



GAS TAX BREAK?

AMID A TENUOUS CEASEFIRE WITH IRAN, PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP SAID HE SUPPORTS A SUSPENSION OF THE FEDERAL GAS TAX, BUT CONGRESS WOULD HAVE TO APPROVE. **A4**

STATEN ISLAND

Former Islander recounts Venezuelan imprisonment



James Luckey, 28, a former resident of Staten Island resident, is among a group of Americans who were detained by Venezuelan authorities and held for weeks. Photos by Jan Somma-Hammel, Advance/SILive.com

Since his return, James Luckey — whose mother was Q Lazzarus — has been attempting to contact the families of his fellow cellmates.

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By the time James Luckey reached Venezuela in late 2025, he was deep into a months-long adventure through South and Central America. A former Staten Island resident and avid traveler, he had expected the trip to end shortly, with a flight home to reunite with family.

Instead, the 28-year-old — the son of late musician Diane Luckey, who performed under the name Q Lazzarus — was taken into custody by Venezuelan authorities and held for weeks. Luckey was among the Americans later released following the capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

Now back in the United States, Luckey has been trying to track down the families of fellow detainees he met during his imprisonment. He recently took time to share his personal experience with the Advance/SILive.com.

Luckey, who now lives with his aunt in New Jersey, moved to Staten Island at the age of 6 and resided in the borough until he reached college age. Then, he moved to Brooklyn and attended the Fashion Institute of Technology.

For Luckey, there's just "too much world to see and not see it."

He has spent time exploring Alaska, most of the Caribbean, Mexico and Central America.

It was in October of 2024 that Luckey arrived in Colombia and kicked off an adventure into the continent extending south of the equator.

He began by working his way along the western coast of South America and came back up along the eastern coast. The expansive and extensive expedition was sched-



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uled to conclude with a flight home out of Venezuela to meet family for a cruise around Christmas 2025.

ACCUSED OF SPYING

By the time Luckey first entered Venezuela by taxi, it was late and he was unable to make it to the immigration office, he explained. He spent the night in a hotel and then set out for the office, located close to the country's border.

While he said he had all travel documents necessary for his prior stay in Brazil, Luckey did not have a visa to stay in Venezuela, hence the trek to the immigration office.

It was on his way to the office that Luckey was stopped at a checkpoint by Venezuelan military.

At first, Luckey said he thought this would be an immigration issue that would quickly be resolved. Instead, he said he was taken into custody around Dec. 7 or 8, 2025, and was accused of being a spy.

While Luckey suspects authorities wanted the pride of being able to claim they captured an international spy, he also **SEE LUCKEY, A3**

STATEN ISLAND

New training helps combat dual crises of suicide, overdose

Over 300 have participated in the program since it launched in November 2025.

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Drug overdoses and suicide are two horrors many Staten Island families have dealt with and, in many cases, these devastating subjects overlap with one another.

The acknowledgment of that overlap spurred the creation of the Zero Overdose/Zero Suicide training series, a six-module program that aims to equip individuals with a unified approach to detect both suicide and overdose risks early and address these issues before they manifest.

Borough President Vito Fossella and District Attorney Michael E. McMahon joined health care professionals at Borough Hall in St. George Monday to announce that the program, which was launched in November 2025, has educated more than 300 unique participants.

"Mental illness has been a stigmatism on society for forever and we got to break through that because people are suffering and they're hurting and they need help," Fossella said.

Dr. Ginny Mantello, director of health and wellness for the office of the borough president, explained that the training is part of the work being carried out within the framework of Fossella's Behavioral Health Blueprint for Staten Island Children and Young Adults.

"I think we all understand the importance of this, but sadly, not all substance-use providers are comfortable with mental health screenings and the same is true of the opposite, mental health **SEE PROGRAM, A2**

EDITOR'S CHOICE

N.J. company facing suit over 'tomato fraud'

Two California residents claim Cento Fine Foods misled customers about its San Marzano tomato certification.

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A New Jersey-based company is committing "tomato fraud," according to a lawsuit filed by two California residents.

Mike Andrich and Natalie Gianne of California together filed a class action lawsuit against Cento Fine Foods, Inc., on May 4, reports the Advance/SILive.com sister site, NJ.com.

In the lawsuit, the pair allege the food giant intentionally misled customers by marketing canned tomatoes as authentically certified when the tomatoes are not.

The company denies the lawsuit's claims, says the report.

Cento maintains that their tomatoes undergo rigorous quality controls and are farmed by professionals who are audited by an independent third party in Italy, said the report.

The company says the tomatoes are **SEE CENTO, A2**

