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Clark Patriot

'A Voice for All, an Echo for None'

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Alzheimer's program a first in county at Rahway Geriatrics Center

by Pat DiMaggio
They don't recognize family members; some don't have the will to walk or feed themselves. Some days, they don't even remember who they are. And they are our mothers and fathers.

The Rahway Geriatrics Center has instituted a new program to help a segment of their population, a small number of patients who most need a one-to-one relationship with staff members to stop the rapid deterioration found in Alzheimer's disease.

Started in May, the Alzheimer's Unit currently numbers 12 residents in the 120-bed nursing care facility in Rahway. These patients have a tendency to wander from their rooms, thereby disrupting or disturbing other patients. Jeffrey Schwartz, Administrator of the Rahway Geriatrics Center, felt it was important that he plan a program to meet their special needs. The program, currently in operation at the center is the first in Union County.

"We felt that it was a project we needed to get involved in," said Schwartz. "Alzheimer's is one of the two biggest problems affecting the community these days. And there is no cure for either of them. We are doing things to make life easier for them; we try to

bring them a bit of reality." The program consists of extensive recreation and reality orientation to tire out the residents to tire down on the wandering they do. "Although this program is in the early stages, it has shown a lot of improvement in these people," said Schwartz. "They have come back to life as far as reality. We have to look into the future and as people get older we will have to develop programs such as this. It is a problem that has to be addressed. We are the first in Rahway to do something special for this community."

Alzheimer's patients undergo extensive recreation including reality orientation sessions consisting of mentioning their names, where they are and what they are doing for the day, said Ilene Fecht, Activities Director. Recreational activities include bowling, baking, word games and physical exercises.

"We are hoping to cut down on their deterioration through keeping them stimulated," said Roberta Cohen, Director of Social Services. "They receive one-to-one attention and the group's size is small. Reality orientation helps to restore short-term memory. Some of the patients could not be mainstreamed and we felt the need to give them something special."

The program is a joint effort between the nursing staff and social services, said Cohen, and operates with help from COPSA, a Rutgers University program and evaluation center involved in training and giving direction to such units.

The man most involved with the program, and most loved by the patients, is Bill Pakos, who is studying to become an occupational therapist. He calls each of the patients by their names and tries to keep the group close knit and involved. Also soft-spoken, he tries to be a true friend to each resident and tries to keep them a part of the group. There are no slackers when Bill is

in control. "It is a challenge working with Alzheimer's patients, but it is also very rewarding," said Pakos. "In the past two months, since we've been giving them special attention, I've seen many changes. The program retards the progress of the disease and upgrades the quality of their lives."

Also important, said Pakos, is community involvement. "We need help from the community," he said. "We need people with patience and nurturing qualities to volunteer their time with us." Those interested in volunteering their time for one or two

days a week are directed to contact Pakos or Ilene Fecht at the Rahway Geriatrics Center.

The "essential therapy" of the group is funded by the facility, said Administrator Jeffrey Schwartz, and members of the community are invited to contribute to its upkeep. "The Board of Directors care enough to keep this important program," said Schwartz. "Donations to the Alzheimer's Unit would be appreciated and accepted."

Two Step . . . Bill Pakos dances with one of the residents of the new Alzheimer's program at the Rahway Geriatrics Center. Physical exercise is important, says Bill, who has seen much improvement in the patients.

Clark man leads Union Rotary

William A. Saunders of Clark was installed as President of The Rotary Club of Union at a dinner held at Costa-del-Sol on June 16.

Saunders has been a Rotary member for 13 years, and has been with the Union Center National Bank of Union for the last 30 years.

Mayor Anthony E. Russo, of Union, was among those attending the installation dinner. He presented Saunders with a plaque for his dedication to community service.

Saunders succeeds Richard Fisher, who had held the post of Rotary President for 20 months.

Consultant picked for Right-to-Know compliance on chemicals stored in schools

by Pat DiMaggio
The Regional Board of Education at its regular meeting on July 5, awarded a contract for Right-to-Know Act Compliance Consulting services. A bid for the New Jersey Right-to-Know Compliance Program for Arthur L. Johnson High School was awarded to Environmental Safety, Inc., in the

amount of \$29,500. The contract also includes services for the Jonathan Dayton and David Brearley Regional High Schools.

Services to be provided include a chemical inventory of all school facilities where hazardous chemicals or products containing hazardous chemicals are stored, material safety data sheets to be

analyzed, a computer database where all information will be stored, labeling of all products in stock and training for staff members.

The board also awarded a contract to Peter Usa and Son for garbage removal at Johnson High School in the amount of \$14,644.92.

The firm of Johnstone, Skok, Loughlin and Lane was appointed as board attorneys at an annual retainer of \$12,000. Legal research and written opinions will be billed at the rate of \$85 per hour and court appearances will be billed at the rate of \$100 per hour.

The board also appointed Amann, Fidler and Company as board auditors at an audit fee of \$14,900 and appointed Irwin Weinberg, Esq., as a negotiator at a service fee of \$8,500.

Natalie R. Waldt was appointed a treasurer of school funds at a compensation rate of \$3,300 and the firm of Meeker Sharkey Associates, Inc. was approved as the insurance broker for the board.

In other business the board: --Approved the participation of Lorraine Olaszewski, guidance counselor, in a four-day chemical dependency education program at the Monmouth County Chemical Dependency Treatment Center, Long Branch, on August 1-4. This

program will address adolescent and family problems in dealing with alcohol and chemical addictions. Total cost will be \$220.

--Employed Joseph Macal in the District Summer Work Study Program at \$4.50 per hour.

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ALJ students score high in state tests

Dr. Donald Morachnik, Superintendent of Schools for the Union County Regional High School District No. 1, has announced that students from the Arthur L. Johnson Regional High School in Clark recorded high scores on the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT), administered to ninth graders in April, 1988.

These results were presented to the Regional District Board of Education at its July 5 meeting at the Governor Livingston Regional High School in Berkeley Heights.

Student results revealed that 99.2% of the ALJ students passed the Reading program of the test, 95.0% passed the Mathematics segment and 89.1% passed the Writing component of the HSPT. Important gains over the 1987 test results were found in Reading and Mathematics skill development.

Johnson is one of the four regional high schools administered by the Union County Regional High School District No. 1. The District provides secondary education facilities for over 2,600 students from the communities of Berkeley Heights, Clark, Garwood, Kenilworth, Mountainside and Springfield.

Library displaying seniors' arts & crafts

The arts and crafts made by the Seniors of Clark are on display in the large showcase of the Clark Public Library during the month of July.

The group meets at the Senior Center at Brewer School on Westfield Avenue.

Mrs. Helen Rokosny, their instructor, announces classes will begin again in September, 9-11 a.m. All seniors of Clark are welcome.

The Clark Public Library Book Club will meet at the library on Monday, August 8, at 2:30 p.m. Norman Cousins "Anatomy of an Illness," will be discussed.

Country Western Revue

The Union County Department of Parks and Recreation will present a night of pure American music at the Summer Arts Festival's "Country-western revue," July 27, from 7:30



to 9:30 p.m. at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside/Westfield.

The audience is encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets to sit on.

"POPS" . . . Area residents are invited to enjoy some upbeat music in a pleasant outdoor setting when the Union County Regional Pops Ensemble presents free Outdoor Concerts on July 31 and August 1 in Springfield and Clark. The Regional Pops Ensemble will perform a lively blend of jazz and concert pieces at 8 p.m. on Sunday, July 31, at the Springfield Community Pool, Morrison Road, Springfield. The following evening, Monday, August 1, the Ensemble will treat listeners to



some more popular tunes during a 7 p.m. performance at the Clark Municipal Building (formerly Brewer School), Westfield Avenue. The Ensemble features local students and residents who are participating in this year's Instrumental Music Workshop at Governor Livingston Regional High School in Berkeley Heights. Martin Friedman and Paul Hesse are the directors of the Pops Ensemble. For more information on these free outdoor concerts, call 376-6300, extension 328.

Saunders succeeds Richard Fisher, who had held the post of Rotary President for 20 months.



SAFETY AWARD . . . Acting Chief Anton Danco, of Clark's Police Department, second from left, accepts an award from Harry J. Van Lenten, Director of the Traffic Division of the New Jersey State Safety Council, honoring Clark's Traffic Bureau for the most improvement shown in a traffic program. The award was made at a special meeting held on July 5. Roy George, of Clark's Traffic Bureau, left, and Joseph Comarata, Director of Public Safety, look on. "This award shows that police officers are out there doing the job you are paying them to do," said Lenten. "Because of the combined efforts of the officers and the Police Department, Clark has achieved the most improvement for a department their size." Clark was chosen from among 83 Police Departments to receive this award, said Lenten. (Photo & caption: Pat DiMaggio.)