

THE POST

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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF THE DALLAS AND LAKE-LEHMAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Alexandria Weber tries to figure out how the scale in her classroom works.



Teacher Robin Shillingsford helps Tanner Weber clean up his snack at St. Paul Lutheran Church.



Alexandria Weber, Jade Honsicker and Anna Delpino adhere to the 'quiet' sign during the Head Start program.

FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

A fresh Head Start

St. Paul's Lutheran Church comes through for program

By CAMILLE FIOTI
Post Correspondent

DALLAS - Baley Nice was the first in his class to arrive on the first day of school for Harveys Lake and Noxen area preschoolers participating in the Head Start program year at St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

"Nice to meet 'cha. I'm Baley," said 4-year-old, offering his small hand to shake.

In late July, the Lake-Noxen Head Start group learned they could no longer use the space they'd been leasing for 15 years at the Lake-Noxen Elementary School. Head Start is a program that prepares children of low-income families for kindergarten.

Word spread about the group needing a new home. A few offers were received, but didn't meet the group's requirements. Not only was a classroom needed to accommodate 17 3-4-year-olds, but a bathroom, kitchen and office space was also a necessity.

When The Rev. Charles Grube heard about the dilemma, he consolidated some of his Sunday

school classrooms and was able to offer them space for a year.

"That end of our Christian education wing was designed with federal guidelines for child care facilities in mind," said the St. Paul's pastor. "We're really pleased with the Head Start program. They do a lot of good for children and their families."

Baley wasted no time checking out the new digs. He buzzed around the cheery classroom exploring as much as he could before all of the students arrived.

"Oh my gosh, it's huge!" he said as he peered into a large magnifying glass at the top of a terrarium containing seashells, pinecones and feathers.

"Do you hear the ocean?" asked Connie Traver, also known as "Grandma Connie," as she held a conch shell to his ear. Traver has been a foster grandparent with the Lake-Noxen group since her grandson, Eddie Traver was a Head Start student almost 15 years ago.

It was also the first day as a teacher for Robin Shillingsford, a recent Wilkes University graduate. Shillingsford and other staff members were busy for a week and a half before

school started, getting the classroom ready. The students and their families were able to tour the new classroom.

"Even though it wasn't fully set up, at least they got an idea where they would be going to school," she said.

Around 8:30 a.m. the bus arrived and the once quiet room was suddenly filled with excited little voices.

"The children were absolutely wonderful getting on the bus," said Debbie Maskalis, who has been with the program for 15 years. "None of them seemed apprehensive. They came on, were seat-belted in, and away we went."

The school day ends at 12:45 p.m. and Maskalis accompanies the children for the bus ride home. For the first few weeks, she will also be riding the morning bus with assistant teacher Sharon Meeks. Because the students live in such a widespread, rural area, the ride usually takes an hour.

"We have a lot of sleepy children on the way home," Maskalis said.

After settling in, the children gathered on the colorful carpet

in front of "Miss Robin" as she held up different shapes.

"Who has the school bus?" she asked as the students looked for the matching shapes dangling from a yarn necklace around their necks. The shapes also match the ones taped to the front of their backpacks. They were then taped to their "cubbies," a place of their own to put their belongings.

Center manager Sandy Michalisin has been working with the Dallas Head Start group, which is also located at St. Paul's, for a number of years.

"They're still looking for a (permanent) home," she said, referring to the Lake-Noxen group.

Michalisin is hoping that the group will be able to find a location closer to the Lake-Noxen area, since most of the students are from that area. She said that the parents were relieved to hear that St. Paul's offered a classroom.

Maskalis was also happy. "It's different, but it's beautiful here," she said. "It's really wonderful. The classrooms are basically set up the same way. We're very grateful."

Green still serving... as an inspiration

Despite suffering serious knee injury, volleyball player helping teammates

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. - Caity Green pauses and sighs deeply before she answers the question.

Less than a month after suffering a devastating physical - and emotional - injury, the 17-year-old Dallas High School senior is already showing maturity far beyond her years.

"Oh God, I've learned so much. I've been able to put so many things about life in perspective," said Green. "After watching what the people (battling the effects of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans and Mississippi) were going through, I thought 'here I am worried about not playing volleyball and there are people dying and losing everything they have.'"

Green was about to enter the 2005 volleyball season as one of the top players in the Wyoming Valley Conference. All that changed on a late August afternoon.

While going after a ball, Green dove toward the floor. Her right knee didn't follow. And then came the sound many athletes dread hearing.

"I could hear my knee pop," said Green, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament. "Everything happened so fast. I couldn't believe what was happening to me. But I thought everything was going to be fine. I had no idea."

The daughter of Anne Green-Santry and Kevin Santry of Dallas spent almost a week applying ice to her swollen knee before seeing a doctor. At first, Green was told it was probably a tear of her lateral meniscus and she'd be out of action for approximately two weeks. An MRI a few days later showed a more serious injury.

"I guess everything happens for a reason," said the 6-foot-1 Green, an intimidating hitter on the volleyball court and one of the WVC's best blockers last season. "There was a short period of time that I questioned why this was happening to me. But I don't think like that anymore."

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Caity Green (22) attends every Dallas volleyball match, even though she is sidelined with a knee injury.

FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

PT Cruiser fund-raiser nets more than \$1,000

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

HARVEYS LAKE - Thanks to the efforts of hard-working volunteers, nearly two dozen PT Cruiser enthusiasts and generous businesses, more than \$1,000 was raised last weekend to benefit people who have autism. The inaugural event was sponsored by PT Cruisers of Northeast Pa.

Escorted by two Luzerne County Sheriff cruisers, a colorful line of PT Cruisers made its way from the Luzerne Shopping Center, along routes 309 and 415 to Harveys Lake. The caravan of PT Cruisers stopped at Grotto Pizza, where a buffet lunch was held. Harveys Lake Mayor Richard Boice declared the day "Fundrive 4 a Cause Day."

"Everything went great," said Shavertown resident Tim Nulton, founder of PT Cruisers of Northeast Pa. "The local police, the Harveys Lake council, local

business who donated gift certificates, everyone was great. The outpouring of support we received was overwhelming.

"I get goose bumps talking about it."

Money raised during the fund-raiser will be donated to the Luzerne Foundation, which will distribute the proceeds to Earthly Angels, an organization that funds trips and programs for people who suffer with autism. Among the many services the money will be used for includes rehabilitation program at John Heinz, a swim program at the Wilkes-Barre YMCA, a horseback riding program, and a special camp at Camp Kresge.

The more than \$1,000 raised far exceeded initial goal, said Nulton.

"Initially, my wife (Jane) and I talked about raising a couple of hundred dollars," he said. "Then we thought \$500 would be great. But to raise more than

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Even adults become kids again with a visit to the Luzerne County Fair

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