



February 2021

QUARTERLY

A Publication of the Borough of Highland Park

GREETINGS

from the Mayor



Dear residents,

It's my pleasure to formally welcome you to a new communications vehicle we've undertaken in 2021, the Highland Park Quarterly – a limited run 4-page print newsletter.

The Highland Park Quarterly newsletter is designed to serve the needs of Borough residents who do not spend a lot of time on computers or visiting Facebook (or Twitter, or Instagram ...). We've been reminded during this pandemic that there are many residents who prefer print publications and we want to keep them informed and involved too. That is the reason why we're starting The Highland Park Quarterly.

This newsletter is an effort to reach you and provide information you can use, as well as updates of what's taking place around town. Please keep in mind that this is an evolving project and we welcome your suggestions for future issues! Please contact our Public Information Officer, Harry Glazer, by email at hglazer@hpboro.com or by phone at 732-819-3781 to share your ideas.

You are also welcome to mail me (or drop off) a letter, at this address (during COVID-19 times, you will find a drop box in the front of Borough Hall):

Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler
c/o Highland Park Borough Hall
221 South 5th Ave
Highland Park, NJ 08904

Wishing you a safe, healthy, and happy winter,
Mayor Gayle

Updates from the Borough Council

Building on the 2019 Master Plan update, the Borough has kicked off an effort to create a redevelopment plan for four tracts in downtown Highland Park. The Borough held stakeholder meetings in the fall with property owners and tenants in and near the areas of focus, and with residents and business owners throughout town on several other occasions. All of the input gathered will be considered before a plan gets finalized. More information on this initiative can be found on the Borough website, at: <https://www.hpboro.com/government/redevelopment>.

At the January 19th meeting the Borough Council voted to establish the Highland Park Mental Health Commission (HPMHC), whose goal will be to support the mental health and welfare of all residents. The HPMHC will facilitate the creation of a comprehensive mental health support system for the community that promotes lifelong mental wellness, educates the public, and helps the public to access the resources available in Highland Park and the nearby area.



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

at the Highland Park Community Center

The Office of Aging is gearing up to offer several more virtual programs for our residents. We are in the works of offering a Winter Concert performance that will be available via Zoom, and a link will also be included to be viewed later. We are working with NJ Hope and Healing to offer weekly call-in discussion groups, workshops etc... Please stay tuned.

COVID-19 Vaccine Pre-Registration Assistance – We are currently assisting residents who would like to register to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. If you, or someone you know does not have access to a computer or needs help navigating the registration process, we are here and happy to assist! Please call our office at 732-819-0052.



In a photo taken before COVID 19 arrived in our area, standing together after a meeting were (left to right) Kimberly McGraw, Sr Program Coordinator, Highland Park Dept of Aging; Highland Park Councilwoman Stephanie Kim Chohan, Council Chair of our Health and Human Services Committee; Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler; and Stephanie Hunsinger, AARP NJ State Director.

FREE Tax Assistance is available and open to the public sponsored by the HP Department of Aging and United Way. If you made LESS than \$65,000 in 2020, you may file for FREE with one of our IRS Certified Volunteers. This is by appointment ONLY February 1st thru April 15th. Please call 732-819-0052 to make an appointment and for more detailed information. You must have the following information available: 2020 W2 and 1099, Photo Identification, Social Security Card and Copy of last year's tax return.

We are delighted to share very exciting recent news. Last fall, Highland Park became the first Middlesex County municipality to be named an AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities. Less than 500 communities nationwide have earned this distinction. Enrollment in the AARP Network of Age Friendly States and Communities provides communities with the resources to become more age-friendly by tapping into national and global research, planning models, and best practices.

REMINDERS

- ✓ **Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period** is from January 1 – March 31. If you're enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan or switch to Original Medicare (and join a separate Medicare drug plan) once during this timeframe.
- ✓ During these troubling times the Borough's social worker, Nicole Huff, is available to assist residents. She can be reached at 732-819-0052, ex 3115, or nhuff@hpboro.com.
- ✓ For more information on Office of Aging's services, please call Kimberly A. McGraw at 732-819-0052, x3116 or send her email at kimberlymcgraw@hpboro.com.
- ✓ Follow us on Facebook @ **Highland Park Department of Aging**

Highland Park Recreation's Spring Programming will begin March/April and include youth baseball and softball, travel baseball, flag football, soccer training, track & field, Girls on the Run, art classes, coding, and theater. Adult programs will include 2 fitness classes, open soccer, and open basketball.

HP Summer Camps – registration is "open" for Summer 2021 for Day Camp, Sports Camp, and Theater Camp. Join in for summer fun with your friends, classmates, and neighbors!

We are so delighted with our Seasonal Recreation Staff! Most of our staff has grown up playing and participating in our programs, and now as teens, they



work with the upcoming children and their parents, mentoring and teaching, as well as learning the responsibilities of having a 1st job! As most of our staff will move on to college/work and beyond, these and our summer camp counselor positions become available seasonally. Please check the employment page of the borough's website, or contact us!

If you have a business that would like to be a sponsor for our programs or events, please let us know. This helps provide much needed funding for providing quality programs at a reasonable cost to the participants. Sponsorships also help to fund our scholarship program. If you want your business name/logo on team uniforms, publications, and or a banner at games or an event, please let us know!

Scholarships - All Youth Recreation Programs are available at a reduced fee of 40% of the program cost for ALL families that are eligible for free or reduced lunch! Please contact the office for more information.

We at HP Recreation are so glad to serve the community of Highland Park! If you have any questions, suggestions, or need further information, please contact:

Recreation/Arts Coordinator
Andrea Costas
acostas@hpboro.com
732-819-0052, x3113 or 732-819-0411

**Community Services Asst/
Recreation**
Kimberly McGraw
kmcgraw@hpboro.com
732-819-0052, x3117 or 732-819-0411

Register for recreation programs
www.highlandparkrec.com

Join us on Facebook @
[highlandparknjrecreation](https://www.facebook.com/highlandparknjrecreation)

To be included in our future email correspondence for recreational programming, please email hprecreation@hpboro.com

at the Highland Park Public Library



Highland Park Public
Library

Are you getting cabin fever? Join the Highland Park Public Library for virtual programming you can do together with other people. Romance is in the air when Books and Brews Together We Read meets via Zoom, Thursday, February 25 at 7:00pm and reads Kate Clayborn's Love Lettering. Copies will be available prior to the discussion on eLibrarynj.com and physical books will be available from the library. Virtual Books and Brews will meet again on Thursday, March 25 at 7:00pm.

Poet Maxine Susman will be reading new poems on Thursday, February 18 at 7:00 pm and conducting a writing workshop on Monday, February 22 at 10:45am, both via Zoom. Virtual Writers' Circles will meet Thursdays, February 4 and March 4 at 6:00pm. And of course, we'll continue to share story-times and book discussions, and poetry readings, historical talks and community conversations, crafts (for all ages!) and more.

We're continuing to provide online holds on materials, downloadable ebooks and audiobooks, and assistance with all of your research and technology needs! Find more information and full listings of programs, services and resources--available in-person and online--at www.hpplnj.org.

Library staff can also always be reached by email highlandparklib@gmail.com and by phone (732-572-2750). Our year-round weekday hours are Monday & Thursday 10am-9pm and Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 10am-5pm.



Updates from the Department of Public Works

**** NEW ** Bulk Collection By-Appointment Program**

Following a successful trial last year, under difficult circumstances, the Borough is pleased to announce its new bulk collection by-appointment program for 2021. Pick-ups will be scheduled on Wednesdays during the months of April, May, June, September and October.

To make an appointment or if you have questions, please call the Department of Public Works at 732-247-9379.

Each household may request up to two bulk collections per year. An additional pick-up date may take place in September or October to coincide with the townwide yard sale weekend, provided that the COVID-19 pandemic permits scheduling the sale in 2021. Details on the program, including what constitutes acceptable bulk waste, can be found on our website here: <https://www.hpboro.com/bulkcollection>

NEWS

from the Highland Park Police Department



The Highland Park Police Department is pleased that HPPD officers have begun receiving COVID-19 vaccinations. Youth Officer Brian O'Mara and Det. Sean McGraw were excited to be some of the first to receive the vaccine alongside other Highland Park Police Officers. They are thankful for all who made it possible.

They are also pleased to introduce four newly hired police officers to the community.

Ptl. Shakiyla Brown graduated the Essex County Police Academy in March of 2020. She joins us from the New Jersey Institute of Technology Police Department where she served as an officer. She is a graduate of University High School in Newark, and is currently enrolled at Rutgers University finalizing her Bachelors in Psychology.

Ptl. Theo Richards graduated the Essex County Police Academy in 2016. He graduated as a Platoon Leader of his class. He worked previously at the Essex County Sheriff's office, Irvington Police Department, and the East Orange Police Department. He was hired by the Highland Park Police Department in 2020.

Ptl. Louis Middleton is a proud graduate of the Highland Park High School. He was a multiple sport athlete at Highland Park High School, including leading the Owls to the football state championship game and of course beating our rivals Metuchen! He is currently assigned to the Patrol Division. Ptl. Middleton is a graduate of the Monmouth County Police Academy, most noted as graduating during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Ptl. Roland Sams attended Cape May police academy. He has been with HPPD since March of 2020. He was previously a class 2 officer with the Avalon police department. Ptl. Sams is one of our certified bicycle officers who you can catch riding throughout the Borough! Ptl. Sams enjoys working on cars, camping and spending quality time with his family.

**Please welcome Ptl. Brown, Richards, Middleton,
and Sams to the Highland Park Community!**

NEWS

from the Teen Center



Zone 6 is proud to announce a successful second year working with the teens of Highland Park. Despite the COVID virus we were able to implement programming to help the members of our community.

We were able to create a safe space for our students to use the internet for school, exercise, and have mentoring with the director Ashton Burrell. With the help of our local community we were also able to run two successful holiday programs providing food for Thanksgiving and Christmas. With the help of HP Gives a Hoot and donations from McFoods we have been able to create a Food Pantry that continues to run every Tuesday from 10am to 12pm at our center, which is open to all residents, young and old.

In 2021 we are currently working on a Lending Library Project, an annual Zone 6 day in June, increased outdoor programming and student support, and a continued food pantry program. Visit us at 600 Benner Street for more information or follow us on Facebook at the Zone 6 HP Teen Center!



ESSENTIAL

Services



Highland Park Gives a Hoot is a nonprofit fund created by the Borough of Highland Park to contribute to the wellbeing of our children in need. They provide summer camp scholarships to the Highland Park Summer Camp and weekly groceries to families in need of support. Teens can pick up groceries, every Tuesday from 10:00-11:00 a.m. at the Zone 6 Teen Center, 600 Benner St., Highland Park, NJ.

To make a tax free donation, please mail or drop off a check to the Borough of Highland Park, 221 South 5th Ave, Highland Park, NJ 08904. Please write "HP Gives a Hoot" in the memo line.

For more information about or programs please visit <https://www.hpboro.com/hpgivesahoot> or call Monica Jackson, Borough Communications Coordinator, at 732-819-3786.

The Highland Park Community Food Pantry is a volunteer run organization that was established in 2000 to provide non-perishable food to anyone in need of food or who is food insecure.

If you are interested in volunteering or making a donation, please email highlandparkfoodpantry@gmail.com or Nicole Huff at 732-819-0052, x3115.

For more information, please visit our website at www.hpboro.com/foodpantry.

To access the food pantry, visit the Highland Park Community Center, 220 South 6th Ave, Highland Park, NJ on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month from 9:00-10:45am/6:00-7:00 pm and on the second and fourth Saturdays from 9:30 - 10:30am.

If you have an emergency food situation outside of normal distribution days/times, please contact Nicole Huff at 732-819-0052 during normal business hours. Outside of regular business hours EMERGENCIES ONLY call 908-410-7618.

Main Street Highland Park



Please help us keep our downtown strong & healthy, by shopping local. We've got a wide array of well-regarded restaurants, computer repair and clothing stores, and shops with unique offerings that make perfect gifts. You don't have to travel far to find what you need.



It may be cold out now but warmer weather is coming back soon. We invite you to use the Town Tables on South 3rd and North 4th Avenues and the outdoor dining options by many local restaurants.



from Around the Borough

The Borough congratulates Highland Park High School's Model UN and Congress club (and its faculty advisors, HPHS Teachers Adam Gold, Lindsey Wilson, and Raysa Soler), on winning the Outstanding Large Delegation award at the virtual online conference, ConnectMUN.

ConnectMUN is a virtual Model UN debate conference that asks students to take on the role of world leaders to create positive change. The HPMUNC club is led by students Gurvin Anand, Adeesa Haneef, Finn Girvan, Sofia Juliani, Jaclyn Berman, Roberto Soler, Cameron Holand, and Tara Shukla. This club has also raised over \$800 for the Highland Park Community Food Pantry this school year and conducted a variety of civic engagement activities for students.

