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## ATLANTIC FEDERAL DONATES \$50K TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Atlantic Federal Credit Union distributed \$50,000 to five local organizations through the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York's (FHLBNY) Small Business Recovery Grant (SBRG) Program. The funds will help the businesses and nonprofit organizations address hardships resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SBRG Program began in 2017 in response to hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The program relaunched in 2020 to aid small businesses and nonprofit organizations facing challenges due to the coronavirus pandemic. By participating in the program in 2021, the Atlantic Federal Credit Union was able to grant \$10,000 each to New Jersey Workshop for the Arts in Westfield, On Time Transport in Roselle, online service provider EZ Comm LLC, Girls on the Run of NJ East in Millburn, and Boltimo International in Irvington.

"The SBRG is a timely and generous lifeline that will provide relief as other pandemic-response funding resources

are exhausted," shared Girls on the Run of NJ East Executive Director Sydney Davis. "These funds will allow us to address expenses resulting from the pandemic and ultimately bolster our financial aid program to make sure we are helping as many girls as possible unleash their limitless potential. We extend our gratitude to the Atlantic Federal Credit Union and the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York."

"Thank you to the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York for their partnership and the opportunity to extend recovery grants to deserving organizations," shared Atlantic Federal Credit Union Chief Executive Officer Anthony Mero. "This generous funding is helping to support the small businesses and nonprofits that are the backbone of our communities."

The Atlantic Federal Credit Union has been providing banking solutions in Union and Essex counties for over 86 years and is dedicated to supporting financial success within the communities they serve. For more information, visit [AtlFedCU.com](http://AtlFedCU.com).



(above, l-r) New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Founder/Executive Director Dr. Theodore K. Schlosberg, Chief Financial Officer Jessica Brown, and Atlantic Federal Credit Union Chief Executive Officer Anthony Mero.

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Tina Renna: 908-418-5586

[tinarena@rennamedia.com](mailto:tinarena@rennamedia.com)

Joe Renna: 908-447-1295

[joerenna@rennamedia.com](mailto:joerenna@rennamedia.com)

## LUCIANO FELICIO WINS ART SHOW HONORS

Twelve artists from Union County have been selected as award winners in the 55th annual New Jersey Senior Citizen Art Show. Luciano Felicio of Union won an Honorable Mention, Sculpture by a Non-Professional artist, for the artwork, "American Eagle". The 2021 New Jersey Senior Art Show can be viewed online at [njseniorarts.com](http://njseniorarts.com).

The 2021 New Jersey Senior Art Show includes more than 200 artworks created by both professional and non-professional artists, ages 60 and older, from 15 counties across the state. It is co-sponsored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and Mercer County's Division of Culture & Heritage, and is funded by the Council on the Arts with additional support from Mercer County and the New Jersey Association of Area Agencies on Aging.

Union County's annual Senior Art Exhibit is a project of the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs in the Department of Parks and Recreation. The 2021 Union County Exhibit is on view at [ucnj.org/senior-art](http://ucnj.org/senior-art).

As the culmination of county-based senior art shows held this year, the New Jersey Senior Art Show features every artwork that was awarded first-place at the county level in their respective categories. The New Jersey show was juried by art experts Lynn Lymere, Aubrey Kaufmann and Martha Press.



(above) "American Eagle" by Luciano Felicio received an Honorable Mention, Sculpture by a Non-Professional artist, at the 55th annual New Jersey Senior Citizen Art Show. Courtesy.



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## FEBRUARY 14 IS NATIONAL ORGAN DONOR DAY

### NJ Sharing Network

February 14 is all about sharing some love in New Jersey - and not just because it's Valentine's Day! NJ Sharing Network and its many healthcare partners and volunteers throughout the state are working together to register as many organ and tissue donors as possible in celebration of National Organ Donor Day.

"National Organ Donor Day is about taking action and inspiring others to learn more about how they can save lives through organ and tissue donation," said Joseph S. Roth, president and chief executive officer of NJ Sharing Network. "One organ and tissue donor can save eight lives and restore health to over 75 people. I am confident that everyone's efforts on National Organ Donor Day will go a long way toward bringing hope to those currently waiting for a transplant."

Currently, there are over 110,000 Americans –

nearly 4,000 of whom live in New Jersey – waiting for a life-saving transplant. In New Jersey, one person dies every three days waiting for an organ transplant.

However, the generosity of those in the Garden State is providing hope for the future. New Jersey's organ and tissue donor registrations continue to rise thanks to strong community education and outreach efforts as well as simplified ways to register as an organ and tissue donor are also helping to save more lives. It is easy for New Jerseyans to register in any of the following options:

Online at [NJSharingNetwork.org](http://NJSharingNetwork.org); Through the iPhone Health App; In person at your local Motor Vehicle Agency

Observed every year on February 14, National Organ Donor Day is dedicated to spreading awareness and education about organ and tissue donation. It is also a day to recognize loved ones

who have given the gift of life, have received a transplant, are currently waiting or did not receive an organ in time. National Organ Donor Day was started in 1998 by the Saturn Corporation and its United Auto Workers partner with the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and many non-profit health organizations.



(above) Cranford's Emma Rothman Celebrated 10 Years with Heart Transplant in 2021.

Photo courtesy of NJ Sharing Network



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Do you have a hard time doing crossword puzzles? Thought about investing but don't know where to start? Seeking ways to get centered? Or just love Judy Garland? Union Public Library has your back! February's schedule has something for everyone. All programs are on Zoom. To register for all events, go to: [uplnj.org/events/list](http://uplnj.org/events/list). To keep fully informed of everything new at the library, sign up for our newsletter at [uplnj.org](http://uplnj.org) and be the first to know what's happening.

Take a look at our February programs.

### **Canva Basics for Beginners**

**Tuesday, February 1st at 12:00 p.m.**

Are you looking to step up your social media game with custom images? Canva is an amazing resource that you can use to make your own images, gifs, presentations, and more. In this session, we'll share our screen with you to show you exactly how it works. For more information, go to:

[wccnj.org/wbc/classschedule/seminar-details.aspx?ClassID=10316](http://wccnj.org/wbc/classschedule/seminar-details.aspx?ClassID=10316). Presented by WCEC.

### **Meditation**

**Thursdays at 11:30 a.m.**

Join Bindu Bhatt for a virtual meditation session. No experience is necessary. Bindu has practiced meditation for over 30 years and would like to share her insight with you.

### **Beginners Flow Yoga**

**Thursdays at 6:00 p.m.**

This class will lead you through the foundations of yoga postures, body awareness and alignment, relaxation of the mind, and a connection with the breath. You will learn how to improve muscle strength, promote flexibility, and build your yoga program specifically for your mind and body.

### **Insider Tips: Solving the NYT Crossword**

**Wednesday, February 9th at 7:00 p.m.**

Ever been stymied by the devilish clues in a crossword puzzle? Join Deb Amlen, Lead Columnist and Senior Editor of "Wordplay," the crossword and games column of The New York Times, as she shows you what those tricky clues are asking you to do, and proves that crosswords are for everyone.

### **A Valentine to Judy Garland**

**Thursday, February 10th at 7:00 p.m.**

2022 is the centennial birthday of that "the little girl with the great big voice." Join John Fricke, Emmy Award Producer and Author of Judy Garland and Wizard of Oz documentaries and books, as well as enjoy stories about her extraordinary career on stage, film, TV, records, and radio. John is regularly seen on TCM and has spoken at Lincoln Center, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, the National Film Theatre (London), and more.

### **Keys to Financial Success**

**Wednesday, February 16th at 7:00 p.m.**

This workshop will help you understand the path to financial stability and includes developing a transformational money mindset, saving for a purpose, budgeting tools, debt management, investment strategies, and generational wealth. Presented by Financial Coach, Stanley Bridgeforth.

### **Off the Shelf Book Club**

**Thursday, February 17th at 7:00 p.m.**

New members are always welcome. This month's title is Seventh Heaven by Alice Hoffman, available on Hoopla with your Union Public Library card.

### **Investing 101**

**Wednesday February 23rd at 7 p.m.**

Many people consider investing in the stock market overwhelming. This introduction workshop is intended to make you more comfortable and includes understanding what the stock market is and how it works, benefits and risks, options, strategies, and how to get started. Presented by Financial Coach, Stanley Bridgeforth.

### **Writers Workshop**

**Thursday, February 24th at 7:00 p.m.**

Ever want to write stories from your life for yourself or others to read? Interested in stimulating or jump-starting your writing? Lisa Sisler from Kean University leads this workshop to help you to write.

### **Hilton Readers Book Discussion Group**

**Monday, February 28th at 6:00 p.m.**

Members will discuss some of their favorite books and authors! New members are always welcome. Call the Vauxhall Branch at 908-851-5451 for the title.

## UNION MUNICIPAL BAND CONCERT - FEB 7

The Union Municipal Band, under the direction of Howard Toplansky will present a free concert on Monday evening, February 7, 2022. The concert will be held at Hannah Caldwell School Auditorium, 1120 Commerce Avenue, Union, NJ at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free and the public is cordially invited to attend.

Some of the selections will include: Fatinitza Overture by Franz von Suppe, The Last Spring by Edward Grieg, Variants on an American Hymn by Michael Sweeney, Hungarian Dances #7 & #8 by Johannes Brahms, Magnetic Rag by Scott Joplin, Bonds of Unity by Karl L. King and many other fine musical classics.

The band would like to invite musicians, including High School students from Union and the surrounding communities to join the group. If you are interested please call the Recreation Department at 908-686-4200.

# NEW LAW BANNING SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAGS AND MORE

Submitted by Sheila Leonard

There is a new law in New Jersey which will go into effect on May 4, 2022, that prohibits all stores and food service businesses from using single-use plastic carryout bags. Further, grocery stores larger than 2,500 square feet cannot sell or provide single-use paper carryout bags and must only sell or provide reusable carryout bags. Reusable carryout bags must be made of either polypropylene fabric, PET nonwoven fabric, nylon, cloth, hemp product, or other washable fabric, have stitched handles, and be designed for multiple reuses.

In addition, the law further prohibits all people and food businesses from selling or offering for sale any polystyrene foam food service products, also going into effect on May 4, 2022. Under the new law as well, food service businesses cannot sell or serve any food in polystyrene foam food service products. However, some products are

exempt from the law until May 4, 2024, unless otherwise extended by the DEP (Department of Environmental Protection).

The products exempt from the law are: disposable, long-handled polystyrene foam soda spoons when required and used for thick drinks; portion cups of two ounces or less, if used for hot foods or foods requiring lids; meat and fish trays for raw or butchered meat, including poultry, or fish that is sold from a refrigerator or similar retail appliance; any food product pre-packaged by the manufacturer with a polystyrene foam food service product; and any other polystyrene foam food service product as determined necessary by the DEP.

Additionally, this law is making food service businesses only give customers single-use plastic straws if they request one specifically, otherwise the business will not have them out for customers to take, which became effective on November 4,

2021. These businesses are required to keep a decent amount of plastic straws set aside in case of customer requests, but they can also still sell packages of single-use plastic straws as well as can provide and sell pre-packaged beverages by the manufacturer with single-use plastic straws, such as, juice boxes.

If a person or business does not comply with this New Jersey law, the first offense is a warning, the second offense will result in the person or business being fined up to \$1,000 per day, and for the third offense, they may be fined up to \$5,000 per day as well as subsequent violations. Additional violations of the law will result in more and distinct offenses for each day there is a violation. The DEP, municipalities, and anyone certified to the "County Environmental Health Act" are authorized to enforce the law.

For more information visit [www.nj.gov/dep/plastic-ban-law](http://www.nj.gov/dep/plastic-ban-law).

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## MEMORY OF COUNTY RESIDENT HONORED DURING CELEBRATION OF LIFE

### NJ Sharing Network

On September 12, thousands of walkers, runners and volunteers participated in NJ Sharing Network's 5K Celebration of Life Walk and USATF Certified Race at the organization's headquarters in New Providence, NJ. The event, which was presented by Hackensack Meridian Health and Pfizer and supported by dozens of other generous sponsors, honored those who gave the gift of organ and tissue, paid tribute to those who have received a transplant, offered hope to those currently waiting for a transplant and remembered the lives lost while waiting for the gift of life.

Family members and friends of the late Caitlin Nelson, 20, of Clark, NJ, gathered together to form the "Caitlin Gives" 5K team to honor her memory and show their support for NJ Sharing Network's life-saving mission. Caitlin, who tragically passed away in 2017, was an organ and tissue donor who saved and enhanced the lives of many others. Caitlin was a social work student hoping to be a pediatric oncology social worker and she was also a huge proponent of organ donation. At one time prior to her tragic accident, Caitlin told her mother to donate her organs if anything ever happened to her because she said someone could use them. Members of "Caitlin Gives" offered the following message during the

### 5K Celebration of Life:

Caitlin was a selfless, loving, amazing, warm-hearted girl who was one month shy of celebrating her 21st birthday when she tragically passed away. Her passion for life and devotion to helping others was remarkable.

Caitlin's brilliant smile had this way of lighting up a room. She had an incredible, dazzling charm and a sweet, warm personality. She was a fervent supporter of organ donation and strongly encouraged her family and friends to sign up to become organ donors. Caitlin gave the gift of life by donating her heart, lungs, kidneys, pancreas, and liver. She also donated over 200 bone and tissue grafts. Her gifts have already helped 50 people.

Our angel baby accomplished so much and touched so many lives in her 20 years. As a

daughter, sister, girlfriend, cousin, friend, and niece, Caitlin will be missed terribly but will live on in our minds and hearts.

### ABOUT NJ SHARING NETWORK

Dedicated to saving lives through organ and tissue donation, NJ Sharing Network is the non-profit organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue for the nearly 4,000 New Jersey residents waiting for a life-saving transplant. With headquarters in New Providence, NJ, the organization, selected by NJBIZ as one of the state's "Best Places to Work" for the fourth consecutive year, is also part of the national recovery system, serving the 110,000 people on the national waiting list.

To learn more, get involved and register as an organ and tissue donor, visit [www.NJSharingNetwork.org](http://www.NJSharingNetwork.org).



(above) Caitlin Nelson gave the gift of life by donating her heart, lungs, kidneys, pancreas, and liver. She also donated over 200 bone and tissue grafts. Her gifts have already helped 50 people.

Photos by NJ Sharing Network



(above) Family members and friends of the late Caitlin Nelson, 20, of Clark, NJ, gathered together to form the "Caitlin Gives" 5K team to honor her memory and show their support for NJ Sharing Network's life-saving mission



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# ADVOCATES TAKE OATH TO SERVE FOSTER YOUTH

Submitted by Gretchen Boger-O'Bryan

Nine Union County residents ranging from age 22 to 63 make up the newest class of volunteer child advocates for CASA of Union County, the only nonprofit advocating for the best interests of Union County youth removed from home due to abuse or neglect, and placed in foster care.

Superior Court Judge Marc R. Brown presided over the recent swearing-in ceremony via Zoom; advocates will now be matched to a foster youth or siblings and begin putting their 30 hours of training into practice. The class includes both non-parents and parents, and such backgrounds as teaching, freelance, law and homemaking. They are Jacqui Lenner and Nicole Sandstedt of Westfield, Laurie Litterio of Cranford, Rebecca Muston and Amy Saunders of Summit, Sue Pangis of Berkeley Heights, Tamara Parraga-Sez of Newark, Lydia Pernia of Linden, and Jackie Rodriguez of Clark.

Prior to administering the oath, the judge shared, "I find the value of CASA volunteers immeasurable. Although I practiced family law for decades, it involved pieces related to a family, like divorce. In these cases, everything we do is attuned to the entire family and it's the most rewarding in my career. I didn't previously realize the extent of need out there – from poverty, substance use, mental health, and the guidance needed, all of it. CASA is so significant; I always make a point of hearing from the CASA volunteer during the hearing." Acknowledging that COVID-19 requires the swearing-in and court hearings remain virtual for now, he added, "I so look forward to being

able to shake your hand and congratulate you. The assistance you will provide is, again, immeasurable. Thank you for doing this."

Currently, the organization serves just over 80 percent of all Union County foster youth in care. With a goal to provide an advocate for every youth that needs one, the organization has remained steadfast – despite the pandemic – in efforts to ensure its work continues. To that end, a fully online training and recruiting infrastructure was put into place, and protocols implemented to ensure advocates remained both connected to their youth and able to report to judges, and staff continued recruiting and training volunteers to help meet the need for youth still awaiting an advocate.

Executive Director Mariel S. Hufnagel noted, "In the face of the challenging life circumstances we are all facing due to the COVID-19 global health pandemic, this tremendous group of women still made a decision to give of their time and energy, and train virtually to become advocates. I am so proud to welcome them to the CASA family and can't wait to see all of the ways in which they positively impact the youth to whom they will be assigned."

Upon being court-ordered to a case, CASA volunteers have access to the youth as well as foster parents, doctors, caseworkers, therapists and teachers in order to identify concerns and unmet needs, and protect best interests. For details on upcoming trainings and how you can Change a Child's Story, contact Walia at [wworrill@casaofunioncounty.org](mailto:wworrill@casaofunioncounty.org).



(above) CASA volunteers for foster youth who were recently sworn in during a ceremony held via Zoom. For details on upcoming classes and how you can Change a Child's Story, contact Walia at [wworrill@casaofunioncounty.org](mailto:wworrill@casaofunioncounty.org).

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## THREE FAMILIES MADE OFFICIAL ON NAT'L ADOPTION DAY

### CASA of Union County

The frosty morning of Nov. 19 may have been any other Friday for many, but for three Union County foster youth in Rahway, Roselle and Roselle Park, all under age three, their lives changed forever, as Union County Superior Court Judge Lara DiFabrizio granted each the consistency and stability deserved by all children, finalizing their adoptions and ending their time in the child welfare system. Each family had their own CASA volunteer working the case.

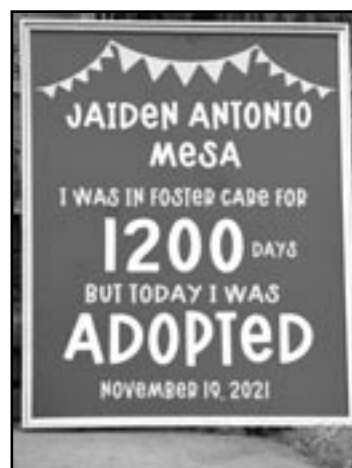
The annual event is held the Saturday before Thanksgiving and courts nationwide often celebrate National Adoption Day the business day before, or even open on Saturday, to hold adoption hearings. Here in Union County, all hearings were performed via Zoom due to Covid-19, and Judge DiFabrizio made official what each child likely already felt: they were finally home.

Despite the virtual component, those involved ensured the excitement was palpable. Upon completion of each adoption, the homes were visited by a caravan of fire trucks, police cars, court staff, law guardians and other case stakeholders, CASA of Union County staff and two of its interns suited up as Captain America and Mr. Incredible, and the bear mascot from Kenilworth's David Brearley Middle and High School. All cheered for the family, where each took their first official photo together, and the children spent time with the superheroes and school mascot.

Families received a hot breakfast donated by Urban Griddle in Elizabeth; a flower bouquet provided by Jane Phillips who, until her recent retirement, headed the Adoption Day Committee for the judiciary; and a gift basket from CASA of Union County made possible by collections of board and card games, puzzles and movie night fixings from the Kenilworth school and Summit's Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child. The latter collection was spearheaded by Desiree

Mitchell, daughter of CASA volunteer Hope Mitchell, and included fleece blankets made with classmates. In addition, each child and all siblings received their own superhero dress-up costume and books hand selected by the Phi Eta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha. Each family received a WalMart gift card funded by the Union County Bar Association. Costumes for CASA's interns were loaned by generous members of the Facebook Buy Nothing Group in Cranford and Garwood.

Today, more than 120,000 youth nationwide need a permanent home, with an average wait in foster care of four years. Each year, 23,000 youth age out of the system without a family or safety net in place. For details on CASA of Union County's mission, the need for volunteer advocates and how to become one, contact Lucia at [lfield@casaoofunioncounty.org](mailto:lfield@casaoofunioncounty.org) or log on to [casaoofunioncounty.org](http://casaoofunioncounty.org).



(above) Upon completion of each adoption, the homes were visited by a caravan of fire trucks, police cars, court staff, law guardians and other case stakeholders, CASA of Union County staff and two of its interns suited up as Captain America and Mr. Incredible, and the bear mascot from Kenilworth's David Brearley Middle and High School.

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## EMERGENCY SHELTER AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

### *The Gateway Family YMCA*

The Gateway Family YMCA was awarded a \$500 grant from the PSEG Foundation to assist with sanitization services for the YMCA's Emergency Shelter and Transitional Housing Programs.

"During this global pandemic, there has been an increased need for essential housing and social services," stated Krystal R. Canady, CEO of The Gateway Family YMCA. "The Gateway Family YMCA has served the community for over 120 years and we thank the PSEG Foundation for their support. As a charity, having community partners allows us to continue helping those we serve."

"The PSEG Foundation aims to build sustainable, equitable, and thriving communities, which is why we are honored to support The Gateway Family YMCA and their efforts to provide Emergency and Transitional Housing Programs," said Calvin Ledford, Jr., President of the PSEG Foundation and Director Corporate Social Responsibility. "By empowering people and investing in local organizations, PSEG aims to address inequalities and inequities, as well as, supports diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the communities we serve."

The Gateway Family YMCA provides housing and social services for over 300 individuals, families, and veterans each evening through emergency and transitional housing

programs located in Elizabeth and Plainfield. They also provide housing and services through supportive housing programs throughout Union County. All residential housing programs include wraparound social services focusing on employment preparation, life skills training, and case management, but also match residents with the resources, benefits, and services they need to transition into permanent housing, for example, emergency meals and health care.

"Many think of the Y as a place to regain wellness, attend summer camp, or learn to swim," said Melynda A. Mileski, EVP/COO of The Gateway Family YMCA. "For many, the YMCA is also a place to call home, gain new skills, and grow as a family."

The Gateway Family YMCA is a leading 501(c)(3) non-profit, health, and community service organization committed to strengthening community by connecting all people to their potential, purpose, and each other. Working locally, the Y focuses on empowering young people, improving health and well-being, as well as inspiring action in and across communities. By bringing together people from different backgrounds, perspectives, and generations, the Y ensures that all have access to the opportunities, relationships, and resources necessary to learn, grow, and thrive.

For more information about The Gateway Family YMCA or YMCA Residential Programs, visit [tgfymca.org](http://tgfymca.org), or contact 908-355-9622.

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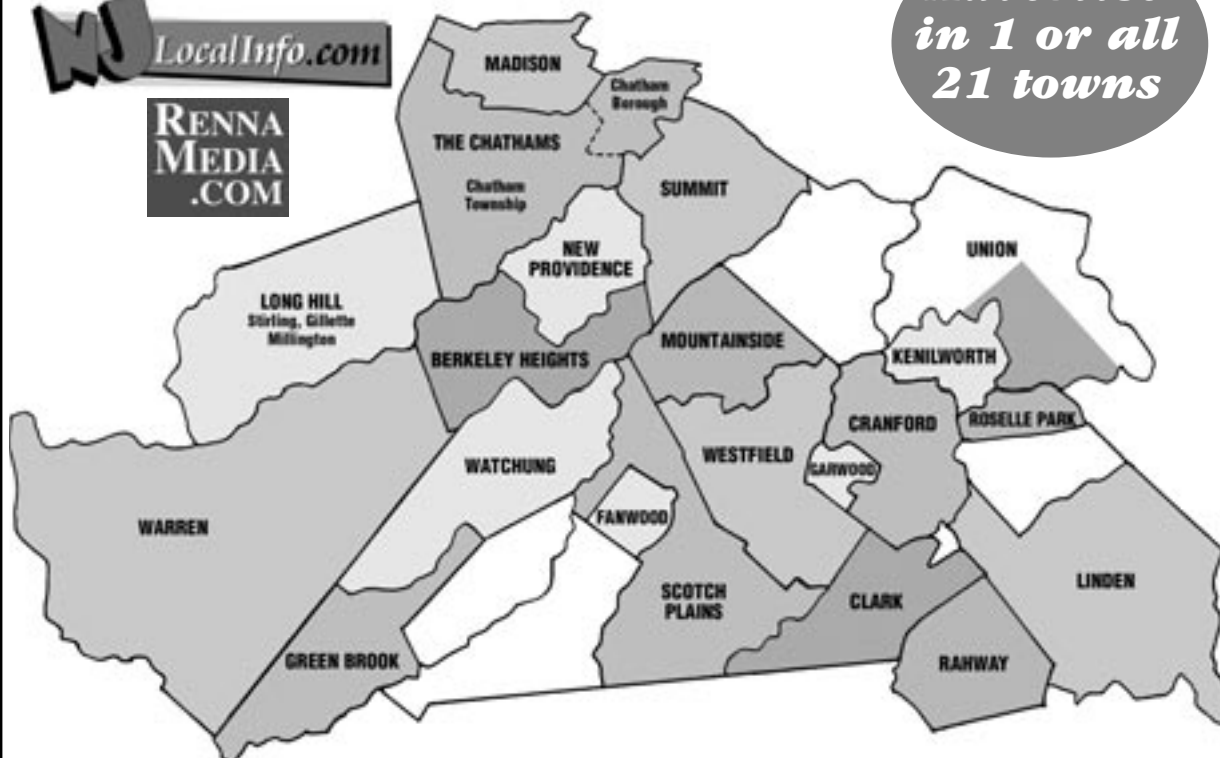
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2 Units	6.5" x 2" or 3.25" x 4"	\$100	\$250	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700	\$800	\$900
4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700
6 Units	6.5" x 6.25" or 10" x 4"	\$240	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1400	\$1600	\$1800	\$2000
9 HALF PAGE	6.5" x 9" or 10" x 7"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1300	\$1600	\$1900	\$2200	\$2400
12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000
2 PAGE SPREAD	21" x 14"	\$700							
BACK PAGE	10" x 14"	\$500							
FRONT PAGE BANNER	8.25" x 2"	\$320							
FRONT PAGE BOX	1.5" x 4.5"	\$240							

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## GRIEF FACILITATOR VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

*Imagine, A Center For Coping With Loss*

Recent studies have found that more than 140,000 children nationwide lost a primary caregiver due to COVID-19, driving a 15% increase in orphaned children. However, these numbers don't include children who lost a parent or primary caregiver due to other causes. The need for grief support programs for children has never been greater.

Imagine offers free peer support groups for children ages 3–18 who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, or close family member. Groups are also available for young adults ages 18–30, as well as for 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, though we hope 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 families waiting to join our support groups. We're unable to offer them support at this time because we don't 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. Volunteers must be 18 years or older.

Bilingual (Spanish speaking) volunteers are needed as well. Volunteers serve as companions and loving listeners for those who are grieving and help create a 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're planning to offer a virtual facilitator training that will meet Friday, February 25th from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m., Saturday and Sunday, February 26–27 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. each day and Monday, February 28th from 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. Participants are required to attend the entire training from Friday to Monday. If you're interested in participating in the training, please contact Imagine Program Manager, Giovanna Peacock, at [giovanna@imagine-nj.org](mailto:giovanna@imagine-nj.org). If you have questions regarding the training, you can call us at 908-264-3100. Please help us ensure that no grieving child is required to wait for the support they need.

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## COURSE ON MENTAL ILLNESS BEGINS MARCH

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education Course will be offered by the Union County Chapter of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). The course will be starting on Thursday evening, March 3, 2022 and meet each Thursday over a consecutive 8-week period. It is free-of-charge, with all necessary materials furnished at no cost.

The course is offered specifically to the parents, siblings, spouses, teen-age and adult children, and significant others of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. The program is not appropriate for individuals who, themselves, suffer from one of the major mental disorders. The course is taught by NAMI members who have completed intensive training.

Curriculum topics include schizophrenia, bipolar disorder (manic depression), clinical depression, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder etc., the clinical treatment of these illnesses and how caregivers can learn to cope more effectively. Attendees will learn about new research, medications, skills needed to successfully communicate with a relative and how to deal with critical periods.

Capacity is limited. To register, or if you have questions, contact Pat Roman at 732-397-8123 or email [patroman2@aol.com](mailto:patroman2@aol.com). Please include in the subject line: F2F Course. A F2F teacher will contact you with the details.

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