

SALUTING KELLY AND JOHN THOMAS: TODAY'S STUDENTS, TOMORROW'S LEADERS

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, too often, we in Congress take to heart the negativity so often seen in the news, on television, and in popular culture. It is refreshing however, to return home to our districts and see stories that inspire, motivate and remind us that this is not the case. Indeed, as I have recently seen, today's students are tomorrow's leaders.

In my home district, two local students, John and Kelly Thomas have taken their compassion for older Americans and united it with some technological know-how. Their efforts are proving that they are indeed shining examples of tomorrow's leaders. In honor of their recent accomplishments, and in recognition of their commitment to older Americans, I ask my colleagues here today to join me in saluting John and Kelly Thomas.

Kelly is a senior at Flintridge Preparatory School in La Canada Flintridge, California. As part of her community service requirement at school, she began playing the piano in area senior centers. And, as the Glendale News-Press recently reported, Kelly with the help of her younger brother John harnessed the power of a new home computer and began to reach out to seniors all across the country.

The brother and sister team had noticed that seniors throughout the community were often isolated and alone living in retirement homes. John and Kelly's new Internet site became a launching pad uniting seniors who are too often lonely with concerned neighbors online and in person. Their web site <http://come.to/writeseniors.com>, has brought people together and proved that John and Kelly, while still in high school are successful not just as businesspeople, but as concerned citizens as well.

In recognition of their accomplishments and with gratitude for their commitment to others in the community, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting Kelly and John Thomas: Today's students, tomorrow's leaders.

MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS BY CHILDREN

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following article which appeared in the Houston Chronicle into the RECORD.

[From the Houston Chronicle, June 3, 2000]

PANEL TOLD OF MENTAL HEALTH ILLS/SUICIDE ATTEMPTS BY CHILDREN CITED

(By Janette Rodrigues)

Alma Cobb trembled with nervous tension Thursday as she told a roomful of strangers the ways her 14-year-old son, David, has tried to commit suicide since his first attempt at age 5.

But her voice was surprisingly firm.

"He tried to hang himself, stab himself and electrocute himself," Cobb testified during a

hearing Thursday on children's mental health needs called by U.S. Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee, D-Houston.

A transcript of the hearing will go into the congressional record. Jackson-Lee and Sen. Paul Wellstone, D-Minn., who also attended the hearing, hope to use the transcript in getting Congress to pass legislation improving children's mental health services.

Studies estimate that 13.7 million American school children suffer from mental health, emotional or behavioral problems. In the Houston area alone, more than 178,000 will need mental health care during their school years.

Suicide and entry into the juvenile criminal justice system are by-products, advocates say, of a society that shuns the issue and hasn't exerted the political will to address preventable problems.

Cobb's story and that of other such parents, services providers and mental health professionals was compelling, and sometimes moving.

But what Cobb has experienced is startling.

Her daughter, Clara, 14, also suffers from emotional and behavioral disorders. She first tried to kill herself at age 7. She and her brother have been absent from school because of their diagnosed mental illness and numerous hospitalizations related to suicide attempts.

Despite documentation of that fact, Cobb said later, the district where her children attend school considered her children truants, not sick, and fined her more than \$3,000 and took her to court.

"Sometimes, my children can't attend school because of their mental illness and suicide attempts, but schools don't understand it," Cobb said, "They just understand their regulations."

Regenia Hicks, deputy director of child and adolescent services for the Harris County Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority, is familiar with the Cobb family's story. The children receive services through the agency.

Hicks said their struggle with the school district is unusual but, unfortunately, not unheard of in cases involving children.

Studies show that at least one in five children and teens in America has a mental illness that may lead to school failure, substance abuse, violence or suicide.

Most such schoolchildren don't receive adequate help because of the stigma attached to their condition, the lack of early intervention and scarce resources, mental health care professionals and service providers told the hearing.

Speaker after speaker voiced the need for increased funding.

"In Texas, we must be particularly concerned that the state budget for children's mental health services has remained virtually flat since 1993, despite growth in both population and need," said Betty Schwartz, executive director of the Mental Health Association of Greater Houston.

"Current budget discussions offer little hope for improvement in the coming legislative session."

Harris County Juvenile Court Associate Judge Veronica Mogan-Price said the piece of MHMRA's budgetary pie for juveniles is small.

She and others spoke of their frustration that the juvenile justice system has become a surrogate for mental health facilities.

Many said it's the norm in Harris County for mentally ill juveniles to get adequate help only after they commit an act that ends with them in a detention facility.

TRIBUTE TO THE CREWS OF SUBMARINES "DARTER" AND "DACE" AND ALL NAVY SUBMARINERS

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, on May 27 in Marquette, Michigan, a community in my congressional district a special ceremony was held to honor the officers and crew members of the submarines *Darter* and *Dace*, SS227 and SS247. These two submarines played a decisive role in what has been called the greatest naval battle of all time, the Battle of Leyte Gulf in October 1943.

The opening shots of that battle were fired by Marquette native Cdr. David McClintock, skipper of the *Darter*, who had positioned his sub to penetrate a powerful Japanese fleet, one that included the famous Japanese superbattleship *Yamato*.

As commander of the two-sub squadron, Captain McClintock had also helped position the *Dace* to make an independent attack on the 31-ship Japanese battle fleet.

Firing torpedoes from both his forward and stern tubes, Captain McClintock sank the heavy cruiser *Atago*, flagship of the Japanese Navy's Second Fleet, and he disabled another heavy cruiser. The *Dace* also sank one heavy cruiser. Two Japanese destroyers were forced to leave the battle fleet to guard the disabled cruiser, bringing to five the number of ships impacted by the *Darter-Dace* attack.

The daring combat actions of these two submarine crews and the essential naval intelligence they provided, were pivotal in helping to prevent a crushing blow to American forces that had just returned a few days earlier to the Philippines under the command of General Douglas MacArthur.

Mr. Speaker, this ceremony included a dedication of a new submarine exhibit at the Marquette Maritime Museum. This exhibit, which includes a submarine conning tower, is intended to honor not only the *Darter* and *Dace* crews but all U.S. Navy submariners, that special group of young heroes who have chosen to go "in harm's way" in dangerous and solitary service beneath the waves. A diorama of the battle, a three-foot scale model of the *Darter*, and a working periscope are also part of the exhibit.

Captain McClintock, who completed a career in the Navy before returning to Marquette after retirement, attended Saturday's service. His classmate at the Naval Academy, Captain B.D. Claggett, who commanded the companion submarine, the *Dace*, also attended the ceremony.

This was an extremely fitting way to commemorate Memorial Day, because it honored this special group of Americans, both living and dead. Perhaps one day, Mr. Speaker, you and our colleagues may have an opportunity to visit Marquette, Michigan and see this special permanent tribute to the unique individuals who have given so much on behalf of our country.