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The 37th annual Borough of Mountainside Tree Lighting celebration took place on Saturday December 3, 2023. Afterwards the Recreation Department invited all Mountainside residents to a free night of ice skating at the Westfield Rink.



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

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**MOUNTAINSIDE GIRL SCOUTS
SPREAD HOLIDAY CHEER**

Girl Scout Troops 40179 and 46127

The holiday spirit was in the air when Mountainside’s Girl Scout Brownie Troop 46127 and Daisy Troop 40179 went caroling at the Chatham Hills Subacute Care Center in Chatham, NJ on Tuesday, December 5th. Troop Leader

Christine O'Grady's father is a resident at the center. She wanted to bring the Scouts to spread some joy to her father and all the other residents. Everyone, young and old, enjoyed the music and good cheer!

Courtesy photo



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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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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



(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.

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.



COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN NURSERY SCHOOL

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Date: **Saturday, January 20th**
Time: **9:00am to 11:00am**
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THE JANUARY SPEAKERS PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMIT AREA OLD GUARD

The Summit Area Old Guard was founded in 1930 and meets most Tuesdays at the New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave. Our motto is "Come for the Programs. Stay for the Friends."

January speakers include Kathleen Bassiacos, Melanie Hazim, Joe Kane, Iveth Gonzales, and Charles Clarkson. Please join us. Our programs are free to the public, and we welcome you!

On January 2nd, Kathleen Bassiacos, a nurse at Unicity Healthcare, with over three decades

of experience in oncology, geriatrics, assisted living and at-home care, will discuss how she focuses on her patients' health by managing emergencies mixed with adaptability. Her presentation will include not only nursing, but also treating the myths surrounding aging and nutrition.

On January 9th, Melanie Hazim, Director of Outreach at the NJ Division of Consumer Affairs, will discuss her responsibilities for educating and promoting awareness of scams targeting New

Jersey residents, and implementing the Division's mission and goal to protect New Jersey's residents from becoming victims of these frauds.

On January 16th, Joe Kane, a prevention specialist with The Council on Compulsive Gambling of NJ, will help us understand compulsive gambling and the need to support those suffering from this addiction. The Council focuses on educating the public, training professionals, referring gamblers and their families to treatment, and advocating for increased treatment services.

On January 23rd, Iveth Gonzales, a team leader with the New Jersey Sharing Network,

will discuss organ donation, its benefits and how the acquisition and distribution system is organized. Iveth will also speak from her experience after her father was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis and why registering as an organ donor, you may change of even save someone's life.

On January 30th, our speaker will be Charles Clarkson, an attorney, and a project director for the Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) under the auspices of Jewish Family Services of Middlesex County. Medicare is for seniors, it expends many billions of dollars, and it must deal with the hazards of fraud. Charles will explain how to detect and how to report Medicare fraud and related healthcare scams.

Past speakers and much more can be viewed at SummitOldGuard.org but we encourage people to drop in on our meetings which take place at the church at 10:00 AM most Tuesdays. "Come for the Speakers. Stay for the Friends." We look forward to meeting you.



(above, l-r) Ms. Bassiacos, Ms. Hazim, Joe Kane, Ms Gonzales, Charles Clarkson

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Closed on Monday, January 1st for New Year's Day and Monday, January 15th for MLK

NOTE FROM TAMMY SHAW, DIRECTOR

The end of 2023 brought several positive changes to the Mountainside Public Library. After a week of having various parts of the library closed off and wrapped in plastic, the Library unveiled new ceiling tiles that replaced the tiles that were damaged during a rain storm on July 4th weekend. As the first step in joining the MAIN Alliance Consortium, a network of 50 libraries throughout Union, Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Warren counties, Mountainside Library has switched its eContent provider and now offers patrons 40,000 eBooks and 28,000 eAudiobooks, an 80% increase over the former provider. The full transition to the MAIN Alliance Consortium is scheduled for May 2024. More information will be available in the coming months. The Library has updated its website and online program and event registration is now available. If preferred, patrons are still welcome to call the library to register for events.

ADULT PROGRAMS FOR THE NEW YEAR INCLUDE TWO SPECIAL EVENTS:

Collage Making Workshop with artist, Kat Block

Saturday, January 20 from 10:00am-1:00pm.
Participants can come in from the cold and learn the art of collage while creating a warm and inviting one-of-a-kind beach scene. Space is limited, Registration is required.

Chocolate Truffle Making

Join Library Director, Tammy Shaw, and learn to make these simple and elegant treats for yourself or to share with someone special. Space is limited, Registration is required.

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REGULAR ADULT PROGRAMMING FOR JANUARY:

Great Courses continues with The 30 Greatest Orchestral Works

Mondays at 1pm (Jan 8th, 22nd, 29th)
**Monday night Book Club: The Kingdoms of
Savannah by George Dawes Green**
Monday, January 8 at 6:30pm
Books are available at the library for participants.

The Cookbook Club

Thursday, January 11 at 6:30pm
Participants will explore new cookbooks and old favorites. The January meeting will focus on healthy starts for the new year. Come for a taste, stay for the discussion. Registration is recommended.

Friday afternoon movies at 1pm.

There will be no movie on Friday, January 12th. the Library has several special events for youth, including:

After School Talks About Animals with the Turtleback Zoo

January 11 (3:30-4:15pm)
Ages K-4. Registration is required.

Read to a Therapy Dog

January 18 at 4:00pm.
Space is limited. Registration is required.

L'il Al Dinosaur

January 25, 4:00-5:00pm.
Be a Paleontologist for the day! Kids will delight in working as a team to put together these dinosaur bones. Ages 3-8.
Registration is required.

Move & Groove, Miss Jolie Returns!

January 30, 10:30-11:15am
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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

17TH ANNUAL INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE

The New Providence - Berkeley Heights Interfaith Council hosted their 17th annual Thanksgiving Service at Faith Lutheran Church in New Providence. The Interfaith Thanksgiving

Service is a community tradition held the Monday before Thanksgiving bringing together different faiths and community in prayer and in thanks.



Photo by Alex Kogan

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Sunday School, Youth & Adult Forums at 8:45 a.m.

Midweek Advent Services with Eucharist
December 6, 13 and 20 at 12 noon
Organ Recitals After Services on December 6 and 20

Christmas Eve
Sunday, December 24
Family Service with Eucharist at 4:00 p.m.
Candlelight Eucharist with Special Music at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Day
Monday, December 25
Nativity of Our Lord Eucharist at 10:00 a.m.
Service of Lessons, Carols and Eucharist
Sunday, December 31 at 10:00 a.m.

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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, Tina 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

Courtesy photo

RETIREES 6TH ANNUAL COOKIE SWAP

Submitted by Kenny i.

The Mountainside Active Retirees celebrated their 6th annual cookie swap at their December 12th meeting with entertainment by Ms. Candy Nelson who sang Holiday songs spanning the decades, both "oldies" not so oldies. The members provided a wide variety of home made and purchased cookies which they enjoyed sampling with a cup of coffee, tea, or hot chocolate. Containers of those treats were also prepared for Mountainside's Volunteer Fire Dept. and Volunteer Rescue Squad. In addition, smaller containers were packaged and delivered to those members unable to attend because of ill health.

The new season will start January 9th with a ticketed luncheon at The Stage House, Mountainside. Regular meetings begin January 23rd at Borough Hall at 10:00 a.m.

FITNESS TRAIL

The Echo Lake Park Fitness Trail is located behind Borough Hall and is 9/10th mile long. It features Accessible Paracourse Fitness Stations. The new trail surface – warning track mix – is easy on the knees and joints. Walk, jog, run, roll or stroll along the scenic trail.




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