

# The Free Lance-Star

## Moving on

Courtland volleyball sweeps Jamestown to reach VHSL Class 4 state semifinals. **SPORTS, PAGE B1**



## Nature nurture

More providers are prescribing the outdoors. **HEALTH, PAGE C1**



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PROVIDED PHOTOS BY JESSICA WARREN

As Jessica Warren hugs her son, Cayden Warren, one last time at VCU Children's Hospital in Richmond on Friday, family members and hospital staff gather for the Honor Walk. The moment is meant to honor the life of individuals who've donated their organs.

# An 'unbelievable legacy'

## Spotsy child's organs will live on in others

**CATHY DYSON**  
The Free Lance-Star

When it became clear that Cayden Warren wasn't going to recover from sudden cardiac arrest, the parents of the 11-year-old decided that, in death, he could save others.

They donated all his organs, except his precious green eyes, because they couldn't bear the thought of giving them to anyone else.

"I want him to live on through other children," said his mother, Jessica Frye Warren of Spotsylvania County. She dreams of "one day meeting the recipients and maybe hugging the person who has his heartbeat. I think that would be just wonderful."

His dad, Daniel Warren, who lives in Falmouth, said he and his ex-wife "knew without question that it was what Cayden would have wanted."

"That was who he was, someone who would give the clothes off his back if it meant helping someone else," his father said.

Cayden, a sixth-grader at Freedom Middle School in Spotsylvania, was declared dead Nov. 11 after experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest four days earlier. He had suffered from asthma and a host of food allergies from birth, was diagnosed with autism



Known for his smile and "a style all his own," Cayden Warren, 11, died on Nov. 11 from sudden cardiac arrest. His organs were donated to save lives of other children.

at age 3½ and didn't talk much until age 4.

But once he got help from a speech therapist, he started talking and didn't stop, said his mother, laughing. He had a "witty sense of humor," said his

aunt, Grace Frye, who set up a Go Fund Me page to raise money for his funeral expenses. By Saturday, the total exceeded the goal of \$15,000.

"He (had) a generous soul and often wanted to give away even

his most prized possessions," Frye wrote.

His father called him "a breath of fresh air in every room he entered. He had a style all his own, a joyful spirit and a deep appreciation for the simple things that made life fun — video games, candy and drawing."

And those eyes. His mother said they'd light up when he got excited over things, even new bands for his braces or his favorite home-cooked meal. When told he couldn't do something, she could see in his eyes that he was trying to figure out another "negotiation process" to get what he wanted.

Cayden hadn't been feeling well on Thursday, Nov. 6, and told his mother he thought he had the common cold. He got a breathing treatment — a normal occurrence with his asthma — and the next day, went to visit his father for the weekend.

On Friday evening, his breathing worsened, the inhaler didn't help, he was sweating profusely and his lips turned blue. An ambulance was called, and the families met at Mary Washington Hospital.

Cayden's heart had stopped beating. He was stabilized, then air-lifted to VCU Children's Hospital in Richmond.

His loved ones prayed that things would turn around, but

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## Ruther Glen man serving 2 life sentences gets another

**KEITH EPPS**  
The Free Lance-Star

A Ruther Glen man who was already serving two life sentences for his unprovoked attack on two Hispanic men last year received another life sentence Thursday in federal court for the same incident.

Douglas Wayne Cornett, 59, pleaded guilty to two federal hate crime charges in U.S. District Court in Richmond. He had already been sentenced to two life sentences plus 16 years in Spotsylvania Circuit Court following convictions that included two counts of aggravated malicious wounding, two counts of assault and battery as a hate crime and two counts of using a firearm in the commission of a felony.

Even after Cornett received his whopping sentence in Spotsylvania, federal prosecutors decided to continue its parallel investigation.

"As our nation recovers from recent political violence, [Thursday's] verdict is a welcome reminder that terror motivated by hate will not be tolerated," federal prosecutor Lindsey Halligan said. "We will continue to investigate and vigorously prosecute those who choose brutality and aggression over civility and reason."

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## Dems wary of GOP promise on health care vote

**MARY CLARE JALONICK**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Now that the government shutdown is over, House and Senate Republicans say they will negotiate with Democrats on whether to extend COVID-era tax credits that help tens of millions of Americans afford their health care premiums. But finding bipartisan agreement could be difficult, if not impossible, before the subsidies expire at the end of the year.

The shutdown ended this week after a small group of Democrats made a deal with Republicans senators who promised a vote by mid-December on extending the Affordable Care Act subsidies. But there is no guaranteed outcome, and many Republicans have made clear they want the credits to expire.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., called the subsidies a "boondoggle" immediately after the House voted Wednesday to end the shutdown, and President Donald Trump said the Obama-era health overhaul was a "disaster" as he signed the reopening bill into law.

It is far from the outcome that Democrats hoped for as they kept the government closed for 43 days, demanding that Republicans negotiate with them on an extension before premiums

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# Charlotte immigration crackdown begins

**ERIK VERDUZCO**  
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Federal officials confirmed Saturday that a surge of immigration enforcement in North Carolina's largest city began, as agents were seen making arrests in multiple locations.

"Americans should be able to live without fear of violent criminal illegal aliens hurting them, their families, or their neighbors," Assistant Homeland Security Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement. "We are

surging DHS law enforcement to Charlotte to ensure Americans are safe and public safety threats are removed."

Area officials, including Mayor Vi Lyles, released a statement criticizing such actions as "causing unnecessary fear and uncertainty."

"We want people in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County to know we stand with all residents who simply want to go about their lives," it said.

Crime is down in the city this year through August, compared

with the same months in 2024. Homicides, rapes, robberies and motor vehicle thefts fell by more than 20%, according to AH Datalytics.

Still, President Donald Trump's administration seized on the stabbing death of Ukrainian refugee Iryna Zarutskaha on a Charlotte light-rail train to argue that Democratic-led cities fail to protect residents. A man with a lengthy criminal record was charged with the woman's murder.

The federal government

didn't previously announced the push but County Sheriff Garry McFadden said this past week that two federal officials told him Customs agents would arrive soon.

Charlotte is a racially diverse city of more than 900,000 residents, including more than 150,000 who are foreign-born, according to officials there.

Willy Aceituno, a Honduran-born U.S. citizen, was on his way to work Saturday when

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