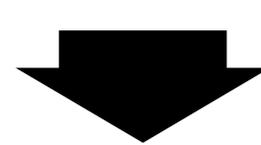




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Business



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GIVING BACK

By ANDRIA Y. CARTER
Staff Writer

HAMILTON – They came by the hundreds, letters filled with funny, sad, uplifting and at times heart wrenching stories but all seeking one goal – to win free Lasik surgery from Campus Eye Group.

Campus Eye Group held the contest as a chance to give back to the community as a way to say thank you for the years of success it has had within the greater Mercer County area. The three winners of the free Lasik surgery are Thomas Dean, Jenna Kean and David Larkin.

Some of the stories were heart wrenching, some sad, a lot of financial hardship and some were uplifting and some people came out of bad hardship. I really wish we could have given it away to everybody,” said Dr. Brian Cohen, the clinic director for the Lasik Center for Campus Eye Group.

Dr. Cohen said it was not easy picking the winners of the contest. Everyone had a good story. Those who did not win, he said can receive a discount on Lasik surgery from Campus Eye Group. Four people chosen as honorable mentions will receive greater discounts on Lasik surgery.

Since 1986, Campus Eye Group has been serving the greater Mercer County area and has become one of the largest multi-specialty interdisciplinary eye care centers in the country. The eye practice is located at 1700 Whitehorse-Hamilton Square Road.

Cohen said everyone had a great story, but the letters received regarding Thomas Dean, Jenna Kean and David Larkin were touching.

Thomas Dean wrote Campus Eye Group because he wanted a Christmas wish he had as an 8-year-old boy to finally come true – to get his eyes fixed. He wrote that when he was eight he couldn't see the television set especially when watching the Christmas shows with Santa Claus. His parents took him to the eye doctor who prescribed glasses and when he got the glasses he cried because he thought his eyes were broken.

He even wrote Santa Claus



Campus Eye Group doctors awarded three Lasik surgeries to local Hamiltonians after reading hundreds of submissions. The contest was their way of saying thank you to the community they serve.

to help fix his broken eye, but waking up on Christmas Day he still needed his glasses to see and learned first hand that there was no Santa Claus. But deep down now as a 23-year-old he still wanted his Christmas wish fulfilled, to get his eyes fixed.

Jenna Kean won free Lasik surgery because both her mother and aunt wrote in nominating her for the surgery. Kean is a remarkable 19-year-old who lost her left leg to a rare form of cancer, called Ewing's Sarcoma. According to her aunt, the chemotherapy that Kean underwent during treatment has caused other issues including affecting her eyesight. Today, the 19-year-old is in college seeking a nursing degree and hoping to be part of the medical field that provides miracles everyday for those who need it.

The third winner is David Larkin. Larkin wrote the contest hoping to win to ease the financial burden his family is going through right now by getting his vision corrected. In April 2008, his wife was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer two months after giving birth to their third child. He at times had to take care of the kids, the house, his wife's medical care while not working or getting paid. In March 2010, both Larkin and his wife believed things were starting to get better when their two-year-

old daughter Lana was diagnosed with cancer, Embryonal Rhabdomyosarcoma, which only 350 kids get each year in the United States. This cancer is not related to his wife's cancer the doctors told him.

He and his wife shared the duties of caring for Lana including stays in the hospital as she underwent treatments, surgery and later further treatment for a life threatening infection that occurred at the surgical sight on his daughter's back.

Because it's not always possible to know what is going on in a patient's life, Cohen said reading all of the stories has been a pleasure and wished he could meet every single person who entered the contest and help them in some way.

He said hopefully by giving the Lasik away to the three winners or offering discounts to contest participants is helping those who need it.

Cohen added that eye care is an essential part of living a very healthy life.

Lasik surgery, which reshapes the cornea to either lessen the dependence or free one from wearing glasses, is just one-way eye doctors have to help people maintain healthy eyes.

To hear more about the contest and Campus Eye Group watch the video at www.trentonian.com.

The new kid on the block

By ANDRIA Y. CARTER
Staff Writer

HAMILTON – Bolani Banjar, Lagatak Banjar, Subzi, Lamb Chop Kabob, Halal Burgers are just a few of the treats that can be found at Afghan Kabob & Grill on Route 33.

Afghan Kabob & Grill is just the latest restaurant to open up in the township's culinary corridor, which offers a plethora of foods including pizza, burgers, Italian and Chinese food. But owner Omar Ayuby noticed that this unique corridor had one thing missing – Afghan and Middle Eastern food.

Since opening June 11 at 888 Route 33 the reception has been great said, Ayuby. He has received only two complaints since he has been open, one being that he didn't serve enough food and the other he serves too much food.

Recently, Trentonian staff members LA Parker, Carlos Avila, and Andria Carter had lunch at the Afghan Kabob and were overwhelmed by the generosity and how great the food was.

Carlos had the Bolani Banjar dish, which is eggplant cooked with potatoes, tomatoes, and a very unique sauce. "It's very good," Carlos said while clearing his plate. LA and Andria also sampled the dish and found it to be very tasty and were pleased that you could not tell you were eating eggplant.

"That is good," LA declared. "Oh my God."

The staff members also tried the Lamb Chop Kabob and Chicken Kabob. The food was very good, not oily and was well seasoned.

The traditional Afghan diet is a very healthy one that consists mainly of lamb, fish and vegetables. Because a number of the dishes are very elaborate and cannot be cooked quickly, Ayuby said it took some time and his wife's help to figure out which Afghan dishes could be converted to a "fast-food" restaurant setting.

The idea for the restaurant came when he noticed a number of people who enjoyed Afghan dishes whenever his wife, a teacher, cooked a dish and took it to her school for teachers, parents and students to sample. Ayuby said he has taken dishes around the neighborhood to introduce his family and say hello.

People around the area embraced the restaurant especially doctors' offices, who tend to have large orders, and soldiers from Fort Dix who come to eat at the restaurant as well.

To learn more about Afghan Kabob watch the video interview at www.trentonian.com.



Afghan Kabob & Grill owner Omar Ayuby, right, and employee Antonio pose at the restaurant Tuesday, Nov. 23.

Trentonian photo/JACKIE SCHEAR