



Inquest calls for police cameras

By **WILL
KOBLENSKY**
The Observer

There were mentally ill people waving scissors and knives, there were police shooting them, and now, a jury has recommended methods of avoiding these tragedies.

Suffering from mental illness and dying from gunfire were Reyal Jardine-Douglas, 25, Sylvia Klibingaitis, 52, and Michael Eligon, the 29-year-old who was gunned down on an East York street after he walked away from the psychiatric ward at Toronto East General Hospital. These three very similar cases from 2010 to 2012 were the subjects of a coroner's inquest that now has its jury verdict. That verdict does not bring with it any criminal charges like a conventional court case would. Instead, the jury has proposed changes to police practices, aimed at preventing this from happening again.

They sifted through 220 proposed recommendations, and settled on 74, including: refinements in police training to help officers better understand mental illness and associated behaviour; training in verbal de-escalation of confrontations with the mentally ill; and investigation into better defensive equipment for police, like shields and body-worn cameras.

"I believe Michael Eligon would be alive today if one of the police officers had just said 'Hey, let's talk to him in a calmer, slower manner,'" said Peter Rosenthal, the Eligon family's lawyer.

■ See **JURY**, page 7



Vanessa Campbell /// Observer

Jumping for dollars

Local residents can get a jump on exercise and leap onto a good cause at Insideout Studio's "pay-what-you-can" charity event. The boot camp is held at Skyzone in Leaside on the last Monday of every month, with proceeds going to the Sunnybrook Foundation's youth mental health program. See story, page 5.

Fragedakis ready for battle

By **ALI NAQVI**
The Observer

Mary Fragedakis could face some stiff competition in her bid to continue representing Ward 29 on city council.

Potential candidates have until September to register with the city for October's vote, but already vying for the council seat from Toronto-Danforth are experienced politician John Papadakis — and Dave Andre, a relative newcomer to East York politics who's already showing some campaign sophistication.

But Fragedakis seems unfazed.

"I am staying focused and getting the job done," she said in an interview.

Andre, meanwhile, is officially launching his campaign at 6:30 this evening, Feb. 21, in the auditorium at the S. Walter Stewart library branch,

170 Memorial Park Ave.

He's already activated a slick campaign website, which describes him as a "civil engineer, husband, father and lifelong volunteer." It says that "transit, infrastructure, community safety, taxes, child-care, and seniors' care deserve real attention and affordable solutions."

Papadakis, on the other hand, is maintaining a low profile so far. Prior to the creation of the "mega-city" — and East York's amalgamation with the other municipalities of the former Metro Toronto — Papadakis was a councillor for the old Borough of East York, from 1991 until 1994.

He's since run for office unsuccessfully several times, including for an East York seat in the House of Commons as a Progressive Conservative in 1993, for an East York seat on Toronto city council in 1998,



■ **FRAGEDAKIS**

for mayor of Fort Erie, Ont., in 2006, and for Fort Erie council in 2010. Papadakis was living in Fort Erie at the time.

Whatever the strength of these challenges, however, Fragedakis has held off similar competition before. In the last municipal election, in 2010, she easily prevailed over a field of six candidates, including Jane Pitfield, who was once a city councillor from East York and even a serious

mayoral candidate. Fragedakis finished with a 14-point lead over her runner-up.

Fragedakis, a longtime resident of Ward 29, has a background as a business person, including a stint as vice-president of a conference company. She holds an MA in political science from the University of Toronto.

If re-elected, Fragedakis said in an interview, her top priority will be public transit.

"I want to see a better-integrated system and improve our current services," she said, and that includes a cost-effective GO transit system.

She also said that public consultation is another priority she has been working on during her current term — for example, getting youth involved in positive activities in the community and being able to continue supporting small business communities, which

Fragedakis calls "the backbone of our community."

The environment is another issue for Fragedakis. She said she stays in touch with local high school students who are concerned about the environment and waste management.

"It's good to see students care and be concerned about the environment and stay involved in positive activities," she said.

Fragedakis also said she has developed a good working relationship with the other council representatives from East York, John Parker and Janet Davis.

When asked about the scandals surrounding Mayor Rob Ford and whether she'll be supporting or opposing any particular candidate for mayor, she said that she wants to stay focused on her ward and that she just wants a mayor who can work with everyone.

POLICE & FIRE

Police seeking flasher after three incidents last week

Toronto police have issued a description of a man who has been exposing himself to women in the Thorncliffe Park area.

In three separate incidents between Feb. 10 and 13, the man flashed women ranging in age from 17 to 55.

He is described as brown-skinned, in his late 20s or early 30s, approximately 5'7", with a medium-heavy build, dark eyes, and a possible overbite. At the time of the incidents, he was wearing a dark-coloured winter coat, beige pants, dark-coloured boots and black gloves.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact 416-808-5300 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

Male, 23, swarmed near Thorncliffe Park Drive

Police report that on Feb. 13, a 23-year-old male reported being swarmed by about 15 other young men. It happened at about 5:20 p.m., near the corner of Thorncliffe Park Drive and Overlea Boulevard.

The victim told police that the men pushed and kicked him while one of them searched him. The victim sustained no injuries.

Police are requesting the assistance of the public in identifying the muggers.

One suspect is described as 22 to 23 years old, 6', 141 pounds, black curly hair, with a thin build. Two others are described as 5'3"-5'4", weighing 150 pounds.

Another is 6'2" with a thin build. Another is 5'6", weighing 119 pounds. And the final description is only of a black male.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact 416-808-5300 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 416-222-TIPS (8477).

Thieves take trailer full of tools from local job site

Staff members at Earthlink Construction, 110 Virginia Ave. near Cosburn and Woodbine avenues, report that on the night of Feb. 11, a trailer of theirs containing a large quantity of tools was removed from a job site. The incident occurred between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8:30 a.m., sources say.

~ Domenic Nunziata

THEATRE



Catherine Magpile // Observer

Daryn DeWalt's character (right) reveals all to Barbara Salsber (left) and Sarah St-Onge-Richard — in *Nude With Violin*, which the East Side Players opened last night.

Mystery with a twist

By CATHERINE MAGPILE
The Observer

If you like classic 'butler knows all' mysteries, and a comedic spin, then you'll want to catch *Nude With Violin* at Todmorden Mills' Papermill Theatre.

Directed by Jim Lyers, the East Side Players' latest production is an adaptation of the original version by Noel Coward. It opened last night and runs until March 8.

Nude with Violin is a witty satire on the pretentious upper class art society. It pokes fun at wealthy modern art critics as it explores the idea of what it takes to create a masterpiece.

The intimate cast of 11 features performances by local actors/actresses Sarah St-Onge-Richard, Damien Howard and Barbara Salsberg, among others.

The play takes place in the lav-

ishly decorated apartment of the late Paul Sorodin, a famous artist who has recently died. His funeral brings his dysfunctional family to Paris to go through his estate.

The play's set is decorated with wonderful attention to detail, giving you an authentic feel of the 1950s. It is highlighted by a gorgeous hand-crafted frame that fits around the entire stage, as if the play itself is a work of art.

Sebastien, his beloved friend and valet, reads a letter from Sorodin admitting that he never painted a single picture. The family begins to search for the real artist in an attempt to save their reputation and fortune.

An assortment of colourful characters come by the Parisian apartment to speak with Sorodin's lawyer Jacob (Howard) about unfinished business. With a few comedic alterations and smartly written banter,

the characters ultimately discover Sorodin's real plan.

Daryn DeWalt, who plays the mysteriously worldly valet Sebastien, does a perfect job of portraying the all-knowing confidant. His performance drives the play as his hilariously clever character guides the family's discovery. DeWalt shows off his language skills as he goes back and forth between English, French, Russian and several other dialects throughout the performance.

Nude with Violin is a smart play that will have you both laughing and questioning your own taste in art.

The cast and crew of *Nude with Violin* will have talkback showings on Wednesdays, where audience members can stay after the show to ask the cast questions.

For more information on the play or to buy your tickets, go to www.eastsideplayers.ca or call the box office at 416-425-0917.

Museum honours African inventors

By NOEL RANSOME
The Observer

During an age of blatant racism and bigotry, leaders have been known to lead through their words, and others through resistance. But there are a select few who lead through discovery.

The travelling International All African Inventors Museum (IAAIM), hosted by Centennial College's East York campus on Feb. 18, illustrated this point by showing students a timeline of African inventors shaping the culture they live in.

"These are the stories that will inspire young people to change," said Angelita Elliott, museum owner and curator. "One of the things that bothers me is that young people think that they're suffering so much and that they're so discriminated against. You've been privileged."

Tables lined the walls of the Cen-

tennial College Student Association, displaying portraits, mini-biographies and visual replicas that presented examples of success matched with injustices to drive this point home.

The mobile display is an exhibit that regularly features over 250 inventors/innovators, along with over 100 miniature artifacts. According to Elliott, pioneers of African descent have been shown to have had a hand in developments as large as the Manhattan Project all the way down to the common video game.

"Quite frankly, some of these men were robbed of the credit that they deserved," she said.

Notable inventors included a South African heart surgeon, Dr. Hamilton Naki, who studied under famed cardiac surgeon Dr. Christiaan Barnard. Naki was a man who possessed no formal education and lived in a township that lacked basic necessities like

water and electricity. The discrimination that occurred in South Africa at the time limited his opportunities in the classroom. Naki pioneered open heart surgery.

"We all have a special gift or a skill," Elliott said. "We all have something that we're masters of, whether we know it or not. When the right opportunity comes up, that skill comes up."

She has been showcasing stories like Naki's for over nine years.

"Let's face it. How many young people see themselves as one of these men or women? But these men and women, the challenges and obstacles they overcame, we will never face that," she said. "We'll never face our lives being threatened all the time. We can walk anywhere we want and can do whatever we want to do. We're really missing the opportunity to excel and make our ancestors proud."

WHAT'S UP IN E.Y.

Surprise! Your teacher can act

Performances of the TCDSB staff's production of Fred Carmichael's *Surprise!* will take place tonight (Feb. 21), Feb. 22, 28 and March 1 at St. Patrick Catholic Secondary School, 45 Felstead Ave. Call 416-222-8282 for tickets.

Keeping your heart healthy

WoodGreen Community Services presents a free information session on cardiac health. The session will take place at the S. Walter Stewart library on Feb. 25 from 2:30-3:30 p.m. For more information, please call 416-396-3975.

Gardening for the relaxed set

Join the Leaside Garden Society at the Leaside library on March 13 at 7:30 p.m. for an evening with Dan Cooper, co-author of *Gardening from a Hammock*, as he speaks about low-maintenance gardening. Refreshments will be available before the meeting begins.

Zeppelins 101

Aviation historian Keith Hyde will talk about Zeppelins at the S. Walter Stewart library on March 18 from 6:30-8 p.m. Discover how these mighty airships could raid the U.K. with impunity during the First World War until their weakness could be exploited near the final days of the war.

~ Henry Chang Li

More than just a food bank

Flemingdon Ministry also offers programs to raise awareness about food issues

By **NINA RAYNARS**
The Observer

Funmi Adeshina arrived in Canada in June of 2011, but the challenges of resettling in a new country hit her quickly. The local food bank became her ticket to getting daily meals.

Adeshina, a single mother with a three-month-old baby, never imagined that she would depend on the generosity of Good Samaritans for survival.

And she feared that her immigration status would prevent her from getting help. But her financial situation forced her to find means of survival.

“When I left the house, I thought it was going to be difficult. I thought maybe they will ask me for so many documents. I thought I won’t even be able to qualify for the food bank,” she said.

But Adeshina’s experience at Flemingdon Park Ministry’s food bank took her by surprise.

“I walked into the food bank with a stroller, and the staff were so amazing,” she said. “They welcomed me and my baby.”

Flemingdon Ministry food bank assures people in need that they will receive food the same day they register. This initiative is made possible through the generosity

of donors and partners.

Kartini Ahmat, a program manager at Flemingdon Ministry, believes that fostering relationships with those who register is helpful in terms of understanding their needs.

“If the person is comfortable with us, we tell them about the different programs and ask if they would like to participate,” Ahmat said. “Some will say, ‘Yes, why not, I never knew there was this thing in the community.’ Then we proceed with registration and we provide food the same day.”

Adeshina’s candour allowed the staff to reach out to her.

“She had a difficult time. She was very emotionally affected,” Ahmat said. “The way she spoke to me said that she needs to be on her feet and she wants to come out of the social assistance.”

Adeshina said the difference between the ministry, which runs separately from the food bank, was explained to her.

“I was informed about all the other services they offer. I decided to enrol myself for Project Star, and I am proud to say I completed it,” she said. “Then I also took on the Food Access Project.”

Tonia Krauser is the media director at Second Harvest, the largest food rescue program in Canada. Second Harvest picks up donations of excess food that would otherwise go to waste

and delivers the food to community agencies in Toronto.

“We are part of the Food Access Project. One of the groups we are a part of is in Flemingdon Park. That group gets together to brainstorm ideas and really create programs to help people in need of hunger relief programs like Food Bank,” Krauser said.

The Food Access Project is community-run. Flemingdon Ministry is a part of this

project. The goal is to raise awareness and education about food issues, to start community-based food projects and to enhance the skill set of participants.

Adeshina is a recipient of the Food Access Project, and she takes pride in the skills she has acquired.

“We were taught how to cultivate different vegetables and the best time to plant and harvest them,” she said.

One of Adeshina’s highlights was a field trip to

the Black Creek Community Farm, where she gained first-hand experience on running a home garden.

“It was good because not everybody knows when to plant some vegetables. There were so many kinds of vegetables I had never seen in my life. It was kind of going to school to learn,” Adeshina said. “What blew my mind was the giant carrots.”

The goal of the trip was to empower participants to learn how to grow organic food to eat.

Rev. Helena Houldcroft, director of Flemingdon Park Ministry, believes a small group of people can make a small difference in the community.

“What’s beyond a food bank? Because if we don’t find those strategies, then we will have food banks forever,” she said.

Unlike some other

food banks that are experiencing a drop in donations, Flemingdon Ministry’s food bank has been fortunate enough to have food supplies streaming in from its partners, as well as from the Muslim and broader Christian communities.

The real challenge for them has been getting enough cash donated to keep their projects and pay for rent and salaries.

“If people want to change systems, they must donate money, not just food,” Houldcroft said. “They have to actually get excited about these community-based projects and come and participate.”

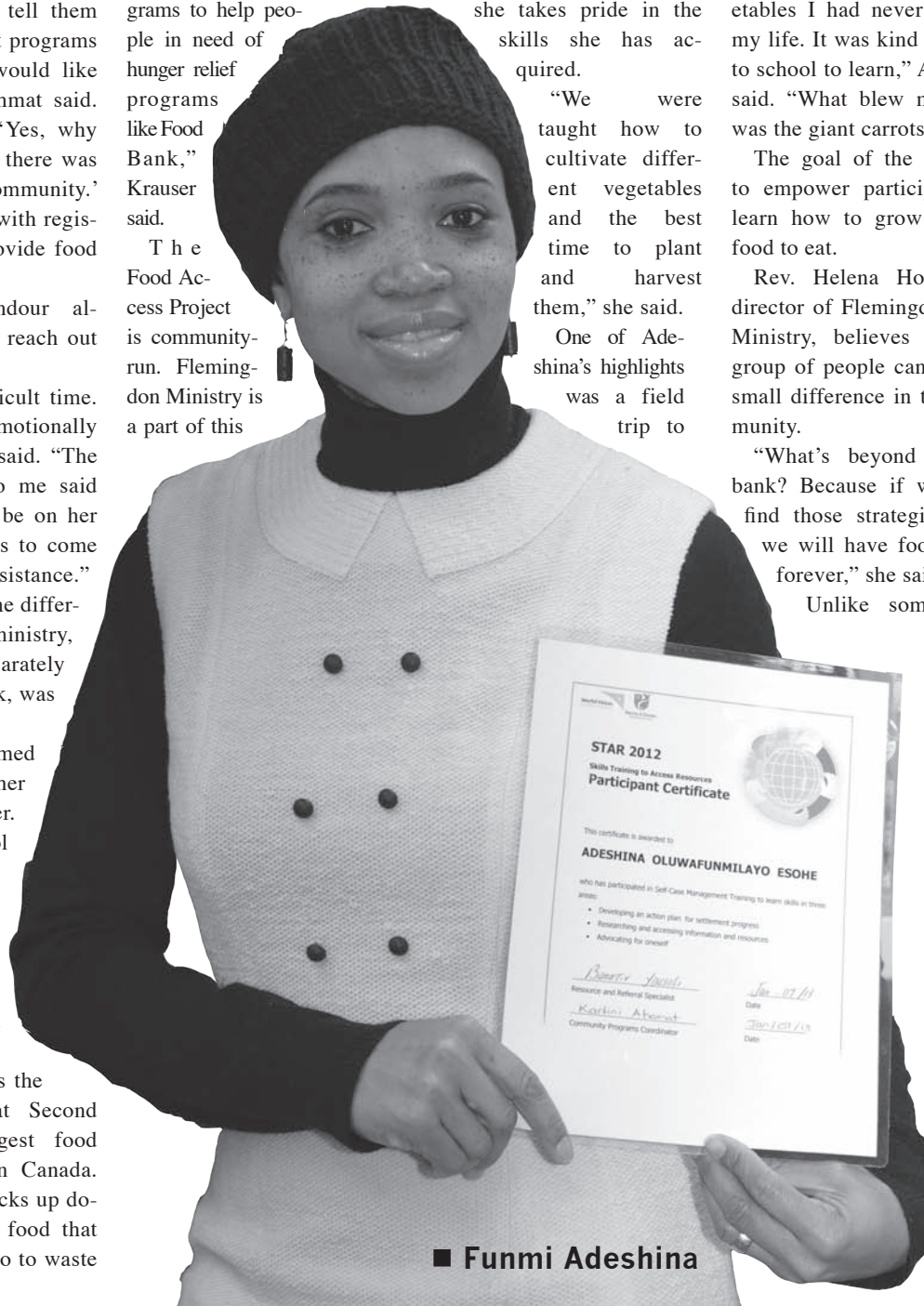
Krauser said she thinks that working with members of the community will help understand the challenges.

She believes engaging ideas and thoughts of those in need will assist in providing permanent self-sustenance for their families without having to rely on food banks.

“Getting the certificate inspired me to say, ‘Yes, I did it,’” Adeshina said. “There’s no more excuses. I have to stand on my feet. It inspired me to get back to my passion, so when my baby is sleeping at night I take my brushes and start painting.”

So Adeshina is actively involved at Flemingdon Park Ministry. She is now working on a new project that enables creative people to showcase and sell goods like artwork and homegrown produce.

“It empowers everyone in the community,” she said.



Nina Raynars // Observer

■ Funmi Adeshina

■ NATURE

Toronto naturalists share their field experiences

By **MARIA SHIPULINA**
The Observer

Anne Byzko is setting up her table to sell postcards with her own photos during the Toronto Field Naturalists (TFN) meeting at the S. Walter Stewart library branch. She took all the photos herself while hiking around Toronto.

For more than 90 years, TFN members have been promoting a love of nature in Toronto. Every week they go out hiking together and take numerous photos, sketch, paint, or write about a new exciting thing they saw.

“We look at the world through our lenses,” Byzko said.

One of her favourite places in Toronto is Humber Bay. Byzko enjoys spending her days there, observing nature. Her presentation for the TFN meeting on Feb. 1 at the library on Memorial Park Avenue in East York was about a “love story” of two birds on the lake.

“Organizing these meeting helps our members share their work and mingle with people

who are passionate about art and nature,” said Gail Gregory, a TFN member and one of the event organizers.

Every member has their own style and their own way of expressing their thoughts and feelings through art. Susan Weiss has been writing journals about her field trips with TFN. She has carefully put every little detail of 442 field trips in those notebooks, never missing a single trip.

“It’s like the book is waiting for me to write it down — like after all those years, I owe a story to it,” she said.

“It is that kind of feeling like you are away from home and you have to go back. Go back and write it down.”

TFN members spend a lot of time looking at the beauty of nature, listening to its various voices and discovering its treasures around Toronto. They show the others what has touched their hearts during shows like this one.

“I really enjoy being out there and seeing it all with my own eyes,” said Margaret McRae, the president of TFN.



Maria Shipulina // Observer

Anne Byzko (left) shows postcards featuring photos that she took in the field to another Toronto Field Naturalist member.

■ COMMUNITY

Spin-A-Thon cycles to success

The Peer Project hosts its second fundraising event

By JENNA REID
The Observer

“I think we may have cheated a bit,” joked Jaime Mor. Mor is a board member in ‘The Peer Project’ and a previous mentor in the program.

“I was spinning for 45 minutes instead of the full hour, but a bunch of the people that I was with were already signed up for the next hour,” Mor said.

“They stayed on the bikes and I’m just staring at these people like, ‘What, are you kidding?’ There was this lady next to me who was just a machine. An absolute machine! She was just going at it. It was unbelievable.”

The program hosted its second annual Spin-A-Thon on the weekend of Jan. 25-26. Energia Athletics — regularly a spin, yoga and kettlebell studio located at 164 Danforth Ave. near Broadview — hosted the fundraiser.

The venue was filled with volunteers, board members, mentors and “mentees” (youth who belong to The Peer Project) along with

pledgers who all came out to support the second Spin-A-Thon.

The bikes started rolling at noon on Saturday and didn’t stop until noon on Sunday — with the motivation to surpass last year’s grand total of \$32,000 for the non-profit organization.

“We’re getting teams together to have a rally spin, where every hour is being occupied for each team,” explained Kathy Bodnar, a member of the Peer Project’s board of directors, “so the team captains have a lot of pressure to get their team biking and raising money for The Peer Project.”

“It’s such an amazing organization that matches youth with trained volunteer mentors. We have so far raised \$35,000, which is really exciting because it costs over \$2,000 to maintain one match for the duration of their relationship.”

The organization has been running for 30 years and currently helps more than 30,000 youths who range in age from six to 15.

Mor spoke proudly about how organizations like the Peer Project will continue to resonate with youth.

“When I was younger, I had a mentor, not from this pro-



Jenna Reid // Observer

Jaime Mor (left) and friend enjoy a well-deserved water break after spending more than 45 minutes riding at the annual Spin-A-Thon. The event invites people to ride exercise bikes for charity.

gram. I found in the almost four years that I have been a mentor for my kid that it is capable of having a very big impact,” he said.

“He often tells me I can talk to you about things that I don’t want to talk to my friends

about, but I also don’t want to talk to my parents about.”

The owners of Energia Athletics, Jon Dunnill and Lea Amaral, said they were excited to support and spin for the fundraiser and that what added that extra edge was the

facility’s new spinning.

“The spinning system that we’re using is called ‘virtual ride spinning,’” Dunnill said.

“It’s all forward motion and it’s beautiful scenery all shot driving down a road. You re-

ally get a rider’s perspective on the video screen as you’re doing the spin class.”

For more information about The Peer Project and how to get involved with the program, visit the website at www.thepeerproject.com

East York clinic offers massages for charity



Jennifer Lee // Observer

Janine Viret prepares signs for the O’Connor Rehab and Wellness Clinic’s February massage fundraiser.

Massage therapists use their healing hands to raise money for program helping Ugandan women

By JENNIFER LEE
The Observer

A small clinic in East York is continuing its long history of charity work, one massage at a time.

On Feb. 2, Janine Viret and Devorah Eisenman, two massage therapists from the O’Connor Rehab and Wellness Clinic, gave massages at a discounted rate to raise money for the Global Volunteer Network Foundation.

“The funds are going towards our program in Uganda,” Viret said.

“They work with women teaching them marketable skills and for children it’s usually feeding programs or schooling programs.”

Viret, who has worked at the clinic for nine years, said the clinic has done similar fundraisers.

In the past, the clinic has asked its clients to bring in school supplies and toys for children in developing countries during their appointments.

They have also organized food drives for

local East York food banks.

“We’re getting people to know the clinic,” she said. “We’re part of this community, but the clinic looked to raise \$600 by giving one-hour massages beginning at 11 a.m.”

“It’s about \$70, give or take depending on the country and the program, to feed a child for an entire school year,” Viret said, “and that’s breakfast and lunch at school and usually also snacks.”

Viret’s boyfriend, Alastair MacGillivray, said the couple became interested in this initiative during a trip to South Africa.

“I’ve seen some of it first-hand and where the money goes and how happy you can make those kids, and that’s what makes it so easy to put effort into something like this,” MacGillivray said.

“A few years ago we went to South Africa and brought a couple suitcases full of school supplies. (We) went to a couple of schools one day and handed them out in one of the townships,” he said.

“These little kids that rarely get anything were bouncing off the walls happy, and I’d never seen anything like that before.”

The clinic is located at 945 O’Connor Dr.

Donations toward its fundraising efforts are always welcomed.

Disabilities won't stop these runners

By SARAH DAYAL
The Observer

Radane Wright, 25, survived being hit by a car, but was told by doctors that he shouldn't play any contact sports following the head injury he sustained.

So he turned to one of the most easily accessible activities of all to keep in shape: running.

"After the accident in 2006 I noticed my vision decreasing, especially at night," Wright said. "I joined the Achilles Running Club in 2010 to keep active, since I was already very involved in soccer, tennis and volleyball prior to my injury anyway."

The Canadian Achilles Running Club is a non-profit organization that encourages people with disabilities to take part in running.

Achilles Canada trains and provides support to participants who have disabilities such as epilepsy, amputation, multiple sclerosis and those who suffer from stroke, head injuries and even visual impairments as seen in Wright's case.

Weekly runs occur all over the city of Toronto, teaming abled-bodied members with participants to reach their fitness goals. The organization hosts a weekly meet-up every Saturday at 8:30 a.m. on the indoor track of Monarch Park Stadium.

"A barrier when running that I faced was depth of perception, so I learned that in a sprint that if I touched the line, I would get disqualified," Wright said. "But Achilles Canada president Brian McLean introduced me to other blind runners who encouraged me and helped me train and figure out solutions to compensate for my weakness in sight."

Wright placed first in the 2010 Achilles race and second place in 2013.

"Training through Achilles, I have been able to represent Canada as a high-performance athlete, and have had the opportunity to train with a coach to get ready for Paralympics and Pan Am Games," he said.

Chris White, 48, started participating with Achilles Canada after he noticed a decrease in his sight.

"I have 20/400 vision with no central vision and I run with a guide in races for safety purposes," he said.

White joined in 2009 after learning about the organization through Blind Sailing Canada.

"I've participated in the Achilles run for the past four years and placed 10th out of 134 people in my age group last year," he said.



Vanessa Campbell /// Observer

Personal trainer Lindsay Robertson and community members take part in the abs component of the night to raise money for Sunnybrook Foundation's youth mental health program.

Jumping for mental health

Community gets fit for support of health programs

By VANESSA CAMPBELL
The Observer

Chants of encouragement can be heard from a high-spirited group at Skyzone as they 'leapfrog' over each other. It's a warmup for the activity of the night: trampolining.

On the last Monday of every month, Insideout Studio, a Leaside fitness club in Leaside, hosts a 'pay-what-you-can' charity bootcamp at Skyzone, an indoor trampoline park just a few blocks away,

at 45 Esandar Dr. Members of the community are invited to jump into fitness and support a good cause. All proceeds go to the Sunnybrook Foundation's youth mental health program.

In addition to raising funds for the program, the event is also aimed at raising awareness about mental health issues affecting the youth of Toronto.

The idea is that of Insideout Studio's director, Barry H. Samuel. Samuel, who has a background not only in fitness, but also in psychology and behavioural modification, said he feels strongly about the cause this event supports.

"The fact is it's a reality and it exists," Samuel said. "I think

it's something we really need to shed a light on — and that's mental health for youth and some of the struggles they go through."

As participants return month after month for this feel-good workout, the spirit of the event is felt by all.

"I have a blast every time," Jason Mergler, 21, said. "It's really just the perfect blend of things you could do. If you're doing something you love and doing it for a great cause, it's just awesome."

Mergler is not the only one enjoying the benefits of this alternative workout.

"In terms of our turnout, (people) come in maybe at the end of a hard day, be it at

work or school and by the time they leave they're completely transformed," Samuel said.

"They're looking so much lighter and brighter, and the smiles are ear-to-ear grins, so it's really great in that sense."

Aside from the \$10,000 Samuel hopes the event will eventually raise, he said he has high hopes for the awareness the bootcamp will bring.

"I hope that people realize the power of the mind-and-body connection. You can't have one without the other and hope to succeed," Samuel said.

"You have to feel good mentally too, and emotionally for that matter... the whole spectrum."



Nolan White /// Observer

Families on ice

East Yorkers enjoyed some quality time with Maple Leafs mascot Carlton the Bear at Don Valley West MP John Carmichael's annual skating party, held Saturday afternoon, Feb. 15, at Leaside Gardens arena.

■ EDITORIALS

Housing in peril

New research by the University of Toronto is a wakeup call for East York.

A recent study by the university suggests that nine out of 10 families living in Toronto's aging highrise apartment buildings are at some risk of losing their homes; of becoming homeless. And one of the neighbourhood clusters sampled in the study includes the areas of Thorncliffe Park, Flemingdon Park and Victoria Village.

The researchers also found that people belonging to ethnic groups, immigrants and single-mother families are more likely to live in these buildings — or in other housing that the research indicated is inadequate.

The housing and homelessness crisis in Toronto is not new — and yet our city council keeps failing to address it effectively. The 2014 budget debate is proof of this. City council voted in favour of a \$4.3 million cut to the Housing Stabilization Fund, a program that helps people under social assistance pay unpaid rent, fight eviction, move if required and meet other housing needs. Last year the fund helped 27,000 people.

So this new cut to the fund will reduce the city's capacity to assist people facing homelessness and other housing-related crises.

The annual cost of homelessness to the Canadian economy is \$7 billion, according to the Canadian Homelessness Research Network, a research organization housed at York University. But we need to question whether addressing this issue through expensive emergency systems is cost-effective — or just a short-term solution to an enduring problem. Shelter beds, soup kitchens and day programs can meet the immediate needs of homeless people, but these measures don't help people off the streets long-term.

Homelessness is often — and wrongly — considered the result of an individual's failing. That may be true in isolated cases. More broadly, however, it's the result of structural shortcomings in the housing market and the socio-economic system generally. But problems created by people can be solved by people, and our municipal government has an opportunity to help promote an adequate supply of affordable housing.

There is no shortage of ideas to tackle this problem — including the restoration of funding for housing security at the federal and provincial levels of government. At the city level, a restoration of the Housing Stabilization Fund would be a step in the right direction.

But ultimately, it's time for us to shift our focus from temporary crisis management to more permanent solutions.

~ Soledad Vega

Wage won't gage

A weak economy in Toronto accompanied by an idle youth unemployment rate has exposed a different and dark side to the recent increase in minimum wage.

Ontario's minimum wage for the past three years has \$10.25 an hour, but advocacy groups such as the Workers' Action Centre and the Campaign to Raise Minimum Wage have fought long and hard to raise it. Yet, the initiative to increase minimum wage to \$11 an hour, effective June 1, may cause more harm than good.

Recent reports of a five-year span from Statistics Canada indicates that youth unemployment is at its highest in Ontario, specifically Toronto. The Canadian average unemployment rate for people between the ages of 15 and 24 is about 14 per cent.

Meanwhile, in Ontario, that rate is significantly higher — ranging between 16 and 17.1 per cent. This illustrates the highest rate of youth unemployment since 1976, when that statistic was first recorded.

Although many youth currently being paid minimum wage will be excited over their 75-cent hourly raise, some business owners may be forced to reduce hours and constrict labour opportunities. This means that even with a pay raise, workers may still bring home the same paycheck as the result of fewer hours.

In addition, a wage increase can serve to limit the amount of job opportunities, as businesses will be more reluctant to take on new workers. This will only help, if not worsen, the youth unemployment rate. Moreover, small family businesses simply will not be able to incur the increased labour costs and hire more workers.

Steve Mastoras, owner of Whistler's Grille on Broadview and Mortimer Avenues, reiterated that a restaurant like his, which consistently hires youth in the summer, will be hard-pressed to hire more than a dozen young people once the wages increase.

Referring to the restaurant and general hospitality sector of the economy, Mastoras said, "We are the number one youth employer in the country... and it's [the minimum wage increase] a serious decision that will adversely affect small businesses."

The wage increase only signifies a raise for those currently making minimum wage. Others who have worked hard to get a raise on their own, and who already sit above \$11 an hour, may not necessarily get the 75 cent bump. Mastoras mentioned that only those who are currently getting minimum wage will be receiving the bump.

"If they are above the minimum wage threshold, my expectations will be that they will remain the same," Mastoras said.

A minimum wage increase may seem good on the surface, but when it kicks in June 1, the reality underneath might not be.

~ Jeremy Hon

■ COLUMNS

@SochiProblems blues

Social media may seem like a simple thing, but it can sure complicate a person's life in a hurry.

Take @SochiProblems, for example — a simple Twitter account that I created for laughs. It blew up fast... going from 300 followers to over 330,000 in a matter of days.

Call it a perfect storm. The arrival of the Olympics — always an attention-grabber. In a place where a strongman rules. Where not everything was ready in time. And where winter sports are being played amid temperatures climbing into the upper teens (and that's Celsius). All I did was provide a platform to complain about it.

But in creating the account, I never thought it would expand to what it is currently; I did it for a few jokes, expecting a following of 15-30 people. Not 330,000.

But along with this explosive growth, I got to see

something else: the other side of news. Being a journalist, you're the one looking for the story, interviewing the subject, writing it up and publishing it in the paper. Being in the news myself is the complete opposite.

It is something that has truly opened my eyes in the past week. Not only does it seem like I'm rarely getting any sleep because my phone is constantly going off, but now I'm always talking about what the news is, to seemingly everyone. Being a journalist, I understand having to get in contact with someone for an interview and the pressure of getting sources to get the story. But this is ridiculous.

I've developed a new respect for those who are always in the limelight. I'm especially sympathetic to people in the news who are around the same age as me. Now that I've experienced a bit of what they go through all of the time,

I know I could never face crowds of cameras every day. I'd go insane. (How do these young celebrities do it?)

For example: When it came to interviews, I didn't quite expect what was going to happen. I had never really been interviewed, so I didn't know how I would feel when the time came.

The biggest challenge was the early morning interview I had with The Morning Show on Global television. First, I'm not a morning person, so getting up and composing myself, doing the interview, then going to school after, was a real challenge. However, it showed me how much you need to be alert regardless of the time of day.

It sounds funny, but it's truly mind-blowing to really reflect on how many people can be reached by social media, and how fast something can explode through it. It can be anything — a catchy tune by a musically gifted unknown or an offbeat trick by a clever amateur scientist.

The lesson here is be who you are, because someone is going to like it and you never know.... It could possibly take you places you never dreamed it would take you.

For now, I'm going to get some Tim Hortons.



Alex Broad

A lesson in black history

It was just a few days ago when a white friend of mine reminded me that this is Black History Month. I was actually taken aback. It had nothing to do with the lighthearted way in which it was brought up — nor the colour of the person raising the point. Rather, it was the fact that I had forgotten completely.

When carrying the label of being an African or Caribbean-Canadian, February is a month that I'm supposed to remember — much like my birthday. This is the month when a younger version of myself would routinely hear the names that paved the way toward a non-discriminative society. I'd be urged to watch films and read literature that painted the picture of a time when colour and race defined a person; where success was made visible for many individuals in the face of racism.

But despite the importance of Black History Month, I no longer feel this urge.

I don't often hear the term Black History Month echoed in my college classrooms; nor do I turn on the television and see much mention of it.

It is a celebration that, in my view, has become ho-hum in its delivery — a 'business-as-usual' event that's acknowledged but forgotten.

You can put the blame on the lack of surface-level racism occurring in our society. Bigotry is rarely out in the open nowadays, so it isn't discussed as often as it is among our neighbours to the south. For this reason, Black History Month is recognized in a token way, out of politeness — but celebra-

tion is optional.

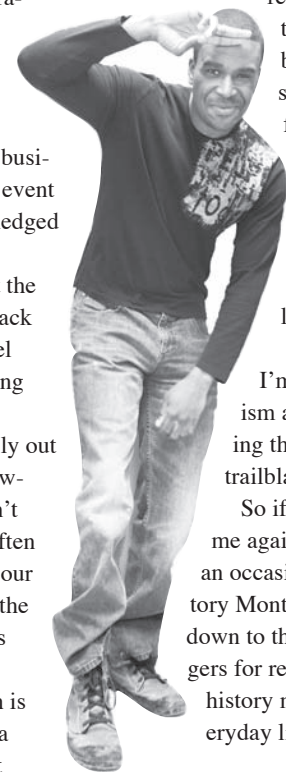
While I have now fallen victim to this way of thinking, my sense of the history will always remain. I am reminded every

time I'm stopped because I fit a description, or politely followed in a store.

It's a reminder that the things that bother me in my day-to-day life used to be a lot worse.

Even the fact that I'm studying journalism at college and writing this column is due to trailblazers before me.

So if you were to ask me again how I can forget an occasion like Black History Month, maybe it comes down to the fact that the triggers for remembering black history make up my everyday life as a black Canadian. A month doesn't change that reality.



Noel Ransome



Jelicia Saulter // Observer

Glitter girls

Sisters Maria Solomos, 12, and Erica, 7, use nail polish and glitter to decorate washers and turn them into pendants at the S. Walter Stewart library's craft event on Feb 7.

TTC driver cures riders' fatigue

East York bus driver helps to make night commutes bearable

By XUETING ZHAO
The Observer

It's 6:38 p.m. and passengers are in line waiting patiently for the No. 25 bus to arrive at Pape Subway Station. It's evident that it has been a long day for most of them, by the looks on their faces. After a few minutes, the bus arrives and everyone can't wait to get on board and out of the cold.

The driver of the bus greets every customer warmly and indicates the estimated time of arrival at the last stop for that bus route.

She also uses the opportunity to remind female passengers about the special stops between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m. provided by the

TTC. This ensures the safety of women travelling alone at night.

"You have to love your job and take pride in it," says the driver, Christina, who asked that her last name not be used, for reasons of personal safety. Born in 1962 in Toronto, she started driving for the TTC in August 2005 and has since managed to bring a smile to the faces of even the most irascible customers.

"All I want to do is to take them home," she says of her passengers. "I am trying to do the best I can."

One of those passengers is Ajzra Sakoli, who says Christina provides "the most entertaining ride I've ever been on. It is the first time I've ever seen a bus driver actually talk with people. It takes away all my fatigue after a long ride on the subway."

Christina routinely gestures to people who have just gotten off another bus across the street to let them know she will wait — that they should take their time and avoid crossing the intersection when

the light is red.

She also provides mittens and hats and sometimes money to those who jump on her bus and seem to be in need.

"Sometimes people would tell me I made their day. But the customers make my day too," she says. "The more you are nice to people, the more people smile back."

Christina still wears the old-school hat that used to be worn by TTC drivers back in the 1970s and '80s. She always comes to work with full uniform, including a tie, even in the summer.

"Because people in Toronto come from different countries, for some of them, a uniform might be the synonym of corruption. People might fear about it," she explains.

"This is my way of showing those people that someone in the uniform should respect them. They should be able to reach out to a person in the uniform and get a nice response."

City's first post office pushed the envelope

Historical Society honours East York building

By SAMANTHA FREEMAN
The Observer



■ Horiszny

Toronto's first post office is a place that's dear to Kay Horiszny's heart.

The building, located at 260 Adelaide St. E., still stands as a historic museum and a fully functioning post office, but to Horiszny, it's where she spent many happy times as a volunteer.

"It will always hold a special place in my heart," said the long-time member of the East York Historical Society. "I will never forget it."

Toronto's first post office was the focus of the society's Jan. 28 meeting at the S. Walter Stewart Library, which featured guest speaker Kate Akerfeldt, assistant curator of the Adelaide Street post office. The topic was particularly relevant in light of the challenges currently facing Canada's postal service.

The group has been the host to many guest speakers over the years, but Horiszny was especially excited about this one.

"I was one of the first volunteers, you know, at the post office," she said. "I got involved in the fall of 1983. I was on a ROM tour and a volunteer there took us on a walking tour downtown. She pointed out this old historic building that was going to be reopening

soon as a post office. She was on the board of directors and she handed out applications for membership to this new little historical society."

Horiszny recalls paying a mere 50 cents to join. She received a letter shortly afterwards, asking if she would like to volunteer.

"I still have the costume dress I used to wear when I worked there. Oh, of course it doesn't fit anymore, but it's nice to still have," Horiszny said with a laugh.

She smiled as Akerfeldt discussed the post office's first opening in 1834 and then again, many years later, in 1984. The building itself almost fell into obscurity. It was not until 1980 that it became designated as a national historic site of Canada and was able to reopen.

"It was pretty much forgotten as the first post office in Toronto. It was cold storage. It was the United Farmers co-op for a while," Akerfeldt said. "By the time it was rediscovered as the post office, it was basically a big fridge. All of the windows were broken out and it was pretty much unrecognizable."

Observer corrections

Two people appearing in separate photographs in the Feb. 7 issue of the Observer were misidentified. The restaurant owner whose picture was on page 8 should have been identified as Chris Christodoulou, and the columnist appearing at the top of page 6 should have been identified as Marcus Duncan.

Also, the story 'Early Fixes Make for Clean Streets' on page 3 contained an inaccuracy. The section about clearing snow from sidewalks should have read: "On its website, the city stipulates that homeowners have 12 hours from the end of the weather event to make their sidewalks safe."

■ INQUEST

Jury recommends more police training

Eligon inquest makes suggestions for working with the mentally ill

Cont'd. from page 1

Talking in a calmer, slower manner is a type of a de-escalation technique, something mental health advocates have been asking for and police have been resisting when an "edged weapon" is involved.

"You can use de-escalation

techniques when you have the time," the president of the Toronto's police union, Mike McCormack, said. "When someone's charging at you with a knife, you have to react."

The lawyer representing Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair told the inquest expanded use of Tasers is the way to go. McCormack is adamant on Tasers too.

"I don't know if they (Tasers) would always change the circumstances but it gives the officers an intermediate use-of-force option between the baton and the gun," McCormack said. "But it won't change the outcome in every sit-

uation.... Sometimes, lethal force is necessary."

That's not a universally held view.

"Tasers are not appropriate weapons for these types of situations.... One of the darts could fail or improperly attach to the person," Rosenthal said. "I'm very opposed to further or expanded use of Tasers."

Rosenthal thinks police should coax the individual to stop rather than barking orders in the traditional sense, "because mentally ill people can't respond to traditional orders." Officers use de-escalation techniques, but they don't

necessarily take that person's state of mind into account.

"An officer could (also) approach the individual with a shield and apprehend them that way," Rosenthal said.

Using a shield or body armour isn't a practical option, according to McCormack, because it's too bulky to carry or wear.

Implementing "mobile crisis intervention teams" and putting body video cameras on cops were other suggestions put forward by lawyers for the victim's families and mental health activists. McCormack doesn't think cameras will change police conduct.

■ MEN'S HEALTH



File Photo from Fotolia

While pharmaceutical companies are pushing older men to take testosterone supplements, the head of urology at Toronto East General Hospital is warning his patients to take heed of a new study linking the hormone to an increased risk of heart attack.

New research uncovers risks of testosterone supplements

Study finds men over 65 who use hormone are twice as likely to have a heart attack

By SOLEDAD VEGA
The Observer

The TV ad shows a handsome man in his 30s running at full speed, taking large, bounding steps with no effort. The next frame shows a couple in their 60s enjoying a romantic day at the beach.

"Are you a man who feels like you're losing your edge?" the host of the Ageless Male commercial says to the camera. "We know how you can boost your strength training, sex drive and performance to the levels you've been wanting. All risk free."

This ad for testosterone supplements would have men believe that aging comes with some serious pathological effects and that these drugs may offer a cure with no risk. Research published recently in the medical journal PLOS ONE, however, says otherwise.

The study in question has found that men over 65 and younger men with diagnosed heart disease were at least twice as likely to have heart attacks after testosterone therapy. It tracked 55,000 men and found that five out of 1,000 non-users were at risk of having a heart attack, while a healthier group of testosterone users older than 65 had double the risk, as did younger men with heart conditions. Dr. Peter Vlaovic, head of urology at Toronto East General Hospital in East York, says these findings are significant.

"I'm somewhat concerned by the fact that there was a higher incidence of coronary events," Vlaovic said. "The fact that

THE LOWDOWN ON LOW T

- It's been associated with low libido and low energy levels
- Most patients seek testosterone therapy for erectile dysfunction
- Losing weight and cutting down on alcohol and steroids can improve testosterone levels naturally
- The Food and Drug Administration is investigating heart issues among men taking testosterone products

the healthier group in the study did worse after the testosterone gets me worried."

Clinical testosterone deficiency, or 'Low T,' as the condition is called, has been associated with low libido and decreased energy levels. For these kinds of cases, monitored testosterone therapy can lead to gradual improvements.

The number one reason for patients asking about this drug, however, is erectile dysfunction, Vlaovic said. Ironically, the pharmaceutical companies selling it are telling men that testosterone will help them "to be the best men they can be." Vlaovic said he believes there is no proof that testosterone therapy could improve a man's virility.

"I have seen very poor outcomes in terms of improvement in erectile function in people on testosterone therapy," he said.

A study from the Medical Journal of

Australia measuring global trends in testosterone prescriptions shows that the hormone's use in Canada had increased 97 per cent between 2001 and 2011.

"Over the last couple of years, I've noticed that the drug reps are coming to my office pushing their products," Vlaovic said. "I can definitely see the prescription rates would tend to go up."

Low testosterone isn't nearly as common as drug companies want men to assume. Yet testosterone patches, gels, supplements and injections are being distributed at doctors' clinics with not enough concern or proper monitoring, Vlaovic said.

The good news is there are better ways to fight "Low T." Research presented at the Endocrine Society's 2012 meeting endorses safer and more natural ways to address it. For overweight men, losing the extra pounds is a natural way to boost their testosterone. Alcohol and drugs like steroids or opiates may also cause 'Low T,' the researchers found. A healthier diet and lifestyle will greatly improve testosterone and energy levels.

As an observational study, Vlaovic said this research isn't conclusive, but should nevertheless be taken into account.

"I'll definitely bring this paper to my patients' attention," he said. "Hopefully there'll be a randomized control trial, with a placebo group and extensive monitoring, that will give us some more light on this subject."

The Food and Drug Administration has begun an investigation on the risk of cardiovascular events in men taking testosterone products.

Although it's a little premature to judge the overall consequences of these findings, it will surely raise awareness and pose questions on the excessive use of a controversial drug.

The family that paints together has fun together

By DILLON HILES
The Observer

What goes well with painting? Competition, apparently. Artisans at Work, located at 2071 Danforth Ave., partnered with East End Arts on Family Day to host an art battle between various families. They were given three hours to create an artistic piece, and afterwards a vote was held to determine the winners.

Tara Shelton, 44, the owner of Artisans at Work, came up with the idea for the art battle.

"Everybody's competitive," Shelton said, adding that holding a competition added excitement to the day.

And true to Shelton's words, each group worked hard to make its painting as good as possible, all while having fun. Occasionally, the children and even some of the adults would take a break to play with Shelton's dog and the store's mascot, Molly, who was running around the store.

Plenty of people dropped in simply to watch the blank canvases being transformed into beautiful pieces of work.

"People love the idea of watching art happen," Shelton said. "Art is mystifying to a lot of people, so I like the idea of the public being able to watch other artists paint."

For co-host Cindy Rozeboom, 48, from East End Arts, it was important for the event to be in this neighbourhood.

"If you're not driving out of town, then you probably wanna' do something local," she said.

Rozeboom and Shelton have been friends for years, so it was only natural for them to work together on this idea. Together, they were able to bring almost 40 people to the art battle.

"Because it's a local thing, I have a distribution list, and Tara has a distribution list of other organizations," Rozeboom said. "We also did a lot of marketing through social media, and through some of the community groups in the area."

The whole day was a lot of fun, according to Nikki Macaulay. She attended the event with her daughter, Emily Macaulay, and her sister, Trisha Causley, and Causley's two children. It was her sister who told her about the art battle in the first place.

"I was looking for something to do on family day that wasn't outside, because it's like negative a million out there," Causley said.

Causley and Macaulay's kids tied for second with Rozeboom's family. Their painting, *Popping Toast*, depicted toast shooting out of a toaster on a kitchen counter. The idea came from Causley's daughter.

"I was sitting at the kitchen counter and [Trisha] asked, 'What do you think we should do,' and I saw the toaster and I said, 'Why don't we do an action shot of toast?'" said Madeleine Causley-Bennett, 12.



Dillon Hiles /// Observer

Emily Macaulay, 10, works on her family's painting, titled "Popping Toast."



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