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YMCA SERVING TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Gateway Family YMCA was awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Community Foundation of NJ, on behalf of the J.C. Kellogg Foundation Fund, to assist the YMCA in serving homeless and housing insecure residents through affordable and transitional housing programs, and wraparound support services.

"We are thankful for the generous support and assistance from the Community Foundation of NJ and the J.C. Kellogg Foundation Fund. This grant assists us in supporting this vulnerable demographic during the coronavirus pandemic," stated Krystal R. Canady, CEO. "In 2021, our Y served 763 men, women, seniors and children through YMCA residential housing programs."

The Gateway Family YMCA has served the local community for over 122 years, providing housing and social services for over 250 individuals, families and veterans each evening. Through residential housing programs in Elizabeth and Plainfield, as well as a supportive housing program throughout Union County, the Y provides emergency, transitional and affordable permanent housing opportunities along with wraparound social services focusing on mental health, food access, wellness services, chronic disease management, employment preparation, life skills and case management.

"At The Gateway Family YMCA, we provide residential housing support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for individuals, families and veterans in our community," stated Melynda A. Disla, EVP/COO, The Gateway Family YMCA. "We continue to see an increased need for housing and social services, food access and mental health



services. The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone, and our residents lost jobs, became food insecure and struggled to access resources, which necessitated extra precautions, facility improvements and additional services provided by the YMCA."

The Gateway Family YMCA's housing programs are open to all residents of Union County regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, primary language, veteran status, and more. As one of more than 25 agencies collaborating in Union County's Continuum of Care unit, The Gateway Family YMCA works with other partner agencies to end homelessness and prevent a return to homelessness in Union County, NJ.

If you or someone you know is in need of emergency shelter, please contact Union County's 24-Hour Homeless Emergency Response Hotline at 2-1-1. They will direct you to the housing program and support services that can best support you and your loved ones.

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, and 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 Housing Programs, visit tgfymca.org or contact 908-355-9622.



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STUDENTS SHOW LOVE AND SUPPORT FOR VETERANS

Franklin School's Blue and Gold Club is a school based club made up of students that volunteer their time throughout the year to help with different community service activities. The

club is overseen by the school's nurse, Ms. Casey Dowling and Ms. Kym Adams. They do a great job and we're proud of these young men and women. Keep up the great work kids!



(above) Recently members of the school's Blue and Gold Club wrote letters to Veterans. The children hope that the letters will put a smile on their faces. Pictured here are students Isabella Giraldo and Katherine Quizhpi.



(above) A Jeans For Troops fundraiser was held in honor of Veterans Day. The project was run by students, Valentino Arias-Gil Allende & Dior Grissom-Taylor (pictured here). Faculty and staff members donated money and in exchange were allowed to wear jeans to work. The school collected \$105 which was donated to the GI GO Fund, a non-profit organization that helps assist veterans and their families with employment, healthcare, housing and more.

Photos by Rahway Public Schools

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BIRTHDAY BASH FOR DR. HOLNESS



(above) Grover Cleveland School
Principal Al Giambrone

Photos by Rahway Public Schools

Submitted by Kate Giammetta

The students and staff at Grover Cleveland sure know how to have a great time. If you remember, back in February of last year, the Cleveland crew surprised and celebrated school Principal Al Giambrone's birthday with the theme of "Where is Al-Do." When Dr. Pat Holness, the school's Vice Principal's birthday, came around in September, Al wasn't letting Pat off the hook so easily.

Al and his co-conspirators created a top-secret plan that surprised Pat. For those that know Pat, he's a bow-tie kind of guy, and according to Al, he loves inflatables. So Al figured what better way to celebrate Pat's birthday than with bow ties and endless inflatables.

The morning Pat arrived at school in typical fashion, he was heading upstairs to his office. Pat remembers getting to the second floor and it being eerily quiet. Not thinking anything, seconds later, he heard the door on the first floor

open, and Al said: "Pat can you come back down." Pat was greeted by Al, dressed in a full suit and bow tie. As the two walked through the stairway doors, Pat was met with a giant Happy Birthday inflatable. As he was ushered into the auditorium, he remembers hearing "Surprise" in a room filled with students and staff dressed in bow ties and a stage filled with inflatables.

Pat was surprised. He said it was the most memorable birthday that he had ever had. No birthday would be complete without a giant cake with Pat's face plastered on it. As the day continued, Pat would find more surprises, like random pictures of him with a party hat posted around the school. Once he finally made it to his office, more inflatables were waiting for him. When Pat was asked about his obsession with the inflatables, he shook his head, laughed, and said, "it's an ongoing spoof between him and Al."

Happy Birthday, Pat; it seems like you and the Cleveland Crew had a great time.

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My Christmas Memories

Christmas morning 1955, and I was 8 years old. I woke up and saw it was bright outside with the sun shining on the days old snow. I quickly ran down the stairs to the living room and saw my dad sitting on the floor next to the Christmas tree, smiling at my reaction to my first Lionel train, set up and running under the tree. I gave him a hug and immediately started to run the train.

Fast forward December 1972 our first Christmas for Fran and I as newlyweds living in the second floor of my in-laws' 2-family. My mother-in-law (whom I loved) was so excited when I brought her outside to view the lights and display I created for her on Fulton St. She said she never thought she would experience such a wonderful sight at her home. Now its Christmas 1975 as we celebrate our first Christmas in our own circa 1915 home. We had our families over for Christmas Eve. While everyone was eating I snuck out to change into my Santa suit. I rang bells and came down to many ho ho ho's and to a facial expression on gramps's face that was worth a 1000 warm smiles.

These memories stand out of hundreds of wonderful memories and I hope you also have wonderful times to remember. During the holiday season Fran and I wish you and yours the happiest and healthiest of all seasons. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Feliz Navidad and Happy Kwanzaa.

Ho ho ho! From,
Santa Matt, your holiday realtor, & elf helper Fran
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GIFT IDEAS FOR THE CREATIVE ONES ON YOUR LIST

It's no secret that the best gifts are those that show your appreciation for the recipient's special interests. If your holiday gift list includes sewing, quilting, home decor or craft enthusiasts, Cultured Expressions Sewing Studio in Rahway has thoughtful gift suggestions they're sure to love!

10. Place a deposit on a creative getaway, then print out and wrap the brochure. There are retreats, destination workshops and more for every imaginable DIY activity. Search for them online or ask a local specialty shop for suggestions.
9. Pick out a few tools of the trade in the crafter's favorite color – they'll be sure to think of you every time she grabs her turquoise scissors, specialty threads and pincushion.
8. Creative kits that combine the supplies with instructions for a specific project are perfect for beginner DIYers, and those who are short on time.
7. Fabric is a great choice for more than sewing and quilting – it's used by crafters for decoupage, fabric flowers and lots of other no-sew projects. Choose a few coordinating fabrics by the yard, or in multi-colored pre-cut packs, which are strips or squares designed as a shortcut to a creative project
6. Purchase a ticket to a virtual class and events, a great choice no matter where your recipient lives. To upgrade the gift, purchase the accompanying kit or supplies for the class.



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5. Gather several smaller items related to their craft to create a unique gift basket – remember to add a snack, along with favorite teabags or gourmet coffee, or even a bottle of wine to enjoy as they create. Gift baskets help you to control the cost because you can easily add or delete various items to keep the total within your budget.
4. Arrange a craft party at a local shop for the recipient and a few crafty friends, with the time and date TBD.
3. If your DIY person is also a bibliophile, choosing a book one of her / his favorite creative topics is a natural two-for-one gift choice.
2. Shopping for children? Give them a break from the high-tech toys with colorful DIY craft kits that encourage creativity and valuable life skills.

1. The ever-popular Gift Card lets them choose exactly what they want or need, while still showing that you appreciate their special interest. Plus, it takes the pressure off of yourself to choose the right color, etc. (Note: If the card has an expiration date or other specific usage terms (the small print), be sure to let the recipient know!)

While you're in the giving mood, be sure to treat yourself to some quality creative time, too! With so many exciting choices available, you're sure to find something to spark your own interest even while you shop for others," says Lisa Shepard Stewart, owner of Cultured Expressions at 1417 Main Street in Rahway. She offers personalized assistance to select the perfect gift, for the holiday season or anytime! Regular studio hours are Wed 4-8pm; Thurs 12-6pm; Fri 12-6pm and Sat 10-6pm.

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CRAIG CLARK CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY OF HEART TRANSPLANT

Craig Clark, 61, is taking time to reflect on the gift of life and the miracle of organ and tissue donation and transplantation as he recently celebrated four years since his life-saving heart transplant. With his health and strength now restored, Craig is living each day to its fullest by enjoying life's precious moments and spending time on his favorite hobbies, including home improvement projects, day trips and travel.

"Each day that I get to travel and spend time with extended family and friends or special events like our children's weddings or the birth of a grandchild, I remember that it was made possible thanks to my organ donor and the care of Susan Pardi, NP, and the amazing transplant team at NYU Langone who kept me alive

through heart failure," said Craig.

Now four years post-transplant, Craig is filled with energy and spends as much time as possible with his grandchild. He is also forever mindful of his organ donor who gave him the gift of life. "The only thing that I know about my donor is that he was 51 years old when he passed," said Craig. "My donor or his family's decision to be a donor has essentially given me a new lease on life."

Craig has also made it a priority to advocate for NJ Sharing Network, the nonprofit organization responsible for the recovery and placement of donated organs and tissue in the Garden State. By sharing his story with others, Craig hopes to encourage more people to register as organ and tissue donors. "One organ and tissue donor can save eight lives and enhance the lives of over 75 others," said Craig.

At the age of 17, Craig enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. He earned bachelor's degrees in Criminal Justice and Art History from Seton Hall University before returning to active military duty as an Artillery Officer. At that time, doctors detected that Craig had a heart murmur, and he was soon diagnosed with cardiomyopathy. Despite his critical health challenges, Craig and his wife, Anna, raised their three children, Adam, Rachel and Nathan, and he enjoyed a successful career in transportation and supply chain

management.

As years passed, Craig's heart disease grew progressively worse. He suffered a stroke and his heart stopped beating twice in a two-week period. Craig had a defibrillator implanted, but he was later diagnosed with congestive heart failure (CHF) in 2017. He was added to the heart transplant waiting list. On August 25, 2018, while admitted at NYU Langone, Craig's prayers were answered when he received "the call" from NYU Langone cardiologist Alex Reventovich, MD that a heart was available for transplant.

"I remember answering the phone was basically the only thing that I had enough strength to do at the time," said Craig. "The next day, I had my transplant. I recovered quickly in the immediate days and weeks after transplant. I was out of the hospital in just seven days!"

Currently, there are over 100,000 Americans – nearly 4,000 of whom live in New Jersey – waiting for a life-saving transplant, according to United Network for Organ Sharing (UNOS). However, the generosity of those in the Garden State is providing hope for the future. Organ and tissue donor registrations in the Garden State continue to increase thanks to strong community education and outreach efforts and simplified ways to register. To learn more, get involved and register as an organ and tissue donor, visit www.NJSharingNetwork.org.



Photo courtesy of NJ Sharing Network

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(above, l-r) UNICO's 2022 Citizen of the Year recipient Michael LoBrace and club President Nino Quaglia.

ATLANTIC CITY BUS TRIPS

The Rahway Senior Men's Club run bus trips to Atlantic City on the first Friday of every month. The cost is \$35. The bus leaves from the tennis courts on Central Ave at 10 a.m. and returns around 7 p.m. We are also looking for new members. Age requirement is 55 and over. Dues are \$10 per year. Meetings are held every Monday morning starting at 11:30 a.m. at the Rahway Senior Center located on Esterbrook Ave. Stop in and join up.

MICHELINO'S OWNER MICHAEL LOBRACE NAMED 2022 UNICO CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO recently honored Michael LoBrace with thier 2022 Citizen of the year award. Michael exemplifies the organization's motto, "Service Above Self". Michael is recognized for his commitment to community service in the city of Elizabeth and his dedication to preserving Italian-American history and culture.

Michael opened Michelino's Pizzeria, located at 169 Washington Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey in November 1992. The business celebrated its 29th year in business this November. He subsequently opened one in Rahway at 79 East Milton Avenue and another at 600 E St Georges Avenue in Linden.

He was born on May 7, 1966, at Elizabeth General Hospital, to Rocco LoBrace and Carmela LoBrace (Nee DiMaggio). In his early years, Michael attended St. Anthony's Catholic School, St. Mary's High School and ultimately Elizabeth High School. Upon graduating from Elizabeth High School, Michael attended Rutger's University where he earned a bachelor's degree in Economics and Italian Literature. Upon graduation, he began working at Harmonia Savings Bank (now Santander). While working at Harmonia, Michael attended St. John's University where he earned his MBA.

Michael's maternal grandmother migrated to the United States in 1915 at the age of 20 years old. She met and married Alfonso DiMaggio and they settled down to raise their family on John Street in Elizabeth. Michael's mother lived in the family home until her passing earlier this year.

Along with being an owner of Michelino's

Pizzeria, Michael is also the School Business Administrator for the Perth Amboy School District. Michael has been an integral part of the city of Elizabeth. He has sat on the advisory board of the Elizabeth Historical Society and he was the chairman of the Elizabeth Special Improvement District for many years. He also worked for the Elizabeth Board of Education for several years. He was responsible for renovating and opening a restaurant in the original Elizabeth Train Station. He has supported countless charities and organizations throughout the city and is always willing to help those who are in need.

Michael has been married to his wife, Diana (Nee Nigro) for 30 years. Together they share three children, Anthony, an attorney, Julia, a nurse, and Alexander, who has decided to join the family business.

The Elizabeth Chapter of UNICO is committed to supporting various organizations such as Cooley's Anemia, The Arc of Union County, Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care, Occupational Center, Elmora Youth League, Scholarships for Italian American Collegian Students, and many other charitable organizations, who desperately rely on our donations to continue their services.

UNICO, which stands for Unity, Neighborliness, Integrity, Charity, and Opportunity, has as its motto, "Service Above Self". Each year, UNICO sponsors a Dinner Dance as its main fundraiser. Additionally, the organization seeks to honor an Italian American who exemplifies the ideals of UNICO.

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- With surgery, there is always a risk for unwelcomed complications. And you could be back to where you started, or worse.
- Medications will be required for relief from surgery and you have been down that road before. Addictions to these pain medications can cause potential side effects, something you do not want to experience.
- Rehabilitation can take years.

Consider This Alternative To Surgery

Northeast Spine & Wellness Center offers you a real opportunity and a painless way to say goodbye to your knee pain without any surgery. Here are just a few of the important benefits you should consider?

- Diagnostic fluoroscopy accurately targets the pain, unlike blind injections.
- Guided fluoroscopic injections are virtually pain free, unlike blind injections.
- No lost time from work or family.
- No expensive or time consuming rehabilitation.
- No potentially addictive prescription medications.
- Recovery time is almost instant, not months or years.

How Does This New Treatment Work?

Relief begins almost as fast as it takes to pronounce the treatment. It's called Viscosupplementation Therapy. To begin with, it starts with **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** investing in the use of diagnostic fluoroscopy. This enables them to target the exact location of your knee pain with pinpoint accuracy. What follows is a simple injection that causes little to no pain, especially when compared to what you may be living with daily. That explains what you will see on the surface of this revolutionary treatment. What's taking place below the surface is how and where the natural healing process takes place. The injection of a Hyaluronic acid called Hyalgan. This gel-like substance was approved by the FDA in 1996. Hyalgan is a natural substance that mimics the synovial fluid that is already produced by your body in your joints. Osteoarthritis sufferers in particular see a reduction in this much needed synovial fluid in their knee joints. Without that cushioning layer of protection, the cartilage in your knee can begin to wear away leading to the rubbing of bone on bone. Through Viscosupplementation Therapy, this natural substance immediately goes to work reducing the swelling and inflammation in the joint and adding a coating layer of protection. Think about Dorothy taking the oil can to The Tin Man. You'll begin to feel that same kind of relief and quite possibly feel like you're ready for a dance down the yellow brick road to recovery yourself. And with a success rate of over 85% in alleviating pain associated with osteoarthritis, it's easy to see why this treatment is so readily covered by Medicare and by most major insurance providers. Diagnostic fluoroscopy to target the pain, Viscosupplementation Therapy to relieve the pain. Simple, fast and no surgery!

Do you Suffer from any of these Symptoms?

There are a number of reasons why you developed Osteoarthritis pain. It can develop with age or because of heredity. It could be from repetitive stress from a job or some glory days in athletics. Of course your concern is with the symptoms you face daily and how to make them end, hopefully without surgery or the use of potentially addictive medications. **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** understands the symptoms you have been living with and can help. If you have any of the symptoms below, please call us today. Relief is a phone call away.

- **Pain** - Whether it's a sharp aching or maybe a burning sensation, the pain can range from irritating to debilitating.
- **Swelling** - This can cause tenderness and soreness to the entire knee area, making walking or going up and down stairs painful, getting in and out of bed or bathtubs difficult and dangerous just name a few activities affected by swelling.
- **Stiffness** - Getting up out of bed or after sitting for a period of time gets more and more difficult. This loss of mobility can be more than a hindrance. It can be dangerous if you need to move quickly.
- **Loss of muscle strength** - This can lead to balance issues and the strong possibility of falling.
- **Joint deformity** - Not just unsightly, but painful as well.
- **Creaking Joints** - Can be painful and a sign of more discomfort to come.
- **Sleepless nights** - Losing sleep over your suffering is not just irritating, but potentially dangerous because of so many other health concerns that can be affected by loss of sound sleep.

Let Me Show You Targeted Relief From Your Knee Pain

Every day, I see patients suffering from knee pain due to arthritis, osteoarthritis, sports injuries or other conditions. Many have been told that they are in need of knee replacement surgery. Other patients say they have been prescribed various prescription medications to deal with the pain.

Something else I see almost every day, are patients that have tried viscosupplementation knee injections elsewhere and found it to be a painful and ineffective experience because the injections were not administered using fluoroscopic guidance. Instead of using the incredibly accurate diagnostic fluoroscopy we use at **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** these patients experienced a blind injection technique, which can be as inaccurate as playing pin the tail on the donkey.

Once I am able to explain to my patients about the pin point accuracy of using diagnostic fluoroscopy and the amazing results viscosupplementation can provide, they are thrilled to get started. They are even more thrilled when they feel the relief. Please contact **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** today to schedule your RISK FREE consultation.

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POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS PROGRAM

Students who have graduated from high school but are still attending school will benefit from a new program design that has started at Westfield's Lamberts Mill Academy. According to Carrie Datillo, Superintendent of Westfield's Union County Educational Services Commission, the courses will provide a basis for transitional skills taking the students to the world of work. "Now that our students benefit from extended time in school, we are able to address the toolkit that will better prepare them for success in work and other necessary independence supports" she said.

Once fully engaged, the students will participate in morning classes and afternoon job placements. Resume building, job searching, personal budgeting, workplace attitudes, communication, attitudes for work, and organizational skills are among the many topics that will be reviewed in morning classes. These will be supplemented by jobsite visits, special presentations, role play simulations and interviews with already working teens and their supervisors. The students have already begun to operate LMA's school store, like a local corner store, where students choose items based upon their success in school. After conducting an inventory the student compiled a shopping list and visited a local supermarket to purchase the needed items. They also provide administrative tasks, assembled fans that were placed in the classrooms, and are supporting a plastic bottle recycling initiative.

Sponsored by the Union County Educational Services Commission, Lamberts Mill Academy supports students aged 13-22 who would not find success in a typical school. The program blends academic rigor with comprehensive clinical and psychiatric services and social and daily living skills all tuned to the needs and skills of each student. Additional details about LMA and/or to arrange a tour, please reach Principal Reed Leibfried on 862-324-6373.

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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 Mekor Chayim in Cranford and the current chair of the Cranford Clergy Council.



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GARRISON CARDS PRESENT NOSTALGIC IMAGES OF RAHWAY AT CHRISTMAS (C. 1960)

Submitted by Al Shipley, City Historian and Rahway Library Research Consultant

The holiday season is always a good time to reminisce and think back to the “good old days” when everything seemed to be better and life was slower and simpler. For those who grew up in Rahway in the 1950s and 60s, it’s a good feeling to conjure up images of the brightly colored lights that were hung across Main, Cherry, and Irving Streets and to remember the wide variety of stores, each bustling with holiday shoppers.

Although our mind’s recollections may be good, photos and paintings can more accurately capture what the business district was really like. Noted artist Lloyd Garrison, who was a Rahway resident for much of his life, produced Christmas cards from 2002 – 2016 showing images of different parts of the city during the holiday season. As city historian, I worked with Lloyd to ensure the streetscapes were as accurate as possible so the cards might be useful in historic research. The following four scenes of the downtown district should bring back pleasant memories. For those too young and those new to Rahway the images may be a good way to bring back one’s own memories of this time of peace and joy.



(above) Through the 1950s and into the 60s, most parking spaces were filled during the holiday season as shoppers could check off every item on their gift lists at stores like W.T. Grant, Marks Harris, Robinsons, and Oxmans. Note that cars parked diagonally on the east side of Main Street and parallel on the west side.



(above) Even the Rahway Theater took on a magical glow at Christmas time. Festive lights were strung across Irving Street from Central Avenue to Milton Avenue to create a canopy of colors. All stores were open til 9 p.m. from the Monday after Thanksgiving until Christmas Eve.



(above) The west side of Irving Street from Elm to Broad shows a number of storefronts including Burton's Colonial Gift Shop where one could purchase Lenox China, and Bauer's Luncheonette, the place to stop for a hot beverage after a long evening of shopping. The Rahway Savings Bank, located to the left of the church, offered Christmas Club savings plans.



(above) Shoppers were bused in from the surrounding communities of Clark, Colonia, Iselin, and Carteret to shop in Rahway's fine stores. Cherry Street businesses offered everything from books, jewelry, and toys, to shoes, hats, and tobacco products. This scene shows Cherry Street looking east from Irving to Main.

IT WOULDN'T BE THE HOLIDAYS WOTHOUT THE ORNAMENTS



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CARING FOR POINSETTIAS

'Tis the season', and garden shops and stores are full of Poinsettias for sale. It is hard to go anywhere without passing a bright display of this holiday favorite.

With tender loving care, this tropical plant native to Mexico will thrive well past 'Three Kings Day', January 6th.

First choose a healthy plant. Drooping leaves can be a sign of problems: exposure to cold, overwatering or lack of sunlight. The small yellow 'flowers' in the center should be bright and closed or partly opened. Dropped yellow 'flowers' indicate over-maturity and should be avoided.

Poinsettia are very sensitive to drafts and temperature fluctuations; therefore, it is important to get your plant home from the shop without damaging it. Cover the plant with plastic or a paper bag, then move it from the store to a warm spot in your car, not the trunk. Once home remove it immediately from the wrapping and check the soil for moisture.

Over-watering is a major problem for Poinsettia causing leaves to droop and roots to rot. Sticking your finger into the top inch of soil is the best way to tell if it needs watering. If dry to the touch, water the plant. If soil sticks to your finger, do not water. The colorful foil doesn't allow water to drain out. Poke a few holes in the bottom to permit drainage.

Poinsettia like bright light. If you have it displayed in a shady area, move it to a bright spot whenever possible, but not direct sunlight.

Keep your new plant safe from children & pets as the leaves are toxic. For more information see Rutgers Cooperative Extension, Fact Sheet #449 "Caring for your Poinsettia"

POINSETTIAS: LORE VS FACTS

Poinsettias are native to Mexico. They are found in the wild in deciduous tropical forests at moderate elevations from southern Sinaloa down the entire Pacific coast of Mexico to Chiapas and Guatemala. They are also found in the interior of Mexico in the hot, seasonally dry forests of Gurrero and Oaxaca. In nature, Poinsettias are perennial flowering shrubs that were once considered weeds. In Mexico the Poinsettia is a perennial shrub that will grow 10-15 feet tall.

Poinsettias received their name in the United States in honor of Joel Roberts Poinsett, who introduced the plant into the country in 1828.



(above) The human eye is attracted to the colorful leaves or 'brats', but the yellow center is the real flower of the Poinsettia.

Poinsett was a botanist, physician and the first United States Ambassador to Mexico. He sent cuttings of the plant he had discovered in Southern Mexico to his home in Charleston, South Carolina. The word Poinsettia is traditionally capitalized because it is named after a person. December 12th is Poinsettia Day, which marks the death of Joel Roberts Poinsett in 1851.

Paul Ecke Jr. is considered the father of the Poinsettia industry due to his discovery of a technique which caused seedlings to branch. This technique allowed the Poinsettia industry to flourish. The Paul Ecke Ranch in California grows over 70% of all Poinsettias purchased in the United States and about 50% of the worldwide sales of Poinsettias. As of August 2012, the Ecke Ranch, which was family-owned and operated for nearly 100 years, announced that it had been acquired by the Dutch-based Agribio Group.

In spite of popular lore Poinsettias are not poisonous. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 50-pound child would have to eat more than 500 leaves to have any harmful effect. Plus, poinsettia leaves have an awful taste. You might want to keep your pets from snacking on poinsettia leaves. Although not poisonous, eating the leaves can cause vomiting and diarrhea in cats and dogs.

Poinsettias are part of the Euphorbiaceae or Spurge family. Botanically, the plant is known as Euphorbia pulcherrima. Many plants in the Euphorbiaceae family ooze a milky sap. Some people with latex allergies have had a skin reaction (most likely to the sap) after touching the leaves.

The showy colored parts of Poinsettias that most people think of as the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves). The yellow flowers, or cyathia, are in the center of the colorful bracts. The plant drops its bracts and leaves soon after those flowers shed their pollen. For the longest-lasting Poinsettias, choose plants with little or no yellow pollen showing.

There are more than 100 varieties of poinsettias available today. Poinsettias come in colors like the traditional red, white, pink, burgundy, marbled and speckled.

The colors of the bracts are created through "photoperiodism", meaning that they require darkness (12 hours at a time for at least five days in a row) to change color. On the other hand, once Poinsettias finish that process, the plants require abundant light during the day for the brightest color.

Poinsettias have also been called the lobster flower and the flame-leaf flower, due to the red color.

Poinsettias are not frost-tolerant. They will grow outdoors in temperate coastal climates, such as Southern California beach communities. In the ground, they can reach 10 feet tall.

There is an old Mexican story of how



(above) Past President of The Rahway Garden Club, James Keane, has been researching and answering garden questions since 1995.

Visit 'Keane Gardener' blog at:
keanegardener.blogspot.com

Poinsettia became a Christmas flower. There was once a poor Mexican girl named Pepita who had no present for the baby Jesus. As she walked her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up. "I'm sure even the smallest gift given by someone who loves him will make the baby Jesus happy".

Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked up some weeds from the roadside and made a bouquet from them. Embarrassed by her small gift, Pepita remembered what Pedro told her. She knelt to place the weeds at the nativity scene and suddenly the flowers turned red. Everyone who saw it believed it was a miracle. Since then, Poinsettias are known in Mexico as the 'Flores de Noche Buena' or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'.

In Chile and Peru, the Poinsettia is called the "Crown of the Andes". Montezuma, the last of the Aztec Kings, had Poinsettias delivered to him by caravan to what is now Mexico City, because Poinsettias could not be grown in the high altitude. The Aztecs used the Poinsettia bracts to make a reddish-purple dye for fabrics, and used the sap medicinally to control fevers.

Economically Poinsettias contribute over \$250 million to the U.S. economy at the retail level and California is the top U.S. Poinsettia-producing state. Poinsettias are the bestselling potted plant in the United States and Canada. Poinsettias are the most popular Christmas plant. Most Poinsettias are sold within a six-week period leading up to that holiday, representing some \$60 million worth.

The most common question people have about Poinsettias is how to get them to rebloom in successive years. You can find YouTubes and articles about that on the internet.

Information in this article is from University of Illinois Cooperative Extension.

James

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"WHAT'S YOUR ANTI-DRUG?" POSTER CONTEST

Rahway Public Schools

Sixth-grade students from Franklin Elementary School in Rahway participated in the 24th annual Prevention Links "What's Your Anti-Drug?" Poster Contest. This local contest is part of the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign in honor of Red Ribbon Week. Students created many amazing posters and did a great job explaining what keeps them drug-free.

Christopher Peralta was recognized for winning 3rd place in the county. He received a certificate and a gift card. Franklin School is proud of him and all of the students.



(above) Christopher Peralta was awarded 3rd place in the county for his "What's Your Anti-Drug?" poster.

Photo by Rahway Public Schools

UNION COUNTY DAY OF PRAYER

On Thursday, October 27, over 130 people attended the Union County Day of Prayer organized by Community Access Unlimited (CAU) and the Union County Interfaith Coordinating Council (UCICC).

It was the 8th annual "Day of Prayer" event, hosted by Temple Emanu-El in Westfield. The event featured a variety of inspirational speakers and performers from Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Christian, Sikh, and Buddhist faiths. The service included a chant from the International Society for Krishna Consciousness of Central New Jersey and musical offerings from Shimon Smith, Cantorial Soloist/Artist in Residence at Temple Emanu-El, who shared Hebrew songs with attendees.

CAU spearheaded UCICC in 2012 to build bonds in the interfaith community and encourage the respect and welcoming of others regardless of faith, sexual orientation, legal status, or ability. CAU is based in Union County and works statewide to assist people with

developmental disabilities and youth at risk to integrate into the community through support services and support coordination. CAU services include housing, education, employment services, behavioral management, advocacy and more.

Rev. LL DuBreuil, who has been a part of UCICC since the first Day of Prayer, said "I was looking for this kind of community because I believe that when we all come together in celebration...then we're already ready to be together in difficult times. UCICC does not only have these worship experiences, but we sometimes do vigils and marches and we raise money for causes. And it's because we know each other from this that we can more easily work together when times are more difficult." DuBreuil is the Interim Pastor of Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, Scotch Plains.

Joyce Cargle, a longtime CAU member, said of the event, "We learned inclusion and we learned about community today."



(above) The Union County Day of Prayer was held on Thursday, October 27, with over 130 people in attendance.

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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 or log on to www.casaoofunioncounty.org.



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



(above) Superheroes from the Union County Sheriff's Heroes Initiative.





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UCEDC AWARDED THE DEI TRAILBLAZER AWARD FOR ACCESS TO CAPITAL

On November 3rd, Union County Economic Development Corp., UCEDC, a non-profit economic development corporation, was honored with the DEI Trailblazer Award for Access to Capital, which recognizes New Jersey companies that are demonstrating tangible and measurable progress in the critical areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I), by the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey and the New Jersey Chamber of Commerce.

UCEDC is proud to share that over the last three years, 85 percent of UCEDC's over \$6 Million in lending has gone to either minority-owned businesses or businesses located in low-income census tracts or low-income borrowers. In 2021 UCEDC issued 162 loans, 62% of which were to minority-owned businesses and 42% to women-owned.

UCEDC also started two new programs

centered on social justice, including the Virtual Incubator Program, which is focused on diverse businesses from underserved populations, and Entrepreneurship As a Second Chance which enables citizens reentering society to forge an alternate path toward employment free of the typical societal prejudices and obstacles they traditionally face. Both programs include live educational workshops, one-on-one mentorship, and access to capital in the form of forgivable loans.

"Being in support of diversity, equity and inclusion is not always synonymous with proactive advocacy, and cohesive company-wide implementation of measurable equity and inclusion goals," said John E. Harmon Sr., founder, president & CEO of the African American Chamber of Commerce of New Jersey. "The inequities that exist in the marketplace were put in place with intentionality and it will take intentionality to reverse these generational impediments. If we are adamant about making an impactful difference, then we must advocate for a reimagined corporate culture of inclusivity in New Jersey and across the nation. That is the pathway to our mutual success."

Tom Bracken, president and CEO of the N.J. Chamber, added, "We are recognizing and celebrating the champions who are meeting the challenge and challenging the status quo."

In response to the DEI Trailblazer Award, UCEDC President Adam Farah said, "I want to thank both chambers for this recognition. This is the first award we've received that has

recognized UCEDC's diversity efforts. First and foremost I want to thank our staff. They were the driving force behind this. Also, our Diversity Advisory Committee, whose work helped us expand our reach in underserved communities."

Mr. Farrah also thanked UCEDC's Board of Directors, who encouraged him to invest UCEDC capital in diverse communities as a way to effect change. UCEDC's popular Virtual Incubator Program and its Entrepreneurship as a Second Chance program were born from that investment. The Entrepreneurship as a Second Chance and Virtual Incubator Programs have also been funded in part by Impact 100 Garden State, Valley Bank, Santander Bank, Capital One Bank, Wells Fargo Bank, Union County Savings Bank, and Northfield Bank.

UCEDC understands that the work to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture is never complete. There will always be more to learn and more that can be done to create an atmosphere that is socially just. Moving forward, UCEDC will continue to work with its Diversity Advisory Committee to refine our programs and further efforts toward developing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for UCEDC's staff, partners, and the clients we serve.

If you would like to contribute to our Virtual Incubator or Entrepreneurship as a Second Chance programs, please email Adam Farrah at afarah@ucedc.com.

For more information about the services of UCEDC visit ucedc.com.



(above) UCEDC President Adam Farah accepted the DEI Trailblazer Award

Courtesy photo

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FLINTLOCKS SCOUTER GROUP LIVES BY THE SCOUT LAWS

The Flintlocks, BSA, Inc. are a group of retired scouts who dedicate their time and talents to building and maintaining the scout camps of the Patriot's Path Boy Scout Council in northern New Jersey.

The group includes some tradesmen, but also

professionals and volunteers of every background. Most are retired, but some still work full-time, and occasionally people volunteer to help for a day here or there. It is a very friendly group with great camaraderie and a good sense of humor. When one member reached age 100,

they designated a parking spot reserved for "all Flintlocks over 100 years old". Two other members are 90 years old, but they will have to wait a while before parking in that spot.

The Flintlocks met for their Fall General Meeting on Thursday, October 20, 2022, at their workshop at Camp Winnebago in Rockaway, NJ. They reviewed the accomplishments of the previous year and discussed future projects the Council needs to have done. Some of the future projects include installing new windows in the dining hall, building a pavilion near the trading post, collecting Toys for Tots; and making craft kits and Pinewood Derby cars for special needs children.

The Patriot's Path Council of the Boy Scouts of America encompasses 5 counties in central and northern New Jersey: Middlesex; Morris, Somerset, Sussex, and Union. The Council website is ppcbbsa.org. There are 11,000 scouts who use the camps in this council.

In spite of their name, the Flintlocks have nothing to do with antique firearms, although some of the old guys are considered "antiques". They meet every Thursday at Camp Winnebago, Rockaway, NJ, all year round, and guests are always welcome. They are organized as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation. All of the members are registered with the BSA, take CPR and AED training, and are vaccinated for COVID.

More than half of the Flintlocks have been awarded the prestigious Silver Beaver Award, which is the highest National Award for a volunteer in the Scouting Program. They usually provide approximately 5,000 hours of volunteer skilled labor every year, saving the Council close to \$250,000 of labor costs.

In the past, the Flintlocks have built cabins, picnic tables, painted the dining hall, built the archery range, built all the structures at the waterfront, financed, built and equipped the STEM Lab at Allamuchy Scout Reservation, financed and built an addition to the Wink Dousa Cabin, and repaired damage to camp structures. In addition to building structures and doing repairs and maintenance, they also volunteer at many Council programs throughout the year. One popular program for Cub Scouts for which the Flintlocks volunteer is called "For the Birds". The children learn about birds and build birdhouses and bird feeders.

The Facebook Page is "Flintlocks". Guests are always welcome. For more information contact Secretary Dr. Michael Hart at drmhart@yahoo.com.



(above) The Flintlocks BSA, Inc. members showing the signs representing the 12 points of the Scout Law. They tease one member for always being seen with a coffee cup in his hand, so they made him a sign reading "coffee". These signs will be posted at the Allamuchy Scout Reservation in Byram, NJ, located near Waterloo Village.

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Clos du Bois Chardonnay	1.5 L	\$19.99
Dom Perignon	750ml	\$259.99
Dreaming Tree (All Types)	750ml	\$12.99
Ecco Domani Pinot Grigio	750ml	\$10.99
Adagio Pinot Grigio	1.5L	\$10.99
Freixenet Brut, Extra, Extra Dry	750ml	\$10.99
Gato Negro (All Types)	1.5L	\$ 9.99
Gazela Vinho Verde	750ml	\$ 6.49
Joseph Carr Cabernet Sauvignon	750ml	\$29.99
Kendall Jackson Vintners Chardonnay	750ml	\$13.99
Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc	750ml	\$14.99
Louis Jadot Beaujolais Villages	750ml	\$13.99
Louis Jadot Pouilly Fuisse	750ml	\$26.99
Martini & Rossi Asti	750ml	\$11.97
Menage a Trois Red	750ml	\$10.49
Mi Amore Red	750ml	\$ 8.99
Moet Imperial Champagne	750ml	\$49.99
Noble Wine 337, 667	750ml	\$11.99
Papi (All Types)	1.5L	\$11.99
Ruffino Chianti	750ml	\$ 8.99
Ruffino Chianti	1.5L	\$13.97
Ruffino Pinot Grigio	1.5L	\$14.99
Ruffino Tan label	750ml	\$19.99
Santa Margerita Pinot Grigio	750ml	\$22.09
Silver Oak Alexander Valley Cabernet	750ml	\$84.99
Simi Chardonnay	750ml	\$13.09
Woodbridge (All Types)	1.5L	\$12.49

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