

the **Stand** south side news

www.mysouthsidestand.com

Syracuse, NY

October 2010 issue 5

FREE

YOUNG EQUESTRIAN

Local teenager and avid horse rider looks to take the next step

Creek Rats to the rescue

Volunteer group dedicates its time to cleaning up Onondaga Creek

SKY PAD

Recording label hopes to help local musicians hit it big

Schools begin to offer classes and programs aimed at halting bullying

Fighting bullies

LEGIONS NEED WAR VETS



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THE PUBLICATION'S EDITORIAL PURPOSE AND
IN KEEPING WITH COMMUNITY STANDARDS.

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■ Cover photography of Jovan Daniel and his horse, Ares, by Mitchell Franz

CALENDAR | OCTOBER

What: Open Call for Singers for the Syracuse Community Choir
When: 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 13
Where: Westcott Community Center, 826 Euclid Ave., Syracuse
Who: Auditions open to all community members; no formal music training required
More Details: Regular choir rehearsals are held from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday evenings at the Westcott Community Center; the choir's 25th Anniversary Concert will be held Sunday, Dec. 19, at Nottingham High School
Contact: To learn more, contact Karen Mihalyi, the choral director, at (315) 428-8151 or e-mail kmihalyi@a-znet.com

What: Butterfly and Moth Expert Robert Michael Pyle to Speak — "Eden in a Vacant Lot"
When: 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 7
Where: Palace Theatre, 2384 James St., Syracuse
 Cost: \$5
More Details: Pyle will share his message concerning the need for children to have access to open spaces in our cities. The event is held in honor of Geneva Hayden, Syracuse resident, active South Side volunteer, and founder of Light a Candle for Literacy
Additional Events: Butterfly hikes and a book signing, which will be held at Baltimore Woods. For details, visit baltimorewoods.org or call (315) 673-1350

HOW TO BUY AN AD

If interested in **running an ad**, contact Ashley Kang to request a **rate card** and discuss options by e-mailing Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or by calling (315) 443-8664. The Stand's rate card can also be found online at www.mysouthsidestand.com

Currently there are more than a dozen contributors writing, snapping photos and recording videos for The Stand. We are excited to see how so much interest has been generated over the past year, and we hope to see even more community involvement going forward.

This issue features a range of stories from Newhouse student reporters in the Urban Affairs reporting class. You'll find an array of business, features, community, youth, health and education stories that affect you and your community.

Recent additions to the online publication include videos produced during September's Video Storytelling Workshop by local South Side residents, coverage of last month's Art-in-Motion event and a book review on a recently published health book by former South Side physician Dr. Jennifer Daniels.

If you are interested in ways to become involved with The Stand, please contact me to learn more. We are currently in search of a new board member, and we always are interested in new community contributors. This month we are holding a Spoken Word Workshop and encourage local youth to come out and express themselves.

Other ways to get involved include writing a letter to the editor, attending future workshops, submitting story ideas and encouraging youth to join the staff. You can help The Stand by requesting copies of the print issue to be distributed at your local business, by purchasing ads and by flipping through these pages. Let us know what you think.

Ashley Kang



UPCOMING EVENTS

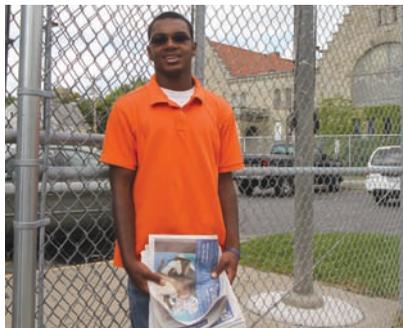
Oct. 9

Spoken Word Workshop

Begins at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 9, at the South Side Innovation Center, 2610 S. Salina St., Syracuse. Taught by members of the Syracuse University Slam Poetry Group Verbal Blend.

No RSVP required; all South Side community residents welcome.

To learn more, contact The Stand's director, Ashley Kang, at Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or by calling (315) 443-8664.



> Kaine Robinson, 14, left, and Da'von Parker, 12, pictured with his mother, Melissa, handed out September issues of The Stand. | Steve Davis, Staff Photo

HOW TO JOIN THE STAND'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Stand currently has an opening for another community member to join our Board of Directors. Board members meet every other month for two hours on a Saturday morning. We discuss upcoming story ideas, events and any questions or concerns.

To be a board member, you would fill out a bio informational sheet, provide a resume and come in to meet the current board members to be interviewed. The Board is searching for someone ready to become an active member, to suggest ideas and represent others in the South Side community.

If interested, contact The Stand's Director: Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or call the office at 443-8664.

WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor can be mailed to The Stand at:

South Side Innovation Center
South Side Newspaper Project, Inc.
2610 S. Salina St.
Syracuse, NY 13205

or e-mailed to:

The Stand's director,
Ashley Kang, at
Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com

All letters must be no more than 200 words and must contain the writer's full name, address and contact information.

THE BULLY PROBLEM

Schools in Syracuse engage students in how to respond to conflict



> Fifth-grade students at the Southside Charter Academy receive weekly counseling about bullying, conflict resolution, and how to be an “upstander” instead of a bystander. | Danielle Waugh, Staff Photo

By | Danielle Waugh
Urban Affairs reporter

Conflict resolution is becoming a critical part of the curriculum for several area schools

Imagine hearing this in grade school: “You’re the dumbest girl I’ve ever met.”

That’s what 10-year-old Vanessa Williams heard one girl say to another in her fifth-grade class at the Southside Charter Academy.

“Bullying happens every day,” Vanessa said.

She’s concerned that the class bully is going to continue for the rest of the year.

“[The bully] is mean,” 10-year-old Brad Everett said. He’s in the same class as Vanessa.

Bullying happens “all the time, everywhere,” according to Candace Johnson, the school social worker at the Southside Charter Academy. She works with the school’s 650 students and 30 homeroom teachers on bully prevention.

One in four students say they are bullied at least once a day, according to the Department of Education.

It’s a trend that worries Syracuse University professor of education Mara Sapon-Shevin, and she’s asking teachers and school administrators to take a closer look at school bullying.

Sapon-Shevin planned a workshop called “Bully Proofing Our Students: Creating Safe and Peaceful Schools” at Drumlins Country Club in late September.

Her goal is to turn bystanders into “upstanders.”

“More students will be bystanders than anything else,” Sapon-Shevin said. “They won’t be the bully, they won’t be the victim.”

Teachers can become bystanders, too, according to Sapon-Shevin.

“Teachers hear it, and they don’t do or say anything,” she said. “When schools don’t do anything, that’s the equivalent of saying, ‘This is OK.’ It’s kind of like a wink and a nod.”

Eighty percent of kids who have been bullied or

harassed have never had an adult intervene, according to research by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.

As a school social worker, Johnson does not want to be part of that statistic. She counsels students weekly about bullying, teaching them about conflict resolution, assertive responses, and how to be an upstander.

The Southside Charter Academy has its own check on bullying behavior.

A program called Capturing Kids' Hearts teaches students to monitor one another. If one student senses that another is being a bully, he or she will give thumbs up. Then the perceived bully has to say something positive about the perceived victim.

"It's not an end-all solution," Johnson said. But she said it's a start.

When Brad noticed his classroom bully "ripping on everyone around," he decided to speak up. "I told her it really wasn't necessary. And then I went and told my teacher," he said.

Despite Brad's efforts, the victim's feelings may not have been spared. "I think I saw her crying," Vanessa said.

Since school lasts most of the day and children aren't allowed to leave, the bullying can feel inescapable to some.

"When you're a kid and you're in school, you're sort of trapped. You don't have the freedom to leave, like adults do," Sapon-Shevin said. "So it feels like [the bullying] is the whole world. That's why we have to take this issue very seriously."

Johnson said at the Southside Charter Academy they take bullying so seriously that they're integrating workshops and seminars on anti-bullying tactics and are focusing on "character education."

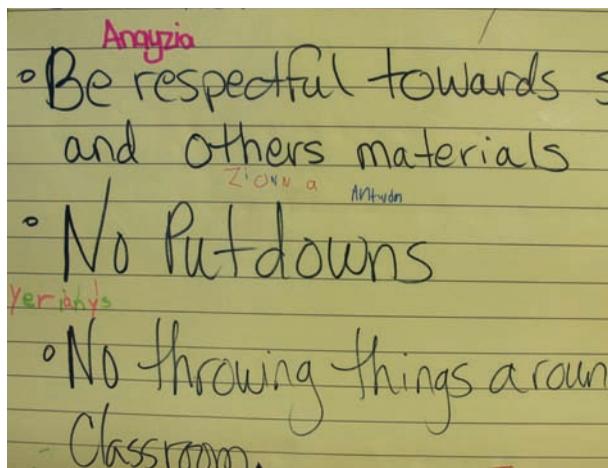
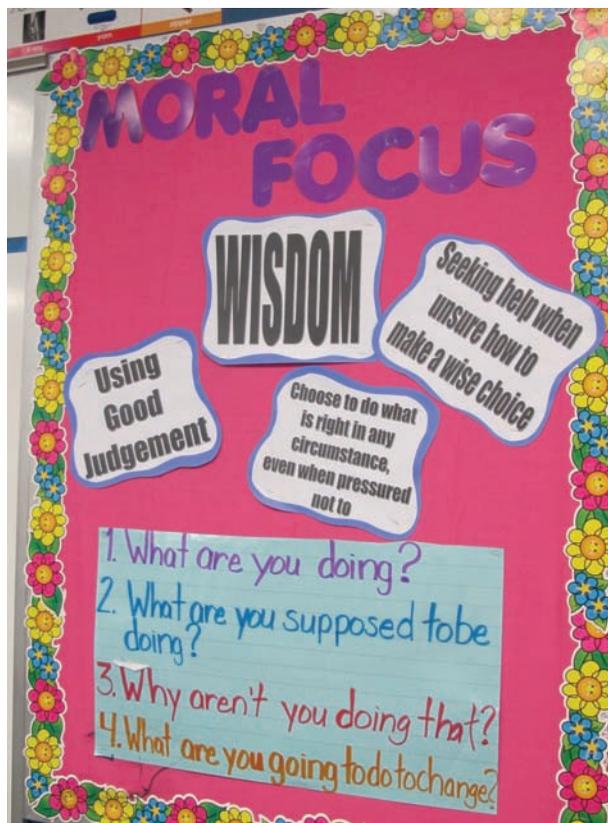
When students are caught bullying, the punishment can range from detention to suspension. Sometimes, Johnson has the student conduct a presentation for the entire school about the dangers of bullying.

Sapon-Shevin thinks character education should be up there with reading, writing and arithmetic. "Everyone is so concerned with achievement, but if you're worried that you're going to get beat up on the playground, or come this weekend you're going to have no friends to play with, it's really hard for you to learn your math or social studies," she said.

Lura Lunkenheimer, president of Peaceful Schools in Central New York, said bully prevention programs like her own are often seen as "luxuries rather than necessities."

Peaceful Schools used to hold bullying workshops in 17 Syracuse schools. After a late state budget, Peaceful Schools received less funding from school districts. It is now only working in one school in the Syracuse City School District: the Delaware Academy.

"Schools have been up against layoffs ... and the dis-



> Several posters hanging in this Southside Charter Academy classroom encourage good behavior among students.

| Danielle Waugh, Staff Photo

tricts have really had to make incredibly hard choices," Lunkenheimer said. "All of their resources are focused on how to maintain [academic] instruction."

But according to Lunkenheimer, bullying education is "an essential part of creating a safe community for our kids to learn in."

Johnson agreed, and stressed that bully-proofing schools has to involve more than teachers. It's a community issue.

"We don't expect overnight success, nor do we claim to have the magic wand," she said. "We understand that we can't always control what happens to our students when they leave school ground, but we do know that, with the program that we have in place, our school is headed in the right direction."

DEFUSE THE BULLY

Candace Johnson, the school social worker at the Southside Charter Academy, offers comebacks to commonly used insults that can temper the situation.

Insult: "Your momma!"

Comeback: "That's odd because I don't think you know my mom!"

Insult: "I bet I did better on that test than you did."

Comeback: "Well then, congratulations!"

Insult: "You're so ugly!"

Comeback: "I like the way I look, thank you."

Insult: "You smell."

Comeback: "That's funny because I took a bath this morning."

Insult: "Your shirt is ugly."

Comeback: "Thanks, I bought it at the ugly shirt store."

Insult: "You're as fat as a whale."

Comeback: "I happen to like whales."

THE CREEK STUNK

When the Creek Rats started hauling trash out of Onondaga Creek nine years ago, the creek stunk.

“All the sewage and farm runoff that was going into the creek was feeding all sorts of algae and seaweed, and the smell was mostly that stuff dying off,” Bob Graham explained.

During very rainy storms, the nearby Midland Regional Treatment Facility still drains some of the waste and rainwater into the creek because it can’t handle the amount of incoming sewage. The smell then stinks up surrounding neighborhoods.

This year, there are plans to complete an unused and unfinished pipeline that for years has been extending out from the Midland site. It’s only 500 feet short of another location that could help the Midland facilities contain the sewage coming in, if it were connected.

Aggie Lane, a South Side resident and member of the Partnership for Onondaga Creek, said construction to complete the final 500 feet of pipeline is supposed to begin over the next two months and take about a year to complete.

CLEANING THE CREEK

‘Creek Rats’ get dirty to make Onondaga Creek clean again



> Two members of the Creek Rats make an attempt to dispose of an old tire found along the stream during a recent cleanup of Onondaga Creek. | Matt Ziegler, Staff Photo

By | Nate Hopper
Urban Affairs reporter

Dedicated volunteers spend hours collecting trash and cleaning up Onondaga Creek

As they walked down toward Onondaga Creek in dry shoes, a little after 8 a.m. on a sunny September Saturday, Bob Graham and Steve Seleyway remembered what the water had looked like when they began hauling trash out of the polluted channel.

“When we first started, it was like an obstacle course trying to canoe down here,” Seleyway said. “There was 100 years of junk thrown in the creek — we were dodging stuff. Now you can just go down and you won’t hit nothing or see nothing much the whole way.”

For nine years, Graham and Seleyway have been cleaning up the creek with a motley crew of volunteers, now known as the Creek Rats. They’ve come from all around the Syracuse area — from the South Side to Eastwood and Clay — and have cleaned from the Kelley Brothers Memorial Park in Nedrow down to Kirk Park. In years past, the crews have consisted of as many as 50 people. A few hundred people have joined in

over the years.

“If you canoe the creek, you can see the difference. There’s almost no garbage in the sections that we’ve done,” Graham said. “Our goal is to make the water readily navigable so people will start to canoe and kayak it. And the more they do, the more interest and support there’ll be for cleaning it.”

The 26-mile creek starts near Tully and flows into Onondaga Lake. It winds through the South Side for almost three miles, peeking out from beneath bridges when not hidden by trees.

On one September Saturday, the Creek Rats divided themselves into two crews: the land crew and the water crew. The 15-person-or-so land crew drove to the day’s endpoint, a rented trash bin in a parking lot beside Dickerson Street’s bridge, and trudged along the muddy shores with buckets and litter grabbers.

Meanwhile, the 11-person water crew dragged six canoes down a Kirk Park hill, plopped them in the water off a four-foot ledge and jumped right into the silty currents — they were going to get wet anyway.

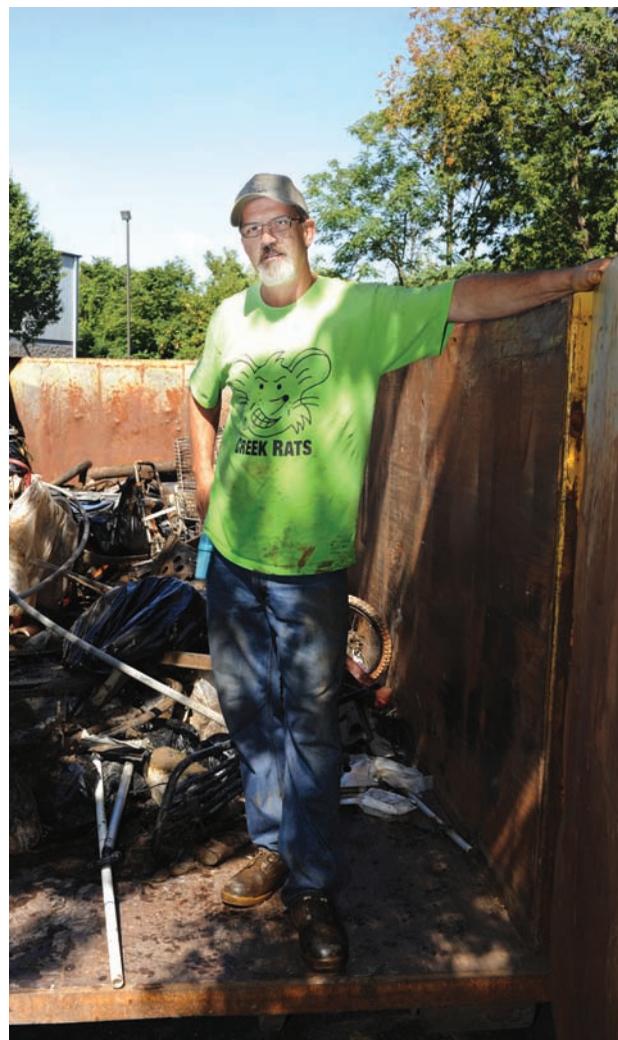
For the next two hours, they paddled down the waterway, tying their canoes to trees before wading

through the waist-high water to snag or pry out a piece of trash. A couple of the trash-filled canoes took on water and almost capsized — but that's normal, some veterans said.

For four Saturday mornings this year — two each in August and September — the Creek Rats focused on the stretch between Kirk Park and Dickerson Street. It's the third consecutive year they've focused on the stretch. Graham hopes after this year it will be clean enough to move on to the two miles left until the Inner Harbor.

"When you get to the downtown portion of the creek, there's just an ungodly amount of stuff in the water," he said.

The Creek Rats are also working to clean up the creek for the city's new Creekwalk, a scenic trail that now traces from Onondaga Lake to Armory Square. The path is supposed to expand further southward to Kirk Park in the future, said Andrew Maxwell, the city's director of planning and sustainability. There's no estimate on how much the extension would cost yet, he explained, but the city is hoping to receive federal or state money in the coming years to begin design and construction.



> Bradd Deitz, member of the Creek Rats, stands in a trash bin of garbage collected from Onondaga Creek. | Matt Ziegler, Staff Photo

People have begun to safely canoe and kayak where the Creek Rats have finished. Bradd Deitz, a South Side resident who's helped haul the trash for the past nine years, said he enjoys paddling down the creek from time to time and forgetting he's in the middle of the city.

"The wilderness around the creek is just so amazing," he said. "Not nearly enough people know about it."

When the two hours ended on the recent Saturday outing, the water crew returned to the shore muddied, sopped to the stomachs and with canoes filled with trash: two shopping carts (one of which was particularly pesky to pry out), a couple of computer monitors, a child's bicycle and miscellaneous junk and rusted metal. All together, the haul filled about a third of the trash bin. The haul from this year didn't fill the two bins it has in the past.

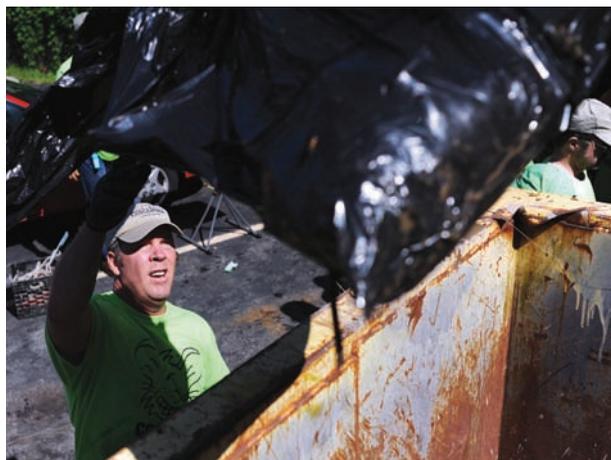
And that's the repayment for the hard, wet work, Deitz said: admiring what you pulled out and watching as the amount that remains to be hauled goes down.

Graham joked he had another reward in mind.

"I just want my dry shoes," he said with a tired smile.



> Two members of the Creek Rats dispose of PVC pipe by bending it in half after a cleanup of Onondaga Creek in Syracuse. | Matt Ziegler, Staff Photo



> A Creek Rats member launches a bag of trash over his head and into a trash bin after a cleanup of Onondaga Creek. | Matt Ziegler, Staff Photo

WHAT THEY FOUND

A telephone booth and a vintage 1950s sewing machine.

Bob Graham, Steve Seleway and Jerry Ireton

Shopping carts, bowling balls and sign poles.

Bradd Deitz

Bicycles, tires, bags of clothes, televisions, floor tiles and radios.

Maude and Bill Morse

Car seat, bowling ball and a calculator.

Xeno Levy

Other items: Refrigerator, laptop computers, a stop sign and a car engine.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

- Contact Bob Graham, (315) 396-2944, bob153@msn.com, or Steve Seleway, (315) 345-2727, selent@msn.com
- Recruit at least eight other volunteers and contact Graham to hold your own event.
- Adopt a shoreline area to maintain.
- Donate money, tools or supplies to the Creek Rats. The project is currently paid out-of-pocket by volunteers.

RECORDING COSTS

Bob Halligan, of Syracuse University's Bandier Program, said the cost of recording depends on the type of record, experience of the artist and producer, and the budget available. Regardless, creating an album is still a large investment of time and money.

Here is a brief breakdown:

Assuming that an artist or group records for 12 hours a day and six days a week, the album could be done in two to three months (approximately 576 hours for two months or 864 for three).

12 hours a day X 6 days a week = 72 hours a week

72 hours a week X 4 weeks a month = 288 hours a month

288 hours a month X 3 months = 864 hours for three months

864 hours for three months X SKY PAD Studio's \$40 hourly rate = \$34,560

864 hours for three months X a large recording label's hypothetical \$200 hourly rate = \$172,800

LAUNCHING PAD

New SKY PAD Studios helps local recording artists make it big



>Tedd Perry, known as SWELL, at the controls of SKY PAD's recording equipment. | Kelly Outram, Staff Photo

By | Kelly Outram
Urban Affairs reporter

New York City natives offer Syracuse R&B acts exposure through affordable studio time

With the help of a local recording label, local R&B artist Erika Lovette is in the process of creating her second R&B album — one that will include songs by the same person who performed a song with R&B artist Anita Baker.

SKY PAD Studios, a new recording label that opened in April 2010, is trying to provide just this kind of opportunity to Lovette and others in Syracuse and put it on par in some respects with big cities such as New York City and Philadelphia.

New York City natives Tedd Perry, better known as SWELL, and his sister, Melissa Parker, are working to help local artists get national exposure. They combine SWELL's music industry knowledge as a producer for more than 20 years working with artists such as P. Diddy, Fabolous and Jagged Edge, and Parker's experience in business, where she has a master's degree in finance.

"The R&B opportunities are not here," said Lovette,

a local R&B artist who is currently recording her second CD, this one with SKY PAD. "The city is limited. There aren't as many open-mic nights or radio stations to help you. You really have to travel and get yourself out there."

Lovette is SKY PAD Studios's first project. Lovette already released her first album titled, "Love, Life and Everything In Between," under a different label in



> Erika Lovette records a track in a SKY PAD studio. | Kelly Outram, Staff Photo

February 2010. With SKY PAD, Lovette is working with songwriter Sheree Hicks, who has written songs for R&B artists Tyrese and Anita Baker and is currently writing songs for Jennifer Hudson's new album.

"Working with SWELL has been a blessing because of his connections," Lovette said.

Financially, launching an artist and running a studio can get expensive, especially since SKY PAD is a project-based studio working with independent artists.

The big costs in creating an album come with packaging and marketing. Lovette said when she made her first CD, packaging cost around \$1,200. Lovette got a break from studio costs for that record because a childhood friend produced it for free. Lovette thinks family, friends and personal support are an advantage of working in Syracuse.

"It's a favor for a favor. People are willing to have your back if you have theirs," Lovette said.

SWELL said studio costs can get expensive, depending on the type of equipment the producer uses and who



> Melissa Parker of SKY PAD | Kelly Outram, Staff Photo

is nothing."

Lovette's first album took about a year and a half to complete. The amount of time it takes to create an album depends on the artist and the studio. The artist usually records around 30 to 40 songs for the project, and then chooses around 12 to actually include on the album itself.

Halligan said for a home recording studio, hourly charges can be anywhere between \$25 and \$75, since it isn't offering the same things that a larger studio would.

Despite the high cost, advances in technology are giving independent producers and artists a financial break.

"It's easier to do music, produce it, package it now," SWELL said

Since most music is bought and downloaded from the Internet, artists can save on packaging, but be hurt by illegal downloading.

"It's a Catch-22," SWELL said. "It's easier to record, but harder to make money from sales."

"I've been in studio, I can record a song," Lovette said. "But now how do I do the business side of it? How do I promote it, market it?"

Parker thinks one way is through hosting artist workshops that can give specific information to artists about how to get started.

"I'm not an artist but if I was, the Internet is good to a certain point, but it isn't going to give you what you need," Parker said. "It isn't going to tell you to go to 120th Street. It can just give you an overview."

NOTABLE NAMES

After more than 20 years in the music industry, in both New York City and Syracuse, SWELL has worked with many notable names in the rap and R&B world.

Among them:

Father MC

Redman

Jagged Edge

Fabulous

Focus (from Aftermath)

P. Diddy

Raekwon the Chef

Chino XO

Megan Rochelle

"Working with SWELL has been a blessing because of his connections"

—Erika Lovette

the producer is.

SKY PAD charges \$40 an hour for studio time and the artists still have to package the CDs themselves. Bob Halligan, Jr., an adjunct professor and musician in the Bandier Program at Syracuse University, said it could take 200 to 300 hours to record an album.

SWELL said that Lovette's first album could have easily cost \$10,000 if she was charged on an hourly rate. "Studios charging \$200 an hour for recording time

infobox CONTACT INFORMATION

SKY PAD Studios

- 407 Hubbell Ave. Suite 1
Syracuse, N.Y. 13207
- (315) 889-1SKY
- www.skypadstudios.com

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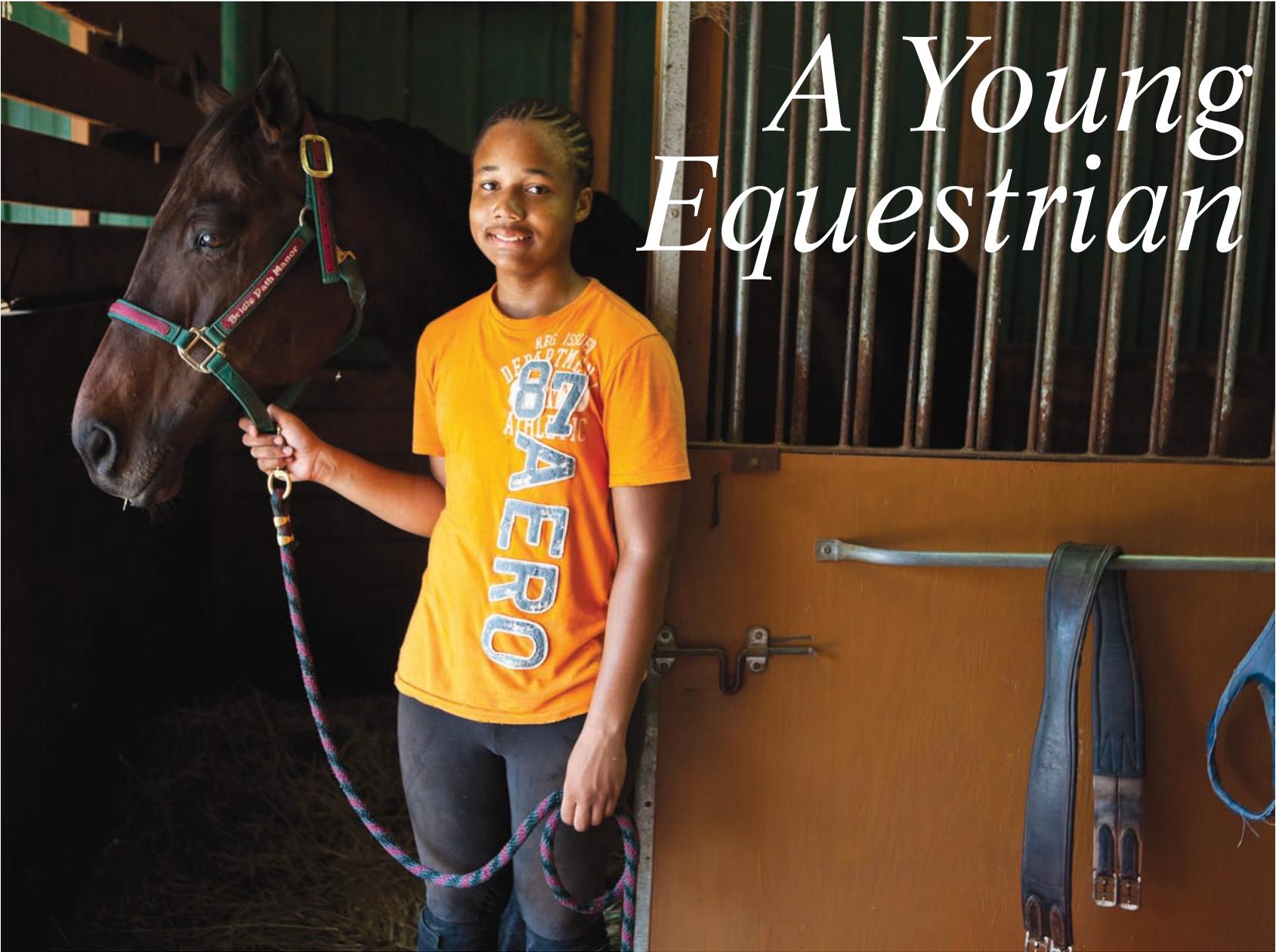
Questions? E-mail Ashley@mysouthsidestand.com or call (315) 443-8664



Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
2010 Founders' Day Luncheon

Join us as we celebrate 41 years
of service in Syracuse!
12:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4, 2010
Sheraton Syracuse University Hotel
801 University Ave., Syracuse
\$40; for tickets, call (315) 263-1512

Community Service Awardees:
Chief of Police Frank Fowler and
Bill Harper
Keynote Address:
Cleveland E. Beckett, Jr.



A Young Equestrian

> Jovan Daniel with his horse, Ares, which he no longer owns. Jovan has trained with five horses in his young equestrian career. | Mitchell Franz, Staff Photo

By | Meghan Russell
Contributing reporter

Jovan Daniel began riding at a young age and wants to become a professional trainer

For as long as he can remember, South Side resident Jovan Daniel loved horses.

While his mother attended school at the University of Minnesota, 3-year-old Jovan would tag alongside her and visit the place on campus where students could board horses. He fed them and occasionally even got to sit on one.

“It just kind of stuck to me that I like horses,” said Jovan, now 16. “So my grandfather took me to get lessons by his house. My mom said that it was just a phase, and that I would grow out of it. But obviously it stuck with me.”

Jovan said he continued riding horses to become the

skilled equestrian he is today, practicing one or two days for a few hours after attending classes at Faith Heritage. During the summer, he practiced whenever he could get out to the horses.

At 13, he started training and competing with the five horses he owned and boarded in Nedrow at the time. He already has a second-place award for flat work and jumping. Many people might have seen him compete at the New York State Fair.

“I train them mostly over jumps, but we want to work on flat work, like walk, trot and canter, before we get to the jump,” Jovan explained. “We want to get the horses associated with jumps so they won’t be scared of being around them or anything.”

And training can sometimes be difficult, he added, since every horse has his or her own personality.

“You have one horse that’s really goofy and nibbles your shirt and licks you in the face,” Jovan said with a



| Mitchell Franz



| Mitchell Franz



| Mitchell Franz



| Mitchell Franz

laugh. “Then you have a horse that’s a slow poke and you have to really get going so he knows that you mean business.”

Now Jovan has one horse, named New York to Paris, and he said he wants to move on to the next stage of competing.

“I want to be a professional rider and trainer,” Jovan said.

Jovan is searching for a job in his South Side neighborhood and is seeking sponsors to help ease the cost of his equestrian interests.

“With all the equipment you have to have — the riding apparel, the horse and the board — it racks up a lot of money in the end,” he said.

Jovan’s mother, Roshana Daniel, helps her son with riding expenses.

“It is an extremely expensive hobby, but it’s my job as his mother to nurture my child’s interest,” she said.

Daniel said she remembers her pre-school-age son galloping around the house with a tail made of toilet tissue, his hands curled up in little fists to represent horse hooves. He even developed calluses on his knuckles, she said.

While other children changed their minds from day to day on what they wanted to be when they grew up, Daniel said her son always knew his true path.

“He read every book and watched every movie he could get his hands on about horses,” she said. “He is at peace when he is around horses and has found his love, the key to success, and it is on top of a horse.”

The young equestrian said he would never stop riding.

“I just love horses,” Jovan said. “I’ve been around them almost all my life, and it’s such a fun sport to be able to participate in. Just having the opportunity to be in it, I feel so honored.”

WORDS OF WISDOM

Catholic Charities aims to educate Hispanic girls on teen pregnancy

By | Emily Warne
Urban Affairs reporter

Nationally, teenage pregnancy is declining, but in the Hispanic population, that decline is minimal

Last spring, Conchita Mazorra bought a couple of prom dresses. Not for herself — at 68 years old, she’s eyeing retirement more than dances. Instead, Mazorra bought them for several of the young women in her Latinamigas program, a pregnancy prevention program run by Catholic Charities.

For Mazorra and “her girls,” the dresses were more than frilly ball gowns for a teenage tradition — they were symbolic of something many of them never thought they’d see: high school graduation and a bright future.

The Latinamigas program, run by Vincent House, aims to help young girls living on the West and South sides of Syracuse learn how to avoid peer pressure and pregnancy, as well as become successful in adulthood.

“Programs like these are so important to our girls,” said Mazorra, who has coordinated Latinamigas for five years. “It teaches them how to make the decisions they need to in life to be successful, independent women. It teaches them confidence and security, and that’s something that they often need.”

Insecurity in teenagers is nothing new, but it’s especially important in a community where English might not be the teenager’s first language, or if they are new to the country. In Syracuse, Census reports say that 5.3 percent of the city is of Hispanic origin.

That’s something that Aly Wane knows firsthand. As a member of the Syracuse Peace Council and an immigrant from Senegal, he works primarily with the immigration task force of the Alliance for Communities Transforming Syracuse to help undocumented families in Central New York and to work for national and local immigration reform.

“The Latino community is already so oppressed,” he said at the Syracuse Peace Council, surrounded by posters on the walls calling for an overhaul of immigration policies. “They need all the help that they can get, and even the families who are here legally are often grouped with the undocumented families. It makes it very hard to get a good job, or an education, or other things that they need to become successful.”

And that’s what Latinamigas aims to provide. Latinas who are from the ages of 13 to 19 are invited to take part in the program, which teaches life skills and provides networking opportunities intended to show them what they can become, especially if they successfully avoid



> Conchita Mazorra is the coordinator for Latinamigas, a pregnancy prevention program run by Catholic Charities. | Emily Warne, Staff Photo

teenage pregnancy. Nationally, teenage pregnancy is decreasing, but the smallest drop has been in the Hispanic population. According to a 2007 report from the National Campaign to Prevent Teenage Pregnancy, the percent of Latinas who become pregnant in the United States before the age of 20 is almost double the national average — 51 percent.

“It’s huge, huge, huge,” said Mazorra, referring to teenage pregnancy on the West and South sides. “Not getting pregnant is one of the biggest obstacles they face.”

Still, because Latinamigas is run by Catholic Charities, she can’t — and won’t — teach contraceptive methods. “Once you give these girls a condom, it’s like you’re giving them permission,” she said. “How can I do that?”

The daily after-school program, which meets three hours a day Monday through Friday, requires that girls have a good attendance record in school and good grades. In return, they bring in professional women to speak to the girls about their experiences and career paths and provide advice. Other speakers also come to talk about related topics, such as sexually transmitted diseases, conflict resolution, how to start and maintain healthy relationships, and peer pressure.

Her program saw five girls graduate high school and go on to college last year — including one 16-year-old girl who went on to community college in Rochester this fall.

“I think we are really getting through to these girls,” Mazorra said. “When one of them finishes high school or goes to a college, we know we’re doing something good.”

PREVENTING HPV

South Side health center can provide vaccine at little to no cost

By | James S. McConico
Urban Affairs reporter

South Salina health center offers vaccine for widespread, and sometimes fatal, STD

Waiting at the bus stop on the corner of South Salina Street and McKinley Avenue, Aries Williams plays the big sister role and chastises her little brother after he chases his football into the middle of a busy street.

Aries, a 16-year-old junior, is headed home from her second day of school to help her mother with her two little sisters. She is willing to talk about an issue that makes some teenagers cringe — sex and sexually transmitted diseases.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, chlamydia and the human papillomavirus, or HPV, are the two most common STDs. HPV is one STD Aries has not heard of.

HPV affects males and females, but it's more threatening to females. Intercourse is not necessary. Genital contact of any kind with an infected partner can spread the disease.

There are 100 different types of HPV. The more serious types can lead to cervical cancer or genital warts.

The seriousness of the disease surprised Aries. "I didn't know about this disease or that a girl could get cancer from it. I've heard of cervical cancer, but I didn't know that's how people got it. None of my friends have had HPV, but a handful of them have had an STD," she said.

HPV is preventable with the use of the vaccine Gardasil. "I have heard of that," Aries said. "I see the 'One Less' commercials all the time."

Gardasil is recommended for females ages 9-26 and must be administered in three phases. "I think it would be helpful to girls my age," she said.

In February 2009, New York became one of 19 states to enact legislation that requires immunization against HPV to be administered to children in the same manner and on the same time schedule as other immunizations, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Aries does not agree with that. "I have two younger sisters, and I think making them get a shot to prevent STDs encourages sex," she said. "I think (the decision) should be left up to the mother and that girl. I don't want anybody telling me what I have to get."

Syracuse Community Health Center Vice President of Communications Sheri Dozier-Owens supports the

requirement. The South Salina branch handles around 90 HPV cases per year. "Most of our cases are teenagers. It's down from previous years, but this doesn't include cases that go undiagnosed. Nearly all our patients are from the South Side community," she said.

The CDC reports Gardasil costs \$120 per dose. The vaccine requires a total of three doses, making the total cost \$360. "We offer the vaccine free of charge or on a sliding scale for those who cannot pay the entire fee. This is based on monthly income, so it varies on a case-by-case basis," Dozier-Owens said.

With school recently back in session, the clinic has seen an increase in parents requesting the shot. "A lot of them talk about having seen the Gardasil commercial. They bring their children in to get the shot when immunization forms need to be updated or when their daughter is in need of a physical to participate in school activities," Dozier-Owens said.

Walking home from school and bundled in her winter coat on an unusually cold day in early September, 13-year-old eighth-grader Nylah Rutledge agreed that Gardasil should be mandatory. "I think it's a good thing. Even though I'm in junior high, girls my age do have sex. Some of them even get pregnant, and sometimes you hear rumors about girls getting STDs," she said.

Nylah has seen the catchy "One Less" Gardasil commercials, but she was not familiar with the details.

"I didn't know you could get all those diseases and so many people died from HPV until now, so I guess if (government officials) are trying to make it mandatory, they must be doing it for a reason," Nylah said.



> This is the newest branch of the Syracuse Community Health Center, located at 1701 South Ave. | James S. McConico, Staff Photo

HPV FACTS

You do not have to have intercourse to contract the human papillomavirus. **Genital contact of any kind** can spread the disease.

An estimated 80% of women will be **infected with HPV** at one point in their lives.

For most women HPV clears on its own, but it **can lead to genital warts** and cervical cancer.

10,000 women are **diagnosed with cervical cancer** in the U.S. each year.

3,700 women **die from cervical cancer** in the U.S. each year.

The American Cancer Society reports that, with **early detection**, cervical cancer is treatable.

DID YOU KNOW?

CERVICAL CANCER is the second-leading cancer killer of women worldwide.

According to the National Cervical Cancer Coalition, nearly 10,000 women are diagnosed with CERVICAL CANCER a year, and 3,700 die from it in the U.S. alone.

According to the CDC, an estimated 80% of women will be infected with HPV by age 50. HPV types 6, 11, 16, or 18 are diagnosed as either genital warts or CERVICAL CANCER.

ON THE SIDE

SOUTH SIDE GROCERS

Brief History

1958: Loblaws Grocery opens at South and Bellevue avenues.

1964: Mario's Big M opens at 2711 S. Salina.

1970: Loblaws Grocery and 20 branches close.

June 1995: Mario's Big M closes.

August 1999: Semaza's IGA Market opens at Mario's former location.

February 2009: P&C on South Salina closes.

August 2009: Jubilee Homes buys the Loblaws Grocery store building at 611 South Ave.

Source: *The Post-Standard*

WANTED: FOOD STORE

Jubilee Homes aims to start work on South Side grocery store in January



> This is the site of a proposed grocery store located at 611 South Ave. | Fernando Alfonso III, Staff Photo

STORES NEAR 611 SOUTH AVE.

Price Chopper

- 4713 Onondaga Blvd.
- 1.6 miles away
- 4 min. by car; 31 min. walk; 10 min. by bike

Wegmans

- 4722 Onondaga Blvd.
- 1.6 miles away
- 4 min. by car; 31 min. walk; 10 min. by bike

Aldi

- 2015 Erie Blvd.
- 3.2 miles away
- 10 min. by car; 1 hour 5 min. walk; 24 min. by bike

By | Fernando Alfonso III
Urban Affairs reporter

Proposed grocery store would give South Side community members an option close to home

Treona Mclean, 18, has to make sacrifices. About two times a month, Mclean rides the bus from her home on Hudson Street to the Western Lights shopping center to buy groceries.

"It kind of sucks," said Mclean, who travels home with six to eight bags after every two- to four-hour trip. "I don't really enjoy it but I have to do it ... I actually see a lot of people from this community on the bus, going grocery shopping."

Since the P&C Foods store on South Salina Street closed early last year, Mclean and some 20,000 South Side community members have had to find other places to buy food.

According to Jubilee Homes of Syracuse Inc., that might soon change.

In August, Onondaga County made a \$100,000 contribution to Jubilee Homes, a neighborhood redevelopment and housing agency that plans to start construction on a South Side grocery store in January 2011. This is the biggest contribution the \$3.9 million project has

received, said Patrice Chang, lead project manager for Jubilee.

"I am extremely confident that ... we are going to see the funds begin to be allocated to us from the government sector. The money is there," Chang said regarding the status of three New York state grant requests. "This is not going to be the type of project that we can dismiss. It is a major priority for the community."

One grant Jubilee is seeking is from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. Because of plans to have the grocery store LEED-certified, Chang is confident the money will be approved.

LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. It is a rating system given to buildings that are "designed to promote design and construction practices that increase profitability while reducing the negative environmental impacts," according to the Natural Resources Defense Council website.

Jubilee purchased the building on the corner of South Avenue and Bellevue Avenue in August 2009 for \$350,000, said Walt Dixie, Jubilee's executive director. When the new store is completed, it will provide the community with much-needed vegetables and fruits and affordable food, Jubilee's website says.

In order to keep the community aware of the

project, Rentia Ferguson, outreach coordinator with Jubilee, has signed up 3,189 people for a shopper card program. The cards are used with coupons to get deals and discounts at South Side businesses like Eco Cleaners & Laundromat and Jerk Hut, Ferguson said.

“I do (the) coupons just so I can keep the community’s faith and hope about the supermarket up,” Ferguson said.

Like Mclean, Louise Poindexter and Cynthia Patterson, who both live near the proposed grocery store site, used to ride the bus regularly to Western Lights — and also to the Price Chopper on Erie Boulevard. Poindexter used to take along a cart for her groceries, struggling with an injured back.

“This was very stressful for me,” said Poindexter. “I didn’t do it often because it was too hard.”

With two children at home, Patterson made the two-hour trip twice a week.

“I did it for years,” Patterson said. “I would carry 10 to 12 bags.”

For some smaller items, Poindexter tried shopping at corner stores. Although many of the stores sold some fruits and vegetables, their selection was limited and it was expensive, Poindexter said.

“One time, I spent 20 to 25 dollars in one of the little corner stores and I just had enough to make a meal for myself for that night,” Poindexter said. “Prices have always been high but that’s ridiculous. I can’t spend 20 dollars or more on each meal.”

Patterson agreed. “I used to go to them but the prices are too high. The food is stale sometimes.”

The \$100,000 is from Onondaga County’s Green Improvement Fund. The fund is part of the Save the Rain Initiative, which is aimed at reducing the amount of rainwater that enters the city sewer system, County Executive Joanie Mahoney said in a statement.

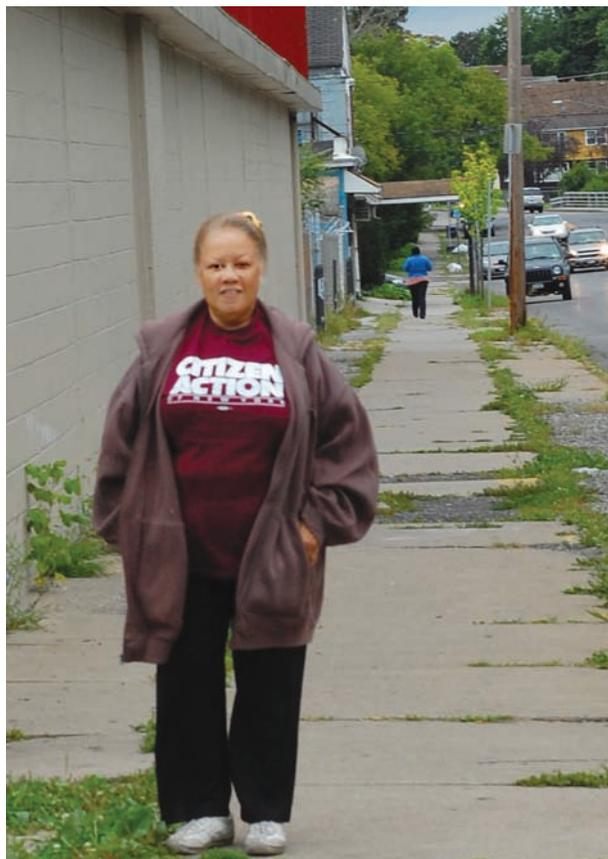
The grocery store planned at 611 South Ave. will have an 11,588-square-foot roof-top garden that will capture about 204,000 gallons of rain a year, Mahoney said.



> Jubilee Homes held an open house last February to reveal the blueprints of the South Side grocery store and displayed this model of how the new 33,000-square-foot community supermarket would appear. | Robyn Stowers, Staff Photo



> Treona Mclean rides the bus from Hudson Street to Western Lights for groceries. | Fernando Alfonso III, Staff Photo



> Louise Poindexter stands outside the proposed grocery store at 611 South Ave. | Fernando Alfonso III, Staff Photo

AREA NUMBERS

South Side

(13205 ZIP code):

Population: 20,592

Ethnicity: 50.4% black, 42% white, 3.2% Hispanic/Latino, 1.7% Asian, 1.4% American Indian/Alaskan native

Median household income: \$29,060

Families below poverty level: 1,071

Individuals below poverty level: 5,135

Eastwood

(13206 ZIP Code):

Population: 16,562

Ethnicity: 88.4% white, 6.6% black, 2.4% Hispanic/Latino, 1.1% Asian

Median household income: \$31,871

Families below poverty level: 540

Individuals below poverty level: 2,662

Source: The U.S. Census Bureau, gathered in 2000

ON THE SIDE

POINTS ABOUT ON POINT

- More than 78 percent of On Point students complete their freshman year and advance to the sophomore year.
- 20 percent have no parent in the picture; some are homeless, from foster care or are refugees.
- 1,748 students have gone to 170 colleges and universities including but not limited to:

- Le Moyne College
- Syracuse University
- Columbia University
- Howard University
- Morgan State University
- Colgate University

FROM THE STREETS TO THE CLASSROOM

By | Brandi Kellam
Urban Affairs reporter

A former gang member turned first-generation college student wants to lead by example

David Trapps can't be stopped. His motivation is his time spent in prison. Trapps is 31 years old and the first person in his family to go to college. Though his journey toward becoming a first-generation college student is not a picture-perfect success story, he recalls it as one that has taught him valuable lessons. Born and raised on the South Side of Syracuse, Trapps endured many hardships that could have deterred him.

ROCKY START

"My mother used to get high ... my pops OD'd ... my stepfather used to get high," Trapps said.

As a youth, Trapps found it hard to listen to his parents' advice because what they told him to do didn't match the example they set. His father died when Trapps was 8 years old, and though his stepfather obtained his high school diploma, none of his parents received a college degree.

Trapps almost followed in their footsteps. As a student at Corcoran High School, Trapps spent time in juvenile detention before eventually dropping out. Soon after, he became associated with a gang that was involved in a murder.

"Somebody was shot and somebody was killed," Trapps said. He pleaded guilty to possession of a weapon in the second degree, which landed him in prison for almost a decade. And then, his release from prison was short-lived. While looking for work he began selling drugs to make ends meet.

CONTACT INFORMATION

On point for College Inc.,
1654 W. Onondaga St.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13204

Phone: (315) 362-5003

info@onpointforcollege.org
www.onpointforcollege.org



> David Trapps at the Coulter Library on the campus of Onondaga Community College. | Brandi Kellam, Staff Photo

“You can be smart, you can be educated, you can be trying to give back.”

—David Trapps

“It was easy for me to re-engage because when I came home people bought a lot of stuff for me ... sneakers, clothes all types of stuff ... coats ... so I felt an obligation to that and that’s how I really got reeled back in.”

Within five months he was back in prison.

“You fool yourself into thinking this is the right course of action but really that’s insanity because I’m doing the same thing, expecting a different result.”

Trapps was released from prison a year later.

The worst part of being in prison was missing the birth of his son. “I missed my first child being born, my son, and that killed me.”

And, it was enough for Trapps to realize that he didn’t want to risk his life or his family by going back to prison. Ever.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

Now 31 years old, Trapps is not a typical first-generation, first-semester college student at Onondaga Community College. Trapps is 10 years older, with a wife and two children. He is a member of the South Side Community Coalition and wants to use what he learned on the streets to help young people make better decisions.

As a student majoring in human services, Trapps overcame the challenges that many first-generation college students face, with the help of the On Point for College program.

According to Samuel Rowser, program director of On Point, many first-generation college students struggle because of the responsibilities they have to help their families. They lack the resources of students whose parents are better off.

“We do have a tendency to think that if we give them enough financial aid and get them into college they should be OK ... but the part that people take for granted who have been to college and have supportive families are all those other things that are crucial to a

student being successful.”

On Point provides a variety of resources for first-generation and low-income college students, including providing them transportation to and from school, money for books, clothes and even a place to stay when they come home during breaks.

Rowser recalls the drive and determination of Trapps to become a student at OCC. While he was incarcerated, someone stole his identity, used it to go to school, and defaulted on college loans. Trapps had a large amount of paperwork to fill out before he could even begin the college application process.

“He was diligent,” Rowser said. “He did a lot of the groundwork.”

Trapps is thankful for the services that On Point provided. “Two of my friends ... tried to go to OCC this semester and couldn’t navigate the paperwork and were frustrated and let the paperwork deter them.”

FUTURE

Trapps said being an example to his wife and children motivates him to earn his bachelor’s and eventually his master’s degree. His wife, Antonisha Trapps, has stuck with him.

“You’re kind of waiting on the uncertainty ... but I knew he had potential and I knew he was a better person than everybody thought he was,” Antonisha said.

Trapps eventually wants to use the degree from OCC to start an organization that will mentor young people who may be struggling just as he did. “At 14 you think someone that doesn’t have the same experiences as you don’t understand your life.”

Trapps indeed understands.

“You can be yourself, you can be grounded, you can be from the hood ... but you can be smart, you can be educated, you can be trying to give back ... earning a decent income for your family, providing for others ... everything that goes along with that.”



> David Trapps and his wife, Antonisha, are renovating this space on South Salina Street so she can open a hairstyling shop. | Brandi Kellam, Staff Photo

TRAPPS' NOTES ON LIFE

ON JOBS AND BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR

“An asset is something that makes money for you without you being there. There’s a difference between a job and an asset.”

ON LEARNING LIFE LESSONS

“I wasn’t ready the first time. That one year (back in prison), I couldn’t even cry I was so hurt. That year affirmed so much of what I already knew. If I wasn’t believing what I learned in them 10 years (the first time in prison), that one year really etched it in stone.”

ON SELLING DRUGS

“You tell yourself, I’m doing this for us (to support my family). You ain’t doing that for them, you’re doing it for you. They just gonna’ reap the benefits, but at the end of the day it’s for you.”

ON THE SIDE

MARRIAGE OF VALUES

May Davis, 67, is another volunteer. She looks after infants at Atonement Day Care Center. She asked for that kind of placement.

"I've always wanted to work with babies," Davis said. "I never got to with my own children because I was a working mother."

Her responsibilities include feeding the infants and rocking them to sleep.

Beth O'Hara sees the program as a marriage of old-time and modern-day values. O'Hara said the program is very popular. There are currently 40 applicants on a waiting list.

Senior citizens must go through a rigorous process to qualify as a foster grandparent, including a background check for criminal history. They must then go through orientation. The foster grandparents receive a modest, nontaxable \$2.65-per-hour stipend. The program is funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service through the New York State Office for the Aging.

WANT TO HELP?

- Help is needed at elementary schools, day care centers, Head Start sites, hospitals, detention centers
- Contact Beth O'Hara at (315) 295-0719

FOSTERING RESULTS

Nationwide program places 'Grandparents' in 30 Syracuse sites

By | Jennifer Cheng
Urban Affairs reporter

As part of a national program, Syracuse senior citizens volunteer in schools, hospitals, day care

Bill Zimmer, 56, helps out at a Van Duyn Elementary School third-grade class every day. The students call him "Grandpa."

He is part of a national program called Foster Grandparents that places senior citizens who are older than 55 in classrooms or day care centers as assistants.

According to the director of the Syracuse branch, Beth O'Hara, there are currently 91 volunteer foster grandparents of mostly low to medium income assigned to around 30 sites in Syracuse. The program gives senior citizens a purpose to leave the house and be active every day, while students benefit greatly from being tutored by respected role models.

Zimmer, 56, lives alone in Syracuse. "It's nice to feel part of a family. They're like my surrogate grandkids," Zimmer said.

On a recent class day, Zimmer walked around a table of students and gently explained to one student how to solve a problem. When the student understood, Zimmer squeezed him on the shoulder and moved on to the next student.

"They need the father figure at least for part of the day," said Zimmer, who helps out in the third-grade class from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. from Monday to Thursday. He recognizes that a lot of Van Duyn students have absent fathers. When one of the third-graders was caught selling lighters at school, Zimmer said it reinforced their desperate need for positive role models.

"I respect their boundaries," he said. "They size you up first and then they warm up to you very quickly."

While the class lined up to walk to the cafeteria for lunch, Zimmer slouched a little to hold the hands of two students.

"They sometimes fight over holding my hand in the corridor," Zimmer said. "They are very inquisitive and not afraid to ask questions. They would ask me why I have wrinkles, why my hair is gray, and why I have padding," Zimmer said, pointing to his stomach and chuckling at the students' honesty.

Claudia Stockard, principal of Van Duyn Elementary School, said the Foster Grandparent program is a generational bridge that is desperately needed in the community.

"A lot of our parents are young who don't have what I'd call 'mother's wit,'" Stockard said. "It comes with life



> May Davis takes care of infants at the Atonement Day Care Center as part of the program. | Jennifer Cheng, Staff Photo

experience, which our foster grandparents have."

Foster grandparents in Syracuse are mostly female. At Van Duyn, there are four grandmas and one grandpa.

"I would love to see some more males as foster grandparents, and it's great to have a Caucasian male," Stockard said, referring to Zimmer. "But it would be even better to have an African-American grandpa. As you can see, most of our students are African-American."

Denise Neimeier, a special education teacher at Van Duyn, appreciates having Ethel Axelson, 81, serving as a foster grandmother in the classroom.

"It helps with behavior having 'Nanny' there because it really sets a different tone."

Axelson said the students are always respectful to her. "I tell them to call me 'Nanny' because my own grandchildren call me 'Nanny,'" she said.

Teresa Zollo, a third-grade teacher, appreciates "Nanny" because she can help the children one-on-one — for example, paying attention to how well the students are doing with their reading.

Anna Whatley, 76, has been a foster grandmother for 15 years and now assists in a kindergarten class at McKinley-Brighton Magnet Elementary School.

When one of the students was struggling recently, Whatley immediately helped.

"Grandma knows what you need before you even ask for it," said Nora Kirst, who teaches the kindergarten class where Whatley assists.

Whatley made a lot of good friends in the program, and every Friday, the foster grandparents have a gathering where they receive updates from O'Hara and a chance to mingle.

NEW FRONTIER

Minority students get acquainted with college

By | Katherine Hills
Community Correspondent

Many minority students go through school unaware of their potential and capabilities. They also don't always take advantage of the resources that are available to them. One organization that is working to awaken and expose students to a world beyond their neighborhoods is The Junior Frontiers of the Mohawk Valley.

The Junior Frontiers of the Mohawk Valley was established in Utica in 1996 and made its way to Syracuse in 2004. Its goal is to provide support to minority children. The Junior Frontiers group focuses on academic excellence, professional development, civic responsibility and self-esteem.

With the 2010-2011 school year beginning, The Junior Frontiers group is kicking into gear. It held its first meeting Sept. 13 at the Payton Memorial Temple. Co-director Jawwaad Rasheed stood before the group of students in grades 6 through 12 who attend schools such as Christian Brothers Academy, Manlius Pebble Hill, Jamesville DeWitt, Cicero-North Syracuse, Syracuse Academy of Science, Syracuse City Schools and others.

He began the session by asking the students to introduce themselves and describe what they did during their summer vacation. The students stood voluntarily, sharing stories of visiting colleges such as Le Moyne and SUNY Oswego, and some schools as far away as the University of Southern California. Students were able to experience college firsthand, taking college courses in accounting, biochemistry and engineering.

Exposing the students early to what it will take to be successful in college and the steps needed to get to college are among the main goals of the Junior Frontiers. Every member of the organization must take the SATs. Students in high school must take it twice; those in middle school take it once. The Junior Frontiers' motto: Start early, do often and become successful.

At the meeting, Rasheed outlined all the events the organization had lined up for the coming year. The students will be exposed to programs and events that will help to guide and enrich their academic journey. Students will have the opportunity to tour SUNY colleges and historical black colleges. They will get a chance to participate in a seven-week SAT prep course, writing workshops and more.

Ishaq Miller, 14, a student at Manlius Pebble Hill, said, "I wanted to be a part of Junior Frontiers because they offer a lot of opportunities and chances to get scholarships." Ishaq also is looking forward to going on the historical black college tour. This year the tour will be making stops at schools located in North Carolina.

A parent, Paige Braxton, is pleased with the program.

"It's good to have people in the community that care about our children's success," Braxton said.

Rasheed also praised the program.

"This organization is important because it gives students the tools they need to be successful, not just short term but also long term," he said.

The Junior Frontiers of the Mohawk Valley works to expose students to all the possibilities that are out there for them and teaches them the steps to take to become successful and achieve their goals.

To learn more about The Junior Frontiers of the Mohawk Valley, contact Jawwaad Rasheed at Jawwaadr@aol.com



South Side Pride in a Puppet

> Ten South Side youths created a large papier-mâché puppet and performed during the Art-in-Motion event held Saturday, Sept. 11, in front of the Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology in downtown Syracuse. The puppet represented the South Side's love of block parties, and the youths danced to the song "Show Out" by DJ Unk. | Matt Ziegler, Staff Photo

Community Folk Art Center presents "Dogs in Transition: Pit Bulls & Mill Dogs" by Cyrus Mejia September 25 - December 11, 2010



Community Folk Art Center is proud to host "Dogs in Transition," which features large-scale paintings of pit bulls and dogs rescued from puppy mills. Mejia is an animal activist and co-founder of Best Friends Animal Society, the nation's largest animal sanctuary for homeless animals.

**805 E. Genesee Street
Syracuse, NY 13210
(315) 442-2230
cfac@syr.edu**

Saturday, Oct. 2 at noon
Canines & Companions Day

Thursday, Oct. 21 at 7 p.m.
"Through a Dog's Eyes"
film screening & discussion



Saturday, Nov. 6 at noon
Animal Figure Drawing Workshop

Thursday, Nov. 18 at 7 p.m.
"The Puppy Mill"
film screening

ON THE SIDE

PRIDE OF THE LEGION

The American Legion was founded in 1919 by WWI veterans who wanted to create an organization for veterans to help other veterans.

In the U.S. there are more than 14,000 American Legion posts with approximately 2.2 million members.

Sons of the Legion, males whose grandparents or parents served in the U.S. military, are also eligible to join.

SYMBOLISM OF THE LEGION EMBLEM



Rays of the sun: Suggest that the Legion's principles will dispel violence and evil.

The wreath: To honor the memory of fallen comrades in arms.

The Star: A symbol of victory, which also represents honor and glory.

Blue outer ring: Stands for the rehabilitation of sick and disabled veterans.

Red inner ring: Stands for service to our community and loyalty to America.

A LEGION DIMINISHED

Fewer veterans of current conflicts are joining the American Legion

By I Mackenzie Reiss
Urban Affairs reporter

The Legion's membership is in slow but steady decline, causing some posts to consider closing

American Legion Post 1361 needs a few more good men like Josh Hefi. Hefi, a corporal in the Marine Corps Reserves who spent 10 months in Iraq, returned home in 2009 and did the unheard of: He decided to become a member, and is now the Syracuse post's one and only veteran from the war in Iraq. But Hefi never heard about the Legion from his commander in the Marine Corps, or anyone else in the service for that matter.

"I honestly don't know of anybody that was in the military of my age that's a member in the American Legion," Hefi said. "I had no idea what it was all about, other than that my father and my grandfather hung out here, until I came. Now I'm glued. There's not a single week where I don't stop in."

On paper, the mission of the American Legion is to support veterans from every branch of the armed forces who served during a time of conflict. But for members of Tipperary Hill Post 1361 on West Fayette Street, the battle isn't over yet. They are still losing soldiers: this time, on the home front.

John Kapelewski, a Vietnam veteran, has been a member at the Legion for eight years. He takes a pull on his draft and delivers the bad news. "We're doomed," he says. "Doomed ... I think it's gonna die, the American Legion. As people are dying, [Legions] are dying." He stops to let his eyes wander the room for a moment, resting on each gray head, as if to prove his point.

The WWII generation, once the driving force of membership, is now passing on. Today membership is 30 percent less than it was during the '40s and '50s, when membership peaked at just more than 3 million, said Bill Sloan, the assistant director of International Affairs and Members at the Legion's national headquarters.

"There's been a tremendous loss in the WWII generation within the past 20 years," Sloan said. "WWII vets made up the majority of membership in the '80s and '90s.

Sloan estimates that 60 percent of current members served in Vietnam, 20 percent in Korea or World War II, and the final 20 percent in various conflicts since 1991. But Tipp Hill hasn't reaped the benefits from that influx of younger vets. In fact, the average age of the post's 240 members is 65.

Veterans of Vietnam, Korea, Bosnia and other



> Josh Hefi is the only veteran from the Iraq war who is a member of the American Legion Post 1361. | Mackenzie Reiss, Staff Photo

conflicts look to younger vets, fresh from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, to fill in the ranks. But those who may be able are seldom willing to join. To recruit new faces, the post has relied on out-dated methods — word of mouth and hosting social dinners, neither of which has proved effective in retaining veterans in their 20s and 30s. There is no Legion Facebook page or post website or Twitter feed.

Last October, when financial woes forced the Legion to re-evaluate its operations, post leaders were forced to choose between making dramatic cuts to their hours of operation, or switching to an all-volunteer force. But rather than close their doors, post leaders asked their staff, who once labored for pay, to do the same for free. The majority said "yes."

Because they did, they were there for Hefi.

"I went through a tough relationship a few months ago. She said that I changed when I came back," he said, so much so that the relationship ended within a year of Hefi's return from war.

"I felt like it was my fault because I came back from deployment and she said I wasn't the same guy she fell in love with. So, it's good to have these guys that have been through the same experiences to talk to. That's something that I wouldn't be able to talk (about) with my other friends, or out at an average bar."