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## October 2021 Newsletter

Hello Gene,

The name Gateway Community Action Partnership reflects our expanded coverage area, but more importantly, it signifies what we are all about. We are a gateway to success for individuals and families in our community and we achieve those results through actions done in partnership within that very community we serve. So please take a minute to read our newsletter and learn more about Gateway Community Action Partnership and our impact in our communities.

### Agency Mission And CAP Promise

The agency's mission is to provide services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency.

**CAP Promise:** Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

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## Southeast Gateway Revitalization Plan Presses On Through The Pandemic

The Southeast Gateway Revitalization project has been a consistent effort under Gateway for more than a decade. With the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the related social and financial challenges, implementation of many aspects of the revitalization program have been postponed, and the larger projects have proven difficult to get off the ground. However, with a global focus on rebuilding and returning to a "new normal," the SEG program is getting back on-track as well.

Gateway first met with residents of the Southeast Bridgeton neighborhood in 2005 to discuss their needs and vision for revitalizing the neighborhood. Together, the Southeast Gateway Neighborhood Revitalization Plan was developed.

With a thorough plan for implementation in place, it is the community that truly brings this project to fruition. Collaborating with residents, agencies, and local government supports a more resilient, sustainable, and connected community that can better adapt to hardships. Esaul Martin and Josue Ruiz-Ramirez, SEG Coordinators, have been building relationships with churches in the area, as well as with the local police. Surveys and meetings are prioritized to outline the most pressing concerns of local residents. Artwork will be incorporated into the neighborhood with involvement from local adults and children, which aims to inspire community connectedness and discourage vandalism and crime. This leads to a safer community for present and future generations alike.

For a project with so many components, Ruiz-Ramirez discusses his perspective on the importance of community support. He recalls the support and feedback of Cuffy Seabrook and other members and partners, which have been vital in moving the project forward. While challenging at times to coordinate the efforts of all people involved, "it truly shows the resilience of not only Southeast Gateway but the city as a whole. If people throughout the city could come together the way we do in Southeast Gateway, there is no telling what we can accomplish," Ruiz-Ramirez said.

The Southeast Gateway (SEG) Revitalization Plan is the main document used to outline all goals in this project and consists of a matrix with three overarching goals: Safety, Economic Development, and Creativity and Sustainability. The plan conducts milestones as part of the Wells Fargo Regional Foundation Implementation Grant. Along with Gateway, partners include the Cumberland Empowerment Zone, United Advocacy Group, and the City of Bridgeton, as well as various other agencies and members of the community. The document includes completion dates from now through 2024 and ongoing. Martin and Ruiz-Ramirez outlined the multidimensional efforts going into realizing the goals in this matrix.

First, to improve safety, goals include increasing the presence of police officers in the neighborhood and improving infrastructure such as street lighting, bus shelters, and traffic safety. A neighborhood watch plan is being developed, as well as bringing awareness to the resources within the community such as the police department and public tip line.

As for economic development, there are plans to bring back job training events to the Southeast Gateway neighborhood, provide a job database, and build transportation resources for people travelling for work. Improving access to homeownership is also a major goal, and will include building single-family homes and affordable housing while preserving the historical characteristics of Bridgeton. Recently, a Food Specialization Center has been opened in partnership with the Cumberland Empowerment Zone. The center offers a space for food-related small businesses to start or grow their business while also providing food to the SEG neighborhood (where food insecurity has been identified) and concentrating financial interactions within the neighborhood.

For the future, there is a proposal to create a mixed-use Plaza in the neighborhood to provide necessary day-to-day products and services to residents. This location would provide temporary development jobs as well as permanent jobs once opened. It is to include a laundromat, food services, and an urgent care center in proximity to residential areas for accessibility. Phase I includes developing large commercial buildings, while Phase II will focus on residential development. The Plaza was proposed to be developed on South East and Pamphylia avenues with plans for extensive remediation and preparation for development.

The matrix concludes with Sustainability and Creativity. A notable project in this component of the plan intends to remediate the "Tin Can" site to create a community recreation space. Youth Empowerment Zones, expansion of educational opportunities, and minority entrepreneurial centers are outlined in the revitalization plan. Holding Unity Day events is another way to bring together many stakeholders in the community; in Summer 2021, an event was held to bring together the community with food, games, and partner organizations. Semi-annual neighborhood clean-ups were started less than two years ago with a huge number of volunteers and agencies from all over Cumberland County.

The interaction between all partner efforts to achieve the multi-dimensional matrix will collectively build a more sustainable Southeast Gateway Neighborhood.



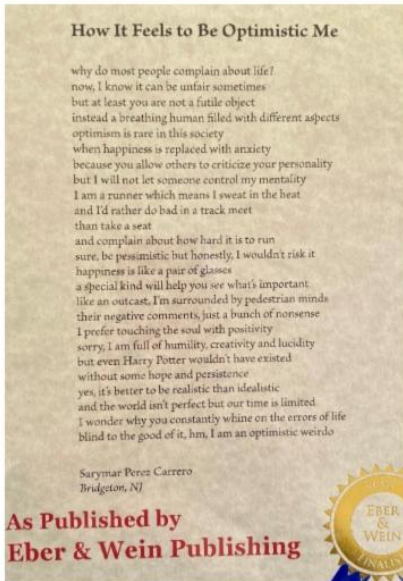
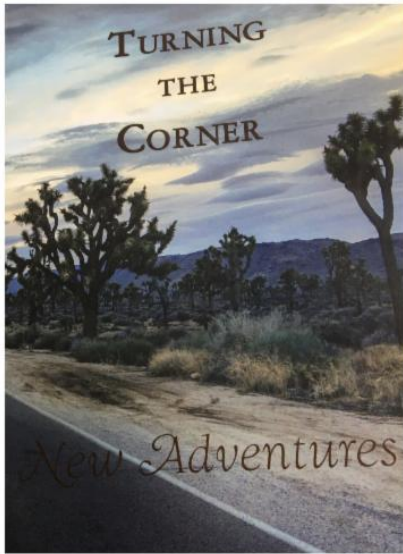
Pictured above, a group photo from Bridgeton's Semi-Annual Citywide Cleanup in September.

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## **Gateway Employee Becomes Published Author With Poem On Optimism**

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Sarymar Perez Carrero, an alumnus of Gateway's Head Start and current Training Associate at the Head Start Center in Bridgeton, recently became a published author with a poem she entered into a contest in December 2020. The poem is featured in a book titled, "Turning the Corner: New Adventures." Sarymar expressed her excitement to represent the city of Bridgeton, and hopes that her poem will encourage others to try new things with optimism and determination.

"I would just like to say that I entered this poem contest last December and thought because of the many people entering that I wouldn't have a chance, but I was so proud of the poem I created that I wanted others to be able to read it and feel connected to the theme of optimism it contains. When I received a letter in the mail stating that I had advanced to the semifinal round and that my poem would be published in a book, I felt so overjoyed and accomplished. It makes me happy to know that in a way, I am an official author and that I get to represent little Bridgeton and New Jersey as whole. I also advise others to try new things that are out of your comfort zone because you never know what the outcome will be unless you try." – Sarymar Perez Carrero

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## Gateway's Mill Creek Urban Farm Expands With The Addition Of A New Greenhouse

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Gateway's Mill Creek Urban Farm, with the help of Sunrise Greenhouse Construction, has expanded its growing space with the addition of a new greenhouse. The greenhouse, which is 34 feet wide and 96 feet long, will soon be filled with romaine lettuce and hydroponic tomatoes. Marcus Weaver, Director of Agriculture and Food Initiatives, plans to have a harvest come out of the new greenhouse before the end of the 2021 growing season.

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## Southeast Gateway Partners With The ALMS Center To Host A Successful Job Fair

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The WOW Mobile (Wellness on Wheels) partnered with DiBiase Preschool in Vineland to educate children and their parents on oral hygiene and the importance of regular dentist visits.

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## Lineage Logistics Volunteers Join Gateway's Food Distribution Team To Help Combat Hunger

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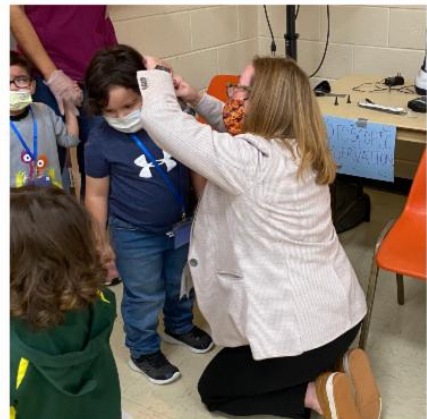


**Gateway staff were joined for the Penns Grove food distribution by three volunteers from Lineage Logistics, a cold storage company that recently opened a 200,000 square foot facility nearby in Swedesboro. Lineage Logistics is committed to helping combat hunger in the communities where they are located, and have both donated food and sent volunteer help to Gateway's pantry in the past few weeks.**

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## **Montclair State University Staff And Students Test Hearing At Hamilton 1 Head Start**





**Montclair State University Staff and Students completed 73 hearing screenings on Hamilton 1 Head Start students. Special thanks to our Head Start Health Manager, Shelly Mihalecz, for making this possible.**

You can support Gateway's mission "to provide services that improve the quality of life and promote self-sufficiency" while shopping at Amazon's "AmazonSmile." Please click on the link below the next time you shop. More information about the program follows the link. Thank you.

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## About AmazonSmile

### What is AmazonSmile?

AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support Gateway Community Action Partnership every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to Gateway.

### How do I shop at AmazonSmile?

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## Welcome to Gateway CAP's New Hires!

Tanasha Cockburn, WIC Clerk/ Peer Counselor  
Rachelle Robinson, Food Distribution Assistant  
Nicholas Corwonski, Urban Farm Head Grower  
Emily Merino Castro, Gateway Scholars  
Etab Kurdi, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Houda Elbaroudi, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Shahnaz Alsharkas, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Mahlana Windrow, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Evelia Perez Perez, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Angelique Donaldson, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Alheli Castro Solano, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Madileidy Guzman Bocio, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Shelee Mcilvaine Family Advocate  
Nicholas Dobrowolski, Distribution Driver  
Esperliss Melo, EHS Education Coordinator  
Syeda Jahan, WIC Clerk/Peer Counselor  
Brionna Martin, Center Aide  
Griselda Garcia, Family Advocate  
Betzaida Gomez, Child/Family Site Director  
Rena Albakour, Sub Teacher Assistant  
Yvonna Martin, Literacy Assistant  
Donna McClary, Education Outreach Worker  
Kiera Lane, EHS Group Teacher  
Denise Harris, Food Service Worker

Ramirrah Curry, ERSEA Associate

## Gateway Community Action Partnership

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Contact Us Today



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