



Rahway Arts + Business Partnership

Annual Report on Activities & Programs for Calendar Year 2017

Report Date: May 9, 2018

MISSION

The mission of the Rahway Arts + 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), which is the civic, cultural and commercial center of the entire City. The Rahway Arts + Business Partnership is the District Management Corporation for Rahway's SID.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

The programs and activities facilitated by the RABP are of two types: Special Events and Ongoing Programs. Special Events include once-a-year events such as the Rahway Taste of Spring, an annual event held since 2000, as well as Rahway's first Imagination Girls Art Summit, a partnership between the RABP and Someone's Daughter. Ongoing Programs include activities which occur throughout the year, such as the Rahway's Own campaign, and which involve gatherings, programs and displays.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

The RABP is a non-profit corporation, governed by a Board of Trustees as well as a representative from the City Council. Operational management of the RABP is provided by the Executive Director and the Managing Director. The services of the Managing Director are shared with the City of Rahway, by whom the Managing Director is also employed as an Economic Development Specialist. Since 2017, the RABP offices have been located in City Hall. This facilitates the efficient operation of the RABP, and enhances communication between the City administration and the RABP.

ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

IMAGINATION GIRLS ART SUMMIT *(Special Event)*

In January, the RABP Partnered with Someone's Daughter to bring approximately 90 participants to Rahway's first Imagination Girls Art Summit, for girls aged 13-17, to the Hamilton Stage. Group workshop activities included dance, art and learning the art of becoming a great DJ. Someone's Daughter is a community based non-profit organization led by women whose mission is to educate, empower and encourage young girls. They advocate for and sponsor programs which help girls achieve a high level of social, educational, cultural and spiritual well being.

CREATIVE RAHWAY FOR EDUCATION *(Ongoing Program)*

Since 2014, the RABP has been an active participant in the monthly meetings of the Creative Rahway for Education (CRE) Committee, 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 City-wide Creative Rahway Convening, held in January 2013 at the Hamilton Stage. The goal of the 2013 Convening was to inspire connections and collaborations and to generate new ideas, by bringing together stakeholders from many different parts of the Rahway community. Rahway Public Schools student groups participate regularly in City and RABP events such as Culture Crawl and Winter Wonderland.

MUNCH MADNESS SANCTIONED BBQ COMPETITION *(Special Event)*

Rahway's Munch Madness 2017 was a wildly successful event, and filled City Hall parking lot with the heady aroma of world class barbecue on Saturday, April 1st. More than 500 people attended. In 2017 the Rahway Arts and Business Partnership took over the BBQ Competition and transformed the event into Rahway's First Sanctioned BBQ Competition, which brought more than 30 Pit Masters from all over New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut. The Competition was sanctioned by The Steak Cookoff Association (SCA). The winner qualified to compete in the SCA Championship, and also qualified for the World Food Competition, which brought additional recognition to Rahway, as



Munch Madness was one of only two recognized, sanctioned 2017 events in the Northeast.

The RABP secured sponsorships from many companies including Walmart, Kingsford Charcoal, GrillGrate, J. Vrola Meat Purveyors, West Hudson Industries and Gunter Wilhelm.

The meat was donated by J. Vrola Meat Purveyors

THE RAHWAY TASTE OF SPRING *(Special Event)*

The 17th annual Rahway Taste of Spring, held on April 21, 2017, 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 Dobrowolski, is the major fundraising event held each year by the Rahway Arts + Business Partnership to raise funds for the RABP's programs and activities.

Restaurateurs and purveyors of wine and spirits from Rahway and twelve surrounding communities serve bite-size portions of their most delicious fare and their most popular beverages. Over the years, The Taste has built up a following that attracts residents from all over central NJ. The restaurateurs compete for the recognition that comes from winning "Best of" in various categories. The night ended on a lively note, with the most spirited dance party the event has ever seen. Food, music and fun define the Rahway Taste of Spring. Another year, another success!

Restaurants competed for awards in many categories, including Best Appetizer, Best Gourmet Entree and Best Dessert. This year the RABP inspired one of The Taste sponsors, Gunter Wilhelm, a German maker of high-end cutlery and cookware, to provide additional prizes for each winner: knives, engraved with both the Taste of Spring logo and the name of each winning restaurant. Gunter Wilhelm intends to continue its relationship with Rahway, the RABP and our culinary events.

The Taste has come a long way since the very first Taste of Rahway was held in the Masonic Hall in the fall of 2000, and attracted 100 visitors to sample the best of a dozen Rahway restaurants. Within a few years, The Taste had grown so popular that it filled the entire gym at the Recreation Center, and needed additional tents to accommodate more than 1,000 "Tasters." Over the years, the hard work of a dedicated Taste Committee crew has made this event possible, and made each Taste better than the year before!



A full house at the Rahway Taste of Spring 2017

TASTE OF SPRING 2017 COMPETITION WINNERS

Mulberry Street Restaurant: Best Gourmet Seafood and winner of the overall "Taster's Choice"

Dominic's Italian Restaurant: Best Gourmet Pasta

A Taste of Marina's: Best Chicken Wings

Seasons 52: Best Restaurant Dessert, Best Gourmet Appetizer and Best Table Display

Mara's Bakery Cafe: Best Bakery Dessert and Best Pulled Pork

Nygel's American Cuisine: Best Entree and Best Seafood

The World Famous Waiting Room: Best Appetizer

Laurie's Creative Cakes: Best Metro Bakery Dessert

Rosie's Cafe: Best Side Dish

Pinho's: Best Gourmet Bakery Dessert

Hugo's: Best Ethnic Food

Beana's Para Siempre: Best Mexican Food

III Amici Ristorante: Best Pasta



At the Taste of Spring, Vendors enjoy the opportunity to show off their goodies

RESTAURANT WEEK *(Special Event)*

Following up on the success of Restaurant Week 2016 — our first ever! — and the energy and attention generated by the Rahway Taste of Spring, the RABP organized the Second Annual Rahway Restaurant Week, beginning the day after The Taste, from April 22nd to April 29th. Eleven restaurants participated: Beana's Para Siempre, Meatballs & Brew, The World Famous Waiting Room, Cubanu Latin Fusion, Hugo's Restaurant, Luciano's Ristorante, Nancy's Townhouse, Taste of Marina's, The Irving Inn, and Patria — with *prix fixe* menus showcasing their unique cuisines. Restaurant Week was promoted by the RABP using a logo and advertising campaign created by Rahway's Wizdom Media to encourage patrons to enjoy Rahway's unique restaurants. RABP Board Trustee Patricia (Maye) Kozlowski 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.

CULTURE CRAWL 2017 *(Special Event)*

The 5th annual Culture Crawl was held on September 23rd, on a perfect, blue-sky, late-summer day, from 1-6pm. More than 5,000 attendees enjoyed music, arts, food and more, in an open-air arts and music festival which spanned the entirety of the Special Improvement District. Culture Crawl has increased in scale each year — with more attendees, more performers, more stages and a longer duration with each successive Culture Crawl. This year over 100 artists participated with over 30 musicians and other performers.

Downtown Rahway was organized into ten zones for Culture Crawl 2017, which included three Main Music Stages, and 15 performance venues, in all — which included The Art Stage, the Train Stage, the Harley Stage, the Café and the Fazioli Room at the UCPAC and several venues at the Hamilton Stage.

The main stage at Hamilton was transformed by a performance by Grounded Aerial, an aerial dance company whose performance inspired "ooh's" and "aah's". Other memorable events included the Rahway Reel Short Film Festival, and an Artful Kids section dedicated to the younger artists — with a beer tent for their parents. Hannum's Harley-Davidson hosted a "Bikes as Art" exhibit while a Chinese Cultural Festival took place on Main Street. The OMG! Creation Station kept festival goers busy with many art projects. On Cherry Street, RABP Trustee Danni Newbury led artists of all ages in a Community Tree Tile project; over the following month the tile project was completed, and the final product was installed adjacent to the Cherry Pit building.

The programming for Culture Crawl 2017 built upon the foundation and experience of four prior years of Culture Crawl. This year RABP introduced, for the first time, two shuttles and several port-a-potties. Prior years' marketing campaigns were reconceived, to better illustrate the diversity of experiences offered at the Culture Crawl 2017. Also for the first time, the RABP arranged for a large SkyMall Banner, on display at Menlo Park Mall in Edison for the month leading up to the event.

In addition to the food and the fun for all ages, Culture Crawl showcases Rahway's businesses, by situating artists in front of stores, throughout the Special Improvement District. Feedback and positive

responses from last year's Culture Crawl inspired the RABP to schedule this year's event on Saturday afternoon, rather than Friday night, to extend the duration to five hours, rather than three hours as in previous years, to expand the footprint of Culture Crawl, and to increase the number of participating artists.



*OMG Creation Station at
City Hall Plaza*

CULTURE CRAWL 2017



Jazz musician Leon Pressley performing on Cherry Street



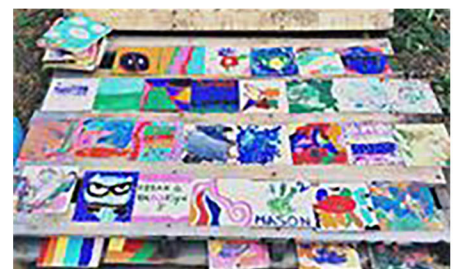
The Hannum's Harley-Davidson music stage, one of three main stage performing venues



Grounded Aerial performing at Hamilton Stage



The Rahway Reel Short Film Festival was part of Culture Crawl



Community Tree Tile Project

RAHWAY'S OWN *(Ongoing Program)*

In 2013, after hearing one too many times "Rahway? Isn't that where the prison is?" Rachael Faillace, former Executive Director of the RABP, and Samson Steinman, former Mayor of Rahway, decided Rahway needed some rebranding. Knowing how much Rahway has to offer, they, together with several Rahway School District (RSD) teachers — including Patricia Volino-Reinos (now RHS Vice Principal) and Daniel Garay — developed a campaign to celebrate Rahway, and so, Rahway's Own was born!

This celebration of community pride highlights successful native sons and daughters of Rahway whose talents, skills and hard work have made our City, our nation and our world a better place. The first honorees — the Rahway's Own Class of 2014 — included Nilola Tesla, Carl Sagan, Daphne Lee, Antonio Garay and Ike Igbinosun.

In 2017, the RABP and the Rahway School District (RSD) celebrated five Rahway residents who have made a special impact in their field: Daryl Dixon, Musician and Arranger; Fred Stueber, Wrestling Hall of Fame Coach; Jim Kennedy, Assemblyman (NJ 22nd District) and Mayor of Rahway from 1990 to 2010; Ken Miller, Scientist and Author; and Dion Dawkins, NFL Rookie and Offensive Tackle for the Buffalo Bills. Each of the five honorees was the subject of a beautiful poster, celebrating his achievements. The posters were unveiled at an assembly and press event in October at Rahway High School.

An additional poster was created to honor the ongoing accomplishments of Daphne Lee, Rahway's Own Class of 2014, who was crowned Miss Black USA in August 2017. Darrion Caldwell, Rahway's Own Class of 2016, was also honored for his accomplishments in the world of Mixed Martial Arts, with a proclamation from the City Administration. Caldwell became the 2017 Champion of the Bantamweight Division of Bellator MMA, the second largest mixed martial arts promotion in the world.

Rahway's Own is becoming better known with each passing year. The Rahway's Own Class of 2017 was nominated by Rahway residents, and chosen by a committee comprised of past Rahway's Own winners, community leaders and the RABP.

The Rahway's Own campaign has grown. The RSD continues to use the Rahway's Own concept to inspire students of all ages. Every year, as part of the District's participation in the National Council of Teachers of English National Day of Writing, Rahway's kindergarteners create a "Rahway's Littlest Own" poster — inspiring them to dream about their futures and how they might someday become one of "Rahway's Own." Seventh graders and ninth graders in the RSD also take part in Future Rahway's Own projects. In seventh grade, students research the career paths that interest them and in ninth grade, they set goals to make those dreams come to fruition.

After four years of college as a music major at Jersey City State College, Rahway's Darryl Dixon traveled to Hollywood, California to "get his feet wet" in the music business. After working with the Richard Pryor Show band at NBC, he was contacted by George Clinton to tour with Parliament Funkadelic and later started working with Mulady where the Chapeau Horn Section was formed, a partnership that has lasted over 3 decades. Darryl's playing, writing and horn arrangement credits put him amongst some of the biggest and most well-respected names in music, such as Akia Kiki, Christine Aguilera, Marshmello, The Police, The Rolling Stones, and many others.

RAHWAY'S OWN
CELEBRATING OUR COMMUNITY, ART, EDUCATION, AND BUSINESS.

Rahway. Home to Creativity and Innovation.
rahwayplshappening.com/rahwaygo-on

Before attending Brown University, earning a PhD and becoming a Professor of Biology, Dr. Kenneth A. Miller graduated from Rahway High School as student government president and a varsity swimming record holder. Among his many accomplishments, Miller has co-authored an widely-used biology textbook, and his research work on cell membrane structure and function has produced more than 60 scientific papers and reviews in leading journals. Miller is known for his appearances on The Colbert Report and the PBS science program NOVA in support of science and the popularization of scientific concepts.

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James J. Kennedy has called Rahway home for over 40 decades. In 1970, Kennedy was elected to the first of four consecutive terms as Mayor of Rahway. From his first day in office, economic development was a hallmark of the Kennedy administration. His Rahwaygo-on/On Your Mark initiative is a model for smart growth. His many achievements include the construction of an award-winning high school and arena, the Rahway Memorial Center, a new public library and the historic Stage. He formed the Rahway Arts Council, a collection of entrepreneurial opportunities and businesses, to create a hub of arts, education and activity. In 2016, Jim Kennedy was elected to the New Jersey General Assembly where he represents the 12th legislative district.

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2012 Rahway High School graduate and Temple Owls star Dion Dawkins was selected by the Buffalo Bills with the 101st pick in the second round of the 2017 NFL Draft. Starting 41 of 44 games at Temple, he was named a First Team All-American Athletic Conference selection. Dawkins received an invitation to the Senior Bowl where he started at guard for the North team. Dawkins was ranked the second best guard in the draft by Sports Illustrated before the NFL Draft.

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Four of the six "Rahway's Own" posters for 2017

RAHWAY'S OWN RISING STARS (Ongoing Program)

In May 2017, the RABP launched a new category of Rahway's Own: Rising Stars. These are elementary, middle school and high school students who were nominated by their principals for their outstanding achievements. A poster honoring the seven Rising Stars was created by Wizdom Media and unveiled at a celebration in May of 2017. This year we celebrated these extraordinary students who have done extraordinary things:

- Jordan West, track and field star, outstanding student, and one of Rahway's High School's greatest athletes.
- Jordan Williams from the 7th and 8th Grade Academy, who is currently making his professional debut as "Young Simba" in Disney's Lion King National Tour.
- Camila Blandon, from Grover Cleveland, an outstanding student and a role model to other students.
- Connor DesRochers, whose theatrical talents, creativity and leadership have been an asset to the Madison School.
- Ajanae Thompson, of the Roosevelt School, a track star who maintains honor roll grades.
- Kaitlyn Vieira, from Franklin Elementary School, an exemplary student who mastered the art of leadership and founded the school's Peer Mediator Program while keeping high honors.
- Mychaela Fields, of St. John Vianney, started running track in kindergarten and continues to win championships; she also plays violin, and is both cheerleader and a Girl Scout.

The Rahway's Own and the Rising Star posters can be seen on the walls of Rahway High School, as well as under the clocktower at Rahway Train Station Plaza. The posters were also displayed at Menlo Park Mall. A mobile version of the posters, on display at the Cherry Pit building on Cherry Street, is presented at school concerts, the Taste of Spring and anywhere the RABP is able to display our pride in Rahway's rich history as a launching pad for creativity and innovation.



The poster celebrating the first class of Rahway's Own Rising Stars

ADOPT-A-PLANTER *(Ongoing Program)*

The Adopt-a-Planter Program is a collaboration with the DPW, City Administration, Rahway Garden Club and community members and businesses. In May 2017, the City purchased new planters to replace the concrete ones which have in place for years throughout the District. The new planters — in a variety of shapes, sizes and colors — feature an internal reservoir that stores water, so that it's not necessary to water as often. This makes the plants healthier and happier. The new planters help make our streets more attractive in a sustainable way that saves water and money, both. The Rahway Garden Club selected a mix of ornamental and flowering plants that would be attractive and hardy enough to flourish along our City streets where the planters are located.

DPW purchased the plants and assisted with the planting.

Community members and local businesses adopted individuals planters in the downtown by installing the initial plants and then making a commitment for their ongoing care for the rest of the growing season. Each planter was marked with a sign indicating the name of its "adopter." Even the Rahway Ambassa-dogs, Bell and Luna, adopted a planter! Bob Markey, a longtime resident of the district and a Master Gardener, provided video tutorials, showing how to prune the vegetation to ensure the planters look beautiful all season long. This initiative culminated with a picnic breakfast in October as a "thank you" to those who participated.



YARN ART! *(Special Event)*

In 2017 the RABP worked with Linda Grant, a local artist and Rahway Rec Center instructor, to create YARN ART! — a pop-up art display created with brightly colored yarn. YARN ART! is a fun, low-tech and inexpensive form of civic art. It is a temporary art installation that readily adorns any surface or structure, adding color and excitement. When the yarn begins to look worn, it is cut off and removed.

The YARN ART! project was implemented first at City Hall Plaza, in June; and then again at Train Station Plaza, in August. Both installations were very well-received by the community and added color and interest to the District. The children attending the Storytime on the Go program particularly enjoyed looking at all the tableaux, including a Harry Potter themed area and a chair adorned with butterflies.

The RABP received a generous discount on supplies from Jo-Ann's Fabrics in Rahway, in addition to donations made from various community sources. Linda received assistance from community members Kathlene Brindle and Marlene Olsen-Hamm, as well as from knitting groups from Metuchen and Fanwood. The yarn art was removed in November to make space for Winter Wonderland.



RABP sponsored YARN ART!

Helpers enjoying the fruits of their labor



Left to Right: Amy Garcia Phillips; Artist, Linda Grant; Ann Marie Williams; Kathy Brindle in front of City Hall

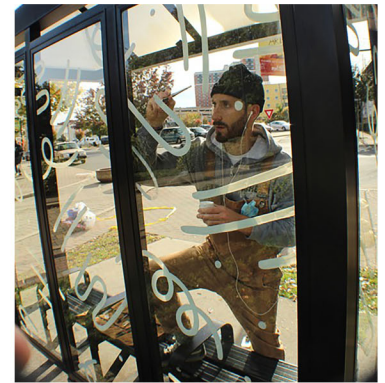
YARN ART!



SPLASH OF COLOR BUS MURALS *(Special Event)*

In 2017, the RABP hired Joe Geis, a Rahway artist, to add a "Splash of Color" in the form of custom-designed murals, to the three bus shelters located in downtown Rahway, as part of the RABP's ongoing commitment to make the District more attractive in all ways, great and small. Mr. Geis is an accomplished artist, traveling and working all over the world, but his hometown of Rahway holds a special place in his heart.

The murals were installed one at a time, on each of the three bus shelters. The first step was a thorough cleaning of the shelters, by Concord Commercial Cleaning, a Rahway cleaning service. The mural at the double shelter beneath the train trestles on Irving Street was completed on May 28th. The mural at the shelter on Irving Street between Elm and Elizabeth Avenues was completed on July 14th. The mural at the shelter on Main Street near Bridge Street was completed on November 4th.



Artist Joe Geis creating the "Splash of Color" bus stop murals

STORYTIME ON THE GO *(Ongoing, Initiated in 2017)*

Storytime on the Go, a weekly story time for young children and their parents, was first "brainstormed" by the RABP Executive Staff while attending a conference in late 2016. It was conceived as a way to accomplish three worthwhile goals, simultaneously, while also having fun: to attract attention to the Farmer's Market at Train Station Plaza, to facilitate the Rahway Public Library (RPL) reaching outside its building and into the community, and to make the District more inviting for families. The Rahway Recreation Center was also an important partner in this program, providing foam cushions for the children and parents to sit on and bringing a petting zoo to the first Storytime in June 2017.

Each Thursday, weather permitting, children, parents and a volunteer storyteller gathered at the Farmer's Market, for a story read aloud by local business owners and community members, including Cherron Rountree, Rahway's Business Administrator, and former Mayor Steinman. Music was played before and after Storytime, and the children were encouraged to decorate the plaza with chalk art — and they did! Storytime ended just as the Farmers Market vendors were setting up shop. This gave the parents the opportunity to shop for fresh produce with their kids, before heading home, and provided the Farmer's Market with additional customers.

The RABP collaborated with the Rahway Parking Authority to provide free parking passes for parents staying for Storytime.

STORYTIME ON THE GO



Clockwise from the upper left: Storytime on the Go at the Rahway Train Station Plaza; the petting zoo at the kick-off party; children make chalk drawings after Storytime; families at the Train Station Plaza; Former Mayor Steinman reading to the children

PASEO *(Ongoing, Initiated in 2017)*

The Paseo des Artistes is the "working title" for ongoing improvements to the pedestrian walkway between Main Street and the Rahway Parking Authority parking lot adjacent to River Place. In January 2017, the RABP Executive Staff and RABP Board President Joel Schwartz met with the business and property owners whose buildings adjoin either side of the walkway to discuss the possibility of making the space more inviting by adding some elements of interest that would create a welcoming space for public use. One of the first phases of the project was to care for the three cherry trees in the space — pruning and root feeding — and removal of a fourth tree which had died. Colorful tables and chairs were placed in the space to encourage dining al fresco in the shade of the cherry trees. The RABP and business owners intend to improve the space and add more elements in the Spring of 2018.



Clockwise from upper left: The pedestrian walkway off of Main Street; Mark Ciapka, co-owner of Applied Dynamic Solutions which adjoins the Paseo, helps install plants in the new planters that help make the Paseo more inviting; The cherry trees in bloom; Friends dining out in the Paseo with Ambassa-dogs Luna and Bella

WINTER HOLIDAY SEASON 2017

WINTER WONDERLAND ON CHERRY STREET *(Special Event)*

In 2017, the City once again requested that the RABP organize the decoration of Cherry Street for the annual Winter Wonderland and Tree Lighting Celebration. This was the third year in a row that the RABP undertook this event, which took place on November 24th.

Working again with Francesca Rizzo, a Rahway artist, and her team of artful elves, the RABP made Cherry Street truly magical. Large decorative presents hung from the honey locust trees. Candy canes adorned the lamp posts, while edible candy canes seemed to be growing from the pine trees lent to us by Scheiferstein's Market and transported by the Rahway DPW. A large tableau of a scene from A Charlie Brown Christmas was a centerpiece of the streetscape.

Paint, donated by Sherwin-Williams, was used to create the tableau. Another highlight was a festive scene in the window of the Cherry Pit by the yarn artist, Linda Grant. A team of "creation elves" helped create the items for decoration and teams of "installation elves," including the Rahway High School football team, helped to install the decorations in the days prior to November 24th.



*Cherry Street decorated for Winter Wonderland
by Rahway artist Francesca Rizzo and a host
of Rahway "elves"*

LIGHTS AND HOLIDAY DECORATIONS AT CITY HALL PLAZA *(Special Event)*

During the 2016 holiday season, there were conversations among the RABP Board and staff and in the larger community about how to make the holiday spirit more visible in the District. As 2016 drew to a close, the Board suggested that we increase our investment in street decorations for the next winter holiday season. The RABP worked with the City to develop a three year plan to purchase large, lighted snowflakes that attach to the lamp posts along Main Street and Irving Street. Some were purchased for the 2017 holiday season, and the rest will be purchased in time for the 2018 season to provide decorations on each of the lamp posts in the District. The RABP also made arrangements with a landscape contractor to enliven the planters in front of City Hall with reusable materials, and to add lighting to wrap the lampposts under the train trestles on Poplar Street and Main Street.

WINTER WONDERLAND VENDOR VILLAGE *(Special Event)*

Vendor Villages were a new element added to the Rahway's Winter Wonderland 2017. The RABP organized groups of local artisans and vendors to display and sell their wares in two "villages," one adjacent to City Hall and one on Cherry Street. It was a positive addition to the the holiday season in Rahway.

POP-UP DOG PARK *(Special Event)*

Not every town is lucky enough to have "Ambassa-dogs," but Rahway does! Joe Brown, dog lover, active member of our community, and the human associated with Bella and Luna, was recruited to help us create a Pop-Up Dog Park — a temporary dog park created for dogs and their human owners, so that pups can roam free and meet other dogs, and "dog people" can meet other like-minded folks. After a day of four-legged fun, the dog park is dismantled.

The vacant field adjacent to Hamilton Stage was the location of several spontaneous doggie meet-ups prior to the Pop-Up Dog Park events. The RABP paid for some supplies, including temporary fencing and doggie bags. DPW provided appropriate trash receptacles. Members of the community brought doggie treats to share. The "Bella and Luna Pop-Up Dog Park" was part of RABP's September 2017 Culture Crawl event, an arts and music festival that takes place throughout Rahway's entire downtown.



*Ambassa-dogs Luna and Bella, and their owner Joe Brown,
at the Pop-up Dog Park*

SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY *(Special Event)*

The RABP worked together with the Rahway Chamber of Commerce to promote Small Business Saturday 2017 — an marketing initiative, all across the US, which encourages holiday shoppers to patronize brick-and-mortar business which are small and local — as opposed to big boxes owned by national chains. It is a "Think Local" counterpoint to Black Friday — a shopping holiday held on the Saturday following Thanksgiving. The RABP worked with the Rahway Parking Authority to provide free metered parking for shoppers for the whole day. The free parking was advertised through social media as well as by lime green flyers that were distributed around the District, to promote the event. As an additional boost to Rahway's local businesses, the RABP posted, on social media, descriptions about all of the businesses that are in the District, drawing attention to the diverse businesses that call downtown Rahway "home."

BUSINESS IS OUR MIDDLE NAME! *(Ongoing)*

The RABP promotes the vitality of the District by supporting the downtown businesses in many ways, and with each passing year, we find more ways to do so. We celebrate the "birthdays" and "anniversaries" of every downtown business, via social media and via new media, such as Tap Into Rahway. The RABP helps to make the opening of every new business in the downtown an event, with celebratory Ribbon Cuttings coordinated with the City Administration, so that as many people as possible in Rahway and the surrounding area know about the launch of a new business in our community.

The RABP continues to facilitate relationships among businesses in the District, the Rahway Public Schools and the City Administration.

One of the benefits of the RABP "sharing" with the City the Shared Service position of Ann Marie Williams, Managing Director of the RABP, is our shared ability to support new businesses from the beginning of their journey. As Economic Development Specialist for the City, Ann Marie meets potential business owners early in their process of conceiving their new business. She is therefore able advise them on "How to Set Up a Small Business" — which is also the name of a pamphlet developed jointly with the City to assist new businesses. Ann Marie guides new business owners through the permitting process until they are ready to open. This facilitates our ability to keep better track of businesses in the District.

RESTAURANT MEETINGS *(Ongoing)*

In 2015, the RABP initiated a monthly gathering of restaurant owners in the District, to increase their awareness of City policies, initiatives and activities, including temporary street closures, as well as to address any concerns or needs of Rahway's restaurants. This has been a productive and cohesive working group, with fifteen to twenty restaurants participating each month.

THE MUDTURTLE "GIRLS RULE" COMPETITION *(Sponsorship)*

The RABP contributed to the sponsorship of the Mudturtle "Girls Rule" Competition, part of a larger Union County Rugby event that took place in June 2017. The RABP introduced the Competition to Trish Kozlowski, local designer and RABP Trustee, who assisted in the design of the event T-shirt. In appreciation for our help, the T-shirts featured the RABP logo and the Mudturtle organization painted the RABP logo on the field in gratitude. This event helped to bring awareness of Rahway and our brand outside of the five-mile radius we usually reach.

THE WILLOWS: RENTAL HOUSING ORIENTED TOWARD ARTISTS

In early 2017 the RABP was approached by developers of the The Willows — Ingerman Family Communities and Bruce Morgan of BCM Affordable Housing — to assist them in the promotion of The Willows, a rental housing complex with an orientation toward providing affordable housing and with a defined Preference Policy for practicing artists. The Willows is located in the District, on Central Avenue, overlooking Robinsons Branch of the Rahway River, and is nearing completion. The City Administration and the Rahway Redevelopment Agency has worked with The Willows development team since the project was first conceived as the sort of project which might attract more practicing artists to live, work and create their art in Rahway — and thereby boost the profile of Rahway as a center of the arts. The RABP assisted the marketing of The Willows, by maintaining an "interested list" of artists who were hopeful of living there. Some of whom were taken on tours of The Willows, as part of Culture Crawl and on other occasions.

In November 2017, the RABP provided its "interested list" over to The Willows' marketing team, who provided them with rental applications. The Willows is expected to open in Spring 2018.

HALLOWEEN

Rahway's largest Halloween event, was celebrated on Saturday, October 28. Approximately 10,000 people attended the Halloween Parade, which began at Hamilton Stage along Irving Street, and the Trunk or Treat. The RABP assisted the Recreation Center in judging the Costume Contest, for both people costumes and doggie costumes.

LIVE WELL RAHWAY

The City of Rahway hosted the 3rd Annual Live Well Rahway event, a health and wellness expo held at the Rahway Train Station Plaza on June 17th. The RABP assisted in the physical set up of the Expo, and also by arranging for presenters and performers. In addition, the RABP coordinated with the City Administration and with Councilman Jeremy Mojica who was the Master of Ceremonies for the event.

BIG THURSDAYS

During the months of June, July and August, the City of Rahway hosts outdoor programs on Thursday evenings. This year the RABP assisted in the programing of Big Thursdays in June at the Train Station Plaza which included: a wrestling exhibition featuring Rahway High School Wrestlers; a cheerleading-based exercise class featuring CheerFIT, a golf instruction program featuring the golf pros from Galloping Hill Golf Course; a Shotokan Karate demonstration by SMA Karate; and a Latin Dance party hosted by Contento Dance.

The RABP assisted the City in the promotion of the July Big Thursdays: Movies at City Hall Plaza and August Big Thursdays: The Mayor's Concert Series, which is a series of outdoor concerts in front of the Union County Performing Arts Center. Rahway is happening every Thursday during the warmer months!

RUGBY TOURNAMENT

Union County Rugby held their annual tournament in Rahway River Park on June 17th. The City requested the RABP to assist with the event. The RABP functioned as the "point people," faciliating arrangements among the City and the Tournament organizers for all aspects of the event. The RABP organized a lunch program, which including lunch boxes from Rahway Fried Chicken, pizza from Tony's, and arranged for the Soup 'R Dogs food truck to provide food during the tournament. RABP also arranged for a local Rita's Ice vendor to give competitors and their families a discount. In addition, Hugo's restaurant provided, for a reasonable fee, a buffet dinner for competitors who preferred a sit-down meal downtown. Later, after the tournament, the RABP arranged for the World Wrestling Federation, an affiliate of the Rahway Rec Center, to put on an evening entertaining show for the competitors.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Funding for the Rahway Arts + 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 2017, 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 2017 totaled \$14,000; most of this was raised at the Taste of Spring.

The total amount of income received by the RABP from all sources in 2017 was \$174,515. During 2017, the RABP spent approximately \$161,946 on programming, salaries and expenses.

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