



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Some of the cast of Westfield's musical, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," strike a pose.

Schools Garner 28 Cappie Nods

Westfield receives 21 nominations for musical.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Audiences loved it, and the students who put it on believed they'd created something special. And now the Cappie voters have validated their feelings by

nominating Westfield High's spring musical, "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat," for 21 Cappies.

Chantilly High's play, "Stage Door," garnered seven nominations, and Centreville High's musical, "Working," received one. The winners will be revealed Sunday, June 12, during the 12th annual Cappies Gala at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

"Joseph" received four nods for its critics and

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Police Unity Tour Bicyclists Return

Riders raise \$1.5 million while honoring fallen officers.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Sporting smiles and holding signs of welcome, Kevin Whalen's four sons joined their mom, friends and neighbors Thursday morning, May 12, to welcome him and the other bicyclists passing through Centreville near the end of their three-day, Police Unity Tour (PUT) ride.

Then, at the McConnell Public Safety Center on West Ox Road, more families joined their loved ones, as well, as the bicyclists enjoyed a quick lunch before journeying on to Washington, D.C. There, they connected with other riders from all over the country to bicycle together to an afternoon

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PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

From left are Jeri Fields, chaplain for the Mount Vernon Police Station, and Capt. Cindy McAlister, director of the police training academy and former commander of the Sully District Police Station.

Raising Money for Cancer Research

Relay for Life is set for June 4.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

If Jackie Katounas isn't able to walk in the upcoming Relay for Life, June 4, at Centreville High, it's because she'll have just become a new mother. But if her husband hadn't been successfully treated for cancer, he wouldn't be around to share in the joy.

On Christmas Eve 2008, at age 31, Mike Katounas of Centre Ridge was diagnosed with stage 3C testicular cancer. He spent all of 2009

receiving treatment in Indianapolis from cyclist Lance Armstrong's doctor and, since 2010, has been cancer-free.

Relay for Life raises money for the American Cancer Society so, after Mike's ordeal, the Centreville couple wanted to give back. "We had so much support through 2009 from family, friends and neighbors that joining the Relay for Life last year was a natural fit," said Jackie. "I saw an announcement about it in the paper and

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Remembering Reema in Song and Dance

Annual cabaret is set for May 28.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

The death of Reema Samaha and her classmates at Virginia Tech was a tragedy from which her family and friends will never fully recover. But each year, a Remembrance Cabaret is held to honor her talents and her memory.

This year's event is slated for Saturday, May 28, in the Westfield High auditorium. The show starts at 7 p.m., but the doors open at 6 p.m. for a bake sale and silent auction.



Reema Samaha

Organizing it all is Ashley Dillard, a Westfield theater student and 2006 graduate, the same as Reema, and she's hoping for a large turnout. Said Dillard: "I want as many people as possible to come out and support the Samahas [Reema's parents] and let them know we still care."

The silent art auction will feature 25-50 items, including original paintings, prints, photographs and jewelry from local professional artists and students.

Attendees may bid before and during the cabaret.

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Relay for Life Returns at CVHS on June 4

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signed up.”

They started a team comprised mainly of family members and close friends and called it, “Sometimes You Feel like a Nut.” Both Jackie and Mike participated and – unless their baby comes early – they’ll walk this year, too.

“We have 13 members now and had such fun doing it last year,” said Jackie. “I especially liked watching my husband hoot, holler and cheer, celebrating while doing the survivors’ lap around the track. It’s just a lap, but it’s a success story.”

Last year’s Relay had a superhero theme, so Mike wore a superhero costume. But all those who’d helped him were also heroes in Jackie’s eyes. “Everyone that supported us, that whole year, was all in one spot,” she said. “And seeing them cheer him on was very cool. That’s why we love being involved and doing whatever we can.”

“Some events are meaningful, but don’t dig deep,” said Jackie. “But Relay for Life gets to us and makes us want to continue to support and fight for those still battling. Giving your time and making the effort really means a lot. Without this funding, we wouldn’t have had a cure and Mike wouldn’t be here.”

This year’s Relay is the 26th annual and will be the fifth time Centreville High has hosted. Rain or shine, it’ll begin at 2:30 p.m. with a reception in the cafeteria for cancer survivors. Olive Garden and Bonefish Grill are providing lunch and there’ll be live music, plus gifts donated by the teams and local merchants. As the guest speaker, survivor Lisa VanLahr of Centreville will share her own story. To attend, survivors should e-mail suzyqholman@yahoo.com.

Opening ceremony is at 4 p.m. on the Wildcat football field. The Chantilly Academy junior AFROTC Color Guard will present the colors, and Centreville High’s Symphonic Choir will sing the National Anthem. Supervisor Michael R. Frey (R-Sully) will speak, and local caregiver Ricardo Aguilera will share his personal experience.

Passion4Community/New Life Christian Church is sponsoring the children’s area, open from 4:30-8:30 p.m. The fun includes face-painting, water tattoos and moonbounces; games such as water-balloon toss, a hula-hoop contest, life-sized tic-tac-toe and tug-of-war; plus coloring and bead-making. There’ll also be free popcorn and Sno Cones, and children may play there without their parents being on a team.

“There’s a suggested donation of \$5 for unlimited games and snacks, with the proceeds going to Relay for Life,” said Mike Fewster, New Life’s Chantilly campus pastor. “We’ll also show family-friendly movies from midnight-5 a.m. to help the walkers stay awake. And we’re donating 1,000 bottles of water to the event.”

Survivors, those in remission and those still fighting, will walk the first lap.

Caregivers and those they cared for walk the next lap. Then teams start walking, with as many members walking at a time as they



Members of the “Super Cool Kids” team, primarily from Little Rocky Run, walk in the 2010 Relay. Many of these children are now on The Caped Crusaders team.



Chantilly High senior Nikki Ferraro (second from right) with her Bite Me Cancer team at last year’s Relay.

want. The only rule is that someone from each team is walking at all times. And community members are encouraged to gather ’round the track and cheer them on.

The relay aspect is that team members take turns walking, walking as long and as far as they want. Then they can relax and socialize with the others at the campsite. The relay runs until the next morning at 6 a.m., but not everyone has to spend the night.

Entertaining throughout the event will be the Flock of Eagles band, New Life’s J10 band and deejay Jarrod Wronski. There’ll also be team contests such as tent decorating and a “Mr. Relay” competition, plus additional games.

So far, 28 teams – mostly from Centreville,

Chantilly and Clifton – have signed up for the relay, but Co-Chairs Marion Rantis of Little Rocky Run and Lisa Desman of Clifton expect more than 30 – totaling some 650 people. Each person contributes \$100, so the event could potentially raise \$65,000.

The 12-person planning committee has been readying for the Relay since January and, said Rantis, “We want no rain so we can walk all night. It’s a rain-or-shine event but, if there’s lightning, we have to stop.”

She became involved with the Relay in 2009 to honor her mother on the 20-year anniversary of her death and stayed involved “because of what a great cause and community event it is. I like meeting people in the community and their inspiring stories keep me motivated.”



Rylee Moorman, of the Centreville Long & Foster team, holds a candle during last year’s luminaria ceremony. His mom, Sarah Moorman, is team captain.

Desman and Susie Holman are also supervising their daughters who are planning the survivor reception. Delaney Desman and Hannah Holman are Clifton Elementary sixth-graders, and Heather Holman is a Robinson eighth-grader, and all three also co-captain the Pink eLEMONators team. It’s comprised of Clifton and Willow Springs elementary Girl Scouts whose parents are cancer survivors, and Delaney, Hannah and Heather will earn their Girl Scout silver award by helping organize the reception.

“I do the Relay because my dad and other family members have been diagnosed with cancer,” said Heather. “Doing it helps find an end to this disease.”

“Our dad had cancer on his tongue in summer 2009, but he’s OK now,” added Hannah. “I wanted to do the Relay for him because of his struggle. And I’m excited to stay the whole time because the end of it got rained out last year.”

This is Delaney’s third year participating and, she said, “I like that it benefits cancer awareness. My mom was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in 2005, but she’s doing fine now, so I wanted to give back. About 50 people are coming to the reception. We’re calling people for food donations, and friends’ families are giving us donations to rent tents, chairs and tables. We want to give the survivors a great experience and show them how much we appreciate all their hard work.”

“The survivors have a bond,” said Desman. “They’ve all been through the same thing, and you see that at the relay.” Agreeing, Jackie Katounas said the caregivers have the same type of bond, too.

“At the time, you think you’re the only one,” said Desman. “But at the Relay, you realize you’re not. What moved me the most at last year’s Relay was that, last year, it was

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Relay for Life Returns at CVHS on June 4

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pouring rain, but people kept walking – we were so emotionally committed to it. You see grandparents, people with strollers, some running, some walking – all enjoying it in their own way – and I think it bonds us as a community.”

Her husband Eric is heading the Purple Powerhouse team of about 32 people. So far, it’s raised nearly \$7,000 and is the event’s second-highest fund-raising team.

The most dramatic and moving part of the Relay is the luminaria ceremony at 9:30 p.m. On each luminaria bag is the name of someone who’s died of cancer. “The ceremony recognizes people who’ve passed away, are still battling or have survived it,” said Desman. “We read every, single name on the bags, and we encourage people to submit photos of those named.” E-mail photos to ldesman@gmail.com.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARION RANTIS

The Purple Powerhouse team walks last year’s opening lap. Its members are mainly from Clifton and team captain is Eric Desman.

Relay Info

- ❖ To donate, join a team or purchase a memorial luminaria, go to www.CentrevilleRelay.org.
- ❖ To attend the survivors’ reception, e-mail suzyqholman@yahoo.com.
- ❖ For more information, e-mail CentrevilleRelay@gmail.com.
- ❖ Photos for the slideshow of cancer victims and survivors may be sent to ldesman@gmail.com.

‘A Cause Near and Dear to Our Hearts’

BY BONNIE HOBBS
CENTRE VIEW

Relay for Life participants have a variety of reasons for getting involved but, more often than not, it’s because cancer struck someone they know. That’s the case with the Centreville Dance Academy’s team, Happy Feet.

“A lot of us were touched by cancer in our families and we wanted to do something, ourselves,” said team captain Heidi Stafford. “We also thought it was a great opportunity to teach the [Academy] kids to give back.”

So far, Happy Feet is the top fund-raising team in the Centreville Relay, amassing close to \$11,000. It’s comprised of 46 dance students, teachers and parents.

The students are part of the Academy’s performing company, Centreville Dance Theatre.

“My grandfather died of cancer, my aunt is battling breast cancer now and my mother-in-law won her battle with it,” said Stafford. “I walked with my mother-in-law last year in the three-day, Avon walk.”

Stafford and Tiffany Miller both teach at the Academy and will walk with their team along with Miller’s twin sister Brooke and their mother Kaindais. Tears coming to her eyes, Miller said, “My dad passed away in October of cancer at 58, and Heidi had this idea to start the team.”

Miler also lost an aunt to breast cancer so, she said, “It happens to you and you want to do something important to help out.” Their fund-raising is one way. A team dinner for which Centreville Square restaurants donated food and they sold tickets yielded \$1,200, and a recent bake sale fetched \$550.

Another fund-raiser is slated for Thursday, May 19, from 7-9 p.m., at Rita’s in the Sully Station Shopping Center, with the dance instructors scooping ice custard for customers. And during May, their students are bringing in loose change to class. “It’s

really neat to see them giving,” said Stafford. “One girl cashed in her whole allowance and brought in \$30 in pennies.”

Meanwhile, in Chantilly, Nikki Ferraro and her Bite Me Cancer team – comprised mainly of Chantilly High students, like her – is also readying for the Relay. A senior, Nikki, 18, formed the team last year in response to her own diagnosis of a rare form of thyroid cancer.

Her parents, Sharon and Michael Ferraro, started a foundation, www.bitemecancer.org, in honor of her, and will walk with her team in the Relay. “Nikki will have more scans in July, but she’s stable now,” said her mom. “And the doctor’s been amazed at the progress she’s made.”

At this point, Nikki’s the highest, individual fund-raiser for the Relay, raising \$7,182. P.J. Skidoo’s in Fairfax and Baja Fresh in Chantilly hosted team fund-raisers, and family friend Debi Wheatley held an event in her home. Attendees bought jewelry, purses, chocolate and skin-care products; sales plus donations yielded almost \$1,000.

Another team fund-raiser is set for Wednesday, June 1, at the Chick-Fil-A by the Dulles Expo Center, with the team receiving a percentage of the proceeds between 5-7 p.m.

In addition, several students in the health-and-medical-science program at the Chantilly Academy will work at the Relay. They’ll help set up concessions and the luminaria event, will volunteer at the first-aid station and will run a children’s game.

Chantilly High’s Senior Class is also lending a hand. It selected Nikki’s team and its participation in the Relay as one of its last “11 for ’11” community-service projects for this year.

So it’s helping promote the team and its upcoming fund-raiser and hopes to sell “Bite Me Cancer” T-shirts at the school.

Neighbors in Centreville’s Compton Village community started a Relay team called the Village People in 2008, and that’s how

Dayna Young first learned about it. “But it took on a new level of importance in my life when I was diagnosed with stage 3 breast cancer in 2009,” she said. “So my younger son, Blair, wanted to get involved with the relay.”

He captained the team that year, and Young will walk with its members this year for her second time. She’s now finished treatment and is doing well, and the team hopes to raise \$6,000.

“Last year, it was overwhelming to see everyone coming together and all these lives that have been touched by cancer,” said Young. “It’s such a great organization and a big community event, we want to remain involved. It’s a valuable thing and a cause near and dear to our hearts.”

This year, she’s also on the planning committee for the Centreville Relay. “I’m so thankful to be feeling well,” said Young. “And to help the whole event run more smoothly is very exciting for me.”

A first-time participant is Virginia Run’s

“We use the photos to make a slideshow so people can see their faces and remember them,” said Desman. “We show it on a screen during the luminaria ceremony as their names are read. Led by the survivors, everyone takes a candle and walks a lap in honor of them.” Purchase memorial luminaria at www.CentrevilleRelay.org.

Although co-chairing this event is lots of work, Desman’s happy to do it. “This is my way of taking charge of something that took charge of my life for so long,” she said. “I’m also doing something positive for the community; hopefully, my experience will benefit others.”

She said the Relay also creates awareness and reminds busy moms to listen to their bodies and take care of them. “Here, you see the faces of cancer – kids, teen-agers, adults and elderly people,” said Desman. “You never know who it’s going to hit.”

Kathleen Hagan, leading the team, Youth4theGreaterGood. “It’s a new, community-service, teen youth group and it’ll be our first event,” she said. “Most of the members attend Stone Middle or Westfield High schools, but we’ll expand it to others.”

Hagan said some teens have so much that they should share and “realize many people in the community are much less fortunate than they are. This is to instill in them compassion and wanting to do a greater good for the community.”

Since Relay for Life is family-oriented and welcomes youth, she wanted to get the group involved and excited about giving back to others. And, she said, “When kids come together for a cause, they really do work hard.”

Now, they’re planning a bake sale and car wash to raise funds. “My father and grandmother died of cancer,” she said. “And I realize how many people in our community it affects, young and old, so we just have to keep fighting.”



PHOTO BY BONNIE HOBBS/CENTRE VIEW

Some of the Relay for Life participants are (standing, from left) Marion Rantis, Kathleen Hagan, Tiffany Miller, Heidi Stafford and Lisa Desman and (seated, from left) Hannah Holman and Delaney Desman.