

The league was established to promote fast-pitch softball for girls in the Manassas-Prince William County area.

The members of the team are: Stephanie Gaynard, Katie Lee, Laura Hundemer, Courtney Bures, Kesha Robinson, Julianne Sudduth, Kristin Windle, Lydia Sumner, Kelli Rotter, Alyssa Kemmerer, Alexis Hochstrasser, Brittany Alexander-Smith, Jasmine Davenport, Katie Speaks, and Ashley Demaret. They are coached by Mike Windle, Mike Bures, and Donald Alsberry; and their scorekeeper is Tony Gaynard.

Through their hard work, the Manassas Express members have been ambassadors of sportsmanship for Manassas, Prince William, and all of Virginia. On behalf of the citizens of the 10th District, we say to them, congratulations.

HONORING PHILADELPHIA DIVA
PATTI LABELLE AND BROADWAY
STAR DOUGLAS SILLS

HON. JON D. FOX

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 16, 1998

Mr. FOX of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two outstanding entertainers who are being recognized for their talents and their dedication to charitable causes.

On Thursday evening, September 24, Ms. LaBelle will receive the "1998 Distinguished Arts Award" by Pennsylvania Governor Thomas Ridge as part of the Governor's Awards for the Arts.

Broadway superstar, Douglas Sills, currently the Tony Award nominated star of *The Scarlet Pimpernel* at the Minskoff Theatre on Broadway is being honored by the Leukemia Society of America with the "Shining Star Award" in recognition of his commitment to charitable causes as well as his enormous talent. Among his theatre credits are the Los Angeles production of Tim Rice's *Chess*, the national touring company of *Into the Woods*, by Stephen Sondheim, the First National Tour of *The Secret Garden* and regional programs throughout the Nation. On television he has had roles on "Coach," "Empty Nest," "Models Inc.," "Party of Five," "Sisters," "Sliders," and "Women of the House." His film credits include *Funny About Love*, *The Swan Princess II*, *Escape from Castle Mountain*.

Mr. Sills holds degrees in theatre from the University of Michigan and the American Conservatory Theatre. He is a two-time Dramalogue Award winner and a charter member of the Antaeus Project at the Mark Taper Forum and Produced Dinah Was in Los Angeles. His role of Percy in *The Scarlet Pimpernel* has brought him numerous honors including the 1998 Theatre Award for Best Actor and the Drama League Award for Outstanding Artists. He was also nominated for the 1998 Best Actor Tony Award and as Best Actor for the Outer Critics Circle Award, FANY Award and the Theatre World Award.

Patti LaBelle is a musical sensation, dazzling audiences for an incredible 37 years. Born in Philadelphia, Ms. LaBelle has been singing all her life, first as a child in the Beulah Baptist Church gospel choir and then, as a teenager, in the legendary girl group Patti LaBelle and the Bluebells. In 1961, the Blue-

bells hit the charts with its first single, "I Sold My Heart To The Junkman" which went gold. The group recorded a number of songs which made the top 40 and played the best R&B venues in the Nation including the Apollo Theatre in Harlem, the Uptown in Philadelphia and the Regal in Chicago.

In 1970, a dynamic change in image, sound, costume, management and message gave birth to the renamed trio—Labelle. The group's sound blended soul, funk, rhythm and blues, gospel, pop and high-intensity rock-and-roll, while their futuristic costumes and theatrical staging made an unforgettable impact. Labelle's gold album, *Night Birds*, yielded the number-one single of 1975, "Lady Marmalade."

On October 6, 1974, Labelle made history as the first black vocal group to appear at the Metropolitan Opera House where thousands of audience members included Bette Midler and Jackie Onassis.

Patti LaBelle made her solo debut in 1977 when she played to overflow audiences in New York, Chicago, Washington, DC, and a dozen other cities. Since then, Patti LaBelle has gone from triumph to triumph and strength to strength. Her one-woman Broadway shows have shattered box office records, she has starred in her own prime-time television special and weekly TV series, "Out All Night." She starred in the national tour and Broadway revivals of the gospel musical *Your Arms Too Short To Box With God* and the role of a nightclub singer in the motion picture, *A Soldier's Story*, which was created especially for her.

Over the past 21 years, Patti LaBelle has recorded more than 50 albums and established herself as a major solo recording artist with classics like "You Are My Friend," and "If Only You Knew." She has garnered 10 Grammy Award nominations and the 1992 Grammy Award for Best R&B Vocal Performance; seven NAACP Image Awards (including the coveted "Entertainer of the Year Award"), three Emmy Award nominations, two American Music Awards and a Cable Ace Award. In 1996, Boston's Berklee College of Music presented Ms. LaBelle with an honorary doctorate. Her autobiography, *Don't Block The Blessings*, was a national best seller and earned the NAACP Image Award for outstanding literary work. A cookbook, *LaBelle Cuisine: Recipes to Sing About* should be released soon.

Ms. LaBelle is also well known as a humanitarian. She serves as spokeswoman for the National Medical Association, the Minority AIDS Council's "Live Long Sugar" campaign, the National Cancer Institute and the American Diabetes Association. The National Cancer Institute will receive \$90 million in additional research funding and \$10 million a year over the next five years for education and outreach programs if The Laurie Beechman Memorial Act, which I was proud to author, becomes law.

Mr. Speaker, these two extraordinary artists are a clear example of the spirit of the entertainment community when it comes to helping those in need. Patti LaBelle has a long record of working for a variety of causes and has been an outstanding member of the Greater Philadelphia community for many years. Douglas Sills is a young man with a bright future ahead of him. An excellent singer, Douglas has also shown a keen acting skill which will

allow him to do both singing and non-singing roles. Two years ago, the "Shining Star Award" was given to a constituent of mine, Laurie Beechman.

Another reason I am so proud to stand here and tell you about these brilliant performers is that they are both scheduled to perform in a tribute concert—*Let The Memory Live Again! A Musical Celebration For Laurie Beechman*—on November 30 at the historic Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia to raise money for GILDA'S CLUB®. These two outstanding entertainers are just a couple of the many talented artists who will join together to raise funds to battle ovarian cancer, the disease which took the life of Laurie Beechman in March after a nine-year struggle against the disease.

I am amazed that all these wonderful performers are willing to give what little time off they have to help others. But, it seems to be a Broadway tradition to reach out like this because Laurie Beechman performed at many events of this kind. In fact, just two years ago, she and Sam Harris performed at *Rainbow and Stars* to raise money for the battle against AIDS. Now, Sam will be co-hosting the tribute to Laurie, a woman he called his "musical soulmate," along with Ms. LaBelle.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to be associated with Patti LaBelle and Douglas Sills who represent the heart and soul of the entertainment industry which has dedicated itself to the battle against these afflictions and have reached out a hand to those in need. As a result of the Laurie Beechman Tribute Concert, GILDA'S CLUB® will be able to reach out to more people with cancer and their families.

November 30 will be a night of stars at the Walnut Street Theatre and none will shine brighter than Douglas Sills and Patti LaBelle. But, I'm sure they would be the first to tell you that the real stars that night will be Laurie Beechman and the long struggle against ovarian cancer she wages even after her death.

I insert these comments in the RECORD so all may know of the accomplishments of these two fine performers in the hopes it will awaken a similar dedication to humanity in each of us.

PROMOTION OF A DRUG-FREE
AMERICA

HON. BOB ETHERIDGE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 16, 1998

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to promote the Drug-Free America Blue Ribbon Campaign. As part of a resolution detailing how our children are at risk, the U.S. House of Representatives has declared September 13-19, 1998, as Blue Ribbon Week. This selected week, shortly after most children return to school, allows Americans to join together in waging a strong campaign to win the War on Drugs by the year 2002. We must protect our children from drugs and we must support our law enforcement community in the fight to keep our streets safe.

The efforts to reduce the incidence of substance abuse, including abuse of alcohol and illicit, drugs is a major public policy issue in the United States. An estimated 52 million Americans experience a mental health or substance abuse problem every year, with less