



Downtown Loves Moms brings people to the Town Plaza each year to find that perfect gift for mom, while enjoying food, entertainment, and shopping downtown.

## 2018 Annual Report

Photo credit: Lauren Beischer.

## Volunteers Accomplishments in 2018

**Business Mix Management:** Partner with Innovation and Family Friendly Team to diversify business mix and capture a greater portion of spending at businesses in downtown Metuchen.

- Had **30** Business openings and 6 Business moving or expanding within the District.
- Vacancy rate of 4.06% with only 39,874 sqft available at the end of 2018.

### Openings

1. Jersey Mike's, 349 Lake Ave
2. NHT Global, 325 Lake Ave
3. Pink Lotus, 435 Main St
4. Thorro Learning Center, 202 Main St, Ste 214
5. Magic Fingers, 458 Main St
6. Chipotle Mexican Grill, 369 Lake Ave
7. Scottish Dog, 406 Main St, Room 1L
8. Vanity, 287 Main St
9. Frutta Bowl, 333 Lake Ave
10. Pearl Street Café, 10 Pearl St
11. Hot Yoga Revolution, 21 Pearl St
12. The Center for Embracing HHR, 283 Main St, Suite 2
13. WiseMind Center for Social and Emotional Learning, 20 Highland Ave
14. ELITE Fitness Alliance, 215 Durham Ave
15. Sumiyaki Japan, 331 Lake Ave
16. Cale Salon, 56 Pearl St
17. Jairo Barber Shop, 316 Main St
18. Lash Lounge, 349 Lake Ave
19. ManiMe, 349 Lake Avenue, 120
20. CVS, 45 Pearl St
21. Luigi's Ice Cream, 349 Lake Ave
22. ANSH Chiropractic, 315 Main St
23. Be My Guest, 10 Pearl St
24. Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices New Jersey Properties – Metuchen, 564 Middlesex Ave, Ste 1-2
25. Cachet Boutique, 398 Main St
26. Licensed Arbiter, 61 Pearl St
27. The Kabab Factory, 567 Middlesex Ave
28. The Hub Leasing Office, 660 Middlesex Ave, E
29. Strategies for Wealth, 16 Pearl St, Ste 216
30. Creative Twist Events, 10 Pearl St

### Expansions (moved or expanded)

1. Suhey Photography, 398 Main St, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
2. Star Hospitality, 339 Main St, Floor 2
3. Preschool of Rock, 402 Main St, Ste 300
4. QuantM Technologies Inc., 407 Main St, Ste 217
5. Metuchen Downtown Alliance, 10 Station Pl, Ste 3
6. Vaticano Shoe Repair, 5 Pennsylvania Ave

## Services to Businesses

- Provided storefront consultations to **18** businesses in 2018.
- Provided \$33,188.85 towards \$105,027.70 in improvements to signage, storefronts, and merchandising. Awarded matching grants to the following businesses.
  - Metuchen Liquor & Wine
  - Boyt's
  - Fresco
  - Metuchen Dentist
  - Hailey's Harp & Pub
  - Picture Perfect Studios
  - Cachet
  - Runner's High
  - Smoker's Haven
  - The Kabab Factory
  - The Greek
- Held Win at Marketing Workshop that helped **17** businesses develop a marketing plan, improve websites, and enhance social media.
- Provided \$16,740.25 in grants to 7 businesses through our pilot Innovation Grant program.

## Communications

- Held **28** retail promotions to 'make cash registers ring' that brought **8,220** people downtown.
- Produced several commercials.
- Earned **3,896,327** media impressions on TV/News12, Central Jersey InMotion, The Metuchen Mirror, The Criterion.
- Secured an additional **4,029,254** media impressions from 202 articles, posts – over 3x the number of unearned media articles than in 2017.
- Grew database of contacts to **2,960** names. Also have 2,224 Facebook likes, 1,094 Instagram follows, and 207 Twitter followers at end of 2018.

## Getting it Done

Implemented clean and green policies that improved the visual appearance of the downtown.

- Performed **25** cleaning and maintenance visits by Commercial District Services.
- Organized plantings in March, July, September, and November.
- Added holiday lights throughout the entire downtown District.

## **Metuchen Downtown Alliance Awards for 2018**

### **Volunteer of the Year – Elaine Edgcomb**

Past awardees

2017 – Dan Cea

2016 – Bobbie Theivakumaran

As a volunteer with the Metuchen Downtown Alliance since our inception in 2016, Elaine has been invaluable to several key initiatives. Early on she helped with the selection of a consultant and development of a market analysis for the District. She was instrumental in helping to shape the “Innovation Transformation Strategy” that has guided our work for nearly two years now. As Innovation Team Chair she assembled a team of people to assist businesses with technology, improving their storefronts, and with marketing. Partnerships she has helped to develop are with Central New Jersey SCORE and Metuchen High School through a “Downtown Fellows” program. Elaine’s contribution over the past several years have been significant.

### **Storefront Improvement Award – The Kabab Factory**

Honorable mention: The Greek, Cachet, Smokers Haven

Past awardees:

2017 – Rob DeFillipis, Runner’s High

The Kabab Factory is one of 42 businesses that have participated in our Storefront Grant program, and one of 12 to receive matching grants so far. The grant to The Kabab Factory for new exterior painting and signage outside. On the inside tasteful decorations help to tell the brand story of this dynamic, exciting new dining place in downtown Metuchen.

### **Business Champion Award – Jenny Lai, Picture Perfect Studios**

Past awardees:

2017 – La Rosa Pizzeria and Restaurant

2016 – Cai’s Cafe

Jenny Lai of Picture Perfect Studios is someone who takes good ideas and applies them. Following a storefront consultation Jenny completed redesigned her entry door, storefront windows, and visual merchandising inside. Picture Perfect was one of seventeen businesses to participate in the Win at Marketing Workshop held Summer 2018. She frequently reaches out and partners with fellow Metuchen businesses and can often be seen taking photographs at MDA meetings and promotions.

### **District Owner Award – Michael Ciesielka, Nexus Parking Systems**

Past awardees:

2017 – Jeff Jossell, Suburban Square, LLC

Since opening their Metuchen facility in 2016, Nexus Parking Systems has contributed greatly to the success and comfort of our businesses and residents. Staff have taken an active interest in the work of the Alliance, participating in nearly every meeting and serving on our Parking Team. Additionally, generous free parking during weekends from 5pm on Friday to midnight on Sunday has helped encourage people to visit, dine, and shop downtown.

#### **Promotion Award – Linda Levine**

Past awardees:

2017 – Joanne Cruz

2016 – Bobbie Theivakumaran

Linda is not only a volunteer but also a resident in downtown Metuchen. As a volunteer she has been invaluable connecting Alliance businesses with various promotions throughout the year. As a resident she is well known to many of the business owners throughout the downtown. Recently she increased her commitment by joining the team at the Pearl Street Business Center to assist with business development and project management activities there.

#### **Innovation Award – Bernie Hetzel**

Past awardees:

2017 – Edward Wetzel

2016 – Elaine Edgcomb

Bernie brings with him over 3 decades of experience in storefront design to his work with the Alliance. As a professional store designer he once had responsibility for as many as 3,000 stores nationally. Some of his earliest retail experience, however, was designing windows for a business on Main Street in Metuchen. He has now come full circle and is an important part of our team helping businesses throughout the District with making upgrades and improvements.

#### **Public Official Award – Brandon Uhlig, Metuchen Media**

Past awardees:

2017 – Allison Inerro

2016 – Fred Hall, DPW Director

Brandon provides professional video through an innovative partnership between the Borough of Metuchen, the Metuchen Independent School District, and the Metuchen Downtown Alliance. His videos promoting downtown businesses and highlighting various promotions have garnered over 100,000 views on Facebook and YouTube. Brandon has also become an important voice on our Communication Team, helping to craft campaigns that benefit businesses.

These **140** Volunteers contributed **5,409** hours valued at **\$148,572.50**

Alexis Sarmiento  
**Alex Dormoy, MHS**  
**Alex Roberts**  
Alex Wilkins \*  
Alison Inserro  
**Amber Cardillo, MHS**  
**Ami Pejovic**  
Anderson Lin \*  
**Andy Lai**  
Angela Pineiro \*  
Anisha Khan \*  
**Anabella Russo, MHS**  
Anthony Campisi \*  
**Anushka Pande, MHS**  
Audrey Hausser  
**Barbara Crafton**  
Bernie Hetzel  
Bobbie  
Theivakumaran  
**Charu Bakshi**  
Chris Crane  
Chris Flynn \*  
Chrissy Kremer  
Christine Newman  
**Christopher Ray, MHS**  
Claire McClanahan  
Colin Faxson \*  
Colleen Hanson \*  
Daniel Cea  
**Dave DeSantis, SCORE**  
David Fenco  
Diana Callinan \*  
Donna Hills  
Doreen Doherty \*  
Dorothy Rasmussen  
Dottie Winhold  
Edward Kremer  
Edward Levinson

Edward Wetzel  
**Ejona Qormemeti \***  
Elaine Edgcomb  
Elyissia Wassung \*  
Eric Berger \*  
Ernie Agtarap  
Gary Gerckens \*  
**Gary M. Wade, MAI \***  
Gary Tilbor \*  
Glenn Gawronski \*  
Grace Shackney  
**Harvey Greenstein, SCORE**  
Hasana Muhammad \*  
**Dr. Hazel-Anne Johnson**  
**Henry Cea**  
**Hruday Shah, MHS**  
Ian Fawcett  
Isaac Kremer  
Jaclyn Emslie  
**Jamie Gordon \***  
Jan Margolis  
Jane Meyer, SCORE  
Jason Delia  
Jay Muldoon  
Jeff Jossell  
Jennifer Lai \*  
Jes DePasquale \*  
Jim Peck  
Jim Walsh \*  
Joan Mistrrough  
Joanne Cruz \*  
**John Manzo \***  
Jonathan Busch \*  
**Jorge Maldonado \***  
**Joseph R. Stanio \***  
**Joshua Schooler \***  
Juan Carlos Gomez-Peralta

**Justin Goldsberry \***  
Kalpesh Patel \*  
Kara Gumnic  
Karen Van de Castle, MHS  
**Kathleen Henn, MHS**  
Kathy Busch  
Keith Timko  
**Kun-Han Lee**  
**Laura Ann Wilkins \***  
Laura Griffith  
Lauren Beischer  
Leon Schwartz \*  
Linda Koskoski \*  
Linda LaStella  
Linda Levine  
**Lisa Wachter \***  
Lois Anne Cataldo \*  
Lorraine Mulligan \*  
Lynette Johnson  
**Lynn Fitzgerald**  
**Kodila**  
**Mansi Khandelwal \***  
Margaret Inglese \*  
Maria Manjelo \*  
Mark Harris  
Mark Herzberg  
**Maryam Beshara, MHS**  
**Maura Flood**  
Melissa Karlovitch  
Michael Ciesielka \*  
Michelle Murphy  
Michelle Schutz \*  
Mirjana Novkovic  
**Moshe Atzbi**  
**Nancy Bukovina, SCORE**  
Nelson Li  
Nicole Blankiet

**Nigel Longville \***  
Noelle Stary  
Peter Klein \*  
**Phil Xie, MHS**  
**Rebecca Perlmutter, MHS**  
**Richa Desai, MHS**  
Richard Green III  
Rob DeFilippis \*  
Robert Diken  
Robert F. Russo  
Robert Matland \*  
Robyn Trimboli-Russo  
**Ronald Severino**  
Roselle Sy  
**Samuel Solomon, MHS**  
**Sean Massey \***  
Sharon Matt Atkins  
Sheri-Rose Marcus  
Rubin  
Sheri Schwartz  
Shirley Kelbie Brown  
Stephen Santola \*  
**Steve Silberman, SCORE**  
Stuart Schooler \*  
Sue Cea  
Sue Fitzgerald \*  
Suhey Zetino \*  
Tanya Roper \*  
Thomas Kremer  
Todd Pagel  
Traci Gerckens \*  
**Uri Gorbatov \***  
**William Benz, SCORE**

\* These are Full Members of MDA because of their status as a District Businesses, District Owner, or both. Those in **Bold** are new volunteers in 2018. SCORE is Central NJ Senior Corps of Retired Executives. MHS is Metuchen High School.

**Board of Trustees** (term #, term length)

*Terms expiring 12/31/2019*

Glenn Gawronski, Parking Authority (At-large)

Mark Harris, Arts Council (At-large)

Linda Koskoski, Borough Council (At-large)

Jay Muldoon, Borough Admin (Ex officio)

Leon Schwartz, Chamber (At-large)

*Terms expiring 12/31/2020*

Diana Callinan, District Business (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

Stuart Schooler, District Owner (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

Michelle Schutz, District Business (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

Bobbie Theivakumaran, Resident (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

Gary Tilbor, District Owner (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

*Terms expiring 12/31/2022*

Eric Berger, District Owner (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4 year)

Jamie Gordon, District Owner (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

Sue Fitzgerald, District Business (1<sup>st</sup>, 4 year)

Chris Flynn, District Business (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4 year)

# Financial Statement

## Revenue

SID Contribution	165,200	
Borough Contribution	125,000	
Contributions	14,162	
Grants	7,186	
Total Revenue		311,548

## Expenses

Program Services		
Education and Tech	3,992	
Placemaking	42,372	
Storefront Grant Fund	47,638	
Merchant Videos	5,000	
Street Improvement and Maintenance	19,027	
Promotions and Avertising	69,243	
Communications	34,418	
Total Program Expenses		221,690

## General and Administrative

Salaries and Related Expenses	79,620	
Contract Services	23,195	
Offices	8,917	
Rent	11,604	
Utilities	1,968	
Depreciation	361	
Facility and Equipment	4,231	
Travel and Meetings	10,208	
Insurance	2,295	
Dues and Membership	1,227	
Volunteer Training	3,245	
Website Costs	699	
Miscellaneous	1,222	
Total General and Administrative		148,792

Total Expenses 370,482

Increase (Decrease in Net Assets) (58,935)

Net Assets at Beginning of Period 78,313

Net Assets at End of Period 19,378



# The Strength of our Organization is our Volunteers!

## **Communications Team**

We're working hard to get the message out about Downtown Metuchen through earned and unearned opportunities. Help us find the right mix of tv, print, and other marketing to enhance the image of the downtown. Our AMP Team works to amplify the marketing impact that District businesses get from retail promotions and special events held downtown.

## **Fundraising Team**

Help with managing our sponsorship program, resident campaign program, and other fundraising to support the work of our organization.

## **Promotion Team**

Continue the process of turning Metuchen into a convenient regional destination for families and kids where something fun, new, and exciting is always happening. Help activate the downtown with opportunities, products, activities, and experiences. This includes the Town Plaza, which will become a place for people to gather daily and for extraordinary events. Example: Kids Takeover, Haunted Downtown.

## **Public Art Team**

Enhance the image of the downtown with new and exciting public art. Assist with implementing the MDA Public Art Policy developed with support from a public arts professional. Contribute to the continuous improvement of the downtown through public art.

## **Storefront Team**

Guide businesses through the process of upgrading and improving their storefronts. Assist them with planning and implementation of improvements. Work with MDA, consultants, and the Borough to facilitate best design practices that enhance shopability, visibility, and aesthetics downtown.

## **Tech Team**

Build on Metuchen's heritage of independent, creative people to cultivate innovative and unique small businesses, entrepreneurs, and artists. Examples include business education, advocacy, recruitment/retention, and more. Our Tech Team helps businesses use technology to grow.

**You may sign up to volunteer online...**

<https://www.downtownmetuchen.org/volunteer/>

**Or drop by the office or send a note to...**

Isaac D. Kremer, Executive Director, [isaac@downtownmetuchen.org](mailto:isaac@downtownmetuchen.org)  
10 Station Place, Suite 3, Metuchen, NJ 08840