

to the reason why we were homeless. She raised my sister and I as a single mother and had to work all the time while my sister baby sat me.

We lived in Colorado for the first five years of my life, but I was born in San Antonio, Texas. My mother and I, along with my older sister moved to San Antonio because it's where the rest of our family was. It wasn't even my mom's idea to go to Colorado in the first place so the first chance we got to come back, we took. Growing up in San Antonio was quite difficult. As soon as we arrived, my mother asked a family member for a place to stay. She needed time to find a job for herself and an elementary school for me. My sister was old enough by this time to get her own job and begin living her own life, so that's exactly what she did. Eventually, the family of the family member we were staying with began to grow and my mother knew it was time to give them their own space back. We felt somewhat intrusive, as we did for most of the others we stayed with. The people we stayed with usually already had their own family, but still had the heart to offer a whole room to my mother and I.

My mother was great with keeping me in school, but not so great at staying put in one place, or keeping a job. This sounds really negative, but the reasons will explain why she couldn't keep a job. My mother found out that she was a diabetic when I was in the second grade. The next school year, we found out that I was also diabetic. She fell ill quite a bit, and so did I. We were both new to this disease, so we didn't quite know how to control it like we do now. Most minimum wage jobs expect a doctors excuse if a day is missed. For my mother, that was difficult. She never learned how to drive, so we stuck to public transportation, but for a woman who is ill, public transportation is just not safe. I remember feeling so helpless knowing that my mother, the woman who'd kept me healthy and up to date with shots and other records was sick and I could do nothing. By the fifth grade, I'd been to seven elementary schools, and my mother had worked a handful of jobs. The last person we stayed with lived in the courts. They got evicted because we weren't on their lease. We got someone kicked out of the courts. After that event, my mother felt so low and so bad about what we'd done. After that, she decided that it would be best if we were on our own instead of hurting others.

We moved into the Dwyer Avenue Shelter and I feel that was the best decision my mother made. The shelter provided so much information about the services that were available to us. They even offered my mom a job as receptionist in the front office of the shelter. They helped us get in contact with Transportation Services who provided school busses for me to attend which ever school I was last attending. Unfortunately, I had just moved up to junior high school so I attended yet another school, but I still felt more stable than I had before. The Shelter case workers helped all of the families who lived in the shelter find an apartment complex in a really nice part of town at an extremely discounted price. After the lease was up, my mother had worked enough as a receptionist that we could now afford our own apartment.

After two and a half years of successfully staying on our feet, my mother fell ill. Her liver had become inflamed and she was hospital-

ized for a month. She lost her job and we lost our apartment. For a whole month I lived with friends; Friends who I was able to create bonds with because we were stable. After that month, we had to move back into the shelter. My mother was told that she wouldn't be able to work ever again. This news threw my mother into a depression because she knew that she could no longer support herself, much less her daughter. The shelter, once again, helped us move into an apartment complex that wanted only a fraction of our total income, and helped us with transportation. Luckily, my father had begun paying child support a few years earlier so we had an income. We lived there for two and a half years, until I graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School, ranked number 7 of my class.

That summer, I left to attend Texas State University. Moving from school to school made me slower than the other students because of all the different teaching techniques I'd been exposed to; some teachers even thought I was dyslexic. However, I made it all the way. I plan to go so much further, too, because I'm tired of being homeless. "Education is power" is my motto. Look at me now: "Only after two semesters of college, I'm influencing the decisions of congressmen!"

#### A TRIBUTE TO PETTY OFFICER GREGORY GAYLOR

#### HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Petty Officer Gregory Gaylor, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Technician with the United States Navy. Petty Officer Gaylor is being honored by the Navy at the USO annual gala this November as the 2012 USO Sailor of the Year. He is being recognized for the steadfast determination and unwavering courage he displayed in saving the lives of his fellow soldiers and furthering the U.S. mission in Afghanistan.

Perhaps the most notable aspect of Petty Officer Gaylor's service came when he expertly led a three man EOD team during combat operations in Afghanistan from December 2011 to June 2012, in which he was responsible for locating and dismantling Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), among other objectives. In April of 2012, Gaylor and his team were fired upon by four separate machine gun positions, but with little regard for his own safety he managed to clear a nearby compound of explosive hazards and help transport those wounded from the line of fire. Overall, he located and destroyed four IEDs, faced six direct fire engagements, and trained over 300 Afghan Commandos in Counter-IED tactics and basic demolition techniques, which aided in the autonomy of Afghan security forces.

The courageous and selfless actions of Petty Officer Gaylor are truly commendable and indicative of the skill, professionalism and fortitude of the men and women of the United States Navy. On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District, I congratulate Petty Officer Gaylor on achieving the USO Sailor of the Year honor and thank him for his remarkable service to this great nation.

RECOGNIZING DR. TRACY VALLIER

#### HON. TOM McCLINTOCK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. McCLINTOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Dr. Tracy Vallier.

Dr. Vallier's career as a Professor of Geology at Indiana State University, Whitman College, Lewis-Clark State College, and Iowa State University; as well as his experience with Scripps Institute of Oceanography, Moss Landing Marine Laboratories and the US Geological Survey are all worthy of note. He has doubtlessly passed his passion and hard-earned knowledge on to innumerable students and colleagues.

Dr. Vallier has spent the last 50 years working to explore, document and teach the geography and geology of the Hells Canyon. The canyon, which follows the route of the Snake River through Idaho and Oregon, is the deepest gorge in North America: at 7,993 feet deep, it dwarfs the Grand Canyon by nearly 2,000 feet. Hells Canyon is a breathtaking, nearly-inaccessible American treasure that has been over 300 million years in the making, during which numerous geological processes ranging from volcanic uprisings, to the slow carving of the Snake River to cataclysmic glacial floods have provided a landscape filled with some of the most complex and intertwined geology in North America.

Dr. Vallier has dedicated the last half-century to understanding this geologic masterpiece. His colleagues tell us that he has probably explored more geography of Hells Canyon than any person alive. In his 50 years working in the Canyon, Dr. Vallier has led to an understanding of not only the geologic history of the Canyon, but also of the regional tectonics of the Pacific Northwest. He has shared this knowledge of the Canyon's history, native sites, flora and fauna, and ecology to colleagues, students, and almost everyone he has met. Dr. Vallier is a born teacher and his love and knowledge of the Canyon is passed on to students and strangers alike.

John Wesley Powell, who is best known for his pioneering study of the Grand Canyon, said about his explorations: "We have an unknown distance yet to run, an unknown river to explore. What falls there are, we know not; what rocks beset the channel, we know not; what walls ride over the river, we know not. Ah, well! We may conjecture many things." Without Powell, indeed we would have been left for a long time with only conjecture as our guide to the Grand Canyon.

In the same way Mr. Speaker, without Dr. Tracy Vallier, we would remain in the dark about the wonders of Hells Canyon. As Dr. Vallier continues his work in the Canyon today, it is my privilege to rise in recognition of his many achievements and contributions to our nation.

#### COLORADO BIOBUSINESS ACCELERATOR

#### HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, September 21, 2012*

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud the grand