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See page 1B

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TUESDAY, APRIL 22, 2014 • No. 112 • LONGMONT, COLORADO

# Medical grow limits abandoned

## Authorities allege abuse of 'medical necessity loophole'

By KRISTEN WYATT  
ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DENVER — Colorado appears to be giving up on its effort to crack down on medical marijuana growers

who are using a legal loophole to grow high numbers of pot plants without the kind of oversight faced by commercial growers. The Colorado Department of

Health and Environment said in a statement Monday that it was reviewing responses to letters it sent earlier this month to about 2,300 doctors who have recommended

medical marijuana. The letters sought medical justification for recommending more than six plants to any patient. Colorado's state constitution

allows medical marijuana patients up to six plants, though doctors can give permission for more plants. The constitution also allows patients to designate a "caregiver" to grow the pot on their behalf. Colorado has about 3,300 designated caregivers, registered under a model that wasn't  
Please see **LOOPHOLE**, 2A



A little  
**T.L.C.**  
goes a long way



Mia Nilsen, 4, of Boulder chases bubbles from TLC co-teacher Jessica Horton on the playground Monday. Mia has Rett Syndrome, which prevents her from speaking or using sign language. Top: Mia and her mother, Amy Nilsen of Boulder, walk to the playground at the TLC Learning Center.

## Boulder 4-year-old finds hugs, support at Longmont preschool

By WHITNEY BRYEN  
TIMES-CALL COMMUNITY REPORTER  
After a few minutes of being pushed on a swing Monday morning, Mia Nilsen points to a card that has the word "more" written on it, ignoring the card next to it that says "all done."  
Mia, 4, has Rett syndrome, a rare

neurological disorder that impairs brain function that makes speech and sign language impossible. The cards are Mia's way of communicating.  
Every few minutes, Mia's teacher at the Longmont's TLC Learning Center, formerly the Tiny Tim Learning Center, stops pushing the swing

to offer Mia the cards. The Boulder family will be supporting the school at the 31st annual Celebrate TLC dinner and auction on Saturday, May 3. All proceeds from tickets and the live and silent auctions will benefit the TLC Learning Center.  
Parent and TLC volunteer Janie Peterson said in addition to raising money for the school, the auction will also raise awareness about the benefits of the school's inclusive education model.

Please see **TLC**, 2A

## UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ENGINEERING PROGRAM



Jeremy Papasso / For the Times-Call  
Darren Looze, right, a University of Colorado freshman, works with a classmate to design a shoulder rehabilitation device during a first year engineering projects class on Monday in the Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory on the CU campus in Boulder.

## College looking to double enrollment

Program hopes to rank in top 20 in U.S. by 2020

By SARAH KUTA  
FOR THE TIMES-CALL

The University of Colorado's College of Engineering and Applied Science plans to double enrollment by 2020, which will mean growing its student body to more than 8,000 students and hiring roughly 125 new faculty members — not to mention needing an estimated 300,000 square feet in additional space.  
The college also hopes to rank in the top 20 engineering programs in the country by 2020 and receive \$135 million in research awards, according to its strategic plan, "A Fresh Look at Engineering 2020: Vision For Excellence."  
Robert Davis, dean of the college, said the goals reflect expected growth in

engineering, math and computer science fields in the years to come.  
The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that, by 2022, the architecture and engineering fields will grow by 7 percent and the computer and mathematics professions will grow by 18 percent.  
The college surveys all students roughly six months after graduation. In each of the last four years, roughly 80 percent of students have been employed and 15 percent were in graduate or professional school, Davis said.  
"Engineering has consistently been a very good field for jobs, even during the recession," Davis said.  
Salaries also have increased among CU engineering graduates. In 2009, the average salary at graduation was \$52,000. That jumped to \$63,000 in 2012, Davis noted.  
"That's a significant jump, but it's a very robust figure that shows engineering is a  
Please see **ENGINEERING**, 2A



Elise Amendola / Associated Press  
Double amputee Celeste Corcoran, center, a victim of last year's bombings, reaches the finish line of the 118th Boston Marathon on Monday with the aid of her sister Carmen Acabbo, left, and daughter Sydney, right, who was also wounded last year.

## BOSTON MARATHON

# In show of defiance, 32,000 run race

## Victims of 2013 bombings remembered

By JIMMY GOLEN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BOSTON — Some ran to honor the dead and wounded. Others were out to prove something to the world about their sport, the city or

their country. And some wanted to prove something to themselves.  
With the names of the victims scrawled on their bodies or their race bibs, more than 32,000 people ran in the Boston Marathon on Monday in a powerful show of defiance a year after the deadly bombing.  
"We're marathon runners. We know how to endure," said Dennis Murray, a 62-

**Inside**  
For more coverage of the marathon, see page 1B.

year-old health care administrator from Atlanta who finished just before the explosions last year and came back to run again.  
"When they try to take our freedom and our democracy, we come back stronger."

The two pressure-cooker bombs that went off near the end of the 26.2-mile course last year killed three people and wounded more than 260 in a spectacle of torn limbs, acrid smoke and broken glass. But the city vowed to return even stronger, and the victory by Meb Keflezighi — the first American in 31 years to win the men's race — helped deliver  
Please see **MARATHON**, 2A



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on that promise.  
 On Twitter, President Barack Obama congratulated Keflezighi and Shalane Flanagan, the top American finisher among the women, "for making American proud!"  
 "All of today's runners showed the world the meaning of #BostonStrong," Obama wrote.

The race was held under extraordinary security, including 100 new surveillance cameras, more than 90 bomb-sniffing dogs and officers posted on roofs.

As runners continued to drag themselves across the finish line in the late afternoon, more than six hours into the race, state emergency officials reported no security threats other than some unattended bags.

Kenya's Rita Jeptoo won the women's race in a course-record 2 hours, 18 minutes, 57 seconds, defending the title she won last year but could not celebrate because of the tragedy.

Keflezighi, who did not run last year because of an injury, won the main event this year in 2:08:37. A 38-year-old U.S. citizen who emigrated from Eritrea as a boy, Keflezighi wrote the names of the three dead on his bib along with that of the MIT police officer killed during the manhunt.

As he was presented with the trophy and golden laurel wreath, "The Star-Spangled Banner" echoed over Boylston Street, where the explosions rang out a year ago.

"I came as a refugee, and the United States gave me hope," said Keflezighi, who was welcomed by fans chanting "U.S.A.!" "This is probably the most meaningful victory for an American, because of what happened last year."



Jeremy Papasso / For the Times-Call

Liam Burke, a University of Colorado freshman, works on a biofuel Arduino auto pilot airplane design during a first year engineering projects class Monday on the CU campus in Boulder.

### ENGINEERING from page 1A

good salary field," he said.

Davis said being intentional about growth allows the college to make decisions about hiring faculty and planning for more building space sooner rather than later.

He said he hopes the goal will be self-fulfilling, that students will be excited to come to a program that's looking ahead.

"They'll want to come and be part of that growth," he said. "Some of the better students, some of the better faculty will want to come to a

place that's dynamic and growing."

That growth may also present a few challenges for the college, Davis said, such as finding building space for the students and faculty.

Davis said he estimates the college will need roughly 300,000 square feet of space to accommodate the growth.

CU is 32nd among undergraduate engineering programs and 34th for engineering graduate programs in U.S. News and World Report's rankings.

### TLC from page 1A

Despite her communication challenges, Mia is very social and thrives on the attention she gets at the preschool, which combines typical students and students with special needs.

"If we go to the park, other kids will come up to her and want to play but she will just stare at them and they'll just leave," said Amy Nilsen, Mia's mom. "At school, the other kids will bring her cards and help her communicate in other ways. They know her."

Another student ran up to Mia on the playground Monday, giving her a hug and pointing out how much she likes the sequin purple butterfly on Mia's shirt. Mia's friend does all of the talking while Mia smiles and touches her shirt acknowledging the compliment.

"It's really good for her to be around the other kids and see what they're doing and learn from them," Nilsen said. "She doesn't have any older

brothers or sisters to watch, so this is where she gets that."

Teachers and therapists also provide Mia and other students with special needs individual attention.

Mia works with a speech therapist to improve her communication, and a physical therapist helps her stretch tight muscles that result from a hand-clapping habit that is typical of many Rett patients, Nilsen said.

As the family discusses where Mia will go to kindergarten in 2015, Nilsen is realizing how much Mia has benefitted from TLC.

"My husband and I work full-time, so having a safe place where she can be during the day is really important," Nilsen said. "It takes away a lot of the worry knowing that she is somewhere that she can thrive."

Contact Times-Call community reporter Whitney Bryen at 303-684-5274 or wbryen@times-call.com

### LOOPHOLE from page 1A

affected by the passage of recreational pot in 2012.

Caregivers are not required to submit to background checks or pay the steep licensing fees required of commercial pot growers.

Colorado health authorities have tried several times since the 2000 passage of that amendment to crack down on caregivers. State law limits caregivers to five patients and a total of 30 plants — but state health authorities have said a small number of those caregivers are using a "medical necessity" loophole to have more patients and grow many more plants.

The Health Department sent letters to caregivers on April 1 asking for addi-

tional medical justification. Dr. Larry Wolk, Colorado's chief medical officer, told caregivers last month to expect more scrutiny over what he called "excessive" plant counts.

"Single plants can produce significant amounts of usable cannabis," Wolk said.

But caregivers pushed back. One of the high-volume caregivers, James Clark Jr. of Akron, said his 40 or so patients were distraught at the news.

"I told the state if they wanted to do this, they'd have to come out here and tell these people to their face they wouldn't be able to access their medicine," Akron said Monday.

A lawyer representing other marijuana activists threatened to sue over the letters and was told Friday that the Health Department wouldn't pursue the "medical necessity" reviews.

"That is a decision for the physician," lawyer Rob Corry said of the marijuana plant counts. "The Health Department should not practice medicine. It should not second-guess doctors in the field."

A proposed bill to end "medical necessity" marijuana waivers has not been introduced.

A Health Department spokeswoman, Jan Stapleman, gave The Associated Press a statement Monday that said little about how the agency planned to pursue high-volume caregivers.



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