



SPOTLIGHT ON GOVERNMENT

Correspondence From Your Local, County, State & Federal Officials



Thomas F. Kelaher

TOMS RIVER – Part of keeping people healthy is getting them healthy in the first place. In Toms River, that means working together with community leaders on a plan for public health improvement.

Toms River Mayor Thomas F. Kelaher, working in conjunction with the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation, the applicant organization, has applied for a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to build a culture of health in New Jersey as part of the RWJF New

From The Desk Of The Township Mayor

- Mayor Thomas F. Kelaher

Mayor Partners With Foundation To Tackle Pressing Health Problems

Jersey Health Initiatives program, established nearly 30 years ago.

Mayor Kelaher and the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation, which is managing the project, have put together The Toms River Family Support and Health coalition in the hope of securing the grant money to address the area's priority health issues. If selected as grant recipients, the Coalition will begin its task of tackling obesity, hunger, substance abuse, senior isolation and other top health concerns facing our town and county.

The coalition is made up of partners ranging from prevention to inter-

vention, encompassing leaders from the public health, business, education, philanthropy, nonprofit, community development, healthcare and government sectors of our community.

As part of the RWJF New Jersey Health Initiatives program, if successful, six individuals from the coalition will participate in the Boundary Spanning Leadership Institute. This will provide intense training to develop skills and knowledge to work with the coalition and community to address challenges, align resources, focus on health priorities and implement policies.

The coalition chose

Lynette Whiteman, Executive director of Caregivers of Central New Jersey; Peter Rosario, CEO of Ocean County YMCA; Daniel Regenye, public health coordinator/health officer of the Ocean County Department of Health; Debi Heptig, Executive Director of Hope Sheds Light; and Tara Cunningham, director of strategic planning of the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation to participate.

In addition, two doctors, Gemma MacCarrick and Timothy Brennan, were nominated as coalition coaches and will also participate in the leadership training.

Coalition members ac-

knowledge the power in working together to tackle issues that will help create a healthy and economically vibrant community.

Kelaher stated, "I am happy to support this project as I can see how this will enhance the quality of life for all of our residents. One of the things that we've been able to do here is bring together a coalition that doesn't look at just one problem, but looks at the whole plethora of problems – be it obesity, substance abuse or hunger."

"We are very fortunate to be able to collaborate with those who impact each sector of our com-

munity. We have created this coalition with confidence that we will be able to move forward and start to tackle the major health care priorities in Toms River and Ocean County," said Jeremy Grunin, executive director of the Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation.

Whiteman says as a caregiver for her own mother, she experiences firsthand the tremendous need to assist the elderly population. "Working together with a strong coalition will strengthen our ability to support our community and make it one in which people from all generations can lead healthy and joyous lives."