

The Commercial Review/Bailey Cline

Courtnee Taylor, left, gives a high-five to now 4-year-old Blair Buckland after painting her face Sept. 30 during a fundraiser at the Portland Main Street Fall Festival. Taylor is on the board of directors for Kids Purpose Project, a local non-profit organization aimed to fill the needs of suffering children in Jay County.

Kids are their purpose

By **BAILEY CLINE**
The Commercial Review

Kids Purpose Project's goal — to help kids be kids.

For the group of women and mothers in the community, fulfilling the needs of suffering children in Jay County is the priority. The nonprofit started in 2021 con-

tributes wherever there is a deficiency. Whether it's collecting and donating toiletries, winter clothing or school supplies, or offering services at a community event, Kids Purpose Project is on the job.

"(We help) pretty much wherever we see kids that have a need," said Teresa Taylor, a member of the

group's board of directors.

Purpose

Holly Johnson, who co-owns Moo Juice Express in Berne with her husband Brady Johnson, remembers when her nephews, now 4-year-old Simon Chenoweth and 3-year-old Abel Chenoweth,

were diagnosed in 2019 and 2020 with cystic fibrosis.

"It was terrifying for our family," she said.

Symptoms of cystic fibrosis include persistent coughing, frequent lung infections, wheezing or shortness of breath, poor growth or weight gain and frequent greasy,

bulky stools or difficulty with bowel movements. However, Johnson noted, her nephews were later diagnosed with an extremely rare form of the disease, meaning they would likely have no symptoms. Only 218 others in the United States have the diagnosis, according to Kids Pur-

pose Project's website, and 80% of those still need treatments, unlike Simon and Abel Chenoweth.

"We're very, very blessed," said Johnson. "But that kind of opened our eyes to what it's like to be a family with kids who are in the hospital."

See **Purpose** page 5D

Thankful for the experience

Exchange students look forward to Thanksgiving dinner



Lucie Henneaux

By LOUISE RONALD
The Commercial Review

Nine of the 15 foreign exchange students at Jay County High School recently took a few minutes out of their school day to talk with the Commercial Review about Thanksgiving.

This is the first American Thanksgiving for all of them.

What do they know about the holiday?

“I know it’s a lot about turkey,” said Angie Montebello of France. “That’s the only thing that I know.”

Three students from Spain — Oskar Alart, Hugo Gutierrez and Naroa Zugasti — are familiar with Thanksgiving from movies.

“Families meet each other and have lunch and celebrate,” said Zugasti.

“The whole family meet in the same house and they have dinner or lunch or something,” Gutierrez agreed.

Alart said his impressions of American high school from movies have turned out to be accurate, so he expects Thanksgiving to be the same.

Carla Alashkar is from Lebanon and has never seen Thanksgiving in the movies, but has learned a bit from her host family.

“I know some stuff like there is a family gathering and they have like a big meal,” she said.

Livia Luzzi of Italy also listened to descriptions from her host family.

“It seems like a party or something,” she said. “They just get together and eat.”

Labibah “Lily” Awliya saw Thanksgiving in a lot of movies before coming to the United States from Indonesia.

When she applied for foreign study, “I wrote that one of the things I want to experience in America is having a Thanksgiving dinner,” she said.

Isabella Puusepp from Estonia is looking forward to the big Thanksgiving meal. She’s not worried about trying new foods.

“I’m open to everything,” she said.

Gutierrez isn’t quite so sure. “I’m kind of nervous it if doesn’t look like I will like it,” he admitted, “but I always try it.”

Lucie Henneaux of Belgium hasn’t tried pumpkin pie yet and is a little concerned because she doesn’t like cinnamon. Even so, she’s determined to take a bite.

“If there is pumpkin pie, I’m going to try it,” she said.

Of course, not every try is a success. Zugasti, however, is a born diplomat.

“I just try to pretend that I like it even if I don’t,” she said.

All the students plan to help out in the kitchen — cooking if they can or at least clearing up and washing dishes.

And they are prepared to express their thanks.

Henneaux is looking forward to it.

“I can’t wait to ... say what I’m grateful for and also know

what (her host family is) grateful for,” she said.

What are they thankful for?

Oskar Alart from Spain lives with Mark and Jen DeHoff

“My (host) family because they’re helping me a lot. I feel like they are my real family.”

Carla Alashkar from Lebanon lives with Chris and Jennifer Nibarger

“I’m thankful for everything. For the whole experience I’m living right now. I’m so grateful.”

Labibah “Lily” Awliya from Indonesia lives with Pat and Chrissy Krieg

“Right now, I’m just so thankful that I’m here in Portland, Indiana. I’m so thankful and grateful for my host family because they really supported me so much.”

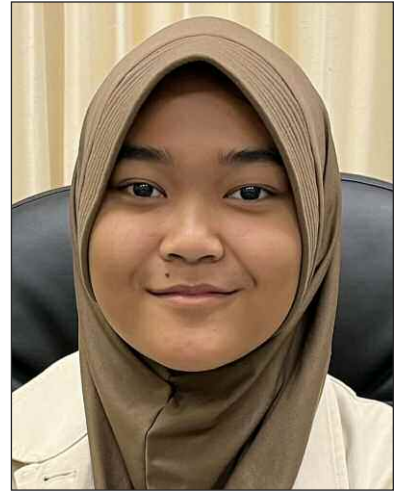
Hugo Gutierrez from Spain lives with Patrick and Hannah Long

“I’m thankful about my family because they gave me a chance to come here.”

Lucie Henneaux from Belgium lives with Bobby and Cheryl Ruiz

“I’m grateful to be here. ... I’m very lucky.” Her host family doesn’t usually do the “big American thing” at Thanksgiving but this year they will for her sake. “I’m so excited.”

See Experience page 4D



Labibah Awliya



Oskar Alart



Hugo Gutierrez



Isabella Puusepp




Naroa Zugasti

“I can’t wait to ... say what I’m grateful for and also know what they’re grateful for.”

—Lucie Henneaux





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Turkey bowl perfect for leftovers

By LINDA GASSENHEIMER
Tribune News Service

What do you do with Thanksgiving leftovers or really anytime you have a lot of leftovers? This turkey bowl is an answer. You can use your leftover stuffing, turkey and vegetables or use whatever cooked meat or vegetables you have in your fridge. Use this recipe as a guide for amounts and how to use them.

Quick Fix

instead of orzo to save time.

— Place the frozen corn kernels in a colander and run warm water through them to quickly defrost.

— Use a bowl that will comfortably fit the ingredients, or use a plate if you don't have a large bowl.

Helpful hints

— You can use microwaveable rice

Countdown

— Place water for orzo on to boil.

— Microwave broccoli florets.

— Prepare ingredients.

— Assemble the bowls.

Shopping list

To buy: 1 package orzo, 1 bunch broccoli florets, 1 container cherry tomatoes, 1 package frozen corn kernels, 1 bunch cilantro, 1 head of lettuce or 1 package shredded lettuce, 1 bottle reduced-fat oil and vinegar dressing and 3/4 pound cooked deli turkey

breast if not using your leftover turkey.
Staples: olive oil.

Turkey bowl

3 ounces orzo (rice shaped pasta), about 1/2 cup

1 cup cherry tomatoes, cut in half

2 teaspoons olive oil

2 cups broccoli florets

3 cups shredded lettuce

3/4 pound cooked turkey, cut to small pieces

1 cup frozen corn kernels

1/4 cup reduced-fat oil and vinegar dressing

2 tablespoons chopped cilantro

Place a medium-size sauce pan three quarters full of water on to boil for orzo. Add orzo to boiling water and boil 9 to 10 minutes. Drain and place in a mixing bowl and add tomatoes and olive oil. Add salt and pepper to taste. Toss well.

Place broccoli in a microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high one minute.

Divide lettuce between two large bowls. Add the orzo placing half of it on

one side of each bowl. Divide turkey pieces placing them next to the orzo on each bowl. Continue to place corn kernels, and broccoli florets moving in a circle around the bowls. Drizzle the dressing over the bowl ingredients. Sprinkle cilantro on top.

Yield 2 servings.

Per serving: 563 calories (24% from fat), 14.7 g fat (2.8 g saturated), 4.3 g monounsaturated), 123 mg cholesterol, 54.9 g protein, 57 g carbohydrates, 5.4 g fiber, 193 mg sodium.

Girls' wardrobe too much for friend's mom

DEAR ABBY: I am a fairly laid-back mom of a wonderful 13-year-old daughter. Her friends are nice kids, but some of them dress pretty provocatively. I have seen them wear super-short shorts that are very "cheeky" and tops that really expose their assets.

We have been invited to a party at a friend's home, and my daughter is allowed to bring a friend. The friend she has chosen to invite regularly dresses in very provocative attire, and I would feel more comfortable if I knew she was going to dress "appropriately" by my standards.

I don't know what to do. Should I talk to the parents? (Cringe!) Ask my daughter to tell her friend what the dress code is and to convey "Wear something that doesn't show your butt cheeks"? Or must I ignore it and hope for the best? — OVEREXPOSED IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEAR OVEREXPOSED: Many teenage girls let it all hang out in an effort to attract attention. I do not think you should talk to the girl's mother because I don't think your comments would be warmly welcomed. Instead, ask your daughter to talk to her friend and suggest that for THIS occasion, it would be better to cover up more than she usually

does because the hosts are old-fashioned and can be judgmental — just like you.

DEAR ABBY: I have been married to my high school sweetheart for 30 years. Recently, she shared details of two infidelities that she had with other men.

The first was with an individual on the staff of our church who held himself out to be my friend. My wife says it was an unprovoked attack, where he forced himself upon her. But when I asked why she didn't resist or fight him off, she said she didn't know and that maybe, deep down, she wanted it to happen. The second was someone she met at a bar and had developed a relationship with. When I was away on business trips, she stayed with him overnight on four occasions.

She tells me these things happened more than 20 years ago and she's been faithful since, but to put it bluntly, I am devastated and unconvinced



Dear Abby

that that's the entire story. I believed my wife to be faithful during our marriage.

I guess I was naive because, over the years, she was jealous and accused me of something nefarious if I even looked at a woman, although I never strayed. Now I'm doubting everything. Did we live a fictional life? Were we ever truly happy? How can I believe that she's been faithful since?

The fact of the matter is I DON'T BELIEVE HER. I still love her, but every time I look at her, I think about what she told me, and I'm having a hard time coping with this information. I don't think I will ever get over this. What should I do? — DOESN'T BELIEVE HER IN FLORIDA

DEAR DOESN'T BELIEVE: I can feel your pain, and for that, you have my sympathy. You may need the help of a marriage and family counselor to figure out the answers to the questions you are asking yourself. Once you have started on that path, ask your wife to join you. Solid marriages are built on trust. Only if that can be reestablished will your marriage be healed.

DEAR ABBY: Three months ago, I lost my dear, loving wife (the best part of me) to cancer;

COVID-19, pneumonia and heart problems. We had a great marriage, not perfect, but the happiest times of our lives. In disbelief, carrying a burden of grief, sorrow and pain, I am lonely and alone, but it is getting lighter with each passing day. I know I don't want to spend the rest of my remaining time this way.

We were together 40 years, rearing a blended family of four children. Then, seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren came along. How long should I wait before considering looking around, dating and searching for someone to share my life with? I am being bombarded with interest from women I do not know, which I did not expect. — ALONE IN ALABAMA

DEAR ALONE: Please accept my sympathy for your loss. Your loneliness, pain and vulnerability are palpable. This is why, when you start dipping your toe into the dating pool, it's important to take your time and not rush into any "quickie" entanglements. Realize that as a senior widower, you are now a hot commodity. You will meet many women as the weeks go on.

There's a good reason why folks are advised not to make any serious decisions

for a year after a loss such as the one you have experienced. Take your time and avoid jumping into any serious commitments in the coming months.

DEAR READERS: Tomorrow is Thanksgiving, and no Thanksgiving would be complete without sharing the traditional prayer penned by my dear, late mother:

Oh, Heavenly Father,
We thank Thee for food and remember the hungry.
We thank Thee for health and remember the sick.

We thank Thee for friends and remember the friendless.

We thank Thee for freedom and remember the enslaved.

May these remembrances stir us to service.

That Thy gifts to us may be used for others.
Amen.

Have a happy and safe celebration, everyone! — LOVE, ABBY

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Community Calendar

Notices will appear in Community Calendar as space is available. To submit an item, email news@thecr.com.

Today

WEDNESDAY MORNING BREAKFAST CLUB — Will meet at 8 a.m. in the east room of Richards Restaurant. All women are invited to attend. Includes activities and devotional time.

PING PONG — Will be played from 11 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays at West Jay Community Center.

PORTLAND ROTARY CLUB — Will meet at noon each Wednesday in the cafe at John Jay Center for

Learning, 101 S. Meridian St., Portland.

EUCHRE CLUB — Will meet at 2 p.m. the fourth Wednesday of each month at Chalet Village Health and Rehabilitation in the North Lounge.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP — New Beginnings, a support group for friends and families of alcoholics, will meet at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday in the Zion Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 726-8229.

A BETTER LIFE - BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Wednesday at

Redkey United Methodist Church, 122 W. Main St. Come early for a meal. For more information, call Pastor Randy Davis at (765) 369-2085.

Friday

PAST RECOVERY SERVICES — Peer Addiction Support Team recovery support group meets at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. each Friday at the Jay County Drug Prevention Coalition office at 100 N. Meridian St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3259.

Saturday

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS — Will meet at 10 a.m. at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, 218 E. High St., Portland. For more information, call (260) 251-3336 or (260) 729-7000.

Sunday

A BETTER LIFE - BRIANNA'S HOPE — A faith-based recovery group for all kinds of addictions, will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. each Sunday at The Rock Church, 1605 N. Meridian St., Portland. Come early for a meal. For more information, call (260) 766-2006.

Monday

PORTLAND BREAKFAST OPTIMISTS — Will meet at 7 a.m. for breakfast at Richards Restaurant.

PING PONG — Will be played from 9 a.m. to noon each Monday at Jay Community Center.

EUCHRE — Will be played starting at 1 p.m. each Monday at West Jay Community Center, 125 Hoover St., Dunkirk.

TAKE OFF POUNDS SENSIBLY (TOPS) — Will meet for weigh-in at 4:30 p.m., with the meeting at 5 p.m., at Trinity United Methodist Church, 323 S. Meridian St., Portland. New members welcome. For more information, call (260) 726-5924.

Sudoku

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Level: Intermediate

Tuesday's Solution

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| 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
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| 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| 4 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| 5 | 4 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 9 | 3 |
| 6 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 8 | 4 |
| 9 | 8 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 6 |

The objective is to fill a nine-by-nine grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine three-by-three boxes (also called blocks or regions) contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

Happy Thanksgiving Day

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Livia Luzzi



Carla Alashkar



Angie Montebello

Lucie Henneaux of Belgium, fourth from left, with her host family and friends at the Indiana State Fair. Henneaux lives with Bobby and Cheryl Ruiz of Portland.

Experience ...

Continued from page 2D
Naroa Zugasti from Spain lives with Frank and Marcie Vormohr
"I'm thankful for being here. Experiencing this. It's way different from what I'm used to in Spain, so I'm really thankful for that."

Angie Montebello from France lives with Ken and Rene Denton
"I'm grateful for being here and experiencing this. Having parents that support me."

Isabella Puusepp of Estonia

lives with Chris and Jennifer Nibarger

"When I got the scholarship (to study abroad), I was like, 'I don't know if I should go or not' and my friends were like, 'Go!' And now I'm here and I'm in a very happy place in my life."

Livia Luzzi from Italy lives with Matt and Sarah Lingo

"I always dreamed to come to America. ... I'm just thankful for being here and to have my family back in Italy that supports me ... and my host family here that supports me too."

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Recurrence research

Penn got \$10 million grant for studying breast cancer

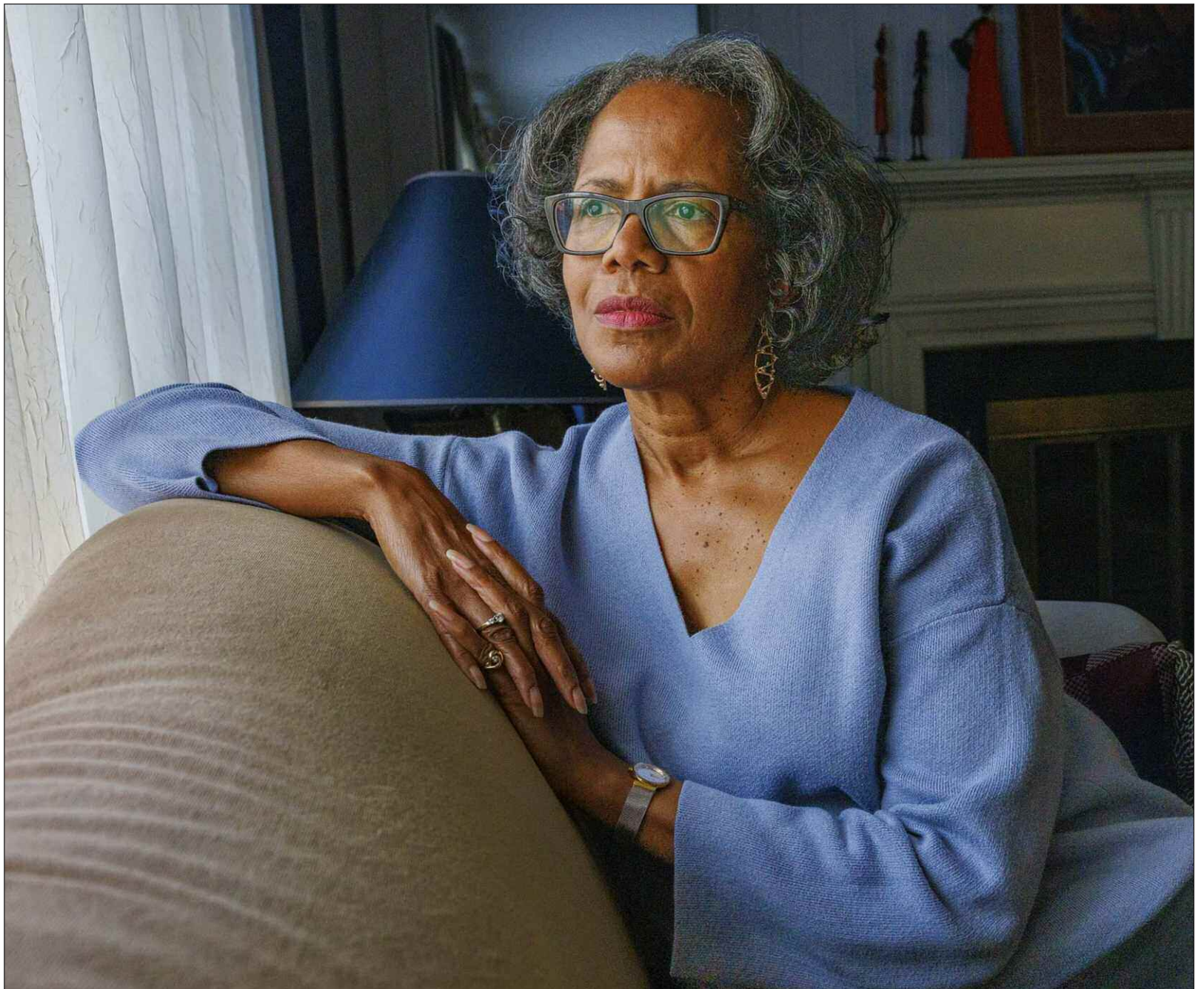
By SARAH GANTZ
The Philadelphia Inquirer
Tribune News Service

PHILADELPHIA — Just as she hoped to start a family, Denise Murray was diagnosed with an aggressive form of breast cancer. Thirty years old and newly married, she felt it was too risky to consider pregnancy if she might not live to raise her children.

A majority of patients, including Murray, whose tumors are found early, are still alive five years later. But in about 30% of cases, breast cancer eventually returns — sometimes years or even decades later — and then is almost always fatal.

Doctors have no way to definitely say whether or when a patient's cancer may recur. But researchers at University of Pennsylvania now think they are learning how to find and kill dormant breast cancer cells left in the body after treatment, before they have a chance to reactivate and spread. After four years, all but two of 51 patients treated in an advanced clinical trial are still cancer-free.

The early findings, presented at a European oncology conference in October, offer hope that treatment may one day reduce the likelihood of breast cancer fatally recurring. Now, with a \$10 million federal grant to expand their proof-of-concept trial, Penn researchers seek to



Tribune News Service/The Philadelphia Inquirer/Alejandro A. Alvarez

Lisa Dutton of Wynnewood, shown above in her home Oct. 27, enrolled in a clinical trial that attempted to detect and kill dormant breast cancer cells before they reactivated.

give patients greater certainty that they do not have to live in fear of their cancer returning.

“When you make these decisions, you don’t make them for

yourself, you make them for your family,” said Murray, who lives in Egg Harbor Township.

“They have to pick up the pieces of whatever happens.”

Angela DeMichele, the co-director of the breast cancer research program at Penn’s Abramson Cancer Center, began researching breast can-

cer recurrence after struggling with how to talk to patients about the unknowns that remained after treatment.

See Research page 6B

Kids ...

Continued from page 1D
Jay County was determined in 2016 to have the highest child poverty rate in Indiana at about 14 percentage points higher than the state average. As of 2022, Jay County ranked 28th out of 92 counties. Approximately 25% of children in Jay County live in poverty.

Johnson explained the women now involved in Kids Purpose Project often sought to help out children or families in need. Her former role as a special needs teacher at General Shanks Elementary School also contributed to her desire to help others.

“I worked with a lot of kids who lived in pretty rough situations,” she said. “I had to meet with a lot of parents just as part of my job, and so you kind of hear the backstory of how parents struggle to take care of their children, and what goes on at home.”

Johnson got ahold of her sisters, Krista Chenoweth and Kortney VanSkyock, her mother, Teresa Taylor, and sister-in-law Courtnee Taylor.

“I feel like when she suggested it, it was like a no-brainer,” said Chenoweth. “Because the boys’ diagnosis is symptomless, or a miracle, we just wanted to, I guess, shine God’s light on other kids the way that he has for us.”

They started putting together “bravery bags” — they have items such as food, gift cards, toys, gasoline cards or pajamas — for families that are regular visitors to hospitals, a program they still put on today.

“It just kind of grew from there,” Johnson said.

Projects

Kids Purpose Project launched in 2021. The group was granted 501(c)3 status in February 2022, making it a tax-deductible charitable organization.

Kids Purpose Project has teamed up with Youth Service Bureau of Jay County for the last three years between October and December to collect items for keeping children warm through the winter.

See Kids page 6D

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Kids ...

Continued from page 5D
Requests from families in need may include coats, hats, gloves, scarves or boots for infants through 18-year-olds; twin-size bedding such as blankets, pillows, comforters or sheets; bath towels, hand towels or washcloths; or \$5 gift cards for Jay County restaurants.

For folks wanting to contribute toward the effort, Kids Purpose Project is accepting new items as donations and has an Amazon list — it's available at [amzn.to/3uhYrFm](https://www.amazon.com/?ref=AADS_Card) — for volunteers to purchase and send items. (Drop-off locations are at Bizzy Dips Bakery and Coffee Shop, Wildflower Beauty Lounge, Progressive Del Toro and Deer Park Boutique. To arrange a drop-off or pickup, folks can message Kids Purpose Project on Facebook.)

The group also accepts monetary donations that are used to buy items, which are delivered to Youth Service Bureau periodically through the three-month drive.

Donations this year are being accepted until Dec. 20. As of Nov. 10, Kids Purpose Project had reached just over the halfway point of its goal to collect 100 coats, 100 hats, 100 pairs of gloves and 100 scarves for Jay County children in need this winter.

In 2022, Kids Purpose Project's partnership with Youth Service Bureau outfitted 70 children in the community with winter coats and accessories.

"(They told us) everything that was donated was taken in the blink of an eye," Johnson said.

Kids Purpose Project also offers other programs, such as gathering and donating school supplies.

"I think, you know, as mothers, we kind of know what kids need," said Johnson. "We've been there. We know the ins and outs of what those extra costs mean, especially when it comes to school supplies."

She noted the average cost per child for school supplies each year is \$700.

"It's a huge strain on families, so I'm hoping that we're making a big impact on helping those families to take care of those extra costs," she said.

Kids Purpose Project assem-



Photo provided

Operation Kozy Kids, a winter clothing drive partnership between Kids Purpose Project and Youth Service Bureau of Jay County, is in full swing through Dec. 20. Pictured above are several coats donated for the cause in October.

bles lice kits for schools and provides duffel bags or suitcases filled with toiletries for foster children.

It also participates in various community events throughout the year. Kids Purpose Project organized haircuts for 80 children during the Back to School Bash in August at Dunkirk City Park and offered face painting and do-it-yourself bird feeder painting in September at the Portland Main Street Fall Festival.

Kids Purpose Project was nominated as a finalist for the Community Group of the Year Award at the Jay Community Awards in May.

"This group would give the shirt off their back to help in any way they can for anyone," said

Randy Stephen, a member of Jay County Chamber of Commerce's board of directors. "This group has the sweetest and kindest hearts."

The nonprofit organization also received a \$2,300 grant in 2022 and a \$3,500 grant this summer from the Arby's Foundation to help purchase school supplies for local students.

Johnson noted her group hasn't pursued many grants or fundraisers yet but plans to apply for more in the future. The board of directors has tried to keep the organization's workload within reason of their schedules.

"When we started this, with all of us being such busy Moms, we decided that we didn't want it to become something stressful,"

explained Johnson. "We didn't want starting a nonprofit to become a burden because obviously we do all have several children ...

"But in consideration of that, I think it's grown very, very well," she added.

Kids

In the beginning stages of Kids Purpose Project, one little girl in particular stuck in the back of Johnson's mind as a reason to spearhead the organization.

"She had no running water at home, came to school in the middle of winter in flip flops, shorts and tank tops," recalled Johnson. "Just seeing kids that live that kind of life right where we are, it's heartbreaking."

Johnson hopes to expand the organization's programs in coming years. Chenoweth noted they've considered putting together benefits or fundraisers and offering scholarships to children.

"There are so many different organizations in Jay County who are working to try to make our county a better place," said Johnson.

To learn more about how to donate or get involved as a volunteer, visit [kidspurposeproject.org](https://www.kidspurposeproject.org) or go to Kids Purpose Project on Facebook.

"All these Moms got together. And, you know, we've all got kids, and our kids, I feel like, are extremely blessed," Teresa Taylor said. "I feel like we all just want to give back."

Research ...

Continued from page 5B
"We get to the end of the initial treatment and they say, 'How will I know if it worked? What do you mean I have to just wait and see?'" she said. "They're just waiting for the other shoe to drop their whole lives."

After treatment, it's common for some breast cancer cells to go dormant — to exist in the body without multiplying and creating masses the way cancer cells normally do. For reasons doctors still haven't figured out, these dormant cancer cells sometimes "wake up" and begin to rapidly divide again months, years, or even decades after treatment.

DeMichele compares the phenomenon to bear hibernation: Bears go months without eating or drinking, their heart rate slows, and they remain sedentary through the long winter. Then one day, they wake up famished and emerge from their den to prowl the forest for food.

Doctors have for years known that these dormant cancer cells settle in bone marrow, the spongy center of bones where red blood cells are made. Recurrent breast cancer is almost impossible to eliminate because once it has reached bone marrow and blood, it spreads everywhere.

DeMichele and her colleagues set out to answer two questions: First, could they detect dormant cancer cells by periodically testing patients' bone marrow? Second, could a combination of oral medications that don't work against active cancer kill the cells while they were dormant?

Murray knew immediately that she wanted to enroll in the trial because it was at least a chance at the type of certainty she needed to plan her future.

At age 13, Murray had been treated with chemotherapy for lymphoma, a blood cancer thought to be unrelated to her breast cancer diagno-

sis. The chemotherapy she received in childhood had made it more likely that she would experience infertility. Now, additional chemotherapy and radiation could damage her reproductive health.

Before beginning her breast cancer treatment, Murray and her husband decided to freeze embryos. The procedure entails removing eggs from an ovary, fertilizing them in a lab, allowing them to grow several days into embryos, then freezing them for future use.

She had a lumpectomy, chemotherapy, and radiation, then enrolled in the trial to test her bone marrow for signs of dormant cancer cells.

As part of the clinical trial, doctors extracted samples from patients' pelvic bone — a reservoir rich with bone marrow — and tested them for dormant cancer cells.

If the test came back positive, patients were given oral medications.

Roughly 200 people enrolled to have their bone marrow tested, and 51 were ultimately treated for dormant cancer cells. About half of the 51 had triple-negative breast cancer, which has a higher rate of recurrence than less aggressive forms. All but two remained cancer-free four years later.

With a \$10 million grant from the Department of Defense, DeMichele and her colleagues will enroll more patients, especially from diverse backgrounds, and continue testing past participants.

One of the trial's first patients, Lisa Dutton, 63, of Wynnewood, is now helping to encourage more people to participate in studies like this one. Dutton enrolled after she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017. A bone marrow test found dormant cells in 2021, so she started the trial's drug regimen. She's still cancer-free today.

She's grateful a friend

encouraged her to join the trial. Dutton, who is Black, now volunteers with an advocacy organization focused on outreach aimed at improving racial diversity in clinical trials. Dutton fields phone calls from people who want to know what it's like to participate, or who need reassurance that they'll still be treated for their cancer, even if they don't receive the supplemental therapy being tested.

Dutton said she hopes that by sharing her experience with others, she can be "an example for people to see there could be a light at the end of the tunnel," and that clinical trials are worth considering, even if they may lead to additional treatment.

Enrolling more patients from diverse backgrounds is critical for DeMichele's team to advance their work.

The initial study provided proof-of-concept, but her team needs to test the theory with many more patients before they can know if they've found a way to detect and intercept dormant cancer cells.

"We would like to have a strategy to be able to say, 'You are free and clear,'" DeMichele said. "Wouldn't it be amazing?"

Murray tested positive for dormant cancer cells a few months into the trial. She was disappointed, but also relieved that doctors could offer a way to kill off the cells — hopefully for good.

Her next bone marrow test after completing the drug regimen came back clean. And so did the next.

She'd carried the weight of cancer for so long, but now feels she has better information to guide her future.

In October 2019, Murray gave birth to her daughter, Savannah, who became a big sister two years later.

"Joy," Murray recalled feeling while holding her baby girl for the first time. "Just pure joy."

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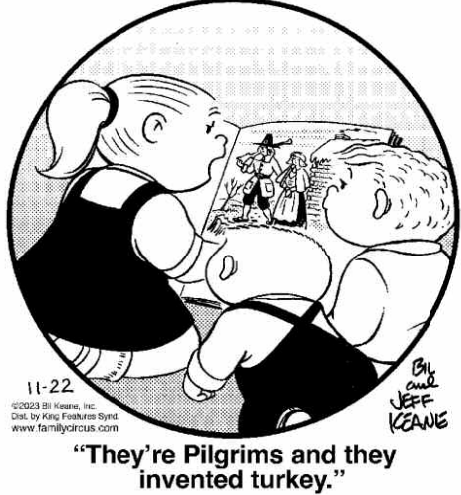
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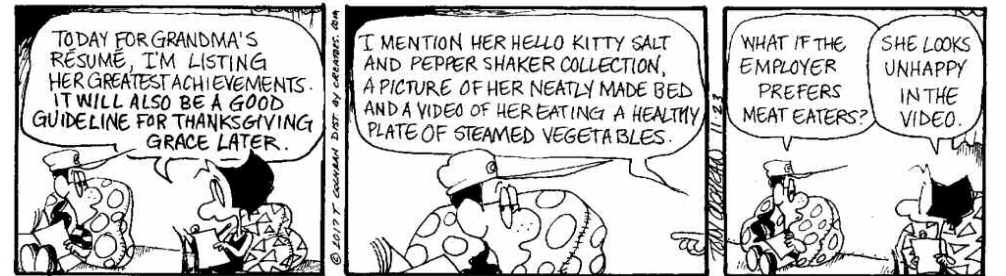
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