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## MIKE SAVERINO RECEIVES ASSISTANCE DOG FOR 2ND TIME

Canine Companions for Independence – a national non-profit organization providing highly trained assistance dogs for children and adults with disabilities – is proud to announce that Green Brook, New Jersey resident Mike Saverino has recently received his second assistance dog from Canine Companions for Independence.

Mike was matched with Webster, a two-year-old yellow lab/ golden retriever cross who has been trained to respond to over 40 advanced commands. Mike's first Canine Companions assistance dog Akirra retired earlier this year after 8 years of loving service. His new dog Webster is aptly taking over right where Akirra left off. Webster can turn light switches on and off, open and close doors and retrieve dropped objects. However, one of his most important jobs will be to provide constant companionship for Mike.

Mike and Webster returned to Green Brook after completing Canine Companion's recent Team Training Class, an intense, two-week course held at Canine Companion's Northeast Regional Center in Medford, NY – one of six such centers nationwide. The Northeast Regional Center serves a 13-state area from Maine to Virginia.

Each student who attends Team Training – held at each center four times a year – is paired with a fully trained, working assistance dog like Webster, and is taught to work with his/her canine companion. The training course consists of daily lectures, exams, practice and public outings.

Mike and Webster are settling into a routine back in Green Brook. Mike says, "Webster is a very special dog and I hope to have many wonderful years with him."

About Canine Companions for Independence: Canine Companions for Independence is the largest non-profit provider of trained assistance dogs with six regional training centers across the country, including CA, FL, OH, NY and TX, and has placed over 5,000 assistance dogs. Established in 1975, Canine Companions provides highly trained assistance dogs to children, adults and veterans with disabilities and is recognized worldwide for the



(above) Saverino and Webster IV.

excellence of its dogs, and the quality and longevity of the matches it makes between people and dogs. There is no charge for the dog, its training and on-going follow-up services. For more information, visit [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org) or call 1-800-572-BARK.



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# Green Brook Gazette

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## BRYAN ZHANG ADVANCES IN SPELLING BEE

Green Brook Middle School (GBMS) held the championship round of competition for the National Geographic Bee on January 19, 2017. Over four hundred students at GBMS participated in the Geo Bee and nine students made it to the school championship round. After a difficult final round of competition, including Lauren Chapleski being eliminated in third place, only Danyal Aftab and Bryan Zhang remained. Sixth grade student Bryan Zhang eventually won the school competition and now has a chance at a \$50,000 college scholarship. Bryan will now take a qualifying test to determine his eligibility for the New Jersey state Bee final on March 31, 2017.

The National Geographic Society will provide an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. for state winners to participate in the Bee national championship rounds from May 15 – 17, 2017. The 29th annual national finals will air on May 19 at 8 p.m. EST on the National Geographic Channel and Nat Geo Wild. One first-place national champion will receive a \$50,000 college scholarship, a lifetime membership to the National Geographic Society including a

subscription to National Geographic magazine, and a trip to the Galapagos Islands, courtesy of Lindblad Expeditions and National Geographic.



(above) Two of the three social studies teachers at GBMS: Dana Sweeney and Kevin Weeks with the Geo Bee winner, Bryan Zhang.

## 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 [editor@rennamedia.com](mailto:editor@rennamedia.com) or call 908-418-5586

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Registration is \$8. At Door \$12 • Note: this is a non-rated tournament.

Non-scouts (under 18 only) can register by calling Joe Renna at 908-447-1295.

Scouts can use Patriots' Path Council Munsee District Double Knot link to register on-line at [ppbsa.doubleknot.com/event/2031497](http://ppbsa.doubleknot.com/event/2031497)

Scouts can email Jim Parlapiano [jim.parlapiano@hotmail.com](mailto:jim.parlapiano@hotmail.com) for more info.

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## THE WIZARD OF OZ IS COMING TO GREEN BROOK THIS MARCH

Green Brook Middle School students will follow the yellow brick road all the way to the Emerald City in their production of the The Wizard of Oz this March. Opening night is on Thursday March 16th with an another performance on Friday March 17th, both at 7pm (doors open at 6:30pm).

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the door or online by going to [greenbrookms.seatyourself.biz](http://greenbrookms.seatyourself.biz). Contact [GBMStickets@gmail.com](mailto:GBMStickets@gmail.com) for additional info.

When a tornado rips through her Kansas home, a young girl named Dorothy (Erin Ptack) and her dog Toto (Rhea Cariappa) must travel somewhere over the rainbow to find their way back home. Along the way, they're greeted by a brainless Scarecrow (Abby Wighard), a heartless Tin Man (Jillian Cronin), and a Cowardly Lion (Jordan Pincus) that all accompany her on her way to ask the great and powerful Wizard of Oz (Andrew Moberly) for help. Their journey is made more terrifying by frequent unwelcome visits from a Wicked Witch (Mia Hionis) who wants to steal the magical ruby slippers that Dorothy received from Glinda the Good Witch (Alyssa Ostry). Will

Dorothy find her way home? Will the Scarecrow get his brain, the Tin man his heart, and the Lion his brain? There's only one way to be sure! Come see our musical this spring!

The show will be performed at the Green Brook Middle School Auditorium at 132 Jefferson Ave in Green Brook N.J.

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## GREEN BROOK TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTEGRATED PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

The Green Brook Township Public Schools Integrated Preschool Program will be holding an Informational Night for parents with children ages 3 to 5 who would like to know more about this program. This event will take place on

**Wednesday, Feb 8 from 6:00-7:00 p.m.  
in the I.E.F. Elementary School Media Center.**

Registration information for the 2017-18 school year will be posted on the Green Brook Township Public Schools website at [www.gbtps.org](http://www.gbtps.org) on February 15.

If you have any questions,

please contact Derek Ressa, Director of Student Services, at

**[dressa@gbtps.org](mailto:dressa@gbtps.org) or 732-968-1171 extension 1300**

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## REGION II SCHOLASTIC HONORS MUSICAL GROUPS



Twelve student instrumentalists and another seven student singers from Watchung Hills Regional High School have been selected for Region II scholastic honors musical groups.

### Selected for All Region II

#### Vocal groups

are, from left, Kyra Anthony, Christine Tanko, Angelina Carrano, Anchal Dhir,

Suchir Govindarajan, Kira Leinwand and Summer Stuart.

### Selected for All Region II Instrumental groups

are: From left, Katie Tan, Olivia Xu, Lindsey Shi, Craig Mandelbaum, Jack Horan,

Andrew Morrison, Ethan Marmolejos, and Carl Peterson.

### Not in the photo are students selected for All Region II Instrumental groups.

They are: Cathleen Luo, William Narayanan, Cristina Sarrico, and Catherine Cai.

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## STUDENTS SING AND DANCE WHILE RAISING FUNDS FOR PROJECT ALS

Students and teachers at Watchung Hills Regional High School (WHRHS) demonstrated their performance skills and entertainment savvy, while raising funds for Project A.L.S. (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis), at a Talent Show, Wednesday, Jan. 11, in the school's Performing Arts Center (PAC). Some 16 acts were presented for the enjoyment of the audience, including solo and group performances of song, dance, musicianship, and poetry. Three of the acts were awarded prizes in the talent show competition at the event.

First prize went to Peri Martins of Warren Township, who sang "Rise Up," by Andra Day, and accompanied herself on piano. Second prize went to Eliana Neuwirth of Warren Township, who sang, "Almost Lover," by Fine Frenzy. Third Prize went to Isabella Zhou of Warren Township, who performed a Chinese Dance to the music of the number titled, "Incense."

According to the program, the Talent Show was presented, "In loving memory of Tom Shea (1968-2012) and Jenifer Estess (1963-2003)." Shea is the late brother of WHRHS English

Teacher Laura Goodson, who died from A.L.S.

Two summers ago, WHRHS students read, as part of a summer reading assignment, "Tales from the Bed: A Memoir," by the late Jenifer Estess, as told to her sister, Valerie Estess. The work of non-fiction was about Jenifer Estess' battle with ALS, often also referred to as Lou Gehrig Disease. In addition, several representatives from Project ALS, including Jenifer's sisters, Valerie and Meredith Estess, spoke to assemblies of WHRHS students. WHRHS student government leaders have held several fundraising events in the last couple of years, such as this year's and previous years' Talent Shows.

"Since its inception, Project ALS has advanced ALS research, accelerating the testing of potential drugs, establishing the world's first and only privately funded stem cell laboratory and developing the first laboratory models of ALS," according to published Project ALS literature. "We have brought together the top stem cell biologists, geneticists, motor neuron experts and ALS neurologists to work on ALS and related diseases—transforming the field. In 17 years, Project ALS has raised over \$75 million, directing between 80-93 percent annually to research programs."

One of the highlights of the Talent Show was an ensemble performance of "The Room Where It Happened," from the current award-winning Broadway musical, "Hamilton." Among the performers were WHRHS History teachers Rebecca Brown, Sean New, Ken Karnas and Greg O'Reilly.

Students in the ensemble include Adele Rotondo, Jack Melillo, Suchir Govindarajan, Hannah Melillo, Kyra Anthony, Claire Vickery, Matt Oboh, Maddy Goffredo, Elisabeh Russo, Grace Shanahan, Julianne Lin, Francesca

Meehan, Stephanie Moreno and Sarah Kelly. In a separate performance, Dana Wasserman and Summer Stuart sang another song from Hamilton, "Dear Theodosia."

Several singers offered solo singing performances, including: Colton Berry, "I Wonder as I Wander," by John Jacob Niles; Sarah Kelly, "I Can't Make You Love Me," by Bonnie Rait; and Michael Dumapit, "In Your Atmosphere," by John Mayer.

Several bands performed, including "Tank," comprised of Alex Overzat from WHRHS, and his friends from other schools, Nick Scafuto, and Kerry and Thomas Stranick of Bridgewater-Raritan High School, and Ben Boxer of Livingston High School. They did "Runaway," by Bon Jovi.

WHRHS student band "No Fugazi," performed "Waiting on the World to Change," by John Mayer. Band members of No Fugazi are: David Kim, Natalie Kim, Eddie Cai, Ben Kozakowski, and Matt Renzo. The student band, "Wah!", featuring Will Johnson, Will Broder and Anthony Speros, performed "Careless Whisper," by George Michael and Wham!, while Anthony Speros also contributed a solo vocal and guitar performance on, "Phunkdified," by Justin King.

The Piano/Violin/Cello Trio, featuring students Minhee Han, Brian Zeng and Kevin Lu, played the musical composition, "One Summer's Day."

Student Hannah Melillo joined a trio of The Teachers Band, comprised of English teachers, Kristin Mannion, Michael Porter, and Ira Horowitz, to create three-part harmonies on "White Winter Hymnal," by Fleet Foxes. The Teachers Band trio closed out the Talent Show with "You're My Best Friend" by Queen.

Mehu Saju read an original poem. Spencer Acciarito offered an original comedy stand up routine.

## GARDEN CLUB OF WATCHUNG BEGINS 60TH YEAR

The Garden club of Watchung began 2017 with a presentation by Alma Jones, Floral Designer. Alma bases her floral creations on the works of Leatrice Eiseman, author of "Colors for Your Every Mood". Alma described how certain color combinations-easily expressed in floral arrangements-can stimulate and relax the senses, release happy memories and enhance our moods.

The celebration of our 60th anniversary will take place in February with Club members donning apparel from 1957, the year our club began. Garden club president, Karen Gelotte, expressed how her 30 years in the Garden Club has made a difference in her life. "When I moved to Watchung, I wanted to become integrated in the community and the Garden Club was the perfect stepping stone to do so. As we go forward into our 60th year, we will continue to serve our members and communities by stimulating an interest in gardening, encourage preservation of our natural environment, and plant and maintain our four gardens in Watchung."

Residents from Watchung and surrounding communities are invited to join our active club. To learn more, visit our website at:

[www.thegardenclubofwatchung.org](http://www.thegardenclubofwatchung.org), visit our Face Book page or telephone (908)754-5766.



(above) Karen Gelotte and Alma Jones

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(above) The band, "Wah!," a trio of students, from left, Will Johnson of Gillette, Will Broder of Warren Township, and Anthony Speros of Stirling, played, "Careless Whisper," by George Michael and "Wham!".



(above) The Piano/Violin/Cello Trio, featuring Kevin Lu of Warren Township on Cello, Minhee Han of Green Brook Township on piano, and Brian Zeng of Warren Township on violin played "One Summer Day".



(above, left) Peri Martins of Warren Township, who sang "Rise Up," by Andra Day, and accompanied herself on piano, won first prize at the WHRHS Talent Show,. (right) Eliana Neuwirth of Warren Township sang "Almost Lover," by Fine Frenzy, at the WHRHS Talent Show. She won Second Prize.



(above) Student band, "No Fugazi," Natalie Kim of Warren Township, Eddie Cai of Watchung, David Kim of Warren Township, Owen DiDonna of Millington, who is a WHRHS graduate now a freshman at Towson University, Towson, Md., Ben Kozakowski of Green Brook Township, and Matt Renzo of Warren Township, performed "Waiting on the World To Change," by John Mayer at the Talent Show.



(above) Isabella Zhou of Warren Township performed a Chinese dance titled "Incense," at the WHRHS Talent Show. She won Third Prize in the competition part of the Talent Show.



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(above) The Teachers Band, featuring English teachers Ira Horowitz on lead electric guitar, Michael Porter on vocals and acoustic rhythm guitar, and Kristin Mannion on vocals, welcome guest singer, student Hannah Melillo of Millington, who helped create three-part harmonies on the song, "White Winter Hymnal," by Fleet Foxes. Then, The Teachers Band sang, "You're My best Friend," by Queen to close the Talent Show.

## LOCAL AUTHOR JAMIE M. MILLER PENS SECOND CHILDREN'S BOOK

"The Boy and His Wandering Wallaby" is the follow-up children's book to 2015's "The Boy in the Yellow Raincoat", by author Jamie M. Miller. This is the second book in the series.

The first book in the series, titled, "The Boy in the Yellow Raincoat," tells the story of a little boy who has a strong dislike for rain. It is because of his Sensory Processing Disorder, a condition commonly associated with autism in which the senses are not correctly perceived in the brain and can cause an 'overload' as well as aversions to sounds, textures, lights, smells, etc. In the story, the boy is frightened of the rain's sounds, how it feels and the way it stings his skin. Within the comfort of his yellow raincoat and the love and story-telling from his mother, the boy learns to understand the positive purpose for rain and overcomes his fear by learning a new approach when handling what displeases him about the rain.

Much like "The Boy in the Yellow Raincoat," "The Boy and His Wandering Wallaby" touches on characteristics of Autism and Sensory Processing Disorder and the attachment children

can have with a specific object that they use for comfort, such as a stuffed animal. In the story, the boy and his wallaby share many adventures until one day, the boy wakes up to find his wallaby missing. He panics, but his mother once again comforts her son and promises to find the beloved toy while he is in school. At the end of the day, the boy returns home and waiting is his wallaby!

The picture books are aimed for ages Pre-K through First grade. Both stories were written with the intention of bringing awareness to understand Sensory Processing Disorders, autism and other disabilities. Miller's own son and inspiration for the books are based from his own struggles with his disorders and explaining why he was 'different' to his peers. She hopes the books will open a line of communication between a child and the person reading the stories to them and promote anti-bullying, especially to those with adversities. The boy remains nameless to act as a relatable character so that readers can envision themselves as the star to place themselves in the situation.

For both projects, Miller collaborated with illustrator and friend, Matthew J. Corrales to bring the books to life. Corrales was up for the challenge. With his artistic talent, he recreated the characters and scenes, bringing the stories to life with vivid artwork designed to capture the attention of young children and to promote question asking.

Miller will be hosting several readings of "The Boy and his Wandering Wallaby" throughout 2017 at local libraries, elementary and pre-schools and other events. She will kick off the "Read across America Campaign" at John P. Faber Elementary School in Dunellen at the end of February and will post future events on her Facebook page, The Boy Series. When she isn't writing, Miller is an employee of Bill Vince's V.I.P. Honda in North Plainfield.

"The Boy and His Wandering Wallaby" was published in November, 2016 and along with "The Boy in the Yellow Raincoat," both are available online in print and electronic versions through


Barnes and Noble: [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

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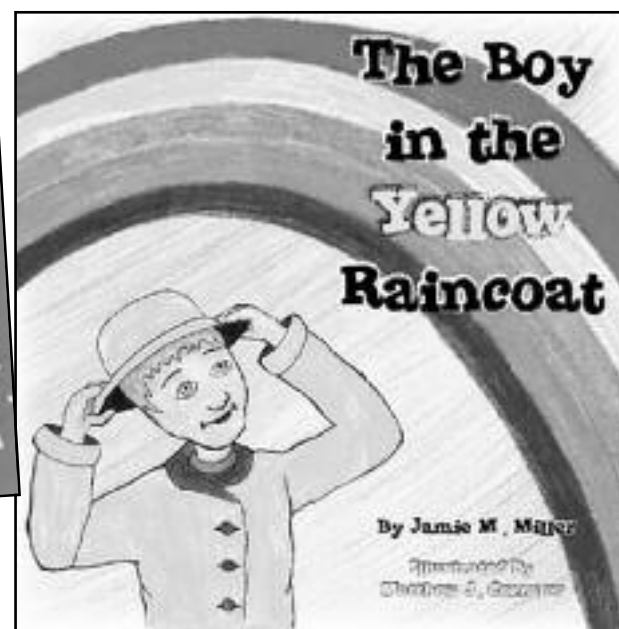
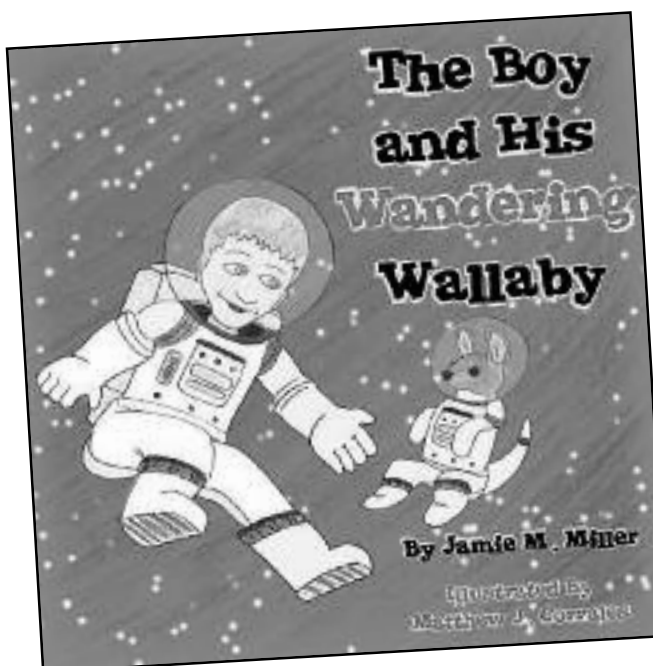


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