her son, studying music composition at James Madison University, composes music for the orchestra.

The Society's initial membership of eight has grown to more than 55 musicians and it is now the largest of its kind in America, with musicians from in their teens to those in their 90s. It includes several orchestra musician ensembles that present educational and cultural outreach programs in schools, parks, retirement communities and for charitable events in the United States and Russia.

The Russian folk orchestra was founded in St. Petersburg, Russia in the late 1800's by Vasily Andreyev when he realized that the balalaika's unique and inimitable sound needed to receive greater recognition, moving this initial peasant class instrument to the concert stage. The orchestra is organized in instrumental sections similar to a symphony orchestra and under the direction of a conductor. Its principal instruments are the triangular-shaped balalaikas and oval-shaped domras and the ''shimmering'' sound is produced by the rapid plucking of the strings of the balalaikas, the domras, a gusli (table-harp) and supplemented with accordions, woodwinds and percussion.

It is mystical and enchanting musical sound is patterned after the traditional Russian folk orchestras. Moscow Channel 1 Television, the largest television station in Russia, filmed the orchestra's rehearsal at Rock Spring Church and concert at Kenmore Auditorium, both in my district, and a video-clip was shown on Russian television. It showed Moscow viewers a large and well-developed Russian folk orchestra in America.

''Alive at Twenty-Five, a Silver Anniversary Celebration,'' concerts will be presented on May 18 arid 19, featuring Alexander Tsygankov, Russia's premier domra soloist, and Andrei Saveliev, America's balalaika virtuoso. We're proud the Virginia concert will be held in my district at Yorktown High School, in Arlington.

The Washington Balalaika Society's goal is to expand awareness and appreciation of this musical art form by performing in a broad range of audiences in a variety of venues. It has performed at the Kennedy Center Concert Hall with the Paul Hill Chorale and The Chorale Arts Society, Carnegie Hall in New York, the Embassy of the Russian Federation, and the Smithsonian Institution. It has been the guest of the Andreyev Musical Foundation at concerts in New Jersey. Russian Soprano Olga Orlovskaya, great grand-daughter of the famous Russian basso, Feodor Chaliapan, is often a featured soloist.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to recognize the Balalaika Society, both for their cultural mission spreading news of this art form and the wonderful music they perform in Virginia and around the world.

RECOGNIZING THE FAIRFAX COUNTY FEDERATION OF CITIZENS ASSOCIATIONS HONOREES

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens' Associations and the honorees of its 63rd Annual Awards Banquet.

The Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations is a coalition of civic and homeowners associations from across Fairfax County. Each year, the Federation honors a select few individuals for their extraordinary contributions to our community.

Five individuals are being recognized for their dedication and years of service to the residents of Fairfax County. As a former two-term President of the Federation, as well as the former president of my own civic association in Mantua, I understand that those who volunteer their time, energies, and talents to civic activities play a role in why Fairfax County is ranked as one of the best communities in the nation to live, work and raise a family. I am honored to recognize the following individuals for their service to the community:

2012 Lifetime Achievement Award: Katherine Hanley for nearly 40 years of tireless efforts at every level of public service ranging from her local homeowners association board, to Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, to Secretary of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Ms. Hanley's leadership has been pivotal in transforming Northern Virginia into a community that is envied and used as a model throughout the country. She has devoted herself to causes such as human services, homeless prevention, education, health care services, arts, education, and reduction of gang activity. She has also been a leader in the areas of transportation and the transformation of Tysons. Under her leadership as Chairman, Fairfax County was named ''Best Managed County''. Ms. Hanley was also named a ''Washingtonian of the Year'' in 2000 by Washingtonian Magazine; and in 2002, she received the ''Distinguished Service Award'' from the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

2012 Fairfax County Citizen of the Year: Peter Murphy for his 30 years of service on the Fairfax County Planning Commission, 25 of which he has served as Chairman. During this time Mr. Murphy has been responsible for overseeing enormous growth and development and implementation of management policies and procedures. In recognition of his contributions, Mr. Murphy has received numerous awards including the Department of the Army Commander's Award (Medal) for Public Service (2009); the 2007 Lawrence V. Fowler Award, the 2006 Katherine K. Hanley Public Service Award from Leadership Fairfax, Inc.; and the Times Courier Citizen of the Year Award.

2012 Citation of Merit: Rose Chu for her decades of service in the areas of health care, senior citizen assistance, and issues of importance to the Asian community. Since 1987, Ms. Chu has served on the Fairfax County Health Care Advisory Board. Ms. Chu is also Vice Chairman and Chairman of the Community Advisory Committee for the Community Health Care Network which provides primary health care serves for 20,000 Northern Virginia residents. In addition, Ms. Chu is one of the founders of the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia, CAPAVA, and currently serves as its Secretary.

2012 Citation of Merit: Phyllis Payne for her fervent work as an advocate for our children. Ms. Payne is a co–founder of Start Later for Excellence in Education Proposal, SLEEP, which she represents on the Northern Virginia Healthy Kids Coalition and the Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax. She is a founding member in the Fairfax Education Coalition and has served with PTA and PTSA/PTSO organizations. Ms. Payne was an at-large representative for the Fairfax County Public Schools, FCPS, School Health Advisory Committee, and a member of the FCPS Transportation Task Force. All children who have attended public school in Fairfax County have benefited from her efforts on their behalf.

2012 Special Gratitude Award: Kyle Talente for his dedication and contributions to Fairfax County's community revitalization efforts. Mr. Talente served on the Southeast Fairfax Development Corporation, SFDC, Board of Directors for eight years, the final three as President. After stepping down in 2012, he continued to serve the SFDC on the Advisory Committee. Mr. Talente has also served on the Fairfax County Community Revitalization and Reinvestment Advisory Group and on the Hopkins House Academy Budget and Personnel Policy Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking these incredible individuals and in congratulating them on being honored by the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations. Civic engagement is the root of a community, and due to these individuals, Fairfax County residents can enjoy an excellent quality of life. The contributions and leadership of these honorees have been a great benefit to our community and truly merit our highest praise.

A TRIBUTE TO MEL CULPEPPER

HON. ADAM B. SCHIFF

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Women's History Month. Each year, we pay special tribute to the contributions and sacrifices made by our nation's women. It is an honor to pay homage to outstanding women who are making a difference in my Congressional District.

I would like to recognize an exceptional woman, Mel Culpepper of Los Angeles, who for many years has worked with non-profit organizations and has made a profound impact on the families in our community.

Ms. Culpepper has served as the Executive Director of the Boys and Girls Club of Hollywood, BGCH, since 2007, where she manages the Club's annual budget, spearheads fundraising efforts, and serves as the liaison to government and community agencies. During her time as Executive Director, Mel has introduced development strategies and cost-saving concepts that have greatly contributed to the success of the organization.

Prior to Ms. Culpepper's work for the BGCH, she worked as Director of Residential Treatment Services for Stanford Home for Children in Sacramento, where she managed the budget and developed new programs for children with mental illnesses. Prior to that, she served as the Executive Director of the Central YMCA of San Francisco.

Mel has contributed to our community by creating partnerships and relationships with other Hollywood businesses, non-profit organizations and individuals, which benefit the Club and its members and the community. For example, she created a partnership with the Hollywood Community Housing Corporation,

HCHC, and collaborated on a successful plan to shuttle HCHC children from their housing units to the BGCH for after-school programming. Today, the BGCH provides free annual BGCH membership, free year-round shuttling to and from HCHC facilities, and free hot lunches and snacks. In addition, these at–risk children receive tutoring, computer training, and homework assistance. Another partnership Mel created involved Ross Dress for Less, which provided clothes, shoes, and supplies to members of the Club for the 2010–2011 school year. Additionally, Mel partnered with Toyota of Hollywood for an annual holiday Toy Drive, and as a result of this partnership, Toyota donated a portion of their December sales to the BGCH.

I ask all Members to join me today in honoring an outstanding woman of California's 28th Congressional District, Mel Culpepper, for her exceptional service to the community.

KENDRA DIMUCCI

HON. ED PERLMUTTER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Mr. PERLMUTTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and applaud Kendra DiMucci for receiving the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. Kendra DiMucci is a 12th grader at Warren Tech North and received this award because her determination and hard work have allowed her to overcome adversities.

The dedication demonstrated by Kendra DiMucci is exemplary of the type of achievement that can be attained with hard work and perseverance. It is essential students at all levels strive to make the most of their education and develop a work ethic which will guide them for the rest of their lives.

I extend my deepest congratulations to Kendra DiMucci for winning the Arvada Wheat Ridge Service Ambassadors for Youth award. I have no doubt she will exhibit the same dedication and character in all of her future accomplishments.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ROBERT PITTENGER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Mr. PITTENGER. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 103–105, I am not recorded because I was absent from the U.S House of Representatives. Had I been present, I would have voted in the following manner.

On rollcall No. 103. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

On rollcall No. 104. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

On rollcall No. 105. Had I been present, I would have voted "yea."

ELLIOTT STEELE, VINCENT HOUSE, HONORED WITH AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

HON. C. W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Elliott Steele, the Executive Director of Vincent House, a remarkable organization in Pinellas Park, Florida, was recently honored by The National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare with an Award of Excellence at its National Council Conference.

Specifically, Mr. Steele received the Reintegration Award for Achievement for his tireless work, and that of his wife Dianne, to found Vincent House, a clean and safe haven for people recovering from mental illness.

Vincent House helps adults living with severe and persistent mental illness achieve recovery through work partnerships within the community. The more than 600 individuals who have sought help there have been treated with the utmost dignity and respect by the staff and volunteers. As a result, they have built up in themselves a sense of new–found confidence, self–esteem, and real life social and work skills that have improved their quality of life, led to their independence, and helped them regain their pride in being able to find real–life work experiences in our community.

Vincent House was the outgrowth of the love, compassion and dedication the Steele's had for their daughter, who was diagnosed in 1993 with severe mental illness issues during her freshman year of college. The Steele's decided to devote themselves to finding a way to help those like their daughter who had lost hope and for which traditional treatments were not producing results. They each quit highly successful careers in 1999 to devote their full–time focus to the cause.

By 2003, they opened the doors on Vincent House in a small storefront in a Pinellas Park strip mall. The concept was based on programs established in several other communities where a community center or club house would create a place where those with mental illness could be surrounded in a loving and supportive environment by people who listened to their dreams and helped them reintegrate into the community through volunteer and work opportunities. Those who pass through the doors of Vincent House are not considered patients, they are considered members. And once they become a member, they are a member for life.

The Steeles were joined in their quest to help those with mental illness by Bob Dillinger, the Public Defender for Pinellas and Pasco Counties, who shares a passion for helping this underserved population. Together they found funding within the community to open Vincent House and to move into a larger, stand–alone facility two years later. It is a facility that has already almost doubled in size to meet the increasing demand for these services.

Mr. Speaker, having had the privilege to tour Vincent House and attend their annual Breakfast of Hope, I have seen and heard first–hand the success stories of those who have passed through its doors and are now proudly working in our community. Every one of those club members who walks through the door and one day walks out that door with a positive experience and a job is better than any award Elliott and Dianne Steele can receive. It is a sense of achievement that is shared by all of Vincent House's staff, volunteers and members of the board.

Vincent House is an excellent program that I believe can be replicated in communities throughout our nation. It is my hope that my colleagues in the House will take a look at Vincent House and share information about its success with their constituents back home. It is also my hope that my colleagues will say thank you to Elliott and Diane Steele for a job well done.

HONORING THE VALLEY CRIME STOPPERS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 2013

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Valley Crime Stoppers for the tremendous efforts they have made to help crime victims in our Central Valley. During Crime Victims' Rights Week, we are reminded of the bravery of crime victims and we honor those who advocate on their behalf.

Valley Crime Stoppers has built strong relationships with the city of Fresno, local media, and law enforcement. After a robbery, drive-by shooting, or other crime is reported by the news, citizens are encouraged to call the police or Valley Crime Stoppers if they have any information concerning the incident. Victims and bystanders have a safe place to turn in Valley Crime Stoppers because it is an anonymous tip line. It is an unfortunate truth that victims are often fearful to share information with law enforcement because they have been threatened by their offender. Valley Crime Stoppers provides victims with an alternative, so they can tell their story without fear of retribution.

Educating and bringing awareness to residents are important missions of Valley Crime Stoppers. They have put together several campaigns that aim to lower crime in the Central Valley, including a television promotion that brings awareness to the very negative consequences of children being exposed to domestic violence. Another example of a Valley Crime Stoppers campaign is a poster that aims to keep neighborhoods safe by getting guns out of the hands of criminals. These campaigns, combined with other efforts made by Valley Crime Stoppers, have led to 9,598 arrests made and 461 guns recovered from the streets. Residents have been given the tools to act as change agents to keep the city of Fresno and the entire San Joaquin Valley safe. In addition to keeping citizens engaged, Valley Crime Stoppers pays individuals for tips that lead to a criminal arrest.

As Co-Chairman of the Victims' Rights Caucus, it is my honor to recognize the good work of Valley Crime Stoppers and to thank the board members at Valley Crime Stoppers for their support and activism. These individuals sincerely care about victims' rights and keeping our neighborhoods safe.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Valley Crime Stoppers for their contribution to our Valley. Their advocacy for