



FITCHBURG PRIDE

FITCHBURG'S OWN WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

FREE

March 19, 2010
Vol. IV, No. 11
28 PAGES
3 SECTIONS

Fitchburg, Massachusetts • www.fitchburgpride.com

March showers bring April...?



On Sunday, Chad Hackett, 30, of Lunenburg, throws a rope to a stranded motorist (photo left) who stalled in the rising flood waters in the parking lot between D'Angelo's Sandwich Shop and Cinema World on John Fitch Highway. On Monday, the Nashua tributary continued to overflow on Monday, (photo center) stalling unwitting drivers who were forced to abandon vehicles as tow truck operators tended to other emergencies. What a difference a day makes. As the river water finally subsides on Tuesday, heavy machinery is used to rebuild the banks of the river and restore the parking area next to D'Angelo's (photo right). PRIDE PHOTOS/ CHARLES STERNAIMOLO

'Feels like home'

Local family looking to adopt two Haitian girls

BY CAROLINE KERAS
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With three grown children, Michael and Denise Tully were expecting that the only way their family was going to grow was through their four grandchildren that have been born during the past two years and any future grandchildren.

When a 7.0 magnitude earthquake hit the nation of Haiti in mid-January, however, their plans changed.

Micah, the Tully's 25-year-old son, first went to Haiti during a mission trip in 2002 with Grace Community Church in Chelmsford and the group Servants for Haiti. The group went down to work at a school started by Pastor Gene Rigaud Antoine.

During a mission in 2004, he met eight-year-old Maudeline and six-year-old Guerlene, orphans in the Kingdom Kids Orphanage in Port-au-Prince.

After being abandoned by their mother, Pastor Rigaud and his wife decided to take care of the girls by starting Kingdom Kids.

"They just have a heart to help kids," said Denise.

While on their trip, Micah and his friends played with the girls and the other children in the orphanage when they came back from their day of construction work, taking the time to get to know each child.

"I didn't realize that they were sisters until I grew attached to them separately," said Micah.

Upon his return home, he encouraged his parents to sponsor the children he met in Haiti, making special efforts to ensure that Maudeline and Guerlene were taken care of.

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Micah Tully met Maudeline and Guerlene, whom he hopes to soon be able to call his adopted sisters, during a 2004 mission trip to Haiti. The Tully family needs to raise around \$25,000 before the girls can come to Fitchburg.

COURTESY PHOTO

'The greatest honor'

Jones sees opportunity to make a difference in new position

BY CAROLINE KERAS
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One week after being told that he would be returning home from the jungles of Vietnam, Kenneth Jones found himself back in Fitchburg, and having to readjust to civilian life with virtually no government assistance.

"When I got out of the service (in 1972), Veterans' Services agents were dedicated, but they did not have the programs or training that there is today," said Jones. "If you needed information, you had to find it on your own."

Since that time, he has always wanted to assist veterans in any way possible, so he was thrilled when he was appointed the interim Fitchburg Veterans' Commissioner by Mayor Lisa Wong last November, after the retirement of then commissioner T.J. Blausler.

Wanting to continue his service beyond the interim time frame, he immediately put in his application to be hired for the position permanently. To be awarded the job, all applicants must have five years managerial experience and be a veteran.

His military credentials include a tour in the U.S. Army from 1970 to 1972 and the Massachusetts National Guard from 1973 to 1991; he has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Air Medal, and several other decorations for action under hostile enemy fire.

After a review of his application and an interview by the selection committee, which was made up of six local veterans, Wong appointed Jones, who has served as her



New Fitchburg Veterans' Commissioner Ken Jones plans to continue to work hard to advocate for local veterans after officially taking his post earlier this month.

PRIDE PHOTO/ CAROLINE KERAS

chief-of-staff, to the position.

"I am excited to have Ken lead the city's efforts to make sure veterans in this city get the recognition and the benefits they deserve," said Wong. "Ken's strengths are his ability to work with people and to navigate through complex paperwork. These are skills he demonstrated when he worked in the Mayor's office and during his interim appointment to the Veterans' Commissioner post."

Jones admits that some things have changed since he first got out of the Army.

"The new G.I. Bill is far more robust than when I got out," said Jones.

He is looking forward to the opportunity to make new veterans coming home aware of the services they are eligible for that he was not able to get himself.

There are many agencies that will make personal trips to veterans who are

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