

What's happening

Sunday

■ Come find out who is the most talented person in Davis at **Davis' Got Talent**, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Veterans' Memorial Theater, 203 E. 14th St. Twelve performers selected from earlier auditions will be performing. Tickets are \$7 in advance, \$9 at the door and may be purchased at the Community Services Department, 23 Russell Blvd.; Armadillo Music, 205 F St.; The Avid Reader, 617 Second St.; and Dimple Records, 212 F St. For more information, call the city at (530) 757-5626.

Tuesday, March 1

■ Parent Project is back. The **Davis Police Department and Davis Joint Unified School District are teaming up for a 10-week class for parents**, with topics including how to stop arguing with your children, improving school attendance and preventing drug and alcohol abuse. The cost is \$50 per person and sessions run Tuesdays from 6 to 9 p.m. at Da Vinci High School, 1400 E. Eighth St. To register, call Trease Petersen at (530) 747-5432.

Saturday, March 5

■ **Davis Parent Nursery School holds open houses on both of its campuses:** 1441 Danbury St. in South Davis and 426 W. Eighth St. Open houses run from 10 a.m. to noon. Open enrollment for fall 2011 is under way. For more information, visit <http://www.davisparentnurseryschool.com/programinfo.html>.

■ **Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts are invited to a special "Scout Night"** at the UC Davis men's basketball game beginning at 7 p.m. at The Pavilion. Tickets are \$5 and must be purchased 24 hours in advance. Scouts are asked to wear their vests or uniforms to the game. For more information, call Jessica Williams at (530) 753-8962 or e-mail [jmawilliams@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jmawilliams@ucdavis.edu).

Monday, March 7

■ **Learn more about the Montessori education method** at a parent education program hosted by the Birch Lane Elementary School Montessori Parent Advisory Committee from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Birch Lane MPR, 1600 Birch Lane. The event is free and open to the public.

Thursday, March 10

■ It's a minimum day for Davis public secondary schools, so students in **grades 7 to 12 are invited to Central Park for "Day on the Green."** The city of Davis will offer barbecue, live music and entertainment from 1 to 4 p.m. and it's all free. For more information, call the city at (530) 757-5626.

Saturday, March 19

■ The **Davis High Madrigal Singers host their annual workshop for students in grades K-9.** The fun gets under way at 12:30 p.m. and concludes with a concert for friends and family at 4 p.m. The cost is \$25 per person. For more information, contact Mindy Manville at (530) 753-2042.

■ **Pioneer Elementary School holds its annual auction fundraiser** this evening. All the fun takes place at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. For more information, call the school at (530) 757-5480.

Saturday, March 26

■ Parents, teachers and child care providers are invited to the annual **Yolo County Child Development Conference** from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Veterans' Memorial Center, 203 E. 14th St. The cost is \$40/in advance, \$50/at the door. For reservations and more information, call (530) 757-5695 or visit <http://www.cityofdavis.org/cs/childcare/>

# Honor their role

## Exceptional teens receive Golden Heart Awards

By **Anne Ternus-Bellamy**

ENTERPRISE STAFF WRITER

Photos by **Fred Gladdis**

ENTERPRISE PHOTOGRAPHER

It's hard to imagine how anything good can come out of something as horrific as the murder of Andrew Mockus almost 20 years ago.

A 14-year-old Holmes Junior High School student at the time, Mockus was killed by a group of Davis teens who beat him, robbed him and pushed him into the path of a moving train.

Stunned, the city responded by holding public forums to discuss the issues facing the community's youth and ways the city could do more to help. In the end, the Davis City Council adopted seven recommendations that grew out of the forums, including the creation of the Golden Heart Awards, which would honor local teens for the good that they do. The awards would be given annually in two categories: overcoming personal challenges and community service.

Many exceptional Davis teens have been

honored since then, and surely none were more exceptional than the five teens who received Golden Heart awards at last week's City Council meeting. From the recipient of the community service award — who truly lives to serve others — to the four teens awarded Golden Hearts for the personal challenges they've overcome, they are an inspirational lot.

— *Reach Anne Ternus-Bellamy at (530) 747-8051 or [aternus@davisenterprise.net](mailto:aternus@davisenterprise.net). Comment on this story at [www.davisenterprise.com](http://www.davisenterprise.com)*

**Taylor Stone, community service**

Stone, who was nominated by the Rev. Mary Lynn Tobin of Davis Community Church, has packed more community service into her 18 years than most people do in a lifetime.

Beginning when she was just 4 years old, Stone began assisting her mother, Elisa Stone, in an annual holiday gift drive for children in Davis and West Sacramento. It remains one of her favorite activities, quite simply because of the personal reward.

"They are so grateful," she said of the children involved, "and the expression on their faces when they receive their presents ... it makes you want to do it every year."

Through Davis Community Church, Stone has found many ways to serve those less fortunate than she is. She has organized toiletry drives and water bottle drives and delivered many a meal to someone in need. She volunteered in relief projects after both Hurricane Katrina and the Haiti earthquake. She's even attended several trainings in order to learn how to better help the homeless.

This summer, she'll be heading to Nicaragua for three weeks with some other Davis High students to teach English.

"I haven't done anything like that before," Stone said. "I'm really excited."

And given all her service so far, it's hardly any surprise what Stone sees as her future profession: police officer.

"I just want to get out there and keep everybody safe," she said.

According to Tobin: "She is a perfect candidate for a Golden Heart Award because her heart is truly golden."



**Ashley Altchek, personal challenge**

After being diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia in May 2009, Altchek, 16, missed a lot of school for treatments and hospitalizations. She eventually fell a full year behind in her coursework.

But driven by her own determination and the help of family, friends, and teachers at Davis School for Independent Study, Altchek hung in there and caught up again.

And while she continues to regularly undergo chemotherapy, her grades are up and many around her are inspired by her attitude and resiliency.

"She's a hard worker," said DSIS teacher Eleanor Low, who along with other DSIS staff nominated Altchek for the award. "She has done a superb job at keeping a positive attitude going through her sickness."

For her part, Altchek credits her sisters — 14-year-old triplets Kimi, Stephanie and Caroline — for helping get her through the past couple of years, as well as her good friend Indi Vaughn-Ralston, who also nominated Altchek for a Golden Heart.

"I make her laugh," Vaughn-Ralston said. "And I make sure she gets her homework done."

Altchek's nominators said she "never complains, maintains a positive attitude and is always thinking of others. Ashley is strong from the inside and the outside."

And happily, she currently shows no signs of cancer.

**Josie Campanelli, personal challenge**

Diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was 8 years old, Campanelli, 14, has never let the disease slow her down. Not only that, she serves as a mentor and a friend to other youngsters diagnosed with the disease.

She was nominated for a Golden Heart award by the Meinert family for that reason: When 9-year-old Kate Meinert was diagnosed with diabetes last year, Campanelli was there for the family, as she has been for other children and their families.

"I ask how they're doing, let them know it can't stop them," Campanelli explained. "I let them know that they can call me any time because I know what it's like. And they do call."

Now a ninth-grader at Harper Junior High School, Campanelli has stayed active with cheerleading, soccer and volleyball over the years. She says coaches, teachers and friends have all been supportive.

"It's annoying," she said of having to frequently stop what she's doing to check her blood sugar or give herself a shot of insulin. "But everyone's really understanding."

And they certainly appreciate her.

Said the Meinerts in their nomination: "There are people like Josie who will pick you up, they will brush you off and they will guide you out of the storm."



**Neia Wixson, personal challenge**

Wixson, now a 15-year-old Harper Junior High student, is one of those kids who could have simply fallen through society's cracks.

In her younger years, she was neglected and often abandoned until her older sister, Celina — shown at left with Neia — took the necessary steps to obtain custody of Wixson and her younger sister, Sarah.

In her sister's care, Wixson began to shine at school, with her grades steadily improving and her dreams of going to college coming closer and closer to reality. She was nominated for a Golden Heart by two of her teachers in the AVID program at Harper — Scott Thomsen and Julia Hodges — who said "because of Neia's dedication to school work and her kind heart, she is a role model to her classmates."

Added Hodges: "Being her teacher has helped me to become a better person and has helped me to weather my own life struggles with a positive attitude."

For her part, Wixson said the award "shows me that I've overcome a lot and even though bad things have happened, I got through them." And now, she says, "things are good."

**Robert Lipman, personal challenge**

Lipman was on a sixth-grade field trip to Catalina Island when his heart first failed him.

"We were sitting at the campfire eating s'mores," he said, "and I just passed out."

Paramedics were called and Lipman was helicoptered off the island to a hospital in Los Angeles. Two weeks later, he was fitted with a pacemaker. The next day, he was back at school.

And while his soccer and basketball careers had come to an end — too much physical contact — his tennis career got under way. Five years later, he's the No. 3 player on the Davis High varsity tennis team. And that's just a small part of what defines Lipman now.

After a chance meeting with a local cancer researcher — Jian-Jian Li of the UC Davis department of radiology and oncology — while walking his dog, Lipman began working in Li's lab and he's never looked back.

He has identified, through hours of research, a genetic predisposition to dry mouth caused by radiological treatment for cancer; he has attended and presented at conferences at Harvard University and in Washington, D.C. He's been invited to Oxford University this summer to continue his research, after which he'll head to a conference in Warsaw, Poland. And he's all of 17 years old.

"It's tiring," he says of working in the UCD lab every day after school (except during tennis season, which is just getting started, and which will keep him on the court all but one day a week).

"But I can't see myself doing anything else," he adds.

As for his heart, having grown a full foot or more since the original pacemaker was installed, he'll have to undergo surgery to replace it soon. The pacemaker requires regular battery changes as well over the years — something his mom uses to her advantage.

"She tells me if I don't clean my room, she's not replacing my battery," Lipman chuckles.

In addition to the five recipients of Golden Heart awards, seven teens were recognized by the City Council last week as honorees. Sarah Douglas, Anny Huang, Heather Kerr and Kalley Thompson were recognized in the community service category, while Kevin Green, Tyler Hilton and Linda Saragosa were honored for overcoming personal challenges.

