

CRANFORD MONTHLY_{NJ}

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VETERANS DAY EVENTS HONOR LOCAL VETERANS

Cranford Public Schools

Cranford Public Schools continued its tradition of partnering 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 8th with schools welcoming veterans John Aslanian, Kevin Braine, Jerry Chen, Jim D’Arcy, Brian Evans, Neil Friedman, Michael Gregory, Michael Maguire, Alan Murphy, Guin Pherson, Mark Pollock, and VFW Post 335 Commander Mark Schwartz.

Bloomington Avenue School, Brookside Place School, Hillside Avenue School, Lincoln School, Livingston Avenue School, Orange Avenue School, and Walnut Avenue School were adorned with student-created patriotic decorations 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 guests of honor.

Cranford High School also hosted their “Ten Questions with Our Cranford Veterans” assembly for students enrolled in United States History II again this year. Students developed and posed questions for John Aslanian, Jim D’Arcy, Mike Gregory, and Mark Pollock 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 in 2024.



(above) Brookside Place School fifth grade student, Theodore Espinoza, hands a homemade flag pillow he made to Air Force Veteran James D'Arcy during the Veterans Day clap-in.

Photos by Cranford Public Schools


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(above) Orange Avenue Students pose with decorations they made to welcome Cranford veterans during the clap-in.




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Cranford Knights of Columbus

For the second year in a row, the Cranford Knights Columbus supported the Franciscan Charities Annual Coat Drive, led by Brother Knight Keith Santulli. St. Michael's Church parishioners generously donated over 150 coats, hats, gloves, and assorted clothing.

Collection and sorting were conducted over several weeks with the distribution event taking place on Saturday November 11th where Brother Knights assisted as personal shoppers and event coordinators. Keith and his Cranford Knights Team participated by sorting and distributing

over 800 coats, 500 hats, gloves and socks to needy families in Newark's Central Ward.

The Council also made a monetary donation to the Drive to further support this worthy cause and ministry. For more information visit franciscancharitiesinc.org.

The Cranford Council supports many worthy charities and civic causes and is committed to being a viable part of our community. For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact our Grand Knight Kevin Cumiskey at 973-390-9327 or visit our web site, cranfordknights.org.



(above, l-r) Brothers Sean O'Shea and Keith Santulli, Past Grand Knight Jerry Conheeney, and Brother Tom Molfetto at the distribution event.

Courtesy photo



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ATLANTIC FEDERAL GIVES RECOVERY GRANTS TO LOCAL NONPROFITS

The Atlantic Federal Credit Union (“The Atlantic”) distributed \$50,000 in grant funding to five local nonprofit organizations through the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York Small Business Recovery Grant Program (“SBRG”). The SBRG is designed to support the financial security and health of organizations that have faced economic challenges due to the rate environment, inflation, supply-chain constraints, and/or rising energy costs.

The SBRG began in 2017 in response to hurricanes in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The Program relaunched in 2020 and was made available again in 2021 to aid small businesses and nonprofit organizations facing challenges due to the Coronavirus pandemic. By participating in the SBRG this year, The Atlantic was able to grant \$10,000 each to Bianca F.L.O.W.E.R.S. Inc. in Plainfield, Jewish Family Service of Central New Jersey, Mobile Meals of Westfield, St. Joseph Social Service Center in Elizabeth, and The SHARE Alliance in Springfield.

“Thank you to the Federal Home Loan Bank of New York for their partnership and the opportunity to extend recovery grants within the communities we serve,” shared The Atlantic Federal Credit Union Chief Executive Officer Anthony Mero. “The SBRG funding will help our deserving recipients continue their selfless work throughout Essex and Union counties –

ensuring community members in need have access to food, clothing, social services and other crucial resources through the holiday season and beyond.”

ABOUT THE ATLANTIC FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

The Atlantic Federal Credit Union was founded in 1935 as a not-for-profit financial cooperative to meet the savings and borrowing

needs of Members. Today, The Atlantic Federal Credit Union exclusively serves Essex and Union counties in New Jersey with financial wellness resources, competitive rates and technology-driven solutions for personal and business banking.

For full eligibility criteria and more information, visit TheAtlanticFCU.com.



(above, l-r) Check presentation Mobile Meals of Westfield - Adam Cadmus, CEO at The Atlantic; Josephine Walsh, OM at Mobile Meals of Westfield; Carla White-Garrett, Community Engagement Representative at The Atlantic; and Anthony Mero, CEO at The Atlantic.

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FOSTER YOUTH JOIN FOREVER FAMILIES AT ADOPTION DAY

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties

On a recent fall morning, five youth ranging from three to 10 years old entered the courtrooms of Superior Court Judges Gavin Handwerker, Paul Nieves and Chanel Hudson as foster youth and, shortly after, emerged as official members of their new families.

Adoption Day is eagerly anticipated by many at Union County's Family Court, as ample smiles fill the courthouse – a juxtaposition to the daily navigation of complex issues fraught with loss or discord. This year, county dignitaries presented

families with proclamations and certificates, and festivities included performances by 30 high school students from Elizabeth's Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy A Cappella Choir; a former foster youth sharing her personal journey and adoption story; a roaming balloon artist; sheriff's officers dressed as superheroes and a Batmobile outside for visiting; furry greetings from Kenilworth's David Brearley Middle High School mascot bear; personalized cupcakes; and ice cream, face painting, and friendship-bracelet making stations.

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties presented family fun-themed gift baskets made possible in part from donations by David Brearley Bears That Care program and the Union County Bar Association. Baskets were given to all those finalizing on Adoption Day, as well as several families who adopted earlier in the year.

Cynthia Evans of Scotch Plains was among the CASA volunteers to attend the ceremonies for their assigned children. "The day was a long time

coming for these sisters, and it was amazing," she said. "I've been their advocate since 2020. Between their adoptive families and all involved, embraces and cheers were aplenty. My time as their CASA volunteer was both rewarding and challenging. I'm thankful I could help ensure their needs were met and services were provided while in care."

Adoption Day is a national movement to raise awareness of children in foster care. Since its inception 23 years ago, nearly 60,000 children have found permanency. More than 437,000 youth in the United States are currently in the child welfare system awaiting a permanent home, and the average wait is four years. For more than 23,000 youth, that doesn't happen, and they age out of the system, facing life on their own.

For details on CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, becoming an advocate for foster children or other opportunities to support the organization's work, log on to www.casapassaicunion.org.



(above, right) Event included a balloon artist; cupcakes; ice cream, face painting, and bracelets.




(left) Each family received a basket made possible by CASA of Passaic and Union Counties & the David Brearley Middle High School Bears That Care Program.



(above) Sheriff's officers dressed as superheroes, and maned a Batmobile outside the courthouse.


Courtesy photo



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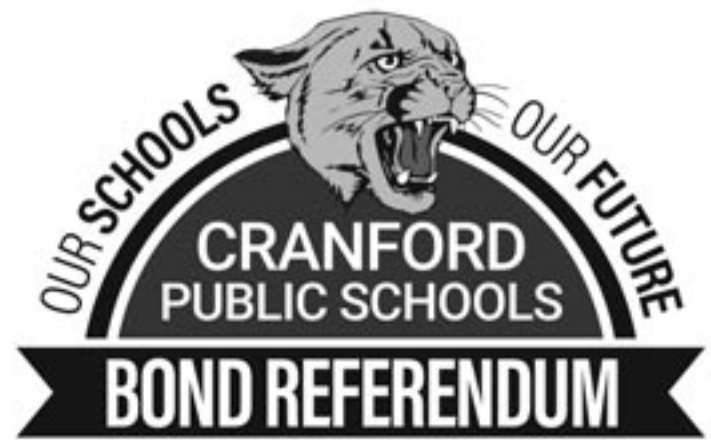


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PROJECT BREAKDOWN

A cost comparison of the kindergarten classrooms additions to the upgrades and renovations at all eight schools



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2023 CEREAL KILLER DOMINOES FUNDRAISER

The Cranford Knights of Columbus donated boxes of cereal to Julie Carroll of Cranford Family Care (CFC) to support the 2023 Cereal Killer Dominoes Fundraiser sponsored by Caren Demyen and Downtown Cranford and benefitting CFC . The Cranford Council has a close and long-standing relationship with Julie and Cranford Family Care and will continue to support this worthy organization today and in the future.

The Cranford Council supports many worthy charities and civic causes and is committed to being a viable part of our community. For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact our Grand Knight Kevin Cumiskey at 973-390-9327 or visit our web site, cranfordknights.org.



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HOLD MARCH DATES FOR URINETOWN

Cranford High School Performing Arts Department proudly presents Urinetown (yes, like urine – yes, that’s the title) on March 1, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., March 2 at 7:30 p.m., and March 3 at 2:00 p.m. Premiering on Broadway in 2001, with music by Mark Hollman, book by Greg Kotis, and lyrics by Hollman and Kotis, Urinetown centers on a world where a 20-year drought has limited the water supply so severely, that citizens are forced to pay to use the bathroom - or suffer the harsh consequences. We’ve said too much already, we wouldn’t want to spoil the show!

You better “Run, Freedom, Run” to buy your tickets by visiting chs.booktix.com or emailing Mrs. Elizabeth Adams - adams@cranfordschools.org, starting February 4th. If you want to know “What is Urinetown?” then we hope to see you at the performance!

Make sure you go to the bathroom before the show... it is a “Privilege to Pee” after all...

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- You've had it with your clothes not fitting
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- You have something big coming up like a wedding, vacation, or reunion and you don't feel good about the way you look
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- ✓ **Kick it Off:** With a pep rally/nutrition seminar (Tuesday, 1/23 @ 7:15 p.m.)
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See what others are saying about Active Life Fitness!



"THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS ARE AMAZING!"

Maria: I joined last year for a six-week challenge. I got more benefits from those six weeks than going to a 'big' gym for six years! The coaches are great and easy to talk to, and they know much about fitness! I've met and become good friends with other members. I always look forward to working out because they've made it challenging but fun. The physical and mental health benefits are amazing! Thank you, ALF!



"ALF HAS DONE MORE FOR MY OVERALL HEALTH THAN I COULD HAVE IMAGINED!"

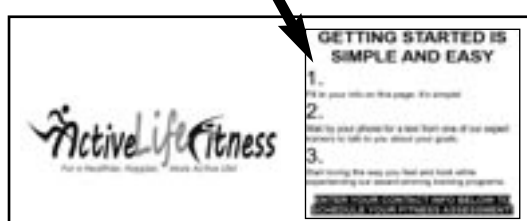
Teresa: I started at Active Life Fitness in March 2022 after a battle with breast cancer, knowing I had to take better care of myself ALF has been a blessing This comes from someone who hasn't been in a gym in over 30 years and hates After a few months, I found my balance was better, I had more stamina, and, most importantly, I could get through the day with clarity! I'm in a better mood and don't suffer from I as much brain fog! ALF has done more for my overall health than I could have imagined! I highly recommend Active Life Fitness!

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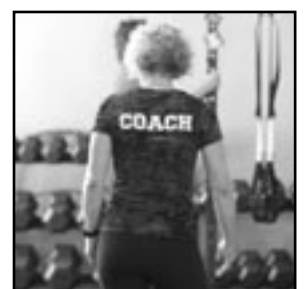


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SERVICE LEAGUE VOLUNTEERS WALK RUNWAY FOR CHARITY

Submitted by Ann Ormsby and Sylvia Martinez

Twenty volunteers from the Westfield Service League (WSL) recently put on a fashion show for the residents of Cranford Senior Housing. All the clothing and accessories shown on the models was then available for sale to the residents.

“We started the Fashion Show as a community outreach effort and now it is an annual event that residents look forward to,” said Michele Williams, founder and co-chair of the show. “The goal has always been to provide entertainment to the seniors while also giving them an opportunity to shop for inexpensive items in their own environment, since the majority of them lack access to transportation.”

Judy Goldman, vice president of the Cranford Senior Housing Tenants Association, praised the fashion show and the shopping experience: “It’s wonderful. It gives the residents an opportunity to buy really nice things at very reasonable prices, and it’s very entertaining.”

CSH resident Don Connola, who attended the fashion show for the first time, said, “I enjoyed it.”

Tenants Association President Harriet Pearlman said the residents look forward to the event every year. “It brings everybody out and gets them smiling,” she said.

Beyond the fashion show, an additional twenty WSL volunteers set up a boutique on the premises where items such as jewelry, toys, scarves, handbags, hats and gloves, and holiday décor were purchased. Almost all items were \$5.00 or less. Barbara Cantor and Patti Tata co-chair this part of the event and work with the volunteers to sell the merchandise.

“This event is wonderful on so many levels. The seniors have fun, they can buy holiday gifts for their families and something for themselves, and we raise money for the non-profits that the WSL supports,” said Barbara Cantor.

“This year, there was a special treat for the seniors. Each senior attendee received a gift — a Swarovski crystal bracelet — courtesy of Martin Jewelers in Cranford,” said Patti Tata.

“A huge thank you to Martin Jewelers for the gifts they provided to the residents,” said Cindy Rabinowitz, Executive Director, Cranford Senior Housing praised the WSL. “I am so grateful to the Westfield Service League for having their fashion show here for the fourth year. It gives residents a joyous afternoon of camaraderie and seeing beautiful fashion.”

The WSL Thrift & Consignment Shop is located at 114 Elmer Street in Westfield. All proceeds from the fashion show, the boutique, and the shops are given out in grants to local non-profits that the WSL supports. Last year, the WSL donated \$70,000 to 29 organizations.

The shop is open Tuesday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information about donations or volunteering, call 908-233-2530 for the Thrift Shop or 908-232-1223 for the Consignment Shop. To learn more, visit westfieldserviceleague.com.



(above) WSL member Donna Risberg looks fetching in black, white and red.



(above) WSL member Nancy Lau shows off a gorgeous blue coat and handbag.



(above) WSL member Myrna Cummings strikes a pose worthy of a silver screen star at the Cranford Senior

Courtesy photos



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GOLF OUTING CHECK PRESENTATION TO CRANFORD 86

John Doolan

During the Cranford VFW's Annual Veteran's Day breakfast, the Cranford Knights of Columbus presented a check in the amount of \$5,000 to Don Sweeney and the Cranford 86 Project (Cranford 86) from the proceeds of our Annual Golf Outing which was another tremendous success.

Cranford 86 is an organization that recognizes and memorializes the 86 Cranford residents who were killed in the line of duty defending our country. The Cranford Council and the Knights of Columbus as an international organization has and always will support our veteran community, and we have supported many veteran support organizations for many years.

Over the years, we have developed a close relationship with the Cranford VFW, and we would like to thank Post Commander Mark Schwartz, and brother Jim D'Arcy and Post 335 for allowing us to make our presentation at their breakfast this year.

Cranford Council supports many worthy charities and civic causes and is committed to being a viable part of our community. For information about joining the Cranford Council, please contact our Grand Knight Kevin Cumiskey at 973-390-9327 or visit our web site, cranfordknights.org.



(above, l-r) Barry Mazza and Don Sweeney of Cranford 86, Past Grand Knight Jerry Conheeney, Financial Secretary Rick Ferraioli, Past Grand Knight & Golf Outing Chair John Doolan, Brothers Keith Santulli and Wally Shackell, and Stu Rosenthal of Cranford 86.

Courtesy photo



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COLLECTION DRIVE – JAN. 15

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service 2024

There will be a contactless “Drive Up and Drop Off” event on Monday, January 15, from 3 - 5 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford, located on the corner of Miln and Springfield Aves.

The event is sponsored by the Cranford Clergy Council and the Interfaith Human Relations Committee.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE REQUESTED:

- Wrapped/bagged sandwiches for St. Joseph’s Soup Kitchen and Food for Friends of Rahway
- Diapers and wipes for Raphael’s Life House and NJ Diaper Bank Drive
- New socks, gloves, and hats for the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless
- Pantry items for Cranford Family Care

- Women’s Sanitary Products
- Items specifically for homeless Veterans from NJVN and NJ VFW. Including:
- New T-shirts (assorted sizes S-4XL), dress shirts/pants, boxer briefs & women’s underwear, sweat tops/bottoms (all sizes but needing more of 2XL - 4XL), socks, slippers, and slides.
- Paperback books, wordsearch and adult doodle books, color pencils, washable felt markers, and board & card games.
- Body soap, lotion and powder, deodorant, toothpaste and toothbrushes, shaving cream, and razors.
- Individual snack bags: chips, muffins, granola bars, and cookies, etc.
- Gift Cards, movie cards and game cards.



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Organized by the American Museum of Natural History (amnh.org).

DJ DREWSKI & FRIENDS CONCERT AT THE UCPAC

Dj Drewski a radio host on Hot 97 fm and TV Personality hosted a Hip Hop concert that concert goers will never forget for years to come.

The Halloween themed concert was a huge success that sold out the UCPAC in Rahway NJ. Majority of its attendees were High School and college students who attend local schools in the New Jersey area. One concert goer said "Shout out to DJ Drewski because this has been the best show I ever seen!"

The attendees got way more than they bargained for when they got to witness some of the hottest hip hop acts hit the stage.

The show featured hip hop stars such as Sleepy Hollow, 41, Ron Suno & Dj Drewski (who is a Elizabeth NJ native.)

"I was extremely happy with the turnout and being able to use my platform to entertain and inspire the youth" said Dj Drewski.

"It was a great opportunity to bring the local youth to an incredible theatre like the UCPAC and show them they do not have to go out of town to see some of their favorite performing artists."

Solar, who is Dj Drewski's 2yr old daughter also joined the stage with him to celebrate such an incredible show. For Drewski, that was a full circle moment because as a child himself DJ

Drewski's father hosted a Rock & Roll concert at the same theatre years prior. Inspired by his upbringing in Elizabeth NJ, Dj Drewski plans to host more events and shows like this in the near future and is glad he was able to give both The City of Rahway and the surrounding communities a taste of what is to come.

Thank You to the Union County Police Department, Rahway Police Department and UCPAC for making sure everyone was safe and had a wonderful time.

To keep up with more of what Dj Drewski is doing follow him on social media at @SoDrewski



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CRANFORD CELEBRATES THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS - MENORAH LIGHTING

Cranford had its annual downtown menorah lighting on Monday, December 11, 2024, drawing one of the largest crowds ever.

The event was organized by the Union County Torah Center Chabad and Cranford's Temple Beth-El Mevor Chayim (TBEMC).

The first candle, or "shamash," was lit by Mayor Brian Andrews, and TBEMC Vice President Andrew Feldman lit the remaining candles.

The event took on particular significance this year in light of the ongoing war in Israel.

Speakers included Chabad's Rabbi Levi Block, Mayor Andrews, and TBEMC's Rabbi Paul Kerbel, who all spoke of the power of light symbolized by the Hanukkah candles.

After the candles were lit, Hanukkah music played, and Mayor Andrews joined Rabbi Block in a traditional dance.

This was followed by a "gelt drop" with children swarming to catch dreidel and gelt chocolate coins dropped from a Cranford Fire Department ladder truck with mini parachutes. The crowd also celebrated with jelly donuts and light-up menorah necklaces.

Courtesy photos



(above) A "gelt drop" with children swarming to catch dreidel and gelt chocolate coins dropped from a Cranford Fire Department ladder truck with mini parachutes.



(above) Speakers included Chabad's Rabbi Levi Block, Mayor Andrews, and TBEMC's Rabbi Paul Kerbel, who all spoke of the power of light symbolized by the Hanukkah candles.

ANNUAL INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Over 150 Cranford residents attended a moving service of thanksgiving and gratitude, during the annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Service held at St. Michael's Church on Monday, November 20, 2023. The service is sponsored by the Cranford Clergy Association led by Rabbi Paul Kerbel, and the Cranford Interfaith Council led by Cindy Hannen.

Courtesy photo



SPIRITUAL? CURIOUS? SEEKING?

Do you consider yourself Spiritual? Are you Curious about what people are talking about when they speak of having faith or being spiritual? Are you Seeking peace of mind, of heart of soul?

Come and see for yourself. Come and explore the Christian faith. Come and discuss with other seekers what is on your mind, what you cannot talk about except with other seekers. Come to an Alpha gathering.

Alpha is for everybody that wants to discuss seeking answers to life's big questions. Why are we here? Is this all there is to life? Where are we going? How do I attain peace of mind, heart, and soul? Whether you are young or old, have faith or are atheist or agnostic, Alpha provides a safe environment for exploring our big questions about life.

We begin by sharing a meal together and getting to know each other. We watch a video

together then break into small groups for uninhibited discussion about what is on our minds.

There is no cost to participate. The series runs for 12 weeks on Monday nights beginning at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 9:00 p.m. It will begin February 5th, 2024, and end May 6th, 2024. Three of the sessions are live in person and the remainder are on Zoom. You will need a desire for frank discussion, a willingness to participate and a commitment to attend. You will also need a computer or smartphone capable of Zoom sessions.

The live in person sessions will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 1571 S. Martine Ave., Scotch Plains, NJ 07076. If you have any questions, please call (908) 889-2100. To register go onto IHMParish.net/alpha.



Meet new people & explore faith together.

Alpha is a place to connect with other people who are open to exploring life, faith, and meaning. Each session includes a time to connect with others (often over a free meal), hear a short talk on an element of the Christian faith, and then a chance for each person to share their own questions with the group. We'd love to hear your perspective!

Alpha Winter/Spring 2024
Season begins **LIVE**
Monday February 5th
7:00 pm @
The Nazareth Center
(Followed by weekly sessions hosted on Zoom)

Scan the QR Code with your phone or smart device to access our sign up page at www.ihmparish.net/alpha

If you have questions about Alpha, please contact the Nazareth Center Office at 908-889-2100 or send an email to office@ihmparish.net



A CHRISTMAS GIFT WORTH WAITING FOR

The members of First Presbyterian Church of Cranford got an early Christmas gift this year - a new Pastor! After a two-year period without a permanent minister, the church is pleased to announce its new Pastor/Head of Staff, Reverend Jin Bae.

Ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA) in November 1996, Rev. Bae joins us most recently from Bethany United Presbyterian Church in Bloomfield, NJ. Rev. Bae holds a Master of Theology (Th. M.) from Yonsei University, Seoul, South Korea, a Master of Divinity (M. Div.) from Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA, and a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (BSEE) from the University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Rev. Bae has held a variety of senior leadership positions throughout his career and has led multiple global mission trips to the Philippines, Peru, Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan, and Mexico.

“Rev. Bae stood out from the more than 80 candidates’ resumes we reviewed,” said church member and search committee co-chairperson Laura Holcomb, “We couldn’t be more excited

for him to help us be the church we want to be for the Cranford Community.” Search committee member Fred Fitzgerald, a member of the congregation for more than 25 years, agreed, “Listening to Rev. Bae preach during the search process blew me away. His sense of humor, genuine love of people and deep faith make him a wonderful choice for our next Pastor.”

December will be a month of celebrations and we invite you to one or all of our Christmas season events including on

January 1 at 10:00 a.m. - Come for a Service of Lessons and Carols and start the new year right. Extend the Christmas cheer and join us for Christmas Carols interspersed with readings from the bible.

ABOUT THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF CRANFORD – As the body of Christ empowered by the Holy Spirit, the First Presbyterian Church of Cranford (FPCC), 11 Springfield Ave., Cranford, seeks to live God’s Word and inspire others to embrace Jesus’ commandment to love one another as the Lord loves us. Learn more at firstprescranford.org/ Christmas.



(above) First Presbyterian Church of Cranford is pleased to announce its new Pastor/Head of Staff, Reverend Jin Bae.

Courtesy photo

CRANFORD FAMILY CARE THANKS CHS STUDENTS

Cranford Family Care would like to thank all the Cranford High School students who made

donations and helped in the food pantry over the holiday season.

Courtesy photos



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Sunday, January 28, 2024

11:30 pm - 2:00 pm

PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION

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COME SING WITH US AT OUR OPEN HOUSE AT SHRINE OF ST JOSEPH

Hickory Tree chorus

Put some music in your life in 2024! Join the Hickory Tree Chorus for an Open House at Shrine of St Joseph, 1050 Long Hill Road, Stirling, NJ, which will include a meet-and-greet, movement warm-ups and, of course, some wonderful singing. Dates are January 10 and 17, 2024, from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. The chorus sings a

variety of music, including old-fashioned love songs, Broadway, Disney, Beatles, and more in a fun, supportive community. Come sing with us and share the joy of music together! Stay for the friendship and fun!
Hickory Tree is an award-winning women's chorus singing four-part a cappella harmony in the barbershop style. We are passionate about

music, performance, fun & friendship. We believe every voice counts and encourage women singers of all ages, colors, ethnicities, and orientations to visit us and share our joy of music.
Please contact the Chorus for the Open House by email at info@hickorytreechorus.org. Find more information at hickorytreechorus.org.



(above) The Hickory Tree Chorus invites the public to sing with them at an Open House, on January 10 and 17, from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m.

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GIRL SCOUTS BEAUTIFY RIVERWALK WITH TILED PLANTERS

Submitted by Emily Serna

Cranford Girl Scout Troop 40079 created two community tile planters to beautify the space at the entrance to the riverwalk at South Avenue and Centennial. They held a ribbon cutting with the town on November 18th to celebrate the installation of the planters and thank those who supported their efforts.

Last year, Troop 40079, who are now 6th graders, came up with the idea to improve the entrance to the Riverwalk. Troop 40079 hosted three community tile painting events with Downtown Cranford and Fire Me Up Studio. The girls particularly enjoyed explaining the project to the adults and kids who painted tiles. In total, the planters represent 200 individual works of art by the Cranford community.

The girls designed one planter to communicate their message about kindness to nature and our environment. Eight troop members also worked additional hours cleaning the river site, researching and growing native plants, and planning the installation, earning their Bronze

Award, the highest recognition a Girl Scout Junior can achieve.

One of the reasons Troop 40079 chose this as their project was because the river is important to Cranford and its history. In addition, tiles are significant to Cranford. Tiles were first introduced to Cranford in 1929 with the original tiled street signs that can still be seen today.

The girls are grateful for the town's support and enjoyed working with Commissioner Kathleen Prunty, Downtown Cranford manager Caren Demyen, and Fire Me Up owner Tammie Ramos-Crispino. They also appreciate the Cranford Fire Department volunteers who helped cement the tiles.

Troop 40079 plans to continue taking care of the entrance to the riverwalk so it becomes a place for everyone to enjoy. The troop is led by Emily Serna, Erin Reilly, and Mary Ellen McCloud. Members include Plum Weber, Miriam Serna, Rebecca Sample, Lily Rosenthal, Samantha Reilly, Elise Reilly, Juliet McCloud, Caroline McCloud, Layla Holan, Kayla

Fernandez, Kate Billows, Ellie Billows, Aislynn Atieh.

The Girl Scouts of Cranford boasts over 1,139 Girl Scout Members in 71 troops and Juliettes making it one of the largest non-profit organizations in town. The Cranford Service Unit is a part of the Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey (GSHNJ) Council which is part of the Girl Scouts of the USA. If your family is interested in learning more about local Girl Scouts or to find out more information on the Girls Scouts of Cranford, please visit cranfordgirlscouts.com.



(above) Ribbon Cutting ceremony.



(above) Troop 40079 at finished project.

Courtesy photos

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Monday - Thursday: 10 AM - 9PM; Friday, Saturday: 10 AM - 5 PM; Sunday: closed

ADULT EVENTS

Movie Night

Wednesday, January 3, at 7 p.m.

Join us the first Wednesday of the month for a screening of a recently released DVD! Visit our website or contact the library for film titles.

Puzzle Swap

Saturday, January 6, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Join us for our first ever all-ages Puzzle Swap! We will be accepting donations at the Circulation Desk of completed, gently-used puzzles, starting December 18.

International Film

Monday, January 8, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Join us for an International film screening. The same film will be shown at 2pm and 7pm. Please contact the library for the film title.

Adults Create

Tuesday, January 9, at 7 p.m.

Join us the 2nd Tuesday of every month for crafts! Space is limited; please visit our website or contact the library to register.

Trivia Night

Wednesday, January 10, at 7 p.m.

Join us for another fun evening of trivia on Wednesday, January 10, at 7pm! Feel free to bring your own snacks and (non-alcoholic) drinks. Prizes awarded to the winning team.

Please register.

Friends of the Library Used Book Sale

Thursday, January 18 through

Saturday, January 20

Used Book Sale in the Cranford Public Library's Friendly Book Cellar from Thursday, January 18, through Saturday, January 20, 2024.

Saturday is bag day. We provide the bags.

Browse through thousands of books at low prices. Registration is required.

Attendees are invited to sign up for a one-hour session, starting on the hour. PLEASE SIGN UP FOR ONE SESSION ONLY;

Only cash and checks; no credit or debit cards.

Celtic Harp to Warm the Soul

Wednesday, January 24, at 7:30 p.m.

Odarka Polanskyj Stockert is a classically trained yet experimentally inclined harpist and poet who plays eclectic repertoire with Celtic and Ukrainian/Eastern European overtones.

Elevated Voices: Robyn Gigl Author Talk

Saturday, January 27, at 2 p.m.

Robyn Gigl is the best-selling author of the Erin McCabe Legal Thriller Series, which takes place partly in Cranford.

CHILDRENS' EVENTS

Toddler Tuesday

Tuesday mornings in January and February at 10:15 a.m.

Families with toddlers are invited to Toddler Tuesday. No registration is required.

The Unbreakable Code

Thursday, January 11

from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Students in grades 3-5 are invited to The Unbreakable Code by Jennifer Bertman and write codes that help find some hidden books!

Registration is required.

Frozen Party

Monday, January 29 at 6:00 p.m.

Families with children of all ages are invited to join us for a Frozen Party. Enjoy an hour of Frozen-themed crafts and activities.

Josh's Show and Tell: The Magic Candle

Tuesday, January 23 at 4:00 p.m.

Local author Tamara Shap will be sharing her book Josh's Show and Tell: The Magic Candle.

F children ages 4 and up.

Read to therapy dogs

Tuesday, January 23 and February 20

6:30-7:30 p.m.

Dogs are a perfect, non-judgmental audience for children learning to read independently!

Take a Brain Break!

Wednesday, January 24 from 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Get up and get moving at this fun and active program. This program is for children in grades 3-6, registration is required.

Lego Storytime

Thursday, January 25th

from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Friends in Kindergarten and up are invited to don their pajamas and relax as we share a story and construct schools using Lego bricks!

Dot and Dash robots

Wednesday, January 31

from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Students in grades 3-4 are invited to get hands on experience with Dot and Dash robots!

Valentine's Day

Wednesday, February 7 at 6:00 p.m.

Families with children of all ages are invited to join us for a Valentine's Day themed session of Family Art.

Library Scavenger Hunt

Join us for a Library Scavenger Hunt to Celebrate Black History Month: Who Was/is books will be hidden throughout the library!

Once you find a book, join everyone in the Children's Department to share the book that you found. Registration is required.

Decorate your own tote bag

Wednesday, February 14 at 5:30 p.m.

Twins ages 9+ are invited to decorate their own tote bag.

Explore Art Materials

Wednesday, February 21 at 6:00 p.m.

Artists in grades 2 and up are invited to explore art materials. No registration is required.

Lego Creations

Thursday, February 22

from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Creators in Kindergarten and up are invited to make Lego creations to display in the library!

Glitter Everywhere

Settle in and listen to Glitter Everywhere: where it came from, where it's found & where it's going by Chris Barton and Chaaya Prabhat.

After sharing the book, we'll explore with prisms and light. This storytime is best suited to children ages 5-10, no registration is required.

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SANTA DELIVERS THOUSANDS OF EARLY SMILES ACROSS CRANFORD

Submitted by Andrew Feldman

Santa Claus came early to Cranford again this year by way of the Cranford Jaycees’ Santa Deliveries and Toy Drive. Over the course of two nights, Santa made stops at almost 1,000 homes to deliver a total of 2,339 presents, both records, often escorted by flashing lights from a Cranford Police or Fire Department vehicle and a team of elves.

The visits were part of an annual toy collection drive where parents donate a present for families in need throughout the region. The parents can then have a wrapped present delivered by Santa to their home on a weekend night. The drive netted almost 3,000 toys, filling two U-Haul trucks, that were distributed to Cranford residents and several local organizations: Cranford Family Care, the New Jersey Community Development Corporation in Paterson, and Union County Social Services.

The program is a longtime Cranford tradition

that has nearly doubled in size in recent years. More than 60 Jaycee members volunteer to support the event, from organizing presents by region and loading delivery cars to planning traffic routes and suiting up as Santa Claus. Eight teams, each with a Santa and elf helpers, delivered the presents each night.

The Jaycees credit the Cranford Police & Fire Departments and the Cranford Police Auxiliary for their support with this year’s deliveries, as well as Steve Robertazzi from the Cranford Recreation and Parks Department for the use of the Community Center as the staging location.

“Every year it’s a massive undertaking, but it’s also our favorite event to see the joy when Santa pulls up to the houses,” said Mike Bond, who co-chairs the event for the Jaycees with Cameron Andre. “We thank all the people who donated toys so we can spread that joy across our community and give more families a happy holiday.”



(above) The Cranford Jaycees collected almost 3,000 Toys for Charity, and delivered for than 2,300 presents.

Courtesy photo

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12 Units	10" x 8"	\$360	\$900	\$1200	\$1500	\$1800	\$2100	\$2400	\$2700	\$3000
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IMAGINE, A CENTER FOR COPING WITH LOSS

As the staff at Imagine prepared to launch a new program year in September, it quickly became evident that the demand for Imagine's grief support groups had grown. Imagine began its new program year offering three in-person Nights of Support at their Mountainside location, one Night of Support at their Newark location and a virtual option. Though each Night of Support (NOS) can accommodate up to 60 families, it became clear that a new night was needed to support all of the new families that had reached out to Imagine seeking support following the death of someone close to them.

The first step in launching a new NOS is to train new volunteers to facilitate each support group. Imagine held a training session November 3-5th, training 10 new facilitators for the new NOS that will meet on alternate Mondays beginning in November. The ten new facilitators were joined by new Imagine staff who participated in the training as well.

In addition to the story sharing and support for one another that's part of Imagine's training, the group had an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills regarding Alan Wolfelt's Companioning Model for grief support that's practiced at Imagine. Many of the participants in Imagine's training program find the training experience to be meaningful and life changing. One participant

shared: "The training was truly amazing and inspiring. I am so honored to have had the opportunity to participate in it." Another said: "The Imagine Staff are amazing. I so appreciate all the knowledge they shared and the encouragement they gave to me and the other participants." The staff at Imagine are so pleased to welcome this new group to their wonderful team of volunteers!


Imagine has been providing free peer support groups for children and families for over 10 years and relies on both the generosity of volunteer facilitators who donate their time, and the generosity of donors who help fund Imagine's programs. This holiday season, if you'd like to support Imagine's mission of ensuring that no one grieves alone, please consider making a donation to support Imagine's programs at imagineenj.org.

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. Imagine also offers grief and loss education and training to the community. For more information please contact Imagine at 908-264-3100 or info@imagineenj.org.



(above, l-r) Imagine held a training session November 3-5th, training 10 new facilitators (pictured above) Back row: Brian Stump, Sandra Toppin, Cynthia Goodman, Tinah Bouldin, Shari Levine, Latoyya Schenck, Imagine's Chief Development Officer, Paul Muir, and Marianne Rubino. Front row: Imagine's Mountainside Program Associate, Kellie Saracino, Jen Schildge, Imagine's Operations Consultant, Susan Pink, Rachel Heisch, Imagine's Training and Development Operations Associate, Alexa Adubato and Pat Taeschler

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