

CRANFORD MONTHLY_{NJ}

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RUBBER DUCKY RACE 2021 WRAP UP

Hanson Park Conservancy

After a postponement of the original date of Sunday October 10, 2021 Hanson Park Conservancy successfully held their annual Rubber Ducky Race on Sunday October 17, 2021 at Sperry Park in Cranford, NJ.

On race day, over 1,100 rubber ducks were transported down the river from the Cranford Canoe Club by Ellen McHenry, Walter Gallagher and Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty. The ducks were then tossed into the River right before the waterfalls as the crowd waited patiently as the rubber ducks “raced” their way to the finish line.

Members of HPC, Commissioner of Public Works and Engineering Tom Hannen, Jr, Fire Department Water Rescue and Boy Scouts were in the river waiting at the finish line to collect the winning ducks. They also assisted in getting all the remaining ducks back on dry land.

After the race was finished, prizes were then announced and distributed by Cranford Radio’s own Bernie Wagenblast. Anyone who was not present to receive prizes were contacted the next day by a member of HPC.

All children (and adults) in attendance had a wonderful time and we at HPC are so appreciative of all our Sponsors and Merchants, those who adopted ducks and so many generous donations. HPC decided that due to the devastation left behind by Hurricane Ida a few weeks early, all “ducks are on us” meaning no one was obligated to pay for ducks.



Only donations were accepted this year.

Money raised from the Annual Rubber Ducky Race goes directly to park maintenance. Please stop by and visit Hanson Park at 38 Springfield Avenue.

Photos by Kevin Papa

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GOLF OUTING BENEFITS NJ VETERAN'S NETWORK

Cranford Knights of Columbus

In the spirit of supporting our worthy veterans, the Cranford Knights of Columbus donated \$5,000 to the NJ Veteran's Network from the proceeds of the council's annual golf outing. The council would like to offer special thanks to Investors Bank for their generous tournament sponsorship.

The Cranford Knights of Columbus is a

catholic fraternal organization dedicated to our four core principles, charity, unity, fraternity and patriotism. The Cranford Council supports many charities and civic causes locally, state-wide, and nationally and is committed to be a viable part of our community. For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact our Grand Knight Jerry Conheeney at 908-416-3464 or visit the Council website at cranfordknights.org.



(above, l-r) Investors Bank Cranford Branch Manager Juan Rengifo, Cranford VFW special guests Jim D'Arcy & Mark Schwartz, Joe O'Neill owner of Benner's Auto Body and a NJ Veterans Network Board Member, Grand Knight Jerry Conheeney, Michael Boll, President of the NJ Veterans Network, John Doolan Council Golf Outing Chair, Deputy Grand Knight Kevin Cumiskey, Worthy Chaplain Monsignor Tim Shugrue and Past Grand Knight Jim Feehan, Jr.

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SPREADING A LITTLE KINDNESS

Do you have some joy to share? Students in the P2E Program in Cranford Public Schools are on a mission to spread kindness. We painted rocks and shells with positive affirmations and colorful pictures in an effort to promote positivity. Our hope is that those in need of some extra cheer will take one home. Our first stop was Taylor Avenue Beach in Long Beach Island. We would like to expand our project and continue to collect shells and rocks to be placed at various locations around the state.

If you would like to participate by spreading happiness to others, please contact Lisa Lesiak, Coordinator of the Pathways to Excellence Program for Cranford Public Schools at lesiakli@cranfordschools.org.



(above) The Happiness Project visited Long Beach Island.

Photo by Cranford Public Schools

CRANFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES NEW MOBILE APP

The Cranford Police Department has announced the launch of its new free mobile app which is available in both the App Store (for Apple) and Google Play (for Android). The first of its kind in this region, the Cranford Police Department's app aims to increase resident-police communications through quick push-button notifications, real-time information availability, and customer-service themed conveniences.

With the creation and implementation of this app, residents can request traffic enforcement and submit crime tips instantaneously – which activates automatic notifications to specific supervisors who can address these concerns. By offering this technology to residents free of charge, residents may use their smartphones to access crime mapping, request crash reports, see real-time weather announcements, read press releases and arrest blotters, request parking permits, access the department's various social media platforms, and find local resources. Most conveniently, residents may find a directory of officers to communicate concerns directly and quickly.

Chief Ryan J. Greco encouraged residents to download the app. "This app is another means for residents to communicate with the police department. Whether about requesting traffic enforcement, submitting crime tips, or reporting Street or Victorian Light outages, this app provides residents an easy means to communicate to our officers, which enhances their ability to better serve the community," he said. To ensure that residents can easily take advantage of this

free technology immediately, the Cranford Police Department created a QR code which redirects individuals to the appropriate application store. In the near future, look for these QR codes on Cranford Police Department's marked patrol vehicles.

The app was created by Captain Edward Davenport along with Apex Mobile and designed with the Cranford Community, its needs, and the services provided by the police department in mind. By providing the community with a streamlined mechanism to communicate concerns, request information, and access permitting, the app increases the efficiency of police-operations, expedites residents' requests, and eliminates barriers created through traditional time-consuming communication processes.



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(above, l-r) Mary Leonard and Don Sweeney

DON SWEENEY RECEIVES NATIONAL COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Submitted by Mary Leonard, DAR Chapter Chair

The Daughters of the American Revolution, Cranes Ford Chapter, was honored to present Don Sweeney with the National Society's Community Service Award on November 13th.

In Cranford Memorial Park stands a granite monument with the names of 86 hometown heroes who answered a call to duty and make the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our freedom. Don Sweeney, who created the Cranford 86 Project in cooperation with the Cranford Historical Society and other members of the Memorial Day Committee, has made sure these fallen veterans are being publicly honored and remembered.

This award epitomizes Don Sweeney, as he has made a contribution to the community of

Cranford in an outstanding manner by organizing Cranford 86 Project. These fallen heroes have been remembered in print and on the street poles in downtown Cranford.

Lisaann Permunion, NJDAR State Chair Community Service, stated in her letter to the chapter "Mr. Sweeney truly embodies the spirit of this award. Words like outstanding, dedicated and passionate comes to mind in reading of his selfless devotion to community and devotion to veterans who gave the ultimate sacrifice during the United States involvement in World War I, World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam War."

To learn about the Cranford 86 Project please visit cranford86.com.

FROSTED FUN COMING TO CDC THEATRE!

Ring in the holiday season with the hilarious, interactive, and completely demented adventure for the whole family, Frosted: A Frozen Fairytale Parody. It has jokes for both children and adults, hyper-enthusiastic ice cream makers, snow machines, and villains out to destroy the universe as you know it, plus so much more! Help us make everything fun in pop-culture, from snow-people, to the princesses who love them, to various Mouse adventures, 80's and 90's music, life in New Jersey, and all things in between!

Written by Mike Burdick and Sean Lough, this original show is filled with fabulous fun for everyone. Director Ken Webb had this to say: "It has been a lot of fun to watch something original being developed. The show is a parody with many familiar elements, but the show itself is brand new. It's not often that you have a show where the characters are really cartoons come to life, so it lets the actors really work to make something unique. I think I can speak for everyone who has worked on the show so far when I say that if the audience has as much fun seeing it as we have been having creating it, everyone will have a wonderful time!"

Frosted: A Frozen Fairytale Parody will come to town on December 10, 11, and 12th, and all tickets are \$15. Visit cdctheatre.org for showtimes and tickets, be sure to get yours soon! This new show has the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, to thank for helping with funds to make this show possible.



Elizabeth Bataille
Sales Associate



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CHRISTMAS SHOPPE AND SOUP FESTIVAL DECEMBER 11TH

The Cranford United Methodist Church will host its 9th Annual Christmas Holiday Shoppe and Soup Fest on Saturday, December 11, 2021, from

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This is a family-friendly event where kids and adults alike can do their holiday shopping.

Dozens of vendors will offer merchandise, crafts, and gifts. There is definitely something for everyone at the Christmas Shoppe and Soup Fest!

Fabulous homemade soups, for take-out only, will be available as part of the event as well as re-packaged soups, in quarts and pints, until supplies last. Come early because these soups sell out quickly!

Baked goods and lunch will be available for purchase too.

For additional fun, children's book author, Laura Sassi, will read to the children from her new book, *Little Ewe*. Also, the Shanyse Strickland Quartet will perform for attendees too! So, skip the mall, the crowds, and the hassles to join us instead for a great day of unique shopping!

The event will take place in the church's education building located at 201 Lincoln Avenue, Cranford, NJ, on the corners of Walnut and Lincoln Avenues. Another great part of the event is admission is free and there is plenty of free parking.

For information, please call Shanyse at 908-276-0936, or send an email to office@cranfordumc.com. Also, the church's website to visit is cranfordumc.com.



CRANFORD 8U SOFTBALL WINS FALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Submitted by: Jay Harris

The Cranford Calas 8U Softball Team won the District 2 Parkway League Championship on Saturday, October 23rd at Pony Tail Park in South Plainfield. Finishing the season with an 11-1 record, the championship game saw Cranford avenge their only loss of the season against a talented Clark squad 4-2.

Cranford won on the strength of consistent hitting and strong defense that the team delivered when they needed it most. "We set a high standard for the girls going back to summer ball, and they just kept working and getting better as a team," said Coach Chris Calas, who

led the group for the second consecutive season.

"We preach listening and having fun, and the girls did just that all the way through. I'm super proud of how this team battled, picked themselves up when they needed to and gave it everything an eight-year-old could."

Tears flowed from the faces of both teams as they lined the 1st and 3rd baselines for the trophy presentation. While it was understandable from their opponents, the Cranford girls assured coaches that theirs were tears of joy. A lot of heart epitomizes this great group of young ladies who reaped the reward for an outstanding season.



(above, l-r) Coach Chris Calas, Assistant Coaches Jay Decker, Jay Harris and Michelle Calas, (middle) Avery Dugan, Emilia Valenza, Lexi Jakubowski, Julia Agnone, Isabel Jakubowski, Delaney Harris, Ryleigh McGuire, (bottom) Charlotte Lubinger, Gabby Zacccone, Brooklynn Calas, Julia Brandao, Rita Ferrara and Cassidy Decker

The Cranford United Methodist Church, 201 Lincoln Avenue, Cranford will host its 9th annual
Christmas Shoppe and Soup Festival
Saturday, December 11, 2021, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

- This is a family-friendly event where kids and adults alike can do their holiday shopping.
- Dozens of vendors will offer merchandise, crafts and gifts.
- There is sure to be something for everyone in the Christmas Shoppe & Soup Fest!
- Fabulous homemade soups will be available as part of the event and pre-packaged soups (quarts & pints) for take-out will also be available until supplies last. Come early – these soups sell out quickly!
- Baked goods will be available for purchase, too.
- Children's book author, Laura Sassi, will read to the children from her book: *Little Ewe*.
- The Shanyse Strickland Quartet will perform for us too!

So, skip the mall, the crowds and the hassles and join us for a great day of unique shopping!

The event will take place in the church's education building at 201 Lincoln Avenue, Cranford, corner of Walnut and Lincoln Avenues, Admission is free. There is plenty of free parking.

Questions? Call Shanyse at (908) 276-0936 or send an email to office@cranfordumc.com. Visit cranfordumc.com



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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ANNOUNCES DATES FOR CHRISTMAS SERVICE AND NEXT GRIEF SEMINAR

The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford (FPCC), has announced it will hold one Christmas Eve service at 4:00 p.m. on December 24, 2021. The service will be in-person and online on Facebook and YouTube. Advance registration is suggested for in-person worship and can be done on the website at firstprescranford.org/Christmas. Information on COVID-safety precautions can also be found on the website.

The Rev. Daniel A. Velez-Acevedo will lead a traditional Christmas Eve service with familiar Christmas carols, perfect for families and all those who wish to celebrate with full choirs and organ music. Music will be led by the Chancel Choir, directed by Elsa Hahn and accompanied by organist Robert Grube. Featured soloists will include Lynn Pinto, formerly with the Metropolitan Opera and local recording artist, Kelli Bruno. During the final hymn, "Silent Night, Holy Night", the lights will be dimmed and candlelight will fill the Sanctuary.

Can't make it Christmas Eve? We'll be back in the Sanctuary Sunday morning, December 26th at 10:00 a.m. for a relaxed and fun service.

If getting through the holidays is challenging, don't journey through your grief alone. FPCC is preparing for its free seven-week seminar, "Journey Toward Wholeness - Healing the Grieving Heart", which takes place every Sunday on Zoom at 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. from January

16- February 27, 2022. Registration begins now and is required to attend this event. Call facilitator Suzanne at 908-251-5641 or Pam at 908-370-8016.

The co-leaders of the program, Patti Williams, RN and Certified Pastoral Bereavement Counselor and Virginia Waters, PhD, have personal and professional training and experience in the field of grief and loss. They are joined by a team of trained facilitators who provide support and lead breakout groups for individuals who have experienced a similar loss.

In the words of a recent participant, "Thank you and your team for everything you are doing to create such necessary, safe, and encouraging bereavement healing space for these times. Being with other grieverers, I felt myself soften into the truths of my loss in a profound way that I haven't had the opportunity to do at all during this time of Covid. I'm so grateful for that small step forward. I was also mightily impressed by how well you all managed the technology to make this possible. Well done!"

The program is FREE and open to all faiths. We have helped 3,500 participants in 21 years.

For more information visit

www.firstprescranford.org/journey-to-wholeness-healing-the-grieving-heart/

Learn more about First Presbyterian Church of Cranford (FPCC), 11 Springfield Ave., Cranford, at firstprescranford.org.

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Please help St. Joseph's Social Service Center make the holidays special. We have over 400 households registered for our Giving Tree program and would appreciate your support to make this happen!

The easiest way to help is to donate \$25 gift cards (preferably Visa, American Express, or Walmart), supermarket gift cards of any amount (preferably Shoprite or Stop and Shop), or make a financial donation by visiting: www.sjeliz.org/donate - please mention Giving Tree in the "note" section. To make a donation by mail: Send your gift card or check to: ☐ ☐ St. Joseph Social Service Center, 118 Division St., Elizabeth, NJ 07201-2736.

Since 1983, St. Joseph's has served the materially poor and homeless community of greater Elizabeth, New Jersey, by providing basic human needs such as food, clothing and medications, as well as a wide range of services and programs to help them acquire the material goods and social services they need to live with integrity. St. Joseph's is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)3 organization. To view our Form 990, visit www.sjeliz.org/about-us.html.

COMMUNITY HELPING TO SERVE CRANFORD FAMILIES IN NEED

Julie Carroll, Cranford Family Care Association

With the holiday season upon us, Cranford Family Care (CFC) is once again prepared to serve Cranford families in need thanks to the help of many residents and organizations. We have also been fortunate to have an influx of volunteers who pick up and distribute meals, plus do weekly grocery shopping for additional food.

To get the season of giving started, Boy Scout Troop 75 of Cranford ran their annual "Scouting for Food Drive" and stocked our pantry once again. For Thanksgiving, the "Feed My Lambs" Outreach of St. Michael's Church provided 50 Turkey dinners, and snack bags. Marc Corelli and The Garlic Rose donated 60 Turkeys. The Girl Scouts of Cranford collected non-perishable food for Cranford Senior Housing and Cranford Nursing Home while the Daisies and Brownies helped make the Thanksgiving bags for Cranford Seniors. Other Thanksgiving food drives were done by Bloomingdale School,

Brookside School, Daughters of Ireland of Union County, St. Michael's School, Garwood Cares and Trinity Episcopal Church. Flag For Cranford partnered with Subology, Garlic Rose and Dryers Farm for 200 snacks, 200 dinners and 200 Delicious pies. All of this is in addition to the residents and organizations who donate to Cranford Family Care on a day-to-day basis.

For Christmas and Hanukkah, we will be making holiday bags for our seniors filled with a few of their favorite things including slippers, blankets, hard candies, cards, games and more. CFC is Partnering with BCG Bankers Cooperative Group, Inc., who will be donating 25 hams along with 25 other items such as (milk, eggs, and sides) right before Christmas.

For those who would like to get involved or donate, please visit our website at cranfordfamilycare.com or mail any donations to Cranford Family Care, 61 Myrtle Street, Cranford, NJ 07016.



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TICKETS NOW ON SALE FOR 21ST ANNUAL PIPES OF CHRISTMAS

The Pipes of Christmas will celebrate its 23rd season with performances in New Jersey and New York this December. The holiday favorite opens on Saturday, December 18 at Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, located at 921 Madison Avenue (at 73rd Street) in New York City for a 2PM performance. The concert moves across the Hudson River on Sunday, December 19 to Central Presbyterian Church located at 70 Maple Street in Summit, NJ with performances at 2PM.

For those weary of the ceaseless stream of secular seasonal music from department stores to TV, the Pipes of Christmas offers a spiritual and traditional take on the season that connects concertgoers to the holiday in a fresh, meaningful way. The show features tunes such as, Highland Cathedral, Joy to the World, and Amazing Grace, all performed live on pipes and drums, harp and fiddle, and organ and brass and more. Not only does the performance define Christmas cheer, but also it inspires those of Celtic descent to retrace and reconnect to their ancestry.

The concert presents the music of Christmas accompanied by readings taken from the Celtic literature of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. Featured performers include singer Margaret Kelly from Aberdeen, Scotland, James Robinson from the film "Braveheart," New England fiddle champion Paul Woodiel, champion harpist Rachel Clemente, and the Pipe Major Kevin Ray Blandford Memorial Pipe Band from Redlands, CA among many more.

TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW

Tickets may be purchased online exclusively through ShowTix4U. (Be certain to select "The Learned Kindred of Currie" as the organization name.)

LEARNED KINDRED'S ONLY FUNDRAISER

This annual concert is the Learned Kindred's only fundraiser, generating their operating budget for the year ahead. Losing the concert income is financially devastating to outreach programmes which support young people in education in Scotland, Canada and the United



States through scholarships and sponsorships.

Proceeds from the concert support an extensive music scholarship program, which includes the Carol Hassert Memorial Fine Arts Scholarship at Summit (NJ) High School as well as annual gifts to the National Piping Centre, the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (both located in Glasgow, Scotland), Sabhal Mòr Ostaig, the Royal National Mòr and the Gaelic College in Nova Scotia, among others.

ABOUT THE PIPES OF CHRISTMAS

Since making its debut in 1999, The Pipes of Christmas has played to standing room only audiences. Now a cherished holiday event, the concert provides audiences with a stirring and reverent celebration of the Christmas season and the Celtic spirit. Audience-goers return year after year to experience the program, many reporting that the Pipes of Christmas has become part of their family's annual Christmas tradition.

The concert has been lavished with critical acclaim. In his review for Classical New Jersey Magazine, Paul Somers wrote, "The whole evening was constructed to introduce gem after gem and still have a finale which raised the roof. In short, it was like a well constructed fireworks show on the Glorious Fourth. The Westfield Leader described the concert as "a unique sound

of power and glory nowhere else to be found."

The Pipes of Christmas Virtual Concert, produced by The Clan Currie Society / The Learned Kindred of Currie, has been nominated for an award in the prestigious MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards (Na Trads) 2021.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Robert (Bob) Currie (United States) currierobert82@gmail.com, (908) 858-6357

Neil Gunn (Scotland) neil@ngwriting.com, 07493 509991

Clan Currie Society Facebook page:

facebook.com/ClanCurrieSociety

Concert Facebook page:

facebook.com/ThePipesofChristmas

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CRANFORD DAY MARKS TOWNSHIP'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Cranford Day: A Showcase of Cranford's Community Organizations, one of the signature events on the Cranford 150th Anniversary Committee's calendar, took place on Saturday, September 25. It was organized and produced by Cranford Day event co-chairs Jeff Pistol and Loretta Smith, with encouragement, guidance, and support from Cranford 150th Anniversary Committee chair Pat Pavlak.

Thirty-nine organizations set up displays in parking lot 1 on North Union and Springfield Avenues and/or presented musical entertainment at the adjacent gazebo. The Cranford High School (CHS) Jazz Band, the CHS Madrigal Choir, the Cranford Dramatic Club, and the Rahway Valley Jerseyaires provided musical entertainment. The Cranford Historical Society had their display outside the Crane-Phillips House Museum on North Union Avenue. At Eastman Plaza, MPACK provided music and there was a face painter, courtesy of the Cranford Office of Downtown Business and Economic Development which provided assistance to the Cranford 150th Anniversary Committee.

Unlike any ordinary street fair, Cranford Day did not have any commercial or out of area groups. It was a true community effort by the local people for the local people. Not having commercial vendors encouraged Cranford Day attendees to visit the stores, restaurants, and other businesses in downtown Cranford, the commercial heart of the Township. There is certainly a place for typical street fairs and they are valuable and serve a purpose, but Cranford Day had a different purpose.

Cranford Day was designed to bring Cranford community organizations and residents together, in one place, so that the local groups would have an opportunity to describe and promote their organizations, solicit memberships, and fund-raise, and Cranford residents would have a chance to discover, join, support, and benefit from the organizations. The concept was



(above, l-r) Cranford 150th Anniversary Committee chair Patricia Pavlak, Mayor Kathleen Miller Prunty, Cranford Day co-chair Loretta Smith, Cranford Day co-chair Jeffrey Pistol, and Cranford 150th Anniversary Committee member Phyllis Kivett-Howard.

successful, resulting in organizations reporting that they gained new members, raised funds, and successfully networked with residents and other organizations.

According to many years of Cranford Chronicle archives from the mid-twentieth century, the Village Improvement Association created the original Cranford Day in 1947.

Cranford Day (1947 to 1953) and Cranford Days (beginning in 1954) were a tradition for quite a number of years in the mid-1900's. They were single or multi-day events in which civic organizations held events to bring residents together. The downtown merchants typically held Cranford Gift Days in conjunction with Cranford Day(s). Cranford Day(s) events included such things as river carnivals or regattas, dances, floral displays, art exhibits, sports competitions, dances, roller skating, bus tours around the town, and open houses at the police and fire departments and the first aid squad. One Cranford Day(s) tradition was to provide coffee and donuts to railroad commuters.

The Cranford 150th Anniversary Committee

thought that it would be nice to revive the Cranford Day concept for the Township's 150th anniversary year. Because downtown Cranford is now thriving with many events all year long, a condensed, more modest version of Cranford Day was decided upon, and that is how this year's Cranford Day came about.

The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, which began conducting services in Cranford in 1832 and moved into its first church in 1851, was the oldest organization that participated in Cranford Day. The newest organization to participate in Cranford Day was the World Mission Society Church of God, which arrived in Cranford in 2021.

The following organizations participated in Cranford Day: Centennial Village Group, College Women's Club of Cranford, Cranford 86, Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce, Cranford Dramatic Club, Cranford Environmental Commission, Cranford Family Care, Cranford First Aid Squad, Cranford Fund for Educational Excellence, Cranford High School Jazz Band, Cranford High School Madrigal Choir, Cranford Historic Preservation Advisory Board, Cranford Historical Society, Cranford Newcomers Club, Cranford Parent Teacher Council, Cranford Police, Cranford Public Library, Cranford Public Schools' Friends of the Performing Arts, Cranford Recreation and Parks/Cranford Swim Pool Utility, Cranford Unity Project, Cranford Woman's Club, First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, Friends of the Cranford Public Library, Green Team, Green Thumb Garden Club, Hanson Park Conservancy, Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield, Project Home of Cranford, Rahway Valley Jerseyaires, St. Mark AME Church, Sunny Acres Civic Association, Temple Beth-El Mekor Chayim, Troop 80 Boy Scouts, Trinity Episcopal Church, VFW Post 335, Wednesday Morning Club, World Mission Society Church of God, and the Yarnstormers.

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TRUE HAUNTINGS AT HILLSIDE AVENUE SCHOOL

Just in time for Halloween, Cranford author Dinah Williams visited Hillside Avenue School to talk about ghosts. Using stories from her True Hauntings and Terrible but True books, she touched on how many people believe they have seen a ghost (1 in 5), where ghosts can be found, why people think they appear, evidence that ghosts exist, and what to do if they see one.

Throughout her visit, she touched on stories of real encounters, in many locations, from battlefields and disaster sites to cemeteries and the White House.

At the end of the presentation, Dinah announced the four students who had won the scary story writing contest. A spooky time was had by all!



(above) Winners of the scary story writing contest.

Photo by Cranford Public Schools

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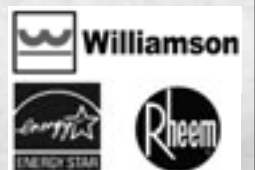
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VOLUNTEER GRIEF SUPPORT FACILITATORS NEEDED

Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for children's grief support programs has never been greater. Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss, a non-profit organization based in Mountainside and Newark, exists to support children in New Jersey who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, or close family member. Imagine offers free peer support groups for children ages 3-18, young adults 19-30, and the parents and guardians of the children in the program. Groups for Spanish-speaking bereaved adults are also available. Currently, all groups are being held virtually, however, there are plans to transition some groups to in-person as soon as it feels safe to do so.

Imagine's support groups are only possible because of our amazing team of volunteers who facilitate the groups. Imagine currently has a wait list of families looking to join our support groups. We are unable to offer them support at this time because we do not have enough volunteers to begin another Night of Support. We need your help!

Imagine's volunteer facilitators come from all walks of life and no special background is required, other than, a willingness to listen, a heart inclined to serve, and the ability to be with children and adults in grief without trying to fix, solve, or give advice. No prior experience is necessary, but volunteers must be 18 years or older. Bilingual (Spanish-speaking) volunteers are needed as well. Volunteers serve as companions and caring listeners for those who are grieving to help create a safe space where participants can share tears and embrace the joys of life.

We are hoping to fill our upcoming training with lots of wonderful new volunteers! We are planning to offer virtual facilitator training December

10-12th from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. For information on joining Imagine's team of volunteers, please contact Imagine's Program Manager, Veronica Ortiz, by emailing veronica@imaginej.org, or by calling 908-264-3100. Please help us address the growing need for children's grief support and ensure that no grieving child is required to wait to receive the support they need.

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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.'"

- Quentin L.

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PHYLLIS DUNLOP OF CRANFORD - SPOTLIGHT VOLUNTEER

By Jahi McDonald, CASA of Union County

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) has named Phyllis Dunlop of Cranford their November Spotlight Volunteer.



After spending your entire life working toward the betterment of those less fortunate, one would think retirement would be the start to some much-deserved “me time.” If you’re Phyllis, you’d be wrong.

If there’s one thing to know about Phyllis – and really, there is so much to know – it’s that she consistently puts her community

and the needs of those within it first and foremost. After seeing a recruitment advertisement in The Star-Ledger, Phyllis heeded the call and trained as a CASA volunteer. In fact, this month marks five years since she was sworn by a judge and officially began her advocate journey.

Her first case was an 11-year-old boy whose father had been recently released from prison and, as she puts it, he was “moving heaven and earth to be reunified with his son.” She admits that making the initial phone call was among her most difficult challenges as a CASA volunteer. “After many pep talks to myself, I made the call. He was understandably suspicious of what I wanted but after we spoke and I told him I had his son’s back, we formed a good relationship. After having the case only three months, the two were reunited.” She offers up this thoughtful piece of advice for other advocates unnerved by those first steps. “Always remember that no matter who you have to make your case to, you are there for the child.”

It wasn’t until the end of her second case, however, that Phyllis felt she truly understood the level of fulfillment to be found in being a CASA

volunteer. Assigned to advocate for a pair of brothers who ultimately were adopted, she says the depth and breadth of her work and her presence in the lives of these boys clicked in a singular moment: “I was asked to be in the family photograph taken at the second boy’s adoption ceremony. At that point, I knew I had made a difference.”

Phyllis’ advocacy work has led to her impacting the lives of five young boys in as many years. Interestingly, Phyllis notes that at the outset, she believed she’d be better-suited to working with girls. “Never having had a son or a brother, I expressed I’d be more comfortable with girls. Yet, I’ve had all boys from ages three to 12 and it has been great! I’ve learned a lot.”

Phyllis comes from a career in the nonprofit sector, from raising funds for higher education, museums, and food insecurity, to advancing causes like mental health and animal welfare – and, yes, even child advocacy. Phyllis spent time as a beloved member of #TeamCASA, working on the development side of the agency, even while actively advocating for her youth as a volunteer advocate. She’s eloquent, well-versed and articulate (and the grammarian in her may point out all three flirt dangerously with redundancy). Indeed, Phyllis is no grammarer. In fact, she and a likeminded former CASA colleague often shared Office Grammando responsibilities.

Whether professionally or personally, Phyllis continues to devote herself outside of the dictionary to her community and the greater global community, ensuring impact whenever possible. These include roles as chair of the Mission Committee of her church, The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, organizing mission trips to Nicaragua and Brazil.

When she does take time to sit and relax, she’s reading – not a member of one book club but three! – and, of course, spending time with her husband. Oh, and the abundance of cats they love. For Phyllis, life seems rich with giving, loving and learning, the latter of which includes a love of travel and all the world has to offer,

something she’s eager to pick up again. “I love to travel and am looking forward to the pandemic restrictions being lifted so I can do that again,” she admits.

We’re guessing that when such freedoms ring, you very well could find her embedded and dancing amid masses of crowd-goers at a Bruce Springsteen concert. With her go-to soundtrack classic rock, the New Jersey native is one of her favorites. In fact, says Phyllis, she’s even rubbed shoulders with him during her 10-year tenure with the Community Food Bank of New Jersey – a nonprofit for whom the singer is a known supporter.

It’s likely no surprise, given Phyllis’ passion for life, tapping into all it offers and all it asks of us, that she comes from altruistic parents whose upbringing seems to be a lasting gift, a legacy for all those that cross her path. Phyllis admits her favorite quote for inspiration is actually the first line of the Prayer of St. Francis: “Lord make me an instrument of your peace.”

(This writer notes he may or may not have had to delete an addendum to the St. Francis prayer quote above, as Phyllis’ former colleague may or may not have taken advantage the writer’s empty desk chair for a moment and change the last sentence to read: “Lord make me an instrument of your peace [and good grammar].”)

Seems to us that between the two guiding forces, she’s pretty well got this life thing figured out, and will continue to guide and support any youth that heads her way into their own altruistic direction and meaningful existence.

There are more youth like Phyllis’s awaiting their own CASA volunteer. The need is real, and so is the opportunity to change a life. Will you become a CASA volunteer for a Union County youth living in foster care through no fault of their own? Learn more by contacting Lucia at lfild@casaoofunioncounty.org.

In addition to serving as a fall marketing intern for CASA of Union County, Jahi McDonald is a 2020 graduate of Rutgers University-New Brunswick, with plans to begin a career in public relations and marketing.

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A 2021 Membership Form can be found on the Society's website at cranfordhistoricalsociety.org. For more info about joining the Cranford Historical Society, please call the Society's office at 908-276-0082 or e-mail cranfordhistoricalsociety@verizon.net.

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LIBRARY CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS IN DECEMBER

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Monday - Thursday: 10 AM - 9 PM; Friday: 10 AM - 5 PM;

Saturday: 10 AM - 2 PM; Sunday: Closed

Cranford Public Library

Cookie of the Month Grab and Go Kit

Bring home a Cookie of the Month Grab and Go kit and whip up a batch of Holiday Drop Cookies! Kits are available on a first come, first served basis at the Children's Desk, while supplies last. Get yours starting at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 7! Jars contain all necessary dry ingredients, you'll need to add wet ingredients.

Grab and Go Kits

Saturday Mornings

Looking for creative projects to fill the cold, December days? The library will be putting out Grab and Go Kits on Saturday mornings at 10:00. Stop by December 4 to get the supplies to make a paper snowman, December 11 for mitten scratch art, and December 18 for a beaded snowflake craft! Kits are available on a first come, first served basis in the library's contactless pickup area, while supplies last.

Tween Writing group

Wednesday, December 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Students in grades 4-6 are invited to join us for our first ever virtual Tween Writing group. The library will provide registrants with a small notebook, which we'll decorate together. Once our journals are decorated, we'll get them started with some writing prompts. While there will be time for participants to share their work, reading what you write is not required.

Registration is required and space is limited:

eventbrite.com/e/200519458097

Sew Your Own Garland

Pickup Available:

Monday, December 13

Tuesday, December 14

Makers in grades 4-6 are invited to hand sew their own decorative waterfall garland! Visit

eventbrite.com/e/195309494957 to reserve a kit online. Each kit contains supplies, written instructions, and a link to a video tutorial. You'll also need a pair of scissors and straight pins or tape. The library will be running "office hours" on Wednesday, December 15 from 6:00-7:00 p.m. for anyone who would like assistance completing their project, email antolino@cranfordnj.org to arrange a drop in. This free program is sponsored by the Errington Foundation.

Crafting Stories

Wednesday, December 22 at 3:00 p.m.

Readers and artists in grades 1-3 are invited to join us. We'll be meeting virtually to share a story and create art inspired by it. This month, we'll be sharing The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend by Dan Santat and playing fun art games. Registration is required and space is limited:

eventbrite.com/e/200531664607

Game Day

Tuesday, November 16 at 4:00 p.m.

Join us for an hour of picture bingo and win great prizes like toys and books! This program is for children of all ages with a caregiver. Registration is not required, but participants will be asked to sign in upon arrival. This program is being held in the Community Center.

Early Readers Book Club

Wednesday, December 29 at 3:00 p.m.

Students in grades K-2 are invited to join us for this month's meeting is all about Elephant and Piggie! We'll be reading There is a Bird on Your Head together before creating some Elephant and Piggie crafts. This is a virtual program, registration is required: eventbrite.com/e/200536649517

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SCOUT EXECUTIVE SPEAKS TO ROTARY CLUB

Submitted by Dr. D. Michael Hart

Marc Andreo, the Scout Executive and CEO of the Patriot's Path Council, Boy Scouts of America spoke to the Rotary Club of Westfield on Tuesday, September 21, 2021. His topic was to update the club on the state of the local Scouting. The pandemic has decreased the scouting program somewhat, but it is still going strong, and they are planning to rebuild it to where it was before the shutdown.

Paul Harris, the man who started Rotary International in 1905, was great friends with James E. West who started the Boy Scouts of America in 1910. Paul gave advice on how to spread the program throughout the US, mirroring the way Rotary clubs were spreading. Both organizations have a lot of similarities, including an ethical code, teaching leadership skills, being community based and service oriented. Rotary clubs currently charter 1,000 scout units across the US.

The Patriot's Path Council, BSA consists of 5 counties in northern New Jersey with more than 10,000 scouts and 4,000 adult volunteers. They are in the counties of Sussex, Morris, Somerset, Union and northern Middlesex. The headquarters in Cedar Knolls has only 25 full-time staff. There are two scout shops one in Cedar Knolls, and one in Mountainside.

The Council offers three Day Camps: at Watchung Reservation; Johnson Park, New Brunswick; and Camp Wheeler at Mt. Allamuchy Scout Reservation. The Council offers four overnight camping opportunities: Winnebago Scout Reservation in Rockaway, NJ; Mt. Allamuchy in Byram Township; Sabattis Adventure Camp in Long Lake NY, and the four national high adventure bases: The Summit in West Virginia; Northern Tier in Minnesota, Sea Base in the Florida Keys, and Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico.

Recent changes to the Scouts include welcoming girls to the Cub Scout and the legacy Boy Scout programs three years ago. The purpose was to include entire families in the activities. To accommodate this change, the "Boy Scout" program for ages 5th grade through age 18 was renamed the "Scouts BSA". The name of the parent organization remains the Boy Scouts of America. The Cub Scout program is for children from K through 5th grade; Scouts BSA is for children 5th grade through age 18. Other programs have been coed for many decades, including Explorers - who explore career opportunities, Venture Crews - who go on high adventure trips, Sea Scouts who learn mariner skills, and a relatively new program - STEM- in which students explore science

related careers. These last four programs welcome boys and girls from ages 14 to 21.

Cub Scout Dens may be all boy and all girl, or coed. Scouts BSA Troops are either all girl or all boy. This year there are 250,000 young women in the scouts, and 1,000 girls were the first graduating class of female Eagle Scouts. Only 4% of all scouts ever achieve the rank of Eagle, making it a mark of distinction.

The residents of Westfield are enthusiastic supporters of Scouting. There are 12 units: 7 Cub Scout Packs and 5 Scout Troops, with nearly 500 youth, which is double the national average. Last year the Patriots' Path Council recognized 315 Eagle Scouts and Scouts collectively earned more than 6,200 merit badges. The Rotary Club of Westfield has been a long time supporter of the Scouts. Several members are Eagle Scouts, and many of the children of Rotarians are in the Scouting program, and a number have earned the rank of Eagle. The club likes to support Eagle Service projects financially.

Scout Executive Marc Andreo asked the Rotarians to help spread the word about local Scouting. With units and camps open again, they are seeking more youth to join the local programs. Please visit beascout.org to locate a unit near you!



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Community Access Unlimited

A triumphant musical returning this December promises holiday cheer, a lot of laughs, and possibly too much sugar.

Tickets for Elf the Musical Jr. are now available for showings on December 10, 11, and 12th. All shows are streaming virtually at 7:00 p.m. for audiences to enjoy at home. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased on line at: www.showtix4u.com/event-details/57483

The CAU Community Players are an inclusive group of performers with and without disabilities who collaborate to stage incredible musical performances, including past productions of Hairspray and Aladdin. Community Access Unlimited (CAU) is a Union County-based, statewide nonprofit that works to integrate people with disabilities and youth at-risk into the community through comprehensive ways.

The cast of the show is thrilled to return to the stage after months of virtual rehearsals and preparation. Performers used clear masks to interact safely while allowing the audience to enjoy their expressions.

"The point of the show is to fill everyone with Christmas spirit," said Tyler O'Neill, who plays Buddy. "I'm discovering a side I never thought I had and a lot of joy. And like Buddy, I too enjoy a good hug every now and again."

Adam Fleissner, who plays Buddy's cantankerous father, Walter, said he is excited for everyone's hard work to pay off in the final production after a hiatus last year, due to the pandemic.

"It's the first time doing a CAU play since the shutdown and I just love seeing everyone again," said Fleissner.

Proceeds from the play support CAU's comprehensive services for people with disabilities and youth at-risk, which include housing, education, employment, support coordination, and life skills training.

This adaptation of the hilarious, hit film is sure

to warm hearts as we prepare for the holiday season.

"I want people to get tickets so they can laugh hard," said cast member Ernie Smalls.

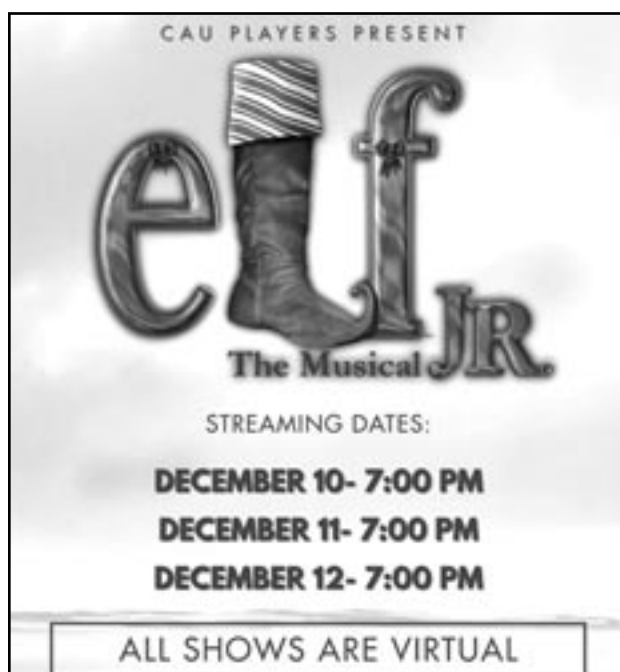
ABOUT COMMUNITY ACCESS UNLIMITED:

Community Access Unlimited (CAU), who is celebrating 42 years in 2021, supports people with special needs in achieving real lives in the community. CAU provides support and gives voices to adults and the youth who traditionally have little support and no voice in society. CAU

helps people with housing, life skills, employment, money management, socialization, and civic activities. CAU also supports opportunities for advocacy through training in assertiveness, decision-making and civil rights. CAU currently serves more than 3,000 individuals and families, with the number growing each year. For more information about CAU and its services, contact us by phone at 908-354-3040, online at caunj.org, or by mail at 80 West Grand Street, Elizabeth, NJ, 07202.



(above, l-r) Zoe Rivera and Tyler O'Neill perform as Jovie and Buddy in Elf the Musical Jr. with other CAU Community Players.



(above) Elf is streaming Dec 10, 11, and 12th at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased online at: www.showtix4u.com/event-details/57483



COLLEGE WOMEN'S CLUB HOLDS SCHOLAR TEA

CRANFORD MONTHLY • Page 21 • December 2021

Cranford Residents Carol Ramey and Rita Greco join Cranford College Women's Club member Fran Serpico at the Club's 3rd Annual Scholar Tea. The ladies enjoyed an afternoon of great food, a performance from The Shea-Jennings Irish School of Dance and good old fashioned conversation. The event is an annual fundraiser that raises money for local students who will be embarking on their college careers

next year. The club is grateful to those who participated and for all the local business donors that helped make it possible. For more information about how to join the College Women's Club or to donate to our scholarship or tribute funds go to our website collegewomensclubcranford.com or email the club at cranfordcollegeclub@gmail.com.

Photo by Cranford College Women's Club



Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce December Event Checklist

- ✓ Networking Event - 12.2, 5:30pm at Hanson House. [rsvp: tinyurl.com/cranfordnetworking](https://tinyurl.com/cranfordnetworking)
- ✓ Letters to Santa - received by 12.10 at the Mailbox at the Gazebo
- ✓ Trolley Rides & Santa Sing Along - 12.18, 1-4pm at the Gazebo
- ✓ Stories with Santa - Every Sunday Night, 7pm. Chamber Facebook page.

'Tis the season for a very merry Chamber!

BOY SCOUT WREATH SALE

Cranford Boy Scout Troop 80 will kick off its annual Christmas decoration fundraiser

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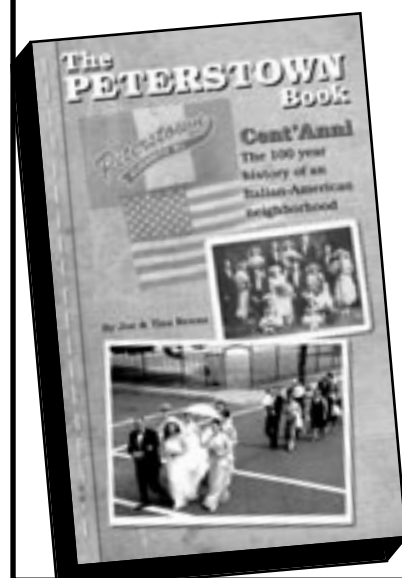
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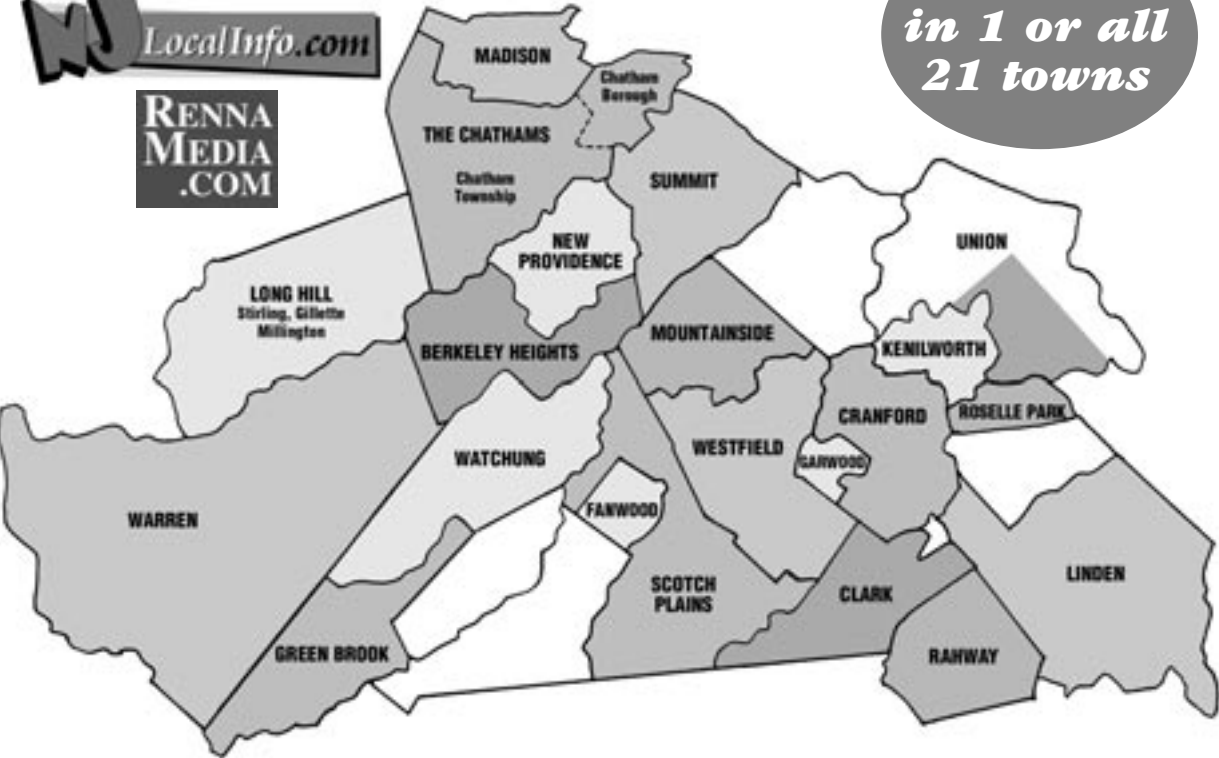
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HANUKAH: A CELEBRATION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

By Rabbi Paul David Kerbel Temple Beth El Mekor Chayim, Cranford

Hanukah is one of the Jewish religion's most popular holidays. No doubt, part of Hanukah's popularity derives from its proximity to Christmas and the bundling of a variety of religious, ethnic and cultural holidays that occur at this time of year creating a festive holiday season.

You might be surprised to know however, that unlike Christmas, Hanukah is not one of Judaism's major holidays. That billing goes to Rosh HaShanah (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Fasting and Atonement) and the Pilgrimage Festivals of Passover, Sukkot and Shavuot that are explained and discussed in The Book of Leviticus (Chapter 23).

But Hanukah is important for many reasons. In the first place, next to the Passover Seder, more Jews celebrate Hanukah than any other Jewish ritual or holiday observance. We celebrate two miracles on Hanukah: the military victory of a small, outmanned Jewish army winning out over a superior Syrian-Greek King Antiochus

Epiphanes, who forbade the Jewish people to study their scriptures, keep their calendar, observe their holidays or offer sacrifices in the Temple. The King wanted the Jews to sacrifice to the Greek Gods and study the best of Greek culture. King Antiochus was jealous of the God of Israel and sought to eradicate distinctive Jewish practices and culture.

The second miracle of Hanukah is the story in Rabbinic tradition, that when the revolt ended and the Jewish people sought to rededicate and purify the Holy Temple in Jerusalem that had been defiled by the decree of King Antiochus by lighting the Menorah, the religious candelabrum that served as a major symbol of religious Jewish life in the Temple, that there was only enough purified olive oil to last for one day, but the lamp remained burning for eight days!

But I also think the story of Hanukah teaches and shares important lessons for our friends and neighbors of other faiths about religious faith and belief. To me, Hanukah represents the first



victory in human history of religious freedom. In a certain sense, Hanukah is a universal holiday of religious freedom. If the Jewish people had lost this physical and spiritual war in 164 BCE (before the common era) and 164 years before the birth of Jesus, Judaism would have died out and since Christianity and Islam emanate out of and are connected to Judaism, there would not be today any adherents of these great faiths. Judaism, Christianity and Islam exist today because of the religious faith of these defenders of Judaism to stand up for their beliefs and rights.

Hanukah also teaches religious tolerance and the celebration of pluralism. Hanukah reinforces the rights of a minority to stand up for its beliefs while living in a larger secular or religious culture of other religious faiths. Our country was built on the idea of freedom of religion and the freedom to live by and practice the customs, rituals and commandments of our respective religions. Hanukah teaches me that sometimes miracles happen in the quiet constancy of our everyday practice of our respective customs, prayers and traditions and our interaction and bonds of friendship and community responsibility with our neighbors of all religions and ethnic groups.

The most enduring symbol of both Hanukah and Christmas is the celebration of light. We light a Menorah to symbolize the miracles of our survival and the dedication of our people - for over four-thousand years even in the midst of persecution or the attempt to suppress our faith and practice - to practice our customs and traditions with hope and confidence in the future as a monotheistic ethical religion and culture.

For our Christian friends, the lights of the Christmas season represent essential religious beliefs including joy, peace, kindness and service to our fellow human beings. Even with the challenges the Covid-19 pandemic has caused, among the most difficult in our lifetimes, may the lights of our respective traditions strengthen our commitment to our respective faiths and our obligation and opportunity to make a difference in our community and in the world at large. As one great rabbi wrote: "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness." Wishing all of us a meaningful holiday season!

Rabbi Paul David Kerbel is the rabbi of Temple Beth El Mekor Chayim in Cranford. He is active in the Cranford Clergy Association, the Union County Board of Rabbis, the Rabbinic Roundtable of the Jewish Federation of MetroWest, NJ and on the New Jersey Advisory Board of The Anti-Defamation League.

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