

Friends Join in Great Race; Memorial for Leslie Mazzara - June 15, 2005

(courtesy www.thejournalonline.com)

Kelly McCorkle, Miss SC 2002 and a participant in the The Amazing Race which aired recently on CBS, is planning a similar event in Anderson County in August.

Proceeds from the local race event will go toward a new Calvary Home for Children cottage named after her friend, Leslie Ann Mazzara, who was murdered along with her roommate last October in Napa California.

The great race type event is being planned for mid August and will include 50 to 100 two person teams competing for prizes, according to McCorkle. Teams will pay an entry fee and can obtain sponsors she said.

The event is expected to draw statewide and national attention.

48 Hours Mystery will be filming the event for a segment to be aired in September, according to McCorkle.

The show has been following the Mazzara case, which remains unsolved.

A 48 Hours film crew conducted interviews recently in Williamston with Mayor Phillip Clardy and McCorkle and also at Freedom Weekend Aloft, where McCorkle and others, including Miss Greenville, Anna Hanks were manning the Calvary Home for Children booth.

Hanks was a close friend to Mazzara and McCorkle knew her before they both participated in the Miss South Carolina Scholarship Pageant in 2002.

Mazzara was a graduate of Belton Honea Path High School, a member of the Greenville Ballet Company and attended the S. C. Governor's School for the Arts. She graduated in 2003 from the University of Georgia with a Bachelor's degree in philosophy.

She was crowned Miss Williamston in 2002 and went on to compete in the the Miss South Carolina Pageant.

Mazzara became an advocate for abused and neglected children, speaking at church and school events to raise awareness, by promoting legislation for the cause and conducting fundraisers for Stephanie's Cottage at Calvary Home for Children.

Stephanie's Cottage, was named after Stephanie Carter, a four-year-old Anderson girl who died on October 17, 2000 after a year of torture at the hands of her father and stepmother.

With Leslie's help, the cottage was completed and the first children moved in in 2002.

She moved to California and was working for a winery when she and a roommate were brutally stabbed on October 31, 2004. No arrests have been made.

McCorkle has taken up the cause of her "best" friend and the efforts of the family and friends of Mazzara who have begun a memorial fund to raise money for a third cottage.

Calvary Home for Children is a long term residential care facility that provides a home for abused, neglected and orphaned children from all over the Southeastern U. S.

Children from the upstate of South Carolina and surrounding areas receive special consideration, according to director Sam Henderson, director of Calvary Home for Children.

A ribbon cutting for the second cottage, the White Cottage will be held Monday, June 20, at 11 a.m. and will be followed by an open house.

The Leslie Mazzara Cottage will be the third in the center located on Simpson Road and will cost approximately \$250,000 to construct, according to Henderson,

The center is on 25 acres of land and includes plans for 6 homes and a multipurpose building.

The cottages are 6,000 sq. ft. eight bedroom brick homes which are built to special set of safety codes which include walls, doors, fire codes and other standards.

They also include other amenities including two stoves, 2 washers and 2 dryers.

Children placed with Calvary Home for Children can stay from a few months to 2 years if necessary, according to Henderson. They also attempt to keep siblings together.

The homes are sponsored by churches, businesses, and fundraisers, according to Henderson and receive no federal support.

The organization is a 501C3 non profit which was incorporated in 1998.

Calvary Home for Children also operates a Rags to Riches Thrift Store located at 511 West Whitner St. in Anderson.

Anyone interested in making a donation toward the Leslie Mazzara Cottage or helping with the great race event being organized by McCorkle can contact Sam Henderson at Calvary Home for Children at (864) 296-5437.