

Shari Zamarra, a Catholic involved with the Fairfax County Communities for Action Youth Task Force, participated in "Activism Through Faith: How Women Make an Impact" at the Mubarak Mosque in Chantilly.



Putting Faith into Action

NEWS, PAGE 3

Ending Homelessness: 'It Can Be Done'

NEWS, PAGE 8

From Hiking Appalachian Trail To Biking across America

PEOPLE, PAGE 5

CALENDAR, PAGE 9 ❖ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 10

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Ending Homelessness: 'It Can Be Done'

Housing and homeless services providers discuss “Complex needs and promising solutions.”

BY ANDREA WORKER

HomeAid Northern Virginia (HANV) brought together about 100 housing and homeless service providers from a variety of public, nonprofit and faith-based organizations at its annual Housing Forum on March 30, giving them the opportunity to share their challenges and best practices with their peers, while learning about some of the latest trends in the fight to end homelessness.

Newly appointed HANV executive director Kristyn Burr opened the event before turning the program over to moderator Karen Cleveland of the Cleveland Group.

Samantha Batko, director of the Homeless Research Institute, National Alliance to End Homelessness, was the program's keynote speaker and started her section with positives, noting that Virginia was the first state to functionally end homelessness among veterans. “On Tuesday,” she added, “Bergen County, New Jersey announced that they were the first to end chronic homelessness. We know it can be done.”

How were these successes achieved? “Through ‘Rapid Rehousing,’ the value of data, and a determined community-based partnership,” said Batko.

The switch to a focus on the Rapid Rehousing model was a major topic at last year's forum and the cause for considerable concern among some of the providers. The strategy represents a paradigm shift in previous methodologies to end a person's or family's homeless situation by pulling out all the stops to first find suitable housing for the client(s) and then wrapping any services they may need — financial assistance, help finding employment, overcoming past credit problems, mental health treatments, etc. — around them once they have been placed in a stable housing environment.

THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH to helping the homeless in the past has been to take them into shelters and then work with them to resolve issues and obstacles before placing them in an independent living situation. While this strategy can make finding them suitable housing less challenging, the process could take months, sometimes years. Remaining in shelter for that long creates a different set of problems, from overcrowding or impossible waiting lists for shelter placement, to potentially exacerbating the anxiety of the homeless, particularly children and youth, who find it difficult to adjust and face the stigma of their situation at school or during other social activities.

Rapid Rehousing also put further pressure on service providers. It's easier to provide services and to monitor progress when the clients are grouped in shelter facilities and have the benefit of supervision and readily-accessible support. Monitoring hundreds of



Newly appointed HomeAid Northern Virginia executive director Kristyn Burr welcomes the participants to the organization's annual Housing Forum for housing and homeless services providers.



Shelter House chief operating officer Jamie Ergas presents the summary from the round table discussion on “Implementing Coordinated Entry” while program moderator Karen Cleveland captures the key points on the flip chart.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER

people scattered around the region in a variety of housing situations can be a challenge.

But the housing and homeless service providers have, for the most part, risen to the challenges. The official statistics for the homeless population for 2016 are not yet available, but the anecdotal evidence shared by the attendees indicate a positive result to the shift in strategy.

“Trust and a good relationship with landlords is essential,” said one attendee. When trying to place clients who are still working through obstacles, or who have credit problems, who have been evicted — possibly more than once — who have served prison terms, or who may be registered sex offenders, requires getting out into the rental community and honestly addressing the landlord's concerns and responding swiftly

and appropriately when there are problems.

Batko also commented on the current political climate, highlighting several topics of much discussion by groups like the National Alliance to End Homelessness. According to Batko, although federal dollars allocated toward homeless prevention and remediation make up the smallest percentage of the federal budget at approximately \$2.5 billion, predictions for the FY2018 budget call for the lowest level of financial support since 1962.

Potential cuts to the agencies that help provide services to the homeless or those who are only a step away from that condition, changes in health care laws and in other social safety net programs could greatly increase the numbers of people that suddenly find themselves without a place to live.

Batko stressed two main points before concluding her remarks. First, she noted, “Efficiency. Agencies have to use the data, work together, re-think strategies” to decrease the length of time that people spend homeless, she said, and the organizations must be prepared to validate the outcomes of their efforts.

Secondly, Batko called upon the attendees to learn how to advocate. Many nonprofits operate under the misconception that they risk their exempt status if they take, and voice, a position on politically controversial issues. There are rules and limitations, but Batko urged the attendees to speak out and find ways to magnify their voices. “You are the experts,” she said, and should be able to offer that expertise to the lawmakers.

Batko suggested developing stronger relationships with local elected officials to inform them and to ask for their support, and the support of faith-based communities, in advocacy efforts. “Call now,” she said, to ask Virginia lawmakers to pass the extension of Medicaid in the state. Start efforts now to protect funding and to resist “block grants” as funding solutions, since they are often seen as “funding cuts.” In their take-home packets, the attendees received a primer on how to avoid any pitfalls when publically addressing policy issues.



Attendees at the Housing Forum divided into round table groups to tackle some of the issues they all face, like “Landlord Engagement,” and “Resource Gaps and Needs.”

BEFORE THE PANEL DISCUSSION got underway, there was a reminder that as of June 30, organizations seeking HUD funds will have to have adopted the standards of practice set forth by the National Alliance to End Homelessness — a requirement of which not everyone in the audience seemed to have been aware. The Alliance has toolkits for implementation and measurement available on their website at www.endhomelessness.org.

ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

ONGOING

- Art Guild of Clifton Exhibit.** 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Clifton Wine Shop, 7145 Main St., Clifton. Includes oil paintings of European settings; doors, windows, and flower shops. Free. Call 703-409-0919 for more.
- Carolina Shag Dance.** Wednesdays, 6:30-10 p.m. at Arlington/Fairfax Elks Lodge, 8421 Arlington Blvd., Fairfax. Free lessons at 7:30 p.m.; no partners needed; dinner menu at 6:45 p.m. Tickets are \$8. Visit www.nvshag.org for more.
- Open Rehearsal.** Wednesdays, 7:30 p.m. at Lord of Life church, 13421 Twin Lakes Drive, Centreville. The Fairfax Jubil-Aires barbershop chorus invites men of all ages who enjoy singing. Free. Visit www.fairfaxjubilaire.org for more.
- Toddlin' Twos.** Tuesdays, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Early literacy storytime with songs and activities included. Age 2 with caregiver, free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.
- Storytime for Three to Fives.** Tuesdays, 1:30 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Stories and activities for children age 3-5 with caregiver. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.
- English Conversation Group.** Thursdays, 7 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.
- English Conversation Group.** Selected Saturdays, 3 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-830-2223 for dates.
- English Conversation Group.** Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Practice English with a group of students and adults. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.
- Plant Clinic.** Saturdays, 10:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. A neighborhood plant clinic with horticultural tips, information, techniques, and advice. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a space.
- ESL Book Club.** Mondays, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Meet and discuss a book chosen by group. Free. Call 703-830-2223 with questions and to reserve a spot.
- ESL Book Club.** Every other Saturday, 11 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Adults learning English are welcome to meet and



On Sunday, April 9, the Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold an N gauge T-TRAK model train show, 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

discuss a book chosen by the group. To find out book title, call 703-502-3883.

Lego Block Party. Every other Tuesday, 3 p.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Legos will be provided for an afternoon of building. Grades 3-6. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Duplo Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 10:30 and 11:30 a.m. at the Chantilly Library, 4000 Stringfellow Road. Develop and reinforce early literacy skills for reading success. Ages 1-3 with adult. Free. Call 703-502-3883 to reserve a spot.

Live After Five. Fridays at 5:30 p.m. at The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway. Every Friday night a band plays on the patio of the winery. Free to attend. Visit www.wineryatbullrun.com for a full schedule.

Mondays are Family Night. 5-7 p.m. at Villagio, 7145 Main St. \$45 for a family of four. Call 703-543-2030.

Legos Kids Club. Every other Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Thousands of Legos for children to play with. Ages 6-12. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Starlight Storytime. Every other Wednesday, 7 p.m. at the Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain Drive. Stories under the stars for ages 4-8. Wear pajamas and bring stuffed friends. Free. Call 703-830-2223 to reserve a space.

Over-40 Softball League. A Fairfax-based league is looking for enough players to form another team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders -played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. If interested, email skeduman@aol.com for more.

SATURDAY/APRIL 8

Easter Eggstravaganza Wagon Rides. 10:30 a.m. at Frying Pan Park, 2709 West Ox Road. Start with

the egg hunt and then ride around the crop fields. \$2. Ages 2 and older. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks.

APRIL 8-9

Mother's Day Art Show. 1-6 p.m. at 6540 Jerome Court, Manassas. Original paintings, photography, fused glass, prints, and hand-crafted jewelry. Visit visitmanassas.org.

SUNDAY/APRIL 9

Festival of Color. noon-7 p.m. at Bull Run regional park, Centreville. Celebration of festival of colors, Holi, with the sensational Bollywood singer Mika Singh. Visit womenmpower.org/ for more.

Model Train Show. 1-4 p.m. at the Fairfax Station Railroad Museum, 11200 Fairfax Station Road in Fairfax Station. The Northern Virginia NTRAK members will hold an N gauge T-TRAK model train show. Museum members and ages 4 and under, free; ages 5-15, \$2; 16 and older, \$4. Visit www.fairfax-station.org or call 703-425-9225.

SATURDAY/APRIL 15

Celebrate 275 Years of History. 1-4 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. It's a party to celebrate 275 years of history at the site, mingle with historic reenactors, enjoy visits with the Walney Visitor Center animals, play historic games and try your hand at woodworking. Delve into the past with history tours, archaeology talks, and Civil War drilling demos. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

Civil War Soldier Campfire. 5:30-7 p.m. at Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, 5040 Walney Road, Chantilly. Learn about the lives of the soldiers who fought during the Civil War. Practice drilling with a soldier and see a musket firing demonstration. \$10. Call 703-631-0013 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/eclawrence.

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Sick & Tired



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Man o' man was I sick last weekend (that was not a question). It began as a runny nose, followed by an annoying hacking cough, compounded by sneezing and watery eyes, an occasional headache, with zero interest in food and hardly any energy to get myself out of bed where I spent practically the entire two days. I haven't been that sick/incapacitated since, I don't know when. Thankfully, there was no temperature, sore throat or nausea to further complicate my inability to move off the bed. And most thankfully, there was no urgency to visit the bathroom (I don't know if I would have had the wherewithal to even get there). Otherwise, I might have actually had to call/email the doctor and/or make an appointment at the Emergency Room. After all, I do have cancer so I really shouldn't ignore — totally — the times when I'm feeling uncharacteristically bad. This past weekend, had I gone from bad to worse, I would have called.

However, my symptoms, as miserable as they were, especially for two days, didn't meet the this-is-it threshold as set forth by my oncologist. Though the symptoms were new and different versus the everyday norm, they certainly weren't uniquely different (lung cancer related) for a seasonal-type cold. Moreover, the pain/discomfort/cough wasn't coming from my lungs, and the symptoms had only lasted a few days, not a few weeks. I therefore determined that unlike Babe Ruth who felt "just as bad" as he sounded in his famous Babe Ruth Day farewell speech at Yankee Stadium on April 27, 1947, I wasn't dying. I was just sick with a bad cold, one that was worse than any I remember (although maybe I've forgotten. See column titled "I Can't Forget What I Don't Remember" published 3/22/17).

Nevertheless, since I'm not a doctor, just a patient, presumably I should know what my body is telling me. However, I may not be so inclined to listen (fear mostly). Though my life may occasionally be at stake, I still struggle with the facts of my case. I delude myself into thinking that if I don't give in to the pain and suffering — as rare as they usually are, then I won't suffer the consequences: dying before my time. I don't want to believe the worst so I don't. I wouldn't attribute my above-average life "unexpectedness" since diagnosis (eight years — AND ALWAYS COUNTING) as the power of positive thinking since I never read the book written by Norman Vincent Peale. But I try not to focus too much on my diagnostic reality.

I mean, it's not as if I laugh in the face of death; heck, I cry more than ever, especially while watching programs on television when heartstrings are pulled. Somehow though, I try not to take my cancer personally, if that makes any sense? I try to take it the same way Curly Howard of The Three Stooges took his many slapstick pratfalls: "I'm a victim of soycumstance."

But when I get sick, whether or not I feel anything in my chest/lungs, I cross over into an entirely new realm. No more am I able to talk/humor myself into or out of things, no more am I able to deny my cancer reality and no more am I able to pretend that all is right in my world. It's during these situations when the metaphorical/proverbial you know what hits my emotional fan that I suffer the most. Unfortunately, there's not a shut-off button. I just have to ride it out, as bumpy as it typically is, and hope I come out the other end in better shape than when I went in.

So far, so good. Although I'm still coughing a bit and blowing my nose, all the other symptoms have subsided and no more do I feel worse for the wear. I don't suppose it's cancer-related, but of course, what do I know? What I do know is this: if the remaining symptoms linger, I'll worry, and on Wednesday, April 19 — and for the following week, I'll worry even more awaiting the results from the CT Scan and lower abdomen MRI I have scheduled that day (it's a special: two for one). Granted, these tests are not any newer than catching a cold, but still, I can't help wondering: since I was diagnosed as "terminal," this can't keep going on forever, can it?

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

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-Werner Heisenberg

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jackson Clark takes a break from hike.

Jackson Clark Aims To Give Back

FROM PAGE 5

see all the way to the ocean.”
At one point Jackson got so sick, with headache, and soreness, that it was difficult to even walk, but the closest town was 10 miles away. Jackson explained that when you first start on the trail as an inexperienced hiker, they tell you to pace yourself, don't try to go too fast — no more than 8-10 miles a day. After you get your “trail legs” you can pick up the speed or hike longer periods. The best advice, Jackson said was “to listen to your body.”

For the last month of his trip he hiked with a group of people who he said helped to support each other, shared supplies if others ran short, and were basically like a family for each other. Throughout his hike, he saw wonderful natural sights, and learned to appreciate the simplest things of life, “like a dry pair of socks and a warm bed.” He came away from the experience feeling lucky for the help he received all along the way, and decided he wants to start on another journey of a different sort this year.

At 19 now, Jackson hopes to raise enough funds to go on a Bike and Build trip across the country this spring. He found out about it through a coworker at REI. All bikers start

from Virginia Beach on May 22 and bike through 12 states for a total of 3,875 miles to end in Oregon on Aug. 6.

Besides the adventure part of the trip, Jackson and other participants will be giving back to the common good. Along the way, he and the group of bikers will stop to build 12 affordable houses at predetermined sites in coordination with other organizations such as Habitat for Humanity. This is Jackson's chance to see the much of the rest of America. Jackson cited a few facts about the affordable housing crisis in our country.

Affordable housing is that which the monthly mortgage payment is 30 percent or less of a person's monthly income. Forty million households in the country do not fall within those parameters. Twenty million pay more than 50 percent of their monthly income to meet the monthly mortgage payment. So the need is great.

Jackson said he will be posting periodically on his blog for those who wish to follow his progress. To support his efforts, visit <https://classic.bikeandbuild.org/rider/9240>.

This story was originally printed in the Greenbriar Flyer.

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FROM PAGE 4
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VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTORS NEEDED

The **Sully Senior Center** in Centreville is looking for the following instructors: Zumba gold, basic art, Tai Chi/Qigong, and a personal trainer. Meals on Wheels drivers, substitute drivers, and co-coordinators are needed for routes throughout the county. Much of the coordination can be completed via phone and computer. Call 703-324-5406, email VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm VolunteerSolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov.

FRIDAY/APRIL 14

Westfield Mulch Order Deadline. Have your mulch delivered right to your driveway on April 21 or 22. Your order will raise the funds needed to provide a safe and sober All Night Grad Party for Westfield Seniors and support other vital PTSA programs. Order

early, there is a limit on the total number of bags that can be delivered. \$5 per bag. \$2 per bag, for students to spread mulch, also limited number of slots. Order today at bit.ly/2kAh4fb.

MONDAY/APRIL 17

Emergency Preparedness Lecture. 7 p.m. at the Cale Community Center, 4615 Stringfellow Road. Guest speaker is Grelia Steele, the new Community Outreach Manager for the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management. Visit www.wfcwc.org or call 703-378-4250.

SATURDAY/APRIL 22

7th Annual Immigration Forum. 5:30-9 p.m. at Korean Central Presbyterian Church, 15451 Lee Highway, Centreville. Join the Centreville Immigration Forum in celebration of the dance, music, food and diverse community of Northern Virginia. Free. Visit www.centrevilleinternationalshowcase.org.

Women of Different Faiths Discuss Helping Others

FROM PAGE 3

and wishes of good will, as did the county government," she said. "And that speaks toward the type of people we have here in the county; activism was when our neighbors spoke up [against the vandalism]. And when, more recently, threatening phone calls were made to Jewish community centers, all religions came out to express their support and concern."

Bulova said all issues are women's issues and require "a moral prism through which we look at them. But a key element in activism is also listening and understanding where other parties are coming from."

A teacher in the audience told Bulova that, over the past few months, she'd been "bombarded with national issues" and wondered how to respond on a local level. "Right now, the Board of Supervisors is con-

sidering the FY '18 budget, so we're hearing from people concerned that finances won't be provided for the services important to them," replied Bulova. "But it's also about what we don't hear; and if we don't hear from people, we assume everything is OK."

As for the larger issues, she said, "I'm also concerned about what's happening nationally. I'm glad people in Fairfax County are speaking out against hate speech when others feel liberated to say ugly things they never would have said before. And when they hear it, they need to say, 'That's not OK; that's not the way I feel.'"

Pediatrician Susan Kohn belongs to Temple B'nai Shalom in Fairfax Station and is a member of the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom – a group of Muslim and Jewish women. She said, "Doing little kindnesses to people you see every day" is also activ-

ism.

And April Dalton, of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, shared that, a year ago, her church was called on to help refugees fleeing to Greece. "I was so upset and wanted to help them," she said. "I got a list of things to do from Catholic Migration and Refugee Services, and it's been so empowering to bring an international issue to our, little city. We now need 20 cribs and other baby items for 20 women who just got here from Afghanistan." Anyone wishing to donate toward this effort may contact her at april Dalton@gmail.com.

Dalton said she can also do her part to help the world by going to PTA meetings, writing her congressmen and raising her children to be nice to people who aren't nice to them. Agreeing, Ananda Vrindavan, temple president of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness in Washing-

ton, D.C., said, "Conversation is a powerful thing. And creating opportunities for children to talk to others can help them become independent [thinkers]."

"We tend to hang out with our own groups," added Kohn. "But we can teach children there are lovely people outside their own group. After 1-1/2 years of existence, the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom brings people together who wouldn't normally talk to each other. And in the past few months, our membership has grown because they know this is an organization that watches each other's backs. So I encourage people to find organizations like this."

Summing up, Ahmadiyya Muslim Fazeela Wadan said, "We need to feel the pain of others, create compassion in our children and become advocates for them in the world."

ROUNDUPS

Learn about Addiction

The Sully District Police Station's Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will meet Wednesday, April 12, at 7:30 p.m. in the Sully District Governmental Center, 4900

Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Does someone in your life struggle with addiction? Wonder how it begins? Attend this meeting to learn about the power of addiction and how one local woman turned her life around. This is an opportunity to speak with someone who fought heroin

addiction at a young age and won. Learn about Nora's story and how those in her life impacted her recovery. Experts will be on hand to answer questions and address current trends. The public is encouraged to bring loved ones, friends and family who may benefit from hearing her story.

Free Carseat Inspections

Certified technicians from the Sully District Police Station will perform free, child safety carseat inspections Thursday, April 13, from 5-8:30 p.m., at the station,

4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. No appointment is necessary. But residents should install the child safety seats themselves so technicians may properly inspect and adjust them, as needed.

The first 35 vehicles arriving on each date will be inspected so inspectors have time to properly instruct the caregiver. Call 703-814-7000, ext. 5140, to confirm dates and times.

Prepare for Emergencies

The GFWC Western Fairfax County Woman's Club (WFCWC) will host a presentation on "Emergency Preparedness" on Monday, April 17, at 7 p.m. Guest speaker Grelia Steele is the new community outreach manager for the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management. She will discuss personal preparedness and provide an overview on family and emergency preparedness resources to help people become ready for unforeseen disasters.

Steele is an emergency management professional with six years of experience in two Northern Virginia jurisdictions and international experience. She holds two Bachelor Degrees from Virginia Commonwealth University in Homeland Security and Emergency Management and in Political Science. She also holds numerous local, state, and federal certifications in public safety.

WFCWC usually meets at 7 p.m. on the third Monday of the month, September through May, at the Cale Community Center, 4615 Stringfellow Road. Guests are welcome and admission is free. Visit www.wfcwc.org or 703-378-4250.

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Easter Celebration Services

Sunday, April 16

6:30 am Sunrise Service

9:15 am & 10:45 am

Worship Services

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