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CMS Students Solidify Kindness In Annual Tour

By Cheryl Conway

Kindness rocked last week in Mt. Olive when second graders, teachers, staff and parents from Chester M. Stephens Elementary School in Budd Lake toured the landscape with their smiley faces.

Held on Friday, April 5, the 11th annual CMS Kindness Tour was a smashing success involving 108 second grade students, all the second grade teachers, several aides and school nurse. They loaded three buses with a chain of parents following in their cars. The chilly spring day did not stop the warmth along the way with stops to the Warren Haven Nursing Home, food pantry at the Trinity House in Hackettstown, Midnight Run, Budd Lake Post Office and then back to CMS for a celebratory lunch and rockpainting session with Pinot's Palette.

"It was heartwarming to see the children share in this hands-on experience," says Ann M. Scotland, second grade teacher and organizer of the CMS Kindness Tour.

"We went to the Warren Haven Nursing Home and sang songs of kindness to the grandmas and grandpas," describes Scotland. "This was led by music teachers Mrs. Lisa King and Mr. Chris King. After the children sang they visited with the elderly and gave them hand-made flowers.

"Next we went to the food pantry at the Trinity House in Hackettstown," continues Scotland. "The children brought canned goods that were collected from the CMS Family (entire school)... we brought about 1,000 cans. The children sorted and placed them on the shelves. We also gave them a gift card to be used at Shoprite. At that same location we visited with people that are part of an organization called The Midnight Run. Every two weeks this group goes into NYC to help the homeless. Our students decorated food bags with messages of love. We donated gift cards and supplies for them to utilize in their service.

"Our last stop was the post office to mail letters of gratitude to our troops," says Scotland. "After lunch back at the school Pinot's Palette came and the kids painted rocks. These rocks will be brought to the Goryeb Center at Morristown Memorial Children's Hospital for their courtyard and to East Brook Elementary School for their garden of healing."

Scotland says each student painted three rocks with messages of kindness.

"Some of the messages were "you rock", "It's your world", "be kind", "Love", "Smile"... or a simple heart/rainbow."

Every year during the tour, neighbors and even businesses create lawn signs to show support of the tour and motivate the tourists.

As a thank-you this year to all of the supporters, CMS will be selecting its favorite kindness sign with a \$100 reward. The winner will then get to select a charity in order to "pay it forward" and spread even more kindness.

Scotland had not yet identified the winner as of press time, as there were a lot of signs to choose from.

"I am not sure how many signs were out there," says Scotland after the tour. "Sunset Drive had one at almost every house."

As her final reflection from the day, Scotland shares: "We are so grateful for all of the helping hands and hearts that create this beautiful day. The reflection of this moment is heartwarming. It is our hope that the children will understand the power of one and even more so the power of many. Together we can make a difference blending all of our skills and talents with kindness. These boys and girls are our future, they are our hope. It is a lesson that will grow with time."

Photo Gallery

Welcome readers to the 15th issue of Mt. Olive Online. Get MO news online today! Advertise with us!

MO Online Seeks Real Life Stories Of Kindness

For 14 years, Chester M. Stephens Elementary School in Budd Lake has been encouraging its school community to engage in acts of kindness.

Second grade teacher Ann M. Scotland and her students at that time came up with the idea of Rainbow Connections and with that awareness of being kind to others grew.

"It was a simple unexpected moment in the classroom that turned into something life changing for me and in turn for all of my students thereafter," says Scotland.

"They saw "Rainbow Connections" in books they read, extended Rainbow Connections using writing skills, and recognized the importance of "Rainbow Connections" when collaborating with peers or simply playing on the playground," she explains.

From there, the Kindness Tour was created as a CMS 2nd Grade Field Trip. The current seniors at MOHS were the first to take such a journey.

Mt. Olive Online is extending this rainbow connection to the community of Mt. Olive and is inviting readers to submit real stories that they are engaged in or witness that involve an act of kindness. Acts can be as small as saying "thank-you" or holding a door open for a stranger, to mowing someone's lawn or cooking for a neighbor to larger good deeds like donating to a charity or volunteering at a soup kitchen.

In a recent post on the Mt. Olive Community Forum Facebook Page a man writes about a group of youngsters who found Flanders Park filled with trash one day. So they ventured out and volunteered their time to pick up the garbage at the local park. Stories like this go untold, and those behind the scenes go on unnoticed. By sharing these stories with the community, these acts of kindness can be recognized.

So starting this month, the same month of the annual CMS Kindness Tour, *Mt. Olive Online* will continue to share these wonderful stories that warm the heart and connect others to a kinder world.

Email editor@mtoliveonline.today those "kind" of stories.

Vigil Opens Door To Deeper Understanding And Relationship

By Cheryl Conway

A community prayer service held last month following the New Zealand Mosque shooting represents a positive step in standing up against hate and bigotry both near and far. Close to 300 members of the community gathered at Mt. Olive High School in Flanders Friday, March 22, at 7 p.m., to attend a community vigil and prayer service. Almost two hours long, the Vigil- Remembrance of New Zealand Shooting, was led and hosted by the Islamic Society of North Jersey based in Mt. Olive, members of the Muslim community and the Mt. Olive Interfaith Alliance. The event was originally set to be held at Turkey Brook Park, but due to the inclement weather, was moved to indoors.

The purpose of the vigil was to unite as one community to raise awareness against hate crimes, acts of violence, bigotry and racism against all groups of people. It was organized in response to the hate-filled terror attack that occurred a week prior on Friday March 15, against Muslim worshippers at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, killing at least 50 people and wounding 50 more.

Organizers were pleased with the turnout and community support. The mayor, chief of police, Morris County sheriff and Mt. Olive clergy were among those in attendance.

"I thought it was great; better than what we expected," says Mohsin Ansari, president of the Islamic Society of North Jersey Board. "It was a lot of positive support" by the "Mt. Olive community taking a stance against hate crimes." The purpose of the vigil was to build awareness of who Muslims are and take notice of what some of the atrocities are against the Muslim people, says Ansari, who has been associated with the Mt. Olive Clergy Association "to come up with a way of bridging the gap of different faiths" with a goal of "all working together."

Mayor Rob Greenbaum says "I thought the vigil was extraordinary. It was extremely gratifying to see so many residents of Mt. Olive supporting the local Muslim community. It was important in light of the mass shooting in New Zealand to let the local Muslim community understand that they are an important component of the township.

"Bias and prejudice whether based upon race, religion, sex, age or for any other reason cannot be tolerated both here and elsewhere," says Greenbaum.

Rev. Serena Gideon Rice, pastor of Abiding Peace Lutheran Church in Budd Lake, says "I was very pleased to see a strong showing of support for our Muslim neighbors, and to hear the consistent commitment to making Mt. Olive and Morris county safe and welcoming places for all people, recognizing the value of our diverse residents." Rice helped to organize the Mt. Olive Interfaith Alliance with the leaders from United Presbyterian Church of Flanders and the Islamic Society of North Jersey in 2017.

The service began with Imam Jawad Ahmed of Islamic Society of North Jersey leading members in prayer. An opening speech then followed, with additional remarks by several local leaders speaking out against acts of hate, violence and racism.

"When acts of hatred occur to be silent is to communicate that such hatred is acceptable," says Rice. "It is not. Gathering publicly to say that we all belong to each other, and that our community is stronger when we seek to understand and value each other, across our difference, is a necessary response to the voices and actions that seek to divide us. "I hope this vigil, and the continuing efforts of members of our community to reach out across religious, ethnic, social, and political differences, creates the opportunity for increased understanding, and for cultivating true community. True community happens when everyone is welcomed and valued in their own uniqueness, and we all grow by learning from each other."

Rice is hopeful that the community gathering is a bridge in fostering better relations among all people. "The Mt. Olive Clergy Association and Mt. Olive Interfaith Alliance are excited by the response to our proposal to host a series of community conversations that will continue the work of the vigil, and provide the opportunity for deeper understanding and relationship," says Rice. "We are busy planning for an initial gathering this coming summer."

Anyone interested in participating can email pastorserena@optimum.net to receive announcements and follow-up.

Local Youth Leader Speaks Out On Environment And Climate

By Cheryl Conway

Age does not even come into play for this local teen who has been voicing her concerns about the environment and climate change for the past few years.

As a member of the Mt. Olive Young Dems since 2017 and the Morris County Democrats, 16 year old Ananya Singh of Flanders led the Youth Climate Strike in Morristown on Friday, March 14, from noon to 2 p.m. and is preparing for the next protest or National Day of Action set for Saturday, May 3, in Trenton. Like other students throughout the nation and world, Singh walks out of school during the school day to unite with her peers and call for action at organized strikes in cities and even local communities.

She is passionate about youth having a voice especially on issues involving the environment. "We're not going to stop striking until we see real actions," says Singh. "We want to continue to grow our presence; to show government how important it is to have strong commitments."

An Activist Is Born

A junior at Morris County School of Technology in Denville, Singh got introduced to activism in 2015, the summer before her eighth grade, when she attended a week long training camp- Youths Empowered Action. Campers learn how to become activists, attend workshops about the environment, how to create an action plan and other actions such as those that pertain to racism and animal rights.

From all that she learned, Singh says her greatest lesson was "I didn't have to wait until I was older to take action or make a difference."

So when she returned to school after summer break, at the start of eighth grade, Singh started organizing at the Mt. Olive Middle School a group of students who would raise awareness regarding certain issues.

She began with the Climate Ribbon Project in 2015.

"I set up a table at lunch," says Singh, and asked students to write on a string of fabric "things they love" that they did not want to be affected as a result of climate change. "Green Peace helped us out," and ribbons were sent to the Paris Climate Conference.

Her goal was "to be part of something larger than ourselves," says Singh. "A lot of people gave really great feedback; students and teachers were encouraging."

After that, Singh organized the Youth United Making An Impact group at the middle school, with activities for teens planned monthly at the Mt. Olive Public Library to talk about different issues. Up to 20 students got involved, says Singh.

Her main project- Fixed Democracy through Green Peace- was to gather signatures on a petition to educate people about the No Fossil Fuel Money Pledge, and then present that to former Congressman Leonard Lance.

Since the 2017 election, when she helped with the campaign, Singh has been involved with the Mt. Olive Democrats and the Morris County Democrats.

During the 2018 campaign, Singh was an intern for Congressman Tom Malinowski.

"I did a lot of field work," says Singh, canvassing, phone calling, staffing events when he spoke, entering data, training volunteers.

When it comes to the issues, her top concern is the environment especially climate change, she says.

"It's going to impact so much of my future and the future for everybody," says Singh. A "good policy will help us take the action that's needed, to meet the challenges we are up against with the environment."

Her involvement with the Youth Climate Strike began when she entered high school. She was youth advisor/council member for the National Youth Leadership Council from 2016-2018, in which she is still involved. With NYLC, Singh leads workshops, facilitates leadership training and collaborates with students from across the state on how service learning can cause change.

In her sophomore year last year Singh started the Environmental Club at her school and served as vice president. So far stronger recycling measures have taken place and an environment convention around Earth Day was held.

As vice president again this year, Singh has been continuing the school's recycling efforts to expand beyond cardboard and paper.

The group received a commitment to have plastic and glass recycling to begin soon, she says. On April 26, the Environmental Club has planned a First Fest to be held at her school with booths, games, music and activities.

Youth Climate Strikes

Singh was the lead organizer for the March 15 Youth Climate Strike in Morristown. More than 100 schools from around the area attended, with some college students in the mix, she says. In this school strike for climate, students leave school as an act to show their concerns. It is a "symbolic thing as to what was at stake for us," says Singh. The "focus is to create attention." The purpose of the strike, is "to put more pressure on our politicians," says Singh. "We are not going to accept empty words. We want concrete action to meet the demands of science. "Our leaders, they are not taking action," she says. It does not feel there is a lot being done. We don't have a lot of commitments from our leaders. Whatever we do have, it isn't enough."

Regarding emissions Singh says "We are not on track to meet that goal and we don't have a plan."

In the mission statement of the Youth Climate Strike, it states:

"We, the youth of America, are striking because the science says we have just a few years to transform our energy system, reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, and prevent the worst effects of climate change. We are striking because our world leaders have yet to acknowledge, prioritize, or properly address our climate crisis. We are striking because marginalized communities across our nation —especially communities of color, disabled communities, and low- income communities- are already disproportionately impacted by climate change. We are striking because if the social order is disrupted by our refusal to attend school, then the system is forced to face the climate crisis and enact change. With our futures at stake, we call for radical legislative action to combat climate change and its countless detrimental effects on the American people. We are striking for the Green New Deal, for a fair and just transition to a 100 percent renewable economy, and for ending the creation of additional fossil fuel infrastructure. Additionally, we believe the climate crisis should be declared a national emergency because we are running out of time."

The demands of the strikers include: Green New Deal which is an equitable transition for marginalized communities that will be most impacted by climate change; a halt in any and all fossil fuel infrastructure projects;

all government-made decisions be tied in scientific research, including the 2018 IPCC report; declaring a National Emergency on Climate Change;

compulsory comprehensive education on the impacts of climate change and the importance of climate justice throughout grades K-8;

preserving public lands and wildlife; and keeping water supply clean.

While she has a ways to go before she can vote or run for a political office, Singh plans to keep her youth voice strong.

Singh is most passionate about maintaining that "youth voice" by making sure young people are represented in schools, political process and non-profit organizations.

To help in that effort, Singh serves as the high school chair for the New Jersey Student Sustainable Coalition, which began in 2018 and is still being structured.

Involved are high school students, college students and organizations. Its hope is to connect with more students pertaining to environmental issues, she says.

From the looks of things, Singh is well on her way of speaking out on issues that matter to her the most.

Her future interests lie deep with political science and environment studies and she says her career plans will involve activism, organizing or politics.

"I'm really excited to see what we can accomplish," she concludes.

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Community Awareness Night Set For MOHS

A Community Awareness Night is set to be presented by the Mt. Olive High School Class of 2019 on Tuesday, May 21, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at MOHS The goal of the evening is to bring the community together by having students connect with local resource providers to spread awareness regarding health and wellness topics.

Admission is free and the event is open to all students, parents and community members.

Kids Play, Read, Watch At Local Library

Mindfulness Play: April 15, at 7 p.m. Looking to kick off spring break with a lot of fun and a little magic? Come explore the power of mindfulness and make own Mind Jar! Ages 5-105.

Double the fun for spring break! Join in for two special movie showings for families at the MOPL!

- * Sunday Funday Movie: April 14, at 1 p.m. Join in for another Sunday Funday Movie, to celebrate spring returning with "Mary Poppins Returns."
- * Thursday Thrills Movie: April 18, at 1 p.m. Get ready for a special Spring Break Thursday Thrills Movie, "Spider Man: Into the Spider Verse."

Therapy Dog Storytime: April 27 at 11 a.m. Olaf and Duffy are so excited that spring is here and they are ready to have more fun at the library. Join in for National Library Week, with this special story time with some furry friends. (Ages 4-9).

In Honor of National Library Week, help celebrate by reading more books. Help Buzz Grow His Garden! For every three books read in April, kids will get to decorate a flower for Buzz's garden. Help make the library beautiful this month.

April 6-April 18 is MAINQuest 2019. Want to win some fabulous prizes? Visit the library and try to solve a riddle. If solved, grab the QR code and take a selfie, along with making sure to tag #mtolivepl and #MAINquest! There will be a riddle for kids up to 5th grade and another for grades six—adults.

Local Police Seek Support For Unity Tour

The Mt. Olive Police Department is looking for donations to support its upcoming Police Unity Tour.

As participants since 2002, several members of the MOPD plan to take part on May 9 through May 12 and are seeking community support.

The Police Unity Tour, established in 1997, is a 300-mile bicycle ride from New Jersey to Washington D.C., which raises awareness and honors those law enforcement officers who have been killed in the line of duty.

Since its establishment, the Police Unity Tour has donated nearly 16 million dollars to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (nleomf.com) based in Washington D.C., according to a support letter from the MOPD. Those donations have come directly from the fund raising efforts of local, state and federal law enforcement officers who are required to individually raise a minimum of \$1,950 to take part in the ride.

As with previous years, officers from the MOPD have primarily relied on the generous donations made by Mt. Olive businesses and community members to participate.

This year, four Mt. Olive officers- Chad Rossy, George Jadue, Christopher Saunders and Tyler Mullooly- will look to take part in the Police Unity Tour, which will be starting in East Hanover on May 9, and arrive in Washington D.C. on May 12.

"In order our reach our financial requirements for the ride, we are seeking donations from our local community members and businesses," the MOPD letter states. "Your donation to the Police Unity Tour is fully tax deductible (Tax ID #22-3530541) and most importantly greatly appreciated."

Additional information about the Police Unity Tour, and other fundraising efforts, can be found atwww.facebook.com/teammountolive; or www.mopd.org.

Donation Checks should be made payable to: Police Unity Tour – Mount Olive, P.O. Box 134, Budd Lake, NJ 07828.

NEWS at local college and University

Photography Technology Students Display Talent At CCM Gallery

Photos by Jessica Schaub and Alicia Stone featured in the exhibition "Let the Sun Play Possum" at the County College of Morris Art and Design Gallery.

The County College of Morris (CCM) Art and Design Gallery's next exhibition, "Let the Sun Play Possum," will feature the thesis work of seven photography technology students who will be graduating in May.

The upcoming installation runs from April 16 to April 26 in the CCM Art and Design Gallery in the Sherman H. Masten Learning Resource Center in Randolph. A reception, which is free and open to the public, will be held Friday, April 26, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The CCM Art and Design Gallery is open Mondays through Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

All of the work being displayed in the exhibition was created by students in Professor Hrvoje Slovenc's Portfolio Preparation course. Since February, the students have been working on various pieces to showcase the photographic skills they acquired during their course of study in the Photography Technology Program. The students each developed a unique concentration that is visible in every photo.

Melissa Efrus, of Springfield, weaves the prophetic and poetic, juxtaposed against erotic themes in her work. She combines a mix of analog, digital and multimedia work, ranging from image manipulation, Polaroids, historical techniques, textiles, text and drawings.

Jessica Schaub, of Wharton, redefines the meaning of the word "home" in her work. For the "Photography Technology Program Thesis" exhibition, Schaub recreated parts of the house in which she grew up.

The artwork from Kahli Suggs-Barnes, of Succasunna, focuses on a distorted, incomplete sense of self. Through a series of manipulated self-portraits, using collages, weaves and patterns, Kahli explores detachment toward one's own identity.

Brian Cole, of Netcong, is interested in the complex, emotional profile of young people born and raised in the era of social media. He wonders whether loneliness, depression, anxiety and a lack of social skills are the result of experiencing the world primarily through a phone or a computer screen.

Inspired by her father's work as an architect, Alicia Stone, of Hackettstown, creates and photographs dioramas of idealized domestic spaces. In her photographs, everything is in order, and everything is where it is supposed to be. Her portrayed interiors exist in the space between fantasy and reality.

Jeremy Guevara, of Dover, is interested in the failure of the idea of the American dream, and the cultural norms adopted by the generation before his own. More specifically, his black and white photographs offer a critique of a lifestyle defined by a 9 to 5 blue-collar job.

The staged wedding photographs taken by Stacy Moen, of Oak Ridge, aim to capture defining moments during a wedding day. In her words, a wedding is a journey that begins with two people intertwining their separate lives into a committed lifetime together.

For information on the academic programs offered through the Art and Design department at CCM, visithttps://tinyurl.com/y9kzbxqf.

CCM Celebrates 50th Anniversary With Titan Trot 5K

As part of its 50th Anniversary celebrations, County College of Morris (CCM) in Randolph will be holding a Titan Trot 5K on Sunday, May 5, just one event for the fun-filled weekend. Registration is now open for the 5K at ccm.edu/titan-trot/. The race takes place on CCM's Randolph campus. USAFT certified, the Titan Trot 5K consists both of a run and walk. The cost of registration is \$25. The 5K starts at 9 a.m.

The 5K is part of the college's Titan Weekend to celebrate its anniversary. Also included is a free fun-filled festival for the public to celebrate the birthday of the college's mascot, Titus the Titan. That celebration takes place on the CCM campus Saturday, May 4, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Events include a free Titan barbeque, live music performed by CCM music majors, cupcake decorating, arts and crafts, face painting and lots of other fun activities. To learn more about Titan Weekend, go towww.ccm.edu/titan-weekend/.

Centenary University Inducts Students Psychology Honor Society

Centenary University's Psi Chi Chapter, currently in its 26th year, inducted 11 students, all of whom maintained a minimum 3.2 overall GPA and a minimum 3.2 psychology major GPA. Psi Chi Honor Society is an organization dedicated to recognizing scholastic achievements in the field of psychology, as well as encouraging research and leadership among its members. The students inducted join the ranks of renowned and influential professionals in psychology or related fields. Students conduct and present independent research with Centenary faculty members highlighting their dedication and commitment to the science community.

"I'm proud to be an advisor to this wonderfully talented group of students," says Dr. Keith Morgen, associate professor of psychology and chair of Centenary's Social and Behavioral Sciences Department. "I look forward to many more contributions from these young adults, not only within the honor society, but to the science of psychology as a whole."

Founded in September 1929, Psi Chi has given opportunities to more than three-quarters of a million members (students and professionals) to network, take on leadership roles, and serve their communities through respected and valuable service projects. The organization offers more than \$400,000 in grants and awards annually and has chapters all around the world. The eleven Centenary University students inducted into the society are: Haley Clancy, Port Murray; James Crouse, Phillispsburg; Danielle Dellamo, Andover; Courtney Deloughery, Dumont; Melissa Krueger, Long Valley; Katherine Lyman, Sparta; Keeley McGregor, Wantage; Jordan Noll, Great Meadows; Morgan Pierson, Byram Twp.; Hailey Rainier, Chester; and Cheyenne Unangst, Andover.

To learn more about The Psi Chi Honor Society, click http://bit.ly/PsiChiHonorSociety. Psi Chi is the international academic honor society for psychology whose purpose shall be to encourage, stimulate, and maintain excellence in scholarship of the individual members in all fields, particularly in psychology, and to advance the science of psychology.

About Centenary University

Founded in 1867 by the Newark Conference of the United Methodist Church, Centenary University's academic program integrates a solid liberal arts foundation with a strong career orientation. This mix provides an educational experience that prepares students to succeed in the increasingly global and interdependent world. The University's main campus is located in Hackettstown with its equestrian facility in Washington Township.

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Photo Gallery

Chapel Serving Fish & Chips Dinner

Join in at the First Presbyterian Church's Chapel in Hackettstown on Friday, April 26, from 5 p.m.-7 p.m., for the "Tastefully British" Fish & Chips Dinner.

Tickets are \$15 for adults; and \$8 for children under 12.

Advanced ticket purchase is required! For tickets, call Ellen at 908-637-6236.

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Experienced journalist since 1990, living in Flanders for 21 years and covering Mt. Olive

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