

counselor for thousands of children who have grown to become men and women living and serving in communities across America.

CJ has always stressed education and being a "Student Athlete" over just being an athlete. He continues to work at the Mount Vernon Boys and Girls Club as the Athletic Director and Head / Director of the Mount Vernon "Elite" AAU Basketball program.

Calvin Jones is being honored by the Henry Allen Educational & Learning Foundation for his decades of good work for and among the youth of Mount Vernon. His motto, relevant to all of us, is that we should listen to our children because they have a lot to say and need to be heard.

I am proud to join with the Foundation in honoring CJ for his work in inculcating wise counsel into our young boys and girls, the fruit of which is growing and thriving across the country.

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OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

**HON. MIKE COFFMAN**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 7, 2012*

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was \$10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is \$15,671,916,356,611.36. We've added \$5,045,039,307,693.28 to our debt in just over 3 years. This is debt our Nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

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ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORCHARDS CHILDREN'S SERVICES

**HON. GARY C. PETERS**

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 7, 2012*

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 50th Anniversary of Orchards Children's Services of Southfield, Michigan. For five decades, Orchards has been providing critical support services to families and youth in need across Southeast Michigan.

It was 1958 when the founding women of Orchards, all members of the National Council of Jewish Women, gathered to address a growing dilemma in communities across the region: inadequate resources available for families of at-risk youth. All too often, at-risk youth would end up being removed from their families and moved to facilities outside of Michigan. This led to the separation of many families and to moments of crisis for them. It was just four years later that Orchards was born—first as a single residence serving just seven young boys, then later with additional homes serving adolescent boys and girls.

After officially launching as an independent child care agency in 1987, Orchards has grown and expanded its programs to meet the changing needs of at-risk youth in a community uniquely challenged by long-term economic uncertainty. However, in spite of these obstacles, Orchards has endured and its thou-

sands of clients have achieved a brighter future. Today, Orchards' programs include foster care and adoption services, a complete array of services for strengthening family cohesiveness and a set of programs geared toward providing at-risk youth with the opportunities necessary to ensure a well-rounded development.

The importance of Orchards' services, in a time of unprecedented pressure and financial crisis for families across Southeast Michigan, cannot be overstated. Each year, Orchards serves over four thousand children and families, two thousand of them with its family preservation services, and all of them are at-risk. And even more telling, the average age of the youth Orchards supports is eight, which underscores the existing need for these critical services at an early age. In just one measure of its success, 96 percent of the youth in the Detroit School System that are served by Orchards complete their high school education and graduate—a figure almost three times the current rate system wide.

Mr. Speaker, for half of a century, Orchards Children's Services has been an orchard for its clients; a place where they can grow and prosper. Many times, Orchards' employees and supporters have been there during seminal moments of crisis to support at-risk youth and their families with critical social services. There is no doubt that Orchards' work has strengthened the core of Michigan's communities, its families, and our greatest asset, our children. I am so pleased to recognize Orchards on achieving this significant milestone, and I wish its CEO Michael Williams, its Board Chairperson Carol Klein and its employees, supporters and clients many decades of success to come.

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IN HONOR OF DEACON MIRIAM LOPEZ

**HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 7, 2012*

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Miriam Lopez is a retired New York City police officer who worked jointly with federal agencies because of her expertise in laws that governed firearms and explosives. She was in charge of the inspection of fire arm dealers in New York City and the tri-state area and the renewal or removal of the dealers' licenses.

After retiring from the Police Department, Deacon Lopez became more involved in the church and with youth. She had mentored teenagers for years through the Police Athletic League program, and now she is a member of the Generation X Ministry in Kingdom Baptist Church, serves as a Deacon for the congregation, and is the office and bookstore manager. Her passion for youth and the community has led her to pursue mission work, which is her next endeavor. Deacon Lopez is mother, grandmother, sister and daughter as well as a pillar of strength to the community she serves.

Deacon Miriam Lopez is being honored by the Henry Allen Educational & Learning Foundation and I join with the Foundation in congratulating her for her years of working with our youth.

HONORING MAURICE AND SOPHIE CONTI

**HON. LYNN C. WOOLSEY**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 7, 2012*

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the bravery and selflessness of Maurice and Sophie Conti of Muir Beach, California. On October 13, 2008, the Contis, along with their young children Massimo and Annabelle, led the rescue of three sailors stranded by the sinking of their yacht some 60 miles from Fiji. The Contis have been recognized internationally for putting their own lives at risk in the service of others, and their example is a true credit to the sailing community and the people of Marin County.

On the night of October 12, 2008, the Australian and New Zealand crew of the Timella issued a distress call after running aground on the Takau Lakaleka reef in Fijian waters. After contacting the Australian and New Zealand High Commissions, the Contis quickly realized that no other vessel was in a position to assist the Timella. In the darkness, they set out on the two-and-a-half hour voyage to meet the stranded sailors, whose ship and life raft had both already sunk by the time of their arrival.

While Sophie Conti handled the Contis' catamaran in swells measuring 10 to 15 feet, Maurice Conti carefully navigated the reef to reach the crew of the Timella by dinghy. Coordinating with rescue teams based in New Zealand, the Contis then brought the stranded sailors safely to Fiji.

The Contis were awarded the International Maritime Organization Award for Exceptional Bravery at Sea in 2009, and Cruising Club of America has awarded them the 2009 Rod Stephens Trophy for Outstanding Seamanship. This month, Maurice and Sophie Conti are also receiving New Zealand Bravery Medals from the government of New Zealand.

Mr. Speaker, I ask you to join me in thanking the Conti family for their courage. They represent the best of the maritime tradition, and they are exemplary ambassadors for the civic-minded spirit of our community.

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RECOGNIZING MAY AS STROKE AWARENESS MONTH AND HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AWARENESS MONTH

**HON. LAURA RICHARDSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, May 7, 2012*

Ms. RICHARDSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the month of May as Stroke Awareness Month and High Blood Pressure Awareness Month. I encourage Americans to fight against stroke and high blood pressure and support individuals and their families who suffer from these devastating and debilitating afflictions.

In the United States, stroke is the third leading cause of death and the leading cause of long-term disability. In fact, one in four deaths in California is related to heart disease and stroke. While all ages, races and classes are at risk, African Americans are disproportionately at risk of experiencing high blood pressure and are almost twice as likely as other groups to experience a stroke.