

Mayor's Corner

The COVID-19 pandemic has been hard on all of us. It has been hardest for residents who were directly impacted by the virus. In our Town hundreds have tested positive for the coronavirus and sadly, we lost some community members. Our prayers go out to the families who lost a loved one. Please know the Town Council and I are here to support you in any way we can and are working tirelessly, along with the Town staff, to make this terrible situation a bit more tolerable.

On a positive front, even though we are still dealing with a high number of COVID cases, the rate of daily increases seems to be declining. The number of hospitalizations as well as the number of serious medical interventions have gone down significantly. Furthermore, Governor Phil Murphy continues to ease restrictions. Like all of you, I cannot wait for the pandemic to be behind us and normalcy to return to our lives. I am looking forward to a time when we can visit our friends and family as usual, gather at concerts, normal school routines and more. I am confident we will eventually get there. In the meantime, everyone should

continue to follow CDC guidelines on social distancing guidelines and, out of consideration for others, please wear a mask as recommended when social distancing is not possible. Things are getting better, but this is not the time to be complacent.

In the coming weeks, we will work to open our facilities to residents based on the Governor's recommendations. Be assured that your safety is our priority. New measures will be in place to enhance safety of our facilities and residents. I ask for your patience and understanding as we begin the journey of returning to normal.

Visit our website secaucusnj.gov/virus for the latest updates.

Stay vigilant and be well.



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Town-wide Banners Celebrate Class of 2020

When Governor Phil Murphy announced that schools will continue with the distance learning program for the rest of the school year, students in the senior class were especially saddened. It dawned on them that the traditional senior year events such as the prom, year-end recitals, performances, sports, field trips and more that mark the end of 12 years in school would all be cancelled. The Mayor and Town Council wanted to change that. They wanted to provide a way for the senior students, their teachers, families and the community to make up part of what they lost.

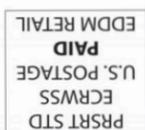
Mayor Gonnelli and the Town Council loved the idea of installing large banners recognizing each student of the graduating class. And soon enough, banners went up. Several businesses donated generously to cover the costs of the banners. If you would like to donate, please send your check to:

Youth Alliance
Attn: Class of 2020
1203 Paterson Plank Road
Secaucus, NJ 07094



Check our website www.secaucusnj.gov/virus for the latest updates as restrictions continue to ease.

LOCAL POSTAL CUSTOMER
SECAUCUS, NJ 07094



Secaucus Municipal Government Center
Paterson Plank Road
Secaucus, NJ 07094

Secaucus Fourth-Grader Channing Jervis Wins Art Contest

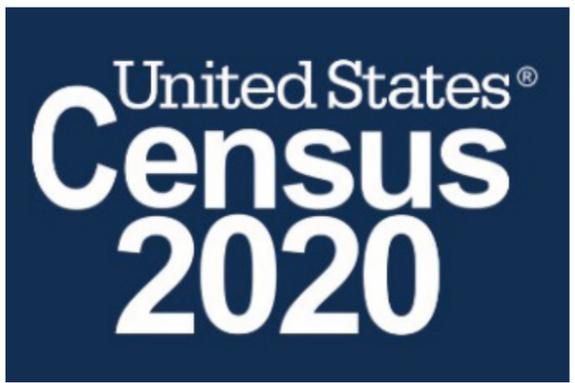
Huber Street fourth-grader, Channing Jervis, was selected as co-winner in the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey's (PDFNJ) Design a Fourth Grade Folder contest this year. The other winner is Wade Bullard from Lawrence Intermediate School, Lawrenceville. Their designs will be featured on the 40,000 folders distributed to fourth grade classrooms throughout the state this fall. Channing's winning design entitled "Never Let Drugs Control You" won him the winning spot, and Wade won the top spot for his design entitled, "New Jersey Drug Free, Full of Fun Things To Do".

More than 3,400 fourth grade students from across New Jersey have showcased their artistic skills with their entries into the contest. The talented winners were chosen out of 28 finalists who were showcased in a virtual award ceremony held on May 12th. The awards ceremony had typically been held at Jenkinson's Boardwalk, but due to COVID-19 the ceremony

was held virtually. All 29 fourth grade student finalists will receive medals for their creative peer-to-peer substance use prevention artwork following the theme "Fun Things to Do Instead of Drugs." Classroom posters featuring all the finalist's designs will be distributed to the classrooms.

"These students should not only be commended for their creative ability, but also for sharing these important drug-free messages with their peers," said Angelo Valente, Executive Director of the Partnership for a Drug-Free New Jersey. "Their artwork showcases the importance of living a drug-free life and what it means to them."

"It is never too early to begin the conversation and educate today's youth about substance use and prevention efforts," states Valente. "The Fourth Grade Folder Contest is just one example of how to engage students and encourage them to make smart decisions throughout their lives."

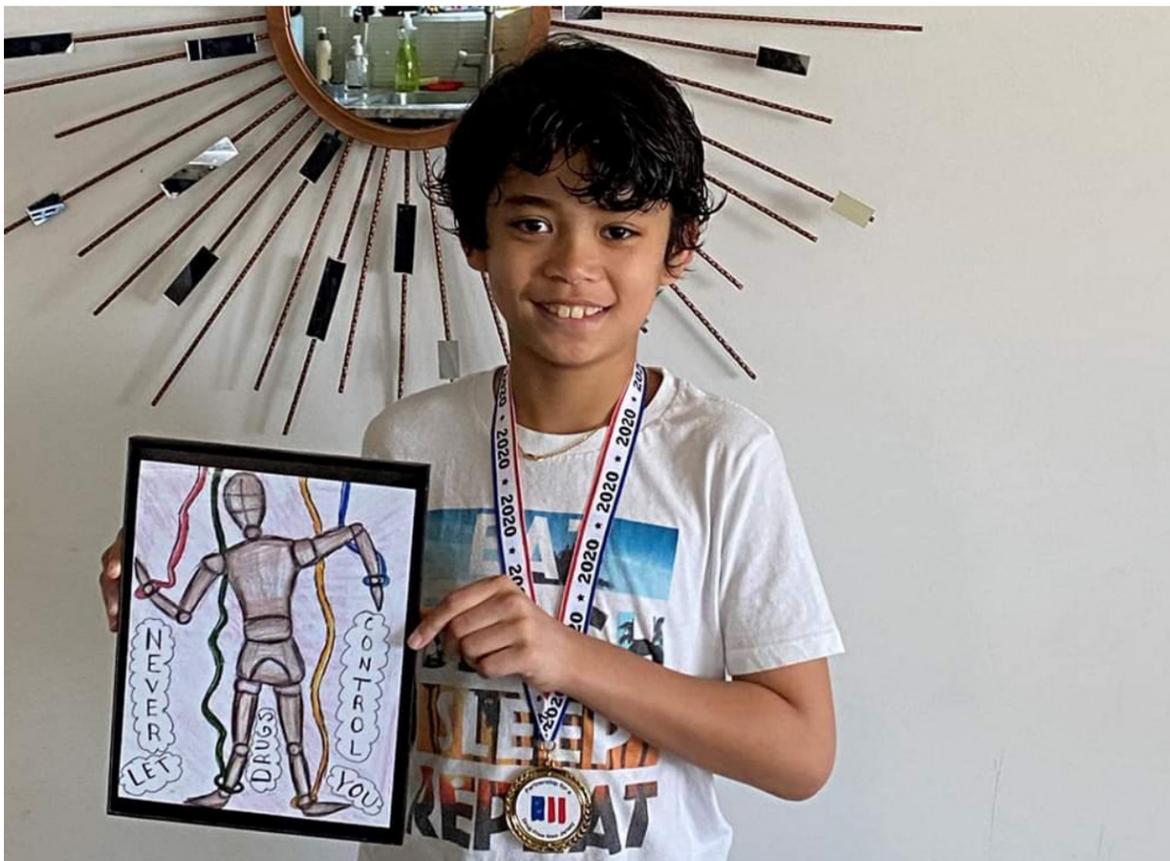


Every 10 years, the census counts all residents living in the country. Census 2020 is here! Residents received a letter from Census in March asking them to complete it online or on the phone. Residents who did not complete it, received several reminder letters and postcards. As of late May, about 40% of Secaucus residents have not yet completed their census. That means 4 out of every 10 residents are still not counted.

Every resident counts! Whether you are a homeowner or tenant, employed or unemployed, citizen, permanent resident or on non-immigrant status, a long-time resident or live here for a short time—if you live in Secaucus, you count. It is easy, secure and confidential. Just log on to www.2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020. Support is available in 59 languages, including Spanish, Chinese and Gujarati. So help in your language is only a click or call away. If you do not complete the census in the self-response period, a Census representative will come to your door to gather your household information.

Why is completing the Census important? Census data is used to determine the way federal funds are allocated for schools, transportation, infrastructure, emergency services, healthcare, social services and more. If every resident is not counted, our community may lose out.

Please do your part and complete the census now if you have not already done it. Remember, if you live in Secaucus, you count!



Life, and Celebrations Must Go On

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many things, but Ed Becker would not let anything disrupt the celebration of his 20th wedding anniversary with wife Anna. With no vacations to go on, and no large gatherings allowed, he planned a simple and sweet Renewal of Vows ceremony in his backyard on May 20th, 2020. The ceremony was officiated by Mayor Michael Gonnelli, in a mask-on, socially distanced setting.



COVID-19 Testing Now Available to All

COVID-19 diagnostic and antibody tests are available to all Hudson County residents, whether or not they exhibit symptoms. Tests are available at Hudson Regional Hospital by appointment only. To get tested at Hudson Regional Hospital, please register on their website www.hudsonregionalhospital.com or call the Testing Hotline at 201-388-1097. Select local clinics including Riverside Medical Group also offer COVID-19 tests. Please check with the testing site and clinic for availability and insurance coverage information.

Donald Ciecuch Receives Junior Firefighter of the Year Award

The National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC) recently selected Secaucus High School senior Donald Ciecuch for the 2020 Junior Firefighter of the Year Award. The award honors a junior firefighter for going above and beyond in their service to their fire department. This is the first time in its history that the NVFC has chosen a junior firefighter from New Jersey for this prestigious award.

Donald Ciecuch became a Junior Firefighter for the Secaucus Fire Department when he turned 16. His enthusiasm and energy became immediately apparent in his efforts to improve the volunteer firefighters' program. He saw scope for improvement and helped update the programs rules and regulations together with the Fire Chief Carl Leppin and Town Attorney Keri Eglentowicz. He proposed establishing a robust social media presence for the department and created several Facebook pages as well as a website with a listing of all training courses available to new junior firefighters. He hopes this will help volunteer junior firefighters obtain basic firefighting knowledge prior to attending the Fire Academy. Donald also helped institute a new incentive program for junior firefighters with Firefighter I certification who make 35 percent of the fire calls, cleanings, and any fire department functions.

Donald also recruited over 25 members to the junior firefighter program and has been given permission by the Chief of the Fire Department to oversee the program. He goes out of his way to remind participants to attend training drills and department functions. Although juniors cannot participate in interior operations, he encourages them to respond to as many calls as possible so they can aid in basic exterior operations and learn as much as possible. He goes above and beyond to help junior members advance, assists in enrolling them in the Fire Academy, helps them with homework and studying, if necessary, and even drives junior firefighters to the academy when they do not have a ride.

Additionally, he encourages members to take specialized training courses, such as, a boater safety class and CPR/AED training.

Donald attended the Bergen County Fire Academy and received his Junior Firefighter I certification. He also attended advanced training and received his I-200, I-300, and I-400 Incident Management certifications. On May 7th, he became a member of the Secaucus Fire Department, following the footsteps of his father, former Chief Raymond Ciecuch, who has 38 years with the department. He graduates from Secaucus High School this month and is headed to Montclair State University in Fall.



Huber School Student Wins Art Contest



Arav Bajoria, a fourth grader from Huber Street School won the "How Much We Love Hudson County Drawing and Creativity Contest" organized by the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office. The contest was launched as school children throughout the county are stuck at home and learning through online instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was designed to give students a great way to be creative, expressive and reflective of their own surroundings.

With dozens of entries submitted, Hudson County Prosecutor Esther Suarez announced winners from each town and schools that entered with 17

awardees. Each winner will receive a \$25 Target gift card. All participants will also receive a certificate.

Students were encouraged to draw,



create an artwork or write a poem about what they love about Hudson County with inspiration from their town. The contest was open to students K-12.

COVID Testing Conducted at Senior Buildings

Mayor Michael Gonnelli and the Town Council, in conjunction with the Hudson Regional Health Commission and Hudson Regional Hospital, offered COVID-19 testing to all residents of our three senior housing complexes in Town. More than 160 senior residents signed up for the tests which were conducted at the Elms and Kroll Heights community rooms on May 7th, 8th and 28th. "Many residents wanted to get tested but were not comfortable going out to a testing site, so we brought the testing to them. Thanks to team effort, it was an easy, efficient and seamless process," said Mayor Gonnelli.

Fire Destroys Home on Koelle Blvd.



A home on the corner of Koelle Boulevard and Huber Street was destroyed in a two-alarm blaze early morning on Thursday, May 14th. Secaucus Police Chief Dennis Miller said no one was injured in the fire, which broke out at roughly 2:30 a.m. At one point the home, which was being rented as two separate units, was completely engulfed in flames. What remained after the fire ended is the charred skeletal frame of the building. Even the car parked on the driveway was completely burned. Fire Chief Carl Leppin expressed his disappointment that the fire was not containable when the Secaucus Fire units arrived on the scene but was relieved that no one was hurt. The Secaucus Volunteer Fire Department, with assistance from departments from Jersey City, Rutherford and Lyndhurst, did an outstanding job in keeping the fire from spreading to neighboring homes. The cause of fire is still being determined. GoFundMe pages started by relatives of the affected families raised about \$42,000 for one family and \$12,600 for the other. The Secaucus Emergency Fund also provided cash donations for immediate relief and the Mayor and Town Council helped by reaching out to organizations to provide assistance, such as the Red Cross.

Meadowlands Field Hospital Closes

The number of COVID-19 cases requiring hospitalization are going down in our area and across the State. This trend has resulted in the decision to close the temporary Field Hospital that was set up at the Meadowlands Exposition Center in Town. The Field Hospital was first opened in early April, with a capacity of 250 beds, and was initially intended to be used for overflow of non-COVID patients from area hospitals. When the field hospital opened, the New Jersey Department of Health announced that it could also be used for COVID-19 patients who exhibit milder symptoms, with acute patients going to local area hospitals. Fortunately, the need for the hospital did not last and the closure was announced on May 8, 2020. Governor Murphy said that items and supplies from the site will be stored and ready

for rapid deployment elsewhere, if needed. Members of the Secaucus Police and Fire Departments applauded the medical team and staff as they filed out of the temporary medical site for the last time.

With local hospital, Hudson Regional, being chosen as the official COVID-19 testing site for Hudson County and the convention center as the field hospital, the Town has played a major part in the initial fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayor Michael Gonnelli said that his and the Town Council's "primary concern is the health, safety and security of our residents. I am proud of the Health, EMS, Police and Fire Departments who coordinated seamlessly to ensure the health our business community and residents were not adversely affected during these trying times."



Phone Scams: Be Alert, Be Safe

The Secaucus Police Department would like all residents to be alerted to phone scams. Many residents have received phone calls from scammers purporting to be from the Social Security Administration or the IRS and ask for personal information including your social security number and bank information. Other scams include calls about someone close to you who needs your immediate help. Scammers then coax you into buying gift cards and sending them the information. More recently, residents received text messages with links that promise COVID cures or offers of COVID relief funds from FCC Financial Care Center. The links guide you to disclose personal information, including social security numbers, dates of birth and ultimately your banking or debit card information. Do not become a victim of these scams. Please remember:

- Don't answer calls from unknown numbers. Let them go to voicemail.
- If you answer and the caller (often a recording) asks you to hit a button to stop receiving calls, just hang up. Scammers often use these tricks to identify, and then target, live respondents.
- If you receive a scam call, write down the number and file a complaint with the FCC.
- If someone asks you to load money on a gift card to help your child, grandchild or someone else, hang up immediately and call a person you trust, or the police.
- Do not disclose personal identifying information on sites that are linked to a text message you received.

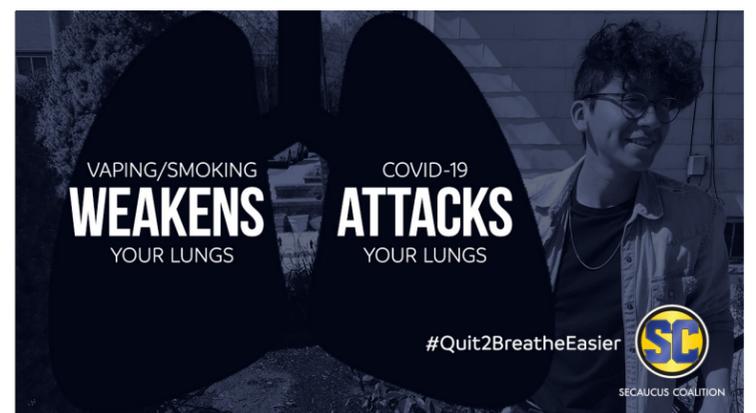
For more information on the types of scams, visit www.fcc.gov/scams

Secaucus Emergency Fund



The Secaucus Education Association donated a check to Mayor Michael Gonnelli on Monday, June 1, 2020. The funds will go to the Secaucus Emergency Fund, a charitable organization which has touched many lives our Town.

Secaucus Coalition: United in Purpose



Secaucus Coalition, like most other organizations, has had to curtail face-to-face meetings and activities. Though in-person participation that involves students and community members has not been possible since mid-March, the Coalition has been very active in its mission to prevent addiction in youth. The Coalition Coordinator Dave Bratton and members of KAI (student coalition members from Secaucus High School and High Tech) worked through the COVID-19 health crisis to create a poster and two 15-second video PSAs.

"The current health crisis is difficult for all of us. It is especially concerning for people who are addicted to smoking or vaping. Social distancing has not stopped us from getting this message across. KAI members, especially Nicky Sanchez, put in a lot of effort to make PSAs a reality," said Secaucus Coalition Coordinator Dave Bratton.

You can view the videos and the poster online on the Media tab of www.secaucuscoalition.org or on the Secaucus Coalition Facebook page.

Secaucus High School Top Two



The Secaucus High School Class of 2020 Valedictorian is Harris Spahic and Salutatorian is Olivia Fox. School counselors congratulated the students via a Zoom meeting and the designations were announced on the school's Facebook page. Harris will attend Stevens Institute of Technology's highly competitive Launchpad program majoring in Computer Science. Olivia will attend Cornell University majoring in Policy Analysis and Management. Banners honoring these top graduates are installed at the center of town on Paterson Plank Road by the Plaza. We wish both students and all graduates much success.