

# CRANFORD MONTHLY<sub>NJ</sub>

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## SOME TOWN HAPPENINGS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

### TROLLEY RIDES

The annual Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce free community event “Trolley Rides & Sing Along with Santa” was a big hit! Graced with a warm, sunny day the line stretched down the block from the Gazebo on Springfield Avenue with the trolley leaving every 15 minutes.

### HORSE & CARRIAGE RIDES

Horse & Carriage rides were held on December 9th. The free event was hosted by Downtown Cranford. Residents were asked to bring a donation for Cranford Family Care and a full car load of food was collected. Greeting guests were Mr. & Mrs. Clause, and volunteers included the Sheet Metal Workers Local 22 who helped with the smores station. Cranford High School Band members played Christmas carols.

### TREE LIGHTING

Did you ever wonder how all of the ornaments make it up the tree? A special thank you to Rob, Cranford Police Department, for spending the day with us and carrying the most special ornaments up our tree! - Cranford Area Chamber of Commerce

### CRANFORD JAYCEES

### COLLECT OVER 2,500 TOYS FOR CHARITY

Thank you Cranford for donating over 2,674 presents (at this writing) as part of Santa Deliveries! We delivered them to Cranford Family Care, Union County Social Services, and Trinitas Regional Medical Center in Elizabeth where some very deserving kids will get a brighter holiday season. We also helped Santa deliver over 2,000 gifts across Cranford - Follow Cranford Jaycees on Facebook

### CRANFORD PBA TOY DRIVE

The 2nd annual Cranford PBA Toy Drive honoring Ray Schwartz was a great success. Special thanks to Cranford native, Jeff Osnato, Owner of WeCool Toys for the generous donation of hundreds of toys. Lastly thank you to the Morristown Hospital who took care of Ray and still currently takes care of one of our own, Nick Swandrak. Nick made an appearance to help at the Toy Drive as well at the drop off. Nothing stopped him from helping out, even as he endured his own treatment! A big thank you to everyone who donated and participated! - Follow Cranford PBA Local #52 on Facebook



(additional photos on page 22 and 23)

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### SEND US YOUR NEWS

Do you have a community service that you need help publicizing? Did you or someone you know accomplish something amazing? We are interested in hearing about your latest achievement (honor, award, etc.), send us your news! **Email: [editor@rennamedia.com](mailto:editor@rennamedia.com)**

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## A YEAR OF GIVING - CRANFORD FAMILY CARE

2022 has been a surprisingly busy year for Cranford Family Care! The organization provided food and financial assistance to more than 70 local families, fulfilling its aim to help them regain self-sufficiency.

None of this aid could have happened without the support of the many businesses, congregations, clubs, and individuals who donated time, goods, and money to help support Cranford residents in times of need. Cranford Family Care wants to thank everyone, including:

- Anthem Style & Gifts • Arnold's Pest Control
- Augusta Mae Boutique • Bella Organici
- Beyond Dance • Big Sexy Soup
- Booster Club • Boy Scouts • Breadsmith
- Brighton Air Corp • Brooke Filosa Coldwell Banker Realty • Cake Artist Café
- Calvary Lutheran • Calvary Preschool
- Calvary Tabernacle • Carlito's Barber Shop
- CHS Class of '23 Project Graduation
- College Women's Club of Cranford Group
- Come Play and Learn Preschool
- Cougar Headquarters • Cranford Fire Dept
- Cranford Golden Touch Jewelers
- Cranford Moms Group
- Cranford Police Department
- Cranford Schools
- Sheet Metal Workers Local Union No.#22
- Cranford Theater • Cranford United Methodist
- Cranford VFW Post #35
- Cranford Women's Club • Délice Macarons

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Cranford Family Care appreciates the support (apologies if anyone was overlooked!) and looks forward to working together in 2023.

Happy new year!

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## WESTFIELD AREA YMCA BEGINS CELEBRATION OF CENTENNIAL YEAR

In 2023, the Westfield Area YMCA celebrates its 100th anniversary of service to the community. The Y will kick off the celebration with special hours on New Year's Day from 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. A limited-edition commemorative 100th-anniversary long-sleeve workout shirt will be distributed to current and new members for the first few months of the year, while supplies last. Centennial celebration events and activities will be announced throughout 2023.

Summer Day Camp and Child Care Open Houses will be held on Saturday, January 7 from 10 a.m. to Noon. This summer's theme is "History in the Making" as the Y provides an opportunity for campers ages 3-15 to express themselves, try new activities, learn new skills, make new friends, be creative, and have a blast! Summer Camp Open Houses will be held at the Main Y Facility, 220 Clark Street, and the Garwood Family Center Y, 500 East Street. Camps are ACA-accredited and located in Cranford, Garwood, Mountainside, and Westfield. Full and half-day traditional, sports, S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) and leadership development camps are available by the week or all summer long. Camp Early Bird registration begins on January 2 and ends on January 31. Child Care Open Houses will be held at the Bauer Branch YMCA, 422 East Broad Street; Early Learning

Center YMCA, 170 Elm Street; and Garwood Family Center YMCA, 500 East Street. Registration for full-day child care, half- and full-day preschool, full-day Kindergarten, and Kindergarten Wraparound will be available for the 2023-2024 school year. Registration for after-school care will begin in March.

For information on all Westfield Area YMCA programs and services, visit [westfieldynj.org](http://westfieldynj.org) or call the Welcome Center at 908-301-YMCA (9622). The Y is for youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Financial assistance is available for YMCA programs and memberships for those who qualify.



(above) Westfield Area YMCA campers enjoy a trip to Mindowaskin Park.



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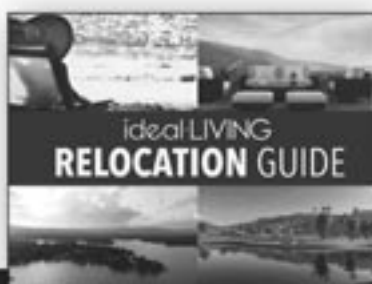
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## ATTEMPTED GRANDPARENT SCAM LEADS TO ARRESTS

### Cranford Police Department

A New York man and woman were arrested after attempting to defraud an alert Cranford resident during an attempted grandparent scam on November 29, 2022.

At approximately 0900 hours, police received a call from a Cranford resident reporting that an individual identifying themselves as a New York Prosecutor's Office had their grandchild in police custody. The scam caller stated that the grandchild was involved in a serious motor vehicle accident which required them to be bailed out of jail. The alert resident immediately recognized that this was a scam because another family member made contact with the grandchild - confirming that he was not in police custody. With the fraudster still on the line, another family member contacted the Cranford Police Department to report this event. Immediately, Detective Lieutenant John Swandrak, Detective

Lieutenant Spencer Durkin and members of the Cranford Police Investigative Division arrived on scene and established surveillance on the resident's home. The scam caller indicated that a member of the New York Prosecutor's Office would arrive to retrieve cash bail left in a package on the resident's front porch.

At approximately 1215 hours, police observed a woman, 19 year-old Melody Sandoval of Bronx, New York, approach the front door of the resident's home to retrieve the package of cash bail from the resident's porch. After a brief on-scene investigation, Sandoval was taken into custody. Shortly thereafter, police located Sandoval's accomplice, 19 year-old Jeury Gonzalez of Tarrytown New York, in a 2005 Honda parked on an adjacent street and arrested him as well. The Union County Prosecutor's Officer approved charges against Sandoval and Gonzalez for 3rd Degree Theft by Deception.

Both were processed and provided a Superior Court Appearance Date.

Chief Ryan J. Greco commended the resident's quick-thinking in calling the Cranford Police Department as this incident was unfolding. "These grandparent scams tap into a family members' emotions, and the scam artists are relentless in their goal of defrauding victims of large sums of money," he said. He noted that typically, the fraudulent caller will pretend to be from law enforcement or an attorney's office. In light of bail reform, bail is rarely used in the State of New Jersey and residents should immediately be suspicious of any individuals who are willing to pick up large sums of cash in person to pay for legal bills, bail, or fines.

Residents are encouraged to share this story with family members who may not have access to social media to prevent future acts of fraud from occurring.

## BOY SCOUTS TROOP 80

At Troop 80's December 12 meeting, the Scouts demonstrated how to use a cardboard box as a makeshift camping oven to bake S'mores pies. This recipe is a twist on the camping staple and uses a pie tin with a graham cracker crust, filled with chocolate chips and mini marshmallows.

To create an "oven," a mid-sized cardboard box was lined with aluminum foil. Then an empty pie tin was placed on the bottom of the box with a wire rack above it. The S'mores pie was placed on the rack. Hot charcoal briquettes were placed in the empty pie tin, and the box was taped shut for 15 minutes. The heat generated in the aluminum-lined box baked the chocolate and marshmallows to create the pie. A nice hot treat on a cold night!

If your son would like to join Troop 80, please contact Shannon Tallon at [shan.tallon@gmail.com](mailto:shan.tallon@gmail.com).



(above) Scouts baked S'mores pies during their December 12 meeting.

Courtesy photo

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(above) Hillside Avenue School teacher, Christine Eulas, poses with her father, Jim D'Arcy, who was welcomed as a guest of honor.



(above) Mark Schwartz, Mike Gregory, and Jim D'Arcy served as guest speakers for "Ten Questions with Our Veterans" assembly.



Mike Gregory poses with his son after the Orange Avenue School community honored him.



(above) Mark Pollock receives a hug from his daughter at Walnut Avenue School..”

# STUDENTS HONOR VETERANS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Cranford Public Schools

This year, Cranford Public Schools partnered with the Cranford VFW Post 335 to commemorate Veterans Day and honor the members of our town who served in the armed forces. Events took place in all buildings across the district on Wednesday, November 9th with schools welcoming VFW members Mark Schwartz, Jim D’Arcy, Mike Gregory, and Mark Pollock. Brookside Place School, Lincoln School, Livingston Avenue School, Orange Avenue School, Bloomingdale Avenue School, Walnut Avenue School, and Hillside Avenue School were decorated with student-created patriotic “paper chains of gratitude” that included messages of appreciation. VFW members then toured each school where students lined the halls

for a “clap in” to thank and celebrate their guest of honor.

Further contributing to the day’s events, Cranford High School hosted a “Ten Questions with Our Cranford Veterans” assembly for students enrolled in United States History II. Students developed and posed questions for Mark Schwartz, Jim D’Arcy, and Mike Gregory, who graciously shared their experiences in the US military, allowing students to develop a deeper understanding of events studied in their classes and a greater appreciation of the sacrifices members of the US military make.

Cranford Public Schools and the Cranford VFW Post 335 look forward to continuing and expanding their partnership to honor our community’s service members next year.



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Mini Wrap Platter (Feeds 5) \$41.99

Mini Triple Decker Club Sandwich Tray (Feeds 5) \$40.99

For other options (chicken wings, antipasto platter, mozzarella sticks etc.) please see our menu online @ [cozycornerdeli.net](http://cozycornerdeli.net)



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The Raptor Trust is also offering private guided tours, virtual school programs, and outdoor field trips and scout programs through the winter months.

You can email [education@theraptortrust.org](mailto:education@theraptortrust.org) with any booking questions or find more information on our website at [TheRaptorTrust.org](http://TheRaptorTrust.org).

## HONORARY P.B.A. SEEKS YOUR SUPPORT

The Cranford Honorary P.B.A. is seeking motivated individuals who are interested in becoming members, board members, and volunteers.

When you become a member of the Cranford Honorary PBA, you join local business leaders, law enforcement officers, and citizens like yourself who are committed to backing our Cranford Police Department and their families and letting them know we're on their side. Joining the Cranford Honorary PBA is a tangible way to express your support for the work that our officers do to protect families like yours every day.

As a Cranford Honorary PBA member, you'll help:

- Promote the morale, professionalism and good and welfare of the Cranford Police Department.
- Contribute funding to the Cranford Police Department, various local charities and events annually.
- Help in fostering a positive relationship between law enforcement and the residents of Cranford along with fellow PBA members throughout our town.

The Cranford Honorary PBA's mission statement is as relevant today as it was when the organization was first established: "To promote the moral, professionalism and the good and welfare of the Cranford Police Department and to promote and grow the relationship between the citizens, business owners and the members of the Cranford Policemen's Benevolent Association and the Honorary P.B.A."

Our Cranford Police need your support. Join your friends and neighbors and become a member now!

If you are interested in becoming a part of this great organization or would like more information, please call 908-272-2227, or drop us a line at: Cranford Honorary PBA Local 52, P.O. Box 1663, Cranford, NJ 07016.

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT NJ 211?

The 211 system is found throughout the United States and is devoted to connecting people in need to the resources that can help. While each 211 operates independently, all of the more than 200 organizations provide a network of local support that people can call on with confidence when they need help and simply don't know where to turn. In New Jersey, our motto has been: Need Help? Start Here.

NJ 211 provides live assistance 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Our services are free, confidential and multilingual. There are several ways to reach us: By phone (simply dial 2-1-1); via text (send your zip code to 898-211); email ([info@nj211.org](mailto:info@nj211.org)); or chat on-line: [nj211.org/contact-us](http://nj211.org/contact-us). Whichever method you choose, you will be communicating with a community resource specialist who has been educated about federal, state and local systems

created to help people who are struggling.

NJ 211 also serves as the State Homeless Hotline and New Jersey's Utility Assistance Hotline.



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# MEET TECHNICAL SERGEANT CECIL L. SPITTLER, ONE OF CRANFORD'S 86 AND 1930'S PRO BASEBALL PITCHING ACE

Co-written and researched by Don Sweeney and Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault, Edited, and researched by Vic Bary

Meet Technical Sergeant Cecil L. Spittler, One of Cranford's 86 and 1930's Pro Baseball Pitching Ace

Co-written and researched by Don Sweeney and Janet Cymbaluk Ashnault, Edited, and researched by Vic Bary

There were 86 men from Cranford that made the ultimate sacrifice, giving their lives while fighting for our freedom. As the author of 34 of these Hometown Hero profiles, I have not failed to note the numerous other sacrifices made by these brave members of our military. The large majority of returning war veterans, except in some cases in the Vietnam War era, were met with parades and overwhelming thanks from an appreciative, welcoming American population. Most all American veterans took advantage of special educational and loan programs that paved their way to become comfortable in American society. Most found love and created a family and found themselves engulfed in their version of the American dream. This was something that our Cranford 86 heroes gave up along with their life.

As I prepared to tell the life story of Cecil Spittler, while gathering facts from old news clippings, the lyrics of the 1984 Bruce Springsteen song Glory Days were on my mind constantly. The song tells of a high school baseball pitcher, known for his blazing "speedball". He lives on his own legends which get told and retold at get-togethers with his old friends. So many of the life stories that we have shared to date have been of Cranford young men that were lucky enough to be gifted with talents, early in their lives, that put them up on an athletic pedestal. But their right to relive those "Glory Days" moments, as they aged into their senior years, was stolen from them. The first name that comes to mind is Ray Ashnault, a Little League slugger, known to hit the long ball in clutch situations. Also, Thomas Truxtun was a West Point Lacrosse star, so good that the US Military Academy's lacrosse field house now bears his name. Archibald Cameron was an All-American football star at Virginia Polytech Institute. Augie D'Alessandris starred at basketball and baseball throughout all four years at CHS at the highest level. Even Dick Borrell made his fame with one catch, in a clutch, game-winning, miracle reception against football rival Roselle High School. Each one's moment in the sporting spotlight was different, but for every one, they were possibly the greatest accomplishments of their short life. Cecil Spittler took his starring moments farther than any other Cranford 86 hero, achieving legitimate stardom in a big ballpark. But, like all of these sports stars in our Cranford 86, the time that Cecil was given to recount those "Glory Days" moments was cut way too short.

Cecil Spittler, like many young boys, dreamed of reaching the major leagues of professional baseball. The story of his climb is full of triumphs and setbacks, but in the end, looking back, he had quite a ride. Born on April 15, 1911 in the coal mining town of Madera, Pennsylvania, Cecil was



(above, left) Cecil Spittler, whose boyhood dream was to be a big league ball player, almost reached his goal. Wearing the signature wool pinstripes, he played under contract to the NY Yankees for seven years in the minor leagues and as a probationary pitcher for the big club. His "Glory Days" moment was facing the mighty Babe Ruth in 1936 when the Babe was in the last year of his career with the Boston Braves. (above, right) T/Sgt. Cecil L Spittler's military portrait, with his distinctive cleft chin, that made it easy to identify him in group pictures.

(above) On August 19, 1943, while stationed at Fort Dix waiting for his mission to begin in Europe, Cecil Spittler married Ruth Hodges. Ruth was a nurse as Elizabeth General Hospital. Shortly after her husband's departure, she would answer the call for urgently needed nurses and enlist in the Navy as ensign.

one of six children born to Calvin and Nora Spittler. He was praised early on as a gifted mathematician and a high school teacher was quoted to say, "Cecil works algebra like he swallowed the book". In a biography found at the Cranford Historical Society, Cecil was praised for his dedication to God throughout his early life in Pennsylvania. It was said that Cecil would sooner miss breakfast than miss Sunday school. His family encouraged him to make math his profession, head off to college and settle down to a teaching career. But Cecil had a dream, accompanied with incredible talent, his life's plan would include a fast moving baseball and a pinstriped uniform. Cecil shined on the baseball diamond throughout Little League and high school. He was called a "world beater" for his incredible talent as a "hurler" with a fast ball that became known as the "Spittler Fireball". During the seemingly never-ending long winters, Cecil and his best friend were known to dig out a pitcher's mound and a batter's box in the deep snow, so they could start their baseball season before the anticipated thaw. In 1928 he graduated from Philipsburg High in Pennsylvania, just one year before the crash of the stock market which marked the beginning of the Great Depression. Cecil's sister Hilda was able to find employment in the bustling commercial area of Bayway, between Linden and Elizabeth, New Jersey, where blue collar jobs were still available. Cecil soon followed and was employed as a surveyor's helper at Standard Oil. Union County had a well-organized amateur baseball league and Cecil wasted no time in joining, first as a member of the Cranford Athletic Club in 1929. As part of the Standard Oil team, his natural talent to throw faster than anyone ever known in the Union County leagues, drew attention in local

newspapers. He was soon offered a deal with the Springfield Stars in 1930. A clipping from the family scrapbook told of a bold and impetuous move made by the talented nineteen-year-old. Cecil drove from his Linden home to Philadelphia to meet Cornelius McGillicuddy. Known to the baseball community as Connie Mack, McGillicuddy was the owner of the Philadelphia Athletics for 50 seasons. Cecil asked Mr. Mack for the opportunity to demonstrate his skills with a baseball. As Connie Mack was known to do, he led young Spittler to Shiba Park and let the ambitious young Jersey kid show him what he had. After the workout, Mr. Mack told Cecil that he had what it takes to be a pitcher in the big leagues, but candidly stated that without a curve ball, he wouldn't get anywhere. Cecil took Connie Mack's constructive criticism to heart, and within a year he had added a curveball to his repertoire.

A little background of the baseball business in the 1920s and '30s might help you to imagine what is about to happen in our hero's life for the next eight years. Baseball was coming off an amazing boom period throughout the Roaring '20s. The New York Yankees' owner was Jacob Ruppert, a German immigrant and owner of the 30 million dollar Manhattan brewery that crafted Knickerbocker Beer. Ruppert not only built an empire in major league baseball, but he created the supporting minor league program as well. Several A and AA minor league teams from up and down the east coast were acquired by Ruppert which created a steady flow of young talent to fuel his New York Yankees organization. He purchased the Newark Bears and made them the AA gem (the highest level) of his minor league system. It makes me wonder if the ability

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# TECHNICAL SERGEANT CECIL L. SPITTLER

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(above) A historic photo of the men of the 407th Infantry as they cross the fortified 400 mile-long Siegfried Line or, West Wall, as it was known by the Germans. With 1800 bunkers, pillboxed, tunnels and tank traps, it was built in the 1930's and then refortified after the Normandy landings.



(above) It has become a ritual with our team, whenever possible, to locate and visit the final resting place of our Hometown Hero. Cecil Spittler is buried at Clover Leaf Memorial Park in Woodbridge. We cleaned up around the edges of his marker, placed an American flag and said his name, along with a prayer. After learning about Cecil's touch with greatness on the ballfield, I wish there was a way to let passersby know, that this was not only a brave soldier, but a NY Yankee pitcher as well. I'm going to work on that.

to sell beer to his baseball fans had anything to do with his master plan. With air travel still in its infancy, the Bears' proximity to New York allowed for easy access to his stable of talented rising stars just across the Hudson River. In this era, Major League Baseball was played exclusively during daylight hours and was viewed only in stadiums by live audiences. Although the technology to broadcast by radio and eventually television was available, owners feared that giving their games away for free could possibly destroy their financial empires. Owners like Ruppert eventually realized the lucrative possibilities of paid advertising through mass media that up until then had not been considered. The Depression affected the revenue of Major League Baseball teams, but the business of baseball still did relatively well during those 12 years, possibly because it offered a temporary diversion from the troubles of the day. The average professional American baseball player of the era was considered a superstar and paid about \$4,500.00 per season, equal to about \$70,000 in today's money. Ninety-five percent of the revenue came from attendance at stadiums which charged about \$1.00 for admission and .50 for bleacher seats.

As in the past, our stories come to life with the results of the hard work done by our researchers and our ability to locate a family member. The Cecil Spittler project was blessed by both. Our long-time supporter Mike Sapara, who inspired story number one featuring his classmates Ray Ashnault and Joe Minnock, informed us that his girlfriend, Darla Canney, was the niece of Cecil Spittler. Darla's mom was Betty Jean, Cecil's sister. A treasure chest of information, assembled in a classic scrapbook, was delivered to me. News clippings from the sports pages and correspondence to and from the battlegrounds of Europe helped us to piece together the baseball career of Cecil Spittler, from Little League to the New York Yankees as

well as his Army life overseas. It was a privilege to read the colorful words of the talented sportswriters of the day. Their reporting was the only way that fans, who were not in attendance at the ballpark on game day, were informed of the day's action of America's favorite pastime.

Between the years 1931 and 1938, young Cecil Spittler was on a wild ride, which several times brought him tantalizingly close to the pitcher's mound on the field in "The House That Ruth Built". In 1931 Cecil was signed by a New York Yankee minor league "A" team, his first paying job in the sport that he loved. In 1932, he impressed onlookers with the Springfield Ponies in the Lackawanna league in Massachusetts, with an 11-1 record. It was here that he received professional training and displayed his ability to learn quickly. Cecil had now perfected his powerful curve ball and had added a hook pitch to his skillset, which brought his craft to the next level. His ability to perform under extreme pressure was soon noted by his coaches and local sports reporters. Even when found in difficult situations by the mishandling of balls behind him, he cast no blame and just bared down and became even more relentless with his throwing. He was described to possess "baseball gruff". In late 1932 "Ceece" as he was now called, was sent to the Newark Bears, the Yankees AA team. Young Cecil, now only 21 years old was on the fast track towards becoming a New York Yankee. But as quickly as his throwing abilities had advanced his career, they now stalled it, and he ended up demoted back to "A" level ball, for what was described in a sports page article as "not measuring up to requirements".

Following the 1933 season, a star Yankee pitcher, Russell Van Atta, played a promotional tour throughout New Jersey to raise awareness of baseball. He chose Cecil to join the all-star team. Van Atta opened the game with a dazzling pitching display where he went four innings not

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The 1936 Newark Bears are, from left to right, as follows: (front row) Marvin Duke, Frank Hawkins, Kemp Wicker, Nolen Richardson, and Ray Schalk; (middle row) Howard LaFlamme, Les Lowers, Cecil Spittler, Al Pichota, Oscar Vitt, John McCarthy, Willard Hershberger, Spurgeon Chandler, and Chief Kay; (back row) Max Rosenfeld, Merrill May, Bob Collins, Ray White, Bill Baker, Frank Makosky, Bob Muller, Dick Porter, and Ralph Boyle. The Buffalo Bisons defeated Newark in the International League playoffs four games to one. (Courtesy of the Newark Public Library.)

(above) The 1934 League Champion Norfolk Tars, led by team ace Cecil Spittler. On July 24th of that year, Spittler would pitch a near perfect game, retiring 28 of 29 batters. This was the performance that moved him to the Newark Bears, the Yankees' top AA minor league team.



SPRING TRAINING FOR these and other members of the Newark Bears Baseball Club will start tomorrow in Sebring, Fla. This group is shown in the Market street station of the Pennsylvania Railroad yesterday as a number of players left for Florida. They'll meet the rest of the club there today. Left to right are Bob Miller, Frank Makosky, Cecil Spittler, all pitchers; Manager Oscar Vitt and Secretary Ray Kennedy.

TECHNICAL SERGEANT CECIL L. SPITTLER

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giving up a hit. He then handed the ball to our Cecil, and everyone in attendance was shown what a former Newark Bear's pitcher could do. Cecil completed the last five innings without allowing any hits, yes, a nine inning no-hitter, a very rare occurrence, even in 1933. At one point he struck out eight in a row. Van Atta reported back to his Yankee contacts that Spittler should be reconsidered in the hierarchy of the Yankee minors. So, for the '34 season, he was sent to Norfolk, Virginia to join the Tars and work under a legendary manager, Bill Skiff. On July 24th, against the Richmond Colts, Cecil, renewed with confidence and swagger, pitched another no-hit event, this time from inning one to nine. If not for the batter who reportedly didn't get out of the way of an inside "Spittler Fireball" that clipped his elbow, not one of the Colts would have reached first base. Twenty-nine batters faced, twenty-eight retired, one short of the elusive perfect game, Cecil struck out fifteen. The Tars, led by Cecil Spittler, went on to win their first championship pennant in fifteen years. Cecil's performance that season was rewarded with a call back to the Newark Bears. On September 30th, Cecil was honored by the mayor of Linden, Myles McManus, who was his biggest fan. For pitching a nearly perfect game and his promotion back to the Newark Bears, a dinner was held at

the Linwood Tavern on South Wood Avenue, still a community hot spot. Cecil was awarded an engraved wristwatch and over one hundred were in attendance, including some Yankee ballplayers.

After Spring training in Florida, Cecil was selected to start in the 1935 season opener. In a double-header at the Bears' Ruppert Stadium in the Ironbound section of Newark, Cecil watched as the Bears lost the first game. But as the starting pitcher in the second game, Cecil gave a stunning performance, producing a 3-0 victory. His control was described as perfect. Cecil Spittler appeared in forty-five games that season and had a record of 14-10 with an ERA of 4.03. The local sports writers were thrilled with the "sandlot" hero. With most up-and-coming stars recruited from college programs, Cecil was said to have a B.S.L. (Bachelor of Sandlot). The Bears' manager, Otto Vit, referring to Cecil's unconventional pitching form, said "He does everything wrong, but he wins".

The 1936 season started off with a big contract signing for Cecil that made headlines. While no dollar amount was disclosed, it was reported that "the Bears' ace was rewarded handsomely for his stellar performances in

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Cecil Spittler's Eight Year Baseball Career Path

Year	Name of Ballclub	Location	level	owner
1929	Cranford Athletic Club	Cranford, NJ	Amateur	Union County League
1930	Standard Oil	Linden, NJ	Amateur	Union County League
1930	Springfield Stars	Springfield Mass.	A	NY Yankees
1931	Cumberland Colts	Cumberland, Maryland	A	NY Yankees
1932	Injured			NY Yankees
1933	Belmar Braves	Belmar, NJ	A	NY Yankees
1934	Norfolk Tars	Norfolk, VA	A	NY Yankees
1935	Newark Bears	Newark, NJ	AA	NY Yankees
1936	Newark Bears	Newark, NJ	AA	NY Yankees
1937	NY Yankees	Bronx, NY	Major League	NY Yankees



(above) The 1936 Newark Bears, Cecil Spittler's team for his last year as an ace pitcher. While in spring training of the 1937 season, he tore a muscle in his pitching arm that would never allow him to regain his dominant "fireball" that had him ear marked for a slot on the NY Yankees during the golden years of baseball.



(above) Ruppert Stadium, the home of the Newark Bears, at 258 Wilson Avenue in the Ironbound section.



(above) Images from the "Glory Days" of an American kid who had a chance to live out much of his boyhood dream. Following Cecil Spittler's near perfect game with the Norfolk Tars, there was incredible press coverage of the event. A no-hitter was as rare then as it is now, and the perfect game is even more incredible. His two most powerful pitches were the fastball, known as the "Spittler Fireball" and his unique curveball. Skeets Dickey was the younger brother of a Yankee star of the era, Bill Dickey. Bill was in attendance in Linden, at the Linwood Tavern, for Cecil's reception back to the Newark Bears, the Yankee's premium class AA Minor League Baseball club.



(above) These clippings from the Newark Star-Ledger show the level of stardom that Cecil was getting used to. The coverage introduced him to the Bears' fans, hyping up his status as their up-and-coming ace pitcher. Cecil is shown in his traveling clothes at the train station as he departs for his first taste of Florida spring training and then in uniform, on the field, in Sebring, Florida. Unfortunately, as wise people often say, "Man makes plans . . . and God laughs

# TECHNICAL SERGEANT CECIL L. SPITTLER

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1935". It seemed that now, it was just a question of when, not if, he would be moving up to the Yankees. Seemingly, the biggest obstacle in Cecil's path was the talent-heavy Yankee roster that would need to make room for another superstar. The Bronx Bombers would win the World Series in 1936 as they did in 1937, '38 and '39. And so loaded with talent themselves, it was said that the Newark Bears, not the World Series losers New York Giants, were the second best team in baseball in 1936.

At this point, Cecil's career seemed to be on the upswing. However, we discovered that he was having severe pain in his throwing arm which he was slow to report to management. He could still pitch, but not to the level that AA baseball required or as dominantly as he did in the 1935 season. Cecil was sent to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore for an advanced diagnosis, which was a sign that Mr. Ruppert saw value in Spittler's future with the Yankee organization. It was determined that he had a severely separated muscle in his shoulder. A Brooklyn surgeon promised success and performed a procedure that would remove the damaged tissue and return the six foot, one hundred eighty-five pound, right-hander to his former self. After surgery, Cecil was sent back to Union County to rest and slowly work his arm back to strength. Sportswriters who asked Cecil how his arm was doing would receive extremely promising responses. But, a couple performances in public in the Union County league, would display lackluster results that left Spittler in need of lengthy recovery time after each appearance. There was also some talk of a mental element to his demise, as well. The Yankees were still of the mind that Cecil would work his problems out, so he was removed from the Bears' injured reserve list, and he was signed as a probationary pitcher for the New York Yankees. This was seemingly a place to hold him under contract, safe from another squad's acquisition, while he healed. Cecil remained in that position until 1938, when his baseball career ended after his arm did not recover as was hoped. Sadly, Cecil never was able to pitch a game in Ruppert's Yankee Stadium.

In the Spittler family memoirs, there is a baseball, encased in plastic, and labeled as the ball that their Uncle Cecil used to strike out Babe Ruth. At first, we found that to be impossible, because Ruth retired in 1936 and Spittler had not made it to the Yankees until 1937. However, in our research we learned of a promotional pre-season game at Ruppert Stadium in 1936. The major league, Boston Braves would play the

powerful Newark Bears, in an exhibition game which was commonplace in the day. The sports pages were on fire with anticipation, as the Boston Braves had just acquired Babe Ruth, the biggest box office draw of the last decade. The headlines were bold, Cecil Spittler, the ace of the Newark Bears, would face Babe Ruth. Family and friends must have been elated for Cecil. When game day arrived, surprisingly, Cecil was not the starting pitcher, surely a disappointment to Cecil's local following, but Babe Ruth did not disappoint. On his first at bat, he crushed a pitch over the fence as he had done over 700 times before. Then, later in the game, he hit the longest home run in Ruppert Stadium history. The Bears had an early 7-1 lead when Cecil and Bob Miller were brought in for the save, which was not to be. They gave up nine runs collectively, the final score was Braves 10, Bears 8. It was not reported as to which pitcher took the loss, but Cecil was the last pitcher mentioned in the article. We speculated that it was Cecil's recently revealed arm injury which negatively affected his performance that day. He may have been put in the game, just to allow him to face the Babe, as the previous day's headlines had touted. So, it is feasible that Cecil Spittler did face Babe Ruth, and possibly struck him out. To date, we have not found any written evidence to support this, but as we have learned, it is best to believe in the family legends when any doubt is present.

After voluntarily leaving professional baseball, Cecil returned to the Bayway area. He worked in Linden as a shipping clerk at the chemical company, American Cyanamid, and lived in Cranford at 15 North Avenue with his parents. We could find no further details about Cecil's transition back to life off the pitcher's mound, until we learned that he was drafted in November of 1942, at the age of 31, eleven months after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Cecil was shipped to Camp Maxey in eastern Texas to train with the 102nd Infantry Division, 407th Infantry Regiment or "Ozarks" as they had been known since WWI. As the unit slowly assembled and grew to their projected size of 40,000 men, they were already being specially trained for the encounters that were likely to occur. The Normandy invasion and anticipated march across France were still more than a year away, but General Eisenhower had incredible foresight. He knew that when the Nazis, these attackers who had occupied nearly thirty countries, were forced back to their homeland, they would defend it with incredible ferocity. At Camp Maxey, the Texas terrain mimicked the European landscapes that

the Army was preparing to attack. There were recreated German villages, with mock snipers posed in windows, a scenario that foretold what lay ahead for our Hometown Hero.

From Camp Maxey, the 102nd was moved to Camp Swift, also in Texas, for tactical training with tanks and helicopters. In total, 90,000 soldiers were training at Camp Swift for the upcoming attack of the German homeland. Cecil Spittler, already at the rank of sergeant, served 6 months there as an instructor. From Texas, the training moved to Louisiana for advanced maneuvers instruction. At the conclusion of this intense battle training, the 102nd Infantry Division was staged at Fort Dix in New Jersey, as they awaited orders to start their mission. Letters from the family scrapbook tell of Cecil's elation at being able to reach home by train and bus, in just a few hours, to spend some time with his family and girlfriend Ruth Hodges. Ruth was a nurse at Elizabeth General Hospital, she and Cecil married on August 19, 1943. With the great need for nurses in the military, after Cecil was deployed, Ruth answered the call of duty herself and enlisted in the Navy as an ensign. Spittler's 102nd Infantry Division landed in France, at Cherbourg, on September 23rd, 1944, just east of the Normandy beaches. They completed their training in nearby Valognes, after which they traveled approximately 400 miles, unobstructed, across the recently liberated French countryside.

A high-level understanding of what was then occurring in the European Theater of Operations may be of help to our readers at this point. General Eisenhower had implemented a broad attack strategy. Several armies, each of approximately 100,000 soldiers, fanned out across France. They were methodically liberating towns and villages while advancing to the Rhine River, the natural border between Germany and several other European countries. When each army was poised at the Rhine, a massive invasion into Germany would be conducted. In total, this surge would include about 2 million Allied soldiers. Through the stories that we have told so far, our regular Cranford 86 readers may be familiar with the troop movement that was occurring during this time. In the far west of France, we traveled with Private Bill Hinkle in his trek across the Vosges mountains and the Maginot Line with the 7th Army. We learned how Arthur Galvin in Patton's 3rd Army struggled with supply line shortages as they worked their way through central France. And now we follow Cecil Spittler, a member of the 9th Army. From

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# TECHNICAL SERGEANT CECIL L. SPITTLER

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the eastern French countryside, under the command of General Simpson, Cecil would be led into violent encounters while breaking through the Siegfried Line at the Hurtgen Forest and then onto the Roer River region. With General Eisenhower as its mastermind, Europe had become an enormous chess game.

In 2018, I had the honor of interviewing for TV 35, our town's oldest living WWII hero, Peter Klein. Sadly, Peter passed away this year. We will miss him and the valuable historical input that he provided to the Cranford 86 effort. His description of the Hurtgen Forest in the wicked weather of 1944 gave me an understanding of what Cecil and his unit were experiencing. Peter had landed at Normandy Beach, fought in the Battle of the Bulge as well as in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest. He told me that the Hurtgen Forest, which was on the border between Belgium and Germany, was the roughest for him. He told me it was the coldest he had ever been in his life. The snow was deep, and the weather was brutal. Peter said that they were totally underdressed, and he hadn't even been issued a winter coat. The Longest Battle: September 1944 to February 1945 - from Aachen to the Roer and Across, by Harry Yeide, is a fantastic book that we used in our research. It helped to guide us through the first combat, two months long, that Cecil's unit encountered in early October inside the Hurtgen Forest. It stated that the snow gear didn't arrive until January of 1945. Like Peter Klein, Spittler too may have been underdressed for that same bitter winter. Reading the details of war, where thousands of soldiers traversed the Siegfried Line, supported by hundreds of tanks and 2,500 aircraft, was heart-pounding. The swiftly moving Roer River lay before them, and with its many bridges it began a historic challenge for the 9th Army. For the next months, advances were said to be measured in feet not miles, with the same land being fought over several times.

In late 1944, many felt that the mighty Panzer battalions, whose disabled tanks covered the roadsides, had been taken out of action and the Nazis were near collapse. Rumors were spreading wildly through the Allied troops which created false hopes that the war would be over by Christmas. The actual truth, which was well known to General Eisenhower, was that the German forces from Normandy, had retreated to the German and Belgian borders. They had repaired and refortified the Panzer tank divisions and had now concentrated their might with many reinforcements into a Schwerpunkt strategy, a military concentration of sorts. This industrial manufacturing region was crucial to the Nazi war efforts and Hitler's orders were clear. There would be no surrender and they were to fight to the death. In order for the 9th Army to reach the Rhine River to join the other forces for the assault on Germany, they would have to conquer the Roer River industrial region. The 9th Army of over 100,000 soldiers was under the control of General William Simpson, probably the most

successful and most unknown general of the era, who served with distinction in both WWI and WWII. The flamboyant styles of Generals Patton, Bradley and British General Montgomery stole all the headlines during this period, as General Simpson quietly completed his wartime tasks flawlessly, including victory in the Roer River campaign, which was the longest and fiercest of the war.

Vic Bary, our military expert, took the lead on research for the combat actions of Sergeant Spittler. He discovered that Cecil's unit was on a mission to attack three bridges that cross the Roer River into four small, Belgian villages, Welz, Linnich, Roerdorf and Flossorf, a mile or two separated them from each other. The area was being protected by the 304th Volksgrenadier Division, a new creation of the German Army, after its horrible defeat in Normandy. A Volksgrenadier contained more automatic weapons and short range munitions than an ordinary infantry unit. They were often paired with an SS Panzer Tank Division, as was the case in this instance. The houses in the villages were full of snipers, and Allied advances across the river bridges were plagued by booby traps and mines that the Germans had planted on streets and in houses. All of this added up to an extremely treacherous mission. (See the YouTube videos in our online story at Cranford86.org) Technical Sergeant Cecil Spittler was with the 407th Infantry Regiment, 1st Battalion, Company B. A typical company had about 150 - 175 men and was broken into rifle platoons of about 40 each. Cecil now a Tech. Sergeant (E-7), was second in command of his platoon, under a 2nd Lieutenant. Two letters written by Cecil indicated his whereabouts at this time. One was written on November 27th, while in a small town in Holland. Cecil wrote that he was in a foxhole just fifty yards from a German pillbox that was putting out heavy mortar fire. One shell had even lodged itself into the top of his foxhole. In another dated November 28th, he told of being tucked into a basement as he awaited the start of "another offensive push". Our research shows that rifle platoons were being sent across the river to neutralize the sniper fire which had been causing many Allied casualties. We believe that on November 30th, 1944, in the village of Welz, Cecil was on one of these missions. It was here that he lost his life, just two days after writing those letters home.

The battle for the Roer lasted six months and sadly, the last four months were without the services of Tech. Sergeant Cecil Spittler. The 102nd Infantry Division would continue through Germany until that country's surrender in April 1945. The 102nd, that started in Cherbourg in September with about 100,000 soldiers, reported their casualties as follows: 932 killed in action, 3,668 wounded, 185 missing, and 137 taken as prisoners of war. The Germans had suffered considerably more.

At pivotal moments in many of our stories, the thought always seems to come to mind as to

where our hero was at this time. I couldn't help but wonder if the accurate arm and "ability to perform under extreme pressure" of our former Yankee pitcher had ever been asked to perform in battle. We've all seen WWII movies when a hand grenade needed to be thrown into a pillbox or through a second floor window. I can just imagine the commanding officer calling on Sergeant Spittler to deliver the perfect strike on demand, taking out an enemy position or sniper's nest. What a moment that would have been. When Cecil had some downtime, in the barracks, on a transport plane, or huddled in a foxhole or basement, we picture him surrounded by wide-eyed, younger, comrades-in-arms. He was one of the few who had a chance to achieve a touch of greatness, before making the ultimate sacrifice. We hope that he got great joy out of regaling audiences with tales of his "Glory Days" on the baseball field, just as described in the Springsteen song.

Technical Sergeant Cecil L. Spittler was buried in the beautiful Netherlands Military Cemetery in Margraten, before being brought home on April 14th, 1946. When he was laid to his final resting place in Clover Leaf Memorial Park in Woodbridge, he received a full military funeral hosted by the Captain Newell Rodney Fiske VFW Post #335 of Cranford and the Cranford American Legion Post #212. Cecil was survived by his wife, Ensign Ruth Hodges Spittler, his parents Nora and Calvin, three sisters and a brother.

We'd like to thank Vietnam veteran Mike Sapara, for sponsoring the banner of Cecil Spittler which will be unveiled on Memorial Day, 2023. This year's ceremony to honor the Cranford 86 will highlight Technical Sergeant Spittler, who sacrificed his life safeguarding freedom, allowing the privilege that is our way of life to continue for every American. We love hearing comments from our readers, let us know what you think of our ongoing project, email us at [info@cranford86.org](mailto:info@cranford86.org) and follow us on Facebook at Cranford86.

## CRANFORD 86

Those who gave their lives in service to our country.

### DID YOU KNOW ONE OF THE CRANFORD 86?

You can email us with any information



### THE CRANFORD 86 56-PAGE BOOKLET AND AWARENESS CAR MAGNET ARE AVAILABLE FOR A DONATION

Please help us to fund our continuing mission to tell the stories and see the faces of all 86 Hometown Heroes.

Email: [info@cranford86.org](mailto:info@cranford86.org)  
or call Don Sweeney at 908-272-0876

## CRANFORD SPORTS HALL OF FAME HONORS 2022 INDUCTEES

During a induction ceremony held on November 17, 2022 at the Westwood, the following were honored by the Cranford Sports Hall of Fame:

Terry Biunno, Candace Borges Hueterman, Taylor D'Antico, Nik Fekete, Kimberly Ann Kupka Donatello, Jessica McCoy, Timmy Meyer, Margaret Morrow, Sylvanus Shaw, James

Shriner, Michael Snyder. The following teams were inducted: 1986 Wrestling Team, 1997 Baseball Team, 1999 Baseball Team, 2008 Volleyball Team, Police Athletic League.



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# GIVING THANKS FOR A LIFE WELL LIVED

*Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless*

Mikaela Santos came into our lives in the summer of 2022. In July, we received an email from Karen Gilmour, a yoga instructor with Alluem Yoga in Cranford, telling us about a young student with a desire to give back to the community, especially homeless children. She wanted to collect backpacks full of all the necessary school supplies to start the year off right. Mikaela, together with her instructor Karen, her sister Vivienne, her mother Yesica, her Aunt Natalie, and her good friend, Marielle, started a giving tree with the backpack needs of nearly 50 children in our housing programs.

A few weeks later at the beginning of the 2022 school year Mikaela passed away. Mikaela was just 11 years old. She lived most of her life in and out of hospitals because she had childhood cancer. So briefly did we know her yet how profoundly she affected us all. She left everyone she met with a sense of love and light. And it is her story we want to share with you today.

Just days after her death, her mother, sister, aunt, and friend delivered her backpack project to the Elizabeth Coalition. We were amazed at the love and care that went into creating each individual backpack. Mikaela willed her idea into being...she really made it happen!

What made Mikaela so special was her ability to transform her experiences of pain and illness into a project for others. Mikaela was asked what inclined her to helping others when she herself was going through so much. Mikaela answered, matter of fact-ly, "I might have cancer but I also have love, a home, and my family to support me. One thing does not have to do with the other."

Karen remembers Mikaela as someone who always showed up with love...to the studio...to her practice of yoga...to her friendships. "Every moment with Mikaela was a favorite one. I loved her little laugh and her sweet smile. Mikaela was a light in this world...and in my life."

Mikaela's mom, Yesica, recalls how knowing Mikaela made her a different person, "Mikaela was my first-born, she's the reason I became a mother and then when her sister, Vivienne, was



born we were complete. Knowing Mikaela makes me feel honored and proud to be her mother." Mikaela's precious spirit burns brightly in memory for those who loved her most but also for those lives she touched so briefly with her creativity, her giving, and her compassion.

The children who received a backpack wrote notes and drew pictures to thank Mikaela. Some notes make mention of an angel, which is how they choose to remember her and her supreme act of bravery in being a force for good in the world. To be so young and yet full of such a wise mind and kind heart, sharing her blessings with others, is a page from her remarkable story that we can all learn and grow from.

Thank you, Mikaela.

It is supporters like Mikaela that are so vital to our work. Donations and volunteers free us to offer premium case management to those who need it, allowing us to offer the care and focus on each client who comes through our door. Consistent, dedicated partnerships push our vision that one day, we will eliminate homelessness and equip each person with the support they need.

For volunteer opportunities to help our homeless brothers and sisters, and donate, visit [theelizabethcoalition.org](http://theelizabethcoalition.org).

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**Thursday, January 26, 2023**

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

**Sunday, January 29, 2023**

12:00 pm - 3:00 pm

**PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION**

**PLEASE CALL**

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## LIBRARY BOOK SALE JAN. 19, 20, 21

Looking for some good reading at bargain prices? The Friends of the Cranford Public Library invite you to visit their used book sale in the library's "Friendly Book Cellar." Browse through shelves full of thousands of books and make as many selections as you'd like! Most hardcover adult books are \$2.00 and paperback books are \$1.00. Most children's books are 25 cents or 50 cents!

The Book Sale will take place on January 19 (1-8 p.m.), Friday, January 20 (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.), and Saturday, January 21 (10 a.m. - 2 p.m.). January 21 will be bag day. For just \$8, you can fill a shopping bag with books. Cash or checks only. Registration is required and can be done so at [cranfordlibrary.org/friends.php](http://cranfordlibrary.org/friends.php).

The Friends look forward to seeing you at the "Friendly Book Cellar." The Friends of the Library is a non-profit organization. Proceeds of all book sales and monetary donations benefit library programming and events for all ages throughout the year.

These sales are only made possible because of your book donations. Book donations in good condition are welcomed and appreciated, any time during library hours. Library staff at the front desk can help direct you. Please note that we cannot accept encyclopedias, textbooks, audiocassettes, or VHS tapes.

## MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY OF SERVICE

The First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, located at 11 Springfield Ave., Cranford, will host a Martin Luther King Day of Service.

On January 16, 2023, from 3 - 5 p.m. the church will be a "Drive Up -Drop Off", location for donations. There will be volunteers at the curb outside of Bates Hall (across from Gray's Funeral Home), to accept contributions.

The following donations would be greatly appreciated: wrapped/bagged sandwiches, diapers and wipes, new socks gloves and hats, pantry items and women's sanitary items. Organizations receiving the donations are St. Joseph's Social Service Center in Elizabeth, Raphael's Life House in Elizabeth, Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless in Elizabeth, Cranford Family Care and Rahway Food for Friends.

Questions may be directed to Janice Grievous - [janicegrievous@gmail.com](mailto:janicegrievous@gmail.com).

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## SANTA'S HELPERS

Over the last four years, a small group of Santa's elves has helped fill Christmas stockings for Family Promise of Union County. The organization serves low income families and families experiencing homelessness.

Students and staff at the Academy for Performing Arts at the Magnet School in Scotch Plains participated this year also. Kaitlyn Landaverde, a Junior from Clark, organized the drive at the high school.

Patricia Novy of Clark, who started the project four years ago, shared the fact that the group filled 36 stockings the first year, 67 stockings last year and 91 Christmas Stockings for children ages 4 to 12 this year.

"The need is greater than ever," Novy said. "In speaking with Family Promise, the children often receive donated gifts, but stockings are not considered. Our little group of friends, family and former colleagues help fill that void."

We are inspired each year by this quote from a nine-year-old boy, "When you give something; someone else gets."



Courtesy photo

(above) Patricia Novy with Christmas stockings waiting for delivery to Family Promise of Union County.

**KEAN**

# Sayaka Ganz

## Reclaimed Creations

Produced by David J. Wagner, L.L.C., David J. Wagner, Ph.D., Curator/Tour Director

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## RELIEF FROM CHRONIC KNEE PAIN

### FDA Approved Treatment to Avoid Surgery

### DON'T BLAME THE ARROW FOR MISSING THE TARGET

Just like tens of millions of other Americans, you were looking for relief from your chronic knee pain. You thought Viscosupplementation injections might be the answer, but the results were disappointing and painful. Don't assume the treatment wasn't right. That could very well be like blaming the arrow for its path to the target when the problem might be the archer. If you didn't get the pain relief you were hoping for, chances are your injection treatment was off target. Unlike blind injections or even ultrasound targeted treatments found elsewhere, **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** uses diagnostic fluoroscopy to make sure the area that needs treated is the exact area where the injection goes. This is the most advanced method of delivering this pain relieving treatment with 95% accuracy to give you the results you're looking for. The use of Fluoroscopy guided injections sets **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** apart. The end result is you living pain free from your chronic knee pain. You can avoid the lengthy and painful road of knee replacement surgery. You can avoid the endless trial and error assortment of potentially addictive prescription medications. This treatment, using fluoroscopy guided injections has seen a success rate of above 85% in those suffering from knee pain related to osteoarthritis, and that includes people with bone on bone involvement. You've suffered from chronic knee pain long enough. Call **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** now for a RISK FREE consultation.



### If Knee Surgery Sounds Scary, It Should

Have you have been told you are facing knee replacement surgery? Have you been told about all the downsides you could be facing? First and foremost, there are NO guarantees that knee replacement surgery will be the answer to your pain, but let's look further:

- Surgery is costly, regardless of the percentage of services covered by insurance.
- Surgery requires lost time from work and typically requires a regimen of rehabilitation and medications.
- With surgery, there is always a risk for unwelcomed complications. And you could be back to where you started, or worse.
- Medications will be required for relief from surgery and you have been down that road before. Addictions to these pain medications can cause potential side effects, something you do not want to experience.
- Rehabilitation can take years.

### Consider This Alternative To Surgery

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

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

### How Does This New Treatment Work?

Relief begins almost as fast as it takes to pronounce the treatment. It's called Viscosupplementation Therapy. To begin with, it starts with **Northeast Spine & Wellness Center** investing in the use of diagnostic fluoroscopy. This enables them to target the exact location of your knee pain with pinpoint accuracy. What follows is a simple injection that causes little to no pain, especially when compared to what you may be living with daily. That explains what you will see on the surface of this revolutionary treatment. What's taking place below the surface is how and where the natural healing process takes place. The injection of a Hyaluronic acid called Hyalgan. This gel-like substance was approved by the FDA in 1996. Hyalgan is a natural substance that mimics the synovial fluid that is already produced by your body in your joints. Osteoarthritis sufferers in particular see a reduction in this much needed synovial fluid in their knee joints. Without that cushioning layer of protection, the cartilage in your knee can begin to wear away leading to the rubbing of bone on bone. Through Viscosupplementation Therapy, this natural substance immediately goes to work reducing the swelling and inflammation in the joint and adding a coating layer of protection. Think about Dorothy taking the oil can to The Tin Man. You'll begin to feel that same kind of relief and quite possibly feel like you're ready for a dance down the yellow brick road to recovery yourself. And with a success rate of over 85% in alleviating pain associated with osteoarthritis, it's easy to see why this treatment is so readily covered by Medicare and by most major insurance providers. Diagnostic fluoroscopy to target the pain. Viscosupplementation Therapy to relieve the pain. Simple, fast 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. Call 732-827-0800

Scot Paris MD, FACS



### Here's what our patients have to say

"I'm dancing without pain. I can move with no problem whatsoever. I can go up and down steps with no pain."

- Patricia G.

"Over 85% relief for the first time in 15 years, suffering with knee pain. My life is getting back to normal."

- Perry O.

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

- Question L.

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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.

## FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

Are you feeling stressed and alone in trying to cope with the effects of a loved one's mental illness? Union County's Family Support Group is for family members and caregivers of persons with mental illness. The group is led by NAMI-trained facilitators and is a peer support group that allows participants to gain insight from others facing the same challenges.

Zoom sessions are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 7 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. To register, email Denise at: namiunioncounty@yahoo.com with your name, town, and phone number.

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# BUTTERFLY RELEASE REFLECTS ON GRIEF AND LOSS

*Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss*  
Over 30 Imagine participants and staff gathered in the Tribute Meadow at Fairview Cemetery in Westfield held on Saturday, October 22. It's a lovely spot near the weeping willows, pond, and fountains. They came together for a Butterfly Release Ceremony arranged by Imagine staff member, Kristin Imbimbo and Sharon Rossman and Rick Ralph of Fairview Cemetery. The ceremony included poetry, music and

reflections on grief and loss followed by the release of the butterflies. As it was a cool night, many of the butterflies chose to stay close to the warmth of the children and adults releasing them sitting on hands, shoulders and jackets as they warmed themselves before flying off. It was an intimate ceremony of remembrance and Imagine and Fairview plan to partner again in the spring to provide another opportunity for families to participate.

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 are 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@imagine-nj.org](mailto:info@imagine-nj.org).



(above) Members of Imagine and Fairview Cemetery came together for a Butterfly Release Ceremony.

Courtesy photo

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FROM 1-4pm

**JAN 7 JAN 14 JAN 21 JAN 28**

**FREE EVENT!**  
NO REGISTRATION NECESSARY!

**Warm up this winter with some FREE delicious soups!**  
Visit participating Rahway restaurants on Saturdays in January from 1-4pm and ask for a sample of their featured Soup Stroll soup!

Scan the QR code for a full list of participating restaurants or visit [RahwayIsHappening.com/soupstroll](http://RahwayIsHappening.com/soupstroll)

Please note: While supplies last. Establishments will not be able to accommodate food allergies or restrictions. Not all restaurants are open the entire 1-4pm. Please check individual hours of operation.

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MAYOR RAYMOND A. GIACOBBE

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## JANUARY IS A SOUPER TIME TO VISIT RAHWAY

Rahway is your winter destination in 2023! Looking for something to do to fight off those winter blues? Bundle up and take the train, rideshare, or drive to Rahway to experience all that the city has to offer. Rahway is home to a diverse small business community with unique retail shops and dining experiences. You can start your day in Rahway with a hot cup of coffee and some shopping, get the kids out of the house for lunch and some family game time at the arcade, and plan a date night with drinks and dinner at any one of our many delicious restaurants. No matter what cuisine you are craving, you will find it in Rahway! Watch a show at the Union County Performing Arts Center, view an exhibit at one of our art galleries, or listen to local musicians who can help you rock and sway your way through the winter months.

Looking to warm up this winter? Our annual Soup Stroll, presented by our Special Improvement District (SID), will return every Saturday in January (Jan 7, 14, 21, 28) from 1-4 p.m. Mayor Raymond Giacobbe and the Rahway City Council encourage everyone to attend this free event as a great way to get together with friends, get out of the house, and sample some delicious soups while strolling through the City.

Restaurants will be stirring up their finest soups for you to try, so be sure to follow @Rahwayishappening on Facebook and Instagram or visit [RahwayIsHappening.com/soupstroll](http://RahwayIsHappening.com/soupstroll) for participating eateries and more information. Snap a photo of you and your Soup Stroll Squad enjoying your samples and share it with @rahwayishappening on Instagram to enter our Soup Stroll Selfie contest for a chance to win a \$25 Gift Card to your favorite participating restaurant.

Visit [Rahwayishappening.com](http://Rahwayishappening.com) for information on parking, lists of shops and restaurants and details about all of our upcoming events!

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# HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS PHOTO ALBUM





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# HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS PHOTO ALBUM



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# CENTER FOR HOPE’S AUXILIARY YEAR-END DONATION

The Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care, a community-based non-profit hospice organization in Union County, New Jersey, celebrated the season with their Auxiliary on Monday, December 5. At the party, the Center received a very generous gift: a check for \$100,000 representing the funds raised from the Auxiliary over the past year.

Marge Hussey, the Auxiliary’s president, was pleased to be able to present the check to the Center. “Each year,” she said, “with our many events and the Hope Chest Thrift Store, we work tirelessly to not only educate the community about the Center, but to help the Center in its mission: providing only the finest in hospice care to all those who need it regardless of an inability to pay. As I present the fruits of that work to the Center tonight, I hope you all can share the pride I feel in knowing that we’re making a difference in the lives of so many each and every year.”

Tom Kasper, the Chairman of the Center’s Board of Trustees, was on hand to accept the gracious donation. “This is incredible,” he said. “While each and every one of us, alone, do what we can, it pales in comparison to the work that can be done when we come together as a group and work toward a goal. You all have shown that here tonight. There’s simply no way the Center can properly state the gratitude we feel for the Auxiliary throughout the year.”

Marge concluded by saying, “As we come together this holiday season, I want to again thank everyone for their hard work...and remind

everyone that our work is not done! Next year, those in need in our community will still remain and will still need our support.” She reminded the group that “we still need new members to help us do even more next year.”

The Center for Hope offers hospice and palliative care in its two residences in Scotch Plains and Elizabeth, and provides hospice care to patients in the wider community where they live. For more information on the Center or the Auxiliary, visit [cfhh.org](http://cfhh.org).

**ABOUT CENTER FOR HOPE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE, INC.**

Center for Hope Hospice & Palliative Care (Center for Hope) is a non-profit, community-based organization that provides terminally ill patients with hospice care, and their families or

loved ones with physical, emotional, and spiritual support during their time of need. The Center actively supports the individual's right to live out the remainder of their life with dignity and in comfort, surrounded by the love of family and friends, and eased from the burdens of physical, emotional, spiritual, financial or social distress. Center for Hope welcomes all terminally ill patients, their families and loved ones without concern for race, ethnicity, religious affiliation or ability to pay. It also offers pain and symptom management for chronically ill and seriously ill patients through its palliative care program. Center for Hope operates two facilities in Scotch Plains and Elizabeth; the latter provides nearly \$3.5 million a year in charity care. For more information, visit [cfhh.org](http://cfhh.org).



(above, l-r) The officers of the Center for Hope Auxiliary present a \$100,000 check to the Center for Hope’s Board of Trustees Chairman. Pictured are Marge Hussey, Dolores Paruta, Ginny Comer, Thomas Kasper, Dolores Hynes, and Rosemary Burke.

Courtesy photo

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## CRAIG CLARK CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY OF HIS LIFE-SAVING 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 Reyentovich, 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](http://www.NJSharingNetwork.org).



(above) Heart transplant recipient Craig Clark of Scotch Plains recently celebrated the four-year anniversary of his life-saving transplant.

Photo courtesy of NJ Sharing Network

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## FLINTLOCKS SCOUTER GROUP LIVES BY THE SCOUT LAWS

The Flintlocks, BSA, Inc. are a group of retired scouters 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 ppcbsa.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](mailto: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.

Courtesy photo

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