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Ulin Brings Harmony To Levittown

By EMILY CAPPIELLO

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Allison Ulin always knew that she wanted to be a teacher, but she didn't always know that she would be starting her own school one day. "Being a teacher has really been a long-time, childhood dream, but after awhile, I realized that I wanted to teach kids the way I wanted to," she explained. "I wanted to do something that had my own spin."

Ulin has been teaching for years and in a variety of spaces - private school, public school, in the city and on Long Island. Everywhere she went, she said there were aspects of the curriculum that she didn't always love. Now, at the urging of her



Allison and John prepare for their grand opening

friends and family, she has opened Harmony Early Learning, a day care/pre-school/pre-kindergarten center located at 148 Center Lane.

While she had the dream of owning her own school and being able to put her own stamp on the learning process, she never acted it until she spotted the vacant property while visiting her in-laws. "My husband and I were just driving one day and there it was. It just caught my eye," she said. After scoping out the location and realizing that it was a prime spot, she called and got the information. "It was owned by the bank and had been vacant for five years," Ulin said. When she mentioned the property to her friends,

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Cancer Survivor Gives Back

By LYN DOBRIN

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When Narges Rothermel picks up the hotline phone at the Adelphi NY Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline where she is a volunteer, sometimes the person calling is newly diagnosed and frightened. "When I tell them I'm a 35 year survivor, they don't hear me. I again say I had breast cancer 35 years ago. There is a pause. And then they say, 'Really!?' and I hear hope replacing the fear."

Narges did not have a hotline to call when she was diagnosed in 1978 when she was 37 years old, with two young children. She says cancer was the last thing she expected. She wasn't overweight; she wasn't a smoker. My doctor and nurse and I thought maybe it was backed up milk after I stopped nursing my son. It was breast cancer. "Your life just stops," she said. "There was a wall in front of me."

Her four-year-old daughter Miriam and three-year-old son Peter became her focus. Not knowing if she would survive, she decided to write poems for them in English instead of her native Farsi, which was the language she had used for her writing previously. "I wanted them to know something about their mother." Thirty-five years ago breast cancer was viewed as a

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Former Giant Kicks Off Season In Levittown

By EMILY CAPPIELLO

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Former New York Giants kicker, Sean Landeta, joined Levittown Stop & Shop as it kicked off football season. Landeta visited the store on Sept. 7 and signed autographs, took photos with fans greeted shoppers and reminisced about some of his favorite moments playing the game he loves.

"The proudest and best moment for any player, along with me, is the moment that you actually make it," he told the *Levittown Tribune*. "You want to make it, you have dreams

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Sean Landeta meets fans and signs autographs in Levittown

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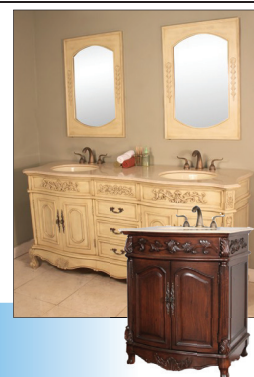
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death sentence. Her first book of poetry was published under the title *Wild Flowers*.

Although Narges was born in Iran, her father was Russian and her mother Turkish/Russian. She received a nursing degree in Tehran, became an instructor in the same nursing school and traveled to city of Isfahan, first as staff nurse then as director of a two-year program to train Licensed Practical Nurses.

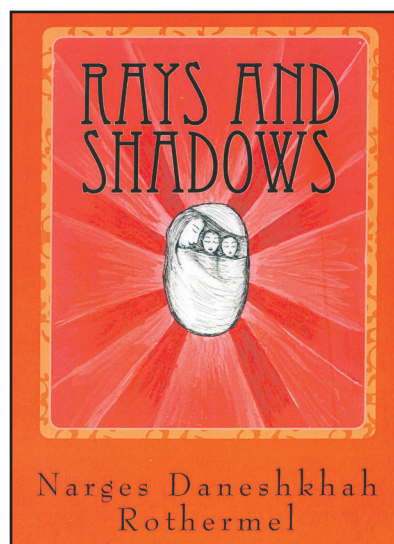
Narges came to the United States from Iran when she was 28. She was accepted as an Exchange Visiting Nurse to Overlook Hospital in Summit New Jersey. She was also eager to escape the suffocating political atmosphere of Iran. "If you talked about and against the shah, the next day you were marked. My generation wanted freedom of speech." After completing the two-year program, she obtained an RN degree. She returned to Iran and found it was even more stifling. She returned to the US, deciding to make this country her home. She met her husband-to-be at the wedding of a friend where she was maid of honor and he was best man. That evening Gary Rothermel told her the next wedding would be theirs.

When Narges had a new cancer in right breast in 1997, she knew about the Adelphi Program (as a nurse she had been referring people there for help) and she joined a support group. She says she found the program helpful and beneficial and volunteered so she could help others.

Narges is still writing poetry. Her



Narges Rothermel



second book, *Rays and Shadows*, published in October of 2012, is about her journey with breast cancer. She has donated the profits of her book, more than \$400, to the Adelphi program. Both books are available in Levittown Library and can be purchased from Amazon.com or from the author Narira@aol.com.

Poems from *Rays and Shadows* By Narges Rothermel

Homecoming

Open arms of my four-year old daughter and my three-year son were waiting for me in the hall

Their eyes questioned, "Where have you been?" They didn't know I had surgery They didn't know I've been in hospital

Their legs dashed and raced towards their mother Each was competing with the other The hugs, the kisses, the looks, They held back nothing

Then they said, "Hi" to their father

Chest forgot how sore it was Unbalanced body minus a breast stood tall An instant dam tried to hold back the tears

Uncertain emotions, Fears, and the fresh-pain, all chose to stand by in order to witness and respect this moment

I was home with my children.

Need to talk to someone about breast cancer?
Call the Adelphi NY Statewide Breast cancer Hotline at 800-877-8077.

Can Heaven Wait?

Dear God,
Lying here, between my daughter
and my son
Warmth of their hands, angelic face
of each one

brings smile to my lips and happy
tears to my eyes
I am content here as I could be in
your paradise

Beauty and serenity of heaven in
my mind
Can't be serene if I leave my
children behind

When each child holds me with a
tight grip
makes me bargain with you for a
delayed trip

God, I am asking I am begging you
Can you postpone our rendezvous?

Allow me to stay on this earth for
a while
Let me hear their laughter see their
smiles

Please let me stay with my children
for a while.

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they immediately urged her to go for it. "They were like 'You have been talking about this for years, just do it!' and my family was so supportive. I definitely could not have done this without family support," she explained.

She went for it and bought the property in 2012, right before Hurricane Sandy. "There were so many things that needed to be done on it anyway and getting the property in a good condition was the first one. Unfortunately, Hurricane Sandy hit and the Town got so backed up with taking care of claims, that we got a bit delayed," said Ulin. However, not even a hurricane could have stopped Ulin from making her dream a reality and soon enough she was able to make all of the major improvements that she planned. "We had to make sure that the space was new and up to codes. We added bathrooms in all of the classrooms so that we don't have to take a child out to use them. It will be much more convenient," she said. Add to those improvements new walls, flooring, and a half-circle driveway.

Opening this September, Harmony, she said, will be a place that focuses on the creative curriculum and a more student-based learning process. "I want to focus on using what they love to teach [the kids]. They will learn what they need to learn, but I want it to be more student-based and driven by what they really like," explained Ulin.

In addition, she has decided that the school will serve healthy and organic snacks. "I want kids to know that fruits and veggies can be fun to eat too and I want the parents to know that when they aren't with their child, they are still getting what is healthy and good for them." Snacks are included in the tuition price, parents that send their child to a full-day program will need to pack a healthy lunch.

Programs are offered for children as young as 18 months and as old

as five years. Harmony also offers extended hours for early-morning and evening pick-up; Mommy & Me classes for children 18 to 36 months; and a vacation program that is offered when schools are out but parents still have to work.

"I wanted to give this community what it needed," Ulin said. "I want to have a good presence in this community. I want to get involved and let people know that we are here to help." Her hope is that eventually Harmony will become a community center where she can host parenting workshops and have guest speakers come and discuss important topics in child education and development.

"I love changing lives and I love knowing that I helped to mold a person," said Ulin.

For information, visit HarmonyEarlyLearning.com or call 516-308-2460.

EVENTS

The First Presbyterian Church, 474 Wantagh Avenue in Levittown, 516-731-3808. Summer office hours, weekdays from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Yoga For Beginners

Yoga for beginners and first time yoga students, free. Led by Lisa on Fridays at 7 p.m. Bring towel or mat; bring a friend.

Bible Study

Summer Bible Study on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

The First Presbyterian Church is looking for other ideas for free community events, to be held on Fridays at 7 p.m. If you are interested in hosting an event for youths or adults, call the church office from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on weekdays. 474 Wantagh Avenue in Levittown, 516-731-3808.