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2025-2026 EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

Berkeley Heights Public Schools

The Berkeley Heights Public School District is thrilled to announce the following educators as our 2025-2026 Governor's Educators of the Year. This award recognizes outstanding teachers who inspire and shape the lives of our students.

They are known to actively collaborate with colleagues, students, and families to create a strong culture of respect and success and demonstrate leadership and innovation in educational activities at the school, district, and/or state and national levels that take place both within and outside the school setting.

THIS YEAR'S EDUCATORS OF THE YEAR ARE:

- Mary Kay McMillin Early Child Care Center:
Emily Mulieri/Grade 1
- William Woodruff Elementary School:
Mary Niedenfuhr/Media Specialist Grades K-2
- Mountain Park Elementary School:
Michele Guerriero/Special Education Teacher
- Thomas P. Hughes Elementary School:
Matthew Madura/Grade 4
- Columbia Middle School:
Dawn McGann/Grade 7 Social Studies Teacher
- Governor Livingston High School:
Dawn Buchan/Science Grades 9-12



(above) Michele Guerriero

Courtesy Photo

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(above) Mary Niedenfuhr



(above) Emily Mulieri



(above) Matthew Madura



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FRIENDS OF LIBRARY BOOK SALE SUCCESS

Friends of the Berkeley Heights Public Library
As its final event of the year, the Friends of the Berkeley Heights Public Library hosted a very successful book sale from December 12 – 14, raising over \$1,800 for the benefit of the BHPL programs.

Despite a weekend snowstorm, nearly 350 book lovers turned out to shop a wide range of adult and children’s fiction. Seniors, toddlers, and everyone in between found appealing titles among the more than 3,200 books donated for the event. Younger children browsed board books and older kids found chapter books and classic series to read over Winter Break.

A number of adult buyers commented on the quality and variety of books they found, while others said they were buying these books as holiday gifts for family and friends.

On Saturday, Elaine Insinnia, local author and former Columbia Middle School teacher, hosted a reading and signed copies of her book, *You Go, Girl!*

The Friends have started planning next year’s book sale, and will share details in 2026.

All proceeds from Friends events, including the December book sale, benefit Berkeley Heights Public Library programs. This year the Friends of the BHPL sponsored free regional museum passes and activity kits, a monthly Spice Club, fun community events—such as the Edible Book Contest, a student club at Governor Livingston high school, and early literacy assets for the area’s youngest readers.

To learn more about the Friends of BHPL or sign up to volunteer at future Friends events, please contact friends@bhplnj.org.



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CALLING ALL VETERANS

VFW Post 6259, located in Berkeley Heights, is looking for new members to join our ranks and to continue your service. Not a veteran of a foreign war? Come join us anyway for camaraderie and help us start an auxiliary group at the Post. Call Steve Mondragon at 908-403-1902 for more information.

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SHARP-SHINNED HAWK RELEASED BACK TO WILD

This feisty Sharp-shinned Hawk was admitted on 12/22 after being found in a yard in Warren following a window strike. On intake, the hawk had bloody nares and mouth, consistent with head trauma often seen after collisions. The nares are a bird's nostrils, located near the base of the beak, and bleeding there often points to head or facial trauma from collisions.

With supportive care and time to heal, this "Sharpie" as we call them, made great progress and was moved to an outside flight cage on 12/28/25. After proving strong, steady flight and good awareness, the hawk was successfully released back to the wild on 1/2/2026.

Sharp-shinned Hawks are incredibly fast and agile forest hunters, built to weave through dense trees while chasing small birds. That same speed

and focus, however, can make them especially vulnerable to window strikes when reflective glass looks like open sky or habitat.

Remember, small changes matter, adding window decals is a simple way to help protect avian wildlife.

ABOUT THE RAPTOR TRUST

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

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GLHS HEART OF THE HIGHLANDER FALL AWARD RECIPIENTS

Berkeley Heights Public Schools

The Governor Livingston High School Athletic Department is excited to recognize the next class of Heart of a Highlander award recipients for the 2025 Fall sports season. This group is an exceptional collective of student athletes that represent GLHS in the highest

regard. This award was created to recognize a Governor Livingston High School student-athlete from each sports team (each season) who exemplifies great character, leadership, sportsmanship, inclusion, and community service. **THE STUDENTS RECOGNIZED ARE:**

- Noah Abdalla - Boys Cross Country
- Rylee Conover - Girls Cross Country
- Abby Kim - Girls Volleyball
- Pippa Raaijmakers - Girls Tennis
- Sienna Duff - Cheerleading
- Collin Cisko - Football
- Corinne Morrison - Field Hockey
- Nole Campbell - Boys Soccer



Photo by BHPS

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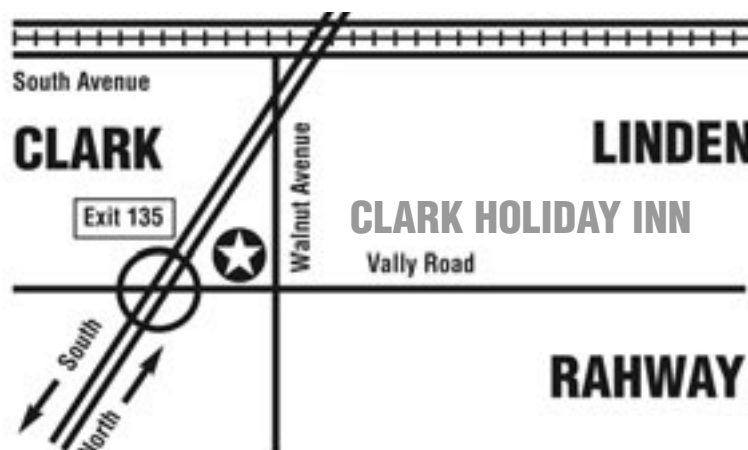
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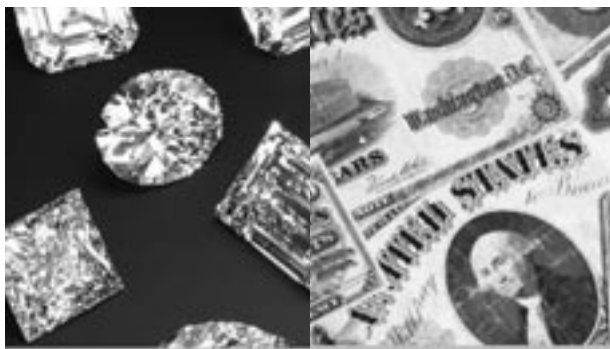
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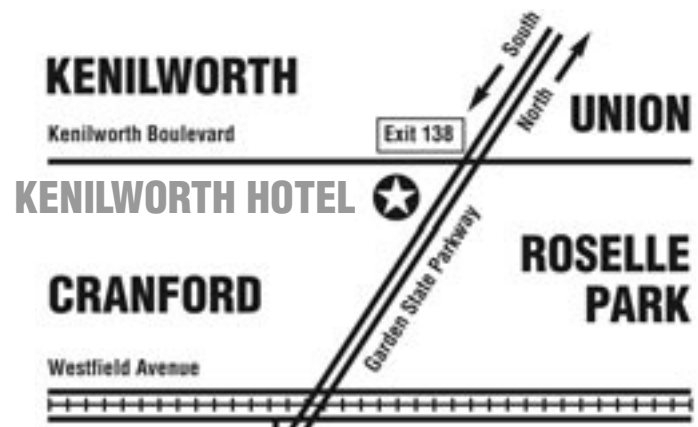
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FEBRUARY SPEAKERS PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMIT AREA OLD GUARD

The Summit Area Old Guard is a social, educational, and recreational organization that serves men of retirement age. We meet Tuesdays, 9:30 a.m., at the New Providence Presbyterian Church located at 1307 Springfield Ave – we encourage visitation, and all are welcome. Our motto is “Come for the Programs. Stay for the Friends.” The organization was founded in 1930. Our website address is summitoldguard.org.

In February, we will have four speakers:

FEBRUARY 3RD, MATTHEW LIBERA

Professor of Materials Science and Engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology, will tell us how to make a better hip implant. Biomedical implants such as hip and knee prostheses have had a huge impact on human health and have improved the quality of life for millions of patients. However, in addition to their wonderful healing properties, these, and other tissue-contacting biomedical devices (e.g., catheters, tissue-expanders, pacemakers, etc.) can also catalyze infection. Infection rates vary from about 1-5% but can be as high as 50% depending on the nature of the device. Device-associated infection can be a life-changing complication which currently has no cure. Professor Libera will give an overview of tissue-contacting implants using hips as a prime example and then describe the infection problem as well as ongoing efforts to prevent, detect, and cure these infections.

FEBRUARY 10TH, NANCY ORI

Nancy Ori will discuss ‘Nature as the Inspiration of Art’. Nancy has been an internationally respected photographer for over 35 years and a video producer for Ciba-Geigy and Novartis, and is owner of New Jersey Media Center, LLC in Berkeley Heights, NJ. Nancy studied with Ansel Adams and was a teaching assistant for many years with the Ansel Adams Workshop in California. In 1994 she established the NJ Photography Forum, a group of professional and serious amateur photographers. Nancy will share her personal interpretation of the landscape and architecture, demonstrating how she uses photographs to transform natural and man-made settings. Her images, which reveal a love of light, shadow, and form, become powerful documents that express the land's vulnerability and endurance.



FEBRUARY 17TH, STEVE NISBERG

We will learn about the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). Our speaker will be Steve Nisberg, a human resource specialist. Steve will give us insight into this global Non-Governmental Organization and share its history, the work that it does around the world to stabilize the climate, strengthen the ability of people and nature to thrive and support people's health through eight key areas of focus.

FEBRUARY 24TH, KEN CAVANAGH

We'll delve into AI – artificial intelligence. Our speaker will be Ken Cavanagh, former faculty member, cyber security, Fordham University. Ken will review the various elements of AI and how they affect our daily experiences, including debunking common misconceptions and highlighting ways AI is used today, such as virtual assistants, healthcare, and daily assistance.



(above, l-r) Matthew Libera, Nancy Ori, Steve Nisberg, and Ken Cavanagh



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BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THERAYOUTH

At Drew University, Madison, NJ • Saturday, March 21, 2026 • 4:00 PM

Pegasus: The Orchestra will perform at Drew University on Saturday, March 21 at 4:00 PM for the TheraYouth Foundation's Third Annual Concert fundraiser. Held at the Dorothy Young Center for the Arts, the concert will unite world-class professional musicians with local student performers to raise critical funds for TheraYouth's mission to provide needed physical, occupational, and speech therapy services to disadvantaged children who cannot otherwise access care.

Pegasus: The Orchestra pairs artistic excellence with social impact. Pianist, conductor and composer Karén Hakobyan founded the group in 2017 as a nonprofit dedicated to supporting exceptional musical talent, and to bringing world-class performances to underserved communities. True to its namesake, the ensemble empowers its musicians to soar artistically. Pegasus functions as a collective of artist leaders, resulting in performances that run the range of vibrant, driven orchestral performances alternating with intimate and chamber-like expression. The New York Concert Review calls Pegasus "a truly first-rate ensemble" and a "can't miss" group, urging audiences to "get your tickets right away before they sell out."

As a composer-arranger, Director Hakobyan frequently crafts orchestral works to showcase

the unique musicality of the ensemble's artists, as in this concert which Hakobyan specifically wrote for this performance.

The Chatham High School Chamber Choir, directed by Kenneth Bryson, will perform the Interlude. This ensemble has performed at venues including the White House, the National Anthem at Citi Field to open a Mets game, the Empire State Building, and the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and appreciated for their musical excellence.

The proceeds from this concert will support the TheraYouth Foundation, whose mission is to ensure that children are never denied critical physical, occupational, or speech therapy simply because their families cannot afford it. TheraYouth serves disadvantaged youth with treatable conditions, helping them gain strength, communication, and independence. Funded entirely through donations and fundraisers, every dollar raised supports life-changing therapy sessions for children who might otherwise go without the care they need to thrive.

"Every child deserves the chance to reach their full potential," said TheraYouth founder, Dr. Irina Marcoff, DPT. "This concert not only raises vital funds but brings the community together around the belief that early, high-quality therapy can change the course of a child's life."


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KARÉN HAKOBYAN, CONDUCTOR

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 Saint-Saëns – *Cello Concerto No. 1*
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DAR LAUNCHES AMERICA 250 CELEBRATION

Submitted by Holly Dunbar

America's semiquincentennial year has arrived and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) kicked off the celebration by honoring their patriot ancestors at the Somerset County Park Commission's Festival of Trees.

"Celebrating America 250 by Honoring Our Patriot Ancestors" was the theme of the tree hosted by Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter DAR at the Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge during December. The 8-ft. tall tree was decorated with red, white and blue lights and the profiles of the Revolutionary War ancestors of DAR chapter members.

"We hope that our tree helped to raise awareness of the individuals who established our nation," said Regent Nancy Stoll. "Our members are descended from patriots in nine states who served in a variety of ways. We need to remember the sacrifices that they all made for our freedom."

Featured on the tree were mini profiles of 50 patriot ancestors and their service. They included a captain of the Lexington Alarm in

Massachusetts, a river boat pilot, people who donated money or supplies, a brigadier general of the light dragoons, a spy, a president of the provincial Congress, and farmers who joined their local militia.

To join the DAR, women need to document their descent from a man or woman who aided the cause of American independence. Some prospective members have mapped out their family tree, but others know only that they have an ancestor who served in the Revolution. In that case, the DAR will assist them with research and the application process.

The DAR is a non-profit, non-political women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education. There are currently 190,000 members in 3,000 chapters in the U.S. and several nations abroad.

If you are a descendent from a patriot of the Revolution and would like to join the DAR, contact the chapter at

ESCchapterDAR@gmail.com.



John Honeyman
b c 1729 Armagh, N Ireland
d 1822 Bedminster, NJ
Counterspy for Washington
Somerset County
New Jersey

(above) Most of the patriot ancestors honored were from New Jersey and many were local.

Courtesy Photo

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(above) The DAR tree was decorated with early American flags and profiles of 50 Revolutionary War ancestors of chapter members.



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OPERA AT FLORHAM VALENTINE SERENADE

Lenfell Hall, The Mansion, Fairleigh Dickinson University (285 Madison Ave, Madison, NJ)
Sunday, February 15, 2026 at 2:00 PM

Opera at Florham invites audiences to celebrate Valentine's Day weekend with a concert of love on stage: Valentine Serenade, a special Sunday afternoon concert on February 15, 2026 at 2:00 pm at Lenfell Hall, The Mansion, Fairleigh Dickinson University (285 Madison Ave, Madison, NJ 07940).

Featuring beloved Opera at Florham favorites Sarah Barrera, Soprano, and Pedro Barrera, Tenor, this program showcases a married couple united on and off the stage, whose shared artistry brings rare intimacy and authenticity to every performance. Rather than a traditional recital, the concert unfolds as a cinematic emotional journey—exploring love, longing, joy, and farewell through music that resonates deeply with the heart.

In past performances, the Barreras have captivated audiences with repertoire ranging from Giuseppe Verdi, Giacomo Puccini, and Charles Gounod to Ennio Morricone, Stephen Sondheim, and other modern favorites, seamlessly bridging Opera, theater, and film in performances that are both emotionally rich and theatrically compelling.

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- A rare opportunity to hear a married couple perform together, bringing genuine intimacy

and emotional authenticity to the stage

- A cinematic, story-driven program that goes beyond a traditional recital
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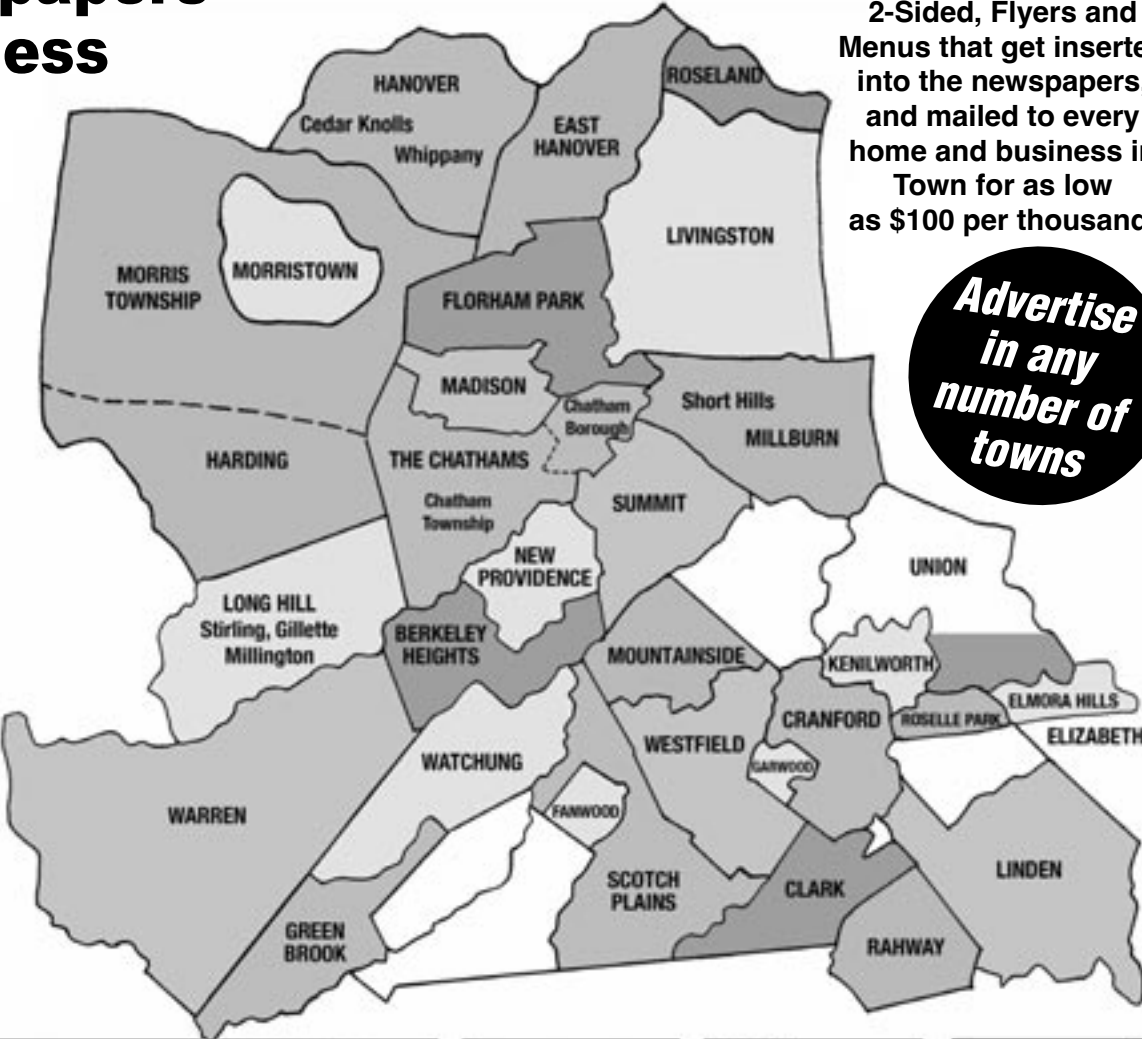
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This photo highlights just some of our crew members who responded to these calls for our neighbors in need.

We couldn't do this work alone. A huge thank you to the Berkeley Heights Police and Berkeley Heights Fire Department for their constant support and partnership on so many of these calls. Working together makes our community stronger every day.

Thank you, Berkeley Heights, for allowing us to serve.

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YOU ARE INVITED TO A WEDDING AT CDC THEATRE

A modern musical farce with heart, *It Shoulda Been You*, at CDC Theatre, 78 Winans Ave in Cranford, NJ, invites you to a wedding day where nothing goes as planned. Chaos, secrets, and laughs abound as two families, one Jewish, one Catholic, collide in a whirlwind of love, identity, and unexpected twists. Her mother is a force of nature. His mother is a tempest in a cocktail shaker. And, when the bride's ex-boyfriend crashes the party, the perfect wedding starts to unravel. It's up to the bride's sister to turn a tangled mess into happily ever after in this musical comedy for anyone who has ever had parents.

This fast-paced ensemble comedy celebrates acceptance, forgiveness, and the true meaning of family. At the Steinberg wedding, nothing is what it seems; religions collide, Machiavellian plots are revealed, promises are broken, secrets are exposed and hope springs from the most unlikely of places. The charming, funny musical, *It Shoulda Been You*, invites you to a wedding day that you'll never forget, with blushing brides, nervous grooms, overbearing moms, unexpected guests and plenty of crazy twists and turns. Anything that can go wrong does, and love pops up in mysterious places.

Performances are Fridays and Saturdays from February 13th- 28th at 8pm, and Sundays February 22 and March 1 at 2pm.

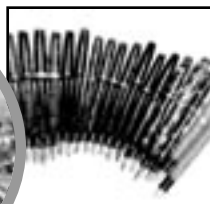
CDC Theatre is happy to announce that as part of a new pilot program, the February 22nd matinee performance will be ASL interpreted. For tickets and more details, visit cdctheatre.org.

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