

The Prince George's Post



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Prince George's Community College Announces New President

By COURTNEY DAVIS

Prince George's Community College

LARGO, Md. (June 1, 2020)—The Prince George's Community College Board of Trustees announced today the selection of Dr. Falecia D. Williams as the College's ninth president. She will succeed Dr. Charlene M. Dukes, who has enjoyed a stellar 25-year tenure including 13 years as president.

Mr. Sidney Gibson, chair of the Board of Trustees said, "We had a highly competitive pool of candidates which resulted in the three outstanding finalists. However, when evaluated against PGCC's highest strategic priorities, Dr. Williams consistently excelled. Given our spectacular record of local, state, and national achievement and our ambitious vision for PGCC, when compared to Dr. Williams' demonstrated competencies, character, and courage, she quickly emerged as the obvious choice. Her professional experiences amplify her commitment to access, excellence in teaching, learning, and student success, equitable outcomes, strategic partnerships, and community engagement."

Dr. Williams comes from the 68,000 student, Valencia College in Orlando, Fla., where she has served as president of the Downtown

and West campuses that serve more than 30,000 students. Dr. Williams was responsible for providing academic, administrative, and fiscal leadership to support the vision, mission, and values of Valencia College. She led a team of 17 administrators including 15 deans and oversaw 13 academic divisions, the library and learning support services, two student service divisions, and two faculty senate presidents. She also managed a \$41 million budget. Dr. Williams has been associated with Valencia College for over 22 years, advancing progressively in responsibilities including: Part-time professor, Student Success & Service Learning; Postsecondary, team lead; director, Dual Enrollment; director, Transition Program; dean for Workforce Development; assistant vice president for Workforce Development; interim provost for West Campus, then president; and president Downtown Campus. Prior to Valencia College, Dr. Williams served for 10 years as a K-12 educator and coordinator.

A noted expert in Pathways, PGCC's highest strategic student success priority, as a campus president at Valencia College, Dr. Williams implemented a comprehensive \$1.5



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Dr. Falecia D. Williams has been selected as the College's ninth president.

million Title III Pathways project to revamp student services, upgrade educational planning tools, pilot early alert protocols, and increase faculty engagement in coaching stu-

See **PRESIDENT** Page A5

Deadline Approaching to Enroll in a Health Plan

Marylanders have until **June 15** to enroll in a health plan through Maryland Health Connection's Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period. More than 38,000 Marylanders have already received coverage since our state of emergency began in March, and have health coverage that will protect themselves and their families not just now, but in the future.

You can also enroll by filing your state taxes by July 15. On your state tax forms (502 and 502B) check the box to share your information with Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to see if you qualify for free or low cost health insurance.

We are committed to providing access to affordable health coverage for Marylanders during this difficult time, and beyond.

Michele Eberle

Executive Director, Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

Prince George's County Opens New Appointment-Only COVID-19 Testing Site in the Chillum/Langley Park Area

New testing site offers convenience to Latino community; County encourages symptomatic and asymptomatic people get tested.

By GEORGE LETTIS
PG County Health Dept.

LARGO, Md. (June 7, 2020)—The Prince George's County Health Department's second free community COVID-19 testing site has opened at the Rollingcrest-Chillum Recreation Center, located at 6120 Sargent Road, Chillum, MD 20782. Testing at this site is by appointment only. The center can accommodate both drive-thru and walk-up testing of those with or without symptoms.

"It is well-documented that black and brown communities nationwide have been hit the hardest by the pandemic and are most at-risk for serious illness," said Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "My top priority is the health, safety, and well-being of every Prince

George's County resident. This additional testing site will make COVID-19 testing more convenient for our Latino residents."

To schedule an appointment at a Prince George County Health Department testing site, call the County's coronavirus hotline at 301-883-6627. Appointments are available at the following testing sites operated by the Prince George's County Health Department:

Rollingcrest-Chillum Recreation Center

6120 Sargent Rd, Chillum, MD 20782

By appointment only: Monday-Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Cheverly Health Center

3003 Hospital Drive, Cheverly, MD 20782

By appointment only: Monday-Friday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bowie State Announces Fall 2020 Plan to Return to Campus

Students to Learn On-Site & Online, With On-Campus Priority on First-Year Students

Students to Learn On-Site & Online, With On-Campus Priority on First-Year Students

By DAMITA CHAMBERS
Bowie State University

BOWIE, Md. (June 1, 2020)—Bowie State University announces a plan to return to on-campus learning and working after COVID-19 restrictions, using a phased approach to reduce the number of people on campus and protect the health and well-being of the students, employees and the public.

The Bowie State fall semester begins Monday, August 31, with a plan that follows guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for effective physical distancing and recommendations from the University System of Maryland (USM) for its 12 member universities.

BSU students will take a mix of in-person classes, classes that use in-person and virtual methods, as well as fully remote classes. All classes will be delivered remotely after the Thanksgiving break. First-year

students will receive priority for in-person classes and on-campus housing to aid in their transition to college life.

"Success in the first year is critical to students' academic and personal development," said Bowie State University President Aminta H. Breaux. "The direct engagement with our faculty, along with immersive co-curricular activities, are important in nurturing their ability to persist at the university."

BSU hopes to offer in-person classes for some upper-class students, particularly those in programs where hands-on learning and access to specialized equipment are difficult to replicate virtually. Some on-campus housing will be available for upper-class students with special circumstances, and efforts are underway to secure additional off-campus housing for those students.

See **BOWIE STATE** Page A8



PHOTO COURTESY HARMONY HALL CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (DAR)

Pictured are Harmony Hall Chapter members Shawn Garren and Andrea Parish, Chestnut Oaks Assistant Director of Community Relations Terri Bridgeman and Director of Community Relations Tami Ramzzidin, Harmony Hall Chapter Regent Deanna Lutz, and Vice Regent Lori Sebastian.

Harmony Hall Chapter, NSDAR, Mask Makers Deliver in a Time of Need

By PRESS OFFICER

Harmony Hall Chapter NSDAR

FORT WASHINGTON, Md. (June 1, 2020)—The Harmony Hall Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) is lending a helping hand to healthcare and other essential workers on the front lines of the pandemic, ensuring that area residents and facilities have more protective wear resources to face the threat of the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

As of May 22, the four Mask Makers of Harmony Hall Chapter DAR in Fort Washington, Maryland have sewn and donated masks to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bonnie Blink Maryland Masonic Home, and others in need around the community such as Chestnut Oaks Senior Living Community in Fort Washington ensuring that no resident will have to go without a mask.

"While chapter meetings have been suspended during this time

of Stay at Home, serving those in our community remains a priority," said Deanna Lutz, Regent of the Harmony Hall Chapter. "We know these are tough times for everyone and the members of the chapter want to do whatever we could to help."

Nationwide, DAR chapters from all 50 states have been participating in the organization's Service to America From Home initiative with more than 430,000 masks already being donated and tens of thousands more produced every day to be distributed in local communities.

"I am exceptionally proud of what DAR members are accomplishing as part of a proud tradition of service that dates to our 1890 founding," said Denise Doring VanBuren, DAR President General. "In difficult times like these, we know that it is not the emergency that defines us, but how we respond to it."

To learn more about the DAR and the work of the Harmony Hall Chapter, please visit www.harmonyhall.marylanddar.org.

INSIDE

Maryland Pro Bono Service Award Given to Prince George's County Judge

The judicial honor went to Judge Cathy H. Serrette of Prince George's County who has spent her entire career serving people in poverty and advancing civil rights.

Community, Page A3

ChildWatch: Hope Through the Suffering

... this cry is different. Across the nation and world Blacks, Whites and people of all colors, including those who had never before joined a protest against racial injustice, are coming together, speaking up, and loudly proclaiming the same essential truth: Black lives matter.

Commentary, Page A4

Beyond Spots & Dots Launches \$15,000 Women-to-Women Grant Program

"...We want to pay that forward and ensure if we are able to offer a helping hand, we do, and to the people who need it most. We're committed to the community," said Melanie Querry, Founder and President, Beyond Spots & Dots.

Business and Finance, Page A5

Shop Locally, Help the Bay's Environment and Economy

Our actions at home have an impact on the health of our neighbors, lands, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay and our economy. Let's work together to keep everything and everyone healthy.

Environment, Page A6

The Importance of Contact Tracing

CovidLINK is a fundamental part of how Maryland is responding to the coronavirus outbreak. But your response is the most important part of this process.

Ready For a Splash, But What's in the Water?

Health and Wellness, Page A7

TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

New hospital for COVID patients opens in Fort Washington

Councilwoman Monique Anderson-Walker attended the unveiling and tour of the STAAT ModTM (Strategic, Temporary, Acuity-Adaptable Treatment), the new prefabricated ICU wing at Adventist HealthCare Fort Washington Medical Center, and emailed me about it.

This is the first hospital in the nation to install units to care for COVID-19 and other critical patients, with these airborne infection isolation rooms (AIIR) which provide increased safety for patients and caregivers.

The impressive 16 units, designed by HGA and prefabricated and assembled by The Boldt Company, arrived on April 25. They are ready for COVID-19 patients.

Maryland's known coronavirus cases

There have been 54,982 reported cases in Maryland through June 4 at 5 p.m.; 807 were added the day before.

There have been 2,641 deaths; 44 are new.

Neighbors & other good people

Randy Geogemiller, of Morningside, posted a message on NextDoorMorningside: "Consider supporting a local artist during this challenging time. Plus, Nico's work is amazing. See for yourself... <https://nicogilkart.com/shop/>"

Colleen Melton, whose obit I ran in last week's column, was a member of Local #26 IBEW. If you recall, she was a Master Electrician.

Kenneth F. Harris II was the winner in the June 2 Primary for the nonpartisan Board of Education seat. He'll represent our area, District 7.

We're still awaiting the Primary count for some Maryland offices, but I hardly need tell you that Joe Biden (D) and Donald Trump (R) won for President in the Maryland Primary.

And I'm still locked down, provided plenty of good food by my local children and grandkids.

I'm saddened by the tragic death of George Floyd and amazed at the reaction, not only by civil unrest in Washington, but the protests around the world. I'm profoundly disturbed that combat troops

have been called in, with teargas and rubber bullets, to silence protesters.

The First Amendment: "Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Rory's story

Rory Lohman recently emailed, interested in receiving my column, and I asked him—as I always do—to tell me about himself.

He's the son of John and Pauline Lohman who moved to 409 Allies Road about 1959. John Lohman was a member of the Morningside Fire Department.

Rory attended Morningside School, Spaulding, Foulis and Crossland. But he didn't graduate because, in his senior year, he joined the Army. He emailed, "I ended up going to Germany, guarding the borders at East Germany and Czechoslovakia for 6 years. That's where I met my young wife Bruni who is from Germany."

He stayed in the Army for 46 years, retiring as Chief Warrant Officer. He retired as a disabled veteran at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Rory and Bruni have been married for 46 years, "and are still going strong." They have two children, Regina and Rory Jr., and two grandkids. They live in Huntingtown, Calvert County.

McNamara commencement features VIPs

Bishop McNamara High School's 54th Annual Commencement Ceremony honored the Class of 2020 on May 22. Due to the pandemic, the school created a senior celebration that featured special messages from alumni Tyoka Jackson '89 and Jeff Kinney '89 ("Diary of a Wimpy Kid" author), as well as NBC anchor Pat Lawson Muse.

Also featured were an instrumental performance by Bailey Jade Guy '20, singing by Bishop McNamara student Sadia Bonkapr Bangura '20, and an invocation by Rev. Robert Boxie III, Parochial Vicar, St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Celebrating Prince Georgians a century or older

It's time for Special Recognition of those who live in Prince George's County and are 100 years or older (born no later than 1920). For information about how to register, contact the coordinator at centenarian@pgparks.com.

Changing landscape

Smithsonian property in Suitland is poised to grow significantly. It's the Smithsonian's largest off-site storage facility. However, several of the buildings have outlived their life expectancy. There will be new buildings and major expansion of the capacity in the decades to come.

A groundbreaking ceremony marks the start of the new Emergency Department and front entrance expansion at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital. The new department will boast 50% more treatment rooms, redesigned waiting area, new retail pharmacy and—get this!—a 24-hour café.

Jobs

Prince George's Schools are hiring. They're seeking educators, nurses and others. For information, call the Schools' office at 301-952-6000.

Jean Beardmore, once lived on Maple Road

Jean Merriman Beardmore, 79, formerly of Maple Road in Morningside, died Feb. 7. In recent years she lived in Front Royal, Va.

Survivors include her husband of 60 years, Lawrence L. Beardmore, sons John and Paul, daughters Sharon and Lisa, ten grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Lansdale Sasser Jr., delegate, lawyer, tobacco farmer

Lansdale Sasser Jr., 93, Maryland state delegate from 1955 to 1963, died April 13 at his historic family home in Upper Marlboro. He was the son of Congressman Lansdale Sasser and Agnes Coffren Sasser.

He was a partner in the Upper Marl-

See MORNINGSIDe Page A3

Around the County

Taneasha Hines Receives Hair Loss Certificate

Taneasha Hines completed a hair loss certification class at the Atlanta Airport Westin on May 6, 2020. She is certified as a hair loss specialist which allows her to work with dermatologists and oncologists. She was encouraged to participate with "Look Good, Feel Better" through the American Cancer Society to assist women suffering from hair loss, as they undergo chemotherapy. She was trained to service men, women, and children by learning to measure and fit a client for a hair loss system and/or unit.

If you or someone you know is suffering from hair loss issues, Taneasha Hines can be reached at Posh Hair Designz, 3407 Ft. Meade Rd, Suite 90, Laurel, MD 20724. For more information, visit www.officialposhair.com or call 240-898-6523.



PHOTO COURTESY TANEASHA HINES

Local Students Honored

Prince George's County Students Recognized For Academic Achievement at Berkeley College

WOODLAND PARK, NJ (June 4, 2020)—Students from Prince George's County have been named to the President's and Dean's Lists at Berkeley College for the winter 2020 semester.

"The work ethic and talent of these students will serve them well as they prepare to graduate and progress toward their future success," said Michael J. Smith, President of Berkeley College.

The following students from Prince George's County have been recognized:

President's List: **Zyaira Peters** of Fort Washington

Dean's List: **Nichole Williamson** of Upper Marlboro

Berkeley College students who achieve a grade point average of 4.00 with a minimum of 12 academic credits qualify for the President's List. Students who achieve a grade point average of 3.50 or better with a minimum of 12 academic credits qualify for the Dean's List.

—Ilene Greenfield, Berkeley College

Sharada M. Weaver graduates from Goshen College

GOSHEN, Ind. (June 4, 2020)—**Sharada M. Weaver**, of Hyattsville, graduated from Goshen College this spring with a bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary major in nursing, psychology and biology with a minor in music.

Members of the Goshen College Class of 2020 were honored during the college's 122nd commencement ceremony, held virtually, on April 26. The Class of 2020 consisted of 244 graduates who were awarded the following degrees: 134 Bachelor of Arts, 38 Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 4 Bachelor of Science, 16 Master of Science in Nursing as family nurse practitioners, 10 Master of Arts in Environmental Education and 16 Master of Business Administration.

—Brian A. Yoder Schlabach, Goshen College

Tiffany Blake Graduates From Clarion University

CLARION, Pa. (June 3, 2020)—**Tiffany Blake**, Bowie, MD, graduated with a MSLS Information and Library Science in May from Clarion University of Pennsylvania.

—Tina M. Horner, Clarion University

Lycoming College Announces Most Recent Graduates

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (June 2, 2020)—Lycoming College extends a warm congratulations to recent graduate **Tamara Collington** (Upper Marlboro, MD), who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice/Criminology and a minor in Philosophy.

Lycoming College Celebrates Spring 2020 Dean's List

WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. (June 1, 2020)—The Lycoming College Dean's List is issued at the close of each semester in recognition of superior scholarship. **Taylor Jackson**, '22 of Temple Hills, MD, was recognized for academic excellence for the Spring of 2020. Jackson currently has an undeclared major.

Students make the Dean's List if they complete at least 12 semester hours and earn a minimum grade point average of 3.50 for the semester.

—Marla Kramer, Lycoming College

New Service for Victims of Domestic Violence BREAK THE SILENCE!

Domestic Violence Hurts Everyone

The non-profit Community Crisis Services, Inc. a 24/7/365 organization that has been offering support services and hotlines in areas including domestic violence, mental health, homelessness, abuse and neglect, as well as suicide prevention, since 1970, added a Domestic Violent Chat Line on June 1.

This chat will be available daily from 10 a.m.—4 p.m.

Individuals who may need this chat, or any of the other services provided, should visit www.communitycrisis.org

—Courtesy Cheverly Police Department

Pre-Father's Day Celebration and "Virtual Men's Cookout"

Join Prince George's County State's Attorney Aisha N. Braveboy and Principal Deputy Jason Abbott for a Pre-Father's Day Celebration and "Virtual Men's Cookout" **Friday, June 19, 2020** from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The event will feature special guest speakers Former Seattle Sea Hawk Derrick Fenner and Former Washington Redskin Brian Mitchell.

There will be prizes for best grill and meal presentations. So, for all of the "backyard grill masters," please like and follow @pgsaonews on Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter and post a photo in your "grill gear" using the hashtag #pgsaonewsCookout.

If you would like to attend this online event, please register on Eventbrite.

For more information, send an email to tamichaelides@co.pg.md.us.

See AROUND THE COUNTY Page A3

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

GLOBAL EDUCATORS

Two Global Educators join Bowie State University's revamped International office. Two international educators with strong backgrounds in delivering life-changing study abroad experiences for college students have joined Bowie State University's revamped International Office, boosting the global engagement for Maryland's first historically black university.

Named the new director of international education and services, Qimamah Najreullah is a seasoned international educator leader, who is committed to diversifying America's image abroad and increasing African Americans' participation in global affairs. Patrick Frazier, named the study abroad coordinator, has more than 15 years of experience of opening doors to opportunity to students to study abroad. Media Contact: Damita Chambers, dchambers@bowiestate.edu.

SPRING 2020 VIRTUAL COMMENCEMENT CELEBRATION

Bowie State University Spring 2020 Virtual Commencement Celebration will be held Friday, June 26 at 3 p.m. featuring student photos and celebrating video clips along with congratulatory messages from campus leaders and supporters to honor the achievements of the graduating class.

BRANDYWINE PRIMARY CARE

"Now accepting new patients in Brandywine. John Hopkins Community Physicians offers a complete range of health services for the whole family. Internal medicine physician Bonita Coe, M.D., and family medicine nurse practitioner Tamika Jones, C.R.N.P., would be honored to care for you and your family. They are proud to offer family medicine (care for adults and children) and internal medicine. Now scheduling appointments online or by phone, JHCP.ORG/BRANDYWINE or dial 301-242-5678."

"The address is 7704 Matapeake Business Drive, Suite 110, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Complimentary parking available. Primary Care Brandywine is in the Brandywine Crossing Medical Office Building between CarMax and Xscape Theatres." Information: John Hopkins Medicine

HAWKS ABROAD 2021

As COVID-19 has interrupted many schedules, sophomores Princess Sarah Bentil and Aleecia Joof are planning for their study abroad experiences as they were selected as Frederick Douglass Summer Scholars for summer 2021. The students were awarded a \$1,500 grant and \$500 towards airfare as a part of the Council on International Educational

Exchange's (CIEE) Frederick Douglass Global Fellowship. Sarah Bentil, a business major, has goals of being an international business woman and plans to study in Barcelona, Spain. The Laurel, Maryland native is currently Miss Sophomore at University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

In addition to the study abroad award, Joof was also selected to attend the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) for the upcoming academic year. The human ecology major (fashion merchandising concentration) and Greenbelt, Maryland native plans to study in Paris, France working toward her goal of a career in marketing and fashion merchandising. Their advice to fellow Hawks is "take advantage of study abroad opportunities and don't procrastinate." Information from UMES THE KEY, a newsletter for student, faculty, staff, alumni and friends, May/June 2020.

CEDAR HAVEN FISHING AREA

Fishing is permitted along the shore at Cedar Haven Fishing Area. A Chesapeake Bay Sport Fishing License is required. The address is 18400 Phyllis Wheatley Blvd., Eagle Harbor, Maryland 20608.

JUNE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to William King, Stephanie Samuel, Jasmine Taylor, Sandra Miley, Ruth Wilson, Rendell Crawford, Rita Pinkney, June Fauber, Louise Gordon, Sally Fauber Lucas, Yolanda Jackson, Atara Serene Scott-Bourne, Avia Balkcom-Williams, Tawana Lindsay, Zazzmy Simmons, Carol Bell, Eddie Wilson, Barbara Marsh, Beverly Bunnie" Baker, Madison Falby, Raymond Porchea, Alston, Knight, Kendra Neal, Christopher Quarm, Rodney Tyree, Shiloh Bell, Barbara Harris, Rahsaan Silas Thomas who are celebrating birthdays in June.

JUNE WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Wedding Anniversary to Joachim and Esther Neckere, Nathaniel and Sheila Holmes, Tony, Sr. and Beatrice Chapman, Henry and Idena Thomas, William and Quiviana Stroman, Brewer and Pauline Clark, Robert and Sandy Miley, Daniel and Carolyn Glee, Joseph and Nadia Prah who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating their Wedding Anniversaries in June.

OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

A little bit of everything. Alumni Engagement News and Updates. Bowie State University Office of Alumni Engagement Facebook Page. #BSU4LIFE#BSUBOLD. Join the virtual conversation every Wednesday at 5 p.m. on the BSU Office of Alumni Engagement Facebook Page.

COMMUNITY

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Don't Let Screen Time Take Over

The COVID-19 crisis and restricted social contact has many of us spending more time in front of electronic screens. It might be the family TV, our business laptop, or streaming on our smart phone. For our kids it's often some gaming device or social media via their phones. Whatever, the result is that our screen time is increasing significantly.

While business demands for adults and online classes for kids are clear reasons why today's world requires us to spend more time with our electronic devices, many of us are also spending a great many more voluntary hours online just to fill in time. This is often not a good thing.

Too much screen time isn't going to make you go blind, though it can lead to eye fatigue and headaches. But those excessive hours online can have a negative effect on family life.

If every family member constantly has their faces buried in their favorite electronic time killers, there is usually less time for family sharing and interaction. You may notice your kids aren't sleeping as usual, they seem to get little or no exercise, and have trouble showing up at set mealtimes. Look a little closer and you may find that your own screen time is also encroaching on what should be other, normal activities for you.

So how to fix the problem? A starting point is simply to develop a schedule. Video game time for the kids isn't whenever they can't think of anything else to do, but maybe a two hour block after they've done their chores or schoolwork, and another block while dinner is being prepared. If there's online class assignments to be tackled, make that clearly separated on the schedule from play time.

Adults' screen time can also be scheduled. Time spent watching TikTok videos, or constantly streaming old TV shows can usually be used in more productive and fulfilling ways. Yes, physical exercise and outdoor time should be on the schedule, but art projects, reading, gardening or starting a new hobby can also deserve time blocks.

Having to turn off that electronic plaything with nothing else to do is going to frustrate both kids and adults. But using that time instead for something interesting, maybe even educational or fun, makes the day more fulfilling and can help make time back online more enjoyable and entertaining, which is what it should be.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACACorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org.

Morningside from A2

boro law firm, Sasscer, Clagett & Bucher, past president of the Upper Marlboro Lions Club and the Bank of Brandywine, Co-Publisher/Co-Owner of The Enquirer-Gazette, tobacco farmer, and Senior Warden of Trinity Episcopal Church.

Survivors include his wife of 64 years, Anne; three daughters, seven grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

Milestones

Happy birthday to Aimee Crawford, Joel McCune and Cameron Nichols, June 13Rep. Steny Hoyer, June 14; Kara Dameron, Dot Pfeil and June Zaccagnino, June 15; Helen Padgett and Lucia Scott, June 16; Bill Kimbles, June 18; and Stephanie Phipps, June 19.

Happy anniversary to Jill and Ken Kimmel on their 22nd, June 15; Ange and Marlyn Meoli, their 58th on June 16; and Steve and Cornelia Blankenship, their 15th on June 18.

Around the County from A2

Virtual Youth Speaks Forum

We are calling all youth! Join Prince George's County Office of Community Relations for a creative community event facilitated by youth and for youth to have a voice in exploring community-centric topics, issues, and challenges we are facing today. This forum will focus on topics including community policing and mental health. The virtual forum will be held **Saturday, June 13** from 1 to 2 p.m. Please register to attend: ocr.mypgc.us.

PGCMLS Virtual Author Events

Wednesday, June 17, 7 p.m.

George M. Johnson discusses his debut young adult memoir "All Boys Aren't Blue" (Macmillan, 2020). Johnson explores his childhood, adolescence, and college years in New Jersey and Virginia. Register via www.crowdcast.io/pgcmls **Friday, June 19, 11 a.m.**

Antoine Lunsford, as an elementary school educator and author, provides children with quality literature that unfolds a captivating story with cool characters that teach valuable life lessons to students. "Little Andy: The Greatest Recess Monitor Ever," is the first in the "Little Andy's World," series, which Lunsford published within four months in the fall of 2017. Enjoy this virtual local author read-aloud on Friday, June 19 at 11 a.m. Register: www.crowdcast.io/pgcmls **Monday, June 22, 7 p.m.**

"Hamilton" fans who are familiar with the soundtrack or the show won't want to miss the discussion with University of Maryland historian, Richard Bell, Ph.D. Bell will explore the musical phenomenon of the successful marriage of history and show business. Be sure to attend this virtual event, Hamilton: How the Musical Remixes American History on **Monday, June 22 at 7 p.m.** Register: www.crowdcast.io/pgcmls

Maryland Pro Bono Service Award Given to Prince George's County Judge

Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland Names 2020 Maryland Pro Bono Service Award Recipients Attorneys and organizations from across Maryland recognized

By PRESS OFFICER
Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland

BALTIMORE (May 20, 2020)—Seven attorneys, one judge, one law firm and three organizations have been selected for the 2020 Maryland Pro Bono Service Awards: a celebration of exemplary commitment to pro bono service awarded by the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland (PBRC). PBRC plans to officially honor the winners during the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) Legal Excellence Week scheduled for the Fall of 2020.

Individual award winners include: Jack Condliffe of Baltimore County; Deborah Devan of Baltimore City; Ellen Dew of Baltimore City; Garrett Fitzgerald of Talbot County; Jonathon Gladstone of Anne Arundel County; Stephanie Joseph of Montgomery County and Joy Sakamoto-Wengel of the Attorney General's Office. **The judicial honor went to Judge Cathy H. Serrette of Prince George's County** and the Law Offices of Michael Connolly of Baltimore County received the Law Firm Award. The organizations taking the lead in pro bono contributions include the: Annapolis Immigration Justice Network (AIJN); Association of Corporate Counsel: Baltimore Chapter; and the Maryland State Association of Accountants and Tax Professionals.

The nominations of these individuals revealed that they all shared similar traits: professionalism, compassion, fearless advocacy, and a zealous dedication to helping as many clients as possible. This year's winners helped in a wide range of case areas, from bankruptcy, criminal record expungement, children's wel-

**Cathy Serrette, Judge,
Circuit Court Prince George's County**
Nominated by: Karen Jensen, Retired judge

Judge Serrette has spent her entire career serving people in poverty and advancing civil rights. In her private practice before joining the bench, she offered pro bono services in family law, human trafficking, and juvenile justice cases through multiple organizations. A particular passion has been her advocacy on child welfare, and once on the bench, she committed herself to leading efforts on foster care enhancement, special immigrant juvenile status (SIJS) for unaccompanied immigrant children, and re-entry for youth. In 2002, Judge Serrette was appointed to the Court of Appeals' Standing Committee on Pro Bono where she continues to serve as an active member encouraging the southern Maryland region in particular to engage in pro bono service. She serves on the Access to Justice Commission, served on the board of Community Legal Services for years, co-chaired the Partners for Justice Conference and was President of PBRC among numerous other activities.



PHOTO COURTESY PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER OF MARYLAND

fare, to immigration status. A few of the winners accepted over 100+ pro bono cases in addition to their full-time jobs and mentored the next generation of attorneys. As for the solo law firm and organizations, all of them demonstrated a deep commitment to serving the disenfranchised.

"I am immensely impressed with the level of commitment and service of these often-unsung heroes. They are changing lives and stabilizing communities in every corner of the state, demonstrating the impact of advocacy for those without the means to access the justice system. It is incumbent upon those privileged to practice law to use their license and skills to empower those without," com-

mented Sharon E. Goldsmith, Executive Director of the Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland.

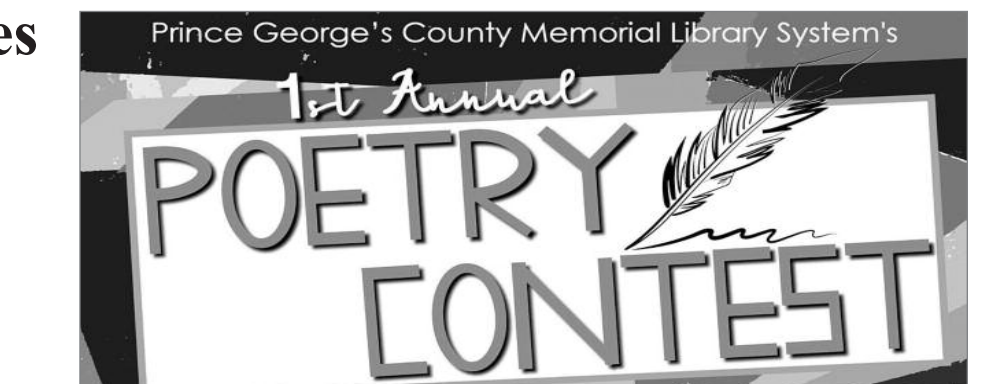
The Maryland Pro Bono Service Awards were designed to honor attorneys, judges, and organizations who have gone above and beyond for their community. The judging panel was comprised of PBRC board members. For more information on the Maryland Pro Bono Service Awards, please visit <https://probonomd.org/awards/>

Pro Bono Resource Center of Maryland is the pro bono arm of the Maryland State Bar Association and helps increase access to justice to vulnerable Marylanders by connecting attorneys to pro bono service.

Library Announces Winners of First Annual Poetry Contest

By DONNA SCOTT-MARTIN
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (June 4, 2020)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) announces the winners of its First Annual Poetry Contest, which is made possible by the Friends of the Upper Marlboro Branch Library. The contest was open to all ages and Prince George's County residents, and this year's theme is "Summer/Vacation." Poetry submissions were evaluated by a panel of PGCMLS staff and local poets in three categories: children, teens, and adults. The Library's First Annual Poetry Awards and Celebration [took] place as a virtual event [last] Saturday, June 6. The program featured awards for the PGCMLS First Annual Poetry Contest winners with special appearances by Prince George's County Poet Laureate Sistah Joy Alford and poet Hiram Larew, a member of the Board of Library Trustees. An archive video is available on PGCMLS YouTube. Visit www.pgcmls.info. Awardees are listed below by category.



PGCMLS POETRY CONTEST WINNERS

Poems by Children 2020

First Place: "Summer" by Naomi Wilson
Second Place: "Not a Predictable Summer" by Olaoluwa Oni
Third Place: "inside my hart" by Bryson Wood
Honorable Mention: "Beach in the summer" by Alyssa Banford
Honorable Mention: "Summer in the Philippines is hot" by Lauren Merillana

Poems by Teens 2020

First Place: "In Mayaguez" by Marissa Michel
Second Place: "Summer Too" by Cecilia Fenstermaker
Third Place: "staycation." by Noelle Gonzales Jackson
Honorable Mention: "Earth's Treasure" by Ramatulai Kanu

Honorable Mention: "Reminiscent Vision" by Mia Gonzales Jackson

Poems by Adults 2020

First Place: "Dog Days" by Will Staton
Second Place: "Our Summer Vacation: The Wilds of the Backyard" by Robert Jones
Third Place: "Getaway" by Warren Palmer II
Honorable Mention: "Summer in MD" by Taylore Willis
Honorable Mention: "Sandcastles in the Sky" by Scott Hommel
Honorable Mention: "Any Place But Home" by Samuel Jackson (5/8/20 version)

"The Library is thrilled with the success of the first annual poetry contest. We congratulate all of the winners and participants on their fantastic submissions," said Nicholas Brown, PGCMLS Chief Operating Officer for Communication and Outreach.

Council Chair Todd M. Turner and Council Member Derrick Leon Davis Encourage Residents to Participate in Bowie-Mitchellville & Vicinity Master Plan Kickoff Event

Virtual Kickoff Meeting Saturday, June 13

By ANGELA ROUSON
Prince George's County Council Media

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 5)—Prince George's County Council Chair Todd M. Turner (D – District 4) and Council Member Derrick Leon Davis (D- District 6) encourage residents to join a virtual (given the current state of emergency) kickoff meeting for the Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan on Saturday, June 13, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. The meeting will highlight the initiation of a new Master Plan for approximately 59 square miles of northeastern Prince George's County, including the entire City of Bowie, Mitchellville, Collington and other surrounding communities.

Initiated by the Maryland-National Capital Planning and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and the Prince George's County Council, this is the first Master Plan update since the 2018 Council adoption of the new Zoning Rewrite Ordinance.

The Bowie-Mitchellville & Vicinity Master Plan will serve as a guiding document formulated through public engagement to address future development in the City of Bowie and surrounding communities. The plan will replace the 2010 Bowie State MARC Station Sector Plan, and the 2006 Bowie & Vicinity Master Plan, and will be based on Plan Prince George's 2035.

Council Chair Turner and District 6 Council Member Derrick Leon Davis, both of whom represent areas covered in the Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan, will welcome participants to the kickoff meeting on June 13th. Chair Turner discusses why public participation in this process is vital to its success.

"It is important for residents, property owners and stakeholders to play a role in shaping their communities—now and in the future. The Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan will carefully examine existing conditions, including transportation, recreation and open space needs, and revisit the vision for the area. We want residents, businesses and others to be a part of the discussion and encourage them to participate."

The Master Plan will involve additional public and community outreach through 2022. For more information, visit <https://www.mncppc.org/3390/BowiePlan>, or contact the project team: BVMP@ppd.mncppc.org or call 301-952-3756.

WHAT: Bowie-Mitchellville and Vicinity Master Plan Kickoff Meeting

WHEN: Saturday, June 13, 2020 10:00 a.m.

WHERE: Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams Live
To register, visit: <https://www.mncppc.org/3390/BowiePlan>

COMMENTARY

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Hope Through the Suffering

"Another life taken. Another public lynching. Another news story. Another act of recorded Black death . . . [This death] is not an anomaly, but a historical pattern of behavior that binds every American to an unexamined history of our nation."

These lines are from the opening scenes of the "sermonic film" Rev. Otis Moss III, senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, released on May 17: *The Cross and the Lynching Tree: A Requiem for Ahmaud Arbery*. The 22-minute film covers the long legacy of racial injustice and violence in the United States and how we must respond to America's original sins of slavery, racism, and White supremacy. One week later that prophetic sermon also became a requiem for George Floyd, who was killed May 25 by Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. Chauvin has since been fired and charged with

second degree murder, along with three other officers who have been charged with aiding and abetting murder and manslaughter. In a nation with a long shameful history of public lynchings as spectacle and entertainment, George Floyd's murder has ignited something new: public mourning and public outcry for real justice.

Rev. Moss took his film's title from the book by the late Rev. Dr. James Cone, the founder of Black liberation theology and a tireless crusader against racial terrorism and other forms of injustice. Rev. Cone's central message was that the God of the gospels must be understood as a God of the oppressed who is most concerned with the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. In his words, "Nobody who is lynching anybody can understand the cross." When Rev. Cone spoke to an audience at the Children's Defense Fund's Proctor Institute about

The Cross and the Lynching Tree he said: "This book is my prayer, my invocation to God on behalf of Black people, in the hope that the nearly four centuries of Black suffering will be redemptive for our children and grandchildren, revealing to them the beauty in their tragic path, and also empowering them to continue to fight, to resist the violence of White supremacy. It is also my hope that Whites, too, will be redeemed from their blindness, and made to open their eyes to the terror of their deeds, so they will know that we are all of one blood, and what we do to others we do to ourselves. . . . Let us hope that we, through God's grace and our struggle, we will be able to overcome our prejudices and hate that separate us, and thereby empower us to become the one people God created us to be."

What a prescient prayer for exactly this moment. Witnessing George Floyd's murder has proven to be an inflection point in the fight against the violence of White supremacy, unleashing waves of pain and anger and a deep, deep cry for justice that cannot be stopped or silenced. It has become a cry for Mr. Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Tamir Rice, and generations of Black men, women, and children lynched and murdered with no arrests, convictions, or justice. It is a soul piercing cry from every mother who heard Mr. Floyd calling out for his own mother as Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. For centuries Black families mourned our murders alone, but this cry is different. Across the nation and world Blacks, Whites and peo-

ple of all colors, including those who had never before joined a protest against racial injustice, are coming together, speaking up, and loudly proclaiming the same essential truth: Black lives matter.

We are seeing blindness being removed and history being made before our eyes. Where will America go from here? Can this be a moment where suffering will prove redemptive? Will Mr. Floyd's death force us to finally confront our history, overcome the legacy of hate, including hateful leaders who seek to divide rather than unify, and become the one people God created us to be? This is our moment. There is a reward for our struggle.

Thus says the Lord:

A voice is heard in Ramah,
lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children;
she refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.
Thus says the Lord:
Keep your voice from weeping,
and your eyes from tears;
for there is a reward for your work,
says the Lord:
they shall come back from the land of the enemy;
there is hope for your future,
says the Lord:
your children shall come back to their own country.

(Jeremiah 31:15-17)
June 5, 2020

Donnell Williams

President, National Association of
Real Estate Brokers



Statement on the Current State of Unrest Within the United States

WASHINGTON (June 2, 2020)—Once again, we, the National Association of Real Estate Brokers are called upon to witness history, to be the conscience of America and to be the trusted advisors of our communities.

While we are grieved at the passing of yet another Black man, George Floyd at the hands of a few bad actors on the Minneapolis police force, we also recognize we are at war with a novel virus—COVID-19. Black Americans are simultaneously battling COVID-19, as well as the virus of racial injustice, the virus of discrimination, the virus of prejudice and the virus of inequality.

This is a historic time. A new birth is taking place. In the future, you will be asked "What'd you do?" What'd you do at this critical time as Black Americans were waging battles, both physically and economically, on multiple fronts? What'd you do when the homeownership gap between Blacks and Whites hovered around 30 percentage points? What'd you do when Black men were shot and killed for jogging in Georgia or physically restrained to death in Minneapolis?

The National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) chooses to respond to the civil unrest within our borders from an economic perspective. The Realist Nation firmly believes "HE WHO OWNS THE LAND MAKES THE LAW." And to that end we encourage voting. We encourage completing the census and we encourage the amendment of HUD Section 184 that provides low interest mortgage loans to other minority groups but currently does not include Black Americans.

It's a new day. If nothing else, the year 2020 has shown us that business as usual is over and some rules were made to be broken. Sam Cooke told us "...a change is gonna come," and the National Association of Real Estate Brokers pivots to embrace these changes as we continue to work to have a positive impact upon Black lives across the country.

NAREB is issuing a Call to Action to eliminate

obstructive systemic barriers that hinder or preclude the increase of Black homeownership. These systemic barriers include, but are not limited to:

- Lending discrimination and the despair fueled by racial discrimination that obstructs Black homeownership
- Call for passage of the Heroes Act
- Call for all 50 states to pass and update fair housing laws
- Call for cities to reform foreclosure prevention laws
- Call to eliminate zip code based insurance rates
- Call to eliminate credit-based auto, life and property insurance rates
- Call for Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to eliminate Loan Level Price Adjustments (LLPA)
- Call for more investment in Black-owned banks, CDFIs, and credit unions
- Call to create and increase Renaissance neighborhood initiatives
- Call for more technical assistance to increase commercial real estate, property management and real estate investment.
- Call to increase funding to create more career and business opportunities for Black Americans in commercial, etc.

For more information visit: www.nareb.com.

The National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) was formed in 1947 to secure the right to equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed or color. NAREB has advocated for legislation and supported or instigated legal challenges that ensure fair housing, sustainable homeownership, and access to credit for Black Americans. At the same time, NAREB advocates for and promotes access to business opportunity for Black real estate professionals in all of the real estate disciplines. NAREB annually publishes *The State of Housing in Black America report*. www.nareb.com

Council Chair Todd M. Turner Welcomes New Prince George's Community College President, Dr. Falecia D. Williams

The Prince George's County Council extends a warm welcome to the newly-selected ninth president of Prince George's Community College, Dr. Falecia D. Williams.

The Council also congratulates the Prince George's Community College Board of Trustees and the Presidential Search Committee, led by Sidney L. Gibson and Oretta Bridgwaters-Simms respectively, for conducting a thoughtful and diligent review process of highly-competitive applicants for Community College president.

A noted expert in student success, Dr. Williams formerly served as president of the Downtown and West campuses of the 68,000 student Valencia College in Orlando, Florida, where she was responsible for providing academic, administrative, and fiscal leadership to support the vision, missions and values of the institution. Dr. Williams had been associated with Valencia

College for over 22 years before her recent selection to lead Prince George's Community College.

Prince George's Community College is a growing, thriving institution of higher learning committed to academic excellence of over 40,000 students. Its legacy of service has flourished under the leadership of Dr. Charlene Dukes, who is retiring following a 25-year tenure, including 13 years as Community College president. We wish to thank and commend Dr. Dukes for her steadfast, excellent and nationally recognized leadership in the County.

Dr. Williams will assume responsibilities for Prince George's Community College in August 2020, prior to the start of the fall semester. We look forward to working with Dr. Williams to form strategic partnerships, engage our community, and contribute to Prince George's County's education, economic and workforce development initiatives.

Men's Health Month: 26 Years of Progress and Counting Awareness Period Is Key to Fighting The Spread of COVID-19

June is Men's Health Month and the global activities associated with this month-long celebration this year are more important than ever, and now include encouraging men to fight the spread of COVID-19 by seeking early treatment for symptoms, practicing safe distancing, and being a role model for their children.

In 1994, when Men's Health Week first launched, women outlived men by 6.6 years. Men's Health Week has since been expanded to include all of June as Men's Health Month, and by 2017, that gender gap had narrowed to five years. Why the dramatic change? Well, Men's Health Month (MHM) itself has played an important role.

Celebrated every June across the country and around the world, MHM features screenings, health fairs, media appearances, and other health education, awareness, and outreach activities. Community leaders, workplaces, government agencies, faith-based communities, and healthcare providers are working hard to raise awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of health issues that affect men, boys, and their families.

However, despite all these efforts, a significant gender gap persists. Men and boys die in greater numbers and younger ages from nine of the top 10 causes of death. They account for more than 90% of workplace injuries and fatalities, are less likely than women to be insured, and are far less likely to see a doctor for preventive care.

All of this impacts their ability to be involved fathers, supportive husbands, and engaged members of their community. Biology plays a role here, but many experts, including those at Men's Health Network (MensHealthNetwork.org) believe that many of the premature deaths and illnesses that affect men and boys are preventable.

The real culprits are socialization and lifestyle. As young boys, our sons are taught that "big boys don't cry," leading to the inevitable "macho-man" attitude, where they're expected to ignore health concerns and "push through" the pain. Conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, prostate cancer, and COVID-19 could have far better outcomes if men were to recognize the symptoms and seek treatment promptly. But they don't.

That same macho attitude keeps males from seeking help for depression, anxiety, or other men-

tal health issues. As a result, boys and men self-medicate, smoking, drinking, and abusing drugs more than women and engaging in more risky behavior. And males are four times more likely than women to commit suicide.

These same mental health and substance abuse problems have grown much worse during the coronavirus pandemic, with loss of jobs, stay-at-home requirements, and threats of foreclosure as men, and women, try to find ways to cope in an uncertain environment.

This has been hard on men, whose self-image as their family's protector has been shattered, among all segments of society. This is especially true for those, including minority men and those with minimal job skills, who have finally entered the workforce during the recent boom.

The good news is that, working together, we can improve and lengthen the lives of men and boys in our lives, whether they're dads, fathers, sons, husbands, uncles, boyfriends, friends, or the guy down the street. How? Celebrate Men's Health Month by encouraging the men and boys in your life to eat right, get exercise, and follow the recommended social distancing protocols. A recent study found that males are less likely than females to comply, not surprising considering their predisposition toward risky behavior.

And when society returns to normal, encourage them to schedule a thorough physical exam (and if they won't do it, show a little

love and make the appointment for them). Chances are, it's long overdue. Two great sources of men's-health-related information are the Men's Health Online Resource Center (MensHealthResourceCenter.com) and GetItChecked.com

In the meantime, **you can also celebrate Wear Blue Day on Friday, June 19** by taking and posting photos of yourself, family members, pets, etc. wearing blue and using the #ShowUsYourBlue hashtag and giving a shout-out to the guy(s) you're wearing blue for. Because digital media is so important, MHN has created a social media toolkit with sample Twitter and Facebook posts, along with pictures, online at: www.MensHealthMonth.org/men-s-health-month-toolkit.html

For more information about Men's Health Month or to learn how you can participate, contact MHW@menshealthweek.org

Men's Health Month and Men's Health Week are managed by Men's Health Network. MHN is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to reach men, boys, and their families where they live, work, play, and pray with health awareness messages and tools, screening programs, educational materials, advocacy opportunities, and patient navigation. For information, visit them at MensHealthNetwork.org, on Twitter (@MensHlthNetwork), and on Facebook (facebook.com/menshealthnetwork), or call 202-543-6461.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

COVID Has Created a Demand For Social Security Information, Says the AMAC Foundation

LADY LAKE, Fla. (June 1, 2020)—Telephone and email traffic through our Social Security advisory service has markedly increased over the past several months since the outbreak of the COVID crisis, according to Gerry Hafer, Executive Director of the AMAC Foundation. “It hasn’t reached panic proportions by any means, but the uncertainty caused by the virus and the far-reaching efforts to deal with the pandemic have certainly caused a rush to review individual family resources, particularly among the 50-plus segment of the population.”

The extreme measures to combat the disease—lockdowns and lay-offs, for example—have breadwinners looking for ways to offset the financial toll of the epidemic in the near term and in the long term. “It’s put a new importance on Social Security and, as a result, it has sparked a new interest in how to navigate the intricacies of the system.”

The AMAC Foundation, a non-profit affiliate of the Association of Mature American Citizens, is staffed with a team of professionals trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). “Our aim is to provide a better understanding of the complexities of Social Security by providing answers to specific, personalized questions about the various aspects of the system. The best way to get the explanations you need is to submit a specific query via an email to ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org or by phone (888-750-2622),” according to Hafer.

Meanwhile, the Foundation has recently added a new feature on its Website—a series of some **100 Social Security podcasts** that can be accessed on-demand by selecting the “Podcasts” menu item on the site’s menu bar. All recordings are keyword searchable by entering terms in the “Search Podcasts” block at the top of the page: <https://amacfoundation.org/audio/>.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

How Do I Apply With Social Security Offices Closed?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: I am 64 years old and would like advice on how to move forward to apply for Social Security now instead of waiting until I am the “magic” age of 66.5 years. **Signed: Ready for Retirement**

Dear Ready for Retirement: All Social Security offices are currently closed to public visits, but they are still providing telephone services (although telephone wait times are usually longer these days). You can apply over the phone if you wish. However, the most efficient way to apply for your Social Security benefit, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, is to apply online. You will need to create your personal “My Social Security” account prior to applying online, but that is easy to do at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. For information, Social Security uses a “two-factor” identification process for security purposes, usually by asking you to enter, in addition to your password, a special ID code sent to your cell phone (or email). Once you have set up your personal account, you can use the online application process at www.ssa.gov/retire.

Here is a link to a short video from Social Security which explains the online application process: www.ssa.gov/hlp/video/iclaim_r01.htm. When you start the online process, be sure to write down the reentry code, which will allow you to save and re-enter your online application as many times as needed before you finally submit it. Once it is submitted, Social Security will call you or write you to get any additional information they need. A couple of things I want to be sure you are aware of:

By claiming before your full retirement age (FRA) your benefit amount will be permanently reduced. The reduction is about 0.56% per month prior to your FRA that you claim (at 64, a reduction of about 15%).

Finally, if you are still working, you’ll be subject to Social Security’s earnings test until you reach your full retirement age. If you start benefits mid-year 2020, you’ll be subject to a monthly earnings limit of \$1520, and if you exceed that limit you won’t be eligible for benefits for that month. The following years you’ll be subject to an annual limit, until you reach your FRA when there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn.

The 2.1 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] www.amac.us is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation’s capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation (www.AmacFoundation.org) is the Association’s non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America’s Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members’ behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at www.amac.us/join-amac.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Beyond Spots & Dots Launches \$15,000 Women-to-Women Grant Program

Agency to provide \$15,000 in grants to three women-owned businesses impacted by COVID-19.

PITTSBURGH (June 4, 2020)(PR.com)—Layoffs. Furloughs. Businesses closing their doors. This has been the unfortunate reality for many during the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home orders. In an effort to help support women-owned businesses struggling to maintain production, commerce and/or staff as a result of the devastating COVID-19 outbreak, Beyond Spots & Dots is launching its Women-to-Women Grant Program, which offers \$15,000 total in grant funds to three women-owned businesses, with each receiving \$5,000.

With locations in Pittsburgh, PA; Columbus, OH; and Baltimore, MD, Beyond Spots & Dots was not excluded from fearing for the worst as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The agency now seeks to give back and help fellow women-owned small businesses who are struggling and need additional assistance.

“This has been a tough time for women leaders. We want to celebrate the extra

work women are doing these days,” said Melanie Query, Founder and President, Beyond Spots & Dots. “As a women-owned company, we’re incredibly fortunate to have been able to sustain our business through such a difficult time. We want to pay that forward and ensure if we are able to offer a helping hand, we do, and to the people who need it most. We’re committed to the community.”

To be eligible for a Beyond Spots & Dots Women-to-Women Grant, businesses must be:

- Women-owned
- Small business with less than \$5 million in annual gross revenue
- 25 or less full-time employees
- Business address in Pennsylvania, Ohio, or Maryland

Qualifying businesses must apply online by July 15, 2020. To learn more and apply, visit: <https://www.beyondspotsanddots.com/women-to-women-grant-program>

Beyond Spots & Dots will announce grant finalists on or about July 31, 2020. Grant awardees will be announced on or about August 15, 2020, with award disbursements to be sent on or about August 31, 2020.

Established in 2006, Beyond Spots & Dots is a full-service advertising agency in Pittsburgh, PA, Columbus, OH and Baltimore, MD. Beyond Spots & Dots is dedicated to planning, creating and managing advertising, marketing, public relations, branding and digital for clients. Agency services range from digital advertising, programmatic tactics, social media, web development and SEO to traditional media buying, market research, copywriting, brand development and video production. Beyond Spots & Dots is also recognized as a national Women’s Business Enterprise (WBE) by the Women’s Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC). Visit beyondspotsanddots.com.

Maryland Humanities Awards \$515,000 to 100 Organizations With Coronavirus Relief Grant Program

By SARAH WEISSMAN
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (June 1, 2020)—Maryland Humanities announces a total of \$515,000 in funding for 100 Maryland nonprofit organizations (\$5,150 per organization) through its CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act Emergency Relief Grants Fund. Recipients of the general operating grants include museums, historic sites, preservation & historical societies, and community & cultural organizations. The fund helps ensure that humanities organizations continue to provide opportunities for Maryland’s diverse communities to access and engage with public history, cultural heritage, and civic learning. The final roster of grantees represents 22 counties and Baltimore City. These grants are funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the CARES Act economic stabilization plan appropriated by the U.S. Congress.

Board Member and Grants Committee Chair Dr. Maarten Pereboom, who is Dean of the Fulton School of Liberal Arts at Salisbury University, says, “Through the process of awarding 100 grants to wonderful organizations across the State of Maryland, we at Maryland Humanities were reminded again of how our communities connect and

Prince George’s County Grantees are listed below. To learn more about our CARES Act Emergency Relief Grants, visit www.mdhumanities.org/grants/cares.

Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts, Inc., Fort Washington
Educare Resource Center, Inc., Clinton
Global Health and Education Projects, Inc., Riverdale
James Agee Film Project, University Park
Laurel Historical Society, Laurel
National Capital Radio and Television Museum, Bowie
People for Change Coalition, Largo
Prince George’s African American Museum and Cultural Center, North Brentwood
Sound Theory Urban Development Youth Outreach, Landover
The 13th Man, Landover

become stronger by exploring the human experience together. We were so grateful to be part of a process that, with the generous support of the CARES Act, validates and sustains this important work through these challenging times.”

“Congress recognizes the vital role the cultural sector plays in creating vibrant communities, both in the dynamic programs these organizations offer and in the jobs they create. We are honored to fulfill their investment in the humanities as part of the CARES Act,” says Aaron Heinsman, Acting Executive Director at Maryland Humanities. “Each of these organizations makes a unique and valuable impact on our state’s cultural and educational landscape.”

Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations such as the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios, www.BakerArtist.org; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

President from A1

dents for success. She also opened a Center for Teaching/Learning Innovation on the West campus as a place for faculty and staff to explore new technologies and build communities for innovation for learning. Her other noteworthy accomplishments include: the disruptive design, development, and launch of a new educational ecosystem model for a joint campus in partnership with the University of Central Florida; the development of baccalaureate degrees; accreditation for the B.S. Nursing and B.S. Electrical and Computer Engineering Technology and renewed programmatic accreditation with commendations for 11 health-related programs; opening a summer bridge program that resulted in 97 percent course success rate and 87 percent retention rate compared to 80 percent course success rate and 76 percent retention when students engaged in tradition enrollment; enrollment growth; empowering faculty ownership and leadership of Valencia’s learning and student success agenda; and garnering more than \$30 million over five years to support promising practice, intellectual experimentation, capacity building, and faculty development.

Dr. Falecia Williams said, “I am deeply honored and excited to be selected as the ninth president for Prince George’s Community College. For more than 60 years, Prince George’s Community College has been locally and nationally recognized for its deep commitment to student success, community impact, and economic viability, and I am eager to immerse myself in this stellar community of learners, scholars, leaders, and partners. I’m earnestly dedicated to working collaboratively with all of the internal and external key stakeholders to continue to advance PGCC’s remarkable record of achievement and innovation.”

Dr. Williams is active in numerous pro-

fessional, business, civic endeavors, and board service including: Visit Orlando; Central Florida Regional Housing Trust; Coalition for the Homeless; Lifework Leadership Orlando; Parramore Comprehensive Neighborhood Plan Development Team; Florida High Tech Corridor Workforce Development Team; Florida Department of Education Next Generation Curriculum Standards Committee and Subcommittee for Postsecondary Transition; the American Council on Education Postsecondary Transition Committee; and the Florida Association of Community Colleges.

Dr. Williams’ honors and awards are extensive and include: Orlando Business Journal Top Five Leaders for Economic Development; Orlando Magazine, Top 15 People to Watch; Orlando Magazine, 50 Most Powerful; Central Florida YMCA Achievers Education Advocate of the Year; Leadership Award, American Association of Women in Community Colleges; and Teacher of the Year, Eustis Middle School.

A noted expert in student success, Dr. Williams has presented extensively, including: “Equity-minded Teaching and Learning Models,” Aspen Presidential Fellowship; “Big Ideas Around Learning and Success for Equitable Outcomes,” Cuyahoga Community College; “Education as the Catalyst for Community Transformation,” Institutional Committee of Auxiliary Services Administrators Conference; “Equity Models in the Community College,” Achieving the Dream; “Program Learning Outcomes and Workforce Education,” League for Innovation Conference; “Relevant Performance Measures for Workforce Education Programs,” Florida Association for Career and Technical Education Conference; “Competencies for Teaching Distance Education in the Community College,” University of Central

Florida Graduate Student Showcase;

“Creative College Transition Programs: Recruitment and Retention Initiatives that Work,” Learning Conversations Conference; “Pathways to Leadership,” American Association of Women in Community Colleges Workshop Series; and “LifeMap: A Developmental Advising Model,” PBS Teleconference Live Broadcast.

Dr. Falecia D. Williams holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction-community college leadership from University of Central Florida, Orlando, a master’s degree in education, teaching and learning, from Stetson University, Deland, Fla., and a bachelor’s degree in psychology from Rollins College in Winter Park, Fla.

She also holds professional certifications from Stanford University as a Design Thinking Professional, and from Harvard University’s Institute for Educational Management (IEM). Dr. Williams also completed an Aspen Presidential Fellowship at the Aspen Institute’s College Excellence Program.

The process to find a new president for Prince George’s Community College began last fall when the Board of Trustees appointed the Presidential Search Committee and launched a nationwide quest. The search culminated with a visit by the top three candidates to the Prince George’s Community College Largo campus during the week of May 11–15, when each participated in meetings with the executive leadership team, constituent and union leaders, and in a series of virtual meetings with students, faculty and staff, and the College’s external community including elected officials. The candidates also met with President Charlene Dukes and the College’s Board of Trustees in a manner compliant with local and state orders regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Williams will assume responsibilities for Prince George’s Community College in August 2020 prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

ENVIRONMENT

Shop Locally, Help the Bay's Environment and Economy

By ADAM BRAY AND NISSA DEAN
Bay Journal News Service

Every year in early June—and this year, depending on COVID-19 restrictions—the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay recognizes Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week and celebrates the many connections we have to the Bay.

First championed by the Chesapeake Bay Commission in 2016, the week is intended to raise awareness about the Bay as a valuable economic and environmental resource. Normally, the Alliance would be very busy right now partnering with local restaurants to promote one delicious bounty: the Chesapeake Bay blue crab and crab cake. Last year, the Alliance hosted our first Crab Cake Week in Richmond and Williamsburg, VA, to increase awareness about the importance of a healthy Chesapeake to the food we love to eat.

This year, though, partnering with local restaurants has taken on an entirely different meaning. And need. In the wake of COVID-19, our region's food industries are struggling and need our help.

If you live in the Bay watershed, you've undoubtedly enjoyed some of the amazing food that is grown and harvested in our region. Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of just how abundant and diverse our regional food supply is. Approximately 64,000 square miles of land and 150 rivers, with all their tributaries, ultimately flow into the Chesapeake.

In just a few hours' drive, you can catch blue crabs or rockfish in the Bay itself or in the wide rivers that flow into it, or you can forage for ramps, or morels and other mushrooms in the watershed's headwaters in the shadow of the Blue Ridge mountains. And the land in between, the fertile Piedmont soil, is home to more than 87,000 farms producing meat, dairy, fruits, vegetables and grains. Given this close proximity to such a bounty of fresh, local ingredients, it's no surprise that the Chesapeake region is home to some of the country's best restaurants, chefs and food scenes.

In normal times, it is easy to take all of this for granted. But, as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by physically distancing ourselves from each other, we're ironi-

cally reminded how interconnected we all really are. As it becomes more difficult to find the food and necessities we rely on daily, it's obvious that we've become very dependent on restaurants, farmers, fishermen and the many people responsible for providing us with amazing local food. Restaurants have been hit especially hard at this time, and so have small-scale producers who sell to local markets.

The Chesapeake Bay seafood industry is struggling more than ever. With restaurants permanently or temporarily closing, or offering limited menus, watermen and oyster farmers are struggling for business and increasingly worried as the blue crab season hits its stride. What can we all do to help?

Four Things You Can Do

1. Order delivery or takeout from local restaurants. Many restaurants have adapted to delivery or takeout—their only safe and legal option for staying in business. Support them, if possible, and be sure to tip! Wait staff generally rely on tips as an important part of their income, so tip for the delivery or pickup what you normally would for a sit-down meal. Consider purchasing gift cards now that you can use after the threat has passed.

2. Connect with local farmers or fishermen/women. Many local farms and fishermen/women rely on restaurants to buy their catch. Now that restaurants' dining rooms are closed, they are adapting by selling directly to consumers through online orders and community-supported agriculture.

3. Eat local produce and seafood. Whether you buy your food from a restaurant or at a grocery store, try to focus on what's local. This not only helps the restaurants, grocers, growers and suppliers, but it also helps

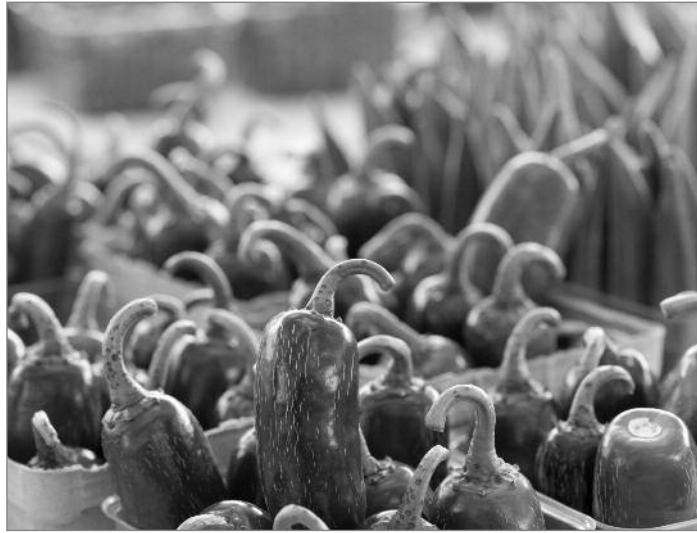


PHOTO CREDIT: USDA PHOTO BY LANCE CHEUNG

Locally grown peppers on sale at a Washington D.C. farmers market.

the environment. Buying local cuts down on the distance food has to travel to get to your plate, and it results in better air and water quality.

4. Shop small. The larger farms, grocery stores and chain restaurants will weather COVID-19 much more easily than smaller grocers, restaurants and farms. If you have the option in your area, shop the smaller outlets to support your local economy, build community and lessen the environmental impact of your purchases.

Remember, our actions at home have an impact on the health of our neighbors, lands, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay and our economy. Let's work together to keep everything and everyone healthy.

Nissa Dean is the Virginia director of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. Adam Bray is the program assistant in the Alliance's Richmond office. For more information on the subject, visit allianceforthebay.org/food. This article first appeared in Bay Journal and was distributed by the Bay Journal News Service. The author's opinions do not necessarily reflect those of the Bay Journal.

Find farmers markets:
www.farmpgc.com/find-local-products
Find oysters, shellfish:
ecsga.org/buy-shellfish/

PGCPS Remains Top in the State For Green School Certification

By OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
Prince George's County Public Schools

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 2, 2020)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) continues to lead the state with the most number of new Maryland Green School certifications.

This year, 10 schools earned certification and 30 schools were re-certified, raising the total number of Green Schools to 131—64 percent of all schools systemwide and approximately 21 percent of the 635 active Maryland Green Schools.

"I am very proud that we are leaders in the state in the Green School initiative," said Dr. Monica Goldson, Chief Executive Officer. "Green School programs empower our students to get involved in a common cause, hone problem-solving skills and build their environmental literacy."

Crossland High School, Chesapeake Math & IT (CMIT) Academy, CMIT North Middle School and Dwight D. Eisenhower Middle School joined six elementary schools in earning first-time certification: Hillcrest Heights, Hollywood, James Ryder Randall, Judge Sylvania Woods, Mount Rainier and Rosa Parks.

To maintain Green School status, schools must recertify every four years. Patuxent Elementary School achieved "sustainable" status this year for having three consecutive recertifications.

In addition to Chapel Forge Early Childhood Center, other schools earning 2020 recertification include:

- **High schools:** Academy of Health Sciences @PGCC, Bladensburg, Bowie, Oxon Hill, Suitland
- **K-8/Middle schools:** Benjamin D. Foulois Creative & Performing Arts Academy, Benjamin Tasker, Imagine Foundations at Morning-side Public Charter School, Stephen Decatur, Thomas Johnson
- **Elementary schools:** Bond Mill, Capitol Heights, Cherokee Lane, Cora L. Rice, Doswell E. Brooks, Gladys Noon Spellman, Heather Hills, Mattaponi, Paint Branch, Panorama, Phyllis E. Williams, Pointer Ridge, Port Towns, Rockledge, University Park, Whitehall, William W. Hall, Woodridge Elementary

Maryland Association for Environmental and Outdoor Education's (MAEOE) Annual Maryland Green School Youth Summit—which honors new, recertified and model schools—was cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools will still receive a Maryland Green School or Center flag, statewide and local recognition, and special gifts.

The Maryland Green Schools program, sponsored by MAEOE, is one of the most rigorous and comprehensive Green School certification programs in the nation. It encourages educational opportunities, increases environmental awareness, and promotes environmental stewardship practices for students at all grade levels. Through a non-competitive application process, schools must demonstrate their green activities and culture in eight criteria areas.

The Williams S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center has played a key role in growing the number of certifications by assisting schools with achieving and maintaining Green School status through modeling, educational programs, application guidance and support. Visit YouTube for a video created by the Schmidt Center to honor this year's Green Schools: <https://youtu.be/ITrXY51yWV4>

For more information about the Green School Program, visit the MAEOE website: maeoe.org/green-schools-and-green-centers.

Earth TALK™ How Are We Doing in Regard to Tropical Deforestation?

Dear EarthTalk:

How are we doing in the battle to stop or slow deforestation, especially in the tropics where forests store so much of the world's biodiversity?

—M. Lark, Neptune, IA

In short, not so good. Global Forest Watch, a project of the non-profit World Resources Institute (WRI) which uses satellite data to track global forest loss, found that the world lost some 3.8 million hectares of tropical primary forest (defined as forests of native trees undisturbed by human activities) in 2019—equivalent to one soccer field every six seconds and an area about the size of Switzerland in total. One particularly nasty side effect of all this forest loss is the release of more than two billion tons of carbon dioxide, the leading greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere as the trees came down in 2019. (To put that into context, this is more emissions than caused by all of the vehicles on the road in the United States during the same 12-month stretch.) The tropical primary forest loss in 2019 is the third highest amount in recorded history, behind only 2016 and 2017.

While deforestation is an issue everywhere, it is particularly problematic in the tropics where the majority of the world's biodiversity lives. Another leading conservation group, WWF, points out that some 17 percent of the forest across the Amazon has been cut down over the last 50 years, mostly to make room for cattle ranching—so we can enjoy our steaks and burgers. The group warns that

if nothing is done to stop it, some of the world's most iconic and biologically diverse forest landscapes could be lost to deforestation, including primary habitat for iconic wildlife species like orangutans, tigers and elephants.

"The hot spots are located in the Amazon, the Atlantic Forest and Gran Chaco, Borneo, the Cerrado, Choco-Darien, the Congo Basin, East Africa, Eastern Australia, Greater Mekong, New Guinea, and Sumatra," reports WWF. "Up to 420 million acres of forest could be lost between 2010 and 2030 in these 'deforestation fronts' if current trends continue."

Brazil suffered the largest total primary forest loss of all in 2019, with deforestation for agriculture and other new land uses increasing rapidly through that country's vast stretches of Amazon rainforest. Meanwhile, neighboring Bolivia experienced the largest surge in primary tropical forest loss, where rampaging wildfires, most likely set intentionally to clear land for farming, reduced 80 percent more tree cover than in previous years.

On the bright side, Global Forest Watch reports that primary forest loss was reduced significantly in Indonesia, where a recently imposed government moratorium on clearing land for palm oil plantations—along with beefed up enforcement—has reduced annual forest loss to levels not seen for 15 years (before the palm oil craze swept the region). Primary tropical forest loss was also down some 50 percent in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.

What's the solution? Frances Sey-

mour of WRI tells The New York Times that she'd like to see the international community address the problem through economic incentives that encourage forest protection. She adds that governments should focus on preventing forest burning, increasing monitoring and enforcement to stop encroachment while providing the poor with alternatives to forest exploitation.

CONTACTS: Global Forest Watch, globalforestwatch.org; World Resources Institute, wri.org; WWF's "Living Forests Report Chapter 5: Saving Forests at Risk," worldwildlife.org/publications/living-forests-report-chapter-5-saving-forests-at-risk.

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IMAGE CREDIT: TOM FISK, PEXELS

The worst years on record for primary tropical forest loss across the Amazon and beyond were 2016, 2017 and 2019.

TUESDAY TIP

DETENER LA CONTAMINACIÓN

El reciclaje de flujo único le permite colocar todos sus materiales reciclables en un contenedor para la recolección en la acera, pero algunos artículos pueden ensuciar la carga.

- Evite pañales, bolsas de plástico y guantes de plástico en su contenedor de reciclaje.
- Tampoco se aceptan cubiertas faciales, pañuelos y productos de higiene.
- En caso de duda, botarlo a la basura. Visite bit.ly/acceptedpgc para ver una lista de artículos de reciclaje aceptables.

Prince Georges Proud

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Maryland Department of Health Kicks Off State-Wide Campaign To Educate Marylanders About the Importance of Contact Tracing

By PRESS OFFICER

Maryland Department of Health

BALTIMORE, Md. (June 2, 2020)—The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) on June 2 began rolling out a new state-wide campaign to educate Marylanders about the importance of contact tracing and how it is a vital tool in the fight against the spread of coronavirus.

The campaign will help support the newly developed "COVID Link," a state-of-the-art data management platform that will facilitate MDH's contact tracing partnership with local health officials.

"Our new campaign will help Marylanders understand the contact tracing program and its role in reducing the spread of this disease," said Governor Larry Hogan. "While we have taken a series of bold and aggressive actions to flatten the curve, contact tracing is one of the four building blocks needed to contain the virus and allow us to fully reopen the state."

The campaign's slogan, "Respond. Connect. Recover," signifies that all Marylanders have an important part to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19, which has resulted in the deaths of more than 2,400 people in the state. The outreach program will include a series of educational videos, public service announcements, social media posts, website content, informational fact sheets and frequently asked questions, and other outreach materials.

"Contact tracing—along with widespread testing, ample supplies of PPE and hospital preparedness—is how we will keep Maryland moving toward a safer and healthier future," said MDH Secretary Robert R. Neall. "Already, Maryland residents are coming to understand why it is important to work with their local health departments, which are successfully reaching out to people who have been exposed to help contain the disease."

For Marylanders who have had COVID-19, working with contact tracers has helped combat the disease by connecting friends, family members and acquaintances to local health departments.

Michele Spaulding, 62, worked with a contact tracer from the health

Respond: Answer the call and stop the spread.

CovidLINK is a fundamental part of how Maryland is responding to the coronavirus outbreak. But your response is the most important part of this process. Here's how you can help:

- Answer and/or return any calls from "MD COVID."
- Stop the spread by following the guidelines provided on the call.
- Spread the word, not the virus. Let your community know how important it is.

department in Calvert County to identify people who attended a real estate open house she organized before restrictions were announced limiting the number of people at such gatherings. Spaulding was one of the first positives cases in the state.

"We need to cooperate with contact tracers because we are all in this together," Spaulding said. "We have to help one another. If someone calls, please tell them where you were and who you were with. Believe me, it could save someone's life."

Todd Poorman, 41, of Anne Arundel County, likely passed the virus to his seven-week-old son, who also tested positive for the disease. Both have recovered.

"I am grateful for the contact tracer from the health department who called me to check in every single day I was in quarantine," Poorman said. "We figured out who I was in contact with, which I had already done anyway on my own to a certain extent. There is a lot of stigma out there, but we need to move past the fear and work together."

Contact tracing is not a new strategy in the fight against infectious disease and has been effectively employed during other health emergencies, such as the H1N1 pandemic in America and Ebola outbreaks in Africa.

MDH has quickly expanded its team of contact tracers and now has 1,400 investigators across the state's 24 jurisdictions. Starting this

week, the program will have the capacity to track 1,000 cases and up to 10,000 contacts daily. On April 22, Governor Hogan announced a contract with the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), the nation's oldest and largest university-based research firm, to hire and train contact investigators.

MDH's contact tracing program works like this: when an individual tests positive, case investigators reach out to that person by phone within 24 hours. Based on information collected about the COVID-19 positive individual's symptoms and contact history, case investigators will call other people with whom the individual has had close contact and provide necessary guidance about monitoring symptoms and isolating at home.

When the phone rings, the caller ID will read "MD COVID." Depending on whether the contact investigator is calling directly from NORC or a local health department, there will also be a list of phone numbers provided to verify the caller's identity. Maryland's contact tracing workforce is trained to ensure that all personal information is collected in accordance with regulations and guidelines to protect privacy and personal health information.

The contact tracer will ask about the individual's health, any potential symptoms, and the duration of those symptoms. They may ask about an individual's whereabouts and interactions for a specific period of time. A contact investigator will never ask for a Social Security number, financial or bank account information, or personal details unrelated to COVID-19. They will not ask for photographs or videos, passwords or any payment.

For more information on contact tracing in Maryland, please visit <https://coronavirus.maryland.gov/pages/contact-tracing>.

The Maryland Department of Health is dedicated to protecting and improving the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management and community engagement. Follow us at <http://www.twitter.com/MDHealthDept> and <https://www.facebook.com/MDHealthDept>.

Ready For a Splash, But What's in the Water?

Risk of COVID-19 seems low, but tainted stormwater still poses risks

By WHITNEY PIPKIN

Bay Journal News Service

There are plenty of reasons to stay out of some Chesapeake Bay waters, particularly after a heavy rain. When stormwater hits local waterways, it may be carrying bacteria, toxins, animal waste and even raw sewage. Can it carry the coronavirus too?

Some researchers are tracking the virus' presence in sewage as an indication of how many people might be infected in a given area. They also are hustling to answer a secondary question: If the virus can be detected in sewage, could it also be in waterways that are tainted with sewage after it rains?

The short answer is yes—but probably not in a form that could infect additional people. While the virus that causes COVID-19 can be detected in untreated wastewater, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say "there is no evidence to date" that a person exposed to it in this form can contract the disease.

There are, however, still plenty of reasons to be concerned about swimming or recreating in water that has recently been polluted by sewage or stormwater runoff. As swimming season begins, experts who study waterborne diseases say that catching the coronavirus from water contact is probably among the least of those concerns.

"Sewage was already dangerous. That's why we have these standards about recreational waters," said Mark Mattson, president of the nonprofit Swim Drink Fish and Waterkeeper for Canada's Lake Ontario.

Mattson said he's more concerned about people

being able to prevent virus transmission by maintaining a social distance on busy beaches than he is about coronavirus spreading through open water. And plenty of other harmful bacteria could be present instead.

To that end, he helped create the Swim Guide app, where groups collecting water quality data can post it for the public to consider before engaging in water recreation. The app is now used in nine countries and by several Chesapeake Bay advocacy groups to post the results of weekly bacterial monitoring programs.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has added a new intonation to the question of whether or not you can get sick if you go to the beach," a post about new coronavirus risks on the Swim Guide's website begins. But, it continues, the tests on which the website's information is based are "already designed to provide you with an indication of your health risks from recreational water illnesses when you go swimming."

In other words, the tests already flag sites that might be unsafe for water contact because of sewage leaks or overflows—posing risks from bacteria, if not coronavirus.

In sufficient numbers, these bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illness, skin and ear infections, and some conditions that can be life-threatening. These bacteria can enter the human body through the nose, ears or other openings as well as through small cuts.

Scientists worldwide have pivoted much of their research to focus on the coronavirus, and that is now true for the sewage and wastewater industries as well.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in May hailed a new study showing that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, could be detected in urine and stool samples at wastewater treatment facilities. So far, the virus has turned up there in higher concentrations than expected based on the number of clinically confirmed cases.

This data could help localities determine how many people are actually infected in a given area—including those without symptoms—and help them track changes in infection rates over time.

But these findings also raised new concerns about whether wastewater could be an additional conduit for the disease, particularly for those whose work puts them in potential close contact with sewage. The initial concern was for wastewater treatment plant workers, but those whose work involves collecting water samples that could contain traces of sewage also took notice.

There is currently "no evidence to date" that the coronavirus has been transmitted to a person via wastewater, either before or after the sewage moved through a wastewater treatment plant, according to the World Health Organization.

When wastewater became the latest frontier for coronavirus research this spring, the Hampton Roads Sanitation District in southeast Virginia was uniquely positioned to respond. The district, which provides wastewater treatment to 18 cities and counties in the region, had recently begun using molecular technology to identify emerging pathogens that could be coming in with the region's wastewater as part of a pilot project started last July.

This foray into "wastewater epidemiology" could be used to identify public health trends in the population, from opioid use and antibiotic resistance to disease outbreaks.

The technology uses DNA sequencing to identify the presence of certain pathogens or chemicals while another machine allows the scientists to quantify how much is present. The district began monitoring for coronavirus in early March, around the time the World Health Organization declared a global pandemic.

"We were already set up to monitor wastewater, so it was a matter of validating and verifying the coronavirus methods as soon as they became available," said Raul Gonzalez, an environmental scientist leading the effort.

So far, the treatment plants' data reflects that the region could have about 10 times more coronavirus cases than were being counted by clinical statistics, a number that mirrors findings from studies in other locations.

But the district's technology can't tell researchers whether the coronavirus strains they find in wastewater are still "alive" or able to infect additional people. The technology identifies the virus by its RNA but doesn't culture the virus to see whether it is still viable. Doing so would require a lab with one of the highest levels of pathogen safety. Few exist, but one in Arizona is conducting such a study.

"It's still too early to definitively state whether wastewater contains infectious coronavirus," Gonzalez said. "But we have an idea of which way all the studies are leaning."

As of mid-May, he said, most of the studies indicate that coronavirus is no longer viable once it has passed through the digestive tract. One study indi-



CREDIT: BAY JOURNAL PHOTO BY DAVE HARP

As swimming season begins, experts who study waterborne diseases say that catching the coronavirus from water contact is unlikely, but there are plenty of reasons to avoid open water contact after a heavy rain.

cated that fluid in the colon would be strong enough to deactivate the virus, "so by the time it gets into the stool and then wastewater, it's likely inactive," Gonzalez said.

This conclusion mirrors other scientific findings that coronaviruses have a "low environmental viability" and can easily be deactivated by disinfection or other environmental stressors.

A spokesman for DC Water, which runs the largest advanced wastewater treatment facility in the world at Blue Plains in the District of Columbia, said their treatment process would inactivate the virus.

"Right now, all water treatment processes using disinfectant would kill any bacteria, including COVID-19," spokesman Vincent Morris said.

The virus could still be present in any raw sewage that overflows into streams and rivers, when rain overwhelms underground pipes or a treatment plant's capacity. These polluted spills, called combined sewer overflows, occur in many communities throughout the Chesapeake region.

"In general, where there are combined sewer overflows, we tell everyone to avoid the water and so do not expect to change the guidance now," Morris said.

The Waterkeeper Council sent out a memo at the end of March suggesting waterkeepers take additional precautions to protect themselves when collecting water samples, especially near outfalls for sewage-tainted stormwater.

The memo mentioned that, during the SARS-CoV outbreak in 2003, there was "documented transmission associated with sewage aerosols" at a sewage treatment plant, a potential concern that was reiterated by more recent coronavirus research out of China as well.

Because waterkeepers collect water samples that could contain sewage, the potential for those particles to become aerosolized through a splash or spill led the council to recommend gloves, masks and other precautionary measures.

Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper Alice Volpitta said she wasn't sure how to feel in advance of Memorial





TUESDAY TIP

STOP THE CONTAMINATION

Single-stream recycling allows you to place all of your recyclables in one container for curbside collection, but some items can dirty up the load.

- Avoid diapers, plastic bags, and plastic gloves in your recycling container.
- Face mask coverings, tissues, and hygiene products are also not accepted.
- When in doubt, leave it out. Visit bit.ly/acceptedpgc to view a list of acceptable recycling items.



