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Fraud enforcer accused of fraud

By Alex Wood
Journal Inquirer

The supervisor of certain Connecticut welfare fraud investigations was arrested Wednesday on a federal fraud charge based on accusations that he lied about his income and assets to participate in a federally subsidized program to reduce

mortgage payments on his East Hartford home.

The man, Lynwood Patrick Jr., 39, is charged with wire fraud. He was arrested Wednesday at his home, appeared in U.S. District Court in Hartford, and was released on a \$150,000 bond, U.S. Attorney Deirdre M. Daly said in a statement.

Patrick is director of investigations for the state Department of Social Services' office of quality assurance, according to an affidavit by Special Agent John Keaney of the inspector general's office of the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

■ SEE FRAUD / PAGE 17

CONGRATULATIONS



Angela Gomez is all smiles after getting her certificate from People Empowering People program facilitator Lorena Cisneros during graduation Wednesday at St. Patrick Church in the Thompsonville section of Enfield. The almost 2-decade-old statewide program seeks to provide training and support to targeted adult populations to help change their lives and their communities.

Jim Michaud
Journal Inquirer

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■ Additional photos are available in the Photos tab of the JI's website.

THURSDAY

MAY 7, 2015

WINDSOR LOCKS

Fired worker faces ethics fine

The Office of State Ethics is accusing the worker of using state resources for his own financial gain. **Page 3**

STATE

Panel backs fire chiefs bill

A lawyer representing Thompsonville Fire Chief Frank Alaimo in Enfield raised concern about firing rules. **Page 12**

STATE

\$2 million judgment upheld

The award was against a heart surgeon who secretly placed video cameras in his then-lover's home. **Page 16**

SPORTS

Brady sacked in 'Deflategate' report

A 243-page NFL investigative report says the Patriots quarterback "was at least generally aware" of plans to prepare game balls to his liking, below the league-mandated minimum pressure. **Page 44**



SPECIAL INSERTS



FRIDAY'S WEATHER

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PAGE 11 EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE WORD GAME! PLAY NOW! SCRAMBLR ONLY LASTS 5 MORE WEEKS!

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People Empowering People leads to success for Enfield's Latin community

By Annemarie A. Smith

Journal Inquirer

ENFIELD — Lorena Cisneros is a force to be reckoned with. The 36-year-old mother of two is vivacious, determined, and whip-smart.

As she arrives at Thomas G Alcorn Elementary School with her family in tow to begin setting up for the night's University of Connecticut's People Empowering People class, she chats about how the program, for which she is the Enfield coordinator, changes lives.

"I have so many people say to me how happy they are because of the program," Cisneros says.

The almost two-decade-old statewide People Empowering People program, also known as PEP, seeks to provide training and support to targeted adult populations to catalyze change in their lives and their communities.

Director Catherine Love explains that PEP grew out of a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant for assisting children, youth, and families at risk.

"At the time, there was a lot of talk about what was wrong with people instead of what their strengths were ... We wanted to develop a curriculum that was strength-based," Love says.

The resulting 10-week program teaches adults across the state life skills, including decision-making, problem solving, and communication skills, as well as community values during weekly, two-hour classes.

"We give parents leadership skills so they can be advocates for their children," Love says.

As part of the curriculum, participants develop and complete a service project they see a need for in their community.

During the 2013-14 academic year, Love says, more than 1,300 community service hours impacted more than 5,000 people across the state.

At the end of each program, PEP



Jim Michaud / Journal Inquirer

People Empowering People program facilitator Lorena Cisneros, far right, arranges diplomas for a group photo during graduation Wednesday at St. Patrick Church in the Thompsonville section of Enfield.

hosts graduation for all participants as a way to celebrate their accomplishments.

On Wednesday, the Enfield program hosted graduation for its 12 participants at St. Patrick's Church in the Thompsonville section.

Love emphasizes that PEP works to improve the lives of its participants.

"This is evidence-based. We've had research done and we can prove it's making a difference in the lives of participants," she says.

Family resource centers, Head Start programs, public school systems, nonprofits, towns, and other organizations can apply for state

grants to bring PEP to their community.

In Enfield, it was an organization called KITE, or Key Initiatives to Early Learning, that applied for the grant to help the town's growing Latino community better participate in society.

KITE brought Cisneros on board to run the program.

Cisneros explains, "KITE saw the necessity (for this program) in schools ... A lot of (Latino) parents here don't speak English and have trouble communicating with teachers. They also don't go to programs the schools have, so KITE wanted to get parents involved."

Cisneros' first class had 13 students, and they focused on the lan-

guage barrier in town.

The group decided to host a community conversation as their service project, which tackled the creation of English as a Second Language or ESL classes in town, ways to help Latino children with schoolwork, and developing better translation services in the schools.

It was such a success that she will host another one this year on Thursday, May 21, at 5 p.m. at the Angelo Lamagna Activity Center, 19 N. Main St.

Cisneros' current group of 12 participants wanted to focus not on Latino problems, but on ways the Latino community gives back to Enfield.

Thus, the group organized a Latin dance night for residents of all ages and races in order to raise money for the Enfield Food Shelf.

"We thought, let's make something healthy," Cisneros says. "We know about music and rhythms, so let's do a salsa and meringue class."

The event was a success.

Cisneros says she truly sees firsthand what a difference PEP makes in the lives of her students.

"One said it changed her relationship with her husband," Cisneros says. "Other people say it is so nice because they know lots of people and if they have questions they know who to call. They know now that they have friends."

Finding this sense of community, Cisneros says, is no small thing.

In fact, the issue is a very personal one. She tears up as she recalls coming to the U.S. from Ecuador as an illegal immigrant 14 years ago, with no English skills and no job.

"It was like being in jail," she says.

Still, determined to make a life for herself here, she took English classes at Asnuntuck Community College.

With her new language skills, she was able to navigate the paperwork necessary to become a U.S. citizen.

Now she is determined to help others in similar situations.

"My own experience when I came here is I didn't have that person that said, 'If you want to continue your education, follow these steps,'" she says. "When I have the possibility to be that person now, I say 'OK!'"

PEP is just one way Cisneros gives back to the country that changed her life.

The work, which marries Latino and American cultures, she says, makes her incredibly happy.

"We (Latinos) have incredible values," she says. "We just have to share them and then people will be happy to share with us."

Armed Forces Day Breakfast set

By Journal Inquirer Staff

ENFIELD — The American Legion Tanguay Magill Post 80 is hosting an Armed Forces Day Breakfast on Saturday, May 9.

The purpose of the event, which will be held at the post at 566 Enfield St. at 9 a.m., is to bring local veterans, reserve, and active duty service members, as well as supporters together in support of each other and the community.

The theme of the event this year is, "Remembering Vietnam 50 Years (1965-2015)."

The event will begin with an informal breakfast catered by Maneeley's of East Windsor, followed by a semi-formal ceremony to recognize those who served the nation.

The guest speaker will be retired Chief Warrant Officer 4 Vic Musante.

The event is open to the public and tickets cost \$20.

For more information and to purchase tickets, call John Smith, 860-930-6092, or Martin Prior, 860-265-1099.

2nd annual Mother's Day hike scheduled in Somers

By Annemarie A. Smith

Journal Inquirer

SOMERS — The Northern Connecticut Land Trust is urging children to tell their mothers, "Take a hike!" this weekend.

The organization is hosting its second annual Mother's Day family hike on Sunday, May 10, at the McCann Family Farm on Route 190.

The leisurely 1½-mile hike through forest and fields at one of the land trust's flagship properties will start at 10 a.m.

Albert Grant, the event's coordinator, said the trail will provide great bird watching opportunities.

Grant said the hike was a hit last year, with beautiful weather and about 20 hikers. He hopes this year will draw even more families.

"It's a nice family thing to do," Grant said. "Everybody likes to take a walk in the woods in the springtime."

Participants should meet behind the Somers Town Hall at 600 Main St. to carpool to the event.

For more information, call 860-623-5487 or visit www.northernctlandtrust.org