

CONGRATULATING HACIENDA-LA PUENTE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT'S NATIONAL BLUE RIBBON SCHOOLS

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the principals, teachers, board members, staff, students, and families of Glen A. Wilson High School, Mesa Robles School, Los Molinos Elementary, and Wedgeworth Elementary in the Hacienda-La Puente Unified School District (HLPUSD), which all received the prestigious National Blue Ribbon Award this year from the U.S. Department of Education.

In particularly want to commend the more than 450 students at these four distinguished schools who live in La Puente, Valinda, and West Puente Valley in California's 31st Congressional District: Wilson (197); Mesa Robles (137); Los Molinos (64); and Wedgeworth (55). I also extend my congratulations to Superintendent Dr. Alfonso Jimenez, Board of Education President Christine H. Salazar, and the entire district, whose distinguished schools have made a profound and lasting impact on the lives of the students and families in the community.

Each year, the Department of Education recognizes the academic excellence and success in closing achievement and opportunity gaps of a select few elementary, middle, and high schools across the nation through the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The Blue Ribbon designation process is highly selective, with only 33 schools across the State of California and 353 nationally, receiving a 2023 Blue Ribbon designation.

On behalf of my constituents in California's 31st Congressional District, I want to proudly congratulate and thank everyone who has helped make these four Hacienda-La Puente schools the exemplary institutions that they are today.

HONORING JANET AARON

HON. BRANDON WILLIAMS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. WILLIAMS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to honor Janet Aaron, Supervisor of the Town of Skaneateles, as she marks 40 years of service to her community.

Ms. Aaron's municipal career began in 1983 when she served at the Village of Skaneateles as a part-time clerk. In 1988 she became Deputy Town Clerk for the Town of Skaneateles, serving under Juanita Newell. Ms. Aaron was elected Skaneateles Town Clerk in 1994 and served successfully in this position until 2017. During her tenure as Town Clerk, Ms. Aaron obtained \$59,000 in grants for the Town Records Management Program, became a Certified Municipal Clerk, served as President of the Onondaga County Town Clerk's Association, and also served as the District Director of the New York State Town Clerks Association. As Town Clerk, Ms. Aaron worked with 7 town supervisors, several town councilors and

a number of board and committee members. In 2017, Ms. Aaron was elected Skaneateles Town Supervisor, starting her first term in 2018.

In her career as Supervisor, Ms. Aaron has a host of achievements to her credit. Some of the many accomplishments realized under her leadership include upgrades to Austin Park, repair of the Soldiers and Sailors monument at Lakeview Cemetery, updates to the Mandana Boat Launch, establishment of the Town of Skaneateles Facebook Page, updates to the Comprehensive Plan, and new signage and branding throughout the Town. In addition, Ms. Aaron helped organize the Skaneateles Watershed Municipal Partnership, formed a Hamlet Committee, and oversaw the refinancing of the joint fire department bond with the Village of Skaneateles saving over \$100,000 over the life of the bond. Always focused on the needs of residents, Ms. Aaron lobbied Spectrum to provide internet to parts of Skaneateles's rural community and oversaw the purchase of town streetlights and conversion to LED, saving the lighting district over \$30,000 per year. Ms. Aaron worked tirelessly to continue services during COVID-19 by developing protocols, providing protection for employees and residents that included remotely connecting employees to the office so they could work during the pandemic to meet the needs of residents. As a dedicated advocate of the town, Ms. Aaron helped to acquire grant funding for Smart Cities security cameras, hamlet planning, shared services, and most recently the water district, securing \$4.4 million, the largest grant the community has ever received.

Ms. Aaron is a third-generation member of the Skaneateles community. Her grandparents owned Pine Grove Dairy which provided door to door milk delivery in both the village and town. Ms. Aaron graduated from Skaneateles Central School and then attended Cayuga Community College earning her degree in Business Administration. She was married to the love of her life for 40 years until his passing in 2012. Her family includes a son, step-daughter and 4 grandchildren. In addition to her work for the village and town, Ms. Aaron has dedicated many hours to volunteer work with various organizations including the Skaneateles Historical Society.

Janet Aaron's love for her community is evident in her decades of municipal and volunteer service. On behalf of New York's 22nd Congressional District, I offer my sincere appreciation and congratulations on the occasion of her retirement.

HONORING GENESIS HOUSE FOR 30 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

HON. ELISSA SLOTKIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, today I celebrate Genesis House, which for the past 30 years has provided meaningful opportunities and hope for people living with mental health challenges in Livingston County, Michigan.

Founded in 1998 in Howell, Genesis House is a program of Livingston County Community Mental Health and part of the evidence-based Clubhouse International model designed to im-

prove the lives of those who participate by providing social support, education, and employment. One of more than 300 such clubhouses worldwide, Genesis House is so much more than a physical gathering space; it's a place members can call home. At Genesis House, people navigating life with mental illness can learn, grow, and develop the individual skills they need to increase their independence and continue their recovery. In this model, Clubhouse members and staff work together to carry out daily duties, with staff mainly serving as coaches, cheerleaders, and talent scouts, pouring their faith into those who may not yet believe in themselves.

In addition to providing a place for meaningful social and recreational opportunities for hundreds of members, over the past 30 years Genesis House has partnered with dozens of local employers and organizations to help members find and retain gainful employment.

It's a powerful vision of social and economic inclusion, and one that I had the chance to see firsthand when I visited Genesis House in 2019 at its Fowlerville location. There, as members answered phones, prepared meals, and tidied the facility, I heard how much the Clubhouse meant to them. I saw what a restorative atmosphere it was, and that it was clearly a community of people dedicated to walking alongside one another on the path to a better life, no matter how long it takes or how difficult it is.

Recently, Genesis House returned to its Howell roots and took over a larger, brighter space with the capacity to serve even more members. The new location, where sunlight pours in through floor-to-ceiling windows, is a powerful metaphor for the light that Genesis House shines in the community, and the glow of resilience of its members. As we mark 30 years of success for Genesis House, I salute all those who have supported this organization along the way, by fundraising, volunteering, and helping to spread the word about the organization and break the stigma around mental illness. I pay tribute to the members and the staff for the hard work they do each day to make this house a home. Long may Genesis House, a beacon of hope for so many, continue to shine in Howell and beyond.

MICHELLE DAVILA ROJAS

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Michelle Davila Rojas for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Michelle has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Michelle, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Michelle's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Oberon Middle School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Michelle Davila Rojas on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

HONORING THE CAREER OF DR. ELEZ BIBERAJ

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. CONNOLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize Dr. Elez Biberaj, who is retiring after 43 years of service in the news organization Voice of America (VOA).

Voice of America's mission and commitment to the highest journalistic standards have been the central focus of Dr. Biberaj's professional journey. Throughout his career, he's done his very best to uphold the values that have made VOA one of the world's most preeminent and most trusted journalistic organizations. He's had the privilege of serving in various roles, from being a radio broadcaster in the Albanian Service (1980–1982), to Senior Writer/Editor specializing in Soviet and East European Affairs in USIA's Press Division (1982–1986), Chief of the Albanian Service (1986–2004), Managing Editor of the Eurasia Division (2004–2005), and since 2005, Director of the Eurasia Division. He also served as VOA's Acting Director from June to December 2020.

Through Voice of America, Dr. Biberaj witnessed and covered consequential world events. Dr. Biberaj covered the Cold War to the collapse of communism, the rise of democracy in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the Balkan wars, the integration of East European nations into Euro-Atlantic institutions, Russia's shift towards an authoritarian regime, and more recently, Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. He is honored and privileged to have worked alongside so many remarkable colleagues as he advanced the noble mission of delivering accurate and objective news and information to global audiences, telling America's compelling story, and championing its democratic values.

Dr. Biberaj accelerated the Eurasia Division's shift in Voice of America toward engaging digital audiences and harnessing the power of mobile and social platforms. He also worked closely with his counterparts at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty to create the Current Time network, the first joint VOA/RFE/RL programming brand in the history of U.S. international broadcasting, launched to provide fact-based alternatives to Russian-language disinformation.

Dr. Biberaj's commitment to the fundamental ethos of promoting freedom, democracy and providing independent fact-based reporting serves as a source of hope and a shining beacon of truth for millions of people around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Dr. Elez Biberaj on his long-standing career as a leader in journalism.

HONORING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MR. JOHN MCKENZIE

HON. MARK POCAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize my constituent, Mr. John McKenzie, a Wisconsin business owner who plays a significant role in the revitalization of Dane County through his generous philanthropy.

Mr. John McKenzie, through his highly successful family business, consistently gives back to his community by maintaining improving, and reinvesting in properties throughout Dane County.

Beyond his obligation to his business, Mr. McKenzie spent years working with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County because of a heartfelt desire to improve the lives of young people, especially those belonging to underrepresented communities.

Mr. McKenzie partnered the Madison Area Builders Association with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County to introduce opportunities and careers in the skilled trades to young people looking to better their lives.

This great idea gained momentum and not long after, with the help of Mr. McKenzie, the National Association of Home Builders and the national Boys and Girls Clubs created their own partnership, extending new opportunities to millions of kids across our Nation.

Mr. McKenzie not only sought to shrink the racial and gender wealth gap, but also to mentor kids on how to save, invest, and build for the next generation. On July 15, 2023, with \$30.4 million dollars' worth of investments and donations, Mr. McKenzie opened the McKenzie Regional Workforce Center, a place where kids of all ages can participate in career introductory programming.

Mr. John McKenzie demonstrates that business-driven organizations and organizations with a social focus can form partnerships that benefit the entirety of their respective communities. For that, I commend him, and I join his friends, family, and colleagues in offering him best wishes and continued success.

IN RECOGNITION OF DAVE ABDALLAH

HON. RASHIDA TLAIB

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. TLAIB. Mr. Speaker, today I want to recognize Dearborn Heights Council Chairman Dave Abdallah. Since he was first elected to serve the people of Dearborn Heights in 2015, Mr. Abdallah has been a tireless advocate for every corner of the city.

Before he ever considered a career in public service, Dave Abdallah was an already well-known community member. Mr. Abdallah immigrated to Michigan from Lebanon at the age of ten and started school speaking no English. He worked hard at school and pursued studies in finance before he made his career in real estate, a natural fit for his outgoing and gregarious personality. In addition to his successful real estate career, Mr. Abdallah became involved with numerous community organizations, including Bint Jebal Cultural Center, and Michigan's Commission of Middle Eastern Affairs, which spurred his interest in elected public service.

In his eight years serving as a member of Dearborn Heights' City Council, Mr. Abdallah has strived to give back to the community and make lives better. He has sought to uplift the voices and concerns of the residents he serves and he has worked to strengthen economic development within Dearborn Heights

by attracting businesses to the area. When he isn't helping residents, he is cheering for our Detroit Lions every chance he gets.

Please join me in recognizing Dave Abdallah for his outstanding commitment and service to the people of Dearborn Heights in Michigan's 12th District Strong.

JONATHAN LORANCE

HON. BRITTANY PETTERSEN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jonathan Lorance for earning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth Award.

Jonathan has achieved great things, all while overcoming adversity and challenges along the way. Students like Jonathan, who strive to make the most of their education, develop crucial skills and a work ethic that will guide them for the rest of their lives. This award is a testament to Jonathan's hard work, determination, and perseverance at Arvada K-8 School and is clearly just the beginning of a bright and promising future.

It is my honor to congratulate Jonathan Lorance on achieving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award.

RECOGNIZING DOCTORS MAHENDER AND JAYALAKSHMI PAMPATI

HON. MORGAN McGARVEY

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 12, 2023

Mr. McGARVEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two remarkable physicians, a husband and wife, Mahender and Jayalakshmi Pampati, in recognition of their retirement from the healthcare field after nearly 33 years of dedicated service to the people of Eastern Kentucky.

Drs. Mahender and Jayalakshmi Pampati moved to Hazard, Kentucky in 1990 with a goal of providing high quality care to the underserved communities of Eastern Kentucky. Through their respective careers and the life they built together in Hazard, they became part of the fabric of the community. They raised three kids, Ashwin, Rudra, and Shivani, in Hazard, participating in the local Parent Teacher Association and engaging with their patients beyond their medical practices. For decades, both doctors centered their careers on providing quality care and service to their community.

Dr. Mahender Pampati, born in Hyderabad, India, son of Dr. Kishen and Mrs. Suwarna Pampati, started and grew a radiology practice upon arrival to Hazard. With his partner Dr. Ashok Patel, he built a radiology practice, Hazard Radiology Associates, that served the entire Appalachian Regional Hospital System in addition to Mountain Comprehensive Health Care. Mahender was the first specialty trained neuroradiologist in Eastern Kentucky and facilitated the installation of state-of-the-art CT and MRI equipment for more specialized care.