

CENTRE VIEW

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PHOTO BY DEB COBB/CENTRE VIEW

International Style

The Bhangra Evolution performs a choreographed dance as part of Westfield High's International Night. They represent northern India. Performers are (in no particular order): Manisha Gohhale, Shipla Gohhale, Natasha Sareen, Bhumika Singhal, Yasmin Sheikhabadi, Hanna Park, Kassia Haldi, and Nishi Begum.

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Preschoolers Send Gifts to Soldiers

Learning to "pay it forward."

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

A group of Chantilly preschoolers is showing that even the youngest children can help bring smiles to America's soldiers overseas. With their parents' help, they collected items for care packages and then helped pack them into boxes bound for Afghanistan.

"We filled 30-plus, 12x12-inch boxes donated by the post office," said Barb Bechtel, director of the preschool portion of Chantilly Academy Gymnastics and Preschool. "The postage was donated by Freedom for Alliance, which ships care packages to soldiers."

The children are ages 3-5, and she said all 80 of them in the school participated in the event, the last

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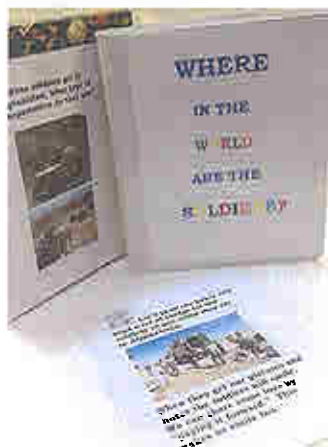


PHOTO BY DEB COBB/CENTRE VIEW

As part of the unit, teachers created a book describing who they were collecting items for and the places where they were sending the boxes. Program organizer Barb Bechtel says that some students were so enamored with the book they begged to take it home overnight to read with their parents.

Raising Funds for Brain Tumor Society

Two events held in Fairfax woman's honor.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Two events held Sunday and Monday at Chantilly High have helped Fairfax resident BethAnn Telford raise more than \$3,000 for the National Brain Tumor Society (NBTS).

The senior class is doing 11 community-service projects this year and, during March, the NBTS is its beneficiary. So on Monday, proceeds from the theater students' production of their VHSL state championship winning play, "AP Theatre," plus a one-act version of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" went to the charity.

"It was theater student Kelsey Monk's idea to use these plays as a fund-raiser, and they brought in \$1,430," said Telford. "They sold no tickets — everything was by donation."

And when Sunday's chilly weather forced a Track-a-Thon fund-raiser into the school gym, the students didn't miss a beat. They ran or walked at least 200 laps.

"It was wonderful," said Telford. "They gave me \$2,000 so far, but will be collecting for two more weeks. Some kids ran eight miles and one boy ran the whole time. We got a great turnout and had about 100 participants. The whole thing was just amazing, and so many different age groups took part."



PHOTO BY DEB COBB/CENTRE VIEW

Kelsey Monk, left, and BethAnn Telford after Chantilly High's one-act plays.

Over the past school year, Telford became close to the students planning the event, talking with them and spending time with them. She, herself, has been struggling with her own brain tumor for nearly six years, and she learned that eight Chantilly students or members of their families have brain tumors, as well.

During the Track-a-Thon, she said, "I was running with everyone from my own friends to young kids. One Chantilly girl walked for another friend who also has a brain tumor. I can't have kids of my own because of my illness; when they operated on me the first time, they took my pituitary gland. So I go to a lot of events involving kids."

Telford also has ties to Chantilly High. "A lot of my friends went to Chantilly, and I often train on that track because it's a great track and it has lights. During the Track-a-Thon, the [Chargers] track team

SEE STUDEB=NTS, PAGE 15

ATTENTION POSTMASTER:
THE SENSITIVE MATERIAL
REQUESTED IN HOME 3-31-11

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U.S. POSTAGE
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PERMIT #422

Students Raise Money for Brain Tumor Society

FROM PAGE 1

gave me a nice donation.” She also noted a donation given by a woman whose son is a Chantilly senior and has a brain tumor. “She said her husband was going to donate \$1,000 to someone’s political campaign,” said Telford. “But in-



Hugh Gannon, 9, of Chantilly is running in honor of several family friends who have brain cancer. He is a running enthusiast and participates in the Chantilly Youth Association track program.

stead, she came and gave most of it to me. She also donated to Chantilly student Nikki Ferraro, who has a rare form of thyroid cancer, and to a 1-year-old Loudoun County girl who also has a brain tumor, and I’m very happy about that.”

Telford, too, is no slouch when it comes to helping others. Despite her illness — and also because of it — this athlete has competed in numerous marathons and triathlons to raise money for the NBTS.

“I’ve raised \$223,000 in just under six years, and I’m really pleased,” she said. “So far, I’m up to \$23,000 for this year, but my goal is \$60,000 so I have a long way to go.” Tax-deductible contributions may be made via her Web site, www.teambt.org.

In April, Telford’s going to Massachusetts to run in the Boston Marathon. But she es-

pecially has her sights set on the Kona Iron Man competition in October in Hawaii. “But you can only get in through a lottery system, and I’ve been trying to get into it for five years,” she said. “Hopefully, this will be my year.”

Regarding Chantilly’s Track-a-Thon, Telford said it’s important the students know that “this was not just about me. When you do an event, you also bring in people collecting for their causes, like Nikki, who was there selling her ‘Bite Me, Cancer’ bracelets and T-shirts [to raise money for cancer research]. So it was great — the students were supporting a classmate while helping the Track-a-Thon.”

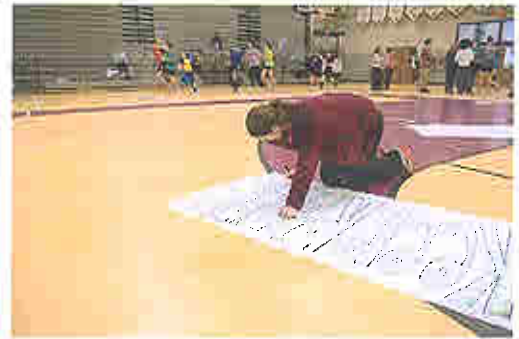


BethAnn Telford, of Fairfax, runs with Savey Lombardo, of Centreville, a family friend.

PHOTOS BY DEB COBB/CENTRE VIEW



Senior Class Sponsor Meredith Norris (holding card) meets with volunteers before the Track-A-Thon begins.



Rachel Walden, freshman from Centreville, works on a sign as runners do laps in the distance. Walden’s father is severely disabled as a result of a brain tumor diagnosed when she was in first grade.

Chantilly Preschoolers Send Gifts to Soldiers

FROM PAGE 1

eight days of February. “In preschools, February is a month of love for mom and dad, so we wanted to extend that to everyone,” said Bechtel. “We used a pay-it-forward mentality so the students would learn to give from the heart, without expecting anything in return.”

So she and the school’s 10 teachers told the children their packages were going to U.S. soldiers serving in Afghanistan. Then they got information about that area from the Internet and wrote a “book” for the children containing their findings.

“We showed them photos and told them about the country, its people, where the children go to school and how the boys and girls are educated separately — and in tents,” said Bechtel. “And they were interested in what they learned.”

“We also told them where our soldiers

are and what they’re doing, but we didn’t show pictures of soldiers with guns,” she continued. “We just said the soldiers are always on the lookout for danger.”

In addition, members of the Chantilly High Junior Air Force ROTC color guard came to the school, presented the colors for the children and let them ask questions. Then the students brought in photos of their own family members in the military. So, said Bechtel, “It was really special and a lot of fun for them, and it made it real for the students.”

As for the care packages, Freedom for Alliance gave the school a list of the items the soldiers would like, such as snack foods, Kleenex, movies, playing cards, batteries and books.

“We asked parents to get these items, but to let their children help pick them out,” said Bechtel. “One little girl said she was going to send a book and a teddy bear so a soldier could hold the bear and read the book, just like she does, before going to bed



Some of the 80 students of Chantilly Academy Preschool who donated items to be sent to U.S. troops abroad. Teachers pictured are (from left) Shamleem Noto (seated), Bobbie Stanko, Barb Bechtel, Laura Klaiman, Suzanne Lambert and Judy Conroy.

at night. I was so touched by that.”

The children also wrote messages and drew pictures to be enclosed in their packages. “They just quivered with excitement packing the boxes here at school,” said

Bechtel. “And people were exceedingly generous. We’re really proud of the children, and we’re excited that they learned about caring, paying it forward and giving from the heart.”