

**ESSEX COUNTY EXECUTIVE DIVINCENZO PRESENTS  
SIX ESSEX RESIDENTS WITH OUTSTANDING SENIOR CITIZEN AWARDS**

***Annual Awards Program Recognizes Seniors who Contribute***

***to the Success of the Senior Club Program***

**Belleville, NJ** – Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. presented six Essex County residents with Outstanding Senior Citizen Awards during the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Senior Citizen Luncheon at The Chandelier in Belleville on Thursday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. Approximately 150 Essex County seniors attended the annual celebration, which recognizes members of Essex County’s various senior clubs for their dedication and commitment to the program.

“Congratulations to our Senior Club members who are being recognized today. Whether you offered a kind word for your fellow members, gave a ride to someone who needs transportation, organized a trip or served as a club officer, your volunteer efforts are the reason this program continues to thrive,” DiVincenzo said. “Your actions contributed to a welcoming atmosphere where others can strike up new friendships, spend an afternoon and remain connected to their community. Thank you for Putting Essex County and our Seniors First,” he added.

“This is a terrific program and I applaud the seniors who participate and stay involved. We are recognizing some truly amazing people today,” Freeholder Patricia Sebold said.

The Outstanding Senior Citizen Awardees are as follows:

**Connie Gambacorta** is a member of the Branch Brook Cherry Blossom Club. She is one of the original members of the Cherry Blossom Club and has attended every meeting. Ms. Gambacorte just turned 90 years old and the club members wish her all the best in the future. “It’s a great surprise to be honored. I enjoy all the friends I’ve made through the club and the activities we do are fun,” Gambacorta said.

**Lucy La Grasso** is a member of the Independence Park Monday Club. She has been a member of the club for over 25 years and has served as one of its trustees. Ms. La Grasso greets members warmly with her smile and is a wonderful woman who treats everyone with respect. The members of the Independence Park Monday Club are proud to honor her. “I was surprised with this honor and didn’t expect it,” Ms. La Grasso said. “I enjoy the club and sharing time with my friends here,” she added.

**Jean Marinaro** is a member of the Independence Park Friday Club. Ms. Marinaro has been an outstanding member for many years and has held the positions of president and treasurer during her time with the club. She has contributed a great deal to the Independence Park Friday Club before retiring at the end of 2016. Club members look forward to seeing her from time to time. “I am grateful to be honored and to know that my friends appreciate the things I do,” Ms. Marinaro said. “I’ve been coming to the club for a long time because of the friends I have made, the trips we take and the games we enjoy,” she added.

**Honorato Gonzabay** is a member of the North Ward Center's Casa Israel. He is a former professional soccer player in South America who competed as a member of international teams and during tournaments. Mr. Gonzabay is an active member of Casa Israel, where he receives medical services and enjoys participating in recreational activities. He is always friendly, and the members and staff at the center love to hear his stories about playing soccer during the 1950s. "I thank my friends for the nomination; it is great to be honored. I feel very happy because I enjoy going to Casa Israel. They really help me," Mr. Gonzabay said.

**Claire Librizzi** is a member of the Watsessing Park Senior Club. Since becoming a member of the club, she has been the Sunshine Girl and does an outstanding job. She also provides transportation for non-drivers, helps serve snacks and visits club members in the hospital. Ms. Librizzi is truly an asset to the club. "It was very nice of my club members to recognize me. I love the people in the club; we have a great group," Librizzi said.

**Stella Marano** is a member of the Roseland Senior Citizens. She was a teacher at Ann Street and Avon School in Newark for 42 years and lent her talents as a staff developer to help new teachers improve their instruction techniques. As a volunteer, she was a community advocate at St. Barnabas Medical Center, member of the University Scholarship Committee and the Town Set fund-raising group, chair of the Roseland Senior Advisory Board, program chair for the Roseland Senior Social Club, member of the Roseland Library Board and an election poll worker. "This is a great honor for me. I'm involved in a several organizations that assist seniors because I believe there should be activities and entertainment provided for older Americans," Marano said.

The annual award program was sponsored by the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs. Essex County hosts 11 senior citizen clubs, and each one has the opportunity to nominate someone from their club for the award. This year, six clubs participated in the awards ceremony.