

Pesce fund to help immigrant children

BY STEPHANIE ANGELINO CASOLA
STAFF WRITER

The Pesce name lives on in a memorial fund honoring the lives of young Carlo, Sabrina and Melissa Pesce - three children killed in their Livonia home along with their father, Marco Pesce, and grandmother, Maria Vergati, before Christmas.

The Carlo, Sabrina and Melissa Light of Life Memorial Fund benefits children afflicted with retina disorders.

It is operated by the National Association of Immigrant Families, A.N.F.E. Since 1992, children have come to the United States from Italy to receive medical attention "restoring light to their life."

The program was started by volunteers, including Livonia resident Theresa Nascimbeni. In light of the tragedy, she offered to name it after the Pesce children.

"Especially today - how the world goes - to know you'll be able to do something for other people I think is very, very important," she said.

According to a statement, the Pesce family "hopes that this memorial fund will help bring the light to the life of other children so that Carlo, Sabrina and Melissa, whose lives were cut short by such an act of senseless cruelty, may continue to live through the eyes of other children."

Karen Lazenby, funeral director at Harry J. Will Funeral Home in Livonia, said there has been tremendous community response to the memorial.

"Everyone has called to see what they can do," she said.

The fund has already paid for one child to have surgery here in Michigan since the incident last month, according to Lazenby.

The program began with one baby, now 10-year-old Gianluca Blama of Torino, Italy. It has

helped 82 children receive medical care. Doctors Michael Pesce and Anthony Capone Jr. of William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak handle the surgery - which mostly involves premature babies.

"When they come into the world, the retina is detached," Nascimbeni explained. "They are completely blind."

Nascimbeni hopes the program will also allow Italian doctors to come to the United States to learn about the procedure and technological advances so they can begin to help children within their own country.

As a volunteer, Nascimbeni helps make arrangements for the families to come to the U.S., takes them to the hospital and arranges for them to stay in an apartment in Royal Oak.

Because many speak only Italian, she works as a translator for families. During their two-to-five-week stay in Michigan,

Nascimbeni does her best to make them comfortable.

On Thursday, Jan. 9, she left for San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy. There, doctors held a conference to explain the procedure.

On Friday and Saturday, they saw nearly 40 children who will either undergo the procedure or be examined post-surgery.

"We can be very proud of what we've accomplished in many years," she said of the fund.

"It's like (Marco's brother) Fabrizio (Pesce) said, something can come (that is) very good. They would like this program to go on and be able to help Italian children."

Those who wish to send donations can make checks payable to The Carlo, Sabrina and Melissa Light of Life Memorial Fund, A.N.F.E. of Michigan, 35902 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia, MI 48150.

POLICE CALLS

Home Invasion
In the 30300 block of Glenmuir Street, a home had its door pried open to gain entry between 8:30 a.m.-4:20 p.m. Monday. Some rooms in the house were ransacked. A list of items taken would be submitted by the homeowner.

Drug possession
Police pulled over a vehicle along Grand River and

Middlebelt for a loud exhaust around 10:30 p.m. Monday. The driver, a 22-year-old Alameda man, had marijuana in the vehicle and a pipe.

At the Ramada Hotel, police pulled over a vehicle suspected of making a drug purchase at a room around 2:40 p.m. Monday. A 23-year-old woman and a 29-year-old man, both from Detroit, were arrested for possession of crack cocaine and marijuana.

Advocacy training offered

The Commission on Children, Youth and Family will an "Advocacy Training" seminar 6:30-9:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 23 at Farmington Hills City Hall in the council chambers. The seminar will be conducted by a representative of Michigan's Children, A Child Advocacy Organization. There is no cost for the seminar.

Farmington Hills City Hall is located at 31555 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills.

Creativity abounds at districtwide competition

Teams from the Farmington Public School District will present creative solutions to challenges posed at a Destination Imagination showcase Jan. 25.

The public is welcome to attend the event, held from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Farmington High School.

32000 Shiawassee. Teams are from Kenbrook, Longene, Forest, Hillside, Eagle, Gill, Our Lady of Sorrows and St. Fabian Elementary Schools and East, Dunclell and Power Middle Schools.

Destination Imagination gives kids a chance to expand

on the skills and knowledge they learn in school in a non-traditional way.

Organizers call it Creativity 101, or thinking outside of the box.

They say the program covers the things kids don't learn in their regular classes.

"However you describe

Destination Imagination, the bottom line is this, 'It's the most important course in education,' according to the program's promotional brochure.

For more information, call Margaret Telford at (248)489-3999 or visit www.destinationimagination.org.

-by staff writer Sue Buck

INK WELL

State Honors Choir
Paul Luoma of Farmington Hills auditioned and was chosen for the State Honors Choir, from the State Regional Choir. This is the second year in a row he has achieved this distinction. He is performing with the choir this month.

Luoma is a Junior at North Farmington High School and will again perform with the Male/Female Mixed Choir. He is also a member of Stagecrafters Youth Theater

Program in Royal Oak.

MSPRA contest winners
The Farmington Public School District has been named a winner in the annual Michigan School Public Relations Association Communications Contest.

Diane Bauman was presented with a "commendable" award in the Ind. P225 Annual Report Category for the entry, Farmington Public Schools 2000-2001 Annual Report.

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