December 8, 2019

**LEUKEMIA PATIENT** 

"He doesn't trust anybody that walks through his hospital room door, except me or his dad."

Volume 132, No. 249

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# U.S., IRAN SWAP PRISONERS

## St. James grad among guardsmen killed in crash

By Brian Arola

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**ST. JAMES** — A St. James High School graduate was among the National Guardsmen who died Thursday in a helicopter crash near St. Cloud.

James A. Rogers Jr., 28, was one of three soldiers killed when a National Guard helicopter crashed shortly after takeoff from the St. Cloud National Guard aviation facility. Rogers; Charles P. Nord,

30; and Kort M. Plantenberg, 28; were conducting a routine maintenance test when the crash occurred.

Rogers, who lived in Winsted, was born on June 23. 1991, in Madelia and graduated from St. James High School in 2010, according to a biography released Saturday by the National Guard.

As a student, he participated in tennis, theater and chorus, among other activities. St. James High School Principal Karla Beck, who

was Rogers' music teacher from 8th to 12th grade, said the young man embodied the school's core values of courage, respect, integrity and compassion. "We want every graduate

to have that, and those four words describe everything you need to know about this young man," she said.

St. James students recite the Pledge of Allegiance each Monday morning. Beck said she plans to honor Rogers during Monday's pledge, adding the community is proud of his military service.

"It was a privilege to be his teacher, and I hope his family understands and knows that we will support and surround them," she said. Les Zellmann, Rogers' high

school tennis coach, recalled Rogers' passion for the military as evident even as a student. He said Rogers was talented enough to advance to state as a senior, but was



Minnesota National Guard

James A. Rogers Jr., who was born in Madelia and graduated from St. James High School in 2010, was killed along with two other National Guardsmen in a Please see CRASH, Page A5 helicopter crash near St. Cloud on Thursday.

#### Today's **)**BITUARIES

- Ronald D. Arndt
- Gary Hudson

#### **OPINIONS**

#### **Homelessness**

The organizations working on the homlessness problem in southern Minnesota do so on slim budgets. They need community support. — A4

#### LOTTERY

Saturday's Daily 3 0-2-9 Friday's Gopher 5 2-5-17-42-44 Saturday's Powerball 18-42-53-62-66 and 25 Saturday's Lotto America 8-16-22-28-49 and 3 Saturday's Northstar Cash 1-3-7-12-27

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### **P**AGEFINDER

WEATHER, PAGE C6



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Mankato, Minnesota

### CONSTANT STRESS'

#### Resources sparce for homeless programs



Julie Goleman and her 8-month-old son, Matthew, now have an apartment after Goleman returned to the Mankato area in January, eight months pregnant. Goleman was able to get support from area nonprofits and move into her own place in October after several months of couch-hopping at the homes of friends and family.

#### Financial struggles abound

By Trey Mewes

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ousing is tough enough to get in normal times, but try finding a home when you're eight months pregnant and re-

building your life. That's what Julia Goleman faced earlier this year. A

Address Unknown

32-year-old Mankato native, Goleman returned to the area late last year after fleeing a bad domestic situation in South Carolina. Thankfully, she had family and friends who would let her stay for extended periods of time while she signed up for classes at South Central College. Even so, she still went without a home of her own for almost 11

Goleman reached out to the Community

Please see HOMELESS, Page A5



Regina Wilson, pictured at home, recently went through a housing crisis when she fell behind on her rent over the past few months. She received help from the Minnesota Valley Action Council and has caught up on her rent, but she's concerned future issues could put her in a similar situation.

Groups in Mankato that address housing

Amount, in billions, Congress funds homeless programs through the McKinney-Vento Act.

Nonprofits that help people through the Coordinated Entry federal program.

### Gunman watched videos of shootings

Another recorded outside building

The Associated Press

PENSACOLA, FLA. —

The Saudi student who fatally shot three people at a U.S. naval base in Florida hosted a dinner party earlier in the week where he and three others watched videos of mass shootings, a U.S. official told The Associated Press on Saturday.

Officials investigating the deadly attack were working Saturday to determine whether it was motivated by terrorism, as both President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Mark Esper indicated that they would review policies governing foreign military training in the United States.

Family members on Saturday identified one of the victims as a 23-year-old recent graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who alerted first responders to where the shooter was even after he had been shot several times.

"Joshua Kaleb Watson saved countless lives today with his own," Adam Watson wrote on Facebook. "He died a hero and we are beyond proud but there is a hole in our hearts that can never be filled."

The shooter opened fire inside a classroom at Naval Air Station Pensacola on Friday, killing three people and wounding two sheriff's deputies, one in the arm and one in the knee, before one of the deputies killed him. Eight others were also hurt. Both deputies were expected to survive.

The official who spoke Saturday said one of the three students who attended the dinner party hosted by

Please see SHOOTING, Page A5



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### HOMELESS: Resources sparce for homeless programs

Continued from Page A1

Against Domestic Abuse early on. CADA workers helped her address her domestic issues, but it wasn't until this past fall that Goleman tried to find housing.

CADA staff helped her apply for housing through a federal subsidy program. She took an online survey to determine "what degree or severity" of homelessness she had, put her name on a priority list for housing subsidies, and got lucky - Goleman was approved for federal housing money within a month and was in an apartment of her own by the end of October.

"I'm definitely in a better spot, happier than hell,' she said with a laugh.

Goleman is a success case for Mankato-area nonprofits that help hundreds of people address homelessness each year. About 46 organizations and governmental bodies have a hand in providing some type of housing assistance or advice, and the Mankato area's nonprofit network ensures many of those groups work together to help residents from multiple angles.

In a perfect world, that would be enough to address homelessness in the Mankato area.

But it's not.

Area nonprofits don't have nearly enough money or staff to get people off the street and into homes at the pace many homeless advocates want to see. Advocates don't have enough resources to keep people from losing their homes. And while those nonprofits work hard to secure funding to continue helping residents, they have to rely more on private donations as state and federal funding hasn't kept up with the demand.

"It's constant stress," said Jen Theneman, executive director for Partners for Affordable Housing. "It's kind of like, 'Where does the money come from?""

#### The players

Partners for Affordable Housing has been in the Mankato area for more than 30 years. The nonprofit provides several types of services for people finding shelter, from transitional shelters in Mankato to rentcontrolled housing in the area to financial help for people looking for housing.

Partners is one of six organizations in the Mankato area that refers residents to federal Continuum of Care

programs, which provide homeless funding and services at a community level through coalitions of nonprofits and government agencies. Homeless residents can sign up for coordinated entry, a centralized system through the Continuum of Care that provides housing help and support for clients.

CADA, The Reach, the Salvation Army, the Minnesota Valley Action Council and the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans all help residents with coordinated entry. Each addresses different facets of homelessness, from The Reach's emphasis on homeless youth to CADA's mission to help women suffering from domestic or sexual abuse.

But they all share financial struggles. Partners runs on a \$1.3 million annual budget to attempt to help about 1,000 people who contact the nonprofit each year. CADA assists about 800 women each year from across the region, about 100 to 200 specifically with housing, on about a \$550,000 annual budget. The Reach, which hears from about 900 people younger than age 25 each year, operates on just under \$1 million despite a recent push to expand its services and add staff.

'With eight of us, we're all running in different directions," said Tasha Moulton, senior program manager at The Reach. "We still feel like we don't have enough to address all the

needs out there." Nonprofit workers agree funding is the primary challenge in addressing homelessness in the area, though they're also quick to point out the Mankato area is generous in supporting organizations that address homelessness. The uneven funding, however, also means workers often scramble to identify and apply for new grant opportunities to keep their programs running.

Area organizations, like many nonprofits addressing homelessness throughout the U.S., rely more on private donations and grant realize it, but we're a big programs than public fund-

That's due in part to waning government support. Federal funding for homeless issues simply hasn't kept pace with the increasing need, and experts say a variety of societal factors – fewer good-paying jobs, a widening gulf in wage inequality and ongoing inflation — means nonprofits are getting less buying power from seemingly stagnant federal funding levels.

"It's gone up modestly on a year-over-year basis, but most of the increase has been eaten up just because a lot of the money goes to pay rent for people who used to be homeless," said Steve Berg, vice president for programs and policy at the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Berg and other homeless advocates say nonprofits need to have a variety of funding sources so their programs won't be impacted as much by political changes in Washington, but Congress should step up its allotments for homeless programs to deal with an increasing number of homeless across the U.S.

Both the House and Senate have bills that would expand funding for McKinney-Vento Act programs, which are major sources for homeless and housing funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Congress already funds about \$2.6 billion in McKinney-Vento programs, but the House would see that money increase to \$2.8 billion, while the Senate

wants about \$2.76 billion. Homeless advocates say that money would be welcome, but they'd like to see Congress increase homeless program spending to \$3 billion.

"We feel like communities have shown that they can do really good work with this money," Berg said. "There's not that many things that Congress funds that they get good results and do really good work, but this is one of the things where they do."

Minnesota's homeless funding has had more increases over the past five years, state experts say. Cathy ten Broeke, an assistant commissioner at the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, said Minnesota purposefully tries to give more funding to homeless-related programs than federal sources.

"I think people don't funder of services and supports because it's a priority for us," said ten Broeke, who also serves as the executive director of Minnesota's Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Homeless advocates acknowledge Minnesota's outsized role in homeless funding, but they say more attention is needed to build better supports for the

For example, earlier this year the Minnesota Legis-

lature allotted \$1.6 million for emergency shelter services for the state over the next two years. While homeless advo-

cates have long advocated for more shelter funding, they were encouraged by an additional \$3 million in one-time funding for various shelter programs throughout the state. That included \$130,000 for the new Union Street shelter run by Partners for Affordable Housing in St. Peter.

"It's hard for shelters to utilize one-time money because it's not guaranteed to be there," said Matt Traynor, director of organizing at the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless. "So that was a perfect example of how that money could be spent."

Still, one of the coalition's goals during the next few years is to secure ongoing shelter funding for organizations such as Partners.

#### Tough choices

Faced with near constant budget struggles, area nonprofits have to make every dollar work. That means some organizations have to make tough decisions on who gets help and how much.

MVAC, which doesn't provide shelter but helps residents find long-term housing solutions, decided in recent years to focus on a smaller group of clients so the residents they do help have a better chance at finding and keeping permanent housing. That help can range from navigating state and federal assistance programs to financial aid during a crisis.

"In the past, we helped a lot of people with one month's assistance, but we would find many of them within three to six months would come back with another crisis," said Kate Hengy-Gretz, a social worker with MVAC.

As a result, MVAC has gone from assisting 180 clients annually to about 70.

That assistance works. as Regina Wilson knows. Wilson, 53, and her family moved to a duplex in Mankato in April, but she had to have surgery and lost her job within the same month. As a single mother living with four children, Wilson said he had no choice but to put off her rent to make ends meet.

Wilson's unemployment didn't kick in right away, and she got far enough behind on her bills to be

state's homeless population. served with an eviction notice. Facing a court date for eviction, Wilson received financial help from MVAC to help her keep her home.

"It's good now," she said. "I just paid December's rent and I'm all caught up."

Still, nonprofit help only goes so far. And a success today doesn't guarantee a client's problems are over.

Wilson's rent is about \$1,650 a month, and she pays at least 40% of that through Section 8 rental assistance. Though MVAC helped her in a crisis, Wilson approached MVAC after her second month behind rent as she knew it would be difficult for her to catch up.

She was turned down at that time. Her situation didn't qualify for help.

Though Wilson is grateful for MVAC, she said the nonprofit and her landlord could have saved the money and the hassle if she had received help in the summer, rather than at the last possible moment before she and her family could have been thrown out on the street.

Wilson now has to pay her landlord's attorney fees for the eviction process. She recently had to leave another job that required her to regularly work 12hour shifts too often, which meant she couldn't be at home often enough for her family.

"It's been hard," Wilson said. "I don't know what I'm going to do for Christmas and the holidays."

#### **Working together**

Funding woes and overworked staff have prompted Mankato's nonprofits and government agencies to come together in recent years. They meet at least monthly to discuss ongoing community problems, strategies to capture more funding from state, federal and private resources, as well as figure out how to get residents the help they need.

"It's been crucial," said Andrea Gilbert, shelter manager at CADA. "We can find out what other groups can help our clients with their issues and at the same time offer help for other groups who have people that maybe we can help."

As Hengy-Gretz puts it, the collaborative effort means Mankato-area nonprofits have a better chance at addressing all of a person's issues to keep them in permanent housing. And Mankato is uniquely positioned to take advantage of that collaboration — experts say the rural growth center is small enough to ensure better partnerships between nonprofits, landlords and government agencies, as opposed to larger metropolitan areas such as the Twin Cities.

"What you find is in rural communities are incredibly good at finding unique ways to share the resources they have," said Paul Mackie, the director of Minnesota State University's bachelor of science in social work program. "You see less siloing in rural areas because they have the benefit of forming relationships easier."

Area nonprofits are already taking steps to improve the services they can offer. They've applied as a group for a Continuum of Care navigator who can help track the 1,284 households throughout south-central and southeastern Minnesota that have applied for federal housing help.

Area homeless advocates say that navigator position could track 10-12 households at a time and help them fill out the large amount of paperwork required to qualify for federal programs. And there are ongoing efforts to secure a larger permanent location for the Connections Shelter, the church-run shelter program during cold-weather months.

Those efforts mirror a statewide effort to build the necessary networks to help people in crisis. Minnesota agencies have put together a plan to address key factors that contribute to homelessness in Minnesota, as well as spur an increase in housing developments across the state.

Advocates plan to push lawmakers for more shelter funding, as well as \$500 million for more affordable housing. And state officials say they're seeing more bipartisan agreement to address Minnesota's housing woes than ever before.

"I think there's hope for big and bold action that we can and should take. Whether we do is a very good question," ten Broeke said. "This is an issue we actually know how to solve. But it's more do we have the community and political will to solve it?"

If nothing else, homeless advocates say they hope to make the area's housing concerns more of a public priority.

'We need to keep talking about this," Gilbert said. "We need to keep making people aware."

### SHOOTING: Gunman watched videos of shootings

Continued from Page A1

the attacker recorded video from outside the classroom building while the shooting was taking place. The official spoke on condition of anonymity after being briefed by federal authorities. Two other Saudi students watched from a car, the official said.

The official said 10 Saudi students were being held on the base Saturday while several others were unaccounted for.

A U.S. official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity on Friday identified the shooter as Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani. The official wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly. The official also said the FBI was examining social media posts and investigating whether he acted alone or was connected to any broader group.

Two U.S. officials identified the student as a second lieutenant in the Saudi Air Force, and said Friday that authorities were investigating whether the attack was terrorism-related. They spoke on condition

of anonymity to disclose information that had not yet been made public.

President Donald Trump declined to say whether the shooting was terrorism-related. Trump tweeted his condolences to the families of the victims on Friday and noted that Saudi King Salman had reassured him in a telephone call that the shooter "in no way shape or form represents the feelings of the Saudi people."

But in comments echoing those made earlier by Defense Secretary Mark Esper, Trump said Saturday that he would review policies governing foreign military training in the

The U.S. has long had a robust training program for Saudis, providing assistance in the U.S. and in the kingdom. A couple hundred students from countries outside the U.S. are enrolled in training at the Pensacola base, said Base commander Capt. Tim Kinsella.

"This has been done for many decades," Trump said. "I guess we're going to have to look into the

whole procedure. We'll start that immediately.'

The shooting has shined a spotlight on the sometimes rocky relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia.

The kingdom is still trying to recover from the killing last year of Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. Saudi intelligence officials and a forensic doctor killed and dismembered Khashoggi on Oct. 2, 2018, just as his fiancée waited outside the diplomatic mission.

Naval Air Station Pensacola is one of the Navy's most historic and storied bases. It sprawls along the waterfront southwest of the city's downtown and dominates the economy of the surrounding area.

Part of the base resembles a college campus, with buildings where, in addition to foreign students, 60,000 members of the U.S. Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard train each year in multiple fields of aviation.

Kinsella said the base would remain closed until further notice.

Residents of Pensacola mourned the attacks and offered their condolences to the affected members of the community.

Joshua Watson was being praised as a hero by his family.

Adam Watson said his little brother was able to make it outside the classroom building to tell authorities where the shooter was after being shot "multiple" times. "Those details were invaluable," he wrote on his Facebook page.

Watson's father, Benjamin Watson, was quoted by the Pensacola News Journal as saying that his son was a recent graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who dreamed of becoming a Navy pilot. He said he had reported to Pensacola two weeks ago to begin flight training. "He died serving his country," Benjamin Watson said.

The shooting is the second at a U.S. naval base in one week. A sailor whose submarine was docked at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, opened fire on three civilian employees Wednesday, killing two before taking his own life.

### **CRASH: St. James** grad among guardsmen killed in crash

**Continued from Page A1** 

called away for training during the section tourna-

"He was a great young man, (had a) big heart,' he said. "He definitely was what we call an impact person."

Rogers came from a military family — his mother and sister served in the Air Force, Maj. Nathan Burr, the unit's former commander, told the Star Tribune.

His buddies nicknamed him "Little Known Fact James" because he reveled in sharing tidbits of information with his fellow soldiers.

"He had no limit to his knowledge," Burr said. "Every time you flew with him, you never knew what you'd talk about ... We always wanted to fight over James for our trivia team."

Rogers officially enlisted on June 5, 2009, while still in high school, as a field artillery specialist. As a chief warrant officer two who piloted Black Hawk helicopters, he completed a nine-month deployment in Kuwait in May, according to the National Guard. Sen. Julie Rosen,

R-Vernon Center, who represents the St. James area, offered condolences to Rogers' family in a statement.

"My heart breaks for Chief Warrant Officer 2 Rogers, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nord, Sgt. Plantenberg, and their families," Rosen stated. "This tragic accident is a sobering reminder that in their world, even routine tasks are dangerous. All of Minnesota is praying they, and their families, can find peace."

Follow Brian Arola @BrianArola