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Great Falls CONNECTION

On Sunday, Apr 28, the Great Falls Friends & Neighbors Scholarship Fund (GFFNSF) hosted its First Spring Tea fundraiser event at the River Bend Golf & Country Club. The event was made even more special by the attendance of more than 20 children.



Spring Tea Raises Scholarship Money

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Two Town Hall Meetings in May
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OPINION, PAGE 6 ♦ ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 12 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 14

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Hope in Bloom

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

**FACETS annual benefit breakfast
shares hope and progress.**

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

If you have ever wondered what impact local nonprofits really have on social issues in our area or what long-term benefits they provide to the area's most vulnerable, attendance at the 8th annual FACETS Breakfast, themed "Hope in Bloom" and held on April 25, would have answered your curiosity in an eloquent and heart-warming way.

Yes, there was a celebrity emcee to guide the event, in the person of NBC News4 Northern Virginia Bureau Chief Julie Carey. Yes, there was a prominent and influential featured speaker in Congressman Gerry Connolly (D-11), with additional remarks by FACETS Executive Director Joe Fay and Board Chair Don Harris. There was even a video presentation showing some of the work being done by the Fairfax-based nonprofit whose mission is to aid those facing or experiencing homelessness, providing emergency shelter and needs, helping them gain safe and permanent housing and "working with them to end the cycle of poverty through education, life skills and career counseling."

But what really hit home and highlighted the lasting good that can be accomplished when community works together, were the "courageous client speakers" who took to the podium to tell their personal stories.

Richard was first up. With his vision lost to glaucoma, Richard was escorted to the stage by caseworkers Ruben Aquino and Candice Stancil of FACETS' Supportive Housing services.

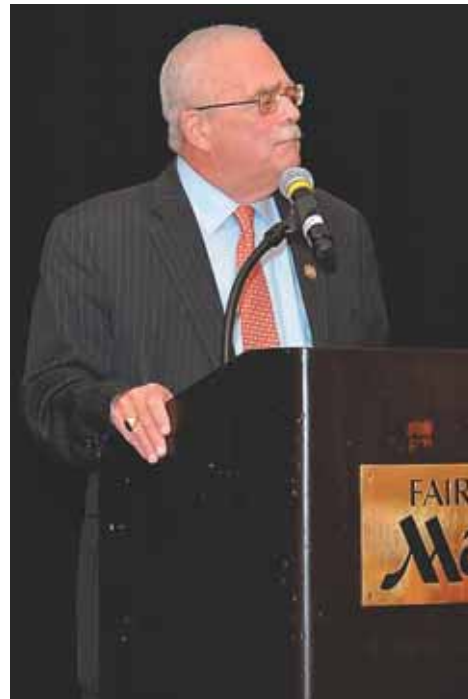
Richard has experienced homelessness more than once, with substance abuse a contributing factor the first time around.

"I came to this area and found help. My sobriety days began on August the 8, 1997," Richard told the audience with quiet pride.

AFTER FINDING ASSISTANCE the first time, Richard actually began working with other homeless, initially as a volunteer at the Bailey's Crossroad Community Shelter, and then as an employee of the facility. But as those who work with our neighbors in need well know, stability can be a precarious perch in our expensive hometown. As his sight began to fail, in 2011 Richard had an accident. Hesitant to reach out again for fear of losing what he finally had achieved – employment and his dignity - Richard fell into homelessness once more, seeking shelter in abandoned homes in Annandale.

When his "home" was discovered, Richard had to move out into the unsheltered world again, but found a new path when he visited the Safe Haven drop-in day shelter run by the First Christian Church in Falls Church.

"That's when I engaged with FACETS," he said. With their support and the caring assistance of Aquino and Stancil who worked



U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly (D-11) was the featured speaker at the FACETS Benefit Breakfast.



From left: Del. Kathleen Murphy (D-34), Dranesville District Supervisor John Foust, and Braddock District Supervisor John Cook join event emcee Julie Carey, Northern Virginia Bureau Chief for NBC News4 before the annual FACETS Benefit Breakfast program got underway.



Maria Avila, Program Director of Single Adult Housing Stabilization for FACETS was honored at the event for her work as the coordinator of the Hypothermia Prevention Program.



Norca Calderin was honored for her efforts as FACETS Hypothermia Prevention Site Coordinator and Case Manager. FACETS has been running the annual program during the winter months for 18 years.

with him to secure the resources he needed, Richard has now been living for years in independent housing.

"I thank FACETS for working with me to maintain my independence. I have two of the best case managers standing here beside me today. I thank them and you."

Yvette and case manager Tanner Sigmon were up next.

Yvette, who hails from southern Springfield, described a childhood in a good home in a good neighborhood. She worked full time in law firms and saved enough money to buy her own townhouse when she was

just 23.

She sold that home and moved to Roanoke, "but bad things happened there, and I came back."

With no money, no job, and a different

SEE FACETS, PAGE 9

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Date and Time

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NEWS

GFCFA to Hold Two Town Hall Meetings in May

Great Falls Citizens Association (GFCFA) has developed two different programs for residents in May:

First, local power outages: what's the solution? — will be held on Wednesday, May 1, 7:30 p.m. at Great Falls Library.

Dominion Energy has been invited to discuss power outages and its plans to improve the reliability of the electric grid. The presentation will include information on its Strategic Underground Program as well as information on other undergrounding projects in the area designed to improve service, including several in the Great Falls area. Speakers will be: Julie Wagoner, Operations Specialist, Distribution System Reliability and Alison Kaufmann, with Electric Distribution Underground Communications.

At this meeting, GFCFA will present the recommended slate of candidates for officers and board members; nominations may be made from the floor. The GFCFA election will be held on June 3.

Second event — live raptors and

what you and your children should know about the wildlife around us — will be held on Saturday, May 18, from 10 a.m.-noon, at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls.

GFCFA has developed a special morning program that will be of interest to adults, children and all families who want to know more about deer, coyotes, raccoons, eagles and sustainable environment. Speakers include a Fairfax County wildlife biologist and a representative from the county's Animal Protection Office. GFCFA has also engaged the DC-based Earth Conservation Corps to bring three live raptors, such as a red-tailed hawk and an owl. These live birds of prey will be part of the indoor program as well as an outdoor demonstration. Light refreshments will be served.

All GFCFA members are encouraged to take the GFCFA "Looking Forward to 2025 Survey" by clicking on this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H9JJHB6>

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BULLETIN

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

THURSDAY/MAY 2

Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. First and third Thursdays of every month. Contact facilitator Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Memory Cafe. 2-4 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Connect with others living with loved ones with dementia, find fun, resources and "family." Email Carol Blackwell at lovriver@aol.com or call at 571-236-6933.

SATURDAY/MAY 4

UUCF Yard Sale. 7 a.m.-1 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. All proceeds benefit - UUCF Social Justice Council; Shepherd's Center of Oakton-Vienna & National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI-Northern Virginia). Email UUCFYardsale@gmail.com or call 703-281-4230.

Mindful 365 Meditation. 10 a.m.-noon at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Monthly. Newcomers welcome. \$10. Visit www.unityoffairfax.org/events Reserve a spot at sittinggroup-2019.eventbrite.com.

Peripheral Neuropathy Support Group. 2-4 p.m. at Mason District Governmental Center, 6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale. Meets the first Saturday of the month. All are welcome. RSVP for available seating. Call 301-263-0616 or visit www.dcpnsupport.org for more.

District Supervisor Candidate Meet and Greet. 4-6 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Meet the candidates who are running for the Fairfax Board of Supervisors: Dranesville District; Hunter Mill District; Providence District; and Sully District. Free. RSVP at www.eventbrite.com/o/naacp-fairfax-county-12397167937.

SUNDAY/MAY 5

Eclectic Accessory Extravaganza Sale. 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at Temple Rodef Shalom, 2100 Westmoreland St., Falls Church. Wide assortment of previously owned "treasures" such as designer handbags; scarves; high quality costume jewelry; decorative home and household accessories; and children's play items. Free admission. Email burkittjudithp11@comcast.com or call 571-319-0587.

Low Cost Rabies Vaccine Clinic. Noon-2 p.m. at Mount Vernon Governmental Center, 2511 Parkers Lane, Alexandria. Cost is \$15 per pet, cash and check only. Dogs, cats, and ferrets may be vaccinated at the clinic. Dogs must be on leashes; cats and ferrets must be in carriers. All pets will receive a 1-year rabies vaccination. To obtain a 3-year vaccine, bring pet's rabies certificate (not tag) showing the current rabies vaccination expiration date. 2019 county dog licenses will be sold for an additional \$10. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/animalshelter/communityassistance/rabiesclinics

22 Proven Processes. 1-3 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. A class that focuses on abundance processes and based on the book "Ask and It Is Given" by Esther and Jerry Hicks. By donation. Visit unityoffairfax.org/events or 22-proven-processes.eventbrite.com.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 8

Fairfax County Park Authority Board Meeting. 7:30 p.m. in the Herrity Building, 12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 941, Fairfax. Open to the public. See www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/boardagn2.htm or call 703-324-8662.

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 7

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However, for any day during that 12 month period that the daily account balance is less than the \$25,000 minimum, the Special Rate will not apply, and the interest rate will revert to the standard interest rate applicable to your Platinum Savings account. As of 02/15/2019, the standard interest rate and APY for a Platinum Savings account in AR, CT, DC, FL, GA, MD, MS, NC, NJ, NY, SC, TX and VA with an account balance of \$0.01 and above is 0.05% (0.05% APY). Each tier shown reflects the current minimum daily collected balance required to obtain the applicable APY. Interest is compounded daily and paid monthly. The amount of interest earned is based on the daily collected balances in the account. Upon the expiration of the 12 month promotional period, standard interest rates apply. Minimum to open a Platinum Savings account is \$25. A monthly service fee of \$12 applies in any month the account falls below a \$3,500 minimum daily balance. Fees may reduce earnings. 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OPINION

Black or Blue: Lessons Learned from How Virginia Democrats Handled the Ralph Northam Debacle

Let's get something straight, this is not a blackface controversy, this is a KKK controversy.

BY KOFI ANNAN
PRESIDENT, FAIRFAX COUNTY NAACP

During a 1960 speech to a mixed audience in New York City, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "There is a pressing need for a liberalism in the North which is truly liberal." While Virginia is a southern state, it gets bluer with each election, therefore we should take heed to MLK's words, which essentially challenges liberals to fight the gravitational pull to the right on issues of civil rights and equity. It is difficult to see both the election of Ralph Northam, his subsequent actions, and the actions of the party to protect him as anything but the party signaling to the center-right that they have their back and are willing to sacrifice a few black voters if need be.

Liberals have long sought to convince African Americans that they alone can shield us from conservative's intent on rolling back the hands of time. And African Americans normally respond to that message, having never wavered in our loyalty for the last half century. Every election cycle we make or break elections in favor of the Democratic Party, even though for the most part we get marginal improvement in our quality of life overall, and in many measurable ways we actually regress. Our average collective net worth remains a fraction of whites, our employment rate remains half that of whites, our neighborhoods are still gentrified in the name of progress, predominantly black public schools are still underfunded, we still make up 40 percent of the nations' incarcerated, and school administrators still consistently dole out harsher punishments to our kids compared to their white counterparts, even in districts dominated by Democratic Party leadership. A report from the Institute for Policy Studies, released to coincide with what would have been MLK's 90th birthday, demonstrated that over the past few decades, black wealth actually fell by 50%.

On the other hand, Republicans haven't presented a particularly appealing message to African Americans voters at any point during this time period either, and even less so during the Trump Administration, which uses racism and xenophobia to collect votes as effectively as any administration in recent history. However, what's more intriguing is the possibility that Democrats like Northam view Trump's success as a reason to shift focus on securing the white middle-class vote even if that means sacrificing some of the African American vote, or at least taking the black vote for granted. After all, the politics of "fear the racist Republican" is a lot easier to sell today than it was just a few years ago. This might explain why presidential favorite Pete Buttigieg felt comfortable proposing that he would undo decades of work to expand voting rights to those convicted of crimes, who are disproportionately represented

by minorities.

This certainly appears to be the case in Virginia. Most of us are familiar with the controversy surrounding Governor Northam and his possible Ku Klux Klan (KKK) affiliation by now, right? Perhaps I shouldn't assume. Maybe you were one of those that ignored the Klan member in the photograph, and instead saw this incident as a [less harmful] 'blackface' controversy that could be explained by innocent cultural insensitivity. But let's get something straight, this is not a blackface controversy, this is a KKK controversy. A lot of people - including the governor - would rather focus on the person in blackface because it's a slightly more tolerant form of white supremacy, and conveniently ignore the terrorist next to the individual in blackface. But the governor should not be let off the hook that easily. The KKK is America's original domestic terrorist group (despite what the laws say), having killed well over 4,000 Americans that we know of, and our governor either is or was associated with them. Let that sink in, particularly as we still mourn the loss of another group of innocent lives at the hands of other terrorist groups in New Zealand a few weeks ago, Pittsburgh, Charlottesville, and most recently Sri Lanka. The leader of the Democratic Party in Virginia has yet to offer a sensible explanation for why a terrorist was in his yearbook, and the Democratic Party is okay enough with this that they're now openly not only defending him but trotting him out at political fundraisers.

To most the case against Northam seemed open and shut, and his resignation seemed inevitable. One would imagine that an elected official who represents the party which prides itself on its diversity, that routinely secures over 90% of the African American vote, and counts on that constituency to win key battleground territories in a purple state that was red just a few elections ago, would certainly recognize that defending the governor is not a hill worth dying on and step aside as quickly and as gracefully as possible.

Well we're now approaching May and not only has Northam refused to step aside, but even more unfortunate the Democratic Party has begun to rally around him in a show of solidarity. First came the slow drip of messages of appreciation from members of the General Assembly for one bill after the other on social media. Then the ridiculous Michael Jackson impersonation story that once seemed straight out of a bad SNL skit became the official party line. As for the "Coonman" nickname in his VMI yearbook that never received a formal explanation from the governor? Well one explanation floated to me by a Democratic member of in the Virginia House of Delegates - who happened to be African American - was an even greater insult to our intelligence, and full of even more racist stereotypes. According to the delegate the governor's nickname stemmed

from the fact that he had a lot of black friends due to his love of basketball.

As if insulting our intelligence wasn't bad enough, many within the Democratic Party felt it necessary to go after those amplifying the call for the governor's resignation. Following a protest led the Fairfax County National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at a Democratic fundraiser where the governor was scheduled to attend, Democratic Party loyalists and leaders alike attacked the NAACP for doing the very thing the organization was founded for - standing up against racism. Its members were described as "troublemakers" and "bullies"; and the nation's oldest and most successful civil rights organization is described as a "fringe element" by one party leader.

One of the talking points coming from Virginia's Democrats is that "the governor isn't going anywhere, so we might as well work with him." This intentionally alleviates the burden of responsibility from the rest of the party leadership, because it makes them seem powerless, when in reality they really don't want to challenge him anyway. As the reaction to the protests demonstrated, real challenges to the governor will not be looked upon favorably by the Democratic Party. If they'll publicly assassinate the NAACP, one could only imagine what private pressure is being placed on African American legislators who dare break ranks. This likely explains the deafening silence and acquiescence from most black elected officials on this issue.

Not enough black leaders (elected and community leaders alike) stand with the black community on principle when it matters most; and if they can't stand on principle when it comes to the KKK, when will they? If they can't break ranks with the party now, when will they? Black leaders stood next to Hillary Clinton when she called our youth "super predators", and they stood next to Bill when he doubled down on Reagan's mass incarceration policies. We're often told that the solution is electing more African American to office; but if this is the best they can do when faced with a such a clear-cut choice in a time of crisis, then their true value to the African American community is questionable.

If these officials don't have what it takes to tackle overt headline-grabbing racism within their own ranks, how can they be trusted to tackle systemic racism that doesn't make headlines. The numbers highlighting African American wealth decline speak for themselves. They can't.

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PEOPLE

Receiving Top Honors

Sales associate Christine Richardson of the Great Falls office was recognized for exceptional industry success in March said Mark Ackermann, president of Weichert, Realtors' Capital Region.

A top producer, Richardson led her Weichert sales region for listings, resale listings, revenue units and resale revenue units for the month. She also shared top honors for sales. The region comprises offices throughout Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun, Orange, Prince William and Warren counties.

Richardson can be reached in



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Christine Richardson

Weichert's Great Falls office at 731-A Walker Road, or call 703-759-6300.

BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 5

THURSDAY/MAY 9

The Opportunity in Opportunity Zones. 8-10:30 a.m. at Valo Park - Tysons Corner, 7950 Jones Branch Drive. New community investment tool was created by the 2017 tax law, census tracts that state and federal governments have targeted for economic development. Join the Community Foundation for Northern Virginia and learn about this new investment tool. \$40; includes continental breakfast. Visit www.cfnova.org to register.

FRIDAY/MAY 10

Digital Citizenship: Tips for

Parents. 10 a.m.-noon at at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 - Room 100, Dunn Loring. Digital Citizenship can be described as the norms of appropriate, responsible behavior, impact on self and others, with regard to technology use. Free to parents, educators and community members. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 15



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Schar Cancer Institute rendering.

Schar Cancer Institute Opens to Patients May 13

Institute becomes a landmark for health care and research in Fairfax County

The Inova Health System will usher in a new level of medical treatment and patient care when the Inova Schar Cancer Institute opens to patients May 13 on its Merrifield campus.

"The Schar Cancer Center raises the already-high level of health-care facilities in Fairfax County," said Catherine W. Riley, interim president and CEO of the Fairfax County Economic Development Authority. "As part of the Inova Center for Personalized Health it can make Fairfax County a destination for world-class research and clinical work."

Dedication ceremonies took place Wednesday, April 24, for the \$150 million center for care and research that is anchoring the 117-acre Inova campus, fulfilling a vision that began with the acquisition of the former Exxon Mobil site. The institute was made possible, in part, by a \$50 million contribution from Dwight Schar and wife Martha, whose legacy will extend beyond Fairfax County-based NVR home builders.

MEMBERS OF THE SCHAR FAMILY were joined by others, including U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy and wife Marcelle, political commentator Cokie Roberts, and Lara Hopewell, a local hockey mom-turned-crusader for cancer research — all cancer survivors. Also participating in the ceremonies were U.S. Rep. Gerry Connolly, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova and Inova CEO Dr. Stephen Jones. The ceremonies featured more than 100 cancer patients and their family members, who became the first to walk through the front door of the newly-dedicated facility.

"We are so fortunate in Fairfax County to have access to such world class medical care and treatment," said Bulova, who presented a proclamation from the Board of Supervisors congratulating Inova. "We have amazing facilities, doctors and cutting-edge technologies that are right here, literally in our own backyard, and that is so incredibly valuable."

Riley echoed the importance of having a first-class cancer facility in the county, offering residents the highest quality care without requiring them to travel, often hundreds of miles for treatment. She also emphasized the importance of the research that will take place at the facility, creating a new horizon in the

diversification of Fairfax County's workforce.

"We're very excited about the research and development aspect of the Schar Institute and the ways in which it will help diversify our local economy," Riley said. "It will attract new doctors and scientists. In partnership with facilities like the University of Virginia Medical School, those researchers will be applying for new grants and developing the kinds of programs that will make Fairfax County known as a medical research and development center."

"We are so fortunate in Fairfax County to have access to such world class medical care and treatment."

Sharon Bulova, Chairman, County Board of Supervisors

DURING THE DEDICATION, Jones announced that Dr. John Deeken, who had been serving as acting president of the Inova Schar Cancer Institute, is named permanently to the president's role. Deeken said the institute would continue stress its "patient-first" philosophy, building on its ability to provide one-stop care through teams of doctors, nurses, therapists, researchers and specialized counselors.

"The vision and the spirit is that the patient is at the center of everything we do," said Deeken, who previously served as COO of the Inova Translational Medicine Institute. "Fundamentally, that's the difference in the model of care at Inova."

"This is the culmination of years of effort in planning and design and recruiting — to make real what we'd hoped to have for all the patients in Northern Virginia, which is expert care close to home. Nobody in Northern Virginia should think they need to go to Houston, New York or Baltimore to get world-class cancer care. We have it right here."

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NEWS

FACETS Hosts Benefit Breakfast

FROM PAGE 3

family relationship than before, Yvette called a tent in the woods her home. Eventually she met Tanner at the Lamb Center, a day shelter in Fairfax offering meals, laundry service, access to general healthcare, counselling, job search help, and more.

Yvette advises that others like her have to be prepared to “self help” and do the work, actively participating in improving their lives, but you “should ask for help, and offer it when you can.”

After 12 years of homelessness, Yvette now has a safe place of her own to call home and feels that with Tanner and FACETS’ help, her life is “moving forward.”

Printice, who also came to FACETS through the Lamb Center was the final “Courageous Client Speaker,” accompanied by his case manager Robert Tindall.

“A very bad divorce” and health issues contributed to his homeless state, during which time he suffered several heart attacks. At the benefit breakfast, Printice did not so much tell his own story in detail, as take the opportunity to thank the many people who have helped him into safe housing and better health.

FACETS was founded in 1988 by Linda Wimpey, starting as a three-nights-a-week outreach program in partnership with a few area churches to tend to the needs of homeless families.

“When I was the Providence District Supervisor, I delivered hot meals with Linda,” recalled Connolly.

“I will never forget seeing people come out of the woods wearing suits on their way to work.”

Connolly credits Wimpey and FACETS with being instrumental in developing the county’s Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness, adopted when he was Chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and with playing “a big role” in the “penny on the tax rate” budget item that puts money toward affordable housing in the county.

What FACETS is and what they do has grown significantly over the years. Dozens of area faith communities and businesses now partner with FACETS and a network of nonprofit and county service agencies to continue the battle against homelessness and poverty.

AT THE BREAKFAST, FACETS also celebrated 15 years of operating the annual Hypothermia Prevention and Response Program for the county’s Human Services Region 4 - Western County/Fairfax and Centreville areas. During the cold months from November through March, the homeless are offered shelter, meals and services at partnering area churches, with each faith community taking on a seven-day stretch of overnight hospitality.

This winter season FACETS and partners took 302 people out of the cold each night. Thirty-eight of those experiencing homeless then now have places of their own to call home with the help of FACETS case managers and resources that the FACETS folks have worked to find for their clients. The breakfast gathering was the perfect time and place to honor Maria Avila and Norca Calderin who direct the Hy-



Richard tells his story as a client of FACETS, accompanied by his case managers, Ruben Aquino (left) and Candice Stancil (right). With the help of FACETS, Richard, who lost his sight to glaucoma, has now enjoyed stable, independent living for many years.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA WÖRKER/THE CONNECTION



Yvette experienced 12 years of homelessness. One of three “courageous client speakers” at the FACETS Benefit Breakfast, Yvette spoke matter-of-factly of her situation, grateful for the assistance and guidance of FACETS staff, but advising that “self help and honesty” are needed to move forward and improve your life.

pothemia Prevention program.

Before sending the attendees on their way, FACETS Board Chair Don Harris challenged them to “sign the pledge of financial support” available at each table, so that “we can continue to do this work together.”

In Fairfax County, organizations like FACETS have helped reduce the number of homeless by 47 percent between 2008 and 2018, but the goal to end that state is still in the distance. Estimates are that an additional 15,000 affordable housing units will be needed as the county continues to grow, and that’s on top of the current shortage of more than 31,000 units, as reported by Joe Fay.

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Route 7 Corridor Improvements Fairfax County

Public Information Meetings

Attend one of two public information meetings near you.
All meeting times are 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Presentation starts at 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

Forestville Elementary School
1085 Utterback Store Road, Great Falls, VA 22066

Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Colvin Run Elementary School
1400 Trap Road, Vienna, VA 22182

Find out about the latest design and construction plans to widen about seven miles of Route 7 (Leesburg Pike) from four to six lanes between Jarrett Valley Drive and Reston Avenue. The project also includes shared-use paths along both sides of the road, turn lanes at intersections, and a bridge replacement over Difficult Run.

Stop by between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. to view displays and learn more about the project and upcoming construction activities. VDOT will hold a presentation beginning at 7:30 p.m. Project staff will be available to answer your questions.

Review project information on the project website (www.connectroute7.org), at the information meetings, or during business hours at VDOT’s Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive in Fairfax. Please call ahead at 703-259-1940 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

Give your written comments at the meeting, or submit them by **May 24, 2019** to Mr. Arifur Rahman, P.E., Virginia Department of Transportation, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, or email ConnectRoute7@VDOT.virginia.gov. Please reference “May 2019 Public Information Meetings” in the subject line.

VDOT ensures non-discrimination 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 Arifur Rahman at 703-259-1940.

State Project: 0007-029-942, P101, R201, C501, B610, D606, D608;
0007-029-225, P101, R201, C501, D607
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Federal: STP-5A01 (745), STP-5A01 (790)



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PHOTOS BY ADRIENNE WEST

Exceeding expectations: Great Falls Friends & Neighbors Scholarship Fund (GFFNSF) Board members.

Spring Tea Raises Scholarship Money

Local women's charity raises funds for women in search of higher education.

BY ADRIENNE WEST

On Sunday, Apr 28, the Great Falls Friends & Neighbors Scholarship Fund (GFFNSF) hosted its First Spring Tea fundraiser event at the River Bend Golf & Country Club. Thanks to the generous donations from their sponsors and the unprecedented support of members and the public alike, they had an amazing event.

GFFNSF surpassed their attendance goal of 100 people, and exceeded their initial fundraising goal of \$3,000 by more than \$4,000.

The GFFN Scholarship Fund provides scholarships to women over the age of 25 with financial need who are pursuing degrees at George Mason University or Northern Virginia Community College. Each year, the Scholarship Fund board has the opportunity to review and select essays put forth by these deserving women.

The event was made even more special by the attendance of more than 20 children who enjoyed the balloon artist and their own buffet. They all were dressed up and so well-behaved. It was wonderful to see the ballroom full of Great Falls Friends & Neighbors members with their friends and family, enjoying time together while supporting such a great cause.

In 2016, the GFFNSF established two \$25,000 endowments — one at each college. The endowments ensure perpetuity of monies previously donated, and reflect a strong desire to invest in women and the community at large for the long term.

In addition to the endowments, the GFFNSF raises money each year through fundraising events for in-

SHARE EVENT PHOTOS

Many pictures were taken at the event, so please reach out to Adrienne West at TheMrsWest@hotmail.com if she took photos of you. If any other attendees took photos, kindly share them on your social media and tag GFFNSF and/or forward them to Adrienne for distribution.

Watch for announcements on the GFFNSF event, a cocktail party, to be held this fall. We greatly appreciate all the support you have shown us and look forward to paying it forward to the many deserving women that apply for our scholarships each year. Thank you and please support our sponsors mentioned in this week's paper.

Please like and share our social media sites to share our mission!:

<https://www.gffnsf.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010879745038>
<https://www.instagram.com/gffnsforg/>
<https://twitter.com/GFFNSFOrg>



More than 20 children attended, dressed up for the occasion.

dividual scholarships. In the 2017-18 academic year, GFFNSF awarded seven scholarships for a total of \$8,500. In 2018-19, they will award 10 scholarships totaling \$15,000, that way giving back to the community and taking pride in the testimonials from extraordinary scholarship recipients.

GFFNSF would like to thank each member of the board for going beyond their positions in making this event happen.

The Great Falls Friends & Neighbors Scholarship Fund Board would like to thank everyone that helped make our first annual Spring Tea fundraiser an amazing success!

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NEWS

Volunteers Pack Ramadan Food Boxes To Help People In Need

As the Islamic holy month of Ramadan approaches, Islamic Relief USA, a nonprofit humanitarian and advocacy organization based in Alexandria, helped prepare for the month of fasting by packing boxes with nonperishable foods.

Some 60 volunteers participated in the Saturday, April 27 event, which was split in two shifts. The volunteers helped fold boxes, pack them with food, tape them for shipping, and flatten unpacked boxes. In total, the volunteers assembled 1,500 food boxes.

The food boxes, whose items are intended to last for several days, are all non-perishable. They include cooking oil, a 10 pound bag of basmati rice, canned tuna, beans, sugar, flour, vegetable bouillon, pasta, Ragu sauce, cereal, peanut butter, and, of course, dates.

The boxes will be given to local residents in need, regardless of their race, gender, creed, or religion.



Some 60 volunteers assembled 1,500 food boxes.



The food boxes are all non-perishable.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



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CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Student Art Exhibit. Through Wednesday, May 8 at Starbucks, 9863 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Currently exhibited at the Great Falls Starbucks are 15 examples of students at Colvin Run Elementary. Call 703-438-8389.

Art Exhibit: “Taking Territory.” Through June 1, gallery hours at MPA@ChainBridge, 1446 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Taking Territory: New Works by Susan Goldman, Barbara Kerne, Eve Stockton and Patricia Underwood. Visit mpaart.org for more.

THURSDAY/MAY 2

Business Leadership Luncheon: Mental Health in the Workplace. 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at Hyatt Regency Tysons, 7901 Tysons One Place, Tysons. CEOs, managers, HR and other professionals will take away ideas for developing and strengthening workplace mental health initiatives. Attendance is open to anyone with an interest in mental health in the workplace. Visit www.NAMI-NorthernVirginia.org.

FRIDAY/MAY 3

McLean Farmers Market Opens. Fridays, through Nov. 15, 8 a.m.-noon at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Sixteen local farmers and producers will sell fresh produce; meats; breads, pastries; jams; dairy products and eggs; herbs; flowers, coffee, more. The Market will be closed on May 17 for McLean Day setup. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/mclean.

Intro to Djembe Drumming and Drum Circle. 7-8:30 p.m. at McLean Community Center’s Alden Theatre, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Join The Alden for a creative (and de-stressing) Friday evening master class for families. Participants will learn the elements of Djembe Drumming from artist Kofi Dennis and then use those skills in a group drum circle. \$12/\$8 MCC district residents, includes admission and drum rental. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org for more.

Old Firehouse 5th and 6th Grader Parties: Luau. 7-9 p.m. at the Old Firehouse, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Participants will enjoy free catered food and beverages, an open dance floor with music played by a popular DJ and a variety of party attractions. \$35/\$25 MCC district residents; preregistration is highly recommended. Call 703-790-0123 or visit www.mcleancenter.org for more.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 3-5

“Ripcord.” Friday-Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m. at the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. The Vienna Theatre Company’s production of Ripcord centers on retirement home roommates, Abby and Marilyn, who mix together about as well as oil and water, getting into Odd Couple-esque situations. Tickets are \$14 at viennava.gov/webtrac or in person at the Vienna Community Center.

SATURDAY/MAY 4

Native Plant Sale. 8-11 a.m. at the Riverbend Park Outdoor Classroom picnic shelter, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Native plant sale from the Friends of Riverbend Park supports Riverbend Park. These plants thrive in Northern Virginia because they are native to the area, which means they’re good for the plants and wildlife around them, too. Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

World Vision Global 6K for Water. 8:30-10 a.m. at W&OD Trail (Vienna West), Ayr Hill Road, Vienna. Vienna Presbyterian Church partners with World Vision to provide children in developing countries access to clean water in their villages. Food, face-painting, educational tent, music and information about World Vision. Walk, run, or stroll this 6K and invite family, neighbors, and friends. \$50 Race registration fee. TeamVienna by registering at www.teamworldvision.org/team/10917.

Ribbon Cutting and Open House. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Oak Marr Golf Complex, 3136 Jermantown Road, Oakton. Discover the new and improved double-decker driving range, learn more about offerings and instruction and then help officials cut the ribbon at Oak Marr Golf Complex. The Burger Shack food truck will be on-site for lunch. Call 703-324-8662 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/oak-marr.

Live Music: James Fernando. 1 p.m. (doors at noon) at Jammin’ Java, 227 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. James Fernando is a pianist and



‘I’ve Got a Little Twist’

New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players present “I’ve Got a Little Twist,” a cabaret evening featuring rewritten lyrics for G&S tunes, G&S numbers that are juxtaposed with more modern musical theatre and sometimes, classic Gilbert and Sullivan that is left intact and allowed to speak for itself. Saturday, May 4, 7 p.m. at The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. \$40/\$30 MCC tax district residents; running time: 120 minutes (all ages). Visit www.aldentheatre.org for more.



PHOTO BY LUCIA BACON

Hundreds of healthy, beautiful and well-priced plants donated by Club members will be offered at the plant sale.

Plant and Yard Sale

Not sure what to get for Mother’s Day? Come to the Great Falls Garden Club’s popular plant and yard sale for a new plant or item for mom’s garden. Saturday, May 11, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Free admission. Call 703-757-7360 or visit gfgardenclub.org for more.

composer whose music lies at the intersection of jazz, classical, and electronic music. All ages. \$15-\$20. Call 703-255-1566 or visit www.jamminjava.com for more.

New York Gilbert and Sullivan Players. 7 p.m. at The Alden Theatre at McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. “I’ve Got a Little Twist,” See above, Visit www.aldentheatre.org for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 4-5

Book Sale. Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. East, Vienna. Featuring thousands of quality used books, CDs, DVDs, and audiobooks. Prices remain the same: hardbacks \$2, trade paperbacks \$1, pocket paperbacks 50 cents, children’s books 25 and 50 cents. CDs and videos \$1-\$2. Credit cards accepted. All proceeds benefit the library.

SUNDAY/MAY 5

Visit Colvin Run Mill. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. at Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Don’t miss the chance to see, hear and taste history with a Sunday visit to Colvin Run Mill. Stop by the mill for a grinding demonstration

from noon-3 p.m. See 19th century technology at work as the miller grinds wheat or corn into flour and meal that can be purchased at the park’s General Store. Call the site to confirm grinding is on. \$8 for adults, \$7 for students 16 and up with ID, and \$6 for children and seniors. No reservations are required. Call 703-759-2771 www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/colvin-run-mill.

Gardening With Kids. 1-4 p.m. at the Freeman Store, 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. The Ayr Hill Garden Club, in celebration of 90 years of gardening in Vienna, presents Gardening With Kids. Free and open to the public. RSVP to Monica.anschel@hotmail.com.

Teen Acting Audition. 2-5 p.m. at Old Firehouse Teen Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Audition for Traveling Troupe, a pre-professional summer theatre program for 9th – 12th graders. Perform Shakespeare’s Twelfth Night on tour throughout Virginia. Prepare a Shakespearean monologue (min. 14 lines). \$50 in advance, \$60 at the door. Call 703-987-1712 or visit www.travelingplayers.org.

TUESDAY/MAY 7

Historical Society Presentation. 7-9 p.m. at Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike, Great Falls. Join the Great Falls Historical

Society to hear local historian and award-winning author, Greg Wilson, discuss “Conflict and Rebellion in Fairfax County, 1860-1861.” Free and open to the public. Visit gfh.org

WEDNESDAY/MAY 8

Bike to School Day. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) will participate in Bike to School Day to promote physical activity and reduce traffic congestion and pollution near schools. Parents are encouraged to work with their school and PTA or PTO to assemble bike trains or walking groups for the event. Visit www.walkbiketoschool.org/.

Movie Series: New Disney Classics. 12:30 p.m. at The Alden Community Hall, McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. The Alden is kicking off a new film series with “new Disney Classics” – those that were loved during the 1990s. The films will be shown at 12:30 p.m. on the 2nd Wednesday of the month through June. Free admission. Visit mcleancenter.org/performing-arts for more.

THURSDAY/MAY 9

Historian William Connery. 7:30-9 p.m. at Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E., Vienna. Meet the author of Civil War Northern Virginia 1861 as he recounts the notable events and battles that occurred in Northern Virginia after the firing on Fort Sumter in 1861. Books available for sale and signing. Free. librarycalendar.fairfaxcounty.gov/event/4878628 or call 703-938-0405

FRIDAY/MAY 10

6th Annual Casino Night. 6-10 p.m. at Volkswagen Group of America Headquarters, 2200 Ferdinand Porsche Drive, Herndon. 6th Annual Casino Night fundraiser supporting the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington/Fairfax County Region. Hosted By LaVar Arrington with special guest “Secretary of Defense” Dexter Manley. Visit one.bidpal.net/casinonight2019 for tickets.

Movie: Instant Family. 7:30-9:30 p.m. at Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join Unity of Fairfax on the second Friday of the month for mindful movies. “Instant Family” A couple adopts three young children. Free, donations welcome. call 703-281-1767 www.unityoffairfax.org/events

SATURDAY/MAY 11

Plant Sale. 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Freeman Store, 131 Church St. NE, Vienna. The Ayr Hill Garden Club will host its annual spring plant sale with a focus on plants native to Virginia. Plants available include those that thrive in sun or shade, are deer resistant, and tolerate drought. Native plants attract beneficial birds and insects to your garden. Proceeds help maintain five Vienna area gardens. Free admission. Email monica.anschel@hotmail.com.

Learn About Pollinators & Build a Bat House. 9-10:30 a.m. at Riverbend Park, 8700 Potomac Hills St., Great Falls. Pollinators power food production. Bats help eat mosquitoes, as well as pollinate plants, but they are having a hard time. Help these animals thrive by building a bat house to hang at home. For participants 3-adult. \$8 per person, and everyone must register. A fee of \$15 per bat house should be paid to the instructor Call 703-759-9018 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/riverbend.

“All the Way Live.” 1 p.m. at The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. In this interactive show, world-renowned hip-hop artists collaborate on the spot to “remix” everything from the alphabet to folktales. \$15/\$10 MCC district residents. Visit mcleancenter.org.

Mad Hatter Tea Party. 2-4 p.m. at Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Calling all children age 4 through grade 6. Bring a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, or some other significant adult to the Mad Hatter Tea Party. Reservations are required and space is limited. Reservations close May 8. Visit www.lewinsville.org/event-items/mad-hatter-tea-party.

PRS’ Springtopia. 6-9:30 p.m. at Hyatt Regency Tysons Corner, 7901 Tysons One Place, McLean. PRS, Inc., a nonprofit helping those living with serious mental illness or facing life crises, is hosting its 2nd annual Springtopia: A Season of Hope. \$175. Call 703-531-6321 or visit prsinc.org/springtopia for more.

SATURDAY-SUNDAY/MAY 11-12

Relay for Life. At Langley High School, 6520 Georgetown Pike, McLean. Relay for Life of Langley McLean will have its 2019 relay, an all night event to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Planned by students from McLean and Langley but open to the entire community. Free registration. Call 703-213-5386 or visit secure.ascevents.org.



Final Weekend of Langley's 'Mamma Mia!'

Don't miss the final weekend to see Langley High School's smash musical, 'Mamma Mia!' Performances on May 2 - May 4 at 7 p.m. and on Sunday May 5 at 2 p.m. For more info see <https://www.saxonstagemammamia.com/> For tickets see <https://www.itickets.com/events/422146.htm>

Children See History Through Hip-Hop Lenses

The Alden presents B-Fly Entertainment's "All the Way Live!" for one performance at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 11. Written and performed by Washington, D.C. hip-hop artists Baye Harrell and Paige Hernandez, this interactive show for children is "all the way live" as history is revived through hip-hop lenses. Tickets are \$15, \$10 for McLean Community Center district residents. The theater is located at 1234 Ingleside Ave.

Creativity. Respect. Understanding. Cooperation. Effort. Self-care. "All the Way Live!" seeks to teach these qualities in a relatable and catchy way, much like a song on the radio. Using rhythm and rhyme, the show aims to tune children to the frequency of positive thoughts and feelings. Its opportunity for audience participation gives young people a chance to broadcast their best selves to the world. "Paige Hernandez is the complete performer package personified. She has a lot of energy and possesses a million-dollar smile...Her rapping and rhyming skills match Harrell's, making them a winning team," as reported in Broadway World.

For more information or to purchase tickets online, visit:



Hip-hop artists Paige Hernandez and Baye Harrell will perform 'All the Way Live!' at McLean's Alden Theatre on Saturday, May 11.

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



www.aldentheatre.org or call 703-790-9223, TTY: 711. For ADA accommodations, contact Patron

Services Manager Evelyn Hill at evelyn.hill@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 571-296-8385.



Seas of Tranquility, by Walt Lawrence

Invitation to Visit ArtFest

To the Editor:

It is that time of year when Great Falls Studios holds its annual Spring ArtFest so please accept this invitation to come out and see what the local art community has to offer.

I will be in my studio at the Artists' Atelier located in the Village Centre with my ever-growing collection of images of the Great Falls area and even a few from other parts of the country. The Atelier studio spaces and the gallery area will be filled with work.

The attached image, titled Seas of Tranquility, was taken at the Outer Banks which de-

picts a distant sailboat on a very tranquil sea as an October moon rises in the sky. This summer on July 20 will be the 50 year anniversary when the Apollo 11 astronauts landed on the moon in an area called the Sea of Tranquility. If you are 60 or older, as I am, I'm sure you can remember where they were and who you were with on that day, I certainly will never forget it. I have the image printed on a 20 x 30 canvas.

Please stop by and say hello, I look forward to seeing you.

Walt Lawrence
Great Falls

Concert for the Community

To the Editor:

There's going to be a concert in Great Falls for U.S. military service veterans, young people, and anyone who wants to celebrate 70 years of U.S.-South Korean friendship and alliance. I hope you will attend.

The South Korean children's choir will sing and perform at Christ the King Lutheran Church, 10550 Georgetown Pike, on Sunday, May 5 at 2:30 p.m. The public is invited. The concert is sponsored by the Great Falls Area Ministries (GFAM)—the churches in this community—and the Far East

Broadcasting Company of South Korea (FEBC). Colorful costumes and traditional Korean dance will add to the pageantry of the professional one-hour concert. There is no charge for this program, so bring your friends and neighbors. If you know of U.S. military men and women who have served in Korea, please let them know they are invited and that this is a "thank you" concert for their service and for American support over so many decades.

Bill Canis
President, GFCA

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NEWS

Virginia Trails Nation in Placing Foster Children with Relatives

BY CAITLIN MORRIS
CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Only 7 percent of Virginia's foster children are placed with relatives, according to a new study — well below the national average of 32 percent.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation tracked changes in foster care in each state from 2007 to 2017. For Virginia, the data snapshot contained some good news: There were fewer children in foster care, and fewer foster children were placed in group homes.

But many experts say that ideally, foster children should be placed with relatives — and on that measure, Virginia did not make any progress over the 10 years.

"We want for children to have a family that is their family forever — whether it's their family of origin or if their foster family turns into an adoptive home," said Allison Gilbreath, a policy analyst at Voices for Virginia's Children, a nonprofit advocacy program.

Over the 10-year period, Virginia was successful in decreasing the percentage of foster children in group homes from 23 percent to 17 percent. That means more children have been fostered in family settings — but just not with their own relatives. The data also shows that older youth are more likely to be in group homes.

Virginia was also successful in reducing the number of children entering foster care. In 2007, there were 7,665, compared with 4,795 in 2017.

"While we have reduced the number of children overall in foster care, black children in particular continue to be overrepresented both in family-based settings, but also particularly in group homes," Gilbreath said. "We really need to spend some time and energy in the state and figure out what we can do that will specifically get at the racial inequities in the foster care system."

This year's Virginia General Assembly passed SB 1339 to bring Virginia in compliance with federal foster care regulations, including the federal Family First Prevention Services Act enacted in 2018. The

act encourages states to keep children in family-based settings by redirecting federal funds to support services for at-risk children and their caregivers.

Virginia's new law also aims to increase the number of children placed with family members by notifying relatives when a child enters foster care.

Voices for Virginia's Children joined the Annie E. Casey Foundation in calling on child welfare systems to shift resources from group placements to family settings.

"They feel more loved and protected, and it's a more normal experience for that child," Gilbreath said. "But also, they're more likely to achieve permanency that way, and that's what we really want for kids."

The organizations contend that the support system for other foster children and caregivers should also be available to relatives who take in children. This includes financial support and access to mental health support. Often, family members take in a child through what is known as kinship diversion, meaning they take in a child without using the foster system and don't receive the same support as caregivers in the foster program.

The children's advocacy groups also called for expansion of kinship navigator programs. These programs aim to help relative caregivers navigate the complex child welfare system. Under the Family First Prevention Services

Act, additional federal funds have been made available for kinship navigator programs.

"Virginia has already started to take advantage of these funds but could adopt the programs statewide," Voices for Virginia's Children stated in a press release.

The organization and the Annie E. Casey Foundation also asked for increased access to services that would help stabilize families. By aligning legislation with the Family First Prevention Services Act, funds will be accessible for family support services to prevent at-risk children from entering the foster system.

"If we were able to step in and provide that family support — we'd be able to make that family successful," Gilbreath said.

"We really need to spend some time and energy in the state and figure out what we can do that will specifically get at the racial inequities in the foster care system."

**— Allison Gilbreath,
Policy Analyst,
Voices for Virginia's Children**

Free Cinco de Mayo Lyft Rides Offered to Prevent Drunk Driving

Free Cinco de Mayo Lyft rides will be offered to deter impaired driving throughout the Washington-metropolitan area beginning Sunday, May 5, 2019.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2019 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide program will be in operation for 12 hours beginning at 4 pm on Sunday, May 5th (Cinco de Mayo) and continue until 4 am on Monday, May 6 as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday.

During this twelve-hour period, area residents age 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may

download Lyft to their phones, then enter a SoberRide code in the app's "Promo" section to receive their no cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's Cinco de Mayo SoberRide@promo code will be posted at 3 pm on Sunday, May 5 on www.SoberRide.com.

Last year, a record 897 persons in the Washington-metropolitan area used WRAP's Cinco de Mayo SoberRide program rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide program on St. Patrick's Day, Independence Day, Halloween and the winter holidays.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide@ initiative can be found at www.SoberRide.com.

BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 7

FRIDAY-SATURDAY/MAY 10-11

District29 Toastmasters Conference. At Capital One Headquarters, 1680 Capital One Drive, McLean. District 29 Toastmasters are having their annual conference (theme: “Embracing Change”). All are welcome. The conference includes speakers, leadership and education sessions, speech contests, food, networking, and more. You do not need to be a current member of Toastmasters International. \$0-\$124. Visit tmd29.org/2019ConfTMD29/

SATURDAY/MAY 11

Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Letter carriers will pick up donated food. Leave donations before your typical mail delivery time. All food stays in the local community. The top requested non-perishable food items are: cereal, pasta, pasta sauce or spaghetti sauce, rice, canned fruits and vegetables, canned meals (such as soups, chili and pasta), 100 percent juice, peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, canned protein (tuna, chicken and turkey), beans (canned or dry), oatmeal, canola or olive oil. Specific questions regarding the Food Drive should be directed to 202-662-2489.

Family Caregiver Expo. 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center at Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus. Capital Caring will host its first Caregiver Expo in partnership with AARP and Virginia Hospital Center. The expo is free and will feature information highlighting resources and support programs available to family caregivers, including home care services, financial and estate planning, elder law, and information sessions on such topics as Alzheimer’s and Dementia, Preservation of Assets, and Caring for the Caregiver. Free health screenings, massages. Contact Amy Shields at ashields@capitalcaring.org or call 703-531-6095

Fairfax Board of Supervisors Chair Candidate Forum. 3-5 p.m. at Heritage Fellowship Church, 2501 Fox Mill Road, Reston. Join the Fairfax NAACP for moderated panel discussion with candidates for Fairfax County Board of Supervisor’s Chair, Alicia Plerhoples, Tim Chapman, Ryan McElveen and Jeff McKay. Free. RSVP at www.eventbrite.com/o/naacp-fairfax-county-12397167937.

TUESDAY/MAY 14

Networking Breakfast. 8-10 a.m. at Sunrise of McLean, 8315 Turning Leaf Lane, McLean. Held the second Tuesday of every month to network and hear more about key health topics for seniors. RSVP at 703-734-1600 or at mcLean.DOS@sunriseseniorliving.com.

NARFE Meeting. 1 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna. Meeting for National Active and Retired Federal Employees Association Chapter 1116 (Vienna-Oakton). The guest speakers will be Virginia State Co-Service Officers Arlene and Johnny Arthur. Enjoy an ice cream social. Free. Members and guests welcome. Call 703-205-9041.

WEDNESDAY/MAY 15

Vienna Woman’s Club Meeting. 7-9 p.m. at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St. SE, Vienna. Vienna Woman’s Club invites prospective members to its open membership meeting with a guest speaker on a common interest subject. www.ViennaWomansClub.org

THURSDAY/MAY 16

Caregivers Support Group. 10-11:30 a.m. at UUCF Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax - Program Building, 2709 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. For caregivers to adult family members with dementia. Contact Jack Tarr at 703-821-6838 or jtarr5@verizon.net.

Memory Cafe. 2-4 p.m. at Andrew Chapel United Methodist Church, 1301 Trap Road, Vienna. Helping those with dementia and their caregivers find fun, resources and “family.” Email Carol Blackwell at lovriver@aol.com or call at 571-236-6933.

FRIDAY/MAY 17

Emergency Preparedness for Parents of Students with Disabilities. 10 a.m.-noon at Dunn Loring Center for Parent Services, 2334 Gallows Road, Entrance 1 – Room 100, Dunn Loring. The message of preparedness for residents with disabilities and access and functional needs. Free to parents, educators and community members. Call 703-204-3941 or visit www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center for more or to register.

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As Luck Has Had It



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Aside from the fatigue I experienced a few columns ago, this immunotherapy infusion is, and has been, quite manageable.

My biggest take away so far is that I’ve had no real quality of life issues, as had been the case with my previous chemotherapy/alimta infusions. With that drug, I had post-infusion eating challenges and for nearly a week after the fact, felt less than mediocre.

Moreover, I wouldn’t say I felt like I had cancer, but I certainly was reminded of it — if that makes any sense.

And even though I do have some minor side effects from my current immunotherapy infusion, I am reminded nevertheless, that I have cancer. Not because of how I feel, as was the case previously, but because of how I look — and because of what I feel.

I am referring to my “Adam’s apple” tumor. Not only can/do I ‘look’ it all the time but quite often, depending on how I move my head: forward/downward, I can feel it too.

I have to tell you, feeling it as I do, and looking at it as often as I do: every day, is unsettling.

My whole approach to this living-with-cancer life has been to compartmentalize it a la Jerry Seinfeld and “the vault.” Out of sight has helped keep some things out of mind. And when things are out of mind, it’s much easier to make believe.

And making believe has been one of my methods of “operandi” since Feb. 20, 2009. That’s the date (you bet I remember) when my internal medicine doctor called me at work with the results of my previous week’s biopsy: “malignant,” he said.

Up until that call, the previous six weeks’ diagnostic pursuit had been interesting in a curious kind of way wondering what all the goings on were about and when all these inconveniences would end. And not for a minute during this entire process did I ever think I’d be diagnosed with a “terminal” disease: non-small cell lung cancer, stage IV. I figured, to the extent I figured at all, that the process would result in much having been done about nothing.

Boy was I wrong!

I still remember — and laugh when I recall the phone conversation I had with my thoracic surgeon after he had received the results of my PET scan: “You lit that thing up like a Christmas tree,” he said.

Presuming that wasn’t good news, I replied: “I hear there are false positives all the time which is why these scans aren’t used a lot.” (A perfect example of a little knowledge in the wrong mouth.)

I can’t recall if the doctor snickered before he said the following: “Well, then your scan was a world record false positive.” I don’t know if I grasped the obvious at that point but soon a surgical biopsy was ordered and the rest is Kenny-with-cancer history, a history with which many of you regular readers are all too familiar.

And that’s a familiarity which I hope has not bred contempt. Because even though it’s my life — and I’m stuck with it (as the old saying says), it need not be yours. I can well imagine and appreciate how living with and/or seeking out negativity is not likely to improve any one’s lot in life. (I try to avoid it every day.)

To that end, I have always tried to tread lightly and write with a soft touch since I’ve been cancer-centric beginning June 10, 2009, when I published my first column on the subject: “Dying To Tell You, Sort Of.” And in so doing, I’ve tried to see the light amid the darkness and be thankful for any in between.

I can’t say it’s been fun, but it’s funny how things have turned out: alive and reasonably well, 10-plus years later.

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

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