local communities since 1974. Since its founding, the League has donated more than \$1.3 million for local causes.

Anyone interested in learning more about the League or membership is invited to call during business hours. 908-322-5420, visit the League's website at scotchplainsthiftshop.weebly.com or speak to any of the volunteers at the Thrift Shop. Checkout the organization's Facebook page, "Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League," and give the League a "Like."

DECREASING BACK PAIN BY INCREASING TREATMENT OPTIONS

If you've been living with back pain, it's time to discover the innovative treatment options at the Center for Back Pain at Hackensack Meridian JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute.

Our board certified doctors, who are also certified in pain and sports medicine, use the treatment to best address your pain, including image-guided injection treatments, physical therapy and, when necessary, minimally invasive surgery.

You will get a treatment plan to help you ease pain and regain strength and functionality—safely and quickly.

To find a doctor, visit HackensackMeridianHealth.org/BackRehab or call 732-897-BACK (2225).



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RELIEF FROM CHRONIC KNEE PAIN

FDA Approved Treatment to Avoid Surgery

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. Addictions 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." - Question L.

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LEARN TO MOVE WITH AWARENESS FOR BETTER BALANCE AND FITNESS

Discover a Unique Approach to Fitness! Through funds provided by the All of Us Research Program, the Scotch Plains Public Library is pleased to be offering a weekly balance and gentle fitness class live via Zoom, led by instructor Yasmin Ofek. Classes are held on Friday mornings at 10 a.m., and will continue through April. All are welcome, you do not need to be a Scotch Plains resident to participate.

Older adults in particular are encouraged to join these classes, which are designed to address the loss of balance and strength that can occur as we age. Yasmin's instruction integrates principles from the Feldenkrais Method, which emphasizes moving with awareness to allow your nervous system to discover easier, more efficient movement patterns. Combined with her knowledge of anatomy and experience as a fitness trainer, Yasmin's classes can help you establish a better connection between the brain and body, while also gently strengthening the muscles that keep your body upright.

All you'll need are a chair and sneakers to begin this gentle but effective approach to moving confidently throughout the lifespan! Registration is required. Please sign up at scotlib.org/events or call the Library at 908-322-5007, x204. You will be sent the Zoom link prior to the class. Live closed-captioning will be available during the classes to anyone who would like to use this service.

Developed resources reported in this project are supported by the National Library of Medicine (NLM), National Institutes of Health (NIH) under cooperative agreement number UG4LM012342 with the University of Pittsburgh, Health Sciences Library System. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

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DESPITE PANDEMIC, ADOPTION DAY FAMILIES FEEL THE COMMUNITY LOVE FIVE-TOWN PARADE INCLUDES SUPERHEROES, GIFT BASKETS AND MORE

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 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



(above) The Pennicook Family of Union with Superheroes

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:

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or call 908-598-5511.

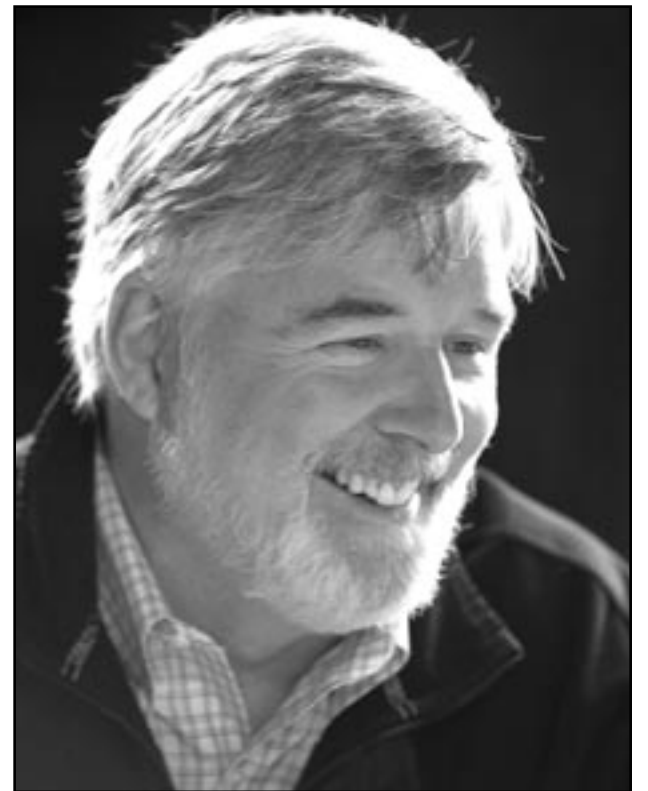
Your Decisions Matter is a community initiative funded by Atlantic Health’s Chilton and Overlook Medical Centers’ Community Advisory Boards whose goal is to encourage families to talk with their loved ones about end-of-life care and decision making.

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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MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE HELD VIRTUALLY



(above, top l-r) Martin Luther King Day of Service Co-Chairs: Amanda Barnett, Michelle Shapiro Abraham. (bottom) Courtney Agnello



(above, l-r) Scotch Plains Mayor Josh Losardo, and Fanwood Council President Anthony Carter.

By Dan DiBella

Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community gathered on January 18th, 2021 for the 12th annual MLK Day of Service. The day was formed as a way to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. Due to the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, this year's ceremony was held virtually on Facebook. It can be viewed on the Scotch Plains Township, and Fanwood, NJ Facebook pages.

Since 2016, the Day of Service Committee has been honoring individuals from the community who exemplify the work of Dr. King.

Organized by Michelle Shapiro Abraham, Amanda Barnett, and Courtney Agnello; the Day of Service is an opportunity for volunteers to celebrate the interwoven and compassionate community they create together. The hour-long presentation featured speeches from town officials, a video tribute to Dr. King, and songs by St. Johns Baptist Church and Congregation Beth Israel.

Among those present were: Scotch Plains Mayor Josh Losardo, Fanwood Council President Anthony Carter, and Rabbi Howard Tilman of Congregation Beth Israel, along with several members of the committee.

The thought provoking video presentation, "Has the Dream Been Fulfilled?" compares Dr. King's fight against inequality and injustice to today's current struggle. The short tribute film was made by members of the MLK Day Service Project and local teens.

The 2021 Day of Service Award recipient is lifelong Scotch Plains resident, Kimberly Hood. Kimberly is an active volunteer at the Manna

From Heaven Food Pantry, and also serves as president of the Missionary Ministry of St. John's Baptist Church. This year's award was presented by 2020 recipient Delois Dawson.

The Day of Service Committee also took the opportunity to talk about an exciting Black History initiative called, "The Legacy of Kramer Manor." The project sets the precedent of educating and preserving history in the historically black sections of Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

Following the ceremony, hundreds of volunteers gathered at over 25 locations to collect donations, as well as participate in educational and service opportunities. The committee reported afterwards that 550 families volunteered and filled 1,600 volunteer slots.

"Today you helped create the community that we all want to live in."

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- filled carloads of toiletries for families in need
- covered our towns with over 50 hand-painted kindness rocks
- joined with over 250 others learning about the legacy of Dr. King and how to make our world more whole, just and compassionate.

If you are interested in joining on the Planning Committee for 2022, please email spfdayservice@gmail.com.

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SEA SCOUT SHIP 228 VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE



(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.

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 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.

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TRINITAS INTRODUCES NEW OPTIONS FOR MOOD DISORDERS TREATMENTS

In the midst of a comprehensive Behavioral Health facilities expansion, Trinitas Regional Medical Center announces the consolidation of all major treatments into a single, customized delivery system – one that now includes esketamine and Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT). The advanced approach to mental health services complements a future-focused rethinking of how mood disorders are evaluated and treated.

Each patient's care will be tailored to his or her particular symptoms, history and lifestyle, according to Dr. James McCreath, Vice President of Behavioral Health at Trinitas. "Our approach to delivering treatment to our patients has always been based on what's most suitable for the individual," he says. "Introducing new options this year allows us to further tailor our treatments, adding to the benefit of having one of the largest hospital-based mood disorder programs in New Jersey."

Dr. McCreath and Dr. Salvatore Savatta, Chair of Psychiatry, cite the advantages of these new options to patients experiencing severe forms of

depression. "In cases of refractory depression – when a patient fails to respond to more traditional antidepressants – esketamine and ECT can provide substantial relief."

Used in tandem with traditional psychiatric medications and evidence-based psychotherapies such as dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT) or cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), also available at Trinitas, these new options complete what McCreath calls a "highly integrated array of therapies" at the practitioners' disposal. Esketamine, which is also helpful for patients with more challenging types of depression, is delivered as a nasal spray. The unilateral ultra-brief pulse delivery of ECT now in use at Trinitas has been shown to be nearly as effective as the previous bi-lateral approach, with the added benefit of patients experiencing far fewer side effects, such as memory loss. With regards to ECT, Dr. Savatta says it's important for people to consider all available options when undergoing treatment for severe mood disorders.

"There are many misconceptions about how today's ECT affects the mind, even what this treatment looks like," he says. "People base it on what they've heard or seen on TV and in the movies. And even those depictions of old-fashioned ECT treatments were largely inaccurate. We need to remove the stigma surrounding ECT so more people can feel comfortable seeking out and receiving the treatment they need."

Above all else, practitioners at Trinitas deliver compassionate care – an attribute that no technology can offer in itself. "We're always striving to show compassion to our patients, and to their families," Dr. Savatta says. "People who come to Trinitas for Behavioral Health treatment will find a vibrant, young, and experienced team of forward-thinking providers who have all of today's treatment options at the ready."

Those treatment options are available to address a broad range of mood disorders, which distort an individual's emotional state and can affect his or her ability to carry on a normal life.

Mood disorders can include any impairment that leaves a person feeling unusually sad, depressed, or anxious, and manic conditions in which a person's quickly alternates between extreme depression and excessive happiness. Major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, seasonal affective disorder, and generalized anxiety are among the most common types of mood disorders for which patients may seek treatment.

The Trinitas Department of Behavioral Health and Psychiatry provides treatment to patients of all ages, as well as family-based services. The Center offers a 98-bed inpatient facility and a specialized unit for adults with mental or developmental disabilities. Prior to the pandemic, Trinitas provided more than 15,000 outpatient visits a month. The team of practitioners, including several bilingual team members, encompasses every facet of mental health service needs: Psychiatrists, Psychologists, Licensed Social Workers, Substance Abuse Counselors, Creative Arts Therapists and many other types of professionals are available to treat patients. Specialized Services include parenting groups, women's services, geropsychiatry, an adolescent residential program, and programs for individuals with HIV. Survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse can also receive specialized care, as can juvenile offenders or persons requiring justice-involved services.

For more than 50 years, Trinitas Regional Medical Center – formerly Elizabeth General Hospital – has been one of the area's leading providers of Behavioral Health services. Reach out today to learn more: 908-994-7556.

ABOUT TRINITAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

Trinitas Regional Medical Center, a major center for comprehensive health services for those who live and work in Central New Jersey, is a Catholic teaching medical center sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of Saint Elizabeth in partnership with Elizabethtown Healthcare Foundation. For more information on Trinitas Regional Medical Center, visit: TrinitasRMC.org or call 908-994-5138.



(above) Dr. Salvatore Savatta and Reynard Burgos, RN, Clinical Coordinator, conduct a dry run of an ECT treatment on Melissa Penas, Behavioral Health Clinician, to give her insight into the process so she may relay information to potential recipients.

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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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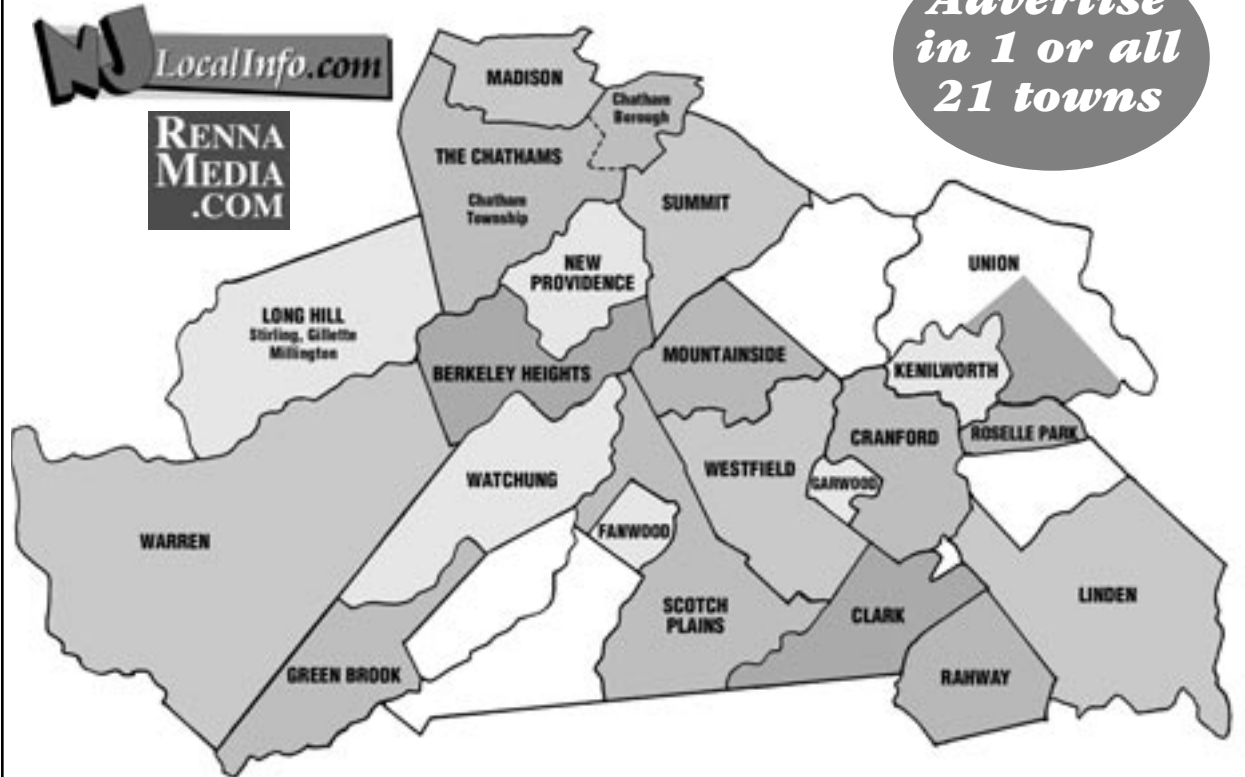
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