

Dranesville Elementary Holds Fun Run

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PHOTO BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

Community Creates Season of Giving

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Library's Beta Plan: Dead on Arrival

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Teacher Lauren Warner, resident of Arlington and teacher of a fifth grade class at Dranesville Elementary, marks the t-shirt of one of her students to verify how many laps the student has completed.

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To have community events listed in the Connection, send to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com by the Friday prior to the following week's paper.

WEDNESDAY/MONDAY/NOV27-DEC.16

Toys for Tots Drop-off. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays, at National Realty, located at the corner of Reston Parkway and Sunrise Valley Drive, 11890 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. Drop a new, unwrapped toy in the donation box in the lobby. All toys will be distributed to needy children within Loudoun County and to Herndon & Reston children via the non-profit Herndon-Reston FISH, Inc. "Newborn to 1-Year Old" and the "Teens" age groups are particularly needed. 703-860-4600.

FRIDAY/NOV. 29

American Red Cross Blood Drive. 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston.

SUNDAY/DEC. 8

Worm Composting. 2-3:30 p.m. Walker Nature Center, 11450 Glade Drive, Reston. Learn about Worm composting, which is a type of vermiculture that is a natural method of recycling food waste. Reservations required by Dec. 5. Fee: \$35/Bin RA members; \$40/Bin Non-members. naturecenter@reston.org

TUESDAY/DEC. 10

Discover Graphics. At ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Exhibiting the work of printmakers for the past 30 years.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 11

Business Education Workshop: Learn to Enjoy Tax Time. 8:30-10 a.m., at Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce, 1763 Fountain Drive, Reston. The cost is \$10. Register at <https://restonvacoc.wliinc25.com/>. More info: call 703-707-9045.

ONGOING

Fairfax County's Meals on Wheels urgently needs drivers in the Annandale, Franconia/Kingstowne, Reston, Mount Vernon and McLean areas. 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults.

Herndon Senior Center seeks a knitting enthusiast to teach basic procedures. Class meets Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. to noon and musicians to play soothing music on weekend mornings. 703-324-5406, TTY 711 or <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadults>.

AWANA Club for Christian Children. 7-8:30 p.m., at MLK Christian Church, 11400 North Shore Drive, Reston. Awana helps churches and parents work together to develop spiritually strong youth who faithfully follow Jesus Christ. 703-709-3641.

Knitting Enthusiasts, Musicians Needed. 10:30 a.m.-noon, at Herndon Senior Center. Herndon Senior Center seeks a knitting enthusiast to teach basic procedures. Musicians to play soothing music on weekend mornings also needed. 703-324-5406, TTY 711, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/olderadult or VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Habitat Heroes Project. Every 4th Saturday of each month. Join the Habitat Heroes in protecting Reston's forests from aggressive plants and restoring them to their natural state. Wear long sleeves, long pants, and if possible, gardening gloves to protect from insects and dangerous plants. R.A. will provide tools, gloves, snacks, and water. To volunteer and find more information, contact hbrock@reston.org or 703-435-7986.

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PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

2012-13 Dranesville Elementary PTA Officers (from left) Christine Brinson, PTA Vice President, Kelly Smith, PTA Correspondence Secretary, Kim Baker Recording Secretary, and Rachel Gross, PTA President. In the background is Dranesville Elementary.

Dranesville Elementary Holds Fun Run

Fun Run attended by all grades called a success.

BY RYAN DUNN
THE CONNECTION

Dranesville Elementary School in Herndon had a fun run fundraiser on Friday, Nov. 15, with students from third grade through sixth grade gathering at 9:15 a.m. Students in kindergarten through second grade participated in their fun run at 1:45 p.m. The event was operated by the organization Boosterthon, which had previously been at Dranesville Elementary. “We serve schools in Prince William and Fairfax County... We worked with both the PTA and administration for this event,” said Boosterthon team leader Marcus Harris.

The Boosterthon program at Dranesville began on Wednesday, Nov. 6 with a prep rally. “The reasons we need a fundraiser is we want to support the staff and teachers at Dranesville and the amazing work they do with the kids here,” said PTA Recording Secretary Kim Baker. “The PTA provides buses for field trip requests, for professional development requests, for technology and many other financial needs at the school. The Boosterthon is a great way to raise funds we need and teach our children important lessons about fitness, character, and leadership,” said Smith.

Since 2001, the Boosterthon Fun Run team has been serving schools across America, providing a fun, healthy alternative to sales-driven fundraisers. The Boosterthon Fun Run is based in Atlanta, Ga., and has served students at 1000 schools in 22 states across the U.S. “We offer a nine-day program with an emphasis on fitness, leadership, and character,” said Boosterthon leader Harris.

At 9:15 a.m. students in third through sixth grade went outside for the fun run which was close to two miles. Principal Kathy Manoatl was there to cheer students on. “Every student participates and gets a t-shirt. Dranesville Elementary has a focus on fitness and it is important that students get the opportunity to move. We also offer family fitness nights,” said Manoatl. Dranesville Elementary has an enrollment of 758 students at the school from preschool to 6th grade.

A water stand operated by a team of volunteers was set up on the field. Like every great sporting



Dranesville Elementary School Principal Kathy Manoatl stands with Boosterthon Fun Run team member Adam Clements.

event, there was a playing of the National Anthem. Harris asked the students to give a round of applause to the parents who came, and then read out some rules. “This is not a race so be safe,” said Harris. He also instructed everyone participating to have some water after completing five laps.

“The fun run is far superior to some fundraisers, the organization is so impressive,” said parent Jenna Moyle, a Herndon resident for 15 years. She was there to cheer on her son Matthew Moyle, a student at Dranesville Elementary. “It was fun to run around with friends,” said Matthew Moyle.

PTA President Rachel Gross and other PTA members were at the event. Most of the PTA has been very receptive to Boosterthon. “It is a very solid company, they are so positive,” said Gross. “The theme this year was teamwork and not bullying.”

“We support it [the fun run] because it is a fitness based fundraiser,” said Dranesville Elementary physical education instructor Alison Matias. “I am hoping my children’s school in Prince William County will also pick up this program.” Matias has been a physical education teacher for 11 years at Fairfax County schools, and for 9 years at Dranesville Elementary.

“It is a great event,” said Yani Moreira resident of Herndon. Moreira was there to cheer on her daughter Madison. Lauren Warner, resident of Arlington and teacher of a fifth grade class at Dranesville, was also attending the event. “It [the Boosterthon program] is a wonderful opportunity for the kids to run for the school and learn social lessons like respecting others,” said Warner.

“They are not losing any classroom time for the 15 minute team huddles they have during the days, and they are learning community, team values,” said Gross. “The theme was teamwork and not bullying, and for the goal we wanted to increase the technology at our schools. We did a full force campaign this year,” said Gross.

Boosterthon also has a program to give some of their proceeds to families in need.

For more information about Dranesville Elementary School, visit www.fcps.edu/DranesvilleES

To learn more about Boosterthon, visit www.boosterthon.com.

VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Thankful for on this Thanksgiving Day? — RYAN DUNN

Beth Meyer – Owner of Green Lizard Cycling at 718 Lynn St, Herndon

“My husband and I are both thankful for the support of the people of Herndon since we opened up Green Lizard Cycling. The community support has been awesome.”



Tim Groszkowski – Owner of Great Harvest Bread at Herndon

“I am thankful for my family and community in which I work and live.”



Dung Lam - Owner of Herndon Clock and Watch at 715 Pine Street, Herndon

“I am thankful for the business we get from our returning customers. Some of our customers travel in from DC and Silver Spring, Md.”



Olivia DiBenigno – Staff member at Potter’s Fire in Herndon, ceramics artist

“I am thankful for my education and for my job.”



Mike Faul – Owner of Potter’s Fire located at 797-B Center St. in downtown Herndon

“I am grateful that God let me be an American citizen.”



Karen Rivera – Manager of Alders Arts and Frames at 310 Elden Street, Herndon

“I am most thankful for my family and job, and that people continue to support smaller businesses.”



PHOTOS BY RYAN DUNN/THE CONNECTION

THE COUNTY LINE



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Library Board of Trustees Chair Willard O. Jasper (center), along with several other library board members, presented reports from two ad hoc committees appointed by the library board in September to conduct a series of public outreach meetings after trustees suspended the beta plan to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, Nov. 19. Recommendations included increased funding and discarding the controversial beta plan.



PHOTO BY VICTORIA ROSS/THE CONNECTION

Wearing purple, about 50 library supporters gathered at the Fairfax County Government Center on Tuesday, Nov. 19, to show their support for the library board's recommendations to the Board of Supervisors.

Library Board of Trustees: Who They Are, What They Do

Library's Beta Plan: Dead on Arrival

Supervisors endorse
Library Board's recom-
mendations to increase
funding, discard beta plan.

BY VICTORIA ROSS
THE CONNECTION

You can assume that the BETA Plan is dead. I will make that motion tomorrow." In her email to a concerned library patron the night before the Board of Supervisors Nov. 19 meeting, Chairman Sharon Bulova (D-at-large) put to rest speculation that the board would resuscitate the controversial beta plan aimed at streamlining the county's library system.

The next day, the board passed Bulova's motion 8-1 to accept a report from the Library Board of Trustees, effectively killing the beta plan, which included proposals to reduce staff, eliminate the requirement for branch managers to have a master of library science degree, and reduce the number of children's librarians.

Library Board of Trustees Chair Willard O. Jasper presented the reports from two ad hoc committees, appointed by the library board in September to conduct a series of public outreach meetings after trustees suspended the beta plan.

"For starters, there is no sentiment on the committee, the Library Board of Trustees, staff, or the majority of public commenters to move forward with the beta plan, including its reclassification of positions," Jasper told the board in explaining the blanket rejection of the beta plan.

Jasper also said the library system has "suffered

demonstrably" from several years of severe budget cuts, and recommended increasing funding library operations.

"The predominant message (from the report) is that the library requires additional funding to maintain its high-quality selection," Jasper told the board. "The library budget has been cut 40 percent ... spending in Fairfax County is the lowest in all eight neighboring jurisdictions."

In addition to accepting the report, the board approved Bulova's motion to add a "consideration item" of \$1 million to the fiscal year 2015 budget. "This additional funding would ... be directed to the acquisition of non-fiction works," Bulova said. "More than 10,000 additional materials could be acquired with this funding."

Supervisor Michael Frey (R-Sully), who voted no on the motion, said he wasn't pleased with the library's report, and chastised fellow supervisors for distancing themselves from "the reforms we made."

He also praised Library Director Sam Clay for having the courage to "put the (beta) plan out there."

"I really was kind of shocked that the Board of Trustees would come back with a report that essentially says flatly 'no' to all proposed changes and 'give us more money,'" Frey said.

"Our board has been saying to every department head tell us how you can do more with less, and they came back and said we'll do the same with more. And the supervisors said OK — here's million dollars more," Frey said. "They have seen how to get more money — just turn up the heat on us."

Criticism of the plan has been building since July, when Clay unveiled a program that would test a new organization model this fall at the Burke Centre Library and the Reston Regional Library, the busiest library branch in the county. Clay has defended the

SEE BETA PLAN, PAGE 5

The Fairfax County Public Library Board of Trustees, a 12-member, volunteer board is responsible for library policies and for making budget recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The board meets on the second Wednesday of each month except August. Most meetings are held at 7 p.m. at George Mason Regional Library.

The public is invited to attend. A maximum of ten people may register to speak on library concerns during the public comment period at each monthly meeting.

For information or to register to speak, call 703-324-8324.

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Represents Fairfax County Public Schools
5215 Dunleigh Glen Lane, Burke
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Appointed by Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock)
Branches located in this district:
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Burke Centre Library

City of Fairfax
Mary Petersen of Fairfax
Appointed by Fairfax City Council
Branch located in this district:
City of Fairfax Regional Library

Dranesville District
Kristin Cabral of McLean

Appointed by Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville)
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Great Falls Library
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Appointed by Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill)
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Elizabeth Clements of Annandale
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Appointed by Supervisor Pat Herrity (R-Springfield)
Branch located in this district:
Pohick Regional Library

Sully District
Karrie K. Delaney of Chantilly
Appointed by Supervisor Michael Frey (R-Sully)
Branches located in this district:
Centreville Regional Library
Chantilly Regional Library
Access Services for people with disabilities.
Access Services is located at the Government Center.

Beta Plan Discarded

FROM PAGE 4
reorganization, saying that the goal was to streamline staffing while retaining a high level of service.

Vera Finberg, a librarian who attended the board meeting, said she was disappointed by the board's discussion of funding.

"This is a rich county," Finberg said. "Do not tell us you value libraries and don't have enough money to support them."

Finberg was joined by more than 50 library supporters — employees and volunteers — who attended the meeting to show support for library board's recommendations.

They applauded when Supervisor Linda Smyth (D-Providence), dubbed the "dumpster diving supervisor," spoke. Smyth touched off a furious debate over how the library discards used books when she photographed dumpsters full of books in seemingly good condition that she found behind the library's technical operations center in Chantilly this summer.

On Aug. 29, Smyth recovered dozens of usable books from the dumpsters, and then took them to county officials who ordered an immediate stop to the discarding. Smyth said she learned that more than 250,000 books have been thrown out since October 2012.

"One never knows what this job will bring," Smyth said at the board meeting, adding that she was still hearing concerns about discards.

"We need to be sure books are on library shelves as long as possible. Mending used to be part of process. This is something that seems to have fallen by the wayside, and that's putting it nicely," Smyth said.

Supervisor John Cook (R-Braddock) said he supported the library system and the public engagement process, but noted that

libraries had to find ways to adapt to a world where the Internet has replaced newsprint and e-books have supplanted paperbacks.

"Libraries everywhere are changing as new technology changes the nature of information-gathering," Cook said. "If the answers were simple, someone would have thought of it already."

Most of the supervisors praised the patrons and staff who participated in the public meetings and committees. "We heard you," Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) said. "In my opinion, in two months you've made tremendous progress." Supervisor Cathy Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) said she was grateful that library staff also attended the meetings. "We should look at who we are and who we should be serving ... Collaboration is important."

Supervisor Jeff McKay (D-Lee) said the library controversy exposed a silver lining.

"Let there be no doubt in the community about the passion that citizens have about their libraries," McKay said. "We should be proud of all the responses we heard."

David Broder, president of the SEIU Virginia 512, said the library board's reports teach two lessons.

"First, local families love our libraries and library staff," Broder said. "Second, any so-called reforms which don't take advantage of librarians' expertise and which don't reflect the desires of the community are bound to fail. The Board of Supervisors needs to lead the effort to strengthen our libraries for the next generation."

Supervisors asked the Library Board to return in December with a plan for implementing the recommendations.

To read the Library Board of Trustees reports, go to <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/news/communicationandevaluationreport.htm>

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OPINION

Holidays Are About Giving

So many needs, so many great organizations, give locally where your heart leads you.

The holidays are about giving. They are about children. The holidays are about sharing, about joy, about alleviating suffering for others. The holidays are about being thankful and about faith and appreciation.

Most of us live in neighborhoods that are very homogenous. There are exceptions, but most people reading this live in affluent areas where the houses are mostly in the same price range, and while there might be some ethnic diversity, there is little in the way of economic diversity.

It's easy to forget that there are massive unmet needs, hungry children, homeless families most with at least one working parent, homeless individuals with jobs and without jobs, people who don't know for sure whether they will have enough to eat or be able to be warm enough, people who are choosing between medical care and car repair when forgoing the car repair could mean losing a job.

In Fairfax County Public Schools, about 50,000 of the 185,000 students qualify to receive free or subsidized meals, a significant measure of poverty. Many elementary schools staff are discovering that for some of these students, a majority of students in some schools, they only meals the can count on are breakfast and lunch on school days.

Nonprofits, school staff and individuals have been working to send backpacks of healthy, kid-friendly food home with students on the weekend.

It's hard to imagine 50,000 students going hungry; it's obvious that children who aren't sure they will be able to eat when they are hungry are not going to have joyous holidays filled with family meals, gifts and special activities.

Hundreds of homeless students attend the public schools, and their needs are greater.

There are literally hundreds, probably thousands, of ways to give locally this season. Here are



Needy families wait on line to receive groceries and gift certificates at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Herndon on Nov. 16. Sixty families an hour were escorted through the church supermarket during seven hour LINK event. www.linkagainsthunger.org 703-437-1776

PHOTO COURTESY OF FRANK SIMMONS

a few ideas. We welcome suggestions for other groups.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

FAIRFAX COUNTY

Where To Give Locally

In no particular order:

- ❖ Our Daily Bread — has been serving needy families in Fairfax County for 25 years. The Holiday Program helps those in need with food for the holidays and gifts for their children, making last year's holiday season brighter for approximately 3,000 families. For more information on their holiday programs, including how to sponsor a family, go to www.odbfairfax.com/holiday
- ❖ Food for Others distributed more than 2.4 million pounds of free food to families in need in Northern Virginia in the year ending June 30, 2012. The non-profit provides a safety net for people who suddenly face unforeseen emergencies such as a family illness or the loss of a job or a spouse. Located at 2938 Prosperity Ave., Fairfax, VA 22031, 703-207-9173. www.foodforothers.com
- ❖ Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO), 703-569-9160. Open to receive donations at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield. Provides food and financial assistance to those in short-term emergencies, and provides clothing and household goods to low income families, helping more than 5,000 people last year. www.echo-inc.org.
- ❖ Lorton Community Action Center operates the Act II Thrift Shop at 9506 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Sales from the shop generate funds for LCAC and clients also shop there. Now collecting gift cards and food baskets for Thanksgiving, gifts and food baskets for Christmas, and warm coats. 703-339-8611 www.lortonaction.org.
- ❖ Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Washington Fairfax Area operates clubs in two of the neediest areas of the county, Culmore and the Route 1 corridor, focusing on character and academic success. <http://www.bgcgw.org/fairfax/>
- ❖ Office to End and Prevent Homelessness needs just a few thousand dollars more in

contributions for Jeans Day (in October) to qualify for a matching grant from the Phillip L. Graham Fund, turning many \$5 and greater donations into \$50,000 to help thousands of homeless in Fairfax County. www.ziphomelessness.com

- ❖ 12 Ways of Giving: Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships "12 Ways of Giving" campaign is an annual event that showcases many ways for meaningful, local giving during the holiday season, highlighting nonprofits in Fairfax County. www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org
- ❖ Comfort for America's Uniformed Services (CAUSE) — ensures that recuperating service members have opportunities for recreation and social interaction and receive concrete signs of appreciation for all that they have done. 4114 Legato Road Suite B, Fairfax, VA 22033, 703-591-4968, cause-usa.org
- ❖ National Capital Food Bank, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. www.capitalareafoodbank.org
- ❖ Western Fairfax Christian Ministries — food pantry at 13981 Metrotech Drive in Chantilly (near Backyard Grill and Bar). For more information or to sponsor a family, call 703-988-9656, ext. 105. To mail gift cards or send donations by check, add a note saying "food basket program" and send them to: WFCM, P.O. Box 220802, Chantilly, VA 20153. 703-988-9656.
- ❖ The Jeanie Schmidt Free Clinic, 13525 Dulles Technology Drive, Herndon, VA 20171, 571-235-3577. Last year, 139 community volunteers — nurses, nurse practitioners, and physicians — gave more than 1,300 hours of their time to see patients. jsfreeclinic.org.
- ❖ Alternative House — Abused and Homeless Children's Refuge, 2100 Gallows Road, Vienna, VA 22182, 703-506-9191. www.thealternativehouse.org.
- ❖ Cornerstones, 11150 Sunset Hills Road, Suite 210, Reston, serving Reston and Herndon. 571-323-9555, www.cornerstonesva.org. Programs and services include the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, Emergency Food Pantry, Hypothermia Prevention Program and the Thanksgiving Food Drive.
- ❖ SHARE of McLean seeks donations of grocery gift cards and more. Checks and gift cards can be sent to: Holiday Celebration, Share, Inc. PO Box 210, McLean, VA 22101. 703-284-2179. www.SHAREofMcLean.org
- ❖ LINK, serving Herndon, Chantilly, Loudoun and more, needs contributions of food, coats and

holiday toys for children, plus volunteers. More than 4,000 adults and children have signed up for help with Thanksgiving and Christmas meals. 703-437-1776 www.linkagainsthunger.org

- ❖ FACETS helps parents, their children and individuals who suffer the effects of poverty in the Fairfax area. FACETS is always in need of volunteers, and offers a variety of one-time and ongoing opportunities. 703-865-4251 or volunteer@facetscares.org. FACETS offers a monthly Youth Volunteer Night, with the next one scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 20, 5:30-6:30pm. Information about supply donations and FACETS holiday gifts drive is available on the website at www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
- ❖ Committee for Helping Others (CHO), Vienna, organized in 1969 by a group of concerned churches and individuals in the Dunn Loring, Merrifield, Oakton, Vienna community to provide simple, loving charity to those in need. 14th Annual Thanksgiving Interfaith Service is Tuesday, Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m. at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road. Vienna 703-281-7614 <http://www.cho-va.com>
- ❖ Fairfax City Area FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), working with the Office of Coordinated Services Planning, Fairfax County Department of Human Services, FISH helps local citizens who are in temporary need of life's basic necessities such as food, clothing, and financial assistance for rent, mortgage payments, utilities, and medical treatments. FISH also provides limited transportation for doctor appointments and food delivery. 703-222-0880 <http://fairfaxfish.org/>
- ❖ Herndon-Reston FISH (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
- ❖ Lamb Center, www.thelambcenter.org, Day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178
- ❖ Northern Virginia Family Service, 10455 White Granite Drive Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124 703-385-3267 <http://www.nvfs.org/>
- ❖ United Community Ministries, Mount Vernon, 703-768-7106, 7511 Fordson Road, Alexandria, 22306 <http://www.ucmagency.org/>
- ❖ Touching Heart in Herndon is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to educate children to have giving hearts. <http://www.touchingheart.com>, 703-901-7355

Oak Hill & Herndon CONNECTION

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FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community, including special holiday services. Send to reston@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Thursday.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, 651 Dranesville Road, Herndon, has Sunday worship services at 8:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. Nursery and childcare are provided and youth and adult Sunday school classes are held prior, from 9:40-10:45 a.m. 703-437-5500 or www.trinityherndon.org.

Vajrayogini Buddhist Center, Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Ave., Reston, holds weekly classes starting Sept. 12, Thursdays 7-8:30 p.m., for the general public which use Buddhist teachings to practice meditation. \$12. 202-986-2257 or www.meditation-dc.org.

St. Anne's Episcopal Church, 1700 Wainwright Drive in Reston, holds Sunday services at 7:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:15 a.m. and contemporary service at 5 p.m.

Nursery, Sunday school and adult education available. Morning prayer on Monday at 9:30, Holy Eucharist Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. 703-437-6530 or www.stannes-reston.org.

Adult Sunday school will be held 9:30 a.m. Sundays at the Washington Plaza Baptist Church at Lake Anne Village Center. The group is studying the Gospel of Mark. Services follow at 11 a.m.

HAVEN of Northern Virginia offers a variety of free bereavement support groups, meeting on a weekly basis. Contact 703-941-7000 or www.havenofnova.org for schedules and registration information.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Washington and the Jewish Outreach Institute offer the Mothers/Parents Circle, an umbrella of free educational events and resources. Jewish rituals, ethics and the creation of a Jewish home, regular meetings and group Shabbats and holidays. Participants include Sha'are Shalom, Congregation Beth Emeth, Temple Rodef Shalom and the Jewish Community Center of Northern Virginia. ShalomDC.org.

The Baha'i community of McLean holds a weekly fireside, a meeting of discussion, devotion and fellowship, at 7500 Box Elder Court in McLean, at 8 p.m. every Friday. An opportunity to learn about the Baha'i faith. 703-556-3400.



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BGCGW's Fairfax County region includes the Culmore Character Club and Murraygate Village Club, serving 582 members a year. On average, 120 youths come through the doors every day during the school year.



Meet Henry Lopez, 2013 National Boys & Girls Clubs Virginia Youth of the Year, who grew up with the BGCGW Culmore Character Club for 14 years. Henry now attends George Mason University on an Honor Scholarship studying computer engineering.

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Visit <http://www.bgcgw.org/givegreatfutures/> and select "Fairfax County"





Cornerstones staff and volunteers accept food donations and prepare the boxes the night before the Thanksgiving food distribution at St. John Neumann Catholic Church in Reston. From left: Minnie Orozco, Urgent Needs and Life Skills Program Manager, Gail Greenberg, Board Member and volunteer, Susan Alger, Volunteer and Resource Manager, Embry Rucker Community Shelter, and Alacia Earley, Volunteer and Drives Manager.



Good neighbors, from left: Subu Sagar, Manisha Raj, and Raj Munusamy arrived at the St. John's donation drop-off site with a cart full of bags collected by members of ACT Foundation USA.



Angela Suarez, PR and Marketing Representative for Cornerstones, is ready for another round of loading and hauling the goods to a client's vehicle. Suarez did take a minute in-between her distribution duties to highlight some of the other seasonal drives and initiatives that Cornerstones is organizing, like the "Holiday Gifts for Kids" Campaign and the Winter Coat Closet collection of winter wear.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Community Creates Season of Giving

Organizations and individuals step to transform 'The Holiday Season' into 'The Season of Giving.'

By ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

Thursday, Thanksgiving, traditionally marks the beginning of "The Holiday Season." The Christmas Shopping Derby will kick off at midnight for many of the big retailers, and the frantic rush of decorating, card sending, gift buying, wrapping, parties, baking, cooking, preparing for visitors or preparing to travel shifts into high gear. It's a busy time of year, and for many, a happy one. But for the community's most vulnerable citizens, the holiday season means extra pressures and concerns. For those struggling to make ends meet, they worry that they may not be able to provide a feast for their families, or fulfill the holiday gift wishes of their children - at least not without a little help. Some of our senior citizens may not have loved ones nearby to care for them. Others may not even have the basic necessity of a place to live.

Thankfully, there are several organizations and scores of individuals in our area who are ready and willing to step up and provide more than a little help for their neighbors in need. These folks have transformed "The Holiday Season" into "The Season of Giving." "It can get a little crazy," said Karen Mulholland of Reston. "You've got the pull of your own family needs for the holidays, and then you add collecting food for the Thanksgiving distribution, and then the de-

livery. It makes for a crazy week or two, but I feel so much better on Thanksgiving Day knowing we helped someone else have a happy family meal." Mulholland and her family rallied her neighborhood to collect for the food drive organized by Cornerstones (formerly Reston Interfaith), the Reston-based nonprofit whose mission is to "promote self-sufficiency by providing support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter...and other human services."

IN THE LAST WEEK, Wall Street has posted record highs. The local housing market has shown significant improvement all year, and consumer confidence is trending upwards, yet "We are still seeing more people registering for Thanksgiving meals," said Minnie Orozco, Cornerstones Urgent Needs and Life Skills Program Manager. "We have about 928 families who have signed up. That's an increase of more than 100 families over last year." Orozco and a number of staff and volunteers were on duty Friday night at the donation drop-off point at St. John Neumann's Catholic Church in Reston. Though nearly buried beneath boxes and bags - many that had been lovingly decorated by school children and scout troops - the workers seemed pretty jolly, as they went about their tasks of collecting, sorting, and balancing boxes for each registered family. "And for the walk-ins, too," added Orozco. "There are always those who just show up, so we try and

have extras on hand." Gail Greenberg has been volunteering with Cornerstones (Reston Interfaith) for more than five years and is on the board of the organization. On this occasion she acted as greeter, accepting donations from generous participants like Subu Sagar, Manisha Raj, and Raj Munusamy who arrived with ten full bags on behalf of the ACT Foundation USA, a non-profit formed to serve the underprivileged in the community. As she floated in and out among the aisles of boxes and bags, Greenberg spoke about why she volunteers. "I don't think a lot of people know how many people are homeless right here in Reston and Herndon, how many people are spending their nights in our woods," she said. She went on to talk about "100,000 Homes," a national campaign dedicated to providing housing for 100,000 of the most vulnerable and the chronically homeless by July 2014. Cornerstones is a partner in this effort. Part of the campaign's strategy calls for conducting a homeless "Registry Week." Earlier this year more than 200 volunteers across Fairfax County made contact with 462 homeless persons. Cornerstones (at the time Reston Interfaith) volunteers conducted interviews with more than 100 individuals from the North County Hypothermia Prevention Program, the Embry Rucker Community Shelter, and even in encampments in the woods. "These people need our help," said Greenberg. The inter-



From left: Amy Mintz, in charge of the Advent Giving Program, Director of Serve Ministries for Floris United Methodist Church (FUMC) in Herndon, and Cyndy Cooke, just back from a trip to Sierra Leone where FUMC sponsors a Child Rescue Center and a Hospital, gather around one of the three Gift Trees in the church gathering foyer.

views showed that nearly half of the homeless were employed, 40 percent had a physical disability, 10 percent were veterans, and the majority cited "unable to pay rent/utilities" and "job loss" as the reasons for their homelessness.

TO EVERYONE'S RELIEF at the Friday Drop-Off event, the donations kept coming in. Before long, everything was in order for the following morning's distribution. "We have 450 families signed up to collect from here at St. John's," Orozco reported. "There are other distribution sites around the area,

and some places, like Reston Community Center at Hunters Woods will keep collecting and distribute later." Orozco, Greenberg and a small army of Cornerstones staff and volunteers were back at their posts on Saturday morning ready to distribute. Wheeling flatbed dollies, volunteers loaded up, lined up, took the items out to the clients' vehicle, and then started the process all over again. One of the "volunteer" food distributors was Cornerstones PR and Marketing Representative, Angela Suarez, who took a few moments in between



Evan Bonshock, a first grader from Oak Hill, carefully considers the Wish List tag he has chosen. Evan's family, mom Heather, dad Dennis and brother Cameron picked out several Wish List tags to fulfill. "We do this every year," said Heather.

deliveries to highlight some upcoming events and the needs involved to assure success. "Our next big campaign is our "Holiday Gifts for Kids" seasonal drive," Suarez announced. "Each child will list up to three items, totaling about \$50-\$65 per child. We have 1500 kids to provide for this year. So far we have taken care

of about 1300, so we do need more donors. For most of these children, these will be the only gifts they will receive for the holidays." Any one wishing to grant a child's Holiday Wish should visit the Cornerstones website www.cornerstonesva.org and fill

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HOLIDAY CALENDAR

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 27

Community Thanksgiving Eve Service. 7:30 p.m. United Christian Parish, 11508 North Shore Drive, Reston.

THURSDAY/NOV. 28

Thanksgiving at Vinifera. 12-7 p.m. Vinifera Wine Bar, 11750 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston. A three course Thanksgiving feast complete with turkey, sides and pies. \$55 per person. 703-234-3550.

FRIDAY/NOV. 29

23rd Annual Reston Holiday Parade. 11 a.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Take part in the festive season with Macy's-style balloons, musicians, dancers, antique cars, and more. This one-hour parade along Market Street will also welcome the arrival of Santa and Mrs. Claus in a horse-drawn carriage.

www.restontowncenter.com/holidays.

Gingerbread Man Mile. 8 a.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. The course covers a 1-mile loop around Reston Town Center. Registration: \$5. <http://www.prraces.com/gingerbread/>

Tree Lighting and Sing Along. 6 p.m. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. Join Santa to light up the Christmas tree and sing some festive carols.

The Thanksgiving Story. 11 a.m. Frying Pan Farm Park, 2709 West Ox Road, Herndon. Bring family and friends to this lively and interactive retelling of the Thanksgiving Story. Admission \$4-\$6.

SUNDAY/DEC. 1

Chanukah on the Town Square. 5:30 p.m. Giant Menorah lighting, crafts, refreshments and more. Herndon Town Square, in front of Town Hall at 730 Elden Street, Herndon.

TUESDAY/DEC. 3- SUNDAY/DEC. 29

Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol. NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park

ENTERTAINMENT

Send announcements to herndon@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline is the Friday prior to the following week's paper. Photos/artwork encouraged. For additional listings, visit <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/news/2013/sep/26/fairfax-county-calendar/>.

WEDNESDAY-SATURDAY/NOV. 27-30

Ventures and Puzzles. 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday, at Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Abstract oil paintings by Frank Eifert, in an exhibit in which "Half-Reflections" accompany each picture to metaphorically suggest some of the intentions, surprises and significances encountered in the creation of the picture. In this series of paintings, Frank developed a "multi-directional" style, painting from all four sides and four corners (for square pictures), essentially providing up to eight distinct pictures, the multiple options of viewing reflecting the ambivalence and ambiguity of our time. 703-467-4500 or www.restoncommunitycenter.com.

WEDNESDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 27-DEC. 9

The Artists of Montorno. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday; 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday-Saturday; and 1-5 p.m. Sunday, at ArtSpace Herndon, 750



Southview Community Church, 2620 Reston Pkwy, Herndon, presents "Living Nativity," in which the Christmas story is recounted in a meaningful and tangible way with live animals and visual interpretations, starting Dec. 6.

Drive, Herndon. In this behind-the-scenes retelling of one of the most famous stories of all time, join Marley and an annoying little sprite named Bogle, as they set out on an impossible adventure to save old Scrooge's soul. Tickets: \$25. <http://www.nextstoptheatre.org>

TUESDAY/DEC. 3

New York Festival of Song "Cubans in Paris, Cubans at Home." 8 p.m. CenterStage, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Features Cuban music that took the world by storm in the 1920s and 30s and found a special welcome in Paris. Tickets: \$20-\$40. <http://restoncommunitycenter.com/centerstage-new-york-festival-of-song.shtml>

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 4

"The Twelve Dates of Christmas." NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Tickets: \$25. <http://www.nextstoptheatre.org>.

FRIDAY/DEC. 6- SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Living Nativity. 6:30-9 p.m. Southview Community Church, 2620

Reston Pkwy, Herndon. The Christmas story is recounted in a meaningful and tangible way with live animals and visual interpretations.

SATURDAY/DEC. 7

Alternative Gift Market. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church, 1625 Wiehle Avenue, Reston. This annual market and craft festival allows you to donate on behalf of someone to a cause that will benefit others.

Gifts from the HeART: Reception and Holiday Sale Event. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Lake Anne, 1609-A Washington Plaza, Reston. Original works of art in a variety of media, including oil, acrylic, watercolor, collage, stained glass, ceramic, sculpture, and mixed media, in a wide range of sizes and prices. <http://restoncommunitycenter.com/gifts-from-heart.shtml>

Herndon Towne Square Singers Winter Concert. 7:30 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. The Towne Square Singers perform music of the holidays from TV and movies. Tickets: \$12. <http://www.herndonva.gov/>

special welcome in Paris. \$20 Reston/\$40 Non-Reston.

TUESDAY/DEC. 3- SUNDAY/DEC. 29

Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol. 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. This one-man show retells the classic story but focuses on Scrooge's departed, doomed and chained business partner, Jacob Marley.

FRIDAY/DEC. 6

First Fridays. 7 p.m. ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Join ArtSpace Herndon for Art House Cinema and Brew. The first Friday of the month, watch an important piece of art film history by the finest producers and directors in the world. 21+, \$10 for the movie and two microbrews. Reservations required artspaceherndon.org.

TUESDAY/DEC. 10

Discover Graphics. At ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Exhibiting the work of printmakers for the past 30 years.

SATURDAY/DEC. 14

Opening Reception for Discover Graphics. 4-7 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center Street, Herndon. Exhibiting the work of printmakers for the past 30 years.

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SPORTS

South Lakes Boys' Basketball Looking for Playoff Return

Seahawks failed to reach regionals last two seasons.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

The South Lakes boys' basketball team has a go-to scoring threat capable of shouldering the load. Now the Seahawks need consistency from his supporting cast.

Last season, guard Brandon Kamga carried the South Lakes offense as a sophomore. While Kamga was a standout, the lack of a reliable second or third scoring option contributed to the Seahawks finishing with a 9-14 record and exiting the Liberty District tournament in the first round. South Lakes failed to qualify for the regional tournament for the second consecutive season. Entering the 2013-14 season, Kamga, now a junior, will again be South Lakes' top offensive threat. He's grown to 6 feet 4 inches and will return to the more comfortable position of two-guard after playing point guard as a sophomore. Kamga sat out of a recent scrimmage against Wakefield due to soreness, head coach Andrew Duggan said, giving other players a chance to share the scoring load.

"While we have a very good player, Brandon, on our squad, I believe we are still young and growing as a team," Duggan wrote in an email. "I like our team, but we must improve our defense or we may

struggle at times. The name of the game is to get stops and we are not there yet. The goal for our team is to improve daily and grow closer every day. I think we are on track, but it's early."

Senior guard Clayton O'Neill is one of the top candidates to assist Kamga at the offensive end. At 6 feet 4, O'Neill is a threat to knock down 3-pointers or post-up inside. He is also a strong rebounder and defender. Senior guard Dre Puryear (5-11) can attack the basket and junior combo guard Zach Pearl (6-0) is a quality shooter. Senior post player Henry Quinn-Irons (6-6) is "much improved from last season in play and confidence," Duggan wrote.

The Seahawks are looking to reach the regional tournament for the first time since the 2010-11 season, Duggan's first as South Lakes head coach, when they finished Liberty District runner-up and beat Falls Church in the opening round of regionals. South Lakes will compete in a scrimmage at Chantilly High School at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 29. The Seahawks will open the regular season at home against Stone Bridge at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

South Lakes senior post Henry Quinn-Irons battles against two Wakefield players during a scrimmage on Nov. 23 at South Lakes High School.



PHOTO BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Be a Part of CHILDREN'S CONNECTION

During the last week of each year, the Oak Hill/Herndon Connection devotes its entire issue to the creativity of local students. The results are always remarkable, and the editions have won many awards. It is a keepsake edition for many families.

We publish artwork, poetry, essays, creative writing, opinion pieces, short stories, photography, photos of sculpture or gardens or other creative efforts.

We ask that all submissions be digital so they can be sent through e-mail or delivered on CD or flash drive. Writing should be submitted in rich text format (.rtf). Artwork should be provided in .jpg format. Identify each piece of writing or art, including the student's full name, age, grade and town of residence, plus the name of the school, name of teacher and town of school location. Please provide the submissions by Friday, Dec. 6 for publication the week of Dec. 26.

E-mail submissions to: ChildrensNorth@connectionnewspapers.com

To send CDs or flash drives containing artwork and typed, electronic submissions, mark them clearly by school and hometown and mail the CD to Children's Connection, 1606 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22314.

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Communities Come Together to Support Neighbors in Need

FROM PAGE 9

out the online donation form – but hurry! Collection dates are Dec. 5 – 7. And Cornerstones “Season of Giving” starts before the traditional Holidays and extends well beyond them, with their Winter Coat Closet program in association with Hunter Mill District Supervisor Cathy Hudgins, collecting winter wear for children and adults from Oct. 31 until Feb. 28, 2014. Information on needs and donation sites for the Coat Closet are

also available on the Cornerstones website.

Cornerstones is certainly a significant contributor to the “Season of Giving,” but there are others reaching out to community neighbors in need as well. Jake McGlothlin, Director of Serve Ministries at Floris United Methodist Church (FUMC) in Herndon, described an impressive list of programs that the congregation has developed over the years, “and they are the ones who have asked

for and spear-headed these efforts,” noted McGlothlin. “It isn’t the church leadership that say ‘here’s what we will support.’ Our people come to us and want to help in so many different ways.”

FUMC has a number of outreach initiatives underway. In the gathering area of the church, Christmas trees are decorated with “Wish List” tags rather than traditional ornaments. The recipients of these items include families from Hutchison Elementary in

need and children with special needs through Care Connection for Children, affiliated with Inova Children’s Hospital, among others. This year FUMC has taken on 1300 gift requests, ranging from gift cards for local grocery stores, to new jeans and shirts to wear to school. Few of the recipients asked for toys or non-necessities. Just the basics. And the congregation at Floris is responding with overwhelming generosity with some folks taking three or four Wish List

Tags to fulfil. Non-members of the congregation are warmly welcomed to visit the church and participate in the program.

“We’ve got another new program starting up this week, as well,” reported McGlothlin. “This one is about Alternative Giving, he said. “We all have someone we want to get something for at the holidays who just doesn’t need anything else from the traditional gift inventory, so how about mak-

SEE SEASON, PAGE 13

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Season of Giving

FROM PAGE 12

ing a donation in that person's honor? "Donations made as part of the Alternative Giving program will benefit the church-sponsored Child Rescue Center and the Mercy Hospital in Sierra Leone, the Guest House Program that offers temporary shelter to the homeless during the coldest winter months, and other local charitable needs. Again, this program is open to non-members of the congregation. If making a donation instead of

buying another sweater or knickknack for Auntie Alice sounds like a good idea, then contact FUMC via their website at www.florisumc.org, or call 703/793-0026. FUMC will also be participating for the first time in the Guest House program, partnering with organizations like FACETS, a non-profit that works throughout Fairfax County to meet emergency needs and then assist in the gaining of permanent safe housing with counseling and support to

improve life situations). The church will join a number of area organizations and religious communities that each offer a week of supervised shelter and needed items to the county's homeless. "This is a big one for us," admitted McGlothlin. "We may be hosting some 400 people for a week in January. We've been planning since March. We are now in the volunteer recruitment stage. Knowing our congregation, I am sure they will rise to the chal-

lenge."

CORNERSTONES also operates shelters under the North County Hypothermia Prevention Program from Dec. 1, through March 31, 2014. Staff are pleased to report that they have secured sufficient catering sponsorships for the shelter guests, but there is still a need for donations from the Hypothermia Prevention Program Wish List, available on the Cornerstones website. All of these local organi-

zations and the individuals who support them have their own initiatives, missions, motivations and needs, but together they create the Season of Giving that so many in the community need and depend on – and all of them say there's room for more aboard the Volunteer Sleigh – especially at this time of the year. Try the websites listed above for opportunities and information. Other resources include www.reston.org and www.herndon-restonfish.org.

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"Scanticipation"



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

When I get CT-Scanned on Wednesday, November 27th, it will be nearly four months since my last diagnostic scan. That occurred during my hospital "staycation" during the first week of August, when I was admitted due to the extremely abnormal fluid buildup in my left lung. The surgery to drain the fluid went well, as you regular readers know, but as a consequence of this procedure/hospital stay – and its recovery, my subsequent chemotherapy infusions were delayed for about a month and naturally the follow-up scans were as well. This meant/now means that my every-three-month scan has become at least for this particular set of time circumstances, a four-month interval, the longest such interval in my full-time cancer career since I was first diagnosed with stage IV, non-small-cell lung cancer back in February, 2009.

I'm not nervous about the outcome this time, however, as I have written about in previous columns: "Scanxiety," "Scanning the Horizon" and "Scantastic." These are all examples of the emotional roller coaster a cancer patient rides when scans are in the offing. Regarding (you'll note I didn't use "concerning,") this upcoming scan, I feel more curious and calm than I have felt before. Aside from being more experienced with this process/cycle, and continuing as well to be relatively asymptomatic, my most recent lab work has been encouraging or at least not discouraging in that certain results/levels are improving. Now I don't know if these improved results (specifically my creatinine and bilirubin levels as well as my GFR/glomerular filtration rate) have any effect on the metastatic tumors in my left lung, but the improving levels do mean that my body is tolerating the every-three-week chemotherapy infusions that I've been receiving since September 20th. And "tolerating" is about as good as it gets, considering there are few drugs still available that my oncologist would feel are suitable for my condition. More to the point, when I asked my oncologist how do I really know (other than the lab results) that I'm tolerating the drug, he said, "You wouldn't be a very happy camper if you weren't." To which I replied, happily: "Well, I'm a long way from that." And not that the camping reference was lost on me, but I've been camping very few times in my life, and on those few occasions, I was happiest when I was leaving the campsite heading home.

Camping experiences aside – and not misunderstood, I am looking forward to the results of this next scan and really not stressing about it, either. Nor am I anxious. If anything, I'll admit to being naive. Moreover, I won't admit to being positive, since there's so much about the human body that I don't understand and after five years of having cancer-type symptoms and/or feelings, or not having cancer-type symptoms and/or feelings, with varying outcomes, I never know what to make of any of it. What I am positive about is how mysterious it all is and how few guarantees there are in any of it. Nevertheless, I'm grateful for a definite maybe; I can live with that, as I have been.

Time will tell, soon enough. Although, a long Thanksgiving weekend might slow down the e-mail which my oncologist will send with the results. But I can't worry about that either. I feel good. My labs were good. My reaction to yesterday's chemotherapy was good. The Red Sox just won the World Series for the third time in 10 years; that's all good, great in fact. For a terminal cancer patient from Boston five years post-diagnosis who wants to live and loves his hometown team, it doesn't get much better, realistically speaking.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

South Lakes High School senior Olivia Vita talking to astrophysicist Hakeem Oluseyi of Science Channel's Outrageous acts of science.

South Lakes Seniors Attend STEM Diversity Symposium

Three South Lakes High School seniors—Mahrukh Chowdan, Marli Saunders and Olivia Vita were chosen by the GEMS Club Initiative to attend the first-ever STEM Diversity Symposium on Capitol Hill to discuss the accomplishments women and minorities have made in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as the importance of encouraging more women and minorities to pursue STEM studies and careers. The event took place on Nov. 13. Held in conjunction with members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Congressional Black Caucus, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the symposium featured remarks by leaders in Congress on diversity in STEM, including U.S. Senator Mazie Hirono, and a panel discussion and question and answer session moderated by Debbie Myers, General Manager and Executive Vice President of Science Channel.

The panelists were: NASA astrobiologist and geologist Dr. Jennifer Eigenbrode; electrical engineer and Discovery Channel's

Mythbusters personality Grant Imahara; astrophysicist Hakeem Oluseyi of Science Channel's Outrageous Acts of Science; Cindy Moss, Director of STEM Initiatives for Discovery Education; and E. Anne Sandel, Executive Director,

Surface Warfare for the Naval Sea Systems Command.

"Before this event, I did not realize how much I had let stigmas (which I thought I had eradicated) steer my life," said SLHS senior Olivia Vita. "I had wanted to get into the scientific field in ecology but ruled many areas of study out because supposedly 'artists cannot be scientists.' I can see more clearly

that I really can do anything-I could be an astrophysicist!"

She added, "This definitely changed my career path."

The GEMS Club Initiative is a grassroots organization committed to building the STEM pipeline by promoting and encouraging girls. www.gemsclub.org

South Lakes High School is committed to engaging students with community groups that can support engaged learning.



School Garden Vegetables on Aldrin's Menu

Students from Aldrin Elementary School were able to harvest some of their fall vegetables from the school's garden. Earlier in the school year, classes sowed seeds for lettuce, kale, radishes, spinach, carrots, beets and broccoli. The children are enjoying seeing how crops grow, how long it takes, and what they look like before they get to the store. They also get to experiment tasting vegetables they may have not tried before.



Kari Ginsburg in rehearsal of "The Twelve Days of Christmas."

NextStop Theatre to Present Two Holiday Shows

BY DAVID SIEGEL
THE CONNECTION

Herndon's NextStop Theatre is giving audiences two new Holiday theater treats. The two shows "have a tremendous amount of heart and can appeal to anyone who loves the holiday season. But they are also unique and original stories

that have not been performed in this area," said Evan Hoffman, Artistic Director, NextStop Theatre.

The shows, "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol" and "The Twelve Days of Christmas," are one-actor plays performing in rotating repertory during December.

"Jacob Marley" is a show with "a remarkably clever reimagining of one of the most recognizable stories in the world. Playwright, Tom Mula, has taken a classic and made it fresh and new by examining it through a different character's eyes," said Hoffman. "The Twelve Days of Christmas," by Ginna Hoben, is "one of the funniest and most heartfelt scripts I have ever read."

The directors and actors for the shows are Rob McQuay, director and Ray Ficca, actor for "Jacob Marley" and Abigail Isaac, director and Kari Ginsburg, actor for "The Twelve Days."

"We all know the classic tale of Ebenezer Scrooge and his miraculous redemption on Christmas Eve. But what about Jacob Marley, Scrooge's departed, doomed, and chained business partner?" said McQuay, about "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol." It is a "behind-the-scenes retelling of one of the most famous holiday stories of all

time" from the perspective of Scrooge's business partner in the classic Dickens' tale.

"The Twelve Dates of Christmas" director Issac "was immediately drawn to the energetic and witty main character [Mary], I identified with a lot of the material...I think that relationships are even more poignant during the holidays, and this show juxtaposes dating woes with the holidays in a very relatable way."

"I am excited to be performing a show during the holidays that is about hope and redemption," said Ficca, who has been acting professionally nationwide for over twenty years. It is a great story to experience during the holiday, noted Ficca.

Ginsburg, with professional stage credits in many local theater companies, noted that her character Mary in "The 12 Dates of Christmas" is "genuine, vulnerable, sassy and very smart...She's also a little neurotic."

The show is a tale about what might be "best" for Mary when her engagement falls apart after Thanksgiving and she spends the Holidays "alone."

Each show aims to give enjoyment as the NextStop Theatre provides unique new stocking stuffers to Dulles Corridor audiences.

Where and When

"Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol" and "The Twelve Days of Christmas" performed at NextStop Theatre at The Industrial Strength Theater, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Tickets: \$25-\$27. For tickets call 866-811-4111 or visit www.nextstoptheatre.org. For general inquiries call (703) 481-5930

❖ "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol" performances are: Tuesday, Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 5, 7:30 p.m., Sat, Dec. 7, 8 p.m., Sun, Dec. 8, 2 p.m., Tues, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m., Thurs, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m., Sat Dec. 14, 8 p.m., Sun Dec. 15, 7 p.m., Wed, Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m., Sat, Dec. 21, 8 p.m., Sun, Dec. 22, 2 p.m., Fri, Dec. 27, 8 p.m., Sat, Dec. 28, 8 p.m. and Sun, Dec. 29, 7 p.m.

❖ "The Twelve Days of Christmas" performances are: Wed, Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m., Fri Dec. 6, 8 p.m., Sat, Dec. 7, 4 p.m., Sun Dec. 8, 7 p.m., Wed, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m., Fri, Dec. 13, 8 p.m., Sat Dec. 14, 4 p.m., Sun Dec. 15, 2 p.m., Tues, Dec. 17, 7:30 p.m., Thurs, Dec. 19, 7:30 p.m., Sat Dec. 21, 12 p.m., Sat, Dec 21, 8 p.m., Sun Dec. 22, 7 p.m., Thurs, Dec. 26, 7:30 p.m., Sat, Dec. 28, 4 p.m., Sun, Dec. 29, 2 p.m.



Ray Ficca in rehearsal of "Jacob Marley's Christmas Carol."

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