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FAMILY ICE SKATING NIGHT

After the annual tree lighting ceremony, families were treated to a Family Ice Skating Night, an evening of free ice skating at Westfield Rink. The Recreation Department reserved the rink exclusively for Mountainside residents and their guests.

(Additional photos on pages 8 and 9.)



Photos from this and other events can be found online at rennamedia.com and on Mountainside View page on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/mountainsideview) Feel free to “Like,” “Tag,” and “Share.”



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IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY CHURCH TO HOST “ALPHA” SESSIONS

Is There More to Life Than This? In a world of isolation, anonymity, and keyboard-warriors, Alpha offers content and guidance for churches, ministries, and individuals to create a space for honest and open conversations about life's biggest questions. Everyone is welcome and no questions are off limits.

Alpha is a place to connect with other people who are open to exploring life, faith, and meaning. Alpha fosters honest, open, and judgment-free conversations for anyone to explore the Christian faith. Each session includes a time to connect with others (often over a free meal), watch a short video on an element of the Christian faith, and then a chance for each person to share thoughts and questions with the group.

“I was invited to participate in the Alpha pilot. From the initial meeting, I knew this was something that I wanted to be a part of,” explains Nancy Schreck. “After completing the pilot, I joined the Alpha team to help plan for the future of Alpha at IHM. It's a wonderful opportunity for people at any level of faith to meet new people and explore new ideas.”

Sessions are free to attend and are scheduled on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. The first meeting will be live and in-person on Monday, February 13, 2022 beginning at 7 p.m. in the Nazareth



Center of Immaculate Heart of Mary (IHM) Church: 1571 S. Martine Ave. Scotch Plains. Good food and conversation will be offered to all in attendance. Most meetings after that will be hosted on Zoom. Links and directions will be provided to those who register. Participation is capped at 30 people.

“When I offered tech support for the pilot program at IHM, I had no idea what I was in for. I'm not very religious. But Alpha was an unexpected surprise!” offers Gabe Lamberty. “The program is interesting and entertaining. And it's nice to meet new folks from the community. Overall an unforgettable experience.”

“I'm looking forward to the Alpha experience,” says Lou Zappo. “It sounds like a lot of fun, and who knows, I might learn something about myself.”

Registration is required, please go to our website at ihmparish.net/alpha or call 908-889-2100. If you have questions about Alpha, please email office@ihmparish.net.

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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 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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CHAMBER EXPANDS INTO CLARK

Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABOUT THE GWACC

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

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CAREGIVER PRESENTATIONS AT THE MOUNTAINSIDE MUNICIPAL BUILDING

Through funding support from the Blanche M. and George L. Watts Mountainside Community Foundation, SAGE Eldercare continues to offer GPS (Guidance Planning and Support) services to residents of Mountainside. The grant allows SAGE to outreach and assist Mountainside's older residents who are at risk, may be living alone, with little or no support in the community.

SAGE launched Navigating Support for Older Adults: A Compass for Caregivers at the Mountainside Municipal Building, 1385 Route 22. The series will discuss eldercare decisions including securing help in the home, local resources for support when alternate care may be needed, handling health transitions and use of assistive technology. Topics will be offered monthly in 2023, with some live and virtual sessions. For more information and to register, call SAGE at 908-273-5550.

The goal of GPS Services is to work with families, other care providers, and the community to ensure that seniors receive services that support their health and well-being, maximize functionality, decrease isolation and allow them to remain living independently as long as possible.

"Informed and empowered caregivers can

help older adults they assist to age in place successfully at home – to thrive, not just survive" said Pat Stelmach, Care Navigator for GPS at SAGE "Older adults steered through GPS have direct access to the multiple other integrated services at SAGE, too." To learn more about GPS Services, whether or not you are a resident of Mountainside, please call SAGE Eldercare at 908-273-5550 or visit sageeldercare.org.

ABOUT SAGE ELDERCARE

SAGE Eldercare is one of only a few providers in the nation — and the only one in New Jersey — to provide a full range of eldercare services under one roof. For 68 years, SAGE's mission has been to help older adults remain living in their own homes. Whether it is assisting with a Home Health Aide, helping with food insecurity, or offering a stimulating adult day medical program, SAGE can help. Their team provides referrals, caregiver support groups and free and confidential Medicare counseling. And as the unique challenges of older adults and caregivers evolve, they offer educational programming every step of the way to keep the community informed of best practices. Learn more at sageeldercare.org.



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MOUNTAINSIDE'S NEWEST EAGLE SCOUT - JACOB QUISUMBING

Submitted by Sheila Sidhu

Jacob Quisumbing of Mountainside achieved the rank of Eagle Scout on October 22, 2022.

Jacob is the son of Albert and Mimi Quisumbing. He is a member of Boy Scout Troop 177 of Mountainside, chartered to the Community Presbyterian Church. Jacob has been a Scout for ten years, including his years as a Cub Scout in Pack 177.

To earn the rank of Eagle, a Scout must earn at least 21 merit badges and demonstrate leadership and community service by organizing and carrying out an Eagle project.

During his time as a Boy Scout, Jacob earned 26 merit badges, served actively in leadership positions of Scribe and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader for his Troop, and also participated in community service events like the annual Thanksgiving Food Drive. In his later years of

scouting, Jacob was inducted into the Order of the Arrow and is a Brotherhood member of Woapalanne Lodge 43.

Jacob's Eagle project entailed building a commemorative garden for the Mountainside Rescue Squad to honor their service during the COVID-19 pandemic. He recruited, worked with, and managed a team of volunteers, logging a total of 64 man hours, which included meeting with Rescue Squad officials and fundraising. Jacob raised over \$1,000, doubling his initial project fundraising goal. He was able to donate the remaining funds to the Rescue Squad for their future maintenance of the garden.

Jacob is a Class of 2022 graduate of Governor Livingston High School and is currently attending the University of California, Berkeley. He plans to pursue a dual degree in industrial engineering and data science.





(above) Jacob Quisumbing of Mountainside achieved the rank of Eagle Scout on October 22, 2022.

Courtesy photos




(above, l-r) Domenico Deluca of the Mountainside Rescue Squad, who is also an Eagle Scout from Troop 177, accepting a check from


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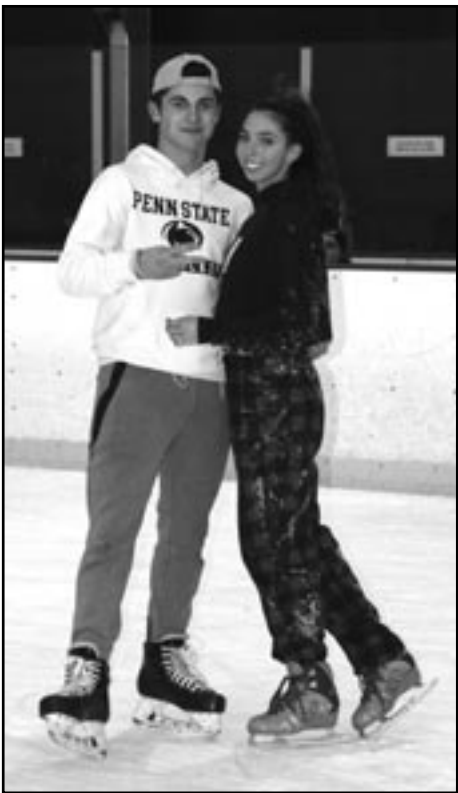
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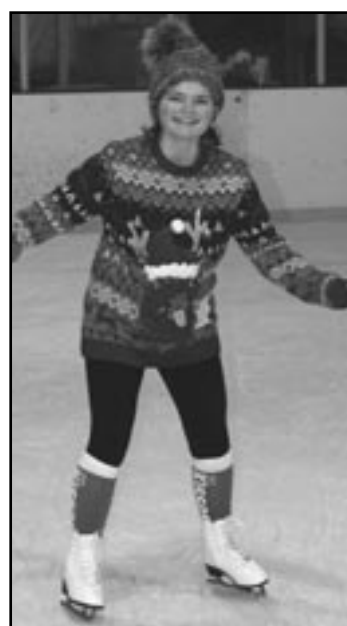
2022 FAMILY ICE SKATING NIGHT PHOTO ALBUM

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2022 FAMILY ICE SKATING NIGHT PHOTO ALBUM

Photos from this and other events can be found online at rennamedia.com and on Mountainside View page on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) Feel free to “Like,” “Tag,” and “Share.”



MOUNTAINSIDE TREE LIGHTING



The Mountainside Christmas Tree was lit on Saturday, December 3rd at the annual tree lighting ceremony. The popular landmark is located at the corner of Route 22 East and New Providence Road next to the Rescue Squad building. The Mayor officially light the tree, and the Scouts sang carols.

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(right) The Mountainside Historical Committee sold hot chocolate and cookies. Proceeds from this sale will benefit the restoration and maintenance of the Hetfield and Levi Cory Houses.



(above) Mountainside Scouts led the crowd in singing Christmas carols.



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SANTA GETS ESCORTED AROUND TOWN

The Mountainside Volunteer Fire Dept. has been escorting Santa around town to deliver packages for the past ten years. It is a great way to meet and interact with the community and to spread cheer during the holiday

season. We look to perform this duty with Santa for many years to come for future generations. We are always looking for volunteers for any town residents that are interested.



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



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



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5TH ANNUAL COOKIE SWAP

The Mountainside Active Retirees held their 5th annual cookie swap on Tuesday, December 13 in the Borough Hall Community Room.

Entertainment was provided by Joanne Hansen, a Mountainside resident and professional harpist. Members and non-members attending the meeting brought home-

baked or store-bought cookies for the enjoyment of everyone there.

Continuing the spread of holiday cheer at the end of the meeting, a total of 105 containers, tins, and zip-lock bags were sorted, packaged and delivered to homebound Mountainside seniors. Containers were also delivered to the

Volunteer Mountainside Rescue Squad, the Volunteer Mountainside Fire Department, and the Volunteer Mountainside Senior Buddy Meal Drivers. Additionally, every senior getting a delivered meal on the next day received a couple of packaged treats with their meal from the members of the Mountainside Active Retirees.



(above) The Mountainside Active Retirees gathered for their 5th annual cookie swap on Tuesday, December 13.



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'MINDING YOUR MIND' AT GLHS

Berkeley Heights Public Schools

As the Student Assistance Counselor at Governor Livingston High School and Columbia Middle School, Ms. Madison Rowohlt is charged with providing mental health resources to students.

"One of the things I do in my role as a student assistance counselor is act as a resource to students and educate them about the importance of taking care of their mental and emotional health. I accomplish this by providing Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs. My role differs from my colleagues in the counseling department because I do not provide academic or college/career counseling," said Ms. Rowohlt.

She continued, "In looking at my goals for the year, I felt the need to bring more mental health programming to the school. Students are aware of mental health issues and open to learning more about recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental health issues, so I wanted to provide opportunities to them to express themselves and seek the help they may need."

Minding Your Mind is a national non-profit organization that "is dedicated to ending stigma and destructive behaviors associated with mental health issues, moving away from a crisis-based response to prevention through education." Minding Your Mind uses the power of storytelling to provide evidence-based education on mental health challenges to audiences by having a person, a young adult typically, come

and tell their story so that there is an element of relatability for the students with the speaker.

In mid-October, GLHS conducted two days of assemblies with 9th and 11th graders who heard from a young man about his struggles with mental health, his drug and alcohol experiences, and his road to recovery and health and wellness. He shared his story, as well as the signs of anxiety and depression, and concluded by giving students ideas on how they can ask for help.

Ms. Rowohlt and the counseling team used the assemblies as an opportunity to speak to students about the mental health services that the school and district provides. According to Ms. Rowohlt, "After every presentation there were students who approached the speaker to either thank him or to share personal experiences. They really connected with him and it made an impact. It served as a great conversation starter for students to seek support."

"We strategically timed this program to take place at the beginning of the year because we want students to feel they have a supportive community at GLHS and that they have supportive staff members to rely on," said Ms. Rowohlt. "By bringing in a relatable person to tell their stories to students, the stigma around mental health decreases. We hope our students will ask for support and identify when they are struggling as a result of the presentation."

Minding Your Mind was made possible thanks to funding provided through a grant from The

Mountainside Municipal Alliance. The hope is that the program will continue to be recognized for its value and funded annually so that it can be offered to students year after year.

Madison Rowohlt earned her undergraduate degree in Criminology, as well as her Masters in Counseling, at TCNJ. She has been a student assistance counselor at GLHS since March 2021.

For more information on the Minding Your Mind program, visit mindingyourmind.org.



(above) GLHS conducted two days of assemblies with 9th and 11th graders on "Minding Your Mind".

Photo by Berkeley Heights Public Schools

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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



(above) Mikaela Santos

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.

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