



The Bristol Observer



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New school would cost league its fields

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI
STAFF WRITER

Plans for a new K-8 school in Forestville have left one of the city's three little league programs in search of a new home.

The Forestville Little League uses three baseball fields behind Greene-Hills Elementary Schools. Two of the fields are on Board of Education property, while the third is on city property. The Little League has been using those fields for the past 50 years or so. But, that could come to an end as soon as next year.

The Board of Education is building two new K-8 schools in the city, one of which will be built on the current Greene-Hills school site. Once the Forestville K-8 school is built the two fields on school property will be changed to meet state regulations for fields needed for the school, which includes turning one of the fields into a softball field.

The Little League would no longer be able to use the fields once they're built,

because one is for softball and the other will be larger than the regulations allowed by Little League.

Forestville Little League would be left with one field. But, that one field would have limited access to it during construction as the area would be used for staging construction equipment while the school is being built.

"We've been told all along we're not going to be losing our fields," said Dale Akerley, president of the Forestville Little League.

Akerley said he learned the fate of the fields in December when he first saw architectural drawings for the school. Since then, he said, he's been in contact with city officials to try to find a solution to the problem.

"I don't think they understand the severity of the problem," said Akerley.

Akerley said the Little League, which had more than 300 children last year,

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Hard-working hospital volunteer says farewell

By ELIO GUGLIOTTI
STAFF WRITER

For the last 14 years, Barbara Eckstrom spent up to six days a week at Bristol Hospital, sometimes pulling 12 hour shifts on any given day. She isn't a doctor or nurse. Rather, Eckstrom is one of Bristol Hospital's most dedicated volunteers.

"She's just such a part of the Bristol Hospital family," said Patricia Fournier, director of volunteering and communications for Bristol Hospital.

Eckstrom logged nearly 23,000 hours of volunteering at the hospital over the past 14 years. Now, the 85-year-old grandmother has retired from her volunteer post.

"Her presence will be missed. ... I'll miss her smile and her 'good mornings,'" said Fournier.

Eckstrom began volunteering at the hospital when her husband got sick in 1996. Since then, Eckstrom has been a staple around every corner at the hospital, from volunteering



TAMMI KNAPIK

Bristol Hospital volunteer Barbara Eckstrom shares a laugh with Jeanne Edwards, right, and Bonny Gladstone, center at a reception honoring Eckstrom for her 14 years of service.

at the information desk and gift shop to acting in informational movies made by the hospital.

"She was very versatile," said Fournier. "Any role that we asked her to participate in she was wonderful."

With Eckstrom's illus-

trious volunteering career coming to an end, her friends at the hospital made sure to send her out with a bang.

A reception was held last week with Eckstrom as the guest of honor. A steady stream of people made their way into the Hughes

Auditorium at the hospital to wish Eckstrom well in her retirement. Everyone was greeted with a smile and hug from the long-time volunteer.

The people at the hospital kept her going over

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Teen steps forward to come to aid of animals

By MIKE CHAIKEN
EDITIONS EDITOR

Alyscia Talbot wants to help the abused and neglected animals of the world.

But the 13-year-old eighth grader at Memorial Boulevard Middle School knows that she is too young for any hands-on activities involving the handling of animals. But she wanted to help out all the same.

So, in 2008, she launched Alyscia's Pet Project. She explained it

was her way of helping out animals through fundraising and the collection of donations such as food, etc. for the animals.

During the first year of her efforts, Alyscia stepped up to help the Connecticut Humane Society shelter in Newington. And now, Alyscia is working to help Animal Rescue Foundation of Terryville. ARF recently lost its shelter to a fire and is trying to rebuild it. (Alyscia said she intends to pick one animal-related charity to help each year.)

Alyscia said helping out was important to her "because unfortunately there are so many animals that are abused and neglected in shelters... It's important to help those in need, whether it's humans or animals."

Prior to helping both the Humane Society and ARE, Alyscia said she approached both organizations to brief them one what she intended to do. She said both were open to

See **ANIMALS**, page 4



MIKE CHAIKEN

Alyscia Talbot

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