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UNION'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

FREE

Published by Renna Media, LLC. On-line at RennaMedia.com

Issue 169 • January 2025

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WINTER WONDERLAND AND HOLIDAY VILLAGE

Union Township hosted a two-day celebration packed with festive fun and free activities for the whole family.

Winter Wonderland and Holiday Village was held at Biertuempfel Park on Friday, Dec 6, and Saturday, Dec 7, 2024.

There were live performances, food trucks, synthetic ice skating, photos with Santa, a Santa workshop with crafts, holiday games, and so much more!



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Spirit of UNION

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

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HICKORY TREE CHORUS WINTER SING-ALONG

Stay warm this winter by putting some music in your life in 2025! Join the Hickory Tree Chorus for a Winter Sing-Along, which will include a meet-and-greet, warm-ups and, of course, some wonderful singing. Dates are January 8 and 15, 2025, from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. at The Shrine of St Joseph, 1050 Long Hill Road, Stirling, NJ. The chorus sings a variety of music, including old-fashioned love songs, Broadway, Disney, Beatles, and more, in a fun, supportive community. Come sing with us and share the joy of music together! Stay for friendship and fun!

And the event is free!

Hickory Tree is an award-winning women's chorus singing four-part a cappella harmony in the barbershop style. We are passionate about music, performance, fun and friendship. We believe every voice counts and encourage women singers of all ages, colors, ethnicities, and orientations to visit us and share our joy of music.

Please contact the Chorus for the Winter Sing-Along by email at info@hickorytreechorus.org. Find more information at hickorytreechorus.org.



(above) The Hickory Tree award-winning women's chorus is hosting free events on January 8 and 15, 2025, from 6:45 to 9:30 p.m. at The Shrine of St Joseph, 1050 Long Hill Road, Stirling, NJ.

Courtesy photo



● Use code **KSREN** for 20% off tickets!

Erth's Dinosaur Zoo Live!
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SPIRITUAL? CURIOUS? SEEKING?

Do you consider yourself spiritual? Are you curious about what people are talking about when they speak of having faith or being spiritual? Are you seeking peace of mind, of heart of soul?

Come and see for yourself. Come and explore the Christian faith. Come and discuss with other seekers what is on your mind, what you cannot talk about except with other seekers. Come to an Alpha gathering.

Alpha is for everybody that wants to discuss seeking answers to life's big questions. Why are we here? Is this all there is to life? Where are we going? How do I attain peace of mind, heart, and soul? Whether you are young or old, have faith or are atheist or agnostic, Alpha provides a safe environment for exploring our big questions about life.

We begin by sharing a meal together and

getting to know each other. We watch a video together then break into small groups for uninhibited discussion about what is on our minds.

The series runs for 12 weeks on Monday nights beginning at 7:30 p.m. and ending at 9:00 p.m. It will begin February 3rd, 2025, and end May 12th, 2025. Three of the sessions are live in person and the remainder are on Zoom. There is no cost to participate. You will need a desire for frank discussion, a willingness to participate and a commitment to attend. You will also need a computer or smartphone capable of Zoom sessions.

The live in person sessions will be held at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, 1571 S. Martine Ave., Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

To register go onto IHMParish.net. If you have any questions, please call 908-889-2100.

Photo by The Raptor Trust

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OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

Thursday, January 23, 2025
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

Sunday, January 26, 2025
11:00 pm - 1:30 pm

**PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL
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START STRONG, STAY CONNECTED AT THE GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA

The Gateway Family YMCA Provides Unique Opportunities for Everyone this Winter



At The Gateway Family YMCA, individuals and families find more than just a place to work out. With opportunities to connect with new people, develop new skills and explore new interests, the Y facilitates the discovery of new passions and assists in gaining a greater sense of purpose and belonging for all. This January, The Gateway Family YMCA is helping everyone in the community start strong with new programs, new hours, community initiatives and a membership special!

Winter programs at The Gateway Family YMCA include new options that introduce Arts, Enrichment and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) in addition to traditional YMCA programs like Dance, Gymnastics, Swimming Lessons, Youth Sports, and Group Exercise. With registration available now, for winter programs, childcare and summer camp, January is the ideal time to get ahead and plan for an exciting 2025. Beginning January 2nd, The Gateway Family YMCA has announced expanded facility hours in Elizabeth, Rahway and Union to better serve the local community. In addition, January 1 – 15, everyone can join the YMCA with \$0 Joiner fee using promo code JAN at tgfymca.org/join-the-Y. This offer is available on all membership types, including Family Memberships with one to four adults. For local families, The Gateway Family YMCA provides a fun and unique opportunity to support all ages, together or apart, within the same organization.

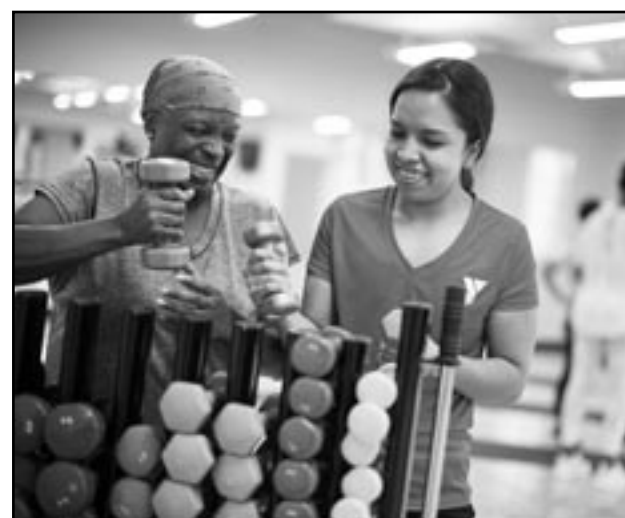
The Gateway Family YMCA provides alternative solutions for busy families, including virtual group exercise, a mobile app with 24-hour access to thousands of recorded seminars, skill drills, group exercise, art and motivational programming.

Unique programs for specialized communities is at the heart of the Y's mission. Through WISE Community Services programs individuals with Alzheimer's, Dementia, Mild Cognitive Impairment, or those who would benefit from additional assistance and their caregivers receive specialized services and support to ensure they

remain healthy, active and independent. This March, The Gateway Family YMCA will launch a Veterans Wellness Initiative. For interested individuals, the Wellness Center Branch is collecting an interest list at 908-349-9622 or veterans@tgfymca.org. Chronic Disease prevention and management programs like Enhance Fitness for Arthritis, Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring and LiveSTRONG at the YMCA provide a comprehensive community resource without the additional burden of travel. The 7th Grade initiative, Boys and Young Men of Color Strategy (BYMOC) and innovative programs like Esports ensure that everyone receives the support and commitment of caring role models, leadership opportunities and life-skills necessary for a bright future.

"Our mission is to serve and support all individuals in our community, and we have a unique opportunity to ensure equitable access is available through financial assistance supported by community partners and donors in our Annual Support Campaign," stated Colleen A. Clayton, Chief Development and Strategy Officer.

To learn more about The Gateway Family YMCA, visit tgfymca.org or contact the Elizabeth Branch 908-355-9622, Five Points Branch 908-688-9622, Rahway Branch 732-388-0057 or the Wellness Center Branch 908-349-9622 for more information.



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LONG-TIME PUPPY RAISERS HONORED

The Seeing Eye

The Seeing Eye recently honored five long-time puppy raisers with induction to “The Seeing Eye 21 Club”, a special honor for volunteers who have raised at least 21 Seeing Eye® puppies. The non-profit also honored the Seeing Eye puppy raising club volunteers with two awards, the Outstanding Leader Award and the 20-year Leader Award. Finally, 34 exceptional college-bound puppy raisers were awarded college scholarships totaling \$64,000.

“Each year, The Seeing Eye’s Family Day is a celebration of all the hard work and dedication of our volunteer puppy raising families,” said Seeing Eye director of canine development Peggy Gibbon. “An army of volunteers provides each Seeing Eye puppy with a loving home environment, socialization, and basic training that prepares them to become Seeing Eye dogs for people who are blind.”

“We’re actively recruiting puppy raisers and puppy sitters for our upcoming litters that are planned for the coming months. If you’re interested in joining our community of dog lovers, now is a great time to reach out to us and learn what puppy raising is all about,” said Gibbon. “We need homes and families of all shapes and sizes for our puppies because fully trained Seeing Eye dogs are placed in similarly diverse families and living situations with people who are blind.”

A puppy raiser family is responsible for

providing a loving and nurturing home environment for approximately one year. During that time, the raiser is responsible for teaching basic obedience, house manners, bringing the puppy to Seeing Eye puppy club meetings and socialization trips in their area. The Seeing Eye puppy could be a German shepherd, Labrador retriever, golden retriever, or a Labrador/golden retriever cross.

Puppy raisers must live within New Jersey, eastern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware or New York (Rockland or Orange Counties) so they can attend regular puppy club meetings where they will receive help and coaching with their puppies. All veterinary expenses are covered by The Seeing Eye and a stipend is provided to help cover the cost of dog food. If a Seeing Eye puppy does not graduate from the program, the family who raised the puppy is offered the first option to adopt the puppy they raised. For more information visit seeingeye.org/raise.

Established in 1929, The Seeing Eye provides specially bred and trained dogs to guide people who are blind. Seeing Eye dog handlers experience greatly enhanced mobility and independence, allowing them to retain their active lifestyles. The Seeing Eye is a 501(c)3 non-profit supported by contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations, bequests, and other planned gifts.

The Seeing Eye is a trademarked name and can only be used to describe the dogs bred and trained

at the school’s facilities in Morristown, N.J. If you would like more information on The Seeing Eye, please visit the website at SeeingEye.org, call 973-539-4425, or email info@seeingeye.org.



(above) Pam Heady was among those inducted into “The Seeing Eye 21 Club”, a special honor for volunteers who have raised at least 21 Seeing Eye® puppies. Courtesy photo

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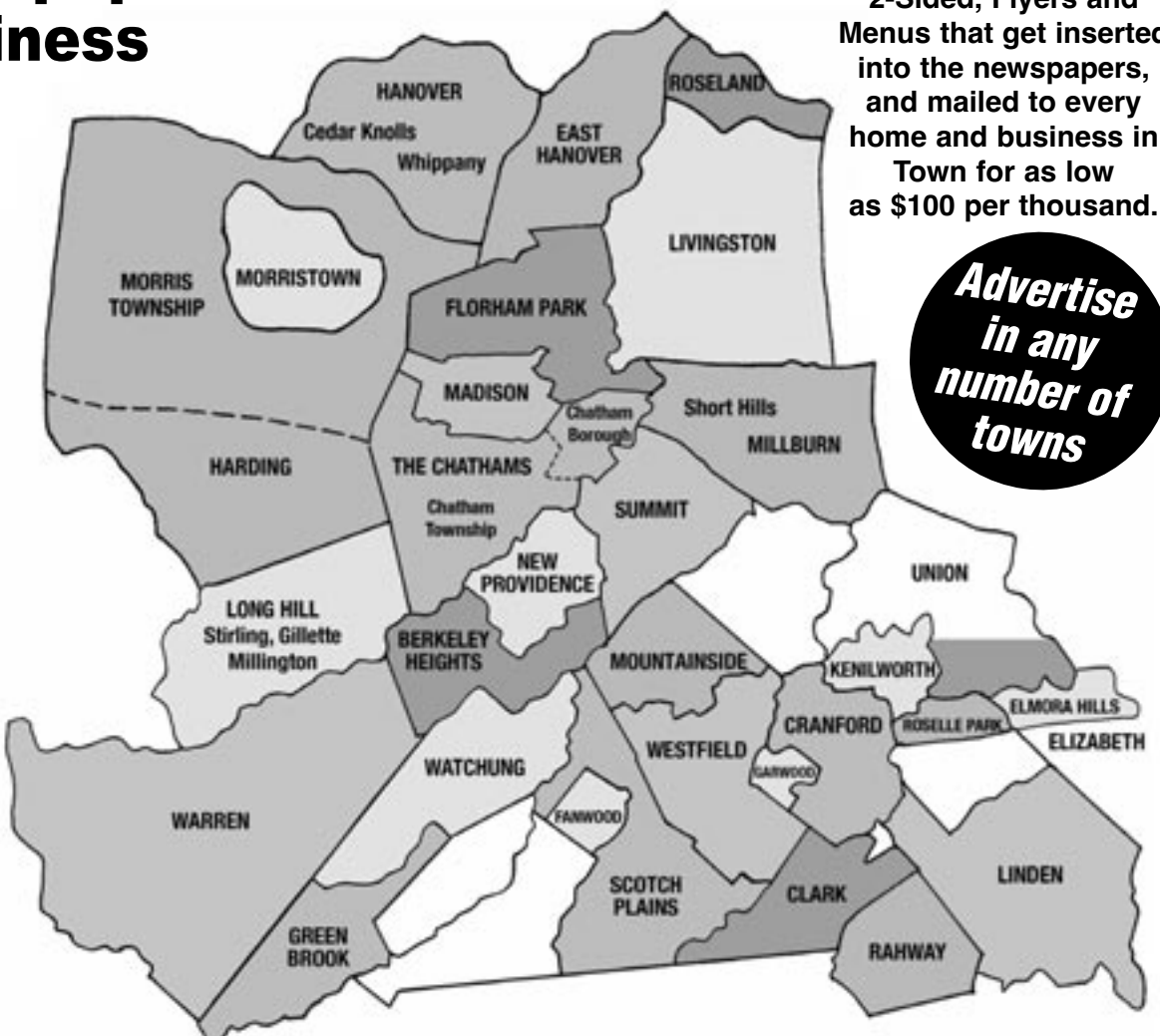
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6 Units 6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE 6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
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JANUARY EVENTS AT THE UNION PUBLIC LIBRARY

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 Vauxhall Branch, 23 Hilton Avenue, Vauxhall, NJ 07088 • Phone: 908-851-5451 • <https://uplnj.org/>

Friends of the Library meeting (Main Library)

Thurs. 1/2 @ 6:00 pm

Join the Friends of the Library at their monthly meeting. New members are always welcome. Come and support your library.

Health & Wellness with Courtney Gaines (Vauxhall Library)

Sat. 1/4 @ 1:00 pm

Please join us as Ms. Courtney Gaines talks about health, wellness, and other topics in a fun way as we connect as a community

Total Body Blast with Courtney Gaines (Vauxhall Library)

Mon. 1/6 @ 6:00 pm

Participants will complete a wide range of upper and lower body movements that will challenge their body in a safe and efficient way.

Introduction to Native Plant Gardening (Vauxhall Library)

Wed. 1/8 @ 6:00 pm

In partnership with the Native Plant Society of NJ and Master Gardeners of Union County Elizabeth Talmont & Isabel Julio join the Union Public Library in an informative discussion about Native plants.

Total Body Blast with Courtney Gaines (Main Library)

Sat. 1/11 @ 12:00 pm

Participants will complete a wide range of upper and lower body movements that will challenge their body in a safe and efficient way. The program is led by Courtney Gaines.

American Historical Theatre presents Martin Luther King Jr (Vauxhall Library)

Sat. 1/11 @ 1:00 pm

Keith Henley, an actor from the American Historical Theatre in Philadelphia, will perform a reenactment of Martin Luther King and his importance in the Civil Rights movement

Architect of the Mind: A Mentalist Show (Vauxhall Library)

Mon. 1/13 @ 6:00 pm

Minds are read, lies detected, actions influenced - all in an engaging, family-friendly format!

Build Your Balance (Main Library)

Wed. 1/15 @ 10:30 am

Through gentle strength exercises, and stepping strategies, learn to keep your body balanced in different situations.

Adult Crochet for Beginners (Vauxhall Library)

Wed. 1/15 @ 6:00 pm

Please join us as Ms. Lisa Roberts teaches attendees the basics of learning how to crochet.

Off the Shelf Book Club (Main Library)

Thurs. 1/16 @ 6:30 pm

This month the club will be reading The Heaven & Earth Grocery Store by James McBride. Great way to make new friends!

Animal Crossing Open Hours (Online via Nintendo Switch)

Fri. 1/17 @ 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Check out our inclusive virtual library building that serves children, teens, and adults. As a thank you for visiting, there will be freebies! Our UPL Nintendo friend code is SW-4027-1837-6212. All ages welcome. No registration necessary. If you have any questions, please contact jcarvajal@uplnj.org.

Elvistory: The King of Rock n Roll (Main Library)

Sat. 1/18 @ 1:00 pm

Join us for Elvistory's first appearance at the Union Public Library. It's the late 50's and Elvis has taken the country by storm, appearing on Ed Sullivan and other TV shows, and diving headfirst into acting in some of his early films.

Nutrition & Wellness with Courtney Gaines (Main Library)

Wed. 1/22 @ 12:00 pm

This will help guide you into making healthier behavior changes. We will discuss basic fitness and nutrition topics

Hilton Readers Book Discussion Group (Vauxhall Library)

Wed. 1/22 @ 6:00 pm

January's selection is Camino Island by John Grisham.

Saturday Afternoon Trivia: 80s Music II (Vauxhall Library)

Sat. 1/25 @ 1:00 pm

Put down the Duran Duran record and put on your Wham! shirt as the Vauxhall Branch Library returns with 80's Music Trivia. Attendees will play for fun and prizes.

Vauxhall Negro League Baseball Club (Vauxhall Library)

Mon. 1/27 @ 6:00 pm

Come join us as our goal is to preserve the history of Negro League Baseball. January's meeting will consist of a book talk of Joe Posnanski's The Soul of Baseball and a discussion of film viewing of The League.

An Inside Look at Working with a Literary Agent: A Conversation with Seth Fishman

Tues. 1/28 @ 1:00 pm

You're writing a book (or thinking about it), but what happens next? Join us for an inside look into working with an agent and the beginning stages.

Library Karaoke: Back to the 80s (Vauxhall Library)

Wed. 1/29 @ 6:00 pm

Do you think you can sing better than Cyndi or Prince? Maybe you have better moves than the King of Pop? Please join us for fun and prizes as we sing the greatest hits from the 1980s.

Evening Meditation (Virtual on Zoom)

Mon. @ 6:30 pm on 1/6, 1/13, 1/27

Join Bindu Bhatt for a virtual evening meditation session. No experience necessary. Bindu has practiced meditation for over 30 years and would like to share her insight with you.

Weekly Chair Yoga (Main Library)

Tues. @ 9:00 am on 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28

Take a deep breath with friends and stretch! A popular class for beginners or professionals now as a weekly series. Presented by the Gateway Family YMCA.

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

Weds. @ 12:30 - 2:00 pm on 1/8, 1/15, 1/22, 1/29

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.

Meditation

(Virtual on Zoom)

Thurs. @ 11:30 am on 1/2, 1/9, 1/16, 1/23, 1/30

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

Library Board Next Meeting Date Meeting at the Main Library

Tuesday 1/28 @ 6:30 pm



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