Hats Off to the Class of 2017

Centreville High School’s Class of 2017 throws their caps in the air as the ceremony ends.

Farewell to Westfield High

Reminiscing Reema, 10 Years Later

‘Music to Do Good And Help People’
Remembering Reema, 10 Years Later

By Bonnie Hobbs

Westfield High 2006 grad and Virginia Tech victim Reema-Samaha loved both theater and dance, both of which range from funny to deeply serious and moving. And the 10th annual Remembrance Cabaret in her honor contained all these emotions within skits, songs and dances. It was held Saturday, June 17, on the Westfield stage where Reema once acted in shows such as “Fiddler on the Roof” and “Arsenic and Old Lace.” And making it even more special was the fact that – as has been the case each year – participating in the cabaret were both Westfield alumni and dancers from Virginia Tech’s Contemporary Dance Ensemble (CDE), with whom Reema used to perform.

However, the emotional highlight of the evening came when the four people who’ve been Westfield’s theater directors joined together at the podium. There, Scott Pafumi, the school’s first theater director – from 2000-2010 – read the senior essay he’d had Reema write, reflecting on her time in Westfield Theater and her hopes for the future. Standing next to him were former Westfield directors Zoe Dillard and Susie Pike and current director Rachel Harrington – who was a Westfield student when Reema was and who also performed in the cabaret.

The event raises money for the Reema J. Samaha Memorial Scholarship Fund, as well as Angel Fund, which supports the safety and wellbeing of youth and school-aged children. And at the end of Saturday’s show, Reema’s father, Joe Samaha, addressed the crowd. He noted all the work Angel Fund has done in the past decade to make schools safer. And he praised its past president, Lu Ann McNabb, for getting four pieces of legislation passed toward that end, during her tenure. In the past 10 years, said Samaha, “We’ve given about $60,000 in scholarships to Westfield and Herndon high school students and $15,000 to $16,000 to Actively Caring 4 People,” a positive-reinforcement program in schools. He also expressed gratitude toward CDE
Remembering Reema

From Page 2

and the Westfield theater alumni who’ve returned every year to honor his daughter, including sisters Ashley and Phoebe Dillard who produce and direct the annual cabaret. Said Samaha: “To all of you who’ve come back each year and supported us, our heartfelt thanks.”

Also speaking was Reema’s mother, Mona Samaha. “Besides the hardship of losing Reema, we’ve learned that love is the essence of life,” she said. “And these remembrance events have been so special because they’ve been full of loving, giving and receiving. [And through them all], Reema is still alive and kicking.”
Westfield High School's Class of 2017 during graduation at the Eagle Bank Arena at George Mason University.

Westfield Chamber Singers perform during graduation.

Westfield High Graduates 610 Students

A mid pomp and circumstance and a sea of black and gold, Westfield High School's Class of 2017 held its 16th commencement ceremony for 610 students at the Eagle Bank Arena at George Mason University in Fairfax on Thursday, June 15.

School Principal Dr. Anthony Copeland presented several statistics about the class of 2017, namely that the class received $2,271,920 in scholarships, had 14 Cappies nominations for theater, had two National Merit Scholars, 110 Summa Cum Laude graduates (students with 4.0 GPAs or higher), eight Governor's School attendees, and nine students who will be attending U.S. Service Academies (Naval, Air Force, Military, Coast Guard, etc).

On top of that, the Westfield Bulldogs football team won the state championship Group 6A this year.

Student graduates who were singled out for excellence include: Pride Award winner Andrew Ssekikubo, and Carolyn Ziegler who won both the Leader of the Pack Award and the Student Award.

— Steve Hibbard

Westfield graduates Derek Knodt, Evan Kohnstam and Lauren Kohout.

Westfield graduates Gracie Wright, Orville E. Wright, Joel Yang, and Christine Yoon.

Westfield graduates Nick Jiang, Lilly Johnson, and Chase Johnson.

Westfield graduates Alan Zhai, Camilla Zhang, Lingyi Zhu, and Lucinda Zhu.

Westfield graduates Israt Jahan and Yash Jain.
‘Music to Do Good and Help People’

Project Joy will provide an income for Zambian orphans.

By Bonnie Hobbs

When Don Halterman was the praise and worship director at Centreville Presbyterian Church, he went on a mission trip to Zambia in 2012. And although he returned home to his life here, the orphans he’d met there stayed on his mind.

A musician, he was determined to better their lives in some way. And now, through a new venture called Project Joy — via which these children will perform and sell their original songs — he intends to do just that. But it’ll take some help from others to bring it to fruition, and he’s hoping members of the community will open their hearts and wallets to lend a hand.

“When I went to Zambia, I fell in love with the orphans there and became passionate about helping them,” said Halterman. “And since retiring from my position at Centreville Presbyterian, two-and-a-half years ago, I’ve wanted to start my own music company. But I wanted to do meaningful music that impacts the world — which is my company’s mission statement.”

So he and the three others in the company, Grander Music — Centreville residents Kent Washburn and John Nixon, plus photographer Anders Arestad of Front Royal — looked for artists and organizations to promote, in line with their goal. Their vision statement is “Rite place, right people, write music.”

Halterman said the word “rite” is used as signifying a sacred spot. “We believe that God put us [the right people] together to do this — write music that can do good and help people,” he said. “What makes the music meaningful is its impact in the world after we create it.”

He returned to Zambia in 2014 and started singing with the orphans there and helping them write songs. “I loved the way they sang so joyfully and passionately,” he said. “Their voices were untrained, but really beautiful.”

The following year, Halterman went back again. Accompanying him was Centreville’s Cathy Baker, a board member of Every Orphan’s Hope (EOH) — a national group that sponsors Zambian orphans and builds villages in Zambia. “I worked with the kids, see ‘Music to do’. Page 12

In their music studio are (back row, from left) Don Halterman and Kent Washburn and (front row, from left) John Nixon and Anders Arestad.

The orphans gather around Don Halterman and his guitar to learn new music.
Losing One of Our Own

Worst fear of any parent of a teenager: losing a child to violence.

Later this week, when area Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan, a month of observance and daily fasting at Eid al-Fitr, the surrounding community grieves with them the loss of 17-year-old Nabra Hassanen of Reston.

Nabra was among a group of teenagers who were gathered at the All Dulles Area Muslim Society for an all-night event overnight Saturday during Ramadan, and who were returning to the center after going to eat at a fast food restaurant.

Fairfax County Police report: “At about 3:40 a.m. on Sunday, a group of as many as 15 teenagers was walking and riding bikes along Dranesville Road. The group of teens had been attending an overnight event at a mosque, the All Dulles Area Muslim Society or ADAMS Center, and had left to go to a fast food restaurant. As they were returning to the mosque, some were on the sidewalk and others were on the road itself. Detectives believe [Darwin Martinez Torres, 22, of Sterling] came upon the teens while he was driving. Investigation reveals a teenaged boy on a bike began arguing with Torres. Torres then drove his car onto the curb as the group scattered. Witnesses say Torres caught up with them a short time later in a nearby parking lot and got out of his car armed with a baseball bat and began chasing the group. Torres was able to catch Nabra. His anger over the encounter led to violence when he hit Nabra with a baseball bat. Torres then took Nabra with him in his car to a second location nearby in Loudoun County.”

Nabra’s body was found in a Loudoun pond. Torres is charged with her murder, which police describe as a road rage incident rather than a hate crime, although more charges could come later.

All parents who have successfully raised children into a teenagers know fear for their safety as they become more independent. We express our love to our teens to be safe participating in events based at a house of worship. We expect our teens to be safe from violence. Nabra’s death means that all of us now have a diminished sense of safety; we all grieve with Nabra’s parents, who lost their beautiful and beloved daughter during Ramadan, on Father’s Day. We share their horror at what their daughter suffered.

Coming together in support of the Muslim community in vigil, prayers and other support has meant a great deal.

Beyond Father’s Day

To the Editor:

“Remember the time when We took a covenant from the children of Israel: ‘You shall worship nothing but Allah and show kindness to parents and to kindred and the orphans and the poor, and spend. Sure these pressures of prayer, and pay the Zakat:’ then do not say much but when he look up to everyday. Adulthood can be scary at times but when I see my dad I am reminded that at his age and with everything he has gone through, if he can keep his relaxed stature then I sure can too! Fathers will always be there. It takes time for some of us to learn and appreciate that simple fact but at the end of the day we do not realize everything they do since they are the guardian of the house hold or the captain of the fort and how everyday they get up to keep that fort from falling down.”

Mary Kimm

Celebrating Ramadan

To the Editor:

Currently, Muslims in Northern Virginia and around the world are celebrating the holy month of Ramadan which started on May 27 (10 days earlier than last year) in correlation with the Lunar Calendar.

It was in this month that the holy scripture of Islam, the Quran, began to be revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims fast from dawn to sunset and abstain from food and water for this time. This fast is not just physical in nature but also requires them to shun any wrongdoing or bad habits.

The Holy Quran states: “O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may become righteous” (2:184). Therefore, the purpose of Ramadan is not only to abstain from food and drink, but to also practice self-restraint, focus on good deeds that help others and improve one’s spirituality, and understand the struggles of those less fortunate who do not have ample food and water available for them.

Shumaila Ahmad

Chantilly
Hats Off to Centreville’s Class of 2017

Centreville High School sends off its senior class at the Eaglebank Arena on June 16.

By Gretchen Kernbach
Centre View

Centreville High School’s Class of 2017 is ready for takeoff. Dressed in all light blue, Centreville sent off their most recent graduating class on June 16. The 549-student class, filled with 4.0 scholars, Division I athletes, musicians, future military and many more, showed nothing short of success.

The beginning of the ceremony included the presentation of the colors, national anthem, the pledge of allegiance and a welcoming statement from senior class administrator Amy Balint. Following that, Principal Dave Jagels gave encouraging words to the class.

Jagels discussed the value of hope, a trait he felt is often “underappreciated.” He continued, talking about the power of a thank you, inviting all educators from Centreville and in the audience to stand up for applause.

Then came the presentation of the Faculty award, which went to future UVA student Pooja Karandikar. Balint recognized Karandikar as “well respected, empathetic and a good listener,” someone who always encourages cooperation in the classroom.

The scholar address was given by Kourtni McNeil, who plans to study at Northwestern University this upcoming fall. Her speech revolved around being a pilot and flying through life. She implied that she’s “never flown a plane before,” but every day in high school was an added page to her flying manual.

McNeil also touched on the insignificance of getting lost, but rather focusing on the importance of “getting back where you need to go.” The end of her speech was met with a loud applause from her fellow classmates and audience alike.

This year’s guest speaker was Centreville 1994 graduate Curtis Taylor Jr., who went on to graduate from Purdue University. Right now, he serves as the executive vice president of Taylor Integrated Services 3.

“What do you say to the millennials who know everything,” said Taylor.

Taylor reflected on his time back at Centreville; a time with no cell phones and students would get in trouble for having pagers in class instead. He reminded graduates that they need to set high expectations for themselves, as each of them were created for a special purpose.

To the surprise of everyone in the auditorium, there was another message to be given by a special guest — Ludacris. Set up as a video, Ludacris gave a congratulatory message to the class of 2017, as he attended Centreville in 1993 for one year.

A musical performance was given by Karandikar and Kobie Turner, who did a medley of songs by Ryan Cabrera and The Beatles.

Graduating seniors wait in their seats for the ceremony to start.

Jack Dunn is studying music at Belmont University.

Cameron Stewart is attending Virginia Tech in the fall to study architecture.

Riley Prosser will be studying chemical engineering at the University of Delaware.

Lauren Fischer is heading to VCU in the fall as undecided.

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Graduating seniors wait in their seats for the ceremony to start.

By Gretchen Kernbach
Centre View

Graduating seniors wait in their seats for the ceremony to start.
Submit entertainment announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com. Calendar Deadline: Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

Art Guild of Clifton Exhibit. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St. Clifton. Includes oil paintings of European settings, doors, windows, and flower shops. Free. Call 703-409-0190 for more.

Carolina Shag Dance. Every Wednesday, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free. Lessons at 7:30 p.m., no partners needed; dinner menu at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are $8. Visit www.mvdag.org for more.


English Conversation Group

Storytime for Three to Fives.

Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Practice English Conversation Group. Saturdays, 3-5 p.m. at Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Drop in and enjoy casual conversation and learning for adult learners of English. Volunteer-led program. Call 703-830-2223.

English as Second Language Book Club. Mondays, 7:30 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English Conversation as a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Plant Clinic. Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. A neighborhood plant clinic with horticultural tips, information, techniques, and advice. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve.

ESL Book Club. Mondays, 7 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Adults learning English are welcome to meet and discuss a book chosen by the group. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Legos Kids Club. Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Thousands of Legos for children to play with. Ages 1-5 Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Starlight Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Centre Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Stories under the stars for ages 1-3 with adult. Free. Call 703-543-2030.

Whys and Whey of Dairy. 11 a.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Sully Road, Chantilly. The crafts will highlight the 18th century kitchen and house, and how dairy products were made in the days before big grocery stores and chilly refrigerator sections. $7. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site for more.

Holiday Crafts Day.

Spend an hour with a volunteer tutor to practice conversing in English. Friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve.

English Conversation Group

Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

English Conversation Group

Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.

Legos Block Party. Every other Tuesday, 3 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Legos will be provided for an afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve.

WEDNESDAY/JUNE 28

Keeping a Travel Sketchbook/ Journal. 7-8:30 p.m. in the Centre Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Bring the sketchbook and drawing material of choice. This is part of the The "Art at the Library" series which is held the fourth Wednesday of every month at Centre Regional Library, 7-8:30 p.m. Call 703-830-2223 for more.

JUNE 30-JULY 1

Yogs and Whey of Dairy. 1, 2 and 3 p.m. at the Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. Learn how dairy products used to be made before the days of big grocery stores and chilly refrigerator sections. $7. Call 703-437-1794 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully-historic-site for more.

TUESDAY/JULY 4

Holiday Crafts Day. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. The crafts will highlight the holiday and the railroads. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, $2; ages 16 and older, $4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

SUNDAY/JULY 16

NTWRK Scale Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. $4 for adults 16 and over and $2 for children 5-15. Call 703-978-7777 for more.

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Finding the Right Mentor

A mentor can brighten a young person’s future.

By Marilyn Campbell

Amyka Mason says that she was struggling with academics, finances and time management. She knew that she needed to make a change, but didn’t have a source for guidance. Mason discovered the Women in Search of Excellence (WISE) Mentoring Program run by Northern Virginia Community College and her life began to change.

“When I joined WISE, [I] was assigned [a] mentor and learned how to speak about the challenges I was facing and the goals I had,” said Mason. “[My mentor] helped me dramatically … plan for future events.”

The upcoming summer months offer teens an opportunity to connect with adults other than parents who can offer guidance through mentorship programs. Finding the right mentoring match can be a life-altering experience, say experts.

“Through supportive relationships with adult mentors, teens can learn how to develop practical goals, identify resources to accomplish goals ... regulate emotions, communicate effectively with others and cope better with stress,” said Jerome Short, Ph.D., associate professor of psychology at George Mason University.

The Virginia Mentoring Partnership (VMP) is a source for those who are looking for a mentor or those who want to mentor others. The organization’s program managers train mentoring program coordinators and mentors. Their goal is to increase the number and quality of mentoring programs in Virginia. VMP maintains a database where prospective mentors or mentees can plug in a ZIP code and find the closest mentoring program.

“We provide support across the State of Virginia to help align program practices that research shows make high quality mentorship programs,” said Betsy Bilharz, Virginia Mentoring Partnership. “We recruit, screen and match mentors with young people using that set of standards.”

Recognizing that a mentoring relationship is not usually a relationship of equals is an important aspect of mentorships, says Amy L. Best, Ph.D., professor and chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology at George Mason University. “There are really two types of mentors: those who provide guidance and willingly share knowledge they have accrued from their experience in the field,” she said. “The second type are those who facilitate opportunity, vouching for someone or helping the person with points of contact in their area of interest. Both are important.”

THE MENTORING RELATIONSHIP develops best when mentors listen to a young person’s concerns and expectations and empathize and tailor support and skill building around the teen’s needs and with their input, says Short. “The relationship should benefit both the mentor and the teen through expressions of gratitude, a sense of accomplishment, and expectations for future support and success.”

Effective mentors are as interested as they are interesting and are forthcoming with accounts of their own struggles and the strategies they used to overcome them, says Best. “The best mentors listen first and then lead. It’s not a one size fits all relationship,” she said. “The best mentors are concrete in their guidance and work with attainable and flexible goals. [They] don’t play favorites, but work to create an ethos of fairness and mutual respect.”

Tykesha R. Myrick works as a financial aid manager at Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and is the founder of the WISE program on campus. The program, which targets minority women, pairs students with adult professionals who offer guidance to the students, many of whom are the first in their families to attend college. “The relationships go beyond academic accomplishments and are life changing and life lasting,” said Myrick. “The goal is to provide a holistic environment for these young women.”

Mentorship programs such as WISE work best when those being mentored are receptive. “The [best] mentees [respect] the mentor’s gift of time [and] recognize the importance of learning by listening and ask thoughtful questions, and they are open and responsive to guidance,” said Best. “It is equally important to invest not simply in the best and brightest, but those with the smallest glimmer of promise. Good mentors move mountains.”
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PUBLIC NOTICE: Centrewood Dr.

5&7 Mobility, LLC proposes to build an 88 foot Bell Tower Communications Tower. The overall height of the tower will be 88 feet above ground level and the site is located at a ground elevation of 345 feet above mean sea level. No lighting is anticipated. The site location is 6400 Old Centreville Road, Centreville, Fairfax County. VA 20121 (38-46-33.1 N, 77-29-30.8 W). The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Antenna Structure Registration (ASR) Form 854 filing number is A108294.

ANNUAL PERMIT - Interested persons may review the application for this project at www.fcc.gov or applications by entering the filing number. Interested persons may raise environmental concerns about the project under the National Environmental Policy Act rules of the FCC. 47 CFR §1.1307, by notifying the FCC of the specific reasons that the action may have significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Requests for Environmental Review must be filed within 30 days of the date that notice of the project is published on the FCC’s website and may only raise environmental concerns. The FCC strongly encourages interested parties to file requests online at www.fcc.gov/environmentalReview, but paper requests can be sent to FCC Requests for Environmental Review, Attn: Barnes Williams, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20554. A copy of the request should be provided to CBRE, Inc. at 4 West Red Oak Lane, White Plains, NY 10604.

ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS - Interested persons may review the application for this project at www.fcc.gov or applications by entering the filing number. Interested persons may raise environmental concerns about the project under the National Environmental Policy Act rules of the FCC. 47 CFR §1.1307, by notifying the FCC of the specific reasons that the action may have significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Requests for Environmental Review must be filed within 30 days of the date that notice of the project is published on the FCC’s website and may only raise environmental concerns. The FCC strongly encourages interested parties to file requests online at www.fcc.gov/environmentalReview, but paper requests can be sent to FCC Requests for Environmental Review, Attn: Barnes Williams, 445 12th Street SW, Washington, DC 20554. A copy of the request should be provided to CBRE, Inc. at 4 West Red Oak Lane, White Plains, NY 10604.

Farewell to Centreville High

FROM PAGE 7

Frisby gave the presentation of the class gift which was a statue for the school’s stadium.

“I’m going to miss the people, friends and teachers, basically everyone who has impacted me over the past four years. Hopefully I will see them in the future,” said Molly Thames.

After the presentation of the candidates and diplomas, the class of 2017 traditionally threw their caps up in the air.

The graduates sit alphabetically before the ceremony begins.

An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.

- Werner Heisenberg

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From left are Jaqueline Blaise, Elizabeth Murphy and Dylan Cooper. The gold stoles represent Key Club membership.
‘Innovation of Flight’

The Steven Udvar-Hazy Center National Air and Space museum hosted its annual “Innovation of Flight,” one of two events in which the museum attracts in excess of 15,000 visitors. Pilots were on hand to talk about the aircraft which were on display from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. on Saturday, June 17. Visitors were allowed to walk on the tarmac on the exterior of the museum grounds which connect to Dulles International Airport. Fairfax County Police department’s helicopter was one of many helicopters on display for guests. Two of the crowd favorites were the F-16, and the C-17 which were on display for an up close personal experience for the guests. The C-17 (top) was left open so visitors could walk through and see first-hand how U.S. Military Service members are transported. The highlight of the day for many was seeing a B-2 Stealth Bomber (bottom) do two flyovers above the museum’s grounds.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers needed at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road, Fairfax Station. The Museum offers a variety of exciting volunteer opportunities in Museum events, programs and administration. Contact volunteer@fairfax-station.org or 703-945-7483 to explore services that will fit your schedule and interests. Visit www.fairfax-station.org, or call 703-425-9225 for more.

THURSDAY/JUNE 22

Fundraiser. Shop at a Whole Foods Market located inFair Lakes, Reston, Springfield, Tysons or Vienna and 5 percent of net sales will be donated to the Fairfax County Park Foundation to help Frying Pan Farm Park, Hidden Pond Nature Center, and other Fairfax County park programs.

SUPPORT TODAY

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singing songs and helping a couple of them write original songs, and Cathy recorded them,” said Halterman.

One in five Zambian children became orphans after that country’s AIDS epidemic; and in 25 percent of households there — some 625,000 — the primary caregiver is a child. And there’s such widespread poverty in Zambia that it’s extremely difficult for orphans to find a sustainable source of income.

“The Zambian community doesn’t support employment opportunities for the younger generation, so they have to find their own things to do,” said Halterman.

“So EOH works on sustainability projects for them, and I’m adding in my project to theirs.” (To see a video about it, go to https://www.gofundme.com/project-joy).

Via Project Joy, he plans to produce a full-fledged documentary on the entire process of teaching the children new, original songs, plus dances to their music. Then the goal is to have them perform their songs and dances at various community churches and functions throughout Zambia — but mainly in Lusaka, the capital and most-modernized part of the country.

“These kids have no money or material goods, yet they’re happier and more joyful than anyone in the U.S.,” said Halterman. “It just takes me aback. I believe it’s because of the joy of the Lord — only He can give it to you. We all have joy as humans; but when you connect it with God, it bursts out so other people can see it.”

Ironically, he said, when he was a boy in Sunday School, he remembers saying, “I’ll do anything for God; just don’t send me to Africa to be a missionary.” Said Halterman: “It was just the unknown, so it was scary to me then. So this project is God’s sense of humor.”

Basically, he said, “It’s tough over there. These kids have so little; their parents have either died of AIDS or left them. But I want them to have a sustainable, meaningful life so they can be part of the solution, not the problem.”

EOH supports more than 100 orphans there, and 25 have been identified as having the skills to perform the songs and dances. “We’ll produce seven, original songs — two of them written by one of the orphans and five written by me,” said Halterman.

“They’ll have reggae and island rhythms.”

They’ll be recorded as both a CD and a DVD, and people who donate at the Website, www.musicprojectjoy.com, will be able to download them. “It’s all tax-deductible because we teamed up with a nonprofit called PCI — Public Communications Inc. — which will collect the donations and send 100 percent of the money to Project Joy,” said Halterman.

“There are no salaries; but we need to raise $58,000 to help us travel to Zambia, produce the CDs and DVDs and prepare the kids to go out and perform.”

Then the orphans can both sell the CDs and perform for money, which will provide an income for them. On the DVDs, available to contributors, each song will be accompanied by a video.

“We plan to return to Zambia in August, for about two weeks, to do the project,” said Halterman. “The kids are excited about it; they love singing and interacting with others.

And I did the music tracks to go with their songs.”

He’s hoping people will contribute to the cause at the website because, unlike many other projects, this one will have an immediate, positive impact on the children’s lives. “They could do a concert the week after we leave,” he said. “And this is a way people can help kids in Africa, even if they can’t go there. They can still be an integral part of these orphans’ lives and really make a huge difference.”

Photos Courtesy of Don Halterman