

Potomac ALMANAC

WELLBEING

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Diners enjoy eating
outdoors in the
Bethesda Streeterly.

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JULY 1-7, 2020

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Potomac REAL ESTATE

April, 2020 Sales,
\$925,000~\$839,900

IN APRIL, 2020, 54 POTOMAC HOMES SOLD
BETWEEN \$1,800,000-\$499,000.



6 12123 Trailridge Drive — \$895,000



5 12417 Over Ridge Road — \$897,000



8 11601 Falls Road — \$839,900



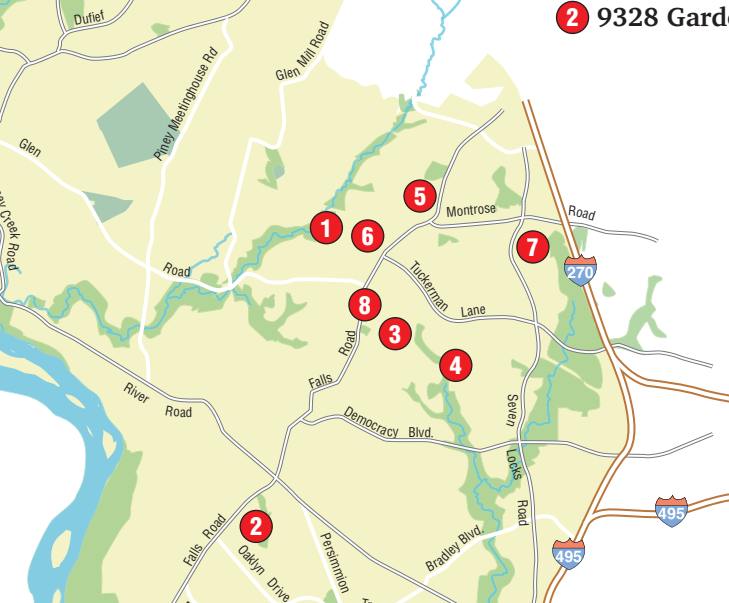
3 9028 Rouen Lane — \$899,000



2 9328 Garden Court — \$915,000



4 10813 Gainsborough Road — \$898,000



Address.....	BR	FB	HB	Postal City	Sold Price.....	Type.....	Lot AC	Postal Code.....	Subdivision.....	Date Sold
1 9617 WINDCROFT WAY ..	4...	3		POTOMAC.....	\$925,000	.....Detached...	0.30	..... 20854.....	FALLSREACH	04/17/20
2 9328 GARDEN CT	5...	3	1	POTOMAC.....	\$915,000	.....Detached...	0.38	..... 20854.....	TIMBERWOOD	04/13/20
3 9028 ROUEN LN	4...	3	1	POTOMAC.....	\$899,000	.....Detached...	0.58	..... 20854.....	LAKE NORMANDY ..	04/29/20
4 10813 GAINSBOROUGH RD ..	4...	3	1	POTOMAC.....	\$898,000	.....Detached...	0.24	..... 20854.....	FOX HILLS	04/10/20
5 12417 OVER RIDGE RD....	5...	4	1	POTOMAC.....	\$897,000	.....Detached...	0.32	..... 20854.....	COPENHAVER	04/16/20
6 12123 TRAILRIDGE DR....	5...	3	1	POTOMAC.....	\$895,000	.....Detached...	0.49	..... 20854.....	FALLSREACH	04/06/20
7 7 VAN DYCK CT	6...	3	1	POTOMAC.....	\$850,000	.....Detached...	0.25	..... 20854.....	WILLERBURN ACRES	04/17/20
8 11601 FALLS RD	5...	3	1	POTOMAC.....	\$839,900Detached...	0.45 20854.....	LAKE NORMANDY ..	04/06/20

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News



County residents enjoy the use of traffic free streets thanks to MCDOT'S Shared Streets program.



Streets Are For People Get outside and play ... and eat.

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

For less than a month, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has had a program in place that allows residents to close their streets to through traffic, allowing neighbors to use the street for walking, biking, visiting or just wandering about free of [most] traffic concerns.

Called Shared Streets, the program which started June 19, gives residents an easy application for a block permit, so their street has limited traffic for either four consecutive days during the week - Monday through Thursday, or three weekend days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

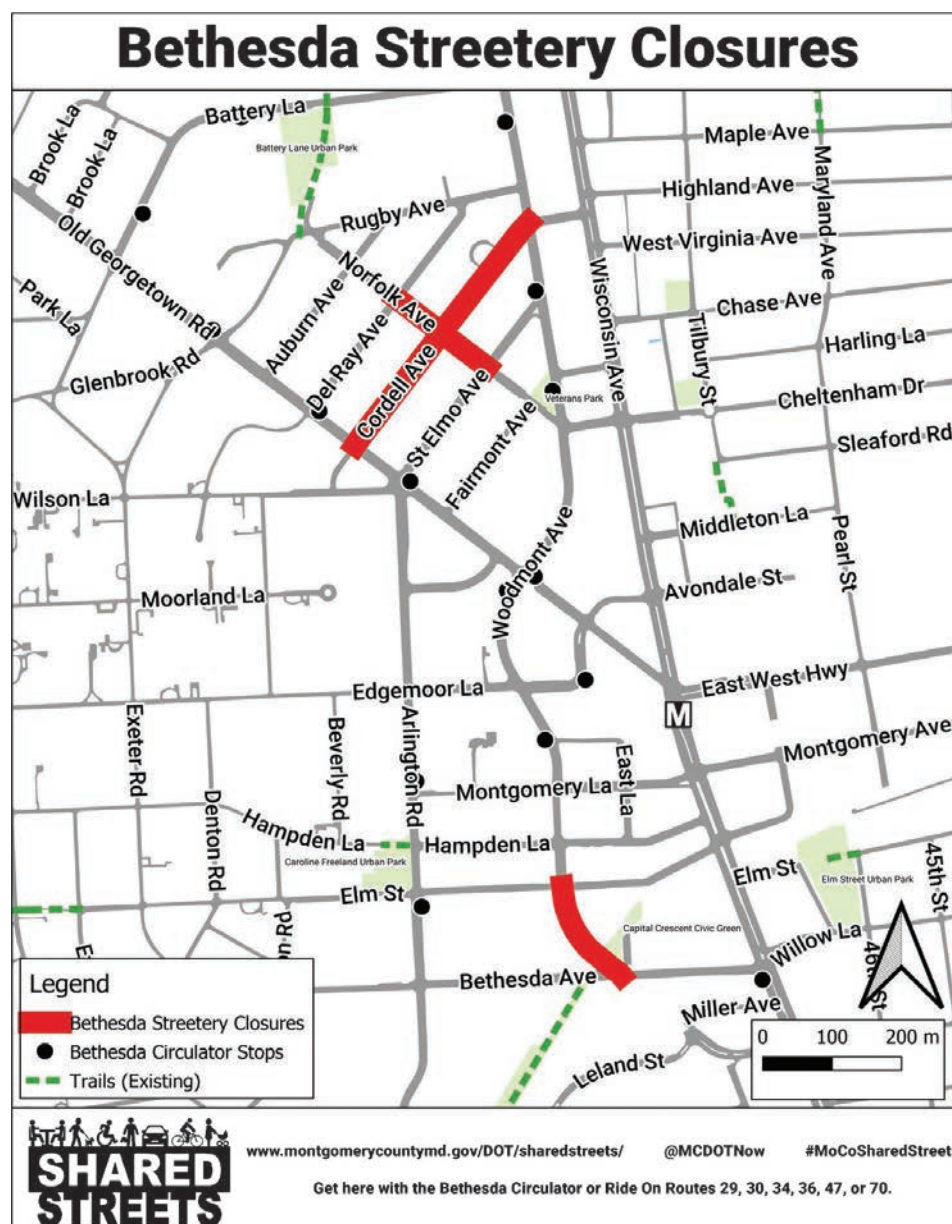
Applications cannot be for consecutive blocks of time, Hannah Henn, Acting Strategic Communications Manager and Senior Engineer for Strategic Innovation at Montgomery County Department of Transportation, said.

The new Shared Streets Block Permit program is part of a larger Shared Streets program that includes outdoor seating and curbside retail and on-street walking and biking.

MCDOT already had a block party permit [which], since March, was put on hold because of COVID-19, Henn said. "There won't be any block parties this summer."

"Safe and accessible public spaces are a critical aspect of community health and vibrancy. MCDOT understands that our public rights of way are a key resource for residents and businesses, and that the best use of those spaces may shift under changing circumstances," MCDOT Director Chris Conklin said. "In response to the COVID-19 health crisis, I have directed our planners

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Bethesda Streeterly

A dining concept to create additional restaurant seating outdoors in downtown Bethesda, the Bethesda Streeterly is set-up as open seating. All tables are placed at least 6 feet apart with a limit of four people permitted per table. Restaurant patrons are invited to dine within this open-air area after picking up food and beverages from a local Bethesda restaurant. Tables will be cleaned after each use.

The Bethesda Streeterly is open from 11am - 10pm daily.

- ❖ Norfolk Avenue, between St. Elmo Avenue and Cordell Avenue
- ❖ Norfolk Avenue, between Cordell Avenue and Del Ray Avenue
- ❖ Woodmont Avenue, between Elm Street and Bethesda Avenue
- ❖ Veterans Park, corner of Norfolk and Woodmont Avenues
- ❖ Cordell Avenue, between the parking garage near Old Georgetown Road and Triangle Towers; On Cordell Avenue, Streeterly hours are Wednesday - Sunday, 4 p.m. - 10 p.m.

View downtown Bethesda's full list of restaurants at www.bethesda.org/node/682

Temporary street closures make all this possible.

and engineers to think creatively about how we can adjust the use of our streets, sidewalks, and parking facilities to best serve today's needs. As a result, we are implementing a new initiative—Shared Streets."

Henn explained that with things changing so quickly the department modified the original plan.

SEE STREETS ARE, PAGE 5
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Covid Week in Potomac

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

Monday, June 29

CHILD CARE: Child care providers in Montgomery County can apply for funding to help offset financial losses caused by COVID-19 and assist with reopening expenses beginning Monday, June 29. The Early Care and Education Initiative Recovery Fund will provide financial assistance to eligible licensed child care center programs, registered family child care homes, and letter of compliance programs. Priority will be given to programs serving families with limited incomes and children with special needs.

BOOK DROPS: Montgomery County Public Libraries will resume some services at library branches beginning Monday, June 29 with adjusted hours. The branch book-drops will be open at all branches for return of borrowed library materials except for Go Kits, laptops/hotspots, and items from the Library of Things Music. Fines on books will continue to be suspended.

FIRST AMENDMENT: Rep. Jamie Raskin, the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, held a remote briefing on how the violent treatment of protestors and journalists across the country by federal and local law enforcement has violated the First Amendment. The First Amendment is a fundamental right that protects the freedoms of speech, assembly, press, and religion, and this police violence threatens our country's democratic norms.

Friday, June 26

FIREWORKS? NEXT YEAR: Fourth of July celebrations; "Germantown Glory" and "Mid-County Sparkles" have been cancelled. "In light of the current public health and social distancing requirements, we found that it would not be possible to host the Fourth of July celebrations while ensuring the safety of our residents and staff," said Montgomery County Recreation Director Robin Riley.

As residents make plans for the upcoming July 4 holiday, health officials recommend that everyone celebrates at home. Large, outdoor gatherings still pose a high risk, especially when people are close together and cannot properly maintain physical distance.

VISITING LOVED ONES: Gov. Larry Hogan today announced a phased reopening plan for Maryland's assisted living facilities. This plan requires universal screenings and face coverings for staff and visitors, mandates widespread testing, and allows for limited visitation. Assisted living facilities must meet a series of prerequisites to begin relaxing any restrictions:

The facility must not be experiencing an ongoing outbreak of COVID-19, defined as one or more confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a resident or staff member.

Absence of any facility-onset COVID-19 cases within the last 14 days.

Universal source control must be in place, requiring anyone else entering the facility to wear a face mask or cloth face covering at all

	Monday, June 29	Monday, June 22
Potomac 20854 Cases:	297	287
Montgomery County Cases:	14,675	14,141
Maryland Cases:	67,254	64,603
United States Cases:	2,504,175	2,275,645
Montgomery County Deaths:	697	683
Maryland Deaths	3,048	2,945
United States Deaths:	125,484	119,923

times while in the facility.

Staff must have access to adequate personal protective equipment (PPE).

Provided a facility has met the prerequisites, limited visitation is allowable if:

Visitors and residents wear a face covering at all times.

Visitors and residents maintain proper social distancing at all times.

There is not an ongoing outbreak at the facility.

Additionally, it is strongly recommended that there are no more than two visitors at a time per resident per visit.

Assisted living facilities are required to adhere to the following protocols and restrictions for the foreseeable future:

Universal screenings. Facilities must screen all persons who enter the facility for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, including temperature checks. Facilities must refuse entrance to anyone screening positive for symptoms of COVID-19.

Face coverings. All staff, volunteers, vendors, and visitors when permitted, must wear the appropriate face covering at all times when they are inside the facility. All residents should wear face coverings under certain circumstances, including if they leave their rooms and are within close proximity of others, and for any appointments outside of a facility.

Widespread testing. For all assisted living programs with less than 50 beds, upon identification of a resident or staff member with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19, the facility must report the case to their local health department and test all residents and staff for COVID-19. Testing must be performed at weekly intervals until no new resident infections are confirmed in a 14 day period since the most recent positive result. In addition, all assisted living programs with 50 or more beds must test all staff, volunteers, and vendors who are in the facility regularly on a weekly basis for COVID-19.

Resident Checks. Facilities must screen all residents daily, including observing for signs and symptoms of COVID-19—asking questions about signs and symptoms of COVID-19—and where appropriate, temperature and pulse oximetry checks.

PPE. Facilities must make good faith efforts to maintain adequate supplies of all appropriate types of personal protective equipment (PPE) for staff, and as appropriate

ate, residents.

Regular Reporting. All facilities must provide informational updates on COVID-19 to residents, residents' representatives, and staff within 24 hours of the occurrence of a single confirmed infection of COVID-19, and/or whenever there are three or more residents or staff who have new-onset respiratory symptoms within a 72 hour-period.

Last week, the governor announced the beginning of limited outdoor visitation at Maryland nursing homes, where the state is conducting follow-on testing for all staff, as well as facilities with active cases. As of today, there are active COVID-19 cases in 87 of the state's 227 nursing homes.

PREVENTING EVICTIONS: Gov. Larry Hogan announced \$30 million in new funding to prevent evictions and help Marylanders affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) intends to deploy \$20 million in expected federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program funding across all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland to help address eviction prevention needs.

The residential rental industry is experiencing a reduction in rental payments combined with increased maintenance costs. Approximately 9,000 of the 45,000 state-financed rental units in Maryland are currently delinquent at an estimated cost of \$3 million per month. The Assisted Housing Relief Program is intended to help bring rental delinquencies current for those units and provide relief for the tenants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic through direct payments to the eligible property management company. Once a payment for back rent from the Assisted Housing Relief Program is received by a landlord, tenants will have their rental debt eliminated and no longer face the threat of eviction.

Thursday, June 25

LOOK AT THE SCIENCE: "We do not want to see a spike in cases and we cannot relax in fighting COVID-19," said County Executive Marc Elrich. "It is good to be in Phase 2 and for people to visit the businesses and restaurants that opened this past week with the reopening guidelines. However, I keep stressing that everyone must wear face coverings (except when seated at a restaurant) and maintain physical distance. Although we have reached a bit of stability, the virus

is still here. It is not going away, and we will watch those numbers carefully over the next couple of weeks. I have been asked about Phase 3 of reopening. I cannot give you a date because, at this point, we are watching the data and following the science."

COVID-19 IN MARYLANDERS UNDER 35: Maryland's statewide positivity rate dropped to a new low of 4.92%, and hospitalizations fell below 500 for the first time in 12 weeks.

"While we are unfortunately seeing rising case numbers in states across the country, here in Maryland, all of the key health metrics continue to trend in a very positive direction," said Gov. Larry Hogan. "But the fight against this virus is far from over. The positivity rate among Marylanders under the age of 35 is now 34 percent higher than the rate among those 35 and older. We simply cannot afford to stop being vigilant and cautious. Our long-term recovery can only be effective if all Marylanders continue exercising personal responsibility."

Maryland has now conducted 613,513 COVID-19 tests, including 9,914 tests in a recent 24 hour period. The state's seven-day average positivity rate has dropped to 4.92%—down nearly 82% from its peak level on April 17. The positivity rate in Montgomery County has dropped more than 79% from its peak, down to 6.75%.

The Maryland Department of Health has launched a coordinated public outreach campaign encouraging Marylanders to continue to wear face coverings as the pandemic continues, and as summer activity increases.

DEBIT CARD, NOT MONEY? U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin (MD-08) joined Rep. Lois Frankel (FL-21) and 28 other representatives raising concerns expressed by constituents who received their Economic Impact Payment in the form of prepaid debit cards. "While most EIP recipients have received their payments through direct deposit, the IRS announced on May 27, 2020 that they would issue nearly 4 million payments in the form of debit cards instead of paper checks," according to the representatives. "This has raised serious concerns about the ability for many Americans to seamlessly access this critical relief created by Congress to help the American public during this time of great uncertainty and desperation."

The Treasury Department did not alert Americans who would receive their payment through a debit card, and many Americans missed or threw out the debit cards because they looked like a scam. Now, these individuals can face fees to get the card replaced and fees when they try to access their payments, as well as difficulties individuals may face transferring funds from the card to a bank account.

WORK SHARE PROGRAM: Senator Chris Van Hollen, U.S. Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) and other senators and representatives introduced the Rebuilding Main Street Act, legislation to help small businesses, nonprofits, and workers weather the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and support safe reopening. The legislation expands the ex-

SEE COVID, PAGE 6

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Streets Are For People



FROM PAGE 3

The idea for the Block Permit, Henn said, came from a number of people.

“We launched an [appeal] for citizen feedback in May and my understanding is the idea came from multiple conversations,” she said.

In preparing to launch the Block Permit program, MCDOT used the original Block Party permit and streamlined it.

“We adjusted it to current needs,” she said. “The difference is nobody will be blocked from coming onto the streets. It is sort of an on-demand Greenway.”

There is no cost to apply for a permit. The county will provide signage and plastic barrels at the ends of the street along with a sign explaining the Safe Streets Block Permit Program.

“Everything we are doing is in response to COVID-19,” Henn said. “We realize the needs and we are trying to provide [solutions]. We’re hopeful this program is helpful to people.”

To apply for a Block Permit visit <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT/sharedstreets/>. Permit turn around is fast, Henn said. “we’re aiming for two days,” she said.



PHOTOS COURTESY MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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~~Free and open to all~~
Potomac Community Village
 Presents via Live Zoom

Local historian Judith Welles talks about her new book, a photographic history of Potomac, titled
Images of America: Potomac

Wednesday, July 1 @ 11am
 Register at
info@PotomacCommunityVillage.org

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Update on Montgomery County Public Library Operations

Dear Library Customers –

We are very pleased to let you know that MCPL will be resuming some services from our branches effective June 29.

We plan to open book drops at all of our branches (except for Noyes and Long Branch) on Monday June 29, so that you may return all of our materials you have been taking care of for us since March, with the exception of Go! Kits, items from the Library of Things Music, laptops, and hotspots. We are not quite ready to take those back in yet. If you are still not comfortable visiting a library book drop, don't worry – fines are still suspended at this time. We will also reinstate phone service at all of our branches, with the exception of Noyes and Long Branch. Service hours will be limited.

PLEASE NOTE – we cannot accept any donations at this time. Any donated materials left at our branches or deposited in our book drops will be disposed of. Donations may be taken to the Friends of the Library Montgomery County bookstore. Please check this link for information. <https://www.folmc.org/>

July 6, we will begin providing a contactless holds pick up service at all branches (except for Noyes and Long Branch). You will be able to place items on hold online or by phone, and then make an appointment to pick them up in the library vestibule or at an outside table.

More information on this service will be forthcoming. Please Note - If you have a holds list currently, please review it at this time and delete or suspend holds you do not wish to pick up using this service.

Three-week due dates will be reinstituted on July 6.

We are happy to say that our wonderful slate of Virtual Events will continue, and of course our online digital resources continue to be available at <https://mcpl.link/DigitalResources>.

Our next chapter for recovery will allow access to our buildings and computers on a limited basis. Please stay tuned for more information on that.

Thank you for all of your support during the past three months, and we look forward to once again being able to share our wonderful physical collection with everyone.

Anita Vassallo
MCPL Director

SUMMER READ: In other exciting news our Summer Read and Learn program for 2020, entitled "Imagine Your Story" has kicked off. There are activities and events for children and teens of all ages. You can learn all about the program at this <https://montgomery-countymd.gov/library/programs/summer-read-and-learn.html>

RACIAL JUSTICE: For recommended ebook reading about racial and social justice for adults, teens and children, see: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/social-justice.html#kids-ebooks>

VIRTUAL EVENTS: For Virtual Library Events, see: <https://mcpl.libnet.info/events?r=thismonth&term=Virtual%2520Program>

Montgomery County Minimum Wage Increases on July 1

The minimum wage will increase in Montgomery County on Friday, July 1, in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic. Signed into legislation on Nov. 17, 2017, Bill 28-17 raises the minimum wage incrementally, each July 1, until it reaches \$15 per hour in 2022.

Montgomery County's minimum wage will rise to \$14 for employers with 51 or more employees and \$13.25 for employers with 50 or fewer employees; a small employer, with 10 or fewer employees, is required to pay \$13 hourly.

CPI-W = Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers

Most employees must be paid at least the Montgomery County minimum wage rate.

An employer who provides

"home health services" or "home or community-based services" and receives at least 75 percent of gross revenues through state and federal Medicaid programs, may apply to the Office of Human Rights for designation as an eligible services provider subject to an adjusted implementation schedule.

Employees age 18 and under, working under 20 hours per week, are exempt from this rate. Employees under 18 years of age must earn at least 85 percent of the State minimum wage rate which is \$11 an hour right now.

For more information about the County's minimum wage, visit the Office of Human Rights website at www.montgomery-countymd.gov/humanrights/

Effective date	Large employer	Mid-sized employer	Small employer
July 1, 2020	\$14	\$13.25	\$13
July 1, 2021	\$15	\$14	\$13.50
July 1, 2022	\$15+ CPI-W	\$14.50	\$14

Covid Week in Potomac

FROM PAGE 4

isting work share program to allow employers to share their payroll costs with the federal government, while receiving grant help to cover other fixed costs such as rent and needs for reopening safely like cleaning and protective equipment. After 14 straight weeks in which more than one million workers filed for unemployment benefits, the legislation would help laid off workers safely return to their jobs at reduced hours while continuing to receive a prorated unemployment benefit to compensate for their lost wages.

Wednesday, June 24
EDUCATION AND BROADBAND: Governor Hogan committed more than \$45.6 million in additional education funding, including \$10 million each for K-12 technology improvements, community college workforce programs and rural broadband as well as \$5 million for internet service in urban centers where access to the internet can be scarce for

underprivileged populations.

Tuesday, June 23
MOBILE CRISIS UNITS: Mobile Crisis Response Services were enhanced by the Council's appropriation of \$592,202 to the Department of Health and Human Services. Currently, the County only has funding for one Mobile Crisis Team which can only respond to one call at any time. This appropriation would fund six social workers to lead additional Mobile Crisis Teams, and hiring people who can also serve residents for whom English is not their primary language is a priority. The Mobile Crisis Team is a two-person team that responds to calls made directly to the Crisis Center, and when the police request their assistance as a part of a police response. Response from a crisis response team can help deescalate a situation and immediately begin a health-based response to safely deal with the underlying cause of the crisis.

PARTNERSHIP TO ADDRESS HUNGER: The County appropriated \$10.3 million to address the food security challenges of Coun-

ty residents, while simultaneously supporting local food banks, restaurants and farmers through a public-private partnership with the Greater Washington Community Foundation. The full Council sponsored this special appropriation that was initiated by Councilmember Will Jawando. This appropriation provides up to \$300,000 to the Greater Washington Community Foundation to initiate and administer the Montgomery County Food Security Fund, which will accept private donations that will support implementation of the food security response strategy. This appropriation also provides \$10 million to implement the strategy with the goal of raising \$5 million in private donations.

FAMILY COACHES: More than \$565,000 will provide support services for families in crisis to prevent jeopardizing the safety of vulnerable youth during COVID-19, including \$183,846 to Identity Inc. to provide culturally responsive and trauma-informed services that support underserved children and their families. Almost \$382,000 will be used to support

a family strengthening and intervention program that provides one-on-one coaching for families who are struggling with instability and violence at home. The full Council sponsored the special appropriation that was initiated by Councilmembers Nancy Navarro and Gabe Alborno. The Covid-19 public health crisis has disproportionately affected communities with lower incomes and communities of color in the County. Moreover, restrictions intended to slow the spread of disease have led to more than 87,000 unemployment claims filed by County residents since the beginning of March. As a result, Covid-19 has placed significant financial and mental stress on these families and support services are necessary for families in crisis to safeguard vulnerable youth and avoid risky behaviors.

TERRACOTTA WARRIORS: Xi'an, a city in China, donated 20,000 masks to protect Montgomery County frontline workers during the COVID-19 health crisis. In 2013, Montgomery County established a "Sister City" relationship with the city of Xi'an, which is

home to 12 million residents and the famous TerraCotta Warriors. Montgomery Sister Cities, Inc. was established in 2009 to connect Montgomery County to the world.

LOOK AT THESE NUMBERS: More than 50 million units of personal protective equipment (PPE) has been distributed by Maryland to hospitals, state agencies, local health departments, and front line workers. The state has distributed more than 50.8 million units of PPE, including: 15 million pairs of gloves, 1.5 million gowns, 19.4 million surgical masks, 8.4 million KN95 masks, 5.7 million N95 masks, and 854,200 face shields. The state established the Maryland COVID-19 Emergency Relief Manufacturing Fund to incentivize Maryland businesses to manufacture PPE and other supplies to meet the current needs of the healthcare industry. To date, the Maryland Department of Commerce has awarded \$3.2 million for PPE production to companies that applied to the fund.

Yoga and Meditation

How self-care and mindfulness help ease anxiety over racial injustice.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE ALMANAC

Before the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent stay-at-home orders, Kesha Davis's weekday evening routine included picking up her fifteen-year-old son at a bus stop in Old Town Alexandria. He used public transportation to make the trek from his school in Potomac. Davis timed her arrival around his bus schedule so that he wasn't left waiting for her on the sidewalk.

"Since Ahmaud Arbery was killed in Georgia while he was jogging, just because he was Black, I've felt like I need to be even more careful about how other people will perceive my son," said Davis, who is African American. "He plays sports and wears athletic clothes home from school. He's also five-ten (5'10") and could be mistaken for a man."

As reports of protests and police killings across the country seem ubiquitous, the toll of racial injustice leaves many in the African American community feeling vulnerable and anxious. According to the Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, African Americans are 10 times more likely to experience psychological distress than whites.

Even without a personal connection to those who have been victims of racist acts of violence, images of such events can lead to heightened feelings of stress particularly for African American women, says therapist, Deborah Jackson, LPC. "We are often caretakers and expected to be strong all the time," she said. "Even if we don't know anyone involved in the killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and so many others, as African Americans we know that it could have been us or someone we know."

The constant presence of such images can lead to feelings of defenselessness, advises Jackson. "When we feel unsafe or vulnerable, we feel the effects spiritually and emotionally," she said. "These feelings can happen gradually and we might not even be aware of them, but this is the time to practice self-care. For many African American women, practicing self-care often takes a backseat to taking care of others. In order to stay strong we have to take care of our own wellbeing."

Practices such as yoga and meditation bring about an awareness of one's feelings or emotions, says meditation and yoga instructor Sydnea Lewis. "They quiet your mind so that you're aware of what's going on in your body."

The current racial climate is concerning and



PHOTO COURTESY OF SYDNEA LEWIS

Yoga teacher Sydnea Lewis believes that yoga and meditation can soothe the stress that some African American women might feel during this challenging time of race relations.

stressful, particularly for African American women, says Lewis. "Anxiety is worrying about the future," she said. "Yoga forces you to be present during an asana practice or mediation. Yoga and meditation teach you how to quiet the mind. The more you do it the more you can take it off the mat and meditation cushion and into your everyday life."

"I am fearful for my sons as they walk through the world," said Jackie Lee, an African American mother of three. "One is a man and one is still a boy but, depending on the situation they could both be seen as a menace at worst or a nuisance at least. In either case, they could find themselves on the wrong side of the law for no other reason than that they are Black. It is infuriating."

It takes a consistent practice of yoga and meditation to gain the mental relaxation that can soothe the strong emotions that injustices induce, says Lewis. "For example, if I think about one of my friends or someone I love being hurt or killed by the police, it serves me no good." Worrying about something that has not happened is destructive and unnecessary, advises Lewis. "Yes, it's a possibility, but it's good to remind yourself of the positive," she said. "Try

to reach for the silver lining in any and everything." Such a forward-looking mentality can be difficult to cultivate. "I have had frank conversations with [my sons] through the years, but in the wake of George Floyd's murder have had to do a deep dive into the realities of racism, white privilege, perceptions, and the protocol for interacting with the police," said Lee. "I hate having these difficult conversations but I have to set aside my discomfort to increase their awareness and improve the chances of their survival."

"I am fearful for my sons as they walk through the world. They could find themselves on the wrong side of the law for no other reason than that they are Black. It is infuriating."

— Jackie Lee

POTOMAC ALMANAC

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Mourning, Afternoon and Evening



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

We had to euthanize Biscuit, our oldest cat on Saturday, June 20th. He would have been 14 on September 20th. Biscuit is survived by his half-brother, Andrew and his two half sisters, Sloane and Twinkle. Biscuit's litter mate and brother, "Chino" preceded him in death in November, 2019, after succumbing to diabetes. Biscuit had likewise been diagnosed with diabetes around the same time as "Chino." However, as occasionally happens, according to Biscuit's veterinarian, some cats "spontaneously" overcome the disease, as Biscuit miraculously did, and go on to live relatively normal lives. Biscuit lived approximately one year after his diabetes went into remission, which ended up being about seven months longer than "Chino." Not exactly 'relatively normal'; nonetheless, we were grateful for the extra seven months.

Biscuit was "the senior man," as we called him and we typically left him in charge of the other four cats when both Dina and I would be away from home. Of all five cats, Biscuit was the most present in our lives. He was also the most social, the most fearless and the most affable/tolerant of all our cats. An indoor cat like our entire herd, Biscuit was most likely to be around and to socialize. He would greet visitors within a few minutes of their arrival and invariably introduce himself by jumping up on the coffee table in front of the couch and staring at the newcomer. He was also the first in line for breakfast and dinner, first in line for treats, and whenever my wife, Dina, made a tuna fish sandwich for lunch, Biscuit was, you guessed it, first in line. Topping out at 15 pounds, somehow he managed to keep his weight down. He was a sweet, adoring and talkative cat and we loved him, and of course, we miss him terribly, especially Dina.

Over the last few years, particularly, Dina and Biscuit had formed a bond. He was her cat, just as "Chino" had been mine. Not that Biscuit ignored me, hardly. But when he made his requests, verbal or otherwise, Dina was almost always the intended requestee. Moreover, as Dina's schedule changed, she became Biscuit's primary caregiver, feeder, litter-box scooper and groomer and more interesting for Biscuit, became the one to let him outside to take in the sights, sounds and smells which enthrall cats. She was, on these special occasions, daily of late, his constant companion, which is how they spent his last Saturday morning, together, outside.

What has made Biscuit's passing so difficult is how quickly he declined, always a bad sign, our veterinarian said. Biscuit stopped eating on Friday after barely nibbling on Thursday. He even turned away from treats that I offered him and tuna fish that Dina placed in his bowl. Though still engaged with us, we could see his haunches, and feel his boney spine. He had lost two and half pounds in the last three months. That Friday night, Biscuit had trouble settling down and whimpered off and on through the night. I called the veterinarian first thing Saturday morning and we were fortunate to secure an appointment at 10 am that very morning. Biscuit was clearly struggling and probably even suffering as his zero interest in breakfast confirmed and his sounds not of silence continued.

We didn't want to be selfish this time as we had been with "Chino." We kept him at home far too long before taking him to the veterinarian and have regretted it ever since. We just couldn't let go. We weren't going to make the same mistake with Biscuit. That Saturday, we drove to the animal hospital and dropped Biscuit off to be examined while we waited in the car (per phase 2 rules). Ten minutes or so later, the veterinarian called with her grim assessment: Biscuit was failing and was not going to recover. Through our tears, we then made the decision to end Biscuit's suffering. We took his body home that day and buried him on Monday next to his brother "Chino."

It was a private service attended only by family members.

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

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