



August 2022

QUARTERLY

A Publication of the Borough of Highland Park



GREETINGS

from the Mayor



I was delighted to meet with Middlesex County Commissioner Director Ronald G. Rios, along with Councilman Matthew Hersh (who oversees parks and recreation), and officials from Middlesex County and Borough staff, on June 22nd as we visited the two reconstructed playgrounds located in Donaldson Park. The on-site meeting culminated the efforts my efforts with County officials, to improve and repair damage done to the park by Hurricane Ida.

Improvements include Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant playground equipment, transfer systems to help everyone access the play apparatus, a poured-in-place (soft-playground) surface to replace the wood carpet, bench pads, and fencing between the playground and parking. In total, Middlesex County contributed more than \$754,000 to the equipment and installation.

Highland Park is blessed to be surrounded by two beautiful County parks. Donaldson Park's playground has been a community favorite that was destroyed in a recent storm. This beautiful new playground is flood resilient and has already been enjoyed by so many of our children and their families.

I hope you continue to enjoy our community, our beautiful parks, and our active downtown this summer. Please stay safe.

Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler

P.S. By now, home owners should have received their annual real estate tax letter including your obligation for 2022-2023. Following our commitment to stabilize municipal taxes, this year's average increase for the municipal portion (the part of the budget your governing body can control) was only \$1.64 per month, or less than .59% over last year's taxes.



UPDATES FROM THE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Adopt-a-Drain Program: Sustainable Highland Park (SHP) is sponsoring a new volunteer initiative to help clear storm drains of debris, allowing them to function more efficiently during weather events. SHP is seeking volunteers to help clean

1-3 storm drains near their home on a regular basis which will ultimately prevent storm drain blockage which results in flooded streets. For more information and to sign-up to volunteer, please see: <https://sustainablehighlandpark.org/>

Borough-Wide Revaluation:

The Middlesex County Board of Taxation ordered

Highland Park to hold a Borough-wide tax revaluation. Borough Council authorized two resolutions related to the Borough's upcoming revaluation, one which appropriates funds in the amount of \$400,000 over the next five years to pay for the revaluation. The second resolution awards a contract to Professional Property Appraisers, Inc. who was selected via an RFP process. Once the state gives the "green light" to the agreement, the Borough will begin communications with residents regarding the revaluation process. For more information, please see: <https://www.hpboro.com/departments/tax-utility/tax-assessor>



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

at the Highland Park Community Center

Office of Aging

We've got activities for many interests!

- Fall Schedule - Exercise Classes (Exercise with Donna Chair Yoga) on Monday's from 10:00 am – 11:00 am
- Fall Schedule - ZUMBA Gold Sessions Wednesdays at 9:15 am -10:00 am & Friday's 11:00 am – 11:45 am
- Tai Chi with Beverly Spool to be held on Thursday's from 11:00 am – 12:00 noon
- Art & Painting Classes – Weekly
- FREE Blood Pressure Screenings available 1st Friday of each month 11:00 am – 12:00 noon
- On site Podiatry Appointments, 4th Thursday of every month at 1:00 pm
- Bi - weekly Afternoon Tea and Discussion Groups. See monthly calendar for listing.
- BINGO, Mah Jongg & Card Afternoons (weekly) in small group setting with reserved time slots.
- Daytime indoor and outdoor music and entertainment this spring and summer. Please see monthly calendar.
- Monthly Wellness Programs for Mind, Body & Spirit, Thursdays at 10:00 am. Sept. 1st, 10:00 am – Heathy Coping Strategies; Oct. 13th, 10:00 am – Mindfulness.

Community Services Outreach and Assistance/Reminders:

Meet with our Social Worker Nicole Huff by calling (732) 819-0052 or email nhuff@hpboro.com to schedule an appointment. You can also meet Nicole on Friday's this summer and fall at the Farmers Market from 10:00 am – 11:00 am.



Important reminder > Open enrollment is from October 15th - December 7th. During this time, people can enroll in Medicare Advantage plans and in Supplemental Medigap plans. They can also change and enroll in a Part D plan as well.

The Highland Park Community Food Pantry is held on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month 9:00 am – 10:45 am and 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm and on Saturdays from 9:30 am – 10:30 am on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of each month. For more information or for food emergencies when food pantry is not open, please reach out to (732) 819-0052 for assistance.

SAVE THE DATES

- Cornucopia Princess Lunch Cruise Trip - Wednesday, Sept. 14th, 11:00 am – 3:30 pm, \$95.00 person.
- Fall Trips to Atlantic City, PNC Art Center Fall concerts and more – Stay Tuned for listings.
- Fall Luncheon – Tuesday, Sept. 20th, 12:30 pm. Musical Entertainment: Spook Handy.
- October Luncheon – Thursday, Oct. 20th, 12:00 noon. Special Guest: Mickey Magic, Comedic Magician.

Please join us and like us on Facebook@Highland Park Department of Aging.

The Highland Park Recreation department has just finished another amazing summer at our HP Summer Camp! This summer we sold out of most of our sports camps, as well as our new Leader in Training program for our 6-8th grade campers! We also partnered with the HP Wrestling coaches, Craig Girvan and Evan Farmer-Rodgers, to provide a new, free summer wrestling program!



Now we are looking forward to our fall programs and we are excited to bring back the Youth Fall Soccer Program, NFL Flag Football, and our Youth Theater Company performing Mary Poppins Jr! Our fall adult programming is also open for registration. Don't miss out on the opportunity to play adult soccer, volleyball, men's basketball, or women's basketball for 10 sessions per program! Note that our adult, as well as our youth programs, sell out quickly and space is limited! To stay current on our programming and events visit our website at www.highlandparkrec.com or follow us now on our Facebook page at [highlandparknjrecreation](https://www.facebook.com/highlandparknjrecreation)!

Families that qualify for free and reduced lunch are eligible for a 60%



discount on all programs offered by the borough. Contact the office for more information on this program! Last but not least, we will have our Annual Halloween Party and Costume contest on October 30th! This party will be held at the HP Community Center from 1 pm to 4 pm! There will be music, food, a costume contest, and games at this free event! We look forward to seeing everyone there!

at the Highland Park Public Library



Highland Park Public
Library

Spend another one hundred years with the library! We are thrilled to announce the GRAND PRIZE of the library's Centennial Bingo Game! All participants will be entered into a raffle drawing to win--absolutely free of charge--a brand new bicycle from Highland Park's Local Bike Shop! We are so happy to be partnering with the Local Bike Shop in order to enhance your accessibility and ability to travel, as well as your impact on the environment and your local communities. All ages are encouraged to participate all year, through December 2022. Stay tuned for more fantastic programs, purchases, historical resources, activities, and more as well celebrate HPPL turning 100 years old this year. Find more details at: www.hpplnj.org/library-centennial.

This fall, the library celebrates One Hundred Years of Learning: A series of talks from experts on the arts, science, and history, with a special emphasis on Jerseyana. In addition to popular programs for adults like Crafternoons, Virtual Play Readings, Books & Brews, and the long-standing Writers Circle, we also are excited to introduce a few new adult programs including: Date with Death Club (Getting Comfortable with Death Talk); Basic Computer Skills Classes to be held in partnership with the library and the HP Community Center; and Crafter Dark at the Pride Center of New Jersey.

Be sure to check out the library's website for a full calendar of events, access to digital resources, and more information about the variety of services that we offer all year, including Notary service, HP Municipal IDs, free Internet access, printing and copying service, book group support, seed library, and more. We are here for you in-person seven-days-a-week, including evening and weekend hours. We also continue to provide contact-free pickups of craft kits, puzzles, books, movies, and magazines! Find more at www.hpplnj.org.



- Community Blood Drive - Thursday, August 25, 12:30pm-6:30pm
- Date with Death Club: Getting Comfortable with Death Talk - Thursday, September 8, 6:30pm-8:30pm
- Basic Computer Skills Class - Thursday, September 22, 6:30pm-8:30pm
- Jerseyana: Finding Local History - Thursday, October 6, 7:00pm
- Raising Our Children to be Optimistic and Constructive Contributors to Society - Thursday, November 3, 7:00pm

The library is open 7 Days a Week!
Monday 10am-9pm; Tuesday 10am-9pm; Wednesday 10am-5pm; Thursday 10am-9pm; Friday 10am-5pm; Saturday 10am-2pm through Labor Day; Sunday 1-5pm

NEWS

from the Highland Park Police Department



The Highland Park Police Department and the Safe Walking & Cycling Committee have teamed up to bring Street Smart NJ to Highland Park! Street Smart NJ is a public awareness and behavioral change pedestrian safety campaign. Since its creation in 2013, more than 200 communities have participated in Street Smart NJ.

Street Smart NJ emphasizes educating drivers and pedestrians through mass media and grassroots outreach, as well as

high visibility enforcement. Street Smart NJ complements, but doesn't replace, other state and local efforts to build safer streets and sidewalks, enforce laws and train better roadway users.

The campaign is coordinated by the North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority and is supported by federal and state funds, with additional funding/in-kind contributions from local partners, including Keep Middlesex Moving, our area's transportation management association.

UPDATES

from the Department
of Public Works

BULK WASTE PICK-UP BY APPOINTMENT PROGRAM

The Borough's bulk waste collection-by-appointment program continues through October. Pick-ups will be scheduled on Wednesdays. To make an appointment, and for more information, please call Public Works at 732-247-9379.

Each household may request up to two collections per year. There will be an additional town-wide bulk pick-up on September 13, 2022.

For information on acceptable and unacceptable items for bulk waste pick up, please see: <https://www.hpboro.com/departments/public-works/bulk-waste-collection>

The Department of Public Works also offers, at its facility on Valentine Street, a cardboard dumpster where residents can dispose of large volumes of cardboard at any point during business hours on weekdays. The dumpster is located to the left of the building.



HIGHLAND BUCKS: HIGHLAND PARK'S LOCAL GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Buy a digital HP Bucks Gift Card and support our downtown small businesses! The HP Bucks electronic gift card can be purchased online and used at many downtown stores, restaurants, and services. <https://app.yiftee.com/gift-card/hp-bucks-highland-park/>

How does it work? All you do is select the value of your Highland Bucks that you want to purchase. Then select your recipient (yourself, family, friends, etc.) and send via email or text message. The recipient can use that value to make purchases at participating Highland Bucks gift card merchants [418 Burgers, Bridge Turkish Grill, HP Farmers' Market, iBrows Beauty Studio, Linx8, Mordy's

Bakery, Pappagalo's, PatronCutz, Pino's, and Robert's Florals]. The card can be used at any location that has signed up for the program. The digital card works like a credit card and is keyed in manually into a business' POS or terminal systems as a credit card. There are no physical cards available, although the card can be printed out onto a piece of paper if you choose.

These gift cards are intended to be used in store or over the phone with the listed participating merchants. Additional businesses are being added every day! If you are a business who wants to get involved, email mainstreethighlandpark@gmail.com to get into the program. And for a limited time, for every \$40 in Highland Bucks you buy, you get \$10 in FREE extra bucks!

UPDATE

Neighborhood Preservation Program

Late last year, Highland Park was awarded a \$750k Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) grant to be used over the next five years to revitalize Woodbridge Avenue and the adjacent neighborhood. In March 2022 the Woodbridge Avenue NPP 5-year Implementation Plan was formally adopted by Mayor & Council and approved by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (NJCA). Some projects the funding is slated to be used for include grants for businesses and homeowners, improvements to Molimock-Graff Park, addition of new trees, purchase of additional trash receptacles and street furniture, commission of public art, and installation of holiday decorations.

Work related to NPP is being coordinated by Emma Von Thun, NPP Coordinator, with input from a volunteer Stakeholder Engagement Team. If you live along Woodbridge Avenue or in the neighborhood adjacent to it and would like to get involved with the NPP program, please reach out to Emma at evonthun@hpboro.com or by calling 732-287-5801.

Stephania Gonzalez Mena, the Program Manager for the Neighborhood Preservation Program in the New Jersey State Department of Community Affairs, visited the Borough on June 30th to tour aspects of the Woodbridge Ave district which are benefiting from the NPP grant. Standing together on June 30th were, left to right: Councilman Matt Hale (Council member who oversees economic development), Mayor Gayle Brill Mittler, Kahlidra Hadhazy (member of the NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team and Planning Board), Emma Von Thun (Highland Park NPP Coordinator), Stephania Gonzalez Mena, and John Marron (member of the NPP Stakeholder Engagement Team and Chair of the Highland Park Arts Commission).



FARMERS MARKET HOT PEPPER EATING CONTEST

Friday August 19
mainstreethp.org/peppers

Local daredevils are invited to the market to compete by trying the market's hottest peppers—from Highland Park's own pepper master Dave Bell of Capsaicin Chiles—in ascending order.



ARTS IN THE PARK

Sunday September 11
mainstreethp.org/artsinthepark

Join us for Highland Park's annual festival of the arts, including a juried art show, music and dance performances on multiple stages, food trucks, and more!



UPCOMING EVENTS

And be sure to keep checking mainstreethp.org for updates on upcoming Outdoor Movies, Night Owl Markets, the Window Art Walk, Townwide Garage Sale, and more!