

# THE VOICE

## RCSJ Spring Mega Open House: Unleashing the Ultimate Educational Extravaganza

**By: Sada't Howard**

On, Wednesday, March 20th, RCSJ held its first half of the Mega Spring Open House at the Gloucester Campus gymnasium to allow prospective and current students to learn more about the college and its offerings. Students, faculty, and staff worked together to ensure everything went smoothly and successfully. At the building entrance, guests were warmly greeted with snacks and a smile; then they were assisted as they arrived, ensuring everyone felt welcomed and supported throughout their visit.

At the event, there were tables with faculty, staff, and students where prospective students could ask questions and connect with the key people who will be supporting them during their future college journeys. Students could meet faculty outside the classroom, explore extracurricular activities, and discover honor society opportunities. Open House was a chance for students to meet their future allies and get the information they will need about the college and what it has to offer. Information provided included: programs, classes, athletics, scholarships, clubs, tutoring, advisement, wellness, food pantry, paid internship career connections, and so much more.

Marcela Salveski, Dean of the Division of Communications and Creative and Performing Arts, stated: "Every year, we try to provide students with the most updated information about our programs. They are the ones who begin the conversation, helping us to understand their needs."

She later added, "The best part of Open House, in my opinion, is the conversations between professors and prospective students and parents. Students might come with an idea in mind regarding their future major, but something else might spark their interest."

Adam Morina, the Administrator of Business Engagement stated: "Through this event, RCSJ hopes to bring awareness to the different types of degrees and programs students can choose from, our different course delivery options, we can assist prospective and current students with questions regarding the college's application, enrollment and financial aid processes, and create opportunities for students to connect with different community and industry leaders that can help them through their education and employment journey."



## Unifying Hearts and Igniting Dreams: Unified Sports

**By: Hannah Iannotti**

Fridays are a special time for Unified Sports athletes across Rowan College of South Jersey. You might be wondering what a Unified Sports athlete is. These athletes are RCSJ students who vary in intellectual abilities and disabilities. This event takes place every Friday from 12:00 to 1:15 pm, at both the Gloucester and Cumberland Campuses. Athletes and partners practice together, in preparation to play other New Jersey colleges.

In the 2023 season, RCSJ Gloucester saw success in their basketball and soccer games. The soccer team advanced to the Unified Soccer Cup for the second year in a row and moved up two divisions in the tournament. The players took second place in the Division I level and look forward to furthering their soccer skills and friendships. Unified Sports hosted their 7th Annual Night Showcase Basketball Game to show off their impressive basketball skills, with hopes of getting more partner participation.

In the fall and spring, Unified Sports a held on the soccer fields behind the tennis courts where the athletes play soccer and kickball. In the Winter, the players meet in the gymnasium to play basketball. No prior athletic experience is needed,

Since 2013, partners and players have united to create relationships that last both on and off the field. A word of advice from Coach Meri Boody, for people interested in helping: "Come out to practice...once you are out here playing with the athletes you will never want to leave. It is like a family."

If you are interested in learning more information, email Meri Boody at [mboody2@rcsj.edu](mailto:mboody2@rcsj.edu) (Gloucester Campus) or Xiara Maldonado at [xmaldona@rcsj.edu](mailto:xmaldona@rcsj.edu) (Cumberland Campus).



## RCSJ Hosts Successful Blood Drive with the Red Cross

**By: Zoe Reale**

Rowan College of South Jersey continued its tradition of supporting the Red Cross Blood Drive, marking their 14th consecutive year of participation. On February 29th, the college opened its doors to donors, aiming to collect blood from donors on and off campus. RCSJ achieved its goal, emphasizing the community's commitment to supporting RCSJ's student government, the Red Cross, and those in need.

The event, held on the RCSJ campus, was organized to ensure the safety and comfort of all participants. Volunteers from The Red Cross managed the proceedings, guaranteeing smooth operations throughout the day. As part of their commitment to volunteer well-being, the Student Government provided a

variety of food and beverages to sustain donors during the donation process.

Looking ahead, RCSJ is already preparing for its next blood drive scheduled for June 11th on the college campus. To ensure the success of future events, students and staff are encouraged to volunteer their time and support by participating in blood donations and telling peers about the blood drive as well.

Information about the next blood drive will be communicated through student and staff email and word of mouth. The RCSJ Student Government continues to promote the blood drive and do all they can to reach their goals.

## Roadrunner and Together Cafe Provide Students with Job Opportunities

By: Katelyn Craig

Food options have finally made their way to Rowan College of South Jersey – and for a good cause! The cafe options on campus provide students with disabilities with work experience they can carry throughout their lives. The Roadrunner and Together Cafe are operated by Schools for Neurodiversity's Career Center and RCSJ's Adult Center for Transition (ACT). Their goal is to create inexpensive places to eat for the college community, while providing job training and employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

The Roadrunner Cafe has recently been revamped and is now open in the College Center Cafeteria on the Gloucester Campus. Featuring an array of breakfast, lunch, and snack options, the cafe provides affordable food offerings to students, faculty, and staff. Mozzarella sticks, chicken nuggets, or a bacon-egg-and-cheese can all be found for under \$3.50. All are welcome to visit and browse the selections. The cafe currently accepts most major credit cards, Apple Pay, Google Pay, Rowan Bucks, and cash.

More dining options can be found at the Together Cafe, located in the Rowan Medicine building on the Gloucester Campus. On the Cumberland Campus, the cafe is inside the Student Services building. It is operated by the RCSJ ACT Program and Vineland High School's RISE Program.



Amy Pio-Burke and Devon Riggs

The staff also spoke about their roles and experiences. Amy Pio-Burke and Pam McDermott work the day shift with students at the Together Cafe. Pio-Burke emphasized that the response to the cafe has been exceptional. Those who come to visit are excited to talk to the students who are working. Through her observations, she feels that working at the Together Cafe has had a great impact on the students' confidence levels.

In many instances, students may feel overwhelmed on their first day at work. Pio-Burke explained that by their third or fourth shift, they come in excited to work with the knowledge of their duties. The staff and students work together to find which roles at the cafe they are fit for. Whether it be wiping tables, prepping salads, or manning the cash register, Pio-Burke says that, “the students gain a sense of accomplishment by the end of their shift.”

As for recommendations, Pio-Burke suggested everyone check out the chef's specials, there is always something new and delicious to try! Check out the [menu](#) selections and hours of operation for both the Gloucester and Cumberland Campus locations.



## Have No Fear, It's Peer 2 Peer! RCSJ's Judgement Free Club for Conversation and Connection

By: Alysa Serrano

Peer 2 Peer is offering a solution to a problem every community college student faces while on campus. How can I connect with other students? The club itself focuses on providing an inclusive environment where students can feel comfortable, be heard, and receive support from fellow students. What started as a solution to the effects of the global pandemic has now become an opportunity for students to navigate early adulthood with their peers here on campus. Student clubs have long built a sense of community within their members, but there has never been a club whose sole purpose was for that community alone. That is, until Peer 2 Peer.

Located at the RCSJ Gloucester Campus's College Center, students are welcomed to a judgment-free area where open discussions are encouraged. The topics range weekly, but all are invited to voice their opinion for an opportunity to be heard.

“We have prioritized discussions about self-care, time management, combating exam anxieties, and balancing obligations,” explained Peer 2 Peer leader, TJ Edmund, as he shared what's normally discussed during group hours. “This semester, we have tackled cyberbullying in college, burnout, destigmatizing men's relationship with mental health, uplifting marginalized voices, and all of the recurring topics since 2022.”

For students who may struggle with a growing problem throughout adulthood: gaining and maintaining adult friendships, an environment where you can connect with other students provides an opportunity unlike any other. Some of the club's goals include guiding students toward success in college as well as helping members navigate aspects of their life outside of school. With support from peers, students are less alone in their journeys.

“My goal is to lead with love and leave no one behind, especially for students who derive from marginalized communities,” Edmund explained as he discussed his role in the club and its community, “I am committed to making everyone feel seen and heard.”

That commitment has led several students to find a place where they're free to share a part of themselves they otherwise might not have been able to. Peer 2 Peer brings value to RCSJ's campus by connecting students to each other.

For any RCSJ student who feels more of the “college” and less of the “community,” contact [dmussoli@rcsj.edu](mailto:dmussoli@rcsj.edu) for more information on joining Peer 2 Peer.

### Need money for college?

# FAFSA

## will show you the money!

Open to all who wish to apply for federal and New Jersey state financial aid.

**What do you need to bring?**

- 2022 federal tax return for FAFSA 24-25.
- W-2 for students and parents (if applicable) and all accompanying schedules.
- Students and contributors **MUST** attend.

**To-Do List:**

Create your FSA ID at [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov) or scan the QR code

- Students must create an FSA ID.
- Contributors (the student, a parent, adoptive parents, or a spouse) must create an FSA ID (if the student is under the age of 24 and must use a different phone # and email address).

Create your NJFAMS login at <https://njfams.hesaa.org/NJFAMS/login> (student only)

**Registration is required due to limited seating. (10 seats per session)**

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/mpktz6a6> scan the QR code to register.

Dates	Hour	Location
Thursday, March 7, 2024	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	BSC 905
Thursday, March 21, 2024	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	BSC 905
Wednesday, March 27, 2024	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	BAC 506
Thursday, April 4, 2024	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	BSC 905
Wednesday, April 10, 2024	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	BAC 506
Thursday, April 18, 2024	2:00 pm - 4:00 pm	BSC 905
Wednesday, April 24, 2024	5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	BAC 506

Rowan College of South New Jersey Gloucester Campus  
Phone #: 856-468-5000 Email: [financialaid@rcsj.edu](mailto:financialaid@rcsj.edu)

## Preparing for Success: ENGL 050 and ENGL 060 Developmental Courses Launch

By: Jose Marinero

In a significant stride towards fostering academic excellence, Rowan College of South Jersey Gloucester Campus is poised to implement a transformative change by integrating two developmental English courses – Introduction to College Reading and English I (ENGL 050) and Introduction to College Reading and English II (ENGL 060). Both were previously housed at the Cumberland Campus. This transition, slated to commence in Fall 2024, represents a pivotal moment in RCSJ's commitment to nurturing student success and retention.

At the heart of this evolution is Professor Emily Maddox, a seasoned educator at RCSJ, who champions the cause of academic advancement. With a keen focus on personalized instruction, Professor Maddox highlights the importance of these developmental courses in catering to the diverse needs of students.

ENGL 050 and ENGL 060 are designed as integrated reading and writing courses, offering students a comprehensive approach to mastering essential academic skills. Through a carefully structured curriculum and practical exercises, students engage in critical aspects of reading comprehension and writing proficiency.

Eligibility for ENGL 050 and ENGL 060 is determined by students' Accuplacer scores, ensuring tailored support for those requiring additional assistance. Professor Maddox emphasizes the significance of personalized placement, ensuring that students receive the support necessary to thrive academically.

Flexibility in scheduling is prioritized to accommodate students' academic pursuits, ensuring a balanced educational experience. Despite the rigorous nature of ENGL 050 and ENGL 060, RCSJ strives to offer scheduling options that complement students' existing coursework, promoting academic success.

Progress and success in ENGL 050 and ENGL 060 are measured through continuous assessments, including essay assignments and the Accuplacer test. These evaluations serve as benchmarks, providing students with a clear gauge of their growth and readiness for subsequent coursework.

Upon successful completion of ENGL 050 and/or ENGL 060, students are equipped with the requisite skills to excel in college-level coursework. Professor Maddox underscores the progressive nature of the courses, ensuring that students are adequately prepared for the academic challenges that lie ahead.

As RCSJ Gloucester Campus embarks on this transformative journey, the integration of ENGL 050 and ENGL 060 symbolizes a commitment to nurturing student success. With personalized instruction, comprehensive support services, and a dedication to fostering growth, RCSJ continues to uphold its mission of providing accessible, quality, education for all.



Professor Emily Maddox

**Through the guidance of educators like Professor Maddox, RCSJ remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence, empowering students to achieve their fullest potential and thrive in an ever-evolving academic landscape.**

## Want to Earn a Bachelor's Degree for Less than \$30,000? A RCSJ 3+1 Program Might Be For You!

By: Taylor Travis

Looking to be the next Anderson Cooper, Greta Gerwig, or Sigmund Freud? Are you looking to get a bachelor's degree for less? Then check out our 3+1 programs!

Rowan College of South Jersey currently offers twelve different 3+1 programs in which students complete three years at RCSJ and their final year at Rowan University. During the first two years at RCSJ, students will earn their associate degree and then apply for the 3+1 program of their choice. Students complete their junior year at RCSJ, then seamlessly transfer over to Rowan University for their senior year. With this program, students are able to earn a bachelor's degree for less than \$30,000.

The path to do so is easy. After the first three years at RCSJ, students must complete their last 30 credits in their fourth year at Rowan University to graduate. Transcripts are sent over internally, and there are no extra steps or applications when it comes to transferring over to Rowan University, making it less stressful for students.

Eligible students can use their financial aid towards their tuition, as well as any earned scholarships. RCSJ is partnered with Blackbaud and offers thousands in scholarships that students can apply for.

The 3+1 program truly allows for flexibility within a student's life. Offering countless on campus, online, and hybrid courses, a student can tailor their schedule to what best fits their lifestyle. Between internships, work, or just daily life struggles, RCSJ will be there to help organize collegiate life the way that works best for you.

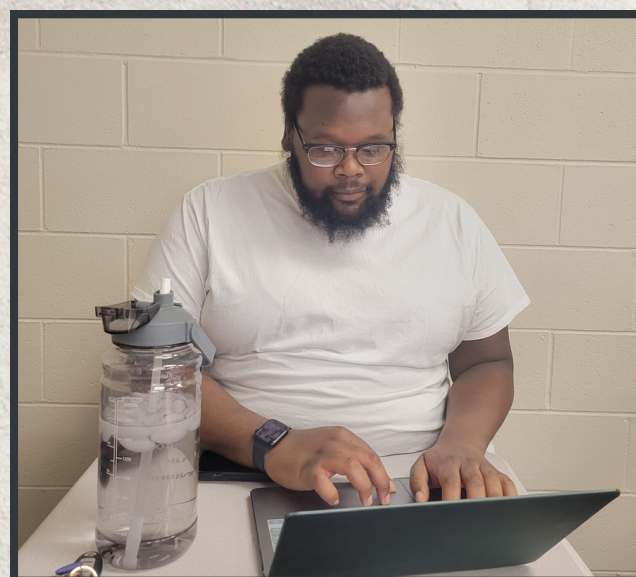
Students interested in the 3+1 program can visit the website, or contact Alescia Kennon at [akennon@rcsj.edu](mailto:akennon@rcsj.edu)

**"I love teaching the 3+1 students. They've already shown the determination to complete their associate degree, and they're usually anxious for more. The program is perfect for some students, as they benefit from cost savings and still finish with a bachelor's degree from Rowan University"**

**-3+1 RTF Professor Michael Wolverton**

**"Choosing the 3+1 program was truly a no-brainer for me. I had to jump on the opportunity to get my bachelor's degree at a fraction of the normal cost. I love that due to this program, I'll be entering the "real world" with real career skills and less debt."**

**-Sadat Howard 3+1 Applied Professional Communications Student**



### 3+1 Programs Offered:

- Radio, Television and Film
- Law and Justice Studies
- Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management
- Business Administration: Global Business/Leadership
- Data Analytics
- Applied Professional Communications
- Inclusive Education
- Fitness Management
- Nursing
- Psychology
- Computing and Informatics

### Rowan College of South Jersey’s Gloucester Campus to Undergo Road Construction on East College Drive through May

By: Lindsey Blithe

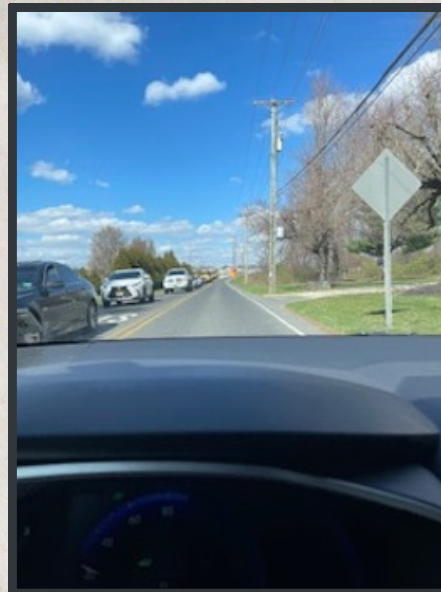
One of the few entrances into Rowan College of South Jersey’s Gloucester Campus will now be closed until May. All traffic is now redirected to the other entrances: North College Drive and West College Drive. Students and faculty entering from Blackwood-Barnsboro Road must enter off Salina Road onto College Drive. According to the construction announcement on RCSJ’s website, the construction was implemented to create a safer traffic pattern.

The frequented entrance and exit of East College Drive is used by both students and faculty. Faculty and staff use Lot F to park off Alumni Drive. Students use Lot E. Both parking lots are closest to the Rastelli Business and Corporate Center, Education and Humanities Center, and the Performing Arts Center. East College Drive allows students and faculty to swiftly and easily reach their destination.

With the construction of the road, students and faculty using the entrance off Salina Road onto College Drive, must now use the roundabout and the busy stop sign in front of Lot D. This student parking lot is split into two lots, divided by a bus stop. Due to the bus stop and through traffic of College Drive, the stop sign tends to become backed up. This traffic issue at the stop sign may cause students or faculty to be late for their classes, or in the worst case, cause an accident.

An anonymous neighbor to Rowan College claims, “The traffic is so terrible every morning. All the students taking the detour makes it incredibly difficult to leave for work.” When speaking with her son, who attends RCSJ and would like to remain anonymous as well, he stated, “I live right near the school, and somehow, I am late for my classes because the cars get so built-up. They should have just started the construction during the summer semester.”

The construction does not have a specific end date. It is predicted to conclude sometime at the end of May, which will be when the spring semester is completed. Hopefully, the traffic issue will be resolved, and the construction will be completed sooner than expected.



Firsthand photo of the traffic buildup at the College Drive entrance - the road was backed up all the way from the campus roundabout to the exit onto Salina Road. The traffic was moving at an extremely slow pace.



Up-close photo of the construction - this is located at the entrance to Alumni Drive, allowing access to buildings such as the Education and Humanities Center.

### South Jersey High School Students Have the Opportunity to Kick-start Their Post-secondary Careers

A new program created by RCSJ allows high school students from selected schools in South Jersey to attend college classes and earn college credits before graduation.

By: Madilyn Exler

Rowan College of South Jersey has created a partnership program with 25 different high schools located in Gloucester and Cumberland County on March 12, 2024, allowing students to begin their post-secondary careers before they graduate. The local schools that have partnered with Rowan College of South Jersey are now considered “RCSJ Collegiate High Schools.”

Students from 21 public schools located in both Gloucester and Cumberland County, as well as four South Jersey Catholic schools, are able to attend college courses and earn college credits at a lower cost, while taking their usual high school classes in conjunction. RCSJ Collegiate High School students are offered pathways that have been mapped out by Rowan College which help them in obtaining their bachelor’s degrees. These pathways include assistance in financial aid, summer programs, and scholarship opportunities.

Lower tuition rates have been made possible through the merging of Rowan College of Gloucester County and Cumberland County College in 2019. In addition to lower tuition costs, this merge offers students more educational options such as greater degree and class choices.

**Rowan College officials state: “RCSJ Collegiate High School takes education to the next level, providing an affordable, practical way to earn college credits and prepare for the rigors of excelling in a collegiate environment – all before high school graduation.”**

The college plans on expanding this program in the future, which would allow more high schools that are located outside of Gloucester and Cumberland County to become RCSJ Collegiate High Schools.

The South Jersey schools in partnership with Rowan College are listed below. Selected high schools from Gloucester, Cumberland, and Camden County are included.



Students attending the RCSJ campus as part of the RCSJ Collegiate High School program



Click here to learn more about the program!

**The Impact of an English Teacher**

**By: Grace Albert**

Alicja Mariano has always been a reader and writer. Growing up, her parents stopped regulating her bedtime, as she would stay up for hours on end reading books. She enjoyed looking at picture prompts and making up stories about fictional characters. Majoring throughout college in English, she had no idea what she wanted to be when she grew up. While attending a workshop for English majors, she found that she could take a teaching course. After already taking a political science and sociology class, her senior year of college, she took an Intro to Teaching class. Before the semester was over, she fell in love. She described the atmosphere as “somewhere so comfortable and familiar” and said she had felt right at home. Mariano knew she wanted to be a teacher, and it was exactly where she belonged.

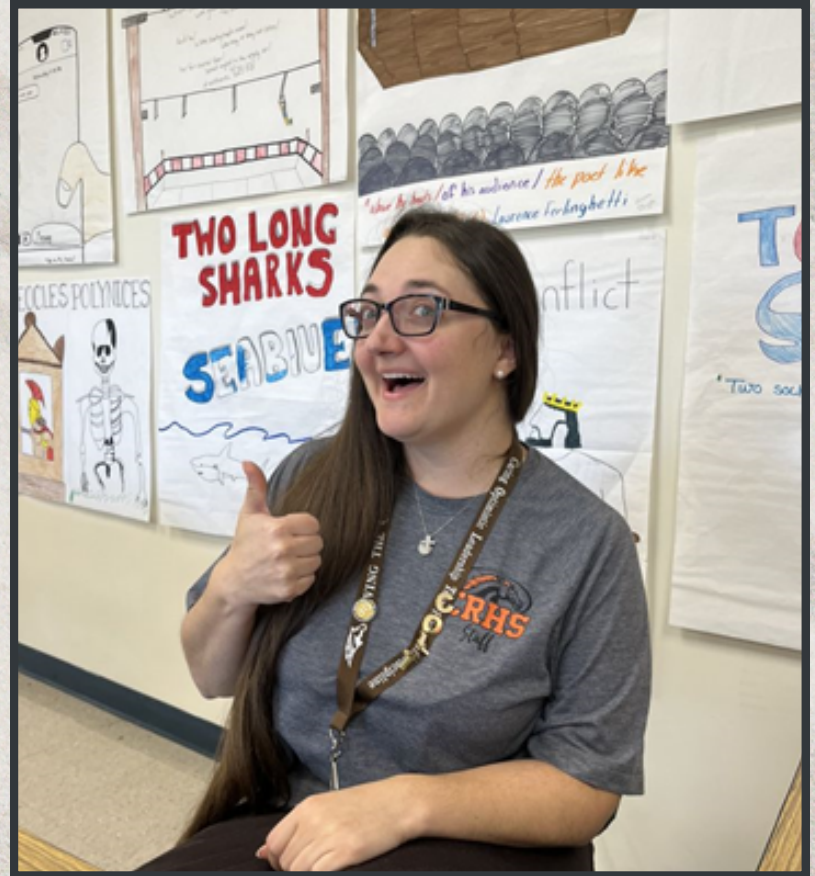
However, due to it being Mariano’s senior year of college, it was much too late to join any programs to which she would get her teaching degree. So, she decided to wait and graduated with her Bachelor’s in English. Then she entered a dual enrollment program to earn both her master’s degree and teaching certification at the same time. Within two years she did just that, and immediately started teaching at RCSJ (previously known as Cumberland County College). She taught English 101 there for a semester before transitioning to a job at Cumberland Regional High School, where she taught 12th grade English classes. Not only did she teach at the high school, but she continued to teach English 101 at night classes at the college. This provided her with two paychecks, but a busy schedule.

After years of doing just that, Cumberland Regional received a grant. This grant was a pilot course that allowed selected 12th grade students to take Freshmen Seminar and English 101 for college credits. During students’ study hall and aide blocks, Mariano would teach these classes on top of her typical high school classes. This was her schedule for about two years before this pilot course transitioned to the Early College High School Program that Cumberland Regional High School offers today. ECHS offers high school students the chance to earn a Liberal Arts Associate Degree from RCSJ on top of a high school diploma by the time they graduate senior year. And though Mariano no longer receives two paychecks, she teaches these students pivotal college classes in high school.

Born and raised in Bridgeton, New Jersey, Mariano graduated from both Cumberland Regional High School and Rowan University. Mariano has been teaching for 15 years, and her classroom where she currently teaches was her favorite classroom growing up.

As mentioned before, on top of just teaching 12th grade at Cumberland Regional, she also teaches ECHS students in classes such as English 101, English 102, and Effective Speech. As someone who earned college credits throughout her high school career, she mentions that: “It’s an opportunity to give back and pour into others as they poured into me.” However, unlike her 12th grade students who she only has one semester, her ECHS students often have her multiple times. Mariano says, “It’s bittersweet as I get to learn who my students are and watch them grow.”

Mariano’s impact at Cumberland Regional High School is extraordinary. She allows students to expand their mind with a higher-level English, as well as give opportunities to earn college credits. Through her, students are able to save money, time, and overall stress. Her love for English and her students shows greatly in the classroom and out of the classroom, as she’s shown up countless of times for big events, has written college recommendation letters, and is always ready to give a helping hand. Her positive attitude and way of ruling the classroom teaches students not only how to write essays but how to tackle life.



**Alicja Mariano**

**April Kellum: Advice from an Advisor**

**By: Dylan Kedosh**

It’s true that for a lot of students, going to an advising appointment for the first time, or any time for that matter, can be stressful and scary. However, having someone like Mrs. April Kellum there to guide you through the motions, and help paint a picture of what you should do next to meet your goals, takes a lot of stress off anyone’s shoulders.

Kellum serves as the advisor for a wide range of Majors, spanning across Accounting, Human Resource Management, Computer Info Systems, Digital Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Equine Science, Equine Pre-Vet, Computer Science, Environmental Science, and Data Analytics for the students that are part of the 3+1 Program. Kellum’s job is to meet with students regularly and help them plan out their next steps for their tenure at RCSJ, as well as their time beyond RCSJ, if they plan to transfer to a 4-year college.

Prior to her tenure as an Academic Advisor, Kellum grew up in Nashville, Tennessee, and always wanted to be an Academic Librarian, due to her own love of writing and history. When she began enrolling in college, Kellum moved to Ithaca, New York, while pursuing her Bachelor’s Degree in English and History at Cornell University, and graduated in 2020. After receiving her bachelor’s degree, Kellum determined that she was going to continue forward, and pursue her master’s degree. She graduated in 2022, receiving her MA in Higher Education at Rowan University.

Only a few months after her graduation, Kellum gained the position of Academic Advisor at RCSJ in May 2022, having had prior academic experience as a research assistant for a professor at Rowan University. Kellum stated that the main reasoning that led her to the position was: “I know how it feels to be unsure about your future and not being able to have access to certain resources, so I want to be the one to help provide students with these resources.”

Now, you may be scratching your head wondering why exactly you should go to advisement. Fortunately, Ms. Kellum advised that the most important reason to consistently meet with advisement is to

make sure that you are taking the correct classes that you need to, so you can stay on track to earn the degree that you’re working towards. You always want to make sure you’re not missing anything needed to complete your degree, as well as make sure all your classes are in line with your major.

Within each of these tasks, Kellum explains that the most important trait that academic advisement aims to provide is “Ultimately helping students feel better than when they first walked into their appointment, while being a guiding source of information, and providing direction to students looking for assistance.”



**April Kellum**

**Schedule your advising appointment today!**

**Brenden Rickards: A Journey in Education**

**By: Zoe Reale**

Born in Morgantown, West Virginia, and raised in Fairmount, Brenden Rickards, the eldest of three siblings, set off on a journey that would lead him to become a pivotal figure in the academic landscape, currently serving as the Provost and Vice President of Academic Services at RCSJ.

Rickards' academic trajectory began at West Virginia University, where he initially pursued engineering before transitioning into a career in biology. It was during his undergraduate years that a summer research program ignited his fascination with teaching, prompting him to pursue further studies at Princeton University for his graduate degree.

While at Princeton, Rickards dealt with the division between his aspirations as a research scientist and his strong desire to teach. This internal struggle ultimately led him to RCSJ, where he sought to share knowledge and guidance with students during their formative years in college.

Over the years, Rickards has had several roles at RCSJ, transitioning from a dedicated Biology Professor for 6 years, to the role of Dean of STEM for 5 years, before taking on his current position as Provost and Vice President of Academic Services. Reflecting on his journey, Rickards emphasizes his commitment to positively impacting students' lives academically.

"As I started out initially as a faculty member, I enjoyed helping students figure out their career goals and career paths, but as a faculty member you are only exposed to the students in your class. The whole reason I progressed through different levels of the administration is because the higher levels you go, the changes you make can affect far more students."

**"The biggest hurdles that you run into in any educational path is not what the hurdle is, but how you are going to solve it."**



**Dr. Brenden Rickards**

Beyond his professional ventures, Rickards cherishes his role as a father and husband, eagerly anticipating the future educational pursuits of his children. With his son on the brink of college and his daughter in 7th grade this year, Rickards finds purpose in supporting their future academic and personal journeys.

In his free time, Rickards enjoys his passions, whether it be exploring eclectic restaurants and being a "foodie" or partaking in outdoor activities like golfing and skiing. As a committed member of the RCSJ team, his free time pursuits are much needed.

As Rickards continues to leave a long-lasting mark on the educational landscape, his steady dedication to fostering academic assistance and shaping future generations stands as evidence to the transformative power of education. To Brenden Rickards, the journey of learning becomes not just a path to success, but an enriching experience for all who come across it.

**Joseph Priole**

**By: Rhyan Goldsborough**

Joseph Priole is a 19-year-old college student currently living in Bridgeton, NJ. Priole was born in Berlin Township, NJ, which he describes as "that dirty, weird place with the cool farmer's market." Priole's most significant memory of his hometown is the twisted and sharp roads that made it hard to see what was ahead of him - a memory that he thinks mirrors the person his hometown shaped him to be.

He describes his childhood as nothing short of average - a lonely experience that Priole says made him, "an awkward and deeply troubled person." However, Priole could admit with a smile that these experiences helped him to become a more positive and grateful person later in life, and his college experience at RCSJ thus far has been a significant part of that.

When Priole applied to RCSJ, he was fresh out of high school and knew that he wanted to pursue his dream of having a career in art. He viewed RCSJ as the perfect fit for what he wanted to do at the time and arrived at the college with a motivated mindset and a heart full of determination to achieve his dream.

Soon after starting at RCSJ, Priole found himself juggling two jobs and a full-time school schedule, while also trying to upkeep his family life and mental health. On weekends and select weekdays, he busses tables and cooks food at a local café. During the week, he drives to class and his on-campus job as a receptionist at RCSJ's Administration Building. After a much-needed deep breath from explaining his schedule, Priole says that despite the craziness, his on-campus job and tiring work schedule have taught him a lot about himself and life. While he initially started his job to make some extra money, he realized the enjoyment he felt working at his school to help people.

His job requires him to help students and staff alike navigate the campus for meetings, testing purposes, or anything else they need. Although it may seem like a small job to some, this makes Priole one of many people who do their part in keeping the school a working and friendly environment. It was easy for him to take pride in this, even if he was only a small cog in the system. Helping people became Priole's calm in the storm, as he was able to find comfort right in the heart of his daily struggles. His contribution to the community at RCSJ has taught him the importance of putting himself out there to do something good, even if it's small, which is a lesson he found hard to accept as a kid.



**Joseph Priole**

Priole has no regrets about his decisions, but if he could tell his freshman-year self one thing, it would be to "know your limits and be prepared to make mistakes." Priole's current goals are to continue helping his fellow peers at RCSJ, while also keeping up with all of life's responsibilities. His future goals include living as comfortably as he can while having a career making art, which he says makes him the happiest. Priole's self-made quote that he chooses to live by is: "Stay true to yourself and never give up on your dreams, even if others may doubt you."

**Through School and Beyond**

**By: Nicole Sailey**

College can be a challenging transition for students. While preparation is crucial, nothing compares to firsthand experience. Iris Heider, a Rowan College of South Jersey graduate, has successfully completed her education and established her career in the healthcare field. Her story not only sheds light on the challenges students face, but also offers valuable insights on navigating these obstacles into a fulfilling career for both current and prospective students.

Originally from Puerto Rico, Heider faced numerous challenges in her adjustment in and out of school. Balancing coursework, extracurricular activities, and part-time jobs proved to be an uphill battle. "There were times when I felt overwhelmed, questioning whether I could keep up with the demands of school," recalls Heider. Financial constraints added another layer of stress, forcing her to juggle a range of obligations while trying to make ends meet.

Heider strategically utilized the resources provided by RCSJ to overcome these hurdles. Recognizing the importance of educational guidance, she frequently sought assistance from the Academic Support Center, mainly using its tutoring services to improve her understanding of demanding subjects. With the guidance of her Academic Advisor, Heider carefully planned her educational journey, aligning her course selections with her career aspirations and personal goals.

Additionally, with RCSJ having one of the lowest tuition rates in New Jersey, Heider used the payment plans offered by the college to ease the financial burden and ensure that she could focus mainly on her studies.

**"Career Services provided me with the resources I needed to enter the job field confidently."**



**"My advisor played a crucial role in helping me navigate course choices and enrollment."**

Although these services helped her while she was in school, she was unsure of how to proceed when it came to obtaining a career after receiving her degree. That's when Heider decided to turn to RCSJ's Career Services for guidance and support. Through one-on-one career advising sessions, she gained insight into various job opportunities. She refined her resume and cover letter writing skills to stand out in a competitive job market.

After completing her education at RCSJ, she proudly holds up her diploma. She has finally been able to pursue her lifelong dream and is now enjoying a fulfilling career. Her experience resonates with many students at RCSJ. With her advice, she hopes to help alleviate the pressure students face with the daunting nature of college and aid them with guidance.

**Discover PTK Today!**

**By: Jose Marinero**

Phi Theta Kappa, founded in 1918 at a women's college in Mississippi, is the largest honor society among two-year colleges. It is also the largest society on the RCSJ campus, offering various benefits to students. What sets PTK apart from other honor societies is its inclusivity; it's not major-specific, which is uncommon in higher education. While other societies may require a specific major, PTK welcomes students from all majors. The requirements for membership are relatively easy: students need to have completed 12 college level credits and have maintained a GPA of 3.5.

For this article, we interviewed PTK Co-Advisor, Shawn Rutter. Mr. Rutter stated that one of the best parts of becoming an officer for PTK is the travel you get to do. In years past they have gone to Colorado, Texas, Missouri, and this year they get to go to Orlando, Florida. At these National PTK events many of the Student Officers will be recognized and awarded. Rutter describes these experiences as, "It's a huge stage with cameras recording everything! It was like I was at the golden Globes."

Becoming a Student Officer in Phi Theta Kappa requires a combination of commitment and determination. While it's not an easy task, it's an opportunity to challenge oneself and grow. Prior experience is not necessary, making it accessible to all members. Currently, there are five officer positions available for the 2024-2025 term. PTK has a membership of approximately 250 students. Students who are interested in applying for an officer position can email directly to express their interest to Mr. Rutter at [srutter@rcsj.edu](mailto:srutter@rcsj.edu).

Student Officer positions commence on June 1st and will be marked by an induction ceremony and team building activities led by the advisors.

**"PTK is what you want it to be!"  
-Mr. Rutter**



**PTK Officers**

Part of PTK's focus revolves around its four key components, known as hallmarks: scholarship, fellowship, service, and leadership. Achieving the highest level ranking is a goal for all PTK chapters. Our chapter here at the Gloucester Campus has consistently maintained a five-star rating, except for two years, since its inception almost 30 years ago.

To maintain their five-star status, they undertake projects like The College Project and Honors in Action. The College Project involves collaboration with the College President to address campus needs. Last year, their project aimed to support current students through initiatives like creating the email address, PTK Cares, for peer-to-peer support. This initiative was successful and earned recognition for our chapter's accomplishments.

It is evident that PTK not only celebrates academic achievement but also fosters a sense of belonging and purpose within the campus. Phi Theta Kappa strives for excellence in scholarship, fellowship, service, and leadership, and they are continuing to make a positive impact on our campus and beyond.

RCSJ Softball’s Game Plan for the 2024 Season

By: Hannah Iannotti

RCSJ’s Women's Softball Team is gearing up for their upcoming season, Coach Stephen DePasquale and former short stop Emily MacGibeny, spoke about preparations for the new season and what it is like to be involved in women's college athletics.

Head coach, Stephen DePasquale, is coming off a World Series playoff birth and being named Region 19 North Atlantic B Coach of the Year. He outlined insights into creating a hopeful World Series-level team. One of the first things Coach DePasquale spoke about, regarding preparations, was the importance of going into the new season with a new mindset. He stated that: “The past season does not determine this season. This is an all-new season.” DePasquale talked about how the past season does not determine the success of the new season; as it is a whole new team with new talents. To harvest the most out of his players, he relies heavily on creating a balanced team of softball knowledge and fellowship.

At the time of this interview, he discussed that one of his main strategies for getting his team ready to play for the March 9th opener was to focus on individual skills, before working on team talent. He mentioned that having good softball knowledge is crucial to having long-term success.

DePasquale’s way of creating good team chemistry is by encouraging his players to leave the bad games on the field and to reunite before every game. Coach DePasquale talked about the extra length the coaching staff goes through to make their team feel special, such as having specialized cubbies and having decorated bags for special events. A long-standing team tradition, that was going to receive some creative changes this season, includes the team stacking their hands on a team bat before every game and at the end of every practice. It signifies that the team must work together and play for each other. This season, however, the bat is receiving a creative change that many on the team did not know about. Coach DePasquale detailed the new bat, stating that the end of the bat will have the RCSJ letters and will represent the words, Relentless Confidence Successful Journey .



The new logo will also be the design of the team's new warm-up shirts. When asked about what it is like to coach female athletes, DePasquale discussed that women could move on from their losses a lot easier compared to male athletes. He also felt that RCSJ provided accurate funding and attention to its women’s programs.

While recapping the team's 2023 season success, Coach DePasquale talked about a player who was once named Woman of the Year and had a batting average of .508; this was Emily MacGibeny. MacGibeny, former short stop in 2023, has since left the team to pursue her education.

Continued on Page 9

Noah Heitz: A Rising Star for Rowan College of South Jersey’s Men’s Soccer Team

By: Edward Mazurkiewicz

It has been decades, since Rowan College of South Jersey’s, Gloucester Men’s Soccer Team has qualified for the NJCAA National Championship Tournament, in Charlotte North Carolina. But this year they did it, due largely to the introduction of their new first-year player Noah Heitz.

Heitz, is a nineteen year old sophomore from Wenonah, New Jersey. He grew up attending Deptford Public Schools, and decided to spend his high school years attending Gloucester County Institute of Technology. Heitz has been playing soccer all of his life, and was always very good. Typically, he was the best player on his team. He was always the captain on his soccer teams growing up, more specifically his Deptford Soccer Club teams, and his elite travel teams. When Noah decided to commit to Rowan College of South Jersey, he was determined to make an immediate impact.

When Heitz decided to attend high school at Gloucester County Institute of Technology, it was almost a lock-in that he would continue his soccer career and education at Rowan College of South Jersey, Gloucester. Gloucester County Institute of Technology is located right next to Rowan College of South Jersey, Gloucester, and Heitz was scouted and looked at very closely in his four years of high school, by RCSJ, Gloucester Men’s Soccer Head Coach, Geroge Hobbins.

Heitz also started his college education during high school by taking online classes at RCSJ through the High School Options Program. Already having academic experience and credits at RCSJ, made it an easy choice to continue here and play soccer for the College.

Heitz was always seen as a smart and loveable kid by all of his peers growing up. He performed well off the soccer field too. His grades were always in the top of his class, and he always gave back to his community. He was in National Junior Honor Society while he was at Deptford Middle School, and the National Honor Society in high school. When I asked Heitz what was more important to him while he was growing up, grades or soccer, he said: “My education

and grades have always been my top priority in school, I feel like that should come first. It sets your foundation as a student and a person, and soccer just comes along. You can’t be respected and called a student athlete, if you don’t take the student part seriously.”

In his first year of attending Rowan College of South Jersey, Gloucester full time, Heitz brought tremendous value to the team.

Continued on Page 9



Noah Heitz Playing a Soccer Game This Year for Rowan College of South Jersey, Gloucester



**RCSJ Roadrunner Golf Team Prepares for Official Match Play**

**By: Edward Mazurkiewicz**



Pitman Golf Course, NJ – As the defending Region XIX and GSAC champions, the RCSJ Roadrunner Golf Team is gearing up for an exciting season. Last year the Men’s and Women’s Golf Teams at RCSJ both qualified for the National Tournament in up-state New York, with the female golf team finishing second.

While the team bid farewell to several outstanding golfers who graduated – including Skylar Amoroso, Freddie Ramos, Cole Bruner, Jack Wheaton, Sam Burek, Shane Maccarone, Crystal Johnson, and Amanda Volk – they’ve reloaded with fresh talent. Joining returning champions Captain Logan Perrone and Captain Nancy Davidson are multi-sport star Alaina Villari and a brand-new group of players: Nick Iulucci, Eddie Mazurkiewicz, Alex Seber, Hayes Hulitt, Paul Welker, Lanie Guzman, Dimia Donaldson, and Chloe Shields. This team is determined to do the same and more than the team last year and teams in the past.

The RCSJ Athletic Department staff stand firmly behind the team, ready to cheer them on as they take on the challenges of college golf. “We’re not rebuilding,” says Coach Guy Davidson, “we’ve reloaded!” The team’s determination and hard work have prepared them for the leap to college-level competition. The team started practices back in February to get ready for the long and challenging season ahead, to make sure they do well and accomplish their goals.



**“We’re not rebuilding,” said Coach Guy Davidson, “we’ve reloaded!”**

The team will play in matches every week over the months of March and April, to get ready for the conference and regional tournaments in May, hoping to get back right where they left off last year, by qualifying for Nationals in June. This time, to win it.

Stay tuned for updates and follow the RCSJ Roadrunner Golf Team as they aim for victory this season!

**RCSJ Softball’s Game Plan for the 2024 Season**

*Continued from Page 8*

In an interview about her time playing for RCSJ, she spoke about the team atmosphere and life as a female college athlete. MacGibeny articulated the support that RCSJ gives its female athletes, stating: “RCSJ absolutely supported the team at the time of our World Series run. I would see many posts from back home and the constant support of the athletics program.”

MacGibney also voiced that while the program did not receive the most funding, the team worked hard to raise their own money together. When asked what she would change about women’s sports, her answer was simple; she would like for women’s sports to be more popular, and she even stated: “We put so much time and effort into our craft, and it would be great to see some recognition from someone other than our friends and family.” Despite these struggles, her World Series run with RCSJ was memorable and furthered her sports career.

With a program focused on team bonding and encouraging all its athletes, RCSJ may have the perfect stance to hit a grand slam.

**Noah Heitz: A Rising Star for Rowan College of South Jersey’s Men’s Soccer Team**

*Continued from Page 8*

Heitz knocked in 12 goals and racked up 8 assists, bringing his stats to the top level for the team. This was expected out of Heitz, considering all of the awards he received for soccer in high school. Not only did the team qualify for Nationals, and finished seventh in the nation, Heitz also led the team to win their Conference and Regional titles.

When I asked Heitz if he felt any added pressure to perform this year he said: “No, not really. I really just lock in and get in zone when I’m on the field, I don’t let myself get distracted with any outside noise.”

**Are you not quite a college-level athlete, but still looking to stay in shape, get involved, and have fun?!**

**The Rowan College of South Jersey Department of Athletics supports on-campus athletic clubs!**

**We encourage all students to get involved and come out to play!**

**If you have any questions, or want to find out more, feel free to contact [athletics@rcsj.edu](mailto:athletics@rcsj.edu)!**



**The Roadrunners Score Their Goal!**

**By: Nicole Sailey**

Against all odds, the Roadrunner Men’s Soccer Team have accomplished a remarkable feat by securing the victory as the school’s first Region 19 North Atlantic District B Championship since 1994. In addition to being a historic turning point for the team, the victory solidifies Coach George Hobbins’ outstanding tenure as head coach.

When Coach Hobbins and his assistant coaches reflected back on the preseason, they recognized that they were posed with some daunting obstacles. However, for the Roadrunners, what once appeared to be an impossible feat turned into an incredible journey of perseverance.

The leading struggle for the team was the roster. With a multitude of gaps in the lineup, Hobbins and the veteran coaching staff were understandably concerned about their performance. Fortunately, through their diligent practice and the addition of new players as the season progressed, victory was just in view.

Their extraordinary comeback paid off when they defeated Ocean County College 3-1 to guarantee the top-seeded Runners’ control in the championship game. The team’s win was fueled by efforts from Anthony Delgado and Tyler Lowe, in addition to a late goal from Kevin Martin, which sparked an uproarious celebration throughout supporters.

The team’s success clearly touched Coach Hobbins, who stated: "It is truly awesome to see how these players have grown and bought into our program." The victory demonstrates the players’ talent and willpower in addition to illustrating the teamwork and unyielding passion that defines the Roadrunners.

A key moment in the season took place in an exhausting away game against Sussex CCC, when the team managed to score a vital 1-0 victory in spite of being short-handed. The win acted as a catalyst, setting off an incredible 12-game winning streak that carried the team to the championship.

The Roadrunners’ victory marks a significant achievement in RCSJ history. After defying all expectations, the team carried their thrilling message through a celebratory Gatorade dunk.



**The Roadrunner Men’s Soccer Team**

**Click or scan here to see upcoming games and team schedules!**



**Or check out our social media!**



**Highlighted Player at Cumberland**

**By: MaryKate McAleer**



**Mollie Reece, Dukes Softball Team**

In only her second year at RCSJ Cumberland, Mollie Reece has already been labeled as a major offensive threat.

Last year, she helped the Dukes Softball Team advance to the final four with 24 stolen bases, 69 hits, and 3 home runs throughout the season.

She was awarded “Duke of the Week” last year for her outstanding playing, her work in the Athletic Department, and her help on the Game Operations Team in the winter and fall.

Reece is a true example of a team player with her sportsmanship shining on and off the field.



**BREAKING NEWS**

**Scholarship Application Portal Now Open!**

The online scholarship application at Rowan College of South Jersey-Gloucester Campus is your golden ticket to a world of scholarship possibilities! It's free to apply and super easy. In a few steps, you're ready to be matched to qualifying scholarships!

Log into the online portal [rcsj.edu/awardspring](https://rcsj.edu/awardspring) or click the QR code below and complete your application before the deadline. The application closes on **June 1, 2024**, so don't delay. Have a question? Send an email to [scholarships@rcsj.edu](mailto:scholarships@rcsj.edu) Good Luck!



**SCAN ME!**



**Usher’s Halftime Superbowl Performance: These Are My Confessions of a Legendary Artist**

**By: Sada’t Howard**

Usher definitely won the crowd at the 2024 Super Bowl with his famous utterance of "Yeah" three times and more, as he serenaded viewers with his electrifying, soulful tunes at his halftime show performance. Hailing from Atlanta, Georgia, with his smooth-like-butter voice, mesmerizing dance moves, and chart-topping hits, Usher left his mark on that stadium just as he has on the music industry for the past three decades.

Usher, deemed the King of R&B, rose from his seat on the throne in the middle of the stadium. Surrounded by many dancers and a marching band, he started with "Caught Up," leading into "You Don't Have To Call," where he proved to the audience why nobody should leave their girl around him as he sang out, mesmerizing the crowd.

"They said I wouldn't make it; they said I wouldn't be here today," he told viewers as he dedicated the performance to his "mama." He led the crowd into "Superstar" as his voice effortlessly soared to falsetto high notes, creating a sense of pure musical magic.

The marching band joined as Usher seamlessly transitioned to "Love In This Club." Soon after, Alicia Keys graced the stage with her hit "If I Ain't Got You." Although her performance had a rocky start, she quickly redeemed herself after her opening voice cracked as she sang, and the two artists beautifully played the piano in unison. Usher and Alicia Keys truly touched our hearts with their duet of "My Boo." It was a beautiful moment that showcased their incredible chemistry and vocal talents.

Usher’s ability to capture our hearts through music and dance is remarkable. For 13 minutes, he performed many classic hits that encapsulated his past, present, and future in music. He brought out other musical guests in addition to Alicia Keys, such as H.E.R., Will.i.am, Jermaine Dupri, Lil Jon, and even Ludacris. They all joined Usher on stage to turn up the energy and performed hits like "OMG", "Turn Down For What", and "Yeah!" Usher truly dived into his musical bag of hits to show us exactly why the spotlight needed to be on him, and not on Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce.



In the final seconds of his performance, Usher repeatedly exclaimed: "I turned the world to the A." Without a doubt, he did just that as he represented the boys and girls from Atlanta, showing the world that no dream is too big. Usher flawlessly proved why he was the perfect choice for the half-time Super Bowl performance.

**Godzilla Minus One: Film Review**

**By: Dylan Kedosh**

Godzilla, the gargantuan reptile that sparks only one thought whenever you picture the character: absolute destruction. But what happens when you take that unstoppable, destructive, and primordial force, and confront it with the sheer determination that is the human spirit? This is *Godzilla Minus One*.

The story follows Koichi Shikishima, a deserter kamikaze pilot in the Air Force, traumatized by his first encounter of Godzilla at the end of World War II, as he returns to his hometown directly after the surrender of Japan. The country, as well as Koichi’s home, is in shambles after the war, and Koichi is forced everyday to be reminded by those around him that he is a deserter that failed to do the one duty he was assigned to. As Koichi and his adoptive family grows closer overtime, friend Noriko and baby Akiko, Koichi takes a job disposing of torpedoes in the ocean, with Godzilla consistently appearing in the same sea, triggering Koichi’s PTSD of his original encounter. In an attempt to neutralize Godzilla, Koichi, as well as his coworkers, band together with veterans of the Japanese military in a last-ditch effort to defeat the monster, forcing Koichi to confront both the trauma, and the war within himself that he left behind with his fighter plane.

The film’s visual effects and overall production were very impressive, even going as far as earning the production team an Oscar for their efforts, with nothing more than a budget between \$10-\$15 million. Visual effects for explosions, earthquakes, and other supernatural effects like the glow of Godzilla’s spine and atomic breath were extremely detailed, allowing the audience to really feel each explosion. The visual characterization for the time, as well as the overall tone and atmosphere of post-World War II Japan, was very realistic and as though almost the entire population was running on fumes after the war, giving the last bit of energy that they had before collapse.

A month later, Toho Studios released a secondary version of the film in January, called *Godzilla Minus One Minus Color*, debuting the same story of *Godzilla Minus One*, but in black and white, serving both as a tribute to the original 1945 *Godzilla* film, as well as a new jumping off point in continuity for the franchise.



**“Worthy of seeing in theaters!”  
-Taylor Travis, RCSJ Student**

While it’s true that in recent years there have been multiple Godzilla installments such as *Godzilla vs. Kong*, with a sequel on the way later this year, *Godzilla Minus One* is meant to deliver an experience that brings the franchise back to its roots and conveys incredible storytelling with powerful themes of carnage, loss, and perseverance.

This film serves as an incredible entry in the Godzilla franchise, as well as revolutionizing the way Godzilla films are able to tell intense, and emotionally investing stories. I strongly encourage anyone that is interested in the film to give it a viewing, and I hope the studios recognize the gem they’ve created, and expand on the unique universe they’ve made.

## Check out these concerts, pride and free summer events in South Jersey:

### Wildwoods International Kite Festival



May 24th-May 27th 8:00am-9:00pm  
Admission: Free!

If you're looking for a display of color and wonder, then join the hundreds of kite lovers in Wildwood as they partake in the 38th Annual Wildwoods International Kite Festival! This event lasts a total of 4 days. If you're interested in flying a kite, you can register at the registration tent during the festival. The best part of all is that you can watch it for free!

### Jersey LGBTQ+ Pride



June 2nd 12:00-7:00pm  
Admission: \$10

If you're looking to celebrate Pride in the best way possible, check out New Jersey's oldest and biggest Pride event in Asbury Park! The day shifts from a parade, to a rally, to a full festival celebrating everything LGBTQ+. Asbury Park is ensuring the safety of all participants for an enjoyable time for everyone.

### Haddon Township 2nd Annual Pride Celebration



June 6th-7th 6:00pm  
Admission: Free!

If you're looking for a local Pride event, check out Haddon Township's 2nd Annual Pride Celebration! Offering a safe space for all involved in the LGBTQ+ community. Celebrate with performances, food, entertainment, and LGBTQ+ friendly organizations.

### Mood's Farm Market Blueberry Festival



July 8th 10:00am-4:00pm  
Admission: Free!

Love local farm markets and blueberries? Then check out Mood's Blueberry Festival! Offering a blueberry pie contest, blueberry picking, music, antiques, and small businesses.

### Collingswood Crafts and Fine Arts Festival



August 17th-18th, time TBD  
Admission: Free!

If you love supporting local artists, then check out Collingwood's Crafts and Fine Arts Festival! Offering live music, food, vendors, and fun for the whole family. A raffle tent of the festival's artists' work benefits the Ronal McDonald House of South Jersey.

## Free art, film and summer festivals in Philadelphia:

### Manayunk Arts Festival



June 22nd-June 23rd 11:00am-7:00pm  
Admission: Free!

If you're interested in art then you should head to Philly for the Tri-State area's biggest outdoor art festival. Follow along Main Street to view pieces from over 300 artists. There are 8 different categories with different types of works such as jewelry, woodwork, and photography. If you're interested in entering your work, visit their website today!

### Philly Pride Parade and Festival



June 2nd 10:00am  
Admission: Free!

If you're interested in one of the largest Pride events in the tri-state area, then check out Philly's Pride Parade and Festival! Every year this event brings over 25,000 people to the city to celebrate. Key highlights include the parade itself, food trucks, over 160 vendors, and so much more! Making it a safe and fun experience for everyone.

### Philadelphia Museum of Art Pay-as-You-Wish Days



First Sunday of the month 10:00am- 5:00pm and every Friday 5:00pm- 8:45pm  
Admission: Pay what you can!

Love the arts and looking to save some money? Then check out the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Pay-as-You-Wish days! On the first Sunday of the month and every Friday after 5pm, admission at the museum is whatever you want to pay. It might sound like there's some kind of catch but there's not! Whatever you can afford, they will take, and there's no limit as to what you can see!

### Wawa Welcome America Festival



June 19th-July 4th  
Admission: Free!

Join Wawa in celebrating our independence this summer! This event has programs discussing major events in American history such as the founding of America and the abolition of slavery. This 16-day event is celebrated all over the city with free admission to museums, musical performances, and Wawa Hoagie Day! This event ends with a fireworks display and a free concert featuring artists such as Demi Lovato and Ludacris!

### BlackStar Film Festival



August 1st-August 4th  
Admission: TBA

This film festival helps support Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists. Artists all over the world submit their work for audiences to see during the festival. The filmmakers give interviews about their films and give feedback to other filmmakers. You can purchase a ticket to view these films, or you can submit your work by the deadline, April 1st to compete. Tickets for this event go on sale May 7th.

## Click on the links below for more summer fun ideas!

- Ocean City Spring Block Party
- Franklin Institute "The Art of the Brick"
- Edgar Allen Poe Museum
- Longwood Gardens Summer Performance Series
- Haddon Twp. Summer Solstice Music Festival



Written by RCSJ Astrologers Katelyn Craig and Taylor Travis

## Aquarius

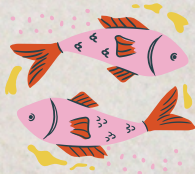
January 20-February 18



This summer expect to find inspiration and advancements in your life. From May through October, Pluto is in retrograde. During this time, you should reach out to be involved in your community. As an Aquarius, you are fiercely independent. This summer, try opening your heart and mind to deepen your relationships with others. This may be the time to reach out to old friends or start a new hobby. Even when facing changes in relationships and your career, take time to care for yourself.

## Pisces

February 19-March 20



This summer you may find accelerated changes in yourself and your relationships. Neptune, your ruling planet, goes into retrograde in Pisces on July 2nd. This period will expose some truths that you may have been avoiding, and you will find clarity in your emotions. Use this time to trust your intuition, focus on your self-expression, and don't let others' opinions bring you down. Make sure not to overwork yourself by the end of the summer - get some rest!

## Aries

March 21-April 19



Aries, while you may have wrestled with chaos in your relationships this year, expect relief coming your way. Mercury retrograde ends on May 14th. This time will bring clarity to your needs. Your friendships may have faced hardships and evolutions but try your best to not let your impulsivity get the best of you. This summer you will be a very busy bee. Your work life will be facing positive transformations, so your determination will pay off soon. Be sure to make an adventure out of this summer!

## Taurus

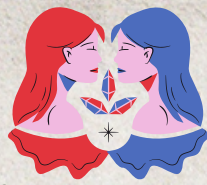
April 20 - May 20



To kick off your summer there is a New Moon in Taurus on May 7th. A New Moon is a sign of a new beginnings. If there are things in your life you've been wanting to change, this is your sign. However, you may face some unpredictability in your life during this time - make sure to stay grounded. Use this summer as a chance to make moves in your career, celebrate your friendships, and practice self-love. Trust your senses and manifest the summer you want to experience.

## Gemini

May 21 - June 20



Gemini, this summer will be the calm before major transformations. You will be facing significant changes in your work and love life by the end of the year. On May 25th Jupiter enters Gemini. Jupiter is the planet of luck, success, and prosperity. This is the perfect time to make moves on the projects you've been working on. Your generosity and optimism will flourish during this time. The goals you have been working toward will pay off soon, so take some extra time to rest and relax this summer!

## Cancer

June 21 - July 22



Love and prosperity are coming your way this summer. On June 17th both Mercury and Venus are entering Cancer. Venus will bring romance into your life. As a Cancer, you experience your emotions deeply. With Venus on your side, you will feel more ready than ever for love. Mercury will strengthen your intellectuality and bring clarity to your senses. Your communication skills will prosper during this time, which will also help your love life. This summer have fun in your relationships and spend time doing your favorite hobbies!

## Leo

July 23 - August 22



2024 is full of fortune for you Leo. Not only when it comes to financial fortune, but within your career and relationships. With the support of Jupiter and Saturn, they will be there to guide you to your achievements. On July 21st, the Buck Moon in Capricorn will enhance your determination and push you forward to your main goal. Take advantage of it! On August 19th the Sturgeon Moon in Aquarius will help tame the flame of your fiery personality, so take a step back to relax and enjoy the last few days of Leo season.

## Virgo

August 23 - September 22



Virgo, this summer will occupy your thoughts with many projects. However, try to balance those projects with your true needs. As someone who is hardworking and is constantly trying to be perfect, you may forget to put yourself first. On June 2nd, the Strawberry Moon in Capricorn will unlock your creative side. Try a new hobby and relax your mind as you prepare for the months ahead.

## Libra

September 23 - October 22



This will be an interesting summer for you, Libra. When the Gemini Sun shines down on you, check in on your loved ones and spend some quality time with them. As the summer progresses, you may be tempted to spend money on the more luxurious things in life. Just be careful and keep an eye on your bank account. Although you deserve to treat yourself, think about the expenditure before you regret your purchase.

## Scorpio

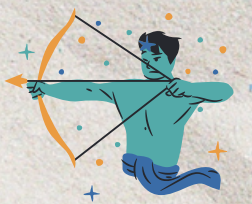
October 23 - November 21



Scorpio, this summer is all about emotional bonds with others. During the Gemini Sun, you will be motivated to strengthen your connections with others. Don't be afraid to be honest and express your feelings about what you truly need. This summer is also driven by motivation towards your career and enhances your confidence. Share those ideas with your peers and shout out some new ideas. Get your voice out there!

## Sagittarius

November 22 - December 21



Starting off the summer strong during the season of Taurus, you will be focused on your wellbeing. This doesn't just mean physically, it means your entire wellbeing. Take advantage of the Taurus sun and focus on your mental and emotional wellbeing. It will help you focus on any hiccups along the way. As you progress through the summer, try to take a look at your spending and prioritize your needs and wants in your budget, but don't forget to treat yourself!

## Capricorn

December 22 - January 19



Capricorn, your ruling planet Saturn will be in retrograde from June 29th-November 15th. Take this time to really focus on yourself and take a look at your close relationships. This summer calls for you to take a break from work and enjoy the summer sun! Jupiter and the Gemini Sun will activate your house of routine and wellness. You're always hardworking, and you deserve to relax. Remember to spend time with your friends and loved ones.