

January 2025

Year 22

Issue 228

# Passaic Valley UNICO

Our January 2025 Monthly Newsletter



**Passaic Valley UNICO**  
**PO Box 341**  
**Little Falls, NJ 07424**

## **Serving**

*Little Falls*

*Totowa*

*Woodland Park*

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Chapter Website

[www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org](http://www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org)

Chapter Website

[www.UNICOmembers.com](http://www.UNICOmembers.com)

Facebook Page

[www.Facebook.com/PassaicValleyUNICO](https://www.Facebook.com/PassaicValleyUNICO)

Instagram Page

[www.Instagram.com/PassaicValleyUNICO](https://www.Instagram.com/PassaicValleyUNICO)

District Website

[www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com](http://www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com)

National Website

[www.UNICO.org](http://www.UNICO.org)

Chapter Email

[PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com](mailto:PassaicValleyUNICO@gmail.com)

## **A Message from our Chapter President**

*As December has passed and the holiday season is coming to an end. I hope everyone was filled with excitement & gratitude the past few weeks. The holiday season brought a special time of magic, moments to cherish, traditions to celebrate and opportunities to give back to those around us. Coming into the New Year, I see our chapter coming together collectively. The District Christmas Party was a huge success and many chapter members attended.*

*We have a 50/50 raffle that is in its preliminary stage and will commence shortly in the months to come. Last year's Super Bowl Raffle was a huge success, and we will be running it again at Super Bowl time. At our next meeting we should have some additional information about our upcoming Corn Hole Tournament.*

*January's meeting will be on Wednesday the 8th at 8:00 pm at Evolutions Restaurant on Browertown Rd in Woodland Park. If interested, many members will be going earlier for dinner at 6:15pm. If you just wish to attend the chapter meeting, this will commence at 8:00pm sharp. Please email John Barbieri @ [johnb56@optonline.net](mailto:johnb56@optonline.net) and let him know if you will be attending dinner, as it is very important that we get a head count prior.*

*On behalf of the Executive Board, we want to take a moment to thank you all for your continued support and looking forward to working with all of you to help make another successful and fun filled year.*

**Respectfully**

**Carmen Criscione- Chapter President**



## January Birthdays

15 Patricia Pelonero

## Photo Albums

All our chapter event pictures can be seen on our website ... Additional pictures from our "NJ IV District" and also a lot from our "UNICO National" events can also be seen on their websites.

[www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org](http://www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org)  
[www.UNICO.org](http://www.UNICO.org)  
[www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com](http://www.UNICONJIV.yolasite.com)

## Food Pantry

Please do not forget about our UNICO Phil Arena and our many other Food Pantries ... Your non-perishable donation will help restock them.

Please contact our Food Pantry Chairs, Carmen Gaita, or Patricia Pelonero on how you can help. Or please just bring your items to any chapter meeting

## Upcoming Events – Local and National

January 8, 2025 ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday ~ Chapter Monthly Meeting ~ Evolution Restaurant in Woodland Park ~ 6:15 pm Dinner ~ 8:00 pm Meeting

April 26, 2025 ~ The Saturday after Easter ~ Our Annual Food Drive at ShopRite

June 23, 2025 ~ Monday ~ Our Annual Golf Outing Fundraiser ~ See page 7 of this newsletter for more information

## Buon Anno Happy New Year



## Below are our UNICO's CORE VALUES

If you know of someone who has them and would like to help us make a difference, please invite them to a meeting and possibly have them join our chapter as a new member.

**U – Unity**

**N – Neighborliness**

**I – Integrity**

**C – Charity**

**O – Opportunity**

**“Service Above Self”**



## UNICO Charities

### Foundation Charities

... Cancer Research  
 ... Cooley's Anemia  
 ... Food Bank  
 ... Italian Studies  
 ... Mental Health  
 ... Scholarship  
 ... St. Jude's Hospital

### National Charities

... Anti Bias  
 ... Armed Forces  
 ... Columbus Day  
 ... Heritage Calendar

### Eight Italian New Year Traditions

The only way to read this  
is on your computer  
Click here to open the link

**#1 : Lentil Soup**  
**Do you know others ?**

## ComUNICO

You can now read the  
Com-UNICO magazine on the  
 internet  
 Just click or go here >>>  
[www.unico.org/comUNICO](http://www.unico.org/comUNICO)

## Who's Who

### Our 2024-2025 Executive Board

President ..... Carmen Criscione  
 1st Vice President ..... Joe Benvenuti  
 2nd Vice President ..... Chuck Russo  
 Treasurer ..... Bruce Ponchak  
 Secretary ..... Steve Pelonero  
 Sgt. At-Arms ..... John Morano  
 Corresponding Secretary ..... John Morano

### Our 2024-2025 Board of Directors

Steve Pelonero	Past Chapter President	2010 & 2011
John Barbieri	Past Chapter President	2014 & 2015
Bruce Ponchak	Past Chapter President	2016 & 2017
Carmen Gaita	Past Chapter President	2018 & 2019
Eileen Wood	Past Chapter President	2020 & 2021
Dominick Bucci	Past Chapter President	2022 & 2023

### Our 2024-2025 Chapter Delegates

President Carmen Criscione ... 59 Members (President +3)  
 Delegate: Sal Benvenuti  
 Delegate: Patricia Pelonero  
 Delegate: open

(Delegates represent our chapter and are urged to attend our district,  
 regional, and national meetings, especially if a vote is called for)

### Our 2024-2025 Fundraising Committee Heads

Cornhole Tournament ..... John Barbieri  
 Food Pantry ..... Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero  
 Golf Outing ..... Joe Barone  
 Holiday Cheer ..... Carmen Gaita, Joe Benvenuti, Sal Benvenuti  
 Overseas Armed Service Care Packages ..... Roni Corrado  
 Raffle ~ 50/50 ..... Claudine Stefanelli

### Non-Fundraising Committee Heads

Community Service Day (April) ..... Charles Russo  
 Good and Welfare ..... Joe Benvenuti  
 Heritage ..... Angelo Verrone  
 Membership (plus member section of website ..... John Barbieri  
 Newsletter ..... Steve Pelonero PNP  
 Nominating Chair ..... **Open - To be appointed**  
 Publicity ..... Christina Castillo & Roni Corrado  
 Scholarship / Brian Piccolo ..... Charles Russo  
 Study Abroad College Grants ..... Cav. Joseph Agresti PNP  
 Website ..... Steven Pelonero PNP



## *Our NJ District IV and Chapter Christmas Get-Together*

*340 people celebrating Christmas with our Special Need Friends  
Families and Members of UNICO  
At The Brownstone on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024*





***Italian Heritage Photo***  
***From the 2025 UNICO Heritage Calendar ~ January***  
***Poppies in Rome***



*This photo was taken by one of our own chapter members, Steve Pelonero, while on a trip to Italy in 2008 with his wife Patricia and also Bruce and Ann Ponchak and their daughter Jennifer.*

*Most everything you might want to know about poppies can be seen by clicking in these websites*  
*< [Poppies](#) > and/or < [Poppies](#) >*



# Map of Italy

## Where is your Heritage from ?



## Committee & Comments

### **Chapter President ~ Carmen Criscione**

*Please try to fill out the survey for our future monthly meetings. It is on the next page of this newsletter*

### **Community Service Day ~ Chuck Russo**

*Circle your calendar for our annual Food Drive at the ShopRite in Little Falls on Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup>, the Saturday after Easter. Details and sign-up sheets at upcoming chapter meetings ~ Thank you, Chuck*

### **Food Pantries ~ Carmen Gaita and Patricia Pelonero**

*As always, donations for our local food pantries can always be brought to any chapter meeting (non-perishable items, money, or food gift cards) ~ Thank you always for your support.*

### **Golf Outing ~ Joe Barone**

*Please see the flier and sponsor letter on pages 9 and 10 of this newsletter ~ Thank you everyone*

### **Overseas Soldier Program ~ Roni Corrado**

*No update this month*

### **Publicity ~ Roni Corrado & Christina Castillo**

*No updates this month*

### **Scholarship ~ Chuck Russo**

*The scholarship committee is moving forward with plans for TWO Super Bowl Pools for the big game on February 9<sup>th</sup>. One pool will be our traditional pool with the squares costing \$25 each just as we have done the past few years.*

*In addition, based on requests and suggestions, we will have a second pool this year with the squares costing \$50 each. That pool will feature at least one "variation" which will guarantee more winners. Details will be revealed at the January chapter meeting where both "grids" will be available for "square sales".*

*So please have your cash &/or check book with you for the early buy-in. We encourage "partnerships" for the \$50 contest. Please have at least names of members, friends, relatives who would also want a square or 2...or 3 so they can also get in early. With the enthusiastic support of the membership, we will be able to sell all 200 squares well before the big game.*

### **VP Message ~ 1<sup>st</sup> VP Joe Benvenuti**

*Hello all, I wanted to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New year. Our next meeting will be January 8th at Evolution on Browertown Road in Woodland park. 6:30 dinner with meeting starting at 8pm. Hope all can attend as this is the first time we are having a meeting there. We have a private room so should be very nice. It is a cash bar if anyone wants to drink, soda and water will be provided.*

*We have a lot to discuss this first meeting of 2025 so please make an effort to attend, lot of our fund raiser will be coming up, so we need everyone's support to make this a great year. Hope to see you all at meeting ~~~ Joe B*

**Ciao Passaic Valley UNICO Chapter Members**

We recently had an Executive Board meeting this week and had many positive statements on how the venue for our last meeting worked out extremely well. Members, both existing and new liked the comradery and easiness of how the meeting went. We as a board had a discussion because as in the past there were questions on how the cost of restaurant base venues have increased.

We decided to send out a questionnaire to obtain members' opinions. The results will be kept anonymous and reviewed by the board.

This questionnaire is an effort to find places to have our monthly meetings, which are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month ~ except during July and August, as even we get summer off.

This is an effort to hear back from all of our members because your opinion does count.

Of course, everyone is not going to be in agreement, but the results will be looked at as long as the attached document is brought back to the January 8<sup>th</sup> meeting at Evolution in Woodland Park (formerly known as PJ Rufo's) for review by the executive board ... Another meeting reminder will go out as the date draws closer and it will also be on our chapter website @ [www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org](http://www.PassaicValleyUNICO.org) along with all of our other chapter information.

All results will be kept anonymous

Please fold and give your printed papers to our chapter president,  
Carmen Criscione

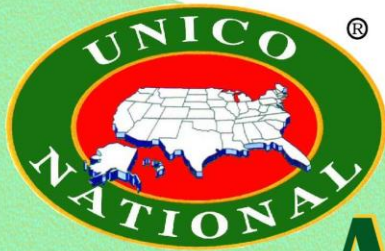
**Check all that apply**

- ☐ I prefer meetings at a restaurant
- ☐ I prefer meetings in a church hall
- ☐ A mix of both is OK
- ☐ Your additional recommendations \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your input

Your chapter executive board





501c3  
organization

# Passaic Valley Chapter 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing

**Monday June 23, 2025**  
**Crystal Springs Golf Club**

1 Wild Turkey Way, Hamburg, NJ 07419

Modified Shotgun Start at 9:00am

- Highland Starter Breakfast at 8:00am
- On Course Beverages at Halfway House
- American Cookout Meal in the Big Sky Pavilion - 2:00pm to 6:00pm  
(includes beer, soda, coffee and tea)

Contests, Prizes & Raffle's	
Money Raffle	Closest to the Pin
Straightest Drive	Low Team Gross
Win a CAR "Hole in One"	
Win 3 Day Golf & Stay "Hole in One"	

**PRIZES ON EVERY PAR 3**

**Online Registration**

**\$175 per person - Check or Cash Payment**  
**\$60 per person Dinner Only**

**\$179 per person - Credit Card Payment**

Pre-Registration is REQUIRED by June 18, 2025

Go to: [www.unicomembers.com/golf](http://www.unicomembers.com/golf)

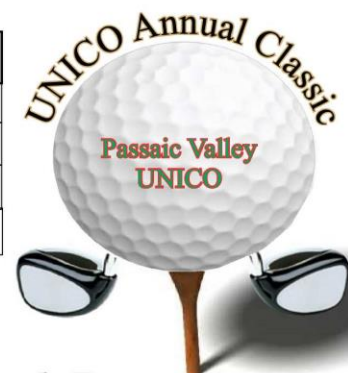
**Golf Hole / Event Sponsorship - \$100 to \$500**

Ad displayed on the course, on our Website,  
and in our Monthly Newsletter for the Year!

**Contact: Joseph Barone**

**JCHRZBAR@gmail.com or 973-986-7042**

All proceeds will go to our local scholarship and charitable endeavors





# UNICO NATIONAL

The Largest Italian American Service Organization in the United States  
"Service Above Self"

*Unity - Neighborliness - Integrity - Charity - Opportunity*

Passaic Valley UNICO, 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing

June 23, 2025

Golf Hole Sponsor

On June 23, 2025, the Passaic Valley Chapter of UNICO National will hold its 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing. The golf outing is one of our major fund raisers for the chapter and goes to support the many local and National charities. Passaic Valley UNICO is a 501(c)3 approved organization.

On a local level, our Passaic Valley Chapter of UNICO has supported, in one way or another, the towns of Little Falls, Totowa, and Woodland Park. Some examples have been donations to the fire departments, libraries, and police stations. We have, and continue to supply, our "UNICO - Phil Arena Food Pantry" at Holy Angels Church in Little Falls. This pantry is there for all residents within the mentioned communities. Annually, we provide numerous High School Scholarships, Study Abroad Grants to students from Montclair State and Seton Hall Universities, donations to various high school projects and other charitable endeavors.

Every December with the help of local businesses like yours, we raise money and donate funds to local families in need of support as identified by the parishes in the aforementioned communities. Over the last several years we have donated on average, \$2,500.00 split equally per season to these people in need.

On a National level, we make donations through the UNICO National Foundation to The Jimmy V Foundation, St. Jude's Hospital for Children's Research, Coolies Anemia Foundation, Mental Health Research, and also to the UNICO National Scholarship Fund.

We are asking for your support by being a "Golf Hole Sponsor" at our annual Golf Outing. The cost is a minimum of \$100 which gets you a display sign on a hole with your name or business. In addition, as a hole sponsor, we will place your add on our website and in our monthly newsletter for one year. Our website currently has over 85,000 visits. Further information can be found at [www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor](http://www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor).

Please consider supporting our Golf Outing. Should you have any questions, please contact Joseph Barone, Chairman, Passaic Valley Golf Outing: (973) 986-7042. Checks should be made payable to Passaic Valley UNICO and sent to the address shown below, or payment can be made online at: [www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor](http://www.unicomembers.com/Sponsor).

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph Barone  
Golf Chairman





### **Our UNICO Charities**

#### **UNICO National**

*Armed Services ~ Columbus Day ~ Heritage & Photo Calendar*

#### **UNICO Foundation**

*21<sup>st</sup> century ~ Anti-Bias ~ Cancer Research & Prevention*

*Cooley's Anemia ~ Italian Studies ~ Mental Health*

*Scholarships ~ Torracco Food Bank/Shelter*

**About UNICO** ~ UNICO is the largest Italian American Service Organization in the United States  
Unity, Neighborliness, Integrity, Charity, Opportunity

UNICO was founded on October 10, 1922, in Waterbury, Connecticut. A group of 15 men, led by Dr. Anthony P. Vastola, came together to create what has become a very special and very proud organization. It was Dr. Vastola's dream to create an Italian American service organization to engage in charitable works, support higher education, and perform patriotic deeds. Our motto is "Service Above Self".

Each year, the UNICO Foundation and the UNICO National Chapters across the country donate approximately \$1 million to various charities. Scholarships continue to be the primary focus of UNICO, as roughly one-third of all monies raised goes to deserving students from all the chapter locations throughout the chain.

UNICO National has funded major research in Cooley's Anemia and Mental Health. Through its association with the Jimmy Valvano Foundation, it has funded over 10, \$50,000 grants to help find a cure for Cancer. These worthy areas continue to receive generous support from the chapters and its members for these worthy causes.

If you would like to attend one of our meetings to see if you might be interested in joining UNICO, please contact us through any member, or through our email. We would be honored to have you as a member of our Passaic Valley UNICO Chapter.

# Our 2024 Cornhole Sponsors

Passaic Valley  
UNICO

 **Bella Notte**  
AUTHENTIC ITALIAN CUISINE  
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• BISTRO •

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Meg's**

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Little Falls

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 **ShopRite**

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LA PIZZA**

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1005 McBride Ave., Woodland Park, NJ 07424  
(Park West Shopping Center)



# Our 2024 Golf Sponsors

(From July 1, 2024 ~ June 30, 2025)



1244 McBride Ave.  
Woodland Park

**Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor**



973-339-9477

[www.LegalLeafNJ.com](http://www.LegalLeafNJ.com)



Thank you to “All” of our Sponsors (62)



**Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
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1244 McBride Ave.  
Woodland Park  
973-339-9477

[www.LegalLeafNJ.com](http://www.LegalLeafNJ.com)



**Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
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**Chuck Russo**  
Insurance Consultant



**Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
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**Bagels Unlimited**  
**Gregory Evangelou**  
163 East Main Street  
Little Falls, NJ  
973-785-2211



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Your Hearing is Our Star - copies required!




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**Gaita Memorial Home**  
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**Crews-Wilbert Vault Co.**



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# Our 2024 Golf Sponsors

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Passaic Valley Chapter Member

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www.THISBAGISNOTATOY.com

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**Joe & Ellen Kliminski**  
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Friends and Supporters of  
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Breakfast, Lunch, and Catering  
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Little Falls  
Friends and Supporters of  
Passaic Valley  
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**Sal Benvenuti**  
Passaic Valley Chapter Member  
Tax Consultant  
& Mediator

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**Chris & Ann Di Mattio**  
PNP / Members of  
Scranton UNICO

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07009  
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973-256-5001

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Annual Golf Outing  
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**Columbia Bank**  
Nick Stack  
Branch Manager • Financial Services Officer  
NMLS #1582575  
1127 Pompton Avenue  
Cedar Grove, NJ 07009  
Email: nstack@columbiabankonline.com  
Phone: (973) 857-6290  
Fax: (973) 857-6291

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Annual Golf Outing  
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**Totowa Tire Service**  
589 Union Blvd, Totowa  
(973) 942-0159

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Annual Golf Outing  
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**Riverview Florist & Greenhouse**  
142 Totowa Rd, Totowa  
(973) 956-9159

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Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor

**Election Fund for  
Senator Corrado  
for Senate**

Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
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**Little Falls ShopRite**  
Little Falls, NJ

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Business Manager  
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Nutley, NJ 07110  
www.goboss.com  
Office: (201) 403-9639  
Cell: (973) 214-0049  
Fax: (973) 262-1058  
jdye@goboss.com

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# Our 2024 Golf Sponsors

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Little Falls, NJ 07424

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**James A. Martin**  
Certified Public Accountant

22 CHURCH STREET  
RAMSEY, NJ 07446  
TEL (201) 236-1211  
FAX (201) 236-1825  
jmartin@jamcope.com

Passaic Valley Chapter  
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**FESTA MEMORIAL FUNERAL HOME, INC.**

Robert P. Festa, President N.J. Lic. No. 2502  
Robert P. Festa, Jr., Manager N.J. Lic. No. 4097

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Totowa, NJ 07012

Phone: 973-790-8086  
Fax: 973-790-6174  
www.festamemorial.com

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JOHN MAZZO

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CELL: 973-609-3473

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**CPR Inc**  
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Joe Benvenuti  
Account Rep

Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor

**Tomothy P. Kane**  
Attorney At Law

Abdy & Kane, P.C.  
17 Furler Street  
Suite 3  
Totowa, NJ 07512  
973-890-9090

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Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor

**JOHN J. VETERI, JR., ESQ., LLC**

John J. Veteri, Jr.  
Attorney at Law

3 University Plaza, Ste. 207  
Hackensack, New Jersey 07601  
Phone: 201-836-6300  
Fax: 201-836-6301

Cell: 973-865-3040  
jveteri@primelaw.com  
Member NJ & NY Bar

Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor

**FRANK'S PIZZA**

261 Comly Road  
Lincoln Park, NJ  
973-686-9005

Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor

**CORE WELLNESS**  
Chiropractic | Holistic | Massage

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Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
Sponsor

**Park West**  
Diner • Cafe  
& Bakery

Route 46 West  
Little Falls

Passaic Valley Chapter  
Annual Golf Outing  
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100 Main Street  
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(973) 256-8592

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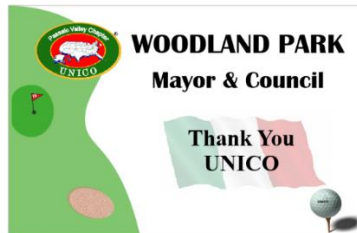
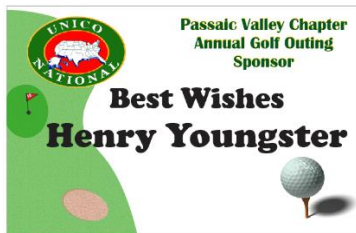
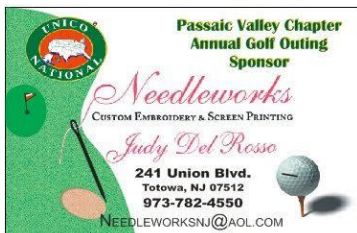
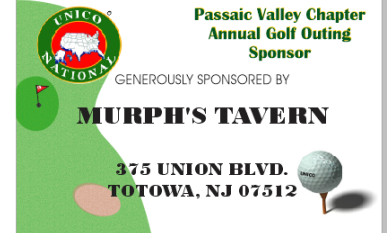
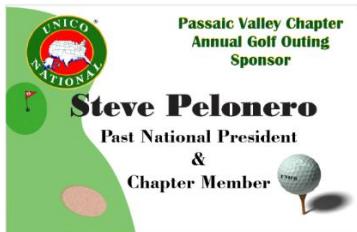
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And, if received early enough, you will also have a sign on one of the 18 holes at our Annual Golf Outing