



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Real Estate Resource



LCMR COUNSELOR HELPS TO TRAIN YOUNG BOXERS

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Group seeks solutions to rising drug abuse

Healthy Youth Coalition cites bored teens, dysfunctional families as contributors

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — With little to occupy their time other than sports, living in an area with limited employment opportunities and some coming from dysfunctional families, a number of Lower Township teens are finding relief in the form of drugs and alcohol.

Lower Township Healthy Youth Coalition held its first fact-finding meeting Feb. 3. Last year, the township

and Cape Assist received a federal Drug Free Communities grant for \$125,000 per year for five years to hire a coordinator to find a way to keep kids off drugs. Steve Selby was hired as coordinator working with Cape Assist.

At the kick-off public meeting, participants received a small remote control that allowed them to answer questions on a screen related to the availability and use of drugs and alcohol for township youth. The

'The youth of this area are bored out of their minds. They have nothing to look forward to and we have nothing to offer them in this township.'

—Lower Township Healthy Youth Coalition participant

results of the survey were dismal, painting the township and county as a place where there was little for youth to occupy their time other than sports, virtually nothing to do in winter and few career opportunities. In addition, the survey showed

a number of teens living in dysfunctional families where drug and alcohol abuse was not monitored.

Many of the participants in the audience were teachers or worked in fields related to substance abuse or youth, most of which were

members of the coalition's steering committee.

"The outcry and support from this community so far has been outstanding," Selby said. "We are leaps and bounds ahead of where we thought we would be at this point in the game, and that's exciting and that's a testament to all of you and all the people that have been calling non-stop to ask how they can get involved."

The on-screen survey asked if alcohol was accessible to township youth. A

total of 75 percent of the audience voted "yes."

Joe Faldetta, Cape Assist's prevention director, asked the audience where teens were getting alcohol. Answers from the audience included from older siblings, friends and classmates, alcohol was available in their home, paying someone of age to purchase alcohol in a liquor store and families hosting parties in their homes.

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Police, pupils and pizza

Officers hope sharing slices with students forges a bond

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The officers entered teacher Ann Griffith's sixth-grade classroom at Cape May City Elementary School on Feb. 5 with urgent business: two pizzas, chips, juice boxes and an award for Student of the Month.

The city's Police Department, under the direction of Capt. Robert Sheehan, will visit the school each month for a pizza party and spend time socializing with the students. Sheehan presented student Naada Moustafa with a certificate as Student of the Month and a coupon for free movie tickets. A duplicate of the certificate will be displayed at the police station, Sheehan said.

He was accompanied by Detective Joe Walker, Officer Ken Cooper and Sgt. Tony Marino.

"Every time we do this,



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Capt. Robert Sheehan and other officers with the Cape May Police Department throw a pizza party for students in Ann Griffith's sixth-grade class at Cape May City Elementary School.

we're going to bring a different set of officers in," Sheehan said.

Griffith said her classmates selected Naada as Student of the Month. She said Naada was someone who would do good work in any situation and represent Cape May as a good citizen.

As the children get older, they will feel comfortable

with police officers as a result of the social interaction, Griffith said. She said law enforcement was a possible career choice for the students.

School Superintendent Victoria Zelenak told the sixth-graders the officers came to the school to assist when it holds lockdown drills. She said the officers

wanted to establish a connection with the students.

"Building relationships with them is very important," Zelenak said.

The officers talked about their work as both they and students ate pizza. Walker said when a call is received, an officer responds and

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Mahaney wants no tax increase in 2016 budget

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Mayor Edward Mahaney is recommending adjustments to the city's proposed 2016 budget to keep property taxes from rising.

At a Jan. 15 special council meeting, City Manager Bruce MacLeod's proposed city budget featured a .7-cent increase in the property tax rate. If approved, the local purpose tax rate would increase from 33.9 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 34.6 cents.

At a Feb. 2 council meeting, Mahaney offered a list of recommended adjustments that would eliminate the need for a tax increase. He said his recommendations did not use additional surplus funds.

Mahaney said none of his

recommendations would reduce or eliminate city programs and services nor cause any financial harm to the city or its taxpayers. On the revenue side of the budget, he recommended increasing the projection of parking meter revenue by \$21,500 based upon experience in recent years.

In addition, he asked to add a reserve to pay bonds and notes by \$83,800, which he said would offset the increase in debt service in the budget.

Mahaney recommended reducing the line item in the budget for health insurance by \$52,200 based upon the fact that three new full-time firefighters/EMTs and a new tax assessor would begin employment during the 2016 year but not at

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MAHANEY

Beth Judah Temple celebrates 100 years

By CAROL R. EMMENS
Special to the Star and Wave

WILDWOOD — Beth Judah Temple in Wildwood is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. Rabbi Ron Isaacs leads the worship services and is the Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Sholom in Bridgewater, where he has served for 40 years. As the only active synagogue in Cape May County, Beth Judah Temple welcomes all denominations of Jews, and Isaacs describes the congregation as "eclectic."

"It has members who have many different ways of expressing their Juda-

ism and observance. The knowledge of Judaism, for example being able to read Hebrew, varies, as does the level of observance. My challenge is to make worship, prayer and study accessible to all," he said. "For those who cannot follow the Hebrew, I sing melodies with no words so that they can participate."

He said music, spirited singing and rhythm instruments increase the liveliness of the services and the joy of prayer.

Isaacs is passionate about Jewish music and is a singer and guitarist.

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LCMR students win H&R Block scholarships

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Sixteen Lower Cape May Regional School District students were each awarded a \$20,000 scholarship from the H&R Block Budget Challenge, and one of them was ranked No. 1 in the country.

The students were winners in an interactive, real-life simulation personal financial education program from H&R Block that rewards students for mastering budgeting and personal finance decision-making.

"I can't think of a better way for us to kick off Career and Technical Education Month in New Jersey," Superintendent Christopher Kobik said.

Lower Cape May Regional High School Principal Larry Ziemba said he was proud of the students and teachers Lee Pierce and Mike Wilson, who teach a financial literacy class called Consumer Economics in the school district.

"I think last year we were excited when one student won the \$20,000 award," he said. "To have 16 win it is an accomplishment to them, and I'm also grateful to H&R Block and their generosity in recognizing our students today."

H&R Block Franchise Regional Director Phil Cody said it was exciting for the company to see it can change the lives of people

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

H&R Block presented 16 students at Lower Cape May Regional High School each with a \$20,000 scholarship. They were among 22 top winners across the country.



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