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## MASTERS SWIMMERS CELEBRATE 17TH ANNIVERSARY

*Submitted by Barbara Rushman*

A group of Masters Swimmers from Madison and the surrounding areas have had the privilege of swimming together for many years at Drew University, the Madison YMCA, Madison Community Pool, the Summit YMCA and other close by locations.

Traditionally, the group tracks monthly swim yardage on a user friendly website. Because the pandemic limited the group's ability to swim regularly this year, tracking of yardage was temporarily suspended in March, and resumed in June on strictly a voluntary basis. After resumption, the monthly ranking of yards by swimmer was not published as it had been in the past, so that none of our swimmers would feel any pressure to track during this unusual year. For the first time ever, we elected not to award "Yardsticks" to swimmers at our traditional awards breakfast based on their annual yardage achievements.

But we were determined to connect with each other as a group as we do every year. So the Masters Yardstick Swimmers celebrated the group's history, strong personal relationships, and love of swimming recently at its 17th anniversary annual awards breakfast on January 9th, online for the first time ever, with record participation. Hosted by longtime swimmers Bob Nissen, Joe Donohue, and Richard Clew, the agenda of the Virtual Event picked up on highlights and photos of our past live events (thanks to group historian Barbara Rushman) and brought us together in such a way that all active members could relate to and enjoy.

One of the highlights of our past breakfasts has been an endless breakfast buffet that we all have enjoyed, with many of our swimmers preparing and bringing their own secret family specialty casseroles, deviled eggs, coffee cakes, bread puddings, and sticky buns. Since it was impossible for all of us to be together, the food selections were cleverly recreated on a virtual buffet table, visually introduced one by one thanks to swimmers submitting their suggested recipes. The buffet table was filled and was "virtually consistent" with the actual one at our past events, and provided us all "food for



*(above) The Masters Swimmers gathered virtually for a Zoom brunch to celebrate 17 years of the organization.*

thought" as we envisioned how good each item would be, and perhaps determining a way to recreate those favorites in our own kitchen. Not quite the real thing, but as close as you can get in the current environment. It provided an opportunity to be thankful for all of our good times in the past, and anticipated future events when we can be together and each enjoy the buffet again.

At our virtual breakfast, we also asked swimmers to submit their idea of a perfect swim in the future, when we would expect to have less restrictions than under our existing situation. Swimmers dreamed of future indoor and outdoor swims with the freedom to spend the time we wanted in swimming with our fellow swimmers, friends, and families, and optimizing our yards once again. And one dream to reality we witnessed was a picture of the new Madison YMCA pool, which is expected to be completed by the end of June, 2021. This beautiful new eight-lane modern pool will be a welcome venue for many of us who swim in the area.

Finally, we did provide a virtual ranking of all of our swimmers in yardage "clusters", starting with 1-100,000 yards, and progressive 100,000 yard clusters beyond these (thanks to our web site coordinator Barry Lass). All sixty of our swimmers fell into one of nine clusters, and were alphabetically listed to eliminate any specific ranking within a cluster. The one person in our highest cluster was Jennifer Bauman of Parsippany, achieving an annual yardage level within the 800,000-900,000 range.

At the end of the event, we took a group picture on Zoom - a screen shot - which provided yet another opportunity to connect with each other in this special way. We all had a great time and were so happy to connect online with our "swim buddies" once again.

We will continue our optional tracking for now, and we are convinced that our program will evolve and grow again over time. Most importantly, we look forward to the day when we can all say without hesitation "see you at the pool".

For more information please contact Bob Nissen at [bobnissen@gmail.com](mailto:bobnissen@gmail.com).

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# JOCELYN XU'S POETRY RECOGNIZED



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Chatham High School sophomore Jocelyn Xu won the top honor in the Regional Scholastic Writing Awards, the Gold Key. She won in the category of Poetry Writing for her poem titled "The Weight of Melanin."

Jocelyn was also awarded the Silver Key in Poetry Writing for her poem titled "My Father Plays the Piano."

She received Honorable Mention for the following poems: "The Garden Path," "Postscript," "Eulogy to Peonies," and "When We Fold: A Guide for the Colorblind."

Jocelyn's freshman English teacher, Rachel Ruffner, said, "When our world shifted last spring and we were thrown into remote learning, Jocelyn took this time to become immersed in her writing and developed a passion for poetry. In the midst of chaos, she has used poetry as an outlet to process and convey her feelings about being quarantined along with the unfortunate social injustices that continue to permeate society. These awards are well-deserved, and I am so

proud that Jocelyn has been recognized for her writing talent."

Gold Key winners' pieces will move on to be judged at the national level.



Photo by School District of the Chathams

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# VENTURE CREW 28 ON WINTER HIKE

Members of Chatham’s Venture Crew 28 hiked Pyramid Mountain on January 23. A cold winter day did not take away from their enjoyment of the outdoors. Crew 28 is an all-female crew that focuses on outdoor adventures, leadership, personal growth and service projects. The crew recently passed its four year anniversary.

For information about Crew 28, visit [venturecrew28.com](http://venturecrew28.com).

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(above) Crew members in this picture live in Summit, Chatham, New Providence, Berkeley Heights and Millburn.

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– Beverly B., a community resident



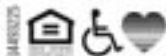
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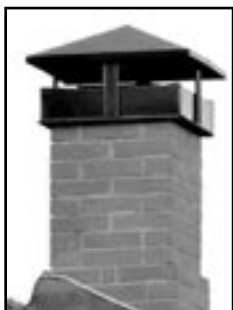




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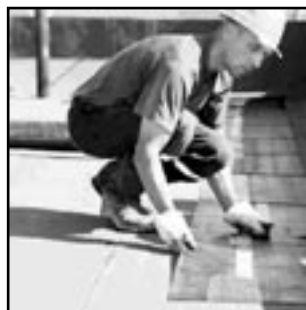
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## LOCAL GYM GETS CRUSHED BY PANDEMIC

In 2007, Gabriele Fitness founder, Vince Gabriele, started a Sports Performance training business out of the back of his pick-up truck. Over the past 13 years, the Berkeley Heights based gym has worked with thousands of youth athletes between the ages of 6-18.

When the pandemic struck in March of 2020, the Sports Performance program at Gabriele Fitness was hit hard. They tried to move it on-line but had little success.

Since Covid-19 was too much they decided to put the program on the back burner. They focused on their adult personal training program which held strong due to a very loyal core membership.

It's been close to a year since they shut the Sports Performance program down, but a huge announcement was recently made.

### THE HUGE ANNOUNCEMENT

Founder, Vince Gabriele, announced they are bringing the Sports Performance program back and have been behind the scenes working on a full-fledged re-brand.

The new program will be called Grit Athlete Performance. It will serve local youth athletes ages 6-18 who want to perform better at their respective sports.

Founder, Vince Gabriele, was asked why he decided to bring the program back and his answer was very inspiring.

### THE STORY THAT IGNITED THE FIRE

Gabriele was sitting at his normal table at the Prestige Diner when a young man in his 20's came up to him, looked him in the eye and shook his hand.

The young man was a student in their Sports Performance program close to a decade ago. He went on to tell Gabriele how much he had learned and still uses the nutrition, fitness and life lessons today.

He entered the program as a slow, shy and awkward kid but transformed himself into a strong, confident healthy adult.

"This was the moment", Gabriele said.

"The moment I knew we needed to bring the Sports Performance program back so we could continue to help create stories like this."

### A HAND-SELECTED TEAM OF TRAINERS

Gabriele went out and hand-picked a brand-new team to transform this into the premier Sports Performance training program in the area.

The full-time job of this new team will be to help athletes ages 6-18 get strong, fast and confident so they can build a bigger and better future.

Grit Athlete Performance will help kids get stronger and faster so they can perform better at their sports. The true goal is bigger than that and goes beyond their athletic career.

Grit is not something you need just in sports. Grit is a character quality that every successful human being has had in their life. When you have grit you continue to have the power. When you have grit, anything is possible.

That'll be the take home message when they launch this new program on March 15th. Grit will have 3 programs that serve the following age groups:

- 6-8 years old
- 9-13 years old
- 14+

### A VIRAL RESPONSE FROM LOCAL PARENTS

Gabriele recently put a message out to his local list and on the community forum sites with the announcement. The response was overwhelming.

Well over 100 people responded with strong interest to reserve spots in the new program. The first block of training will go from March 15-June 15th. They have stated they will only be taking 50 athletes for the first run. They expect to be fully sold out by March 1st.

### HOW TO REGISTER YOUR CHILD

If you have a child that is in these age groups and have interest in signing your child up for their March 15th-June 15th program, please visit:

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- They **need to improve their confidence** and you want them to start to get better at recovering from their mistakes.
- They're doing pretty good right now but want to take their performance in their sport to a **higher level.**



## Here's what parents can expect to happen:



- **They will get stronger** which means when they show up to their sport they'll be able to perform better than ever.
- **They will run faster and jump higher** so they can show up to their next season and people will start asking what the heck have they been doing.
- They'll become **more coordinated and improve agility** which means they'll pick up new skills their coaches teach them faster.
- **Your children will start to eat better** because we'll be educating them daily on what's good and what they should avoid...don't be surprised if they start asking you to buy more vegetables.
- **Confidence will skyrocket.** When kids get stronger, faster and more fit ...their confidence will rise...so will their self-esteem which means their performance in every aspect of life will get better.
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- **9-13(SPACES REMAINING: 9)**
- **14+(SPACES REMAINING: 14)**

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### About Grit Athlete Performance (A Gabriele Fitness Company)

GRIT helps kids ages 6-18 get strong, fast and confident so they can build a bigger and better future. They are located in Berkeley Heights inside Gabriele Fitness. All Grit coaches have been handpicked via a very lengthy interview process by Gabriele Fitness founder, Vince Gabriele.

# SAGE’S MEALS ON WHEELS PROGRAM DELIVERS RECORD NUMBER OF MEALS DURING COVID-19

Submitted by Cindy Potters

As the pandemic forced businesses and services to close in 2020, the demand for SAGE’s Meals on Wheels kept increasing. By the end of the year, the nonprofit delivered a record breaking 50,000 meals, an increase of 7,000 over the previous year. Family members who were unable to visit and offer support to their older adult relatives called on Meals on Wheels for help. The meal service became an increasingly important resource for food and a means for having someone check in on loved ones.

According to Marianne Kranz, Director of Meals on Wheels, she, her staff and many volunteers continued to go to the SAGE building at 290 Broad Street in Summit every day during the pandemic to pack and deliver meals. Community organizations and area residents pitched in by donating what was needed. Along with frozen meals and nonperishable food items, people dropped off toilet paper and paper towels,

masks, baked goods and made monetary donations. “Our goal was to provide our clients with extra food so they wouldn’t have to worry about leaving the house to get to a grocery store,” said Kranz. “There were also people coming home from the hospital alone, scared and food insecure.”

Meals on Wheels was there to help and continues to be a vital support to those in the community who need it. The average age of someone receiving meals is 83. Half of these clients live alone and 65% rarely see anyone other than the volunteer who brings them their meal.

If you or a family member is in need of meal assistance, call 908-273-5554. Meals on Wheels delivers to: Berkeley Heights, Chatham, New Providence, Millburn/ Short Hills, Mountainside, Summit and Springfield.

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. If you are in need of Meals on Wheels or would like to make a donation, please call 908-273-5550 or visit [sageeldercare.org](http://sageeldercare.org).



*(left) Meals on Wheels Coordinator, Robin Handwerger sorts through donations from community organizations and area residents made during COVID-19. If you are in need of Meals on Wheels or would like to make a donation, please call 908-273-5554.*

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SHORT-TERM  
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2019-20



Nathan Weiser

★★★★★

Spring Grove is by far the best rehab center I have ever been to. The staff are kind and caring and have gone above and beyond my expectations. The building is kept extremely clean and the new renovations are very nice.

Thank you Spring Grove for a wonderful and pleasant stay.



Charles Sherrick

★★★★★

I have been at Spring Grove for a few weeks now, they have exceptional service and excellent staff. All the nurses have been professional and attentive to all my needs. I never thought a rehab center can have such a beautiful layout and well put together. The newly renovated room I have stayed in, is up to date and extremely clean. The therapy staff have gone above my expectations with their expertise and getting me to where I am today. Alyssa the social worker has gone above and beyond with all her assignments.

Thank you Spring Grove.



Chrissy Sloan

★★★★★

The nursing staff and administration is professional, patient, attentive and understanding. The facilities are very clean and well maintained. My parents room is always clean and tidy. Although it was a difficult decision to make relocating my folks from a home environment to a senior living facility, Spring Grove made my decision easy.

Thank God for them!

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# ROGER HELPS VETS 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](http://www.roger.vet) or contact the ROGER team at [roger@backpacksforlife.org](mailto: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.

# LAFAYETTE SCHOOL DONATES GROCERIES FOR VALENTINES DAY

For Valentine's Day Lafayette School students celebrated by giving rather than receiving. The school donated over 300 bags worth of groceries to the Community FoodBank of NJ. Students also made Valentine cards to thank volunteers at the food bank.

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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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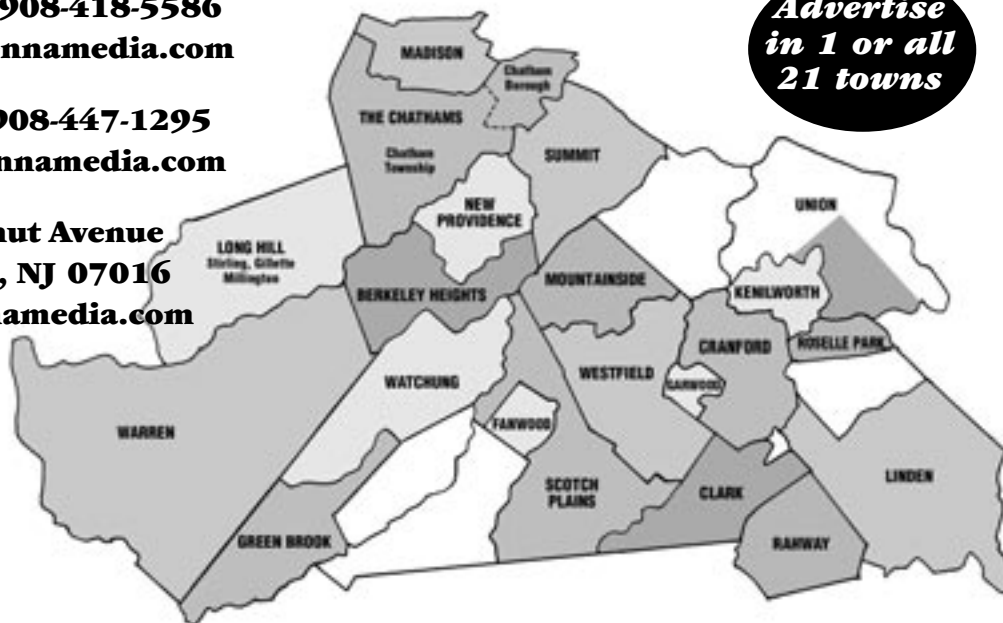
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4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700
6 Units	6.5" x 6.25" or 10" x 4"	\$240	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1400	\$1600	\$1800	\$2000
9 HALF PAGE	6.5" x 9" or 10" x 7"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1300	\$1600	\$1900	\$2200	\$2400
12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000
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## VOLS NEEDED TO HELP AT BLOOD DRIVES

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

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

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

## MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS NEEDS VOLS

The New Jersey Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) – a network of community-based, locally organized units comprised of volunteers – is looking for reinforcements, particularly those with vaccination skills. MRC volunteers are especially vital during emergencies and disasters when paid public health and emergency response assets are overwhelmed. Healthcare professionals (including recently retired individuals) having vaccination skills are especially needed now that COVID-19 vaccines are available.

In addition to skilled vaccinators, individuals with all types of skill sets (for example, security, language translation/interpretation, education and outreach, warehouse operations, clerical, counseling, and more) are needed. If you are interested in volunteering with the MRC, visit njlmn.njlincs.net and click on “Register as an Existing or New MRC Volunteer!”

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