



# Matters

M A G A Z I N E

SCHOOL 2025

Maplewoodshop Makes Hands-on Learning Cool Again  
CHS Athletic Director Energizes Cougar Sports  
Volunteers Preserve Columbia High School's Past  
SOMA Hoops Draws Local Youth to the Court  
SOPAC's Arts Education Programs Build Confidence  
Matters School & Enrichment Guide  
... and more



*Featuring Local People, Places and Things that Matter to Maplewood and South Orange Since 1990*



# True



# original

We tailor what we do to every home. Because every home is one of a kind.  
Just like you. Just like us.

**Christian  
Quaritus**  
Managing Broker  
c 917.584.4913

**Joseph  
Facchinei**  
Sales Associate  
c 917.558.3795

**Karla  
Laverde**  
Sales Associate  
c 973.393.1058

**Steven  
Pagan**  
Sales Associate  
c 609.631.5668

**Rebecca  
Berenson**  
Office Administrator  
o 973.846.9220

**Rebecca  
Brooksher**  
Sales Associate  
c 646.269.8232

**Adam  
Harrington**  
Sales Associate  
c 310.770.8675

**Jorge  
Laverde**  
Sales Associate  
c 973.393.1059

**Amy  
Young**  
Sales Associate  
c 973.868.0768

**Randy Lyn  
Ketive**  
Broker of Record  
o 201.655.1500

**Angela  
D'Aries**  
Sales Associate  
c 973.650.8898

**Sam  
Joseph**  
Sales Associate  
c 917.359.8990

**Kyle  
Loffland**  
Sales Associate  
c 917.992.3151

**Anthnoy  
Yousef**  
Sales Associate  
c 973.738.6866

**Charles  
Oppler**  
Chief Executive Officer  
o 201.314.4922

**Prominent Properties Sotheby's International Realty**

6 Sloan Street, South Orange, New Jersey 07079 | o 973.846.9220 | [prominentproperties.com](http://prominentproperties.com)

© 2025 Sotheby's International Realty. All Rights Reserved. Sotheby's International Realty® is a registered trademark and used with permission. Each Sotheby's International Realty office is independently owned and operated, except those operated by Sotheby's International Realty, Inc. The Sotheby's International Realty network fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act.



## **#1 REAL ESTATE TEAM COLDWELL BANKER**

As the kids head back to school in Maplewood and South Orange, it's the perfect time to think about your next move. Now is the time to make it happen!

**LET US HELP YOU NAVIGATE THE SELLING AND BUYING PROCESS.**

Our fabulous listing at 163 Garfield Place in South Orange could be the one! It is a stunning one-of-a-kind home showcasing classic Craftsman architectural details, rich millwork, striking high-beamed ceilings, and is nestled in a wonderful neighborhood close to everything. *Offered at \$1,100,000.*



**DEBBIE RYBKA HOWARD**

**Team Leader**

**Call me 908-591-4886**

**3RD GENERATION MAPLEWOODIAN**

**40+ YEARS EXPERIENCE**

**Call Us Today For The Results YOU Deserve**



# Want to redo your kitchen without redoing your kitchen? Go for it. *Spray-Net.*



Our patented and customized paint solutions ensure that we achieve a factory finish for every application, backed by our **15 YEAR WARRANTY** against peeling.



SCAN HERE to learn more!

WE RECOAT

MELAMINE • LAMINATE • WOOD • THERMOFOIL • BACKSPLASH

CALL US FOR YOUR FREE QUOTE!

**SPRAYNET.COM**

**973.791.9778**

SPRAY-NET ESSEX COUNTY



NETFLIX

PROPERTY BROTHERS

HGTV

INCOME PROPERTY



**SPRAY-NET**

Custom Chemistry. Smarter Painting.

Hmm, she'll be back at school next week, and I can finally schedule with Cristina for acupuncture... can't wait!



*Seven Point Wellness*

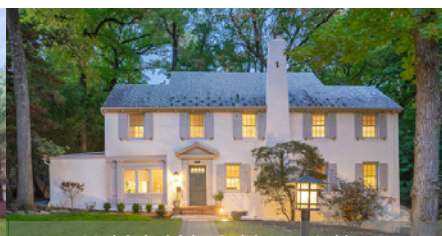
Acupuncture | Herbal Medicine | Body Therapy  
Nutrition & Lifestyle Consultation

**www.sevenpointwellness.com**

**(917) 210-1063**

Gotta get in to see Cristina before I leave for school. Can't believe I took biochem and physics in the same semester. Ohhh, I can feel stress already!



|                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p>Sold at 100% of Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> SOUTH ORANGE<br/>290 Redmond Road</p>     |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> SOUTH ORANGE<br/>411 Redmond Road</p>    |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> LIVINGSTON<br/>54 Crescent Road</p>      |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> SOUTH ORANGE<br/>50 Stewart Place</p>   |
|  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MAPLEWOOD<br/>417 Walton Rd</p> |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> LITTLE FALLS<br/>242 Long Hill Road</p> |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MAPLEWOOD<br/>13 Norfolk Avenue</p>     |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MONTCLAIR<br/>105 Montclair Avenue</p> |
|  <p>Sold at 100% of Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> WESTFIELD<br/>603 Boulevard</p>          |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MAPLEWOOD<br/>3 Mountain Avenue</p>     |  <p>Sold at 100% of Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> CLARK<br/>813 Riverbend Drive</p>                |  <p>Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> SPRINGFIELD<br/>4 Christy Lane</p>                    |
|  <p>Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MAPLEWOOD<br/>17 Evergreen Place</p>         |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MAPLEWOOD<br/>3 Colonial Terrace</p>  |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> MAPLEWOOD<br/>23 New England Road</p> |  <p>Multiple bids, Sold over Asking</p> <p><b>Sold</b> SUMMIT<br/>13 Henry Street</p>       |

YEAR-TO-DATE CLOSED LISTINGS • AVERAGE SALE PRICE TO LIST PRICE: 113% • AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET: 10.6



**Victoria Carter**  
Broker/Sales Associate

From showings to signings,  
no one moves real estate like

**VICTORIA CARTER**

(973) 220-3050

victoria@victoriacarter.com

office direct: (973) 376-6748

505 Millburn Ave.

Short Hills, NJ 07078

reception: (973) 376-4545



VICTORIA  
CARTER  
GROUP

**Weichert**  
REALTORS





# Matters

M A G A Z I N E

The Magazine of Maplewood and South Orange

VOL. 36 ISSUE 5 SCHOOL 2025

## contents

*in every issue*

**Heart of the Matter 8**  
facing the test of jersey driving

**Events that Matter 10**  
around the towns

**New Businesses 10**  
say hello

**Book Report 16**  
explore these book recommendations

**Food Matters 22**  
mangala's chicken curry

**Language Matters 24**  
a whole entire response to redundancies

**Finding Home 33**  
learning as they went along

**Resource Guide 44**  
local sources

**Final Matters 46**  
the joy and pain of going to kindergarten

18



26



30



ON THE COVER



Mike Schloff, founder of Maplewoodshop, as photographed by Carlos Sanchez, a local photographer who started photography at Columbia High School, where he took classes in art history, studio art and graphic design. He now studies photography & visual media at the Rochester Institute of Technology. See more of his work at [carlossanchezphotography.myportfolio.com](http://carlossanchezphotography.myportfolio.com) or on Instagram and Facebook @s.anchezshots

*in this issue*

**12 Old-School Tools, New-School Purpose**  
maplewoodshop is making hands-on learning cool again

**18 New Athletic Director Energizes Cougar Sports**  
her motto: we win!

**26 Preserving Columbia High School's Past**  
the volunteers who work its archives

**30 Basketball League Fills Void, Builds Community**  
soma hoops draws local youth to the court

**34 Lights. Camera. Confidence!**  
sopac's art, dance and music education programs help kids believe in themselves

**38 Wanted: Quirky, Corny and Charming Talent**  
get ready to audition for the mapso family follies talent show

**40 Matters School & Enrichment Guide**  
options for early and private education and enrichment



Take **Matters Magazine** with you. Read us online.





**JILL SOCKWELL  
GROUP**

## Selling SOMA: August Edition!

The Jill Sockwell Group has already closed 31 transactions so far this year with 7 more Under Contract (two of those never even hit the market!). We use our proven formula to prep and promote our listings and provide our Sellers with an organized plan for the selling process! We use our market knowledge, hustle, creativity, preferred vendors, and 15 + years of experience! If you're buying or selling in SOMA #justcalljill at 917.657.8800!

### July 2025 Activity in SOMA

#### **ACTIVE:**

29 Oakview Ave, Maplewood 5 BR 3.5 BA \$1,185,000

#### **UNDER CONTRACT:**

17-25 Church St, #5, South Orange \$565,000

371 Franklin Pl, South Orange \$1,150,000

#### **SOLD:**

29 Glenside Rd, South Orange \$1,208,000

11 Hart Dr. N, South Orange \$1,335,000

15 Burnett Terr, Maplewood \$1,352,000

92 Union Ave, Maplewood \$749,000

73 Woodside Rd, Maplewood \$710,000



#### **Pamela "Jill" Sockwell**

Licensed Real Estate Salesperson  
M 917.657.8800 | O 973.310.6816  
jill.sockwell@compass.com  
www.jillsockwell.com

Make sure you never miss a listing! Sign up for our Off-market Listing Alerts and Newsletter here:



The "J" and "S" in  
Jill Sockwell Stand  
for JUST SOLD!

**COMPASS**



PUBLISHER  
& EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Ellen Donker

ASSOCIATE EDITOR &  
SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER  
Anne Mandell

STUDENT INTERN  
Esme Kraiss

#### ADVERTISING CONSULTANTS

Rene Conlon  
H. Leslie Gilman  
Amy Power

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Ellen Donker

COPY EDITORS  
Charles Hammer  
Tia Swanson

#### CONTRIBUTORS

Tori Chickering, Kristen di Gennaro,  
Adrianna Ahern Donat, Esme Kraiss,  
Amy Lynn-Cramer, Cindy Perman,  
Ilyse Rimalovski, Carlos Sanchez,  
Harriet Sigerman



Please address all correspondence to:  
Visual Impact Advertising, Inc.®

P.O. Box 198  
Maplewood, NJ 07040  
973-763-4900

[mattersmagazine.com](http://mattersmagazine.com)  
[info@mattersmagazine.com](mailto:info@mattersmagazine.com)

*Matters Magazine*® is owned and published by Visual Impact Advertising, Inc., P.O. Box 198 Maplewood, NJ 07040. *Matters Magazine* is free, with editions direct mailed seven times a year to the residents of Maplewood and South Orange and distributed to businesses and surrounding communities totaling 16,000. Subscriptions are available to non-residents for \$30 (U.S.) \$40 (Foreign) annually. No part of the publication may be reprinted or otherwise reproduced without written permission from Visual Impact Advertising, Inc.

CIRCULATION VERIFIED BY  
U.S. POSTAL RECEIPTS.



READ & RECYCLE

heart of the *matter*

# Facing the Test of Jersey Driving

It feels good to be behind the wheel

BY ELLEN DONKER



Image by pngtree.com

When I was growing up, getting a driver's license was a big deal. It was a ticket to some independence and a chance to give our parents a break from driving us around town. Everyone made an appointment at the MVC to take the road test on their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday. I did the same and celebrated the day as a legal driver.

I took to driving quite naturally, but my days on the road were not completely stress-free. That's why you keep practicing. It's probably why, on day two of my newfound freedom, my father had me drive him on an errand in his ginormous Cadillac. The road was crowded, with two narrow lanes each way. I was sure I would crash his fancy car, but then I didn't. It made the next time I drove that much easier.

When it was time for my kids to learn to drive, my husband happily handed me the responsibility. As triplets they were all on the same timeline, so I took each one out to whatever empty parking lot I could find. To practice parallel parking, we positioned garbage cans at the curb in front of our house. Neighbors with older kids nodded knowingly as they walked by, remembering the fraught drill with their own children.

These days, kids have to take lessons from a driving school if they want their licenses when they turn 17, so I enrolled all three. When their birthday came around, I took Madeline and Christian to the MVC in Rahway. Tim had a glitch and had to wait a few weeks. Let's just

say that neither child passed the first test, so I found myself at the MVC several weeks later. And maybe once more. When it was Tim's turn to take the test, I selfishly asked him to try to pass the test the first time. I was getting tired of the trek to Rahway. And he did. Hooray!

I wondered how we would manage having three new drivers in the house all wanting to use the cars at the same time, but it was rarely a problem. That's a benefit of living where kids can walk most places. And maybe it's why, to my surprise, some of my kids' peers didn't rush to get their licenses.

Apparently, it's a trend that's been in motion for the past 20 years. CNN reported that according to a 2020 study, nearly 40 percent of teens delayed getting their license by one to two years, and 30 percent delayed by more than two years. Anxiety is the biggest reason, but finances and environmental concerns also play a role.

Early in her driving career, Madeline wasn't that interested in getting behind the wheel. I pushed her to drive locally until she felt more comfortable because it was sometimes inconvenient for me to take her places. When she was in college, I helped her buy a car. That did wonders with getting her in the driver's seat.

She is now 25 years old and drives everywhere. She finds herself giving pep talks to friends who are terrified to drive and will avoid highways whenever possible or take an Uber to get around.

I know that traffic in northern New Jersey is no joke, but doing life here so often requires a car. I'm all for using public transportation, bicycles and one's own two feet, but I also think it's important to have the skill of driving. Maybe that means plowing through our unease in order to tame it. Face it head on. Remember the times when we were brave and everything turned out fine.

I've had my share of close calls, endured horrendous traffic jams and gotten hopelessly lost in sketchy neighborhoods, but I wouldn't trade it for the freedom it gives me to be in control and able to meet life's demands. 



# *ann* LASKOWSKI COMPASS

## **Want to Sell Next Spring? Start Now.**

The most successful home sales start months in advance. Fall and winter give you the perfect window to prepare for the spring market--without the pressure of a looming listing date. If you get started now, your home will shine come spring!

### **Top Tips to Get Your Home Spring-Market Ready**

- Take advantage of the winter months to **declutter and donate**.
- **Check any major systems** such as HVAC to avoid problems that could arise during inspection.
- **Consult a realtor** to prioritize what matters most for a smooth sale and prepare for staging.
- **Tackle any repairs or painting** that signal deferred maintenance.
- **Take exterior photos** in the summer or fall while everything is green and in bloom.

**Let's create a strategy now so you can sell  
with confidence later!**

Ann Laskowski  
Phone: 917-586-3018  
Office: 973-310-6816  
Email: [Ann@LaskowskiAndCo.com](mailto:Ann@LaskowskiAndCo.com)  
[www.LaskowskiAndCo.com](http://www.LaskowskiAndCo.com)  
[@welcomehomeNJ](https://www.instagram.com/welcomehomeNJ)



1200 Morris Turnpike, Ste 1200, Short Hills, NJ 07078





Say **Hello** to our  
Newest Businesses!

### Medusa Greek

Greek street food

135 South Orange Avenue, South Orange; medusagreeknj.com

### Shisa Tattoo Studio

Japanese-style tattooing

155 Maplewood Avenue, Unit 7, Maplewood; shisatattoo.com

### SOMA Sweets

Ice cream and candy store

58 Vose Avenue, South Orange; somasweets.com

### Tattoo Love Shack

Tattoo and piercing shop

1779 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood; instagram.com/tattooloveshack

### The Spinning Hand

Luxury knitting and crochet kits

155 Maplewood Avenue, Unit 1, Maplewood; thespinninghand.com

If your business is less than three months old, have it featured in the next issue of Matters Magazine! Email us with the details at [info@mattersmagazine.com](mailto:info@mattersmagazine.com).

## COUTO DEFRANCO

YOUR LOCAL CPA FIRM

60+ combined years of experience, working  
together to serve the SOMA area!



Nelson Couto, CPA, CFP® and Anthony DeFranco, CPA,  
CFP®, MS (Taxation) — Partners; Couto DeFranco, P.A.



Marco DeLuca, CPA

Call us today to set up a complimentary  
consultation for all your tax and accounting needs.



**COUTO DEFRANCO, P.A.**  
CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS & ADVISORS  
973.378.3300 • [coutodefranco.com](http://coutodefranco.com)



### The Theater Project

August 14-17, 21-24 Thursdays 10AM,  
Fridays and Saturdays 7:30PM, Sundays  
2PM "In this Corner: Cassius Clay" by Idris Goodwin:  
A story of family, friendship and community – and  
a young boxer who fought adversity inside the ring  
and out; tickets \$35, seniors \$28, students \$20

**DETAILS** The Oakes Center, 120 Morris Avenue, Summit; 908-  
809-8865; [thetheaterproject.org](http://thetheaterproject.org)



### South Orange Department of Recreation & Cultural Affairs

August 20 and 27 8PM South Orange Summer  
Movie Nights: "Minecraft Movie" (8/20) and "Wicked"  
(8/27)

**DETAILS** Floods Hill, South Orange; 973-378-7754; [southorange.org](http://southorange.org)



"Wicked"

August 26 6-9PM Opening night of "Cumming  
of Age," a 25-year retrospective of Alan Cumming,  
captured by acclaimed photographer Steve  
Vaccariello, that celebrates Cumming's charisma,  
queerness and theatrical flair; free

**DETAILS** Pierro Gallery, 5 Mead St, South Orange; 973-378-7754;  
[southorange.org](http://southorange.org)



"Cumming of Age"

September 14 1-3PM Community Day & Back-  
to-School Bike Parade: Meet elected officials,  
learn about local organizations and connect with  
neighbors, plus enjoy ice cream, yoga, a bike parade,  
live music and more

**DETAILS** Meadowland Park Skate House, South Orange; 973-  
378-7754; [southorange.org](http://southorange.org)



### Montclair Film

August 23 7PM "The Wild Robot"

**DETAILS** Archery Field at Brookdale Park, 473  
Watchung Avenue, Bloomfield; [montclairfilm.org/  
events/2025summerseries](http://montclairfilm.org/events/2025summerseries)



"The Wild Robot"

cont'd on p. 36



#1

## AGENT TEAM IN MONTCLAIR

for Sales Volume, Number of Transactions, &amp; Agent Market Share\*



Results matter—and no one delivers like The Dana Sue Team. They're known for strategic marketing, expert negotiation, and unmatched local knowledge. They also bring that same excellence to South Orange and Maplewood, helping buyers and sellers achieve top results.

As the school year kicks off, SOMA is buzzing—and so is the market. Whether you're trading up, downsizing, or just getting started, The Dana Sue Team is your A+ choice for a smart, seamless move.

With Kristen Scaravaglione and Debra Scher, this powerhouse team offers deep expertise across Essex and Morris counties.

THE  
*Dana Sue*  
TEAM

**Susan "Sue" Lovit**

Lic. Real Estate Salesperson  
susan.lovit@compass.com  
M: 973.477.7252  
O: 973.310.7360

**Kristen Scaravaglione**

Lic. Real Estate Salesperson  
kristen.scaravaglione@compass.com  
M: 201.397.3684  
O: 973.310.7360

**Dana Schwern**

Lic. Real Estate Salesperson  
dana.schwern@compass.com  
M: 201.657.5201  
O: 973.310.7360

**Debra Scher**

Lic. Real Estate Salesperson  
debra.scher@compass.com  
M: 917.699.3581  
O: 973.310.7360



The Dana Sue Team is a team of real estate agents affiliated with Compass, a licensed real estate broker and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws. All material presented herein is intended for informational purposes only. Information is compiled from sources deemed reliable but is subject to errors, omissions, changes in price, condition, sale, or withdrawal without notice. This is not intended to solicit property already listed. Photos may be virtually staged or digitally enhanced and may not reflect actual property conditions. \*Source: GSMLS 04.01.2025 - 06.30.2025.

**COMPASS**



# OLD-SCHOOL TOOLS, NEW-SCHOOL PURPOSE

Maplewoodshop is making hands-on learning cool again

BY AMY LYNN-CRAMER



Left: A tent card reinforces class lessons on how to use a hammer. Center: Mike Schloff demonstrates how to properly hammer a nail into wood. Right: A Maplewoodshop trainer gives hands-on instruction. Photos by Carlos Sanchez.

Maplewood resident Mike Schloff is carving out a different kind of classroom, one plank of wood at a time. As the founder of Maplewoodshop, Schloff is bringing woodworking back into schools and reaching students by feeding their need to create.

“I was that kid who couldn’t sit still,” Schloff says. “I have ADHD, and I know what it’s like to feel like you don’t fit in.” The restless energy he felt in the classroom, paired with the calm he found fixing bikes alongside his dad after school, laid the foundation for what would eventually spark a hands-on education movement.

At its core, Maplewoodshop thrives on something deeply human: the need to create. “What began in a single classroom now reaches more than 200 camps, homeschoolers, charter schools and public schools in New Jersey, New York, Maine, Florida, California and Washington,” says Schloff.

To date, more than 20,000 students have experienced the program, which has even made its way to Australia. And thanks to a new partnership with the Carpenters Union, high school students can earn up to 16 college credits through a pre-apprenticeship pathway.

Handy around the house and thriving in a successful career in digital media product management, Schloff experienced what he calls his “maker moment” at Columbia High School’s Maker Madness event in 2015. As he watched a young boy beam with pride over a small woodworking project, something clicked.

“I realized that this is what I’m meant to do,” Schloff says. “I wanted to build something real by helping kids discover who they are through their hands. And so I did a complete 180 and left corporate America.”

“I knew I wanted to bring the lifelong benefits of woodworking to as many kids as possible, but I was only one person,” says Schloff. “The best way to have the biggest impact was to go where

the kids already were. I had to reach them in their current schools and camps, where the kids already respected their instructors and felt comfortable.”

His philosophy is simple and deeply personal: “You can be smart in more than one way. Intelligence in your hands is still intelligence. Working with tools is math, and it’s also mindfulness, com-



Through a partnership with Maplewoodshop, the Newark Workforce Development Board’s Pre-Apprenticeship program utilizes union carpenters to teach Barringer High School students and 18- to 24-year-olds in Newark who are exploring careers in construction.



munity and truth.”

What began in 2016 as after-school and evening classes in a repurposed day-care space quickly evolved into a bigger mission of helping educators bring woodworking back into schools, camps and communities, with no shop room or prior experience required.

“We call it shop regret,” Schloff says. “Schools got rid of shop 30 years ago. Now they realize they lost an entire way of teaching problem-solving, creativity, collaboration and hands-on intelligence.”

Through trial, error, user feedback and multiple iterations, Schloff designed a portable woodworking system. His “shop class in a box” fits inside a lockable rolling tool chest. It includes tools, wood, lesson plans, safety protocols, emotional learning cues and a tray-like bench that sits atop a table.

The Maplewood Library was Maplewoodshop’s first institutional customer. In 2017, Schloff and Hilton Branch

Manager Irene Langlois unveiled the original “shop class in a box” at World Maker Faire. At the time, it was one-of-a-kind.

In 2017, when Maplewood Middle School (MMS) art teacher Michele Reisman first partnered with Schloff, Maplewoodshop was in its early days. “He was just getting started,” Reisman says. “It wasn’t the phenomenon it is now.”

With a grant from the Achieve Foundation, she and a fellow teacher piloted the program in their 3D art class. “We hadn’t had woodshop at MMS for decades,” Reisman says. “This was completely new to the students. And they loved it.”

The students weren’t as-



Children at a class held in Maplewoodshop's newest location in Montclair learn how to use tools including a Japanese pull saw. Photo by Carlos Sanchez.



Schloff designed a portable woodworking system. His “shop class in a box” fits inside a lockable rolling tool chest. It includes tools, wood, lesson plans, safety protocols, emotional learning cues and a tray-like bench that sits atop a table.

sembling pre-cut kits. They were designing, measuring, sawing, sanding and learning by doing. “They rose to the occasion,” Reisman says. “Some of them were fearless. It was incredible. Students were helping each other troubleshoot and problem-solve.”

Reisman brought her own creative spin to the experience, empowering



Maplewood Middle School art teacher Michele Reisman piloted a Maplewoodshop program in 2017 with a grant from the Achieve Foundation. These eighth-graders are now rising college seniors.



CHAPALA MEXICAN GRILL

## DISCOUNT COUPON

---

### \$10 OFF \$100+

LIMIT 1 PER TABLE. CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS.  
NOT VALID FOR GRUBHUB, DOORDASH, OR UBEREATS

Open Lunch & Dinner

---

(908) 688-6666  
www.chapalamexicancuisine.com  
1637 Vauxhall Road, Union, NJ

VALID SUNDAY - THURSDAY



NURTURING EACH CHILD’S WONDER AND CURIOSITY

REGISTRATION OPEN FOR PRESCHOOL:  
AGES 18 MONTHS - 5 YEARS OLD



TODDLER TIME | PRESCHOOL | BEFORE & AFTERCARE

For more information, please contact Jennie Rubin (jrubin@tstinj.org) or Lauren Byers (lbyers@tstinj.org), Preschool Directors.

432 Scotland Road, South Orange, NJ | www.tsti.org





Announcing Our New

# AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

providing the same exceptional care and educational excellence as our renowned preschool!

Monday - Thursday K - 5th Grade 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM 4 Days or 2 Days options

For more information visit: [Kinderganpreschool.org/after-school](http://Kinderganpreschool.org/after-school)



Haniel Rosemond, DDS, MAGD  
General Dentist  
Davia Strachan, DDS  
Pediatric Dentist  
Spec. Permit 4041

Same Day Dentistry & Emergencies Welcome  
Early Morning and Evening Appointments Available  
General Dentistry ■ Invisalign® ■ Implants  
Early Dental Care for Babies ■ Pediatric Dentistry

Call us to schedule your next appointment  
(973) 762-2660

[southorangedentalcenter.com](http://southorangedentalcenter.com)  
481 SOUTH ORANGE AVENUE, SOUTH ORANGE, NJ 07079



# Preschool makes the heart dance with light.




contact [jackie.delucia@wkdschool.org](mailto:jackie.delucia@wkdschool.org)  
[www.wkdschool.org](http://www.wkdschool.org)



*This elementary age boy made a bird house at a class in SOMA.*

students to decorate their builds with plaster, gold leaf and other artistic elements. “Mike’s program focuses on construction. I got to bring in the aesthetics,” she says.

But the real beauty was the transformation happening inside the kids. “They weren’t on their phones. They were fully in it, using their senses, feeling the wood, smelling the pine, respecting the tools,” Reisman says.

Maplewoodshop’s projects range from keepsake boxes to toothbrush holders, dog houses and even footstools that younger siblings can use to reach the sink. But it’s not just about what’s built, it’s about what’s felt. “One student built a box he was so proud of that he immediately painted it and took it home,” Reisman says. “That’s what you



*Schloff holds an example of a finished plinko game that the students will be making. Photo by Carlos Sanchez.*

want. You want them to say, ‘I made that,’ and want to keep it.”

Schloff agrees. “It starts as a plank of wood. You can’t even imagine what it will become. Then you measure, saw, join, and suddenly, it’s a box. It’s transformational.”

Hudson Tyler, who grew up in South Orange and is studying at the College of New Jersey, fondly recalls his experience as a 12- and 13-year-old at Maplewoodshop’s summer program. “The class was successful in teaching me the basic principles of woodworking,” he says.

He said he would recommend the program to other kids. “Definitely! Building things from scratch is a pretty good method of learning the techniques.” Tyler, who

The safety posters say it all: Something will go wrong. How you deal with it is what matters. We’re a community. Help others. Ask for help.

built a toolbox and a tray during the program, proudly notes that his mom still uses the tray as part of her regular rotation.

Maplewoodshop may look like a box of tools on wheels, but it’s really a launchpad for learning. Step into a classroom using Schloff’s woodshop experience and you’ll hear the steady rhythm of saws and



*Schloff patented this worktable that fits on most tables making it easy to turn a space into a woodworking station. Photo by Carlos Sanchez.*

hammers, feel the energy shift, and see something rare – kids completely immersed in what they’re doing.

Schloff’s philosophy isn’t just about woodworking, it’s about rehumanizing education. “We’re not just building projects. We’re building people,” Schloff says. “With no power tools, the





At a recent class children made a plinko game. Here they color the wood they cut. Photo by Carlos Sanchez.

programs are safe and adaptable.” Kits include visual cue cards, safety posters, prompts for emotional intelligence and online training for teachers, instructors and camp counselors.

His hands-on portable program has sparked student engagement, making math practical and opening doors to real-world career exploration. “Teachers report seeing students light up, especially those who struggle in traditional settings,” Schlöff says. “You give them a tool and they find their calm. They focus, they help each other, they feel useful and they feel like they belong.”

Maplewoodshop’s headquarters is in East Orange, where Schlöff and his small but mighty team build each kit by hand. They’ve transformed the process from towering 8-foot cabinets to kid-friendly mobile chests that can roll into classrooms and be tucked away.

Reisman has witnessed the evolution of Maplewoodshop firsthand. “Mike has made it more user-friendly,” she says. “Now it’s something a teacher can run confidently, even without a shop background.”

In 2024, Reisman reconnected with the program through a summer school offering, where 12 eager middle schoolers enrolled. “They just wanted to keep building,” she



A high schooler at Camden’s Promise Charter School puts his problem-solving skills to use.

says. “And with a sense of empowerment, they knew they were in control. That’s rare for kids.”

Now, with the recent grand opening of MWS Studios (Maplewoodshop Studios) at The Little Shops in Montclair’s Lackawanna Plaza, Maplewoodshop has expanded its mission to reach more people. “While we’re focused on offering engaging, skill-building workshops for kids, we’ll also be hosting community classes, pop-up events and creative experiences for all ages,” says Schlöff.



This boy at Banyan School in Little Falls learns how to measure the wood for his project.

This past summer the South Orange-Maplewood school district piloted a Maplewoodshop program. It garnered such high student interest that Columbia High School freshmen will be able to take a full-year woodworking course in partnership with Maplewoodshop starting this fall. Serving as the foundation of its STEM program, the course will guide students in the design of several projects, including birdhouses, keepsake boxes and cars.

For Reisman, it’s been remarkable to witness the journey. “It’s like watching your kid grow up. Mike has built something meaningful, something that matters.” 

Amy Lynn-Cramer is a health & life coach. After writing this article, she and her family are going to check out Mike’s new studio in Montclair and participate in one of his workshops.



## The Jennifer McManus Team Has Been SETTING RECORDS.

LET US  
GET YOU  
MOVING.



**SOLD!**

134 Ward Pl, South Orange  
SP: \$1,410,000  
**RECORD FOR STREET!**



**SOLD!**

10-12 Oberlin St, Maplewood  
SP: \$1,305,000  
**RECORD FOR STREET!**



**SOLD!**

44 S. Pierson Rd, Maplewood  
List Price: \$770,000 to SP: \$1,144,943  
**49% Over LP!**  
**RECORD FOR STREET!**



**SOLD!**

28 Park Ave, Maplewood  
SP: \$952,000



**SOLD!**

42 Orchard Rd, Maplewood  
SP: \$860,000



**SOLD!**

162 Forest Hill Rd, West Orange  
SP: \$930,000



**SOLD!**

942 Stillwater Rd, Stillwater  
SP: \$760,000 (Represented buyers)

### Read what these clients say about Jen:

“It was truly a pleasure working with Jennifer from the beginning of the initial consultation to the completion of the sale. Jennifer’s expertise: Knowledgeable about market conditions, buyer needs, and marketing strategy. Her professionalism: Accessible, dedicated, and committed to a successful outcome.”

-Seller of 44 S. Pierson Rd

“Jen was incredibly responsive, answering texts at all times of the day and also hands-on (literally – helping us move furniture on the fly!), while always keeping her eye on the big picture. Jen is a savvy strategist with a deep understanding of our local market, and she helped us land the best sale we could.”

-Seller of 10-12 Oberlin St



The Jennifer McManus Team

#1 Small Team

(917) 837-2192

jennifer.mcmanus@cbmoves.com





# WE LOVE TO PAINT

Are you tired of poor to mediocre jobs?  
We have been doing superior work  
in the area for **43** years.



Look to us for:

- 🔧 Painting
- 🔧 Paper Hanging
- 🔧 Home Improvement

*We Are The Picky People Painters*

**HUE STRONG PAINTING**  
**908-688-2586**

License#13VH08631500



Find Your  
Sweet spot  
on the Corner  
of Irvington Ave.

Where good vibes meet great flower.

OPEN  
EVERYDAY

MONDAY-SUNDAY  
11am-8pm

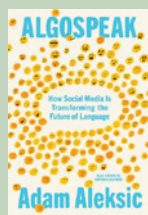
751 Irvington Ave,  
Maplewood, NJ 07040

For use only by adults 21 years of age or older.

## Book Report

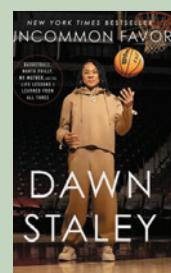
Explore Matters Magazine's  
story topics with these books

*Algospeak: How Social Media Is Transforming the  
Future of Language* by Adam Aleksic



A captivating journey through the intersection of language and social media, where communication is changing in unprecedented ways. Gen Z Linguist Adam Aleksic uses his research, from emojis to how people talk about sex and death, to usher readers through the new linguistic landscape shaped by algorithms and technology.

*Uncommon Favor: Basketball, North Philly,  
My Mother, and the Lessons I Learned  
From All Three* by Dawn Staley



This memoir traces the extraordinary journey of basketball's Dawn Staley. From the gritty streets of North Philadelphia to Olympic podiums and coaching triumphs, Staley reflects on the people and places that shaped her resilience, leadership and drive. At the heart of her story is her mother who guided Staley through adversity and triumph. With raw honesty and deep insight, Staley explores how basketball, family, and community taught her to defy limits and embrace purpose.



*Doomsday Archives* by Zack Loran Clark

New Rotterdam is no place for a kid, and that's what Emrys Houtman likes about it. Emrys obsessively documents his town's urban legends and cryptid sightings in a Wiki, along with his neighbors and fellow horror fans Hazel and Serena. It's all in good fun until one day, the trio stumbles upon the

Doomsday Archives, a collection of relics with dazzling powers and dangerous consequences.

*Making Bird-Friendly Birdhouses:  
Instructions and Plans for 15 Specific Birds*  
by Melvin "Bird Man Mel" Toellner  
and Matt Maguire



While birdhouses are beloved by many, they're often crafted more for visual appeal than for the birds themselves. Making Bird-Friendly Birdhouses flips that script. In this book, lifelong birder Mel "Bird Man Mel" Toellner and expert woodworker Matt Maguire guide you through over 15 thoughtfully designed projects that prioritize what birds truly need — safe, functional homes that support their natural nesting behaviors.



*Indian Kitchens: Treasured Family Recipes  
from Across the Land* by Roopa Gulati

Treasured family recipes are full of the wonderfully varied food that makes up the vibrant country of India. Gulati makes pitstops at the homes of the people who cook them every day, and the result is over 100 delicious, fresh and must-try recipes that you'll want to cook time and again.

**SOUTH ORANGE  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

298 Walton Avenue, South Orange | 973-762-0230 | [sopl.org](http://sopl.org)



# PLUG INTO MY EXPERIENCE

## I Go the Extra Mile

When you're ready to buy or sell your home, make sure you hire an experienced realtor – someone who has been through the ins and outs of varied transactions and changes in the market, and knows how to manage the details.

With our current market of low inventory and high mortgage rates, I can help buyers find off-market properties or pocket listings. I'm also experienced in multi-family rental properties and can help VA and FHA buyers. If you're looking to sell, ask me how you can make maximum profit on your house.

When you work with me you have access to my tried and true network of resources. I can connect you with lenders for the right mortgage programs, contractors to solve inspection issues, and service professionals to handle any home-related matter you can think of.



### CHECK OUT MY NEW LISTING!

Charming Colonial  
\$690,000  
3 bedroom/1.5 bathroom  
76-78 Woodside Road, Maplewood



## Contact me today!

Call or text me to talk about your real estate needs. I'd be honored to help you.

### DENNIS HEPWORTH

BROKER ASSOCIATE

JUSTIN KILISZEK REAL ESTATE EXPERTS TEAM

353 Eisenhower Parkway, Livingston

Cell: 862.252.0866

[dennis.mynjhomesearch.net/contact-agent](https://dennis.mynjhomesearch.net/contact-agent)

[dennis.hepworth@mac.com](mailto:dennis.hepworth@mac.com)

### *Get to Know Dennis*

- Longtime Essex County resident: 10 years in Maplewood and 21 years in Short Hills.
- Originally from Boston. My accent only comes out when I'm with my siblings.
- Married 35 years to Cathy. We have two sons, Matt and John.
- Graduated from the University of Tulsa with a B.S. in Business Administration.
- Spent 20 years on Wall Street and 13 years in real estate.
- Passionate about weightlifting and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.



**EXPERIENCED • TRUSTWORTHY • PROFESSIONAL**

*Safely serving communities in Essex, Union, Morris, and Somerset counties.*



# New Athletic Director Energizes Cougar Sports

Her motto: We win!

BY ADRIANNA DONAT



*Sjocquelyn Winstead gets ready to start her second year as Columbia High School's Athletic Director.*

Sjocquelyn Winstead made a lasting impression in her first year as Columbia High School's athletic director. With enthusiasm, inclusive programs and a clear vision for the future, she is bringing new energy to Cougar sports.

"When the last bus pulls back into school, that's when my job is done for the day," she says. From early morning to late evening, she coordinates transportation for dozens of teams, ensures fields are prepped, checks in with coaches, communicates with parents and Cougar Boosters, and works to support current and future student-athletes.

Her mission: To remind everyone that sports are an extension of academics and that every athlete is a student first.

A former varsity basketball captain, soccer player, softball player and cross-country runner,

Winstead knows firsthand the transformational power of sports. Growing up with ESPN on in her home and a deep admiration for the WNBA, Winstead says athletics shaped her confidence, leadership style and career.

"Sports can take you on a journey," she says. "They teach you how to lead, how to think critically, how to bounce back." That journey led her to Rutgers University, where she served as a student manager for the women's basketball team. She also found ways to lead off the court, eventually becoming head coach at Hillside Recreation Department and, after graduation, the girls' basketball head coach at Hillside High School.

By 2009, she realized she could one day run an athletic department – even in a field still dominated by men. What made her choose Columbia High School? "CHS is one of the best academic high schools in Essex County," Winstead says.

"It's a prestigious school with a legacy in track and field. I wanted to be part of a community that values excellence in all forms – academic, artistic and athletic."

Winstead has prioritized developing strong middle school athletic programs. "I'm excited to see the foundation we're laying for younger students who want to be part of CHS athletics one day," she says.

Board of Education President Nubia DuVall Wilson says the programs will be for seventh and eighth graders. "Through Athletic Director Winstead's efforts, this upcoming school year our students will be able to experience interscholastic athletic competition, creating an in-district feeder program to Columbia High School and enhancing community involvement in our athletics," she says.

And Wilson has a point. Supporting middle school athletes, educating them about their options



to compete at CHS and getting them set up on their high school teams can be complicated. Athletes can get lost in the process. Winstead streamlined the athlete registration process and expanded outreach to incoming ninth graders and their families. “It used to be confusing,” she says. “Now we walk students through it, and we reach out to eighth grade families so we can build those relationships early.”

She’s also made strides in inclusivity. CHS now recognizes girls’ wrestling and flag football and has added boys’ volleyball as an emerging program. “We must meet the needs of all students,” she says, noting her focus on Title IX compliance and open communication with coaches and student-athletes.

Student-athletes have taken note. “Winstead has been a huge help and made an immediate impact from the jump,” says Liam Ayers, class of 2027 and a member of the varsity basketball team. “Her help with the basketball team and being so interested and aware with what’s going on shows that someone else cares. She’s made decisions that are going to leave a big impact on the Columbia basketball team and program that’ll benefit us in years to come.”

Colin Brandt, class of 2026 and



Columbia High School wrestling team captain Jared Van Allen competing in a match. During the 2024-25 season, the team won the conference title, its first since 1991. Photo credit: Lora Photography

a varsity football team member, says Winstead has made a large impact. “Ms. Winstead has been a big help to the football team. By starting a girls’ flag football program, she helped us get funding from the Jets, which got us new gear and other upgrades that really helped the team,” he says. “Beyond that she’s been an active presence for all student-athletes. Whether it’s showing up to games, checking in with players or making sure we have what we need, she’s made a big impact in a short time.”



Jonathan Harrell, class of 2025, in mid-flight during an indoor hurdle event. Photo credit: Lora Photography

One of Winstead’s proudest moments this year was signing day. “We have Division 1, 2 and 3 athletes at CHS,” she says. “I asked each one to send me a pennant from the school they signed with so we can celebrate and display them. It was a highlight of the year.”



The Columbia High School football team sets up at the line just before the snap. The team’s record for the 2024-25 season was 1-7. Photo credit: Lora Photography

But getting her student-athletes to signing day had some obstacles. The biggest challenge, she says, is access to facilities. With only one turf field and multiple teams vying for space, it’s tough to

FULLY INSURED LIC: 13VH12858300

## PAINTING CARPENTRY & GUTTERS

### INTERESTED IN UPGRADING YOUR GUTTERS FROM 5 INCH TO 6 INCH?

#### GET READY FOR WINTER

Aluminum Copper & Colors  
K-Style & Half Round

With 6 inch gutters and 3"X 4" downspouts  
you can handle rain water more efficiently

### NEED TO CLEAN YOUR GUTTERS? NOT A PROBLEM!

#### WE DO INSTALLATION REPAIR & SERVICE

CALL US FOR A FREE ESTIMATE (973) 951-0606

1980 SPRINGFIELD AVE SUITE 9A, MAPLEWOOD NJ 07040

TO GO TO WEBSITE

Scan Me

TO SAVE CONTACT

WWW.XHRISHOMEIMPROVEMENTS.COM INFO@XHRISMAIL.COM

PERFORMING ARTS STUDIO

HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE GROW INTO ARTISTS OF INTEGRITY

#### Musical Theatre Classes:

**Ages 7-13**

Kids on Broadway & Beyond  
Musical Theatre Mania  
Theatre Jazz

#### Dance Classes:

**Ages 7-18**

Ballet, Jazz, Tap  
Hip Hop, Lyrical

**Private Voice Lessons**

**Acting Classes**

#### Kinder Classes:

**Ages 3-6**

Kids on Broadway  
Dance Combo  
Hip Hop Totz

Visit our website for more information!  
ClassActPAS.com  
973.789.0191  
128 Irvington Ave, South Orange, NJ



# Our Lady of Sorrows School

The Catholic School of South Orange and Maplewood



Enrolling now for PreK through 8th grade

OurLadyofSorrowsSchool.org • office@ourladyofsorrowsschool.org  
172 Academy Street, South Orange, NJ 07079 • 973.762.5169

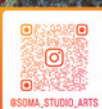


The Columbia High School varsity girls soccer team at Underhill Field. The team went 9-10-1 in the 2024-25 season. Photo credit: Lora Photography



Art Classes for  
Beginner through  
Advanced students  
ages 8-80

Fundamental skills  
that last a lifetime



www.SomaStudioArts.com

maintain equity or give athletes the practice time they need. The softball team currently practices off campus. “It’s like you have one classroom and you’re trying to fit 18 classes in it,” Winstead says. “Our teams deserve the best facilities. We’re academically and artistically great. Our athletes deserve the same support.”

The community has stepped up. From the people in the stands, to Cougar Boosters to parent volunteers organizing banquets and end-of-season celebrations, Winstead says she’s inspired by the way people show up. “It anchors our teams,” she says. “It provides that ex-

tra level of care.”

Still, her focus remains squarely on the students. “Athletics is education-based,” she says. “You may not be the strongest student academi-



Varsity tennis player Eden Phillippe competing in a match. The team went 12-7 in the 2024-25 season. Photo credit: Lora Photography

cally, but sports can grow your confidence and critical thinking skills. Every moment on the field is a chance to learn.”

Winstead hopes that message continues to resonate. Her own story – from high school team captain to the leadership role she holds now – is proof that sports can shape a life.

As for her motto? It’s simple and right on brand: We WIN! 

Adrianna Donat is a local writer, real estate agent with Pollock Properties Group and lifelong fan of game day chants, team spirit and underdog victories. She believes a great coach – and a good pair of sneakers – can change your life.



Sjocquelyn Winstead’s focus is on the students and believes “sports can grow your confidence and critical thinking skills.”

  
**Give Them an A+  
in Survival Skills!**  
Year-round | Infants-Adults | Small Groups



Help them pass the most  
important test of all,  
staying safe in the water.

**Call 201-645-1300**

333 Elmwood Ave, Maplewood, NJ | BritishSwimSchool.com/HWF



THE ARTS FAIR HAS A NEW HOME:  
**YOURS!**

# THE ARTS FAIR

GOES DIGITAL!



DANCE  
SCHOOLS

MUSIC  
SCHOOLS

FINE ARTS  
STUDIOS

AND  
MORE!

It's time to register for arts classes, and we are thrilled to bring the Pollock Arts Fair Digital Directory to everyone 24/7! Visit [www.PollockArtsFair.com](http://www.PollockArtsFair.com) to view our complete list of arts educators in Northern New Jersey. Registrations for classes are open NOW - visit today!

*If you find the directory helpful, please consider donating to **Achieve Foundation's Pollock Arts Initiative** to increase access and equity of arts education in the SOMSD school district for all.*



A FEW SUCCESS STORIES:



13-15 PLYMOUTH AVE., MAPLEWOOD  
LP: \$929,000 SP: \$1,388,800



42 HEADLEY PL., MAPLEWOOD  
LP: \$899,000 SP: \$1,325,000



286 TILLOU RD., SOUTH ORANGE  
LP: \$1,250,000 SP: \$1,752,000



31 TUSCAN ST., MAPLEWOOD  
LP: \$519,000 SP: \$720,000

## 2025 YTD report

Thank you for making  
us your #1 team!

Over 75 families  
served, \$75M+ in  
sales, and \$25K+  
donated so far  
this year.  
We're grateful for  
your trust—and  
proud to keep  
delivering results  
that matter.

CARE.  
SERVE.  
GIVE.



# Tastes of Home

## Mangala's Chicken Curry

BY ILYSSE RIMALOVSKI



Rajan readies her spices and chopped vegetables for making chicken curry.



The gift of home-cooked food brings the Rajan/Jacinto family together.



Chicken curry is a comfort food adaptable to the regional flavors of India, balancing flavor and spice.

**Tastes of Home** is a *Food Matters* series celebrating the rich culinary traditions of our local residents.

The aromas flowing from Mangala Rajan's kitchen stir hunger, memory and tradition all at once. Coriander and cumin are blooming in hot oil, signaling the rich, layered experience of the meal to come.

"With chicken curry, you can be as simple or as sophisticated as you want," says Rajan, adding chopped vegetables and fresh pastes of garlic and ginger to the pot. She has already warmed whole and ground spices from her masala dabba, a highly organized Indian spice box. She will serve her curry with traditional basmati rice and a side of spicy chopped green beans with coconut, reminiscent of the flavors her mother cooked for her.

Mangala Rajan and her husband, Lester Jacinto, met while pursuing graduate degrees at Temple University, both on student visas from India. She hailed from the southern region of Chennai and was raised as a vegetarian. He was from Mumbai in the West, where meat was the mainstay of his diet.

Although their worlds seemed far apart in terms of cuisine, religion and language, they discovered they shared deep values regarding education and family. Soon they would create a plan for the future and a home of their own. Rajan and Jacinto blended aspects of their traditional cultures into their American lives, landing them in their beloved South Orange neighborhood 28 years ago.

"We've taken our kids to India a lot to give them a sense at their core of their Indian origin," says Jacinto. "But we told them that beyond that, they have to find their way."

Their son, Mihir, 24, and daughter, Gunjan, 20, are lured to the kitchen by the magical aromas of their mother's cooking. As adults, it has become a game to guess which spices they can discern. "I was praying that my kids would be interested in cooking Indian food," says Rajan, recalling their early preference for pasta and pizza. "Now they love it and help me cook, which is very gratifying."

School lunches often consisted of leftovers such as stewed chickpeas (chana), lentils (dal), or chicken curry and rice. The kids' friends were often curious to see what Mom packed. Today, Mi-

hir is grateful for his sense of culinary adventure, and Gunjan finds that cooking is much easier than going out, even if that means cooking pasta in her dorm room.

Rajan's cooking prowess is celebrated throughout her family and social circles and extends well beyond Indian cuisine. Continuing the legacy of her mother and mother-in-law, she is the resident expert and keeper of recipes, which she "eyeballs" instead of measuring.

When pressed for time, she uses Indian spice mixes from the local company DHOL (see sidebar) for making curries and other traditional dishes. She works full time in New York as a medical researcher at Weill Cornell but finds it personally and culturally important to prepare a home-cooked meal. "Cooking forces me to shut off work," she says. "It is a nice transition that literally makes me feel good." 

*Ilysse Rimalovski is a well-seasoned home chef, writer and recipe developer living in Maplewood. Have food questions or need inspiration? Visit Ilysse's Facebook page, Ilysse Ideally, or send email to forilysse@icloud.com.*



# Mangala's Chicken Curry

## Ingredients

*1½ pounds chicken thighs, fat trimmed and sliced into chunks*  
*1 medium onion, finely chopped*  
*2 Roma tomatoes, finely chopped*  
*1 large potato, diced into cubes*  
*1 tablespoon tomato paste*  
*1 spicy green chili, such as serrano (optional)*  
*2 garlic cloves, peeled and grated (or ½ tablespoon garlic paste)*  
*½-inch piece of ginger, peeled and grated (or ½ tablespoon ginger paste)*  
*2 tablespoons plain low-fat Greek yogurt, whisked to a smooth consistency*  
*Oil/ghee to coat the pan*  
*1 teaspoon salt*

## Whole Spices:

*2 cardamom pods*  
*3 cloves*  
*1-inch piece cinnamon stick*

## Ground Spices:

*1 tablespoon coriander powder*  
*1½ teaspoons cumin powder*  
*1½ teaspoons turmeric powder*  
*1½ teaspoons Kashmiri chili powder (see note)\**  
*½ teaspoon garam masala\**

## Fresh Herbs:

*Small bunch coriander leaves, chopped*  
*4 or 5 mint leaves (optional)*

## Instructions

1. Marinate raw chicken chunks with yogurt and salt for at least 30 minutes, up to one day in advance, and refrigerate.
2. Pour 1½ teaspoons of oil in a Dutch oven or large pot. Add whole spices and fry for a minute or two until fragrant. Add chopped onions and cook slowly on medium heat until browned and caramelized.
3. Lower heat to simmer and add ground spices, except garam masala. Add fresh tomatoes, salt and green chili (if using) and mix well, ensuring spices do not burn.
4. Raise the heat, add tomato paste and let ingredients cook until oil visibly rises to the surface.
5. Add chicken pieces and mix thoroughly.
6. Simmer curry for 20 minutes, adding up to a cup of water (depending on your preference for thinner or thicker gravy) until the chicken is almost cooked through.
7. Add potatoes and simmer until fork tender (10 – 15 minutes more), mixing the curry to prevent it from sticking to the bottom.
8. Lastly, add garam masala and a teaspoon of ghee (if using) and mix well.
9. Garnish with fresh herbs. Serve alongside basmati rice and/or Indian bread such as roti or *naan*.



Rajan uses whole and ground spices from her masala dabba, a spice storage container widely used in Indian kitchens.

## Notes

- For Indian ingredients, Mangala suggests India Bazaar in East Hanover or a visit to Iselin, which offers many authentic stores and restaurants. She also highlights the Indian fare at The Order in South Orange.
- Ghee is clarified butter that is shelf-stable with a rich flavor.
- Kashmiri chili powder is a mild aromatic powder available in Indian markets. A mix of cayenne pepper and sweet paprika is an alternative. Adjust heat level according to preference.
- Garam masala is a ground spice blend that typically includes coriander seeds, cumin seeds, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and pepper.
- Chicken breasts may be substituted for thighs, however they tend to result in a less flavorful curry.
- DHOL Chicken Curry Spice Mix may be substituted for the whole and ground spices.

## Need a Shortcut?

South Orange resident Renu Mittal shares the culinary delights of her North Indian heritage through her company DHOL Spice Mix. “It’s not just about getting dinner on the table,” says Mittal. “It’s about enjoying family, food and stories along the way.” DHOL’s Chicken Curry Spice Mix includes warming aromatics such as cardamom, coriander and ginger along with more obscure ingredients such as dry mango powder. The result is an easy vibrant meal with authentic flavors. Visit [dholspicemix.com](http://dholspicemix.com).



## RED BARAAT

OCT 10 | 7:30PM

“the best party band in years”  
(NPR)

**BUY TICKETS TODAY!**

SOPACnow.org

**JOSHUA RADIN**

OCT 16 | 7:30PM

**CINDY BLACKMAN SANTANA**

OCT 18 | 7:30PM

**THE HOT SARDINES**

NOV 16 | 7:30PM

**20 SOPAC**

SOUTH ORANGE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



# THE WINSTON SCHOOL OF SHORT HILLS

Recognizing Difference. Enabling Success.

Students with language-based learning differences thrive at Winston! We serve bright learners with challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and executive functioning differences, **turning obstacles into opportunities.**



Orton-Gillingham instruction in small and structured groups ensures that students receive **personalized, systematic, multisensory support tailored to their needs.**

The Winston School of Short Hills  
30 East Lane  
Short Hills, NJ 07078  
(973) 379-4114 | [www.winstonschool.org](http://www.winstonschool.org)

Visit us on the web to  
schedule a tour today!

## ENROLLING NOW!

### WHY US?

- DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM
- PLAY-BASED LEARNING
- OUTDOOR PLAY

REGISTER NOW  
FOR 2025-2026!



SCHEDULE A TOUR!

973-763-5460  
[morrowpreschool.org](http://morrowpreschool.org)  
@morrowpreschool

REGISTER  
NOW!

## A whole entire response to redundancies

BY KRISTEN DI GENNARO

In response to my last column describing the new(ish) use of the possessive “and I’s,” a reader wrote in with an observation about “whole entire,” as in, “I can’t believe she ate the whole entire thing.”

I must admit, it took me a minute to see the potential problem with “whole entire,” but I assume it’s bothersome because it’s redundant – both “whole” and “entire” mean the same thing. So why use the two words together?

My guess is that speakers use the two-word phrase for emphasis, like a cleaner way of saying, “She didn’t just eat the whole cake, but she ate the whole \*&%\$ thing!” After hearing “whole entire” multiple times, other speakers start to use the phrase as well without even noticing the redundancy.

In fact, many of us are guilty of using “whole entire” and other redundant phrases, such as when we mention the “free gift” we received with a purchase, our “past history” with someone, or the “end result” of a long, complicated situation. In fact, we’re probably not even aware of using such questionable words or phrases.

Take, for example, the situation *Matters Magazine* editor Ellen Donker describes in the spring issue, noting how a former boss frequently used the word “irregardless.” This immediately reminded me of one morning when Tony Dokoupil, a journalist on *CBS This Morning*, uttered this word during a segment. I have no idea what he was talking about, but just as Ellen noticed when her former boss used this word, I tuned in and made a note of it. Unlike with Ellen’s boss, however, someone must have told Dokoupil about his transgression because after the

commercial break, he apologized for having uttered it, as if he had said a four-letter rather than a four-syllable word. In case anyone missed his spoken apology, Dokoupil followed up with a social media post:



Tony Dokoupil  
@tonydokoupil

Follow

I said “irregardless” on TV today. I regret the error.

As a linguist, I’m less interested in Dokoupil’s use of a questionable word than I am in his response. What makes “irregardless” so offensive that its use warrants an apology? Many insist the word isn’t logical because it includes two negatives: the prefix *ir-* and the suffix *-less*. But language isn’t math, so no, two negative affixes do not equal a linguistic positive. Some say it derives from a blend of “regardless” and “irrespective,” making one of the affixes redundant. Or maybe “irregardless” is emphatic – not simply without regard for what follows, but *really* without any consideration whatsoever. This brings us back to “whole entire.” If past history is any guide, (ir)regardless of our individual preferences, the end result will probably have all of us using the word eventually.

What other questionable words or phrases have you noticed? How do you react when people use them? Please email your thoughts or questions on language matters to Kristen di Gennaro, your local linguist, at [language matters@mattersmagazine.com](mailto:language matters@mattersmagazine.com). 

Kristen di Gennaro is an associate professor of English at Pace University, where she teaches courses on linguistics. She lives in Maplewood and sometimes gathers language data during her commute on the train.



## Celebrating our 2025 local clients....



61 Plymouth Ave, Maplewood



6 Burnet Street, Maplewood



11 Wyndham Rd, Short Hills



108 Roland Ave, South Orange



89 Stewart Rd, Short Hills



452 Elmwood Ave, Maplewood



82 Oakview Ave, Maplewood



89 Jacoby St, Maplewood



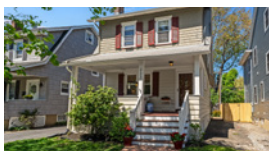
82 Courter Ave, Maplewood



17 Hickory Dr, Maplewood



231 Prospect St, South Orange



233 Ward Pl, South Orange



81 Courter Ave, Maplewood



179 W Fairview Ave, S. Orange



107 Mercer Place, South Orange



114 Roland Ave, South Orange



225 Kingsland Terr, South Orange



436 Summit Ave, Maplewood



3 Glenside Rd, South Orange



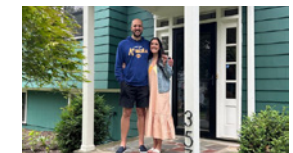
33 Orchard Rd, Maplewood



13 William St, Maplewood



179 W Fairview Ave, S. Orange



357 Hillside Pl, South Orange



56 Plymouth Ave, Maplewood

Our many past and current clients can attest to our unique brand of hands-on customer care, in-depth community and market insights, and our well-oiled processes. Let our local expertise guide you every step of the way.



## COMPASS

**Kelly Lombardi & Bonnie Ramsey**  
**Tandem Real Estate Group**

Real Estate Salespersons

M: 973.991.9954

O: 973.310.6816

TandemNJ@Compass.com

Tandem Real Estate Group is a team of real estate salespersons affiliated with Compass. Compass is a licensed real estate broker and abides by Equal Housing Opportunity laws.

\*Based on GSMLS Data for all brokerages 1/1/2024 - 12/31/2024



# Preserving Columbia High School's Past

The volunteers who work its archives

BY HARRIET SIGERMAN PHOTOGRAPHY BY CARLOS SANCHEZ



The Columbia High School archivists  
L to R: Anne Wessel Dwyer, Hannah  
Edelman, Carol Moran Petrallia and  
Kate McMorrow Brown.

**T**he Columbia High School Archives is a meticulously organized two-room work space in the new Media Center at Columbia. With its neatly labeled file cabinets and shelves full of books by Columbia graduates, the archives exudes an atmosphere of purposeful

activity, a welcoming portal to Columbia's past.

It was not always this way. In 1995, Carol Moran Petrallia, an English and debate teacher at Columbia, received a call about some boxes of old papers pertaining to Columbia housed in the room where she met with her debate class. She and another teacher soon realized there was a wealth of material about Columbia's history.

Little did Petrallia know that she was embarking on a decades-long journey to organize and catalog those items into an archives as she joined forces with retired teacher volunteers Roseann Sharo, Dr. Carol Collins and Mary Bissinger. These days, her team includes Hannah Edelman, Anne Wessel Dwyer and Kate McMorrow Brown. Together, they have overcome several obstacles, including a pandemic that stopped all work, several hectic moves to different work spaces and a flood that nearly destroyed much of the collection.

The boxes of documents were first housed in a room that several previous librarians and a former principal had outfitted with shelving and cabinets. The contents were ostensibly library reports going back to 1895, but Petrallia and fellow English teacher Edelman discovered other items, such as

commencement brochures and musical programs.

Petrallia and Edelman recruited students from the student council to help them go through the material. But they quickly realized that the work could not be done "in blocks of 45 minutes," as Petrallia says.

Edelman describes the chaos they encountered: "I don't think anyone fully understood what was there and what we really had." When she first joined the effort, she "almost fainted." They faced a monumental task of organizing and inventorying the collection.

Early on, at the suggestion of Susan Newberry, Maplewood's very knowledgeable town historian, Petrallia and Edelman attended a program at the Morristown Advisory Board about how to organize the archives. Out of almost 100 attendees, they were the only representatives from a high school, and they received a wealth of information.

When Petrallia retired in 2006 and Edelman shortly after, they and other volunteers really dug into organizing the archives. "It was just a revelation to find" the range of materials, Petrallia says. Besides the library reports, they found:

- Bound volumes of the *Columbian*, the school's



Standing seven feet tall, Cougar Joe was created by Charles Scattergood and Louis Bernstein, CHS class of 1946, for their 30<sup>th</sup> year class reunion. For many years, he proudly served as mascot for teacher Meg Wastie's English classes.





Carol Petrallia examines old issues of "The Columbian," CHS's newspaper.

newspaper, dating back to the 1920s

- Boxes of Columbia's yearbook, the *Mirror*, dating from 1912 to the present
- Volumes of CHS's student literary publication, the *Guildscript*
- Pictures, school and district news articles, sports-related features, programs from musical and the-

atrical performances, articles pertaining to the tragic events of 9/11 and historical documents relating to students and the school community

The collection expanded to include books and files by and about Hall of Fame inductees and a growing collection of books written by Columbia graduates. Initially, the archivists went through every item, categorized it and put protective sleeves on more fragile items. Soon, Dwyer, another retired English teacher, and McMorrow Brown, who currently teaches special education at Columbia, joined the all-volunteer archival staff.

They received administrative support from current principal Frank Sanchez, former assistant prin-

cipal Terry Woolard, Keysha Knight, administrator of the educational departments, and past and current librarians Joseph Fanning, Deborah Cohen, Teresa Quick, Mary Beth DiPrima and Suzanne Ng.

The process of organizing the archives was painstakingly slow but full of intriguing discoveries. Edelman says, "Every time we would come here we would get so distracted . . . because we couldn't get to our work."

One such intriguing discovery was a photograph of the senior class in the 1912 senior yearbook of South Orange High School, the precursor to Columbia. Among the 24 graduating students in the picture was a young Black woman. (Alfred Kinsey, valedictorian of the class, and later a famous sex researcher, is also in the picture.) Her name was Delia Bolden, and an essay she wrote on "The Negro Question" was included in the yearbook. Her fellow classmates had chosen to publish it. Bolden also presented the essay at the senior class commencement exercises, an honor accorded to her by the seniors and teachers.



These historic photos show what the high school looked like when it was first built.



An intriguing find in the archives was this picture of the 1912 class of South Orange High School (a precursor to CHS) that includes student Delia Bolden, the first Black woman to graduate from it.

In searching words, she condemned the social and political discrimination that Black people faced almost five decades

NEW JERSEY'S

# BEST ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

GENERATORS • EV CHARGERS • ELECTRICAL SERVICES • FINANCING • LICENSED & INSURED

CONTACT US FOR  
YOUR FREE ESTIMATE

(973)-996-4696  
[Tothelectricllc.com](http://Tothelectricllc.com)





# Learn, Grow, Create



**Montclair Film offers fall classes for pre-teens, teens, and adults. Sign up now for:**

- ◆ Filmmaking
- ◆ Stand Up Comedy
- ◆ Improv
- ◆ Podcasting
- ◆ Voice Acting
- ◆ Sketch Comedy Writing
- ◆ Storytelling
- ◆ Screenwriting
- ◆ Editing... and more!

Financial Assistance is available for qualified students.

**MONTCLAIR  
FILM+  
EDUCATION**

**Space is limited,  
so register today!**

**Go to [MontclairFilm.org/Education](https://MontclairFilm.org/Education)**

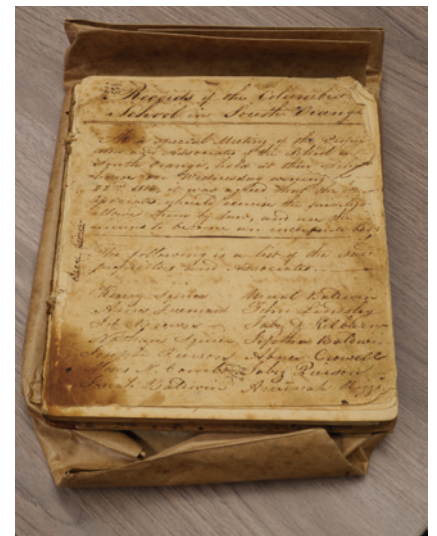
**MONTCLAIR FILM** ◆ 505 Bloomfield Avenue ◆ Montclair, NJ

after the Civil War. She spoke unflinchingly about voter disenfranchisement and lynching but concluded, “In spite of all opposition and hindrances the negro has developed wonderfully in his 47 years of freedom.” In the yearbook, Bolden also wrote as her personal statement, “I hate nobody. I’m in charity with the world,” a quotation attributed to Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver’s Travels*.

Because of this astonishing find, former principal Elizabeth Aaron used Delia Bolden’s life as the basis for Black History Month one year at Columbia, and Jefferson Elementary School was renamed Delia Bolden School. Archivist Anne Dwyer Wessel and Andra Marx, a community member, researched Bolden and discovered that her niece and grand-niece live in Montclair. The district board invited them to the renaming of the Delia Bolden School.

The archives also includes class pictures from the district’s other schools. “When you see pictures here . . . you will see children of color in the classes,” Edelman says. Petralia adds, “It may not be large numbers of children, but you see them throughout the school district. These children are here, and they’re all part of the school. No one is separate.” This district practice was codified in a book written in 1930 by Dr. Henry W. Foster, a former district superintendent, which the archives owns. In it, he stated, “All children will enjoy the right to a public education.”

The archivists’ goal, in Petralia’s words, is “to organize, secure and preserve the existing collection and all new donations.” They strive to make the archives available to stu-

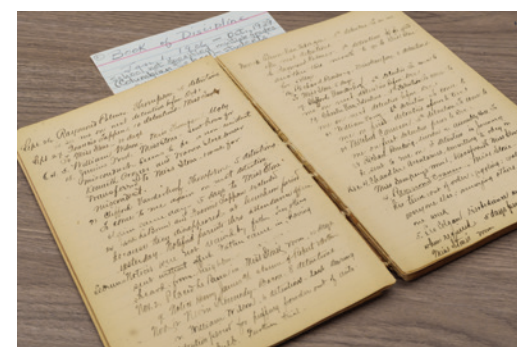


In 2012, boxes from the Board of Education yielded an ornately hand-written book of minutes from 1814. It recorded the first meeting of the town leaders to incorporate the school district along with plans to build the first schoolhouse.

dents, faculty, staff and members of the community who want to do research or learn more about Columbia and the community. The archivists send out newsletters to alumni describing recent finds and have made presentations to alumni gatherings. In addition, they encourage English and social studies teachers to incorporate this material in classroom assignments. A new goal is to begin digitizing the *Columbian* this fall. As Petralia explains, “The *Columbian* is at the heart of our collection and will provide us with important information about the history of our school and our community.”

In 2012, the archives received 17 boxes from the Board of Education, which included more records and attendance information about the district’s schools. Also included was an ornately hand-written book of minutes from 1814 recording the first meeting of the town leaders to incorporate the school district under the name the South Orange school district, along with plans to build the first schoolhouse in the two towns.

In early September of 2024, shortly after the new school year started, Petralia received another call, this time a very unhappy one. She learned that water from a burst pipe had



This Book of Discipline, kept from 1906 to 1929, notes cases of student misconduct and the accompanying punishment.

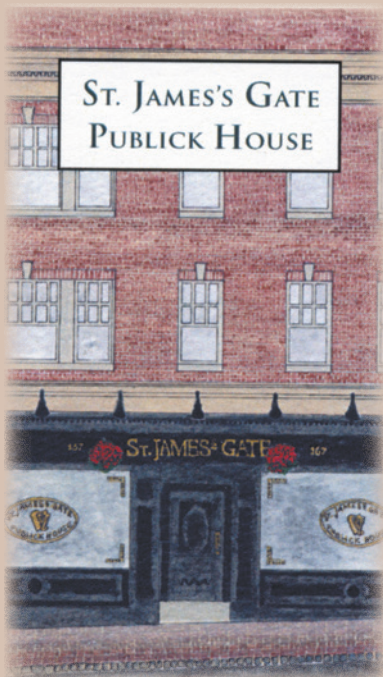
**Enjoy Summer  
in our  
Outdoor  
STREET CAFE!**

**THE LATEST AT SJG**

- Oysterfest is Back – September 6!
- Lobster Rolls are Here!
- Seasonal Beers on Tap.

**YOUR CHOICE!**

Dine with us indoors fireside  
or at our street cafe.



Authentic Irish Cuisine, Irish Coffee,  
Fine Wines and Irish Whiskey  
worthy of Celtic Kings

“MAY YOUR THIRST FOR LIFE NEVER RUN DRY”

**167 MAPLEWOOD AVENUE  
MAPLEWOOD VILLAGE 973-378-2222**

ST. JAMES'S GATE APPAREL AND GIFT CARDS AVAILABLE  
[stjamesgatemaplewood.com](https://stjamesgatemaplewood.com)





CHS memorabilia, such as this megaphone and varsity jacket, stand atop file cabinets in the archives' new home in the renovated media center.

damaged or destroyed many boxes of materials, mostly those containing bound copies of the *Columbian*. Principal Frank Sanchez quickly orchestrated an effort to move everything into his office meeting room, secured a dehumidifier and cleared space to open and dry the damaged bound newspapers, pictures, files and other boxes of material. His office became "the drying zone." Wearing masks and gloves, the archivists started salvaging what they could.

Social studies teacher J. D. Robinson immediately helped. He showed the archivists how to insert clean sheets of printing paper between the wet pages of documents to absorb the dampness. Every day, the four archivists turned pages to accelerate the drying process, and they carefully removed ruined bindings from bound volumes with an Exacto knife.

Fortunately, the yearbooks from the archives had escaped damage because they had been stored in another room, but numerous bound volumes of the *Columbian* and copies of the *Guildscript* were destroyed. Several administrators donated their copies of past issues of the *Guildscript*, and the four archivists hope to replenish the full collection of the student literary magazine. The archivists and additional helpers continued to methodically insert clean paper between each damaged page. "Six weeks in," says Petrallia, "we knew we were going to save some things, but it took six weeks to get it to [that] point." All told, they lost eight boxes of material out of a total of 52.

Former teachers and students have contributed items to the archives. The

archivists often get calls asking whether they are interested in a document or item. A couple of years ago, a woman from Michigan wrote to ask if the archives would be interested in some CHS student handbooks from the 1940s, which she had found at a house sale. Petrallia eagerly said yes. The archivists actively seek

material, especially about CHS sports and sporting events.

Petrallia and Edelman say the archives has changed their perceptions of Columbia. Edelman comments that notes from board meetings stored in the archives suggest that the arts played a significant role in the school district from the outset.

Petrallia adds, "When we go back to these early books . . . [we see] the school always had concerts, they had a band, they had an orchestra." They learned from the archives that every student class had to write and produce a play. Students also had to write essays, which their fellow students critiqued, sometimes quite critically.

The four archivists are still going through material and organizing and cataloging it. Occasionally students and faculty ask for help with researching the archive's materials. "We have worked many hours with our students," Petrallia says. "That's our greatest joy. We may be retired, but we still love teaching!"

For now, the volunteers plug away, uncovering more information and insights about Columbia and the district. This is unpaid work, which they are doing as a labor of love, though the Achieve Foundation and the PTA Presidents' Council have provided funds for boxes and other supplies. The archivists believe in the value of their work, knowing they are stewards of a rich archival collection for a school that has shaped so many lives and played a vital role in our two towns. 

*Harriet Sigerman loves researching American women's history and has happily spent time in several archives on the East Coast.*



**AoPS Academy**  
Millburn Campus

MILLBURN@AOPSACADEMY.ORG • (862) 206-4667



**Discover the Difference:  
Get Ahead This School Year with  
AoPS Academy Millburn**



Innovative after-school, weekend, and summer enrichment in math and language arts for grades 2-12. Reach out to **AoPS Academy Millburn** today!

**ENROLL TODAY**

AS SEEN IN *Atlantic* THE NEW YORKER **WIRED** Forbes



**The KinderGan**  
PRESCHOOL

Providing an innovative and progressive curriculum in a nurturing and stimulating environment

Flexible 3, 4, & 5 day programs

Extended day hours: 8 AM - 6 PM

Brand new state of the arts facility

Frumie Bogomilsky - Director  
MS Early Childhood SP.ED

For more information:  
973. 763. 7455  
[www.kinderganpreschool.org](http://www.kinderganpreschool.org)



SCHOOL AS IT SHOULD BE



**Far Brook School**

PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION SINCE 1948

AGE 3 - GRADE 8

**FARBROOK.ORG**



# BASKETBALL LEAGUE FILLS VOID, BUILDS COMMUNITY

SOMA Hoops draws local youth to the court

BY ESME KRAIS



League founder and commissioner Taylor Valentine inspires team spirit among the fifth grade girls' division.

**O**n any Saturday during the winter, South Orange Middle School's gym is filled with the sounds of sneakers squeaking on the wood floor, basketballs bouncing as kids dribble them on the court and fans cheering when athletes make good plays.

Since 2023, SOMA Hoops has given youth a place to play recreational basketball in a fun, non-competitive environment.

"The energy is palpable. The positivity is unbelievable," says Taylor Valentine, the founder and director of SOMA Hoops. "Hopefully, you see a lot of high fives."

SOMA Hoops runs on this energy and enthusiasm, which is why kids keep coming back. In its first year, the group had 340 kids from second to

eighth grade and grew to about 700 kids from first to 10th grade in its second year. As SOMA Hoops approaches its third year, the goal is to serve 1,000 players out of the 7,200 students in the district.

Although Maplewood and South Orange had recreational leagues for other sports, for basketball, "there were clinics and classes and travel teams. There was not a recreational level league," says Matt Gray, director of recreation and cultural affairs for South Orange.

"In a town that doesn't have an ice rink, in a town that doesn't have an indoor pool ... there was a void for sports in the winter," says Valentine.

As kids get older, sports become more competitive, often pushing out those who are less skilled. Valentine says, "It shouldn't be up and out in youth sports. It should be play as long as you want, because this is a game you can play as long as you want."

As someone who grew up playing basketball and has coached numerous teams, Valentine knew how much fun the game could be. But it wasn't until 20 years after he stopped coaching, when his



A sea of girls in red SOMA Hoops jerseys cheer on the Columbia High School Varsity Girls team during Spirit Night.



daughter was in third grade, that he found there were no local recreational basketball leagues for her to join.

Many other parents saw the same void. Lizzie Wolff, a SOMA Hoops parent, coach and volunteer in charge of marketing and communications, says, “I had noticed the lack of a rec league in our town because I grew up playing in a rec basketball league.” For many parents, this meant that their kids would be missing out on the community, lessons and experiences that they had while playing.

Valentine and other parents wanted their kids to play basketball in a supportive environment, which is why he approached Gray. Through their partnership, the department handled signups, found gym space and provided equipment and uniforms.



SOMA Hoopsters take their game to new heights.

“Our goal isn’t to win a championship in this league,” Valentine says. “Our goal is to ... build great human beings and to give them a fun experience that makes them want to come back and do this and feel like they can.”

Maddie Stein, age 11, says, “I love SOMA Hoops because it is a fun and playful environment, and I like that I can play my hardest while also having a really fun time.”

Valentine knows how impactful SOMA Hoops has been and can recount story after story. One example is Courtney Bryant, a mom who was

looking for a place for her middle school daughter to play basketball. “Last year, she launched our seventh and eighth grade girls program,” says Valentine. “Her daughter got involved, started playing apprehensively, and today you can’t get her off the basketball court.”

SOMA Hoops has allowed kids to form their own community. As Gray says, “It’s just about coming together with your friends in an organized way that there’s no real expectation beyond coming, playing, having fun and then going to get pizza afterwards with the same kids you go to school with.”

Besides organizing a recreational league, SOMA Hoops has also established SOMA Basketball Boosters. This nonprofit arm supports various causes in the community, including providing basketball equipment to local schools that didn’t have any. Valentine and other parents raised funds for basketballs, cones and rebounders for Clinton Elementary School so kids could learn to play the game.

The Boosters has also launched a peer-to-peer program. Current middle



SOMA Hoops relies on volunteers to serve as referees. Among them are, L to R, Olivia Roskin, Maayan Blint Midrony and Izzy Cataquet.

school girls advise fifth-grade girls on navigating the social, emotional and academic transition to middle school. The program allows the older girls to be leaders and inspires the younger ones to do the same. Valentine recalls his fifth-grade daughter saying, “I want to be on that panel. I want to tell the fifth graders



## The world needs the Co-op

*“Here, I learned how to love deeply.”*  
- Co-op Alum

Visit us to learn more  
[montclaircoop.org](http://montclaircoop.org)

Montclair Cooperative School  
Early Ages – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
65 Chestnut Street, Montclair





# We keep you smiling!



Every effort is made to ensure the utmost comfort for each patient.

Enjoy a modern professional environment and a caring staff.

As a former faculty member of Fairleigh Dickinson Dental School, Dr. Wysz now devotes all her time to private practice.

## Wendy Wysz, DMD

General, Restorative & Cosmetic Dentistry

250 Millburn Avenue | Millburn  
973-467-0077

Saturdays and Evenings Available  
On site parking | Convenient location



Two Hoopsters put their "Team Time" skills into action during a fast-paced game.

what middle school is all about when I'm done with my first year."

wants to play recreational basketball," says Gray. "The challenge is



SOMA Hoops coaches and players collaborate with Manhattan's Steady Buckets program, deepening their commitment to growth, learning and community impact.

This past year, the Boosters awarded a referee scholarship to a kid who represents the program's mission of creating a better community. The first one was given to graduating Columbia High School senior Ari Wasserman for his contributions on and off the court. He spent the last two years refereeing for SOMA Hoops and is also an athlete, camp counselor and creator of a short film.

SOMA Hoops requires many volunteers to run smoothly. This year, the program had 170 coaches and 240 volunteers. Anyone over the age of 13 can volunteer, with opportunities including setting up and taking down the gym, helping with fundraising and coordi-

nating events.

Given the positive response and the growing number of players, SOMA Hoops has clearly tapped into a community need. However, that growth does not come without its challenges. "The goal ... [is] to serve every child in SOMA, grades one through 12, [who]

Still, the leaders of SOMA Hoops remain committed to their goal. They want to make basketball accessible so that every kid, regardless of ability or experience, has a place where they can

play the sport, be a part of a community and feel like they belong. Registration opens on September 22. To get reminders, visit [soma-hoops.com](http://soma-hoops.com) and click the pre-register button.  Although Esme Kraiss, a rising junior at Columbia High School, doesn't play basketball herself, she enjoys writing stories about it.



SOMA Hoops teams partner with SOMA Kids Feed Kids to learn about food insecurity in the community and help pack bags for families in need.

# SAT SEPT 20

**2PM-6PM**  
21+ Only

  
BUY TICKETS





TICKETS ON SALE NOW

[SOUTHORANGEDOWNTOWN.ORG](http://SOUTHORANGEDOWNTOWN.ORG)

**SLOAN ST PARKING LOT**

*Rain Date: Sun Sept 21*






# Learning as They Went Along

Finding Home with Victoria Carter

BY ELLEN DONKER



Kevin and Giovanna Sheerin now have a home with plenty of room for their boys to play.



Giovanna and Kevin Sheerin had lived in Brooklyn for many years, always in a rental. But with two boys, ages 3 and 5, they needed more room.

“We were looking for something that we could move into and it was in good condition,” says Kevin. “I wasn’t looking for something fully renovated. Seemed like that stuff was overpriced for somebody else’s vision of their house.”

Needing to find a town that offered a good commute to the city, Giovanna also hoped to be closer to family in Pennsylvania, where she grew up. Kevin, who hails from Westchester County, said, “Anywhere but Long Island.”

The couple drove around various towns in northern New Jersey, visiting Montclair, Maplewood and Millburn. They also searched online and found a home they liked on Victoria Carter’s website. “So we kind of stumbled into Victoria, but it worked out,” Kevin says.

The Sheerins remember their first meeting with her. “Victoria is great. I mean, she strikes me as the real deal,” Giovanna says. “I think she gave us good advice. I always felt like she had our backs and was honest with us.”

As this was their first home purchase, the Sheerins learned as they went along. Over time, Kevin says, “We got to understand the price differentials between what drove prices up in terms of finished basements or central air or location ... how close it was to town, how close it was to schools.”

Eventually, the couple zeroed in on homes that could accommodate their family, including visit-

ing parents. Giovanna says she started to pay attention to houses that had a safe yard for their boys, a powder room on the first floor and a semi-finished basement or attic with adequate storage.

Kevin says, “[Victoria] was patient with us while we kind of figured out what we were looking for. Then she gave us sound advice about one of the houses that we knew that we wanted to bid on.” Although Victoria told the couple they probably wouldn’t get the house, she encouraged them to submit a bid, saying, “There’s nothing wrong with making the offer. At least you go through the process right and figure out all the steps and get all your paperwork together.” Kevin says, “She was very much right,” adding that “even the advice that maybe we didn’t want to hear at the time was usually correct.”

Giovanna was impressed by Victoria’s responsiveness. “I’m remembering that when we put a bid in on the first house, and we really didn’t know what we were doing, Victoria was literally getting knee surgery,” Giovanna says. “And then there was another time where she was on vacation, like somewhere tropical, and still navigating all of this with us, which I never would have expected her to do .... She understood we were very ner-

vous. We had never done this before.”

At the end of March, the Sheerins found a four-bedroom sidehall Colonial in Maplewood. They anticipated that final bids for the house would be accepted by the following Tuesday, but they didn’t want to get involved in a bidding war. Kevin says, “So we asked Victoria if there was a number we could offer on Monday to avoid it going to Tuesday.” Although they weren’t told what the number was, Victoria encouraged them to provide a strong offer.

The sellers accepted the offer. By June 28, the Sheerins moved into their home. They had the walls painted, the floors finished and central air installed.

Giovanna says, “It’s like the perfect amount of renovation for us, because we were able to move in and it’s totally livable and totally pleasant.” With lots of space to fill, they’re busy outfitting it with new furniture. Come September, their older son will be starting kindergarten.

The Sheerins credit Victoria with helping to make their move go smoothly. Giovanna says, “There were moments where I just felt like, ‘Oh, thank God Victoria is our agent. I think this is going to work out well.’” 



Victoria Carter helped the Sheerins find their first home in Maplewood.



# Lights. Camera. Confidence!

SOPAC's art, dance and music education programs help kids believe in themselves

BY CINDY PERMAN



South Orange Middle School students rehearse with Ailey Teaching Artist Darius "Dam-azi" Williams in preparation for their 2019 Dance Residency Finale. Credit: Lianne Schoenwiesner, Spotlights Photography.

When kids have the attention of professional artists and the opportunities to showcase their creative work, they transform from:

A child who draws ... to an artist. A kid who plays an instrument ... to a musician. A young person who dances ... to a dancer.

The South Orange Performing Arts Center's arts education programs help to make these connections between students and professional artists, musicians and dancers. SOPAC, which is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> year, regularly hosts music, theater, dance, comedy and other shows in its theater, special events in the loft, and exhibits in its art gallery. Around 9,000 students participate in its education programs each year, learning, showing their work and performing.

"We believe the arts should be something

students experience, not just observe," says Linda Beard, SOPAC's director of arts education. "Whether it's dancing on stage, picking up a paintbrush, playing an instrument for the first time, or finding their voice through poetry, our programs are about giving young people the chance to step into the creative process and see what they're capable of."

The arts education programs are done in conjunction with local schools and can range from a 60-minute performance to a 16-week educational program.

- There are Arts Residencies that bring professional musicians (through the Orange Strings Residency in the Orange school district and the Jazz Residency at Columbia High School) and dancers (from the famed Alvin Ailey dance company in West Orange, South Orange and Maplewood schools) directly into the classroom.
- The Inspired Minds program gives young

artists a professional gallery experience to show and sell their work.

- The Poetry Out Loud program, a partnership with national and state arts organizations, helps kids learn and perform poetry.
- The Lux Orchestra Initiative aims to introduce kids to orchestral music through professional performances that are more like a rock concert, with an "explosion of lights, sound and music," and performing classics like "Beethoven's Fifth (Symphony)" to more relatable (ahem, gateway) soundtracks like "Star Wars" or "Harry Potter." And yes, they also host school trips to shows at SOPAC, but the themes go beyond what you might expect, including math, history, adventure and culture.

Simone McCrear is a student from Maplewood who studied dance at a local studio and through SOPAC's artist residency partnership with AileyDance Kids at South Orange Middle School



and then Columbia High School. She says it was a confidence boost to study with teachers who were professional dancers.

“My teacher always believed in me,” McCrear says. “Having someone in the dance world that I felt saw me as a dancer ... Maybe I didn’t talk that much. She saw something in me.”

Working with the instructors from AileyDance Kids, she felt understood as a Black dancer.



Simone McCrear, who received the 2024 Paul Bartick Emerging Artist Award, performs her original choreographed work, at “My Black Is Beautiful,” the South Orange Middle School’s Black History Month celebration. Photo courtesy of SOPAC.

“Being a Black dancer in the industry is a challenge in and of itself. I always felt that I had to work harder than other people to accomplish the things I want to,” McCrear says. “Everyone who was an instructor for Ailey was a person of color. I feel like they understood my experience without me having to explain it to them.”

Obenewaa Frimpomaa, a visual artist whose parents are from Ghana, recently graduated from Millburn High School and participated in SOPAC’s Inspired Minds program. Her artwork includes a lot of portraits, mostly of family, friends or herself.



Obenewaa Frimpomaa accepts the Paul Bartick Emerging Artist 2025 award, standing in front of her artwork at SOPAC. Credit: Lauren Dick

“I talk about race. I talk about history. I use poetry. I reference my own Ghanaian-American descent,” Frimpomaa said. “Every time I make my work, I think about my younger self. She was a very shy, reserved person, who felt very trapped in a box of stereotypes. I try to speak to and motivate her,” Frimpomaa says. “You can color outside of the lines. I want to show, particularly Black, female girls like me, that you are not in a box.”

Frimpomaa submitted artwork to Inspired Minds every year for four years, starting when she was a freshman. When she was a sophomore, she had a piece accepted.

“Just knowing my work was there – that was such an affirming moment, especially since that particular piece was about my parents immigrating here,” Frimpomaa says. “It was like, ‘Wow. I can really share parts of myself with my community and have it be appreciated.’”

Frimpomaa was the recipient of the Paul Bartick Emerging Artist Award in her senior year in 2025. This included an exhibit of her work, including her sketch books, which show the visual and thought



In “Weaving Healing,” a charcoal, gouache and ink piece by Obenewaa Frimpomaa, the art of hair braiding isn’t just about sisterhood, it’s “collective healing and vulnerability.” Credit: Lauren Dick

# FALL AFTER-SCHOOL CLASSES AVAILABLE NOW.

Kitchen Table is a culinary studio offering chef-led, professional-caliber classes for kids and adults alike. We also host private events and corporate team-building classes throughout the year. Come check us out!

## KITCHEN TABLE MAPLEWOOD



kitchentable.maplewood   Kitchen Table Maplewood



## Maplewood Village Alliance

Saturdays August 30-September 28

5-9PM Summer Streets features great live music and extended shopping hours

**DETAILS** Maplewood Village; 973-762-4552; [maplewoodvillagenj.com/maplewood-village-summer-saturdays](http://maplewoodvillagenj.com/maplewood-village-summer-saturdays)



Summer Streets

## Maplewood Porchfest

August 31 1-5PM Over 70 bands and performers on dozens of porches all over the Hilton neighborhood

**DETAILS** Hilton neighborhood, Maplewood. For information, an interactive map of porches and bands, and opportunities to volunteer, go to [maplewoodporchfest.com](http://maplewoodporchfest.com)



Maplewood Porchfest

## The Maplewood Strollers

September 2-3 7-9PM Audition for "The Secret Adversary: A Tommy and Tuppence Adventure," a new adaptation of Agatha Christie's 1922 mystery. All ages welcome, sides provided, full cast breakdown at [TheStrollers.org](http://TheStrollers.org)

**DETAILS** The Burgdorff Center, 10 Durand Road, Maplewood; 973-761-8453; [thestrollers.org](http://thestrollers.org)



Audition for "The Secret Adversary"

## South Orange Performing Arts Center

September 5 7:30PM Stella Cole brings timeless songs to life with takes on Streisand, Garland, and more

September 6 7:30PM Friends of the Brothers – the ultimate Allman Brothers tribute band

September 7 7:30PM Ruben Studdard, Grammy nominee and American Idol winner singing from his new album, "The Way I Remember It"

September 12 7:30PM Gypsy jazz guitarist Stephane Wrembel blends Django Reinhardt's legacy with his own electrifying style

September 14 7:30PM David Koechner, Todd Packer from The Office and Champ Kind from Anchorman, brings his comedy to the stage

September 19 7:30PM Grammy-nominated CimaFunk fuses Afro-Cuban rhythms and funk into shows Rolling Stone calls "must-see"

September 21 7:30PM The Improvised Shakespeare Company creates a Shakespearean play nightly based on an audience suggestion

September 26 7:30PM Masters of the Telecaster brings GE Smith, Larry Campbell & Jim Weider together for a night of blues and roots rock



Stella Cole



Stephane Wrembel



The Improvised Shakespeare Company



Obenewaa Frimpomaa's sketch books were on display during the Bartick Award celebration and presentation to show her thought process when creating art. Credit: Lauren Dick

processes behind her artwork.

"Just knowing that a place like SOPAC and other performing arts places and other museums exist and that they are still advancing the dreams of young artists gave me a lot of hope," Frimpomaa said.

McCrear won the Paul Bartick Emerging Artist Award the year before (in 2024) and had the opportunity to choreograph a solo under the guidance of a professional Ailey dancer. She said it was an amazing, inspiring experience.

"It made me want to put in the time to be a great artist," McCrear says.

McCrear also learned discipline, not only for working hard in class but also in a holistic sense, such as knowing when to let your body rest.

Talk to anyone about the SOPAC arts education programs long enough and you'll hear that it's so much more than learning art, music or dance.

Beard said students learn teamwork. This includes watching how

professionals work as a team in the Luxe Orchestra Initiative or when they are performing in an ensemble, be it dance or music. They learn to lead, follow and listen to each other.

Aurora Mendez, a professional violinist and teaching artist-in-residence in the Orange School District through the Orange Strings Residency, said one of

the most amazing things about the program is how it brings students together.

"They're such a special group of kids. They're from all walks of life ... Some are native New Jerseyans and some have English as a second language," Mendez says. That means students might not always be able to communicate with each other verbally. "Lo and behold, you find out that, in this class, music becomes their common language."

One of the most rewarding things as a teacher, Mendez says, is when she sees that light bulb go off and the student realizes they can do whatever they're trying to do.

Mendez recalls one student who was convinced she was terrible at violin. They tackled the problem together, measure by measure. Slowly but surely, they realized her hand posture was the problem. Her left hand was moving a little too fast. Once they identified it, she nailed it!

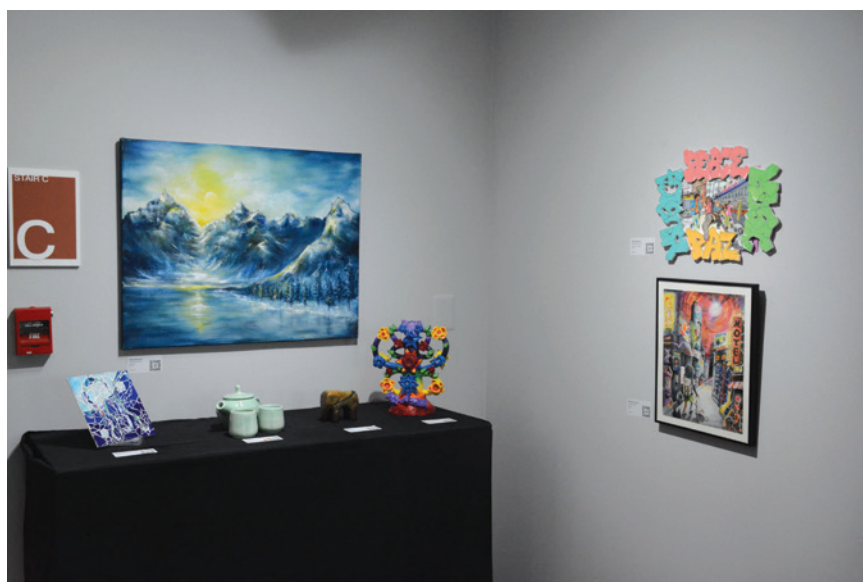
The student gave herself the grace and the space to figure it out. And when she did, she was beaming.

"I see the impact that it has," Mendez says. "When you are able to empower people with the ability to do something, you empower them to change their state of being. You're able to empower them to change their life."



A small class ensemble from Orange High School shares a joyful moment with district music teacher Jhi Eu-Gu (center left) and teaching artist Aurora Mendez. Photo courtesy of SOPAC





Artwork from the Inspired Minds 2025 exhibit of student artwork in mixed mediums.  
Credit: Lauren Dick

That confidence. That ability to strip away self-doubt.”

And whether students choose to pursue a career in the arts, or a completely different field such as medicine or law, the boost to their confidence is something they will carry with them throughout their lives, Beard says. The belief that they can do whatever they set their mind to. And that who they are, what they

have to say and what they create is worthy of our attention.

“It’s not about turning every student into a professional artist. It’s about unlocking confidence, connection and curiosity that they’ll carry with them long after the final bow or brushstroke,” Beard said. “We have found that, across the board, involvement in arts education is linked to positive outcomes

academically, socially and emotionally.”

Beard told the story of a young artist from Irvington who had his work accepted to the Inspired Minds gallery exhibition. When it came time to put his work up for sale, he opted not to. The reason, it turns out, is that he didn’t think anyone would want to buy it. When he found someone who said she’d be willing to pay \$100 for his work, he was blown away. It gave him such a boost of confidence, he went back and asked if she’d be willing to pay \$125. She said yes!

“That is the perfect representation of what confidence can do,” Beard says. “I have value. I want to make sure that I am getting my full value. I thought it was brilliant that he went back to renegotiate.”

That student enlisted in the military so he can save money for college. McCrear is now in her second year at the Boston Conservatory at Berklee College as a commercial dance major. She dreams of one day touring with a major music artist as a dancer. She came back to SOPAC this year to help judge the Paul Bartick Emerging Artist Awards. She was part of the panel that named Frimpomaa as this year’s recipient. Frimpomaa, who just graduated from Millburn High School, will be a freshman at the Rhode Island School of Design in the fall, studying graphic design. She dreams of one day having a successful graphic design career and her own art exhibit.

Arts education can cultivate social and emotional growth in students.

“It nurtures their identity – who they’re going to be,” Beard said. “I think it empowers them to see their world in a different way and know that they can shape it because they have confidence to be the leader. And it really is preparing them for life, not just their next step in a grade level of curriculum or even in arts education. It’s really preparing them for life.” 

*Cindy Perman is a freelance writer, editor and pet sitter, who lives in Maplewood. She was that artsy kid who loved dance, music and art, and does her best to remain an artsy adult.*

## STAY COMFY WITH WOOLLEY!

### SAVE with a MAINTENANCE PLAN for HEATING, COOLING & HEAT PUMPS

You get an annual service call, plus these benefits:

- ✓ 15% off the regular service fee and repairs related to the system covered under your plan
- ✓ Priority emergency service
- ✓ 15% off plumbing repairs
- ✓ 1 year warranty on parts
- ✓ \$25 in loyalty credits accrue annually for each plan you have, for as long as you maintain your plan
- ✓ 24/7 customer service representative



Your local **ONE-STOP SHOP** for all your home comfort needs: heating, plumbing and cooling

**CALL OR VISIT US ONLINE  
FOR AN APPOINTMENT  
973-847-2354**

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE SPECIAL OFFERS

### FREE 3-Year A/C or Heating Maintenance Plan

with any New A/C or Heating Install

**Valued Over \$545!**

Worry-free maintenance, priority service, no hidden fees!

**FREE ESTIMATE**

*Terms apply.\**

### Need Plumbing Repairs?

We're Flushing Away Our Service Fee!

Book a plumbing repair with Woolley and we'll waive the \$99 service fee.

**CALL 973-847-2354**

*Terms apply.\*\**

### 0% Financing

for 18 Months on a New A/C or Heating System

**LEARN MORE**



Woolley Home Solutions | [woolleyhome.com](http://woolleyhome.com) | 12 Burnett Avenue, Maplewood | 973-847-2354



# Wanted: Quirky, Corny and Charming Talent

Get ready to audition for the MAPSO Family Follies Talent Show

BY TORI CHICKERING AND ELLEN DONKER PHOTOS BY LISA WHITEMAN

**A**re you the type who would like to see a show featuring dancers, musicians, circus folk, slam poets, drag queens, cloggers, dad-joke tellers or bird-callers? Or would you like the chance to perform your quirky or hilarious act in front of your friends and neighbors?

Since 2023, the MAPSO Family Follies has given our towns an old-timey, heartwarming, low-stakes, family-friendly, local talent show. As the director and co-producer, I describe it as a 90-minute, neighbor-studded show with a nod to '80s show-biz variety shows. Think *Waiting for Guffman* meets *The Gong Show* meets *America's Got Talent*.



Teddy & Sasha Ames sang "In the Shallow."

But the Follies is *not* a contest. It's an opportunity for performers of all experience levels to collaborate and challenge themselves in a welcoming community and be unabashedly silly. As comedienne and icon Cher quips, "Until you're ready to look foolish, you'll never be great." Those words sum up the core of the Follies' mission.

It's also where you come in. The Follies team wants you to audition. The more quirky or unpredictable your audition, the better. It's a chance to twirl that baton again, brush up on your ribbon

dance or revisit that ventriloquist routine.

The Follies asks three local luminaries (business owners, arts instructors or supporters) to serve as audition judges. There are two key rules: 1) no act may be more than three minutes and 2) positively no solos. The 'no solos' rule fosters creative collaboration by insisting family, friends and neighbors work together to come up with an act.

"The multi-generational acts are really special," says Sybil Rodgers, Follies consultant and former co-producer. "To see kids on stage with their parents – sibs and grandparents cheering – is to see the spirit of MAPSO in action."

Your likelihood of being cast also improves by doing something upbeat, fun or uptempo. "Just keep it under three minutes," says talent coordinator Cat Delett.

In case you haven't been to a Follies show before, local ukulele instructor and Follies performer Mary Amato says, "It's a glorious, uproarious antidote to isolation and a great way to make random new friends."

Of course, the best part of the show is the emcee: ME! Audience plant Chrissy McIntyre says, "Tori brings a wonderful enthusiasm, making everyone on stage feel confident and special."

Not convinced? Amato adds, "She's masterful at keeping the crowd engaged with grace and humor while all of us singers, dancers, jugglers, com-

ics and acrobats of varying ages and experience, scramble backstage to get into places!"

The Follies team hopes the show continues for many generations to come. As Rodgers says, "It's a home-grown mix of seasoned talent and brand-new performers, so the audience never knows who'll grace the stage next. But they know they'll be delighted."

The show is fortified by the invaluable support of Maplewood's township administration and Andrea Teutli, Miriam R. Perez and Stacey Ross-Trevor of the Maplewood Division of Arts & Culture.

The Follies depends on its volunteer backstage crew, local photographer (Lisa Whiteman), designer (Craig Stout), and, as Delett says, our "local trove of awesome arts instructors." There have been show-stopping dance numbers from Studio 509 Fitness and musical acts from InterAct and The Strollers. In Tune, SOMA Pop Choir and South Orange Symphony have been represented, and MMS, SOMS and CHS students have performed.

Anyone ages 9 to 99 in Maplewood, South Orange and surrounding towns is invited to audition on

Wednesday, September 24, 6 to 8 p.m. at The Woodland. Online submissions will be accepted through September 30.

The Follies will be held at The Woodland, Thursday, October 23 at 7:30 p.m. Buy your tickets early as the show usually sells out. For tickets, audition guidelines, online submissions and more, visit [maplewoodartsandculture.org/follies](http://maplewoodartsandculture.org/follies). 



The Lipman Family Circus wowed last year's MAPSO Family Follies audience.



Last year's show ended with an All Cast Sing-a-Long Finale



## South Orange Performing Arts Center (cont'd)

October 3 **7:30PM** Petty People with Steve Ferrone plays Tom Petty's hits, led by Evan Kremin and Heartbreakers drummer Steve Ferrone

**DETAILS** South Orange Performing Arts Center, 1 SOPAC Way, South Orange; 973-313-2787, [SOPACnow.org](http://SOPACnow.org)



Petty People

## Springfield Avenue Maplewood

September 7 **11AM-4PM** SOMA Affordable Art Sale: An outdoor art party featuring 40+ local artists selling work for \$200 or less, together with food, beverage and entertainment vendors

**DETAILS** 1662 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood; 917-373-6797; [somaaffordableart.com](http://somaaffordableart.com)



SOMA Affordable Art

## Outpost in the 'Burbs

September 12 **7:30PM** Ron Sexsmith and Ed Seifert Live in Concert: Outpost in the Burbs kicks off its 38<sup>th</sup> season with Canadian songwriter and three-time Juno winner Ron Sexsmith and NJ's own Ed Seifert; tickets \$35

September 19 **7PM** Rosanne Cash & John Leventhal Live in Concert; tickets \$55, \$75

**DETAILS** First Congregational Church, 40 South Fullerton Avenue, Montclair



Rosanne Cash

## Achieve Foundation of South Orange-Maplewood

September 20 **9AM** Newstead 5K: The 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Newstead 5K raises funds for Achieve programs that support SOMSD students and educators

**DETAILS** South Mountain Annex, 112 Glenview Road, South Orange; 973-819-9850, [achievefoundation.org](http://achievefoundation.org)



Newstead 5K

## Maplewood Farmers Market

Mondays through November **2-7PM** Fresh fruits and vegetables, pickled goods, prepared foods, dried fruit and nuts, desserts, coffee, organic skincare and selections from local breweries; plenty of parking

**DETAILS** Near 1662 Springfield Avenue, Maplewood; 973-762-1175 ext. 2, [maplewoodnj.gov/government/public-works/farmers-market](http://maplewoodnj.gov/government/public-works/farmers-market)



Maplewood Farmers Market

## South Orange Downtown Farmers Market

Wednesdays through October **1-6PM** Local produce and meats, house-made pickles, freshly baked goods and grab-and-go lunch and dinner options

**DETAILS** Sloan Street lot across from NJ Transit, South Orange; [southorangedowntown.org/farmers-market-2025](http://southorangedowntown.org/farmers-market-2025)



South Orange Downtown Farmers Market

# Turn Over a New Leaf— Register for Fall Learning!

With over 100 classes in our NEW Fall catalog, there's something for everyone!



[somadultschool.org](http://somadultschool.org)  
973.378.7620

### DON'T MISS:

**MONSTER BAWL  
HALLOWEEN DANCE PARTY!**  
Oct. 24 @ The Woodland

**EVA SAMO LECTURE**  
"It Can Happen Here: White Power and the Rising Threat of Genocide in the U.S."  
Oct. 27 @ CHS Black Box Theater

### NEW CLASSES

- Chess
- Italian for Travelers
- Sugar Cookie Decorating
- Fly Fishing
- Acrylic Painting
- So much more!



# Independent



**PAINTERS INC.**

*Professional and Reliable Painters*

## Superior Painting for a Reasonable Price



- Warranty up to 4 years
- Painting Since 1996
- Carpentry and Deck Refinishing
- High Quality Preparation & Painting
- Follow Lead Safety Regulations
- Fully Insured and Licensed

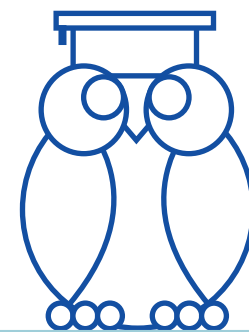
CALL NOW FOR A FREE ESTIMATE  
**973-444-1956**  
[independentpainters.com](http://independentpainters.com)





# 2025-2026 Matters School Guide

See what our area schools have to offer



SCHOOL/LOCATION

CONTACT

AGES

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

## → EARLY & PRIVATE EDUCATION

### AoPS Academy

788 Morris Turnpike, first floor  
Short Hills

Shanika Semexant-Audige  
Campus Director  
862-206-4667  
[millburn@aopsacademy.org](mailto:millburn@aopsacademy.org)

Grades 1-12

AoPS (Art of Problem Solving) Academy is an after-school enrichment program designed to teach problem-solving skills through advanced math and language arts courses. The program emphasizes inquiry-based learning, fostering critical thinking and encouraging students to actively pursue solutions. AoPS Academy is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, ensuring a high-quality educational experience.

### Far Brook School

52 Great Hills Road  
Short Hills

Emi Ithen  
Director of Enrollment  
Management  
973-379-3442  
[farbrook.org](http://farbrook.org)

Ages 3-Grade 8

Far Brook's progressive approach integrates science, math, literacy, technology and art, harnessing children's innate curiosity and joy as a catalyst for a powerful learning experience. On 9.5 acres of woods and wetlands, students explore the natural world with purpose. Within a richly diverse community grounded in social justice, they are challenged, supported and truly known.

### KinderGan Preschool

113 Parker Avenue  
Maplewood

Frumie Bogomilsky  
Director  
973-763-7455  
[kinderganpreschool.org](http://kinderganpreschool.org)

Ages 23 months-5  
years

KinderGan Preschool seeks to create a stimulating and enriching educational environment for every child. Its comprehensive and developmentally appropriate program is designed to promote each child's intellectual, social, physical and emotional growth. KinderGan is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and includes a preschool day as well as childcare hours.

### Montclair Cooperative School

65 Chestnut Street  
Montclair

Emily Kohan  
Director of Enrollment  
Management  
973-783-4955  
[emilyk@montclaircoop.org](mailto:emilyk@montclaircoop.org)  
[montclaircoop.org](http://montclaircoop.org)

Ages 3-Grade 8

Montclair Cooperative School keeps children at the center of school life and engages parents in their children's education. At the heart of its progressive approach is the belief that children thrive in an environment that honors individuality and community, self and others. The partnership between students, families and teachers contributes to the life of the school in ways that benefit all who enter. Open House: Friday, October 10 at 10 a.m.

### Morrow Memorial Preschool

600 Ridgewood Road  
Maplewood

Ariel Dutra  
Director  
973-763-5460  
[morrowpreschool.org](http://morrowpreschool.org)

Ages 2½-5

Morrow is a co-operative preschool offering a creative, play-based curriculum that encourages exploration and growth. It provides a happy, safe and nurturing environment that lays the foundation for lifelong learning by promoting the core values of love, patience, kindness, curiosity and self-esteem. Co-op, partial co-op and non-co-op classes are offered for 2½ to 5-year-olds and a non-co-op Kinderbridge program is available for 5- to 6-year-olds.

### Our Lady of Sorrows School

172 Academy Street  
South Orange

Judy A. Foley  
Principal  
973-762-5169  
[ourladyofsorrowsschool.org](http://ourladyofsorrowsschool.org)

Grades Pre-K-8

Our Lady of Sorrows School seeks to enhance the learning experience by encouraging students to recognize their talents and maximize their impact on the world as lifelong learners and future leaders committed to the values rooted in the tradition of the Catholic faith. Additional offerings include STEM, technology, junior high accelerated math, student council, art, fine arts with an annual spring musical, and an impressive sports program.



## →EARLY &amp; PRIVATE EDUCATION (CONT'D)

**The Winston School  
of Short Hills**30 East Lane  
Short HillsDr. Josephine I. Diamond  
Head of School  
973-379-4114  
[info@winstonschool.org](mailto:info@winstonschool.org)  
[winstonschool.org](http://winstonschool.org)

Grades 1-8

Come discover The Winston School of Short Hills, where students with language-based learning disabilities thrive. The school serves bright learners with challenges such as dyslexia, ADHD, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and executive functioning differences, turning obstacles into opportunities. Our use of Orton-Gillingham instruction in small groups ensures that students receive personalized, systematic, multisensory support. Rolling admission with space available for the 2025-2026 school year.

**TSTI's Iris Family  
Center for Early  
Childhood Education**432 Scotland Road  
South OrangeLauren Byers and Jennie  
Rubin  
Co-Directors  
973-763-4600  
[tsti.org](http://tsti.org)Ages birth-2 years:  
Child accompanied  
by an adult (parent/  
caregiver) programs  
18 months-6 years:  
Preschool

The award-winning Iris Family Center focuses on each child's developmental needs and promotes a positive, secure and accepting environment. Curiosity, social skills and cognitive development are fostered in an age-appropriate manner, in an atmosphere conducive to exploration. A love of nature is instilled using our expansive outdoor learning spaces/playgrounds. Allergy friendly.

**Weekday School**111 Irvington Avenue  
South OrangeSamantha Grab  
Head of School  
862-438-5223  
[jackie.delucia@wkdschool.org](mailto:jackie.delucia@wkdschool.org)  
[wkdschool.org](http://wkdschool.org)

Grades Pre-K-5

Weekday School gives children the freedom to think big. Small class sizes allow for individualized learning, where intrinsic motivation is nurtured and authentic learning happens through collaborative problem solving. Students learn by constructing knowledge, by collaborating with their teachers and peers and by engaging as citizens to promote social justice.

## →MUSIC, ART &amp; ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

**British Swim School**Winchester Gardens Retirement  
Community  
333 Elmwood Avenue  
Maplewood201-645-1300  
[britishswimschool.com/hwf](http://britishswimschool.com/hwf)

Ages 3 months-adult

British Swim School believes that every individual, regardless of age or ability, should have the opportunity to become a safe and happy swimmer. With year-round lessons for babies, children and adults in Winchester Gardens' heated indoor pool, the brand is dedicated to its mantra, "Survival of the Littlest," focusing first on the skills needed to survive a water accident, then moving on to stroke development and more advanced skills.

**Class Act Performing  
Arts Studio**128 Irvington Avenue  
South OrangePage O'Connor  
Executive Director  
973-789-0191  
[ClassActPAS.com](http://ClassActPAS.com)Ages 18 months-  
adult

Located in the heart of South Orange Village, Class Act offers a top-of-the-line training program for recreational and pre-professional students to study dance, voice and acting with a skilled and dedicated teaching staff.

**EmpowerED Mindful  
Solutions**Marie Jarrett, M.A. Ed. and  
Heather Bruno, M.A. Ed.  
Co-Founders  
215-410-1639  
[info@empoweredms.org](mailto:info@empoweredms.org)  
[EmpoweredMS.org](http://EmpoweredMS.org)

Grades PreK-12

EmpowerED Mindful Solutions provide holistic educational support for families. Whether you are seeking a small group class or private tutoring for reading/writing or math intervention services, executive function coaching or support through the 504/IEP/ISP processes, our highly skilled, trusted educators are dedicated to empowering families and elevating all children.

**In Tune, Maplewood's  
Neighborhood Music  
School**165 Maplewood Avenue  
MaplewoodJohn Brophy  
Owner and Teacher  
973-913-4791  
[intunemaplewood.com](http://intunemaplewood.com)

All ages and levels

In Tune offers guitar, bass, piano, voice, ukulele, loog, violin and drums, as well as a rock band program, adult classes and music & movement for younger students. Teachers are expert musicians who teach the music that students love, keeping them energized and grounded in music fundamentals.



# 2025-2026

## Matters School Guide (cont'd)

SCHOOL/LOCATION

CONTACT

AGES

ABOUT THE SCHOOL

### → MUSIC, ART & ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS (CONT'D)

#### KinderGan After School Program

113 Parker Avenue  
Maplewood

Frumie Bogomilsky  
Director  
973-763-7455  
[kinderganpreschool.org](http://kinderganpreschool.org)

Grades K-5

The KinderGan After School Program extends the same exceptional care and educational excellence as the renowned preschool. Children will enjoy engaging activities, incredible specialties and personalized attention, ensuring a seamless continuation of their growth and learning. The program runs four days a week, Monday through Thursday, from 3 to 6 p.m. and offers transportation as part of the registration fee.

#### Kitchen Table

1851 Springfield Avenue, 2nd Floor  
Maplewood

Chef Lila Lea  
Owner  
917-414-4970  
[lila@kitchentablemaplewood.com](mailto:lila@kitchentablemaplewood.com)  
[kitchentablemaplewood.com](http://kitchentablemaplewood.com)

Ages 2 years-adult

Kitchen Table is a culinary studio for children, teens and adults that teaches basic skills and classic cooking techniques to beginning students in a professional kitchen space under the guidance of an experienced chef. Students learn to feel confident about their skills by working in a small group.

#### Little Apple Arts

St George's Church  
550 Ridgewood Road  
Maplewood

Becky Fisher  
Owner  
[littleappleartstheatre@gmail.com](mailto:littleappleartstheatre@gmail.com)  
[littleapplearts.com](http://littleapplearts.com)

Ages 3 years-Grade 6

Little Apple Arts provides a positive environment in which children can explore the dramatic arts in public and private classes, camps and pop-ups. Through song, dance, acting and games, the staff encourages confidence, teamwork and creativity. Children will learn through purposeful play and group collaboration.

#### Montclair Film

505 Bloomfield Avenue  
Montclair

Sue Hollenberg  
Education Director  
973-783-6433  
[education@montclairfilm.org](mailto:education@montclairfilm.org)  
[montclairfilm.org](http://montclairfilm.org)

Grades 6-adult

Montclair Film offers exciting classes for 'tweens, teens and adults in screenwriting, narrative and documentary filmmaking, directing, cinematography, editing, improv, voice acting, podcasting, storytelling and so much more. Have fun and learn new skills in our creative hands-on workshops.

#### Sew Leana

12 West South Orange Avenue  
South Orange

Leana Lu  
Owner  
[leana@sewleana.com](mailto:leana@sewleana.com)  
[sewleana.com](http://sewleana.com)

Ages 5-adult

Sew Leana offers hand sewing classes for ages 5 and up; machine sewing classes for ages 8 and up; as well as teen and adult classes at all levels. Birthday parties, open studio nights, and special workshops are available as well as summer camp. Check out the fabric shop for fabric, notions and sewing kits.

#### SOMA Studio Arts Atelier

4 West South Orange Avenue,  
2nd Floor  
South Orange

Melissa Zimberg  
Owner  
[SomaStudioArts@gmail.com](mailto:SomaStudioArts@gmail.com)  
[somastudioarts.com](http://somastudioarts.com)

Ages 10-adult

The ability to create amazing art and communicate what is in your mind's eye is a skill that is developed and honed with quality art education and practice. By breaking down artistic training into easy-to-understand principles that build upon each other slowly and logically, SOMA Studio Arts Atelier demystifies the creative process to make it accessible to anyone wishing to develop a high-level artistic proficiency.

#### Studio 509 Kids!

509 Valley Street  
Maplewood

Bethany Pettigrew and  
Guada Bas  
Directors  
973-275-0509  
[studio509kids@gmail.com](mailto:studio509kids@gmail.com)  
[studio509fitness.com](http://studio509fitness.com)

Ages 4-18 (Kids/Teen classes)

Studio 509 Fitness and Studio 509 Kids! has something for everyone. In addition to our popular adult programming and personal training, we also offer kids/teen classes in dance, fitness, hip hop, creative movement and musical theater dance. No recitals or costumes to buy - just great classes with wonderful and supportive teachers. 10-week session starts September 15.



## → MUSIC, ART &amp; ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS (CONT'D)

**The Spinning Hand  
Knit & Crochet**155 Maplewood Avenue, #1  
MaplewoodKari Capone  
Owner & Teacher  
[thespinninghand.com/  
classes](http://thespinninghand.com/classes)

Grade 5-adult

The Spinning Hand is accepting a limited number of applicants to its afterschool Fiber Arts program. Students in two levels (grades 5-8 and 9-12) will learn the fundamentals of knitting and crochet and the principles of design. There will also be ample studio time to pursue independent projects.

**Zeman School  
of Oheb Shalom  
Congregation**170 Scotland Road  
South OrangeGavin Hirsch  
Director  
[zemanschool.org](http://zemanschool.org)  
[gavinhirsch@ohebshalom.org](mailto:gavinhirsch@ohebshalom.org)

Grades K-7

The Rose and Isadore Zeman Religious School is offered tuition-free for synagogue members, thanks to a generous donation from the Arthur Schechner Charitable Foundation. At Zeman, we're inspired by a desire to expand our community and remove barriers to help all engage in Jewish life and education. By the time they graduate, students have developed a strong love of Judaism and inspired to remain engaged with Jewish community throughout their lifetime.

## → CONTINUING EDUCATION

**South Orange-  
Maplewood Adult  
School**17 Parker Avenue  
MaplewoodNatalie Provenzano  
Director of Operations  
973-378-7620  
[schoolinfo@somadultschool.org](mailto:schoolinfo@somadultschool.org)  
[somadultschool.org](http://somadultschool.org)Adults and teens  
14+ unless otherwise  
stated

The Adult School is dedicated to lifelong learning with a mission to inspire, engage, empower and connect to our community. Our Fall 2025 catalog has over 120 classes, including many NEW offerings. Choose from creative arts, lectures & events, health & fitness, home & garden, technology, Broadway shows, and more. Sign up for the weekly newsletter and follow us on social media.

**BASS FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC**

Treatment and Rehabilitation for  
Headaches • Neck Pain • Back Pain  
Sports/Gym-Related Injuries  
Disc Problems • Pinched Nerves  
Auto Injuries • Pregnancy-Related Aches

**Most Insurance Plans Accepted**

Our hours are Mon - Fri 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

491B Valley Street, Maplewood • 973-378-BASS (2277) • [BassFamilyChiro.com](http://BassFamilyChiro.com)**DR. WAYNE BASS****BE PART OF OUR WOMEN IN BUSINESS FEATURE**

What's the **SECRET INGREDIENT** to your Business Success?  
Describe your business to our readers and tell them about the secret ingredient that makes it successful. Is it your ability to understand trends? Your superior customer service? Your ability to adapt to change quickly?

Profile by Ellen Donker • Headshot by Julia Maloof Verderosa  
The *Matters Magazine* Fall issue comes out on October 10.

**INTERESTED?**Contact your advertising consultant or visit [mattersmagazine.com](http://mattersmagazine.com).**DEADLINE: FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19****EMPOWERED  
MINDFUL SOLUTIONS**  
HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES**504/IEP COACHING & ADVOCACY**

Expert coaching, equipping caretakers to confidently advocate for their child's unique needs.

Supportive, non-legal advocacy for caretakers who want an extra voice during important decisions about their child.



SUPPORTING YOUR FAMILY AS WE WOULD OUR OWN.

**SMALL GROUP CLASSES  
ONE-ON-ONE PRIVATE TUTORING**

Multi-Sensory Orton-Gillingham Reading/ Writing Support

Multi-Sensory Math

Executive Functioning &amp; Mindfulness

[www.empoweredms.org](http://www.empoweredms.org)[info@empoweredms.org](mailto:info@empoweredms.org)**COMPASSIONATE, HIGHLY SKILLED, TRUSTED EDUCATORS**





## ROOFING & GUTTERS

**THE SLATE ROOF PROFESSIONALS**

- Slate, Tile & Shingle Roof Repair, Replacement
- Yankee Gutters
- Historic Restorations
- Chimneys
- Masonry
- Carpentry
- Slate & Tile Roofs Cleaned

LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED

973 857 7300

SlateRoofProfessionals.com

## BLINDS

**BUDGET® BLINDS**

Style and service for every budget.®

Serving SOMA, Essex and Union counties

Your source for  
*blinds • shades • draperies • shutters*

CALL FOR A CONSULTATION TODAY!

**862-437-0692**

[budgetblinds.com/south-orange-maplewood-nj](http://budgetblinds.com/south-orange-maplewood-nj)

## PAINTING

**ROCHA PAINTING AND HOME REPAIR**

Let Us Make Your Home Beautiful!

Painting - Bathrooms - Kitchens - Floors  
Wood Window Repairs - Carpentry  
- Maplewood Resident -

**862-220-9059**  
charlesrocha62@gmail.com  
IG: rocha\_painting\_home\_repair  
NJ #13VHO9296100

## SWEET TREATS

**gourmet cereal treats & artisanal granola**

FIND US AT YOUR LOCAL FARMERS MARKET

| SUMMIT             | MAPLEWOOD | SOUTH ORANGE |
|--------------------|-----------|--------------|
| every other Sunday | Monday    | Wednesday    |

order anytime at [cerealdreams.com](http://cerealdreams.com)

## FITNESS CLASSES

NEW CLIENT SPECIAL

**3 WEEKS**

UNLIMITED CLASSES

**\$50**

**STUDIO 509**

FITNESS • WELLNESS • MORE

STUDIO509FITNESS@GMAIL.COM

## BAGEL DELIVERY

**the rolling bagel**

**Hand-rolled bagels and sourdough breads made with home-milled flours.**

Delivered in Maplewood & South Orange.  
Sign up to hear about delivery dates.  
[www.therollingbagel.com](http://www.therollingbagel.com)



## MUSIC INSTRUCTION

**Your Community,  
Your Music!**

Sign up for Lessons  
and Classes!




## THEATER CLASSES



**LITTLE APPLE ARTS**  
**BROADWAY AT PLAY**

littleapplearts.com @littleappleartstheatre

Public Classes • Private Classes • Pop-Ups • Camps

## KNIT/CROCHET CLASSES



**AFTER SCHOOL  
Knit & Crochet Studio**

Level 1: Grades 5-8  
Level 2: Grades 9-12

est 2007  
made with ♥ in NJ

Visit [thespinninghand.com/apply](http://thespinninghand.com/apply)

## KIDS/TEENS DANCE & FITNESS

**KIDS & TEEN  
DANCE AND FITNESS**  
AGES 4-18

10 WEEK SESSION  
BEGINS SEPTEMBER 15TH

FOR SCHEDULE AND  
REGISTRATION:  
[STUDIO509KIDS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:STUDIO509KIDS@GMAIL.COM)



## SEWING INSTRUCTION



**Sewing Classes  
Fiber Arts Camp  
& Textiles Shop**

SEW LEANA

[www.sewleana.com](http://www.sewleana.com)

## LICE REMOVAL

**LICE HAPPENS**  
— NO SHAME. NO BLAME. —

Confidential & discreet service in the privacy of your home

- Hands-on removal of head lice and nits in one visit
- Safe, pesticide-free products
- Success Guaranteed!

24-Hour LiceLine  
973.727.8902

[www.LiceHappens.com](http://www.LiceHappens.com)  
[Audrey@LiceHappens.com](mailto:Audrey@LiceHappens.com)

Peter & Audrey Byram  
Owners

## COMMUNITY HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



**OHEB SHALOM**  
Traditional Heart. Modern Soul.

**ROSH HASHANAH**  
IN THE PARK | SEP 22 | 5:30-6:30 PM  
MAPLEWOOD MEMORIAL PARK

[OhebShalom.org](http://OhebShalom.org)





# The Joy and Pain of Going to Kindergarten

My daughter starting school brings out my inner child

BY MARIBETH THEROUX

**M**y daughter is starting elementary school in the fall. I am so happy for her. It also makes my eyes well with tears just writing that. I didn't expect to cry when my daughter received her kindergarten placement for the fall. Perhaps I could have anticipated that feelings might arise. After all, it doesn't take much to stir them, especially when it comes to one's children. And yet, I was wholly unprepared when the email came and the feelings knocked me over.

School was hard for me. The schoolwork part was fine, but the social dynamics? That part was hard. Painful even. The inner child in me carries that not-quite-fully-processed pain to this day. I so badly do not want my daughter to experience that same pain, or any pain, for that matter. But of course, pain is kind of inevitable in this life. We live, we laugh, we love and we cry.

I, for one, cried every day for a month when I started kindergarten. The teachers and administrators assumed it was because I did not want to be separated from my mom. A fair assumption. I'm not sure if my tears had anything to do with it, but my mom ended up getting a job in the office at my elementary school. I remember that morning so clearly. I was crying in the cubbies (as I did every morning). My teacher came over to tell me, "Your mom is going to work part time in the office. You don't need to cry anymore."

I stopped crying, but not really out of finding any particular solace in this new information. I think more than anything I stopped crying because it was abundantly clear that everyone needed me to stop crying. I accepted my fate. I accepted that school would be a thing I would do. Every day. For



Photo by Stephen McFadden on Unsplash

years to come.

My school years were not all bad. I forged friendships in middle school and high school that continue to this day. I found my love of theater and writing.

But then there was the time in second grade when a classmate genuinely thought I could not speak (because I so rarely spoke). And there was me worrying so much I would get nosebleeds in class that I would tip my head back ever so slightly in anxious hopes of avoiding them. There were the days I pretended to have pinkeye, so that instead of being ushered to school I would be ushered to my grandmother's couch where I would stay beneath a blanket watching *The Price Is Right* and drift to sleep when the afternoon block of soap operas began.

There were entire school years when I dreaded the lunchroom. The visceral feeling of picking up the cafeteria tray and turning to face the onslaught. The noise and the faces. Did I mention the noise? *What table? What will I say? What will they say back?*

*Will they mock me for simply sitting down?*

A question that didn't occur to me then that occurs to me now: Why is this so hard for me?

And finally at just shy of 40 years old I know the answer. I'm on the autism spectrum. Social dynamics, big groups of people, lots of stimulation all day every day – these are all things that are hard for me. They make me tired. They mean I use a whole lot of my energy just to do the very basics of initiating a conversation, deciding where to sit, finally letting out an exhale when once again I get to be alone, or at least somewhere where the rules are a bit more clear.

To this day I occasionally need those recovery days of staying under a blanket and being lulled to sleep by the sounds of other people's problems on the television.

It's important to remember, with this and all things, that my daughter's experience will be her own. It's so easy as parents to project our own feelings and worries and pains onto our children. It's so important to instead be responsive to whatever *their* experience is.

I hope that she will find her people. I hope that she will find her way. I hope that she will have more joy than pain. I hope that amid the often confusing and overwhelming social dynamics of school that she finds what she loves. Grows. Learns. Looks to the future and imagines a life she wants to lead.

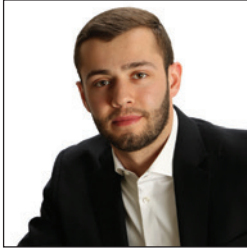
I sometimes wonder what additional support might have helped me. But honestly? *The Price Is Right* and my grandmother's couch went a long way. 

*Maribeth Theroux is a poet and comedian. She recently launched The SOMA Network, an organization devoted to creating and sharing local opportunities and access to the arts. She lives in South Orange with her husband, daughter, son and two couches.*



# A Specialized Team Gets You to the Right Address!

Brilliant Guidance. Smart Moves. Homes You'll Love.



Giovanni 'John' Apicella // Realtor  
ALC Member\*



Kathleen Kroll // Realtor



Tovia Lichtman // Realtor



Cory Marks // Realtor



Mark Mattheiss // Realtor



Thomas McCauley // Realtor



Robert Northfield // Broker Associate



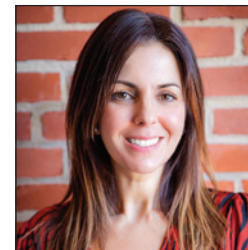
Mark Slade // Realtor and  
MaryCeu Nunes // Broker Associate  
ALC Member\*



Tyasia Parks // Realtor  
ALC Member\*



Andre Saraiva // Broker Manager  
ALC Member\*



Marcia Soares // Realtor  
ALC Member\*



Joanne Watkins // Realtor



Reed Kean //  
Operating Principal, Realtor



Octavio Mendes //  
Broker of Record

## WORK WITH A TEAM THAT WINS!

On average, our listings sold  
**112%** of asking price.

GSMLS Data, Essex County.  
06/01/2025 - 08/01/2025



Maplewood | Springfield | Newark

kwmtdr.com

(973) 762-5400



Start the search for your  
dream home, TODAY!



## WE ARE YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD EXPERTS

Contact us to find out what your  
home is worth in today's market.

## CAREER POSSIBILITIES

*A career with KW MTDR is a career worth having!*  
For more on this opportunity, where anything is possible, contact  
**Fina Barbosa at KLRW787@KW.com**

\*The Agent Leadership Council (ALC) is comprised of top performers in  
our office that serve as leaders, that inspire and motivate.  
Each office is independently owned and operated.







# MEET THE TOP PRODUCING OFFICE IN MAPLEWOOD & SOUTH ORANGE



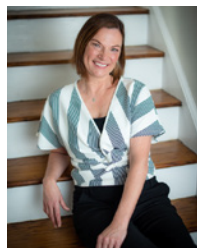
**AMY  
PATERNITE**



**BENJAMIN  
GARRISON**



**KATE  
ELLIOT**



**JENNIFER  
MCMANUS**



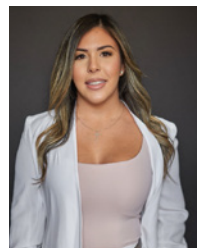
**MARVIN  
WILLIAMS**



**CAROLINE  
FARNSWORTH**



**CATHY  
KNAPP**



**VALERIA  
MARIN**



**COLLETTE  
ANDREWS**



**LISA  
TAYLOR**



**DONNA  
DICKSON**



**THE KINSELLA  
HENDY TEAM**



**ELAINE  
EHRENKRANZ**



**LORIE  
PHILLIPS**



**VICTORIA  
AGYEMAN**



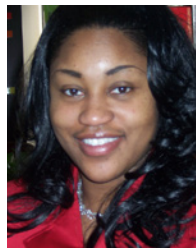
**VINCENT  
OTIENO**



**SARA  
BROWN**



**DESHAWN  
HODRICK**



**KIMBERLY  
TAYLOR**



**KAREN  
HARRIS**



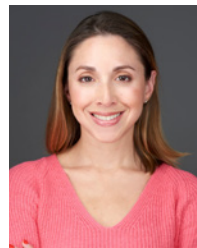
**FRAN  
KURTIS**



**MARY  
ROBERTS-AUER**



**NAJJIYYA  
PERRY**



**ABIGAIL  
MORI**



**SUSAN  
BLODGETT**



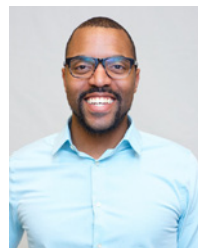
**JOSEPHINE  
CUOZZO-HEFFERNAN**



**COREY  
JONES**



**ROBIN  
MACKECHNIE**



**DONNIE  
JONES**



**LISA  
HILL**



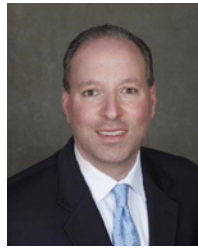
**KIANI  
WHITE**



**THE SCOTT  
TEAM**



**MIKEALA  
SEMEXANT**



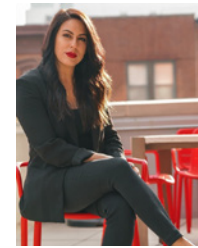
**AGOSTINO  
SAVINO**



**JAS'AN  
THOMPSON**



**KEN  
KRASNER**



**ANNE MARGARET  
CORBACHO**



**COLDWELL BANKER**

**REALTY**

**145 MAPLEWOOD AVENUE  
973-378-8300**