A community magazine serving the residents of Nutley MAY 2024

NUTLEY NEIGHBORS

Right Place... Right Time

Diana, Ryan, Chloe, and Ava Steup

Photograph by Carly Ann Photography

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October 25	December 1

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Timing is Everything!

There are certain things that need to be done right on time like taking the pot roast out of the oven before the fire department joins you for dinner or pressing down on the accelerator when the light turns green so the driver behind you doesn't start honking.

And let's be honest–doing things at the right time has many positive benefits. (Like that pot roast being moist and tender… mmm!)

Our cover story family knows a lot about being in the right place at the right time. Diana attended an event and met someone who would become an integral part of her life. That led to her being introduced to Ryan Steup who later became her husband. Now, Diana and Ryan are parents of two children and are living happily ever after here in Nutley.

There are a lot of moments in our lives where timing was everything. Sometimes, we may not see the importance of being in a certain place until years after.

Barry Lenson has a wonderful article about Gino Giua, a prominent figure at Nutley High School in the 1960s and 1970s. He was part of the school's maintenance team, but he impacted the lives of students and the entire community in many ways. If you attended high school during that time, you may have met him, but if not, his story will touch your hearts today.

Timing is always critical, especially in sports, and this month we have a bittersweet article about Coach Michael Blanchard. He has been a major part of the Nutley Jr. Raiders wrestling program, but he is stepping down to focus on the high school team. I'm sure his influence and encouragement will still be felt among all of Nutley's wrestlers.

And now–oops! According to my watch, it's time to turn the pages and start reading this issue!

Joyce Corey
Content Coordinator

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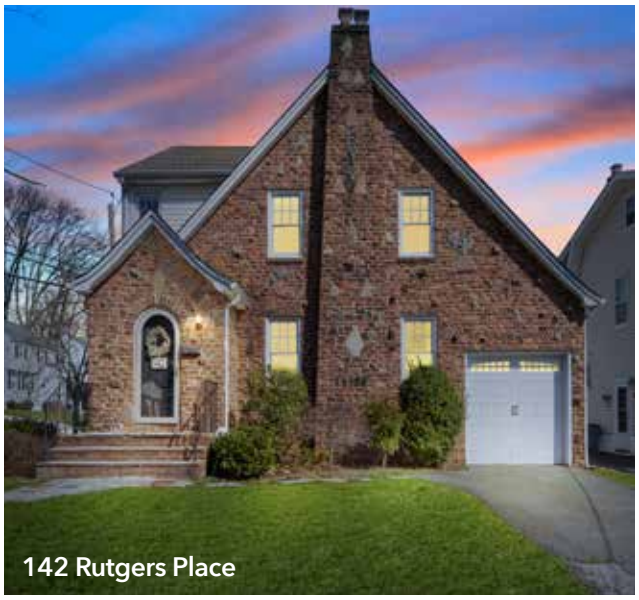
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GSMLS Data: Single Family, Condominiums/Cooperatives, Town Houses January-March '24

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2024 Real Estate Snapshot in Nutley*

Average List: $541,567
Average Sold: $572,648
Median Days on Market: 20

SINGLE FAMILY HOMES SOLD MARCH 2024:

ADDRESS	LIST PRICE	SOLD PRICE	DIFFERENCE
120 Kenzel Ave.	$835,000	$800,000	-$35,000
640 Franklin Ave.	$219,900	$226,000	$6,100
401 Chestnut St.	$654,900	$600,000	-$54,900
71 Elm Pl.	$599,000	$635,000	$36,000
18 Essex St.	$614,900	$560,000	-$54,900
92 North Rd.	$699,900	$780,000	$80,100
110 Satterthwaite Ave.	$725,000	$765,000	$40,000
51 Stager St.	$999,000	$951,000	-$48,000
6 Hillside Ave.	$319,000	$315,000	-$4,000
11 Carteret Pl.	$598,000	$598,000	$0
17 Locust St.	$499,900	$592,000	$92,100

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Feature Story

Diana, Ryan, Chloe, and Ava Steup

Right Place… Right Time

By Joyce Corey
Photograph by Carly Ann Photography

Even though life is mostly about showing up, when you end up in the right place at the right time, there can be some surprising twists.

Diana had been part of a Yelp Elite Squad, which is a group of people adventuring through their hometown and beyond, snapping photos and writing about where they've been. But showing up at an event led Diana to a certain person who would become an integral part of her life.

"When I was at one of the events, I met Ryan's sister, Stephanie, who also currently lives in Nutley," Diana said. "We became great friends, and I was very close to her and their other sister, Deanna. With time, I met their brother Ryan. It kind of just happened naturally. He always said that he just knew that we would be together, and I could just take my time. Well, he was right, and I didn't take that long to figure it out. We started dating in 2016 and we got married on July 6, 2018."

Deciding to live in Nutley was an easy choice for the couple who wanted to be near their families while raising their own children.

"We are in the Yantacaw section of town," Diana said. "We moved here in 2020 right before the pandemic hit. We both agreed that we loved how the town felt to us from the very start. We're able to walk to the park with our children and our neighbors have always been very sweet. One of them brought us a dessert when we first moved in, and another made homemade Halloween baskets for our little girls after they met us when we were taking a walk."

Although Chloe (4) and Ava (2) are young, they are finding fun things to do at home and in town.

"Chloe loves to draw and read books," Diana said. "The girls love to spend time at home being silly with each other. As a family, we try to attend most of the town events especially when they are geared towards the children. Our favorites are Santa arriving in a helicopter, fall festivities in the park, trunk or treats, fire department events, breakfast with Santa at the Knights of Columbus, and Easter events at the park."

Holidays at the Steup house make the children (and adults!) smile with their themed displays.

"Ryan loves to decorate," Diana said. "He puts giant Halloween animatronics outside like witches, skeletons, werewolves, and clowns, and for Christmas, our house is turned into a winter wonderland inside."

Summer is also a busy time for the family. Since Diana is a teacher, she is able to spend more time with her daughters during the summer break from school.

"I went to Rowan University in Glassboro and completed the Teacher of Students with Disabilities (TOSD) Endorsement Program," Diana said. "I earned my Master of Arts in Education at St. Peter's University in Jersey City. Right out of college, I started my career as a special education teacher in Wallington and I've been there ever since 2005."

"Since I'm off for the summer, I try to stay as busy as possible with Chloe and Ava," she said. "Our favorite place to be is at the beach, spending time with our family members and a lot of our close friends who feel like family."

Ryan's career as a pipeline technician also allows him time to take trips with the family and make some memories.

"Ryan attended William Paterson University and earned his degree in business." Diana said. "He originally was an electrician working with his father but in 2018, he began his career at Williams Gas Company."

During the summers, Diana and Ryan put their day-to-day careers on pause as they find sunny places to enjoy or new travel locations.

"Every summer, we love to plan a family trip to some beach such as Ocean City in Maryland, Wildwood, or even in Maine." Diana said. "I would love to do some more traveling as the kids get older. As of now, we are doing mostly local exploring. Our one family goal is to take the girls to Disneyworld."

5 Things the Steup Family Loves About Nutley

1. The programs at the Parks and Recreation Department
2. The park systems
3. Being so close to various places
4. The community feeling
5. All the holiday events in town

With each trip Ryan, Diana, Chloe, and Ava Steup take, and with every town event or activity they attend, they know the importance of being in the right place at the right time. Moments are made, memories are kept, and their lives enriched each time they show up.

As Chloe and Ava grow older and explore the town around them, they will be ready to take their own place in the world, just like their parents did. But for now, tossing a beach ball in Wildwood or watching Santa arrive in a helicopter fills their world with all the right things. ■

We are always looking for fascinating residents to feature in *Nutley Neighbors*. If you are interested in being included or would like to nominate one of your neighbors please email jcorey@bestversionmedia.com.

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Learn Coping Skills to Support and Maintain Your Mental Health

By Scott McKelvey and Staela Keegan, Senior Clinical Supervisor at Nutley Family Service Bureau

Everyone goes through a rough patch now and then. Whether you're experiencing serious challenges, or life's everyday stresses are taking their toll, mental health is just as important as physical health. There's nothing wrong with seeking support, and you don't have to wait for a crisis to start professional counseling.

The good news is that there are many coping skills you can practice on your own when you are overcome with negative thoughts and emotions. In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month, let's discuss common, effective coping skills that can help you through a rough patch!

MENTAL HEALTH FOCUS

Learn Coping Skills to Support and Maintain Your Mental Health

The first is practicing self-care, which is exactly what the name implies. Getting enough sleep, eating healthy foods, drinking plenty of water, and exercising regularly are common forms of self-care.

Keep in mind that self-care doesn't require a complete change in lifestyle. Something as simple as taking a hot shower or wearing comfortable clothes can be a form of self-care. If you're not comfortable with intense exercise, low-stress body movement like walking releases endorphins that can reduce pain and stress and improve mood.

Guided meditation is a coping skill that trains you to become aware of the present moment without judgment while calming the mind and body. Guided meditations are easy to find on YouTube, social media, and mobile apps. The more you practice meditation, the better prepared you'll be to respond to stress, anxiety, depression, and other negative feelings.

When you get anxious, your heart rate tends to increase, and breathing becomes shallow. Deep breathing promotes the "rest and digest" response to stress and counteracts the "fight or flight response," which drains energy. Deep breathing tells your nervous system to slow down, which can slow your heart rate, increase oxygen intake, and enable greater relaxation and self-awareness. There are many deep breathing methods, so choose one that's comfortable for you!

Practicing gratitude, especially when you first wake up in the morning, is a coping skill that helps you develop a positive mindset and outlook. Instead of dwelling on how bad things seem, commit to starting your day with an entry into a gratitude journal! Writing down your feelings each day can help you get negative thoughts out of your head and onto paper. Then you can move forward with greater clarity and positivity.

Finally, spending time in nature, breathing fresh air, and removing yourself from places and situations that trigger negative feelings can help you clear your mind. For example, gardening and planting flowers can be therapeutic and relaxing. Imagine practicing your new coping skills while surrounded by nature in one of Nutley's beautiful parks! You may also meet new people, build new relationships, and grow your support system. ■

Founded in 1913, Nutley Family Service Bureau offers mental health counseling, case management, food pantry services, and more to the local community. Visit the website for more information at www.nutleyfamily.org

May the Masterpieces of Children Warm Our Hearts

By Michelle Palmer

Ivanka, local gymnastics star (left and below left) Keyla's art and a love for nature (below)

May is a beautiful month to celebrate the masterpieces of our children. Just like the sun brings us warmer temperatures, the bright and colorful work of young artists warms our hearts. Art comes in all forms from dance, gymnastics, painting, cooking, and creating dreams into reality.

Ivanka is an eight-year-old who is an incredibly dedicated gymnast. She started taking gymnastics before she could walk at Little Gym in Montclair. When she was three years old, she moved on to Flipping Out here in Nutley. She worked up to joining the mini team at age five and started competing with her bronze team this year. She has competed nationally in Florida as well as in New Jersey and has received many gold medals. She also faced several challenges, injury, and fear. At this young age she declared her mindset as "You cannot succeed without failure." Her family is not only proud of her athletic ability, but her very optimistic way of not giving up.

Keyla is 11 years old and puts all the summer happy vibes into her artwork. As she proudly displays her painting of trees, her smile shows how much she appreciates nature. Her artistic creation is loved by her family, and it brings joy to the decor around their home.

Vivienne is eight years old and has been learning to crochet. Her happiness in showing off her finished project highlights her dedication to accomplishing a new skill. She is thrilled to display her crocheted flower collar which is perfect for the season. ■

Vivienne's flower power

Michelle Palmer is the author of a children's book, *Brinco Finds His Way Home*, which is available at Amazon and Pretty Handy in Nutley.

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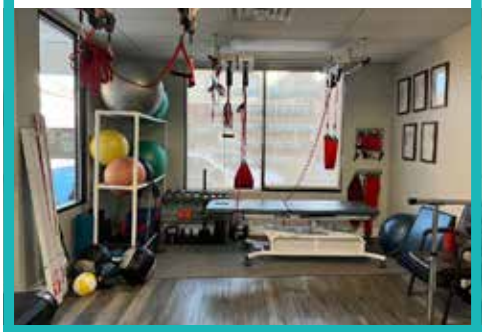

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End of an Era – Beginning of a New One

By Joyce Corey

For the past decade, Coach Michael Blanchard has been involved with the Nutley Jr. Raiders wrestling program. During that time, the program has steadily improved to become one of the more inclusive and successful programs in Nutley. He will be the first one to tell you that he did not do any of this alone and, even though he is often credited with the growth of the program, he has enjoyed a monumental amount of support from so many people to put Nutley youth wrestling back on top.

Photo credit: Chris Andres

8th grade leaders (above) Back row: Michelle Gavilanes, Evan Blanchard, Kevin Gallagher, Max Tripoli, and Louis Dellavolpe. Front row: Owen Marsala, Kadyn Cordoba, Sam Malanaga, and Evan Seborowski. The 2024 Suburban Dual team (left) captured the League Championship with a 9-1 record this season. This team was 25-4 over the past three years.

"I came to the program after my third son was born and I had stopped coaching high school wrestling in Rutherford," he said. "We had enjoyed a lot of success during my time there, but I knew youth wrestling was a totally different beast. My wife, Tricia, has been very supportive of my passion for wrestling. She encouraged all three of our boys to try it, but only our middle son really seemed to like it. As he got more into it, I took on more leadership in our organization."

Blanchard remembers exactly when he decided it was time to rev things up for the program.

"2019 was the first year I was back coaching a dual meet style team in the Suburban League. We did well and took second in the end-of-the-year tournament. A season later we were able to remodel our wrestling room with the help and support of Commissioner Tucci and Superintendent DeMaio. I knew our team was ready for bigger things. However, Covid had other plans for us, and we wound up not being able to wrestle the next season."

Despite the setback, the team continued to communicate and ran several food drives for the Nutley Family Service Bureau. When the following season began in 2021, the team remained intact and full of determination. That was really the start of something special in Nutley.

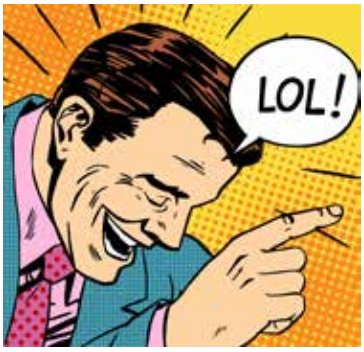
Since that time, the team has grown to 140 wrestlers and includes 7 female wrestlers. Additionally, there have been 4 league championships with 4 new banners in the Parks and Recreation gym. The team has also added 10 major trophies to the trophy case.

"Success comes from the work of so many. We have lots of coaching volunteers, parents that run various aspects of our program, and all the people at Parks and Recreation that help support us," Blanchard stated. "Support matters and so do people. We take that philosophy into everything we do."

As this season concluded, Blanchard announced that he will be moving on and letting others lead the program next season. "The tournament and the clinic are opportunities for me to stay connected, but the day to day will fall to others. It's the natural progression as I look to support the Nutley High School program now. I have enjoyed my time, but time never goes backwards. I'm moving forward and embracing new opportunities and the changes it will bring. I am lucky and feel blessed to have had this time." ■

Free Comic Book Day Comes to the Nutley Public Library with Comics for All! MAY 4 FROM 11AM-4PM

By Lucia Alvarez, Librarian, Children & Young Adult Services



Free Comic Book Day (FCBD) is the biggest event in the comic book industry – a single day when participating comic book specialty shops and libraries around the world give away comic books absolutely free! Established in 2002, FCBD was founded on the belief that for every person out there, there's a comic book they'll love. This annual event offers a huge selection of free titles designed to appeal to a broad range of age levels and tastes. FCBD is traditionally held on the first Saturday in May and is the perfect opportunity to introduce friends and family to the many worlds of wonder available at local comic book shops and libraries.

The Nutley Public Library has been a participating location for FCBD for over 8 years and will be joining the celebration of comics on Saturday, May 4, offering the community a fun, family-oriented event where everyone can find a comic they'll enjoy. Additional activities include crafts, a movie, and some extra goodies.

With a diverse range of awesome titles like *Pokémon, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Disney's Encanto, Spider-Man, Star Wars,* and many more, we're sure there's a comic book for everyone. Comics are a fun and enduring form of entertainment for readers of all ages to dive into as imagination comes to life. Whether it be popular comics, film, television shows, or video games, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Free Comic Book Day kicks off at 11am and runs until 4pm at the Nutley Public Library. Regular updates, information about comic books, and a list of participating publishers and their free comics are all online at www.freecomicbookday.com.

The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Nutley Public Library, which supports enrichment programs and events for the community. ■

For more programming information, please visit youthservices.nutleypubliclibrary.org and follow the Nutley Public Library's Facebook page.

Stephone Gaines: Teacher of the Year!

By Joyce Corey

The January Board of Education meeting generated a lot of applause when Commander Maria Hamlin of VFW Post 493 presented the Teacher of the Year award to Stephone Gaines.

"He is so deserving of this honor," Hamlin told me.

Mr. Gaines is the director of vocal activities and his talent, creativity, and connection to students at Nutley High School resonates beyond the classroom.

He has been a teacher for 9 years and started working for the Nutley school system in 2019 in a leave replacement position that became permanent a year and a half later. It also led to some major accolades for Gaines and his students and many remarkable achievements.

"Last year, a select group of my students and I performed in the Distinguished Concerts International New York program," he said. "We met, studied with, and performed in the David Geffen Hall at the Lincoln Center with Grammy Award winning composer Eric Whitacre. The highlight of this particular event was being chosen to be a soloist by Whitacre himself."

Engaging students in the classroom comes naturally for Gaines because of his genuine love of the subject.

"I have a passion and love of music and I shamelessly present that each and every day to my students," he said. "I share tons of stories and experiences from back when I was a young artist and I try my best to provide them with the best possible opportunities I can. Over the years I've built a culture where we hold ourselves to high ideals and standards and, in order to achieve at the level we'd like, we have to be able to continuously work at our art and raise the bar for ourselves."

Their commitment and work have received recognition, locally and throughout New Jersey.

In 2022-23, the entire music department was acknowledged by the Essex County Board of County Commissioners for an exceptional year of achievements. The choir received a Superior Rating and 1st place at the Music in the Parks Festival in addition to the departmental Esprit de Corps Award for showcasing exemplary etiquette, professionalism, and pride in their work.

In the 2023 New Jersey Music Educators Association (NJMEA) All State Mixed/Treble Choir season, 10 students were accepted. This is the highest number of students accepted from Nutley ever, dating back to the origins of this organization in 1929.

This year, 23 students were accepted into the NJSMA Region 1 Honor Choir, which made Nutley the second highest represented district in North Jersey.

Gaines also has a continuing goal of sustaining a high level of performance for the program.

"We have our hands full with the number of upcoming events that range from state conferences, out of state festival competitions, residency programs, and concerts," he said. "We want to make each moment that we step onto the stage matter!"

Stephone Gaines brought his talent, his love of music and genuine enthusiasm to Nutley High School, rightfully earning him Teacher of the Year.

And to that we say, "Encore!" ■

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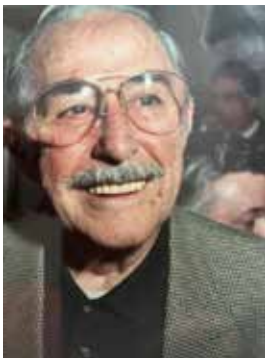
Remembering Gino Giua. . . A Citizen of Nutley and the World

By Barry Lenson, Art Historian, Nutley Historical Society



Gino Giua, a prominent figure at Nutley High School in the 1960s and 1970s, left an indelible mark on the lives of those who knew him. As a member of the school's maintenance team, he went beyond his professional duties, becoming a caring and influential presence in the lives of the students. He was not just a familiar face; he was an elegant, soft-spoken, old-world gentleman who looked out for everyone.

Recently, I spoke to Gino's daughter, Eileen Luberto, who shared remarkable insights into her father's life. Gino, born in Rome, New York in 1918, was the eldest of four siblings. His early life included a move to Sardinia, Italy, at the age of 7, and later a return to the U.S., settling in Greenwich Village. Gino's education in languages began at Vincent de Paul Catholic Church, where nuns imparted their knowledge in French. His proficiency in English, Italian, French, and Latin would prove invaluable during his service in the Army from 1943 to 1946.

Hardworking parents shaped Gino's character. His mother, a seamstress, and his father, employed on the NYC docks, instilled values that would guide him throughout his life. Despite a brief foray into art lessons in Greenwich Village, his path took a turn when he answered FDR's call to join the Army. Gino's linguistic skills expanded in Panama, where he learned Spanish before serving in Scotland, England, and France during World War II.

Assigned to General Patton's 8th Division in France, Gino played a vital role installing communications lines between Paris and Dieppe for General Eisenhower. His artistic talent found expression in contributing to the battalion's internal newsletters. Post-war, Gino married Phyllis Vaglio and settled in Nutley, working multiple jobs to support their family. Education, patriotism, sports, and love were core values instilled in their children, John and Eileen.

Gino and family, 1968

Gino's dedication to Nutley extended to his 41-year career with the Nutley Board of Education, where he rose to the position of Manager of Buildings and Grounds. A long-term member of various community organizations, he participated in every Memorial Day Parade since 1947. Gino's impact on the community went beyond his official roles. He opened the school for students, decorated the gym for events, and collaborated with the police and fire departments on various projects.

Even in retirement, Gino remained devoted to family and community. In 1996, he served as Grand Marshal of the Memorial Day Parade, despite facing challenges due to legal blindness. Gino's final years were spent enjoying his garden, flowers, and grandchildren before he passed away at the age of 90 in 2009.

Gino Giua's legacy extends far beyond the halls of Nutley High School. His multifaceted talents, unwavering dedication, and genuine care for others have left an enduring imprint on the hearts and memories of those who had the privilege of knowing him. ■

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Pet Corner

Adopt Us!

Submitted by Nicole Milici, Jersey Pits Rescue Inc.

Adorable Bubbles is 14 weeks old and ready to find her forever family.

She is Wee-Wee pad trained and working on house training and crate training in her foster home. She loves all people, kids, and other animals. Puppies are required to go to homes with resident dogs that they can learn from and grow up next to. We do not adopt siblings out together due to littermate syndrome (please read about this online!).

Puppies are a lot of work, so you will need to be willing to continue her training. Meet and greets for approved applicants are required and all household members (2 legged and 4) must be in attendance. We require that all resident pets are spayed/neutered, up to date on vaccines, and seen regularly by their vet.

If you are interested in adopting and meet the above requirements, send us an email at jerseypitsrescue@gmail.com.

Submitted by Christa Milici, Yellow Brick Road Rescue NJ

Butterscotch was recently found outside, left behind by his previous owners, and is looking for a home where he won't be left behind ever again. He loves to cuddle and is unbothered by other cats. He is an older gentleman, estimated to be around 10 years old. He is very sweet and would make the perfect addition to any family. He is also very unique looking.

He is neutered, up to date on vaccines, microchipped, and FIV/FeLV negative.

If you are interested in Butterscotch, email us at yellowbrickroadnj@gmail.com

May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Wed.

Knitting & Crochet Club

@Nutley Public Library, 93 Booth Dr.

Share your love of knitting and crocheting whether you're experienced or a beginner. Meet fellow knitters, brush-up on your skills, and learn some new techniques. Bring your current project or start a new one, and please bring your own supplies.

Time: 1-3pm

For more information visit nutleypubliclibrary.org

May 4, Sat.

Free Comic Book Day

@Nutley Public Library, 93 Booth Dr.

For all ages. Calling all comic book fans! Stop by the library to collect the latest popular comics and grab a goody bag that includes a craft to take home.

Time: 11am-4pm

For more information visit youthservices.nutleypubliclibrary.org or call 973-667-0405 ext. 2623

May 10, Fri.

Spring Wild Edible Walk

@Essex County Environmental Center, 621 Eagle Rock Ave., Roseland

For families. Take a walk along the trails to identify and discuss the variety of forest groceries available for harvest around the local landscape. You'll meet Spice Bush, Ostrich Fern, Mountain Mint, Stinging Nettle, Wild Leek, Trout Lily, and others. Learn some of the folklore behind the plants and discuss

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MAY 2024 EVENTS CALENDAR

proper identification, ethical harvest, growing environment, and methods of preparation. On the return, collect a few dandelions to fry up as bite-size fritters and leave with a greater appreciation for the ephemeral beauty of the changing seasons.
Time: 6-7:30pm
Cost: $40 per family (up to two adults and two children) or $12 per child, $15 per adult.
For more information and to register visit www.essexcountyparks.org/facilities/environmental-center/calendar

May 13, Mon.
Golf Outing: Nutley Thriving Survivors
@Hendricks Field, 220 Franklin Ave., Belleville
18 holes of golf. Lunch immediately following at Nanina's In The Park, 540 Mill St., Belleville. Must register by May 7.
Time: 8am
Cost: $175
For more information visit https://www.nutleythrivingsurvivors.com/golf-outing-may-13-2024-1

May 14, Tue.
Municipal Election Day
Time: 6am-8pm
For more information and to look up your polling place visit www.nutleynj.org/voter-information

May 20, Mon.
Horticulture for Seniors
@Essex County Environmental Center, 621A Eagle Rock Ave., Roseland
Join the Rutgers Master Gardeners of Essex County for this class especially designed for senior citizens. This month's topic is The Great Jersey Tomato. Reserve your seat by May 13. Meet in Garibaldi Hall.
Time: 1-3pm
Cost: Free
For more information or to register call the Master Gardener Helpline at 973-228-2210

May 22-24, Wed.-Fri.
Trip to Wildwood, NJ: Nutley Senior Citizen Club
Trip is for three days and two nights. Open to everyone.
For more information and itinerary, please call Ellie Slomkowski at 973-667-4871 or Eileen Luberto at 973-632-0763

May 23, Thurs.
Stroke Screenings
@Dept. of Public Affairs and Health, 149 Chestnut St.
Evaluate your risk for stroke through cholesterol testing, blood pressure, pulse check, carotid artery assessment, and stroke-related counseling from staff physicians. Registration is required.
Time: 10am-12pm
Cost: $35 per person
For more information or to schedule an appointment call 973-284-4976

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A community magazine serving the residents of Nutley

Important Phone Numbers - www.NutleyNJ.org

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Fire Department	*(973) 284-4940*	*Chamber of Commerce*	*(973) 667-5300*
Town Hall	*(973) 284-4951*	*Public Affairs & Health Dept.*	*(973) 284-4976*
Library	*(973) 667-0405*	*Public Works*	*(973) 284-4958*

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