ROSELLE PARK MONTHLY

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ANTHONY SIGNORELLO YOUTH CENTER REDEDICATION

A ribbon cutting and rededication ceremony was held Saturday, October 23rd, for the newly renovated Anthony Signorello Youth Center.

"It's a good day for Roselle Park," Business Administrator Andrew Casais said, welcoming the full gymnasium. Mayor JosephSignorello III and Councilman Joseph Signorello, Jr. spoke on behalf of the Borough community and Signorello family. "I said it in 2004 – and we did it – and I'll say it again today, let's wear the paint off the place," said Councilman Signorello, father of the late Anthony Signorello for whom the center is dedicated.

"I have a complexed relationship with this building," said Mayor Signorello, "the loss of my brother was confusing and upsetting. I was here in 2004 as a child, but now, being here as Mayor, seeing what these improvements will do for the community for years to come makes me proud."

Originally opened in 2004, the Anthony Signorello Youth

Center serves to embody the legacy of Anthony Signorello, a young man who tragically lost his life all too young. The newly renovated facility encompasses a total investment of over \$300,000 in improvements, including new multipurpose rooms, academic spaces, conference area, gaming centers and gymnasium. The Youth Center now serves as the headquarters for the Roselle Park Department of Recreation and is intended to provide families with programs that foster a sense of community, sportsmanship, and well-being.

"It is an honor and privilege to serve as the Recreation Director for the Borough of Roselle Park," said Roselle Park Director of Recreation John Ranieri, Jr. He continued: "The goal of the Roselle Park Recreation Department is to meet the recreational needs of our community, and the

Recreation Department staff took great pride in restoring this building to its original purpose of serving the community as a hub for youth and community activities."



(above) Ribbon cutting ceremony at newly renovated Anthony Signorello Youth Center

Photo by Borough of Roselle Park



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ARK MONTHLY

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Do you have a community service that you need help publicizing? Did you or someone you know accomplish something amazing? We are interested in hearing about your latest achievement (accomplishment, honor, award, etc.). Then send us your news!

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ROSELLE PARK TO HOST FIRST WINTER MARKET

Borough of Roselle Park will be hosting its first Winter Market at Michael J. Mauri Park. The three-day event will have a multitude of activities, performances, vendors, and more for residents to enjoy.

The first day of the Winter Market will take place on Friday, December 3rd from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., as will the Borough's Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony. There will be craft vendors, food vendors, free kids activities, and a beer garden sponsored by Roselle Park Youth Football. Live performances from the Roselle Park School District Choir and Christmas carols by the Roselle Park High School Marching band will also take place. There will be an ice skating rink as well as free family portraits with Santa and Mrs. Claus.

On Saturday, December 4th and Sunday, December 5th, the second and third days of the Winter Market will take place from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. There will be craft vendors, food vendors, free kids activities, and a beer garden. Kids activities include mechanical rides, such as Kiddie Carousel, Kiddie Ferris Wheel, Dixie Band, Fusion Dance, Kyle Cancino, and Los 9 WhirlWind, and a Human Snow Globe. Live Del Sabor Band.

During the first weekend of December, the performances from local artists will take place every hour starting at 3:00 p.m.

Should inclement weather occur, the events for that day will be cancelled. COVID-19 guidelines and social distancing rules will still apply for this year's events. For more information, please contact the Casano Community Center at (908)-245-0666.

Food vendors will include: Ketal Korn, Latin Bites, Lechon de Negron, The Box, Coffee Stream, The Lab Truck, United Ice Cream, Dee's Hot Dogs, and The Original Goldenbrown.

Craft vendors, provided by Roselle Park Loves Arts, will include: Olmedo Soul, Angelise Rose Garden, Campbell Family Crafts, ShyGal Crafts, Celeste Color Art, and many more. Performances on December 4th will include, respectively: RPHS Band, Angelyse Estevez, Susie Dance Group and Sister Power the New Generation, Isabelle Latorne and Reanna Saldana (The Quaranteens), and Trying Our Best Band.

Performances on December 5th will include, respectively: Roselle Park Elementary School

THE BOROUGH OF ROSELLE PARK'S

This three-day event will have plenty of fun festivities for the whole family!



Friday, December 3rd

From 4-8 p.m. at Michael Mauri Park

- Annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony
 - Free kids activities
 - Craft and food vendors
 - Beer garden
 - Free family portraits with
 - Santa & Mrs. Claus
 - · Ice skating rink
- · Featuring live performances from the Roselle Park School District Choir and the Roselle Park High School Marching Band

Saturday, December 4th + Sunday, December 5th

From 2-8 p.m. at Michael Mauri Park

- Craft and food vendors
 - Beer garden
- Free kids activities & mechanical rides
 - Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts tables
- · Featuring live performances from local artists every hour starting at 3 p.m.



Should inclement weather occur, the events for that day will be cancelled. COVID-19 guidelines and social distancing rules will still apply for this year's events. For more information, please contact the Casano Community Center at (908)-245-0666

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ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

Roselle Park will be hosting its annual Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony at Michael J. Mauri Park from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

The first day of the Winter Market will also take place on the same day as the tree lighting. There will be craft vendors, food vendors, free kids activities, and a beer garden sponsored by

Roselle Park Youth Football. Live performances from the Roselle Park School District Choir and Christmas carols by the Roselle Park High School Marching Band will also take place. There will be an ice skating rink as well as free family portraits with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Winter Wonderland. At 7 p.m., Santa and Mrs. Claus will take the stage for the Christmas Tree Lighting.

Food vendors will include: Ketal Korn, Latin

On Friday, December 3rd, the Borough of Bites, Lechon de Negron, The Box, Coffee Stream, The Lab Truck, United Ice Cream, Dee's Hot Dogs, and The Original Goldenbrown.

> Craft vendors, provided by Roselle Park Loves Arts, will include: Olmedo Soul, Angelise Rose Garden, Campbell Family Crafts, ShyGal Crafts, Celeste Color Art, Pixie Barn Wreaths, Art & Parker, Happy Heifer Hairbows, NJ Rope Depot, Mystic Hawk Soaps, Cinsknits, Sora Ceballos Illustrations, LIT Candles NJ, Cross Rhodes Crafts, The Pour Artist NJ, and wreaths by the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.

> Should inclement weather occur, the events for that day will be cancelled. COVID-19 guidelines and social distancing rules will still apply for this year's events. For more information, please contact the Casano Community Center at (908)-245-0666.



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

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 fluoros-

copy 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 whatwoever. 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 hack to normal." - Perry O.

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

- Quenton L.

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ROTARY WELCOMES NEW MEMBER

Rotary Club of Roselle-Roselle Park



Sabir Calloway, a Roselle Park resident, recently joined the Rotary Club of Roselle-Roselle Park.

Mr. Calloway is a 2009 graduate Roselle Park High School and attended the University of Southern Mississippi. He works in financial planning with New York Life, helping people plan out their financial future, he is also a purchasing manager for Hexacon Electric in Roselle Park.

The Rotary Club of Roselle-Roselle Park is a 97-year-old service organization serving the Twin Boroughs. The club is part of Rotary International which has 35,000 clubs in over 200 countries around the world. Rotary's motto is 'Service Above Self'.

New members are always welcome. Visit roselle-roselleparkrotary.org. Join our cause!

BLOOD DRIVE - DEC. 13

The holiday season is the perfect time to give the gift of life. Since the start of the pandemic, the Borough of Roselle Park, has hosted the American Red Cross to run blood drives at the Casano Community Center.

The next blood drive will be held on December 13th. If you are available to donate please call 1-800-733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter: RosellePark to schedule an appointment.

For the last year, the United States has faced a blood shortage, warning that blood supplies across the country are critically low, with less than a five-day supply of blood products to spare. During that time, the Casano Community Center has hosted multiple blood drives to provide much-needed blood during the community's time of need.

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ANNUAL TOYS 4 KIDS PROGRAM

CHRISTMAS & HOLIDAY LIGHTS CONTEST

Roselle Park is ready to "sparkle"again with Positively Roselle Park 24/7's 6th Annual Christmas and Holiday Lights Contest. "It's the most wonderful time of the year, and Roselle Park really shows it." said Joe DeIorio, volunteer coordinator.

Listed as Fun New Jersey's Most Festive Places, homes and businesses are encouraged to participate in this spirit lifting community program.

This year's categories are: Most Traditional/Classic, Best of the East, Best of the West, Best indoor Christmas Tree/Holiday Decoration display and Facebook People's Choice.

Nominate yourself or your neighbor by December 17th. Winners will be announced on December 20th

Don't want to enter but want to be a part of the holiday spirit? Then sign up as a "Sparkle Site" and be on the virtual map so others can drive by and enjoy your display.

There is no cost to enter and the contest is completely voluntary and fun. Go to RosellePark247.org to enter. Because no one "Sparkles" like Roselle Park!

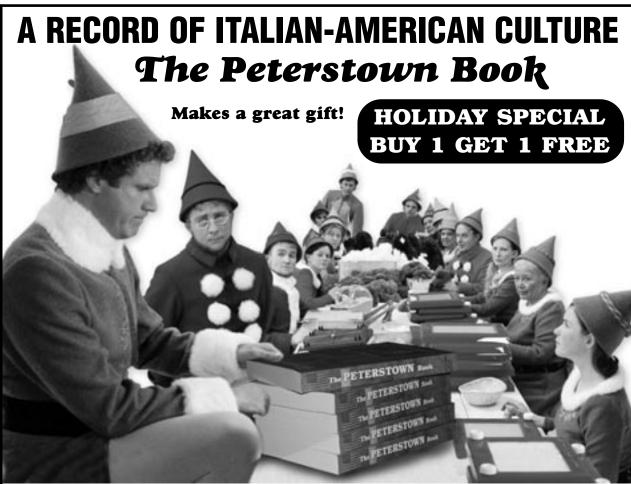




"It's time again for our Toys 4 Kids program", announced volunteer program coordinator, Jodi Bellomo. For our 7th year, Positively Roselle Park 24/7 will be collecting for Roselle Park families in need, Epiphany House in Asbury Park, Chancellor Avenue Elementary School in Newark and for the Central Jersey Leathernecks

Detachment #868 (for Toys for Tots). Please Drop Off Toys by Monday December 13th. Toys should be new and unwrapped. Gift Certificates are also welcomed. No Used Toys or Clothes PLEASE. Visit the website rosellepark 247.org/toy-drive for toy request list and gift cards you can donate!







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SEA SCOUT FROM SUMMIT EARNS COUNCIL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sebastián Heredia has been awarded the 2021 Patriots' Path Sea Scout Leadership Award. Sebastián is a Sea Scout from Ship 228 in Linden and he is an Eagle Scout from Troop 67 of St. Teresa of Avila Catholic Church in Summit.

Sebastián discovered Sea Scouting in 2017 and has been dual enrolled in Ship 228 and Troop 67 ever since. In 2019, Sebastián was nominated Sea Scout of the Year and he was the only Sea Scout from Patriots' Path Council to attend the World Scout Jamboree in West Virginia as a member of the National Sea Scout Ship. At the World Scout Jamboree, 40,00 Scouts and leaders participated from all over the world.

Sebastián earned his Eagle rank in 2019 and later earned the Silver Palm award. He is a Brotherhood member of the Order of the Arrow. Sebastián graduated from Summit High School in 2020 and went on to become an EMT. He is a member of the Summit Volunteer First Aid Squad.

Currently, Sebastián serves as the Patriots' Path Council Boatswain. In 2021, he carried out a successful regional, virtual training program and was selected for this Area Leadership Award. He was also selected to attend SEAL this summer: the Sea Scout Advanced Leadership Training in San Francisco, California. SEAL Training is the highest leadership training for Sea Scouts. He is working to earn the rank of Quartermaster which is Sea Scouting's highest honor.

Sebastián is accepted to SUNY Maritime College and will enter the Regiment of Cadets in



(above) Sebastián Heredia has been awarded the 2021 Sea Scout Leadership Award.

August. His goal is to obtain a United States Coast Guard deck license and a degree in Maritime Transportation. His future plans hope to include military service. He is grateful for all of the opportunities that have been granted to him through Scouting.

Sea Scouting is open to both male and female youth ages 14-21 who have graduated the 8th grade. There is a Maritime Explorer Club for younger youth in 6th to 8th grade. Adult volunteers with maritime experience or captain's licenses are needed too. If you are interested in learning more about Sea Scouting and Ship 228 in Linden please visit ship228.com.



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 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: 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.

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ELF THE MUSICAL JR. TO SUPPORT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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.

"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.



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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 Spanishspeaking 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

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@imaginenj.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.

PLAN A FREE TRIP TO THE RAPTOR TRUST

The Raptor Trust is a 501(C)3 organization that provides free medical care to thousands of Injured and orphaned wild birds each year. Located at 1390 White Bridge Road, Millington, NJ, The Raptor Trust's outdoor aviary trail is open to the public Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There is no charge and no reservation necessary for general admission at this time, though donations are always appreciated.

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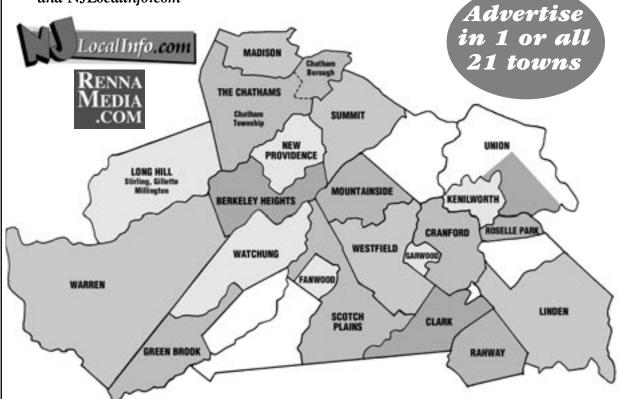
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HANUKAH: A CELEBRATION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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

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

Hanukah is one of the Jewish religion's most 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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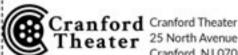
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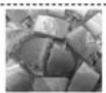
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