



PHILLY.COM INQUIRER DAILY NEWS [Jobs](#) [Cars](#) [Homes](#) [Marketplace](#)




MyCommunity
Powered by the Inquirer Family of Newspapers



LOURDES
MEDICAL CENTER
OF BURLINGTON COUNTY
218 Sunset Road | Willingboro, NJ 08046 | 609.835.2900

10 YEARS OF PROGRESS
1998-2008



A 249-bed community hospital that provides technologically advanced diagnostic and treatment options close to home.

HOME | PHILADELPHIA | MONTGOMERY | DELAWARE | MAIN LINE | CHESTER | BUCKS | CAMDEN | GLOUCESTER | BURLINGTON

Welcome **Guest** | Register | Sign In Web Search powered by **YAHOO!** SEARCH Site search

Burlington County  

email this print this TEXT SIZE: **A A A A**

Posted on Mon, Oct. 19, 2009

Boy champions NJ's first Blindness Awareness Month

By Jessica Ercolino
Staff Writer

One local boy is proving that without sight, there is still vision.

As part of the first-ever Blindness Awareness Month, more than 60 local organizations have come together to build awareness about ways to prevent, treat and cure blindness and other serious visual impairments throughout October.

The campaign spawned from 12-year-old Rocco Fiorentino, ambassador for The Little Rock Foundation and award-winning humanitarian.

Rocco, a Voorhees resident, is blind due to premature birth and has been working for the cause since he was 5 years old.

"He was having trouble keeping up with the other kindergartners reading their print books because the level of Braille education was not enough," said his mother, Tina Fiorentino. "He was angry and frustrated."

Rocco was the first blind child to attend the Voorhees School District, she added. "We spent a lot of time researching and looking for resources," she said. "I had to teach myself how to raise and educate a non-sighted child in a sighted world."

Fiorentino and husband, Rocco, created the Little Rock Foundation in 1997 to help other families with children who are blind or visually impaired.

Over the years, young Rocco has been speaking to legislators and students across the state, hoping to spread awareness and lobbying for more services for the blind and visually impaired.

Because of him, \$1.2 million has been dedicated to Braille education and services in New Jersey, and 54 jobs were saved at the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, according to www.blindnessawarenessmonth.org.

Last year, Rocco approached Camden County Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald and Assemblywoman Pamela R. Lampitt to express his hopes of creating a month focused on educating the public about eye disease, eye care and addressing the rising trend of severe visual impairment.

They sponsored the bill, and in December, Gov. Jon Corzine signed into law a measure establishing October as Blindness Awareness Month.

"We are very excited about the opportunities we will now have to share the stories of people like me who face life with the challenge of being blind or visually impaired," said Rocco.

But establishing the campaign in his own state wasn't enough: The boy pitched his campaign to Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell, who — in conjunction with Pennsylvania Association for the Blind — proclaimed October as Blindness Awareness Month, too. Rocco is currently in talks with New York Gov. David Paterson, said his mother.

Witnessing their son's success has been a "tremendous feeling" for the Fiorentinos. "As a parent, seeing your little boy's vision all come together for him — it's just amazing," said Tina Fiorentino. "Because of the dreams he has and his desire to show them what his world looks like, people are willing to help him. It's such an inspiration."

Among the more than 60 groups involved with the campaign are: Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Seeing Eye Puppies, Fighting Blindness, Association for Blind Athletes, Wills Eye Hospital, Overbrook School for the Blind, the Free Library of Pennsylvania and the Library for the Blind & Handicapped.

"We are thrilled about the diversity of programs and awareness campaigns that are being offered this month," said Tina Fiorentino. "It is very exciting and we are most appreciative that so many organizations are working together to build a better world for the blind and visually impaired."

On Oct. 24, the Boy Scouts of America will team up with The Little Rock Foundation for "Make a Difference Day" at Camp Little Rock in Medford. For the last nine years, the site has hosted a one-week summer camp program, free to families of blind or visually impaired children.

"We'll be working to improve the campground," said Tina Fiorentino of the event. "We're going to add boardwalks and ramps to cabins so the children have access to certain activities."

Special discounts for the blind and visually impaired are available with Ride the Ducks, the National Liberty Museum and the Academy of Natural Sciences.

Goodwill Industries of Southern New Jersey is communicating with all clients and shoppers in October about the campaign and created a call center there for people who are blind.

READER FEEDBACK
Post a comment

SAVE AND SHARE





ABITARE
APARTMENT HOMES AND RESIDENCES
VOORHEES TOWN CENTER



1, 2 & 3 bedroom apartments for rent, and condominiums for sale in beautiful Voorhees, NJ

For more info
www.LiveAbitare.com

Advertise Here

Today's Most Viewed **Most Emailed**

N.Y. Post mocks Phillies as 'Frillies'
Informant offers look inside mob
Woman arrested after offering sex for World Series tix
Pa. woman charged with offering sex for WS tickets
Lab: Mount Holly student who died had H1N1 virus

▶ **More Most Viewed**

N.Y. Post mocks Phillies as 'Frillies'
Woman arrested after offering sex for World Series tix
2 drawings for free World Series tickets
Mayor Raffles World Series Tickets
Woman arrested for trying to trade sex for World Series tickets

▶ **More Most Emailed**

MOST VIEWED IN THIS SECTION

- More News Page
- Keep home temperature in check this winter with Ward's
- Vic's Concrete & Masonry Co. paves the way to quality driveways
- Taking a long, hard look at your finances
- Belly dancing shakes up Cinnaminson library

LATEST STORIES IN THIS SECTION

- ⌄ Burlington County Freeholders approve solar panels on county building to offset energy costs 10/23/2009
By Mischa Aaron Arnosky
- ⌄ Penn Queen Diner makes it fresh and homemade every day 10/23/2009
By Jessica Ercolino
- ⌄ Evesham Township School District student wins NJ Doodle 4 Google 10/23/2009
By Amanda Rittenhouse
- ⌄ A not-so underground community center in Burlington 10/19/2009
By Amanda Rittenhouse
- ⌄ Keep home temperature in check this winter with Ward's 10/19/2009
By Jessica Ercolino

ADOPT A PET
The Wonder of Dogs 10-25

A full list of events and programs is available at www.blindnessawarenessmonth.org. For more information, visit The Little Rock Foundation Web site, www.tlrf.org, or call 877-220-2500.

Sponsored Links

select blinds Shades & Blinds at Low Prices! Vertical & Horizontal Blinds. SelectBlinds.com	Blindness and Low Vision Products Call us before you buy any visual Aids (973) 272-7667. www.brailledepot.com	Wooden Blinds For Less All About Wooden Blinds For Less. Your Guide To Home Improvement. YourHomeDIY.com
--	--	--

PEOPLE WHO READ THIS ALSO READ
20 things to ponder about the Yankees

...AND BOUGHT:

Praise for new Barnes design

Letters: Times were tougher before plasma TVs

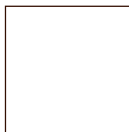
Upper Darby police get bait car



Adjustable Height Garage
SamsClub.com



Eagle River Smoke Wood Grill
SamsClub.com



8' Blinds
SamsClub.com



Sign in to post a comment

Comments

0 comments

Register to comment

Why are we asking you to register? We've made some changes to the Philly.com commenting system to increase the quality of the user experience and dialogue, and reduce the number of inappropriate or offensive posts. You're now required to have a registered username and account before adding a comment. This will improve the comments for everyone. We apologize for the inconvenience. **Join the conversation!**

SIGN UP NOW

Already Registered? Sign In

Email Address

Password

Forgot Password?

SIGN IN

Halloween Can Be Scary for Dogs

Much of the fun and excitement experienced by humans at Halloween can be devastating to dogs. Treats meant for humans, especially chocolates ones, can...

The Philadelphia Inquirer

Philadelphia tax revamp is still a mess

Philadelphia's new and supposedly improved property values, heralded as the solution to a broken tax system, are so filled with errors that it may take up to two years to get them right, according to the city budget director.

Signs of Charleen's "torture" were hidden
Corzine spends more than 2 foes combined



Stimulus plan needs some stimulation: Awarded \$157M in fed funds, the city has spent just \$1M, and saved only 52 jobs

MORE THAN six months after President Obama's \$787 billion stimulus package was passed into law, the city of Philadelphia has spent less than \$1 million in recovery money and retained just 52 jobs.

2 political consultants face evasion charges: Feds allege they didn't pay tax on proceeds


ID-theft defendant denies guilt: Miguel Bell seeks bail; feds resist




21st Century Oncology
Leading-Edge Technology For a Better Tomorrow


We are a leading developer and operator of radiation therapy centers. These centers, which are freestanding and hospital-based, provide a full spectrum of radiation therapy services to cancer patients, including conventional external beam radiation treatments and advanced services such as prostate seed implants and 3D conformal treatment planning.


www.21stcenturyoncology.com



MERCHANDISE


- 

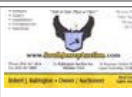
ARCHITECTUAL DRAWINGS & DESIGN FOR LESS!
\$0.00
- 


Non Profit Remodeling Contractor (You Save Money!)
\$0.00
We are Non Profit Contractors a community services-General Contractor! (501c3 affiliated) We are...
- 

Brand New in the Box Computer and Monitor
\$500.00
Brand new ZT Systems Computer with 22" flat screen monitor, never taken out of the box. 500GB...

GARAGE SALES

- 

Huge indoor moving Sale sat oct 24th 9-11, sun 9-2
\$0.00
Everything must go. large home filled to the brim with quality stuff. furniture, antiques, gym...
- 

FANTASTIC MULTI-ESTATES AUCTION
\$0.00
PUBLIC AUCTION
Antiques, Collectibles & General Merchandise Sunday - November 1, 2009 Start...
- 

Sectional Sofa
\$800.00
This sectional sofa would be a great addition to a family room!! It is practically brand new;...