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SPOTLIGHT

Take holiday walk in Kellogg Park

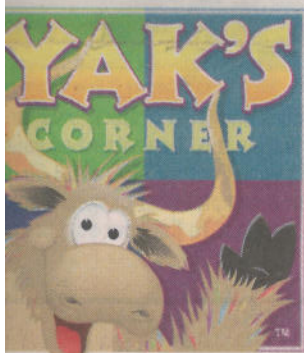
Every holiday season, Christmas trees adorned with sparkling lights line the paths in Kellogg Park in downtown Plymouth.

The Walk of Trees features about 55 trees decorated by families, Scout troops, businesses and others. Through Dec. 31, you can view the trees any time of the day or night — the lights are always on.

"It's a real holiday tradition," said Fran Toney of Plymouth, executive director of the Plymouth Community Chamber of Commerce, which is sponsoring the event. "We started it about 12 years ago, and you can always find people out there looking at the trees."

There is no charge to view the trees. For more information, call the Chamber of Commerce at 734-453-1540.

By Mary Lenzion



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ornbread to go
with your chili

YAKTIVITY, PAGE 2



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eeps adding
o his success

SPORTS, PAGE 6



Photos by DAVID KILKENNEY/Special to the Free Press

Little Stars Foundation founder Amy Sun, 13, and her brother Alan, 9, pass out blankets as gifts for each of the residents of the Waltonwood at Carriage Park senior center in Canton following a performance Dec. 15. The siblings used money they raised and saved to purchase the blankets.

Little stars shine for seniors

Canton teen's nonprofit group performs holiday concerts

By NANCY DEUTSCH
FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

The brightest stars that some senior citizens see this time of year may not be the celestial variety.

These stars shine in a group of children who play violin and call themselves the Little Stars Foundation.

The young musicians tour nursing homes where they play

Christmas carols on their violins and pass out fleece blankets to residents. The foundation is a nonprofit organization started last year by Amy Sun, 13, of Canton.

"Last year, around Thanksgiving, we didn't have anything planned for Thanksgiving Day," Amy said. "So we went to the Four Seasons nursing home and the Hope Nursing Care Center," which are both in

Westland. "I thought it was a good experience."

Amy brought along her brother Alan, 9, her sister Anna, 6, and her mother, Yihong Tong. They all play violin.

The musicians were well received, so Amy decided to ask friends and other members of the Plymouth-Canton Community Schools Orchestra if they

See SHINE, 7



Amy Sun plays her violin at Waltonwood at Carriage Park senior center in Canton. She started the nonprofit Little Stars Foundation last year.

5 QUESTIONS WITH ... JEAN TABOR

Award-winning Canton librarian to retire

Director oversaw
25 years of change

By PAULINE M. LUPERCIO
FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

Jean M. Tabor loves change and thrives on chaos. The 64-year-old Canton resident has had plenty of both during her 25 years with the Canton Public Library.

Tabor, who is set to retire in January, got her start as an adult/teen librarian after deciding that a career as a secondary school teacher was not for her.

Just three years after joining the Canton Public Library staff, Tabor accepted the position of library director. She fell in love with her new role on the first day.

changed dramatically. When she started, the library had a card catalog and an Apple IIe computer. Now, the library deals with Flickr accounts and e-books, and lends as much audiovisual material as books.

Tabor also has fond memories of the chaos involved with the building of the library in 1988 and with the 2000 renovation.

The Michigan Library Association recently recognized the married mother of seven and proud grandmother of eight with the 2007 Award of Excellence.

Cathleen Russ, chairwoman of the Michigan Library Association's award committee, presented Tabor with the award at a November reception in Lansing.



Jean Tabor

Excellence is given annually in recognition of a Michigan library staff member for outstanding contributions to local library service.

Russ recognized Tabor for her dedication to patrons, enthusiasm and leadership.

QUESTION: Being a library director, you must have a great love for reading. What are your favorite books and genres?

ANSWER: I do love to read, and I can't stand not to have a book that I'm reading by my bed. It's a source of total relaxation to me. I read different genres — I like mysteries,

as well as the classics.

In college, I studied women's literature and am currently rereading "The Golden Notebook" by Doris Lessing.

Q: How did you feel when you learned you had been selected for the 2007 Award of Excellence?

A: This was a great honor — to be recognized by my peers but, more importantly, to be nominated by my staff. I was very pleased, and it's a great way to end my professional career.

Q: Do you have plans for travel or leisure lined up to fill your free time after your retirement in January?

A: During the first year, we plan to travel a lot, especially

been able to do that while working. We'll be spending time in Arizona ... and Lake Linden in the Upper Peninsula. Eventually, I'll be looking for volunteer opportunities.

Q: What do you think you will miss most about your role as Canton library director?

A: There's no question that I will miss the staff most of all. We have a big library family here, and it will be hard to leave them. I'll also miss colleagues I've worked with in the library profession, and I'll miss visioning for the future of the library.

Q: Is the glass half empty or half full?

A: Definitely half full. I always try to keep a positive outlook.

SCHOOL BULLETIN BOARD

PLYMOUTH-CANTON EDUCATIONAL PARK: Director of bands **Marc Whitlock** has been selected as the Michigan representative for the annual feature of "50 Band Directors Who Make a Difference" in the December issue of School Band and Orchestra magazine. The magazine, which is published for school band and orchestra directors, selects one band director from every state.

Whitlock is the director of bands at the educational park, where he supervises 300-plus students from Canton, Plymouth and Salem high schools. Whitlock is also the director for the award-winning Plymouth-Canton Marching Band. He joined the staff at Plymouth-Canton in 2003. Previously, Whitlock was a band director at Marian Catholic High School in Illinois and at Hebron High School in Texas.

Earlier this year, Whitlock was named to the staff of the inaugural U.S. Army All-American Marching Band. Whitlock will join the staff of 10 instructors to lead 91 musicians selected to perform at the U.S. Army All-American Bowl halftime show on Jan. 5 at the Alamodome in San Antonio. Three of Whitlock's students at PCEP were selected to the All-American band.

"We are so incredibly blessed to have Marc Whitlock lead our band program at the park," said **Julie Kaminski**, assistant principal at Plymouth High.

CANTON HIGH: Student **Sarah Yu** received a \$100 Barnes & Noble gift card as a finalist in the awards program of the Association of Chinese Americans, the Detroit Chinese Engineers Association and the Council of Asian Pacific Americans.

By Free Press staff

SHINE | Kids give seniors holiday cheer with concerts

From Page 1

would like to visit nursing homes and play music.

The Little Stars Foundation — with members from Canton, Livonia, Farmington Hills and Westland — now has 18 members. While they play music and spread good cheer primarily over the holidays, they also play their violins for area seniors about once a month throughout the year, she says.

Sahil Rafai, 13, of Canton, a fellow orchestra member with Amy, decided to join. Sahil and his brother, Sagar, 10, who both play violin, have performed with the group in many nursing homes.

"I felt that the seniors have such an unhappy existence, just sitting in wheelchairs," Sahil said. "I decided it would be nice to give them some entertainment."

Kathie Chuang, 12, of Farmington Hills recently started playing with the group after her parents, who are friends with Amy's parents, heard about it. She plays the violin and has been to two performances so far.

"It's really fun," Kathie said. "It's really entertaining for the older people. They smile and clap. It's nice."

Dawn Cooper, activities director for Waltonwood at Cherry Hill in Canton, says the Little Stars performed there at Thanksgiving and the residents of Waltonwood "absolutely love them. They're a treat to watch. It's breathtaking. Such huge talent comes from such little bodies!"

The group was recently welcomed back to play for the Christmas holidays. Last weekend, the Little Stars played at Waltonwood at Carriage Park in Canton and at Waltonwood at Cherry Hill and the Four Seasons Nursing Center in Westland.

Amy says she thought it would be nice to bring gifts around the holidays. On her sib-



DAVID KILKENNEY/Special to the Free Press

lings' birthdays in October, they both requested money for the foundation instead of personal gifts, and accrued nearly \$700. The group raised more money at Halloween when they requested money for the foundation instead of candy. With the funds, the Little Stars bought fleece blankets to distribute to the seniors.

Yihong says the musical pastime benefits both the elderly and her own children who play for them.

"I want them to contribute to the community," she says. In return, "they get more practice and encouragement."

While the children all practice their violins, it's more fun to play before an attentive audience, she notes.

"I like to see how they react to all our performances," Amy says.

She says many seniors become particularly teary-eyed

Alan Sun and his mother Yihong Tong of Canton play "O Come All Ye Faithful" on their violins during a Little Stars Foundation performance Dec. 15 at Waltonwood at Carriage Park in Canton.

when the group plays "Edelweiss."

Paul Shen joined the group after Yihong asked his mother if he could. Paul, 13, lives in Canton and plays violin and some piano accompaniment.

"I like to see the senior citizens enjoy themselves more," he said.

The Little Stars play their violins, though they usually do not sing, Amy says. But that's not a problem.

"When we perform Christmas music on the violin, the seniors sing along," she says.

As for the title of the group, Amy says she chose that herself.

"I chose the Little Stars Foundation because all of us love music, and we wanted to brighten up the seniors' lives with music like a star brightening the sky."

To contact the group, go to www.thelittlestars.org.

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Last Chance Animal Rescue

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Jell-O, about 12 weeks old, was left in a box on a doorstep with his four siblings on a cold and rainy night. They were weak, but with a lot of tender-loving care, they became healthy. Jell-O was named after a sweet