

OLLI offers mature adults in Northern Virginia over 400 courses and special events at its three campuses in Fairfax, Reston, and Loudoun.

From arts to zoology, religion to science, there is a topic to satisfy everyone.

I believe that education and learning are lifelong endeavors. OLLI provides this opportunity to learn for the sake of learning. Not to get a degree or advance in your career—but just for the sheer pleasure of expanding your knowledge or finally having the time to explore a new subject.

I commend the leadership of both George Mason University and OLLI for their commitment and vision to extending the benefits of continued and collaborative learning to as many members of our community as possible. As someone who comes from local government, I understand firsthand that the high quality of life that we enjoy in Northern Virginia is directly linked to the quality of educational resources that are at our disposal.

I congratulate the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute staff and volunteers on 25 years of service to our community and ask my colleagues to join me in wishing them great success in all future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY THE NATIONAL OPIOID EPIDEMIC

HON. ANN M. KUSTER

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. KUSTER. Mr. Speaker, it is my honor to include in the RECORD today the personal stories of families from across the country that have been affected by the opioid and heroin epidemic. In the U.S. we lose 129 lives per day to opioid and heroin overdose. In my home state of New Hampshire I have learned so many heartbreaking stories of great people and families who have suffered from the effects of substance use disorder.

Earlier this year, my colleagues and I were joined by many of these courageous families who came to Washington to share their stories with Members of Congress and push for action that will prevent overdoses and save lives. Since then, we passed both the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act and the 21st Century Cures Act to provide much needed funding and critical policy changes to fight this epidemic.

The advocacy of these families truly is so important to leading to change in Washington and I am proud to preserve their stories.

JOHN MICHAEL AHERN—ROCKPORT,
MASSACHUSETTS

John was born on September 30, 1969. He was the youngest of three siblings, Kathryn, Charles, and Mary, and a father to three beautiful boys, Johnny, Rian, and Connor.

Growing up, John was a wonderful son—joyful, loving and compassionate. At the age of 14, he began a transition that would lead to a long, hard fought battle with addiction. Over the years, John was treated at various rehabilitation clinics across the country. He did his best to maintain his sobriety and would do so for short periods of time, but the disease of addiction was too strong for John.

John was determined to overcome his struggles, fighting fiercely and with all his

strength. But in the end, on August 16, 2015, the disease of addiction proved too great for him to overcome. John passed away unexpectedly from a heroin overdose. He was 46 years old.

“I can’t imagine his daily struggles and the hardships he faced in his short life,” writes his mother, Gail. “It was heart-breaking to see John’s self-esteem diminish over time. He had a difficulties maintaining employment and finding stable living. Before his last and final attempt at recovery, which so sadly failed, John was living in a homeless shelter.”

“I loved my John. I know his life was bittersweet and his struggles were so great. I believe some individuals are just too fragile for this world, and I am so grateful to God that he took John home at last. For I know in my heart he is now joyous, at peace, and in the loving arms of our Lord. John’s struggle is over; he is now an angel.”

ANDREW ANGERS—SAGINAW, MI

Andrew was born April 5, 1982, at 12:01 a.m. He was a beautiful baby and had a star quality about him as a toddler. Growing up, Andrew was a happy, healthy boy with a kind heart and a brilliant smile. Then one day he was not so happy anymore.

As Andrew entered high school, he began to struggle with personal demons. As a result, he experimented with drugs as a way to cope with his emotions. Andrew was immediately taken hostage by addiction and his battle progressed before he even graduated. Andrew did manage to graduate, although a year later than he should have. Regardless, it was a happy day for him and his family.

For the years following, Andrew’s struggles with addiction continued but at times it seemed he was gaining the upper hand. Andrew entered college and even married his high school sweetheart. Sadly, college went by the wayside and the marriage failed. Even throughout all the hardships, Andrew was still there—there were glimpses of the sweet, sensitive, kind-hearted man he was.

Andrew was a very talented musician and was often seen walking around wearing a banjo. He had the most wonderful smile and such a warm laugh. Andrew had hope right up until the end. In a final phone call he spoke of his future and being done with using. On June 18, 2009, Andrew was found dead from an overdose. It truly was the day the music ended.

NICHOLAS ANTICH—CROWN POINT, INDIANA

The mother of Nick Antich wants people to know her family’s tragedy in order to bring light to a growing epidemic in the United States. It’s unfortunate that people are ashamed to tell the stories of their loved ones who are battling drug addiction. They worry that society will see those struggling as second class, low-life individuals. As an emergency nurse, Nick’s mom has a job to help anyone who enters the ER.

Nick’s mother now has the perspective that if addiction can happen to her son, it can happen to anyone. Addiction impacts people who are educated; smart, charismatic and have the world in the palm of their hand. Nick Antich was an top student who didn’t get into trouble at school and never caused his father and mother much grief beyond the typical teenage issues. Nick was raised in a normal family, played baseball as a child and wrestled in middle school. He loved animals and was known as the “animal whisperer” because on several different occasions he saved kittens from the side of busy highways where they had been dumped.

When Nick was accepted into an Engineering program for college, he moved to Indianapolis. During his Sophomore year in college, Nick started dabbling in drugs. Nothing his mother would consider hardcore, but

never-the-less, drugs. Nick was smart and knew the risks involved with drug use, so his mother never imagined that anything serious was happening. She certainly never prepared herself for the journey her family was about to embark upon.

One day, Nick called his mother to say he had been sick in bed for three days. She knew in her gut that something was not right. Nick had been sick a bunch of times since going away to college, which is normally no big deal—take some Tylenol and get rest—but this time felt different. She called an ambulance and sent them to Nick’s address. Two hours later, Nick’s mom arrived at the hospital where she found her son curled up in a ball on a cot. Nothing had been done. The hospital knew Nick was going through heroin withdrawal but because of HIPAA they couldn’t tell Nick’s mother what was happening. When Nick saw his mom, he held up his arms and said, “Mom, it’s bad.” She dropped to her knees and her hell as a parent began. Within 24 hours, Nick was on a plane to Arizona where he was admitted into treatment for the next two months.

Nick moved back home after treatment and within three months his mother saw suspicious signs. She kicked him out of her house. In September of 2014, Nick came and told her, “Mom, I’m using again.” Within 24 hours, Nick was back on a plane to Arizona for a second stint in treatment. This time Nick was there for four months. He came home for Christmas of 2014, clean from Xanax and heroin.

Nick got a job working for the state of Indiana and was quickly promoted. However, Nick felt miserable inside and nothing his mother did could fix Nick’s loneliness. When Nick was diagnosed with Bipolar Disorder, he faithfully took his meds and followed up monthly with his doctor. He did not want to be unhappy; he exercised, attempted a vegan diet and quit smoking three months before he died.

The week before Nick relapsed, he had to work long shifts plowing during a snowstorm and was stressed and tired. Sitting by himself plowing snow for 16 hours did something to Nick; he got Xanax from a friend. When his mother found out, Nick told her, “Mom, I just wanted to take something to make my miserable job tolerable . . . I would never use heroin again.” Unfortunately, Xanax was all it took to wake up the devil within Nick that had been dormant for 18 months. His mother was petrified that whole week, thinking here we go again. On Friday, March 4th, Nick went to see friends in Indianapolis for the weekend and had plans to stay with his sister in Bloomington for the rest of that week. Nick’s parents flew out on Saturday for a week’s vacation in Arizona. On Sunday afternoon, March 6, 2016, Nick didn’t wake up.

She hates drugs. They robbed Nick of his life, they robbed her daughter of her only sibling, and they robbed his parents of their only son. Over 450 people attended Nick’s wake, which was a testament to how loved he was: friends, family, and teachers from elementary through high school came to share that day with Nick’s family. Nick didn’t realize how much love there was for him in this life.

Despite the resources Nick’s mother had access to as an emergency room nurse, she could not save him. This is what she has to learn to live with forever. Please don’t hide these stories anymore. Out of the 450 people who attended Nick’s service, at least a dozen said it happened to them too.

TOMMY JACOB ARNOLD—DECATUR, ILLINOIS

The Arnold’s youngest son, Tommy died of a heroin overdose on June 25, 2016. His battle

with addiction started when someone offered him heroin as an alternative to dull the pain of a toothache. It instantly grabbed control and robbed Tommy of everything—family, friends, jobs, cars, a home—but most of all it robbed him of his self respect.

Growing up, Tommy was a typical all-American boy with hopes and dreams. He loved music, movies, campfires with friends and just being with those he loved. He was a shy, gentle giant that was always kind and caring to everyone he met—he would give the shirt off his back to anyone in need. Tommy lost it all to this horrible, ravaging drug.

On the morning of June 25th this year, Tommy's family was awoken by the coroner telling them that their son had overdosed just a few hours earlier—and his body was awaiting their funeral instructions at the morgue. No parent should have to receive news like this. Tommy fought hard before losing his battle with addiction. He was in recovery five different times, but this last time he wasn't able to fight his way back.

"30 days of treatment isn't enough to help those afflicted successfully fight this battle," writes Tommy's mother, Kathleen. "Longer, progressive plans need to be developed to stop this epidemic from taking the lives of our loved ones."

Although Tommy is in heaven now, pain-free, he leaves behind parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, a brother and sister, the love of his life, and his six year old son. His family is all heart-broken.

RONNI BAKER—STOW, MAINE

Ronni Baker was raised in a loving and stable environment where her and her sister's needs were met. As a family, the Bakers did many things together; they played outside, went camping and fishing, and always had fun.

Ronni's parents had good relationships with both of their daughters and supported them in pursuing their interests. Ronni loved trying new things. She joined the 4-H youth organization at the age of ten and got her first horse when she was 12. She was also a Girl Scout and participated in Odyssey of the Mind creative challenges. Ronni was an avid reader and loved trivia. She had a fondness for animals and had a way with them. At 16, Ronni thought it would be fun to enter a Miss Teen USA contest, so she did. In high school, she was on the wrestling team.

Ronni had strong political views and feelings about equality—she often stuck up for the underdog. As a young child, she spent a lot of time with her great-grandparents and developed an affection for the elderly. After becoming a certified nurse's aide, she started working in a local nursing home—a place where she connected with and felt protective of the residents.

School came easy to Ronni and she never really had to work that hard at it. Socially, she was bubbly, easy-going, and funny. She had lots of friends. So why did Ronni, of all kids, start using drugs? Why did she—of all people—die of a drug overdose in the dawn of her life?

Her family thinks it started innocently enough, with kids experimenting with alcohol and/or maybe marijuana; just like many teenagers do. But opiates changed the rules of the game. These pills are now shared the way other substances were in the past. With these powerful drugs, kids can't always move on from their experimentation phase and grow up. They think they are just having fun and are invincible, but no one is invincible when it comes to opioid addiction, let alone a young adult.

Add to this experimentation, the fact that when Ronni was in her late teens she started experiencing some back and leg pain related

to the demands of wrestling. Afterward, Ronni was in a car accident and received prescription opioids for her pain. Around the same time, she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder; which had not been previously identified as an issue due to her academic ability and achievements.

As parents, the Bakers thought that if they did mostly everything right, then their children would be okay. They thought that by living out in the sticks they were insulated from some of the big-city problems that affect many young individuals. Opioids are everywhere and opioid addiction lays in wait for everyone.

FRANKIE PROUT—PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

On February 5, 2012, at 6:04 a.m. Frankie Prout, oldest of four, was pronounced dead at the age of 20 while living in a halfway house.

Frankie grew up in Port Richmond in Philadelphia. As a child, he was loved by everyone. Around the age of 18, Frankie started to change. He wasn't acting like his normal happy self and his mother knew something was wrong, but never in a million years did she suspect he was developing a drug addiction. It turns out Frankie was using Percocet prescribed by a dentist. By the time his use had escalated to crushing and snorting 30mg, he was stealing from and lying to his family and friends. He eventually was incarcerated for robbing a car. When he returned home from jail, he went right back to abusing drugs. At this point, Frankie's family gave him the option to get help or be homeless.

When Frankie and his mother first went to a detox facility, he was turned away for an expired ID. The second time, he was turned away from the detox facility because he didn't have enough drugs in his system. Frankie at this point was so sick from withdrawal that he begged his mother to let him die. In order to get enough drugs in his system to be admitted, his mother had to purchase Percocet for him to use. Detox accepted him that time and kept him for five days during which he celebrated his 19th birthday. When the facility ran out of beds, Frankie was released. He stayed clean for three months before relapsing. Frankie's addiction got worse and worse during his relapse. He desperately needed detox to get clean again but he was turned away from the facility because there were no beds.

When Frankie finally was able to get into detox, again his stay was only for five days. This time Frankie celebrated Christmas there. When he was released, Frankie went to an inpatient rehabilitation facility and seemed to be doing well there. However, his insurance covering the treatment ran out after 42 days.

From the inpatient rehabilitation facility, Frankie to a halfway house in the same neighborhood where he used to get high. Frankie checked in on a Thursday afternoon and was out on the streets within the hour—he didn't even get drug tested. He was living with eleven heroin addicts, all of whom were allowed to come and go as they pleased. On Saturday, Frankie went to his mother's house for more clothes and blankets. She was surprised to see him and asked why he didn't have any restrictions. When he didn't answer, his mother told him she was going to check out the halfway house the very next day. Before leaving he said, "I love you Mom. See you tomorrow." Those were the last words she heard from her son. Frankie died of an IV heroin overdose in the bathroom of the halfway house where someone helped him get high and left him to die.

JOHN ROBERT "BOBBY" BAYLIS II—ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

Bobby was the oldest of three siblings. He was a funny, kind-hearted kid who played

sports in high school. The summer after his freshman year in college, Bobby had ACL surgery and came home with a 90-day supply of OxyContin. That was the summer Bobby became addicted to pain medication.

During the following year, Bobby suffered from anxiety and depression. He had trouble keeping up in his classes and Bobby dropped out in the spring. Within six months of returning home, Bobby had several run-ins with the police.

Bobby's mom will never forget the moment when she realized that her son was addicted to drugs. She was rustling through his room and found a box in the back of his closet full of childhood memorabilia. Wrapped up tight in Bobby's baby blanket was a box of hypodermic needles. Having a son that was addicted to drugs and in trouble with the law was something Bobby's mom never expected would happen to her family. Shortly thereafter, Bobby fell into a vicious cycle—moving between jail, treatment, recovery, and relapse. Despite the fact that his mom kept trying to get Bobby the treatment he so desperately needed, she felt helpless. His mom often thinks that if Bobby had access to better treatment and if he hadn't been restricted to serve probation in Roanoke (the town where all of his connections to drugs were), Bobby would have been better poised to succeed in recovery.

Bobby's addiction was destroying his life and the lives of his entire family. He had stolen his mother's credit cards, pawned items from his family's home and put his mother into financial debt. She laid awake at night worrying that a drug dealer would come to their home and worried that she would receive the call from the police saying that he had overdosed.

Bobby was convicted of possession and distribution charges. He spent three years in a Federal Prison Camp. His mom was grateful for this because at least Bobby was safe and drug-free for three years. At the Camp, Bobby received his journeyman's license as an electrician, was certified in heating and air conditioning, and cultivated his relationship to his higher power. When his mom went to visit him, there was light in his eyes, and for the first time in a long time she did not see Bobby overtaken by addiction.

When Bobby got out jail and came home, his mom felt like she had Bobby back. He said, "Mom, I have a second chance at life." Bobby was lucky to get a great job despite his felony record. He worked hard every day of the week; got up at 6 a.m., packed his lunch, and came home by 7 p.m. after a long day's work. He was proud of his accomplishments and got a promotion at work.

Then Bobby let people from his past back into his life and his addiction was triggered. In one weekend, Bobby relapsed for the last time. On a sunny Saturday afternoon, he overdosed from heroin laced with fentanyl. His mom found him lying on the floor in his bedroom and the EMS couldn't revive him. He died on June 6th, 2015 at the age of 28.

After the shock of Bobby's death, his mom felt compelled to speak out in order to change the stigma that surrounds this disease. Since then, many people have told her their stories about a family member who is struggling with addiction or has died of it. These stories are not public knowledge. We need to reach out to families who are struggling and grieving. We need to replace judgement with respect and support. We need to let them know they are not alone.

NICHOLAS "NICK" BERGER—POTTSTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Nick was a really great guy and a wonderful son. He grew up in an average middle-class home, surrounded by family and pets who loved him dearly. He enjoyed many activities in high school, including football, ROTC, agriculture, and animal husbandry.

From an early age, nature was Nick's solace. He enjoyed camping, hunting and fishing. After graduating high school, he worked as a hunting guide in Wyoming for a couple of seasons tracking elk, mule deer, and antelope. During that time, he hunted and fished in Alaska, British Columbia and Canada. He encountered some challenges in the wild but he had good survival skills and could think on his feet.

Nick's father owned a construction business and when Nick returned home he started working for his dad. Nick was a natural and his father had hopes of passing his business on to him someday.

One day, Nick hurt his shoulder while playing a casual game of football and eventually had to have surgery. During his recovery, the doctor prescribed semi-synthetic opioids. After completing the prescribed dose, Nick sought out supplemental prescription medication on the street. When illegal prescriptions became too costly, Nick turned to heroin.

Nick kept his addiction hidden. His family and closest friends remained clueless about his struggle. He was never in trouble with the law and didn't miss work. Nick came home for family meals and was rarely out late. He was always an honest kid, so when Nick told his family something, they believed him.

Slowly, some of Nick's behaviors changed. He became moody. He often asked for his paycheck early, kept coming down with flu-like symptoms and started acting depressed. His family didn't understand what was going on and when they asked, Nick said he had a 24-hr bug.

In retrospect, Nick's family thinks that his opioid drug use went on for at least a couple of years undetected. Eventually, the signs became too apparent and when his family confronted Nick, he said he desperately wanted and welcomed help. Nick told them, "I have a serious drug problem and I can't control it."

After a couple phone calls, Nick was placed in a local 30-day treatment program in December 2013. Nick's 30-day program consisted of detox and 12-Step-based therapy. Nick was a good student; he learned about his disease, engaged in discussions with counselors and other residents, and helped others who were also struggling with their addiction.

During this time, his family explored more extensive treatment and recovery programs. They wanted to provide Nick with the best possible education and clean living environment to help him turn his life around. Nick agreed to participate in a 90-day inpatient private pay recovery house and was transported to the facility upon completion of the 30-day program.

Nick also worked hard in the 90-day inpatient program and was praised again by counselors. Eventually, he was given some increased responsibilities that involved speaking with and engaging other residents. He was given the opportunity to speak at another facility and had been selected as an interview candidate by CNBC for a segment they were developing on opioid addiction and recovery houses. His family was encouraged by his progress. When the day finally came for Nick to return home, he was welcomed with open arms.

After being home for just three weeks and one day, Nick's disease fooled him into using—"just one more time." Thinking they can use just once, or on occasion, without having the same physical reaction as they did before is common problem for people with a substance abuse disorder. This warped misconception, accompanied by a completely clean body, often leads to overdose or death. The body physically cannot tolerate the same dosage the person was taking to get high before getting clean.

On Thursday evening, April 24, 2014, Nick was supposed to go to an outpatient group and then a meeting. He came home late—but, "looked OK," according to his father. Nick retired to his room and injected crushed Oxycodone before going to bed. When he fell asleep his lungs stopped and his body shut down. His parents found him dead the following morning. Nick was 31.

RECOGNIZING THE RETIREMENT
OF MRS. SYLVIA L. HERNANDEZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mrs. Sylvia L. Hernandez, Regional Administrator for the U.S. General Services Administration's (GSA) Greater Southwest Region, who will be retiring after 38 years of service.

Mrs. Hernandez was born on May 31, 1956 in Deming, New Mexico. She attended Deming High School and eventually received her Bachelor of Arts degrees from New Mexico State University and the University of Texas at Arlington. She also earned a Master's Certification in Telecommunications Management from the University of Dallas, Texas. After college, Mrs. Hernandez would soon join the GSA, starting a career that expanded over three decades.

Mrs. Hernandez's hard work and dedication at GSA allowed her to serve in several important capacities throughout her time in the organization. She served as Director for the Technical Services Division, Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), in the GSA Greater Southwest Region. In addition, she served as the Acting Deputy Regional Administrator for the Greater Southwest Region. Mrs. Hernandez's experience eventually led her to be appointed as the Acting Regional Administrator for the GSA's Greater Southwest Region, through which she oversaw all of GSA's activities in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas as the Regional Administrator. Mrs. Hernandez's success with GSA earned her the prestigious FAS Commissioner's Award.

Mrs. Hernandez will now get to spend more time with what she values most: her family, which includes her husband of 38 years, their children, Claudia Hernandez and Eloy Hernandez, and grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the service of Mrs. Sylvia L. Hernandez whose dedication to work and family serves as a model for us all.

IN RECOGNITION OF OUR LADY OF
MOUNT CARMEL

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize The Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on the occasion of its 175th anniversary. I am pleased to recognize their continued dedication to maintaining one of the oldest parishes in Queens and all of Long Island.

Since its founding in 1841, Our Lady of Mount Carmel has been devoted to welcoming all members of the community. The Parish celebrates the rich Queens Borough culture through educational programs and monthly festivities. This has earned it the title "Mother Church of Queens County."

Mount Carmel is one of the few parishes in New York City that has its own parish cemetery. Their cemetery reflects the heritage of the early Irish Catholic settlers of Astoria, many of who arrived there to escape Ireland's potato blight of the late 1840s. Our Lady of Mount Carmel was also the first Catholic community in Queens County to have a resident priest, and the first to conduct Mass in its own church building.

Along with English language services, the Parish has performed masses in Spanish since 1977 and has added services in Czech and Slovak as well.

Additionally, the Parish has made significant efforts to improve the community through religious and educational programs. They accomplished this by establishing religion classes for mentally disabled and physically challenged students, religion classes for junior high school students, adult religious education programs, a teen club, and children's summer programs. The Parish has also established the Young Adult Internship Program, a job-training program for unskilled youth that teaches valuable workplace skills to roughly 35 students per semester, resulting in more employment opportunities within the neighborhood.

The Parish has devotedly served its Queens community for 175 years, and it is a pleasure to represent this treasured institution in Congress. I am proud to salute all the friends, supporters, and parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and I extend my sincerest appreciation for their dedication to the community.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the remarkable history and extraordinary work of the Parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel on its 175th anniversary.

TRIBUTE TO THE DES MOINES
AREA RELIGIOUS COUNCIL FOOD
PANTRY NETWORK IN THE
SECOND SESSION OF THE 114TH CONGRESS

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Food Pantry Network for their 40 years of service to the food insecure citizens of central Iowa.

DMARC was founded in 1952 to assist the spiritual needs of the community and to promote moral, social and civic welfare to our fellow man and woman. In May 1976, DMARC officials established the Food Pantry Network, an emergency food program to help provide services to those in need. In the 40 years since its creation, it has become the largest food pantry network in Iowa, with 11 sites in the Des Moines metropolitan area, including some sites in the Des Moines Independent School District, helping to feed 34,000 people