Help Children's Specialized Hospital Offer Help and Hope to Youngsters

By THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF ELIZABETH-PLAINFIELD

"I can talk about Children's Specialized forever; it is truly an amazing place!"

Susan Oldroyd Laffler's enthusiasm for Children's Specialized Hospital is contagious. Located on New Providence Road in Mountainside, with eight other facilities across New Jersey, Children's Specialized Hospital is a source of hope and help for the thousands of patients who are treated every year for a variety of chronic and potentially debilitating diseases.

As director of Annual Giving for the Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation, Ms. Laffler knows very well how essential volunteer help is to the hospital's success and what an important role such assistance has played throughout its history.

Children's Specialized Hospital was founded in 1891 by a group of concerned townspeople who recognized that children in nearby cities spent their summers living in hot, confining tenement buildings. As a result, the Children's Country Home was opened in July 1892 and hosted 59 children over the next three months through the Fresh Air Fund.

Soon it became apparent that many of the children visiting the Country Home suffered from a variety of infirmities and required special care all year round. In 1904, with the financial support of the local community, Children's Specialized opened its doors permanently, focusing on children suffering from an array of illnesses.

Medical care has certainly advanced since Children's Specialized first opened, but one thing that has not changed is Children's Specialized's reliance on the local community. The hospital has always served patients regardless of their ability to pay and that has been the policy of the hospital since its founding.

While Children's Specialized offers a variety of volunteer opportunities within the hospital, there is currently an immediate need for individuals to spearhead fundraising events so that Children's can continue to serve its patients regardless of their financial status or insurance credentials.

To this end, the Foundation has launched "For Children's," an exciting new way for groups in our community to get involved. According to Ms. Laffler, "For Children's" offers wonderful ways for people of all ages and abilities to use their talents to benefit the Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation.

In 2004, Children's Specialized benefited from the generosity of many groups in our community. The Cranford High School football team sponsored a bench-a-thon and raised approximately $6,000 for the hospital. Most recently, Phillips-Van Heusen employees raised nearly $1000 by selling valentines for the children at the hospital.

Individuals with an idea for a fundraising event can contact the Foundation. Children's Specialized also has a great list of fundraising ideas and welcomes the opportunity to work with new partners looking to make a difference in the life of a child, whether it is a high school student looking to create interest in a college application, a retired person wanting to exercise dormant skills, or a working person willing to take on a different type of challenge from their daily schedule.

The Foundation's professional fundraisers will meet with the individual or group and provide help and guidance throughout the process of planning the event.

Anyone interested in having a positive impact in their local community can contact the Children's Specialized Hospital Foundation at (908) 301-5468 or visit www.childrens-specialized.org .

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The Junior League of Elizabeth-Plainfield is an organization of women committed to promoting volunteerism, developing the potential of women, and improving the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. For information or to join, visit www.jlepnj.org or call (908) 709-1177.

YM-YWHA Reveals Spring Registration

COUNTY – The YM-YWHA of Union has opened registration for its spring classes. The eight-week session will begin on Sunday, April 3. Due to several holidays, there will be no classes on April 24, May 1 and May 29.

The Lifeguard Certification Class will begin on Tuesday, March 15, with a pre-test at 7:30 p.m. For those who pass, the class will take place on Tuesday nights and Sundays.

All levels of swim courses will be held on Sunday mornings, beginning at 9:30 a.m. for children ages six to 24 months.

Additionally, an Art Workshop and Karate classes will be offered Sunday mornings. Yoga will be featured Monday and Thursday evenings, while Kickboxing will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The Y is located at 501 Green Lane in Union. For more information, please call the Y at (908) 289-8112.

Spadaro Family Benefit Slated For March 18 in Scotch Plains

SCOTCH PLAINS – Friends of the family of the late Salvatore "Sam" Spadaro will hold their first annual "get-together fundraiser" on Friday, March 18, at the Italian-American Hall in Scotch Plains, from 7 to 11 p.m.

A longtime resident of Scotch Plains and formerly of Westfield, Mr. Spadaro died suddenly of a massive heart attack at age 45 on September 2, 2004. An employee of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, he worked as head custodian at Terrill Middle School.

The fundraiser will benefit Mr. Spadaro's wife, Cindy, and their three children, Salvatore, 11, Antonio, 9, and Gabriella, 5. Active in their local community, schools, church, sports programs, Boy Scouts and Brownies, the family now faces unexpected, long-term financial difficulties.

The benefit will include dinner, dessert, BYOB, a disk jockey and dancing, raffles/silent auctions and 50/50s. Tickets for the event are $40 each or $400 for a table of 10. To purchase tickets, please call Karen Stone, (908) 889-8159, or Lynn Kelly, (908) 654-6651.

Anyone who cannot attend but would like to make a monetary donation or donate merchandise that can be used for the raffles is asked to contact a committee member.

EAGLE SCOUT…Gregory Ryan, Jr. receives his Eagle Scout rank during a ceremony on February 19. The Reverend Donald Hummel of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains bestowed the award. Members of Troop No. 77 of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Westfield, as well as almost 100 guests, were in attendance. Gregory has been accepted to Penn State University, where he will pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree starting in the fall of 2005.

Classes For Adults to Be Held At Torah Center in Westfield

WESTFIELD – A new series of classes for adults will be held at the Union County Torah Center, located at 418 Central Avenue in Westfield.

On consecutive Tuesdays, March 15 and 22, Rabbi Mitchell Bomrind will present "Reflections Upon the Heroes of the Megillah," an exploration of Jewish heroism from long ago to modern times. Classes will meet at 8 p.m. at the Torah Center. Each lecture is $5.

On Wednesday, March 16, at 7:30 p.m., Fruma Wilschansky will lead a seminar for women on "Purim: What's Behind the Masks?" Students will delve into the Kabbalistic twists and turns in the Purim story; discover Haman's plot; celebrate the heroic acts of Esther, and uncover God's guidance through it all. This class will be held in a private home; for the location, please call the Torah Center.

A continuing, free, weekly Megillah class is held on Thursdays at 8 p.m. at the Torah Center. Participants are invited to study the text, along with its commentaries, to gain a deeper understanding of the story of Purim.

Additionally, newcomers are welcome at an ongoing weekly Talmud class, taking place Mondays at 8 p.m. There is no charge to attend, and no background or experience is required. All are invited.

For more information on any of these programs, please call the Torah Center at (908) 789-5252.

Holy Trinity Seniors To See Irish Dancing

WESTFIELD – The Holy Trinity Senior Social Club will hold its regular monthly meeting on Monday, March 14, at 1:30 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Interparochial School on First Street in Westfield.

Children of the school who have learned authentic Irish dancing will perform in costume. The meeting will follow and refreshments will be served.

African Violet Group Slates Show and Sale

SCOTCH PLAINS – The Union County Chapter of the African Violet Society will hold its 51st Annual Flower Show and Sale on Friday, March 18, from 6 to 9 p.m. and Saturday, March 19, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The event will take place at the Parish Hall of the All Saints' Episcopal Church, 559 Park Avenue in Scotch Plains.

Exhibits will be judged and plants from a commercial grower will be available for purchase. Questions will be answered at the Education Booth. Anyone interested in African Violets is invited to attend. Admission is free.

Ms. Sobel to Discuss Politics In Israel at Hadassah Event

WESTFIELD – On Monday, March 21, the Westfield Chapter of Hadassah will hold a meeting at Temple Emanu-El, located at 756 East Broad Street in Westfield.

The featured speaker will be critic, journalist and lecturer Edith Sobel, who will discuss "Unwinding the Pretzel of Israel's Politics." She has made 53 trips to Israel.

For many years, Ms. Sobel was Education Chairwoman of the Northern New Jersey Region of Hadassah, as well as Editor-in-Chief of the *Jewish Community News* of Bergen and Passaic Counties, a Jewish Federation newspaper.

Members of Hadassah and the community are invited to attend. Bagels and coffee will be served at noon, and the program will follow at 12:30 p.m. For further information, please call Hadassah President Jeanne Goldstein at (908) 232-3308.

First Baptist Reveals Meetings For Book Club and Bible Study

WESTFIELD – On Saturday, March 19, the Women's Book Club of the First Baptist Church will meet from 10 a.m. to noon in the church lounge.

The Reverend Dee Dee Turlington, Senior Minister, will speak on "Facts and Fiction about Saint Pat." Members of the group are reading "How the Irish Saved Civilization," by Thomas Cahill, as background for the meeting.

Visitors are welcome to share in the discussion and fellowship, even if they have not read the book. Refreshments will be served.

The book club meets on the third Saturday of every month, except during the summer. For more information, please call Bette Savage at (908) 575-8637 or email her at Elzsvg@netscape.net.

On Wednesday, March 16, the Women's Bible Study Group will meet from 10 a.m. to noon in the church library. The group's current theme is "Women of the Bible."

During each meeting, one of the regular members discusses and compares a Biblical woman and a famous 20th century woman.

Visitors are welcome and refreshments will be served. For more information, please call Betty Cochran at (908) 755-6351.

Sisterhood to Conduct Passover Food Event

CRANFORD – The Sisterhood of Temple Beth-El Mekor Chayim, located at 338 Walnut Avenue in Cranford, will hold its annual Passover food presentation on Tuesday, March 15, at 8 p.m.

The program will be presented by Fred Nery, merchandiser of Ethnic Foods for Wakefern, the parent company of ShopRite. He will bring new Passover related products for distribution and tasting, and will answer questions related to Passover foods.

Sisterhood President Lenore Klein will preside at a short business meeting. Parve refreshments will be served. Harriet Scheiner, Judaica Shop Chairwoman, will have the shop open for business and displaying Passover merchandise.

For more information, please call the temple at (908) 276-9231. Business hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Friday from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

First Baptist to Begin ALPHA This Sunday

WESTFIELD – The First Baptist Church of Westfield will hold the first regular meeting of its ALPHA course this Sunday, March 13, from 5 to 7:45 p.m. in the church lounge.

ALPHA offers a 10-week, practical introduction to the Christian faith. Each weekly session begins with an informal dinner, followed by a large-group learning time, and ending with small-group discussion.

Weekly topics include "Who is Jesus?"; "Why Did Jesus Die?", and "Why and How Should I Read the Bible?"

The First Baptist Church is located at 170 Elm Street. For more information, interested persons may call the church office at (908) 233-2278 or email firstbaptist.westfield@verizon.net.

Programs For Youngsters To Resume at Library

WESTFIELD – As of Tuesday, March 15, the Westfield Memorial Library will resume its storytime programs for children. Youngsters must have a valid Westfield Library card to participate.

All of these programs are conducted on a drop-in basis, but space is limited, so participants are encouraged to arrive early and sign in at the Children's Desk.

"Time for Tales: 3½ to 5 Years Old" is held on Tuesdays from 1:30 to 2 p.m. and Thursdays from 10:30 to 11 a.m. Children go into the story room without an adult to listen to stories and watch a video of a picture book.

Adults are not permitted to accompany the child, but are asked to stay in the library during the program in case of "emergencies." To enable as many children as possible to participate, the library asks that youngsters attend this program only once per week.

Children in kindergarten and up are invited to attend the library's After School Activities Program (ASAP) on Thursday, March 17, from 3:45 to 4:45 p.m. They will celebrate St. Patrick's Day by listening to a story, watching a film, and creating a special craft. Light snacks will be provided.

"Super Science for Kids" will present two workshops for those in kindergarten and up on Saturday, March 19. The first will be from 9:30 to 11 a.m., while the second will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Participants will learn about archeology and paleontology as they dig for dinosaurs and unearth interesting facts about rocks, minerals and crystal.

Space is limited, so individuals are urged to register as soon as possible at the Children's Desk on the first floor. Youngsters must have a Westfield Memorial Library card to attend. The library is located at 550 East Broad Street and parking is free.

If you see this guy, give him a hug. It's his birthday!

Happy Birthday, Dave.

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