

THE RELAY

The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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Medford Family Life Center Comes to Fruition

By Denise Herschel
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MEDFORD - The process began in 2004 and has been quite a journey for the congregation, but after 14 years of tremendous perseverance the Medford United Methodist Church's Family Life Center was dedicated with more than 400 attendees on December 17, 2017.

Bishop John Schol consecrated the building during the church's worship service and preached at the service.

"One of the cool things we did was a liturgy where we passed several items representing our mission, our vision, and our history, up to the stage including a chair from our original building that was constructed in the 1850s," said Medford UMC senior pastor Rev. Joe Monahan. "During a service two years ago to culminate our capital campaign for the building, we passed many of the same items from the existing building out to a tent on the site of the Family Life Center near the main entry. At the dedication service, we were able to pass these items to the altar area."

Dedication attendees included Capital District Superintendent Rev. Frank Davis, Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director of the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey, and Bishop Schol. Participants from the church included Lay Leader Coleen Lombardi, Doug Fearon, chairperson of Medford UMC's Expansion Team and



After 14 years of steady perseverance and faith, Medford UMC celebrated the opening of its Family Life Center with 400+ attendees. Photo provided

Rev. Monahan.

"Our children participated in passing the items to the stage, the choir sang in the service and our praise band led wor-

ship," Monahan added.

The Family Life Center is a multi-purpose facility that was built for worship, recreation, dining and fellowship. The

overall building footprint is 9,900 square feet. An open house for the community was held in early January.

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Church Leaders Invited to "Take the Lead"

WAYNE - Church members in Greater New Jersey are invited to bring their pastors to a day of resourcing laity to lead in their churches and communities. On March 3, "Take the Lead: Tools for Leadership" will be held at Bethany Wayne UMC in Wayne, NJ from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and will feature keynote speaker Rev. Mike Mather, pastor of Broadway UMC in Indianapolis, IN. A special afternoon session will be dedicated to applying learnings for ministry and community.

A graduate of Drew Theological Seminary and a faculty member of the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at DePaul University, Mather is the author of the upcoming book, "Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected

Places." Attendees will hear the story of an urban congregation that grew vitality by creating new ways to connect with people and community.

Additionally, Mather will lead a workshop on connecting with community titled "Name, Bless and Connect."

"How do we connect in our communities?" Mather asks. "We begin with recognizing the giftedness of the people around us. We celebrate it and then invite and encourage connection."

Rev. Jess Winderweede and her team from Kingston UMC will share about leading ministry with millennials in a workshop called "More Than Just Coffee."

Designed for churches looking to connect with millennials but uncertain

Continued on page 5

Bishop's Message Shared at NYC Women's March

Sharon Townsend, a member of Trinity UMC in Hackettstown was moved and inspired by Bishop Schol's call to prayer and action in an email letter sent out to GNJ on January 12. She quoted it on her sign at the Women's March in NYC on Jan. 20. "I pray that by sharing your message on my sign, and my participation, I have honored God," she said.



Camp Connects Youth to Go Deeper in Faith and Leadership



GNJ camp staff and counselors have been in prayer, gearing up to forge relationships and build connections at this summer's upcoming Next Generation camping programs at Pinelands Center. Photo above of the lake at Pinelands Center in Browns Mills, NJ. Photo by Josh Kinney



By Josh Kinney
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THE PINELANDS - You know the feeling. Gathered around a campfire with friends and a steaming cup of hot chocolate or a gooey s'more, the grip of the daily grind loosens. Conversation flow freely among the trees, or if you're in New Jersey: the pines. Stripped of the pressure of classmates, school assignments and computer screens you find it

easier to connect with the person sitting next to you. You can hear and feel the presence of God.

Out of the fresh air an idea is born. A perspective is shifted. A heart is changed.

Such is the draw of GNJ's Next Generation Camping initiative; immersive outdoor programs designed for students to learn, develop relationships, and grow deep in their faith while taking a break from their digitally saturated lives to cultivate the kind of experience no amount of clicking and scrolling can produce.

"The idea is create a memorable, life-altering experience that can then

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A Message from the Bishop



The Church's Identity Crisis

I have five different ways to get from my office to our treasurer, John Cardillo's office. The fastest and most direct way is down the center corridor and make a left. I can make a left out of my office and go along an outside corridor which allows me to say hi to communication, property and benefits staff. I can make a right, a longer route, and say hi to our foundation, A Future With Hope and connectional ministries staff. I can take the stairs to

the first floor and walk to the back of the building and take the back set of stairs to the second floor and proceed to John's office. I take this route when I want a little exercise, particularly late in the afternoon. I can take the elevator to the first floor and walk up the back set of stairs. I never take this route because I like taking the stairs. There are five different ways to John's office. I use four of them for specific purposes that include exercise or greeting people or an urgent matter.

What would it be like if our conference policy said that I could only use one prescribed route to John's office?

Today is the final article in a series about our identity crises in The United Methodist Church. The two previous articles talked about how The United Methodist Church (the denomination) is not a church but a form of government and the second article how it's not a nuclear family but an extended family. Today I want to explore if United Methodism is a set of behaviors or a way of being.

The 1868 Book of Discipline, Methodism's book of policies and practices was 3 ½ inches by five inches, the size of a postcard and 200 pages. Our present Book of Discipline is 5 ½ inches by 9 inches and more than 600 pages. The 1868 Discipline has the liturgies and hymns of the church along with our polices. Today's Discipline does not include the liturgies and hymns. Other than the sheer increase in policies and laws of the church is that early on, the Book of Discipline was to help a person be a disciple in the Wesleyan tradition.

Today's Book of Discipline focuses on behavior rather than being, on policies rather than values, on what not to do rather than what to do to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. It focuses more on *how* than *attitude*, more on *laws* than *values*. All organizations need appropriate policies but we have lost a sense of balance. Jesus' teaching in the Gospels said very little about *how* and a great deal about *what* we should be doing. Even the laws that Jesus talked about were lessons in values – love God and love your neighbor, do unto others as you would want them to do to you, pray for those who persecute you.

As we have gotten more prescriptive, we have used the Judicial Council (the church's Supreme Court) to resolve more of our church's disputes. Today there are generally over 2,000 pieces of legislation to our General Conference (our congress) each time it meets. Annual conferences have a greater ability to be more values focused; congregations even more so, and the greatest degree of sharing and living values is found in small groups focused on supporting and encouraging one another to live a disciple's life in the Wesleyan tradition. Think of it, our small groups are more like the early Books of Discipline.

Our identity grows out of the life of Jesus Christ. It is nourished and enriched in the congregation by focusing more on being, values, and a way of life rather than elevating laws and policies. Healthy discipleship recognizes the best form of governance is treating others as Christ taught us to treat one another, that the best policies protect the poor, the outcast, the lost and the oppressed, and the church has its greatest impact as it gets smaller – small groups, mission teams, Bible studies where people are focused on nurturing each other's soul, supporting each other in their discipleship walk and serving the world.

When lay and clergy leaders are asked what are the values of The United Methodist Church, the top six listed are:

1. God's grace through Jesus Christ is available to everyone
2. Community and world mission engagement
3. Open communion table for Christians of all ages and from all denominations
4. Scripture as foundational for our belief and living
5. The needs of the poor are addressed
6. Fellowship and community among disciples



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THE GNJ DIGEST
UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

**The March 2018 Issue Deadline
is February 19, 2018**

These six values are foundational for United Methodists. You cannot legislate these. As soon as you begin to establish policies for how you will fellowship or how to experience grace we take all of the excitement out of faith and being a Wesleyan disciple. Certainly we need policies and laws to maintain healthy boundaries but don't over legislate.

What's a United Methodist to do? Focus on our core values, engage in small groups and mission teams, and don't expect The United Methodist Church in the next town or in the Philippines to practice being a United Methodist just like your experience. If you do need to develop policies in your congregation, ask how it will help us better live our values. If you have to turn to the Book of Discipline, don't use it as a book to pound into people what you believe makes sense, but understand it through the lens of how it helps us be a disciple of Jesus Christ and live our values. Move from governing to mission, from seeing everyone like your family to embracing diverse expressions of faith, and value values as a guide for your living.

Keep the faith!

John Schol
Bishop
The United Methodist Church
of Greater New Jersey

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THE RELAY
The United Methodist Church of Greater New Jersey

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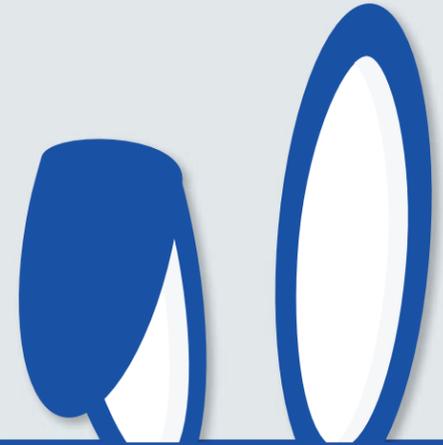
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FOR ADVERTISING RATES, INFORMATION and PLACEMENT
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UP YOUR GAME FOR LENT, EASTER AND BEYOND!



UP YOUR WORSHIP SERVICE

Expect and welcome first-time guests.
But don't single them out!

Invite your congregation to participate in worship.

Design your service around one theme relevant to the community and/or world.

Challenge attendees toward taking action.

Begin and end on time.

UP YOUR VOLUNTEER TEAM

Be on the lookout for passionate, gifted people who could serve.

Set volunteers up for success: teach them how to do their jobs well.

Share vision and update how you do things through regular trainings.

Fill volunteer teams with people who reflect your neighborhood and want to serve.

Be less serious: Create a fun environment to serve.

UP YOUR WORSHIP SERIES

Communicate series with an engaging title, drawing people from outside the church.

Begin series with the end in mind. What is the journey your congregation will take this season?

Don't say everything the first week. Give one clear idea and create anticipation for what comes next.

Tell stories. Don't just speak to the head - communicate to the heart

Bring your message to life in ways other than the sermon. Think about setting the altar and worship space, consistent music, graphics images and more.

Recap - Each week, briefly introduce the series and how it's building

Plan in advance. Tie each week together and into Easter.



YEAR AT-A-GLANCE

2018 GNJ Key Dates & Deadlines

*Dates are subject to change. Please continue to check the GNJ Digest and specific district resources for further events and information.

MARCH

Thur.	1	Pre-Retirement Seminar	Alison Walsh
Sat.	3	Northern Region Day of Learning	Krystina Michalopoulos
Thur.	15	Annual Conference registration opens	Beverly Karlovich
Fri.	30	Good Friday	MRC closed
Sat.	31	GNJ scholarship applications deadline	Diana Picurro

APRIL

Sun. - Mon.	1-2	Easter	MRC closed
Tue.	3	IGNITE registration opens	Beverly Karlovich
		Quarterly check-ins due (new appointments only)	Regional Team
Sat.	21	Transition Workshop (new appointments only)	Regional Team
Sat.	28	Laity Recognition	Diana Picurro

MAY

Fri.	4	Annual Conference hotel registration deadline	Beverly Karlovich
Sat.	5	Transition Workshop (new appointments only)	Regional Team
Fri.	11	Spring 2018 Team Vital Grant applications deadline	Diana Picurro
Tue.	15	Clergy Evaluation deadline	Soomin Lee
		Vitality Goals Form deadline	Regional Team
Sun. - Tue.	20-22	Annual Conference	Beverly Karlovich
Mon.	21	Coaching registration opens	Diana Picurro
Mon.	28	Memorial Day	MRC closed

JUNE

Fri.	1	2017 Fund Balance Report deadline	Regional Team
		Coaching registration deadline	Diana Picurro
Sat.	2	Lay Servant Graduation	Diana Picurro
Sat.	30	Quarterly check-ins due (new appointments only)	Regional Team

JULY

Sun.	1	Fall 2018 Team Vital application deadline	Diana Picurro
		Church conference forms available online	Regional Team
Wed.	4	Independence Day	MRC closed

AUGUST

Wed.	1	Fall 2018 PaCE registration opens	Diana Picurro
Mon.	27	Coaching registration opens	Diana Picurro

SEPTEMBER

Mon.	3	Labor Day	MRC closed
Sat.	8	Communities of Hope commissioning	CMT
Mon.	10	Coaching registration deadline	Diana Picurro
Thur.	13	Bishop's Day on the Central Region	Deborah Sidorakis
Sat.	15	Fall 2018 PaCE registration deadline	Diana Picurro
Wed. - Thur.	19-20	Bishop's Day on the Southern Region	Jennifer Creran
Fri. - Sun.	28-30	IGNITE	Beverly Karlovich
Sun.	30	Quarterly check-ins due (new appointments only)	Regional Team

OCTOBER

Mon.	1	Spring 2018 PaCE grant application deadline	Diana Picurro
Fri.	5	Congregational Development Grant applications due	CMT
Sat.	6	Laity Leadership Academy	Diana Picurro
		Skylands District Church Conferences: Session 1	Krystina Michalopoulos
Sat.	13	Gateway North District Church Conferences: Session 1	Krystina Michalopoulos
Sat.	20	Gateway South District Church Conferences	Jennifer Creran
Sat.	27	Palisades District Church Conferences (English)	Krystina Michalopoulos
Sun.	28	Palisades District Church Conferences (Korean)	Krystina Michalopoulos

NOVEMBER

Thur. - Thur.	1-15	Health Benefits open enrollment	Alison Walsh
Sat.	3	Gateway North District Church Conferences: Session 2	Krystina Michalopoulos
		Delaware Bay District Church Conferences	Jennifer Creran
Sun.	4	Skylands District Church Conferences: Session 2	Krystina Michalopoulos
Mon. - Wed.	12-14	Bishop's Convocation	Soomin Lee
Sat.	17	Central Region Super Saturday Church Conferences	Deborah Sidorakis
		Cape Atlantic District Church Conferences	Jennifer Creran
Thur. - Sun.	22-25	Thanksgiving	MRC closed
Tue. - Wed.	27-28	Bishop's Day on the Northern Region	Krystina Michalopoulos
Fri.	30	Laity Academy grant application deadline	Diana Picurro

DECEMBER

Sat.	1	Fall 2018 PaCE registration opens	Diana Picurro
Tue.	4	Year-End Statistical Training: Northern Region	Krystina Michalopoulos
Wed.	5	Year-End Statistical Training: Central Region	Deborah Sidorakis
Thur.	12-14	Year-End Statistical Training: Southern Region	Jennifer Creran
Fri.	14	Fall 2018 Team Vital grant application deadline	Diana Picurro
Mon. - Tue.	24-25	Christmas	MRC closed
Sun.	30	Quarterly check-in's due (new appointments only)	Regional Team

Annual Conference to Create Space for Spirit Movement

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

WILDWOOD – For Greater New Jersey, this year’s Annual Conference might feel a bit different from years past. The 2018 “Miracles Everywhere” agenda is designed to include more opportunity to spread and share the powerful, life-changing ministries in GNJ and create room for the Holy Spirit to move among us.

“Miracles are happening everywhere and this annual conference session will celebrate God’s wonders in our midst and the more marvelous works God wants to do in our midst,” said Bishop John Schol. “The annual conference session is more than legislation, more than business, it is God’s opportunity to break in and bless us.”

Eric Drew, Director of Worship is helping compile a ‘Miracles Everywhere’ sermon series package for GNJ pastors. He believes miracles are all about expectation.

“Take the Lead”

Continued from page 1

about where to begin, workshop attendees will hear from the team at Kingston UMC whose ministry with young adults launched the Feed Truck and then has gone beyond.



Rev. Michael Mather of Broadway UMC in Indianapolis will be the keynote speaker at “Take the Lead” on March 3 at Bethany Wayne UMC. Photo provided

Rev. Gina Yeske, Director of Small Groups, will be presenting “Big Ideas for Every Small Group Leader” begging the question of what’s next for small group and uncovering new ways to bring vitality to a group’s ministry.

“Our communities are a mosaic of cultures, languages, abilities and orientations,” said Rev. Lyssette Perez of the UMC of The Rockaways. Along with her colleagues Rosario Quinones and Alma Matos, Perez will direct a Contemporary Bilingual Multicultural Worship Workshop aimed at providing tools and ideas to develop this kind of worship as a means of outreach to all people.

“For many years and generations, churches have been the one place that has been pretty homogeneous,” she said. “It has been said that eleven o’clock on Sunday morning is the most segregated hour of the week. However, if we walk through any city or town, we will see all sorts of people and shops, hear voices in different languages and smell a variety of foods from different restaurants. We celebrate the cultural diversity in our congregations.”

Perez encourages workshop attendees to bring open hearts, a Bible and any instruments they may have.

Seeing conflict as a transformative experience through leadership and conflict resolution will also be featured in a session led by Rev. Dr. Steve Bechtold, Skyland District Superintendent. Bechtold invites anyone experiencing a situation that needs resolution in one’s church, community or life to join a discussion to learn how to lead in the process of conflict resolution.

An afternoon plenary with Trey Wince, Director of New Disciples will explore how to take next steps and put learning into practice. Additionally, Rev. Jana Purkis-Brash, Executive Director and Brian Mickle, Director of Development, from the United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey will be on-site to provide resourcing information and answer questions.

To find out more about Take the Lead and to register, visit gnjumc.org/events/takethelead



“It is about expecting that God is present, and God will do great things among us and through us,” he said, mentioning how in other cultures such as Central America and Asia where Christianity has rapidly spread, believers expect that God is working everywhere and at all times.

“When they pray, they expect that their prayers will be answered,” he said. “It is the act of letting miracles happen rather than legitimizing, and really believing in God’s presence and power.”

“Would we be surprised if God came into our meeting or into our preaching in a way we had never expected?” Schol asked. “Don’t look for God to come in a particular way, but do look for God to come. As followers of Christ, we must learn to give God elbow room. Live in a constant state of expectancy, and leave



Junius Dotson
human understanding.”

The 2018 Annual Conference will celebrate the recovery work of A Future With Hope and what’s next for the ministry as it embarks on regenerative transformation to bring about Hope Centers across GNJ. Updates from The United Methodist Stewardship Foundation of Greater New Jersey, The Centenary Fund,

room for God to come as God decides.”

Drew concurred. “Don’t put God in the box and expect that God will do what we want. God moves in ways that go beyond

United Methodist Communities and GNJ’s Next Generation initiative will also be highlighted. Mission partners will be celebrated including GNJ’s commitment to Puerto Rico’s recovery following last year’s devastating hurricane, support for the North Katanga Episcopal Area in Africa and a Rise Against Hunger mission project.



Susan Henry-Crowe

Rev. Junius Dotson, General Secretary of Discipleship Ministries will be joining the conference to share about making, shaping and engaging passionate disciples of Christ. Additionally, General Secretary of the Board of Church and Society, Rev. Susan T. Henry-Crowe will be returning and speaking on breaking the cycle and eliminating poverty in communities.

Legislation items will include budget, shared ministries formula, pension, equitable compensation, discontinuance of churches, and cemetery reports. The deadline to submit legislation online is Feb. 14. Visit gnjumc.org/2018-annual-conference for details.



TAKE THE LEAD

TOOLS FOR LAITY

Laity, bring your pastors for a resource day in the Northern Region with a special afternoon session dedicated to applying what is learned for your ministry and community.

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FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER AT:
www.gnjumc.org/events/takethelead



FEATURING
REV. MIKE MATHER



Rev. Michael Mather has served as pastor of the Broadway United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, Indiana for the past 13 years and has been a United Methodist pastor for 31 years.

Before graduating from Drew Theological Seminary, Michael grew up in small towns in Southern Indiana.

He is a faculty member of the asset-based Community Development Institute at DePaul University and is the author of an upcoming release titled “*Having Nothing, Possessing Everything: Finding Abundant Communities in Unexpected Places.*”

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CHART A NEW COURSE?
Hear the story of Broadway United Methodist Church and how it has created new ways to connect and support the surrounding community.

LEARN MORE ABOUT REV. MICHAEL MATHER AT:
www.broadwayumc.org and at www.gnjumc.org/events/takethelead

Seeking Stories for 'Miracles Everywhere' Series

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE – Starting in March, a new Relay series will highlight miracles taking place in our midst. Building off of the 2018 Annual Conference theme 'Miracles Everywhere' the series seeks to shed light on often overlooked miracles in our lives, churches and communities.

"A miracle doesn't have to be a huge moment," said Bishop John Schol. "We can shift our perspectives to see that miracles are happening all around us. Let's strive to open our minds and hearts, shifting our perspective to see the miracles that are everywhere."

In 2017, a Relay series profiled "Apostles in our Midst" highlighting apostolic mission within GNJ and the apostles behind the ministries. This year's article series seeks to not only build upon the resulting stories of apostolic leadership but also the more personal, intimate and relationship-centered miracles occurring across GNJ.

Whether it's a specific ministry, person, or instance where one has experienced a miracle or has been a miracle to someone else, The Relay wants GNJ to go public and share God's miracles throughout our connection.

"As the church navigates through liminal times (a transitional time on the edge of what God has next for the church), the Spirit is calling GNJ to address our adaptive challenge and engage in new possibilities with courage," said Eric Drew, Director of Worship. "We are called to continue to imagine and discern innova-

tive ways to effectively be in ministry in and with the community so that we cultivate transformational leaders who make disciples and grow vital congregations to transform the world."

Drew, who is helping compile and strategize a 'Miracles Everywhere' sermon series package for GNJ pastors went on to say that it is not us but God who performs the miracles.

"It is shifting the focus to God, not what we do," he said. "It is by the power of God that makes miracles happen, not by our own doing. We need to glorify God's work through us."

In a recent worship service for the staff of the Mission and Resource Center, Bishop Schol shared that we tend to focus on why things happen in the midst of hardship and unexpected situations.

"We need to focus on what we can do and who can do," he said. "It is about shifting our attitude to actively seek how we can turn those situations around and become active participants of God's miracles."

Story Submissions Sought

The Relay invites readers to share their miracle stories. If you have a story you would like to share, please email Josh Kinney, Editorial Manager at jkinney@gnjumc.org. Please share this information with other church leaders and members.

"God is creating signs and wonders in GNJ and there is even more God wants to do," exclaimed Schol. "God wants to continue working through the United Methodists of Greater New Jersey so that miracles of healing and transformation



GNJ representatives assess damage left from Hurricane Maria and help plan long-term recovery efforts. Photo provided

occur across GNJ and around the world."

Living the Miracles

One example of exactly that is GNJ's commitment to serving as living, working miracles to the people of Puerto Rico following last year's devastation from Hurricane Maria. United Methodists in Greater New Jersey are already preparing for a miracle for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Puerto Rico. On Dec. 27, 2017, a team from GNJ embarked on a trip to Puerto Rico to assist with the organizing of recovery efforts. Bishop Hector Ortiz invited Bishop John Schol and a small team to meet with his staff and leaders about the long-term recovery of the island based on A Future With Hope's Sandy recovery ministry and talent. In 2017, GNJ raised more than \$400,000 for hurricane relief.

Additionally, a container of relief supplies sent by GNJ to Puerto Rico was recently released by U.S. customs and delivered to the Methodist Church of Puerto Rico Metro area distribution center to be spread among impact areas.

The United Methodist Committee on Recovery (UMCOR) has begun coordinating Emergency Relief Teams (ERTs) to Puerto Rico. The first teams to be deployed will be Specialized Early Response Teams and will be oriented to address circumstances unique to this location and situation beyond the general scope of work for more traditional ERTs. Several ERT training sessions for di-



The Esperanza for Puerto Rico container has been released by U.S. customs and GNJ donations were delivered to Methodist Church of PR Metro area distribution center to be distributed in most impacted areas. Photo provided

Photo provided

saster response will be held in February, March and April. Additionally, a United Methodist Volunteers in Mission (UMVIM) leadership training session will be held March 10 at Westwood UMC. Visit gnjumc.org/events for details.

For more information on GNJ Disaster Response go to: gnjumc.org/disaster-response



On Dec. 27, 2017, a team from GNJ embarked on a trip to Puerto Rico to assist with the organizing of recovery efforts after the recent hurricanes. Photo provided

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GNJ Podcast Reaches Across Denomination, Female Co-Host Sought



Pictured above: Erik "Skitch" Matson and Jess Winderweede join podcast host James Lee and former co-host Kaitlynn Deal on a video podcast episode about starting new, creative ministries. Photo by Josh Kinney

By Josh Kinney
jkinney@gnjumc.org

NEPTUNE – Are you listening? The Uncovered Dish Christian Leadership Podcast of Greater New Jersey is resounding across the denomination. Pastor Olu Brown of Impact Church in Atlanta, a large, multicultural United Methodist congregation committed to sharing Christ's love, reached out to Visual Arts Manager and podcast co-host and founder James Lee to say, "I really love listening."



Rev. Olu Brown, founding pastor of Impact Church in Atlanta, shares his love for The Uncovered Dish podcast and is scheduled to be a featured guest on an upcoming episode. Photo provided by Impact Church

"You have such a great show, and I am quite fond of tuning in," said Brown. "The show is great and I am really looking forward to your next episode."

Brown specifically praised the "Political Divide and Church Unity" episode featuring Rev. Chuck Mitchell of Delanco UMC and Rev. Lysette Perez of the UMC of the Rockaways.

Brown was invited to speak on the podcast and was featured in a recent episode. Additionally, Lee was invited to speak on Impact Church's podcast.

The GNJ ministry podcast was launched in Fall 2016 as a tool designed specifically for GNJ leaders. However, the soundwaves are echoing across the nation as many Christian leaders have tuned in.

"Podcasting was something we wanted to do for quite some time," said Lee. "As we moved into the Mission and Resource Center, we built into our media and productions studio the capacity to produce a podcast."

Dubbed "The Uncovered Dish" the podcast name plays off the beloved United Methodist tradition of a covered dish supper. Primarily centered on leadership, each episode covers a variety of themes. From church vitality, small groups, making new disciples, and worship, to interviews with various GNJ pastors, and local and statewide community leaders outside the church with valuable experience. Additionally, the podcast serves to cover and promote events within GNJ and some episodes have been featured as video podcasts.

Seeking Female Co-Host

The Uncovered Dish is actively seeking a new female co-host for 2018 to join Lee on-air. Anyone interested in joining the conversation and learning more about the world of Christian leadership and podcasting should contact James Lee at jlee@gnjumc.org

"A good host is someone who makes the audience feel included in the hangout and facilitates the conversation in a way that produces great content," Lee said. "We want to create a podcast that serves and inspires pastors."

Listen, watch and find out more at gnjumc.org/podcast



Check Out Our Featured Episode:
**OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES:
A CONVERSATION ON BAPTISM**

Baptism is one of the two sacraments United Methodists practice. We primarily practice infant baptism - a time when a family comes in front of the congregation and promises to raise their child in the Christian faith. But after the baptism celebration stops, too often the actions of both the family and congregation do as well.

Much about baptism is shrouded in mystery. What does it do? What does it symbolize? Who should or shouldn't get baptized? How do you do it well and why does it matter? Find out all this and more on this episode of The Uncovered Dish.



Like, subscribe, download and share your thoughts!

WATCH & LISTEN TODAY AT:
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Camp Connects Youth to Go Deeper in Faith and Leadership

Continued from page 1

be built upon after camp is over," said Ryan Clements, Next Gen Coordinator. "Church experiences are wonderful but some connections, especially the more intimate ones, are sometimes better suited beyond those walls."

Camp staff and counselors at Pinelands Center at Mt. Misery are rallying under the leadership of Next Generation Ministry, GNJ's nonprofit partner the combines the ministry of youth, camping and campus programs including IGNITE and camping. They have been in prayer, gearing up to forge relationships and build connections at this summer's upcoming camping programs.

"I'm excited for the relationships that will form between campers from different churches across GNJ as well as the counselors," said Clements.

During the summer camping sessions, campers and counselors will be able to go deeper in their faith and Christian leadership with a full week dedicated to worship, spiritual connection and nature. Just a few months later, they will have a chance to reconnect as a larger body at

IGNITE on September 28-30 at the Wildwoods Convention Center in Wildwood.

Rev. Steve Bechtold, Skylands District Superintendent and proud advocate for camping ministries, believes the unique approach of the Next Gen initiative taking three distinct and separate entities of GNJ ministries (camping, campus ministries, and youth) and coordinating them so that each feed and support the others provides a more complete pathway for making and growing new disciples.

"Young people are not the church of tomorrow, they're the church of today," said Bechtold "And yet many young people are finding our congregations irrelevant, making it hard for them to fully engage in their growth as disciples."

"I am a product of camping programs, but my camp experience was largely disconnected from local church ministries, campus ministry and other programming for youth," he said. "I think one of the real benefits of this new initiative is that we'll have the opportunity to engage with young people in life-transforming ministries on many levels and can continue to

be in ministry with them throughout these important years when the church has an opportunity to help build a foundation for living that will last a lifetime."

Bechtold is particularly excited about helping local congregations with a smaller number of youth learn new ways for engagement that does not isolate young people but integrates them into the larger ministry both locally and beyond so more youth can find connection within in a congregation's youth group or just a handful their own age.

This summer, Next Gen Ministries will partner with Barefoot Republic Camp in a new and exciting, Christ-centered, multicultural experience focused on building unity within the Body of Christ for rising 6-8th graders. The partnership provides GNJ the opportunity to hold camp at Pinelands Center for the first time in three years. While the staff at Pinelands have hosted a myriad of retreats and school programs, Barefoot's program provides the center the chance to reinstate week-long overnight camping in 2018.

Additionally, a senior high leader-

ship camp will be held in July to grow leadership skills through active spiritual formation, hands-on mission training and opportunities, and leading for change.

"The relationships and ideas formed during this time will leave students equipped to start projects and initiatives at their churches," said Clements.

In August, Ninos Para Cristo & Jovenes Para Cristo camp will be held at Pinelands for all ages in an inclusive program for campers of all backgrounds to come experience God through the celebration of Latino culture and heritage.

"As technology consumes many young people, we're actively seeking ways to lessen its grip," said Clements. "Whether they realize it or not, kids are craving time away from their screens and tapping into a primal need to gather."

For the Next Gen team, the ideal backdrop of the wild places where the echoes of our communal past still resonate is a great place to start.

To find out more about Next Gen camps, programs, opportunities and contact info, visit gnjnextgen.org



NEXT GENERATION

UNITED METHODISTS
OF GREATER NEW JERSEY

The cost of a week of camp is simply out of reach for many families. GNJ is committed to not let cost be a barrier to any student wanting to attend our summer camps. This New Year, give to the GNJ Camp Scholarship Fund. Next Gen board members have enthusiastically agreed to give a "first fruits" gift of their own to get the fund started.

Donate today at: www.gnjnextgen.org



FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT 2018 SUMMER CAMPS OR REGISTRATION

Email Ryan Clements, NextGen Coordinator at rclements@gnjumc.org.

Medford Family Life Center Comes to Fruition

Continued from page 1

The building seats approximately 400 for worship and about 320 for dinner. As for recreation, it is set up for high school regulation volleyball and half-court basketball.

"We have state-of-the-art tech, a great sound system, cameras and recording equipment for live streaming worship and theatrical lighting," said Monahan. "It encompasses the large room, stage, kitchen, welcome area, storage, two classrooms and a nursery."

The building is currently being used mostly for worship and youth programming though it has hosted several district events.

Monahan added that the church receives calls almost daily asking about using the Family Life Center.

"We have had interest from several different community organizations including some art groups and local camps.

is approximately \$2.7 million dollars with the church conducting three capital campaigns to raise funds

"The latest campaign gathered commitments of over \$1 million and we are still collecting those pledges that will wrap up in February 2019," said Monahan. "We worked with Horizons Stewardship on our last campaign and when we are done we are projecting a mortgage of about \$600,000."

The process of having the center built has been a long one with much work to navigate approvals not only at the township level but also from Burlington County and from the Pinelands Commission.

"It was very challenging and required a tremendous amount of perseverance," he said. "Along the way, we had to conduct three capital campaigns to raise the money and we also had to undergo three redesigns to create a project that met our needs and was affordable."



An outside view of Medford UMC's new Family Life Center. Photo provided

portant," stated Monahan. "In terms of the actual construction, we did the site and utility work phase in the fall and winter of 2015, then the building construction itself began in May 2017 and was completed in December."

The Family Life Center is located on the church property which is comprised of the main church building, sanctuary, fellowship hall, offices and an education wing housing a preschool and other classrooms.

"We built this church in the early 1970s and added the education wing in the early 1980s," Monahan said. "Also on the property is what had been the parsonage - it is now called The Annex and we use it for the youth programming and small group ministry."

The original Medford UMC was at another location in the village of Medford from the 1820s until the 1970s when the church moved to its present location.

Monahan explained that the center was largely driven by a need for more worship space. Contemporary worship was held in a hall that held only about 140 people comfortably.

"Since we opened we have had 150 to 200 in our contemporary worship service each week," he said. "It was also really important to us to provide a space where

our youth could have a good time to play sports and games. We think this space provides us with an excellent opportunity to connect with and partner with the community in new ways."

And now that the Family Life Center has finally come to fruition, Monahan recollected that one of the most important parts of the construction process was prayer.

"Throughout the process we took the building itself very seriously and thought through details carefully," he said. "But we also understood that the building was really just a container for ministry. We had a ton of creative ideas around prayer. Our Associate Pastor Kathleen Stolz also played a huge role. We surrounded the construction with prayers - written on structural steel, hidden in the wall, and painted by children on stones we scattered around the foundation. The prayers were tangible reminders along the way of how God is faithful to us when we persevere in prayer and faith. There were many times when I heard, 'This will never get done.' At times, I thought that to myself. But God is faithful."

For more information about the Family Life Center at Medford UMC visit medfordumc.org or call 609-654-8111.



A packed house of over 400 attended the opening ceremony service on Dec. 17, 2017 for the Medford UMC's Family Life Center. Photo provided

We have also been approached about potentially hosting a voting location in the new building. We are sorting through who the right partners are for us and how to prioritize usage. We hung a large (12' high) backlit cross and flame on the building and since then, the inquiries have increased dramatically."

Church member Gordon Curtis was the project manager invested in the effort from the beginning. Bill Frame led the original building committee and church member Michael Pagnotta was the original architect.

"Ultimately it wasn't Mike's plan we built but he and Bill helped us get the approvals needed which was super im-

Hope Church Launches Second Location



Hope Church's second location launched at the Thomas E. Harrington Middle School in Mount Laurel on Jan. 21. Led by the same staff and leadership as the Voorhees campus, the new church has a specific focus on outreach, hospitality, worship and children's ministries. Hope UMC has grown steadily into one of the largest churches in GNJ with more than 1,500 calling it their faith home.

Photos provided

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ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION & APPLICATION DETAILS:
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**For information and a Greater New Jersey Application
visit www.gnjumc.org or call Diana Picurro @ 732.359.1064.**

DEADLINE: SCHOLARSHIPS MUST BE POSTMARKED BY MARCH 31, 2018

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

National deadlines may vary

Centenary College United Methodist Scholarships

Centenary College offers annual scholarships to confirmed, active members of a United Methodist Church while maintaining satisfactory academic progress and reside on campus. Call, 1.800.236.8679 or visit www.centenarycollege.edu.

General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (National Loans and Scholarships)

For information and application forms for the The United Methodist Loans and Scholarships Program visit www.gbhem.org. Call the Loan Department at 615.340.7346 or the Scholarship Department at 615.340.7344.

CONFERENCE HAPPENINGS

2018 Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) Contribution

The Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) is provided to participants per approval by the Conference Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Effective January 1, 2018 all participants enrolled in HealthFlex received their annual HRA contribution from the Conference. Single participants received \$1,250 and all other participant types received \$2,500. The contribution was put into the Wageworks account/card and funds are available immediately. We do not offer a Flexible Spending Account (FSA) or a Health Savings Account (HSA) through the HealthFlex Plan. Churches are responsible to enroll participants into their own FSA. The church's plan must have a written Plan Document and Enrollment Form. A Plan Form is required to change the amount withheld per IRS rules. Professional assistance is recommended to set up Section 125 Flexible Spending Plans.

Winter Preparedness

The cold and snow reminds us all to prepare our churches for winter. Visit gnjmc.org/disasterresponse and click on Disaster Response Resources to see resources recommended by Sovereign to winterize all church properties.

Email Fraud

Church email addresses and pastor emails are publicly accessible online. While most people will use this information to find a local place of worship or make a contact about a spiritual need, these addresses are available to businesses for solicitation and to con artists as a part of a scam. Learn more about how you can avoid email fraud and scams at gnjmc.org/email-fraud

Registration Open for Local Pastors Licensing School

2018 Local Pastors Licensing school dates are Feb. 16-17, April 6-7, May 11-12, June 22-23. All meetings will be held at The Mission and Resource Center. Visit gnjmc.org/ordained-ministry-2 for details and to register.

Spring 2018 Basic, Advanced Lay Servant Classes

Lay Servants combine words and actions in leadership roles within their churches and communities. Spring 2018 Advanced and Basic Lay Servant Classes are open for registration. Visit gnjmc.org/what-is-lay-servant-ministries for details and to register

Pre-Retirement Seminar - March 1

GNJ's Board of Pension and Health Benefits is presenting a Pre-retirement Seminar for pastors and their spouses. A benefits educator from Wespath will speak on retirement planning on March 1 at the Mission and Resource Center for those planning to retire in the next five years. The session will also feature a speaker from the Social Security Administration on Social Security and Medicare. Visit gnjmc.org/events to register.

Lay Ministry Recognition 2018

To nominate a person or group in your church for Lay Ministry Recognition to honor their creativity and innovation in transforming lives and making disciples of Jesus Christ, visit gnjmc.org/lay-ministry-recognition-2018-nomination-form to submit before March 4. Laity will be recognized on April 28 at the Mission and Resource Center.

Scholarships Offered for 2018 UMEIT:USA and NWCUC Events

The Council of Bishops is offering scholarships for young adults (age 21-35) to attend the 2018 United Methodist Ecumenical and Interreligious Training (UMEIT:USA) and the National Workshop on Christian Unity (NWCUC) this Spring. To receive a scholarship application, email Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst, Ecumenical Staff Officer, The Council of Bishops, at jhawxhurst@umc-cob.org no later than Feb. 28.

ACT Now to End Racism

The United Methodist Church is joining other churches in the United States to bring thousands of Christians to the Washington, D.C. National Mall on April 4 for a rally and kick-off event hosted by the National Council of Churches in the U.S. to promote racial justice. The United Methodist Council of Bishops encourages United Methodists who are able to attend. Visit nationalcouncilofchurches.us/actnow for more info.

Best Practices are Worth Sharing

Best practices are worth sharing because there may be ideas that will help your congregation. Visit gnjmc.org/excellence-in-communication to see examples of best practice for gaining clarity about the mission and ministries of disciples in a congregation, aligning the congregation to a common purpose, set of expectations, and how to engage. Share your best practices by sending them to Brittney Reilly, Online and Digital Communications Manager at breilly@gnjmc.org

Facing the Future Conference

"Facing The Future" - a resourcing event organized by GCORR for pastors in cross racial and cross cultural appointments will be held May 7-9 in Newark, NJ. Visit facingthefuture2018.com for more info and to register. The next price break is Feb. 28.

Toolkit: What Then Shall We Say

The Commission on Race and Religion has produced a toolkit resource in response to recent attacks on several African, Caribbean and Central American nations. Bishop Schol's prayer is highlighted as part of the kit. Visit gcorr.org/what-then-shall-we-say to learn more.

Racial Ethnic Grants

The General Board of Global Ministries invites you to apply for grants that will be awarded in Spring 2018. The deadline is Feb. 23. These grants have assisted nonprofits, churches, annual conferences, and other community organizers in the areas of leadership and congregational development, ministry with the poor and health ministries. Visit umcmmission.org for more info

Save the Date for Local Church Communications School – March 7

Developed especially for local-church communicators and pastors, this event on March 7 will expose you to some of the latest technology and practices in the communications industry and is aimed at helping the local church thrive in its mission. Topics include conducting a communications audit, latest technologies, marketing and automation, podcasting, Facebook Live and taking your church online. Check the GNJ weekly Digest e-newsletter for updates.

Apply for Ethnic Young Adult summer internship

The Global Board of Church and Society of the UMC is now accepting applications for their 2018 Summer Ethnic Young Adult program. This eight-week intensive program is designed for young justice-seekers willing to work in the intersections of faith, advocacy and social change while working with an organization engaged in addressing social injustices. This is an opportunity for vocational discernment, leadership development, learning more about of United Methodist connection and faith formation. Application due March 1. Visit umcjustice.org for more info.

Campus Ministries

Want to find out more about campus ministry? Check out our GNJ churches who have campus outreach programs at gnjnextgen.org

OBITUARIES

Harvey Hewitt, Spouse of Retired Full Elder, Rev. June Hewitt, died on Nov. 5, 2017. A Celebration of Life was held on Nov. 11, 2017 at Resurrection UMC in Durham, NC. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to June Hewitt, 3211 Angus Rd., Durham, NC 27705-5401

Johnnie R. White, Retired local pastor died on Jan. 16. A viewing and memorial service took place on Jan. 19 at Hamilton UMC in Atlantic City. Memorial donations (in lieu of flowers) may be sent in memory of Johnnie R. White to Hamilton UMC, 609 Arctic Ave., Atlantic City, NJ 08401

Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Carol White, 1825 North Arkansas Ave., Atlantic City, NJ 08401

Ranch Hope Celebrates 60th Anniversary of Ranch Hope Radio

Ranch Hope is celebrating its 60th year on radio. To commemorate this milestone, Rev. Dave Bailey, Sr. hosted a celebration dinner on January 11. Nearly 200 people attended the event at the Catholic Community of the Holy Spirit Parish Center in Woodstown, which included a buffet dinner, music by Jeff and Sue Duffield, and an uplifting and entertaining address by Dr. Tony Campolo. Special recognition was given to Ranch Hope Radio supporters, both past and present. Awards were presented in memory of P. A. Alger, Ed Bold, Newt Grice, Fritz Harz, Paul Hunsberger, Rev. Paul Pedrick, Lester Rook, Sr., and Bill Sparks. Honorees included Aldine UMC Duck Supper, Pierson Bailey, Darlene Davis, Larry and Carol Dunn, Jeff and Sue Duffield, Jack Hibbard, George Krementz, Charles Lee, George Moore, Jack Moore, Rev. Don Polk, Nancy

Reeves, Bob Robinson, Fred Sharkey and Bob Smith.

Rev. Dave Bailey, Sr. started his radio broadcasts with The Wondrous Story on WSNJ in Bridgeton on November 7, 1957. To date, more than 20,000 programs have aired to bring sermons, news items and Gospel music to listeners in the region. Ranch Hope has been a member of the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) for over 40 years, and in 1998 received the NRB Eastern Chapter's Percy Award. Rev. Bailey and Ranch Hope also received NRB's prestigious national recognition for 50 years on Christian radio.

Listen to The Wondrous Story weekday mornings on LIFT-FM (98.5, 97.9 and 103.3) and PRAISE-FM (88.1, 88.9 and 100.9), as well as online any time at www.wondrousstory.org. For more info about Ranch Hope, visit www.ranchhope.org.

GIVE YOURSELF A PRESENT - WINTER RESPITE

Are you a caregiver seeking a break from responsibilities, desiring a winter vacation, investigating senior living options, or needing other support for your loved one?

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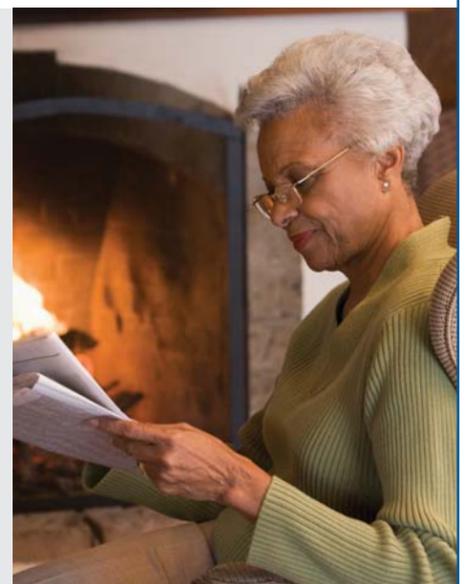
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Collingswood | 856-854-4331

Pitman

UMCommunities.org/Pitman
Pitman | 856-589-7800

The Shores

UMCommunities.org/TheShores
Ocean City | 609-399-8505

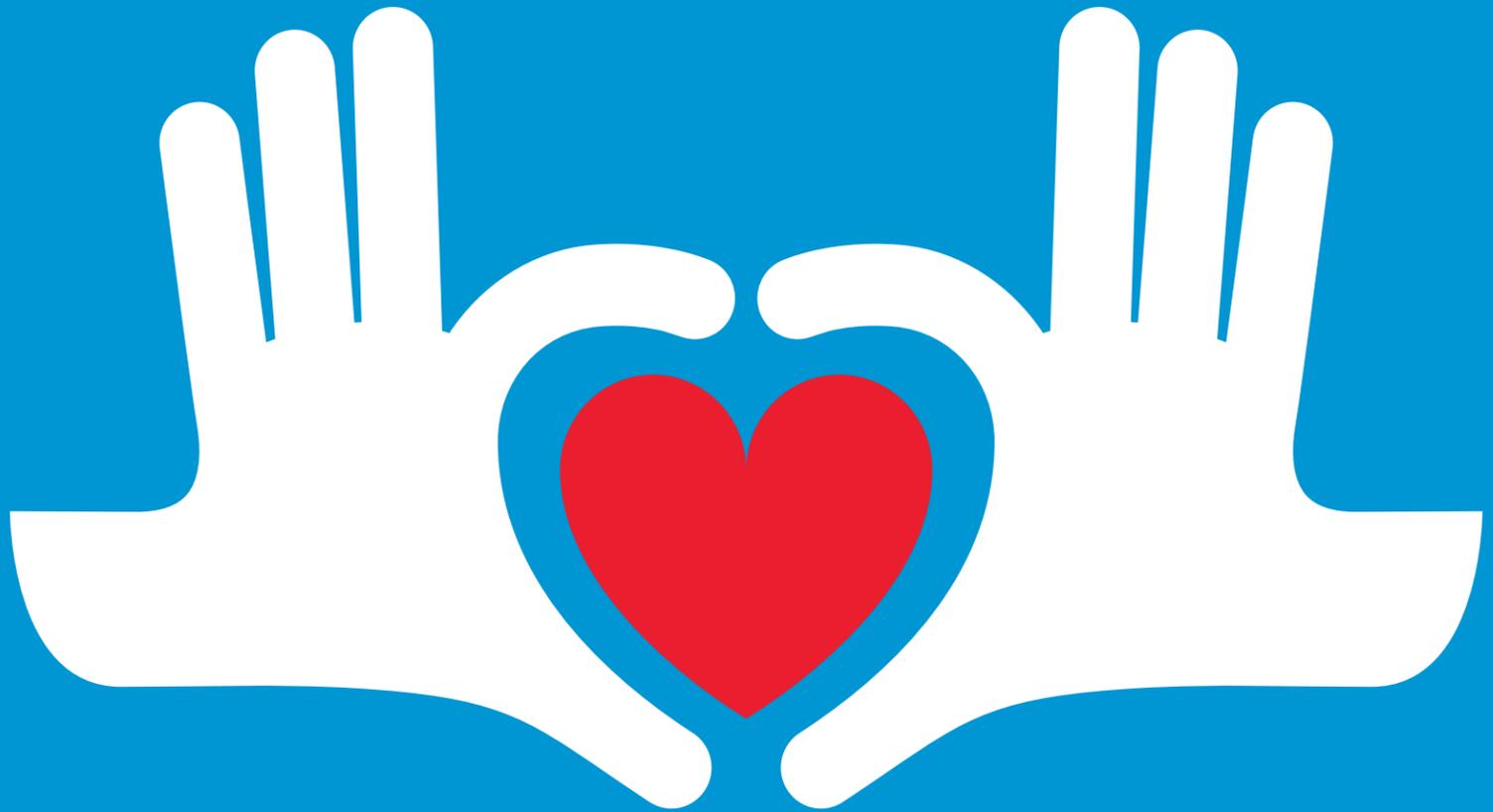


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HERE IN GREATER NEW JERSEY!

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