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## BOY SCOUT TROOP 23 CAMPS ON STATEN ISLAND

Submitted by Daniel Bernier

The William H. Pouch Scout Camp is a forested oasis surrounding a pond in the middle of Staten Island. When Boy Scout Troop 23 spent a weekend there in the middle of February, it was hard for them to tell that they were in one of the five boroughs of New York City.

The Scouts stayed in Beech Cabin, where they learned about and practiced knot tying and orienteering. They cooked eggs and bacon, hot dogs, and spaghetti and meatballs, and they baked a gluten-free cake in a Dutch Oven in the cabin's fireplace. The highlight of the weekend was waking up on Saturday morning to find the camp blanketed in four inches of snow – perfect for making snowballs and snowmen.

Boy Scout Troop 23, sponsored by St. Genevieve's Church of Elizabeth, welcomes any boys who are at least 11 years old or graduated from the fifth grade to join them on upcoming camping trips and hikes, a 4-day trip on Memorial Day weekend to Gettysburg, and a week-long summer camp in July.

Contact Scoutmaster Dan Bernier at 908-451-1948 or webfootroop@gmail.com for more details.



(above) Ben, Michael and Zachary bakes a gluten-free cake in a Dutch oven in the fireplace of the Beech Cabin in Pouch Scout Camp on Staten Island.

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(above) Scouts of Troop 23, Elizabeth, spent a snowy weekend in February in Beech Cabin in William H. Pouch Scout Camp on Staten Island.

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**ELIZABETH FIREFIGHTERS COMPETE AT COOKED AND UNCORKED FOOD AND WINE FESTIVAL**

On Monday, February 26, 2024, Elizabeth firefighters joined together with firefighters from around New Jersey to compete in The Ultimate Fire Department Cook-off, part of the Cooked and Uncorked Food and Wine Festival. The Elizabeth team took home 1st place in the “Handheld” category with their Cuban sandwiches.

The event benefited the New Jersey State Firefighter’s Mutual Benevolent Association and The Burn Center at Saint Barnabas Medical Center. The Fire Department Cook-off is part of a culinary extravaganza where participants were able to experience the tastes and flavors of some of New Jersey’s finest restaurants, caterers and dessert shops all in one location.



(above) Elizabeth Firefighters took home 1st place in the “Handheld” category of the competition.

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

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## RUMMAGE SALE

Townley Presbyterian Church, 829 Salem Road, Union, NJ will be holding its Spring rummage sale, on Friday, April 26 from 9 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday, April 27 from 9 a.m. to noon. Lots of merchandise including clothing, toys, books household goods, and more. A portion of our proceeds supports local charities.

If you have items to donate, you can drop them off Sunday, April 21st through Thursday, April 25th. All donations are tax-deductible. Please don't bring TVs, computer parts, or furniture too big to fit in a car. You can leave items outside the Salem Road parking lot door and we'll move it inside within an hour or two. Or call us 908-686-1028 if it looks like rain. Donations are tax deductible.

Townley Presbyterian Church gathers at 10 a.m. on Sunday for family worship, followed by coffee and fellowship. Services are also live on Facebook@TownleyChurch. Please join us. Our phone number is 908-686-1028.



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## SCOUTS MARCH IN ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE

A light rain couldn't keep the Union County St. Patrick's Day Parade from returning to the streets of Union Township on Saturday, March 9. Organizations marching in the parade, including Irish groups, police and fire departments, elected officials, school bands and pipe and drum bands, and Scouting units, were cheered on by thousands of people lining Morris Avenue and Stuyvesant Avenue.



Boy Scout Troop 23, sponsored by St. Genevieve's Roman Catholic Church in Elizabeth, has been marching in the Union County St. Patrick's Day Parade since 1998, a year after the parade was first held. They were back again this year, joined by Cub Scouts from Pack 23. Wearing their iconic yellow sweatshirts, they were led by a banner depicting Troop 23's mascot, a duck named Webby. Webby is equipped and ready to hike or camp, at any time and - true to form - in any weather.

The Scouting program has instilled character, good citizenship and physical fitness in the youth of Elmora and beyond for over 60 years. Cub Scout Pack 23 and Boy Scout Troop 23 provide activities and training for children of all faiths, from Kindergarten through high school graduation. For more details, please contact Dan Bernier, Scoutmaster, at (908) 451-1948 or webfoottroop@gmail.com.

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# BAYWAY COMPLEX COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL

A ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the Bayway Industrial Complex Community Advisory Panel (CAP) donation of a new bingo machine for seniors. Former AristaCare resident and Linden senior Jane Kosa championed the new bingo machine cause. Jane Kosa noted: "A bingo machine is a very important, fun activity that the residents of the AristaCare facility really enjoy and offers numerous benefits for seniors. When I realized that the old one was no longer working, I had to do something."

The bingo machine costs were covered by member companies of the Bayway Complex Community Advisory Panel (CAP). Companies supporting the costs included Cogen Technologies Linden Venture, Infineum USA L.P., Linden VFT, Phillips 66, Parkway Generation, Solutia Inc., Veolia North America.

The Bayway CAP was established in 1998 and has been providing a forum for open dialogue between the community and CAP member companies. The CAP has annually awarded High School scholarships for many years and now has expanded its support to include annually supporting a community item or program in need. "The request for support of the bingo machine came to my attention at the end of the year with a call from Jane Kosa. As facilitator of the Bayway CAP, I felt it was a perfect fit for the CAP. Our CAP member companies were pleased to be able support this community need," stated Nancy Sadlon, Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, Manager of Public Affairs.

## ABOUT THE BAYWAY COMPLEX COMMUNITY ADVISORY PANEL (CAP)

The Bayway Community Advisory Panel (CAP) is a committee of community representatives from Linden, Rahway, Elizabeth, and Staten Island including neighbors, educators, retirees, public officials, emergency responders, and environmentalists who attend quarterly meetings that serve as a forum for dialogue between the community and company representatives from Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery, Infineum USA L.P., Cogen Technologies, Veolia North America, Solutia, Parkway Generation and Linden VFT LLC.



Courtesy photo

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## CUB SCOUT PACK 23 PINEWOOD DERBY RESULTS

Cub Scout Pack 23 held its annual Pinewood Derby at St. Genevieve's Church on February 23. Working with a parent or other adult, each Scout shaped a block of wood into a race car, painted and decorated it, and then competed with it against other Cubs on a 30-foot long 6-lane track. There was a lot of excitement and enthusiasm among the Cub Scouts who participated!

The overall winners for the Pack were as follows:

- 1st place – Noah Bustamante
- 2nd place – Samantha Cueva Cruzado
- 3rd place – Athan Skamangas

The Best Design award, as chosen by his fellow Cub Scouts, went to Noah Bustamante. If you know a child who is anywhere between a Kindergartener and a high school senior, please encourage them to get in on the fun of Scouting. The Scouting program instills character, good citizenship and physical fitness in youth through outdoor activities such as campouts and hikes,

involvement in community activities, and just plain FUN!

Cub Scout Pack 23 provides activities and training for boys and girls in Kindergarten through fifth grades. Boy Scout Troop 23 is for boys who are at least 11 years old or graduated from the fifth grade. New members are welcome at any time, all year round. For more details, please contact Dan Bernier, Scoutmaster, at (908) 451-1948 or [webfootroop@gmail.com](mailto:webfootroop@gmail.com).



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## YOUNG PLAYWRIGHTS RECOGNIZED

Elizabeth Public Schools



(above, l-r) Jaylen Mingo, a senior, has won 3rd place with his play titled "The Death Gamble", and Karma Beech-Wilson, a sophomore, has earned second place with her play, "Again Tomorrow"

Courtesy photos

Two students at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy in Elizabeth have earned recognition in this year's Young Playwrights Competition through The Theater Project, a theater company based in Union County. Jaylen Mingo, a senior, has won 3rd place with his play titled "The Death Gamble" and Karma Beech-Wilson, a sophomore, has earned second place with her play, "Again Tomorrow." Their plays will be read aloud online during the 22nd Annual Young Playwrights Awards and Performance. Students will receive monetary awards along with The Joseph M. Curka Award for Young Playwrights.

The goal of the competition is to encourage the next generation of theater practitioners and audience by honoring their work and bringing it to life. High school students get professional feedback on their work and winners see their plays performed in a staged reading. The Theater Project is committed to the concept that participation in the arts builds fundamental skills in reading, writing and critical thinking.

More information is available at [thetheaterproject.org](http://thetheaterproject.org)

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ADVOCATE FOR UNION COUNTY CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Five-year-old Jennifer is diagnosed with autism and almost completely nonverbal. Due to excessive violence in the family home, a concerned neighbor called for help and, after investigation, Jennifer was placed in foster care. The two phrases Jennifer can say graphically depict violence witnessed at home and confirm trauma she's endured. Since entering care and being enrolled in school, it's evident Jennifer has also experienced educational neglect. At age three, she was entitled to an Individualized Education Plan from the Department of Education to provide such intervention services as in-home speech and behavioral therapies, both helpful for future enrollment in a half-day educational program. Unfortunately, Jennifer's parents neglected to utilize these services and she is now more than two years behind her peers.

Jennifer is just one of the more than 500 children removed from home in Passaic and Union counties each year due to abuse and neglect. These children are separated from all they've ever known: parents, siblings, friends, teachers, and their belongings. For Jennifer, the road ahead is long, and she needs a caring, consistent adult in her corner to protect her best interests while in foster care. That's where Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers come in.

A CASA volunteer is trained on the ins and outs of advocating for child-victims and fully supported by CASA staff for the duration of the case. No special background in child welfare is necessary; successful CASA volunteers are dedicated community members with varied life experiences who believe abuse and neglect are non-negotiable. CASA volunteers visit the children, make unbiased observations, interview others in the child's life, and make recommendations to the judge. They often are the only consistent adult in the life of a child involved in the child welfare system, as caseworkers, professionals, and even placements



(above) There are currently hundreds of Union County children in need of a CASA volunteer!

can be ever-changing. A CASA volunteer provides continuity during a time of chaos and unknowns.

There are currently hundreds of Union County children in need of a CASA volunteer! Plans are underway for an advocate training class.

To learn more, attend an information session either Monday, April 22, at 5:30 p.m. at the Clark Public Library, 303 Westfield Avenue in Clark, or Tuesday, April 30, at 10 am at the CASA office, 1143 East Jersey Street, Second Floor in Elizabeth. Register now at

[casapassaicunion.org/info-session](http://casapassaicunion.org/info-session).

### ABOUT CASA OF PASSAIC AND UNION COUNTIES:

The nonprofit is court-empowered to recruit, train and support volunteer advocates to speak up for the best interests of children in foster care. Assigned by a court order that grants access to the child and all those in their lives, the CASA volunteer gathers information and makes informed recommendations to the judge deciding the child's future. Often, the CASA volunteer is the only consistent person in the child's life. For more information about CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, call 973-832-4002, e-mail [info@casapassaicunion.org](mailto:info@casapassaicunion.org) or log on to [www.casapassaicunion.org](http://www.casapassaicunion.org).

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## NEW FOOD PANTRY AND CLOTHING BUILDINGS CELEBRATED



(above) A moving dedication ceremony concluded with an uplifting blessing offered by Father Anthony Randazzo of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield.



### St. Joseph Social Service Center

The St. Joseph's community, encompassing residents from Elizabeth and volunteers and supporters from five counties in New Jersey, came together on February 24, 2024, to celebrate the opening of two new buildings on its campus. The new food pantry building is already in use, and the second building will ultimately be used for clothing distribution.

The cold weather was no match for the warm spirit of compassion and caring that animated the event and has guided the agency for the past 38 years. All in attendance toured the new buildings and participated in a moving dedication ceremony that concluded with an uplifting blessing offered by Father Anthony Randazzo of Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church in Westfield.

The two new buildings represent the first phase of an ambitious capital improvement plan to improve and expand services to families and children in need in Elizabeth and to fulfill St. Joseph's vision to serve those experiencing homelessness and poverty with dignity. The new food pantry building will allow St. Joseph's to offer a better food pantry model – an individual choice food pantry. With this model, clients will come at an appointed time and will be able to choose their food based on their personal and cultural preferences. The new clothing building will be used as temporary program space during the next wave of renovations and ultimately will be used to offer clothing and home goods in a more dignified environment.

"Dignity has been a core value of the agency since our founding in 1986," noted Bernadette Murphy, Executive Director. "Our goal is to help people acquire the material items they need to live with dignity. We believe that it is vital for our clients to receive food, clothing, supplies and support services in an environment that fosters

dignity, where individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness are truly welcomed as sisters and brothers."

Daisy Trocan, a member of the Board of Trustees, spoke at the dedication event about what these new buildings will mean to Elizabeth residents. As a child her family relied on support from the agency during difficult times. "The love and support my family received from St. Joseph's meant so much to us," Trocan reflected.

Harold "Kess" Kessler, who has overseen the capital improvement plan from its inception several years ago, remarked that work has already begun on the second phase of the construction plan. Over the next year, the main hall on campus will be transformed into a multipurpose space with private offices for mental health counseling and case management services, new facilities for the soup kitchen program, spaces for the Adult Learning Center and health and nutrition workshops and diagnostic testing, and a reception area where residents can obtain information about agency programs and community services. Karen Maher, President of the Board of Trustees, noted that these new spaces will "allow the agency to expand services to the community, particularly in the areas of physical and behavioral health."

Six days a week a dedicated team of 6,000 volunteers from Elizabeth, Union, Westfield, Cranford, Mountainside, and dozens of other communities, make sandwiches for the hungry in their kitchens, bring food, clothing and home goods, serve meals at the soup kitchen and help with the operations of the agency. St. Joseph's serves over 3,500 individuals annually. The organization helps Elizabeth residents access food, medicine, mental health counseling, adult education, clothing and a myriad of additional healthcare and support services.

To learn more about St. Joseph's please visit [sjeliz.org](http://sjeliz.org).

Photos from this and other events can be found online at [rennamedia.com](http://rennamedia.com) and on the Renna Media page on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com).  
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## 40TH ANNUAL QUILT SHOW – APRIL 20TH

Harvest Quilters of Central NJ will present their 40th annual quilt show on Saturday, April 20, 2024. The 40th Sharing the Quilts will be held at the Willow Grove Presbyterian Church, 1961 Raritan Road, Scotch Plains, NJ from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is \$8 for adults, and \$3 for children under twelve.

At 10:30 a.m., fiber artist Karen Hochman of Plainfield will show her creations and speak on “Everything Old is New Again, What Inspires You?” The award-winning hand-quilter is a former antique dealer and collector of vintage textiles. A Harvest Quilter since 1990, her quilts are influenced by and connected to women artists and makers of the past and present.

Kathy Anderson Lee of Plainfield will be recognized as 2024’s Featured Quilter with a special display of 17 colorful modern bed sized quilts. The chemical engineer and active STEM education volunteer began quilting in the 1980’s while living in North Carolina. After a hiatus

from the craft to raise 2 children and work in oil research, she rediscovered her talent in 2018.

“It was a revelation returning to quilting given all the advancements in technology, dyes, digital printing along with the new availability of international fabrics,” Lee said.

Baby quilts made by members will be displayed and later donated to a local women’s shelter. Several additional local charities will benefit from the sale of fabric and drawings for a queen-sized quilt and sewing themed gift baskets.

In addition to viewing a full array of modern, traditional, art and wall-hanging quilts, attendees can participate in viewer’s choice awards, kid’s crafting table and vendor sales area.

A tearoom offering lunch, snacks, homemade baked goods, and beverages will benefit Willow Grove Church’s youth activities.

For additional information, please contact [harvestquilters.com](http://harvestquilters.com) or with questions email: [harvestquiltersnj@gmail.com](mailto:harvestquiltersnj@gmail.com).

## IMAGINE SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss has been offering free peer support groups to children, youth and adults who are grieving for more than 10 years. The volunteers who facilitate these groups create safe spaces where the pain of grief can be acknowledged and shared, and where group members feel felt. Imagine’s volunteers are the heart of Imagine’s programs, and many find their volunteer work with Imagine so fulfilling that they continue for many years, some having stayed since the program began. Here’s what some of Imagine’s volunteer facilitators have to say about their experience:

Imagine’s volunteer facilitators come from all walks of life and no special background is required other than a willingness to listen, a heart inclined to serve, and the ability to be with children and adults in grief without trying to fix, solve or give advice. Volunteers must be 18 years or older and bilingual (Spanish speaking) volunteers are needed as well. Volunteers serve as companions and loving listeners for those who are grieving and help create a space where participants can share tears and embrace the joys of life.

This Spring, Imagine will offer two facilitator training classes for those who would like to join this amazing group of volunteers. The first will be held at their location at 570 Broad Street in Newark from May 3-5 from 9 am-5 pm each day. The second option will take place at Imagine’s location at 244 Sheffield Street in Mountainside from June 7-9, also from 9am-5pm each day. Imagine staff ask those participating in the training to plan to attend all three days.

If you’d like to join one of the upcoming trainings, please visit [imagineinj.org](http://imagineinj.org) and complete the interest form found on the website or scan the QR code below. When completing the form, you’ll be asked to choose a convenient date to attend an information session where you’ll learn more about volunteering with Imagine. We hope you’ll consider joining this wonderful team of volunteers who support Imagine’s efforts to ensure that no one grieves alone.

Imagine is a 501c3 that offers grief and loss education and training to the community and 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. For more information please contact Imagine at 908-264-3100 or [info@imagineinj.org](mailto:info@imagineinj.org) or visit our website at [www.imagineinj.org](http://www.imagineinj.org).



(above) Fiber artist Karen Hochman of Plainfield will show her creations and speak on “Everything Old is New Again, What Inspires You?” The award-winning hand-quilter is a former antique dealer and collector of vintage textiles. A Harvest Quilter since 1990, her quilts are influenced by and connected to women artists and makers of the past and present.

Courtesy photos



(above) Featured Quilter, Kathy Lee Kathy Anderson will be recognized as 2024’s Featured Quilter with a special display of 17 colorful modern bed sized quilts. The chemical engineer and active STEM education volunteer began quilting in the 1980’s while living in North Carolina. After a hiatus from the craft to raise 2 children and work in oil research, she rediscovered her talent in 2018.

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