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(above) Thirty-seven students from Westfield High School's Youth and Government (YAG) Club participated in the 81st Annual New Jersey Youth and Government Conference.

Photo by WHS Youth and Government Club

Issue 117 • June 2025

Westfield Public Schools

Thirty-seven students from Westfield High School's Youth and Government (YAG) Club participated in the 81st Annual New Jersey Youth and Government Conference, held April 25-27 at the Hilton East Brunswick. The three-day event welcomed 400 students from more than 20 high schools across the state, offering a hands-on opportunity to experience the legislative, executive, and judicial functions of state government.

The WHS YAG Club, with advisors David Della Fera and Daniel Farabaugh, was recognized with the prestigious Premier Delegation Award, a testament to the students' hard work and engagement throughout the conference.

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Several WHS students earned individual honors: · Gabriela Castillo, Michael Fisher, Tegan Hegarty, and

- Rachel Werner successfully passed their bills into law.
- Jakob Kofsky received the Outstanding Advocate Award.
- · Zoe Urbano was honored with the award
- for Outstanding Statesperson.
- · Carson Donnelly and Mahie Panjwani were selected to represent New Jersey at the upcoming Conference on National Affairs in North Carolina this summer.

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The New Jersey Youth and Government Conference provides students with an immersive civics education experience, allowing them to develop leadership, public speaking, and policy-making skills while simulating realworld governance.



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GARWOOD ROCKS FESTIVAL - JUNE 1ST

On Sunday June 1st from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Garwood celebrates its 11th Anniversary of its 'Garwood Rocks' Festival, sponsored by Vermella at Garwood Station that attracts over 10,000 people each year from the surrounding communities for a fun day for all ages. Organized by the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce [GWACC] and free to all members of the public - Center Street from South Avenue to Unami Park is transformed into an open-air event featuring vendors with merchandise for purchase, live music, Kid Zone rides on Beech Street with inflatable bounce houses, 23 food trucks, and a beer and wine garden for all to enjoy. In addition to the exciting live music and entertainment -Garwood Rocks' highlight is its classic car show with over 175 vehicles.

"With the 11th 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 Carol Kearney, Event Director. "All residents from Garwood and the surrounding towns will be able to experience what the whole community has to offer – and after 11 years – it demonstrates our commitment to the region and the success of the event."

Along with the classic car show, the live music featured at the event is also a large draw for the nearly 10,000 people expected to attend Garwood Rocks. The main stage at Center and Willow will feature performances from a variety of local and professional bands including 4 Flight Rock and Marie & the Blue Rats. Exit Eleven will be headliner act and will close out the show.

The Beer and Wine Garden, sponsored by the Crossroads of Garwood, will provide adult beverages throughout the event and the food trucks and vendors will feature everything from empanadas, pizza, burgers, and more.

Garwood Rocks is again sponsored by Vermella at Garwood Station, a highly amenitized resort-style residential rental community located at 450 South Ave. It features 40,000 square feet of amenity spaces for fitness, gathering, and working from home. Vermella at Garwood is located directly adjacent to the New Jersey Transit Train Station for ease of commute into New York City or Newark.

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

For more info about the Garwood Rocks event, contact Carol at 908-789-3306 or carol@uniquecruiseandtravel.com or Donna Vella at donnavellastreetfairs@yahoo.com.

POLICE DEPARTMENT YOUTH ACADEMY INVITE

Town of Westfield

The Youth Police Academy is open to Westfield residents who are graduating grade 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 in 2025. There is no cost for the program.

Youth Academy students will start each day with a basic military drill and physical fitness activities to be led by a certified Westfield Police Department Physical Fitness Instructor and current John H. Stamler Police Academy Drill Instructor.

Thereafter, students will head into the classroom for specialized instruction on criminal, juvenile and motor vehicle law, as well as an introduction to the court system, crime prevention and criminal investigations. They will also receive basic first aid instruction and CPR certification. The curriculum will include special guest speakers and demonstrations from various other law enforcement and public safety agencies.

"We are very excited to bring back the Youth Police Academy, which provides us with yet another opportunity to engage with the community," said Westfield Police Chief Christopher Battiloro. "This program will give our young residents an opportunity to see the inner workings of our police department and provide them with some insight into a potential future career in law enforcement."

In addition to an application, interested students will be required to submit an essay stating why they wish to be selected for the Youth Police Academy, as well as provide a reference letter from a non-family member. Due to space constraints, only a limited number of students can be accepted.

Applications for this free program are due by June 6, and can be found on our website: westfieldnj.gov/655/Youth-Academy



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ANDREW CICALA PRESENTED WITH YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD

Optimist Club of Westfield

Andrew Cicala, a senior at Westfield High School, is the recipient of the 2025 Optimist Club Thom Hornish Youth Volunteer Award. The award is named in honor of Thom Hornish, a former Westfield High School history teacher, in recognition of his dedication to youth, club service and involvement as a past president and long-time member of the Optimist Club. The Youth Volunteer Award is given annually to a Westfield high school junior or senior who has dedicated a substantial amount of time and effort to benefit the local community by demonstrating volunteer service, work ethic, leadership and involvement in community and school activities. This is the 30th year the Optimist Club has recognized outstanding young men and women who distinguished themselves through volunteer service. The recognition includes a scholarship award presented at the April dinner.

Andrew is an organized and proactive student and community volunteer with a strong work ethic, leadership skills and a passion for engineering, design, and architecture. Skilled in leadership and team collaboration through various clubs, internships, and employment.

He is recognized for academic achievements, community service, and award-winning photography. A community volunteer, he is active as an intern at the Westfield Food Pantry where he facilitates food distribution by coordinating food drives, organizing donations, and supporting

efforts to feed underserved populations in the Club as Founder and President. community.

He is active at Westfield High School as a member of several clubs where he also holds leadership positions in the Architectural Innovation Club, Community Service Club, Habitat for Humanity Club, and Photography

The Optimist Club is founded on the principals of volunteerism and community service and is proud to recognize young men and women who have embraced these ideals.

For additional information about the Westfield Optimist Club visit westfieldnj.com/optimist.



(above, l-r) Andrew's father Patric Cicla, Director Westfield Food Pantry Keith Gibbons, Andrew Cicala, Andrew's mother Angelina Cicala, Optimist Club President Darielle Walsh.

Courtesy photo





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CMC & CWC FUND WHS TEAM TO ATTEND COMPETITION

the Westfield College Women's Club (CWC) are pleased to announce that they jointly funded Westfield High School's DECA team to attend DECA's 2025 National Championships in Orlando, Florida. Each Westfield college club provided half of the \$1,500 sponsorship for this national event.

DECA, formerly known as the Distributive Education Clubs of America, is a non-profit organization of 300,000 members that prepares high school and college students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. This is the first year that WHS has participated in the DECA program and making it to nationals is a distinct accomplishment.

CMC Trustee John Clark and CWC President Alyssa Welsch-Rovito presented the \$1,500 check to the three students representing WHS in the DECA National Championships at an event at WHS. On the first day of competition, they competed in the exam portion of the event and on the second day in a role-playing challenge. The three students representing WHS at DECA nationals are:

Victoria Marmarou (WHS 2025) is competing in Apparel & Accessories Marketing. Victoria is the WHS DECA Secretary.

Annabel Griffith (WHS 2026) is competing in Principles of Business Management. Annabel is the WHS DECA President. She came in 2nd in Business Management in March of this year. Jovce Park (WHS 2026) is competing in in March earlier this year.

The Westfield College Men's Club (CMC) and New Jersey at the DECA State Competition in Principles of Finance. Joyce came in 2nd in New Jersey at the DECA State Competition in Finance



(above) John Clark, Trustee of the College Men's Club of Westfield, Victoria Marmarou, Annabel Griffith, Joyce Park, Alyssa Welsch-Rovito, President of the College Woman's Club of Westfield. Photo by Alyssa Welsch-Rovito





NJ FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA PRESENT "MOZART IN THE GARDEN" JUNE 14



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Back by popular demand, New Jersey Festival Orchestra's highly acclaimed outdoor concert returns on Saturday, June 14, 2025 with "Mozart in the Garden," a spectacular open-air musical celebration set against the grand backdrop of one of Westfield's finest residences. Concert begins at 7:30 PM. Gates open at 6 PM. Free on-street parking and full accessibility available.

Under the direction of Maestro David Wroe, the NJ Festival Orchestra invites audiences to step into the golden age of European cultural grandeur. From the joyful flair of Mozart's "Prague" Symphony to the toe-tapping rhythms of Kodály's Hungarian folk dances and Elgar's sweeping, romantic elegance, this concert promises a night of unforgettable charm and symphonic brilliance under the stars.

The evening opens with the fiery folk rhythms and gypsy spirit of Kodály's Dances of Galánta, a tribute to the Hungarian countryside of the composer's youth. The program continues with the romantic Viennese-sounding elegance of Elgar's Introduction and Allegro, a virtuosic showcase for the NJFO string section.

The evening culminates in a performance of Mozart's joyful and exuberant Symphony No. 38, "Prague," a dazzling work that celebrates the composer's special connection to the city that embraced him.

"Viennese giant Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart East Broad St., Westfield.

made his home in Vienna but allowed the city of Prague to adopt him, said Maestro Wroe. His "Prague" symphony jumps for joy and displays a bravado and confidence unique amongst his compositions."

"This concert highlights cultural and geographical empires at the pinnacle of their power, all unified through the power of music," Wroe added.

Held under the stars with full theatrical lighting, acoustically enhanced sound, and Westfield's historic elegance as the setting, "Mozart in the Garden" promises an unforgettable summer experience.

"This concert is going to be another phenomenal event," stated NJ Festival Orchestra board member Keith S. Hertell. "We transform my grounds to create a beautiful outdoor performance experience with stage lighting, acoustics, and a fully professional stage. It's a huge undertaking and we are deeply grateful to Ray Catena of Union for their support."

Admission: \$45 General Lawn Admission (bring your own chairs and refreshments). \$85 VIP Reserved Seating (limited access seating close to the stage with chairs provided)

Tickets can be purchased online at www.njfestivalorchestra.org, by phone at (908) 232-9400, or in person at the NJFO office, 224

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\$92,613 IN GRANTS AWARDED TO 45 CIVIC AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The Westfield Service League

The Westfield Service League (WSL) membership voted to approve \$92,613 in grants to 45 civic and service organizations serving the residents of Westfield and Union County. The funds are raised from the thrift and consignment shop that the WSL runs in Westfield and donations from the community.

"I'm thrilled that because of the devotion of our shoppers, consignors, and donors, and the wonderful work of our staff and volunteers, we were able to award the largest amount in several years to local nonprofit organizations," said Grants Committee Co-Chair Gigi Tilocca. "It is always great to fund tried and true nonprofit and service organizations doing good work in our communities, as well as new organizations, all

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vetted by our dedicated grants committee members."

This year's grant recipients included organizations helping children with cancer and their families, seniors with Alzheimer's, after school and summer programs for underserved children, arts organizations, a suicide prevention hotline, and other important community services. A full list of the organizations is below.

"We are grateful for the ongoing support of the WSL Thrift & Consignment Shop customers and the more than 175 volunteers who work tirelessly in our shops processing the clothing that is donated or consigned, maintaining our house where the shops are housed, vetting the organizations which receive funding and all of the other activities that go into running our organization," said Grants Committee Co-Chair Jane Francz.

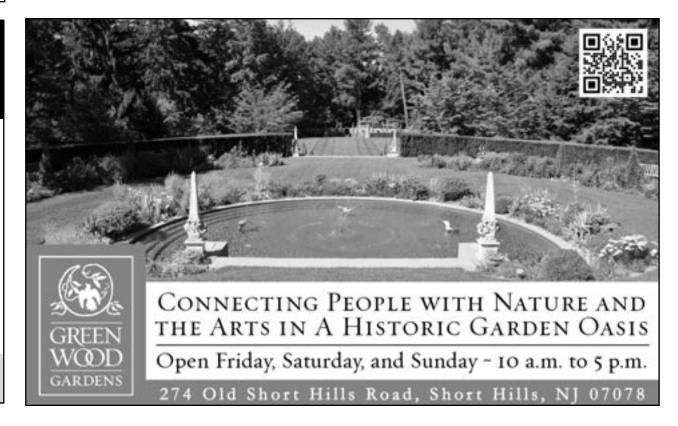
Each year, members of the Grants Committee are each assigned a number of organizations to vet. Vetting includes a meeting with a representative of the organization, usually on site, and a review of the organization's financial statements and their application. The committee then meets to discuss each organization and a recommendation is made to the full membership and voted on.

"We want to thank all of the members of the committee for their hard work in making sure that the money we raise goes to the best possible programs in deserving organizations," said Susan McClelland and Karen Salemme, Co-Presidents of the WSL.



(above) Members of the WSL Grants Committee met to discuss the non-profit agencies which requested funding for the coming year.

Photo by Jan Herringer





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WESTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL NAMES AWARD-WINNING EDUCATORS

Westfield Public Schools

Four teachers have been honored by the Westfield High School community with awards of excellence. WHS acting principal William Loughran announced the award winners during morning announcements on May 5.

English teacher Kimberly Gosen-Fowler is the recipient of the 2025 Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award, established to annually recognize a tenured teacher who demonstrates excellence in teaching in the classroom and a commitment to intellectual pursuits beyond the classroom.

Gosen-Fowler is described by student nominators as a "kind and amazing teacher." One student writes: "She has taught us a lot while making the class fun and engaging. She really is the best teacher I've ever had."

"What I love most about teaching is the a former principal and teacher. students - getting to know them and helping them understand the importance of keeping an open mind and listening to others as they construct meaning," says Gosen-Fowler.

The 2025 recipient of the Jeffery Family Above and Beyond Award is science teacher Rudy Scipioni. Students were asked to nominate a tenured teacher or counselor who has made a difference in their life as a student, or who they witnessed making a difference in the life of another student.

Student nominators describe Scipioni as "an amazing teacher," "always willing to help me out," and "someone I genuinely look up to."

"He's taught me lessons that go far beyond the classroom," writes one student about Scipioni. "That kind of support is rare, and it's why his impact has been truly extraordinary."

"I am deeply honored to receive this award, and I want to sincerely thank my wonderful students for nominating me. Building a strong classroom community has always been at the heart of my teaching-one where students feel like family, supported and encouraged every step of the way," says Scipioni. "I feel truly blessed to teach in the Westfield community, where students come eager not only to grow academically, but also to develop life skills and lessons that will serve them far beyond the classroom. I strive every day to treat my students with kindness and respect, in the hope that they will carry those values into their relationships and actions both now and in the future."

Science teacher Jeffrey Robbins received the 37th Annual WHS Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO) Teacher of the Year Award, for which parents and students nominate a teacher who communicates enthusiasm, is encouraging, motivating, and is a good role model.

Student and parent nominators say Robbins is a "caring, helpful, generous, and kind" teacher who creates "meaningful bonds with students."

"Having a bad day?," writes one student about Robbins. "He checks in and is there if you need anything." "He has made learning fun again." writes another student. "I've learned more in his class than in any other."

"My favorite part of teaching is our students; we have incredible students in our district. I have been able to witness incredible acts of kindness and friendship, and see students make great connections to the outside world," Robbins says. "It is exciting to go to work each day and to also have a chance to collaborate with colleagues and administrators to help make the classes and WHS even better."

For the Robert and Linda Foose Memorial Award, students were asked to nominate someone who, through both excellence in teaching in the classroom and a demonstrated commitment to intellectual pursuits beyond the classroom, is a role model and an inspiration to the WHS community. Spanish teacher Paula Parada is the 2025 recipient of this award, which is named for

"She knows how to make the learning environment an enjoyable experience," a student writes. "She engages with her students and helps us understand the material more effectively, using games and activities to ensure we are prepared for tests and quizzes! It's the perfect balance between fun and learning, making it easier for us to focus and work hard."

"What I love most about teaching is fostering fun and meaningful relationships with my students while sharing my passion for the Spanish language and culture," Parada notes. "My goal is to always create a positive, engaging environment to help students feel comfortable and open to discovering the joy and benefits of learning a new language."

All four award recipients were honored by the Westfield Board of Education at a public meeting on Tuesday, May 20.

"Recognizing the many accomplishments of our students and staff is one of the most meaningful parts of the school year," says Superintendent Dr. Raymond González. "What makes these particular honors so special is that they come directly from our WHS students and families, who have been personally impacted by the care and dedication of these four exceptional educators."



(above) Educators Honored with Awards of Excellence: Kimberly Gosen-Fowler, Rudy Scipioni, Jeffrey Robbins, and Paula Parada

Photo by Westfield Public Schools



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SEA SCOUT OPEN HOUSE – JUNE 21

The crews of Liberty Sea Scout Squadron from Patriots' Path Council will host their annual open house at the Carteret Marina, located in the Carteret Waterfront Park, 200 Middlesex Avenue, Carteret, NJ, on Saturday, June 21, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The open house will include tours of our primary training vessel, the Sea Dart II, an introduction to the Sea Scout program, and nautical activities. Our members are from across Northern New Jersey; historically from as far as Warren, Sussex, and Ocean counties. The Sea Scouting program is open to male and female youth ages 14 to 21. The crews operate a fleet of vessels that include the Sea Dart II, sailboats, powerboats, and paddle craft out of the Liberty Nautical Education Center (libertynautical.org) on the Rahway River in Linden, NJ. Aboard the vessels, young men and women learn nautical skills, including navigation and engine room maintenance, while visiting various ports on their many trips. Come down to visit and the scouts will be glad to welcome you aboard!



(above) Come down to visit and the scouts will be glad to welcome you aboard during our open house on Saturday, June 21, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

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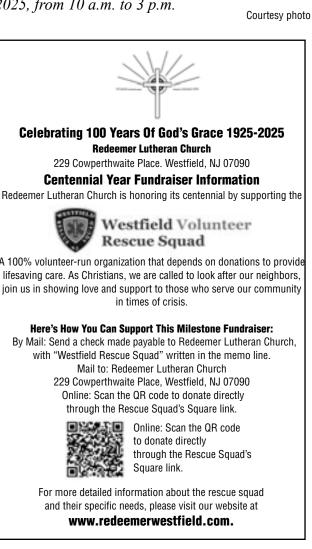
Russell H. Hulsizer, who practiced law at 99 Summit Avenue, Summit, New Jersey and ceased practicing in 2014, passed away on November 22, 2023.

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ROTARY CLUB OF WESTFIELD PHILHOWER FELLOWSHIP BESTOWED

Westfield Public Schools

Jefferson Elementary School 2nd grade teacher Dawn Donahue is the 2025 recipient of the Rotary Club of Westfield's Philhower Fellowship in recognition of outstanding teaching at the elementary school level. At the same time, McKinley Elementary School secretary Joan Penczak received the Steengrafe Award, introduced two years ago by the Rotary Club to recognize non-certificated staff for their dedication and commitment.

Donahue is in her 10th year of teaching at Jefferson, 8 years in 2nd grade.

Letters of nomination for Donahue from parents laud her as an "enthusiastic, committed, and hard-working" educator who "prepares her students for the real world, builds confidence in the learner's abilities, and encourages them to succeed."

For more than a decade, Penczak has worked as the head secretary at McKinley.

Colleagues who nominated Penczak for the Steengrafe Award described her as "100% committed to the staff and students," "the heart and soul of McKinley," and "the heartbeat of our school."

Donahue and Penczak were recognized at a Board of Education meeting on May 20. They will receive the Philhower and Steengrafe Awards on June 3 as guests of honor during a Rotary Club luncheon.

Three Rotarians and two elementary school principals served on the nominating committee.

The Philhower Fellowship was established in

1993 by the Rotary Club to honor former Westfield Rotarian Charles Philhower and to recognize the importance of teaching in the elementary grades. An educator for more than 50 years, Charles Philhower, who died in 1962, was supervising principal (superintendent) of Westfield schools for three decades as well as cofounder and past president of the Rotary Club of Westfield.



(above) McKinley Elementary School head secretary Joan Penczak (center) is the 2025 recipient of the Weyman Steengrafe Award, introduced two years ago by the Rotary Club of Westfield to recognize non-certificated staff for their dedication and commitment. Penczak is pictured here with Superintendent

Dr. Raymond González and McKinley principal Mary McCabe. In its third year, the Steengrafe Fellowship was established in memory of Weyman O. Steengrafe who began teaching Social Studies in the Westfield Public Schools in 1942 before serving as principal at Franklin, Tamaques, and Wilson Elementary Schools. Weyman was a lifelong Rotarian from 1966-2010, serving as Club President in 1971-1972 and District Governor in 1985-1986.



(above) Jefferson 2nd grade teacher Dawn Donahue (center) is the 2025 recipient of the Rotary Club of Westfield's Philhower Fellowship in recognition of outstanding teaching at the elementary school level. Donahue is pictured here with Superintendent Dr. Raymond González and Jefferson principal Susie Hung.

Photo by Westfield Public Schools

INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL EDUCATORS RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE

Westfield Public Schools

Edison Intermediate School Spanish teacher Jillian Martinez and Roosevelt Intermediate School science teacher Melissa Fahy have been recognized as outstanding intermediate school educators by the Optimist Club of Westfield.

Martinez says she loves learning and laughing with students. "I am ALWAYS either learning and laughing," says Martinez, about her 14 years in the district, 10 of them at Edison. "They teach me so much about growth, self-worth, discipline, self-care, while also keeping me current in the middle school trends and slang. They are the best part of my day and the reason I'm always smiling."

Fahy has been teaching 6th grade science at Roosevelt for 15 years. She is lauded by a colleague as "an incredibly talented and knowledgeable science teacher" who "takes a lesson, turns it around, and makes it exciting for students."

The Optimist Club, a not-for-profit service organization that supports youth and the community, presents an award annually to two Westfield intermediate school educators - one each from Edison and Roosevelt. The Intermediate School Outstanding Teacher Award was established in 1998 by the Optimist Club to give deserving credit to intermediate school

teachers.

"The Optimist Club mission and purpose as a "Friend of Youth" is to support the positive development of children," says Optimist Club President Darielle Walsh. "We are proud to provide resources for this meaningful annual award that recognizes the dedication and

achievements of our intermediate school teachers."

The selection committee consisted of Optimist Club members Maria Fuentes, Marty Gulino, Gene Jannotti, and Victor Mankoski, along with Edison principal LaNova Schall and Roosevelt principal Brian Gechtman.



(above, left) Edison Intermediate School Spanish teacher Jillian Martinez is the co-recipient of the 2025 Optimist Club's Intermediate School Outstanding Teacher Award. Pictured here with Edison principal LaNova Schall and Superintendent Dr. Raymond González.

(above, right) Roosevelt Intermediate School science teacher Melissa Fahy is the co-recipient of the 2025 Optimist Club's Intermediate School Outstanding Teacher Award. Pictured here with Roosevelt principal Brian Gechtman (left), Superintendent Dr. Raymond González, and Roosevelt assistant principal Keith Brunson (right). Photos by Westfield Public Schools

FIRE DEPART 150TH ANNIVERSARY - JUNE 21

Mark your calendars for June 21, when we come together as a community to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Westfield Fire Department! This significant anniversary not only marks a century and a half of dedicated service and commitment to the safety and wellbeing of Westfield but also provides an opportunity to celebrate the legacy and spirit of the Westfield Fire Department, which was established in 1875.

The celebration will kick off with a parade through downtown Westfield – showcasing fire

Mark your calendars for June 21, when we trucks, vintage apparatus, and community groups — and will conclude at the Westfield Armory for a day of games, food, drinks, and more.

Timeline: 9 a.m. – Parade Line up; 11 a.m. – Parade Step Off ; 1 p.m. – Celebration at the Armory to include Mini Golf, Live Music, Rocak Wall, Food & Drinks, Commemorative Apparel & Anniversary Books

For more information on the festivities, including parade participation and sponsorship opportunities, visit: westfieldnj.gov/2078/150th-Anniversary.

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10TH ANNUAL FEATHERFEST – JUNE 1

We invite you and your family to The Raptor Trust (TRT) on Sunday, June 1, 2025, for a day of all things bird! Make a difference in one day. FeatherFest is the biggest event of the year, when our community comes together to raise funds to help care for the influx of baby birds we admit each spring/summer. Tour our facilities and participate in games, gifts, auctions, raffles, food, and FUN! Entry times for FeatherFest must be booked online at: theraptortrust.org/featherfest

The Raptor Trust is located at 1390 White Bridge Road, Millington, NJ.

The Raptor Trust is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization which provides free medical care to thousands of orphaned or injured birds each year. Our infirmary staff is available seven days a week during daylight hours to admit injured birds, but we must rely on the people who find them to bring them to us for care. If you find a bird that needs help, please visit our website theraptortrust.org for instructions. We cannot do what we do without the kindness of many – including our visitors!





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