

Meetings

HOME offers humans rights scholarship

Housing Opportunities Made Equal will award a \$1,000 scholarship in honor of Joanne Champion Granger. The scholarship will be presented to a high school senior in Erie or Niagara county who, in addition to academic achievement, has demonstrated the commitment to human rights shown by Granger during her lifetime. Granger was a high school science teacher and community activist whose personal experience with housing discrimination gave her the determination to work for equal rights in housing for herself and others. A \$50 award will be given to the high school of the winner, in appreciation for its participation. Scholarship applications are due Friday, Feb. 1, and the winner will be recognized at HOME's 45th annual meeting and dinner on April 15. Upon request, the Scholarship Committee will send speakers to area high schools and civic organizations to talk about the scholarship and encourage young people to get involved in human rights issues. For further information, application forms or to request a speaker, contact Grace Smokowski at 854-1400, ext. 22.

Straight Talk Convention slated for Jan. 26

The 12th annual Straight Talk Convention will take place from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 26 at the Buffalo Convention Center. Reservations can be made in care of the Small Business Administration, 130 S. Elmwood Ave., No. 540, Buffalo, NY 14202 or call 551-4301. The annual small business conference includes plenary session speakers, seven breakout options, and follow-on weeknight seminars on various topics.

BNI Enterprise chapter sets next meeting

The next weekly meeting of the BNI Enterprise chapter of Business Network International will be held from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 18 at the Fairdale Banquet Center, 672 Wehrle Drive, Cheektowaga. For more information, call 894-5794.

Upgrade Tutoring 'levels the playing field' for students

by **JESSICA L. FINCH**
Associate Editor

Upgrade Tutoring understands that every student learns at a different rate and has programs to address those needs.

Founded by Nancy Berger of Amherst, Upgrade Tutoring offers SAT prep courses, Regents test reviews, subject-specific tutoring, seminars and programs to address many areas of academic concern.

Berger didn't have to look past her three children to know that all students don't learn in the same way. She said her daughter was very successful in school, while one son struggled with challenges during his teen years.

"Tutoring works. It's the smartest students that know they need help," Berger said. "Some students don't know how to study."

She said the employees at Upgrade Tutoring teach students how to learn and study to be successful in their classes.

With its headquarters at 5757 Main St., near Evans Street, Berger's business grew from, The Homework Club, which she ran from her mother's basement. Now she has 10 locations, several in Buffalo and multiple locations expected to open in southern



Upgrade Tutoring owner Nancy Berger helps Aviva Reisch, 16, with her homework at the 5757 Main St. center. Reisch attends Williamsville South High School.

Erie County.

A lot of focus is on SAT prep courses. Berger is offering a free SAT seminar at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30 at Williamsville South High School, 5950 Main St. Call 632-9900 for reservations.

"I'm trying to put the students on a level playing field, especially those who can't afford SAT prep courses," she said.

Upgrade Tutoring does offer group and individual SAT training courses at a cost.

prove general organization skills and to increase their overall developmental level.

Berger said in today's classrooms, teachers don't have the time to focus attention on all the developmental differences in the students.

She said the services provided are customized, with objections clearly defined for each student.

"We are very outcome-oriented," she added.

Upgrade Tutoring also goes into the community, offering "Surprisingly Simple Secrets of How to Succeed in School." Berger encourages parent-teacher associations, church and youth organizations to take advantage of the seminar.

Berger, a former high school English teacher, with a master's degree in the subject, has 25 years of experience in education and business.

She has found that, more than anything, she wants to impart the "Weeble" philosophy to students.

"When you get knocked down, get back up again," she said. "The difference between failure and success is how one reacts to setbacks."

For information, visit the Web site www.upgradetutoring.com or call 632-9900.

Master Khechen raises funds for hospital, celebrates giving

by **JILL SCHMELZER**
Ken-Ton Editor

Master Khechen Tae Kwon-Do's third annual Kick for Life event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 19 at the Burt Flickinger Athletic Center at Erie Community College, 21 Oak St., Buffalo.

Chairperson Michele-Elise Burnett-Reich said part of martial arts training is giving back to others. All proceeds from Kick for Life will be donated to Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo.

The event is free, but money will be raised for the institution through basket raffles, board-breaking contests and photo opportunities with local celebrities, such as the Buffalo Jills and McGruff the Crime Dog.

Students of Master Khechen's will perform martial arts demonstrations, including the breaking of 5,000 boards.

A special performance will be given by Master Khechen's C.O.R.E. team, which will entertain the audience with a choreographed production of young athletes skilled in martial arts weapons and forms, accompanied by music, as well as dramatized self-defense skits, Burnett-Reich said.

A special two-week class promotion will be offered at the Tae Kwon-Do school with a donation of \$20 to the hospital. Participants will also receive a T-shirt and fitness evaluation.

"It's a fun day," Burnett-Reich said. "Everything we do is going back to Children's Hospital."

Sponsorship packages are available ranging from black belts at \$2,000 and more, red belts at \$1,000, green belts at \$500 and white belts at \$250.

Depending on the sponsorship package, participants will receive a variety of items.

For information, visit <http://www.masterkhechen.com>.

Tops Markets names appointments

Tops Markets has made new leadership assignments for six company officials who will work to guide initiatives in Tops Markets' operations, stemming from its recent purchase by Morgan Stanley Private Equity.

The assignments include: John Persons, senior vice president of operations; Jack Barrett, senior vice president of human resources; Mike Metz, vice president of information technology; Mike Verostko, vice president of sales development; Tom Fitzgerald, vice president of real estate and construction; and Dave Prisaznuk, controller.

Metz, of Amherst, has more than 20 years of experience at Tops Markets. In his new role he is responsible for information technology systems and support functions for Tops corporate office and 71 stores.



Metz



Prisaznuk

Prisaznuk, also an Amherst resident, has been with Tops Markets for 20 years. In his new role he provides oversight for all financial activities including control of corporate assets. In addition, he has responsibility for risk management, treasury functions, financial reporting and payroll administration.

Tops Markets, LLC, is headquartered in Williamsville and operates 71 full-service supermarkets and five franchise supermarkets.

Business News

Mandarin Kung Fu is holding a free trial week throughout January. Introduction classes are available afternoons & evenings from Monday through Friday at the Robert Binner Community Center, 777 Maryvale Drive, Cheektowaga. New and experienced stu-

dents are welcome. In addition to learning self defense movements, the school focuses on physical and mental training. For information, call 631-3004 or visit www.mandarinkungfu.com. Classes are taught by owner, Sifu Normin Mandarino of Amherst.

The Vein Treatment Center, located in Amherst, donated two \$500 scholarships to Immaculata Academy in Hamburg. The center's vice president, Karen Karalus Karamanoukian, is an alumna of the academy. Scholarships were awarded based on essays.