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JUNE 18, 2020

Alexandria stzette Packet

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 $Titan\ Triumph_{T.C.\ Williams\ holds\ online\ commencement.}$

By Jeanne Theismann Gazette Packet

t wasn't the graduation ceremony the senior class expected when the school year began in September, but across the city students and families celebrated June 13 as T.C. Williams High School held a virtual graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020.

"Our sudden school closures in response to a worldwide pandemic is simply unprecedented and has thrown us all into a new way of living with almost no notice," T.C. principal Peter Balas said in his commencement address from the school's Parker-Gray Stadium. "But you have done it and still made it here today, your graduation."

Several speakers addressed the graduates, including ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, class president Amiya Chisolm and 2016 graduate and U.S. Olympian Noah Lyles, who proudly displayed his graduation cap that he had dec-



The George Washington National Masonic Memorial is lit up in the T.C. Williams school colors of red, white and blue to honor the Class of 2020.

orated with the Olympic rings. "I bet you didn't see yourselves

graduating like this," said Lyles, a two-time world champion track and field athlete. "I'm sure you wanted to give hugs and high fives after this 12-year journey. But the class of 2020 is courageous, relentless. You were born for times like this."

Lyles shared with the graduates some of the adversities he faced in his quest to become a professional athlete.

"I was born with severe asthma," said Lyles, who turned pro directly out of high school. "Can you imagine a track athlete with asthma? But I persevered. I wanted to make a whole new path for myself."

Lyles also spoke of his dyslexia, ADD and experiences with bullying.

"It wasn't an easy path," said Lyles. "But I didn't want to be another child who just goes through

See T.C. Williams, Page 16



Class of 2020 graduates from T.C. Williams, Bishop Ireton and Maret high schools celebrate June 13 at a gathering in Lake Barcroft.



Nawal Gaal, Pierina Echevarria and Glenda Cabrera gather on the steps of the George Washington National Masonic Memorial following the June 13 virtual graduation ceremony of T.C. Williams High School.



A group of childhood friends pose for a photo June 13 to celebrate their graduations from T.C. Williams, Bishop Ireton and Maret high schools.

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Alexandria's Income Gaps

Whites make three times as much as Hispanic workers, twice as much as black workers.

By Michael Lee Pope Gazette Packet

hite Alexandria is pulling in significantly more money than Hispanic workers and African Americans, according to numbers from the United States Census Bureau. A look at average income shows non-Hispanic whites make more than \$85,000 a year. That's more than three times the average income for Hispanic workers, \$24,000, and more than twice the average income for black workers, \$37,000.

"Where do Latinx folks work? They're in the service industry. They're in kitchens. They're in basic-level construction," said Jon Liss, executive director of New Virginia Majority. "All of a sudden now we're seeing those jobs as being essential, but unfortunately when it's time to get paid for jobs that are dangerous and dirty and nobody wants to do them they're not getting paid."

The nationwide wave of protests against police brutality sparked by the murder of an unarmed black man by a white police officer in Minnesota has sparked a new conversation about how race and ethnicity influence everything from education and health care to criminal justice and corporate power. At the center of that debate is a concept that many white people are confronting for the first time: systemic racism. The disparity in incomes between whites and people of color in Alexandria is the end result of a complex web of factors.

"I think we are expected to perform less favorably than other demographics," said Christopher Harris, president of the Alexandria NAACP. "The expectation is that we are less valued and not worth as much as a person in another demographic with less education or less experience."

Chuck Collins at the Institute for Policy Studies says people often look at income disparities and resort to something he calls the "narrative of deservedness," which he defines as "the story we tell ourselves to justify inequality." It's the idea that people who work hard and have taken the time to earn advanced degrees deserve to make more money. He says it's a comfortable story, but it glosses over structural inequalities and the legacy of racism in employment, income and education.

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com

Average Income in Alexandria



source: Census Table S1902

"When you look at systemic trends, you can't just chalk it up to a story of meritocracy," said Collins, who is director of the Program on Inequality and the Common Good at the Institute for Policy Analysis. "Part of how we change that story is for those of us who have had advantages or have had the wind

"I think we are ex-

pected to perform

less favorably than

come.

at our back to honestly talk about that."

THE HIS-TORY OF income inequality dates back to the days of slavery, when Al-

exandria was home to one of the largest slave-trading operations in the county. After the Civil War, a series of Jim Crow laws institutionalized racism in Virginia, creating a system to segregation perpetuating white supremacy and a poll tax preventing black people from exercising their franchise. After World War II, government subsidized loans for veterans and farmers helped white families buy homes and start building wealth.

"We invested in expanding the white middle class, and we put a lot of white households on the express train to wealth building," said Collins. And we barred blacks, Latinos and native people from getting on that train."

The ratio of average black wealth to average white wealth has not changed since 1962, when the Federal Reserve launched the Survey of Financial Characteristics of Consumers. Back then, the average black household had 20 percent of the wealth of the average white household. The wealth gap today is identical to that 1962 ratio, an indication that all the progress made during the civil rights movement did little to move the

needle for economic equality. University of Virginia economics professor other demographics." Eric Young says the pri-- Christopher Harris, president of mary driver the Alexandria NAACP of relative wealth is relative in-

> "You have a bunch of households that start out behind, and their income level is smaller so there's no reason to expect them to catch up," said Young, who is now on a sabbatical at the Federal Reserve in Cleveland. "If anything,

what's kind of surprising is that they didn't fall further behind."

Young says one reason for the income gap is the relationship between the education system and the job market. While more than 80 percent of white people in Alexandria have a college degree or higher, only one out of three black people in Alexandria have a college education, and only one out of three Hispanic people in Alexandria have a bachelor's degree or higher. He says part of the reason that black and Hispanic workers have low-paying jobs in service industries is that their educational background makes it harder to get a job in a higher-paying industry.

"The educational system is creating part of this gap by benefiting the typical white student more than the typical black or Hispanic student," said Young. "When they graduate, they come out with a gap in their skills and then they sort into industries that pay different amounts on average."

SOMETIMES THE INCOME GAP

is illegal, and employers are violating the law by paying black and Latino workers less than their white colleagues for doing the same job. Traditionally those cases have been heard in federal court, but starting next month a new law might end up radically changing how wage discrimination cases are litigated. A new law introduced by Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30), known as the Virginia Values Act, will open up state courts to wage discrimination claims for the first time. Employment lawyers say they expect most wage discrimination cases will end up moving from federal courts to state courts as a result.

"In federal court, you have a mechanism that allows cases to be dismissed or reviewed by the judge on its merits before it goes to trial. It's called summary judgment," says Michael Barnsback, a defense lawyer in Alexandria who represents employers in discrimination cases. "Virginia state courts have a very strong policy of once a case is filed, you're going to get your day in court and you're going to trial."

Barnsback says many people file discrimination cases under difficult circumstances, right after losing a job. In many cases, he says, they're trying figure out why they lost the job and they suspect that discrimination may have played a role. But then when they get to the courtroom they need evidence. Now that Ebbin's bill is opening up circuit courts to these kinds of cases for the first time, people who feel they've been discriminated against will have a new venue that might not have as many roadblocks as the federal court system.

"My legislation is a tool that can only move things in the right direction," said Ebbin. "But I don't think it's going to be a panacea for wage discrimination."

News Briefs

KING STREET: During Phase Two of the "Forward Virginia" reopening blueprint, the City will continue the temporary closure of the 100 block of King Street to vehicular traffic.

COMMUNITY POLICE REVIEW BOARD: Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2950 on June 9 which condemns police brutality and systemic racism; reaffirms that Black Lives Matter; and states Council's intent to establish a Community Police Review Board within 90 days.

The City Manager and City Attorney were directed to return to the Sept. 8 City Council meeting with a proposal to establish the board. The resolution was presented in the aftermath of the May 25 death of George Floyd.

SYSTEMIC RACISM: In its resolution, City Council acknowledges that the plight of black and brown Americans is not only present in the form of police brutality, but is also entrenched in institutions such See News Briefs, Page G

COVID-19: Not a Fair Fight

Regional perspective: pandemic exposes health inequality leading up to discrepancies in life expectancy.

> **By Ken Moore** The Connection

n Alexandria, the Latinx population, which comprises 16.8 percent of the City, accounts for 55.5 percent of Alexandria's positive cases of COVID-19.

Arlington's Latinx community makes up 15.8 percent of the county's population, but accounts for 55.5 percent of the positive COVID cases. And Arlington's black population which makes up about 1 in 10 people (9.6 percent) in the county accounts for almost 1 in 4 deaths (24.1 percent).

The population of Fairfax County is 16.8 percent Hispanic but Latinx individuals account for 65.3 percent of positive COVID-19 cases in Fairfax County.

By Sunday, June 14, months into the pandemic, African Americans accounted for 1,154 deaths, more than 41 percent of the total, in Maryland even though they account for 30.9 percent of the overall population.

Montgomery County's black population had the highest rate per 100,000 individuals (79). And the African-American population in Montgomery County was the only demographic that had a greater percentage of deaths than its demographic predicts.

THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA Regional Commission concluded that Latinos accounted for a disproportionate number of coronavirus cases in this area.

"The HIspanic or Latino share of cases in Northern Virginia is three-and-a-half times their overall share. All health districts in NOVA have significantly higher shares [for the Latino population]. This indicates significant ethnic disparities in COVID 19 cases."

Coronavirus cases by zip code in Northern Virginia also revealed disparities by race, ethnicity and economic status. In the City of Alexandria, zip code 22305 stood out for 579 cases.

"Although viruses do not discriminate, the COVID-19 virus disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations just as other diseases and health conditions do," according to the Alexandria City Government, explaining some disparities.

The zip codes with higher concentrations of poverty, lower education levels, and crowded housing conditions tend to have the highest rates of COVID. These people are more likely to work in jobs where they are underpaid, don't get paid sick leave, depend on public transit and don't have telework opportunities, bringing more risk of exposure to coronavirus.

"Inequitable conditions have created disproportionate rates of chronic health issues resulting in large differences in life expectancy across Alexandria. Now, these chronic health issues also make people more susceptible to severe disease from COVID-19 infection," the city report said.

"AFFLUENCE in Northern Virginia masks gaps in health and economic opportunity that have been exacerbated even further by the current coronavirus pandemic," according to the Northern Virginia Health Foundation.

"Although everyone is potentially susceptible to the virus, research shows that people of color and 4 ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE PACKET & JUNE 18-24, 2020

COVID-19 Cases in Alexandria City

 Population

 White 51.8%
 42%

 Black 21.3%
 15.1%

 Latino 16.8%
 55.5%

COVID-19 Deaths in Alexandria City



Source: City of Alexandria

low-income families are especially vulnerable and have higher death rates from COVID-19," said Steven H. Woolf, of Virginia Commonwealth University and the Northern Virginia Health Foundation. "They have greater exposure to the virus, are more susceptible to complications, have greater barriers to health care, are more vulnerable economically, and suffer from deteriorating health caused by deepening economic adversity."

Northern Virginia is a "seemingly affluent area" with good health statistics in general, but life expectancy varies by 17 years within the region, he said. "Economically marginalized communities will face devastating wage losses, unemployment and food scarcity. Low income families will undoubtedly struggle the most to rebound."

THE PANDEMIC has magnified discrepancies that health officials already knew were there.

According to the Arlington County Government, "Arlington rightfully celebrates being highly ranked in many areas, like employment, education and health. However, looking beyond aggregate data and drilling into results in different geographic, ethnic, racial and other often-marginalized groups reveals that health disparities exist among Arlingtonians in these groups. Not everyone is thriving."

According to the Fairfax County health department, "The data does underscore some of the existing disparities in Fairfax which make certain populations more susceptible to exposure and to greater risks from COVID-19 infection, just as they are for other diseases and health conditions."

"Simultaneously, COVID-19 continues to showcase and exacerbate the disparities that exist in our most vulnerable communities," said Fairfax County Chairman Jeff McKay.

"Now more than ever, we know it is the role of our local government to achieve true structural change in our communities. We in Fairfax County must honestly ask ourselves, 'What actions are we taking?; What voices are we lifting up?;' and for me as your Chairman, 'Are our policies affecting systemic change in our community?""



Neighborhood Health, a local non-profit community health center serving primarily low-income and uninsured people in Fairfax County, Arlington and Alexandria held a COVID-19 testing day in the Arlandria neighborhood of Alexandria, where 236 residents received free COVID-19 tests on Saturday, May 16.

Some Changes, But It's All About the Virus

Since the May 7, 2020 Alexandria health department report on zip code data, there have been significant changes. The May analysis included rates that varied from 2.3 to 19.7 cases per 1,000 residents in the zip codes that can be calculated. New data from June 9 shows rates ranging from 3.9 to 35.5 cases per 1,000 residents in these zip codes.

All Alexandria zip codes had decreases in their positivity rate. The zip code with the highest positivity rate in the May analysis, 22305 (55.4%), had a 46% reduction in the positivity rate, to 30.1% on June 9, but still has the highest positivity rate.

The virus has widespread community transmission throughout all of Alexandria, Northern Virginia, and Washington D.C. and Maryland, the City reports. An individual's risk of becoming infected continues to be based on many factors, including individual exposures and health status, environmental conditions, policies and practices of businesses, and individual behaviors.

Disproportionate Impact

From the Alexandria Health Department and City:

"Although viruses do not discriminate, the COVID-19 virus disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations just as other diseases and health conditions do. The zip codes with the highest rates COVID-19 cases in Alexandria are also the zip codes with higher concentrations of poverty, lower education levels, and crowded housing conditions. The populations living in some zip codes have experienced discriminatory policies and systems, resulting in inequitable access to economic opportunities, affordable housing, and healthcare.

"Inequitable conditions have created disproportionate rates of chronic health issues resulting in large differences in life expectancy across Alexandria. Now, these chronic health issues also make people more susceptible to severe disease from COVID-19 infection. Additionally, these community members are more likely to work in jobs where they are underpaid; do not receive paid sick leave; and are not afforded telework opportunities, creating additional risk of exposure to the COVID-19 virus."

Addressing the Inequality

From the Alexandria Health Department and City:

"The Alexandria health department has been working with vulnerable populations, community leaders and activists in communities of color and disadvantage for decades, including in the battles against HIV/AIDS, other communicable diseases and teen pregnancy. The Alexandria health department provides those communities with targeted prevention services such as immunization and sexual & reproductive health clinics and the Special Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

The department's population health efforts engage residents and partners to identify barriers to ideal health, to help build solutions that make sense for everyone. AHD's Community Health Assessment underscores the existing disparities in Alexandria. The project's steering committee – a group of committed, diverse community members and leaders – used equity as their guide throughout the process. Community members reviewed the results of this work and chose three focal points – poverty, housing and mental health – for a five-year Community Health Improvement Plan, developed in tandem with the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria.

Since originally becoming aware of COVID-19 in late 2019, AHD has been working with community partners that serve populations at high risk for severe illness if they contract COVID-19. Additionally, AHD prioritizes efforts to protect Alexandrians most at risk, particularly those over the age of 65 and those living in congregate living facilities (e.g. long-term care facilities, group homes, and detention centers).



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News



ASO Music Director James Ross will conduct the presentation of HomeGrown: American Stories in Music and Film Nov. 7-8 in a partnership with the Alexandria Film Festival.

'Homegrown' Filmmakers ASO, Film Festival announce joint partnership selections.

By Jeanne Theismann Gazette Packet

The Alexandria Film Festival, in partnership with the Alexandria Symphony Orchestra, has announced the six filmmakers that have been selected to participate in its joint project, HomeGrown: American Stories in Music and Film.

The films will accompany music by American composers performed "live to picture" by the orchestra as part of ASO's 2020-2021 season on Nov. 7 and 8. The works will also be screened as part of the Alexandria Film Festival Nov. 12-15.

Director Michael Fallavollita's award-winning Tale of the Kite will be set to Jennifer Higdon's Blue Cathedral, composed in memory of her brother and commissioned for the Curtis Institute of Music in 1999.

The music of William Grant Still, the first African American to conduct and have his works performed with a major orchestra, will accompany the work of film

News Briefs

From Page 3

as the judicial system, the electoral process, career advancement, education, housing and the health care system. The resolution also affirms that the City of Alexandria and all government officials have a duty to ensure the protection of all communities through actions and reform, including in the justice system. Resolution 2950 calls for state and federal elected officials to pass meaningful laws to prohibit militarization of law enforcement; reform the criminal justice movement; and reform police immunity laws.

The resolution identifies gathering data on the demographics of police encounters with the public and the urgent need to adopt a body-worn camera policy for police as priorities to be added to the City Council work plan. The Alexandria Police Department is currently evaluating implementation of a pilot camera program.

artists Jane Pittman and Annette

One of filmmaker's Alexi Schei-

ber's works will be set to Clouds by

Charles Tomlinson Griffes, great

uncle to ASO Maestro James Ross.

tion of John Henry will be accom-

panied by a Shannon Washington

Stockbridge will be paired with

found video footage compiled by

her images of Alexandria to an or-

chestral suite by Aaron Copeland.

Filmmaker Andrea Kalin will set

"Much of this music comes from

the middle decades of the 20th

century when American composers

began to successfully depict our

country's unique flavor in sound,"

said ASO Music Director James

Ross, who envisioned the proj-

ect. "These pieces can be seen (or

heard) as a kind of big metaphor

for the tenderness and danger that

our country and world presently

faces." www.alexfilmfest.com.

www.alexsym.org

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The 1940 Aaron Copland rendi-

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Opinion

Reconsider What We Expect Police To Do

The article by Michael Lee Pope, "Disproportionate Use of

Force" (June 11, 2020), was most disturbing. I was angered by the story of the white police officer's harassment of a black Alexandria citizen who was simply doing his job. How many other incidents

of police racism and

LETTERS

maltreatment of our black and brown community members do we not know about? It is time for the Alexandria Police Department to be transparent with its data and documentation, especially in reporting the use of force. Only then will we be able to hold police officers accountable for their actions. In addition, officers who exhibit behavior rooted in

racism should not be part of our police force.

It is also time to assess the powers our city has given the police department; as many in our community have said, including the ACLU executive director who was interviewed in the article, we need to reconsider what we expect our police officers to do. Instead of allocating funds for them to be involved in policing problems that result from such areas as mental health, homelessness and economic need, drug addiction, and school behavior management, we should be using our resources to develop and invest in community-based solutions to these issues. We must help and protect our vulnerable populations rather than expand

even further the often-destructive efforts to police them. https://grassrootsalexandria.

> Zeina Azzam Grassroots Alexandria

Help Struggling Businesses

To the Editor:

For several months now, I have noticed the increasing number of empty storefronts downtown. King Street, Washington Street, Pitt Street -- all have "For Rent" signs now. Most recently, Walgreens on King Street closed on March 5.

Walgreens was a friendly neighborhood pharmacy which was necessary to many people, including myself. I inquired and learned that Walgreens closed because rents downtown were growing too high.

As rents were becoming too high and driving businesses out when times were normal, the problem is now exacerbated by the coronavirus. City Council should consider lowering or freezing rents in order to support struggling small businesses.

> **Carolyn Ostrom** Alexandria, Va.

Oppose Prohibition of Firearms on City Property" To the members of the Alexan-

Senior Services Cancels Gala

enior Services of Alexandria (SSA) canceled its 2020 Annual Gala due to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic crisis. "This was a tough decision," said Mary Lee Anderson, SSA's Executive Director. "However, our priority now is to continue to serve the city's most vulnerable population — our older adults — with programs that are keeping them safe and healthy."

SSA is now delivering nearly 2,500 meals each week (up from 900 weekly in February) and has over 100 clients in our Groceries to Go program.

Virtual Friendly Visitor matches and handling DOT reservations are ongoing.

A new weekly e-gram, SSA Connection, with interesting and uplifting information for Alexandria's older adults, and Senior Ambassadors get updates to share with their communities three times a week.

As Alexandria begins to transition into phased re-opening, SSA staff will continue to manage all this remotely until a gradual return to the office is possible.

"We are very thankful for the generosity of our Gala sponsors and donors for their continued support of SSA during this critical time," said Laurie Blackburn, SSA's Board Chair. "Your donations will allow SSA to continue responding to the increased need for services to the senior population. We are fortunate to live in such a compassionate and caring community."

♦ Alexandria Gazette Packet ♦ June 18-24, 2020

8

dria City Council:

As a gun owner with a Concealed Handgun Permit ("CHP") and native of Alexandria, I believe that your proposed anti-gun ordinance will infringe upon my freedoms. What right does the City of Alexandria have to take away the right of self-defense? Gun rights are human rights.

Gun rights are women's rights. The right to self-defense is especially important right now, as lawless looters and criminals assault bystanders and damage and burn buildings in Virginia and across the nation. The City does not have the right to completely ban law-abiding citizens from possessing guns in government buildings, parks, recreation and community centers, and at permitted events and adjoining streets (hereinafter referred to as "City Property") as proposed in Chapter 3 of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia (Section 2-3-5)

"Prohibition of Firearms on City Property." Meanwhile, firearms are allowed in National Parks and Wildlife Refuges, National Forests, and other lands owned by the Federal government.

As a preliminary matter, the City rushed this ordinance through during a pandemic without sufficient public hearings or meetings. It is also not supported by data. When asked on June 11 and 12, respectively, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office and Police Department could not produce any statistics on:

(1) The number of crimes committed by CHP holders; or

(2) How this ordinance will prevent any crimes on City Property. The City has no record of crimes,

Bulletin Board

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

ABSENTEE VOTING BY MAIL

- The City of Alexandria encourages absentee voting by mail for the June 23 Republican Party primary election for U.S. Senate. Voters in Virginia do not register by party, so any person registered to vote in Alexandria may vote in the election. There is no Democratic primary election on June 23, since only one candidate qualified for the ballot. Due to COVID-19, all voters are eligible to vote absentee. Voters may choose reason "2A (My disability or illness)" when applying for an absentee ballot.
- Voters who wish to cast their absentee ballots in person must complete their ballot applications at the Office of Voter Registration and Elections (132 N. Royal St., Suite 100). The deadline for casting an absentee ballot in person is Saturday, June 20, at 5 p.m. In-person absentee voting hours are Monday

arrests, or convictions for acts committed by CHP holders on City Property. Thus, the City is targeting a group that is crime-free and statistically helpful in preventing crime and violence while neglecting the rise of violent crime in Alexandria, specifically on City Property.

I frequent Alexandria parks and trails and am struck by how the City callously ignored that a man went on a shooting rampage at the Eugene Simpson ballfield when he tried to murder Congressman Steve Scalise, Senator Rand Paul, and others in their group on June 14, 2017. Average citizens do not have Special Agent Police details to protect themselves.

Not everybody can wait for the Alexandria Police Department and

Sherriff to handle this extremely dangerous criminal. Indeed, Kentucky Senator Rand Paul told MSNBC:

"Everybody probably would have died except for the fact that the Capitol Hill police were there, and the only reason they were there was because we had a member of [House] leadership on our team."

Under the proposed ordinance, ordinary citizens would have no protection from the gunman or other criminals on City Property.

Vote AGAINST Chapter 3 of Title 2 of the Code of the City of Alexandria, Virginia (Section 2-3-5) "Prohibition of Firearms on City Property."

Guns Save Lives!

Lisa A. Kilday Esq. Alexandria Ed. note: This letter has been edited for length.

through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., with extended hours on Saturday, June 20, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Election Day Voting Locations:

For the June 23 Republican primary for U.S. Senate only, due to the lack of availability of many regular polling places, there will be six voting locations in Alexandria: Durant Arts Center (1605 Cameron

St.) This will be the location for voters who normally vote at City Hall, Lyles Crouch School, Durant Center. Lee Center and AlexRenew.

Maury School (600 Russell Road) This will be the location for voters

- who normally vote at Ladrey Senior Building, George Washington School, Fire Department Headquarters, Charles Houston Center and Maury School.
- Mt. Vernon Center (2701 Commonwealth Ave)
- This will be the location for voters who normally vote at Cora Kelly. Mt. Vernon, Potomac Yards, George Mason School and Charles Barrett
- Center. Minnie Howard School (3801 Braddock Road)



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ALEXANDRIA COUNTRY DAY SCHOOL

Congratulates the Class of 2020!



Top Row: Aidan Bain, Jackie Beauregard, Ella Bennett, Raegan Bonner, Kyle Burner, Laura Duffield, Brooke Dunton Second Row: Claire Engelhardt, Elizabeth Eskew, Robert Greenberg, Shiane Heiber, Preston Heilig, Kyla Johnson, Kelsey Mathieson Third Row: Ellie McNulty, Nikolas Mercader, Jack Nagtzaam, Anthony Noufal, Brian Peguero, Steven Peguero, Channing Pinkos Fourth Row: Rylie Reid, Keenan Reynolds, Daniel Rowe, Jack Ryder, Reeves Versaggi, Sawyer Weiss, Jeremy Young

Members of the Class of 2020 have been offered admission to and/or will be attending the following high schools:

BASIS Tysons, Bishop Ireton High School, Bishop O'Connell High School, DeMatha Catholic High School, Edmund Burke School, Elizabeth Seton High School, Emma Willard School, Episcopal High School, The Field School, Foxcroft School, Garrison Forest School, Gonzaga College High School, Langley High School, Maret School, St. Andrew's School (DE), St. Anselm's Abbey School, St. Stephen's & St. Agnes School, T.C. Williams High School

Alexandria Country Day School is a leading K-8, coed, independent school in the Del Ray community of Alexandria. We provide a challenging academic program; numerous arts and athletics offerings; a robust and integrated approach to social-emotional learning; a school-wide service learning program; and an innovative public speaking curriculum. To learn more, visit www.acdsnet.org or call 703-837-1303.



ALEXANDRIA, VA, AWARDED FEDERAL FUNDS UNDER FEMA'S EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER NATIONAL PROGRAM (EFSP)

The city of Alexandria has been awarded \$42,174 in Phase 37 and \$35,469 in Phase CARES through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Emergency Food and Shelter Board Program (EFSP). The EFSP program was created by Congress in 1983 to supplement nonprofit, faith-based and local government agencies that provide food, shelter, rent, mortgage, and utility assistance programs.

Under the terms of the grant from the National EFSP Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive Federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice nondiscrimination, 5) demonstrated the capability to deliver emergency food, shelter, rent, mortgage, and utility programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, have a voluntary board.

To apply for Phase 37 and CARES funds, public or private voluntary agencies must contact EFSP@uwnca.org. to request a grant application(s). Any nonprofit, faith-based or local government agency that provides food, shelter, rent, mortgage, or utility assistance may apply for funds in both phases. A separate grant application for Phase 37 and Phase CARES will be provided to grantee upon request.

Grant application(s) and one(1) copy of attachments for Phase 37 and Phase CARES must be e-mailed to EFSP@uwnca.org no later than Thursday, July 9, at 11:59 pm.

For more information, please contact Mary Ann Floto at mfloto@uwnca.org.



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News



Anne Ramsey hands out prebagged groceries from the Meade Room at Historic Christ Church at their last pop-up pantry on March 19 before the coronavirus shut down the weekly event. Daily

Serving People in Dire Need

Pop-up grocery moves from Christ Church to Personal Delivery Services with daily food deliveries to people falling between the cracks.

> By Shirley Ruhe Alexandria Gazette Packet

Part 1 of a series on food insecurity in Alexandria during the coronavirus

he regular Thursday morning pop up grocery at Historic Christ Church has been closed for

the last three months and transformed into a delivery service. The pop-up grocery served more than 30 families in need each week.

The church has kept the Lazarus Food Pantry (popup grocery) running "but in drastically modified ways," according to Barbara Fallon who is the volunteer coordinator of this effort, now run out of a staff member's home and the Methodist Church across the street. "We are reaching those in tremendous need who are falling between the cracks from some of the other major City food efforts," Fallon says.

In February they were hearing about the coronavirus but the pantry kept going. "We had an arrangement with Marymount nurses, and Pamela came with music and meditation yoga for people waiting for the pop-up pantry to open." Fallon says the last two weeks they moved the pantry outdoors for the first time.

"March 12 was very chilly. We set up a long line of tables for safety's sake and 40 chairs. We had hand sanitizers." The next week the health situation was getting more serious, so instead of clients having the usual shopper experience, the volunteers prepackaged grocery bags for the first time ever and served them from the Meade Room kitchen at the church. "We had to be quick."

Fallon says they prepackaged 90 bags of food. "People were starting to get nervous. Fifty came out the final day and got fresh vegetables, eggs, frozen meats. We were as generous as possible. We had 35 extra grocery sacks, thank goodness, because the calls kept coming in for food." Some people walking by on the street who saw the line of people said they didn't know they offered the food, "and we reached additional people in need that way."

At the last two pantries they took the phone num-

bers of those who wanted to participate so they could send a group text to the clients telling them what to expect in the future, and about other food resources such as the ALIVE! Free giveaway and Hunger Free Alexandria.

Fallon says she delivers to people who are really in dire need. "For instance, 87-year-old Magna, who has a room in a Del Ray house. She hadn't been out for a month, and she had no food. I text her that I'm coming. I leave the food in her front yard and wave. She must cook because she loves the fresh produce."

Fallon says, "Most of the people are families with kids. I delivered to a Spanish single mother with a darling first grader who translated for her." Fallon said she had gotten the call asking her to make another delivery the same day for this family's emergency. "They had no food." She said when the mother got the sacks of groceries she could say only one English word with a smile— "Happy."

Melanie Gray, Director of Outreach and Mission at Christ Church, says the former pop-up grocery volunteers now sack up groceries. "The network of volunteers I created years ago is able to work now. It took a while to pull it together to make it work, but once it's working, it works really well." The food pantry volunteers do the shopping and another group of go-getters deliver the groceries every day.

There was a lull of a few weeks and "we wondered how we were going to regroup." Gray set up a Care Team of volunteers who called 200 people in the Christ Church records to check in and see if they needed food. Fallon says a lot of these people are sequestered and don't have the internet or any way to find out about the resources the City offers. "A lot is by word of mouth."

"But we were getting all of these calls—what are we going to do?" The church building was closed. That's when Liz Denson, Gray's Assistant at Christ Church, offered her home as a storage place. Denson says she had all the groceries and other supplies in her living room but eventually there was too much. So she ap-

> See Serving People, Page 18 www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



CONGRATULATIONS T.C. Williams Class of 2020!



T.C. Williams High School graduates have diverse postsecondary plans, and many will be attending top universities in the U.S.



Jazmine Lee Baxter
Spelman College



Ethan James Steele Sample Princeton University



Felicity Katherine Brock U.S. Naval Academy



Sekou J Koram Virginia Tech



Emile Sebastian Cohen Suárez University of Virginia

T.C. Williams High School graduates are heading off to the following colleges and military institutions:

Academy of Art University (1); Bard College (1); Barry University (1); Bowie State University (1); Brigham Young University - Idaho (1); Brigham Young University - Provo (1); Catawba College (1); Christopher Newport University (3); Clemson University (1); College of Charleston (3); Columbia University in the City of New York (1); Concordia University - Montreal (2); Curry College (1); Davidson College (1); Daytona State College (1); Dillard University (1); Drexel University (1); Duke University (1); Eastern Florida State College (1); Eastern Mennonite University (2); Elon University (4); Ferrum College (1); FIDM Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising - Los Angeles (1); Florida International University (1); Fordham University (1); Fork Union Military Academy (1); Frederick Community College (1); George Mason University (44); George Washington University (2); Georgetown University (1); Georgia Institute of Technology (2); Georgia State University (1); Goucher College (1); Hampden-Sydney College (1); Hobart William Smith Colleges (1); Howard University (2); Ithaca College (1); James Madison University (14); Johnson & Wales University - Charlotte (2); Johnson & Wales University - Providence (1); Kentucky State University (1); Lafayette College (1); Liberty University (1); Longwood University (1); Marymount University (6); McGill University (1); Miami University - Oxford (2); Middlebury College (1); Missouri State University (1); Montgomery College (1); Morehouse College (1); Mount Aloysius College (1); New York Institute of Technology (1); Norfolk State University (7); North Carolina State University at Raleigh (1); Northern Kentucky University (1); Northern Virginia Community College (246); Oakland Community College (1); Oberlin College (1); Old Dominion University (8); Oregon State University (1); Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (1); Pennsylvania State University (1); Pratt Institute (1); Prince George's Community College (2); Princeton University (1); Purdue University (1); Queen's University (1); Radford University (2); Reed College (1); Richard Bland College of William and Mary (6); Rochester Institute of Technology (1); Savannah College of Art and Design (3); Seattle Central College (1); Shenandoah University (2); Shepherd University (2); Southeastern University (1); Southern University and A & M College (1); Spelman College (2); Stanford University (1); Tennessee State University (1); Texas Christian University (1); The Ohio State University (1); The University of Arizona (1); The University of Memphis (1); The University of Tampa (1); Trent University (1); U.S. Air Force (2); U.S. Army (7); U.S. Coast Guard (1); U.S. Marine Corps (3); U.S. National Guard (1); U.S. Navy (3); United States Coast Guard Academy (1); United States Naval Academy (1); Universidad San Francisco de Quito (1); University of California Los Angeles (1); University of Chicago (1); University of Delaware (1); University of Limerick (1); University of Mary Washington (7); University of Maryland - College Park (2); University of Massachusetts - Boston (1); University of Massachusetts - Amherst (1); University of Michigan - Ann Arbor (1); University of Mount Union (1); University of Rhode Island (1); University of Richmond (1); University of Rochester (1); University of San Diego (1); University of South Carolina - Columbia (1); University of South Florida (1); University of Southern California (1); University of St. Andrews (2); University of the District of Columbia (2); University of Utah (2); University of Vermont (1); University of Virginia (31); University of Wisconsin - Madison (2); Vanderbilt University (1); Virginia Commonwealth University (35); Virginia Military Institute (1); Virginia State University (22); Virginia Tech (36); Virginia Union University (1); Voorhees College (1); Washington & Jefferson College (1); Washington University in St. Louis (1); West Virginia University (2); William and Mary (9); Worcester Polytechnic Institute (1); Wright State University (1)



Shelter Experiences May Be Virtual, But They're Still Warm and Fuzzy

By Barbara S. Moffet

661 Tigger," igger, 13-year-old Allayna said over and over as a year-old pit bull terrier she had never met leaped in her lap and licked her face. "As soon as I saw her, I thought of Tigger from 'Winnie-the-Pooh,'" Allayna recalled. "She was just so loving and protective."

It seemed like the proverbial love at first sight for Allayna and her mother, Cassandra Eichner. But the encounter outside the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria (AWLA) shelter wasn't actually their first sight of the dog. Eichner and her daughter had chosen Tigger, then known as Beanie, by viewing adoptable dogs on the AW-LA's website as part of a new virtual adoption process, brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The next step was a virtual meet-andgreet with Beanie and two AWLA staff members. Eichner and Allayna watched from home as Beanie played lovingly with the staffers. "I could almost feel her presence through the screen by seeing how joyful she was," Cassandra Eichner recalled. "Other dogs might be shy or scared or growl with their toys, but I didn't see any of that."

During phone consultations with the staff, Eichner and her daughter asked lots of questions, including about the dog's medical history, and then, after a conversation between mother and daughter about the responsibility of owning a dog, agreed that Beanie was the one. After purchasing the necessary supplies, they went to the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter to pick her up. Eichner said she was nervous about that first meeting, but after discussing next steps with the staff in the parking lot from a safe physical distance, Beanie came right out to them on a leash, ready for a walk. "As soon as we finished the walk, she hopped right into the car," Eichner said. "I can't believe how trusting and loving she was."

"Tigger" has turned out to be a very curious dog who wants to sniff and see everything. And there has been plenty to see and smell she has hiked in the Smoky Mountains and romped on the beach in the Outer Banks. Sleeping at night with Allayna might be her favorite activity. "She is the perfect dog for our family," Eichner said.

The AWLA's virtual adoption process is just one of the many ways the shelter has reached out to the community during the pandemic. A virtual humane educa-12 🛠 Alexandria Gazette Packet 🛠 June 18-24, 2020



Allayna Eichner and Tigger at play in North Carolina's Outer Banks. Newly adopted Tigger rounds out the family of Allayna and her mother, Cassandra Eichner, of Alexandria.

AWLA

The Animal Welfare League of Alexandria operates the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter, Alexandria's only open-access animal shelter. In response to the global pandemic, the AWLA has initiated a virtual adoption process that has seen adoption of dozens of pets and is operating a Pet Pantry that has provided nearly 4,000 pounds of pet food and supplies. They also have launched a virtual humane education program for kids and are offering assistance to Alexandrians with questions about wildlife and animals in the community. More information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org

tion program for kids of all ages called Junior PAWS offers weekly lessons on topics ranging from animal-themed crafts to pet training. Many of the shelter's youth programs, including Pawsitive Action Club (PAC), scout badge programs and youth shelter tours, are also available in a virtual format; more information can be found at AlexandriaAnimals.org/Youth.

Six-year-old Rylee Lawrence made some new friends when she participated in AWLA's "Crafts With Carly," a weekly Zoom-based class for kids. When her school in St. Mary's County, Md., closed in March because of the pandemic, Rylee began studying kindergarten language arts, reading and math through the online platform offered by the school, with assistance from her mother, Lisa Lawrence, who's a special education teacher. But Rylee deeply missed her teachers and peers, her mother says. As part of Crafts With Carly, students create crafts in real time, smiling and laughing together as AWLA staffer Carly Mercer provides guidance and encouragement. One of



An accordion-style cat, created by six-year-old Rylee Lawrence during "Crafts With Carly," an online class offered by the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

Rylee's favorite projects was creating the animal of choice — Rylee's was a cat — out of colored paper that students cut to fan out, accordion style. Mercer instructed the kids to paint and draw each whisker or other feature in accurate detail

"Each kid would hold up their project for the others to see, so Rylee held hers up, and Carly and the others said it looked great," Lawrence said. "To see the smile on her face was fabulous."

Dozens of AWLA volunteers have been dedicating their time and services from home since March, writing short bios of adoptable animals, sewing curtains for kennels and face masks for employees; some are also undergoing continued training that will help them when they return to the shelter. Volunteer Cathee Lee decided the pandemic work-at-home climate was right for teaching her senior dog, "Leroy Jenkins," some tricks. Lee enrolled him in the shelter's Polite Pups virtual training class for volunteers, intended to teach skills at home that can be used lat-



Tigger the pit bull terrier relaxes while on a road trip in Illinois; Tigger was adopted through the AWLA's new virtual adoption process.



A pooped senior dog "Leroy Jenkins" takes a break after an intense session of the online "Polite Pups" class, designed to prepare AWLA volunteers for working with dogs. Leroy learned some tricks and how to avoid conflicts with other dogs when going on walks.

er with dogs at the AWLA. "I was so excited when they offered the class because Leroy's so reactive to other animals that there's no way we could have trained him at the shelter," Lee said. "He's the perfect candidate for virtual learning."

Every Saturday from 1 to 2 p.m., Lee and Leroy sat in front of the computer to watch and listen to AWLA Volunteer Program Coordinator Brenda Maier demonstrate clicker training to the dogs - and humans — who had gathered. Clicker training uses positive reinforcement like treats to reward desirable behaviors. Lee says Leroy is a smart dog who enjoyed the mental stimulation of the class, and she shared the lessons on positive reinforcement with her husband to try out with Leroy.

Bulletin Board

From Page 8

- This will be the location for voters who normally vote at Blessed Sacrament, Douglas MacArthur
 - School, Chinquapin, Temple Beth El Synagogue and Patrick Henry
- Center. John Adams School (5651 Rayburn Ave)
- This will be the location for voters who normally vote at NOVA Arts Center, James K. Polk School, Hermitage, John Adams School and William Ramsay Center.

The class has redirected Leroy not to react to other dogs while walking on a leash, Lee said. "He now knows that when another dog goes by, he should look up at me and will receive a treat," she said. "He sits and makes eye contact instead of giving me the side eye or jumping at the other dog.'

To get into position for class, Leroy would climb into his large, comfy dog bed in Lee's Alexandria home. Through the Polite Pups sessions, Leroy learned to play dead and spin in a circle and to recognize the word "touch," which would lead to actions like a high five. "He loved the class, and it was a really cool bonding experience for us," Lee said. "The only thing is, when we discussed concepts, he would fall asleep."

Tucker School (435 Ferdinand Day Dr) This will be the location for voters who normally vote at Beatley

- Library, Tucker School, South Port Apartments, Cameron Station and Olympus Condos. Voters will receive a mailing by mid-
- June confirming their voting location for the June 23 Republican primary. Voters who choose to vote in-person on election day must go to their new assigned voting location. The six voting locations will be open from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m.

A Vested Interest APD K-9 Taz to receive body armor.

By Jeanne Theismann Gazette Packet

he Alexandria Police Department's K-9 Taz, a 2-year old German Shepherd who was imported from Hungary, will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a donation from local residents Chuck and Cathy Rey and the nonprofit organization Vested Interest in K-9s, Inc.

Delivery of the vest, which will be embroidered with

the names of the donors, is expected within eight to 10 weeks. A single donation of \$960 will sponsor one vest, which has a value of \$1,744-\$2,283 and weighs an average of 4-5 pounds.

K-9 Taz became a member of the APD in April 2019 and completed more than 800 hours of specialized



APD K-9 Taz will

receive body armor

courtesy of a dona-

tion from Alexandria

residents Chuck and

Cathy Rey.

in narcotics detection. He is assigned to Officer Kyle Russel. Officer Russel and K-9 Taz are also assigned to the Special Operation Team as a K-9 element. Outside of work,

training. He is certi-

fied in Patrol and

will soon be certified

Taz enjoys going for walks in the woods, playing ball, and through the nonprofit spending time with Vested Interest in K-9s his older brother K-9 Chance, who retired in 2019 from police work. He strongly dislikes baths and being groomed.

Vested Interest in K-9s, established in 2009, provides bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s has provided over 3,917 vests to K-9s in all 50 states.



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Senior Services of Alexandria would like to thank all of our 2020 Gala and Silent Auction sponsors, donors, and volunteers for their generous support. We regret that we must cancel our 2020 Gala in response to continued concern over COVID-19, and we are deeply grateful for the many generous supporters and sponsors who have allowed us to keep their event contribution in this time of need. We look forward to seeing all of you again in person in the future.

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Special thanks to Gazette Jacket



Feeding the Fight **Friendship Firehouse** wraps up food delivery.

By Jeanne Theismann Gazette Packet

embers of the Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association wrapped up a 6-week period of delivering over 600 meals to Alexandria firefighters with a donation of lunches June 5 from Foster's Grille.

The Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association delivers a meal from Foster's Grille to AFD headquarters June 5. Pictured in back, left to right, are Tyler Fredericks, Russel Thorne, Myron Dent, Erin Mustian, Scott Corder, Michael Catts and Bruce Catts. In front are Catherine Weinraub and Marion Moon.

Delivering the meals were Foster's Grille owners Bruce and Michael Catts and Friendship Firehouse board members Catherine Weinraub and Marion Moon. Union Street Public House participated in the Feed the Fight program with donations from Moon, former City Councilman Frank Fannon, members of the Old Dominion Boat Club and other individuals.

"The Friendship Veterans Fire Engine Association has wrapped up their six weeks of feeding the local firefighters," said board president Joe Shumard. "Each week, through sponsors, we fed approximately 90 firefighters. We thank them so much for their service and being out there on the front line."

www.friendshipfireco.org

Alexandria; This Week in Covid Library fees, George Floyd, pandemic within pandemic, combating institutional racism, playgrounds opening, auto loan relief and more.

Alexandria Cases: Virginia Cases: United States Cases: Alexandria Deaths: Virginia Deaths: United States Deaths:

> By Ken Moore Gazette

45

Wednesday, June 17

ONE LESS: The health department reported eight new COVID-19 Cases last night. The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 2,168, including 47 fatalities. The Virginia Department of Health has reassigned one previously reported fatality to another jurisdiction. Detailed data is available through the links at alexandriava.gov/Coronavirus.

Tuesday, June 16

NINE MORE COVID CASES: The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 2,160, including 48 fatalities.

Monday, June 15

SEVENTEEN MORE: The cumulative number of COVID-19 cases in Alexandria is now 2,151, including 48 fatalities.

DEMOGRAPHIC DASH-BOARD: The Virginia Depart-

Tuesday, June 16 Monday, June 8 2,102 2,168 55,331 51,251 1,920,904 2,063,812 47 1,477 1,570 109,901 115,27

> ment of Health updated its demographics dashboard to include additional racial reporting categories for case, hospitalization and death data.

> The updated dashboard confirms existing race, ethnicity and zip code data that indicates Alexandria's Latinx population is disproportionately burdened by COVID-19. The data also confirms that people of color are experiencing higher rates of hospitalization due to COVID-19. The Alexandria Health Department and the City are committed to working directly with community members and partners to address these disparities and develop solutions not just for COVID-19, but also for the underlying systems and policies that have led to these inequities, according to city documents.

REC CENTERS: Recreation centers will operate at 30% capacity with modified hours and access. Beginning on June 20, all recreation centers will be open for scheduled programming. The following centers will provide limited recreational access for teens, individuals, and families, as well as

Zip Code Analysis

Zip Code	Population	Confirmed Cases	Positivity Rate	Confirmed Cases/1,000
22206	530			
22301	15,171	68	9.9	4.5
22302	20,238	220	16.1	10.9
22304	54,003	611	17.9	11.3
22305	16,095	572	30.1	35.5
22311	16898	417	21.6	
22312	6901	529	25.8	
22314	47826	185	11.2	3.9

Zip code 22206 is primarily in Arlington County; the Alexandria portion of data for 22206 is not provided. Zip codes 22311 and 22312 are shared between Alexandria and Fairfax County. The number of cases and number of people tested, and accompanying calculations, are for the entire zip code.

Source: City of Alexandria

senior-only hours:

- Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe St. Leonard "Chick" Armstrong Rec-
- reation Center, 25 W. Reed Ave. Mount Vernon Recreation Cen-
- ter, 2701 Commonwealth Ave. Patrick Henry Recreation Center,

4653 Taney Ave. William Ramsay Recreation Cen-

ter, 5650 Sanger Ave.

Recreational access schedules will be posted at alexandriava. gov/Recreation by Friday, June 19.

LEE CENTER: The Registration & Reservation Office at the Lee Center will be open by appointment only, Monday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To schedule an

appointment, call 703.746.5414. CHINQUAPIN PARK: Beginning June 22, Chinquapin Park Recreation Center & Aquatics Facility will offer Alexandria residents ticketed entry for racquetball, swimming, and use of the fitness room on Mondays through Fridays to ages 60 and older from 8 to 10 a.m., and to all ages from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Ticketed entry for racquetball and fitness room use will be available on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to noon for all ages. Advanced reservation is required for ticketed entry and reservations will be available each Thursday for the following week. Tickets for the week of June 22 will be available starting at 9 a.m.

on Thursday, June 18. One ticket per day can be reserved per person. Tickets can be reserved online at alexandriava. gov/Recreation or by calling 703.746.6909. General admission fees apply and passes remain suspended throughout the summer.

NATURE CENTER: Jerome "Buddie" Ford Nature Center is currently closed due to necessary repairs.

POOL SEASON: The 2020 summer outdoor pool season will be July 1 through September 7 (Labor Day). Pools will be open for diving, exercise and instruction, with lap swimming limited to three persons per lane. Each pool will have specific requirements and restrictions. See alexandriava.gov/116065.

Registration for outdoor fitness and tennis classes will begin at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, June 17 for Alexandria residents, and Friday, June 19 for nonresidents. Summer programs take place June 26 through September 5. Registration will be available online at alexandriava.gov/Recreation and in person by appointment at the Registration & Reservation Office (1108 Jefferson St.). Schedule an appointment by

calling 703.746.5414.

Swimmers must always maintain 10 feet of physical distance unless necessary to protect the physical safety of the swimmer..

Education Learning Fun

Discussing Racial Injustice with Children

Books and visual art can help begin difficult conversations.

By Marilyn Campbell The Gazette

s horrific scenes of police brutality and images of passionate protesters are ubiquitous in a smartphone and social media obsessed society, parental control over information that children receive can be limited. Framing and discussing such issues can be equally as challenging.

Children pick up on racial injustice earlier than parents might think, so toddlers can begin to learn about injustice early in very basic terms, says Glenda Hernández Tittle, Ph.D. Montgomery College, School of Education. "I think it's really important to start talking to children about racism and biases early and why it's wrong that people are mistreated," she said. "Ask how they would feel

if they were treated that way themselves. Research shows that as early as two to three years old, children are quite aware of biases."

Parents can create a safe environment in which children and young adults can express their thoughts. "Conversations about racial injustice can be difficult, but they are necessary," said Karen Bentall, a librarian at Oakridge Elementary School in Arlington. "Books can help, [but] I must stress the importance of reading a wide variety of books where children can see themselves and others."

Reading can give children an appreciation of the experiences of those whose lives are different from their own. "Books can be windows into the lives of others, mirrors to reflect our own experience, and sliding glass doors that allow us to step into other worlds," said Bentall. "They help develop empathy."

Literary classics such as Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird can offer a springboard for lively discussions on race, suggests Bentall. "Many parents feel a sense of nostalgia toward their childhood books, but looking at them through a social-justice lens can spark conversations about the insidious bias that has crept into our language, thoughts, and patterns," she said.

Movies can also give children an opportunity to understand the lives of others. "You can ask questions about characters and why they did what they did," said Tittle. "You can also ask children about their own peers and who sits with whom at school and how they feel about that."

The types of characters that children see in books, movies, television and other types of media can have an impact on their cultural and racial understanding. "It's important for children to see diverse characters in positions of leadership and power," said Tittle. "Be cautious in selecting. Some classics often perpetuate biases and racists attitudes."

Visual art is another medium by which children can see and absorb beliefs about the characteristics www.ConnectionNewspapers.com



PHOTO BY MARILYN CAMPBELL The types of characters that children see in books, movies, television and other types of media can have an impact on their cultural and racial understanding.

"Conversations about racial injustice can be difficult, but they are necessary." — Karen Bentall,

Oakridge Elementary School

of others. "Looking at art can also be a powerful part of raising awareness of racism and calling for needed change," said Kathryn Horn Coneway.

One example, says Coneway, is the Four Freedoms Project co-founded by Hank Willis Thomas. "[It] includes multiple versions of images that focus on freedom from fear, freedom from want, freedom of worship, freedom of speech," she said. "Families can view the original images created by [artist] Norman Rockwell 70 years ago and reflect on how the recreated versions made by the Four Freedoms Project both signify and call for change."

Parents can encourage their children to be agents of change, suggests Tittle. "Such as, 'What do you think we should do if we see something like that?' These prompts go beyond what we've typically done and help to develop a culture beyond awareness but also of advocacy and activism," she said.

Conversations around race should be ongoing, advises Tittle. "Parents will have different comfort levels about talking to kids about these topics and that's okay, she said."

An examination of the past can inform current conversations on racial justice. "Though parts of American history can be difficult and even heart wrenching, remain honest about our history, and that while we are proud of some of our history, there are things we didn't do right and that we need to work to change," said Tittle. "These conversations should be ongoing."



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Thursday - Lasagna Night Friday - Fish Fry Saturday & Sunday - Full Brunch Buffet with Omelette Station

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T.C. Williams Holds Online Commencement



Together since attending MacArthur Elementary School, a group of friends celebrate their graduations from T.C. Williams, Bishop Ireton and Maret high schools at a gathering June 13 at Lake Barcroft.

From Page 1

the motions. I wanted to create my own destiny and facing those adversities is what got me here today."

Following the online ceremony, graduates gathered in small groups to celebrate with family and friends.

"It was nice being in comfort of our own homes but also really weird not being able to be around our classmates," said Pierina Echevarria, who met friends Nawal Gaal and Glenda Cabrera at the George Washington National Masonic Memorial following the ceremony. "That was sad. But we've done our best to stay in touch with texting and FaceTime."

As part of the ceremony, a documentary of the Class of 2020 was shown, with seniors answering the questions "What do you love? What do you fear? What do you hope for?"

"I, like many of you, am saddened by the fact that we are not together today as one TC family to hand off diplomas, shake hands and hug," Balas said. "Our current reality simply will not allow

for that at this time. The Class of 2020 has endured so much, and we wanted to put together this production to honor and celebrate you as you graduate today."

Balas spoke of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the recent nationwide protests against racism.

"I discuss this with you today, on a day of celebration, because it is the right thing to do," Balas said. "Your generation has the power to change the world as we know it. Use your strengths to become agents of change and participate in productive action that will result in our country instituting justice that has been so elusive for 244 years."

Balas quoted Dr. Martin Luther King, saying "true peace is not merely the absence of tension, but the presence of justice," before offering his closing remarks.

"I look forward to the day when we can see each other again and plan future events to make up for what you have lost," Balas said. "Today marks the end of one era and the start of a new one. I can promise you that the Class of 2020 will always be remembered."



ACPS Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings delivers remarks at Parker-Gray Stadium during the June 13 virtual graduation ceremony of T.C. Williams High School.



T.C. Williams Principal Peter Balas delivers remarks from Parker-Gray Stadium during the June 13 virtual graduation ceremony.



Principal Peter Balas to the Class of 2020



U.S. Olympian and 2016 T.C. Williams graduate Noah Lyles holds his graduation cap during an address to the Class of 2020 during the June 13 virtual graduation ceremony.



T.C. Williams Class of 2020 president Amiya Chisolm was one of the speakers during the June 13 virtual graduation ceremony. She will attend Norfolk State University in the fall.



graduation from T.C. Williams High School by jumping into Lake Barcroft following the school's June 13 virtual graduation ceremony.

Appetite



Lena's Oasis, located on top of the Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza & Tap parking deck, opened Monday. Reservations are required and can be made online at lenaswoodfire.com

How Are Restaurants Handling Phase 2?

By Hope Nelson Gazette Packet

s Phase 2 of the state's Forward Virginia plan nears the end of its first week in Alexandria, restaurants are settling into the new rules in different ways. From continuing with the curbside status quo to opening their doors for the first time since the shutdown, establishments are finding their way in the new normal, one meal at a time.

Lost Dog Café, 808 N. Henry St.

The pizza, pasta and sandwich purveyor on Route 1 has opened its doors again this week after months of delivery and takeout. Though Lost Dog has a small patio, it hadn't opened for tableside dining during Phase 1, opting instead to wait until indoor dining could be offered at 50% capacity. Now, with tables spaced further apart and new precautions in place, Lost Dog has opened once more, offering nightly dining both indoors and out on a first-come, first-served basis.

Fontaine, 119 S. Royal St.

Fontaine, meanwhile, has been offering outdoor dining since Phase 1 began, and the restaurant has now begun offering indoor seating as well with the dawn of Phase 2. The cute outdoor tables simply can't be beaten, though; by making use of the parallel parking spaces outside the cafe, Fontaine has offered diners a very intimate outdoor setting with plenty of space to go around. The restaurant has reconfigured its indoor seating to allow for more space between tables – and more room to enjoy crepes.

Port City Brewing, 3950 Wheeler Ave.

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Alexandria's longtime brewery has elected to stand pat at the moment, maintaining its bustling curbside and delivery business while not opening the tasting

room to patrons just yet. Port City is adamant that it will open back up when the time is right, when the region is more safe from Covid-19, but that time is not now. Meanwhile, the pineapple remains out front for hours each day, welcoming drivers up to the front door for curbside pickup, and the brewery's delivery service remains quite popular as well.

Del Ray Café, 205 E. Howell Ave.

Parking-lot dining? Forget it – change your attitude and your mindset, and suddenly the asphalt outside the Del Ray Café becomes a stunning seat along the Champs Elysees. The restaurant has had its outdoor dining in effect since the beginning of Phase 1, but with the advent of Phase 2 it has also reopened the indoor space to the requisite 50% capacity. Still, as mild as the weather has been this week, there's really no better seat in the house than the patio outside the house. Reservations recommended.

Lena's Wood-Fired Pizza and Tap, 401 E. Braddock Road

While Lena's hasn't opened its indoor dining room yet, it already has a robust outdoor patio for those looking to get a little more distance from others – and fresh air, to boot. But the restaurant has taken things one step beyond this week with the new Lena's Oasis, a secluded spot atop the restaurant's parking deck. But don't let the location fool you – with a tent, white curtains, and plenty of green plants, the spot is truly an oasis, a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle while being a bit pampered. It takes "staycation" to a whole new level.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

Employment



tennas (tip heights 101') on the building at 1101 King Street, Alexandria, VA (20200951). Interested parties may contact Scott Horn (856-809-1202) (1012 Industrial Dr., West Berlin, NJ 08091) with comments regarding potential effects on historic properties.

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Taking the Results in Stride

By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Apparently, I'm back in the lung cancer business. According to the video visit I had June 8 with my endocrinologist, my thyroid cancer has not moved into my lungs where my oncologist thought it might have - given the results of a previous biopsy and some surprising tumor inactivity in my lungs. The 'surprising inactivity:' the tumors didn't kill me. Living, as they say is the best reward. And it sure beats the alternative.

Nevertheless, I can't say I'm thrilled with the outcome. All the tumors in my lungs still being non small cell lung cancer squashes my dream that those tumors were curable papillary thyroid cancer (as it had been suggested by my oncologist in a previous phone call) that had moved rather than the originally diagnosed incurable lung cancer which itself had metastasized. In fact, papillary thyroid cancer is called "the friendly cancer, " according to one of my oncology nurses at the infusion center. There's nothing friendly about non small cell lung cancer, stage IV.

I was hoping that the diagnosis of thyroid cancer was going to change my life from being cancer-centric to being thyroid-cancer-are-youkidding? You mean to tell me, after 11 years and four months living as, and being treated for, lung cancer, the actual diagnosis is thyroid cancer? But alas, poor Yorick, 'twas not to be. If what I've been told recently is the absolute-without-a-doubt truth/accurate diagnosis, than I am back on the emotional precipice waiting for the other shoe to drop or at the very least, have one of my socks fall down around my ankles and get all balled up in my sneakers. (Which I hate by the way; when socks get all rearranged like that. I like the heel of the sock to be lined up properly with my heel and the toe of my sock not twisted away from the toes and so forth.)

Once again, I suppose I'll have to pull myself up by my own boot straps, which I don't even own, and step lively, putting one foot ahead of the other and trying not to back up one step for every two I take. I've progressed too far for too long to backslide now. And even though my working thyroid-cancer-instead-of-lung-cancer narrative is now a thing of my medical past, it was sort of fun and uplifting - while it lasted. Now, I have to reconnect with my previous lung cancer reality and try to find some new approaches to living with a "terminal" disease.

It reminds me of what Cpl. Klinger (Janie Farr) the cross-dresser from the television series M*A*S*H once did when he returned to camp after assisting the doctors off-site at an aid station. He was all business away from the 4077th, but upon his return, a few hundred yards outside "the upholstered toilet seat" as Trapper John (Wayne McIntyre) once called it, Klinger put his female nurses cap back on and reverted to his previous form as a skirt-wearing Section 8 wannabe, and life for him and all the other M*A*S*H personnel returned to their abnormal.

So too must I return to mine: as a stage IV, non small cell lung cancer patient who hasn't died and somehow has managed to keep under the reaper's radar. I mean, how else does one live so far beyond one's original "13 month to two year" prognosis? Granted, I have a good attitude and have made some changes to my diet and lifestyle, but hardly would I characterize my behavior as any kind of poster-boy status. Sure, I've tried to make light of an extraordinarily heavy burden and made lots of jokes in the face of what I was led to believe was certain premature death (what death isn't premature?), but that's more about personality than procedure. I was up for the challenge is all. Not everybody is. As Kenny Beatrice, a long time sports-talkhow host in the Washington DC area used to say: "You can't teach height." Lucky for me, as my late father often said, I was "born with broad shoulders."

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





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News Serving People

From Page 10

proached the Methodist Church across the street that offered their refrigerator and storage space.

Today Denson, with a couple of Methodist church volunteers, will load up bags for deliveries and carry them across the street to her home where Christ Church volunteers will pick them up for delivery. "I try to recruit the help of my 10-year-old son to carry the bags and the 8-year-old and three-yearold help in small ways. I make it a point to talk about what I am doing so they understand what is happening in the City."

Denson pulls out her handy spreadsheet by zip code to cluster the daily deliveries. She has a list for each client. "We ask what they need. They mostly all get the same food but today one single mom with two kids has requested paper towels, dish soap, toothpaste, baby wipes. We give them what we have." Denson put out the word to volunteers to drop off groceries at her house. Fallon says volunteers bought food with their own funds. They got a couple of grants to provide Giant gift cards and ALIVE! generously provided Denson with a lot of food. In addition, gleaning will begin at the Farmer's Market, which will add fresh produce to their supplies. Fallon says originally it was food, food, food. But now they have been able to add diapers and toiletries. "And now we're adding crayons and coloring books."

Gray says they have learned as they go along and "we make corrections. The families asked for more masa flour, rice, snacks for the kids, cups of noodles, laundry detergent, trash bags, very specific things." And the airlines repackaged their snacks and provided packages of pretzels and things "which the kids loved."

Lazarus Counselors at Christ Church helps residents in the City in crisis situations by addressing the immediate needs. Gray says since March 19, Lazarus Counselors have taken 462 calls and spent over \$119,000 on 339 client bills and 128 gift cards and groceries. Gray explains the church's Lazarus ministry reaches out with financial counseling and support for people facing financial emergencies as well as offering a shop and share assistance through the pop-up grocery. They have spent \$14,630.15 on groceries for 128 families, including 475 people with 54 receiving groceries and 109 receiving gift cards.

In addition to food, the Lazarus ministry has been able to give people \$250 to pay a portion of their rent. Even so, "This is like putting a bandaid on a cancer." But, Gray says, "People are so grateful for something; they want to be heard. It shows the system is working."

Gray adds "starting today the ACT fund has been set up to help City of Alexandria employees making under \$60,000." Lazarus has a phone call for intake and a City employee can go online and start the application. "We plan to get back within 48 hours. Nobody needs to know you need money. It can be used for gas, food, whatever you need." These efforts are funded through a cooperative effort from six churches, grants from United Way, FEMA, and ACT for Alexandria as well as over \$75,000 from 198 individuals



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