

Families in New Jersey are choosing to travel closer to home. These daytrips have become so popular that there is a name for them: staycations. Families that staycation are one of the fastest growing segments of travel in the state. According to the coupon service, Valpak, staycations are the “in thing to do.” Branchburg should be the destination for New Jersey families.

ValPak reports that the most popular daytrip destinations are amusement parks and miniature golf. While not an amusement park, our town has the newly opened Branchburg Sports Complex. The Sports Complex offers laser tag arena, a play maze, an arcade, and of course, an indoor, sports facility. Less than a mile away, we have the Tee-rrific Mini-Golf Center, featuring 18-hole mini-golf for families and a driving range for more serious golfers. Across the highway is Raritan Valley Community College's Theater and Planetarium. The theater is ranked by TripAdvisor as the number one family attraction in town, while the planetarium offers laser concerts and star shows. Today I'd like to suggest how you could draw staycationers to visit our family-friendly town.

Who better understands the demographic of young people better than young people? In fact, most of the Yelp and TripAdvisor reviews were from teenagers. We can sponsor a contest in which students write and prepare a town brochure. We can award the winning entry with \$500, along with recognition at the Chamber's annual awards banquet. The simplest, least costly way to produce travel materials is to utilize our best resource – students in town. ValPak reports that 58% of New Jersey residents make travel plans 6 months in advance. I recommend that we announce the contest no later than February 1st.

Evidence indicates that New Jersey families want to travel close to home and want value in their destinations. As you can see, a student brochure contest about our exciting attractions will demonstrate that Branchburg is THE daytrip destination.