

THE SPIRIT OF

# Essex

Winter 2024

# CALLING ALL CREATIVES!

The Essex County Teen Arts Festival comes to Essex County South Mountain Reservation

## ESSEX COUNTY TEEN ARTS FESTIVAL



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



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

PAGE 6



PAGE 7



PAGE 10



PAGE 12



PUTTING **ESSEX COUNTY** FIRST



## A MESSAGE FROM THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Dear Friends,

As the holiday season begins, we invite you to enjoy the festive traditions throughout Essex County. Join us at our Holiday Lights Spectacular at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo for a magical display of over one million lights around our zoo complex featuring 50 illuminated holiday and animal figures. Don't forget to join us for Winter Story Time, a family-friendly activity for children ages 8 and younger. In the spirit of giving, remember to drop off non-perishable food, gently use winter coats, and bring new toys to benefit the less fortunate.

Get in the holiday spirit with our Essex County Historic Holiday Tour! During December, historic homes and properties bring the past to life with beautiful décor from earlier periods. This festive holiday activity is a great way to explore Essex County and learn about our local history.

You can also spend some time outside learning about nature and the importance of conservation at our Environmental Center. Enjoy our numerous family-friendly seasonal activities like our Outdoor Skills Family Day and our Nature Homes and Habitats Contest. And the Grinch is in town! Join us and the 4-H Club for festive family photos with your pets, partake in holiday crafts, and enjoy the hot cocoa and coffee bar.

The holiday season is also a great time to give the gift of arts and culture and visit local museums, galleries, and theaters with your friends and family.

In the Spirit of Essex, we wish you a happy holiday season! Together we will continue *Putting Essex County First*.

Joseph N. 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

### BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Carlos M. Pomares, *President*  
Tyshammie L. Cooper, *Vice President*

Carlos M. Pomares  
*President*



*The Board  
of County  
Commissioners*



Tyshammie L. Cooper  
*Vice President*

Brendan W. Gill  
Romaine Sermons  
Leonard M. Luciano  
Robert Mercado  
A'Dorian Murray-Thomas  
Wayne L. Richardson  
Patricia Sebold

Leonard M. Luciano



A'Dorian Murray-Thomas



Patricia Sebold



Brendan W. Gill



Robert Mercado



Wayne L. Richardson



Romaine Sermons

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.



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

# The Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs is excited to announce the Essex County Teen Arts Festival for 2025...



**This one-day, in-person festival will take place at the Essex County South Mountain Recreation Complex in West Orange on **Thursday, March 27, 2025.****

**There are two ways to participate in the festival. Teen artists ages 13-19 may submit work to be critiqued by professional artists and young artists also may attend the Festival on March 27th.**

"I am proud of the skill and creativity that our students exhibit in the arts, whether it's on stage, in the studio or in the gallery. Our Essex County Teen Arts Festival is an opportunity to showcase the talent found in our 22 municipalities and share it with the public. We are pleased to be expanding the festival to include performing arts for the first time and look forward to our teenage artists participating in this exciting event," DiVincenzo said.

For the first time, the festival will feature opportunities for performing artists and presentations of dance, vocal music and instrumental music will be judged. Dancers, singers, and musicians will perform at the Festival in March before professionals for constructive criticism. Some of the submitted pieces will be submitted to the NJ State Teen Arts Festival.

The festival will feature workshops for teens to help them to develop their artistic skills. Workshops will include, but are not limited to, the art of nature, songwriting, creative movement, the business of being an artist, how to put together a portfolio, and poetry writing. Additionally, the festival offers teens the opportunity to network with their peers throughout the county and professional artists from multiple disciplines.

The online portal for artwork submission and festival registration will open on January 14, 2025. For more information, please visit <https://essexcountyteenartsfestival.org/> or email [teenarts@parks.essexcountynj.org](mailto:teenarts@parks.essexcountynj.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](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar)

**Winter Classes from November to March 2025**  
**Learn to Skate Group Lessons**  
**Ages: 3½ to adult**  
Classes are offered on Fridays at 4:15pm, Saturdays or Sundays at 11:15am or 1:30pm. Snowplow (ages 3½ to 6), Basic 1-6, Freestyle, and Adult class instruction. **\$200-\$225**. Online registration required.

**November to March 2025:**  
**Public Ice Skating**  
**Ages: 3 to adult**  
Sessions offered on:  
Saturday and Sunday from 2-3:30pm.  
Friday afternoons from 4:45-6:15pm  
Saturday and Sunday from 11:45am-1:15pm & Online registration suggested.  
**Adults - \$10 / children 15 & under - \$8 / seniors - \$8 / skate rentals - \$5**

**November to March 2025:**  
**Adult 35+ Skate Sessions**  
Sessions offered on Tuesday & Thursday mornings from 10:45am to 12:15pm  
Online registration is suggested. **Adults - \$17 / skate rentals - \$5**

**November to March 2025:**  
**JoJo Starbuck's Adult Class.**  
Registration is suggested.  
[jojostarbuck777@gmail.com](mailto:jojostarbuck777@gmail.com)

**ESSEX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER**  
621-B Eagle Rock Avenue, Roseland  
973-228-8776 - [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar) No Refunds Given for Missed Classes.

**ORGANIZED GROUP BOOKINGS (Institutions, Scouts, Municipal Recreation Programs, Homeschoolers, Etc.) For all ages.** Maximum of 20 participants including group leaders/chaperones. 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 required (if less booked, minimum booking fee applied). **Fee: \$12 per participant (including leaders/chaperones)**

**CLUBS FOR CHILDREN**  
**LITTLE EXPLORERS**  
**Mondays—December 9, 16; January 6, 13; February 3, 24**  
**For ages 2 and 3 from 10-11am AND for ages 2-5 from 3-4pm**

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. Please be prepared for all weather conditions. Maximum of two children per adult. All sessions are limited to 10 children. This is not a drop off class; adults must accompany children. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$15 per child per session**

**FOREST FRIENDS CLUB**  
**Thursdays—December 19, January 16, February 13, March 20; 4-5pm**  
**For children ages 5-10.** 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). Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$15 per child per session**

**HOLIDAY HERBAL SCRUB-MAKING**  
**Thursday, December 5; 5:30-7pm**  
**For all ages.** Make and take a homemade herbal scrub. Visit our

geodome to harvest lemon balm and lavender. Learn about the power of scent and how to care for your skin using nature to promote self-care. We will select our favorite scents from herbs and essential oils and add them to create a sugar or salt scrub of your choice. All materials are included. Participants will leave with a custom crafted scrub to try at home! This class has an outdoor component, so please come dressed for the weather. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$15 per child and \$20 per adult**

**FOREST FRIENDS FEEDER CONTEST**  
**Registration deadline: Wednesday, December 11th; Project drop-off: Friday, December 20th by 5pm**  
**For all ages.** Create an edible, festive and unique wildlife feeder to be on display in an outdoor exhibit for ECEC's forest friends to enjoy! Projects will be on display on our forested trail for as long as the forest critters allow! For contest rules and to register, please call 973.228.8776.

**S'MORES n' MORE**  
**Saturday, December 14; 2:30-4pm**  
**For all ages.** Join an ECEC naturalist-guided short walk on the trails and experience forest life in wintertime. Afterward, practice fundamental fire skills and build a campfire in a safe and controlled environment. Once we get our fire burning, we'll roast marshmallows and make s'mores. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

**FOREST FRIENDS FEEDER WORKSHOP**  
**Thursday, December 19; 4-6pm**  
**For all ages.** Join Center staff to create an edible, festive and unique wildlife feeder to be on display in an outdoor exhibit for ECEC's forest friends to enjoy! Some materials will be provided, and it is encouraged to bring your own items, most especially your creativity! All participants will have their project entered into our Forest Friends Feeder Contest. Prizes will be awarded. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child, \$15 per adult**

**ESSEX COUNTY HOLIDAY LIGHTS**  
**AT ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO • 5pm TO 9pm**  
Friday, November 29 to Wednesday, December 4  
Friday, December 6 to Tuesday, December 31  
**FREE ADMISSION** [turtlebackzoo.com](http://turtlebackzoo.com)  
Closed December 24 & 25  
Winter Workshop from Sunday, December 1 to Saturday, December 7  
Donations of non-perishable food; new, unwrapped toys; and new or gently-used winter coats for the needy are appreciated.

**WINTER WILDLIFE EXPLORERS CAMP**  
**Monday, Dec. 23; Thursday, Dec. 26 & Friday, Dec. 27; 9:30am to 3:30pm**  
**For children ages 6-10.** Campers explore our wooded wetland forests in wintertime and enjoy stories, crafts, campfires, and forest adventures. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$300 per child for all three days OR \$110 per child per day.**

**S'MORES n' MORE**  
**Saturday, January 4; 11am to 12:30pm**  
**For all ages.** Join an ECEC naturalist-guided short walk on the trails and experience forest life in wintertime. Afterward, practice fundamental fire skills and build a campfire in a safe and controlled environment. Once we get our fire burning, we'll roast marshmallows and make s'mores. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

**WILD ABOUT WILDLIFE**  
**Tuesday, January 14; 6-7:30pm**  
**For ages 6 and up.** Test your wildlife wisdom in a hands-on exploration as you play games of inquiry to examine a variety of skulls, tracks, furs, feathers, and scat! Compare and contrast form and function, then discuss them with a naturalist. All participants make-and-take a clay animal track of their own. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

**MLK DAY: FOREST ANIMALS WINTER SURVIVAL - ONE DAY CAMP**  
**Monday, January 20; 9:30am to 3:30pm**  
**For ages 6-10.** Campers explore our wooded wetland forests in wintertime and enjoy stories, crafts, campfires, and forest adventures. In honor of this day of service, they also will participate in stewardship activities on our outdoor campus, such as making wildflower seed balls for the pollinators, removing invasive

vines to make winter wreaths, and caring for our bird feeders and bird houses. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$95 per child**

**GUIDING CHILDREN IN THE MODERN AGE -The Origins of Stress, Disconnection, & The "Chronically Online" Generation**  
**Saturday, January 25; 10:30am to 12pm**  
**For adults.** Join Dr. Daniel Atkins for a 90-minute workshop on the origins of stress in the body and how this is manifesting in the "chronically online" modern age. Parents, teachers, caregivers and all who are called to work with children are invited to share their struggles connecting to kids in an increasingly ungrounded and disconnected world. Dr. Atkins provides guidance to support the necessary healing for love to flow naturally, first to ourselves and then as caregivers. He explores topics of the mind-body connection, intimacy in relationships, and

rediscovering authenticity beyond social conditioning. Following the discussion, he invites participants into an optional guided meditation to reconnect to the loving power within us, aligning our thoughts, emotions, and physical body to live in our highest Light and service to others. **FREE; participants are welcome to donate to the Essex County Parks Foundation, a 501-c3 non-profit organization directly supporting the Environmental Center's environmental education programs and stewardship efforts.**

**GUIDING CHILDREN IN THE MODERN AGE –The Origins of Stress, Disconnection, & The “Chronically Online” Generation Monday, February 24; 6pm to 7:30pm**

**For adults.** Join Dr. Daniel Atkins for a 90-minute workshop on the origins of stress in the body and how this is manifesting in the “chronically online” modern age. Parents, teachers, caregivers and all who are called to work with children are invited to share their struggles connecting to kids in an increasingly ungrounded and disconnected world. Dr. Atkins provides guidance to support the necessary healing for love to flow naturally, first to ourselves and then as caregivers. He explores topics of the mind-body connection, intimacy in relationships, and rediscovering authenticity beyond social conditioning. Following the discussion, he invites participants into an optional guided meditation to reconnect to the loving power within us, aligning our thoughts, emotions, and physical body to live in our highest Light and service to others. **FREE; participants are welcome to donate to the Essex County Parks Foundation, a 501-c3 non-profit organization directly supporting the Environmental Center's environmental education programs and stewardship efforts.**

**OWL PELLET DISSECTION**

**Monday, January 27; 5:30-7pm**  
**For ages 6-11.** Learn about these beautiful and mysterious silent hunters of the night. Discover what they are eating by carefully reconstructing the bones found inside owl pellets, while discussing predators and prey and food chain dynamics. Advanced registration



Wild about Wildlife at Essex County Environmental Center

and minimum number of participants required. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child**

**WINTER NATURE JOURNALING Saturday, February 1; 10-11:30am**

**For all ages.** Participants will experience winter discoveries through hiking and bird watching, and explore the joy of phenology, the cyclic and seasonal natural phenomena. They will make nature journals, and in them write and draw their forest exploration findings. Dress warmly for the weather. Advanced registration and minimum number of participants required. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

**ESSEX COUNTY BEEKEEPERS' SOCIETY: BASIC BEEKEEPING: 3-DAY SHORT COURSE**

**Saturdays, February 1 & 15; Snow-day March 15, 8:30am to 4pm; Field Day TBA**  
**For adults and children ages 12 and older.** This short course is appropriate for new beekeepers as well as those who need a refresher. Offered by the Essex County Beekeepers Society, completion of this class fulfills the education requirement necessary to legally keep bees in New Jersey. Classroom topics covered include Honey Bee Biology, Beekeeping Equipment, Getting Started with Bees, Keeping Bees in Populated Areas, Bee Plants, Seasonal Management, Honey Bee Pests and Diseases, Harvesting Your Honey Crop, Queens, Queen Problems and Re-Queening. Day 3, Field Day, takes place

in apiaries in Montville Township and provides students with an introduction to working with the bees. Students will have the experience of opening and inspecting a beehive themselves and obtain hands-on lessons in recognizing the various components of a hive and colony as well as inspection basics such as smoker lighting, protective gear, and correct use of the hive tool. For information, contact registrar Justin Luna at Justin@GalacticGold.org. Online registration is available at <https://njbeekeepers.org/Education.htm>. Scholarships are available for students aged 12-22. For an application, visit <https://www.njbeekeepers.org/Education.htm>. Meet in Garibaldi Hall. **Fee: \$130, which includes all class materials, continental breakfast, and afternoon snack.**

**VALENTINES FAMILY WALK & CAMPFIRE**

**Tuesday, February 11; 5:30-7pm**  
**For all ages.** Experience forest life at night and make birch bark hearts and necklaces that double as fire-starters. We'll build a campfire, make s'mores, and enjoy fire-popped popcorn and mint tea or hot chocolate. Dress warmly for the weather. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$15 per child and \$20 per adult**

**BUILD-A-BIRD HOUSE**

**Saturday, February 22; 10:30am to 12pm**  
**For all ages.** Join us to build a home that encourages breeding birds and other wildlife to take residence. Putting out bird houses now improves the chances of having a nesting pair of songbirds in gardens by spring. Pre-registration and payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$25 per birdhouse (2 people max per birdhouse)**

**S'MORES n' MORE**

**Wednesday, February 26; 5:30-7pm**  
**For all ages.** Join an ECEC naturalist-guided short walk on the trails and experience forest life in wintertime. Afterward, practice fundamental fire skills and build a campfire in a safe and controlled environment. Once we get our fire burning, we'll roast marshmallows and make s'mores. Pre-registration and

payment required either in person, by mail or online. **Fee: \$12 per child and \$15 per adult**

**ESSEX COUNTY TURTLE BACK ZOO**

560 Northfield Avenue, West Orange  
973-731-5800 - [www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar](http://www.essexcountyparks.org/calendar)

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

**EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS Hatchlings: December 1, January 5 & February 2 at 10am**  
**Tots: December 1, January 5 & February 2 at 11:30am**  
**Explorers: December 8, January 12 & February 9 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 \$25-\$30 per participant.** For more information, visit, <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/early-childhood-programs/>.

**WONDERS OF THE WILD**

**Radical Reptiles: December 7 from 1-3pm**  
**Winter at the Zoo: January 18 from 1-3pm**  
**Science Magic: February 8 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 Essex County South Mountain Reservation, Reservoir or Zoo as weather permits; does not include zoo admission for after the program. **\$30/participant.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/wonders-of-the-wild/>.

**SOPHISTICATED SCIENCE SEMINARS**

**Amazing Anatomy: December 8 from 1pm-3pm**  
**Zoo Conservation and Stewardship: January 12 from 1-3pm**  
**Biology, Evolution, and Adaptations: February 9 from 1pm to 3pm**

Sophisticated Science Seminars are conservation programs for audiences ages 13-103. Seminars run throughout the year and span topics such as animal anatomy, habitats & 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. **\$30/participant; includes a visit to the zoo, but not zoo admission for after the program.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/sophisticated-science-seminars/>.

**HOMESCHOOL DAYS**

**December 11: Wild Colors from 11am to 1pm**  
**January 22: Warm or Cold-blooded from 11am to 1pm**  
**February 19: Animal Appetites 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 Essex County

South Mountain Reservation, reservoir, or zoo as weather permits; be prepared to go outside. **\$30/participant per session; zoo admission not included.** Guardians will need a valid photo ID for pick-up. For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/homeschool/>.

**FAMILY NATURE CLUB: NATURE GUARDIANS**

**Christmas Bird Count: December 15 from 9-11am**

**Great Backyard Bird Count: February 16 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 building your birding skills and a salamander research project at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo. **\$5-\$15/participant.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/family-nature-club/>.

**FAMILY NATURE CLUB: NATURE ADVENTURERS' HIKES**

**Wildlife of the World: January 12 from 1-3pm**

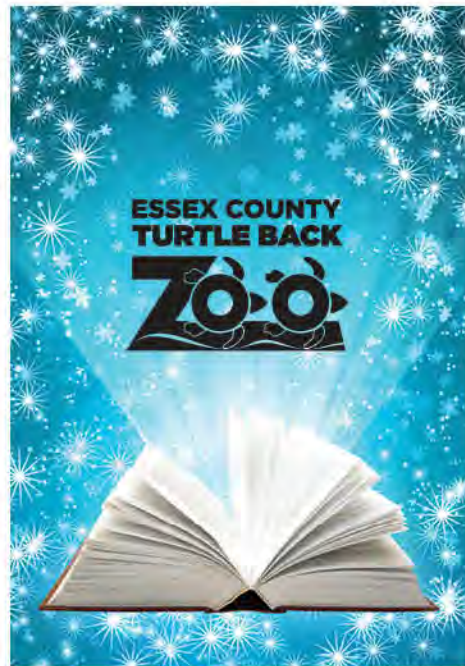
**Create Your Own Nature Journal: January 26 from 1-3pm**

**Rock On Geology Hike: February 9 from 1-3pm**

Nature Play is playing WITH nature, not just IN nature and is a great way to interact with nature no matter your



The Behind the Scenes tour of the sloth exhibit is available at Essex County Turtle Back Zoo.



# Winter Storytime

## At Turtle Back Zoo

**Saturday, December 14 & Sunday, December 15;**

**2pm, 3pm, & 4pm**

**Thursday, December 19 & Friday, December 20; 6pm**

**Saturday, December 21; 2pm, 3pm, & 4pm**

Wear your favorite winter seasonal attire, enjoy an animal-themed story, and meet a favorite animal friend. This is a family-friendly event recommended for families with children ages 8 and younger.

**\$10/participant; zoo admission not included.**

For more information,

visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/storytime-programs-at-turtle-back-zoo/>.

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; hikes are lightly themed. Zoo admission is not included. **\$15/participant.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/family-nature-club-nature-adventurers/>.

### BEHIND THE SCENES TOURS & ANIMAL ENCOUNTERS

#### Behind the Scenes...

**Giraffes: December 7, 14, 21 & 28 at 2pm**

**January 4, 11, 18 & 25 at 2pm**

**February 1, 8, 15 & 22 at 2pm**

#### Animal Encounters...

**Sloth Socials: December 7, January 18 & February 8 at 10am**

Join us for a deeper exploration into the care and conservation of our animals! For 6 years old 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 includes bagels and coffee and an educational presentation. **\$50/participant.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/behind-the-scenes-tours/>.

### UPCOMING MINI-CAMPS

**Monday, December 23; Thursday & Friday, December 26-27 from 9am to 4pm**

**Monday, January 20 from 9am to 4pm**

**Monday, February 17 & Tuesday, February 18 from 9am to 4pm**

Join us at Essex County 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. **\$100/participant.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/zoo-camps/>.

**SUMMER CAMP OPEN HOUSE Saturday, February 1; hour long informational sessions at 11am, 12pm and 1pm**

It's never too early to think of summer! Join us for Essex County Turtle Back Zoo's Annual Summer Camp Open House to check out what's new and fun at camp for Summer 2025. On Saturday, February 24 from 11am to 2pm, you can meet camp counselors, learn about our science-based curriculum, try a camp activity, and say hello to a few of our camp Animal Ambassadors. **Free event,** register in advance, day-of walk

ups will be welcome. This is not a drop-off program for children; all attendees should register. For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/events-calendar/>.

### WINTER WORKSHOP

**Sunday, December 1 from 11am to 2pm**

Wear your favorite winter-inspired outfit and join us to make holiday-themed enrichment items for all our animals! This is a family-friendly event recommended for all ages. **Free with zoo admission.** Stop by the Mount Building Classroom to participate. For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com>.

### 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 by location.** For more information, visit <https://turtlebackzoo.com/discover/education-center-programs/> ■

## ANNUAL ESSEX COUNTY PARKS PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS

The Essex County Environmental Center and the Essex County Parks Department would like to thank you for your participation in our annual Parks Photography Contest. All contest entries portrayed beautiful images highlighting the wide range of opportunity and natural splendor found throughout the Essex County Park System. As you could imagine, it was very challenging for the Essex Photography Club judges to select winners; however, the ballots are in and we would like to announce the winners:



1st Place -Adult  
*John Shiever*  
Fall At Grover  
Cleveland Park



1st Place -Youth  
*Alexandra Barrios*  
Branch Brook Park



2nd Place -Adult  
*Beth Calamia Scheckel*  
Branch Brook Park



2nd Place -Youth  
*Thomas Carey*  
Orange Reservoir



3rd Place -Adult  
*John Levai*  
Yantacaw Park



3rd Place -Youth  
*Asher Gamble Egret*  
Watsessing Park



Honorable Mention -Adult  
*Rachel Dykstra*  
Kips Castle



Honorable Mention -Youth  
*Jaysiin Cespedes*  
Branch Brook Park



1st Place -Professional  
*Arthur J Ballinger III*  
Verona Park

## ESSEX COUNTY CULTURAL EXHIBITIONS

### HEIDI GALLERY at JSDD

310 Eisenhower Parkway, Livingston  
973.272.7148 / HeidiGallery@JSDD.org  
Call for ADA accommodations, etc.

### The WAE Open – 2024

**December 8: Artist Walk & Talk and Closing Reception of The WAE Open – 2024**

Artists gather to discuss their work, their process and answer the questions of audience members. 2pm to 4pm. Free

### 'To Be Determined'

**December 12 to January 19, 2025**

Artists of NJ Art Association  
A creative, intentionally or unintentionally, has 'to be determined' to be heard. Determination drives talent, dedication, and a strong work ethic.

A creative group can nurture one's artistic well-being and determine the opportunities that might yet be taken. This exhibit speaks to the power of art communities to inspire and thrive. Free. December 12, Opening reception, 6 to 8pm

### JCC OF GREATER METROWEST

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



Oil painting by Sharon Sayegh

**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.*



"Wanting" by John Zollo

### Paintings by Sharon Sayegh and drawings by John Zollo

**January 12 to February 23**

Exhibit by winners of the annual Gaelen Juried Show. Reception is January 12.

### STUDIO MONTCLAIR'S LEACH GALLERY

641 Bloomfield Avenue, Montclair  
862.500.1447 / Studiomontclair.org

### Dwelling in Hope

**November 1 to December 12**

Studio Montclair's first exhibition devoted exclusively to photography. The show conveys images expressing the concept of finding hope within the familiar, everyday aspects of our lives. Presenting the craftsmanship of talented photographers ranging from novices to professionals, this uplifting exhibit will inspire, stimulate, provoke, and delight viewers. ■

# ESSEX COUNTY HISTORIC HOLIDAY House Tour



**Saturday, December 7 & Sunday, December 8, 2024**  
Times vary by location

Visit [essexcountyparks.org](http://essexcountyparks.org) for participating locations



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



**COUNTY OF ESSEX DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL AFFAIRS**  
155 Prospect Avenue, Suite 100  
West Orange, NJ 07052  
973.268.3500 / [www.essexcountynj.org](http://www.essexcountynj.org)

PUTTING ESSEX COUNTY FIRST

## ESSEX COUNTY WINTER EVENTS

### December to January 2025:

**Glassblowing studio.** Warm up with us this winter! Get close to the flames in our glassblowing studio, make beads with a table torch or keep it low key in one of our mosaic's classes. Work closely – and safely – with our trained teaching artists to make your own glass ornament or menorah or plan a creative holiday party. GlassRoots Newark Glass Art Center, 10 Bleeker Street, Newark. Save 10% on your meal at VIBE BBQ on 56 Halsey Street by showing your class confirmation email! Weekends. 10am to 2pm. \$70. 973.353.9555. GlassRoots.org

### December 7: The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert.

The New Jersey Symphony presents Disney's The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert featuring the complete film, with the score performed live to picture. The Muppets perform Charles Dickens' classic holiday tale, with Kermit the Frog playing Bob Cratchit, the put-upon clerk of stingy Ebenezer Scrooge (Michael Caine) and features many more of your favorite Muppet characters. This special holiday event is fun for the whole family! New Jersey Symphony, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 3 and 7:30pm. Tickets start at \$39. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

### December 7-8: Essex County Holiday House Tours.

In 2020, USA Today readers voted the Crane House and Historic YWCA's Holiday House Tour #4 IN THE NATION. Be among the first to see this year's decorations as one of the Essex County Holiday House Tour sites. Visit us to see the beautiful period decorations by the Garden Club of Montclair. Self-guided tours let you explore this 227-year-old home at your leisure. Warm yourself in the hearth and learn about holiday food traditions. Stop in to the Nathaniel Crane House for unique holiday gifts! As a gift to our visitors this



Glassblowing at Newark Glass Art Center

holiday season, general admission will be waived. Instead, any donations are welcome. Crane House & Historic YWCA Museum, 110 Orange Road, Montclair. 12-3pm. Free. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

### December 7-8: Essex County History Holiday House Tours at the Kingsland Manor.

Come explore the rich history of the Kingsland Manor, which is on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places. The Manor is open on the third Sunday of each month (except August and November). Check our Events page for other special events for the fall and Holiday seasons. Kingsland Manor, 3 Kingsland Street, Nutley. 1 to 4pm. 973-661-3410. [www.kingslandmanornutley.org/](http://www.kingslandmanornutley.org/)

### December 8: Rutgers-Newark Chorus Winter Concert.

The Rutgers University-Newark Chorus and conductor Dr. Brian Harlow present their annual Winter Concert. This year's concert is centered around the compositions of talented men and women from the United States and will feature the premieres of two arrangements by Brian Harlow. St. Mary's Church, 520 MLK Jr. Boulevard, Newark. Free admission, donations accepted at the door. 973.353.5194.

### December 13: Candlelight Holiday Tour.

A fun evening that begins with period libations in the historic hearth

kitchen and continues with a tour of the Crane House & Historic YWCA. See the period holiday decorations artfully designed by the Garden Club of Montclair. (a ranking in USA Today's 2020 10 Best Reader's Choice Travel Award for the "Best Holiday Home Tour!") as staff leads special candlelight tours that tell the history of our past holidays from the 1700s to the 20th century. Recommended for visitors ages 10 and up due to Santa Spoilers! Crane House & Historic YWCA Museum, 110 Orange Road, Montclair. 6pm. \$25 per person, \$20 for MHC members. Registration required. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

### December 14: A Gospel Holiday.

Spotlighting celebrated artists from Newark and beyond, the New Jersey Symphony lauds the power of the first instrument—the human voice—with a gospel music-inspired holiday extravaganza. Come ready to sing, dance and clap along! Science Park High School, 260 Norfolk Street, Newark. 2pm. Adult tickets are \$20; children's tickets are \$10. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

### December 14: "Winter Reveries."

Conductor Anthony LaGruth and the Livingston Symphony Orchestra take you on a musical "sleigh ride" through the snowy landscape of the season with both familiar pieces and a few lesser-known gems! Heritage Middle School,

20 Foxcroft Drive, Livingston. \$15 to \$25, under 12 Free. 973.980.1809. [www.lsonj.org](http://www.lsonj.org)

### December 15 and 22: Winter Wonderland Open House.

In 2020, USA Today readers voted the Crane House and Historic YWCA's Holiday House Tour #4 IN THE NATION. Be among the first to see this year's decorations! Visit us today to see the beautiful period decorations by the Garden Club of Montclair. Self-guided tours let you explore this 227-year-old home at your leisure. Warm yourself in the hearth and learn about holiday food traditions. As a gift to our visitors this holiday season, general admission will be waived. Instead, any donations are welcome. Crane House & Historic YWCA Museum, 110 Orange Road, Montclair. 12-3pm. Free. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

### December 19: History at Home: Scientific American Architect and Builders Edition.

Scientific American Architects and Builders Edition strikes again! Architect Debra David continues this series with more Montclair residences featured in the magazine which was part of the Scientific American brand from 1885-1905. This installment will include residences along with a few buildings that may surprise you! Zoom/virtual. 7pm. Free. Registration required for Zoom link. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

### December 22: Handel's Messiah.

Spirits will soar at "For Unto Us a Child is Born" and the "Hallelujah Chorus" as well as the treasured arias that make Handel's Messiah the must-hear classic of the holidays. Jeannette Sorrell, who "brings revelations" (Philadelphia Inquirer) to everything she conducts, leads the New Jersey Symphony and the phenomenal Montclair State University Singers. Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, 89 Ridge Street, Newark. 7pm. Tickets start at \$29. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

### January 5 to February 23: Crane House & historic YWCA Museum Open.

The Crane House & Historic YWCA museum is a historic house museum that explores the history of our country from its early years as



Holiday House Tours at the Crane House and Historic YWCA Museum

an independent nation to a country embroiled in the civil rights struggle. Stop by for a self-guided tour of the museum and visit the Museum Store featuring products from local crafters and Montclair flare. Crane House & Historic YWCA Museum, 110 Orange Road, Montclair. Every Sunday. 12-3pm. Admission is \$8/person; free for children under 2, MHC members, Families First program, military personnel, NARM and Montclair students. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

### January 9 and 11: Jean-Yves Thibaudet Plays Ravel.

A lightning-fast touch and richly expressive insights have made pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet internationally famous, and Ravel's jazz-age Concerto, bursting with blues and heartbreaking melody, is Thibaudet's signature piece. Conducted by an exciting young star in his New Jersey Symphony debut, Kevin John Edusei, this is a highlight of the season! New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. January 9 at 1:30pm; January 11 at 3:30pm. Tickets start at \$29. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

**January 16: History at Home: The Van Vleck House(s).** Explore the history of the Van Vleck family in Montclair and the elaborate houses they built for the community they called home. Presentation led by Montclair Township Historian Mike Farelly and Montclair Architect Paul Sionas. Zoom/virtual 7pm. Free. Registration required for Zoom link. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

### January 19: Guided House Tour: Many Voices.

This interactive tour is designed to share the many voices that are part of Montclair's rich history, using the Crane House & Historic YWCA as a window onto different time periods and the people who are part of Montclair. Sharing the many voices within this historic house will shape a tour that connects visitors to part of the past and make it come to life. The house spans a history from 1796 to 1965 introducing a number of different voices and perspectives that shape an evolution of Montclair history for the visitor. 12, 1 or 2pm. Admission is \$12/adult; \$10/student/senior with ID; \$8/child; free for children under 2, MHC members, Families First program, military personnel, NARM, and Montclair students. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)



Self-Guided Tour Sundays at The Crane House & Historic YWCA

**January 25: 2025 Lunar New Year Celebration with Xian Zhang.** Join us for this evening of community and cultural exchange that is wonderful for families and children, as we celebrate the Year of the Snake. Music Director Xian Zhang, pianist Min Kwon, the Peking University Alumni Chorus and the Starry Arts Children's Chorus all return for this joyous concert. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 7:30pm. Tickets start at \$29. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

**January 31 and February 1: Holst's The Planets—An HD Odyssey.** Stunning HD images from decades of NASA exploration accompany Holst's celestial orchestral suite, The Planets. Paired with a love song to the beauties of bird and sky, Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending, this concert will present a whole new experience of the word "awesome." New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. January 31 at 8pm; February 1 at 8pm. Tickets start at \$29. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

**February 15: Warner Bros. Discovery presents Bugs Bunny at the Symphony.** Bugs Bunny at the Symphony is back! Celebrate Looney Tunes and its legendary stars, including Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Sylvester, Wile E. Coyote, Road Runner and, of course, Bugs Bunny, our very favorite "wascally wabbit." Enjoy classics including "Baton Bunny," "The Rabbit of Seville" and "What's Opera, Doc?" alongside Warner Bros. Discovery 3D theatrical shorts "Rabid Rider," "Coyote Falls" and "Fur of Flying." Don't miss these extraordinary musical scores performed live by the New Jersey Symphony as all the action unfolds on the big screen. More information on the program is available at [www.bugsbunnyatthesymphony.net](http://www.bugsbunnyatthesymphony.net). New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 8pm. Tickets start at \$35. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

**February 16: Guided House Tour: Eyewitness to Black History.** Explore 200 years of Black history in Montclair and New Jersey through rare first-hand

accounts, primary and secondary source documents at the Crane House & Historic YWCA Museum. Engage with artifacts and documents that are a springboard for discussion about race both in the past and in the present-day. Crane House & Historic YWCA Museum, 110 Orange Road, Montclair. 12, 1 or 2pm. Admission is \$12/adult; \$10/student/senior with ID; \$8/child; free for children under 2, MHC members, Families First program, military personnel, NARM and Montclair students. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org)

**February 20: Brahms and Chopin.** Compelling new voices and the pleasure of dear friends. Christoph König is a cherished, frequent guest on the New Jersey Symphony's podium, a master especially of classics like Chopin's tune-filled Concerto No. 1 and Brahms' dramatic First Symphony. We're also thrilled to introduce you to Allison Loggins-Hull, the New Jersey Symphony's new Resident Artistic Partner—a role created to innovate and inspire. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center Street, Newark. 1:30pm. Tickets start at \$29. 800.255.3476. <https://www.njsymphony.org/>

**February 20: History at Home: From Loudoun to Montclair: One Woman's Experience of the Great Migration.** Join the Loudoun Museum of Leesburg, Va., as research volunteer Caroline S. O'Connell explores the experience of Flossie Sinclair Furr, an African American school teacher, who was a part of the Great Migration during the first decades of the 20th century. O'Connell will share the reasons Sinclair Furr and others from Loudoun County, Va., made their way to Montclair, why some returned home, and the impact their time in the North had on their lives and those of others in Loudoun. The presentation will expand on this original blog post online at [www.montclairhistory.org/new-blog/from-loudoun-to-montclair-one-womans-experience-of-the-great-migration](http://www.montclairhistory.org/new-blog/from-loudoun-to-montclair-one-womans-experience-of-the-great-migration). Zoom/virtual. 7pm. Free. Registration required for Zoom link. 973.744.1796. [www.montclairhistory.org](http://www.montclairhistory.org) ■

## ESSEX COUNTY ONGOING PROGRAMS

**BRANCH BROOK PARK ALLIANCE**  
973.969.1189  
[www.branchbrookpark.org/calendar](http://www.branchbrookpark.org/calendar)  
Please call for ADA accessibility details

**December to February: Volunteer Stewardship in Essex County Branch Brook Park**  
Join the Branch Brook Park Alliance team in ongoing stewardship efforts. Days vary based on weather. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Prudential Concert Grove. 10am to 2pm. Free. Advanced registration required. [www.branchbrookpark.org/volunteer](http://www.branchbrookpark.org/volunteer)

**December to February: Historic & Horticulture Tours**  
Join the Branch Brook Park Alliance team for a 45-minute walking tour and learn more about the historical significance of Essex County Branch Brook Park and the formal gardens. Essex County Branch Brook Park, Prudential Concert Grove. Flexible dates and times. Fee \$15 per person (discounted rate for groups, please inquire). Advanced registration is required.

**THE CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF THE SACRED HEART**  
89 Ridge Street, Newark  
973.484.2400  
[www.cathedralbasilica.org](http://www.cathedralbasilica.org)

**December 5: Navidad Latina.** The Cathedral Spanish Choir, under the direction of Olfary Gutiérrez, joins forces with singers and instrumentalists from other Latin American communities of the Archdiocese of Newark. Program includes Villancicos Tradicionales o Latin America and Spain. 8pm. Doors open at 7pm. Free-will Offering. 973.484.2400. [www.cathedralbasilica.org](http://www.cathedralbasilica.org)

**December 18 and 19: The 53rd Candlelight Carol Sing – Two Performances.** A Christmas tradition for 50+ years, the Carol Sing has become one of the most significant Christmas concerts in Northern New Jersey. The ambiance of candlelight and season décor, along with thousands of participants, combine to create an event that must be experienced featuring the Cathedral Choir, organ and Brass Ensemble. 8pm. Doors open at 7pm. Free-will offering. 973.484.2400. [www.cathedralbasilica.org](http://www.cathedralbasilica.org)

**December 22: "Messiah" with the New Jersey Symphony and Montclair State University Singers.** The Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart, 89

Ridge Street, Newark. 7pm. Doors open at 6pm. For tickets, call 1-800-ALLEGRO.

**ESSEX PHOTO CLUB**  
In-person (IP) meetings are held at the Caldwell United Methodist Church, 8 Academy Road, Caldwell. Zoom access is through the club president Catherine Kuzik-Fernandez at 862-485-7474.

**Educational Programs:**  
December 5: Member Workshops-Topics TBD. (IP), 7:30pm  
January 2: Topic TBD. Zoom, 7:30pm  
February 10: "Lensbaby" Presented by Jamie K. Davidson. Zoom, 7:30pm  
Sponsored with Livingston Camera Club  
March 6: Member Workshops-Topics TBD. (IP), 7:30pm

**Competitions:**  
**December 19:** End-of-Year Project - Images with Leading Lines. Judged by EPC Members. (IP), 7:30pm  
**January 16:** Club Competition: Nature and Pictorial projected images with a Creative Pictorial category. Judged by Peter Morton. Zoom, 7:30pm  
**February 20:** Club Competition: Nature and Pictorial projected images with a Creative Pictorial Category Judged by Arik Gorban. Zoom, 7:30pm  
**March 20:** Club Competition: Nature and Pictorial projected images with a Creative Pictorial Category Judged by Alan Bogard. Zoom, 7:30pm ■



Winter volunteer stewardship in Essex County Branch Brook Park





**Department of Parks,  
Recreation & Cultural Affairs**  
155 Prospect Avenue, Suite 100  
West Orange, NJ 07052  
[www.essexcountynj.org](http://www.essexcountynj.org)

**Be a Fan and Follow Us**



Essex County Arts



@essexarts

### 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](mailto:essexarts@parks.essexcountynj.org)

The Essex County Division of  
Cultural and Historic Affairs

PUTTING **ESSEX COUNTY** FIRST

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER WITH SOY INKS.

Presorted  
Standard  
US Postage  
Paid  
Permit No. 360  
Newark, NJ

PUTTING **ESSEX COUNTY** FIRST

## NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

2024 | **25** SEASON

TAKE A **MUSICAL**  
**JOURNEY**  
WITH US!

### UPCOMING CONCERTS IN NEWARK

*The Muppet Christmas Carol in Concert*

**Dec 7** | NJPAC at 3 pm & 7:30 pm

*Handel's Messiah*

**Dec 22** | Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart at 7 pm

*Jean-Yves Thibaudet Plays Ravel*

**Jan 9 & 11** | NJPAC at 1:30 pm & 8 pm

*2025 Lunar New Year Celebration with Xian Zhang*

**Jan 25** | NJPAC at 7:30 pm

*Holst's The Planets—An HD Odyssey*

**Jan 31–Feb 1** | NJPAC at 8 pm

*Warner Bros. Discovery presents*

*Bugs Bunny at the Symphony*

**Feb 15** | NJPAC at 8 pm

*Brahms and Chopin*

**Feb 20** | NJPAC at 1:30 pm

**GET TICKETS!**

**1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) | [njsymphony.org](http://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.

