

EDITORIAL

Screenings save lives

A new report from the American Cancer Society has shown that although breast, cervical, and colon screenings can detect cancers sooner and potentially save lives, the number of people getting their recommended screenings is still low. The report also shows that out of those getting screened many still may not be following the recommended schedule — allowing potential cancers to go undetected longer.

Since 2000, the ACS says the rate of screening for breast and cervical cancers has stayed about the same, while the rate of colorectal cancer screening has increased, though not as fast as experts had hoped.

Some of the most common screening methods for detecting cancers are:

Mammograms—an x-ray of the breast used to detect breast changes in women who have no signs or symptoms of breast cancer. It usually involves two x-rays of each breast. Mammograms make it possible to detect tumors that cannot be felt and can also find tiny deposits of calcium in the breast that sometimes indicate the presence of breast cancer. Only about 60 percent of women ages 40 to 64 get regular mammograms. For women over the age of 65, the percentage drops.

Pap Smears—a test that checks for changes in the cells of a woman's cervix. The test is used to look for changes in the cells of the cervix that show cervical cancer or conditions that may develop into cancer. Women should start getting Pap smears at age 20.

Colonoscopies—an outpatient procedure during which men and women's large bowel (colon and rectum) is examined from the inside. Colonoscopies are usually used to evaluate symptoms like abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, or changes in bowel habits. They are used to screen for colorectal cancer. Only about 50 percent of men and women ages 50 to 64 and 57 percent of those older than 65 have regular colonoscopies.

The ACS has reported that the number of men and women in the United States dying from cancer has dropped for the first time since 1998.

Talk to your physician as soon as possible to discuss screenings for cancer. It's never too early to take all the necessary precautions.

Citizen of the Week

By Carrie Compton

Maya Davis turns her spring break into a springboard for giving back to the less fortunate.

With spring break ending on March 8 for Rosemont College students, many of the pupils returned from sunny destinations, and freshman Maya Davis was no different. But, while California may qualify as a sunny and posh vacation spot, Davis' weeklong stint volunteering in south central Los Angeles was anything but luxurious.

Davis and five other students accompanied by two program coordinators participated in the outreach-oriented alternative spring break, a collaboration of the three ministries of the Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, Rosemont College, Response-Ability, and the South Central Los Angeles Ministry Project (LAMP).

"I first heard about [the alternative spring break] in the first month of school. They had a club fair and the campus ministry had a table and they mentioned the alternative spring break," Davis said.

From the beginning she was excited about the prospect of volunteering even though she knew the trip wouldn't be free.

For the week of her spring break, Davis and four other volunteers had a new set of responsibilities each day, doing everything from filing papers at inner-city Catholic schools to helping out at inner-city preschools.

"We went to LAMP and they have a program that has baby-sitting, preschool and programs for school-aged kids ... they also do programs that brings families together. It's geared toward Hispanic communities and it also helps with acclimating those families to the U.S. school system. For instance, in Mexico, it's not an A through F system at school, it's one through 10, so families have to learn how to read report cards and they help with things like that."

On another day, Davis and her fellow volunteers helped to organize a fundraising yard sale and on another day some of them helped paint a nature scene at one of the parochial schools where the group volunteered. But of all the volunteering experiences, Davis was the most touched by her time helping out at LAMP.

"My favorite day was when I worked at LAMP — working with toddlers. I thought it was the most rewarding experience — playing with them and being interactive," Davis said.

Even though the days of doing volunteer work were full of giving



Maya Davis, of Blue Bell, took her hard-earned time and money and donated her spring break by helping others in South Central Los Angeles.

back to those in need, Davis found time to see and do inspirational activities, even on her free day.

"On our free day we went to Homegirl Café, a division of Homeboy Industries, which is a program to help ex-gang members get out of the cycle and get jobs. It started as a program out of church and now they have Homegirl Bakery with state-of-the-art equipment."

"It was very inspiring to see how a small program started by one man could expand and help so many people and it really did help the East Los Angeles community and it gives people a new way of life. 'Nothing stops a bullet like a job' — that's their slogan and it's exactly what they do and what they give — it was very inspirational," Davis said.

The alternative spring break left a definitive imprint on Davis, and she said the experience showed her, above all, the dire need for education reform.

"[The trip] changed my outlook on education. I always thought education was important, but when I went to these schools, in reality, there really needs to be a huge reform in America. Even in these parochial schools there were way too many kids in the classroom, and it seems like even Catholic schools need it, so I can only imagine what a public classroom looks like," Davis said.

"There needs to be a lot done to increase the level of education in American children."

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A Great Newspaper Since 1883
 Published by Montgomery Newspapers
 290 Commerce Drive
 Fort Washington, PA 19034
 Telephone: 215-542-0200
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DOMO ARIGATO ... On the weekend of March 7 and 8 The Wissahickon High School Robotics Team took the San Diego Regional Championship by storm and came home with 3 trophies! Not only WHS win on the field of play, but they also displayed gracious professionalism in the heat of competition. The FIRST Robotics Philadelphia Regional to be held next week at Temple's Liacourus Center, on March 20 and 21 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., each day -- public is welcome!

Letters

Cultural events are right around the corner

To the Editor:

In January my husband and I attended the opera season opener at La Scala, Milan, Verdi's "Don Carlos." In February we went to the Salzburg Festival's production of Mozart's "Don Giovanni." No airfares, hotel rooms, or expensive tickets — just a three-mile ride from home to Amblertown's Sunday afternoon opera series. Free parking, comfortable seats, much better views than in an opera house, and best of all, glorious singing — not a disappointment in either opera.

The one odd thing was that most in the audience were seniors. It seems to me this series would be a golden opportunity to introduce musical young people to opera. The March opera is Puccini's "Il Trittico," three one-act operas, including a comedy. In April the opera is Verdi's "Rigoletto," filled with melodic arias and lots of action — again a good introduction to musical theater. So let's show that our community will support a premier cultural event like this.

Tickets (\$26) are available at the box office (215-646-2550) or at the door. Seats are first come - first served.

Nancy McKelvie
 Dresher

Our economic mess was created by many

To the Editor:

I found Mr. Cooley's last letter interesting, but he seems to have missed a few points. President Bush came into office also facing a recession and then had to deal with Sept. 11.

After getting through all that, the economy was growing. The problem didn't present itself until two years ago, when the Democrats took over congress. This was a time when everyone was jubilant that more Americans owned homes than ever before and they all took credit.

Then there was the problem with Fannie Mae, when in December 2004, the head of Fannie

Mae, Franklin Raines, took "early retirement" after being caught inflating income to increase bonuses for him and other executives. Franklin Raines held positions in both the Carter and Clinton administrations. According to an article in *Business Week*, Howard Gleckman wrote: he "launched an overhaul of the way loans were originated, targeting the reams of paper that accompany home loans. He was convinced that streamlining the process could cut costs by more than one-third and trim approval times from weeks to hours." Now we all know what happened to Fannie Mae!

Now let's take a look at others that held management positions at Fannie Mae. Vice-Chair Jamie Gorelick, also part of the Clinton administration and, as some believe created "the single greatest structural cause for Sept.11 was the wall that segregated criminal investigators and intelligence agents" through a March 1995 memo. And Herb Moses, a former partner of Barney Frank. Moses, was an executive at Fannie from

1991 to 1998, where Moses helped develop many of Fannie's affordable housing and home improvement lending programs. In 1991, Frank pushed for reduced restrictions on two- and three-family home mortgages. Now what do you think happens when you reduce mortgage restrictions?

And maybe, if all the politicians paid their taxes, we wouldn't have a deficit.

I not saying that President Bush did everything right, but to single him out is just wrong. The problem rests with all of them and it's about time we, the people, hold them responsible for their actions and if they don't do their jobs, why do we re-elect them?

A possible solution would be to take their platform and at the end of their term, if they haven't lived up to their promises, they can't run again. Also, Congress should have limits and either all the perks should be taken away or taxed, just like we are.

John Szostak
 Dresher

Write to us

We welcome letters to The Amblertown Gazette, and ask readers to respect these guidelines.

- Letters must be typed and must include the author's full name. The Amblertown Gazette will not consider letters that do not provide the author's full name.
- Letters should not be longer than 350 words.
- A phone number and address must be included for verification. The Amblertown Gazette reserves the right to request proof of identification.
- The Amblertown Gazette reserves the right to reject letters or edit their content. Anything suspected of being a form letter will be rejected.
- Letters should be addressed to The Amblertown Gazette, 290 Commerce Drive, Fort Washington, PA 19034; faxed to 215-643-9475; or e-mailed to gazette@montgomerynews.com.

Looking back to 1993

The following stories were reported in the Gazette March 24, 1993

•Blue Bell fourth-graders no longer take pen to paper when completing writing assignments for Mrs. Slater's class, they take finger to keyboard. Slater's classroom is the first in the district to house five computers in an attempt to integrate technology into the classroom.

•Chief Parole Officer Edward Jones, 45, was shot in the back by parolee Julius Dotson when Dotson tried to flee during an argument with Jones. After shooting the officer, Dotson tried to flee the scene but was shot by a county detective. Dotson is suspected in involvement with four recent post office robberies.