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## SCHOOLS HOST THIRD ANNUAL MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

### Elizabeth Public Schools

On Wednesday, June 4th, 2025, the Bilingual & ESL Department proudly hosted the third annual EPS Multicultural Festival at the vibrant Thomas G. Dunn Sports Center. This dynamic celebration brought together the entire Elizabeth Public Schools community in a colorful showcase of global cultures and traditions.

Every EPS school contributed to the immersive experience by transforming their spaces into lifelike cultural landscapes. School displays came alive with vibrant posters, intricate student artwork, and authentic decorations that reflected the rich heritage of countries from around the world.

The air was filled with the enticing aromas of traditional dishes, as families and guests sampled a wide array of savory cultural cuisines—each bite telling a story of heritage and home.

The festival was a feast for the senses and a celebration of student creativity and pride. Throughout the afternoon, students took center stage with heartfelt traditional performances that transported the audience across continents. Their dedication and enthusiasm lit up the venue, creating moments of joy, unity, and cultural appreciation.

Guests were invited to journey through the festival with a special “passport,” collecting stars as they visited each cultural exhibit and

community agency. This interactive element encouraged exploration, learning, and meaningful conversations, making the experience both educational and memorable.

With over 600 attendees, the festival was a resounding success - a true celebration of togetherness while taking a “Journey Through Time and Cultures”.



Courtesy photos



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# CANINE COMPANIONS CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

## Canine Companions

Mike Saverino was recently matched with his third Canine Companions service dog names Arbor. Mike is overjoyed about how Arbor has picked up right where his retiring service dog Webster left off, making a difference in Mike's daily life.

Arbor II is a two-year-old lab-golden retriever cross specially bred and trained by Canine Companions to serve people with disabilities. Arbor knows over 40 professional commands to assist Mike in his daily life. Arbor opens doors, turns on lights, and picks up dropped items for Mike to name just a few.

Mike enjoys sled hockey, weightlifting, and is heavily involved in the Canine Companions New Jersey Volunteer Chapter.

About Canine Companions: National nonprofit Canine Companions is celebrating 50 years of empowering people with disabilities to live with greater independence — and it all started with a service dog named Abdul. Canine Companions invented the concept of the modern service dog in 1975 and has since placed more than 8,200 expertly trained dogs at no cost to clients, entirely supported by donations. Today, as America's first and largest provider of service dogs, Canine Companions leverages seven locations across the country to serve adults, children and veterans with disabilities as well as professionals working in health care, law enforcement and educational settings in all 50 states. Volunteer, donate and learn more at [canine.org](http://canine.org).



(above) Mike Saverino & service dog Arbor  
Courtesy Photo

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## SCOUTS VISIT PHILADELPHIA AND VALLEY FORGE

Submitted by Boy Scout Troop 23

Contact Scoutmaster Dan Bernier at 908-451-1948 or webfoottroop@gmail.com

Boy Scout Troop 23 experienced an inspiring 4-day trip to Pennsylvania over the Memorial Day Weekend. Fourteen Scouts and 7 adult leaders camped in tents for the weekend as guests of the Valley Forge Volunteer Fire Company. They hiked to historic sites throughout Philadelphia on Saturday, qualifying for the Bicentennial Trail of Freedom patch and medal. The Scouts not only learned about the people, sites and events that were important to the formation of our country, they also got to enjoy a classic Philly cheesesteak lunch.

On Sunday, they visited the Welcome Center and toured the important sites in Valley Forge National Historical Park, where General George Washington and his army spent the difficult winter of 1777-78. Before heading home on Monday, Troop 23 participated in a Memorial Day Service and barbecue lunch at the Washington Memorial Chapel.

Thanks to fundraising and donations, the Scouts and leaders were able to eat in local restaurants to allow more time at the historic sites. Troop 23 thanks all of its supporters who help make these meaningful experiences possible.

Boy Scout Troop 23, sponsored by St. Genevieve's Church of Elizabeth, welcomes any boys who are at least 11 years old or graduated from the fifth grade to join them on upcoming camping trips and hikes, as well as a week-long summer camp in July.



(above) Let Freedom Ring! Boy Scout Troop 23 visited the Liberty Bell during a 4-day trip to Philadelphia and Valley Forge on Memorial Day weekend.

Courtesy Photo



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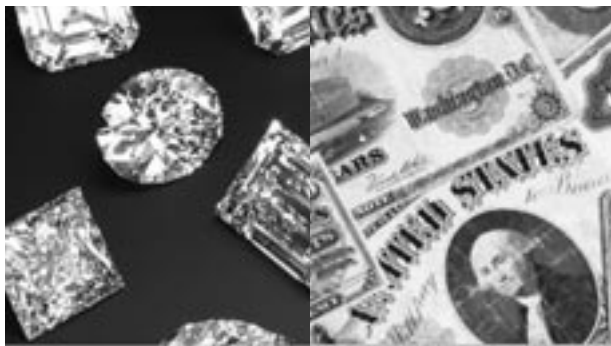
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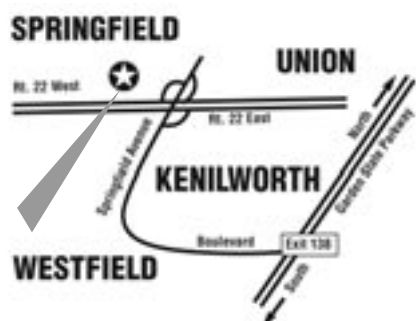
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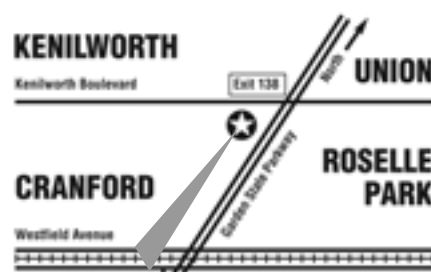
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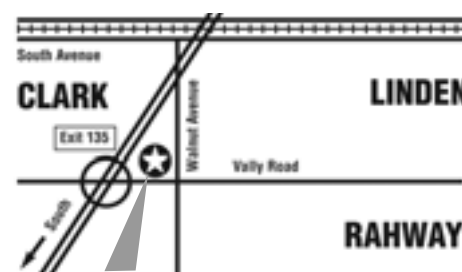
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# POLICE CARRY THE TORCH FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Elizabeth Police joined police officers from across the state in the 42nd Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special Olympics New Jersey. Over 3,000 police officers took to their local streets to raise funds and awareness for this incredible organization.

## ABOUT THE ANNUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY:

Torch Run began in New Jersey in 1984 as a way to raise funds and awareness for Special Olympics New Jersey. The run is a day-long event, split into 26 legs (or starting points) with

some legs beginning as early as 4:45 a.m. The run travels through more than 300 towns, covering 750 miles on-foot. About 3,000 runners participated in 2025. Representing over 450 police departments. To learn more, visit [NJTorchRun.org](http://NJTorchRun.org).



(above) Elizabeth police officers participated in the 42nd Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run.

Courtesy Photo

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# STUDENT AND VOLUNTEER HONORED AT LITERACY NJ CONFERENCE



(above) Xiomara Fuentes of Elizabeth and her longtime tutor, Lorraine Gilbert, of Cherry Hill

Courtesy Photo

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## Literacy New Jersey

A student and volunteer from Literacy NJ Union County, Xiomara Fuentes of Elizabeth and her longtime tutor, Lorraine Gilbert, of Cherry Hill were recognized at the 2025 Literacy for Life Conference for their extraordinary partnership and commitment to adult education. Xiomara received the Award for Student Excellence, and Lorraine was honored with the Award for Volunteer Excellence at the May 2 conference held at The College of New Jersey.

Xiomara, originally from Honduras, came to Literacy NJ in 2020 with limited formal education beyond sixth grade. Determined to improve her English and earn her high school diploma, she began attending ESL classes with Lorraine Gilbert. The two quickly formed a strong bond, and Lorraine continued to support Xiomara through each step of her learning journey, from mastering English to preparing for and completing the GED.

After progressing through ESL and pre-GED classes, and with the help of additional GED tutors, Xiomara passed all her subject exams in September 2024 and received her high school diploma. She has since enrolled at Union College of Union County, NJ to pursue a degree in business administration and continues to build job and digital literacy skills through Literacy NJ. “When I learned I had passed the tests, I cried,” said Xiomara. “I realized how far I had come. I

felt free to find a better job, and continue my education.”

Lorraine, who began tutoring with Literacy NJ in 2020, was instrumental in guiding Xiomara from her earliest classes to her GED success. Her commitment to supporting students through challenging times—including the height of the COVID-19 pandemic—has helped many learners access additional programs and pursue ambitious goals.

In reflecting on their four-year journey together, Lorraine shared: “We were a team, and we were on a mission. I’ve never known such a person as Xiomara. She is an inspiration to me and a role model to her children.”

The Literacy for Life Conference also recognized several other award recipients, including volunteer and student honorees from Literacy Volunteers of Camden County and Literacy NJ Gloucester, as well as the Outstanding Affiliate Award presented to Literacy Volunteers of Somerset County.

Literacy NJ’s statewide network provides free instruction in reading, writing, math, and English to over 5,000 adults annually, with the support of more than 1,300 volunteers. Services include one-on-one tutoring and classes in ESL, high school equivalency, and U.S. citizenship.

To learn more about Literacy NJ or find a local affiliate, visit [literacynj.org](http://literacynj.org).

# FRED’S ROOM HELPS CHILDREN PROCESS GRIEF

## Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss

At Imagine, we know that grief is complex, and big feelings need a safe place to be expressed. That’s why we created the Volcano Room, a dedicated space where children can release their emotions in a healthy way. Recently redecorated with characters from the Inside Out film series, the room features cushioned walls, soft basketballs, and big pillow piles to jump in

Courtesy Photo

where children can process their grief in their own time.

For the DeJesus family of Scotch Plains, Imagine has been a source of comfort for the past five years. To honor their beloved husband, son, and father, they chose to dedicate the Volcano Room as “Fred’s Room.” The event happened on the fifth anniversary of Fred DeJesus’ death at just 38 years old. Fred’s wife Suzanne, and their daughters led the family in a heartfelt dedication ceremony.

“We know that Fred is watching over us, front row for every dance recital, Girl Scout event, and school performance,” Suzanne shared. “He’s still cheering us on, asking, ‘How did it go, kiddo? I know you hit it out of the park.’”

Spaces like Fred’s Room are made possible by families who want to create a lasting tribute to their loved ones. As Imagine continues to grow, we are honored to help families find meaningful ways to celebrate the lives of those they hold dear.

Imagine, A Center for Coping with Loss is a 501c3 that offers grief and loss education and training to the community and free year-round grief support groups for children ages 3-18 and young adults 19-30 who are coping with a loss due to death. Concurrently, support groups are available for the parents and caregivers of the children in the groups and offered in English and Spanish. For more information, please contact Imagine at 908-264-3100 or [info@imagineNJ.org](mailto:info@imagineNJ.org) or visit their website at [imagineNJ.org](http://imagineNJ.org).



(above) The DeJesus family gathers in Imagine’s “Volcano Room” recently dedicated in memory of Scotch Plains resident Fred DeJesus.

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# JULY PROGRAMS AT ELMORA BRANCH LIBRARY

Registration for all our programs will be on our website!

Please go to [elizpl.org](http://elizpl.org) to check-out all our events!

For any cancellations, please visit our website for more information.

\*The library will be closed on July 4th and July 5th\*

## 4th of July Scavenger Hunt & Craft to Go

Wednesday, July 2

Get a small prize from our treasure chest when you complete the hunt and take home a craft!

### Zumba Gold

Monday, July 7, 14, 21, & 28

Tuesday, July 8, 15, & 22

Thursday, July 10, 17, 24, & 31 at 9 am

Add fitness to your daily routine through the joy of dance! Walk-ins are welcome.

### Mahjong

Monday, July 7, 14, 21, & 28

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. Ages: 18 & up

### Monday Cinema at Elmora

Monday, July 7, 14, 21, & 28 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

"Novocaine" on 6/7

"Transformers One" on 6/14,

The Substance" on 6/21

"The Wild Robot" on 6/28.

### Adult English Book Club

Tuesday, July 8 at 11 am

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

This month's pick is "Anne of Avonlea"

by L. M. Montgomery.

### Adult BINGO

Tuesday, July 8 at 11 am

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

### Paint n' Sip

Wednesday, July 9, 16, & 23 at 11 am

Relax and get creative with a fun painting session! Enjoy coffee and Munchkins while you paint - no experience needed,

all supplies provided.

### Lil' Bookworms

Wednesday, July 9 at 5 pm

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

### The Rummikub Club

Thursday, July 10 & 24 at 2 pm

Join us for a friendly game!

Beginners are welcome!

### Bad Art

Friday, July 11, 18, & 25 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!

### Junior Chess Club

Friday, July 11, 18, & 25 at 4 pm

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

We welcome beginners.

## Storytime at Green Acres Park

Saturday, July 12 at 11 am

Join Ms. Martha for storytime and craft at the park! No registration required

### Stitch & Mending

Tuesday, July 15 at 10 am

Wednesday, July 16 at 5 pm

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

### Read to a Dog

Wednesday, July 16 at 4 pm

Creature Comfort will be coming to the Elizabeth Public Library to allow children to read to a dog!

### Adult Spanish Book Club

Thursday, July 17 at 2 pm

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

### Boogie Woogie Babies

Friday, July 18 at 11 am

Boogie Woogie Babies is a lively 30-45 minute dance class for little ones and their caregivers!

Designed for ages 6 months to 4 years, we'll sing, dance, and have a blast while developing fine motor skills. Join us for some fun!

### Friendship Bracelet

Saturday, July 19 at 11 am

In Honor of International Friendship Day, make a friendship bracelet at Elmora for your BFF!

### Family BINGO

Tuesday, July 22 at 11 am

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

### Guinea Pig Fair at the Library

Wednesday, July 23 at 5 pm

Join us for a fun-filled, furry afternoon at the library's Guinea Pig Fair! Whether you're a seasoned guinea pig lover or just curious to meet the adorable little animal.

### I Scream for Ice Cream

Thursday, July 24 at 2 pm

To celebrate National Ice Cream Month, learn how to make ice cream at the Elmora Branch Library! Registration is required!

### Bubbles aRe Us

Saturday, July 26 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!!!

### The Edible Book Club

Wednesday, July 30 at 1 pm

Welcome to The Edible Book Club, where cooking and reading come together! Each month, we explore a cookbook and bring its recipes to life. Come for the books and stay for the bites!

### Adult Scrabble Club

Thursday, July 31 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.

# COOL ART CONTINUES THROUGH JULY

Elizabeth Arts Council

The coolest place to be this summer is the Elizabeth Arts Council (EAC) annual COOL ART show at the Elizabeth Public Library. 11 South Broad Street, third floor exhibit area.

COOL ART is a mixed media show featuring the work of EAC members Ray Horner, Derek J. Dent, Daphnie Manzione, Joanne Leone, Lydia Watson, Shez, Marjorie Picard and Sharon Curia.

For further information about the EAC and COOL ART, please call 908.289.3584. For library hours, phone 908.354.6060 or check the library website: [elizpl.org](http://elizpl.org)



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4 Units	3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"	240	560	900	1000	1300	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100
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
12 Units	6.5"x14"	400	960	1400	1800	2100	2400	2700	3000	3300	3600	3900
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# HUMAN IMAGE OF SUBMARINE IS A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD®

On Wednesday, June 4th, 2025 the City of Elizabeth, NJ, and Elizabeth Public Schools, set a GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS® for the Largest Human Image of a Submarine.

An official judge from Guinness World Records was on hand to verify the record and confirmed that 800 students of the Elizabeth Public School- Juan Pablo Duarte- Jose Julian Marti School 28 set a new world record at 25 1st St, Elizabeth, NJ 07206. Guinness World Records announced that we have set a new world record!

The students came together with support from the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, The Elizabeth Destination Marketing Organization, the local learning community, members of Elizabeth Public Schools central administration, Elizabeth Public Schools team members, members of the Elizabeth Board of Education, and City of Elizabeth dignitaries.

Other prominent members in attendance included USS New Jersey Commissioning Committee officials Pete Engelman and Tim Doelger.

A special salute to honor Elizabeth, NJ a city of “firsts” and its ongoing legacy to maritime history was demonstrated by the students of School 28, by standing on the very ground where American naval innovation first came to life—the original site of the Crescent Shipyard, where the first U.S. submarine was built. The students now are part of a living legacy documented forever in history by helping the city receive its first GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS® title.

“I am so proud of our students and team members for their commitment to teamwork in

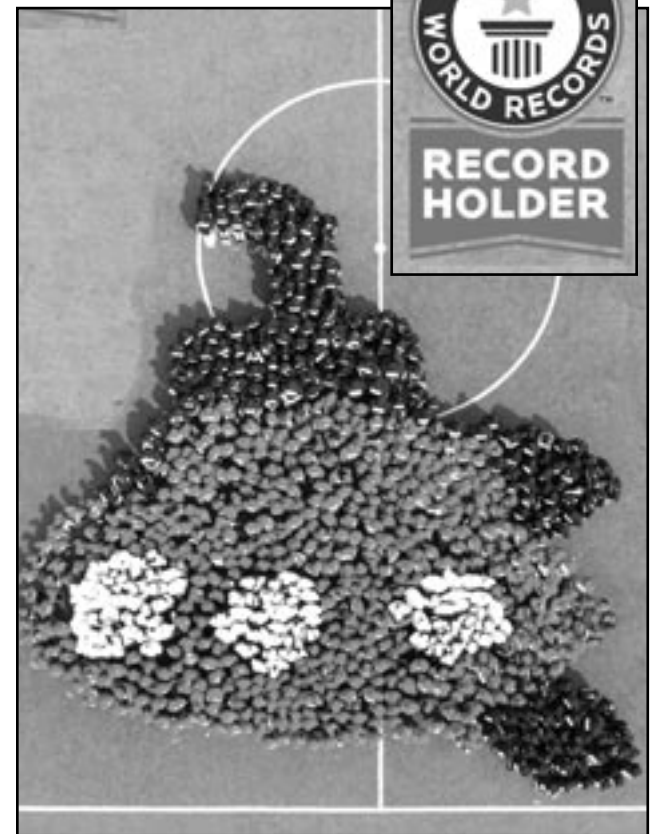
achieving this amazing feat and upholding our district’s standard of excellence,” said Elizabeth Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer.

This event not only showcased the students’ enthusiasm and teamwork but also pays homage to Elizabeth’s rich naval history. “As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Elizabeth Tourism, we reflect on a decade of marketing our destination and telling the stories that make this city extraordinary—from innovation and industry to resilience and community. Today, we proudly add a new chapter,” said Jennifer M. Costa, CEO/President of the Elizabeth Tourism and Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce.

In September of 2024, the U.S. Navy officially recognized Elizabeth as the birthplace of the U.S. Submarine Force, acknowledging the city for having built and sold the first submarine to the U.S. Navy. The U.S. Navy commemorated the occasion with the unveiling of a sculpture - 3D replica of the USS Holland (SS-1) at Veterans Memorial Park created by local chamber members and students of the Elizabeth Public Schools.

“Through the collaboration of Elizabeth Public Schools, the City of Elizabeth, and the United States Navy, we were able to commemorate the special connection between the submarine and our city,” said Elizabeth Board of Education President Stanley J. Neron. “This great accomplishment by our community now allows us to share this story with the world.”

This Guinness World Record is one of two that the City of Elizabeth is pursuing. The other is an attempt to set a world record in celebration of the



FIFA World Cup 2026™ coming to

New Jersey. This world record attempt has been postponed due to excessive heat temperatures in Elizabeth and will be rescheduled for later this year.

For more details on Elizabeth’s history and current events, visit [goelizabethnj.com](http://goelizabethnj.com). For additional information or media inquiries, please contact Jennifer M. Costa, President/CEO of the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce, at (908) 220-9643 or email [jcosta@goelizabethnj.com](mailto:jcosta@goelizabethnj.com).

## STEP UP, SPEAK UP FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

### CASA of Passaic and Union Counties

Mia spent most of her nine years in a home marked by instability and fear. Her parents’ addiction left her hungry, alone, and unsure of what to expect each day. She eventually entered foster care. While her peers prepare for a fun-filled summer, Mia finds herself living with strangers. A judge assigned a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer to her — and now, although things still feel uncertain and scary, Mia has someone who listens, shows up, and stands up for her.

Mia is just one of more than 500 children removed from home in Passaic and Union counties due to abuse and/or neglect. Living in foster care and separated from all they’ve known, each child needs a caring, consistent adult in their corner to protect their best interests while in care. Is that you?

CASA volunteers are trained advocates who visit the child monthly and have court-ordered access to all parties in the case. Supported by CASA staff, advocates make fact-based observations about outstanding needs or concerns and make recommendations to the court. The CASA volunteer is often the only consistent person in the child’s life. Applicants must be at least 21, be able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, have computer skills, pass a background check, and complete the 36-hour training.

Fall trainings start soon; Union County’s begins Sept. 16 in Linden and Passaic County’s begins Nov. 3 in Wayne; county of residence does not matter. View the training dates at [casapassaicunion.org/casa-training](http://casapassaicunion.org/casa-training).

The first step to becoming a CASA volunteer is to attend an information session. Register now

at [casapassaicunion.org/info-session](http://casapassaicunion.org/info-session) for any of the following:


Union County – Wednesday, July 9 at 12pm, Child Focus office in Elizabeth, 1143 East Jersey Street, 2nd Floor; Wednesday, July 9 at 5:30pm, Colleen Fraser Building in Westfield; Wednesdays July 16 and July 23 at 12pm, Child Focus office in Elizabeth, 1143 East Jersey Street, 2nd Floor; and Wednesday, July 23 at 5:30pm, Rahway Library.

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties is a program of Child Focus, which prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children, and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect. For details about CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, call 973-832-4002,

email [info@casapassaicunion.org](mailto:info@casapassaicunion.org),

or log on to [www.casapassaicunion.org](http://www.casapassaicunion.org).

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