

THE POST

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



FOR THE POST/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

Breaking ground for a new trail on the Dallas School District campus, with shovels from left, are Paul Reinert, Dallas Elementary School principal; Dr. Calvin Johnson, PA Secretary of Health; Frank Galicki, Dallas superintendent; Mark Innocenzi, Steps to a Healthier PA Luzerne County; and Kathleen McCarthy, Wycallis Elementary School principal.

One step at a time

Trail on school campus will promote physical fitness

By DAVE KONOPKI
Post Editor

DALLAS TWP. - Dr. Calvin Johnson isn't another stuffed suit from Harrisburg. Hardly.

Wearing a blue jogging suit with white sneakers, the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health looked like he was ready to take a leisurely stroll along a trail on the Dallas School District campus Wednesday afternoon.

If he returns in a few months, he'll be able to just that. The state's primary public health advocate and spokesman took part in a groundbreaking ceremony behind the Wycallis Elementary School for the new walking trail that will link Wycallis and Dallas Elementary School.

"This is an exciting day," said the 39-year-old Johnson, who joined Governor Ed Rendell's staff in 2003. "We're trying to make kids

"Every big project begins with a small step. In this case, a community came together and decided to take an active role in helping develop healthy children."

Dr. Calvin Johnson
PA Secretary of Health

healthy and teach them to make healthy choices. Building a trail is something easy, but very significant. We want kids to be more active and this trail is a beautiful first step."

The school district received a \$2,000 grant from Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity after successfully completing an online assessment and grant application last year. The organization Steps to a Healthier PA Luzerne County matched the \$2,000 grant and the Wyoming Valley Wellness Trails Partnership added \$1,000. The district has also re-

ceived more than \$3,000 of in-kind donations from the Back Mountain community.

Steps to a Healthier PA Luzerne County empowers people of Luzerne County to live healthier, longer lives by funding community-based interventions that focus on the prevention of diabetes, obesity and asthma by addressing the related risk factors of poor nutrition, physical inactivity and tobacco use, said program manager Carol Husa.

"Dallas has been a wonderful partner and a model school district," she said. "It was one of the first school districts to welcome us in and accept our assistance. They've been very proactive. It takes time for someone to fill out the online assessment and write the grant. We enjoy working with the people at Dallas."

The trail will be more than one mile long and connected to the schools and athletic fields. It will be available for use by physical education classes, as well as the general public. The trail is expected to be completed by the end of May.

The schools are expected to use the trail for recess activities, nature walks and math classes (with the students using pedometers). There will also be active reading zones on the trail.

"This is a beautiful area," said Johnson, a Philadelphia who was making his first trip to

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Mark Innocenzi of Steps to a Healthier PA Luzerne County prepares for the groundbreaking.



Mark Evans, 16, has been to the country four times



Dallas High School student Mark Evans carries a few cinder blocks while helping to build a small health clinic in Honduras.

Dallas youth spends time helping others in Honduras

By GENELLE HOBAN
Post Correspondent

DALLAS - Dallas High School student Mark Evans recently returned from his fourth weeklong service trip to Honduras, lending his helping hands with a group of volunteers from Operation Honduras.

Operation Honduras is a group of Northeast Pennsylvania volunteers who travel to San Pedro Sula, Honduras, annually. The weeklong trips are dedicated to improving the quality of life of orphans and other people living in that area. The volunteers do everything from building health clinics to delivering hearing aids. "I first heard about it through my dad, who went down a couple years before me," said Evans, who spent the week building a small health clinic for a village. "We had to build it out of concrete because they can't have things made out of wood because of termites. I was mixing cement, laying blocks and carrying blocks."

People from Honduras stole the tools and other things the volunteers were using this year, Evans said.

"It surprised me, but I guess they needed the money because they can sell them on the black market," the Dallas resident said. "Usually when we go to villages, the kids are really nice. There is no middle class in Honduras. There is either upper class or you live in

"Usually when we go to villages, the kids are really nice. There is no middle class in Honduras. There is either upper class or you live in some hut."

Mark Evans, 16
Operation Honduras volunteer

some hut so I can see where they are coming from."

Evans said he actually likes Honduras and wouldn't even mind living there.

"If I had a choice I would live there," he said. "All you need is \$600 a year to live good. It is sort of like New York City, some parts are really nice. There are bad parts too, but that's in any city."

On the weekend, Evans and some of the other volunteers took a trip to the Bay Islands but didn't have hotel reservations so they wound up sleeping in the rental truck. His friend, Mike, however, slept in a hammock in someone's front yard.

"He was eaten alive by bugs," Evans said. "We got a hotel the next day, but it started raining anyway so we couldn't really enjoy the beach."

Communicating with the Hondurans in San Pedro Sula -

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Mark Evans poses with one of the many children he's helped during the last four years.

Dallas equestrian ranked among best in nation

By M.B. GILLIGAN
Post Correspondent

DALLAS - Despite all of her previous success, this promises to be one of the best years for local equestrian Jocelyn Eckman. The 16-year-old has won more than 40 ribbons and is ranked ninth in the nation in Hunter class.

Eckman has been competing on horseback since the age of 3 when she rode ponies in local

"lead-line" events.

"The rider sits on the pony and is led into the ring," said her mother, Cynthia Eckman. "They are judged on how they sit and they have to answer questions about the parts of the horse, his show name, and the parts of the saddle. She was so cute and she wore these tiny little boots."

Of course, Jocelyn has changed and grown over the years. In previous years, she has been the local

year-end champion in mini stirrup division, twice in the short stirrup division, and reserve champion in the short/long stirrup division.

This year, Jocelyn has broken into the national ranks. She has been training a pony whose show name is Benlea Sea Wolf. The 4-year-old pure breed Welsh pony from Virginia is more affection-

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Dallas resident Jocelyn Eckman rides a horse during a recent competition.

We want to meet the candidates

The Post wants to give our readers a chance to get to know the candidates who are running for two high-profile offices in the May 16 primary election - state Senator in the 20th District

and state Representative in the 117th Legislative District. All candidates are welcome to submit a biography no longer than 175 words. Longer information will be edited for length. Headshots of the can-

didates are also welcome. All information - biography and photos - must be e-mailed to thepost@leader.net no later than Wednesday, April 19. Photos must be sent in a JPEG format and the bio-

graphy must be sent as a plain text message. The information about the candidates will appear in the May 7 edition of The Post. For more information, call editor Dave Konopki at 829-7248.

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