



Rahway Arts + Business Partnership Annual Report on Activities & Programs for Calendar Year 2016

Report Date: May 8, 2017

MISSION

The mission of the Rahway Arts and Business Partnership (RABP) is to facilitate the ongoing growth of Rahway as a diverse, vibrant, economically and socially sound community. The RABP develops and promotes activities and programs that encourage the long-term success of Rahway's Special Improvement District (SID), a center for business, arts and culture for the entire City. The Rahway Arts and Business Partnership is the district management corporation for Rahway's Special Improvement District.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

The programs and activities facilitated by the RABP are of two types: Special Events and Ongoing Programs. Special Events include annual events, such as The Taste of Rahway, which has been held in the spring for the past 15 years, and also special events, such as French Bistro Night, which was held for the first time in 2016. Ongoing Programs include activities which occur throughout the year, such as promotion of the SID on the RABP's website, as well as programs such as Rahway's Own, which involve gatherings, programs and displays.

MANAGEMENT RESTRUCTURE

In November 2016, the management of the RABP was restructured. The Rahway Arts and Business Partnership entered into a Shared Services Agreement with the City of Rahway, wherein the RABP and the City of Rahway agreed to share the services of its Economic Development Specialist, Ann Marie Williams, who became the full-time Managing Director of the RABP. Pursuant to the Shared Services Agreement, an annual consideration is to be paid by the RABP to the City of Rahway. Also the position of Amy Garcia Phillips, who had been working in the RABP leadership with a special focus on the arts since 2015, was redefined as Executive Director.

SPECIAL EVENTS

THE RAHWAY TASTE OF SPRING

The Rahway Taste of Spring, held on April 15, 2016, was a successful event, for the 15th year in a row. The Taste attracted 1,500 people to the Rahway Recreation Center and raised approximately \$10,000 for the RABP. This event, directed by RABP Board Member Matt Dobrowoski, is the major event of the RABP's annual fundraising programs.

Restaurateurs and purveyors of wine and spirits from Rahway and twelve surrounding communities brought tapas-sized portions of their best fare and their most popular beverages, which were enjoyed by all. Over 800 tickets were sold — in advance for \$35 and at the door for \$40. Restaurants competed for awards in categories such as Best Appetizer, Best Gourmet Entree and Best Dessert.



Wizdom Media, based in Rahway, created a logo and an advertising campaign for both The Taste of Spring and Rahway Restaurant Week

RESTAURANT WEEK

Following up on the energy and attention generated by The Taste, the RABP worked with local restaurants to organize the First Annual Rahway Restaurant Week, from April 16th to April 23rd. Fourteen restaurants participated with *prix fixe* menus that showcased their unique cuisines.

RABP Board Member Patricia Maye donated her design skills to assist the restaurants in the creation of a menu that was easy to read and provided consistency among all the participating establishments. Based on the success of Restaurant Week 2016, the RABP plans to continue this event in coming years.

THE GREAT DEALS AND MEALS CONTINUE!

DINE OUT! RAHWAY RESTAURANT Week APRIL 16-23

APRIL 16-23 • 2016

Rahway Restaurant Week will be held April 16 – April 23, 2016.
We are inviting you to visit the participating restaurants that are offering a prix fixe menu of \$40 or less for Dinner and \$25 or less for Lunch (not including drinks, tax and tip). Mark your calendars and start planning which restaurants you will want to visit that week!

Beana's Para Siempre Mexican Restaurant 988 St. Georges Ave. - Rahway (732) 381-3233	La Malinche Mexican Restaurant 1588 Irving Street - Rahway (732) 382-9550	Patric Patric Latin Bistro 169 W. Main Street - Rahway (732) 943-7531
Cubano Latin Infusion Restaurant & Lounge 1467 Main Street - Rahway (732) 489-7100	Luciano's Ristorante Restaurant and Lounge 1578 Main Street - Rahway (732) 815-1200	The Rail House Eclectic American Cuisine 1448 Irving Street - Rahway (732) 388-1699
Fiesta Cancun Mexican Restaurant 289 Main Street - Rahway (848) 666-7230	Meatballs & Brews Restaurant & Bar 1482 Main Street - Rahway (732) 381-1066	Sabor Peruano Peruvian Cuisine 1578 Irving Street - Rahway (732) 900-1396
Hugo's Restaurant Peruvian Cuisine 1585 Main Street - Rahway (732) 827-5850	Nancy's Towne House Restaurant & Bar 1453 Main Street - Rahway (732) 669-7674	The Waiting Room Restaurant and Bar 66 E. Cherry Street - Rahway (732) 382-0900
Just Plain Dave's American Restaurant 956 St. Georges Ave. - Rahway (732) 381-6049	Nigel's American Cuisine American Restaurant 85 E. Cherry Street - Rahway (732) 669-7674	

For more info visit RahwayTaste.com
Enjoy an exceptional dinner in the heart of Rahway and then catch a show at the beautiful Union County Performing Arts Center.
For show schedule, please visit www.ucpac.org.

Visit us on Facebook for more details and a listing of specials:
 [Rahway Arts & Business Partnership](https://www.facebook.com/RahwayArts&BusinessPartnership)

Rahway Restaurant Week is proudly presented by:
www.rahwayshappenings.com

AMBASSADOR-LED RESTAURANT TOURS

In 2016, as part of the RABP's ongoing efforts to support local restaurants, the RABP initiated Restaurant Tours, a program to encourage residents of the downtown apartment communities to visit and support the many downtown restaurants — especially ones they have not yet tried.

Thoughtfully selected “Ambassadors” knowledgeable about Rahway, upcoming events and points of interest in the City met pre-registered residents of Skyview, Metro Rahway, River Place and Park Square in their respective lobbies, and escorted them through the downtown to the restaurants on the Tour. Participants sampled the cuisine at each of three restaurants, and received free gifts, including swag bags and tickets to UCPAC shows.

The Ambassadors educated participants over the course of the Tour about things to do and see in the City. Local businesses, along with Rahway's Willit Concierge, assisted the RABP with the implementation of the Restaurant Tours. One evening each month, during the months of June, July and September, the RABP ran four simultaneous tours, one for each of the apartment communities.

The guests on the Tours were impressed and surprised to see all that Rahway had to offer — just a short stroll from their front door! Many participants commented afterwards that they would feel more comfortable going out on their own after having participated in the Tours. The RABP plans to continue this successful program during the summer of 2017.



Skyview



River Place



Park Square



Metro Rahway

CULTURE CRAWL

The 4th Annual Rahway Culture Crawl was held on June 17, 2016. Rahway's very own Nikola Tesla was the theme of this year's event, during which the bust of Nikola Tesla at the Train Station Plaza was re-dedicated by the Tesla Science Foundation, together with the City of Rahway and the RABP. More than 100 artists who work in many media and styles of art displayed their work in more than 60 locations throughout the downtown Special Improvement District.

This year's Tesla-themed celebration included dancers from Tesla's native Serbia, performers from the show "Nikola Tesla Drops the Beat", as well as a Theremin player. Anthony Cappetto, a 3D / 4D Chalk Artist, was hired by the RABP to produce a chalk drawing of a Tesla Coil, incorporating an actual Tesla car in the exhibit.

As in previous years, students from the Rahway School District participated in Culture Crawl. The Rahway High School (RHS) Robotics Team inspired the crowd with their robotic creations. Musicians from the RHS Orchestra performed at the Hamilton Stage. The RHS ROTC helped to kick off the Tesla dedication ceremony at the Train Station Plaza.

Culture Crawl-ers were encouraged to make their mark on several mural art projects, including one created by RABP Board Member Danni Newbury. Participating artists painted individual tiles, which will become part of a larger tree mosaic mural.

The sound of music and the spoken word as well as the work of artists of all genres filled the streets and stages of Rahway. There was so much to see that attendees commented that there was not enough time to see everything. As a result, RABP is planning to extend the hours for the 2017 Crawl.



FRENCH BISTRO NIGHT

The RABP assisted with the preparations for and the implementation of the Rahway High School French Club's "Bistro Night," which was held at The Rail House restaurant on April 25, 2016. This event was a fundraiser for the St. Jude's foundation and a learning experience for the students, as it provided them with the real-life experience of running a restaurant for an evening.

The restaurant staff donated their time to help educate and train the students. The Rahway community purchased tickets to attend this special evening, which also provided well-deserved publicity to the event host, The Rail House Restaurant.



HALLOWEEN

The 2016 Halloween event on October 29th drew thousands to the downtown. Festivities began at the Hamilton Stage with the annual costume contest that was judged by a panel selected by the RABP. The interior of the Stage was transformed into the "Haunted Hamilton." Floats led the parade to the "Trunk or Treating" at City Hall, where children were able to go from car to car, to view the decorated car trunks and receive gifts and candy.

The day ended with a "Fear-Works" fireworks display. The RABP coordinated with the businesses downtown to keep them abreast of the activities of the day, as well as to promote specials and after-parties at the restaurants.



WINTER WONDERLAND

The 2016 Winter Wonderland and Tree Lighting was the culmination of the annual calendar of events in the City.

The RABP hosted a window decorating contest to encourage all the downtown businesses to decorate their windows in winter themes to promote the City and the season. Irving Inn was the 2016 winner. The RABP will continue to support this event through planning, marketing and implementation.



ONGOING PROGRAMS

RAHWAY'S OWN CAMPAIGN

In 2013, the Rahway's Own program was conceived by two Rahway High School teachers, Patricia Volino and Daniel Garay, and the former RABP Executive Director, Rachael Faillace. Using visual branding created by Wizdom Media, this campaign of community pride and branding highlights successful native sons and daughters of Rahway whose talents, skills and hard work have made an impact on our City, our nation and our world.

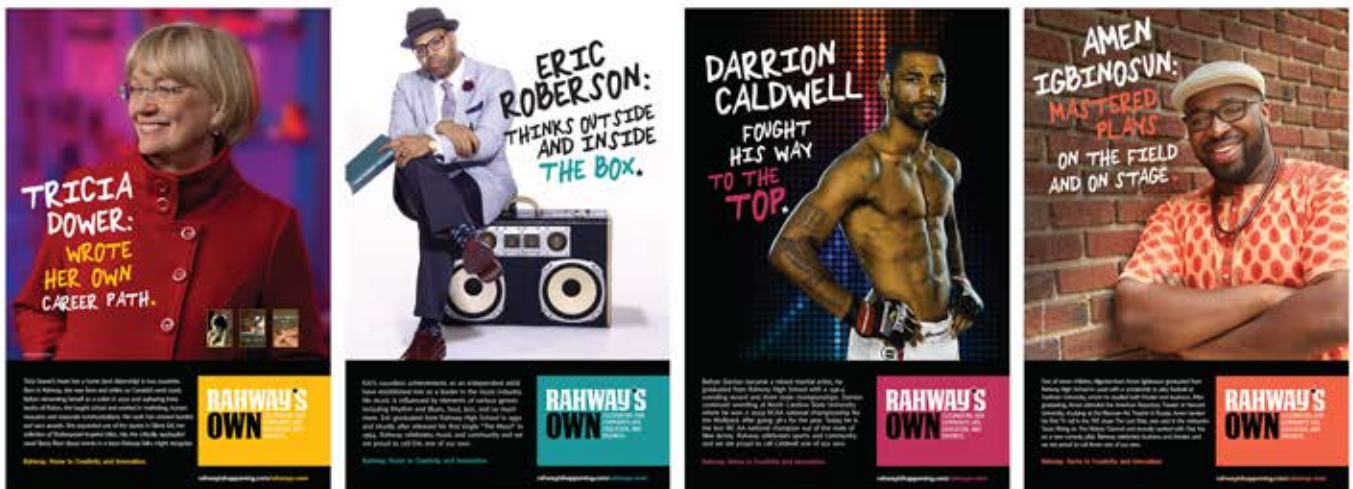
In 2016, Rahway's Own, an ongoing joint collaboration of the Rahway School District and the RABP, celebrated four Rahway residents who have made a special impact in their field: Mixed Martial Arts fighter Darrion Caldwell, Author Tricia Dower, R&B artist Eric Roberson and Actor Amen. Each of the four honorees was the subject of a beautiful poster which was unveiled at an assembly and press event in October at Rahway High School.

An additional poster, memorializing Manny Yarbrough, was also created to pay tribute to this world-renowned Sumo wrestler who passed away in 2015. This collaboration between the Rahway School District and the RABP is becoming better known which each passing year.

The Rahway's Own Class of 2016 was nominated by Rahway residents and chosen by a committee comprised of past Rahway's Own winners, community leaders and the RABP. Previous Rahway's Own honorees have included Carl Sagan and Milton Friedman.

Banners and large format posters of each of the Rahway's Own recipients are displayed in the Rahway High School hallways, inspiring students every day. Posters also are used for traveling exhibits, such as the first football game at the new stadium, as well as Culture Crawl. The posters are currently being displayed at City Hall in the conference room. A set of the posters are displayed at Rahway elementary school concerts, the Taste of Spring, the lobbies of the UCPAC and Hamilton Stage, and at other events throughout the City.

Large format posters of the Rahway's Own Class of 2016 were displayed at Menlo Park Mall and at NJ Transit rail station platforms. A permanent collection of past and present Rahway's Own honorees is displayed at the Rahway Train Station Plaza at the base of the clock tower.



SUPPORTING & PROMOTING RAHWAY RESTAURANTS

In December 2015, the RABP organized a meeting with a group of downtown Rahway restaurants to discuss advertising, events, and information sharing among themselves about the day-to-day operations of their restaurants. That meeting has grown into an ongoing, monthly gathering of more than a dozen restaurateurs and the RABP, and more importantly, it has led to the creation of the First Tuesday — Rahway Dine Out program. The participating restaurants find great value in enhanced communications and coordination among the restaurant community. In these monthly gatherings, restaurant owners and representatives share information among themselves, and also have a venue to discuss concerns, questions and ideas. The RABP has assisted in finding solutions to problems facing the restaurant community and has been a liaison for them between City agencies and the Administration.

In 2016, the First Tuesday—Rahway Dine Out initiative enjoyed its second, successful year. The premise of Rahway Dine Out is simple: We live in a town with great local restaurants, so let's enjoy them! With over a dozen restaurants participating and offering specials and incentives, Rahway Dine Out is the perfect marriage of local restaurants engaging local residents to come out and Think Rahway First! — a slogan originally developed by Shakira Johnson of Johnson PR and Events.

BUSINESS SUPPORT

Supporting and promoting the downtown businesses is a large part of the mission of the RABP, and the RABP pursues this goal in many ways. Every issue of *The Rahway Review* includes an article, prepared by the RABP, which highlights a local business.

All the businesses in the downtown are listed on the RABP website. The RABP shares information with the businesses through multi-lingual emails, and is a liaison to City agencies and Administration. The RABP has helped to make the businesses in the downtown stronger and more successful, and has been a source of information for, and a connection among, businesses and different organizations.

With the improved management structure inaugurated this year via the Shared Services agreement with the City, the RABP has been better able to help local businesses navigate through the municipal permit process. This process can be complicated for any business. The RABP has been able to act as a guide and a facilitator for new businesses as they make their way through the permit process, and to provide a more welcoming feel as well as helping new business owners avoid costly changes or delays. In December 2016, the Managing Director of the RABP helped to create new City codes and to revise existing ordinances to facilitate the opening of two unique stores in Rahway: Kitty Hall and Kat's Vintage Boutique & Chic.

NEW WEBSITE

www.RahwayIsHappening.com is the new website of the RABP. In 2015, the Rahway Arts District re-organized and re-branded to become the Rahway Arts and Business Partnership. The previous website was somewhat dated and not as user-friendly as desired. In addition, the former website did not reflect a sufficiently strong partnership with downtown businesses. The new website has areas to promote events, identify local businesses, and to post articles about Rahway.

CREATIVE RAHWAY FOR EDUCATION

Since 2014, the RABP has been an active participant in the monthly meetings of the Creative Rahway for Education Committee (CRE), a coalition of educators, school administrators, City administrators, local artists and businesses seeking to create opportunities for Rahway Public Schools students to connect with the downtown business and arts community, in order to enhance their educational experience, as well as to encourage pride in their City. The CRE group emerged from the larger town-wide Creative Rahway meeting that took place in January 2013 at the Hamilton Stage. The purpose of the meeting was to spark collaborations and germinate new ideas by bringing together stakeholders from many different parts of the Rahway community.

Rahway Public Schools student groups participate regularly in City events such as Culture Crawl and Winter Wonderland. An example of the type of activities which have resulted from the Creative Rahway collaboration is the French Bistro Night, in which Rahway High School French Club students transformed a local restaurant, The Rail House, into a French Bistro for the evening.

CONSULTATION

In October, the RABP hired an outstanding business consultant, Seanette Corkill, of Front Door Back — whose specialty is consulting with merchants to make their stores, and especially their storefronts, more attractive and appealing to patrons and therefore more successful — to provide personal on-site consultations with several downtown businesses on how to better present their businesses inside and out.

RABP staff had initially met Ms. Corkill, who has advised individual businesses and Business Districts through out the country, through DowntownNJ. Ms. Corkill and her colleague, Ann Marie Luthro, specialize in facade improvements, display windows and storefront design. They also provided constructive suggestions on how to improve upon several of Rahway's public spaces.

RABP SUPPORT OF OTHER CITY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Throughout the year, the RABP partners and supports many programs and events with the City of Rahway, the Union County Performing Arts Center, the Rahway Public Library and the Rahway Recreation Center. These same organizations in turn support the efforts of the RABP.

City events in which the RABP participated in 2016 included Big Thursday programing, culminating in the Mayor's Concert Series held in front of the UCPAC held every Thursday night in August, as well as the Fire Fly 5K Run in May, the 4th of July celebration and Foodstock held in September.

Working together with all of these organizations is what puts the "Happening" in Rahway Is Happening!

FINANCIAL REPORT

Funding for the Rahway Arts and Business Partnership comes from two sources:

- 1) a special assessment on properties within the Special Improvement District, and
- 2) fundraising events undertaken by the RABP which promote the District and its goals.

In 2016, the City of Rahway provided \$130,000 to the RABP raised from the special assessment on properties within the SID; this is the same amount the City has provided to the RABP from this funding source during the past several years. In addition, income from RABP-sponsored events in 2016 totaled approximately \$18,000; most of this was raised at the Taste of Spring.

The total amount of income received by the RABP from all sources in 2016 was \$148,000. During 2016, the RABP spent approximately \$85,000 on programming, salaries, and expenses.