

# The DALLAS POST

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## NEW YEAR: Vietnam style

Crowd packs Franklin Twp. Fire Hall to bring two cultures together.

By SARAH HITE  
Dallas Post Correspondent

About 200 people attended the Vietnamese New Year celebration hosted by Father Vincent Dang of St. Francis Cabrini Church at the Franklin Township Volunteer Fire Hall in Orange on Feb. 10.

Vietnamese New Year is often observed by decorating the traditional Hoa Mai tree, which is dressed with families' wishes for the New Year, and families give one another monetary offerings in red envelopes. Other traditions include visiting family and friends and purchasing new clothes.

From the specially-prepared cuisine to decorating the Hoa Mai tree, not many details were spared in the yearly celebration

Dang emphasizes the importance of bringing culture together in this unique celebration. In addition to traditional foods like roasted pig, fried rice and egg rolls, chicken wings and pizza have become staples of the Franklin Township event.

that Dang has hosted since he arrived in the Wyoming Valley area in the early 1990s.

"The food is brought in special from Philadelphia," he said.

Dang emphasizes the importance of bringing culture together in this unique celebration. In addition to traditional foods like roasted pig, fried rice and egg rolls, chicken wings and pizza have become staples of the Franklin Township event.

"We have American food for the American people," he said. "(The Vietnamese people) have



Hanh Le, of Wilkes-Barre, decorates the hoa mai tree, symbolic of the Vietnamese New Year before Mass at the Franklin Township Fire Hall on Feb. 10.

BILL TARUTIS PHOTOS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST



Rev. Vincent Dang celebrates Mass in Vietnamese in celebration of the Vietnamese New Year.

come here and adopted the American culture, and now we share our culture, too. It's about friendship."

For some parishioners, the mass and following meal are just as much about celebrating Dang as they are about Vietnamese culture.

"I bounced around from church to church until I met Father Dang," said Richard Monee, of Dallas. "He's a wonderful priest."

Some attendees traveled from as far as Warrior Run, near where Dang was once the priest of another parish, to commemorate the occasion.

"Wherever he goes, we go," said Marion Croop, of Warrior Run. "He's the best person in the world."



The Franklin Township Fire Hall is packed for a Vietnamese New Year's Mass and reception.

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## A different kind of birthday party

By SARAH HITE  
Dallas Post Correspondent

Jenelle O'Brien, of Dallas, posed a challenge for herself when planning her daughter's birthday party this year. She wanted to find something unique and active to occupy about 20 6-year-olds for a few hours, and she had to think a bit out of the box.

Instead of the same old routine, O'Brien organized a make-your-own-pizza party at Original Italian Pizza in the Dallas Shopping Center for her daughter, Kyla, and 19 of her closest friends on Sunday, Feb. 10.

"I used to be a teacher so I like it when the kids can do something interactive," said O'Brien. "It's better than kids just going to a party and eating."

The kids decorated their own aprons and chef hats upon arrival and took turns making real (including rolling the dough) and fake (using paper mache crusts) pizzas during the two-hour fete.

It was the first event of its kind to be held at the pizza parlor owned by Joe and Joann Tomasino.

"We've had pizza parties, but not this kind of hands-on learning experience," said Joe Tomasi-



Noah Greco, 6, left, of Dallas, left, holds up his pizza craft with Jagar MacDonald, 5, of Trucksville.

BILL TARUTIS/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

no, who opened the location about six years ago.

Under Joe's instruction, the miniature chefs-for-a-day floured and rolled out their own dough and assembled colorful culinary creations with several different toppings at their disposal.

"I like pepperoni," said the birthday girl. "That's all I eat."

O'Brien chose Original Italian Pizza because it's one of Kyla's favorite places to enjoy a slice.

"It's an amazing honor," said

"We've had pizza parties, but not this kind of hands-on learning experience."

Joe Tomasino

Owner of Original Italian Pizza

Joann Tomasino. "We value our customers' opinions. It's pretty tough to get kids to eat, and when they say something is their favorite, that's huge."

Parents in attendance said it's difficult to plan and create party offerings for youngsters that will

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Mary Murray, center, a resident of the Meadows Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Dallas, recently celebrated her 100th birthday with her great-granddaughters Kimberly Kubast, left, and Stephanie Kubast.

## Mary Murray notes her 100th birthday

Meadows resident honored by family and friends on special occasion.

Mary Murray, a resident at the Meadows Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, celebrated her 100th birthday on Feb. 6 with her family by her side.

Cake is one of Mary's favorite things and there was lots of that at her party. Mary enjoys spending her days at the

Meadows socializing with staff and fellow residents and participating in the music programs and church services.

She especially loves visiting with the children from Little Meadows Day Care as well as the pet therapy dogs.

A resident at the center since 2005, Mary has made a lot of friends who also helped share her special day.



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