

OUR TOWN

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STUDENT OLYMPIC DAY TRADITION CONTINUES

Rahway Public Schools

Rahway Public Schools once again celebrated one of its most anticipated traditions as students, staff, families, alumni, and community members gathered for the annual Rahway Olympic Day at Rahway River Park.

The event featured a full day of friendly competition, teamwork, school spirit, and community engagement as students from across the district competed for bragging rights and the coveted Rahway Olympic Day championships.

In the elementary school division, Roosevelt Elementary School successfully defended its team championship, edging out Grover Cleveland Elementary School by just five points in a closely contested competition. Students demonstrated outstanding effort, sportsmanship, and enthusiasm throughout the day, making for an exciting finish.

The annual rivalry between the Rahway 7th & 8th Grade Academy and the Rahway High School Freshman Team once again provided plenty of excitement.

For another year, the 7th & 8th Grade Academy emerged victorious, continuing its winning tradition and giving students and staff another memorable chapter in one of Rahway Olympic Day's most anticipated competitions.

"This event is about much more than competition," said Rahway High School teacher and Olympic Day Coordinator Leon Bunion. "It's an opportunity for our students to build

relationships, demonstrate teamwork, show school pride, and create memories that will stay with them for years."

One of the day's highlights was the annual Community 4x100 Relay, which featured teams representing various sectors of the Rahway community. The race lived up to its reputation as one of the most exciting events of the day, with the Rahway Track Alumni Team successfully defending its title.

The Rahway Police Department Team finished in second place, while the Rahway Staff Volunteer Team earned a third-place finish.

The Rahway Olympic Day committee extends its sincere appreciation to Superintendent Dr. Aleya Shoieb, the Rahway Board of Education, and all district principals for their continued support of this tradition. Their commitment to creating meaningful experiences for students helps make events like Rahway Olympic Day possible year after year.

Special thanks are also extended to the event's sponsors, whose generosity and investment in Rahway's youth contributed to the success of the day, including: 29 West, Law Office of Christopher A. Kozlowski, Esq., Butch Kowal Foundation, Health Pharma USA LLC, Family Hospitality LLC DBA Home2Suites by Hilton, The Lymphatic Massage, James Walker, Rahway Track Booster Club, and Lovely Roses Rahway.



(above) Rahway Olympic Day brought friendly competition, school pride, and community spirit to Rahway River Park.

Photo by Leandro Garcia Phillips

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MAGNAMARA AND MORAN CONTRIBUTE TO A NEW BOOK ON THE JOY OF THEATRE

As summer began, a new book that celebrates the joy of watching or participating in theatre productions made its debut. “Marquee Moments” is a new book by Dr. Phillip Sprayberry that features reflections of some 40 different theatre artists about their experiences as actors, theatregoers, directors, and staff spanning both amateur and professional theatre. “To be clear,” writes Sprayberry in his introduction, “these essayists are by people who love the theatre, wanted to share some vivid memories of their special moments, and have recorded them for you to enjoy as well.”

The anthology is divided into five segments: “From the Start” (first experiences in theatre), “From the Seat” (audience recollections), “From the Stage” (acting memories), “From the Staff” (front-of-house, backstage), and “From the Rest” (other memories of theatre). It features varied, accessible stories, including memories of directing children’s shows, a “Les Miserables” tour stop in San Francisco during the 1989 earthquake, a front-of-house confrontation, and a personal history told through viewings of “A Little Night Music”.

Two local Union County natives are among those represented in the collection. Deirdre Louise MacNamara, originally from the Elmora section of Elizabeth, and currently a NYC-based playwright, contributed “To the Stage”, about



(above, l-r) Lead author Phillip Sprayberry, with contributors Deirdre Louise MacNamara and Maurice J. Moran at the book launch held in early June.

Courtesy photos

why she fell in love with theatre, and “What A Way to Spend the Day!” dealing with the magic of theatre. Maurice J. Moran of Rahway contributed “R&G Are Dead” about his life-long love of this alternate version of Hamlet; “Showstoppers” about personally experiencing moments of exactly that; and “Show Beginners” about why he spent 37 years of his life directing educational theatre.

The book is available from Amazon and B&N online in paperback or eBook editions. It is also on sale at Here’s the Story bookstore in Union.



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7TH GRADE INITIATIVE AT THE GATEWAY FAMILY YMCA

The Gateway Family YMCA

Registration opens August 15th for the 2026-2027 7th Grade Initiative at The Gateway Family YMCA. Students entering 7th Grade are invited to visit the YMCA and join for free with proof of grade and a guardian's signature. Registration is available in person at The Gateway Family YMCA – Elizabeth Branch - 135 Madison Avenue in Elizabeth. Five Points

Branch -201 Tucker Avenue in Union, Rahway
Branch – 1564 Irving Street in Rahway and
Wellness Center Branch – 1000 Galloping Hill
Rd in Union.

As part of the NJ YMCA 7th Grade Initiative, a state-wide strategy designed to support and encourage teens to maintain a healthy lifestyle, The Gateway Family YMCA offers a complimentary membership for all 7th Grade Students, including activities for mentorship, volunteerism and wellness. Additional program opportunities include group exercise, strength training, basketball, pickleball, soccer, swimming, esports, STEAM, virtual YMCA360 and a variety of events specifically created based on their interests and feedback.

The goal of the 7th Grade Initiative is to increase physical activity and support teens in the development of lifetime healthy habits, volunteerism and leadership skills while providing a safe and supportive environment with supportive role models at the YMCA.

“Sports become more competitive entering the teen years, and there is a chance of becoming sedentary. The Y is here to provide activity, socialization, leadership skills, and staff role models to encourage healthy habits to last a lifetime,” stated Susan Butler, Senior Director of Community Wellness, The Gateway Family YMCA.



The Gateway Family YMCA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, health and community service organization of caring staff and volunteers dedicated to strengthening community and stands For Youth Development, For Healthy Living and For Social Responsibility. The Gateway Family YMCA has been proudly serving Eastern Union County and Northern Middlesex County, for 126 years.

For more information about The Gateway Family YMCA's 7th Grade Initiative, visit www.tgfymca.org or contact the Elizabeth Branch at 908-355-9622, Five Points Branch at 908-688-9622, Rahway Branch at 732-388-0057 or Wellness Center Branch at 908-349-9622.

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LEARN ABOUT BECOMING A CASA VOLUNTEER *August Info sessions being held in Union County*

Eight-year-old Noah is diagnosed with autism and almost completely nonverbal. Due to sounds of repeated altercations in the family home, a concerned neighbor called for help and, after investigation, Noah was placed in foster care. Years of neglect and witnessing domestic violence had left him anxious, withdrawn, and unsure who to trust. Just surviving, rather than thriving, had become his every day.

For children like Noah, healing requires not just a safe place to live, but a consistent, caring adult whose sole focus is ensuring their voice is heard, their needs are met, and their best interests are protected. That is where Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of Passaic and Union Counties comes in.

CASA is a volunteer-powered program of Child Focus, a nonprofit that trains and supports community members to advocate for children from birth to age 21 who have experienced abuse, neglect or abandonment. Appointed by a Family Court judge, each CASA volunteer gets to know their assigned child or sibling set through regular visits, and gathers information from all those involved in their life – teachers, doctors, resource and biological parents, and caseworkers – to make recommendations to the court that help ensure the child has stability, needed services, and is moving toward permanency.

Becoming an advocate means you'll not only change a child's life, most volunteers find it changes theirs, too. No child-welfare background is necessary; successful CASA volunteers are community members with varied life experiences who simply believe abuse and neglect are non-negotiable. Volunteers must be 21 or older, communicate effectively orally and in writing, pass a background check, and complete the 30-hour training.

The first step is to attend a required information session to learn more. Attend any one of these sessions: 10 a.m. Tuesday, August 4, at Clark library; 10 a.m. Tuesday, August 11, at the Colleen Fraser Building in Westfield; 10 a.m. Tuesday, August 18, at Mountainside Library, and 10 a.m. Tuesday, August 25, at Child Focus' office, 1143 East Jersey Street, Second Floor, Elizabeth. Register now at www.casapassaicunion.org/info-session.

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 CASA of Passaic and Union Counties, call 973-832-4002, e-mail info@casapassaicunion.org, or log on to casapassaicunion.org.



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ANNUAL WHEATENA PARK CLEAN UP

Rahway Garden Club

The Rahway Garden Club had their third annual Wheatena Park Clean Up this spring.

Despite the rainy day, members of the community turned up and got to work filling up bags of trash, and recyclables. Thank you to all

who came to help make the community a brighter place! Here's hoping for more sunshine next year!



Courtesy photos



CHAMBER OPENS REGISTRATION FOR RAHWAY DAY

The Rahway Chamber of Commerce is now accepting registrations from businesses, nonprofit organizations and community groups interested in participating in Rahway Day 2026, one of the city's signature community events.

Scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 17, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., Rahway Day will once again transform the Rahway Recreation Center, 275 E. Milton Ave., into a vibrant community gathering featuring local businesses, organizations, live entertainment, family activities, food trucks and more. Admission is free and open to the public.

Held under the Chamber's "Think Rahway First" initiative, Rahway Day connects residents with the businesses, organizations and services that help make Rahway a thriving place to live, work and play.

"Rahway Day is one of my favorite events because it brings together everything that makes

our community special," said Chamber President Heidi Loder-Rosal. "Whether you're discovering a local business, supporting a nonprofit or enjoying the day with family and friends, Rahway Day is a celebration of the people and organizations that make Rahway such a wonderful community."

This year's event will feature pumpkin painting for children ages 12 and under, pickleball clinics, karate demonstrations, yoga, live performances by Rahway High School students and local dance groups, hourly door prizes, a selfie station, a 360-degree photo booth, Touch-a-Truck activities, an antique police vehicle and a variety of local food trucks.

Businesses, nonprofit organizations and community groups are invited to reserve exhibit space and explore sponsorship opportunities. Rahway Day provides a unique opportunity to

connect with hundreds of residents while showcasing products, services and community resources.

Registration and sponsorship information is available at

rahwaychamberofcommerce.com

or by contacting

Chamber President Heidi Loder-Rosal

at contact@rahwaychamberofcommerce.com

or (848) 236-5027.

ABOUT THE RAHWAY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Rahway Chamber of Commerce supports local businesses while fostering a vibrant, connected community through advocacy, networking and events. Signature programs such as Rahway Day strengthen relationships among businesses, organizations and residents while encouraging everyone to Think Rahway First.

CHAMBER GRANTS

The Rahway Chamber of Commerce has opened applications for its 2026 Business Improvement Grant Program. Applications will be accepted through Monday, August 31.

Each year, the Chamber invites member businesses and nonprofits to apply for grant funding to support physical business improvements, community-focused programming, or enhancement of their digital presence. The grants are funded through Chamber membership dues, proceeds from Rahway Day, and other fundraising efforts. For 2026, up to \$5,000 in total grant funding is available.

Grant recipients will be announced during Rahway Day 2026, which will take place on Saturday, October 17 at the Rahway Recreation Center.

To learn more and submit an application, please visit: bit.ly/RCCgrant2026



DIDYA KNOW? MORE INTERESTING ITEMS FROM PAGES OF RAHWAY HISTORY

Submitted by Al Shipley, City Historian and Rahway Library Research Consultant

FIRST TO MAKE BIKE TRIP ACROSS U. S.

James Maye (1895-1982), a well-known and active citizen in Rahway for sixty years, is credited as being the first person to ride a bicycle across the United States. His nine-month trip between 1913 and 1914 would attract nationwide attention.

When Maye was eighteen years old and living in Linden, he and three friends made plans to go from New York to California on bicycles with hopes of reaching San Francisco in time for the Panama Exposition, a World's Fair celebrating the construction of the Panama Canal. The young men departed from City Hall in New York City on June 28, 1913 at 3:00 in the afternoon. Along with the bare necessities, Maye carried a packet of 100 post cards that would verify his journey when he returned home. It was his intention to get post office postmarks or signatures of city or state officials on the cards as he passed through cities along his route.

Although four young men set out on the 2,904 mile trip, only Maye completed the entire journey. Two companions turned back half way into Maryland and the third rider stopped after reaching Kansas. During the course of Maye's trip to the west coast, the number of miles he travelled each day varied greatly. The most miles he covered in one day was 125, the least, 6.

The completion of Maye's trip was not without a touch of irony. He reached San Francisco in March, 1914, almost a year before the Panama Exposition opened on February, 20, 1915.



(above) 18 year old James Maye poses for a photo before continuing his journey across the U.S.

Courtesy Photo

SEX ED SUPPORTED BY CHURCH WOMEN IN 1949

Juvenile delinquency was on the rise after the close of World War II, and by the spring of 1949, the subject of how to deal with teenagers was a growing concern. In March, 1949, the Rahway Council of Church Women sponsored the first of a series of three town meetings at which time members voiced support for the teaching of sex education as a way to address the problem. The Council believed that carefully planned and properly administered courses in sex education could be a step in the right direction of curbing the issue.

Problems dealing with teens would become more troublesome during the decade of the 1950's prompting cities across the nation to develop all sorts of policies to address the difficult dilemma of teenage angst.

OIL AND GAS – THE MORE THINGS CHANGE...

In October, 1973, oil producing nations in and around the Middle East placed an embargo on their exports that targeted several nations including the United States. Wide-spread shortages of oil and gasoline soon caused serious problems for most Americans. States and cities were left on their own to deal with the situation. Long lines to gas stations stretched for blocks and wait times to get served could last hours. Gas stations shortened their hours of operation and many ran out of gas with motorists still waiting

in line.

By the second week in November, the Rahway City Council and Board of Education had plans in place to help ease the situation. The Bd. Of Ed. cancelled Friday classes for all grades and cancelled night school adult education classes. The heat was lowered in all schools during class-time and lowered even more at night. The City Council called for conservation of fuel in all city buildings and rationed gas in most city vehicles. Mayor Daniel Martin set a \$3.00 minimum on the purchase of gasoline when at the pump. City Council also posted measures that residents could take to help cope with the fuel shortage.

Thankfully, the embargo ended in March, 1974, after six months of inconvenience.

REFORMATORY BECOMES A PRISON

In 1929, the easily identified domed building located at Rahway's south-eastern border in Avenel, was converted from a reformatory into a maximum security prison. Because of its Rahway Post Office mailing address, and its proximity to the Rahway Train Station, the structure was familiarly called the Rahway Reformatory and later Rahway Prison.

The facility was opened in 1901 as a place to reform incorrigible young boys and men aged 16 – 30 who were found guilty of a first offense. It would serve in that capacity for twenty-eight years and would house as many as 700 residents.

In the mid 1920s, the New Jersey State Department of Institutions and Agencies began looking for ways to alleviate the overcrowded conditions at the Trenton State Prison which was housing 1,600 inmates in a facility built for 1,000. The plan was to build a new reformatory in Annandale and convert the "Rahway" facility into a prison. After major security upgrades and additions, approximately 600 inmates were transferred from Trenton to the new prison.

The prison which has served as a maximum security facility for nearly 100 years finally had its name changed from "Rahway" Prison to East Jersey State Prison on November 30, 1988, after decades of complaints from city officials and citizens.

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MUGWORT (ARTEMISIA VULGARIS)

Mugwort is a highly invasive, rhizomatous perennial weed found all over New Jersey. Researchers at Rutgers Cooperative Extension warn that because it reproduces aggressively from tiny root fragments, it is notoriously difficult to eradicate and can rapidly take over home gardens and landscaping.

HOW TO IDENTIFY MUGWORT

According to experts at Rutgers University, identifying the plant comes down to a few key physical traits and a simple sniff test:

The leaves are dark green and smooth on top, but have a distinct silvery-white, wooly underside. Mugwort is often referred to as "wild chrysanthemum weed" because of its deeply lobed leaves. If you crush the leaves or stems, they emit a strong, highly aromatic scent resembling sage.

Because mugwort spreads through an extensive, underground network of roots (rhizomes), pulling it out by hand is largely ineffective and will often trigger more aggressive re-growth. The most effective approaches combine both mechanical and chemical methods.

Repeatedly mowing or cutting the plants multiple times a year helps starve the root system.

Because of the dense hairs on the leaves, specialized post emergence herbicides like glyphosate are often needed to penetrate the plant, ideally applied in late summer or early fall.

If you are dealing with a heavy infestation, you can reach out to the Rutgers Plant Diagnostic Laboratory for specific management advice.

In Washington DC, The Smithsonian Institution preserves mugwort's botanical history in its vast plant collections. They note the plant's journey from an ancient magical talisman to a foundational botanical medicine in traditional cultures across the globe.

Mugwort is historically known as the "Mother of herbs," it holds a fascinating legacy spanning millennia.

Throughout history, humans have prized mugwort for a wide array of practical and ritualistic purposes:

Ancient Roman and Anglo-Saxon travelers placed mugwort leaves in their shoes to prevent fatigue and soothe aching feet on long marches. Medieval Europeans also used it in amulets to ward off malicious spirits, the plague, and nightmares.



(above) Mugwort spreads rapidly and has totally overgrown this native wildflower garden in Clark.

Known by many Indigenous Peoples of North America as the "dream plant," it was burned as incense or stuffed into pillows to enhance dream vividness, promote restful sleep, and encourage lucid dreaming.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, mugwort is the primary herb used for moxibustion, where dried leaves are burned near the skin to stimulate acupuncture points and balance "Qi", the fundamental life force in traditional Chinese medicine.

In Western herbalism, it was long used to ease digestive complaints and regulate menstrual cycles.

Folklore links mugwort to Midsummer and the summer solstice. Pagans historically wore costumes made of mugwort while dancing around bonfires and tossed the herb into the flames for protection during the coming year.

Before the introduction of hops, mugwort was once used to flavor beer.

Information in this article is from Rutgers University,

The Smithsonian in Washington DC and 'The Illustrated Book of Herbs' Gallery Books

Happy Summer Gardening,

James



(above) Past President of The Rahway Garden Club, James Keane, has been researching and answering garden questions since 1995.

Visit 'Keane Gardener' blog at:
keanegardener.blogspot.com

Rahway Native Plant Rain Garden

MAINTENANCE

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2026 Rahway Rain Garden Volunteer Maintenance Schedule

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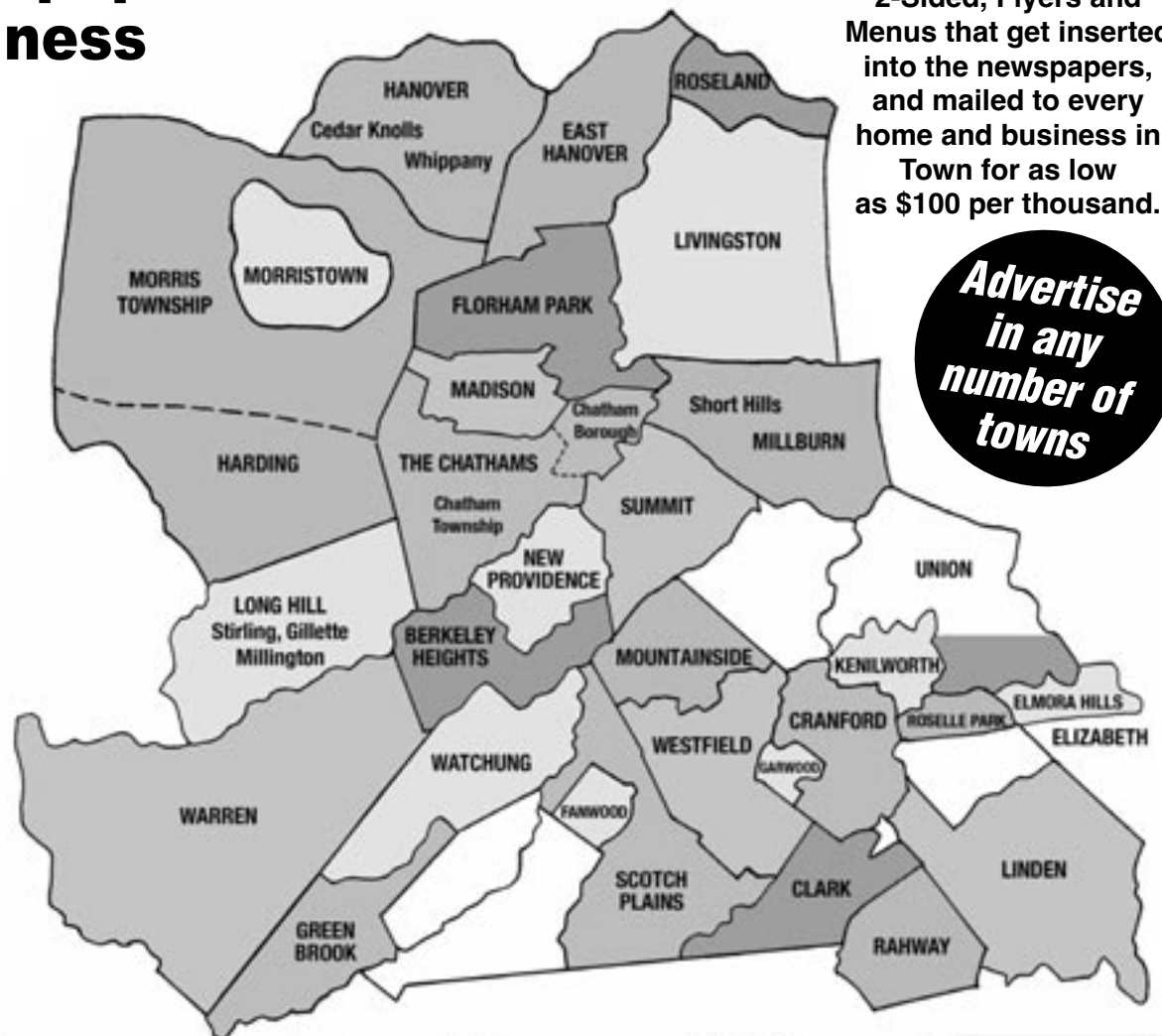
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4 Units	3.25"x8" or 6.5"x4"	240	560	900	1000	1300	1600	1700	1800	1900	2000	2100
6 Units	6.5"x6.25" or 10"x4"	320	760	1200	1400	1600	1800	2000	2200	2400	2600	2800
9 HALF PAGE	6.5"x9" or 10"x7"	360	860	1300	1600	1900	2200	2400	2600	2800	3000	3200
12 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
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POWERING POTENTIAL: PHILLIPS 66 COMMUNITY STEM SCHOLARSHIP WINNER ANNOUNCED

Scholarship supports students pursuing careers in the energy industry

A local high school senior has earned a Phillips 66 Community STEM Scholarship, recognizing academic excellence and a commitment to careers that will help power a more innovative energy future.

Sophia Prezeau, a student at Linden High School, is among more than 50 students nationwide selected from a competitive pool of applicants planning to study science, technology, engineering, or mathematics at a technical school or four-year university. Sophia plans to major in chemistry.

“As a chemistry major, being awarded a scholarship in my specified field of study means that I will be able to focus more on my studies in college rather than monetary concerns,” said Prezeau.

Students enrolled in technical programs will receive \$2,000 scholarships, while students attending four-year universities will receive \$5,000. Scholarships are renewable each year through graduation, provided recipients remain enrolled full-time and meet required GPA standards.

“This is more than a scholarship—it’s an investment in our community’s future,” said Lisa Barra, Public Affairs Advisor at Phillips 66 Bayway Refinery. “We’re proud to support students who are driven to innovate and make a meaningful impact on the future of energy.”

Through its social impact programs, Phillips 66 works to create stronger, safer, and more resilient communities in the areas where it operates. The company invests in education at every level, from elementary school through post-secondary programs.

“Every student deserves access to educational opportunities to pursue what’s possible,” said Courtney Meadows, Manager of Social Impact at Phillips 66. “These scholarships help remove barriers so talented young people can explore STEM careers and apply their skills to real-world challenges. When students succeed, our communities grow stronger, and we are honored to support them as they take the next step.”

ABOUT PHILLIPS 66

Phillips 66 (NYSE: PSX) is a leading integrated downstream energy provider that manufactures, transports, and markets products that drive the global economy. The company’s portfolio includes Midstream, Chemicals, Refining, Marketing and Specialties, and Renewable Fuels businesses. Headquartered in Houston, Phillips 66 has employees around the globe who are committed to safely and reliably providing energy and improving lives while pursuing a lower-carbon future.

For more information, visit
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Meet us for Crochet Club

August 3 & 17 at 6:00 p.m.

Bring your own project or learn a new pattern!

Recommended for ages 16+.

Unearth a Story Summer Movies

Join us @ 2 pm in the auditorium.

Pack a snack or grab one from us!

8/3 *Jurassic World Dominion* (2022)

8/10 *The Mummy Returns* (2001)

8/17 *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (2008)

Unearth a Story!

8/5/2026 @ 2:00 p.m.

Today in our Discovery Studio we will be playing with clay (air-dry clay) and will be making our own pinchpots. For teens age 13-17

Step in Time, Stay in Line!

8/8/2026 @ 1:00 p.m.

Every 2nd Saturday @ 1. Spaces are limited.

Needle Felting

8/8/2026 @ 2:00 p.m.

Artist Christine Hsaio will teach us how to create a delightful raccoon out of wool in this workshop! Space is Limited. Ages for 16+.

Registration is Required.

Unearth a Story

8/12/2026 @ 2:00 p.m.

If you need to decorate your pinchpots from our previous program, bring them in! In addition, we will be getting introspective and will design our own self-portraits. For teens 13-17

Our Voices Book Discussion Group meetup

8/26/2026 @ 6:00 p.m.

Join in the conversation or just listen.

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