



NEWS

## Hundreds Show Support for Local Law Enforcement at National Night Out

Livingston's second "National Night Out" drew large crowds. The highlight was a pair of helicopters landing on the Oval.

By **Danielle Elliot** August 4, 2010

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Hundreds of families gathered at the Oval on Tuesday night for Livingston's second annual "National Night Out ([/articles/national-night-out-on-oval-2](#))." The energy was high as the community came together to support local anti-crime efforts.

The night kicked-off with a ceremony to recognize local law enforcement agents. Officer Gary Mankowitz addressed the crowd. "Let criminals know that we are united as a community and will not tolerate being victims of crime," he said.

He went on to emphasize the importance of the public's role in crime prevention.

"Without you reporting crime and details of crimes," he said, "it is harder to do our job."

There were a lot of fun activities throughout the event, but the highlight of the night was when two helicopters landed, at separate times, in the center of the Oval, to children's delight.

"Helicopter! Helicopter! Come on, Mom, come on. It's a helicopter!" said one little boy, obviously excited.

Once the chopper was safely on the ground, a long line formed for children to take a quick tour of the interior.

"The helicopter is their favorite part," said Nancy Mullin, who was out with her three young sons. "It's a fun night. A little hot, but it's fun to see all of their friends from school."

By the high school end of the Oval, guests had a chance to check out a one-of-a-kind trike. The custom-built vehicle, designed by Sonny Croughn, drew a lot of older boys and men, who came by to check out the purple and black dragster.

While more than half the crowd swarmed to the chopper, others continued to run through the huge sprinkler created by the fire department, which was spraying water from the raised fire engine ladder.

Another crowd gathered around 7 p.m. as Livingston firefighters demonstrated how to use the "jaws of life" to pull victims safely out of vehicles after a crash.

"We're having fun, absolutely," said Tom Magnier, whose three sons – Michael, 6, and twins Matthew and Christopher, 8 – were trying out a pair of goggles that simulate intoxication. They were managing to navigate through a cone course pretty well despite the blurred vision. "This is our first top, but they're looking forward to the helicopter," he added.

There were carnival games and inflatable water slides, along with parachute activities for young guests and live cover bands playing older tunes that many of the adults seemed to remember fondly. The line was long, too, at the "sno cone" table. Livingston police officers also manned a grill and handed out free hot dogs and pizza.

"It's important to support the police, because they do a wonderful job in town. They are excellent about letting the kids know they're here to help," said one Livingston mom, who declined to give her name. She went on to say that National Night Out is "the biggest draw in town."

"This is exciting," said Livingston Police Detective Anthony DiPold. "We look forward to this every year, and from the looks of it, the community does, too."

In addition to law enforcement and firefighters, there were other safety-oriented organizations handing out information and free gifts. Megan Mattingly, 26, of New York Sports Club, said they come out to promote water safety. "Glitter the Clown" handed out stickers in front of the Red Cross booth and there was even information about safe investing from the NJ Office of the Attorney General.

The night wrapped up with a 9 p.m. showing of the movie "Up" projected on a giant screen near the back of the Oval. Guests started reserving spots as early as 7:30p.m.

FBI Agent Michael Ward, who is stationed out of Newark, thanked the crowd.

"This is very encouraging. Thank you for coming out. Now more than ever, we need the support of the community. Nowadays, connectivity with the community drives everything that we do," he said.

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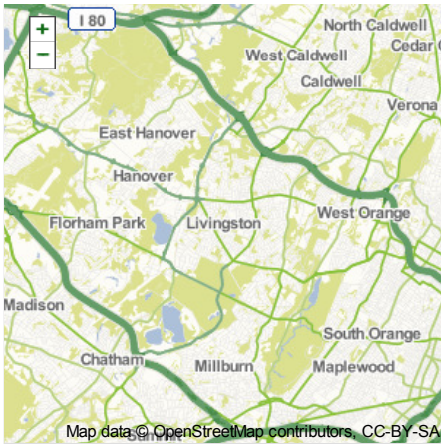


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