

Ginger Mahon of Great Falls is preparing for this year's donation day. She is the Wish List Project organizer, allowing hundreds of children and teens to get a special gift during the holidays.

Holiday Wishes Granted

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Celebration of Lights Kicks Off Holiday Season

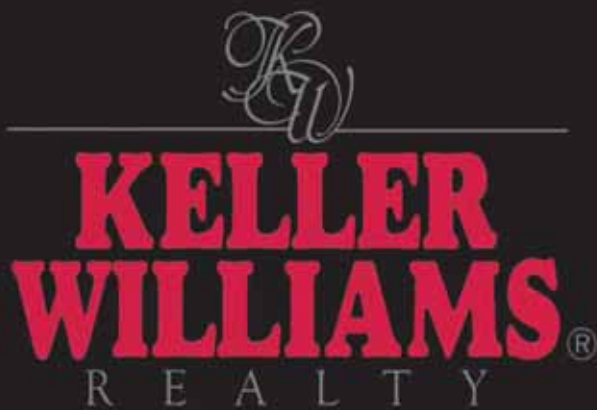
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PHOTO BY REENA SINGH/ THE CONNECTION



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10514 Dunn Meadow Rd, 5 Bedrooms, 5 Full-
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LO8274054 - \$855,000 - Sterling
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bath 3 level end-TH, HW flrs
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kitchen and more!



LO8329961 - \$355,000 -
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Holiday Wishes Granted The Wish List Project sending 325 homeless children holiday gifts.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

Because of Ginger Mahon, more than 300 homeless and foster care children and teens will wake up to presents on Christmas.

The Wish List Project, which turns 15 this year, will deliver donated personalized gifts to six organizations throughout the county, playing Santa for hundreds of children.

"It's all about getting that one wish granted," said Mahon, Great Falls.

Mahon runs the project out of her home. She said it started when a friend told her about children in Washington, D.C. not having presents during the holidays. In the weeks following, Mahon's daughter, then in Kindergarten, brought home a letter from school asking parents to prepare an extra peanut butter and jelly sandwich in their children's lunchboxes on Friday to send to the E. Rutger Shelter in Reston. Shocked that there was a shelter so close to her home, she decided she wanted to do more than send sandwiches.

That year, in 2000, 29 children received holiday gifts.

Every year, Mahon creates a list on Sign Up Genius and emails a link to potential donors. Everyone who puts together a package for a child or teenager gets to partake in the donation party.

"What we have been doing is hosting an open house in our home for the donation drop off party," she said. "This year, we're going to be fulfilling 325 in-



PHOTO BY REENA SINGH/ THE CONNECTION

Ginger Mahon, the creator and driving force of The Wish List Project, continues to bring the Great Falls community together through the spirit of giving.

dividual wishlists."

THE MOST RECENT ADDITION is the Fairfax County Foster Care. She was having lunch with a friend who was a social worker and asked if there is any other groups of children who could benefit from her annual project.

"She took one look at me and said the teenagers are the forgotten ones during Christmas," she said.

Now that the list has grown since 15 years ago, Mahon has help from both Lissa Perez and Christy Shumadine.

"I learned about the project through our school community and my neighborhood would sponsor a few families and kids from the list every year," said Shumadine. "Through the years, the recipient list has grown and it's been exciting to watch the wonderful work that Ginger does and to play our small part in her massive efforts."

Perez moved to Great Falls in 2010 and began donating to the project as soon as she found out about it. She gave each of her own children the responsibility of fulfilling another child's wish list, something she felt would teach them about the spirit of the season.

"When I went to the drop off party, I was overwhelmed by the generosity of the community and by Ginger's massive undertaking," said Perez. "I also learned that she did everything by email, phone and had a file folder full of handwritten notes."

MAHON SAID the sight in her home is an emotional experience for many of the donors and herself. By the end of the day, her home is brimming with packages filled with a wish from a child - like a nail polish set, iPad, books. Every year, every single child on her list has their wish fulfilled.

"A miracle happens in my house every year on donation day," she said. "Everyone can feel it. The generosity is astounding. You can't help but feel moved."

It is not just the generosity of donors, either. She said Paisano's Pizza always triples her order without charging extra to provide food for the donors and her helpers. Also, for the first time this year, she said a church group is taking part in the project.

"It's amazing," she said. "I always end up getting everything we need plus more."

To donate a gift for The Wish List Project, visit <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080a49aaaf2ea46-15th>.

Celebration of Lights

Traditional festival kicks off Great Falls holiday season on Dec. 6.

BY REENA SINGH
THE CONNECTION

The village will kick off the holiday season with an age old tradition: Celebration of Lights.

The festival, which includes a tree lighting by Santa and Mrs. Claus and a live nativity, will take place on the Village Green on Dec. 6 from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

This will be the 23rd year that the tree has been lit.

"It was my wife's idea in 1991," said Robert Moore. "She thought it would be nice to have a tree lighting for the kids. It's a tradition that's been going on and on."

With the help of Gary Schmitz, Moore has made sure there was a tree erected in the green every year since.

In that moment, where the lights are switched on by Santa lives the memory

of his wife, Jackie, who passed away in 1995.

"You should come here and see those kids' eyes get big, and they start hollering," he said. "It's great to have something for the kids and the community," he said. "For this area, it starts off the Christmas season."

In previous years, he said between 800 to 1,000 children show up to see the tree lighting and talk to Santa.

Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive at 6 p.m. to the Village Green to light this year's 38 foot tree decked out in 5,000 lights.

A petting zoo and pony rides will follow the lighting as Village Green Day School, Great Falls Elementary and Colvin Run Elementary sing carols for the remainder of the event.

At 7:30 p.m., the live nativity, featuring both local people and local animals, will begin. The tradition has been carried on by local Margaret Johnson - with more recent



PHOTO BY JENNIFER BENITZ

Suzette Luzine with her daughter Veronica, 4, at the Celebration of Lights in 2012.

help from Claire Abbott.

When she started the tradition, she was helping to plan a new holiday activity for the community with Great Falls Friends. While others suggested visits from Santa, she wanted something different.

"I said I wanted equal time," said Johnson. "Christmas is about Christ."

The nativity was designed by her and built by local Glen Sjoblom.

Abbott, who Johnson calls her "right hand gal," said people come from all over the area every year to see the nativity.

"People come year after year to reflect on the scene for 15 to 20 minutes," she said.

Johnson said many people in the commu-



PHOTO BY ROBBIE HAMMER

Gabriel Chaves, 3, sits on his father J.J.'s shoulders while waiting in line to see Santa Claus while attending the annual Celebration of Lights in 2012.

nity think of the nativity and the Celebration of Lights as a whole as the start of the holiday season.

"We do it because it is a necessary part of the holiday," she said. "It's our gift to the community."

For more information about the free event, visit <http://celebrategreatfalls.org/Christmas.html>.

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VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

— REENA SINGH

Henry Friedman, 4, Vienna:
“Turkey. Mom. Dad.”



Connie Shabshab, McLean, stay-at-home mom:
“We are grateful for good friendships and a country that still has religious freedom.”



Karen Eye, Great Falls, stay-at-home mom:
“We're grateful for family and friends, for the holiday and for a close-knit Great Falls community.”



Helen Link, Potomac Falls, fashion consultant:
“I'm grateful for good friends and family.”



PHOTOS BY REENA SINGH/ THE CONNECTION

WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

John Kelly to Speak in Great Falls

Washington Post columnist John Kelly will be the featured guest at the Great Falls Speaker's Series (GFSS) monthly gathering on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m., at the Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike. (A brief reception will begin at 7 p.m.) Kelly will be on hand to discuss a variety of wide-ranging topics, from the challenges of writing a fast-paced, entertaining newspaper column to the dynamic process of how he searches for material by observing the smallest details of daily life. Kelly, a graduate of University of Maryland, has studied as a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University and as a senior visiting Fellow at Oxford University. The event is free and open to the public. Seating is first-come, first-serve. Reservations will not be taken. Because a capacity crowd is expected, early arrival is recommended. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m. For further information, contact the Great Falls Library at 703-757-8560.

attendance to answer any questions about the Historical Society and its mission and projects. For almost 40 years, GFHS has been dedicated to preserving the history of Great Falls and informing the residents of the community of its unique past and traditions. The society presents monthly programs for its members and the public on a historical aspect of Great Falls and the surrounding area, it hosts the annual Great Falls Day celebrating history, family and community, and it continues to gather local historical artifacts, photos, oral histories, research and published works through its historical archive.

The GFHS welcomes you to stop by, celebrate the season, and learn a bit more about the historic community, while reveling in the wonderful music, delicious food, and warm fellowship with your neighbors. Contact Betty Swartz (703-759-2378) Hospitality Chair or Jan Schar (703-759-3940) Membership Chair for more information.

Great Falls Senior Center to Host Holiday Potluck Luncheon

The Great Falls Senior Center (GFSC) is ending its year with a holiday potluck celebration of the season. Entertainment will be provided by The Madrigals, Langley High School. The Dec. 2 event will be held at Christ The King Lutheran Church, 11550 Georgetown Pike. The program is from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Guests will have the opportunity to bring their favorite dish (salad, vegetable or dessert) to share with fellow attendees, or to make a modest contribution. The Senior Center will provide ham, turkey and beverages. Ashby Ponds is the event sponsor, a full-service maintenance-free community designed for an active independent retirement located in Loudoun County. To attend and to sign up to bring a favorite dish for the luncheon, call Joy Trickett 703-404-8412.

Great Falls Historical Society to Host Holiday Open House

The Great Falls Historical Society is hosting a Holiday Open House on Thursday, Dec. 11, at 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the historic Old Forestville Schoolhouse at 9812 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The festive event will kick off a community-wide membership drive by the Society and is open to all residents of Great Falls. Families and children of all ages are welcome.

Come enjoy the holiday music, hors d'oeuvres and desserts made by some of the finest cooks in the community. A selection of historical displays will be on view, and Kathleen Murphy, president of GFHS and the GFHS board members will be in

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Celebration of Lights

Saturday, December 6 ~ 5:30pm to 8:00pm

Great Falls Village Centre Hill

Join us for our Celebration of Lights! Watch Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in an antique fire truck to light the Great Falls Tree. Enjoy the petting zoo, pony rides, fire pit, hot cider, hot chocolate and popcorn. And don't miss the beautiful, live nativity scene.

5:30-Refreshments available

6:00pm ~ Santa & Mrs. Claus arrive to light the Christmas Tree

6:15pm ~ Petting Zoo and Pony Rides begin

6:15pm ~ Village Green Day School

6:35pm ~ Great Falls Elementary Chorus

6:55pm ~ Forestville Elementary Chorus

7:15pm ~ Sing-a-Long (please join us!)

7:30pm ~ Live Nativity Scene

All activities are FREE
to the public.



Preferred Partner



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www.CelebrateGreatFalls.org

OPINION

Holidays Are About Giving

Give thanks and share; tens of thousands of families around us are in need.

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

Surrounded by the bounty in so many neighborhoods in Northern Virginia, many of us see little signs of the massive unmet needs here. But in Fairfax County Public Schools, more than 52,000 of the students are poor enough to re-

ceive free or subsidized meals, a significant measure of poverty.

In Arlington more than 32 percent of the students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals; that's 7,452 students at last count.

In Alexandria, 8,582 students are poor enough to receive free or subsidized meals. That's 60 percent of the 14,222 students enrolled.

These are children who are living in families who may be on the brink of homelessness, families who must choose between medical

bills, car repair, heat and food. These are children who may not be sure that they will have a meal between the meals they get in school. School holidays can bring uncertainty and hunger, a far cry from the celebrations, gifts and plenty that we associate with Thanksgiving and Christmas.

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 a few ideas. We will rerun this list again during the holiday, so let us know what we have missed.

— MARY KIMM,

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

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
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **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. www.facetscares.org. 10640 Page Avenue, Suite 300, Fairfax VA 22030
- ❖ **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.
- ❖ **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
- ❖ **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>
- ❖ **Herndon-Reston FISH** (For Immediate Sympathetic Help), 336 Victory Drive, Herndon, 703-391-0105 <http://herndonrestonfish.org>
- ❖ **Northern Virginia Family Service**, 10455 White Granite Drive Suite 100, Oakton, VA 22124 703-385-3267 <http://www.nvfs.org/>
- ❖ **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

Nurturing Happy Memories

For some, memories of just a few happy moments provide arsenal for enduring.

BY JOAN BRADY

"It's my few happy memories that keep me going," a young woman who had grown up in foster care told me a few months ago.

To be honest, today I'm a little foggy on exactly what her happy memories even were. They weren't monumental experiences or achievements. They were simply moments in time when she felt happy.

One was about being near the water. Another, a meal eaten at a particular restaurant. And another, a time when she felt like she was being heard. A small arsenal of moments that she could dip into, as needed.

I haven't been able to stop thinking about that conversation. I grew up with two loving parents. While no childhood is perfect, I'd say mine was pretty close. What I keep



The importance of happy memories: Joan Brady in a selfie with her siblings, the first photo of just the four of them since childhood.

stored away are my few unhappy memories. Images I trot out when I want to wallow in a little self-pity.

But what if I could hang on to just a few good memories. And they had to be enough to keep me moving forward, from making bad choices, even from killing myself. What would they be?

Well there was my nursery school graduation. Every kid had

to stand up and perform in front of the group of proud parents. Painfully shy and paralyzed by the very idea, I distinctly remember my mother telling me that she had spoken with my teacher and I would be exempt from this particular torture. This one I'd keep as a reminder that I have a mother who had my back then and continues to now.

There was that beautiful spring

day that I walked with her down the streets of New York City, proud to be a recent college grad and excited to be going on job interviews and looking for an apartment. It would be good to hang on to a reminder to appreciate accomplishments and to embrace the next set of goals with enthusiasm. There was the time a few years ago that my sister and brothers and I took a selfie. It was the first image of just the four of us since we were kids. There was something about that moment, enjoying each other's company and recognizing, that no matter what, these people could be counted on. Yup, definitely a memory worth hanging on to.

And maybe, one would be the moment when I recognized how lucky I am to have a treasure trove of happy memories as deep and as long as my life.

Joan Brady is a professional photographer; mentor and advocate for current and former foster children; volunteer with paws4People, Fairfax Families4Kids, and others; and a resident of Great Falls. Reach her at joan@joanbradyphotography.com

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CONNECTION

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CALENDAR

Send announcements to north@connectionnewspapers.com.
Deadline is Friday for the following week's paper. Photos/
artwork encouraged.

THROUGH SUNDAY/JAN. 4, 2015

Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights. 5:30 p.m. Meadowlark Botanical Garden, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. A winter wonderland, including a flowing stream of softly glowing lights, a two story animated fountain and a Gingerbread Village. Admission: \$13 adults, \$8 children ages 3-12; children under 3 are free.

TUESDAY/NOV. 25

The 16th Annual Community Thanksgiving Worship Service. 7:30 p.m. Vienna Baptist Church, 541 Marshall Road SW, Vienna. Clergy and choirs from participating churches will lead the service with prayers for peace and thanksgiving. Offerings will go to support the local food banks run by Our Daily Bread and Committee for Helping Others (CHO). For additional information or transportation needs, please call the Shepherd's Center at 703-281-0538.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 26

GFL Pokemon League. 4:30- 6 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Come play Pokemon with your friends. School ages 5 to 15.

Treasured Threes to Fives. 10:30 a.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East Vienna. Join us for stories and songs. Ages 3-5 with adult.

Toddler Tales. 10:30 a.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Stories and activities for you and your toddler. Age 2-3 with adult.

THURSDAY/NOV. 27

Thanksgiving Day Brunch. Seatings from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Enjoy a special Thanksgiving Day brunch, featuring all your favorite brunch items and delicious Thanksgiving fixings. Enjoy live musical entertainment and special activities for our

youngest brunch guests. \$125 per adult, \$40 per child, ages 4 to 12, exclusive of tax and gratuity.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 28- NOV. 30

Vienna Arts & Crafts Show. Friday: 10 a.m.- 5 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sunday: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, Vienna. Handmade arts and crafts, including decorative painting, fused, etched, painted and stained glass, ceramics and pottery, hand-painted silk, woodworking handweaving, photography, paintings and drawings, clothing and functional textiles, jewelry and much more. All of the artists and artisans will be on hand to answer questions and talk about their work. Admission: \$3.

FRIDAY/NOV. 28 - WEDNESDAY/DEC. 24

Santa HQ at Tysons Corner Center, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons Corner. Visit Santa's Magical Workshop & Observatory, presented by HGTV - for photos and family activities, located in Fashion Court on level one between Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's - beginning November 14th. Reserve your space online to see Santa. Ongoing event.

FRIDAY/NOV. 28

John Eaton. 8 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Renowned pianist, vocalist, musicologist, and humorist delivers renditions of cherished American songs. Tickets: \$25-\$27. For more information, visit www.wolftrap.org.

GFL Drop-In Chess. 4:30-6:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop in chess at the Great Falls Library Meeting Room. All ages are welcome.

Annual Gingerbread House. 4 p.m. Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Kick-off the holidays with The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, as the life-sized Gingerbread House is unveiled. Located on the 3rd floor, arrival lobby level of the hotel, the

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 10



Santa Picture Day
Saturday December 6, 2014
8AM to 2PM

Holiday Treats and Refreshments for All.
BIG Savings in Posh Paws Boutique,
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RESTON TOWN CENTER

Holidays are HERE!

Friday, November 28

8 am Stores Open Early
Gingerbread Man Mile for Kids

11 am 24th Annual
Reston Holiday Parade
"Home for the Holidays"

12:30 - 4:30 pm Visits and Photos with Santa
Mini-Train Rides

5 pm "Frosty Follies" Performance
6 pm Tree Lighting & Sing Along
6:30 - 10 pm Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides

Sundays: Nov 30 & Dec 7, 14, 21

12 - 4 pm Mini-Train Rides

Saturdays: Dec 6, 13, 20

4 - 9 pm Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides

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11900 Market Street
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Proof of Purchase

County-wide nonprofits offer gift ideas and civic engagement.

By TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

In over 20 years as manager of Burke Lake Park, Charlie Reagle has seen a lot of benches installed. So many in fact that he's running out of water view locations. And though many people choose to honor deceased family members with a bench, he's had plenty donated in tribute to the living. One pair of sisters gave a bench as a birthday gift to their mother; it had two plaques, one of which was at ground level so the mother's dog could see it.

"Each one, working with a donor, I know the story with it," said Reagle. "Going out, going around the trail, you wind up spending several hours with them over this whole time."

While water view space may be drying up at Burke Lake, there are plenty of scenic plots available throughout the 420-odd parks around Fairfax County. And there's a collaborative effort underway to help populate that with tax-deductible gifts. It's part of the county's Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3) "12 Ways of Giving" initiative.

In this instance, citizens can donate a new bench (around \$2,000 for the installation), adopt an existing bench with a plaque (\$800) or have a two-to-three-inch-calibre landscape tree planted. The donations to the parks go through the nonprofit Fairfax County Park Foundation. OP3 is encouraging the public to help address civic issues by making charitable donations as gifts.

"The idea is it's to be very easy, very engaging," said Wendy Lemieux, a spokesperson with OP3. A single web page is a portal to donate to 12 different organizations that each satisfy a county goal for the environment, education, animals or domestic violence.

"As you dive deeper, you can get involved and knock someone off your Christmas list as well," Lemieux said.

Charitable giving has become a major factor in the economy: "Donations, in the country as a whole, are now a \$335 billion enterprise," said Alan Abramson, director of the GMU Center for Nonprofit Management, Philanthropy and Policy. He cited the latest report from Giving USA, a semi-annual public service analysis.

Abramson attributes a gain in giving over the past several years in part to the regrowth of the economy, but that it's also "a creative time for giving," he said. "With more online giving, more people are thinking about loans instead of gifts. These are new creative approaches to engage people in helping."

Which is where 12 Ways comes in. Now in its fourth year linking citizens with nonprofits and county-wide issues like disadvantaged students from minority groups underperforming in schools, the gift-giving angle is paying off. "We've seen groups have



PHOTO COURTESY OF SANDY BROMLEY

Ina Fernández, director of the Fairfax County Office for Women & Domestic and Sexual Violence Services and Fairfax County Police Department Chief Edwin Roessler were at the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting Sept. 23 for the declaration of October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

up to a 150 percent increase in giving," said Lemieux.

"We've come to realize that addressing social problems is not just going to be government's responsibility," said Abramson. "We need all sectors, individuals, families and communities coming together if we're going to get something done."

To learn more about the nearly 500 nonprofits registered in Northern Virginia, visit www.connectnorthernvirginia.org.

Opportunities to Help

❖ **OUR DAILY BREAD** has been contracted by Fairfax County to provide holiday assistance with half of the 3,000 referrals of families in need from county social workers.

Gift: \$50 donation for gift cards for clients or adopt a family.

"It's an opportunity to connect people with people," said ODB executive director Lisa Whetzel, "neighbors to neighbors. You see there are people who live around the corner that are living without a lot of the amenities that they live with. It's eye-opening."

❖ **REFOREST FAIRFAX AND FAIRFAX RELEAF** project to plant trees that maintain canopy cover around the county, help with stormwater management and soil retention. The project is responsible for many of the trees along the Fairfax County Parkway, as well as a big replanting after construction at Bonnie Brae Elementary School.

Gift: \$35 donation for multiple native trees in a group planting somewhere in the county.

"Eighty percent plantable space is on private land in Fairfax County," said Jim McGlone, urban forest conservationist of the Virginia Department of Forestry. "Trying to expand or improve the coverage, we really have to engage the public and get individuals planting trees."

❖ **FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK FOUNDATION**

Gift: \$2,000 for a new bench or \$800 to



PHOTO COURTESY OF ELLIOTT RUBINO

Captain II Willie Bailey (left), Erin McMullin with Operation Warm (center) and Niko Chakos with FOCUS North America (right) distributed 2,200 pair of shoes and 2,000 coats Oct. 28 at Fire Station 11 with Firefighters and Friends to the Rescue.

adopt an existing bench; \$1,000 for a new tree donation or \$500 to adopt.

"It does keep on giving," said Roberta Longworth, executive director of the Park Foundation. "Our wooden benches are guaranteed for five years and steel for ten."

❖ **FRIENDS OF FAIRFAX COUNTY ANIMAL SHELTER**

Gift: Donations of various sizes help with surgeries, medication, collars, tags and the microchip program.

"It's an open access shelter that takes in every animal that comes to the door," said Kristen Auerbach, a spokesperson for the Fairfax County Animal Shelter. Annually, that number is about 5,000 dogs, cats, reptiles and other furry creatures. "It's the largest jurisdiction in the United States with a placement rate above 90 percent. We're about 95 percent this year."

❖ **FAIRFAX LIBRARY FOUNDATION**

Gift: Add a book to a specific library's collection, such as the Richard Byrd location, through their Amazon wish list and put the gift recipient's name first on the list to check it out.

"They're supporting the community overall, based on their interests," said Susan Harman, executive director of the Fairfax Library Foundation. "That's helpful, and they can do it from their desktop."

❖ **COLLECT FOR KIDS:** a consortium of nonprofits, for-profits and county agencies working to make sure all students start school with the necessary supplies. Fairfax County has about 50,000 students that qualify to receive free or reduced meals. Collect For Kids reached three-fifths of those this year.

Gift: Donations of various sizes help with the bulk purchase of backpacks, pencils, pens, scissors, etc.

"When do you start to think about back to school stuff?" said Jay Garant, Fairfax

County Public Schools coordinator of business and community partnerships. "We've already bought things at that point, so moving the donation point to December would be great for us."

❖ **FIREFIGHTERS AND FRIENDS TO THE RESCUE:** works with churches, shelters and schools to provide toys, coats and shoes to children. Fifteen years ago, the organization helped 50 kids; today they reach over 3,000 in a single donation event, usually held at Fire Station 11 in Alexandria.

Gift: Donations of various sizes help purchase toys, bicycles and coats for children for the holidays.

"With 180 schools in the county, 50 to 70 are coming to us," said Captain II Willie Bailey with the Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department. "And one out of four kids living below the poverty line, that's a big need. The station looks like Toys 'R' Us for a few hours."

❖ **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICES:** working with the nonprofit A Way Forward to provide basic house and emergency needs for people leaving shelters to start new homes. The county has offices in 11 locations, including the South County Human Services building.

Gift: Donations of various sizes help purchase goods like bed in a bag, kitchen in a bag, door locks, mattresses, as well as holiday-specific items like toys, games and books.

"We're raising funds to give families the extras they just don't have the money or resources to provide during the holiday season," said Sandy Bromley, Fairfax County-wide domestic violence coordinator, "give victims the chance to really celebrate the holidays."

For the complete 12 Ways of Giving nonprofit list and donation portal, visit http://www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org/enews/Ways_to_give_1214.html.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK FOUNDATION
Michelle Opdahl (left), Kalle (center) and Tom Bowser (right) enjoy time on a bench at Burke Lake Park.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE FAIRFAX ANIMAL SHELTER
Annie Duer's family is currently fostering Sweet Jane through the Fairfax Animal Shelter. Sweet Jane has been waiting more than six months for a "forever home."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Our Daily Bread volunteers fill food crates at the Complete the Circle collection and distribution event held at Fairfax High School Nov. 9.

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Here's What's Happening at MCC



32nd Annual McLean Holiday Crafts Show

Friday-Sunday, Dec. 5-7
Friday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sunday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

Admission: Adults, \$3; \$1, ages 13 and under
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Old Firehouse Teen Center
7th-9th grader
Ugly Sweater Party
Friday, Dec. 5, 7-10 p.m.
\$10/\$5 OFTC member

Midday Movies
"The Others" (2001)
Wednesday, Dec. 10, 1 p.m.
Free admission

OFTC Family Events
Breakfast for Dinner with the
Unruly Theatre Improv Group
Friday, Dec. 12, 7-9 p.m.
Registration is not required.

Day Trip
Holiday in Baltimore
Saturday, Dec. 13, 8:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.
\$87 per person/\$82 MCC district residents

Bring the Kids
"Frozen" (2013)
Saturday, Dec. 13, 2 p.m.
Free. Reservations are not required.

The McLean Community Center
www.mcleancenter.org
Home of the Alden Theatre
www.aldentheatre.org



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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

culinary work of art is large enough for guests to walk around inside and explore the sugary construction created by our talented Pastry Team. Opening day festivities will include holiday confections, hot spiced cider and hot cocoa.

John Eaton. 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Renowned pianist, vocalist, musicologist, and humorist delivers renditions of cherished American songs. \$25-27. 703-255-1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

SATURDAY/NOV. 29

Stephen Kellogg. 7:30 p.m. The Barns at Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. This lively performer and talented everyman combines soulful songwriting and passionate guitar for a classic rock 'n' roll sound. Tickets: \$25. For more information, visit www.wolftrap.org.

Cars & Coffee. 7-9 p.m. 760 Walker Road Great Falls. Gathering of cars at Katie's Coffeehouse. Antique, custom, hotrod, exotic, sports, etc.

MONDAY/DEC. 1

Vienna Annual Church Street Holiday Stroll. 6-9 p.m. Church Street will be closed between Lawyers Road and Mill Street, and visitors are invited to stroll amid the sights and sounds of the holiday season and visit merchants along the way. Historic structures open during the event include the Freeman Store and Museum, the Little Library, the train station, the red caboose, the Knights of Columbus (former First Baptist Church), and the Vienna Presbyterian "old chapel." Santa Claus will arrive at the Freeman Store at 6:15 p.m. and help Mayor Laurie DiRocco light the holiday tree. Afterwards, Santa will visit with children on the front porch of the Freeman Store. The Holiday Stroll will feature entertainment by local musical groups, a petting zoo, free hot chocolate, marshmallows for roasting at supervised "bon fires" and other festivities. Visitors are encouraged to bring canned foods and place them in boxes on the Freeman Store porch.

Model Trains Plus Thomas, Too! 6-9 p.m. Historic Vienna Railroad Station, 231 Dominion Road NE, Vienna. Celebrate the holidays during the Vienna Holiday Stroll seeing and hearing model trolleys and trains including Thomas and some of his friends and the Polar Express on display and in operation. Great family fun and activity for the young and young at heart. Free admission. www.nvmr.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 4

35th Annual Tiny Tots Holiday Concert 2014. 10 a.m. & 7 p.m. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. The James Madison High School Wind Symphony and Color Guard present an exciting concert celebrating the spectrum of seasonal music. Purchase tickets at: <http://james-madison-band.ticketleap.com/tiny-tots>

Civil Twilight with Special Guest Baby Bee. 8 p.m. The Barns Wolftrap, 1635 Trap Road, Vienna. Stirring alt-rock with impassioned vocals and atmospheric melodies. \$22. 703-255-1900. <http://www.wolftrap.org/Barns.aspx>.

FRIDAY/DEC. 5

Ugly Sweater Party. 7-10 p.m. Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. For 7th-9th graders. \$10/\$5 OFTC member.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 13

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTOS BY MARISSA BEALE/THE CONNECTION

(From top left) Dancers Nicole Luz, 14; Taylor Shenk, 15; Justine Verheul, 15; Amanda Baird, 17.

'The Nutcracker' at Madeira

If you are in search of a way to begin the holiday season, a rendition of "The Nutcracker," performed by dancers at the Margaret A. Haddad School of Classical Ballet, is sure to warm your heart. "We have been preparing since September," said Margaret Haddad, owner of the school.

"I try to encourage everyone to work hard to please the audience," Haddad, who has been teaching dance for more than 50 years, started dancing when she was just 4 years old. At 10 she became the first child in England to receive a scholarship to study at The Legat School of Russian Ballet. "I was there for six years, and went on to dance professionally for eight years after that," said Haddad. She danced in "The King and I."

"As a young dancer you get whatever opportunities you can."

And for many of the dancers in Haddad's studio, dancing in "The Nutcracker" is a yearly opportunity. "This would have been my eleventh 'Nutcracker,'" said 15-year-old dancer, Sarah Parks, who has been with Haddad's studio for 11 years. A broken leg keeps her from dancing in this year's performance; however she will contribute backstage by helping dancers with their costume changes. But to her students on the stage this year, Haddad wants them to achieve all they can.

"It's fun growing up and seeing your parts in the show change," said Nicole Luz, who also danced "The Nutcracker" before.

"Last year's show was very different," seconded fellow dancer Amanda Baird. The show is the same, but each year the cast changes. This year's performance will feature the professional talents of Valerie Tellman from the Richmond Ballet, and her partner, Kirk Henning. Also dancing will be artists Alexi Kudrin, William Smith and Julianne Gurgul, all from the Manassas Ballet Theatre. Seasoned dancer, Alexie Tochilin will also be on stage. Originally a dancer in Moscow, Tochilin came to the United States in 1994 and has been dancing in shows with Haddad's studio ever since.



(From top left) Dancers Lauren Sung, 10; Jessica Zaffuts, 9; Julianna Haddad, 10; Andrea Karam, 10; Amelia Frischling, 8; Annabelle Spruill, 8, have various parts in the show.

"I built this place while I lived in Kenya. The property owner thought I was crazy," said Haddad, who traveled to the United States every month as the studio was being built. "But he is glad I am still here." In addition to teaching in the U.S., Haddad has also taught and choreographed in England, Kenya and Lebanon, and "The Nutcracker" is a yearly tradition.

This year's performance will feature around 75 dancers in more than 200 costumes. It will be held Saturday, Nov. 29 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. and on Sunday, Nov. 30 at 4 p.m. at the Madeira School, 8328 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Purchase tickets online at www.BrownPaperTickets.com, or call 703-981-6901 for more information.

December 5-6, 2014

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Holiday Marketplace
Saturday, Dec 6 from 10 am - 4 pm

The Scottish Christmas Walk Parade
Saturday, Dec 6 begins at 11 am

Holiday Designer Tour of Homes
Saturday, Dec 6 from 11 am - 4 pm

For more information visit www.ScottishChristmasWalk.com or phone (703) 549-0111.

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Thanksgiving Q&A: McLean's Maffei Helps Feed Homeless

Senior QB,
soccer player
enjoys mashed
potatoes,
gravy.

Brian Maffei started at quarterback for the McLean football team this season and helped keep the Highlanders in the playoff hunt down the stretch.

While McLean fell short of a postseason berth, finishing 5-5, Maffei left his mark on the 2014 campaign. He set a single-game state record with 42 completions against Herndon on Oct. 2, passing for 415 yards, with four touchdown passes and two interceptions during a 51-35 loss at McLean High School.

Maffei, who also plays soccer at McLean, plans to attend the Naval Academy next year. He recently participated in a Q&A via email with The Connection, sharing some insight about his Thanksgiving plans.

❖Q: What are your plans for Thanksgiving?

Maffei: My brothers are coming home and we'll all go on a hike and watch a lot of football. We're also running a 5k together as a family.

❖Q: Do you or your family have any annual Thanksgiving traditions?

Maffei: We always watch the parade and eat my mom's home-made cinnamon rolls. Afterward, we go on a hike. We also go as a family to feed the homeless in DC with a

group called Sunday Suppers.

❖Q: Does your family incorporate sports into Thanksgiving? If so, how?

Maffei: Well, we always watch a lot of football but we never really play. We've played Wiffle Ball games with some of our friends.

❖Q: What is your favorite thing to eat on Thanksgiving?

Maffei: Definitely mashed potatoes and gravy.

❖Q: The McLean football team narrowly missed the playoffs. What are your thoughts about how the season went?

Maffei: Obviously, I would have loved to

go into the playoffs but I was extremely proud of everyone on the team. All the players came together and worked harder than I have ever seen in the program. We came together as a family and I'll cherish this season forever.

❖Q: What is your favorite memory from playing football at McLean?

Maffei: It's hard to pick one memory from four years of such an amazing experience. But I would say my favorite moment was the homecoming game this year (24-21 victory over Fairfax). After such a crazy game it was so great being able to celebrate with all the boys.

❖Q: What are your college plans? Are you planning to play football in college?

Maffei: I'm planning on going to the Naval Academy next year. I'm currently trying to play for the sprint football team there so we'll see how that goes. I would love doing that because they run a spread offense and I could fit in well.

❖Q: Who is your favorite music artist? Why?

Maffei: Definitely Brad Paisley. I think he's such a down-to-Earth guy and he's really relatable.

❖Q: What is your favorite movie? Why?

Maffei: "The Sandlot." I love the 1950s feel and the Americana in that movie. I always wished I could play baseball under the fireworks.

❖Q: What location is the farthest you have traveled from the Washington, D.C. area?

Maffei: I went to Jackson Hole, Wyo., when I

was 8. It was pretty cool to be cut off from the urban lifestyle I was used to. We got to see all the western lands on the drive to Wyoming, which was neat.

❖Q: Who are your favorite pro sports teams?

Maffei: I love all the Cleveland teams because that's where my family is from. The Browns are my favorite, though - just because I love football.

❖Q: Who are your favorite pro athletes?

Maffei: King James. I can't describe how happy I was when LeBron came back to Cleveland.

— JON ROETMAN



McLean senior Brian Maffei, with ball, played quarterback for the Highlanders in the fall and plays for the school's boys' soccer team in the spring.

PHOTO BY CRAIG STRUBITZEL/THE CONNECTION

Langley Dominates McLean on Ice

The Langley hockey team started its season with a shaky loss to Flint Hill on Nov. 7, but has been firing on all cylinders ever since. The Saxons beat Herndon 4-3 on Nov. 14 in their second game with a stellar performance by senior assistant captain Sam Lafuria, who scored all four goals, and steam-rolled McLean 8-2 on Nov. 21 in front of a sellout crowd.

The Saxon Faithful declared a "Whit-out" and showed up in force with 100-plus to support their team. With the stands rocking, junior assistant captain Jason Guidi potted the first goal less than a minute into the game and the Saxons never looked back. Freshman JT Gorman worked between the pipes and came up with several key saves to deny McLean

any momentum in the game. Senior captain Will Clemson delivered several hard hits and made it painful for McLean to gain any traction in front of the net.

Although the shot differential remained high, McLean threatened the Saxon lead due to penalties which left the Saxons in 5-on-3 and 5-on-4 situations through much of the second and early third period. McLean was unable to capitalize due to sophomore Kevin Wang and senior Chris Lane, who kept McLean at bay while the Saxons regrouped and prepared for the onslaught. With less than 5 minutes to go in the game, the Saxons came up big with four goals, completing Jason Guidi's hat trick plus one.

Langley will face Bishop O'Connell at 4 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 5 at Kettler Iceplex.



The Langley hockey team beat McLean, 8-2.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

35th Annual Tiny Tots Holiday Concert 2014. 10 a.m. James Madison High School, 2500 James Madison Drive, Vienna. The James Madison High School Wind Symphony and Color Guard present an exciting concert celebrating the spectrum of seasonal music. Purchase tickets at: <http://james-madison-band.ticketleap.com/tiny-tots>

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 5 - 6

Renaissance Feaste. 7 p.m. Capital Church, 10233 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Langley High School's choirs, including the Madrigals and the Women's Chamber Choir, present Renaissance-style dining and musical event. The holiday celebration features costumed servers, jesters, minstrels, and musicians in a festive "Greate Hall" environment. Fashioned after a 16th-century gathering of landed gentry, the event offers entertainment and traditional Madrigal songs such as "Masters of This Hall," "Gloucestershire Wassail," and "Deck the Halls."

Tickets adults \$30; student \$20. For more information on the Langley choirs and tickets for the Renaissance Feaste, visit www.langleychorus.com.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5 - 7

32nd Annual McLean Holiday Crafts Show. Friday: 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sunday: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Avenue, McLean. Admission: Adults, \$3; \$1, ages 13 and under. Good all 3 days.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 5-14

Christmas Market & Winterfest.

Friday, 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Tysons Corner Center Outdoor Plaza, 1961 Chain Bridge Road, Tysons Corner. Festival will include 30 vendors selling German holiday goods. Plus, mulled wine, German beer, German fare, hot chocolate and coffee. Enjoy the spectacular Christmas tree, entertainment, beer garden and other festive activities. Ongoing event.

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Holiday Sing-A-Long. 4 p.m. Wolf Trap's Filene Center, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. No tickets are required, but patrons are encouraged to bring an unwrapped toy donation for Toys for Tots. For more information, visit wolfttrap.org.

Great Falls Celebration of Lights.

5:30 - 8 p.m. Great Falls Village Centre. Watch Santa and Mrs. Claus arrive in an antique fire truck to light the Great Falls Tree. Afterwards, Santa will be in his house to meet all children who wish to share their holiday wishes. For the children, there will be a petting zoo and pony ride that will begin immediately after the tree lighting ceremony. <http://www.celebrategreatfalls.org/Christmas.html>

Authentic Darjeeling Teas.

1-3 p.m. Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. From India's Himalayan foothills, the "Champagne of Teas" has recently been granted Protected Origin Status. Taste and compare the unique qualities from the four seasonal flushes and learn why tea garden location can impact the final flavor of Darjeeling teas.

Tea infused treats included. Advance reservations and payment (\$30 per person) required through the Mill at 703-759-2771.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/DEC. 6-7

Gingerbread House Decorating

Class. 10 a.m. & 1 p.m. Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Boulevard, McLean. Learn to make your own sugary home at a Gingerbread House Decorating Class, taught by The Ritz-Carlton, Tysons Corner's Pastry Team. The class includes all the ingredients to construct a beautiful gingerbread house as well as a special souvenir. \$75 per child, ages 3 to 12, inclusive of tax and gratuity. Event also takes place on Dec. 13, 14, 20 and 21.

SUNDAY/DEC. 7

McLean WinterFest Parade. 3:30 p.m. Old Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Groups interested in participating in the parade should go to www.mcleanwinterfest.org to complete the registration information and submit it to parade officials. Each entrant will receive confirmation of their registration with this year's parade rules. Registrations will be accepted until Nov. 18.

THURSDAY/DEC. 11

Great Falls Historical Society Holiday Open House. Old Forestville Schoolhouse, 9812 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. The entire community is welcome. Music, refreshments and local history.



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21 Announcements

21 Announcements

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26 Antiques

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“Shrinkage”



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Not exactly “like a frightened turtle” as “smiled” on a long-ago Seinfeld episode by Jerry himself; this shrinkage is the good kind, the kind you hope a radiological oncologist characterizes when viewing your CT Scan (computed tomography). Specifically, the exact kind of scan I get every three months to assess and evaluate the tumors, and fluid, in my stage IV, non-small cell cancer-affected lungs. The actual scanning itself takes about 30 seconds of “breathe in,” “hold it,” and “breathe out” to determine if my life is on hold – in a good way – or in jeopardy (not a belated reference back to last week’s column). The week-long wait until we have our face-to-face appointment with my oncologist to learn the results is not as interminable as you might think. Over time, we have gotten used to the experience. After all, living with cancer means living, not dying, and adapting and compartmentalizing cancer’s effects – mentally, physically and spiritually; all keys to surviving and enduring the good, bad and ugly that daily can traumatize those of us “characterized as terminal” who frequent the Infusion Centers hoping for a miracle cure.

Since March, 2009, I’ve been treated with nearly non-stop chemotherapy, infused mostly, except for 12 months or so when I was able to take a targeted therapy pill at home and only had to show up at the Center for scans and doctor’s appointments. Six years ago almost, this process began; I can’t say it seems like yesterday, because there are yesterdays – due to the effect of chemotherapy – that I simply don’t remember (“chemo brain” is the accepted condition/characterization), but time flies when you’re having fun or rather, you’re still alive against all odds. And so it seems as if I still have a few tomorrows. Tomorrows that were hardly promised to me back at the original Team Lourie meeting in late February, 2009. Somehow, through a variety of fits and starts, I have survived: my DNA, my family history, my attitude, my pills, my supplements, my alkaline water, my diet and lifestyle changes, my above-average luck, whatever, however, I am still present and accounted for. And though “stable” is a radiologist’s/ oncologist’s description I have come to hope and pray for and embrace over these past six years, “shrinkage” is a description “most welcome” as Hercule Poirot might say and one I rarely anticipated hearing – considering my stage IV circumstances.

But I can take it. Though I’m not cancer-free and certainly not in remission, I am doing reasonably well. I am, as a good friend says: “in pretty good shape for the shape I’m in.” The scan results are results with which I can live (Duh!) and so I intend to – until three months hence when we do this scan dance all over again. Granted, this cycle of gloom and doom and results-not-soon-enough is hardly ideal, but it is a living and a living I was not “prognosed” to have (“13 months to two years” was the original prognosis) when first diagnosed. I’m nowhere near home free; I’m still in for the fight of my life – for my life, but for the moment, at least, for this quarter, due to the shrinkage, I can take a bit of a break, which if you want to know the truth, I can certainly use.

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

BULLETIN BOARD

To have community events listed in the Connection, send to north@connectionnewspapers.com. The deadline for submissions is the Friday prior to publication.

TUESDAY/NOV. 25

- Adult English Conversation Group.** 1 p.m.
Dolly Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Enjoy practicing conversational English in a group setting.
- Lego Club.** 2 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Drop in and play with LEGOs! Ages 3 and up.
- Computer One-on-One.** Noon. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. Internet basics, email, Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.
- English Conversation One-on-One.** 1:30 p.m. Oakton Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. English practice for a non-native speaker with a library volunteer. Call for appointment. Adults.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 26

- ESL Conversation Group.** 2 p.m. Practice English in this casual conversation group. Adults.
- One-on-One Computer Tutoring.** 2 p.m. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Avenue East Vienna. Work with a volunteer tutor to learn about the Internet, setting up an email account and using basic software. Adults.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 3

- Human Rights Defenders: Relevant International Law and Strategies.** 7:15-9 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. A presentation by David Padilla, international human rights consultant. How lawyers and other activists try to defend victims of human rights violations around the world. www.uucf.org.

ONGOING

- Vienna Toastmasters.** 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m., at the Vienna Community Center on the 2nd floor room opposite the elevator, 120 Cherry St., S.E., Vienna. A friendly place to get comfortable with public speaking and impromptu speaking for new and experienced speakers. Open to the public.
- Run With the Doctor.** Every other Saturday at 7 a.m. 8230 Boone Blvd, Tysons Corner. The Center for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine offers its services in a convenient format to runners at this running event. Free. facebook.com/runwiththedoctor.
- Senior Fall Prevention Classes.** 1:30-2:30 p.m. and 2-3 p.m., The Woodlands Retirement Community, 4320 Forest Hill Drive, Fairfax. Classes are held in a heated indoor pool and are designed to work on balance and core muscles. \$10. 703-667-9800.
- Coffee/Tea Poetry Group.** Poets and poetry lovers seek to form a group to meet once a month at a local coffee/tea shop to enjoy each other’s creations. 703-819-1690.
- Virginia Sheriff’s Institute Scholarship Program.** Those enrolled in a Virginia college or university who are pursuing a degree in the field of criminal justice are eligible for the Virginia Sheriff’s Institute Scholarship Program; recommendation letter needed. 703-246-3251, shf-pio@fairfaxcounty.gov or <http://vasheriffsinstitute.org/scholarship/>.
- Everest College Free GED Test Preparation.** Tysons Corner, Vienna. Free GED test preparation and credential completion program, GED Advantage, open to the public. 1-888-201-6547.
- Weekly TIPS Lunch.** 12:15-1:30 p.m., at Shula’s, 8028 Leesburg Pike, Vienna. Tyson’s Regional Chamber of Commerce does lunch. 703-862-4895.
- New Neighbors League Club of Northern Virginia.** For women, the club includes Bridge, mah jong, gardening, quilting and many other activities. www.newneighborsvirginia.com.
- Volunteers for Change.** A program for adults which offers more than 50 weekend and evening volunteer opportunities per month. www.volunteerfairfax.org.
- Haven of Northern Virginia Support Group.** 703-941-7000, www.havenofnova.org or havenofnova@verizon.net.
- The Advisory Board of the Northwest Center for Mental Health Services.** 7-9 p.m. Looking for volunteers who are dedicated to improving mental health services. 703-435-0868.



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