

JANUARY 2021

A community magazine serving the residents of Nutley

# NUTLEY NEIGHBORS

## The Balsamo Family's Homeroom

Photograph by  
Randall Kenneth  
Photography



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August 25.....	October 1
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## Publisher's Note

# Happy New Year!

The flipping of the calendar always feels like a renewal, and this year even more so. For some, 2020 has definitely been the most difficult year of their lives. With all that has happened, the disruption, the challenges, the heartache and loss, we've made it through. Is there more uncertainty and challenges ahead? Yes. But in this new year we can always approach it with optimism and make it our best year yet. Isn't that what we usually set out to do every other new year? Now more than ever we need to shift our attitudes, looking forward and not backward. Setting new goals, opening that business, taking better care of our health, finding deeper feelings of joy in our daily rituals and being able to connect better with our friends and loved ones.

Our attitudes focus primarily on emotional issues that affect our everyday lives. What we know determines our outlook. How we feel about what we know determines our attitude. Emotions have the capacity to propel us to future success or future disaster. The feelings we have towards the world around us form our attitudes. The right attitude can make us move mountains and the wrong attitude can make us feel crushed by the smallest petty little things. For 2021, let's focus on our attitude. It's the one thing we can always control. And our attitude often reflects our outcomes. We can choose how we will react to setbacks and new opportunities that may come our way.

I've been publishing *Nutley Neighbors* since 2015 and here we are now in 2021. It has been a great ride and we look forward to continuing to serve the community. We are a small business like one you would see on Franklin Ave. and faced our own share of challenges. Our community small businesses who you know and love face major hurdles on their way to recovery. We ask that you keep them in mind when making purchases, even going the extra mile with them before looking to big box outlets.

I know throughout this year our publication brought light when things looked dim. I am hopeful that our publication will become an even stronger community bonding agent for you. As time passes, we are learning more and more how important community is. That's what we try our very best to accomplish here in these pages. The readers, the fans of this publication, always let us know how much it means to them. I am grateful for that opportunity. To bring unity amongst our neighbors. To be able to connect great local businesses with you. Share the good news in a time period when sensationalism dominates the airwaves.

May 2021 be filled with the promises of a hopeful tomorrow for you and yours. And from my family to you, we wish you a Happy New Year!

**Michael Stefanelli** Publisher



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## Is it Safe to Open My Eyes Now?

Remember when you were a child and something scary happened? Did you close your eyes? I did.

I guess I thought if I couldn't see it, it's not real and can't hurt me. As an adult, I realize that things exist (and can hurt me) even if my eyes are closed.

Good thing my sense of hearing works just fine.

Amidst all of the scariness this past year, there was the sound of a town coming together and helping each other.

And you know what? That's how it's always been.

Barry Lenson has a great article about Nutley Tough and David Wilson reviews a book called *Waves of Hope*. Both articles look at past events that happened (right here in Nutley!) and how people not only survived but how they helped others to get through trying times as well.

I actually felt braver after reading these articles and I hope all of you do too.

Sometimes when I read historical accounts, I wonder if all the heroic things have already been done.

The short answer is there is room in every year for people (like you and me) to make a difference.

Our cover story family understands this. Each member of the Balsamo household connects with our community, through the Nutley Board of Education, the PTO at Yantacaw School, the Nutley Family Service Bureau, or the Kingsland Manor. They all find a way to make life better and more enjoyable for those around them.

This month, the magazine starts a new feature (along with Nutley's own Michelle Palmer) called Kids Corner where we spotlight the talents, creativity, and artwork of Nutley's youngest residents.

The children who live in our community will someday look back at this time in history and will remember the adults who encouraged them to create beautiful things as an expression of hope and to make their world a bit more cheerful.

Let's do that too.

Just like generations before us have done.

Welcome 2021! We've been waiting for you!

*Joyce Corey* Content Coordinator



*Randall Kenneth*  
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## 2020 Residential Market Compared to 2019 Residential Market

### 2019:

Homes Sold	338
Average Price	\$391,643
Highest Price	\$770,000
Days on Market	57

### 2020:

Homes Sold	296
Average Price	\$421,903
Highest Price	\$910,000
Days on Market	44

DATA RETRIEVED FROM GSMLS. DECEMBER 2020 NOT INCLUDED IN DATA

Best Version Media does not guarantee the accuracy of the statistical data on this page. The data does not represent the listings of any one agent or agency but represents the activity of the real estate community in the area. Any real estate agent's ad appearing in the magazine is separate from the statistical data provided which is in no way a part of their advertisement.

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# Happy New Year Wishes from Our Nutley Neighbors!

**Hello 2021!** So glad you have arrived!  
May this year be overflowing with health and  
happiness. We have collected some New Year  
greetings from our *Nutley Neighbors*.  
May their words remind us of the power of  
community and the hope that exists in every  
heart and home in town.

*Cheers to growth,  
humor, and good health  
in 2021 - Happy New  
Year, Nutley Neighbors!*

*From the Herman family*

*May even half the  
things you hope for  
yourself come true this  
year. Here's to new  
beginnings.* *Vicky Chalk*

*Truly love this town and  
all our neighbors so let's  
kiss the bad vibes of  
2020 goodbye and look  
forward to a healthy,  
happy, blessed 2021!*

*Greetings from the  
Gordon house  
on Willow Place*

*May everyone have a  
blessed New Year, 2021,  
it can't be worse than 2020.*

*Tom and Marilyn Peters*

*Happy and Healthy New  
Year to All*

*Robert E. Wilson*

*Wishing everyone a  
Happy and Healthy  
NEW year ... Be smart ...  
Be kind ... Be safe ...*

*Marianne Gould*

*A Very Happy, Healthy  
& Prosperous 2021 to  
Everyone!* *Dianne and  
David Wilson*

*Wishing all our friends  
and neighbors a very  
healthy, happy and  
prosperous 2021!*

*Susan Farr*

*We can't erase the past,  
but we can embrace the  
future. May 2021 heal  
our sadness and bring us  
great joy!* *Joyce Corey*

*Happy New Year with  
hope, happiness, and  
good health to all the  
beautiful people in  
our strong and loving  
community.* *Love,  
Linda and Butch Buset*

*All of us at the Nutley  
Museum are looking  
forward to reopening  
and welcoming you  
and your family inside.  
Wishing you a wonderful  
2021.*

*Barry Lenson,  
Historian, Nutley  
Historical Society*



*The Balsamo family:  
Matthew, Sal, Sharon, and PJ*

## Feature Story

# The Balsamo Family's Homeroom

*By Joyce Corey Photograph by Randall Kenneth Photography*

*"Be honest, be kind, be loyal, and never give up." –Balsamo family motto*

When the alarm clock goes off in the Balsamo home, going to school is probably the first thought of the day. Sal and Sharon both work in a school; he is a teacher in Paterson, and she is a behavior specialist in Montclair, while sons, PJ (12) and Matthew (10), get ready to attend classes at John H. Walker Middle School and Yantacaw Elementary, respectively.

It's not a stretch, therefore, to think of Nutley as the family's homeroom, the place where they assemble daily before going about to their diverse activities. And each person in this family is actively engaged in something interesting, fun, or, educational.

The Balsamo story officially started in July 2006 when Sal



*The doggies!*

and Sharon got married.

"We met through our mutual friend Melissa," Sal said. "We were legally married at Ravello's in East Hanover but 10 years later we got married at our church, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, here in Nutley. We have many great memories together, but we loved having a second wedding with our boys, friends, and family in attendance at the reception at the Kingsland Manor."

Their respective college degrees directed their career paths which dovetailed nicely in the field of education.

"I graduated with a BA in history and political science from Rutgers and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Montclair State," Sal said. "I have taught social studies at Eastside High in Paterson for the past 16 years."

Sal also was also recently reelected to the Nutley Board of Education for a three-year term.



"I have a BA in communications from Seton Hall and a Master of Science of Special Education from Long Island University," Sharon said. "I am a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst and am employed as a Behavior Specialist with Montclair Public Schools."

Back home in the Nutley school system, Sharon is an active Yantacaw School PTO volunteer.

Their sons, Matthew and PJ, also connect to the local community through a variety of activities and events.

"We are a sports family," Sal said. "We are always supporting our kids and their teams. Matthew and PJ play soccer, basketball, and wrestling through the recreation department. They both play baseball all year round. PJ plays for Nutley Central and Matthew plays for North Jersey Moose."

"We were incredibly pleased that PJ and Matthew were able to play on the same Little League team for the first and last time this year," Sharon added. "We were not sure that it would happen because of COVID, but Nutley East Little League worked hard to make sure the players



Matthew (left) and PJ were able to play on the same Little League team this year!

had a safe season this summer."

The boys are encouraged to take part in other non-sporting activities that give them a deeper appreciation of all that this town offers.

"Matthew and PJ have volunteered at the Kingsland Manor this past summer moving earth to help transform the new beautiful garden boxes there," Sharon said. "They have also attended all of the open house events at the Kingsland Manor and have helped with the Christmas decorations. This summer, PJ volunteered at the Nutley Family Service Bureau. They have also attended numerous events and programs at the library as well as all of the spring, winter, and fall festivities that normally occur in town."

It's wonderful that the entire Balsamo family is engaged with the local community on so many levels but choosing Nutley as their hometown came about because of a couple other factors.

"I grew up in Nutley, attended Radcliffe School, and graduated from NHS in 1996," Sal said. "But a big reason that we moved to Wharton Avenue is because it allows us to keep a close eye on our archnemesis, Rick Buset," he

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Matthew and PJ

# 5

## Five Things the Balsamo Family Loves About Nutley

1. The schools
2. The friends who become family
3. Parks, public safety, and public services
4. Sports programs
5. Nutley eateries and small businesses

adds with a laugh. *(This has certainly intrigued me, and I plan on contacting the Buset family for an interview to further unravel this mystery! Stay tuned!)*

But on a less mysterious note, Sharon further explains their choice of Nutley.

"We have the best neighbors!" she said. "Our block has kids playing constantly! All the parents are very friendly and many of the people with grown children have taken the time to get to know the kids growing up now. It is a comfort to have such a close community who looks out for each other."

And if you happen to notice the hydrangeas blooming out front, there is an interesting story behind them.

"I enjoy gardening," Sal said. "The hydrangeas were transplanted from clippings that came from my grandmother's house in Passaic. We used those hydrangeas to create centerpieces for our wedding reception."

While traditional homerooms do not allow pets, the Balsamo family has three rescues.



The family on their annual trip to Seabrook Island, South Carolina

"Our oldest is Putza who is 14. We found him in our yard a week or two after returning from our honeymoon. He was about six weeks old and weighed only four pounds. Next is Lilly who is a 5-year-old Rottweiler/black Lab mix. Our youngest is Angel who is about to turn three. She is a husky/boxer/Great Dane mix. Lily and Angel were adopted from Rock City Rescue located in Arkansas."

With all the activities in the Balsamo house, (including a few dogs barking!) the overriding message this family wants to give to their Nutley Neighbors is this:

"We are always willing to lend a hand. We believe in being there for each other as others were there for Sal while he was growing up in Nutley."

That says a lot about this family who shares their lives with all of us in Nutley. ■

*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](mailto:jcorey@bestversionmedia.com).*



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# Waves of Hope Book Review

By David Wilson

The Nutley community has provided unparalleled support of our veterans and their families over many decades. *Waves of Hope* is a book that chronicles the Negra family's contributions during World War II. During visits with his mother, Anger Joan Negra (currently at the 101-year milestone of life), Ronald Negra travelled back in time as she shared her vivid memories from World War II. Families worried and wondered whether their loved ones were alive, while searching for word about the fate of their servicemen.

In 1943, American pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and gunners parachuted from their B-17s and B-24s, as they were being attacked and shot down by German aircraft batteries and fighter planes. Many of those that survived were captured and interred in German prison camps. The Germans, under enormous pressure, finally agreed to announce the names of five captured prisoners of war (POW) each night on Radio Berlin.

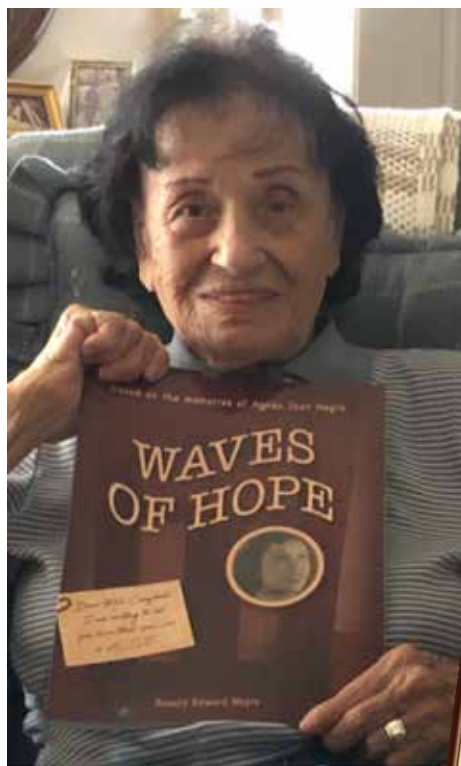
Using a shortwave radio, Agnes, living in Nutley and the newlywed wife of an American soldier, listened each night and wrote down the prisoners' names and hometowns. She then wrote to each family to let them know their loved one was still alive. Agnes became one of the only communication links to families of American POWs as they struggled with anxiety, fear, and heart-wrenching emotions. A young wife and mother when husband, August, went into battle and was wounded in the Rhineland campaign, she shared her memories about the turmoil for American families as their spirit of hope was bolstered by the words of a woman and her radio.

Ronald Edward Negra became passionate about sharing his mother's story. *Waves of Hope* has now been published, documented by the actual handwritten letters and postcards written to Agnes from grateful POW families. The story of Ron's parents is woven throughout the text. Agnes Joan Negra has also been recognized as a "Home Front Hero" in the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. for her work contacting over three hundred POW families.

Some letters are short, many poignant, all were grateful. One in particular was extremely emotional to read. Mrs. W. H. Smith of Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania wrote:

"As long as there are Americans like you who are sharing such wonderful work and giving such wonderful service to our fellow Americans; I am sure victory will be ours, and you can be sure you and others like you have played a vital part."

Agnes Joan (Verdi) Negra's family, originally from Boston, arrived in Nutley in 1938. Soon after, the family established the Verdi Fish Market at 187 Franklin Ave. Agnes married



Author Ronald Negra's mother, Agnes Negra with the book (left)

His parents Agnes and August Negra (below)



Nutley native August Negra on September 6, 1941.

The Negra Family moved from Newark to Nutley in 1907 and purchased fourteen acres on Harrison Street. Later, after subdivisions, Newark Avenue was established as more families relocated from the Brick City. The Negras were active in UNICO, Rheinheimer Boys Club, AMVETS, and other civic organizations. August joined the Nutley Police Department, retiring as captain in 1975. His remarkable story is in Anthony Buccino's *Nutley Notables Volume Two*. August and Ronald share the unique honor of serving as the only father and son Nutley High School class presidents in 1938 and 1965, respectively. ■

*Waves of Hope* is available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Visit Ron Negra's website for more information: [ronaldwardnegra.com](http://ronaldwardnegra.com).



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## Arts and Crafts

# Pretty Handy is a Teacher Mom's Happy Place

By Michelle Palmer

As an elementary school teacher and the mom of a three-year-old, Pretty Handy is a pretty fun place to be. At first glance, the shop is very unique, displaying accessories made by local artists, but as you explore further, there's a world of creativity for parents and children.

Pretty Handy, located at 175 Franklin Avenue, is a makerspace and gift shop that brings local crafters, vendors, and DIY-ers together. They offer quality products made by artisans and have a sincere desire to improve the community and environment through collaboration and sustainable practices.

As the mom of a young child, I see it as a place to foster creativity while having fun.

The first craft we made together at Pretty Handy was during a rock painting session. This project turned into a sentimental keepsake because my daughter asked me to display the rocks on my desk. The studio at the store was clean and safe, and the owners were cheerful and helpful. This all created a welcoming atmosphere which I appreciated.



Planting rainbow seeds (above)  
Rock painting in the studio (right)



Cactus jewelry holder finished product)



Toy Story inspired creations

With the restrictions imposed because of the pandemic, we were able to pick up kits curbside. Many of these activities were educational including fine motor skills practice, painting, gardening, and memory making. We created spoon figures inspired by the newest Toy Story movie, painted a cactus jewelry holder, planted rainbow seeds, and I sewed matching

hair scrunchies for us from a DIY kit.

It felt good to support a local business and my daughter and I made some wonderful crafts—and memories! ■

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## 2021 Winter Reading Challenge at the Nutley Public Library for Children, Teens and Adults

*By Deidra Garcia, Head of Youth Services*

**T**he nationwide Winter Reading Challenge will once again be held in January at the Nutley Public Library. From January 1st to January 31st, the library challenges children, teens, and adults to read (or have read to them) at least 620 minutes (20 minutes or more a day) during the month of January and keep track of their reading on our Beanstack site at [nutleypubliclibrary.beanstack.org](http://nutleypubliclibrary.beanstack.org).

Upon completion of Nutley Public Library's Winter Reading Challenge, children and teen participants can collect a goodie bag and certificate. Top readers in each age category (babies/toddlers, grades K-5, grades 6-12, and adult) will also receive a Barnes & Noble gift card, sponsored by the Friends of the Nutley Public Library.

A record number of schools and libraries have signed up to participate, reading to surpass last year's collective goals of at least 5 million minutes and 75,000 books during the month of January. Sponsored this year by Simon & Schuster's Books Like Us program, the top-performing libraries and schools will earn major awards, including new book donations and virtual author visits from Sharon Draper, Stuart Gibbs, and Stephen Graham Jones, among others.

Registration for the national Winter Reading Challenge begins online Tuesday, December 1, 2020

at [nutleypubliclibrary.beanstack.org](http://nutleypubliclibrary.beanstack.org) and will continue throughout the month of January 2021. All reading during the month of January counts, even if you register in January! ■

For further information, please visit [nutleypubliclibrary.beanstack.org](http://nutleypubliclibrary.beanstack.org), contact Deidra Garcia at [deidra.garcia@nutley.bccls.org](mailto:deidra.garcia@nutley.bccls.org), or call the Youth Services Department at 973-667-0405 x2623.

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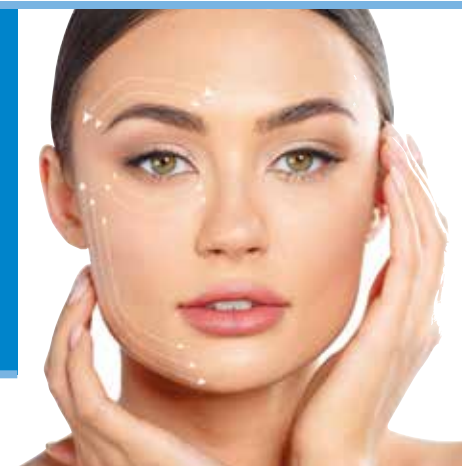


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# Is It Possible to Remain Mentally Healthy During a Pandemic?

By Joanna Buset, LPC

The pandemic is an example of a traumatic event that has touched all of us in some way. You may have suffered the loss of a loved one, or your own business or employment, you may be supporting a child with education or emotional well-being. Maybe you have been kept from visiting family, traveling, or from attending a funeral, wedding, or memorial service. This type of stress caused by the pandemic is known as traumatic stress, the stress associated with trauma.

## ■ WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health refers to a person's psychological and emotional well-being. The ability to maintain a healthy mental state requires coping, communication, and social skills, as well as self-awareness to understand our own needs and how to meet them.

When we think of the pandemic and how it relates to mental health, it is clear the threat of COVID-19, as well as



quarantine measures, have caused significant trauma and traumatic stress for most people.

Feeling out of control with decisions being made seems to be a theme lately. What can we do to remain hopeful and maintain some level of motivation to continue to care for ourselves and meet our own needs?

We all have the same basic needs, but we differ in the way those needs are met for us. Self-care is any activity we do deliberately to care for our mental, emotional, and physical health. Understanding our own needs and how to meet them is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. Managing our own stress by meeting our own needs will make us more available to be present with others.

But how can we meet those needs?

It's important to understand the different types of self-care.

## ■ PHYSICAL: WHAT OUR BODY NEEDS

Sleeping, eating, dancing, walking, jogging, any rhythmic, repetitive motion which creates a natural regulation for our bodies because it mimics our heartbeat

## ■ PSYCHOLOGICAL: OUR MIND, OUR THOUGHTS

Self-reflection, pleasure reading, saying "No", intentional smiling, solitude

## ■ EMOTIONAL: OUR FEELINGS, OUR EMOTIONS

Seeing friends, crying, laughing, praising yourself through positive self-talk, humor.

How we respond to emotion is an especially important aspect of our well-being.

## ■ WORKPLACE: OUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

Scheduled breaks, supervision, peer support

Mindfulness is an example of a strategy used for self-care to help us remain present in the moment. Research shows mindfulness reduces depression as effectively as medication and with no side effects. It reduces insomnia and increases our sense of well-being. Mindfulness improves emotional and social intelligence and helps develop empathy and compassion to improve relationships.

Our ability to care for ourselves is a result of what we have each personally experienced throughout this pandemic. Some may have thrived during quarantine, becoming healthier versions of themselves due to less



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stress and a gift of time for self-care. Others may feel like it continues to be the greatest struggle, figuring out how to manage work while taking care of a family. Single parents may constantly worry whether they will be able to keep managing this all on their own. Being the sole financial provider in a family may cause some to return to work before feeling safe, but they know their family depends on them.

We may not be able to control our circumstances, but we have the power to learn to control the way we think about our circumstances and how we respond. Understanding our own needs and practicing ways to meet them will provide us with the support we require to remain mentally healthy during this extremely challenging time. It's so important not to allow our own thoughts to interfere with our ability to see our own strengths and recognize the ways we can care for ourselves as much as we may care for others.

We are all experiencing this trauma and the way we think of it will either help us through or, unfortunately, stand in our way.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, please know you are never alone. Support is always a phone call away. Be kind to yourself and be kind to others. ■

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# Adopt Us!

*Submitted by Jersey Pits Rescue Inc*

A month after nearly losing his life in a brutal attack, 10-year-old Bubba is still in search of a quiet place to rest his head. He has been hunkering down with the kind and compassionate people at RBARI. Bubba has been a good boy and is in a quiet area where he can decompress and get lots of loving from the kind staff and volunteers there. Bubba is totally healed and ready to be in a home!



What he really needs is a very special foster or forever home to allow him to enjoy his golden years. After all Bubba has been through, we want to ensure that he finds the right match in a foster/adoptive family. Bubba will need a foster or forever home without other pets or small children as he is an old dude who just wants to chill. Fostering is free - we cover all supplies and any medical costs. Please apply today! [jerseypitsrescue.com](http://jerseypitsrescue.com)

*Submitted by Yellow Brick Road Rescue NJ*

Meet Lucy! Lucy is a 1-year-old young female. She is a rare orange girl! She is very sweet and would make the perfect addition to any family. She loves to be petted and is always purring. Lucy would be great with kids. Since she hasn't been around dogs, we are unsure how she would react. She would be fine as a single cat as she doesn't seem to like other cats but may get along with them with time and patience. She is micro-chipped, FIV/FelV negative, stool-tested negative, dewormed, UTD on vaccines, and will be spayed. \$100 adoption fee and application apply.



To apply for Lucy: <https://yellowbrickroadrescuenj.com/cat-adoption-application/> or email us at [yellowbrickroadnj@gmail.com](mailto:yellowbrickroadnj@gmail.com) ■

# Nutley History Tells Us ... We Will Survive Everything ... Because We Are Nutley Tough

By Barry Lenson

If you travel around the country, you will find that people everywhere like to say they are tough. People in Brooklyn wear shirts that say they are Brooklyn Tough. People in Boston are Boston Tough.

But if you review the history of our town, you will discover that we, the people of Nutley, can stake a claim to being the toughest of all. (We are also the nicest, the most caring of our neighbors, the most civic-minded, and lots of other things!)

There is no doubt that the current COVID-19 pandemic is testing us. It is one of the most severe challenges we have ever faced, and our hearts go out to every single resident of our town who has lost a loved one to this disease, and we will never forget our dear ones who have perished.

But please join me in thinking about some of the crises that Nutleyites have endured, only to emerge stronger on the other side.

■ **WORLD WAR I** Many people from Nutley fought in "The Great War," and a number of them perished. That loss left a great scar on our community. Yet, the people of Nutley created a beautiful memorial parkway in our parks to commemorate those who fought and those who died. We walk through this area of remembrance every day, where their memory binds us together in thankfulness and pride. That's one example of being Nutley Tough.

■ **WORLD WAR II** Many people from Nutley fought in World War II, and many of them died. We honor their memory every day. Their stories inspire us. One such story is told in the new book *Waves of Hope* by Ronald



Children at the Park School around 1900. The early ancestors of Nutley Tough! A sign that a Nutley veteran brought home from Europe after WWI.

Edward Negra. (Please read David Wilson's review of that book in this issue.) It tells the story of the author's mother Agnes who, when her husband was fighting in Europe, sat by her shortwave radio and wrote down the names of American soldiers who had been taken prisoner by Germany and Italy. She then wrote letters to their families, telling them that their loved ones were still alive.

That is just one story of Nutley heroism during a time of world conflict. Sometimes Nutley toughness is expressed through that kind of great love.

■ **THE VIETNAM WAR** People today often say, "I have never seen our country as divided as it is now." That may be true, but our country might have been even more divided during the Vietnam War years. In some households, parents and their children could barely communicate about the war, about the draft, and other topics. But then, when American soldiers came home from the war, conflicts were set aside, and veterans were welcomed as heroes. Ours is a town to be proud of. When all is said and done, we always do what is right.

■ **THE GREAT PANDEMICS OF THE PAST** Nutley town leaders rose to the challenge of protecting our citizens in the flu pandemics of 1918 and 1958. In 1953, the town protected our citizens by making the polio vaccine available in schools. We've conquered public health crises before, because we are Nutley Tough. And we are going to do it again.

■ **SEPTEMBER 11, 2001** From Nutley, we could literally see the twin towers fall on 9/11. Nutley citizens died, and our neighbors lost loved ones. The words "we will never forget" express our strength. But "we will always remember you" could say even more, because it means we are keeping those people alive.

■ **AND THOSE ARE NOT THE ONLY CHALLENGES WE HAVE ENDURED** We might not see it happening yet, but we are now in the process of overcoming the great COVID-19 pandemic. As we have done in the past so many times, we will reach out to each other with kindness.

If that is what it means to be Nutley Tough, welcome to our town. We are here for one another. That is reflected in our history, and it is still happening today. ■

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# Dr. George Bronson Philhower M.D.

## PART ONE: THE EARLY YEARS

By David Wilson

The beginning years of Franklin Township, now Nutley Township, was a period of rapid growth with many personalities applying their talents, time, visions, and monies to ensure a prosperous future for the town. Researching this history is fascinating, inspiring local historians to organize their finds into storylines that highlight individuals whose civic contributions formed Nutley.

This is the story of Dr. George Bronson Philhower M.D., who served 23 years on the Board of Health, nine years on the Board of Education (two as president), 24 years on the Library Board (of which he was a charter member), 15 on the Park Commission, 23 as town physician, and numerous other social, religious, and civic groups. Somehow, he found time to have a medical practice, marry, and have four children.

The story begins August 8, 1862 in Croton, Hunterdon County on the family farm. George had private tutors, attended Franklin Academy, State Normal School, then on to New York University for his medical training and interning at Bellevue Hospital, receiving his medical degree in 1886. He immediately hung his shingle out on a large, rambling house with a wrap-around porch at 281 Grant Avenue. He termed himself a country doctor with a casual approach. House calls on foot or horse and buggy, with payments due when you had resources, sometimes 10 or 20 years later. Founded as a family practice, with an expertise in treating pneumonia cases.

He was kindly, generous, scholarly, short-tempered, and inclined to be intolerant. A staunch Prohibition supporter, he hated liquor in all forms and refused to prescribe it, calling it evil and an underlying cause to many illnesses. Office visits were two dollars, and if you weren't very sick, he told you to go home and forget about it. A house call was three dollars if you were really sick. Hypos were cleaned with a simple pants wipe. Virginia Bennett worked with him during the 1918 flu epidemic and had to change clothes and take a green soap bath at every home visit.

George married Florence Rowan in a grand celebration at her father's Central Hotel on Chestnut Street. They were both riding the new bicycles around 1895, starting their family, and being active community members. Florence was Township Clerk for a short time and worked with the women's club



Top left: Dr George B. Philhower M.D. 1932. Above: Memorial plaque off Vreeland Avenue. Bottom left: Vreeland Avenue entrance to Memorial Parkway



promoting "safe and sane fireworks" and other quality-of-life issues. George taught First Aid as a World War I preparedness

activity, preceding the Red Cross. The doctor spent Saturday afternoons cheering the high school baseball team until he was hoarse.

Philhower's most important public service was creating Nutley Memorial Parkway in 1919. He spearheaded the formation of this walkway that recognized all Nutleyites who served in World War I. He was passionate about the park, visiting every day to ensure his vision of a place where the elderly could rest and meditate, lovers could walk together, and the young could play. His words: "Generations, as yet unborn, will rise and call us blessed for that." He was a keynote speaker at the 1925 Raymond Blum bridge dedication.

We will share more of Dr Philhower's life and contributions to Nutley in Part Two: The Later Years. ■

*David Wilson is the author of Fire in Our Lives, a book containing stories, experiences, and advice from his forty-year career in public safety. Available at Amazon, Barnes & Noble and Google Play.*



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# Our Little Heroes at Work!

By Michelle Palmer



*Alexis N.*

The pandemic has brought us challenging times, but also gave us the opportunity to get creative with our children while staying home or enjoying nature. Families in Nutley and neighboring communities have grown closer making memories that will last forever. While making these memories, kids have shown off their amazing abilities as artists and thinkers. Although virtual school has become the new way to learn, an appreciation for nature, outside play time, and recycling can also be seen.

We celebrate the heroes that are keeping us safe every day. Let's also give our little heroes a celebration by honoring the wonderful work they have been creating. These kids have taken a stressful situation and turned it into an opportunity to learn and grow.

Alexis N. of Nutley has learned the value and art in recycling. She worked with her mom to transform an old door into a new picture frame. After painting the wood, she added her own special drawings and photos. They truly turned trash into a treasure.

Brody N. of Bloomfield is learning to count and worked with his mom to create this pumpkin patch. The young learner worked on his fine motor skills and practiced the numbers while completing this craft. Of course, the fun continued with enjoying a few sweets and a run around the park.

These two friends, Sabrina P. and Elliot N., enjoyed the sunshine and showing off their crafty sides in Belleville Park. They created paper plate monsters using paint sticks, pom poms, construction paper, and glue. They have learned their colors and certainly developed great imaginations.

Young artist Allie of Nutley, brings us her beautiful smile and her nature-inspired paintings. The rainbow has been a symbol of hope and strength. She continues to brighten the day with her art and talent. She also learned the importance of recycling by using tissue paper as a canvas for one of her projects. ■



*Allie*



*Sabrina P. and Elliot N.*



*Brody N.*

## Welcome to the Kids Corner!

This is the place where we will shine a spotlight on the talents, creativity, and artwork of Nutley's youngest residents!

Our own Michelle Palmer will feature a craft, an activity, or a fun idea for you to express yourself and make something awesome.

Check for this feature each month. The Kids Corner will not be complete without YOU!

Send in your art, short poems, or pictures of a craft you completed and we will print as many as we can.

Let's make our world a little more beautiful with your art and creativity!

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