

News Clips Report

Girls' Day Hammond Daily Star

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A Girls Day Celebration, the brainchild of Rita Anderson, was held May 28 in Martin Luther King Park.

Anderson is a paraprofessional in the Tangipahoa Parish School System who wanted to hold a lemonade and pizza party for three little girls as an end-of-the-school year treat last year. Word got around, and the party for three became party for 35 girls in Andersons back yard.

This year she decided to extend her community outreach for young girls between the ages of 6 and 9. She addressed the steering committee at the District 1 Pine Ridge Weed & Seed meeting and asked for assistance in presenting the event.

The community responded. Employees of the 7h Ward Marshal's Office, Hammond Fire Department, Vista volunteer Janice Beard and Hammond Junior Auxiliary got on board. The JA ladies provided the food.

R.M. dropped by during the afternoon and said more than 50 girls attended with word spreading and more arriving all day. From all accounts, she said it was a big success.

The goal of the Celebration is a to sow seeds of validation, hope and purpose. R.M. wrote in an e-mail asking for help for the program, 'It is a fact that people who know they are valuable are less likely to treat them or allow others to treat them as worthless. Help her tell our daughters that they are young, beautiful, gifted and loved.'

Anderson plans to hold another Girls' Day Celebration next year. Anyone wanting to help her may call (985) 687-4060 or Beard at (985) 277-5647.

The Tangipahoa Volunteers for Family and Community, the volunteers of the LSU AgCenter, held their annual volunteer luncheon on May 20 at Woodland Park Baptist Church in Hammond.

Over the years I've attended quite a few of those luncheons, though I didn't attend this year. I admire these resourceful ladies who year after year go out into their communities spreading good will with projects focusing on literacy.

Sunshine Lady Ann Bourliea sent a few photos, and I noticed Joan Reed received her 53-year membership certificate. Livingston Parish Extension Agent Laura Lea Perault, who used to be our parish agent, made the presentation.

Congratulations, Joan, and all the winners of awards this year for their service and dedication to their communities.

I was able to get a sneak peek into the new Albasha Greek and Lebanese Cafe on Wednesday and met with one of the owners, Nabeel Badawi. The inside is beautiful, and right away I was drawn to two room-size murals.

Nabeel told me the artist is Johnny F. Bell, who (I found out on his Web site) was named Louisiana State Artist Laureate by former Gov. 'Mike' Foster. Bell is from Denham Springs. The murals are a beautiful focal point along with a fountain in the dining room and what will be a shady outdoor seating area.

The other tenant in the same building will be Phil's Grill, which the Metairie location manager called 'a little neighborhood burger joint' that specializes in creating a new hamburger every month and plans special events, like a Kids Night on Tuesdays, when the children can create their own sundaes.

Beezie Landry with Stirling Properties said Hammond Square owners are very near signing the lease with another restaurant which will reside in the other new building with East of Italy, a pizza, sandwich and pasta place. He said it will be very different from the other three and added that lifestyle center owners have plans for at least seven restaurants at the site one perhaps a big national restaurant joining Santa Fe Cattle Co., Raising Cane's, Albasha, Phil's Grill, East of Italy and the soon-to-be named sixth restaurant across from the Palace Theatre.

Stay tuned for future developments.