



PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Carrying in donations to the NVFS toy closet last week are (from left) Aliza Hasnain, Robin Falci, Cameron Milner and Nikki Tran.

Family Services Delivers for Santa

Beatty donated space for toy closet.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
 CENTRE VIEW

Santa's elves come in several forms; and in the local area, many of them are Northern Virginia Family Services volunteers. And this week, they'll deliver Christmas presents to 589 families — some 2,100 people — in Fairfax and Prince William counties.

Among them are residents of Centreville, Chantilly and Clifton, and those numbers include more than 1,100 children. "Besides toys, we also provide food cards to every family so they can buy their holiday meal," said Northern Virginia Family Services Director of Development Pam Ryan.

The recipients are the agency's client families and, each year, its programs serve about 30,000 people. "NVFS provides whatever programs and/or services families need to permanently lift them out of poverty," said Ryan. "It's a private, non-profit dedicated to helping individuals and families find new paths to self-reliance and brighter futures."

Last week, volunteers were busy accepting drop-offs of new toys to sort and fill up the Northern Virginia Family Services toy closet in the Sully Place Shopping Center in Chantilly. And Ryan was thrilled with the site.

"We're here because of Beatty Management's generosity in donating this space for us to use for our Gifting for Families program," she said. "It's so important for us to have a place like this for storing and sorting the gifts."

SEE FAMILY SERVICES, PAGE 12



Posing with some of the donated toys are (standing, from left) Jan Hawkins, volunteer coordinator for the Serve campus; Westfield High seniors Nikki Tran and Aliza Hasnain; JMU freshman Robin Falci and NVFS volunteer coordinator Navara Cannon; on bike is Westfield senior Cameron Milner.

Volunteers Provide 'A Child's Joy'

Group makes, fills and gives stockings to ONC families.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
 CENTRE VIEW

When Our Neighbor's Child (ONC) delivered presents Sunday to local families in need, tucked among the gifts were 900 handmade Christmas stockings filled with toys. They were there because of the efforts of Chantilly's Denise Forgione and the volunteers of "A Child's Joy."

It began in 2005 when Forgione brought some filled stockings to the Western Fairfax Christian Ministries (WFCM) food pantry. "I volunteered there and knew some moms had missed the cutoff date for [requesting] Christmas assistance," she said. "So a friend of mine and I brought about 45 stockings."

They were a big hit and were gone in a flash, so she decided to SEE GROUP PROVIDE, PAGE 12

Fundraiser in Honor Of Ryan Lopynski

Goal is to purchase EKG machines.

On April 26, 2009, Ryan Lopynski was a freshman at Virginia Tech with his whole life ahead of him. He'd come home to Clifton's Hampton Chase community to see his family and look for a summer job. But while showering before going to see his sister's basketball game, he suffered a fatal heart attack. The specific cause of his death is still unknown, although it was discovered posthumously that Ryan had an enlarged heart.

His loss devastated his family; but since then, they established The Ryan Lopynski Big Heart Foundation to honor him and to increase public awareness of Sudden Cardiac Arrest through education and action. SCA claims the lives of 30 young adults a week in the U.S., and the foundation's goal is to reduce the occurrence of SCA

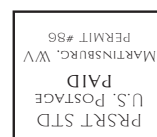
and save lives.

Toward that end, the "Every Heart Counts" fundraiser is slated for Saturday, Jan. 5, 2013, from 7-11 p.m., at the Westfields Golf Club, 1940 Balmoral Greens Ave. in Clifton. The event includes an international wine-tasting sponsored by the Clifton Wine Shop, live and silent auctions, food and dancing.

Money raised will purchase EKG machines to provide free EKG screenings for Fairfax County high-school students during their annual athletic physicals. These screenings will offer a critical new level of heart testing that is currently unavailable — and they can potentially identify a heart abnormality before it is too late.

To register for the fundraiser, go to www.ryanlopynski.org.

— BONNIE HOBBS



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NEWS

Westfield High SGA students and their homemade cookies for Our Neighbor's Child.



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Cookies, Cookies Everywhere for ONC

SGA students at both Centreville and Westfield high schools last week each brought to school thousands of homemade cookies. Then they packaged them, loaded them into trucks and brought them to Our Neighbor's Child for its 830 gift-recipient families.

At Westfield, 120 students each brought in three dozen cookies for a total of 4,320. All five SGA classes at Centreville contributed a total of 8,700 cookies. Together, the two high schools donated and packaged more than 13,000 cookies.



Westfield students with some cookies are (from left) sophomore Rachel Dougherty, junior Selena Clyne-Galindo and senior Rebecca Lawson.



A sampling of some of the many homemade cookies contributed by Centreville High SGA students.



Holding some homemade cookies from Westfield are (from left) junior Jon Ohanian and Nick Magnusson.

Centreville High SGA members (from left) Yasemin Atalay, Brooke Peterson, Lauren Liddle, Nathan West, Ruth Wondemu and Amanda Rekenhaller hold some of their cookies. Behind them are boxes of cookies they already packed.



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Christmas Lights in Centreville

Many local houses and yards are decorated in lights for the holiday season. Here are some of the sights in Centreville's Woodgate Village community.



A Time for Giving

FACETS helps children give presents to siblings.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

All year 'round, FACETS helps people in poverty in Fairfax County. It works with families living in public-housing communities and having an average income under \$20,000 for a family of four. It also aids those who are, or recently were, homeless.

The organization also runs after-school programs for children and adults, all year 'round. There are boys' and girls' groups, homework-help groups, arts and crafts, plus ESL classes for adults. And in December, FACETS puts on Sibling Shops.

These events enable children to peruse a variety of toys, games and other items, select gifts for their brothers and sisters and have them wrapped. The shops are also holiday parties, involving food, games and crafts, and the nonprofit FACETS hosted five of them last week.

As the Christmas season approaches each year, FACETS obtains donations from the community for children, teens and adults so children can 'shop' for gifts for their brothers and sisters. Then, at each holiday party, volunteers walk them through and help them pick out age- and gender-appropriate presents.

FACETS also recruits groups to host and provide volunteers for each Sibling Shop. The first party was Monday, Dec. 10, at the Ragan Oaks Community Center in Fair Oaks. Volunteers from the Bank of America provided the decorations, games and refreshments and wrapped the presents.

The Dec. 11 event at the Old Town Hall in Fairfax was hosted by volunteers from Deloitte Consulting. GMU's Alpha Omicron Pi sorority hosted the Dec. 12 Sibling Shop at nearby Robinson Square, and Brandywine Realty Trust hosted the Dec. 13 event at Barros Circle in Centreville.

A Sibling Shop for children not housed in one of FACETS's family centers was hosted by Centrepointe Church. All together, these holiday parties provided some 160 children with gifts to give to their family members.

Jacob Berenbroick, FACETS community-development advocate in the Barros Circle neighborhood, helped organize the Centreville party with FACETS' educational and community-development team.

"They do a lot of work, months out, planning and preparing, and getting various organizations and groups to volunteer their time," he said. "They also solicit gift donations, set up locations for collecting the presents and get the decorations and arts-and-crafts supplies from the volunteers."

At Barros, Brandywine supplied the food and wrapping paper, and children colored Santa Claus paddleballs and ceramic snowflake ornaments while they ate. And one or two at a time, the children took turns "shopping" in another room.

"It's important because, due to a lack of flexible income in their families, these kids

don't have the luxury of buying their siblings something nice — or anything, at all — for Christmas," said Berenbroick. "So this gives them the opportunity to do what every other kid does — pick out a toy for their brother or sister."

And at the same time, he said, "They can enjoy their friends' and neighbors' company. This brings the community together for a great event where people can socialize and enjoy the spirit of the holidays."

London Towne Elementary kindergartner Jazzelyn Carter, 5, selected a football for a 10-year-old sibling. And Saad Salim, 8, a third-grader at Deer Park Elementary, planned to get a football for his brother, 16. Meanwhile, he showed the snowflake ornament he was coloring.

"I'm going to give the ornament to my mom and tell her Merry Christmas," he said. At the party, he enjoyed meeting his friends and eating a sandwich, cookies, pretzels and grapes.

Upstairs, Brandywine Realty Trust employees Natalie Dahlstrom, Ray Rosson and Kristy Kurrus wrapped the presents. "Our office manager, Stacey Madigan, organized [Brandywine's efforts] and was looking for help," said Dahlstrom. "About 10 people from our office are here."

"I had just done something similar through a Secret Santa program in Alexandria and I liked it," she continued. "And you can't say no to something like this because it's just such a good cause. It's also a good way to meet other people at Brandywine because we all work in different offices."

Rosson said it's an enjoyable event and he likes volunteering. As for Kurrus, she said, "I love seeing the kids so happy, and what's better than shopping? It sounded like fun to help them shop for their siblings, and it teaches them the giving vs. just the receiving."

Three of the Alaalla siblings attended the party. Babiker, 10, a Deer Park fifth-grader, selected a Barbie doll in a purple car for his 7-year-old sister. "I like being able to bring her a present," he said. At separate times from him, sisters Lojain, 5, and Fatima, 11, did their shopping. A Deer Park sixth-grader, Fatima enjoyed picking out a bath-products set for her 14-year-old sister.

Also shopping was Isaiah Word, 12, a seventh-grader at Stone Middle. He chose a watch for his brother, 8, and decided on a green bow to go with the wrapping paper. Said Isaiah: "I liked the food and picking out his present."

Brandywine's Debbi Vigna joked that she was a "personal shopper," helping the children select their gifts. "They know what they want, right away," she said. "They see it and that's it."

Delighted to participate, Vigna said, "I think it's important that everyone gives back. This time of year, not everyone gets presents, so this event lets children experience the joy of giving — which is what it's all about. And I think it's just amazing that FACETS does things like this every day."



Wrapping presents are Brandywine Realty Trust employees (from left) Natalie Dahlstrom, Ray Rosson and Kristy Kurrus.



Saad Salim, 8, with the snowflake ornament he colored.



Jazzelyn Carter, 5, with her gift-wrapped present.



Babiker Alaalla, 10, chose this Barbie doll and car for his younger sister.



From left: Sisters Lojain and Fatima Alaalla wait to get their gifts wrapped.



A volunteer and children making Christmas crafts together.

Another Arrest in Handyman's Death

Victim worked for local business-owner.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

In June, Reynard Prather was sentenced to 30 years in federal prison. On Dec. 7, Tasheik Champean, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to commit robbery and use of a firearm in a crime of violence causing death.

And last Wednesday, Dec. 12, Stacy Lorenzo Reed, 43, of Manassas, was the third person arrested in connection with the May 2010 death of Centreville handyman Jose Cardona. A Metrobus driver, Reed was arrested at the end of his route and charged with robbery.

Cardona, 39, was a married father of two who lived in Manassas Park and worked as a handyman and gardener. His employer owned nine check-cashing stores in Northern Virginia, and the conspirators believed he kept cash from those stores in his 9,000-square-foot mansion on Compton Road. So they planned to rob him at gunpoint and flee with the money.

On May 17, 2010, Prather and Champean drove from Prince George's County, Md., to a strip mall in Virginia. During the drive, authorities say, Champean promised Prather \$50,000 if he'd help rob the homeowner.

According to court documents and the Dec. 10 affidavit filed in U.S. District Court in Alexandria —

and written by Fairfax County Police Det. Stephen Needels — Champean was armed with a loaded, semiautomatic pistol and gave Prather a duffel bag containing the same thing.

"Both prior to and following his pleas of guilty, Prather identified Reed as one of two persons with whom he and Champean met in a strip mall [that] morning," wrote Needels. "According to Prather, Reed drove Champean and him to the vicinity of the [home] and dropped them off."

The two, armed men walked to the house and saw the homeowner leave. They then entered through an open garage door to await his return. According to court documents, Champean instructed Prather to restrain the homeowner's younger son upstairs in the residence and he'd "take care of [the homeowner] upon his return."

But around 10 a.m., before he got back, the intruders were discovered by Cardona and one of the sons.

"The four paired off in a struggle: Prather and the son and Champean and Cardona," the documents state. "While so involved, Prather heard a shot fired and saw Cardona lying dead on the driveway in front of the garage." The assailants then fled and, according to Needels, "were driven away by the other person they'd met that morning in a vehicle registered to Reed."


Furthermore, he added, "Cellular tower records show that telephones associated with Reed, Champean and Prather were used in the vicinity of all the locations described above at the relevant times on May 17, 2010."

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The Ryan Lopynski Big Heart Foundation
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Reminder: Shop Locally, Give Locally

Supporting the community.

With less than a week before Christmas, many people have not completed their shopping, and so we remind you of the importance of spending a significant portion of your shopping budget locally. At this point in the season, the high cost of expedited shipping might also serve as an incentive to shop in locally owned stores. One way to be sure holiday shopping comes with some holiday spirit is to do a portion of your shopping in some of the area's locally owned stores. There is special holiday ambience available by shopping in the heart of a town that is decked out for the season.

Where To Give Locally

The Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships has put together a list of 12 ways to support nonprofit partners that are in need of contributions to carry out their mission. Visit www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org

- ❖ Support services for aging in place through Life Circle Alliance www.lifecirclealliances.org/donate.htm
- ❖ Shop online "Gifts that Give Hope" Alternative Gift Fair for Fairfax County at www.giftsthatgivehope.org/fairfax providing links to buy gifts that support more than 20 Fairfax County nonprofits including Alternative House, Herndon-Reston FISH, FACETS, Stroke Comeback Center, and more.
- ❖ Honor the memory of a relative or friend or recognize a birthday, wedding, anniversary, retirement or other special event by donating a bench to a park through the Fairfax County Park Foundation <http://fairfaxparkfoundation.org/support/benchtree.htm>
- ❖ Buy a book to fulfill the Library Foundation's Wish List <http://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/registry.html/002-9627810-1915264?id=2P3AKWX1F9FO>
- ❖ Donate the gift of trees through Reforest Fairfax of the Fairfax County Restoration Project <http://www.fcrrp3.org/reforestfairfax/>

LETTER

How Many More Incidents?

To the Editor:

There is a saying from the Quran that to take one innocent life is to kill all mankind. I cannot begin to fathom what that equates when 20 angelic children and six of their teachers are murdered. As a Muslim I think about what my faith teaches me to love, honor, and respect children. As a student, I cry thinking that those kids will never be in my place to make a sincere difference in this world. As an American, I am far too broken to comprehend why such innocence was taken away so violently. I grew up through Virginia Tech back when I was a freshman at Westfield High School and thought that was the end of it. It cannot possibly be worse than this. Now as a junior in college, I wonder how many more incidents America will see before as President Obama stated, "meaningful action" is taken.

Saira Bhatti
Centreville

EDITORIAL

Small retail shops are part of defining any community. Their livelihood depends on the livability and quality of the neighborhoods around them. A small business owner pays attention to every detail in his or her business in a way that no chain can. Frequently, it is the small retail person who is active in fundraising for local charities, for fire and rescue service, for local schools and in organizing holiday events.

Local retail stores, mom-and-pop stores, continue to face tough challenges. Competition from big box stores and online sellers makes the holiday shopping season all the more important to locally-owned retailers.

With less than two weeks to go before the end of the charitable giving year, we also remind you of the critical local needs that are filled by a variety of local nonprofit organiza-

- ❖ Give the gift of Art to benefit the Arts Council of Fairfax County, <http://artsfairfax.org/donate>
- ❖ Protect a child's smile and health by donating to Project Pearly Whites from the MSCP Foundation, mccpfoundation.org/news/mccpfoundation_launches_project_pearly_whites/
- ❖ Help end homelessness through the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/opeh.htm>
- ❖ Give the gift of your time and become a mentor for BeFriend-A-Child, <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/childrenyouth/befriendachild.htm>
- ❖ Provide for a family for the holidays through A Way Forward and donate care packages to those who need it most, <http://www.awayforward.org>
- ❖ Other Fairfax County organizations that need your help to keep helping others:
- ❖ **Literacy Council of Northern Virginia**, 703-237-0866, www.lcnv.org. Teaches adults the basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and understanding English. Offers one-to-one tutoring programs for adult learners as well as beginning-level ESOL and Family Learning adult programs.
- ❖ **Computer C.O.R.E.** 703-931-7346, www.computercore.org. Adult Education, Computer Training and Career Development, with classes in Alexandria, Fairfax, Herndon and Annandale
- ❖ **Our Daily Bread** has been serving needy families in Fairfax County for 25 years. The Holiday Program helps those in need with food for the holidays and gifts for their children, making last year's holiday season brighter for approximately 3,000 families. www.odbfairfax.com/holiday
- ❖ **Food for Others** distributed more than 2.4 million pounds of free food to families in need in Northern Virginia in the year ending June 30, 2012. The nonprofit provides a safety net for people who face emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. www.foodforothers.com
- ❖ **Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO)**, 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year. www.echo-inc.org
- ❖ **Lorton Community Action Center** operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Sales from the shop generate funds for LCAC and clients also shop there. Now collecting gift cards and food baskets for Christmas, and warm coats. 703-339-8611 www.lortonaction.org
- ❖ **Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE)** — ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation. 4114 Legato Road Suite B, Fairfax, VA 22033, 703-591-4968, cause-usa.org
- ❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. www.capitalareafoodbank.org
- ❖ **Western Fairfax Christian Ministries** — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly (near Backyard Grill and Bar). For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them

With suggestions from readers, we have updated our lists. We welcome suggestions as we continuously update our local lists of community organizations. You can find a complete list on our website, www.connectionnewspapers.com

Last News Issue of 2012

This is the last regular edition of the Connection for 2012, and it includes the last of our 2012 series on immigration. Next week, delivered shortly after Christmas, is the Children's Connection, devoted to the artwork and writing of area students.

— MARY KIMM,
MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

- to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153. 703-988-9656.
- ❖ **The Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic**, 13525 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171, 571-235-3577. Last year, 139 community volunteers including nurses, nurse practitioners and physicians, gave more than 1,300 hours of their time to see patients. jsfreeclinic.org
- ❖ **Alternative House** — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182, 703-506-9191. www.thealternativehouse.org
- ❖ **Reston Interfaith**, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.restoninterfaith.org. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program and holiday food drives.
- ❖ **SHARE of McLean** is fully volunteer run, and seeks donations of grocery gift cards and more. Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101. 703-284-2179. www.SHAREofMcLean.org
- ❖ **LINK**, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. More than 4,000 adults and children have signed up for help with holiday meals. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org
- ❖ **FACETS** helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area. FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. FACETS offers a monthly Youth Volunteer Night. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
- ❖ **Committee for Helping Others (CHO)**, Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of concerned churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. 703-281-7614 <http://www.cho-va.com>
- ❖ **Fairfax City Area FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), working with the Office of Coordinated Services Planning, Fairfax County Department of Human Services, FISH helps local citizens who are in temporary need of food, clothing and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880 <http://fairfaxfish.org/>
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
- ❖ **Lamb Center**, www.thelambcenter.org. Day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178
- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**, 10455 White Granite Drive Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124 703-385-3267 <http://www.nvfs.org/>
- ❖ **United Community Ministries**, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306 <http://www.ucmagency.org/>
- ❖ **Stop Child Abuse Now (SCAN)** of Northern Virginia, 703-820-9001, www.scanva.org. Parent Education, Public Education-re: child abuse and Court Advocacy for Abused and Neglected Children

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A Connection Newspaper

Teaching Healthy Culinary Traditions

Nutrition experts say moderation, not deprivation, is key.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
CENTRE VIEW

The holidays start with a saucepan of mushrooms — usually portabella, crimini or oyster — sautéing in olive oil. Next, sliced onions sizzle in a bath of bubbling butter and wine until they're caramelized.

This is how Bonita Lillie starts her yuletide feast. Under the guidance of her deft hands, such rank and file produce become mushroom soup. Fresh minced pork and cheddar cheese become a re-creation of her mother's sausage rolls. She doesn't measure ingredients, count calories or add flavor-depleting substitutes. Only real food makes the cut in her Alexandria kitchen.

"I go with my gut and what feels right. I don't use recipes," said Lillie, a registered dietician and nutrition instructor at Marymount University in Arlington. "If you're cooking a family dish that you look forward to every holiday and you substitute a fat-free version of something, it won't taste right and you won't satisfy your memory of that dish."

During a time of year when it is not uncommon to wash down Bûche de Noël with eggnog or to pile one's plate with slices of crown roast beef drizzled with merlot cream sauce, Lillie and other local nutritionists, food enthusiasts and health gurus say don't engage in self-deprivations.

They emphasize that moderation, minor modifications and keeping it real are the keys to maintaining family traditions in ways that are healthy.

"Fat, per se, is not evil," said Nichole Ferrigno, culinary director for Tiny Chefs in Great Falls, Alexandria, McLean, Oakton, Springfield, Arlington and Potomac. "It really becomes about the type of fat one is consuming. When we think of ... eggnog, peppermint cake and gingerbread, I would tell folks to have just a little bit of the real thing. I do not ever, ever recommend substituting real foods with processed look-a-likes."

READ LABELS and examine the contents, say experts, or better yet, buy foods that don't require labels. "[I]t is definitely better to eat real food," said Joel Martin, Ph.D., a professor of kinesiology at George Mason University in Fairfax. "Our bodies have been used to eating real food for thousands of years and only recently have artificial ingredients been introduced into our diets. In the long run, regularly eating these substitutes may cause numerous undesirable effects."

Ferrigno, a former restaurant chef, suggests swapping imitation for moderation. "Even when it comes to holiday indulgences, one can partake and still do so within the parameters of a healthy diet," she said. "The key ... is to stick with whole, unprocessed foods. By consuming the real thing, your body is satiated with just a small amount. When we consume artifi-



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL/THE CONNECTION

When faced with an array of yuletide treats, dietician Jennifer Kay Nelson advises against "mindlessly grabbing cookies [and] candy ... here-there-everywhere."

cial ingredients, it takes much, much longer and many, many more calories to reach the same level of satiety."

Replacing one natural ingredient with another is a flavor-preserving option. "You could substitute ... an alternative sweetener like honey or agave nectar"

for sugar, said Lenora Lawson, a chef instructor at The Art Institute of Washington's International Culinary Schools in Arlington.

In fact, minor ingredient tweaks can pack powerful taste bud punches. "When you're baking a cake, sometimes you can replace oil with applesauce in some cakes, and often it tastes better," said Lillie. She cautions, however, that "when you take out the fat in any dish, you have to replace it with herbs or other seasonings so that you don't lose the taste."

"When we think of ... eggnog, peppermint cake and gingerbread, I would tell folks to have just a little bit of the real thing. I do not ever, ever recommend substituting real foods with processed look-a-likes."

— Nichole Ferrigno, a local culinary instructor

ESCHEWING LARGE cookie cutters for their bite-

sized counterparts and baking pies with graham cracker crusts instead of traditional fat-laden shells are tactics that Vienna-based culinary instructor Christine Wisniewski employs during the holiday season. "There are lots of ways to go about healthy-ing up the holidays," she said. "If the filling is the star of the dessert, fill and bake individual ramekins for a crust-free dessert and significant calorie and fat savings."

Most importantly, when faced with a dizzying array of yuletide treats on a tray or table, think before making a choice. "Be mindful, be appreciative and aware of what you are eating," said Jennifer Kay Nelson, director of clinical dietetics and an associate professor of nutrition at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. "Mindlessly grabbing cookies, candy, nuts here-there-everywhere often end up in unexpected pounds."

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FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

How the Powerless Access Power

Immigrants make significant gains in influencing political system.

By VICTORIA ROSS
CENTRE VIEW

Final part of the series.

On Election Night Nov. 6, Keisy Chavez's nerves were frayed.

The Fairfax single mom had been campaigning hard for Democrats since the official launch of Latinos for Obama last April.

She filmed a commercial for Senate candidate Tim Kaine in September, worked phone banks, door-knocked during 104-degree heat, stuffed envelopes, delivered yard signs, and seized every opportunity to talk to friends, neighbors and strangers about the importance of the 2012 election.

Her daughter, Cinthya Qureshi, 24, likes to tease her mom about her willingness to talk to anyone when it comes to politics.

"If my mom is pumping gas, and sees someone next to her, she will start a conversation about politics," she said.

"I've been organizing for President Obama and Governor Kaine since the launch of their campaigns, and everyone I talk to in the Latino community gets fired up to help spread the message of everything they have done for us," said Chavez.

Chavez was ecstatic over of Kaine's and Obama's victories in Virginia. "It was such a powerful feeling. I can't really describe how happy and relieved I felt," she said. "It shows that you can make a difference. It's a big motivation to realize that you can have an impact on something bigger than you, something that touches so many people."

Like many Latinos this election cycle, Chavez made certain her voice was heard. According to exit polls, recent immigrants, not just Latinos, voted overwhelmingly, 73 percent, for Obama in Northern Virginia.

Data from the Pew Research Center also shows that Asian Americans have shifted more to Democrats since 2008 than any other minority group. Representing just 3 percent of the national voting population, they are the fastest growing demographic in the United States, and their influ-



Keisy Chavez, a Latino activist with Latinos for Obama, and daughter Cinthya Qureshi at their business in Herndon.

ence is being felt beyond traditionally blue states, like California, Hawaii, New York and New Jersey, into swing states like Virginia and North Carolina.

"This area, particularly Fairfax County, is teeming with immigrants, from South America, India, Vietnam, South Korea and elsewhere," said Frederic Bemak, director of the Diversity Research and Action Center at George Mason University. "I can't imagine many of them swooned at Romney's incessant China bashing, or talk of self-deportation for the undocumented."

"The tectonic plates are shifting on immigration," said Frank Sharry, a McLean resident and executive director of America's Voice, an advocacy group for immigrants. "The fact that leading conservative voices are joining Republican leaders in calling for immigration reform that includes relief for the 11 million undocumented immigrants in America is a major development that will open up space

for the GOP to do the right thing and help pass sensible reform legislation."

Sharry said political leaders should consider the response from 2012 voters to this question asked in the network exit polls: "Should most illegal immigrants working in the United States be offered a chance to apply for legal status or deported to country they came from?"

"By a whopping 65-percent-to-28-percent margin, Americans support the 'apply for legal status' option," Sharry said.

Chavez said the 2012 election was a "reality wake-up call."

"I think it has finally hit some Republican politicians and policymakers that if you don't embrace immigration you will go nowhere. If you really want your party or your candidate or issues to be addressed, you need to embrace the mix of people in this country. Everyone has something to bring, regardless of whether you're Latino, Asian, or Irish."



Brian Moran, former chairman of the Democratic Party of Virginia with U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8) and Fred Shwaery of Vienna, a member of the Arab American Democrats of Virginia, at the 24th annual Arab American Candidates' Night Dinner held at the Tysons Corner Marriott on Sept. 30.

Voting: How the powerless begin to access power?

Political affiliation aside, research shows that immigrants, especially when they organize and vote, are influencing the political discussion overall, not just electing Democrats.

According to immigration experts, the right to vote is a key motivating factor when immigrants choose to become citizens, instead of just holding on to their green card.

Andrew Eade, who grew up in England, has been working in the U.S. for 16 years. In May, Eade was one of 75 new citizens who took the Oath of Allegiance during a special naturalization ceremony at the Fairfax County Government Center.

A resident of Herndon for 16 years, Eade said he wanted to become a citizen so he could "fully participate in the system and vote."

"I've been paying taxes for all these years, and I thought it was time to vote. You want to feel like you are getting your voice heard," he said.

Tam-Anh Lam, 23, called Tammy by her clients at the Four Seasons Nail Salon in Oakton, pulls out a creased photo of her 4-year-old daughter, Leah-Anh, to show a client.

Lam came to the United States

with her parents when she was 2 years old. Lam lives with her parents in Reston, who help take care of her daughter.

She became a citizen when she turned 18, but did not vote until this year. Lam said she wants her daughter to grow up with self-confidence and the higher education she lacks.

"I never paid much attention, but this year there was so much in the news that concerned me," Lam said news about immigration, education and healthcare struck a chord with her, and she decided she would vote this year.

"I wanted to vote because it gives you power. It's the American way. . . . I wanted my daughter to know that we're Americans too, and she can do anything. If I can't do it, maybe she can. Who knows, she could be a doctor someday," Lam said.

Community-based organizations, according to a 2009 Urban Institute study, play a key role in encouraging immigrants to enroll in citizenship programs so they can participate in the electoral process.

"A significant aspect of immigrant integration is civic participation," said Richard Eldridge, the Citizenship volunteer manager at Hogar Immigrant Services, a Fairfax County program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington. "We have a strong component of helping people become new citizens, of empowering immigrants through the benefits of



Andrew Eade, wife Stephanie and son Greyson, 21 months, of Herndon. Eade, from England, was one of 75 candidates who took the Oath of Allegiance during a special naturalization ceremony May 25 at the Fairfax County Government Center.

citizenship."

"Our goal is for immigrants to participate fully in the greater community," said Brooke Hammond Perez, education services and group manager. Hogar, which was founded in 1981, offers a combination of legal consultation, English-language instruction and citizenship classes.

While the majority of Hogar's immigrant clients live below the poverty level, their determination to become engaged, active citizens is inspiring, Hammond Perez said.

But few have touched Hammond Perez personally as much as client Alhaji Alpha Bah, an 82-year-old immigrant from Sierra Leone. In 1992, Bah was a shop-keeper in the West African nation when civil war broke out. During a decade of brutal civil war, when tens of thousands of people died, Bah was forced from his home, living as a refugee in Guinea for seven years before coming to the United States in 2003.

"He was accompanied to the U.S. by four of his nine children," Hammond Perez said, adding that his other children had to stay behind in Guinea and Sierra Leone. "Even now, he doesn't know the whereabouts of three of those five children."

Bah came to Catholic Charities in 2010. He did not have any formal education, did not speak English and was not able to find consistent work. Despite these obstacles, Bah, accompanied by Hammond Perez, was officially sworn in as a U.S. citizen on Oct.

14, 2011. When asked what he wanted to do as a new American, he said he wanted to register to vote as soon as possible. "I feel proud. I feel big. You are a citizen. Welcome to America," Bah said in video interview discussing his experiences. (To see the video, visit hogarimmigrantservices.org.)

Immigrants Gaining Political Influence

In Virginia and at the national level, immigrant voters are changing the political landscape in unprecedented ways, and hold increasing influence across the political spectrum.

"From a political perspective, the way the demographics are shifting, those who would demonize and attack new immigrants and Latinos do so at their peril," said Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49), the first Latino Democrat elected to the Virginia General Assembly.

Latinos have a long history of political involvement through organizations which give them access to elected officials, according to the Urban Institute.

In contrast, the Urban Institute study says, Asian and African immigrant communities are newer and lack long-serving, established leaders to spearhead and encourage participation and advocacy. While Asians comprise 17.4 percent of Fairfax County's population, compared to 15.6 percent

SEE IMMIGRANTS. PAGE 10



Del. Mark Keam (D-35)

Immigrant Success Story

Delegate Mark L. Keam.

Del. Mark Keam (D-35) is the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly. In November 2009, Keam was elected to an open seat in the House of Delegates and re-elected in November 2011. Keam, 46, currently serves on the House Education and Finance Committees, and is co-chair of the Legislative Tourism Caucus. Keam sat for a series of interviews with Connection reporter Victoria Ross in his Vienna office in December. Here is Keam's story, mostly in his own words.

For new Americans, life is hard, but once they overcome those barriers, they are stronger, and they contribute so much because they fought so hard to get here. I'm proud of my background. The policies I advocate for are from the perspective of an immigrant, something which is sorely missing in Richmond. As an immigrant who came here with nothing, I'm able to have everything I ever wanted, to give my children incredible opportunities.

Let me put it this way, unlike most people whose immigration stories are fairly simple, (for example, they move from one country to another country), I lived in four different countries and several different cities. I guess you could say I was the result of global circumstances beyond my control.

My parents met in the late 1950s. They had lost their parents during the war, so I didn't know any of my grandparents. My mother had an older sister, who was a devout Christian. She didn't like my father.

My parents were like street kids after the Korean war. My mother didn't finish school and my father was sort of a rogue. The only way my aunt would let him approach my mother was to prove he was upstanding citizen, so he became a minister.

In 1961, there was mandatory conscription in the military, so Keam's father was sent to Vietnam as a chaplain.

My father would come back at least once every two years. My brother was born in 1962, my sister was born in 1964 and I was born in 1966. In 1969, he came back to Seoul, and he wanted to set up a church. But Korea was still very run-down post war. Imagine Afghanistan, imagine that scenario. Korea was like Afghanistan times two. No running water, all the buildings were bombed, everything was devastated, being run by dictators. It's only 50 miles from DMZ. That was the world I was born into.

THE WAR IN VIETNAM was at a standstill, a lot of countries started establishing ties in South Vietnam, so they asked my father, who had studied Vietnamese language and culture, to establish a Korean church and community center. We lived in the church, and I remember the building well.

This goes directly into how I got into politics. From the time I was 4-years-old, I can't remember one meal we had with just the five of us. Our meals were with whoever was at the church. For the 5,000 Koreans who lived in Vietnam in the 70s, every one of them came to our church because it was also the only community center. It was the hub of all Korean activities. From the time I woke up until I went to bed, there were always people around us.

When I was a small kid, I freaked out because we had caskets. I remember there'd be a wedding in the morning, a funeral in the middle of the day, and another wedding at night. You'd see the same people dressed up for a wedding and then back for a funeral, because they knew each other. I lived in that world with the idea that community helps each other. It was ingrained in me such a natural way that I think, to this day, that's the core of my being. What made me who I am and what made me think the way I do and act the way I do every single day was molded in my childhood. More importantly, because of my father, I saw it was incumbent upon us to be leaders in our community. Family is important, but community is just as important. So that has led me to do what I'm doing today.

When Keam was 9-years-old, in April of 1975, he recalls his family fleeing the church compound during what historians call the Fall of Saigon. The capture of Saigon by the People's Army of Vietnam and the National Liberation Front, marked the end of the Vietnam War and the start of a transition period leading to the formal reunification of Vietnam into a communist state. The fall of the city was preceded by the evacuation of almost all the American civilian and military personnel in Saigon, along with tens of thousands of South Vietnamese civilians associated with the southern regime. The evacuation culminated in Operation Frequent Wind, which was the largest helicopter evacuation in history.

That's the most traumatic thing that's ever happened to me. We were playing in the room, and I just remember my mother coming in saying we have to pack up and go.

We had seen a lot of things. Whenever I see war-

SEE BARRIERS. PAGE 10

FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION

Immigrants Gain Influence in Virginia

FROM PAGE 9

who are Latino, Asians speak many different languages and come from a wide variety of cultures, making it more difficult to politically mobilize the population as a whole.

Regardless, political leaders are increasingly tuned in to the concerns of immigrants, and the number of immigrant community-based organizations is increasing. In 2000, according to the Urban Institute, there were 90 such organizations in Fairfax County; in 2009, the number was up to 149.

"The number of organizations devoted to the interest of members of the immigrant community has been increasing just as the number of immigrants has been increasing," said Del. Ken Plum (D-36). "I try to attend as many meetings of groups with immigrant members to demonstrate to them that they can have a say in government and that there are those in elective office who value the contributions."

At the 24th annual Candidates' Night Dinner, hosted by the Arab American Republicans and the Arab American Democratic Caucus of Virginia on Sept. 30, nearly every Fairfax County Democrat running for office was there, courting voters, including Kaine, U.S. Rep. James Moran (D-8) and U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11). Former U.S. Rep. Tom Davis, (R), who served eight terms in Congress, was Mitt Romney's surrogate.

Launched in 1987 by the Arab American Institute (AAI), the event is a forum for campaigning politicians, and a place where the Arab-American community can engage in the political process.

"Candidates' Night, by admission of most politicians attending the forum, has been praised as one of the best ethnic political forums," said event co-chair Saba L. Shami. "It's become an institution, bringing candidates together with the Arab American community as an integral part of the American political process."

Del. Mark Keam (D-35), the first Korean American and the first Asian-born immigrant to serve in the Virginia General Assembly, said Asian immigrants are beginning to see unprecedented growth in both population and political clout.

"In 2000, I was the convention chair of the National Asian American Bar Association. It was held in D.C., and we broke all records. We had 500 lawyers getting together in the same town, and we had a budget of over \$300,000. We thought that was big time," Keam said.

"In 2012, same town, same convention, but this year the event drew 1,700 lawyers and had a budget of \$1.6 million," Keam said. "What that tells you is something about both the physical growth and the economic clout of Asians, because of the money spon-



Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49) at the Democratic Committee Headquarters in Annandale.

PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/CENTRE VIEW

sors were willing to spend targeting our community."

Lopez pointed out that since 2000 Latino voter participation in the Commonwealth of Virginia has gone up between 1 and 3 percent every election cycle. Currently, there are 683,000 Latinos in Virginia, and approximately 183,000 of those are eligible voters, according to the State Board of Elections.

According to the 2010 decennial census, between 2000 and 2010, Latino voter registration increased by 75 percent in Virginia, one of highest increases in country.

"This is something that really blew me away," Lopez said. "The average age of the Latino citizen is 15 years old. Think about what that means in two years and four years and eight years. You're going to see a huge increase in Latino registered voters."

Lopez said the increasing percentage of Virginia's Latinos and immigrant voters make him hopeful that the political polarization regarding immigration reform will diminish.

"There's something huge about what's happening in the Commonwealth," Lopez said. "The demographic shifts coming to Virginia will wipe out the effects of the short-sighted anti-immigrant politicking we see now."

Chavez said it's just smart—politically and economically—to create a pathway to citizenship for young immigrants. "We're relying on their talent and skills. It's not just a Latino concern. . . . It helps the economy and makes America stronger for everyone."

"Like the program says 'it's the new normal.' Get used to it. Embrace it," Chavez said.

Overcoming Barriers

FROM PAGE 9

torn scenes of Libya or Syria, it brings back flashes of memory. I never saw actual tanks roll in, but we heard bombs going off. There were times when we would go through the markets of Vietnam, and we had seen Buddhist monks self-immolating in political protests—just awful.

After seeing things like that, it wasn't real to us until that day my mom said pack up.

The families at the compound got in the cars, and drove to this little airport. As we're leaving in the helicopter, we look back and I see my dad standing behind the chicken-wire fence.

KEAM SAID HE EVENTUALLY reconstructed what happened to his father through relative's stories and his father's testimony.

My father was stranded on the rooftop, and he was arrested by the Viet Cong. He had two marks against him. One was that he was a religious leader in a communist country. Another mark was that he served in the South Korean military, even though he was a chaplain.

We were taken back to Seoul, and there were so many rumors. We heard that my father was killed, or that he was in prison, or that he made it but he's not coming back. We had absolutely no way to understand this. . . .

When we arrived back in Korea, we had zero, nothing. No one was doing well. My mother found a one-bedroom apartment in Seoul. My mom had never finished high school let alone college. As a woman, she had no way of having meaningful employment, being a single mother with three kids. . . . So my mother went to churches and to ex-military friends and it was those people who supported us, not the government. I never asked her, and she never talks about it, but I believe the only way she fed us every single day, is that she begged and went to charities and welfare groups. That was the year I became an adult and lost my childhood innocence.

KEAM SPOKE ENGLISH AND FRENCH, but not much Korean. Back at school in Seoul, he was bullied and treated as a special-needs student. He said that terrible year transformed him in ways that make him the person he is today.

I preach this all the time, discrimination is discrimination no matter who is doing it to whom. My life's mission is to fight against discrimination. I am also passionate about literacy. I serve on the board of Virginia Literacy Foundation, a nonprofit founded by former Virginia First Lady Jeannie Baliles to ensure that everyone has essential reading and writing skills they need to succeed.

After what Keam considers the worst year of his life, assuming his father was never coming home, feeling out of place in his native country, his family got another surprise. His father returned home, showing up on their doorstep out of the blue.

"That's a story for another time, how we eventually got here," Keam said.

THE REST OF THE STORY, ABRIDGED: After reuniting with his father, Keam's family then moved to Australia, where his father established another church before eventually moving to California.

Keam received a political science degree from the University of California at Irvine, and had a chance to live in Falls Church while working as a college intern. After receiving a law degree from Hastings College of the Law, Keam returned to Virginia where he met and married Alex Seong Keam, also an attorney. The Keams have two children, Tyler, a Cub Scout, and Brenna, a Brownie. Both children attend Mosby Woods Elementary School in Fairfax.

As a part-time citizen-legislator, Keam, who is known as the most prolific member of the General Assembly on Twitter @markkeam, maintains a year-round office in Vienna in addition to his Richmond office. When the General Assembly is not in session, Keam serves as senior advisor for strategic affairs at Verizon; he has worked at Verizon since 2007. Before that, for six years, he served as chief counsel to the Assistant Senate Majority Leader Dick Durbin on the Senate Judiciary Committee. Before working on Capitol Hill, Keam worked at the Small Business Administration, and had also served as an attorney with the Federal Communications Commission's Wireless Bureau.

HOLIDAY ENTERTAINMENT

Email announcements to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com. Photos welcome.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 19

Winter Choral Concert. The Centreville High School Choral Department presents "Celebrate the Season: A Winter Choral Concert" at 7:30 p.m. in the Roy A. Skip Maiden Theatre at Centreville High School. Free to students with valid I.D. and \$5 for general public.

SATURDAY/DEC. 22

Holiday Open House. Noon-5 p.m. at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter, 4500 W. Ox Road, Fairfax. Tour the adoption wing while enjoying refreshments and learning about the many volunteer opportunities. 703-830-1100.

THROUGH DEC. 24

Fair Oaks Enchanted Ice Palace Holiday Tradition. Open during all Fair Oaks regular and holiday hours. Fair Oaks' Ice Palace features a 30-foot ice dome with falling snow, interactive multi-sensory elements, larger-than-life snow globes, Ice Throne and light show beneath twinkling icicles descending from Fair Oaks' 65-foot Grand Court atrium. New this year will be showcases of the beloved prehistoric herd from the family film Ice Age: Continental Drift. The 1,200 square foot Ice Palace will culminate with a visit to Santa and a complimentary Ice Age gift. Fair Oaks will also celebrate the eight days of Hanukkah with a display adjacent to the Ice Palace featuring the history and significance of the dreidel (sevivonim). Free and open to the public. Visit www.ShopFairOaksMall.com or call 703-279-2708. Fair Oaks Grand Court, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall.

THROUGH JAN. 6, 2013

Bull Run Festival of Lights. This



Fair Oaks Enchanted Ice Palace.

Ice Palace

Through Monday, Dec. 24 — open during all Fair Oaks regular and holiday hours Fair Oaks Grand Court, 11750 Fair Oaks Mall, Fairfax. Fair Oaks' Ice Palace holiday tradition features a 30-foot ice dome with falling snow, interactive multi-sensory elements, larger-than-life snow globes, Ice Throne and light show beneath twinkling icicles descending from Fair Oaks' 65-foot Grand Court atrium. New this year will be showcases of the prehistoric herd from the family film Ice Age: Continental Drift. The 1,200 square foot Ice Palace will culminate with a visit to Santa and a complimentary Ice Age gift. Free and open to the public. Visit www.ShopFairOaksMall.com or call 703-279-2708.

event features more than two miles of holiday light displays, food, fire pits for marshmallow roasting, carnival rides, hay rides and Santa's Enchanted Lights. The light show is open Monday through Thursday, 5:30-9:30 p.m. and Friday through Sunday and holidays, 5:30-10 p.m.

Admission is \$15 per car Monday through Thursday; \$20 per car Friday through Sunday and holidays. At Bull Run Regional Park located at 7700 Bull Run Drive, Centreville. Visit www.bullrunfestivaloflights.com or call 703-359-4633.

BULLETIN BOARD

Email announcements to centreview@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday at noon. Photos welcome.

TUESDAYS AND/OR THURSDAYS

Senior Fall Prevention Classes.

1:30-2:30 p.m. Classes are held in a heated indoor pool and are designed to work on balance and core muscles in order to prevent injuries and falls. At The Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Dr. Registrations are required. Call 703-667-9800 to register as space is limited. Cost is \$10 per class.

MONDAY/DEC. 24

Christmas Eve Services. St. Peter's in the Woods Episcopal Church, 5911 Fairview Woods Dr., Fairfax Station, will hold Christmas Eve services. Holy Eucharist with choral ensemble and living crèche at 5:30 p.m., special music at 7 p.m. and Holy Eucharist with choral ensemble at 7:30 p.m. Nursery care available for the 5:30 p.m. service. Call 703-503-9210 or visit www.spw.org.

ONGOING

Respite Care Volunteers. Give a family caregiver of a frail, older adult a break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment or have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for a few hours each

month. Volunteers are matched with families in or near their own neighborhoods in Fairfax County. Support and training is provided. Contact Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm.

Advocates. The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program needs volunteer advocates for residents in assisted living and nursing facilities throughout the area. Training is provided. Call 703-324-5861, TTY 711 or email Lisa.Callahan@fairfaxcounty.gov. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/ltombudsman/vol_ombud_program.htm.

Volunteers Needed. Our Neighbor's Child is coordinating holiday assistance (gifts of new toys and new clothing) for children of families in financial crisis in Centreville, Chantilly and Western Fairfax. Assistance is made possible each year through the generous support of local churches, schools, businesses, and individuals. ONG needs help more than ever from groups or individuals willing to "adopt" the special needs of local children. The number of requests for winter coats/jackets and other warm clothing is high again this year. Contact Stephanie Somers at somerss@cox.net. For volunteer opportunities or to make a monetary donation, visit www.ourneighborschild.org.

White House Ornament Sale. The Western Fairfax County Woman's Club is selling 2012 White House Christmas ornaments. This year's ornament honors William Howard Taft. This ornament features President and Mrs. Taft delivering Christmas presents in a White Steamer automobile. The ornaments cost \$19. Proceeds benefit charity. Order by calling 703-378-6841 or 703-378-6216. It is possible to order previous years' ornaments.

Pleasant Valley Preschool, a non-profit cooperative preschool located in the Greenbriar Community Center, has limited openings for 4- and 5-year-olds on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. 4615 Stringfellow Road. Call 703-378-6911 or visit www.pleasantvalleypreschool.com.

Congregation Yad Shalom in Centreville provides a variety of activities in a traditional format with a modern flair. We welcome interfaith couples who wish to participate, and openly invite inquiries about a range of programs offered for the entire family. Contact the Congregation at 703-579-6079, or visit www.yadshalom.com.

The Chantilly Academy Auto Technology and Auto Collision Repair classes are looking for used cars as donations to the program. Contact Ann Booker at 703-227-3041 or Kenny Brown at 703-222-7466.

Northern Virginia Neighbors Club. Meet members at one of the monthly luncheons, coffees or mixers. Email nvn156@yahoo.com.

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CENTRE VIEW

Group Provide Stockings to ONC Families

FROM PAGE 1

do it again, the following year. And this time, some members of her church, Fairfax Church of Christ, wanted to help, too. So in 2006, they made 150 stockings.

"We filled them with little toys and games that we'd give our own kids," said Forgione. "We bought dominos, crayons, sidewalk chalk, yo-yos, Legos, bubble wands, etc."

All the toys are new, and each stocking is about 17 inches tall and 5 inches wide. "We buy Christmas fabric and have 'elves' who sew all year 'round," said Forgione. "Our signature toy is a new Beanie Baby that we put at the top of every stocking."

Meanwhile, the project continued growing. "People kept bringing toys to church for me, especially after Christmas when there were sales," said Forgione. "They assumed we'd keep doing the stockings so, on Sundays, I'd find bags of toys on my pew."

Finally, in 2007, they turned it into a non-profit called "A Child's Joy." Initially, all the volunteers – some 150 people – were from the church.

The same number of people are still involved, but now the volunteers include members of the community and range from children to senior citizens.

Eventually, the group began contributing stockings to ONC and, at one point, Forgione put an ad on the "Create the Good" section of the AARP Web site. "I asked for women to sew or to send me the Beanie Babies they'd collected and saved – in mint condition," she said. "Last year, one man who'd collected over 1,000 Beanie Babies as an investment – and had them sitting in bins in his basement – donated them all to us."

On Dec. 8 – stockings sewn and toys pur-



Michael and Denise Forgione of "A Child's Joy."

Part of the stocking-stuffing assembly line for "A Child's Joy."



PHOTOS COURTESY OF KELLY LAVIN

chased – she and her volunteers formed two assembly lines at the ONC warehouse and stuffed 1,200 stockings in one hour. "We buy the toys and sew the stockings all year 'round, but gather together to stuff them all on one day," said Forgione. "Then we give them to the organizations we've promised them to, that same day."

This year, 900 stockings went to ONC; 100 to Shelter House for the Katherine Hanley and Patrick Henry homeless shelters; 100 to the Laurel Learning Center in Reston for low-income children; and 100 to area churches.

Forgione's husband Michael is Board of Directors president of A Child's Joy, and she's the secretary/treasurer and toy manager. "I love to hunt down new toys," she said. "But I couldn't run this without

Michael. We like each other's company and working together.

He helps me inventory the toys and lug them to the stuffing site."

The effort also brings back fond memories to Forgione. "There were six of us at home and, when I was young, my mom hand-knitted my stockings," she said. "And that was my favorite part of Christmas."

She also enjoys Stuffing Day and so do her volunteers. "Many wear reindeer antlers and Santa hats while they do it," said Forgione. "There's Christmas music and they're happy – it's part of their Christmas tradition. It does as much for them as for the children receiving the stockings."

And this year, a 7-year-old Chantilly girl named Rylee made her own contribution. "She told me, 'I have something for you,'

and she gave me her allowance – \$1.30 – saying, 'This is so you can buy more toys next year,'" said Forgione. "I was so touched."

To donate to the organization for the purchase of the toys and Christmas fabric for the stockings, go to www.achildsjoy.org.

Toughest, said Forgione, is "knowing that all we can give these families are stockings, when there's so much more they need – like food – and it breaks your heart." But she's pleased to bring whatever joy she can to their children.

"After we stuff all the stockings, Michael and I go home, put up our tree and start the season," she said. "Then we love waking up Christmas morning, knowing there are children who have stockings that might otherwise have nothing."

Family Services Gives Christmas Presents to Families

FROM PAGE 1

It's also where the 68 caseworkers come to pick out the gifts which they'll deliver to the particular families they serve. But, said Ryan, "This wouldn't be possible without John Beatty's and Beatty Management Co.'s support of and belief in our programs."

Northern Virginia Family Services offers "Training Skills," a 23-week job-training program for both unemployed and underemployed individuals. It provides emergency financial and food assistance and runs

the 92-bed Serve shelter in Manassas. In addition, said Ryan, "We have Head Start and early Head Start programs, plus we offer our clients life-skills and financial-management programs." As for the gifting effort, it began in October when Northern Virginia Family Services sent out a holiday-appeal letter to its regular donors and also put it on its Web site. "We asked for food and gift cards for our Operation Turkey Thanksgiving Food program," said Ryan. "We also asked people to consider donat-

ing new toys or gift cards for Christmas, as well." In return, she said, "We got a tremendous response from our thousands of individual and corporate donors. For example, many companies will do a gift card or toy drive for us."

Northern Virginia Family Services got into its Chantilly space Dec. 10 so donors could drop off their toys and gifts there. "We've got a full team of about 50 volunteers that sorts the gifts into categories by age and gender," said Ryan. "That makes it easier

for the caseworkers to come in and select the specific presents for the families with which they work. They know them best, so they know what the children would like to receive." Volunteers include people and companies from the community, as well as students from Westfield High. But the Gifting program is only one of the many things the agency does for its clients. To learn more about its work or to volunteer for any of its programs anywhere in the area, go to www.nvfs.org.

ROUNDUPS

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, Dec. 27, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station, 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians

may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

Embezzlement Is Charged

City of Fairfax police have charged a Chantilly man with stealing from his employer. He is Kenneth Wayne Kirby, 33, of Rockland Village Drive. According to police,

on Nov. 29, managers of the Auto Zone at 10960 Fairfax Blvd. in Fairfax reported that an employee had been taking merchandise from the business without paying for it, then selling these items and keeping the proceeds for himself.

Following an investigation, Kirby was charged with felony embezzlement and was arrested Dec. 3 at the business.

He was later released from the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center on personal recognizance.

Animal Shelter Open House

The Fairfax County Animal Shelter is holding a holiday open house Saturday, Dec. 22, from noon-5 p.m., at 4500 West Ox Road in Fairfax. The Shelter's offering a free spay or neuter for the first 100 cats, kittens, dogs or puppies adopted from it through Dec. 31; call 703-830-1100.

SPORTS

CENTRE VIEW SPORTS EDITOR JON ROETMAN
703-224-3015 OR JROETMAN@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Centreville Girls' Basketball Starts 7-0

The Centreville girls' basketball team continued its winning ways and undefeated season this week, scoring runaway victories over South County (75-40) on Dec. 11 and Washington-Lee (74-50) on Dec. 14.

Leading the scoring for each game were Jenna Green (21 and 18 points, respectively); Ashley Brusick (12 and 15 points); and Chrissy Jacksa (eight and nine points).

The Wildcats faced Marshall on Tuesday, after Centre View's deadline. Centreville will travel to face Forest Park on Friday, Dec. 21.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Centreville resident Presley Egbers, a quarterback, was selected to compete for Virginia in the FBU National Championship, a youth football tournament for seventh- and eighth-graders featuring 64 teams from across the country.

Centreville Indoor Track and Field

The CVHS Wildcats opened their indoor season with a tri-meet at Episcopal High School in Alexandria on Dec. 1. Seven Centreville athletes scored during the event.

Seo Hee Im finished fourth in both the girls' long and triple jumps. Senior Sydney Evans also scored in two events, with a victory in the 55-meter hurdles and a third-place finish in the high jump.

Andrew Ridenour placed in two events for the Wildcat boys' team with a fourth-place finish in the 55-meter dash and a second-place finish in the 300-meter dash. Michael Bishop also scored for the team in the 300 with a fourth-place finish. Dean Dickinson and Fernando Muzo placed second and third, respectively, in the 500-meter dash.

Maya Munoz won the girls' 1000-meter run with an indoor personal best.

The following weekend, Centreville hosted the Centreville Winter Challenge, which consists of indoor events run in an outdoor setting. Nine teams attended the meet, with strong squads from Langley winning the boys' contest and Woodbridge capturing the girls' title. Events were scored through eighth place.

The host team had a first-place finish from senior sprinter Mike Wright, who won the 300-meter dash. Second-place finishers were Sydney Pryor in the girls' triple jump, Young Bin Jin in the boys' triple jump, Sydney Evans in the girls' high jump and the boys' 4x800 'A' relay (Chase Heiner, Bobby Dunn, Chan Young Lee, Brady Madden). Third-place finishers were Young Bin Jin in the Long Jump, Im in the girls' triple jump, Bella Muzo and Calvin Jones in the 500 meters, the girls' 4x800 relay (Natalie King, Colette Rizzi, Muzo, McKinsey Smith) and both girls' (King, Muzo, Smith, Rebecca Vinter) and boys' 4x400 meter relay teams. Fourth-place finishers were Evans in the 55-meter hurdles, Andrew Ridenour in the 55-meter Dash and Dunn in the 3200. Kayley Bogemann (1600), Michael Bishop (500) and Lee (3200) placed fifth in their events. Sixth-place finishers were Mikael Mantis (triple jump), Ridenour (long jump), Dickinson (1000), Gabby Pereks (3200). Seventh place included Evans (long jump), Wali Miller (1600), Hannah Huggins (3200). Also scoring for CVHS were eighth-place finishers M. Smith (1600) and Joanna Ahn (1000).

Centreville Swim and Dive

The Centreville swim and dive teams went up against Herndon on Dec. 7.

Centreville first-place finishers were: Brooke Worley (200 free), Abby McCranie (50 free), Paul Baumgartner (diving), Abby McCranie (100 free), Shannon O'Donnell, Logan Ross, Brooke Worley, Abby McCranie (200 free relay), Jonathan Clark (100 back), Tae Hyun Jung (100 breast), Brooke Worley,

Mackenzie Cripe, Logan Ross and Abby McCranie (400 free relay).

Wildcat second-place finishers were: Jonathan Clark, Tae Hyun Jung, Matthew Rice, Andy Balberde (200 medley relay); Mackenzie Cripe, Shannon O'Donnell, Katie Schwindt, Esther Lee (200 medley relay); Wonjae Lee (200 free), Logan Ross (200 IM), Andy Balberde (50 free), McKenzie Istin (diving), Wonjae Lee (100 fly), Ryan Boll (100 free), Tae Hyun Jung, Andy Balberde, Matthew Rice, Jonathan Clark (200 free relay), Esther Lee (100 back), Logan Ross (100 breast).

Third-place finishers were: Tae Hyun Jung (200 IM), Esther Lee (50 free), Tyler Kurowski (diving), Sarah Hessler (diving), Katie Schwindt (100 fly), Brooke Worley (100 free), Mackenzie Cripe (500 free), Sarah Hessler (100 breast), Ryan Boll, Patrick Muradaz, Brent Rushing and Wonjae Lee (400 free relay).

Fourth-place finishers were: Alex Aguilera, Patrick Goldhammer, David Weisdrot, Wesley Orlosky (200 medley relay), Ryan Boll (200 free), Morgan Cripe (200 free), Shannon O'Donnell (200 IM), Jonathan Clark (50 free), Kelsey Daily (50 free), Patricia Escueta (diving), Andy Balberde (100 free), Mark Mahoney (500 free), Kelsey Daily (500 free), Brent Rushing, Esteban Molina, Tae Wan Kin, Patrick Muradaz (200 free relay), Patrick Goldhammer (100 breast), Shannon O'Donnell (100 breast), Sarah Clark, Esther Lee, Katie Schwindt and Tea Leitch (400 free relay).

Westfield Girls' Basketball Starts 5-1

After dropping its season opener against South Lakes, the Westfield girls' basketball team won its fifth straight, beating Broad Run, 57-38, on Dec. 14.

According to stats from the Washington Post's website, Emily McNamara led Westfield with 13 points. Jules Abruzzo finished with 12 points and Meghan DiPippa added 11.

Westfield hosted Langley on Tuesday, after Centre View's deadline. The Bulldogs will host the Bulldog Bash Holiday Tournament Dec. 27-29.

Westfield Boys' Basketball Improves to 4-2

The Westfield boys' basketball team defeated Annandale, 62-47, on Dec. 11, improving its record to 4-2. According to stats from the Washington Post's website, C.J. Hill led Westfield with 17 points. Trevon Walton added 10 points.

Westfield traveled to face Langley on Tuesday, after Centre View's deadline. The Bulldogs will host Middleburg Academy at 5:45 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 20.

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Touching For Sure, But Not Always



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Usually, but not always, when I show for my scheduled post-chemotherapy/post-scan appointment with my oncologist, I am physically examined (touching, feeling). Recently, due to some enhanced computer and facility upgrades, I was shown the actual scans, digitized. However, on more than one occasion over the last 18 months or so, after we discussed the results of my most recent CT Scan – and lab work, no physical exam was performed. Apparently, as I later learned, the good results from my scan sort of trumps any need to feel for physical manifestations. Meaning, that if the scan shows no tumor growth or movement, it stands to reason – medically speaking, that corollary-type symptoms/indications/abnormalities would not occur/be present. To simplify even more, there's no need for a "pre-operative grope," to quote Dr. Hawkeye Pierce from an episode of M*A*S*H, if the diagnostic test shows there's nothing to "grope."

On balance then, the doctor's not examining me is good news, generally, presumably; at least that's how he explained it to me. It's a professional version of "Why bother?" There's nothing to see so he doesn't have to take a look. I can live with that. Still, I remember the first appointment I had with my oncologist when he didn't examine me (he always asks questions though); before I sort of realized that I hadn't been examined, I was already in my car driving home. I said aloud to my wife, Dina: "He didn't even examine me!" I felt cheated somehow, as if I didn't get my co-pay's worth. I called my nurse the next day to complain and express my curiosity/anxiety about why it was that my oncologist had not touched/ tested me for any physical reactions/signs as he had on all previous appointments.

My doctor did not call back if I recall, but I believe my nurse did, with some tepid reassurance. However, on my next appointment with my oncologist, we discussed the reason why I hadn't been examined during the previous appointment. He said there is a debate within the medical profession about this very subject. If the scans are encouraging and show no appreciable tumor growth and/or movement, the patient's body will likely not exhibit any signs to the contrary. Ergo, physically examining the patient is sort of redundant. However, my concern that something wasn't done to me (physically examined by my doctor) is not uncommon, my doctor said, and causes patients to have a not-expected reaction: skepticism. The perception by us patients is that the doctors are not in fact doing everything they're supposed to be doing, "Hippocratically" speaking. The doctors might know better, and know the facts, but when dealing with us patients, there are feelings to consider. And if the patient's feelings are not considered during this fairly intimate doctor-patient relationship, then the facts, clear as they may be, may fall on deaf ears. This is the quandary – as it was explained to me; examine a patient who you know (from their most recent diagnostic scan) is not experiencing any negative reactions (to their disease) or, don't examine the patient and cause a negative emotional reaction by not physically examining them. And as any of us terminal patients will attest, there's a fine line to be straddled between positive and negative thoughts and interpretations and how they affect the patient. Maybe, reassuring the patient might be more important than following protocol?

As much as I want to be a patient patient, the longer I survive, the more impatient and paranoid I'm becoming. I want to enjoy the good news, really I do, but sometimes I can't. Damn cancer.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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Community Feast Gathers Neighbors for Fellowship

Mount Olive Baptist Church hosted about 100 of its neighbors and special guests at its second Annual Community Feast on Dec. 8. Members served up hot holiday meals to families, offered a winter clothes closet for men and women, and celebrated with liturgical dances and songs of the season.

“The Community Feast is a time for those who enjoy bounty in their lives and those who are experiencing drought and famine in our community, to eat, talk, fellowship, and celebrate together,” said the Rev. Dr. Eugene Johnson, Pastor of the Mount Olive Baptist Church.



The Rev. Dr. Eugene Johnson, pastor of the Mount Olive Baptist Church, greets guests arriving for the church's Second Annual Community Feast.



The Annual Community Feast is a time of service and fellowship for Mount Olive Baptist Church members and guests.

PHOTOS BY
B. DENISE HAWKINS
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From left are JoAnna Goldberg, director of marketing at Storage Village Self Storage, and Terri Kelly, manager of WFCM's Food Pantry, accepting the Thanksgiving Food for WFCM clients.

Storage Village Donates Dinners

Storage Village said "Thank You" to its community by helping to ensure that each of its neighbors could enjoy a Thanksgiving meal. Through its "Room for Dinner" campaign, Storage Village fed 86 families in the Baltimore-Washington area that would otherwise be unable to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner.

Through the annual Room For Dinner initiative, Storage Village donated a Thanksgiving meal to a family in need for each unit rented Nov. 1-15.

Each Storage Village location partners with an organization that directly meets the most pressing needs of the storage's immediate community. The local Storage Village partnered with Western Fairfax Christian Ministries.