



1ST QUARTER NEWSLETTER

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A Message from our CEO

Dear Community Members,

As we close out the first quarter of the year, I want to take a moment to thank you—and reflect on the work we've done together, and for our community residents who make this work possible.

These past few months have been filled with meaningful progress. Whether through our community events, national celebrations and acknowledgements, or highlighting our wonderful staff, we've been fortunate to deepen our impact and continue serving the community we care so deeply about.

As we celebrated International Women's Month, we had many positive messages from the staff to reflect on women in leadership, and speak about who inspired them and guided them on their journey to the JRF. Throughout my journey to becoming a CEO, I have been fortunate to be surrounded by a network of incredible women—colleagues and supervisors—who have significantly influenced my professional growth. These women played pivotal roles in shaping my leadership style, instilling confidence in me, and showing me the value of compassion and resilience in the business world. As you read through the newsletter, you will see all of the amazing Women that work within the JRF as we highlight our staff and the contributions to the community along with awards they may have received this quarter!

As we look ahead to the next quarter, we're excited to expand our efforts—bringing even more opportunities, resources, and support to those who need it most. We'll be focusing on strengthening our community relationships with agencies and residents, as well as provide a number of new events to support the community. We hope you'll continue to walk with us every step of the way.

Thank you for being an essential part of our journey—whether you are a resident, partner, or supporter. Together, we're building something that lasts.

Warm regards,

Ms. Jaime Rivello

Chief Executive Officer





ABOUT JRF

Our Mission

The Jewish Renaissance Foundation (JRF) is a non-profit nonsectarian organization founded by individuals who feel compelled to act upon the teachings of the Jewish faith. We believe as citizens in a democratic society, we must respond to the needs of our neighbors and share our talents and resources. The JRF is committed to helping individuals/families become healthier and stronger.

We serve the City of Perth Amboy, Edison, and surrounding communities in Middlesex County.



Our Programs & Locations



JRF Community Health Center

1931 Oak Tree Road, Lower Level
Edison, NJ 08820
(732)482-9600



Family Success Center

Bayside Family Success Center
500 Dobranski Avenue
Perth Amboy, NJ 08861



533 New Brunswick Ave.

Perth Amboy, NJ 08861
The home of AmeriCorps, AEI, T&TC, FAC including My Choice Store, and PAAC.



Administrative Offices

1090 King Georges Post Road
Building 7, Suite 704, Edison, NJ 08837
(732) 324-2114

To learn more about our programs please click on the links below to visit us on:



EMPLOYEE UPDATES

JRF Superstars

Employee of the Month
Jan 2025

Rosanna has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership, organizational skills, and a collaborative spirit. During the recent DCF visit, she truly shined, ensuring that everything ran smoothly and seamlessly. Her ability to lead and coordinate the team, while fostering a positive and supportive environment, played a vital role in FSC's success. Whether it's handling the details or motivating others, Rosanna does it with professionalism and dedication. JRF is truly grateful to have her as part of our team!

Rosanna Hunez
Lead Family Partner
Program: FSC

Quarterly Superstar
(Jan-March 2025)

From day one, Lakesha has exemplified what it means to be a true team player!

Her dedication, reliability, and willingness to go above and beyond have made a significant impact on the team. She is truly a Superstar!

Lakesha Braxton
Sterilization Tech
Program: FQHC

Quarterly Superstar
(Jan-March 2025)

In addition to her outstanding support of the guidance department during the Suicide Prevention Initiative at the SBYS program, Rose also serves as a vital liaison for the guidance team—not only because of her exceptional ability to deescalate situations, but also for her natural talent in building rapport with students. She is truly a Superstar!

Roseiry Jimenez
Mental Health Counselor
Program: SBYS

Quarterly Superstar
(Jan-March 2025)

Jaribel has gone above and beyond in supporting "My Choice Store," ensuring it remains stocked with nutritious foods, handling partner reporting, and organizing data tracking systems. Her dedication and coordination has made a meaningful impact on both shoppers and the team. She is truly a Superstar!

Jaribel Tineo
Wellness Coordinator
Program: C&FS
My Choice Store

City of Perth Amboy Teen Center's Women's History Month Honoree



The City of Perth Amboy Teen Center celebrated Women's History Month on March 26th, honoring four amazing women: DJ Giselle Manebodh, Sandra Nunez Dates, Mabel Leonardo, and our very own, **Jenny Alvarez**. Surrounded by friends, family, and colleagues, these incredible women were recognized for their hard work in helping the community and inspiring the next generation.

"Their creativity and passion show the strength of women throughout history who have made a big impact. Through their work with young people, they continue to lift others up, encourage, and shape the future, making a real difference every day." – City of Perth Amboy

COMMUNITY
IMPACT

Scouting...Vale La Pena! 2025 Service Awards

On April 9th, the Patriots' Path Council of the Boy Scouts of America hosted the Scouting Vale La Pena 2025 Service Awards Dinner at The Armory in Perth Amboy, celebrating six incredible honorees!



As a proud Perth Amboy native, JRF's very own, **Precious Ojeda**, LEAP Program Coordinator and SBYS Program Assistant, was recognized for being an influential leader, educator, advocate and positive force of dynamic change in the community.

This annual celebration honors leaders from across the region whose service, mentorship, and advocacy are making a lasting impact on their communities.



Welcome

NEW FACES OF THE JRF STAFF

Jose De Mesa
Lead Program Assistant
P.A.A.C.

Kate Manchisi
Program Coordinator
AmeriCorps

Evelyn Quezada
Program Manager
STEP-UP

Chamalie Ramsingh
Patient Registrar
JRF Community Health Center

PROGRAMMING UPDATES

School Based Youth Services



Emerging Leaders Program

This quarter, the Emerging Leaders program focused on building foundational skills in public health and community engagement. In January, students reviewed key concepts like SMART goals, social determinants of health, and survey design, and were introduced to data collection methods.

February centered on hands-on experience, as participants led focus groups, collected data, and refined surveys to support their health initiatives. In March, the group welcomed guest speaker Kenny Ortiz, Superintendent of Recreation at City of Perth Amboy, who shared valuable insights on public health and inspired deeper critical thinking. The month wrapped up with a creative group activity and infographic projects, allowing students to collaborate and visually present their assigned health topics.



Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP)



NFTE's New York Metro Youth Entrepreneurship Summit (YES!)

brought together high school students, teachers, and business professionals at UBS for a dynamic half-day event focused on **entrepreneurship and career readiness**. Students participated in sessions concentrating on professional skills, business plan coaching, and learned about opportunities to compete in upcoming NFTE Regional Competition in June and a spot at the National Competition in October. It was an incredible experience for the YEP students filled with learning, networking, and valuable insights for future entrepreneurs. Stay tuned for what's to come!

Additionally, this quarter, YEP members engaged in a series of hands-on activities designed to strengthen their entrepreneurial skills and teamwork. In January, they collaborated on a fun **Restaurant Wars Challenge** and presented the first drafts of their business slides for the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge. In February, YEP also focused on strategic thinking through a party planning activity and business analysis game, encouraging creativity and collaboration. In March, students refined their business presentations with guidance from NFTE coach Judy, learning how to clearly communicate ideas while focusing on target markets and cost structures.





PROGRAMMING UPDATES

School Based Youth Services



The start of this new year was filled with engaging and meaningful activities in the SBYS Program. Students kicked off the month with the **Letters & Laughter Event**, writing letters to their future selves while enjoying food, drinks, and fun social time with peers.



For Valentine's Day, a **Sweetheart Social** combined games, sweet treats, and an important discussion on healthy vs. unhealthy relationships as part of **Teen Dating Violence Prevention Awareness**.

SBYS also hosted a **College Panel Workshop** for their students, featuring guest speakers from NJ colleges who shared insights on campus life and the transition to college.



Additionally, our ongoing **Prevention Circle** group with Empower Somerset continues to thrive, with active participants engaging in weekly sessions focused on healthy relationships, pregnancy prevention, and STI.



Throughout January, Step-Up students participated in a variety of engaging activities focused on goal-setting, personal growth, and community involvement. They kicked off the year with a **New Year Goals Activity** and a collaborative banner project to build confidence and social skills. Students also organized a coat drive, demonstrating leadership and community engagement. Additional activities like the **Positive Affirmations** session and **Vision Board** creation helped students strengthen self-esteem, mindfulness, and motivation as they set intentions for the year ahead.



*Vision Boards
&
New Years
Goals*

In February, Step-Up students focused on self-care and healthy relationships. Through a selfcare activity they explored ways to manage stress and promote well-being through discussion and daily tracking. Later, through a **Healthy Relationships Activity** they learned to identify healthy, unhealthy, and abusive relationships through a presentation, movie, and group discussion.

Healthy Relationships



PROGRAMMING UPDATES



Toddler Time – January 28th

The FSC kicked off their very first Toddler Time, creating a special space for toddlers to engage in free play while their parents received valuable insights into child development. The program also fostered growth and creativity in the children through thoughtful activities and exploration.

A huge thank you to Jiguar, who came to share helpful information about their center and provided resources for parents to better support their children's growth and development.



Mom Support Group – January 30th

In addition to Toddler Time, the FSC hosted their Mom Support Group, which is a safe space for mothers to connect, share experiences, and support each other. This group is a wonderful way for moms to build relationships and gain strength from one another as they navigate the challenges of parenthood.

Taco Tuesday – February 18th

FSC hosted a Taco Tuesday at the Bayside Family Success Center starting at 5:30 PM. Families came together to enjoy great food, conversations, and community bonding. A special highlight of the event was receiving a proclamation from Mayor Caba of the City of Perth Amboy, for national parent leadership month, recognizing all the work that Bayside Family Success Center has contributed to cultivating leadership among parents in our community. A special thank you to Horizon NJ Health for making it possible!



Parent Cafe at Middlesex College – February 27th

The FSC hosted their very first Parent Cafe at Middlesex College in Perth Amboy, bringing together 11 parents, for open discussions, support, and connection. To ensure parents could fully engage, we provided childcare in a separate room. The event was a great success, fostering conversations about parenting challenges and shared experiences. A huge thank you to everyone who participated and supported these events! We look forward to hosting more gatherings that empower and uplift parents.



Women's Day Zumba Celebration – March 8th

For Women's Day on March 8th, we teamed up with PAAC to host an energetic Zumba celebration led by the incredible Marisol. The event featured music, movement, and healthy snacks like vegetable juices, energy bars, and yogurt to keep everyone fueled. As part of the celebration, participants added their names to a mural beside words that reflected their unique strengths. It was a joyful and empowering gathering of around 20 women honoring themselves and one another.



My Choice Store Share Your Foodways Program – March 24th

Chef Carolina Moratti, from the Middlesex County Share Your Foodways Program, highlighted the value of utilizing canned goods from the food pantry, sharing practical tips and creative ways to incorporate these ingredients into delicious Hispanic recipes.

The demonstration featured six different types of salads, all made with the same base ingredients but creatively enhanced with a variety of canned goods. Participants enjoyed sampling each dish and were thrilled to take some home afterward!

Our senior participants had a wonderful experience and were incredibly engaged throughout the session. Chef Moratti, did an outstanding job connecting with everyone, ensuring they stayed interested and excited during the entire cooking demonstration.

Additionally, each participant was excited to receive a recipe to try preparing the dishes at home. The session was both educational and enjoyable for everyone involved!



PROGRAMMING UPDATES



Warming Up Winter with Art and Connection at PAAC



This winter, the PAAC neighborhood buzzed with artistic energy and joyful connection. On February 26, residents gathered for a day of self-care and creativity at the PAAC **Painting Party**. Set to a backdrop of soothing music, attendees let their imaginations run wild—painting, crafting, and sketching their hearts out in a warm and welcoming space.

Then, on March 26, the fun continued as neighbors rolled up their sleeves for a hands-on **Ceramic Class**. From first-time potters to seasoned artists, everyone embraced the mess and magic of working with clay.

Laughter echoed and inspiration flowed as participants explored new techniques and shaped one-of-a-kind masterpieces to take home.

These events reminded us all that creativity has no age or skill limit—just a willingness to play, express, and connect.



The JRF is honored to receive \$150,000 in funding from Provident Bank through the Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit (NRTC) program in support of our Perth Amboy Alliance for Community (PAAC) initiatives.



On March 20, the PAAC team, alongside JRF CEO, had the honor of attending the "Celebrating Community Impact" Breakfast at Provident Bank Headquarters in Iselin, New Jersey. Hosted by Provident Bank, the event recognized organizations that are making a meaningful difference in their communities. Among those celebrated was the Jewish Renaissance Foundation (JRF), recognized for its impactful work and as a proud recipient of a \$150,000 NRTC investment from Provident Bank for 2025 to benefit the PAAC Neighborhood.

This generous funding will help implement key revitalization plans and support complementary efforts such as social services, recreational programs, and open space improvements. Together, these initiatives aim to enhance the quality of life for residents within this unique area of Perth Amboy, bordered by Washington St. and Inslee St., between Amboy Ave. and the train tracks. For more information, visit: [News Article](#)

Investing in Revitalization:

A \$75K Contribution from Peoples Security Bank & Trust

We are incredibly grateful to have received a generous \$75,000 contribution from John Pagano and Wendy Ewen of Peoples Security Bank & Trust in support of JRF's NRTC (Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credit) projects. Their support empowers JRF to continue investing in meaningful, community-driven initiatives that make a real difference in the lives of those we serve within the PAAC neighborhood. It was a pleasure to share our programs and services with them — and we're excited about the future of this growing partnership!



PROGRAMMING UPDATES

Community Health Outreach: Education, Screenings, and Support

JRF continues to raise awareness about the COVID-19 vaccines by providing education, dispelling myths, and working to increase vaccination rates among vulnerable populations disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. In addition, our dedicated team of nurses has provided glucose and blood pressure screenings, along with vital health education, at community events. This past quarter alone, our nurses supported 9 events in collaboration with community partners, reaching approximately 84 individuals. Since launching our COVID outreach in 2021, JRF has hosted over 200 events throughout Middlesex County, NJ.



Doctor and Dentist Appreciation Day 2025

On March 27, in observance of National Doctor's Day, we proudly presented our doctors and dentists with a Certificate of Appreciation in celebration and gratitude for their dedication to providing compassionate, quality care to our community at the JRF Community Health Center.

Their hard work, expertise, and kindness make a meaningful difference in the lives of so many, each and every day.

We are truly thankful for all that they do to keep the community within Middlesex County healthy and thriving!

Dr. Zelikson, Chief Medical Officer/Family Physician
Dr. Saini, Internal Medicine
Dr. Doshi, Pediatrician
Dr. Vega, Dental Director
Dr. Fortunato, Dentist



Transforming health into happiness, one smile at a time!

On February 7, JRF's Community Health Center hosted GIVE KIDS A SMILE Day 2025, bringing joy and care to our little ones. **Give Kids A Smile®** is an annual volunteer initiative that provides free educational, preventive, and restorative dental services to children from low-income families.

Our event featured none other than our very own, Dr. Maribell Vega, Dental Director at the JRF Community Health Center, dazzling and all dressed up as the Tooth Fairy—assisted by our amazing dental staff! This year, we provided free dental screenings to 11 children.

In addition, a special thank you to **Jersey Mike's from Woodbridge, NJ** for fueling our event with delicious food for the kids and volunteers and for always supporting our agency. Together, we're building a stronger, healthier community—one smile at a time!





OPPORTUNITIES: SERVE & LEARN



Click on the QR code for more information:
Haga clic en el código QR para obtener más información:

To apply, contact/Para solicitarlo, póngase en contacto con:

Jordi Jimenez-Marte
AEI Education and Career Readiness Assistant
(732) 324-2114 ext. 125 or jordi.jimenez@jrfnj.org



The Alternative Education Institute (AEI)

The Alternative Education Institute (AEI) program is a comprehensive educational program delivered in a non-traditional learning environment to help youth with parental consent between the ages of 16 – 17 and adults earn their **New Jersey State High School Equivalency Diploma**. Upon completion, the AEI program will continue to assist its students with entrance into post-secondary education, trade school and/or employment.

The Alternative Education Institute offers the following free educational services in English:

- AEI General Program (for participants 16 years and older)
- Every Tuesday Evening, **5:00 PM – 8:00 PM**

Eligibility Criteria:

- Must live in Middlesex County
- Must be enrolled in school or any other educational program
- Must be able to provide us valid documentation
- Must have access to an electronic device and internet

Instituto de Educación Alternativa (AEI)

El programa del Instituto de Educación Alternativa (AEI) es un programa educativo integral que se imparte en un entorno de aprendizaje no tradicional para ayudar a los jóvenes con el consentimiento de los padres entre las edades de 16 a 17 años y a los adultos a obtener su **Diploma de Equivalencia de Escuela Secundaria del Estado de Nueva Jersey**. Al finalizar, el programa AEI continuará ayudando a sus estudiantes con el ingreso a la educación postsecundaria, la escuela de oficios y /o el empleo.

El Instituto de Educación Alternativa ofrece los siguientes servicios educativos gratuitos en Español:

- Programa de Sábado en Español de AEI (para participantes que hablan, leen y escriben español y tienen 16 años o más)
- Todos los Sábados por la mañana, de **9:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

Criterios de Elegibilidad:

- Debe vivir en el condado de Middlesex
- Debe estar inscrito en la escuela o en cualquier otro programa educativo.
- Debe poder proporcionarnos documentación válida.
- Debe tener acceso a un dispositivo electrónico e internet.



AmeriCorps New Jersey

AMERICORPS WEEK MARCH 9 – 15. This year's theme was **AmeriCorps Works for America**. Celebrate members, volunteers, programs, leaders, and champions who demonstrate that America's greatness comes from the extraordinary acts of ordinary citizens. Click on the QR Code to make a difference. Join AmeriCorps today!



#MayorsDay with City of Perth Amboy's Mayor Caba



#TeamBuilding



#DayoftheA



#PartnerAppreciationDay



#HappyProudNotYetSatisfied



UPCOMING EVENTS

Make a Meaningful Impact— Partner with the Jewish Renaissance Foundation



Jewish Renaissance Foundation
"One People, One Heart"

17TH ANNUAL JRF GOLF OUTING

THURSDAY, JULY 10, 2025
FORSGATE COUNTRY CLUB



8:30am–5:00pm ⌚
375 Forsgate Drive, Monroe, NJ 08831 📍
Ticket Price \$400 💰

Join us for a day on the greens!

Enjoy breakfast, a silent auction during lunch, and chances to win prizes for *Closest to the Pin*, *Longest Drive*, and a *\$10K Hole-in-One Contest*. Whether you're a seasoned golfer or new to the game, it's a great way to have fun while supporting the Jewish Renaissance Foundation (JRF). Your sponsorship helps JRF provide essential services—like medical, dental, mental health care, and family outreach—to vulnerable individuals across Middlesex County.

For more information, scan here:



and/or contact, Office Manager,
Lissette Vargas Guzman
at 732-324-2114.



Scan to access our program calendars for upcoming events:

