



# PROCLAMATION

Office of the Mayor  
Camp Happiness Day  
July 10, 2023



- WHEREAS:** The New Jersey Blind Men’s Club was created in 1910 by four courageous blind men in the Newark area with the intent to provide support, education, and socialization activities for the blind and visually impaired, allowing them to lead happy and productive lives while promoting acceptance to the public; and
- WHEREAS:** In 1929, these forward-thinking men created an innovative camp-like experience in Leonardo which became known as Camp Happiness. They named the camp this since it was the first time these individuals were not defined by their blindness and were able to venture out on their own in a safe environment, learn independent living skills, and participate in social activities such as swimming, boating, and fishing; and
- WHEREAS:** In 1930, Middletown Township celebrated this creative program with a parade, fanfare, and a proclamation recognizing July 10, 1930 as “Camp Happiness Day”; and
- WHEREAS:** In 1987, the organization officially changed its name to the New Jersey Blind Citizens Association, Inc. (NJBCA) as it began accepting women and promoting inclusivity; and
- WHEREAS:** Now in its 113<sup>th</sup> year of providing free services, the NJBCA still serves as a statewide resource and referral center for the blind and visually impaired, as well as their families and caregivers. On its 94<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Camp Happiness continues in the spirit of its founders by offering educational forums, arts and crafts, wellness programs, music and computer technology events, and peer support groups. Campers are also able to give back through community collaborations, fostering an environment of hope and purpose. Now,
- THEREFORE:** I, Mayor Tony Perry and the Middletown Township Committee, do hereby proclaim July 10, 2023 as **Camp Happiness Day** in the Township of Middletown and encourage the community to support the NJBCA, especially after its resurgence from the pandemic. We are truly honored to have such an inspiring, impactful organization based in Middletown.

*Given, under my hand and the Great Seal of the Township of Middletown, this tenth day of July in the year two thousand twenty-three*

---

Mayor Tony Perry