

study committee, chaired by Mr. Pane, discovered that 93 percent of addicts began their use before the age of 17. Sixty-three percent began before the age of 14. And, alarmingly, 80 percent of those in prison in the United States are there for drug-related offenses.

Serento Gardens is the sole provider of drug and alcohol counseling and prevention services to children, teens, and adults in the greater Hazleton area. In 2006, the agency's programs reached more than 22,000 individuals in Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District. In its 30-year history, the agency has directly benefited hundreds of thousands of individuals in northeastern Pennsylvania.

In 2007, Serento Gardens was named the Pennsylvania Counseling Agency of the Year by the Pennsylvania Certification Board in Harrisburg. The PCB is the body which certifies all substance abuse counselors and educators in the Commonwealth.

Madam Speaker, please join me in congratulating Serento Gardens for the invaluable work that is done to prevent people from succumbing to the ravages of addiction and to rescue those already addicted so they can return to a productive life. The work being accomplished by Serento Gardens has improved the quality of life for thousands of people and has earned it the respect of a grateful community.

HONORING MARINA E. ORTEGA

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. ENGEL. Madam Speaker, it is with great sadness that I report the passing of Marina E. Ortega, a long time resident of Mount Vernon, who died on February 7, 2008. She was born January 18, 1938 to Felix and Maria Ortega in Jamaica, West Indies, where she was raised. She trained as a nurse in England, graduating as a state certified midwife.

In 1968, she arrived in the United States and worked as head nurse in the medical/surgical unit at United Hospital. She also obtained her certificate as a nurse practitioner, HIV counselor, and New York State certified nurses aids trainer and examiner.

She retired in 1992 and worked as a volunteer at the Mount Vernon Neighborhood Health Center until June 2006. During this period she established a volunteer services program and placed over 300 volunteers at the center; she set up and coordinated a Reach-Out and Read literacy program for children, which became a model program for the State; and served on all fundraising committees.

In 2006, Ms. Ortega organized and served as president of the Caribbean Cultural Caucus where she fought vigorously for an amnesty bill for the English-speaking Caribbean nations. In 2000, in part because of her work, I introduced legislation to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act in regard to Caribbean-born immigrants.

Ms. Ortega was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church in Mount Vernon. She is survived by a sister, Helen Graham; three brothers, Francisco Ortega, Sisto Ortega, and St.

George Walker; two aunts, Josepha, Castera and Daisy Hernandez; a sister-in-law, Sylvia Webb; with Carol Morris and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Marina and I worked together many times in helping the Caribbean community. She was ardent and steadfast in helping people as a nurse, as a volunteer, and as someone who cared deeply for her community. It is with great sorrow that I and the entire community say farewell to her.

HONORING TONI BEATTY

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Madam Speaker, Rio Rancho, NM, is known as the City of Vision. It exists today because of the vision of countless citizens and public servants who are transforming a desert into a metropolis.

Toni Beatty had a particular kind of vision. While others imagined homes and businesses and roads, she imagined a community of readers and thinkers and dreamers.

When Toni moved to Rio Rancho in 1986, the town had just begun to grow into a city. She was hired to build a library system that would keep pace with the area's dramatic growth. As Rio Rancho has grown over the last two decades, Toni's libraries have grown with it. They have hosted art shows and horse fairs. They have exposed residents to ancient cultures and current events. And they have always reflected Toni's remarkable combination of intellectual curiosity and public spirit.

Now, Toni is leaving Rio Rancho to return to Mexico City. She leaves behind a community more developed in every way than the one she moved to 22 years ago. She also leaves behind a library system that would be the envy of any city. During her time in Rio Rancho, she recruited and trained a professional staff that will remember her ability and kindness long after she has left. Rio Rancho will miss her, but we wish her well as she begins the next chapter in her impressive career.

HONORING CARTER G. WOODSON
FOR BLACK HISTORY MONTH

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, during the early years of the 20th century, a small number of intellectuals began to question whether the United States was simply a transplant of English civilization. W.E.B. Dubois, Theodore Herzl, and Randolph Bourne believed that modern America should embrace the cultural differences that newcomers brought with them to America. Democracy, they believed, required tolerance of difference and could sustain those differences in harmony.

Among those intellectuals of the Progressive era, Carter G. Woodson did most to forge an intellectual movement to educate Americans

about cultural diversity and democracy. For the sake of African Americans and all Americans, Woodson heralded the contributions of African Americans and the Black tradition. In 1915, he established the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History and by the time of his death in 1950, he had laid the foundation for a rethinking of American identity.

The multiculturalism of our times is built on the intellectual and institutional labors of Woodson and the association he established. He should be known not simply as the Father of Black History, but as a pioneer of multiculturalism as well. In honor of its founder, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History devotes the 2008 Annual Black History Theme to both the labors of Woodson and the origins of multiculturalism.

I ask the House to join me in carrying out the work of Carter G. Woodson and to celebrate his many contributions to Black History.

RECOGNIZING STEVEN FRANK
LAVALLIE FOR SERVICE DURING
WORLD WAR II

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 25, 2008

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a man who served with honor and distinction in World War II, and who was taken from us in battle much too soon. Following his induction into the Army in 1942, Steven LaVallie served outside the continental United States in the cause of freedom and liberty against the Axis powers. While he fought bravely for the better part of 2 years, Mr. LaVallie was sadly killed in action fighting the Germans in France on October 28, 1944.

Originally hailing from Montville, Connecticut, Mr. LaVallie eventually earned his GED certificate. In addition to his marriage to his wife Elsie and the birth of his son Steven J. LaVallie, Mr. LaVallie was an active member of the Masonic Fraternal Organization. I was very honored to present his son, Mr. Steven J. LaVallie of Wesley Chapel, Florida with his father's posthumous Purple Heart in a ceremony earlier this month.

While Mr. LaVallie did not make it home from the front lines of World War II, his contributions to world freedom and liberty will never be forgotten. He may have been taken from his family too soon, but his son and dearly departed widow Elsie LaVallie should know that he gave his life so that others might be free.

Madam Speaker, soldiers like Steven Frank LaVallie should be recognized for their service to our Nation and for their commitment and sacrifices in battle. I am honored to present Mr. LaVallie's son with his long overdue Purple Heart earned on the battlefields of France so many years ago. All Floridians should know that we truly consider him one of America's heroes.