

# Activists planning training session

Paramus site of 'win  
back Congress' event

**Catherine Carrera** North Jersey Record  
USA TODAY NETWORK - NEW JERSEY

An army of amateur political activists who say they're part of the anti-Trump wave are expected to gather in Paramus this weekend to train on the basics of organizing a movement: how to spread a message, rally voters and expand.

"Voting is the number one tool we have to change anything at all," said Alexandra Spyridaki, spokesperson for Bergen Indivisible for Democracy, which is hosting the training at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Central Unitarian Church on Forest Avenue.

The group is one of thousands of local chapters of a national organization, Indivisible, and one of at least five chapters that exist in Bergen County. Indivisible was formed by former Democratic congressional staffers after President Donald Trump was elect-

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# The Record

NORTHJERSEY.COM

SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018

PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

NORTHJERSEY.COM ■ SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2018 ■ 7A

## Training

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ed as part of a resistance movement.

The organization's mission is to "defeat the Trump agenda, elect progressive leaders and realize bold progressive policies" by following the successful steps the Tea Party had taken in 2009, which is laid out in an easy-to-follow manual authored by the organization's leaders.

Leaders of the national group will provide the training – a basic "how-to" on grassroots activism – to some 150 people who have signed up so far for the event.

Local chapter leaders say they were moved to become politically engaged for the first time after Trump was elected and on the heels of last year's Women's March on Washington, D.C.

Since starting a local chapter a year ago, Lori Sackler says she feels "empowered to take action" whenever she meets with the 257 active members of her group.

"I was never an activist before, none of us were ever activists," Sackler said.



**U.S. Rep. Josh Gottheimer could face a competitive challenge in the November general election.** KEVIN R. WEXLER/NORTHJERSEY.COM

Sackler's group is based in the state's 9th Congressional District, where Democrat Rep. Bill Pascrell has been in office since 1996. Although the district is not in jeopardy of losing the seat to a Republican, Sackler said she and her group members did not want to stand by with-

out taking action.

"Instead of sitting home and being anxious, we're an outlet for people who want to feel like they're doing something," said Sackler, who works full time as a financial adviser.

Other training at the event will focus

on how to collaborate with groups in districts that are facing a tough battle to either keep their seat blue or flip from Republican to Democrat.

Anna Wong, 33, is a member of Indivisible NJ-5, based in the 5th Congressional District where Democrat Rep. Josh Gottheimer could face a competitive challenge in the general election. In 2016, Gottheimer narrowly won the seat against a longtime Republican incumbent.

Wong said she looks forward this weekend to collaborating with other local chapters and "building momentum" in the local resistance movement.

"I'm excited to compare notes, work with each other, amplify each other's voices - really driving home the message of the Democratic Party," Wong said.

Attendees will learn how to galvanize voters and go door-to-door to get people engaged.

"We need contributions to campaigns, but, I think, whoever knocks the most doors that's who's going to win," Wong said.

For more information, visit [bergenindivisiblefordemocracy.org](http://bergenindivisiblefordemocracy.org).  
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