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## ALJ MARCHING CRUSADERS ARE METLIFE CHAMPIONS!

### Clark Public Schools

This October, Arthur L. Johnson (ALJ) High School Marching Band performed at the Ludwig Tournament at MetLife Stadium. 55 Bands went to perform of various group sizes, and ALJ came home as Ludwig 1 Open Class Champions! According to ALJ Music Teacher Erik Krebl, "Some of the best bands in the state were in attendance. I am extremely proud of the work the students, parents, and my staff have done to achieve this monumental achievement, the first in our school's history! So for the year 2022, the Marching Crusaders are MetLife Champions!!"



Photos by Clark Public Schools



(above) The ALJ Marching Band named Ludwig 1 Open Class Champion at the Ludwig Tournament at MetLife Stadium.

## TOURNAMENT OF BANDS HOSTED AT ALJ

### Clark Public Schools

On Saturday, September 24, Arthur L. Johnson High School hosted its first-ever Tournament of Bands Competition, hosting 9 different schools from Central New Jersey. ALJ jumped up to a score of 81.170, leaping from a score of 75 the week prior. Currently, ALJ is ranked number 2 out of 46 bands performing in their division throughout the entire east coast.

The ALJ band and music program are thriving under the

leadership of second-year director Erik Krebl. Supervisor of Music Anthony Caldiero stated that "Mr. Krebl and his students put in countless hours perfecting their crafts and the results are showing. They are an excellent representation of the talent and commitment that exists within the ALJ community."

Throughout the month of October, the band performed at both ALJ football home games, as well as at competitions every weekend.

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## CHRISTMAS DRIVE-THRU FOOD COLLECTION DECEMBER 10

Cranford United Methodist Church invites you to lend a helping hand to families in need this holiday season. The church is holding a Drive-Thru Christmas Food Drive on Saturday, December 10th from 10 a.m. – 12 pm. in the church’s parking lot.  
Here are some suggestions for Christmas dinner donations: canned ham, canned pineapple, candied yams, cranberry sauce, rice, applesauce, juice, raisins, bottled gravy, broth, oil, spices, canned green beans, corn, cornbread mix, cake mix, condensed milk, canned pie filling and crusts, Christmas cookies and pudding.

Hardy fresh fruit and vegetables are also very much needed, such as potatoes, garlic, onions, sweet potatoes, apples, pears and oranges.  
Place your bags in your trunk, drive up, pop your trunk and volunteers will remove them, no contact needed! Your food donations will be delivered to St. Joseph’s Social Services and other local organizations serving people in need.  
Cranford United Methodist Church’s parking lot is located next to the Cranford Library.  
Can’t make that date? There are bins outside near the Little Free Pantry in the church’s parking lot where donations can be dropped any time.



(above) Cranford United Methodist Church is holding a Drive-Thru Christmas Food Drive on Saturday, December 10th from 10 a.m. – 12 pm. in the church’s parking lot next to Cranford Public Library.



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# GARWOOD DEMOCRATIC CLUB CLEANS UP NORTH AVENUE

Submitted by William Niersted

No plastic bags, but just as many irresponsible cigarette smokers!

That was the verdict on Saturday, October 8, after the Garwood Democratic Club completed its third 2022 Route 28/North Avenue cleanup as part of its annual Adopt-A-Highway commitment



(above) The Garwood Democratic Club continued its annual tradition of picking up litter along North Ave.

to the New Jersey Department of Transportation. Cigarette butts remain – from our initial cleanup 3 years ago – the largest single most picked-up item.

Once again, we thank local businesses that have placed cigarette butt poles in front of their businesses, and we urge the industrial establishments to do the same for their employees. I remind cigarette smokers that the butts they throw into the street end up in storm drains, our streams, and back into our drinking water supply. You are not ‘throwing away’ your cigarette butt; you are just setting yourself up, and the rest of us, for drinking it later. I urge you to please dispose of your cigarette butts responsibly.

This time club members Debbie Ledger, Councilman Marc Lazarow, Mark Gernett, Russ Graham, Clarissa Nolde, Isabella and Gonzalo Vazquez, Mayor Sara Todisco and Bill Nierstedt bore cotton gloves, handled ‘grabbers’, and picked up enough litter to fill 4 garbage bags and one bag of recyclables. I would have to say that we did notice a reduction in the amount of material picked up (we wondered if Hurricane Ian had washed it all down the storm drains!).

Regardless, North Avenue remains a hotbed for litterers.

While cigarette butts remain the #1 litter item, this cleanup did see a few changes in litter items. Auto-related parts – nuts, washers, screws, lug bolts - have reduced in number (maybe the car owners brought the cars to real auto shops to get repaired!). The most interesting item was our first Christmas tree ornament. A little early! The major item worth listing is utility company debris. It became readily apparent that PSE&G workers don’t clean up after their work very well – housing canisters, brackets, wires, etc., filed our bags. Other items of consequence are ‘airplane’ size liquor bottles, fast food restaurant food packaging, and one shirt. The number of masks and plastic gloves is also down, but not eliminated. The restrictions on single-use plastic bags are working as we didn’t pick any up at all!

Each cleanup reduces litter from entering our stormwater system and rivers, and reduces the visual litter blight, improving Garwood’s appearance to those passing through. Those interested in assisting the Club in its future North Avenue cleanups are encouraged to contact the Garwood Democratic Club.

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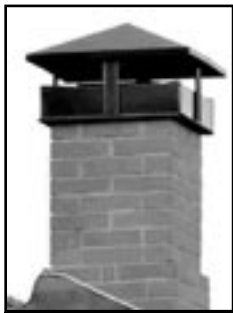
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# LINCOLN SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE WINNERS

Garwood Public Schools

## CHAMBER EXPANDS INTO CLARK

Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

GWACC Chamber of Commerce at its November Board of Director meeting approved the addition of the Clark Business Alliance, and the Irish Business Association (IBA) to the GWACC Chamber. GWACC will now cover six towns, Clark, Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, Scotch Plains, and Westfield.

Elected to the GWACC Board of Directors for a one-year term were Alan Tennant, President of the Clark Business Alliance, and Steve Flood, President of the Irish Business Association. These additions will afford exceptional access to business professionals in all six towns.

The first meeting in Clark took place at Manny's Diner on November 10 and was sponsored by the Clark Township. GWACC will now continue to schedule and publicize IBA and Clark Township events.

Gene Jannotti, GWACC CEO stated, "This is the first expansion of GWACC in many years and it will bring a new group of business professionals into the organization. All existing members will benefit from this relationship."

Clark Mayor Sal Bonaccorso said, "I am excited to see the Clark Business Alliance as part of GWACC working with businesses in town. We need to support our local businesses in any way we can, they are the heartbeat of a thriving community."

All future networking event information and registration can be found on the GWACC website, GWACCNJ.com.

### ABOUT THE GWACC

Established over 74 years ago, the GWACC is the primary business organization in Clark, Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Garwood, Mountainside, and Westfield. The chamber promotes local business opportunities, economic development, and community growth. The GWACC includes 500 member businesses and nonprofit organizations. For more information, go to GWACCNJ.com or call Gene Jannotti at 908-233-3021.

Mrs. Planer, the art teacher at Lincoln School in Garwood, is proud to announce that seven of her students were winners in the Prevention Links Red Ribbon Anti-Drug Poster Contest in Union County. Students had to illustrate an activity that they do to keep them away from drugs.

In the eighth grade, Yvett Rodriguez won 1st place, Cordelia Baker won 2nd place, and Craig

Lowry won 3rd place. In the sixth grade, Emma Ferrara won 2nd place. In the fifth grade, Ania Sobotka won 1st place, Lucy Leonard won 2nd place, and Valerie Faustino won 3rd place.

The students worked hard on their posters and were thrilled to receive awards and gift cards from Prevention Links at the Red Ribbon Prevention Walk and Family Fun Fall Festival at Nomahegan Park on October 22.



(above) Seven students from Lincoln School in Garwood were winners in the Prevention Links Red Ribbon Anti-Drug Poster Contest in Union County.

Photo by Garwood Public Schools



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# HANUKAH: A HOLIDAY OF LIGHTS AND MIRACLES

*Submitted by Rabbi Paul David Kerbel*

Hanukah is a ‘major’ Jewish holiday. You might be surprised by that. Most rabbis and Jewish educators would say just the opposite, that Hanukah is a ‘minor’ Jewish holiday. From the perspective of religious Jewish law, Hanukah does not have the same religious significance of Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (our Day of Atonement and forgiveness), Passover (our Festival of Freedom), Shavuot (the holiday where we celebrate the revelation of the Five Books of Moses), and Sukkot (our Fall festival celebrating the end of the summer harvest and our relationship with God).

Hanukah is a ‘major’ Jewish holiday culturally and ethnically. One of the ways we can understand any religion is not just what the religion ‘teaches’ but what its followers actually observe and practice. More Jews observe Hanukah than any other ritual, other than participating in a Passover Seder. Part of Hanukah’s ‘popularity’ is that it falls in the Jewish calendar between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Hanukah represents a powerful response to the feelings of exclusion and of being a minority in the larger Christian culture of America and allows members of the Jewish community to celebrate its own traditions and be proud of the Jewish heritage even as the airwaves, malls and

TV commercials are filled with the sounds and traditions of Christmas.

But regardless of where Hanukah falls in the calendar, I would suggest the following four reasons why Hanukah is a ‘major’ Jewish holiday and has lessons for both Jews and our non-Jewish neighbors to learn from share:

1. Hanukah represents the first victory in human history for religious freedom. Had the Jewish Maccabees not won their war with the Greek/Syrian kingdom, Judaism may have died out and Christianity and Islam, both of which have roots in Judaism, may never have developed. The Jewish people celebrate the value for all of us to celebrate our respective religious traditions.
2. Hanukah teaches us religious tolerance and to celebrate diversity and pluralism. As America becomes more diverse and welcomes citizens of many different religions from around the world, we learn from each other and how much we have in common.
3. Hanukah reinforces the ability and opportunity of each minority to teach, learn and celebrate its religious traditions and its principles and unique ethnic and religious identity while we all share and believe in the values of freedom and democracy.
4. Hanukah reminds us of the modern-day miracles that we have participated in: the redemption of over one million Jews from

the former Soviet Union who were not allowed to learn about their Jewish faith and practice Judaism while under Communist rule; the rescue and welcoming of over 100,000 Jews from Ethiopia and the rescue and of endangered Jews and other Jewish communities around the world. We must always be prepared to deliver the few from the many, the weak from the mighty and the righteous from the wicked.

Finally, I would like to share that the word “Hanukah” means ‘dedication’ and comes from the same Hebrew word as ‘education.’ Hanukah is about making sure that we maintain our Jewish identity, that we teach our children, the values, the history, the rich heritage which is ours to embrace and pass on to the next generation. May the lights of our Hanukah menorah symbolize our love for Judaism, our right to practice Judaism as a minority while at the same time, sharing symbols of light and the theme of miracles with those who celebrate Christmas even as all of us strive to make the world a better place. For our Jewish tradition has taught us this eternal message: “It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.”

**Happy Hanukah and Happy Holidays to all!**  
*Rabbi Paul Kerbel is the spiritual leader of Temple Beth El Mevor Chayim in Cranford and the current chair of the Cranford Clergy Council.*

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## GARWOOD LIBRARY DECEMBER EVENTS

*The Library will be closed on December 24 and 26 for the Christmas Holiday and December 31 for the New Year's Holiday.*

### Classic Movie Fridays

*December 2 and 16 at Noon*

Join us for Classic Movie Fridays featuring memorable movies from the 50s and 60s. Light refreshments will be served. Registration required

### Knitting Club

*December 5, 12, and 19 at 10:30 am*

Join our Knitting Club. Open to all levels, whether you're a beginner or you want to share your vast knowledge of knitting, or just spend an hour being creative and socializing. No Registration required. Yarn and needles provided to newcomers

### Holiday Backdrop

*December 5 through 22*

Come take your holiday picture at our do-it-yourself Holiday Photo Station complete with a festive backdrop and a cardboard Santa.

Goodie bags for kids are available while supplies last. The backdrop will be available during library hours on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### Storytime in the Library

*December 6, 13 and 20*

*at 10:30 am and 11:30 am*

Join Miss Maryanne for stories, bubbles and more. Registration Required

### Virtual Kids Craft

*December 6 at 3pm*

Pick up supplies for a Holiday inspired craft, then watch the craft tutorial on the Library's

Facebook page at 3 pm. The video will be available for viewing thereafter. Registration is required for craft kits and is limited to 15 participants. Sign up on the Library's website calendar or by phone.

### Library Board Meeting

*December 7, 7:30 pm*

A meeting of the Garwood Library Board of Trustees will take place in the Library. This meeting is open to the public.

### Virtual Adult Craft

*December 13 at 3 pm*

Pick up your craft supplies from the Library and then watch the Facebook tutorial at 3 pm.

Registration is required for craft kits and is limited to 10 participants. Sign up on the Library website's events calendar or by phone.

### Countdown to Noon

*December 30 at 11:30*

Bring in the New Year at the Garwood Library. Enjoy sweet treats, crafts, and a whole lot of fun with a noon ball drop celebration for children in 2nd grade and younger. Registration is required.

### Book Discussion Group

*December 19 at 1pm*

Join us in the library for a lively discussion of this month's book "The Magnificent Life of Marjorie Post" by Allison Pataki Allende.

## ALJ FALL PLAY - OEDIPUS THE KING

The students of Arthur L. Johnson High School presented Sophocles' tale of Oedipus the King in November. Oedipus is the famous story of the ill-fated king on his quest for the truth about his identity and his ultimate downfall. Director Peter Nevargic gave a modern look to the ancient tale, and it was performed by 15 very talented student performers.

### THE CAST INCLUDED:

OEDIPUS – Gabe Snedeker; JOCASTA – Isabel Cortese; CREON – Vincent Goodman, Jr.; PRIESTESS – Mary Sikora; MESSENGER #1 – Hunter Zawoysky; THE SHEPHERD – Jacob Hernandez; MESSENGER #2, Taylor Normann; A BOY – Bryan Horling; ANTIGONE – Alyssa Szarszewski

### THE CHORUS INCLUDED:

Nicholas Conrad (leader); Kayla Comiskey (leader); Jason Conrad (leader); Vincent Goodman, Jr.; Maya Sores (leader); and Hunter Zawoysky

Photos by Clark Public Schools



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# ADOPTION DAY FETES YOUTH LEAVING FOSTER CARE FOR FAMILIES

## CASA of Union County

On the morning of Thursday, Nov. 10, children from 18 months to 18 years gathered at the Union County Courthouse surrounded by courthouse staff and judiciary, county commissioners, area organizations and more – all there to celebrate youth reaching the long-awaited end to living in foster care with adoption into a forever family. Family courts see complex issues fraught with loss or discord nearly every day, yet Adoption Day is eagerly anticipated by all, as fresh starts and ample smiles fill the courthouse.

November is National Adoption Month and National Adoption Day, celebrated the Saturday before Thanksgiving, is a national movement to raise awareness of children in foster care awaiting a family. Since its inception in 2000, more than 75,000 children have found permanency on this day. Still, more than 110,000 youth in the United States need a permanent home and the average wait is four years. More than 23,000 youth nationwide age out of the system each year and must face life on their own.

This year, Union County’s celebration came

early, but no complaints; it just means children received permanency even sooner. After Judge Daniel Roberts performed the adoption ceremonies, the festivities began: from roving a balloon artist and CASA Volunteer Dina Gharaibeh providing face painting to a musician and more than a dozen superheroes from the Union County Sheriff’s Heroes Initiative – the Batmobile even made an appearance – there was nothing but smiles to go around.

Speakers included 17-year-old Maeve Boger-O’Bryan of Cranford and Joseph Coston of Fair Lawn. Maeve discussed her own open adoption and Joseph shared his story as an adoptive parent of eight youth from the foster system.

CASA of Union County provided family fun baskets with donated board and card games, fleece blankets, jars of popping corn, movie candy and more from David Brearley High School’s Bears that Care group, all packed into baskets donated by Cranford Girl Scout Troop 40836. The high school bear mascot also made the rounds, much to the delight of the littlest adoptees and their siblings. In addition, each

family received a ShopRite gift card made possible by a Union County Bar Association donation, as well as gifts from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority’s Theta Phi Omega, Phi Eta Omega and Omega Psi Omega chapters.

For details on CASA of Union County and becoming an advocate for a foster youth, contact Chanel at [info@casaoofunioncounty.org](mailto:info@casaoofunioncounty.org) or log on to [www.casaoofunioncounty.org](http://www.casaoofunioncounty.org).



(above) The Honorable Daniel Roberts, J.S. C. (Adoption Day Judge), with David Brearley High School Bears That Care



(abobe) Superheroes from the Union County Sheriff’s Heroes Initiative.





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# LOCAL TEEN HELPS RAISE MONEY FOR FAMILIES FACING PEDIATRIC CANCER

Nick Swandrak, 18, of Cranford, NJ, teamed up with retired NFL Coach Tom Coughlin to raise money for local families facing pediatric cancer on October 21 at Cipriani 42nd Street, New York. In a speech to a crowd of nearly 500 professional athletes, celebrities and supporters at the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund's annual Champions for Children Gala, Swandrak shared his own journey of being diagnosed and treated for acute lymphoblastic leukemia and his subsequent relapse earlier this year. The Jay Fund, the nonprofit founded by the two-time Super Bowl winning coach of the New York Giants, marked its 17th year of providing financial, emotional and practical support for families tackling pediatric cancer in the New York/New Jersey Metropolitan area.

Swandrak knows all too well the challenges families face when a child is diagnosed with cancer, and he is passionate about raising awareness and funds to support them. He has spent much of the last four years enduring grueling cancer treatments and being isolated from his friends due to his immunocompromised condition. His family, like all families who have a child with cancer, has faced expensive medical bills coupled with rising inflation and record-high food costs.

Swandrak and his family have been supported by the Jay Fund throughout his treatment.

"The Jay Fund covered our mortgage payments when our bills became overwhelming and has given me experiences that I will never, ever forget," Swandrak told the crowd of current and former New York Giants, business leaders and Jay Fund families and supporters.

Swandrak's emotional words captivated the audience, and his speech was one of the highlights of a night that raised \$1.25 million for the Jay Fund and the families it serves in the New York/New Jersey Metropolitan area.



(above) Nick Swandrak

Courtesy photo

"Nick is a remarkable young man and a current Jay Fund scholarship recipient," said Mary Jane Pulzello, Managing Director of the Tom Coughlin Jay Fund in NY/NJ. "He received a standing ovation from the audience, as many were deeply moved by this young man's courage and tenacity in fighting cancer for more than four years."

Swandrak thanked his medical team who continue to help him through this fight, as well as his friends and family who have lifted him up from day one. He saved his most heartfelt appreciation for his parents, stating their love and support have been everything to him.

"As of today, I've had 126 chemo shots, 28 spinal taps, and over 200 days sleeping on scratchy hospital sheets," Swandrak told the crowd. "Fighting cancer is tough. You're in bed, and sick a lot of the time. There are days that are a real struggle. But I'm looking forward to ringing that bell for the second time this December and being back in remission."

# GIANNA FRINO RECEIVES HEISMAN SCHOLARSHIP

Arthur L. Johnson High School Senior Gianna Frino recently received The 2022 Heisman High School Scholarship awarded by the Heisman Trophy Trust.

School Winners will continue on for the chance to become State Winners, National Finalists or National Winners. State Winners receive a \$1,000 college scholarship, National Finalists receive a \$2,000 college scholarship and the male and female National Winners will each receive a \$10,000 college scholarship.

The Heisman High School Scholarship program honors the nation's most accomplished, community-minded high school senior athletes. By inviting male and female students from schools across the country to share their stories of leadership and impact, the program aims to inspire all students to harness their potential, push their limits, and use their talents not only to advance their own futures, but to improve the communities and world around them.



(above) ALJ Assistant Principal Katrina Poskay, Heisman School Scholarship Recipient Gianna Frino, and ALJ Principal Tara Oliveira

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# ST. JOSEPH SOCIAL SERVICE CENTER URGENT NEEDS

New Shopping Bag Rules in NJ... and We Need Bags!

New Jersey has the strictest ban on plastics in the country, and it is now in effect for the entire state of New Jersey, including for food distribution at St. Joseph Social Service Center. We are in need of reusable bags for our clients. If you can donate new or used but clean reusable shopping bags, please drop them, 118 Division Street, Elizabeth, NJ, during normal operating hours. If you have questions, please contact our Food Program Director, Corey Wu-Jung at cwujung@sjeliz.org or 908-354-5456 x412.

One of our urgent ongoing needs is for tuna or chicken in single serve pouches. Donations are gratefully accepted!

We are in need of a car or minivan. If you have a spare vehicle in good working condition, please consider donating it to St. Joseph's. Please contact Emy Cruz at 908-354-5456 x403.

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1 Unit (Business card)	3.25" x 2"	\$60	\$150	\$250	\$350	\$400	\$450	\$500	\$550	\$600
2 Units	6.5" x 2" or 3.25" x 4"	\$100	\$250	\$400	\$500	\$600	\$700	\$800	\$900	\$1000
4 Units	3.25" x 8" or 6.5" x 4"	\$180	\$450	\$700	\$900	\$1100	\$1300	\$1500	\$1700	\$1900
6 Units	6.5" x 6.25" or 10" x 4"	\$240	\$600	\$900	\$1200	\$1400	\$1600	\$1800	\$2000	\$2200
9 HALF PAGE	6.5" x 9" or 10" x 7"	\$320	\$800	\$1000	\$1300	\$1600	\$1900	\$2200	\$2400	\$2700
12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700	\$3000
18 FULL PAGE	10" x 14"	\$400	\$1000	\$1400	\$1800	\$2200	\$2500	\$2800	\$3000	\$3400
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## SHINING STARS “CHRISTMAS SPECTACULAR” DECEMBER 9

Celebrate the holiday season when the Shining Stars take the stage for their 2022 “Christmas Spectacular” set for Friday, December 9 at 7:00 p.m. The show will take place on the main stage at the historic Union County Arts Center in Rahway as this talented cast sings and dances to many of your holiday favorites.

With many cast members from all over Union County and beyond, Shining Stars Network has been producing live programming for the special needs community for ten years.

This year’s Christmas Spectacular marks the return of the Shining Stars to one of the most beautiful theaters in New Jersey and will feature 35 special needs cast members and their volunteer buddies from local high schools, who serve as mentors to the cast during rehearsals.

Two previous Shining Stars shows at UCPAC drew more than 1,000 audience members for each performance, and already, the buzz is building in the community.

“We’re so excited to ring in the holiday season,” noted Shining Stars Network co-founder and President Mike Curci. “Our stars are ready to share their smiles, energy and amazing talents with everyone. This will be a great way to cap off our 10th anniversary celebration.”

“We strongly believe in creating an inclusive environment for our cast, and our buddies are an integral part of the Shining Stars experience,” noted Shining Stars co-founder and director Sally Curci. “We are so excited to bring a new show to

the stage and cannot wait to connect with our incredible audience again to celebrate the holiday season.”

Shining Stars Network is wrapping up a big year, which included their annual “Evening of Shining Stars” Spring Show, Summer Performing Arts Workshop, and their successful Paper Mill Playhouse debut performing in front of a sold-out audience at the Paper Mill Brook Side Cabaret.

“Shining Stars Network is not only about performing, but more importantly we’re about building self-confidence and self-esteem,” said Shining Stars co-director Nicole Greene. “Our cast members are not only talented, but inspire us every day, and we are all very excited about taking the stage again to share another magical night with the audience.”

Tickets are on sale now at UCPAC.org. For groups of 10 or more, email [shiningstarsnetwork@gmail.com](mailto:shiningstarsnetwork@gmail.com).

The night will also feature a Tricky Tray and 50/50 raffle. Doors will open at 6:00 p.m.

Shining Stars Network is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization based in Cranford, N.J. that offers opportunities in the performing arts for the special needs community.

Plans for the 2023 season include their 2nd “Reach for the Stars” Gale, set for March 14 at the elegant Park Chateau Estate & Gardens in East Brunswick.

For more information on Shining Stars Network or to make a donation, please visit [shiningstarsnetwork.org](http://shiningstarsnetwork.org).

## WILL YOU JOIN IMAGINE’S AMAZING TEAM OF VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS?

November is Children’s Grief Awareness Month and at Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss we’re spending this month honoring the children who come to us for support by doing all we can to ensure that no child grieves alone. One of the ways that we’re working to bring free grief support groups to more children is by bringing them to more communities, most recently to the Newark community.

In October, Imagine began offering free grief support groups every other week on Thursday evenings at the Boys and Girls Club of Newark on Avon Avenue. As these groups continue to grow, our need for volunteer facilitators will grow as well. Imagine’s volunteer facilitators are the heart of our support group program. Facilitators first complete a three-day training to prepare them to create safe spaces and be loving listeners for the children, youth, young adults and adults in Imagine’s support groups.

Imagine staff are planning a training for adults interested in facilitating Imagine’s Newark support groups. The training will be held at the Teach for America location in Newark December 9-11 from 9 am-5 pm each day. If you’re interested in making a difference in the lives of grieving families and would like to participate in this life-changing training, we’d like to hear from you! Imagine’s training will prepare you to be present for the children and families that participate at Imagine, help you support those in your family and community who are grieving and also provide an opportunity for you to receive support for losses you’ve experienced. Those interested in this training can complete this form <https://forms.office.com/r/RGwq323gHg> or contact Imagine’s Newark Program Manager, Sonia Nunez at [sonia@imaginej.org](mailto:sonia@imaginej.org).

Please join us in honoring Children’s Grief Awareness Month by considering joining Imagine’s amazing team of volunteers. We hope to welcome you to the Imagine community.

Imagine offers free year-round grief support groups for children ages 3-18 and young adults 19-30 who are coping with a loss due to death. Concurrently, support groups are available for the parents and guardians of the children in the groups and offered in English and Spanish. Imagine also offers grief and loss education and training to the community. For more information please contact Imagine at 908-264-3100 or [info@imaginej.org](mailto:info@imaginej.org).

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