



## Monroe Township Boasts Second Lowest Tax Rate in Middlesex County

Monroe Township has the second lowest overall effective tax rate in Middlesex County according to the 2021 Abstract of Ratables recently released by the Middlesex County Board of Taxation.

The report lists Monroe Township's effective tax rate of 2.027, the second lowest in comparison to the County's 25 municipalities.

"This ranking is a result of a slight municipal tax rate reduction in 2021 – despite the COVID pandemic – from \$.493 to \$.489 per \$100 assessed value," said Mayor Stephen Dalina. "It also is attributable to our AA+ bond rating which is the second highest rating assigned by Standard & Poor and

only awarded to 10% of municipalities nationwide."

The state defines an effective tax rate as "a statistical study that enables the comparison of one district to another based on the assumption that all districts are at 100 percent valuation. This rate is not to be used to compute the tax bill."

"Monroe Township provides a wide variety of quality programs and services to our residents that is unparalleled elsewhere in the County and our comparably low tax rate shows that we offer among the best value in the County," said Mayor Dalina.

### Monroe's Overall Effective Municipal Tax Ranking in Middlesex County

Taxing District	Overall Effective Tax Rate	Taxing District	Overall Effective Tax Rate
Cranbury	1.634	South Amboy	2.612
<b>Monroe</b>	<b>2.027</b>	Metuchen	2.689
Old Bridge	2.092	Perth Amboy	2.733
South Plainfield	2.113	Middlesex	2.758
South Brunswick	2.134	East Brunswick	2.759
Piscataway	2.175	Woodbridge	2.774
Edison	2.280	North Brunswick	2.835
South River	2.310	Spotswood	2.963
New Brunswick	2.325	Milltown	2.967
Plainsboro	2.351	Dunellen	3.122
Sayreville	2.376	Jamesburg	3.260
Helmetta	2.574	Highland Park	3.516
Carteret	2.589		

\*Source Middlesex County's 2021 Abstract of Ratables.

"We also continue to have among the lowest residential water and sewer service fees in the region."

The Monroe Township munic-

ipal tax rate has seen a less than 1% average increase over the past seven years. Water and sewer rates remained the same in 2021. ■

## Middlesex County and Monroe Move Forward with Major Traffic Improvements at Applegarth and Prospect Plains Road

County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, County Commissioner Charles Kenny, and County Commissioner Leslie Koppel recently met with Monroe officials to further discuss improvements to the intersection of Prospect Plains Road and Applegarth Road. The onsite meeting represented the culmination of efforts, led by Mayor Stephen Dalina and county officials, to improve safety in this corridor.

Along with replacing traffic signals at Applegarth/Prospect Plains Road, other project improvements will be: adding dedicated left turn arrows in all

directions, sidewalks, pedestrian push-buttons and ADA ramps, plus roadway reconstruction. Design is concluding, and land acquisition will begin this winter.

"This project is a collaboration between Middlesex County and the Township of Monroe with support and assistance from the Middlesex County Department of Transportation. It's great to see all parties involved working together for the safety of our Middlesex County residents," said Board of County Commissioners Director Ronald G. Rios.

*Continued on page 3*



County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, County Commissioner Charles Kenny, and County Commissioner Leslie Koppel met with Mayor Stephen Dalina along with officials from Middlesex County and the Township of Monroe.

## TOWN HALL

1 Municipal Plaza • Monroe Township, NJ 08831  
www.monroetwp.com

## ELECTED OFFICIALS

### Mayor:

Stephen Dalina . . . . .sdalina@monroetwp.com

### Council President:

Miriam Cohen . . . . .mcohen@monroetwp.com

### Council Vice President:

Elizabeth Schneider . . . . .eschneider@monroetwp.com

### Council Members:

Terence Van Dzura . . . . .tvandzura@monroetwp.com

Leonard Baskin . . . . .lbaskin@monroetwp.com

Charles Dipierro . . . . .cdipierro@monroetwp.com

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

**Township Main Number** . . . . .(732) 521-4400

**Animal Control** . . . . .(732) 521-0222

**Construction Office** . . . . .(732) 656-4585

**Court Administrator** . . . . .(732) 521-4020

**Township Engineer** . . . . .(732) 605-9440

**EMS & First Aid** (non-emergency) (732) 521-1880

**Health Department** . . . . .(732) 521-4400 ext. 192

**Environmental Protection** .(732) 521-4400 ext. 118

**Monroe Township Library** . . . . .(732) 521-5000

**Utilities Department** . . . . .(732) 521-1700

**Office of Senior Services** . . . . .(609) 448-7140

**Parks Department** . . . . .(732) 723-5000

**Police** (non-emergency) . . . . .(732) 521-0222

**Public Works** . . . . .(732) 656-4575

**Recreation** . . . . .(732) 723-5000

**Recycling** . . . . .(732) 656-4575

**Tax Collector** . . . . .(732) 521-4405

**Township Clerk** . . . . .(732) 656-4573

**Traffic Safety** . . . . .(732) 521-0222 ext. 126

**Transportation** . . . . .(609) 443-0511

## Mayor Dalina Lauds State for Increasing Homestead Rebate Program for Tax Relief

Mayor Dalina, a vocal advocate for the expansion of the state's Homestead Rebate, is expressing appreciation to the state for increasing funding for this key tax relief program.

Almost 7,000 Monroe residents will benefit from this expanded program, with an additional \$130 credit. Collectively, that is an additional \$900,000 in direct property tax relief for Monroe residents.

Mayor Dalina had been critical of state policy that historically trimmed the Homestead program as a way to balance the state budget. The latest round of benefits, scheduled to be paid in May 2022, are

intended to offset property tax bills from 2018.

"Monroe is committed to fighting for as much state and federal aid as possible to reduce the tax burden for our residents," Mayor Dalina said. "This is a great victory that builds on our previous successes to expand our senior freeze program and longstanding effort to create and expand the retirement income exclusion program."

Mayor Dalina worked with Sen. Linda Greenstein and Assembly members Wayne DeAngelo and Daniel Benson to advocate for full funding of the Homestead Credit program for this year.

"I also am pleased to announce an important change to a state program that began in 2017, in which couples age 62 and older are excluded from state taxes if they earned under \$100,000 per year," Mayor Dalina said. "Now, with my strong support, the state is allowing couples who annually earn between \$100,000 and \$150,000 to receive a partial exclusion, rather than be cut off entirely. That will be a boost for many Monroe residents."

More information about the Homestead program is available by calling 1-888-238-1233. ■

## Public Input Incorporated into Draft Master Plan

After a very successful public outreach campaign this past summer, with resident input gathered at three community workshops and a highly-successful survey completed with more than 85,500 question responses and nearly 5,500 comments, the Township's

Master Plan efforts have now entered into the next phase.

The public input will now be used to recommend amendments, as the Township's planning experts update their drafts.

The consultants will be

meeting with Township professionals and the Master Plan Stakeholder Committee through January for comments and feedback. The Master Plan Subcommittee plan to present an update at Planning Board meetings in the first quarter of 2022. ■



## Township of Monroe NEWS

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email: info@jaffecom.com • web: www.jaffecom.com

**EDITOR & PUBLISHER:** Jonathan Jaffe

**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER:** Elisa Kranz

**ADVERTISING:** Jill Levey

**PRODUCTION:** Jama Bowman

**Contributing Writer:** Kristina Sternesky

**Monroe Township Public Information Officer**  
Stacey Kennedy at 732-521-4400

The Monroe NEWS reaches every home,  
business and post office box in Monroe.





## A Message from Mayor Stephen Dalina

This is the time of the year when we are especially grateful for our many blessings, be it our family, our friends, our health or our homes.

We all have one blessing in common: Our collective decision to live in Monroe Township.

My wife, Susan, and I

decided to move to Monroe in 1998 with our two boys. It was the ideal choice; a safe community with great schools, strong recreational programs and tight-knit neighborhoods. Susan and I figured it was the ideal place to raise the boys and to one day retire. That remains the grand plan.

Besides the many friendships made over the years, there are many amenities in Monroe of which I am immensely proud.

For example, we have a state-of-the-art library.

Trust me on that, as a Rutgers University professor. I know of no other library system in Middlesex County that offers such a breadth of services in such an attractive setting. Our library is a jewel.

In addition, we have top-notch recreational facilities for our thriving programs and sports leagues. Through the Master Plan process, I intend to invest more in recreational locations and spaces. As a member of the Recreation Advisory Board, I have witnessed the care-

ful planning and consideration that goes into each and every town offering. My boys carry fond memories of playing youth baseball here, and I was pleased to be a part of Monroe Baseball for several years as a volunteer.

To conclude, I am also enormously thankful to all of you - the residents of Monroe Township, who always are so willing to work together for the common good. We proudly help whenever help is needed and we support one another always.

I often think back to the earlier days of the pandemic, when our office received numerous calls for vaccine appointments. Volunteers from the community jumped into action to help, ensuring every caller received service. To me, that is quintessential Monroe.

We are always here for each other, in good times and in bad. And for that reason, I am truly blessed to serve as your mayor. My very best wishes for a wonderful 2022. ■

## NJTPA and Middlesex County to Fund \$500,000 Study of Truck Traffic

Following the steady urging of Mayor Dalina, the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority (NJTPA) and Middlesex County have committed \$500,000 in federal and county transportation funds for a comprehensive regional study of ongoing truck traffic. The study is primarily funded by a \$400,000 grant from the NJTPA, with the county providing staff and resources.

“The state is taking this very seriously and agreed

a detailed study of the regional freight corridors is the next, logical step in our efforts to finally relieve truck traffic in our residential neighborhoods,” Mayor Dalina said. “This study will provide the necessary information for state and county leaders to devise the right solution on the roadways they operate and maintain in Monroe Township. Public safety is paramount; and we need these trucks off our residential streets.” ■

## Traffic Improvements *Continued from page 1*

“Middlesex County is proud to invest in these safety improvements, but it is essential that pedestrians play their part by making smart, safe decisions and by crossing roads only at authorized locations.”

“Safety is our top priority and the proposed improvements to this well-traveled corridor, including

dedicated left turn arrows, promises to provide safer passage for vehicle and pedestrian traffic alike,” Mayor Dalina said. “This is another strategic collaboration with Middlesex County to improve quality of life for our residents and all those who travel through Monroe Township.”

“On behalf of all the

residents in the Township of Monroe, I know how crucial this traffic signal project is to our community,” said Middlesex County Commissioner Leslie Koppel. “Not only does the County fully support this project, but we are dedicated to getting this project moving in a timely fashion and addressing all concerns.” ■

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## Monroe Residents Have Saved More Than \$15 Million on Electric Bills with Community Energy Aggregation Program

*Participants will Automatically Revert to JCP&L in December – No Action Required*

Monroe Township residents enrolled in the Township Community Energy Aggregation (MTCEA) program have saved more than \$15 million since the 2013 program inception. The Township is the only municipality in the state to successfully bid eight uninterrupted years (four, two-year contracts) of its energy aggregation program.

MTCEA “Round Four”, which began in December 2019 with Constellation New Energy for a two-year term ending in December 2021, has generated actual savings

over the JCP&L tariff price of approximately \$3 million. This translates to an average savings of over \$200 per participating residence - more for those using large quantities of electricity or living in all-electric homes.

This fall, the Township launched a competitive procurement process to obtain a replacement energy supply contract for “Round Five” that would begin in December 2021.

Unfortunately, like other municipalities bidding this fall, proposals received were higher than the current JCP&L tariff

price. Therefore, the Township was unable to award a new contract, and all program participants will be transitioned back to JCP&L in December to receive the lowest available pricing. Participating households were recently notified of this switch back to utility supply via letter from JCP&L.

**Residents are advised that the transfer back to JCP&L will be automatic with no action needed.**

The Township remains committed to helping residents save money on their electric bills and will be soliciting bids next year

from third-party suppliers if market conditions improve, and electric costs are lower than the JCP&L rate at that time.

In the meantime, residents should exercise caution in responding to solicitations from unfamiliar energy suppliers and be warned of scammers and teaser rates that promise low rates now but balloon later.

Established in 2013, the MTCEA program is conducted under State law and in accordance with the State Board of Public Utilities’ regulations. Current participation is



approximately 14,000 households. Residents seeking additional information should contact program coordinator Harold Klein at 732-521-4400, ext. 135. ■

## Two New Social Groups at the Senior Center

The Monroe Township Senior Center introduced two new social groups in November. “LGBT Socialize with Me” is a social gathering of members of the LGBT community, and “W. O. W.” is a widow and widower support group.

Contact the Senior Center at 609-448-7140 for information about these groups and all of the great programming available to members. ■

## Monroe Expands Shared Services Agreement to Cut Costs

Monroe Township has a strong history of entering into shared services contracts with neighboring municipalities and Middlesex County to reduce costs and eliminate costly redundancy.

“We are proud to have a very strong relationship with the surrounding towns and the county, all of which are our partners in actively finding ways to reduce the residential tax burden,” Mayor Dalina said.

Monroe has inked two new agreements. The first

is with the Middlesex County Improvement Authority, involving the recycling of yard waste. The second arrangement is with the Township of Manalapan to share public works equipment.

“Every one of these new agreements builds upon previous good work, as we continually reduce expenses to Monroe taxpayers through shared services,” the mayor said. “We will continue to aggressively pursue ways in which to share resources.” ■

An advertisement for M. David De Marco Funeral Home, Inc. The top part of the ad features the company name in a large, elegant, cursive font. Below the name is a smaller line of text: "Family Owned and Operated Since 1979". The main part of the ad is a photograph of a large, two-story white building with a prominent porch and columns, likely the funeral home. At the bottom of the photograph, there is a black box with white text providing contact information: "Thomas J. DeMarco, Manager, N.J. Lic. No. 4651", "205 Rhode Hall Rd. Monroe Twp., NJ 08831 - 732-521-0555", and "www.demarcofuneralhome.com".



## Notice from OEM

*Boosters Now Available to Everyone Ages 18 and Over*

Booster vaccines are currently available at the following local pharmacies by appointment. Check with your primary care physician or urgent care provider for additional booster vaccine availability and guidance. For more information, visit <https://covid19.nj.gov/pages/vaccine>.

### **FRANKLIN PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult), Moderna, J&J  
557 Englishtown Road, Suite 141, Monroe  
732-446-5445

### **TEXAS ROAD PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult), Moderna, J&J  
355 Applegarth Road, Monroe 609-235-9368

### **WALGREENS PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult)  
314 Applegarth Road, Monroe 609-655-3101  
or 2 Gordons Corner Road, Manalapan  
732-446-1419

### **POINT OF CARE PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult), Moderna, J&J  
333 Forsgate Drive #104, Jamesburg  
732-641-2664

### **MARLBORO MEDICAL ARTS PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult), Moderna, J&J  
479 County Road 520, Marlboro  
732-946-1600

### **CVS PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult)  
306 Applegarth Road, Monroe 609-395-4970  
or 238 Forsgate Drive, Jamesburg  
732-521-4393  
or 350 US-130, East Windsor 609-443-5100

### **WALMART PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult)  
1126 US Highway 9, Old Bridge 732-525-8030  
or 839 US-130, East Windsor 609-443-6159  
or 326 W Main Street, Freehold 732-780-3048  
or 290 NJ-18, East Brunswick 732-387-1059

### **SHOPRITE PHARMACY:**

Pfizer (Pediatric, Adult), Moderna Booster  
3880 Summerhill Road, Spotswood  
732-251-5202

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## Parker at Monroe Adult Day Center

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**Parkerlife.org**  
**609-655-6853**

**200 Overlook Drive, Monroe Township**



## Monroe Recreation Hosts Christmas Tree and Menorah Lighting



Monroe Township Volunteer Fire Company #1 hosted a holiday car parade.

Recreation department welcomed residents to a Christmas tree and menorah lighting. Residents enjoyed candy canes and hot chocolate and had the chance to meet Mr. and Mrs. Claus. Thanks to all who participated in this festive event!



The Monroe Township Recreation Department officially ushered in the holiday season at the Community Center on December 1.

## NJ's Largest Menorah



Mayor Dalina and members of the Township Council attended the lighting of New Jersey's largest menorah of the Chabad Jewish Center of Monroe on the corner of Prospect Plains road on November 28.



The event was hosted by Rabbi Eliezer Zaklikovsky and the Chabad Jewish Center of Monroe.

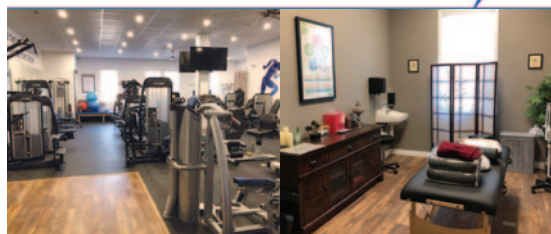


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Verizon Channels 32 and 40.**



## Monroe Awarded \$327K State Grant for Improvements to Spotswood Gravel Hill Road

Monroe is receiving a \$327,480 grant from the 2022 Municipal Aid Program for its Spotswood Gravel Hill Road — Roadway & Pedestrian Improvements project.

“This section of roadway needs some upgrading and we are pleased to be able to make the necessary improvements with support from the state DOT,” said Mayor Stephen Dalina. “We are thankful to our legislators, including Senator Greenstein and

Assemblymen DeAngelo and Benson, for supporting our efforts to secure these funds.”

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) funding will be used to construct roadway and pedestrian improvements along Spotswood Gravel Hill Road from Eric Court to Benny Lane. The scope of work primarily includes restoration of the roadway, milling, paving, signage, guide rail upgrades, minor drainage improve-

ments, and installation of additional sidewalk for pedestrian accessibility.

DOT’s Municipal Aid Program is a very competitive program intended to provide municipalities with transportation-based grants to supplement their transportation programs. DOT provides 75 percent of the grant amount when a town awards a contract and the remaining 25 percent upon completion of the project. ■

## Monroe Police Hosts Seventh-Annual Toy Drive



The Monroe Police Department held its annual toy drive, with all the presents dropped at Robert Wood Johnson University Children’s Hospital in New Brunswick on Dec. 7 for children spending the holidays in the hospital. Thank you to the Monroe Township PBA Local 255 for the delivery, as well as donations from the entire community. An entire trailer was filled!

## Celebrating Our Centenarians!

Happy birthday to all Monroe residents who celebrated their 100th birthdays this year! They include:

- Louise Silberman, January 20
- Florence Marks, May 9
- Josephine Mary Sanzone Birardi, June 9
- Doris Odell, August 2
- Florence Johnson, August 4
- Rosalind Rosenfeld, September 2
- Joseph DiPietro, September 18
- Miriam Fein, October 8
- Suzanne Balaban, October 13
- Ben Bergman, October 24
- Joseph Ghignone, November 12
- Shirley Greenbaum, November 16
- Ruth Cohen, December 3
- Sidney Kesselman, December 25

If you know of a Monroe resident who is celebrating their 100th birthday, we’d like to help celebrate. Please contact Eileen Biennas at 732-521-4400, ext. 114.



Mayor Dalina presented a 100th Birthday proclamation to Florence Johnson.



## Monroe Wolverines Pop Warner Cheer Shines at Nationals



Mitey Mite



Pee Wee



Varsity

## Nationals 2021 Recap

**National Champion!** - Mitey Mite Large Level 1

**First Runner Up** - Pee Wee Large Level 2

**First Runner Up** - Varsity Large Level 3

All three teams placed top 2 in the country after taking a whole year off due to the pandemic. Congratulations! #WAM!

## Efforts Continue to Repeal \$10,000 Federal Cap on State and Local Property Tax Deductions

Mayor Dalina is expressing appreciation to the House of Representatives for pushing repeal of a \$10,000 federal cap on deductions for “SALT,” an acronym for state and local taxes. This has been a priority for the Dalina Administration, which has strongly supported the New Jersey Congressional delegation in addressing this critical issue.

In mid-November, the U.S. House approved a “Build Back Better” bill with a key component: a long-sought measure by Mayor Dalina to raise the cap on state and local tax deductions.

The House plan would raise the cap to \$80,000 through 2030 and then reduce it to \$10,000 in 2031, after which it would expire. The measure now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Bob Menendez is developing a SALT plan

that could eliminate the cap entirely for those making \$400,000 or less and then gradually restore the cap on higher earners.

The differences would need to be hashed out but restoring the SALT deduction is critical to Monroe residents and affordability.

In 2017, the federal government modified the tax code, no longer allowing property taxpayers to have full deductibility of their property taxes and state income taxes as part of federal tax filings. This decision hit towns across New Jersey, like Monroe, particularly hard.

“The government’s decision was an unfair burden for many of our residents,” said Mayor Dalina, adding the full deduction of state and local taxes has been part of the U.S. tax code for more than a century. In fact, in 1913, the first federal

income tax form allowed taxpayers to deduct state and local taxes - one of only six deductions allowed at the time.

Mayor Dalina said that reviving the SALT deduction is especially critical for Monroe’s middle-class residents, including families, seniors and the front-line workers who have helped the community survive the pandemic.

“Because of the cap on SALT deductions in 2017, many New Jerseyans are paying more in federal taxes,” Mayor Dalina said. “They deserve the SALT deduction. It is the tax break they earned. I will continue to make my voice heard on this issue with our Congressional delegation and I will keep our residents updated.” ■

# Sign up for the Monroe News e-newsletter.

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## Monroe Township Senior Center Exercise Classes Winter 2022

		<h3>January 2021 Center Activities</h3>			Pre-Register for All Programs > REQUIRED EACH MONTH! < 609-448-7140	
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
<b>3</b> 9:30 Drop-In Bridge 10:30 <b>Energetic Pathways</b> 11:00 <b>Gentle Stretch (\$)</b> 1:00 Yam It 1:00 Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 <b>Sing in the New Year</b> 4:00 <b>Ballroom Dance (\$)</b>	<b>4</b> 8:45 <b>Gentle Yoga (\$)</b> 9:00 Chorus 9:30 <b>Adv-Beg. Mah Jongg \$</b> 10:15/11:30 <b>Drums Alive (\$)</b> 10:30 <b>Mindful Eating Z</b> 2:00 <b>Puzzle Peace</b> 2:00 <b>Laughs with Jeff</b>	<b>5</b> 9:00 <b>Total Toning (\$)</b> 10:00 <b>Move &amp; Groove (\$)</b> 10:30 <b>Carpe Diem</b> 12:15 Duplicate Bridge No Parkinson's Support 2:00 Open Cribbage 2:00 <b>Rock N Roll Grandma</b>	<b>6</b> 9:00 <b>Chair Yoga (\$)</b> 10:00 <b>Art Expression (\$)</b> 10:00 <b>Body Works (\$)</b> 10:00 <b>Fun with Yiddish (\$)</b> 10:30 Between the Covers 11:15 <b>Healthy Stretch</b> 12:30 <b>Mixed Watercolor (\$)</b> 2:00 <b>Blue Jersey Band</b>	<b>7</b> 9:00 <b>Zumba Gold (\$)</b> 10:00 <b>Fun Friday (\$)</b> 10:00 Open Canasta 10:30 <b>Why Am I Dizzy?</b> 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 <b>Qi Gong (\$)</b> 1:30 <b>Texas Hold'em</b>		
<b>10</b> 9:30 Drop-In Bridge 11:00 <b>You're So Vein</b> 11:00 Gentle Stretch 1:00 Yam It / Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 <b>Prescott &amp; Schneider</b> 3:30 <b>Healthy Bites</b> 4:00 Ballroom Dance	<b>11</b> 8:45 Gentle Yoga 9:00 Chorus 9:30 Adv-Beg. Mah Jongg 10:30 <b>Aging: Lighter Side Z</b> 10:15/11:30 Drums Alive 11:00 Green Thumbs 2:00 Puzzle Peace 2:00 <b>Music with Lou</b>	<b>12</b> 9:00 Total Toning 10:00 Move & Groove 10:30 <b>Bananas Over Bananas</b> 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 2:00 <b>Music by Roman</b> 2:00 Open Cribbage	<b>13</b> 9:00 Chair Yoga 10:00 Art Expression 10:00 Body Works 10:00 Fun with Yiddish <b>Memory Scr., By Appt.</b> 10:30 <b>Chef Lori Demo</b> 12:30 Mixed Watercolor 2:00 <b>Art Lover's Guide</b> 6:00 <b>LGBT: Socialize w. Me</b>	<b>14</b> 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Fun Friday 10:00 Open Canasta <b>Knee/Hip Scr., By Appt.</b> 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 Qi Gong 2:00 <b>Off-R-Rockers</b>		
<b>17</b> Office Closed 	<b>18</b> 8:45 Gentle Yoga 9:00 Chorus 9:30 Adv-Beg. Mah Jongg 10:15/11:30 Drums Alive 10:30 Bereavement Group 11:00 <b>Musical Survival Z</b> 2:00 Puzzle Peace 2:00 <b>Winter Enchantment</b> 5:30 W.O.W.	<b>19</b> 9:00 Total Toning 10:00 Move & Groove 10:30 <b>Bye, Bye Blues</b> 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 2:00 <b>Claudia's Strings</b> 2:00 Diabetes Support	<b>20</b> 9:00 Chair Yoga 10:00 Art Expression 10:00 Body Works 10:00 Fun with Yiddish 10:30 <b>Your Best Diet</b> 12:30 Mixed Watercolor 2:00 <b>Maci's Music</b>	<b>21</b> 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Open Canasta 10:00 Fun Friday 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 Qi Gong 11:00 <b>Is That Mole Cancer?</b> 12:00 T.A.P. (MTHS) 2:00 <b>Enjoy Kim &amp; Tim</b> 7:00 <b>Guthrie Brothers</b>		
<b>24</b> 9:00 <b>Cardio Blast (\$)</b> 9:30 Drop-in Bridge 10:00 <b>Total Body Reset (\$)</b> 10:00 <b>Robinson Art (\$)</b> 11:00 <b>About Dr. King</b> 11:00 Gentle Stretch 1:00 Yam It / Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 <b>AJ DUO</b> 4:00 Ballroom Dance	<b>25</b> 8:45 Gentle Yoga 9:00 Chorus 9:30 Adv-Beg. Mah Jongg 10:15 & 11:30 Drums Alive 11:00 <b>Jerry's Travels Z</b> 2:00 Puzzle Peace 2:00 <b>Bruce S. Foster Sings</b>	<b>26</b> 9:00 Total Toning 10:00 Move & Groove 10:30 <b>Trivia Time</b> 11:15 <b>Raise the Barre (\$)</b> 12:15 Duplicate Bridge 2:00 <b>It's Charo!</b> 2:00 Caregivers Support	<b>27</b> 9:00 Chair Yoga 10:00 Art Expression 10:00 Body Works 10:00 Fun with Yiddish 11:00 <b>About Neil Simon Z</b> 12:30 Mixed Watercolor 2:00 <b>True Heroes</b>	<b>28</b> 9:00 Zumba Gold 10:00 Open Canasta 10:00 Fun Friday 10:00 <b>Your Safe Haven</b> 10:30 Harmonica 11:00 <b>Close to Heart</b> 11:00 Qi Gong 2:00 <b>60's Jukebox Show</b>		
<b>31</b> 9:00 Cardio Blast 9:30 Drop-in Bridge 10:00 Total Body Reset 10:00 <b>Robinson Art (\$)</b> 11:00 Gentle Stretch 1:00 Yam It 1:00 Table Tennis 1:00 Open Mah Jongg 2:00 <b>Marc's Country</b> 4:00 Ballroom Dance	<b>PLEASE NOTE:</b> ♦ The Winter 2022 Session of exercise classes commences the week of January 3rd. Class registration begins on Friday, December 17, at 9:00 a.m., in-person or online. Consult the flyer for complete details. ♦ When you see "Z" by a title, this indicates a virtual program via Zoom.		<b>What's Your New Year's Resolution?</b> ?????	If you are Unable to Attend a Program, You Must Call 609-448-7140, ext. 216, to CANCEL. Waitlisted Members Will Appreciate It!		

- Registration via Community Pass or in-person.
- This session commences the week of January 3.
- FEE: \$40.00 per class, per person.

### MONDAYS, Starting on January 3:

- YANG TAI CHI for BEGINNERS, 11:00 a.m.: Join June, Certified Yang-style Tai Chi Instructor, as she guides beginners to improve their balance and relax.
- BALLROOM DANCE, 4:00 p.m.: Join Candace as she welcomes all levels to learn some of the most popular ballroom dances.
- CARDIO BLAST (Starting Jan. 24), 9:00 a.m.: Linda helps you improve your range of motion during this low-impact cardio. Modifications offered.
- TOTAL BODY RESET (Starting Jan. 24), 10:00 a.m.: Total body strength class as you use light hand weights, tubing or resistance bands.

### TUESDAYS, Starting on January 4:

- GENTLE MAT YOGA, 8:45 a.m.: Sherry, a certified yoga instructor, helps improve your breathing, flexibility, strength and balance through mindful movements.
- DRUMS ALIVE, 10:15 a.m. or 11:30 a.m.: A workout that fosters physical, mental, and emotional balance with an element of fun using stability balls and drumsticks.

### WEDNESDAYS, Starting on January 5:

- TOTAL TONING, 9:00 a.m.: Join Celeste as she focuses on strengthening and toning all muscle groups during this non-impact cardio workout.
- MOVE & GROOVE, 10:00 a.m.: Get moving during this music-inspired fitness class with easy dance moves, cardio fitness, and light strength training.
- RAISE THE BARRE (Starting Jan. 26), 11:15 a.m.: This total body barre workout focuses on low-impact, high-intensity movements that lift and tone muscles.

### THURSDAYS, Starting on January 6:

- CHAIR YOGA, 9:00 a.m.: Sherry guides you through Hathe - the gentle form of Yoga.
- BODY WORKS, 10:00 a.m.: Work your whole body during this low-impact aerobic workout using resistance bands, light hand weights, and chair exercises.

### FRIDAYS, Starting on January 7:

- ZUMBA GOLD, 9:00 a.m.: Fran gets your hips moving during this modified, Latin-inspired ZUMBA class.
- FUN FRIDAY, 10:00 a.m.: High-energy, "smorgasbord" workout, that combines cardio, strength, flexibility, core and balance.
- Qi GONG, 11:00 a.m.: This Chinese Yoga class will energize and balance your mind, body and spirit through gentle movements, breathing techniques, and sound.

For more information call 609-448-7140.

## Township Gift Drive Continues this Holiday Season

As is the tradition, the mayor's office is collecting holiday gifts for needy children in collaboration with the Monroe Police Department.

School nurses provide lists of students and families to the mayor's office each year. A tree is placed in the mayor's office with tags, so municipal employees, police officers and others can purchase the toys.

The generosity is always strong. Last year, for example, members of the Nativity of Our Lord Church in Monroe donated \$1,500 in gift cards. All gifts will be delivered to township school nurses on December 9 for distribution to the children. Last year, more than \$8,000 in gift cards and toys were provided. ■





## Monroe Salutes its Retirees

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**Jennifer "Jenn" Sternberg**

Jenn, Assistant Director of the Monroe Township Senior Center, will mark her last day with the municipality December 31. Sternberg began her career with Monroe 31 years ago as Public Relations Coordinator for the senior center, located at the time in the municipal building's basement and serving only 13,000 members.

Since the transition to the Senior Center's Halsey Reed Road location, programming and participation has seen tremendous

growth. One of the highlights of her long career was her very first volunteer program, "Sweethearts Day," in February 1990, when she coordinated games and refreshments.

"I will miss the camaraderie that I have shared with the staff, volunteers, and the members," Jenn said. "The Senior Center is truly a special place."



**Christopher "Chris" Mullen**

Monroe bids farewell to Police Officer Christopher Mullen after 25 years of honorable service.

At 11:57 hours on October 29, 2021, Ofc. Mullen completed his final transmission, surrounded by his family and friends, before retirement.

His fellow officers and supervisors wish Ofc. Mullen a happy retirement and good luck in his next chapter.



**Fran Cohn & Janet Mackiewicz**

Congratulations to crossing guard Fran Cohn on her retirement. Thank you for your years of dedicated service to keeping our children safe. Best wishes to police dispatcher, Janet Mackiewicz as she retires after 25 years of service. ■

## Thousands of Residents Enjoy Octoberfest 2021



The Monroe Township Recreation Department hosted its annual celebration of fall with thousands of Monroe residents who turned out for Octoberfest 2021 on Oct. 24 at the Community Center. Mayor Dalina kicked off opening ceremonies while the Wolverine Mini Cheerleaders and Mini Men entertained the crowd. This year's event featured food vendors, rides and bounce houses, local craft vendors, music and plenty of Monroe spirit.

## Monroe Welcomes New Employees



**Vito Oliveri**

The Senior Center is proud to welcome Vito Oliveri as its new Program Director. He comes to the Township with a solid background in recreation management and serving older adults for more than 20 years.

Graduating in 1998 from Rider University with a degree in Psychology, Vito has cultivated a career of service to the senior population. His prior work at facilities such as Applegarth Care Center and Genesis Cranbury Center provide him with a well-rounded perspective on senior living. Vito also holds several certifications in

areas of music therapy, activity direction and dementia care.

His wealth of experience along with his certifications makes him a welcomed addition to the team. ■



## An Important Message on Veterans Day

NOV. 11, 2021

By Jack Kirschenbaum, Commander, American Legion Post 522

A woman I know discovered that I had been in the military, and with a combination of distress and disdain in her voice, she exclaimed, "You were in the military!" "I can't imagine you doing that." "Why were you in the military?" What she meant was, "how can I be one of them." I gave some thought to her remarks and particularly her discomfort with me having been in the military. I wondered, "what goes on in the minds of people that lead them to think as she was thinking."

Well, it is easy to view men and women who were in the service as being different from those who were not. People in the military wear uniforms, carry equipment, ride in vehicles, etc. that are clearly different from civilians.

Also, on television, movies, news, and print media, soldiers and marines are often depicted as being like "Rambo" or "John Wayne." Even now, much of the attention is directed at our special forces with their camouflage attire, arsenal of weapons, and combat activities. Except for holidays such as Christmas, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day, the medias' portrayal of people in the military is sensationalized.

Based on these images from the media, non-veterans may get the perception that people in the military can be cruel, overly aggressive, hard

drinkers, violent, destructive, and dangerously out of control. However, we veterans, our families and friends, and the families of those currently in service or have served in the past, know that these depictions are the exception, not the rule. Nonetheless, that is the reference many civilians get and therefore develop about those in uniform. So, I can see how she could think, "I can't imagine you doing that."

The thought, "How can I be one of them?" also begs the question, What does a veteran look like or what does a veteran do? When I look around, I see ordinary citizens going about their lives, taking care of their families, holding responsible positions at their place of employment or in their businesses.

On the surface, veterans conduct themselves the same as everyone else. We are indistinguishable from the rest of the adult community. Unless you specifically ask, you wouldn't know that your clergy, politician, first responder, realtor, company vice president, photographer, insurance salesman, physician, etc. are veterans.

But most importantly, what makes a person enter the military? There are as many reasons for being in the military as there are veterans. For many, it was an opportunity to experience the world out-

side of their community or to obtain employment. For others, it was a feeling of patriotic duty. Again, there are countless reasons for people to choose to be in the military.

However, there is an underlying common thread tying together all who serve or served in the military. It begins with the primary mission of the military. That mission is to protect our nation, our community, and our families from threats wherever they may arise.

Everyone in the military took an oath to do their part in fulfilling this mission. And everyone in all of the branches of the armed services received training to enable us to do whatever we were called to do, including sacrificing ourselves for the benefit of all Americans. That doesn't make veterans better than non-veterans. It only means that, by enrolling in the military, we have agreed to a specific role in safeguarding our nation and our democratic way of life.

Thanks to the good wishes and support of many in the general population, we who served in uniform are reminded, on this Veterans Day, that we are who we believe we are, noble warriors who served our country in whatever capacity that entailed. So yes, I am proud to be one of them. ■

## Monroe Honors Its Veterans



Monroe Township paid tribute to all of the brave service men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces in two Veterans Day ceremonies on November 11. Mayor Dalina and members of Township Council along with Commander Jack Kirschenbaum and Legion Post #522 hosted a wreath-laying ceremony at the Township Municipal Building, followed by an equally moving program at the Memorial Monument at Veterans Park on Avenue K.

## Unaffiliated Veterans: We Want You.

Unaffiliated veterans are urged to join Monroe Township's veteran organizations.

Residents of Stonebridge, Renaissance, and Rossmoor can join the Veterans Club in their communities. In addition, residents of Monroe and surrounding areas can join the Korean War Veterans Chapter 148, Jewish War Veterans Post 609, and American Legion Post 522. There are no restrictions as to when you served in the military. ■

## Tribute to Our Veterans

On November 5, Monroe Township Friends of the Senior Center hosted a patriotic tribute to Monroe veterans and all who served. The program was led by Jack Kirschenbaum, Commander, American Legion Post 522.





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## Sewa Diwali Food Drive



The 4th Annual Sewa Diwali Food Drive collected more than 19,000 pounds of food and \$853 in direct monetary donations. Collected items were dispersed to the Presbyterian Church, Monroe Township Food Pantry, and Calvary Chapel in Jamesburg.



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