Make Peace the News

From the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation

30 New Gift Bricks Installed!

Thirty new personalized bricks were recently installed in the Peace Garden area of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park here in King Farm. Since 2008 when the Mosaic of Gift Bricks program began, 475 bricks have been sponsored by or for people who live in countries all around the world.

Sponsoring a personalized gift brick offers a creative way for individuals, families, organizations, and businesses to express a message or celebrate a loved one, while becoming part of history in a space designated for peace. Brick sponsorships also support the peace programs and outreach activities of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation, many of which are offered for free to youth and adults.

Mattie’s Foundation received a special gift with this round of bricks — installation of the new pavers at no cost, courtesy of Potomac Valley Brick and Supply Company, a local family-owned and operated masonry business. When Alan and Kathleen Richardson of the Richardson Family (L-R Dave, Kathleen, & Alan) donated labor and materials for the installation of 30 new personalized bricks in the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation’s Peace Garden area in Mattie’s Park.

Mosaic of Gift Bricks can also be ordered via USPS mail. For more information about Mattie’s Foundation or the Mosaic of Gift Bricks Sponsorship Program, please visit www.MattieOnline.com or Email HeartsongBooks@gmail.com.

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Ingleside Seeks to Become Certified Peace Community

By Kate Myers

Bob Balkam often goes out of Ingleside’s seventh-floor dining room, his eyes searching for that familiar, peaceful landscape known as the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Park. Balkam invariably thinks back to the close friendship he and his wife shared with Mattie Stepanek and his mother Jeni when the two were neighbors in King Farm, before Mattie passed away and Balkam and his wife moved to Ingleside. A world-renowned poet and activist, Mattie died at age 14 due to complications from dysautonomic mitochondrial myopathy, Jeni suffers from the same disease.

“Mattie and I talked a lot about peace,” recalls Balkam. “He always said, ‘Peace is possible...it can begin simply over a game of chess and a cup of tea.’ And he meant it! As a World War II veteran, I’m interested in peace too. I started to wonder how I could transfer this interest in peace to Ingleside, which is a very peaceful place to live anyway.”

As a former member of the Mattie J.T. Stepanek Foundation Board of Directors, Balkam knew about the foundation’s efforts to promote peace and its recently launched Peace Certification Program. He and his wife Laurin felt strongly that Ingleside would be an excellent candidate for certification, and he shared their idea with Ingleside’s Chaplain Richard Thayer and Executive Director Marlin Liest. Both Thayer and Liest readily agreed.

An outgrowth of Mattie’s message of peace and hope, the Peace Certification Program gives individuals, groups and organizations the materials and support they need to seek, make and bring peace to their communities. Registering with the program (which Ingleside has done) is the first step; the Foundation then works with applicants to put their individual peace plan and journey into action. Certification is the final step.

Ingleside, one of the first adult communities that is peace certified. Not only are the residents of Ingleside seeking to become a Peace Seeker. We share materials with you that support you in exploring and reflect-

According to the Foundation, the three components to Peace Cer-

1. REFLECT: You choose to become a Peace Seeker. We share
time and labor for the Mosaic of Gift Bricks statement. They
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