



CAUSEWAY CARES DONATES VAN TO EXPAND OCEAN’S HARBOR HOUSE OUTREACH AND YOUTH SERVICES

Vehicle donation provides critical transportation for street and community outreach, programming and young adults in residence

TOMS RIVER, NJ – Causeway CAREs, funded by the Wintrode Family Foundation, has donated a van to Ocean’s Harbor House, providing the organization with an important new resource to support its programs, expand community outreach and provide transportation for young adults in its care.

The van was donated as part of the Causeway CAREs Vehicle Donation Program, an initiative that provides vehicles to local nonprofit organizations where reliable transportation can directly enhance their ability to serve the community.

For Ocean’s Harbor House, having dedicated transportation will make an impact across several areas of the organization. The van will support its Intensive Street Outreach and Wellness Support Program, allowing staff to meet young people where they are and provide basic necessities, mental health and wellness support, and connections to housing and other critical services.

Just as importantly, the vehicle will strengthen Ocean’s Harbor House’s broader community outreach efforts and provide much-needed transportation for young adults in its residential program when emergent needs arise. Whether connecting with young people in the community, supporting outreach activities or helping a resident access an essential service, the van gives staff greater flexibility to respond when and where they are needed.

“It takes a village, and we are so thankful that Causeway CAREs and the Wintrode Family Foundation are part of



From left: Kaitlyn Strohmeier, Marketing Manager, Causeway Family of Dealerships; Chris Varner, Used Vehicle Merchandising Manager, Causeway Family of Dealerships; Joe Stroppolino, Director of Advertising and Marketing, Causeway Family of Dealerships/Causeway CAREs; Mary Teresa Bijeau, Director of Administration, Ocean's Harbor House; Jenny Allen, Director of Programs, Ocean's Harbor House; Dawn Samaritano, Chief Financial Officer, Ocean's Harbor House; David Wintrode, President, Causeway Family of Dealerships/Causeway CAREs; Ann Marie Baker, President, Design 446

ours,” said Dawn Samaritano, Chief Financial Officer and Co-Executive of Ocean’s Harbor House, who will accept the donation on behalf of the organization. “This is such a meaningful donation that will change the lives and futures of the young people we serve. Having reliable transportation allows our team to reach more young people, build relationships and connect them with the support and resources they need to move forward.”

Donna Carlson, Chief Operating Officer and Co-Executive of Ocean’s Harbor House, added, “Having dedicated transportation is an important resource for our entire organization. This van will strengthen our street and community outreach, support our programming and help us respond to the emergent transportation needs of the young adults in our residence. It gives our team another way to be there for young people when they need us most.”

Founded in 2004 and funded by the Wintrode Family Foundation, Causeway CAREs partners with nonprofit and

community organizations throughout Ocean County to address local needs and strengthen the organizations serving the region. Its Vehicle Donation Program is one of the many ways Causeway CAREs provides practical resources that can have an immediate and lasting impact.

For nearly four decades, Ocean’s Harbor House has provided housing, outreach and supportive services for vulnerable teens and young adults. Through transitional living, education, workforce development, life skills, wellness support and community outreach, the organization helps young people move toward greater stability and independence.

The new van represents far more than transportation. It provides Ocean’s Harbor House with a critical resource that connects its programs, its outreach efforts and the young people it serves, helping the organization extend its reach throughout the community while responding to the everyday and emergent needs of young adults in its care.

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The

Causeway Gazette

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About Ocean’s Harbor House

Ocean’s Harbor House is a nonprofit organization in Toms River, New Jersey, providing transitional housing, supportive services and outreach for teens and young adults experiencing homelessness, housing instability or crisis. Serving the community for nearly four decades, Ocean’s Harbor House helps youth build pathways toward stable housing and independence through individualized case management, life skills training, workforce development, education, wellness support and community-based resources. Through its residential and outreach programs, the organization is committed to preventing youth homelessness and empowering young people throughout Ocean County and the surrounding region to build stable, self-sustaining futures. To learn more, visit oceansharborhouse.org.

To learn more about Causeway CAREs, please visit CausewayCARES.com or email Joe.Stroppolino@CausewayCars.com.



The
Wintrode
Family
Foundation



Causeway CAREs’ mission is to make a direct and profound impact in and around Ocean County in the areas of education, food security and quality of life. Founded in 2004 and funded by The Wintrode Family Foundation, Inc., Causeway CAREs strives to make the community a better place to live grow and thrive. To learn more, visit CausewayCARES.com.

OCEAN COUNTY YMCA HONORS COMMUNITY LEADERS AT 2026 RED TRIANGLE RECEPTION

Causeway CAREs and Wintrode Family Foundation Recognized with Community Partner Award

TOMS RIVER, N.J – The Ocean County YMCA recently celebrated community leadership, service and philanthropy at its 2026 Red Triangle Reception, held August 27, recognizing individuals and organizations whose commitment has helped strengthen the YMCA and the greater Ocean County community.

Among this year’s honorees were **Causeway CAREs and the Wintrode Family Foundation**, recipients of the Community Partner Award in recognition of their longstanding commitment to the Ocean County YMCA and the many children, families and individuals it serves. **Nicole and Justin Alsobrooks** were also recognized during the evening for their dedication and service to the Y and the community.

For more than two decades, Causeway CAREs and the Wintrode Family Foundation have invested in programs and organizations that address education, food security and quality of life throughout Ocean County. Founded in 2004 and funded by the Wintrode Family Foundation, Causeway CAREs was created to make a direct and meaningful impact in the communities served by the Causeway Family of Dealerships.

That commitment has been especially evident through the Wintrode family’s longstanding relationship with the Ocean County YMCA.

Over the years, their support has helped fund swim lessons for children in the Lakewood Head Start program and, in 2018, provided the YMCA with a transit van that expanded YKids programming and aquatic outreach to underserved communities. When the COVID-19 pandemic changed the needs of the community, that same vehicle became an important resource, allowing the Y to deliver meals to individuals who were ill or unable to shop for themselves.

In 2021, the Wintrode Family Foundation provided the funding to launch Toms River Young Adults, an 18-to-21 transition program created in partnership with Toms River Regional Schools and the Ocean County YMCA. The program gives participating students opportunities to take part in swimming, yoga, functional fitness and shared lunchtime activities, helping them develop healthy habits, independence and meaningful social connections.

“The YMCA has always been about bringing people together and giving people opportunities, and that is something our family strongly believes in,” said **Dave Wintrode Sr.** “We have been fortunate to be able to support programs here that make a real difference. When you see children learning to swim, young adults gaining confidence and people receiving help when they need it most, you see what community is all about. We are very proud of our relationship with the Ocean County YMCA and truly honored by this recognition.”

The Community Partner Award was presented by **Ann Marie Baker, Ocean County YMCA Board Member and President of Design 446**, who recognized the Wintrode family’s history of responding not only with financial support, but with a willingness to identify needs and help create solutions.

The Red Triangle has long represented the YMCA’s commitment to strengthening spirit, mind and body. The annual Red Triangle Reception celebrates the people and partners whose leadership, volunteerism and generosity help the Y advance its mission of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

Through partnerships like those with Causeway CAREs and the Wintrode Family Foundation, the Ocean County YMCA continues to provide opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn, grow, connect and thrive.



From Left: David Wintrode Jr, Joseph Strollofino, Dave Wintrode Sr, Ann Marie Baker, Dylan Wintrode, David Manzo, Michael Rittaco

About Ocean County YMCA

The Ocean County YMCA, located in Toms River, is committed to strengthening the community through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Through aquatics, health and wellness, child care, youth and family programs, community outreach and financial assistance, the Y works to ensure that individuals and families have opportunities to reach their full potential.

About Causeway CAREs and the Wintrode Family Foundation

Founded in 2004 and funded by the Wintrode Family Foundation, Causeway CAREs works to make a direct and profound impact throughout Ocean County in the areas of education, food security and quality of life. Through charitable giving, community partnerships, volunteerism and collaborative initiatives, Causeway CAREs supports nonprofit organizations working to make Ocean County a better place to live, grow and thrive.

CONNECTION IS A COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY: Addressing the Growing Epidemic of Senior Isolation

By Laurie Goganzer,
President & CEO, YMCA of the Jersey Shore and Ocean County YMCA

“To care for those who cared for us is one of the highest honors.” This quotation from author and public speaker Tia Walker is more than an inspirational statement. It’s a call to action – one that’s become increasingly critical as the number of Americans aged 65 and older will more than double over the next 40 years, according to the Urban Institute.

One of the major risk factors among senior citizens is social isolation. When left unaddressed, it has a measurable impact on quality of life. The National Institute for Health reports that social isolation has been associated with an increased risk of premature mortality from all causes.

This is not just a national problem. It’s a local one. Ocean County is home to the second largest senior population in New Jersey, with 23.3% of its residents aged 65 and older. Monmouth County isn’t far behind at 20.4%.

The message is clear: As a community, we need to rise to the occasion and meet the needs of our aging population, especially those who are vulnerable due to physical, mental, social or financial factors.

Connection, Community and Accessibility

The YMCA of the Jersey Shore understands how critical this mission is. We offer many programs designed specifically for seniors to promote physical well-being and social connection, including:

- Senior Wellness**
•**Veterans Pathway**
•**Diabetes and Chronic Disease Prevention**
- LIVESTRONG Cancer Support**
•**Senior Aquatics**

These programs not only get seniors moving. They get them out of the house and give them something to look forward to. I know we’re making a difference when I hear stories from our staff - stories about senior members checking in to the same class every week, laughing with friends, making new connections. They’re not just getting through the day, they’re living life to the fullest.

Last year, YMCA of the USA President and CEO Suzanne McCormick shared the results of a study conducted in partnership with NORC of the University of Chicago. The study found that older adults who visit YMCA facilities and participate in our programs showed significant increases in overall well-being and social connectedness.

We also understand many seniors live within a strict financial budget. Fortunately, we’re able to offer many of our senior programs to our members for free. The Y also offers a membership discount for retired veterans and seniors, and members of eligible Medicare and Medicaid insurance plans can receive a no-cost membership.

This wouldn’t be possible without grant funding, partnerships with organizations like Hackensack Meridian Health and the generous support of the larger community.



Left: Local seniors benefit from services including pet therapy, reducing isolation and improving quality of life. **Right:** Volunteers transport seniors to medical appointments, ensuring they receive the care they need. Photo Credit: CVCJ

Beyond Four Walls

We’ve always wanted to expand the level of support for seniors beyond the walls of our facilities. Thanks to our recent merger with Caregiver Volunteers of Central Jersey (CVCJ), we now offer a new array of services to seniors and can reach a greater proportion of vulnerable older adults, particularly in Ocean County.

Offerings such as transportation to medical appointments, grocery shopping assistance, friendly visits, therapy dogs, reassurance calls and other practical services reduce social isolation and improve quality of life while preserving dignity and independence.

But there’s more work to be done. Support services for isolated seniors often rely on volunteers. Given the fast-growing senior population at the Jersey Shore, there’s a constant shortage of help. If we don’t work together to close the gap, too many isolated older adults won’t receive the care and attention they deserve.

Let’s Rise to the Occasion Together

As Tia Walker so eloquently stated, it is truly an honor to care for those who have cared for us. It’s incumbent upon all of us to step up and take action.

This responsibility spans generations. Younger volunteers are a source of energy and spirit, while active older adults dedicated to helping their vulnerable peers foster a sense of camaraderie and inspiration. We are all called to action.

Together we can combat social isolation and make the Jersey Shore a place where seniors grow closer, stronger and feel like a valued part of the community.



Photo Credit: 3 Chicks That Click

Laurie Goganzer is president and CEO of the YMCA of the Jersey Shore and the Ocean County YMCA, which together deliver youth development, healthy living and social service programs to nearly 65,000 people in central New Jersey communities.

Learn more about the programs and services supporting older adults and how you can make a difference in combating senior isolation at ymcanj.org.

Family Promise of the Jersey Shore Hosting Its 13th Annual Gift Auction November 7th

Happy Autumn!

This is such a great time of year along the Jersey Shore. There's a fresh feel of fall in the air and yet the days still seem like summer with many wonderful happenings.

It's brilliant to start off this season with gratitude!

Thank you to the Wintrade Family Foundation, Inc., for the 9th Annual Causeway CAREs 5K last weekend!

Their "9 Years. 9 Nonprofits. 1 Big Impact." run was a great success benefiting nine local nonprofits including Family Promise of the Jersey Shore. Thanks to everyone who played a part in making a difference in our community with this special event.

We have our own special event coming up!



Our 13th Annual Gift Auction is Saturday, November 7th at St. Mary's Parish Center located at 100 Bishop Way in Manahawkin, NJ. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 cash at the door.

Please join us for our next event and enjoy a fun night out while supporting our important cause.

All proceeds from the night go directly to Family Promise of the Jersey Shore's mission of helping local families and individuals facing homelessness.

Tickets are available at St. Mary's Parish Office located at 747 West Bay Avenue in Barnegat, NJ 08005, Monday-Friday 9am-3pm and Saturday 10am-1pm.

For more information please contact Sabrina at 609-968-1888 or by email at sabrina@familypromisejerseyshore.org.

We are also seeking sponsors, volunteers and donations of gifts for the event.

Monetary donations may be sent online by texting "give" to 833-975-2970 or visit pushpay.com/g/familypromisejerseyshore to share your gift.

Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/FamilyPromiseJerseyShore and Instagram @familypromisejerseyshore for news and updates.

Thank you again for all your past and future support that makes it possible for Family Promise of the Jersey Shore to help local children, their families and others in need overcome homelessness.

Sincerely,
Jim Lowney
Public Affairs Manager
Family Promise of the Jersey Shore
jim@familypromisejerseyshore.org
www.familypromisejerseyshore.org



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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TICKETS CALL 609-968-1888
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Here's The Fine You'll Pay For Passing A Stopped School Bus In NJ

By Buehler, WOBN

School is back in session across most of New Jersey, and I always like to take a moment this time of year to talk about school bus safety while on the roads. A few years ago, while living in PA, I accidentally blew past a school bus that had its red lights on, and the repercussion for that was not fun, so now I like to take an abundance of caution and pass along the rules of the road to other drivers.

If you're driving down the road in the morning or the afternoon, and you see a school bus with its red lights on and stop sign out, that means you have to stop. It seems pretty self-explanatory, but still, we see videos all the time of people blowing past school buses. You should also be stopping with about 25 feet of distance between you and the school bus, according to News 12.

There is an exception to this rule, however, and that's if you're on a divided highway with a raised median. In that instance, oncoming traffic doesn't need to stop, but you do need to



Vasyl / stock.adobe.com

reduce your speed to about 10 miles per hour. And sometimes, mistakes happen, and you end up coming close to, or blowing right by, a school bus that's got its red lights on and stop sign out, so what's the punishment?

You could see up to 5 points on your license and a fine of \$250 coming at you, and nowadays, school buses are equipped with cameras to catch drivers who pass them while stopped.

You can always use my rule of thumb when I see a school bus as well: when in doubt, just stop.

wobn.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

PRESENTED BY 



ANNUAL OCC VIKING 5K AND FUN RUN

Lace up your running shoes in support of Ocean County College! This event is an annual tradition aimed at supporting the Foundation's mission of enhancing access to higher education for Ocean County residents through scholarships and awards.

Sunday, October 4, 2026 at 7:30am



THE 25TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

Tee off for a good cause at Pine Barrens Golf Club. This annual event assists the Foundation in its mission to make higher education more accessible to Ocean County residents through scholarships and awards.

Tuesday, October 13, 2026 at 9:30am



THE FACES OF FAITHS: A JOURNEY THROUGH WORLD RELIGIONS

This fall, The Free School continues The Faces of Faiths: A Journey through World Religions with an in-depth exploration of one of the world's most influential and diverse religious traditions: Buddhism.

Mondays, November 2, 9, 16 & 23 at 6:00pm



A CONVERSATION WITH TRAVIS MILLS

An inspiring evening with retired U.S. Army Staff Sergeant, veteran advocate, and bestselling author Travis Mills as he shares his powerful journey of resilience, overcoming adversity, and recalibrating life.

Monday, November 9, 2026 at 6:00pm

Learn More: OCCFoundation.org



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ASK A MASTER GARDENER AT THE WARETOWN BRANCH

WARETOWN – Do you have gardening questions? The Rutgers Master Gardeners of Ocean County can help you from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, September 25 at the Waretown Branch of the Ocean County Library.

Whether you are planning a new garden, want help troubleshooting plant problems, or need advice on growing, the Rutgers Master Gardeners are ready to assist. Bring your gardening questions – along with photos or samples of insects, plants, shrubs, or trees – for identification, diagnosis, and recommendations.

The Rutgers Master Gardeners are trained and certified volunteers who partner with the Rutgers Cooperative Extension. They provide Ocean County residents with free, research-based information on sustainable gardening practices, soil health, pest management,



RUTGERS New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Cooperative Extension of Ocean County

native plants, composting, and much more. No question is too big or small – whether you are a seasoned gardener or just starting out.

Registration is not required for this free program. For more information, call 609-693-5133, or stop by the branch at 112 Main Street.

VETERANS’ RESOURCE FAIR COMING TO THE OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY’S TOMS RIVER BRANCH

TOMS RIVER – Are you or a loved one a veteran? On active duty preparing to transition out of service? Come connect with local and state organizations, VA representatives, and community services offering support for veterans and their families during the Veterans’ Resource Fair from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, November 21 at the Toms River Branch of the Ocean County Library.

Veterans, active-duty service members, their families, and supporters can



explore resources for benefits, healthcare, employment, housing, and other services.

Some of the attending organizations include Ocean County Veterans Service Bureau, NJ Office of Women Veterans, and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), among others.

This program is hosted by the Ocean County Library’s Voices for Veterans Committee.

Registration is not required to attend this free event. For more information, call 732-349-6200, or stop by the branch at 101 Washington Street.

FANNATION: COSTUME COLLECTION AND GIVEAWAY AT THE OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY

TOMS RIVER – Do you have gently used costumes your kids can no longer wear? The Toms River, Lakewood, Plumsted and Tuckerton branches of the Ocean County Library are collecting costumes for kids aged 0 to 11 years. The drive is currently running until September 30.

Bring your gently used costumes to any of the participating branches during their regular operating hours.

Collected costumes will be given away for free at “FanNation: The Geekstravaganza” on October 3 at the



Toms River Branch. Kids can wear their newly acquired costumes for the FanNation Cosplay Contest or for Halloween.

Call or visit any participating branches for more information.

CELEBRATE LIBRARY CARD SIGN-UP MONTH THIS SEPTEMBER WITH THE OCEAN COUNTY LIBRARY

TOMS RIVER – This September, the Ocean County Library invites you to celebrate Library Card Sign-up Month and discover how a library card can hit all the right notes, no matter what your tastes are.

With a library card, you can do more than check out books. From free classes and job resources to homework help, streaming media, and cultural events, today’s libraries connect communities to information, inspiration, and each other.

This year’s theme, “A Library Card Hits All the Right Notes,” is a reminder that libraries offer something for everyone – no matter your age, background, or goals. Whether you’re checking out a classic story or trying something new, finding harmony at the library’s programs, finding your focus in a study room, vibing out in a cozy nook, or composing your future with new skills, there’s a seat in the front row at the library for you, and your library card is the ticket.

At the Ocean County Library, you will find:

- Welcoming spaces for browsing our collections, reading, studying, tutoring, gaming, web browsing, creating in



our Sparks’s Lab makerspaces, and exploring in our sensory spaces.

- Free digital resources, including but not limited to free audiobooks, eBooks, movie and music streaming, database access, newspapers, and eCourses.
- Programs and events for all ages, including storytimes, crafts, book clubs, concerts, art exhibits, author talks, as well as informational programs on technology, history, culture, food, health, and professional development.

Getting a library card is free, easy, and empowering. For students, it’s a key to academic success. For adults, it’s a gateway to lifelong learning. For everyone, it’s a smart way to stay connected to your community.

Stop by any of the Ocean County Library’s 21 branch locations or visit us online at theoceancountylibrary.org to sign up for your card today.



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A private tour of the Emerald Isle (April 15-23, 2027)

Ireland is a combination of vast, unspoiled nature, scenic wonders, charming towns and warm hospitality. Spend two nights in Galway, two nights in Killarney, one night in Waterford and two nights in Dublin. Rate includes round trip airfare from Newark, hotel accommodations, professional tour guide, breakfast daily including arrival, three dinners, all admissions and sightseeing. Please call for a day-to-day itinerary. Rate per person based on double occupancy is \$3,499.00.

Grand Mediterranean from Barcelona to Rome (August 8-15, 2027)

This amazing cruise starts in Barcelona and visits two ports in the south of France, Provence and Villefranche (Nice). Then visit the birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence followed by Salerno and Messina (Sicily), with a day at sea and disembarking in Rome. Rate of \$2,099.00 per person includes: balcony cabin, all meals including 3 specialty dining, Wi-Fi, unlimited open bar, pre-paid ship board gratuities, shore excursion credit and a \$100.00 on board credit. Airfare and pre/post packages are available in September.

Canada and New England Fall Foliage with Princess Cruise round trip NY (October 16-23, 2027)

Experience leaf peeping on a voyage along the grand coasts of New England and Canada. Cruise rate includes: balcony cabin, all meals (specialty dining additional), all beverages, pre-paid gratuity and on-board credit. Rate per person is \$2,335.00. Transfers will be offered from Home Town Travel for a nominal fee.

Upcoming informational nights in September at Home Town Travel: Sandals/ Beaches Resorts and Collette tours on September 28th at 5pm, RSVP is required. Collette Vacations will talk about our three upcoming tours to Pacific North West and Scandinavia for 2027 and Morocco in the spring of 2028. Check out our website for additional group departures for 2027/2028 and informational events and dates.



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Your Journey Begins Here

A Need We Feed Delivers a Taste of Summer to 200 Ocean County Neighbors

A Need We Feed recently celebrated its annual summer BBQ-themed meal delivery, providing 200 freshly prepared meals to seniors, veterans, families, individuals with disabilities, and other neighbors in need throughout Ocean County.

The special summer feeding has become an annual tradition for the Toms River-based nonprofit, bringing together local businesses, volunteers, and community partners to provide clients with not only a nutritious meal, but a few extra touches that make each delivery even more meaningful.



This year, Charlie's Pizza Restaurant & Pub in Manchester prepared all 200 BBQ meals, while Stop & Shop generously donated fresh fruit and lemonade to accompany them. Debbie Trainor of Each Stitch Counts added another thoughtful touch by donating hand-stitched dishcloths paired with dish soap for clients.



Members of OceanFirst Bank's WaveMakers also helped make the day special by creating handmade cards for A Need We Feed's senior clients, adding personal messages of kindness and encouragement to their deliveries.

Twenty-five of the BBQ meals were provided to Vetwork, a local nonprofit serving veterans, as part of A Need We Feed's ongoing commitment to supporting veterans throughout Ocean County. The organization's dedicated network of volunteer drivers distributed the remaining meals directly to A Need We Feed clients.

The day was made even more meaningful by the return of Bill Winder and Debbie Lorenz of the Bill & Ginger Winder Family Foundation, who joined A Need We Feed for its Annual Summer BBQ for the third consecutive year. During their visit, they presented the organization with an extraordinarily generous donation to support its mission and the neighbors it serves.

Founded by Bill Winder, the Bill & Ginger Winder Family Foundation is guided by its mission to "Improve the Lives of People and Animals and the Environments in Which They Live." The Foundation supports nonprofit organizations doing meaningful work to improve the lives of vulnerable populations with limited access to resources. The Winder Family Foundation's continued generosity will have a tremendous impact on A Need We Feed's ability to provide more freshly prepared meals,



reach more individuals and families, and remind neighbors facing difficult circumstances that their community cares. Their continued belief in A Need We Feed's mission and the people it serves is deeply appreciated.

This year's Annual Summer BBQ was

truly a community effort. A Need We Feed extends its heartfelt gratitude to Charlie's Pizza Restaurant & Pub, Stop & Shop, Each Stitch Counts, OceanFirst Bank's WaveMakers, the Bill & Ginger Winder Family Foundation, and the many volunteers who helped make this special day possible.



We're excited to announce that, thanks to \$100 from every vehicle sold during the month of July, we raised an incredible \$37,700 for the Speidel family! Thank you to everyone who supported this effort and helped us give back to a family in need. We're incredibly grateful for the generosity of our customers and our entire Causeway community.

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"Serving Seniors and their Caregivers"

Interfaith

Health & Support Services of Southern Ocean County
WWW.INTERFAITHSOC.ORG

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed to help provide friendly support to our Seniors - a few hours per month, your choice of schedule. Our Volunteers are truly "Neighbors helping Neighbors", serving others with love, respect, hope and compassion.

Interfaith Health & Support Services is a non-profit, volunteer based organization partnering with community faith based communities and local businesses to provide free services & support to Seniors living at home independently in Southern Ocean County. Service area includes Forked River south to Tuckerton, and all of LBI.

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Transportation to medical appointments
- Grocery shopping or food pantry delivery
- Transportation to Community Programs
- Respite & support for the caregiver of a loved one with Dementia or Alzheimer's
- Friendly visits & Reassuring phone calls

If you are interested in volunteering, or receiving services please contact us at: 609-978-3839

Hunger Action Month: Meals On Wheels Outreach More Than Meals for Seniors Like John

September is Hunger Action Month, a time to recognize the impact of hunger in our communities and take action to help those who need support. For older adults throughout Ocean County, hunger can affect more than physical health. It can impact independence, safety, and the ability to remain at home.

For John T., Meals on Wheels Ocean County has been a lifeline. Referred to our program through his local senior center in November 2022, John began receiving meals as his mobility became more limited. Today, he receives both weekday and weekend meals, helping him remain nourished and independent at home.

But John’s story is about more than food. His outreach workers, pictured with him here, have helped connect him to support beyond the meal, including assistance with utilities and other needs. That is the heart of our mission: making sure seniors have access not only to nutrition, but to the Community, Care, and Connection they deserve.

At Meals on Wheels Ocean County, our work is More Than Meals. Every delivery provides nutritious food, a wellness check, and a moment of connection. For John, those moments matter. “The cooperation with them is absolutely fantastic,” John shared. “I couldn’t ask for any more.”



His driver, Peggy, sees that impact firsthand. “John often tells me how his day would not be complete without MOWOC meals, daily visits, and our quick conversations,” she shared. “I believe that our everyday moments, daily interactions, and routines make a



difference in their lives and vice versa.” Scan the QR code below to hear John share his story in his own words.

This month, we ask our community to take action. Your support helps provide weekday and weekend meals, wellness checks, and the continued support that allows seniors like John to remain safe, nourished, and connected at home.

Because hunger is not always easy to see, but together, we can help make sure no senior in Ocean County feels forgotten.

To learn more or support our mission, visit csimow.org.

Scan Here



Nissan Frontier voted #1 Best Truck for Tailgating in USA Today Sports Readers’ Choice Awards

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Just in time for football season, the Nissan Frontier PRO-4X has been named the #1 Best Truck for Tailgating in the USA Today Sports Readers’ Choice Awards. To select tailgating vehicles, a panel of USA Today Sports editors curated a shortlist of vehicles, then readers and the general public voted to pick the winners.

The Nissan Frontier is a touchdown on game day with tailgate-ready features that will thrill the whole squad. It’s available with a spacious six-foot cargo bed, a 10-speaker Fender® Premium Audio system and the convenience of two 120-volt power outlets and has a towing rating of up to 7,150 pounds. Frontier is the fastest-growing pickup truck in the U.S., backed by the confidence that 92% of Frontiers sold in the last decade are still on the road today.

For the 2027 model year, the Nissan Frontier offers even more ways for drivers to get the most out of their truck with the introduction of a Sport Edition package that enhances SV grade with PRO-4X-inspired visual appearance elements and attention-grabbing yellow accents, the sure-footed confidence of all-terrain tires and additional skid plate protection. It also adds an available Qi2 wireless phone charger with faster, more consistent charging. The 2027 Nissan Frontier has a starting Manufacturer’s Suggested Retail Price (MSRP) of \$32,490.

Frontier is proudly assembled in the U.S. at Nissan Canton Vehicle Assembly Plant in Mississippi. Over one million Frontier trucks have been assembled in Mississippi, part of two million Frontiers assembled in the U.S. to date. The truck’s standard 3.8-liter V6 engine – the most powerful naturally aspirated V6 in its class – is assembled at Nissan Decherd Powertrain Assembly Plant in Tennessee, where it is rigorously tested for long-term durability and reliability.

usa.nissan.com



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Medium: Catherine McCall



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MONMOUTH COUNTY

Ocean County
October 22, 2026 | 6:00 - 9:00 PM
Gal Mediterranean Cuisine
2 NJ-37, Toms River, NJ
Medium: Joe Hicks



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Scan For New Nissans

Causeway Claims 2026 Seaside Park Softball League Championship

SEASIDE PARK, N.J. — Causeway finished the job — and did it in dominant fashion.

After finishing the regular season with a 7-3 record and earning the No. 3 seed, Causeway put together a remarkable playoff run, defeating three teams on its way to the 2026 Seaside Park Softball League championship.

Causeway opened the playoffs against former league champion Seaside Service Center, sweeping the series in two straight games. The No. 3 seed then continued its run in the semifinals, taking down the Ducks in two straight games to punch its ticket to the championship round.

Waiting for Causeway in the finals was Pagano, setting up a rematch of last year's championship.

Causeway struck first, winning Game 1 and moving within one victory of the title. Pagano answered in Game 2, forcing a winner-take-all rubber match.

With the championship on the line, Causeway delivered its most dominant performance of the postseason.

The offense erupted, and Causeway cruised to a 17-2 victory, putting the game — and the championship — out of reach for Pagano. The blowout secured the title and capped a postseason in which Causeway went 6-1, including three consecutive series victories.

The championship also marked another major milestone for Coach Julian Cimino, who captured his second league

championship while making his fourth appearance in the finals in as many years. Cimino's consistent success has made Causeway a fixture in the league's championship round, and this year's title added another trophy to an already impressive four-year run.

Causeway Cleans Up in League Awards

Causeway's success wasn't limited to the team trophy.

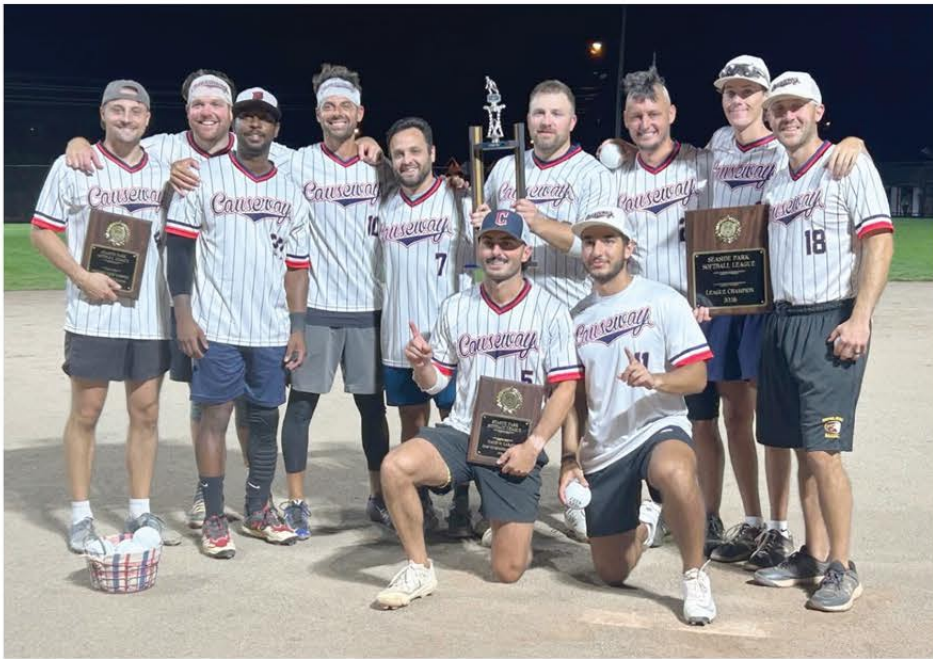
The championship squad also cleaned up when the league handed out its individual awards.

Mike Puglisi was named the league's Most Outstanding Player, recognizing his impact throughout the season. Puglisi also took home the award for most home runs in the league, adding another individual honor to Causeway's championship season.

Meanwhile, Shane Black was named Finals MVP after dominating throughout the postseason and saving some of his best performances for the biggest stage.

Black was particularly impressive during the final three games against Pagano, playing a major role in Causeway's championship-clinching victory. His performance throughout the finals earned him the Finals MVP honor and provided another highlight in an already impressive postseason run.

From a 7-3 regular season and a No. 3 seed to a 6-1 playoff record and a championship, Causeway proved that seeding meant little once the postseason began.



They knocked off a former champion. They swept the Ducks. They survived a championship rematch with Pagano. And when the title came down to one final game, Causeway didn't just win — they won 17-2.

Now, Causeway has the championship trophy, the individual hardware, and bragging rights over the entire Seaside Park Softball League.

The 2026 Seaside Park Softball League champions are Causeway.

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Interfaith Health & Support Services of Southern Ocean County, Inc.

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St. Mary of the Pines - Parish Center
100 Bishop Way, Manahawkin, NJ

DOOR PRIZES

Ticket Price: \$40.00 (non-refundable - includes 12 games)

Tickets available on August 10, 2026 - cash, check or credit card (3% fee for credit card use)

Additional cards are \$15.00 (advance) \$20.00 (at the door)

Super Bingo Game - \$5.00 per card with \$500 cash prize!

Pick up tickets - Interfaith Health & Support Office

56 Nautilus Drive, Manahawkin

Monday - Thursday, 10:00am-2:00pm / 609-978-3839

50/50

More details available at www.InterfaithSOC.org

Doors open: 4:45pm

Bingo Starts: 6:15pm

Doors will be locked once Bingo begins, and no one will be permitted to enter once games begin.

You must be 18 to participate. Tables will be assigned at time of ticket purchase.

10th Annual
Marty Aronow
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Wednesday, October 7, 2026

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CAREing for Children

We at Ocean County Business Association are pleased to again present the Tenth Annual Marty Aronow Charity Golf Classic.

Last year's outing raised \$22,000. Those funds were used to buy gifts and food boxes which are donated to under privileged children and families. These gifts have been distributed by CAREing for Children (CFC) to charitable organizations in Ocean County.

Because CFC is run strictly on a volunteer basis, there are no overhead costs as 100% of all donations go to support those in need. Additionally, 100% of the Golf Classic's net proceeds are funneled directly to CFC. Over the first 9 years of the event, we have raised and donated over \$182,000 worth of food and children's toys to the community. Additionally, in both 2024 and 2025 we donated 100 backpacks stuffed with school supplies to children in need.

Many thanks for joining us and enjoy a fun day of good golf and fellowship.

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SENIOR CORNER

8 Ways to Prevent Someone With Dementia From Getting Lost

By Amy Goyer, AARP

One of the most common safety concerns for caregivers of people who are living with dementia is that their loved one will leave without their knowledge, get confused about their location or where they are going and get lost (sometimes referred to as “wandering”).

The stakes are real: According to the Alzheimer’s Association, an estimated 7.4 million Americans age 65 and older are living with Alzheimer’s, the most common type of dementia. Many live with other types of dementia, and roughly 6 in 10 people with dementia will “wander” at some point — often more than once.

In my 35 years of caregiving and work experience, no one I have encountered who is living with dementia “wanders” aimlessly. In their mind, there’s a reason:

- They are looking for something or someone.
- They are acting on a strong feeling that they should be somewhere — work, home, picking up a child after school, etc. Sometimes they aren’t sure where they should be, but the feeling makes them go try to figure it out.
- They want to do something. (I once lost an adult day-care client because he wanted to go fishing.)
- They have an unmet need they are trying to address — hunger, thirst, tiredness, loneliness, etc.
- They are scared and want to look for a place that feels safe.

We may not understand what they are thinking or why they are confused. And they may not be able to communicate it.

In more than a decade of caregiving for my dad, who had Alzheimer’s, he disappeared twice. Both times, he was legitimately looking for someone.

Even if we don’t think our loved ones could get lost, it can happen to anyone — and it’s almost always a surprise when it does. It’s much better to prepare and prevent than to wait until a life-threatening incident occurs. Here are some steps you can take to lower the risk.

1. Install alarms and alerts

Consider gadgets and technology that will alert you when your loved ones are up and about before they leave home, such as audio and video

monitors; activity sensors like floor mat or bed/ chair pad alarms; motion-sensor alarms (in the home, near the door inside and outside, by the driveway); simple stick-on door chime alarms; or a security system that will sound when doors are opened (without automatically calling 911) and/or provide alerts on your phone or other devices. Even a simple motion-sensor light under the bed can alert you when your loved one is getting out of bed.

2. Make the home entry/exit safer

Make door handles more difficult to open with door-lever safety locks or doorknob safety covers. Try installing dead bolts where they are harder to see — above eye level or below the “normal” placement. Consider a door guard or lock that is just a bit more complicated for someone with dementia but still simple enough for you to use easily.

Important: Be sure you have a safe way to exit in an emergency, including if something happens to you and your loved one needs to leave the home.

3. Make sure they can be identified

Be sure your loved ones have some form of identification on them and a recent digital photo readily available.

Using multiple forms of identification, including emergency contact numbers and a disclosure of their dementia diagnosis (and any other health conditions), is a good idea in case one form is removed or lost.

4. Use GPS tracking

Smartphone apps: If your loved ones have a smartphone, ensure GPS is installed and accessible if you can’t find them or need to track their progress when they travel alone. For example, use the Find My app (iPhone, Apple Watch, laptop, iPad or an AirTag attached to keys or other items) on Apple devices, or use Find My Device and Find My Friends on Android devices. Apps like Life360, Family Nest and Glymose for Auto help you track loved ones or a family group in real time.

GPS trackers: GPS trackers, such as Apple’s AirTag, Life360’s Tile or Samsung Galaxy SmartTag2, can be attached to clothing, keys, wallets, cars (in the trunk or under the bumper) or just about anywhere, including shoe-sole inserts. You can track these devices using your smartphone or another device, but your loved one does not need a smartphone.

Wearable GPS tracking devices may be in the



methaphum / stock.adobe.com

form of a wristband (like a watch) or a necklace like a lavalier pendant (often part of a medical alert system). In addition to GPS tracking, they may offer fall detection, an SOS button and tamper-resistant straps that are hard to remove, with battery life stretching to a week or more on some models.

Car devices: Another option is a device placed on the car dashboard, such as MOTOSafety, CarLock or Bouncie, that allows you to track their location, in addition to other features such as monitoring speed and how the car is functioning.

5. Pay attention to exits and safety hazards in the yard and garage

People with dementia and visual or perceptual impairments may not be able to see glass doors; placing stickers on the glass can prevent your loved ones from walking into it.

Make sure you fence in the yard and add locked gates to it and, separately, the swimming pool, if you have one. Monitor the safety of pathways and steps, including for rain, snow and ice, and ensure adequate lighting. If the grill is a concern, lock the cover and access to gas tanks and all fire starters.

Check the garage for safety hazards like gasoline, tools (especially saws and cutting and pruning tools), lawn mowers and ladders, and block access if they pose a danger. If your loved one can easily access a neighbor’s yard, talk with the neighbor about safety issues.

6. Assess whether driving is safe

Many people drive for a while after a dementia diagnosis. If your loved ones are still driving,

be sure to constantly monitor their judgment, vision and visual processing, and safe driving and navigation skills. They may be able to operate the car safely but unable to find their way around.

Confer with their doctor and review AARP’s “We Need to Talk” online seminar about discussing hanging up the keys with a loved one.

Be mindful that your loved ones know their independence is threatened when they stop driving. They may fear isolation and being unable to get where they need to go when they need to go there, so be sure to have alternative transportation options available.

7. Flag access to bicycles, lawn mowers, tractors, golf carts

A caregiver told me her husband couldn’t find the car keys, so he got on the riding mower and took off down the road. It was quite a while before she realized he was gone. Be aware of “alternate vehicles” you might not normally consider. Be sure to monitor their ability to use them safely, and block access if they can’t.

8. Loop in authorities, neighbors and your community

Let trusted neighbors know about your loved one’s diagnosis and what to do if they see them outside alone — a quick call to you can prevent a situation from escalating.

Often, there are favorite places your loved one likes to go, such as a coffee shop, park, restaurant or grocery store. If you are comfortable doing so, speak with the staff or managers and give them your contact information in case your loved one goes there without you.

Silver Alert

A Silver Alert is a public notification system (modeled after the Amber Alert for missing children) used to help find missing older adults, particularly those with dementia or another cognitive impairment, who may be lost. It’s issued by law enforcement and spreads the word through radio, TV, highway signs and other public channels so the community can help watch for the person.

Contact your state department of public safety, center for missing persons or your local police departments and sheriff’s office to find out if they offer a Silver Alert Registry. If they do, you can register your loved one in their secure database so in case they get lost, the information is easy for first responders to access quickly. Each state sets its own rules for who qualifies and how the alert works. Registering usually includes a digital photo, physical description, medical conditions and emergency contacts. Some departments will even provide a free identification bracelet.

Remember that abilities and needs can vary greatly among individuals with dementia, and safety concerns can change as the disease progresses. Continually assess your loved ones’ risk for getting lost or injured if they leave home alone.

aarp.com



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Fulfill Expands Backpack Program Through Partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health

Fulfill, a leader in alleviating hunger and building food security in Monmouth and Ocean counties, has expanded its Backpack Program beyond the traditional school year through a new partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health (HMH), ensuring children experiencing food insecurity continue to have access to nutritious food during the summer months. The collaboration also broadens the Backpack Program by pairing weekend backpacks with fresh food distributions, helping families access healthy meals when school cafeterias are closed. The partnership has already provided 409 students with 1,938 backpacks throughout June and July, with more distributions taking place in August.

“Summer can be one of the most difficult times for families facing food insecurity because the reliable meals children receive during the school year are not guaranteed,” said Cat Hynoski, Community Health Associate at Fulfill. “Fulfill’s partnership with Hackensack Meridian Health allows us to bridge that gap by providing children with nutritious kid-friendly foods they can easily prepare while also connecting families with fresh, healthy ingredients. Together, we are not only helping ensure children have enough to eat over the weekends but are also supporting stronger food security for families.”

Traditionally offered during the school year, Fulfill’s Backpack Program provides children with shelf-stable breakfast and lunch items to supplement the meals they receive during the week. With HMH’s support, the program was extended into the summer at participating Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sites, where children will also receive weekend backpacks alongside fresh produce, bread, eggs and yogurt from The Common Market. The partnership supports Fulfill’s Backpack Program and complementary fresh food distribution efforts while advancing HMH’s commitment to improving community and population health.

“We are dedicated to creating sustainable solutions that make a tangible difference in people’s lives. This initiative is about more than just providing food; it’s about providing security, improving health outcomes, and showing our communities that we are here for them,” said Nicole Harris-Hollingsworth, EdD,

MCHES, Senior Vice President, Social Impact & Population Health for Hackensack Meridian Health. “By partnering with expert organizations like Feeding America-affiliated food banks and leveraging our network’s resources, we are ensuring that our investments have the maximum impact, reaching the people who need it most.”

The Backpack Program reflects Fulfill’s broader approach to addressing food security through community partnerships that expand year-round access to nutritious food. By extending the program beyond the school year, Fulfill and HMH are helping children and families maintain consistent access to healthy food when they need it most. The partnership is made possible by HMH’s new multi-pronged commitment totaling almost \$7 million to expand its fight against hunger and food insecurity. Of the total investment, \$2.3 million

is dedicated to the HMH Healthy Connections Nutrition Pack Program. The initiative launched in at least 13 schools and after-school programs in communities served by HMH, specifically targeting schools where 40% or more of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The partnership with Fulfill has been extended through June 2027, allowing both organizations to continue serving children and families in need across Monmouth and Ocean counties.

Fulfill’s Backpack Program consists of gallon-sized bags filled with individually packaged breakfasts and lunches that fit easily inside a child’s backpack. Food items are selected based on feedback from participating children, families and school partners, with an emphasis on familiar, nutritious options that require minimal preparation. Distributed before the weekend, the backpacks complement the meals children receive through the SFSP by providing additional food support when weekday meal sites are unavailable. From December 2025 through May 2026, the partnership supported the distribution of 3,594 backpacks across multiple sites and 1,619 produce boxes through combined programming

Participating sites include Betty McElmon Elementary, Hugh J. Boyd Elementary, Ocean County YMCA, PAL Asbury Park Police Summer Camp, Project Teach, Regional Day School, South Paw, St. Raphael’s, Treasured Angels and Waretown UMC.

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5	\$45,682	\$3,807
for each additional household member add	\$6,682	\$557

For seniors: Interested in finding out if there's a distribution site near you? Go to fulfillnj.org/seniorstaples or call 732-918-2600.

For senior residences and senior-serving organizations: Interested in bringing this program to the seniors you serve? Call Lynette Hargrove at 732-918-2600.

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We're excited to see some of our Causeway managers take on new opportunities and continue to grow within the Causeway Family of Dealerships. Congratulations to everyone on their new roles and exciting next steps!



Ryan Purul (left) has made the move from Causeway Honda to Causeway Hyundai, where he continues his role as Sales Manager. Randy Evans (right) has also taken on a new role, moving from Finance Manager to Sales Manager at Causeway Hyundai!

Two familiar faces, new opportunities, and the same great Causeway team!
Congratulations, Ryan and Randy!



Sales Manager Dan McMahon will now be working deals out of the Ford showroom!

A familiar face in a new showroom!
We're excited to see Dan take on his role
at Causeway Ford. Stop by and say hello!
Congratulations, Dan!



After years as a Finance Manager, Tom is stepping into his new role as Sales Manager at Causeway Honda!

A familiar face in a new role, and we're excited to see Tom take on this next chapter with the Causeway team. Congratulations, Tom!



Wallace Moore has made the move to
Sales Manager at Causeway Honda!

A familiar face taking on a new role, and we're excited to see Wallace continue to grow with the Causeway team. Congratulations, Wallace!



Will Evans has made the move from Causeway Hyundai to Causeway Nissan, where he'll continue his role as Sales Manager!

A familiar face in a new showroom!
We're excited to see Will take on this
new opportunity. Congratulations, Will!



John Catalano has made the move from Causeway Hyundai to Causeway Honda, where he'll continue his role as Sales Manager!

A familiar face in a new showroom!
We're excited to see John take on this
new opportunity. Congratulations, John!

Beach Haven Chowder Cook-Off Sets 2026 Return

By Veronica Flesher, Patch Staff

BEACH HAVEN, NJ — Beach Haven will host the popular 2026 Chowder Cook-off on Oct. 3 and 4 behind Bay Village on Taylor Avenue, according to the Beach Haven Chamber of Commerce.

Saturday admission will be free, while Sunday will be a ticketed event.

The annual event is organized by the Beach Haven Chamber of Commerce and is billed as a two-day celebration of local chowder, live entertainment and family-friendly activities in the borough. The cook-off brings together chowder fans, local restaurants and visitors for taste-testing and community activities in Beach Haven.

Competitors will be divided into two chowder categories, red chowder and white chowder.

Attendees will be able to sample a variety of chowders from local businesses. Winners are set to be announced at the end of the event and will receive recognition and prizes tied to the competition.

The event will also include live music, arts and crafts vendors, and activities for children, according to the chamber's event information.



White chowder competitors are:

The Chicken or the Egg
Dolce Liberta
Element
Mud City Crab House
Panzone's LBI
Station 117

Red chowder competitors are:

39 Degrees North
Country Kettle Chowda
Frankie Fed's
La Bamba
Lefty's
Sea Shell Resort







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2026 Edition

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*Figures valid October 2025 - September 2026

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September Is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month In Stafford

By Veronica Flesher, Patch Staff
MANAHAWKIN, NJ — Stafford Mayor Robert Henken proclaimed September as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month in Stafford at the latest Township Council meeting.

The proclamation says the “Turn The Towns Teal” campaign is intended to create awareness about ovarian cancer and recognize people affected by the disease.

The text of the proclamation states that about 19,680 women will receive a new diagnosis of ovarian cancer and that more than 12,720 women will die from it. It describes ovarian cancer as the deadliest of female reproductive diseases and says families, friends and communities across the country support people who are fighting the illness while offering hope for a cancer-free future.

The proclamation also says that ovarian cancers are difficult to detect early because there is no simple and reliable screening method and symptoms are often not clear until later stages. It says that by recognizing warning signs and unexplained changes, women can increase the likelihood of detecting ovarian cancer at an early stage, when treatment is most effective.

The proclamation says the nation pauses during National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month to support people who know the pain of the disease, honor those who have died and renew a commitment to more effective prevention, detection and treatment. It also says the township stands with people who continue to fight the disease, with those who have lost loved ones and with advocates, medical researchers and health care providers.

patch.com

Thomas William Gardner Obituary

Thomas William Gardner, age 74, of Mount Royal, NJ, went home to be with the Lord on March 1, 2026, surrounded by the endless love of his family. He was the first born son of the late Charles and Joan Travers Gardner. They moved to Delran, NJ when he was 12 years old. Tommy was the devoted husband to Elena, proud father to Zachary and Joshua, supportive brother-in-law to Krista, who he thought of as a daughter, and best friend to many. With broken hearts and eternal gratitude we honor the beautiful life of a remarkable man that was the force at the center of our world.

To his wife, Teg was a true partner in every sense of the word. He believed in her, stood beside her, and built a life grounded in loyalty, laughter, and shared dreams. Their marriage of 35 years was not just a story of unwavering love. Their bond and friendship deepened with every year.

To his sons, Pop was the best dad anyone could have hoped for. He showed up for games, school events, late night talks at the kitchen table, and every moment in between. He taught by example that family always comes first, love is shown through actions, and to forgive quickly. He was the voice reminding them to push harder and never quit.

To his sister-in-law, Tommy was the hero, a role that came naturally to him. He took care of her selflessly, not for recognition, but for her health, happiness, and security. He loved her unconditionally without hesitation. He was the calm, safe place she called home.

From a young age strength and determination defined him. In Riverside High School he was chosen as captain of the wrestling team and left his mark on the football field. He was never just strong in body, but strong in character too. He led with his smarts, grit, and confidence. Friends were drawn to Beav’s larger than life personality. They dressed up for dances, raced



cars on Taylors Lane, and rode everything from horses to Harleys.

After graduating, he served his country honorably in the Army with courage and discipline. They awarded him the National Defense Service Medal and Sharp Shooter M16 Badge. Protecting the people he loved was of utmost importance to him.

As a union Boilermaker, hard work was not something he talked about. It was something he did every single day to provide for his family. He was the fixer of broken things that earned respect by living it. Breezy had a way of turning ordinary moments into the funniest jokes and stories. He was awarded the 50 year service pin for his commitment and talent. He felt honored that his sons followed in his footprints.

That warrior spirit was what carried him through his battle with cancer. Beyond the toughness was a generous man full of heart. He had a soft spot for the dogs, Julia and Bruce, who were his constant companions. He enjoyed watching sports with his boys, singing to his girls, being at the seashore, drawing like his mom, and making every celebration special. The Gardner 5 was his greatest joy. Nothing made him happier than to hear laughing echo through the house, watching his children grow, holding his wife’s hand, and knowing his family was together.

Tommy’s legacy is the extraordinary love he poured into his adoring family that will last forever. He lived his life with integrity, perseverance, and resilience. Those lessons and many more remain our guiding light in the darkest of times. We will always hold his cherished memory in our hearts and the impact of his life will never fade.

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Back-to-School Safety Reminders from Hackensack Meridian Children’s Health

By Michele Leff, Patch

Manahawkin, N.J. - August 31, 2026

- As the summer winds down, the familiar rhythm of the school year will soon begin – a great reminder to focus on safety. As emergency medicine physicians at K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital at Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center, we’ve seen firsthand the types of accidents and injuries that can occur. By working together, we can ensure a safe and healthy return to school for our children.

On the Move: School Bus and Pedestrian Safety

The journey to and from school presents some of the most significant safety

challenges. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), while school buses are the most regulated vehicles on the road and students are about 70 times more likely to get to school safely on a bus than by car, the most dangerous part of the journey is getting on and off the bus. From 2014 to 2023, there were 209 school-age children who died in school-bus-related crashes, and 79 of them were pedestrians.

For younger bus riders, it’s best to be at the bus stop at least five minutes before the bus is scheduled to arrive. This reduces the need to rush, which can lead to accidents. Teach your children to stay at least 10 feet back from the curb

– about three giant steps – and to never walk behind the bus. It is within that 10 foot area that kids are in the most danger of not being seen by the driver.

Once on the bus, children should find a seat and remain there. This minimizes distractions for the driver. For drivers, the start of the school year means being extra vigilant. In New Jersey, the law requires drivers to stop at least 25 feet away from a school bus with its red lights flashing. On a road with no physical divider, traffic in both directions must stop. Failure to do so can result in fines, license points, and, most importantly, a tragic accident.

With many children walking to school, pedestrian safety is a major concern. In 2023, 17% of children aged 14 and younger who were killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians, according to the NHTSA. Drivers must slow down in school zones and should be prepared to stop for children at crosswalks even if it’s not during school hours.

Beyond the Commute: Backpacks and In-School Injuries

Safety doesn’t stop at the school door. Two common issues we see are backpack-related injuries and head injuries. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that a child’s backpack should weigh no more than 10% to 20% of their body weight. A heavy backpack can cause back, neck, and shoulder pain. When choosing a backpack, look for one with wide, padded shoulder straps, a padded back, and a waist strap to help distribute the weight evenly. And while your child (especially older kids) may not think it looks cool, always encourage them to use both shoulder straps.

Head injuries are also a significant concern. These injuries can happen on the playground or during sports. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, contact sports – including football, basketball, and



Alysson / stock.adobe.com

soccer – are associated with 45% of all emergency department visits for sports- and recreation-related traumatic brain injuries and concussions among children ages 17 and under. While injuries can range from a minor cut on the head to more extreme cases that can cause bleeding on the brain or coma, it’s crucial to seek medical attention any time a child has a blow to the head – and especially if they show signs of confusion, headache, or vomiting. Ensuring proper head and safety gear will help reduce your child’s risk of injury.

The start of a new school year is a time of new beginnings. By taking a few extra precautions, we can help our children have a safe and successful year. For more information on children’s health and safety, please visit hackensackmeridian.org/kids.

Grace Marie Ponce, M.D., is the division chief of pediatric emergency medicine and David Bergamo, M.D., is associate director of pediatric emergency medicine at K. Hovnanian Children’s Hospital at Hackensack Meridian Jersey Shore University Medical Center.

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The first little touches of Fall always make me happy



By Danielle Natale - Causeway Honda Sales Consultant

The changing seasons are coming quickly, and

as fall creeps in, so do all the beautiful fall plants!

It really is a little early for me to go mum crazy just yet. I usually like to wait until the end of September so they last longer once the cooler weather settles in. But I did break down and buy just a few!

I have a few over-the-railing flower boxes that belonged to my Pop Pop. I like to keep them looking beautiful at my house because I know how much he enjoyed having them at his. It's a small way for me to continue something that he loved, which makes them even more special to me.

I have them hanging on the front of my house, and they were definitely ready for a little refresh. Adding a few mums and other fall favorites was all it took to clean everything up and make the front of the house feel fresh again.

Here's an example of what I chose to use in my planters:

- Coleus
- Black fountain grass
- Creeping Jenny
- White mums
- Dusty miller

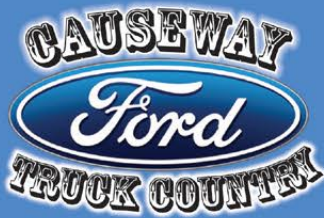
I love the combination of the deep, rich colors with the bright white mums and



soft dusty miller. The creeping Jenny adds that perfect pop of green spilling over the edge of the boxes, while the black fountain grass gives everything a little height and drama.

I'm not quite ready to say goodbye to summer, but I have to admit—those first little touches of fall always make me happy. There's something about refreshing the planters and adding those first few mums that makes the changing season feel a little more exciting.

Now I'll try to behave myself and wait a few more weeks before the real mum shopping begins! If you have a smaller garden but have always wanted to try growing pumpkins, I highly recommend giving the vertical method a try next growing season. It was a fun experiment, made great use of our limited space, and turned into one of my favorite parts of the garden this year.



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By Veronica Flesher, Patch Staff

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Entry Deadline: October 7th

Congratulations to Last Month's Winners!

Evelyn



Reagan



Sophia





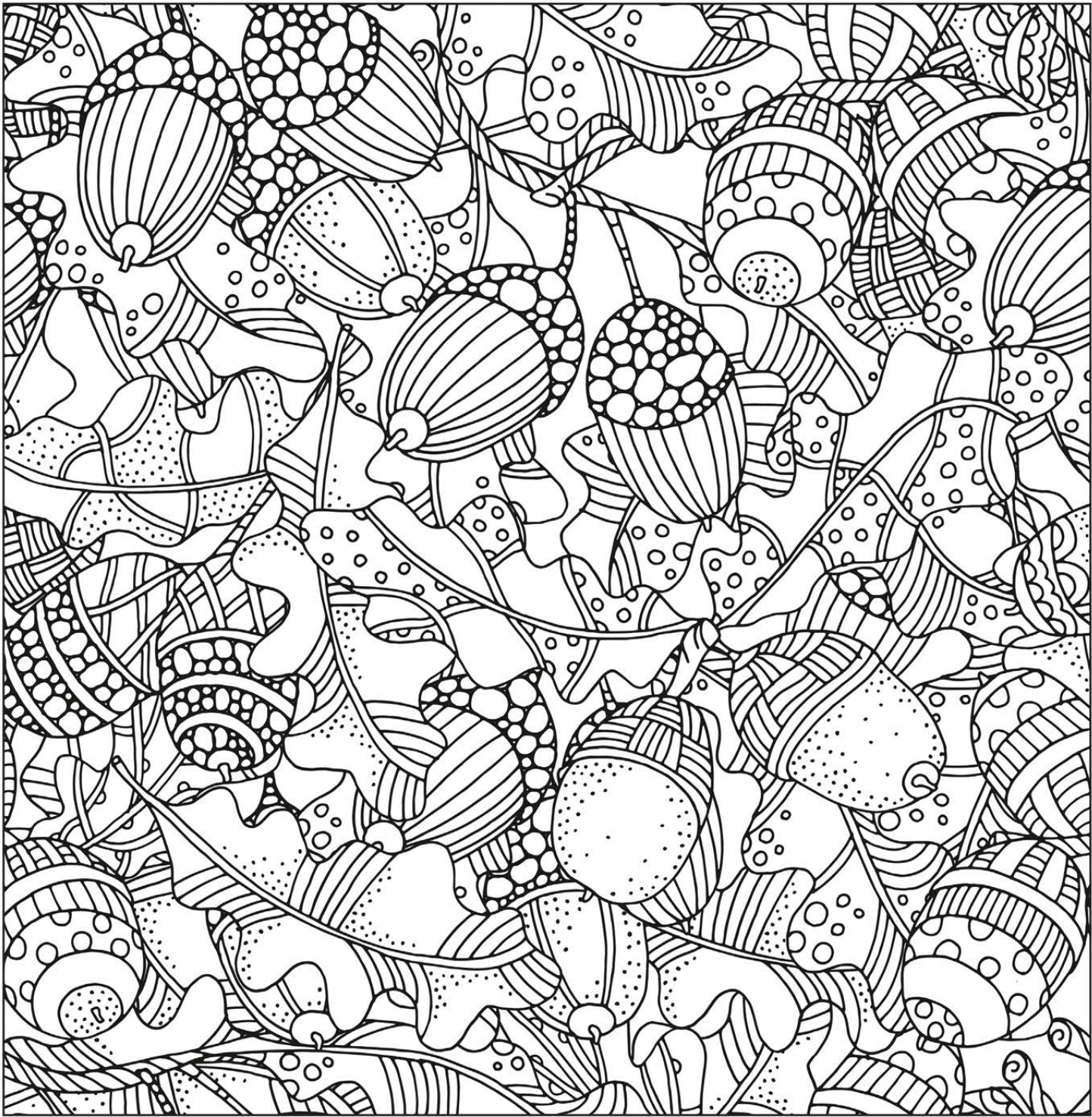
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Child's First Name _____

Age _____

School _____

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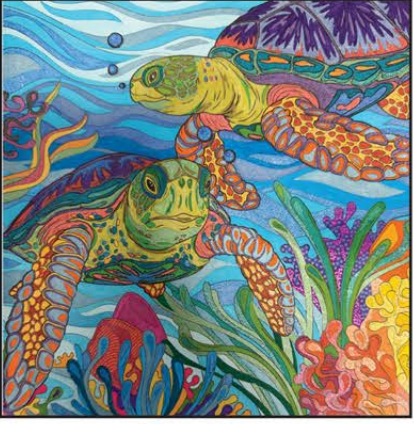


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Cathy

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