

# PROCLAMATION

**WHEREAS,** Usher Syndrome is a relatively rare genetic disorder caused by a mutation in any one of 11 genes resulting in a combination of hearing loss and visual impairment and is a leading cause of combined deafness and blindness; and

**WHEREAS,** more that 400,000 people are affected by this genetic disorder worldwide, with approximately 50,000 of those in the United States; and

**WHEREAS,** Usher Syndrome, which is incurable presently, impacts three major senses in the body:

**Vision:** Vision loss in Usher Syndrome is caused by progressive vision disorder known as retinitis pigmentosa (RP). RP causes the light-sensing cells in the retina to gradually deteriorate, initially resulting in night blindness, followed by narrowing of the visual field, commonly known as tunnel vision.

**Hearing:** Children with Usher Syndrome are born with or develop hearing loss. It is estimated that upward of 10% of people with congenital bilateral sensorineural hearing loss have Usher Syndrome.

**Balance:** Balance is achieved and maintained through input from one's eyes, the vestibular organs in the inner ear and the sensory systems of the body, such as the skin, muscles and joints. Thus, people with Usher Syndrome suffer from severe balance issues due to vestibular dysfunction; and

**WHEREAS,** there are three clinical types: Type 1, Type 2 and Type 3, which are distinguished by the severity and age when the signs and symptoms appear, and there are at least eleven different genetic types of Usher Syndrome, as determined by the genes that are involved. One cannot determine the genetic type by clinical testing, as DNA testing is the only reliable way of determining the true generic type; and

**WHEREAS,** because of limited public awareness, those affected with Usher Syndrome may suffer with depression, anxiety, isolation and loss of independence; and

**WHEREAS,** the Usher Syndrome community is uniting around the world to spread public awareness but especially to be recognized annually the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of September; and

**NOW, THEREFORE IT BE PROCLAIMED,** that the Mayor and Town Council of the Township of Scotch Plains, do hereby designate September 17, 2022 as

## USHER SYNDROME AWARENESS DAY

in the Township of Scotch Plains and town hall will be lit in navy and gold to raise awareness.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joshua G. Losardo".

Joshua G. Losardo, MAYOR