



Golden Gazette

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

NOVA United: Golden Friendships and Hoops

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Does the prospect of playing a new sport sound exciting or daunting? For many of us, the idea of taking up a new sport, especially competitively, is overwhelming. Fears of injury, exhaustion and humiliation can effectively end the endeavor before it even begins. Not so for the members of NOVA United Senior Women's Basketball Association.

NOVA United gives women aged 45 and older the opportunity to play three-on-three half-court basketball, improve their skills and compete. Many of NOVA United's members joined the league well into their 60s and beyond, some never having touched a basketball in their adult life. These members' willingness to try a new sport, along with their desire to stay active and compete, has paid off. At the 2022 National Senior Games, held in Fort Lauderdale, FL in July, NOVA United's 80+ team, The Classics, won the Gold medal.

Nancy D. Joyner, 77, one of the founders of NOVA United, recalls how the league began in 2003. Jackie

Stephens, a lifelong basketball player, had relocated from Michigan to Virginia, and couldn't find a league to play with in her new hometown. She sent an email to members of the American Association of University Women, asking if anyone was interested in playing. Nancy and a few others joined Jackie to play, and eventually founded NOVA United. Unlike Jackie, Nancy had no basketball experience, having gone to

a high school that didn't offer sports for girls, so joining the group was a learning experience and a leap of faith. Initially, NOVA United was a ragtag group of players of all ages playing together. It took a few years before they acquired enough players to form competition-ready teams divided into five-year age groups – 45-50, 50-55, etc.

One factor that helped NOVA United attract players and grow was securing a regular practice space. The team practices every Friday evening at James Lee Community Center in Falls Church. The relationship has also benefitted James Lee. NOVA United members faithfully volunteered at a youth wheelchair basketball tournament hosted at the center



NOVA United players: Top row play in the 70-75 and 75-80 divisions; (L-R) Betty Martin, Gail Arnall, Lily Chuh, Barbara Chadbourne and Nancy D. Joyner. Bottom row are The Classics; (L-R) Helen Crum, Mary Lou D'Alessandris, Vivian Robertson and Ruth Nieboer.

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Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Call **703-324-5411, TTY 711**. The TTY number for all contacts in this publication is 711 unless otherwise stated.

It is our policy that all articles published in the Golden Gazette must be written by employees of Fairfax County agencies or partner organizations.

READER SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTENT TO THE GOLDEN GAZETTE

We'd like your feedback! What topics would you like to see in future issues? How can we make this publication even better?

Do you know a centenarian living in Fairfax County or an older adult who has given back in a significant way? We are always looking for interesting older Fairfax County residents to feature.

Email your suggestions to **DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov** or call **703-324-GOLD**.

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prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. League members also step up to support James Lee's annual holiday gift drive. Another draw for NOVA United is their coach, Melinda Lynham, a lifelong basketball player, who after joining the league switched from player to coach, believing it was the best way to put her years of experience to good use.

Participating in NOVA United has been a life-changing experience for many of the players, especially the oldest players, who have forged close friendships and may be the most enthusiastic members of all.

Team captain for The Classics is 82-year-old Helen Crum, a longtime member of NOVA United. In addition to enjoying the exercise it provides, Helen's favorite part of playing basketball is the camaraderie. Players support each other during difficult situations and keep in touch even after they can no longer play. "Once a classic, always a classic," says Helen. One of her favorite experiences while playing with the league was participating in the National Senior Games in 2013 in Cleveland. Helen was honored to carry the Virginia flag during the opening ceremonies. Her team also won the bronze medal that year. It was the first time she medaled in any games and it was a very exciting experience.

Another member of the gold-medal winning team, Vivian Robertson, is 80 years old. Throughout her 70s, Vivian was so spry that she played with The Rebounders, the 65+ team, but joined The Classics after undergoing hip replacement surgery. Vivian joined NOVA United in 2007 after seeing a flyer for the league while attending an event at James Lee Community Center. "When I saw it, I knew it was right up my alley," says Vivian. She didn't know that a basketball league for older women existed, but she loved playing basketball in high school and found that, with some practice, her skills returned. Playing again awakened Vivian's passion for the game.

In addition to playing, she has coached a girls' team at her grandson's elementary school. Vivian's favorite thing about playing with NOVA United is the women she's met and the friendships they formed. Even while recovering from surgery, Vivian attended practice – not to play but to support and cheer on her team. Vivian knows that when she eventually stops playing, their friendships will continue, saying "I will always be there to support them no matter what."

Mary Lou D'Alessandris, 83, is another member of The Classics. Like Vivian, Mary Lou joined NOVA United in 2007 after searching for a women's sports league

and seeing a newspaper ad for the league that said that new players were welcome with no experience needed. After watching the team practice and seeing the talent on display, she tried to sneak away but a player took notice and convinced her to stay and join them. Two weeks later, Mary Lou was playing in a tournament to qualify for Nationals. She says that joining NOVA United was one of the best moves she's ever made. One of her most memorable experiences was attending the screening of "Coming Back to the Hoop,"

a documentary about NOVA United produced by Jane Pittman, a filmmaker and NOVA United member. Seeing herself and her fellow players on screen was a moving experience for Mary Lou. "I'm not a person who likes to show off, but that was really special," she recalls.

The newest member of The Classics is Ruth Nieboer, 81, who joined NOVA United just over a year and a half ago after being recruited by Helen, a fellow pickleball player. Ruth last picked up a basketball in high school, so her skills were rusty, but she has steadily improved over the months. She was motivated to keep trying by the support and encouragement she received from her fellow players. Ruth also believes in trying new things, stating "At my age I really enjoy having a challenge. I can see myself



At a recent Friday practice, Vivian takes a shot while Helen, Ruth, Nancy and Mary Lou look on.

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improving and that does wonders for my self-esteem. This is my challenge and I feel like everyone should have a challenge in their life.” Although she joined the team too late to qualify for the 2022 Nationals, she played in the qualifying tournament for the 2023 games and looks forward to playing in her first Nationals in July.

Beyond individual player’s stories, the success of NOVA United can also be measured in how they are changing perceptions about what older women can do. The young people at James Lee Community Center think nothing of seeing older women playing basketball because they witness the league practicing every Friday. “It’s no big deal and that’s good. They will grow up and won’t say they can’t do something because they’re too old,” says Nancy. Vivian Robertson’s family are in awe of her basketball skills and her son-in-law loves to brag about the talent of his basketball playing mother-in-law. When Vivian struggles to master a new move, her grandsons encourage her to “go back to her skills” and keep trying, believing that grandma can accomplish anything she sets her mind to. Mary Lou recalls a few occasions where NOVA United teams played exhibition games during halftime at Duke University, the United States Naval Academy, and Washington Mystics games. Each NOVA United player was introduced along with their age. After some initial skepticism, audiences were impressed by the basketball skills on display, applauding and complimenting the players as they left the court.

One question that NOVA United players often hear is “Aren’t you afraid of getting hurt?” Although the women are competitive, they are not reckless and feel that the benefits greatly outweigh the risks. Vivian loves playing basketball because it keeps her physically fit, mentally sharp, and is good for her mood because it’s fun. The social aspect is also enjoyable and good for the players. Teams celebrate birthdays, have parties, and support each other during tough times. As to the question about getting hurt, Nancy points out that you can get hurt any time. “I would rather get hurt going for a basket than taking out the trash. If you stay healthy and strong, you are less likely to get hurt. Why not have fun?”

Interested in joining the fun? New players are always welcome. For more information, email NOVAUnitedSWB@gmail.com. ☀

Mature Living – Scam Prevention

Many people continue to fall victim to scams, and seniors are often a desirable target for scammers. Melissa Smarr is a Code Specialist with Fairfax County Government Land Development Services and a facilitator with Fairfax County Silver Shield Anti-Scam Campaign, and she reveals how we can protect ourselves and our assets. Producer Fran Guastadisegni talks with MPO Anthony L. Capizzi, a Crime Prevention Specialist with the Fairfax County Police Department. He describes actual scams that people have fallen prey to and offers tips on how to avoid them. We close out our discussion with Trudy Marotta, the Volunteer Community Ambassador with AARP, Virginia, and a member of the Silver Shield Task Force. Trudy is also a spokesperson for the Fraud Watch Network for Fairfax County, and she shares valuable resources we can all use to stay safe.

Mature Living can be seen on Channel 1016 on the following days and times:

- ◆ Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ Monday at 5 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday at 4 p.m., 8:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday at 8:30 a.m., 4 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday at 9:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday at 9:30 a.m., 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

This program can also be seen on your computer: FairfaxCounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/mature-living

You can find information on services for older adults at FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults or call 703-324-7948, TTY 711, Monday-Friday. ☀

March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

by Karen Kelly, Disability Rights and Resources

March is National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recent U.S. estimates show that about one in six children aged 3-17 years have one or more developmental disabilities such as autism or cerebral palsy. Developmental disabilities occur among all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

Each year, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors proclaims March as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month; a time to raise awareness about the inclusion of people with developmental disabilities in all areas of community life, and to celebrate and showcase the excellent work that is being done around the country to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The County also offers resources, information and an e-newsletter, Access Fairfax, for people with developmental and other disabilities. Visit the following websites:

- ◆ Fairfax County Disability Rights and Resources: FairfaxCounty.gov/FamilyServices/Disabilities
- ◆ Subscribe to the free Access Fairfax E-Newsletter: FairfaxCounty.gov/FamilyServices/Disabilities

Celebrate Social Workers in March

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

March is Social Work Month – a time to recognize, appreciate, and celebrate the important work of social workers. Every day, social workers employed with the Department of Family Services Adult and Aging division provide invaluable services to the community.

Here are a few examples of the work they do on behalf of older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers:

- ◆ Staff the Aging, Disability & Caregiver Resources Line and connect callers to services and programs that will help improve their quality of life.



- ◆ Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board: FairfaxCounty.gov/Community-Services-Board
- ◆ Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services: FairfaxCounty.gov/Neighborhood-Community-Services

The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities encourages everyone to participate in National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month. To find ideas on how you can participate, visit nacdd.org. ☀

- ◆ Educate older adults, adults with disabilities, and their caregivers and families about useful resources, preventative screenings, and assessments available to them.
- ◆ Investigate reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of adults to determine if protective services are needed.
- ◆ Provide case management services to older adults and adults with disabilities.

To learn more about the programs and services offered by the Adult and Aging division, please visit FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults. ☀

Taking Time to Connect Benefits Family Caregivers and Their Loved Ones

by Allegra Joffe, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Many family caregivers dedicate a large amount of time caring for their loved ones but they may still feel a social disconnection between themselves and the person they care for. Disconnection can happen when their time together is monopolized by caregiving tasks and duties. The good news is that connection can be reestablished and intentionally putting aside time to connect will benefit both parties. Social connection has been proven to produce health benefits for both caregivers and care receivers. Harvard Medical School has found that social connections are healthful because they “relieve harmful levels of stress, which can adversely affect coronary arteries, gut function, insulin regulation, and the immune system.”

Some practical examples that family caregivers can use to connect with their loved one are:

- ◆ Set time aside during the day to talk about non-caregiving topics.
- ◆ Attend an in-person or virtual class that’s enjoyable for you and your loved one at a local library.
- ◆ Learn a new skill or hobby together.
- ◆ Listen and sing to music and take turns choosing songs.
- ◆ Go for a walk together in your neighborhood or local park and discuss what you see.
- ◆ Reminisce over old photos and share stories.
- ◆ Do a puzzle together.
- ◆ Visit local animal shelters.
- ◆ Go to a free community event together.
- ◆ Try a new meal together and rate how it tastes.



If you wish to learn more about caregiving resources for persons with dementia, call our Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources Line at **703-324-7948** or visit, **FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults**.

Understanding Dementia for Caregivers - Caregiver Webinar

Wednesday, March 15, Noon to 1 p.m.

In this presentation, Dr. Abigail Lawler will provide an overview of the different types of dementia, such as Lewy Body Dementia, Vascular Dementia, Frontal Temporal Dementia, Parkinson's Disease, and Alzheimer's Disease, along with suggestions for techniques and medications that may help with difficult behaviors.

Dr. Lawler is a Neurology Specialist at Inova Parkinson's and Movement Disorders Center (IPMDC) and a board-certified member of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. Online Registration: **bit.ly/CAREWEB1**

Come to a Memory Café - Caregiver Workshop

Friday, March 24, Noon to 1 p.m.

Caregivers need the fellowship and support of others who are facing similar issues, and those with the diagnosis need friendship and the opportunity to talk with those in the same situation. During this virtual presentation, you will discover what exactly a Memory Café is, and what it isn't. We will have an interactive session with sample activities, games, and resources. Traveling with your loved one on the Alzheimer's journey is difficult. Sharing the journey with others can make it easier.

This presentation will be facilitated by Carol Blackwell, who was a caregiver for her husband, Bob, for 12 years. Bob and Carol were the subjects of a series of articles in USA TODAY on living with Alzheimer's Disease, and they wrote a weekly blog for the online USA TODAY. Online Registration: bit.ly/StayingWell-123

Pulmonary Rehab: Helping You Breathe Easier - Caregiver Workshop

Friday, March 31, Noon to 1 p.m.

Are you or your loved one struggling to breathe? Do you have a lung disease or suffer from shortness of breath? In this webinar, Marjorie McBurney, Registered Respiratory Therapist from John Hopkins Bayview Medical Center, defines breathing and why is it so important. In addition, she will explore what is pulmonary rehab and is it right for me? She will describe and demonstrate some of the techniques – PLB, Huff Cough, Energy Conservation and review supplemental oxygen and monitoring, and discuss caregiving support. Online Registration: bit.ly/StayingWell-123

Virtual Chair & Mat Yoga Class

Wednesday, March 1 and 8, 10-11 a.m.

This gentle class uses both the yoga mat and a chair and is designed for relaxation. Hosted by the Fairfax County Public Library. Online Registration: bit.ly/ChairMatYoga. ☀

Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

by Jacquie Woodruff, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) is an advisory board mandated by the Older Americans Act. Commissioners for the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church.

At the February 15 COA meeting, One Fairfax staff led discussion about One Fairfax and the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan.

COA Meeting, Wednesday, March 15, 1 p.m.

The meeting will be held electronically due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android:

us06web.zoom.us/j/89534902972

Access Code: COA-m1234!

Live audio of the meeting may be accessed by dialing **888-270-9936** (US Toll Free) or **602-333-0032**; conference code: 231525.

For ADA accommodations, contact Ana Valdivia, **571-407-6960** or Ana.Valdivia@fairfaxcounty.gov; TTY services available via 711.

*Note: Meeting will be held virtually unless otherwise impacted by Fairfax County's State of Emergency Status due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Check website for meeting location updates: FairfaxCounty.gov/FamilyServices/Older-Adults/Fairfax-Area-Commission-on-Aging/Meetings. ☀

Flood Safety and Preparedness

by Carly Mullinax, Department of Emergency Management and Security



Did you know that flooding is one of Fairfax County's most common hazards? Over the years, great improvements have been made to the infrastructure in place to prevent flooding, however, heavy rains are still the leading cause of flooding and can cause damage to homes and businesses that aren't prepared. Depending on its depth and velocity, flooding can be a nuisance or a disaster. Be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near a body of water, downstream from a dam, or in other areas known to flood in previous storms. To stay safe during a flood, follow these steps:

- ◆ Ensure you have flood insurance if your home is in an at-risk area. For more information on flood insurance, visit the National Flood Insurance Program's website at **floodsmart.gov**.
- ◆ Listen to the Emergency Alert System (EAS) or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio for current emergency information and instructions regarding flooding.
- ◆ Subscribe to Fairfax Alerts for local flood warnings and information by visiting **FairfaxCounty.gov/alerts**.
- ◆ If told to evacuate, evacuate immediately.
- ◆ Turn around, don't drown! Never drive around barricades or attempt to drive through water on the roadway.

Are you interested in learning more about floodplains and watersheds in your area? Visit Fairfax County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services' webpage for more information:

FairfaxCounty.gov/publicworks/stormwater/flood-information. ☀

Stay Safe from Falls with Help from Rebuilding Together

The nonprofit Rebuilding Together helps homeowners on limited incomes live safely in their homes. Their skilled volunteers and staff make home modifications and repairs at no cost for homeowners who qualify. Modifications include:

- ◆ Grab bars to use the shower and toilet safely
- ◆ Stair rails on both sides for more stability
- ◆ Handrails on exterior steps
- ◆ Brighter lighting



Photo courtesy Rebuilding Together

- ◆ Improved security by ensuring effective door locks
- ◆ General work including minor plumbing and electrical repairs

Call **703-528-1999** to learn more or to request an application.

For more information, visit **rebuildingtogether-aff.org**, email **info@rebuildingtogether-aff.org** or call **703-528-1999**. ☀

Help with Heating Emergencies Closes March 15

by the Public Assistance and Employment Services Division of DFS



Are you facing a “no heat” situation? The Crisis Assistance program helps households overcome energy

emergencies that cannot be met by other resources. An energy emergency is determined when a household has no heat or is in imminent danger of being without heat. The open application period for the Crisis Assistance Program closes on March 15, 2023.

Households can apply for one or more of the following:

- ♦ **Payment** of primary heat source utility bills.
- ♦ **Payment** of security deposits for primary heat utility when a deposit is needed to establish service or prevent a disconnection.
- ♦ **Purchase** of primary home heating fuel when the fuel supply is low.
- ♦ **Repair** of inoperable or unsafe heating equipment.
- ♦ **Replacement** of heating equipment for homeowners only (when repair is not possible).

- ♦ **Provision** of supplemental heating equipment/maintenance.

Households can apply for either program in the following ways:

- ♦ **Online:** at **CommonHelp.Virginia.gov**.
- ♦ **Phone:** call the Enterprise Call Center at **1-833-522-5582**.
- ♦ **Paper Application:** call our main number at **703-324-7500** to request an application be mailed to you.
- ♦ **Fax:** fax a completed application to **703-653-1355**.
- ♦ **In Person:** applications are available at these Department of Family Services locations:

Annandale - Heritage Center, West Wing, 7611 Little River Turnpike, 5th Floor, Annandale

Fairfax - Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 232, Fairfax

Reston - Lake Anne Office Building, 11484 Washington Plaza West, 4th floor, Reston

Richmond Highway/Alexandria - South County Center, 8350 Richmond Hwy. (Route 1), 4th floor, Alexandria. ☀

Individualized Care Matters

by Camden Doran, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

A person receiving long-term care services has the right to receive individualized care. Services and activities should strive to attain or maintain a person’s highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being. Often this can be addressed in a person’s initial assessment and plan of care (POC). As each individual is assessed for services, many things should be taken into account, including their life history, strengths, functional abilities, and nutritional status. Preferences regarding food, communication, and daily routines should also be honored to enhance quality of life. Staff, family members, and the person receiving the services should work together in creating the POC to ensure

all medical and non-medical issues are discussed and agreed upon. A POC can be updated at any time as an individual’s preferences or condition changes.

As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP) is often called on to assist residents and consumers to advocate for their rights in order to ensure quality of care and quality of life. For more information about care planning, or other nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at **703-324-5861**, or contact by email at **NVLTCOP@fairfaxcounty.gov**. ☀

Dr. Heisung Lee Receives 2022 Andrus Award for Community Service

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Congratulations to Dr. Heisung Lee, the 2022 recipient of the Andrus Award for Community Service. The Andrus Award is the AARP's highest volunteer award, recognizing individuals 50 and older who have devoted their time, skills and talents to enriching the lives of others.

On December 13, 2022, Jim Dau, AARP Virginia state director, presented the award to Dr. Lee at the Korean Central Senior Center in Centreville.

Lee was recognized for her years of service to improve the lives of Korean older adults in her community. Her accomplishments include founding and leading the Central Senior Center, which has served Korean-speaking older adults for almost 30 years; creating a Korean Meals on Wheels program; and developing a nurse aide training program for the Korean and Hispanic communities, which has resulted in the training of over 1,000 personal care aides and certified nurse aids.

In accepting the award, Lee credited the many volunteers she has worked with over the years and encouraged others to seek out volunteering opportunities, saying "volunteering not only helps others but gives you inner joy and a way to experience God's blessings. Start early in your life and volunteer a small amount of your time with your talent and do not wait until you have time to volunteer. Encourage and bring your family, friends, and the young and old to volunteer with you for church, community, school and our country. It may be a small amount of your time, but many small acts of volunteerism can result in big changes that help make our community a place better to live, especially for older adults."

If you would like to learn more about Dr. Lee's life and work, read the full profile in the August 2022 issue of the Golden Gazette: bit.ly/3SfDEK9.



Left to right: Dr. Heisung Lee; Jim Dau, AARP Virginia State Director; Amber Sultane, AARP Virginia Associate State Director; Don Harmon, AARP volunteer. Photo courtesy Dr. Heisung Lee.

Interested in finding opportunities to volunteer in your community? Check out Fairfax County Volunteer Solutions: bit.ly/FXVSVOL. 🌟

Diabetes Self-Management Class

Tuesdays, March 21-April 25, 1-3 p.m. Free. Take control of your health and your happiness. Fairfax County's Diabetes Self-Management Program is 6-week group interactive workshop series for individuals interested in learning how to live better by effectively managing their Pre-Diabetes or Diabetes. Held in-person at Falls Church Community Center: 223 Little Falls St. Space is limited, and preregistration is required. Caregivers welcome! For more information or to register, please visit tinyurl.com/DSMP123 or call Kristin Martin at 703-324-7577, TTY 711, or email Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Create Positive Changes by Volunteering

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator

Here are a few of the many ways to provide support as a volunteer in our community. Check out bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER for many more.

Volunteer Solutions offers opportunities to provide support to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers in one-on-one or group settings. Do you have a skill to share? Fairfax County Senior Centers need leaders and instructors in line dancing, fitness, languages, cooking, art, crafts, pottery, music, and more! The following roles are also needed: drivers (for medical appointments, errands, grocery shopping), social visitors, household organizers, and more. To learn more and register go to bit.ly/FXVSVOL, email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov, or call 703-324-5406.

GrandInvolve volunteers are needed to help in Title I elementary schools as mentors, tutors, classroom assistants, and more. Older adults help students achieve and maintain grade-level skills in reading and math, and build confidence. This program fosters intergenerational relationships which are beneficial to all involved. If you're patient, encouraging, dependable, and interested, email volunteer@grandinvolve.org. For more information go to Grandinvolve.org.

The Department of Family Services' **Body Safety Program** needs volunteer classroom instructors to help empower elementary students with the tools they need to prevent or interrupt child abuse and exploitation. Bilingual facilitators are also needed. Visit bit.ly/BodySafetyProgram or contact Francesca Lovitt at Francesca.Lovitt@FairfaxCounty.gov, or 703-324-7459.

Insight Memory Care Center is a nonprofit providing specialized care, support, and education for individuals in all stages of memory or cognitive impairment, their care partners, and the community. Volunteer assignment at their early-stage Reconnections programs or Adult Day Center may include helping participants with brain fitness activities, setting up for activities, and more. Times are flexible and sites are in Fairfax and Sterling, Virginia. Visit bit.ly/InsightMCC or contact Jessica Peters at Jessica.Peters@Insightmcc.org or 703-204-4664 ext. 120.



Shepherd Centers need volunteers to drive adults 50 and older to medical appointments and non-medical errands (e.g. grocery shopping). Contact the Shepherd Center in your area for more information:

- ♦ **Shepherd's Center of Annandale/Springfield**
Call 703-941-1419 or visit ShepherdsCenter-Annandale.org.
- ♦ **Shepherd's Center of Fairfax/Burke**
Call 703-323-4788, visit SCFBVA.org, or email info@scfbva.org.
- ♦ **Shepherd's Center of McLean, Arlington and Falls Church**
Call 703-506-2199, visit SCMAFC.org, or email info@scmafc.org.
- ♦ **Shepherd's Center of Oakton/Vienna/Dunn Loring/Reston/Herndon/Great Falls**
Call 703-281-0538 or visit SCNOVA.org.
- ♦ **Shepherd's Center of South County**
Call 703-799-0505 or email SCSC-Transport@Verizon.net.
- ♦ **Shepherd's Center of Western Fairfax County**
Call 703-246-5920 or visit SCWFC.org.

If you wish to **submit** volunteer opportunities, email Tanya Erway at VolunteerSolutionsRecruitment@FairfaxCounty.gov. 🌟

Join Seniors in Action at the McLean Community Center

by Carrie Conley, McLean Community Center

Come be a part of the Seniors in Action (SIA) Program! Participate in a variety of programs designed to keep you healthy, active and having fun. Build relationships and foster a sense of community while enjoying fitness classes, games, speakers, and social activities. Seniors in Action Program Manager Carrie Conley will help make your time at the McLean Community Center fulfilling and fun.

SIA Memberships: \$100 per year/\$48 MCC district residents.

Register in-person at the McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean, VA 22101 or over the phone at **703-790-0123**, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-1:30 p.m. You can also register online anytime using this link: bit.ly/3JtVBCZ

For more information, visit mcleancenter.org/events/seniors-in-action/ or reach out to Carrie Conley by phone at **703-744-9376** or email at **Caroline.Conley@fairfaxcounty.gov**. ☀

Enjoy a Show While Supporting Young Talent in Your Community

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

If you are a fan of the performing arts but ticket prices have put many professional productions out of reach, consider attending one of the many theatrical productions offered at Fairfax County high and middle schools. The most popular months for theatrical performances are April and May, and schools offer a wide range of productions – from musicals to dramas, classics to modern works. By attending these performances, you will also help support arts programs in the schools and the young artists they nurture.

For a full list of upcoming performances, go to fcps.edu, then from the “Full Menu” dropdown, select “Calendars,” then “Fine and Performing Arts Events.” You can also learn about upcoming performances from signs displayed outside of schools or by calling the front office of your local high or middle school. Tickets for most performances can be purchased online and at the door. Prices vary, but most tickets cost less than \$15 and some schools offer a senior discount. ☀



Above: a performance of the play "Our Town" by students at West Springfield High School. Right: Franklin Middle School students perform the musical "Newsies." Photos courtesy Fairfax County Public Schools.



Important: Changes to Your Snap Benefits

by Amy Carlini, Department of Family Services

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Federal Government passed a law to temporarily increase SNAP benefits to support families.

Recently, the federal government changed the law and the temporary increase to the SNAP benefits will end **February 16, 2023**. Beginning in March, all SNAP benefits will return to normal amounts, without the added supplement.

The Virginia Department of Social Services has created a temporary information line. Please call: **1-855-635-4370**

If you need food now, call Fairfax County Coordinated Services Planning: **703-222-0880**

For more food resources, visit the Human Service Resource Guide online at **FairfaxCounty.gov/HSRG**, and search “food.”



If you receive SNAP you may also be eligible for Medicaid, TANF, Energy Assistance, Child Care Assistance and more. Apply at **CommonHelp.Virginia.gov/access** or apply by phone at **1-833-5-CALL-VA (1-833-522-5582)**. ☀

The Virtual Center for Active Adults: Fighting Social Isolation Through Online Programming

from Neighborhood and Community Services and ServiceSource, Inc.



Since 2020, the Virtual Center for Active Adults (VCAA) has been working to reduce social isolation by creating opportunities for social interaction among older

adults and people with disabilities through a variety of virtual programs, classes, and events.

Older adults and people with disabilities are invited to join the VCAA to participate virtually and make connections. Mixed Media Mondays is hosted weekly at 2 p.m. by volunteer artist Sharon Fishel from the McLean Projects for the Arts. People of varying abilities are welcome to join Sharon's lessons, which she hosts from her home. Participants are encouraged to share their work with others in the group. Another

VCAA partnership with Arts for the Aging showcases interactive online performers who engage the audience through singing, dancing and movement.

Other interactive programs offered on the VCAA include:

- ◆ Exercise programs – yoga, tai chi and others.
- ◆ Discussion groups – Music Lover's Unite, Virtual Travel Group, Book Club, and genealogy programs.
- ◆ A variety of art, dancing, and language classes.
- ◆ Special interest topics and livestreamed holiday performances.

In 2022, the VCAA expanded the virtual community they serve by partnering with Arlington County, Prince William County, and the Town of Vienna to provide in a wider variety of programs and instructors. View the VCAA's full schedule of programs, classes, and events at **bit.ly/NCSvcaa**.

Follow this link to join any of the VCAA classes on a computer, smartphone, or tablet: **bit.ly/VCAAzoom2**. ☀

Protect your Health in Variable Weather

by the Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response, Fairfax County Health Department

While normal body temperature does not change much with aging, it becomes harder for your body to maintain optimal body temperature as you get older. A consequence of variable weather patterns are extreme weather events such as heat waves and freezes. Such extreme weather events make us more prone to weather-related illnesses. As we approach seasonal changes, it is important to become aware of the most common health-risks:



Cold Weather Preparedness

Hypothermia (body temperature below 95°F) is most common at very cold temperatures, but it can occur even at cool temperatures (above 40°F) if you become chilled from rain, sweat, or being in cold water. You can also get hypothermia while indoors if outside cold weather persists or when you are working in cold environments, such as a storage freezer.

Frostbite is caused by prolonged skin exposure to cold outdoors. When the temperature is 0°F or below, it takes about 30 minutes for exposed skin to get frostbite. At -15°F with even a little bit of wind, frostbite is possible within 15 minutes.

Impacts of heart disease including chest pain/angina, heart attack, and risk of stroke are heightened in the

colder months, particularly if you have a history of low body temperature or have had hypothermia in the past.

Hot Weather Preparedness

Heat exhaustion is a warning that your body can no longer keep itself cool. You might feel thirsty, dizzy, weak, uncoordinated, and nauseated. You may sweat a lot. Your body temperature may stay normal, but your skin may feel cold and clammy.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency in which the body's temperature rises above 104°F. Signs of heat stroke include fainting, confusion or acting strangely, not sweating even when it's hot, dry, flushed skin, and a strong, rapid pulse, or a slow, weak pulse.

Heat syncope is a sudden dizziness that can happen when you are active in hot weather. If you take a heart medication called a beta blocker or are not acclimated to hot weather, you are even more likely to feel faint.

Make a habit of the following to be better prepared:

- ◆ Avoid sudden strenuous activity such as shoveling snow in the winter, or landscaping in the summer, if you are not used to doing them on a regular basis. Build your strength and stamina for physical activity slowly and consistently.
- ◆ Eat a healthy diet every day to make sure your body regulates your temperature with changing weather and has enough energy to keep you cool or warm.
- ◆ Make sure to stay hydrated, even when it is cold and limit your alcohol intake.
- ◆ Maintain an optimal temperature at home by season. In the cooler months maintain your home temperature between 68°F and 72°F. In the

hotter months it is recommended to set your air conditioning between 72°F and 78°F.

- ♦ Take steps to manage stress and maintain awareness of any events that affect you emotionally. Incorporate mindfulness, breathing exercises, or meditation in your daily routine.

- ♦ Listen to your body, and if something feels different, make sure to let your healthcare provider know as soon as possible. *

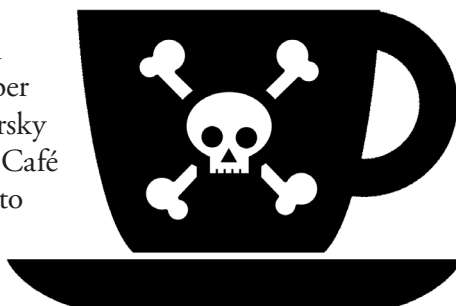
*If you believe you are having a medical emergency, please call 9-1-1 immediately. ☀

What is a Death Café?

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

A Death Café is where people gather to discuss death, often while eating cake and drinking tea. The objective is "to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives." Death Cafés are led by a facilitator, but the discussion that takes place is directed by the group, with no agenda, objectives, or themes. A Death Café is a discussion group, not a grief support group or a counseling session.

Death Cafés were the brainchild of Jon Underwood, who hosted the first Death Café in his home in London in September 2011. Together with his mother, Sue Barsky Reid, Underwood developed the Death Café model and produced a guide for people to run their own Death Café. Death Cafés have been hosted all over the world, including Fairfax County.



Librarian Hannah Risley has been facilitating Death Cafés since 2017, first with Alexandria Library and more recently at Pohick Regional Library, a branch of Fairfax County Public Library. To prepare, Hannah reached out to Death Positive DC founder Sarah Farr, who provided training. Hannah also familiarized herself with the Death Café how-to guide, available at deathcafe.com.

Hannah's experience facilitating Death Cafés has been very positive. Despite the somber topic, she finds that facilitating a Death Café is similar to leading a book club. Her primary role as facilitator is to ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. Hannah begins each of her Death Cafés by asking attendees to introduce themselves and state why they decided to attend the event. At the conclusion of the introductions, she asks

the group if there was something mentioned during the introductions that they want to discuss. After this conversation starter, the discussion continues with little help required.

Hannah has grown to love facilitating Death Cafés because each event brings a new mix of people, and the discussions are always varied and interesting.

The discussion topic during one of her

most recent Death Cafés was green burials and environmentally friendly funerals. The reasons why people choose to attend the events also vary. Many attendees have experienced a recent life-changing event, such as the loss of a loved one or birth of a child, while some attend simply out of curiosity.

Hannah believes that discussing death can be liberating, saying "If we don't talk about something, it can make us anxious. If we talk about death, we can move on and enjoy our lives more." Some participants discover that attending a Death Café has helped them learn how to talk about death with their own family and friends. Hannah has also found the discussion of death brings people together. No matter your beliefs, background or political affiliation, death is something we all share and will someday experience.

Interested in attending a Death Café? Hannah facilitates a Death Café on the first Saturday each month from 3-5 p.m. at Pohick Regional Library. Registration is required and space is limited. Learn more and sign up at FairfaxCounty.gov/library or by calling Pohick Regional Library at 703-644-7333, TTY 711. ☀

Senior Centers Celebrate Another Successful Winter Warming Service Project

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

For the fourth year in a row, Fairfax County senior centers collected new, homemade or purchased adult and youth hats, scarves, mittens and gloves for their Winter Warming Service Project. Over 2,500 items were collected this year, exceeding last year's total of just over 2,000 items.

Donated items were collected at all 14 Fairfax County senior centers and many of the donations were knit or crocheted by senior center staff and participants. Other big donors include ServiceSource, Inc., the Shawl Ministry at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, the Mt. Vernon Adult Social Club and the Therapeutic Recreation Services division of Neighborhood and Community Services. Two individuals also contributed generously – Tammy Chinyavong and Kathy Fries, formerly the Assistant Director at Pimmit Hills Senior Center.

Many of the items collected were given to four local nonprofit organizations – HomeStretch, Cornerstones, Shelter House, and HumanKind Foster Care – for

distribution to the communities they serve, including adults and families experiencing homelessness. Items were also donated to survivors of the devastating earthquakes that hit Turkey and Syria on February 6.

Items were also included in gift bags as part of the Christmas Hope project. For this project, senior center staff assembled and distributed holiday gift bags containing an assortment of useful items for winter months. The bags were given to residents placed in Tall Oaks Assisted Living Center and Dulles Health & Rehabilitation Center using county grants and had no family or other means to receive a Christmas gift.

Thank you to everyone who generously donated to the drive! Many Golden Gazette readers also donated yarn at senior centers, which participants put to good use knitting hats and scarves.

Senior Centers continue to accept donations of new, clean yarn – any color, size or blend is welcome. To find a senior center near you, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/senior-centers. ☀



Top, senior center staff and participants show off items they made for the drive. Bottom, bins of hats and scarves collected during the drive. Photo courtesy Neighborhood and Community Services.

March Community Calendar

Softball Players Needed!

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Women over the age of 40 and all skill levels are welcome. We play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit goldengirls.org.

Players Needed for Northern Virginia Senior Softball

For fun, fitness, friendship, and to avoid dementia, join one of 24 slow-pitch softball teams! We welcome men 50+ and women 40+ of all skill levels. Our average age is 66, with many players in their 80s. No tryout, just an assessment for team-level assignment. Two games, each Tuesday and Thursday morning, April-July, and Fall Ball, September-October. For more information, call Dave at 703-663-7881.

Young at Heart Senior Center Advisory Council Craft and Flea Market

Saturday, March 4, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center,
3740 Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax

Join us to shop, eat, and enjoy friendly company while supporting this Green Acres Senior Center fundraiser.

Fairfax County Consumer Affairs Day

Thursday, March 9, 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Fairfax County Government Center,
12000 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax

Join Fairfax County's Consumer Affairs for this free event dedicated to educating and protecting consumers. This event will include special presentations on topics such as Consumer 101, Tenant Landlord Rights and Responsibilities, Funeral Planning, and Scams. The event will also feature vendor exhibits that you can visit before and after the presentations. Please register by calling **703-222-8435**, TTY **711** or email **consumer@fairfaxcounty.gov**. For more information, visit **FairfaxCounty.gov/cableconsumer/csd**.

Emergency Preparedness: Preparation for Spring & Summer Emergencies

Tuesday, March 14, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Join the Virtual Center for Active Adults for a virtual presentation about emergency preparedness. For more information, visit **bit.ly/novaVCAA**; To join the virtual presentation on Zoom, visit **bit.ly/VCAAzoom2**; Meeting ID: 905 123 5932; Password: 3636

"Investigating the Evidence" with Judy G. Russell, CG, CGL

Saturday, March 18, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Sponsored by the Fairfax Genealogical Society (FxGS), this event will be both virtual via Zoom and in-person at the Dunn Loring Fire Hall, 2148 Gallows Road, Dunn Loring. The first session, "When Worlds Collide: Resolving Conflicts in Genealogical Research," will be an interactive workshop. The second session, on negative evidence, will begin after lunch.

Price is \$35 for FxGS members, \$40 for nonmembers, and \$12 for lunch (provided by Jason's Deli). Register at **fxgs2023mar.eventbrite.com**. Visit **fxgs.org** for more information.

Find Your Military Family at Mount Vernon Genealogy Society's Annual Conference

Saturday, March 25, 8:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Rd.,
Alexandria

Hear nationally renowned genealogists discuss how to track down records of your military family members and those who supported them. Speakers will share their thoughts on how this research contributes to a deeper understanding of our ancestors and a richer social history of our nation. Registration is \$40. Register at **mvgenealogy.org/cpage.php?pt=86**. Find out more about the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society at **mvgenealogy.org**.

Home for Life 2023 EXPO

Friday, March 31, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center,
3740 Blenheim Blvd, Fairfax

Free event presented by Fairfax Village in the City. Join Village members and volunteers as we consider the challenges of our current living situations, learn how to adapt for safe and successful aging, and meet local agencies and providers who can help us do just that – or find desirable alternatives. For questions, email **Jason.Scadron@fairfaxva.gov** or call **703-385-5738**.

Virtual National Theater Musical Performance featuring Steve Gellman

Friday, March 31, 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Join the Virtual Center for Active Adults for a virtual musical performance. For more information, visit **bit.ly/novaVCAA**; To join the virtual presentation on Zoom, visit **bit.ly/VCAAzoom2**; Meeting ID: 905 123 5932; Password: 3636

Please note that dates, prices, and times are correct at publishing. However, please confirm information by calling or checking using the phone numbers or websites provided.

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- Saturday, March 4th, 10 AM - 12 PM
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- Saturday, March 25th, 10 AM - 12 PM
(Panera Bread lunch is included)

Seminar location: 3918 Prosperity Ave. #114, Fairfax VA 22031