

Annual Report for 2018

Rahway Arts + Business Partnership
Annual Report on Programs and Activities for calendar year 2018



Mission

The mission of the Rahway Arts + Business Partnership (RABP) is to facilitate the ongoing growth of Rahway as a diverse, vibrant, economically and socially sound community. The RABP develops and promotes activities and programs that encourage the long-term success of Rahway's Special Improvement District (SID), which is the civic, cultural and commercial center of the entire City. The Rahway Arts + Business Partnership is the District Management Corporation for Rahway's SID.

Activities and Programs

The Programs and activities facilitated by the RABP are of two types: Special Events and Ongoing Programs. Special Events include once a year events such as the Rahway Taste of Spring, an annual event held since 2000. Ongoing programs include activities which occur throughout the year, such as the Rahway's Own campaign which involve gatherings, programs and displays.

Management Structure

The RABP is a non-profit corporation, governed by a Board of Trustees as well as a representative from the City Council. Operational management of the RABP is provided by the Executive Director and the Managing Director. The services of the Managing Director are

shared with the City of Rahway, by who the Managing Director is also employed as an Economic Development Specialist. Since 2017 the RABP offices have been located in City Hall. This facilitates the efficient operation of the RABP, and enhances communication between the City Administration and the RABP.

Activities and Programs

Creative Rahway for Education (Ongoing Programing)

Since 2014, the RABP has been an active participant in the monthly meetings of the Creative Rahway for Education Committee (CRE), a coalition of educators, school administrators, City administrators, local artists and businesses seeking to create opportunities for Rahway Public Schools students to connect with the downtown business and arts community, in order to enhance their educational experience, as well as to encourage pride in their City. The CRE group emerged from the City-wide Creative Rahway Convening held in January 2013 at the Hamilton Stage. The goal of the 2013 Convening was to inspire connections and collaborations and generate new ideas, by bringing together stakeholders from many different parts of the Rahway community. Rahway Public Schools student groups participate regularly in City and RABP events such as Taste of Spring and Winter Wonderland.

Restaurant Week (Special Event)

Rahway's Culinary scene is garnering some well earned attention and 2018's Restaurant Week was it's "peacock moment"! Changing the timing of Restaurant Week from Spring to Winter was a suggestion made by the proprietors the year prior. The RABP listened and so Rahway's annual Restaurant Week was held January 22nd-26th.

Fourteen restaurants participated (Beanas Para Siempre, Meatballs & Brew, The World Famous Waiting Room, Cubanu Latin Fusion, Hugos Restaurant, Luciano's Ristorante, Nancy's Townhouse, Taste of Marinas, The Irving Inn, Sabor Peruano, Patria, Just Plain Daves, Haruka Sushi and La Malinche) with prix fixe menus that showcased their unique cuisines. The RABP was able to use the logo and advertising campaign created in 2016 by Rahway's Wizdom Media. This was used in both print and social media to encourage patrons to enjoy Rahway's unique restaurants. RABP Board Trustee Patricia Kozlowski donated her design skills to assist the restaurants in the creation of a menu that was easy to read and provided consistency among all the participating establishments.

One unique characteristic was the collaboration not only of the restaurants but of the local businesses as well. Diners were encouraged to hold on to their receipts for specials outside of

their meal. With receipt in hand, folks were able to take advantage of the following: The Gateway Family YCMA offered childcare from 6-9pm for only \$10; Wet Ticket Brewery offered \$1 off your tab; The Watt Hotel Bar offered 10% off of your first drink; Rahway Kitty Hall offered 50% off of your entrance; Sticks Cigars offered 1 free cigar with the purchase of two, and, Union County Performing Arts Center offered Free tickets to the screening of Princess Bride or 35% off Dream Theatre Productions Legally Blonde showing that weekend.



Fios 1 Restaurant Hunters Comes to Rahway

Rahway's downtown Restaurant Scene is gaining notoriety! Christine Sloan, host of Fios 1's culinary show, "Restaurant Hunters", searches for delectable delights all throughout New Jersey. In early 2018 she requested the RABP suggest Rahway eateries that would fit their criteria for an upcoming episode. The RABP provided backgrounds on all the restaurants and the Producers selected The Irving Inn, The Rahway Grill and Sabor Peruano to highlight during an episode that aired in March.

RABP Social Media

In December of 2017 the Executive Team met with Heather Dube, a dynamic Rahway resident who wanted to assist the RABP in it's initiatives and activities. Heather began by taking over the RABP's Instagram account and grew the number of followers from 320 to 1,200. She also facilitated several initiatives throughout the year including the Rahway Shoppers Guide and the Rahway Bingo Board, both designed with the intention of educating Rahway residents to all that the downtown has to offer.

Tri-County Chamber of Commerce

In January, Len Harris of the Tri-County Chamber of Commerce, invited Rahway to host a meeting and inform the Chamber members of Rahway's activities and initiatives. The RABP

continued this relationship by regularly updating Mr. Harris, the representative for Rahway, who in turn, informs the Chamber at large.

American Planning Association of NJ's Annual Conference - Guest speakers

On January 25th, the Executive Team of the RABP was invited to speak at the American Planning Association of NJ's Annual Conference as part of a panel, '*In the Center of it All: Outside the Box Strategies for NJ Downtowns.*' Initially the Executive Director was contacted after an article was published naming Rahway as one of the Five Happening Places in NJ which cited the monthly meet-up group "*Cinco Rahway*". Cinco was created by Ann Marie and Amy outside of the work of the RABP, however, they used panel as a platform to discuss Cinco, but also many of the initiatives that happen in our downtown.

The Rahway Taste of Spring (Special Event)

The 18th annual Rahway Taste of Spring held on April 20, 2018 attracted a sold out crowd of over 1,500 people to the Rahway Recreation Center and raised over \$15,000 for the RABP. This event, directed by RABP Board Member Matt Dobrowolski, is the major fundraising event held each year by the Rahway Arts + Business Partnership to raise funds for the RABP's programs.

Restaurateurs and purveyors of wine and spirits from Rahway and fourteen surrounding communities brought bite sized portions of their best fare and their most popular beverages, which were enjoyed by all. The restaurateurs are all vying for the accolades that come from winning *Best Of* in their category. Over 900 tickets were sold in advance for \$30, creating our first ever sold out event before the doors even opened. Patrons raved about the offerings and will be sure to purchase their tickets in advance next year! Vendors were pleased with the efficiency and organization of this event and are already looking forward to 2019.

The Rahway Taste of Spring is also a food competition awarding winning restaurateurs with a beautiful plaque, "Günter Cash" awarded by Günter Wilhelm, a high end cutlery and cookware company, and a year's worth of bragging rights. In addition, the overall winner, the coveted Taster's Choice, also received an engraved knife from Günter Wilhelm. The winners are listed below.

Taste Of Spring Competition Winners 2018

Seasons 52

217 Lafayette Ave, Edison, NJ 08837

Best Gourmet Seafood

Best Gourmet Entree

Best Side

****Taster's Choice****

Red Knot

3 Golf Dr, Kenilworth, NJ 07033

Best Appetizer

Havana Central

55 Parsonage Rd, Edison, NJ 08837

Best Entree

Best International

Rosie's Cafe

238 Inman Ave. Colonia, NJ 07067

Best Salad

Bar Louie

675 U.S. Highway 1S, Ste. 8, Iselin, NJ 08830

Best Pasta

Best Sliders

Ceviche 14

268 Monroe St, Rahway, NJ 07065

Best Gourmet Pasta

Beana's Para Siempre

988 St. Georges Ave, Rahway, NJ 07065

Best Mexican Food

Chevys Fresh Mex

1150 S Stiles St, Linden, NJ 07036

Best Metro Ribs

Bahama Breeze

520 Woodbridge Center Dr, Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Best Chicken Wings

Best Restaurant Dessert

Mara's Bakery Cafe

250 South Ave, Fanwood, NJ 07023

Best Pulled Pork

Dorsi's Bakery

479 Port Reading Ave, Port Reading, NJ 07064

*Best Dessert Bakery
Best Gourmet Dessert Bakery*

Gold Leaf Pastry Shop and Cafe
900 W St Georges Ave, Linden, NJ 07036

*Best Metro Bakery
*Best Table Display**



Caption: Awards



Caption: Best in Show: Gold Leaf Bakery



Caption: Our Esteemed Judges



Caption: Dorsi's Bakery



Caption: In the winners circle



Caption: We couldn't do it without our Volunteers, especially these two, Anne And Lori McDarby



Caption: The Man the myth, the mastermind behind Taste of Spring, Matt Dobrowski



Caption: Everyone is having a great time



Caption: DJ On Fire



Caption: Tim Pewitt From Wet Ticket



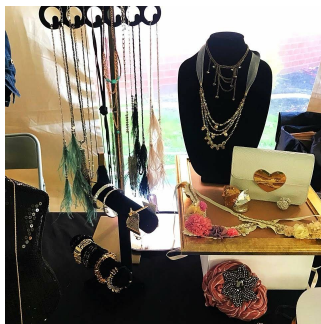
Caption: Karickter



Caption: Sponsor Gunter Wilhelm



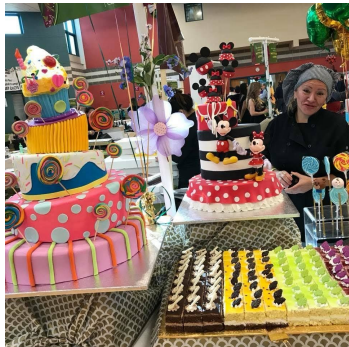
Caption: Wine and Design Rahway



Caption: Artisan vendors



Caption: Rahway's Sticks Cigars



Caption: Delicious offerings from Restaurants and Vendors



A huge Thank You
to our 2018 Taste of
Spring Sponsors:



Caption: We thank our sponsors

Culture Crawl 2018 (Special Event)

On Saturday, September 22nd from 1-6pm Rahway's downtown was happening! The sixth annual Culture Crawl was held on a beautiful late summer day doubling the number of attendees from last year, festival goers spent their time enjoying music, art, food and more in an open air art and music festival, which spans the entirety of the Special Improvement District. The streets were transformed by over 200 artists of all genres, bringing color, sound and movement to every corner of the mile footprint.

Councilman Jeremy Mojica commented that "this year's Culture Crawl brought crowds that rival Rahway's Hot Rods and Harley's event" (an annual car and bike festival that boasts crowds of nearly 10,000 people).

Programming for Culture Crawl 2018 built upon the foundation and experience of previous festivals. This year the RABP introduced a Vendor Village at the Train Station Plaza. For a small fee, vendors (who do not produce their wares) could pay a small fee to be located in this centralized area. Artists, for whom participation is free, were also offered the option pay to be located in the Vendor Village.

This year, in collaboration with the Friends of the Rahway Public Library, festival goers could enter their team in the 8th Annual Amazing Rahway Race, a scavenger hunt that spanned the entire festival. Contestants were charged with recovering a "stolen" piece of Rahway artwork. Winners received prizes and accolades as well as experiencing all areas of the festival.

Downtown was organized into nine zones, serviced by a complimentary shuttle. Starting at City Hall Plaza youngsters took part in yoga, twirling, art and many other activities, organized by Jennifer Truncale, in the *Kids Path to One Love* area. Sharing the Plaza, was Shakira Johnson's, *Make Art @ OMG! Plaza* inspiring women and girls to create something great, with a special appearance and performance by Rahway's Rising Star, Kristina Bonisio.

While shoppers enjoyed the Vendor Village, the Train Station Plaza was hopping with music at the *Wizdom Media Main Stage* by bands Rasha Jay, Mizu, The Wishy Washy Band, Brian Rothenback & The Adventuring Party, the Afraid Brigade and Red House Blue House. Hannum's Harley-Davidson's hosted their up-Cycle Art Exhibit featuring art created from bike parts! Cherry Street, curated by Ateiler Rosal Art Gallery and Framing was alive with artisans, spoken word, art exhibits and music by Kayka, Sweater Pills and the Redwinged Blackbird Band. On Main Street, The Litehouse's Four elements of Hip Hop, included two live graffiti murals and CubaNu's outdoor Latin party was the perfect spot to grab some quick bites, a drink and maybe even a dance!

This year, at Northfield Bank, the Wannabe's hosted a Hip Hop dance party, inviting passerby's to join them for line dancing. The music at the Arts Park was kicked off by Hollow Molly Acoustic, followed by Kailey Rocker, Vessel of Truth, Lauren Cooks St. Gark and the Loamers,

Heavy Flow and Brian Beckford. The front of The Gallery Space, curated by Earl's Girls, (from Earl's Cuts and Curls), Dana Holland and Tajiana Spann, brought the intersection of Irving and Seminary alive with inspiring music, colorful art, unique vendors, ancestry readings and even a parade.

Rodney Green Jr., from Exitium (a step and contemporary dance company), assisted in producing a full schedule of dance performances including, Step, Contemporary, Salsa, Kuchipudi (a traditional form of East Indian Dance), Bellydance, Broadway Dance, Bollywood, Hip Hip and Hip Hop Fusion. Some highlights of the dance performances included a Dance-A-thon Fundraiser for Myeloma Cancer hosted by Rahway Dance Theater and a Step workshop hosted by Rodney Greene Jr.

Lisa Vandever from CineKink, curated the 2nd annual Rahway Reel Short Film Festival. Each hour had a unique theme: Kids Kartoons; True Stories; Imaginings; Jersey Fresh; and, for those festival goers 18 years and older, Risque Biz. These will be shown again throughout 2019 in case you missed them the first time!

Many other artists contributed to the energy and vibrancy on the sidewalks including, the Rahway Paws Pop-Up Dog Park and Poetry Outside of the Pit, hosted by Big Mike of ACP Arts, both on Hamilton Street and the large Frida Kahlo, created out of yarn by artist Linda Grant.

In addition to the food and fun for all ages, Culture Crawl showcases Rahway's businesses by situating artists in front of stores throughout the special improvement District, with the intention of moving all artists indoors in the event of rain.

There was so much to see as you walked the sidewalks and visited the businesses in the downtown. "[Rahway] should be very proud – congratulations on a diverse and fun Cultural Crawl. I thought I was going to breeze through and we spent a couple of hours trying to get to everything. Next year, I will get there much earlier.", remarked Anita Thomas, Executive Director of Carolyn Dorfman Dance.

Promotion for Culture Crawl included Every Door Direct Mailers, flyers, social media advertising and a video advertisement at Menlo Park Mall. The RABP also created a Culture Crawl Pop Up Music Series on Fridays during the summer months and a Culture Crawl Summer Dance Concert weekend in July to draw attention to the greater event. (For more information see "Culture Crawl Pop- Up" .)



Caption: William Lopez co owner of the Litehouse, in front of the graffiti mural created on Main Street during the festival



Caption: Hollow Molly Acoustic at the Arts Park



Caption: Artist and activist, Marleen Olsen Hamm and her tree created out of trash from the Rahway River Clean ups



Caption: Rahway's Contento Dancers performed a Salsa routine in the Hamilton Stage.
Dancers From left to right: Deborah Walkoczy, Serena Ramos, Brittany Hale, Astrid Zuniga



Caption: The Gallery Space Curated by Earl's Girls



Caption: Drummer PJ Pagan performed on Hamilton Street



Caption: *Make Art @OMG Plaza* (Photo courtesy of Drawline Studios)



Caption: Poetry Outside of the Pit hosted by Big Mike of ACP Arts



Caption: Music at Striker Realty (Photo courtesy of Drawlines Studio)



Caption: Pose Lab at One Nest Yoga (Photo courtesy of Drawlines Studio)



Caption: Artist Jeff Brooks gifting a Rahway inspired piece to Mayor Jacobbi

Culture Crawl Pop up Events *(Special Event)*

This year the RABP expanded the Culture Crawl festival concept to include the Culture Crawl Pop Up Music Series and Culture Crawl Pop Up Dance Concert. Expanding the concept was two-fold. Culture Crawl is a robust festival with multiple venues and simultaneous programming. By “Popping Up” portions of the festival throughout the year, it gives artists multiple opportunities to share their craft, and audiences to enjoy them, as well as providing repeated brand placement and advertising throughout the year.

Culture Crawl Summer Music Series (*Special Event*)

During the months of June, July and August, musicians performed in the Paseo (the walkway off Main Street) on Friday evenings (weather permitting) from 6-9pm. Garnering the assistance of Nick Rosal a musician and the proprietor of Atelier Rosal, the RABP was able to program musical acts, ranging from full bands to single buskers, to bring life and music to Main Street. Passerbys enjoyed the lively music and small crowds as they went about their Friday night activities, while others purchased refreshments from the local eateries and enjoyed alfresco meals and live music. This was part of the phase two plan for the Paseo.



Caption: Summer Music Series in the Paseo



Caption: Enjoying Summer Concert Series

Culture Crawl Summer Dance Concert (*Special Event*)

Nikola Palivoda, a talented dancer, choreographer and producer, who participated Culture Crawl 2016 and 2017, partnered with the RABP to create the first Annual Culture Crawl Summer Dance Concert on July 6, 7 and 8. The weekend consisted of performances by a variety of local amateur groups and a core ensemble performing set pieces each show. The weekend included an opening night reception, a Master Class in between Saturday shows and a panel discussion closing out the final Sunday show. The weekend showcased diverse expressions of dance genres including, Contemporary, Bollywood, Belly Dance, Hip Hop and Step- Contemporary Fusion to name a few. This event drew attention to Rahway and it's downtown, the beautiful Hamilton Stage and the larger Culture Crawl 2018 event in September.



Caption: Marketing material and program cover for Culture Crawl Summer Dance Concert

Rahway's Own (*Ongoing Programing*)

In 2013, Rachael Faillace, former Executive Director met with teachers Patricia Volino- Reinos and Daniel Garay from the Rahway School District (RSD), and discussed that Rahway had

much to offer and was in much need of some rebranding. With the blessing from City Administration, the Rahway's Own Campaign was born.

This celebration of community pride highlights the successful native sons and daughters of Rahway whose talents, skills and hard work have made our City, our nation and our world a better place. The first Honorees- The Rahway's Own Class of 2014--included Nikola Tesla, Carl Sagan, Daphne Lee, Antonio Garay, Ike Igbinosun and Manny Yarborough.

In 2018, the RABP and Rahway school district celebrated five Rahway natives who have made a special impact in their field: Musicians and brothers, Warren and Allan Vaché; Strength and Conditioning Coach for the NY Jets, Joe Giacobbe; Rahway historian and author, Alex Shipley; and European Basketball Star, Louis Campbell. Each of the five honorees was the subject of a beautiful poster celebrating his achievements. The posters were unveiled at an assembly and press event in November at Rahway High School.

Rahway's Own is becoming better known with each passing year. The Rahway's Own Class of 2018 was nominated by Rahway residents and chosen by a committee comprised of past Rahway's Own winners, community leaders and the RABP.

The Rahway's Own campaign has grown. The (RSD) continues to use the Rahway's Own concept to inspire students of all ages. Every year, as part of the district's National Council of teachers of English National Day of Writing, kindergarteners create an individual "Rahway's Littlest Own" poster—Inspiring them to dream about their futures and how they can someday become one of Rahway's Own. Seventh graders and ninth graders in the RSD also take part in Future Rahway's Own projects. In seventh grade, students research the career paths that interest them and in 9th, they set goals to make those dreams come to fruition.



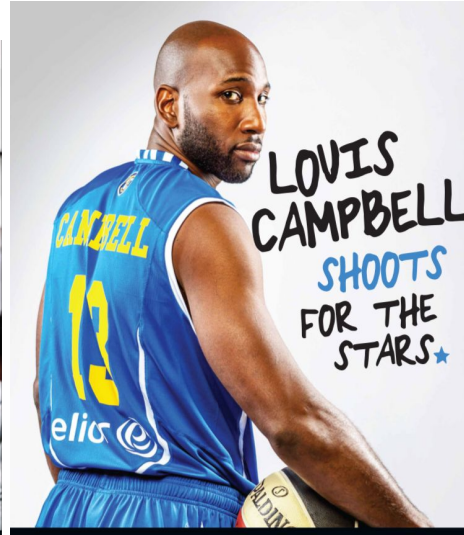
JOE GIACOBBE:
CONDITIONED FOR SUCCESS★

While at Rahway High School, Joe Giacobbe earned All-State and All-County honors which led to a place on the Rutgers University football team. He earned a full scholarship after two years, playing as both a defensive and offensive lineman. In his senior year, he contributed to the Scarlet Knights' winning record of 12-2 and their first ever bowl victory. From 2002-2005, Giacobbe was the football team's Director of Player Performance. The certified strength and conditioning specialist and registered strength and conditioning coach is currently a Strength and Conditioning Coach for the New York Jets.

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LOUIS CAMPBELL
SHOOTS FOR THE STARS★

A former basketball and football player at Rahway High School, Louis Campbell went on to play NCAA Basketball for the Buffalo Bulls. Louis ranked in the Top 20 in steals for 3 years and remains in the Top 20 all-time in steals for the Mid-American Conference. Campbell has played basketball professionally in Germany and Japan, and he is currently playing in France. After an astonishing fifteen year career, he brings not only his athletic talents to the Levallois Metropolitans, but also his leadership, knowledge, and experience. Louis Campbell's many accomplishments include becoming a two-time German League All-Star, a French Cup Final MVP, a French Cup champion, a Leaders Cup champion, and a Match des Champions champion.

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AL SHIPLEY:
KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE★

Teacher, author and historian, F. Alexander Shipley is a lifelong resident of Rahway. After receiving a degree in English from Montclair State University and a Master Degree in Humanities from Seton University, he taught English for thirty-three years, including twenty-four years at Rahway High School. In 2000 he was appointed City Historian by the mayor of Rahway and in 2005 was hired as the Research Consultant for the Rahway Public Library. A member of Rahway's Monmouth and Drunken Tavern Museum since 2013, Al Shipley has served as president, vice-president, trustee and, currently, Director of Museum Operations. Shipley has authored four publications of local history including "The Case of the Unknown Woman" based on a famously unsolved 19th century Rahway murder.

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WARREN & ALLAN VACHÉ
HIT ALL THE RIGHT NOTES★

Brother and jazz musicians, Allan and Warren Vaché, were born in Rahway to a musical family. Their father was a professional jazz bassist, and their mother worked for Decca Records. After graduating from Rahway High School, Warren, a cornetist, earned a degree in music education from Montclair State College where a talented, talented young man. College while studying with David Berke of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and found jazz. After leaving, he went on to study at the Juilliard School and then at the New York University. He has been a professional musician for over four decades, playing a spectacular range of instruments, and has been involved in performance, composition, and recordings. Allan performed with the Jim Carlin band for 10 years and still continues to show the stage occasionally as a live solo musician and also a featured performer on the PBS Public Radio International weekly radio program, "New York Live from the Landing." Warren continues to perform at various venues, appearing at outdoor festivals, and performing in Broadway shows and at clubs.

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Caption: Rahway's Own Posters, Class of 2018



Caption: Rahway's Own Celebration: From left to right: RHS Principal Mr. Farinella, Mrs. McCollins (Mother of Louis Campbell), Mayor Giacobbe, Joe Giacobbe, RHS VP Patricia Volino-Reinoso, Amy Garcia Phillips, Ann Marie Williams, Alex Shipley, Superintendent Dr. Patricia Camp, Daniel Garay
 Photo Credit: Joe Brown



Caption: Rahway's Own Honorees, Joe Giacobbe and Alex Shipley

Rahway's Own Rising Stars (Ongoing Programing)

In May 2017, we launched a new category- Rahway's Own Rising Stars. These are elementary, middle school and high school students that are selected by their school administrations for their outstanding achievements. A poster honoring the seven Class of 2018 Rising Stars was created by Wizdom Media and unveiled at a celebration on June of 2018. This year we celebrated:

- Miah Matamoros of Madison Elementary who raised funds to help children in Haiti and assists Seniors with their English.
- Lia Klimansky from Franklin Elementary, a consistently high achieving student, musician, athlete and peer-leader.
- Joskar Yanes from Grover Cleveland Elementary, who was not only president of student government but also a talented musician and honor roll student
- Malcolm Jackson from Roosevelt Elementary, an athlete, scholar and dancer and was chosen out of hundreds of dancers to perform in the the 2017 Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade
- Kristina Bonisisio from 7th and 8th Grade Academy, an ambitious scholar and musician, who's persistence, hard work, willingness to help others, and a genuine aspiration to do good and be the best one can be, embodies everything that we know makes successful citizens.
- Anastasia Rachinsky, from St. John Vianney, a straight A student, who balances her academics with her many other activities such as girl scouts, soccer and volunteering while cultivating her love of the arts through dance and theater. .

The Rahway's Own and Rising Star images can be viewed on the walls of Rahway High School, under the clocktower at our own train station plaza and in the windows of Cherry Pit building, located on Cherry Street in Rahway and were displayed for a period of time at Menlo Park Mall.

A mobile version of the exhibit that is on display at the Cherry Pit building on Cherry Street, is presented at school concerts, the Taste of Spring and anywhere we can set up to show off that Rahway has a rich history, but is also a launching pad for creativity and Innovation.

Rising Stars

2018



KRISTINA BONISIO
Rahway Academy, 8th Grade

Kristina celebrates everything that makes successful citizens: persistence, hard work, always ready to help others, and a genuine openness to be guided and by the best one can be. An ambitious scholar and musician, she truly owns her success.



LIA KLIMANSKY
Franklin Elementary School, 6th Grade

Consistently listed on the ICS "Rising Stars" list, Lia is a member of Peer Mediators, School Chorus, Safety Patrol, STEM Club, and Crochet Club. This summer she will be attending The Junior National Young Leaders Conference at Georgia Mason University.



MALCOLM JACKSON
Roosevelt Elementary School, 6th Grade

Malcolm is a Peer Mediator, Patrol Officer, and member of the Chorus who also plays basketball and basketball. Malcolm has been performing on stage since the age of five winning numerous championships for dance, including the most recent scholarship from Missions of Hip Hop in January 2018.



MIAH MATAMOROS
Madison School, 1st Grade

Miah grows at her time volunteering at her library and assisting senior citizens whom first language is not English. In addition, this innovative and thoughtful youth created her own miniature start to raise funds for Haitian children in need.



JOSHUA MOOREHEAD
Rahway High School, Senior

Joshua began making music and posting their online at ten years old. He created different songs inspired by other artists and songs himself. He has been in various positions. A member of the National Honor Society, he continued to gain more time by learning more dancing, video editing, drawing, and DJ animation. At the age of 18, Joshua made his first film entitled Nature and now works as a Business Manager.



ANASTASIA RACHINSKY
St. John Vianney, 3rd Grade

Anastasia has truly embraced her hometown's commitment to "The Arts" she began taking ballet lessons when she was four years old and has performed alongside professional dancers in the American Repertory Ballet's production of The Nutcracker in both years. She enjoys attending Rahway's Winter Shop and summer theater camp and looks forward to joining her school's Drama Club.



JOSKAR YANES
Grover Cleveland, 6th Grade

Joskar is the current president of the STEAM student council government, a Safety Patrol, and part of the Gifted and Talented program. He is an avid member of both the band and string programs, receiving the All City Band where he takes on the role of principal second violinist.

These students have been selected by their school for their outstanding qualities and accomplishments. The Rahway Community celebrates these "Rising Stars" and looks forward to following their futures.

Rahway, Home to Creativity and Innovation.



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Caption: Rahway's Own Rising 2018 Star Artwork

[Story Time on the Go!](#) (Ongoing programming)

Story Time on the Go, a weekly story time for young children and their parents, was First “brainstormed” by the RABP executive staff while attending a conference in late 2016. It was conceived as a way to accomplish three worthwhile goals, simultaneously, while having fun: to attract attention to the Farmers Market at the Train Station Plaza, to facilitate the Rahway Public Library (RPL) reaching outside it’s building and into the community, and to make the District more inviting for families. The City and the Rahway Recreation Center were also important partners in this program, the City provided the space and the insurance and the Rec Center provided foam cushions for the children and parents to sit on and brought a petting zoo to an early story time in June 2018.

Each Thursday, weather permitting, children, parents and a volunteer storyteller gathered at the Farmers Market, for a story read aloud by local business owners and community members including Cherron Roundtree, Rahway’s Business Administrator, and Mayor Giacobbe and his wife, Laura Giacobbe. Music was played before and after story time, and the children were encouraged to decorate the plaza with chalk art – and they did! Adjusting the time from the previous year, Storytime ended just as the farmers market vendors were setting up shop this gave the parents the opportunity to shop for a fresh produce with their kids, before heading home, and provided the farmers market with additional customers.

The RABP collaborated with the Rahway parking authority to provide free parking passes for parents staying for story time.

This year, the RABP created a banner that hung on the side of the Train Station Plaza Stage and served to advertise the weekly event.

Story time on the Go was expanded to include three indoor Story Time on the Go gatherings in the lobby of the Watt Hotel. Scheduled during days the RSD students had off from school, the first was hosted OneNest yoga studio owner, Lisa Sorensen. The second was by Mayor Giacobbe on Election Day and the third was hosted by local realtor, Audra Loccisano, with special guests, Mr. and Mrs. Claus, in anticipation of the City’s Winter Wonderland, an outdoor winter festival and annual tree lighting celebration.



Caption: Story Time On the Go banner on display at the Train Station Plaza



Caption: Dawn White from Hannum's Harley Davidson reading at Story Time On the Go

- **Paseo** (*City Beautification*)

The Paseo is the “working title” for ongoing improvement to the pedestrian walkway between Main Street and the Rahway Parking Authority parking lot adjacent to River Place. In January 2017, the RABP Executive Staff and the RABP Board President Joel Schwartz met with the business and property owners whose buildings adjoin either side of the walkway to discuss the possibility of making the space more inviting by adding some elements of interest that would create a welcoming space for public use. Phase 1 of the project was to care for the three cherry trees in the space and add colorful tables and chairs to encourage dining alfresco in the shade of the cherry trees.

Phase 2 of the project included a new mural painted on the side of the ADS property and with approval from the proprietors. Dubbed “The Wings Mural”, and created by artist Lawrence Ciarallo, this work of art encouraged passerby’s to photograph themselves in front of the mural.

The second phase also included the Culture Crawl Pop Up Summer Music Series. Partnering with the proprietor of Ateiler Rosal, (a custom framing shop and art gallery in Rahway), Nick Rosal, the RABP created the Culture Crawl Pop Up Music Series every Friday evening, weather permitting, from 6:00 to 9:00 pm. Musical acts of various sizes performed for a passerbys and alfresco diners during the months of June, July and August.



Caption: "Wings" mural

Oktoberfest 2018 *(Special event)*

Trustees of the RABP, Vice President Larry Fishman, Treasurer Ron Dolce, Secretary Patricia Kozlowski and Matt Dobrowolski planned and executed the first Annual Rahway Oktoberfest. Several businesses, such as The Gramercy, (a new apartment complex on Cherry Street), helped by sponsoring this new initiative. The crew at Wizdom Media designed a colorful logo used to advertise. Cornstalk decorations donated by Shoprite adorned lamp posts throughout the District. Banners donated by Northfield Bank helped advertise fall menu items, specialty beers on tap and new wines to try, along with tempting discounts. All of this helped Rahway to get ready for fall! Plans are already underway to expand on this concept for October 2019.

Rahway Business Bingo Board *(Special event)*

Rahway Business Bingo Board initiative was conceived and executed by our dynamic volunteer, Heather Dube. For the month of October, patrons of downtown businesses were encouraged to visit participating venues to acquire a stamp on their "Rahway Business Bingo Board". Patrons that acquired the greatest amount of stamps mailed in their boards and were eligible for a

drawing for a \$100 gift card. Caroline Ajel was the winner this round. The RABP intends to repeat this concept in 2019.

Winter Holiday Season 2018

- **Winter Wonderland On Cherry Street** (*Special Event*)

In 2018, the City once again requested that the RABP organize the decoration of Cherry Street for the annual Winter Wonderland and Tree Lighting Celebration. This was the fourth year in a row that the RABP undertook this event which took place on November 23rd.

Decorations for this year consisted of four elements: new decorative banners for the lamp posts, faux presents created by Mr B Printing of Rahway tied to trees lined the street, a “tree” made of garland, where festival goers could hang self made ornaments decorated during the event, and once again, pine trees lent to the RABP by Schieffersteins’s Farmers Market, transported by DPW, upon which candy canes were placed for all attendees to enjoy.

Another highlight was a festive scene in the window of the Cherry Pit by our Yarn Artist, Linda Grant. Characters made of yarn depicted wintry scenes for all to enjoy throughout the holiday season.



Caption: Volunteers putting candy canes on the trees



Caption: Cherry Street decorations



Caption: (3 Photos) Linda Grant's wintery scene in the Window of the Cherry Pit

- **Winter Banners for Lamp Posts** (*City Beautification*)

This year the RABP commissioned artist Mary Ann McFarland to create several whimsical, wintery designs which were printed as banners to adorn the the lamp posts on Cherry Street, which are different in size then in the rest of the downtown. Partnering with Nick Rosal from Atelier Rosal and receiving installation assistance from DPW, the new banners add a colorful and festive feel to Cherry Street and can be used again annually.

- **Vendor Village for Winter Wonderland** *(Special event)*

The RABP organized the Winter Wonderland Vendor Village for the second year. Groups of local artisans and vendors were invited to display and sell their wares in the Vendor Village located in the Cherry Pit building on Cherry Street. It provided a fun opportunity for festival goers to start their holiday shopping.

Lights and Holiday decorations *(City Beautification)*

During the 2016 holiday season, there were conversations among the RABP board and staff and in the larger community about how to make the holiday spirit more visible in the District. In accordance with the three year plan, developed in 2017 with the City, the RABP purchased additional lighted snowflakes that attached to the lamp posts all throughout the downtown.

Small Business Saturday *(Special event)*

For the second year, the RABP worked together with the Rahway Chamber of Commerce (RCC) to promote Small Business Saturday 2018 ---a marketing initiative started by American Express, all across the US, which encourages holiday shoppers to patronize brick-and-mortar businesses which are small and local – as opposed to big box is owned by national chains. It is a “Shop Local” counterpoint to Black Friday – a shopping holiday held on the Saturday following Thanksgiving.

This year the RABP and RCC expanded the day with a bag give-away in the lobby of the Watt Hotel. Shoppers were encouraged to stop by and pick up “Shop Local” bags provided by American Express, which held promotions from local businesses and a cup with the “*Experience Local Rahway*” logo. Shoppers also received drink tickets for complimentary beverages from participating local establishments.

The RABP worked with the Rahway Parking Authority to provide free metered parking for shoppers for the entire day. The free parking was advertised through social media as well as by flyers that were distributed around the district, to promote the event. As an additional boost to Rahway’s local businesses, the RABP posted, on social media, descriptions about the businesses that are in the district, drawing attention to the diverse businesses that call downtown Rahway home.



Caption: Rahway Businesses were excited for Small Business Saturday

Rahway Gift Guide (Special event)

Created as a tool for shoppers during Small Business Saturday and the holiday shopping season at large, RABP Volunteer, Heather Dube created a grouping of downtown businesses based on different categories such as "Gift an Experience" and "For your Four-Legged Friend". Guides were given out with the Small Business Saturday "Shop Local" bags.



Caption: Holiday Gift Guide

Business is our Middle Name! (Ongoing)

The RABP promotes the vitality of the District by supporting the downtown businesses in many ways, and with each passing year, we find more ways to do so. We celebrate the “birthdays” and “anniversaries” of every downtown business, via social media. The RABP helps to make the opening of every new business in the downtown an event, with celebratory Ribbon-Cuttings coordinated with the City Administration, so that as many people as possible in Rahway and the surrounding area know about the launch of a new business in our community.

The RABP continues to facilitate relationships among businesses in the District, the Rahway Public Schools, the Union County Freeholders and the City Administration.

One of the benefits of the RABP “sharing” with the City the Shared Service position of Ann Marie Williams, Managing Director of the RABP, is our shared ability to support new businesses from the beginning of their journey. As Economic Development Specialist for the City, Ann Marie meets potential business owners early in their process of conceiving their new business. She is therefore able to advise them on “How to Set up a Small Business” —which is also the name of a pamphlet developed jointly with the City to assist new businesses. Ann Marie guides new business owners through the permitting process until they are ready to open. This facilitates our ability to keep better track of businesses in the District.



Caption: Mayor Jacobbe celebrates new businesses

Photo Credit: Joe Brown

Restaurant Meetings (Ongoing)

In 2015, the RABP initiated a monthly gathering of restaurant owners in the District, to increase their awareness of City policies, initiatives and activities, including temporary street closures, as well as to address any concerns or needs of Rahway’s restaurants. This has been a productive and cohesive working group, with all of our table service eateries participating, in person or via email, each month.

Leasing Office Meetings (Ongoing)

Following the success of the Restaurant Meetings, the RABP initiated monthly meetings with the Management Companies and Leasing Offices of the rental apartments, surrounding and within, the District. This facilitates the sharing of information of upcoming events and initiatives for their residents, as well as awareness to the new and existing businesses in the downtown. It has also helped facilitate a valuable relationship with the City Administration.

SID Directors Meetings *(Ongoing)*

Beginning in fall of 2017, Directors of Special Improvement Districts and other Municipal leaders from Union County began meeting bi-monthly to offer mutual support and share acquired knowledge. Rahway hosted the January meet-up which took place at Wet Ticket, a local brewery in the heart of the downtown and we catered from two local businesses Rahway Fried Chicken and Sinai Bakery. This is a valuable tool for all who attend. The Executive Team continues to attend these meetings as they provide useful information, given by others in similar positions.

Provided Support

Big Thursdays

During the months of June, July and August the City programs every Thursday as part of “Big Thursdays”. This year the RABP assisted in the programming for the June events at the Train Station Plaza organizing “¡Baile! Rahway”, a weekly outdoor Latin dance party hosted by local dance company, Contento Dance. Councilman Jeremy Mojica was the weekly DJ while Rahway graduate and percussionist, Jeff Silva, accented the music to give it a lively feel. Each week a class in a different Latin dance style was hosted by Contento Dance, followed by performances by Contento Dance and Christina Piedra and her dancers, Cultural Explosion. Cubanu sold quick bites, while the Union County Performing Arts Center sold beverages.





Caption: ¡Baile! Rahway

Poetry at the Pit

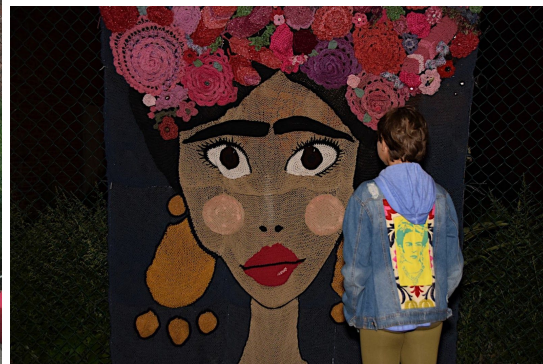
This year the RABP has provided support to the Rahway Prevention Coalition, a City organization that works with the youth of Rahway to prevent gang violence and drug use, during their “Poetry at the Pit” Open Mic and Spoken Word events.

Yarn Art! (Ongoing)

Rahway’s 2017 Artist of the Year, Linda Grant, created vignettes and colorful decorations, all from yarn, in 2017 that adorned City Hall Plaza and the Train Station Plaza. In 2018, Linda scaled down the scope of her work and created two masterpieces, the first a Matisse style “Goldfish”, and the second, a portrait of Frida Kahlo. Through the RABP, Ms. Grant was granted access to a City owned fence on Cherry Street that could serve as her “canvas”. Her beautiful pieces became a highlight of Cherry Street and a temporary landmark adding color and elegance to the streetscape.



Caption: Lida Grant's replication of Matisse's Goldfish



Caption: Linda Grant and Frida Kahlo

Rahway River Clean-up Grant

The RABP was crucial in securing a \$200 grant from the Department of Public Works for local community members, led by Rahway's Volunteer of the Year, Marleen Olsen- Hamm, who continues efforts to improve the appearance and cleanliness of Milton Lake. Although Milton Lake is technically outside of the SID, the RABP Executive team believed it a worthwhile initiative to support.

Restaurant List for the UCC Graduation

Union County College hosted their Winter graduation at the UCPAC. The RABP collaborated with the Union County Freeholders to provide each ticket holder with a list and description of all the downtown restaurants.

Rahway High School French Club Brassiere

On February 14th, Rahway HS French Club created an in-house French Brassiere. Taking over their school's cafeteria, they created a French restaurant providing both in-house and take out options. This was a fundraiser for the French Club's trip to France. The RABP assisted by marketing it to City Hall and the downtown businesses. It was an opportunity for our businesses to connect and see the value that our High School adds to the community. An initiative that came out of the Creative Rahway for Education.

Financial Report

Funding for the Rahway Arts and Business Partnership comes from two sources

- 1) A special assessment on properties within the Special Improvement District, and
- 2) fundraising events undertaken by the RABP which promote the District and its goals.

In 2017, the City of Rahway provided \$130,000 to the RABP raised from the special assessment on properties within the SID; this is the same amount the City has provided to the RABP from this funding source during the past several years. In addition, income from RABP - sponsored events in 2017 totaled \$14,000 which was raised during Taste of Spring.

The total amount of income received by the RABP from all sources in 2017 was \$174,515, During 2017, the RABP spent approximately \$161,946 on programming, salaries and expenses.

Press:

[Rahway's Taste of Spring is coming on April 20th \(MyCentralJersey.com\)](#)

[A Look Back At The 2018 Rahway Taste of Spring \(NewJerseyStage.com\)](#)

[Rahway's Taste of Spring to offer sample of Union County dining scene \(MyCentral Jersey.com\)](#)

[Eighteen Years of Success for Taste of Spring \(RennaMedia.com\)](#)

[Rahway Taste \(Inside NJ magazine\)](#)

[Rahway Mayor Giacobbe to Help Cut Ribbon on Artists' Affordable Housing Unit in Rahway \(TAPinto.net\)](#)

[Rahway unveils affordable housing complex — The Willows at Rahway \(MyCentralJersey.com\)](#)

[Artist-preferred housing complex opens in Rahway \(UnionNewsDaily.com\)](#)

[40 Things for Fall Family Fun in Central New Jersey \(MyCentralJersey.com\)](#)

[Over 200 Hundred Artists Energized Rahway's Downtown During Their Annual Arts and Music Festival, Culture Crawl 2018 \(NewJerseyStage.com\)](#)

[Rahway Seeks Artists For 2018 Culture Crawl Festival \(NewJerseyStage.com\)](#)

[Rahway Hosts Culture Crawl Summer Dance Show \(NewJerseyStage.com\)](#)

[Summer Dance Show Sets The Stage for Culture Crawl in Fall \(Westfield Leader, page 18\)](#)

[Inspired by the immigration struggles at the border, artist and activist, Linda Grant, takes up her knitting needles \(NewJerseyStage.com\)](#)

[5 of the Hottest Up & Coming Towns in New Jersey \(Happening Magazine\)](#)

[Destination Jersey: Rahway Restaurant Week brings 'dinner and a show' to city \(MyCentralJersey.com\)](#)

[What's on your plate? Beautiful dishes from New Jersey chefs \(MyCentralJersey.com\)](#)

Congratulations to Cubanu, Beanas Para Siempre, and The Irving Inn!