

FEATURES



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Street sign dedication ceremony for the late pastor Peter Wilson, Sr.

Story by Joe Parisi

A capacity crowd packed Mt. Zion Christian Baptist Church in Mount Vernon on Saturday, August 5 to honor the life and legacy of the late Rev. Peter Wilson, Sr., who died July 28, 2016 at 72. A street renaming ceremony followed the service opposite the church.

Rev. Wilson, Sr. was called as pastor of Mt. Zion Christian Congregational Church on October 17, 1982 and installed as pastor on January 15, 1983.

The nearly two-hour memorial service was filled with music and included many fond remembrances from family members, longtime friends and colleagues for the man at the heart of Mt. Zion Christian Baptist Church's spiritual life for so long, and the Mount Vernon community as a whole. Also in attendance were many dignitaries including former mayor Ernie Davis and members of the City Council, the city comptroller, city officials and others.

The Mistress of Ceremonies for the memorable church ceremony was Sylvia



The late Rev. Peter Wilson, Sr.'s family holding a copy of the street sign honoring him, while being presented a proclamation by City Clerk George Brown

Gadson.

The Mt. Zion Christian Baptist Church

choir provided wonderful musical selections throughout the ceremony.

Continued on page 6

Mount Vernon bustles with activity during "National Night Out"

Story by Joe Parisi



Members of Mount Vernon's Finest preparing food for the attendees

National Night Out, a nationwide effort to curb crime by forging relationships between the police and the community, was held on Tuesday, August 1 in the Levister Towers Courtyard. It seemed like the entire populace of Mount Vernon came to life to participate in National Night Out - America's Night Against Crime.

National Night Out - America's Night Against Crime is a good time to get to know your neighbors and take part in crime prevention activities happening across the city - and Mount Vernonites did exactly that.

Each year during National Night Out, the Mount Vernon Police Department makes an extra effort to strengthen neigh-

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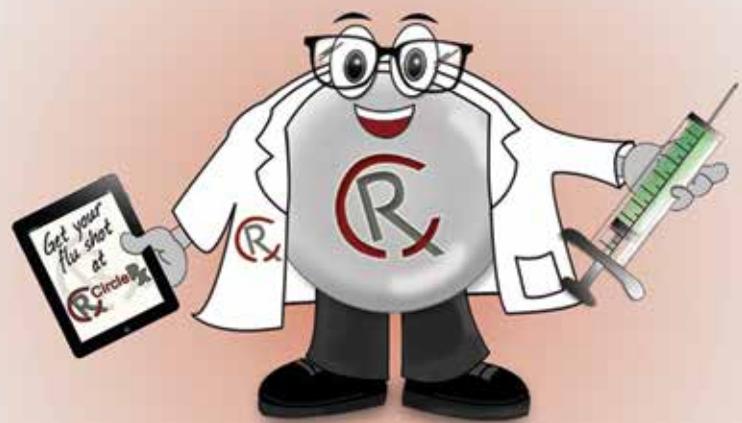
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Flu shot

Special screening of "13th" at Pelham Picture House



Several of the youth housed at the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester

On Wednesday, September 13, there will be a special screening of Ava DuVernay's documentary, "13th", at the Pelham Picture House. The screening is part fundraiser and part awareness raiser for the Youth Shelter Program of Westchester, which will celebrate its 40th year in service to youth in 2018. The event, which begins at 6pm, includes the screening and a panel discussion and light refreshments afterward. A donation of \$25 minimum is requested.

The Pelham Picture House is located at 175 Wolf's Lane in Pelham.

"13th" is a raw and honest exploration of the historical context and trajectory of what we have now identified as the injustice of mass incarceration. Whether you

have heard about it, or have seen the film, the panel discussion will offer a unique opportunity to become part of the local conversation with key stakeholders and local leaders about solutions for Westchester.

Panelists include: Glenn Martin, Founder of JustLeadership, USA; Kathie Davidson, Chief Administrative Judge, 9th Judicial District; Mayo Bartlett, Esq., a civil rights and criminal defense lawyer and Jared Rice, Esq., New Rochelle City Council member.

Laura Rossi, Executive Director of Westchester Community Foundation, will moderate the panel discussion.

For more information about the shelter and to register to attend the film screening, visit www.ysow.org.

Mayor Thomas: "Be outraged on funding priorities"

I was encouraged to see the vocal participation and outpouring of opinions during last week's Community Development Block Grant public hearings. This grant round was extremely competitive with numerous dedicated non-profits and organizations applying for this limited funding.

Two things I heard loud and clear was the shared desire from the community to fund our young people including the Mount Vernon Razorbacks and the Mayor's Scholarship. As a Razorback myself, I know firsthand how vital this organization is to our identity as a community, our bond among one another, and our pride as the birthplace of champions. Therefore, I have directed that the Razorbacks receive a CDBG funding allocation for this cycle. In addition, I have directed an increase in the proposed funding for the Mayor's Scholarship. Memorial Field is moving forward with the installation of a semi-permanent track so our Razorbacks will have their field once again.

My thanks again to all the applicants and to those that took the time to voice their opinion and I encourage you to continue to raise your voice on behalf of our great city. The City Council has the ability to fund programs that did not receive CDBG funds and to invest in infrastructure improvements that will make city facilities and programming fully ADA-compliant. Please continue to advocate, inform, and remain engaged with elected officials to keep our city moving forward.

And it is now time for the City Council and Comptroller Maureen Walker to hear your voice as well. We should all be outraged that the City Council and Comptroller Walker eliminated funding for the police commissioner. This makes it incredibly difficult for us to attract the leadership that our families deserve if we cannot offer

them a salary. No other government would do this to their constituents so why should we tolerate it here? In 2015, there were 212 police officers. When I took office in 2016, they cut twenty positions from the department. In 2017, the City Council and Comptroller Walker slashed funding for the police commissioner and additional officers in the department. This is especially troubling since Comptroller Walker claims that Mount Vernon is financially solvent with \$19 million sitting unused in a city account. We have been overtaxed, underserved and treated as a second-class community. It's time for you to ask Council members and Comptroller Walker why your lives don't matter. Call Comptroller Walker at 914-665-2442 and City Council members at 914-665-2351.

#AllLivesMatter

#BeOutraged

#MVMovingForward

How long must we continue without the basic resources we need for our public safety? If we do not invest in our community, we risk placing our growth, development, and security on the whims of the Trump Administration or the random kindness of strangers to fund our future.

The public comment period for CDBG funding remains open from now until August 7, 2017. All stakeholders are encouraged to express their views on the proposed draft budget by emailing Dom McCoy at: DMcCoy@cmvny.com. Non-English speaking individuals and those who require the information in an alternative format may contact the Planning Department at 914-699-7320 to request assistance. All comments received by 12:00 NOON on August 7, 2017 will be considered and will be incorporated into the official public record.

Respectfully,

Mayor Richard Thomas

Astorino to veto Immigration Protection Act

Joined by Westchester County's largest Hispanic law enforcement organization, members of the county's Departments of Public Safety and Correction, and union leaders from the Department of Correction, County Executive Robert P. Astorino promised to veto legislation that would make Westchester a sanctuary county because it would jeopardize public safety, particularly those in our immigrant communities, would cost taxpayers millions of dollars and would be nearly impossible to enforce.

The Immigration Protection Act was approved 10-5 by the Board of Legislators earlier today. The county executive now has 10 days to veto the act.

"Westchester is a diverse county with vibrant immigrant communities that are welcomed and valued," Astorino said. "I'm opposed to this act because it puts public safety at risk, especially those in our immigrant communities; puts Westchester at odds with our own federal government; creates rights not available to ordinary citizens; will jeopardize approximately \$13 million in federal funds and is so confusing as to be unenforceable. It all adds up to be a dangerous idea, and for those reasons I will veto this legislation."

In addressing issues with the act, Astorino noted that enforcing immigration laws and deportations are the responsibility of the federal govern-

ment, not county police, and that this act severely restricts how local communities and law enforcement communicate with federal agencies, such as the FBI and Department of Homeland Security.

The county executive also said that his administration had long worked with legislators and immigration groups to come up with workable legislation. But after much testimony from advocates, public safety, corrections and social services, the grave flaws in the act were apparent and unworkable. In this case, political grandstanding was put before public safety, Astorino said.

"Just because proponents of the bill say it doesn't create a sanctuary

county, doesn't make it so," Astorino said. "Our county attorney has given us an opinion that passage of this act makes Westchester a sanctuary county and at odds with the federal government."

In his legal opinion, County Attorney Robert Meehan raised concerns that the law established "sanctuary policies," jeopardizes millions of dollars in federal funds, and raises substantial questions as to whether it violates federal law.

Immigration reform is needed, Astorino said, but it is the duty of Congress, not local legislatures.

City Council members and citizens express outrage during Block Grant (CDBG) public meeting



HUD representatives during the Q&A session

On Monday, July 31, a large crowd attended a public meeting in the Mount Vernon City Council Chambers concerning the City of Mount Vernon's annual action plan for use of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME Investment Partnership Program Federal Funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Mount Vernon's allocations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 are: \$1,435,516 of CDBG funds and \$355,206 in HOME funds.

To receive this funding, the city is required to submit an Annual Action Plan to HUD. Receiving input from residents and the broader community, including non-profit agencies and neighborhood associations, is vital to ensuring that the city

utilizes scarce resources effectively.

Hosting the heated meeting were three paid consultants representing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

To ensure that residents and the broader community have ample opportunity to provide input and to receive an overview of this year's CDBG application, the City of Mount Vernon scheduled two public hearings, and the July 31 meeting was the second one held.

Those in attendance included the entire body of the Mount Vernon City Council, NY State Assemblyman Gary Pretlow, Mount Vernon City Clerk George Brown, agency heads or representatives from throughout Mount Vernon and City of Mount Vernon department representatives.



Roberta Apuzzo, who heads the badly needed soup kitchen, expressing her anger over having her funds cut

Each agency head or representative in attendance had been provided in advance with a copy of the agencies being awarded grants for 2017.

Although the meeting was relatively civil, there were periods in which fireworks did go off from agencies that were not receiving funds or receiving too little in 2017.

The list of community organizations whose entire funding was cut is as follows: The Soup Kitchen, Y-COP, Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club, The Razorbacks, Family Services of Westchester, Greater Centennial AME Zion Church and St. Paul, John and Clements Church.

Some of the people that spoke during the public comment period scorned the three HUD consultants.

"How in God's name can you award \$42,000 to the mayor's so-called Midnight Basketball program and cut the Soup Kitchen's funding in its entirety," emphasized one angry speaker.

Many on the list receiving money complained that what they were receiving was a fraction of what they have received in the past.

"How long did it take you to review the many applications from agencies seeking funds", asked one angry lady. "Three days," responded one of the consultants. "How could you possibly have reviewed so many applications in such a short period of time," yelled out one angry agency head. "You obviously did not do your homework on this and, consequently, many people in Mount Vernon are going to suffer."

There was also outrage over the lion's share going to the Urban Renewal Agency, which is receiving \$762,740 for the installation of LED streetlights. It is obvious that to reach such a high figure of \$762,740, some agencies had to have their funding totally cut and others had to have their grant money reduced. Some are wondering why this money has been allocated to go for LED streetlights, since Sentinel Construction was awarded a contract by the city to install the LED streetlights and the funds are already in place.

According to the three consultants, the numbers are not carved in stone and it is simply a draft, which is subject to changes.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers are encouraged to send us letters expressing their viewpoints on any issue. Letters should not contain inflammatory or provocative language and will be subject to editorial review. Please keep your letters brief and not to exceed 300 words. Your name and address must be included, but will be withheld upon request.

SUGGESTED NEWS ITEMS

We welcome all suggestions concerning news we should cover in our newspaper. Please call the Editor with suggestions at 914-584-6386.

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EDITORIAL

Mt. Vernon city news to the Inquirer has been curtailed

The Mount Vernon Inquirer has been providing city of Mount Vernon news in excess of 12 years. For many years we were the only source of news for the Mount Vernon community other than the Journal news – which basically gave the city a black eye with their coverage.

Some Mount Vernon residents are asking me why we no longer publish upcoming

events on our website. My response is disappointingly simple – we are not provided with that type of information anymore by the city.

Mount Vernon mayor Richard Thomas is heavily involved with social media and he has a small army of people working as reporters, videographers and photographers for his administration. Therefore, all the city events are now covered by his

workers and can be found on his Facebook page immediately after they take place.

The mayor is undoubtedly doing a great job covering Mount Vernon news on his Facebook page and the Inquirer has become irrelevant to him at this time. The news we receive has been minimized dramatically.

In spite of the changes that have taken

place, I will continue to cover as much news as I can with the Inquirer for the many that do not have computers or just enjoy reading the Inquirer. And by the way, I will work hard to scrape up information on upcoming events for my online site.

Thanks for your longtime support.
Joe Parisi

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The Mistress of Ceremonies for the memorable church ceremony was Sylvia Gadson

City Clerk George Brown had the distinction of introducing the many dignitaries and members of the clergy in attendance.

Remarks came from both church and community members led by former mayor Ernest D. Davis. Mayor Richard Thomas was scheduled to speak first, but for unknown reasons did not attend the ceremony. Mayor Davis was followed by a long list of speakers.

Emotions ran deep as Pastor Wilson, Sr.'s son, Peter Wilson Jr., addressed the

audience. Tears were also evident when the pastor's daughter, Sheila Wilson-Sebro, provided a long biographic sketch of a loving father.

"My father served as Worship Leader for the United Missionary Baptist Association's parent body. He had served in the past as chaplain for the United Black Clergy of Westchester and as a vice president. In addition, he served as a mentor for "The Gent's Club" for young boys at Edward Williams Elementary School and



Rev. Peter Wilson, Sr.'s daughter Sheila Wilson-Sebro addressing the audience

as resident minister for boys and girls at Nelson Mandela-Dr. Hosea Zollicoffer High School, in Mount Vernon. And he continuously motivated and inspired Mt. Zion to study the Word of God," said his daughter.

The benediction was provided by Minister Dianne Asphalt, ending the emotional ceremony.

As the large crowd gathered at the corner where the new street sign was to

be unveiled, the pastor's family, consisting of his wife, daughter, son and others watched in awe as the pastor's son unveiled the new street sign.

After a long and loud ovation, City Clerk George Brown read a proclamation stating that a portion of South Eighth Avenue, between Sandford Boulevard and Fifth Avenue, will now be known as Rev. Peter Wilson, Sr. Way. He then handed the proclamation to the family.



Rev. Darren Morton was one of many speakers

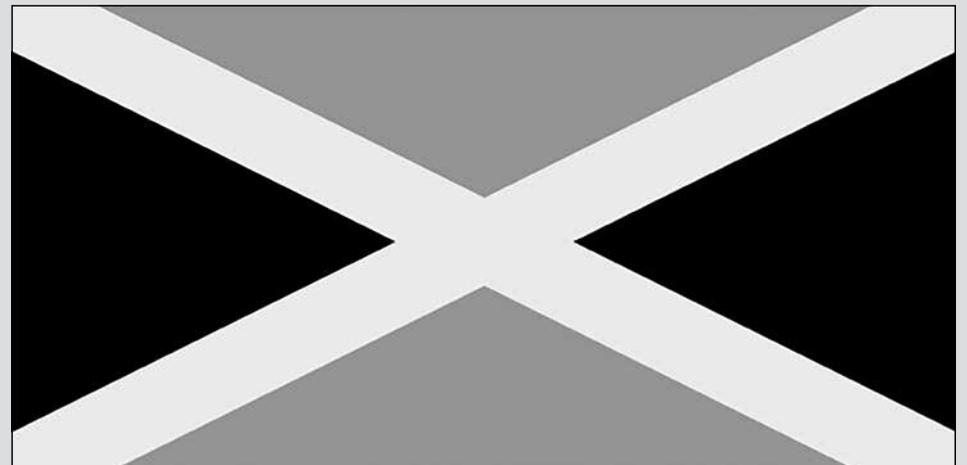


The late Rev. Peter Wilson, Sr.



The new street sign after being unveiled

Jamaica's 55th Independence Day celebrated in Mount Vernon



Mount Vernon's Fourth Avenue was buzzing with excitement on Saturday, August 13, as many celebrated Jamaica's 55th Independence Day on a picture perfect summer day.

The celebration was scheduled to commence at 4:00 PM, but many arrived early to be near the stage. As the crowd started to swell, it was obvious they were there to feel "de vibe" of arts, entertainment, culture and a variety of vendors.

Everybody in attendance, many from other states, knew that Mount Vernon is the home of one of the largest Jamaican populations, and they anticipated having a great evening upon arriving.

The event keeps growing in popularity every year, hosted by the City of Mount Vernon as part of the Summer

Breeze Concert Series, partnered with the popular Dazzles Caribbean Restaurant, located on Fourth Avenue in Mount Vernon.

The setting was perfect for those running for office in Mount Vernon and several of them were in attendance. Every year, thousands of people attend the festival, hoping to embrace the rich culture and history of Jamaica by celebrating through live entertainment, special guest performers, a variety of delicious and tasty Jamaican cuisine, children's activities and so much more.

Like previous years, the streets were lined with vendors, sponsor booths, and flags and banners leading up to the huge outdoor stage.

The yearly event is free, family friendly and many Mount Vernon families were in attendance with their young children.

FLASHBACK

Official reopening of 'Roundabout' brings relief to Mount Vernonites



Using a dramatic combination of music, water and light, the Roundabout delivers spectacular performances with its majestic fountain

On Thursday, November 4, 2006 on a festive, but frigid late day in Mount Vernon, a legion of people attended the official grand reopening of the former MacArthur Circle, now known as the Roundabout.

Prior to the start of the well-organized ceremony there was electricity in the air, since the large crowd knew they were going to witness history in the making.

The introduction of dignitaries was done by Serapher Conn-Halevi, Mount Vernon Democratic Committee Chairperson, who introduced a long list of local elected officials, along with City of Mount Vernon officials on hand for the important event.

This piece of property, which at the time was a swamp, was owned by a man named Edwin Hartley. Mr. Hartley wanted to donate the land to the newly incorporated city for use as a park. At the same time, the railroad cut was being dug a few blocks away. It was decided that the fill from the excavation could be used to fill the swamp for the creation of what we know today as "Hartley Park."

The idea of a Circle was first suggested in 1897 by former Mayor Edwin W. Fiske, an Alderman at that time. The Circle, at the

intersection of Gramatan and Lincoln Avenues, was intended as a pleasant sanctuary in the midst of a growing community. Later, when Edwin Hartley gave the city a much larger plot of ground, right across the street, the need for the circle park disappeared, but the circle remained while traffic flowed smoothly around it.

The Common Council, in January 1898, authorized the Public Works Department to improve the plot and convert it into a "circle" bordered by a sidewalk with trees.

In 1912, permission was given to the United Spanish War Veterans to erect a "suitable memorial on the city-owned land." In 1927, the Circle acquired a new significance. Erected in the middle of it was a monument commemorating the brave deeds of the heroes of the Spanish American War (April 25, 1898 - December 10, 1898). Mayor MacQuesten unveiled the statue of "the unknown soldier" and dedicated it to "our soldiers and sailors in the war with Spain and the Philippine Insurrection."

The Memorial, paid for by donations from private citizens was made from metal recovered from the USS Maine, which sank in Havana Harbor on April 15, 1898.



Mayor Ernest D. Davis, with wife Bettye by his side, participating in the traditional ribbon cutting ceremony

In 1942, the city officially named the circle in honor of General Douglas MacArthur. "The unknown soldier" stood in the middle of an unnamed circle.

Along with the park, there was an adjacent traffic circle, which is still vivid in the memory of those who lived, worked or passed through Mount Vernon. In 1972, "the Circle" was removed, and the monument was placed at the northwest corner of Hartley Park. When this was done Mount Vernon's downtown never looked quite the same. Mayor Ernest D. Davis, an architect by profession, inspired by old renderings, determined that the "the Circle" must be returned to its original site where it would work in concert with Hartley Park again. In May, 2000 work began to create a new dramatic roundabout. After many inconvenient delays, the long-awaited opening of the Roundabout finally took place.

The many who attended the official ribbon cutting ceremony watched anxiously prior to the fountain being activated for the very first time. When activated, the array of color lights, music and computer controlled high rising jets of water prompted the throng of people to watch in awe and

disbelief. Magnificent, grandeur, majestic - were some of the words being used by some elected officials watching the spectacular event.

On hand for the ceremony was David Osborn, Site Manager - St. Paul's Church National Historic Site in Mount Vernon. The crowd listened with great interest as Osborn spoke about the Spanish-American soldiers of Mount Vernon.

Just before the ribbon cutting part of the ceremony, Mayor Davis, who was obviously treasuring every minute of the historic celebration, told the crowd: "Some people did not understand the significance of this project. Mount Vernon will be known and chronicled by what you see here. Historians will write that Mount Vernon recaptured its splendor." The mayor then had the honor of taking the first symbolic drive through the Roundabout in a vintage car from the 1920's.

The historical event caused Gramatan Avenue to be closed until 10:00 PM, and the participants later enjoyed live music and food being provided by the local merchants.



Former Mount Vernonite and national recording artist/producer Jeff Redd singing the National Anthem



Mayor Davis taking the first symbolic drive through the Roundabout in a vintage car from the 1920's

Continued from page 1



Police academy recruits helping a child exit a play station



A member of Mount Vernon's Finest giving out free baseball items

borhood spirit and police-community partnerships. The entire department attempts to generate support for, and participates in, local anti-crime efforts, heighten crime and drug prevention awareness, and to send a message to criminals letting them know neighborhoods are organized and fighting back.

There was a huge presence of Mount

Vernon's Finest at Levister Towers, and the community responded impressively. Many citizens were seen waiting on a long line to sample hamburgers and hot dogs prepared on a grill by some members of the Mount Vernon Police Department, along with an assortment of refreshments – all free. There was also plenty to do for the kids, like face painting, games, and



People waiting to be served an abundance of free and delicious food



Kids waiting to have balloon sculptures created



Representatives from WCC Mt. Vernon Extension



A Mount Vernon City Council candidate accompanied by her campaign team members

play stations.

A live DJ provided entertainment and there was even a dance contest for the many youth in attendance.

Like in previous years, numerous agencies attended including the County Cor-

rections and Probation, Westchester Community College and others, along with MVPD, hosted tables. Also in attendance was a long list of elected officials, which included Mayor Richard Thomas, along with candidates seeking Mount Ver-

Continued on page 9

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non City Council seats.

This year's event was a great success and the City of Mount Vernon, Levister

Towers Management, and the Mount Vernon Police Department played a major role in making it happen.



Kids waiting for a dance contest to commence - including adults

Former FBI agent appointed to probe Mount Vernon Urban Renewal Agency



Mount Vernon Mayor Richard Thomas announced the appointment of Richard M. Frankel, a highly respected 26-year career law enforcement official, as special counsel to commence an investigation into the records and operations of the city's Urban Renewal Agency.

Mayor Thomas said, "Mr. Frankel's assignment will be to conduct an in-depth review of the agency's operations and investigate possible irregularities that date back as far as 2006. Since taking office I have had serious concerns about the agency's work and its use of federal funds. Six months ago, I hired former Obama administration officials to review whether the Urban Renewal Agency was in compliance with federal law. Their feedback to me has necessitated the appointment of a recognized white-collar criminal expert to take a deep dive into the records of the agency and

utilize sworn testimony to review the agency's operations. Under Section 66 of the City Charter, the mayor has these powers."

"Among the findings of the initial investigation of the agency was that it had an estimated \$6 million in loans that are listed as "uncollectable or undocumented." Reports that should have been filed with the Department of Housing and Urban Development were disregarded and a veil of silence hid communications to the agency staff. We also need to know why certain federal funds remain unspent. Of particular concern, is the fact that city funds are being transferred to the agency with no explanation as to why." Thomas stated.

About the Special Counsel: Richard Frankel spent the majority of his career with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He has led numerous FBI field divisions as the Special Agent In-Charge of the Newark, New Jersey, overseeing criminal investigations, as well as undercover and tactical operations with an emphasis on threat-based, intelligence-led law enforcement. Mr. Frankel is a recognized authority on complex investigations, asset recovery, cyber security issues and crises management. He served as the Associate Director of National Intelligence and Senior FBI Representative to the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. His public service began as an Assistant District Attorney in Suffolk County, NY. He is of counsel to Ruskin Moscou Faltischek P.C.

EDITORIAL

Mt. Vernon's youth to suffer over LED streetlights bureaucratic misinformation

As I wrote in a separate editorial, the city has eliminated Block Grant funding to the Mount Vernon Boys & Girls Club, The Razorbacks and several other agencies that serve the needy in Mount Vernon. And numerous other agencies had their funding reduced dramatically.

Why? Well, if you look at the list of those receiving funding, the Urban Renewal Agency is receiving \$762,740 for LED streetlights. The city's position is that the NY Power Authority can perform the LED contract for little to almost nothing. So, we must ask ourselves, why, if that is the case, hundreds of thousands of crucial youth funding initiatives should be eliminated in this mean spirited manner?

The city has been circulating misleading information (fake news) regarding the ongoing legal dispute concerning the company that was legally awarded the contract to install the lights.

In a Yonkers video interview, Mayor Richard Thomas refers to the deal struck to install the lights as one that was struck in the darkness of night. This comment is absolutely shocking and incorrect, since as a city councilman, the mayor spoke in support of Sentinel installing the lights for over 20 minutes on August 26, 2015. The minutes of that meeting will support what I am stating in this editorial.

In the video interview the mayor also states that an audit was never made. Each member of the City Council received one; the city clerk received one; the Law Department was given one; the comptroller got a copy; and one was provided to the mayor's office as well. Each audit was officially stamped with the date and time prior to disbursement on multiple occasions.

The mayor also stated in the video that a check was cut to a company that was ill prepared to install the streetlights. That is so far from the truth. If Sentinel was not qualified, the bank would never have approved the city's loan.

The City of Mt. Vernon drafted the contract into two phases. This is important because the city was supposed to perform the detailed audit prior to any bank funding was initiated. The city did not have the means or the resources at the time, so the city stipulated contractually, that if the awardee performed the audit successfully and on time at the awardee's expense, the city would repay all expenses. Only then would the bank funding be initiated, and authorization for phase 2 would ensue 15 days after the city's engineer signed off on it.

Please note that no other bidder was willing to perform the citywide audit at all, and that was the primary reason the contract was awarded to Sentinel in the first place. In addition, no funding institution would have ever funded the project unless the audit was performed and quantified by multiple agencies prior to any closing.

Subsequently, the money was placed into an escrow account, where it still is, and the funds were going to be paid in stages as the lights were installed.

Furthermore, Mount Vernon taxpayers were not going to pay a penny. The yearly energy savings from the highly efficient streetlights would have paid for the loan – not the taxpayers, as reported by the city.

As Mount Vernon's hometown newspaper for nearly 14 years, we take pride in reporting the truth. And the public is being misinformed on the streetlight debacle – and that's the truth.

Judge removes entire slate from Mt. Vernon City Council race due to fraud

Reginald Lafayette, head of the Westchester County Democratic Committee and Westchester County Board of Elections has announced that the entire slate running for City Council on the "Committee for a Stronger Mount Vernon" has been removed from the ballot by a judge due to fraud.

This action is the result of a lawsuit filed by Comptroller Maureen Walker, Councilman Marcus Griffith, Clyde Isley and Janice Duarte, the candidates nominated by Democratic Party lead-

ers.

The court filing sought to invalidate the candidacy of Adriane Saunders and her running mates with the "Committee for a Stronger Mount Vernon" on the basis of fraud and the judge determined that fraud was in fact committed.

The eliminated slate is comprised of Adriane Saunders, Robin Harmon-Myers and Paul Herrick, along with Walidah Aime, who is challenging Maureen Walker for comptroller.

Members of GEM Summer Leadership Academy visit the United Nations



On August 1, the participants of the GEM Summer Leadership Academy were afforded the opportunity to explore behind the scenes views on an exciting guided tour at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. It was an amazing opportunity for these young women to learn about the UN Young Ambassadors Program and visit various conference rooms where prominent world leaders meet to discuss vital issues pertaining to how the United Nations addresses issues such as disarmament, peace and security, human rights,

and the Millennium Development Goals.

GEM stands for Girls Embracing Maturity. Mentoring by women leaders, who shared their experiences, provide these future leaders with skills that will prepare them to become strong leaders of their generation.

The group was welcomed by former Mount Vernon City School District Superintendent Dr. Brenda Smith and other members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority who shared career advice and tips over lunch.

Mt. Vernon honors Purple Heart recipients



Mayor Thomas honoring Calvin Parker, chairman of the CCVA

Mayor Richard Thomas and the City of Mount Vernon recently hosted a solemn ceremony honoring Purple Heart veterans of our armed forces in recognition of their sacrifices for our country.

A Purple Heart medal is presented to those men and women who have been wounded in battle and to the families of those killed in battle.

The event featured remarks from Veterans Services Director Kristyn Reed, Purple Heart recipient, Councilman Yuhanna Edwards and Mayor Thomas.

As part of the recognition for the day, Mayor Thomas signed proclamations making August 7th Purple Heart Day in Mount Vernon and identifying Mount Vernon as a Purple Heart City.

FLASHBACK (SEPTEMBER 2015)

City Council gives final approval to have streetlights converted to LED



Terrence Horton displaying the LED light that his company will be installing in Mount Vernon

On Wednesday, August 26, the Mount Vernon City Council gave the final approval to have the City of Mount Vernon replace its antiquated streetlights with the vastly more economical LED streetlights. All the members voted favorably for the conversion with the exception of Councilwoman Deborah Reynolds, who voted, "No."

The Sentinel / Soosung International Trade Agreement had been in the making for three long years: it was signed in South Korea by Sentinel Technology Services International, a Mount Vernon based company, and Soosung Electronics, the supplier of the lights. Accordingly, Soosung Electronics will be training unemployed Mount Vernon workers to install the lights and will also be establishing a distribution hub on Third Street.

The mere thought that Mount Vernon's unemployment rate (the highest in Westchester County) will be positively impacted, is very inspiring. And the promise that our youth will be trained in a very lucrative field is a measure of success for a city seeking to move ahead.

The new LED streetlights provide the additional benefit of introducing a large tax savings to taxpayers, while at the same time illuminating neighborhoods with the warming light of advanced technological achievement. Mount Vernon is on the verge of becoming one of the first cities in Westchester County to perform a complete citywide Green retrofit initiative with the replacement of its antiquated streetlights.

The transition to the new lights is scheduled to take one full year to complete.

District's Standard & Poor's rating improves from "A" to "A+"

Taxpayers in the Mount Vernon City School District will see the benefits of the district's recent Standard & Poor's historic rating upgrade from "A" to "A+," which will save the district millions of dollars in interest payments over the next 15 years.

S&P Global Ratings' upgraded rating has allowed the district to do the following:

The district has sold \$50 million in 15-year construction bonds to JP Morgan at a 2.3 percent interest rate, which is 1 percent lower than the district's financial advisors initially expected.

In addition, the district also sold \$3 million in short-term debt to Sterling National Bank at a 0.73 percent interest rate, which is considered an exceptionally low rate in the industry, according to Ken Silver, the district's Assistant Superintendent for Business. This low rate of interest will save the district some \$16,000 in the next year.

In its entirety, the savings is approximately \$3.2 million in total debt service

in the construction bond and short-term debt sales.

"The bond rating we now have is the best we've ever had in the history of the school district," Silver said. "Parallel to our commitment to educational excellence, we are committed to prudent fiscal management and to be wise guardians of taxpayer money. The bond and short-term debt sales are an example of the many different ways we look to save money and further focus on academic achievement."

An additional benefit, Silver added, is that the district will use the cost savings to help finance the various, approved construction projects currently taking place. The district will also invest funds, not immediately needed, at a rate of 1.25 percent, which Silver said is an outstanding interest rate to be offered in this economy.

This short-term investment is expected to generate several hundred thousand dollars in interest income before being needed to pay construction costs.

Major renovation at Brush Park



Recently, Mayor Richard Thomas and the City of Mount Vernon broke ground on a new playground at Brush Park. The new playground was successfully installed and ready for families to play, just in time for back to school!

Mayor Thomas, Recreation Commis-

sioner Darren Morton and Water Commissioner Ben Marable unveiled the brand new water fountains that are now installed in Brush Park. These water fountains have been installed in parks across the city and are part of Mayor Thomas' commitment to investing in green spaces, city-wide.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Young Mt. Vernon resident returns from volunteer service trip to Costa Rica

Aidan Henegar's reflection:



Aidan Henegar (r) with friends in Costa Rica

A couple weeks ago, I was privileged with the opportunity to go on a Courts for Kids trip with a group of twelve students and two teachers from Loyola. Courts for Kids is an organization that arranges trips in which students from America visit lesser privileged communities and assist the locals in building a multipurpose court. When we arrived in San Jose, we met the Courts for Kids

volunteer, Sarah, and a few Peace Corps volunteers that would be helping us out. After hopping on a bus and traveling south for four hours, we arrived in the small, rainy town of Salitre, Costa Rica.

This trip was not easy work for any of us. Every day for six days, we would wake up early, grab a quick breakfast, and head to the court location. There was some preparation work to be done at the beginning of the week, but after two days

we were focused mainly on pouring cement. Despite breaks for lunch and a snack, we spent several hours shoveling and lifting buckets, mixing cement, and dumping wheelbarrows full of wet cement onto the court. For me, this work experience grew my understanding of perseverance and what it means to keep working hard through the pain, as well as encouraging and lifting up others. I will never forget the difficulty I had to overcome during this project, but I will always remember talking with my friends while shoveling gravel and looking out into the beautiful Costa Rican valley, which the court overlooked.

After the working hours passed, we would typically head back to the main village and relax. Sitting down and looking out into the heavy Costa Rican rain after a long, hard day of work was extremely rewarding. We had several hours of free time during the rain, so we passed the time by talking about anything and everything we could think of. I remember including the topic of food into several conversations because we craved the variety of food options in America that we didn't get in Costa Rica. Most meals consisted of rice and beans, with some vegetables on the side.

Perhaps the most memorable part of this trip was the community bonding we

shared with each other and the people of Salitre. During our lunch break on the first day of work, we ran out to the small soccer field in the center of the village and met the kids who were playing. I was struck by how friendly and welcoming the kids were to us. We spent time with them the whole week and got to know what their lives are like. One afternoon, Chandler (Naylon), Chris (Burch), and I talked to three boys sitting on a porch, waiting for the rain to stop so they could keep playing. They told us they were cousins and we told them we were from America, and much more. We talked to these kids - Brendan, Eric, and Franklin - several times throughout the week. Another afternoon, the kids took us to a nearby creek where we jumped off 15-foot high cliffs into the narrow area of cold water. Most of us thought of that afternoon as the coolest thing we did in Salitre, but it also showed us what these kids of another culture do in their free. It was experiences like these that made this trip so memorable and special for me.

I will always remember this trip and how eye opening it was for me. My experiences in Costa Rica were unlike anything I've ever done before, and I would strongly recommend going on a trip like this.

FDR Drive Band returns to Fleetwood as part of Klein's Summertime Symphonies



Senator Klein addressing the crowd



The FDR Drive Band in action

Residents of Fleetwood and surrounding communities were in a swinging mood on Tuesday, August 8, as Senator Jeff Klein, in association with the Fleetwood Neighborhood Association and the Mount Vernon Recreation Department's Summer Breeze Concert Series, sponsored and presented his latest performance in the 2017 Summertime Symphonies, starring the popular

FDR Drive Band.

The FDR Drive Band are a "dance and party band" who play a mixture of Motown, R&B, 70's through current dance music, pop hits, swing, novelty songs and standards. Due to popular demand the band has performed at the Broad Street Playground the last three consecutive years – and residents from the Fleetwood community flock to the park in big num-

bers when they perform.

The MC for the extremely well attended venue was Michael Justino, who is president of the Fleetwood Neighborhood Association.

After introducing the band, Justino introduced Senator Klein, who stated: "It is a great pleasure to see so many of you enjoying this great weather and classic pop songs at tonight's concert. I'm proud

to be able to offer great concerts like this that bring the community together for a night of summer fun," said Senator Klein.

Since its renovation, there has been a big demand for the use of the Broad Street Playground, and those who attend events there always have a marvelous time, especially when the FDR Drive Band is performing.



The use of a walker did not stop this lady from attending the performance



A partial view of the many who attended the performance

Mt. Vernon Police Youth Academy graduation ceremony was fun-filled



The City of Mount Vernon Police Youth Academy had a fun filled and action packed year. From trips to Good Morning America, selfies with Robin Roberts and Michael Strahan, a trip to the studios of Eyewitness News and a full day at the entertainment company Roc Nation Studios, the young adults saw a lot of interesting things,

met many inspiring professionals and mixed in with the program's learning modules, even had some fun.

At the graduation ceremony, Detective Dave Clarke, the director of the Academy, congratulated every student and thanked the parents, friends and supporters for their commitment to the program and the students.

Mt. Vernon Youth Bureau celebrates end of Summer Youth Employment Program



Nearly 200 youth attended the celebration



Members of the Mt. Vernon Youth Bureau

The Mount Vernon Youth Bureau, on Thursday morning August 10, held a year-end celebration for the Summer Youth Employment Program employees. The celebration took

place at the Doles Center and featured music, food, guest speakers, breakout sessions, and a visit from Mayor Richard Thomas.

Brother Arthur Muhammad acted as the

Master of Ceremonies and introduced numerous speakers that addressed nearly 200 youth in attendance. The guest speakers included Dr. DaMia Harris, head of the Youth Bureau, City Comptroller Maureen Walker, School Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton, Mayor Richard Thomas and others.

"Mount Vernon is proud of every one of you because during the course of your summer employment you demonstrated

discipline, professionalism and an aptitude for future success. Congratulations on a successful summer job program and all the best in your future endeavors," said Mayor Thomas.

"Everything I have heard about this group has been absolutely positive, and I wish to thank you for being crusaders for our great school district," added Dr. Hamilton.



School Superintendent Dr. Kenneth R. Hamilton



Brother Arthur Muhammad acted as the Master of Ceremonies



City Comptroller Maureen Walker addressing the young crowd

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- Dean of Administration and Finance - Hostos Community College
- Former Commissioner of Public Safety - Mount Vernon, NY
- Former Detective Sergeant - City of New York

Accomplishments for the City of Mount Vernon

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- Developed Officers Training Program for Academy Graduates
- Developed annual performance measures for all police personnel
- Developed a staffing policy which reduced overtime costs

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FORWARD MARCH



This column is dedicated to news about Mount Vernon veterans in collaboration with the Mount Vernon Veterans Service Agency

The Mount Vernon Veterans Service Agency (VSA) is working diligently to provide services to Mount Vernon's Veteran community. After a summer hiatus, the Central Committee for Veterans Affairs - a community council of veterans that advise the director of issues, needs, and desires within the veteran community - is reconvening on Tuesday, September 5 at 5:00 pm in the City Hall Memorial Room. Meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. This is an excellent opportunity to have your voice heard!

Mount Vernon veterans are encouraged to get involved in the veteran's community in order to gain access to all benefits to which they and their dependents are entitled. This includes access to education, medical benefits, property tax exemptions, burial benefits, and survivor's benefits for spouses, among others. The VSA can provide clarity on eligibility and help to navigate complex VA forms and processes. By being proactive and involved, veterans can help themselves and their loved ones. Contacting the VSA is the first step in accessing these benefits.

One group of veterans that is often overlooked and underrepresented is the Desert Storm/Shield veterans. Many of these former service members have developed respiratory illnesses because of poor waste disposal practices (burning trash and human waste). If you are a Desert Storm/Shield veteran or a veteran of any era and think you may have a disability related to

your military service, please contact the VSA.

The Food Bank of Westchester fresh produce giveaways are ongoing into the fall. The next ones are Friday, September 8 and September 22. Produce is dispersed in the municipal parking lot on Prospect and N. 3rd Avenue. Registration can be done on-site and veterans should self-identify to gain priority.

The Division of Veterans Affairs is also providing veterans with a \$20 voucher to be used at area farmer's markets. The next voucher giveaway is on September 22 at the Yonkers outpatient clinic from 9am to 2pm. Veterans are also encouraged to check the Department of Recreation's Facebook page to find out about other happenings in the community. Some upcoming events are the Summer Breeze Concert Series Season Finale on Thursday, September 7, the Classic Car Show on Saturday, September 23 at Brush Park, Mount Vernon City Fest on Saturday, September 16 and the Wartburg Fall Festival on Saturday, September 23.

The VSA will be closed for training September 25 through October 6. During this time, please call the Yonkers VSA or the White Plains VSA if urgent assistance is needed. Any voice-mails left at the Mt. Vernon VSA will be returned by the Director as soon as possible.

As always, veterans and veteran supporters are encouraged to submit ideas and requests for "Forward March" to VSA Director, Kristyn Briez Vanderberg-Reed at (914) 665-2319.

New Country. New School. New 6th Grade Valedictorian



Kevin Cuellar

Grimes Elementary student Kevin Cuellar immigrated to America from the Dominican Republic just in time to begin sixth grade this past school year. Speaking little to no English, Kevin was determined not to let a language barrier hold him back. He faced down his challenge, and initial frustrations, with resolve. He studied hard to understand his schoolwork and socialize with his new classmates, and by June had become not only the class speaker for sixth grade graduation, but its valedictorian, too.

Kevin's speech that day began, "I am new to this school and also to this country. I am an immigrant."

It had been less than eight months since Kevin arrived from the Dominican Republic on his birthday, September 13th, when he first said of arriving in the United States, "It was my birthday present!"

While the transition to a new country was difficult, Kevin worked hard right away to begin learning the language. Early test assessments showed Kevin's aptitude for math - he worked out complex word problems that proved difficult even for some of his English speaking classmates. Early encouragement from his math and science teacher, Mr. Casey, went a long way toward pushing Kevin even farther.

In his speech, Kevin namedropped both his ELA teacher, Ms. Bryant, and his ESL teacher, Ms. Bergins, with gratitude. He credited them for their patience and giving him the extra classroom time, which he request-

ed, so he could stay focused as he pushed himself to do a little more every day to meet his goal - to score on grade level for ELA.

"The last [assessment] test that Kevin took, his ELA score was on a mid-sixth grade level," said Bryant. "Kevin was an overachiever!"

Besides being a self-made scholar, Kevin is also an artist. He shared some of his work with Ms. Bryant, who quickly helped him show it off to more people at the school.

"He could draw anything and his handwriting looked like calligraphy," she said. "Our principal asked him to draw the school mascot, Drexel the Dragon. The original is framed and hangs in the school hallway, Kevin's rendition of Drexel appeared on the sixth grade graduation tee shirts."

Kevin flourished academically, made plenty of friends and earned the respect of his peers - many of whom began approaching him for tutoring. He never missed an assignment and earned prizes for the quality of his work.

"Kevin has been an inspiration to everyone at the school," said Grimes Elementary principal Erik Van Gunten. "He exemplifies the growth mindset through both his determination and his belief that he could overcome these obstacles. He saw challenges as learning opportunities, and that is what we nurture here at Grimes Elementary."

Kevin let his teachers know early on that his goals included college and a great career. He was given the encouragement and resources he needed to set him on that path, but it was his dream backed by an unflagging work ethic that ultimately earned him his honors.

"When parents, teachers and staff members collaborate to provide the support a child needs, the sky is the limit," said Van Gunten.

As Kevin delivered that opening line of his valedictory speech - "I am an immigrant" - the audience erupted with applause. And, although directed to his peers, it seemed his speech resonated with many others in the room.

"Don't let anything stop you. You can do it, even if you fail at first," he said. "You have to keep on trying, you just have to keep pushing on and never ever give up!"

“Brazilian Day Mount Vernon” a huge success



Shoppers viewing some of the items on display by a vendor



People purchasing refreshments to cool off

As many readers know, Mount Vernon houses over 98 different nationalities and has the largest African American and West Indian populations in the county. In addition, a significant portion of the population is also Brazilian, with approximately 1 in 10

people in Mount Vernon being from Brazil. This year, the annual “Brazilian Day Mount Vernon” celebration once again brought the spirit of Brazil to the heart of Mount Vernon’s downtown. Like in previous years, the event took place on Sunday, August 14, at the popular Brazilian

restaurant known as Lvsiadadas, across the street from Mount Vernon’s City Hall.

A portion of Stevens Avenue was closed to traffic to accommodate a huge band stage and dozens of vendors selling Brazilian delicacies and articles to the general public.

Several top bands and popular singers, led by ai delicia, Karisma and others, provided entertainment.

The DJ’s for this popular event were Edson Landi, Theo and Marcinho.

During the course of the celebration several Mount Vernon City Council candidates, including County Legislator Lyndon Williams, clambered up on the huge stage to greet those in attendance. Janice Duarte, who speaks Brazilian Portuguese and is also a candidate for City Council, introduced the candidates.

The event was a huge success and clearly exhibited Mount Vernon’s unique diversity.



Mount Vernon City Council candidates Clyde Isley and Janice Duarte posing for a picture



(l to r) Janice Duarte, Clyde Isley, Marcus Griffith and Legislator Lyndon Williams being introduced to the crowd by Duarte

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Author: Deirdre Lloyd
Westchester County resident

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fury
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almighty doctrine?
So be it
...In the moves that weren't grounded
In words unfounded
Uplift, sore souls those compounded
The whole idea of being [Well] be it

I AM MALALA

Author: Gerard Becker - 2013, Oct.
Tuckahoe resident

(The young teenager named Malala was
shot in the Swat valley of Pakistan
by the Taliban in 2012 for daring to pro-
mote education among young woman.)

I...ammalala
Enfeebled voice, struggling,
Rising from Pashtun hammer blows of
history,
I...am MALALA!
Trying to resurrect a beautiful brain,

Battered by a bullet's maniacal message:
"A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOME
OR...THE GRAVE!"

I...AM MALALA! my voice echoing,
Careening between deaf ears of black
draped automatons,
Shouted down by harpies hiding in the
hills,
Co-opting divinity to disguise depravity,
I...am..... MALALA,
The nascent miracle,
Another prophet proving,
The word more powerful than the projec-
tile,
Confined to preach, to teach, on a mani-
cured cricket field,
Never to see my tree blossom in the gar-
den of the badlands,
Never to taste its nectar of...hope ,

.....
only.....

The demon seeds await my homecoming,
Yet, I AM MALALA!

In the safety of my English country day
school,
I AM MALALA!

In the un-united nations to pleading ap-
plause:
I AM MALALA!

I ...AM BENIZAR BHUTTO

I... AM MAHATMA GHANDI

I...AM ANN FRANK

I... AM MARTIN LUTHER KING

I...AM MEDITAR EVERS

I... AM..... MALALA!

Can ...I... beforgotten?????

I...have written the word(?)

.....am I more fodder for a world's fantasy

or

Just another Fatwa!?

TO OUR READERS & SUPPORTERS

From the editor (jaFa)

This year JAFa's Poets Corner celebrates our 6th year.
We are still the longest, continuously running, poetry column
in any local area monthly publication. We have reached
this milestone because of you, the community, who have so
generously supported us. THANK YOU! Please email your poems to
vze23cff@verizon.net or mail a typed copy please to
James Fair, 153 South 5th Ave., Apt 6B, Mount Vernon, NY 10550

EDUCATION COLUMN

By Diane Fulves, M.A., M.Ed.,
Director, EMPOWERING OUR PARENTS
Email: dee076@verizon.net

A New Year... Are You Ready?

Soon a new school year will begin. You will be back to schedules, early mornings, meeting the school bus, homework, tests, and all the "busyness" of school days. Ready or not, here they come.

The start of a new day begins the night before. Your children must have a good night's sleep to be alert and attentive throughout the six hour school day. It might be a good idea to start practicing their new bedtime a few days before school begins to get them ready for the new routine. You may want to create an end of the day ritual to help your children settle in and feel safe and loved before they fall asleep. The last face they see, the last words they hear will come from a parent who loves them. How comforting is that?

The next step to the start of a successful day is a good breakfast. Find foods that your children will enjoy, but make sure that they provide the nutrients and energy to sustain them through the morning. Some children will not have lunch until 1:00. Be creative, but try to find good sources of protein, eggs, a grilled cheese sandwich, peanut butter and jelly, oatmeal, or a nutritious cereal with some fruit. Cereals with lots of sugar and artificial ingredients are not on the menu! If your children cannot eat a lot before they leave for school, pack this breakfast and send it with them. Tell the teacher and arrangements can be made to have them eat their breakfast before the school day begins. This should not be a problem.

Making preparations for the school day the night before will make a big difference for your children and help them start the day feeling organized and relaxed. Get all materials in the book bag, homework, pencils, pens, signed notes, permission slips and everything that your children will need. Prepare clothes and, if possible, make lunches. Your mornings will be much calmer.

Talk to your child about the new school year. A new grade brings new challenges, a different classroom, a new teacher and many new classmates. Some children look forward with excitement, but others may be nervous and apprehensive. Helping them deal with their anxiety is very important. Talk about the things that are making them nervous. Please don't tell them not to be nervous. That doesn't help them and can cause more anxiety. Listen to them calmly and patiently and talk about solutions. Just knowing that you support them will help relieve some anxiety.

Parents, remember that the new teacher does not know your children and may not understand their needs so I recommend that you make yourselves available to provide important information which will prevent problems. The teacher in the previous grade can also share strategies that worked. We are a team. We must work together to share ideas and techniques to help our children succeed. We must do this because success is the only option!

Good Neighbors Block Association holds annual event

On July 29, the Good Neighbors Block Association held its Annual Community Event, which was co-sponsored by the City of Mount Vernon's Recreation Department.

A special program was held in which the City Council honored several members of the association and others for

their service to the community and the city. The Mistress of Ceremonies for the event was Ms. Semple.

Rev. Joyce Somerville, Assistant Pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church, provided the opening prayer. She also accepted an award for the church which has donated meeting space for the association for over 17 years ago.

NY State Senator Jamaal Bailey was in attendance and addressed a large gathering of people in the South Ninth Avenue Playground. Also in attendance was Councilman Yuhanna Edwards, who has served the association from its inception. He addressed the gathering and was also honored and provided the closing remarks. De-

tective Medina of MVPD Canine Unit educated and entertained the group.

Other honorees included Mrs. Cato, Mrs. Howell, Mrs. Kendall and Mr. Harris.

The event was supported with donations of food from Fresh Daily Inc. and Pizza King Restaurant.



Alternative Medicine Options

by
Joe Parisi

Natural home remedies that heal ailments

Soothe a sore throat
Gargle twice daily with a solution of six pressed garlic cloves mixed into a glass of warm (not hot) water. Follow the regimen for 3 days. Research shows that fresh garlic juice has antimicrobial properties that fight pain-causing bacteria. The warm liquid soothes inflamed tissue.

Curb a cough

Indulge in a square or two of dark chocolate. Researchers found that chocolate's theobromine compound is more effective than codeine at suppressing persistent coughs without the side effects of drowsiness and constipation.

To calm a nagging cough that keeps you awake at night, take 2 teaspoons of honey (1 to 2 teaspoons for kids; don't give to children younger than 1), along with 500 mg of Ester C 30 minutes before bed. The vitamin C (nonacidic Ester type) won't upset stomachs in the early stages of your cough.

Research shows that honey works better than either a cough suppressant or no treatment at all for relieving children's nocturnal cough and promoting sleep.

Reduce a fever

Sip linden flower tea, which works in two ways: It stimulates the hypothalamus to better control your temperature, and it dilates blood vessels, inducing sweating.

Steep 1 tablespoon of dried herb (available in health food stores) in a cup of hot water for 15 minutes, then sip. Drink three to four cups a day. If you still run hot after a day of sipping tea, seek medical attention.

For a high fever (above 102°F), take a tepid bath, which simply cools the body to match the water temperature. Bathe until your temperature decreases to 101° to 102°F, then sip linden flower tea to lower it even more.

Cool a burn

If you grazed your skin with a hot-from-the-oven cookie pan, apply aloe vera gel to the burn as needed. The soothing and anti-inflammatory gel creates a second skin to protect the burn from air, which irritates exposed nerve endings.

Cut a cold short

Sip a faux hot toddy. Cut a vitamin C-rich lemon in half and squeeze the juice from one half into a cup. Studies show that vitamin C taken before the onset of a cold shortens its duration and severity. Drop the lemon half shell into the cup. Add boiling water and a teaspoon of organic raw honey, an immunity booster that also coats painful throat tissues. Breathe in the healing vapor to open sinuses, and sip a cupful two or three times daily to fight the bug. (To make a traditional hot toddy, add a half shot of brandy.)



Jim and Annie Kiselak's Natural Food Column

Direct from the sunny island of Vieques, Puerto Rico

Human health benefits of eating organic foods

Greater Antioxidant Value

Antioxidants are important nutrients found in fresh fruits and vegetables and have been shown to impart multiple health benefits, including the prevention of many cancers. Some studies show that organic foods may have more antioxidants compared to commercial varieties. A 2012 study in the "Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture" discovered higher antioxidants, including vitamin C, in organic broccoli compared to conventional.

Reduced Pesticide Exposure

Many consumers choose organic produce because they desire to lower their exposure to the pesticides found on commercial produce. Certified organic produce is free from pesticide residues. A 2008 study published in "Environmental Health Perspectives" revealed a majority of organophosphorus (OP) pesticide exposure in humans comes from dietary intake. When commercial produce was replaced with organic produce, pesticide exposure was reduced significantly. Among other concerns, OP pesticide exposure has been shown to contribute to deficiencies in neurodevelopment, becoming a factor in autism, ADHD and other neurological impairments in developing children.

Reduced Antibiotic Exposure

With the increasing usage of anti-

biotics among dairy farms and feed lots, antibiotic resistance is becoming a concern for many Americans. Organically raised animals are not given antibiotic additives; therefore, organic dairy and meats products do not contain these residues. Consistent exposure to low doses of antibiotic residues can also disrupt the normal flora of the human gut, reducing the number of healthful bacteria and leaving humans more vulnerable to harmful bacteria and illness.

Genetically Modified Foods

More recently, an increase in production of genetically modified foods and the lack of labeling of these foods is causing many concerned Americans to choose organic foods. The health implications of GM foods is still being studied, but preliminary results do not look good. Rat studies show depressed immune systems, reproductive dysfunction, cancer, allergies, toxicity and more. In one 2005 study, conducted at the Russian Academy of Sciences, a 55 percent death rate of rat pups born to rats fed a GM soy diet was discovered, compared to a 9 percent death rate of rat pups born to rats fed a non-GM soy diet. Nearly 70 percent of all processed foods contain GM ingredients, and choosing organic is the only guarantee that food is free of genetic modification.

Mayor Thomas: Solution to Mount Vernon's tax certiorari issues

Did you know that the City of Mount Vernon lost over \$300,000 in just 20 minutes? During the August 15 Board of Estimate and Contract meeting, the city paid out \$300,000 due to tax certiorari proceedings. Tax certiorari is a legal process by which property owners can challenge how much they are being taxed and, if successful, lower their tax rate.

Every year, Mount Vernon budgets

over \$1 million for this process with most of the benefits going to commercial property owners, leaving the average homeowner stuck with the tab.

Instead of writing hundreds of thousands in checks, the city needs to focus on getting property values right and taxes lower.

Myself and Assessor Stephanie Vanderpool discussed the best way to stop the bleeding and the consensus was a

"revaluation". A revaluation is a process by which a city looks at all the properties within its borders and assesses the true market value of each property and adjust the taxes on these properties accordingly. Revaluation ensures that all property owners pay what their property is truly worth. A revaluation would cost less than what the city is spending on tax certiorari each year.

It's a win, win and creates a level play-

ing field for homeowners.

The taxpayers who are making the biggest dents in our city budget with tax certiorari are commercial properties which are in fact just shifting more and more of the tax burden onto renters and homeowners.

Any CPA knows that this reckless financial policy of this city's monies is costing the city millions of dollars and we need to stop the bleeding now!

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Why is Mt. Vernon IDA giving away millions to real estate developers?

On September 13, 2017, the Mount Vernon IDA is scheduled to vote on a PILOT plan that would give a \$25,000,000 tax break to Enclave Equities to build 179 market rate rental apartments in Fleetwood. The IDA has scheduled the vote on the Enclave project for the day after the Democratic Primary election.

The Enclave is a 179-unit project proposed for at 525 MacQuesten Parkway. It is but one example of some two dozen other proposed projects seeking tax breaks to construct rental housing in Mount Vernon and thousands of Units are currently proposed. If approved, these tax breaks could exceed four hundred million dollars. These tax breaks can best be understood this way. An owner of a one bedroom condominium apartment at 777 MacQuesten Parkway currently pays about \$6,000/year in property taxes, increasing at an average rate of 3.9%/year based on the last 10 years in Mount Vernon. Compare that to the Enclave, where the developer will pay only \$1,000/year for a one bedroom, increasing at a fixed rate of 3% annually for the next 25 years. The tax breaks on this project alone will likely exceed \$25,000,000. That's a lot of money to produce just 15 permanent jobs in Mount Vernon. I believe this is a project that a developer would build in Fleetwood without giving away our tax dollars.

The proposed Enclave is a so called "Market Rate" rental building and it's almost unheard of in New York State to use PILOTS for such rental housing projects and certainly not PILOTS that extend beyond 10 years. Buffalo used 10 year PILOTS.

Mount Vernon is not just one of the poorest cities; it also has one of the lowest homeownership rates (less than 38% versus 65% nationally). I believe giving away property tax dollars to build rental housing is not how our tax dollars should be spent. I believe tax credits should be used to create permanent jobs and to increase home ownership rates in Mount Vernon. Tax breaks should not go to developers and future landlords. I believe tax breaks should be used to help young people buy new affordable condominiums in Mount Vernon with state assistance and to help current and new small businesses who hire our residents. That's how you build a strong community of

stakeholders who will inevitably create a Mount Vernon that developers want to invest in without us having to give them tax breaks.

We should all be demanding that the candidates take a stand on this issue - especially Comptroller Maureen Walker. Ask her how we will pay for police and fire required to protect 15,000 more residents and the new sewers for the many new toilets. Ask her how will we pay to educate thousands of new public school children? Ask her to show us the cost benefit analysis that the law requires her to prepare for every project. There is nothing about this on her website. When she was audited 4 years ago by the New York State Comptroller's office, they specifically faulted her for not doing the cost benefit analysis when Mayor Davis was in charge of the IDA. The NYS audit report is available on line.

By: Paul Herrick, Esq.



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District ELA and math state test proficiency levels show marked improvement

The Mount Vernon City School District is continuing to raise the bar of student academic achievement as evidenced by another year of remarkable improvements in English language arts and math state test scores for grades 3-8.

The district's improvements over the past two years far sur-

passed the statewide score improvements. The district's ELA proficiency grew 14 percentage points, doubling in two years. In math, the district improved by 9 percentage points in two years. The state grew by 2 percentage points in ELA and 2 percentage points in math for the same time period.



'Ask the Pharmacist'

Mark Rauchwerger
Circle Rx Pharmacy
120 Gramatan Ave, Mt Vernon
914-665-5555

How long does it take for the flu vaccine to work?

There is no exact answer for how long it takes for a flu vaccine to start working. The exact time it takes for a vaccine to reach its full effect varies for every individual. However, it generally takes about two weeks for your body to generate a sufficient

amount of antibodies to protect you from the flu. During the first two weeks after receiving your vaccine you are still susceptible to the flu and it is still possible to catch the flu despite the flu vaccine.

I get a funny taste in my mouth after using my asthma inhaler. Is it OK to drink water right after?

You can rinse your mouth with water, or drink milk or a soft drink, for example, to remove the taste an inhaler may leave in your mouth. You are encouraged to rinse your mouth right after using an asthma inhaler - not only to remove the aftertaste, but more important, to avoid developing an oral fungal infection. You can rinse your mouth with water, or drink milk or a soft drink, for example, to remove the taste an inhaler may leave in your mouth.

Tasting your inhaled medication, however, often is an indication of poor inhaler technique. Proper inhaler technique ensures the delivery of the desirable amount of medicine to your lungs and less medicine residue in your mouth.

Even with good technique, however, it is important to rinse your mouth when you are taking certain drugs called inhaled corticosteroids (ICs) - for example, Flovent® (fluticasone). The residue these medications can leave in your mouth increases your chance of developing an oral fungal infection such as thrush (oral candidiasis). Review your inhaler technique with your doctor or pharmacist to minimize your chances of developing an oral fungal infection, and be sure to read all the patient information supplied with your medication. If you are not certain if your inhaled medication requires rinsing your mouth afterward, ask your pharmacist

Mayor's Advisory Board celebrates Mayor Thomas' birthday at Hartley Park



Mayor Richard Thomas cutting his birthday cake at his surprise birthday celebration



A gathering of seniors enjoying the food

Hartley Park was the scene of a big birthday celebration on a beautiful sunny day, August 9, as the Mayor's Advisory Board celebrated Mayor Richard Thomas' 35th birthday.

The crowd was comprised of many city officials, dignitaries and over two hundred senior citizens all having a splendid after-

noon and enjoying an abundance of freshly cooked food and refreshments.

When the mayor arrived, he attracted a thunderous applause from the excited crowd. Many ran up to him and embraced him - wishing him a happy birthday.

Anthony Guarino, chairman of the Mayor's Advisory Board, was in attendance and played a major role in organizing the



Joan Horton distributing the food to the seniors



Seniors waiting for the cake to be cut



Volunteers dispensing the food



Seniors posing for a picture while enjoying the food

very festive venue.

When Geraldine Christiana, Director/Office for the Aging at the Armory, introduced the mayor, he was in total disbelief,

since the event was organized as a surprise party.

"I must admit this celebration was a well-kept secret. I didn't know my birth-

Continued on page 27

Continued from page 26



Geraldine Christiana introducing the mayor

day was being celebrated until I walked into the park and people started wishing me a happy birthday. I can't thank you enough for this wonderful surprise," said the mayor.

Many gathered around him with cameras as he prepared to cut his large birthday cake. After he cut the first piece, he was the first to sample the cake with a big smile on his face.

Pinelands, Barbados youth basketball team visits Mount Vernon



The team prayed before breakfast was served

The Mount Vernon Recreation Department hosted the Pinelands Youth Basketball Team from Pinelands, Barbados for participation in an international basketball invitational and clinic. As part of the invitational, the Barbados Youth Team competed against our Mount Vernon youth in the Mount Vernon Outdoor Basketball League and the Mount Vernon Elite.

Throughout the week the play-

ers participated in a basketball clinic, headed by coach Bob Cimmino, and enjoyed some cultural activities around the city.

On their last day in Mount Vernon, Mayor Thomas and several members of the administration shared a farewell breakfast with the team in his conference room and presented the players and coaches with Certificates of Recognition for their hard work.

Mt. Vernon Fresh Market returns



Recently, the Mount Vernon Fresh Market came back for another week after a very successful launch several weeks ago. Volunteers from City Hall, the Food Bank of Westchester, and across the community distributed over 15,000 pounds of fresh food and produce to Mount Vernon residents and more.

The Fresh Market visits Mount

Vernon every other Friday under the Park Avenue Bridge in Municipal Lot 11 offering healthy food solutions - no one is ever turned away.

Join them for the next Fresh Market event on Friday, September 8 at 4pm.

If Friday doesn't work, feel free to check out the Farmers Market at City Hall Plaza, every Thursday from 10-3.



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THE TERRORIST IN MOUNT VERNON

By Lesly Zamor

Terrorism is the unlawful use of violence and or intimidation against civilians in the pursuit of political aims.

Terrorists are hard at work in Mount Vernon. Vicious attack rumors by anonymous sources is TERRORISM. However, false and flagrant rumors did not just begin to occur in this city, it has been around for some time now. Not that this does not exist elsewhere, but here in Mount Vernon, it festers, reeks, is disgusting and is an embarrassment to us all! Rumors about the Mayor, the city council, candidates for political office, school board trustees and so on... all incredibly negative and seditious, sprouting from anonymous emails and fake social media accounts. Yet, there is gleeful enjoyment and incredulity by so many people while reading and spreading these lies. They start with "Did you hear about..." With so many churches in Mount Vernon and Sunday church goers, you would think this community would know something about the Tenth Commandment and the Bible.

- "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." - Exodus 20:16
- Honesty must always characterize our speech and conduct. To bear false witness against our neighbor is an affront to a holy God who is himself "the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Now I will admit, I am not a church goer, yet my faith is strong and my conscience is clear. While there is a right to free speech, there is also the responsibility of the writer to be accountable for the things that they say. Those that write anonymously and intentionally omit their names are not whistle blowers. They are cowards, manipulators and yes, terrorists. Have you ever seen a terrorist show their cowardly faces while executing innocent civilians? If what they were doing was so right and just, then why not show their faces? Only cowards hide, the brave and just open themselves up to accountability and challenge. Each and every citizen has the moral obligation to educate themselves, and seek the truth. Getting to the truth is not always easy and expedient, it is sometimes hard work. We call that "due diligence" and it requires effort and action....and it is important. Why? Because the information from your research is what you are armed with when you decide the future of your community on Election Day. Voting is your right, and also a responsibility!

Some ask, "Well how do I find the truth amidst all of the false information?" Your first line of defense is to "Trust your guts"! You know better when something sounds too outlandish be true! Next, there are town halls, city council and school board meetings. Yet these meetings have very low attendance, usually having the same nine or ten citizens every time. Scheduling to attend these meetings is not always convenient between home and work commitments. However, we all make time for what is important to us. I am sure that many of Sundays there is something that you really need to get done, but you make sure to make time for God first. The same should apply before you repeat a vicious and false rumor. You should make the time to research it or not repeat it at all. And nor should you vote without researching what the candidates' views on critical issues are and what their record has been if they have held political office. If before you flew on a plane, you thought your pilot was not properly trained or had the credentials to fly and commandeer the plane, would you still get on board? This is simply why quality information about the people who will run your city is so important.... because they will be commandeering your quality of life, investments and services while you live here!

Just remember, there is no effort in opening a fake email, or a fictitious Facebook page and allowing yourself to be the victim and dumping ground for someone else's vicious attacks, manipulations and falsehoods. Reading and believing anonymous sources, is akin to eating food that has been left at your front door. Who left it? What is it? Why did they leave it there? No person of sound mind would eat something that was left at their front door if they didn't have these answers. Challenge the source, question the intention; but most importantly engage within your community, ask the hard questions and become a quality and credible source of information for yourself and your neighbors. Attend public meetings, question your officials and those seeking office. Form neighborhood groups and take turns attending meetings so you can keep up with events that affect your future. Disseminating or spreading anonymous information without verification is not only irresponsible, but it also harms your community by degrading the collective energy and potential momentum for positive change. The goal of these terrorist is to keep the status quo and keep good and qualified people out of the process. When they put out their garbage, leave it there, it soils you when you pick it up. This is their marketing and propaganda tool used to divide, misguide, and confuse. This community has had a lengthy diet of this poison, and now we seek a cleansing before we become what we consume.

Have some respect for yourself and your intellect. Let us look to a higher standard, holding others, and most importantly ourselves to that standard. Let us expect great things Mt. Vernon, great things can happen here!

Thank you Mount Vernon!

Boys & Girls Club of Mt. Vernon summer program ends with celebration



A group of kids are all smiles during the end of summer celebration

Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon had its most successful program this year with 160 participants and a full array of daily activities for their young participants.

The finale brought children, families, staff and volunteers together in a celebration that showcased the work the children did all summer at the club.

While fun is a major component of the summer program, it is very important that education is also an important part of summer programming. All participants participated in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program supported by Boys & Girls Club of America, Hofstra University and Con Edison. Parents that attended the celebration were given demonstrations of their children's work. The parents went away very impressed with the work of their children. One parent was overheard saying "Wow, I have never seen my child so ex-

cited about science experiments."

The children are placed in age appropriate groups and every group had to develop a team name, group chant, and develop a performance for the finale. The finale was directed by Faith Hardy, a volunteer high school student who is interested in pursuing a career in the arts.

The team that ran the summer program led by Ms. Halima Penny worked very well together and made sure they had a safe productive summer. Ms. Penny, the club's Director of Outcome Measurement, took over the leadership of the summer program this year. During the celebration Ms. Penny told CPO Mr. Mel Campos, "Mr. Campos it is very gratifying to see our community come together. All of our hard work paid off. Seeing the end result makes it all worthwhile."

The club is now gearing up for their After School Program. The program runs from September 6, 2017 - July 8, 2018.

BUSINESS OF THE MONTH SEPTEMBER 2017 "THE MILESTONE SCHOOL"

Angela Freeman established the legendary and popular Milestone School nearly 40 years ago and the demand for enrollment at the school is simply amazing.

"Good Beginnings Never End" is the premise upon which The Milestone School was founded in 1979.

An independent Nursery through Grade 4 day school, they prepare students for a lifetime of learning. Realizing the importance of this critical phase of learning, their highly enriched curriculum will take your child through this first and most important "milestone" in his or her education.

Rooted in Montessori principles, they provide a strong academic foundation while leaving room for the child to explore many other disciplines from Spanish

to their highly acclaimed Shakespeare program.

Its small classroom sizes allow for individualized attention ensuring each child's academic success.

Centrally located in the Fleetwood section of Mount Vernon, Milestone draws its diverse student body from Westchester, Rockland and Fairfield Counties, as well as the surrounding New York City area.

There is an enlightened setting. . . it goes beyond retention of knowledge and works with each child to develop confidence, independence, and a desire to learn. . . preparing them for a future of "endless possibilities."

The school is located at 70 West Broad Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10552, and they can be reached by calling 914.667.3478.



The Milestone School is a Montessori oriented environment, fostering your child's growth and development through those first important academic milestones. Extended day 7:30am—6:00pm; Chartered by NYS Board of Regents.

Mrs. Angela Freeman, MS Ed. (Head of School)

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ABOUT JANICE

Deep roots in Mount Vernon

- ★ Born and raised, lives and works
- ★ 3 family generations still reside in Mount Vernon

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Care for All Residents...since decisions impact all generations

- ★ Board, Mount Vernon Youth Bureau
An advocate for youth development
- ★ Fundraising Council, Junior League
Supports monthly mobile food pantry

Making Mount Vernon History

Janice would be the first elected Portuguese-American official.

EDUCATION

First in her family to graduate college

- ★ Barnard College, Columbia University
- ★ Co-Fund Chair of Barnard Alumnae Class
- ★ Raised class funds & developed scholarships for students in need

CAREER

17+ years of professional experience

- ★ Vice President of Communications
- ★ Last 7 years dedicated to working with small businesses in Mt Vernon, managing operations and growth

Janice has the skills, experience, and track record to work across teams and get the job done.

S.E.E. THE FUTURE

SAFETY: A Crime Strategies Unit & improved wraparound services for better quality of life for everyone.

EMPLOYMENT: Job-focused programs & investments that benefit everyone and accelerate community growth.

EDUCATION: Partner with MVCSD & WCC to close the skills gap so everyone can grow together.

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Balances a budget that promotes community growth & investment.
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SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ARTS & MATHEMATICS AWARENESS
FIELD TRIPS OUTDOOR PLAY COMPUTER INSTRUCTION
AFRICAN DANCE AFRICAN DRUMMING CHARACTER EDUCATION

TUITION

One child	\$175 monthly
Two children	\$270 monthly
Three children	\$365 monthly

EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION
On or before Thursday, August 31, 2017, \$25
after Thursday, August 31, 2017 \$50
Refer a friend & receive **FREE registration** when they register!
Call (914) 664-1838 ext. 125 or
ImaniCulturalAcademy1994@gmail.com
for more information.

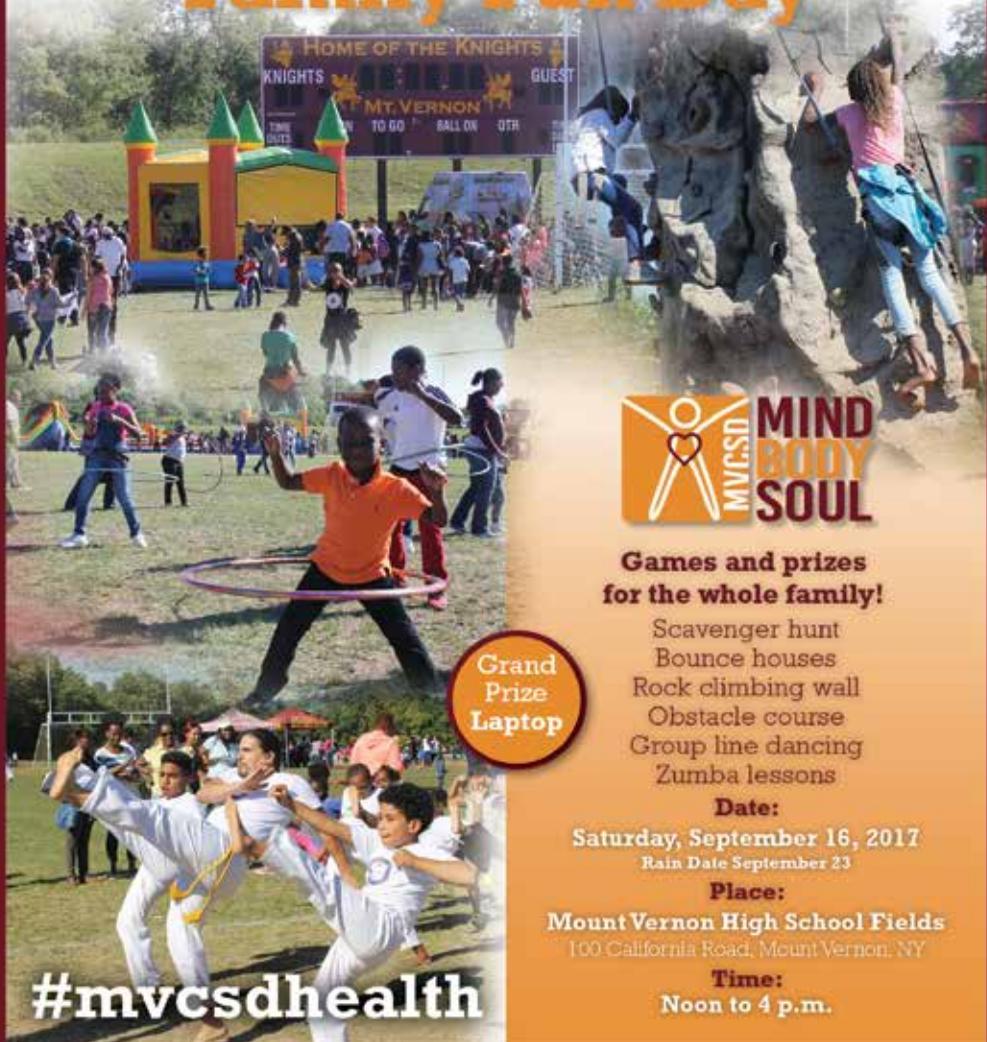
REGISTER TODAY!
114 West 4th Street, Mount Vernon, NY 10550

REV. DR. STEPHEN W. POGUE, PASTOR
FAY L. FAGAN, BOARD PRESIDENT
TONYA JENKINS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Please join us for the
Mount Vernon City School District
Family Fun Day**

FREE



MIND BODY SOUL

Games and prizes for the whole family!

- Scavenger hunt
- Bounce houses
- Rock climbing wall
- Obstacle course
- Group line dancing
- Zumba lessons

Grand Prize Laptop

Date:
Saturday, September 16, 2017
Rain Date September 23

Place:
Mount Vernon High School Fields
100 California Road, Mount Vernon, NY

Time:
Noon to 4 p.m.

#mvcsdhealth

A CLEAN CAR IS A HAPPY CAR.

FREE CAR WASH

WITH

EVERY OIL CHANGE



1st Street Car Wash & Quicklube
300 West 1st Street
Mount Vernon 10550
914-664-7006

Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon

350 South Sixth Avenue, Mount Vernon NY 10550, 914-668-9580 Fax: 914-668-1902 www.bgcmvny.org

Join the Celebration!!!
Day for Kids



Saturday, September 23, 2017
11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Boys & Girls Club of Mount Vernon
350 South Sixth Avenue



ANNUAL GOLF OUTING & DINNER

Monday, September 18, 2017

Westchester Hills Golf Club
401 Ridgeway, White Plains NY 10605



Joseph D. Roberto
Chairman, President, & CEO
PCSB



Mike Phillips
World-Renowned Saxophonist
BGCMV Alum

Schedule of Events

10:30 am Registration
11:00 am Breakfast & Warmup
Noon Shotgun Start
5:00 pm Cocktail Reception, Dinner, &

Fall Programs

September 06, 2017 – June 08, 2018

After School Program

Ages 6 – 13
\$60 per school year
Mondays – Fridays
3:00 pm – 6:30 pm

- Basketball
- Computers
- Film Club
- Game Room
- Mentoring Program
- Passport to Manhood
- Physical Activity
- Power Hour
- Project Learn
- Robotics
- Smart Girls
- Smart Moves
- Soccer
- Social Recreation
- Special Programs
- STEM
- Torch Club
- Volleyball



- Be Great: Graduate!
- Career Launch
- Club Tech/Computers
- Date Smart
- Drama Matters
- Fitness
- Game Room
- Keystone Club
- Mentoring Program
- Money Matters
- Movies
- Passport to Manhood
- Smart Moves
- Social Recreation
- Special Programs
- Sports
- STEM
- Youth Entrepreneurship
- Youth of the Year



Teen Program

Ages 14 – 20
\$25 per school year
Mondays – Fridays
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm