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ISSUE 9 • MAY 2014

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## WATCHUNG HILLS RHS HALL OF FAME INDUCTS NINE

By Eleanor Mathews



Bill Apgar, Brian Penn, Nick Yonezuka, Mary Commune, Mario Diez, Roy Kortman, Gary DiNardo, Edna D'Elia, Chris Lenzo.

Nine names were added to the Watchung Hills Regional High School Hall of Fame at its annual induction ceremony, held on May 9 in the school's performing arts center.

The honorees, selected from nominations by the community at large, represent a variety of professions. Some are graduates of Watchung Hills Regional High School who have attained distinction in their fields, others have served with dedication as teachers, coaches, Board of Education members.

The Hall of Fame was established in 2008 as part of the school's fiftieth anniversary commemoration, and since its inception (including this year's nominees), 64 persons from fields as varied as public service, education, athletics, the arts, science have been honored.

Plaques highlighting the 2014 honorees' contributions, with abbreviated biographies and photos, will be added to those already on display in the atrium. This year's plaques were donated by: Mrs. Tina Cecala, Mario Diez, Jr., Dr. Tom DiGanci, Mr. & Mrs. Terry Mac Connell, the Warren Township Committee, the Watchung Hills Diamond Club, and the Watchung Hills Physical Education & Health Department.

### THE 2014 HALL OF FAME HONOREES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

William Apgar (Class of 1962), public servant, Warren Township mayor, Board of Education president, US Army Legion of Merit, could not be present but was introduced by his nominators, Bonnie Plotkin and Gail Tafaro.

Mary Commune (Class of 1971), pianist, composer, was introduced by John Commune, who attributed his cousin's success to her passion for excellence, her belief in herself.

Edna D'Elia (1967-1985) caused some 4800 students to become better parents or successful early childhood teachers by initiating the nursery school education program some 40 years ago, said Hills present pre-school teacher, Julie Jaran.

Mario Diez (1979-2013) Following in his father's footsteps as a physical teacher and coach, Mario Diez Jr. spoke of some of the attributes contributing to his father's success, such as patience, optimism, good humor.

Gary DiNardo (Class of 1971) was introduced by Warren Township committeeman Victor Sordillo, who cited the many instances when DiNardo had gone beyond the call of duty as a public official. "You fall a lot," said the mayor. "You have to get up and move on—the Sandy experience made me the person I am today," said DiNardo modestly.

Roy Kortman (Class of 1976), now a winning college softball coach at Long Island University was represented by his daughter, Ms. Fallon Kortman.

Christopher Lenzo (Class of 1987), an eminent labor and employment attorney, was introduced by Dr. Tom DiGanci, recently retired Hills principal.

Brian Penn (Class of 1972), is still remembered at Hills for his track record. These days, as a geospatial software engineer for the National Ecological Observatory Network in Boulder, Colorado, he is deeply involved in Hyperspectral remote sensing having helped establish a NASA-based university center.

Nicholas Yonezuka (Class of 1981) was introduced by Mr. Ed Williams, who called the honoree "an athletic prodigy" whose career began at nine years of age. His extreme focus and discipline contributed to his status as US National Judo champion from ages nine to fourteen, the youngest Olympian ever. Needless to say, along the way, representing Watchung Hills, he was also district and regional wrestling champion.

The evening's activities concluded with a buffet prepared by the cafeteria staff under the direction of Ms. Lisa Martins. The event, including the nominating procedure, was under the direction of Vice Principal Terry Mac Connell. Nomination forms for future candidates will be available at the school's main office.



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## BRIAN BROWN IS TEACHER OF THE YEAR

By Eleanor Mathews

Although the annual Teacher of the Year program is no longer sponsored by the state, it is still a highly-regarded recognition program in many of New Jersey's school districts. Watchung Hills Regional High School is one of those districts that yearly honors a teacher who is considered outstanding, a model for the profession, recognized as such by students, parents and fellow teachers alike.

This year that honor has been bestowed on Brian Brown, a 10-year member of Watchung Hills Regional High School's Science Department. A plaque, presented to (a surprised) Brown at Hills' April faculty meeting, expresses the high regard in which Brown is held: "...For generating intellectual energy and momentum from small sparks or curiosity, for being a positive force for learning and growing in our school community, for having compassion and commitment as strong and steady as gravity's pull, we honor you as Teacher of the Year."

Brown teaches four honors sections of physics. In the two-plus decades during which Brown has taught, he has seen many changes, both in the curricular emphases of his subject and in the students themselves. Obviously, the use of the computer, which two decades ago was little more than a word processor, has become the prime tool for physics students - but one that is nevertheless only a tool - that needs to be balanced with hands-on skills and understanding of the subject matter. With some of the more tedious operations now processed by computer, today's students are allowed to delve more deeply, become more analytical.

His students, says Brown, are "genuinely talented, and what's more, push themselves." But that doesn't mean they can't have fun while doing so, as evidenced, for example, by their early fall physics-oriented trip to Disney World, during which they explored some of the principles of physics behind the park's fun façade.



Brian Brown, Science Department

An exceptionally interested group of parents, says Brown, supports his students.

Brown himself attended West Essex High School, received his bachelor's degree from the M.I.T. and has his master's degree in Materials Engineering from University of California / Santa Barbara - where he was a member of the tennis team. He taught briefly at Columbia H.S. (Maplewood) before coming to Hills.

From physics to physical: Brown lays aside the texts and experiments of the academic year during the month of July to teach tennis and conduct a tennis clinic on Watchung Hills' courts ([brianbrownstennis.wordpress.com](http://brianbrownstennis.wordpress.com)). Unlike his AP classes, there are no exams, no term papers! He's also a serious bicyclist, a sport he shares with his sons, 15 and 17.

His peers are not the only ones to acknowledge Brown as both teacher and person. At its December 5th Induction Service, newly-selected members of Hills National Honor Society recognized Brown as the teacher who most nearly symbolizes the four standards of the prestigious honor group: scholarship, character, community service and leadership.

And those are the very qualities of a Teacher of the Year.

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### PROMOTE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT

Community service organizations and sports teams are encouraged to submit news of upcoming events or highlights and photos on recent events.

Organizations who are interested in submitting content can email Lynn Sjurset at [lynn@rennamedia.com](mailto:lynn@rennamedia.com).



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## What else is available to treat knee pain?

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— Ron Spiaggia, DC - Clinic Director  
Joseph Mejia, DO, F.A.A.P.M. & R. - Medical Director

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— Vicki M.



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(above) Will Schafer, owner of the new Ashley furniture store in Green Brook, helps unload donated recliners at the Green Brook first aid squad building

## STAGECOACH RUN

Submitted by James Koch

If you were standing at Washington Rock late in the afternoon in the 1860's or 1870's you probably would hear the clip clop of horses' hooves pulling the stagecoach up what is now known as Cardinal Lane from the Plainfield Train Station to the Washington Rock Mountain House. A 2 1/2 to 3 story resort hotel that sat behind what is now the Green Brook Company Fire House #2.

The hotel had many owners and financial problems but catered to city folks who wanted fresh country air and wonderful views from the Rock. Hotel was there from 1852 until a fire claimed it until in March 1883.

JOIN US FOR OUR MONTHLY MEETING OF THE TOWNSHIP HISTORIC AND CULTURAL COMMISSION ON THE THIRD THURSDAY

## ASHLEY FURNITURE GIVES GREEN BROOK FIRE-EMS A REASON TO RECLINE

Submitted by Jonathan Jaffe

Volunteers with the Green Brook Fire-EMS still carry vivid memories of that day 15 years ago, when Hurricane Floyd ripped through the town and filled their headquarters with 10 inches of rainwater. The recliners that had been used for squad meetings were destroyed and discarded, as the volunteers began the task of remodeling the building on Greenbrook Road. Luckily, at the time, a local furniture store, now out of business, stepped in to donate some replacement recliners.

All was well, once again. But after 15 years of day-to-day use, those once pristine recliners are now facing the hands of time. Will Schafer, owner of the new Ashley Furniture HomeStore in Green Brook, heard the need. As part of his grand opening, he has donated three new leather recliners to the 50-member squad, to officially

kick-start a recliner replacement campaign. Schafer, who recently dropped off the brown leather recliners at the squad building and placed them prominently in the front of the room of old, worn recliners, said the company philosophy is to learn about local need and figure out a way to give back. "Not only do we have a welcome new business in town," said Darlene Breen, EMS Chief of Green Brook Fire-EMS, "but they're already becoming active citizens and are willing to help us."

"Our team is so gracious of Ashley's donation," she added. "We always work to promote Green Brook's local businesses and it means a lot that they turned around and helped us when we needed it."

The new Ashley Furniture HomeStore is located at 350 US 22 in Green Brook.

## POLICE DEPT HIRED THREE NEW OFFICERS



(above) Three new township police officers were sworn in at the 4/21 meeting of the Green Brook Township Committee. (front row, center, l-r) Nick Torsiello, T.J. Pinizzotto and Timothy Stringer, surrounded by other members of the department.

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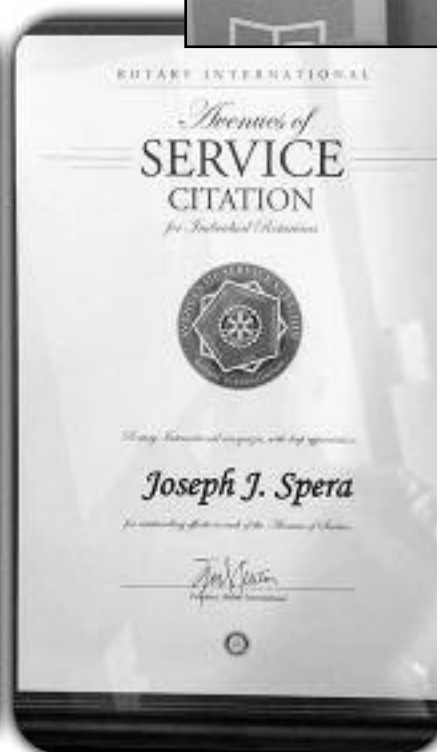
(above) Artist Susan Sabo-Innocenti from Watchung with her watercolor paintings. Painting on bottom left by Artist Ghanshyam Patel from Greenbrook.

## ROTARY CLUB RECEIVES MULTIPLE AWARDS

All awards, including The Care and Share Award for the Club's Blood Drive held at Abingdon Care and Rehabilitation in Green Brook were presented to the Club at the annual District Conference on May 3, 2014. They are a testament to the hard work and community spirit of the D-GB Rotary Club which sponsors such community oriented programs as the Pasta Festival, Blood Drive, Car Show, Shredding Day, Comedy Night and Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony.



(above, l-r) Assistant District Governor Ann Walko presents President-Elect Joe Spera with the "Governor's Award" designating the Dunellen-Green Brook Club the best in the District for 2013--2014.



(left, l-r) Paul Spera and Joe Spera pose with the "Avenues of Service Award"

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## GREEN BROOK SCHOOLS LIGHT IT UP BLUE FOR AUTISM

April was Autism Awareness month in Green Brook schools. In an effort to share knowledge and raise awareness, the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) launched their "Lighting It Up Blue" program to educate students and parents about autism, and to raise funds for Autism Speaks.

In one component of the program, teachers and staff participated in a "Dress Down for a Cause" fundraiser for Autism at the end of April. They donated a few dollars to dress down in blue jeans or simply wear blue to show their support. Participating teachers were entered

into a raffle to win an "AWear" Autism Awareness Scarf.

Students and staff also raised awareness by talking about accepting others, learning about the challenges and successes for those that have this neurologic disorder.

Another part of the program was a "Change for Autism" fundraiser for Autism Speaks. Students bought raffle tickets and had a chance to win an "Autism Speaks" Build a Bear. After spring break, blue hair streaks were available to purchase at the Middle School to raise additional funds.

The district also provided supplies, training tools and seminars for their own therapists and staff that work with special needs students.



(above, r-l) Sharon Lynch decorates Special Education teacher, Ms. Suzanne Yip's hair at GBMS.



(above) Sharon Lynch, a Green Brook parent, volunteered at our Autism Awareness table to help raffle off a donated basket, an Autism Speaks Build A Bear and an "AWear" Scarf. She also decorated students' hair with blue streaks to "Light It Up Blue" for Autism Awareness month.



(above, l-r) Keira L., Genesis R., Kaitlyn Z. and Grace G., Girl Scouts from Troop 65023 learned what Autism is and how some of their classmates may need special services to help them learn. The girls decorated a school bulletin board at IEF elementary as part of the "Lighting It Up Blue" event.

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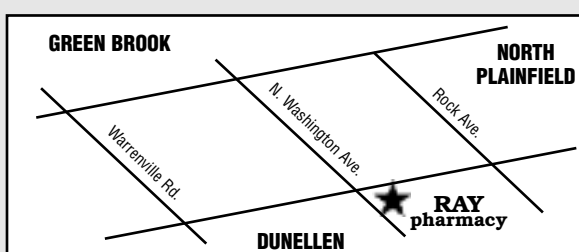
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# MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS WIN SEVEN TITLES AT INTER-COUNTY FINALS



(above) Documentation & Recycled Materials Winners – “Green Car”



(above) Craftsmanship Winners – “Night Mobile” Car



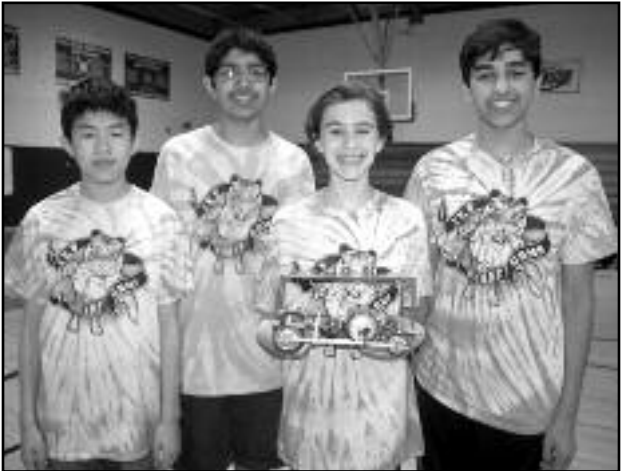
(above) Overall Winner – “Space Shuttle” Car

*Submitted by Margaret Silver*

Green Brook Middle School 7th & 8th grade GATE (Gifted And Talented Education) students competed in a Jr. Solar Sprints car competition that resulted in four winning teams advancing to the inter- county finals on May 16. Students followed specific competition rules and guidelines in constructing a solar car model competing in four categories (Engineering, Craftsmanship, Best Use of Recycled Materials, & Documentation Portfolio). Each team was scored by a panel of professional judges, which include various engineers, educators, contractors, & Mayor Boccio of Green Brook. Jr. Solar Sprints is sponsored by TransOptions in Cedar Knolls, NJ which provided basic car materials and who will host the inter-county finals in Frenchtown. Given a basic criteria to follow, students were encouraged to be as creative as possible in constructing and decorating their cars. This program heavily incorporates STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics) into their car projects.

Green Brook Schools congratulates the four winning teams that advanced to the inter-county finals in Frenchtown.

- DOCUMENTATION & RECYCLED MATERIALS WINNERS:**  
**“GREEN” CAR:**  
Deeba Shokrani  
Demetra Chang  
Victoria Li  
Michelle Yang
- ENGINEERING WINNER:**  
“Child’s Play” Car  
Jared Pincus  
Sanjeeth Rajaram  
Peter Wu  
Divesh Kapadia
- CRAFTSMANSHIP WINNER**  
“Night Mobile” Car  
Katherine Buser  
Maggie Zhou  
Sarah Dang  
Alexandra Fenlon
- OVERALL WINNER**  
“Space Shuttle” Car  
Vamsi Desu  
Michael Jiang  
Zachary Yang  
Kevin Tan



(above) Engineering Winners – “Child’s Play” Car

After completion of their local Jr. Solar Sprint competition in April, Green Brook Middle School students took seven titles home from the Inter-County Finals on May 16, advancing three winning teams to State Finals on May 28. Congratulations to:

“Green” Car: 1st place Best Use of Recycled Materials, 1st place Documentation Portfolio, 2nd place Craftsmanship, and 3rd place Engineering.

“Child’s Play” Car: 1st place Engineering and 2nd place Documentation Portfolio

“Space Shuttle” Car: 2nd place Best Use of Recycled Materials

Photos by: Margaret Silver



(above) 7th & 8th Grade GATE Science Class Participants



## GREEN BROOK TEACHERS OF THE YEAR

Suzanne Scannell was elected Irene E. Feldkirchner school's Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Scannell has been teaching in Green Brook for over 25 years. She taught first grade for nine years and has been teaching third grade ever since. As an elementary school teacher, Mrs. Scannell provides instruction in all subject areas and finds this to be an enjoyable challenge. She said that teachers spend as much time learning as they do teaching in order to stay on top of their profession. Mrs. Scannell embraces this learning curve for herself as well as for her students. She developed her teaching motto – "Grow Up Smart" – after years of encouraging in her students the desire to learn. She tells her students that learning has to be a choice they make for themselves. Life provides us learning opportunities but we must choose to learn from those opportunities.

Richard Esposito was elected Green Brook Middle School's Teacher of the Year. Mr. Esposito has been teaching in Green Brook for five years as a Middle School mathematics teacher. He enjoys getting to know the students on a personal level through talking about similar interests, watching them go from a level of

frustration with a concept to a level of confidence and then applying those skills to the outside world. Mr. Esposito is also a co-leader of the Ultimate Frisbee Club. He enjoys watching the students work together as a team and engage in a healthy dose of competition with their teachers, which he finds quite entertaining as well.



(above, left - right) Suzanne Scannell, Irene E. Feldkirchner Elementary School Teacher of the Year. Richard Esposito, Green Brook Middle School Teacher of the Year.

## PERSONALIZED ACADEMIC WORKPLACE READINESS AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Camp PAWS is a unique summer school program developed by the Green Brook Township Public Schools for the purpose of developing and maintaining the individualized academic, organization and workplace readiness, and social skills of students in preschool – 8th grade during the summer.

Camp PAWS is staffed by highly qualified general and special education teachers and paraprofessionals. This innovative program blends academic, social skills, work-place readiness skills, and unified arts instruction with recreation into each day, while also providing related therapy services for students who require such via an IEP or 504 Plan.

Camp PAWS will take place this summer from June 30, 2014 until August 7th. It will be located at the Irene E. Feldkirchner Elementary School and will be open Monday through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Parents may pay full tuition, \$516 (\$86.00 p/week) per child, or they may pay for specific weeks, but all tuition must be paid in advance of July 1, 2014.

## SUMMER TRIPS

Green Brook Recreation is putting the finishing touches on a new Summer Fun Program that will feature daily trips from June 30 through July 11. Visit us at [www.greenbrookrec.org](http://www.greenbrookrec.org) for details.

## STUDENTS HOLD FROZEN MOVIE NIGHT FOR CANCER FUND

FRIDAY, MAY 30TH, 7-9PM

132 JEFFERSON AVE

GREEN BROOK TOWNSHIP

The GBMS 8th Grade GATE Social Studies class is holding a movie night, showing the Disney movie hit, Frozen, to raise awareness and donations for the Cycle for Survival.

Cycle for Survival is a nonprofit organization created in 2007 by Livingston, New Jersey native Jennifer Goodman Linn. She started it while suffering from sarcoma, a rare cancer. Although she passed away in 2011, her passion still lives on and the charity is stronger than ever.

The charity's main purpose is to raise money and awareness for rare cancers. What is unique about this charity is that 100% of all profits gained go directly to rare cancer research at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, one of the most renowned cancer researching hospitals in the world.

At this time, Cycle for Survival has already raised over \$51 million in only 7 years.

The movie night is free, with a suggested donation at the door. There will also be a bake sale. All proceeds will be donated to Cycle for Survival.



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GRB5

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### FRESH FISH

Available Thursday  
to Sunday

Filleted, Steaked,  
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### Top or Little Neck Clams

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## COUPON



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## COUPON

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## COUPON

### \$2.00 OFF your purchase of \$20.00 OR MORE



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Excludes garden center and fish purchases. Limit 1 offer per customer  
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