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## LEARNING GARDEN UNVEILING AT BATTLE HILL SCHOOL

Union Assistant Superintendent of Schools Annie Moses joined representatives from the ShopRite of Union, Dole Packaged Foods and the Captain Planet Foundation at Battle Hill Elementary School on Thursday, September 29, to inaugurate a Project Learning Garden at the Union school. All three organizations helped the school grow its existing garden into a Project Learning Garden with a special curriculum and more chances for students to expand their palates and knowledge of food and the environment. Students today planted hyacinth bulbs and got to taste test tomatoes and carrots from the garden.

Battle Hill Elementary School was awarded the Project Learning Garden after submitting an application to the Captain Planet Foundation. Dole committed resources to the effort in conjunction with a recently completed Earth Day program with ShopRite stores.

"Here at Dole, we understand the importance of teaching children the benefits of incorporating fruits and vegetables into their diet, whether they are enjoying fresh produce from their learning garden, or a healthy Dole snack," said Larry White, Vice President, Sales, Dole Packaged Foods. "By partnering with the Captain Planet Foundation and ShopRite, we are helping more students learn about and develop healthy habits."

"Anything can be taught in the context of the garden, and hands-on learning supports student understanding of natural systems, food origins, and healthy eating," explained Leesa Carter, executive director of Captain Planet Foundation. "Captain Planet Foundation is dedicated to nurturing the next generation of environmental stewards, and ensuring they are armed with an understanding of the natural world in which they live. We are thrilled to be working with Shoprite and Dole to provide Battle Hill Elementary School with a CPF Learning Garden!"

"We are proud to partner with Dole to provide this Learning Garden to Battle Hill Elementary School" said Perry Blatt, director of Village Super Markets, which owns and operates the nearby ShopRite of Union. "At ShopRite we are always looking for ways to improve the quality

(continued on page 2)



(above) Anita Laverty, PTA President at Battle Hill Elementary School in Union, with her daughter, third grader Julia Laverty, and Captain Planet in the school's Project Learning Garden. I thought you might be interested in photos from the Learning Garden unveiling at Battle Hill Elementary School in Union, NJ on Thursday, September 29. Union Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Annie Moses, joined Dole Packaged Foods and ShopRite to mark the donation of a Captain Planet Foundation Learning Garden to Battle Hill Elementary School.



(above) One of the planting beds at the Project Learning Garden at Battle Hill Elementary School in Union. ShopRite, Dole Packaged Goods and the Captain Planet Foundation collaborated to offer students the special garden and curriculum.

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## LEARNING GARDEN CONTINUED

of the life for the families we serve, especially children, through education around nutrition and healthy living. Giving back to our neighborhoods is incredibly important to us."

ShopRite of Union Dietitian Justine Hernandez worked with students to make a salad with carrots harvested from the school garden. She also taught the children how to make a pineapple vinaigrette dressing for the salad

"The garden provides students and teachers a chance to take their learning out of the classroom," said Battle Hill Principal Mark Hoyt. "It provides a valuable opportunity for them to put into practice the lessons being taught in the classroom. By working with members of our learning community, we will continue to provide new and exciting learning experiences for our students."

About Battle Hill Elementary School

Battle Hill School is a neighborhood school set on ten-acres of luscious land. Battle Hill School's name was derived from its historical connection to the Revolutionary War, specifically the Battle of Springfield. Our school is a microcosm of the community and society in which we live. We foster the building blocks of friendship, acceptance of personal differences, personal commitment, and academic success.

At Battle Hill, our success is based upon the dedicated, caring staff and committed parents working together to ensure that all students have a positive learning experience.

Our goal is to create a safe haven for students, faculty, and parents. We provide opportunities for learning by building strong values, inspiring children, and providing the building blocks for a

good education.

Battle Hill serves 425 students from pre-kindergarten to fourth grade. Through our reading, math, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, physical education, and technology curriculum, all our students can find a vehicle to express their strengths and talents so that they reach their fullest potential.

About Captain Planet Foundation (CPF)

Based on the critically-acclaimed animated series Captain Planet and the Planeteers, CPF was co-founded in 1991 by media mogul Ted Turner and producer Barbara Pyle. Since then, the Captain Planet Foundation has played a critical role in helping to ensure that the next generation of business leaders and policy makers are environmentally literate citizens who leverage technology and information to manage and protect the air, land, and water upon which all life depends.

CPF is a grant-making foundation that has funded over 2,000 hands-on environmental education projects with schools and non-profits that serve children in all 50 U.S. states and in 23 countries internationally. More than 1.2 million children have directly participated in and benefited from these educational projects.

In addition to its Small Grants Program, the Captain Planet Foundation also operates the following programs:

Project Learning Garden, the Leadership Center, SAGES, Planeteer Clubs, and a number of other science education initiatives that exploit the intersections between technology, innovation, the environment and personal action. For more information: [www.captainplanetfdn.org](http://www.captainplanetfdn.org).

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## ADVOCATES NEEDED FOR LOCAL FOSTER YOUTH

CASA of Union County is seeking Union residents to step up and be the voice for one of the nearly 600 Union County youth, ages 0-21, currently in foster care through no fault of their own.

Traditionally, the required 30-hour training is held over six weeks, with volunteers meeting several evenings each week. However, two new training options are now available, in response to prospective volunteers seeking more scheduling flexibility. A December training — which begins Monday, Dec. 5, 2016 — allows those home during the day to complete all training within five days from 9 am to 4 pm at the CASA offices; the January training — which begins Thursday, Jan. 12 — continues the traditional six-week format, but incorporates online learning at the volunteer's convenience, and fewer in-person sessions. Lunch or light dinner is provided. At the conclusion of training, a Superior Court judge swears in the new child advocates at the Union County Courthouse.

Trained CASAs are court-empowered to speak to foster parents, teachers, doctors, lawyers, therapists and more. CASAs visit the youth regularly and incorporate findings into a report for the judge. They attend quarterly court hearings, working to ensure a youth's time in care is as short as possible and their best interests remain the priority. Although not required, there is an additional need for male advocates and advocates who speak Spanish. Just who is a typical child referred to CASA of Union County? Meet 12-year-old Marissa:

When my mother was pregnant with me, she drank alcohol and used cocaine, and I was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. Even though the state was working with my mom to help her get clean and be a better mom to me and my brother, she couldn't stay away from the drugs and alcohol. My older brother tried to take care of me, but he said it was too hard, and our house was so dirty and cluttered. A worker from the state came and took me, and put me into a foster home. That

worker left and I have a new worker. When I met her, she said the plan was for me to go back with my mom as soon as she's better. I was so happy. But I just found out that now my mom is missing! I'm so worried and hope she's okay. Is she drinking again? Is she hurt? Every day I wonder what will happen to me and what's happened to her. I'm so scared. I don't see my brother anymore at all. My family is so broken and I feel all alone.

Union residents are encouraged to contact Rachel at (908) 527-7044 or [rwhite@casaoofunioncounty.org](mailto:rwhite@casaoofunioncounty.org) to RSVP for an information session below, or for more details on claiming a seat in the December or January class.

Evening information sessions are:

Thursdays, Nov. 17 and Dec. 15 at the County Clerk Building, 300 North Avenue East, Westfield; morning sessions are 10 a.m. Fridays, Nov. 18 and Dec. 16

At CASA's offices, 1143-45 East Jersey Street, Second Floor, Elizabeth.





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# HANNAH CALDWELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS GET PUBLISHED

Spirit of UNION • Page 5 • November 2016

Hannah Caldwell Elementary School has much to celebrate as twenty-three of their students were published in the Spring 2016 Creative Communications A Celebration of Poets. Creative Communications is a well-known company that encourages students to pursue their love of creative writing. Teachers Janine DaSilva, Diana Cantone, and Leslie Jenkins decided to enter their students because they believed that this would give them the opportunity to develop their writing skills and show them how they can become empowered by their writing.

The students then created several types of poems such as acrostic, haiku, and cinquian. The students then chose their favorite poems they hoped to be published. Their poems were submitted to Creative Communications last Spring. Teachers were notified several weeks later of students' whose poems were chosen for publish in the 2016 Spring Edition of A Celebration of Poets book, available for purchase online. Hannah Caldwell Elementary School was also honored with the Spring 2016 Poetic Achievement Award, which recognizes schools with excellent language arts programs as well as those with the most chosen submissions.

Third Grader Joseph Brown wrote his poem "Bees" to highlight the vibrant colors and unique qualities bee's posses. Brown shared "I chose this

poem because I wanted everybody to see how creative I am. I am glad to be published in a real book!" Isabelle Lopes, also in the 3rd Grade, wrote her poem "Dogs" because dogs are her favorite animals. Inspired by her dog Lily, Lopes is "excited for her cousins to see the book!"

On Tuesday, October 18, 2016, the students and teachers, along with their families, were honored by the Superintendent and members of the Board of Education for their excellence in creative writing. Principal Kathy DiGiovanni stated "I am extremely excited for my students and teachers for this recognition." Superintendent of Schools Mr. Gregory Tatum added, "I am very pleased to see our young students participating and excelling in their writing. It's so re-warding to see our students' work in print and attaining this level of recognition. I congratulate each participant and their respective teachers for a job well done."

Published students included: Anaiah Ansah, Xavier Aro, Alannah Badalamenti, Derek Barber, Isabella Beaumont, Ashley Becke, Jenyne-Del Blake, Anastasia Bogutska, Joseph Brown, Savannah Cohen-Calloway, Taylor Demas,

Cristina DeSousa, Ogechukwu Ekeh, Adriana Ferreira, Michael Giaimo, Aviel Hernandez, Isabella Lopes, Joshua Moore, Katelyn Navoa, Karaamour Orleans, Manuel Sardinas, Gianna Sirico, Lucas Suarez, Kyle Van Beek.



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## A NEW CHAMPION IS CROWNED AT FOURTH ANNUAL UNION'S GOT TALENT!

The fourth annual Township of Union Talent Show Union's Got Talent was held on Saturday, September 24, 2016 to an enthusiastic audience. Presented by Investors Bank the event raised money for two non-profit organizations; Union High School Performing Arts Company, and Douglas Michael Krueger Scholarship Fund Inc; all money raised helps to directly benefit the students of Union Township through grants, scholarships and arts education.

Winners included: 1st Place: Jonathan Hyer — Union Resident 2nd Place: Christopher Erdman—11th Grader, Union High School People's Choice Award Winner: Kimberly Moreira— Kawameeh Middle School Youth Award Winner: Dance Impressions—Union Residents

Cash prizes were awarded for the top two winners in the amounts of \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second place and \$250 was awarded to the People's Choice Winner.

Hosted by Doc Burkhardt and featuring a guest appearance by last year's winner Alyssa Muniz, who treated the audience to their rendition of

"Time of Your Life" from Dirty Dancing, with a special appearance from the Maplewood Glee Club.

The evening was filled with great entertainment and laughs provided by Burkhardt. Judges included Township of Union Mayor and musician Manny Figueiredo, Director of Education at the Paper Mill Playhouse Lisa Cooney, Choreographer Lindsay Moore Burkhardt, Theatrical Producer Robert Lukasik and Investors Branch Manager Regina Nicholls. UHSPAC Choreographer Jennifer Williams shared "It's always an amazing experience when you can bring the community together. For us, we want to continue to raise money to support our students and support our town, and to me there is no better way of doing that with a stage and great entertainment."

Don't miss UHSPAC's production of Footloose, December 8, 9, 10th at 7:30pm and December 11th at 2pm.

For more information visit their website [www.uhspac.com](http://www.uhspac.com) or follow them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @UHSPAC.



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(above) 1st Place:  
Jonathan Hyer



(above) 2nd Place:  
Christopher Erdman



(above) People's Choice Award  
Winner: Kimberly Moreira

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# KAWAMEEH MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH AWARD WINNER: DANCE IMPRESSIONS

*Spirit of UNION* • Page 7 • November 2016



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## HOLIDAY CELEBRATION AND TREE LIGHTING IN FRONT OF TOWN HALL ON SUNDAY, DEC 4TH

"It's always a joy to see the community come together," Township Mayor Manuel Figueiredo, "The Holiday spirit is alive and well in Union." Featuring holiday music and an ice carving demonstration by professional commercial sculptor, Bill Bywater, this year's celebration is bound to be a fun and exciting event. The tree-lighting ceremony begins with Holiday Music at

5pm followed by a visit from Santa, and the lighting of the Holiday tree. After the ceremony, children and their families can stop inside Town Hall to say "hello," and have their photo taken with him. The event will begin at 3:00 p.m. with the ice carving demonstration and the tree lighting ceremony will begin at 5:00 p.m. The event is free of charge to attend.

## UNION TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY SECOND ANNUAL PUB CRAWL

On Saturday, November 12, the Union Township Historical Society will host its second annual Pub Crawl. The bus will depart Burnet Middle School at noon and return at 6. The historic taverns and the menu for each stop on the tour are: The Pittstown Inn (1760) in Pittstown for hors d'oeuvres, the Farmhouse at Grand Colonial (1685) in Hampton for lunch, the Ship Inn (1860) in Milford for English pub fare, and

Chocolate in the Oven for take-out ice cream. The Ship Inn was the first site in New Jersey to brew beer for consumption on the premises since Prohibition.

A cash bar will be available at each location. Tickets are \$80 each (which includes a \$25 tax-deductible donation to the UTHS/Caldwell Parsonage) and may be obtained by calling 908-687-7468.

## UNION ELKS BREAKFAST NOV 20TH

The Union Elks Lodge #1583, located at 281 Chestnut Street, Union, will have a breakfast on November 20, 2016 from 8 a.m. to noon.

Menu will include: Eggs anyway you like; Sausage, bacon and home fries; Pancakes; Western omelets. Cost: \$8.00 adults, \$6.00 Vets/Seniors/Children.

## JAZZ VESPERS WORSHIP SERVICE AT UNION'S TOWNLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Vespers is always an evening service, held at sundown. Townley's Jazz Vespers brings a modern, jazz spirit to this non-denominational occasion. Expect it to be a joyful noise.

Carrie Jackson & The Jazzin' All-Stars will lead a Jazz Vespers Worship Service at Townley Presbyterian Church on Saturday, 12 November 2016. Townley Church is located in Union, NJ at 829 Salem Road. The service begins at 5:00pm and runs to 8:00pm.

Carrie Jackson is a well-known jazz vocalist, with a loyal following in the northern New Jersey and New York City area.

She will lead the service together with Townley Church's pastor Rev. Howard Bryant.

They'll be backed up by The Jazzin' All-Stars, a crew of talented professional jazz musicians. Carrie has gathered who'll imbue Vespers with a jazz beat and spirit that it has rarely voiced before.

Ecumenical and non-denominational, Townley's Jazz Vespers will bring people together with the universal language of music in a joyful and meaningful worship service.

Admission is free to all, but a free-will offering benefits Monarch Housing of Cranford, NJ.

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### ATTORNEY SETTLES HOME EXPLOSION LITIGATION FOR \$975,000.00

Attorney David C. Bendush announced settlement of a lawsuit arising from a home explosion in Hunterdon County in September of 2014. The blast was caused by a contractor who was converting the home of his clients, from oil to natural gas. The clients were in the home with their infant daughter at the time of the explosion and fire. Davis Heating and Cooling was attempting without success to purge the new gas lines. Large amounts of natural gas were caused to accumulate inside the basement until the gas exploded, nearly levelling the structure and knocking the clients to the ground where they stood. Mr. Bendush litigated the liability issues aggressively, and attained the unusual result of summary judgment for plaintiff. The defense had little choice but to settle quickly and on favorable terms, in order to avoid a trial.

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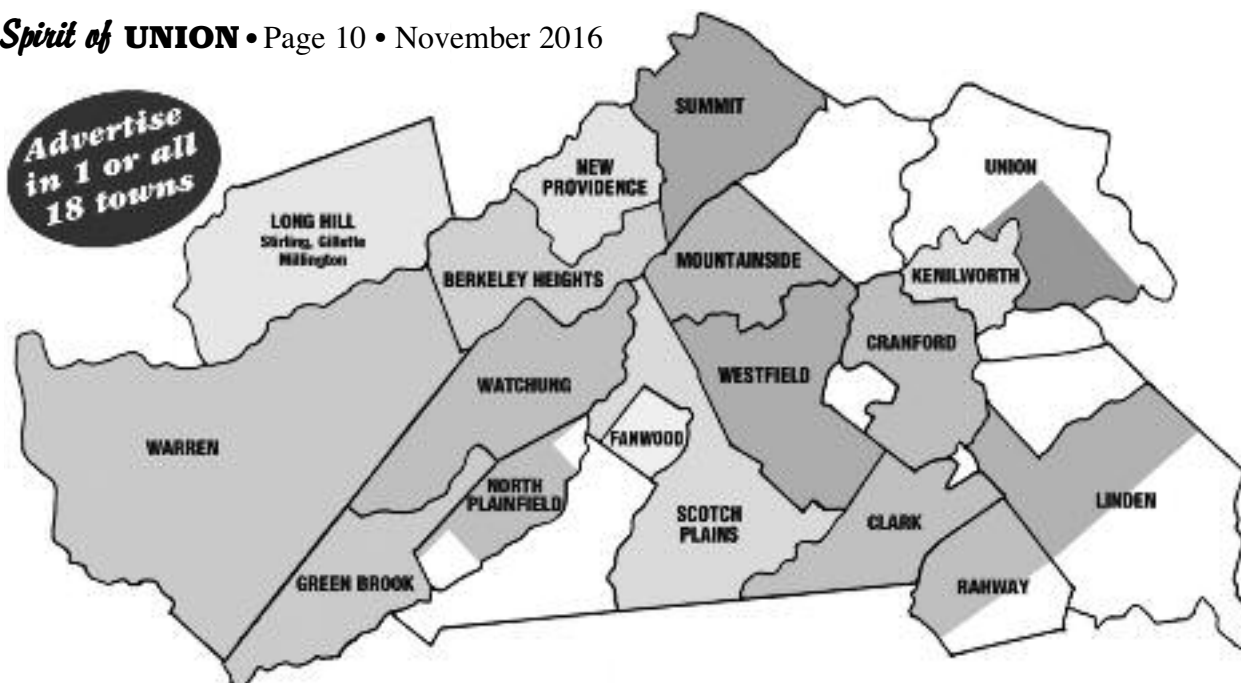
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## THE BIG HAUNTED HOUSE TRUNK OR TREAT

Jefferson School's "The Big Haunted House Trunk or Treat" was held on October 29th.



Photos from this and other events can be found online at [rennamedia.com](http://rennamedia.com) and on the Spirit of Union page on [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) Feel free to "Like", "Tag" and "Share"



## UNION CENTER SPOOKTACULAR WINDOWS

Union Recreation Department once again invited students to paint participating store fronts in the downtown with a Halloween theme.

Desi Garcia, a junior at St. Mary of the Assumption High School in Elizabeth, has been participating in the event since the sixth grade. A

more traditional theme of a black cat with pumpkins was selected for this year's entry into the Halloween Window Painting Contest 2016. "Pookie", (a friend's real life tuxedo cat), is clearly the main feature of the artwork and has so far delighted passersby within Union Center area.



(above) Desi Garcia, 11th grader from Union, in front of painting at 20TH Legislative District Office on Stuyvesant Avenue.

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