

# Scotch Plains NJ

## WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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### AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR MIKA SONG VISITS BRUNNER

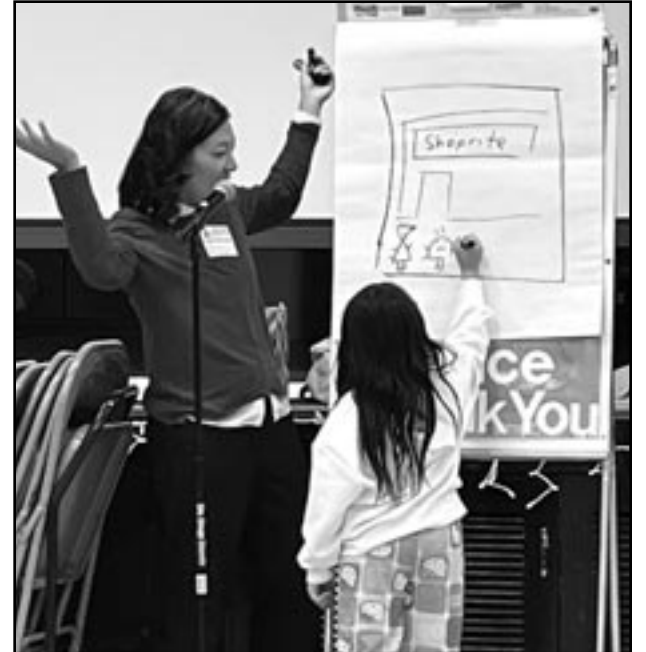
*Submitted by Jennifer DeFini*

To cap off an exciting Read Across America Week, author and illustrator Mika Song visited with the students at Brunner Elementary on March 8th. Ms. Song met with students in all grades to share her illustrating and storytelling skills. With the younger students, she shared her Norma and Belly series of graphic novels by acting out the stories “Donut Feed the Squirrels” and “Pizza My Heart” with the students and illustrating story boards. Often, students were called up to help with the illustrations. With the 3rd and 4th grade students, Ms. Song, together with the students, created a unique story across four story boards using the Norma and Belly characters getting Fabio’s pizza! Students learned how to build a comic strip into what could eventually become a graphic novel.

Mika Song also had a small group lunch with some deserving 4th grade students who had earned this visit by writing an essay, song, or graphic story. During the lunch, the students posed various questions and learned more about the publishing industry, how Ms. Song comes up with story lines, and even how she auditions names for her characters.

Thanks to Mrs. Rabe, Brunner’s media specialist, for introducing the Brunner community to many of Mika Song’s books in advance...it was great seeing the students recognize Mika and know her characters so well! Thanks also to the Brunner PTA for sponsoring this visit and to Fabio’s Bistro for providing lunch and starring in the story! And finally,

a heartfelt thank you to Mika Song for spending the day with the Brunner Community and signing nearly 200 books!



Courtesy photos

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# Scotch Plains NJ

WHAT'S HAPPENING MONTHLY

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# SPFHS CABARET FOR A CAUSE RAISES OVER \$1,000 FOR LOCAL NONPROFIT

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Choirs raised over \$1,000 to support the nonprofit organization, LifeTown, which offers social and recreational opportunities for children and teenagers with autism and other special needs, as well as their families.

The event on Wednesday, Feb. 14 was a huge success; the high school choir students performed music from “The Hunchback of Notre Dame,” “Hamilton,” “Toy Story,” “The Man of La Mancha,” and “Hairspray,” in addition to songs performed by featured soloists.

Marc Shaiman, a composer and lyricist who co-wrote the Broadway musical “Hairspray” and recently won a Grammy for the musical comedy “Some Like It Hot”, gave a special video message at the performance. As a SPFHS alumnus, he was happy to support the cause and to hear that the Concert Choir students were performing a Hairspray medley.

“The concert was a fun way for the community to celebrate Valentine’s Day, while also supporting a worthwhile cause,” said Jan Allen, SPFHS choral director. “We are thrilled to have raised over \$1,000 for LifeTown.”

LifeTown, which is a project of Friendship Circle New Jersey, provides children and teens with special needs and their families a wide array

of innovative respite, social, and recreational programs. These experiences are essential building blocks for an individual to acquire confidence and self-esteem and to ultimately lead a full, productive adult life.



(above, l-r) Emersyn Teicher, senior and student coordinator; Grace Sweeney, senior and assistant student coordinator; June Schechner, LifeTown volunteer and representative; Jan Allen, SPFHS choir director, at Cabaret for a Cause.

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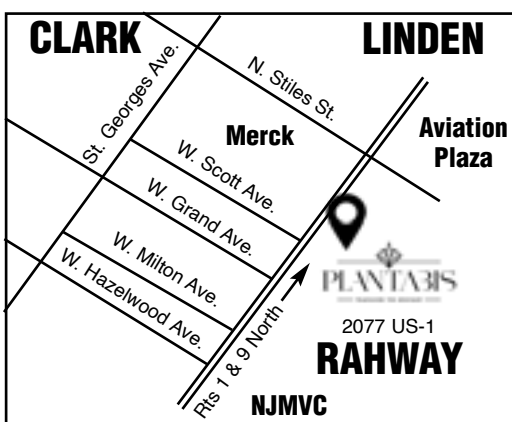
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## COLLEGE CLUB'S APRIL IN PARIS FUNDRAISER

April in Paris is the theme of the College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains' spring luncheon fundraiser which will take place on April 28th at the Westwood at 438 North Avenue, Garwood, NJ from 12 noon -4:00 p.m.

The gala event will include entertainment by the Harmonics Quartet which is an a capella singing group based in Fanwood. The group is comprised of four female vocalists who are dedicated to delivering musical excellence and artistic performances. The vocalists in the group are: Georgette Carter Chrystal, Sarah Gill Coffin, Karen L. Kumpf and Susan Schuman.

The fundraising event will also include a three-course lunch, a Silent Auction, a Basket Raffle, 50/50 Raffle with three monetary prizes and a raffle for a \$500 Shop Rite gift card. Winners need not be present for the 50/50 raffle or the Shop Rite gift card raffle. All proceeds from the spring event will fund scholarships for

local young women. The College Club Scholarship Committee is currently reviewing scholarship applications for the 2024-2025 scholarship recipients. The spring luncheon is the final fundraiser before scholarships will be awarded in May and the success of the event will determine the amount of money that will be available for the scholarships. To date, the College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains has awarded approximately \$780,000.00 in scholarships to approximately 582 young women.

Tickets for the luncheon fundraiser are \$60 each and can be obtained by contacting Dorothy at 908-230-4917 or at dorothyculleylusk@gmail.com. The deadline

for requesting luncheon tickets is April 10th. Tickets for the \$500 Shop Rite gift card are \$5 each. 750 tickets are available and can be obtained by contacting Dorothy.

50/50 raffle tickets are \$2 each and can be obtained by contacting Sue at 908-472-8515 or at sskt@verizon.net.

Tickets for the luncheon and the raffles are also available from any College Club member. Cash and checks will be needed to make purchases at the event.

There are college bound women in our community who depend on the College Club and the members are motivated to make the Spring Luncheon a fundraising success and an enjoyable event for all who attend.



(above, l-r) College Club Co-Presidents Jean Naugle and Joan Skubish are looking forward to a successful and enjoyable Spring Luncheon Fundraiser. All are invited to attend the "April in Paris" themed even on April 28th.



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## 7TH ANNUAL PATRICK'S DOWNTOWN RACE TO SUMMER 5K

Registration is now open for the 7th annual Patrick's Downtown Race to Summer 5K, which will be held on June 12, 2024.

Click the link to register on our webpage: [runsignup.com/PatricksRacetoSummer5k](https://runsignup.com/PatricksRacetoSummer5k)

We are getting close to one of the biggest events in the heart of downtown Scotch Plains. Be sure to register now for \$30 before the price increases on June 4 to \$35. Check in will begin at 6:00 p.m. on June 12, with the Family Fun Run at 7:00 p.m. and the 5K starting at 7:30 p.m.

The race will use the same 5K course as previous years, starting and finishing across from the Fire House on Senger Place, and conclude with an after party with music and BBQ from the Stage House Tavern on the Alan

M. Augustine Village Green next to the Scotch Plains municipal building.

The Patrick's Downtown Race to Summer 5K was started in 2015 by a local group of runners who wanted to see a great event to promote downtown Scotch Plains. This group of runners partnered with another group of local residents who previously put on the Patrick J. Allocca Memorial 5K.

The Patrick's Downtown Race to Summer 5K raises money to support charitable recipients and causes and donated over \$20,000 through funds raised from last year's race to various groups and individuals including Camp Clover, a summer bereavement camp for children, Play for P.I.N.K, the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad, the Scotch Plains Fire Department, Immaculate

Heart of Mary Food Pantry, the Frazee House restoration project, SPF Scholarship Foundation, local families in need, and more.

The race is also supported by the Township of Scotch Plains and is one of the qualifying races that are part of the Mayor's Wellness Challenge.

Email [patricksdowntownracetosummer5k@gmail.com](mailto:patricksdowntownracetosummer5k@gmail.com) with any questions or sponsorship information.

The Patrick's Downtown Race to Summer 5K is a 501 (c)3 charitable organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Please also "Like" the Patrick's Downtown Race to Summer 5K Facebook page for the latest updates.

[facebook.com/](https://facebook.com/PatricksDowntownRacetoSummer5K)

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## VENDOR POP-UP FESTIVAL – APRIL 28

The Spring Vendor Pop-Up Festival will return to the Fanwood Train Station on Sunday, April 28th. You will be pleasantly surprised when you see the array of top-notch exhibitors selling quality items, arts and crafts, and collectibles. All exhibitors are hand-picked and chosen for their unique items, hand-made creations, start-ups, and well-groomed businesses, and together they create this posh marketplace.

Stop by...shop a little, relax, and enjoy the good food, great music, and 60+ exhibitors.

Held in the south side Fanwood Train Station Parking Lot, this event is open 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and will feature gourmet food trucks, and live music throughout the day.

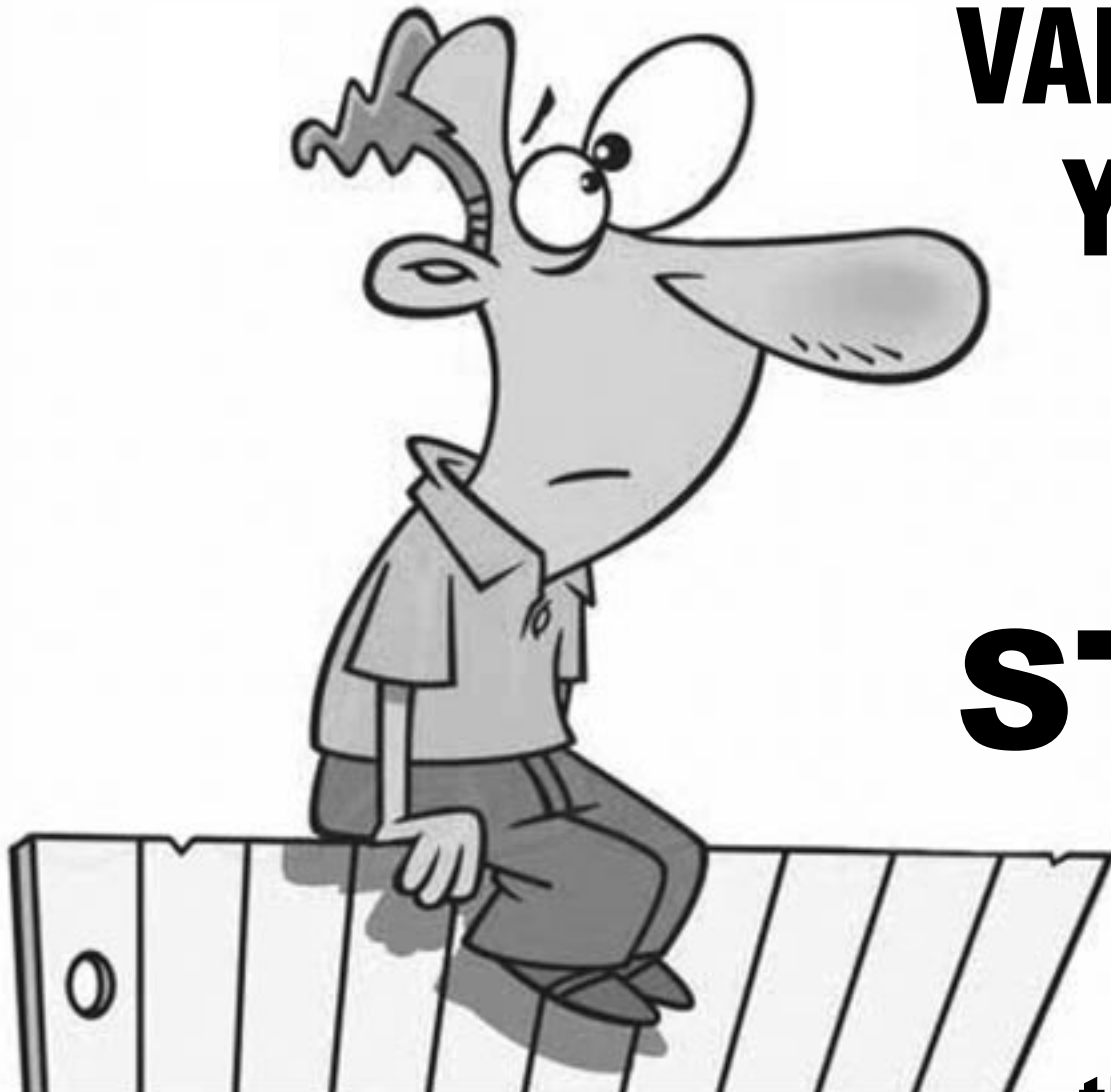
Parking is available at the North side train station then just walk over the bridge. Use this address for your GPS: 238 North Avenue, Fanwood, NJ.

This event is hosted by the Borough of Fanwood NJ. For more info visit: [JCPromotions.Info](http://JCPromotions.Info)

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# SPRS AUXILIARY THANKS COMMUNITY FOR ITS ONGOING SUPPORT



Courtesy photos

The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad Auxiliary held its 14th annual Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, February 25, 2024, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. As usual, it was a great success. They, along with girl scouts from Evergreen School, served close to 300 adults as well as a large number of children under 5, and raised much needed funds to support this crucial volunteer organization.

All-you-can-eat pancakes, toppings, sausage patties, coffee, tea, and juices were offered for just \$7.00 per person. There was also a raffle for baskets and gift cards for sports and fitness, salons, restaurants, mini-golf and more. These items were donated by individuals, local businesses and organizations, some of which

donated already-prepared themed baskets. These themes included an Italian dinner, Rutgers Football tickets and a tea basket.

Attendees had a wonderful time, as usual, and everyone's support is greatly appreciated. The auxiliary looks forward to doing it again next year.

The Scotch Plains Rescue Squad relies on ongoing community support. These contributions enable the Squad to fulfill their motto, Neighbors Helping Neighbors - We Work for Pride Not Pay. The squad looks forward to continuing to faithfully serve those who call for help.

Contributing Author: Susan Baldani, a life member of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad.



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## FRIENDS OF LIBRARY POETRY NIGHT - APRIL 11

The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library are thrilled to announce a free Poetry Night event, showcasing distinguished poets. Join us on Tuesday, April 11, at 7 p.m. for an evening that promises to be a profound celebration of words and wisdom.

This special event features a lineup of remarkable poets, including:

Moriah Cohen, a 2023 New Jersey Council on the Arts poetry fellow and author of the chapbook *Impossible Bottle* (Finishing Line Press). Cohen's acclaimed work has graced the pages of *Best New Poets*, *Adroit Journal*, *Narrative*, and many other prestigious publications. As a dedicated educator, Cohen also teaches at a local high school in New Jersey, shaping the next generation of poets.

Robin Rosen Chang, whose full-length collection *The Curator's Notes* (Terrapin Books) has captivated readers nationwide. Chang, a recipient of a 2023 Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, has contributed to *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Plume*, and numerous other esteemed journals. With an MFA from Warren Wilson College, Chang is a revered figure in the literary community and an inspiring writing instructor at Montclair State University.

Liz Kingsley, an MFA candidate at the Rainier Writing Workshop and an esteemed alumna of

Mount Holyoke College and NYU Wagner. Kingsley is not only celebrated for her literary contributions but also for her impactful work as an elementary special education teacher and Wilson Dyslexia Practitioner. Her dedication to both writing and education has made a significant difference in the lives of her students and readers.

The Scotch Plains Public Library and the Friends of the Scotch Plains Library invite the community to immerse themselves in the transformative power of poetry. This event is free and open to the public, offering a unique opportunity to engage with the voices of contemporary poetry.

\*The event was previously mistakenly

advertised as April 8 but the date is April 11.

The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library is a devoted group of volunteers bound by a common objective to fortify and enrich the essential resources and services offered by the Scotch Plains Public Library. Through our unwavering commitment, we strive to raise funds that strengthen and expand the library programming including summer reading, adult and youth programs, and the museum pass initiative. We aspire to cultivate an enduring passion for literature, propel lifelong learning endeavors, and foster a sense of intellectual and social belonging within the Scotch Plains community.



(above, l-r) Moriah Cohen, Liz Kingsley, Robin Rosen Chang

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- Group 2 (Grades 7-12) : Mondays, May 6–June 17, at La Grande Park building

#### **STEM Python Coding for Intermediates: 6:30–7:30PM**

- Group 1 (Grades 3-6) : Wednesdays, May 8–June 12, at Forest Road Park
- Group 2 (Grades 7-12) : Mondays, May 6–June 17, at La Grande Park building

\*No class Memorial Day Monday May 27th

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For more information and to register, go to  
[fanwoodrecreation.org/stem-python-coding.htm](https://fanwoodrecreation.org/stem-python-coding.htm)



## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO ADVOCATE FOR 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



(above) 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).

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 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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*- Robert, GRIT Athlete Parent*
- “My son is more disciplined and confident in himself”  
*- Steve Hughes, Grit Athlete Parent*
- “I have watched my children become more confident and vocal.”  
*- Christine Stramandinoli, Grit Athlete Parent*
- “His confidence has shot up in the last few months...and has carried forward to the way he approaches other activities like sports and schoolwork. My son is now making his bed daily and exercising every day.”  
*- Catherine Solfaro, Grit Athlete Parent*
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*- Dara, GRIT Athlete Parent*

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## CUSTODIAN OF THE YEAR CONTEST

### Fanwood/Scotch Plains Public Schools

Salvatore Gano, a custodian at Evergreen Elementary School in Scotch Plains, was named to Cintas' list of top 10 custodians in the country. Online voting is now open for the public to select the grand prize winner who will be named "Custodian of the Year" later this spring.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools and Evergreen Elementary School are proud of Salvatore Gano, or Mr. Sal as everyone knows him. Gano has been employed with the district

for 33 years. He exemplifies the qualities of kindness, patience, and reliability that make him an integral part of the school community.

He is one of the 'Celebrity Walkers' for Walk Your Child to School Day, joins in the school's annual kickball game and dresses up for the school's Halloween parade. Gano also makes sure the school shines from top to bottom. He consistently demonstrates a commitment to creating a safe, comfortable, and welcoming environment for all members of the Evergreen

community, according to the nomination.

Now in its 11th year, the contest selects 10 finalists and then uses an online voting system to determine the top winner. The winning custodian and school will receive generous prizes.

Please consider voting for Gano to be named "Custodian of the Year".

Voters can cast a ballot daily through April 12 here:

[custodianoftheyear.com/submissions-2024/](http://custodianoftheyear.com/submissions-2024/)

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(above) Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools' Salvatore Gano Named Top 10 Custodians in Cintas Contest.

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## CEREMONY HONORS FALLEN HERO LOUIS CHECCHIO

### Township of Scotch Plains

When Scotch Plains launched its Veterans Advisory Board in May 2022, one of its goals was to ensure every local veteran who lost his life in combat or is missing in action would receive special recognition.

Another “Gold Star” family was honored Feb. 23, with a ceremony held to remember U.S. Army Technical Sgt. Louis Checchio, killed July 20, 1944. A street sign “topper” was placed where the fallen hero had lived in Scotch Plains, at the intersections of Cook Avenue and Coles Avenue & Cook Avenue and Lyde Place; and Technical Sgt. Checchio, born on December 9, 1918, lived at 386 Cook Ave. He entered the service in August of 1941.

He trained at Fort Lee Leonard Wood, Missouri and in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Technical Sgt. Checchio went overseas on December 4, 1943 as part of the United States

Army 13th Infantry, Company B. He was tragically killed in action, in France.

The ceremony included participation from Scotch Plains’ elected officials and other dignitaries, local veterans and their families. The American Legion Post 209, on Park Ave., coordinated all aspects of the ceremony, providing an honor guard and rifle salute in tribute. Then, township leaders and family members unveiled the street sign topper. In addition, the Township Council issued a proclamation, honoring Technical Sgt. Checchio for his ultimate sacrifice.

Mayor Josh Losardo added that the stories of fallen soldiers should serve as a learning tool for

the youngest residents of Scotch Plains.

“Our children should learn there are no real winners in war,” the mayor said. “It should not be glorified, especially during these turbulent times. Instead, the brave men and women from Scotch Plains who served and sacrificed should be remembered for their courage, dedication, and true love of country.”

Initiated during World War I, the title “Gold Star” distinguishes a family member who lost a loved one in military service. Today, immediate family members (parent, sibling, spouse, or child) receive a Gold Star from the U.S. Department of Defense to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice.



(above) U.S. Army Technical Sgt. Louis Checchio



(above) On Feb. 23, 2024, the family of Louis Checchio was honored at a township ceremony held to remember U.S. Army Technical Sgt. Louis Checchio, killed July 20, 1944. A street sign “topper” was placed where the fallen hero had lived in Scotch Plains, at the intersections of Cook Avenue and Coles Avenue & Cook Avenue and Lyde Place; and Technical Sgt. Checchio, born on December 9, 1918, lived at 386 Cook Ave. He entered the service in August of 1941.





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# MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA-FREE CAMPAIGN

## JOIN MUSEUM IN CELEBRATION OF SPRING

"All are invited to attend the 2024 opening of the Osborn Cannonball House Museum on Sunday, April 7, 2024.

As part of a springtime celebration, the museum display will feature antique Edwardian clothing from the museum's vast antique clothing collection.

Costumed docents will be available to give tours of the c.1750 house and will share with you the story of the Osborn Family, the two Revolutionary War Soldiers who grew up in the house, and other stories of this important, early Scotch Plains family. You will also hear how the house became known to the community as the "Cannonball House."

There will be a spring-themed craft for kids in our backyard tent and a special treat for children who visit.

The museum is located at 1840 Front Street, Scotch Plains. Admission to the museum is free, but donations are always welcome.

## MENTAL ILLNESS TALK 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](http://namiunioncountynj.org) to learn more about NAMI's free resources on mental illness.

The Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club is emphasizing Mental Health awareness as part of this year's Rotary theme "Create Hope in the World". The club is raising awareness concerning mental health issues in multiple ways. They've begun to schedule meetings focusing on the topic, and are offering Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR) training to help identify and assist individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. The club is also asking Fanwood and Scotch Plains residents and businesses to take the mental health Stigma-Free Community Pledge.

The club kicked off the mental health awareness campaign at its' February 28, 2024 evening meeting. The featured speakers were Ray Freaney of the Mental Health Associates Rotary Club and Mary Clair Givelber of Caring Contact. Mary spoke about services her organization

provides for those experiencing a mental crisis, including the 988 Suicide Hot Line and Crisis Lifeline. Further information about the hotline can be found at [caringcontact.org](http://caringcontact.org).

The month of May is National Mental Health Awareness Month and the Rotary Club will be working with various organizations to set up mental health programs. This will include three different presentations by mental health experts and those who deal with mental health issues. They will also be partnering with the Scotch Plains Township to support the May 4th Mental Health Fair and race..

To learn more about the Mental Health awareness initiative and to take the Stigma-Free pledge, go to [fsprotary.org/stigma-free](http://fsprotary.org/stigma-free).

You can also send an email to [fsprotarystigmafree@gmail.com](mailto:fsprotarystigmafree@gmail.com).

## SPRING INTO ACTION

*Fanwood-Scotch Plains Thrift Shop*

The Thrift Shop shelves continue to be stocked with items perfect for refreshing your spring décor and wardrobe.

Warmer weather clothing is now available in sizes ranging from infants to adults for males and females. Find tops and bottoms, dresses, jackets, shoes, accessories and more, some brand-new and ALL in good condition. Household items, toys and home décor that will perk up your porch or enliven your living space are consistently being re-stocked.

You can also find beautiful evening wear just displayed and suitable for proms, weddings and other special occasions—including a few stunning bridal gowns that just might be the perfect fit for a bride-to-be. And mark your calendars for Saturday, April 13, when the shop will host during regular hours one of our periodic jewelry events—the perfect way to complement your special occasion dress with just the right touch of bling!

Also in the spirit of the season, remember that Earth Day is right around the corner on April 22. Earth Day provides a powerful way to make a positive impact on our environment, whether it's

taking part in local clean-up campaigns, planting trees, reducing our carbon footprint, AND/OR bringing items you no longer need or want to the Thrift Shop for resale. Now is the time to "spring clean" your closets, home and yard and give those items a new lease on life by donating them for future use by someone who needs and will treasure them.

Donations to the Thrift Shop at 1741 East Second Street, Scotch Plains are accepted during our normal store operating hours: Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Note that all store proceeds outside of operating expenses are donated by the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League to local non-profit organizations or used for student scholarships.

To learn more about the Service League, volunteer opportunities and types of donations accepted call the store during Thrift Shop business hours: 908-322-5420. You can also visit the Scotch Plains Thrift Shop web site [scotchplainsthiftshop.weebly.com](http://scotchplainsthiftshop.weebly.com), or search the "Fanwood-Scotch Plains Service League" on Facebook.

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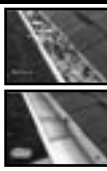
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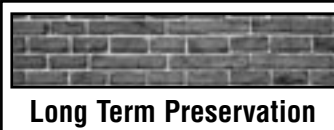
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# SCOTCH PLAINS FANWOOD UNICO NEWS

*Submitted by Angelo Ucciferri*

The Scotch Plains Fanwood chapter of UNICO recently participated in a local service project to benefit the food pantry at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church in Scotch Plains. UNICO gathered over 12 bags of food and non-perishable items for the church, which will be distributed to local families in need as part of their Easter service project. We also welcomed 2 new

members to our chapter, Sierra Pasquarella, and Jackie Stasenko.

UNICO is the largest Italian-American service organization in the USA, and the Scotch Plains Fanwood chapter is celebrating its 50th year. To learn more about becoming a UNICO member or obtain additional information on UNICO events, please visit their official website at [unicospf.org](http://unicospf.org) or email them at [spfunico@gmail.com](mailto:spfunico@gmail.com).



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(above, l-r) UNICO National Membership and Retention Director, Geri Samuel swore in new members Sierra Pasquarella and Jackie Stasenko.



(above) Fr. Andy Prachar (center), pastor of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church, along with UNICO members Daniela Sellinger (left) and Jeff Blanck (right).

Courtesy photos

## COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SEEKING DONATIONS

As the Fanwood Community Foundation is asking the community to consider donating to their "For the Love of Fanwood" Annual Appeal. FCF grants help nonprofits improve all aspects of local life. Last year's grant recipients were Caring Contact, Jam Kancer in the Kan Foundation, Fanwood Rescue Squad, Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA, Tiny Tim Fund, and Wolves Basketball Academy. In addition, FCF continued its commitment to stock our local food pantries by sponsoring a virtual food drive and also donating \$2,023 directly to the local Immaculate Heart Mary Food Pantry in Scotch Plains.

Donating is easy and tax-deductible.

Scan the QR code or visit [fanwoodcommunityfoundation.org](http://fanwoodcommunityfoundation.org) and click the "donate" button. FCF can also help meet charitable goals for those considering planned giving. Please contact Peter Chemidlin, financial professional, at (908) 322-1800.



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(right) The QR code will connect you to our PayPal to make a direct donation.

## EASTER BASKET COLLECTION



Here is a sample of this year's Easter Basket Collection hosted by Immaculate Heart of Mary Church in Scotch Plains. Members of the parish and neighbors in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood community gathered Easter baskets for families in need. These baskets were given away during IHM's Food Pantry Distribution days throughout the Lenten season. "We wanted to provide a special treat for kids around town who may have otherwise missed out on the joy of the Easter season." As told by Families of Faith Coordinator John McGuire, who helped organize this collection of Easter Baskets. We want to thank Kathy Mitchell and the generous folks of the Scotch Plains/Fanwood community for this act of kindness. Happy Easter from IHM! For more information about Immaculate Heart of Mary Church's events and activities, please visit [ihmparish.net](http://ihmparish.net).

## 2024 DOLLARS FOR STUDENTS CAMPAIGN

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Scholarship Foundation kicks off its annual fundraising campaign with Dollars for Students Weekend Saturday, April 6 and Sunday, April 7, 2024. Since the founding of the Scholarship Foundation, local students have volunteered their time to support fundraising efforts for the annual campaign.

"Our annual Dollars for Students campaign is the longest-standing fundraising effort since the Foundation's inception," said Cathy Hirschhorn, Foundation Trustee and lead organizer of this community-wide fundraising effort. "We are grateful for the community support from the dollars and cents collected in our tin cans and the businesses that will be hosting us this year."

Student volunteers will be stationed at locations throughout the community on Saturday and Sunday, so don't forget an extra dollar or two

when heading out to the soccer fields or for your morning coffee. You can plan your stops and see this year's schedule and list of supporting businesses by visiting the Foundation website.

"We are excited to introduce an alternative way to make an instant donation at our stationary locations," said Michelle Wywra, Foundation President. "QR codes will be provided on each donation canister that will connect you to our PayPal to make a direct donation."

The Foundation has awarded over \$4 million to deserving students since 1967. These scholarship awards are made possible by the generosity of local businesses and members of the community and beyond.

### ABOUT THE FOUNDATION:

For more information about Scotch Plains-Fanwood Scholarship Foundation visit [spfscholarshipfoundation.org](http://spfscholarshipfoundation.org).



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 8:45 a.m. Education Hour

---

**Passion/Palm Sunday - March 24**  
 8:00 a.m. Spoken Liturgy with Eucharist  
 10:00 a.m. Festival Liturgy with Eucharist

---

**Holy Thursday - March 28**  
 12 noon Spoken Liturgy with Eucharist  
 7:30 p.m. Liturgy with Rite of First Holy Communion

---

**Good Friday - March 29**  
 12 noon Ecumenical Community Service  
 7:30 p.m. Service of Tenebrae

---

**Holy Saturday - March 30**  
 A Day of Silence, Prayer & Reflection

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**Easter Celebration - March 31**  
 7:00 a.m. Memorial Garden Liturgy  
 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. Liturgies with Eucharist

---

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## NJIO SPRING CONCERT – APRIL 21, 2024

New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra (NJIO) will present its Spring Concert on Sunday, April 21st, 2024 at 3 pm at Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church in Plainfield. This Concert celebrates NJIO’s 30th Anniversary and is free and open to the public. Donations are gratefully accepted. The Concert will be followed by a ticketed Gala at the same location.

NJIO’s 30th Anniversary Concert will feature a spectacular young opera star, soprano Sydney Dardis. Ms. Dardis will perform with NJIO what is known as “Four Last Songs” by Richard Strauss, completed in 1948 when the composer was 84. According to the Los Angeles Philharmonic, they are “songs of farewell – to life, to art, to a vanished world. There is nothing like them in music for the sheer intensity of their concentrated, gentle heartache. It is music so bewitchingly sensuous, so achingly nostalgic, so subtle in its interweaving of vocal and

instrumental textures as to defy description.”

Ms. Dardis will also perform Lehar’s “Einer Wird Kommen” (Someone Will Come) from the operetta Der Zarewitsch (The Tsarevich). Ms. Dardis, a native of Laguna Niguel, California, received her Master of Music degree in Vocal Arts from The Juilliard School, where she studied with Darrell Babidge. Ms. Dardis completed her undergraduate degree from The Juilliard School as well. In 2023 Ms. Dardis was named a winner of the New York Regional District in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions.

NJIO Symphony will also play the popular Overture to Die Fledermaus by Johann Strauss II.

NJIO’s Intermezzo Orchestra, conducted by Oliver Hagen, will perform music by John Williams, a movement of Brahms’ Symphony no. 3, and selections from Tchaikovsky’s

Sleeping Beauty. The Prelude Ensemble, NJIO’s entry-level group, is conducted by Elizabeth Maliszewski. Prelude will be performing an arrangement of Haydn’s Surprise Symphony, Gauntlet, and Lucy Farr’s Barn Dance, as arranged by our own Graham Cohen.

A celebration of NJIO’s 30th season will immediately follow the 30th Anniversary Concert. Guests will be entertained by NJIO musicians, a silent auction and a tricky tray, and a delicious dinner. For more information about the gala, please see: [njio.org/gala](http://njio.org/gala)

Concert Details:

Sunday, April 21st, 2024, at 3 pm  
(doors open at 2:40 pm)

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Free Admission \* Sunday April 21st 2024

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### Spring Concert & 30th Anniversary Celebration

FEATURING THE MUSIC OF:  
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Johann Strauss II

Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church  
716 Watchung Avenue Plainfield, NJ

3:00 PM  
Free Concert

5:00 PM  
Ticketed Gala

Guest soprano soloist  
Sydney Dardis

Purchase gala tickets at [www.njio.org/gala](http://www.njio.org/gala)

For more information or accessibility requests, contact [info@njio.org](mailto:info@njio.org) or call 908-603-7691

This concert is made possible by funds from: the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts; a 2024 HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) Grant from the Union County Board of County Commissioners; The Plainfield Foundation; The Lillian Schenck Foundation; The Henry S. and Agnes M. Truzack Foundation; a collective contribution made by the Citizens Philanthropic Foundation and the Investors Foundation; Standish Foundation, and many other generous supporters. NJIO is a proud participating organization in the Families-First Discovery Pass Program, a program of the NJ Departments of Health and Human Services.




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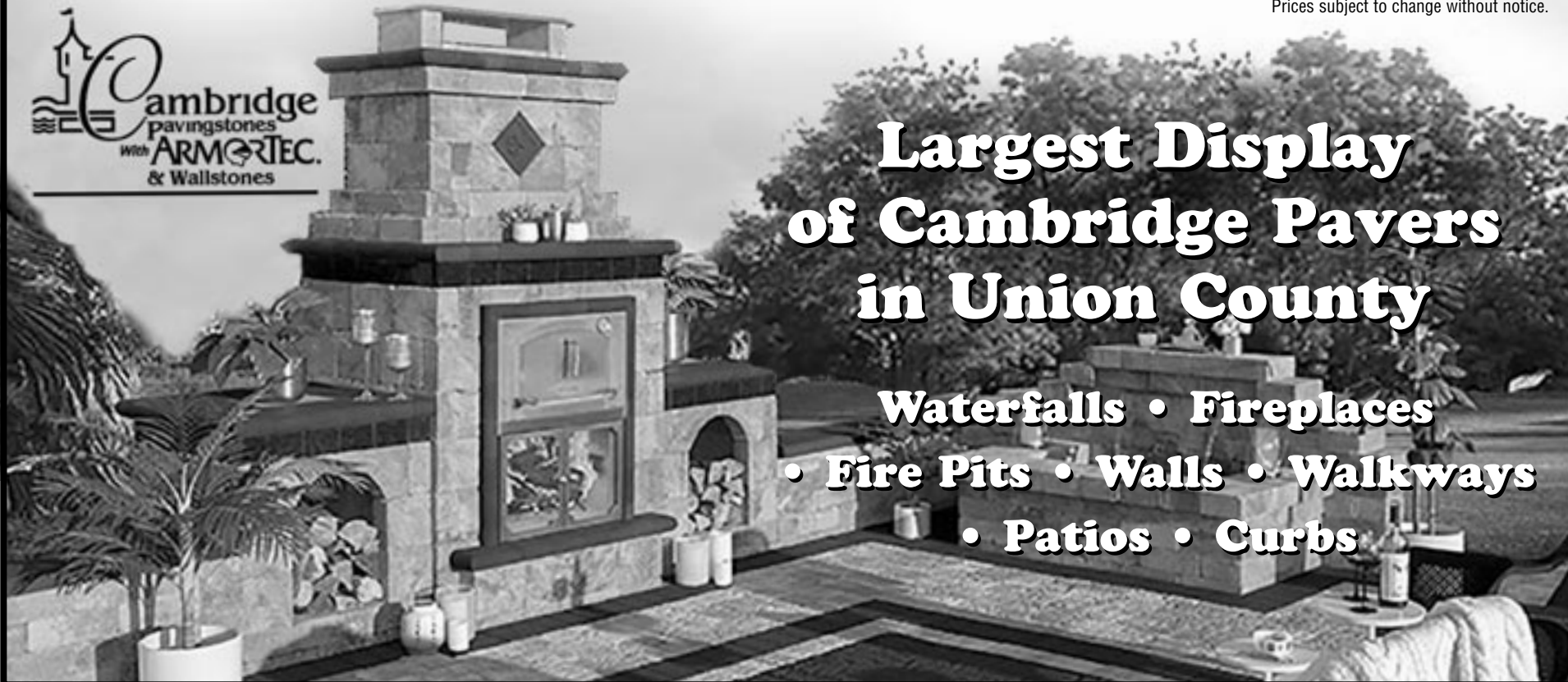
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# APRIL PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS AT THE SCOTCH PLAINS PUBLIC LIBRARY

### Bring Your Own Book

Monday, April 1 at 10am

an informal discussion of what participants have recently read and enjoyed. Registration is required.

### Virtual decluttering program

Monday, April 1 at 7pm

Jamie Novak will present a virtual decluttering program: How to Catch Up (when you feel hopelessly behind). Registration is required.

### Wednesday Movies

Wednesdays at Noon

We'll show Wednesday Movies in our downstairs meeting room.

### Connecting Beyond Distance

Thursday, April 4 at 7pm

The Resolve Community Counseling Center will present Connecting Beyond Distance, with strategies for social anxiety/isolation.

Registration is recommended.

### Balance Awareness with Yasmin Ofek

Fridays at 10am

A gentle but effective approach to moving confidently throughout the lifespan.

Registration is required for this virtual class.

### Hypertension Clinic

Friday, April 5, 10am to Noon

In the Adult Room with a public health nurse from Union County. Walk-ins welcome.

### Friends of the Library membership meeting

Monday, April 8 at 7:15pm

### Drawing with Sandra Cerchio

Tuesday, April 9 at 10am

Registration is required.

### Drop In Crafting

Tuesday, April 9 at 1pm

bring your work-in-progress and craft with company.

### Poetry Night

Thursday, April 11 at 7pm

presented by Friends of the Library.

### Going Native without Feeding Bambi

Monday, April 15 at 7pm

Going Native without Feeding Bambi with Master Gardener Lourdes Osorio, co-sponsored by the Scotch Plains Garden Club. Registration is required.

### Afternoon Book Club

Tuesday, April 16 at 1pm

will discuss Killers of the Flower Moon by David Grann.

### Evening Book Club

Thursday, April 18 at 7pm

will discuss Tomorrow, and Tomorrow, and Tomorrow by Gabrielle Zevin.

### Great American Songbook

Saturday, April 20 at 2pm

Carol Erickson will sing pieces from the Great American Songbook. Space is limited; registration is required.

### Board of Trustees meeting

Wednesday, April 24 at 7pm

### Drop In Crafting

Thursday, April 25 at 7pm

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More information about library news and events can be found at [scotlib.org](http://scotlib.org).

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