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Issue 153 • August 2023

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

an important and active part of the community.

Donors to the Greater Union Township Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund gathered recently to meet the two Union High School graduates who received scholarships for 2023.

Named the "Union Township Chamber of Commerce Businesses Scholarship," the award was created to allow all Chamber member businesses to collectively contribute to the fund and thereby allow for bigger awards. This year, two scholarships of \$3,000 each were presented to Janaya Warren-Bey, who will be attending Lincoln Technical Institute with the goal of becoming an electrician, and Ritch-Tara Pompilus, who will begin her studies at Brandeis University to study economics.

The scholarship is dedicated to the memory of Anthony Giordano, a longtime Chamber member who served on its Board of Directors for more than a decade. Affectionately known as "Uncle Tony" by his friends and colleagues, he was a major force in the Chamber in the 1980's and 1990's and chaired the organization's Golf Outing for many years.

"We are beyond grateful to the many Chamber businesses who stepped up and contributed to this year's fund," said Executive Director/CEO James Masterson. "Our Chamber is an important and active part of the community —and this is one way in which we demonstrate our commitment to the Township of Union. I encourage our community to show their gratitude by patronizing these businesses."

The Chamber businesses who supported this year's scholarship fund are: Chairman's Circle: Cold Stone Creamery; Union County Orthopedic Group; Sheptock, Chelland and Grieves and Signaturz Sports Bar and Restaurant; President's Circle: Anytime Fitness, Laura and Paul McGrath and Northfield Bank; Founder's Circle: All City Electric, BCB Bank, Beacon Wealth, Insurance Associates Plus; Kessler Rehabilitation Center, Mathnasium and Shake A Paw Center for Rescue and Adoption; Scholars Circle: Friends of the Union Library, JAG ONE Physical Therapy and NJ Arts World; Student's Circle; Atlantic Federal Credit Union, JKS Web Design and The Theater Project; Friends Circle: Union Township Historical Society and SGS.

Information concerning the Scholarship and how to contribute to the fund may be had my calling the Chamber at 908-688-2777 or emailing Masterson at executivedrector@unionchamber.com.

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(above) scholarship winners Janaya Warren-Bey and Ritch-Tara Pompilus were celebrated recently by the Union Township Chamber of Commerce.

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ELKS LODGE DONATES TO THE LITTLE LEAGUE

The Union Elks Lodge #1583 of the East Central District presented a donation to the Union Little League on June 17, 2023.

The check in the amount of \$2,500, contributed towards the purchase of two defibrillators. The proceeds are from Elks National Foundation Gratitude Grant. Pictured are Hank Bedlivy, New Jersey State Elks Association District Vice President; Audrey Smith, Exalted Ruler; Greg Pavick, President of the Union Little League and Vince Ditta, District Deputy.









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THE FUTURE OF REAL ESTATE

GEORGE A. CASTRO IV (21) SELLS RECORD-BREAKING \$4.36 MILLION DOLLAR MANSION

By: Abraham Friedman

CASTRO - When it comes to the world of business, there is no mistaking that attaining success is anything but an effortless feat. Simply charting a clear-cut way to do so necessitates utmost tenacity and discipline, and to then realize such a goal pivots on consistency. This is precisely what can be said in regard to Real Estate, where one's expertise in communication and character must stand at the forefront of every endeavor, making it a demanding profession, regardless of age. Thus, it's nothing short of outstanding when the youngest in the industry work their way up to greatness, and in regard to those who have gone as far as to break records, look no further than George A. Castro IV of Premier Homes who, at just 21 years old, has realized unprecedented triumph in his career through a most recent transaction worth millions, making a name for himself as the true future of real estate.

Having been acclaimed time and again for his unwavering dedication and ingenuity as a businessperson, it is beyond doubt that George Castro has made impactful strides within the Real Estate industry, and the vast recognition brought about by his latest sale of a new residence is no exception. Located at 420 Ludlow Avenue in Spring Lake, New Jersey, the property was built by "AllertonFox Construction", one the biggest commercial construction and development companies in Manhattan, New York, and is but one of many multi-million dollar homes throughout the prestigious neighborhood.



As with all his previous work, George enthusiastically took this unique opportunity presented to him, procuring a contract on the property under 30 days from the original listing date. The residence was initially listed at \$3,995,000, and was ultimately sold for \$4,367,000, a whopping \$372,000 above the original listing price. While this in itself is an exceptional accomplishment, it is made even more significant by George's remarkably young age, recognized as the most ever expensive residential sale by a 21-year-old in the entirety of the United States.

Castro emphasizes the importance of his medium of both marketing and selling, a crucial variable in his mastery of Real Estate. In the case of most Realtors who are selling million-dollar properties, they often focus solely on the market and local areas surrounding a particular residence, which is considered an outdated means to advertise to affluent buyers. Meanwhile, George has been marketing luxurious properties to purchasers not only from New York but several states throughout the country and even overseas. It is exactly this which differentiates him from the majority of agents. "There are many rich and affluent purchasers in Manhattan who live in small apartments but are paying hundreds upon thousands of dollars in rent," he states. With his concentration on efficient and contemporary ways of selling, George has been able to hone into this market and grant a myriad of buyers, whether near or far, the opportunity of purchasing opulent homes in New Jersey.

With his record-breaking achievement, George Castro's eminence in the tri-state area's Real Estate scene is ever-increasing and has been actualized by the aptly named "Wonder Boy" in the short span of only 3 years, at that. First setting foot in the industry at 18, his talent in Real Estate was put to the test by the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought change to our lifestyles, and hence, the state of the business. George rose to the challenge without hesitation, honing his potential with ceaseless determination to be greater than meets the eye. "If you're looking to think at all, you might as well think big, and in the Real Estate industry, it's important to always look to have the upper hand" he says.

By virtue of his prowess and passion for Real Estate, George Castro has come to establish himself not only as a distinguished professional in an industry marked by competition but as a paragon of his age. Through 2022 and beyond, he has earned numerous commendations as a top agent in the Premier Homes company and the state of New Jersey. More than that, George is the youngest realtor to have received the 2022 Gold New Jersey Realtors Circle of Excellence Sales Award, further underscoring his ascendancy in the industry, all through skill well beyond his years.

In recent times, opportunities for prosperity have been sought out on a progressively larger scale, giving rise to new and innovative talent more so than ever before. However, it is George Castro who has proven that the scope of one's success hinges on the individual mindsets of those who strive for it. As he strongly believes "There are no limits to what you can accomplish, except the limits you place on your own thinking. Usually those who are the most competent and committed, are the ones that rise to the occasion."

IMAGINE GRIEF SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Volunteers recently completed three full days of training in order to join Imagine's amazing team of volunteer facilitators. During their training, space was provided where they could share their stories of loss with one another and give and receive support as Imagine staff modeled the skills utilized in Imagine's peer support groups. Imagine practices Alan Wolfelt's Companioning Model which encourages us to walk beside someone on their grief journey, so they feel felt and know that their story matters. Those who participated in this training can utilize the same skills and tools modeled by Imagine staff as they create safe spaces for Imagine participants in our peer support groups.

Imagine is a 501c3 nonprofit that offers free year-round grief support groups for children ages 3-18 and young adults 19-30 who are coping with a loss due to death. Concurrently, support groups are available for the parents and guardians of the children in the groups and offered in English and Spanish. Groups are also available for parents who have lost a child aged 30 or younger. Imagine's Training and Education staff provide grief and loss education and training to the community. For more information, please visit imaginenj.org or contact Imagine 908-264-3100 or info@imaginenj.org.



(above, back row, l-r) Imagine's June Facilitator Training Class - Katie Perlowitz, Bridgewater; Doug Roberts, Basking Ridge; Mouli Patel, Union; Imagine's Program Supervisor, Abigail Priece; Arielle Miller, Springfield; Curtis Moore, Irvington; and Rong Lui, Chatham; (front row, l-r) Imagine's Summer Intern, Emma Heinze; Meghan Cole, Westfield; Lyrica Smolenski, Cranford; Engagement Manager, Ashley S Allen; and Imagine's Executive Assistant, Najiyyah Bailey.



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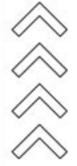
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ROTARY HELP STOCK FOOD PANTRY

The Rotary Club of Union

Members of The Rotary Club of Union and Hillmann Consulting of Union recently held a mini-drive to assist the Union Township Food Pantry. Members donated Stop and Shop gift cards and Hillmann Consulting matched the donation. Employees of Hillmann donated their time to go shopping to get the necessary staples. The donations and gift cards, totaling \$1,000, were delivered to Mayor Manny Figueiredo to supplement the shelves of the food pantry during the summer.

Each month the Rotary Club holds a drive or performs a service meant to positively impact on our community. In the past, drives have resulted in donations of goods or services to the Union food pantry, to Cornell Hall nursing home, and to area shelters. Established in Union in 1941, members of Rotary continue to work for and believe in the principle of Service Above Self.

For more information about the Rotary Club of Union, email info@unionrotary.org or check the website: Rotary Club of Union.

Courtesy photo



(above) The shoppers, Geralanne Maglione, Kylie Nemeth, Sharon Brangman with Kathy Arminio, president of the Rotary Club.

BLOOD DRIVE - AUGUST 20

On Sunday, August 20, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m., Vitalant (formerly Community Blood Services) will conduct a blood drive at Holy Spirit Parish Hall, 971 Suburban Road (corner of 1500 Morris Avenue), Union, NJ. Refreshments will be served.

Ann, a blood recipient says, "I wish I could tell my donor how grateful I am for your selfless act. You may have wondered what became of your donation. Well, it saved my life."

Appointments are recommended, but walkins are welcome. Make an appointment or get more information at vitalant.org or by calling 877-258-4825.

Donors must: weigh at least 110 pounds; bring ID; eat a meal before donating; drink plenty of water before and after donating.

Blood Drive Sponsored By: **Holy Spirit Church** Union

Sunday, August 20, 2023 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

School Gym 971 Suburban Road Union, NJ 07083

Appointments strongly recommended

You may make an appointment using the link below or QR code https://donor.cbsblood.org/donor/schedules/drive_sche

For more information or to schedule a donation. call 1.877.258.4825 or visit us at vitalant.org Find us @vitalant 🔴 🖸 🚯



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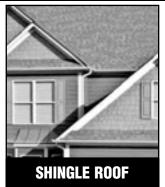
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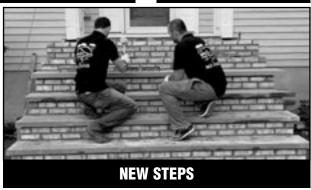












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"AFRICAN ACCENTS" CELEBRATES **AFRICAN FABRIC MONTH IN SEPTEMBER**

Studio in Rahway is marking African Fabric Month in September with a special event at the Barron Arts Center in Woodbridge on September 7, 2023. Studio owner Lisa Shepard Stewart will share her passion for the unique textile arts of the Continent, and how to use them creatively. Learn how and why the fabrics are made traditionally, and view some of the most recent projects she has made with them. Sewing skills are NOT required to enjoy this informal presentation of creative ideas and inspiration. "Of course, if you ARE inspired to learn to sew after the presentation, we do offer beginner classes at the studio, and lots of virtual classes", says Lisa.

African Fabric Month promotes the beauty and cultural significance of textiles like bogolan (mudcloth), kente cloth, adinkra, batik, ankara

The Cultured Expressions Sewing & Quilting prints and more. Their suitability and versatility for DIY enthusiasts ranges from fashion and quilts to home décor, crafts and gifts. Embellishments like Krobo beads and brass accents from Ghana will also be shown and discussed as the perfect finishing touches for any project.

> (NOTE: The lecture is FREE but advance reservations are required; please call Barron Arts Center at 732-634-0413)

Regular studio hours are Wed 4-8pm;

Thurs 12-6pm; Fri 12-6pm and Sat 10-6pm.

For information on workshops, upcoming Handbag MasterClass, the studio's Sewcial Impact initiative and more,

visit www.CulturedExpressions.com, visit in person at 1417 Main Street in Rahway, or call 866-MUDCLOTH.





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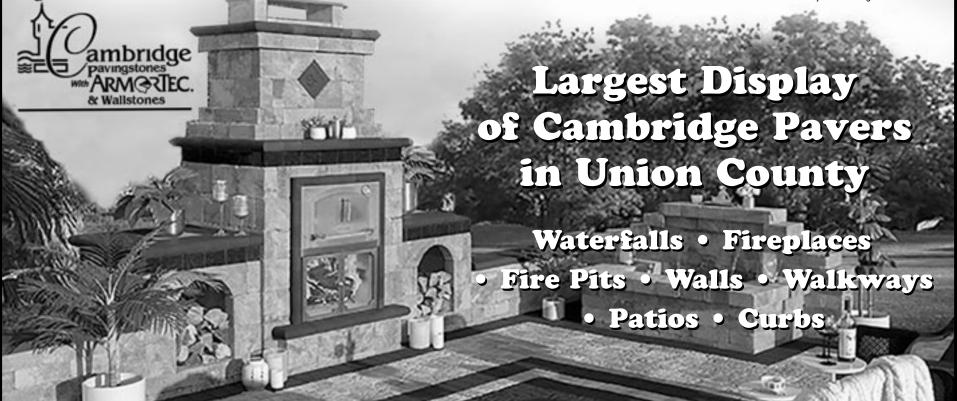
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BOGASH NAMED KEAN 2023 VALEDICTORIAN

Anthony J. Bogash, a 2019 graduate of Arthur L. Johnson High School was named Valedictorian of Kean University's 2023 graduating class. He graduated on May 18th with a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and a Bachelor of Science in Finance.

Throughout his collegiate career, Anthony was bestowed as a member of the Lambda Alpha Sigma Honor Society in 2021, inducted into the NJ Collegiate Business Association Honor Society in 2022, and has been on the Dean's list all four years, maintaining a 4.0 grade point average.

Anthony will be pursuing a Master's Degree at Kean University in Global Business this Fall while working as a graduate assistant for one of his undergraduate professors.

Courtesy photo

IS THERE MORE TO LIFE THAN THIS?

Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Scotch Plains to host a free spirituality seminar.

Registration is required, please visit ihmparish.net/alpha.

A free spirituality seminar is being offered by Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Scotch Plains, NJ. Most meetings are on Zoom. 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.

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, September 18, 2023, 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.

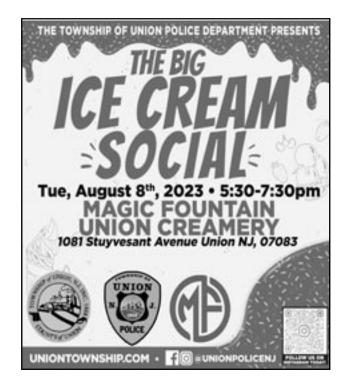
Registration is required, please visit ihmparish.net/alpha or call 908-889-2100. If you have questions about Alpha, please email office@ihmparish.net.

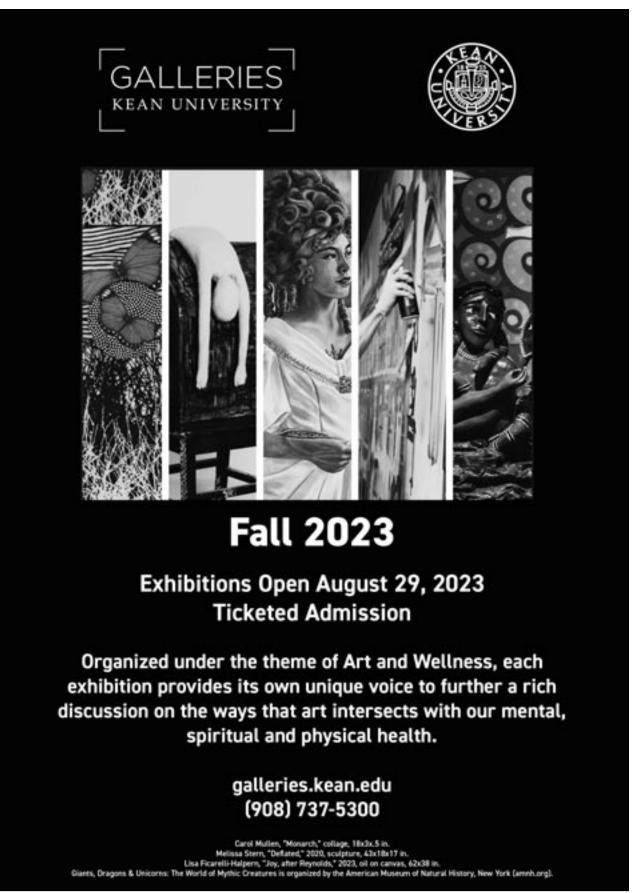


FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP

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.





GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA 7TH GRADE INITIATIVE

The Gateway Family YMCA

Registration begins on August 15th for the 2023-2024 class of 7th Grade Initiative members at The Gateway Family YMCA. As part of the NJ YMCA 7th Grade Initiative, a state-wide strategy designed to support and encourage teens to maintain a healthy lifestyle, The Gateway Family YMCA offers a supportive 7th Grade Leaders Club program and complimentary membership for all 7th Grade Students in the local community. Incoming 7th Grade students are invited to visit the YMCA and join with proof of grade and a guardian's signature. Registration is available in person at The Gateway Family YMCA -Elizabeth Branch - 135 Madison Avenue. Five Points Branch -201 Tucker Avenue, Union, Rahway Branch – 1564 Irving Street, Rahway and Wellness Center Branch – 1000 Galloping Hill Rd, Union.

The goal of the 7th Grade Initiative is to increase physical activity and support teens in the development of lifetime healthy habits, volunteerism and leadership skills while providing a safe and supportive environment with role models at the YMCA. All 7th Grade students are provided a complimentary full privilege membership including wellness and fitness access, group exercise programs, basketball, pickleball, soccer, swimming, YMCA360 and a variety of other programs specifically created based on their interests and feedback.

"7th grade is a pivotal time in youth development, where teens begin to make their own decisions and life choices. Our Y is committed to support the youth in our community and work together to ensure a bright future," stated Melynda A. Disla, President and CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. "At this time in their lives, many teens become sedentary as sports become more competitive. We are here to provide activity, socialization, leadership skills, and role models to encourage healthy habits to last a lifetime."

The 7th Grade Leader's Club, a structured program offering teens leadership and volunteer



(above) Registration Begins August 15th for The Gateway Family YMCA's 7th Grade Initiative.

opportunities is also available for registration on August 15th. With a focus on team building, personal growth, character and job skill development, service and volunteerism, the 7th Grade Leader's Club empowers teens to create a chart of work and volunteer projects specific to the needs in their community, identified and completed by students.

The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers dedicated to strengthening the foundations of community and stands For Youth Development, For Healthy Living and For Social Responsibility. The Y impacts the community by providing quality services to people of all ages, races, faiths or incomes. Providing services for Eastern Union County and Northern Middlesex County, for 123 years, The Gateway Family YMCA has six YMCA branches in Elizabeth, Rahway and Union, serving the communities of Avenel, Carteret, Clark, Colonia, Elizabeth, Hillside, Kenilworth, Linden, Plainfield, Port Reading, Roselle, Roselle Park, Sewaren, Union, Vauxhall, Winfield Park and Woodbridge, NJ.

For more information about The Gateway Family YMCA's 7th Grade Initiative, visit tgfymca.org or contact the Elizabeth Branch at 908-355-9622, Five Points Branch at 908-688-9622, Rahway Branch at 732-388-0057 or Wellness Center Branch at 908-349-9622.

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ARC OF UNION COUNTY RAISES \$41,000

The Arc of Union County, a non-profit agency serving more than one-thousand adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, raised over \$41,000 at its first annual Swing Into Summer Golf Invitational on June 21st at Galloping Hill Golf Course in Kenilworth.

Golfers from local and regional businesses, private individuals and other supporters enjoyed a full day of golf, breakfast, lunch and numerous prizes. Among them was a raffle for an allexpense paid luxury three-day, two-night stay at the exclusive Kiawah Island Golf Resort in South Carolina won by Ryan Frangopoulos of Macro Technology.

The event also served as a passing of the torch from The Arc of Union County's long-time Executive Director Frank Caragher, who retired at the end of June after 49 years of service to the IDD community, to his successor, Edwin Asuta, who took over in January.

For 74 years, The Arc of Union County has offered a lifespan of services including family support, early intervention, education, residential, day habilitation and employment services. All proceeds will directly support these programs.

The Arc is grateful to Galloping Hill Golf Course and GAPGEM LLC Golf Event Management for their essential roles in making this event a success. We also thank our 23 sponsors without whose support this event wouldn't have been possible. They are:

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Learn more about The Arc of Union County, its programs and services, at arcunion.org or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. And for an early start on next year's golf event, contact Marianne Kranz at mkranz@arcunion.org.



(above) Retired Executive Director Frank Caragher and his successor Edwin Asuta

AUGUST EVENTS AT UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 9 AM - 8 PM;
Wednesday, Friday, Saturday: 9 AM - 5 PM; Sunday: Closed

Walk in Wednesdays (Vauxhall Branch)

Wednesdays @ 12:30 -2:00 pm

Do you need help navigating the many resources our Library offers? Learn to navigate HOOPLA, Freegal, and Kanopy to download and enjoy ebooks and audiobooks, music and movies, and so much more.

Meditation (Zoom)

Thursdays @ 11:30 am

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

Chair Yoga (Main Library)

Thursdays 8/10 @ 10:30 am

Take a deep breath with friends and stretch those winter muscles! For beginners to professionals. Presented by the Gateway Family YMCA.

Acing the Job Interview (Vauxhall Branch)

Fri., 8/4 @ 2:00 pm

Please join us for this presentation for job seekers who want to learn tips on how to succeed in a job interview.

Adult Sew It! Workshop: Make Your Own Flower Pillow Case (Main Library)

Mon., 8/7, from 5-7:00 pm

Learn to use a sewing machine and create a flower pillow case in this workshop led by Ellen Lumpkin Brown, sewing instructor and owner of Sew It! No previous sewing

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Practice Your English! (Main Library)

Tues., 8/8 @ 6:00 pm

Just a chance to practice English and have fun. Join us! (Must be able to speak basic English.)

Networking for Job Seekers (Vauxhall Branch)

Fri., 8/11 @ 2:00 pm

Please join us for this informative session to learn what networking is, how to prepare for it, and why it is an important part of the job search process.

Divine Mediumship and Angel Messages (Vauxhall Branch)

Mon., 8/14 @ 6:00 pm

RoseMarie Rubinetti Capiello, author of Speaking from Spirit, will lead a discussion on mediumship. Learn more about what mediumship is and how it works, dream "visits" and other signs from departed loved ones, and tips for understanding and coping with grief. Rosemarie studied at Arthur Findlay College in the UK, which specializes in spiritualism and psychic sciences.

Balance Class with the Y (Main Library)

Wed., 8/16 @ 10:30 am

As we age, avoiding the risks of falling is more critical than ever. Learning to balance your body in different situations through gentle strengthening exercises and stepping strategies. Give this popular class a try! Registration is limited.

Off the Shelf Book Club (Main Library)

Thurs., 8/17 @ 6:30 pm

New members are always welcome. This month's title is The Violin Conspiracy by Brendan Slocumb.

Practice Your English! (Main Library)

Tues., 8/22 @ 6:00 pm

Just a chance to practice English and have fun. Join us! (Must be able to speak basic English.)



AREA ELKS SPONSOR PICNIC FOR VETS

Submitted by Jon Joshua

On July 15, more than 20 Elks from the East Central District, consisting of Lodges in Stirling, Summit, Springfield, Mountainside, Cranford, Union, and Rahway sponsored a picnic at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home in Edison.

With warm weather and blue skies, hamburgers, hot dogs, sausage & peppers, roasted potato, salads, and watermelon were just some of the items on the menu that was served to over 80 veterans in attendance.

Elks pledge "So long as there are Veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them." At Lyons VA, East Orange VA, Menlo Park Veterans Home, Paramus Veterans Home, and across the country, Elks volunteers provide direct service to Veterans in more than 330 facilities each month. And through grants, Elks Lodges connect with veterans and military members in their communities,

providing them with services where they live.

For more information about the Elks and how to join, please visit elks.org.



(above) More than 20 Elks from the East Central District sponsored a picnic at the Menlo Park Veterans Memorial Home in Edison.



Courtesy photos



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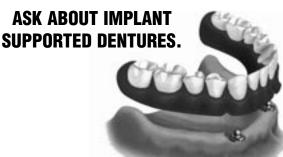
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AUGUST DIVE-IN' MOVIES AT THE POOL

Township of Union

'Dive-In' Movies at the Pool will continue in August 2023. The Dive-In movies will be hosted at the Columbian Swim Club at Jeanette Avenue.

The schedule for this year's Dive-In Movies is as follows:

> Thursday, August 10: Black Panther 2 Wednesday, August 30: Atlantis: The Lost Empire

"The Dive-In Movies are always a hit with our residents, who are looking for a way to

spend their summer evenings that are fun and different," said Robert Cowper, Superintendent of Recreation. "We are continuously grateful to partner with the Columbian Swim Club, which offers a great space for us to host this event, that's perfect for the summer."

The Columbian Swim Club's \$5 daily admission fee covers the movie. For more information and undates Recreation events. on uniontownship.com/147/Recreation, or follow



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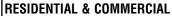
The movies are scheduled to begin at sunset.

on Instagram @twpunionnjrec.



(above) Attendees both young and old at last year's screening of "Luca"

Photo by Township of Union



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