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TWO SCHOOL 12 STAFFERS NAMED EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR

Elizabeth Public Schools

The Governor's Educator of the Year Program highlights educational innovation, student achievement, exemplary teaching, and important services outside the classroom environment that lead to student success. This celebratory program recognizes our state's best PK to grade 12 teachers and educational services professionals.

Among several eligibility criteria, they must also be experts in the field who inspire students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn; actively collaborate with colleagues, students, and families to create a strong culture of respect and success; demonstrate leadership and innovation in educational activities; and have the respect and admiration of students, parents and colleagues.

School No. 12 Third Grade Teacher Ms. Crystal Paula Rodriguez was earned Teacher of the Year honors.

She says "Although my childhood seemed tough there were amazing people that helped along the way. I went to several elementary schools and one thing they all had in common was an educator willing to help. Many noticed we were in a tough situation. When we needed food, my family was directed to the school's counselor for resources. When I needed love many teachers were there to give me a hug and provide comfort. When I struggled in class many teachers dedicated their own time to make sure I succeeded. I remember each of their names because of the profound impact they had on my life. Their love and dedication made me want to become 'the teacher'. 'The teacher' that challenges you academically, 'the teacher' that empowers students, and 'the teacher' that is there to talk to and empower others to show up as their best self.

As an educator, I believe that my role as a teacher goes far beyond the classroom and the requirements imposed by the position. I believe that being a great teacher requires you to foster a genuine connection with students that increases students' and teacher rapport, preparing the students for a world that at times can be challenging, and igniting a love of learning. In my classroom, I make it a priority to ensure that I know my students and their families. This is done through a host of activities throughout the school year such as all about me posters or a get to know you activity and having daily conversations with parents or caretakers both in person and through educational platforms. Parents are invited into my classroom on a yearly basis to speak with me regarding their child's academic progress, but also, to observe their child's learning. In addition, with the curriculum and learning materials used I create an environment where my students





(above, l-r) Third Grade Teacher Ms. Crystal Paula Rodriguez and School Counselor Ms. Kristina Pedulla.

can ask questions and conduct research through a variety of topics to increase their curiosity of learning. Allowing this process to naturally occur in the classroom allows us to learn together and hear their stance on their inquiry and passion."

The Educational Service Professional of the Year award went to Ms. Kristina Pedulla, School Counselor.

She says "Many factors have influenced me to become a school counselor. After being an educator for over ten years, I decided to become a school counselor in order to help a greater population within the school community. As an educator, I saw what an impact outside issues could have on a child's academic success. I realized that in order for a child to succeed academically, his social and emotional well-being all played a huge part. I have a deep desire to help students navigate challenges, whether they are academic, social, or emotional. Being a school counselor allows me to ensure that every student receives the emotional and academic support he or she needs in order to succeed in all aspects of life. My goal is to make a meaningful difference and create a lasting impact in all students' lives. Seeing students grow academically, socially, and emotionally has brought great meaning and joy to my career.

School counselors play a key role in supporting students' academic, emotional, social, and career development, while also ensuring a safe and supportive school environment. Teachers, parents, and counselors work together to create interventions to help students succeed. I take pride in being empathetic to the struggles that my students endure. Students can open up to me easily and know they are in a safe space with me."



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LANDSCAPE WITH BIRDS IN MIND

The Raptor Trust

How many Eastern Screech Owls do we currently have at The Raptor Trust? Apparently ALL of them! Most of these owlets were displaced after the trees that held their nests were cut down.

Cutting down trees and landscaping especially during nesting season - can destroy active nests, scare off parents, and even injure adult birds during a critical time.

Most birds nest between March and August. Even small projects - like pruning shrubs or pulling out vines - can have a devastating result on a nest.

Here's how you can help:

- Delay major trimming until fall
- Check for nests before cutting or clearing

- Leave a few brush piles
- birds and critters love them
- Avoid pesticides and non-native plants

These small steps can make all the difference for birds trying to raise their families nearby—or young birds in the first days of their lives.

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 websitetheraptortrust.org for instructions. We cannot do what we do without the kindness of many – including our visitors!



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JLEP ANNOUNCES 2025 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

The Junior League of Elizabeth Plainfield (JLEP) awarded three \$4,000 scholarships at their Annual Dinner on May 21, 2025 to college bound women who demonstrated a passion for volunteerism. The scholarship recipients are:

- Vasyyah Mars of Rahway who will be attending **Howard University**
- Erica Donohue of Westfield, NJ who will be attending Fairleigh Dickinson University
- Laila Quallis of Westfield, NJ who will be attending Morgan State University.

Bernadette Houston, chair of the JLEP Scholarship Committee said "With over 32 qualified scholarship applicants, our Scholarship review committee had their work cut out for them. It is amazing the dedication that these young women have, excelling in studies, sports, and community activities. It was quite a challenge to come up with the top three for the year, but we were finally able to reach a consensus and upon meeting the award winners, our decisions were confirmed. All the young women are well qualified and great representatives of their schools and communities, truly the future volunteers of Union County."

The Junior League of Elizabeth Plainfield awards scholarships each spring. To find out more about the League's scholarship program or about how to join as a member, please contact the League at 908-709-117, or via email at

office@jlepnj.org.

JUNIOR LEAGUE OF ELIZABETH PLAINFIELD

The Junior League of Elizabeth Plainfield is a chapter of the Association of Junior Leagues International, Inc. and is an organization of women whose mission is to advance women's leadership for meaningful community impact through volunteer action, collaboration, and training. Its purpose is exclusively educational

and charitable. To learn more about the Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield please visit jlepnj.org.

For more information about the Junior League of Elizabeth Plainfield, please contact: Stephanie Eckenrode, President, Junior League of Elizabeth Plainfield, call (908)709-1177 or email information@jlepnj.org



(above, l-r) Liz Strong, Mary Jackson, Teri DiFrancisco, JLEP Scholarship Committee members, Vassyah Mars, Laila Qualis, Erica Donohue, Scholarship recipients, Bernadette Houston, JLEP Scholarship Committee Chair. Courtesy Photo



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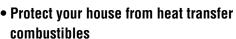


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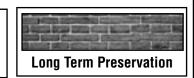
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GARDEN CLUB WILL FEATURE PAUL TRADER PRESENTATION - AUG 6

The Township of Union Garden Club will feature Paul Trader who will give a presentation on Weed Control in the Yard and Garden.

He will teach about categories of weeds and how they can be prevented and controlled in the garden and yard using least-toxic methods and products. He will also discuss solutions for controlling moss, poison ivy, and Japanese Knotweed.

Paul Trader is the retired horticulturist and executive director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rockland County, New York, in addition to teaching Integrated Pest Management courses in the School of Professional Horticulture at the New York Botanical Gardens

in the Bronx.

The public is invited to hear Mr. Trader speak at 7pm on August 6th in the Bonnel Room located on the second floor in the rear of Town Hall at 1776 Morrris Avenue, Union. For more information contract Veronica Doll 908 447-1991.





(above) Cub Scout pack #68 and their parents joined with members of the Township of Union Garden Club to renovate the municipal gardens located at in front of the town hall at 1776 Morris Avenue, Union.



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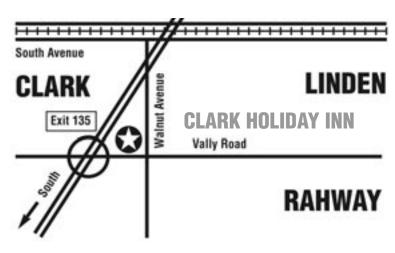
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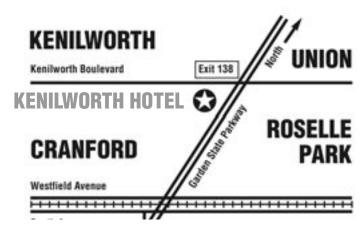
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THE BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN ARCHIVES & CENTER FOR AMERICAN MUSIC TO BE SIGNATURE GROUP AT 6TH ANNUAL MARCH TO YORKTOWN DAY

As the country enters a year of celebrations leading up to 2026 and America 250, the Semiquincentennial of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route New Jersey (W3R-NJ) announces an event that is a prelude to Westfield Celebrates America 250.

The 6th Annual March to Yorktown Day Commemoration & Encampment Festival in Westfield, NJ will be held on Sunday, August 17th from 12:00 noon – 4:00pm.

The event will kick off at 12:00 noon at outside of Westfield's Town Hall with an opening ceremony and the playing of patriotic music followed by remarks about the importance of Westfield commemorating when the French and American troops marched from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, VA (an almost 700 mile, nine state, land and water journey) to lay siege to the British forces there, securing independence for the United States. The march of the troops took place in the summer of 1781 taking them through several Union County towns including Westfield, Mountainside and Scotch Plains on August 29, 1781. The March route was designated in 2009 as the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail, a unit of the National Trail System, administered by the National Park Service.

At 12:30, the community is invited to watch or join-in the symbolic march re-enactment along East Broad Street to Mountain Ave. Wreaths of remembrance will be placed at the Presbyterian burial grounds where over 70 Revolutionary War Veterans, their families and other patriots are buried. The march will continue into Mindowaskin Park accompanied by the Generals Rochambeau, Washington and Lafayette, the New Jersey Sons of the American Revolution Color Guard, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the New Jersey Fifes and Drums, the Miller-Cory Museum colonial living history group, women camp followers and the New Jersey Militia Heard's Brigade.

From 1:00 to 4:00, a history themed festival will be set up in Mindowaskin Park. A talk on American experiences in the Revolutionary War will be given by Dr. Sean Dineen, Adjunct History Professor, Kean University and disabilities advocate. The event's signature group is The Bruce Springsteen Archives & Center for American Music. They will be on hand to share news about their mission and they will have an exhibit with engaging items. Children's games and activities along with information will be provided by local history organizations such as the Forgotten Victory Trail Association, Westfield Historical Society, Miller-Cory House Museum, Princeton Battlefield Society, Westfield Chapter Daughters of the American Revolution, West Fields Chapter Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of the Revolution in New Jersey, Washington Association of New Jersey, North Jersey American Revolution Roundtable, Fortnightly Club, Swan Historical Foundation, Trent House

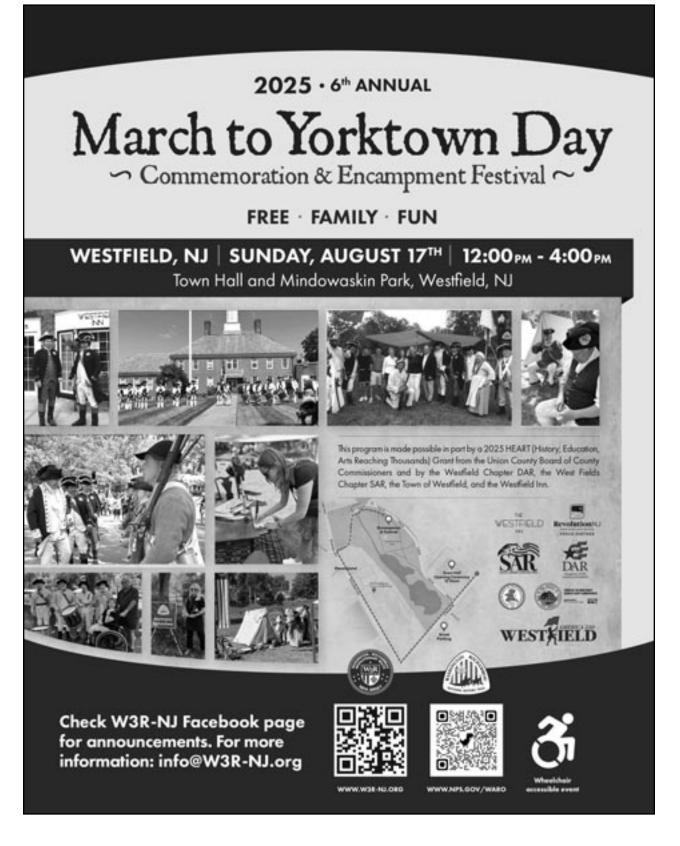
Museum, Merchants & Drovers Museum, Frazee House Museum, Center for Creativity at the Rialto, Liberty Hall Museum and others.

An encampment with tents, cooking demonstrations, fife and drum music, musket firing and marching drills will occur during the festival.

Food by A Taco Affair of Westfield, will be available for purchase.

This event is made possible by support from Mayor Shelley Brindle, the Westfield Town Council, the Town of Westfield, and in part by a 2025 HEART (History, Education, Arts Reaching Thousands) Grant from the Union County Board of County Commissioners, The Westfield Inn, Chez Catherine, the West Fields Chapter SAR, the Westfield Chapter DAR, the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, New Jersey (W3R-NJ).

For more information email info@W3R-NJ.org Follow on Facebook @W3RNJ and www.w3r-nj.org



BOY SCOUT TROOP AND CUB SCOUT PACK RETIRE AMERICAN FLAGS



(above) The Scouts of Cub Scout Pack 23 and Boy Scout Troop 23 retired old and worn American flags on Flag Day at St. Genevieve's Church in Elizabeth.

Courtesy Photo

Join Mayor J. Christian Bollwage & City Council as the City of Elizabeth Celebrates et Park☆599 Vine Street☆6pm to 8pm your neighbors Fun for the whole family! FIRST RESPONDER VEHICLES FUN ACTIVITIES INFORMATIVE VENDORS A FOOD MUSIC & MORE! Starts At 8:30pm MOVIE NIGHT Bring Your Lawn Chairs! Boy Scout Troop 23 and Cub Scout Pack 23 retired 50 worn out or damaged American flags on Flag Day, Saturday, June 14.

The ceremony, in which flags are properly retired by cutting them into quarters and then burning them, was held behind the St. Genevieve's Church Convent on Princeton Road in Elizabeth.

Dozens of Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, leaders, parents, other family members and guests participated in the solemn and respectful ceremony, with each having the chance to place flag sections into the fire. The Scouts who participated will receive a brass flag grommet, sifted from the ashes and strung on a leather lanyard, to commemorate their participation.

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 and Boy Scout Troop 23 provide activities and training for children of all faiths, from St. Genevieve's parish and the surrounding area, from Kindergarten through high school graduation. For more details, please contact Dan Bernier, Scoutmaster, at (908) 451-1948 or webfoottroop@gmail.com.

STOCK UP NOW ON FIREWOOD

Do you need firewood for your backyard chiminea, fireplace or wood-burning stove? You can get well-seasoned split hardwood logs at St. Genevieve's Church, 200 Monmouth Road, Elizabeth, for less than what you pay in the supermarket. And at the same time, you will be supporting the camping program of Boy Scout Troop 23, including a campership fund that helps send financially-challenged Scouts to summer camp.

Help yourself from Webby's Wood Shed, located behind the Rectory near the garages that face 818 Livingston Road. Follow the directions on the envelopes provided to make a payment. Thank you for your support!



(above) Firewood is available from Webby's Wood Shed at St. Genevieve's Church. Purchase helps send Scouts to summer camp.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

American Revolution (SAR) has been very busy this month in Union County. We presented the SAR Bronze JROTC Medal to cadets at Linden Naval JROTC, and Abraham Clark Marine JROTC on June 9th at each schools award ceremony. We took part along with the Church & Cannon Chapter of the NJ Daughters of the American Revolution in a Commemoration of the Battles of Connecticut Farms (now Union) and Springfield on June 14th at the First Presbyterian Church in Springfield. We also held an Army 250th birthday celebration afterwards at the church. On June 21st the State Color Guard was

The New Jersey Society of the Sons of the at the re-Dedication of the James and Hannah Caldwell Monument in the First Presbyterian Church gravevard in Elizabeth, hosted by the Union County Historical Society. Then on June 22nd the Color Guard was the Dedication of the first sign of the Forgotten Victory Trail in Taylor Park, Millburn. The Forgotten victory Trail covers the Campaign of the Battles of Connecticut Farms and Springfield.

The Sons of the American Revolution is a genealogical organization for men with Revolutionary War ancestors.

If anyone has an interest in joining email chrissands44@aol.com.



(above) The SAR Color Guard with the wreath commemoration for the Battles of Ct. Farms and Springfield.

Courtesy photos



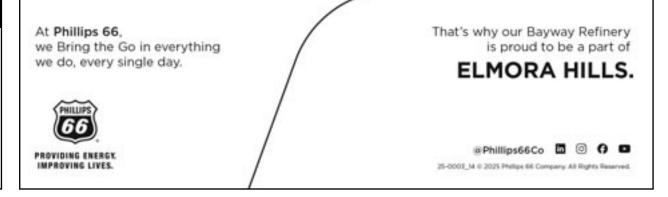
(above) Cranes Ford Chapter DAR and Union County Historical Society at the James and Hannah Monument Re-Dedication.

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AUGUST PROGRAMS AT ELMORA BRANCH LIBRARY

Registration for our programs will be on our website! Please visit elizpl.org to check-out all our events! For any cancellations, please visit our website for more information. *The library will be closed on August 30*

Elmora Book Sale

Friday, August 1st to Friday, August 8th Book Sale Hours: Monday to Thursday 10-7pm; Friday 10-5pm; Saturday 10-1pm Book Sale Prices: Price Range: 0.50¢-\$5.00; FinalDay08/08: Bag of Books \$10 Bring your own Bag or \$2.00 Bag Donation

Code Forward

Monday, August 4, 11, 18, & 25 5 pm to 6:30 pm

Offering free coding education to kids who are ready to create, build, and lead. Our team brings years of experience in Java, Python, and other programming languages. *PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN ELECTRONIC DEVICE

All Week

Summer Scavenger Hunt & Craft-to-Go

Monday, August 4 to Saturday, August 9 (All Day)

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

Mahiong

Monday, August 4, 11, 18, & 25 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, August 5 at 11 am

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

Crochet with Sol

Tuesday, August 5, 12, 19 at 12 pm Ms. Sol will teach you everything you need to know to get started, from fundamental stitches to understanding gauge.

Lil' Bookworms

Wednesday, August 6 at 5 pm

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

Lunch & Learn

Thursday, August 7 at 11 am Discover the insights into Diabetes at an engaging seminar. No registration is required

The Rummikub Club

Thursday, August 7 & 14 at 2 pm Join us for a friendly game! Beginners are welcome!

Storytime at Green Acres Park

Saturday, August 9 at 11 am

Located on 169 Bellevue St, Elizabeth, NJ. Join Ms. Martha for storytime and craft at the park! No registration required

Zumba Gold

Monday, August 11, 18, & 25, Tuesday, August 12, 19, & 26, and Thursday, August 14, 21, & 28 at 9 am Add fitness to your daily routine through the joy of dance! Walk-ins are welcome.

Tai Chi & Qi Gong

Monday, August 11 at 4 pm Wednesday, August 13 at 9 am

A gentle Chinese art that combines slow, flowing movements with deep breathing.

Stitch & Mending

Tuesday, August 12 at 10 am Wednesday, August 20 at 5 pm

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

Art Time with Ms. Martha

Wednesday, August 13 at 5 pm

You don't need to be an artist to join Ms. Martha for a special children's art program. No supplies are needed; just bring your creativity.

Boogie Woogie Babies

Friday, August 15 at 11 am

Grab your little ones and join us for a groovy morning filled with songs and dancing!

Monday Cinema at Elmora

Monday, August 18 & 25 at 1 pm

Join us for a Monday Cinema at Elmora Branch Library. It's going to be a great time! This month's showtime is "

Tuesday, August 19 at 11 am

Join us at the Elmora Branch Library for a funfilled game of BINGO.

Family Bingo

Tuesday, August 20 at 2 pm

Join us at the Elmora Branch Library for a funfilled game of BINGO

Adult Spanish Book Club

Thursday, August 21 at 2 pm

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

Bad Art

Friday, August 22 & 29 at 1 pm

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, August 22 & 29 at 4 pm

Don't miss out on our Chess Club for Kids! We welcome beginners.

Bubbles aRe Us

Saturday, August 23 at 12 pm

Located on 640 3rd Avenue, Elizabeth, NJ Join Ms. Martha for songs, stories, and crafts with LOADS of fun! Stories in English and Spanish for the whole family. FREE PIZZA!!!

Adult Scrabble Club

Tuesday, August 26

Thursday, August 28 at 2 pm - 3:30 pm Word lovers! Exercise your B-R-A-I-N (7 points) by playing Scrabble with other likeminded adults.

The Edible Book Club

Wednesday, August 27 at 1 pm

Each month, we explore a cookbook and bring its recipes to life. Come for the books and stay for the bites! This month's theme is Spring Salads & Humus

Paint n' Sip

Wednesday, August 27 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.

Guinea Pig Fair

Wednesday, August 27 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, this event is perfect for families.

Toddlers World

Friday, August 29 at 11 am

An hour of songs to sing, music, &playtime.

50TH REUNION FOR CLASS OF 1975

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Saturday, October 11, 2025

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Interested parties should contact Linda Mallozzi by email at lemlaw@comcast.net.

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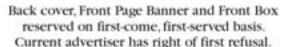
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YMCA'S CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER OPEN HOUSE - AUG. 14TH

Child Care Programs in Elizabeth and Union. Child Care and Early Learning programs at the Y focus on nurturing child development by building foundational skills, fostering healthy relationships and boosting self-reliance, all in a safe and supportive environment. With programs run by caring adult role models who are invested in helping every child reach their full potential. The Gateway Family YMCA's Child Care Programs are a safe place providing support for working families.

"We believe that every child is a unique individual. The values and skills learned early on are vital building blocks for quality of life and future success," stated Lisa Yanez, Senior Director of Child Development. "We are committed to promoting each child's individual development and supporting the entire family."

The Gateway Family YMCA is hosting Open House and Parent Information Sessions at the

The Gateway Family YMCA Offers YMCA Five Points Branch Child Development Center, 201 Tucker Avenue, Union and the Youth Development Branch Child Development Center, 16-20 Jefferson Avenue, Elizabeth on Thursday, August 14th 6:00-7:30 p.m. Families are invited to visit the Y and learn more about programs and options to fit their needs for infant, toddler and preschool care. information, visit: tgfymca.org/events

> Registration is available in August for the 2025-2026 session of Infant. Toddler and Preschool Child Care. The YMCA also offers Before and After School care in local elementary and middle schools, on-site public Preschool in Rahway and Union, Vacation Day programs during school holidays and Summer Day Camp.

> The Gateway Family YMCA's Child Development Centers follow the Creative Curriculum built on theories of development in young children, that all children learn through active exploration of their environment and

therefore the environment plays a critical role in learning. The philosophy of the Creative Curriculum is that young children learn best by doing. The research-based Creative Curriculum is implemented in all classrooms through ageappropriate activities, lessons and daily routines and learning extends to the Y's core values of Caring, Honesty, Respect and Responsibility.

The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers dedicated to strengthening community through Youth Development, Healthy Living and Social Responsibility. The Y doesn't just strengthen bodies – it strengthens people, families and communities.

For more information about The Gateway Family YMCA's Child Care programs, visit www.tgfymca.org or contact the Youth Development Branch 908-355-3061 or the Five Points Branch 908-688-9622.





(above) The Gateway Family YMCA Offers YMCA Child Care Programs in Elizabeth and Union.





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