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Newark®

WINTER 2025

We Winter in Newark

Ice Skating at
Winter Village

Holiday Shows
at NJPAC & More

10 Great Places to Live

Newark's
Booming
Film Industry

FAITH EVANS

Brings Her
**Celebrity
Friends**
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

We Winter in Newark

There's something about winter in Newark that gets under your skin—in the best way. The warmth of the people, the creativity, the way the city comes alive when the temperatures drop. I'll be honest: Every time I put together our Winter Issue, I have a fleeting moment when I think, *Maybe I shouldn't publish this. Maybe I should keep this hidden jewel of a town to myself.* Because the truth is, **we winter in Newark** the way some folks "summer on the Vineyard"—with pride, tradition, and genuine joy.

This issue captures exactly why.

Let's start with **Newark Winter Village**, where the heated igloos burst with the laughter of parents and the ice rink fills with children, first-time skaters, and people like me—adult skaters who wait too long to make a reservation and end up getting shut out. (Yes, it happened. In Newark, not Rockefeller Center—which took me immediately on New Year's Eve, by the way!) **Last year, I sat in one of those igloos on an extremely cold day in Newark, sipped cocoa with my high school bestie, and Newark felt warm and cozy.**

Then there's the shopping. The ES550 Equal Space Holiday Pop-Up remains one of my favorite places to find gifts made by local artisans. And if you know me, you know I could spend hours in the **Source of Knowledge Bookstore** on Broad Street. In the winter, it's the perfect place to duck into after Winter Village or before a NJPAC show. Enter on Treat Street and you're greeted by murals that line the block—vibrant stories told on brick and concrete.

And of course, this issue features **Faith Evans**, whose Ryder's Room gala brought star power and purpose back home. Her story isn't romanticized—it's real. Newark shaped her, and she continues to pour into the city that raised her.

I love the winter energy in Newark. But don't believe me. Don't check it out. I'll gladly keep all this magic to myself.

Warmly,


Sakina Spruell Cole
Publisher



Send your questions to info@colemediainc.com

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Published by Cole Media Inc.
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CONTENTS

3
LETTERS TO
THE PUBLISHER

4
TABLE OF CONTENTS

5
GOVERNMENT
ASK THE MAYOR

6
NEIGHBORHOOD
IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
Holidays Around
the Wards

9
YOUTH
SPOTLIGHT
Free Tuition Pays Off

10
FEATURE
10 New Places
to Live in Newark

14
FEATURE
Faith Evans Lights up
Newark with Ryder's
Room Gala

18
FEATURE
UEZ Benefits for
Newark Businesses

20
FEATURE
Recent Films
Shot in Newark

24
ENTERTAINMENT
Downtown Newark
for the Holidays

26
ENTERTAINMENT
Kwanzaa to
Valentine's Day
at NJPAC



COURTESY OF ZAMIN JONES



CEYLON GREY



MOUNA MOUSSA



COURTESY OF NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

COVER PHOTO: JONATHAN MANNION



ASK THE MAYOR

GOVERNMENT



Mayor Ras J. Baraka, City of Newark

What's Newark's model for collaboration?

Mayor Baraka: "We have something called the Newark Alliance in our city that really holds everyone to account—all the eds (educational institutions) and meds (medical institutions); all the larger corporations and small development organizations; obviously, the universities; the hospitals; and the city government."

"The Alliance discusses not just the economic prosperity of the city or investing in small businesses or using UEZ dollars to create free transportation for Newark residents, we also talk about how to solve for homelessness and build drop-in centers, how to reduce crime.

"We like to say, 'When we all do well, we all do well.' If you want to make money, you have to make sure the community is stable. If the community is stable, then your business becomes stable."

Mayor Ras J. Baraka recently discussed Newark's collaboration model at the New Jersey League of Municipalities conference in Atlantic City, NJ.

Send your Ask the Mayor questions to info@colemediainc.com

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IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

NEIGHBORHOOD

Holidays Around the Wards

During the holiday season, a festive spirit can be felt across all of Newark. From late November through the New Year, the city is alive with lights, music, and community as each ward hosts its own tree lighting ceremony to mark the season.

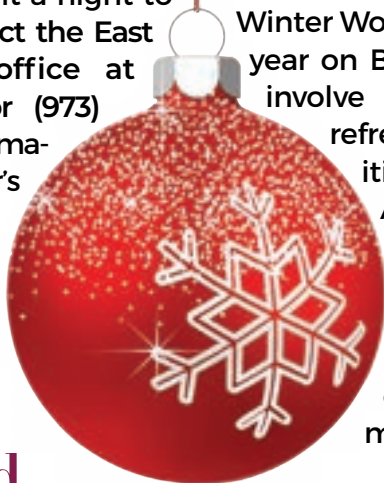
The season peaks with the **Mayor's Annual Christmas Tree Lighting at City Hall** on **Thursday, December 11th**, when people from every ward gather together to watch Newark sparkle. However, if you cannot make it downtown for the mayor's tree lighting, do not fret, as every ward has its own ways of celebrating the holidays.

MARY A. BROWN



East Ward

Every year, the East Ward comes to life at the Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony. The event is made possible through the support of the East Newark Fire and Police Departments, which help escort Santa Claus into town for the picture-perfect event. Families line up to take photos with Santa and sing along to songs performed by local carolers, making it a night to remember. Contact the East Ward council office at (973) 733-3665 or (973) 733-6571 for information on this year's festivities.



Central Ward

The Central Ward celebrates its annual tree lighting on Springfield Avenue, in partnership with the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Newark Ironbound. Guests can warm up with delicious hot cocoa while enjoying holiday carols performed by students from Arts High School, a beloved Newark tradition. Contact the Central Ward council office at (973) 733-5874 for information on this year's festivities.

South Ward

The South Ward is known for its Winter Wonderland Festival, held every year on Bergen Street. The festivities involve a tree lighting, seasonal refreshments, crafts and activities, and live entertainment. At past festivals, the South Ward has also come together to do a coat and toy giveaway, demonstrating true holiday spirit. Contact the South Ward council office at (973) 733-3753 or (973) 733-3754 for information on this year's festivities.



West Ward

Each year, the West Ward lights up Central Avenue Green with a beautiful tree and dazzling lights. Last year, the lighting included reindeers, ornaments, candy canes, and much more. The entire block is covered in holiday magic, drawing in both drivers and pedestrians who stop and enjoy the view. Contact the West Ward council office at (973) 733-6427 or (973) 733-6428 for information on this year's festivities.

North Ward

The North Ward celebrates the holiday season with its annual Holiday Parade of Lights & Tree Lighting Ceremony. In past years, the parade has traveled from Verona Avenue to Second Avenue, featuring festive floats designed by local students. The celebration often continues at Common Thread Park, where families can take free photos with Santa Claus, enjoy face painting, listen to carolers, and indulge in hot chocolate and holiday treats. Contact the North Ward council office at (973) 733-5136 for information on this year's festivities. 



—Mahima Aktar





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Free Tuition Pays Off

YOUTH

Name: Zaamin Jones

Age: 21

Hometown: Newark, NJ

School: Saint Elizabeth University
(Florham Park, NJ)

Major: Psychology

Expected Graduation Year: May 2026

CITY OF NEWARK



Mayor Baraka (center) and St. Elizabeth faculty with the first class of students in the GEP program.



YOUTH SPOTLIGHT

COURTESY OF ZAAMIN JONES

Newark native Zaamin Jones is one of 45 students who are thriving in college because of Newark's Guaranteed Education Program (GEP), the city's tuition-free college program that began in 2022.

"The Guaranteed Education Program gave me the opportunity to change my life," says Zaamin. But, Zaamin's path to higher education was not easy. He lost family members and friends to violence and incarceration. Worst of all, during his senior year of high school, Zaamin lost his older brother to gun violence. "I was living in survival mode," he says.

Through GEP, Zaamin found a supportive community. The program provided him with mentors, offered networking opportunities that helped build his confidence. "Having people that look like me and come from similar backgrounds—it matters," he says.

A psychology major, Zaamin hopes to become a sports psychologist, to help athletes navigate mental health challenges.

His passion stems from his own background as an athlete and his journey with mental health. Zaamin also hosts his own podcast, *Beyond the Fog*, on Instagram: @beyondthefogpod.

"The Guaranteed Education Program gave me a backbone and the confidence to branch out," he says. "Anyone can be handed an opportunity, but what you make of it makes the biggest difference." —Mahima Aktar

10

NEW PLACES TO LIVE IN NEWARK

by Mahima Aktar

Newark's residential landscape is transforming, driven by bold developers and a growing demand for modern urban living. This list spotlights 10 of the city's newest places to call home—from luxury high-rises near Penn Station to innovative community-driven projects reshaping entire neighborhoods. Notably, Newark-raised developer Pedro Gomes is leading a new wave of intentional revitalization with Envy and Vida, two developments built within a block of each other as the foundation of his proposed district stretching from Central Avenue to Orange Street. See what's new!

Iconiq

777 McCarter Hwy, Newark, NJ 07102

Located next to Penn Station, this luxury apartment complex was developed by NBA Hall of Famer and Newark native Shaquille O'Neal. The complex boasts 360-degree panoramic views from its rooftop pool and terraces, provides 24/7 concierge service, and includes private indoor parking.





Cosmo 440

440 Elizabeth Ave, Newark, NJ 07112

Located in downtown Newark, Cosmo 440 features apartments with designer interiors, stainless-steel appliances, spa-inspired bathrooms, luxury vinyl flooring, and shared washer and dryer facilities on every floor. Residents also enjoy a co-working lounge, 24/7 professional maintenance, and concierge service.



Iron65

65 Mcwhorter St., Newark, NJ 07105

Located in Newark's Ironbound district, IRON65 features designer residences with a fully equipped fitness center, yoga studio, cold plunge pool and saunas, a rooftop with NYC skyline views, outdoor kitchen and BBQ areas, and game and lounge rooms.



The Ballentine

80 Freeman St, Newark, NJ 07105

Located in Newark's Ironbound district, The Ballantine offers studio to two-bedroom apartments with smart-lock entry and an in-home washer and dryer. Residents can enjoy a concierge-attended lobby, rooftop deck, outdoor courtyard, conference areas, a fitness center equipped with a yoga studio, game room, and pet spa.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Envy

58-84 Norfolk St, Newark, NJ 07103

Located directly next to Kanela Cafe and in close proximity to NJIT, Essex County Community College, and Rutgers Newark, Envy offers coworking space, a state-of-the-art gym, a rooftop lounge with city views, and modern appliances.



Vida by Gomes

34-40 Hudson St, Newark, NJ 07103

Located near Branch Brook Park and University Heights, Vida offers one- and two-bedroom layouts. The apartments include a tranquil zen garden for quiet reflection, a catered coworking space for productivity, a dog park, and secure parking with EV charging stations.



Hoyt Tower

50 Sussex Avenue, Newark, NJ 07103

Located next to Rutgers Newark and mere blocks from NJIT and Saint Michael's Hospital, Hoyt Tower offers modern one- and two-bedroom units with floor-to-ceiling windows. The residences include coworking space, a rooftop terrace with skyline views, pet-friendly accommodations, and garage parking.

8



The Mercer
10 Commerce Ct, Newark, NJ 07102

Located near Penn Station, The Mercer provides studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom loft-style residences with high ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows. Residents can enjoy a cafe and Cheeky's sandwich restaurant along with a state-of-the-art gym, coworking lounge, and shared office space.



River Pointe
486 Market St, Newark, NJ 07105
 Located steps away from Newark Riverfront Park and five minutes from Penn Station, River Pointe offers one- and two-bedroom units, or two-bedroom duplexes. Residents have access to a rooftop lounge with riverfront views, a gaming room, and entertainment spaces.



Stadium Rose
484 Roseville Avenue, Newark, NJ 07107
 Located in Newark's North Ward, one block behind the historic Newark Schools Stadium, Stadium Rose features 25 one-bedroom units and 10 two-bedroom, two-bathroom units. Thirty-one percent of the apartments are designated as affordable housing for qualified Newark residents. Residents have access to bike storage, a laundry room, an exercise facility, a community room, and a garage with assigned parking for a monthly rate. [CN](#)



LOYALTY OF FNL PRODUCTIONS

Faith Evans Lights Up Newark with Ryder's Room Gala

by Kim Prime and Sakina P. Spruell



CEYLON GREY

Faith Evans with her son Ryder

In September, the Newark Museum of Art radiated with purpose and star power as Newark-raised, Grammy Award-winning artist Faith Evans hosted the inaugural Ryder's Room gala. The event was the first of its kind by Evans' nonprofit, Ryder's Room Inc., named after her son Ryder who was diagnosed as a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Evans founded the organization in 2017 to advocate for families and children with autism and other disabilities.

Evans decided to bring her organization's inaugural gala to Newark because it's the city she's called home since she



Destination Newark captures guests as they arrive for the gala.

was 6 months old. Even though she moved to Los Angeles more than 30 years ago, Evans still reveres her days growing up in Newark, NJ. “I went to Emanuel Baptist Church at Clinton [Place] and Chancellor [Avenue],” she proudly tells *Destination Newark*. “I started singing there at 2½ or 3 years old.” It was a launching pad to a singing career that includes nine studio albums and multiple Grammy Award nominations.

Evans says there are very few times that she comes back to the East Coast and doesn’t visit Newark. Her grandmother, cousins, and friends still live in the South Ward of Newark, some of whom sit on the board of her foundation and helped plan the gala.

The gala was both a family affair and a star-studded benefit featuring performances by MC Lyte, Mike Epps, Freeway, and more. During the event, five community leaders who have been instrumental in advancing autism awareness and providing resources were honored, including Safiyyah Muhammad, a nationally respected disability policy advocate; Maliaka Mitchell, an advocate, educator, and leader in the



field of developmental disability who provides culturally competent, person-centered behavioral services; Andrew Burger, an artist and educator who is a respected voice in the autism community; Liza Lawrence, a healthcare executive with a deep-rooted commitment to autism awareness and advocacy; and Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka, who was given the Elevate Award for his achievement in urban revitalization.

Beyond the glitz and glam and blue carpet of the star-studded event, there is Faith Evans, the mother. “This is my assignment right now,” she tells *Destination Newark*. “I don’t have full-time childcare at home, it’s just me and Ryder,” explains the soprano who has been in the music industry for three decades.

Shortly before the pandemic, Evans says she pulled Ryder out of school and began caring for him on her own: “Now that he’s 18, I’m entering a new chapter when it comes to finding services for him at this stage in his life.” Evans knows well the ongoing challenge of navigating services, and credits fellow parents for guiding her early on. Now she seeks to pay it forward with Ryder’s Room. “I’ve learned so much,” she says. “I just

PHOTOS BY ZION LASTER

wanted to share it with other parents who don't know where to turn."

Ryder's Room offers monthly support groups and aims to expand access to medical care, education, and social services. "Over the pandemic, I started doing free symposiums to share all that I'd learned with other parents," says Evans. "It's a way to use my platform while I'm not traveling or recording, to do something for the greater good."

Evans has four children: her oldest Chyna, 32; Christopher, 29; Joshua, 27; and Ryder, 18. She says the most touching part of the gala for her was honoring her daughter, Chyna, with a surprise award. "For most of Ryder's life, especially when I was actively recording, she really stepped up," recalls Evans. She says Chyna was so excited, she "boo-hoo cried" and called her brothers: "I wanted her to know how much she was appreciated."

"Since our gala, we have gotten a lot of interest from people wanting to partner and offer support," says Evans, acknowledging one of many positive outcomes of the first Ryder's Room event. And judging from the organization's public reception, Ryder's Room is on its way to positively impacting families and communities everywhere.

For more information, visit www.rydersroominc.org 



ZION LASTER



LOYAL OF FNL PRODUCTIONS



ZION LASTER

Clockwise L to R: MC Lyte, Mayor Ras Baraka with Evans, El DeBarge



Faith Evans and Newark Beth Israel CEO Darrell K. Terry, Sr. at the hospital's new lobby grand opening.



MARY A. BROWN

Faith Evans distributes meals in Newark during a Thanksgiving Turkey Giveaway



MARY A. BROWN



FESTIVALS UNITED NEWARK

NEWARK IS A TRUE FESTIVAL HOTPOT.

Festivals United Newark is a coalition of Newark's most beloved cultural events—Afro Beat Fest, Halsey Fest, Lincoln Park Music Festival, Newark Arts Festival, Newark LGBTQ Pride, and Newark Winter Village—formed in partnership with the Newark City Parks Foundation. Together, we celebrate the richness, resilience, and creative spirit of our city.

When festivals unite, communities come together—across cultures, identities, and generations. That's the spirit of Festivals United Newark: one city, many stories, shared joy.

FUN isn't just a name—it's a movement.



Newark Alliance

NEWARK
DOWNTOWN
DISTRICT

NJHEDA

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DOWNTOWN NEWARK FOR THE HOLIDAYS

NOVEMBER 29TH, 2025 - JANUARY 4TH, 2026

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WWW.NEWARKHAPPENING.COM

DOWNTOWN NEWARK FOR THE HOLIDAYS

From cozy pop-up shops and ice skating at Winter Village to arts showcases and family-friendly activities, Downtown Newark for the Holidays is your perfect destination to celebrate the season's magic and support the heart of our community.

Enjoy exclusive discounts, seasonal events, and one-of-a-kind holiday experiences from Newark-based organizations and small businesses.

Make the holiday season unforgettable—right here in Newark!

NEWARK
Mayor Kim M. Hightower

NEWARK
ARTS FESTIVAL

NEWARK
LGBTQ PRIDE

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DOWNTOWN
DISTRICT



Newark Business Owners May Qualify for These Benefits

Take a Look at Some of the Benefits of Being a UEZ Business:

- **Reduced sales tax:** The sales tax in a UEZ is 3.3125%.
- **Tax-free purchases:** On items such as capital equipment, facility expansions, and upgrades.
- **Financial assistance:** UEZ businesses can benefit from financial assistance available from agencies such as NJEDA.



ROB THOMAS/ADOBESTOCK

If you own a business in Newark, you may qualify for special benefits under New Jersey's Urban Enterprise Zone (UEZ) program, which was designed to stimulate economic development and job creation in cities that have suffered from years of disinvestment.

Newark's UEZ program has played a key role in the city's revitalization with projects such as the Teachers Village community, the Food Depot grocery store, and the CityPlex 12 movie theater. Since 2020, 18 transformative projects have been launched, including the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, Façade



VAKSMANV/ADOBESTOCK

How to Register to Become a UEZ Business

1 Create or log in to your New Jersey Premier Business Services (PBS) account and add your business. (See PBS Instructions link for details.)

2 Select "Urban Enterprise Zone" when choosing a Service Center in PBS.

3 Complete and submit the UEZ Certification Application to finalize your registration.

For more information contact
InvestNewark.org | UEZinfo@dca.nj.gov

Improvement Grant program, neighborhood beautification, free shuttle services, and public safety programs.

Does Your Business Qualify to Be a UEZ Business?

- ✓ **Location:** Your business must be situated within a designated Urban Enterprise Zone boundary. Most zip codes in Newark, NJ qualify. Visit InvestNewark.org to check the map.
- ✓ **Tax Identification:** You must have a valid federal tax ID number (EIN or FEIN).
- ✓ **State Registration:** Your business must have a New Jersey Business Registration Certificate issued by the Division of Revenue and Enterprise Services.
- ✓ **Tax Compliance:** Your business must be in good standing with the State of New Jersey.

UEZ BEYOND TAX INCENTIVES

Small Business Revolving Loan Fund – \$400,000

- Assists UEZ-certified businesses seeking to establish or expand their companies, redevelop or otherwise improve their retail, commercial, and professional services or industrial businesses with a loan.

Small Business Incentive Program – \$3,600,000

- Assists UEZ-certified businesses seeking to establish or expand their companies, redevelop or otherwise improve their retail, commercial, and professional services or industrial businesses; focused on filling vacant retail spaces in the Arts and Education District.



CITY OF NEWARK

Shuttle Vehicle Services Project (Via Newark program) – \$477,000

- For supplemental, free transportation for residents and visitors within Newark's UEZ to ease customer access to businesses in UEZ areas.

Public Safety and Retail Patrol Program – \$179,054

- For supplemental policing and retail corridor patrols in the UEZ area to boost employee, customer, and business owner confidence and attract more customers and businesses to the UEZ area in the Mount Prospect Business Improvement District and Bloomfield Avenue Business Improvement District.

Clean and Green Project – \$135,000

- For supplemental sanitation services, including daily sweeping, graffiti removal, pressure washing, light landscaping, and support for special events in the Mount Prospect Business Improvement District and Bloomfield Avenue Business Improvement District. 



That Was Filmed in Newark

by Mahima Aktar

In recent years, Newark has blossomed into one of New Jersey's top destinations for filmmakers and movie studios because of its accessibility, creative community, and strong leadership. Desiree Hadley, Manager of the Newark Office of Film and Television since 2019, has witnessed this growth firsthand. She witnessed Newark's growth after Governor Phil Murphy reinstated New Jersey's Film and Digital Media Tax Credit Program in 2018, which offers a 30%–35% rebate on qualified production expenses within the state, with an additional 3% diversity bonus. These incentives have drawn productions across New Jersey, bringing Netflix to Monmouth County, 1888 Studios to Bayonne, Center Lee Studio to Jersey City, and soon, Lionsgate's new studio to Newark.

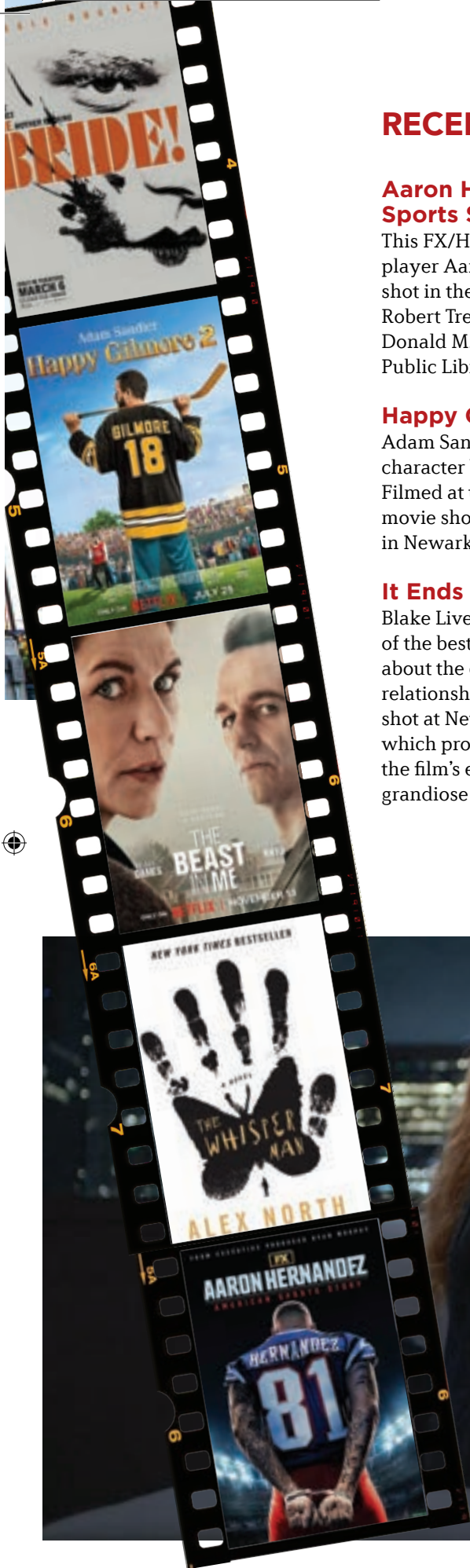
Hadley also credits Newark's success as a filming destination to its strategic location. "We are just in a great space to engage these productions. We are 15 miles from Manhattan and within the TMZ – the 30-mile zone – of Columbus Circle," she says. The location allows New York union workers to work on films in Newark while keeping costs lower for producers. Beyond location, Newark's mix of

historic Beaux-Arts architecture provides productions with the classic "New York look" at a fraction of the price.

Newark's creative community has also become central to its identity as a film destination. When Warner Bros. filmed *The Bride!*, three Newark residents were hired through the Access to Action internship program, which helps residents get involved in the film industry.

To ensure these opportunities continue to grow, Newark recently received a \$750,000 grant that will help fund workforce programs that provide free training for residents interested in film and media careers. Partnerships with Express Newark, Newark Film School, the Office of Film and Television, and other local organizations will also help residents gain hands-on experience and industry exposure. "Mayor Ras Baraka has an artistic background and comes from a creative household where the arts were respected and appreciated. His understanding of creativity and community engagement has been key," says Hadley.

With Lionsgate's new studio set to open soon, Newark's rise in the film industry is only just beginning.



RECENT MOVIES FILMED IN NEWARK

Aaron Hernandez: American Sports Story, 2023-24

This FX/Hulu series about troubled NFL player Aaron Hernandez features scenes shot in the National Newark Building, Robert Treat Hotel, WBGO radio station, Donald M. Payne Sr. Technical HS, Newark Public Library, and other sites in Newark.

Happy Gilmore 2, 2024

Adam Sandler brings his beloved golf pro character back for another round of laughs. Filmed at the Dayton Street School, the movie showcases the hometown spirit in Newark.

It Ends With Us, 2024

Blake Lively stars in this movie adaptation of the best-selling novel of the same name about the complexities of an abusive relationship. The movie features scenes shot at Newark's Oriental Grand Lodge, which provided a gorgeous backdrop for the film's emotional narrative with its grandiose architecture.

Relay, 2024

Relay tells the story of a fixer who mediates between whistleblowers and the companies they expose. The movie features scenes shot in Newark Symphony Hall, Harriet Tubman Square, Newark Public Library, Kilkenny Alehouse, Andros Restaurant, and St. Stephan's Grace Community.

Rob Peace, 2024

Rob Peace tells the story of an academically gifted son, burdened by his circumstances, fighting to free his father from a double murder conviction. The movie features scenes shot at Newark's St. Benedict's Preparatory School and the Essex County Jail, locations that mirror the challenges and resilience of the movie's characters.

Office Romance, 2025

Jennifer Lawrence stars in this film about a strict anti-fraternization policy at a law firm that begins to unravel when a charismatic new lawyer joins the team. Filmed on Mulberry Street, the film captures Newark's bustling professional scene.



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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Beast in Me, Fall 2025

Claire Danes and Matthew Rhys star in this upcoming Netflix series about neighbors who don't get along. The series will feature scenes shot on Washington Street, Frelinghuysen Avenue, Mulberry Street, Poinier Street, Halsey Street, Broad Street, Branford Place, and at other sites in Newark.

The Whisper Man, 2025

Filmed in the Forest Hill section of Newark, this movie adaptation of the best-selling novel of the same name explores a father-son duo who set out to catch a serial killer.

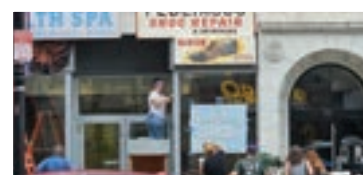
UPCOMING MOVIES

The Bride!, 2026

Set to be released in March, this horror film about a woman who is murdered and resurrected to become Frankenstein's companion features scenes shot along the Washington Street trolley line and at the intersection of Washington and Campbell.

Non-View, 2026

Emily Blunt stars in this upcoming futuristic UFO story that features scenes filmed at NJIT. The campus' sleek, modern architecture provided the perfect backdrop for the film's otherworldly atmosphere. 



Storefronts on Market Street get a makeover for the filming of *I Play Rocky*, a movie about the making of the *Rocky* movie.

Want to See Your Place on the Silver Screen?

Property owners may submit images and details of their space through the "Upload Your Property" tab on the Newark Office of Film and Television website for consideration of being a movie set. Once approved, your space will be added to a global library of filming locations where producers may choose your property based on the vibe they are looking for. Owners are compensated when their space is used.

Upload at filmatnewark.com

FEATURE



PHOTOS BY MOUNA MOUSSA

We Winter in Newark

Visit Downtown for the Holidays

Winter in Newark arrives not just with a chill in the air but with an unmistakable energy that transforms the city into a festive playground of culture, creativity, and community. At the heart of this seasonal magic is the **Newark Winter Village** at Mulberry Commons, located at 162 Mulberry Street, across from the Prudential Center in downtown Newark.

The Winter Village 2025-2026 season runs from **Nov. 29 through early January**, Wednesday through Friday from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m., and Saturdays and Sundays from Noon to 8:00 p.m. Admission is free, though reservations are required for certain activities like ice skating and igloo

rentals. Ice skating tickets cost about \$15 for adults and \$10 for children (or \$10 if you're bringing your own skates), while heated private igloos rent for \$50-\$75 per hour, depending on size.

In addition to ice skating and "chilling out" in igloos, visitors can also go go-karting on the ice. And, of course, there's the seasonal marketplace filled with local vendors and one-of-a-kind merchandise. Special programming—like Learn to Skate nights, Pride nights, and other community-focused events—also pop up throughout the season. Visit newarkwintervillage.com for more information and to make reservations.



Kwanzaa Family Festival & Artisan Marketplace

Get your loved ones talking about the one-of-a-kind gifts you found for them this holiday season! Local artists and designers will sell handcrafted clothing and hats, jewelry, candles, home decor, natural beauty products, crystals, and more at the **Kwanzaa Artisan Marketplace at NJPAC**. The marketplace will be open Friday, Dec. 19, 7:00 - 11:00 p.m.—perfect for those with tickets to gospel great CeCe Winans' performance—and **Saturday, Dec. 20, 1:00 - 11:00 p.m.**



COURTESY OF NJPAC

EqualSpace Holiday Pop-Up

Just a few blocks from Newark Winter Village, the **EqualSpace Holiday Pop-Up** event will bring holiday shopping into the neighborhood with a curated market of local creatives. The event will be held **Dec. 9 and 11, from 1:00 - 8:00 p.m.** at the EqualSpace ES550 Campus at 550 Broad Street. There will be vendors, music, sweet treats, hot cocoa, coquito, raffles, and more. Visit equalspace.co for more information.



COURTESY OF EQUALSPACE



Tansy



Pooka Pure & Simple

PHOTOS BY CITY OF NEWARK

The Pillars

Another destination for holiday shoppers is **The Pillars**, a brand-new 15,000-square-foot retail and community hub developed by Audible at 33 Washington Street. The official ribbon-cutting took place on Oct. 15, 2025, and The Pillars is now open to the public. Current hours are Monday – Friday, 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday, 11:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Inside The Pillars you'll find carefully selected local businesses, including:

- **Tansy**, a women-owned home goods and plant store, offering classes and curated botanicals.
- **Pooka Pure & Simple**, known for its bath & body products and DIY workshop.
- **HealHaus**, a wellness destination that offers meditation, yoga, breathwork classes, and a wellness café.

CIN

ENTERTAINMENT

Dec. 12-13, 2025

JERSEY NUTCRACKER

Tchaikovsky's classic ballet is elevated by some of the best talent in the Garden State! Samuel Pott, Artistic Director of Nimbus Dance based in Jersey City, choreographed this jazzy new spin (pun intended) that features illustrated scenes designed by Jersey City artists Laia Carbrera and Isabelle Duverger, along with a libretto co-written with Alysia Souder (The Institute for Music for Children). Witness the magic of extraordinary dance and be captivated by a storyline that will make your Jersey heart soar!



Spend Kwanzaa to Valentine's Day at NJPAC

ENTERTAINMENT

Dec. 19-21, 2025

GRAMMY® WEEKEND

It's a GRAMMY® weekend at NJPAC. CeCe Winans will light up your holidays with her joy-filled music for two nights only: Dec. 19 and 20. The Blind Boys of Alabama give another winning Christmas performance on Dec. 21. These legends will perform holiday classics and uplifting songs from their albums *Go Tell It On the Mountain* and *Talkin' Christmas*.





Dec. 20, 2025

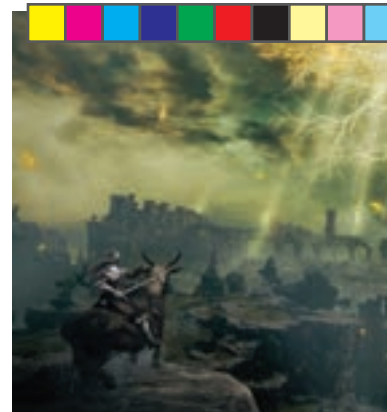
KWANZAA FAMILY FESTIVAL & ARTISAN MARKETPLACE

The Arts Center comes alive with free family programming. There will be performances, Kwanzaa celebrations, dancing and drumming classes, face painting, storytelling, and more. The Artisan Marketplace is open during the festival and on Dec. 19 for those attending the CeCe Winans performance. Visitors will be able to purchase one-of-a-kind items and gifts from local artists and designers selling handcrafted clothing and hats, jewelry, candles, home decor, natural beauty products, crystals, and more. Register for the Kwanzaa Family Festival at njpac.org.

Jan. 24, 2026

ELDEN RING: SYMPHONIC ADVENTURE

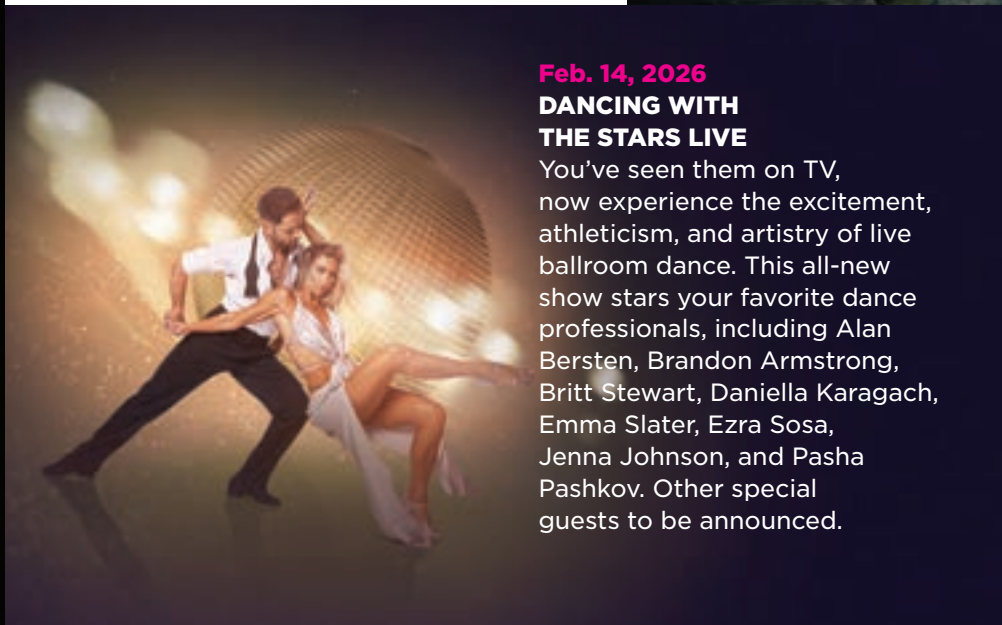
The fantasy video game Elden Ring comes to life with a massive orchestra and choir performing its gorgeous score. Don your best cosplay and come enjoy the show.



Feb. 14, 2026

DANCING WITH THE STARS LIVE

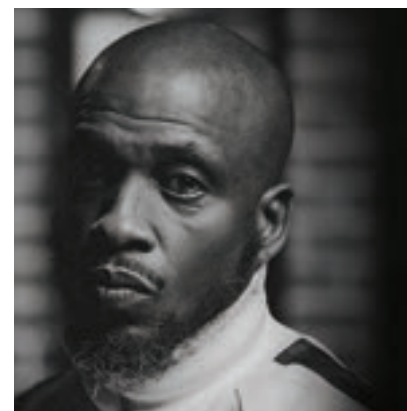
You've seen them on TV, now experience the excitement, athleticism, and artistry of live ballroom dance. This all-new show stars your favorite dance professionals, including Alan Bersten, Brandon Armstrong, Britt Stewart, Daniella Karagach, Emma Slater, Ezra Sosa, Jenna Johnson, and Pasha Pashkov. Other special guests to be announced.



Feb. 8, 2026

DRUMLINE LIVE

Feel the incredible rhythms of DRUMLine Live. Based on the HBCU marching band tradition, this synchronized stage show gives you the full drumline experience with a full percussion and brass section and dazzling dancers.



Feb. 20, 2026

ALI SIDDIQ: IN THE SHADOWS TOUR

Stand-up comedian and YouTube sensation Ali Siddiq will leave you in stitches with his amazing storytelling. Recommended for ages 16+.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NJPAC

Visit **NJPAC** at One Center Street, Newark, NJ or at njpac.org for more information.



new jersey performing arts center njpac



**lucy darling
of the
holidays**

dec 27



**a live conversation
with chevy chase**

following a screening
of *Christmas Vacation*
Dec 18 @ 7:30PM

Get in the Christmas spirit
with this special film screening
followed by an audience Q&A
with Clark Griswold himself.



**hollywood
in new jersey**

David Newman & Sebastian Knauer
with the New Jersey Symphony
Sat, Jan 3 @ 8PM

Music from silver-screen favorites
like *A Beautiful Mind*, *Spartacus*,
The Robe, *How the West Was Won*,
Basic Instinct and more!



**royal
philharmonic
orchestra**

Sun, Jan 25 @ 3PM

The Royal Philharmonic, violin superstar
Ray Chen and conductor **Vasily Petrenko**
present Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto
and Sibelius' Second Symphony.



**nai-ni chen
dance company**

Sat, Feb 14 @ 2PM

Sun, Feb 15 @ 2PM

Bring the whole family to welcome the
Year of the Horse with the spectacular
Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company.



ali siddiq

In the Shadows Tour

Fri, Feb 20 @ 7PM

Comedian **Ali Siddiq** (Comedy Central,
Def Comedy Jam) will leave you
laughing with hilarious true-life stories.



with the New Jersey Symphony

Sat, Mar 7 @ 2 & 8PM

Rediscover the magic of *Harry Potter*
and the Sorcerer's Stone™ while
NJ Symphony performs John Williams'
unforgettable score.



MARS WRIGLEY



Generous support for Classical performances provided by the Smart Family Foundation/David S. Stone, Esq., Stone & Magnanini

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One Center Street, Newark, NJ