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Elizabeth Public Schools

The MLK Committee of Elizabeth NJ, with the support of Elizabeth Public Schools, held a wreath-laying ceremony in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on January 15, 2025, at the MLK Monument in front of Elizabeth City Hall. The ceremony was emceed by Elizabeth Board of Education President Stanley J. Neron, an opening prayer was given by Reverend Leonard Grayson of True Word Community Christian Center, and Opening Remarks were given by Reverend George Britt of Mount Teman AME Church.

The performances at the ceremony began with “Star-Spangled Banner” and “Lift Every Voice and Sing”, performed by George Washington Academy School No. 1 and Jerome Dunn Academy School No. 9 Music Teacher Kerry Stubbs. Additional performances included “Be the Change,” performed by the Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy Choir under the direction of Kelly Ann Cubias, an excerpt from “I Have a Dream,” performed by Winfield Scott School No. 2 students, “Litany of Commemoration,” performed by Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy student Dory Madrid, and “America the Beautiful,” performed jointly by the Elizabeth High School Marching Band, under the direction of Miguel Bolivar, and the Elizabeth High School Color Guard, under the direction of Sharon Calixto.

Photos by Elizabeth Public Schools



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CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF NIGHT SKY GAZING

Amateur Astronomers, Inc (AAI) of Cranford, NJ celebrated their 75th Anniversary on Sunday, November 17, 2024, at The Westwood Caterers of Garwood, NJ. In attendance were 53 past and current members who range from teenagers to seniors.

AAI has always interested anyone who loves looking and learning about the night sky. Housed in the William Miller Sperry Observatory on the Union College campus in Cranford, the observatory is open to the public every Friday night with their twin domes looking at the heavens. One of the domes houses a 24-inch reflector and the other dome houses a 10 refractor, which was constructed by club members. Public lectures start at 8:30 p.m. on Fridays, they are on current topics in Astronomy.

Youth lectures are presented by the club at 7:00 p.m. to preregistered scout groups to help them earn their patches in science. If you are interested in preregistering a scout group, please contact info@asterism.org.

The club also celebrates celestial events such as eclipses by opening the Observatory and having numerous telescopes outside the building. For more information about AAI email, membership@asterism.org or visit asterism.org.

ASTRONOMY DAY - MAY 17, 2025

Amateur Astronomers, Inc. along with the North Jersey Astronomical Group, two amateur astronomy clubs located in New Jersey, are once again holding their annual Astronomy Day on

Saturday, May 17, 2025. The event will be held in 2 locations: Trailside Nature & Science Center in Mountainside in the afternoon and at William Miller Sperry Observatory on the campus of Union College in Cranford in the evening. The theme is "Solar Max, Unlocking the Secrets of the Sun." This is a family friendly event that focuses on learning about our Sun and its impact on us, and also about astronomy and related sciences in a fun and easy to understand atmosphere. This event appeals to both children and adults. The event is free and open to the public and does not require preregistration. So, mark your calendars for Saturday, May 17, 2025, and come out to learn more about the Sun and our universe!



(above) AAI has always interested anyone who loves looking and learning about the night sky.

Housed in the William Miller Sperry Observatory on the Union College campus in Cranford, the observatory is open to the public every Friday night.

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THREE STUDENTS TO SHINE AT PLAYWRIGHTS FESTIVAL

Submitted by Sandra Toll, Theatre Arts Teacher, Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy

The Jefferson Arts Academy community is thrilled to announce the selection of three exceptional student playwrights whose original works will take center stage at the upcoming Newark Playwrights Festival. The festival will take place on February 12 at the Jim Wise Theatre in Kupfrian Hall on the NJIT Campus, offering an extraordinary evening of creativity, talent, and storytelling.

The selected plays, chosen from a competitive pool of submissions, will be professionally directed and brought to life by NJIT actors, providing a unique platform for these emerging voices to showcase their talent in front of an audience. Their achievements have been guided and nurtured by their drama teacher and mentor, Sandra Toll, whose prioritizes motivating students to bring their voices to the stage.

“This festival is not just about showcasing young talent; it’s about empowering students to explore storytelling and express themselves through the art of playwriting,” said Toll. “I’m incredibly proud of what these students have accomplished.”

Journey Beech-Wilson a junior, presents *Spirits, Are You Here?*, a suspenseful examination of trust and fear, this play explores the fragile boundaries between belief, deception, and the unknown.



Mia Diaz



Sasha Silva



Journey Beech-Wilson

Mia Diaz, a senior, offers *Late Night Diner*, a thought-provoking work set against a backdrop of a storm, this play uncovers themes of justice, resilience, and the reckoning of past wrongs.

Sasha Silva, a junior, captivates with *I Like an Idiot*, A heartfelt exploration of unspoken feelings that delves into the courage it takes to confront love, vulnerability, and the fear of rejection.

The Newark Playwrights Festival is a celebration of fresh, innovative voices in theater.

Attendees can look forward to an evening of riveting performances that highlight the power and creativity of young minds.

Event Details:

Date: February 12, 2025

Time: 7 pm

Location: Jim Wise Theatre, 99 Summit Street, Newark, NJ 07103.

Admission is free. Don’t miss this chance to support the next generation of playwrights and experience the magic of live theater.

Photo credit: Garrett Maney



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BOY SCOUT TROOP AND CUB SCOUT PACK AWARDS PRESENTED

Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23 presented awards and recognitions to their members at a Court of Awards on Wednesday, December 18. The Scouts received rank advancements, merit badges, adventure pins and belt loops.

Participation emblems were given out for the Boy Scout's week-long summer camp in July and the Jersey 360 Jamboree at the Sussex County Fairgrounds in October. Some of the Boy Scouts

received Historic Trail Awards for assisting in staffing the Four Centuries in a Weekend program at the Deserted Village of Feltville in October. And most Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts received the Chartered Organization Service Award for collecting 6,000 pounds of food in their Scouting for Food Drive in November.

The Scouting program instills character, good citizenship and physical fitness in youth through outdoor activities such as campouts and hikes,

involvement in community activities, and just plain FUN!

Cub Scout Pack 23 provides activities and training for boys and girls in Kindergarten through fifth grades. Boy Scout Troop 23 is for boys who are at least 11 years old or graduated from the fifth grade. New members are welcome at any time, all year round. For more details, please contact Dan Bernier, Scoutmaster, at (908) 451-1948 or webfoottroop@gmail.com.

ALL CHILDREN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN PINEWOOD DERBY

The excitement is building for the Cub Scouts of Pack 23 as they get ready for the annual Pinewood Derby. Scouts are given a kit that includes a block of wood, plastic wheels and axles. With help from a parent or other adult, they transform those parts into a race car and then race it against their friends' cars, down a 30-foot long track. Trophies are presented to the winners.

Pack 23 would like to invite all boys and girls, from Kindergarten to the 5th grade, to join in the fun, even if they are not in Cub Scouts! The Pinewood Derby race will be held on Friday, February 7, in Saint Genevieve's Church hall, at 7:00 p.m. Derby kits cost \$6 each and can be requested from Cubmaster Dan Bernier at 908-451-1948.

The Scouting program at St. Genevieve's Church teaches character, citizenship and physical fitness to the youth of Elizabeth and surrounding towns. New members are welcome at any time, all year round. For more details, please contact Dan Bernier, Scoutmaster, at (908) 451-1948 or webfoottroop@gmail.com.



(above) Scoutmaster Dan Bernier presents Bobcat adventure pins to the Arrow of Light Cub Scouts of Pack 23 at a recent Court of Awards.

Courtesy photo



(above) Cub Scouts from Pack 23 are transforming blocks of wood into race cars for their annual Pinewood Derby.

Courtesy photo

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AN UNUSUAL GOOSE REHABBED AND RELEASED

The Raptor Trust

The Brant goose, with its compact size and striking black-and-white plumage, is a remarkable bird. Adapted to drink saltwater, these geese embark on long migratory journeys from their Arctic breeding grounds to coastal winter habitats. Look for them in estuaries, mudflats, and saltmarshes, where they thrive throughout the winter months.

Recently, The Raptor Trust treated a Brant goose (Admit #21-4190) found in Long Valley with wounds from a predator attack. After intensive care, including suturing lacerations, treating an eye injury and parasites, this resilient bird was successfully released at Sandy Hook on November 2nd.

ABOUT THE RAPTOR TRUST

The Raptor Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located at 1390 White Bridge Rd., Millington, NJ. They provide free care and assistance to injured, sick, or orphaned wild birds. They offer educational programs to the public about wild birds, especially birds of prey. They strive to provide a human example for others. For more information about upcoming events, to make a donation, and volunteer opportunities visit info@theraptortrust.org. To report an injured wild bird call 908-647-2353.

(above) We're thrilled to see this Brant goose take to the skies (or water) once more! It was a charming patient.



Photo by The Raptor Trust

ELIZABETH FIREFIGHTERS TO COMPETE IN COOK OFF

On Monday, February 24, 2025, firefighters from around New Jersey will compete at the Cooked and Uncorked Food and Wine Festival, at the Pines Manor in Edison. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Mark A. Virag Memorial Cancer Fund, Family Promise of Bergen County, and The Burn Center at Saint Barnabas Medical Center.

The Ultimate Fire Department Cook-off is an integral part of the evening as firefighters will compete in three different categories: Gourmet, Firehouse and Dessert.

The competition is part of the culinary extravaganza where participants will be able to experience the tastes and flavors of some of New Jersey's finest restaurants, caterers, and dessert shops all in one location.

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BRINGING WARMTH THROUGH COATS FOR KIDS CAMPAIGN

Knights of Columbus Council 6386

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the St. Rose of Lima community, the Knights of Columbus Council 6386, chartered at St. Rose of Lima Church in Short Hills, NJ, successfully concluded its annual Coats for Kids campaign. Between mid-September and early November, over \$8,000 was raised, enabling the purchase of 360 brand-new winter coats. These coats were distributed to children in need at the St. Joseph Social Service Center, located in Elizabeth and St. Mary's Church, located in Newark, NJ.

Thomas Abella, Coordinator for the Coats for Kids campaign, underscored the campaign's mission, "It's so important to provide warm clothing for children in need. Every coat symbolizes care, compassion, and a brighter winter for a child."

This year's success is part of a proud tradition. Over the past seven years alone, the St. Rose community has contributed over 2,000 coats to children in need. This effort is part of the larger

Knights of Columbus initiative, which has seen over 1,500 councils across North America donate more than 1,000,000 coats since the program began in 2009.

The Coats for Kids campaign exclusively provides brand-new coats purchased through the Knights of Columbus' worldwide network. Abella emphasized, "We focus on delivering new, high-quality coats to ensure children are fully equipped to face the cold months."

Expressing his gratitude, Abella added, "We

are so thankful, once again, to the St. Rose community for their incredible generosity. Your donations directly benefit children right here in our diocese, making a meaningful impact."

The Knights of Columbus Council 6386 continues to demonstrate the power of faith, community, and generosity in addressing local needs. This year's coat drive stands as a testament to the collective compassion of the St. Rose parishioners and their commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of children.



BLOOD SERVICES VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

New Jersey Blood Services (NJBS), a division of New York Blood Center, which provides blood for local patients, is looking for a few good volunteers. The blood drive volunteer is an integral member of our team whose tasks include assisting donors with registration and/or at the refreshment area. No medical background necessary. Volunteers should be outgoing to provide friendly customer service, be able to perform tasks as needed, must provide proof of COVID Vaccination prior to volunteering and must have transportation. All training is provided including additional precautions for the safety of our team and blood donors. For additional information call or text Sharon Zetts, Manager, NJBS Volunteer Services at 732-850-8906, Monday to Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

To apply online as a blood drive volunteer, please go to:

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The library will be closed on

February 17.

Zumba Gold

Monday, February 3, 10, 24 and Thursday, February 6, 13, 20, & 27 at 9 am

Add fitness to your daily routine through the joy of dance!

Tai Chi & Qi Gong

Monday, February 3, 10, 24 at 4 pm and Wednesday, February 5, 12, 19, & 26 at 9am

Join Pete on Monday & Wednesday for Tai Chi, a gentle Chinese martial art that combines slow, flowing movements with deep breathing.

Experience the refreshing benefits of mindfulness!

Monday Cinema at Elmora

Monday, February 3, 10, & 24 at 1 pm

At 1pm, don't miss out on the fun! Join us for a Monday Cinema at Elmora Branch Library. It's going to be a great time! This month's showtime is "Conclave" on 2/3, "Joker: Folie à Deux" on 2/10, & "Juror #2" on 2/24.

Crochet with Sol

Tuesday, February 4 & 11 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.

Mahjong

Monday, February 3, 10, & 24 from 12 pm - 2 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.

Ages: 18 & up

Adult English Book Club

Tuesday, February 4 at 11 am

Join our Book Club meeting and engage in a lively discussion about our latest book.

Stitch & Mending

Tuesday, February 11 at 10 am and Wednesday, February 12 at 5 pm

Come to Elmora to mend your clothing. Bring the article you need help with and assistance will be provided.

Adult Scrabble Club

Thursday, February 13 at 2 pm - 3:30 pm

Word lovers! Exercise your B-R-A-I-N (7 points) by playing Scrabble with other like-minded adults.

Adult BINGO

Tuesday, February 18 at 11 am

Join us at the Elmora Branch Library for a fun-filled game of BINGO.

Adult Spanish Book Club

Thursday, February 20 at 2 pm

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

Cards Against Humanity Game Day

Thursday, February 20 at 4 pm

Join us for a fun card game for the whole family!

Lunch & Learn

Tuesday, February 25 at 11 am

Discover the insights into Mental Health at an engaging seminar. Secure your seat by registering, as seating is limited.

Bad Art

Friday, February 28 at 1 pm

Join us at Elmora for a wildly fun event where we celebrate the beauty in "bad" art! Embrace your inner artist—no experience needed! We've got all the supplies you'll need, so just bring your imagination and a willingness to have fun.

Remember, no art is ever bad!

Don't miss out—space is limited!

Lil' Bookworms

Wednesday, February 5 at 5 pm

Encouraging kids to share their love of reading, engage in book discussions, and feel eager about reading.

Junior Chess Club

Friday, February 7, 21, & 28 at 4 pm

Don't miss out on our Chess Club for Kids!

We welcome beginners.

Valentine's Day Scavenger Hunt

Friday, February 14 (All Day)

Can you find all the lovey-dovey images hidden in the library? Win a prize from our treasure chest!

Valentine's Craft To Go

Friday, February 14 (All Day)

Take home a cute V-Day craft to make for a loved one!

Toddlers World

Friday, February 14 & 28 at 11 am

An hour of fun songs to sing, music, and playtime.

ESL Classes for Kids

Wednesday, February 19 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

Bubbles aRe Us

Saturday, February 22 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!!!

Drawing for Kids

Tuesday, February 25 at 3 pm

Come and join us for a delightful storytime where you will learn how to draw!

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(above, left) Learn the tips and tricks of crocheting with Ms. Sol! She will teach you everything you need to know to get started, from fundamental stitches to understanding gauge. Or just pop in to crochet with others. (above, right) Stitch & Mending - Tuesday, February 11 at 10 am and Wednesday, February 12 at 5 pm. Come to Elmora library and Library Assistant Martha Cardenas will help you with your sewing project, or mend your clothing. Bring the article you need help with, and assistance will be provided. Or just pop in to sew with others.

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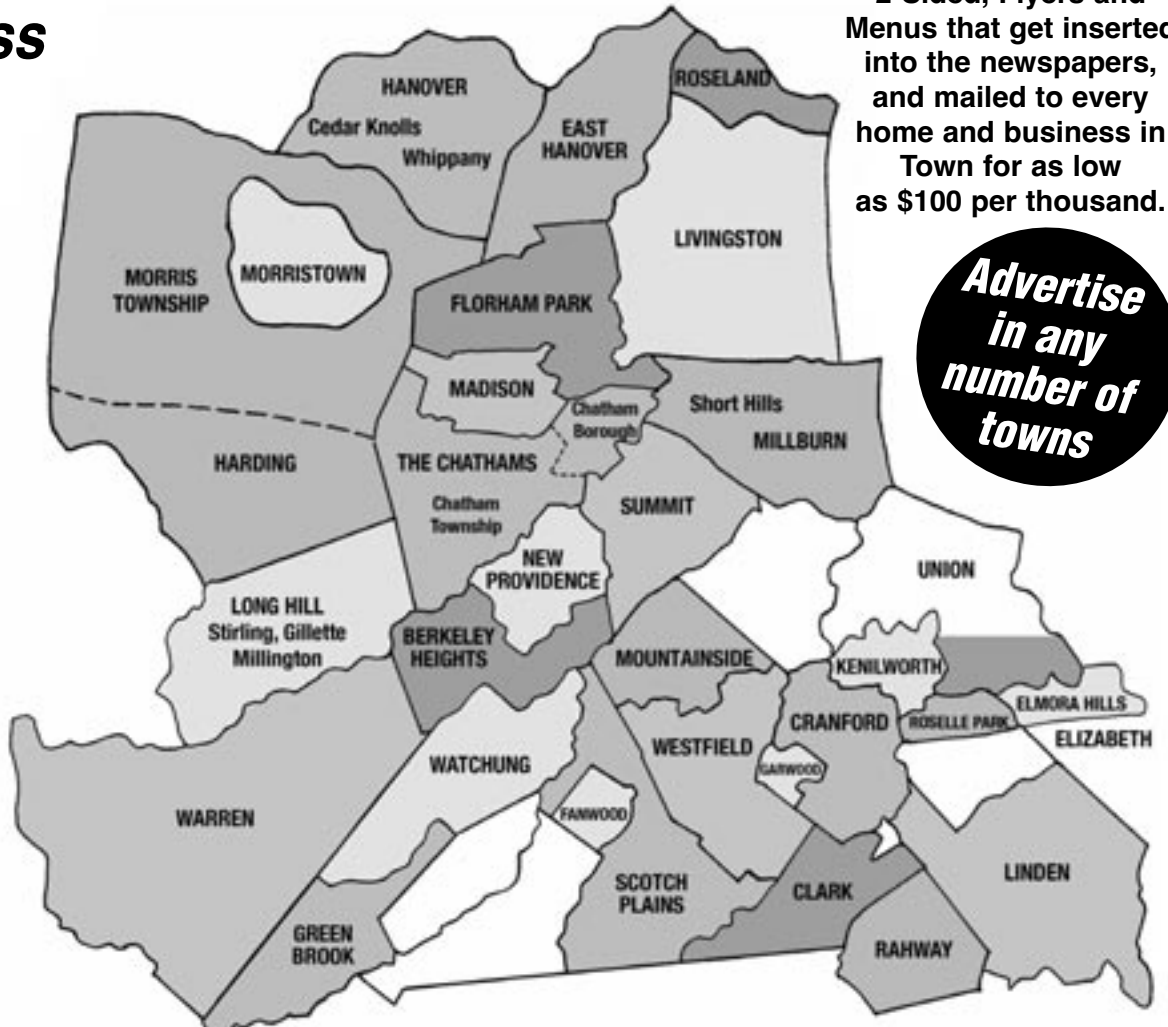
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NEW YEAR, NEW CEO ELIZABETH COALITION TO HOUSE THE HOMELESS

As we welcome in a new year full of new promises and opportunities, the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless also welcomes new CEO Dan McGuire to lead our mission of serving the homeless and housing insecure of Union County.

As of January 1, 2025, Dan McGuire stepped into the role as CEO. He brings 20 years of experience at Homeless Solutions, the largest provider of homeless shelter and services in Morris County. During his nine years leading the organization, he worked to increase program capacity and improve service delivery, including adding a permanent home for their Winter Warming Center. He facilitated the acquisition and renovation of a historic rooming house for 22 women of limited means, as well as stewarded a unique partnership to create and operate a campus of shared housing for up to 32 homeless women, among the housing development initiatives during his tenure.

“Dan brings a wealth of knowledge creating

affordable housing and delivering services to those most in need,” said Jeffrey Crum, president of the Board of Directors for the Coalition. “We are thrilled to have Dan step into this position as we uplift thousands of families in our community, acting as a beacon of hope in Elizabeth and Union County.”

“It’s an incredible honor and privilege to join the Elizabeth Coalition,” said McGuire. “The Elizabeth Coalition has helped countless individuals and families who had nowhere else to turn. I look forward to working with the board, staff and volunteers to add solutions and enhance systems to get to a place where homelessness is not as prevalent, nor is considered an inevitability for some of our neighbors.”

Previous Executive Director Linda Flores-Tober announced her retirement early last year after leading for three decades. She leaves behind a rich legacy of advocacy and innovative leadership, paving the way for new solutions to tackle homelessness in both the Coalition’s



(above) Dan McGuire CEO, Elizabeth Coalition to House The Homeless

footprint, as well as throughout the state.

Notable achievements include establishing the first functioning Code Blue program in New Jersey in 2003 – Operation Warm Heart. Various houses of worship and organizations came together to ensure that men and women without a shelter would have a warm place to sleep during the year’s coldest months. Prior to its decommissioning in 2020, the program assisted over 1,300 individuals. The program continues today as an intensive outreach program to individuals living on the streets of Union County.

“The endless passion and care that Linda has gifted to the Coalition has had an immeasurable impact on those facing homelessness and housing insecurity in Union County,” said Crum. “Her tireless commitment and advocacy to those in need remains awe-inspiring, and we extend our deepest gratitude for her years of service.”

“It has been an absolutely amazing experience,” said Flores-Tober. “While I will surely miss serving the Union County community, I am looking forward to many peaceful days at home with my husband watching my New Jersey Devils win game after game. And, of course, continuing to improve the lives of the unhoused and housing insecure.”

To learn more about the Elizabeth Coalition, visit theelizabethcoalition.org

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