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Back to the BASICS 101 - Homemade Baking Mixes, 5 Plant Protein Mixes, Elderberry Syrup Mixes
Beasley Farms - Fresh Chicken Eggs, Duck Eggs
Brenda Mathern - Ornaments, Squash Relish, Small Wooden Items, Dill Pickles, Pine Needle Baskets, Glass Art, Re-caned Chairs
Elizabeth Hattaway - Homemade Canned Goods and Baked Goods, Embroidery Work
Evelyn Johnson - Homemade Baked Goods
Gigi's Sweet Treats - Cake Slices, Cookies, Fresh Vegetables
Jordan Farms - Cleaned Catfish, Jam, Fig Preserves, Pickles, Raw & Roasted Pecans
Mad Batter Bakery - Cupcakes, Cookies, Muffins, Gluten Free/Organic Spices and Rubs, Fruit Pies, Bird Houses, and Aluminum Casting Art
Mary Thompson - Peanut & Pecan Brittle
New Life Designs - Handmade bracelets
Phillips Farm - Cuslaw Pies, Tarts, Strawberries, Peas
Pine Valley Farm - Bread, Cakes, Pies, Jellies, Fresh Produce, Apple Butter, Vegetables
Rob Phillips Produce - Fresh produce
Ronald Daniel - Pound Cakes, Bread, BBQ Sauce, Pickles, Raw Local Honey, Pepper Sauce, Meat Rub, Cane Syrup, Croutons
Soulano's Bath & Body Indulgence - Cold Processed Soaps, Bubble Bars, Sugar Scrub, Wax Melts, Body Spray, Lip Balm, Beard/Mustache Oil, Hand Sanitizer
The Farm at Watermelon Road - Grass-fed Beef, Eggs, Microgreens
Tom-Tom's Pepper Patch - Homemade Pepper Products, Pickled Vegetables, Jellies, Herbs, Fresh Vegetables, Salt Scrubs
Triple T Nursery - Variety of Plants including Herbs, Tomatoes, peppers, Bedding Plants, Perennials, Hanging Baskets

TELL IT!

To whom it may concern, someone needs to paint the stripes in the street between Walmart and the service station. Someone is going to have a head-on collision because people don't realize there is a turning lane to turn into Walmart. Please help with this.

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4 charged in murder of Chester couple

Additional man charged with theft by receiving stolen property

From Staff Reports
Four Dodge County men were charged Wednesday with the murder of an elderly couple found dead inside their house earlier this week.
Law enforcement officers served arrest warrants

Wednesday for Gary Pennamon, 17, Kojak Thomas, Jr., 19, and two 16-year-old males, one from Eastman and one from Chester.

Also arrested was Alijah Shamir Pennamon, 19, of Eastman, who was charged with one count of theft by re-

ceiving stolen property. Additional charges are expected.

Around 8:47 a.m. that day, a Dodge County Sheriff's deputy conducted a welfare check at 1169 Chester-Alamo Highway, the residence of Everett and Jain Williams. The deputy found



G. PENNAMON



THOMAS

Everett and Jain Williams inside dead, with suspected gunshot wounds. It was also determined that property was missing from the residence.

The welfare check was requested by a neighbor who had not seen the Williams since Sunday, April 22.

The Dodge County Sheriff's Office requested that the Georgia Bureau of Investigation assist in the case.

An autopsy is scheduled to take place at the GBI Crime Lab in Macon.

The Eastman Police Department, Georgia Department of Community Supervision, Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice, Oconee Drug Task Force, Ocmulgee Drug Task Force, Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Georgia State Patrol also assisted in the investigation.

Anyone with information on the case is asked to contact the GBI office in Eastman by phone at 478-374-6988 or via email at Tips@gbi.ga.gov

Everyday heroes



Photo by Payton Towns III

TLC CASA volunteers honored at the banquet included (first row, from left) Sarah Smith and Lila Weatherly, (second row) Sandy Cox, Courtney Nelson and Alan Yauk, (third row) Andrea Craft, Suzanne Cole and J.J. Hall, and (fourth row) Mary Thomas and Jewel Mellinger. Leon Garren is not pictured.

Local TLC CASA volunteers honored for their work 'helping the children'

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Volunteers with TLC CASA were thanked this past week for their service helping abused and neglected children.

According to Marie Townsend, CASA program director, the month of April is when the organization wanted to honor its volunteers. A partnering agency with the Heart of Georgia United Way, TLC CASA gathered its volunteers for a luncheon at Company Supply.

"Our volunteers do a great job working with the children," Townsend said. "Without our volunteers, we can't do what we do. CASA is a volunteer-driven base. Our volunteers advocate and work these cases for abused and neglected children in Laurens County and surrounding areas."

Donna Jarrard has recently been named the new CASA Advocacy coordinator for Laurens County. Since March 1, she has heard volunteers tell their stories.

"Being a volunteer with CASA gets into your bones, and I don't think I can quit. These kids need us."

—Jewel Mellinger, CASA Volunteer

Jarrard retired from the local Division of Family and Children Services after 30 years.

"The children had been through a lot of trauma and CASA volunteers are looking out for the children's best interest," Jarrard said. "I need to recruit more volunteers because Laurens County is a large county. Since I started in March, we have gotten 15 more kids who need care."

Jewel Mellinger has been a volunteer for almost three years. She became a CASA volunteer when she moved to Georgia.

"I needed something to make me feel like this is my town," Mellinger said. "I found it and I love it. Being a volunteer with CASA gets into your bones, and I don't think I can quit. These kids need us."

J.J. Hall has been a volunteer for 2 1/2 years. She completed her training with Mellinger.

"My daughter went to school with a girl who was in foster care," Hall said. "I felt compelled to get involved, especially once you see there is a need for children not to fall through the cracks. It feels very rewarding to help them."

Leon Garren has been with CASA for approximately 12 years.

"You've got to love kids to do this," Garren said. "There is such a need for volunteers to help with this. People need

See CASA page 8a



Photo by Payton Towns III

Sheryl Kurland was the guest speaker at the Women In Need of God's Shelter luncheon Thursday afternoon.

Kurland urges women to find their 'Fabulosity'

By PAYTON TOWNS III
Sheryl Kurland recalled watching a hairstylist limp to her chair. The hairstylist found out that Kurland was the president and founder of Find Your Fabulosity, an organization that helps women with domestic violence.

The woman leaned down and whispered into Kurland's ear, "I'm a victim right now but I can't talk about it."

Kurland shared this story and more during the Women In Need of God's Shelter luncheon held at the Dublin Country Club Thursday afternoon.

Heather Mullis, executive director of WINGS, said they originally hoped to have 50 women attend the event. They ended up with more approximately 80.

"We are really please about the response from our community," Mullis said. "We were pleased that they wanted to learn more about domestic violence. We were super excited."

Kurland asked people to raise their hands if they had a daughter, sister, grand daughter or niece or great-niece. Kurland's point was that everyone in the room knows somebody who is a victim of domestic violence.

"The statistics are alarming," she said. "Every nine seconds, a woman in the United States is being or assaulted. One in every four women will be a victim of domestic violence in her lifetime. One in five women in college will be a

victim of sexual assault, a form of dating violence. One in three women in junior high or high school, will be a victim of physical, verbal or emotional abuse from a dating partner."

Kurland wanted the women attending the luncheon to leave with ideas they could do to make a difference in preventing domestic violence and dating violence.

Kurland told the story about the hairstylist whose boyfriend beat her up because she was out with her girlfriends. Kurland told the audience about a woman who had been beaten in a store.

"This is truly a silent epidemic," Kurland said. "It's a desire to kill a woman's confidence or self-esteem or whatever it takes to have complete control over her. It does happen to men, but overwhelmingly women are the victims and men are the perpetrators."

There are six categories of domestic violence and dating violence: physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, financial and digital.

"The digital is the monster that keeps getting bigger because of social media," Kurland said. "We've got the emailing, texting and sexting and everyone of those is the perpetrator's dream."

According to Kurland, police officers have told her that digital abuse is worse in junior high school. Young boys have been known to send out text messages to

See WINGS page 8a

NWLE students learn about journalism from Courier Herald reporters



Northwest Laurens Elementary School students in Laura Sanders' fifth grade class learned about journalism during a visit Thursday from Courier Herald Senior Reporter Payton Towns III and Staff Writer Kelly Lenz. The class was given copies of Thursday's newspaper and magazines recently published by The Courier Herald. (Photo by Payton Towns III)

WINGS



Photo by Payton Towns III

Lipstick donated for admission to the luncheon will be handed out to women at the WINGS shelter.

Continued from 1a

more than one young girl asking for sexy pictures. They take the pictures and embarrass the young girls.

"This is what's going on," Kurland said. Kurland asked for participants to go to her website at findyourfabulosity.org, and click on a link with the question, "Am I Being Abused?" She said there are 72 different behaviors typical of someone abusing someone.

"I encourage you to use it," she said. "This is a comprehensive checklist. People know they are in a relationship that is not right and that is very, very unhealthy." A dating violence relationship becomes more and more isolated over time and most victims do not realize it, Kurland said.

"They keep buying into it," she said. "The woman feels really stuck."

Domestic violence is similar, Kurland talked about a family member who seem to have the perfect marriage.

"One day she told me that she was scared for her life," Kurland said. "She said she could not get out of the relationship because she was a stay at home mom and if she reported him he would be arrested. The number one reason for homelessness in women is domestic violence."

She eventually divorced her husband, who was an attorney. The woman lost everything, but got her life back.

"She's a true survivor," Kurland said.

The speaker wanted the women in the audience to remember that they are "fabulous."

"When you feel fabulous, you feel a strong sense of self-esteem and confidence that you can wade off the negative," Kurland said. "You get the strength you need to fight and say, 'I won't be the victim.'"

While doing workshops, Kurland came across the idea of giving out lipsticks to women who are victims of domestic violence.

"I wanted these women to feel like women again," she

said. "I went and bought a whole bunch of lipstick at Walmart. At the end of the workshop, I gave them lipstick as a thank you gift, telling them to pick out any color they wanted."

What happened next surprised her. "The energy of the room completely transformed into positivity," Kurland said. "They all helped each other pick out the right color. They were laughing and having fun. The woman in them showed up. That's what I call fabulosity."

This has continued to occur at every workshop. It led to Kurland starting Find Your Fabulosity, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Thursday's luncheon was free for every woman who donated lipstick.

"With all of the lipstick you brought today, will make an amazing difference in the women who will receive them," Kurland said. "These will stay here with WINGS and be given to the women there. That's super awesome."

Kurland said victims of domestic violence and dating violence need to know they deserve better than what is happening to them.

"You have to be the one to make a decision," Kurland said. "You deserve a really good healthy life. There is no reason for anyone to violate you. It is not your fault and you are not to blame. You could never do anything bad enough that's worthy of the violence you are experiencing."

Kurland urged those who are in a violent relationship, to call WINGS at 478-275-5880.

"The advocates they have working at the shelter are amazing," she said. "They are available 24/7. You don't have to be ready to go to a shelter or willing to get out of a relationship. The advocates are trained to meet you where you are emotionally. You have to be the one to reach out and get help. You are not stuck and you are not to blame. You can have a safe free life."

Sometimes other women

knows another woman is being abused. Kurland went over some the signs, which includes a change in behavior, a change in doing things or a change in their appearance.

"You can tell that they are not the same and they may not be able to focus like she used to," Kurland said. "It may be that her demeanor is sad. You need to reach out to them and tell them you are concerned."

Kurland encouraged the women to take some of her Fabulosity cards that has the national domestic violence hotline number on it.

"If someone tells you they are being abused, believe them," Kurland said. "Women just don't say those words for no reason."

Kurland brought back up the hairstylist who told her she was being abused. Kurland took action by calling the national domestic violence hotline.

"I found the names of the shelters in that area," she said. "I wrote down all the information."

Kurland bought a card and left the information for the hairstylist.

"I went back and gave her the envelope," she said. "I didn't expect to hear from her anymore. I got a text message telling me, 'that was the nicest and sweetest thing someone has done for me in a long time. I'm crying tears right now. Thank you so much for reaching back and caring. I can't tell you how much this means to me.'"

"In doing these things, you may not know how much you are making a difference," Kurland added. "Just know that you are making a difference."

Continued from 1a

to help look after these kids," Garren said. The DPCS Services is overworked and overwhelmed.

"These volunteers help out," Garren said. "I never thought I'd do this for 12 years. It was something I was asking to volunteer for and see what it was like. Once you do it and see that child reunited with their parents or adopted out, it is kind of addictive after that."

Lila Weatherly calls herself a newbie, having completed her training in 2016. Weatherly, who is retired, was going to become a volunteer with her son.

"He had to drop out," Weatherly said. "I talked with Marie and went on and joined. A lady in our church was active in CASA and she told me that they needed volunteers really badly. I felt like I needed to give back because I've been so blessed in my life."

Andrea Craft has been with CASA for a year and a half. When she stopped working, she wanted to give back to the community.

"Children are my passion, and CASA is that avenue," Craft said. "It's sad, but we are able to give a voice to the children who are in the foster system. So far, I haven't had any happy reunions or adoptions yet. That part is hard, but I feel like these children deserve to be in a safe and loving home."

Alan Yauk has helped with the yard at CASA for the last 10 years. He has been an advocate for the last two or three years.

"I enjoy working with the kids," Yauk said. "It's tough sometimes and heartbreaking. I don't think people realize the situations these kids are going through. I think people hear about it at church and I really hope they will become volunteers and help these kids."

Yauk said opioids are the biggest problem currently.

CASA

"I don't think people really know what these kids are going through and what they have to put up with," he said.

Annie Graddy has been volunteering with CASA for 18 years.

"I was stuck with it once I got involved," Graddy said. "I've seen some good outcomes and some bad ones."

Of course, Graddy enjoys the good outcomes.

"I had one child grow up and go off into the service," she said. "That made me so proud."

Suzanne Cole retired and joined CASA three years ago.

"I wanted to do something in my community and this spoke to me," Cole said. "You don't know what is out there until you get out there. That first hug from a child means the world to me."

Cole was very surprised when she got into cases.

"You don't know it until you actually see it," she said. "There have been tears in the courtroom and I've seen a child adopted. Some cannot go back with their parents and that can be very emotional. As an advocate, you are affecting a child for the rest of their life. You are shaping that child's future."

Mary Thomas has been with CASA for 17 years. Her goal is to reunite the children with their parents.

"I've seen it go either way," she said. "At the end of the day though, it's all about the child. No matter what the child is going through, they love their parents. We've got to do what is in the best interest of the child. The parents understand that I'm working for the child. We have to make sure the child returns to a safe environment and a good home."

Sandy Cox has been a CASA volunteer for five years. Cox hopes to make life better for the children in her cases.

"I like trying to make the best choices for children and help the court out," Cox said.

"It's very worthwhile and a very rewarding experience to see the kids get a home."

Courtney Nelson has been with CASA as an intern. She started in January and finished a few weeks ago.

"It was an eye-opening experience," Nelson said. "The people in the organization makes you feel included, and they are really ready to help."

Nelson is thinking about becoming a volunteer.

"I got to see some of the cases," she said.

Sarah Smith is close to becoming a new volunteer for CASA.

"I just have a few more courtroom hours and I'll be sworn in," Smith said. "I'm looking forward to it. I always wanted to be involved with that children and I have a background in the legal field. I stay home with my daughter now and I thought this was a way to help children. I'm looking forward to getting my first case."

Townsend said another training class will be starting soon. Part of the training is online, while the other part is called in-person training. Volunteers have to go through 10 hours of courtroom observation before being sworn in by the juvenile court judge to advocate for a child.

"You have to be 21 years old or over and have a clean background check," Townsend said. "Once all of that is done, they can be sworn in as an advocate."

Anyone interested in volunteering for CASA can call Darard at 478-275-8100, ext. 2.

"We definitely need more," Townsend said. "Unfortunately, we are picking up more children to bring them into foster care. Without volunteers, we can't do what we do."

Cox said it is worth becoming a volunteer.

"You are helping a child," she said. "Their lives will hopefully be more productive one day because of this."

Explosion rocks Wisconsin refinery, forcing evacuations

SUPERIOR, Wis. (AP) — An explosion rocked a refinery in northwestern Wisconsin on Thursday, injuring at least 11 people, forcing the evacuation of homes, schools and a hospital, and sending a plume of noxious smoke into the air.

Authorities said a tank containing crude oil or asphalt exploded at the Husky Energy oil refinery in Superior, a city of about 27,000 that borders Minnesota and the westernmost tip of Lake Superior.

That prompted them to order the evacuation of a three-mile (five-kilometer) radius around the refinery, as well as a 10

mile (16 kilometer) corridor south of it where the smoke was heading.

It was unclear how many people were being evacuated. The refinery is in an industrial area, but there's a residential neighborhood within a mile to the northeast. The corridor downwind to the south of the refinery is sparsely populated.

There were no reported deaths, but at least 11 people were injured, including one person who was seriously hurt. They were being treated at hospitals in Superior and nearby Duluth, Minnesota.

Fire officials said the explo-

sion happened around 10 a.m. and the fire was extinguished by 11:20 a.m., though the plant was still smoking. Superior police later tweeted that the fire had reignited and urged residents living within the evacuation area to leave. Police blocked roads into the area around the refinery.

Three schools and St. Mary's Hospital in Superior were being evacuated as a precaution.

Essentia Health spokeswoman Maureen Talarico said five people injured in the explosion are being treated at St. Mary's Medical Center, a Level II trauma center in Duluth.

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