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#### ADVOCATES FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN NEEDED

CASA Training Program in Clark this Fall

Child Focus is seeking dedicated community members to make a difference in the lives of abused and neglected children by volunteering as Court Appointed Special Advocates, or CASA volunteers. The next training session to become a child advocate kicks off in September at the Clark Public Library.

Each year in Union County, more than 250 children are removed from home, through no fault of their own, and placed in foster care. These children suffer a dual layer of trauma - first from the abuse and neglect that led to their placement in the child welfare system, and second from the upheaval and uncertainty that comes with being removed from the only home they've known. They need a reliable adult on their team, someone whose only agenda is speaking up for the best interests of that child.

That's where the nonprofit Child Focus' Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program comes in. A CASA volunteer ensures a child's needs are met while in care awaiting a safe, permanent home. Advocates visit the child regularly and connect with those in the child's life, making informed, independent, evidence-based recommendations to a family court judge. As caseworkers and resource homes frequently change, the CASA volunteer is often the only consistent adult presence in the child's life, and providing continuity during a time of turmoil and unknowns is critical.

No professional experience or prior knowledge of the child welfare system is needed, as volunteers are trained on the ins and outs of advocating for child-victims, and fully supported by CASA staff. Volunteers complete a 36-hour in-person training course that covers a wide range of topics to ensure volunteers are prepared to navigate court proceedings, build trusting relationships with children, and collaborate with caseworkers and attorneys to create a comprehensive support network.

"Our CASA training program is designed to ensure that volunteers have the tools they need to succeed in this role and advocate for what's truly in the best interests of the child or sibling group,"



(above) A recent CASA Volunteer class during their training session at the Child Focus office.

Courtesy photo

said Erica Fischer-Kaslander, Executive Director of Child Focus. "We teach a strengths-based approach, which helps volunteers harness the potential within each child and the support network surrounding them. It's about fostering resilience and optimism for children who have experienced very difficult circumstances, and for all those involved in their journey toward a brighter future."

In addition to educating volunteers on the child welfare system and preparing court reports, the multi-disciplinary training delves into a range of issues from trauma and mental health to poverty and cultural competency. The training incorporates role-play as well as courtroom observations, the latter of which help demystify the work. Upon successful completion of training, volunteers are equipped with the tools needed to successfully advocate for local vulnerable children, and are sworn in by a Family Court judge.

Interested in securing a spot in the fall training? Attend one of these information sessions: Wednesday, August 14 at 5:30pm at the Union County Colleen Fraser Building, 300 North Avenue East in Westfield; Thursday, August 22 at 5:30pm at the Rahway Public Library, 2 City Hall Plaza; and Wednesday, August 28 at 12pm at the Child Focus office at 1143 East Jersey Street, 2nd Floor in Elizabeth. Sessions at the Wayne Child Focus office, Hamburg Turnpike, Suite D2, are Tuesday, August 6 at 5:30pm, Thursday, August 15 at 12pm, and Monday, August 19 at 12pm. Register now at casapassaicunion.org/info-session.

#### **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.

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#### Elmora Hills Monthly · Page 2 · August 2024 SUPPORTERS PROVIDE NEEDED RENOVATIONS

JFSCNJ Housing Services Department



#### Renna Media LLC, Publishers 202 Walnut Ave., Cranford, NJ 07016

Elmora Hills Monthly is published by Renna Media. 5,400 newspapers are printed monthly and mailed to businesses and residents in and around the Elmora Hills section of Elizabeth, NJ. Although great care has been taken to ensure the information contained within is accurate, Renna Media assumes no liability for errors or omissions.

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#### **SEND US YOUR NEWS**

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

#### **ADVERTISING**

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Through the efforts of JFSCNJ Board Member Mark Ginsberg of Garden Homes, the Wilf • The Wilf Family for donating all of the Family, and several generous supporters who donated their goods and services, JFSCNJ renovated existing office space, in the Elizabeth office, for the Housing Services Department. The JFSCNJ Housing Services Department provides rental assistance, emergency financial assistance, deposit, case-management counseling to individuals and families in Union County.

We wish to thank the following supporters for kindly contributing their goods and services to this project.

They are:

- furniture.
- Mark Ginsberg, Garden Homes, for coordinating the entire project.
- Kellie Geltrude, KE Interior Designers, who designed the office space.
- Meir Levi, Straightline Electronics, for the electrical work.
- Lenny Shapsis of DFS (Design Flooring Systems) for donating and installing the flooring.
- Marco Grillo of Hamilton Painting, for painting the office.



(above, l-r) Mark Ginsberg, Peter Jacob (JFSCNJ Housing Services Director) Kellie Geltrude, Marta Otero (JFSCNJ Housing Services Social Worker), and Tom Beck (JFSCNJ Executive Director).

Courtesy photo

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BEAUTY IN DIVERSITY BY PIERRE DALPÉ

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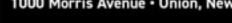
### Silence Breaking:

Gail Winbury

August 27 - December 6, 2024

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(above) The Gateway Family YMCA's offer safety, enrichment and fun in after school programs.





#### **AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS AT YMCA**

The Gateway Family YMCA Offers School Age Child Care Programs in Local School Districts. At the Y's Before and After School Programs, kids have a safe place to explore their interests and discover their passions, learn to work and play together and turn classmates into friends. With programs run by caring adult role models who are invested in helping every kid reach their full potential, The Gateway Family YMCA Before and After School Care Programs are a safe place for working families.

"We are committed to the youth in our care, providing staff role models, opportunities for innovative STEAM activities, healthy living, arts and youth sports," stated Melynda A. Disla, President and CEO, The Gateway Family YMCA. "As an organization dedicated to youth development, we understand how important it is that our children have a safe and enriching environment for learning, both in and out of school."

Registration is ongoing for the 2024-2025 school year Before and After School Programs offered in collaboration with the Rahway Public School District, Elizabeth Public School District and Union Township Public School District. School age child care programs are a place where children can remain active, extend their learning and continue to be engaged during their time out of school – a critical time for youth. Programs are held in local elementary and middle schools as

well as at YMCA for children attending on-site Preschool at the YMCA in the Union Township Public School District and the Rahway Public School District. The YMCA also offers Vacation Day programs during school holidays.

"We are pleased to be able to provide these programs to the families in our community, allowing their invaluable social, emotional, physical and academic growth to continue long after the school day ends," stated Melynda A. Disla. "Through a balanced approach to youth development, the curriculum offers activities, mentorship and academic support, nurturing the potential of all participants throughout the year."

The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers dedicated to strengthening community through Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. The Gateway Family YMCA impacts the community by providing quality services for all, with financial assistance available to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The Y doesn't just strengthen bodies – it strengthens people, families and communities.

For more information about The Gateway Family YMCA's school age child care programs, visit tgfymca.org or contact the Elizabeth Branch 908-355-9622, Five Points Branch 908-688-9622 or Rahway Branch 732-388-0057.





# 19B E. Westfield Ave. Roselle Park, NJ 07204 732-579-4138 Summer Store Hours: Tuesday - Thursday 2pm - 9pm Friday 2pm - 10pm Saturday 12pm - 10pm Sunday 12pm - 9pm (Starting July 1st - September 2nd) Delivery and Advance Ordering now available on our website www.parkicecream.com Park Concerns July 1st - September 2nd) BUY 1 SCOOP & GET 2ND SCOOP FREE With this coupon. Expires 8/31/24.

#### SALEM ROADHOUSE CAFÉ: JAZZ ON AUG 10

The Salem Roadhouse Café presents Radam Schwartz and his Jazz Quartet, Saturday, August 10th, 2024. The doors open at 7:30 p.m., the show starts at 8 p.m. Admission is \$20 and includes show, snacks, non-alcoholic beverages, and dessert. The venue is located in Bailey Hall, below Townley Presbyterian Church, 829 Salem Rd, Union, NJ. The Roadhouse operates as a non-profit that raises funds for carefully chosen local charities.

Radam, a Hammond B3 Organist and Jazz pianist, has built his reputation over the last 30 years playing with such great artists as Arthur and Red Prysock, Eddie Lockjaw Davis, Al Hibler, David Fathead Newman, Russell Malone, Cecil Brooks III and Jimmy Ford. He has been featured on over 40 albums as a sideman and has recorded 9 albums as a leader.

Backing up Radam at this special jazz instrumental show will be Rodrigo Romero (aka RoD) who is a Peruvian woodwind player, composer and educator active in Lima, Miami and New Jersey; Guitarist Ilan Eisenzweig who studied under renowned jazz guitarist Vic Juris and frequently performs at venues throughout New Jersey and New York City; Philadelphia born musician Dave Gibson who is paving his way toward that pantheon of jazz greats. Paying all the dues required to develop his prodigious talent. Gibson has earned an impeccable reputation in the jazz world.

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

#### 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.

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, 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.

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. Many thousands of dollars have been raised for these deserving charities.

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#### **Zumba Gold**

Thursday, August 1, 15, 22, & 29 and Monday, August 12 & 26 at 9 am Add fitness into your day through dance with us! Call 908-353-4820 to reserve your spot, however, walk-ins are welcome!

#### **Adult Chess Club**

Friday, August 2, 9, & 23 at 12:30 pm
Join the Adult Chess Club every Friday at
12:30pm! Regardless of your skill level!
Beginners are welcome to participate. We hope
to see you there!

#### **Crochet with Sol**

Monday, August 5 & 12 and Tuesday, August 6 & 13 at 12 pm

Learn the tips and tricks with Ms. Sol! She will teach you everything you need to know to get started, from fundamental stitches to understanding gauge.

#### Mahiong

Monday, August 5, 12, 19, & 26 from 1 pm - 4 pm

Everyone who loves Mahjong is welcome to come & play at the library. Bring friends or come alone & find new partners. We'll provide the space for open play. A minimum of 4 players are required to play the game.

#### The Book Clubbing Club

Tuesday, August 6 at 11 am

Become a part of our Book Club and engage in lively discussions about the latest and most intriguing book news with like-minded book lovers! This Month's pick is "Lessons in Chemistry" by Bonnie Garmus

#### Lil' Bookworms

Wednesday, August 7 at 5 pm
Kids will share their love of reading, learn to talk about the books they're reading, and be motivated to read. Ages: 5-8

#### **Bridge for Beginners**

Thursday, August 8 at 1 pm

All skill levels are welcome to join the library for Bridge - a challenging trick-taking card game played with a standard 52-card deck by four players in two partnerships sitting opposite each other around a table. Stop by with your own deck of cards!

#### **Storytime at Green Acres Park**

Saturday, August 10 at 11 am

Located on 169 Bellevue St, Elizabeth, NJ Join Ms. Martha for storytime and craft, and somuch-fun at the park! No registration required

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#### Stitch & Chat

Tuesday, August 13 at 10 am and Wednesday, August 14 at 5 pm
Come to Elmora to mend your clothing. Bring the article you need help with and assistance will be provided.

#### **Adult Scrabble**

Tuesday, August 13 at 2:30 pm
Word lovers! Exercise your B-R-A-I-N (7 points) by playing Scrabble with other likeminded adults.

#### **ESL Classes for Kids**

Wednesday, August 14 at 5 pm Join us every third Wednesday of each month, to learn English as a Second Language with fun interactive activities. For ages 5-12

#### **Toddlers World**

Friday, August 16 & 30 at 11 am An hour of fun songs to sing, music, and playtime.

#### **Inside Out at the Library**

Saturday, August 17 at 1 pm

Join us for a joyful story that explores a range of emotions, an exciting game of Simon Says, and a coloring activity!

#### Junior Chess Club - (Ages: 7-12)

Monday, August 19 & 26 at 4 pm

Don't miss out on our Chess Club for Kids! We welcome all kids, including beginners. Join us and let's play some chess!

#### **Adult Spanish Book Club**

Thursday, August 22 at 2 pm

Come and join Martha as she hosts a monthly book discussion for Spanish-speaking adults!

This month's read is "Conversacion en la Catedral" by Mario Vargas Llosa

#### **Bubbles aRe Us**

Saturday, August 24 at 1 pm

Located on 640 3rd Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ Join Ms. Martha for songs, stories, and crafts with LOADS of fun! This storytime will feature stories in English and Spanish for the whole family. FREE PIZZA!!!

#### **Family Fun BINGO**

Wednesday, August 28 at 5 pm

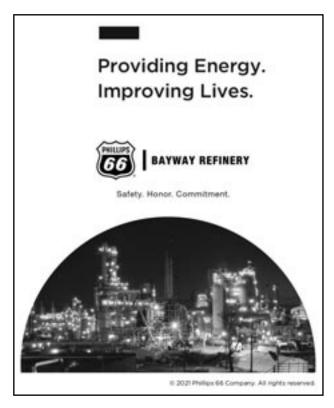
Join us at the Elmora Branch Library for a funfilled game of BINGO the whole family can enjoy! Exciting prizes await the winners!







*Many References* • 25 years of experience Lic # 13VH00418100











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