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Sister cities of a different kind

Resolution bridges gap between West Lake Hills, city in Kosovo

By Ed Allen
Editor

Sister-city agreements traditionally involve adjacent communities coming together for some mutual benefits, but that was not the case with a similarly named resolution recently approved by the West Lake Hills City Council.

The City Council approved the resolution for Stanterg, Kosovo, to be a sister city simply as moral support for West Lake Hills resident Dita Dauti-Heilman. Prior to the approval, Dauti-Heilman made an emotional appeal for the action in behalf of 400 Voices, a nonprofit organization she formed last year to collect much needed items for Trepca School in her native city.

"Being from a place where you are not able to speak that freely and coming to a country that you can use your voice and on top of that become a voice of others has been a powerful thing," she told the council.

Dauti-Heilman, who serves as a volunteer at the Eanes History Center and parent volunteer at Eanes Elementary



West Lake Hills resident Dita Dauti-Heilman addresses students at Trepca School in her native city of Stanterg, Kosovo, after delivering much needed supplies.

School, went on to say that teaching students about the history of this area fueled her desire to teach them about another school that has lost everything and now has hope.

"I felt very honored last year to board a plane with maybe 40 pounds of letters," she said, referring to the letters students from Eanes Elementary wrote to go along with school supplies and other necessities for the students at her old school.

She pointed out that she is not often speechless, but she was upon arrival in Stanterg

when the children began opening the letters from the Eanes students.

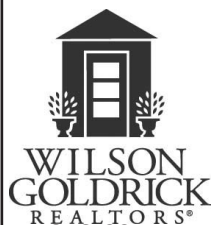
"One boy took about five minutes to open up the envelope (with a letter from an Eanes student)," she recalled. "When I asked if he needed my help, he said, 'Oh no, I just want this moment to last as long as it can.'"

After the presentation by Mayor Dwight Thompson said he couldn't add much more than that except to simply ask his fellow council members to

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