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Issue 111 • February 2025



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HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024: A YEAR OF GENEROSITY AND IMPACT

Fanwood Community Foundation

The Fanwood Community Foundation were able to grant \$6,430 to six outstanding organizations in 2024.

The funds were given to support critical initiatives addressing food insecurity, promoting joy and wellness for individuals and families facing financial and health challenges, providing essential protective equipment and tools for our local emergency responders, and supporting crisis hotline training.

These organizations are Caring Contact, Fanwood Fire Department, Fanwood Rescue Squad Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA, Jam Kancer in the Kan, and the Union County

College Foundation.

Through your overwhelming support for the Community Food Bank of New Jersey Virtual Food Drive we raised \$2,493, which we proudly matched with a \$2,024 donation to our local Immaculate Heart of Mary Food Pantry. As we turn the page to a new year, we remain deeply grateful for your unwavering commitment to building a stronger, more compassionate Fanwood. Together, we are making a lasting impact. Thank you for being an essential part of Fanwood's journey.

To learn more visit fanwoodcommunityfoundation.org.



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FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS CELEBRATION

Borough of Fanwood

On Monday, December 30, 2024, the Borough of Fanwood hosted a ceremonial lighting of a giant Menorah to celebrate Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights. The lighting ceremony was proceeded by a procession of cars with Menorahs on top through Scotch Plains, Westfield, and Fanwood, led by a police escort.

Rabbi Avrohom Blesofsky of The Chabad of Union County officiated while injecting energy into the small gathering at the North Avenue side of the Fanwood Train Station, where the

Menorah stands. Rabbi Blesofsky was assisted in lighting of the candles by Fanwood resident Bruce Zakarin.

“There is an incredible message (in Hanukkah) in that a little bit of oil went very far. A little bit of positive influence, a little bit of connection, a little bit of light in a child’s life will go very, very far,” Rabbi Blesofsky said in explaining that Hanukkah is a “time of education.” He then led the crowd in a blessing and singing traditional Hanukkah Lights songs. Donuts, a traditional Hanukkah treat, were served afterwards.



(above) Bruce Zakarin lights the sixth candle of the Menorah as Rabbi Avrohom Blesofsky looks on at Fanwood’s Menorah Lighting Ceremony held at the Northside Train Station.

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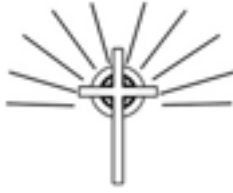
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TISH ISACK RECEIVES COLLEGE CLUB SERVICE AWARD

The College Club of Fanwood Scotch Plains is pleased to announce Mrs. Tish Isack was selected for the 2024 Service Award. Tish has been the chair of the scholarship committee for a number of years coordinating the application process, overseeing the review and selection of the recipients. Mrs. Isack engages the scholarship recipients throughout the school year via emails

and texts to support their education efforts and Tish keeps the club members informed of this communication. Tish consistently supports every College Club fundraising event and activity. Tish embraces the mission of the College Club which focuses on education and service to the community, member fellowship and financial

assistance to college bound women. Our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to Tish for her nearly 20 years of service and dedication to the College Club! The College Club welcomes new members to join us. Please reach out via our website spcollegeclub.org, or our email address: collegeclub.fsp@gmail.com.



Celebrating 100 Years of God's Grace 1925-2025

We are thrilled to announce that Redeemer Lutheran Church will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2025 ! This is an incredible milestone that marks a century of Redeemer's faithfulness, fellowship, and service to our community. Throughout the year, we'll be hosting a series of exciting events to honor this momentous occasion. These events will culminate in a

**Grand Anniversary Celebration:
Sunday, September 28, 2025**

2:00 PM Worship Service in the sanctuary Fellowship Reception to follow in Luther Hall, featuring food and beverages.

Whether you've been with us for years or are new to our church family, we invite you to join us in giving thanks for all that God has done, and will continue to do, through Redeemer Lutheran Church. Stay tuned for more details about upcoming anniversary events!

Let's honor the past, rejoice in the present, and look forward to a bright future together.

Redeemer Lutheran Church • 229 Cowperthwaite Place, Westfield NJ



(above, l-r) Mrs. Naugle ,Mrs. Tish Isack, and Mrs. Skubish. Courtesy photo

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2025 NJ FMBA COOKED & UNCORKED

On Monday, February 24, 2025, firefighters from around New Jersey will compete at the Cooked and Uncorked Food and Wine Festival, at the Pines Manor in Edison. Proceeds from the event will be donated to the Mark A. Virag Memorial Cancer Fund, Family Promise of Bergen County, and The Burn Center at Saint Barnabas Medical Center.

The Ultimate Fire Department Cook-off is an integral part of the evening as firefighters will compete in three different categories: Gourmet, Firehouse and Dessert.

The competition is part of the culinary extravaganza where participants will be able to experience the tastes and flavors of some of New Jersey's finest restaurants, caterers, and dessert shops all in one location.



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VICKIE BOLL: A VOLUNTEER WHO MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE

New Jersey Veterans Network

Every day, the New Jersey Veterans Network (NJVN) supports disabled veterans and their families, providing crucial resources that can truly change lives. A big part of that success is due to our amazing team of volunteers who give their time, energy, and heart to help our heroes.

One volunteer who stands out is Vickie Boll. Vickie is a regular face in the veteran community, and her dedication to the cause is nothing short of inspiring. Despite facing her own challenges as someone with autism, Vickie works tirelessly to ensure that veterans have access to the resources they need and that they feel appreciated and supported. Whether it's helping load trucks with supplies or bringing cheer to veterans at recreational therapy events, Vickie is always there, offering a helping hand and a smile.

For Vickie, helping veterans is more than just a task – it's a personal passion. She finds a sense of safety and belonging with veterans, who, she says, are nonjudgmental and deeply appreciative of her efforts. Their gratitude motivates her to continue her work, and her positive attitude has made a real impact on the lives of many veterans.

But Vickie's good deeds don't stop there. Her



(above) Vickie Boll is a regular face in the veteran community, and her dedication to the cause is nothing short of inspiring.

Courtesy photo

heart of service extends beyond veterans. Most recently, she spearheaded a successful collection for St. Hubert's Animal Rescue, further showing her commitment to making the world a better place for both people and animals.

It's an honor to have Vickie on the NJVN team. Her kindness, compassion, and tireless work ethic are a reminder that small actions can make a huge difference. The world is truly a better place because of people like her.

Help us save Vets – and make a lasting impact on those who served.

NJVN are always looking for volunteers that can both assist with upcoming events and help mentor veterans so they can live better productive lives. Volunteers are the most important NJVN resource, and we would love to have more people help us save lives. If you need assistance or are interested in joining the team, please send us your name, email, and phone number to NJVN1775@gmail.com or call 973-332-1556. Check out our website NJVN.org for our services and accomplishments.




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ANGELS IN AMERICA PART ONE: MILLENNIUM APPROACHES" AT CDC

We are excited to announce that Tony Kushner's acclaimed play, "Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches," will be in performance at the CDC Theatre in Cranford from February 14 to March 1. This monumental production is a significant event in the cultural calendar and promises to be a landmark moment for theatre enthusiasts.

"Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches" is the first part of Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize-winning epic that explores the complex themes of politics, sexuality, and faith against the backdrop of the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. The play is known for its profound narrative, compelling characters, and its unflinching examination of societal issues.

The CDC Theatre in Cranford is honored to host this powerful work. As one of New Jersey's longest producing community theatres, CDC Theatre has a rich history of bringing high-quality productions to the stage. The upcoming performance of "Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches" is set to continue this tradition, offering audiences an unforgettable experience. Directed by Michael Kidney is the cast: Corey Chichizola as Prior Walter, Brian Petty as Louis Ironson, Sean Lynch-Littlejohn as Joe Pitt, Molly Reinhardt as Harper Pitt, Lisa Barnett as Hannah Pitt, Aaron Hancock as Belize, Richard Colonna as Roy Cohn and Even T. Charpentier as The Angel.

The staging of "Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches" at CDC Theatre is not just an exciting theatrical event; it is a cultural milestone. The play's themes are as relevant today as they were when it first premiered in 1991, making this production a poignant reminder of the ongoing struggles and triumphs within our society.

We invite you to join us for this extraordinary

production. Tickets are available at cdctheatre.org. Don't miss the chance to witness Tony Kushner's masterpiece come to life on the stage of CDC Theatre in 2025. This is an event you won't want to miss.

Made possible by funds from the Union County Office of Cultural & Heritage Affairs, a partner of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts.



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VIDEO MAGNIFIER TO AID WITH READING

Scotch Plains Public Library

The Scotch Plains Public Library has received a high-definition desktop video magnifier for use within the library. The device is simple to use, allowing for adjustment of brightness, color, and magnification of books, photos, documents, and other items. Anyone interested in using the magnifier should ask at the Adult Services desk for a demonstration.

Local resident Veronique Cordier and her family graciously donated the magnifier in memory of her mother, Anne Marie Nabi, in the hope that it would be a benefit to seniors in our community. Mrs. Nabi was an avid reader, and the first female student to attend Union College full-time and never lost her devotion to education.

For more information, email library@scotlib.org or call (908) 322-5007 x 204. The Scotch Plains Public Library is located at 1927 Bartle Avenue.

PULLING BACK THE CURTAIN ON LEONARD BERNSTEIN

College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains

Join us and bring guests on February 17th at 7:30 p.m. at Mira Vie, 295 South Ave., in Fanwood to learn about Leonard Bernstein. The event, sponsored by the College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains, is free and open by the public.

This versatile composer, conductor, teacher and activist was one of the greatest personalities of the 20th Century. His triumphs ranged from the NY Philharmonic to Broadway's West Side Story to the score for Hollywood's On The Waterfront. Entertainment historian John Kenrick pulls back the curtain on the brilliant career and unconventional private life of an American musical legend.

John Kenrick has worked in the theatre at every level from amateur to Broadway, eventually serving as personal assistant to six Tony Award winning producers, including the team behind the original production of Rent. He has taught musical theatre history courses at New York University's Steinhardt School, Temple Emmanuel's Streicker Center, The New School University, and Philadelphia's University of the

Arts. John's books include Musical Theatre: A History. He is one of the founding curators for the Museum of Broadway, as well as creator of the educational website Musicals101.com. One of John's students put it this way: "He didn't just make me laugh – he made me care."



(above) Entertainment historian John Kenrick

Courtesy photo

LT. DAN KRANZ GRADUATES FROM FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY

Borough of Fanwood

Lieutenant Daniel Kranz, Officer in Charge of the Fanwood Police Department, graduated on December 12, 2024, from the 292nd Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy in Quantico, Va. The session consisted of men and women from 48 states, the District of Columbia, and Guam. The class included members of law enforcement agencies from 27 countries, eight military organizations, and five federal civilian organizations.

The FBI National Academy offers 11 weeks of advanced communication, leadership, and fitness training. Participants must have proven records as professionals within their agencies to attend and must complete various fitness challenges throughout the session which lead to the "Yellow Brick Road" challenge the final week of class.

To date, a total of 55,797 graduates have completed the FBI National Academy since it began in 1935. Lieutenant Kranz is the first member of the Fanwood Police Department to graduate from the National Academy.



(above) Lieutenant Daniel Kranz

Courtesy photo

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UNICO SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAR. 1

Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO

Scotch Plains-Fanwood UNICO Now Accepting 2025 Scholarship Applications for Local High School Seniors Pursuing College or Post-Secondary Trade/Vocational/Technical Education

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood chapter of UNICO, the largest Italian-American service organization in the United States, is committed to supporting local students in their educational journeys. Since its establishment in 1974, the chapter has awarded over \$275,000 in scholarships to deserving students.

This year, the chapter is proud to offer six scholarships to high school seniors of Italian descent who reside in Scotch Plains or Fanwood. The scholarships available are:

Four (4) \$2,500 scholarships for students

planning to attend a 4-year college or university
One (1) \$1,500 scholarship for a student attending a 2-year college

One (1) \$1,000 scholarship for a student pursuing a vocational, technical, or trade school
Scholarships will be awarded based on a combination of academic excellence, financial need, extracurricular involvement, and community service. For more information and to apply by the deadline of March 1, 2025, visit the Scholarship Program page at unicospf.org.

For any questions related to the scholarship application, please email spfunicoscholarship@gmail.com.

To become a member of our chapter or for information on upcoming events, please visit our website at unicospf.org or email us at spfunico@gmail.com.

S-F SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DUE FEB. 7

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Scholarship Foundation is currently accepting applications for high school seniors graduating in 2025 who reside in Scotch Plains or Fanwood, and residents currently attending college or other post high school institutions for scholarships. Electronic applications are now available at spfscholarshipfoundation.org.

The numerous scholarships offered by the Foundation range in criteria; some awards are need-based, while others have criteria such as the intent to pursue an education in a particular field or participation in certain activities in high school. The major criterion for eligibility is that the applicant resides in Scotch Plains or Fanwood; an applicant need not be a graduate of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. In addition to the application, the Foundation requires a personal essay from the applicant, a letter of reference, and an official high school or college transcript.

The deadline for the Foundation to receive

applications - and any supporting documents as indicated - is February 7, 2025 at 5 p.m. Applicants may submit their applications and other supporting documents via our online application.

Since 1966, the Foundation has been able to award thousands of scholarships worth over \$4 million to students in Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

"The Foundation is proud to uphold the commitment to support the educational endeavors of the students in our communities," says Michelle Wywra, President of the Foundation. "We could not accomplish this without the kindness and generosity of our donors, and the participation and support from the community via our fundraising efforts."

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Scholarship Foundation's Board of Trustees is a 100% volunteer-run 501c3 non-profit organization. To learn more about this year's scholarship offerings, visit spfscholarshipfoundation.org.

CC SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE - FEB. 15

The College Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains 2025-2026 scholarship application forms can be obtained from the SPFHS Counseling Office or at spfk12.org or fspcollegeclub.org.

This will be the 89th year that female students seeking financial assistance to pursue a four-year college degree have been helped by our club's fund-raising efforts. To date the College Club has awarded approximately \$810,000 in scholarships to approximately 595 women.

In the words of one of our recipients "From the bottom of my heart, I thank the College Club for investing in my education. It means the world to me that I have a team of female supporters who saw something in me and spent their precious time and energy to raise the scholarship money that will allow me to further my education and pursue my dreams."

Application materials must be postmarked on or before February 15, 2025 to be considered.

The Scholarship Committee will be ready to begin reviewing applications the first week of March. The decision to select 2025-2026 Scholarship Recipients will be finalized in mid-April.

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UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESERVING HISTORY

For more information visit unioncountyhistoricalsocietynj.org.

The Hannah and James Caldwell Memorial Obelisk recently underwent a complete restoration and cleaning at the Siloam-Hope First Presbyterian Church (formerly known as the First Presbyterian Church of Elizabethtown) in Elizabeth thanks to the Union County Historical Society (UCHS).

UCHS President Joanne Rajoppi said, “The 179-year-old obelisk honoring Revolutionary War pastor and patriot James Caldwell and his wife Hannah, was in terrible condition: encrusted dirt from years of neglect with loose mortar and unreadable engravings. As we approach the 250th anniversary of our country, what better time to reflect, remember and honor the contributions of our patriots, especially the Caldwells, who sacrificed their lives for independence.”

The Siloam-Hope First Presbyterian Church cemetery is one of the oldest in the state, dating to the late 1680s. More than 40 officers of the

Continental Army are buried there, many of whom attended the church while Reverend Caldwell served as its pastor. Caldwell also served as General George Washington’s Deputy Commissary of supplies during the war. The British placed a bounty on his head and he was murdered in 1781. His wife Hannah and mother of their nine children had been murdered the previous year by a British soldier in the aftermath of the Battle of Connecticut Farms.

There are also more than 313 enslaved and free African Americans buried in the historic cemetery, often in unmarked graves: some are children, and some are likely war veterans. The 313+ Ancestors Speak Project acknowledges and commemorates their lives and burials. A monument with their names was recently erected in the cemetery.

The restoration of the Caldwell memorial was partially funded by a Union County Heart Grant,

donations by the Union Township Historical Society, the NJ Society of the Sons of the American Revolution, (NJSAR), the West Fields Chapter of SAR, American Legion Post 248, the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield and many individual contributors.

Ms. Rajoppi said that the restoration included a workshop on how to clean gravestones.

Volunteers, including local area Boy Scouts, the Crane’s Ford Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and UCHS members attended the four-hour event.

The restoration work was completed by Richard Grubb & Associates, a full-service cultural resource management firm and one of the largest, independent archaeological and historic preservation consulting companies in the eastern United States. Their corporate headquarters are in Cranbury, New Jersey.

ABOUT THE UNION COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW JERSEY

The UCHS was incorporated by an Act of the 93rd Legislature of the State of New Jersey on April 1, 1869. The objective of this Society is the collection and preservation of all matter of historical relics, books, records, documents, and manuscripts, to stimulate and encourage historical research and the study of history pertaining to the territory originally embraced by Elizabethtown and the present Union County.

The Society exists through the help and generosity of its members. Membership is comprised of citizens who have a common interest in preserving the past. There is no paid staff. The Executive Board and Members perform all Society functions.



(above) The recent restoration and cleaning of the James and Hannah Caldwell Memorial Obelisk at Siloam-Hope First Presbyterian Church in Elizabeth was commissioned by the Union County Historical Society.

Courtesy photos

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