

Helping Others Help Themselves

NEWS, PAGE 3

Springfield CONNECTION

Franconia ♦ Kingstowne
Newington

From left — ECHO volunteers Pat Norton of Springfield, Eileen McGirl of Burke and Patsy Maddox of Fairfax assess and sort donated kitchenwares.

95 Express Lanes to Open in December

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What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

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AREA ROUNDUPS

Police Seek Carjacker

Fairfax County police are looking for the man who carjacked a female Friday, Nov. 7, in Fairfax. The incident occurred around 9:50 p.m. in the 3000 block of Nutley Street. Police say the man approached the victim in a shopping center parking lot, drew a handgun and forced her into her own vehicle.

He then made her drive to nearby banks to withdraw money.

Finally, the man left the vehicle at the New Carrollton Metro Station. Detectives have

a composite sketch of the suspect.

He's described as black, in his 20s, about 5 feet 10 inches, and walking with a limp. Police are working with detectives from Metro Transit police who are investigating a similar case in their jurisdiction and believe the same per-



Suspect

son may be responsible for both crimes.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Crime solvers at 1-866-411-TIPS/8477, e-mail www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org, text "TIP187" plus a message to CRIMES/274637 or call police at 703-691-2131.

Festival of Lights and Carols

The public is invited to enjoy live, holiday music while snacking on s'mores and

hot cider on the green in front of the Sherwood Community Center. The free event is Saturday, Dec. 6, from noon- 7 p.m.

Then at 7:30 p.m., the City of Fairfax Commission on the Arts is sponsoring “A Celtic Christmas with Síor-Óg. Cost is adults, \$5; children 12 and under, free. The Sherwood Center ground will be a winter wonderland throughout the holiday season, with animated lights for all to enjoy through Jan. 4.

The sponsors are the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and the Bull Run Festival of Lights.

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PHOTOS BY TIM PETERSON/THE CONNECTION

(Clockwise from top left) ECHO volunteers Pat Norton of Springfield, Eileen McGirl of Burke, Patsy Maddox of Fairfax and Jean Chandler of Burke assess and sort donated kitchen wares.



LCAC Lead Counselor Loretta Shinol of Springfield has managed cases for the nonprofit for over 20 years.

Helping Others Help Themselves

ECHO steps up holiday giving in Burke and Springfield.

BY TIM PETERSON
THE CONNECTION

Duane Carlson and his wife Alice are sorting canned goods into a long row of evenly spaced paper bags, each representing a family. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, there's a vibrant energy among volunteers buzzing around the Ecumenical Community Helping Others (ECHO) building in Springfield. The nonprofit basic need for assistance organization is open year-round, and now it has the feeling of Santa's workshop.

Duane, Pastor Emeritus at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Springfield, and Alice still volunteer once a week after hatching the idea for ECHO 46 years ago, along with nine other Springfield and Burke churches. Seeing a rapidly growing need in their community for food and basic household items, Duane said the founding philosophy was simple.

"We had the idea that there are always



Duane (left) and Alice (right) Carlson of Springfield had the idea to form ECHO.

people who are interested in helping other people," he said. "Don't expect everybody to be interested because they aren't, that's the way it is. But if you can recruit those people like this, you see them all around here, my goodness what you can do."

With a bench of 400 volunteers and a board of 26 church congregations, you can develop a client base of over 1,500 and move over 200,000 pounds of donated food to those clients in a year. ECHO offers clothing, school supplies and limited financial assistance to families in crisis, but food and basic home goods are their main outreach.

"We service the perennial poor, those people who work contract labor jobs, or are on fixed incomes," said ECHO Executive Director Meg Brantley, "that do OK for most of the year and then something happens, like a terribly cold winter and they let two to three of their electricity bills pile up." The idea is not to create a sustaining dependence; rather offer a life-preserver and a leg up.

ECHO serves all of Burke and Springfield, and Brantley said their demographics have shifted over the decades: "53 percent of our clientele is Hispanic," she said, "then African-American, then people from Afghanistan, Pakistan, a lot of that part of the world."

This year ECHO sent out 1,062 invitations to their eligible client families to receive Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets, 339 of those registered for Thanksgiving and 224 families are already set to receive Christmas baskets.

Fran Eck of Springfield has managed the

holiday food basket program for many years. "It's exciting to know that these families are getting something special for the holidays," she said. "It can be stressful, but I enjoy doing it."

The food, clothing and household goods are all donated from the Burke and Springfield communities. "They're so very, very generous, they never not give," said Brantley. "When we're out of something, I swear you just put it up on the electric sign outside and within 24 hours people are donating. We've just come off a huge local scouting drive, which got over 24,000 pounds of food."

Businesses also help quite a bit. The Springfield Chamber of Commerce runs a coat drive for ECHO and the week before Thanksgiving, the Cardinal Forest Giant in Springfield donated 18 cases, or 108 individual pumpkin, sweet potato and apple pies. Another major assistance source is the Burke CROP Walk, a faith-based fundraiser for world hunger and crisis relief, which took place Nov. 23 and donates close to \$10,000 each year to ECHO.

The sign in front of the ECHO building at 7205 Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield usually lists the food, home or clothing items that are in highest demand for them, but they welcome most donations of time, goods or financial help.

95 Express Lanes Scheduled to Open in December

Beginning next month, a 29-mile stretch of I-95 should look a little different. Existing HOV lanes will change to "Express Lanes," offering drivers with an E-ZPass a less congested alternative. The change affects 95 starting in Stafford County around Garrisonville Road, north to I-395 in Fairfax County by Edsall Road.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) partnered with the Transurban and Fluor-Lane 95 LLC for design and construction of the \$925 million project. Funding came from Virginia's Public-Private Transportation Act.

VDOT recently released results from an online survey of 1,200 Northern Virginia drivers conducted last month. They concluded from the sampling that many drivers aren't prepared for the

new lanes to open.

To access the lanes, all cars must have an E-ZPass, the flat, white transponder that sticks to the inside of the windshield.

There are two types of passes available: the E-ZPass pays a toll wirelessly when drivers use the Express Lanes; the E-ZPass



Flex works the same while in toll mode, but can also be switched to HOV mode. With three or more passengers along for the ride, Flex cars travel the lanes toll-free.

The direction of travel on the Express Lanes should be familiar to 95 regulars, continuing on the current HOV schedule. But unlike the current HOV lanes, the Express Lanes will be in effect all day, every day.

Once the lanes pass north of the

Edsall Road area on I-395, the current HOV rules go back into effect. Even with an E-ZPass, cars with fewer than three passengers have to exit during HOV hours.

Drivers can find out more information on where to purchase either kind of E-ZPass, as well as direction reversal schedules and the HOV transition location at the official website: www.95expresslanes.com.

—TIM PETERSON



One hundred guests moved through the Pohick Church Christmas Mart lunch each hour for three hours. The proceeds from the mart help continue the church's outreach efforts in Lorton and Fort Belvoir.



(From left) Karlie Herbst of Alexandria, Laurie Kittle of Alexandria as "Mrs. Sinah McCarty of Mount Airy," Janis Harless of Mason Neck as "Ann 'Nancy' Mason of Gunston Hall," and Molly Herbst of Alexandria talk about seasonal church decorations in the historic Pohick Church during the church's Christmas Mart.

Sun Shines on Pohick Church Christmas Mart

In recent years, it's poured on people like Janice Cranel while they waited for the Pohick Church Christmas Mart to open. Rain or shine, they would still line up in front of the modest red brick building where colonial celebrities like George Washington, George Mason and their families attended services. "We come for the fellowship, the delicious luncheon, sweet ladies, arts and crafts, jewelry and Christmas decorations," said Cranel.

"And casserole," added Woodbridge resident Gay Ruff. Longtime friends Ruff, Cranel and Haymarket resident Sarah McClellan has been coming to the Christmas Mart for 25 of its 55 years of existence. They left the Nov. 20 anniversary with jewelry, decorations and casseroles with names like "Posh Squash" and "Chicken Supreme."

The Mart included 16 crafters and vendors from around Virginia and Maryland, as well as a traditional holiday lunch featuring turkey salad, green beans, cranberry sauce, stuffed celery and pumpkin pie. The line-up hasn't changed in years.

Money raised from lunch guests and people purchasing donated jewelry and crafts goes to the Ann Mason and Martha Guilds, women's groups at Pohick Church that support local charitable organizations including the Lorton Community Action Center, New Hope Housing in Mount Vernon and Fisher House at Fort Belvoir.

"It's just amazing, the different levels of service," said Mount Vernon Supervisor Gerry Hyland, in between turkey salad and pumpkin pie, "with how many people eat here and then what they're able to give back." Hyland has been coming to the mart lunch for over 15 years.

Pat Osisek of Alexandria is a member of the church and helped sell donated jewelry, one of the biggest shopping draws of the mart. With numerous stands set up in the main hallway of the church office building, Osisek said "you couldn't move in here"



Pohick Church members (from left) Pat Osisek of Alexandria, Nancy Bireley of Woodbridge, Anne Poad of Springfield, Cammie Little of Alexandria and Laurie Napier of Springfield sell donated jewelry to raise outreach funds at the Pohick Church Christmas Mart.

Friends (from left) Janice Cranel of Woodbridge, Sarah McClellan of Haymarket and Gay Ruff of Woodbridge have been coming to shop at the Pohick Church Christmas Mart for 25 years.

PHOTOS BY
TIM PETERSON/
THE CONNECTION



"We come for the fellowship, the delicious luncheon, sweet ladies, arts and crafts, jewelry and Christmas decorations."

— Janice Cranel

while the mart was open between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. "We enjoy doing it every year," she said. "We've been doing this part since 1980 and it's stronger than ever."

On the 55th anniversary of the mart, brilliant sun shone through the crisp fall air all day. Cranel, McClellan and Ruff could take time to enjoy the scenery walking their casseroles back to their cars.

—TIM PETERSON

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

— TIM PETERSON

Tom Verdin of Springfield:

"I'm thankful for my family, my relative health and my eighth grade Civics students at South County Middle School."



RJ Adelman of Springfield, third grade at Sangster Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for my clothes, not everyone has many clothes. And I'm thankful for having a warm coat right now."

Jolin Srun of Springfield, fourth grade at Franconia Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for my family. They're awesome. They make food for me, like my favorite: macaroni and cheese."



Padraig Hall of Springfield, third grade at Sangster Elementary School:

"I'm thankful for my sports equipment: baseball gear, swimming gear and tennis

racquets for cul-de-sac tennis. Without it I wouldn't be able to play sports."

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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.

EDITORIAL

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

❖ **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

❖ **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/>

❖ **Lamb Center**, www.thelambcenter.org, Day center for homeless, Fairfax 703-691-3178

❖ **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.

❖ **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

❖ **National Capital Food Bank**, 6833 Hill Park Drive, Lorton, serving all of Northern Virginia, 703-541-3063. www.capitalareafoodbank.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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VIEWPOINTS

What Are You Thankful for This Thanksgiving?

— MARISSA BEALE



Debra Williams, worker at JCPenney, Springfield:

"I have worked at JCPenney for 11 years and am thankful for this day, having a place to live and that people around me are uplifting. Even though the economy is hard, I see a lot more people coming to the Lord. A bow should be on the front door of your house. Your home should be a Christmas gift to those around you."



Logan Warrington, sophomore at West Springfield High School, Springfield:

"I am most thankful for the people around me, including friends, teachers and family. The community I'm in is very supportive and full of good people."

Stacy Warrington, yoga instructor, from Springfield:

"I am thankful for health and the welfare of my family. I am thankful for living near our nation's capital. We have lived here for seven years, but are originally from the Pacific Northwest."



Michelle Jordan, housewife, from Springfield:

"I am originally from Texas but live in Springfield. This year I am thankful for my family, and that everyone is healthy."



Santa Claus, Springfield Town Center:

"I am most thankful for the opportunity to interact with all the people I see."

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COMMUNITY

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 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 construc-



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.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Kay Fowler, executive director of Fairfax ReLeaf, plants a tree at South Run Park.

tion 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."



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.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK FOUNDATION

Michelle Opdahl (left), Kalle (center) and Tom Bowser (right) enjoy time on a bench at Burke Lake Park.

♦ FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK FOUNDATION

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



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.

♦ 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/news/Ways_to_give_1214.html.

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lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way.
2. not appreciated or understood.
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Nick Cabrejos To Perform at The Empire Nightclub

Singer/songwriter Nick Cabrejos, 24, of Singleton's Grove in Centreville will perform on Saturday, Nov. 29 at 12 p.m. at The Empire Nightclub and The Alchemy Room, 6355 Rolling Road, Springfield.

Originally from Lima, Peru, Cabrejos will play original easy listening pop and cover songs from his debut album, "86 Sleep," which is being officially released on iTunes on Dec. 2. The album is a reflection of past loves, restless nights, and the yearning for discovery outside of the suburbs of Northern Virginia.

"My brand of music is often referred to as 'singer/songwriter,'" he said. "I plan to stand out in this genre by delivering interesting melodies and catchy rhythms that are influenced by artists from all around the world."



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Singer/songwriter Nick Cabrejos

A 2009 graduate of Centreville High School, Cabrejos started his musical journey by taking violin classes in fourth grade at Centreville Elementary school. He later switched to guitar at Liberty Middle School after taking a music lab class. Once in high school, he enrolled in the guitar department, and performed his first singer/songwriter performance in the Acoustic Gumbo concert his senior year with original music created by students.

"I remember being really nervous until the audience began to clap along with my chorus," he said. "After that I was hooked." He said he is grateful to Mr. Burke, Mr. Cosby, and Mrs. Gibbs for the inspiration and help that they provided him.

— STEVE HIBBARD



Bring your family along to watch Tchaikovsky's opulent holiday masterwork, "The Nutcracker," on Nov. 29-30 at Woodson High School in Fairfax.

Send notes to the Connection at south@connectionnewspapers.com or call 703-778-9416. The deadline is the Friday prior to the next paper's publication. Dated announcements should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event.

THROUGH MONDAY/DEC. 15

FCPS Art Teachers Exhibition.

Building W-16 McGuireWoods Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. FCPS art teachers display their art. 703-584-2900. www.workhousearts.org.

THROUGH MONDAY/JAN. 19, 2015

Dada Re-Discovered.

Building W-16 Vulcan Gallery, Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Dada Re-Discovered explores how contemporary media and ideas can filter past Dada concepts and artwork. The exhibit will feature sound, video, performance and other visual mixed media. 703-584-2900. www.workhousearts.org.

WEDNESDAY/NOV. 26

Small Wonders. 10:30 a.m. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Road, Burke. Build your child's early literacy skills with stories, songs and play! Age 1-2 with adult. 703-249-1520.

FRIDAY/NOV. 28

Black Friday Holiday Celebration at the Workhouse.

10 a.m.-7 p.m. Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton. Explore the artwork of nearly 100 artists, join in interactive demonstrations and find that perfect gift while supporting local artists. Festivities will also include Doughnuts with Santa, fine-art projects for children, and holiday music and theatrical performances throughout the day. Free. 703-584-2900. www.workhousearts.org.

SATURDAY/NOV. 29

Small Business Saturday and Tree Lighting.

Tree lighting at 5 p.m. Mosaic District, 2910 District Avenue, Fairfax. Get a head-start on holiday shopping at a mix of small, local retailers, then stay for Mosaic's holiday tree lighting and sing-along in Strawberry Park. www.mosaicdistrict.com.

Seraphic Fire Christmas: Carols by Candlelight.

8 p.m. GMU Center for the Arts, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. Tickets: \$30-\$50. Begin celebrating the holiday season with this revered a cappella ensemble. This critically acclaimed group comes to the Center for the first time to present a dazzling holiday performance — a candlelight Christmas concert with a popular mix of Gregorian chant, carols, motets, and contemporary favorites.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/NOV. 29-30

"The Nutcracker." Saturday: 2 & 7 p.m. Sunday: 2 p.m. Woodson High School, 9525 Main Street, Fairfax. Members of the Fairfax Ballet's Company, along with students from

the Russell School of Ballet and special guest artists from around the world, will dance to Tchaikovsky's opulent holiday masterwork. Group discounts are available for qualifying organizations with 10 or more guests. Email events@fairfaxballet.com or call 703-439-9788 for more information. Tickets are available for purchase at <http://fairfaxnutcracker2014.brownpapertickets.com/>. Tickets will also be available at the door beginning one hour before each show.

SUNDAY/NOV. 30

Family Advent Celebration. 4-5:30 p.m. Burke United Methodist Church, 6200 Burke Centre Parkway, Burke. Make crafts, decorate cookies, and more. Free admission.

MONDAY/DEC. 1

Children's Performance Series:

Mr. Skip. 10:30 a.m. Old Town Hall, 3999 University Drive, Fairfax. Start the week off with Mr. Skip, who is all about music and movement, sings original and classic kids songs like Old MacDonald to the 5 and under crowd. He gets the kids off their seats and moving. Free but donations are accepted. 703-385-2712.

TUESDAY-WEDNESDAY/DEC. 2-3

Tiny Tots Concert.

Tuesday: 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Wednesday: 7 p.m. The Robert E. Lee High School Band and Drama Department announce their annual Tiny Tots Concert featuring favorite children's characters. Reservations are required for the morning performances but not for the evening performance. Admission is \$2. For information or reservations call 703-971-2229 or email the Lee High School Band at LeeHSBand_TinyTots@yahoo.com.

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/DEC. 5-6

Norwegian Holiday Festival.

Friday: 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Saturday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Christ Lutheran Church, 3810 Meredith Drive, Fairfax. The 44th Annual Holiday Festival features Norway's cooking, culture and cool buys. Seven local traditional Nordic handcraft artisans join with their felted figures and tree ornaments, jewelry, needle arts, rosemaling, and weaving. Two days of live music and Nordic Dancing complement the sale of Norwegian sweaters, T-shirts, CDs, books (in English), toys, and linens to name just a few of this year's many unique items for family, friends and home.

SATURDAY/DEC. 6

Free Concert. 6:30 p.m. 5500 Ox

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

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CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 10

Road, Fairfax Station. Living Savior Lutheran Church (livingsaviorlutheran.org) will host The Cathedral Brass (cathedralbrass.org) for a free concert. The program will feature jazz trumpeter Roger Rossi (formerly of the Army Blues), and will include Antonio DiLorenzo's "Twas the Night Before Christmas," narrated by Alan Cole. Free and open to the public. 703-352-1421.

City of Fairfax Festival of Lights and Carols. Sherwood Community Center, 3740 Old Lee Highway, Fairfax. Come enjoy live holiday music, hot cider, s'mores by the Yule log, petting farm, Ferris wheel, caroling and lighting of the Christmas tree in the winter wonderland. Visit www.fairfaxva.gov/about-us/special-events/festival-of-lights-and-carols for times and locations.

Plantation Christmas. 2-7 p.m. Gunston Hall, 10709 Gunston Road, Lorton. 2-7 p.m. Ride in a horse-drawn carriage, sip warm cider by the fire, and sample period food prepared in the hearth kitchen. Return to the 18th century as costumed characters greet you in the house and throughout the grounds. Admission: \$15 adults, \$5 children (6-18).

Shepherd Christmas Showcase. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Church of the Good Shepherd, 9350 Braddock Road, Burke. Over 30 vendors will be offering a wonderful selection of jewelry, toys, handbags, home decor, kitchen ware, skin care, Christmas decorations and much more. A raffle, cafe and gourmet bake shop will also be featured. For questions or additional information, call 703-323-5400 or email jhwilcox@aol.com.

Historic Pohick Church Candlelight Dinner. Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway, Lorton. Featured will be musical entertainment and a catered dinner of assorted hors d'oeuvres, beef tenderloin, roast chicken, side dishes and several desserts. Tickets are \$75 a person. www.pohick.org. RSVP by Nov. 22 to Charlotte Knippling at 703-946-1031.

Advent Coffee Concert. 9:30 a.m. St. Stephen's United Methodist Church, 9203 Braddock Road, Burke. The Maranatha Singers will present an enjoyable morning of music. The theme of the concert will be "Remembering Christmas." Refreshments served after the concert in the Welcome Center. Everyone is invited to attend. Free.

SUNDAY/DEC. 7


Gardeners Holiday Open House. 12-4 p.m. 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Come to an open house hosted by Friends of Green Spring for gardeners of all ages to get in the holiday mood, including a children's puppet show. Admissions: \$3 (puppet show only). 703-642-5173.

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 3-SUNDAY/DEC. 7

Snow Day. 10:30 a.m. W-3 Theatre, Workhouse Arts Center, 9601 Ox Road, Lorton. One cold December morning, a young girl named Skip wakes up to find the entire neighborhood covered in a thick, dazzling blanket of white snow. \$8. 703-967-0437 or www.artsonthehorizon.org.

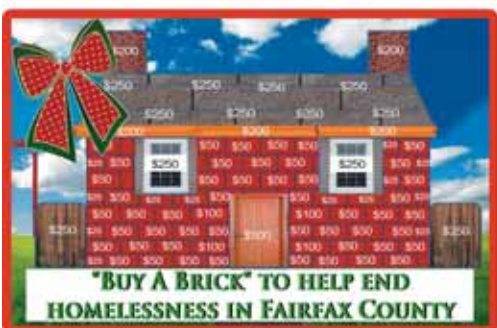
SATURDAY/DEC. 13

Holiday Horse Drawn Hayrides. 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Road, Springfield. Enjoy holiday music and merriment on a horse drawn hayride through the park. Warm up with seasonal treats available for purchase at the snack bar, and settle in to share stories around a toasty campfire. Also visit with Santa and tell him what's on your wish list.



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Thanksgiving Q&A: Bruin QB Edwards Happy to be Practicing.

Lake Braddock will face Westfield in 6A North semifinals Saturday.

Kyle Edwards was a varsity standout for the Lake Braddock football program during his sophomore year, earning second-team all-conference honors as an offensive utility player and safety.

The Bruins won their first 12 games of the 2013 season and were seemingly on their way to the region championship game, leading Westfield by 13 points in the fourth quarter of their semifinal matchup. The Bulldogs came storming back, however, and handed the Bruins a 19-16 season-ending defeat.

This year, Edwards, now a junior, made the move to quarterback, taking over for the graduated Caleb Henderson, a highly recruited signal caller who ended up at the University of North Carolina. It took time for Edwards to get comfortable leading the Lake Braddock offense, but he eventually earned first-team all-conference accolades at his new position.

After playoff victories against Oakton and West Springfield, Edwards and the Lake Braddock Bruins find themselves in a familiar position: preparing to face Westfield in the region semifinals. Kickoff is scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 29 at Westfield. The winner will face the winner of the other semifinal matchup between Centreville and Battlefield.

Edwards, who also plays basketball and baseball at Lake Braddock, plans to play football in college. 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?

Edwards: Obviously, I will be spending a lot of time with my family. Right now it looks like family dinner is at my house, and all the relatives will be over. Should be a great time.

Q: What will the Lake Braddock football team do on Thanksgiving?

Edwards: At Lake Braddock, our tradition is to have a morning practice on Thanksgiving. The breakfast that follows it is legendary and it's really something we as players look forward to and earn.

Q: How does it feel to still be practicing as Thanksgiving comes around?

Edwards: It's something I experienced last year as a sophomore and was lucky to be a part of. It is definitely exciting to have the opportunity again.

***Q: Do you or your family have any**



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Junior quarterback Kyle Edwards and the Lake Braddock football team will face Westfield in the 6A North region semifinals on Saturday.

“At Lake Braddock, our tradition is to have a morning practice on Thanksgiving. The breakfast that follows it is legendary and it's really something we as players look forward to and earn.”

— Kyle Edwards, Lake Braddock QB

annual Thanksgiving traditions?

Edwards: We keep it simple and just enjoy the holiday. Only tradition I can think of is tearing off the wishbone and seeing who gets the bigger half.

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

Edwards: I definitely have a sports family. We watch football all day and play around in the backyard with our neighbors and relatives.

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

Edwards: I have always been a pumpkin pie kind of guy.

Q: Lake Braddock was in this position last year, facing Westfield in the region semifinals. The Bruins lost a late lead and the game. Is there anything you took away from that experience that can help you this time?

Edwards: Well, I think just being on the field and playing against a physical and talented Westfield team gave me a lot of key experience that would then carry over into this year. I think I'll be able to just relax and focus on the game because I have played on a Saturday in front of a few thousand people before. After last year's loss, I learned the importance of finishing games and executing so that has been something Coach [Jim] Poythress harps on all season.

Q: As a quarterback, how do you

feel at this point of the season compared to your season opener against West Potomac when you were making your first start at a new position?

Edwards: Coach Poythress and Coach Quigley have done a great job in helping me grow as a quarterback. The main difference is confidence, but they instilled that in me by letting me mature as a passer, and now we're really spreading the ball around the field through the air. I feel significantly more comfortable in the pocket and with our game plans.

Q: Who is your favorite music artist? Why?

Edwards: Michael Jackson. He has endless hits, and his music is timeless.

Q: What is your favorite movie? Why?

Edwards: “A Few Good Men.” Tom Cruise is one of my favorite actors. This movie made me want to pursue a law degree. It's an iconic movie: “You can't handle the truth!”

Q: Who are your favorite pro sports teams?

Edwards: Redskins and Broncos.

Q: Who are your favorite pro athletes?

Edwards: Peyton Manning and Brett Favre (even though he is retired). I admire how they play the game and their work ethic.

— JON ROETMAN



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

Jade Williams and the South County softball team won the VHSL 6A state championship in the spring of 2014.

Headed to Chicago

Jade Williams made an immediate impact with the South County softball program, earning first-team all-district honors as a freshman outfielder in 2013.

Last season, Williams moved to shortstop and came up clutch in the postseason, earning first-team all-region tournament honors as the Stallions captured the 6A North region title and eventually won the program's first state championship. Now a junior, Williams committed in September to play softball at Kent State University, a member of the Mid-American Conference. Williams, who earned second-team all-conference honors as member of the South County field hockey team in the fall, recently participated in a Q&A with The Connection, sharing her Thanksgiving plans.

***Q: What are your plans for Thanksgiving?**

Williams: My family and I are going to Chicago for a big wedding and a family reunion of sorts. I especially look forward to seeing my Grandpa and my cousins.

***Q: You're committed to play softball at Kent State University. What made Kent State the right choice for you?**

Williams: I have wanted to play college softball for as long as I can remember. The Kent State coach got interested in me at a tournament in Colorado. She personally came to watch me several times there and again in Georgia. She invited me to visit Kent State and I loved my time there. Kent has a veteran coaching staff and they play in a competitive DI conference (Mid-American Conference). The campus is beautiful and the academic support for athletes goes above and beyond. My future teammates helped seal the deal.

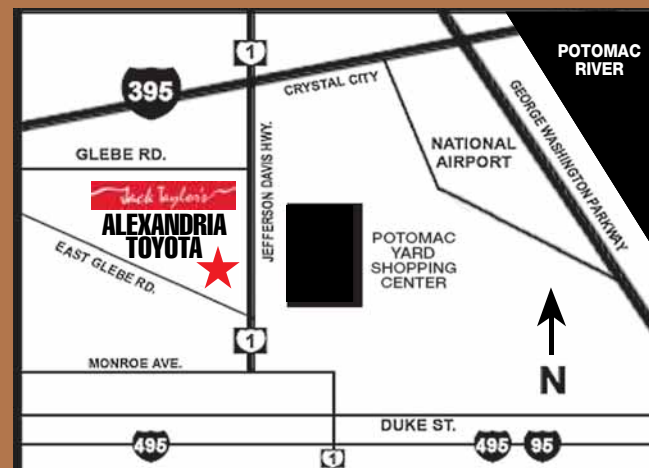
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