

productive lives for LGBT and questioning youth ages 13–21, as they transition from adolescence into adulthood. SMYAL is the only Washington metro area service organization dedicated solely to supporting LGBTQ and questioning youth. The staff and volunteers concentrate on five activities: Life Skills and Leadership Development; Counseling and Support; Health and Wellness Education; Safe Social Activities; and Community Outreach and Education.

Ruby Corado has been a transgender rights activist in DC for over 15 years, focusing on the Latino community in the areas of health care, HIV, human rights, and immigration. She has been tireless and outspoken in defending and assisting transgender people, demanding justice for brutalized and murdered sex workers. She has been at victims' hospital bedsides, at meetings with police officials, and at crime scenes, and has organized vigils, bringing her own experience as a Latina transwoman to bear in promoting the interests of this at-risk community in our city. Ruby has worked as a program manager for Whitman Walker Health, Transgender Health Empowerment, and Latinas En Acción, a group she has led for many years.

Jeri Hughes has persistently and doggedly pressed the District government to increase its employment of transgender people. Her efforts led Mayor Vincent Gray to direct the Department of Employment Services to conduct Project Empowerment job training for transgender citizens. Her efforts to highlight violations of the DC Human Rights Act by the Department of Corrections have led to ongoing efforts by the city and activists to improve the treatment of the city's transgender inmates and detainees. Jeri Hughes helps transgender people every day in her job at Transgender Health Empowerment.

Will O'Bryan is Managing Editor of Metro Weekly, which he joined in 2005 as a community reporter. He previously served as a news reporter and arts editor for the Washington Blade, and as a media liaison for a nonprofit health organization. Prior to that, he was arts and entertainment editor for Just Out, the Pacific Northwest's premier LGBT publication. Will is an unwavering advocate for coverage of the entire breadth of the LGBT community, especially those who are often neglected. In his biweekly column, "Stonewall Baby," he personally engages issues affecting our entire community. He exemplifies the quiet, unheralded commitment of the many people who do the vital work of building community.

Jeffrey D. Richardson is Director of the Mayor's Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Affairs, where he has taken the initiative to connect activists with key agency staff and get results. His tireless efforts have ranged from advocacy within the government to supervising young LGBT interns. He brings to his job the empathy and service-oriented approach that he developed in his career as a social worker. In his prior post as president of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, he was a steady leader who worked amicably and productively with GLAA and other advocacy groups and this year's recipients of its Distinguished Service Award.

I ask the House to join me in congratulating the Gay and Lesbian Activists Alliance.

HONORING MAYOR JOE AFFRONTI

## HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Temple Terrace Mayor Joe Affronti. In addition to representing the City of Temple Terrace, Florida, Mr. Affronti has also been a strong advocate for Project Gratitude.

Project Gratitude was founded in 2006 by David Lefavor, a retired military chaplain and has been championed by Mayor Affronti. Its mission was to provide military chaplains returning from deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan with a three-day complimentary visit to Tampa, Florida. During their stay, the chaplains and their families would visit area attractions including Busch Gardens, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Kennedy Space Center, and local restaurants.

In addition to his loyal support of Project Gratitude, Mayor Affronti enjoys community support in this endeavor from individuals, businesses, and Veterans' Service Organizations including: American Legion Post 152, Suncoast Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Tampa Navy League, Busch Gardens, Kennedy Space Center, Lupton's Catering, Chamber of Commerce of Temple Terrace Florida, Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI), Marriott Towne Place, Hilton Garden Inn—North Tampa, the Marine Corps League of Florida, as well as the Major Samuel Woodfill Chapter of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) in Dayton, Ohio.

Due to the drawdown of U.S. military forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, Project Gratitude's mission will conclude with its last reception on April 25th in Temple Terrace, Florida having provided a total of 75 Chaplains and their families with a 3-day "R & R" in appreciation for their service and sacrifice for God and Country.

As Vice Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, it is truly my honor to recognize Mayor Affronti for his dedication to this program and the cause of improving the lives of those who so selflessly gave to our Nation.

## IN RECOGNITION OF CAROL STAFFORD

## HON. JACKIE SPEIER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Carol Stafford, a dear friend and an indefatigable health professional who for 39 years has dedicated her life to nursing and caring for the poor and those in need in San Mateo County. She retired as a triage nurse at Willow Clinic in Menlo Park on March 17, 2012 after a remarkable career that has touched the lives of thousands of county residents.

For almost four decades Carol brought life saving care to patients in the emergency room at San Mateo County General and she spearheaded comprehensive procedures for treating victims of sexual assault at a time when most hospitals had few protocols. She chose to work in facilities (Chope Hospital and Willow

Clinic) that treated the neediest and most vulnerable members of society because she believed that all patients deserve the highest level of medical care, regardless of economic circumstances. One of her patients described her as the nicest person he had ever met, but Carol treated all people the same way—with the utmost kindness, compassion and respect.

On June 10, 1973 Carol graduated from the College of San Mateo with an associate degree in nursing. The next day she started her career working nights on the medical surgical floor at Chope Hospital, which is now San Mateo Medical Center. Two years later she moved to the emergency room and by 1981 she was promoted to Nurse Manager of the Emergency Department. While she was working full time she returned to college and earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing at California State University at Long Beach.

Back then police had limited protocols for dealing with victims of sexual assault. Often times, assault victims were taken to emergency rooms for a rape kit, but no counseling would be offered. Carol decided she wanted to change that and worked with the emergency room physician manager, the police department and the board of supervisors to develop comprehensive treatments for survivors of sexual assault.

At the time, I was on the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors and worked with Carol to develop these new standards. Policies and procedures were implemented to train staff. There was always someone on call who knew exactly how to treat victims of sexual assault with both counseling and support and Chope Hospital emerged as a model and a leader in handling rape cases. Over time, the program evolved into the Keller Center for Family Violence Intervention, a nationally recognized program that provides victims of child abuse, elder abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence with comprehensive medical, emotional, social and legal support.

Carol has strong ties to the Bay Area. She was born in San Francisco and grew up in San Carlos. At age 15 Carol's father passed away. Her mother went to work to support the family, demonstrating qualities of strength and independence. All three sisters graduated from college and went on to have successful careers. Carol's younger sister, Denise Raabe, is the Santa Clara County Deputy District Attorney and her middle sister, Gail Raabe, served as San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner.

Carol is a life-long Giant's fan and a baseball fanatic. Growing up, she posted 8-by-10-inch photographs of the entire San Francisco Giants team in her bedroom. To this day, she has season tickets. Carol's devoted husband of 41 years, George Stafford, her sons Paul and Joseph and her daughter-in-law, Courtney Stafford, will now enjoy more quality time with Carol. It's important to note that even as demanding as Carol's nursing career has been, she has always put family first and was home most days when her boys came home from school.

Though Carol has retired from a wonderful career, she will continue to play a vital role in our community and she will certainly have a friend in me for life.

Mr. Speaker, Carol Stafford has dedicated her life to assisting people in need. I ask that the House of Representatives to join me in

commending her for her extraordinary selflessness and service.

CONGRATULATING THE MISSION  
SHARYLAND RATTLERS VARSITY  
SOCCER TEAM

**HON. HENRY CUELLAR**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the Mission Sharyland Rattlers varsity soccer team of Sharyland High School in Sharyland, Texas on winning the UIL Class 5A state boys soccer championship. The Sharyland Rattlers boys' soccer team victoriously ended a long season on Saturday, April 21, 2012, at Birkelbach Field in Georgetown, Texas.

A crowd of more than 750 fans watched the Sharyland Rattlers team win 3–2 in a shootout to defeat Katy Morton Ranch. In their long 31–3–3 winning season, this outstanding boys' soccer team proved that hard work, dedication, and skill are the perfect recipe for champions. These high school soccer players were led to the championship title through the tireless leadership of their Head Coach Reveriano Hernandez. I congratulate the educators and leaders of this superb team. Key players in the team include Most Valuable Player during the Championship game Jesus Olivarez and Jorge Medina, Most Valuable Player Defensive during the Championship game. Parents, faculty, family, friends and former students traveled to the championship game to support and encourage the boys' soccer team. This championship marks an accomplishment and proud occasion for the team, school and those who attended the game to show their support.

Sharyland High School is part of the Sharyland Independent School District. It was Sharyland's first time playing at the UIL state tournament and has now set a pace for winning tradition as the school's first state soccer championship for Sharyland High School. The Sharyland Rattlers have been recognized for setting the area record for 31 (wins) 3 (ties) 3 (loses). With the motivation to bring home the state championship the team devoted 18 hours a week in training and practiced diligently during Christmas and Spring Break.

I am honored to praise the accomplishments of Sharyland, Texas' home team, the Sharyland Rattlers boys' soccer team as the Class 5A boys' soccer state title champions. Congratulations.

GOVERNOR'S AWARD FOR  
VOLUNTEERISM

**HON. CHELLIE PINGREE**

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

Ms. PINGREE of Maine. Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate those in my State being honored with Governor's Award for Volunteerism. The following Maine people and organizations have showed exemplary commitment to donating their time and energy to help others:

Volunteer of the Year Julia Brown, Service-Learning Practitioner Donna Vigue, Out-

standing National Service Volunteer Elisabeth Lohmueller, Youth Volunteer Julia Brown, Corporate Volunteerism honoree Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, Outstanding School District Sanford, and Outstanding Nonprofit Volunteer Program Trekkers.

In a cynical world that calls us to believe no one does something for nothing, these volunteers and thousands more like them continue to give us hope and belief in each other's goodness.

HONORING KATELYN MOODY

**HON. PETE OLSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to interact with some of the brightest students in the 22nd Congressional District who serve on my Congressional Youth Advisory Council. I have gained much by listening to the high school students who are the future of this great Nation. They provide important insight into the concerns of our younger constituents and hopefully get a better sense of the importance of being an active participant in the political process. Many of the students have written short essays on a variety of topics and I am pleased to share these with my House colleagues.

Katelyn Moody is a sophomore at Deer Park High School in Harris County, Texas. Her essay topic is: In your opinion, why is it important to be involved in the political process?

IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE  
POLITICAL PROCESS

In life each person is responsible for finding his or her own happy ending. This also suggests that we walk a path in our life with our happiness. The pursuit of happiness as we have come to phrase it in our own government. Within our pursuit of happiness, we are not only one, we are a unified nation, who has withstood the best of times and the worst of times, who has come to the rescue when no one else will take a stand. A unified nation who is not made of one, but made of many. For our country depends on those who are in pursuit of America's happiness and therefore citizens must stand for what is right and what is just. Our first step to pursue our country, the United States of America's happiness is to step forward and become involved in the political process.

It is of vital importance that each and every person is involved in making decisions for our country. If we are a nation who will stand for nothing, we will fall for anything. The citizens must be the strong hold of our country and hold our ground. For instance being involved in the political process is a citizen's duty and responsibility. Citizens must be aware of current events in the world and how that one situation could impact us locally, nationally, and globally. It is imperative for one to know what is going on in your country for you to be able to form decisions about what is right and what is just. Knowledge is valuable and can reveal to us what is best for our country. If a person isn't involved in our country's political process it shows a lack of interest in what is best for America and its people. If we lose sight of how our country was based on the ability to make choices that benefit our government and its inhabitants, we have lost our patriotism. Our country is only as good as it's citizens collective efforts.

They say character is what you do when no one is watching. From my standpoint, I interpret this as we can't only take part in the political process when it is important to us, but we must take part in the political process at all times because it is important to every American. Americans' beliefs, ethics, morals and values are illuminated through our choices and our political standpoints. Our voices should not be silent echoes ringing through our nation, but should envelop the nation with our prevalent concern. Our voices will be heard, but the choice is ours to speak up. Speaking up shows our character and who we each are and what we believe in. It unveils how we should be constant participants in America's political process. If we all stand together for what we believe in and what are values are, how could our country go wrong? We can't prevail with only some participants, everyone must participate to guarantee our freedoms and our pursuit of happiness.

You see, our founding fathers put forth an insurmountable effort to guarantee our freedom and our pursuit of prosperity. We must ask ourselves, to what extent will our generation rise to protect those same rights for another strong hold, another upcoming generation. We must speak up, show what we stand for, and let the character of America be unveiled. We must not sit like ducks thinking to ourselves, "Oh well, they can handle it, they will surely speak up" because if they don't, our strong hold is no longer and we will show our lack of interest in our political processes which protect freedom and the pursuit of a full and prosperous life. And, without those things we would be left in an abyss of nothingness. It is shown here how important taking part in political processes proves to be and the consequences of not doing so. Remember, the choice is ours to speak up. Americans are responsible for finding our own happiness and to continue pursuing this, no matter the cost.

IN MEMORY OF DELORES A.  
PARKS

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, April 24, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to the late Delores A. Parks, a woman who spent her entire life tirelessly caring for her community. Mrs. Parks passed away in her sleep on Sunday, April 15, 2012. She was 77.

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once said, "Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." Mrs. Parks was blessed with many gifts and talents, but her greatness came from her dedication to the community. She is truly a hero of mine. Mrs. Parks was a generous, warmhearted and loving woman who always went the extra mile to support her neighbors.

I know the difference one person can make because I am a witness to the impact of Mrs. Parks' extraordinary career of service to others on the lives of ordinary boys and girls and men and women. There is much wisdom in the ancient proverb that says if you catch a person a fish, you feed him for a day; if you teach a person to fish, you will feed her for a lifetime. Mrs. Parks was a great lady but what makes her truly special is her commitment to serving others altered for the good the trajectory of thousands of lives.