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# **INITIATIVE ADVANCES ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH**

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools is proud to announce the outstanding success of its teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) certification program. This year, 329 high school students completed the program, marking a significant milestone as the initiative enters its second year. This remarkable achievement highlights the district's dedication to prioritizing the mental well-being of its students.

Recognizing the concerning increase in mental health challenges among adolescents across the nation, SPF initiated the program last year with funding from the Mental Health Association of New Jersey and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The district offers the course to its 11th-grade students as an integral component of their health curriculum. This course is designed to provide students with the necessary tools to recognize, comprehend, and respond to indicators of mental health and substance use issues among their peers. The tMHFA certification program, initially developed in Australia and adapted for the United States by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing and Born This Way Foundation, aligns with New Jersey's comprehensive health standards, incorporating mental and emotional health components into the district's curriculum.

"Our commitment to promoting mental wellness extends beyond the classroom," said Kristine Iarussi, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools' Director of Counseling, Health and Wellness. "With over half of our high school students trained in tMHFA, we've empowered our student community to act proactively to recognize and address mental health concerns."

Participation in the certification program is a school-wide effort with health teachers undergoing training sessions conducted by the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. This comprehensive approach ensures that educators are well-prepared to effectively guide students through the curriculum.

As students navigate the complexities of modern life, including academic pressures, social dynamics, and familial expectations, initiatives like tMHFA can play a pivotal part in supplying



(above, l-r) Ant Butters and Cooper Tamase hold up their teen Mental Health First Aid (tMHFA) certificates. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School students were among the more than 300 Raiders who participated in the national program.

Courtesy photo

them with the skills to promote resilience and well-being. Student testimonials underscore the program's impact on fostering a supportive environment where individuals feel encouraged to address mental health challenges. Ellie Szopinski, 16, emphasized the importance of approaching mental health discussions with empathy and understanding.

"The course allowed us to approach people from a neutral standpoint where we can help even if we're not close to them," she shared.

"The most notable thing was learning to recognize the behaviors themselves and how to identify these crises and stop them before they become life-threatening," Ant Butters, 16, added.

Saman Zeb, 17, highlighted the significance of destigmatizing mental health issues and promoting open dialogue.

"Mental health is often overlooked," Zeb said. "It's nice to have a course that allows you to take a deep breath and realize that your mental health and the mental health of others is really important."

Students also said the class encourages self-preservation.

"I feel like it's just as important for people to educate themselves not only to help others but also to help themselves," Cooper Tamase, 16, said, adding that mental health has been a focus of his for years.

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# **COLLEGE CLUB SPRING LUNCHEON**



(above) Gail Iozzi shows off the basket raffle prize that she won at the luncheon. She was one of the afternoon's happy winners that included silent auction winners, table prize winners, 50/50 monetary prize winners and the \$500 Shop Rite gift card winner.

Submitted by Bernadette Hoyer

The Spring Luncheon Fundraiser recently hosted by the College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains was the culmination of many months of planning and working together by the college club members to raise funds for the club's scholarship fund. Since its founding in 1933, the college club remains committed to its mission of supporting young women through scholarships. Sincere thanks are extended to all members of the community who donated raffle items, purchased raffle tickets, silent auction tickets. Attended the event and made direct donations to the scholarship fund in lieu of attending.

The annual spring event is a major fundraiser for the College Club and the "April in Paris" themed luncheon added \$18, 860 to the club's scholarship fund. The scholarship committee is looking forward to announcing the scholarship recipients for the 2024-2025 academic. The club will be able to award \$31,000 in scholarships due to successful fundraising support. To date the College Club of F-SP has awarded approximately \$780,000 in scholarships to local young women.

The luncheon was held at the Westwood in Garwood and the attractive venue was enjoyed by all attendees along with the attentive wait staff the fine dining luncheon menu.

The delightful musical entertainment provided by the Harmonics quartet added a high note to an enjoyable afternoon and a successful fundraiser.

Courtesy Photo



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# JOAN SKUBISH RECEIVES GOOD SCOUT AWARD

Joan Skubis was presented the Good Scout Award from the Boy Scouts Of America – Patriot's Council for her volunteer spirit and dedication to many organizations. Joan was recognized on May 2nd at a dinner reception at the Westwood in Garwood. Joan is Co-President of the Fanwood-Scotch Plains College Club; members were on hand to congratulate Joan and share in her achievement.

Joan was introduced by Jean Naugle, Co-President of the F-SP College Club and she said of Joan: "We are proud of Joan and grateful for her legacy with the College Club passed onto Joan by her mother who years ago was a member of College Club and chaired the Scholarship Committee."



(above) Steve Goldberg, F-SP Rotary Club member and emcee of the awards dinner, congratulates Joan Skubish (center) along with Jean Naugle, co-President of the F-SP College Club. Courtesy photo

## **SINGER-SONGWRITERS TO PERFORM - JUNE 8**

The Fanwood Performance Series presents the music of singer-songwriters Nicola Vazquez and Ryan Harris Brown on Saturday, June 8, 2024, at the Kuran Cultural Arts Center, a.k.a. the Carriage House, alongside Borough Hall.

Nicola Vazquez has performed her original blend of rock, pop and soul in venues around the New York area, opened for Eve 6 and Edwin McCain, and shared stages with Ricky Martin and other recording artists. An accomplished singer, songwriter, guitarist, keyboardist, actor and dancer, she has performed on Broadway and participated in the MTA's "Music Under New York" program.

Regular patrons may remember Ryan Harris Brown from his 2018 Fanwood Performance Series show. Brown uses his love of intimate storytelling and his expert musicianship to create songs that are both thought provoking and unforgettable. He cites John Mayer, Ben Folds and James Taylor among his musical influences.

Showtime is 7 p.m. at the Carriage House, 135 Watson Road just west of Martine Avenue.

Admission is \$15 for adults, \$10 for students and seniors – cash at the door.

Reservations are strongly recommended. Seating is limited, and recent shows have packed the house. While advance tickets are not available, music fans are urged to RSVP by email to fanwoodperformance@gmail.com to reserve seats. "We want to avoid turning anyone away at the door," said Dan Murphy, the series' volunteer coordinator.

The Fanwood Performance Series is a presentation of Mayor Colleen Mahr and the Fanwood Borough Cultural Arts Council. It is made possible in part by a HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) Grant from the Union County Board of County Commissioners.

After a summer break, the music will continue with shows on Sept. 14, Oct. 19 and Nov. 9. The fall performer lineup will be announced soon.

Music fans can find more information and updates at the series website fanwoodperformanceseries.org.





(above) Singer-songwriters Nicola Vazquez, Ryan Harris Brown to perform in Fanwood June 8.

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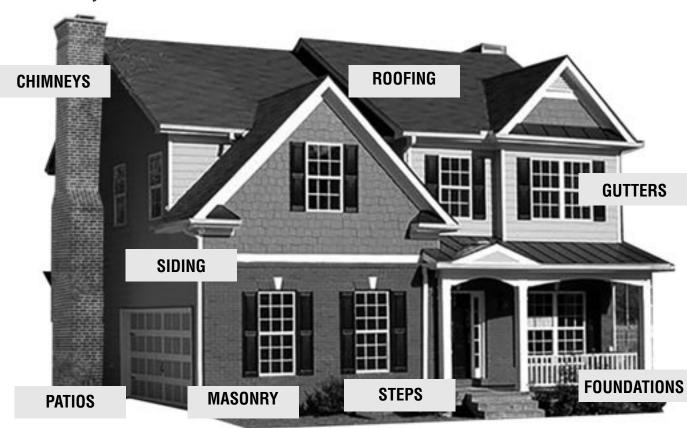
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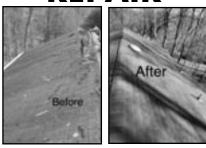






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# MARY WROBLEWSKI CELEBRATED ON 100TH BIRTHDAY

#### Borough of Fanwood

Fanwood Police, Fire and Rescue did a driveby celebration for Mary Wroblewski who turned 100-years-old on May 12th.

Mary is the mother of Bernadette Hoyer of Fanwood, a long-time member of the Fanwood Rescue Squad, as was Bernadette's late husband, Bob Hoyer. Mrs. Wroblewski resides in Scotch Plains, and enjoys reading, gardening, bird

watching and online shopping.

Mary Wroblewski was born in Newark to parents who were immigrants to the United States from Russia (father), and Austria (mother). She left high school to support her family and later earned her GED and working her way through beauty school. She was both a hairdresser and clerical worker in her life, retiring from PSE&G in 1989.

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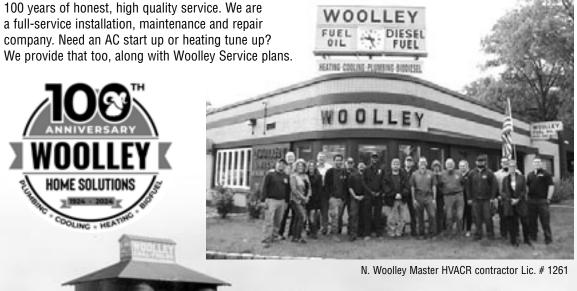
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(above) Mary Wroblewski and her family with Police, Fire and Rescue Squad members.

Courtesy photo







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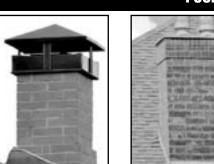
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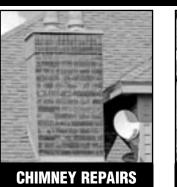
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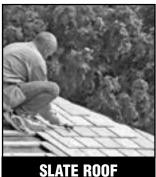
















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# **FANWOOD RECREATION**

#### PARTY IN PARK, FREE SUMMER MOVIE SERIES

Fanwood kicks off its summer season with its annual Party in the Park on Tuesday, June 25th, 6 – 8:30 p.m. in La Grande Park! Join us for food, music, rides, contests and more! Immediately following the party, the first film in Fanwood's free 8-week summer movie series, tentatively scheduled to be Wonka, will be screened on La Grande Park's baseball field. The remaining family-friendly selections for the movie series are still being worked out at the time of this writing.

Please check fanwoodrecreation.org for more details about the Party in the Park and updates on the movie series.

#### **REGISTRATION IS OPEN FOR REC PROGRAMS**

Registration is still open for these Fanwood Recreation summer programs for children: TGA Premier Junior Golf Camp, Applause Musical Theater Camp, CreateArt Workshops, Summer Park Program, Babysitting Certification, Junior First Responders Program, Junior Tennis Lessons, SAT Boot Camp, Summer Art Workshop: Monsters & Creatures & Creeps, STEM Python Coding Bootcamp, Daring Detectives Camp, Crazy Chem Works Camp, Secret Agent Lab, Rockin' Rockets Camp, Jr. Reactors Camp, NASA: Academy of Future Space Explorers Camp, Hip Hop Experience Dance Camp, Fashion Design Camp: Caribbean Week, Parent & Me Soccer Squirts, Parent & Me Multi Sports Squirts, Soccer Squirts, Squirts Multi Sports, T-Ball Squirts, Senior T-Ball Squirts, Multi Sports Camp, Basketball Camp, Golf Camp, NFL Football Camp, Skateboarding Camp. Cross Country/Track & Field Camp, Middle School Book Club and Middle School Math Review.

Registration is also open for Pickleball Lessons and Tennis Lessons for adults.

For more info about these programs and to register, please go to fanwoodrecreation.org.



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After receiving such positive feedback from our last walking tour, The Friends of the Fanwood Library are back, by popular demand, with another Historic Walking Tour of Fanwood. This time, local historian and Chair of the Fanwood Historical Preservation Commission, Joan Skubish, will take us on a walking tour of downtown Fanwood on June 9th at 2 p.m. (Rain Date to be Determined.) Registration is limited. Visit the library's website: fanwoodlibrary.org.

Do you know who is known as the Father of Fanwood?

Do you know about the Fanwood Athletic Club or the Maple Tree Inn?

Where was the old library downtown?

Come and learn about some of downtown Fanwood's interesting history on this downtown walking tour! In part, this will be a decade-bydecade tour – there's so much to learn!

At the conclusion of the tour, participants can visit the Fanwood Museum at the train station and refreshments will be provided. Joan will continue to share some more great information.

# **SP-F HS HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS CORRECTION**

Congratulations to Michael Richard Jackson, Scotch Plains- Fanwood High School class of 1965, pioneering medical innovator, for being one of the inductees into the SPFHS Hall of Fame. As one of the authors of a press release on behalf of the SPFHS Alumni Association, I apologize for incorrectly listing his name as

"Michael Richard" in the May, 2024 issue of this publication. More information about Michael Richard Jackson, as well as the other alumni inductees, can be found on the SPFHS Alumni Association's website: spfk12.org/alumni

-Michael Loberfeld, a member of the SPFHS Alumni Association



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## **ANDREW SMITH ASSUMES PLEBE LEADERSHIP POSITION**

#### U.S. Military Academy

The U.S. Military Academy recently announced the names of the cadets from the Class of 2027 selected to lead the Corps during its annual Plebe Parent Weekend. These fundamental roles are the top positions within the Corps charged with carrying out the responsibilities of leadership of the cadets. Brigade Information Systems Officer: Andrew Smith, from Fanwood, NJ, was among the cadets who assumed their leadership duties on March 22, 2024.

This is a key step in the leadership development of the fourth class as it provides them with their first opportunity to serve in various leadership roles. Additionally, it is a unique time, without upper-class presence, that affords the Plebes a significant bonding experience. Lastly, it is the U.S. Military Academy's and the Class of 2027's opportunity to showcase to parents, family, and friends the extraordinary transformation of these cadets.

"This year's cadet leaders have distinguished themselves amongst their peers, consistently demonstrating academic, military, and physical excellence throughout their time here, more importantly, they have demonstrated the exceptional moral character that leadership demands," said Commandant of Cadets Maj. Gen. Lori Robinson.

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country. Its mission remains constant—to educate, train, and inspire the

Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the U. S. Army. For more information, go to www.westpoint.edu.



(above) Andrew Smith, Fanwood, was among cadets from the Class of 2027 selected to lead the Corps.

A SAM'S

Photo by U.S. Military Academy







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# BOOK COLLECTION & SALE

The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library is thrilled to announce its highly anticipated book sale, a first since 2019, set to take place from June 13th to June 15th, 2024. This event is a beloved tradition within the community, offering a wide selection of books at unbeatable prices.

# **EVENT DETAILS: BOOK COLLECTION: JUNE 3RD – 8TH**

• June 3rd: 9:30am - 1pm;

• June 5th: 6:30-8:30pm; June 6th 4-7pm

• June 8th: 10am-12pm & 1-3pm

#### **SALE DATES: JUNE 13TH - 15TH**

 June 13: 5-8pm Scotch Plains and Fanwood Friends of the Library members

• June 14: 10-4pm;

• June 15: 10-4pm; Bag sale 2-4pm

The Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library invites book enthusiasts to participate in the book collection phase from June 3rd to June 8th. Donations will be accepted with volunteers stationed in the library basement to receive contributions. It's important to note that while the Friends appreciate all donations, they are unable to accept CDs, DVDs, cassettes, textbooks, magazines, out-of-date books, or items in poor condition.

"We are excited to once again host our annual book sale, bringing together book lovers from all walks of life," said Christine Szeluga, Vice President of the Friends of the Scotch Plains Public Library. "This event not only provides affordable reading materials but also supports the programs and initiatives such as the summer reading and museum pass programs, for our beloved library."

For more information about the book sale, to inquire about donations or to volunteer to help, please email: spplfriends1@gmail.com

# **LIBRARY ADULT PROGRAMS**

1927 Bartle Ave, Scotch Plains • 908-322-5007 • www.scotlib.org Wednesday, June 19 - Library Closed

#### **Bring Your Own Book**

Monday, June 3 at 10am an informal discussion of what participants have recently read and enjoyed.

Registration is required.

#### **Library Only Open for Primary Election**

Tuesday, June 4 closed for library business

## 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, June 7, 10am to Noon in the Adult Room with a public health nurse from Union County. Walk-ins welcome.

#### **Friends of the Library Book Sale**

Thursday, June 13, 5-8pm (Friends members only)

#### **Friends of the Library Book Sale**

Friday, June 14, 10am-4pm (Open to the public)

#### Friends of the Library Book Sale

Saturday, June 15, 10am-4pm (Bag Sale 2-4pm)

**Introduction to Crochet**Monday, June 17 at 10am

registration is required.

#### **Night Sky with**

#### **Morris Museum Astronomical Society**

Monday, June 17 at 8:30pm

#### **Drawing with Sandra Cerchio**

Tuesday, June 18 at 10am registration is required.

#### **Afternoon Book Club**

Tuesday, June 18 at 1pm will discuss Women Talking by Miriam Toews.

#### **Gallery Exhibit**

Thursday, June 20-Friday, June 28 featuring Sandra Cerchio's young students

#### **Board of Trustees meeting**

Thursday, June 20 at 7pm

#### **Evening Book Club**

Thursday, June 20 at 7pm will discuss The Housekeeper and the Professor by Yoko Ogawa.

#### **Ellen LaFurn concert**

Saturday, June 22 at 2pm featuring 20th Century female songwriters.

# Photography Basics for Adults with Danielle Stio

Monday, June 24 at 7pm Wednesday movie

Wednesday, June 26 at 12pm in our downstairs meeting room

## **GARWOOD ROCKS ANNUAL FESTIVAL – JUNE 2**

On Sunday, June 2nd from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Garwood celebrates its 10th Anniversary of its 'Garwood Rocks' Festival, sponsored by Vermella at Garwood Station. The evet is organized by the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce [GWACC] and draws over 5,000 people from all surrounding counties and towns in New Jersey. Admission to the festival is free of charge.

"With the 10th Anniversary of Garwood Rocks this year, we have been planning an even more special event than in years' past – especially with our continued partnership with Vermella at Garwood Station" said Lew Kimble, Executive

Director of the GWACC. "All residents from Garwood and the surrounding towns will be able to experience what the whole community has to offer – and after 10 years – it demonstrates our commitment to the region and the success of the event."

#### **ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:**

Center Street will be opened at 11 a.m. with food vendors and trucks lined up along the street, offering everything from classic carnival fare and much more.

The main stage at Center and Willow will feature performances from a variety of musical acts from local bands to bigger and more well-known artists including 4 Flight Rock, Marie & the Blue Rats and Mirrors on the Moon.

The Beer and Wine Garden, sponsored by the Crossroads, will provide adult beverages throughout the event.

Families with young children will be drawn to the kid's area at the Westfield Y location, between Locust Avenue and Beech, where there will be inflatable bounce houses and a carnival ride.

Classic car show which is expected to draw over 150 cars. Merchandise and artist vendors of all kinds will also be displaying their wares for purchase. Several non-profit organizations will also be on display.

For more information about Vermella at Garwood Station's residential rentals, visit www.vermellanj.com.

For more information about the Garwood Rocks event, contact Carol carol@uniquecruiseandtravel.com at 908-233-3021 or Donna Vella at donnavellastreetfairs@yahoo.com.





## URGENT NEED FOR VOLUNTEER ADVOCATES FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Information sessions to be held in June in Clark and Elizabeth

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 one of more than 500 children removed from home in Passaic and Union counties each year due to abuse and neglect. Currently, there is an urgent need for advocates to serve Union County children, as there are more than 250 children in the foster care system, with just 72 children being served. 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 Child Focus comes in. Specifically, its Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) program.

Said Executive Director Erica Fischer-Kaslander, "We are committed to recruiting, screening, and training advocates for every child in Union County who needs one, just as we've done in Passaic County. It is difficult to overstate the difference a CASA volunteer can make in the life of a child removed from home through no fault of their own, often due to abuse or neglect." She added, "Children with volunteer advocates are more likely to have needed services ordered on their behalf, spend less time in the foster system, and experience significantly better outcomes than those who go without. Becoming a CASA volunteer requires a significant time commitment and training, but volunteers often find the work as life-changing for themselves as it is for the children they help."

CASA volunteers are trained on the ins and outs of advocating for child-victims and fully supported by CASA staff. 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 placements are ever-changing. A CASA volunteer provides continuity during a time of chaos and unknowns.

The first step to training is to attend an

**Property Maintenance** 

information session. Choose from Thursday, June 6 at 5:30 p.m., and Thursday, June 27 at 5:30 p.m., at the Clark Public Library, 303 Westfield Avenue in Clark; Monday, June 10 at noon, at the Child Focus office at 1143 East Jersey Street, 2nd Floor, Elizabeth, NJ 07201; or Wednesday, June 5 at 5:30 p.m., Wednesday, June 12 at noon, or Monday, June 17 at 5:30 p.m. at the Wayne Child Focus office, 415 Hamburg Turnpike, Suite D2. Register now at casapassaicunion.org/infosession.

#### **ABOUT CHILD FOCUS:**

Child Focus prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect by amplifying their voices and working toward lasting, permanent solutions that address their unique situations and provide support needed to thrive. This critical work is accomplished through three distinct but complementary programs: CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, NJ Safe Babies Court Team, and the Open Door Store. For more information about Child Focus, log on to childfocusnj.org.

# UNICO WELCOMES LYDIA BOCZON

Scotch Plains Fanwood UNICO would like to welcome its newest member, Lydia Boczon, to the chapter.

UNICO is the largest Italian-American service organization in the USA, and the Scotch Plains Fanwood chapter recently celebrated 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 or email them at spfunico@gmail.com.



(above, l-r) SPF UNICO First Vice President, Daniela Sellinger swearing in Lydia at a recent chapter meeting.



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# **FANWOOD FD RECEIVES \$70K GRANT FUNDING**

The Borough of Fanwood has been awarded a \$70,000 grant award from the NJ Department of Community Affairs (DCA) American Rescue Plan (ARP) Grant Fund to purchase 15 sets of turnout coats and pants for the borough's volunteer fire department. The grant supports regional and local firefighter departments to ensure they have proper protection, cleaning, and sanitization equipment. These are funds available through the American Rescue Plan disbursed by the New Jersey DCA.

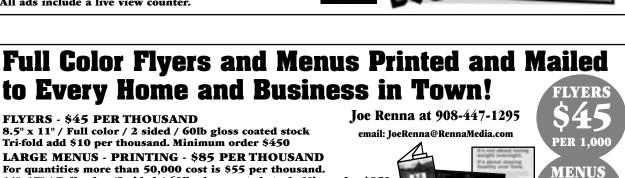
"The Fanwood Volunteer Fire Department is pleased to have been chosen to receive \$70,000 in this year's NJ DCA American Rescue Plan Grant. PPE (personal protective equipment) is the most important equipment we own. The safety of our membership with high-quality protective equipment allows us to perform with courage and confidence, while moving forward into dangerous environments," Fire Chief John Piccola said. "We will be replacing all necessary gear with at least 14 full sets."











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