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## POLICE CARRY THE TORCH FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Westfield 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.

Officers, along with students and staff from Roosevelt Intermediate School, ran from the Garwood/Westfield border to the Westfield/Scotch Plains border.

The Westfield Fire Department raised the American flag over North Avenue to support the Law Enforcement

Torch Run.

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) Westfield police officers, along with students and staff from Roosevelt Intermediate School,

Courtesy Photo

## WPD QUALITY OF LIFE UNIT

Town of Westfield

In addition to our ongoing public safety efforts, the Westfield Police Department also implements incremental measures during the summer months, when we have more pedestrians and cyclists on our roads and seasonally high downtown foot traffic.

Back for its fourth year, the Quality of Life Unit significantly enhances WPD manpower assigned to the Central Business District on select Thursday, Friday, and

Saturday nights through Labor Day, with their duties also extending to nearby Mindowaskin Park. These uniformed and plainclothes officers will issue infractions for parking violations, bicycle riding on the sidewalks (which is not permitted in the downtown), and any unruly and/or destructive behavior. Similarly stepped-up patrolling and enforcement efforts are also underway at all parks as they experience increased seasonal use.

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## ALUMNI SHARE THEIR TALENTS AND GIVE BACK

Westfield Public Schools

A tired faculty room at Westfield High School has been revitalized, thanks to the generosity of three dedicated WHS alumni.

Ellie and Michael Mroz - high school sweethearts, now married and running an interior design firm and construction company respectively - volunteered their time, expertise, and resources to lead the renovation project. Artist Callie Campbell, also an alum and former

WHS math teacher, donated one of her stunning artworks to adorn a newly refreshed wall.

"This was so much more than a redesign. This was a full-circle, beautiful story," says WHS health educator Susan Kolesar who spearheaded the five-month project. "It's a story of staying connected, giving back, having passion for your work, and forging your own path, as all three of our alumni did."



(above l,r) WHS alum Callie Cambell, Michael Mroz, Ellie Mroz, and WHS health educator Susan Kolesar in the newly renovated faculty room at WHS.

Photo by Westfield Public Schools

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# COMMUNITY BAND SUMMER CONCERT SERIES BEGINS JULY 3RD

The Westfield Community Band, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Connors, continues its 113th season with its annual Independence Day Concert on July 3rd at 7:30 p.m. in Mindowaskin Park. The band will be joined by members of the Westfield Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) and Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), who will present a special program in tribute to Independence Day. Also featured will be appearances by Westfield's own "Towne Crier", who will present the "news of the day" and an Independence Day address by a selected community leader.

The band's music program will feature selections which celebrate America and American composers, including "Strike Up the Band" and "Walking the Dog" by George Gershwin, "Over There Fantasic" based upon Irving Berlin's World War I composition, "Over There", "America the Beautiful" by Samuel Augustus Ward, and "This Land is Your Land" by Woody Guthrie. This special program will also include the music of Broadway, with performances of "Highlights from Hello Dolly!" and "Lerner and Loewe in Concert" and the classic American marches, "Americans We" and "Commando March".

The band continues its 2025 Summer Concert Series with concerts on July 10th and 17th. The band rehearses each Wednesday evening from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Community Room in the Westfield Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street.

The band's membership includes musicians from ages 18 to 80, including many active and retired music educators. Under the music direction of Dr. Thomas Connors, now celebrating his 21st anniversary season, the band performs a wide variety of concert band literature, including many classic and contemporary compositions. Experienced area musicians who are interested in a position with the band should contact band manager Barry Rosenberg at 908-337-9073 or

info@westfieldcommunityband.com. The band's Summer Concert Series is sponsored by the Westfield Recreation Department. The band's concerts are made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Chairs and blankets are recommended. In the event of rain, the concert will take place in the Westfield Community Room, located in the Westfield Municipal Building.



(above) The Westfield Community Concert Band presents its Independence Day Concert on July 3rd at 7:30 p.m. in Mindowaskin Park, Westfield. The band will continue its 2025 Summer Concert Series with a concert on July 10th and 17th.

Courtesy Photo





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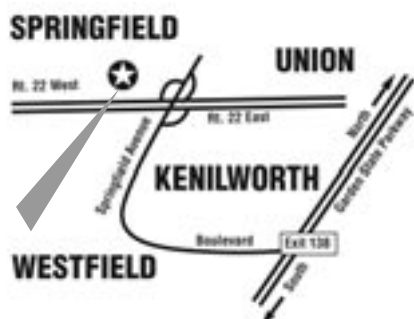
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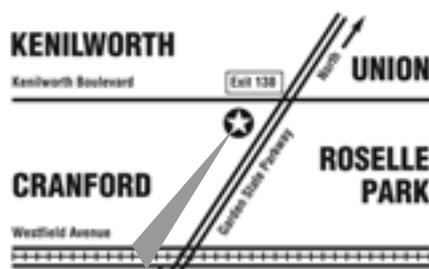
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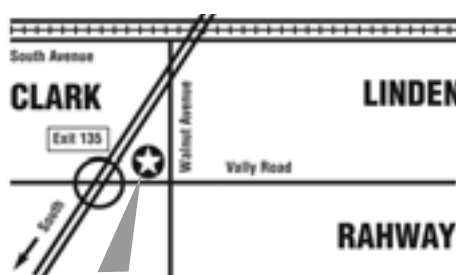
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REUSABLE BAG LIBRARY

No bag? No problem! The McKinley second grade Girl Scout troop has been working hard to donate their little free reusable bag library to the municipal parking lot next to Trader Joe’s, where anyone can take or donate bags as needed. The troop did an amazing job of presenting their idea to the Town Council in April and received unanimous approval to put their project in place.



Courtesy Photo



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### 9/19 – A BROTHER'S REVIVAL: A TRIBUTE TO THE ALLMAN BROTHERS BAND

Led by former Allman Brothers Band bassist David "Rook" Goldflies.

### 9/20 – GYPSY: A TRUE STEVIE NICKS EXPERIENCE

Sabrina Staats leads this enchanting tribute that channels the haunting voice and ethereal style of Stevie Nicks.

### 9/26 – SOUTHERN STEEL: CLASSIC SKYNYRD LIVE

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### 9/27 – RODNEY NORMAN: COMEDY, INSIGHT, AND LAUGHTER

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### 9/28 – LIGHTS OUT: THE JERSEY BEACH BOYS

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# 40 OUTSTANDING YOUNG WOMEN

### Westfield Girl Scouts

Westfield Girl Scouts honored 40 outstanding young women at the 2025 Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards Recognition Ceremony. Held at the Presbyterian Church, this annual event recognizes Juniors, Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have earned one of the three highest awards achievable through Girl Scouts.

These 5th - 12th graders completed a variety of service projects recognized at both state and national levels. Their efforts over the past two

years allowed these community-minded Girl Scouts to address a range of important issues. Creating ways to protect local playgrounds and gardens, developing a digital archive, initiating an electronics-free curriculum, and cultivating a love of animals were just a few of the girl-led projects presented throughout the evening.

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are honors of great distinction. They carry a legacy of perseverance, community betterment, discipline, and respect. The families of Service Unit #52, together with

Roxie Zeek, Director of Girl Experience, Girl Scouts Heart of New Jersey, were proud to honor these deserving young women.

Westfield Girl Scouts is dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

The volunteer-run organization provides girls in grades K-12 with opportunities to reach their full potential by developing values and skills for life.

For additional information contact [gshnjwestfield@gmail.com](mailto:gshnjwestfield@gmail.com).



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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



(above) Mike Saverino & service dog Arbor

Courtesy Photo

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).

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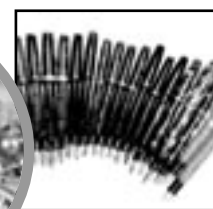
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At Imagine, we know that grief is complex, and big feelings need a safe place to be expressed. That's why we created the Volcano Room, a dedicated space where children can release their emotions in a healthy way. Recently redecorated with characters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

Westfield Girl Scouts spent a full week in celebration of the 113th anniversary of the Girl Scouts USA. Hundreds of local scouts joined family and friends in over 20 separate activities to learn more about the organization, support the community, and have fun.

**DURING GIRL SCOUT WEEK '25, WESTFIELD GIRL SCOUTS COULD BE FOUND:**

- Collecting and assembling supplies for over 113 "Birthday Boxes". These packages, containing all of the materials necessary to celebrate a birthday, were delivered to local food pantries.
- Creating and donating blankets to the Westfield Police Department for distribution in cases of accident or emergency.
- Receiving a proclamation from Mayor Brindle.
- Working with TeeTee Charles, author of the series Olivia's Unordinary Adventures to earn the SCRIBE badge.
- Contributing to the archival effort of digitally preserving local Girl Scout materials.
- Learning the proper way to handle the US flag.
- Serving communities of faith.

Westfield Girl Scouts is dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. This volunteer-run organization provides girls in grades K-12 with

opportunities to reach their full potential by developing values and skills for life. For additional information contact [gshnjwestfield@gmail.com](mailto:gshnjwestfield@gmail.com).



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# TEN STUDENTS RECOGNIZED WITH THE LIFT WHILE YOU CLIMB AWARD

## Westfield High School

Ten Westfield High School students have been recognized with the Lift While You Climb Award, in honor of the late WHS principal Dr. Derrick Nelson. Nelson, who died in 2019 from complications suffered while donating bone marrow to a boy he didn't know in France, once said: "We have an obligation to our fellow human beings that if we are in a position to help someone, you do it. You lift as you climb. If you can do that, you have contributed more to society than anything your bank account can produce and, ultimately, contribute more to your own well-being."

Nominated by WHS faculty and staff for Spring 2025, the ten recipients of the Lift While You Climb Award are:

Liam Concannon, described as someone who "shows genuine compassion to all of his peers. He is always willing to mentor or help anyone in need and cares deeply for all groups of people. He is an exemplary role model and leads every single day by example."

Macy Curran, described as "a trusted teammate, a selfless player, and a vocal leader on the Varsity softball team for the past two years. Always the first to cheer on or refocus her teammates, she brings positivity, resilience, and sportsmanship to everything she does. With her sense of humor, dependability, and kindness, Macy has earned the trust of her teammates - trust that allows her to hold them accountable to the high standards and goals they've set together. Macy makes Westfield

softball stronger and we're lucky to have her on our team."

Ana da Silva Souza, with a nominator saying this: "As Ana navigated her way through a new community and high level of rigor, she took on obstacles with determination and grit. Even while she puts so much time and effort into her school work, AND her jobs outside of school, she never lets that take away from the joy she feels taking care of her family."

Keira Deignan, described as "the epitome of a team-first player. She brings steady energy, sharp humor, and strong leadership to the Varsity softball team in a way that lifts everyone around her. Always dependable, present, and all-in, Keira earns the trust of her teammates by leading with heart and a full commitment to the team's success. She doesn't just contribute to team culture - she helps define it."

Sloan Dossin, whose nominator says this: "Sloan is a very intelligent person. Although he is concerned about his achievements, he takes the time out to worry about others. He sees himself as part of the school community and as such does care about the state of the school. When in class he can get his work quickly and be done, but instead he works with others explaining the question and waiting for the others to understand before moving on. He really has an altruistic spirit in which he truly likes to help others."

Erin Hazard, whose nominator writes that "Erin always does her best, but what really stands out is how she encourages everyone around her

to do their best, too. Having been hired at the same time as Derrick Nelson and admiring him for his leadership qualities, Erin truly reminds me of this legacy he left behind. She is more than deserving of this award."

Nadia Rego, described as "a radiant presence, bringing warmth and kindness to every space she enters. Nadia is a gift to the WHS community."

Alice Schaefer, described as a person who "always has a positive attitude towards her classmates and takes advantage of every opportunity to lift up her fellow classmates. She's complimentary towards everyone and always offers support and encouragement to those in need. She offers to help her classmates with various things in class on a daily basis."

Kenzie Schiller, whose nominator describes her this way: "Kenzie is the first student to participate in class (even when the subjects are difficult to talk about). She also shows the utmost respect to her peers and their diverse opinions. She is exactly the type of student that the Westfield Public School District aims to cultivate as shown by the mission statement."

Quynh Williams, described as "a power student" who has overcome obstacles. "She holds two jobs, one which involves commuting to NYC. Quynh is conscientious, focused, responsible, and has a positive demeanor through it all," writes her nominator. The "Lift While You Climb" Award is sponsored by the WHS Counseling Department twice during the academic year, in the fall and the spring.



(above) Pictured with K-12 Director of Counseling Falyann Balassone (right) and WHS Acting Principal William Loughran (left) are recipients of the Spring 2025 "Lift While You Climb" Award, in honor of the late WHS principal Dr. Derrick Nelson. (L-R) Alice Schaefer, Kenzie Schiller, Nadia Rego, Quynh Williams, Ana da Silva Souza, Macy Curran, Keira Deignan, and Erin Hazard. Not pictured: Liam Concannon and Sloan Dossin.

Photo by Westfield Public Schools

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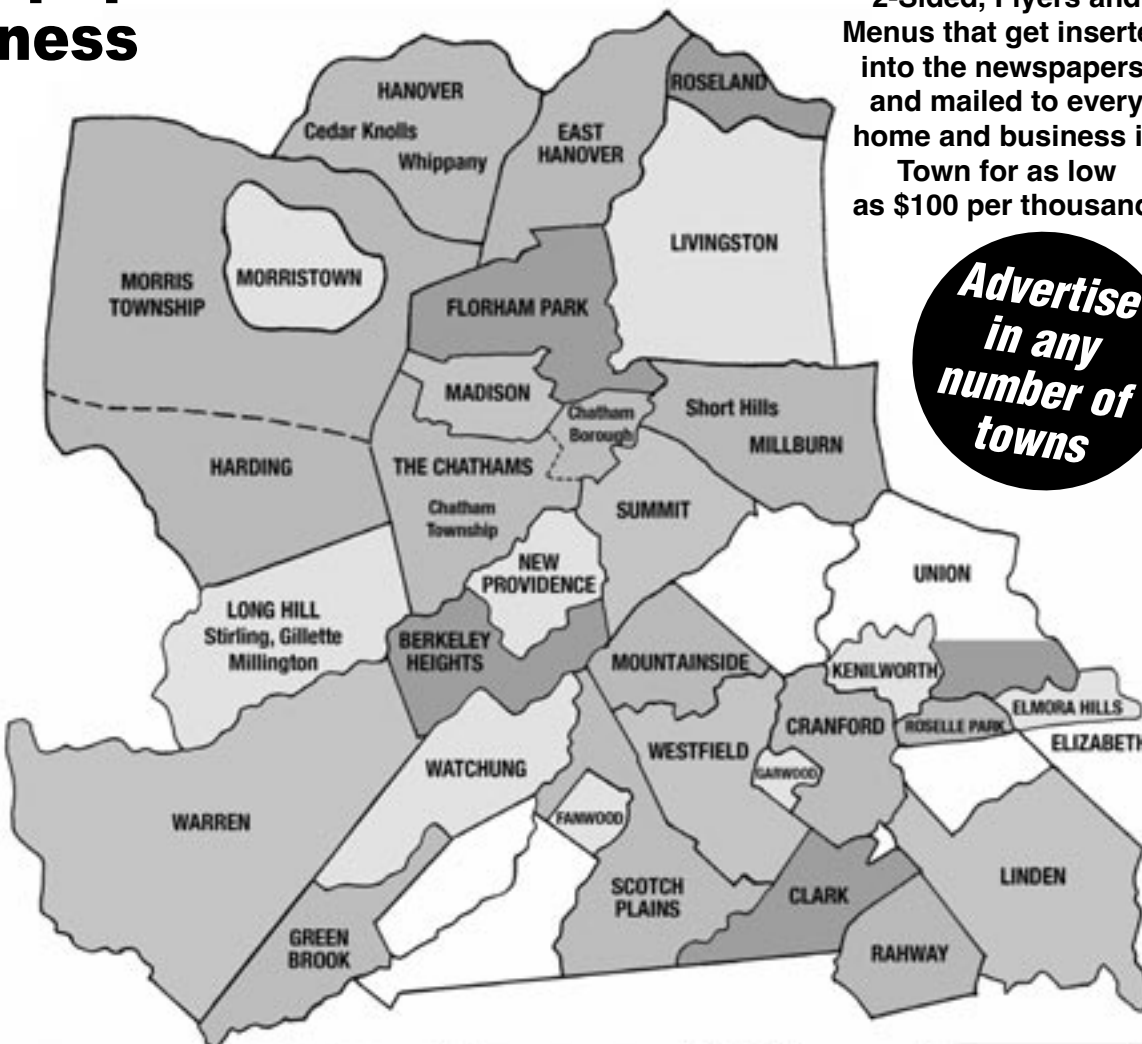
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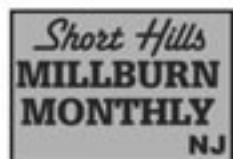
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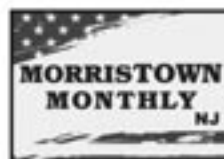
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## SMALL BUSINESS MENTORING HELPING VETS

### SCORE Central Jersey

During National Military Appreciation Month and beyond, SCORE mentors offer resources for veterans to start and grow their entrepreneurial enterprises.

Veterans' training, resolve and fortitude to overcome challenges make them the ideal entrepreneur. They soar as small business owners. According to research, 80 percent of the 1.7 million veteran-owned business owners consider themselves successful. The small business five-year survival rate for veterans is double that of the non-veteran population.

Data from the U.S. Small Business Administration has shown that small business owners with an established mentor have twice the success rate – 70 percent versus 35 percent – as those who do not have a mentor.

In conjunction with National Military Appreciation Month in May, SCORE, a national nonprofit organization that assists small businesses, has developed specific resources for use by its 10,000 mentors nationally in mentoring veterans.

The SCORE Veterans Small Business Resource Guide features veterans-specific resources to offer insight on developing a business plan, securing funding, starting a business, buying an existing business, buying a franchise, connecting with one of SCORE's volunteer mentors, and gaining a better understanding of business through webinars and workshops.

"Volunteering at SCORE is my way of showing appreciation to those who helped and guided me during my career while sharing my background and experience to help entrepreneurs succeed," said SCORE Mid-Atlantic Regional Vice President Ed Coleman. "While I enjoy working with all SCORE clients, as a U.S. Army veteran, I particularly enjoy working with veterans to translate their military experience into entrepreneurship. Helping clients realize their dreams is very gratifying and the essence of the SCORE mission."

SCORE Central Jersey Chapter Chair Nancy Verduin said mentors continually expand their



*(above) Since 1964, SCORE has helped more than 17 million entrepreneurs start, grow or successfully exit a business. SCORE's 10,000 volunteers provide free, expert mentoring, resources and education in all 50 U.S. states and territories. Visit SCORE at score.org.*

Courtesy photo

knowledge base to better assist veterans on their entrepreneurial journey.

"Military transitioning from active duty have different needs than civilians in terms of starting a business," said Verduin. "It's wonderful to have veterans' resources at our volunteers' fingertips to aid in mentoring our service men and women."

Veterans account for about 10 percent of SCORE's client base. Veterans own 10 percent of small businesses and 14 percent of franchises. Since franchisors have a defined plan of what the business should entail, veterans represent the perfect franchisee given their ability to effectively execute plans as intended.

Nationally, veterans own nearly 2 million businesses, employing more than 5 million Americans, and generating more than \$1 trillion in annual income. Of those, 40 percent of veteran-owned businesses generate more than \$500,000 in annual revenue.

To learn more about SCORE, request a mentor or volunteer to be one, visit score.org.

Funded in part through a Cooperative Agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration. All opinions, conclusions and/or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA.

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