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GIRLS WRESTLER OF THE YEAR: ALISSA ALCINDOR

Township of Union Public Schools

After a sixth-place finish in the state last season, Alcindor was the only girls' wrestler from the conference to get on the podium this season, finishing runner-up at 235 pounds to Ewing's Shellitha Collins after losing in the state final. She beat Collins earlier this season at the Bloomfield Holiday Tournament as well.

Alcindor went 27-1 on the season with 21 pins, of which 10 came inside the first period. And while she improved on her state tournament finish from a year ago, she also won her first North 2 Region title after finishing runner-up there last year.

Among the signature wins for Alcindor this year were two decisions over two-time state medalist Saharia Quamina from Bloomfield, as well as two pins over state medalist Kayla Mena from Parsippany Hills/Parsippany and a pin over state medalist Samantha Domask in the state semifinals.

Coach of the Year: Dino DeBellonia, Union

It was a banner year for the Farmers this year under longtime coach Dino DeBellonia. As a dual meet team, they went 18-9, their most in a season since 2016 when they went 21-5, and are just two years removed from a 1-23 season. After going 12-17 last year, things seem to be trending in the right direction quickly for Union, and having this year as a recent proof of concept should only help increase numbers and results. They finished third in the Mountain Division with a 6-2 record and made the team state tournament for just the third time since 2016 this season as well. They had several important dual meet wins, beating Linden and Brearley for the first time since 2021, Elizabeth and Johnson for the first time since 2020 and Roselle Park for the first time since before 2010, among other signature wins.

And for as good as Union was as a team this year, it might have been an even better year on the individual front. They had four 20-plus match winners on the boy's side, headlined by 175-pounder Daniel Collin and 126-pounder Gabe Hargrove. Collin went 35-8 and finished fifth at the region, just missing out on qualifying for Atlantic City this year in one of the deepest weights at the region. But the highlight of Collin's season was in the Union County Tournament, where he pinned his way to a Union County title, becoming Union's first county champ since 2017, snapping the longest drought of any team at this year's tournament. Hargrove (36-7), meanwhile, began the season at 132 pounds and was 20-0 heading into the quarterfinals of the Union County

Tournament, before losing twice and getting knocked out. He rebounded and took third in the district but most notably took third at Region 4 as the No. 13 seed to become Union's first boys state qualifier since 2017 as well.



(above) Coach of the Year, Dino DeBellonia, and Girls Wrestler of the Year, Alissa Alcindor.

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SPRING CONCERT - APRIL 12

Westfield Community Concert Band

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.

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 Series on Thursdays, June 20, June 27, July 4 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.

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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 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.

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) 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.

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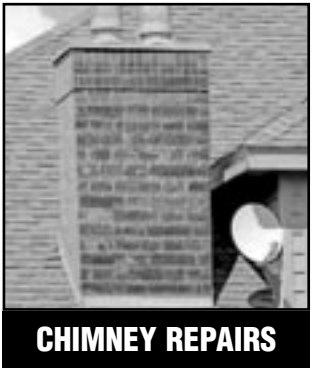
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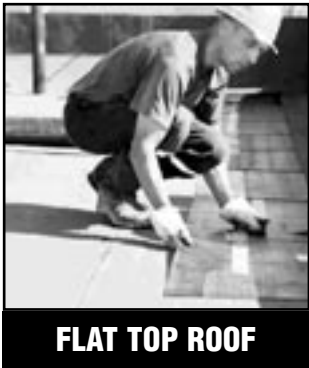
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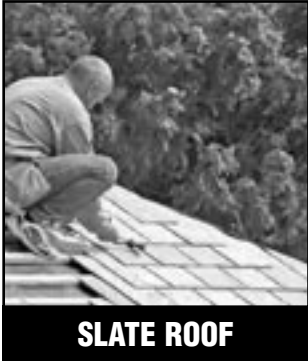
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IMAGINE, A CENTER FOR COPING WITH LOSS, SEEKS VOLUNTEERS

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:

"People outside of Imagine are always supportive when they hear that I volunteer at a grief support center. But I know it can be a little confusing to hear that volunteering at a grief support center is the best night of my week. And that's the magic. That as a volunteer, the joy is not in what we bring, but what we take home from our participants." Rob-5+ years as Imagine Facilitator.

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 imagineenj.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@imagineenj.org or visit our website at www.imagineenj.org.



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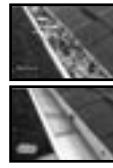
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On Saturday, April 13 at 8 p.m., Carrie Jackson, the quintessential jazz vocalist, will present "What Is Jazz?"

With a dynamic backup group featuring keyboards, bass, drums, and saxophone to back up her musical travels through the history of jazz, Carrie will also have a question-and-answer period after the music for all patrons at the show to participate in. All of this is in celebration of April - National Jazz History Month.

This is expected to be a full house show. Doors will open at 7:15 p.m.

From the golden era of Jazz to the present, Carrie brings her clear, unique jazz vocal styles to life. Her smooth, sultry sound has captivated thousands, garnering a very loyal following.

As always, the Salem Roadhouse Café is live, intimate, up front, and personal. All ages are welcome.



(above) Carrie Jackson

ABOUT SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ

It's not "church music." It's music music. Folks who've come to the Salem Roadhouse Café know that it's a clean, safe place for people who enjoy listening to live music — in a world otherwise filled with clubs and bars. The Roadhouse has always offered its stage to local and independent mainstream musicians. Jazz, rock, folk, and other groups have performed. What's the common thread? They're all great musicians playing the kind of music people like to hear. There's no message, just music.

Now in its 16th year of operation, the Roadhouse started in 2008 by members of Townley Presbyterian Church with a grant from the Presbytery of Elizabeth. Hey — that's why we're located where we are, Townley Presbyterian Church, 829 Salem Rd, Union, NJ. The Roadhouse operates as a non-profit that raises funds for several carefully chosen local charities. That's its social mission.

But the many musicians who've played the Salem Roadhouse Café see it as a solid performance venue. They love it because of its special intimacy and great audiences. They say people here "really listen." Ask any of the musicians you meet here — they love to play the Roadhouse, and they want to come back often.

The Salem Roadhouse Café has raised funds for many carefully chosen charities. They include: The Presbytery of Elizabeth E-port Center, Center For Hope Hospice, Community Food Bank, Monarch Housing, Angel Paws Animal Rescue, National MS Society, Haiti Disaster Relief, Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief, The Union County YWCA Domestic Violence Program, Making It Possible To End Homelessness, Camp Johnsonburg, The Music Institute, and others. For 2024 the chosen charity is the Gateway YMCA's Children's Summer Camp Programs. Many thousands of dollars have been raised for these deserving charities.

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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.

Photos from this and other events can be 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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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

Concert Details:

Sunday, April 21st, 2024, at 3 pm

(doors open at 2:40 pm)

Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church

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Admission is free;

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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.

MENTAL ILLNESS SUPPORT 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 to learn more about NAMI's free resources on mental illness.

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.



(above) Fiber artist Karen Hochman will show her creations and speak on "Everything Old is New Again, What Inspires You?"

Courtesy photos



(above) Featured Quilter, Kathy Lee Kathy Anderson will display of 17 colorful modern bed sized quilts.

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Union Public Library has something for everyone in April. Join us!

Celebrate Poetry Month

Tues., 4/2 @ 6:00 pm

(Zoom and off-site at Kean University/Kean Hall Room 127 (1000 Morris Ave, Union, NJ).

Visit the library to register.

Celebrate Poetry Month with special readings, and then add your own.

Meditation (Virtual on Zoom)

Thursdays, 4/4, 4/11, 4/18, 4/25 @ 11:30 am

Join Bindu Bhatt for a virtual meditation session. No experience is necessary. Bindu has practiced meditation for over 30 years and wants to share her insight.

Friends of the Library (Main Library)

Thurs. 4/4 @ 6:00 pm

Join the Friends of the Library at their monthly meeting. New members are always welcome.

Come to support your library.

Songs in the Key of Wonder with the James Austin Trio (Vauxhall Branch)

Sat., 4/6 @ 1:00 pm

Enjoy the James Austin Trio, who will perform jazz standards and selections from their latest release, *Songs in the Key of Wonder*, highlighting a selection of classic compositions from the songbook of the great Stevie Wonder.

What is a Total Solar Eclipse? (Vauxhall Branch)

Mon., 4/8 @ 6:00 pm

Join NASA solar system ambassador Mr. Rich DeFabio, who will share details about the total solar eclipse and the history of this rare phenomenon.

Facebook for Beginners (Vauxhall Branch)

Tues., 4/9 @ 10:00 am

Learn how to communicate with friends and family using Facebook. You will learn how to create a Facebook page, search for and add friends, and post status updates and pictures.

Build Up Your Balance (Main Library)

Wed., 4/10 @ 10:30 am

As we age, it is more important than ever to avoid the risks of falling. Through gentle strength exercises and stepping strategies, we are learning to balance our bodies in different situations. Try this popular class!

Walk-in Wednesdays: One-on-One Library Technology Assistance (Vauxhall Branch)

Wed., 4/10, 4/17, 4/24 @ 12:30 – 2:00 pm

Get help with library resources, including downloading e-books from Libby and Hoopla, using the library catalog and resources, using mobile print, and using the photocopier and scanner. Reservations are not required.

Chair Yoga (Main)

Thurs., 4/11 @ 10:00 am

Take a deep breath with friends and stretch! For beginners to professionals. Presented by the Gateway Family YMCA.

Practice Your English (Vauxhall Branch)

Thurs., 4/11 @ 12:00 pm

Do you know anyone who would like to practice English? Now's their opportunity. Join us for a drop-in group that's more like a party than a formal class. (Must be able to speak basic English.)

Practice Your English (Main Library)

Thurs., 4/11 @ 6:00 pm

Do you know anyone who would like to practice English? Now's their opportunity. Join us for a drop-in group that's more like a party than a formal class. (Must be able to speak basic English.)

X (Twitter) For Beginners (Vauxhall Branch)

Tues., 4/16 @ 10:00 am

Learn how to navigate Twitter, create an account, send a tweet, retweet other people's tweets, use hashtags, follow people, and manage privacy settings.

Off the Shelf Book Club (Main Library)

4/18 @ 6:30

This month, we read *The Dictionary of Lost Words* by Pip Williams. Pick up your copy at the Main Library. Great way to make new friends!

Animal Crossing Open Hours (Virtual)

Fri., 4/19 from 3:00 - 5:00 pm

Come explore UPL Island! Check out our inclusive virtual library building that serves children, teens, and adults. Discover our Mario-themed maze, shake fruit/money trees, shop at Nooks & Abels, help craft DIYs, and leave a message on the bulletin board. As a thank you for visiting, there will be freebies! You must

add us as a friend before entering the island. Our UPL Nintendo friend code is SW-4027-1837-6212. All ages are welcome. No registration is necessary. If you have any questions, please get in touch with jcarvajal@uplnj.org.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) + Self Care Workshop (Vauxhall Branch)

Sat., 4/20 @ 1:00 pm

Life can be challenging for everyone, and dealing with racism, prejudice, and microaggressions can make it even more challenging. That is why self-care is not optional for African Americans and other people of color. Join Ms. Love M. Gaillard, MSW, in a workshop exploring the five core competencies of Social-Emotional Learning and focusing on Self-Awareness and Self-Care.

Microsoft Word for Beginners (Vauxhall Branch)

Tues., 4/23 @ 10:00 am

Learn how to create and edit a document with Microsoft Word. We will cover basic formatting options, such as bolding text, adjusting line spacing, and changing the page alignment.

Hilton Readers Book Discussion Group (Vauxhall Branch)

Wed., 4/24 @ 6:00 pm

April's selection is *The Blackbird Papers* by Ian Smith

Practice Your English (Vauxhall Branch)

Thurs., 4/25 @ 12:00 pm

Do you know anyone who would like to practice English? Now's their opportunity. Join us for a drop-in group that's more like a party than a formal class. (Must be able to speak basic English.)

Practice Your English (Main Library)

Thurs., 4/25 @ 6:00 pm

Do you know anyone who would like to practice English? Now's their opportunity. Join us for a drop-in group that's more like a party than a formal class. (Must be able to speak basic English.)

The Music of Duke Ellington & Billy Strayhorn (Vauxhall Branch)

Sat., 4/27 @ 1:00 pm

Enjoy an afternoon of Jazz music with Vinnie Cutro and Mitch Schechter, who will present the work of the greatest composing duo in American jazz history, Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. Through musical interpretation and oral presentation, part musical performance, part history lesson, the musicians will present samples from the collaboration of Ellington and Strayhorn, demonstrating what made this collaboration so remarkable, and what continues to delight listeners almost 100 years later.

Monday Night Sports Trivia (Vauxhall Branch)

Mon., 4/29 @ 6:00 pm

Calling all sports fans! Do you watch many sports on TV? Test how big of a sports fan you are and hit a home run at our trivia night. Come for the fun and the prizes.

FORGOTTEN VICTORY TRAIL AND THE BRITISH INVASION PRESENTATION - APRIL 7

The Union Township Historical Society invites history fans to a presentation by John Kieser and Bob Gula of the Forgotten Victory Trail Association.

The talk will be given at Connecticut Farms Presbyterian Church, 888 Stuyvesant Avenue, Union on Sunday, April 7, at 2 p.m. Admission is free.

Kieser and Gula will focus on the June 1780 battles of Connecticut Farms and Springfield, which were critical in the defense of New Jersey, as well as of Washington's forces at Morristown.

Those local battles were also crucial in the weakening of the British forces prior to their surrender at the Battle of Yorktown.

Kieser, a Summit resident, is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution and has been involved with the Summit Historical Society and Summit Planning Board.

Gula, a Short Hills resident, is a member of the Sons of the American Revolution, NJ SAR Color Guard, Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, and the General Society of Mayflower Descendants.

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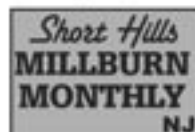
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BLUE ENVELOPE PROGRAM OPINION

Submitted by Simone Palermo

The Blue Envelope Program's purpose is to raise Union County's police departments' awareness of special needs (such as Autism Spectrum Disorder, dementia, and anxiety) and how to best communicate with a special needs driver. One point of interest for me in this news article is how all police officers in Union County's twenty-one municipalities will go through a specialized training course on special needs, as well as learning the best methods in engaging with special needs drivers during a traffic stop. These specialized training courses will be vital in not only developing a deeper understanding of special needs, but also on how to best approach special needs drivers to minimize potential misunderstandings and escalations in conflict when pulled over. They will also better communication to special needs drivers that are non-verbal to provide a safer, unprejudiced community that can ensure trust in its police force.

According to one source within the Clark Township's Police Department, the process of getting a blue envelope is very easy, as the special needs driver can simply call their local police department, press the number for their helpdesk, and ask to receive a blue envelope either directly from the local police station or having it delivered to them in their mailbox. A copy of their driver's

license and vehicle registration, insurance details, and (if necessary) emergency contact card are placed inside the envelope, which is then placed onto the dashboard of their vehicle so that officers do not make the driver even more nervous than normal under a traffic stop. However, it does concern me deeply how easily accessible these blue envelopes can be as there is a possibility of individuals not in the spectrum to abuse them for their own benefit.

According to the same source, there are other towns in Union County that have implemented the Blue Envelope Program in their police departments; said source however does not know if it has currently spread throughout the entire state of New Jersey. Regardless, my source said that the Clark Police Department has managed to hand out several of these blue envelopes to special needs drivers, which is a promising start for the program's progress. Upon further research, I have discovered on various websites – such as Crimewatch and the Montgomery County website – that it is being employed in police departments in California, Pennsylvania, Connecticut.

Overall, my opinion on the Blue Envelope Program is incredibly positive. I am advocating for the Blue Envelope Program for Union County's police departments and hope that it spreads beyond just Union County and the state of New Jersey.

Having lived most of my life with Autism Spectrum Disorder – specifically Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) – I was personally intrigued when I came across the Clark Monthly's "Blue Envelopes for Drivers with Autism" newspaper article. As someone who has lived with autism for years, I feel as though I have a voice in this matter, and I would like to let it be heard.

If you or a loved one are a special needs driver looking for more information regarding the Blue Envelope Program, contact your local police department and ask them how you can get started with your blue envelope today.



THE BLUE ENVELOPE PROGRAM

The blue envelope brings together law enforcement and motorists with autism and other sensory disorders. It's a resealable and convenient place to keep all driver documents, and contains instruction for both the driver and the interacting officer in the event of a traffic stop.

The tool will help bridge gaps in communication and build empathy in our community.

GET YOURS NOW!

by visiting your local police station in any one of
Union County's 21 municipalities, Union County Sheriff's office,
Union County Police Department, or Union County Prosecutor's office

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