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## COMMUNITY RINGS IN THE YEAR OF THE HORSE

Submitted by Jane Shan

On February 8, Millburn High School came alive with color, music, and laughter as thousands of residents gathered for the 2026 Year of the Horse Lunar New Year Celebration. The five-hour indoor festival transformed the MSH gym into a vibrant cultural hub, bringing together families, neighbors, and friends from across the community.

The event was honored by the presence of Millburn Mayor Frank Saccomandi, and other New Jersey leaders including State Senator John McKeon and Assemblywoman Rosaura “Rosy” Bagolie. They addressed the audience and joined residents in celebrating the holiday. Many township committee members and Board of Education members also attended. Several even volunteered during the event, demonstrating strong local support and community spirit.

Festivities opened with the beat of drums and quickly built into a lively showcase of performances, including traditional Chinese dance, lion dance, martial arts, Tai Chi fan, and energetic K-pop routines by local youth. The blend of classic and contemporary styles reflected both cultural heritage and the vitality of the younger generation.

Guests enjoyed a bustling food hall filled with steaming dumplings, savory snacks, sweet desserts, and festive treats, while children and adults lining up for carnival-style games such as ring toss, shuttlecock kicking, darts, mini golf, and chess. Most game booths were proudly run by Millburn’s teenage volunteers, whose enthusiasm and dedication added cheer to every corner of the event.



Courtesy Photos

Visitors also received free calligraphy artworks such as the Chinese character "Blessing", and spring couplets created by local calligraphers. Surprise raffles and lucky red envelopes are distributed by a “God of Fortune,” spreading smiles and good wishes throughout the crowd.

Beyond local participation, the celebration drew coverage from vloggers and influencers from other regions, helping share Millburn’s Lunar New Year spirit with wider audiences online.

Despite frigid outdoor temperatures, the warm atmosphere inside told a different story of connection, generosity, and shared joy. From carefully planned decorations to seamless logistics, the success of the celebration reflected months of preparation by organizers and countless hours contributed by volunteers from Millburn Short Hills Chinese Association and Millburn Institute of Talent.

More than a festival, the event became a heartfelt community reunion, where cultures met, friendships blossomed, and traditions were passed on across diverse communities.

As the Year of the Horse begins, Millburn moves forward with renewed energy, gratitude, and hope. Looking ahead to gathering again next year.



Additional photos on page 16.

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**BOOKSMILES KIDS BOOK BANK SUCCESS**

*Kiwanis New Jersey District*

In December 2025, BookSmiles announced its 4,000,000th book given away, highlighting the urgency for the pending move to an improved, expanded 14,000 sq. ft. facility in Cherry Hill, NJ. In the new location, the non-profit will enlist the help of thousands of volunteers to distribute three to four million books each year to children and teachers in Philadelphia and New Jersey who need them most.

It underscores the organization's unwavering commitment to promoting literacy, book-access, and educational equity in communities facing socio-economic challenges, both at home and abroad using innovative programs for book-intake and distribution.

Founded in 2017 by Larry Abrams, a veteran teaching high school English, BookSmiles has worked tirelessly to bridge the literacy gap, keeping costs down by providing quality upcycled books for children who may not otherwise have the means to build their home libraries. The organization's innovative and community-driven approach has garnered widespread support and enabled the distribution of an impressive number of children's books to schools, community centers, and organizations serving youth living in book deserts.

BookSmiles is the first kids book bank to commoditize used children's books by swapping several tons of used adult books each week. Adults can now unclutter and donate their

collections and estate libraries for a cause, knowing that their beloved collections will be traded for quality children's books.

Abrams remarked, "The passion project that started in my garage moved to our current 4,300 sq. ft. location in September 2022. We quickly outgrew it, expanding from two to our current nine coworkers. We routinely distribute 100,000 children's books each month. In 2025, our four programs planted 1.3 million books in book deserts throughout the region and around the world, maximizing production and using every square foot of space. We keep used children's books out of waste streams and landfills, simultaneously ensuring that the children we serve can build their own home libraries. And I'm proud of our Read the World program, allowing us to send dozens of pallets of overflow abroad each month. I'm honored that teachers from Philly and around New Jersey flock to the Book Bank to get a one-stop-shop classroom library."

BookSmiles has invented a replicable formula when it comes to acquiring pallets of quality children's books for very little cost. We trade grown-up books that are donated ton by ton for children's books. With a lean staff of nine coworkers and an army of volunteers, they are irrigating local and international book deserts.

Those interested in the organization, can visit [BookSmiles.org](http://BookSmiles.org), or contact Larry Abrams at [Larry@booksmiles.com](mailto:Larry@booksmiles.com) or 856-986-2707.



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# AN UNFORGETTABLE NIGHT OF MUSIC TO TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES

On March 21, Pegasus: The Orchestra will perform with the Chatham High School Chamber Choir in a dazzling benefit concert for the TheraYouth Foundation at the Dorothy Center for Performing Arts at Drew University. Led by accomplished conductor and pianist, Karén Hakobyan, the vibrant program includes Haydn's "Fire" Symphony and a rousing version of Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, both composed exclusively for this ensemble. GRAMMY-nominated cellist Sergey Antonov - hailed by The Washington Post as "destined for cello superstardom" - will bring his soaring tone and formidable technique to Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No.1. All proceeds support pediatric medical therapy for disadvantaged youth. Normally this ensemble performs in New York City theaters so tickets are a steal at \$41-\$61 and can be purchased at [therayouth.org](http://therayouth.org).

## TERAYOUTH CELEBRATES THREE YEARS OF TRANSFORMING CHILDREN'S LIVES

In just three years, the TheraYouth Foundation has become a beacon of hope for families across New Jersey struggling to secure essential therapy services for their children.

Physical therapist Dr. Irina Marcoff, DPT, founded TheraYouth to address a troubling reality: too many children with treatable

conditions were being left behind. Long waitlists for public Early Intervention and school-based services; a shortage of pediatric providers accepting Medicaid; and the high cost of private therapy (often exceeding \$125 per session); placed critical care out of reach for hundreds of families.

"Early therapy can change the entire trajectory of a child's life," says Dr. Marcoff. "But for many families, access is the greatest barrier."

At its Elizabeth, NJ clinic, TheraYouth provides affordable physical, occupational, and speech therapy to disadvantaged children, more than 90% of whom rely on Medicaid. Since its inception, over 113 patients have "graduated" from therapy by achieving critical developmental milestones.

The impact of timely intervention is undeniable. One young patient, unable to crawl or walk due to congenitally weak neck muscles, faced the risk of permanent disability due to delays in care. After just four months of physical therapy at TheraYouth, he graduated from treatment, able to walk normally, transforming his future.

Unfortunately, demand continues to outpace resources with more than 400 children on

TheraYouth's waitlist for services. The foundation operates entirely through donations, community partnerships, and fundraisers.

On March 21st, TheraYouth will host a benefit concert to raise vital funds for pediatric therapy services. Help transform the lives of New Jersey's most vulnerable children through buying a ticket, or through a donation at [www.therayouth.org](http://www.therayouth.org).

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# SPRING IS COMING: WATCH YOUR STEP: AN EMT'S PERSPECTIVE



(above) QR code for mshvfas.org website

## BECOME A FIRST AID SQUAD VOLUNTEER

Millburn Public Schools

The Millburn-Short Hills Volunteer First Aid Squad is continuously seeking volunteers. If you are at least 21 years of age and would like to serve our community, please consider joining this team of local heroes.

Learn more about volunteering and training here: [mshvfas.org/volunteer-today](http://mshvfas.org/volunteer-today)

*Emilie C. Whitley, EMT, Millburn Short Hills Volunteer First Aid Squad*

We might be feeling that winter is finally loosening its grip as the days grow longer and many of us feel the pull to get outside and clear the mess winter storms have left behind. After weeks of snow and ice, emerging from the last polar vortex, our optimism is tangible. But from an EMT's perspective, March can be one of the most deceptively dangerous times of the year.

Freezing rain one day, warm sunshine the next, March is a true wildcard. That variability is what makes it risky. We're tired of winter and ready to be done with it, and that fatigue can make us complacent just when conditions still demand our attention. We throw caution to the wind, lace up our sneakers, hop back on our bikes, and head outside. But watch out. As snow and ice melt during the day and refreeze overnight, streets, driveways, and sidewalks turn into genuine obstacle courses, where simply getting around can send you windmilling your arms in a desperate attempt to stay upright.

Look out for meltwater that pools in low spots, concealing ice or uneven pavement beneath what looks like harmless standing water. From the back of an ambulance, we see this all too often: slips and falls resulting in wrist and ankle fractures, head injuries from unanticipated impacts, and the all-too-familiar hip fractures in older adults - injuries that can have long-term consequences for independence and quality of life. For drivers, that

mix of slush, lingering ice, rain, and poor traction dramatically increases the risk of motor vehicle accidents. Add to that the eye-searing glare as the sun rises and sets in spring, and even routine drives can quickly become a hot mess.

There are simple steps we can all take to reduce risk. Continue to salt driveways, walkways, and entrances even when daytime temperatures rise, especially if freezing is expected overnight. Tires and footwear: one word - traction. Take extra care on shaded sidewalks where ice lingers longest. Be mindful when walking dogs, especially those that pull on the leash, which could turn a routine stroll into a full-on four-beat walk. If you're driving, allow for extra stopping distance. Slow down. Stay alert for pedestrians who may slip into the roadway.

Make March a month to go the extra mile for your neighbors. Check in on elderly folks who may be more vulnerable to falls or hesitant to ask for help. Offer to clear or salt their walkways. Make sure your house numbers are clearly visible from the street. In an emergency, seconds matter.

Spring is coming - don't ruin it by getting injured. Be vigilant. Stay safe, stay aware.

The Millburn Short Hills Volunteer First Aid Squad serves the community 24/7, 365 days a year, never charges for services rendered and is funded solely by private donations. For more information on classes or joining MSHVFAS, scan the QR code, visit our website [mshvfas.org](http://mshvfas.org) or give us a call on 973-379-7969.



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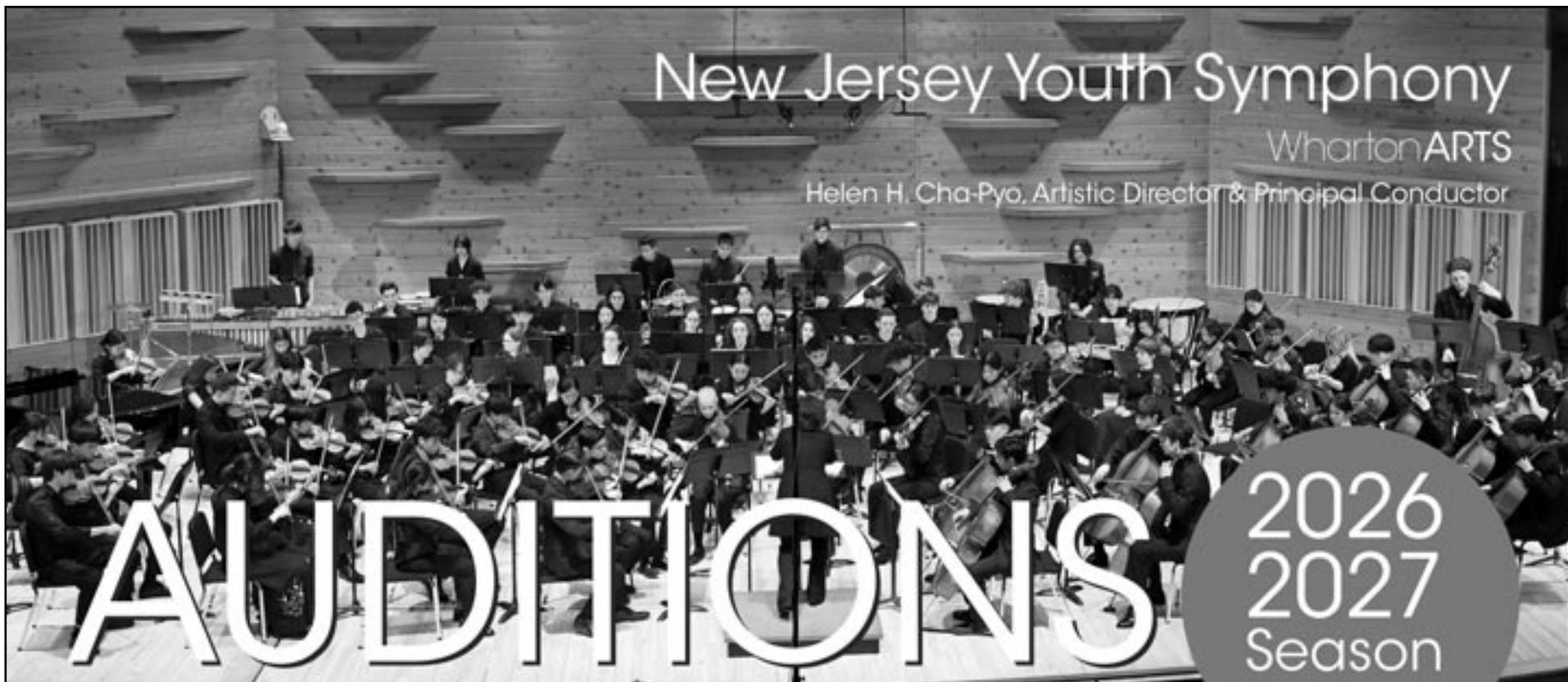


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# NJ FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA PRESENTS “MUSIC FOR A MATADOR

*An Operatic Gala Inspired by Bizet’s Carmen*

The New Jersey Festival Orchestra (NJFO) invites patrons and music lovers to “Music for a Matador,” an unforgettable operatic fundraising gala featuring highlights from Bizet’s Carmen. The event will take place Friday, April 10, 2026, from 6:00–10:00 PM at The Gran Centurions in Clark, NJ.

The evening will showcase electrifying excerpts from Bizet’s iconic opera, narrated by Maestro David Wroe and brought to life by NJFO musicians alongside acclaimed guest artists. Featured performers include Lisa Marie Rogali as Carmen, Dane Suarez as Don José, Sara LeMesh as Micaëla, and SeungHyeon Baek

as Escamillo. Guests can expect an immersive operatic experience filled with drama, romance, and unforgettable musical moments.

In addition to the performance, attendees will enjoy a beautifully curated dinner and have the opportunity to participate in both live and silent auctions, featuring exclusive experiences, gifts, and collectibles.

Proceeds from “Music for a Matador” support NJFO’s ongoing education and community outreach programs, including Listening is Healing, which brings live classical music to hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and community settings. Recently, NJFO has expanded this program to Overlook Medical Center in Summit, NJ, offering patients and staff moments of reflection, calm, and inspiration through music. Funds raised at the Gala help sustain these programs and ensure that NJFO’s artistry and educational initiatives remain accessible to communities across New Jersey.

“Music for a Matador” offers a unique blend of operatic performance and gala celebration, providing patrons with an evening that is both culturally enriching and socially impactful. Sponsors and guests play a vital role in sustaining NJFO’s mission to bring world-class music to audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

For tickets, sponsorships, or more info, visit [www.njfestivalorchestra.org/gala-2026](http://www.njfestivalorchestra.org/gala-2026) or email [info@njfestivalorchestra.org](mailto:info@njfestivalorchestra.org).

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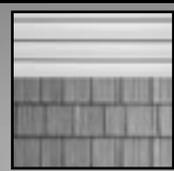
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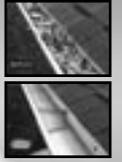
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# YOUTH SYMPHONY REHEARSALS FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC - MARCH 1-5

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, invites young musicians and their families to experience the excitement of ensemble music-making during the NJYS Open Rehearsals Week, taking place March 1-5, 2026.

Throughout the week, visitors are welcome to observe live rehearsals of any of NJYS's 15 ensembles, offering a rare behind-the-scenes look at how young musicians collaborate, learn, and

grow under the guidance of NJYS's accomplished artistic staff. Open Rehearsals Week is designed for students in grades 2-11 who are curious about joining a youth orchestra or expanding their musical journey.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet NJYS conductors, experience the rehearsal process firsthand, and explore how NJYS nurtures musical excellence, teamwork, and confidence in young performers.

Said Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Helen Cha-Pyo, "At the New Jersey Youth Symphony, we hold our students to the highest standards of musical excellence and artistry because they are capable of extraordinary things. At the same time, our core mission goes beyond performance. We want our students to experience the profound connection between music and life, and to understand the power of music as a force for service, empathy, and community building. Open Rehearsals Week is an open invitation to parents, educators, and students to step inside our rehearsal rooms, feel the joy of our community, and witness the 'serious fun' that happens when young people make music together with purpose, passion, and heart."

NJYS is one of New Jersey's premier youth orchestra programs, serving talented young musicians from across the region through a comprehensive range of ensembles and

educational experiences. Open Rehearsals Week reflects NJYS's commitment to access, education, and artistic excellence.

Attendance is free, but advance registration is encouraged. Registration and additional information available at NJYS.org.

## ABOUT THE NEW JERSEY YOUTH SYMPHONY

The New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS), a program of Wharton Arts, provides exceptional orchestral and ensemble training to young musicians in grades 2-12. Through a wide range of ensembles, performances, and educational opportunities, NJYS fosters musical excellence, collaboration, and a lifelong appreciation for the arts.

Wharton Arts' mission is to offer accessible, high quality performing arts education that sparks personal growth and builds inclusive communities. Wharton Arts' vision is for a transformative performing arts education in an inclusive community to be accessible for everyone.

Wharton Arts is located in Berkeley Heights, New Providence, and Paterson, NJ and reaches students from 12 counties. All of Wharton Arts' extraordinary teaching artists, faculty members, and conductors hold degrees in their teaching specialty and have been vetted and trained to enable our students to achieve their personal best.



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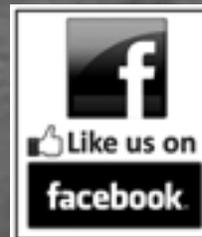
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## MILLBURN MARKS AMERICA'S 250TH WITH A POWERFUL LOOK AT PAST

Submitted by Daniel Cannon,  
Millburn250 Committee Member

On Sunday, February 1st, over 50 community members and history enthusiasts gathered at the Millburn Free Public Library for the opening reception of Millburn and America's 250th: Revolution and Remembrances, presented by the Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society as part of the broader Millburn 250 initiative.

The reception marked an important milestone in Millburn's multi-year commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, highlighting the township's often-overlooked but critical role in the American Revolution.

Christopher Sands, President of the New Jersey Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, attended in support of historian Bob Gula of The Forgotten Victory Trail, who presented on the Battle of Springfield. Sands noted that much of present-day Millburn was once part of Springfield and that a significant portion of the 1780 Battle of Springfield unfolded within Millburn's boundaries. He praised the exhibition's thoughtful presentation and its ability to firmly place Millburn within the Revolutionary narrative.

Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society interns played a central role in developing and presenting the exhibition. Intern Olivia Liang explored Native American history in New Jersey, providing essential background on the people of the region before the Revolutionary conflict.

Intern Ananya Mandrekar presented research on the Hessian House and the death of Hannah Caldwell, wife of Reverend James Caldwell, who was killed during the 1780 Battle of Connecticut Farms. Mandrekar explained that while legend claims Caldwell was deliberately shot by a British soldier, historians believe she was more likely struck by a stray bullet, noting

that her death has been widely misrepresented in popular retellings, including on the Union County seal, and was later used as Revolutionary War propaganda.

Intern Aditi Banerjee focused on the Hessian House and Reverend James Caldwell, highlighting his role as a Revolutionary leader and the broader significance of the Caldwell family during the war. Intern Ashna Swaroop presented on Washington Rock and the missing WPA-era Gerald Foster mural once displayed in the Millburn Post Office, outlining the mural's New Deal origins, its Revolutionary themes, and the unanswered questions surrounding its disappearance.

Intern Olivia Hsu examined Millburn's historic Fourth of July celebrations and circus traditions, illustrating how patriotic observances and community gatherings helped sustain Revolutionary ideals long after independence.

Intern Shaurya Tanna presented Active Independence: How the Past Shapes Our Present, highlighting how local residents have expressed independence across generations. Tanna focused on Revolutionary War officer Captain Eliakim Littell, who fought at Germantown and Springfield under George Washington, and on the legacy of Short Hills resident Cora Hartshorn, whose work in New Jersey's early birth control movement and horticulture reflected independence through leadership and service.

The exhibition resonated strongly with Minna Kelly, a Millburn 250 youth volunteer, who remarked on how powerfully it revealed the town's importance during the American Revolution and praised the interns for their well-researched, visually engaging displays that invited visitors to linger and learn.

The exhibition also struck a personal chord for many residents. Aimee Qiao, originally from China and now an American citizen, shared that reflecting on local history deepens her

appreciation for the sacrifices that made present-day freedoms possible. She described history as a mirror of the present and emphasized the importance of understanding those sacrifices as Millburn continues to grow as a diverse community.

Dorothy Kelly of the Millburn-Short Hills Historical Society described the reception as the culmination of more than two years of planning and research. She emphasized that the exhibition not only brings Revolutionary-era events to light, but also traces how Millburn has continued to remember and commemorate those ideals through art, literature, and civic life to the present day. She encouraged residents to visit the exhibition before it closes at the end of February.

The program concluded with remarks from military historian John Rountree, who captivated the audience with a story about Revolutionary War-era cannonballs discovered during the construction of the General Greene Village Apartment Homes in Springfield. At the time, the cannonballs were sold for just two dollars each, underscoring how easily historically significant artifacts can be overlooked without proper preservation and historical context.

Local resident Vince O'Leary reflected that conversations with presenters deepened his understanding of the Battle of Springfield, noting that while many residents pass historical markers near Vauxhall and Millburn Avenue daily, the exhibition connected those markers to a fuller and more immediate story.

Millburn and America's 250th: Revolution and Remembrances traces local history from pre-colonial days through the Revolutionary War and into modern commemorations of independence. The exhibition is on display at the Millburn Free Public Library from January 12 through February 28, 2026.

For information on upcoming programs and events tied to the semiquincentennial celebration, visit [Millburn250.org](http://Millburn250.org).

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(above - l-r) Chris Sands, Shaurya Tanna, Dorothy Kelly, Olivia Liang, Aditi Banerjee, Ashna Swaroop, Ananya Mandrekar, Olivia Hsu, Ed Marks, and Bob Gula, who contributed research and presentations highlighting Millburn's role in the American Revolution during the Millburn and America's 250th: Revolution and Remembrances program.

# LEA MCKENNA AT THE HELM, SHAPING FUTURE SCOUT LEADERS

*Submitted by Daniel Cannon,  
Scoutmaster Emeritus, Scouts BSA Troop 19*

When Lea McKenna first arrived at National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) in November 2022, she was a 13-year-old Scout eager to grow, learn, and challenge herself. What she discovered would shape not only her Scouting journey, but her leadership identity for years to come. Today, as Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) of the Scouting America Patriot Path Council NYLT Program, Lea stands as a powerful example of what it means to lead with courage, humility, and heart.

As a participant, Lea entered NYLT while building a strong foundation of leadership, some of which included serving as a two-time Senior Patrol Leader of Scouting America Troop 19, chartered at St. Rose of Lima Church in Short Hills; Senior Patrol Leader of the Northern New Jersey female contingent to the 2023 National Jamboree at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia; a Philmont Scout Reservation trek participant and returning Crew Leader this upcoming July; and a Junior at Millburn High School who has recently achieved the coveted rank of Eagle Scout, but the course fundamentally transformed how she viewed leadership. Through hands-on learning, team challenges, and reflection, she learned how to lead teams through problems, resolve conflict, and lead herself with confidence and purpose. More importantly, she discovered that leadership is not about position, but about service. The lessons she gained followed her back to her troop, into school group projects, and into everyday life, reshaping how she communicates, collaborates, and inspires others.

In late November 2022, Lea received an invitation to staff NYLT. Though initially apprehensive, she accepted the challenge and was selected in January 2023. Her first course as staff in August 2023 marked the beginning of a remarkable rise through the program. As a Skills Instructor, she helped teach leadership concepts, supported patrols, and worked behind the scenes to ensure the course ran smoothly. Teaching others deepened her own understanding, turning

knowledge into lived experience.

Lea quickly distinguished herself as a natural mentor and role model. In 2024 and 2025 she served as a Troop Guide, leading patrols through the NYLT journey using the EDGE method (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, and Enable), Scouting's signature leadership teaching model that builds independence and confidence, and helping shy, uncertain participants grow into confident, capable leaders in just a few short days. Her dedication, empathy, and relentless energy left a lasting impact on countless Scouts.

In November 2024, Lea stepped into a broader leadership role as Assistant Senior Patrol Leader of Program, where she helped oversee daily

operations, supported Troop Guides, and ensured the course flowed smoothly. This role prepared her to take the helm as Senior Patrol Leader.

As SPL of the Patriots Path Council's NYLT Program in November, Lea led a course of nearly 80 people, including youth staff, adult leaders, and 40 participants. She carried the weight of the entire program with professionalism, resilience, and grace, balancing high expectations with encouragement and care. She learned to make decisive choices, support her team, and create a welcoming environment for Scouts she had never met before, proving that true leadership means lifting others up.

Beyond the logistics and schedules, Lea built a family. She has grown that family by recruiting more than two dozen Scouts from both Troop 19 (girls) and Troop 17 (boys) of St. Rose of Lima to attend NYLT, inspiring one third of them to follow in her footsteps and serve on staff. She fostered a culture of respect, trust, and joy, ensuring every participant and staff member felt valued.

That impact was felt clearly by those she led. NYLT attendee Elena Katz shared, "Throughout the course, Lea proved herself to be an incredible leader. She was prepared, confident, and ran the program smoothly, creating a fun, welcoming atmosphere that made me want to return. With such a large group, she led by example and showed what strong leadership looks like."

Her influence extended just as strongly to the youth staff. Genevieve Brazell, who served on staff under Lea's leadership, reflected, "Lea was an outstanding SPL. She led with compassion, organization, and enthusiasm, consistently engaging both staff and participants and running the course exceptionally well." Her leadership culminated in a deeply meaningful course that honored tradition, celebrated growth, and inspired the next generation of leaders.

"NYLT didn't just teach me how to lead, it taught me who I am as a leader," Lea reflected. "It pushed me out of my comfort zone, gave me a family of mentors and friends, and showed me that leadership is about serving others and helping them become their very best."



*(above) At the helm of the Scouting America Patriot Path Council NYLT Program, Lea McKenna proudly displays her Senior Patrol Leader flag, a symbol of her leadership and service.*

Photo by Daniel Cannon

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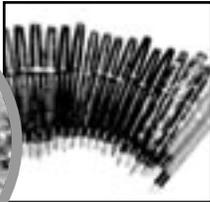
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# WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HIT “PAUSE”?

The parishes of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, Immaculate Heart of Mary in Scotch Plains along with the Church of the Little Flower Berkley Heights and St. James the Apostle Springfield are inviting men of all ages to attend this year’s Men’s Cornerstone XVII retreat. It will be on Friday March 6th and Saturday March 7th and held at St. Bartholomew in Scotch Plains.

## WHAT IS CORNERSTONE?

Cornerstone is an opportunity to hit the “pause button” in life and a chance to renew and strengthen your faith and grow in your experience in the Christian faith. It is led by a team of parishioners from various backgrounds and ages who themselves have experienced an increased presence of Christ in their lives.

## WHY SHOULD I ATTEND CORNERSTONE?

You will have a unique opportunity to meet other men of the community and together listen, reflect, and share real life experiences. Taking the time to retreat from daily routine and stress is both a necessary and rewarding experience.

## WHAT DOES “CORNERSTONE” MEAN?

The word “Cornerstone” describes Christ as the main foundation (“the cornerstone”) of our lives. His presence within us allows us to live, grow, and become more loving and vibrant people of God.

What can I expect at Cornerstone? It will begin on Friday evening March 6th at 6 p.m. and end on Saturday evening March 7th after Mass and dinner. There will be talks, followed by small group discussions, time for quiet personal reflection, Reconciliation, and Eucharist.

## REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

Please visit the web sites of either St. Bartholomew the Apostle at [stbartholomewchurch.org/mens-cornerstone](http://stbartholomewchurch.org/mens-cornerstone) or Immaculate Heart of Mary at [ihmparish.net](http://ihmparish.net). You may also reach out to the co-directors: Jim Brennan 908-337-6874, [jpbrennan1946@gmail.com](mailto:jpbrennan1946@gmail.com); Jose Montero 201-310-4278, [josegomezmontero@hotmail.com](mailto:josegomezmontero@hotmail.com); or Pat Cetera 908-230-7282, [ceteras4@verizon.net](mailto:ceteras4@verizon.net).

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For more information, and to sign-up, visit: [twp.millburn.nj.us/774/Home-Security-Assessment-Program](http://twp.millburn.nj.us/774/Home-Security-Assessment-Program)

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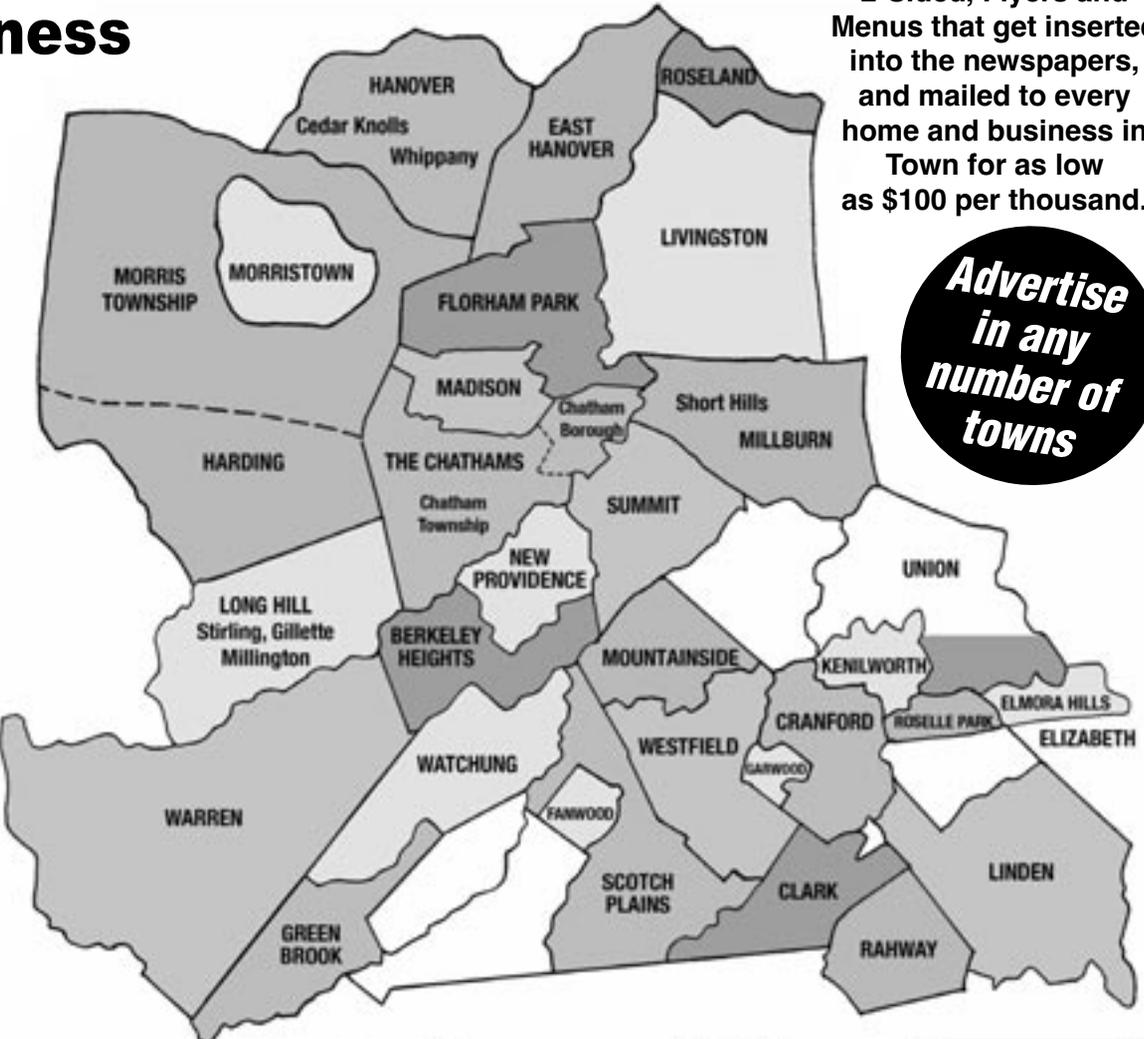
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## MARCH SPEAKERS PROGRAM FOR THE SUMMIT AREA OLD GUARD

The Summit Area Old Guard is a social, educational, and recreational organization that serves men of retirement age. We meet Tuesdays, 9:30am, 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. Website address is [www.summitoldguard.org](http://www.summitoldguard.org).

In March, we will have five speakers:

### MARCH 3, STEVE BONDY

On March 3rd, Steve Bondy, the recently retired US Ambassador to Bahrain will speak about the role of the Foreign Service in advancing US policies internationally, describe his 34-year career with the State Department, and, as a career Middle East specialist, discuss topics, conflicts and trends that are strategic to the interests of the United States in the region. Among other achievements, Steve led 6,000 employees and contractors as COO at the U.S. Embassy in Afghanistan; worked to reconcile armed militias fighting U.S. and local forces in Iraq; assisted Jordan and Israel to negotiate their 1994 peace agreement; created the 2023 U.S.-Bahrain Comprehensive Security Integration and Prosperity Agreement and also confronted Iranian interference and aggression throughout the region.

### MARCH 10, RICK HARTLEY

Next, on March 10th, Rick Hartley, local bridge teacher and author, will talk about the many facets of bridge. He'll describe his own

journey into the land of bridge, highlight celebrities who play bridge with some interesting quotes, discuss the many personal benefits to playing bridge, describe a scandal in an otherwise honorable game, provide an overview of how to play the game, explain why it might be the only “perfect” card game, and where you can learn to play this fascinating game.

### MARCH 17, ANAT SHMULOVICH

On Saint Patrick’s Day, March 17th, Anat Shmulovich will be interviewed about her book, “Where the Night Train Ends: How I Survived Russia, Ukraine and the Loss of the Man I Loved”. The book is a personal memoir of her youth in the Soviet Union describing her passion for advancing her education in music as well as the personal challenges and sacrifices she and her family made along the way. It also describes the experience of life in the Soviet Union in the 1960s and the repression and antisemitism experienced by Anat and her family. She will discuss issues raised in the book and read passages that highlight important milestones in her life: “Many people change careers or pursuits multiple times. On the contrary, I haven’t changed careers my entire life. All my life I either taught or played piano, and my only pursuit was to get better in what I do. I feel I haven’t worked a day in my life”.

### MARCH 24, MATTHEW WUNDER & SAM KEANE

March 24th will feature Matthew Wunder and Samantha (Sam) Keane who will speak on several investment, tax and estate planning

topics. Matthew, a certified financial manager, is a partner at Park Avenue Capital, an investment advisory firm associated with Northwestern Mutual, and Sam is an account manager and also a certified financial planner. They will discuss investment strategies deployed by Park Avenue Capital that are designed to produce attractive after-tax returns with reduced risk for their clients, as well as providing insightful tax, retirement and estate management strategies.

### MARCH 31ST, LARRY O'GORMAN

Finally, on March 31st, we will hear from Larry O'Gorman, a Fellow at Nokia Bell Labs Research in Murray Hill, NJ. His current work areas include efficient AI and multimedia analytics. He has also taught multimedia security at Cooper Union and New York University. Larry will describe how technology has contributed to the creation of visual art from the time of Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) in the 1960s to today’s era of generative AI (artificial intelligence). Over this period, the artist’s role has evolved from solitary creator to orchestrator of immersive viewer experiences to one where the “brushwork” has been ceded to artificial intelligence. Larry will show a sampling of the interactive artworks starting with the Experiments in Art and Technology that involved New York artists working with Bell Labs engineers in the 1960s, and up to present day. With this increasing use of AI technologies, we will ask the question: whose creation is this – human or machine?



(above, l-r) Steve Bondy, Rick Hartley, Anat Shmulovich, Sam Keane, O'Gorman

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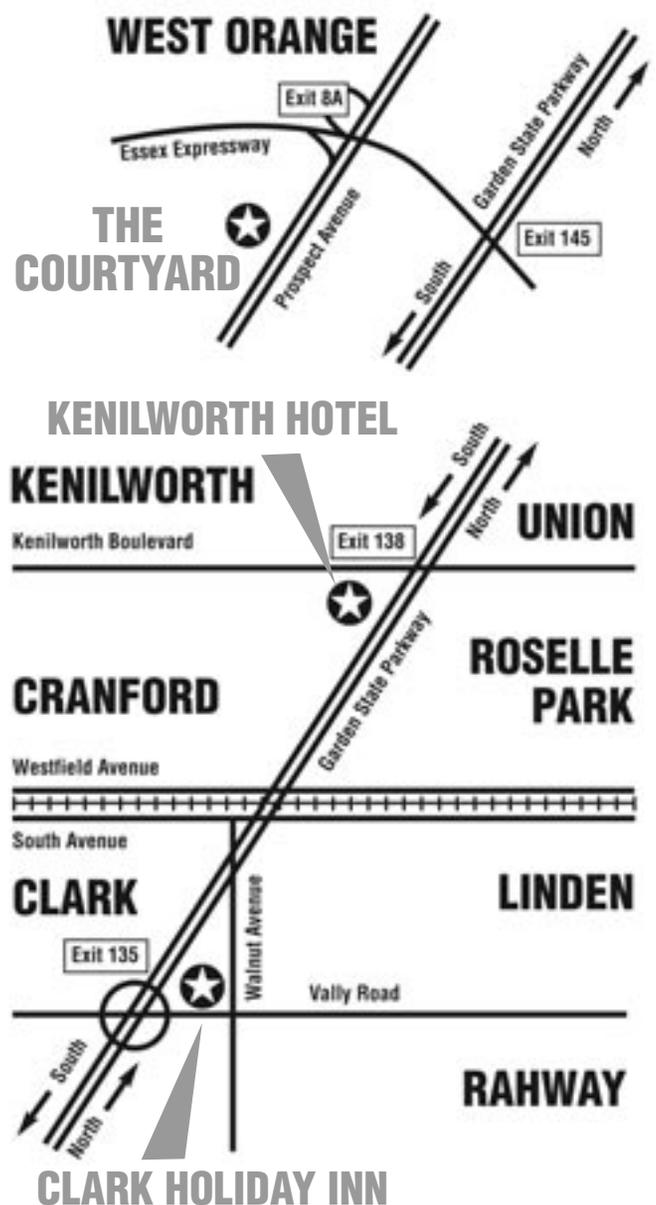
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