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## Letters to the Editor

### I Will Make It My Mission To Establish The Highest Level Of Trust

As a working mom of five, I'm often asked how I manage it all. The housework, the parenting, the job, time to nurture the relationship with my husband, time to take care of myself... The list goes on, and now I will add being a member of the Westfield Board of Education to this list. After over a decade of life in this role, I can tell you the answer. I don't do it all myself. There is only so much time in a day, and the days go very fast. Especially when you are a parent.

During my campaign, I had help. I had incredible help from my friends, my running mates Simon Cirasa and Dennis Cariello, and others. Thank you to personal stylist Erica Ball of www.ericaball.com, Nikki Tardibuono of Blende Custom Beauty, Bar Method, Fresh Bui, and our Jude Connelly store. These local businesses help me look and feel my best at all times.

I just watched my ten year old daughter leave my home office in jeans and a cropped bomber jacket. She looked almost like a teenager. This time is so precious and it goes so fast. I am sharing this because I want you, the parent in Westfield reading this article, to do two things. Know that you are doing the best that you can, and let others help.

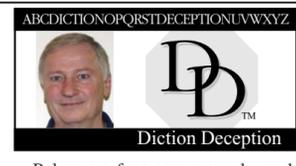
Whether you pay for help, have willing family, have help from your employer, or use school resources, all of these methods will enable you to be the best parent you can be. And one of your biggest helpers is

the Westfield Public School system.

As a member of the board, I will make it my mission to establish the highest levels of trust between the schools and the public so that you can trust us to help. Trust that we are doing the best possible job. Trust that we will address pressing safety concerns proactively. Trust that we will improve communication with parents and really involve them when they reach out. Trust that we will properly and thoroughly evaluate the impact of overcrowding and do something about it if there is a problem. Trust that we have the best teachers and curriculum. Trust that we will do everything we can to protect our kids from drugs, alcohol, vaping, bullying, sexting and unmanageable stress. Trust that our young daughters will have a decent environment to navigate her management of menstruation while at school (one of the issues that inspired me to run for the Westfield School Board in the first place). You have enough on your plate. In my view, our job is to help you and be an arm of support.

My role as a school board member will be to ensure that we are responsive to your concerns, values, and opinions. I am looking forward to helping provide leadership as an advocate for our children and schools. I promise you that serving in this role will be at the top of my priority list.

**Tara Oporto**  
Westfield



Below are four arcane words, each with four definitions - only one is correct. The others are made up. Are you sharp enough to discern this deception of diction?

If you can guess one correctly - good guess. If you get two - well-read individual. If you get three - word expert. If you get all four - You must have a lot of free time!

**All words and correct definitions come from the board game Diction Deception.**

**Answers to last week's arcane words.**

- Jadish - Tired, mean or worn out
- Posnet - A little basin or saucpan
- Pathetist - A hypnotist
- Peba - A small armadillo found from Texas to South America

- SAKEEN**
- A nectarine
  - A grain plant of Abyssinia from which flour is made
  - A wild goat of the Himalayas
  - Discolored or blackened
- TENTATION**
- Experimental adjustment
  - The shattering effect of a sudden burst of energy, as in an explosion
  - Spontaneous subdivision
  - Temporary loss of memory
- TEMULENTIVE**
- Somewhat intoxicated
  - Distressing; perplexing
  - Stern; grim
  - Tenative; timid
- MIFF**
- To take offense or quarrel
  - Utter dismay; astonishment
  - To beat or slap
  - To ignore or overlook

## 'See Something, Say Something' Could Be Key to Averting Tragedy

We are by now all familiar with the phrase "if you see something, say something," or "if you hear something, say something" — an appeal to all of us to report actions, comments or situations that may pose a risk to public health or safety. In Cranford two weeks ago, someone followed that advice, and by doing so may have prevented harm to others.

Authorities arrested a faculty member at Orange Avenue School in Cranford November 2 for allegedly making a threat against the school. The individual, identified as Matthew Acosta, 33, of Kenilworth, was charged with one count of third degree terroristic threats and one count of fourth degree risking widespread injury or damage, according to Cranford Police Chief Ryan Greco. The Cranford Police Department Investigative Division was continuing its probe into the incident.

In a message to parents and guardians, Cranford Superintendent of Schools Scott Rubin, Ed.D., credited another faculty member with alerting Orange Avenue School Principal Marc Edery to the threat. The principal promptly notified the Cranford Police Department, which launched the investigation culminating in Acosta's arrest. A State Superior Court judge last Thursday granted a motion by prosecutors that he be detained pending a mental health evaluation, according to an NJ.com report.

"I want to thank that faculty member for coming forward and making a report," Superintendent Rubin said in his message. "We continue to encourage our entire community to please say something if you hear or see something and that is what this individual did."

The superintendent also lauded the swift re-

sponse of Principal Edery in contacting police. Additionally, Superintendent Rubin and Chief Greco each cited the strong partnership between the school district and the local police department in safeguarding Cranford schools.

In the past two decades, we have witnessed a devastating number of incidents in which children and adults have been killed or injured by violence on school campuses, within businesses and houses of worship, at entertainment or recreation venues. Within the last three weeks alone, armed individuals killed worshippers at a Pittsburgh synagogue and patrons and a sheriff's deputy at a Thousand Oaks, Calif. nightclub.

Frequently, those responsible for such atrocious acts have exhibited disturbing behavior and/or ideologies prior to unleashing violence. The gunman who attacked the synagogue had previously posted anti-Semitic sentiments on social media; the man who opened fire at the nightclub, and who ultimately took his own life during the melee, was described by people who knew him as having exhibited erratic behavior, according to media reports.

We echo the importance of remaining vigilant regarding any potential threats within our community, whether it be from a familiar or unfamiliar source, and of reporting one's suspicions to the appropriate authorities. We recognize such circumstances are extremely difficult, especially when they involve relatives, friends or colleagues. People often say they "don't want to get involved," or fear they may be seen as overreacting to a situation. However, lives may be at stake. By speaking up today, we can possibly prevent a tragedy from occurring tomorrow.

## Most Successful Ever, Scouting for Food Thanks You Westfield

Hunger continues to be a significant need in our and surrounding communities. To help address this need, Scouting for Food was established 30 years ago first in the St. Louis Scout Council. Patriots' Path Council in New Jersey joined this national drive, including Scouts in Westfield.

A sincere "thank you" to the residents of Westfield and the Cub Scout Packs and Boy Scout Troops in Westfield who participated in this year's Scouting for Food, an annual town-wide service project. In the past two weeks cubs and scouts distributed Scouting for Food bags to each home in Westfield and on Nov. 10 picked up donated food and delivered it to the Westfield Food Pantry at Holy Trinity. The food filled the

shelves of more than three rooms from floor to ceiling at the food pantry and many families in need will be served by this successful food drive. More than 4,000 bags and 90,000 food items were donated this year.

This year's Scouting for Food project was the most successful of the past few years - many families donated more than one bag of food. Families and individuals helped collect, deliver to the pantry and sort food for the pantry shelves. All packs and troops in town participated and the people of Westfield responded generously. Our thanks to all who volunteered their time and to the people of Westfield who donated food.

**Bob Frothing**  
Boy Scout Troop 73  
Scouting for Food Westfield

## New To Garwood Bd. of Ed., Maureen Scepkowski Thanks Voters

I would like to thank all those who exercised their right to vote and supported my candidacy for the Garwood Board of Education. I plan to spend the next few weeks listening and learning as I prepare for this position. I will solicit feedback from the community to identify and address concerns, support increased communication, and work toward creating enriching opportunities for teachers and students alike. I look forward to working with all stakeholders to promote academic excellence and increase student achievement and teacher development in all areas.

In my candidate statement, I shared with you my belief that exceptional teachers are the key to an outstanding school and an excellent school system is the foundation of a strong community. For me, there is no greater privilege than being a part of developing a bright future for the children of Garwood. I deeply appreciate your support and I will do my best to serve our community well.

**Maureen Scepkowski**  
Garwood

## As Your Mayor, I Will Represent All Of Garwood, Thank You, Voters!

I am so truly honored and humbled by all the support for Michael Ince, Sean Benoit, and myself on Election Day. We started this journey together over seven months ago and have worked hard to communicate our vision for the future of Garwood along with setting clear goals and plans to make them happen.

a renter or a homeowner, whether Republican or Democrat — we are one Garwood after all.

I've already begun to prepare for my new role by meeting with Mayor Charles Lombardo to ensure a smooth transition. I thank him for serving Garwood for 25 years, the most of any elected official in town history.

An endeavor like this cannot be done by one person or even three people alone. Instead, it truly takes a village. Thank you to the best team anyone could ask for — for making calls, canvassing, passing out flyers, and so much more. Thank you to those I called and emailed thousands of times from early morning to late at night. Thank you to my family for supporting me from day one when I first decided to get involved and put myself out there when I ran for Council back in 2011.

I am also busy preparing to advertise all board, commission, and committee appointments as well as preparing to launch a first-ever Citizens Advisory Panel. Please be on the lookout on www.garwood.org, my Facebook page, and this local paper to see what you might be interested in joining. I'd love to meet with you as the future of Garwood cannot be determined by any one individual. But together, we can and we will make Garwood work for everyone. Together, we can and we will adapt with the changing times of the future, while staying true to the independence and value our founders envisioned.

While I have plenty of ideas on how we can ensure Garwood has a bright future, I'll also be coming to you to ask for your feedback and your ideas. Also, please feel free to reach out to me anytime with your thoughts and questions as we need them to make Garwood work for everyone. I'm ready to get to work! Thank you!

**Sara Todisco**  
Mayor-Elect  
Garwood

## Thank You, Garwood Wants Elected Officials Who Will Serve The Public

We want to thank the residents of Garwood for coming out to vote last Tuesday. The overwhelming support that the voters showed us and our running mate, Sara Todisco, was humbling.

and come to the town hall meetings to receive information first hand.

On election night, your voices were heard loud and clear. You want elected officials who will serve the public, and that is exactly what we are going to do. We will work as a team to make sound short term and long term decisions to the benefit our community. We are so excited to start work as the newest council members beginning in January and to have Sara Todisco as our mayor. Thank you Garwood.

As we move forward with our time on council, we want to make sure that every resident of Garwood knows that they can reach out to us and talk to us. We will listen to you, because all residents should have a voice in local government. We encourage you to come to council meetings and voice your concerns; email us and share your thoughts with us about the town;

**Councilman Elect Michael Ince (D)**  
**Councilman Elect Sean Benoit (D)**  
Garwood

## Letters to the Editor

### Happy To Volunteer For Addamsfest

As a thirty-year resident of Westfield, I would like to thank Mayor Brindle, the town council, and Adrian Pastore for all of their efforts of putting together Addamsfest.

What a great way to honor the history of our town by celebrating one of its famous past residents with a series of exciting events that could be appreciated by all ages!

Week-long events like this, which take an amazing amount of blood, sweat, and tears to put together, are exactly what is needed in this day and age to bring towns together.

I was lucky enough to spend an hour with a group of Westfield seniors at the Addams' art exhibit, which was absolutely wonderful. To bring these prized pieces of art to Westfield was no easy chore, but the seniors absolutely loved it. As a youngster growing up with The Addams Family, it brought back many fond memories.

In closing, I would love to see these events done annually even though I can truly appreciate all of the work and expense that goes into running these events. It would be my pleasure to volunteer in any way that I can on a future event.

**Brad Chananie**  
Westfield

### Mehrotra and Montes Thank Mountainside

Anjali Mehrotra and Ileana Montes thank Mountainside residents for their support and urged everyone to come together and move forward with a renewed focus on the issues that matter: transparency, accountability, and better services for families.

"Thank you to everyone who supported us throughout the campaign, shared your ideas for making Mountainside a better place, and engaged in thoughtful conversations. Our campaign focused on issues that have been ignored for too long in Mountainside, and we firmly believe that bringing these issues out into the light and starting positive discussions about how to address them was important for moving our town forward in a way that serves all families.

"The election is over, but our work is not. Our campaign was about holding our leaders accountable, and that is a job that does not end on election day. We must stay vigilant, and must continue to push for more transparency, accountability, and honesty in Borough Hall.

"Again, we want to thank everyone who supported us throughout the campaign. This was an important step forward for our town, and we look forward to working with the Mayor and Council as well as all the residents who call Mountainside home to make the change we need and keep Mountainside moving in the right direction."

**Anjali Mehrotra and Ileana Montes**  
Mountainside

### Fanwood Chuckle

Just received my first sewer "user fee" bill issued by the Borough of Fanwood. I had to chuckle when I read, "The Mayor and Council are committed to transparency." They sure are transparent, sending out the bills three days after the Council elections.

**Joe Britt**  
Fanwood

### Get Results!

