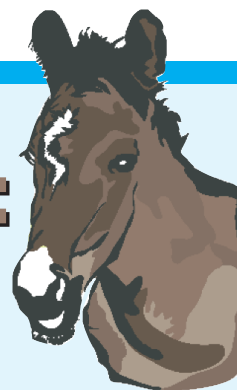


**TWIST  
OF FATE**  
The Miracle Colt's  
Story  
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Thursday, July 30, 2009

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**Portrait of a grieving father with a purpose**

Laurel dad keeps son's memory alive by reaching out to other military families

By Linda Blachly  
Managing Editor

They call them fallen heroes. Casualties of war. Men and women who died for our freedom and for a cause. A club that no one wants to be in. Five thousand of them and counting as the war in Iraq and Afghanistan stretches into the sixth year.

To many of us they are statistics, not a loved one who has left an empty seat at the table and in our hearts. We don't want to picture the faces because we don't want to feel the pain of losing a loved one. But to those 5,000 families who have gotten that knock at the door at 10:30 at night, it's a show stopper.

For Eric Herzberg, of Laurel, his world changed forever on Oct. 21, 2006, when he learned that his 20-year-old son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Eric W. Herzberg, was killed by a sniper in Baghdad. He had been deployed July 14, 2006.

"On a good day, it feels like a full body migraine," the elder Herzberg told his church congrega-



tion at Cedar Ridge Church in Burtonsville, shortly after his death. "On a bad day, it feels like a burning ball of fire that wants to consume you."

Rather than be consumed by the grief, Herzberg chose to make some-

thing positive out of Eric's death.

Drawing from his deep faith in God, Herzberg is now fueled by a sense of purpose for his life and carrying on the legacy of his son. He works with charcoal portrait artist

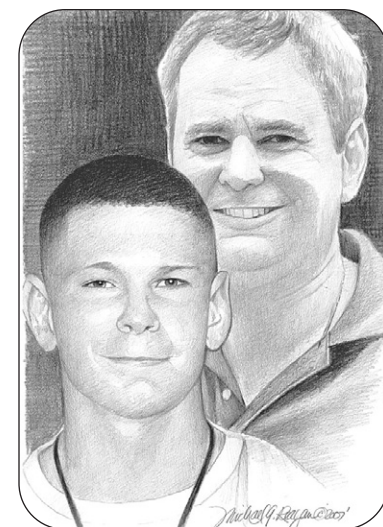


PHOTO ON LEFT BY LINDA BLACHLY  
**Eric Herzberg (left) stands in front of pictures of his son Eric, who was killed in Iraq. Above, the portrait of Eric and his son by artist Michael Reagan.**

Michael Reagan to reach out to families of fallen heroes.

Shortly after Eric's death, Reagan drew a portrait of the father and

See Hero, page 4

**Forum with governor, others brings out large group in Laurel**



PHOTO BY NANCY ROYDEN

From left, delegates Joseline Peña-Melnik and Ben Barnes stand with Gov. Martin O'Malley and former Gov. Parris Glendening as Maryland Sen. James Rosapepe speaks during a forum last Friday in Laurel.

By Nancy Royden  
Sentinel Staff Writer

in Laurel's Granville Gude Park for a town hall-style forum to obtain information about foreclosures.

Political leaders and Prince George's County residents converged

See Budget, page 4

**School district cuts hundreds of positions to save money**

By Nancy Royden  
Sentinel Staff Writer

The public schools in Prince George's County are not immune from being adversely affected by the struggling economy, as 917 positions were eliminated since last August.

"We started to look at the numbers we needed. We started a hiring freeze," said Christine B. Knighton, chief human resources officer with the Prince George's County Public Schools.

Knighton said the district made deliberate decisions and Superintendent William R. Hite Jr. was heavily involved with the decision-making process.

Some of the eliminated positions were lost due to retirement, were vacancies or jobs lost through normal attrition. Approximately 600

people recently lost their jobs, and many of them worked as administrators and executive staff, district spokeswoman Lynn McCawley said.

The district employs 18,066 full-time employees, serves approximately 128,000 students and includes approximately 200 schools, McCawley said.

The district's most recent funding from Prince George's County was slashed by \$14 million. Coupled with cuts from the State of Maryland, the district's budget was cut by a total of \$114 million, Knighton said.

More than \$200 million has been cut from district's budget during the last two years and nearly 700 vacant positions were eliminated in fiscal year 2009, McCawley said.

The district received \$142 mil-

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