

helping small businesses thrive again. Promises made, promises kept.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LADY EAGLES VOLLEYBALL TEAM

(Mr. CISNEROS of California was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the South El Monte High School Lady Eagles volleyball team on their first-ever CIF Southern Section Division 9 championship.

In a hard-fought match, the Lady Eagles fell behind two sets to one before rallying back with determination and grit to take the lead. They forced a decisive fifth set, battling point-for-point until the score was tied 12-12. Senior Zaira Garcia then delivered back-to-back kills, sealing the championship for South El Monte.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Lady Eagles volleyball team on this historic achievement.

EL MONTE HIGH SCHOOL EAGLES FOOTBALL

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the amazing victory of the South El Monte High School Eagles football team in the 2025 CIF Division 14 championship game. The team claimed the school's first-ever championship in a nail-biting 14-6 win.

Under the leadership of their head coach, Frank Gallardo, the team devoted countless hours to training this season. Their hard work and competitive spirit carried them forward when the game was tied at six.

In the final minutes, Eagles quarterback Michael Maldonado stepped up under pressure and delivered a perfect 10-yard touchdown strike to Gabriel Canchola. This touchdown pass put the Eagles in the lead.

With 21 seconds still left, the Eagles' Ivan Lopez broke through the line to sack the opponent's quarterback and seal the championship.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the Eagles football team for their first championship. Their hard work and teamwork shined through, and myself and our community are very proud of them.

BALDWIN PARK BRAVES FOOTBALL

Mr. CISNEROS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the inspiring 2025 football season of the Baldwin Park Braves.

After enduring a five-game losing streak, the Braves turned their season around with determination and teamwork and ultimately secured an at-large bid into Division 11 playoffs.

In the playoffs, the Braves became a different team and dominated their way to the CIF Division 11 championship game.

This was the first CIF Southern Section championship appearance for Baldwin Park since 1991. Unfortunately for the Braves, the goal of a championship would end when their opponent kicked the game-winning field goal with 8 seconds left on the clock.

Although they did not take home the title, their teamwork and determina-

tion reflected the true spirit of a champion and serves as an inspiration to all of us.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Baldwin Park Braves football team on their success this season. Their perseverance and commitment have made their community incredibly proud.

NEW LIFE CENTERS 20th ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate the 20th anniversary of New Life Centers, an organization that I am proud to represent in my district.

Led by Pastor Matt DeMateo, New Life Centers started as a small group working on community violence intervention programs and is now a city-wide movement providing our youth with mentoring, education, sports, play, summer day camps, after-school, and peacemaking programs.

Its community-based, hands-on approach has played a key role in driving down gun violence in our neighborhood of Little Village. New Life Centers Community Care programs also serve more than 45,000 individuals in need of housing, food, and other necessities. Its Pan de Vida Fresh Market distributes food to more than 35,000 individuals per year, filling the gaps that the funding cuts to Federal nutrition programs have created.

When Operation Midway Blitz brought chaos and pain to our community, Pastor Matt and New Life Centers responded by supporting immigrant families, taking food to their homes, and helping find loved ones that ICE had taken.

Mr. Speaker, the work of New Life Centers helps strengthen our community through faith, hope, and healing. I look forward to many more years of partnerships to change the lives and change neighborhoods.

RECOGNIZING OTIS P. GRAVES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Otis P. Graves Elementary School in my district.

Its dual language model develops bilingual and biliterate students that can succeed and be proficient in English and Spanish, opening future opportunities in an increasingly global society.

Even through the challenging moments our community has faced this year, this school has remained a safe and welcoming place for all kids and has promoted and instilled a love of learning. No matter what may be happening at home or in the world, these kids know that they can come here to learn and feel supported.

Mr. Speaker, I am honored to represent them in Congress, and I applaud the teachers, staff, administrators, and families that have helped build this milestone.

Congratulations to Otis P. Graves, and here is to 100 more years.

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF LEYDEN TOWNSHIP

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, as the year comes to an end, I join Leyden Township in Cook County, Illinois, in celebration of the 175th anniversary of its establishment.

In addition to the unincorporated areas, the Leyden Township borders include part of Rosemont, Schiller Park, Franklin Park, part of Northlake, River Grove, Elmwood Park, parts of Melrose Park, Park Ridge, the most western part of Norridge and Bensenville, east of County Line Road.

Leyden Township is a place where neighbors care about each other and love spending time getting to know each other. You just have to attend one of their bingo nights to understand what I mean.

With more than 93,000 residents, Leyden Township takes care of their people. They have a pantry for those in need, a township handyman that provides free services for seniors, and a recreation department dedicated to building a stronger community through educational and recreational programming.

Mr. Speaker, I congratulate Leyden Township on its first 175 years.

HONORING FEEDING FAMILIES FOUNDATION

(Ms. DELAURO of Connecticut was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate something that began in the heart of my hometown, New Haven, Connecticut. A city known not only for its world-class pizza but for its big heart, its creativity, and the way our people lift one another up when times get tough.

About a year ago, I stood here on this very floor and proclaimed New Haven the pizza capital of the United States. Since that declaration, something remarkable has happened not just to our pizza scene but to the spirit of Connecticut itself.

We have witnessed an explosion of creativity led by local artist Michael Pollack, whose New Haven Pizza Club project turned our city's love of pizza into art and art into impact. At the same time, under the leadership of Connecticut's chief marketing officer Anthony Anthony, the State of Connecticut launched the Connecticut Pizza Trail, a campaign that captured imaginations nationwide.

Those efforts drew over 15 billion media impressions and helped make New Haven one of the top 10 most searched destinations in the world, according to Skyscanner.

In New Haven, pizza capital means more than great crust and perfect char. It means community. It means sharing warmth, care, and connection around the table.

Out of that same spirit, the same sense of togetherness, came a remarkable idea: the Feeding Families Foundation.

Founded by Jeff and Samantha Dorman after their daughter was diagnosed with leukemia at just 2 years old, this Connecticut nonprofit was born out of lived experience.

During their long stays at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, Jeff and Sam discovered something too many families learn the hard way: While hospitalized, children receive meals as part of their care. Their caregivers do not. The parents who never leave the bedside, who pour every ounce of strength into their child's recovery, are left to fend for themselves.

They decided to change that.

The idea was simple but profound: deliver free, nourishing meals directly to the hospital room so parents can stay where they belong by their child's side.

They built partnerships, raised funds, and launched what became the Parent Plate Program at Yale New Haven Children's Hospital.

Soon after, they met Michael Pollack, who turned his artistic energy toward this mission. Together, with a growing network of collaborators, they built bridges between hospitals and local restaurants, bringing comfort food from the community straight to the people who needed it the most, and wouldn't you know, it started with pizza.

Pollack introduced the Dormans to Billy Pustari, owner of Modern Apizza, voted the number one pizzeria in Connecticut by the people. Every Friday, Billy and his team make boxes of hot pies for the pediatric cancer floor at Yale. Those pizzas, those humble slices, bring comfort, warmth, normalcy, and a taste of home into the hardest days a family can face.

From there, other restaurants have joined in, lifting the mission even higher. Together, they have transformed our State's pizza pride into something much larger: a movement that feeds families when they need it the most.

Through these efforts, the Feeding Families Foundation has delivered thousands of meals to parents at both children's hospitals in Connecticut, Yale New Haven Children's Hospital, and Connecticut Children's Hospital. That small idea born in New Haven has now spread across the country.

Today, the foundation's programs are in six hospitals across five States providing tens of thousands of meals to parents and caregivers staying with their critically ill child in the hospital. They are just getting started as more and more children's hospitals across the country reach out to them.

The Dormans know firsthand what these families endure: the fear, the waiting, the prayers whispered over hospital beds. They know that a warm meal, even something as simple as New Haven apizza, can make a parent feel seen, cared for, and just a little less alone.

This is about more than pizza. It is about food insecurity in America, a problem that affects millions of families not just in hospitals but in every community of this Nation.

When a parent sits beside their sick child, hungry and exhausted, wondering if they can afford their next meal, it is not just a personal hardship. It is a moral issue.

The Feeding Families Foundation reminds us that food is love. It is dignity. It is what holds families together when everything else feels like it is falling apart, and this is what Connecticut does best.

We lead with compassion. We turn local pride into national purpose. We show that even something as simple as a pizza can spark a movement, one that feeds bodies, lift spirits, and strengthens communities from coast to coast.

Today, I invite my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to celebrate this homegrown idea and honor all those who have made the Feeding Families Foundation a symbol of what is best in America because what started in New Haven, Connecticut, is no longer just local. It is national. It is spreading one meal, one family, one hospital at a time. That is something worth believing in, something worth supporting, and something worth building upon together.

□ 1045

AMERICA NEEDS UNITY

(Mr. LATIMER of New York was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Mr. LATIMER. Mr. Speaker, in today's edition of Politico, there is a story about Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman setting up systems on the border between Nassau County and neighboring New York City, ostensibly to protect Nassau residents from the criminal element coming from their city neighbors.

That is one way for a suburb to act toward the city next door, although it may make it more difficult for the Long Island Mets fans to get to Citi Field or the Queens fans of the New York Islanders to get to UBS Arena. There is another way.

North of New York City, Westchester County and its border communities—Yonkers, Mt. Vernon, Pelham, and New Rochelle—work cooperatively and in harmony with the Bronx. New York City Bronx residents routinely visit New Roc City and Cross-County Shopping Center, and Westchester residents visit and work in Bay Plaza in the Bronx. The Woodlawn neighborhood, with associations and clubs, spans the line between the Bronx and Westchester. The Westchester Bee-Line public bus system takes passengers down to Fordham Road in the Bronx and back. The Montefiore Health System has hospitals in the Bronx and in Westchester and serves clients in between both.

State senators Jamaal Bailey and Nathalia Fernandez join me in representing both sides of the city/county border between the Bronx, New York City, and Westchester County. The

brave men and women of the NYPD in the 45th and the 47th precincts work together cooperatively with police from Westchester County and its cities to deter and prevent crime and apprehend criminals when crimes do occur.

Bronx Borough President Vanessa Gibson and Westchester County Executive Ken Jenkins work together to advocate for the Penn Access project that benefits commuters from both counties. We don't need Big Brother intrusive facial recognition checkpoints. We have mutual respect and civic cooperation.

Bruce Blakeman, in his quest for higher office, thinks that turning us into fearful suburbs that resent their urban neighbors is a way to win votes. I grew up in Mt. Vernon in Westchester County a half a block from the border with the Bronx.

My whole life, not just my time in public service, has been about finding and working the common ground that unites us rather than feeding the anger and resentments that divide us. Politicians on the far fringes of each side desire divisions that they believe can lead to elective office, power, and status. It is a false and dangerous path.

The dotted line that divides the city from the suburb is man-made. What we do on the Westchester/Bronx border and at any border anywhere is work together, and that is the prototype for the America that surely needs unity.

Think about how much we are going to need that unity, all Americans working together, when we face the next existential threat to our freedom and democracy, as we did with Nazi Germany and militarized Japan. It is coming, and you know it.

In the Bronx and Westchester, we will be ready. We encourage the Bruce Blakemans of the world to stop pandering and start building the cooperation we will need in the days to come.

CELEBRATING KEVIN HOWELL

(Ms. ROSS of North Carolina was recognized to address the House for 5 minutes.)

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate North Carolina State University's new chancellor, Kevin Howell, who was recently installed as the university's 15th chancellor.

I have known Chancellor Howell for 30 years. He has served North Carolina State, the UNC system, and a former Governor at the highest levels.

Originally from Shelby, North Carolina, Howell graduated from NC State and was the first Black student body president during his senior year. He went on to earn his law degree from UNC Chapel Hill and served as a law clerk for the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

Howell was born and raised in North Carolina and spent many formative years at NC State, developing a deep appreciation and understanding of this thriving academic community.

In 2015, his NC State family even saved his life. Chancellor Howell's kidneys failed while he was working for