

The Streetlight

Shining a light on homelessness in and around Trenton, New Jersey

thestreetlight.pages.tcnj.edu

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Tamara Torres: From Homelessness to Artistic Activist

By McKenna Samson

Tamara Torres sat on a stool in her Artworks Trenton studio, wearing her “La Feminista” collection T-shirt and some paint-speckled jeans, her curls tucked away in a headwrap, sitting on the edge of her seat waiting to tell her story and explain how a photograph of herself took her all the way across the world from her home city of Trenton to Italy.

The Mercer County native’s story begins in the city of Trenton. At age 11, she and her brother turned to the streets when things were rocky at home. It was on the city streets where Torres met an older friend, John*, who offered to buy her a camera and film in exchange for portraits of himself. Upon taking on this task, Torres realized her passion for photography. Her new 35mm Pentax film camera helped her to see the world in a whole new lens.

“The second I saw through the lens, it was like I saw everything different. It was like a square of things that weren’t realistic, but were, and that could be changed,” Torres remarked.

She explained that she was almost too eager for her own good.



Tamara Torres in her studio at Artworks Trenton
Photo by McKenna Samson/The Streetlight

“I took so many pictures that he [John*] was like ‘okay, film is expensive so, now I’m just going to break the camera. If you fix it, then

I’ll give you more film.’ Now, you’re talking to someone that has nothing else to do, education-wise. So, I fixed the camera, boom. And he got me

more film. I like to say that was the beginning of something.”

Torres’ interest in photography eventually grew into collage art. Her pieces focus on social-political issues; many of which Torres has experienced within her own community. Her piece entitled *Freedom* has a unique backstory that took her from Trenton to a show for UNICEF in Milan, Italy.

On her art piece, *Freedom*, Torres explained that she “created it for these two women that I met that were saving money to get their daughters back because they were from a different culture and when you get divorced in that culture, you lose everything, including family,” Torres explained. She shifted in her seat and nervously smiled as she continued.

She immediately went into the planning and execution of her first art piece, inspired.

“So, I remember going home and putting tape over my mouth and doing this picture. I gave them the photograph and I said, ‘I hope your daughters see

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Send story ideas to

The
Streetlight

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Tamara Torres
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a big world and I hope you can find their voice.' They encouraged me to put it into shows and I was like 'no way, that's not gonna happen' and it did."

Freedom addresses the intersectionality of being an immigrant in America, especially those of color entering America for the very first time. "It was really cool because a lot of immigrants look at it and that's how they feel being here with this big dream, but they can't vote, they can't say certain things, they have to be careful. That was the beginning of my social-political art," Torres summarized.

Torres' acknowledgement of her accomplishments was something that she had a tougher time grasping from her very first international experience. The realization that she had made it as an artist hit her when she was in an unlikely place for an art show: Edinburgh, Scotland.

As she leaned forward in her chair to describe the moment that her life changed, her eyes seemed to glimmer with excitement.

"I was walking to the museums and saw some art and I came out and sat down and I saw the ... Scottish people just walking and I just started to cry. It had just hit me like 'holy s**t.' You were from the streets of Trenton with food stamps, roaches, no heat, seeing people get beat up and people being verbally abused and sexually abused at a young age, myself. You are now sitting under some stone in Scotland, like, Edinburgh looking at people walking by because of your art."

She felt as though she had actually made it. There were endless possibilities for Torres, with her art as her guide.

As a Latinx woman navigating the art world, Torres found herself standing in her truth, among some of the international elite. The art

field, often occupied by those hailing from privileged backgrounds, can be intimidating for those who have alternative origins. There is often a sense of pride one can feel as they enter such a technical and critical community. Torres seemed to feel a certain intensity as she thought to herself and reflected on this.

"There's been exhibits that I've been a part of that people have been like '...where did you get your MA or your BA or CA or whatever,' and like, I didn't and it bothers them so much, mainly white artists, that I'm in their world of high standards where they are and I have nothing. Like, I came from nothing to this. It was just my work and my art that brought me there."

Higher education, while it may have brought some people into the elite art world, did not serve Torres. The ability and passion, that she put into her art pieces allows for her to reach the same exhibits and clientele as artists that have been classically trained through higher education. Her ability to adapt and present her raw talent in these spaces is something that she knew she did not need classical training for. When Torres presented *Freedom* to the public in Italy for the first time ever, the art community there welcomed her genius with open arms. For her, it was an experience like no other.

For those who may feel as though they are struggling to find their way or would like to fit into elite spaces, Torres has a message: "If someone comes from a broken home, like I did, it's really important that they understand that that is not their final destination. I have to say that you have to find something that you love and push on that."

**The name 'John' has been used to protect the identity of the individual who provided Torres' camera.*



Sunflower Village
by Sharon A./HomeFront ArtSpace

The Lost Land II

by Deborah Kisela

Poetry

"The lost land," is in everyone's mind. This is a place where anyone can go to get away from the problems of the world around us.

You go to this land anytime you're feeling sad, mad or even glad. Such a wonderful place to be. No hate, pain, hunger or death.

In this Lost Land, within your mind, is a paradise of life. Animals of all types live together in harmony.

You can sleep with a lion or tiger. Food is abundant. Life is wonderful and free; an escape from reality.

There is no crime, life is full of only good times. Oh, how I wish "The Lost Land" was here on Earth. This world would be a more enjoyable place to be, for all to see!! Such a wonderful and joyous place it would be for you and me!!

Artwork in this issue is available for purchase

HomeFront's ArtSpace - (609) 883-7500 ext. 316
Trenton Community A-TEAM- (609) 695-5456 ext. 105

What Am ...What Am I?

excerpt of poem by Amorphous

I am more delicate than a fallen dead leaf off of a healthy tree.

I am more than my attitude that precedes me.

Let not my ill-mannered, mixed emotions, and uncertain actions define thy existence.

I am more than my attitude.

I roam roads in search for a home.

I've squatted where none have the will to kneel.

I've peeled flesh off my own body in hopes to heal

I've destroyed myself looking to refresh.

What am I?

Poetry

NJ Cities Differ in Approach to Panhandling Policies

By Kristine Spike

A 2016 report from the Department of Housing and Urban Development found that an estimated 553,000 people are experiencing homelessness nationwide. Some behaviors of individuals experiencing homelessness are being criminalized by new policies. Newark, for example, has passed new municipal ordinance to ban panhandling within city limits.

Officials with the Newark Department of Public Safety have reported that in May 2019, police handed out more than 250 summonses for panhandling, which can have a maximum fine of \$500. Newark Police are also enforcing a "delaying traffic" ordinance, which prohibits drivers from stopping to give cash to those requesting it.

In May, 90 summonses were issued. Tickets given for delaying traffic cost \$50, plus a court fine. Newark officials have stated that these policies have been enacted as a public safety effort. In addition, officials report that they have increased outreach efforts.

For instance, Newark's 'Hope One' is a mobile police vehicle that offers Narcan kits, detoxification, rehabilitation recovery support, mental health services, and transportation to treatment facilities. Hope One also works to make identification cards accessible to those experiencing homelessness so that the individuals can obtain services such as assisted housing. Trenton does not currently have a Hope One program, though a list of community partners that perform comparable services can be found in *The Streetlight's*

Mercer County Resource Guide.

The main concern is whether or not such panhandling policies will extend to Trenton and its surrounding areas. Currently, the short answer is no. The City of Trenton has recently revised its policy on begging and panhandling. City legislation states that "the City Council recognizes a constitutional right to beg or solicit in a peaceful and nonthreatening manner."

The legislation in Trenton goes on to mention that "an increase in aggressive solicitation throughout the City has become extremely disturbing and disruptive to residents and businesses." These findings led to the passing of a new article to update and clarify the panhandling regulation.

The recently passed Trenton ordinance goes on to define "aggressive", stating that following or approaching individuals at night, or near ATM machines, amongst other behaviors, all are considered to be "aggressive."

This clause reportedly serves to protect the rights of citizens, while aiming to harbor a safe environment. The City aims to keep intact constitutional rights while also reducing the "disturbance" that panhandling can cause when it takes an aggressive form.

In a phone interview, New Jersey State Police Trooper Ryon Barclay stated that as it stands, there is no reason to expect change in the current panhandling laws, adding that the current policy is clearly defined and has a goal of "protection of all citizens."



Floral

by Megan S./HomeFront ArtSpace

Code Blue and You: Staying Sheltered in the Frigid Months

By Brie Wells

There are over 9,000 people experiencing some form of homelessness on a given day in the state of New Jersey, according to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness. Back in 2013, the “Trenton/Mercer 10-year Plan to End Homelessness” was formed in order to prevent even more people from experiencing homelessness and to improve the situation of those who are currently on the streets. This plan was originally created to make a system that would assess needs and help connect individuals experiencing homelessness to housing, among other resources. Now, a new law involving Code Blue will continue to allow many of these individuals to seek shelter during the winter.

In Mercer County, individuals who suffer from housing insecurity may find themselves on the street during the severe weather conditions, which can be very hazardous to one’s health. Hypothermia occurs when one’s core body temperature falls below approximately 95°F. This drop in core body temperature can

be a direct result of staying out in temperatures around 30°F to 50°F for extended periods of time, especially in wet conditions.

For Trenton’s population experiencing homelessness, this means that suffering from life-threatening conditions such as hypothermia can pose a serious threat. Dr. Rita King, a professor of microbiology at The College of New Jersey in Ewing Township, explained that when a person is in the cold for a sustained period of time, blood vessels become smaller in order to keep the core of the body and vital organs warmer. This can result in fingers and toes becoming susceptible to frostbite, which can cause gangrene, potentially leading to an amputation of extremities.

“If you’re in sustained cold with constricted blood vessels, your blood pressure can raise which can cause heart attacks,” said King.

New Jersey State Senators Troy Singleton and M. Teresa Ruiz recently created legislation that was signed into law in March 2019, requiring all New Jersey counties to set up homelessness trust funds.

These funds would be used to support Code Blue emergency shelter services in order to provide resources and suitable shelter from severe weather conditions.

Code Blue initially was established in May 2017 after legislation was signed into law by Governor Chris Christie in efforts to develop a program that would offer emergency shelter to the population experiencing homelessness in times of inclement weather. According to Mercer County’s Office of Homeless Services’ website, in cases of extreme weather where the temperature drops below 25°F without precipitation, or in the case where it is below 32°F with precipitation with a wind chill of zero degrees for a prolonged period of two hours or more, Cold Blue alerts are issued.

However, King feels that Code Blue alerts should be issued during times of other temperatures as well.

“I don’t know where they came up with 25°F,” said King, calling such an extreme temperature “flat out freezing.”

This new partisan legislation created by Senators Troy

Singleton and M. Teresa Ruiz was passed by the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee. A spokesperson from Senator Ruiz office could not be reached for comment in time for publication.

Despite the new legislation, some patrons from the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen such as Reggie Montigue and Crystal Hickmond told *The Streetlight* that they do not have much trouble finding shelter in the winter. “I have already found my spot,” said Montigue.

Once Cold Blue alerts are issued, individuals who suffer from housing insecurity in Mercer County can turn to their designated Cold Blue shelter, the Rescue Mission of Trenton, which will be open 24 hours once the Code Blue alert is issued. Additionally, people in need of assistance throughout the state of New Jersey can call 211 for shelter information.



Mariposa
by Nilky/HomeFront ArtSpace

Melody by Betty Barr



Listen to the melody in the air.
The cool breeze that blows the trees.
Spring coming up with the Sun beaming.
People enjoying the March winds while the flowers
bloom everywhere.
Flashy cars riding down the streets, hitting the
highways before sunset.
Fear no evil, brother man.
Neighbors sitting on their porch, having fun, enjoying
life.
Having a good time all night long.

Music Box

by Annette Price

Poetry

The music box that brought sweet music to
my ears
The music box that brought love into my heart
The music box that stood on my dresser
The music box that brought tears to my eyes
The music box that brought dancing in my feet
The music box I once had done went astray
The music I once had brought me a broken
heart and broken thoughts
Not remembering what ever happened to the
music box that I once loved



Italian Village
by Sharon Ankle/HomeFront ArtSpace

Could Climate Change Worsen the Homelessness Crisis?

By Joshua Trifari

New Jersey is perhaps one of the states most vulnerable to climate disaster in the upcoming century. Several areas of the Garden State are very low-lying, leaving many neighborhoods, both poor and wealthy, likely to experience flooding.

A disaster like Superstorm Sandy in 2012 was predicted to occur only once every 260 years in New Jersey, according to an article published by Stevens Institute of Technology. However, by the end of the century, New Jersey can expect to see a storm with a similar intensity and impact of Sandy once every five years. This brings serious questions as to how New Jersey would be able to sustain such recurring damages from the storms to come.

In an interview with *The Streetlight*, Jay Everett of Cranford-based Monarch Housing Associates, stated that the effects of sea level rise can decrease property stock and increase property values, therefore making housing less accessible.

The National Low Income

Housing Coalition's 2019 "Out of Reach" report shows that in order to afford to rent a two-bedroom home in New Jersey, a household would need to earn \$28.86 an hour. The current minimum wage in New Jersey is \$10 an hour, though that is scheduled to increase over the coming years. Everett noted that even families with more middle-class incomes struggle with affording the cost of housing in New Jersey. He suggested that increasing the availability of housing stock that is both affordable and sustainable in places that are not vulnerable to persistent flooding would provide a buffer against the impacts of climate change on homelessness.

In Trenton, some of the potential impacts of climate change have already been studied. In a scenario of one foot of sea level rise, the Delaware River will flood more intensely according to the Climate Central Surging Seas Risk Zone Map, as well as creeks that lead into the Delaware River, such as Assunpink Creek, which runs through downtown Trenton. At two feet of sea level rise, parts of I-195 and I-295

in Hamilton Township, just outside of Trenton leading into the city, will become impassable.

Warmer temperatures are also expected. By 2050, New Jersey is expected to experience 34 "Danger Days" per year according to an analysis by Climate Central, where the heat index will exceed 105°F. Currently, New Jersey only experiences about seven "Danger Days" per year. By 2100, the Summer average temperature in New Jersey is expected to feel like Miami, increasing by 9°F.

Trenton's population experiencing homelessness has already experienced concerns due to extreme weather. As reported in a previous edition of *The Streetlight*, the Trenton Free Public Library was forced to close down several times during the summer of 2019 due to the air conditioning not functioning properly.

In an interview, when asked about the city's concern for the vulnerability of the homeless population, Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora's Chief of Staff, Yoshi Manale, told *The Streetlight* that "the City of Trenton does a good

job of keeping housing prices low and foreclosures low," which he said helps prevent people from entering homelessness. However, Manale noted that he does not have specific expertise as to how climate change can impact homelessness.

In 2010, the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University prepared a climate action plan for the City of Trenton. This plan includes recommendations for municipal operations, community-wide energy efficiency programs, water conservation, and community waste reduction. Emphasis was placed on making the housing stock in Trenton more energy efficient, while other parts of the report note how planting native vegetation near Assunpink Creek could prevent flooding and describe plans to work with the East Trenton Collaborative to make the area around the creek more resistant to flooding. However, the report makes no mention of the impact of climate change on people experiencing homelessness in Trenton.

MERCERCounty ResourceGUIDE

Where You Can Turn For Help

All information is subject to change without notice. Call before visiting each location. Check thetreetlight.pages.tcnj.edu for more listings and a map of all resources.

Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing

Amani House

518-520 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Trenton, NJ.
Transitional housing (24 single adult males between the ages of 18-65). Call for appointment. Tel. (609)-393-3168 ext. 13.

Anchor House, Inc.

482 Center St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-8329
24-hour program for runaway, homeless, and at-risk youth ages 10-17
Anchor House Shelter, school Outreach Program, (609) 396-8329
Anchorage Transitional Living Program, (609) 989-1625
Anchor Link Street Outreach Program, (609) 218-5630
Anchor Line, (609) 218-5630

Better Community Housing Trenton – Doorway to Hope

827 East State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-0271
Emergency shelter for homeless families in an apartment setting for up to 90 days.

Arm in Arm

123 East Hanover St., Trenton, NJ. Open Monday – Thursday 9:30 am – 12 pm
48 Hudson St., Trenton, NJ. Open Monday – Thursday 9:30 am – 12 pm
61 Nassau St., Princeton, NJ. Open Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 1:30 pm – 4pm and Tuesday 1:30 pm – 7 pm.
(609) 396-9355. Food pantry, emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposit, mortgage) for low income families and individuals in Mercer County. Pantry visits require photo ID and proof of Mercer County address.

Bethel Seventh Day Adventist Church

203 Hillcrest Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-2224
Open third Sunday of the month 8 am – 12 pm

Bethel World Outreach Ministries International

931 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Trenton, NJ. (609) 656-9228.
Community dinner Wednesday nights 5 pm - 6:30 pm

Bible Way Temple of Deliverance

60 Randall Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 906-1616. Thursdays 4:30pm - 6pm

Cadwalader Asbury United Methodist Church Food Pantry

900 Stuyvesant Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-1037. Thursday 4pm - 6pm

Catholic Charities Community Food Pantry

132 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ (609) 394-8847
Open Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 9 am – 12:30 pm

Celestial Church of Christ Food Pantry

46 Weber Ave., Ewing, NJ. (609) 771-9227
Bi-Weekly food pantry program. Contact for hours.

Christ Temple Ministries

471 Parkway Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-2333. Wednesdays 12pm - 1pm.

Christ Presbyterian Church (Ginny’s Pantry)

746 Klockner Rd., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 587-0751

Concerned Citizens of Ewing Inc. Food Pantry

320 Hollowbrook Dr., Ewing, NJ. (609) 882-0856
Open Monday through Friday from 9:30 am – 1:30 pm

First Baptist Church of Princeton

John Street & Paul Robeson Pl., Princeton, NJ. (609) 924-0877. Dinner Tuesday from 5 pm – 7 pm.

First Presbyterian Church of Hightstown

320 North Main St., Hightstown, NJ. (609) 448-0055
Rise to the TASK Community Supper on Mondays from 4 pm – 5:30 pm

First United Methodist Church of Hightstown

187 Stockton St., Hightstown, NJ. (609) 448-0041. Rise to the TASK Community Supper on Thursdays from 4:30 pm – 6 pm.

Hamilton Township’s Bromley Neighborhood Civic Center

1801 East State St, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 587-8100. Open Tuesdays from 9:30 am-11:30 am and Thursdays from 2:30 pm – 3:30 pm.

Hamilton Township’s J. O. Wilson Neighborhood Center

169 Wilfred Ave, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 393-6480. Open Mondays from 10 am – 12 pm, Wednesdays 1 pm – 3 pm.

Escher Street SRO & Transitional Housing

50 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-4599
Single Occupancy Rooms for single men and women (Project Specific Section 8); Transitional Housing for single men (26 beds) and women (8 beds). SRO accepts transitional housing clients and walk-ins. Referred by Mercer County Board of Social Services or New Jersey Department of Corrections.

HomeFront New Jersey Family Campus

101 Celia Way, Ewing, NJ. (609) 989-9417
Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Permanent Housing are available.

LifeTies

Triad House & Administrative Offices: 2205 Pennington Rd., Ewing, NJ (609) 771-1600
Mary’s Place/T.L.I.T.: 1901 North Olden Ave., Ewing, NJ. (609) 671-0040
Providing 24/7 shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth ages 12 to 21.

Holy Apostles’ Episcopal Church

1040 Yardville Allentown Rd., Hamilton Twp, NJ. (609) 208-0228.
Dinner Tuesday, 5 pm – 6:30 pm

HomeFront Pantry

1880 Princeton Ave., Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 989-9417. Open Tuesdays 12 pm – 8pm, Mondays and Thursdays 9 am – 4 pm.

Holy Trinity Catholic Church Food Pantry

201 North Pennsylvania Ave., Morrisville, PA (215) 295-3045.
Call 48 hours in advance.

Jerusalem Baptist Church

150 N. Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ (609) 394-9816. Third Saturday of a five Saturday month and the first Saturday of a four Saturday month. 11:30 am – 1 pm. Call for details on other services.

Lawrence Community Center

295 Eggerts Crossing Rd., Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 883-3379
HomeFront-managed food pantry provides food bags on the first and third Thursday of the month. Various programs for all ages and computer access for visitors.

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer Food Pantry

189 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-2411
Last Thursday of month. Opens at 8 am on a first come first serve basis.

Meals on Wheels of Mercer County

320 Hollowbrook Dr., Ewing, NJ. (609) 695-3483
Provides nutritious meals to homebound individuals throughout Mercer County.

Medallion Care Behavioral Health

1 Electronics Dr., Suite 105, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-0700. Lunch Monday - Friday from 12 pm – 1 pm

Mercer Street Friends

824 Silvia St., Ewing, NJ. General inquiries (609) 396-1506.
Food Bank inquiries (609) 406-0503

Mount Carmel Guild

73 North Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-5159.
Operates a food pantry Mon-Fri. 9:30 am – 11:30 am and 1:30 am – 3:30 pm

New Covenant United Methodist Church

1965 South Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-4725
Third Wednesday of the month 4pm - 8pm

NJ Conference Adventist Community Services Center

2160 Brunswick Ave, Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 392-7131
Monday and Tuesday 11am - 1pm, 2pm - 4pm. By appointment only.

Primera Iglesia Pentecostal (Alpha and Omega Inc.)

347 Second St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 571-9135. 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Princeton Deliverance Center

301 Southard St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-9161. Wednesday (not 1st of month) 12:30 am – 1:30 pm, Friday 9 am – 12 pm

Rescue Mission of Trenton

98 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-1436
Emergency overnight shelter: day center, meals and clothing for single adults
Housing: Transitional Housing; Rooming and Boarding House; Permanent Supportive Housing
Other Services: Adult education, job training, thrift store, and courtesy store.

United Progress Inc. – Emergency Shelter

56 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2822 and Fax: (609) 392-3215
Providing 22-bed transitional housing service for single homeless males of Mercer County. Accepting transitional housing referrals from Mercer County Board of Social Services.

Princeton United Methodist Church

7 Vandeventer Ave., Princeton, NJ. (609) 924-2613. Free community dinner, Wednesdays 5 pm – 6:30 pm

Resurrection Lutheran Church Food Pantry

4315 Nottingham Way, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-3355
531 Dr. ML King Blvd., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-0016. Saturday 9 am – 11:30 am

Rise Food Pantry

225 Franklin St., Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464.
Open for limited food distribution on Monday through Wednesday from 9 am – 12 pm. Please call the office for requirements and information.

Sacred Heart Church

343 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-2801. Soup Kitchen: 4th Sunday Lunch from 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm. Food Pantry: 3rd Tuesday of the month. 2 pm – 6 pm

Samaritan Baptist Church

531 Dr. ML King Blvd., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-0016. Saturday 9 am – 11:30 am

South Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

First Baptist Church, 128-140 Centre St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-8810. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday Dinner from 4 pm – 5:30 pm.

St. James AME Church

413 Summit St., Hightstown, NJ. (609) 448-7855
Community dinner, Wednesdays 5 pm - 6:30 pm

St. Mary’s Cathedral (Loaves and Fishes Food & Soup Kitchen)

151 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-8447. Last two Saturdays of the month. Lunch is 11 am – 2 pm

The Food Center at Morrisville Presbyterian Church

771 N. Pennsylvania Ave., Morrisville, PA (215) 295-4191

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral Food Pantry

801 W. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-3805. Food Pantry. Every other Saturday 9 am – 11 am. Services via the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen are also available.

Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72^{1/2} Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-5456. Mon. – Fri. Lunch from 10:30am – 1pm, late trays until 2pm; Monday – Thursday Dinner from 3:30pm-5pm, late trays until 5:30pm. Call for other services.

Turning Point United Methodist Church

15 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. Dinner served / Food Pantry. 3rd Sun. 1 pm – 3 pm.

Trinity United Methodist Church of Bordentown City

339 Farnsworth Ave., Bordentown, NJ. (609) 298-0158
Dinner is served Tuesdays from 5 pm – 6:30 pm

United Progress, Inc.

62 West State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2161. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 9 am – 12 pm.

West Trenton Soup Kitchen

Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. 801 W. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 902-0427. Thursday Dinner, 5 pm – 6:30 pm

Emergency, Health, and Addiction Services

Catholic Charities, Behavioral Health Services

10 Southard St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-4557.
Integrated behavioral health and physical health services.

Capital Health Medical System at Hopewell

1 Capital Way, Hopewell Township, NJ. (800) 637-2374.
Clinics, Medicaid, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care.

Capital Health Regional Medical Center

750 Brunswick Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-6722
Mental Health Crisis Assistance. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare

For My Baby and Me

609-256-7801
Hotline that will provide service to drug addicted pregnant women who may be experiencing homelessness.

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Main)

321 North Warren St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 278-5900
Offers fast track, pediatrics, adult medicine, OB/GYN care, social services, podiatry, eye care, behavioral health care, dental services, HIV and Hepatitis C testing and treatment. Have ID. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare. Monday through Friday 8 am – 5 pm and Saturday 9 – 1.

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Chambers)

317 Chambers St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 278-5900.
Adult Medicine and other services. The satellite centers are open Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged.

Henry J. Austin Health Center (Ewing Street)

112 Ewing St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 278-5900.
Adult Medicine and the above services and dental care. Open Monday through Friday 8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Appointments are encouraged.

Hyacinth Foundation

849 West State Street, Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-8175
Prevention, care, treatment and services for individuals with HIV/AIDS

A Better Way

15 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-1224
Specializes in mentoring, re-entry & gang reduction.

Arm in Arm

123 East Hanover St., Trenton, NJ
48 Hudson St., Trenton, NJ
61 Nassau St., Princeton, NJ
(609) 396-9355
Food pantries; emergency financial assistance (rent, utilities, security deposit, mortgage); workforce development, and driver’s license restoration assistance.

Catholic Charities – Emergency & Community Services

132 N. Warren St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 394-8847.
Provides support related to housing, food and mental health.

CEAS (Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services) Center

509 Perry St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-3722
Monday-Friday 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
Operated by the City of Trenton, this center strives to provide services like housing, identification, and information about benefits eligibility.

Central Jersey Legal Services, Inc.

198 West State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-6249.
Will discuss legal issues with individuals, landlord/tenant issues and appointments. Call for appointment (9 am – 4:30 pm).

Child Care Connection

1001 Spruce St., Suite 201, Ewing, NJ. (609) 989-7770.
Resource and Referral for quality child care and access to child care subsidy funds. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9 am – 5 pm., Thursday 9 am – 6 pm

City of Trenton – Health & Human Services

319 E. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 815-2160
Can provide emergency assistance for back rent, first month rent for the homeless and/or at-risk homeless, assistance for Senior Citizens, and other services from its City Hall office.

Community Health Law Project

225 East State St., Suite 5, Trenton NJ (609) 392-5553.
Discusses legal questions with those with disabilities. Offers a low-cost fee-for-service legal service program. Will make appointments.

Community Justice Center

310 West State St., Trenton, NJ (609) 218-5120.
Encouraging the empowerment, resiliency and rights of those struggling with disabilities by providing the essential ingredients of legal education, outreach, advocacy and representation. Will discuss legal questions with veterans and disabled and will make appointments.

Community Options, Inc.

16 Farber Rd., Princeton, NJ (609) 951-9000
Housing and employment services for individuals with disabilities.

Mount Carmel Guild

73 North Clinton Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-5159. Utility and Prescription assistance. Free Home Health Nursing Services: visits for medication management, vital sign checks, pre-filling syringes, administer injections.

New Horizons Treatment Service, Inc.

132 Perry St., Trenton, NJ. Appointment: (609) 394-8988.
Provides an array of medical, clinical and special services, i.e. substance Abuse treatment, detoxification, methadone maintenance, methadone detoxification. Mon-Fri 6am-8pm. Accepts Medicaid, WorkFirst NJ, and self-pay.

Oaks Integrated Care

31 Lexington Ave., Ewing, NJ. 609-583-1900.
1001 Spruce St. Suite 205, Trenton, NJ. 609-396-6788
1320 New Willow St., Trenton, NJ. 609-396-8877
314 East State St., Trenton, NJ. 609-396-4258
2550 Brunswick Pk., Lawrenceville, NJ. 609-396-8877
Linkage to mental health services, medical services, entitlements and housing. Call for appointment.

Oxford House

1065 River Rd., Ewing, NJ. (301) 587-2916, Toll Free: (800) 689-6411
Halfway houses to transition from rehab to independent living.

Princeton House Behavioral Health

741 Mount Lucas Rd., Princeton, NJ. (1-800) 242-2550; (609)- 497-3347
Intensive outpatient, partial hospitalization. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

Planned Parenthood

Trenton Center - 437 E. State St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 599-4881
Hamilton Center - 2279 State Hwy 33, Hamilton, NJ. 689-4964
Services: Abortion Services, Birth Control Services, Emergency Contraception, General Health Care, HIV Testing, LGBT Services, and more.

Rescue Mission of Trenton

96 Carroll St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 393-3533. Residential and Outpatient Treatment for addictions and co-occurring disorders.

Robert Wood Johnson Hospital at Hamilton

One Hamilton Health Pl., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 586-7900
Clinics, General Acute Medical Care Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

Helping Arms

50 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 396-7500
Provides counseling, employment placement services, housing and other social services to low income people, and operates a prison re-entry initiative in Trenton. Referrals from Dept. of Corrections.

HomeFront

Administrative Offices
1880 Princeton Ave., Lawrenceville, NJ. (609) 989-9417
Homelessness prevention (rent/security); permanent service-enriched affordable housing; food pantry; FreeStore; Furnish the Future. Monday – Friday 9am-5pm. Except Tuesday 12 pm – 8 pm

Housing Initiatives of Princeton

11 Mercer St., Princeton, NJ. (609) 252-1572
Serves individuals experiencing homelessness or in danger of experiencing homeless in order to assist with finding affordable housing and resources.

Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness

1001 Spruce St., Ewing Township, NJ. (609) 599-9762
Not a direct service provider, but works alongside other Mercer County agencies and organizations to aid people experiencing homelessness.

Mercer County Board of Social Services (MCBOSS)

200 Woolverton St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-4320.
Complaint Line: (609) 989-4400. Social Services: (609) 989-4451.
Assist individuals with General Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income and other services. M-F, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm, T 8:30 am – 8:30 pm. Can call or walk-in.

Mercer County Clerk’s Office

240 W. State St., Floors 6 and 7, Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6494
ID’s- Voter registration forms, Mercer County photo ID, passport. Monday – Friday 8 am – 4 pm; Wednesday until 6:45 pm. Walk-ins accepted.

Mercer County Connection

957 Route 33, Hamilton, NJ. (609) 890-9800.
County ID card and passport services. Mon, Wed, Fri. 10am – 6pm. Tuesday & Thursday, 10 am – 8 pm. Saturday, 10 am – 3 pm. Walk-ins accepted.

Mercer County Department of Housing and Community Development

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6858
Provides heating/cooling assistance, first-time homebuyer assistance, residential rehabilitation assistance, and affordable housing. M-F 8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Mercer County Department of Human Services

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 468-8296

Mercer County Office on Aging

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ
Information for Seniors (877) 222-3737, (609) 989-6661

Mercer County Office for the Disabled

640 S. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6663

St. Francis Medical Center

601 Hamilton Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 599-5000
Clinics, Medical Care, General Acute Medical Care. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

The Salvation Army’s Trenton Adult Rehabilitation Center

436 Mulberry St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 503-5124

Trenton Department of Health and Human Services - Clinical Services

218 N. Broad St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-3242
Health Promotions and Clinical Services; Health Incentive Program for Women (HIP4W), Children’s Health Services.

Trenton Treatment Center (Part of United Progress, Inc.)

56 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2822
Trenton Treatment Center offers residential (for men only) and outpatient programs for those addicted to drug and alcohol. Accepts referrals, client walk-ins, and uninsured Mercer County residents.

University Medical Center of Princeton at Plainsboro

1 Plainsboro Rd., Plainsboro, NJ. (609) 853-7000
Clinics, General Acute Medical Care. Accepts Medicaid, Medicare.

United Progress Inc. Trenton Treatment Center

56 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 392-2161.
Provides substance abuse treatment, HIV/AIDS counseling, employment and job development counseling, emergency food, utility, housing services and homeless prevention.

Womanspace

1530 Brunswick Ave., Lawrenceville, NJ.
(609) 394-9000; (800)-572-SAFE
Emergency services designed to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault immediately following the initial crisis. Spanish-speaking staff available.

Mercer County Veterans Residence

2280 Hamilton Ave., Hamilton NJ. (609) 989-6120. (Must apply in advance)

New Jersey Department of Labor One-Stop Career Center

26 Yard Ave., Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-6200.
Offers workforce readiness services and career resources. Referrals from MCBOSS, unemployment. Walk-ins accepted. (Monday-Friday), 8:30 am – 5 pm, Tuesdays, 8:30 am – 8:30pm.

Opportunities for All

1701 S. Broad St., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 394-7013
Training and employment opportunities to a diverse group of job seekers. We specialize in working with applicants with disabilities.

Rise – A Community Service Partnership

Main Office, 116 N. Main St., 2nd Floor, Hightstown, NJ. (609) 443-4464.
Providing case management to individuals in the East Windsor/Hightstown area.
Main office is open: Monday through Friday 9 am – 4 pm
(Closed for lunch from 1 pm – 2 pm daily)

Social Security Administration

635 S. Clinton Ave., 2nd Floor, Trenton, NJ. (609) 989-2254; 1-800-772-1213. Assists clients with social security card replacement, Disability info, questions and assistance in applying for SSI and SSDI. Call or walk-in.

Trenton Area Soup Kitchen

72 1/2 Escher St., Trenton, NJ. (609) 695-5456
Hot lunch and dinner (see previous page); adult education; computer classes; job search assistance. Open Monday - Thursday 8:30am - 1 pm, 2pm - 5pm. Friday 8:30am - 1pm

Ujima Urban Women’s Center

1001 Pennington Rd., Ewing, NJ. (609) 882– 2098
Providing compassion, advocacy, and training to urban women residing in Trenton and surrounding areas. Call for Appointment.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Trenton Vet Center

934 Parkway Ave. Suite 201, Ewing, NJ. (609) 882-5744

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Hamilton Outpatient Clinic

3635 Quakerbridge Rd., Hamilton, NJ. (609) 570-6600
General Medicine for veterans.

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Homeless Intervention Program

Hotline is intended to assist homeless Veterans and their families, VA Medical Centers, federal, state and local partners, community agencies, service providers and others in the community. (1-877) 4AID VET (877-424-3838) (National)

New Jersey to Launch Office on Homelessness Prevention

By Jared Kofsky

As chronic homelessness continues to impact thousands of New Jerseyans in municipalities such as Trenton, the question remains what roles government agencies, non-profit organizations, religious groups, and for-profit entities should play in alleviating this crisis. Although the City of Trenton operates the Coordinated Entry and Assessment Services (CEAS) Center and county, state, and federal dollars often fund contracted services at local organizations, the majority of resources serving people experiencing homelessness in Mercer County are ultimately operated by charities such as Anchor House and the Rescue Mission of Trenton.

Now, could changes be coming to how homelessness is addressed on a statewide level?

The Streetlight has learned that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will be moving forward with the development of a new Office on Homelessness Prevention and that the office will be based in the William Ashby Building in Downtown Trenton. Tammori Petty, the Director of Communications for DCA, confirmed to *The Streetlight* that the office will coordinate between government agencies and external organizations serving people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk.

“The office, which will focus on addressing homelessness among all subpopulations, including youth homelessness, has been

tasked with implementing a statewide strategy to address homelessness,” Petty explained. “A major part of the Office’s role will be to engage stakeholders across the state, including people with lived experience of homelessness, throughout the development of the state plan.”

At first, according to Petty, there will be three staff members in the office, including a director, a program manager, and a data manager.

Employment postings issued by the State of New Jersey and viewed by *The Streetlight* show that the director is expected to be paid between \$95,000 and \$100,000 annually. The individual will lead the collaborative efforts, analyze data, make recommendations regarding the statewide plan, and serve as an “expert resource on homelessness.”

The program manager would administer contracts with local organizations while earning between \$70,000 and \$85,000, while the data director would make between \$75,000 and \$90,000 and would issue reports about homelessness in New Jersey.

Applications for all three positions were due to DCA on October 15.

The establishment of the Office on Homelessness Prevention, along with the upcoming New Jersey Homelessness Prevention Task Force that acts as an advisory board for the office, came after legislation was enacted in April that involved appropriating \$3 million to the DCA.



Peacock

By Stacy D./HomeFront ArtSpace



Dandelions In The Breeze
by Elaine Jones/Trenton Community A-TEAM

The Boy Inside Me

by Robert Eaton

Poetry

I have a little boy inside me. I guess everyone does. This little boy is a rascal of a little boy. He is always trying to get me in trouble. If I am being quiet, he will show me funny memories to make me laugh. If I am trying to sleep, he will put “I’d rather be’s” in my head to keep me awake. If I want to write poetry, he will make me make other poets jealous. If I am lonely, he will suggest that I go see Jaime. He will also put sad memories in my head to make me cry. But he will also cause me to get in trouble. He will make me try to think up ways to cause mischief so that I will get in a lot of trouble. I don’t know why I always listen to him, but I do. This is why I have a smile on my face and a mischievous look in my eyes.

Community Opinion

First-Generation High School & College Graduate

By Essence Scott

If not for my parents’ honesty about their education, I would not have graduated from high school *or* college. Their honesty gave me the courage to remain in school, even as mental health issues burst my world open. I knew that I could not quit, knew I had to double down. I had to make an effort to graduate from high school.

The room we were in, Room 24 at the Trails End Motel in Windsor, affectionately called “The Trail-ey” by my Ma even today, further influenced my need to attain my high school diploma and Associates in Arts in Liberal Arts from Mercer County Community College. I knew I did not want to be homeless, in a motel room year after year, with the prices going up. I knew that I wanted and needed a place of my own. I knew education—attending school—doing my best on my schoolwork—would be my key. I knew I never wanted to live in another motel room for the rest of my life, and definitely not with children in tow.

The transition period from high school to college was not without its struggle. Though smart, I was underprepared for the more intense coursework--the readings from several different courses, the papers to write, the Math homework that will not do itself. I ultimately stopped. I tried taking five and six courses at a time and burned out of all of them. I learned that just because my peers were taking

five and six courses a semester doesn’t mean I should.

Asking for help was something that I found embarrassing. I had always been an independent type, and sometimes asking for help made me feel badly. I was supposed to grasp this information. I was supposed to be able to do this on my own, no assistance, no help.

I really do wish I had waited a couple of years after high school before applying to college. I would have been better off for it.

Ultimately, being the first to graduate makes me ecstatic. I did this. I pulled it off—name correctly spelled and (my full first, middle, and last names on my high school diploma, my first name, middle initial, and last name), pronounced correctly.

To other first-generation college students, to the parents who return to school years later, older, wiser, maybe even with children, I say congratulations and I wish you all the best and more. I say to read up on and learn your rights and responsibilities. I would say to find out more about college preparation programs. Lastly, I would say that if we do not feel comfortable about college straight after high school, then it is okay not to go to college. Maybe we’ll learn a little more about ourselves, gain more confidence. Consider going to trade school. The possibilities are endless.

Anchor House Receives Approval for Brunswick Avenue Facility

By Jared Kofsky

A non-profit serving youth and young adults experiencing homelessness could soon be expanding its presence in Trenton's North Ward.

Anchor House, Inc. received approval on July 17 from the Trenton Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) in connection with its proposal for the premises at 868 Brunswick Avenue. The organization sought a use variance in order to turn the house at the site into "office space on the first floor and residential use on the upper floors for up to four individuals," according to a legal notice.

The facility would include four bedrooms, a common kitchen, and a

living area, the notice stated. All of the residents of the house are expected to be between 18 and 21.

Anchor House already operates a shelter for youth and the Anchorage Transitional Living Program for young adults. The non-profit also facilitates the Anchor Link and Anchor Line spaces at the corner of South Broad and Beatty Streets in Chambersburg.

The ZBA's decision was memorialized in September, according to the notice. for the proposed adaptive reuse of the building is not yet clear. No updates from Anchor House, Inc. regarding the project were available by publication time.



Two Horses

By: Kim L./HomeFront ArtSpace

The Spotlight

TASK Expansion Finished

By Zion Lee

The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) has a mission to serve the people of the capital region who are affected by homelessness and/or poverty. The staff at TASK work to help better the lives of many and help smoothly run the operation. With hundreds of patrons coming in every day, TASK is clearly a hub of resources and a valued community for individuals affected by homelessness.

This past summer, renovations were made to the TASK facility on Escher Street. Not only is this change beneficial for the staff, as they now have more offices for administrative work, but there is also a great benefit to the patrons of TASK. A new lounge has been installed with vibrant colored furnishings and natural light pouring through the huge windows that provide a beautiful view of the outside. This allows patrons to get away

from all the buzz of the main area and opt for a more serene setting whether it be study, create art, or write. Furthermore, there is now a more secluded computer room dedicated to the adult education program for any student looking to use technology to further their education. One volunteer had even commented that the expansion has allowed TASK to offer even more help than it had been able to in the past. In addition to the computer room, there are also two classrooms open for tutoring sessions and group events that are filled with works of art from the community and individual patrons. Residents are encouraged to come and see the expansion of the TASK's facility and pursue the available opportunities that TASK provides to all who desire to both learn new skills, resource security, and conquer the challenge of homelessness.

Here to Help: Mercer St. Friends

By Hannah Keyes

The Mercer Street Friends Food Bank for Nutritional Health and Wellness is one of six food banks in the state of New Jersey. Established in 1987, the Food Bank secures and distributes food and provides related nutrition assistance to help ensure that citizens do not go hungry.

According to the Program Associate of Adult Hunger, Pamela Sims Jones, The Food Bank distributes USDA, state-purchased, and donated commodities to 48 member agencies within Mercer County. The 21 mobile pantry sites receive donated perishable and non-perishable items, and the 13 senior citizen housing sites receive designated USDA non-perishable commodities for the 520 Commodity Supplemental Food Program participants. Mercer Street Friends member agencies include a network of pantries, shelters, youth programs and the Trenton Area Soup

Kitchen (TASK) and their sites.

"Mercer Street Friends is 61 years old and the Food Bank is 31 years old. With a staff of 9 and over 2,400 volunteers a year, the Food Bank distributes more than 4 million pounds of food a year," stated Sims Jones.

Within this food distribution, the Food Bank has multiple programs seeking to help reduce hunger, such as "Send Hunger Packing", a program that partners with local public schools and provides healthy kid-friendly food on Fridays for children who are at-risk for suffering from hunger so they can have meals to eat over the weekend. The Food Bank also provides breakfast and lunch for children facing meal gaps during the summer when they cannot get food from school. Additionally, there is a mobile pantry that delivers monthly meal boxes to around 200 low-income seniors.

College Opens Innovative Food Pantry in Ewing Township

By Hannah Keyes and Brie Wells

The SHOP @ TCNJ is not the typical shopping destination for most college students, but for many, it provides resources needed to get through the week.

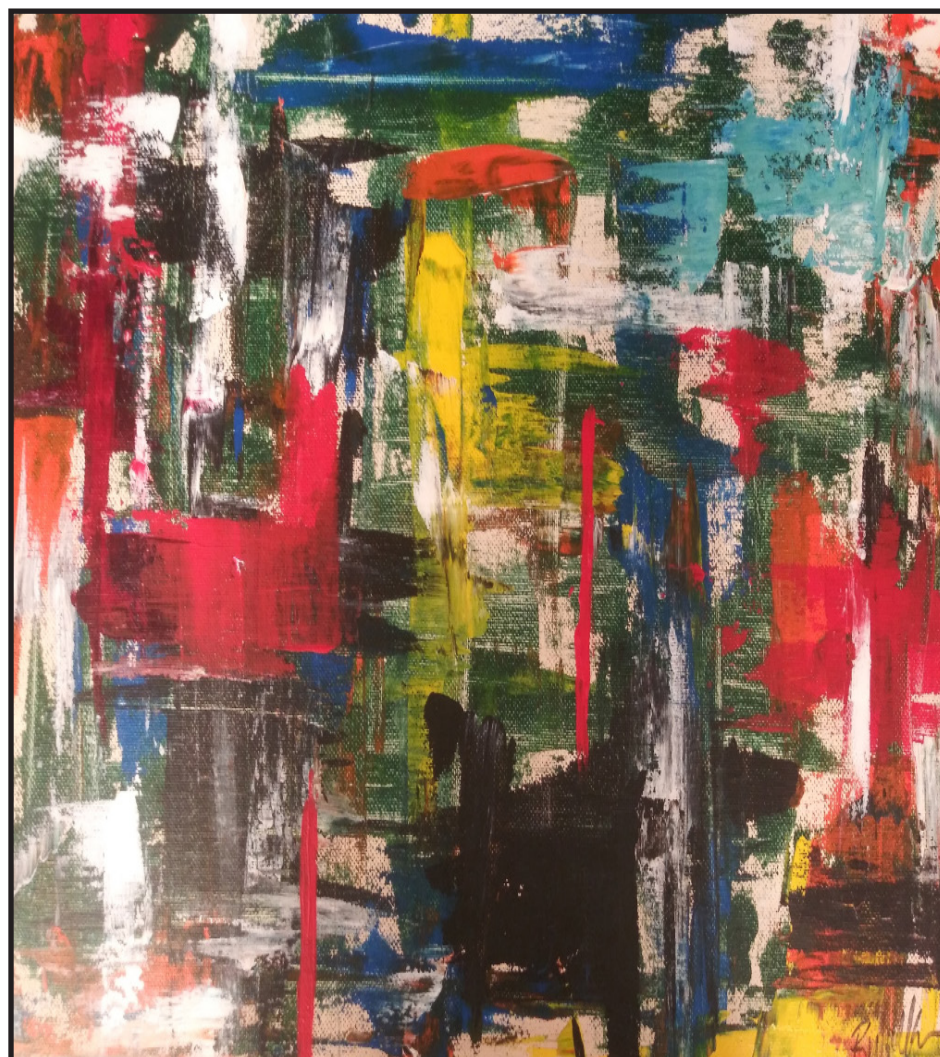
Located at The College of New Jersey's (TCNJ) Campus Town in Ewing Township, The SHOP is a food pantry that provides resources to those who may be experiencing food insecurity. The SHOP offers many different resources such as canned goods, hygiene products, some clothing items, microwavable meals, bottled water, feminine care products, fruits, grains, and vegetables. The SHOP also offers vegetarian and gluten free products for those who may have other dietary concerns.

It is open not only to college students, but also to faculty and general community members who may be in need. There are no questions asked.

Alana Adams, the College Enhancement Intern for The SHOP, mentioned that "food insecurity impacts nearly 40% of college students nationwide, so there should be no shame associated with utilizing the resources your campus or community provides."

However, there is often a negative preconceived notion surrounding the use of a food pantry and seeking help.

"We don't know what you're going through, but we are here to support you in the best way that we can. We want to have an experience with you. We want to provide a welcoming, comforting, inclusive, and safe environment where you are seen as a person," emphasized AmeriCorps member and TCNJ Garden and Food



Studio

By Rosemarie Walker/Trenton Community A-TEAM

Security program assistant Horacio Hernandez.

TCNJ students in Mercer County are the catalysts that brought light to the situation that many members of the community face everyday. The inception of The SHOP began when concerned students asked for referrals or file requests to provide emergency aid to those struggling to eat constantly or to find adequate housing. This need became especially apparent during extended school breaks.

"TCNJ has a Student Emergency Fund, which students can apply and receive limited funding for temporary housing

or food. With the help of other organizations, the Dean of Students Office launched the SHOP in February 2019, which serves as a more long-term solution to students in need, where they can receive food and other supplies on a weekly basis," Adams added.

The building space that The SHOP occupies was offered by the chief of TCNJ's Campus Police and allowed for everything to officially get started.

In order to support the surrounding communities, The SHOP works in conjunction with Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, TCNJ Student and Academic

Affairs, and TCNJ Campus Police. According to the Program Associate of the Adult Hunger Programs at Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, Pamela Sims Jones, "The Food Bank is here to support The SHOP with non-perishable and perishable commodities as needed so that The SHOP can continue to support the TCNJ community members who may be food insecure."

With the aid of Mercer Street Friends Food Bank and the rest of their partners, The SHOP hopes to be able to provide resources to those who do not have access to food and to help end the stigma surrounding asking for help. In the future The SHOP not only wants to provide basic necessities but to also give additional support for various aspects of life.

Donations and offered help are always accepted and valued by The SHOP. Recently there was a Greek Life food drive competition to see which greek organization could donate the most food to The SHOP.

There are many additions that The SHOP hopes to add services as time goes on, such as extra training for staff members, more partnerships with other organizations, the ability to provide hot meals, and the list goes on. The SHOP has a lot in store for the future.

The SHOP @ TCNJ
700 Campus Town Dr.
Ewing, NJ
(609) 771-2780
Mondays 9:30am-12pm,
Wednesdays 2pm-4:30pm
Fridays 10am-12:30pm.

Keeping Up With Chidick

By Zion Lee

As college admissions dates began to approach in 2018, all eyes seemed to be glued to one very special teenager from Jersey City. Dylan Chidick, a young man full of determination and aspiration, had caught the media's attention as he had applied to and received letters of acceptance from 17 colleges.

Not only was this a rare feat by itself, but Chidick also had been affected by homelessness during his time as a high school student. At the age of seven, Chidick's family immigrated from Trinidad to Brooklyn before moving to Jersey City after a rise in prices drove them out. His family later was forced to move into a shelter, where his ability to study was bound by curfews and access to light. Yet, against all odds, Chidick showed the world that nothing would stop him from obtaining a higher level of education. Then, the moment Chidick and everyone else who had been following his story came when Chidick announced that he would be attending his dream school, The College of New Jersey (TCNJ).

Chidick's experience and college application process has been a success story that news outlets covered and people indulged in. Yet, while the end of the news coverage on Chidick's story seemed to suggest a happy ending for Chidick, his journey through life and in college had only just begun.

The Streetlight had the privilege of speaking with Chidick and inquired not only about his story, but also about what he must do now to get through this time of transition into college.

In an interview, Chidick spoke with great exuberance about

the wonderful staff and friends he has interacted with and met at TCNJ. However, he also revealed that he, admittedly, felt "a bit of imposter syndrome" when he sat in a class with other students. He felt as though he did not belong, because he felt that he was less prepared than the other students in his classes. Yet against odds, Chidick has been doing his best and keeping up with his classmates. In fact, Chidick even ran for a position on the Freshman Class Council for the student government and won a seat. While TCNJ has been academically challenging for Chidick, it is clear that he has found a way to not only manage his work but also stay active in his community.

In the interview, Chidick gave words of wisdom for anyone facing homelessness who has dreams they want to accomplish.

While different situations like his occurred, he stated that it "will always be a part of your life that you can never forget" however, "don't let it define you." Instead, Chidick advises students experiencing homelessness who hunger for education like he does to "take that situation" and "open your eyes" by becoming more informed and an active member of your community.

It is clear that while entering college has been a trying experience for Chidick, he has figured out how to stay on top of his work and excel in extracurriculars. While homelessness may have had a huge impact on his life, Chidick says that he will not let that define him as he continues to smile and spreads not only his excitement to everyone he meets but his hunger to learn and achieve his goals.

The Streetlight

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*The views expressed in this newspaper are not necessarily those of
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Tribal Mask in the Crowd

By Dolores Frails/Trenton Community A-TEAM