



LIVE AID... Displaced Louisiana students express their gratitude for the mountain of school supplies sent from Deerfield School by blowing a kiss all the way to Mountainside.

La. Evacuees Grateful For Aid From Mountainside

By LINDA B. CONDRILLO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

MOUNTAINSIDE —Times of devastation and destruction often afford people an opportunity to count their blessings and reach into their hearts and pockets to help fellow citizens. Two months have passed since Hurricane Katrina wreaked her havoc, displacing hundreds of thousands of Americans, many of whom were school-aged children, prompting an outpouring of fundraising efforts by local youth organizations.

As reported in the September 29 edition of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, Mountainside student council members from Deerfield School orchestrated a mammoth school supply drive, including the collection of over \$4,000 to assist students temporarily attending school in Milton, Louisiana. Thanks to the generosity of the Mountainside community, 75 displaced children are now well equipped with new backpacks, school uniforms and standard school supplies.

Expressions of gratitude came to the Deerfield School in the many forwarded thank you letters from staff members and families. A letter from Mrs. Corbello, an eighth grade instructor in the Milton School district, described how her new students' faces "lit up with wonder" after putting the school supplies in their hands. In addition, Milton School student council members put together a powerpoint presentation to personally thank their counterparts at Deerfield.

In an after-school follow-up meeting, Deerfield student council representative Mallory Corrigan told *The Leader and The Times*, "We don't realize how much we have, we take so

much for granted. It made us all feel so much better to send the school supplies to help them out."

Justin Amezcua, also a student council representative, added: "I think it was a cool thing to do because when you still hear anything about Hurricane Katrina, it is a good feeling knowing that we did something about it."

In addition to this accomplishment, the student council conducts many worthwhile charitable events throughout the year, such as collecting holiday gifts for local day care centers and organizing coat drives. Like Hurricane Katrina, this one is sure to go down in the history books.

Local Resident Named President Of TLU

WESTFIELD — Becky Swenson of Westfield is serving as president of the Texas Lutheran University chapter of the American Marketing Association chapter this year. Becky, a senior Marketing major, is a graduate of Westfield High School.

Local Students Selected For Early Identification

AREA — American University sophomores Sara Woods and Emily McDermott were two of 360 students selected to take part in the university's Early Identification Program. Sara, a resident of Scotch Plains, is majoring in International Business within AU's School of International Service. Emily is a resident of Westfield.

The Career Center's Office of Merit Awards and the University Honors Program, as an enrichment opportunity for academically outstanding sophomores, sponsor the program.

GUEST COLUMN WF BOE To Highlight Enrollment, Special Needs



By ANNE RIEGEL
President, Westfield Board of Education

WESTFIELD — This week, we celebrate American Education Week, which is an appropriate time to launch the Westfield Public Schools' guest column in the *Westfield Leader*. Through this column, the Westfield school district will have the opportunity to spotlight people who experience the challenges and opportunities in our schools everyday. The authors will present topics that affect our children and consequently our community, since it is through the support of residents that success of our schools is ensured. We hope this column will be informative and help readers gain a better insight into our schools.

As president of the Board of Education, I have the privilege of authoring this first column and thought I'd use this opportunity to share information about the board itself. What exactly does the board of education do? The board's responsibility is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run. The board sets policy and the administration carries out that policy. The board also establishes goals and holds the superintendent accountable for progress toward those goals.

Goals are developed taking into consideration numerous factors, such as the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards and the community priorities identified through survey results.

By many measures, our schools compare favorably with similar districts statewide and nationally. Then why do we need goals? As in any business, the board wants to maximize the return on its shareholders' investment. In this case, our shareholders are the Westfield community, made up of parents, students, single residents, senior citizens, merchants — everyone who has a stake in the vitality of this town and in the future of our children. We want to ensure that our district's mission — "to prepare students to reach their highest potential" is fulfilled.

The board's goals for this year, which were announced last spring, include: addressing the enrollment imbalance at the intermediate and elementary levels; reducing the academic achievement gap district wide; improving community engagement; developing initiatives between town government and the school district and strengthening achievement of special needs students and reviewing services within and out of district.

To perform our responsibilities, we hold our public meetings at least twice

per month on Tuesday evenings, and almost weekly during the budget development season from January through March. To provide opportunities for in-depth discussion and thorough analysis of issues, Board of Education members also serve on five standing committees: Policy, Curriculum, Finance, Facilities and Long-Range Planning. Our nine members also serve on ad hoc committees and as liaisons to each school and various community groups.

Board members are volunteers who serve three-year terms, with the next election on April 18.

For the board to be most effective, we count on good two-way communication with the community. I urge you to stay informed about what's happening in the district, by attending our board of education meetings, watching them on Channel 36, subscribing to the Superintendent's *Synopsis* newsletter, checking our district website (www.westfieldnj12.org) and reading the newspaper reports of board decisions and school activities. To reach the board of education, we can be e-mailed at boe@westfieldnj12.org.

I hope that this new column will increase the public's understanding of the challenges and opportunities that our school district faces.

Alice Ryan Wins Service Fellowship

WESTFIELD — Alice Ryan, a sophomore at Johns Hopkins University and a 2002 graduate of Westfield High School, was awarded the Aitchison Public Service Undergraduate Fellowship in Washington, D.C. for the upcoming spring semester.

This residential program gives juniors and seniors the opportunity to earn 15 credits while gaining experience in the capital. Alice's participation as a sophomore is a rare privilege. Aitchison fellows take two undergraduate and one graduate-level academic courses taught by Hopkins faculty; intern with elected officials, lobbyists or civil servants; develop an individual research project based on the internship; attend lectures by White House consultants, ambassadors and journalists; live in the University of California dorms with students from the University of California, University of Pennsylvania and Johns Hopkins University and explore the social and cultural resources of Washington.

Alice is a political science major and the daughter of Maryalice and Chris Ryan of Westfield.

THE STUDENT VIEW

The weekly column written by local high school students

Ben Folds Experience Comparable to Early Elton

By KATE MCGEE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

I love music—classic, rock, folk, hip-hop, jazz, alternative, rap (well, some of it). I listen to it all. Not only do I listen to a lot of other music, I like to listen to a lot of unknown musicians, instead of the mainstream music, which becomes overplayed and "old."

On November 7, I was fortunate enough to attend the Ben Folds concert at Radio City Music Hall in New York City. Folds, originally of the band Ben Folds Five, who broke up in 2000, is an amazingly talented pianist whose style resembles that of early Elton John. Similar to Elton John's music, Folds uses the piano, drums and bass, to create various rock and alternative songs, full of catchy lyrics and amazing melodies.

Since the breakup, Folds created two solo albums, *Rockin' the Suburbs* and his latest CD, *Songs for Silverman*, which have been immensely popular with his fans and have attracted new fans, like myself.

To put it plainly: Folds plays an extraordinary show. He opened up the show with "Bastard" off of *Songs for Silverman*, exciting the crowd from the very start of the show. He tries to make his shows casual, like he's having a conversation with the audience, taking requests, asking questions and telling personal stories. He even played a different version of his song "Jesusland," calling it, "the radio remix," which sounded like a U2 song, making the hard-core fans, like my friend, Alex, go crazy.

He continued his show with favorites off of his newest albums, such as, "Prison

Food" and "Annie Waits." He played a personal favorite off *Rockin' the Suburbs*, called "Still Fighting It," which has the notable lyrics, "Everybody knows, it hurts to grow old/ but everybody does/ it's so weird to be back here/ let me tell you what/ the years go on and we're still fighting it..." My only complaint was the lights, which kept shining on the audience and blinded the crowds, even causing Folds to yell to turn them off.

Towards the end of his show, he began playing songs off old Ben Folds Five CD's, causing the crowd to go wild with favorites like "Brick" and "Army." After the song "One Angry Dwarf," he left the stage, throwing his stool at the piano, just like he exits every show. Yet the screaming crowd dragged him back onstage, despite the threats of a \$10,000 fine from the Radio City Music Hall Police.

He ended with two great songs, including "Narcolepsy," a rarity at his live performances.

Folds ended his show by beginning to use the audience to create harmonies for the song "Not the Same" before he was kicked off the stage.

All in all, the show was amazing. Ben Folds is a fantastic musician, the audience is great and one of the coolest parts of the concert was that the entire crowd knew all the words to every song. The only thing I suggest is not to bring younger children to his concerts. His language can get obscene at times. Otherwise, Ben Folds always "gives the people what they want."

Kate McGee, from Cranford, is a junior at Mount St. Mary's.

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