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## News & Information

### Town Comes Out to Celebrate Livingston's 2nd Annual National Night Out

By Rachel Meisel  
8/4/2010



LIVINGSTON, NJ - It was a festive atmosphere at Livingston's second annual National Night Out on Tuesday night. There were carnival rides, games, a DJ, free food donated by local restaurants, live music, and raffle prizes. Adding to the excitement, a helicopter from

Atlantic Health Care landed on the Oval and children were allowed to sit in it. At dusk the movie "Up" was shown.

National Night Out's purpose is to raise awareness regarding how the public and the police need to work together to prevent crime and drug use. Livingston's Community Policing Unit, headed by Officer Gary Mankowitz, 43, who has been in law enforcement for 24 years, was responsible for organizing the event.

National Night Out has been held on the first Tuesday in August since 1984. It was the brainchild of Matt Peskin, then Executive Director of the National Association of Town Watch. His goal was to raise awareness of drug and crime prevention and strengthen police-community partnerships in a block party atmosphere. In its first year or existence approximately 400 communities in 23 states participated. It is estimated that this year over 12,000 communities in all 50 states, U.S. Territories, and Canada held events last night.

Livingston became involved two years ago when Police Chief Craig Handschuch approached Officer Mankowitz to head Livingston's Community Policing Unit. Officers Stan Valles and Joy Klupal are also part of the Unit, which is involved in protecting senior citizens, informing the public about scams, public safety, crime prevention and the D.A.R.E. program. Said Mankowitz, "We are united as a community."

"National Night Out lends itself perfectly to Livingston. It is a great community-oriented activity," said Township Manager Michele Meade, who came with her family.

Charles Budzinski, 47, took his daughter, Ashlea, 3, because, "Livingston puts on a lot of great things like this. We just moved here in October. I had tutored here. I just loved the town and when we had kids I decided this was the best place to bring them up."

In his address to the crowd Officer Mankowitz quoted Sir Robert Peel, the 19th century British Prime Minister who is considered the father of modern policing, "The public are the police and the police are the public."

National Night Out in Livingston helped demonstrate to residents and police alike that by working together, they can prevent crime and drug use.

**Photo above:** Officer Gary Mankowitz, coordinator of Livingston's National Night Out, addressing the crowd.

Photo by Rachel Meisel



Joe from Eppes Essen serving free food to the crowd.

Photo by Rachel Meisel



Charles Budzinski and his three-year-old daughter, Ashlea, enjoying the night's events.

Photo by Rachel Meisel



Activities included inflatable rides, games, balloon making and face painting.

Photo by Rachel Meisel



Mayor Arlene Johnson thanking the volunteers and sponsors.

Photo by Rachel Meisel



Colleen Biss, 8, enjoying the water slide on a hot summer night.

Photo by Rachel Meisel



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