



JEN JAQUA/SUFFOLK NEWS-HERALD

Adelaide Montgomery, a resident of Autumn Care of Suffolk, holds a framed picture of Fred Rogers, her former employer, that hangs in her room at the nursing home.

# A 'beautiful day' for local woman

*Editor's Note: Our personal visit to Autumn Care took place on Feb. 12, three and a half weeks before the first positive case of COVID-19 in Virginia was confirmed.*

**BY TRACY AGNEW**  
EDITOR

resident of Autumn Care of Suffolk, and for her, it's always "a beautiful day in the neighborhood."

In her younger years, Montgomery was the executive secretary and production office coordinator for Fred Rogers, known to many as the Mister Rogers

Nonagenarian Adelaide Montgomery is a current

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# Beautiful: Suffolk woman once worked for Rogers

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from his “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood” program, for many years.

“They were a nice family to work for,” said Montgomery, who was born and raised in Suffolk. “They were very nice people.”

Montgomery, 90, has dementia and can’t recall exactly how many years she worked for Rogers — it was about 10 years, she says — or how she got the job. But her niece by marriage, Rosa Biggs, provided some clues.

Montgomery went to school in Suffolk, Biggs said, and went to Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., to finish her schooling. She then went on to Duff’s Business College in Pittsburgh.

The show was taped in Pittsburgh, so Biggs surmises that her aunt must have met Rogers or got the job somehow either through the college or by replying to a job ad.

Biggs remembers her aunt working for

Rogers and relishing the job. Rogers even gave Montgomery box tickets to see the Pittsburgh Steelers, her favorite team, Biggs said.

“She loved him,” Biggs said. “She was with him up until he ... ended the show. It really hurt her. She was at his funeral and all of that.”

Montgomery said she was at many tapings of the show. She also recalled visiting his home, and he and his family visiting her home.

“I would call him always Mr. Rogers,” she said.

Montgomery said she saw the 2018 documentary on Rogers, and the 2019 movie with Tom Hanks playing Rogers.

“It was OK,” she said of Hanks’ performance. “Every time they put on a new show, I’ll be there to see it.”

She said most people “get very excited” when they find out she used to work for Rogers.

Montgomery said she

didn’t have a favorite segment on the show but recalled “The Neighborhood of Make-Believe,” where a cast of puppet characters interact.

Montgomery had a full life outside of her work on the show, too. After the show ended, Montgomery worked for the local AAA branch. Following her move back to Suffolk, Biggs said, Montgomery got involved in Suffolk’s East End Baptist Church, where she led Bible study, played the piano and helped in the office.

Montgomery was married to Fred S. Montgomery, and they lived in West Mifflin when they lived in Pennsylvania. She had five siblings and doted on her nieces and nephews, especially Biggs’ late husband, Maurice, who was the oldest among them.

“It broke her heart when he passed,” Biggs said. “She was very, very



Montgomery

devoted to him.”

Montgomery never had children of her own.

Montgomery also used to volunteer visiting people at Autumn Care until she went to live there herself.

Montgomery enjoyed sharing her musical talents with the other residents at Autumn Care when she first moved in, although she doesn’t play much anymore. She used to be able to play the theme song to “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.”

It truly is a beautiful day in the neighborhood for Montgomery.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The distribution team on Monday included, from left, Michael Vaughan, Joyce Woodson and Shameka Council, as well as Verkiyah Hughes, not pictured.

# Deputy and her family distribute food

**BY TRACY AGNEW**  
EDITOR

A local woman has taken it upon herself to make sure local children have food while they

are out from school.

Veronica Woodson, who is a deputy with the Suffolk Sheriff's Office, said she started working on the effort late Saturday night. By Monday at

11 a.m., she was handing out bagged lunches at a local park.

"I reached out to a couple of friends when they announced

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# Food: Bagged lunches handed out at park

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the kids were out of school for the next two weeks,” Woodson said in a phone interview Monday afternoon. Earlier Monday, Suffolk Public Schools had announced plans to assist in feeding children during the pandemic closure, but Woodson said she would continue with her plans also, in an effort to ensure every child can eat.

Woodson said she started contacting friends and “everyone just started pitching in,” she said. People donated packaged food and drinks to be bagged for distribution.

Woodson publicized the effort on Facebook, and on Monday, 21 children showed up at a park in Saratoga from 11 a.m. to noon to get lunches.

Woodson said her motivation came from our own experience as a child.

“I had to depend on school lunches,” she said. “I can imagine some of these kids today, that might be all they’re going to get, is what they eat at school.”

Woodson added this is a community effort.

“This is a community thing,” she said. “We’re trying to give back.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Donations of pre-packaged food and drinks for an effort started by Veronica Woodson included Lunchables, chips and fruit.

Everyone is really pitching in and helping out with this event.”

She gave special recognition to those who had helped her or donated items, including Shameka Council, Joyce Woodson, Sarah Knight, Bill Brooks and Sheriff E.C. Harris.

Following is the sched-

ule for this week and next week. All distributions are at 11 a.m. to noon. Woodson said people who want to volunteer or donate can call 375-5175 or come directly to one of the locations from 11 a.m. to noon.

► Monday — Ida Easter Park (Saratoga), 724 Brook Ave.

► Tuesday — Mary Estes Playground (South Suffolk), 220 Hunter St.

► Wednesday — Lake Kennedy Park, 1300 Blythewood Lane

► Thursday — Cypress Pool (Hollywood), 2001 Arizona Ave.

► Friday — near the Quicky Mart, 1309 E. Washington St.



TRACY AGNEW/SUFFOLK NEWS-HERALD

Molly Brennan got lots of honks for her birthday on Monday, thanks to some signs and streamers outside of her Riverview home.

# Sweet 16 honk-a-thon

**BY TRACY AGNEW**  
EDITOR

One Suffolk teen celebrated her Sweet 16 birthday in unusual

style on Monday — at home.

Molly Brennan's family made sure plenty of people knew about it, though. Outside of her Riverview home, colorful

streamers and signs encouraged passersby to honk for her birthday — and lots of people did.

"It's different, because I can't really go anywhere or see any-

one," Brennan said Monday. "I told my mom I wanted an adventure like maybe going

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# Birthday: Lots of honks

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laser tagging or something, but when stuff started happening I kind of started realizing that's probably not going to happen."

Taking it all in stride, though, the teenager said: "I'll probably have some kind of get-together with my friends some other time."

Brennan is homeschooled and would have had a co-op meeting on Monday, which didn't happen. However, she still got to have a Zoom meeting online with her friends, who told her happy birthday.

Brennan's father, Bob Brennan, got coffee to go on Monday morning and

brought it home to enjoy with his daughter.

"I know it's a really crazy time, but just being able to stop and slow down and spend time with your family is really good," Molly Brennan said.

Three fabulous neighbors also made sure to honor her birthday. One sent flowers, one visited while keeping her distance, and another even gifted her some cash.

Molly's mother, Leslie Brennan, said Molly and her three sisters — Lily, Annie and Eden Jane — will definitely remember this time.

"They'll remember it, because it's history," she said.