 ZZ Packer

BY ALLISON MILES

Published author, Ivy League grad, award-winner and more, these are just some of the titles that describe Austin-based writer ZZ Packer.

And, on Dec. 5, some Crossroads students got to hear from her first-hand.

Packer delivered the keynote address at the University of Houston-Victoria’s winter commencement ceremony in Katy.

Packer’s presentation, which was peppered with humor, urged audience members to look at common advice from a different perspective, said Margaret Rice, UHV’s chief of staff.

“I would say she was a role model almost for anyone in the audience,” Rice said. “Young women, African-Americans, all of us who have goals we want to accomplish. She was just an inspiration.”

Packer’s book “Drinking Coffee Elsewhere” earned the writer numerous honors, being selected as a New York Times Notable Book of 2004, a “Today Show Book Club” selection by John Updike, a Commonwealth First Fiction Award and more, according to a UHV news release.

Her stories have appeared in numerous publications, including The New Yorker, Harper’s, Best American Short Stories and others who want to give back.

“The other’s a full-time Realtor, Sheriff, protecting citizens from harm. The other’s a full-time Realtor, constantly on the go. Yes, although T. Michael and LuAnn O’Connor’s dizzying schedules might leave little time to rest, they still find time to give back.

And as co-chairs for the 2012 Sweetheart Charity Ball – for their second consecutive year - on Valentine’s Day they’ll be doing just that.

The husband-wife duo first became involved in the fundraiser in 2011, when approached by event organizers. It was the charity ball’s goal – to benefit the Food Bank of the Golden Crescent – that first caught LuAnn O’Connor’s eye.

Previous work with United Way had afforded her a first-hand look at the food bank and its inner workings, she explained, and of the assistance it offers the region. After the Sheriff got a look himself, the couple was sold on helping out.

“It was pretty convincing,” he said of the organization, which he said receives 99 percent of its good through donation. “It’s a big operation. They need funds and personnel to keep up with the intake and distribution. It’s a really good cause.”

Second Chance Boxing Club

The rhythmic thunder of gloves meeting punching bag filled the Second Chance Boxing Club/Outkast Boxing as boys of all ages prepared to take it to the ring.

But that repetitive beat wasn’t the sound of misplaced aggression, or even of a simple workout. It was the sound of promise.

Miguel Loya began the organization nine years ago, shortly after his son took up the sport. The endeavor was a chance to provide a positive outlet for Victoria youth.

“Our doors are open to anybody who’s willing to try,” he said. “We do have some problem kids who get in trouble, but we want to be a positive influence.”

Fourteen-year-old Jacob Flores has been part of the club on and off for several years. He said his family encourages his involvement not only for the athletic benefits, but because it helps him stay on track.

“They were worried about me being out in the streets with my friends,” he said amid his workout. “But ever since I came back to the gym, I’ve been dedicated. I’m keeping out of trouble and keeping up my grades.”

Good influences or not, the organization still faces obstacles. Students pay $20 a month to participate, but no one is turned away if they can’t pay. That makes coming up with monthly rent and paying for various trips a challenge.

The gym has moved to lower-rent locations and the coaches give what they can, Loya said, and help comes from other area sponsors who want to give back.

Dr. Tywaun Tillman began his affiliation with the gym when a
The mission of Voices United Publication of Victoria: “To Inform & Inspire” students to stay in school and strive for excellence in the classroom and beyond! School “Drop-out” is not simply a Golden Crescent problem, it is a National problem. TV commercials run throughout National Basketball Association (NBA) games urging students to stay in school. The NBA is to be commended for its investment as they join VISD, BISD, Golden Crescent ISD’s and private institutions in this effort.

This issue highlights African American Heritage Month, Food Bank of the Golden Crescent Sweetheart Charity Ball, Your Health, Student Excellence, and Golden CASA.


Packer is a creative writing professor in the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa and has taught at numerous other universities.

She obtained a bachelor’s degree from Yale University in 1994, a Masters Degree from Johns Hopkins University in 1995, an M.F.A. from Stanford University in 1999, and she was named a Stegner Fellow in Fiction at the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa.

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I saw it as something very positive for the community,” Tillman said. “These are kids who are learning a sport. They’re dedicated. Both the boxing and mentoring aspect are very positive.”

All in all, Loya said he plans to continue on with his work, coaching area youth and, hopefully, making a difference.

“It’s a struggle,” he said. “It’s tough. But we’re going to keep going. We’re doing it for the kids.”

For more information on the boxing club, or to donate to the cause, call 361-218-3657.
They might not reside in a 100-room mansion, and they never strove for fame, but for Victoria residents Sam and Carolyn Sumter, that’s just fine. They’re prouder, instead, to have taken up their place in the American dream.

The South Carolina natives had their differences—a city boy who led his football and basketball teams to state and a valedictorian/musician who grew up on a farm—but shared key traits, too.

Both worked hard, enjoyed school and moved on to college. Sam earned a bachelor’s degree in health and physical education at Tennessee State University and Carolyn obtained an associate’s degree, and later moved on to Benedict College, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration.

While the duo met during Carolyn’s time at Benedict, it wasn’t the only benefit school offered.

The first in both of their immediate families to complete college, they said they knew an education was the only way to achieve the lives they aspired to.

“College is just so important. Just getting by isn’t enough,” Carolyn said, noting that, even today, she strives to constantly experience new things and take in information. “The learning never ends. I’m a firm believer in that.”

The two moved to Delaware after Carolyn was offered a job with DuPont’s corporate offices and, in 1975, were married. They made their way to Texas when Carolyn was transferred to the company’s Victoria plant and became what she believes to be the plant’s first-ever black, female employee in a salaried position.

Sam, meanwhile, began his time in Victoria at the Devereux Foundation and, later, both taught and coached for the Victoria Independent School District. Afterward, he moved on to Dow Chemical, formerly known as Union Carbide.

Both Sam and Carolyn retired after 32 years with their respective companies, but their work didn’t end there. Even after retirement, they continue giving back.

They volunteer their time to Christ’s Kitchen and also to Mt. Nebo Missionary Baptist Church, where Sam is a deacon and serves on church auxiliaries and Carolyn serves as financial secretary. Carolyn also works as a HOSTS mentor for the Victoria school district and participates in Women in Partnership for Progress.

The family’s success doesn’t end with Mom and Dad, however. Their daughter, Adrian, and son, Mike have also worked to leave their mark on the world.

Both kept active in student and church organizations and graduated high school with honors. They went on to Texas A&M University, where Adrian obtained a master’s degree in accounting and Mike in management. They live in Houston today and, although they work in different divisions, are both employed by GE.

Sam and Carolyn attribute their family’s achievements to several things. A strong network of family and friends helped, they said, as well as communication with their children and the belief that, with a bit of hard work, anything is possible. Above all, however, comes their relationship with God.

“It’s amazing,” Sam said. “God has a way of getting you in the places you need to be. You just have to work toward what He has in mind for you. He is where we get our strength to do the things that we’ve done.”
Voting is a sacred right

BY SANDRA McKENZIE

More than 300 people participated in the Martin Luther King March and Celebration on January 16, 2012, in Victoria, Texas. The participants met at St. Mary’s Catholic Church and walked to Webster First United Methodist Church. While they walked, the participants, in honor of Dr. King, lifted their voices in joyful harmony, singing hymns of praise to God.

Sandra Avery, president and founder of the Old Landmark Committee, or “Miss Avery” as she is known to her friends and the community, organized the celebration. Avery arranged for ministers, speakers, singers and dancers to inspire, teach and remind of the strides accomplished by the civil rights movement led in part by Dr. Martin Luther King. Avery is a beloved and selfless community leader who devotes much of her life helping those in need.

In an inspired style of worship, the talented praise team dancers of Webster First United Methodist Church and of Mount Nebo Baptist Church, danced to beautiful Inspirational music. Willord Simmons performed a solo praise dance. Superb gospel singers – as talented as any on the national stage joined the celebration and included soloists Dorothy Cunningham, Joyce Snell, Rev. Patrick Henry, pianist Audrey Jones, and the Washington Street Boys.

Besides the singing and dancing, there were sermons given by Rev. Zettie Woodson, Rev. Claude Prince, Rev. Maurice Cashmere, and Rev. Terrence Hayes.

Allen Simmons spoke about the bravery of Ruby Bridges – the young girl who was one of the first children to participate in integration.

Miss Avery asked me to give a historical perspective about Martin Luther King and what motivated the original freedom marches of the 1960s. It was an honor to be asked to participate. I saw the Alabama freedom marches as a young girl, in 1965 and 1966, when my family traveled through Alabama from Texas to Virginia.

We were moving to Virginia from Texas, where my father, an Educator, was to found the Virginia community college system. I thought about what I witnessed in our travels – I saw people of all races and faiths joined together – marching for equal rights and the belief that if people join together they can make the world a better place.

My witness of these marches changed my life and deepened my understanding that all persons must have equal treatment under the law. Dr. King and the freedom marchers worked, not just to abolish segregation, but to insure for all Americans equality and justice, in the courts, in education, at work, in hospitals and in the voting booth.

And, for Martin Luther King, voting was sacred. He believed that the only path to real and lasting equality would come through the ballot box. Dr. King said that “the whole campaign in Alabama had been centered around the right to vote.”

He believed that civil rights without the right to vote was “dignity without strength” and said, “Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights.” American voters can take a lesson from Dr. King: Vote – it is a sacred right and strength.

Participate in your local community – and through respect of the rule of law and peaceful community participation - justice and equality will be realized. And remember, your words and deeds will make a difference to a small child who, unknown to you, learns a great lesson from your actions and participation.
Lauren Clark

Lauren Clark is a 19-year-old sophomore at the University of Houston-Victoria who has captured the respect of faculty and students alike. Her leadership skills are evident in the classroom and extracurricular activities.

A graduate of Lawrence E. Elkins High School in Missouri City, she excelled in both athletics and academics. Now in college, she maintains a 3.5 GPA while serving as speaker of the Student Senate and resident assistant at Jaguar Hall.

Her position with the senate is one she cherishes, as it allows her to be the voice of the student population. Clark’s speaking skills, attention to detail and level-headed approach to problem-solving make her the perfect fit for the job.

Clark’s role at Jaguar Hall allows her to help ensure student residents are comfortable and confident as they experience life on campus and in Victoria. It’s a challenge she said she’s happy to accept.

Throughout her time at UHV, Clark has achieved numerous accomplishments. Those include the Spirit of the Jaguar Award and scholarship, which was based on a written essay, and the Face of the Jaguar Pledge Marketing campaign.

She has also served as fundraising chair for the National Honor Society for Leadership and Success and was the first president of the Jaguar Hall Community Council.

Margaret Rice, UHV’s chief of staff, said Clark has demonstrated herself to be a leader since her freshman year.

“Her enthusiasm is contagious. She’s just an outstanding student,” Rice said. “She is an example of a student who comes to Victoria not only to enhance her university, but the community, too.”

The first to attend college in her immediate family, Clark is the daughter of proud parents Roy and Pam Clark.

Bre’Neka “Shorty” O’Bryant

From classes to practice, to meeting and more, go-getter Bre’Neka O’Bryant can tell you a thing or two about handling a busy schedule.

The only catch? If you want to hear about it, you have to catch her if you can.

The 22-year-old Huntsville native graduated Huntsville High School in 2007 in the top 25 percent of her class.

A lifelong athlete, she lettered in basketball and softball her sophomore through senior years and was voted “most athletic” among her classmates.

Other sports-related honors included honorable mention and academic all-district her sophomore year in basketball and, in softball, honorable mention and academic all-district her sophomore through senior years.

O’Bryant didn’t just sparkle on the courts and ball diamonds, however. She was also selected for homecoming court all four years of high school and crowned homecoming queen her senior year.

She moved on to Blinn Junior College, where her softball skills earned her a partial scholarship, and later transferred to the University of Houston-Victoria. Today, she plays outfield for the Jaguar softball team.

It isn’t all about the athletics, however. O’Bryant and her fellow teammates participate in HOSTS, a mentoring program that allows her one-on-one time to help a Victoria student each week. She also serves as vice president for the UHV Student Senate, an organization she’s taken part in for two years.

Her high grades – she’s had a place on the dean’s list for the past five semesters – earned her spots on two honor societies, Psi Chi and Gamma Beta Phi.

See O’BRYANT, pg 15
Abbie J. Barnett

Abbie James Barnett is assistant principal at Victoria West High School. He has served 14 years in education, working as a teacher and coach.

A Cuero High School graduate, Barnett was junior and senior class president before moving on to Sam Houston State University with a full football scholarship. There, he was an all-conference football player, a member of the all-academic team and also a participant Bearkat track.

Barnett graduated with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and moved on to the University of Houston-Victoria, earning a master’s degree in instructional leadership and supervision.

See BARNETT, pg 7

Leandra L. Hill

Victoria native Leandra L. Hill is assistant principal at FW Gross Montessori Elementary School.

She graduated Stroman High School in 1986 and moved on to Tyler Junior College with a basketball scholarship. After obtaining a full basketball scholarship to Tyler’s Texas College, she transferred schools and earned a bachelor’s degree in political science.

Several years later, Hill enrolled at the University of Houston-Victoria. There, she obtained a master’s degree in administration and supervision.

A former special education teacher and coach at Patti Welder Middle School, Hill has served as an educator with the Victoria Independent School District for 35 years.

See L. HILL, pg 7

Janice McMurray

Janice McMurray is a content learning facilitator at Hopkins Academy. She has served as an educator with the Victoria Independent School District for 35 years.

The Victoria native graduated Stroman High School and moved on to Texas A&M University-Kingsville, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education.

She went on to obtain a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction from Phoenix, Ariz.’s Grand Canyon University.

McMurray began her teaching career in 1977 at William Wood Elementary School and, through the years, taught grades one through three. She later took on a coordinating role with HOSTS, a reading program.

See McMURRAY, pg 7

Tedrick O. Valentine

Tedrick O. Valentine is interim principal for Victoria’s Mitchell Guidance Center.

A Houston native and Stroman High School graduate, Valentine earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from Austin’s Huston-Tilloston University. He later moved on to the University of Houston-Victoria, where he obtained a master’s degree in mid-management.

While his loved ones always stressed the importance of a good education, Valentine was still the first grandchild on both sides of the family to complete both high school and college.

“During the years of your life, you can carry a heavy burden when you’re trying to be the first,” he said. “It felt great to actually make it. It really was a

See VALENTINE, pg 7
McMURRAY, from pg. 6

for at-risk students in Victoria.
In her current role, McMurray works to enhance the educational environment and help students reach their full potential. That includes teacher trainings, analyzing student performance data, working with campus personnel and more.

Her job is an important one, as she strives to keep students actively involved in the learning process. When children leave their school careers behind, she said, they should carry with them classroom memories they can apply to everyday life and an eagerness to continue learning.

“I want to make them learners for life,” she said, explaining she still remembers the teachers she had growing up who went that extra mile. “It’s all about building relationships and working with them, giving them what they need to succeed.”

Away from the classroom, McMurray enjoys singing and remains active at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, where she serves as director for all of the church’s five choirs.

“While the longtime educator said she’s enjoyed the life she’s led the past three and-a-half decades, changes lie ahead. She will retire at the school year’s end.

“I’m sure I’ll miss it. It’s been very, very enjoyable,” she said, noting there are some students she’s taught whose children went on to join her classroom. “I really cared about my students. I still do. I always will.”

McMurray is married to Fleming McMurray. Together they have two children: Shyra and Christopher.

BARNETT, from pg. 6

Afterward, Barnett began as an adult probation officer in Victoria. It was then that he realized he wanted to reach young people before they got wrapped up in the legal system.

“I’d been invited to Stroman High School to speak with kids, motivate them and let them know there were positive things out there,” he said explaining it was just one of many instances that influenced his decision. “When I returned to my probation job, I noticed a couple of kids I’d talked to ended up on probation. Once you get tangled in there, it’s hard to get out.”

Barnett entered education as a coach, offering not only athletic training, but advice and attention his students needed. With 11 siblings of his own, he said he knew the importance of that one-on-one interaction, and knew that kids could take creative—not necessarily positive -measures to obtain it if necessary. He enjoys knowing he has made a difference in students’ lives and believes everyone can reach their life goals. All it takes is belief in themselves, he said, although a strong support system helps.

“Kids need someone who will push them to work harder, stay out of trouble and expose them to things like college campus visits and the like.”

“It’s all about asking yourself, ‘What can I do to help those kids do better?’” he said. “I’m a believer that, if you’re not helping somebody, you’re wasting your time. I don’t think we were put here to just be about ourselves.”

Barnett is married to Paye, his wife of 19 years, and the couple has three daughters: 14-year-old Erica Ronshell, 9-year-old Abbie Javarn and 4-year-old Imani Jorday.

L. HILL, from pg. 6

Hill maintains a deep appreciation for education.

Knowledge is key in today’s global society, she said. And, whether through a formal classroom setting or practical lessons in day-to-day life, she said people are constantly learning.

“You have to,” she said. “Everything is always changing. Nothing stays the same. In order to stay on top of what’s going on around us, you have to take in that knowledge.”

Hill’s successes didn’t come by chance.

She credits them to both God and to her family, who instilled in her the idea that she could be and do anything she aspired to. She hopes to pass those same beliefs on to her daughter, Antaniah Hill, an eighth-grader at Howell Middle School.

“I did what I needed to show her that it’s possible. Nothing is impossible,” said Hill, explaining she encourages her daughter to be independent, but also provides support. “If you think it, you can dream it, you can achieve it.”

Hill is the daughter of Leander and Ruby Dean, of Victoria.

VALENTINE, from pg. 6

great sense of accomplishment.”

Valentine’s career in education began almost by chance, when he took what he believed would be a temporary substitute teaching job. A couple of months later, however, he realized the career was the right fit for him.

He began at Patti Welder Middle School and moved to an administrative role at the Memorial High School Stroman Campus. In Dec. 2010, he found his place at Mitchell.

He said he enjoys knowing he can make a difference in his students’ lives. Not only can he help academically, he said, but his life experiences mean he can help on a personal level, too.

Valentine’s father was never in his life, he explained, and people sometimes looked down on him because he grew up on an economically-disadvantaged part of town.

“I tell those kids my story and about where I came from,” he said. “For some of them, it really helps to have a positive male figure in their lives. I want them to know they can accomplish anything they want to, wherever they live, wherever they come from.”

Away from school he gives back to the community through his business, V Cutz Barber Shop, with free back-to-school cuts and the like.

Valentine is married to Angela Valentine, his wife of 12 years. Together, they have three children: 7-year-old Ashton, 5-year-old Austin and 3-year-old Avery.

Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church

WORSHIP TIMES
Sunday School .................. 9:00 AM
BTU ............................ 10:00 AM
Morning Worship ............ 11:00 AM
Sunday Evening Service ...... 7:00 PM
Monday Night Bible Study... 7:00 PM
Wednesday Night Service ... 7:00 PM
Youth Bible Study Wednesday ..7:00 PM

808 S. Navarro St. • Victoria, Texas 361.575.2949
www.mtcalvaryvictoria.net

UPCOMING EVENTS
Mother and Daughter Banquet
Saturday February 11, 2012 ~ 1-3PM
Guest Speaker: Sister Frances C. Worthey of Waco, Texas
Director of Women’s Ministry MBGCT
Black History Program
Sunday February 19, 2012 ~ 5PM
Guest Pastor: Rev. Dr. Freddie Fillmore
Northland Baptist Church, Houston, TX
Church Anniversary, Homecoming and Friends & Family Day
Sunday March 18, 2012 @ 10AM & 3PM
Guest Pastor: Rev. Lawrence G. Roy
Antioch Baptist Church, Cuero, Texas
Golden Crescent CASA: Speaking Up for Child Abuse Victims in 2012

BY TIM HORBACK
Executive Director Golden Crescent CASA

Last year there were over 70,000 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect in Texas. Imagine being one of those children in the foster care system, you are often disconnected from family members and placed with strangers. The faces that you see seem to constantly change. You might feel frightened and alone as many of the children we serve do.

This is when a Golden Crescent Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteer can help. Golden Crescent CASA trains volunteers to become a trusted presence in the life of the child and an adult voice to speak on behalf of the child’s best interests.

Our volunteers spend time connecting with the child, parents, other family members, school personnel, healthcare providers, and attorneys – everyone involved in the child’s life. CASA volunteers are trained to monitor and review school, medical, and caseworker reports. A Golden Crescent CASA volunteer speaks up for the child by providing reports to the court detailing the child’s needs and best interests.

Become a CASA Volunteer in 2012, become the voice for a child abuse victim; make a difference in a child’s life and your own!

What does it take to become a Golden Crescent CASA volunteer?
- Be over 21, men and women from all walks of life volunteer
- Have a desire to help children
- Keep an objective mind and have the ability to handle emotional situations with maturity
- Be aware of different cultures and ethnic sensitivity
- Have the commitment to complete our training
- Have your own transportation
- Be able to attend scheduled court hearings

The experience of helping a child is a rewarding one. You can make a difference. Golden Crescent CASA is currently seeking Volunteers. If interested, please call us today at (361) 573-3734.

His baby had a baby

BY DEBORAH BRANCH

I recently spoke with a father about a subject that is close to his heart. His daughter, before marriage, became pregnant and delivered her baby before she completed high school. When the initial shock passed and he was able to breathe normally, he dried his and his daughter’s tears, had a man-to-man discussion with the high school father-to-be, set aside the emotions and faced reality. With unaltering love, he made some promises to his daughter and himself. He would continue to support his daughter and his grandchild while his daughter and her boyfriend completed their education. His baby was having a baby and life as they knew it would no longer be the same.

The spiritual, financial, physical and mental support of the father helped to provide the wisdom that was needed by these teenagers at a crucial point in their lives. The father did not agree with the choices the teenagers made which put them in this position, but knew that the love he possessed would provide him with the strength to make the right decision. It was too late for blame. Decisions needed to be made without delay. His love for his daughter would not allow him to close the door on her when she needed him most. In many respects, he had to be the bigger man and the father that his child needed at a very important crossroad.

The “come to Jesus” conversations which the father had during the midnight hour were between him and God. The fears that his child would be ostracized; that all of the plans which he had for her would be forgotten; that she might give up on herself; that her choices in life would be limited; and that he had failed her by not giving her sufficient guidance to prevent this unplanned pregnancy.

The father was disappointed, but refused to allow the poor decisions of the past to govern their future. He put on his best face, prayed and tackled the challenges as they appeared. Fortunately for them, he was able to move away from “Stop.” Every day was a new day and brought new...
Kennon Dvorak is living the dream. After finishing his basic courses at Victoria College while playing for VC Pirates men's basketball team, Moulton High School graduate Dvorak transferred in the fall of 2010 to Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi to finish his bachelor's degree. He brought with him a 3.8 grade point average and a fierce determination to play Division I basketball with the Islanders.

Throughout the last three of the Islanders' games, he went from playing for a matter of seconds to several minutes, to earning himself a starting spot. In the Islanders' most recent game against the University of Texas-Arlington, Dvorak had 15 points, 3 rebounds and 3 steals.

Dvorak's walk on with the Islanders came at the start of this semester, but he began preparing long before then. Playing for VC gave him a better idea of how competitive it would be to play at the Division I level.

"While playing at VC, I got a look at what the college game was like and a feel for much faster play," he said. "It was different. We practiced every day and Coach Anderson always emphasized academics, so I gained some experience with how much work is involved."

After classes, study halls and homework, Dvorak made it a habit to spend extra time in the gym even before he made the team. Dvorak admits, however, that even after earning his walk-on spot, he was given no guarantee he would get to play.

"When I first made the team, I went to it with the mindset that I would work hard every day, help my teammates and stay focused on what I was expected to do for the team," said Dvorak.

Clearly, his dedication has not gone unnoticed. According to Dvorak, he earned a starting spot with TAMU-CC Islanders.

Dominique Ross

VC nursing student and Pirates women's basketball player Dominique Ross began playing basketball in 3rd grade and continued through her years at Memorial High School.

When asked what she loves about basketball, she answers that, in addition to her love for competition, she likes how playing basketball is a team effort.

"In basketball, you work as a team, and you win as a team," said Ross.

She said she feels as though the VC women's team has a good bond and all the players are on an equal level, with the added bonus that there isn't much drama among team members.

When she's not playing basketball, busy nursing student Ross can usually be found in a tutoring center on campus. She says she appreciates that there are tutors on hand to provide help when she needs it.

Inspired by her aunt who is a nurse at the Veterans Association Clinic, Ross is looking forward to earning her associate degree in nursing to become a registered nurse. Her goal is to help others while working as a nurse anesthetist. She also plans to continue her nursing education, possibly at the University of Houston-Victoria, to complete a bachelor's degree in nursing. And while she says she is willing to venture away from Victoria to work in a big city hospital, she wouldn't ever go too far away.

See DVORAK, pg 18
On June 16, 2012 at the LAX Airport Marriott Hotel in Los Angeles, California, Educating Young Minds Scholarship Awards Creator/Producer Oscar Hernandez-Perkins and Founder/Executive Director Angeles Echols will celebrate a 14 year collaboration in honor of academic excellence.

What started in a one-room apartment with two students and only $50.00 has blossomed into a multi-faceted and diverse organization that has touched the lives of many students.

Educating Young Minds is located at 3325 Wilshire Blvd. and now provides 12,000 sq. ft. of space and a state-of-the-art computer lab and library. Today over 300 students (grades K-12) from the greater Los Angeles region takes advantage of EYM’s educational programs and services.

EYM students have attended and/or graduated from colleges such as: Stanford, UC Berkeley, UCLA, USC, CalTech, Xavier, Syracuse, Dillard, Cornell and many more. Educating Young Minds now have over 100 students in major Universities around the Country and have given close to 1.5 Million in Scholarships in the last 14 years.

Executive Director Angeles Echols and Producer Oscar Hernandez-Perkins have every reason to smile, they have just given away over $100,000.00 in Scholarships at the 13th annual EYM celebration.
HOMETOWN PROS

Ronald “Ron” Gant

Ronald Edwin “Ron” Gant is a retired Major League baseball player who was born and reared in Victoria. He credits his athletic success to his father and mentor, George Gant, who introduced him to America’s pastime and encouraged him to practice, practice, practice.

It was apparent during Gant’s years at Victoria High School that the natural athlete’s baseball skills had developed to an outstanding level. The young man excelled in football, as well, and made all-conference at the cornerback position.

Major League scouts began making appearances at Gant’s games his freshman and sophomore years, he said, noting it was his parents – father George Gant and mother Alice Hardeman - who helped keep him grounded and focused while his athletic prowess was under the microscope.

“I tried to tell him not to focus on what was going on around him with the scouts and the TV cameras, but to fo-

See GANT, pg 18

David Atkins

David Atkins is a product of Victoria who has played and coached in the National Football League for 26 years. His athletic achievements came about through hard work, strong role models and a determination to move forward.

The aspiring athlete attended Patti Weider Middle School, where he first encountered Richard Ortiz, a teacher and eighth-grade football coach who took him under his wing. It was that bond that led the young Victorian to follow his dreams of becoming an educator and coach, as well.

Atkins trained hard in the sport he loved and maintained an outstanding football career at Victoria High School. He graduated in 1969 with a scholarship to attend the New Mexico Military Institute and, a year later, received a football scholarship to attend the University of Texas at El Paso.

In 1973 Atkins’ career surged to another level, when he was drafted by the San Francisco 49ers. He remained there until 1975, when he signed with the San Diego Chargers for two seasons. That same year, he completed his final semester of college, earning a bachelor’s degree in secondary education.

Thanks to a strict upbringing by Atkins’ mother, Viola Hicks, the young man grew up with a sense of discipline and focus that allowed him to attain goals.

See ATKINS, pg 18

Bruce W. Herron

From Bloomington High School to the NFL and on to corporate America, Bruce W. Herron is living proof that big dreams and hard work can take a person far.

A Victoria native with athletics in his blood, Herron participated – and excelled – in football, basketball, baseball, track and field. His abilities not only earned him recognition as an all-district performer in both basketball and football, but a full athletic scholarship to the University of New Mexico.

He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in communications and public relations, but had little time to rest once his coursework was over.

In 1977 he broke into the sports world when the NFL drafted him as a linebacker for the Miami Dolphins. He moved on to play for the Chicago Bears from 1978 to 1982, under the leadership of Neill Armstrong and “The Coach,” Mike Ditka.

Herron, who never expected to make it in athletics,
Peripheral Arterial Disease: Too Important to be Ignored
BY TYWAUN K. TILLMAN, MD, FACC
BOARD CERTIFIED INTERNAL MEDICINE

Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) is a circulatory disorder that occurs most commonly in people over the age of 50. PAD is caused by plaque formation inside the arteries with resulting narrowing which reduces blood flow to the affected limbs or organs. The term often refers to the arteries of the legs but may include any arteries not in the heart. However, it involves the same process of atherosclerosis that causes coronary artery disease and heart attacks.

The most significant risk factors for PAD are diabetes and smoking. Others include high blood pressure and high cholesterol. In addition genetic factors such as ethnicity, gender, and family history play a role. Smoking is the single most significant risk factor for developing PAD increasing the risk 9-fold while diabetes increases the risk 2 to 4-fold. Prevalence increases with age—10% of patients over the age of 50 have PAD. PAD also occurs more frequently in men than women, and African Americans are at higher risk than other ethnicities. PAD frequently goes undiagnosed despite its serious implications. This is partly because 60-70% of patients with this disease are pain management, and emotional and spiritual support. To that effect, Hospice of South Texas’s services are provided by an interdisciplinary team of professionals which includes two full-time medical directors, Dr. Tyson Meyer and Dr. Jennifer Gonzales, experienced RN’s, LVN’s, CNA’s, Social Workers, Chaplains, and trained volunteers.

The wishes of the patient and family are always considered. In this day and age there are many decisions to be made when it comes to healthcare, and one of those choices is end of life care. Although end of life care may be hard to discuss, it is very important that it be included as part of our conversations with family and physicians, as well as with those who need to be informed before a crisis arises. When a family is coping with a serious illness and a cure is no longer possible, the type of care most people say they want at the end of life is comfort, dignity and support, all of which are a part of what hospice care provides.

Hospice of South Texas, a local non-profit community hospice, offers a comprehensive type of compassionate care that includes expert medical care,
Martin Luther King Jr stood 30 feet tall on the National Mall as a memorial to him was unveiled in 2011 -- the first memorial on the Mall not dedicated to a war, president or white man. Fifteen years after a Congressional Joint Resolution in 1996 to establish a memorial in Washington, D.C. to honor King, the four-acre site on the Tidal Basin between the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials opened to the public for the first time.

President Barack Obama dedicated the memorial in a celebration on October 16, 2011. The original date, August 28, marking the anniversary of the Dream speech delivered from the steps of the nearby Lincoln Memorial, had to be postponed due to Hurricane Irene.

The winning design from an international contest was inspired by the line from King’s “I Have a Dream” speech, “Out of the mountain of despair, a stone of hope.”

Behind King’s sculpture, on either side of the mountain, is a 450-foot-long wall inscribed with 14 quotations from the famous orator’s speeches, sermons, and writings. King faces Jefferson wearing clothes that fade into the granite above his feet. His arms are folded, with one hand holding his rolled-up Dream speech, according to sculptor Master Lei Yixin, who is a Chinese citizen.

A joint venture team broke ground on the site nearly five years ago, and the

Source: www.artknowledgenews.com

In October 2009, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, a former Mississippi governor, announced that USNS Medgar Evers (T-AKE-13), a Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship, would be named for the slain civil rights activist, fulfilling a promise made to his widow that he would one day do something to honor Evers. The ship was christened by Myrlie Evers-Williams on November 12, 2011.

“The naming of this ship for Medgar speaks to the integrity of the Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus by keeping his promise,” Myrlie Evers-Williams said. “And it speaks to perhaps a different time in America where such a thing can be done.”

Medgar Wiley Evers was born July 2, 1925 in Decatur, Mississippi, the son of Jesse and her husband, James Evers; they owned a small farm and he also worked at a sawmill. After the lynchings of family friends, Evers became determined to get the education he deserved. He walked 12 miles to and from school to earn his high school diploma.

In 1943 Evers and his older brother Charlie were inducted into the army after the US entered World War II. Evers fought in the European Theatre of WWII, including in France. He was honorably discharged in 1945 as a Sergeant. In 1946, he, along with his brother and four friends, returned to his hometown.

In 1948 he enrolled at Alcorn College

See EVERS, pg 17
Striving for excellence in the classroom and beyond

SHANEQUA BARFIELD, AGE 17  
Victoria West High School  
Senior  
A – B Honor Roll Grades 9 Thru 12  
Basketball Team – Key Club  
National Honor Society  
Favorite Subject: World History  
Habitat for Humanity (Volunteer)  
College: Texas State University: Education

ERIC BARNETT, AGE 14  
Victoria West High School  
Junior  
Ranked in Top 50 classes since 5TH Grade  
8TH Grade Top Academic Athlete  
Favorite Subjects: Math & Science  
Competed in AAU Track. Qualified for Junior Olympics (consecutive years)  
Goal: College: Chemical Engineering

LEO BUTLER, AGE 17  
Victoria East High School  
Member TX 956 AFJ ROTC Group  
Division Chief Standardization Evaluation Division  
A-B Honor Roll  
Honors: Reserve Officers Association Medal & Son  
Of the American Revolution Medal  
Favorite Subject: English  
Goal: College

JALIL CARLOS EDDINGTON, AGE 17  
Victoria West High School  
Football: Team Captain – Defensive MVP  
District All-Academic Team  
All District 30-4A Victoria Advocate 2ND, All District  
All District 30-4A Defense 2ND  
Favorite Subject: Psychology & English  
Goal: College

JAMES THOMAS MURPHY III, AGE 16  
Victoria West High School  
Senior  
A – B Honor Roll & TAKS Commended  
Football-NHS-FCA  
Youth Church Program  
Favorite Subjects: History-Chemistry-Culinary Arts  
Goals: College: Psychology

TERRY LEON RAMEY, JR, AGE 17  
Victoria West High School  
Senior  
A-B Honor Roll, TAKS Commended Academic All District Back to Back Football-Track-Power Lifting-NHS-HOSA-FCA  
Attend University of Houston: Medical Field  
Favorite Subject: English & Science  
Active Bethlehem Baptist Church

ERVIN LEE SIMMONS III, AGE 18  
Victoria West High School  
Senior  
A – B Honor Roll & TAKS Commended 9 Thru 12  
Academic All District Football  
Participates FCA (Fellowship of Christian Athletes), HOSA (Health Occupation Studies), Student Council  
College: University of Houston: Pharmacy  
Active Bethlehem Baptist Church  
Favorite Subject: History

CIERA WILLIAMS, AGE 16  
Victoria West High School  
Sophomore  
A-B Honor Roll  
FCCLA Member, FCA  
Member VISD Student Leadership Team (6TH Grade to Present)  
Favorite Subject: English  
Goal: Attend University of Texas Austin: Law

MAIYA RENAI TILLMAN, AGE 8  
Third Grade  
Trinity Episcopal School  
High Honor Roll  
Favorites: Science – Reading – Art – Dance  
Parents: Katherine Limoges & Dr. Tywaun Tillman

MICHAEL BELL, AGE 11  
Fifth Grade  
Rowland Elementary  
“A” Honor Roll  
Only Member of 100 Point Club for Accelerated Reader  
Student Leadership – Student Council (Historian)  
Broadcasting Team – Choir  
Spelling Bee Champ Rowland. Will represent Campus in County Spelling Bee  
Attended “Education In Action Lonestar Leadership Academy”

JOSHUA SMITH, AGE 13  
Seventh Grade  
Cade Middle School  
All Pre-AP Classes  
Favorites: Student Tutor – Sports – Science Competitions  
Student Leadership Team for VISD Community Service (Helping the Needy)

These students were selected by officials at their respective schools for demonstrating excellent achievements both in the classroom and in the community.

Excellence in education means success in life.
O’CONNOR, from pg. 1

The Victoria natives are no newbies to donating their time.

T. Michael is board chair of the Law Enforcement Alliance Project, a member of Project Safe Neighborhood task force and remains actively involved in the Texas Association of Counties-Policy Action Group and the national Sheriff’s Association, among other things.

LuAnn serves on both the YMCA of the Golden Crescent board of directors and the Victoria College Foundation Board. She is also a former member of the YMCA of the USA Mid-America Field Committee, the National YMCA Board of Directors and past board director of the Victoria Preservation Historical Association.

She said she enjoys keeping busy and contributing to the community in which she was raised.

“I do what I can,” LuAnn said with a smile, explaining Victoria is lucky when it comes to citizens willing to support its area charities. “People are good about donating the time or, if they can, the money. I think people realize the good that these groups do. We’re very fortunate in that respect.”

Both husband and wife say they look forward to the Valentine’s Day event, which includes dinner, music, a silent auction and more.

And, when it comes to giving up a night to give back to the community? It’s worth it. “We’re all busy,” T. Michael said.

“But it’s all about taking time to recognize the importance of giving back and working out our schedules so we can be a part of them. The only way to make that a success is participation.”

O’BRYANT, from pg. 5

Although her activities keep her busy, O’Bryant admits she prefers it that way.

“I just can’t sit still,” she said with a laugh. “I like giving back to my community. I had people who always helped me growing up and, now that I’m older, I think it’s time for me to give back, too.”

And others have taken notice.

Margaret Rice, UHV’s chief of staff, said O’Bryant’s leadership abilities have been evident since she first set foot on campus.

“Bre’Neka is not just a role model for other students at UHV, but for K-12 students in VISD,” she said. “She practices, she’s on the road with games and I know her softball coach is very serious about the players attending study hall and keeping their grades up. Bre’Neka really exhibits a lot of character.”

O’Bryant plans to graduate in May and hopes to find work with a juvenile detention center in Conroe, where she can have a positive impact on young people’s lives.

WARNELL, from pg. 1

was nerve wrecking logging on to the testing site and accessing my results. My heart was pounding and my hands were shaking. I was confident I had done well, but you still never know for sure until you see it in black and white.”

Warnell-Fillmore passed her exam, making her the first African-American Superintendent in Bloomington ISD. She stated that the district is making positive changes and continually striving for excellence each day. “I am extremely honored and humbled to be given the vote of confidence by the BISD board of trustees. They put their faith in me to make BISD the best ever; which means that we all must work together to prepare our students to compete and excel in an ever-changing global society.

Warnell-Fillmore looked over her list of goals she wishes to accomplish in the next three to five years; breathed deeply and smiled. “Being a superintendent is challenging, and exhilarating; but at the end of the day, I feel accomplished and inspired.” She is especially proud of helping to write the grant to receive the funding for the FEMA dome shelter which the district will utilize as a gym/multipurpose facility. “I was told that being funded might be a long shot; but with assistance from the State Mitigation Team in Austin and diligence in submitting the paperwork and data; after more than a year, we finally received approval!” Warnell-Fillmore states that being awarded the grant is wonderfully exciting for Bloomington, but adds “the best is yet to come!”

BRANCH, from pg. 8

mercy for the teenagers and their unborn child.

The young man continued to live at home with his family while he maintained his love for the young lady. He began his trek from a boy to a man. He graduated from high school on time, earned a college degree, and worked to support his family. The daughter likewise continued her education (graduating with her high school class), graduated from college with multiple degrees, and has made a difference in her chosen profession. This couple knew early on that failure was not an option. The father’s values were unwavering and passed to his daughter and son-in-law. There were consequences for the actions of the teenagers which impacted not only them but two families, a child, and their community of friends.

The father was there for his baby when she had her baby.
**BY ALLISON MILES**

**Dora Rollins Duncan**

It was October 31, 2011 when Bay City lost Dora Rollins Duncan, a longtime resident with a passion for giving back. And, while she might be gone from sight, the Crossroads community is doing its part to ensure she’s not forgotten.

Duncan was born in Pickens, Miss. and grew up in Bay City. She graduated Hilliard High School in 1965 and, in 1969, obtained a nursing degree from Texas Woman’s University.

The tireless worker served 40 plus years in the nursing and pharmaceutical industries before retiring.

Duncan remained involved in her community even after hanging up her scrubs, however, working with organizations such as Rotary, the Bay City Chamber of Commerce, historical society and more.

She was also a key player in developing the Boys & Girls Club of Bay City, a much-needed organization that now sits at capacity, with about 100 children on its waitlist, said Wil Duncan, her husband of 27 years.

“She vowed that, even after retirement, she would never just sit around doing nothing,” he explained. “She saw too many things that needed to be done. She felt a responsibility and a deep love for her community.”

Duncan sat on the University of Houston-Victoria’s President’s Regional Advisory Board, a position her brother, Willie Rollins, filled before her. Although her time on the board was cut short, she made a lasting impression, said Margaret Rice, UHV’s chief of staff.

The university honored her with an $800 scholarship in her name, as well as a paver stone in front of the school.

“She was a wonderful person. Very much a leader,” Rice said. “We wanted to honor her memory.”

The Bay City Chamber of Commerce also named Duncan “2011 Woman of the Year,” the first award of its kind that the organization awarded posthumously.

Although the community lost a dedicated volunteer and big-hearted leader, Wil Duncan said he takes pride in knowing her memory lives on.

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(now Alcorn State University), a historically black college, majoring in business administration. In college, he was on the debate team, played football and ran track, sang in the school choir, and served as president of his junior class. He was listed in Who’s Who in American Colleges based on his many accomplishments.

He married classmate Myrlie Beasley on December 24, 1951, and received his BA degree the following year. They had three children together; two boys and a girl. In 2001, their oldest son, Darrell Kenyatta Evers, died of colon cancer. Their two surviving children are Reena Denise and James Van Evers.

Evers applied to the then-segregated University of Mississippi Law School in February 1954. When his application was rejected, Evers filed a lawsuit against the university, and became the focus of an NAACP campaign to desegregate the school. That same year, due to his involvement, the NAACP’s National Office suggested Evers become Mississippi’s first field secretary for the NAACP.

Evers’ civil rights leadership and investigative work made him a target of white supremacists. In the weeks leading up to his death, the hostility directed towards him grew. His public investigations into the murder of Emmett Till and his vocal support of Clyde Kennard had made him a prominent black leader. On May 28, 1963, a Molotov cocktail was thrown into the carport of his home. On June 7, 1963, Evers was nearly run down by a car after he emerged from the Jackson NAACP office.

In the early morning of June 12, 1963, just hours after President John F. Kennedy’s speech on national television in support of civil rights, Evers pulled into his driveway after returning from a meeting with NAACP lawyers. Emerging from his car and carrying NAACP T-shirts that read “Jim Crow Must Go,” Evers was struck in the back with a bullet fired from an Enfield 1917 rifle; it ricocheted into his home. He staggered 9 meters (30 feet) before collapsing. He died at a local hospital 50 minutes later.

Evers’s widow, Myrlie, became a noted activist in her own right later in life, eventually serving as chair of the NAACP. Medgar’s brother Charles returned to Jackson in July 1963 and served briefly in his slain brother’s place. Charles Evers remained involved in Mississippi civil rights activities for years to come. He resides in Jackson.
DVORAK, from pg. 9

his spot in the starting lineup after the Islanders' coaching staff began making some personnel changes.

VC Pirates head basketball coach Jonathan Anderson isn't surprised that Dvorak has distinguished himself with the Islanders.

"I think Kennon really benefited from being surrounded by good athletes during the time he played with the Pirates, including his team members and our opponents," said Anderson. "He's also just an exceptional young man who does a great job of juggling his responsibilities while remaining dedicated and competitive. He has a lot of maturity and I know his family plays a big role in that."

Dvorak admits that Division I basketball is quite another thing from playing for VC's club sports team, including high profile coverage on ESPN along with the glamour of travel and playing in huge arenas as such high profile universities as the University of Nevada-Las Vegas.

"The whole atmosphere is just amazing," said Dvorak. "We've spent as much as two weeks on the road visiting other universities."

Dvorak has also been featured in the Corpus Christi Caller-Times and on local television station KIII-TV in Corpus Christi.

Despite the limelight and spending time on the road, Dvorak continues to focus on his academics as much as athletics. Majoring in kinesiology with a view toward becoming a coach and math teacher after graduation, Dvorak finished last semester at A&M with a 4.0 grade point average and is taking 13 hours of classes this semester.

When asked what he intends to do now that he's a starting player with Islanders, Dvorak responds simply.

"I'm going to keep working hard."}

HERRON, from pg. 11

said he was glad he pursued an education before going pro.

"It wasn't until my junior year of college that I even started thinking that way. I never thought I was good enough," he said with a laugh. "But it was engrained in me by my mother since childhood that I should go to college, get my degree and make a better life for myself. It's what she always told me, and it was good advice."

After retiring from the NFL, Herron moved director of athletics at Chicago State University before moving on to Corporate America.

He took a sales executive position with Waste Management, a company he was with for 12 years, before moving on to vice president of business development for global engineering company Invensys APV.

The position afforded him the chance to see the world, as he traveled everywhere from Paris to Dubai, to Germany and more.

Today, the Chicago resident is director of national accounts for Invensys Controls, a company that designs, engineers, and manufacturers controls for residential and commercial buildings.

The work doesn't end when he clocks out for the day, however.

He serves on numerous boards, including Advocate Christ Medical Center; Advocate Trinity Hospital, Tuesday's Child and the NFL Retired Players Association Chicago Chapter, of which he is past president. Herron donates his time to other groups, as well, including the Ronald McDonald Children Charities, Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, Special Olympics and more.

"It's always been a passion of mine to give back," he said, adding that he and his children make it a point to donate their time to area homeless shelters every Thanksgiving. "It's not a handout. It's a hand up to try and help elevate someone's life. I want to do my part to make a difference."

Herron is married to LaGuina Clay-Herron and has four children: Monica, Bruce "BJ" Jr., Jordaya and Vance.

ADKINS, from pg. 11

and helps others reach theirs. It is common knowledge throughout the community and Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church that "Viola Hicks did not play."

"All through college and life in general, it was just a household thing," he said with a laugh. "You were taught to do the right thing, go to college and pursue a career; whatever career of your choosing. It was a good way to grow up."

That sentiment is further confirmed by academic achievements made by Atkins' twin sisters, Lt. Colonel Jennifer Hicks McGowan and Lt. Colonel Vanessa Hicks Callaway, of the United States Army.

Atkins enjoys teaching and challenging young men to reach their potential both physically and mentally.

His coaching career as running backs and tight ends coach and offensive coordinator began at his El Paso alma mater in 1979. Atkins said he considers his five years with the New Orleans Saints among the highlights of his illustrious coaching career. That stint featured two of the NFL's finest running backs, Pro Bowlers Deuce McAllister and Ricky Williams.

Atkins went on to serve three years with the Minnesota Vikings under Coach Dennis Green, with an offense that featured Randall Cunningham. His coaching career also included seven years with the Philadelphia Eagles and a year with the New England Patriots.

Although now retired from the athletics world, Atkins said he's proud of the career he maintained. The NFL only has 32 teams, he said, explaining he feels lucky to have held a spot for 26 years.

"I do miss it," he said, recalling waking up at 7 a.m. on game day Sundays, making his way to the stadium and feeling that rush of excitement from the fans. "It was an amazing experience, but nothing lasts forever. It's time to pass the baton."

Atkins and his wife, Cynthia, have son, Dave Jr., and a daughter, Jasmine.

GANT, from pg. 11

on what he was doing. "George Gant said, "Even when he was called up to pro ball, he got nervous around the cameras. I just tried to ease his mind and remind him the ball was the most important thing."

Gant graduated in 1983 and turned down numerous scholarship offers to enter the Major League draft. He was selected by the Atlanta Braves and assigned to their Minor League system. The athlete continued developing his skills as he matured and was called up to the Atlanta Braves in 1987.

Thus began a stellar 16-year Major League career for Gant, who went on to play for several teams. His longest tenure was the time he spent with the Braves, from 1987 to 1993.

Gant's exploits on the diamond are many, but his proudest moments include entering the prestigious "30/30 Club" for earning at least 30 home runs and at least 30 stolen bases in the same season. The honor is a difficult feat in itself, let alone the fact that he did it for two consecutive years. Throughout his athletic career, he slammed 321 home runs, scored 1,080 runs and obtained an impressive 1,008 runs batted in.

In his knowledge of the game and ability to articulate that knowledge allowed him to carve out another all-star career, as well. Presently, Gant hosts "Braves Live," the Atlanta Braves' pre-game and post-game shows on Fox Sports South. He also does analysis work on MLB Network.

The Atlanta transplant said the career path he's traveled through the years is a rewarding one.

"When you're young, you never think you'll be a big leaguer and have this big career," he said. "But it happened. When I look back on it, I'm proud. It's been a dream come true."

Gant has four children: 16-year-old Ryan, 13-year-old Alexus, 11-year-old Symara and 7-year-old Haly.

HOSPICE, from pg. 12

at the center of our care, which we provide in the home, nursing home, assisted living facilities and as personal care homes.

To make sure that each of us lives as fully as possible throughout our entire lives, Hospice of South Texas is here to help with information about the varied care options and choices that are available. To make sure you and your loved ones benefit fully from these choices, we know from experience that there is no better way than to talk about it before it becomes an issue. If you would like more information about our hospice services, please visit www.hospicesofouthetexas.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

Happy Valentine’s Day!
toward the center, first causing tunnel vision, and then, eventually, blindness.

The cause of optic nerve damage in glaucoma is not known, but since most eyes with glaucoma have high IOP, it is likely that high IOP plays a role in damaging the nerve. IOP is a measure of the fluid pressure inside the eye. The eye is filled with clear fluid that flows in through a spigot and flows out through a drain. In glaucoma, the drain of the eye gets plugged, and fluid coming into the eye cannot get out, raising the IOP.

A thorough examination for glaucoma should include the measurement of IOP. But since some eyes can have glaucoma without high IOP, a careful examination of the optic nerve looking for glaucoma damage is also very important. If the IOP is high or the optic nerve looks damaged (or both), a special test called a visual field test should be performed. The visual field test shows whether or not you’ve lost any side vision to glaucoma.

If you are diagnosed with glaucoma, treatment is available to save your vision. The goal of glaucoma treatment is to lower IOP and stop the optic nerve damage. Several kinds of treatment are available to lower IOP.

These include eye drops, laser therapy, and surgery. Eye drop medications lower IOP by either reducing the amount of fluid entering the eye or increasing the amount of fluid exiting the eye. There are several different kinds of glaucoma medications, and each differs in terms of both its ability to lower IOP and its potential side effects. Laser therapy is often used when medications fail to successfully lower IOP and is also used for patients who cannot tolerate medications due to side effects.

Recent advances in laser therapy have produced lasers so safe and effective that, for some patients, laser therapy is used instead of medications. If medications and/or laser therapy fail to bring the IOP down to a safe range, surgery is available to lower IOP. Your doctor will work with you to develop a treatment plan that will safely lower your IOP.
Newscenter 25

Jonathan McCall
Weeknights At 6 & 10

Your Hometown News

Watch CBS 41
In HD