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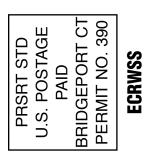
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GLHS HOSTS STUDENT AND STAFF BLOOD DRIVE

Berkeley Heights Public Schools Students and staff at Governor Livingston High School came together on March 1st to donate blood to the American Red Cross. Students ages 16, 17 and 18 years old and all staff members were eligible to donate, and all 16 year olds needed a signed consent from their parent/guardian. Approximately 35 people donated the lifesaving gift of blood that day. According to the American Red Cross, "4.5 million American lives are saved each year by blood transfusions."

Jeanmarie Ringwood, RN at GLHS, organized the event and shared "It was a great day of giving and community as GLHS brought back our in-school blood drive. I am so proud of the many students and staff members who volunteered to participate. Looking forward to an even better number of donations next year!"











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Do vou have a community service that you need help publicizing? Did you or someone you know accomplish something amazing? We are interested in hearing about your latest achievement (honor, award, etc.), send us your news! Email: editor@rennamedia.com

ADVERTISING Joe Renna: 908-447-1295 joerenna@rennamedia.com



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LITTLE LIBRARY BOX

46127 made it a goal this school year to build a constructed by the girls and their parents on Little Library Box for their community. The girls March 10th and will be placed in the ground near used their troop earnings from cookie sales to the Mountainside softball fields later this spring.

Mountainside third grade Brownie Troop purchase the box and supplies. The box was



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TEA PARTY ON THE PORCH AT MOUNTAINSIDE'S LEVI CORY HOUSE



(above) The Mountainside Restoration *Committee will hold a "Tea Party on the* Porch" of the historic Levi Cory House on Saturday, May 4. Guests enjoy Tea on the Porch at the Levi Cory House. Reservations are required for seatings at 1pm, 2pm & 3pm.

hold a "Tea Party on the Porch" of the historic Levi Cory House. Held on Saturday, May 4, volunteers will serve tea and treats to guests on the restored porches of the circa 1818 Levi Cory House. Due to limited space, reservations are required for one of 3 seatings held at 1pm, 2pm, & 3pm. Cost per person is \$10. Each guest will take home a china teacup and saucer. To reserve, (908)233-3135; please call or email hetfieldhouse1@yahoo.com, and leave your name, phone number, preferred seating time, and number in your party. Payment should be made in advance either on Saturdays (11am-3pm) inperson at the Levi Cory House Village Shop, or via the website at mountainsidehistory.org/events

Thanks to funding from the Watts Mountainside Community Foundation, these 2 porches (which were removed over the centuries) were originally part of the 1818 Levi Cory House and have been built back onto the house. The

The Mountainside Restoration Committee will circa 1818 Levi Cory House, which was relocated to Constitution Plaza in 2013, was originally located at the corner of New Providence Road and Mountain Avenue. The house was the location of the first Children's Country Home during the 1890s before expanding to the Children's Specialized Hospital. The Village Shop located inside the Levi Cory House will be open during the tea party.

The Levi Cory House and Deacon Andrew Hetfield House are located at Constitution Plaza (Watchung Ave., off Birch Hill Rd.) adjacent to the Mountainside Library. The Mountainside Restoration Committee is a 501(c)(3) charity and a committee of volunteers whose purpose is to maintain the Deacon Andrew Hetfield House, restore and maintain the Levi Cory House and collect and save historic Mountainside information and items from destruction. For further information, please call (908)233-3135; or, go to: mountainsidehistory.org.



Courtesy photo



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MENTAL ILLNESS SUPPORT PRESENTATION APRIL 23

The Union County Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI UC) is hosting a free presentation on April 23, 2024. Christine Backiel of Bridgeway Crisis Intervention Services (BCIS) of Union County will speak about their services. There will be free resources for adults. The meeting will be held from 7:30 -9:00 p.m., at the RWJ Fitness Center, 2120 Lamberts Mill Road, in Scotch Plains. No advance registration is required. Audience participation is encouraged and free literature will be provided. Visit namiunioncountynj.org to learn more about NAMI's free resources on mental illness.

FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP - 3RD TUES

Are you feeling stressed and alone in trying to cope with the effects of a loved one's mental illness? Union County's Family Support Group is for family members and caregivers of persons with mental illness. The group is led by NAMItrained facilitators and is a peer support group that allows participants to gain insight from others facing the same challenges.

Zoom sessions are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month from 7 p.m. -8:30 p.m. To register, email Denise at: namiunioncounty@yahoo.com with your name, town, and phone number.

THE APRIL SPEAKERS PROGRAM

Summit Area Old Guard

The Summit Area Old Guard is a social, educational, and recreational organization that serves men of retirement age. We meet most Tuesdays at the New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave. Our dues are minimal, and members manage all aspects of the operation. Our motto is "Come for the Programs. Stay for the Friends." The organization was founded in 1930.

We will have five programs in April:

Our speaker on April 2nd will be Laura Ekstrand, founder, and artistic director of the Vivid Stage Company. Vivid Stage Company (formerly called Dreamcatchers) is a professional ensemble of actors. Ms. Ekstrand will discuss the Company and describe how it operates. The program will include background of the artists, discuss how various plays are chosen and the processes employed to create a production. The Company is located at the Oakes Center, 120 Morris Ave., Summit, NJ.

On April 9th we will offer something a little different, a presentation and concert by the musical troupe, The Larks, under the direction of Joanne Taubner Prussak, music director (who also plays accompanying piano). The Larks have been entertaining in and around the Summit area for about fifty years. We will learn how they organize and prepare for their shows, perhaps a little feedback on the Old Guard singing endeavors, and a few words about their parent organization, the Summit Junior League. On April 16th we will be discussing saving and restoring old furniture. Our speaker will be Bob McAnally, Furniture Workshop Manager of the S.A.G.E. Restoration Workshop. SAGE Eldercare, an all-round senior daycare center in Summit, has a volunteer group which repairs furniture for an extremely low price. We will learn what goes on behind the scenes at this iconic Summit institution.

Donna Goggin Patel will be our speaker on April 23rd. Donna serves as Chair of the Summit Environmental Commission. She will tell us about something amazing, Summit's tiny forest. It is possible to grow a full micro-forest on as little as an acre in a few decades. Summit has such a forest. It was planted behind the Community Center several years ago and is thriving. We will learn about the importance of native species and how dense pocket reforestations can help mitigate climate. Donna can also discuss the latest sustainability efforts in Summit and other planned and ongoing environmental efforts.

Finally, on April 30th our own David Dietze, Managing Principal, Senior Portfolio Strategist at Peapack Private Wealth Management, will present. David will discuss current trends and thinking regarding inflation, economic growth, political initiatives, the federal reserve, etc., and how all these factors combine to influence the stock market. He will talk about valuation and where there is both risk and reward in equities.







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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.

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 imagineni.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@imaginenj.org or visit our website at www.imaginenj.org.

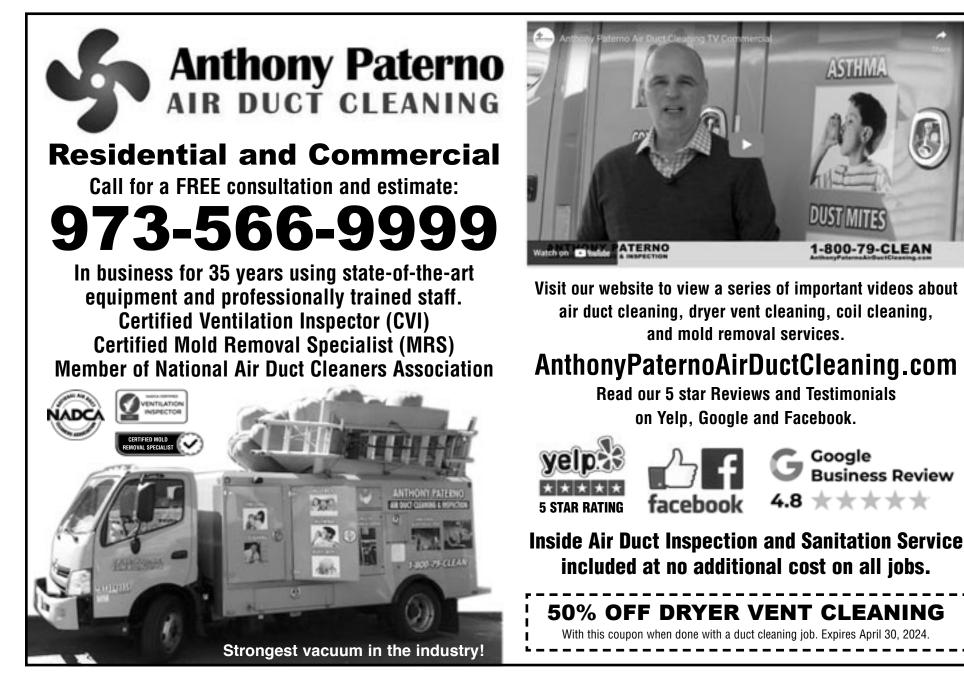
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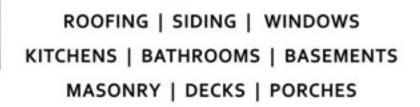


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WESTFIELD COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND SPRING CONCERT - APRIL 12

The Westfield Community Concert Band will present its annual Spring Concert on Friday, April 12 at 7:30 p.m. at Roosevelt Intermediate School, 301 Clark Street in Westfield. Dr. Thomas Connors, conductor and music director of the band, has prepared a program which is highlighted by popular, traditional and contemporary selections for wind band. Admission is free and open to the public.

The program will feature the band's performance of the complete Candide Suite, written by Leonard Bernstein and adapted by Clare Grundman for wind band. Composed in 1956 as operetta based upon a Voltaire's novella of the same name, the music from this selection is widely featured in Maestro, the recent film about Bernstein.



(above) The Westfield Community Concert Band, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Connors, Music Director, will present its annual Spring Concert on Friday, April 12 at 7:30 p.m. at Roosevelt Intermediate School, 301 Clark Street, Westfield.



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1721 E 2nd Street Scotch Plains The program will also feature the music of Gilbert and Sullivan, renowned composers of British operettas, with a performance of the music from the ballet, Pineapple Poll. This 1951 composition includes music from the most popular Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, including H.M.S. Pinafore, Pirates of Penzance and The Mikado. This arrangement has been performed leading wind bands, including the United States Marine Band, "The President's Own".

The band also performs Epic March, by John Ireland, Savannah River Holiday, by Ron Nelson, and Music for a Festival, by popular contemporary composer, Philip Sparke.

The band, in its 112th concert season, will also be presenting its annual Summer Concert

The program will also feature the music of Series on Thursdays, June 20, June 27, July 4 and Sullivan, renowned composers of and July 11 in Westfield's Mindowaskin Park.

Experienced area musicians may inquire about joining the band by contacting Barry Rosenberg, band president, at 908-337-9073 or by email at info@westfieldcommunityband.com.

The band rehearses each Wednesday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in the community room located in the Westfield Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street, and performs throughout the year.

The band is sponsored in part by the Westfield Recreation Department, Megan Schaffer, Director. The band's concerts are made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



All works are from the collection of Michael Mattis and Judith Hochberg. This exhibition was organized by art2art Circulating Exhibitions.



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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 or with questions email: harvestquiltersnj@gmail.com.

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. 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 or log on to www.casapassaicunion.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



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APRIL PROGRAMS AT THE MOUNTAINSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

1 Constitution Plaza, Mountainside, NJ 07092 • 908-233-0115 • mountainsidelibrary.org Mon, Thur: 9:30am - 8:00pm; Tue, Wedy: 9:30am - 6:00pm; Fri: 9:30am - 5:00pm; Sat: 9:30am - 5:00pm; Sun: closed

ADULT PROGRAMS

Book Club Monday, April 1st at 6:30 The book this month is The Whisper Network by Chandler Baker.

Great Courses

Monday, April 1st from 1-2:30pm This will wrap up our series on Great Orchestral Works.

Culinary Book Club

Thursday, April 11th at 6:30pm. **Friday Afternoon Movie** April 5th, 19th and 26th at 1pm There will be no movie on April 12th.



'BHEA'S GOT TALENT' TO RAISE FUNDS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Berkeley Heights Education Association (BHEA), the organization that unites educators, nurses and other district personnel, will be hosting their biggest fundraiser of the year on April 9th. 'BHEA's Got Talent' will be held in the Kenneth Stiefel Theater at Governor Livingston High School on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, at 7 p.m. All performers for this event are members of the Berkeley Heights Education Association and each act will receive feedback from student judges, as well as an opportunity for audience participation.

The BHEA is composed of the teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, interpreters, administrative assistants, custodians, transportation and maintenance personnel of the Berkeley Heights School District.

All proceeds from 'BHEA's Got Talent' benefit the BHEA Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships to graduating seniors each year who exemplify outstanding character and plan to pursue a career in education or one that involves a commitment to the well-being of children.

Ms. Marcy Helmstetter, BHEA President, shared, "The Berkeley Heights Education Association is very proud to present its first ever talent show in support of our BHEA College Scholarship Fund. We look forward to this exciting opportunity to empower our students services to all Westfield armed forces members' through their continuing education."

Tickets are \$10 and advance sale tickets and are on sale now at glhp.booktix.net.

The BHEA is a member organization of the New Jersey Education Association whose mission is to advance and protect the rights, benefits, and interests of members, and to promote a quality system of public education for all students.

The Mountainside Public Library continues our Spring programs for adults and children in April. Our Spring Story Times do not require registration, just drop in! The library will be closed on April 9th for Staff Training.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Cuddle Story Time Tuesdays from 10:30-11:00am April 2, 16th and 23rd

There will be no story time on April 9th as the library will be closed for Staff Training. Join us for nursery rhymes, simple stories and songs.

For children up to 23 months with their caregivers.

Preschool Story Time

Tuesdays from 1:45-2:30pm

April 2nd, 16th, and 23rd

Longer stories for eager listeners ages 3, 4 & 5 years old.

Family Story Time

Wednesdays from 10:30-11am April 3rd, 17th and 24th

No story time on April 10th. Join us for favorite stories for all ages and their caregivers. Check out our website for special Thursday morning events each month! This month we are offering these special programs for children:

Process Art Mornings

Thursday, April 4th from 10:30-11:30am. Drop in to explore some fun ways to create art with your child. Preschoolers ages 2-5 with their caregivers. No registration required.

Duplo Fun

Thursday, April 25th from 10:30-11:30am. A morning to create something fun. It could be messy! Drop in - no registration required. For

preschoolers and their caregivers. **Read to a Therapy Dog**

Thursday, April 18th from 4-5pm.

Bring your favorite books from home and read to Bubbles and Magnolia for 10-15 mins. Registration is required. Please email Elizabeth Perrin at eperrin@mountainsidelibrary.org. You

will receive a confirmation and a time slot.

Telescope Night

Monday, April 15th from 7:30-8:30pm. For ages 5 to Adult. Children must be accompanied by an adult. We will be outside so dress appropriately. Brought to you by John Miller of the Pearl Observatory. See mountains,

valley and craters on our moon. View the clouds and moons of Jupiter. See Saturn and its rings, and other wonders of the universe. Call the library to register at 908-233-0115.

M&R LANDSCAPE CELEBRATING 35TH YEAR

Westfield based M&R Landscape & Design Inc. is a leader in designing, installing, and caring for Westfield and the surrounding community's landscaping needs.

M&R Landscaping was founded by Manny and Rose Carlino who were both raised in Westfield and their families have roots in Westfield now for over 125 years. It has been a family owned and operated business based in Westfield since 1989. It has grown from a small 2-person company in its inception to a leading landscape company in the Westfield area. Their mission has always been to provide high quality landscape services at a reasonable price.

M&R Landscaping has provided many contributions to the town of Westfield over its 35 years in business, most notably its donation of services to Foundation Park, plantings for 9/11 victims, design services for St. Helens Church, donating materials and services to McKinley, Washington, Tamagues, and Lincoln schools, and the Westfield Board of Education.

M&R Landscaping has been a participant for over 20 years in GreenCare for Troops and has provided free landscape and snow plowing families when their spouse has been deployed.

Manny and Rose have always treated their employees like family, treating them the way they wanted to be treated. Some employees have been with the company for 30 years. Owner Manny Carlino is proud of the fact that they have never had an employee quit their job in 35 years. Manny explains "Treating employees like family has given our employee's confidence



(above, 1-r) M&R Landscaping & Design Inc. Supervisor Raul Casquera, Manager Edgar Jimenez, and owner Manny Carlino.

and empowered them to want to excel and better themselves and provide a quality service to our clients. Our motto at M&R Landscaping & Design Inc. is 'Building Relationships One Client at a Time, Through Communication.' we can do that because we have built relationships with our employees who feel like a part of our business."

Manny Carlino would like to announce the celebration of employee Raul Casquera who is in his 30th year with the company this season, and that M&R Landscaping still has over 70% of their over three hundred clients with them now for over 25 years because of employees like Raul Casquera.

For additional information regarding M&R Landscaping & Design Inc. call 908-233-0822, or email m.rlandscape@yahoo.com or visit us at www.m-rlandscape.com.





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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.







908-964-4004 406 Chestnut St. • Union, NJ 07083 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.

Photos from this and other events canbe found online at rennamedia.com and on the Renna Media page on facebook.com. Feel free to "Like," "Tag," and "Share."





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