

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AVALON ACADEMY

**HON. JACKIE SPEIER**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 6, 2015*

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor The Avalon Academy, a unique and visionary school in Burlingame, California which is celebrating 10 years of exceptional service. The school provides educational and therapeutic opportunities to children with cerebral palsy and similar movement disorders.

Avalon Academy was founded by two sets of parents of children with cerebral palsy, Annie Noonan and her husband, Jeffrey Wohl, and Lynette Mullens and her husband, Stephen Dilly, and a special education teacher, Kinga Czegeni. They were frustrated with the fragmented educational system for children with motor disabilities and decided to create a learning environment that addresses the academic, motor skill development, recreational, social and emotional needs of these students. The outcome is a beautiful school that for ten years has allowed the children to thrive and give their families peace of mind and certainty that their children are developing to their fullest potential.

Avalon Academy is certified as a non-public school by the California Department of Education for grades K through 12. It started ten years ago with three students, three staff members and three volunteers. Today it serves 8 children and has 27 staff members. Most of the students have cerebral palsy. Their degree of mobility ranges from being able to walk with assistance to being dependent on a wheelchair. Their cognitive abilities also vary greatly and the faculty caters to their individual needs. Cerebral palsy commonly coexists with related challenges from communication delays, intellectual impairment, social and emotional difficulties and eating challenges. Traditional schools are mostly not specialized to meet those challenges and that is why Avalon Academy is so effective and essential because the school addresses all the needs in one location. The teachers, physical therapists and speech pathologists integrate movement into all classroom activities, no matter the level of physical limitation of the student. This unique approach enhances motor abilities and encourages the children to be as independent and safe as possible in their lives.

I have the highest regard and admiration for the faculty at Avalon Academy who work miracles every day. They are led by Kinga Czegeni, the Head of School. She holds an M.A. in Special Education from the International Peto Institute in Budapest, Hungary and was recruited to California in 1997. Before co-founding Avalon Academy she was the director of Step by Step in Millbrae. She is a certified practitioner in the Ana Baniel Method, has worked with children with cerebral palsy for two decades and has developed Avalon's unique Movement Integrated Special Teaching System.

The two other founders and now board members are professional women and amazing mothers. My dear friend, Annie Noonan, is a successful attorney and employment law expert. She is the mother of Julianne and Sam,

who developed cerebral palsy after an illness when he was 14 months old. Annie took Sam's condition and turned it into a rallying cry for better educational opportunities for children like him. I continue to be in awe of her energy and optimism.

Lynette Mullens holds a Ph.D. and specializes in the clinical research and development of drugs for the treatment of neurologic and psychiatric disorders, including drugs that are commonly used for seizures associated with cerebral palsy. Her work in California with a non-profit that provides online access to clinical trials inspired her to enhance the lives of children with cerebral palsy. She is the mother of George, who has cerebral palsy, Fred and Harriet.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House of Representatives to rise with me to honor the extraordinary individuals who founded and have run Avalon Academy for a decade. They provide the best education imaginable for children with special needs and should serve as a model around the country.

**TRIBUTE TO SOUTHWEST IOWA PLANNING COUNCIL**

**HON. DAVID YOUNG**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 6, 2015*

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate the Southwest Iowa Planning Council as they celebrate their 40th year in operation.

The Southwest Iowa Planning Council's goals are to promote regional cooperation, to serve the counties and cities within our region with community and economic development activities, and to improve the quality of life for all residents in Southwest Iowa. Southwest Iowa Transit Agency (SWITA) operates the public transit system in our eight-county region, and Southwest Iowa Housing Trust Fund (SWIHTF) provides safe, affordable housing by expanding housing opportunities in the region. These additional services the Southwest Iowa Planning Council provides play an important role in improving the quality of life for Iowans.

Mr. Speaker, it's an honor to represent Southwest Iowa Planning Council and its hard working employees in the United States Congress. I know my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives will join me in congratulating the Council on their 40th anniversary and wish them nothing but continued success.

**IN HONOR OF THE 104TH NATIONAL DAY OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

**HON. TOM PRICE**

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 6, 2015*

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I am proud to rise in support of a great friend of the United States, Taiwan. As you know, October 10 is the 104th National Day of the Republic of China.

No one forgets the unbelievable sacrifices the Chinese endured against Imperial Japan

during World War II. Nor do we forget that the Republic of China was in that conflict a full four years prior to the entry of the United States. Earlier this year, our two countries observed the 70th anniversary of the end of that war. After 1949, Taiwan held out as a key non-Communist partner during the early days of the Cold War. As a well-established democracy and as an economic powerhouse, Taiwan has set a model example for the rest of Asia and the world in recent years.

Given our long shared history as allies, it is entirely appropriate that we share in the celebration of Taiwan's National Day. To all of my Taiwanese friends, I wish you a happy and joyous day.

**HONORING THE LIFE OF DR. NANCY MACDONALD CLARK**

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 6, 2015*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Dr. Nancy MacDonald Clark, a champion of nursing education in the San Joaquin Valley. Dr. Clark's efforts in improving the lives of Valley residents, as well as expanding the California State University Stanislaus Department of Nursing, makes her extraordinarily deserving of having the university's Community Health Simulation Lab named in her honor.

Nancy Joan MacDonald Clark was born July 13, 1946 in San Francisco to Joseph MacDonald, a pharmacist, and Edith Bakke MacDonald, a registered nurse. She passed away on December 29, 2014 after a lengthy battle with cancer.

Nancy's family moved from the bay area to Atwater, California in 1951 to open a drug store. Nancy learned the value of service from her parents' involvement in the community. Her father served as Mayor of Atwater for two terms, and her mother hosted Atwater Chamber of Commerce coffee meetings for the newly arrived airmen at Castle Air Force Base. Nancy graduated from Atwater High School in 1964 and became an active member of the Atwater Women's Club.

Nancy graduated from then Fresno State College with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Nursing in 1968. She then went on to earn a Master's of Science in Nursing from California State University Fresno in 1983. She completed a Master's in Public Administration from Golden Gate University in San Francisco in 1985, and earned her Doctorate in Education from University of California, Davis/California State University Fresno's Joint Doctoral Program in 2004.

Dr. Clark worked in acute care in San Francisco, Texas and Florida for two years before relocating to the Central Valley, where she worked in Migrant Health. She then worked as a nurse in the Merced County Health Department for six years. After raising two young children for a number of years, she accepted an appointment at California State University, Stanislaus as a visiting lecturer. Nancy eventually progressed through the ranks to become a full professor in the nursing program, an RN to BSN Second Degree Program.

Dr. Clark was appointed Chair of the Nursing Department at CSU Stanislaus in 1999