

# The Arlington Connection

Maria Tildon of CareFirst addresses the group before handing out \$275,000 of grants to local providers.

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## CareFirst Helps Sustain Health Safety Net

CareFirst invests in community partners who collaborate to expand care for vulnerable.

BY EDEN BROWN  
THE CONNECTION

**A**s Maria Tildon said, while handing out checks for \$50,000, “if anyone ever doubted the power of women, just come up here and look out at this crowd.”

The room was full of women — and a few men — who made Arlington’s safety net organizations what they are: symbiotic teams. Tildon, who is senior vice president, Public Policy and Community Affairs for CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, majored in international relations and would have been a smooth diplomat: she hastened to praise the men in the room, many of them elected officials who have fought for better health care coverage. Justin Fairfax, newly elected lieutenant governor of Virginia was one of them.

Many people are unaware that Blue Cross Blue Shield’s CareFirst program is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving health in the local community, in this case Northern Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, D.C. According to Jule Wagner, vice president for Community Affairs, Carefirst acts like a foundation: They work with more than 100 community-based or-



From left: Jessica Lantz, NovaScripts, director of operations; Stephanie Berkowitz, president and CEO of NOVA Family Services; Nancy White, Arlington Free Clinic executive director; Christian Dorsey, Arlington County Board member; Justin Fairfax, lieutenant governor-elect of Virginia; Kathy Sibert, executive director of A-Span; Alexandria City Councilman Paul Smedberg; Maria Tildon, senior vice president of Public Policy and Community Affairs, CareFirst; Dr. Basim Khan, executive director, Neighborhood Health; and Maria Twomey, executive director, MCCC.

ganizations locally. What’s in it for them to hand out grants to local safety net providers? “It’s our mission,” said Wagner. “People living healthy lives; the health of our community. That’s what we do.” Wagner said CareFirst was investing \$275,000 in six partner organizations represented at the event on Nov. 13.

CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, the region’s largest not-for-profit health insurer,

isn’t like most health insurance companies. Tildon, for instance, was on a first name basis with everyone in the room, from Dr. Tom Connolly, one of the early volunteer doctors at Arlington Free Clinic and an activist in the healthcare arena, to Christian Dorsey, Arlington County Board member, and Stephanie Berkowitz, president and CEO of NOVA Family Services. Blue Cross Blue Shield’s CareFirst has a major commu-

nity partnership: their commitment to reinvesting in the community beyond a legal obligation to preserve a tax exempt status. CareFirst associates serve on more than 270 non-profit boards, and in 2016, their associates volunteered more than 18,400 hours to community organizations.

CareFirst has one of the largest United Way giving campaigns in the region, raising more than \$1 million through associate donations and a company match. Earlier this year, hundreds of associates participated in raising more than \$300,000 in support of the American Diabetes Association.

Lieutenant Governor-elect Justin Fairfax was still celebrating the electoral victory on Nov. 7 and received a large round of applause as he stepped in to speak at the press conference after a last minute cancel-

lation by U.S. Sen. Mark Warner. Fairfax said this was a special occasion for him: his wife was born in Arlington, his mother was a pharmacist and worked at the People’s Drugstore here; his wife is a dentist; his sister is

a nurse in Fairfax; his grandmother was a nurse. Access to healthcare, no matter what color, last name, or status, is some

SEE CAREFIRST HELPS, PAGE 12

## Focused on Improving Health of the Community

Neighborhood Health celebrates 20 years.

BY VERNON MILES  
THE CONNECTION

**T**he Neighborhood Health Clinic started with an idea; that all people deserve access to healthcare. Now, 20 years later after it was founded, that idea has become an organization stretched across Northern Virginia and taking care of 17,000 patients every year. In Arlington, just south of Fort Myer, Neighborhood Health provides dental care through the Arlington County Division of Public Health.

In preparation for an upcoming 20th anniversary gala, current and past directors of Neighborhood Health reflected on how the organization has grown and evolved, and the challenges it faces today.

According to Dr. Basim Khan, executive director of Neighborhood Health, the goal of the organization is to improve health and advance health equity. Neighborhood Health isn’t urgent care; its focus is comprehensive and integrated primary care. That means someone who comes in for a

vaccine also could go down the hall to see their dentist. More than half of the patients treated by Neighborhood Health do not have insurance.

Neighborhood Health started out of dialogues in the 1990s under the Clinton administration about healthcare reform. Susan Abramson was working in U.S. Rep. Jim Moran’s office at the time and part of her work involved meeting with health department officials and becoming familiar with the health situation in the undocumented communities within Arlandria. Abramson said what she found was a community with no access to health insurance and families that couldn’t go to hospitals. Abramson said it was a community facing sexually transmitted disease, babies born at home, and children kept home from school. Abramson said the majority of them had come from El Salvador.

The organization that would later become Neighborhood Health began with a couple of nurses able to secure an apartment to work out of. Most of what they did was immunizations and prenatal care. Eventually it expanded into two apartments. When Abramson became involved, the three-year grant sponsoring the program had ended. Health and Human Services was going to



Dr. Basim Khan (left) and Susan Abramson

give the program one more year to figure out how to continue. Abramson said the Alexandria hospital and Alexandria Health Department contacted her and asked her to help organize the efforts. Abramson left her job with Moran. She was initially told to create a funding mechanism for what already existed, but Abramson said it was apparent that what was in place wasn’t good enough.

“By the end of the first year, 1997, it was

pretty clear that we were only addressing a fraction of the need,” said Abramson. Many of the patients they were seeing were living with rats, malnutrition, sexual abuse, sometimes no running water. “There were no services. There was nowhere to go. People would come in with serious illnesses and there was nowhere to send them.”

Abramson said the organization started partnering with ALIVE! (ALexandrians In Volved Ecumenically) and other local charities for clothing and book drives. What had started as a health department initiative had outgrown its original mission, and after a couple years, the group broke away from the health department and became a separate 501c.

By that point, the group was operating out of 14 apartments and had expanded services to include counseling and therapy, along with partnerships built with the police and social workers.

“It was an evolution,” said Abramson. “One step at a time.”

Seven years later, as the organization continued to grow, Abramson stepped down to begin the nearly full-time job of getting Neighborhood Health federal recognition. After a year of administrative work, Neigh

SEE NEIGHBORHOOD, PAGE 12



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## NEWS

# Rescuing Bats

**The Save Lucy Campaign helps raise awareness of white-nose syndrome and bats in general.**

BY ASHLEY CLAIRE SIMPSON  
THE CONNECTION

**I**n American culture, bats have become symbolic of the scary. These nocturnal animals, however, are respected — revered, even — in many cultures.

When you realize that bats pollinate a number of plants, or that they eat those pesky mosquitos that infect humans with a number of diseases, you can see why some populations hold bats in such high esteem. The Save Lucy Campaign is a local organization of bat advocates and admirers.

The non-profit organization sets out to rescue and rehabilitate as many bats possible from the many environmental dangers that threaten them throughout the world. The local group focuses on raising awareness of and doing everything they can to combat white-nose syndrome (WNS), a disease that over the last few years has killed millions of North American bats and is caused by fungus found in caves.

"Something horrible happened around 10 years ago to bats in this country who hibernate in caves," said Deborah Hammer, a member of The Save Lucy Campaign. "That horrible thing was white-nose syndrome. The bat population was hit hard, especially little brown bats. They were so common, ubiquitous even. Now it's rare to find one, even for research purposes."

The disappearance of a massive portion of these local little brown bats, called lucys (short for the scientific name, *myotis lucifugus*), inspired The Save Lucy Campaign's name and focused quest.

"We officially launched in January 2011," founder Leslie Sturges said. "I had been doing education programs through other organizations — under the aegis of Bat World Sanctuary — and I was involved with the Northeast Bat Regional Working Group. I knew how bad WNS was, and I knew that no one at my programs had heard of it, so something had to change. Our mission is to raise awareness of white-nose syndrome and bats in general and to allow youth a platform to voice their thoughts about the future of bats. Now we're working harder to draw the connection between bats and people, bats and agriculture, and bats and forest health."

Hammer, a long-time bat aficionado and also an autism specialist for Arlington County Public Schools, said she was dumbfounded and beyond disappointed when she learned about WNS.

"When I first heard about it, I was devastated," Hammer said. "Bats already have so much going against them. It's still even re-



**Pip is a tricolor bat (state endangered).**



**MySe are northern long ears (federally threatened).**

ally common for people to kill a bat if it's caught in their houses instead of letting it out. Then, white-nose syndrome became the biggest threat to bats here in Northern Virginia. It's a fungal infection tracked into bat caves by soil in boots, which these days have deep crevices where the fungus can live. While there are many, many other threats to bats worldwide — like poaching, habitat destruction, pollution, and more — WNS is really horrible."

This non-native fungus has killed millions of bats since it was first identified in 2006.

"It causes them to burn up fat reserves as the body tries to fight a fungal infection," Sturges said. "As the fungus invades the bare skin areas of the muzzle, ears, and wing membranes, it damages the skin. The wing membranes are crucial to maintaining body water balance during hibernation, and the disruption and damage causes dehydration and electrolyte imbalance. We've seen massive scarring back when we saw survivors at a local colony, and the ones who survive until spring can still have such damaged wings that they can't fly."

"It can kill an entire colony really quickly," Hammer said. "The fungus covers them in their sleep, and then they fly out of their caves and freeze to death. It's rare for them to live long enough to get into care."

The many impacts of WNS have been catastrophic to the ecosystem.

SEE THE SAVE LUCY, PAGE 14

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Outline of the new committed affordable housing.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

# Securing Affordable Housing

County Board approves \$6 million loan to save nearly 300 affordable housing units.

BY VERNON MILES  
THE CONNECTION

**A**s affordable housing stock dwindles in the region, the main loss is market rate affordable housing (MARKS). These are homes that are affordable to those in Arlington making less than 60 percent of area median income. They are disappearing. About 14,400 have been lost since 2000 due to rent increases, condo conversions and redevelopment. But on Monday night at a County Board meeting, approval of a \$6 million loan to the Affordable Housing Investment Fund (AHIF) means staving off the loss of 294 MARK units and converting them into committed affordable housing.

The proposal was met with overwhelming support



Park Shirlington

from the board, though also with a few reservations about how the project would proceed after approval.

The project acquires the Park Shirlington apartments along 31st Street S, just north of I-395. The total project cost is \$72 million, \$66 million of which is the cost of purchase, \$3 million in acquisition closing costs, \$1.5 million in capital reserves and \$770,000 in debt reserves. The \$6 million AHIF loan helps the project secure the rest of the funding mostly from loans from Citibank and Candeur Group. All 294 units in the project will be

affordable to residents at up to 80 percent of area median income.

"Arlington County is experiencing affordable housing crisis," said Michelle Winters, executive director

SEE HOUSING, PAGE 15

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The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is accepting comments regarding the proposed limited access control changes for the limited access line along I-66 adjacent to the East Falls Church Metro Station.

Information related to the limited access control changes is available for review at VDOT's District Office at 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, Virginia 22030. Please call ahead at 703-259-2239, 800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

VDOT invites public comments related to the proposed limited access control changes. Comments must be received in writing via e-mail at [meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov](mailto:meetingcomments@vdot.virginia.gov) (please reference "Proposed Limited Access Control Changes: Interstate 66 adjacent to the East Falls Church Metro Station" in the subject line) or by mail at the address listed above (ATTN: Andrew Beacher) on or prior to **December 11, 2017**.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT's Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

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# Careful What To Wish For

Could changes in General Assembly mean some legislative requests from Northern Virginia might not be dead on arrival?

**W**hen the Virginia House of Representatives adjourned from its 2017 session, Republicans controlled the house by 66 to 34. The exact count following elections earlier in November is still unclear, but one party or the other could have a 51-49 majority, or even face a 50-50 split.

I don't recall anyone predicting this level of change. Three very close races are likely headed for recount, including one in Fairfax County, and since this is the first time all voters have used paper ballots, it's hard to predict how that will go. But one way or the other, Northern Virginia localities are likely to have more influence.

Fairfax County, along with Arlington and Alexandria, prepare a state legislative wish list each year, made all the more urgent because localities in Virginia have only the powers specifically given to them by the General Assembly. If there is any reasonable doubt whether a power has been conferred on a local government, then the locality does not have that power.

That has meant, for example, localities can only raise revenue from limited sources, can't restrict where people carry guns, can't set their own minimum wage, and can't fully control land use within their boundaries. Some haven't been able to ban discrimination on the basis

of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Not all of these restrictions are based on party affiliation.

Aside from more local authority, the top wish is for more funding.

Fairfax County's draft on funding schools: "Public education funding in the Commonwealth is enshrined in the Virginia Constitution as a joint responsibility of both state and local governments, so it is essential that the state fully meet its Constitutional responsibility to adequately fund K-12 education. Unfortunately, the Commonwealth continues to allow critical gaps to persist between state fund-

ing and the actual costs of providing a high-quality education, placing more of the fiscal burden on localities while substantially limiting local revenue sources, creating a discrepancy that has become increasingly untenable."

The one action that could produce significant funding and services with very low cost to state coffers: expanding Medicaid in Virginia under the Affordable Care Act. Virginia has turned away billions of dollars, plus the jobs and healthier citizenry that come with that.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

## Next Week: More Local Giving

Next week, we will publish our lists of local nonprofits for holiday giving. If you know of an organization that should be included or whose listing needs updating, please email [mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:mkimm@connectionnewspapers.com).

## Deadline Extended: Children's Edition

Submissions of student art and writing are due by Friday, Dec. 8, an extended deadline. You can see last year's editions by visiting [www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/) and scroll down to Children's Edition. Email submissions to the following editors:

- ❖ For Burke, Clifton, Fairfax, Fairfax Station, Great Falls, Herndon, Lorton, McLean, Reston, or Springfield, email to Kemal Kurspahic at [kemal@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:kemal@connectionnewspapers.com).
- ❖ For Alexandria, Arlington, Centreville, Chantilly, Mount Vernon, or Potomac, Md., email to Steven Mauren at [smauren@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:smauren@connectionnewspapers.com).



PHOTO BY RICHARD MUMFORD/THE CONNECTION

## Lingering Color in Barcroft Park

On Wednesday, Nov. 22, a tree displays bright yellow foliage between the jogging path and Four Mile Run.

## BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before event.

### COMMUNITY INPUT WANTED

**Arlington County** is in the process of updating the 2005 Public Spaces Master Plan, which provides strategies for the future for our public spaces, including parks, natural resource and recreational needs that make up that system. As part of the fine tuning of the draft document, additional community input is needed for certain specific areas of focus. (Final draft will be available in 2018.) Visit [parks.arlingtonva.us](http://parks.arlingtonva.us). Come to any or all of these meetings:

- ❖ Chat about Land Acquisition: Friday, Dec. 1, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Courthouse Plaza
- ❖ Deeper Dig on Strategies to Expand Field Capacity with Synthetic Turf & Lights: Wednesday, Dec. 6, 6:30-9 p.m. at Navy League Building
- ❖ Stewarding Tree Canopy, Natural Resources and Casual Use Spaces: Thursday, Dec. 14, 6:30-9 p.m. at Central Library

### THURSDAY/NOV. 30

**Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety.** 10 a.m.-noon at Columbia Pike and South Oakland Street. The Arlington County Police Department's Special Operations Section will be promoting

the 2017 Fall Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Awareness Program in the Lyon Park area. The program aims to change pedestrian, driver and bicyclist behavior while reducing the number of traffic related crashes and injuries. Officers will ticket motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians who violate traffic laws. Visit [police.arlingtonva.us/parking/](http://police.arlingtonva.us/parking/).

**40 Leaders Under 40.** 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. at Army Navy Country Club, 1700 Army Navy Drive. Leadership Center for Excellence is honoring 40 emerging leaders under the age of 40 who demonstrate impact personally and/or professionally. Admission is \$65 for the general public. To register and learn more about the event, visit [leadercenter.org](http://leadercenter.org).

### FRIDAY/DEC. 1

**Submission Deadline.** Arlington County's biennial design awards program, DESIGNArlington, is now accepting submissions for great design in new construction, renovations, additions or adaptive reuse projects. Established in 2009, DESIGNArlington seeks to highlight excellence and diversity in the County's built environment. Residents, property owners, developers, architects and other members of the design community may submit an entry. Visit [projects.arlingtonva.us/planning/](http://projects.arlingtonva.us/planning/)

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Connection

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# ENTERTAINMENT

Submit entertainment announcements at [www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/](http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/). The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

## ONGOING

**Local Artist Exhibition.** Through Dec. 1, various times at Long & Foster, Real Estate's office, 4600 Lee Highway. Local artist Stanley Piotroski has exhibition titled "Piotroski New Works," on display at newly renovated office through Dec. 1. Call 703-998-3111.

**Drafthouse's 2017 Christmas Movie Festival.** Through Dec. 13, various times at Arlington Cinema & Drafthouse, 2903 Columbia Pike. Featuring "Elf," "It's A Wonderful Life," "Home Alone," "Miracle on 34th Street," "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation," "Scrooged," and "Gremlins." \$10 for unlimited admission. Visit [arlingtondrafthouse.com/](http://arlingtondrafthouse.com/) or call 703-486-2345.

**"Crazy for You."** Through Jan. 14, various times at the Signature Theatre, 4200 Campbell Ave. A musical comedy with Gershwin tunes including "I've Got Rhythm," "Someone to Watch Over Me" and "Nice Work If You Can Get It" fuse with tap dancing. Visit [www.sigtheatre.org](http://www.sigtheatre.org).

**Artists' Exhibition.** Through Jan. 31, various times at the Courthouse Plaza lobby. Through the Lens of Frank Hallam Day and Anne Rowland images of Arlington's built and natural environments. Visit <https://publicart.arlingtonva.us/>.

**Arlington Farmer's Market.** Every Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon at the corner of N. 14th Street and N. Courthouse Road. A weekly celebration of local food including fresh produce, meats, dairy, cheese, baked goods, free range eggs, specialty items, cut flowers, plants and herbs. Email [csingiser@cfwdc.org](mailto:csingiser@cfwdc.org) or call 917-733-6402.

**FRESHFARM Market.** 3-7 p.m. on Tuesdays at 1900 Crystal Drive. Shop from local farmers and producers with seasonal fruits and vegetables, fresh-cut flowers, container plants and herbs, farm-raised eggs, all-natural meats, artisan baked goods, and specialty foods. Visit [www.crystalcity.org](http://www.crystalcity.org).

**Mobile Bike Repair.** 8 a.m.-3 p.m. on Thursdays at 1900 Crystal Drive. Drop off your bike on Thursday morning and have it tuned up and ready to ride before heading home. Email [DC@velofix.com](mailto:DC@velofix.com), or phone 855-VELO-FIX.

**Food Truck Thursdays.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at 1900 Crystal Drive and 201 12th St. Actual truck schedules are subject to change so be sure to follow your favorites. Visit [www.crystalcity.org](http://www.crystalcity.org).

**Healthy Lifestyle Runs.** Saturdays, 9 a.m. at Roosevelt Island, George Washington Memorial Parkway. American Cancer Society partners with parkrun USA to promote fitness in the fight against cancer. Free. Visit [www.parkrun.us/rooseveltislanddc/](http://www.parkrun.us/rooseveltislanddc/).

**Friday Night Live.** 8 p.m. Fridays at the Church at Clarendon, 1210 N. Highland St., Suite A. Local musicians perform. Free. Visit [1bc.org](http://1bc.org).

**Arlington's Historical Museum Open on First Wednesdays.** The Arlington Historical Museum is open to the public on the first Wednesday of every month from 12:30-3:30 p.m. The museum consists of exhibits chronicling Arlington County's history from Native American settlements up to the present day. The museum will continue to be open on Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 p.m. Admission is free. The museum is located in the former 1891 Hume School building at 1805 S. Arlington



Summit by Elizabeth M. Beach.

## Meet the Artists

On Thursday, Dec. 7 enjoy the Student Art Reception, 5-7 p.m. at Marymount's Barry Gallery, Marymount University, 2807 N. Glebe Road. Marymount University invites the public to an opening reception for its annual senior art exhibition, which this year is titled "Location." The exhibition will run through Jan. 16. Visit [www.marymount.edu/](http://www.marymount.edu/) for more.

Ridge Road. Contact Garrett Peck at 571-243-1113 or at [garrett.peck@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:garrett.peck@arlingtonhistoricalsociety.org).

**Open Mic Comedy.** Wednesdays 8-10 p.m. at Ri Ra Irish Pub, 2915 Wilson Blvd. Doors open at 7 p.m. Age 21 and up only. Free show, \$25 cash prize for best joke. Call 703-248-9888 or Visit [www.RiRa.com/](http://www.RiRa.com/) Arlington.

**Invasive Plants Removal.** Work parties are held every month to keep the parks free of destructive invasive plants. Teens, adults and families welcome. Every second Sunday of the month 2-4:30 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 Military Road; call 703-228-3403. Every third Sunday of the month 2-5 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road; call 703-228-6535 or Visit [registration.arlingtonva.us](http://registration.arlingtonva.us). Free, no registration required.

**Karaoke.** 8 p.m. on the first Sunday every month at Galaxy Hut, 2711 Wilson Blvd. Visit [www.galaxyhut.com](http://www.galaxyhut.com) or call 703-525-8646.

**Pub Quiz.** 8 p.m. every Sunday at Whitlow's on Wilson, 2854 Wilson Blvd. Prizes for first place. Free. Visit [www.whitlows.com](http://www.whitlows.com) or call 703-276-9693.

**Storytime.** Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:30-11 a.m. at Kinder Haus Toys, 1220 N. Fillmore St. Storytime with Ms. Laura. Call 703-527-5929.

**Lego Club.** Monthly on the first Wednesday. 4-5 p.m. Glencarlyn Branch Library, 300 S. Kensington St. The library provides tubs of legos and a special challenge and after the program the creations are displayed for everyone to see. No registration required. Call 703-228-6548.

**Crystal City Sparket.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. on Wednesdays at 1900 Crystal Drive. Sparket — A Creative Market is an extension of DC's Eastern Market with arts, crafts, and handmade goods. Free to attend. Visit [www.crystalcity.org](http://www.crystalcity.org).

**Art for Life.** Third Thursday of each month. The Hyatt Regency Crystal City's "Art for Life" Partnership with National Kidney Foundation brings a new artist each month to The Hyatt for a reception. Free. Visit

[www.torpedofactory.org](http://www.torpedofactory.org).

**Brunch at Freddie's.** Third Saturday of every month, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at Freddie's Beach Bar, 555 23rd St. The Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance gathers for an all-you-can-eat breakfast buffet (\$9.99). All are welcome. No reservation is required. Visit [www.facebook.com/events/700174390103305](http://www.facebook.com/events/700174390103305).

## THURSDAY/NOV. 30

**Local Pop-Up Shops.** 11 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Plaza Library Shop, 2100 Clarendon Blvd., 1st Floor Lobby. Jules Jewels will be at a pop-up retail market dedicated to, wearable and edible products from innovators and artisans in Arlington. Visit [www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com](http://www.arlingtoneconomicdevelopment.com).

**Nutcracker Theatre Performances.** Thursday and Friday 7:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 1 and 5 p.m. at Kenmore Middle School, 200 S. Carlin Springs Road. Presented by Ballet Nova. Advanced Sale: \$15-\$38, additional \$3 at the door. Visit [www.BalletNova.org](http://www.BalletNova.org).

**Toys for Tots Happy Hour.** 6-9 p.m. at Tortoise & Hare Bar and Grille, 567 23rd St. S., near the Crystal City Metro Station. Food, drink and bring an unwrapped toy to donate to Toys for Tots. The toy cannot contain any food item or resemble any weapons. Presented by Le Chic Geek and Tagging Miles. Call 703-979-1872.

**Crescendo Concert.** 7 p.m. at Washington-Lee Auditorium, 1301 N Stafford St. Crescendo Concert to celebrate Haydn. Visit [www.arlingtonphilharmonic.org](http://www.arlingtonphilharmonic.org).

## NOV. 30-DEC. 3

**Lions Club Fruit Sale.** Various times at St. Mary's Arlington, 2609 N. Glebe Road. Fruits and nuts for sale, The proceeds from the sale benefit community non profits supported by the Lions Club. Visit [www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/arlingtonva](http://www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/arlingtonva) or call 703-598-8266 or 703-862-5956.

## FRIDAY/DEC. 1

**Tongue in Cheek Jazz Band.** 7-9 p.m. at Columbia Pike Branch



Eppur Si Muove by Altyn Ashyrova.

Library, 816 South Walter Reed Drive. Listen to roaring '20s favorites. Light refreshments provided. Libations available for sale by New District Brewing Company. Proceeds will benefit CPRO's West End Activation Committee. Call 703-228-5710.

## DEC. 1-23

**Holiday Hansel and Gretel.** Thursday-Friday, 11 a.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. at Synetic Theater, 1800 S. Bell St. During the bustle of holiday crowds, Gretel tries to keep her brother, Hansel, out of trouble while their unengaged babysitter leaves Gretel to fend for them both. Visit [synetictheater.org/](http://synetictheater.org/).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 2

**Advent Clean Up and Repair Day.** 9 a.m.-noon at St. Mary's Arlington 2609 N. Glebe Road. Inviting men, women, and youth to roll up their sleeves and make a visible difference in preparing our church for seasons of Advent and Christmas. Visit [stmarysarlington.org/](http://stmarysarlington.org/).

**Holiday Wreath Workshop.** 1-4 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Music, refreshments, basic instruction and enough materials for each participant to make at least two wreaths. Participants should bring hand pruners or wire cutters if available and any extra materials or special decorations needed. \$30. Ages 12 and up. Call 703-228-3403, or email [gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## DEC. 2-3

**Petite Nutcracker.** Saturday and Sunday, 1 and 3 p.m. at Kenmore Middle School, 200 S. Carlin Springs Road. Presented by Ballet Nova. Advanced Sale: \$16-\$26, additional \$3 at the door. For 3-5 year olds. Visit [www.BalletNova.org](http://www.BalletNova.org).

## DEC. 2-10

**Holiday House Craft Show and Sale.** Various times at Fort C.F.

Smith Park, 2411 N. 24th St. The Holiday House is a juried arts & crafts sale by local artisans. Call 703-243-7329.

## SUNDAY/DEC. 3

**Christmas Party and Open House.** 3:30 p.m. at the Arlington Masonic Temple 1 S. George Mason Drive. Bethel No. 1, Arlington of the Job's Daughters International is a charity organization, and there will be an Ugly T-shirt and Gingerbread Cookie Decorating Contest. Call 703-585-5513.

## TUESDAY/DEC. 5

**Arlington Arts Supporter on Air.** 3 p.m. on WERA 96.7FM. The nation's Second Lady Karen Pence will be a guest on Arlington Arts radio show. Visit [www.whitehouse.gov/administration/karen-pence](http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/karen-pence).

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 6

**Winter Storytime.** 10:30-11 a.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Stories and signs of winter will be the topic. Free. Ages 2 and up. Call 703-228-6535, or email [longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## DEC. 6-13

**Lions Club Fundraising Event.** Various times at the Overlee Pool (Bath House - Lower Level), 6030 Lee Highway. Entrance off John Marshall Drive. Fresh Citrus, Pecans, and Maple Syrup for sale. Call 703-528-1130.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 7

**Student Art Reception.** 5-7 p.m. at Marymount's Barry Gallery, Marymount University, 2807 N. Glebe Road. Marymount University invites the public to an opening reception for its annual senior art exhibition, which this year is titled "Location." The exhibition will run through Jan. 16. Visit [www.marymount.edu/](http://www.marymount.edu/).



# ENTERTAINMENT

## SATURDAY/DEC. 9

**Birds of a Feather.** 2-3 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Learn about birds flocking together. \$5. Ages 6-10. Call 703-228-6535, or email [longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

**Remove Invasive Plants.** 2-4 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 N. Military Road. Help assist the return of ferns and wildflowers, and the animals that depend on them, in areas once covered in destructive invasive plants. Call 703-228-3403, or email [gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 10

**Candlelight Christmas Concert.** 7 p.m. at the Mount Olivet United Methodist Church, 1500 North Glebe Road. Featuring the Mount Olivet Choir, Brass and Timpani. Call 540-539-3731 or email [cindynewcomb27@gmail.com](mailto:cindynewcomb27@gmail.com).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 11

**Nutcracker Tea at the Ritz.** 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Ritz-Carlton, Pentagon City, 1250 S. Hayes St. Presented by Ballet Nova. High tea with pictures with the Sugar Plum Fairy, crafts, raffle prizes and a mini-performance of excerpts from The Nutcracker. Adults: \$75, Children under 12 - \$44. Visit [www.BalletNova.org](http://www.BalletNova.org).

## WEDNESDAY/DEC. 13

**Happy Holidays Dinner-Dance.** 6:30 p.m. at Knights of Columbus Hall, 5115 Little Falls Road.



## Crescendo Concert

PHOTO BY HANK SMITH

**Crescendo musicians Max Herrmann, Malina Nelson, Billy Holtz, and Christopher Fox are featured in the Crescendo Concert, Thursday, Nov. 30 at 7 p.m. at Washington-Lee Auditorium, 1301 N Stafford St. Crescendo Concert to Celebrate Haydn. Visit [www.arlingtonphilharmonic.org](http://www.arlingtonphilharmonic.org).**

Featuring entertainer Dillon of Piano d'Amore. Will be collecting donations of unwrapped toys to be contributed to the USMC's annual Toys for Tots drive. \$45. Email [BSCRSVP@gmail.com](mailto:BSCRSVP@gmail.com) or call 703-241-0390.

## THURSDAY/DEC. 14

**Rosslyn Carols Holiday Concert.** 5-10 p.m. at the Central Place Plaza across from the Rosslyn Metro station, 1800 N. Lynn St. Enjoy holiday games, food and special winter drinks in addition to a life-size

snow globe that attendees can step into and bring home a holiday picture card. Visit [www.rosslynva.org/do/rosslyn-carols-holiday-concert](http://www.rosslynva.org/do/rosslyn-carols-holiday-concert).

**Human Rights Award Winners Ceremony.** 7-9 p.m. at the Arlington County Board Room, 2100 Clarendon Blvd. The Arlington Human Rights Commission selected this year's recipients and will present the awards at a ceremony and reception. The Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia, Claire G. Gastañaga, will be the keynote speaker. Visit [www.arlingtonhumanrights.org/](http://www.arlingtonhumanrights.org/).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 16

**SALT Toastmasters Meetup.** 1:30-3:30 p.m. at Woodrow Wilson Library, 6101 Knollwood Drive, Falls Church. Seeking individuals who are seasoned and aspiring communicators and leaders. Free. Call 703-475-3208.

**National Chamber Ensemble Concert.** 7:30 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington, 4444 Arlington Blvd. Soprano Rebecca Littig joins National Chamber Ensemble in "Holiday Cheer." Visit [www.uucava.org/](http://www.uucava.org/).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 17

**Flying Squirrel Lore and More.** 5-6 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Learn about these engaging nocturnal acrobats. After an indoor presentation, tiptoe outside to see these little pixies glide in for an evening meal. Free. Ages 6 and up. Call 703-228-6535, or email [longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## THURSDAY/DEC. 21

**Solstice Eve Hike and Campfire.** 6-7:30 p.m. at Gulf Branch Nature Center, 3608 N. Military Road. Celebrate the longest night of the year with candle making and roasting marshmallows for s'mores. Then take a night hike under the crescent moon. \$5. Call 703-228-3403, or email [gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:gulfbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## SATURDAY/DEC. 30

**Winter Bird Walk.** 10-11:30 a.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S.

Carlin Springs Road. What birds are around in the winter? Some are familiar, year-round friends but others are winter-only visitors such as Winter Wrens and Brown Creepers. Beginners welcome and loaner binoculars are available. Free. Ages 6 and up. Call 703-228-6535, or email [longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## SUNDAY/DEC. 31

**New Year's Eve Stroll and Campfire.** 6-7:30 p.m. at Long Branch Nature Center, 625 S. Carlin Springs Road. Explore the park as the full moon rises, then ring out the old and bring in the new by tossing resolutions into a wishing campfire. Bring a flashlight. \$7. Ages 5 and up. Call 703-228-6535, or email [longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us](mailto:longbranchnaturectr@arlingtonva.us).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 13

**The Big Meow.** 3-4 p.m. at Theatre on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive. The story of an ever-hopeful fluff ball who desperately wants to belong to the band of neighborhood cats. \$15 adults/\$10 children under age 10. Visit [www.janefranklin.com/](http://www.janefranklin.com/).

**Forty+ or Minus.** 7:30-9 p.m. Saturday, 2-5 p.m. at Theatre on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive. A multi-generational dance performance. \$5-\$22. Visit [www.janefranklin.com](http://www.janefranklin.com).

## SATURDAY/JAN. 20

**Forty+ or Minus.** 7:30-9 p.m. Saturday, 2-5 p.m. at Theatre on the Run, 3700 S. Four Mile Run Drive. A multi-generational dance performance. \$5-\$22. Visit [www.janefranklin.com](http://www.janefranklin.com).



*"We've made a lot of good friends since moving to Hermitage"*

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Meet Carol and MJ. Carol and MJ are great buddies. They are also next door neighbors. Carol is 88 years old and MJ is 79. Carol moved to Hermitage Northern Virginia from Arlington about a year before MJ, who came from Montgomery County, Maryland. After moving, the two friends discovered a shared love of outdoor walks on the grounds of the community and around the quiet neighborhood streets. Carol focuses on her balance with a functional fitness class 4x a week and MJ enjoys reading in the library. Carol likes the many interesting people and MJ enjoys the many excursions and the reading club. It feels like a family here at Hermitage Northern Virginia.

**For more information, call 703-797-3814**

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# Working To Prevent Substance Abuse in Schools

Monthly statistics show incidents involve children as young as 12.

By Eden Brown  
The Connection



## ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT JUVENILES CHARGED AT SCHOOL LOCATIONS OCTOBER (10/01/17 - 10/31/17)

Offense Date	Offense Time	Charge Date	Age	Sex	Offense	School
06/20/17	10:09 AM	10/03/17	14	M	1) POSSESS NARCOTICS (XANAX) 2) DISTRIBUTE NARCOTICS (XANAX)	KENMORE MIDDLE
08/01/17	12:40 PM	10/24/17	18	M	GANG OFFENSE	W&L
10/05/17	10:37 AM	10/05/17	12	F	POSSESS ALCOHOL	WILLIAMSBURG *
10/05/17	10:37 AM	10/05/17	12	F	POSSESS ALCOHOL	WILLIAMSBURG *
10/12/17	1:55 PM	10/12/17	15	M	POSSESS WEAPON AT SCHOOL (KNIFE)	YORKTOWN
10/21/17	4:09 PM	10/21/17	53	M	POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA	PATRICK HENRY
10/31/17	9:08 AM	10/31/17	17	M	1) POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS (CONCERTA) 2) TOBACCO OFFENSE 3) POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL 4) POSSESS NARCOTICS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY	YORKTOWN *
10/31/17	9:08 AM	10/31/17	17	M	1) POSSESSION OF NARCOTICS (LSD) 2) POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA 3) TOBACCO OFFENSE 4) POSSESSION OF ALCOHOL 5) POSSESS OF NARCOTICS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY	YORKTOWN *
10/31/17	9:08 AM	10/31/17	17	F	1) SELL NARCOTICS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY 2) DISTRIBUTE NARCOTICS (ADDERALL) 3) TOBACCO OFFENSE	YORKTOWN *
TOTAL: 9						

\* Same incident/multiple subjects  
All first time misdemeanor offenders are referred to Second Chance

ARLINGTON COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Lieutenant Susan Noack was worried about having enough hot coffee and donuts for the parents who would come out to the pre-PTA meeting on Nov. 13 to have “coffee with a cop” and talk about what is happening in the schools, particularly substance abuse. She needn’t have worried: only seven parents came to the early evening opportunity to talk with a local police officer.

Noack has been through parenting a teenager and it wasn’t easy. That is why she takes her job as an officer with the Arlington County Police Department (ACPD) in charge of the School Resource Officer Unit (SRO) so seriously. She has been with the ACPD for the past 27 years, and has worked with the schools for 11 of those.

The SRO Unit is comprised of 13 detectives, a sergeant, and a lieutenant. There is one officer in every middle and high school; there are three officers assigned to the various elementary schools. Despite the purpose of the SRO in schools to protect children, Noack says the pushback from parents about SROs investigating illegal activity is an issue she has to deal with all the time.

At the Nov. 13 meeting, parents approached her to ask about the new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regulating the interaction between SROs and students, articulating concern that a student might not have his rights protected adequately if questioned by the police.

Noack explained it is in the ACPD’s interest to make sure the student, whether in 6th or 12th grade, is fully competent to reply to the questions, and has his rights respected. The MOU revision is in process to regulate the role of police officers in schools

so they only get involved legal issues, rather than being called in to address a behavioral issue.

Noack said her focus on substance abuse stems partially from watching people close to her suffer from opioid addiction. She believes in the power of the local authorities to help protect youth from mistakes. She agrees Yorktown High School’s effort to manage substance abuse at the school will benefit from having the doors taken off the bathrooms, but said it has not stopped the bathrooms being used for transactions involving drugs.

“We caught a kid the other day passing drugs under the stall divider,” said Noack. She sighed: “Even LSD is making a comeback,” she said, “since two years ago.” Noack said the statistics indicating drug

activity is continuing at local schools were released last week in order to keep parents informed and aware.

One of Noack’s tribulations is how parents push back on police efforts to steer youth in the right direction. “We call them and say ‘we have a photo of your son or daughter smoking weed’ and they say, ‘You can’t prove that is weed. They might be faking it.’” Noack shrugged: “Never mind assessing why their kid would think it was a good idea to fake doing drugs and put it out online.”

Noack looks around the sparsely attended meeting. “Teen suicide is up in this area,” she said. “Kids have access to drugs because they are getting prescriptions for Xanax — because anxiety is on the rise, and no one is teaching the kids how to manage anxiety

in a different way.” Was Noack disturbed to get such a poor turnout? “We just want to get the word out,” she said. “Our event earlier in the year where we showed drug paraphernalia and talked about the issue got a better turnout.”

“Probably the best deterrent would be K-9 patrols,” Noack said, “however, Arlington Public Schools, under the direction of Dr. Patrick Murphy, has disallowed canines to come into the schools. We were even willing to do it during lock down so there wouldn’t be any interaction with the kids, but we got a ‘no’ from APS,” she said.

Linda Erdos, APS assistant superintendent, School and Community Relations, said there had not been a final decision. “Nobody has ruled out use of canine (K-9) searches in schools; Dr. Murphy wanted to allow the new principal at Yorktown a chance to put other measures in place and to have awareness sessions with students, teachers, and parents. When we met with PTA reps from middle schools and high schools, most parents were interested in beginning conversations, with kids and school administrations; the high schools wanted to hold sessions, to build awareness among families. We wanted them to have the chance to do that. Yorktown has been holding sessions, Washington and Lee had a session last spring and again this fall. We have a weekly meeting with Police Chief Farr and he keeps us aware of what is happening in the schools. Any criminal activity, any concerns about anything, we talk about it. We just had a meeting with the same people who orchestrated the community meeting on Nov. 5 — the Arlington Partnership for Youth and Families — and we talked about what we need to do next. We’re not here to catch people; we want to keep people from making bad decisions.”



## Deploying to Puerto Rico

**Twelve Arlington County Police officers volunteered to deploy to Puerto Rico to assist with law enforcement resources in the wake of Hurricane Maria. The officers will deploy in three staggered teams through Dec. 18 and serve the Puerto Rico community for 16 days each. The request for assistance came through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, which is the national emergency management mutual aid system that facilitates state-to-state disaster assistance.**

## Building Named for Bozman

The Arlington County Board voted unanimously Nov. 18 to name the County Office Building at 2100 Clarendon Boulevard for Ellen M. Bozman, a six-time board chair who died in 2009.

“Ellen Bozman set the bar high for civic service and leadership,” Arlington County Board Chair Jay Fiset said. “It is entirely fitting that the County offices be named for Ellen — a visionary who helped guide Arlington’s growth for decades, played a key role in developing Metro here, and who maintained the highest ethical standards throughout her decades of service to this community that she loved. Ellen believed in open, inclusive, competent government as a powerful agent of progress.”

In August 2017, Fiset received a petition signed by 62 Arlington residents asking that the board name the County Office Building for Bozman. The county’s Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board unanimously approved the naming on Sept. 20, 2017.

Bozman was first elected to the Arling-



ton County Board in 1973, and served for 24 years. Her civic life began before then, when she moved to the area after being selected by the National Institute of Public Affairs to participate in its internship program.

As a member of the League of Conservation Voters in the mid-1950s, Bozman helped defeat massive resistance to racial desegregation in Virginia. She chaired a local fundraising organization, the Arlington Health and Welfare Council from 1967-69, where she led the study of the growing challenges confronting families with children where both parents were working. She championed Arlington’s extended day program for schools.

She also represented the county on the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority and chaired the Arlington Committee of 100. She was president of the Church Council of Rock Spring United Church of Christ.



# GIFT IDEAS

## Trends in Gift Giving

From charitable to sustainable, shopping ideas to please even the pickiest.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

**C**onsider eco-friendly gifts that are constructed from recycled materials. “Items made from reclaimed materials are a great way to give a unique gift,” said Courtney Thomas of the Picket Fence in Burke. “Reclaimed wood is especially popular.”

Solemate Socks are another colorful option. They are made by repurposing recycled cotton yarn that is then spun into vibrant, patterned socks. Thomas also recommends decorative items made from reclaimed wood. “We have some beautiful churches made from wood salvaged from barns in Alabama,” she said.

Ornaments made from reclaimed paper are another environmentally conscious option. “Not only are these beautiful decorations, but they help provide jobs for people in third-world countries,” said Thomas.

Kevin Sweitzer of Thos. Moser, Handmade American Furniture recommends items made from sustainable North American hardwoods, “Namely cherry from the Allegheny Plateau in Pennsylvania and walnut from the riverbanks of Missouri.”

Examples include stacks of food-safe wooden bowls, which are “are sustainable and reusable, [make] a perfect hostess gift ... and a great conversation piece.”

**GIFTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE** in the lives of others are also on trend this year.

One example is Starling Project candles. Proceeds from the sales of these scented candles are donated to UNICEF to help provide solar energy to under-resourced countries.

“Products that support a cause are also a great way to both give a meaningful gift and help those in need,” said Thomas. “We have pottery ornaments that are made in Alabama by women escaping domestic violence.”

Vintage-inspired gifts are trendy this season, says Susan Nelson from Home on Cameron in Alexandria. “Wooden toys, [for example] appeal to all ages, as do vintage items such as magnifying glasses,” she said. “Gifts that are unique and offer a unique experience are popular right now.”

Handmade gifts are another consideration, adds



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOME ON CAMERON

**Vintage items such as these at Home on Cameron in Alexandria make unique holiday gifts.**

Todd Martz, also from Home on Cameron. “Visitors ... love the handmade items for gifts, such as felt flowers from Nepal, hand painted vases, and the custom pillows [which come] in a variety of colors and patterns.

**GIVING PRACTICAL GIFTS** that the recipient will actually use can minimize the need for gift returns. Merchants who are on the receiving end of after-season holiday gift returns suggest customers think about what it will be like for the recipient to actually own the gift, rather than the moment of receiving the gift.

One example, says Madeline Fairbanks of Country Casual Teak, “are accessories for those who entertain regularly such as ... wine stopper or wine caddy,” she said. “Purchasers like the thoughtfulness of the items and the durability of the products because they last for many years.”

**47th Norwegian Holiday Festival / Bazaar**  
**Friday, Dec. 1 & Saturday, Dec. 2**  
 10am - 6pm 9am - 4pm  
**Christ Lutheran Church**  
 3810 Meredith Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030

Norwegian Cafe • Imported Norwegian Food  
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# CareFirst Helps Sustain Health Safety Net

FROM PAGE 3

thing Fairfax personally champions.

“Here is a place of hope,” he said, referring to the fundamental reason people come to the U.S. to seek a better life, or knock at the door of a safety net organization, “and we need to rise to the better angels of our nature and give these people care.”

Fairfax said he was looking forward to working with those at the event, officials and citizens, in Richmond, where he hoped to expand health care: “There are 31 states who have voted to expand Medicaid — 18 who have not — and as a result, the state of Virginia has given away \$6 million a day in federal aid.”

Tildon presented checks for amounts of \$25,000 to \$50,000 to each of six providers at the event, highlighting the interconnectivity that makes it work: none of the organizations could do this alone. The health care provider could not help patients if he couldn’t prescribe medicines from NovaScripts, and then couldn’t refer them NOVA Family Services for jobs.

Basim Khan, of Neighborhood Health, accepted a check for \$50,000 noting that his organization is about to celebrate its 20th anniversary, and has set a new goal of trying to reach 21,000 patients. He said it was a firm Neighborhood Health belief that “the people we serve should get the same care that people get who are better off; we wanted our doctor’s office to look like anybody else’s. CareFirst made that possible at our Richmond Highway location. They helped support staff to get accreditation, and CareFirst helped us get pediatric dentistry on our list of services.”

Kathleen Sibert, executive director of A-Span, accepted a check for \$50,000 from Tildon. “We couldn’t do it without you,” she said. “We serve 11,000 people a year. Very often if there is a health problem, the doc-



**Lieutenant Governor-elect Justin Fairfax talks with Del. Alfonso Lopez (D-49) before the press conference starts.**

tor tells you to go home and rest and recuperate — but what if you don’t have a home to go to? CareFirst made this possible. The nurse practitioner at A-SPAN, Kasha Shaw, heads up a five-bed medical respite program in our new facility which consistently runs at 95 percent occupancy.”

Also receiving a check on Nov. 13 was the Medical Care for Children Partnership (MCCP). This is a program for youth who aren’t eligible for other programs.

As Andrea Lomrantz, director of Family Services, Fairfax County, said, “We are the last stop on the safety net.”

MCCP has a public-private partnership with Fairfax County to expand pediatric dental services to children in the Culmore/Stuart Pyramid community. Fairfax County’s dental clinic can serve only 30 low-income patients. “We have 3,200 kids under our care,” said Lomrantz. “The MCCP foundation was able to partner with Northern Vir-

ginia Community College and Dr. Basim Khan, to make Neighborhood Health the dental partner for these kids. We estimate just the cleaning alone is about \$150,000 worth of leveraged care. The \$25,000 from CareFirst will make it possible for us to provide that.” Another check recipient was President and CEO of Northern Virginia Family Services Stephanie Berkowitz. “Last year we helped 34,000 people on their journey to independence,” she told the crowd. “CareFirst has been a partner with intent and impact.”

Berkowitz highlighted the others in the room: “Because of the collective nature of what we do we are on the cutting edge.” She stressed the need for accessible behavioral healthcare; “It’s one of our biggest needs. CareFirst has supported this for our most underserved community, particularly immigrant children or those who have been through trauma.”



**Nancy White, Arlington Free Clinic, receives check from Maria Tildon of CareFirst, with one of the clinic’s first volunteer doctors, Tom Connolly, M.D.**

Berkowitz was followed by NovaScripts Executive Director Jessica Lantz, who also received a check and who noted that they had dispensed \$3.6 million worth of medication, and had started the program “Education before you Medicate,” and the use of bilingual formats, thanks to the money they received from CareFirst.

The host of the event, Nancy White, executive director, Arlington Free Clinic, also received a check for \$50,000. In 2015, Arlington Free Clinic launched its Oral Health Program in response to the large unmet need for dental care for low-income, uninsured Arlington adults. Grant funding from CareFirst has enabled AFC to sustain its capacity to deliver essential oral health care over the past two years; provide partial expansion of dental services; and identify options for increasing access to dental care for more patients and look towards providing a range of services offered in-house.

## Neighborhood Health Celebrates 20 Years of Service

FROM PAGE 3

borhood Health was designated a federally recognized health center.

Over the years, while the mission has stayed the same, the strategies have had to evolve. Abramson recalled early in the organization’s history when the staff would do house visits.

“It was important for me, at the beginning, to convey to the community that these are people in need and this is what their lives are like,” said Abramson. “Now, that’s not as practical.”

But Khan, now executive director, still personally sees patients one day a week.

“You want to be connected to the community you serve,” said Khan. “You need to listen to patients to figure out how best to serve them.”

Khan says this also helps with the public health balancing act: ensuring widespread access to care while also remembering that behind every number is an individual with their own history and needs.

Khan grew up in Pakistan. He knew from

an early age that he wanted to be involved in helping the underserved and work in healthcare specifically. Khan originally had an interest in international health, but says over time he realized there was a great need inside the United States and it would be easier to make a long-term commitment here. Khan trained at the San Francisco Public Hospital then moved to Northern Virginia, joining Neighborhood Health first as a physician then slowly working up.

“It’s very gratifying,” said Khab. “It gives me a sense of purpose.”

Every case is different. Khan says in many ways, there is no “average” neighborhood health clinic patient. But many of those they serve are poor and immigrants. The client demographics have changed over time. Initially, Abramson said the clientele was 80 percent Latino, but both Alexandria and Neighborhood Health have grown and diversified. Now, Khan says Neighborhood Health’s clientele is roughly half Hispanic, a quarter African American or African immigrant, and another quarter is various.

Today, Neighborhood Health faces a heavy financial strain from the troubled national health care divide.

“Virginia didn’t expand Medicaid eligibility, which meant there were many more uninsured here than in other states,” said Khan. “That puts a constraint on our ability to grow. The demand is still greater than our supply. It’s a very challenging environment. The cost of living here is very high and there’s a much higher demand for services. And with half of our clients not having health insurance, for them, there are no other options.”

A third of the organization’s funding comes from patient insurance. The rest comes from philanthropy. Half of that is

from federal grants, the other half from private donations or partnerships.

Abramson says the upcoming gala is a way for Neighborhood Health to celebrate their sponsors and partners over the years who have advocated for them. The 20th anniversary celebration will be held in the Mark Center on Dec. 7, with a cocktail reception at 6 p.m. and a dinner

and program at 7. The gala’s goal is to help fund the Neighborhood Health expansion goals for 2018.

Despite the financial hardships, Khan hopes to see the organization grow in the coming years to meet the demand. The goal in 2018 is to have 21,000 patients.

“We will continue to need support,” Khan said.

**“It was important for me, at the beginning, to convey to the community that these are people in need and this is what their lives are like.”**

**— Susan Abramson**



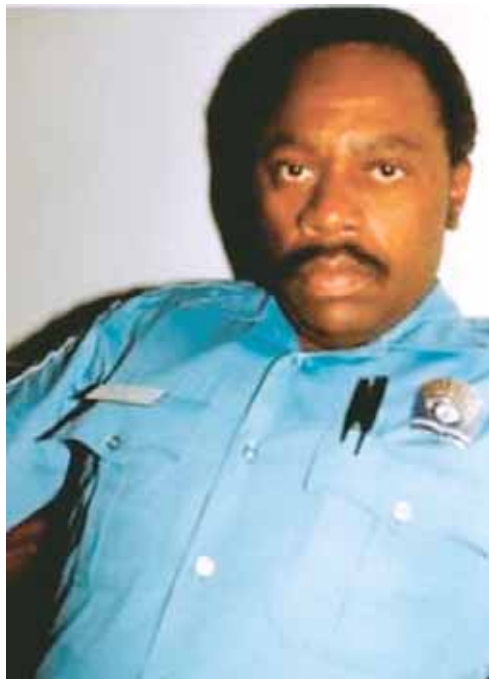
## OBITUARY

# County's First African-American Police Officer Dies

**O**n Thursday, Nov. 23, 2017, retired Officer Irving Comer, the first African-American to be sworn in as a police officer for the Arlington County Police Department, died at the age of 74.

Officer Comer began his career in Arlington County in September 1967 as a communications specialist. At that time, the chief of police had not been successful in recruiting minority officers and asked Mr. Comer to join the force. He initially rejected the chief's request, fearing he would be limited to patrolling minority neighborhoods. He took the position in December 1967, only after the chief assured him he would serve the entire community.

Two years into his service, Officer Comer became a school resource officer at Thomas Jefferson Junior High, just as racial integration began. He served as the police department's youth resource detective, creating a Juvenile De-



linquency Prevention Program.

In May 1974, Officer Comer became a recruiter for the Northern Virginia Police Minority Recruitment Office. Additionally, he created the first ride-along program, focusing on youth mentorship and was an instructor at the Northern

Virginia Criminal Justice Training Academy. Officer Comer retired from the police department in May 1992, serving the Arlington County community for 24 years. Prior to Officer Comer's service to Arlington County, he served in the U.S. Marine Corps from June 1963 to July 1967, obtaining the rank of sergeant.

Officer Comer attended Virginia State University, then Virginia State College, in 1963, majoring in mathematics. In 1973, he received his Bachelor of Science degree in administration of justice from the American University. He received his Master of Science degree in 1975 from Southern Illinois University. Of-

ficer Comer also completed two years of law school at the International School of Law. In 1994, he applied his on-the-job experience and formal education and became a Political Science and Administration of Justice professor at Germanna and Northern Virginia

Community College.

Officer Comer had a love for sports. In his spare time, he coached and officiated high school and recreational basketball.

His daughter, Angela Comer, joined the ranks of the Arlington County Police Department three decades after her father. Angela Comer, who has risen to the rank of first sergeant, said her father was key to her career decision. Although she faced some challenges, she's grateful for the groundwork laid by her father.

"Officer Irving Comer joined the police department at a time the country and the county was struggling with race relations and needed an ambassador," said Chief of Police, M. Jay Farr. "He fulfilled this mission and embraced the task at hand. Our thanks go out to Officer Comer and the legacy he left. Our heartfelt condolences remain with the Comer family as they mourn his loss."

Services for Officer Comer will be held at Dale City Christian Church Cathedral of Praise, 14022 Lindendale Road, Woodbridge, Va. on Friday, Dec. 1 at 10 a.m.



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## Tips for Creating An In-law Suite



It's always a good idea to start thinking about the future of your parents and in-laws, and even your own, now, rather than when you really need to. In-law suites can be ideal for relatives who want to keep their privacy and maintain some independence while also feeling included in the rest of the household. When creating an in-law suite, there are certain things to keep in mind.

### Think about location

There are often many options for where to build your in-law suite depending on your home and lot. You can transform your garage or porch area into an enclosed space. You can design an addition onto your home. You can combine existing rooms in your home such as a living room and dining room.

### Think about functionality

Keep in mind who will be using your new space and anticipate the needs they will have now and in the future. Will they need wider doors and hallways? Could they use assisted baths with lever handles and stylish guardrails? How about no-slip flooring and no-curb showers? The possibilities are virtually endless.

### Think about decor

If your relatives aren't planning to move in permanently or they won't move in for a while, it's important to keep everyone in mind with the decor of your addition. Keeping things neutral, from flooring, to curtains, to wall color, will allow personal touches to be added by those that use the space.

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For information contact us at: [anniversary@neighborhoodhealthva.org](mailto:anniversary@neighborhoodhealthva.org) or to sponsor our Gala and make a reservation go to [www.501auctions.com/neighborhoodhealthgala](http://www.501auctions.com/neighborhoodhealthgala)



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**News**

# The Save Lucy Campaign

FROM PAGE 4

"WNS has killed 90 percent of cave dependent bats in Pennsylvania," Hammer said. "It's been devastating for farmers who rely on bats for pest control."

Unfortunately, experts like Sturges don't see a light at the end of the tunnel soon enough.

"In my opinion, these hibernators are in deep, deep trouble," she said. "We will not 'cure' the fungus that causes WNS because fungi are incredibly persistent and every year, surviving bats get re-exposed. We can hope they develop resistance against the fungus. Given that bats live with the fungus in Europe and Asia, it seems the ability to develop resistance is possible. However, the habitat available to those potential resistors [in our area] is not exactly awesome. We need to do what we can to help those survivors reproduce so resistance can be expressed in the population."

According to Sturges, there are eight species of bats that hibernate in caves. This equates to about half the bats in Virginia.

The Save Lucy Campaign team has educated thousands of people through its outreach efforts, which includes workshops in a number of different locations.

"Our boots-on-the-ground efforts reach about 5,000 people a year, and our audiences range from elementary school students to adult interest groups," Sturges said. "We focus mostly on Backyard Bats, that is, species native to the mid-Atlantic. We feel strongly that not enough attention is paid to local wildlife species unless it's negative press stories. We try to counteract that. Of course, we also touch on bats on a global basis, but we really want to bring nature and conservation home. Personally, I want kids to come up with conservation actions on their own, but we only have an hour with them during a program, so I do point them to conservation actions that they can take and that have a big impact, like invasive plant removal and turning out excess lights at night."

Sturges encourages people to use their own talents and hobbies to make a difference in the lives of these misunderstood mammals.

"We produce animated short films and art to add to our education efforts, and we also encourage kids to use non-conventional methods to share how they feel, like poetry, song writing, and art," Sturges said. "I had a student very excited about writing a 'Fight the Fungus' song."

The Save Lucy Campaign, funded mostly by donations, also does what it can to be hands-on with its rescue efforts.

"We deal with 50 to 80 bats per year," she said, "but we are still running with a skeleton crew of volunteers."

This local guild of bat advocates is made up of more than 10 people with a passion for bats.

"I've loved bats since I was a kid," Hammer said. "I used to go to the library and check out books about



**Fierce is a tricolor bat (state endangered).**

them. I thought that they were amazing. Other people made disparaging comments about them, but I was fascinated. When I was about 15, I went to summer camp, and these teenage boys caught a bat and were torturing it inside a building, and I rescued him and yelled at them. That was the first time I saw one close up, and it was so cute. The experience made me love bats even more."

As a teacher, Hammer has used bats to teach a variety of lessons. If it weren't for her, hundreds of students wouldn't know that there are about 1,300 species of bats, or that bats consume millions of mosquitos every year. Since getting involved with The Lucy Campaign about five years ago, she gets to broadcast these facts and lessons on a much grander scale.

"Getting involved with The Save Lucy Campaign, it's a rare opportunity to work closely with other bat enthusiasts," Hammer said. "I've gotten to educate so many people, and lead people on bat walks locally."

I've gotten to discuss the really interesting phenomena that are happening with different bat species right now."

She said there are so many misconomers about bats, and she believes that it's because creatures of the night often get a falsely bad reputation.

"Contrary to popular belief, bats are not blind," she said.

"That's a myth. They fly with their hands and can actually see even better than us. They also have echolocation capabilities so they can sense something as delicate as a spider web. They may fly near humans, but, it's only to get to insects. We are taught to be scared of things we don't know, and, it is pretty hard for people to wrap their heads around the concept of a mammal that flies. Most bats are not vampire bats, though, and, even those that are bring great advantages to humankind. I wish everyone could know more about bats, and why it's such a tragedy that so many are vanishing."

For more information, visit [www.savelucythebat.org](http://www.savelucythebat.org).

**"We deal with 50 to 80 bats per year, but we are still running with a skeleton crew of volunteers."**

**— Leslie Sturges**



# News Housing

FROM PAGE 5

of the Alliance for Affordable Housing Solutions. “Park Shirlington is at risk of becoming another loss. County is right to be preserving this kind of acquisition.”

However, Winters expressed concerns about the project’s future costs. In the presentation, staff said the project will likely require further AHIF funding in the future for a second phase of work on the site, though a cost projection was premature. Winters argued that with so many other affordable housing projects in line for funding, it would be unfair for this new project to cut ahead, though she said the competition underscored the need for greater AHIF funding.

The County Board expressed agreement with Winters. “I have questions about the process going forward,” said County Board Chair Jay Fiset. “We’d love to move everyone to the top of the list but that’s not possible. As staff reviews this with all the competing interest in mind, the board will be looking hard at that.”

County Board member Katie Cristol, while expressing excitement and whole-hearted support for the project, had concerns about the way the project was presented out-of-cycle. Affordable housing projects typically compete for funding in an annual cycle, but given the large number of units at risk and the time-sensitive nature of the option to buy, staff initiated an out-of-cycle funding process. The staff report notes that this may reduce the levels of AHIF funding that might have been otherwise available during the in-cycle budget approval process.

But despite these concerns, the County Board unanimously approved the loan.

“Without the National Foundation for Affordable Housing Solutions, it’s highly likely all of these buildings would have been demolished by somebody else and something like very high, expensive townhouses,” said Fiset. “And for that, we thank you.”

## BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 6

urban-design/designarlington/.

### SATURDAY/DEC. 2

**Future Quest.** 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at GMU’s Johnson Center, 4400 University Drive, Fairfax. College and career conference for area middle and high school students with disabilities, as well as their parents, teachers and other professionals. Featuring more than 40 workshops and exhibits related to successful life after high school. Free. There is free parking in Lot K, or in the Mason Pond Parking Garage for \$8. Visit [www.futurequestgmu.org](http://www.futurequestgmu.org) to register or email [futurequestnova@gmail.com](mailto:futurequestnova@gmail.com).

### THROUGH DEC. 3

**Coat and Blanket Drive.** Nova Relief Center is holding a blanket and coat drive for Syrian and Iraqi refugees who have fled their homestates to escape the violence from the civil war in Syria. Paxton Van Lines and Maersk are donating their services this year. Donated blankets and coats should be new or gently worn, and may be dropped off at any designated drop-off location below. To make a tax-deductible donation, visit NOVA Relief Center’s website at [www.NOVAreliefcenter.org](http://www.NOVAreliefcenter.org)

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## Giving Thanks for the Going



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Four hours up north with moderate hassle first thing Thanksgiving-Thursdays morning. Dinner and all the fixings with family and friends upon arrival, after a midday break. Conversations and such with young, medium and old (with yours truly being the oldest of our generation) until 1:15 a.m., (a recent time record for many). Up at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast with more casual talk and noshing. Out the door at 9:15-ish heading back for an immediate day-after return trip home scheduled to make an early Friday afternoon chemotherapy infusion. Infusion completed and on the final way home, a stop at the supermarket at 4 p.m. – since we had no Thanksgiving leftovers (turkey sandwiches in particular) to satiate the deprived. Dinner as soon as possible since we were both hungry and tired after our up-and-back. Turkey breast, mashed potatoes and peas for our own leftovers, off-and-on television and napping and then we both called it at 9:15 p.m. or so.

Twelve hours later, we were both awake. What a sleep! What a 24 hours! What a wonderful holiday! I wouldn't characterize it as an ordeal. However, it was a bit of an undertaking given my Friday afternoon commitment; my first-ever, post-holiday, having-to-rush-back-from-out-of-town excursion. Though in previous years, we may have occasionally travelled up and back in the same day, when our route was two-hours to Pennsylvania where the in-laws lived, we are older and presumably wiser now and somewhat less able and inclined to travel with as little margin and rest.

Compounded of course with Kenny-with-cancer being mostly behind the wheel, a permanent designated driver since I don't drink and still see pretty well at night. Still, I'm hardly the driver I used to be and the affect of the holiday festivities on my fellow drivers is always cause for concern.

But all's well that ends well, except for the piles of Thanksgiving day-afters left where we last saw them, miles away. Nevertheless, we are happy to have made the effort, despite the less-than-ideal timing. As difficult as this kind of schedule was/had to be, I can't let, as much as possible anyway, my cancer stuff: infusions, 24-hour urine collection, pre-chemotherapy lab work, quarterly scans and yearly MRIs and quarterly appointments with my oncologist impact my semi-normal life. In fact, my oncologist has been a major proponent of my "quality of life," an advisory he has regularly encouraged.

I've always felt, from the beginning of my diagnosis/prognosis, that I was not going to live my life any differently than I had previous to 2/27/09. As challenging as that proved to be on many occasions, my goal has been to try and integrate my life around my chemotherapy – and vice versa, and to not let too many chips fall along the wayside. Moreover, my philosophy has been not to bucket a list either, but rather to simply live my usual and customary life and not be affected by my "13-month to two-year prognosis." If I was doing bucket list-type things, things that I would ordinarily not be doing, I felt that would be reinforcing a negative: that I was going to die prematurely, rather than encouraging a positive: that I am going to live.

For me, maintaining the status quo and continuing to do the little things that characterize who I am and what I value seemed more appropriate and more Kenny-like. Not sharing Thanksgiving dinner with relatives with whom I've shared a table going on nearly 40 years wouldn't have helped at all. Not now, or ever.

Finding balance – and sanity in the midst of a battle royal – vs a "terminal" diagnosis, stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, is all it's cracked up to be. A little fun, make that a lot of fun, never hurt anyone, especially those of us fighting for our lives.

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



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