

Members of the Paul VI Student Government Association pose with cans of food that the school collected for Food for Others. They are, back row, George Capen, Dan Chauvin, Willard Humphries and Brendan Muha; front row, Brandon Lock, Leah Utley and Damien Ashley.

# Can-Do Effort

NEWS, PAGE 3

CALENDAR, PAGE 8 ♦ SPORTS, PAGE 10 ♦ CLASSIFIED, PAGE 12

ONLINE AT [WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)

PHOTO BY EILEEN KILEY



AIDS Quilt  
 At Mason

NEWS, PAGE 2

Heartfelt Story  
 Publishing Success

NEWS, PAGE 3

ATTENTION POSTMASTER:  
 TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL.  
 REQUESTED IN HOME 12-4-09

VERIFIED  
 PRSRT STD  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 EASTON, MD  
 PERMIT #322



## Helping Those In Need Can by Can

**Paul VI students collect food for Food for Others.**

BY BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

**W**ith demand for help greater than ever, local food banks can only provide sustenance for those in need with help from the community. For 24 years, Paul VI Catholic High School has done just that with its Ton of Love Canned Food Drive for Fairfax-based Food for Others.

From Nov. 16-20, students collected 39,679 nonperishable food items, plus \$9,547 for the food bank, and it's greatly appreciated. Roxanne Rice, executive director of

Food for Others, said the partnership between the two entities produces "significant benefit" to the community.

"Over the past four years, the holiday food drive at the high school has brought in around 30,000 pounds of nonperishable food each year," she said. "Our small staff depends on these types of voluntary efforts



PHOTO BY EILEEN HANLEY/PAUL VI

**Gathering in the back of the Food for Others truck are Paul VI students, back row, George Capen, Dan Chauvin, Willard Humphries and Brendan Muha; front row, Brandon Lock, Leah Utley and Damien Ashley.**

to help us restock our supplies. Not only do the students bring in their donations to the school, but they assist in loading and unloading the vehicles that transport it to our warehouse. Paul VI conducts our largest

school food drive, and we are grateful to the tremendous effort of the students, staff and families that make it happen each year."

Katie Grim, assistant director of Student Life and student government moderator,

**"It is a wonderful opportunity for our school to reach out and help people in our own community."**

— Paul VI Assistant Principal  
Eileen Hanley

said the 11 members of the student government executive board oversaw the project and class officers also helped with can collection, each morning. A competition took place between the school's 54 advisories (home rooms), plus three teams of faculty and staff members, to see who can bring in the most cans.

"We also had target-food Thursday, focusing on cereal, tuna, peanut butter, canned fruit and fruit juice," said Grim. "We have a supportive community and the competition is fun, but it's all about helping others in need. We strive to get 100-percent participation; even if someone only brings in four cans, every can makes a difference."

SEE PAUL VI, PAGE 4

## Woman Turns Tragedy into Triumph

**Sarah Hamaker has an entry in the two latest 'Chicken Soup for the Soul' books.**

BY JUSTIN FANIZZI  
THE CONNECTION

**S**arah Hamaker knows better than most about turning tragedy into triumph. Faced with losing her house and many of her possessions, Hamaker and her family tried to pry the valuable life lessons out of the situation, and according to the publishers of "Chicken Soup for the Soul," Hamaker succeeded wildly.

Hamaker, a Fairfax resident and writer, was recently tabbed to have a story that she wrote included in the latest edition of "Chicken Soup for the Soul," entitled "Count Your Blessings: 101 Stories of Gratitude, Fortitude and Silver Linings." The story, which deals with Hamaker's home being destroyed by a falling tree, is her second to gain inclusion into the best-selling series of motivational and inspirational stories.

"I am very excited that so many people are going to be reading my story," Hamaker

said. "No matter how many times it happens, it's still thrilling to see your name in print. It's a neat thing to think about."

Hamaker, a Colonial Heights native, began her writing career after receiving her graduate degree in 1992 from Marymount University. Following graduation, Hamaker got a job with the National Religious Broadcasters Association, writing for its trade magazine. In 1998, she left the association,

seeking a bigger platform for her work and got a job with the National Restaurant Association. Hamaker remained there until the birth of her first child in 2003 to become a freelancer

so that she could stay at home with her children but still write.

While doing freelance work for the National Restaurant Association, National Association of Convenience Stores and trade publication "Shopper Markets," Hamaker branched out into novels as well. For two consecutive years, Hamaker has participated in "National Novel Writing Month,"



DONATED PHOTO

**Sarah Hamaker**

in which participants are challenged to write a full-length fiction novel in 30 days and has two novels to show for it. Her first novel, written in 2008, was a murder mystery, and the second, written this year, is a story loosely based on Susan Boyle of "American Idol" fame.

"I have two writing lives," Hamaker said. "I have my freelance life, where I write whatever they pay me to write. Then, I have

the creative side of my writing."

That creative side is what brought Hamaker into the fold for the publishers of "Chicken Soup." Hamaker said that a call for entries was passed around at a Christian writing group that she belongs to for the series and was immediately interested. She submitted three stories at the time, and one of them, "A Full House," was selected for entry into "All in the Family." The book was about "our quirky and dysfunctional families," and Hamaker's entry told the story of her mother and father, who had more than 40 foster children go through their home during Hamaker's childhood. Soon thereafter, Hamaker received word that another one of her entries, "A Tree Fell Through It," was selected as well.

"A Tree Falls Through It," according to Hamaker, is one of the most personal stories she has ever written. In 2003, Hurricane Isabel hit the area, bringing driving rain and whipping winds. While at home during the storm, Hamaker and her husband Christian heard a loud crash and then the house began to shake violently. Hamaker said that they jumped out of bed to check on their 1-year-old daughter, who was unhurt, only to find their attic sitting in their upstairs hallway.

"We heard this big crash and then the whole house shook," Hamaker said. "We

SEE HAMAKER, PAGE 6



**Young Lobbyists** Francesca Ferrara of Springfield and Isabella Gordon of Fairfax met with U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) on Sept. 30 to talk about legislation to help assure that schools can safely manage students with life-threatening food allergies. Connolly is a sponsor of the bill.

## Group Gives Money to Needy

For the sixth year in a row, a group of Northern Virginia citizens put their money together and donated it to 11 small nonprofit organizations that help needy populations. Called Giving Circle of HOPE, that group has donated more than \$300,000 since forming in 2004. This year's recipients include Alzheimer's Family Day Center, Bethany House, Computer CORE, Empowered Women International, FISH (Friendly, Instant, Sympathetic Help) of Herndon-Reston, Floris/Grace Ministries, Friends of Guest House, Greenbrier Learning Center, Just Neighbors, Kids R First and Project Mend-a-House. These nonprofits serve populations in the counties of Fairfax, Arlington, Prince William, or Loudoun, or the cities of Alexandria, Falls Church or Fairfax.

The Giving Circle of HOPE is hosting a Gifts That Give Hope alternative gift fair on Saturday, Dec. 12, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m., at Truro Church, 10520 Main St., Fairfax. Shoppers can select gifts in honor of friends and family members that give help and hope to others. For every gift purchased, shoppers will get a card describing the gift, which can be given to their friend or loved one. Cash and checks will be accepted. For more information, visit [www.givingcircleofhope.org](http://www.givingcircleofhope.org).

## Youth Acting Camp Dec. 12

An acting camp and movie night for students in first through sixth grade takes place Saturday, Dec. 12, from 2-8 p.m., at Woodson High School. Theater director Terri Hobson, the Virginia State Thespian Educator of the Year, will lead the students in acting improvisation, playwriting and craftmaking, then wrap up the evening with pizza and a movie. The cost is \$40 per camper (\$30 for each additional sibling). For a registration form, contact Martha Moses at 703 963 6288 or [marthaangelynn@aol.com](mailto:marthaangelynn@aol.com). Each camper requires an Emergency Care form, found at [www.fcps.edu](http://www.fcps.edu). Specify food allergies or special needs for foods.

## Free Spay, Neuter at Shelter

During the month of December, the Fairfax County Animal Shelter is offering a free spay or neuter for the first 100 cats or kittens adopted from the shelter. This offer is part of the shelter's annual Home 4 the Holidays adoption promotion, which seeks to help shelter animals find a loving, permanent home during the holidays.

SEE NEWS BRIEFS, PAGE 5

# Paul VI Can Food Drive

FROM PAGE 3

"We so very much love holding this drive," said Paul VI Assistant Principal Eileen Hanley. "It is a wonderful opportunity for our school to reach out and help people in our own community."

Junior Leah Utley said people brought in cars, trunks and bags full of canned goods each morning, and students unloaded and counted each item and then re-loaded it all in the Food for Others truck. "We call it Hunger Action Week," she said. "We want to take action to stop hunger in our community, especially for those who may have to choose between filling up their car with gas or buying food."

Senior Stefanie Mueller wanted to participate Paul VI's SGA has seen "how much impact we make by doing this. We visited Food for Others last year and saw how much food they still needed and how much they depend on us for it."

Regarding the target foods they collected, sophomore Brendan Muha said the food bank "mainly wanted staples because they're for working families who wanted cereal for their kids for breakfast, tuna at night and peanut butter for their lunches."

Willard Humphries III, a senior, said, "The bad economy inspired people to give even more. We heard from Food for Others that their numbers [of people needing help] have tripled from recent years, and you do what you can, but you wish you could

do more. It's really humbling for a person to go get food from a food bank so they can live a normal, daily life."

Mueller felt good "seeing how much everyone cares and came together to help others." Muha said his advisory emphasized to the other advisories that "what we were doing is for people who don't have anything."

"It's, by far, my favorite week of the whole year," said Humphries. "I really like helping out the community and the people around here."

Utley said Food for Others is one of the largest food providers to the needy in Fairfax County, and Paul VI is its largest food supplier. "[Food for Others Director of Operations] Liz Reinert comes to our school and tells us how important the food drive is, and that, without our help, they wouldn't be able to stock their food shelves for the winter," said Utley.

"The support from parents and local businesses, who donate so the kids can buy cans too, is overwhelming," said Grim. "Families that didn't use to come in to Food for Others, now need help, and our kids realize that and are unselfish. A number of our students also volunteer and do service hours there, helping stock shelves and pack food boxes to give to families. Our school's mission includes developing responsible, moral, service-oriented, young adults, and we're really proud that we're able to contribute to Food for Others."

# Applewhite Honored as Eagle

Fairfax boy one of youngest Eagle Scouts in U.S. history.

Anthony Applewhite, a Fairfax, Virginia resident, who earned his Eagle Scout rank in early February 2009, just shortly after his 13th birthday, was honored by his Boy Scout Troop 1577, Boy Scout Council representatives, and U.S. and local government representatives in a special Eagle Court of Honor ceremony on June 13, at the Trinity Presbyterian Church in Herndon, where his Troop meets. Eagle Scout is a rank that 1-2 percent of scouts ever achieve, and most of them just shortly before their 18th birthday. Anthony's accomplishment makes him one of the youngest Eagle Scouts ever in the United States in the 100-year history of Boy Scouts of America (BSA).

The Boy Scout's National Capital Area Council was represented at the Eagle ceremony by John Stone, the Powhatan District Commissioner, who officially convened the National Eagle Court of Honor. Fellow Scouts and adult leaders in Troop 1577 formalized the achievement of the Eagle Scout rank through a traditional ceremony that included Anthony taking an additional oath that emphasized even further commitments and contributions to good citi-



Anthony Applewhite, left, at his Eagle Scout Court of Honor, with Kirk Brandt and Dan Null presenting his Eagle certificate.

zenship and service in the community. Officials in attendance at the ceremony were Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville), Herndon Vice-Mayor Connie Hutchinson and Sharon Stark, who is the district representative for U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11).

Emcee Ed Guy read from a set of letters and certificates that were received from dignitaries across the country to include: former President and First Lady George and Barbara Bush; U.S. Sen. Jim Webb (D-Va.); U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D11); Gov. Tim Kaine (D); Supervisors Pat Herrity (R-Springfield) and Michael Frey (R-Sully); Del. Tim Hugo (R-40); several astronauts (Heide Stephanyshyn-Piper and Pam

SEE BOY SCOUT, PAGE 7