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CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW



Sal Speziale (thumbs up) brings dinner from Ciao to Inova Fair Oaks emergency-room nurses.

Are Northern Virginia Hospitals Ready?

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Plan C For Bride and Groom in Herndon

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‘I’ve Been Blessed, And I Try To Give Back’

News, Page 8

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It's Demo Time

Reston Station 25
Fairfax County Fire
and Rescue comes down.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Five years after the \$16,000,000 project was approved as part of the 2015 Public Safety Bond Referendum, the new Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Station 25 is another step closer to being built on the same site. Demolition began Friday, March 20, according to Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department on its Facebook page.

The old 2 1/2 bay station is located in the Hunter Mill District of the County at 1820 Wiehle Ave in Reston. It lacked sufficient space for existing equipment, operational support functions, adequate female living space and a workout facility to maintain physical fitness according to Fairfax County's FY 2021 – FY 2025 Advertised Capital Improvement Plan. "Towed my share of fire apparatus out of Station 25," posted Lee Temple on the County's Fire and Rescue's Facebook. "Tight bays and aprons to maneuver out of," he said.

The larger replacement fire station is to be built on the same site and addresses anticipated increased demand for emergency medical, fire suppression, and all hazards services, according to Fairfax County's



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

An excavator takes down the old Reston Station 25, a Fairfax County Fire and Rescue building, making room for a new station on the same site.

FY 2021 – FY 2025 Advertised Capital Improvement Plan. It is scheduled to be operational in early 2021.

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NEWS

Are Northern Virginia Hospitals Ready?

Projections show a critical lack of hospital beds and ICU beds.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
THE CONNECTION

Northern Virginia's health care system could be overwhelmed by an influx of patients infected with the novel coronavirus, according to an assessment from the Harvard Global Health Institute. The projections show hospitals in Fairfax, Arlington and Alexandria could quickly fill their available beds with patients, forcing administrators to either expand capacity or make the kind of life-and-death decisions about care that Italy has been forced into by the crisis.

"The numbers seem very daunting," said Thomas Tsai, assistant professor at the Harvard Global Health Institute. "Our goal was to motivate collective action so we are not making decisions when the epidemic is hitting individual hospitals."

One scenario presented by the institute paints a grim picture for the Arlington Hospital Referral Region, which includes Fairfax County and Alexandria. Assuming the virus infects 40 percent of the population and social distancing allows for the disease to be spread out over six months, more than 10,000 hospital beds would be needed to handle the crush of new patients. That's about 1,000 percent of available beds. Even if hospital administrators cancel most elective surgeries and double the number of beds available, that's still five patients for every hospital bed.

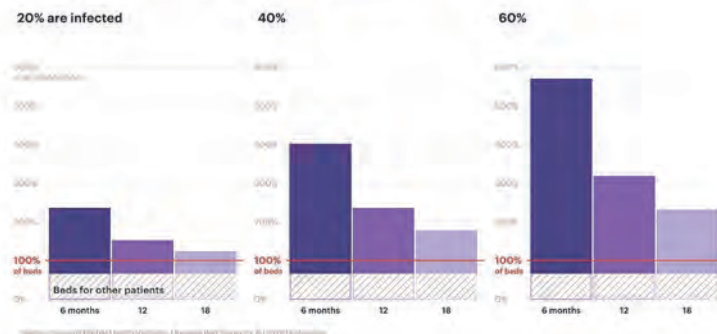
"Nobody really knows what the disease course is going to look like," said Tsai. "So it's important to stay grounded on what we do know, which is our bed supply and our ICU supply."

The data on intensive care unit beds is even more ominous, a particularly unsettling dimension of the projections because these are the patients who would need ventilators because of the intense respiratory problems associated with the disease. Under the scenario where the virus infects 40 percent of the population and social distancing allows for the disease to be spread out over a six-month period, more than 2,000 ICU beds will be needed. Even if most elective surgeries are canceled, according to the Harvard projections, that would still put the the need for ICU beds at 700 percent. That's seven people for every available ICU bed.

"This is looking exclusively at hospital beds based on predictive modeling," said Julian Walker, vice president of communications for the Virginia Hospital and Healthcare Association. "There are also many other healthcare facilities in this state, outpatient surgery centers for example, that are not counted in the hospital bed totals that could also be pressed into service

According to the model, about a fifth of adults who are infected will need to be hospitalized.

This is how many hospital beds will be needed in Arlington, VA if infections are spread out over 6 months, 12 months or 18 months and...



GRAPH COURTESY OF PRO PUBLICA

in the event that there is a real medical surge issue here."

IF NO STEPS WERE TAKEN at social distancing, health experts say, the course of the disease would be about one month. That would totally overwhelm the system and create an unworkable crisis. Spreading the course of the disease out over six months would require a sustained effort at social distancing, an effort to flatten the curve that is still in the early stages.

"We are moving into a period of sacrifice," explained Gov. Ralph Northam as he cancelled all Virginia schools for the rest of the academic year. "We all need to take care of each other from afar because social distancing is the only path forward."

Even if the course of the disease is spread out over 18 months, which would require a massive and unprecedented effort at social distancing, the predictive model still shows the system in Northern Virginia does not have enough capacity. Assuming every elective surgery is cancelled, doubling the availability of ICU beds, Northern Virginia will have a 150 percent need for ICU

beds. That's two ICU beds for three patients who need respirators in September 2021.

"We are underprepared for this kind of an event," said Kevin Peach, chairman of the Local Emergency Planning Committee in Alexandria. "That's why people are behaving the way they are and that there's such an elevated panic."

HOSPITALS ACROSS VIRGINIA are taking steps to prepare for the potential crush of patients flooding their emergency rooms. Elective surgeries have been postponed or cancelled, placing a financial burden on the industry. Mary Washington Healthcare in Fredericksburg has already set up a field hospital, and other hospitals are exploring the idea of setting up their

SEE HOSPITAL BEDS, PAGE 6

Distance Learning Begins on April 14

Superintendent's letter to Fairfax County Public Schools' families.

Scott Brabrand, Superintendent, Fairfax County Public Schools, has sent the following letter to the FCPS families on March 26, 2020:



Dear FCPS Families,

Now that the governor has ordered all Virginia schools to remain closed through the end of the academic year, FCPS, with the support of our School Board, is planning to begin distance instruction and learning with our students on April 14.

Launching a distance learning plan to reach 189,000 students that engages nearly 16,000 classroom teachers is a complex challenge. We acknowledge that distance learning cannot reasonably replace daily in-person instructional programs, and we will not be trying to replicate the regular school day. Our Distance Learning Plan provides for students to continue learning in developmentally appropriate ways, while being mindful of their health and wellness. The plan includes paper learning packets, video broadcasts, lessons/assignments and learning materials posted to Blackboard and completed individually or collaboratively, along with scheduled web chats.

Our Instructional Services team held web conferences with elementary and secondary principals last week to communicate the plan for staff training and resuming instruction. Teachers will be returning to work virtually on Monday, March 30 in order to complete their distance learning training.

Please be assured that this plan was created with the understanding that some of our staff and families may face challenges participating in distance learning, and we will all need to work together in the best interest of our students.

Here is how the Distance Learning Plan will work:

High School Distance Learning Plan

Students will engage in teacher-led, teacher-supported and independent learning in all courses.

During the week of March 30, teachers will be contacting students to reconnect, provide review material for concepts taught prior to closure, and prepare for classes starting on April 14.

The FCPS Online Campus will resume operation on March 30. At this time, students registered for the self-directed Economics and Personal Finance course as of March 19, 2020 for either summer session 1 or summer session 2, will also have the ability to begin the course online through Virtual Virginia.

Distribution has begun of a limited number of Mifi devices, or wireless hotspots, to high school students in need who do not have any access to the internet at home. Schools have been contacting families directly to arrange for the pickups, by appointment.

Middle School Distance Learning Plan

Students will engage in teacher-led, teacher-supported and independent learning.

Learning packets will be distributed by mail to all students in the four core classes: Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Distribution will begin the week of March 30.

Middle school students will be engaged in virtual, teacher-directed learning in the four core classes along with world languages (HS credit) beginning the week of April 14. Elective teachers will post learning activities to Blackboard.

Distribution of laptops began this week for students in need who do not have access to a device at home. Schools have been contacting families directly to arrange for the pickups.

Elementary School Distance Learning Plan

Students will engage in teacher-led and independent learning.

There is also time for teacher check-ins, virtual chats, phone calls and emails with students.

Learning packets will be distributed by mail to all students (PK-6) beginning the week of March 30.

SEE DISTANCE LEARNING, PAGE 6

OPINION

The Biggest Lesson One May Ever Learn

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



COMMENTARY

Among the decisive moves taken by Governor Ralph Northam, also a physician, to contain the spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth was the closing of all public schools for the remainder of the school year. There is little or no opportunity for establishing social distancing in crowded school buildings with young people who are naturally inclined to do anything but keep their distance from each other. There have been many humorous references on social media to parents who find themselves unexpectedly having to home school their children. The situation created is another one during this pandemic for which there really are no good options. Classes will not be held, SOL tests will not be administered, traditional social and athletic events will not take place.

Do not make the mistake, however, of believing that learning will not be taking place while with our children and grandchildren we wait

out the passing or defeat of the virus. The fact of the matter is that the children of our community as well as we adults are experiencing a lifetime event that we will never forget. Our country will have gone from a time of prosperity to the largest government bail-out ever in the history of our country. Many businesses will fail, and the breadth of our economic inequality will become even more painfully apparent. I am not sure what our social, governmental and business institutions will look like when we can proclaim that the pandemic is over, but I believe there is the potential that they will be improved.

For the children who are not in formal instruction there will be much learning beyond the fact that a virus not visible to the human eye can bring the world to a halt. Children will learn from what is happening in their own surroundings. Just how many children in our community depend on food available through the schools? Did we notice the adults who sprang

into action contributing to school pantries to make sure that others are fed? Are we aware as we miss a favorite sports game or school party of the number of classmates who never had an expectation of being able to participate?

That learning on the part of our children will come from their observations of how adults around them in their homes or in the media react to what is happening. Do adults in the community play by the rules or stretch the rules to their personal advantage? Do adults hide behind words that have limited meaning in other situations to limit our response to what is needed? Do the adults in their lives show selflessness in looking out for others?

Schools are closed for a very real emergency, but learning will continue to take place. No longer is the responsibility for teaching left to the classroom. Now more than ever it is up to us as adults to be role models in a crisis that will teach our children more than they ever would have learned otherwise!

For information on the latest updates on COVID-19, go to my website at kenplum.com.

Hunkering Down and Looking Ahead

BY JOHN LOVAAS
RESTON IMPACT PRODUCER/HOST



INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

Dear reader, I sincerely hope all is well with you and yours as we ride out this shutdown so essential to flattening the curve and restoring some semblance of normalcy. To date our family and friends are in good health and getting by. We do miss closer contact with grandchildren, other family members, and friends.

It's hard not to get caught up in the non-stop Coronavirus news with the soaring illness and fatality totals. Then there's the insensitive, narcissistic incompetent at the center whose missteps are resulting in immense suffering and avoidable deaths. Not to mention the millions of jobs lost. I can easily imagine our being in a very different place with, for example, a Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton or a Mitt Romney in the Oval Office. If we are to survive this, the country will have to look to the many competent governors, local officials to lead.

As we carefully walk in the Lake Anne neighborhood, we see both hope and sadness. For example, three younger neighbors have asked us 70-somethings if they could shop for us, or help in any other way. Most Lake Anne Plaza's family-owned small businesses are in dire straits, having had to close their doors. A couple, however, have adapted creatively. The Lake Anne Brew House called on its wait staff to put their microbrews in pop-top cans which they now sell carryout! We've sampled the beer. It's good! New Trail Cycling's owner decided to rent out most of her stationary bikes and now gives online cycling classes to the renters! We are honoring the shut-down. Our first order

of business was to stock up latex gloves, hand sanitizer, anti-bacterial wipes, bleach, and toilet paper. Now we walk our Scottie around the area twice a day, go to Trader Joes about twice a week, and, for a real treat, we go to a Starbucks' drive-thru in Herndon. The walk and occasional calisthenics are all

we have for exercise. We miss our fitness club!

We had hoped that the beginning of the Reston Farmers Market season on April 25 would be the light at the end of our tunnel. Gov. Northam has put a dimmer on that glow. On March 23, he issued Executive Order #53 which, among other things, designates farmers markets as restaurant equivalents, thus tagged as nonessential during the shutdown. If he'd decided farmers markets were more like grocery stores, they would be essential and open under the social distancing rules applicable to groceries. The latter would be entirely feasible.

Now the Secretary of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) has issued a directive refining Order #53 to allow farmers markets to provide delivery and/or takeout services only—no stands or market per se. This, too, assumes a restaurant-like organization working thru websites for online ordering or creating a "menu" of products with a phone number to call. Worst case, they suggest an "onsite process for taking orders (with no "browsing vendor to vendor") and curbside pickup" by customers. It's not yet clear how this warehouse process would work in the real world of over thirty small producers scattered within 125 miles from Va., Md., WV. and Pa. A skeleton staff of the Fairfax County

Park Authority is working hard to organize the operations with a couple of stalwart volunteers running the distribution center. Who knows—we may have to reach out to you, dear readers, to volunteer with us for whatever period of time needed for this jury-rigged emergency operation!

Vendor vendors who sell fruits and vegetables have planted their crops and will start picking them in a couple of weeks. Other vendors already have goods to sell. We'd like to help them even before the Market, such as it is, opens. Please go to our website, www.restonfarmersmarket.com, click on the vendors page, then click on your favorite vendors' names to see if they have websites, and contact them to make your order and arrange delivery. Your reaching out will be greatly appreciated.

See the Reston Farmers Market Facebook page for updates in the weeks ahead.

BULLETIN: Loudoun County farmers markets will open under strict social distancing guidelines. Fairfax County is not likely to allow markets to open.

Write

The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. The deadline for all material is noon Friday. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Send to:

Letters to the Editor
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Alexandria VA 22314
Call: 703-917-6444.
E-mail: editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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Plan C For Bride and Groom in Herndon

Life and love amid coronavirus.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Heidi Marie Metz and Seth Adam Field married on Monday, March 30, on the front porch of his family home in the Town of Herndon. Guests practiced social distancing, watched and cried. Drivers beeped their horns, and for a moment, love powered over COVID-19.

It wasn't the initial wedding the couple and their families planned, the one filled with over a hundred loved ones gathered at the McLean Presbyterian Church, with a reception to follow at Fort Belvoir Officers' Club. Instead, coronavirus and Gov. Ralph Northam's Executive Order Number Fifty-Three canceled that wedding planned for April 4.

The couple understood. Seth serves in the National Guard as a Sergeant. Instead, they drafted Wedding Plan B, a ceremony at Seth's parents' home, same pastor, same day, April 4. And they slashed the guest list to abide with Gov. Northam's Order banning ten or more.

However, on Monday, March 30, Gov. Northam surprised the couple. He strengthened Executive Order Fifty-Three to a temporary Stay-at-Home order through June 10. Family and friends took action. Wedding Plan C went into effect - marry now, today, in four hours.

Shortly after 6:30 that evening,



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

As the pandemic spreads and Virginia Gov. Northam releases a Stay-at-Home order, Heidi Metz and Seth Field prepare to be married as they listen to Reverend James Forsyth of McLean Presbyterian Church speak. Opposite Forsyth is Donald Metz, Heidi's father.

with Heidi's immediate family and Seth's gathered on the front lawn. He waited at the bottom of the porch steps. Reverend James Forsyth held the Bible. Best man and brother Ethan waited with Seth and sister Abby took photos. No

music played. Heidi walked across the lawn, holding onto the arm of her father, Donald Metz and toward her groom.

"During a time of great fear, lives a flash of hope amidst the storm," said Tim Field, Seth's father.

Helping as Many as They Can

Food for Neighbors revamps to offer drive-thru and walk-up distribution.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Even in the days of coronavirus isolation and social distancing, individuals one by one stepped out of their comfort zone, manned plastic gloves and face masks to greet patrons at the Thursday, March 26, Food For Neighbors distribution site at Hutchinson Elementary School in Herndon. On the other end, individuals and families in need of food stood in a long line that wrapped around the front of the building waiting for food desperately needed.

Karen Joseph is Executive Direc-



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

A masked and gloved volunteer hands a bag of food to a patron at the Food for Neighbors distribution.

tor of Food For Neighbors, a non-profit organization committed to supporting local middle through high school students and families struggling with weekend food insecurity. "Our model is to collect the food and provide it to schools where they can distribute it to students they've identified. With the statewide closures, many schools have turned to Food For Neighbors to help them distribute the food. We are working closely with our principals, assistant principals and social workers along with our community partners like Trinity Presbyterian Church and Floris United Methodist Church to make sure these students have food over the weekend. The Food For Neighbors community has stepped up and an-

SEE HELPING, PAGE 7

Free Meals Information

For Local Students

Students attending Brookfield, Centre Ridge and London Towne elementary schools now have curbside pickup available to them. They may get both breakfast and lunch, Monday-Friday, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., at their schools.

Parents should follow the kiss-and-ride signage for traffic flow, and FCPS staff will deliver meals to children and adults while they wait in their cars in the kiss-and-ride line. Walk-ups are still welcome at all sites. Walkers should use school sidewalks to safely navigate their walk to the pick-up stations.

All FCPS students (regardless of age) are eligible for free, grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches. Other Fairfax County children under age 18, can also receive a meal. Adults may pay \$2 for the meals, as well. To receive federal reimbursement, students must be present to request the meals.

In addition, certain school buses are delivering these meals, Monday-Friday, stopping at designated intersections along some bus routes. Below is the information for Centreville and Chantilly Schools:

Bus Route 1:

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

7:35 A.M. 7:45 A.M.

Location: Location: Airline Parkway & the Clubhouse

School Serving: School Serving: Virginia Run ES, Westfield HS, Stone MS

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

7:54 A.M. 8:00 A.M.

Location: Trinity Parkway & Trinity Place - Rental Office

School Serving: Bull Run ES, Centreville HS, Liberty MS

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

8:10 A.M. 8:15 A.M.

Location: Trinity Parkway & Wood Meadow Way (Woodway Apt. entrance)

School Serving: Bull Run ES, Centreville HS, Liberty MS

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

8:20 A.M. 8:30 A.M.

Location: Paddington Court & Paddington Court

School Serving: Bull Run ES, Centreville HS, Liberty MS

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

8:35 A.M. 8:45 A.M.

Location: Lee Overlook Rd & McCoy Rd

School Serving: Bull Run ES, Centreville HS, Liberty MS

Bus Route 7:

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

9:37 A.M. 9:47 A.M.

Location: Rockland Village Dr & Rockland Village Dr

School Serving: Chantilly HS, Franklin MS, Brookfield ES

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

9:50 A.M. 10:00 A.M.

Location: Dallas St & Sulser Place @ Fire Hydrant

School Serving: Chantilly HS, Franklin MS, Brookfield ES

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

10:05 A.M. 10:15 A.M.

Location: Route 50 Service Rd & Meadowland Ct

School Serving: Chantilly HS, Franklin MS, Brookfield ES

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

10:17 A.M. 10:27 A.M.

Location: Chantilly Rd & Winter Harbor Ct

School Serving: Chantilly HS, Franklin MS, Brookfield ES

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

10:29 A.M. 10:39 A.M.

Location: Chantilly Rd & Placid Lake Ct

School Serving: Chantilly HS, Franklin MS, Brookfield ES

Arrival Time **Departure Time**

10:40 A.M. 10:50 A.M.

Location: Chantilly Rd & Flowing Brook Ct

School Serving: Chantilly HS, Franklin MS, Brookfield ES

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-Werner Heisenberg

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NEWS

Distance Learning Begins

FROM PAGE 3

Principals will send parents a published schedule of instruction.

Literacy and math content will also be made available on FCPS Cable Channel 21 (check your local listings or stream online) beginning the week of March 30.

Teacher-student virtual connections are encouraged.

Specials teachers will post learning activities to Blackboard.

Resources for Special Education

FCPS staff is working hard to prepare distance learning materials to ensure that all students have access to educational materials and activities, including our students with Individualized Education Programs and 504 Plans.

Many disability-related modifications and services may be effectively provided online. These may include, for instance, extensions of time for assignments, modifications to assignments, videos with captioning or embedded sign language interpreting, accessible reading materials, and speech or language services through video conferencing. The Office of Special Education Instruction has developed and posted on the FCPS Continuity of Learning webpage, an Accommodations Toolbox that includes strategies and resources on how students may be able to access accommodations at home.

Continuity of Learning resources are also posted in Blackboard as well as on the FCPS public web located at: <https://www.fcps.edu/news/coronavirus-update-academics-distance>. In addition, FCPS is currently reviewing additional online platforms to ensure accessibility for all students and teachers.

English Language Learners

The Office of ESOL Services is collaborating with the content-area

teams to create accessible resources for English learners. English learners (ELs) will participate in grade-level instruction and activities as well as engage in English Language Development (ELD) activities to simultaneously develop English language proficiency, content understandings, and Portrait of a Graduate attributes. It is important for students to read, write, speak and listen to English every day. FCPS is creating ELD resources that incorporate a variety of reading, writing, listening, and speaking activities.

English Learners and families will receive support from ESOL teachers and school-based Parent Liaisons. Additionally, FCPS provides Parent Information Phone Lines for families who speak a language other than English. Phone responders will answer questions and connect families to resources.

Parent Information Phone Lines:
Amharic 571-423-4957; Arabic 571-423-4952; Chinese 571-423-4953; Farsi 571-423-4954; Korean 571-423-4951; Spanish 571-423-4950; Urdu 571-423-4955; Vietnamese 571-423-4956.

3rd Quarter Update

The third quarter grading book is not closed. We are working to ensure that students will have the opportunity to complete all assignments issued prior to the closing of schools before we close the third quarter. We will provide maximum flexibility for our students to be sure they can get those assignments submitted.

Distance Learning Timeline

The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) provided guidance to school systems not to require any new instruction during the past two weeks. As a result, FCPS quickly developed parent resources to support continuity of learning. Tens of thousands of in-

dividuals have utilized the tools in Blackboard, our FCPS website as well as the programming available on our cable channels.

Factors that need to be addressed to begin distance learning include:

Technology infrastructure availability for all students

The diverse learning needs of our students

Appropriate teacher training to ensure fidelity of implementation

Laptop distribution to approximately 15,000 middle school and elementary school students in accordance with health department guidelines, one student at a time

Printing and mailing of 125,000 learning packets weekly to homes across Fairfax County

This distance learning plan also recognizes the challenges of FCPS staff members working from home trying to take care of loved ones while ensuring their own health and safety.

In Conclusion

We are being challenged in ways that we didn't imagine just a few weeks ago. Our teachers are professionals who are adjusting, adapting and learning to do whatever is necessary to create meaningful learning experiences for your students. Thank you for your support and patience. Our schools and teachers will be connecting with you in the days ahead as we embark on this distance learning mission.

This is the first of several communications you can expect to receive that will provide details and guidance about the distance learning plan.

Please continue to encourage and support one another as we face this unprecedented challenge.

Sincerely,
Scott Brabrand,
Superintendent

Fairfax County Public Schools

Critical Lack of Hospital Beds

FROM PAGE 3

own field hospitals. The governor has also relaxed regulation on steps necessary to establish new hospital beds.

"During this public health emergency, government rules about establishing hospital beds are being relaxed," said Walker. "So all of the tools that are available are being explored and leveraged."

Walker also noted that the Virginia Healthcare Emergency Management Program was set up after 9/11 to prepare for a variety of public health emergencies. Participants include

public health officials, state government leaders, the hospital community, first-responders and public-safety personnel. For more than 20 years, these groups have been engaged in strategic planning, operational planning, information sharing and resource coordination.

"The planning and prep work to respond to these situations is something goes on on a regular basis," said Walker. "And that kind of collaboration that has existed for the last 20 years is being brought to bear by assembling all of the stakeholders and assembling the resources to try to combat this head on."

NEWS

Helping

FROM PAGE 5

swered our call for help with an abundance of monetary donations to help us purchase food and grocery store gift cards," said Joseph. Beginning Thursday, April 2, Food For Neighbors anticipates making adjustments to its distribution model to make it more efficient while enhancing social distancing. Organizers seek to provide drive-thru and walk-up delivery. For those in vehicles, Food For Neighbors plans for its volunteers to bring the packed grocery bag or student bags to the car, and the driver loads. For patrons who walk to the school site, there will be tables where one individual at a time can approach and receive the food. Children, if not accompanied by another adult, should be directed to maintain social distance from the table and others.

"As we know, it takes an entire community to care for our neighbors, and right now, we have a lot of neighbors who need this extra food support," said Joseph. The next distribution is planned to start at noon, Thursday, April 2, and will continue until food supplies are depleted, according to James. "Hunger is closer than you think" is the tagline for Food For Neighbors. James asked that the community help Food For Neighbors as it provides for local families. Visit <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/> to learn more.

AREA ROUNDUPS

Respiratory Illness Clinic Opens in Chantilly

Inova Urgent Care's Dulles South location is now staffing a Respiratory Illness Clinic to evaluate all patients with respiratory illness symptoms. It's at 24801 Pinebrook Road, No. 110 in Chantilly; phone 703-722-2500.

Before going, contact your regular physician for evaluation. For assistance with recommendations, to arrange for a physician appointment. Those without a primary care physician should call 1-855-IMG-DOCS. Your regular physician can evaluate your symptoms to determine if testing is indicated and provide a testing order or refer you to the Inova Respiratory Illness Clinic for evaluation. A clinician will greet patients at their vehicles to escort them into the respiratory clinic for evaluation or to collect COVID-19 samples ordered by physicians for testing. After testing, a nurse will contact those whose results are negative for COVID-19.

For patients with positive results, a nurse will coordinate with the patient's regular physician for notification and further instructions. Patients tested may expect results in four to seven days. Open seven days a week, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., this clinic's still seeing other types of patients, too.

How to Help during the Pandemic

For information about how to help others during the coronavirus pandemic, go to <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/donate-help>.

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Cancer in a Pandemic



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

So far as I can tell, I'm being treated as per usual. Meaning, treatment for my recently diagnosed thyroid cancer is on track. On track meaning multiple hospital visits at two health care facilities (some even on the same day) over five consecutive days to include four radioiodine injections, pre-and post-treatment CT scans, lab work, miscellaneous other medical appointments and a low iodine diet to boot spread out over a nearly six-week interval including one over-night at the hospital.

To say I'm looking forward to the experience would be naive. To say I'm looking forward to killing the remaining thyroid cancer in my body would be more accurate. The thyroidectomy I had in late January was very successful but approximately 15 percent of the cancer remains, embedded under my collarbone and elsewhere. Consequently, treatment of my pre-existing/underlying stage IV non small cell lung cancer will be further delayed while we address the thyroid cancer which the surgeon was unable to remove. And now that I have my schedule, as of March 27, I now know when and where and how the process will play out.

One potential major complication: the coronavirus pandemic. Given the screening questions I have been asked of late when calling for medical information, if I am unlucky and somehow become infected or come in contact with someone who has been diagnosed or travel/have traveled to an area of the country/world particularly hard hit, I am guessing my treatment stops/never gets started. And not to be too paranoid about something which hasn't even happened yet but, I'd just as soon not become another statistic and/or not get my cancer treatment and allow my two types of cancer to live on without any checks or balances. (Generally speaking, if the cancer is left alone, it likely won't spontaneously go into remission. Quite the opposite in fact and therein lies my fear of having 'cancer in a pandemic.'

I imagine that at any time over the next six weeks, a hundred things could change that could adversely affect my treatment/schedule, many of which are beyond my control. And not that I'm a controlling person, but when it comes to medical treatment that might actually be saving/extending my life, I do become a bit preoccupied. And if push does come to shove, so to speak, there's not much that I can say or do about circumstances (staffing issues, medicine shortages, reduced hours, increase in patients, etc.) which might affect the availability of health care. As a cancer patient, you'd like to have a little predictability given that your normal routine is hardly what you anticipated. However, none of us anticipated a pandemic and now all us patients are waiting for chips to fall and wondering/hoping our names will be on the treatment list.

Unfortunately, cancer treatment is not hit or miss. It mostly needs to hit. And if some of the hits can't happen when protocol says it should, there is reason to be afraid. But being afraid now, before any of these pandemic-related complications have even occurred is a waste of time, energy and emotional wherewithal. I don't need to worry yet. If any of these worse-case scenarios do happen, there will be plenty of time to worry later. At the moment, I'm scheduled, I'm not sick and I'm able to social-distance, self-isolate and shelter-in-place until further notice.

I just wish 'further notice' wasn't a month from now. So much can happen to so many at so many places, most of which I can't prevent. And yet, if these happenings are not prevented, it's possible the powers that most likely be will inform me that circumstances have overtaken their plans and my treatment will have to be delayed. I'm so close. Thirty days however is an eternity for a cancer patient. Somehow, I have to stop watching the calendar. I have to watch my "ps" and "qs" instead and avoid any unnecessary social interactions. I'd like to think that come the end of April, I'll be ready, willing and available. I just hope that I can say the same thing about the medical professionals and hospitals where I'll be getting treatment.

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



Ciao's Sal Speziale (center) brings dinner, Saturday evening, to Centreville's Fire Station 17.



Chef Antonino Di Nicola holds the pizzas he's giving to the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office.

'I've Been Blessed, and I Try to Give Back'

Ciao brings free meals to doctors, nurses, firefighters.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Sal Speziale hasn't stopped working in four weeks – but that's OK with him, because he and his award-winning, Italian restaurant, Ciao Osteria in Centreville, are busy feeding the frontline fighters of COVID-19. Since March 17, he's provided free lunches and dinners to doctors, nurses, firefighters, sheriff's deputies and police, and he doesn't plan on quitting anytime soon.

"In the military, they teach you to keep going and not rest until you've accomplished your task," he said. "And we're going to keep doing this until everyone's well again and we can go out into the sunshine and be near each other again."

Actually, running a restaurant is Speziale's third career. He spent 14 years in the Air Force, where he was a fighter pilot, flying F-15 Eagles. Next, he was an American Airlines pilot for 32 years, only recently retiring.

He opened Ciao in 2014 and it quickly won rave reviews. It was listed among Open Table's "Top 100 Italian Restaurants" and has consistently been rated in the "Best 50 Restaurants in Northern Virginia" by Northern Virginia Magazine.

Now, though, besides providing takeout and deliveries for Ciao's regular customers, he's bringing food to emergency-room staff at Inova Fair Oaks and Fairfax hospitals, plus Centreville's fire stations.

"I was born in Italy, and poverty makes me appreciate what this country has given me," said Speziale. "The community's been great to us, so we want to give back. This is our way of helping." And he's doing it via Ciao's mouthwatering lasagna, meatball sandwiches, pizza, chicken marsala, Caesar salad, spaghetti, chicken pasta Alfredo and

even gelato.

But he's always thought of his community, even when times are good, giving employee discounts to first responders. So when COVID-19 dramatically changed everyone's lives, it was natural for Speziale to help further. "Doctors and nurses are on the front lines," he explained. Until restaurants were ordered to close their dining areas, business at Ciao was booming. But the March 16 edict only allowing 10 diners at a time forced Speziale to lay off almost 60 percent of his 65 staff members.

THEY NOW WORK ROTATING SHIFTS

and he helps those short on funds. Curbside and delivery orders have been strong, so he's rehired four employees, but he'd like to bring them all back. "We're family," he said. Meanwhile, on March 17, he called Fair Oaks hospital's ER department and asked if anyone was providing their lunches.

"They said 'No,' so we brought 12-14 large pizzas for them," said Speziale. "When we gave them the pizzas, they had the biggest smiles, and it gave me warm feelings. So we returned with food the next day, too. I also asked [Fairfax County] Sheriff Stacey Kincaid to send deputies to pick up food, and we gave them pizzas and salads for their office."

He's now feeding 75-175 meals/day to doctors, nurses and other first responders, seven days a week. Initially, knowing Ciao was struggling, guardian angels in the community helped out. Two people left \$750 and \$400 tips, which their servers shared with coworkers. Others gave 200-300-percent tips.

One Ciao's fan anonymously donated \$5,000 for the employees. Another handed



Chef Antonino Di Nicola holds the pizzas he's giving to the Fairfax County Sheriff's Office.

Speziale \$200 for his staff. "It's so touching, the support and love we're receiving," he said. "So how could we not take care of the first responders?"

Those donations certainly helped – and Speziale's extremely grateful for his customers' generosity. But with all the free meals he's providing, the funds only went so far. March 18 and 19, Fair Oaks hospital's ER received lunch and dinner from Ciao. "My wife Gina was a labor-and-delivery nurse there for 24 years, so we thought of them first," he said.

He soon included Inova Fairfax, but he had to alternate its meal deliveries with Fair Oaks because he didn't have enough money to feed both hospitals. Then on March 23, all Virginia restaurants were ordered to close, except for takeout and delivery.

That day, Speziale started a Go Fund Me account: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/vh2v8-feeding-first-responders>. His goal's

\$100,000 and he's already raised more than half, with 100 percent of the donations going toward food purchasing.

Meanwhile, daily meal deliveries go on. Last Thursday, Ciao brought chicken marsala to Inova Fair Oaks' ER staff. "We also surprised them with our homemade gelato, and they started clapping," said Speziale.

ON FRIDAY, he fed pizza to police officers and dinner to Centreville's Station 38 firefighters. Then a Fair Oaks nurse gave him \$400 she'd collected from neighbors and asked him to feed that hospital's housekeepers, janitors and ER staff. She also handed him thank-you cards made for them by local children.

"It wasn't enough money, so we matched it and fed them dinner," said Speziale. "One housekeeper, in tears, told us nobody ever takes care of them like that." Then on Saturday, he brought lunch and dinner to the Fair

Oaks Intensive Care Unit, lab and security staff. "We're trying to spread it around," said Speziale. He also fed the firefighters at Centreville's Station 17.

"I love helping people," he said. "I've been blessed, and I try to give back a little of what's been given to me." He noted that, "When people get pickups and deliveries from us, it keeps our employees working and kitchen cooking so we can provide food to the first responders until this is over."

Throughout Speziale's adult life, the message in John Greenleaf Whittier's poem, "Don't Quit," has guided him: "Stick to the fight when you're hardest hit; It's when things seem worst that you must not quit."

"We're going to come through this; failure is not an option," said Speziale. "People are starting to work together. This country has problems, but it's still the greatest country in the world. We'll fix it, slowly, but surely – it can't rain forever."