

Fourth grade students at
Colvin Run Elementary plan
and build Colonial American
structures in art class.

All Are Welcome Aboard the STEAM Train

NEWS, PAGE 14

'Messages of Light' in Great Falls

NEWS, PAGE 4

DECEMBER 16-22, 2015

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Sold

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LO8685184 - \$550,000 - Ashburn
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FX8542011 - \$989,000 - Great Falls
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Join us Monday January 11th at our
Military Appreciation Monday (MAM)
event at The Old Brogue in Great Falls.
We will be raising funds for a
Military Family Support Organization

* The Old Brogue is located at the corner of Georgetown Pike and Walker Rd. in Great Falls.
Call (703) 759-3309 to reserve your table at either the 5:30 or the 7:30 seating.
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Our Military Kids, Responding to the Need

Bob Nelson of Great Falls helps Our Military Kids for the holidays.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

McLean's Linda Davidson co-founded Our Military Kids with 11 grants in 2004. "When I started, it was a volunteer program offering to support families in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C.," she said.

The vision, she said, was to operate for a few years.

"The need was great and we received calls from all over the country," said Davidson.

She remembers a service member once saying, "Please don't send cookies, care packages or socks. Just take care of our children."

Helping one family at a time, one child at a time, Our Military Kids has now provided more than 52,000 grants to support and recognize military children of the National Guard and Reserve and children of wounded and fallen warriors from all branches of service.

"We should support those families that continue to make sacrifices," she said. "I feel it is our duty to support them even more now."

The grants to children can pay for fees associated with athletic, fine arts, and tutoring programs. In 2014, Our Military Kids provided 3,360 grants, including 17 grants to families of "fallen service members."

"We cater to the children's needs and interests. The families identify what is important," she said.

KAYLA'S FATHER was redeployed to the war zone when she was in first grade.

The Winchester student couldn't focus and she failed first grade.

Our Military Kids provided her a grant for tutoring based on Kayla's mother's request.

"In the fall, her mother called back to say her first report card was all As and one C-plus," Davidson said. "Kayla was upset that she was failing, but the truth was she missed her Dad."

Kayla is now an honor roll seventh grader.

"We have provided gifts for children who have attempted suicide because Dad came back with post traumatic stress disorder. The person that came back is not the same person who left," said Davidson.

Alex, a teenager from Indiana, began withdrawing when his father returned home.

Our Military Kids provided the funding he needed to pay for football camp. He received his own recognition from Davidson's



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Our Military Kids, co-founded by McLean's Linda Davidson, provides grants to children in military families.



organization that thanked him for his service, and Davidson says the teenager now says, "I'm proud to be serving with my Dad."

The most famous example is Gabby Douglas, born in Newport News, Va., who won the gold medal for gymnastics in London in 2012. She received a grant years ago when she was identified as a having immense talent, but her family needed help paying for her to travel for training.

"It's just being there at the moment when a child needs that outside influence," said Davidson. "I could entertain you all weekend with stories that keep us passionate about this."

AT THE OLD BROGUE in Great Falls, Bob Nelson operates a monthly appreciation military dinner.

Nelson, of Keller Williams Realty in Great Falls, has teamed up with Our Military Kids and its Christmas Gift Wish List project the last seven years to make the holiday season "a bit brighter," he said.



Children in military families receive grants from Our Military Kids that allow them to pursue their needs and interests.



McLean-based organization Our Military Kids helped Olympian Gabby Douglas, then of Newport News, travel out for training when her talent was first identified.

Get Involved

See <http://ourmilitarykids.org/>
See <http://bobnelsonsteam.com/>

"It's my way as a civilian to say thank you," said Nelson. "It isn't charity, it's our way of saying, 'Thank you for your service to our country, for what you've done.'"

The Christmas List project, for families of wounded warriors and fallen heroes, has grown from 63 families to more than 330 this year.

"We were hearing that it was a challenge to have Christmas gifts for the children," said Davidson. "One family didn't want to put up a tree because they didn't want their children to be disappointed that they weren't going to get presents."

A single-father who serves with the Marines first refused help, said Nelson. "He said, 'We're okay, we don't need help,' but when we insisted, he broke down and cried,"

Norma Bozell has been involved for three years. "There is such an incredibly deep

need for our citizens to pay attention to these families," she said. "These people have sacrificed for us."

Gil Lunsford got involved with the program after attending Nelson's military appreciation dinners. "He works his butt off," he said, of Nelson.

"When I call, I say, 'Hello, Santa's calling,'" said Lunsford, of McLean Mortgage. "You hear it all."

"It's got me all jacked up," he said. "I told my family, we had a great life, we are going to have a great life, I want to do something different this year."

He now brings military members to his acreage for different programs, including hunting expeditions. He also started a therapeutic riding program.

"Giving back means everything," said Lunsford.

‘Messages of Light’ from the Faith Traditions of Great Falls Residents

The Great Falls Historical Society holds holiday gathering.

BY KATHLEEN J. MURPHY
PRESIDENT/GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

At our annual holiday celebrations over the last few years, we have noted the increasingly diverse community that Great Falls has become, as families from cultures around the world have journeyed by plane to Great Falls - as compared with travel by foot or horse-and-carriage more than 100 years ago - to live and work nearby.

History is the study of past events - GFHS's mission is "To feel the pulse of earth where man has trod, and for the future, keep the past." This holiday season, we sought to acknowledge and record the coming together of residents from many countries around the world to share our place on earth, our home, Great Falls. We sought to reveal the faith traditions of neighbors at this special time of the year when local Christians "make room in the inn" - extending openness and welcoming hospitality as "men of goodwill."

The planning committee included Charles Stevenson, Janet Hill Al-Hussaini, Marjaneh Adell, Eve Loudenback, and I. We met twice a week for six weeks to research and unfold the story of neighborliness in today's context. We wanted the program to be local - representing the faith traditions of people who live in Great Falls today, inviting all local residents to take part in our holiday gathering.

The program began with a half-hour presentation by nine youths that compared the sacred scriptures of eight religions with regard to nine messages of "neighborliness" - we referred to these as "messages of light:" The Golden Rule; speaking truth; being generous; loving; being a peace-maker; "as you sow, so shall you reap;" living by "more than bread alone;" not judging; and living in unity. Each of nine youths who practiced one of the religious traditions read their religion's scriptures on the topic. To everyone's amazement, each faith tradition



PHOTO BY TR COOK

Readers (from left to right) include Mateen Ghassemi, Noora Haghighi, Jian Mostaghim, James Tran, Delaney Ross, Arnav Ketineni, Kareem Baig, Issac Zaret, and Aundia Mehr Rostami.

has language on the core "messages of light" that were just about identical in guidance and direction - and often in wording. We were able to find the appropriate scriptures for each religion, thanks to the power of the Internet. It is now possible to search a topic and a religion and find relevant quotes fairly quickly.

THE FAITH TRADITIONS and the youth who read were: Mateen Ghassemi, 17, Potomac School, senior, who introduced

each theme; American Indian, read by Noora Haghighi, Langley High School junior; Baha'i, Jian Mostaghim, 12, Potomac School; Buddhist, James Tran, 12, son of Julie and Vu Tran of the Nail Salon in Great Falls; Christian, Delaney Ross, 10, Colvin Run Elementary (and granddaughter of

Pauline Ross, one of the earliest members of the Society); Hindu, Arnav Ketineni, 8, Colvin Run Elementary; Muslim, Kareem Baig, 14, Cooper Middle School; Jewish, Issac Zaret, 10, Great Falls Elementary; and Zoroastrian, Aundia Mehr Rostami, 17, South Lakes High School senior.

The overriding message: It seemed as if there is one Great Spirit (as the American Indian would say), who has been revealing the same messages to prophets in each individual culture around the world - speaking the same messages to prophets in the local language. It is only now that the Internet allows us to understand the meanings across languages, that we can see the connections and realize the unity of values and principles inherent in all faith traditions.

A reflective atmosphere was enjoyed thanks to the classical violin and clarinet played by Kismet al-Hussaini and Stephanie Hanson, respectively. Jon Paul of Megawatt provided the sound engineering - which was extremely important for this event - and Archie Brown filmed the event, while T.R. Cook took photos. The film and text will be available on our website later this month.

Everyone was invited to bring a traditional holiday dish to share. Thanks to all the wonderful cooks who took the time to bring something wonderful, the cuisine was delightful!

THE GREAT FALLS HISTORICAL SOCIETY was organized in 1977 to promote community spirit by bringing the past into the present. Our next program will be held on Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. at the Great Falls Library. For more information about that program or to join the Great Falls Historical Society, visit our website at www.gfhs.org or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/GreatFallsHistoricalSociety.



From left — musicians Stephanie Hanson, clarinet, and Kismet Al-Hussaini, violin.



Guest made an extraordinary effort to bring their best. Here are two tables of desserts. There were also two tables of appetizers, and three of entrees. A feast, indeed.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED



Top, from left, Meenakshi Choudhary, Amber Jordan, Pushpa Singh, Misbah Javaid, Jen Corrado, assistant principal Marylou Carmack and principal Ken Junge.

Colvin Run Receives Playground Shade Structure

Colvin Run Elementary had the Ribbon Cutting ceremony to commemorate the installation of FCPS' first playground shade structure. This shade structure, located on the Preschool playground, was made possible through a grant sponsored by the American Acad-

emy of Dermatology. Principal Ken Junge said, "Thank you to FCPS and the American Academy of Dermatology for their generous support. The staff and students are very excited to have this new addition to our playground and will benefit from its sun protection."

White House Ornaments Sale to Help Artemis House

Great Falls Friends and Neighbors continue the tradition of selling the White House Ornaments — available in the retail stores in Great Falls — that help their efforts each year to raise funds for the local Artemis House Shelter.

Artemis House shelters women and children that are victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

This year's ornament honors President Calvin Coolidge. President Coolidge actually started the tree lighting tradition on Dec. 24, 1923. The 60-ft tree came down from his native state of Vermont, and was replanted in the center of the Ellipse. The ornament symbols on the tree all represent objects of importance to President Coolidge, and the tree lights up to commemorate the President's historic event.

There are two Great Falls Retail Stores helping sell ornaments this year:



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Ornaments are on sale at Great Dogs of Great Falls and The Studio at \$25 each.

Great Dogs of Great Falls, Great Falls Shopping Center, 9859 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls, 703-759-3601; and The Studio, 10123 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls, 703-757-2330.

The ornaments sell for \$25 each.

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OPINION

Season of Giving Never Has To End

Why ending childhood hunger should be your New Year's resolution.

BY AMY JOHNSON, JENNIFER KONISH
AND NICK ARENT

The holiday season is one of our favorite times of year because it's all about the best things in life. It's a time for celebrating, bringing age-old cultural traditions to life, and spending time with family and friends. It's about being thankful for all of the things we are fortunate enough to have in our lives and reminding people how much we love and appreciate them. Oh and we suppose the delicious food that accompanies all of these things makes them that much more enjoyable!

During the holidays there are still a number of people who are struggling to make ends meet and many who don't have enough to eat, but luckily, it is also the season of giving. Around the country, the holidays inspire hundreds of thousands of people to give to the poor. Caring individuals get involved by donating to hunger-relief organizations such as the Capital Area Food Bank — the largest non-profit serving the Washington metro area — serving at soup kitchens, and finding other ways to contribute to the improvement of our communities. Especially when it comes to sharing food, we make sure that everyone has something to eat. The holiday spirit unites us, brings out the best in us, and motivates us to make a real difference in the lives of others.

This year, let's make it our New Year's resolution to keep this level of engagement continuing into 2016 by tackling one of most

tragic problems facing our country — childhood hunger.

About 400,000 children here in Virginia alone are at risk of going hungry and it's a problem we can't afford to put off for another year. Despite all the pies, casseroles, hams and turkeys that will be enjoyed over the next several weeks, over 15.5 million kids across the country are food insecure. According to No Kid Hungry "three out of four public school teachers say students regularly come to school hungry" — another alarming statistic. In a country as prosperous as our own, it is absolutely unacceptable that there are any children who don't know where they are going to get their next meal.

The bottom line is that when kids are hungry, they struggle to learn, and kids who struggle to learn, struggle in life. With stomachs growling, hungry children sit through class unable to focus and get the most out of school. Fatigue and weakness as the result of poor nutrition make it difficult for them to stay awake or participate in physical activities like recess and PE. They are more likely to suffer from hyperactivity, miss school, and experience other behavioral problems which creates a negative learning environment for all students — even their peers who are not food insecure. Perhaps the scariest thing about childhood food insecurity is the inability for a child to reach their full potential because of the dramatic damage hunger does to their brain. Over time, hungry students fall behind their peers academically and many of them never catch up making it far more difficult for them to find good jobs and take care of their children once they grow up. The medical sector is beginning to reprioritize its resources to see healthy food as the important intervention it is. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics recently recommended for the first time that pediatri-

cians screen all children for food insecurity.

If we want to make sure every child gets a fair shot in life, we need to make sure our elected officials and decision-makers properly fund and improve existing food assistance programs such as free/reduced price school meals, SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and WIC. Research shows that these programs help students to perform better in school and in life — but they don't go far enough. First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe is an excellent example of how politicians from both sides of the aisle should be making this issue a priority and continuing to develop new solutions.

Congress is currently considering legislation to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act and to make changes to a number of food assistance programs. This legislation will influence funding for programs like the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program which allows the Capital Area Food Bank and other organizations to provide nutritious meals to food insecure children when school is out of session. If you are as concerned about childhood hunger as we are, you can contact your elected officials and urge them to take action by calling the congressional switchboard at 202-225-3121.

We will start 2016 with one in six kids across Virginia waking up at risk of going hungry throughout the year. With your help — by making ending childhood hunger your New Year's resolution and taking action on this issue throughout the year — we can work toward a future where we wake up on New Year's Day to a country where every child's basic needs are met so that they all have a fair opportunity to be successful in life.

Amy Johnson and Jennifer Konish are the NOVA Kids Cafe Coordinators with the Capital Area Food Bank. Nick Arent is a Campaign Organizer with Virginia Fair Share.

Justice for Juveniles

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)



I often quote from papers written by the staff of the Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis; they provide the most fact-based, nonpartisan, clear analysis of key issues facing Virginians (<http://www.thecommonwealthinstitute.org/>). Recently, I attended the 2015 Policy Summit held by the Institute in Richmond. Topics at the Summit included the declining state support for public schools in Virginia, accessing health care, and returning more money to the working poor through the Earned Income Tax Credit. One topic around which there seems to be a high level of political consensus developing was "Criminal Justice Reform: Opportunities to Save Money and Help Communities."

In a paper published by The Commonwealth Institute, it was reported that Virginia keeps more youth incarcerated than most states. As of 2013 for which the most recent federal data is available, Virginia incarcerated 79 youth in

state facilities for every 100,000 youth age 10 or older living in the state. That's 75 percent higher than the national rate of 45 state incarcerated youth per 100,000 youth in the country. But that does not mean that Virginians are safer or that more youth are diverted from criminal behavior. In fact, the opposite is true. According to data from the Department of Juvenile Justice, almost three-quarters of youth who have been held in the state's juvenile prisons are convicted of another crime within three years of release. Of great concern is the fact that youth who are held in the state's youth prisons for longer periods of time actually have higher rates of re-arrest within a year of release than youth who are held for shorter periods of time!

Virginia's current youth prison system consists of two youth prisons, Bon Air and Beaumont, in the Richmond suburbs. More affluent areas like Fairfax County have established local alternative programs. The highest rates of commitment to the state youth prisons come from the localities that have the highest poverty levels. As the Institute reported, "not only

is Virginia's current system not working to rehabilitate youth and keep communities safe, it is also very expensive. The per capita cost of incarcerating youth in Virginia's juvenile correctional centers was \$148,214 in FY 2015. Local programs are lower in cost as well as more effective at reducing recidivism.

Efforts have been underway to reform the current system for a number of years, but that movement needs to be accelerated. Wealthy communities are way ahead in establishing treatment programs, but these programs that are effective in keeping children out of trouble in the future must be extended to all localities regardless of wealth. The state must resist any effort to dump the problem on localities without providing necessary funds to make alternative programs available. The pipeline from school to prison must be shut off. Alternative solutions that include intensive treatment for offenders and families can keep the community safe, rehabilitate young people before they become criminals, and save money. There is widespread bipartisan agreement that progress needs to be accelerated in this area. It will bring justice to juveniles.

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News



PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Annie Santos, 11, of Annie's Goodies, demonstrated that she is a serious baker, here with her chocolate-peppermint cupcakes with a creamy swirl on top.



Denise Hicks (center) opens her new store at 2920 M Street in Georgetown, with her old Great Falls Farmers Market buddies, Alishya (left) of Bon Vivant and Marika (right) of TSMBKS.

Great Falls Farmers Market Applauds Local Talent

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY
MARKET MANAGER

Saturday, Dec. 12, was our first day this winter inside the Grange and we were excited to have two young culinary talents join us: Annie Santos of Annie's Goodies, and Steven Kurtz of Whippourwill. Annie has been longing to show her baking abilities. She prepared a rich chocolate cupcake with peppermint inside with a rich creamy frosting swirl. She also prepared white and dark chocolate bars with peppermint. It was clear that Annie knew how to give baked goods a lot of pizzazz. Steven offered cookie jars of various cookies and brownies. I have tried a jar of oatmeal raisin cookies and found that I could whip up a tray of cookies in record time, thanks to Steven's excellent preparation work. Everything is carefully measured, ensuring an excellent outcome.

After the market closed on Saturday evening, we headed downtown to applaud Denise Hick's opening of her new Postmodern Foods boutique at 2920 M Street in Georgetown. The Great Falls Farmers Market was one of the farmers markets that played an important role in incubating Denise's fledgling business in its earliest days. Our community can be proud of our combined support of Denise, making it possible for her business to thrive and grow.

Our community farmers market is small, making it a wonderful place to cultivate relationships, get to know what customers are looking for and appreciate - and then there is the mutual support and friendship among the vendors - each



Great Falls Farmers Market opened indoors at the Grange Hall on Saturday, Dec. 12, at 9818 Georgetown Pike with two floors of vendors and several outside.

trying to launch a successful small business. We cannot thank you enough for the vital part you play in encouraging new talent!

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Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova with Michael L. O'Reilly, Chairman of the Governing Board, Fairfax County Office to End and Prevent Homelessness.



Verdia L. Haywood, former Deputy County Executive and Governing Board member, with Glynda Hall, Partnership Development Manager for the Office to End and Prevent Homelessness, and Kathy Albarado, CEO of Helios HR in Reston.

PHOTOS BY MARY KIMM/THE CONNECTION



Wendy Lemieux, of the Fairfax County Office of Public Private Partnerships.

Partnership Launches 'Build a Village' Campaign

Goal to end homelessness in Fairfax County by 2018 looms; more than 400 children are among the homeless here.

Dozens of business leaders, elected officials and advocates for ending homelessness gathered Monday, Dec. 14 in the offices of Piedmont Fund Services in Herndon to launch the "Build a Village" campaign.

The effort is designed to provide funds to help end homelessness in Fairfax County. Businesses pledged more than \$20,000 at the event just to begin. Jim Corcoran, president and CEO of the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce, Don Owens of Griffin-Owens Insurance in Herndon, John Sekas of Sekas Homes in Vienna and Kathy Albarado, CEO of Helios HR in Reston, each pledged \$5,000.

Albarado shared her personal story, which included periods of homelessness when she was growing up as her mother fled domestic violence.

The Build a Village concept, which graphically builds houses with donations starting at one brick for \$25, a window or chimney for \$250, \$500 to build the front door and \$5,000 completing a house, is the brainchild of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce and its president Eileen Curtis, who was on hand for the kickoff. Apple Federal Credit Union will manage donations.

In 2015, about 1,200 people were literally homeless, including 431 children. More than 60 percent of the homeless adults in families were employed, but their jobs didn't pay them enough to afford housing. Domestic violence was the cause of homelessness for more than 40 percent of the adults in families who are homeless. Of the 488 single individuals who were homeless, 52 were 18-24 years old; 123 were 55 years old or older. Two hundred sixty eight homeless individuals were dealing with serious mental illness and/or substance abuse.

Lack of affordable housing is the main cause of homelessness in Fairfax County, according to the Fairfax County Office to



Sharon Bulova, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and Supervisor Catherine Hudgins (D-Hunter Mill) both serve on Governing Board of the Office to End and Prevent Homelessness, and were on hand to support the launch of the "Build a Village" campaign.



Delegate-elect Jennifer Boysko (D-86) with Marge Preston, Executive Director of FACETS.



Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Cornerstones, with Nannette Bowler, Director of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services.



Jeff Lisanick of Vienna, and Joe Meyer, Executive Director of Shelter House.

Prevent and End Homelessness. Low incomes and expensive housing make it impossible to pay for an apartment when earning minimum wage — even working 24

hours per day, seven days a week. Monthly rent for a two-bedroom apartment is at least \$1,500, meaning a family would need an annual income of \$58,760 to afford a two-

bedroom apartment.

To donate, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless and click on "Build a Village" campaign.

CALENDAR

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

WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

Walk, Waddle and Wiggle. 10:30 a.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Animals move in many different ways. Walk like a turtle, waddle like a penguin and wiggle like a worm as we explore the world of animal movement through music, activities and stories. Presented by Riverbend Park and sponsored by the Friends of the Dolley Madison Library. Ages 3-5. 703-356-0770.

NVTC Titans Series. 7-9:15 a.m. The Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. John Chen, executive chairman and CEO of BlackBerry, will headline the organization's upcoming Titans series. During a fireside chat with the Consumer Technology Association's Gary Shapiro, Chen will discuss the ups and downs of innovation, share his experiences turning around momentum-based technology companies, and provide insights into BlackBerry's corporate strategy and focus on security. 703-904-7878, x207. www.nvtc.org.

THURSDAY/DEC. 17

Holiday Crafts for Children. 5:30-9 p.m. Meadowlark, 9750 Meadowlark Gardens Court, Vienna. Visit the craft table and make a free craft to decorate for the holidays. http://winterwalkoflights.com. 703-255-3631.

Author Reading. 7:30 p.m. Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike. Local author Laura Elliott will read and sign copies of her new novel "DaVinci's



Musicologist, humorist and jazz pianist John Eaton will share the history and harmonies of some favorite seasonal songs from the American Songbook at a special "Holiday Spectacular" on Saturday, Dec. 19 at The Alden.

Tiger." Free. 703-757-8560.

Caroling on the Town Green. 6:30 p.m. 144 Maple Ave., Vienna. All ages are welcome to participate in traditional caroling and to enjoy the marshmallow-roasting stations. Weather permitting. 703-255-6360.

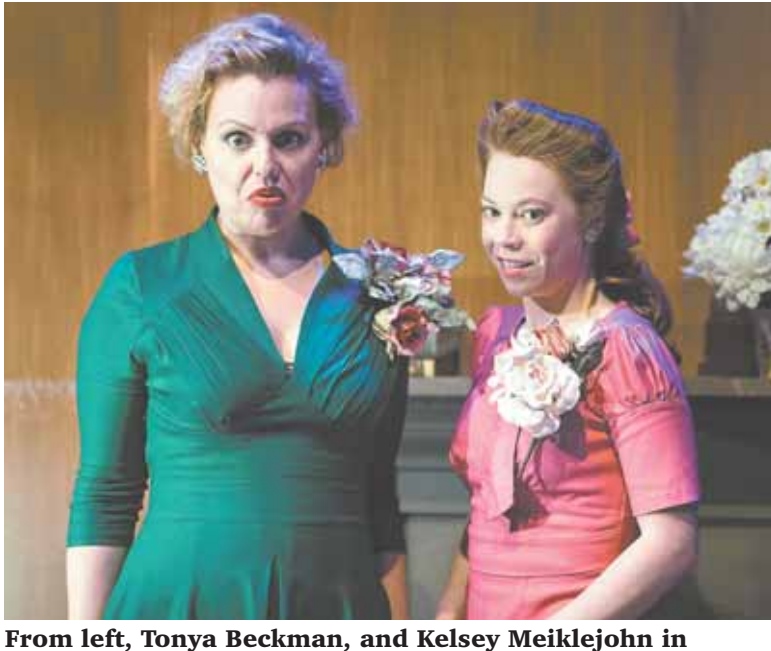
Model Investment Club of Northern Virginia. 7 p.m. Dolley Madison Library, 1244 Oak Ridge Avenue, McLean. Learn more about investing following an investment club model. New visitors welcome. 703-356-0770.

Cat Janice CD Release Party. 6 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Cat Come join for the part as Cat Janice releases CD this winter!

Janice is a rock/alternative singer from the Washington, D.C. area. Her musical debut began in 2013 when she was a featured artist at Doah Fest in Luray, VA. Cat has plans to release her next EP in Winter 2015 after being in studio with producer Austin Bello of Forever the Sickest Kids. \$15-\$20. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

FRIDAYS/DEC. 18

VBA Lead Share Breakfast. 7:30-9 a.m. American Legion, Post 180, 320 Center St, Vienna. Fee for breakfast required. Any questions, contact Linda



From left, Tonya Beckman, and Kelsey Meiklejohn in "Harvey" at 1st Stage. The show runs through Dec. 20 in Tysons Corner. Photo by Teresa Castracane.

Christ at Linda@LindaAChrist.com.

SATURDAY/DEC. 19

John Eaton "Holiday Spectacular." 2 p.m. The Alden, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Musicologist, humorist and jazz pianist will share the history and harmonies of some favorite seasonal songs from the American Songbook at a special "Holiday Spectacular." www.aldentheatre.org. 703-790-0123.

Breakfast with Santa. 9:30 a.m.-11 a.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. Come enjoy for breakfast with Santa and crafts! A photographer will be on hand to take pictures of child(ren) with Santa. The photo will be emailed to parents

following the event. Space is limited to the first 115 registrants. Early registration recommended. Fees: \$20 per person/\$15 MCC district residents; children 24 months or younger can attend free with a registered adult. http://www.mcleancenter.org/. 703-790-0123.

SUNDAY/DEC. 20

Filene Center Backstage Tour. 2 p.m. Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts, 1551 Trap Road, Vienna. Stand on a world-class stage, learn how a theater runs, and get a sneak peek at where the stars get ready. Tours are limited to 30 participants. 703-255-1827 to RSVP or for additional information.

Ongoing

Weekly Storytime. Wednesday and Saturday. 11 a.m. Barnes & Noble, 7851 L Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Themes and Titles vary. Free admission.

"Harvey." Check for show times. Nov. 12-Dec. 20. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, this beloved classic is a treat for the whole family. Veta Simmons and her daughter Myrtle Mae have just moved back into town and are making quite a splash on the social scene. Gatherings and engagements abound as Myrtle Mae peruses for a viable suitor. \$15-\$30. www.1ststagetysons.org. 703-854-1856.

Great Falls Decorating Contest. Through Dec. 22. Bring out your lights, bows, tinsel, inflatables and everything festive to help light up the holidays in town. Submit pictures of your business, organization or neighborhood to info@celebrategreatfalls.org and then vote for your favorites on our website. Voting runs through Dec. 22. www.celebrategreatfalls.org.

Meadowlark Gardens' Winter Walk of Lights. Nov. 14-Jan. 4. A half-a-million colorful LED lights span the lakeside and gardens of Meadowlark Botanical Gardens off Beulah Road in nostalgic and fairytale scenes of the holiday season. http://winterwalkoflights.com/.

Bingo Night! 4 p.m. Sundays, Dec. 13, 20, 27. Vienna Volunteer Fire Department, 400 Center Street South, Vienna. The Vienna Volunteer Fire Department hosts smoke-free bingo every Sunday night in the Flame Room and activities include 33 games for a \$100 prize each and one \$1,000 jackpot game. Admission: minimum \$10. 703-255-6300.

53rd Annual James A. Bland Contest. Through Monday, Feb. 15. Vienna Lions Club invites elementary and high school vocalist and instrumentalists to present a song or piece for cash prizes. For information and application, contact Susan Stiles at sandes89@yahoo.com or 703-938-1142.

Vienna Lions Club Christmas Tree Sales. Weekdays noon-8 p.m.; Saturdays & Sundays 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Through Dec. 17. Walgreen's lot, 225 Maple Ave East, Vienna. Help the Lions help the youth, vision- and hearing-impaired of our community. Fresh, live, beautiful Christmas trees, wreaths, roping, Virginia peanuts, extra-large coloring books all for sale at the best prices in Town.

Dennis Croyon and Susan La Mont Exhibit. Through Dec. 20. 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road, Tysons Corner. View the works of two accomplished artists while attending a performance of "Harvey." www.1ststagetysons.org. 703-854-1856.

Nutcracker Tea. 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Dec. 9. The Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Delight in a contemporary twist on the beloved holiday classic by the South Riding Dance School while you enjoy afternoon tea, petite sandwiches and pastries. All children will go home with a nutcracker doll. \$79 per person. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons. 703-748-4068.

Enchanted Forest Tea. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Dec. 20. The Ritz-Carlton Tysons Corner, 1700 Tysons Blvd., McLean. Watch a dazzling performance by the South Riding Dance School as the Snow Fairy strives to save the woodland ballerinas from the Icicle King, whom is trying to freeze over the forest. Enjoy afternoon tea, petite sandwiches and pastries. \$79 per person. www.ritzcarlton.com/tysons. 703-748-4068.

Optimist Club Christmas Tree Sales. Through Dec. 19. Weekdays 2-9 p.m.; Saturdays & Sundays 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Maple Avenue West at Branch Road. Fill your holidays with the sight and scent of fresh Fraser Fir trees and wreaths, and pine garlands. Trees range in size from cute and cozy 4-foot tall to towering 12-footers. All sales benefit the Optimist Club of Greater Vienna Youth Fund. Any questions, contact at info@optimistclubofgreatervienna.org.

Trail and Ales with Caboose Brewing and Grass Roots Fitness. Mondays through Jan. 31. Caboose Brewing Company, 520 Mill Street, NE Vienna. Come Run with us every Monday night. \$1 Off All Pints! All paces welcome. We will run between 3-5 miles with options to go shorter or longer. You can walk or run. Dog and stroller friendly. Contact Joann Megninley at joannandfrancine@grassrootsfitness.org.

Tai Chi Beginners' Practice. Saturdays, 8-9 a.m. St. Luke's Catholic School Gymnasium, 7005 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Weekly Tai Chi practice. Group has met for over 20 years. Free. FreeTaiChi.org. 703-759-9141.

music. \$15-\$18. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

MONDAY/DEC. 28

Winter Break Trip - Dave & Buster's. 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave. McLean. Eat, drink and

play games! Dave and Buster's is one of the best dining and entertainment attractions around. Lunch and a \$20 game card with unlimited arcade game play are included. Bring money for additional ticket games, if desired. Fees: \$65/\$55 MCC district residents. http://www.mcleancenter.org/. 703-448-8336.



Invites you to Christmas Worship

Sunday, December 20

- 9:00 and 11:15 am - A Festival of Lessons and Carols
- Christmas Eve
- 4:00 pm - Family Service of Holy Eucharist
- Christmas music at 3:30 pm
- 7:00 pm - Holy Eucharist
- Christmas music at 6:30 pm
- 10:00 pm - Holy Eucharist
- Christmas music at 9:30 pm
- Christmas Day
- 10:00 am - Holy Eucharist

6715 Georgetown Pike
McLean, Virginia 22101
703-356-4902
www.stjohnsmclean.org

McLean Symphony Concert. 3-4:45 p.m. Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. My Favorite Things: Holiday Celebration. Featuring Tanya Anisimova, Cello. Celebrate the season with holiday favorites, and sing along with carols, children's songs, and a Hanukkah medley. \$Free, \$15, \$20, \$25. www.mclean-symphony.org. 703-991-7197.

A Cappella Afternoon: Exit 245 + BluesTones. 2 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. With the popularity of Pitch Perfect movies, NBC's "Sing Off" and the John Legend-produced reality show "Sing It On", collegiate a cappella has seen a rise in popularity and visibility. Come join for two of the James Madison University's a cappella groups - the all male Exit 245 and the all female group the BluesTones - performing lively a cappella music! \$10. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

Griffin House. 7:30 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Born and raised in Ohio, House began writing and recording and issued his first independent release, Upland, in 2003. Join the night as Griffin House shares with audience some of his great music. \$18-\$20. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

MONDAY/DEC. 21

Clauster Eve: Jammin Java Songwriters Circle Holiday Edition featuring Todd Wright, Anthony Fiaco, Luke Brindley, and Scott Simons. 7:30 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Join the four songwriters as they share with audience some of the holiday songs. \$16. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

MONDAY-TUESDAY/DEC. 21-22

Animal Vets Workshop. 9 a.m. Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Spend the day with our exhibit animals. Check their health, weight and size; clean and refresh their tanks and enjoy some fun activities and games. Bring snack, lunch and drink. Wear old clothes. \$120/\$135. Ages 6 to 11. http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend-park/calendar.htm.

TUESDAY/DEC. 22

Jammin Java presents Todd Wright's 13th Annual Santa Clauster-f@%! Christmas Spectacular. 7:30 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Join and have fun for the holiday seasons with songs, including folk, rock and more! \$15-\$55. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

THURSDAY/DEC. 24

Good For The Jews. 7:30 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Good For the Jews is a clever, hilarious music duo from New York whose Christmas Eve shows at Jammin Java have become a grand tradition. Join for the duo as they share songs about bar mitzvahs, Passover, Jewish girls, and relatives who live in Boca Raton. \$20. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

FRIDAY/DEC. 25

It's a Fu@*in SUPER bob Christmas. 8 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Join for some lively music from the Super bob rock band. \$12-\$15. https://jamminjava.com/. 703-255-1566.

SATURDAY/DEC. 26

Egypt "Annual Reunion Show." 8 p.m. Jammin Java, 227 Maple Ave E, Vienna. Join the band with a long history, and have some fun time listening to their

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WEEK IN GREAT FALLS

Senior Center to Host Trivia Game Luncheon

The Great Falls Senior Center will host a Trivia Game for Seniors - and lunch - on Tuesday, Jan. 5 from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. upstairs at The Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike. Members may contact Polly Fitzgerald at pollyfitz1@verizon.net or by calling 703-759-4345. To become a member for 2016, contact GFSC, P.O. Box 425, Great Falls, VA 22066 with name, mailing address, phone number and email address to receive monthly members letters and updates. Include a check for the annual dues of \$15 made payable to GFSC. Applications may also be found at gfseniors.org.

The sponsor is the Great Falls Area Ministries formerly the Great Falls Ecumenical Council.

Great Falls Senior Center is partnered with the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services in all ventures and events.

FAITH NOTES

Faith Notes are for announcements and events in the faith community. Send to vienna@connectionnewspapers.com. Deadline is Friday.

St. John's Episcopal Church will hold A Festival of Carols on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 9 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. On Christmas Eve, Thursday, Dec. 24, services will be:

*4 p.m. - Family Service of Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 3:30 p.m.

*7 p.m. - Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 6:30 p.m.

*10 p.m. - Holy Eucharist with Christmas Music at 9:30 p.m.

There will be a Holy Eucharist service on Christmas Day at 10 a.m.

The church is located at 6715 Georgetown Pike, McLean. 703-356-4902. www.stjohnsmclean.org.

Celebrate Advent and Christmas at Trinity United Methodist Church, 1205 Dolley Madison Blvd., McLean. Weekly worship is Sundays at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.; Wednesdays at noon. Holiday events include:

Sunday, Dec. 20, Lessons and Carols, 10:30 a.m. service.

Thursday, Dec. 24, Christmas Eve, 5 p.m. family service; 8 p.m., Candlelight and Communion; 11 a.m., Candlelight and Communion. www.imtrinity.org.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 2589 Chain Bridge Road, Vienna, is holding Sunday evening worship service in a less formal atmosphere and more intimate setting to help you get ready for the week ahead. Sundays, 6 p.m. Communion offered. No childcare. 703-938-2119 or www.elcvienna.org.

St. Francis Episcopal Church, 9220 Georgetown Pike in Great Falls, offers musical, educational, outreach and fellowship ministries in addition to worship services, including a 7:45 a.m. worship service without music; 9 a.m. worship service, children's chapel and children's choirs; 10 a.m. Sunday school and adult forum; and 11 a.m. worship service with adult choir. 703-759-2082.

The Antioch Christian Church offers a time of Prayer and Healing on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. for anyone wanting encouragement and healing through prayers. People are available to pray with you or for you. Antioch Christian Church is located at 1860 Beulah Road in Vienna. www.antiochdoc.org

The Jewish Social Services Agency (JSSA) offers a wide variety of support groups for those with emotional, social, and physical challenges. www.jssa.org/growth-learning.

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

McLean Bible Church Fitness Class at Body & Soul Fitness. Gain balance, energy and strength at 9:45 a.m. Mondays and Fridays. Free childcare for registered students. bodyandsoul@mcleanbible.org.

St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, 1830 Kirby Road in McLean, holds a third Sunday service every month at 10:15 a.m. which allows children to play active roles in the music and as greeters and ushers. Traditional services are every Sunday at 8:15 and 10:15 a.m.

Vienna Christian Healing Rooms are open, every Saturday, 1-5 p.m., at 8200 Bell Lane. A team of Christians is available to anyone requesting prayer. Free and open to the public. 703-698-9779 or www.viennachristianhealingrooms.com.

Chesterbrook United Methodist Church is at 1711 Kirby Road, McLean. Worship service is at 11 a.m. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. for adults and children. 703-356-7100 or www.ChesterbrookUMC.org.

Centering Prayer Group meets Fridays, 9:30 a.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. The hour includes a brief reading related to Centering Prayer, followed by a 20-minute prayer period. E-mail Martha Thomas at mmthomas211@hotmail.com or call the church at 703-759-3509.

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

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton, offers the Religious Exploration (RE) program for all children, from pre-K toddlers through high school seniors, emphasizing exploration of all religious traditions while developing a personal spiritual path. The RE program offers classes on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. 703-281-4230.

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NEWS

Enjoying ice skating at Tysons Corner Mall rink are (from left); Cathy Onsi, Diego Serrano, Hayden Byrnes, Josh Steiner, and Nick Annunziata of McLean, who was hosting his friends from Maryland and D.C. before exams next week.

PHOTOS BY
STEVE HIBBARD/
THE CONNECTION



Ice rink general manager Marissa Marwell in her office.

Tysons Ice Rink is Open for the Season

BY STEVE HIBBARD
THE CONNECTION

The new 6,000 square foot Tysons Corner Ice Rink officially opened this season on Friday, Nov. 13, and will run through March 6, 2016. The outdoor rink located near the Silver Line Metro is situated on The Plaza next to Lord & Taylor on the second floor of the mall. A new Hyatt Hotel opened next door last March.

What's different this year is all of the surrounding stores and restaurants are fully opened and occupied, said ice rink general manager Marissa Marwell, who's been in

the business for 11 years.

"Now that the plaza is fully opened, there's something for everyone," she said. "We've got the ice skating, the restaurants (Barrel and Bushel, Earl's Kitchen and Bar, Starbucks and Shake Shack), and the playground and fire pits to warm up."

The cost for ice skating is \$10 for admission, \$9 for child ages 12 and under, and \$6 per skate rentals. The group rate (10 or more guests) is \$12 per person (includes admission and skate rental). The rink hours are Mondays and Tuesdays from 3 to 7 p.m.; Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3 to 9 p.m.; Fridays 3 to 11 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; and Sundays 11

a.m. to 7 p.m. The skate rental shop is located inside the mall on Level 2 near Lord & Taylor.

Besides general ice skating, the rink offers Birthday Party packages, fundraising opportunities, learn-to-skate lessons (private and semi-private) and private rentals.

"It's never too late to learn to skate," said Marwell. "We offer ice skating lessons for ages 3 and up. (Spaces are still available for Session 2.)... It's also a perfect way to celebrate your birthday party with friends in a magical outdoor atmosphere."

For younger kids, the rink offers a weekly Cartoon Skate on Saturday mornings. "We

have our rink mascots join the children out on the ice from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Saturday morning," said Marwell. "We have Pepper the Penguin, Spots the Dalmatian, Winter the Polar Bear and Lutz the Lion. They skate and interact with the children and their families."

For the older crowd, there's Saturday Night Rock and Skate from 7 to 9 p.m. with DJ Civil. "We do live request, shout outs and a lot of dancing. It's really fun. It's open to everyone," said Marwell.

For more information, visit the web site: www.tysonscornerlearntoskate.com. The email is skatetysonscorner@gmail.com. Call 703-356-1240.

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a child is born
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We want to be part of your family's Christmas tradition throughout Maryland and Virginia this year. Join McLean Bible Church for Christmas Eve service at any of our campuses.

Christmas Services

DECEMBER 23, 2015
McLean Bible Church Montgomery County Campus
12440 Parklawn Drive, Rockville, MD 20852
Family services at 6:30 pm and 8 pm

DECEMBER 24, 2015
McLean Bible Church Tysons Campus
8925 Leesburg Pike, Vienna, VA 22182
Family services at 3 pm and 4:30 pm
Communion services at 7 pm, 9 pm and 11 pm

DECEMBER 24, 2015
McLean Bible Church Loudoun Campus
44180 Riverside Parkway, Lansdowne, VA 20176
Family services at 4 pm and 6 pm
Communion service at 8 pm

McLean Bible Church Prince William Campus
10002 Battlevue Parkway, Manassas, VA 20109
Family services at 5 pm and 6 pm
Communion service at 7pm

To learn more about our Christmas celebration, visit www.mcleanbible.org/christmas.

"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

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New ways to promote STEM disciplines at Colvin Run Elementary School.

BY JEAN T. JIANOS
THE CONNECTION

“Learning for Learning’s Sake.” That is the gift that Susan Blackwell, the Science Resource teacher who runs the STEAM Lab at Colvin Run Elementary School (CRES), gives to every student at CRES every week. Blackwell, a former middle school science teacher who has also taught high school level courses, has been responsible for developing and implementing the STEAM Lab curriculum at CRES for the past four years.

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) describes STEAM as student-centered, project-based and interdisciplinary instruction that integrates Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics. The entire fourth grade at CRES is involved in one such STEAM Lab project this academic year.

Each fourth grade student has planted a tulip bulb in a Journey North Tulip Test Garden. They are applying the scientific steps of making observations about the tulip bulbs and planting conditions, hypothesizing about when the tulips will emerge based upon data reported from other students across the Northern Hemisphere, and then observing when the tulips emerge and bloom, and reporting their data.

Together with students from Zelenograd, Russia, near Moscow, and everywhere in between, they will track the change in seasons and climate around the globe, and will analyze the data to see how climate, geography and plant growth are related.

“We are going to watch spring happen across the world,” says Blackwell.

WHETHER OUTDOORS in the Tulip Test Garden or within the school building, STEAM learning takes place inside and outside the STEAM Lab. CRES kindergarten classroom teacher Connie Bolz was recently recognized by the National Geographic Education Blog as their Educator of the Week for her S.T.E.A.M. Kids project. Bolz used colored, geometric shapes, or “glyphs,” to introduce the youngest students at CRES to symbols that have become a universal language at the school.

FCPS considers the use and interpretation of symbols in academics and the visual arts in evaluating a student’s application of knowledge. How a student perceives and manipulates patterns, colors and symbols is used by FCPS as an indicator of creative and productive thinking.

Bolz also involved parents in the project. Facilitating relationships with parents by providing students and their parents with such hands-on experiences is one of the objectives of the STEAM Project.

Parents also volunteer in the STEAM Lab and help with hands-on activities. One of the things that Blackwell initiated this year for the Family Science Night, run by the



Colvin Run art teacher Lauren Grimm’s sixth grade students used STEAM elements to design and build inventive playground sculptures.

PHOTOS BY JEAN JIANOS/THE CONNECTION



Nat Geo Education Blog recognized Colvin Run kindergarten teacher Connie Bolz for using colored, geometric shapes, or “glyphs,” in her S.T.E.A.M. Kids project.



PHOTO COURTESY OF FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Fourth grade students at Colvin Run Elementary plan and build Colonial American structures in art class.

CRES Parent Teacher Organization, is a showcase of family-built, popsicle stick structures. “It’s a family project,” she says, “they are working on it as a family, although I’ve told them that any adults working on it always have to have children supervising them . . . It is not a competition . . . We do a lot of engineering projects and we talk about the engineering design diagram and how you go through that process. I’m excited to see what they come up with.”

Researching, planning and building 3-D models of structures also take place in the art classrooms. The FCPS fine arts program emphasizes critical thinking, innovative problem solving, effective communication and collaboration, as well as teaching students to connect ideas across disciplines. CRES art teacher Lauren Grimm’s sixth grade students worked together to create sculptures of inventive play structures after looking at architectural drawings from around the world and thinking about the needs of the community they wanted to involve, including people with limited mobility or low vision.

Grimm’s fourth grade students, who are studying Colonial America in Social Studies, each selected the kind of colonial structure they wanted to build and then designed the form based upon the function, whether a house, stable or tavern. Grimm observes that children in fourth, fifth and sixth grades often want to socialize and discuss projects, so she can harness that energy by giving her students “an art challenge that they can solve together in a creative way.”

She finds that students are much more engaged and active, from an individual perspective, if they have the freedom to deliberate among choices and to develop original ideas that allow for that personal choice.

Both Grimm and Blackwell give their students permission to have failed outcomes. “They always look at me with surprise at first,” says Grimm, “but then I clarify by telling them that being open to failure allows them to be flexible and explore many creative options.” Blackwell defines success for her students as learning from their mistakes. “I actually emphasize failure a lot in STEAM Lab because so many of the students come in thinking that failure is a bad thing,” says Blackwell. “There is so much trial and error in the STEAM Lab, but I emphasize what did you learn, figure out what went wrong and fix it so you can do it better next time.”

CRES PRINCIPAL Ken Junge credits the fact that throughout all of the grade levels, the art teachers and Ms. Blackwell collaborate so well with the classroom and technology teachers to ensure that students see the connections among the projects on which they are working. “That’s the important part,” says Junge, “that the students understand that there is a connection between what they are doing as hands-on learning in STEAM Lab and what they are doing in art class and the kind of technology they are using down in the computer lab and how all of that encompasses what they are learning in the classroom as part of their general curriculum.”

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Lessons in Charitable Giving

Conversations, modeling behavior and hands-on actions can help teach children about benevolence and compassion.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

Matthew Mamalian's holiday shopping list included some items that might seem atypical for a 12-year-old middle school student: shampoo, socks, soap and a few snacks. He, along with several friends from his Sunday school class, packed the items in shoeboxes wrapped with holiday paper and tucked a handwritten note of encouragement inside each box.

"We were all laughing and having fun packing them," he said. "We also learned that there are people who really need these things because they don't have a lot else."

The project was part of Interfaith Works'



PHOTO COURTESY OF CYNDY MAMALIAN

Cyndy Mamalian's three children are collecting gifts for the homeless this holiday season. She hopes the project will help them understand the impact that giving can have on others.

holiday giving program, an effort by the local nonprofit organization to meet the needs of the homeless. The holiday season

can be a time for children to learn the principles of benevolence, say child development experts. Involving children in chari-

Interfaith Works Holiday Shoebox Project

Help neighbors in need by decorating and filling shoeboxes with essentials and gift items to spread holiday cheer.

This can be a fun activity for families and groups, large or small. Here are guidelines and suggestions:

- ❖ Start with an empty shoebox, including box lid
- ❖ Cover both box and lid in holiday wrapping paper
- ❖ Write an encouraging note to tuck inside
- ❖ Fill it with suggested items:
\$10 gift card (grocery store, Target)
SmarTrip cards
Travel-sized toiletries like lip balm, deodorant, shaving cream, new crew socks (men's or women's), pocket calendars, mini-flashlight and batteries (AA or AAA), scarf, gloves, mittens, hat, mini-notepads and mini-pens

Deliver shoe boxes to Community Vision program, 8210 Dixon Avenue, Silver Spring, Md., 301-585-4471. For more information contact Yvonne Esipila at yesipila@iworksmc.org or 301-315-1097.

table activities, modeling altruistic behavior and making a link between compassion and a higher power are all effective ways parents can teach their children the value of giving to the less fortunate.

SEE TEACHING, PAGE 17

SPECIAL CONNECTIONS CALENDAR

Advertising Deadlines are the previous Thursday unless noted.

DECEMBER

12/30/2015.....Children's Connection

JANUARY

1/6/2016.....Wellbeing, Renewal, Resolutions

1/13/2016.....HomeLifeStyle

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Jan. 18

1/20/2016.....A+ Camps & Schools

1/27/2016.....Community Guide

1/27/2016.....Winter Fun, Food, Arts & Entertainment; Valentine's Preview

FEBRUARY

2/3/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts I

2/3/2016.....Wellbeing – National Children's Dental Health Month

2/10/2016.....HomeLifeStyle

2/10/2016.....Valentine's Dining & Gifts II

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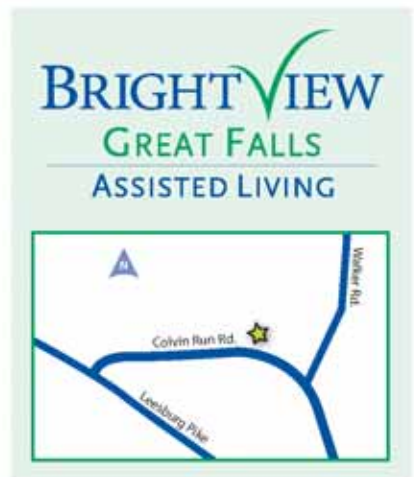
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SPORTS



PHOTOS BY CRAIG STERBUTZEL/THE CONNECTION

Langley's Anna Huang is a level 9 club gymnast.



Langley's Eileen Wen competes on floor during Monday's gymnastics meet at Langley High School.

Langley Gymnastics Seeing Improvement

Saxons place fourth at home meet.

BY JON ROETMAN
THE CONNECTION

Second-year Langley gymnastics coach Michael Comini is pleased with the level of support in his program.

He's also pleased with the improved team scores.

Comini said the Saxons' peaked in the 70s last season. On Monday, Langley placed fourth at a five-team home meet with a score of 109.4.

"I think the success story here is we have [more than 30 gymnasts on the team]," said Comini, who coached at Herndon in the 1980s and 1990s. "That's a big team, so we've got a lot of support here."

Anna Huang is a level 9 club gymnast at Dulles Gymnastics and one of the Saxons most talented competitors. She placed fourth on floor Monday with a score of 8.45.

"She's a solid all-around," Comini said. "She's probably going to add 10 points to our team score."

Eileen Wen competed in the all-around

for the Saxons, producing a score of 23.175.

Amy Wen, and team captains Christina Hara and Nikki Orsolini are also key contributors.

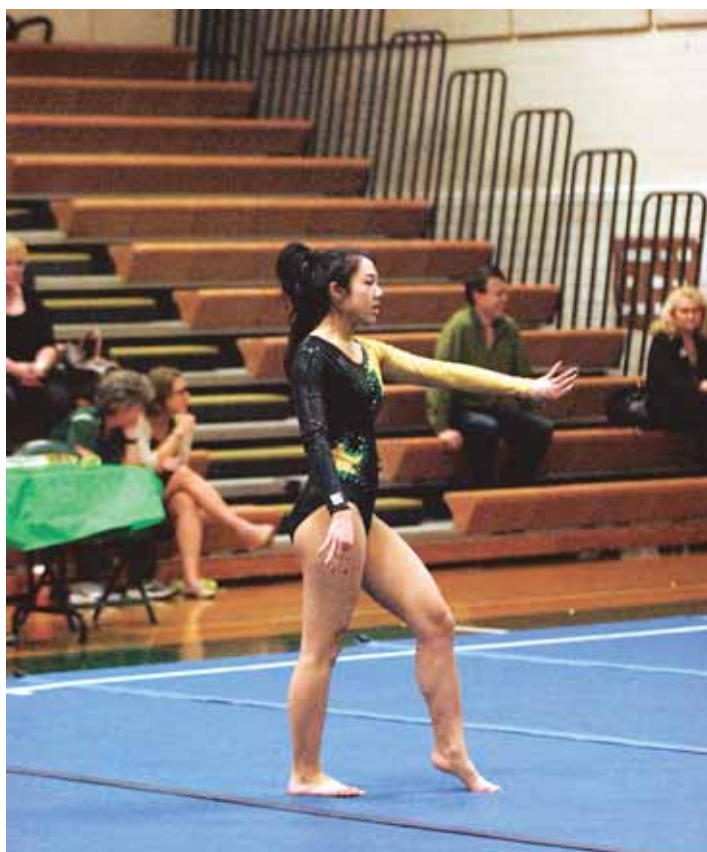
"We're looking at maybe being a contender this year in districts," Comini said. "If we can just finish up in the top three, I think I'd be happy."

Yorktown won Monday's meet with a score of 136.925. Washington-Lee finished second with a total of 129.175, followed by South Lakes (120.325), Langley and Madison (100.25).

Yorktown produced the top three finishers in the all-around: Julia Hays (35.025), Juliette Mitrovich (34.825) and Olivia Zavrel (33.825).



Amy Wen produced a score of 7.6 on floor during Monday's meet.



Christina Hara is a captain for the Langley gymnastics team.

SPORTS ROUNDUPS

Langley Girls Improve to 5-0

The Langley girls' basketball team defeated Mount Vernon 54-34 at Bell Multicultural High School on Dec. 12, improving its record to 5-0.

The Saxons faced South Lakes on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. Langley will travel to face Washington-Lee at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18.

Langley Boys Go 3-0 in Bahamas

The Langley boys' basketball team won each of its three games during a recent trip to the Bahamas.

The Saxons defeated The Oakwood School (California) 65-35 on Dec. 10 and 56-46 on Dec. 11. Langley beat The Vanguard School (Florida) 71-49 on Dec. 12.

Langley improved its record to 3-2 during the trip.

The Saxons faced South Lakes on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. Langley will host Washington-Lee at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18.

McLean Girls Start 3-1

The McLean girls' basketball team won its first three games of the season before losing to defending region champion Oakton 52-27 on Dec. 8.

The Highlanders opened the season with wins over St. John's Catholic Prep (46-45) on Nov. 30, Woodson (46-41) on Dec. 3 and Robinson (53-43) on Dec. 5.

McLean faced Washington-Lee on Tuesday, after The Connection's deadline. The Highlanders will host Hayfield at 7:15 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 18.

McLean Boys', Girls' Swim Teams Beat Hayfield

The McLean boys' and girls' swim teams defeated Hayfield on Dec. 12.

The girls' team remained undefeated with a 218-87 victory. The Highlanders took first, second and third place in eight of 12 events.

Senior captain Emma Chamberlayne, freshman Julia Green (two), junior Julia LeMuyon, sophomore Serena Wood, junior Elizabeth Ulrich, senior Rachel Montgomery, junior Julia Hunter, and sophomore Mary-Kate Mahoney each produced an individual first-place finish.

The boys' team improved to 2-1 with a 182-121 victory.

Senior captain Ben Miller finished first in two events. Juniors Andrew Yang and Ethan Cussatt each finished first in an event.

Divers Bobby Trono (junior), Sina Naeemi (sophomore) and Bennett Verderame (freshman) finished 1-2-3.

McLean will face Washington-Lee on Friday, Dec. 18.

Teaching About Benevolence and Compassion

FROM PAGE 15

“Children need to have empathy modeled for them and they need a script to follow or ideas for carrying out charitable acts,” said Christine Pegoraro Schull, Ph.D., professor of Early Childhood Education at Northern Virginia Community College in Alexandria. “Children aspire to be kind and to be good citizens, but they don’t necessarily know how to do these things.”

Involving Matthew and his siblings in philanthropic efforts through Potomac Presbyterian Church is one of the ways that their mother, Cyndy Mamalian, makes a connection between gratitude, charity and a higher power. “I think it’s important for them to think beyond themselves and live out their faith,” she said. “You need to put your faith into action, and that is about caring for other people.”

Janet Dunlop, Matthew’s Sunday school teacher and a member of the Mission Committee at Potomac Presbyterian Church, melds volunteer projects with class discussions to teach her students about gratitude and charity. This holiday season, as the middle-school aged children clipped wrapping paper and tied ribbons around shoeboxes filled with deodorant, toothpaste, snacks and other essentials for the

homeless, she gave them a description of those who are on the receiving end of their project.

“Many young people growing up in Potomac don’t have much experience with homelessness,” said Dunlop. “When my husband and I arrive at the shelter with these boxes, the people there are so happy to receive them. So, this is also about helping the children see another aspect of life and trying to instill in them a life-long ideal of service.”

Charitable giving for adults often means donating old clothes at the end of the tax year or writing a check to a nonprofit organization. However, children might find it difficult to understand how these abstract actions make a difference. That’s why psychologists and educators recommend giving children first-hand experience in caring for others.

Jenny Trope, Ph.D. and her children raised money to purchase grocery store gift cards that they are distributing to homeless men and women they encounter this winter. “It gives the kids a glimpse of what it’s like to be alone, hungry and stuck outside when it’s cold,” said Trope, who is also a marriage and family therapist based in Arlington.

Such hands-on projects, coupled with a

conversation about why it’s important to take action to aid people in need of a helping hand, could drive home the message. “Children aspire to be kind and to be good citizens, but they don’t necessarily know how to do these things,” said Schull.

A study by the United Nations Foundation and the Women’s Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis found that talking to children about giving is highly effective for encouraging philanthropy, and increases a child’s inclination to give by 20 percent.

“Conversations are critical. Talking about giving in combination with modeling is what actually increases children’s giving,” said Debra J. Mesch, Ph.D., director of the Women’s Philanthropy Institute. “We ... know that these conversations need to be focused on why and how giving ... makes an impact on individuals in need, rather than simply talk that is more general, such

as giving is the right thing to do.”

The dialogue can include concrete examples of how a charitable action will benefit others, say mental health experts. “Around the holidays when you’re struggling to survive, when you’ve lost everything

and every decision you make is about meeting your absolute, basic needs, like how you’re going to take a shower, it’s a nice surprise to get a wrapped box of soaps, toothpaste, socks, snacks and a personal note,” said Nikki Stanaitis, LCSW-C of Interfaith

Works. “It makes a person feel human and gives them the sense of normalcy that we all want.”

Acts of charity displayed year-round can lead to life-long habits of philanthropy. “Don’t reserve donating and volunteering for the holidays. By making it a way of life, you’re sharing your value system about giving and helping others with your children,” said Trope.

“Children need to have empathy modeled for them and they need a script to follow or ideas for carrying out charitable acts.”

— Christine Pegoraro Schull, Ph.D., Northern Virginia Community College

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Naive and Delusional

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



Some days, like today, I don't feel like I have cancer. I feel – delude – myself into thinking that I have/feel what everyone else at my age who doesn't have a "terminal" disease, has/feels. Now whether I'm into something or just rationalizing symptoms like any other cancer patient does – discounting any signs of potential trouble for fear of the consequences – I certainly don't know, and probably wouldn't admit to it anyway; mind over what might actually matter. Nevertheless, it's a good feeling to have, so long as I don't think about it too much and just go with the uninterrupted flow, at least until it's interrupted. I'll spare you the details – in this column, anyway.

But not thinking about having cancer – when you have cancer, seems counterintuitive almost. How do you not think about the most important thing in your life, the "thing" which is very likely shortening that life? I mean, being diagnosed with cancer is not exactly chicken soup for the soul; it's more a harbinger of things to come, most of which are not particularly good. And as much as I would encourage not focusing on a negative and the presumptive self-fulfilling outcome it might portend, denying its existence and pretending that all is right when previously your CT Scans indicated you've been wrong, is reckless and irresponsible, unless you know/feel something that modern medicine has yet to detect.

I don't know anything except what I feel, and most of those feelings are probably being routed through my brain and its desire for self-preservation. The point being: Am I thinking clearly? Thinking wishfully/hopefully? Or thinking normally? That is: pretending, denying, waiting, wondering. Being a cancer patient/survivor is an emotional roller coaster, and feeling good – however fleeting, has many rewards, but feeling bad as I now do (a mere two paragraphs later) is all it's cracked up to be.

Sure, I had chemotherapy the other day, so feeling good, then hours later feeling bad, was not totally unexpected; as you might imagine after nearly seven years of cancer treatment I sort of know the routine/cycle. Still, whenever I feel as good as I did in the opening paragraphs, I get disappointed when the inevitable bad feelings return, which last for a week or so – and what bothers me even more: I should know better (I do know better). But I can't help thinking/hoping that this will be the post-chemotherapy week when I won't feel what I've always felt every week after chemotherapy since the infusions began in early March 2009.

As much as I readily acknowledge how amazingly lucky I am to still be alive, I can't help expecting more. And when I don't get more, but instead get less, I don't usually take it well. Emotionally I get challenged and physically I get compromised. The combination results in a difficult set of circumstances. I don't exactly lose my focus or forget my good fortune, but I am reminded that I have a serious disease, one that is looking for trouble, and occasionally, it does have its way with me. The only saving grace is that it is all very familiar to me now, and as my Auntie Irene used to say: "This too shall pass," which of course, it always does – and then we're back to abnormal.

However, that time when I feel good, it's almost a tease, as I know the forthcoming bad. And yet I want to believe that feeling good, for whatever period, is somehow indicative of a future less complicated than my present. Still, I keep thinking that maybe after this infusion, the week-after will be different. Unfortunately, it's never different. It's always the same. Hope springs eternal though, and as a cancer patient, hope is our most valuable commodity. Thankfully, there's plenty for everyone.

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

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21 Announcements

LEGAL NOTICE

Arlington Endodontics has recently relocated and the office at 4350 N. Fairfax Drive, Suite 160 Arlington, VA has closed. If you are a patient or a referring doctor with questions or concerns relative to the endodontic therapy that was provided in our office, or if you need to speak with the endodontist, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Feimster at 571-312-3762 or Feimster@arlingtonendo1.com.

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WEDNESDAY/DEC. 16

Women's Leadership Council. 9:30-10:30 a.m. 7925 Jones Branch Drive Suite TBD, Tysons. join us for a one hour informational/planning meeting about upcoming events sponsored by Women's Leadership Council. Any question, contact Carla Doyle at 443-909-8665.

THURSDAY/DEC. 17

Community Enhancement Commission. 7:30 p.m. Town Hall, 127 Center Street, South Vienna. 703-255-6360.

Small Business Education Series. 7:30-9 a.m. McLean Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean. This Thursday's topic is "Engage Your Customers with Social Media." \$10, \$15. mtwomey@mcleanchamber.org.

MONDAY/DEC. 21

Alden Theatre Usher Event. 5:30-6:30 p.m. The Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Want to be a part of the arts? Learn how you can become an usher at The Alden. www.mcleancenter.org. 703-790-0123.

TUESDAY/DEC. 22

TIPS I: Lead Sharing & Networking at Fleming's. 12:15-1:30 p.m. Fleming's Prime Steakhouse and Wine Bar, 1960A Chain Bridge Road, McLean.

Free to join, \$16 for lunch. Contact Peter Himmelberger, Travel Cruise and Tour, 703-496-4125 or phimmelberger@travelcruiseandtour.com.

MONDAY/JAN. 4

Town Council Meeting. 8-10:30 p.m. Town Hall Council Chambers, 127 Center Street South, Vienna.

All Town Council meetings are open to the public and individuals are invited to attend and provide their input. Agendas are made available to the public on the Town's website after 12 p.m. on the Friday preceding a scheduled meeting. www.viennava.gov.

FRIDAY/JAN. 15

Falu's Bollywood Orchestra. 8 p.m. The Barnes, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Fronted by one of India's most influential musicians—who's collaborated with masterminds including Yo-Yo Ma and A.R. Rahman—this ethereal ensemble, led by singer Fulu, combines the timeless elegance of Bollywood's musical golden age with an inventive modern style. \$22-\$27. <http://www.wolftrap.org/> or 703-255-1900.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 20

Fairfax Commission on Aging. Noon. Oakton Regional Library, 10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton. The public is welcome to attend and join in the comment period that begins each session. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/coa.htm. 703-324-5403, TTY 711 for meeting access needs.

FRIDAY/JAN. 22

Robyn Hitchcock. 8 p.m. The Barnes, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. One of England's most enduring contemporary singer/songwriters, Robyn Hitchcock began his career performing folk rock in Cambridge. Come enjoy his performance with Emma Swift, who is an alt-country songstress and award-winning radio broadcaster. \$25-\$28. <http://www.wolftrap.org> or 703-255-1900.

SATURDAY/JAN. 23

Marcia Ball. The Barnes, Wolf Trap, 1645 Trap Road, Vienna. Grew up in Vinton, La., she began playing piano at age five and debuted with the country rock album Circuit Queen in 1978. Since then, she has released more than a dozen records, including her Grammy-nominated collaboration with blues stars Irma Thomas and Tracy Nelson, Sing It! (1998). \$35-\$40. <http://www.wolftrap.org> or 703-255-1900.



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