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In spite of the terrible financial times, the Nobles, Ladies and Friends of Aleppo continue to support the Transportation Fund and the children of our Shrine Hospital System through the Aleppo Plaque Program.

Those who engage in this program commit to a tax deductible contribution for either six or eight years and the following list constitute those who have met this obligation for 2009. We would like to thank them for their combined contribution of \$5,980.00 and their continued support of the proud work of being a Shriner.

Thankfully yours,

Peter K. Stone and the Committee

Burn Survivors Thank Shriners for Care

By JENNIFER LADE
STANDARD TIMES

IT has been more than three years since a car accident changed **Carrie Holmstrom's** life. But as she stood at a podium at the Wamsutta Club, speaking about her experience to the Shrine Club of Southeastern Massachusetts, it was obvious that she has come a long way.

Holmstrom's talk on Saturday offered thanks to an organization that has helped her every step of the way in a long and painful recovery.

"They gave my family and me hope that I didn't even think was possible at the time," said Holmstrom, who spoke at the luncheon along with New Bedford burn survivor **Felicia Rego**.

In April of 2006, Holmstrom was involved in a single-vehicle crash near her Dartmouth home. The car erupted in flames, and she sustained burns over 70 percent of her body before she was pulled from the car. She stayed at Mass. General Hospital for eight days before being transferred to the Shriners Hospital in Boston, one of four Shriners hospitals specializing in burn victims.

Holmstrom endured dozens of surgeries, including the amputation of both her legs below the knee and most of the fingers on her right hand. Later, the Shriners Hospital in Springfield outfitted her with prosthetic legs, and she is currently on her seventh pair. At \$30,000 a pair, that would have been a huge expense for the family. But like the rest of Holmstrom's care at Shriners, the legs were free.

"Knowing what I know now, I wouldn't have sent her anywhere else," said **Mike Holmstrom**, Carrie's father, noting the superior, family-centered care at the hospitals.

He said all of the care given to children at one of the Shriners' 22 hospitals in North America is absolutely free to patients and their families, regardless of their income or whether they have insurance. This is made possible through the Shriners' \$800 million annual hospital budget, raised through fundraisers from local chapters.

"Carrie's hospitalization has amounted to millions of dollars and she hasn't paid anything," said Shrine Club president **Richard Greenhalgh**.

Shrine Club of Southeastern Massachusetts is a local chapter of the Aleppo Shriners, one of 191 member Temples of the fraternity known as Shriners International. Saturday's event honored the Potentate of Aleppo, **Robert F. Smith**.

Greenhalgh presented Smith with a check for \$10,000, the fruits of their fundraising efforts in the past year. Another \$5,000 is expected in the coming months after the club sells the aluminum from the soda can tabs they have been collecting. The money will go to the transportation fund, which is used to transport children to a Shriners hospital after an injury.

Rego, 15, also offered her thoughts at Saturday's event. A sophomore at GNB Voc-Tech, she was burned on 16 percent of her body when she fell into a campfire at the age of 8. She spent two weeks at Shriners Hospital in Boston and has had several follow-up surgeries since.

"I'm doing very well," she said, mentioning that she is a dancer.


Rego now volunteers at the local Shrine Club's annual cross-country meet, which they run at UMass Dartmouth as a fundraiser.


"They're wonderful people," Rego said of the Shriners. "You should thank them every chance you get."

As for Holmstrom, she is an independent woman, majoring in public relations as a sophomore at Salem State College and driving a car that has been equipped with hand controls. Next September, she plans to transfer to a college in the south, which has always been a dream of hers.

"I'm ready to start a new chapter in my life," she said.

Your Donation to the Hospital Children's Transportation Fund Plaque Program





The plaque is given for a \$100, \$200 or larger - tax deductible - donation to the hospitals. All monies derived from this program will go to the Children's Transportation Fund.

The plaque is a beautiful addition to your home, office or club. It is one that you can be proud to display. You will be sent your plaque with the current year on it, and we will contact you each year to give you the opportunity to keep your plaque current.

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