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New Blood Donation Center Opens in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
American Red Cross

On Monday, May 5, the American Red Cross held a ribbon-cutting celebration to mark the opening of a new, state-of-the-art blood donation center in Lanham, Maryland. This new facility will collect thousands of blood products each year from generous donors who roll up a sleeve to help save lives.

Prince George's County Health Officer Dr. Matthew Levy spoke during the morning's event and helped cut the ribbon. Maryland District 24 Delegate Andrea Fletcher Harrison also attended and donated blood after the ceremony.

The new Lanham location is one of more than 200 American Red Cross fixed-site blood donor centers across the U.S. The 6,500 square-foot facility has 9 donor beds and will specialize in the collection of whole blood, platelets and red blood cells. Platelets, tiny cells in the blood that form clots and stop bleeding, are most often used by cancer patients and others facing life-threatening illnesses and injuries.

Every two seconds, someone in the United States needs a lifesaving blood transfusion. Blood donors who give at this new Red Cross location in Prince George's



PHOTOGRAPH BY: SCOTT MARDER/AMERICAN RED CROSS.
American Red Cross Regional CEO Dale Kunce, Red Cross Southern Maryland Chapter Executive Director Keith Perry and others gather at the new Lanham Blood Donation Center for its grand opening, on May 5, 2025.

county will help ensure that a ready supply of blood is available for patients in need, here in the DMV and across the country.

The new blood center is open four days a week and is located at 9321 Annapolis Road, Lanham, MD 20706. Make an appointment to donate and help save lives at RedCrossBlood.org or by calling 1-800-RED CROSS.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and

provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission. For more information, please visit redcross.org or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or follow us on social media.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Selected as a Finalist for the National Gold Medal Award in Parks and Recreation Management

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (May 6, 2025)—The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) has been selected as a finalist in the 2025 National Gold Medal Award for Excellence in Park and Recreation Management by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration (AAPRA) in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

The Gold Medal is among the highest honors in the parks and recreation industry, recognizing outstanding management and service. M-NCPPC, which includes the Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, and Montgomery Parks, is the only six-time national Gold Medal winner for excel-

lence in parks and recreation management in the nation. The agency earned this prestigious award in 1973, 1977, 1983, 1984, 2003, and 2015 and was also named a finalist in 2023.

"This recognition is a testament to the unwavering dedication our staff has to serving the Prince George's County community with high-quality recreational experiences," said Bill Tyler, director of M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County. "We are proud to represent our community on a national stage and will continue to pursue greatness in everything we do."

"Being named a finalist for the National Gold Medal Award is a testament to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and community

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Seniors' Home Rejuvenated by REALTOR® Volunteers

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCAR

LANDOVER, Md. (May 7, 2025)—Demonstrating a strong commitment to community service and housing advocacy, a dedicated team of REALTORS® representing the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR) rolled up their sleeves on Saturday, April 26, 2025, to participate in Christmas in April, an annual home repair and rehabilitation initiative serving Prince George's County, Maryland.

This year's volunteer effort focused on restoring a home in Clinton, Maryland, for two senior residents in need. The PGCAR team worked tirelessly throughout the day, painting interior rooms, cleaning, and decluttering, re-

placing flooring, and completing extensive yard work to help improve the safety, comfort, and dignity of the homeowners.

"Our members care deeply about the communities we serve, and Christmas in April is one of the many ways that REALTORS® give back," said PGCAR Community Service Committee Chair Shameeka Price, of Capital Structures Real Estate, LLC. "It's incredibly rewarding to see the impact a single day of service can have on the lives of our neighbors."

PGCAR extends heartfelt gratitude to all the REALTORS® who volunteered their time and talents, as well as to our generous meal sponsors. Special thanks to Clinton Thompson of Interstate Moving & Storage for providing

breakfast, and to Yolanda Burgess of Platinum Partners Realty for sponsoring lunch. Their support helped keep our volunteers energized and ready to serve.

PGCAR is proud to continue supporting programs that preserve housing stability and build stronger communities in Prince George's County.

The Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® is the voice for real estate in Prince George's County, Maryland, representing more than 3,500 real estate professionals in the national capital area, PGCAR is an affiliate of the Maryland and National Association of REALTORS®. We are proud to serve our members and our community and work to ensure professionalism in the industry. Our volunteers and staff work to offer services to real estate professionals and to provide avenues for our members to become more successful. We proudly work to promote and protect home ownership and private property rights.



PHOTO COURTESY PGCAR
A dedicated team of REALTORS® representing the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR) rolled up their sleeves on Saturday, April 26, 2025, to restore a home in Clinton, Maryland, for two senior residents in need.

Laurel High School Students Win Prince George's County 2025 Envirothon Competition

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's Soil Conservation District

BRANDYWINE, Md. (May 5, 2025)—The Prince George's Soil Conservation District (PGSCD) is pleased to announce that Laurel High School won first-place honors in the 2025 Prince George's County Envirothon Competition. Oxon Hill High School came in second place. The Prince George's Soil Conservation District and the William S. Schmidt Outdoor Education Center hosted the event at the Schmidt Center on April 30, 2025. Seventeen (17) teams from ten (10) Prince George's County high schools were tested in five categories: aquatics, forestry, soils, wildlife, and this year's fifth issue, "Roots and Resiliency: Fostering Forest Stewardship in a Canopy of Change."

The participating high schools were: Academy of Health Sciences at Prince George's Community College, Cross-

land High School, Fairmont Heights High School, Frederick Douglas High School, Gwynn Park High School, High Point High School, Laurel High School, Non-Traditional North Program, Oxon Hill High School, and Potomac High School.

"We are extremely proud of the students who competed in the 2025 Prince George's County Envirothon competition. Congratulations to the winning team from Laurel High School and to the runners-up from Oxon Hill High School" said Steven E. Darcey, PGSCD's District Manager. "This year's program was a great success thanks to the hard work and dedication of the local Envirothon coordinators, resource specialists, coaches, and sponsors. We give heartfelt thanks to everyone involved. Let's go win the Maryland State Envirothon!"

The event was sponsored by several organizations in addition to PGSCD and Prince George's County Public School System (PGCPS). The program requires



PHOTO COURTESY PGSCD.ORG
Laurel High School Students with their Envirothon coach

significant funding for instruments, transportation, and lunch, to name a few. This year's sponsors included Keep Prince George's County Beautiful, Southern Maryland Electric Cooperative (SMECO), Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts, Prince

George's County Farm Bureau, Environmental Quality Resources (EQR), Atwell LLC, Robin Hill Farm & Vineyard, and the Forest Garden Club.

"We are proud that our Envirothon students are gaining the knowledge, skills, and leadership experience needed

to address complex environmental challenges," said Dr. Stephen Biller, Environmental Outreach Educator with the Department of Environmental Education at the William S. Schmidt Center. "Through the Envirothon, students not only learn to tackle pressing local and global issues but also inspire action in their communities and promote a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability."

PGSCD and the Schmidt Center collaborated with partners from the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission's Parks and Recreation division, Maryland's USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS), and Prince George's County's Department of the Environment to provide training opportunities and resources to teams and their coaches.

Envirothon Coach, Nadisha Clayton-Garrison, says, "We're incredibly proud of the students for winning again this year. Their dedication and perseverance continue to inspire me. Despite the demands of academics and other co-curricular commitments, they remain fo-

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return soon!

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

DOUGLASS FAMILY REUNION

We are celebrating all graduating classes again this year at the 2nd Annual Douglass Family Reunion on Croom Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Fly back to the nest and create some memories with classes from as far back as 1953 all the way to the rising alumni from the class of 2025. We cannot wait to see you back on Croom Road the last day of May, Saturday, May 31, 2025, at 12 Noon. Once an Eagle, always an Eagle.

Event by FDHS Alumni Association, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Let us preserve and promote the legacy of Frederick Douglass High School, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. P.O. Box 2954, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20773.

CLINTON UMC VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join Clinton United Methodist Church’s Vacation Bible School. Our theme this year is Road Trip: On the Road With God, July 14–July 18, 2025, from 9 a.m. to Noon. Each day our K–5th graders will discover God is with us everywhere we go. Join us for church service on Sunday, July 20, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. for the Children’s Church VBS summary presentation. Please register your child for VBS on our website: <https://cumcmd.org/vacationbibleschool>. If you need a printed registration form, please contact our office at 301-868-1281. June 27, 2025 is the deadline for registration. Interested in volunteering time? Contact us and we will let you know how you can help. Church address is 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland, 20735.

AARP

“The Department of Community Services Aging and Senior Programs Division wishes to extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to the volunteers of the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide program who dedicated their time and talent this tax season to assist senior citizens and low-income adults with completing and filing their 2024 income tax returns. The program volunteers attended intensive training, studies, passed exams, and facilitated preparation/filings at the Richard R. Clark Senior Center to ensure that timely and accurate tax preparation was available to our residents.”

“In addition, we want to acknowledge the I&A staff for their work behind the scenes, in addition to their normal duties. Lastly, to senior center staff for accommodating the needs of this program to continue to serve the community.” Information received from the (SCOOP).

THE 44TH ANNUAL INVITATIONAL SCULPTURE EXHIBITION

The 44th Annual Invitational Sculpture exhibition runs June 13, 2025–July 27, 2025. Public reception Friday, June 13, 2025, 7–9 p.m. Artist talk/Luncheon Friday, June 20, 12 Noon. For more than 4 years, the Montpelier Arts Center has been showcasing the work of sculptors throughout the region. The 44th annual invitational Sculpture Exhibition will take place in the Main Gallery. To register for the Artist Talk/Luncheon, please email Montpe-

lierArts@pgparks.com or call 301-377-7800 by Sunday, June 8, 2025. Ticket Price: Free. Age: All ages. Event Category: Arts Exhibition. Address: The Montpelier Arts Center, 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, Maryland.

ALUMNI SOCIAL AFFAIR

“The Prince George’s County Alumni Chapter of the Bowie State University National Alumni Association, Inc. continues to understand first-hand, the tremendous value of providing scholarships to deserving young people at our beloved Bowie State University. This is why our Annual Scholarship event continuous to be our signature event.”

“Our Alumni Social Affair will be at Martin’s Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt Maryland, on Sunday, June 22, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets: \$80 per person; \$800 per table. Ads for our souvenir booklet are: Full page \$100; Half page \$50; Back page \$150; Patron; \$25 each. Email to: Marketingmanager@pgcac.org. If you are unable to come, and would like to make a donation, any amount is appreciated. Payment for tickets, donations, ads or patrons, please make checks payable to (PGCAC) and mail to: Prince George’s County Chapter, 6710 Laurel Bowie Road, PO Box 1122, Bowie, Maryland, 20718. Note: Payments can be paid by CASHAPP: \$princegeorgecac or Zelle: treasurer@pgcac.org.” Information submitted by Anita D. Ford, PGCAC President.

CELEBRATE JUNETEENTH

Understand the history and celebration, the emancipation of African Americans from slavery in the United States at National Harbor, 201 Waterfront Street, Oxon Hill, Maryland, Thursday, June 19 starting at 11 a.m. Visit our Freedom Day Black-Owned Marketplace in the Capital Canopy. Support the community and check out a variety of businesses, food vendors and more.

WEDNESDAY OPEN MIC KARAOKE

Wednesday Open Mic Karaoke doors open 4–11 p.m. Happy hours with drink specials 4–7 p.m. Karaoke starts at 7 p.m. Free admission and free VIP seating. Cash prize to the top performance. No talent required, just bring your energy and have fun. Perform your favorite karaoke hits or even your own original song. VIP tables are FREE (first come, first served). Music by DJ Big Vernell Johnson. WWW.PIANOKEYSLOUNGE.COM. 7651 Matapeake Business Drive, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613 (240) 816-2211. Come for the vibes, stay for the experience.

MONTPELIER HOUSE MUSEUM COMMUNITY DAY

Montpelier House Museum Community Day will be held on Saturday, May 31, 2025, from 10 a.m.–4 p.m. The address is Montpelier House Museum (301) 377-7817), 9650 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, Maryland. montpeliermansion@pgparks.com. Ticket Price: FREE: No registration required. Walk-ins welcome. Age: All. Event Category: Exhibition Black History Senior Youth Free. Event Program and Series: History Community Days Montpelier House Museum.

same year, a quarter (25%) of young drivers killed in U.S. traffic crashes had a BAC of 0.08 g/dL or higher. [ii]

NHTSA data further shows that while young drivers comprise just five-percent of all licensed drivers in the U.S., they account for 8.1-percent of all drivers involved in fatal crashes. [iii]

While 2024 Monitoring the Future survey (sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse) data shows levels of alcohol use by U.S. 12th, 10th and 8th grade students significantly decreasing in 2024 [iii], alcohol remains the “most common drug used by people younger than 21 in the United States” according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)”[iv]

For more information, visit WRAP’s web site at www.wrap.org.

[i] National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) / Fatality Injury Reporting System Tool (2016–2023, below)

[ii] NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts: Young Drivers (July 2024, 2022 Data) <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813601.pdf>

[iii] 2024 Monitoring the Future survey <https://monitoringthefuture.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/mtf2025.pdf>

[iv] Underage Drinking <https://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/underage-drinking.htm>

Summer Months Usher in Deadliest Period for Teen Drivers

Greater Washington Nonprofit Urges Parental Involvement to Prevent Underage Drinking

By PRESS OFFICER
WRAP

TYSONS, Va. (May 12, 2025)—Citing the fact that the summer months usher in that contiguous period (May–August) when the greatest number of U.S. teen traffic deaths occur [i], a Washington-metropolitan area alcohol education group is urging parental involvement to combat both underage drinking and drunk driving this summer.

The Tysons-based, nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) is providing area parents of teens with Ten Tips for Parents to Prevent Underage Drinking (which are available as a downloadable and or printable pdf). WRAP’s ten annual summer tips, designed to inform Greater Washington parents on how best to deter underage drinking during the dangerous summer months include:

- **Understand the Dangers...** Drinking underage not only increases the chances of dependency later on in life but also leads

to short and long-term consequences as well as leading to other risky behaviors.

- **Know the Law...** The District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia all have zero-tolerance laws making it illegal to consume, possess or purchase alcohol under the age of 21.
- **Be a Role Model...** Parents should be role models to their teens and make sure their own behaviors are appropriate. Use alcohol moderately, serve as responsible hosts and never drink and drive.
- **Know your Liability...** In most cases, it is unlawful for parents to allow their children’s friends to consume alcohol in their home. Parents or adults may face criminal charges later on if these same “friends” are involved in a crash.

In 2022, 30-percent of young drivers (ages 15–20 years old) killed in U.S. crashes had been drinking (with a blood alcohol concentration [BAC] level of 0.01 grams/deciliter or higher) according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). That

Finalist from A1

partners who work tirelessly to provide exceptional parks and programs,” said Miti Figueredo, director of Montgomery Parks. "This recognition reflects our commitment to fostering social connections, encouraging physical activity, and protecting the environment.”

M-NCPPC is competing for the Gold Medal in the Class I category of park systems with a population of more than 400,001. Other park and recreation agencies competing for the Class I Gold Medal include the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation, Johnson County Park & Recreation District in Shawnee Mission, KS., and Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Community Services in Leesburg, VA.

Founded in 1965 the Gold Medal Awards program honors communities in the United States that demonstrate excellence in parks and recreation through long-range planning. Resource management, volunteerism, environmental stewardship, program development, professional development, and agency recognition. Agencies are judged on their ability to address the needs of those who they serve through collective energies of community members, staff, and elected officials.

The Gold Medal recipient will be announced in September at the 2025 NRPA Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida.

With over 29,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for Prince George’s County residents and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. The Department’s Formula 2040 Plan establishes a framework that will ensure the Department can meet future parks and recreation programmatic and facility needs, fulfilling its mission to determine the combination of land, facilities, and programs that will provide appropriate experiences for Prince Georgians in the future. To learn more, visit www.pgparks.com.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Must I Take Medicare Part A Even if I Have VA or Medicaid Coverage?

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

Dear Rusty: Does everyone need to sign up for Medicare part A, even if you are ex-military? Or only on Medicaid, regardless of whether you are eligible for Social Security or not? Also is there a cost for just part A? **Signed: Confused Senior**

Dear Confused: FYI, there is no cost for Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) for those who are also eligible for Social Security benefits. And it is mandatory to enroll in Medicare Part A if you are age 65 or over and are collecting Social Security benefits. If you are ex-military and get all your healthcare services from the VA, you must still enroll in Medicare Part A (which is free) to collect Social Security benefits after age 65.

Enrollment in Medicare Part B (which is healthcare coverage for outpatient services) is always optional because there is a premium associated with Part B. But if you receive all of your healthcare services from the VA, you can—if you wish—decline Medicare Part B and, thus, save the monthly Part B premium. Enrolling in Medicare Part B when you get all your healthcare services from the VA is a matter of having the convenience to choose any healthcare provider you wish (versus using only VA healthcare services).

If you receive Medicaid benefits, and are also eligible for Medicare, you should probably enroll in both Medicare Part A and Part B (Medicare would be primary payor and Medicaid the secondary payor). You would be considered “dually eligible” and likely exempt from most healthcare costs with coverage from both programs. That said, it is sometimes not mandatory to enroll in Medicare Part B to get Medicaid benefits, but each state has separate Medicaid eligibility rules. Thus, you should check with your state’s Medicaid office to see if it is mandatory to take Medicare Part B to keep your Medicaid benefits. FYI, in most instances, Medicaid will pay your Medicare Part B costs, so there is little reason not to enroll in Medicare Part B while on Medicaid. Regardless, enrollment in Medicare Part A is required to collect Social Security benefits after age 65.

I would like to thank you for your service to our country and also assure you that we are always here for you if you have any further questions.

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.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Motor Vehicle Crash Data Querying and Reporting														
Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes														
Filter Selected: Involving A Young Driver (Aged 15-20): Yes														
Years: 2016-2023														
Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes ¹														
Crash Date (Year)	Crash Date (Month)													
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total	
2016	269	281	358	346	395	426	372	413	389	422	391	350	4,412	
2017	286	249	328	332	395	421	405	389	364	400	347	340	4,256	
2018	285	261	357	320	367	374	365	332	374	367	336	294	4,032	
2019	266	224	299	296	374	396	343	343	329	352	332	309	3,863	
2020	292	269	274	261	382	434	457	453	412	423	426	347	4,430	
2021	331	305	367	413	440	458	433	477	441	466	428	411	4,970	
2022	315	288	377	375	429	406	447	416	437	467	368	394	4,719	
2023	352	340	344	433	425	485	421	431	431	471	397	403	4,933	
Total	2,396	2,217	2,704	2,776	3,207	3,400	3,243	3,254	3,177	3,368	3,025	2,848	35,615	

COMMUNITY

Prince George’s Community Federal Credit Union Expands Partnership With Jacob’s Ladder

Credit union joins community efforts to prevent juvenile justice system involvement in Prince George’s County

By PRESS OFFICER
PGFCFU

FORT WASHINGTON, Md. (May 8, 2025)—Prince George’s Community Federal Credit Union (PGFCFU) has expanded its partnership with Jacob’s Ladder, a nonprofit organization dedicated to reducing juvenile reentry in the justice system through educational programs and workforce training in Prince George’s County.

As part of its deepened commitment, PGFCFU has pledged funding, event sponsorships, and volunteer support from its staff throughout the year.

“Supporting organizations that uplift and guide at-risk youth aligns with our mission to strengthen the communities we serve,” said Diane Coleman Brown, President & CEO of PGFCFU. “We believe in the power of second chances and are proud to stand behind the life-changing work of Jacob’s Ladder.”

Founded in 2016, Jacob’s Ladder has served more than 2000 young people through academic enrichment and professional development programs. Executive Director Jarriel Jordan, Sr. expressed gratitude for the renewed support. “PGFCFU has long been a valued partner, and Jacob’s Ladder has benefited from its business services for the past nine years. With this new formal partnership, we now gain the additional resources and volunteer support needed to expand our reach throughout Prince George’s County.”

In 2024, Jacob’s Ladder served as the lead organization for the Stand Up & Deliver Extended initiative, directly addressing food insecurity in Prince George’s County. The program provided critical support to the county’s most vulnerable residents—including seniors, low- to moderate-income individuals and families, veterans, the homeless, and residents with disabilities—distributing over 305,000 meals to more than 43,500

households.

Upcoming initiatives include a summer youth program, a fall backpack drive, and the launch of the “Thrive” incentive program for youth and parents. To learn more or get involved, visit www.jacobsladderyouth.org.

Established in 1967, the Prince George’s Community Federal Credit Union was created to offer financial services to Prince George’s County employees. Over the years, the organization has expanded its reach to serve more than 19,500 members across the county. With assets exceeding \$300 million, our community-based credit union welcomes individuals who live, work, volunteer, worship, operate businesses or attend school in Prince George’s County to open an account. For more information about the organization or to become a member, please visit www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org or call 301.627.2666.



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER PITTMAN

(left to right): Jacob’s Ladder Executive Director, Jarriel Jordan, Sr., Jacob’s Ladder Mascot, PGFCFU President & CEO Diane Coleman Brown at PGFCFU 2025 Annual Meeting.

Black Public Media Tops \$2 Million in PitchBLACK Awards for Black Stories

Documentary about a caregiving comedian and two sci-fi immersive projects are big takers at BPM’s national pitch competition

By PRESS OFFICER
Black Public Media

NEW YORK (May, 6 2025)—<https://blackpublicmedia.org/> Black Public Media (BPM) selected a science fiction gaming project from Prince George’s County, Maryland, resident Jeremy Kamal for \$25,000 in production and development funding at the PitchBLACK Awards on Thursday (May 1, 2025). The project, Run, along with the documentary film Finding Your Laughter and another immersive media project, Rhythmic Wave II: Ancestral Waves in Motion, won a total of

\$225,000 in funding at the event, which was sponsored by Netflix and PBS and took place at The Apollo Stages at the Victoria in Harlem. These awards catapult the total BPM has invested in Black projects through PitchBLACK, since launching the program in 2015, to over \$2 million.

Kamal’s Run is a sci-fi, third person exploration game set in a unique universe where an indecisive recluse must find his way back to safety.

The Awards show was preceded by BPM’s PitchBLACK Forum—the largest pitch competition of its kind in the United States for independent filmmakers and creative technologists who create



PHOTO COURTESY BLACK PUBLIC MEDIA

Jeremy Kamal

Black content—which was held Wednesday and hosted by advertising futurist Tameka Kee. A second immersive project also won funding: Rhythmic Wave II: Ancestral Waves in Motion by Aya, a Los Angeles-based Nigerian-American new media creative, won the \$50,000 award.

The project is a 30-minute live interactive performance set in 5054 blending Afrofuturism, immersive dance and AI-generated movement (from AI dancers trained on the Nigerian Akwa Ibom dance archive) in a three-wall projected space. In the film category, Finding Your Laughter by Chicago residents Arlieta Hall and Brittany Alstot won \$150,000. The documentary follows Hall, a comedian, as she learns to use her own resources—stand-up comedy and improvisation—as tools for both her own mental health and to be a caregiver for her father who is fading from Alzheimer’s disease.

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I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study
City of Alexandria and Fairfax County, VA
Prince George’s County, MD

Location Public Hearing
To Present Recommended Preferred Alternative
Time: 6 – 8 p.m.
Format: In-person with an open house at 6 p.m., presentation at 6:30 p.m., followed by a formal public comment session

Monday, June 2, 2025
Thomas A. Edison High School (Cafeteria)
5801 Franconia Rd., Alexandria, VA 22310

Wednesday, June 4, 2025
Oxon Hill High School (Auditorium)
6701 Leyte Dr., Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Monday, June 9, 2025
West Potomac High School (Cafeteria)
6500 Quander Rd., Alexandria, VA 22307

Wednesday, June 11, 2025
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

Virtual Public Information Room available starting on May 19, 2025, at
www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside

Learn about and provide comments on VDOT’s recommended preferred alternative for the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study. This study is evaluating the potential extension of the express lanes system on the southern section of the Capital Beltway (I-495) by 11 miles from the Springfield Interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 Interchange in Prince George’s County, Maryland. The study includes an Environmental Assessment, which VDOT is conducting in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state, and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, and in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771.

VDOT will offer four in-person public hearings to share information about the recommended preferred alternative to address identified transportation needs within the study area. These needs include providing additional travel choices, reducing congestion and improving travel reliability, improving safety, extending and providing continuity of the express lanes system on I-495, and providing consistency with local and regional plans.

All four hearings will be held in-person from 6 - 8 p.m., and will begin with an open house at 6 p.m., a presentation at 6:30 p.m., and a formal public comment session following the presentation.

A virtual public information room containing the hearing presentation, display boards, and opportunities to submit formal comments will be available starting on May 19 on the study webpage at: www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside.

Review information beginning May 19 on the study webpage, at the in-person public hearings, or during business hours at the VDOT Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-691-6044 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions. Information about potential property impacts, VDOT right of way policies and procedures, and remaining study schedule will be available at the public hearings.

Give your written or oral comments at the in-person hearings or submit them by **June 26, 2025**, via the online comment form at www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside, by email to 495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov, or by mail to Michelle Shropshire, P.E., VDOT Northern Virginia Megaprojects Director, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

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UPC: 122608

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART ELEVEN

Parents Often Struggle to Find Help for Troubled Youngsters—but This Maryland Program Can Help

By KATELYNN WINEBRENNER
Capital News Service

HAGERSTOWN, Md. (May 5, 2025)—Going into her toddler’s annual check-up at Opal Court Pediatrics, Mallory Churchey worried about his behavior.

Her youngest child, 3-year-old son Bronnsen, was having unusual tantrums and outbursts.

“I just knew it was not normal,” said the mother of four from Williamsport, in Western Maryland’s Washington County.

Churchey expected to navigate referrals and waitlists before finding a professional who could help her son. She didn’t expect to schedule an appointment to return to Opal Court the next week.

GIUSEPPE LOPICCOLO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Mallory Churchey with her young son Bronnsen.

For the next six weeks, her son Bronnsen met with Miguel DeCastro, a master’s level social work student, free of charge.

DeCastro is an intern for the Co-Location Internship Program sponsored by Salisbury University and Maryland’s child psychiatry access program, which has placed social work graduate students in pediatric offices in rural areas of Maryland since 2012.

“He was very active in playing with our son and engaging with him but also kind of giving him boundaries,” Churchey said. “Our son never listened to any of us with boundaries. It’s just shocking to watch, to be able to see him be so well-behaved.”

Many other parents are just as content, according to the Maryland Behavioral Health Integration in Pediatric Primary Care program’s last quarterly report. Of 231 families who completed a satisfaction survey, 98.3% reported they would be likely or very likely to recommend the social work intern to a friend or family member.

Along with its internship, the program—known by the acronym BHIPP—offers statewide, over-the-phone behavioral health consultation services in collaboration with the University of Maryland and Johns Hopkins School of Medicine.

The program that brings fledgling social workers into pediatric offices is part of the National Network of Child Psychiatry Access Programs. Yet despite positive reviews from pediatricians and parents, of the 54 programs in the

network, the Maryland program stands out as an exception. Those other programs often offer hotlines to mental health services, but not access to a mental health professional embedded in a pediatrician’s office.

“I don’t know anyone else that’s partnering with a social work school,” said Dr. John Straus, the founder of the network.

Partnering with universities could be a viable option for other access programs in states that struggle to maintain the workforce needed to address the demand for youth mental health services, Straus said.

“I’ve always known what Maryland was doing, but I hadn’t really thought about it nationally, and I think we need to promote it a bit more,” he said.

‘First line of defense’

This school year, eight pediatric and family medicine practices in Wicomico, Somerset, Frederick and Washington counties have social work interns through the program.

The social work interns do behavioral health screenings, brief six-week interventions and coordination of resources and referrals, said program director Meghan Crosby Budinger. Interventions primarily consist of cognitive

See PROGRAM Page A4

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

National Urban League’s Urban Civil Rights Museum in Harlem Defies Trump’s Crusade to Rewrite American History

“He can try to rewrite history, but we have the receipts. And as the Smithsonian’s exhibits magnificently illustrate, African Americans have survived—and overcome—much worse than the frothings of a puffed-up president who fancies himself a king.”

—Eugene Robinson

The history of enslavement, segregation, and discrimination in the United States traditionally is seen as a Southern story. As schoolchildren, we are taught that Slavery was a Southern institution, which the North fought to end. Lynchings and Ku Klux Klan rallies only happened in the South,

as far as we were taught, as did the protests, marches, sit-ins and other courageous resistance that finally brought an end to Jim Crow.

If Donald Trump has way, even this incomplete history of civil rights would be wiped from the record.

But he will not have his way.

Contrary to the “mystical view of an imagined past” behind Trump’s ludicrously-titled executive order, “Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History,” enslavement, segregation, and discrimination—and the courageous resistance—are part of the history not only of the South, but of the North as well. And our Urban Civil Rights Mu-

seum in Harlem will tell those stories, whether Trump wants us to or not.

Trump’s executive order was a naked declaration of war on all cultural institutions that illuminate uncomfortable chapters of our past and a direct assault on the nation’s flagship institution of its type, the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of African American History and Culture. But the “Blacksonian,” as NMAAHC is colloquially known, is fighting back. And so are we.

The Urban Civil Rights Museum in Harlem not only will shine a light on the past—not just the traditional Civil Rights Era of the 1950s and ’60s, but the early roots of the African American presence in the North to the Black Lives Matter movement—but inspire social change in the present.

“As a museum focused on social justice, we hope to connect and communicate with the people, communities, and initiatives that are interested or becoming interested in fighting for change,” museum director and chief curator Jennifer Scott said. “The museum will be a place where one can see and feel the work of the many people who fought for justice in urban centers in the North and reflect on past civil rights efforts so that we can imagine and inspire new possibilities of collective action.”

The museum is part of the Urban League Empowerment Center, a \$242 million, 414,000-square-foot complex that will house the National Urban League’s new headquarters, along with 170 units of affordable housing, below-market office

space for non-profits and community groups, and retail space.

The museum will serve as a resource where visitors can learn more about the different grass-roots movements in the past and present, various civil rights legislation and policies that Americans have fought for, and contemporary initiatives and tools that are available to fight inequities and injustice. We also will host public and education programs that allow people to reflect on democratic ideas and ideals and that will encourage people to engage with one another in public forums and conversations, especially through culture and the arts.

Trump’s executive order—which does not carry the force of law—declares his administration’s desire that cultural and historical institutions reflect only the “uplifting” moments of American history. It’s part of an insidious campaign to erase systemic oppression from our collective memory and advance the myth that racial gaps are, instead, the result of “merit and hard work.”

But the truth will not so easily be subdued. We did not know, when we began planning the Urban Civil Rights Museum in Harlem, that the political climate of today would make our mission even more urgent. And we don’t know what the political climate will be when the museum opens its doors next year. But we do know that we will never succumb to any efforts to whitewash American history.

—May 10, 2025

Ben Jealous

Executive Director,
Sierra Club



When the Birds Stop Singing

Where I grew up in California, on quiet mornings, you could hear the birds before anything else—finches, warblers, sparrows. They made the dawn feel like something alive. Those songs filled the sky with beauty and made the world feel whole.

Now, those voices are going silent.

A new study published last week in Science brought stunning news. Three out of every four of the 500 North American bird species in the study are in decline. Seventy-five percent. It is a collapse happening in real time, in our backyards, in our forests, in our skies.

This is not a mystery. It is not a natural cycle. The reasons are clear—and they are all human-made.

We are destroying bird habitats across this continent. Wetlands, forests, grasslands—paved over or poisoned. We are using pesticides that kill off the insects birds depend on for food. We are building in places that block nesting and migration. And, of course, we are heating the planet in ways that are driving entire species to the edge.

This study is not just a report. It is a warning. And we should treat it as such.

Birds are essential workers in our natural systems. They pollinate plants. They eat pests. They spread seeds that help entire forests grow. When birds vanish, entire ecosystems unravel. The decline of birds is not a small crisis. It is a signal of something much bigger.

We are not just losing birds. We are losing balance. We are watching the Earth’s systems go out of rhythm. That is the extinction crisis.

Many people still do not realize we are living through a mass extinction—what scientists are calling the sixth in Earth’s history. But unlike the one that killed off the dinosaurs, this one is driven by us. Species are disappearing at a rate thousands of times faster than normal. We are making this planet unlivable for the creatures we share it with—and eventually, if we are not careful, for ourselves.

And yet, there is still hope.

We have done hard things before. We have solved problems that once seemed impossible. In the middle

part of the last century, America’s greatest birds of prey were pushed to the edge of extinction. The bald eagle. The peregrine falcon. The osprey. All were being poisoned by DDT, a pesticide that was weakening their eggshells until whole generations were lost.

But in 1962, a scientist named Rachel Carson wrote a book called Silent Spring. She told the truth. She connected the dots. And people listened. The movement she sparked led to the banning of DDT. It led to the creation of the EPA. And it helped bring our great raptors back from the brink.

Today, in places like Chicago, peregrine falcons are nesting on skyscrapers. In Maryland, where I live, bald eagles fly over the Chesapeake Bay again. That happened because people fought for it. That is the power of action guided by truth.

We also saw what the world could do when faced with the hole in the ozone layer—another man-made crisis. In the 1980s, scientists sounded the alarm. The world came together to ban the chemicals causing the damage. Now, the ozone layer is healing. We are seeing progress because we acted boldly and together.

We can do the same for birds—and for nature itself.

It starts with honesty. We must name what is happening: a man-made collapse of ecosystems. We must reject the lies coming from those who want to bury the science, downplay the damage, or pretend that nothing is wrong. We know the truth. And the birds—or the silence where they used to be—are telling it too.

Then we must act. We need to protect the land birds depend on—from forests to shorelines to native

grasslands. We need to reduce pesticide use and restore pollinator-friendly habitats. We need to pass strong laws that defend biodiversity. And most of all, we need to stop burning the fossil fuels that are driving the climate crisis and accelerating species loss all around the world.

Birds are not the only canaries in this coal mine. When I was a boy in Pacific Grove, CA—known as Butterfly Town, USA—they came by the tens of thousands. These charismatic critters, each one lighter than a feather, were heavy enough in their great numbers to bend the tree limbs on which they would land. The same butterfly sanctuary that was home to that marvel this year counted fewer than 250 monarchs. From the monarchs to the meadowlarks, we are watching life itself vanish in plain sight.

Simply to go outside—to walk through a field, sit under a tree, hike through a park, or step into the ocean—reveals the deep truth that we are not separate from nature. We are part of it. What happens to the birds, happens to us.

And what history shows—from banning DDT to saving the ozone layer—is that we still have the power to change course when we choose to face the truth.

Let this study be our alarm. Instead of having to face the terrible question of how much time we have left, let us focus on what we do now: that the time to act is right now.

—May 2, 2025

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

Program from A3

behavioral therapy and parent management training.

Since the program began in 2012, its interns had conducted 12,160 visits with families as of mid-February, Crosby Budinger said.

DeCastro said providing behavioral health services in a primary care setting serves as “the first line of defense” for youngsters who need that help.

In fact, about half of all pediatric check-ups consist of conversations about psychosocial, emotional, behavioral or educational concerns, according to a 2024 academic paper published in ScienceDirect.

“All pediatric practices and family medicine practices that see kids need to be comfortable taking care of behavioral health issues,” Straus said.

Despite this, the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education has not required pediatricians to train in this field, Straus said.

While its guidelines will change at the beginning of July to require a month of mental health training for new pediatricians, most current practitioners aren’t equipped to deal with these issues and have sent families to look for help elsewhere.

The social work internship program offers a better, quicker alternative, DeCastro said.

“Because I’m here three days out of the week, sometimes from those regular checkups, the providers are able to just walk into the office and be like, ‘Hey, there’s someone I’d like you to meet,’ and I’ll meet them in the exam room,” he said.

The program is both convenient and free, said Gabriel Simpson, a social work intern at Gateway Pediatrics in Salisbury, Maryland.

The program runs on funds from the state’s Behavioral Health Administration, the Health Resources and Services Administration as well as grants from the federal government. That allows the program to offer its services with no charge to its patients or their insurance, thereby steering clear of problems that may otherwise arise regarding insurance coverage.

“The accessibility feature that comes along with the ... program is, I think, invaluable,” Simpson said.

A stepping stone

DeCastro said most of the issues he sees in young children are beginning stages of ADHD.

For hyperactive children, strategies as simple as changing how they play can have a significant impact on shaping behavior — and that’s what DeCastro recommended to Churchey.

“He gave homework for us parents to work on with our child after each appointment,” Churchey said. “Mr. Miguel wanted us to get down on the ground with [our son] and have special play time set aside every day to where our son could choose the direction as far as where the play is going to kind of give him a sense of control in that moment, because he wants to control everything.”

Physically putting parents at the same level as their children and role playing situations as simple as meeting a new friend on the playground are common homework assignments for parents, DeCastro said.

“As silly as some of the things were that he gave for homework, it helped,” Churchey said.

Little changes like that are an easy way for kids to develop better behavior, DeCastro said.

“All we’re doing is playing, yes, but we’re also changing the behaviors,” he said. “We’re just meeting kids where they’re at.”

Sometimes, though, children need more help after their six weeks with a social worker.

“We’re a stepping stone to hopefully get them comfortable for a long-term referral later on,” Simpson said.

In other cases, though, no referral is needed.

“Some of the things are acute mental health and may only need a few sessions just to try to help patients get in the right direction,” said Dr. Jennifer Wehberg, the founder of Gateway Pediatrics, which has partnered with the internship program since its start.

‘A huge burden lifted’

The program’s benefits also extend to pediatricians, who can struggle to keep up with youth behavioral health needs.

“We are not mental health providers. I’m not a therapist,” said Dr. Anne Rao at Opal Court Pediatrics.

In addition to lacking the training to fully treat mental health issues, some physicians just don’t have the time.

“Depending on what setting you’re in, doctors can sometimes be under immense pressure to see a certain number of patients per day, and that model of care doesn’t always align with the unique and complex behavioral health needs that children come in with,” Crosby Budinger said.

Lacking time to handle one-on-one sessions with patients and families who have concerns, pediatricians have to give referrals to

behavioral health professionals.

“That’s a challenge because everywhere you go now there’s a waiting list,” Rao said. “You can’t get them into therapy as soon as you prescribe it, so then, there is a time gap and the treatment is delayed for those kids.”

Even if the patient makes it through a waitlist, there are other challenges to face with starting treatment somewhere else.

“The parents have to take the kid to some other place, and the kid has to get acclimatized with the new environment,” Rao said.

With a social work intern in house, these issues “were all taken

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The Prince George’s Post

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COMMUNITY

Envirothon from A1

cused, resilient, and committed to excellence. It’s an honor to see their hard work pay off.”

The winning team from Laurel High School will head to the State competition at the Western Maryland 4H Park in Swanton, June 11–12. The Maryland State Envirothon champions will advance to the National Conservation Foundation (NCF) Envirothon competition held July 20–26 at Canada Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta.

With more counties and states participating each year, the Envirothon competition continues to expand its reach. PGSCD remains committed to its goal to educate as many students and teachers as possible on the importance of conserving our natural resources to preserve and protect the environment. As always, we are #PrinceGeorgesProud!

PitchBLACK from A3

Hosted by comedian Jamie Roberts with a vocal performance by Yansa Fatima, the evening saw veteran film editor Lillian E. Benson, ACE (American Cinema Editors), awarded the prestigious BPM Trailblazer Award by the group’s Executive Director Leslie Fields-Cruz. Benson, who joins Orlando Bagwell, Joe Brewster, Yoruba Richen, Sam Pollard, Michèle Stephenson and Marco Williams in having received the award, is known for her Emmy® nominated work on Eyes on the Prize II, Showtime’s Soul Food, NBC’s Chicago Med and OWN’s Greenleaf. NPR host Brittany Luse (It’s Been a Minute) moderated a conversation with Benson, giving audience members further insight into the history-making editor’s career.

“Tonight, it’s impossible not to reflect on the path paved by giants like Lillian E. Benson, our BPM Trailblazer. Her dedication to the artistry of editing carved out a space for editors from a mosaic of backgrounds,” said Fields-Cruz. “Her legacy as an editor and as a mentor, continues to inspire every single frame of the films that she and her mentees have worked on. And for that I am grateful.”

A two-week BPM Trailblazer Film Retrospective featuring a curated collection of works edited by Benson will stream for free through May 12 on blackpublicmedia.org. Films include Beyond the Steps: Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater; Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise; New World, New Forms; The Taste of Dirt; and two parts of Eyes on the Prize II: The Promised Land (Part 10) and Keys to the Kingdom (Part 13).

Atlanta resident Joel A. Mack was announced as the latest Nonso Christian Ugboke Digital Media Fellow, an award named after BPM’s late director of digital initiatives and awarding a talented under-30 creative. Mack was selected for his/her/their work as a developer, storyteller and creative technologist working in new media.

Descended from the Promised Land: The Legacy of Black Wall Street, a documentary by New Orleans native Nailah Jefferson, was announced as the first-ever AfroPoP Digital Shorts Viewers’ Choice winner, in a competition launched earlier this year. Audience members of the AfroPoP Digital Shorts series, which streams on BPM’s YouTube channel, voted on the award.

In closing out the program, Fields-Cruz gave the crowd—which contained veteran filmmakers including Rachel Watanabe Batton, Lisa Cortes, Chris Metzler, Stanley Nelson and Marco Williams—a charge: “Let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, the fire of innovation, and the unwavering commitment to telling our stories, our way.”

Headquartered in Harlem, BPM is a national nonprofit that funds quality film and immersive work, develops media makers and produces and distributes original content. The group was founded in 1979 and continues to work to center Black stories.

PitchBLACK was sponsored by Netflix and PBS, with additional support from Corporation for Public Broadcasting, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Acton Family Giving, Agog LLC, New York Community Trust, Rockefeller Family Fund, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts, Jerome Foundation, Sonder Foundation and New York Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment.

To find out more about all of the projects that competed, visit <https://blackpublicmedia.org/pitch-black/pitchblack-2025/>. For more information on BPM, go to blackpublicmedia.org. Follow the organization at @blackpublicmedia on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok.

Black Public Media supports the development of visionary content creators and distributes stories about the global Black experience to inspire a more equitable and inclusive future. For 45 years, BPM has addressed the needs of unserved and underserved audiences. BPM-supported programs have won five Emmys®, 10 Peabodys, five Anthem Awards, 14 Emmy® nominations and an Oscar® nomination. BPM continues to address historical, contemporary, and systemic challenges that traditionally impede the development and distribution of Black stories.

Program from A4

out of the picture,” which isn’t only beneficial to parents, she said.

“It’s like a huge burden lifted off of me, too,” Rao said. “I’m in this business because I care about kids. I want them to thrive, and I want them to get to their best potential.”

A year-round problem

Bronnsen’s annual check-up happened to be in January, but had the appointment been scheduled during the summer, the process would have looked different for the Churchey family.

Because the interns are students, the program only runs from August to May, leaving providers on their own for at least two months during summer break.

“We wish it was year-round,” Rao said. “It is only during the school year, but mental health disorders are there all year-round.”

Wehberg tried filling the miss-

ing months by partnering with a local counseling service, but it just wasn’t the same, she said. Now, during the summer, Gateway goes back to its old referral process.

Furthermore, because the interns juggle attending class and working in the office, interns are not available all days of the week, which can cause scheduling issues for busy working families.

“They have him (DeCastro) on a kind of odd schedule compared to the doctors and nurses, so that was a little difficult with scheduling,” Churchey said. “It was very hard for me to be able to be at every appointment.”

The six-session cap can also cause parents to worry about having to go through the referral process they thought they had avoided.

“I would have no idea where to start or what to do,” Churchey said.

See **PROGRAM** Page A6

McDaniel College Students Presented Research, Scholarship, and Creative Work During Academic Symposium

By PRESS OFFICER
McDaniel College

WESTMINSTER, Md. (May, 8, 2025)—Students were selected to present during McDaniel College’s Academic Symposium held May 5 at McDaniel College, 2 College Hill, Westminster, Maryland. The annual daylong event showcased the original research, scholarship, and creative achievements of McDaniel students, faculty, and staff with a robust program of innovative and inspiring presentations showcasing the liberal arts in action.

Students included:

Jayla Pickeral of Aquasco, a junior English major. Pickeral presented during Community Highlights Poster Session.

Kaami Effa of Bowie, a senior Poli-

cal Science and Philosophy major. Effa presented during Examining the Role of Policing in Countering Insurgencies and Global Fellows Capstone Poster Presentations and Philosophy Senior Capstone Presentations.

Sherlyn Estrada of Beltsville, a senior History major. Estrada presented during Hands-On History.

Eli Romero Cruz of Beltsville, a senior History major. Romero Cruz presented during Hands-On History and Inclusive Imprints.

Aiden Chin of Bowie, a senior Cinema major. Chin presented during Internship Opportunities in our Own Backyard.

Gabby Greene of Bowie, a senior Business Administration major. Greene presented during Internship Opportunities

in our Own Backyard.

Alondra Labastida Campos of Clinton, a senior Political Science and Spanish major. Labastida Campos presented during Global Fellows Capstone Poster Presentations.

Donnavan Richards of Ft Washington, a senior Philosophy major. Richards presented during Philosophy Senior Capstone Presentations.

Katia Chavez Manzanares of Oxon Hill, a senior Biology and Psychology major. Chavez Manzanares presented during Biology Capstones.

Ngwing Taku of Bowie, a senior Biology major. Taku presented during Biology Capstones.

For more information about McDaniel College, visit www.mcdaniel.edu.

Annapolis’s Signature Fashion Event Returns With Star Power

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (May 5, 2025)—Annapolis’s hottest red-carpet fashion event is turning up the heat. Designs by Craig Coates Couture will be among the styles worn by community models at this year’s Fashion for a Cause. The show returns to Naptown’s stunning waterfront venue—the U.S. Naval Academy’s Fluegel Alumni Center—from 6 to 9:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 5.

Last year, the fashion show raised a record \$240,000 for Hospice of the Chesapeake’s community health programs, including pediatric hospice services, grief support groups, counseling, and educational offerings.

Craig Coates, the founding pastor of Fresh Start Church in Glen Burnie, is also the creative force behind high-end men’s and women’s fashion that has graced runways at both New York Fashion Week and Los Angeles Fashion Week. Hospice of the Chesapeake is honored to welcome his designs to the runway, alongside styles from some of Annapolis’s most popular boutiques and clothiers, including 3 Sisters, Anthropologie, Boatique, Bohemian Black, Charm City Run LLC, Cotton Company, Helly Hansen, Lilac Bijoux, Scout and Molly’s of Annapolis, South Moon Under, Stardust Deluxe, The Cottage, The Lucky Knot, The Pink Crab, Trendy Tides Boutique, Yves Delorme and Zachary’s Jewelers.

More than 30 community models will showcase this summer’s hottest looks—including magician Chris Dugdale, who will dazzle guests with impromptu performances. Dugdale has entertained everyone from the Queen of England to Queen Bey herself. Returning for his fourth season as emcee is Bryan Nehman, co-host of C4 and Bryan Nehman weekday mornings on WBAL NewsRadio.

Fashion for a Cause is also known for its elevated culinary offerings. This year’s guests can enjoy delicious sips and bites from local favorites such as Bayside Bull,



PHOTO BY MIKE B. PHOTOGRAPHY

(June 7, 2024)—Kevin Campion high-fives an audience member as the community models take their final walk on the runway at last year’s Fashion for a Cause.

Carpaccio, Light House Bistro, Main and Market and Plan It to the T Catering, as well as from food trucks, Green Valley, Sweet Satisfaction and Truck of Deliciousness.

For the ultimate experience, note that standing-room-only tickets will not be available this year. All seating is available exclusively through sponsorships—starting with two seats at the Designer level and up to 12 seats at the Presenting level. The generous sponsors who have already signed on include:

- **Presenting Sponsors:** John & Cathy Belcher, Brian and Patricia Giese Foundation
- **Red Carpet Sponsors:** Genesis of Annapolis, Merrill Lynch Wealth Management—Murray, McGehrin, and Shiery
- **Fashionista Sponsors:** Dragonfly Health, George W. Stone Family Foundation, Shirley Ip, Russ Jones, Medicine with a Mission, MHE Foundation/Matthew Allen Earl, Nancy Smit & Julien Hecht, University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center, Vento Family Foundation, Laura Westervelt
- **Supermodel Sponsors:** Campion Hruby Landscape Architects, The

Davies Family Foundation, Collot Guerard

- **Celebrity Sponsors:** 2-CM Technologies, LLC, ADU—Your Appliance Source, Annapolitan Investment Group, Vanessa Auburn, Brennan Title Company, David Orso Real Estate Group, First Citizens Bank, Dr. Parabh Gill, John & Terry Hussman, Patient First.

Dozens more have joined in support of this high-style, high-impact event.

To reserve your sponsored seats, visit hospicechesapeake.org/ffac or contact Lauren Thurston at 443-837-1531 or events@hospicechesapeake.org.

At Hospice of the Chesapeake, we strive to help individuals and families facing progressive, serious illness to reimagine hope—living each day with intention and peace—while ensuring our nonprofit organization remains a vital resource for future generations. We develop care plans to minimize symptoms and focus on what matters most for patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George’s counties. Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of Hospice of the Chesapeake. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org.

Foreign Exchange Student Program Is Seeking Host Families for the Upcoming School Year

By PRESS OFFICER
ASSE International Student Exchange Programs

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (May 7, 2025)—Families across the U.S. have a unique opportunity to experience a new culture right in their own homes. ASSE International Student Exchange Programs, a non-profit public benefit organization, is currently seeking warm and welcoming host families to open their homes to international exchange students for the upcoming school year.

Hosting an exchange student is a life-changing experience for families that fosters cultural understanding, builds lifelong friendships, while enriching local communities. Students, aged 15–18 years, come from over 60 countries around the world, including France, Japan, Italy, Denmark, Australia, Spain and many more. The students are carefully selected based on their academic performance, English proficiency, and personal character, and they are eager to become part of an American family, attend a local high school, and share their own traditions.

During their stay, ASSE exchange students immerse themselves in American

culture by living with and becoming part of a volunteer host family while attending a local high school. This experience allows them to improve their English skills, form lifelong friendships, and gain a deeper understanding of American life and values. In return, host families and communities benefit from the unique perspectives and cultural exchange that these students bring.

“Being a host family isn’t just about providing a place to stay; it’s about making a student from another country part of the family,” says Lori Wichael, ASSE Regional Director. “Many host families find that the experience is just as rewarding for them as it is for the student. The bonds formed often last a lifetime. Exchange students bring energy, curiosity, and fresh perspectives to their host families and communities. They attend local schools, participate in activities, and become a real family member.”

Host families provide a safe and supportive home, meals, and encouragement, while students come with their own spending money and health insurance, ensuring that hosting is a rewarding and enriching experience without financial burden. Anyone with a warm and welcoming home

can host an exchange student! Host families come in many forms, including married couples (with or without children), single parents, young professionals, empty-nesters, same-sex couples, and retirees.

ASSE also offers qualified American students the opportunity to learn another language and culture by spending a school year, semester or a summer with a host family in another country.

Families interested in hosting an exchange student or exploring study abroad opportunities are encouraged to learn more and apply by visiting www.host.asse.com or contacting Lori Wichael at (800) 677-2773 / east@asse.com.

Founded in the 1930s by the Swedish Ministry of Education, ASSE International Student Exchange Programs, a non-profit, public benefit organization, is a trusted name in Cultural Exchange. Through its mission to promote global understanding and goodwill, ASSE creates life-changing opportunities for young people and their host families to experience different cultures, learn new perspectives, and develop lifelong friendships.

