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HIGH SCHOOL NAMES AWARD WINNING EDUCATORS

Westfield Public Schools

Four teachers have been honored by the Westfield High School community with awards of excellence. WHS principal Mary Asfendis announced the award winners during morning announcements on May 4.

Nominated by students, english teacher Caitlin Cheddar is the recipient of the 2026 Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award, established to annually recognize a teacher or counselor who, through both excellence in teaching in the classroom and a demonstrated commitment to intellectual pursuits beyond the classroom, serves as a model and inspiration to the WHS community to strive towards excellence.

One nomination letter describes Ms. Cheddar as “Ms. Cheddar goes above and beyond everyday to make her students feel welcome and valued. Not only an amazing person, but an amazing teacher. She ensures each and every student is learning to the best of their ability which means something different for everyone.”

The 2026 recipient of the Jeffery Family Above and Beyond Award is social studies teacher Jeffrey Knight. Students were asked to nominate a teacher or counselor who provided extraordinary assistance to a student. The teacher is one who truly made a difference in the life of a struggling child either socially, emotionally, or academically.

One student wrote, “He is an extraordinary source of support for me in ways that go far beyond the normal student experience. He combines strong teaching with genuine care for his students.

VPA art teacher Leah Jarvis received the Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO) Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award, for which parents and students nominate a teacher who communicates enthusiasm, is encouraging, motivating, and readily available to individual students, attempts to elevate standards, encourages students to excel to their greatest potential, is cheerful, flexible, sensitive, and a good role model.



(above, l-r) Westfield High School social studies teacher Jeffrey Knight, english language arts teacher Caitlin Cheddar, VPA art teacher Leah Jarvis and world languages latin teacher James Rowan were honored by the Westfield High School community with awards of excellence. Pictured here with WHS principal Mary Asfendis.

Photo by Westfield Public Schools

“She is my favorite teacher in the school and has such a kind heart. Anytime I come to visit her room, she welcomes me with open arms and encourages me. She is such a great role model in the sense that she motivates me to be as kind as I can to others.”

For the Robert and Linda Foose Memorial Award, students were asked to nominate any WHS staff member, except the principal, for a specific contribution to the educational process at WHS during the 2025-2026 school year. World languages latin teacher James Rowan is the 2026 recipient of this award, which is named for a former principal and teacher.

“A dedicated teacher who puts in the time and effort to help his students as much as he can.”

The awardees will be honored by the Westfield Board of Education at a public meeting on Tuesday, May 12, 2026.

“We enjoy recognizing the many achievements of our students and staff throughout the school year,” says Superintendent Dr. Raymond González, who joined Principal Asfendis on May 4 in congratulating the recipients of the WHS awards. “These recognitions by the WHS school community are particularly meaningful as the nominations are made by appreciative students, parents, and colleagues.”

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TAMAQUES PARK DESIGN PLAN

Town of Westfield

Thanks to everyone who has already provided input on the proposed elements of the Tamaques Park Design Plan. Due to the volume of responses we've received and the overall level of interest within the community, the survey will remain open until June 15 in order to capture as much input as possible. The survey can be found on line: bit.ly/tamaques

Note that the current proposed plan comes directly from previous community input. The elements and features in this plan were requested by the community through stakeholder groups and the 2025 online survey.

Importantly, also note that the images on the feedback site are initial renderings intended to introduce concepts for feedback. At this phase, they are not yet fully scaled or designed in detail.

Community input is a valuable part of this process and will contribute to a thoughtful, multi-phase vision for the park's future, which includes both light touch improvements and more substantial changes. Tamaques Park is our town's largest green space, recreational area and community hub, and the goal is to ensure these meaningful investments in park improvements and long overdue upgrades serve residents of all ages and interests.



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POLICE DEPARTMENT RIDES IN POLICE UNITY TOUR

Town of Westfield

Officers from the Westfield Police Department proudly rode into the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. after completing a grueling 3-day, nearly 300-mile bicycle ride from Somerset, New Jersey as part of the Police Unity Tour.

Our officers joined approximately 2,500 riders from agencies across the country to honor and remember the brave law enforcement officers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

The Police Unity Tour began in 1997 with just 18 riders who wanted to raise awareness for officers killed in the line of duty and ensure their sacrifices would never be forgotten. Today, the event has grown into a nationwide movement that raises millions of dollars for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund and

supports the families of fallen officers.

The ride concludes during National Police Week, an annual tradition established in 1962 when President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation designating May 15th as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which it falls as National Police Week. The week honors

federal, state, county, and local law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty while protecting their communities.

The Westfield Police Department is honored to participate in this meaningful tradition and remembers all those who gave their lives in service to others.



(above, l-r) Officer William Kleeman, 15th year riding; Sergeant Ryan Weiss, 1st year; Officer Nicholas Calello, 3rd year; Officer Ryan Manganaro, 1st year; Officer Anthony Buccino, 1st year.

Photo by Town of Westfield



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PICKLEBALL IS BOOMING...SO ARE PICKLEBALL INJURIES!

How to stay in the game and off the sideline

A few decades ago, it was running.

Then came boot camps, HIIT classes, and CrossFit.

Now? Pickleball courts are popping up everywhere, including right here in Cranford, Clark, and Westfield, and I couldn't be happier about it. Anything that gets people moving is a good thing.

But as someone who has been in the fitness industry for over two decades, I'm also seeing the other side of the story—and so are physical therapists across the country.

A lot of adults are getting hurt. Not because the activity is dangerous, but because their bodies simply weren't prepared for what they were asking them to do.

Tight hips. Weak muscles. Poor balance. Limited mobility. Loss of power and quickness. Stiff joints and aching backs. Sound familiar?

THE REAL PROBLEM

Here's what most people don't realize: being fit isn't just about being active. It's about being prepared for activities.

There's a gap, sometimes a significant one, between what we ask our bodies to do and what they're actually capable of handling. And as we get older, that gap tends to widen.

Not because aging is a death sentence for fitness and recreation, but because most of us aren't doing the specific work required to maintain the strength, mobility, and balance our bodies need to participate in them.

The research backs this up. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, adults begin losing muscle mass at a rate of 3–5% per decade after age 30, a process called sarcopenia. Without deliberate, structured strength training, that loss accelerates. And with it goes metabolism, stability, bone density, and the ability to do the things we love.

"Just doing aerobic exercise is not adequate," says Dr. Robert Schreiber of Harvard Medical School. "Unless you are doing strength training, you will become weaker and less functional."

That's not meant to scare you. It's meant to inform you.

IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT THE PAIN

Let me tell you what I hear most from people who have been sidelined by an injury. Yes, they talk about the pain. The aching shoulder, the pulled hamstring, the bad knee. But what really gets to them? Missing their people.

Pickleball, in particular, has become as much a social phenomenon as a fitness one. The courts are buzzing with groups of friends who show up several times a week, not just for the game, but for the laughs, the competition, the coffee after, the sense of community.

When you're injured, you don't just lose the sport. You lose all of that. And nobody wants to be the one sitting on the sideline watching their friends play while they nurse a knee or a rotator cuff. That's FOMO with a side of physical therapy bills.

The same is true for golfers who can't finish 18 holes because their back gives out on the back nine. For tennis players who have to sit out a season with tennis elbow. For cyclists whose tight hips and weak glutes turn a weekend ride into a painful ordeal. For hikers who cut trips short because their knees can't handle the downhill.

In every case, the injury didn't just cost them the activity. It cost them the experience, the friendships, and the sense of vitality and connection that comes with being active alongside people you enjoy.

The good news? Most of these injuries are preventable. But you have to be proactive.

WHAT YOUR BODY ACTUALLY NEEDS

If you want to stay active, feel strong, and avoid the injuries that sideline so many people in their 40s, 50s, and beyond, here's what to focus on:

Strength. Muscle is your body's armor. It protects your joints, supports your bones, and keeps your metabolism running efficiently. Two to three strength training sessions per week can make a dramatic difference, whether you're swinging a golf club, returning a tennis serve, or reaching for a pickleball overhead.

Mobility and flexibility. Tight hips and stiff joints don't just cause pain; they change the way you move, putting stress on areas that weren't designed to handle it. The rotation required in golf and tennis, the lateral movement in pickleball, and the hip flexion in cycling, all of them demand a body that can actually move freely.



Balance and agility. Falls are one of the leading causes of injury in adults over 50. Balance training isn't just for the elderly; it's for anyone who wants to stay quick, coordinated, and confident on their feet. On a pickleball court. On a hiking trail. On a bike.

Power and quickness. These are the first things to go as we age, and the least talked about. Power training, the ability to move fast, even in small doses, helps your body react faster, change direction more safely, and perform better in the sports and activities you love.

Joint-friendly conditioning. Not all cardio is created equal. High-impact exercise has its place, but smart conditioning means choosing methods that strengthen your heart without beating up your body, especially if you're already logging miles on the court, course, or trail.

THE SOCIAL SIDE OF STAYING FIT

Here's something the fitness industry doesn't talk about enough (but we do): community is one of the most powerful motivators there is.

We see it every day at Active Life Fitness. Members who show up not just because they want to get stronger, but because they genuinely enjoy being there. They encourage each other, celebrate each other's wins, and hold each other accountable in the best possible way.

It's the same reason pickleball has exploded. People aren't just showing up for the sport. They're showing up for each other. When fitness feels like community rather than punishment, everything changes. You stop skipping workouts. You stop dreading the gym. You start showing up, and looking forward to it.

JUST START NO MATTER WHERE YOU'RE AT

One of the most common things I hear from new members is some version of "I wish I hadn't waited so long." The second most common? "I didn't think I was in good enough shape to join a gym."

Here's the truth: you don't need to be in shape to start. You just need to start.

The best fitness programs meet you where you are — your age, your fitness level, your goals, your life. They don't ask you to keep up with anyone else. They ask you to show up and do the work, and then they make sure that work is actually right for your body.

That's the difference between spinning your wheels and making real, lasting progress.

Whether you're a pickleball player, a golfer, a tennis player, a cyclist, a hiker, or someone who just wants to climb the stairs without your knees complaining, the investment you make in your physical health today pays dividends for the rest of your life.

Don't wait for an injury to remind you of that.

If you've been thinking about getting stronger, moving better, and taking better care of yourself before small problems become bigger ones, there's no better time than now.

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C.A.R. PROJECT SUPPORTS EQUINE THERAPY FOR VETS

Submitted by Holly Dunbar

The Children of the American Revolution (C.A.R.) is the nation's oldest and largest nonpolitical patriotic youth organization. A new C.A.R. state project that will aid veterans has been announced. The goal of "Operation Horse" is to raise \$2,000 during the next year to fund equine-assisted therapy for two N.J. veterans



(above) The Man o' War Project has helped to develop a standardized protocol for delivering equine-assisted therapy to treat PTSD.

Courtesy photos

with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The therapy is offered through the Man o' War Project of Columbia University Irving Medical Center.

The mission of the Man o' War Project is two-fold. Equine-assisted therapy is used to treat veterans with PTSD while medical staff evaluate the program to develop best practices for administering equine-assisted therapy. This research can have far-reaching benefits for treating veterans and all who suffer with PTSD.

C.A.R. membership is open to girls and boys from birth through age 21 who are descended from a person who aided the cause of independence during the American Revolution.

New Jersey has nine C.A.R. groups known as societies. Activities offered on an age-appropriate basis help members learn about American history, government, community service and more. Members also gain valuable leadership experience conducting meetings and serving as delegates at state and national conferences.

Pis-Cat-A-Qua Society C.A.R., hosted by the Elizabeth Snyder-Continental Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in Green Brook, is seeking new members. For more information,

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2026 SPRING ATHLETICS SIGNING DAY

Nine Westfield High School student-athletes signed Letters of Intent with colleges and universities in April, signifying recognition of the seniors' accomplishments both academically and athletically. This brings the total number of student athletes from the Class of 2026 who will compete at the college level to 34. Those signing in April are as follows:

- **JACK GRAHAM**
Volleyball, Marymount University
- **ALYSSA CATALANO**
Softball, Penn State – Abington
- **DANIEL BERADI**
Wrestling, Muhlenberg College
- **MAX MACEACHERON**
Basketball, Gettysburg College
- **CONNOR WHELAN**
Football, Colby College
- **MATTHEW ROBERTSON**
Sailing, Fordham University
- **COLE WEIDLER**
Football, University of New England
- **JOSEPH DIMATTINA**
Football, Union College
- **BRODY TORIELLO**
XC/Track, Marist College



(above) Student-athletes signing signed Letters of Intent with WHS Athletic Director James DeSarno (left) and Principal Asfendis (right).

Photo by Westfield Athletic Department

NATIONAL COMPETITION TRIP FUNDED BY COLLEGE CLUBS

The Westfield College Men's Club (CMC) and the Westfield College Women's Club (CWC) are pleased to announce that they jointly funded Westfield High School's DECA team to attend DECA's 2026 National Competition held in Atlanta, Georgia from April 25-29. Each club provided half of the \$1,500 sponsorship for the WHS chapter to compete in this National event.

DECA, formerly known as the Distributive Education Clubs of America, is a non-profit organization of 300,000 members that prepares high school and college students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. 40 WHS DECA chapter members qualified for

the earlier New Jersey State Conference. This is the second year that WHS has qualified for the DECA national conference. On the first day of competition, they competed in the exam portion of the event, and on the second day in a role-playing challenge.

CMC Trustee John Clark and CWC President Susan Kolwalenko presented the \$1,500 sponsorship check to two students representing WHS in the DECA National Conference at an event at WHS. Accepting the sponsorship check on behalf of WHS's DECA chapter were Vedant Iyer and Caroline Sahm who both attended the National DECA Conference.



(above) Back row, John Clark, Trustee of the College Men's Club of Westfield and Susan Kolwalenko, President of the College Woman's Club of Westfield. Front row, WHS students Caroline Sahm and Vedant Iyer.

Courtesy Photo



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WESTFIELD AMERICA 250 PREPARATIONS ARE WELL UNDERWAY

Submitted by Denise Santellis

As America approaches its 250th birthday on July 4, 2026, communities across the nation are preparing for what promises to be one of the largest commemorations in United States history. Known as the Semiquincentennial, the celebration marks 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence and is inspiring towns, cities and states to revisit the stories, sacrifices and spirit that shaped the nation.

From New England and New Jersey battlefields to Southern encampments and Mid-Atlantic crossroads, reenactments of



(above) At Westfield's annual Memorial Day Parade spectators were able to see George Washington march alongside veterans, civic organizations and community groups in a celebration that connects America's founding generation with those who have served the country through the centuries.

Courtesy Photo

Revolutionary War battles, colonial marches and historic gatherings are already being planned. Familiar names such as George Washington, Marquis de Lafayette and Comte de Rochambeau will once again take center stage in public memory. Yet organizers also hope the anniversary will shine a light on the thousands of lesser known patriots soldiers, nurses, laborers, craftsmen and ordinary citizens whose courage and commitment helped secure independence.

The nationwide initiative known as America250 or Freedom250, encourages communities to reflect on the nation's past while also looking ahead to its future. The organizations describe the commemoration as an opportunity to honor "the contributions of all Americans" and to create the most inclusive observances in the county's history.

In Westfield, preparations are already well underway. Like many towns across the county, Westfield has embraced the spirit of the Semiquincentennial with programs that combine education, heritage and community celebration. Local governing officials, historical organization, civic groups, families and residents have begun

participating in the events designed to connect today's generation with the stories of the Revolutionary era.

Found on the Town's website: westfieldnj.gov/america250, are highlights and a growing calendar of events that residents and visitors alike can attend. Planned activities include historical walks, concerts commemorations, educational programs and living-history demonstrations.

Residents are also encouraged to follow the National Parks Service events found at: home.nps.gov/waro/planyourvisit/events.htm, for upcoming commemorations, marches, educational programs and anniversary observances connected to the historic route traveled by the allied America and French armies during the Revolutionary War.

Westfield's America250 spirit can already be seen throughout Downtown Westfield. Four commemorative flags fly at the intersection of Broad Street and Elm Street, while crisp, vibrant United States flags and Veterans banners line the town's main roads. The patriotic displays serve as daily reminders of the community's pride in its history and its commitment to honoring those who helped shape the nation.

One of the highlights each year is Westfield's annual Memorial Day Parade, where this year, spectators were able to see George Washington march alongside veterans, civic organizations and community groups in a celebration that connects America's founding generation with those who have served the country through the centuries.

Across America, historical societies are restoring landmarks, reenactment groups are preparing uniforms and encampment, schools are developing educational programs, and local committees are organizing parades, festivals and exhibitions. From small towns to major cities, the Semiquincentennial is expected to unite communities in remembering not only the famous founders, but also the countless everyday Americans whose stories form the foundation of the nation.

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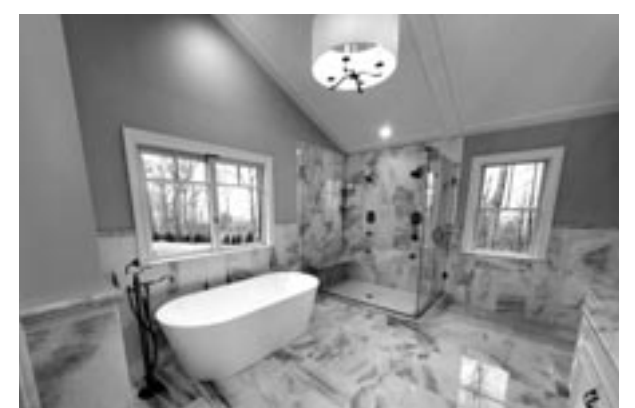
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CAMINO DE ST. JOSEPH WINDS ITS WAY TO ELIZABETH

St. Joseph Social Service Center proudly hosted its inaugural Camino de St. Joseph on Saturday, April 18, 2026, drawing over 160 participants from across Union County and beyond in a powerful show of unity, faith, and support for our neighbors.

Held on the 40th anniversary of the soup kitchen program, the event offered participants a meaningful opportunity to walk in solidarity while raising awareness of the Center's mission. St. Joseph Social Service Center brings people and communities together to serve our neighbors by providing food, health programs, and support services with love, dignity, and compassion.

The day began with a 9 a.m. Mass at the Parish Community of St. Helen in Westfield, NJ, where participants gathered in reflection and fellowship before embarking on the journey. St. Helen's parishioners cooked and served the first soup kitchen meals on April 19, 1986. A meal has been served every Saturday since then.

Following Mass, attendees walked 3 miles to St. John the Apostle Church in Linden, where 4 generations of the Ruggieri family have coordinated the soup kitchen ministry.

After a brief rest, the group walked 3 miles to Warinanco Park in Roselle, and then 3 miles to St. Joseph's in Elizabeth. Additional participants joined at St. John's and Warinanco Park.

Volunteers from the many parishes that help with the soup kitchen and sandwich programs warmly welcomed the walkers and offered

snacks, water, rest and hospitality. The event concluded with a community lunch at St. Joseph's and a celebration of accomplishment and shared purpose among all who participated.

Police from Westfield, Clark, Linden, Roselle, Elizabeth, and the County of Union ensured the safety of participants along the route. Motorcycle and support police from the cities of Linden and Elizabeth provided a secure and well-coordinated escort throughout the day.

The success of the Camino de St. Joseph was made possible through the Camino planning committee. Chaired by Brendan Maher of Westfield, the committee included volunteers from many church partners, along with St. Joseph's staff. Volunteers from the following helped with planning and throughout the day: Holy Trinity and St. Helen's (Westfield), St. John's (Linden), Holy Spirit (Union), St. Agnes (Clark), Church of the Assumption (Roselle Park), St. Michael's (Cranford), Church of the Little Flower (Berkeley Heights), and Immaculate Conception (Elizabeth). County Commissioner Chairman Joseph Bodek joined the opening mass, and Commissioners Lourdes Leon and Joseph Bodek presented a resolution at the lunch.

"This event reflects the strength and compassion of our community," said Bernadette Murphy, Executive Director of St. Joseph's. "Together, we walked not only in faith, but in solidarity with those we serve every day. We are

grateful to all who prayed, walked, volunteered, and donated food and funds."

St. Joseph Social Service Center extends its deepest gratitude to all who participated and supported this inaugural Camino. If you would like to make a donation to the 40th anniversary appeal, please visit sjeliz.org/donate.

For more information about St. Joseph Social Service Center and future events, please contact Mary Phillips at mphillips@sjeliz.org or visit our website at sjeliz.org.

"Share your bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless poor" - (Isaiah 58)



(above) Walkers began the Camino from St. Helen's Church in Westfield.



(above) Walkers arriving at St. Joseph Social Service Center in Elizabeth.

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ORCHESTRA PRESENTS ONE THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS CONCERT

The New Jersey Festival Orchestra closes its season with One Thousand and One Nights, an evening inspired by the legendary Arabian tales that gave rise to Rimsky-Korsakov's beloved orchestral masterpiece Scheherazade. Presented in collaboration with the Slovak-American Cultural Center (S-ACC), the program blends storytelling, international artistry, and symphonic color in performances on Saturday, May 30 at 7:00 pm at The Presbyterian Church in Westfield and Sunday, May 31 at 2:30 pm at the Sieminski Theater in Basking Ridge.

At the center of the program is Scheherazade, Rimsky-Korsakov's vivid musical interpretation of the timeless stories told by Scheherazade night after night to save her life. Sweeping melodies, shimmering orchestration, and dramatic contrasts immerse audiences in a world of myth and imagination, bringing the spirit of the legendary tales vividly to life.

"It is music that represents the rolling sea, the drama of adventure, and the allure of exotic



romance," says NJFO Music Director David Wroe, describing the work as "an irresistible musical combination" that transports listeners into the world of One Thousand and One Nights.

The evening also features internationally acclaimed Slovak guitarist Karol Samuelčík performing Joaquín Rodrigo's *Fantasia para un gentilhombre*. Presented through NJFO's collaboration with the Slovak-American Cultural Center, Samuelčík brings warmth and virtuosity to Rodrigo's celebrated work

inspired by 17th-century Spanish music and dance traditions.

"The Slovak-American Cultural Center is thrilled to partner—again—with the NJFO to introduce world-renowned guitarist Karol Samuelčík to American audiences," writes S-ACC Board Member and longtime NJFO supporter Tanya Pulver. "Performing Joaquín Rodrigo's celebrated *Fantasia para un gentilhombre*, Samuelčík promises to enchant listeners, pairing the concerto's historic elegance with his signature vibrant energy and technical brilliance."

"What I love about the piece is its elegance, colour, and contrast," Samuelčík says. "The guitar creates a dialogue with the orchestra."

Together, these works create an evening shaped by imagination and storytelling, where music becomes the narrator and the orchestra brings centuries-old legends to life.

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ROBERT KEITH ESTRIN - DECEMBER 25, 1952 - OCTOBER 26, 2025

Longtime Scotch Plains resident Robert Keith Estrin, died October 26, 2025 in Nashville, Tennessee, just weeks before his 72nd Christmas birthday. Robert was born and raised in Scotch Plains, living there until 2011, moved to Bridgewater for two years, and in 2013 finally relocated to Nashville in order to be closer to his sister, Kari Estrin, his only surviving family member.

An outstanding graduate of SPFHS in 1970, Robert also distinguished himself at Kean College, graduating Summa cum laude (No. 1 in his class); then continued his learning earning two masters degrees (Political Science and Master of Letters Arts & Sciences) at Drew University and at NYU. A committed scholar, Robert went on to become a beloved teacher at both Solomon Schechter Day School and Bridgewater High School. Robert was also known as a respected and sought after paralegal at Budd Lerner Law Firm in the 90s. Robert left to care for his father in the final weeks of his life, Dr. Herman A. Estrin, who passed in 1999, and then continued to care for his mother, Pearl Simon Estrin, who passed 2007, in the house where Robert grew up.

After moving to Nashville, Robert again chose teaching, though at retirement age, joining the Metro Nashville school system as a substitute. In an underfunded Public School system that had mostly students of color, Robert was a favorite teacher, making school



work relevant, caring individually about students and encouraging them to want more. His dry sense of humor mixed with his take-no-nonsense approach went a long way to winning over skeptical students, along with his special way to make learning exciting. Propelled by a personal mission to empower all those to learn, to understand the value of a good education with effective study habits, and what that would bring to a young adult later in life, Robert was a frequently requested presence throughout the school system.

An aficionado of the arts, Robert was raised in a home where the Metropolitan Opera was faithfully broadcast each Saturday morning and

he could already identify arias by age 3, becoming a passionate, discerning and knowledgeable lover of not only Opera and Classical music, but of ballet, museum art, glasswork and as well was an avid collector of various pieces from The Art Deco period.

Outside of work, Robert was a private person, but those who came to know him became his friends and admirers; Robert always being eager to help out or lift up a friend or someone new he would meet, and remembered for his incredible intellect, fascinating conversation and gentle demeanor.

Beginning June 2, 2026, Robert's sister, Kari, plans to carry forward their shared commitment to honoring their father's legacy at NJIT by supporting and celebrating Dr. "Doc" Estrin's profound contributions to the interdisciplinary and literary life of NJIT students. Robert played a pivotal role in preserving and advancing his father's vision. In 2021, Robert personally researched more than 400 living New Jersey authors, continuing the foundational work his father began in creating the original New Jersey Literary Map.

An informal gathering will be held at B'Nai Abraham Memorial Park 2600 Us-22, Union, New Jersey, at 10:30 a.m., for those who wish to attend. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in honor of Robert's life and legacy. Please contact kmm225@njit.edu for more information to contribute.

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ROTARY CLUB OF WESTFIELD RECOGNIZES SCHOOL STAFF MEMBERS

Westfield Public Schools

McKinley Elementary School 3rd grade teacher Nicole Barca is the 2026 recipient of the Rotary Club of Westfield's Philhower Fellowship Award in recognition of outstanding teaching at the elementary school level. At the same time, Westfield High School, Assistant Head Night Custodian Francesco Dori received the Steengrafe Award, introduced three years ago by the Rotary Club to recognize non-certificated staff for their dedication and commitment.

Barca and Dori received the news on May 4 as Superintendent Dr. Raymond González paid surprise visits to their schools.

"On behalf of the Board of Education and the entire school district, I congratulate Mrs. Barca and Mr. Dori on this well-deserved honor from the Rotary Club," says González. "Their dedication to our students and passion for education inspire us all."

"I am incredibly honored to receive the Philhower Award. This recognition means so much to me. I am grateful to be part of such a supportive community here in Westfield, and I feel very fortunate to work with students who inspire me every day. It is a privilege to be part of their learning and growth, and I am deeply grateful to share in their journey, says Barca."

Letters of nomination for Barca from parents describe her as a "caring, good-natured, and outstanding" educator who "maintains a warm, inclusive and engaging learning environment."

"Mrs. Barca's love for teaching and her students shines through in every assignment and in every student who keeps coming back for her warm smiles and hugs. Her handwritten comments filling the margins of every student's homework and tests are remarkably moving and honestly so impressive that it's hard to throw the pages away. We cherish our children's relationship with her, as well as our own, because it truly extends far beyond the curriculum. Seeing so many alumni return just to visit her is a testament to the lasting love and care she gives well beyond the year she has them in her

classroom." writes one parent nominator.

Another parent nominator noted that "Her ability to keep children engaged in such a crucial developing age is truly remarkable. I also admire the way she mentors the next generation of teachers, there could never be too many 'Mrs. Barca's' in the world of elementary education."

For more than a decade, Dori has worked as part of the building and grounds department at Westfield High School, currently as the Assistant Head Night Custodian.

"I've had the privilege to work at Westfield High School for the last fourteen years and have met so many wonderful colleagues and students along the way. Through all of these years I have never changed my work ethic and if I did it was only to strive to do better. I take pride in my work and always try to find a solution to make things easier for my colleagues. I will continue to always do better for the students and staff at Westfield HS, says Dori."

Colleagues who nominated Dori for the Steengrafe Award described him as "dedicated, kind and professional."

"Francesco consistently goes above and beyond in his role as Assistant Head Night Custodian at WHS. He is dedicated to supporting staff and ensures that every request is handled with efficiency, kindness, and professionalism. No matter how busy he may be, Francesco is always willing to assist and makes every staff member feel valued and supported."

"As both a teacher and a coach, I can confidently say that I would not be able to

perform my responsibilities as effectively without his ongoing help. Francesco's dedication, reliability, and positive attitude make a meaningful impact on our school community. I am extremely appreciative of his commitment and the professionalism he demonstrates every day."

Barca and Dori will be recognized at the Board of Education meeting on May 12. They will receive the Philhower and Steengrafe Awards on June 2 as guests of honor during a Rotary Club luncheon.

Four Rotarians and two principals served on the nominating committee.

The Philhower Fellowship was established in 1993 by the Rotary Club to honor former Westfield Rotarian Charles Philhower and to recognize the importance of teaching in the elementary grades. An educator for more than 50 years, Charles Philhower, who died in 1962, was supervising principal (superintendent) of Westfield schools for three decades as well as co-founder and past president of the Rotary Club of Westfield.

In its fourth year, the Steengrafe Fellowship was established in memory of Weyman O. Steengrafe who began teaching Social Studies in the Westfield Public Schools in 1942 before serving as principal at Franklin, Tamaques, and Wilson Elementary Schools. Weyman was a lifelong Rotarian from 1966-2010, serving as Club President in 1971-1972 and District Governor in 1985-1986.



(above) McKinley 3rd grade teacher Nicole Barca (center) is the 2026 recipient of the Rotary Club of Westfield's Philhower Fellowship in recognition of outstanding teaching at the elementary school level. Barca is pictured here with Superintendent Dr. Raymond González and McKinley principal Mary McCabe.



(above) Westfield High School Assistant head Night Custodian Francesco Dori (center) is the 2026 recipient of the Weyman Steengrafe Award, introduced three years ago by the Rotary Club of Westfield to recognize non-certificated staff for their dedication and commitment. Dori is pictured here with Superintendent Dr. Raymond González and Westfield High School principal Mary Asfendis.

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TARA ROY CHOUDHURY TO COMPETE IN BIOLYMPIAD

Union County Vocational Technical High

The Center for Excellence in Education (CEE) has announced the names of high school students who will compete in the USA Biolympiad (USABO) National Finals at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, from June 21 to July 2, 2026.

Among them will be Berkeley Heights resident Tara S. Roy Choudhury, a student at Union County Vocational Technical High Schools' Academy for Allied Health Sciences in Scotch Plains. She is New Jersey's only representative in the prestigious USABO competition.

As the premier biology competition for high school students in the United States, USABO enriches the life science education of nearly 12,000 talented students annually. It provides the motivation, curricular resources, and skills training to take them beyond their classroom experience to the level of international competitiveness. After two rounds of challenging online exams, 20 finalists are invited to a residential training program where they learn advanced biological concepts and exacting lab skills at the USABO National Finals at Harvard.

Last year, at the 2025 National Finals, Hengzhou Li, Eric Liu, Cloris Shi and Kian Dhawan earned the right to join the USA Biolympiad Team to represent our country at the 2025 International Biology Olympiad (IBO) in The Philippines, where they received three gold medals and one silver. Since CEE began administering the USABO, every member of the USA Biolympiad Team has continued to medal at the IBO.

"These students are some of the highest achieving biology students in the USA," said Joann DiGennaro, president and co-founder of CEE. "Our USA Biolympiad program encourages excellence in biology education and challenges students and their teachers to reach the gold standard in science."

The finalists will participate for ten days in high-level biology instruction inclusive of laboratory training and conceptual understanding followed by two days of testing. Four students



(above) Tara S. Roy Choudhury

Courtesy Photo

will earn the honor of representing the U.S. at the 37th International Biology Olympiad, a worldwide competition involving student teams from over 80 countries. It will take place July 12-19 in Vilnius, Lithuania.

"This is an incredible journey these students take, and it demonstrates the passion these students have for biological sciences," said Kathy Frame, director of the USA Biolympiad. "For high school USABO Finalists to experience this level of excellence is an exceptional opportunity."

The Center for Excellence in Education (CEE), a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, was founded in 1983 by the late Admiral H.G. Rickover and Joann P. DiGennaro, President of the Center. The Center's mission is to nurture high school and university scholars to careers of excellence and leadership in science, technology, engineering, mathematics (STEM) and business, and to encourage collaboration between and among scientific and technological leaders in the global community

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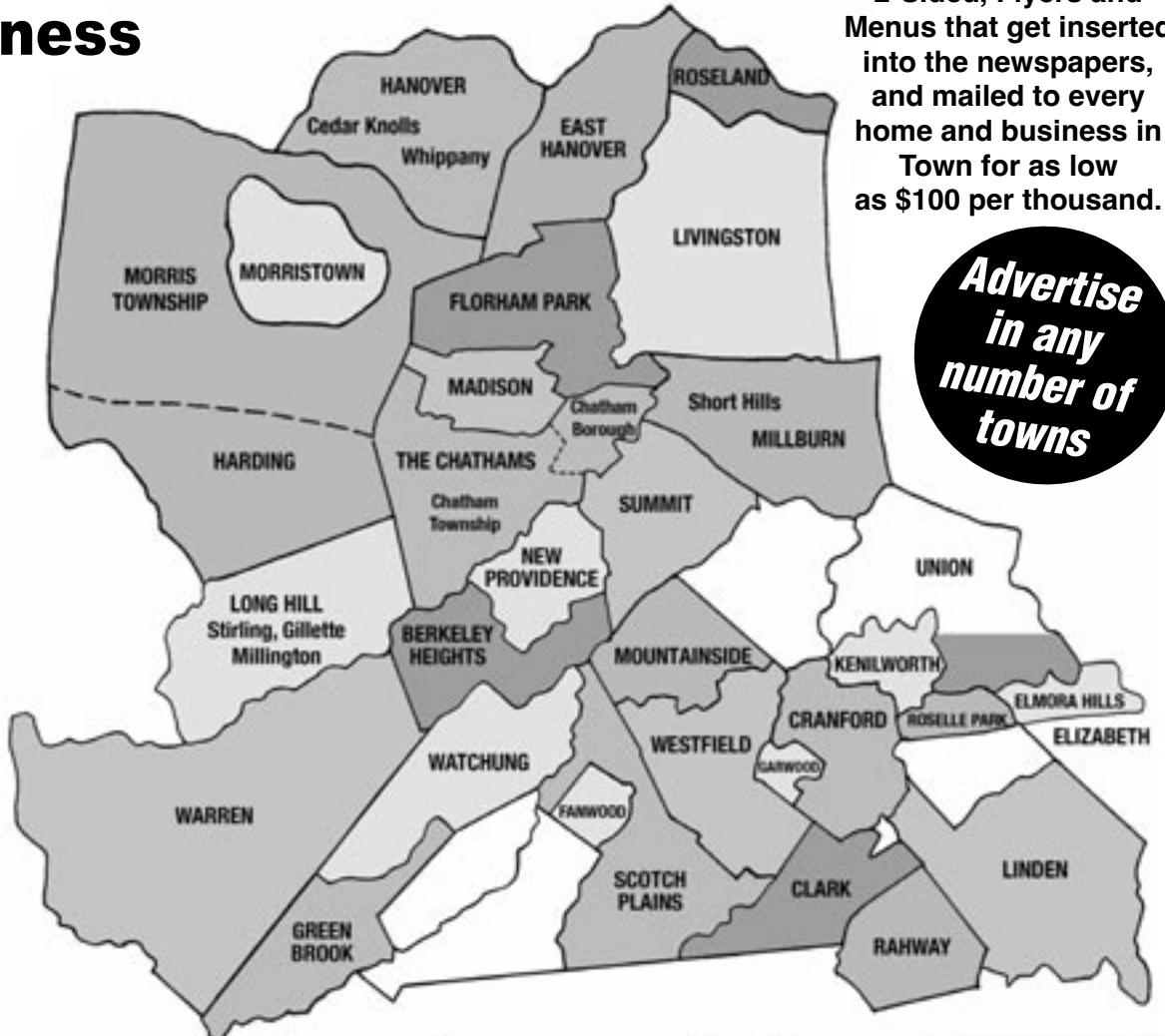
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WARREN MONTHLY NJ

Qty: 6,500
Zip: 07059

Watchung Post NJ

Qty: 2,700
Zip: 07069

Westfield MONTHLY NJ

Qty: 12,000
Zip: 07090

NEWSPAPER AD RATES

Units (wide x High) Size	1 TOWN	3 TOWNS	6 TOWNS	9 TOWNS	12 TOWNS	15 TOWNS	18 TOWNS	21 TOWNS	24 TOWNS	27 TOWNS	30 TOWNS
1 Unit (Business card) 3.25"x2"0	100	260	360	460	560	600	660	700	800	900	1000
2 Units 6.5"x2" or 3.25"x4"	150	360	560	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	1300
4 Units 3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"	240	560	900	1000	1300	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100
6 Units 6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE 6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
12 Units 6.5"x14"	400	960	1400	1800	2100	2400	2700	3000	3300	3600	3900
18 FULL PAGE 10"x14"	500	1200	1800	2200	2500	2800	3000	3300	3600	3900	4300
2-PAGE SPREAD (2) 10"x14"	800										
BACK PAGE 10"x14"	600										
FRONT PAGE BANNER 8.25"x2"	360										
FRONT PAGE BOX 1.5"x4.5"	320										

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PREPAY 12 MONTHS AND GET 3 MORE FREE**

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Back cover, Front Page Banner and Front Box reserved on first-come, first-served basis. Current advertiser has right of first refusal.

Rates effective November 1, 2024. Subject to change. See RennaMedia.com for most up to date pricing.

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- Landscape Tools

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- All Sizes of PVC Pipe & DWV Fittings

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- Peat Moss
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- Polymeric Sand
- Paver Sealer
- Paver Cleaner

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Prices per yard

- Compost\$35
- Jersey Brown\$40

MULCH

- Black Dyed\$33
- Brown Dyed\$33
- Red Dyed\$35
- Hardwood\$24
- Playground\$35

QUARRY BASE MATERIALS

- Mason Sand\$60
- 3/4 Clean Stone\$60
- Stone Dust\$40
- QP\$50

DECORATIVE STONE

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- 1 Riverbed.....\$115
- 1 1/2-3 Riverbed\$99
- 3/4 Red Stone.....\$84
- 3/4 Goose Egg\$125
- 2-4 Goose Egg.....\$135
- 3/4 Arctic White.....\$120

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- Gold Rings
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- Gold Pendants
- Gold Charms
- Gold Watches

BUYING ALL COINS

- Gold Coins
- Gold Eagles
- Proof Sets
- Kreugerrands
- Buffalos
- US Silver Coins Pre-64
- Morgan/Peace Dollars

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- Trays
- 925 Jewelry
- All Sterling Silver

WATCHES

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- Cartier
- Patek Philippe
- Pocket Watches

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- Loose Diamonds
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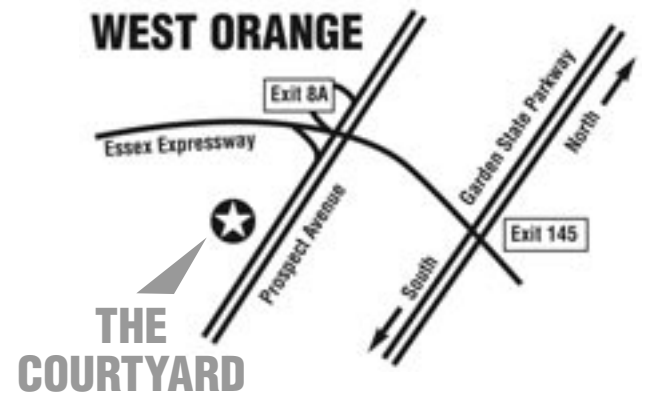


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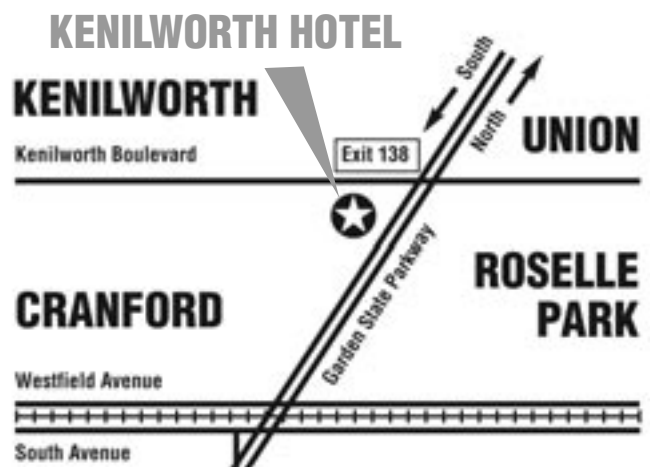
WEST ORANGE COURTYARD
JUNE 1st to 5th
JUNE 15th to 19th

8 Rooney Circle,
West Orange, NJ



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