

The Prince George's Post



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Happy Fourth of July!

from the staff at
The Prince George's Post

PHOTO BY KAROLINA KABOOMPICS:
HTTPS://WWW.PEXELS.COM

2024 “Top Cop” Recipient, Hyattsville Police Department Sergeant Zachary Nemser



On June 24, Governor Wes Moore and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller attended the Maryland Police Executives Association Breakfast where 88 municipal police departments and their leadership gathered to present an award to the 2024 “Top Cop” recipient, Hyattsville Police Department Sergeant Zachary Nemser.

PGCPS Ranks in Top 10% of School Districts for Whole-Child Education

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Public Schools

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 24, 2024)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has received the EVERFI Empowered Seal for the third consecutive year. Awarded to only 10% of U.S. school districts, the seal recognizes exemplary commitment to financial literacy, social-emotional learning, wellness and career education through EVERFI's digital programs.

“Holistic learning that extends beyond traditional subjects is critical to drive positive change, overcome generational challenges and prepare students for the diverse opportunities of the future,” said Superintendent Millard House II. “We are honored to receive this recognition for a third year.”

EVERFI's educational resources equip students with essential skills and knowledge critical for success in today's world. Integrated into the curriculum, the EVERFI Financial Literacy model allows students to earn certifications in banking, credit, insurance, paychecks, taxes, and budgeting. In 2023 and 2024 combined, more than 5,000 students achieved these certifications, demonstrating proficiency in managing real-world financial challenges.

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Child Care Is Scarce in Maryland and the Nation—and the Pandemic Made Matters Worse

By KATELYNN WINEBRENNER and
LAURA SHAUGHNESSY
Capital News Service

Halfway through her 12-week maternity leave last summer, Sarah Haddaway didn't expect the trouble that would accompany her search for child care.

After unexpected rejections from one fully booked child care facility after another, the lifelong resident of Maryland's western panhandle began calling every provider she could find.

Almost 11 months later, Haddaway's son Brooks—who just turned 1—is on at least seven providers' waitlists. He's been on those waitlists since the end of July 2023.

“It's a nightmare,” said Haddaway, who is from Frostburg, in Allegany County. “There is no opening anywhere you look. It's like winning the lottery.”

Parents across Maryland and the nation face the same struggle for one simple reason: the number of children who need child care exceeds the number of slots available in child care facilities.

The COVID-19 pandemic made matters worse. Maryland lost 15% of its child care providers and nearly 7% of its child care slots from Jan. 1, 2020, through Jan. 1, 2024, according to state statistics retrieved by the Local News Network. Those stats show that the number of child care slots in Maryland fell by 15,152 in those four years.

Some Maryland counties experienced especially dramatic changes. St. Mary's County, in Southern Maryland, lost more than a quarter of its providers. Caroline County, on the Eastern Shore, lost nearly a quarter of its child care slots.

In other words, in many parts of Maryland and the nation, child care has gone missing. In this project, the Local News Network details how and why it happened and what can be done about it. Included is a county-by-county-look at child care trends, which readers can access here.

It's not just Maryland families who struggle to find child care. A national survey of 2,000 Americans conducted in November 2023 for Care.com, a company that tries to match families with caregivers, found 65% of families with young children had spent time on child care waitlists.

Many child care providers nationwide left the business amid the pressures of the pandemic, said Dr. Jay Belsky, a child psychologist and professor of human development at the University of California, Davis. He said that's one reason why families struggle to find child



Sarah Haddaway and her husband, Noah, with their son Brooks.

care in a nation that, unlike many others, doesn't offer consistent federal support for it.

“What COVID showed us was how fragile the child care system was,” Belsky said. “We don't have a child care system. We have a non-system.”

‘Super, super difficult’

Child care providers closed their doors in recent years for a variety of reasons tied to one central fact: their work is harder now. In a Local News Network survey of 256 current child care providers in Maryland, 62.5% said their jobs have become more difficult since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Asked to cite the challenges they face, 57.4% of child care providers listed financial stability, while 48% cited burdensome state regulations—issues that are connected, according to many providers. Meanwhile, 46.5% of the providers surveyed said they struggled to hire quality staff.

Child care providers who left the business in recent years echoed those concerns.

Ben Stelle founded Kidpower at Silver Spring International in 2003 under a contract with Montgomery County that allowed him

Child Care in Prince George's County

By The Local News Network

The number of child care providers in Prince George's County fell 18.03% between Jan. 1, 2020, and Jan. 1, 2024. That's the eighth largest decrease in the state.

Meanwhile, the number of child care slots in Prince George's County decreased from 29,401 on Jan. 1, 2020, to 25,800 on Jan. 1, 2024. That's a 12.25% decrease—the seventh largest in the state.

However, the number of top-rated child care facilities—those with a rating of 5 on the state's EXCELS rating system—actually grew in Prince George's County from 22 in early 2020 to 40 early this year.

Here's what Flora Gee, pedagogical administrator at Greenbelt Children's Center, had to say about the child care situation in the county:

“The pandemic has created a complete crisis in staffing. It was always difficult to find high quality early educators to work in child care before the pandemic, but since the pandemic, there is such a void of qualified early childhood educators—and the public school is having the same problem.”

—Jess Daninhirsch

Visit <https://cnsmaryland.org/2024/06/25/child-care-in-prince-georges-county/> for an interactive chart regarding this data.

to work directly out of a school.

“It's super, super, super difficult to turn a profit if you don't have the kind of sweetheart deal that I had,” Stelle said. “Unless you were getting subsidized and had your own sort of small monopoly on a school area, you were out of luck.”

He attributed this mostly to Maryland state regulations, which require that child care centers have one adult employee for every three children under the age of 2.

“You couldn't turn a profit because you couldn't stay affordable at the ratios that were being forced upon you,” Stelle said.

Raven Hill, a spokeswoman for the Maryland State Department of Education—which oversees child care in the state—said there's a good reason the state requires more staff to supervise the youngest children.

“The 1:3 staff-to-child ratio for infants ensures that children receive high-quality care and activities,” Hill said. “Younger children typically need more care and attention, and smaller group sizes

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

Bootie Holson, great-granddad of 67, dies at 92

James Egbert “Bootie” Holson, 92, of Ocean View, Del., formerly of Camp Springs, died June 20. He was born in Washington to the late Edward and Catherine Holson.

Bootie was married 67 years to the late Patricia Ann “Patsy” Holson. Together they raised their family of 14 children in a house they built on Old Branch Avenue in Temple Hills. After retiring, they moved to Bethany Beach, enjoying their golden years together.

He worked for the District Government in the sheet metal trade for 35 years, before retiring and starting a family-owned business, J & J Contractors, specializing in sheet metal and roofing. I remember when he installed a new roof on St. Philip’s Church years ago, adding two small skylights.

He was active at St. Philip’s, volunteering for both church and school. He coached CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) baseball and Camp Springs Boys Club.

He was a huge fan of the Washington Nationals (he was wearing a Nats jacket in the coffin). He enjoyed a good game of poker and a lucky slot machine. He played fast pitch softball in the Guy Mason Metropolitan League and was inducted into the Fast Pitch Hall of Fame along with his oldest son, Jimmy.

Bootie was preceded in death by his wife, Patsy; his children, Mary Christine Delinski, James Joseph Holson and Bonita Jean Watson; and his siblings, Joseph, Edward and Anthony Holson and Mary Anne Holson Friello. Survivors include his children, Catherine Waltersdorff, Barbie Lloyd, Pat Holson, Vicki Farri, Maureen Taylor, Joan Emrick, Ann Horak, Paula Anderson, Michael Holson, Jeanine Schaefer and Mark Holson; 40 grandchildren and 67 great grandchildren.

Mass of Christian Burial was at St. Philip’s with celebrants Fr. Ryan Pineda and Fr. Paul Hill, Bootie’s brother-in-law. The Holson sons were in charge of preparation of the Altar and Gifts; the daughters were Pallbearers. Music was by John Whipple. Interment at Resurrection Cemetery was followed by repast in St. Philp’s Hall.

I attended the funeral. I think all 40 grandkids and 67 great-grandkids (some in-arms) were there. I’m sure Bootie loved it.

Town of Morningside

Morningside has a handsome new website, www.morningsidemd.gov. Check it out for general information and upcoming activities. Also, if you have a concern you’d like the Mayor to address, go to mayor@morningsidemd.gov.

Brandywine-Aquasco

BACK TO SCHOOL WELLNESS EVENT

Back to School Wellness Event Saturday, August 3, 2024, from 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Get ready to kick off the school year with our Back-to-School Wellness Event, where you can learn tips and tricks for staying healthy.

Join us at the Bowie Community Center for a day of fun and learning as we gear up for the new school year. This-in-person event will feature interactive workshops, fitness activities, and health screenings to help you start the year off right. Come meet local vendors offering healthy snacks and school supplies to get you ready for the school year ahead. Whether you are a student, parent, or educator, this event is perfect for anyone looking to prioritize their well-being. Do not miss out on this opportunity to kick off the school year with a focus on wellness.

The event is two hours and thirty minutes. General admission is free. Bowie Community Center is located at 3209 Stonybrook Drive, Bowie, Maryland 20715. Back to School Wellness Event Tickets, Saturday, August 3, 2024, at 11 a.m. Eventbrite for tickets.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday, June 23, 2024, was Student Recognition Sunday at Clinton, United Methodist Church in Clinton, Maryland. Owen Johnson, Lay Servant delivered the Sermon “Continue to Soar.” Worship Leader, Stephnie Samuel. Music by the Gospel Choir under Avis Balkcom-Williams Gospel Choir Director.

High School Graduates are Madison Falby (5/29) Reservoir High School, Ellicott City, Maryland. Parents Alysia Falby, Curt Falby, Grandmother Carolyn Beads, Grandparents Elvin & Joan Falby. Rendell Crawford (5/31) Surrattsville High School, Clinton, Maryland, Parents Evangeline Crawford, Ronald Crawford, Sr.. Aja Bell (6/18) Jackson-Evans High School, Washington, D.C., Parents Anthony Bell, Akua Evans, Grandmother Carol Bell. Kason Duncan MD (5/20) Frederick Douglas High School, Upper Marlboro, Maryland, Mother Kandi Duncan, Grandmother Idena Thomas. Kienel Peralta (5/31) Surrattsville High School, Clinton, Maryland, Mother Khia Knight, Grandmother Luz Knight. Rahsaan Thomas (5/28) Marriotts Ridge High School, Ellicott City, Maryland, parents Dr. Anthony & Marian Thomas. Uchenna Okoro (5/31) North Point High School, Waldorf, Maryland, parents Chimela & Simone Okoro, Aunt & Uncle Chidi & Ike Mbakwe. Ky Panda Massey (5/24) Clinton Grace Christian School, Clinton, Maryland, parents Clifford & Marilyn Panda-Massey. Xavier Pinkney (5/30) McDonough High School, Pomfret, Maryland, parents Amanda & Daniel Farrar, Great Grandmother Alma Pinkney. Congratulations Graduates.

OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP

Kudos to BSU Alumni Dejah Miles (’23). “Last week, I completed

Monthly Town Meeting, July 16, 7 p.m. at the Town Hall. Info: 301-736-2300.

I spy at Darnall’s Chance

Learn real 18th century spying techniques during a role-playing, hands-on spy mission for Gen. George Washington. Find out how the American Army outwitted the British with secrets and tricks to win the American Revolution!

The program is for children ages 6–14 who can read and write. This is a free ticketed event. Program length is approximately 45 minutes. The event will run every Tuesday and Wednesday in July from 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Darnall’s Chance House is in Upper Marlboro, on a hill overlooking School House Pond.

For information, call 301-952-8010.

Places to go and Things to do

Camp Springs Senior Activity Center is hosting Pickett Fences Bingo and Workshop on July 17, 1–3 p.m. Free. For more senior activities, visit the Center at 6420 Allentown Road or call 301-449-0490. You can also pick up the Calendar for June, July and August.

Bingo is held every Wednesday, 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., at Knights of Columbus hall in Forestville. (Bingo allows the Knights to be generous at local food pantries and Pro Life clinics.) Each week they have \$3000 in cash Bingo prizes, and more. For information call Bingo Chairman, George Hoehl, 391-599-0307.

Changing landscape

SakuraGo is announcing its Grand Opening with a banner at Woodyard Crossing Shopping Center, in Clinton. It has traditional Japanese food served with green tea. The website says it offers “fresh hibachi bowl.” If you go, let me know.

Speaking of eating out, daughter Sheila and I tried the Ruth Mexican Food Truck, parked at one of the gas stations on Suitland Road across from Morningside. Ruth herself took our order. I tried enchiladas, Sheila got tacos. The food was tasty and probably, authentic.

A home at 4315 Ridgecrest Drive, in Skyline, has sold for \$450,000.

Denise McHale, Surrattsville grad, dies as David plays “In my life”

Beryl Denise (Negron) McHale, 72, my daughter-in-law, died June 21 in Boulder, Colo. She had suffered for years with Huntington’s Disease.

Denise, as we all knew her, was the sec-

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

ond-oldest of the eight children of Victor and Minerva Negron. She was born in Honolulu, in the then-territory of Hawaii where her father was stationed. Soon after her birth, the family moved to San Antonio where her father was tapped to be an attorney for the Air Force. This took the Negron family to Panama and to Andrews AFB. Denise attended Surrattsville High School, graduating in 1969.

I taught bridge for teens at Andrews Officers Club. One day my son Mike met Denise at bridge. They fell in love. Mike graduated from McNamara and went on to Maryland U. Denise got a secretarial job. They married at Andrews and moved to Michigan, finally to Saginaw. Mike attended General Motors Institute.

Denise became a caseworker for the State of Michigan Department of Social Services. For decades, she worked relentlessly and compassionately to help low-income and unhoused residents of Saginaw access government assistance. She was determined to make sure her clients had all the support they needed and deserved, and when Denise was determined, she was indomitable.

They lived near my family home in Saginaw, and soon welcomed two sons, David and Conor. But sadly, within a few years, Denise apparently suffered the beginnings of Huntington’s Disease. Sadly, their marriage failed. But I always think of her as a daughter-in-law.

She moved to Denver with son David, and later to a nursing home in Boulder. She died there, with David and his guitar, his wife Nina, and two of their children. David played the Beatles’ “In My Life” in the moments before she died. Survivors include sons David (Nina) and Conor (Heather); grandchildren, Jack, Molly, Riley, Mary and Wesley, and several siblings.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Chrissy Bennett, Bea Desmarais and Marie Golihew, July 6; Father Kevin Cusick, Charles “Tony” Haley, Sue Richards and Rev. Dr. Kelvin McCune, July 7;

Jimmy Gromen and Anthony Curcio-Bobbitt, July 8; Karlyn Davis, John Anthony III and my grandson Zachary Seidman, July 9; my daughter Elaine (McHale) Seidman, July 10; Kevin Kline, Nicole Wade, Dee (Curcio) Brown and Dave Williams Jr., July 11; Carolyn Pruitt, July 12; and Kenard Simms, July 13.

Happy Anniversary to Dave and Carolyn Williams, their 49th on July 11.

God Bless America!!

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

one of the most impactful programs available to young journalists—the HBCU Collective Program.” From May 29 to June 12, 2024, Dejah Miles and participants the HBCU Media Collective worked alongside professional journalists at Dow Jones’s Barron’s and MarketWatch newsrooms, as well as participated in newsroom training hosted by The Wall Street Journal. Fellows also attended graduate level courses at the Ivy League, Columbia University. Miles is the first Bowie State University student or alumna to participate in the program. #BowieBOLD.

FAME 20TH ANNIVERSARY GALA & AWARDS CELEBRATION

Please join us in celebrating bringing music and education to the greater Washington Region youth for the past 20 years Saturday, July 13, 2024, from 6–9 p.m. at Samuel Riggs IV Alumni Center University of Maryland College Park, 7801 Alumni Drive, College Park, MD, 20742. Host: Tony Perkins, NBC 4 Anchor. Special Guest: The Chelsey Green Project. “We are thrilled to announce that FAME (Foundation for the Advancement of Music & Education) is turning 20 this year. It has been an incredible journey and none of it would have been possible without every one of you.” Please join us for a spectacular evening of music, awards and entertainment at the Samuel Riggs IV Alumni Center in College Park, MD. With your continued support, we will keep the music playing for another 20 years.

“We are FAME” was founded in 2004 to ensure that every young musician is prepared for college, career, and lifelong learning. FAME’s mission is to give every young musician the best opportunity to succeed in life by providing music training and academic support.

Music is the instrument that FAME uses to capture youths’ attention and build their self-confidence and interest in improving their grades and preparing for college and career. Students are challenged to set high expectations for their academic and life achievements by expanding students’ experiences to demonstrate that they are not defined by their current conditions or surroundings.

This year, FAME supported 1200 youth for college and career through its three programs: Music Central Program, Summer Music Program, and the Fame Jazz Band Program. Fame is strategically located in north, central and South Prince George’s County to serve all youth: University of Maryland School of Music (north), Dr. Henry Wise High School (central), Harmony Halls Arts Center (south), and The Andrew Jackson Academy (south).

VIP Admission: \$150 (includes priority seating & VIP reception). General admission: \$100. Visit www.Famemusic.org or Call 301-805-5358 for sponsorship and additional information.

Local Students Honored

Clarke University Announces Spring 2024 Dean’s List

DUBUQUE, Iowa (June 28, 2024)—Clarke University is proud to announce that 222 students earned a spot on the Dean’s List for the Spring 2024 semester. The list recognizes full-time Clarke students who have earned a 3.65 grade-point average or above, on a 4.0 scale, with a minimum of 12 graded undergraduate hours.

Bowie, MD: **Mannix H. Amos**

Local Students Achieve Dean’s List at TCNJ

EWING, N.J. (June 27, 2024)—The following students have earned the esteemed honor of placement on the Dean’s List at The College of New Jersey for the spring 2024 semester. To achieve this honor, a student must carry 12 or more credits that semester and earn a 3.5 (or above) grade point average:

Bowie, MD: **Maya Randall**, Interactive Multimedia

Local Residents Graduate From William & Mary

WILLIAMSBURG, VA (June 24, 2024)—The following residents recently graduated from the College of William & Mary.

Bowie, MD: **Quinn Osborne**, Bachelor of Arts

Brandywine, MD: **Imari Smith**, Bachelor of Science

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Grieving Husband Asks About His Survivor Benefits

By RUSSELL GLOOR, National Social Security Advisor at the AMAC Foundation, the non-profit arm of the **Association of Mature American Citizens**

Dear Rusty: My wife died May 4, 2024. I notified Social Security, and they have removed the direct deposit made to my joint checking account on May 8, 2024. What are my options now for obtaining any benefits from my wife’s Social Security account? **Signed: Grieving Husband**

Dear Grieving Husband: Please accept our sincere condolences for the loss of your wife. Rest assured that we’re here to assist with any Social Security questions you may have at this difficult time.

FYI, a person must live the entire month to be eligible for SS benefits for that month (Social Security benefits aren’t paid for the month a person dies). For this reason, and as a matter of standard protocol, Social Security instructed the bank to return any payments received for your wife after her death. This is often referred to as the “claw back” rule.

In some circumstances, however, Social Security “claws back” money which rightfully belongs to the deceased, as they did in this case. Your wife’s Social Security payment received on May 8 was her payment for the month of April, and she was fully entitled to that payment because she lived for the entire month of April. I suggest that you download, fill out, and submit Form SSA-1724 to your local Social Security office to recover that May 8 payment, which rightfully belongs to your wife’s estate. Note that the bank will automatically return any future SS payments received for your wife.

As your wife’s surviving spouse, you are also entitled to a one-time lump sum “death benefit” of \$255, which you can request by calling your local SS field office (get the number at www.ssa.gov/locator), or by calling 1.800.772.1213. During that call you can also explore whether you are entitled to any additional SS benefit as a surviving spouse.

If your wife’s monthly SS retirement benefit was more than your current monthly SS benefit, you will be entitled to receive her higher monthly amount instead of your own smaller amount (FYI, if you haven’t yet reached your own full retirement age your survivor benefit will be reduced). And if you are not yet collecting your own SS benefit, you have the option to claim your survivor benefit from your wife first while allowing your personal SS retirement benefit to continue to grow, up to maximum at age 70 if you like.

Just be aware that if you haven’t yet reached your full retirement age (FRA) and you are still working, any SS benefit you take before your FRA will be subject to Social Security’s “earnings test” which limits how much can be earned before they take away some of your SS benefits. The 2024 annual earnings limit is \$22,320 (changes annually) for those who claim prior to the year they attain full retirement age, and SS will take away \$1 of benefits for every \$2 over the annual limit. The “earnings test” no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

The 2.4 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.

COMMUNITY



PHOTO CREDIT DANIELLE HARRIS, INFINITE LEGACY

Tissue recipient Liz Arango-Howshall shared her story.

Infinite Legacy Honors Organ and Tissue Donor Heroes at Annual Ceremony of Remembrance

By PRESS OFFICER
Infinite Legacy

Infinite Legacy, the nonprofit organ procurement organization (OPO) serving almost 10 million people in Maryland and the Metro DC Area, hosted its annual Ceremony of Remembrance commemorating the selfless heroism of organ, eye and tissue donors on Sunday, June 23, 2024 at the Bowie Center for the Performing Arts. There is a critical need for organ donors in the U.S. as more than 100,000 people across the nation and approximately 4,000 people locally are waiting for lifesaving transplants.

During the ceremony, Infinite Legacy honored generous deceased donors and their courageous families. This year’s ceremony featured speakers from Infinite Legacy and transplant recipients who shared their unique stories of how donation and transplantation has impacted their lives.

Infinite Legacy facilitates organ, eye and tissue donation and educates people about the critical importance of registering to be a donor. We work with 68 hospitals and eight transplant centers to decrease the number of people waiting for a lifesaving transplant. We are passionate about giving life and restoring hope while honoring the legacy and generosity of donors and providing care to their families.

Maryland Sports Commission Presents MARS Turf Wars: National Adult Kickball Tournament

Title Sponsor Maryland Sports Commission Brings First ESPN-Streamed National Kickball Competition to Prince George’s County

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Sports Commission

BALTIMORE (June 27, 2024)—The Maryland Sports Commission today announced the Main Attraction Recreational Sports (MARS) Turf Wars Adult Kickball Tournament on July 6–7 at the Liberty Sports Park in Prince George’s County, Maryland. This event will be the first-ever ESPN-streamed national kickball competition, featuring nearly 60 registered teams and over 950 athletes and attendees from across the United States.

“We are proud to bring this groundbreaking tournament to Prince George’s County, Maryland,” said Terry Hasseltine, Executive Director of the Maryland Sports Commission. “The MARS Turf Wars Adult Kickball Tournament not only showcases the athletic prowess of our many participants but also reinforces our dedi-

cation to promoting inclusivity and community through sports.”

The MARS Turf Wars is expected to have a significant impact on Prince George’s County and the state of Maryland. This tournament transcends kickball; it is a celebration of diversity and community through sports. Organized by MARS, a women and minority-owned business based in Charlotte, NC, and in collaboration with the Maryland Sports Commission as the title sponsor, the event aims to promote inclusivity in athletics and advance sports at all levels for all communities.

“The MARS Turf Wars Adult Kickball Tournament represents more than a sporting event; it stands as a testament to the values of diversity, community, and inclusivity in athletics,” said Arion Herbert, co-founder of Main Attraction Recreational Sports. “In collaboration with the Mary-

land Sports Commission, we aim to amplify the voices of underrepresented communities in athletics. By broadcasting this tournament live on ESPN3, we seek to celebrate the athleticism and skill of participants and highlight the unifying power of sports.”

In addition to kickball, attendees can enjoy various on-site activations including a 25ft Inflatable Projection Screen, Mechanical Bull, Kids Bounce House, Stretch Zone Recovery Station, and more.

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Maryland Sports Commission *is the definitive leader in the recruitment and retention of sporting events, both amateur and professional, to the state of Maryland. Since its founding in 2008, Maryland Sports Commission has enhanced the state’s economy, image and quality of life as the go-to resource for the sports tourism industry. Visit: <https://marylandsports.us/>*

Governor Moore Delivers Opening Keynote Address at the Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (June 24, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today delivered the opening keynote address at the Maryland Municipal League summer conference in Ocean City, the largest event dedicated to educational and professional development for Maryland’s local leadership. The governor’s keynote focused on the three principles that have guided the Moore-Miller Administration’s strategy for improving Maryland’s economy: taking a disciplined approach; following the data; and investing in ways that grow the economy.

Following are key excerpts from the governor’s remarks as prepared:

“This administration made the choice to pass bipartisan budgets that haven’t just been balanced—They’ve also been smaller than the final budget of my predecessor. This is the first time in nearly a decade that Maryland has passed a

budget smaller than the one the year before.”

“Our administration said we would leave no one behind. It’s not just a moral imperative—it’s a strategic necessity. When children don’t grow up in poverty, they have a better chance of building strong careers—and that helps everyone. When workers get fair pay and parents have space to enter the workforce, we stimulate the economy—and that helps everyone. When we build new, equitable pathways to prosperity, that makes us more competitive—and that helps everyone.”

“I don’t come from the world of politics: I come from the military and I come from the private sector. And when you’ve been working with a broken business model for years, it takes more than a few months of action to turn things around. But by staying focused, following the data, and prioritizing growth, we’ve been able to get Maryland moving in the right direction again. We’re getting people back to work. We’re investing in families

and children. We’re fighting child poverty. We’re unleashing Maryland’s promise.”

Earlier in the day, both Governor Moore and Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller attended the Maryland Police Executives Association Breakfast where 88 municipal police departments and their leadership gathered to present an award to the 2024 “Top Cop” recipient, Hyattsville Police Department Sergeant Zachary Nemser.

Following the opening session, the governor and lieutenant governor joined the expo hall ribbon-cutting ceremony alongside Maryland Municipal League leadership and walked the expo hall where he engaged with booths from state agencies, municipalities, and businesses.

Governor Moore concluded his visit at the Maryland Mayors Association meeting and luncheon where he delivered brief remarks and presented the outgoing Maryland Mayors Association President Mayor Mike Benton with a citation.

Child Care from A1

allow adults to interact more easily with each child and respond to their unique individual needs.”

Stelle decided to leave the child care business, ending his contract with the county before the end of the 2021 school year, for reasons other than state regulations. He said he was fatigued after decades of working with children.

“The glamor of it wore off,” he said.

Candace Hall, who operated a child care facility out of her home in Montgomery County, cited a different reason for why she closed her operation in 2021.

“The last licenser specialist I had was extremely rude and demeaning,” Hall said in response to the Local News Network survey. “I decided after that last inspection, I would have to close down as I will not be disrespected in my own home.”

Meanwhile, Maxine Seidman—who owned and operated Play Keepers Inc. out of a school in Randallstown for 40 years—said her income fell as the pandemic prompted parents to keep their children at home. Some of her staffers left, too.

“Certainly none of us were making the kind of money we were making before, which wasn’t a whole heck of a lot before,” Seidman said. “But this made it very difficult to get staff after COVID.”

The struggle to stay afloat during the pandemic was unlike anything she had experienced.

“It was very distressing,” she said.

Seidman decided to retire in 2021. But now she’s concerned about the availability of child care in Baltimore County, which state statistics show lost 1,821 child care slots between the start of 2020 and the start of 2024.

“I worry about some of the families,” Seidman said. “Who is taking care of their children? I wonder where those children are.”

A frustrating search

Many Maryland parents also wonder where the child care providers are.

Noor Shakeel said she knew finding child care in Montgomery County would be a struggle.

“I was always stressed out, hearing from my friends’ experiences,” said Shakeel, who lives in Germantown.

To alleviate that stress, Shakeel’s parents cared for her son until he was 18 months old. At that point, she could tell he wanted and needed more socialization.

Shakeel and her husband tried to keep an open mind when they started touring child care centers, but she came across obstacles.

“Distance, safety and money,” Shakeel said. “Those are the three big factors.”

The process is also long, she said.

“It comes to a point when you don’t have a choice other than to settle,” she said.

Eventually, Shakeel’s mother-in-law connected them to a family friend who happened to have an opening in her in-home day care.

“We just got lucky,” Shakeel said.

Other parents are not as fortunate.

Masha Mukhina, an assistant professor of physics at the University of Maryland, moved to Prince George’s County in 2023. Colleagues advised her to add her son, who is now almost 2 years old, to the waitlist for Bright Horizons, a child care center in College Park affiliated with the university.

Much to her surprise, her son continues to be on the waitlist and has even dropped down a few spots due to aging out of the infant group into the toddler group.

“Children move from this waiting list in and out based on age, and I’m supposed to be on the priority list as an employee of the university,” said Mukhina, who ended up hiring a nanny to care for her son. “And I don’t think it gets me any priority because everyone, more or less, on that waiting list is in the same position.”

Several child care providers said availability is especially tight for families seeking care for children under the age of 2.

“Because of the regulations and because of the guidelines that surround children under the age of 2, many of the providers and centers are no longer taking infants, which is making it harder to find infant care or child care for children under 2 throughout the state of Maryland, not just Baltimore,” said Brenda Velez-Jimenez, who operates Brenda’s Little Monkey Daycare in Catonsville, in Baltimore County.

A continuing struggle

As difficult as it is for families to find quality child care now, some providers across Maryland fear the situation will get worse before it gets better.

For one thing, the federal government offered temporary aid totaling about \$24 billion to prop up the child care industry during the pandemic. That program expired in September 2023.

On top of that, several providers noted they face new competition from unlicensed providers that popped up during the pandemic and operate without the same costly restrictions imposed by state regulations.

“You’ve got other children’s neighbors that are providing unlicensed care,” Velez-Jimenez said.

Velez-Jimenez criticized the state for not doing anything about those unlicensed providers, but Hill, the Maryland State Department of Education spokeswoman, begged to differ.

“The Office of Child Care investigates all illegal child care complaints within 10 days of receipt,” she said. “A cease-and-desist letter is issued to providers informing them that they must stop providing child care if they are doing so.”

Other child care providers expressed fears about another new competitor: the new state pre-K program for 3- and 4-year-olds to be implemented over the next few years under the state’s education reform plan, the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future.

While private child care providers are being counted on

to join the pre-K program, some worry they will lose clients—and income—once the state starts offering free pre-K to 3- and 4-year-olds.

“We are terrified that if we lose our 3- and 4-year-olds, you’re going to see centers closing down right and left because there won’t be enough income to support the teachers who work there,” said Flora Gee, pedagogical administrator at the Greenbelt Children’s Center in Prince George’s County.

Gee said her facility has already been losing teachers to public schools that pay twice as much, and she isn’t the only child care provider who worries about staff shortages.

“Finding and retaining competent employees who align with my day care facility’s values and standards is a constant challenge,” said Yvette Gordon, who runs a family child care facility in Baltimore City.

Kelli Deist, who runs an in-home day care in Frostburg, in Allegany County, said there’s an obvious reason for child care staffing shortages.

“We don’t get paid what we deserve,” she said.

During the pandemic, the state permitted Deist to take in children of essential workers in exchange for state compensation.

“Financially, it was a struggle because we weren’t allowed to charge the parents,” she said. “The state was supposed to be paying us, but because it was such a big, new thing, they were way behind. I went three months without any payment at all.”

A nationwide problem

Maryland’s child care shortage is part of a nationwide phenomenon. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, as many as 100,000 Americans have been forced to stay home from work because of their struggles to find child care.

“This burden falls disproportionately on women of color who are on the frontlines of many essential jobs,” said Tina Kauh, a senior program officer and child care expert at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Many are also child care providers who face the monumental feat of juggling their low-wage, high-risk jobs with caring for their families and themselves in the midst of a pandemic.”

With child care slots in such high demand, parents end up paying more and more. Care.com in 2023 found families responding to its survey spent 24% of their income on child care—even though the federal government considers child care affordable if it takes up 7% or less of a family’s income.

Families spent an average of \$321 a week on day care, up 13% from \$284 in 2022, and many families are going into debt to pay child care bills.

“Within the first five years of their child’s life, parents are being forced into a financial hole that is nearly impossible to climb out of,” Care.com CEO Brad Wilson said in a statement announcing the study’s findings.

The United States is unusual

COMMENTARY

Marian Wright Edelman
*Founder and President Emerita,
Children’s Defense Fund*



Child Watch®:

Gun Violence: Acknowledging a Crisis

“I’m graduating, I’m going to college, I get to go home, I get to see my dog, I get to do all this when they don’t. It’s just really hard.”

In the midst of this season’s joyful graduation celebrations, one commencement ceremony stood out in a heartbreaking way because of the friends who were missing. Emma Ehrens told an interviewer she was a six-year-old first grader in December 2012, looking forward to making gingerbread houses later that afternoon, when a gunman armed with a semiautomatic assault rifle burst into her classroom at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. When the gun jammed for a few seconds, one of those classmates, Jesse Lewis, yelled, “Run!” Emma ran, but Jesse was one of the 20 children and six adults who were killed at Sandy Hook that day. On June 12, about 60 survivors of the Sandy Hook shooting graduated from Newtown High School. Like Emma, many of them were still grappling with their memories of that day, the missing teachers and administrators who might have been in the audience, and the other beautiful students who should have

been crossing the stage too.

A group of these high school students have joined the Junior Newtown Action Alliance. The alliance is part of a national grassroots organization founded in Newtown after the shooting to transform their town’s tragedy into meaningful action. They work to end gun violence and reverse our nation’s escalating gun violence epidemic through the introduction of smarter, safer gun laws and broader cultural change. The students of Junior Newtown Action Alliance join Hadiya Pendleton’s friends, who began the Wear Orange movement after she was shot and killed standing in a Chicago park; the survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, who led the March for Our Lives movement; and other young people across the country taking action. As Ella Seaver, also a Sandy Hook survivor, Newtown High graduating senior, and Junior Newtown Action Alliance member, explained: “Putting my voice out there and working with all of these amazing people to try and create change really puts a meaning to the trauma that

we all were forced to experience. It’s a way to feel like you’re doing something. Because we are. We’re fighting for change and we’re really not going to stop until we get it.”

Young people across the country are demanding the same thing. They know guns are the leading cause of death for children and teenagers in the U.S., they have seen firsthand how the threat of gun violence affected their childhoods, and they are determined to do something about it. On June 25, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared gun violence a public health crisis for the first time, underscoring what the American Medical Association and many others have believed for years. The Surgeon General’s advisory notes that gun violence leads to cascading harm across our society: those who lose their lives to guns, those who are injured, those who are direct witnesses, those who lose their loved ones, those who are exposed in affected communities, including schools, and those who experience collective trauma and fear. The majority of Americans fall into one or more of these categories, including the nearly 80 percent of U.S. adults who report feeling stress from the possibility of a mass shooting, and the more than half who say they or their family members have personally experienced a firearm-related incident. And we know the threat of gun violence is devastating for young people.

The report found half of U.S. teens ages 14-17 say they worry “about a shooting happening at my school or a local school near me.” Like all Americans, children and young people are the victims of all kinds of gun violence: homicides, suicides, community gun violence, domestic gun violence, and accidental or unintentional shootings. The report notes that 56% of unintentional gun

deaths among children and adolescents happened in their own homes, and in cases where there was information about how guns had been stored before accidental shootings, 74% of the guns used were stored loaded and 76% were stored unlocked—most commonly accessed from inside or on top of a nightstand, on top of a bed, or under a pillow or mattress.

There is so much more we can do. The Surgeon General’s advisory includes recommendations for a number of common sense measures, including an assault weapons ban, universal background checks, secure storage requirements, including child access prevention laws, and increasing federal funding for gun violence prevention research and community investment in educational programs and mental health resources. As National Gun Violence Awareness Month draws to a close, this advisory provides new momentum for our nation to stay focused on ending this crisis. As Surgeon General Murthy said: “Our children should not have to live in fear that they are going to get shot if they go to school. None of us should have to worry that going to the mall or a concert or house of worship means putting our lives at risk, or that we’ll get a call that a loved one in a moment of crisis has taken their own life with a firearm. All of us, regardless of our background or beliefs, want to live in a world that is safe for us and our children.” And all of us should be listening to the children and young people who are already leading on gun violence prevention, who are tired of losing their siblings and friends and classmates, and who are demanding that our nation protect them, not guns.

—June 28, 2024

Ben Jealous
*Executive Director,
Sierra Club*



The Scorching Truth: Extreme Heat is a Wake-Up Call to Act on Climate Change

Are you one of the more than 100 million Americans who live somewhere that was (or still is) under a heat advisory?

As I write these words, the mercury is soaring. The world is reeling from the deadly impact of extreme heat and weather events. This is climate change in action. We are living it. And the thermometer-busting temperatures are just the tip of the (melting) iceberg.

Jocelyn Richards of Manassas, Virginia is currently staying in Maine to escape the summer heat in the South. She suffers from Chronic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (CIRS) from past exposure to mold. Heat is a major trigger for her due to Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS), a common component of CIRS.

Richards says, “Not only is the heat itself a major trigger, but heat releases VOCs [volatile organic compounds] from asphalt. It becomes unbearable to even take a walk outside or run errands because it’s so dif-

ficult to breathe from the VOCs in the air. Along with other MCAS symptoms triggered by the heat like tachycardia, high blood pressure, and dizziness, it can quickly turn into a medical emergency if I’m out in the extreme heat for even half an hour.”

Richards is still looking for a permanent place to reside with mild temperatures and low levels of the environmental toxins that also trigger her illness. And stories like hers are increasingly common.

A host of illnesses are caused or dangerously exacerbated by extreme heat. Air quality is generally worse during periods of extreme heat. Ground-level ozone—the main component in smog—presents one such threat. It is produced when pollutants, like those from burning fossil fuels, react with heat and sunlight. The stagnant, hot air during heat waves worsens ozone pollution.

The infamous 2022 summer heat wave in Europe is now thought to be responsible for up to 70,000 excess deaths, with ozone pollution playing a big part.

Julie Nicely, an atmospheric chemist at the University of Maryland who worked on a report on the 2022 heat wave, noted the mix of conditions created by such a heat wave “is very bad for the lungs and the cardiovascular system. It’s just very unhealthy.”

Then there is the smoke from wildfires. In addition to the destruction they cause, wildfires are making it harder for millions of Americans to breathe. It is a problem that is getting worse with longer, hotter fire seasons—another feature of climate change. The still-burning Post Fire northwest of Los Angeles is just the most recent high-profile fire in California to get national attention. And wildfire smoke has now become an issue for even more parts of the country.

At one point last summer, Chicago officially had the worst air quality in the world. Other major American cities across the Midwest and East Coast were similarly impacted, as smoke pollution from Canadian wildfires poured over the continent. The threat of a repeat this summer is still there. Wildfires in Canada are still raging, and experts say the 2024 season still could be as bad as or worse than last year’s.

In places where the wildfires occur, once the flames subside, flooding becomes a threat. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the removal of trees and shrubs increases the speed and volume of runoff and hot fires can “create a water-repellent layer of topsoil, which further amplifies runoff volume and speed,” increasing the risk of flash floods.

The heat itself dries out the ground and makes water absorption more difficult, which creates a threat of flash floods. And as the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences points out, “Warmer air holds more moisture, resulting in heavy rainfall, snowstorms, and flooding.” And “warming seawater can fuel stronger, more destructive hurricanes.” NOAA predicts an 85% chance of an above-normal hurricane

season this year.

Beyond the threat of hurricanes along our eastern and southern coasts, inland storms are a growing threat for more and more Americans. The regions impacted by serious tornados are expanding. And once-rare derechos, another kind of incredibly destructive windstorm, are becoming more frequent.

Sadly, the list goes on. Around the world, threats from increasing temperatures include: rising sea levels, food insecurity from the loss of land suitable for crop cultivation, increased risk of infectious disease outbreaks and another pandemic like COVID-19, and the extinction of pollinators that sustain the natural life cycles on which we all depend. But although the situation is dire, we cannot give in to despair.

We must invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and support communities most affected by climate change. The more than \$1 billion investment by the Biden-Harris administration to expand shade-producing and air-cleaning tree canopies in cities across the country is one example. I was recently in Michigan with US Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Homer Wilkes to promote the many benefits of the urban forestry initiative in that state.

At the end of the day, though, when it comes to the cascade of devastation caused by rising temperatures, there can be no substitute for tackling the climate crisis head on. First and foremost, that means hastening our transition from an economy that runs on fossil fuels to one powered by clean, renewable energy. The extreme heat and weather events we’re experiencing are not only a wake-up call. They are an immediate call to action to redouble our efforts towards that transition.

—June 23, 2024

Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.

Education from A1

“The impact of financial education is life-changing and allows students to gain a comprehensive understanding of how money functions in the real world, setting them on a path toward successful financial futures,” said PGCPs Financial Education and Empowerment Coordinator Susan D. Bistransin. “Students in the PGCPs Class of 2024 were the first to graduate with a personal finance course, which became a graduation requirement in 2020. We need

this mandate for the entire state!”

In addition to financial literacy, PGCPs prioritizes the social-emotional learning of students, faculty and staff. Students have access to mental health clinicians who provide early interventions, emotional support and crisis management.

Additionally, through academic and university partnerships with the University of Maryland, College Park, Mt. Holyoke College, St. Elizabeth University, and the National Network of State Teachers of the Year (NNSTOY), PGCPs continues to train

its teachers and leaders in social-emotional learning. In a recent culture and climate survey, 75% of teachers surveyed indicated that they feel confident in leading social-emotional learning lessons for students; and 63% of the teachers were confident in their ability to deliver trauma-sensitive strategies.

To view the full list of recipients of the 2024 EVERFI Empowered Seal, visit <https://everfi.com/k-12/empowered-seal/>.

Child Care from A3

among developed nations in that it has no universal support system for child care or standardized policy on parental leave. Maryland offers a scholarship program that helps subsidize the cost of child care for lower-income families, but it does not cover the full cost.

Belsky, of the University of California, Davis, said he believes there should be a system in place that gives parents a choice to stay home to raise their children if they want, or to be able to choose a high-quality care facility.

“Giving families with young children

more support, including economic support, might afford them the ability to more freely choose what they feel is best for their young children’s care,” Belsky said.

But for families where both parents work, stable child care is a necessity, Belsky said. “Especially at younger ages, stability of care is preferable, desirable, if only from the standpoint of quality of life,” he said.

That stability is important for kids and parents alike, according to Natasha Cabrera, a University of Maryland expert on human development.

“The first five years of life [and] the first year of life is critically important for brain development,” said Cabrera, a professor at

UMD’s College of Education. “Children are like sponges. Their brains are ready, and they’re wired to learn, but they need the cognitive stimulation from the environment.”

The child care shortage could have negative consequences for children across Maryland, such as decreased trust, lowered academic success or increased risk for developing a mental illness, she said.

“It’s awful,” Cabrera said. “It’s very scary. If you care about the future of Maryland, you need to invest in its children.”

Local News Network reporters Fiona Flowers and Jess Daninhirsch contributed to this report.

The Prince George’s Post

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ENVIRONMENT

EarthTalk® Q&A

Home Air Conditioning Gets a Little Greener

By RODDY SCHEER AND DOUG MOSS JUNE 21, 2024

Dear EarthTalk:
What’s the latest in residential air conditioning? How can I stay cool but stay green this summer?

—Jackie B., Reno, NV

The environmental impact of traditional air conditioning systems is significant. Fortunately, there are several advancements in A/C technology that allow you to stay cool while minimizing your carbon footprint. Here’s are some eco-friendly cooling solutions and tips on how to stay green this summer.

One of the significant advancements in A/C is inverter technology. Unlike traditional units that turn on and off to regulate temperature, inverter models adjust the compressor motor speed to maintain a consistent temperature. This is more efficient and reduces wear and tear, extending the life of the unit.

Harnessing solar energy for cooling is a game-changer. Solar-powered A/C units use photovoltaic panels to convert sunlight into electricity, significantly reducing reliance on the grid and lowering electric bills. The initial installation can be costly, but the long-term savings and environmental benefits are substantial.

Another green option is geothermal heat pumps that utilize stable underground temperatures to cool in the summer and heat in the winter. These systems use up to 50 percent less power than conventional heating and cooling. Installation is complex and expensive, but the energy savings over time can be significant.

When selecting an A/C unit, look for models with high Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratios (SEER) and Energy Star certifications. These ratings indicate that the unit meets stringent energy efficiency guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), ensuring reduced energy usage and lower carbon emissions. Meanwhile, ensure that your air conditioning system is running efficiently by scheduling regular maintenance. Cleaning or replacing filters, checking for leaks, and ensuring the unit is in good working order can improve performance and extend its lifespan.

Regardless of the type of cooling technology in your home, investing in a smart thermostat can optimize your system’s efficiency. These devices learn your schedule and preferences, adjusting temperatures automatically to reduce energy consumption when you’re not home. They can also be controlled remotely via smartphone apps, allowing you to make adjustments on the go.

Another way to keep the indoors cool—and reduce the load on whatever A/C system you have—is to improve insulation. Use fans to circulate the air inside to make it feel cooler than the actual ambient air temperature. And use curtains, blinds or reflective window films to block the sun’s heat during the hottest parts of the day. Plant trees or install awnings outside to provide shade and reduce heat gain. And open windows to circulate fresh air, which reduces the need for A/C and also improves indoor air quality.

CONTACTS: ENERGY STAR Most Efficient 2024: Room AC, https://www.energystar.gov/most-efficient/me-certified-room-ac/results?is_most_efficient_filter=Most+Efficient; 5 Ways to Stay Cool During Extreme Heat, <https://www.fema.gov/blog/5-ways-stay-cool-during-extreme-heat>; How to stay cool without air conditioning, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/07/18/health/how-to-stay-cool-without-air-conditioning-wellness/index.html>; How to Choose an Energy-Efficient Air Conditioner, <https://www.constellation.com/guides/appliances/energy-efficient-air-conditioners.html>.

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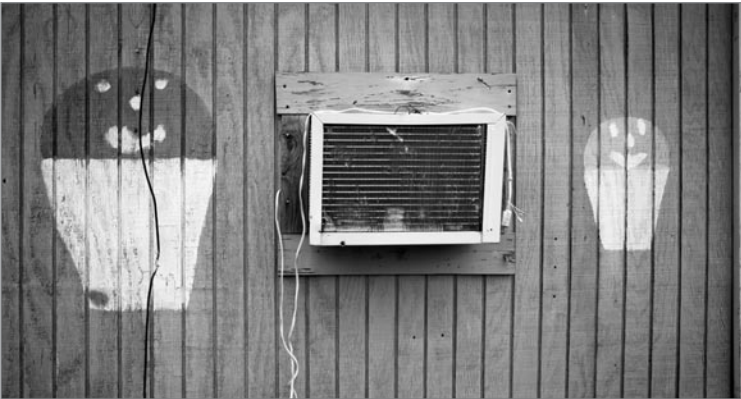


PHOTO CREDIT: VHINES200, FLICKRCC

There’s never been a better time to invest in a home air conditioning system now that new technology has made A/C greener.



PHOTO COURTESY CHESAPEAKE BAY TRUST

Celebration of over \$1.3 million in funding for 33 projects across Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia as part of the Chesapeake Bay Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3) Grant Program

Over \$1.3 Million Announced to Support Green Infrastructure Projects to Improve Communities in MD, PA, VA, WV, DE, and D.C.

By PRESS OFFICER
Chesapeake Bay Trust

WASHINGTON (June 26, 2024)—Today, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection and Prince George’s County Department of the Environment announced over \$1.3 million in funding for 33 projects across Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia as part of the Chesapeake Bay Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3) Grant Program. The awards help communities develop and implement plans that reduce stormwater runoff; increase the number of green spaces in urban areas; improve the health of local rivers, streams, the Chesapeake Bay, and the human populations within the communities; create “green jobs;” reduce energy use; and enhance livability in cities and communities.

“Investing in green infrastructure is not only good for our environment—it also creates jobs and enhances the quality of life in our communities. These federal dollars will go a long way towards supporting local projects that will achieve these goals, while protecting our natural resources and the health of the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed,” said Senator Van Hollen.

“These investments in sustainable, community-driven projects will improve both the environment and quality of life across the region,” said EPA Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator Adam Ortiz. “EPA is proud to help fund green infrastructure that will enhance the health and economic strength of our neighborhoods, local waterways, and the Chesapeake Bay.”

This green infrastructure program is designed to facilitate and encourage communities implementing traditional “gray” infrastructure projects, such as repaving roads or reconfiguring intersections, to add green elements at little additional cost. These green elements then offer cost-effective savings on stormwater treatment, flooding reduction, and other community benefits.

“The G3 program ensures more community-based organizations have the means to preserve our cherished natural resources,” said Harold D. Ward, Cabinet

Secretary of the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. “We have seen the impact of this program in West Virginia from previous years and are excited to see what this class of awardees will accomplish for our environment and communities.”

The G3 Initiative was started in 2011. Initially led by water experts at the EPA, it has grown exponentially and expanded into the program it is today. Over 300 projects have received funding with over \$17.7 million invested into the greening of communities.

“Our County is committed to being inclusive, sustainable, and green,” explained Andrea Crooms, director of the Prince George’s County Department of the Environment. “This grant program isn’t just an investment in our environment; it’s an investment in the health and well-being of the people who live in these areas, too.”

Studies have shown the extensive impact of green communities, ranging from financial to health. Benefits for residents with access to green spaces include decreased stress, improved health and well-being, reduced energy costs, and cleaner air and water.

The 33 awards range in size and scope, from community engagement and education to on-the-ground projects to reduce stormwater runoff, build green spaces, improve climate resiliency, address food insecurity, and more. The Chesapeake Bay Trust will manage these awards, delivering resources back to communities with the support and expertise needed to ensure each project achieves its intended goals.

“Empowering people to make sustainable changes for their communities is at the heart of this grant program,” shared Jana Davis, Ph.D., president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust. “When we empower local groups to become the champions of their green projects, we are promoting the health of their natural resources and communities for years to come.”

Green Streets, Green Jobs, Green Towns (G3) Grant Program 2024 Awardees

Prince George’s County

EcoLatinos, Inc: Landover Hills, Maryland - \$100,616—For a bioretention system to address stormwater runoff at the

St. Mary’s Catholic Church playground. The project will build a comprehensive stormwater best management practice consisting of a bioswale and underdrain system.

Anacostia Watershed Society: Cheverly, Maryland - \$49,767—To gather community voices to design and construct a natural space at an abandoned parcel that reflects the needs of its neighbors. With community and volunteer support, the build will result in a green oasis that fosters ecological, mental, and recreational health.

Morgan State University: Prince George’s County, Maryland - \$19,918—

For a white paper to explore strategies for green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) delivery and maintenance, focusing on the Community Based Public Private Partnership model employed by the Clean Water Partnership in Prince George’s County, MD. The white paper will offer insights into the unique structure and management mechanisms of the model. This project will also foster social and economic co-benefits, particularly in municipalities with minority populations.

Town of Brentwood: Brentwood, Maryland - For technical assistance only—To support a town charrette to facilitate community ideation for green infrastructure practices that will protect the watershed and help increase social capital, climate resilience, equity in access to green space, health and safety, and native habitat improvement.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) is a nonprofit grant-making organization dedicated to improving natural resources through environmental education, community engagement, and local watershed restoration. The Trust’s grantees engage hundreds of thousands of individuals annually in projects that have a measurable impact on the waterways and other natural resources of the region. The Trust’s work is supported by the sale of a specialty license plate; donations from individuals and corporations; and partnerships with private foundations and federal, state, and local governments. The Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for over two decades: On average, 90 cents of every dollar go to programs.

50th Anniversary of Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park

By PRESS OFFICER
National Park Service

WASHINGTON (June 24, 2024)—Join the National Park Service at the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park on July 13. The memorial will be rededicated in a ceremony hosted by the National Park Service, with support from the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) and Bethune-Cookman University.

Special guests to include the Honorable Muriel Bowser, Mayor of Washington, D.C., and Dr. A. Lois Keith, National Chair of the Board, NCNW.

Event Highlights:

The event will include a formal rededication ceremony from 3:30–4:45 p.m. followed by music and informal activities starting at 5 p.m. The ceremony will mirror the original 1974 program, including speeches by leaders of the National Park Service and NCNW, reading of Mrs. Bethune’s Last Will and Testament by students from the Washington School for Girls, performances by the “President’s Own” Marine Band and the Bethune-Cookman University Choir, and a grand unveiling and rededication of the memorial.

At 5 p.m., DC Strings will kick-off the evening performances on stage. At 6 p.m. actor Leslie Jones will portray Mrs. Bethune highlighting key mo-

ments in Mrs. Bethune’s life and selections from her most famous speeches. In keeping with the 1970s flavor of the dedication, “The Tribe Band” will perform R&B and funk music.

In addition to the evening performances, there will be ranger tours, organizations tabling, hands-on activities, food trucks and an area called “Legacy Lane” where visitors can learn more about Mary McLeod Bethune, the National Council of Negro Women, Bethune’s statue and the historic 1974 memorial unveiling event in Lincoln Park. The event will also feature a special commemorative



PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS-EAST

See ANNIVERSARY Page A6

The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park

