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# CONNECTION

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## Honoring Fallen 'in a Smaller Way'

NEWS, PAGE 2



At Chestnut Grove Cemetery in the Town of Herndon for Memorial Day 2020, Michael Cutler, 2nd Vice Commander of The Wayne M. Kidwell American Legion Post 184 Herndon-Reston adds a remembrance flag to the final resting place for Sgt. Wayne M. Kidwell United States Army killed in action during the Vietnam Conflict.

## 'It Felt Good to Be Recognized and Appreciated'

NEWS, PAGE 8

## Lake Anne House Senior Housing Project Closes

NEWS, PAGE 3

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## News

Sign posted by a member of The Wayne M. Kidwell American Legion Post 184 Herndon-Reston explains why there is no Avenue of Flags for Memorial Day Observance 2020 at Chestnut Grove Cemetery in the Town of Herndon.

PHOTOS BY  
 MERCIA HOBSON/  
 THE CONNECTION



## Honoring Fallen 'in a Smaller Way'

### Memorial Day 2020 in Herndon, Reston area.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
 THE CONNECTION

Michael Cutler is 2nd Vice Commander and Avenue of Flags coordinator at The Wayne M. Kidwell American Legion Post 184 Herndon-Reston. In preparation for Memorial Day Observances, he and others usually gathered at dawn at Chestnut Grove Cemetery in the Town of Herndon. In two-person teams, in all types of weather, Veterans and volunteers dropped poles into the ground. Then they raised the 64 casket flags in their care donated by families of interred veterans, creating an Avenue of Flags, a patriotic feature flanking the entrance into the cemetery: 2020 was different.

As the Memorial Day weekend prepared to kick-off, Fairfax County and adjacent jurisdictions ranked among the United States' highest regions for COVID-19 cases. "There's still significant virus circulating here," said White House coronavirus response coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx in a press briefing Friday afternoon, May 22.

According to Christine Cutler Post 184 Adjutant, the Town of Herndon canceled the annual Memorial Day Ceremony due to COVID-19 and associated restrictions in Northern Virginia. No guest speaker; no ROTC color guard; no laying of wreaths at the cemetery. The Northern Virginia region, including the Town of Herndon, remained under Governor Ralph Northam's stay-at-home restrictions, which he had rolled back for much of the state. "While the data show Virginia as a whole is ready to slowly and deliberately ease some restrictions, it is too soon for Northern Virginia," Northam said in a press release May 12.

Members of the Post 184 Avenue of Flags Committee took matters one step further. Not only would there be no Memorial Day Ceremony at the cemetery, but they also agreed not to raise the bold and proud display of 64 casket flags. "Raising and retiring the flags violates social distancing protocols," wrote Christine Cutler in an email.



Michael Cutler, 2nd Vice Commander of The Wayne M. Kidwell American Legion Post 184 Herndon-Reston adds a remembrance flag at Chestnut Grove Cemetery for Army Veteran Conrad L. Lacombe of Reston.

In coordination with the manager at Chestnut Grove Cemetery, Michael Cutler of Post 184 received permission to place small American stick flags with name cards indicating the fallen soldier being honored at the cemetery. He did so where the Avenue of Flags typically lined the main entrance road.

A statement prepared by Avenue of Flags Committee of Post 184 and installed at Chestnut Grove Cemetery explained the change. "It is our intent that these Veterans be remembered in a small way rather than not honored at all.

Updated Saturday, May 23, 2020, two days before Memorial Day 2020: COVID-19 Case Data for Fairfax Health District, Herndon ZIP code 20170 (Cases per 100,000 Person)- 1,102.3, 9th place in the District out of 48 ZIP Codes. Source-<https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/covid19/case-information>.



COVID-19 with its social distance requirements did not permit the installation of a Full Flag Tribute, an Avenue of Flags, at Chestnut Grove Cemetery in the Town of Herndon for Memorial Day Observances 2020.



# NEWS



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY MOMENTA

Rooftop area with sunshades rendering at the New Lake Anne House.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Lake Anne Fellowship House, North Shore Drive, Reston- May 2020.

## Lake Anne House Senior Housing Project Closes

Long-awaited \$86 million project commences this summer.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**C**hristy Zeitz is CEO of the Fellowship Square Foundation (Fellowship). The nonprofit organization owns and operates the two aging 1970s era buildings that make up the Lake Anne Fellowship House on North Shore Drive in Reston. On Friday, May 22, Fellowship and Enterprise Community Development (Enterprise) announced they closed on the innovative \$86 million development plan for the New Lake Anne House in Reston, built along North Shore Drive near the intersection with Village Road.

All 240 modern, affordable apartments will serve low-income seniors at or below 60 percent of AMI for at least 30 years. Located in one of Virginia's most expensive counties, each resident will pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward housing costs, including rent and a utility allowance. "The financing for the new project along with newly negotiated contracts with HUD and Fairfax County will ensure there is sufficient cash flow for construction and future operations," Zeitz said.

According to the Fairfax County website, Grimm+Parker Architects, Charles P Johnson and Associates, Orr Partners, and Bozzuto Construction, Enterprise and Fellowship, will develop the 56 studio apartments, 178 one-bedroom apartments, and six two-bedroom apartments at the New Lake Anne House.

Jamie Rose, CCP of Momena, described Lake Anne House as a seven-story concrete-and-steel frame building on top of a concrete parking deck podium that will feature a large social hall. She said, "The building's abundant common area spaces also include on-site management and resident services offices, a game room, lobby lounge, sun-room, crafts room, computer center, fitness center, and a wellness clinic for visiting medical professionals. The building has a 7,000-square foot terrace...including raised garden beds." Rose added the building would meet Earthcraft and Energy Star certification standards, and all units will meet Universal Design standards.



Emilia Mensah, resident at Lake Anne Fellowship House, said that they had been waiting a long time for the new building to begin.

**TWENTY PERCENT** of them will meet Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, nine will be barrier-free and six designed for residents with visual and/or hearing impairments. Unique features will include a terrace, outdoor park spaces, tree preservation and public art.

"The Fellowship House has been home for many low-income seniors over the past five decades, allowing them to age in place near the cultural and historical center of our Reston community. The New Lake Anne House will continue that tradition with essential upgrades," said Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill).

"Early on, the team realized that the right approach required writing a new playbook – one grounded in ingenuity, a real stick-to-it-ness and with existing residents squarely at the center," said Brian McLaughlin, President & CEO of Enterprise. Rather than relocating the residents temporarily until the new building was finished, they would construct the new Lake Anne House on an underutilized portion of the site. After the residents moved, the old Lake Anne Fellowship House would be torn down and the land sold for future townhomes Construction of the 39-unit market-rate townhouse development by a national homebuilder would help



As site work begins in preparation for the New Lake Anne House project, Hayne Wesson, Lake Anne Fellowship House resident for twelve years, said people know what they are doing.

pay for the construction of the new Lake Anne House.

Zeitz said, "Building affordable housing is not cheap – in fact, it is very expensive, and knowing that your future residents cannot pay the rents needed to cover costs, it is critical that the right subsidies are in place." The novel project demanded the right mix of financing, and the team needed to secure project-based rental vouchers for 100 percent of the units. Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority awarded the project 122 project-based vouchers with HUD providing the rest. The project financing incorporated \$46.5 million in tax-exempt bond financing from the Virginia Housing Development Authority and a \$700,000 loan from the Virginia Housing Trust Fund.

Susan Dewey is the executive director of the Virginia Housing Development Authority. She said, "VHDA is proud to join the crucial effort to revitalize Lake Anne House...We were fortunate to deliver a package of nearly \$50 million in first mortgage financing, along with tax credits and subsidized loans."

In addition, the package contained \$21.5 million in Low-Income Housing Tax Credit equity provided through Enterprise Housing Credit Investments by Capital One, \$3 mil-



Nick, a four year resident at Lake Anne Fellowship House, said that the contractor agreed to replace every tree chopped down.

lion in Blueprint Funding from the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority and \$7.2 million in bridge financing from the Enterprise Community Loan Fund as well as equity from Enterprise and Fellowship. Virginia Community Capital provided \$1 million in predevelopment financing early in the project. "We were happy to be involved and are excited to see this innovative development take flight," said Ed Delany, a Capital Officer on Capital One's Community Finance team who closed the financing the bank provided.

"Our commitment of resources to the New Lake Anne House is not only reflective of our commitment to affordable housing in general, but also to providing more opportunities for our older adult population to age in place safely in comfort and dignity," said Chairman Robert Schwaninger, Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority.

For Emilia Mensah, Hayne Wesson and Nick, the New Lake Anne House was personal. It would be their home. "We've been waiting for this for a long time," said Mensah, a retired teacher.

**SITTING OUTSIDE** in the sun. Wesson, a retired certified public accountant with a Master in Business Administration, looked over where backhoes cleared the land. "So far, so good. People know what they are doing." Another resident, who goes by Nick, looked at the downed trees. "It's for the progress of the new building. The positive side is that the contractor said that another tree would be planted for every one chopped down." A groundbreaking is planned for this summer, occupancy Summer 2022.



# Hate Has No Place Here

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

The outpouring of generosity in our community during the COVID-19 pandemic has been incredible. I continue to learn of people who have responded in remarkable ways to the needs that have been brought on by the quarantine or that have been recognized as a result of our having to stay home. The lack of face masks resulted in dozens of persons working alone or as part of groups to sew face masks and make them available to first responders, medical staff and others. Access to food has been a major concern, and numerous food pantries and distribution centers have been expanded or established to make food available to those in need. Food donations have come pouring in. For a list of places where you can respond to the food crisis, my website, kenplum.com, includes a Food Resources Directory. I am so pleased and honored to live in such a caring community.

Just as I am celebrating the goodness of our



## COMMENTARY

community, some misguided individual or individuals show up and for whatever their motivation decide to spray paint hate symbols on the sidewalks and buildings in one of our shopping centers. For whatever has happened in their lives to fill them with the hate they express, they are unable to exist in an open society that so many worked hard to establish. Graffiti with the worst of the hate words and symbols is bad enough, but in our state and throughout the country there are too many acts of bullying and violence. The Southern Poverty Law Center tracks more than a thousand hate groups with 36 of them located in Virginia. That is why in the last session of the legislature I introduced a bill that the Governor has signed into law to strengthen our hate crime penalties.

I thank Rabbi Michael G. Holzman of the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation for his "Call for Courage" after the recent hate event in Reston for providing me a meaningful perspec-

tive: "The solution is to call these symbols what they are, marks of cowardice. While they claim to communicate hate and fear, they really belie the underlying weakness and loneliness of the perpetrator. We are all afraid, and courage is the ability to face a fear and carry on despite it. Cowards allow fear to drive their decisions and actions, undermining one's duties and purpose." (Full statement at [www.nvhcreston.org](http://www.nvhcreston.org).)

I concur with Rabbi Holzman's recommendation as to what we should do: "The moment calls for courage. We invite everyone to drown these cowardly messages with the message 'Hate has No Home Here.'" Write this on sidewalks, take photos, use the hashtag, and post it online. Let us show Reston, Herndon, Vienna, Northern Virginia, the Commonwealth and the Country that we go forward together." And I would add, let us continue to show through our acts of generosity and support for our neighbors and those in need in this time of a pandemic that we are a caring and compassionate community. Hate has no place here! (Hate Has No Home Here yard signs available for purchase at <https://hatehasnohome.org/index.html>)

# Swastikas Amidst Pandemic

## Cowardice feeds hate crime.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

"Hate is contagious," said Rabbi Michael G. Holzman of Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation in Reston. "We have to address it before it spreads."

According to Fairfax County Police, shortly after 6 a.m. on May 20, 2020, officers responded to the North Point Village Center in Reston, for a report of graffiti. They found several swastikas spray-painted on the sidewalk and nearby areas. The report called it a "bias incident." Swastikas, often called symbols of hate, are a sign of Nazi tyranny and intimidation. The Village Center is slightly less than two miles from Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation.

"They (swastikas), along with zoombombers shouting the n-word or posting images of pornography, demonstrate the dark path that seduces too many of our fellow citizens during this pandemic," said Holzman in an email he sent to clergy and friends. He signed it, as did Cantor Susan Caro and Rabbi Jessica Wainer. "Whether one promotes the hatred of Jews, people of color or women, I believe these symbols are less shouts of fear and loathing and more whimpers of cowardice," said Holzman.

"We barely understand the scope of the virus and our economy is fragile, while our political leadership contributes to the sense of chaos," Holzman added. Leadership, he said, had been slow to respond to the upsurge in COVID cases.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

**A HATE HAS NO HOME HERE sign is installed at the North Point Village Center in Reston, site of a recent graffiti of swastika.**

Two days after the swastika incident, in a briefing on Friday, May 22, Coronavirus Response Coordinator for the White House Coronavirus Task Force, Dr. Deborah Birx, said that nationwide, Washington D.C. and its suburbs, including Northern Virginia, where Reston and neighboring Herndon were located, had the highest rate of positive coronavirus tests in the country, hot spots.

"We are afraid, and the quickest analgesic is to project the fear onto an enemy. Our minds



PHOTO COURTESY OF PASTOR SEAN ROBERDS, FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HERNDON

**HATE HAS NO HOME HERE is marked in chalk outside of First Baptist Church Herndon supporting A Stand Against Cowardice.**

are wired to find a target when threatened, and the easiest target is some marginalized group in society. This eases our mental tension...until fear swells again within, and we seek another hit of mental relief in greater acts of villainization of the other. Hate is the opiate of a terrified society," said Holtzman.

SEE GRAFFITI, PAGE 7





# Chantilly High Grad Is New Firefighter

Chantilly High grad Christopher Wolf is among 53 new recruits who recently graduated from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) Basic Training. He was also one of five alumni from the department's High School Firefighter Program (HSFF).

Via this partnership between FCPS and the department, they got to participate in that program while still in high school. And now Wolf and the others are all new, probationary firefighters. They graduated May 8 as part of Recruit Class 146.

Wolf was in the 2017-2018 HSFF program. It lets high-school seniors explore a future career in the fire service. With a focus on skill development, students are taught to perform safely as firefighters, while learning how to fight live fires, address hazardous-material incidents, conduct search-and-rescue operations, and perform vehicle extractions.

Then, after written and practical tests, they may become certified as Firefighters, Level I and II. Wolf's class graduated four weeks ahead of schedule in direct response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

— BONNIE HOBBS



(From left) are new firefighter Christopher Wolf and Fairfax County Fire Chief John Butler.

## Obituary

## Obituary

### Catherine A. Parker Griffin



A longtime resident of Reston, Virginia died on April 25th after a prolonged illness at the age of 84. A native Washingtonian she graduated from Dunbar High School. Her interest in painting led her to Pratt Institute and Howard University where she graduated in fine arts. Her mentors were professors James Porter and Lois Jones. She had a scholarship to the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She won arts awards including one sponsored by the Washington Post.

From 1958-1970 she worked for the federal government as a statistical draftsman and technical illustrator. Returning to her love of art and children she taught art at the Reston Children's Center from 1983-1990. Upon retiring she worked as an usher at the Kennedy Center. Her volunteer activities included serving as an usher at Wolf Trap. A devoted member of St. Anne's Episcopal Church she served as a teaching assistant on various projects, volunteered at the Closet and with Facets, and was active in the Healing Prayer and Bible Study groups. Her husband Seabron D. Griffin, DDS predeceased her. She is survived by her sister Peggy Chapman Witherspoon of Winston-Salem N.C., her son Seabron of Manassas and her daughter Julie of Los Angeles. Her loving grandchildren Alexia, Michael, and Ryan Griffin along with a host of relatives and friends survive her. Memorial donations may be made to the Clergy's Discretionary Fund at St. Anne's Episcopal Church. Funeral arrangements are by Adams-Green Funeral Home, Herndon, VA. She will be inurned at Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

## Obituary

## Obituary

### Obituary of Jerry George Sardone

Jerry George Sardone of Reston, Va 85



It is with deep sadness we inform you of the passing of our Father, Jerry Sardone on Thursday, May 21, 2020 as a result of Covid-19 related pneumonia.

Jerry was born in Rochester, NY on January 13, 1935.

Jerry served with honor on the Montgomery County Police Department in the late 1950's and the early 1960's as a member of the Bethesda (Second District) Traffic Squad. He left the department and found his calling in real estate and completed over 50 years in the business, earning the title Realtor, Emeritus. He helped people buy and sell real estate in Fairfax County and Loudoun County since 1968.

In his personal life, Jerry was a lifetime member of Omega Tau Rho, Served in the National Guard, a World Record Holder in the International Game Fish Association, Nature Conservationist, and a Nationally and World Ranked Squash Player / Coach. He had a love for music, travel, and spent many a happy year with his late wife, Fay, doing the things that they loved as well as working side by side at the business they started, Jerry Sardone Realty. Jerry was beloved by his friends and family, had a great sense of humor, and made quite a character about town.

Preceded in death by his parents Joseph G. Sardone and Lillian Natalie Sardone, he is survived by his sister, Janet Lee Owens, two sons Jerry Jr. and James, four step children Laurie, Alan, Karen, Lyn, three nieces Corrine, Suzette, Julie, nephew Michael, and sixteen grandchildren - all of whom he loved dearly and always talked about. He will be missed by many.

The family requests in lieu of flowers, that memorial donations can be made in Jerry's name to the Montgomery County Police Alumni Association, Inc. - Benevolent Fund, P.O.Box 431, Damascus, MD 20872-0431.

Due to the restrictions placed by the Covid-19 pandemic there will be no memorial services at this time. If and when a memorial service is scheduled, we will pass along that information. Please keep our father Jerry Sardone, his family and his loved ones in your thoughts and prayers at this most difficult time.

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**-Werner Heisenberg**

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# OPINION

## Graffiti

FROM PAGE 4

Because of the pandemic and the stay-at-home order by Governor Ralph Northam, the Herndon-Reston clergy could not gather in person, but they could act electronically. "The moment calls for haste," Holzman said. He invited fellow all to take A Stand Against Cowardice, sign the statement available through an online link and release it with its long list of signatories. "This act of hate demands an especially loud response...As we were polarized before COVID-19, we should only expect a crescendo of these symbols, and we must turn them back before violent symbols become violent acts. We are already seeing attacks on retail workers who ask patrons to wear masks," he said.

Clergy from local churches, synagogues and mosques showed their support, as did laity and others. One by one, they stood in solidarity with their Jewish brothers and sisters and signed onto the "Call for Courage." "We are all afraid, and courage is the ability to face a fear and carry on despite it. Cowards allow fear to drive their decisions and actions, undermining one's duties and purpose. This pandemic requires unity of purpose, steadfastness, and sacrifice...We invite everyone to drown these cowardly messages with the message, "Hate has no Home Here." Write this on sidewalks, take photos, use the hashtag and post it online. Let us show Reston, Herndon, Vienna, Northern Virginia, the Commonwealth and Country that we go forward together," said Holzman.

Police classified the incidents as "Destruction of Property/Bias Incident." Anyone who has information can call the police non-emergency number at 703-691-2131.

### Highlights of Clergy Comments

The Herndon-Reston clergy have been meeting and building relationships for years, knowing that a crisis requires us to work together...Cowardice, denial and wishful thinking are just as dangerous in a country as they are if we hear a friend say, "Eh, it's probably nothing" when their fever starts to spike. I am proud of your words and honored to sign on.

— Rebecca Messman, Co-Pastor, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Herndon

We are heartbroken to hear about this and our leadership has signed the letter. We have 20 "Hate Has No Home Here" signs to donate.

— Tim Barwick, Minister of Outreach St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Reston

We stand together against hate, bigotry, anti-Semitism, racism.

— Rizwan Jaka, All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS), Sterling

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## Time Will Have Been Told



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

In two days I will have completed four weeks on my low iodine diet (no chocolate, no salt, no dairy, no bread) with four days remaining until my one-night hospital admission and subsequent seven-day medical quarantine at home. If I remember correctly the substance of the hour-long phone conversation we had with a doctor from the Nuclear Medicine department previous to my beginning this thyroid cancer treatment process, on Friday the day after my "radioiodine therapy," my eating can return to its previous abnormal. I just have to hope that the supermarket shelves are fully stocked that day. Unfortunately, in our present pandemic pressure cooker, the chances are above average that my hearts of desire will be missing and not in action.

To assuage any anxieties I have concerning this non-military "D-Day"-type invasion by yours truly, perhaps I should try and set an appointment with the store manager for my local Giant Food to prepare them for the onslaught and provide a list of my demands. I know they're open and sensitive to customer requests as under vastly different circumstances, I have made them with excellent results.

These requests would not be for items unfamiliar to their inventory. It would be more about dotting all the "Is" and crossing all the "Ts" and avoiding any slip-ups to guarantee as much as possible the delivery of my future prized possessions. Though I'm not a commercial customer, I am nonetheless in the desired demographic, the one who primarily makes the food-buying decisions in our home and who's interest and consumption of said items would make me most definitely a person of interest.

The items to which I finally refer are branded by Nabisco, Keebler, Hostess, Drakes, M&M/Mars, Entenmann's and Tastykakes. I won't self-indulge myself any further by offering any more specifics as I'm still almost a week away from "the return." But suffice to say, it's likely any adolescent would offer fairly similar details if asked. However, in addition to the availability issue, there is one extremely important challenge remaining: the actual shopping. Given my underlying lung cancer and/or thyroid cancer, I am an ideal target for the covid-19 virus: over age 65, lung disease and a weakened immune system. In fact, I hit the trifecta. As a result, and according to Dr. Bix's most recent press briefing about the virus, Maryland, my state of residence, is one of the few states not exhibiting the kinds of statistical declines that many other states are. Ergo, by order of Dina Lourie, I am under lock and key. And while under lock and key I will not be doing the shopping - and buying, and therefore will be unable to soothe the savage beast raging inside me.

That's not to say I won't see a family size bag of Nabisco's Double Stuf Oreos Cookies on her shopping list, it's more that I won't see any other Kenny preferences on that list. Nor is it likely that while in-store, she'll wander around the pertinent aisles - as I might, and update me by phone on what other potentially interesting items might be stacked on the shelves/end caps. And quite frankly, if she were to surprise me with some other Kenny necessities, she would likely monitor my intake ("Kenny, what happened to that bag of Oreos I brought home yesterday?") and my joie de vie would be mort. Not exactly would she be denying a dying man his last wish, but for a few weeks at least, after such a long, world-record-breaking interval (for me, anyway) of not eating any of my go-tos, let me have some time to myself. Granted, it won't be pretty, but it's not entirely your business.

After all, if the roles were reversed, I would definitely do the same for you. Desperate times call desperate/uncharacteristic measures. What's good for the gander would certainly apply to the goose. Please don't fowl up this future feasting. Just leave me to my own devices, for a bit, anyway?

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



# ‘It Felt Good to Be Recognized and Appreciated’

## Fairfax County thanks its Public Works employees with food.

By BONNIE HOBBS  
THE CONNECTION

National Public Works Week was May 17-23; and as COVID-19 has revealed whose labor is essential – not just in a crisis, but every day – Fairfax County celebrated workers in a category that doesn’t immediately spring to mind. It honored its public works employees who often fly under the radar yet perform services critical to the continuity of daily life – including trash pickup, recycling, vehicle maintenance, plus jobs involving wastewater, stormwater and water treatment.

To thank these valuable workers, the county’s Economic Development Authority (EDA) secured \$13,000 in funding from some local, philanthropic donors to create a special event for them. Last Wednesday, May 20, a fleet of local food vendors and food trucks served 1,400 meals (mainly lunches) from a variety of cuisines to public workers at 19 different sites throughout the county.

“It takes the skills and talents of everyone to keep an economy and a community safe and strong,” said EDA President and CEO Victor Hoskins. “And this group of dedicated people works relentlessly behind the scenes to provide essential county services. These are jobs that keep us healthy and help provide the amazing quality of life we enjoy in Fairfax County. They can’t be done at home and are physically and personally demanding.”

And besides recognizing the people behind the public services residents often take for granted – but would sorely miss if they stopped – the event also helped provide income for the small-restaurant and food-truck owners who’ve also been hit hard with significant revenue losses during the pandemic.

“In this time of COVID-19, a lot of governments and economic development authorities want to put money back into the community,” explained Kim Bryden, CEO and founder of Cureate, which helped organize the event and coordinate the vendors. “My company is the local, purchasing arm for governments and big businesses, and we connected the food vendors with the public-works facilities.

“This helps the local restaurants because the meals were purchased from them,” she continued. “Furthermore, a lot of people recognize healthcare workers and first responders for their efforts, but not always public-works employees – who are also essential workers. So with this event called Operation Appreciation, we wanted to acknowledge everyone helping us thrive at this time.”



At the I-66 Transfer Station, standing beneath the sign thanking Fairfax County’s Public Works employees are (from left) Ali Arellano, Gabriela Febres and Hernan Rosas of Arepa Zone, and Kim Bryden of Cureate.

PHOTOS BY  
BONNIE HOBBS/  
THE CONNECTION

“These are jobs that keep us healthy and help provide the amazing quality of life we enjoy in Fairfax County.”

— EDA President and CEO  
Victor Hoskins

dignity – food that I’d eat, myself. Everybody deserves to eat healthy, good-tasting food, and providing it has been the most-rewarding part for us, as a restaurant.”

“And coming here today was super fun because we got to see people’s reactions as they ate our food,” she continued. “Since these employees often grab their meals and get back in their trucks, we did four types of rice bowls that they could easily reheat in the microwave. We’ve also been making food for local hospitals.”

Because of the virus, noted Bryden, “We can’t have buffets anymore, so things have to be individually packaged. And small restaurants are more conscious about who they’re buying their ingredients from to protect the supply chain.”

**MOVING FORWARD**, said Febres, “This has made us rethink how catering will look. And we’re being more sensitive to the environment in our packaging. But to pivot in response to the virus, we had to make investments upfront to our software and make a new Website so people could buy our meats by the pound online and we could deliver to their homes.”

“The businesses able to be creative and adapt will be the ones who’ll survive,” added Bryden. “At Cureate, we believe that, every day, you have a chance to invest in the future and the dreams of a small business.”

As for the workers at the I-66 Transfer Station, which deals with trash and recycling, they, too, liked their Arepa Zone meals. “The pork and rice were very good, all the way around,” said lead refuse operator Page Richards. “There are some nice people out there doing something special for us. You see on the news about people appreciating the firefighters, police and healthcare workers, but not us trash workers – so this is very nice.”

Agreeing, Shonpaul Truss, assistant superintendent of solid waste, said, “We appreciate it immensely, and we enjoyed the food. My beef meal was very flavorful, and it’s nice to know we’re appreciated.”

Heavy-equipment operator Allen Crigger said his chicken-rice bowl tasted great and “the plantains were good, too. We enjoyed what they gave us. It felt good to be recognized and know they appreciate the work we do for them.”

“Our frontline workers are our heroes, stepping up to keep our county going during these challenging times and handling critical operations,” said Deputy County Executive Rachel Flynn. “I know our employees were honored that so many were thinking of their wellbeing.”



Enjoying lunch from Arepa Zone at Fairfax County’s Vehicle Maintenance facility are (from left) mechanics Scott Duvall and Quentin White.

**LOCALLY**, providing hot lunches for employees at the county’s Vehicle Maintenance facility and I-66 Transfer Station, both on West Ox Road, was Arepa Zone of Fairfax. The Venezuelan-style meals were bowls featuring basmati rice, sweet plantains, black beans and a choice of either beef, chicken, pork or sautéed vegetables.

At the Vehicle Maintenance facility – one of four in the county – Vehicle Services Director Mark Moffatt said Arepa Zone brought food for both shifts of his 85 total employees there. “It’s nice that they’re honoring our workers,” he said. “We do the maintenance on all the county’s firetrucks, Park Authority vehicles and equipment, school buses and support vehicles.”

Two people enjoying the lunch there were bus mechanic Quentin White and dump-truck mechanic Scott Duvall. White called Arepa Zone’s efforts “great,” and Duvall said he liked his meal. “It was very thoughtful, and I appreciated it,” he said.

Ali Arellano and Gabriela Febres own Arepa Zone, which does takeout and catering. Their Fairfax kitchen is at 3160 Spring St., Unit B, and they were delighted to provide lunches for last week’s event at both West Ox Road sites.

“Once this thing settles down, though, it’s important to continue these efforts supporting the local and minority- and independently owned businesses,” said Febres at the I-66 Transfer Station. “We’re making food with