

COMMUNITIES

From staff reports

BROADVIEW HEIGHTS

Help 'Stamp Out Hunger'

Letter carriers will collect food Saturday, May 10, for the 16th annual drive to "Stamp Out Hunger." The Broadview Heights Lions are asking their community to help by placing bags of non-perishable food by mailboxes, dropping off food at city fire stations or volunteering to help sort and collect the food at the Broadview Heights Post Office at 3:30 p.m. May 10. All collections will go toward the South Hills Lend-A-Hand program, a 20-year-old Lions Club initiative that provides food to 40 area families each month. To donate cash, make checks payable to South Hills Lend-A-Hand, 3591 E. Wallings Road, Broadview Heights 44147.

CLEVELAND

Legal Aid offers free clinics

Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers Program will offer free advice and referral clinics on Saturday, May 17, at University Settlement, 4800 Broadway and Saturday, May 31, at Maple Heights Senior Center, 15901 Libby Road from 9:45 a.m. to noon. Volunteer attorneys from the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association and Calfee Halter & Griswold will be on hand. Legal Aid handles civil problems, such as divorce, landlord disputes, getting special education services at public schools, battling predatory lenders, getting public benefits and bankruptcy. Legal Aid cannot help with criminal issues. For more information and additional clinic locations, visit lasclew.org, or call 216-687-1900.

Conservation grants awarded

The ArcelorMittal USA Foundation has awarded about \$1 million in grants to 16 conservation programs in six Great Lakes states, including projects in Ohio to restore natural habitat and to train school teachers about wetlands. The Lake Erie Allegheny Partnership, based at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, will spend about \$100,000 to buy land or complete other conservation projects. The Ohio Environmental Council will spend about \$34,000 to train school teachers and create a DVD for schools. The \$1 million donation is expected to be matched by as much as \$3 million from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. ArcelorMittal operates the former LTV Steel Co. in the Flats.

Panel OKs airport police plan

Cleveland City Council's Aviation and Transportation Committee approved a plan Wednesday to create a separate Police Department to patrol Cleveland Hopkins International Airport. Other cities, including Seattle, New York and Los Angeles, have airport police departments, officials said. Mayor Frank Jackson's proposal for Hopkins must be approved by three other council committees before going before the whole council. Airport chief Ricky D. Smith said the Hopkins department could be created within six to eight months after its approval. Jackson previously attempted to replace the city officers at the airport with an independent police force, but union officials have won two court battles to stop it. City officials are trying to appeal to the Ohio Supreme Court.

A filling fund-raiser

The Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital will get a portion of luncheon sales at the Au Bon Pain restaurant on selected days to mark the opening of the hospital's Debra Ann November Autism Wing on May 15. The donation will be based on sales of 14 new, low-calorie meals that will be introduced on May 7, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14. The restaurant is in the Cleveland Clinic-Crile Building, 2049 East 100th St.

Action sports tickets on sale

General admission tickets for the AST Dew Tour's stop in Cleveland are now on sale. Cleveland will host the Rite Guard Open July 17-20 at North Coast Harbor. The event — the second of five stops on the 2008 action sports tour — will feature skateboarding, BMX and freestyle motocross. Tickets, which cost \$15 for adults and \$7.50 for children, are available through Ticketmaster and at select Macy's and Giant Eagle stores. More expensive tickets for reserved seats are also available.

CUYAHOGA FALLS

Wanted: river cleanup crews

Volunteers are needed by the National Park Service to help clean up the Cuyahoga River watershed from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, May 17, to cele-

Monitor suspended over slur

Incident occurred in Medina County school

MARILYN MILLER
Beacon Journal

GRANGER TOWNSHIP — A study hall monitor at Highland High School in Medina County has been placed on paid leave after being accused of using racial slurs in a conversation with students. Principal Daryl Kubilus Jr. called the incident "a most unfortunate situation."

"Nothing like this has ever happened before involving a staff member or has ever been brought to my attention," he said.

The suspended monitor, Renee Lewandowski, has been a teacher's aide at the school for two years. She could not be reached for comment.

The incident was reported by Russell James, 15, a freshman from Sharon Center and one of only a handful of minority students at the school.

Of the 1,046 students at Highland, fewer than 1 percent are black. The school has no minority teachers.

Russell said he used to enjoy study hall, when he and fellow students would discuss the world outside of school.

Lewandowski often joined the talks at their table in the school cafe-

teria, he said.

"I enjoyed her company," Russell said, "and valued her opinions on world and local topics."

But last week when the seven students at the table started talking about a white hockey coach working at an inner-city school, Russell said the study hall monitor chimed in on the conversation and used a racial epithet.

"She said minorities are the reason majorities have to watch what they say and do, even though minorities are the ones responsible for all the crime and they're the ones doing all the stupid stuff," Russell said.

He said he let her finish her "tirade" and excused himself.

"I really didn't know what to say or do," the freshman said. "I went to the restroom for a few minutes to collect my thoughts and to reflect on what just happened, then went back right before the bell rang and grabbed my books to leave."

He said a couple of his friends approached him after study hall, also in shock, while others left the room laughing.

"I never heard a teacher use the N-word before," Russell said. "I hear

the N-word in the hallways, but never to my face until just a few weeks ago."

He said one boy called him the racial epithet and then another boy did the same two days later.

Russell, who has been in the Highland school district since third grade, reported the incident to the school guidance counselor.

"I needed to talk to an adult and put everything on the table," he said. "She suggested I talk to my parents and to the principal."

Russell did that and Lewandowski was placed on leave while the incident is being investigated.

Kubilus has known Russell for several years. Before becoming the high school principal, he was an assistant principal at the middle school that Russell attended.

"Russell is a bright, energetic, talented young man with a wonderful disposition," he said.

The principal said he has talked with legal counsel about the incident.

"I don't know if anything addresses this in a teacher handbook or document," he said, "but racially insensitive language will not be tolerated here."

There is no racial sensitivity class

or diversity training in the district, but Kubilus said that have to be addressed soon, near future.

Karla Carruthers, a spokeswoman for the Ohio Department of Education, said diversity training is not part of requirements for teacher's aides.

She said she was not aware of similar incident in Ohio.

"Teachers are usually conscientious sensitive matters," Carruthers said. "It's not something teachers

Russell's mother, Minty James, said her son is still upset over what happened. She said when Russell home from school, he discussed the incident with his father first.

She said it was against judgment to send Russell to land. Her older son, Rodney, graduated from the high school last year and also had reservations about brother going there.

Rodney James, who is now a man at Tennessee State in Nashville, said he often heard racial slurs in Highland.

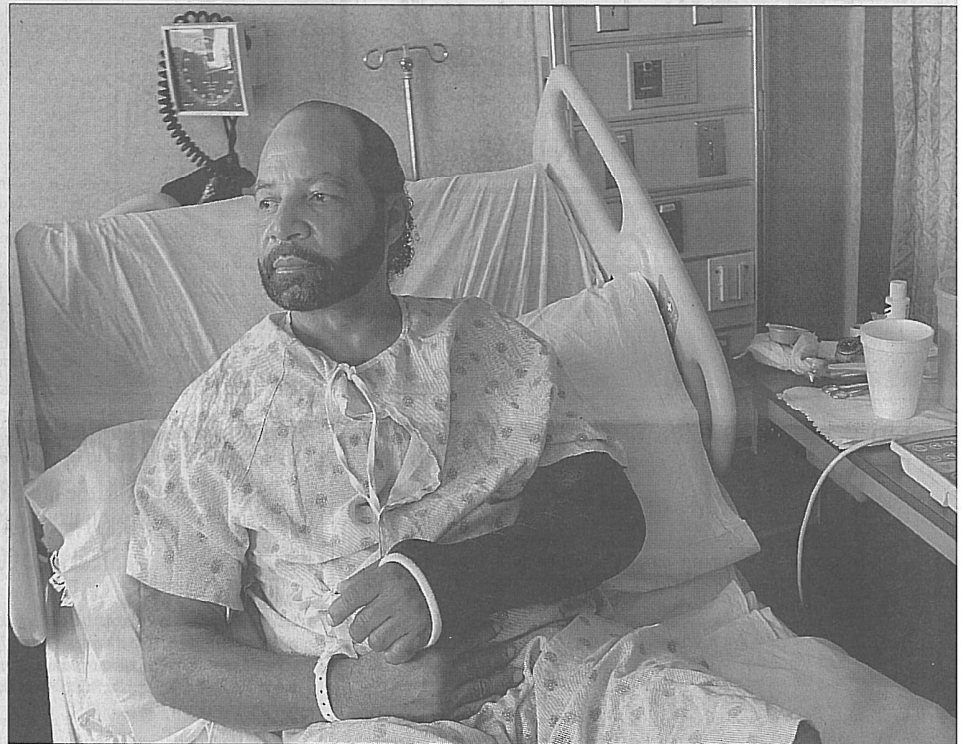
"My freshman and sophomore years were the worst," he said.

To reach this reporter: mmiller@thebeaconjournal.com, 330-996-3098

"I'm not a kid. I'm 55 years old, man, and I can't go asking for someone to help me. Maybe I went about it the wrong way, but I had to go through this on my own."

Eugene Clemons,

a homeless man reunited with his family



MARVIN FONG | THE PLAIN DEALER

Eugene Clemons, 55, saw his daughter, mother, sister and grandson Tuesday after he was featured in a Plain Dealer story about attacks on homeless people. "Maybe this all happened for a reason," he said.

Homeless man, estranged family reunited

His beating leads to relatives' visit

STAN DONALDSON
Plain Dealer Reporter

A homeless man who was attacked in Cleveland last month by two assailants has been reunited with his estranged family after several years.

Clemons said. "I was very happy. . . . Maybe this all happened for a reason."

Clemons, who has been homeless for six years, was featured in a Plain Dealer story on Tuesday about Ohio ranking fourth in the nation in reported homeless attacks. His attack was included in the story.

After the story appeared, family members called the paper to find out

rior Avenue. The men, who have not been caught, used a board with nails to beat Clemons. He suffered a broken wrist and injuries to both legs.

Clemons said he has stayed away from his family because he wanted to "sort out some issues" and didn't want to become a burden.

To support himself while homeless, he has been working temporary jobs and sometimes slept at the 2100

Clemons' family member they were pleased to see him.

"My father is a survivor, he's Marine and I always believed in OK," said Raquel Scott, 32, hadn't seen Clemons in five years.

Scott said that, though the has "drifted apart" over the she plans to do what she can for her father.

Stan Donaldson, an administrator