

# Clark Monthly NJ

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## ANNUAL LAW ENFORCEMENT SPECIAL OLYMPICS TORCH RUN

### Clark Township Police Department

On June 5, 2026, members of the Clark Police Department joined police officers and other community members from across the state to be Guardians of the Flame in the 43rd Annual Law Enforcement Torch Run to benefit Special Olympics of New Jersey. Over 3,000 Police Officers took to their local streets to raise funds and awareness for this incredible organization. They carry the "Flame of Hope" which officially leads into the Special Olympics Summer Games. This event helps raise awareness and funds to support year-round sports training and competition opportunities for thousands of athletes with intellectual disabilities throughout New Jersey.

### ABOUT LAW ENFORCEMENT TORCH RUN®

The Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR), initiated in 1981 by Wichita Police Chief Richard LaMunyon, has grown into a worldwide movement. What began as a humble initiative has transformed into a global beacon of hope and unity, driven by the collective efforts of law enforcement volunteers. Known as Guardians of the Flame, these dedicated individuals join hands with Special Olympics



athletes to champion the cause of acceptance and inclusion for individuals with intellectual disabilities. The essence of LETR lies in its community-centric approach. Law enforcement members from various levels, including federal, national, state, provincial, local, and even military sectors, come together to support this noble cause. Their collaboration extends beyond mere participation; it signifies a commitment to fostering a society where everyone, irrespective of their abilities, is embraced and celebrated.

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# Clark Monthly NJ

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# MUNICIPAL CLERK EDITH “EDIE” MERKEL HONORED ON HER RETIREMENT

## Clark Township

After 24 years of dedicated public service, the Township Council and Mayor Angel Albanese honored longtime Municipal Clerk Edith L. Merkel with a proclamation recognizing her retirement during a recent Council meeting.

Merkel began her career with the township in 2002 as a keyboarding clerk before advancing to Assistant Municipal Clerk in 2005 and ultimately being appointed Municipal Clerk in 2007. Throughout her tenure, she was recognized for her professionalism, leadership, and commitment to transparent and effective local government.

Mayor Albanese praised Merkel for helping

guide and mentor the next generation within the Clerk’s Office, noting the strong team she helped build and prepare for the future.

In accepting the proclamation, Merkel reflected on her lifelong passion for public service, inspired by her father’s work in local government. She thanked the Mayor, Council, coworkers, and her family for their support over the years and said it had been “an honor and privilege to serve the residents of Clark.”

The Township extends its sincere appreciation to Edie Merkel for her years of outstanding service and wishes her continued health, happiness, and enjoyment in retirement.

# NJ CLEAN COMMUNITIES AWARDS \$36K GRANTS

## Clark Township

The Township of Clark has been awarded \$36,766.73 as part of New Jersey’s Clean Communities Grant Program, with additional funding expected later bringing the total award to approximately \$72,000.

This funding supports statewide efforts to reduce litter, promote recycling, and enhance the cleanliness and environmental quality of local communities. In Clark, the grant will help support a variety of cleanup and environmental initiatives, including public works litter removal efforts, storm drain maintenance and management,

disposal and recycling support, and the purchase of supplies and equipment used for ongoing cleanup operations.

The program will also support community engagement efforts such as public education, volunteer cleanup events, and partnerships with local organizations and civic groups.

Township officials expressed appreciation for the continued support through the Clean Communities Program and emphasized that these efforts help maintain a cleaner, safer, and more environmentally responsible community for all residents.



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### LORI'S CLARK TRANSACTIONS FROM 1/1/20 TO PRESENT

<b>SOLD</b>	9 Shetland Dr.	5 Tudor Dr.	93 Jupiter St.	47 Briarwood Path
15 Westfield Ave.	12 Yorktown Dr.	111 Westfield Ave.	166 Meadow Rd.	114 Stemmer Dr.
40 Ivy St.	84 Wheatsheaf Rd.	14 Washington St.	67 Lefferts Lane	30 Haliday St.
15 Tudor Dr.	12 Ascot Way	118 Jupiter St.	41 Oleander Way	312 New York Ave
10 Washington St., Unit 03	301 West Lane	61 Sycamore Rd.	160 Riverside Dr.	30 Haliday St.
47 Briarwood Path	1119 Maurice Ave.	15 Briarheath Ln.	45 Briarheath Lane	349 Willow Way
39 King St.	1 Longfellow Lane	43 Kathryn St.	40 Emerald Pl.	18 Janie Ln.
56 Lexington Blvd.	8 Wendell Place	54 Harding Ave.	24 Hawthorne Dr.	118 Delia Ter.
13 Blake Dr.	13 Blake Dr.	1 Plymouth Rd.	45 Briarwood Path	131 Jupiter St.
213 East Lane	42 School St.	306 Parkway Dr.	21 St. Germain Dr.	668 Raritan Rd.
1168 Lake Ave., Unit 4	29 Harvey Ct.	75 Union County Pkwy	532 Valley Rd.	5 Sycamore Rd.
45 Wendell Pl.	18 Yorktown Dr.	49 Briarwood Path	21 Orchard Ter.	52 Skylark Pl.
501 Oak Ridge Rd.	45 Starlite Dr.	549 Valley Rd.	307 West Lane	17 Blake Dr.
309 Oak Ridge Rd.	1538 Franklin St.	161 Meadow Rd.	64 Mildred Ter.	902 Raritan Dr.
29 Conger Way	40 Conger Way	16 Nassau St.	103 Amelia Dr.	9 Sunset Dr.
13 Florence Dr.	15 Ayers Lane	160 Meadow Rd.	1132 Westfield Ave.	10 Lionel St.
303 West Ln.	72 Dorset Dr.	415 Valley Rd.	22 Glenwood Ter.	223 East Ln,
1 Rose Ter.	5 Schmidt Lane	49 Joseph St.	344 West Lane	74 Malvern Dr,
187 Liberty St.	269 Willow Way	23 Ayers lane	30 Haliday St.	293 Oak Ridge Rd.
11 Harding Ave.	18 Ginesi Dr.	110 Sweet Briar Dr.	30 Coldevin Rd.	31 Shetland Dr.
40 John St.	7 Blake Dr.	30 Stanton St.	30 Stanton St.	86 St. Laurent Dr.
77 John St.	43 Willow way	76 Harding Ave.	131 Jupiter St.	92 Meadow Rd.
17 Hillside Ave.	95 Briarheath Ln.	53 Stemmer Dr.	63 Liberty St.	74 Hall Dr.
11 Avon Rd.	18 Terhune Rd.	291 Willow Way	31 Ross St.	262 Valley Rd.
81 New York Ave.	1 Jarvais Ter.	330 West Lane	118 Sweet Briar Dr.	279 Madison Hill Rd.
42 Kenneth Pl.	39 Frances Dr.	139 Jupiter St.	902 Raritan Rd.	230 East Lane
1 Kathryn St.	28 Gibson Blvd.	458 Oak Ridge Rd.	357 Willow Way	76 Harrison St.
29 Hillside Ave.	41 Largo Lane	307 West lane		

**TOTAL NUMBER OF TRANSACTIONS = 326. 213 ARE IN CLARK**

# EMERGENCY SQUAD PREPS RECREATION SUMMER CAMP COUNSELORS

## Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad

The Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad (CVES) was invited to speak to the 2026 Clark Recreation Summer Camp Counselors. Director of Recreation, Ralph Bernardo, invited the squad to the counselors' orientation and speak about emergency issues the counselors may encounter. President Michael Gennaro met with over 150 counselors Thursday afternoon. He explained the various situations that may arise and how to best handle them. EMT Gennaro emphasized that this is team work and working together. The counselors were told to know their campers. He

encouraged the counselors to learn who has allergies or other conditions that is helpful to know before there is a situation requiring more intervention. If a camper is allergic to bee stings, it is helpful to know this before the child is stung. President Gennaro also explained how to handle a nose bleed and when to bring a child to get help or have help come to the child.

The community should be very comfortable with the Summer Camp Program. Recreation Director Bernardo makes sure your child is in the best possible care while at camp. Clark is a community with all organizations working

together to make Clark a great town. Parents who enroll their child in the Summer Camp program can rest easy that their child is in the best care. The counselors are well equipped to help provide a safe environment and while everyone has a lot of fun.

If you have what it takes and are interested in joining the Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad, please complete an application found at: [Ourclark.com](http://Ourclark.com)>Home>Departments>Clark Volunteer Emergency Squad>Join Us and complete the application. You can also request an application, or if you have any questions email: [cves@ourclark.com](mailto:cves@ourclark.com)



(above) Director Bernardo Gives Counselors Instructions for Camp

Courtesy Photo

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Viscosupplementation is a high-tech answer for all those who think that surgery, dietary supplements, and prescription medication are the only options for eliminating knee pain. In fact, this new treatment enables most people to get back to enjoying everyday activities in a matter of weeks. Treatment is covered by most major health insurance plans, including Medicare.

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# CLARK STUDENTS ADOPT A COW FOR THEIR CLASSROOM

## Clark Public Schools

Can you imagine having a cow as your classroom pet? That's exactly what students in Mrs. Jackie Kozlowski's and Mr. Frank Caragher's 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes experienced this year through Discover Dairy's Adopt a Cow program. Throughout the school year, students followed the growth of a real dairy calf while learning about life on a working dairy farm. The program gave students a unique opportunity to connect classroom learning with the real world as they explored agriculture, animal care, and where many of the foods we enjoy every day come from.

Adopt a Cow is a nationwide program that connects classrooms with dairy farms across the country. Each participating class is paired with a calf and receives monthly updates that allow

students to watch their calf grow while learning about daily life on the farm.

This year, our classes were matched with Harper, an adorable calf from Myerwood Farms in Pilesgrove, New Jersey. Harper quickly became a classroom favorite! Students eagerly awaited each update and loved watching her grow from a young calf into a thriving member of the herd.

Our learning went far beyond simply following Harper's journey. Students supported Harper in the "America's Favorite Calf" contest by writing persuasive speeches and encouraging members of our school community to vote. It was a fun and meaningful way to apply writing skills to a real-world experience.

"Watching the students connect with Harper throughout the year was amazing," said Mrs.

Kozlowski. "They were excited to learn, ask questions, and apply what they were learning in meaningful ways."

As students followed Harper's progress, they learned about calf nutrition, animal care, dairy farming practices, and the important role farmers play in providing food for our communities. For many students, it was their first glimpse into the world of agriculture and life on a working farm.

To wrap up the experience, students participated in a live virtual farm tour with Farmer Melanie. They had the opportunity to meet the calves at Myerwood Farms, learn more about daily farm life, and ask questions about Harper and the responsibilities involved in caring for dairy cattle. It was the perfect ending to a year filled with learning, curiosity, and plenty of excitement about our adopted calf.



(above) Honorary Dairy Farmers

Photo by Clark Public Schools

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# WHY YOUR FITNESS GOALS KEEP FAILING YOU (AND WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS)

When it comes to getting fit, you may think only about the big picture: losing 20 pounds, running a 5K, or dropping two sizes. These are what we call "outcome goals"—they're all about the end result. While these goals are great for giving you direction, they're not always the best way to stay motivated or see lasting success. Instead, focusing on small, daily habits, known as "process goals," might be the smarter way to reach your fitness dreams.

## THE PROBLEM WITH OUTCOME GOALS

Outcome goals sound exciting because they focus on a big win—but here's the catch: they're not always fully in your control. For instance, you might work hard all week but not see the scale budge as much as you'd like. Or life might throw a curveball—a busy schedule, a sprained ankle, or just plain old fatigue—and suddenly, your goal feels out of reach. When that happens, it's easy to feel frustrated and lose motivation.

## THE POWER OF PROCESS GOALS

Instead of zeroing in on the finish line, process goals focus on the steps you take to get there. These are the small, actionable habits you can control, like taking a 20-minute walk after dinner, drinking more water, or eating an extra serving of veggies each day.

Process goals might not sound as thrilling, but they're incredibly effective because they help you build consistency, give you daily victories, and create healthy habits that stick.

Janice M., from Cranford, put it this way, "I had always been focused—obsessed, really—with the numbers on the scale. I could never hit my goal, and I would give up and gain even more weight. It wasn't until the coaches at ALF taught me how to work on the process instead. Now I make sure I get in my steps and workouts consistently, and the weight is falling off."

Here's why process goals work so well:

1. They Keep You Motivated. Every time you check off a small win—like completing a workout or packing a healthy lunch—you get a boost of confidence. This keeps you going, even when the scale or other results aren't moving as quickly as you'd hoped.
2. They're Flexible. Life happens, but process goals allow you to adjust. Can't make it to the gym? No problem—you can take a brisk walk around your neighborhood instead. You're still moving toward your goal.
3. They Build Better Habits. Focusing on actions, like exercising three times a week or cutting back on sugary drinks, helps you create a healthier lifestyle overall. These habits will serve you long after you've reached your initial goal.



4. They Reduce Stress. Focusing on the process makes you less likely to get caught up in things you can't control, like a bad weigh-in or an off week. This takes the pressure off and makes the journey more enjoyable.

## REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: WALKING FOR FITNESS

Let's say your outcome goal is to lose 15 pounds. Instead of focusing solely on the number on the scale, set a process goal of walking 30 minutes a day, five days a week. This is something you can do regardless of what the scale says. As you stick with it, you'll work toward your weight-loss goal and improve your energy, mood, and overall health.

## START SMALL, STAY CONSISTENT

The best part about process goals? They're manageable. You don't have to overhaul your life overnight. Start with one or two small habits, like stretching before bed or swapping out chips for fruit at lunch. Once those become second nature, you can add more.

## THE TAKEAWAY

Big goals can be inspiring, but it's the little steps you take every day that truly lead to success. By focusing on what you can control—your habits—you'll stay motivated, build lasting routines, and enjoy the process of getting healthier. So, the next time you think about your fitness goals, don't just dream about the finish line. Start by lacing up your sneakers and taking that first step—literally.

Marty Musikant and his wife, Kim, own Active Life Fitness, a fitness community dedicated to helping adults in Cranford, Westfield, Clark, Garwood, and surrounding towns get stronger, move better, and live more actively. For more information, call (908) 389-8009 or visit [activelifefitness.net](http://activelifefitness.net).

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# VOLUNTEERS SWORN IN TO ADVOCATE FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

## CASA of Passaic and Union Counties

Seven local community members recently took an oath to stand beside children in foster care as advocates during some of the most uncertain moments of their lives. Union County Superior Court Judge Rosalba Comas presided over the swearing-in ceremony for the newest Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) with CASA of Passaic and Union Counties. Each volunteer will be assigned to advocate for a child or sibling set in foster care.

Among the newest child advocates are Crystal Coleman of South Plainfield, Maria de Gannes of Linden, Rachel Hajjar of Cranford, Julie Harnisher of Westfield, Elizabeth Maher of Summit, and Barbara Monaghan of Westfield.

For children navigating foster care, CASA volunteers are often the one consistent adult focused solely on their best interests both inside and outside the courtroom. Now equipped to advocate for infants, children, and teens who

have experienced abuse or neglect, the volunteers join a network of dedicated advocates serving children across Passaic and Union counties. CASA volunteers provide consistent support, gather information from the adults in the youth's life, and make informed recommendations to help ensure their needs and well-being remain at the forefront daily and in court decisions.

Said Erica Fischer-Kaslander, Executive Director of Child Focus, the nonprofit organization that oversees the CASA program, "Every child deserves at least one adult who shows up consistently, listens carefully, and refuses to let them fall through the cracks. These seven volunteers have made an extraordinary commitment to children who urgently need stability, encouragement, and someone wholly dedicated to their future. Their advocacy can, and will, change life trajectories."

No prior knowledge of child welfare is required to become a CASA volunteer;

comprehensive training equips volunteers with the skills necessary to advocate effectively. Volunteer advocates – all of whom bring their own unique life experiences – visit their assigned child regularly and communicate with caregivers, educators, caseworkers, and others before making informed recommendations to the court.

More volunteer advocates are still urgently needed across Passaic and Union counties to help ensure every child in foster care has a dedicated voice in court and the community.

CASA of Passaic and Union Counties is a program of Child Focus, which prioritizes the needs and well-being of infants, children, and teens impacted by, or at risk of, abuse or neglect.

For details about becoming a CASA volunteer, call 973-832-4002, e-mail [info@casapassaicunion.org](mailto:info@casapassaicunion.org), or visit CASA of Passaic and Union Counties' website at [www.casapassaicunion.org](http://www.casapassaicunion.org).



(above) Judge Rosalba Comas with Newly Sworn CASAs

Courtesy Photo

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# 114TH SEASON OF SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

## Westfield Community Concert Band

The Westfield Community Concert Band, under the direction of Dr. Thomas Connors, continues its 114th season with its annual Summer Concert Series in Mindowaskin Park, East Broad Street, Westfield. The band will be performing four Thursday evening concerts on June 25, July 2, July 9 and July 16. All concerts begin at 7:30 p.m. and are free to the public.

Highlighting this season's special summer concerts will be a 250th Independence Day program taking place on July 2nd featuring presentations by "George Washington", the Westfield Town Crier and members of the Westfields Chapter of the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution. The concert series will also include performances of selections from popular Broadway musicals, including Oklahoma! and Music Man. Each of the band's summer concerts will also include popular marches, classical works and many patriotic compositions, including works by Robert Russell Bennett, George Gershwin, Stephen Foster, John Phillip Sousa, Aaron Copland and many others.

The band welcomed many new musicians this season, including Leslie Pruess on flute, Melissa Alvarez on bass clarinet, Dennis Tung on percussion, Deanna Chun on percussion, Abby Bresalier on trombone, Ben Macry on alto saxophone and Roux Swaminathan on bass clarinet. The band also celebrates the 22nd anniversary season for the band's conductor and music director, Dr. Thomas N. Connors.

The band rehearses each Wednesday evening from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Community Room



(above) The Westfield Community Concert Band presents its annual Summer Concert Series in Mindowaskin Park, East Broad Street, Westfield, with performances on Thursdays, June 25, July 2, 9 and 16 at 7:30 p.m.

in the Westfield Municipal Building, 425 East Broad Street. The band's membership includes musicians from ages 18 to 80, including many active and retired music educators.

Under the baton of conductor Dr. Thomas Connors, the band continues to perform a wide variety of concert band literature, including many contemporary compositions.

Experienced area musicians who are interested in a position with the band should contact band manager Barry Rosenberg at 908-337-9073 or info@westfieldcommunityband.com.

The band's Summer Concert Series is sponsored in part by the Westfield Recreation Department and is made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.

Chairs and blankets are recommended. In the event of rain, the concerts will take place in the Westfield Community Room, located in the Westfield Municipal Building.

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## JULY EVENTS AT CLARK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Please register through the online events calendar on our website at [clarklibrary.org](http://clarklibrary.org), in person, or by phone at 732-388-5999.

### **Unearth A Story - Summer Reading Challenge:**

Participants track their reading and earn raffle tickets for prizes!

#### **Dino-Mite Krafty Kids**

*Wednesdays, July 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 -3:00pm*

Registration is required.

Geared for elementary students

*July 1 - Make a dinosaur squishy*

*July 8 - Paint wooden dinosaur plaques*

*July 15 - Make dinosaur slime*

*July 22 - Cardboard 3D dinosaur sets*

*July 29 - Fossil Jewelry*

#### **Chess Club on Thursdays**

*July 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 from 11am - 3pm*

New members and all levels are welcome!

#### **4 PM STEM**

*Thursday, July 2; Tuesday July 14 & 21  
and Monday, July 27 at 4pm*

Play around with STEM

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Math!).

Geared to Kindergarten - 5th graders.

*Thursday, July 2 - Dinosaur engineering*

*Tuesday, July 14 - Create dinosaur eggs*

*Tuesday, July 21 - Dinosaur fossil dig*

*Monday, July 27 - Salt dough dinosaur fossils*

#### **Tales for Tots**

*Mondays, July 6, 13, 20 & 27 at 10am*

Stories and songs for active listeners. Geared toward ages 2-3 with a caregiver.

Older children are welcome!

#### **Teen Gaming: Nintendo and Board Games**

*Monday, July 6 from 2pm-3pm*

We will have board games and switch games available, but you are welcome to bring your own! Snacks will be provided!

#### **LEGO Club**

*Monday, July 6 at 6:30pm*

structures to be displayed in the Children's area of the library! LEGO® are provided. For children entering grades K - 5.

Light snacks will be served.

#### **Baby Bookworms**

*Tuesdays, July 7, 14, 21 and 28 at 10am*

Join us for stories, songs, nursery rhymes, and movement activities. Geared toward the under 2 crowd with caregiver. 30 minutes of open play .

#### **Patches & Stitches**

*Tuesdays, July 7, 14, 21 and 28 - 12pm-2pm*

Bring your quilt or other crafty project and visit with the members of the quilting club.

#### **Fossil Fun with Rutgers Geology Museum**

*Tuesday, July 7 at 3pm*

Students participate in hands-on interactive arts & crafts activities. Registration is required.

Geared for elementary students

#### **Totally New Tuesdays**

*Tuesdays, July 7, 14, 21 & 28 at 6:30pm*

Enjoy a new movie for adults. Please check our online calendar or visit the library to check the movies being shown.

#### **Mama and Munchkins**

*Wednesday, July 8 at 11am*

Early parenthood can feel isolating, and this group would focus on fostering connection, emotional support, and a sense of belonging in a relaxed, child-friendly environment. Coffee and donuts will be provided for attendees.

#### **Exploration Stations**

*Thursday, July 9 at 10:30am*

Sensory play program specifically designed for toddlers and pre-schoolers. For children ages 18 months through pre-k. Please register.

#### **Soccer Trivia**

*Thursday, July 9 at 6:30pm*

We will be having a soccer trivia night!

Play individually or as a team to answer trivia questions through a Kahoot! online game, so one device per team will be needed, such as smartphone, tablet, or laptop. Limited devices are available through the library, so please contact us if one is needed. Prizes will be awarded for the top 3 teams.

#### **Stories and More**

*Fridays, July 10, 17, 24 & 31 at 10am*

Join us for stories, songs, and rhymes followed by a simple craft. This program is Designed for children ages 3 and up. Registration is required.

#### **Family Friday Flicks**

*Fridays, July 10, 17, 24 & 31 at 2pm*

Beat the heat while watching a family friendly movie and munching on popcorn! Please see calendar for movies playing.

#### **Family Open Play**

*Saturdays, July 11, 18, 25 - 10am - 12pm*

Open play with the library's toys and board games for a variety of ages!

#### **Needlework Club**

*Saturday, July 11 from 10am - 2pm*

Bring what you are working on to sit, stitch, and chat with others who enjoy needlework! The club will meet one Saturday per month. If you have any questions, please drop by the meeting and someone will assist you.

#### **Teen Sewing: Dino Nugget Pillow**

*Monday, July 13 at 2pm*

Come sew your own Dino Nugget pillow on a sewing machine! No sewing experience is required. Open to teens entering grade 7-12.

Registration required.

#### **An Evening with Eliza Hamilton**

*Monday, July 13 at 7pm*

Join Alisa Dupuy as she portrays Eliza Schuyler Hamilton and discover the dynamic and strong person behind Alexander Hamilton.

#### **Jumping Jamie**

*Thursday, July 16 at 6:30pm*

Jump into dinosaurs with Jumpin' Jamie! It's an energetic show featuring live original music, dinosaur puppets, fossils, magic, and more!

#### **Teen Cooking: Dirt Cups**

*Monday, July 20 at 2pm*

Unearth a story at our teen cooking event. We will be making dirt cups full of gummy worms! Open to teens entering grades 6-12.

Registration required.

#### **Dino Bingo for Kids**

*Monday, July 20 at 4pm*

Free Bingo with a twist! We will be playing with pictures of dinosaurs!

#### **Evening Book Club**

*Monday, July 20 at 7pm*

We will be discussing "The Traitor's Wife" by Allison Pataki. Please speak with a librarian if you need a copy of the book.

#### **Colonial Escape Room**

*Tuesday, July 21 at 7pm*

Find clues and solve a series of puzzles in our Colonial-themed escape room before time runs out! Registration required. Time slots available every 15 minutes.

#### **Duplo Bingo**

*Thursday, July 23 at 10am*

Preschoolers pick a building card enabling them to construct their animal by collecting the corresponding bricks as they are drawn.

#### **Mad Science**

*Thursday, July 23 at 6:30pm*

Kids become part of the action as our Mad Scientist fires up a chemical volcano that bubbles, erupts, and roars to life before their eyes. Then the room lights up with wonder as we create a glowing chemical flashlight!

#### **Jurassic Park Book Club**

*Thursday, July 23 at 7pm*

Join us for our new book club, Outside the Lines. For our first meeting, we'll be reading Jurassic Park by Michael Crichton.

#### **Teens: Healing Stone Craft**

*Monday, July 27 at 2pm*

Create your own wire wrapped healing stone necklace or keychain. Open to students entering grades 6-12. Registration required.

#### **Colonial Storytime with the Mayor**

*Monday, July 27 at 6:30pm*

Join us for a special story time with Clark's Mayor, Angel Albanese, to celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States of America!

#### **Afternoon Book Club**

*Tuesday, July 28 at 1:30pm*

Join us for our next afternoon book club meeting. We will be discussing "America's First Daughter" by Stephanie Dray. Please speak with a librarian if you need a copy of the book.

#### **For Kids: Dirt Pudding**

*Tuesday, July 29 at 4pm*

Make some yummy dirt pudding with oreos, pudding, and gummy worms.

\*Allergen warning: ingredients include milk, instant pudding, cool whip, oreos, and gummy worms Registration is required. Geared for elementary students Clark residents with library cards have priority registration. All others will be on the pending waitlist until 48 hours before the event if space allows.

#### **Little Al the Allosaurus**

*Thursday, July 30 at 4pm*

Be a paleontologist! Get ready to dig in! Join John Miller of the Pearl Observatory and find your own fossils right in the library. Comb through fossil silt loaded with shark teeth, coral, sea urchin spines, bones and more. Whatever you find you get to keep. The fossils are up to 20 million years old! For ages 5 and up. Registration is required.

#### **Romance Book Club**

*Thursday, July 30 at 7pm*

Join us for our newest book club focusing on Romance books! If you're a fan of contemporary romance novels, this is the perfect group for you. Our July meeting will be discussing The Lust Crusade by Jo Segura.

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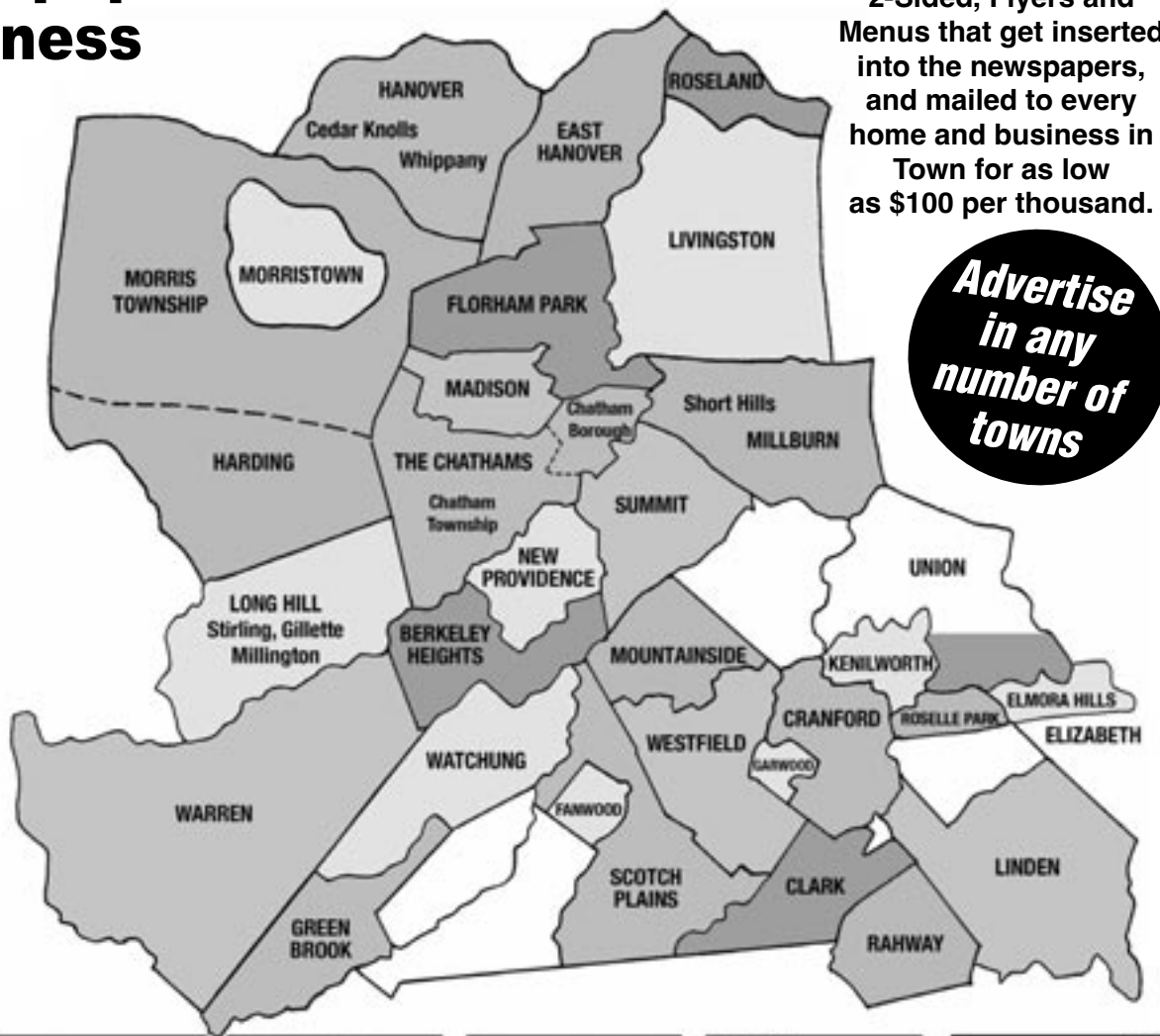
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# PASSING THE TORCH AT 250: HOW NORTH JERSEY'S NEWEST ENLISTEES CARRY AMERICA'S LEGACY FORWARD

*Martha Papson Garcia, Ed.D. (U.S. Army)  
Director of Veterans Services, ROTC Liaison,  
Fairleigh Dickinson University*

Veteran organizations often serve as the backbone of community support for those who have served in the military. Yet, one group is uniquely transforming how America honors its newest service members—before they even don the uniform. While traditional groups like the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion focus primarily on veterans returning from conflict, Our Community Salutes (OCS) dedicates its mission entirely to the next generation of patriots: high school seniors stepping into the U.S. Armed Forces.

As communities across the nation prepared for Fourth of July celebrations and looked forward to America's milestone 250th birthday, the work of Our Community Salutes of North Jersey stood as a powerful reminder of what local support truly meant.

Founded in 2009 by educator and Army veteran Dr. Kenneth Hartman, OCS was created to fill an important gap in community recognition. While college-bound seniors receive enthusiastic decision-day applause and student-athletes draw local headlines for signing with sports teams, military enlistees often quietly slip away to basic training without public acknowledgment. Our Community Salutes ensures these young men and women are the first to hear a collective "thank you" from their hometown.

The organization operates on a three-pronged

support model. For enlistees, public recognition ceremonies provide resources, mentorship, and a sense of pride to ease their transition into active duty. For families, educational tools, community connections, and peer networks that help parents and siblings navigate the military journey. For communities, a collaborative platform uniting local business leaders, veterans, educators, and elected officials to honor local defenders.

Each spring, the North Jersey chapter of OCS brings this essential mission into focus. Recently, the group hosted its 10th Annual Enlistee Recognition Ceremony at Fairleigh Dickinson University's Florham Campus in Madison, New Jersey.

At this high-profile event, more than 90 high school seniors from across northern New Jersey were honored as they committed to enlist in the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, or National Guard. Surrounded by active-duty military leaders, veterans, local dignitaries, and emotional families, these young patriots received a formal send-off recognizing their induction into the elite "less than 1% club" of Americans who wear the uniform. To further support families, OCS introduced programs like OCS Connect, designed specifically to build community for those at home during their loved ones' military journey.

As America approaches its Semiquincentennial—its 250th birthday—the thread connecting these North Jersey enlistees, today's veterans, and the original patriots of the

Revolutionary War becomes profound. It is an unbroken chain of everyday citizens choosing extraordinary sacrifice.

In 1776, the Continental Army was built by farmers, blacksmiths, and tradesmen who swapped civilian tools for muskets to defend the ideal of freedom. Many marched through northern New Jersey, known as the "Crossroads of the Revolution," enduring hardships such as brutal winters in Morris and Bergen counties. Today's veterans have inherited the responsibility of maintaining peace through decades of global conflict. Now, these high school enlistees—stepping onto the same historic Jersey soil—carry forward that legacy by voluntarily safeguarding American liberty. Just as only about 3% of colonists fought for independence, today's service members represent a committed minority protecting the majority.

Many historical battles that were won long ago are celebrated on the Fourth of July. But organizations like Our Community Salutes remind us that freedom is an active, ongoing relay race. By honoring the new generation of military enlistees, OCS ensures that the legacy of American liberty remains vibrant.

The act of honoring veterans isn't just about looking back - it is an investment in the future of the nation. Through grassroots support and community recognition, these young patriots receive a powerful message: their sacrifice is valued, their service is celebrated, and their legacy is America's ongoing story.



*(above) Our Community Salutes of North Jersey 2026, High School Enlistees*

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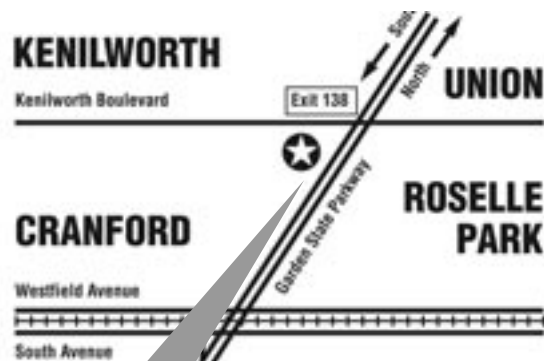
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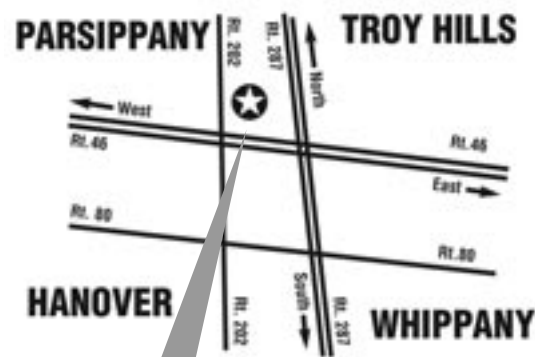
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