

CONNECTION

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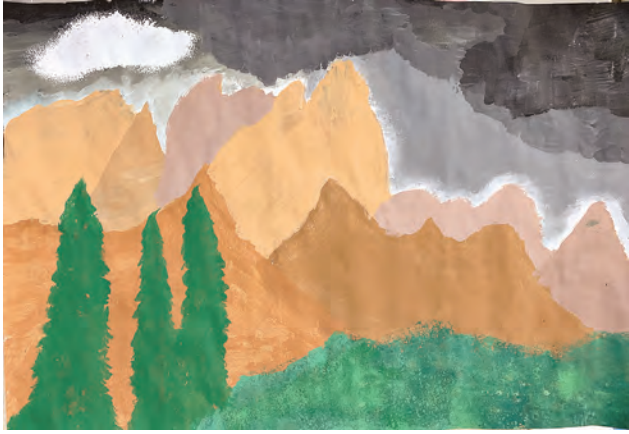


“Wonders of Books”

PHOTO BY ASHLEY CHANG, 11TH GRADE,
CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL

**Children's & Teens'
Connection 2021**

LAKE ANNE ELEMENTARY, RESTON



Finn Passafaro 6th



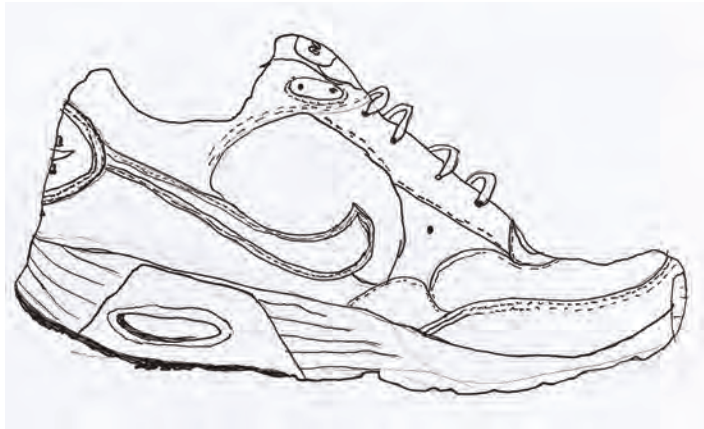
Khamiya Woods 6th



Lialane Alao 2nd



Camila Drake 2nd



Clara Ryan 5th



Manushri Chindham 1st



Evelyn_Rinker_3rd



Marc Zbarcea 3rd



Rosie_Jay_K



Uliana Zolotareva, 3rd



Luming_LeGrand_1st

2021 CHILDREN'S AND TEENS' CONNECTION

Welcome to our 2021 Children's Connection sections. While submissions were still short of the pre-pandemic avalanche of children's and teens' art and writing, in 2021 students have delivered a delightful, sometimes unusual, panoply of expression. I've enjoyed the art and writing as we've downloaded it over many many hours in the last two weeks. And I hope you will also.

You can find digital copies of the papers, including the Children's and Teens' Connection at <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/PDFs/>. The papers should be posted by Thursday, Dec. 16. We deliver tens of thousands of papers to homes, businesses, public libraries and community centers, plus thousands more in email and digital. We will print extra copies, and restock at libraries and community centers. But also

feel free to print out pages from the PDFs or take a digital copy to a photo center to print out larger, high resolution copies of your child's art if you desire many copies.

It feels like a small, or not so small, miracle to have made it to the end of 2021 and be looking forward into the New Year. The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. More recently we have seen the return of advertising for events and Grand Openings. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. Revenue is still short of our greatly curtailed costs.

At the end of 2020, we didn't have any idea how we would keep going. But our readers responded overwhelmingly to our Go Fund Me, bringing us within reach of our goal of \$50,000. PPP funding, "forgiv-

able loans," made our survival possible. Now we are still hoping for a grant from Rebuild Virginia to help get us into 2022. We applied almost a year ago, but it seems possible that our application might be reviewed while there is still money in the fund.

I think we can be characterized as pathological optimists. While there are forces out there that could make it impossible for us to keep going, we continue to push forward. While I have said this a few times without yet making it happen, keep your eyes open for our membership drive, which would hope for readers, sources and community members who would be interested in supporting us on a monthly basis.

One of the magical elements that helped us get this far was the presence on our staff of an international journalism legend, Kemal Kurspahic, who served as managing

editor and guiding light for decades. Kemal died tragically and unexpectedly this fall, having a stroke after minor surgery. We miss him daily. Keeping everything going has been harder since. You can read Kemal's obituary here: <http://www.connection-newspapers.com/news/2021/sep/22/courage-journalism/>

We haven't done everything we aspire to do, we always aspire to greater community service. But we do know that the community is better off for Local Media Connection continuing to publish.

Now that we've told you how we're doing (ha!), let us know how you are doing, what you think about the state of our communities.

Thank you.

— MARY KIMM,
KIMM.MARY@GMAIL.COM

DRANESVILLE ELEMENTARY, HERNDON



Dayana Villalobos Martinez, age 5, grade K



Kylie Costello, age 10, grade 5



Liam McLean, age 8, grade 3



Negar Rupa, age 11, grade 6



Noah Nemeth, age 7 grade 2



Ryan Culbreath, age 6, grade 1



Theodore Gallo, age 9, grade 4



Yeferson Ramirez Paz, age 10, grade 5



Wish List Project Coordinator Christie Shumadine (center) checks in gift cards and coordinates operations at Buzz Aldrin Elementary with the help of Leslie Hutchinson (left) and Eleanor DeMoors (right).

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

The Spirit of Holiday Giving

The spirit of giving starts every year on the second Saturday of December, when the Wish List Project holds its annual gift drop off event. Coordinators Christie Shumadine and Lissa Perez, joined by two dozen volunteer elves, brace themselves for over a thousand wrapped gifts and gift cards to be delivered over a 3 hour time period. The generosity is visible as it perpetuates the essence of the holiday season.

The Wish List Project was created in 2000 and run

by Ginger Mahon until 2015, when Shumadine, Perez and their families took the reins and put the Wish List Project online. The process has remained the same after all these years; the list of "wishes" from those in need is posted online in mid-November for sign ups. Donors, called Wish List Angels, choose a person, two, or a whole family to buy, wrap, and drop off the gifts specifically wished for. These generous "Angels" go

SEE GIVING, PAGE 7

OAK HILL/HERNDON / RESTON / CHANTILLY CONNECTION / CENTRE VIEW ❖ DECEMBER 15-21, 2021 ❖ 3



Town of Herndon residents Tim Field and his daughter, Abby Grace Springmann, embrace a moment with Santa at WinterMarkt 2021.



Saint Niklaus and Santa Claus reach out in holiday spirit at WinterMarkt 2021 held in the Town of Herndon and organized by the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce.



New to the Town of Herndon, Katie Mitchell holds daughter Emma, 2, while Ellie, 5, is very comfortable next to Santa.

Herndon WinterMarkt 2021 Celebrates Holiday Season

Arts & crafts, local beer, Glühwein, food and live music attract 11,000 to the one-day event.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

On Saturday, Dec. 11, the sweet aromas of authentic strudels, stollen and artisanal sausages filled the air at Herndon WinterMarkt 2021, rekindling in the Town of Herndon a tradition of 14th century Europe.

The artisan epicenter for locally handcrafted items, cuisine, beer, Glühwein, and confections complemented by music and dance performances debuted in 2019. Herndon WinterMarkt showcases the historic town's diversity. The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce organized the one-day event, which took place in the Historic Downtown District for the second time, but this time at a larger location than in 2019.

Katie Mitchell of Herndon brought her two daughters, Emma, 2, and Ellie, 5, to the market. "Because we only moved here last year, this is our first Christmas in town," Katie said. "Everyone we have met has been so nice."

The new Lower Lynn Street location in front of the Herndon Municipal Center connected to the adjacent Upper James Parking Lot, allowing for an entertainment stage and 40 vendor stalls selling specialty hot foods, drinks, gifts, handcrafted Christmas wood items similar to those sold in Germany, and an infusion of local artisan works.

The co-owner of Little Austria, Bernhard Gallent, carried hundreds of trays of their award-winning strudels and set them on protected display tables only to see tray after

tray sold out. But Gallent kept them coming. The company uses locally sourced ingredients and follows the traditional method of hand-stretching the dough to paper-thin. "Of course, Little Austria will be here next year, too," Gallent said. He added that Little Austria was one of the original 2019 vendors.

Jeanine Kolman of Herndon stopped by the Herndon Historical Society's stall to purchase the "iconic Herndon Depot sign."

"I love biking on the W & OD Trail — Herndon is almost the halfway mark," she said.

Saint Niklaus joined Sheila Olem, mayor of Herndon, Veronika Beutin, director of the German Information Center, German Embassy Washington, platinum sponsor Northwest Federal Credit Union, and host Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce at the opening ceremony. The free, traditional, European-style Christmas Market embraced the European holiday's focus on family, making it a successful event for vendors and visitors. Andrew Black of A&C Artisan Crafts said, "Sales are great, and we should be back next year."

Despite some long lines, the one-day event provided plenty to see and do, with Santa and Saint Niklaus greeting visitors and the weather, albeit windy, cooperating this year.

"Approximately 11,000 visitors attended Herndon WinterMarkt 2021," said Keven LeBlanc, co-chair organizer. "We thank the community, vendors, and sponsors for making this a delightful holiday event full of camaraderie, cheer, and support for one another."



Artisan Andrew H. Black, founder of A&C Artisan Crafts, explains to Ashleigh Furcron of Louisa, VA, that his hand-knitted miniature sweaters can be used as Christmas tree and wreath ornaments.



Johanna Biedermann of Little Austria quickly sells strudels to customers waiting to savor the traditional layered pastries with fruit fillings.



Visitors strolling the heart of the Herndon WinterMarkt 2021 cross from Lynn Street, pass by Saint Niklaus, and under the Herndon WinterMarkt Gateway Arch, the market's handcrafted centerpiece leading to the magic of the holidays.



Chairman Jeffrey McKay (D-At Large)



Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee)



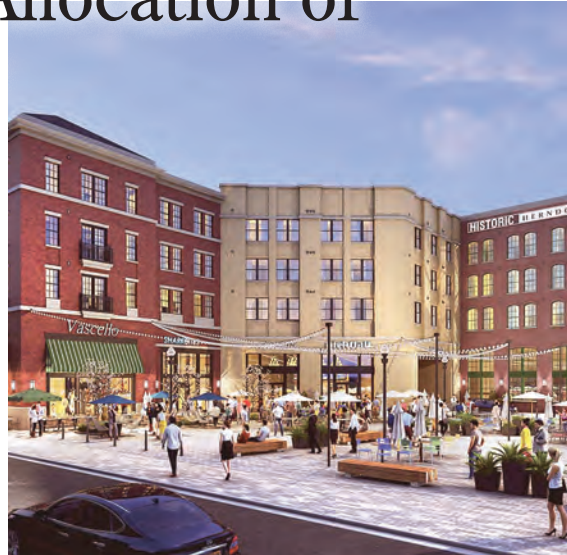
Supervisor John W. Foust (D-Dranesville) shares how authorization of the \$5 million Economic Opportunity Reserve Funding for the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project in the Dranesville District will benefit the Town and the County.

County Approves Allocation of Additional \$5M for Town of Herndon

Funds support capital construction as part of the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Part of an ongoing series.



BLVD | Historic District | Herndon as proposed by Comstock.- "Featuring market-leading amenities, including a year-round resort-style pool, unique social gathering spaces, outdoor cooking facilities, secure indoor parking, and surrounded by numerous downtown parks, retail, and bicycle-friendly service amenities, all located alongside the famed W&OD Trail."

ly. Given the Town Council's approval of the MOU, the Town will receive \$5 million from the EOR Fund. On June 19, 2018, the Board approved a contribution of \$1,200,000 from the Economic Opportunity Reserve (EOR) and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Herndon to govern funding use and distribution.

County staff worked with the Town to create the MOU for the \$5 million. According to the County, the newest MOU contains the following key provisions: "Affirms the County previous commitment of \$1,200,000; Commits the County to contribute \$5,000,000 in additional funding from the Economic Opportunity Reserve Fund for the Project distributed in five payments of \$1,000,000 per year; Ensures that the Project will be generating real estate tax revenue to the County by triggering the first \$1,000,000 payment upon certificate of occupancy for the first residential unit, with the remaining payments to be made on an annual basis; and Details the process for payments." The Project's total cost is estimated to be \$109,100,000. If the MOU is approved, the Town will contribute \$17,850,000 (16 percent of the total estimated cost), the County will contribute \$6,200,000 (6 percent), and Comstock will be responsible for the remaining \$85,000,000. (78 percent).

Supervisor Rodney Lusk (D-Lee) praised the Economic Opportunity Reserve Fund's creative application. "I see this as being one of the essential tools that we'll be able to use in other revitalization areas because we don't have many options in the toolbox," he said.

Chairman Jeffrey McKay congratulated Supervisor Foust and Mayor Sheila Olem of the Town of Herndon on the County-Town partnership. Mayor Olem was present in the audience at the Board of Supervisors meeting but did not speak. "We're in this together," McKay said.

The Herndon Town Council is scheduled to review the Memorandum of Understanding at its Tues., December 14 town council meeting, which will be held at 7 p.m. Since The Connection's weekly edition will have already gone to press, we will update the story online.

There is one more box to check for the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment ("Project"). Although the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Town of Herndon to allocate \$5 million from the Economic Opportunity Reserve Fund to the Town of Herndon for capital construction as part of the Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project, the Herndon Town Council must approve the MOU at its December 14 Council Meeting.

The County Board of Supervisors was asked to act on December 7 to help the Town meet its deadline of committing funds to the Project by December 31, 2021.

Supervisor John Foust's Dranesville District includes the Town of Herndon. Foust thanked County staff for "ironing out a lot of issues" and putting together documentation that protected the County while moving forward with the Project.

"It is going to be just absolutely awesome what they have going in terms of revitalization, in terms of economic development, in terms of placemaking, and attracting the workforce that we need to keep our economy going," Foust said. "And it's going to generate a lot of revenue when it's done."

Herndon's town-owned land in its downtown is currently in the process of being redeveloped into a mixed-use town center with residential, commercial, a public arts center, a pedestrian plaza, and a parking garage (the "Project"). A public parking garage will be built in the Town's Historic District as part of the Project, which will provide free parking.

According to the timeline, the Town of Herndon and Comstock Herndon Venture LC ("Comstock") signed a Comprehensive Agreement on November 1, 2017, to design and develop the Project. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the D.C. construction market with rising costs, Herndon and Comstock agreed to split a \$24,600,000 funding shortfall equal-

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get vaccinated now.

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



Unloading wrapping paper to go with the gifts are (from left) Our Neighbor's Child founder Kelly Lavin, and Westfield High students Sydney Antoncic and Isabelle Cogan.



Also making sure each family receives what was on their children's wish lists is Mary Setash.



Local students selecting gifts to pack according to each family's wish list.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY LAVIN

Our Neighbor's Child Makes Holidays Bright for Local Families

Nonprofit Our Neighbor's Child is in its 30th year of providing holiday presents (toys, books, clothing, etc.) for local families in need in Centreville and Chantilly. This year, it's bringing Christmas joy to nearly 600 families with some 1,500 children. High-school students and companies helped with the packaging. For more information or to donate, visit <http://www.ourneighborschild.org/>

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION



Volunteer Vinay Singh poses with a penguin before packing up some presents.



Checking the recipient families' bags for accuracy is Sue Nye.



Students from Centreville, Chantilly and Westfield high schools helped package the gifts.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KELLY LAVIN

ROUNDUPS

CIF Toy Drive for Local Children

The Centreville Immigration Forum (CIF) is collecting new or slightly used toys for children ages 2-12. Drop them off now through this Saturday, Dec. 18, from 7 a.m.-noon, at the Centreville Labor Resource Center. It's at 5944 Centreville Crest Lane in Centreville. The toys will be distributed to local families in need for the holidays.

Sully Historic Site by Candlelight

Enjoy an elegant, walk-through tour of the Sully Historic Site, lit by the warmth of candlelight. The house will

be decorated for the holidays in 18th-century style. Visitors will see natural evening lighting and decorations the way families experienced it in the 1790s.

Learn about Richard Bland Lee, his family and the enslaved community that lived at Sully and how its work supported the house and farm in the early days of Sully's existence. After the tour, savor traditional ginger and sugar cookies made by Chantilly High's Culinary Arts students, with fresh apple cider. Make a holiday craft to take home to deck your own halls. A special decorated tree, described by a visitor to Sully in 1885, will also be featured.

Candlelight Tours are available this Saturday, Dec. 18, and run every 15 minutes from 4:45 p.m.-7 p.m. Cost is \$10, adults; and \$8, seniors, students and children ages 5-15. Preregistration is required at <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sully>. Masks are required inside the house museum for all participants. Sully Historic Site is at 3650 Historic

Sully Way in Chantilly. For more information, go to the Website or call 703-437-1794.

Car Seat Inspections, Dec. 30

Parents are invited to get their children's car seats inspected Thursday, Dec. 30, from 5-8:30 p.m., outside the Sully District Police Station. It's at 4900 Stonecroft Blvd. in Chantilly. Inspections are done on a first-come, first-served basis. Participants are asked to wear a mask and adhere to social-distancing and safety precautions.

They should also install the child safety seat, themselves, so the inspection can be performed. The seat will be properly re-installed, if necessary, and parents will be taught how to install the seat properly, in the future.

POEM

The Bed

HYUNIL FRANCIS CHOI,

15 YEARS OLD, 10TH GRADE, CENTREVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

When I lie down to sleep
 On the mattress of needles
 That creaks and shakes
 To the rhythm of my guilty heart
 Feelings of regret rise
 Pointed words of jealousy
 Blazing stares of anger
 Numbing tears of shame
 Keeping me awake
 All the mistakes I made today
 Form the monster that leaves me restless
 Squirming and rolling on the bed
 That becomes the cage that I am trapped in
 I try to hide from the icy gaze of the monster
 To find a spot of warmth
 Unable to fall asleep



Craig Buffie and Caitlyn Shumadine organize gifts for Shelter and Program Coordinators to pick up later that day.

The Spirit of Holiday Giving

FROM PAGE 7

beyond the request, often buying 7-10 gifts for each individual. Gifts are picked up by staff of the recipient organizations and delivered to them for the holidays.

In addition to wrapped gifts, thousands of dollars in gift cards are collected and given to partner shelters and programs for general and emergency use during the holidays and beyond.

Wish List Angels directly help individuals in foster care, child protective services, local area home-

less and domestic abuse shelters, teen alternative housing, and local elementary school families identified by counselors.

This year's partners are Fairfax County Family Services, Second Story, Artemis Domestic Abuse Shelter, Katherine Hanley Homeless Shelter, The Women's Center Domestic Violence Program and Buzz Aldrin Elementary School.

Long-time Wish List Angel Leslie Fredrick said, "I have been lucky in my life to always think of Christ-

SEE GIVING, PAGE 15

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 Kyle Knight, Agent

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Public Notice

Updated weight limits on Virginia bridges and culverts

In accord with state and federal law, the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) has imposed new or changed existing weight restrictions and installed new signage indicating the updated weight restrictions on the following bridges and culverts (structures) in Virginia within the last 30 days.

Jurisdiction	Structure ID	Route	Structure Name	Structure	Posted Date
MONTGOMERY	12355	787	DRY VALLEY RD./ROUTE 787	MEADOW CREEK	10/28/2021
DINWIDDIE	6063	631	CLAIRBORNE RD.	HATCHER RUN	10/23/2021
CARROLL	4640	620	FOREST OAK RD./ROUTE 620	CROOKED CREEK	10/22/2021
SCOTT	16924	796	GILLENWATER LOOP	BIG MOCCASIN CREEK	10/20/2021
LUNENBURG	11609	626	DOUBLE BRIDGES RD.	LEDBETTER CREEK	10/12/2021

The list above is not a comprehensive list of all structures with weight restrictions in the Commonwealth, but shows only structures that have new or changed weight restrictions within the last 30 days. The list contains only basic structure identification and location information and the date the new or changed weight restriction and signage became effective.

For a full listing of all bridge and culvert weight restrictions with detailed information about specific structures, including location data and actual weight limits, visit <https://www.virginiadot.org> and navigate to Info Center/Trucking Resources. This page references a posted structures report and a GIS map tool that contain detailed information about restricted structures in Virginia. To receive email notifications regarding new or updated weight restrictions for structures statewide, complete the sign-up form on the web page.

Notices regarding bridges and culverts with new or updated weight restrictions are published monthly by VDOT. For additional information or questions, please contact, haulingpermits@vdot.virginia.gov.

The Virginia Department of Transportation is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on VDOT's Title VI Program or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Program Specialist at 804-786-2730.

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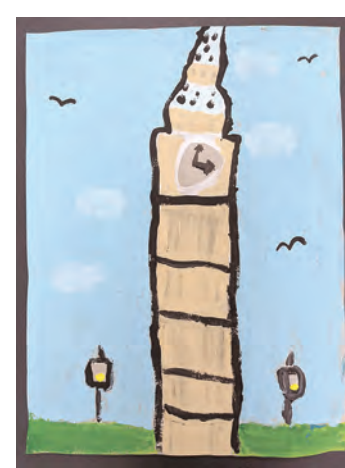
Anna Kim grade 4



Jen Jordan Yave grade 1



Lucia Batres-Bojorquez grade 3



Max Priester grade 3



Melanie Zuniga Sanchez grade 6



Olivia Reklau Kindergarten



Phoenix Lucas grade 2

SUNRISE VALLEY ELEMENTARY, RESTON



Eileen Ocansey



Sean Ying



Emmeline Snell



Mia Shevlin



Emmett Lemrow



Elio Brusgul



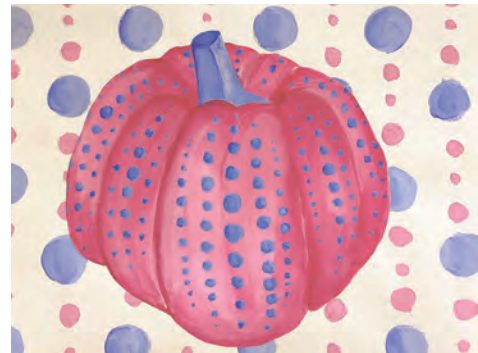
Marco Papini



Purva Bhosole



Iona Bendernagel



Maya Haas



Kate Ferrara



Miles Tung



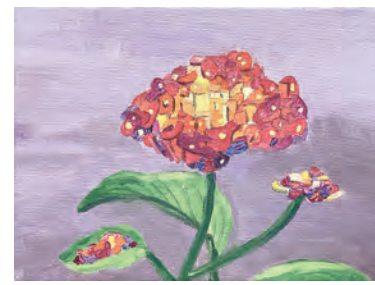
Zuhal Gran



Aanvi Dinesh, 10, Grade 5, Herndon, McNair upper elementary



Alana Dinesh, 7, Grade 3, Herndon, McNair lower elementary



Alexander Yu, 13, Grade 8, Herndon, Carson Middle School



Sean Pan, 8, Grade 3, Poplar Tree Elementary School



Annie Wang, 11, Grade 6, Herndon, Navy Elementary



Serena Pan, 10, Grade 4, Poplar Tree Elementary School



Kevin Cui, 7, Grade 2nd, Cardinal Ridge Elementary School

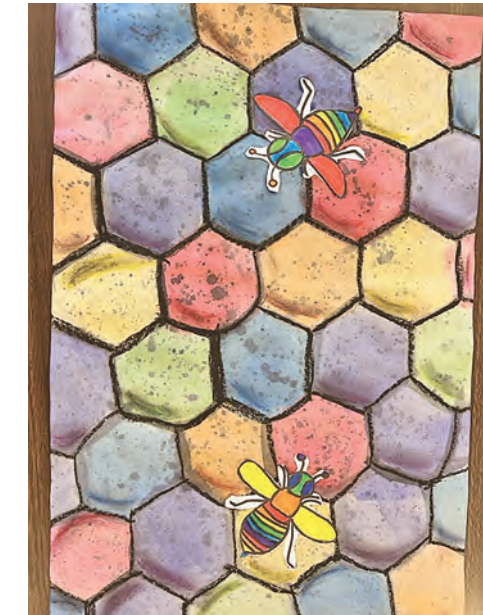
UNION MILL ELEMENTARY



Ella Lucas, 3rd



Wesley Cooper, 3rd



Journey Sandhu, 4th



Larissa Lima, 4th



Owen Lee, 4th



Rebecca Morgan, 4th



Adriana McCormick, 6th



Bella Martinez, 6th



Lincoln Clark, 6th

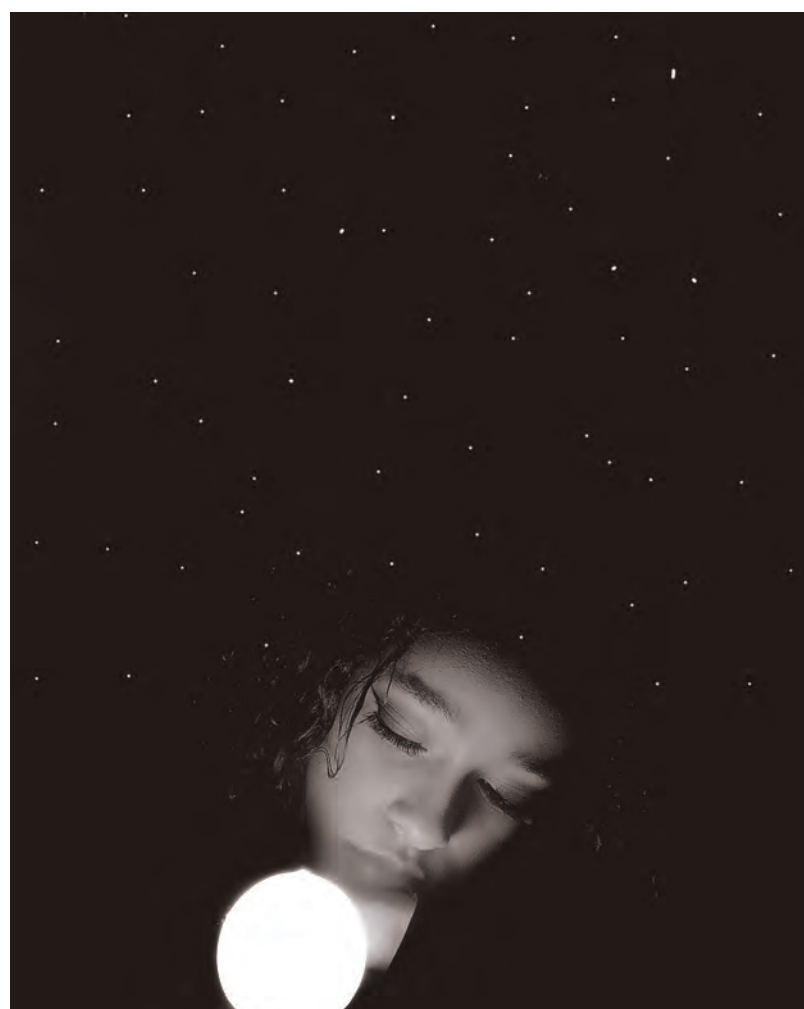
CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL



Kira Smith 12th grade Skin and Bone



Tahanni Robinson 12th Grade Color Blind



Mahlet Solomon 11th Grade Moonstruck



Miles McKeown 9th Grade Leader of the pack



Emily Gates 12th Grade

CHANTILLY HIGH SCHOOL



Jenna Chouman 12th Grade Quieting the Thoughts in my Head



Srinidhi Yelimati 12th Grade "Coming out of my shell"



Ava Poggi 11th Grade Blessing



Bryana Dasher 9th Grade



Cassie Barnes 11th Grade



Connor Kentfield 11th Grade



Mya Ebert 12th Grade



Marianne Hoover 10th Grade "Monster"

Ring

AARON BROOKER

There's ice on the trees,
Time to put on the skis.

As the chorus group
sings,
And the church bell rings.
Ring
Ring
Ring
Yet, not all truly hear it.
Some never go near it.
On the door, you see the light
strings,
The church bell still rings.

Ring
Ring

The loud, warm sign,
That the sun will always shine.
The icy breeze stings,
As the church bell rings.
Ring
Ring
Ring

Time to watch the
auroras,

And unbox the
menorahs.

Time to cook all the
things,
Because the church bell still
rings.

Ring
Ring
Ring
All the toys have been released,
And it's almost time to feast.
On the tree, the ornament

clings.
While the church bell rings.
Ring
Ring
Ring

It's the time of gratitude,

And laughing over tables.
The dove flies over with the
white wings,
Yet, the church bell still rings.
Ring
Ring
Ring

Then suddenly it's over,
We had fun while it lasted.
It's time to welcome spring,
Hear the church bell ring,
Out.

Waiting for snow on christmas

ABHINAV ANISH CHANDRAN

I'm waiting and waiting.
Waiting for the snow
that just has to fall on christmas.

I wait for the ground to turn
white like a sheet of paper,
and wait for the blizzard that
will turn the grass and the trees
white.

I also wait for the intricate snow-
flakes,
each one having it's own unique
shape.

I'll stare out the window all day
if I have to.

I refuse to open my presents.
I refuse to eat anything.

I
WANT
SNOW!

I look up at the sky hoping that
there is a chance,
ANY chance there will be snow
Then I see it.
A snowflake!
After a few minutes more and
more come down
and it starts really snowing.

Finally for once on Christmas,
it actually snows.

(Scroll down for original poem).
Waiting for snow on christmas
Abhinav Anish Chandran

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Waiting for the snow
that just has to fall on christmas.

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and wait for the blizzard that
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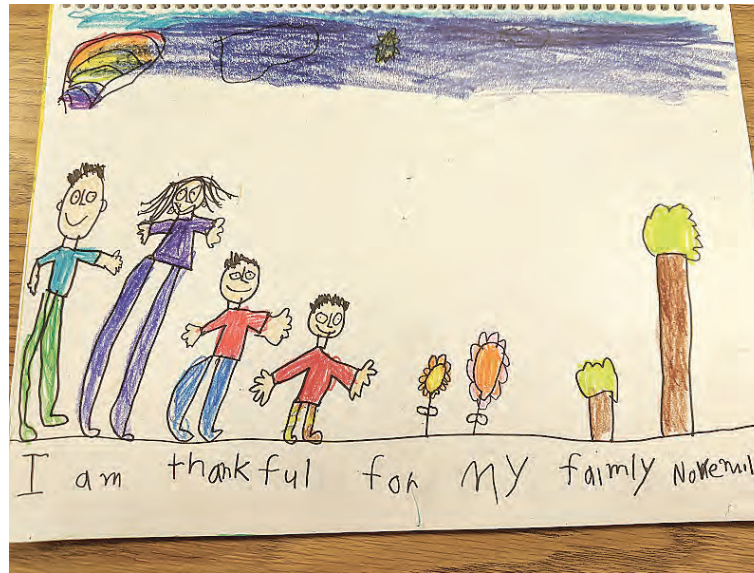
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Ammar Ahmad, Aldrin ES, Grade K

Light and Dark

ALONSO MANTEROLA

Shine then shadow
Two forces
With turmoil between them
Dark then light
Two entities
Keeping balance

One cannot exist
Without the other
Light, bright and beautiful
Dark, shadow y and mystical

You look towards the light
You cast a shadow
The closer you are
to grasping the blaze
Your shadow grows
And follows you
And gives chase

Look toward the darkness,
where hatred and sadness lies
A rush of emotion
Destroying creation
As a shimmer of light
Sneaks into your heart
And starts the endless fight
Once again

Shade, cool and chilly
Sunshine, full of warmth and
heat

The Cloudless sky of the sum-
mer

The Stormy sky of the winter
Every one of us, finds
light and dark within

Balance, what a beautiful
thing!

Celebrating the Holidays

ARIN NANDURDIKAR

The holidays are here.
All over the world
different countries are celebrat-
ing.

And in many diverse ways peo-
ple celebrate.

And I will celebrate in my fam-
ily's way.

My family is waiting to feast.
My grandma is setting up the
table.

The thick bratwurst baking in
the oven

Smells delicious and makes
everyone hungry.

Throughout the house people
are

running to the kitchen.

The stomping of feet
against the floor
is making the dogs
bark in excitement and
the glasses are rattling.

Before we eat,
each of my cousins
will be holding my hands.
Prayers of gratitude
and appreciation
are being said
around the dining table.

My cousins and I will be playing
games
and ripping open gifts after
dinner.

The wrapping paper is like
confetti flying everywhere.
And smiles will make everyone
happy.

We will be celebrating
in our own diverse ways
which makes it feel
more special.

The Holiday Season

ANNA CALLENDER

The holiday season.
It's finally here.
It smells like a feast.
All the family's near.

They might have come
From far away.
But for a few days,
They're here to stay

They talk for hours.
With no hesitation.
Everyone brings something
To make conversation.

The table
Filled with food.
It puts everyone
In a good mood.

You can feel the breeze.
As you step outside.
Go get your hat.
So you can go to the slide.

The family's voices.
Memories you hear.
Bring so much fun.
Can't wait for next year!

(See Below for Original Version)

The Holiday Season
Anna Callender

The holiday season.
It's finally here.
It smells like a feast.
All the family's near.

They might have come
From far away.
But for a few days,
They're here to stay

They talk for hours.
With no hesitation.
Everyone brings something
To make conversation.

The table
Filled with food.
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You can feel the breeze.
As you step outside.
Go get your hat.
So you can go to the slide.

The family's voices.
Memories you hear.
Bring so much fun.
Can't wait for next year!

Virginia Poet Laureate Luisa A. Igloria & the Poetry Society of Virginia Name 2021-2022 Young Poets in the Community

Virginia Poet Laureate Luisa A. Igloria and the Poetry Society of Virginia have named the 2021-22 Young Poets in the Community (YPIC). The twenty-four young poets, selected from a pool of applicants from around the commonwealth, will create public poetry projects showing what matters most to them in our world today and how poetry is a tool for social engagement. Young Poets in the Community is part of Luisa's 2021 Poet Laureate Fellowship Project for the Academy of American Poets with support from the Mellon Foundation. With the Virginia Poet Laureate, the young poets will also have the opportunity to participate in workshops, readings, and other events highlighting their projects. The students will receive certificates and monetary awards for their work.

The incoming cohort of young poets ranges in age from 3rd grade to college senior. Sample projects include a poetry collaboration between law enforcement officers and young African American males; a series of "poetry remixes" based on prominent poems which center on identity; and an anthology of community poems based on residents' experiences during the pandemic.

Elementary School

David Babbick, Virginia Beach, 3rd grade, homeschooled

Jaiden Isaiah Brown, Chester, 5th grade, C.E. Curtis Elementary School

Emily Nguyen, Annandale, 5th grade, Camelot Elementary School; Mentor: Christine Vickers, Librarian, Camelot Elementary School

Middle School

Key'Niyah Clemons, Richmond, 8th grade, Anna Julia Cooper Episcopal School

Zoe Lee, Fredericksburg, 7th grade, Edward Drew Middle School

Abigail Willis, Moseley, 8th grade, Tomahawk Creek Middle School

Elaine Zhang, Falls Church, 6th grade, Haycock Elementary School; Mentor: Long Chen, mother

High School

Renee Anderson, Chester, 11th grade, Appomattox

Regional Governor's School

Yunseo Chung, Yorktown, 12th grade, Grafton High School

Stephanie Gomez, Broad Run, 12th grade, Fauquier County Virtual Academy

Leah Gunn, Bristol, 9th grade, Virginia High School

Adaevia Jones, Stafford, 11th grade, Colonial Forge High School

Charlotte Maleski, Arlington, 11th grade, Washington Liberty High School; Mentor: Chelsea Iorlano, Director/Coordinator of 2020 DC Youth Slam Team

Yayra McGodfred, Virginia Beach, 12th grade, Green Run Collegiate High School

Leia Morissey, Norfolk, 12th grade, Granby High School

Shannie Porter, Charlottesville, 12th grade, Albemarle High School

Kashvi Ramani, Ashburn, 10th grade, Rock Ridge High School and the Academies of Loudoun

Areen Syed, Norfolk, 10th grade, Norfolk Academy

College

Aderonke Adeleke, Chesapeake, sophomore, Old Dominion University

Shawna Alston, Norfolk, freshman, College of William and Mary

Virginia Kane, Alexandria, senior, Kenyon College; Mentor: Dr. Orchid Tierney, Assistant Professor of English, Kenyon College

Hailey Lanford, Arlington, senior, George Washington University; Mentor: Thea Brown, Professor of English, George Washington University

Molly Rufus, Alexandria, art organization employee and audio engineering student; Mentor: KaNikki Jakarta, Poet Laureate of Alexandria, VA

Mariah Salazar-Solórzano, Alexandria, sophomore, Northern Virginia Community College; Mentor: Nicole Tong, Professor of English, Northern Virginia Community College and Poet Laureate of Fairfax County

For the full list of the winners with their mentors, please visit the program's webpage at <http://www.luisaigloria.com/young-poets-in-the-community>.

Follow the young poets' projects on social media via #VAYoungPoets.

CALENDAR

NOW THRU DEC. 19.

Holiday Lights on the Farm. Fridays thru Sundays 5:30 to 8 p.m. At Frying Pan Farm Park, 2739 West Ox Road, Herndon. What is "Holiday Lights on the Farm"? It's where you tour Frying Pan Farm Park in the safety and warmth of your car and see an amazing display of holiday decorations lighting up the 135-acre park. The cost is \$20 per private vehicle. Or you can take the tour on a tractor-drawn wagon ride with up to 20 of your family or friends for \$150 per group. Last year this event sold out, so get your tickets early at <https://bit.ly/FPLights>.

NOW THRU FEB. 19

New Art Exhibits. At McLean Project for the Arts, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. MPA will open its two newest exhibitions on Dec. 2, 2021. Give and Take: Building Form (Emerson Gallery) will feature abstract wood sculpture by Emilie Benes Brzezinski, Rachel Rotenberg, Foon Sham, and Norma Schwartz, while the Atrium Gallery will feature Intersectional Painting: Works by Sheila Crider. Both exhibitions run through Feb. 19, 2022. Visit www.mpaart.org/ or call 703-790-1953 for gallery hours.

NOW THRU DEC. 18

"A Child's Christmas in Wales." Presented by Vienna Theater Company, Vienna. This holiday season, experience a musical celebration of Welsh poet Dylan Thomas' iconic story, A Child's Christmas in Wales, the "never to be forgotten day at the end of the unremembered year," when songs are sung, cakes and sweets are abundant, and the frozen city parks are laden with mysteries and adventures for wild boys and girls to explore. Performance Dates and Times: 7 p.m.: Fridays and Saturdays: Dec 17, 18; 2 p.m. matinees: Sunday Dec 5, 19; and 10 a.m. matinee: Saturday, Dec 18. Tickets: \$15/\$10. Visit <http://www.viennatheatrecompany.org>.

NOW THRU DEC. 19

"Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some)." At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Santa Claus, Rudolph, the Grinch, and just about every other seasonal character you can think of make an appearance in this racy comedy that will have you laughing all the way to the New Year. <https://www.nextstoptheatre.org/>

NOW THRU JAN. 2, 2022

LuminoCity Festival. 6-9 p.m. At Roer's Zoofari, 1228 Hunter Mill Road, Vienna. The LuminoCity Festival, immersive light display experience, unforgettably spectacular night of lights. The festival includes African, Asian, Arid, and Ancient-themed exhibits of spectacularly lit art displays set up in the zoo's walk-through area. www.roerszoofari.com.

NOW THRU DEC. 31

Holiday Sparkle. 12-5 p.m. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W at Lake Anne, Reston. Enjoy the gallery experience at a show of giftable art – authentic, local works of paintings, mixed media, jewelry, mobiles, fine craft objects, cards, and more created by the 8 artists of RAGS. Open weekends and by appointment. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com

THURSDAY/DEC. 16

Jennifer Nettles: Broadway Under the Mistletoe. 7:30 p.m. At Capital One Hall, 7740 Capital One Tower Road, Tysons. Jennifer Nettles stops by for a night of holiday favorites and Broadway hits. Leading with her powerhouse vocals and vivacious energy, this dynamic entertainer recently released Always Like New, a collection of Broadway tunes reimagined as only she can do. Visit CapitalOneHall.com.

DEC. 18-19

Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker. 4 p.m. At GMU Center for the Arts, Fairfax. The Fairfax Symphony Orchestra joins The Fairfax Ballet in their sixth collaboration to present the timeless class holiday favorite, The Nutcracker. This production is unique in the Washington metropolitan region as one of few presented with live musical accompaniment. The Fairfax Ballet Company dances to Tchaikovsky's score performed live by the Fairfax Symphony. Enjoy a winter wonderland of dancing snowflakes, sugar plum fairies and epic battles between heroic toy soldiers and mischievous mice.

MONDAY/DEC. 20

Take Photos of Your Pets with Santa. At Tysons Corner Center, McLean. Monday, Dec. 6, 6 – 8 p.m.; Monday, Dec. 13, 6 – 8 p.m.; Monday, Dec. 20, 6 – 8 p.m. Fashion Court, Level 1. Bring your favorite pet in their holiday best for photos with Santa. This much-loved event has become a signature and well-attended theme night for Tysons Holiday.

TUESDAY/DEC. 21

Winter Solstice Celebration. 7-8 p.m. At Unity of Fairfax, 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Unity of Fairfax welcomes the Winter Solstice with a special celebration of the season when the dark days of winter lengthen. This is an indoor/outdoor event with significant symbolism and meaning. Register online for complete information. Website: <https://2021-12-21-winter-solstice-celebration.eventbrite.com/?aff=cnnews>

ALDRIN ELEMENTARY

Winter to Spring

ASHMITH MEKA

The cool winter breeze
Crashing into my face,
And The snow crunching
Under my feet,
Felt good.

The leaves are
Starting to grow.
The snow is starting
To drip away...
Here comes spring.

Kids outside are playing,
Leaves are falling
Its winter,
It's time to enjoy it.
Snowman's everywhere,
Snow balls flying through the
air,
Crashing everywhere...
Hitting each other.

(See below for newspaper friendly copy)

Winter to Spring
Ashmith Meka

The cool winter breeze
Crashing into my face,
And The snow crunching
Under my feet,
Felt good.

The breeze crashing
On my face
Is starting to
Turn warm.
Now Spring is coming

Kids outside are playing,
Leaves are falling
Its winter,
It's time to enjoy it.
Snowman's everywhere,
Snow balls flying through the
air,
Crashing everywhere...
Hitting each other.

The breeze crashing
On my face
Is starting to
Turn warm.
Now Spring is coming

The leaves are
Starting to grow.
The snow is starting
To drip away...
Here comes spring.

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it shorter.

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now.

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Not-So-Affordable Housing In Virginia

DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM



Fewer Virginians can afford to buy a home, and there is a shortage of at least 200,000 affordable rental units according to the results of a study by the staff of the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission (JLARC) released earlier this week. Much of the material in this column is taken directly from the report which is available to the public at jlarc.virginia.gov. The study was undertaken at the direction of the legislative members of JLARC including myself as chairman and Senator Janet Howell as vice chairman to give basic information to the General Assembly for its legislative action as needed.

As expected, Virginians most affected by the lack of affordable housing are renters who have low income. Households are considered housing-cost burdened when they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing expenses. Approximately 29 percent of Virginia households (905,000) were housing-cost burdened in 2019, and nearly half of these households spent more than 50 percent of their income on housing, putting Virginia near the middle of states in terms of the percentage of households that are cost burdened.

Not surprisingly, the study found that households that rent their homes are more likely to be cost burdened than households that own their homes. Approximately 44 percent of renting households are cost burdened compared with 21 percent of owning households. The majority (67 percent) of cost burdened households live in the state's so-called "Golden Crescent" of Hampton Roads, Northern Virginia, and Central Virginia.

There is a relationship between housing-cost burdened individuals and their occupations, many of which are in high demand. Examples include home health aides (\$22,000 salary), teaching assistants (\$29,000 salary), and social workers (\$51,000 salary) who are needed in all parts of the state, and a lack of affordable housing in some

regions constrains the supply.

The JLARC report states that the median home sales price in Virginia has risen 28 percent over the past four years to \$270,000 in 2021. The percentage of all Virginia homes that sold for \$200,000 or less decreased by 40 percent since 2019. In addition to the rising cost of homes are the upfront costs required to purchase a home. Renting a home is an obvious alternative to home purchasing, but the shortage of 200,000 affordable rental units adds to the problem. The shortage of affordable rental units in Fairfax County alone is estimated to be 80,000.

Possible solutions to the not-so-affordable housing in Virginia suggested by JLARC for state legislative action include a greater contribution to the state's funding for affordable housing of both new affordable multi-family housing and rental housing. The state needs to provide better assistance with upfront mortgage costs. Local zoning affects the affordable housing supply and needs to be examined and revised. Virginia needs to give additional localities the authority to require developers to set aside a portion of units to rent or sell below market price.

There is no place like home for the holidays — or for any time of the year. There is a responsibility that government respond to the need for affordable housing.

The Spirit of Holiday Giving

FROM PAGE 7

mas as a joyous time, but not all kids' lives are as easy, some wonder if there will be anything under that tree Christmas morning. I don't want that to happen to any child if I can help. I know I can't help everyone, but I try to help as many as I can." Fredrick noted that it takes a village, she continued, "Thankfully we have generous people in this area. If everyone can keep pitching in, maybe no children will wake up without a present under the tree."

In addition to those giving gifts, nearly two dozen elves give their time on drop-off day. Many elves have helped with this event annually for years, like Caitlyn Shumadine, Lexie Perez, Alexa Gianoplus, Lynley Birchard and Avery Perez, all seniors in high school who have volunteered since they were in 6th grade.

Avery Perez said, "I love it more each year and value having the opportunity to give back and help people in need." She reflects, "I'm fortunate enough to know the joy of opening presents on Christmas each year and am grateful to help give others that experience." Perez plans to continue community service in college and bring her Wish List Project experience with her. To keep the two dozen volunteers going through the day, Deli Italiano and others generously donated food.

In addition to the Holiday Wish List Project, other drives have been added in recent years, including Thanksgiving Meal Baskets, Winter Coat & Gear Drive as well as occasional drives for what is needed like a Spring Break Food Drive, Toiletry Collection, and Snack Food Drive.

See a summary of this year's giving and sign up to be a Wish List Angel to help throughout the year at wishlistangels.org.

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Indulge Me And/or Indulge Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Give me whatever I want and/or let me be however I want. I have cancer and if you don't like it? Raspberries. I remember what a friend told me soon after I was diagnosed with cancer: "It's all about you now, Kenny." And it's friendly advice I've shared/passed on to other newly cancer "diagnosees." And it's always been received with such appreciation as if newly diagnosed cancer patients need a sort of permission to be more concerned about themselves than about others.

For many, it's a bit of an unnatural position: to concern yourself with yourself. But I must tell you, when that hammer is dropped that you've been diagnosed with cancer, your world shrinks. It's almost impossible to think of anything else. You just don't know if something you do or don't do will affect your cancer/life expectancy. And so, cancer becomes the center of your universe. Moreover, you wonder if what you normally do: eat, drink, be happy, be sad, really matters to the outcome of your treatment.

I mean, it's not as if there's a dos and don'ts handbook for newly diagnosed cancer patients with easy-to-follow instructions for who to call/where to go for who knows what. And since you've been diagnosed with an extremely serious disease, you just as soon not get your homework assignments wrong. When your life is snatched away and/or your world is turned inside out/upside down, you really don't want to be the cause of your own demise. For cancer, there's hardly any guarantees. Survival is a long way from six-hour chemotherapy sessions every three weeks and scans every three months. Being a cancer patient is very hands-on – by you and/or the medical staff, so you must pay attention. To say your life might depend on it might be a bit much but it's not totally wrong. Once you get diagnosed into the cancer world, everything about your health seems to lead to the oncology department.

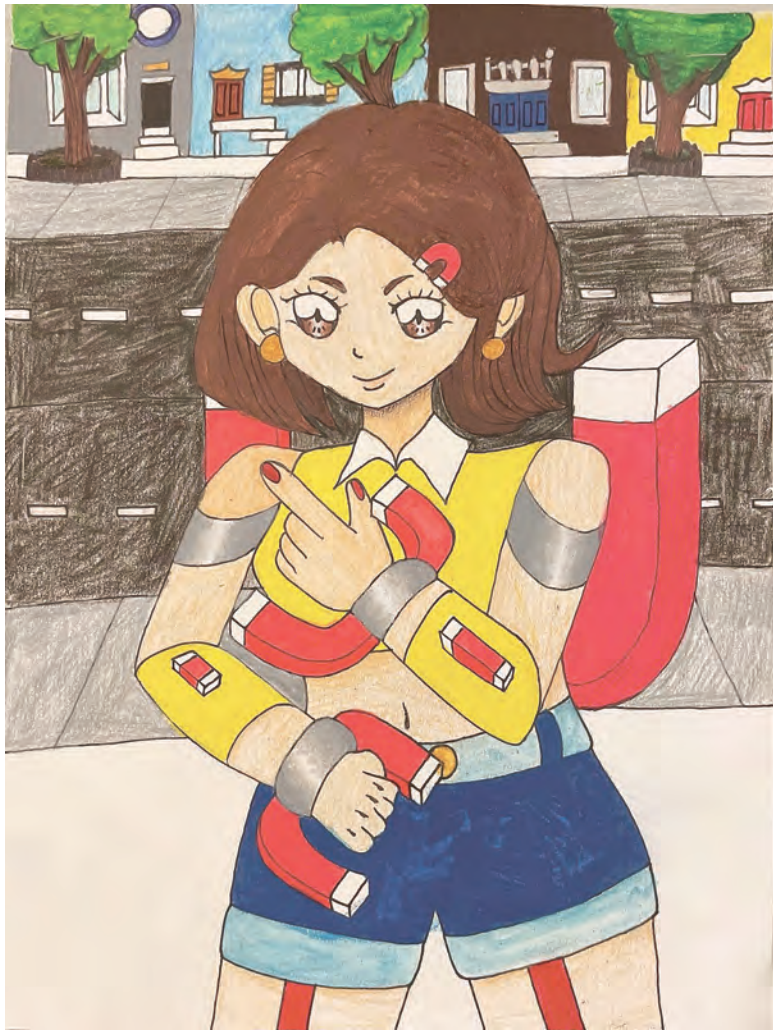
Having to deal with this unexpected/new centrality in your life, a life which, depending on the type and staging of your cancer, you may be in danger, is scary as hell. And if that's the case, the disease may very well be in control and this ongoing fear/angst is the axis upon which your world now turns. Every action, reaction, "proaction," is taken in the context of your having cancer. What it all means, what it all does, if and when you have to do it again or not, are all definite maybes. Your oncologist becomes your new best friend. You hang on his/her every word. To think that a person you had never previously met is now in charge of your life requires an acceptance of reality, possibly a grim reality, for which there may be no escape and worse, requires total compliance.

You bet I require kid gloves. You bet I require a wide berth. You bet I require anything my heart desires because learning from oncologist that you have a "terminal" diagnosis, is about as unsettling as it gets. Any port in a storm you might say? Heck, how about any port no matter the weather? If Bette Davis were alive today and had been a cancer patient, she might update her famous lament: "Being diagnosed with cancer ain't no place for sissies."

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

BULL RUN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

ART TEACHERS: KIM TALIAN AND LUANNE INN



Lily Park age 11, grade 6, Centreville, VA, "Miss Magnet"



Keagan Sweeney of Centreville, VA, age 10, grade 5, Volcano (tempera paint)



Kiara Custode Matthias of Centreville, VA, age 9, grade 4,, self portrait with tree (oil pastel)



Jenny Flores age 6, grade K, Centreville, VA, "Patterned Elephant"



Rosie Inn of Centreville, VA, age 9, grade 3, collage, Bull Run ES, Centreville, VA, art teacher: Kim Talian



Quinn Todd of Centreville, VA, age 11, grade 5, Lightning Strike (tempera paint)



Josue Garcia of Centreville, VA, age 11, grade 5, Umbrellas on the Beach (tempera paint)



Bridgett Rios Soria of Centreville, VA, age 9, grade 4, self portrait (oil pastel)



Aubrey James of Centreville, VA,, age 7, grade 2, Turkey (oil pastel)



Quinn Todd of Centreville, VA, age 11, grade 5,, Radial Symmetry design (marker)



Jillian Muack age 8, grade 3, Centreville, VA, "Community Event"