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ISSUE 101 • JANUARY 2022

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ERA BONIAKOWSKI REAL ESTATE PARTICIPATES IN TOYS FOR TOTS DRIVE AND GIVING TUESDAY

ERA Boniakowski Real Estate participated in the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program and #Giving Tuesday this past fall.

As a kick-off to our Toys for Tots drive we participated in Giving Tuesday which is often stylized as #GivingTuesday for the purposes of hashtag activism, it is held on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving in the United States. It is touted as a "global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world."

The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.

ERA Boniakowski Real Estate filled up over 3 huge bins of toys which were dropped off at the U.S. Marine Corps location in South Plainfield. Joseph Boniakowski said, "It's our way of giving back to the community especially to less fortunate children at this special time of the year! I'm also very proud of our agents and employees who participated in supporting this program. It is such a great feeling when we join together for a special cause."

ERA Boniakowski Real Estate is located at 929 N. Washington Avenue, Green Brook, NJ, 732-968-0700, and serves the entire Central New Jersey area west to the Delaware River with residential and commercial real estate.



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WINTER EXPRESS DELIVERED **FUN TO GREEN BROOK**

Green Brook PTO

Santa had a lot of fun meeting all the children up on their school trees. who came to the Winter Express held on December 14th. For those who missed it, Santa sends all his warm hugs, best wishes and positive vibes.

Kids enjoyed leaving messages for their teachers on wooden ornaments and hanging them

We would like to thank USA Karate for sponsoring our event, and providing us with delicious cookies, and Green Brook Starbucks for donating hot chocolate. The children had so much fun. We would like to wish everyone happy holidays!







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(above) Grace Lin, Author of Bringing In the New Year, will speak about the Lunar New Year during a virtual program on January 25th from 4:30 p.m. to 5:20 p.m.





CELEBRATE LUNAR NEW YEAR WITH SCLSNJ

On February 1st, the Lunar New Year will be celebrated around the world. Welcome the Year of the Tiger with award-winning and New York Times bestselling author and illustrator, Grace Lin, and the Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) during a virtual program on January 25th at 4:30 p.m.

During the program, students in grades K-3 will digitally connect with Lin as she shares samples of her works, explains customs and stories around the Lunar New Year commemoration, as well as leads participants in an interactive drawing demonstration and Q&A session.

From illustrating to writing, the author of over a dozen children's books, has loved creating books since she was a child. Lin realized she "wanted to be an author and illustrator forever," after winning fourth place in a national book making competition when she was in the seventh grade.

"There is something about stories and storytelling, and the need to communicate and share that is inherent in all humans," said Lin. "Reading a book takes a concept that might seem foreign, and makes it familiar. When you use a book as a shared experience, it takes what is unfamiliar and makes it familiar."

The author, an advocate for diversity, aspires

On February 1st, the Lunar New Year will be lebrated around the world. Welcome the Year unique identities and cultures, as well as explore others.

"I hope kids who read my books realize that heritage is something really wonderful and something to treasure," she said. "I hope it gives kids a glimpse into how wonderful and how magical it can be to see and experience things from other points of view and other identities. Reading books are magical and wonderful windows into other cultures."

In 2021, Lin won the Children's Literature Association Phoenix Picture Book Award for her 2001 release, Dim Sum for Everyone!. The award recognizes a work first published 20 years earlier "that did not win a major award at the time of its publication, but from the perspective of time, is deemed worthy of special attention."

The book tells the story of a young girl visiting a bustling restaurant in Chinatown with her family, where they share and enjoy variations of traditional Chinese dumplings, buns, and small snacks known as dim sum.

Attendees are encouraged to read Lin's books, The Year of the Dog and/or Bringing in the New Year, prior to the program.

For more information or to register for the virtual program, visit: clsnj.libnet.info/event/5663371.

HALL OF FAME SEEKING NOMINATIONS

Watchung Hills Regional High School

The Watchung Hills Regional High School Hall of Fame Committee is now accepting nominations for The Class of 2022 Hall of Fame. The deadline for nominations is January 15, 2022. Nomination forms may be found on the school website whrhs.org, under the Community heading. Forms may also be picked up in person at the WHRHS, 108 Stirling Road, Warren.

The Hall of Fame was set up to recognize individuals who have achieved distinction either during their high school days and/or in their professional or community life thereafter, as well as those who have served, with diligence and devotion, as Watchung Hills educators, coaches,

board of education members, volunteers, and so on. Alumni nominees must have graduated at least 10 years ago.

To date, 69 individuals have entered the Hall of Fame in a wide variety of different fields, including education, athletics, humanities, the arts, medicine and volunteerism. Those selected to the Class of 2022 will be honored at a ceremony to be held in May of 2022. Those not selected will still be considered for future classes.

For more information, please feel free to contact Ms. Laurie Grafer, Administrative Assistant to the Principal at 908-647-4800 ext. 4870 or e-mail her at lgrafer@whrhs.org.



SING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH FREE WORKSHOPS!

Tree Chorus on Wednesday evenings in January from 7 to 9 p.m. The Chorus hosts singing workshops via Zoom or in-person for fully vaccinated members and guests as covid safety protocols permit. Participants will learn more about chord-ringing, fun-filled, four-part harmony. Broadway, Beatles, and more!

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> Please register for Sing in the New Year by email info@hickorytreechorus.org or call 908-377-1399. More information hickorytreechorus.org. Watch the promo video on the Hickory Tree Chorus YouTube channel: youtu.be/mcvYYvPV4rQ.





INICA KOTASTHANE NATIONAL ESSAY WINNER



(above) Inica Kotasthane is a national winner of the 2021 Washington Congressional Seminar Essay Contest for high school students

Submitted by Barbara Lang

The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America in the State of New Jersey is pleased to announce that Inica Kotasthane, a junior at Watchung Hills Regional High School, has been selected as a national winner of the Washington Congressional Seminar Essay Contest for high school students. This award entitles Inica to a fully funded week in our nation's capital, Washington D.C., where the goal of the essay contest is to teach and stimulate an awareness of US citizenship — its privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities. Daily meetings with US Senators and Representatives, visits to the National Mall, Mount Vernon, The Pentagon, as well as many memorials and monuments are just some of the planned events and activities.

This essay contest is a major project of The NSCDA held under the auspices of the Washington Workshops Foundation, a private nonprofit educational program in American government for high school students.

Inica serves proudly as Editor in Chief of her school newspaper and Co-Editor in Chief of the blog for Next Generation Politics, a youth-led organization dedicated to promoting civic engagement. She co-chairs the Social Media Committee of her local League of Women Voters chapter, is in the Youth Leadership Program for Somerset County, and will be a Girls State delegate this summer. Inica plans on pursuing her interests in Political Science and writing through public policy, as well as hopes to continue to raise awareness and change for social issues affecting the world today. In addition to all of those responsibilities, Inica volunteers for a local nonprofit, Knit Crochet with Love, to knit caps for cancer patients, helps coach the speech and debate team of her middle school, and is working towards her second-degree black belt in Taekwondo.

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CULTURAL ADVENTURE PASS PROGRAM

SCLSNJ

From fantastical journeys to Westeros in "Game of Thrones" and the Upside Down in "Stranger Things," to relatable experiences in Stars Hollow with the "Gilmore Girls" and Pawnee, Indiana with the crew from "Parks and Recreation," many of us took the opportunity to "quaran-stream" a variety of binge-worthy adventures during the pandemic.

Now it's time to turn off the tube, and explore new sights and destinations with the Somerset County Library System of New Jersey's (SCLSNJ) recently relaunched Cultural Adventure Pass program.

"The relaunching of the Cultural Adventure Pass program shows SCLSNJ inching ever-closer to a return to our full complement of public services," said Christopher Korenowsky, director of public services. "Twenty-twenty was a tough year for everyone and we are pleased to reintroduce this very popular service."

"The careful reopening of many of our partner locations has led us to relaunch our Cultural Adventure Pass program, and seeing the pieces come into place has been a rewarding process," said Darryl Voorhees, manager of adult services programming and collaborations, public services. We are working up to an eventual 10 locations, but currently, there are four destinations available to discover: The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), IMAGINE THAT!!!®, Eastern State Penitentiary, and Morris Museum. SCLSNJ wishes everyone enjoyable adventures in our reemerging world."

By reserving a Cultural Adventure Pass, Library customers will have the opportunity to explore history at the African American Museum and Eastern State Penitentiary; to connect with nature at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden and Morven Museum and Garden; to discover contemporary and classic art at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA); and share educational, playful family experiences at IMAGINE THAT!!!®.

"Play is an important practice of early literacy and early childhood development," said Christine Jansen, manager of youth services programming and collaborations, public services. "SCLSNJ is very excited to add IMAGINE THAT!!!® as a destination to our Cultural Adventure Pass offerings. By participating in dramatic play, children can explore language, engage in opportunities for social and emotional development, build their motor skills, and learn about the world they live in."

When considering your next adventure, SCLSNJ's collection features a selection of books that complement the 10 locations available through the Cultural Adventure Pass program. Youth and adults alike can enrich their knowledge of the exhibits, collections, and/or tours as they venture off to their next excursion by checking out a book from SCLSNJ's librarian-curated booklist.

Discover your next read based on your destination:

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF DREXEL UNIVERSITY

- Adults: "The Story of the Dinosaurs in 25
 Discoveries: Amazing Fossils and the People
 Who Found Them" by Donald R. Prothero
- Youth: "The Age of Dinosaurs: The Rise and Fall of the World's Most Remarkable Animals" by Stephen Brusatte

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN MUSEUM

- Adults: "William Still: The Underground Railroad and the Angel at Philadelphia" by William C. Kashatus
- Youth: "The ABCs of Black History" by Rio Cortez

BROOKLYN BOTANIC GARDEN

- Adults: "Crystal Palaces: Garden Conservatories of the United States" by Anne S. Cunningham
- Youth: "The Kid's Guide to Exploring Nature" by Marilyn Smith

EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY

- Adults: "Eastern State Penitentiary: A History" by Paul Kahan
- Youth: "World's Scariest Prisons" by Emma Carlson Berne

IMAGINE THAT!!!®

- Adults: "Play to Progress: Lead Your Child to Success Using the Power of Sensory Play" by Allie Ticktin
- Youth: "Anywhere Artist" by Nikki Slade Robinson

INTREPID SEA, AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

- Adults: "Carrier: A Century of First-Hand Accounts of Naval Operations in War and Peace" edited by Jean Hood
- Youth: "What's Inside? Battleships" by Peter Mavrikis

MORRIS MUSEUM

- Adults: "Musical Machines and Living Dolls: The Murtogh D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments and Automata" by Ellen M. Snyder-Grenier
- Youth: "Robotics: From Automatons to the Roomba" by Racquel Foran

MORVEN MUSEUM AND GARDEN

- Adults: "A House Called Morven: Its Role in American History" by Alfred Hoyt Bill
- Youth: "The Signers: The 56 Stories Behind the Declaration of Independence" by Dennis Brindell Fradin

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART (MOMA)

- Adults: "The Museum of Modern Love" by Heather Rose
- Youth: "Modern Art Adventures: 36 Creative, Hands-On Projects Inspired by Artists From Monet to Banksy" by Maja Pitamic

SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

- Adults: "Peggy Guggenheim: The Shock of the Modern" by Francine Prose
- Youth: "The Guggenheim Mystery" by Robin Stevens

Due to the pandemic, some locations may require proof of vaccination and/or negative COVID-19 test results; have time restrictions and/or limited guest capacity; and/or other potential barriers. For the most up-to-date information regarding the location's guidelines, visit their websites (as noted above).

SCLSNJ's Cultural Adventure Pass program allows Library customers to check out passes for free admission and special discounts at select locations in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Reservations must be made in advance and passes are valid for three days. For more information or to reserve your Cultural Adventure Pass: SCLSNJ.org/culturaladventure.

For general questions about the program, contact Darryl Voorhees: dvoorhees@sclibnj.org. ABOUT SOMERSET COUNTY LIBRARY SYSTEM OF NEW JERSEY

Somerset County Library System of New Jersey (SCLSNJ) partners with you to connect, to explore, to share and to discover. Together we enrich lives, expand knowledge and strengthen communities. SCLSNJ branches can be found in Bridgewater, Bound Brook, Hillsborough, Manville, North Plainfield, Peapack & Gladstone, Rocky Hill at Mary Jacobs Memorial Library, Somerville, Warren Township, and Watchung. Additionally, there are two SCLSNJ reading stations in Branchburg and Washington Valley. Visit SCLSNJ.org.

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