

## **Blast With the Past!**

Let our area's history play teacher this summer!  
By resident education specialist **Perk Musacchio**

Family, fireworks and the 4th of July! We just celebrated the 243rd birthday of America, which is hard to believe! We live in an area that is rich in history with many buildings, monuments and trees (yes, trees) that are as old as our country! The trees are known as Penn oaks and were brought here by William Penn, so in reality, they are even older than our country!

My husband was a middle school history teacher for over 30 years, and while it wasn't always a favorite subject of the teen scene, he did try to make history come alive because, as a sign in his classroom stated, "Those who forget history are doomed to relive its past." Developing an awareness and appreciation of our country's history can lead to a better understanding of why things are the way they are. Even in the scope of a small community, like a town or even a school district, knowing and respecting the history can often explain why things are the way they are, why people react the way they do, and how to effectively and positively handle situations and make necessary changes.

Because we are so lucky to live in this area, history can easily come alive, especially the history of the Revolutionary War. When children have real life experiences with people, places and concepts, their understanding and learning deepen. They can draw from the background knowledge these experiences build, which will enhance future academic endeavors and help make them become a more well-rounded individual.

In 1776, our country declared its independence from English rule, and so began the Revolutionary War that lasted until October 1781 when the British surrendered at the Battle of Yorktown. We are fortunate to live near the Brandywine Battlefield, the site of one of the largest land battles of the war. Had we not been successful in our fight for freedom, our lives might be very different today. It's important for children to understand that the rights they now enjoy are because of the courage of many people who envisioned a country where citizens could enjoy life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. If it wasn't for these brave soldiers, we wouldn't have the freedom to worship as we please, read books and magazines that we enjoy, gather with friends, speak what's on our mind, and participate in government.

Summer is the perfect time to have fun with family and friends while learning more about the role our community and its residents played in the shaping of America. A friend who moved to Chester County last year shared her idea for learning more about her new community. Last summer, she picked one day a week for a field trip. She was amazed at all the area has to offer and all the history that came alive for her and her children. My husband and I borrowed the idea and decided to do the same thing this summer. Despite living here all our lives, there are so many places we have never visited. For anyone wanting to learn more about our area, here are just some of the places that are on our list. Some of them have special events happening throughout the summer.

### Historical Places

American Helicopter Museum in West Chester

Antique Ice Tool Museum in West Chester

Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia

Brandywine Battlefield in Chadds Ford

Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford

Chadds Ford Historical Society including the John Chad House and Barns Brinton House

Chester County Historical Society in West Chester

Constitution Center in Philadelphia

DE Museum of Natural History in Wilmington

Hagley Museum in Wilmington

Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia

Kennett Underground Railroad in Kennett Square

Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia

Newlin Grist Mill in Glen Mills

Strasburg Railroad in Strasburg

Valley Forge National Historic Park in King of Prussia

West Chester Railroad