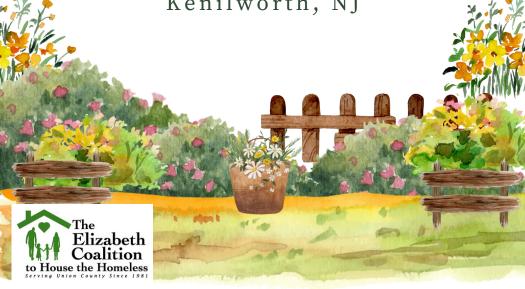


Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless

Garden Party

Tuesday, June 7, 2022 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM Galloping Hill Golf Course Kenilworth, NJ







Garden State Community Bank A Division of New York Community Bank • Member FDIC



David Levenberg and Linda Ershow-Levenberg





The mission of the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless is to serve the immediate needs of the homeless and the near homeless. We strive to empower people with the tools to transition to safe, affordable, and permanent housing. We are charged with advocating for people to achieve housing equity and participate in the larger community.

Our Values

We empower people with tools and support to transition to safe, affordable, permanent housing so that they can live healthy, productive lives.

We believe everyone deserves safe, affordable housing and should be an active part of their community.

We treat everyone with dignity and respect.

We teach people to self-advocate and empower them to become self-sufficient.

We actively build a community of support and compassion in partnership with the community, volunteers, and other agencies committed to advancing the interests of homeless and near-homeless people.



Since 1981, the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless has been a leader serving the homeless and poor in Union County, New Jersey. We provide a safety net to over 2,500 individuals every year with emergency shelter, homelessness prevention, and comprehensive services that help families work toward self-sufficiency. We have expanded our services to include treating the root causes and impacts of housing instability and have created cutting edge programs that have been adopted by several agencies throughout the State.

We work closely with our "sister agency", St. Joseph Social Service Center, to meet the needs of the poor in Union County. The symbiotic relationship with St Joseph's is a true partnership, started well before the idea of collaboration became popular. By providing a full range of complimentary services and programs, the two agencies have woven together a safety net that helps community residents meet their most basic needs. Today, the agencies continue to operate together, sharing space and clients out of a complex in Elizabeth. However, the agencies are separate 501(c)(3) legal entities with their own staff, board of directors, and funding sources.

Together, Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless and St. Joseph Social Service Center provides seamless wraparound services for the poor and the homeless in our community.



Dear Friend,



The world continues to slowly but surely opening up once again. People gather with loved ones to enjoy dining indoors, attend concerts en mass, and share the joy in what seems to be a new normal. But included in that new normal is a severe buckle in our housing crisis. The safety net of pandemic

rental assistance and eviction moratoriums have been lifted, leaving families already struggling fearful of what their future holds. Our Union County residents were already hurting prior to COVID-19. Inflation and the after-effects of the pandemic have added to the trauma, causing more residents to decide whether to pay for food or for rent this month - both with severe consequences. That is where the Coalition steps in.

With your donations, we will continue to support our families through the pain of not knowing where to turn as their worlds turn upside down. Children have a safe place to come where they can do what they do



best - be kids. Men and women are guided through the labyrinth of housing assistance by caseworkers to lead them to a path of self-sufficiency. The Coalition seeks to break down the barriers that drive people to the streets, but we still need help from supporters like you. Many of our adults are minimum wage-earning workers who cannot save enough money for a down payment on an affordable home or a deposit to secure an apartment rental. Despite federal efforts to ameliorate the poverty deepened by the pandemic, many of the families we serve are ineligible for this assistance and face a growing shortage of affordable housing. Our community has never needed our help more, and we have never needed yours more urgently.

Your support has helped rebuild lives, prevented homelessness, and built a bridge to stronger, more stable families and communities throughout our County. Since 1981, the Coalition has provided a safety net to thousands of individuals each year.

To learn more about our work, you may go to the Coalition's website at theelizabethcoalition.org



Your generous support provides emergency shelter, transitional supportive housing, and comprehensive services that helps families work toward self-sufficiency.

We thank you for your kindness and loyalty in supporting the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless.

We also congratulate our honorees for tonight's dinner and thank our sponsors and donors for their generous support.

Sincerely,

Linda Flores-Tober Executive Director



Bernice's Place

Empowering children with knowledge and self-esteem is the key to ending the cycle of housing instability and poverty.

Homeless Prevention and Emergency Shelter

Providing back rent assistance, first month's rent assistance, emergency shelter, and other services for those who find themselves in time of need.

Housing Programs

Working towards a long-term housing solution by offering a stepping stone through Hospitality Houses.

Operation Warm Heart

Catering to the most vulnerable and ensuring they have a safe, warm place to rest for the night during the harshest winter months.



6:00 PM

Cocktails and music

7:00 PM

Buffet dinner and dessert

7:30 PM

Silent auction closes

7:45 PM

Program begins with Board Member Michael Szarek, Master of Ceremonies

- Welcome Linda Flores-Tober, Executive Director and Jeff Crum, Board of Trustees Chairman
- · Awards presentation
- · Meet our Coalition community member

8:15 PM

Silent auction winners announced

8:30 PM

Music and dancing

9:00 PM

Depart for the evening





Adriana Compagnoni

Adriana Compagnoni has a very special job tending to the wellbeing of our environment as a beekeeper and proprietor of South Mountain Bees, creating

honey, soaps, waxes, and balms. As delicate and threatened members of our world, bees make plant life possible and that sustains us all. But even more, her compassion extends to the homeless women, men, and children in our communities through all of her efforts to bring awareness to the issue of homelessness.

Born in Argentina, Adriana spent her post-secondary education in the Netherlands during graduate school and as a research fellow in Edinburgh and Cambridge in the UK. While overseas, she met her husband and they moved to New Jersey to begin their professional lives.

Adriana spent more than 20 years in academia before turning her full attention to beekeeping in 2019, when she became an entrepreneur who turned a hobby into a thriving business, South Mountain Bees. She first connected with the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless through a shoe drive to benefit the organization that was put together by the kindergarten teachers of South Mountain Elementary school in South Orange.



Adriana Compagnoni (continued)

2019 was pivotal as Adriana began to rethink the mission of South Mountain Bees. She realized that she really wanted to have a charitable component to the business, knowing how important it was to her that she give back to the community. That fall, she reached out to Linda Flores-Tober to seek the Coalition's collaboration for her Giving Tuesday campaign. That led to a conversation that she still remembers. Linda shared the words of a homeless woman who sought shelter for her family. The woman told Linda that " ... when you are homeless, people act like you're invisible. They don't look at you, they don't acknowledge your presence. It makes you feel like you don't exist." Those words stayed with Adriana. She decided she wanted to make sure that the homeless are not forgotten. For Adriana, a scented soap cannot change whether or not someone is homeless but it can give them a small moment of happiness and a sense that they matter.

Adriana connects to the mission and values of the Elizabeth Coalition and one of the most significant things that she has learned is that she, too, has a voice that she can lift in support of the homeless and those struggling with poverty. Raising awareness is something Adriana works at and is inspired to do more in living by the words, "Life is today. If it is important, do it today. There is no time to waste."





Barbara Burke

There is a formidable and familiar force of a volunteer in the Elizabeth Coalition's Advocacy office and her name is Barbara Burke. The Project Gatekeeper drop-in center is where we meet people who come needing emergency shelter, help with rent or finding somewhere

to live, and a host of other case management services. It is there, in our front-line office that Barbara can be found. Though her work takes her behind the scenes, she ministers to the client file system together with precision and true compassion. It was 2003 when Barbara was asked to first come in for "about four hours" for a project that has now become nearly 20 years of volunteering at our Center.

After 31 years of teaching, much of it mathematics, in the Elizabeth Public School system, Barbara's principal decided to show their gratitude with a dedication. Barbara's classroom 102 at School 22 now bears a plaque with the inscription: "From this day forward, Room 102 is officially dedicated as the Barbara S. Burke classroom for excellence – June 17, 1999." Some say there are no coincidences – three of our staff walked the halls of School 22 and personally know Barbara's classroom.

Barbara occupies a very special place in the hearts of staff and students alike. Her compassion is inspired by parents who always looked out for the underdog. Kind



and caring, her parents taught by example. They showed their love of neighbor by sharing their food and whatever they had with their community that was the six-family building in Newark where Barbara grew up.

Barbara has a keen appreciation for how the people we serve are often invisible, neglected, and ignored. She is inspired to hope when she sees our staff, interns, and other volunteers working with the clients – listening to them and helping them when nothing else has worked. Barbara's desk is chock full of crayons and coloring sheets for the young ones whose parents are needing a home and are trying to make it right for their children by asking for help.

She shared a quote from a meditation of Richard Rohr's: "The experience of life...[is] not about being correct; it's about being connected." And Barbara is moved to help others by a very strong sense of connectedness to the homeless and those in need in our community.



Gwen Estrada

In 2002, Rev Leonard Grayson asked Gwen to volunteer for the emergency winter sheltering program, Operation Warm Heart. She agreed and continued as Coordinator for the church's chapter until the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted all activities. It was a labor of love, not without some challenges, but always with love.

Gwen is a licensed minister at Liberty Baptist Church in Elizabeth. Under her leadership, she transformed the Operation Warm Heart program at her church to have a homelike atmosphere. Guests had access to a TV, and church volunteers prepared warm food and desserts in the evening followed by hot breakfast in the morning. Gwen was available for guests to share their stories, where she would offer a listening ear and an encouraging word.

Gwen's good deeds extend outside of her church. She also ministers the Word of God and Communion at Brother Bonaventure assisted living in Elizabeth for several vears.

Gwen graduated from Abraham Clark High School in Roselle. One week after graduation, she started working for Federal Government. She continued to work for Drake College of Business in Elizabeth for 18 years as a Business instructor, and other schools in New Jersey and New York. She held various positions in private industry.

Gwen received her Bachelor's degree in Theology in



Gwen Estrada (continued)

2006 and is a certified Notary Public. She attended Union County College and received an Associate's Degree in Social Science, and received hospice training to minister to patients.

Currently, Gwen is retired and assisting her siblings in taking care of their 96-year-old father.







Rev. Joy Mounts

Reverend Joy Mounts, Associate Minister of First Congregational Church of Westfield, was called to ministry by a very real sense of caring and compassion.

For Reverend Joy, serving truly

is love in action. She spent a good part of her youth living abroad and throughout the United States. It was then that her parents motivated her to learn about the places they lived in and encouraged her to understand systemic social problems such as material poverty and homelessness.

When Reverend Joy was first called to FCC of Westfield, she connected with FCC member Donna Grozuczak, a long-time board member of the Elizabeth Coalition and advocate for the marginalized in our communities. Donna inspired Reverend Joy to get involved in the work of serving the homeless.

Outreach is a fundamental value of the First
Congregational Church of Westfield and is clearly at
work within the Youth Fellowship to which Reverend
Joy is drawn in her role as Associate Minister. The
youth embark on mission trips all over the country but
also very close to home in places like the Elizabeth
Coalition to House the Homeless. Over the course of
nearly ten years, FCC of Westfield's Youth Fellowship,



Rev. Joy Mounts (continued)

Deacons, and Board of Outreach Ministries have been hosting a super bowl party for the guests in Operation Warm Heart, the winter shelter program of the Elizabeth Coalition. Reverend Joy is moved by their sensitivity for the homeless even as they grapple to understand why there is such a thing as homelessness. Many of the youth have since gone into the helping professions, which speaks to their compassion.

The wider congregation of FCC of Westfield also gets involved with preparing Thanksgiving baskets for the families of the Elizabeth Coalition as well as organizing collections of hats, gloves, scarves, clothing items, gift cards, make sandwich bags to make an impact on food insecurity, and just about anything they are called upon to do to help out their homeless sisters and brothers. The First Congregational Church of Westfield is a most willing and true friend of the homeless and the materially poor of our community.

Reverend Joy believes God calls us to care for each other. She shared a certain verse that reassures her in her life journey: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)





Kevin Mahoney

Since 2008, after Kevin retired from his role as Director of Community and Government Affairs with Verizon, he began volunteering with the Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless. From then until now, Kevin has volunteered his time

and talent as a handyman ministry, keeping our Hospitality Houses in good repair as well as attending to the needs of the families who have come to stay with us. Kevin's exposure during his tenure in Community and Government Affairs to the impact non-profits were having on the underserved communities of New York City made him all the more aware of his desire to become a volunteer in New Jersey when he retired. Kevin has been a prayer answered for his homeless and near-homeless neighbors in Union County. He asks the question, "What would Jesus do?" to help him on his path. He is also inspired by the good works of the family and friends in his life, especially by the commitment Nancy, his wife, has made to Family Promise, an agency also working with the homeless in our communities.

Kevin relates to the homeless as a friend by responding with humanity and compassion to the struggles that led to their homelessness as well as their hopes and dreams of living independently one day. Both Kevin and his wife, Nancy, also minister to our community members who are struggling to find stable housing through their volunteer work with Family Promise.



Kevin Mahoney (continued)

There, they share in the journey of the families that come into that program and care for their well-being even after they have moved on from the temporary shelter. There is a special relationship. Together, they put their faith into works by sharing their blessing with others. Kevin is particularly impacted by the knowledge that some of the people he works with are just one unexpected bill from being homeless.

Kevin's favorite memory of the Elizabeth Coalition also happened to be his first day as a volunteer. He had called Sister Maryanne Tracey, SC, to ask if the Elizabeth Coalition had any volunteer opportunities. Sister Maryanne said, "I'll see you tomorrow." When Kevin showed up, she proceeded to hand him a key ring with about 30 keys on it and said, "These are yours." That is where it all began.

Kevin shared this quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson which he believes applies to all those being honored today: "To laugh often and much; to appreciate beauty; to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition; to know that even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded in life."





Paresh Patel

Paresh Patel is the owner and manager of the Elizabeth hotel the Efficiency Inn, which serves as an emergency shelter for many of the homeless in Union County with nowhere else to go. His hotel is an example of what hospitality means in action.

Paresh Patel was born and raised in Gujarat, India. He and his wife, Bhavi, have three children and together, they have spent the past 13 years managing the Efficiency Inn. They most recently completed a major renovation to the hotel's interior and exterior. Paresh has been a trusted business professional that we turn to when our clients need a safe place to stay. He first met Ana Hernandez in our Advocacy Office when he began his ownership of the hotel and began accepting our clients with much accommodation soon after.

When meeting Paresh, you are struck by a vibrant personality but also by a person with unassuming compassion for people that is faith-inspired. His values of helping and supporting people who are struggling in both the U.S. and in India are informed by a sense of responsibility and of being a good neighbor.

Over the years, Paresh has shared his faith celebration of Diwali with the Elizabeth Coalition by hosting a luncheon of thanks for our staff and students, those he works closely with in placing and serving the clients. He never imagined he would be working as closely with the homeless as he does.





Ray Tomasso, Ir.

A New Jersey native, Ray Tomasso, Jr. followed in the footsteps of his father and his uncles who established the family heating and oil business

over 70 years ago in 1946. Today, Tomasso Brothers is a heating and oil company that serves Union, Middlesex, Essex, and Somerset counties and has expanded to include air conditioning and oil tank services as well. Tomasso Brothers has worked closely with the Elizabeth Coalition for close to 20 years and has always proven to come through when we needed servicing and fuel. When Tropical Storm Ida hit New Jersey, many families in Elizabeth were overcome by flooding and ended up displaced and facing the loss of their homes and possessions. Over 700 households in one apartment complex alone permanently lost their housing. Others had basements that flooded, destroying boilers and hot water heaters. With such a demand, it seemed everywhere people turned, they couldn't find the very things they needed most.

One of the properties of the Elizabeth Coalition suffered flooding in the basement and we, too, needed to replace our boiler and hot water heater. The Elizabeth Coalition reached out to Ray and was immediately relieved to find out he had the models we needed but more than that, it was because of his kindness and compassion that he put our families at the top of his list of jobs to do. We quickly understood that



Ray Tomasso, Jr. (continued)

our families were a priority for Tomasso Brothers. It is because of his faith and his upbringing that Ray has an understanding and compassion for people just trying to make ends meet or for those who find themselves homeless and in need of help.

When not tending to the family business, Ray spends his time with family and gardening. Ray sums up an idea that serves to guide him. He says "In life, we need to be kind to everyone, no matter their station in life." Ray is willing to help those he may never meet but whose gratitude he will always receive.





Minister Sylvia Gant

Minister Sylvia Gant is a native of New Jersey who has actively volunteered for various organizations in the area. She has been a dedicated supporter of the Elizabeth Coalition's Operation Warm Heart program for several years. She has served as the lead coordinator at Bethlehem Judah Christian Fellowship COGIC, in Elizabeth, New Jersey. Minister Sylvia is also the leader of her local church's food pantry, serving residents of Union County.

Thank You for Ten Years of Dedicated Service





Your undying dedication to helping our brothers and sisters without a secure place to call home has helped to make the world a little brighter.





The Support of Our Sponsors
Helps to Make Our Work
Possible



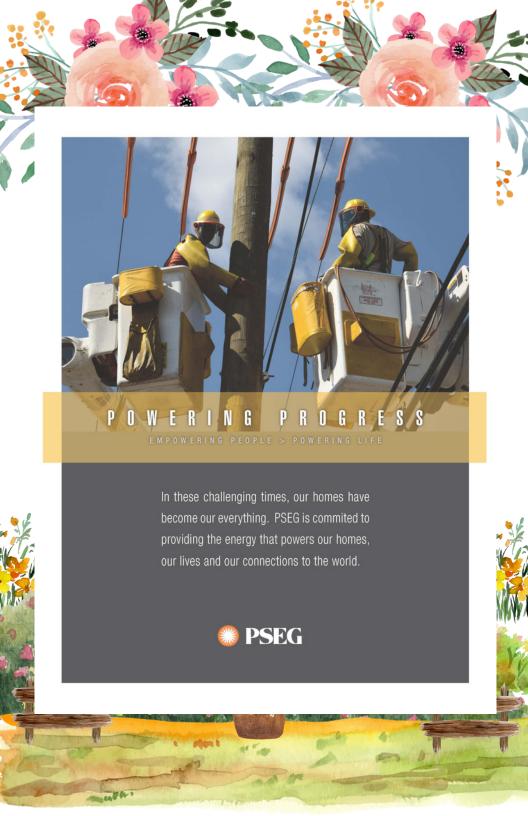




















to our honorees. Thank you for all of your hard work and dedication to the Coalition over countless years.

- Jeff and Jen Crum

THANK You For making the world a bit brighter for our brothers and sisters in Union County.

- Patricia Gallante

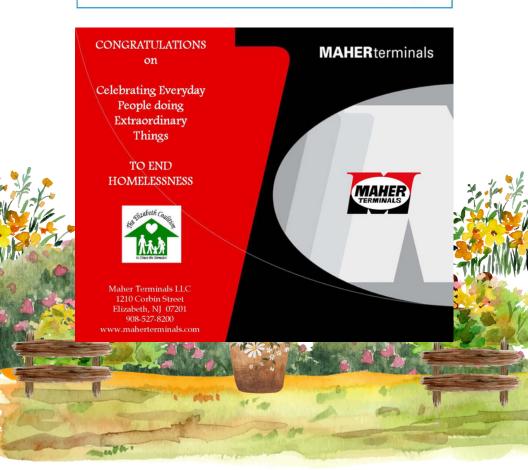


Adriana Compagnoni Barbara Burke Minister Gwen Estrada Reverend Joy Mounts Kevin Mahoney Paresh Patel Ray Tomasso, Jr. Sylvia Gant

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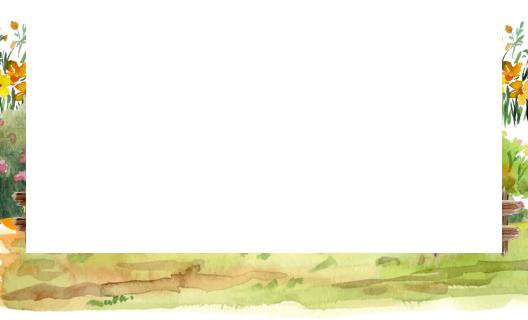


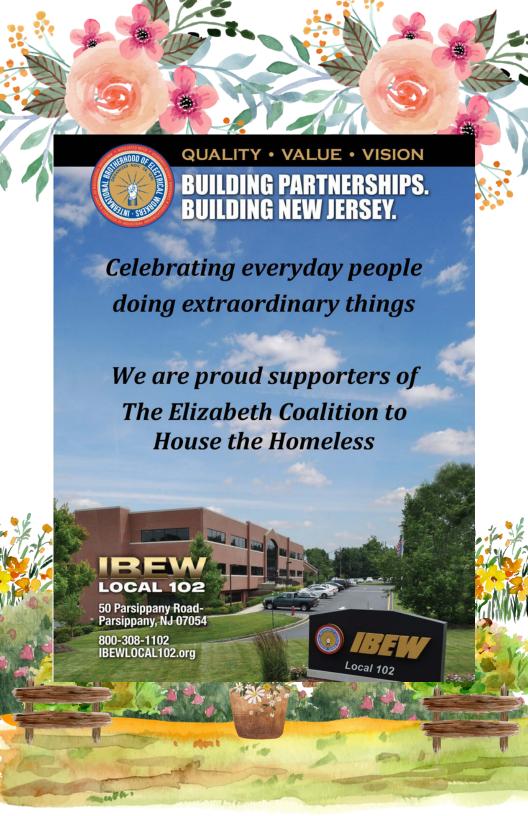




Thank you to the men and women who have dedicated countless hours in the name of service to our brothers and sisters surviving on the streets. It is through dedicated civil servants such as yourself that we will one day see an end to homelessness.

- The election fund of Councilwoman-at-Large Patricia Perkins-Auguste







Donors of this Year's Auction

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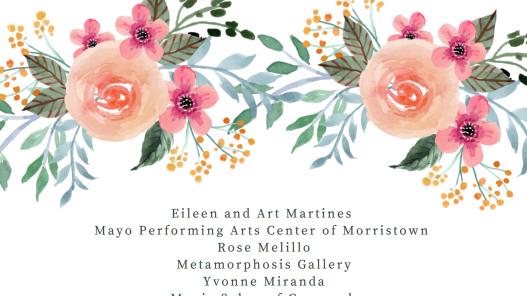
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The Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless

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