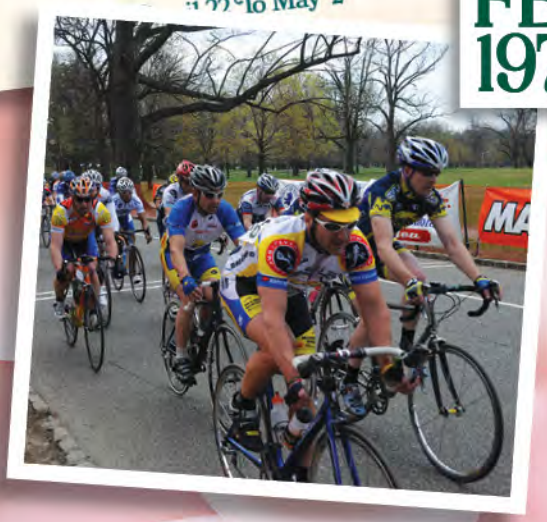
THE SPIRIT OF Essex

Spring 2026

50 Years
ESSEX COUNTY CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL 1976-2026



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Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.
Essex County Executive
and the Board of
County Commissioners

Daniel K. Salvante
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Cultural Affairs

PUTTING **ESSEX COUNTY** FIRST

COMPLIMENTARY ISSUE

A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dear Friends,

This spring marks the 50th anniversary of our Essex County Cherry Blossom Festival in Branch Brook Park. We are proud of reaching this milestone and carrying on the tradition of celebrating the natural beauty of our open spaces, highlighting the cultural diversity of our community and strengthening the bonds between our residents.

Not too long ago, our cherry blossom groves were endangered; many of the trees from the original 1927 donation were dying off because of old age and decay and less than 700 trees remained. We started an aggressive campaign to rejuvenate the cherry tree collection by planting more trees. Working with the Branch Brook Park Alliance, we planted thousands of new trees and now have 5,300 cherry blossoms throughout Branch Brook – surpassing the original 2,000 trees planted almost 100 years ago and giving Essex County more trees than the national display in Washington, D.C. The public always enjoyed visiting the park during the spring to witness the flowering canopy, but the addition of the new trees has sparked interest like never before.

We hope you take the time to stroll or drive through the park this spring. Whether you are a first-time visitor or someone who comes annually, you will be mesmerized by the pink and white flowering blossoms that transform Branch Brook. While here, please take part in our schedule of activities that include a 10K running race, competitive bicycle races, a 1-mile children's fun run, Family Day and, our finale, Bloomfest, a popular community festival that features food, vendors and a diverse lineup of entertainment.

Our spring bloom season does not end with cherry blossoms. Take a trip to the Presby Memorial Iris Gardens in May and June to see the "Rainbow on the Hill" and follow that up with a visit to Brookdale Park to see our formal rose garden. And as the weather continues to get warmer, enjoy the beautiful vistas of our parks or take a walk around the reservoir at our South Mountain Recreation Complex or along the 2.2-mile walking track in Weequahic Park.

Together we will continue Putting Essex County First.

Joseph DiVincenzo, Jr.
Essex County Executive

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.
Essex County Executive
and the Board of County Commissioners

Daniel K. Salvante
Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

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This program is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs received an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State.

NEW JERSEY STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

Indicates the facility is handicap accessible. Please contact the facility directly for specific accommodations.

Celebrating 50 years of Cherry Blossom Events in Branch Brook Park

With America's bi-centennial celebration underway and Earth Day recently established, a small, enthusiastic committee of proud Newarkers set out to establish the Cherry Blossom Festival in Essex County Branch Brook Park in 1976.

Though the historic collection of cherry trees had dwindled in numbers to fewer than 1,000 trees, citizens rallied to program a 10-day festival featuring a wide variety of events including tours and talks, theater performances, art displays and cocktail receptions that celebrated the ephemeral blooms and the return of spring.

From April 4 to April 19, 2026, the Essex County Cherry Blossom Festival will celebrate its 50th anniversary and hallmarks of the first festival are evident in its continued programming. Among the festival's original events was a five-mile run which included a printed T-shirt for a nominal $1 registration fee. On April 12, 2026, folks can join the racing tradition with a lengthier 10K run to support Special Olympics, sanctioned by USA Track and Field and annually attracting nearly 1,500 runners who each receive a commemorative long sleeve shirt and a finisher's medal. Similarly, the 1976 festival included a "Bike-In," described as a "leisure five-mile ride" through the park. The annual Cherry Blossom Challenge Bike Race, a competitive cycling event hosted around the oval in the middle division of the park is the modern-day equivalent and is being held on Saturday, April 4, 2026.

Some other notable events, such as concerts and park clean ups which were part of the first Cherry Blossom Festival, instead transitioned into other Essex County Parks System programming such as the Free Summer Music concert series or have been absorbed into the community engagement activities that fall under the auspices of the Branch Brook Park Alliance, the public/private partnership that advocates on behalf of Branch Brook Park.

Interestingly, newspaper clippings of the era indicate the comparison between Branch Brook Park's cherry tree collection and the more famous blooms surrounding the tidal basin in Washington, D.C. This rivalry may have been established by this fierce group of committee members and most certainly was on their minds during the planning stages. In January 1976, they summoned a press conference and challenged Washington, D.C., to a competition to see which city's cherry trees boasted a more beautiful display. Though the challenge was covered by The New York Times, it's unclear whether Washington, D.C., responded to the call for battle.

What remains clear today, however, is the Essex County commitment to championing and caring for this historic spring display of blossoms. In 2006, Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr., launched a replanting effort to restore the cherry tree groves to their vibrant beginnings. Over the course of a 20-year period, the collection grew from less than 1,000 trees to a record 5,300, including 16 different varieties. Today you can be part of that continued commitment by making a pledge to the cherry tree fund at the Essex County Parks Foundation or simply celebrate with us in the park this spring. More festival and donation details are available at essexcountyparks.org. ■

ESSEX COUNTY SPOTLIGHT

Seasonal events sponsored by the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs

ESSEX COUNTY CODEY ARENA

560 Northfield Avenue, West Orange
973.731.3828 ~ www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar

March 4-5: NJSIAA State High School Hockey Semifinals
March 6-8: NJ Devils Youth Shamrock Hockey Tournament
March 21-22: Gymnastics event

Spring Sessions
Learn to Skate Group Lessons
Fridays and Saturdays – starting in March – 8 weeks
Saturdays – starting in March – 8 weeks
Sundays – starting in March – 6 weeks
Ages: 3½ to adult
Classes are offered on Fridays at 4:15pm, Saturdays at 11:15am or 1:30pm, or Sundays at 9:45am or 12pm
- Snow Plow (Ages 3½ to 6)
- Basic 1-6
- Freestyle
- Adult (15 and up)
- Adaptive Skating

Public Session Skating
Ages: 2½ to adult
Sessions:
- Friday afternoon – 4:45-6:15pm
- Saturday – 11:45am to 1:15pm and 2-3:30pm
- Sunday – 10:15-11:45m and 12:30-2pm
- Adults - $12 / children 16 and under - $10 / seniors - $10 / skate rentals - $5

Senior Skating Sessions (35 and up)
- Sessions are Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10:45am to 12:15pm

Birthday Parties
Reserve a party room to celebrate your child's birthday on the ice
- $125 - 3-hour party room
- Parties are held mainly during public sessions skates or private ice session
- Group admission discount rates for 15+ skaters

Private Ice Rentals
- Call to inquire about private ice rentals for skating and parties; 973.731.3828 ext. 0

ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

621-B Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland
973.228.8776 ~ www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar

PLEASE NOTE: ECEC will be operating on a Tuesday through Saturday schedule and will be CLOSED MONDAYS from October 20, 2025, through March 9, 2026. A Monday through Friday schedule will resume on March 16, 2026.

Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar.

ORGANIZED GROUP BOOKINGS (Institutions, Scouts, Municipal Recreation Programs, Homeschoolers, Etc.)
All ages. Maximum of 25 students. Program length is 1.5 hours. Choose from a variety of topics offered by the Essex County Environmental Center. Inquire by calling the Center at 973.228.8776. Minimum of 10 person booking requirement (if less booked, minimum booking fee applied). **Fee: $15 per participant (including leaders/chaperones)**

SMALL GROUPS/PODS and FAMILIES
All ages. Spring topic selections include: Spring Seasonal Adventure, What's in That Hole?, Lenape Village Tours, Camping 101, Backyard Birding, Geodesic Dome Gardening, Frog Pond Science, Wildflower Walk, Nature Journaling, Wetland Biodiversity and MORE! One group at a time with a limit of 10 people. Schedule your 45-minute time slot by calling the center at 973.228.8776. **Fee: $15 per adult. *Where noted, additional fees apply.**

CLUBS FOR CHILDREN

LITTLE EXPLORERS
Fridays–April 10, 17, May 8, 22, June 12; 3:30-4:30pm
For ages 2 to 5. Join us for explorations of nature as we study plants and animals and observe the colors, shapes, textures, and sounds in the Environmental Center's forest habitat. Please come dressed for the weather; all classes include an outdoor adventure. All children must be walking and accompanied by an adult. Paths cannot accommodate strollers. Maximum of two children per adult. All sessions are limited to 10 children. **This is a 5-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. Fee: $100 per session series**

FOREST FRIENDS CLUB
Thursdays—April 16, May 14, June 11, 4-5pm
For ages 5 through 10. We'll explore the forest using nets, binoculars, magnifiers, and microscopes to investigate nature in our wooded wetland habitat. Together we hope to foster an ethic of stewardship and offer an opportunity to take part in hands-on conservation projects. This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only). **This is a 3-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. Fee: $45 per session series**

FROG POND CLUB
Wednesdays—March 18, April 22, May 13, June 10; 4-5pm
For children ages 5 through 9. Uncover and discover ecosystem interactions at the frog pond. Explore with nets, magnifiers and microscopes to investigate what lives at the pond and learn from a naturalist what can be done to protect and conserve the pond inhabitants. This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only). **This is a 4-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. Fee: $60 per session series**

GARDEN DISCOVERY CLUB
Tuesdays—April 21; May 5, 19; June 9, 23; July 7, 21; August 4, 18; September 8; 4-5pm
For ages 5 and up. Together we'll grow food in our garden plot and learn about everything from soil to seeds along the way. Participants will get hands-on experience with planting, harvesting and cooking. Session themes include soil and composting, seed planting and labeling, thinning, weeding and watering, selective harvest, garden pests, healthy eating and more! This is a drop-off and pick-up class (children only).**This is a 10-class session series; must sign up for the entire series. Fee: $150 per session series**

SEASONAL PROGRAMS

BACKYARD BIRDING BASICS
Saturday, March 7; 10-11:30am
For all ages. Join Andrew and Joanne from The Backyard Birding Store for an informative session on Bird Feeding Basics. They'll cover everything you need to know to get started from choosing the right seeds and feeders to setting up your backyard for optimal birdwatching. You'll also learn tips for creating a bird-friendly habitat and managing common challenges like squirrels and nuisance birds. Whether you're a beginner or looking to up your birding game, this session is for you! **Fee: $12 per child and $15 per adult**

MARCH MAPLE SYRUP: HOW SWEET IT IS!
Saturday, March 14; 2:30-4pm
For families. Maple syrup is a sweet treat that has been harvested ever since

Earth Day

2026
Saturday, April 25
11am to 3pm
Rain Date: Sunday, April 26
For all ages.
Essex County Environmental Center

Yay, it's EARTH DAY!
Bring your family, friends, and neighbors to our annual outdoor festival honoring beautiful planet EARTH, the sustainer of all life! On this special day, the Essex County Environmental Center will make extra efforts to share its wonder and appreciation of the natural world with patrons, partners, and friends. Enjoy a day filled with crafts, games, and recreational opportunities, such as canoeing and hiking. Enjoy demonstrations, information, a local eco-vendors' sale. Environmental Center staff and partner groups will be on hand to guide you throughout this exciting Earth-centric day! Seeking eco-vendors with a sustainable mission. For more information, call 973.228.8776.
FREE EVENT
(items may be for sale)

Essex County Department of Parks and Recreation
& Rose Squared Art Shows Present

Rose Squared Art Shows
39th Annual at Essex County Verona Park
Bloomfield Ave & Lakeside Ave, Verona | Saturday, May 16 & Sunday, May 17

37th Annual at Essex County Brookdale Park
473 Watchung Ave, Bloomfield/Montclair | Saturday, June 20 & Sunday, June 21

For information, directions, a gallery of participating artists and unique artisanal food, visit
rosesquared.com

the Lenape Native Americans lived here on the landscape. Let's celebrate the spring equinox together and hear the story of how maple syrup was discovered, learn to identify our maple trees, tap tree stumps with the twirl of brace and bit hand augers and taste the real thing drizzled over mini pancakes that we make together and cook on a campfire! **Fee: $15 per participant**

Cherry Blossom Talks

Wednesday and Saturdays

April 1-22

Join staff from the Essex County Parks Archives to learn more about the history of Branch Brook Park and the historic cherry blossom tree collection. All talks take place at 11 am in the Cherry Blossom Welcome Center. No pre-registration required.

ART IN NATURE: NATURE WINDOW MOSAICS
Saturday, March 21; 10-11:30am
For all ages. Allowing ourselves to be inspired by nature, we will begin the session with a walk outdoors to observe the different colors, shapes, textures and sounds that the season has to offer. We will collect materials from nature and bring them back indoors to create expressive and unique works of art. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture and Natural Resources. **Fee: $12 per child, $15 per adult**

SPRING CAMP
Tuesday, March 31;
Wednesday, April 1;
Thursday, April 2; 9:30am to 3:30pm
OR
Tuesday, April 7;
Wednesday, April 8;
Thursday, April 9; 9:30am to 3:30pm
For children ages 6-10. Restore the bond between children and nature. Children will have the opportunity to explore nature right here at the Essex County Environmental Center's varied habitats: forest, wetland, pond, and river. **Fee: $120 per child per day**

gARTbage ART CONTEST:
Our 2026 Theme is Birds!
Register by Wednesday, April 8;
Project Drop-Off is Saturday, April 11; 10:30am to 1:30pm
For children in PreK through 12th grades. The Environmental Center's g'ART'bage contest takes a creative approach to protecting our planet by pulling garbage that cannot be easily recycled or is commonly littered and transforming it into works of public art. Team and individual projects are welcome. Winning entrees will be displayed during the week of Earth Day! Grand prizes are awarded to entries that place 1st in all categories; 2nd and 3rd place entries will be recognized with a plaque, certificate, and a small gift from the Environmental Center. Pre-registration required. Contact 973.228.8776 or email tbutler@parks.essexcountynj.org. Register online at https://forms.gle/viPCADgbfGyidvxT8.

Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr.
Essex County Executive
and the Board of
County Commissioners

"For half a century, our Essex County Cherry Blossom Festival has brought together our local community, provided the public with exciting ways to enjoy the colorful display of our blooming Cherry Blossom groves and attracted attention from around the globe. We are proud to continue this tradition and invite you and your family to experience this natural wonder that is even larger than the display in Washington, DC."

ESSEX COUNTY BRANCH BROOK PARK

50 Years
1976-2026

Cherry Blossom Festival

FESTIVAL EVENTS

Saturday, April 4
Cherry Blossom Bike Race
Oval, Northern Division

Sunday, April 12
Cherry Blossom 10k Run
Cherry Blossom Welcome Center

Saturday, April 18
Kids 1-Mile Fun Run and Family Day
Prudential Concert Grove, Southern Division

Sunday, April 19
Bloomfest!
Oval, Northern Division

BRANCH BROOK PARK ALLIANCE

RWJBarnabas HEALTH

FAMILY DINOSAUR DISCOVERY FIELD TRIP
Thursday, April 9; 5-7pm
For families with young children ages 4 and up. Meet at the end of Locust Avenue in Roseland and hike 1 mile total to explore this National Historic Landmark that is home to three-toed Grallator dinosaur tracks from the late Triassic age. Using clay, we'll make and take an impression of an existing track and leave the site undisturbed for future paleontological study. **Fee: $15 per participant**

ART IN NATURE: NATURE WANDS
Saturday, April 11; 10-11:30am
For all ages. Allowing ourselves to be inspired by nature, we will begin the session with a walk outdoors to observe the different colors, shapes, textures and sounds that the season has to offer. We will collect materials from nature and bring them back indoors to create expressive and unique works of art. Led by Roxana Marroquin, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Program Associate, Agriculture and Natural Resources. **Fee: $12 per child, $15 per adult**

BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER VOLUNTEER
Monday, April 13; 5-6:30pm
For adults and students in grades 9 and older. Do you have an interest in the environment and or education and want to get more involved? Join Center staff for an information and training session to find opportunities that fit your skills, interests and schedule. Needs include program support, gardening, stewardship projects, summer camp counselors, butterfly tent hosts and much more! **Pre-registration required at www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar. FREE**

SPRING WILD EDIBLE WALK
Thursday, April 16; 5:30-7pm
For families. Take a walk along our trails to identify and discuss the variety of forest groceries available for harvest around our local landscape. You'll meet Spice Bush, Ostrich Fern, Mountain Mint, Stinging Nettle, Wild Leek, Trout Lily and others. Learn some of the folklore behind the plants and, as we walk and talk, we'll discuss proper identification, ethical harvest, growing environment and methods of preparation. On our return, we'll collect a few dandelions to fry as bite size fritters and leave with a greater appreciation for the ephemeral beauty of our changing seasons. **Fee: $12 per child, $15 per adult**

FISHING 101
Thursday, April 30; 5:30-7pm
For families. We'll begin with an introduction to freshwater fishing and learn to target specific fish species, fishing equipment, knots, bait selection, and technique. Participants will make their own "Altoids Tin Fishing Tackle Kit" to use on site and then take home. Basic equipment will be provided but you are welcome to bring your own. Meet at the waterfront area in the Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex, West Orange, near the Clipper Pavilion and boat rental. **Fee: $20 per participant**

COLORFUL BIRDS OF NEW JERSEY
Thursday, May 7; 6pm to 7:30pm
For families. We are lucky to have a diversity of backyard birds in our neighborhood including American Goldfinch, Northern Cardinal and Eastern Bluebird. We'll explore what makes birds unique by examining beaks, wingspan, weight and bird song. Then we'll explore our trails with binoculars for inspiration to use our creativity and watercolors to paint representations of our favorite birds. **Fee: $12 per child, $15 per adult**

MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE
Saturday, May 9; 9am to 3pm
For all ages. Stop by the Rutgers Master Gardener's annual plant sale for a wide variety of annuals, perennials, ornamentals, shrubs, small trees, tomatoes and herbs. Master Gardeners' Annual Plant Sale will also be hosted at the Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens, 474 Upper Mountain Avenue, Montclair, on Friday, May 1 from 10am to 4pm and Saturday, May 2 from 9am to 3pm. For more details, call the Rutgers Master Gardeners' Helpline at 973.228.2210 from Monday to Thursday between 10am and 2pm. PLEASE NOTE: HELPLINE IS CLOSED FOR WINTER UNTIL MARCH 2, 2026. **Admission is FREE but plants will be for sale**

ESSEX COUNTY FISHING DERBY

2026

Open to children 15 years of age and younger

Wednesday, May 27
Irvington Park

Thursday, May 28
Verona Park

Wednesday, June 3
Weequahic Park

Thursday, June 4
Grover Cleveland Park

Tuesday, June 8
Monte Irvin Orange Park

Wednesday, June 10
Branch Brook Park

Thursday, June 11
South Mountain Recreation Complex

Registration: 5-6pm
Derby: 6-7pm
Awards: 7:15pm-7:30pm

See www.essexcountynj.org for any cancellations due to weather.

- **Children are encouraged to bring their own fishing poles.**
- **There are no rain dates in case Fishing Derbies are cancelled due to weather.**
- **Prizes will be awarded in various age categories.**

UPPER PASSAIC RIVER CANOE TRIP
Wednesday, May 13; 6-8pm
For adults and children ages 10 and older. Take a leisurely paddle on the Passaic River! Paddlers will enjoy scenery and peacefulness as they paddle up the river and float downstream. Geared for beginners and children 10 and up accompanied by a parent or guardian. Meet in the Garibaldi Hall parking lot.
Fee: $40 per person

FROG POND ADVENTURE OUTDOOR CLASS
Thursday, May 21 6-7:30pm
For families. This rrribbettting program will take an up-close look at our wetland and pond ecosystem. Search out and identify the life found in the pond through magnifying glasses, microscopes and field guides. **Fee: $12 per child, $15 per adult**

ESSEX COUNTY PARKS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST
Submissions are due by Wednesday, September 9. Grab a camera and visit any Essex County Park! All are welcomed and encouraged to submit photos that capture a part of your visit to the County Parks System. For rules and regulations, please contact the Essex County Environmental Center.

ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO

Essex County Turtle Back Zoo
560 Northfield Avenue, West Orange
973-731-5800
https://turtlebackzoo.com/

Berson Family Center at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo
973-731-5800 x236
https://turtlebackzoo.com/education/

Purchase Policies: Refunds only occur if the zoo cancels a program due to low registration or weather conditions. If registrants request, purchases are non-refundable.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS
Hatchlings: March 8, April 12, May 10 at 10am
Tots: March 8, April 12, May 10 at 11:30am
Explorers: March 15, April 19, May 17 at 10am
TBZ's Early Childhood Programs encourage family learning and foster early environmental awareness. We invite young children to discover the natural world through gently structured play, art, stories, animal visits and more. Age restrictions apply; pre-registration required; zoo admission not included. **Hatchlings (12-24 months), Tots (ages 2-3) and Explorers (ages 4-5) are $30-$40 per participant.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/early-childhood/.

STROLLER SAFARI
Reptiles Rock: March 11 from 10-10:45am
Curious Cats: April 8 from 10-10:45am
Tree Top Friends: May 13 from 2-2:45pm
Turtle Back Zoo offers a monthly stroller safari for children ages 1-4 and their caregiver. Each month features a unique topic while exploring an area of the zoo. This 30- to 45-minute guided tour, led by one of our educators, focuses on the wonders of the natural world through the eyes of children. **$15 for one child and one adult; $5 for additional children over age 2; $10 for an additional adult. No refunds; does not include zoo admission.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/.

WONDERS OF THE WILD
Mexican and Central American Animals: March 21 from 1-3pm
All About Rainforests: April 18 from 1-3pm
Curious Cats: May 16 from 1-3pm
Turtle Back Zoo is an amazing classroom! Our Wonders of the Wild program is an opportunity to participate in supplementary science and nature-themed programs and projects that facilitate scientific literacy and life-long environmental stewardship. Available to students ages 6-12. The programs include a visit to South Mountain Reservation, Reservoir, or Zoo as weather permits; does not include zoo admission for after the program. **$40/participant.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/wow/.

Learn about Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey with the Essex County Turtle Back Zoo

LIFELONG LEARNERS PROGRAMS
Reptiles and Amphibians of New Jersey: March 1 from 1-3pm
Forest Forensics: April 19 from 1-3pm
Geology of Essex County: Sunday, May 3 from 1-3pm
Lifelong Learners are conservation programs for audiences ages 13 to 103. Programs run throughout the year and span topics such as animal anatomy, habitats and conservation, animal careers, and more. The programs are perfect for those interested in animals, science, conservation, and nature who want to learn something new in a relaxed atmosphere. **$40/participant; includes a visit into the zoo, but not zoo admission for after the program.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/.

HOMESCHOOL DAYS
Ecology 101: March 25 from 11am to 1pm
Growing Up Wild: April 22 from 11am to 1pm
Digging for Dinosaurs: May 20 from 11am to 1pm
Welcome to the wildest classroom in NJ! Our homeschool classes offer students an opportunity to boost scientific literacy and knowledge of the natural world while learning the importance of life-long environmental stewardship. Available to students ages 6-12, this drop-off program includes a visit to South Mountain Reservation, reservoir, or zoo as weather permits. **$40/participant per session; zoo admission not included.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/homeschool/.

FAMILY NATURE CLUB: NATURE GUARDIANS
Prepping For Pollinators: March 15 from 9-11am
Searching for Salamanders: April 12 from 9-11am
Let's go Birding: May 10 from 9-11am
Searching for Salamanders: May 17 from 9-11am
Nature Guardians is an FNC program focused on community engagement that connects families with local conservation actions and citizen science research, shaping our understanding of the natural world. This season's programs will focus on birds. Programs are rain or shine except during severe weather. **$5-$15/participant.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/fnc/.

FAMILY NATURE CLUB: NATURE ADVENTURERS – themed hikes for the spring
Woodland Wanderers: March 22 from 9-11am
Party for the Planet: April 19 from 9-11am
Nature Play is playing WITH nature, not just IN nature and is a great way to interact with nature no matter your experience level or play style. Run, climb, build, dig, or even just sit and experience the sounds, smells, and sights of the outdoors. Nature Adventurers visits different locations near Essex County Turtle Back Zoo; zoo admission not included. **$15/participant.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/fnc/.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS FOR TEACHERS
Genetics and Zoo Conservation (for grades 6-12): March 19 from 9am to 3pm
Genetic Diversity and Conservation (for grades K-5): March 26 from 9am to 3pm
Climate Change and Data Literacy (for grades 6-12): May 8 from 9am to 3pm
Climate Change and Ecosystems (for grades K-5): May 12 from 9am to 3pm
Join experienced TBZ educators for

NGSS-aligned professional development programs leveraging the resources of Turtle Back Zoo. Each session will cover the relevant scientific background, provide advice and materials for classroom implementation, and include a special animal encounter and time in the zoo. **$200/participant.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/professional-development/.

UPCOMING MINI-CAMPS
Spring Break: Monday through Thursday, March 30 to April 2 from 9am to 4pm
Join us at Turtle Back Zoo for some wild fun! To further our mission of conservation, education, and stewardship, campers will be introduced to the extraordinary world of animals, nature, and science. Children will enjoy age-appropriate camp activities that include games, teacher-led lessons, behind-the-scenes tours, up-close animal encounters, hands-on science demos, and fun crafts. Curriculum is unique for each day. **$100/participant/day.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/zoo-camps/.

BEHIND THE SCENES TOURS and ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS
Behind the Scenes at Australia: Sundays at 2pm in March
Behind the Scenes at Island Giants: Saturdays at 2pm in April
Behind the Scenes at the Animal Wellness Center (hospital): Sundays at 2pm in May
Sloth Socials: Saturdays, March 14 and April 11 at 10am
Prairie Dogs and Pastries: Sunday, May 3 at 10am
Join us for a deeper exploration into the care and conservation of our animals! For 6 year olds and over only, under 18 must be accompanied by an adult. All members of the party must have a ticket. Group sizes are strictly limited. No photographs are permitted behind the scenes; all attendees will sign a photo waiver prior to the tour. Attendees may be asked to wear face coverings at some locations. Tour and program guests do not enter exhibits or touch animals. Animal Encounters include a light morning snack and an educational presentation. **$65/participant for Behind the Scenes or Animal Encounters; does not include zoo admission.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/animal-encounters/.

OTHER PROGRAMS AT THE ZOO OR CLOSER TO YOU
In-person and Virtual Programs, Outreaches, and more
Dates and times scheduled at need
Join us for a dynamic and fun educational program that is focused on animals, conservation, and stewardship. We offer a variety of programs that satisfy many scientific benchmarks while also being engaging and informative. Programs can be adapted to age and ability; many can be adapted for outreaches to your school, senior center, etc. **Fees and restrictions vary per location.** For more information, visit turtlebackzoo.com/learn/.

PRESBY MEMORIAL IRIS GARDENS

Walther House Gallery
474 Upper Mountain Avenue
Upper Montclair
https://www.presbyirisgardens.org/

The Art of the Iris — Paintings by Lisa Palombo
May 19 to June 2
Celebrate this iris season with painter Lisa Palombo's floral exhibition inspired by the Essex County Presby Memorial Iris Gardens. Featuring vibrant, garden-inspired works that honor spring in full bloom. ■

ESSEX COUNTY CULTURAL EXHIBITIONS

The following events are offered for the public's enjoyment by Essex County-based arts and history organizations.

The Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs takes no responsibility for the content, accuracy, dates or times and whether or not non-County sponsored events listed in this magazine are held as scheduled.

Gaelen Juried Show award winning artists John Zollo, Janet Boltax and Amy Wax

JCC OF GREATER METROWEST

Cooperman JCC
760 Northfield Avenue, West Orange
973.530.3412 / www.jccmetrowest.org

GALEN GALLERY AT JCC METROWEST
Faces
March 8 to April 26
Gaelen Juried Show award winning artists Janet Boltax, Amy Wax and John Zollo use painting, drawing and pastels to depict diverse members of the human race as well as the residents of their imaginations. All three artists emphasize the faces and facial expressions of their subjects.

STUDIO MONTCLAIR

Academy Square Gallery
33 Plymouth Street, Montclair
862.500.1447
https://www.studiomontclair.org

Integrating Elsewhere
Through March 20
Integrating Elsewhere brings together paintings and sculptures formed through the mind's eye – works that arise from inward perception rather than direct observation. Through color, rhythm, and an orchestrated fracturing of perception, Wendy Letven's works pulse with energy, moving between cohesion and collapse. Chaos becomes harmony, dissonance becomes music. Fragmented forms, repeated motifs, and a personal iconography create structures that feel provisional and in flux, as if held only momentarily. Viewers are invited into an elsewhere: a psychological and sensory space where contemporary experience is felt as ecstatic overwhelm – simultaneously immersive, unstable, and quietly reflective.

STUDIO MONTCLAIR

Leach Gallery
641 Bloomfield Avenue, Montclair

Good Works
March 13 to April 10
Studio Montclair is a nonprofit artists organization and relies heavily on volunteers. This show highlights a number of its long-serving volunteers with several works of their own. Opening reception is Friday, March 13 from 6-8pm.

ViewPoints 2026
April 24 to June 5
Studio Montclair's annual ViewPoints exhibition offers a vibrant window into the breadth of talent emerging from New Jersey and beyond. This open call invites artists to show their latest works. ■

The Essex County Environmental Center would like to thank everyone who participated in our 2025 Contest.

We received 30 distinctive, creative, and edible entries that were a delicious special treat for our outdoor critters, who were most appreciative! It was truly a delightful sight for all to witness our winter wildlife enjoy a seasonal treat made specially for them.

WE THANK ALL WHO PARTICIPATED AND CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL THE WINNERS

PreK to 2nd Grade
First Place: Maya Suraci, Evie Ng
Abie, Bevie and Mama Cat!

PreK to 2nd Grade
Second Place: Sage Yildirim
(Animal Hotel)

PreK to 2nd Grade
Third Place: Iris Brondo
(Birds' Christmas Tree)

Grade 3rd to 5th
First Place: Michael Yildirim
(Uncover Edible New Jersey)

Grade 3rd to 5th
Second Place: Ursa Brondo
(Forest Friends Feast)

Grade 3rd to 5th
Third Place: Elyas Anziani, Kaiden Brooks,
Dylan Diaz, Aamir Harris
(Essex Junior Academy Dragons)

2025 CONTEST RESULTS

People's Choice Award
Andrew Fernandez
(PreK-2nd Grade)
54 out of 103 votes!

Grade 6th to 8th
First Place: Ainsley Aruch, Dayana Calderon
(Liberty Middle School, West Orange)

Grade 6th to 8th
Second Place: Mia Jones, Christian Chin,
Aria Balines, Justin Salazar
(Liberty Middle School, West Orange)

Grade 6th to 8th
Third Place: Remy Bassin and
Reiyansh Shetty
(Liberty Middle School, West Orange)

Grade 9th to 12th
First Place: Samantha Ginorio,
Samantha Harris, Owen Roman, Zayd Poole
(Essex County West Caldwell Tech)

Grade 9th to 12th
Second Place: Tajj Grimsley Scroggins,
Kaitlyn Granja, Maria Taracena
(Essex County West Caldwell Tech)

Grade 9th to 12th
Third Place: Edwin Casarez, Tiara Lawson
(Essex County West Caldwell Tech)

ESSEX COUNTY SPRING EVENTS

March to June: Hands on Team Experiences at GlassRoots. Book your team for a hands-on glassmaking adventure and experience the magic of fire and glass with your team. Bond with your team and make something beautiful such as wine stoppers, personalized bottles or jewelry, with the guidance of their teaching artists. GlassRoots, 23 William Street, Newark. Available by individual booking. Contact info@glassroots.org. glassroots.org

March 5: Cherish The Ladies. Cherish The Ladies is the acclaimed Grammy-nominated Irish-American supergroup renowned for spirited performances, beautiful vocals, and brilliant step dancing. A SOPAC favorite, they've enchanted audiences worldwide with a timeless celebration of Irish tradition and virtuosity. Don't miss this lively event on the SOPAC Mainstage! One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $40 to $60. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/cherish-the-ladies-2026/

March 6: Taylor • Simon • King: Three American Troubadours. The Three Troubadours is a vibrant tribute concert honoring James Taylor, Carly Simon, and Carole King, performed by powerhouse vocalists and a top-tier band. Featuring iconic songs, fresh arrangements, and storytelling, this show promises a heartfelt journey through America's cherished musical classics. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $44 to $64. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/three-american-troubadours-2026/

March 7: Glen Phillips and Augustana. Glen Phillips (Toad the Wet Sprocket) and Augustana (Dan Layus) unite for a night of acclaimed songwriting and powerful performance. Blending folk-pop, platinum hits, and bold new sounds, each artist forges new creative paths while honoring beloved classics. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $50 to $70. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/glen-phillips-augustana-2026/

March 7: Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone™ in Concert. Relive the film that started it all. Watch the wand choose the wizard, a troll run amok and magic mirrors in high-definition while the New Jersey Symphony performs John Williams' iconic score. Don't miss this once-in-a-lifetime event as Harry, Ron, Hermione and all your favorite characters return to the screen and enchant the world all over again. Presentation licensed by CineConcerts. All characters and elements © and ™ Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. Publishing Rights © JKR. Presented in collaboration with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 2-4:30pm and 8-10:30pm. $46 to $96. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

March 12-22: Private Lives by Noel Coward. The Maplewood Strollers are proud to present Private Lives. You'll get a front row seat to see what happens when a divorced couple accidentally find themselves honeymooning with their new spouses in adjacent rooms. Sparks fly in this classic comedy of manners by the witty and wry Noel Coward. The Maplewood Strollers, 10 Durand Road, Maplewood. General admission $25; seniors ages 65 years and older and students ages 18 years and younger $20 (ID is required). For group sales of 10 or more, please contact the box office at 973.761.8453. www.themaplewoodstrollers.org

March 12: Ladies of Laughter. Ladies of Laughter is the acclaimed comedy competition that features top winners and rising stand-up talents, delivering a fresh, hilarious lineup of women who are redefining comedy across America. This performance features Liz Alterman, Carmen Lynch, Leighann Lord, and Veronica Mosey. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $32.50 to $60. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/ladies-of-laughter-mar-26/

March 12: Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra. Music has a life-giving force and uncanny power of resilience. Bela Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra was written on what many thought was the composer's deathbed, but bringing it into the world gave the composer new life – and gave audiences one of the most radiant pieces of music ever written. Meanwhile, Chopin's Second Piano Concerto reminds us of humanity's capacity for beauty, and Bartók's Romanian Folk Dances open the concert with rousing rhythms. Performed by the New Jersey Symphony. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 1:30-3:30pm. $36 to $122. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

Learn glassmaking at Glassroots in Newark

March 14: Expert-led hike in Essex County South Mountain Reservation. Hike about 2-3 hours covering 3-4 miles at a modest pace over rocky trails with one long climb from the Rahway River up South Mountain. Focus on ecology and hydrology, led by the President of the Rahway Watershed Association and an expert on local watershed issues. Good balance required. Children welcome. No dogs. Sponsored by the South Mountain Conservancy and the Rahway River Watershed Association. Clipper Pavilion in South Mountain Reservation on Cherry Lane in West Orange. 3-5:30pm. Free. Advance registration required via rahwayriver.org/calendar.html. Email president@rahwayriver.org with questions.

March 14: Alice In Wonderland. When Alice chases the White Rabbit down a hole, she enters a whimsical world filled with characters such as the Mad Hatter, Cheshire Cat, Caterpillar, and Queen of Hearts. This musical adaptation sets the whole family on an adventure that celebrates the wonder of imagination. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 1pm. $23 to $35. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/alice-wonderland-2026/

Alice and Wonderland at the South Orange Performing Arts Center

March 15: Tigran Hamasyan: Manifeste. Tigran Hamasyan is an Armenian jazz pianist and composer known for masterfully blending Armenian folk music with jazz, rock, and classical influences. A virtuosic performer and celebrated innovator, he has won major competitions and international acclaim for his powerful, evocative sound. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $45 to $60. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/tigran-hamsyan-2026/

March 20: Naturally 7. Prepare to be amazed by Naturally 7, the groundbreaking vocal group that turns their voices into a full band, performing everything from drums to guitars and horns – live and without instruments. Their latest show and album, N7@ The Movies, reimagines beloved film soundtracks – think Titanic, The Sound of Music, James Bond, and more. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $44 to $57. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/naturally-7-2025/

March 27 and 28: Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony. In this first week of spring, you'll feel the joy of being outdoors again in Beethoven's Sixth (perhaps best known as his "Pastoral") Symphony – even with a thunderstorm brewing on the horizon. Mozart casts bright bolts of sunshine in his Divertimento that spotlights the New Jersey Symphony's superb strings, and in his Clarinet Concerto featuring Principal Clarinet Juan Esteban Martinez. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark.7:30-9:30pm. $36 to $122. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

March 28: Discover Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony. Discover the storytelling power of classical music! Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony was one of his only works that depicts very specific scenes and storylines, which we'll dive into measure by measure in this

Colin Quinn at the South Mountain Performing Arts Center

concert. Inspired by Leonard Bernstein's masterful way of putting young audiences at the center of music-making, this interactive concert will feature inside tips, listening cues, and fun facts that make for the perfect Saturday afternoon family outing! This New Jersey Symphony Family Concert is presented in NJPAC's Prudential Hall. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 2-3pm. $12 to $22. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

April 2: Julian Lage Quartet Featuring John Medeski, Jorge Roeder, Kenny Wolleson; co-presented with NJPAC Productions. Julian Lage, the acclaimed guitarist first hailed as a prodigy in Jules at Eight, blends folkloric influences, deep swing, and spontaneous interplay. Lage turns each tune into an open, real-time conversation between musicians on stage. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $76.50 to $109.50. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/julian-lage-quartet-2026/

April 3: Colin Quinn. Colin Quinn is a comedian, actor, and author known for his sharp, funny dissections of American politics and culture from SNL's "Weekend Update" and Comedy Central's Tough Crowd to acclaimed one-man shows like Red State Blue State and his book "Overstated: A Coast-to-Coast Roast of the Fifty States." One SOPAC Way South Orange. 7:30pm. $46.80 to $68.80. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/colin-quinn-2026/

April 9: Brubeck Brothers Quartet. The Brubeck Brothers Quartet, led by Chris and Dan Brubeck, delivers jazz that's inventive, expressive, and joyful, blending straight-ahead jazz with funk, blues, and world influences. Praised for their contagious energy and musical mastery, they create performances that are both a tribute to jazz tradition and a celebration of its ever-evolving future. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $43.50 to $54.50. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/brubeck-brothers-quartet-2025/

April 10: Texas Flood: A Tribute to Stevie Ray Vaughn. Experience the raw energy of Texas Flood, a premier Stevie Ray Vaughan tribute band. This dynamic group recreates the magic of Vaughan's performances with precision and passion. Beyond their tribute roots, Texas Flood has evolved to infuse blues classics with their own music and style, creating a captivating show. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $35.80 to $51.20. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/texas-flood-2026/

April 10 and 12: Xian Conducts Prokofiev and Strauss. Prokofiev asks for astonishing skill from every musician in his tour-de-force concerto. For his part, Strauss invites the artists to become storytellers in A Hero's Life. With the New Jersey Symphony, Xian Zhang brings these two epics to life, and all the artists are joined by the young Italian-American violinist Francesca Dego. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. April 10 from 7:30-9:30pm and April 12 from 2-4pm. $36-$122. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

April 11: Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, now led by trombonist Jeff Bush, delivers the timeless swing and rich ballads that made Dorsey a legend, highlighting iconic solos, classic hits, and the storied moments that launched Frank Sinatra's career. Experience big band mastery that's kept audiences happy for generations. One SOPAC Way, South Orange. 7:30pm. $43.50 to $65.50. 973.313.2787. https://www.sopacnow.org/events/tommy-dorsey-orchestra-2025/

April 16 and 18: Mozart's Requiem. From a little piano solo that Fauré movingly reimagined for orchestra and chorus, to Mahler's songs of a broken heart finding peace in nature, to Mozart's powerful testament to the human spirit – each piece on this program goes beyond words to express what only music can. The April 18 performance is presented in collaboration with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. April 16 from 1:30-3:30pm; April 18 from 7:30-9:30pm. $36 to $122. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

April 26. Expert-led hike in Essex County South Mountain Reservation. Hike about 2-3 hours covering 3-4 miles at a modest pace over rocky trails with one long climb from the Rahway River up South Mountain. Focus on ecology and hydrology, led by the President of the Rahway Watershed Association and an expert on local watershed issues. Good balance required. Children welcome. No dogs. Sponsored by the South Mountain Conservancy and the Rahway River Watershed Association. Clipper Pavilion in South Mountain Reservation on Cherry Lane in West Orange. 3-:30pm. Free. Advance registration required via rahwayriver.org/calendar.html. Email president@rahwayriver.org with questions.

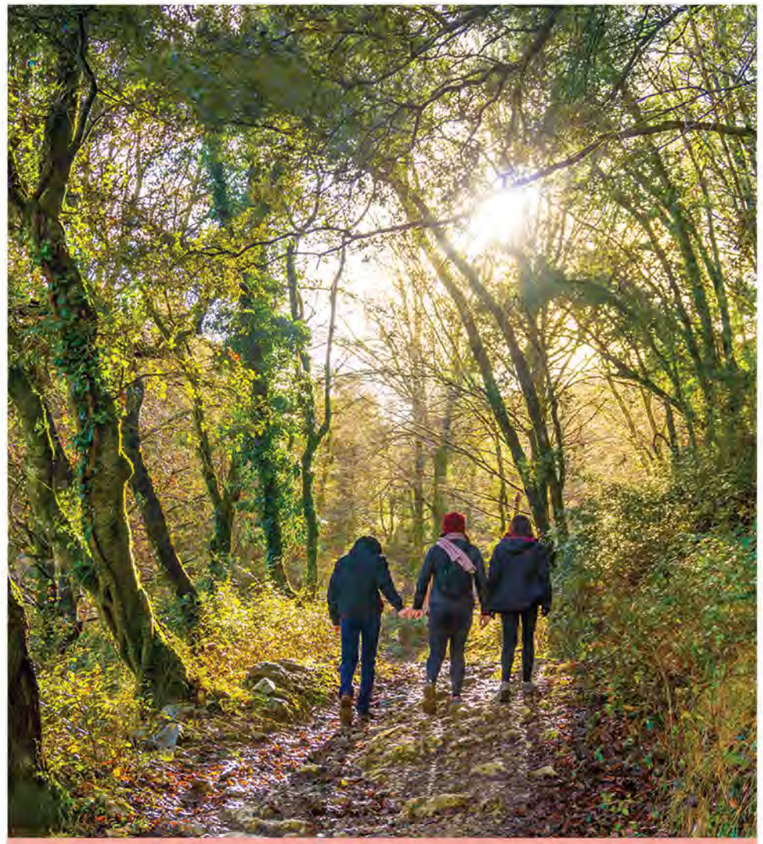
May 2-9: Montclair Literary Festival. Now in its 10th year, the Montclair Literary Festival presents a week of author events bringing people together to discuss books and ideas, and support Succeed2gether's mission of education for all. Downtown Montclair and Montclair State University. Evening events Monday to Friday, full day events from 9am to 7:30pm on Saturday. Majority free. 973.746.0553. succeed2gether.org/montclair-literary-festival/

May 3: Rutgers-Newark Chorus Spring Concert. Dr. Brian Harlow leads the 50-voice Rutgers University-Newark Chorus in its annual Spring Concert. This year's concert, entitled Journeys, features choral music from a variety of cultures. St. Mary's Church, 520 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, Newark. 3pm. Suggested donation $10, $5 students, $25 preferred, available at the door. 973.353.5194.

May 14-24: Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare. The Maplewood Strollers are thrilled to be wrapping up their 94th season with Much Ado About Nothing. A tale of two courtships as dastardly villains are challenged by comical officers, and honor and desire collide to create much ado about laughter and love. Passion, deception, and a merry war of words abound in this popular comedy by the one and only "the Bard of Avon" himself, William Shakespeare. The Maplewood Strollers, 10 Durand Road, Maplewood. General admission $25; seniors ages 65 years and older and students ages 18 years and younger $20 (ID is required). For group sales of 10 or more, please contact the box office at 973.761.8453. www.themaplewoodstrollers.org

May 14 and 16: Joshua Bell Leads Mendelssohn's "Italian." Perhaps America's finest violinist, Principal Guest Conductor Joshua Bell shows his astonishing range in this two-hour European tour. Mendelssohn's surging Hebrides Overture finds Bell leading from the concertmaster seat of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra; then he stands in the solo spotlight for the Spanish symphony that is (wink, wink) all about the violin; finally Bell takes the conductor's podium for Mendelssohn's ebullient "Italian" Symphony, full of sun-splashed melodies. The May 16 performance is presented in collaboration with the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. May 14 from 1:30-3:30pm and May 16 from 7:30-9:30pm. $36-$122. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/

May 16: Expert-led hike in Essex County South Mountain Reservation. Hike about 2-3 hours covering 3-4 miles at a modest pace over rocky trails with one long climb from the Rahway River up South Mountain. Focus on ecology and hydrology, led by President of the Rahway Watershed Association and an expert on local watershed issues. Good balance required. Children welcome. No dogs. Sponsored by the South Mountain Conservancy and the Rahway River Watershed Association. Clipper Pavilion in South Mountain Reservation on Cherry Lane in West Orange.10am to 12:30pm. Free. Advance registration required via rahwayriver.org/calendar.html. Email president@rahwayriver.org with questions.



Expert-led hikes in the Essex County South Mountain Reservation

May 16 and 17: Verona Park Art Show. Celebrate Creativity at the 33th Annual Rose Squared Art Show in gorgeous Essex County Verona Park. Talented local, national and emerging artists bring their artistic visions with a diverse range of mediums, styles, and perspectives. This show is sponsored by the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs and Rose Squared Art Shows. Essex County Verona Park, 475 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona. 10am to 5pm, rain or shine. Admission is free; artwork is for sale. www.rosesquared.com

May 30: Star Wars: The Last Jedi in Concert. Don't miss this big-screen battle with the score performed live by the New Jersey Symphony. The Resistance is in desperate need of help when they find themselves impossibly pursued by the First Order. While Rey travels to a remote planet called Ahch-To to recruit Luke Skywalker to the Resistance, Finn and Rose, a mechanic, go on their own mission in the hopes of helping the Resistance finally escape the First Order. But everyone finds themselves on the salt-planet of Crait for a last stand. Presentation licensed by Disney Concerts in association with 20th Century Fox, LucasFilm Ltd., and Warner/Chappell Music. © 2017 and TM LUCASFILM LTD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. © DISNEY RATED PG-13. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 7:30-10:30pm. $42 to $117. 800.255.3476. https://www.njsymphony.org/ ■

ESSEX COUNTY ONGOING PROGRAMS

Cherry Blossom Ambassadors in Essex County Branch Brook Park

BRANCH BROOK PARK ALLIANCE

973.969.1189
www.branchbrookpark.org/calendar
Please call for ADA accessibility details

March 1 to May 31: Historic and Horticulture Tours
Join the Branch Brook Park Alliance team for a 45-minute walking tour to explore the historical significance of Essex County Branch Brook Park and its formal gardens. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Prudential Concert Grove. In-person event. Flexible dates. Flexible times. Fee $15 per person. Advanced registration is required.

March 1 to May 31: Volunteer Stewardship in Essex County Branch Brook Park
Be a part of the Branch Brook Park Alliance team and help us nurture and preserve the beauty of our beloved park for generations to come. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Prudential Concert Grove. In-person event. Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Free. Advanced registration is required.

March 30 to April 30: Cherry Blossom Tree Ambassador
Join the Branch Brook Park Alliance this Cherry Blossom Season to help preserve a world-renowned collection and make a lasting impact. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Prudential Concert Grove. In-person event. Daily from 11am to 3pm and 2-6pm. Free. Advanced registration is required.

Discover Wellness in Essex County Branch Brook Park

March 30 to April 30: Cherry Blossom Welcome Center Greeter
Experience the beauty of Cherry Blossom Season and connect with people from around the globe by volunteering with the Branch Brook Park Alliance as a greeter. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Cherry Blossom Welcome Center. In-person event. Daily from 10am to 2pm and 1-5pm. Free. Advanced registration is required.

May 1-31: Discovering Wellness in Essex County Branch Brook Park
Join the Branch Brook Park Alliance for a series of free weekly wellness events, including Yoga, Zumba, Soul Line Dancing, and more. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Prudential Concert Grove. In-person event. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday. Times vary. Free. Advanced registration is required.

May 1-31: Children's Story Time with Branch Brook Park Alliance
Gather in the enchanting embrace of the Children's Garden, where the Branch Brook Park Alliance invites you to a captivating story hour that ignites imagination and fosters a profound appreciation for nature. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Children's Garden and Playground. In-person event. Times and days vary. Free. Advanced registration is required.

The Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart and cherry blossoms in Newark

THE CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART

89 Ridge Street, Newark
973.484.2400
www.cathedralbasilica.org

Concert Series
March 1: The New Jersey Intergenerational Orchestra.
3pm. Free-will offering.

March 15: Organ Recital with Christopher Houlihan.
3pm. Free-will offering.

April 3: Choral Meditations on the Stations of the Cross with the Cathedral Choir. The cathedral's tradition continues presenting meditations within the Stations of the Cross. This a cappella program will feature works of Clausen, Lotti, Allegri, and Casals. 8pm. Free-will offering.

April 19: The New Jersey Wind Symphony.
3pm. Free-will offering.

Wednesdays at Noon
A 30-minute recital. A brief tour of the cathedral will immediately follow the recital. Free-will offering.
April 15: Music for Oboe and Harp with Mark Snyder and André Tarantiles.
April 22: The Verona High School Concert Band.
April 29: Organ Recital with Stacie Yao.
May 6: The Three Sopranos with Maria Alu, Elizabeth Perryman and Klára Zíková-English.

ESSEX PHOTO CLUB

www.essexphotoclub.org

In-person events start at 7:30pm at The United Methodist Church, 8 Academy Road, Caldwell. Zoom access can be obtained by calling Catherine Kuzik-Fernandez at 862.485.7474. More information is on the club's Facebook page.

March 5: Educational workshops by club members (in-person)
March 19: Club Competition with Nick Palmieri judging (Zoom)

April 9: Educational Program: "Immigration Photojournalism" by Alan Mestral (Zoom)
April 23: Club Competition with Richard Kent judging (in-person)

May 7: Educational workshops (Zoom)
May 28: Club Competition with judge TBD (in-person)

June 10: Wednesday: End-of-the-Year Rewards Dinner (Location TBD)

Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs
115 Clifton Avenue
Newark, NJ 07104
www.essexcountynj.org

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THE SPIRIT OF ESSEX

For additional copies of this magazine, to join our mailing list, or to submit events for publication, please contact Terri P. Guess, Marketing Coordinator, at 201.341.5786 or e-mail **essexarts@parks.essexcountynj.org**

The Essex County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs

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UPCOMING CONCERTS IN NEWARK

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone™ in Concert
Mar 7 | NJPAC at 2 pm & 8 pm

Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony
Mar 27–28 | NJPAC at 7:30 pm

Xian Conducts Prokofiev & Strauss
Apr 10 & 12
NJPAC at 7:30 pm & 2 pm

Joshua Bell Leads Mendelssohn's "Italian"
May 14 & 16
NJPAC at 1:30 pm & 7:30 pm

Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra
Mar 12 | NJPAC at 1:30 pm

Discover Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony
Mar 28 | NJPAC at 2 pm

Mozart's Requiem
Apr 16 & 18
NJPAC at 1:30 pm & 7:30 pm

Star Wars: The Last Jedi in Concert
May 30 | NJPAC at 7:30 pm

GET TICKETS!
1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) | njsymphony.org

Made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.