

November 25th at Borough Hall. The event featured music, trucks, and special guest, Santa Claus!

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HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING CELEBRATION

Garwood's Holiday Tree Lighting took place on Saturday, entertainment, fun family friendly activities, vendors, food





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POSTAL PAI GARWOOD,







Photos from this and other events can be found online at rennamedia.com and on Garwood Times page on facebook.com Feel free to "Like," "Tag," and "Share."



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Garwood Times "

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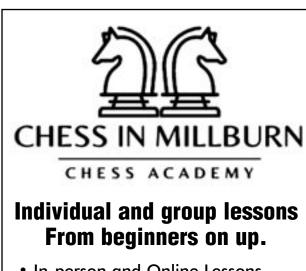
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MARINE BIOLOGY TRIP TO SANDY HOOK

Mr. Lou Van Bergen's Marine Biology class from Arthur L. Johnson High School took a field trip to Sandy Hook this fall. They had spectacular weather for the end of October, sunny and 70 degrees. Students had studied barrier beaches and salt marshes prior to their field trip.

They spent the morning on the oceanside completing a number of surveys. They used simple, yet effective techniques to conduct a beach transect. They then conducted a number of tests to determine the ocean water quality. Last they carried out a current study.

The next stop was the salt marsh. The main focus here is to survey and collect organisms. The students used seine nets, dip nets and a shovel and sieve to collect specimens. The list of organisms collected included a wide variety of fish, crabs and shrimp. The students enjoyed this stop so much it was hard to get them out of the water.

After a quick break for lunch Mr. Van Bergen and Mrs. Bernadette Jacobi led the students on a hike through the dunes. As they entered the trail evidence of deer was present with hoof prints in the sand. Not too long after they came across a number of deer. Along the way they saw numerous plants of the dunes including the only cactus in New Jersey, the prickly pear cactus. After the hike it was back on the bus to get the organisms back to the new home for the school year in room 228 at Johnson.

Multiple students commented "This was the best field trip I have ever been on. I'm coming in the spring again." A new set of students will return to Sandy Hook at the end of May.



(above) Aidan Mazza and Alyssa Schlauberg collecting samples in the salt marsh with a seine net. Courtesy photo

32 ALJ STUDENTS RECOGNIZED AS AP SCHOLARS

Clark Public Schools

Arthur L. Johnson High School is excited to announce that 32 of its students have been recognized by The College Board as AP Scholars. The awards recognize high school students who have demonstrated exemplary college-level achievement through AP courses and exams.

20 students have been noted as AP Scholars receiving a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams.

5 students have been recognized as AP Scholars with Honor receiving an average score

of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams.

ALJ has 7 AP Scholars with Distinction receiving an average score of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken and scores of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams.

"These students displayed immense success with college level work while still at ALJ. This success is certain to place them on an advanced college path. They made ALJ and our entire district very proud," stated Superintendent Edward Grande.





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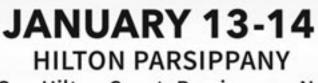
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GARWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY JANUARY EVENTS

For more information and to register for programs, call 908-789-1670 or email garwoodlibrary@garwood.org. Monday and Tuesday 9 am to 8 pm, Wednesday and Thursday 10 am to 8 pm, Friday 10 am to 4:30 pm,

Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm., Sunday Closed. The Library will close on January 1 for New Year's Day and January15 for MLK Jr. Day.

Adult Chess

January 4, 11, 18, 25 at 6:30 pm required. Limit 12.

Knitting Club

January 8, 22 and 29 at 10:30 am Join our Knitting Club. Open to all levels. Whether you're a beginner or you want to share your vast knowledge of knitting. Spend an hour being creative and socializing. No Registration required. Yarn and needles provided to

newcomers

Storytime

January, 9, 16, 23, and 30 at 10 am and 11 am Join Miss Maryanne for stories, bubbles and more. Registration required

Virtual Kid's Craft

January 9 at 3 p.m. then watch the Facebook tutorial at 3 pm. Registration is required for craft kits and is limited to 15 participants. Sign up on the Library website's events calendar or by phone.

Ask Kiosk-Aging Services Kiosk

January 10 at 10 am to Noon Union County Division of Aging Staff will be on hand to assist seniors (age 60+) or their caregivers with information on services, such as meal delivery, respite care, adult day care and

support services for caregivers

Library Board Meeting

January 10, at 7:30 pm at the Library The Library Board meeting is open to the public.

Virtual Adult Craft

January 16, at 3 p.m. Informal chess games for adults. No registration Pick up your craft supplies from the Library and Pick up your craft supplies from the Library and then watch the Facebook tutorial at 3 pm. Registration is required for craft kits and is limited to 10 participants. Sign up on the Library website's events calendar or by phone.

LEGO CLUB

January 17 and 31 at 3 pm Be inspired by this month's theme or build whatever comes to mind. Some will be displayed in our showcase. Registration

required Limit 12 **Book Discussion Group**

January 22, at 1:00 pm

Join us in the library for a lively discussion of this month's book, "Lowland" by Jhumpa Lahiri.

MUSTANG SOCCER FINISHES SEASON ON HIGH NOTE

Garwood Public Schools

The soccer team finished its season with a record of 5 wins, 4 losses and one tie. Big wins came against Golda Och 4-2 after dropping their opening match to them 6-3 and Calvary Christian, who they defeated by a score of 5-1. The team was led by 8th graders Henry Ruggiero, Arthur Silva, Niko Koutzoulis, Collin

Maloney, JJ Marinello, James Peniche, Dom Ruano, Gabe Bellomo, Josh Galvez and Michael Zuena.

BE A MUSTANG MENTOR

We are looking for parents, family, alumni and community members that want to share their occupations, trade, talent or skills with our students. The mentor will work with

administration to identify an age group and timeframe for a presentation/talk/demonstration of the specific skills set they would like to share with our students. If you are interested or know of someone who would be a great influence on our students, please reach out or have them reach out to Mr. Kinney at

ckinney@garwoodschools.org.



Photo by Garwood Public Schools

Garwood Times • Page 5 • January 2024

THE BREAK ROOM AT ALJ HIGH SCHOOL

Clark Public Schools

The School Counseling Office at Arthur L. Johnson High School is proud to announce the opening of the newly constructed BREAK Room. On October 17th, 2023, students gained access to the room which is located directly off of the School Counseling Suite. This fully-staffed space allows for students to Breathe, Recharge, Examine, Act, and Know Their Value.

Recognizing the mental health needs of our student body is an important social-emotional learning initiative from the school counseling office. Students can obtain a pass from their teacher to visit the Break Room for a ten-minute timespan to recharge, relax, and regroup. When asked about the Break Room, current junior, Alya Castro stated, "The Break Room is a good way for students to clear their minds for a period of time. When you go in there, it's very cozy and

IN MY

welcoming for students who want to take a breather."

The calm environment is equipped with comfortable seating, soothing sounds, fidget toys, and opportunities for creativity. The Break Room will also host therapy dogs once per month. Patches and Oreo have already visited ALJ, and their presence is most exciting for staff and students. Mr. Andrew Amendola, Director of School Counseling Services and Assessment, is "excited to welcome this new space to ALJ. In its first few weeks, the reception has been positive, and we are looking forward to evolving the room to fit our students' needs."

We are pleased to be able to provide a peaceful space where students can unplug and step away to seek a few quiet moments to themselves. If more than 10 minutes are needed, students should seek time with their counselors as per usual.

> R YOUTH DEVELOPMENT R HEALTHY LIVING R SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



(above) Tara Oliverira and therapy dog Oreo. Photo by Clark Public Schools

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- Accredited by the Middle States Association Commission on Elementary Schools

OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 25, 2024 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Sunday, January 28, 2024 11:30 pm - 2:00 pm PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL (908) 276-9425

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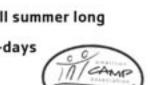
AVAILABLE!

Visit westfieldynj.org/camp for a printable brochure and registration details.



Saturday, January 6 10:00am-12:00pm

Main Y Facility, Westfield



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





(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.



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.

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.



SIGNING DAY AT ALJ HIGH SCHOOL

Clark Public Schools

Various staff members and administration at Arthur L. Johnson High School participated in a signing day ceremony held on November 8, 2023, to honor Robert Tyra (Men's Lacrosse), and Joey Ortega (Men's Wrestling) for their years of service to Crusader Athletics. This event commemorated their signing of Nation Letter of Intents to play NCAA Collegiate Athletics at Merrimack College for the Warriors, and Kutztown University for the Bears.

MEN'S LACROSSE **ROBERT TYRA, DIVISION I MERRIMACK COLLEGE, MASCOT: WARRIORS, HEAD COACH BRYAN KLIMCHAK**

Some of his lacrosse accolades include...

- Four Year Varsity Gold Letter Winner - Lacrosse -Grades 09-12
- Lettered in Basketball Last Season Grade 11 • First Team All-Conference Kimber Division - 3 Years -Grades 09, 10, 11
- First Team All-Union County Mountain Division - 3 Years - Grades 09, 10,11
- 2022 led all Sophomores in the State of New Jersey in Points - Grade 10
- 2022 finished 3rd overall in the State of New Jersey in Points - Grade 10
- 2023 Lacrosse Team Most Valuable Player Award - Grade 11
- Career Stats ... 124 Goals, 87 Assists, 211 Points, 129 GBs ... & Counting - Grades 9-11
- Was selected a Captain for our ALJ Lacrosse Team his Junior Season - Grade 11
- Committed to Merrimack College on February 07, 2023 - Grade 11
- With many more accolades on the way for this upcoming spring season...

With all of his time outside of lacrosse, Rob is involved in...

• Heroes and Cool Kids (high school- middle school relations) - Grades 09,10,11

• Nominated for Homecoming King - Grade 12 "Rob is a two-year captain who has a love for the game of lacrosse that cannot be measured. Putting in the behind-the-scenes work, hitting

the wall, shooting, watching film and game prep offs, demonstrating his versatility as an athlete. are natural to him. He understands what it means to lead by example and that positive actions can speak louder than words. The Merrimack Warriors will be getting an excellent student athlete, and an even greater person, next spring." - Head Coach Brian Klimchack

Rob has been an integral part of one of the best stretches for Crusader Lacrosse in the history of our school. He has led his team to 3 NJSIAA State Tournament appearances, while being a part of 27 wins over the last four years. Congratulations on your wonderful career thus far and best of luck as you continue your athletic and academic career collegiately in North Andover, Massachusetts, with the Warriors.

Crusader Athletics would like to wish the best of luck to Rob as he culminates his wonderful career for the Crusaders this year and continues his academic and athletic success as a collegiate student athlete.

MEN'S WRESTLING **JOEY ORTEGA, DIVISION II KUTZTOWN UNIVERSITY, MASCOT: BEARS, HEAD COACH RICK ORTEGA**

In an exciting moment for the wrestling community, Arthur L. Johnson High School, and the Ortega Family, Joey Ortega, a standout student-athlete, is signing his national letter of intent to join Kutztown University's wrestling team. With an impressive record of accomplishment, Joey brings a wealth of experience and determination to the mat.

Joey's wrestling journey has been nothing short of remarkable. A two-time New Jersey state qualifier and Union County champion, his prowess on the wrestling mat is undeniable. His achievements extend to the national level, where he reached the finals of the NHSCA tournament, showcasing his exceptional skills, willpower, and determination.

But Joey's talents aren't confined to just one sport. In addition to his wrestling achievements, he has made a significant impact on the lacrosse field as a FOGO specialist. Joey's dedication and hard work have led him to win over 400 face-

In addition to his athletic accolades, Joey was crowned homecoming king this past fall, as well as the prom prince in his junior year. Joey has also been a member of Heroes and Cool Kids for the past two years, where he helps mentor up and coming future Crusaders.

With a track record of success, both academically and athletically, Joey Ortega's commitment to Kutztown University marks the beginning of an exciting chapter in his life. As he embarks on his collegiate journey, he will undoubtedly continue to make his mark both on and off the mat, inspiring others with his dedication, talent, and leadership. Kutztown University is gaining not just an exceptional wrestler, but also a well-rounded and influential individual in Joey Ortega.

Joey has been an essential part of one of the best stretches for Crusader Wrestling in the recent history of our school. He led the Crusader Wrestling team to NJSIAA State Tournament Semifinals last year, which was an awesome accomplishment (although this year we are shooting for a championship). In even better news, in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC), you will never have to wrestle against or play Governor Livingston again. Congratulations on your wonderful career thus far and best of luck as you continue your athletic and academic career collegiately in Berks County, Pennsylvania, with the Kutztown University Bears.

Gus Kalikas, Athletic Director at Arthur L. Johnson High School, had this to say about the event. "Both Rob and Joey have been integral parts of the success of our athletic programs while competing at Arthur L. Johnson High School. More importantly, they have been model student athletes that did things the right way both on the field, in the classroom, and throughout our community. Although it will be sad to see them leave, the Crusader's loss is Merrimack's and Kutztown's gain, and we look forward to following their successful collegiate athletic careers over the next four years."



(above) Joey Ortega with his family at the ALJ Signing Day event.

(above) Robert Tyra with his family at the ALJ Signing Day event.

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*excluding NJYS Camps

CRUSADER MARCHING BAND NEWS

Clark Public Schools

Arthur L. Johnson High School Crusader Marching Band recently competed in the Tournament of Bands Statewide Competition. Marching Units from 24 schools came to Barnegat High School to compete for State Championships across 4 Divisions. As part of Group 1A our Marching Crusaders were one of 15 Bands vying for the State 1A Title.

Going into the competition Ranked 9th in New Jersey, the Marching Crusaders faced some serious competition with all bands increasing challenges. Our Marching Crusaders pulled together to post their highest score of the year... an outstanding 90.24! That score placed the Arthur L Johnson Marching Band in 2nd Place overall for Group 1A. Jumping from 9th place to an astonishing 2nd in the State.

The week prior the Marching Band took 1st Place at Central Jersey Regionals, winning high awards for Music and Percussion.

Scores are based on 100 points and bands are judged on Music in 3 parts (Individual,

their scores week to week despite many weather Ensemble and General Effect) and Visual in 2 parts (Ensemble and General Effect). Separate awards for Auxiliary and Percussion are also awarded.

> Marching Band Advisor and ALJ Music Teacher Erik Krebl stated, "The Marching Crusader family has had quite a season. With constant rain outs and indoor performances, the band did not let that get into their heads, they rehearsed hard and are now raking in the results of their effort."



(above) the ALJ High School Crusader Marching Band

FIRST AID SQUAD ACTIVELY RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

The Garwood First Aid Squad is actively recruiting volunteers and invites you to join our team. Whether you are looking to help out the community or get a start in the medical field, we would be glad to have you join us. You can work on board the ambulance or just help out around the squad house. No experience necessary. As a squad member, you can make a difference in a person's life join today.

> If interested, just email us at InformationGFAS@gmail.com or call 908-789-0300.

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FIREFIGHTERS WANTED

Garwood Fire Department Seeking Firefighters **OPENINGS FOR JUNIOR FIREFIGHTERS** 8TH GRADE STUDENTS OR AGES 14 - 18 Interested? Call 908-789-8877

Leave a Message or Stop By for More Info Sunday Morning: 9 - 12 Monday Eventings: 7 - 9



LEARN CPR at the KEEP CALM GARWOOD FIRST AID SQUAD*

For details, email: informationfas@gmail.com

*classes are generally held the 3rd Sunday of each month from 2-6pm.

COMMUNITY FOOD BANK PROGRAM

Clark Public Schools

In conjunction with New Jersey's yearly "Week of Respect," the students at Arthur L. Johnson High School ran a "Can Drive." The school community responded with big hearts, collecting more than 15 large boxes of food just in time to distribute for the holidays.

The food was donated to the Community Food Bank of New Jersey, located in Hillside. As Jack Helm, ALJ junior and student ambassador for the Food Bank, said, "The Community Food Bank Ambassador Program is a great way to get the students and community involved in a positive way for a great cause."



(above) Student Jack Helm and the food collected by the Community Food Bank Program at ALJ. Photo by Clark Public Schools

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Back cover, front page batter and front box reserved on first-come, first-served basis. Current advertiser has right of first refusal.

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

The Atlantic Federal Credit Union ("The crucial resources through the holiday season and lantic") distributed \$50,000 in grant funding to 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 technologydriven 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, Chief Experience Officer at The Atlantic; Josephine Walsh, Operations Manager at Mobile Meals of Westfield; Carla White-Garrett, Community Engagement Representative at The Atlantic; and Anthony Mero, Chief Executive Officer at The Atlantic.

DONATE UNWANTED BOOKS

Looking for a place to donate your unwanted books? Father Paul Prevosto, Pastor of Church of the Assumption in Roselle Park, announces the addition of a book donation bin located in the Church parking lot at 113 Coolidge Place (near the corner of Westfield Ave. and Faitoute Ave.)

All books must have an ISBN barcode on the cover. Hardcover, paperback, and textbooks are all welcome – no encyclopedias, magazines, or water damaged books. Your donation raises funds for the parish.

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