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Dania Beach to honor soldier killed in Afghanistan

Dania remembers life of 'fallen hero'

By Monique Mattiace

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The city is honoring a fallen soldier and native son by launching two programs reflecting his love for children and the outdoors.

City commissioners on Jan. 22 proclaimed March Michael Curry Month for the 37-year-old Army Ranger who was killed July 23 in Afghanistan when a roadside bomb exploded beside his Humvee.

It happened the day before the sergeant's son's 13th birthday and the month before Curry was to retire from the military.

The city will honor the Hollywood Hills High School graduate starting the fourth Saturday in March by holding outdoor recreational activities at C.W. Thomas Park. Kickball and basketball are just a few activities that will be available for the public that weekend.

The city's vice mayor is organizing a kickball tournament, the Broward Sheriff's Office will play a basketball game against the Hollywood Police Department and the Hollywood Fire Department will play against the Dania Beach Fire Department, said Niki Martin, Curry's younger sister.

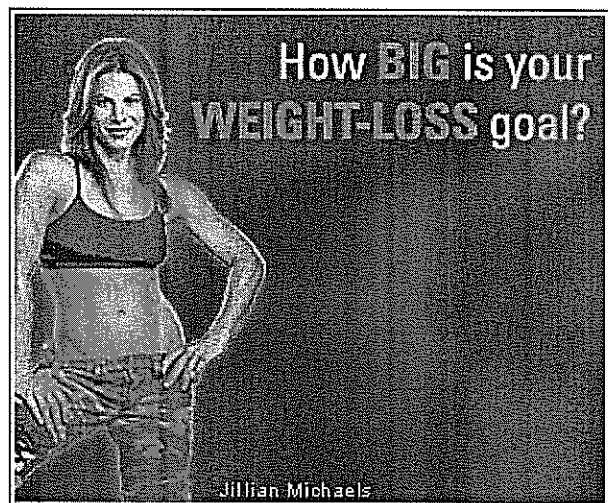
"I am so glad that the city of Dania Beach recognized that more should be done for our fallen heroes and has chosen to honor Michael with this proclamation," Martin said.

Food will be sold and bounce houses, blow-up games and other activities will be available for children, along with a disc jockey to supply music. March for Michael T-shirts will be a giveaway item.

All proceeds during March for Michael will go to the memorial foundation Smiles are Contagious, created in Curry's honor by his sister and close friends due to his "contagious smile," Martin said

Proceeds will be used to upgrade the park, where Curry played growing up, along with other areas in Dania Beach that the city chooses, Martin said.

The commissioners also announced a new program in July called Camp 7:2:3 at C.W. Thomas



Recreational Complex, Frost Park Recreational Complex and Patrick J. Meli Aquatic Complex.

The program will kick off with a public barbecue at the park July 23. Camp 7:2:3, which commemorates the date Curry died, will teach fifth- through 11th-graders leadership skills, team building and community service.

The camp also will get youth involved in community service activities, teach them how to vote and write letters to legislators.

Curry "was a person who believed in education, leadership, teamwork and respect," Martin said. The goal of Camp 7:2:3 is to launch it into other parks around South Florida, to not only honor Curry but all soldiers, Martin said.

Curry's children, Taylor, 13, and Kevin, 10, along with his wife Lucia, who live in Italy, will participate in Camp 7:2:3, Martin said. Curry lived in Italy for 16 years, which is where he met his wife.

The city also hung Curry's full-size military photo, a shadow box with eight coins that represent excellence, a write-up and the proclamation that declares the fourth Saturday in March as his day at the recreational complex.

"Hanging his picture in the C.W. Thomas Recreation Building will serve as a symbol to our young people of the success that hard work, dedication and determination can bring you," Martin said.

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