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\$2.00 SUNDAY, MAY 3, 2015



PHOTOS BY KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Luke Jiang, 3, meets Cookie Monster during Sesame Place's opening day Saturday. The park kicks off its season-long celebration of their 35th birthday in Middletown. **Sesame Classic runner's expo, Story A3**

Crash kills driver, injures workmen

The crash occurred around 5:30 a.m. 4 miles east of the Bensalem Interchange of the turnpike. The eastbound lanes were closed for 5 hours.

By JO CIAVAGLIA
STAFF WRITER

A driver was killed and four construction workers injured — one seriously — in an accident along the Pennsylvania Turnpike in Bensalem on Saturday morning, the second incident in a construction zone in less than a week.

Authorities have not identified the driver who was killed.

Pennsylvania State Police, in a press release Saturday night, said the motorist was driving east in the right lane of the turnpike.

The left lane was closed for construction work at the time. State police said the dead motorist's vehicle swerved into the left lane and sideswiped a work vehicle, then slammed into another work vehicle, shearing off the driver's side doors and ejecting the driver, who was thrown onto the roadway.

The injured workers were Matthew J. Horton of Langhorne, the driver of the second vehicle, and Robert W. Devoll, of Barto, Berks County, the driver of the third vehicle. They were taken to Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol Township for evaluation, state police said. A third worker, Carl Johnston, of Line Lexington, sustained minor injuries. Johnston was taken to Frankford Torresdale Aria Hospital in Philadelphia for treatment.

James T. Beck III, of Elmer, New Jersey, suffered severe injuries and was transported by helicopter to Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia for surgery, according to turnpike commission spokesman Carl DeFebo Jr.

The injured men are employed by PKF Mark III of Newtown and Meco

See **CRASH**, Page A2



Video online

Open Sesame

THE PARK KICKS OFF ITS 35TH SEASON

By CHRIS RUVO
CORRESPONDENT

There's a season-long birthday party going on, and everyone is invited.

Sesame Place, the theme park in Middletown based on the popular children's television show Sesame Street, kicked off its 35th year in business with a special birthday celebration Saturday.

Decorated in birthday décor, the park teemed with families looking to enjoy everything from new rides to a birthday parade featuring the show's beloved characters.

"We love it," said Carl Saalbach, an Ambler resident who was at the park with his wife and 10-month old son, Holden. "It's our first time and

See **SESAME**, Page A2



Kaiden White, 3, of Middletown, mimics Oscar the Grouch as he poses for a photo.



Video online

American Pharoah wins 141st Kentucky Derby
Sports C1



77° Sunny and
52° warm. B3

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Seeking reader input: Health care delivery, cost and care

How are changes in health care delivery affecting you? Has the Affordable Care Act affected your care or your costs? We want to know what kind of improvements you'd like to see in health care and about your experiences in getting medical care, too — whether it's at a hospital, an urgent care center, your family physician or a specialist. Contact reporter Marion Callahan at mcallahan@calkins.com or call 215-345-3060.

Better quality of life under construction

Commentary



Video online

The plight of the homeless in Bucks County is one that brought Mike DeMaio to his knees, literally and figuratively.

There was DeMaio, the co-owner of Milex Construction in Bensalem, among those companies involved in demolishing and rebuilding 11 bathrooms

in disrepair at the Bucks County Emergency Homeless Shelter in Bristol Township. He was on his knees outside one of the small bathrooms on the women's side of the shelter a few days ago, trowel in hand to smooth freshly poured concrete at an exit door near where one of the crumbling bathrooms once stood. Figuratively helping smooth over the uneven lives of shelter residents.



KIM WEIMER / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Eric Duffy, of Milex Construction in Bensalem, builds a wall around the old bathrooms at the Bucks County Emergency Homeless Shelter in Bristol Township on Wednesday. The renovation project is the culmination of the Buck Up Bucks County effort to install new bathrooms at the shelter.

"I grew up here, graduated from Pennsbury, so I have a connection to this area and these people," said DeMaio, 28, who's supervising the project. "I want to give back. I know some of the

hardships these people face. "I have a little girl at home. I look around here at all the kids' drawings on the walls, kids that

See **SHELTER**, Page A6

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Shelter

Continued from Page A1

don't have a place to call home. It hits you. So, if we can make this place more comfortable for the residents by fixing up their bathrooms, it'll make them feel better, and it'll make us feel better to help them."

A helping hand. Such assistance is what the residents of Bucks County offered by reaching into their pockets and hearts to help our neighbors most in need. The "Buck Up Bucks County" campaign was established by the Bucks County Courier Times and The Intelligencer. Also cooperating on the project was Comcast, Family Service Association of Bucks County, which runs the shelter, and Advocates for Homeless & Those in Need.

The result, last fall, was the raising of \$176,000 to help renovate the bathrooms, which are 20 years old.

When the \$350,000 bathrooms project is completed by July, the quality of life for shelter residents will be improved dramatically. No more leaking faucets, or blocked toilets, or out-of-order signs as common on the bathroom doors as morning dew. No more dearth of bathtubs that moms rely on to not only bathe their young children, but to kneel beside and perhaps sing quiet, soothing songs. To make their children feel relaxed. To make their children feel at home.

"I have an 11-month-old daughter, so I know how good it feels to kneel beside her in the bath and sing songs with her," said FSA communications coordinator Nicki Bedesem. "It's just not the same without the bathtubs, and we just don't have enough of them. Now, we will."

Bedesem said funding realized from the Buck Up Bucks County fundraising project will significantly improve the lives of the shelter residents, who number between 70 and 75 at

any time.

"I can tell you the residents here are so grateful for this," she said. "They were grateful when (the first round of) Buck Up Bucks County raised money last year to renovate the shelter kitchen. It makes a big difference in their lives."

"We know that, without community support, as was shown with Buck Up Bucks, none of this gets done. You can't fix the kitchens and bathrooms here with just government money and grants. We are so thankful for a community that cares."

A community that cares includes residents who dropped donations into the Buck Up Bucks County canisters that populated the region, as well as companies that donated materials and time.

Worth and Co., of Pipersville, is donating the bathroom fixtures, bathtubs, showers, sinks, faucets, toilets and plumbing. The Huffman Group, a national construction and management company, which has a regional office in Spring House, has donated its time to manage the project. And Milex Construction is donating project supervisor Mike DeMaio's time, and is also

a paid contractor for the demolition portion of the project.

"We are very grateful that Huffman Group and Milex Construction have generously donated their time to help renovate the bathrooms," said Audrey J. Tucker, CEO of Family Service Association. "Both companies were involved in the kitchen renovation last year, and we're thrilled to have them back again."

When the project is completed, the shelter will have 11 new, fully equipped bathrooms. Eight will be located on the women's and children's section of the shelter, and three on the men's side. Each will have a bathtub, a shower, a sink and a toilet. The reconstruction will also include a changing room/baby station, two janitor's closets, two linen closets and a supply room.

In the meantime, the Family Service Association has rented temporary bathroom facilities in trailers that sit just outside the shelter.

"The fact the community donated to this project and helped provide this one more thing for our residents to feel at home is terrific," said Kari Howatt, shelter coordinator. "This isn't

their home, but it is a temporary home. At the end of the day, those of us who work here go to our homes. We need to make this place feel like home for the residents, and fixing the bathrooms will help do that."

Joseph is a 23-year-old. He'd been living on the street for five weeks until being accepted as a shelter resident on April 10. He and his fiancée have daughters, ages 2½ and 1, and are expecting another child in September. His fiancée and the children are currently staying with her family in Bensalem; he says there just isn't enough room there for him. He's thankful for the shelter, and the upgrading of the bathrooms.

"Getting new bathrooms will be great and mean a lot to us," said Joseph, who spent 4½ years in the National Guard and will soon begin a new job at a local McDonald's. "They're really bad; some don't even flush. When they're done with the new ones, it'll make it feel more like home."

Air mattresses and green cots create a patch-quilt tapestry across the sleeping area of the women's section of the shelter. Blankets

and coats are left in piles, and sneakers and shoes are strewn about. Large, clear plastic storage bins are stacked like so many children's building blocks. Packed in many of them are shampoo, conditioner, soap and baby lotion.

On the other side of the room are some of the bathrooms. They're old and breaking down. Ceiling vents are hanging, and floor tiles are worn or missing. Most have no bathtubs.

Workers have constructed a temporary wall between the two areas, protecting the residents from the bathroom work area. While it might appear the wall serves as a separator, it in fact represents the opposite. The wall is symbolic in a much different way, serving as a connection, not a barrier, to an improved life. It is there where neighbors of the homeless share their talents to help smooth the uneven footing of their lives. Working to make the shelter feel more like home for the residents.

Until they find one of their own.

Phil Gianficaro can be reached at 215-345-3078, pgianficaro@calkins.com or @philgianficaro on Twitter.

Man dies after motorcycle accident

By JO CIAVAGLIA
STAFF WRITER

FALLS — A 32-year-old Bristol man has died from injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident Wednesday in Falls.

Ivan Lebeaux died Thursday at St. Mary Medical Center, police confirmed.

The accident occurred at the intersection of West Trenton Avenue and Pinegrove Road shortly after 8 p.m. when Lebeaux's motorcycle was struck by a vehicle turning left in front of him, police said. Lebeaux, who was not wearing a helmet, suffered severe head trauma, police said.

He was thrown from his motorcycle onto a concrete barrier. The driver and two children in the striking vehicle were not injured. The driver was not identified.

The accident remains under investigation.

Anyone with information about the accident or who witnessed it is asked to contact officer Stephanie Metterle at 215-949-9100.

Jo Ciavaglia: 215-949-4181; email: jciavaglia@calkins.com; Twitter: @jociavaglia

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