

April 2009

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# Next Door Neighbors

VOL.3, ISSUE 4

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Meredith Collins, Publisher

Many of us enjoy an active lifestyle. Being active today may be a natural progression from days when we were younger, participating in team sports and other athletic events. Perhaps we simply enjoy activity in our lives to keep our weight down and improve our health with less of the competitive spirit and more of the 'I really need to do this' attitude. Whatever the case, we can all agree that there are very real health

benefits to remaining physically active as we age.

There can be other positive outcomes as well - emotionally, spiritually and even financially in terms of raising funds for good causes. The individuals we interviewed for this issue have taken their athleticism to another level. By using their interest in sports to give to good causes they have enriched the lives of others as well as their own.

There are hundreds - maybe even thousands - of locals who have their own passion for a cause or benefit that is meaningful to their lives. It would be impossible for us to tell all of their stories. Instead, we have selected a handful of area residents who are harnessing their interest in athleticism and making a difference in the lives of others. Enjoy! **NDN**

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**CORRECTION:** In the March issue, we communicated that Keyana Brown, sister of Dominique Brown, is a rising soccer talent. This was incorrect. She is a rising basketball talent. *Next Door Neighbors* regrets the error.



**Lisa Cumming**  
Photography

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757-532-4037 industrial  
www.lwcphoto.com architectural  
portrait

Cover Photo by Lisa Cumming



## TAKING A SWING AT **“Golf Ministry”**

*By Linda Landreth Phelps*

**B**obby Farino truly believes that playing sports can be fun as well as an act of faith. A good way to judge a person’s level of commitment to a concept is to check his books - both his date book and his check book. Bobby’s calendar would show him to be a very busy man, indeed. As for his check book, if asked, Bobby would say he recommends investing in futures - eternal futures.

At the moment Bobby is a Realtor with

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John Ryland and Associates, but a good deal of his spare time is spent with charitable projects. One of his favorite endeavors is the creation of the interdenominational Williamsburg Pastor’s Golf Association (WPGA). Since moving to Williamsburg in 1980, Bobby has belonged to several different churches. One day he realized that the overworked clergy of our area’s diverse places of worship had little chance for “down

time”. He knew that it was a challenge for them to get to know one another in an informal setting. Playing golf seemed to him to be the perfect way to blend sociability and exercise with just plain fun - networking in the most altruistic way. The result was a monthly WPGA outing where ministers of all faiths and people involved with service organizations such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and United Way can mingle in the spirit

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of ecumenism and friendly competition on local golf courses that generously donate their facilities. "A lot of good business takes place on the course," Bobby says, "but the emphasis is on a stress-free time to look forward to every month and on establishing and nourishing relationships. It's taken off from the original idea of serving just Williamsburg's clergy to an amazing Tidewater-wide golf outing. From the original group of 18, we've grown to over 90 players," Bobby says. Looking back, it's clear that facilitating such a ministry is a natural fit for Bobby's beliefs, talents and interests.

In high school, Bobby was a promising young baseball player as well as a force on the wrestling team. He wound up playing college ball for Wabash University in Topeka, Kansas, but was frustrated by languishing in the shadow of Davey Lopes, a first string shortstop who later played for the Los Angeles Dodgers and was an All-Star pro and 1978 Golden Glove winner. "I thought I was better than him, so it just shows how I grossly overestimated my abilities!" he jokes. Bobby is not by nature a benchwarmer. He's a doer, not an observer, so his attentions soon turned to the golf team, where he fell in love with the sport.

In the years to come golf became not only a pleasant pastime for him but how Bobby supported his family. "I was a salesman in my twenties and had a very successful real estate career going in the Shenandoah Valley. I was pretty wild - I played in a rock band for ten years - and I lacked for nothing I wanted. Like Solomon, anything my eyes desired, I could have. Still, I was unhappy when I thought, 'Is this it? Is this the best it will ever be for me?' I knew it wasn't enough. I found myself alone on a mountaintop one day, crying out to a God I wasn't sure I even knew. I came down the mountain a different man. I didn't see a burning bush, but I felt a lightning bolt. It was a drastic change and I knew my life's mission was to tell others what I found."

After eight years of dating, Bobby asked his high school sweetheart and prom date, Kandy, to marry him. He eventually convinced her that he had given up his former lifestyle and was ready to settle down. He spotted a need for golf club repair in Tidewater and pursued an apprenticeship to learn the craft. In 1974 he opened his first shop, Peninsula Golf Repair, tucked into several rooms of a little house on Denbigh's Old Courthouse Way. The business quickly grew and expanded to include the sale of antique golf clubs and a larger shop on Jefferson Avenue.

"The classic persimmon head clubs were very popular among the pros in those days," Bobby says. "For about five years I was the only person the PGA invited to sell clubs directly to the players on tour, so I was allowed to set up a tent at tournaments where I bought, sold, and repaired clubs. I was also really fascinated by the history of the sport and dreamed of opening a museum one day. Meanwhile, most of the really old clubs stayed stashed under our bed." He didn't know it at the time, but his interest in golf history would serve him well.

"The thing that launched my business to the next level," Bobby

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confides, “was the day somebody sold me a bag full of old McGregor Ben Hogan golf clubs. After doing some research, I realized that one of them had to be a historic club, the legendary 1-iron that had been missing since it was used by Ben Hogan himself for the crucial shot at the 1950 U.S. Open in Merion, Pennsylvania. It disappeared that day and hadn’t been seen for 33 years until it showed up in my hands. Since it had originally been stolen, I gave it back to Ben Hogan and he was amazed to see it again.” From then on, doors opened more easily for Bobby.

“My business was growing and doing well, making it possible to go on mission trips with my church. For the next seven years, I went all over the world, sharing my faith,” he says.

Bobby’s entire family has always been very involved with missions and sports. “When Jason [his son] was 15 he traveled and played with the U.S. National Soccer Team. His games took him all over the world,” the proud Dad says. In most other countries,

soccer reigns as the most fervently played and intensely followed sport, so Bobby figured it was the perfect way to connect with people whose languages might be different.

A close personal friend, Coach Steve Shaw, and his son teamed up with Bobby and Jason and began their sports ministry, which they called Agape Vision. They organized trips to orphanages in several countries, starting with Ethiopia, delivering hundreds of pounds of new, donated soccer balls, boots, and uniforms.

“Most of these kids had never owned anything that was new in their whole lives, much less dreamed of having anything so nice. Showing our love this way without any expectations of return was unbelievable

to those government officials. Their hearts were opened to our message.”

Bobby’s own heart has always been tender for the least popular, the handicapped, the misfits and outcasts, even as a child. “Everybody is important,” he declares. From



Ben Hogan at the 1950 U.S. Open

a kid growing up in Newport News whose passion was for sports to a world-traveling missionary who employs sports in his passion for people - it’s been an amazing trip for Bobby. An Ethiopian orphan kicking a new soccer ball on a dry, grassless field and a pastor enjoying 18

holes on the green fairways of a Williamsburg golf course are both happy and grateful to have been included in his journey of faith. NDN



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WHITNEY MUTTER

# Team in Training

By Brandy Centolanza

For Whitney Mutter, running started out as a fun way to connect with friends and get in shape. It ended up, however, being much more meaningful than a fitness routine.

Inspired by pals, Whitney initially began running as a hobby last summer. "It seemed like something that was so easy to do, that I could just walk out my door and start running," she recalls. "It quickly became addictive."

Last October, one of her friends mentioned to Whitney about Team in Training, a sports training program for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Nationally, more than 380,000 people, from newcomers to pro athletes, participate in the program while raising money to fight the blood diseases. Whitney knew immediately she wanted to be involved, in honor of her father-in-law, Melvin Mutter. In late 2007, he was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and has since gone into remission.

Whitney, a wife and mother of two, has plans to participate in the Yuengling Shamrock Half-Marathon this month in

Virginia Beach to raise money and awareness for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society.

Now, two running coaches, as well as a walking coach, and a mentor, are helping Whitney prepare for the half-marathon as part of Team in Training.

"They are very supportive, and motivational," she says. "They are always cheering me on to get me to the next point."

She tries to run three times a week, including early Saturday mornings with her friends, though she has had to cut back due to a minor stretching injury called iliotibial band (ITB) syndrome. The condition causes burning and discomfort between the hips and knees and is associated with heavy

running.

Whitney admits that she was not fond of running before her friends encouraged



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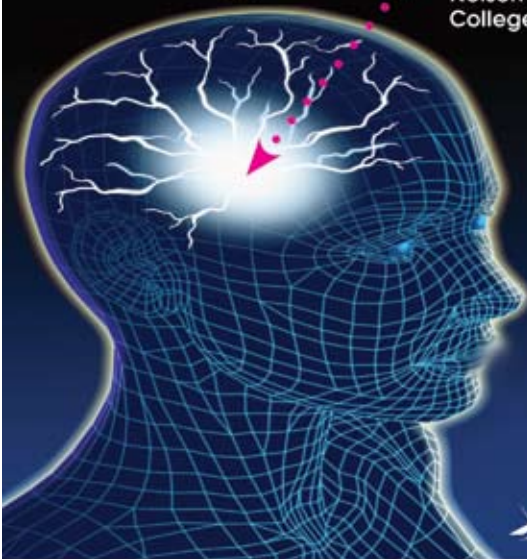
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her to give it a try.

"I didn't even like walking in my neighborhood," she says. "But then I had seen so many people start running and do so well with it that it just made me want to give it a shot."

She struggled at first until she found the right pair of shoes. "That really does make a difference," she points out. "Now after I run, I always feel great," she says. "I don't know if it's just the adrenaline, but if I hit a certain mile I have never hit before, I get such a great feeling inside. A runner's high is what they call it. I'm really getting to know my body."

Her husband, Ryan, has been a strong source of encouragement to Whitney in her endeavor. In the beginning, Ryan would join her on her runs - pushing their two children, Karah and Paul, in the double stroller alongside Whitney. Her friends have also helped by keeping her company on her runs and getting her to the next level. Sometimes when she is with them, she loses track of just how far she goes.

"I have one friend who likes to talk, and that's been a distraction," she laughs. "She's sneaky that way."

Whitney reminds herself often of the real reason why she runs. "My father-in-law is very grateful," she shares. "Every once in awhile, he sends me a little note that helps keep me going. My mother-in-law is the same way."

As part of her training, Whitney participated in her first 5K run in October to benefit the Heritage Humane Society. Her longest runs so far have been a seven-mile run as well as an eleven-mile combined walk and run, both completed last month. For lengthier distances with her Team in Training group, she prefers to train at Newport News Park and the battlefields at Yorktown. Shorter runs take place locally at New Quarter Park near Queens Lake, and on a treadmill she purchased for her home for the colder weather.

Whitney has established a website tracking her progress, and to keep everyone up to speed on her fundraising efforts. She is overwhelmed by the response as she nears her target goal of \$1,900. "I've received donations from people I don't even know," she says.

She finds some days are difficult to get motivated. "When you really want to quit, you think about what these people who have the disease are struggling with and the pain that you are feeling in the moment doesn't even compare to the pain that they are feeling."

Through Team in Training, Whitney has heard numerous stories about people who have battled or are battling leukemia and lymphoma, and her running group has held a "Silent Mile" run in honor of them. That has only made her more determined to finish her upcoming half-marathon.

"I'm just so excited about this," she states firmly. "I'm hoping to finish in about three and a half hours." NDN

*Publisher's Note: The Yuengling Shamrock Half-Marathon was held Sunday, March 22nd, after Next Door Neighbors went to press with this interview.*

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C.J. SMART

# MORE THAN AN ATHLETE

By Alison Johnson

Looking back on his childhood in Washington, D.C., C.J. Smart knows he could have taken a very different path in life. He saw violence and other negative aspects of city life up close and personal. When C.J. was just ten years old, his older brother was robbed at gunpoint on the stairway at their apartment. Two years later, a good friend was murdered. C.J. saw the riches that drugs could bring; one of his friend's father was a "big-time" dealer with a flashy life-style.

Luckily, C.J. had David Johnson to turn to for guidance in a world where it was possible for a young person to take any number of roads and easily wind up on a dead end. David was not C.J.'s biological brother, but he was older and took him under his wing.

"For a kid coming up, you always want to be the cool kid, and selling drugs in my neighborhood was the cool thing to do," says C.J., now 29, and a manager for Wal-Mart in James City County. He is also a

member of a local semi-pro football team. "David played high school basketball and was a good student. So he showed me that you could be a good student and not be in the streets



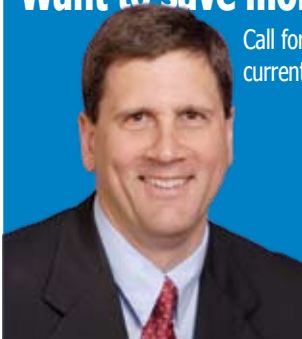
and still be cool. He showed me the other side of the fence that I wouldn't have had an opportunity to see without him."

Today, C.J. is happy to return the gift by taking on David's role in another child's life. As an active member of Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) of the Greater Williamsburg Area, he works with a 10-year-old boy named Rashawn. He also is passionate about helping raise money for the non-profit at its annual Bowl for Kids' Sake.

C.J. has bowled in the fundraiser for the past four years, collecting money by selling baked goods, breakfast foods, chicken wings and french fries. "Kids are our future, so I want to give back," he says. "It's a beautiful thing to watch them grow and be a part of that."

C.J. can't help but think how meaningful David was in his own life and it is only natural for him to want to be that for another youngster. One of

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nine surviving children - an older brother was murdered in 2005 - C.J. grew up in a military family and spent parts of his childhood in Texas and Washington. His mother, father and stepfather were all in the service, and C.J. lived with an aunt in Washington while his mother served overseas.

"On a daily basis, you would see guys hanging out on the corner, cars being stolen or someone being shot," C.J. reflects. "I came up in D.C. in the crack era. It had just started to get big, and with it came crime."

While still young and impressionable, C.J.

met David through a mentoring program called Rites of Passage. David would visit him regularly and make sure he was doing well in school. He also encouraged C.J. to play sports and he attended his football and basketball games and practices.

Athletics made him stronger both physically and mentally. "Sports build character because they bring adversity and challenges just as everyday life does," he says. "You learn how to stand up to things and work through problems."

C.J. went on to play linebacker at Bridge-

water College, a private school in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. The Division III program competes in the Old Dominion Athletic Conference, which also includes Hampden-Sydney, Randolph-Macon and Washington & Lee. C.J. graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Communications.

Now living in the Williamsburg area and the father of a 2-year-old girl, C.J. juggles his full-time job at Wal-Mart with playing linebacker for the Virginia Crusaders, a minor league football team in the Mason-Dixon Football League. The team's 13-game season

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runs from July through the fall. Last November, the Crusaders won a national championship. Even during the off-season, players usually work out together three times a week at a gym in Hampton.

C.J. considers his work with BBBS just as important. The organization pairs youths with adult mentors for positive guidance and friendship, hoping to help make kids more responsible, self-confident and in control of their emotions.

As a Big Brother, C.J. sees Rashawn at least once a week. The two have gone to basketball games, shot hoops and done homework together. C.J. also has gone to eat lunch at Rashawn's elementary school and encourages the fourth-grader in his dream of someday playing college football.

"Rashawn is a great kid with a wonderful personality," C.J. says. "He is very social and opinionated. He just happens to have a temper, but I'm helping him control that and getting him to see that every action has a reaction and consequence. He has definitely started to control his temper and that is helping him see the positives in thinking before he reacts."

Rashawn's mother agrees that C.J. has definitely had an impact. "They both like the same things – especially football – and he's a good mentor and motivator," she says. "C.J. helps Rashawn look toward the future and has shown him that he can succeed. He's really improved a lot this school year in terms of grades and behavior. He's working harder and not getting in trouble like he used to."

Studies of BBBS programs nationwide have shown mentors can provide many benefits. An 18-month study of eight BBBS affiliates found kids in the program were 52 percent less likely to skip school, 46 percent less likely to use illegal drugs, 32 percent less likely to hit someone and 27 percent less likely to abuse alcohol compared to a control group of children without mentors.\*

The program is even more important in tough economic times, says Elizabeth Chisolm, Chief Executive Officer for BBBS of Greater Williamsburg. The local non-profit currently has about 150 pairs of mentors and children, as well as a waiting list of children. Kids can come into the program from kindergarten through age 12 and stay in it through high school. Often, mentors – also called "Bigs" – can not only give a child hope for the future but spot immediate problems such as a lack of food or clothing.

"Our Bigs are such a first line of defense for these children," Chisolm says. "They can tell us what's going on, and often we can connect families with services and resources to help. Bigs can have such a lifelong impact on a child by giving such a short amount of time – just an hour a week."

Bowl for Kids' Sake, held in late February, is the organization's only annual fundraiser and draws hundreds of bowlers. The event is a natural fit for C.J., who counts bowling – both at the alley and in video games – as one of his favorite hobbies. He averages a score of about 190 a game. But with Bowl for Kids' Sake, the real goal isn't lots of strikes but lots of dollars.

"At Wal-Mart, we all try to outdo each other every year," he says. "We know how important this is to the community." **NDN**

For more information on BBBS of Greater Williamsburg call 757-253-0676.  
\* [www.bbbs.org/site/c.djKKYPLJvH/b.1539813/apps/content.asp?ct=2397381](http://www.bbbs.org/site/c.djKKYPLJvH/b.1539813/apps/content.asp?ct=2397381)

CINDY STEGER

# Puts Her Heart into Fighting Heart Disease

By Rachel Sapin

When Cindy Steger, a competitive race walker with a history as a college athlete and a former instructor for a Northern Virginia police academy's running program, crossed the finish line of her first Heart Walk in 2006 she was amazed by how many faces she met at the finish line. "I started off with everybody in the beginning, and I just took off and did my normal pace," she remembers. "When I came back, I was then meeting the masses and it was incredible. The length of the road was packed with walkers and I swear it went on for probably 3/4 of a mile."

Although heart disease is an umbrella term used to describe a range of diseases that affect the heart and blood vessels (with coronary artery disease being the most common type), its worldwide prevalence is still alarming. According to information on the website [mayoclinic.com](http://mayoclinic.com), heart disease is the number one killer of men and women worldwide and in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

When we think of a heart attack, we often picture what is known as the "Hol-

lywood Heart Attack," where an individual dramatically grips their chest and collapses on the floor. However, studies have shown that rather than chest pain, more women than men experience atypical symptoms at the time of a heart attack such as back pain, nausea or fatigue.<sup>2</sup>

Due to information gaps related to the development, diagnosis, and treatment of heart disease in women, when it comes to heart attacks, women are often misdiagnosed, and delayed in receiving proper treatment.<sup>3</sup>

Two years earlier, Cindy experienced a heart attack shortly after competing in a 5K racewalk. Feeling dizzy and fatigued following the

racewalk, she called her doctor, but he was already booked with patients. Since her symptoms didn't indicate that she needed immediate



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medical attention, it wasn't until a few days later - when Cindy felt shooting pains in her arms - that she was admitted to the hospital. At the hospital Cindy learned that part of her heart muscle had died from being deprived of oxygen for days. Just five months earlier, she had undergone a treadmill stress test that gave her a clean bill of health.

Cindy's story is not unusual for women who have experienced a heart attack. Noel Bairey Merz, Director of the Women's Heart Center and Chair of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-sponsored WISE (Women's Ischemic Syndrome

**“One of the things that I tell people is that an overweight person who regularly exercises is at less risk of having heart disease than a thin, inactive person.”**

- Cindy Steger

Evaluation) Initiative, noted in a 2006 interview for National Public Radio's "All Things Considered" that "false reassurances," such as being cleared by an angiogram, lead many women to question whether their health is in jeopardy when they experience atypical heart attack symptoms. "At this past year's Heart Walk - there were a lot of signs explaining that heart disease is the number one killer of women and that more women die from heart disease than from all cancers combined," remembers Cindy. "It was information like that that made me think 'Wow, I'm glad that message is getting out.'"

Cindy is passionate about participating in The American Heart Association Heart Walk because it helps spread awareness of the prevalence of heart disease among women in the U.S. In addition, walking regularly is also what helped save Cindy's life. "There are so many reasons why I should not have survived that heart attack," says Cindy. "Walking was what allowed my heart to start forming collateral veins, which doesn't typically happen unless you're a professional athlete or until you're in your late sixties."

Through Heart Walk, Cindy is not only raising funds for heart disease but also spreading the message that regular exercise can save your life. "Unlike any other disease, the heart is a muscle and you have to activate it in order for it to have any benefit," explains Cindy. "One of the things that I tell people is that an overweight person who regularly exercises is at less risk of having heart disease than a thin, inactive person. It's important to get the message out that it doesn't matter if you walk a ten-minute mile or if you walk a thirty-minute mile, but that just getting out and doing something as simple as walking is so fantastic for your heart."

Almost five years since she survived her heart attack, Cindy has raised \$15,000 for The American Heart Association through Heart Walk, and now walks for the American Heart Association Team. For Cindy, the walk isn't only a day for survivors; it's also a day that brings the entire community together in celebration of survival and heart disease awareness. "What's neat about Heart Walk is that it's very family-oriented," explains Cindy. "You see everyone from grandparents who can barely walk all the way down to little kids who are just learning to walk. The Walk is held at Newport News Park; they have bands and speakers and there are booths all over the place, and then the Walk. It's just a part of that day."

As a result of her own experience with heart disease, Cindy now encourages others to take control of their health. "You have to be your own advocate and you have to be responsible for yourself," implores Cindy. "You need to know what your cholesterol numbers are; you need to know what your blood pressure is, and you need to actually know the number. I'm just blown away by people who say, 'My numbers are good.' But when I ask them what they are, they respond, 'I don't know but my doctor tells me they're good.' Doctors don't really have a lot of time to spend with us anymore. That's why knowledge is so empowering. If you're knowledgeable about your own health, you're better equipped to go to the doctor and say, 'Look, my cholesterol has always been 150 but I've noticed that for the past two years it's been 200. And that's a big change, and I want to do something about it.'"

Since Heart Walk provides Cindy with only one opportunity each year to help raise funds for and spread awareness of heart disease, she feels that it's also important to share her survival story with others. "I'm a pretty proud person, and I don't generally tell people my health problems," she reflects. "That was the hardest part for me: having to admit to people that I had heart disease and had had a heart attack because you know, no matter what, people look at you like, 'What did she do wrong?' Now my goal is to talk to people about this so that they don't experience what I experienced. Having a heart attack is not fun; it's not a great thing to go through. If I can save someone from going through that, that's what's worth it right there." NDN

To learn more about The American Heart Association's 2009 Hampton Roads Start! Heart Walk and how you can help Cindy Steger raise funds for and awareness of heart disease, visit [www.starthamptonroadsva.org](http://www.starthamptonroadsva.org).

<sup>1</sup> [www.mayoclinic.com/health/heart-disease/DS01120](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/heart-disease/DS01120)

<sup>2</sup> [www.hearthealthywomen.org/index.php?view=article&id=83&Itemid=1&option=com\\_content](http://www.hearthealthywomen.org/index.php?view=article&id=83&Itemid=1&option=com_content)

<sup>3</sup> [www.womenheart.org/resources/upload/10\\_Q\\_Report\\_06.pdf](http://www.womenheart.org/resources/upload/10_Q_Report_06.pdf)



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## DEBRA HILL

# *A Love for Sports*

and giving back

By Sara E. Lewis

When College of William & Mary volleyball player Kathleen Hawley faced a family crisis five years ago, Coach Debra Hill rallied the troops. Kathleen's brother, Matt, had been diagnosed with a spinal cord tumor.

Debra supported Kathleen and the team as they organized to walk in support of Matt at Relay For Life, the American Cancer Society's signature

fundraising and awareness event.

The "Miles for Matt" Relay For Life team has continued to walk in memory of Matt at the annual College of William & Mary cancer event. The volleyball team is scheduled to walk for the fifth year on April 3, 2009, at Busch Field near William & Mary Hall.

Relay For Life is one of many fundraising events and causes that Debra has been involved in as an athlete during her 32 years at William & Mary, as well as before and since



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retiring last May. "Coaches were always my role models," she says. Debra believes that it is natural for athletes to want to participate in sporting events for good causes. Because athletes are generally competitive and outgoing, they are often good at raising money.

"Like my coaches, I believe that as athletes we are fortunate and should give back," she says. "I was raised with that ethic, so that was always a part of my coaching."

Debra grew up in Florida and from the beginning believed that a healthy lifestyle included sports. She calls herself a throw back: "When I grew up, you played everything." She participated in five team sports including badminton, basketball, track, softball, and volleyball. "In Miami there were lots of programs for girls and it was the beginning of expansion for girls in sports."

Although she has retired, Debra still participates with the "Miles for Matt" team. Kim Mount, senior volleyball team member, is spearheading the group effort this year.

To support the team, anyone can go to the Relay For Life website and look for events in Williamsburg. Select "Miles for Matt" and donate online or print off a form from the site and send a donation in the mail. Volleyball team member Molly Bohman, a William & Mary senior, is running the entire College of William & Mary Relay For Life event this year.

Even before organizing the "Miles for Matt" team, Debra and many of her team members participated in the William & Mary Relay and gave back to the community in other ways. For example, the team offered a number of youth volleyball clinics. Debra is proud of her volleyball team members' past efforts and sees them participating in a lifetime of community involvement.

Debra, who holds a B.A. from the University of Houston and M.A. from UNC-Greensboro in Physical Education, believes that William & Mary athletes are "a cut above" the rest. "That's just my personal opinion," she says. Not only does she arrive at that opinion based upon her relationships with students and colleagues, but there is a personal connection also. Her partner, Camilla Buchanan, is a William & Mary Hall of Fame athlete who participated in field hockey, basketball, and lacrosse; she is also a world class bicyclist. Debra's daughter, Camilla Hill, is a sophomore at William & Mary who plays field hockey.

In addition, Debra says that Buchanan, a Williamsburg physician, has dedicated ev-

**"Like my coaches, I believe that as athletes we are fortunate and should give back. I was raised with that ethic, so that was always a part of my coaching." - Debra Hill**

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ery spare minute of the past ten years to the Maasai American Organization, a small non-profit that promotes education and community health in Kenya ([www.maasaiamerican.org](http://www.maasaiamerican.org)). She founded the organization in partnership with two Kenyan women, Lydia Masikonte and Tiito Mpetti, and an American friend, Lea Pellett. Debra claims that her partner, who returned to school at the age of 60 to earn a Master's Degree in Public Health and who is currently in England completing a diploma in tropical medicine, is the real mover and shaker. "This article should be about her," says Debra. "I just bob along in her wake!"

Debra volunteers in Africa with Maasai American and sees it as an extension of her philosophy of life. "I have a responsibility to help make the world a better place." But anyone who knows Debra knows that her willingness to walk all night for Relay For Life or pitch in digging wells in Africa has a lot to do with her core nature. "I just love people,"

says Debra. A big benefit of giving to others is what you get back in return. According to Debra, relationships with others improve the quality of life. "You get a better appreciation of how fortunate you are."

As a parent, Debra has developed an empathy with other people such as Matt Hawley's parents. "When you have a child the same age, it is easy to see that you've been fortunate in life," she says. She sees giving back through athletic events, community, and global involvement as a way to "balance the scales."

Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature activity. It offers communities an opportunity to participate by remembering loved ones, celebrating the lives of those who have battled cancer, and fighting back to put an end to the disease. NDN

*To find out more about Relay for Life and how you can fight cancer go to [www.therelayforlife.org](http://www.therelayforlife.org). You will find more info on the April 3-4 event, William and Mary, and the May 29-30 event, Williamsburg.*

## Next Door Neighbors

### Publisher

Meredith Collins

### Managing Editor

Joe Collins

### Copy Editor

Al White

### Lifestyle Editor

Greg Lilly

### Cover Photographer

Lisa Cumming

### Writers

Linda Landreth Phelps, Suzi Drake, Rachel Sapin, Brandy Centolanza, Sara E. Lewis, Muna Killingback, Natalie Miller-Moore, Charlene Smith, Alison Johnson

### Advertising Information

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Please email your questions, comments and ideas to: [meredith.collinsgroup@cox.net](mailto:meredith.collinsgroup@cox.net)

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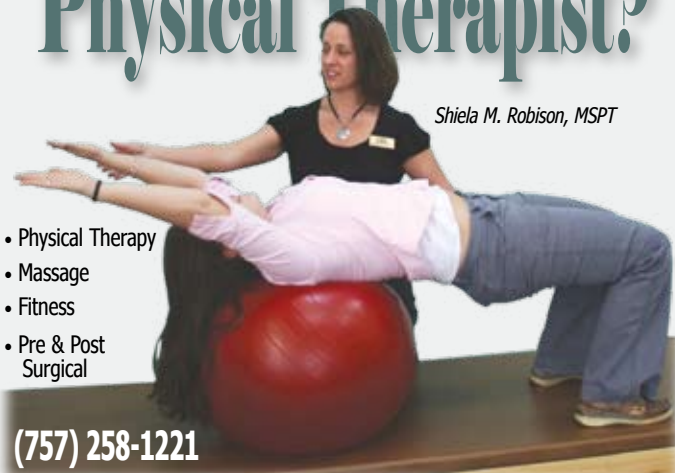


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# EAT WELL FEEL GREAT

## Next Door Neighbors Health

MEGAN CORDOVA SHARES SIMPLE TIPS FOR NOURISHING MEALS

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor

A balanced meal is the key to looking and feeling great explains Megan Cordova, registered dietician. Megan educates people on finding the right balance in their food choices. However, she's not the type to make you feel ashamed of what you eat.

"Food is good," she says. "It should be enjoyable." Too many people go on a 'diet' and then scold themselves when they fail to remain on it. "This is not a diet. Just throw the 'diet' word out the door," she says. "Any food can be worked into a healthy eating plan. For so many people, it's on and off, black or white, and they can't have something. It's okay; it's just a few calories." That's why healthy eating is a way of life, not a temporary regimen to achieve a specific goal.

Megan grew up in Baton Rouge, Louisiana and became fascinated with food and nutrition while in college. "Part of my interest in nutrition came from my own struggle with my weight during high school," she explains, "and then, my father was overweight and died of heart disease." Today, Megan works with Sentara's Diabetes Education Service and with Children's Hospital of The King's Daughter's 'Healthy You' program.

Her job is to educate people on healthy



eating habits and weight management. "Nothing is more touching than when I hear how much the clients' lives have changed because either they've lost weight, lowered their cholesterol, or controlled their blood sugar,"

she says. "It's quite rewarding to help make a change in someone's life."

Small changes in eating habits can bring forth a healthier you. Megan offers advice to achieve a more balanced and nourishing

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# Next Door Neighbors Health

relationship with food:

**Eat breakfast.** If you skip breakfast, your metabolism drops by 4 to 5 %, Megan says, making it harder to lose weight. “We know that people who skipped breakfast actually consume more calories throughout the day than people who ate breakfast.”

**Watch portion sizes.** What is a portion? Megan offers these cues: For fruit, think of a tennis ball; for meat, a deck of cards; for cereals and grains, a cup is about a large handful.

**Drink more water.** Drink less soda and juice drinks. Be very mindful of energy drinks since they usually have too much caffeine and sugar.

**Increase monounsaturated fats and omega-3s.** This includes nuts but you have

to watch your portion size and limit them to about one ounce a day. Nuts are a good source of protein and heart-healthy fat. Other good sources of monounsaturated fats are olive oil, avocados, olives, and peanut butter.

For omega-3 to keep our blood thin, think: salmon, mackerel, herring, and other cold water fish. Try to eat fish a least twice a week.

**Increase whole grains.** The germ and the bran of the grain are packed with nutrients. “When looking at the ingredients,” Megan advises, “the first ingredient should be ‘whole’ something.” At least half of your grains should be whole grains (bread, crackers, pasta, & cereals).

**Eat balanced.** A meal composed of carbohydrates, proteins, and fat continue to give you energy throughout the day. That’s why a breakfast of only yogurt or only toast doesn’t keep your appetite satisfied.

**Get Active.** Do something everyday. It doesn’t have to be a continuous 30 to 60 minutes a day. Use a pedometer and aim for

10,000 steps a day which is about five miles. Park at the far end of the parking lot; take the stairs; take short walks during the day. These small changes can help you be active. For weight management, longer continuous exercise burns calories.

“My philosophy is that there are no bad foods,” Megan adds. “Some foods are healthier, some are not as healthy, but there is nothing that can’t be worked into your meal plan.” She uses the 80/20 rule: What you’re doing 80% of the time is what counts. If you’re eating healthy 80% of the time then you can afford that 20% to have some of your favorite things that may not be as healthy. She advises to think about “How often are you eating those less healthy choices and what are the portion sizes?”

Getting active, watching portion sizes, and focusing on healthier food choices can make a difference in your waistline and in your well being. Once you understand what goes into your mouth, Megan says, you have more control over your health. Eat well, feel great. NDN



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# THE GREEN PLAN

Randy Pingley Helps You Grow the Perfect Lawn

by Greg Lilly, Lifestyle Editor



Choosing the right grass for your yard, Randy Pingley explains, is one of the biggest challenges to achieving a lush lawn. Randy is the Director of Landscape at Kingsmill Resort & Spa and for the Kingsmill community. He knows a thing or two about nurturing grass into a blanket of green.

“My family is from West Virginia where my grandfather owned a Christmas tree farm,” he says. In the summers, Randy would bale hay, tend the vegetable gardens, and shear Christmas trees. His father was career military and they moved every few years, but he spent his summers on his grandparents’ farm. Eventually, his father landed in Fort Eustis when Randy was 15.

As a teenager in Hampton Roads, Randy found that he could make good money mowing lawns. “When the people would come out to pay me,” he describes, “they just loved the way things looked. I developed an appreciation for their reaction. Their encouragement and gratitude spurred me to keep working harder.” His mowing extended farther down his street and throughout the neighborhood. “I would tie the lawnmower to the back of my bike and pedal it down the road,” he remembers.

A job at McDonald Garden Center taught Randy the importance of product knowledge. “I was in charge of watering the nursery stock,” he says. “While I stood there watering, I started to read the tags on the plants, mostly out of boredom.” Before he knew it, he had educated himself on the planting and care of the inventory. As he moved to other areas, he learned more and more about the nursery and its products and services. Customers would seek Randy’s



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# Next Door Neighbors Home

recommendations for plants and lawn care.

Eileen Weldon at Busch Gardens hired him to help with the theme park's landscaping and eventually he moved over to Kingsmill. "Kingsmill is a beautiful and unique place to work," Randy says. "I get to interact with the residents and with the resort guests. I receive calls from the front desk when the guests want to know what certain plants are called or how we achieved a particular grouping they like." The residents and guests' appreciation of his team's work brings satisfaction to his voice. A beautiful lawn is part aesthetics, part science, and part hard work. Thriving grass and a hearty lawn exhibit your pride in your home and surroundings. To create that verdant lawn, Randy likes a three-pronged approach: "Determine your lawn's identity, build a program around it, and commit to maintenance."

"What type of grass do you want?" he asks. "Decide and stick with it. There are many people who have three or four types of grass in their lawn, and that makes it hard to work with." His two recommendations are tall fescue or Bermuda. Even with the drawbacks about each type – fescue is demanding, Bermuda goes dormant in the

winter – Randy says with our soil conditions and rainfall, these are the two contenders.

"Anyone caring for a lawn must establish and follow a yearly program." He suggests keep-

ing a notebook or calendar in your garage or shed to reference as you work with the lawn. The local county extension agencies are good places to find a base program. Note such activities like watering, fertilizing, aeration, over seeding, and sharpening mower blades. Don't just jot down when you do the tasks, but also add the results of your efforts.

This leads into the commitment of maintenance. By following, tracking, and adjusting the program, you can tweak it to your lawn's needs.

Randy weighs the debate between fescue and Bermuda grasses with their pluses and minuses and says it really depends on the individual lawn, the owner's preferences for following a program and the amount of maintenance they're willing to do. "Even with an irrigation system, Fescue is still finicky," Randy says. "You may lose some of it depending on the rainfall. You should have about an inch of water per week to keep it

robust. An inch of water is a lot. You really have to irrigate deeply to soak the roots. And with the hot weather and watering, you can get fungus and other diseases that could harm the fescue."

Randy prefers Bermuda for the resort. Kingsmill has Bermuda on all three of the golf courses. "And what we do to counter the tan/white dormant winter look is we over-seed it with rye grass in September. As soon as the hot weather comes, the rye dies back and the Bermuda comes through. It's a

transition between the two to get a year-round green lawn."

One advantage Randy says Bermuda has over fescue for his work is its drought tolerance and ability to

**"Determine your lawn's identity, build a program around it, and commit to maintenance."**

- Randy Pingley

spread. "The reason we use it on the golf courses" he explains, "is that it regenerates and it grows horizontal. So when you take a divot out of the fairway, it helps re-stitch itself. When you chunk up fescue, it's gone. If you lose fescue in your lawn, it's not coming back. If you lose some Bermuda in patches, the lawn will eventually grow over it."

Although Randy doesn't pull his lawnmower behind a bike anymore, he still takes pride in creating and maintaining a hearty lawn that elicits smiles and compliments. NDN

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# Hey Neighbor!

There are more community announcements for this issue that did not fit on this page.

Please visit [www.wburgndn.com](http://www.wburgndn.com) and click on **Hey Neighbor!** for a complete list of current community announcements.

## Hey Neighbor!

### THREE JOLLY COACHMEN BENEFIT CONCERT FOR CAPERNAUM

March 27, 2009

7:30 pm at the Kimball Theatre. Tickets are \$15. Benefits Capernaum, a ministry that provides social opportunities and creates community for adolescents with special needs. For more information, visit our website at [www.capernaumthrutherroof.com](http://www.capernaumthrutherroof.com), contact the Kimball Theatre at 565-8588, or call Capernaum Director, Ben Conner at 784-8607.

## Hey Neighbor!

### 2009 JUNIOR WOMEN'S CLUB REVERSE RAFFLE

March 28, 2009

7:30 pm at the Historic Triangle Community Building. The Raffle will benefit local charities. Possible grand prize of \$5,000. Please contact the Junior Woman's Club of Williamsburg for tickets or further information at [williamsburgjuniors@hotmail.com](mailto:williamsburgjuniors@hotmail.com) or visit our website at [www.jwcnevents.org](http://www.jwcnevents.org).

## Hey Neighbor!

### FREE LEGAL SERVICES BY LEGAL OUTREACH PROGRAM

March 28, 2009

10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Norge Elementary. Sponsored by Williamsburg Bar Association and W-JCC Community Action Agency. Legal services offered: Uncontested Divorce, Child Custody and Support, Landlord/Tenant, Consumer Law, Employment Law, Will/Estate Law, Immigration Law, Bankruptcy, Restoration of Driving Privileges and Voting Rights. For more information call: Linda Wallace or Yvonne Joseph, 229-9332 W-JCC Community Action Agency.

## Hey Neighbor!

### COVER THE UNINSURED

Now thru March 29, 2009

UNO Chicago Grill in Kiln Creek and Williamsburg will partner with the Lackey Free Clinic in observance of Cover the Uninsured week. Please support the clinic by visiting our website at [www.lackeyfreeclinic.com](http://www.lackeyfreeclinic.com) and printing out a ticket to present to your server during that week. Also, join us at the Ben & Jerry's Free Cone Day 2009 on April 21. Come out and enjoy a free ice cream and learn about the free services in your area. Any donations collected will go to the clinic. Contact Sue Salva at 886-0608 with any questions.

## Hey Neighbor!

### SCHOLA CONTORUM CONCERT SERIES

March 29, 2009

4:00 pm at Williamsburg Baptist Church, 227 Richmond Road. Free and open to the public. Offering received. This select choral group from the University of Richmond will present music recently performed on its concert tour to Prague, Slovakia, and Budapest. For more information contact Agnes French at Williamsburg Baptist Church, 229-1217.

## Hey Neighbor!

### NOMINATIONS FOR THIRD ANNUAL WOMEN WITH A CAUSE CELEBRATION

April 1, 2009

We are currently accepting nominations for the Third Annual Women With A Cause Celebration: founded with the purpose of learning about, celebrating, and raising awareness of women who, with passion and dedication, have championed a cause and made a significant impact in our community. Put your thinking caps on...surely there is someone you know, or

work with, who is doing amazing things that we should all know about. This is your opportunity to introduce her to us, and the community. Nomination forms can be downloaded at [www.womenwithacause.org](http://www.womenwithacause.org). The Third Annual Women With a Cause Celebration will be held at TowneBank Williamsburg Thursday evening, May 28, 2009.

## Hey Neighbor!

### BLOOMS THAT BRIGHTEN, INC. NEEDS VASES

Blooms That Brighten, Inc., a nonprofit organization which provides free floral arrangements to local nursing home facilities and Hospice House is looking for vases to be donated. You may contact the organization at 229-1665 or visit their website at [www.bloomsthatbrighten.com](http://www.bloomsthatbrighten.com).

## Hey Neighbor!

### PROVIDENCE CLASSICAL SCHOOL MINISTRY & MILITARY SCHOLARSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE

Providence Classical School has announced the availability of new scholarships for families in Christian ministry and the military. PCS will consider applications on the basis of need, and encourages interested families to apply. For more information, please contact Edith Dickerson in the school office: 565-2900, [edickerson@PCSvirginia.org](mailto:edickerson@PCSvirginia.org) or through the website: [www.PCSvirginia.org](http://www.PCSvirginia.org).

### ATTENTION

#### NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS!

Please email [heyneighbor@cox.net](mailto:heyneighbor@cox.net) on or before Tuesday, April 7th to be considered for inclusion in the April 23rd issue of Next Door Neighbors.

NetworkWilliamsburg & The Tradition Golf Club at Stonehouse present

## Swing For YOUR Cause!

A Season Long Golf Tournament benefitting the registered nonprofit of YOUR choice!

\$55 includes Golf PLUS \$15 donated to YOUR favorite cause each time you play and prizes throughout the day!

**The next monthly tournament will be held Saturday, April 18 at 1:00 p.m. (shotgun start).**

Registration deadline is Wednesday, April 15.

Visit [www.NetworkWilliamsburg.com](http://www.NetworkWilliamsburg.com) or [www.TraditionalClubs.com](http://www.TraditionalClubs.com) for more information.



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