

The Prince George’s Post



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Harmony Hall Arts Center Presents: Allen Linder—A Journey of Form and Imagination

By PRESS OFFICER
Harmony Hall Arts Center

FORT WASHINGTON, Md. (May 14, 2025)—Allen Linder is a Washington D.C. based artist whose works blend lived experiences with imagination and stories, created through daily, focused discipline. As magic emerges, experience and imagination intertwine with the sacred geometry found in his futuristic sculptures and paintings. These narratives reveal themselves as Linder actively coaxes them from marble and other raw, earthly materials.

Form arises from his creative process, as he carves stone or makes frenetic marks on canvas. To manage the stone dust, Linder maintains separate studio spaces, one for each medium.



Grandfather by Allen Linder

IMAGE CREDIT: ALLEN LINDER

Shuttling between studios in 15-minute intervals, he immerses himself in his artistic journey, dedicating hours to creating his oil paintings on some days, while spending other days on his sculptures.

Mr. Linder has exhibited his extensive work all over the United States and is the recipient of multiple grants from both, the Maryland State Arts Council and the Prince George’s Arts and Humanities Council. He has been a working artist since 1989.

The exhibition runs Monday, May 12, 2025 through Saturday, June 14, 2025 in the Main Gallery.

Location:
Harmony Hall Arts Center
10701 Livingston Road
Fort Washington, MD 20744

PGCPS Celebrates Class of 2025 Academic Leaders

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (May 15, 2025)—Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) proudly hosted its annual Valedictorians and Salutatorians Celebration for the Class of 2025 on Wednesday, May 14, at Martin’s Crosswinds in Greenbelt. This special event honored the top academic achievers from all 27 PGCPS high schools.

“We are so proud of these students for their years of focus, persistence, and hard-earned achievement,” said Superintendent Millard House II. “But we also recognize the people behind the scenes who contributed to their success—families and teachers who supported and believed in them.”

The evening featured remarks

from Board Chair Brannndon D. Jackson and Superintendent House, who both extended their congratulations to the honorees. The Gwynn Park High School saxophone ensemble provided musical entertainment, while the school’s AFJROTC unit opened the ceremony with a presentation of the colors.

“We are incredibly proud to celebrate the hard work, perseverance, and academic excellence of the Class of 2025 valedictorians and salutatorians,” said Dr. Carletta Marrow, Associate Superintendent of High Schools and Non-Traditional Programs. “These students represent the very best of PGCPS, and their achievements are a testament to their dedication, the

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The Cadets were escorted around the campus by Captain Isom—former NJROTC instructor at Bowie High School.

PHOTO COURTESY BOWIE HIGH SCHOOL NJROTC

Bowie NJROTC Naval Academy Trip

By PRESS OFFICER
Bowie High School NJROTC

On Friday, April 25, 2025, the Bowie High School NJROTC Battalion visited the United States Naval Academy, along with their SNSI (Senior Naval Science Instructor) Captain Clemia Anderson, as well as their NSI (Naval Science Instructor) Gunnery Sergeant George Hinton. The

Cadets were escorted around the campus by Captain Isom—former NJROTC instructor at Bowie High School. The cadets had the opportunity to view the classes and observe the learning environment of the students. They were also introduced to the different programs the Naval Academy offers, such as summer seminars, summer stem programs and more. Our cadets had the chance to

speak with various Midshipmen, some of which are alumni of Bowie High School—who currently attend the United States Naval Academy. Cadets were able to see the students march in mass formation into their lunch with their Color Guard and their Battalions.

—PAO
C/PO3 Omowunmi Ogunbanwo

Dive into Summer! The 2025 Summer Pool Season at M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County Begins Memorial Day Weekend

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (May 16, 2025)—M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County outdoor aquatic facilities will officially open for the 2025 summer season, beginning on **Saturday, May 24** at 12 p.m. and will operate on a weekend schedule through June 19. Just in time for Memorial Day weekend, residents and visitors are invited to dive into summer fun at the seven outdoor pools and splash parks throughout the county.

From lap swimming and swim lessons to splash pads and family play areas, the Department offers safe, affordable, and family-friendly aquatic fun all summer long. General admission for resident adults is \$6, and \$5 for youth and seniors. In addition to outdoor slides, ac-

tivities, and other opportunities, the Department also offers state-of-the-art indoor aquatic facilities that provide swimming instruction, water safety education, fitness classes, open swim, and recreational play opportunities year-round.

Outdoor Aquatic Facilities:

- Allentown Splash Park: 7210 Allentown Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744
- Ellen Linson Splash Park: 5211 Campus Drive, College Park, MD 20740
- Glenn Dale Splash Park: 1901 Glenn Dale Boulevard, Glenn Dale, MD 20769
- Hamilton Splash Park: 3901 Hamilton Street, Hyattsville, MD 20781
- J. Franklyn Bourne Pool: 6500 Calmos Street, Seat Pleasant, MD 20743
- Lane Manor Splash Park: 7601 West Park Drive, Hyattsville, MD 20783

- North Barnaby Splash Park: 5000 Wheeler Road, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Summer Outdoor Pool Operating Hours: (visit pgparks.com)

- Mondays: 12–3 p.m. | 3:30–8 p.m.
 - Tuesdays: 12–3 p.m. | 3:30–6:30 p.m.
 - Wednesdays: 12–3 p.m. | 3:30–8 p.m.
 - Thursdays: 12–3 p.m. | 3:30–6:30 p.m.
 - Fridays: 12–3 p.m. | 3:30–8 p.m.
 - Saturdays: 12–3 p.m. | 3:30–6:30 p.m.
- *Outdoor Pools will begin daily operations on Thursday, June 19, 2025, with special holiday hours of 12–4 p.m. in observance of Juneteenth.

Outdoor pools are very popular and tend to reach capacity early in the week-end sessions. To secure a spot it is encouraged for guests to make an online reservation at pgparks.com. Reservations can be made up to 10 days in advance and include a discounted admission fee.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTIA WIGGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Teacher Carol Carter with winners Amani Jones and Jordan Badger

Maryland Students Across Eighteen School Districts Share Their Knowledge at the Maryland History Day Contest

Six students from Prince George’s County received honors

By SARAH WEISSMAN
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (May 13, 2025)—Maryland Humanities is delighted that more than 500 middle and high school students shared a year’s worth of history research at the 2025 Maryland History Day State Contest on May 3.

The competition, held at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), serves as the culmination of Maryland Humanities Maryland History Day program. Students who participate in the program create original documentaries, exhibits, performances, research papers, or websites exploring a historical topic of their choice, based on an annual theme.

Maryland History Day is an affiliate of National History Day, whose work includes selecting each year’s theme. For 2025, the organization chose the theme of “Rights and Responsibilities in History.”

Maryland History Day sparks critical thinking in students, and helps them develop their skills in research and analysis, writing, and public speaking. Last year,

MARYLAND HISTORY DAY HONOREES 2025

Prince George’s County
Advancers to National History Day:
Students: **Jordan Badger and Amani Jones**

Award: First Place, Junior Group Website

Title: Uprooted and Imprisoned: Executive Order 9066 and its Aftermath

School: Kenmoor Middle School

Teacher: Carol Carter

Student: **Christopher Hill**

Awards: First Place, Senior Individual Documentary AND Excellence in United States Military History, sponsored by Maryland Military Monuments Commission

Title: The Fight for The Right of Flight: The Tuskegee Airmen

School: Oxon Hill High School

Teacher: Adam Thomas

Special Prize Winners:

Students: **Kamaal Aaron, Michael Ayodeji, and Kenson Okah**

Award: Barry A. Lanman Award for

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Jane Tretler Charters, staff member of President Carter, dies

Jane Elizabeth Charters, 77, of Lewes, Delaware, and formerly of Skyline, died May 12. She was born in Washington, daughter of Charles and Henrietta Tretler.

She grew up in Skyline, down the street from me. She attended Mount Calvary Elementary, graduated in 1965 from La Reine High School in Suitland, and from Marymount College in Arlington, Va., before beginning a career in human resources with the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

During her time at BEP, Jane was selected to serve as a staff member on President Jimmy Carter’s National Advisory Committee for Women. She served the federal government for more than 30 years, including roles with Naval Investigative Service and the Dept. of Defense Criminal Investigative Service.

At the time of retirement, she served as the head of management for the DOD Office of Inspector General. She received a number of awards and honors through federal service.

After retiring, Jane moved to Gaithersburg and worked at Johnson’s Florist and Garden Center in Kensington. In 2014 she moved to Lewes. In retirement, she enjoyed playing mahjong, canasta, and bunco with her neighbors in the Senators community. She also served as treasurer for Lewes in Bloom and was a dedicated volunteer at Historic Lewes Farmers Market. Survivors include daughter Jessica Charters (Andy) of Millsboro, son Jonathan Charters (Tina); brothers Charles U. (Bucky) Tretler (Debbie) of Norfolk, Va., and Robert H. (Bobby) Tretler (Jeanie) of St. Augustine, Fla; three beloved granddogs, Loki, Norman and Reggie; nephews, Andy Tretler (Jennifer) and CJ Tretler (Cheyenne); and niece Juliet Tretler.

Viewing will be 2 to 4 p.m., Wednesday, June 4, at Parsell Funeral Homes & Crematorium, 16961 Kings Hwy., Lewes.

James Ealey, former Morningside vice mayor, dies

James O. Ealey died April 23. He had joined the Morningside Council in 1991, and in later years served as vice mayor.

Survivors include his wife Yvonne Ealey; children, Lydia Ealey, James Ealey II (Maxine) and Deidre Lawson; stepchildren Robert Humphrey III (Wendy) and Yasmine Toye (Richard); sister, Claudia Lewis; four grandchildren, a great-grandchild, and a host of others.

Services were at Dupont Park Seventh Day Adventist Church, Washington, with burial at Maryland Veterans Cemetery, Cheltenham, at a later date.

Morningside election

Bradley Wade was elected Mayor of Morningside in recent voting and was sworn in Monday, May 19, at the Town Council meeting. He had been vice mayor, a position which will be vacant until he appoints someone from the council to take over as the new vice mayor.

Former councilmember Dave Chambers will be returning to the Council.

Town of Morningside: yard sale

Morningside’s Community Yard Sale—including roller-skating, and an ice cream social—is coming up May 31. Hours, 5:30–8:30 p.m. Admission: free

The town’s four stop-sign enforcement cameras are up and running—making money but, more importantly, they have been encouraging drivers to slow down and drive more carefully.

This is not an automated system; the cameras take video as people drive through the intersections. Then the video is reviewed by a person, prior to a ticket being issued to verify that the law was broken.

Remember: “rolling” stops don’t count as stops. If you do not come to a full and complete stop behind the white line, you might receive a \$40 ticket.

Needed: Paraders

Hey, 4th of July (Friday, this year) is coming! And we need parade participants! Such as vintage cars, trucks, bikes, school bands, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, clowns, flag-carriers, musicians, politicians and candidates running for office and more.

For more Information, call 301-736-2301.

I love the Morningside Parade, every year.

Thank you, Councilwoman Krystal Oriadha!

Last year, Morningside received a \$100,000 grant from Prince George’s 7th-District Councilmember Krystal Oriadha. It was used to buy grills, moon-bounces, a cotton candy machine, a popcorn machine and a storage shed, among other things.

This year, Morningside received a \$110,000 grant from Prince George’s Park & Planning, which is to be spent on recreational programs and community interactions. This money is being used to provide yoga classes and equipment (including the newly arrived yoga octagon block), as well as toddler tumbling classes.

The grant also will support the May 31 community yard sale and social, with skating & ice cream.

I’m Back

The past few weeks have been delightful chaos. Among many visitors, were my brother Tom Mudd and sisters Rosie and Stella from Saginaw, Mich. Writing a column became impossible.

Also, I had to do the Pope Watch, tuned to Rome, and wishing I were there again. (I’ve been to Rome, and to St. Peter’s Cathedral.)

Milestones

Happy Birthday to India Goodall and Ruby Haines, May 4; Donald Young, Jim Henderson and Marlyn Meoli, May 5; Gretchen Ennis, May 6; Dwight Holloway Jr., May 7; Brandi Jeter and Buddy Ramsey, May 9; Gladys Locks, Shirley Eppard and Elijah Thomas, May 10; Benn Cann, Patti Parco Grey, May 18; Kaylin Barbour, Otis Jones, May 19; (1919), Ellen Ashby, May 19; Jim Behr, May 20; Crystal Foster, Juanita Hood and Linda Holsonbake, May 22. Ricci Lee Jr., Betty Call, L. Dorothy Jones, Nancy Sawyer, Dory Babecki and Chester Lanehart IV, May 23; Edna Lucas and Harry Messer, May 24; Dennis Cook, Norma Edwards and my son John

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Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

LAKE ARBOR JAZZ FRIDAY FESTIVAL

The Lake Arbor Jazz Friday Festival, celebrating its 15th Anniversary, will be at National Harbor, Maryland, from July 16–20, 2025. The festival features contemporary smooth jazz and R&B, with events at various locations including Spirit Park, the Newton White Mansion, and the MGM Hotel & Casino. Location: National Harbor, Maryland, 165 Waterfront Street National Harbor. Venues: Wellspring Manor & Spa, Newton White Mansion, National Harbor Spirit Park, and MGM Hotel & Casino. Music Genres: Contemporary smooth jazz and R&B.

Highlights: A week-end-long event with multiple performances. Performers include Phaze II, Chuck Brown Band, Julian Vaughan, and a tribute to Frankie Beverly. A kick-off concert at the Newton White Mansion in Mitchellville with Kofi B. Brian Lenair, and a surprise guest. A Friday Day Festival at Spirit Park with music from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. A Saturday Day Festival will be Saturday, July 19 starting at 12 p.m. at National Harbor. Visit the website <https://lakearborjazz.com/> for more information and to purchase tickets.

ARTS’TINATION—WHERE ART AND COMMUNITY CONVERGE

Enjoy an immersive experience surrounded by local artistry, including vibrant galleries, unique workshops, and a community of artists and enthusiasts. Arts’tination, located at The National Harbor, is PGAHC’S vibrant and unique art gallery, where we celebrate and showcase the talent of local artists who have set up their own individual stalls to display their beautiful Artwork and Handmade Creations. The space is filled with a diverse array of art styles, from contemporary to traditional, and everything in between.

Arts’tination hosts regular workshops and events that offer the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with local artists. From painting and drawing classes to crafting workshops, happy hours, networking and more, there is always something new and exciting happening at the gallery.

Location: The National Harbor, 162 Waterfront Street, Oxon Hill, Maryland, 20745, Phone: (301) 433-9154. Hours of Operation: Monday, Closed, Tuesday–Thursday: 1–6 p.m., Friday & Saturday: 1–8 p.m., Sunday 1–6 p.m.

“Our goal is to create a warm and welcoming environment where artists and art enthusiasts can come together to share their passion and appreciation for the arts.” Creative Connect Happy Hour. Join us every 2nd Thursday for the Creative Connect series, a vibrant and inspiring networking happy hour event series for artists, creatives, residents, and PGAHC grantees”.

Hues and Harmonies: Every first Friday throughout the summer, Arts’tination will come alive with an Artist Walk. Explore the vibrant world of art with the participation of talented vendors from Artbae and PGAHC Artists.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

This month, we are thrilled to shine a light on Pat, affectionately known as Gigi to her grandchildren. After a lifelong dream of learning piano, she is working on learning gospel favorites like “Amazing Grace” at Kentucky Arts Academy. A retired professor from the University of San Francisco, Pat and her husband recently moved from California to Louisville, Kentucky to be closer to family. Outside of music, Pat loves playing sudoku, reading, enjoying gospel music, and

spending time with her husband, Larry, and their wonderful family. Her advice to anyone thinking about learning an instrument later in life? “You are never too old to learn a new skill, you just need motivation and a commitment to practice.

Patricia (Pat) Turner Mitchell is the daughter of the late James Gamell Turner and the late Ruth Turner who resided in Brandywine, Maryland. Also, Ruth Turner was the writer for Prince George’s Post Newspaper for many years. Covering the Brandywine/Aquasco area.

HBCU MEET AND GREET HOUR

Maryland HBCU Alumni Association presents Bowie State University National Alumni Association, Morgan State University National Alumni Association, University of Maryland Eastern Shore National Alumni Association, and Coppin State University National Alumni Association. HBCU Meet & Greet Hour Thursday, June 19, 2025, from 5–8 p.m. Registration required: BLVCK COW, 6133 Highbridge Road, Bowie, Maryland, 20720. Free Entry, Free Parking. HBCU VIBES.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University has earned the prestigious ‘Research Colleges and Universities’ designation in the 2025 Carnegie Research Activity Classification, under scoring the anniversary’s commitment to research, innovation and academic excellence.

“This achievement is a transformative step forward for Bowie State University to reach our goal as an R2 designated institution,” said Dr. Aminta Breaux, president of Bowie State University. “With this designation the university is poised to attract new funding opportunities, enhance cutting-edge faculty research and inspire the next generation of scholars and changemakers.”

As one of the nation’s oldest Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Bowie State has been a beacon of opportunity and achievement for faculty and students in higher education. This new research designation reaffirms the university’s academic excellence and positions it as a key player in shaping the future of research at HBCUs.

The newly established ‘Research Colleges and Universities’ designation was created by the American Council on Education and the Carnegie Foundation for the advancement of teaching to recognize institutions of higher learning that have not previously been acknowledged for their research efforts.

The destination includes any non-R1 or R2 institution that spends more than \$2.5 million on research annually. In the 2022–2023 academic year, Bowie State University awarded 17 doctoral degrees, while its research expenditures in fiscal year 2023 totaled more than \$2.61 million.

“Research not only drives the creation of new knowledge but also enriches learning experiences for our students while they work alongside leading experts,” said Dr. Guy-Alain Amoussou, Provost and Vice President for academic affairs at Bowie State University. “It empowers our faculty to remain at the forefront of their fields, contributing to solving real-world challenges, by prioritizing research and creative activities. We strengthen our institution’s role as a catalyst for new discovery and social impact locally and globally.” Media Contact: David Thompson dlthompson@bowiestate.edu 301-860-4311.

Leaders from A1

support of their families, and the commitment of our educators. This celebration honors their leadership and the bright futures that lie ahead.”

Valedictorians and salutatorians are recognized for earning the highest grade point averages (GPA) in their respective schools. This year’s competition was especially close, resulting in ties for salutatorian at both the Academy of Health Sciences at PGCC and Crossland High School. In addition to their academic success, many of these students are active leaders, athletes, and volunteers within their schools and communities.

For a complete list of the Class of 2025 valedictorians and salutatorians, visit our website: <https://www.pgcps.org/offices/communications-and-community-engagement/newsroom/graduation-2025/valsals>.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Will “DOGE” Hurt our Social Security or Medicare 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: I am a new AMAC member and have an important question for you, and your answer will be greatly appreciated. My question is: Is the new DOGE effort going to help us, or hurt us, all those living on Social Security and receiving Medicare benefits? Please let us know soon. **Regards: Worried Senior**

Dear Worried Senior: Here at the AMAC Foundation, we offer free access to everyone, the public as well as AMAC members, for our acclaimed Social Security Advisory Service, at which we answer all inquiries from anyone with questions about Social Security and enrollment in Medicare. As you can imagine, we very closely watch all action in Washington, D.C. which will affect Social Security and Medicare, especially any Congressional legislation being considered.

The new “DOGE” (Department of Government Efficiency) organization is tasked with uncovering and eliminating fraud and waste in all areas of the Federal Government, and that includes Social Security and Medicare. But the important thing to remember is that DOGE is seeking only to discover fraud and government waste.

Recently a great deal of visibility has been given to DOGE’s efforts to discover potential fraud (and waste) in the Social Security Administration. Everything we have seen thus far indicates that DOGE’s efforts have identified opportunities for reducing fraud and waste at the Social Security Administration, so our expectation is that DOGE’s efforts will tend to help the Social Security Administration become more efficient but not endanger anyone’s Social Security benefits. Indeed, President Trump and the DOGE team have repeatedly said that no cuts in Social Security benefits will occur as a result of DOGE’s efforts. Reducing fraud and waste at the SSA would tend to improve the agency’s financial posture and improve their ability to pay full benefits longer. The same is true for Medicare. Actually, DOGE is very transparent and posts everything they find on this website: www.doge.gov. A quick look at this website reveals that none of what they have found at the SSA indicates any threat to SS or Medicare benefits.

I suggest that any negative news media and social media accounts of DOGE’s activities be taken with a grain of salt. All such articles are largely meant to attract attention to unlikely “doomsday” scenarios. The reality is that our government is over \$36 trillion in debt, and that debt is growing, which is an unsustainable financial path for our country. DOGE is specifically tasked with eliminating the deficit gap by reducing frivolous government spending and fraud. But reducing crucial benefits for seniors on Social Security and Medicare are NOT part of DOGE’s efforts, nor their goal.

Rest assured that here at the AMAC Foundation we are watching all current DOGE efforts very closely and will vigorously oppose anything which will negatively affect Social Security and Medicare. Indeed, AMAC’s stated goal is to strengthen and preserve Social Security for all future generations.

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

Knowledge from A1

more than 28,000 Maryland students participated at the school level. The program is open to public, private, parochial, and home-school students in grades 6 through 12.

Competitors at Maryland History Day have already won first or second place in their category at school and/or district levels. Students from fifteen counties, Baltimore City, and the Juvenile Services Education Program (part of the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services) received special awards, designated for outstanding Maryland History Day projects that cover specific subjects.

Students from seven Maryland counties and Baltimore City will represent Maryland in the National History Day competition, where they will compete among an estimated 3,000 participants from across the country and beyond. National History Day runs June 8–12 at the University of Maryland in College Park.

The national competition involves students from all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and international schools in China, Korea, and South Asia. Maryland History Day is an affiliate of National History Day, a nonprofit education organization that promotes an appreciation for historical research among middle and high school students through multiple annual programs, including the National History Day Contest.

Maryland History Day is supported by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), National History Day®,

Honorees from A1

Oral History Excellence, sponsored by Barry A. Lanman
Title: The Disguised Genocide
Category: Senior Group Documentary
School: Oxon Hill High School
Teachers: Elexis Brooks and Paul Mock

Maryland History Day District Teacher of the Year:
Victoria Patch, Eleanor Roosevelt High School

Thalheimer-Eurich Charitable Fund, Baltimore County Commission on the Arts & Sciences, James T. and Virginia M. Dresher Center for the Humanities at UMBC, and Wright, Constable & Skeen, LLP.

Maryland Humanities creates and supports bold experiences that explore and elevate our shared stories to connect people, enhance lives, and enrich communities. Visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland History Day is an affiliate of National History Day and a year-long educational program of Maryland Humanities. Visit www.MDHistoryDay.org. National History Day® (NHD) is a non-profit organization based in College Park, Maryland, that seeks to improve the teaching and learning of history. The National History Day Contest was established in 1974 and currently engages more than half a million students every year in conducting original research on historical topics of interest. Visit nhd.org.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTIA WIGGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Christopher Hill with his award for Excellence in United States Military History



PHOTO COURTESY OF PORTIA WIGGINS PHOTOGRAPHY

Christopher Hill with his award for First Place, Senior Individual Documentary

Phelecia E. Nembhard Was Elected for Second Term in Office

By PRESS OFFICER
The City of New Carrollton

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (May 15, 2025)—The City of New Carrollton has re-elected Phelecia E. Nembhard as its next Mayor following the municipal election on May 5, 2025. She previously made history as the city’s first Black and first woman to hold the position, serving from 2020 to 2023.

Mayor-Elect Nembhard was born in Whitfield Town in St Andrew, Jamaica and has Guyanese grandparents. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in management and accounting from The University of the West Indies. During her time as a Council member and Mayor she earned her certification in Public Policy from the University of Maryland School of Public Policy.

Her election marks a significant milestone for the community. With her prior experience on the Council, and previously being Mayor, Mayor-Elect Nembhard possesses a strong understanding of municipal governance and the needs of New Carrollton residents. Her campaign emphasized improving public services and infrastructure such as parks, sidewalks, and streets, fostering community unity, promoting responsible development, and increasing civic engagement. While in office, her goals are to improve employee retention rates, increase training opportunities, avoid raising taxes, and work with the Public Works Department to bring our recycling program in-house.

“I am profoundly grateful and deeply honored by the trust the voters of New Carrollton have placed in me to lead our wonderful city again,” said Mayor-Elect Nembhard. “It is a privilege to serve this community, and I am especially humbled to do so again as your Mayor. I am eager to begin working collaboratively with the Council, city staff, residents, and local businesses to build upon our strengths and create an even more vibrant, inclusive, and prosperous future for everyone in New Carrollton.”

Mayor-Elect Nembhard is committed to transparent leadership and plans to complete the Powhatan Bridge, Revitalize the Harland Street Property, engage directly with residents across the city to work on the City’s long term strategic plan, and ensure a smooth transition upon taking office.

“I’m ready to continue the work we started—let’s build a stronger, safer New Carrollton together,” said Mayor-Elect Nembhard. The official swearing-in ceremony will take place Wednesday, May 21, 2025, during the 7 p.m. council meeting.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART TWELVE

Machine Learning—in Maryland and Elsewhere—Opens New Possibilities for Suicide Prevention

By JOE WICKE
Capital News Service

The Reddit thread that caught Philip Resnik’s attention posed a potentially life-saving question.

“Formerly suicidal Redditors, what’s something that kept you alive a little while longer and helped you to get through the dark times in your lives?” the post asked.

Seeing the thread as an opportunity to conduct research, Resnik, a computational linguist and University of Maryland professor, got to work. He and his wife—Dr. Rebecca Resnik, the former president of the Maryland Psychological Association — assembled a team of psychology experts and data scientists to analyze the responses to the Reddit thread.

The resulting research paper, titled “Reasons to Live Instead of Dying by Suicide: New Insights from a Computer-Assisted Content Analysis,” utilizes machine learning to discern the reasons the Redditors chose to live.

The Resniks are just two of several researchers exploring suicide prevention through machine learning—a growing field that’s of special importance to young people amid an increase in teen suicide rates.

In 2023, one in five high school students seriously considered attempting suicide, according to a 2024 study by the Yale School of Medicine. The study also found that from 2007 to 2021, suicide deaths increased by over 62% among people ages 10 to 24.

Resnik hopes research like his can share one important message to teens: They’re not alone.

“It is very easy to not realize that what you’re experiencing is something that is almost cer-

tainly shared, no matter how specific to your situation,” Resnik said. “I strongly suspect, especially given the demographics of the Reddit population that we sample, that somebody who’s a [teen] right now is going to actually recognize a lot more in the experiences of the people who talked about them in this data set.”

Most suicide research primarily focuses on models that predict if a patient is at risk, factoring in past psychiatric disorders and information like race, age and income.

But through his research, Resnik looked into a budding side of suicide prevention efforts—the experiences of those who got through the hard times.

“As I began looking into this, [I noticed] there is so much work on why people die, but relative to that, so little work on understanding what keeps people from dying by suicide,” Resnik said, “and yet that’s what the clinicians in the trenches are doing.”

A life-changing thread

The Reddit thread Resnik’s team studied did not just include young people. Reddit’s anonymity also means demographic factors like the age, race and income of its users remain largely unknown.

Still, given social media’s popularity with young people, youths were surely represented among the over 16,000 comments in the thread. Resnik’s team used software that grouped responses into four overarching themes to explain why those Reddit users chose to live:

Concern for others: Some users said they wanted to avoid inflicting emotional pain or financial troubles on friends, loved ones and even pets.

Sensory pleasures: Some

users referenced possessions or media that helped make them happy or distracted them. This ranged from new episodes of their favorite TV shows, their favorite foods and even substances like marijuana.

Positive foresight: Some users found hope through sources like family and friends, philosophy and faith, or adopted a “one day at a time” mentality.

Negative valence: Some users channeled negative emotions like fear, spite or guilt to push themselves to live.

Resnik noted any number of those four factors can come into play for a person considering suicide.

“This [research] is providing an alternative lens through which to look at people’s experiences of being suicidal,” Resnik said. “You can think of this as the four themes being four different colors, and you can see what’s stronger and what’s weaker for any individual.”

Reddit’s anonymity may have allowed users to be more forthright with their answers. For example, a user may avoid telling a mental health provider that drug use got them through a dark period of their life, but would anonymously mention it on social media, Resnik said.

These reasons showed up prominently throughout the “negative valence” category. While channeling negative emotions toward others may be harmful in the long term, the research shows it might be beneficial in the short term, Resnik said.

Resnik emphasized his research should not discourage people from seeking professional mental health care. Still, he said his work offers an honest look into the mindset of someone experiencing suicidal ideation.

Katherine Schafer, a researcher on Resnik’s team, hopes these findings will provide a more nuanced look at why people experiencing suicidal thoughts stop before harming themselves.

“In a very unique way—and perhaps in an unfiltered way—this project allows clinicians an intimate view into the thoughts of people who have been really acutely at risk,” Schafer said.

Despite its insights, the model only provides a snapshot of a Reddit user’s experience. The research cannot verify if the reasons that stopped suicide attempts worked in the long term for patients or if there were additional contributing factors, such as therapy.

Even with its limitations, Schafer said this data can provide a source of hope for those struggling with suicidal thoughts, given that it showcases 16,000 people who were on the same journey.

“When we think about what might cause suicide, there might be a feeling of loneliness or isolation, and just the sheer volume of content that came from people across the world could help people feel less alone in their dark moments,” Schafer said.

AI and suicide prevention

Resnik is not alone in turning to technology to save lives. Since the 2010s, researchers have been using machine learning to spot when someone might be suicidal.

This approach appears to work. A March 2024 study led by Dr. Alessandro Pigoni, an Italian psychiatrist, analyzed over 80 datasets and found machine learning models excelled the most at predicting suicidal behaviors and attempts in patients facing mental health struggles.



PHOTO COURTESY CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Philip Resnik

gles.

Emily Haroz, an associate professor at Johns Hopkins University, echoed these findings. She said most models are “trained” on patients’ mental health assessments through electronic health records.

“We’ve seen this idea that if we could identify people at risk, that means we can potentially prevent it,” Haroz said. “And the ways we’ve focused on identifying risk and the [patient’s] history has been like a clinician assessment.”

Haroz said Johns Hopkins researchers have recently explored using AI on social media platforms to both identify users at risk of suicidal behavior and intervene through direct messages.

With a vast amount of data to pull from, researchers can even pinpoint specific areas of the country that are most susceptible to suicide.

Vishnu Kumar, an assistant professor in the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering at Morgan State University, used data from the Centers of Disease Control to create a suicide vulnerability index. The index, a scale from zero to one, identifies which U.S. counties have the highest suicide rates with numbers closest to one indicating the most risk.

Kumar emphasized these findings can prompt governments to steer resources to counties with higher suicide rates.

“Sometimes [mental health] resources get distributed equally to all the different counties, but then if you analyze it more in-depth, you will see that some counties that need more attention,” Kumar said. “Instead of simply splitting the resources equally, I think it’s a good way to concentrate on those counties that need more help and then provide more resources there.”

In Maryland, the index shows residents of more densely populated areas such as Baltimore, Howard and Montgomery counties are more at risk, while rural areas like Kent and Somerset counties have a comparatively lower vulnerability.

Data-driven, prediction-based models ultimately provide the backbone for most machine learning research on suicide prevention. For researchers like Haroz, these models are supplements that can improve the work of psychiatrists and other clinicians.

“Keeping humans at the forefront of [research] and finding ways it can augment human de-

COMMENTARY

Ben Jealous

*Executive Director,
Sierra Club*



Cutting Energy Star Hurts Americans —and Helps no One But Polluters

“Look for the Energy Star.” Most Americans know that is excellent advice to anyone appliance shopping. That little blue label saves American consumers roughly \$40 billion a year in energy costs every year.

With the program’s modest price tag—less than one percent of the EPA’s total spending—Americans save a whopping \$1,250 for every single dollar spent on Energy Star. And Americans know that little blue symbol means less wasted energy and cleaner air. It helps families stretch their paychecks and do right by the planet at the same time.

Since the Energy Star public-private partnership began in 1992, it has helped save American households and businesses more than \$500 billion on energy costs. It has more than 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions (roughly the equivalent of annual pollution from 933 million cars). And it has done so while empowering consumers with better information—not by taking anything away. What that looks like at the local level is homes and businesses in a large city like Chicago saving \$116.6 million a year in energy costs, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions

by 539,500 metric tons.

Now, Donald Trump wants to get rid of it. Virtually no one thinks that would be wise.

In March, a large group of manufacturers and industry associations joined a letter calling on Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin to keep the popular EPA program. The US Chamber of Commerce, the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, and others said, “eliminating [Energy Star] will not serve the American people,” and they pointed out that because of consumers’ high awareness of the program—to the tune of 90% brand awareness—the results if it is eliminated would be “decreased features, functionality, performance, or increased costs” of appliances.

Energy Star certified homes typically save around \$450 per year on energy bills. In 2020 alone, the program’s emissions reductions amounted to more than five percent of total US greenhouse gas emissions. That year, the program’s energy savings also improved health outcomes for communities by preventing 210,000 tons each of sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide pollutants, and 20,000 tons of fine particulate mat-

ter (PM2.5). The public health benefits from those reductions in air pollution were estimated to be as high as \$17 billion!

Further, the estimated annual market value of Energy Star product sales is more than \$100 billion. And of domestic energy efficiency jobs, about 35% are in the manufacturing and installation of Energy Star products. As of 2020, that was more than 790,000 American jobs.

In his latest attack on common sense, Trump is trying to eliminate one of the federal government’s most successful, least controversial, and most popular consumer protection tools.

Ending Energy Star is not a serious policy move. It is performative politics at its worst. It is “virtue signaling” to fossil fuel extremists from a man desperate to please his donors while punishing regular people for choosing clean, affordable options.

Targeting the program as part of some sort of ideological deregulation agenda doesn’t even make sense because it is not a regulation. It does not force anybody to buy or produce anything. It is simply a voluntary, science-based labeling system. It helps consumers compare appliances and other products based on their energy efficiency. It helps Americans cut down their energy bills. And it helps reduce pollution that hurts our lungs and heats our planet.

That is why Americans across the political spectrum support it. It is an example of our government doing something simple, effective, and bipartisan. At least, it used to be.

Donald Trump’s push to dismantle this program is a perfect example of how MAGA hardliners have turned their backs on the very people they claim to represent. This is not about freedom or choice. It is about controlling the market to benefit fossil fuel interests. It is about keeping

consumers in the dark. And it is about making sure families have fewer tools to protect themselves from rising costs.

Ask yourself: why, in the middle of what Trump and his allies keep calling an “energy emergency,” would you go out of your way to kill a program that helps people save so much money energy? The only people who benefit are the fossil fuel executives who profit when homes and appliances waste more of it.

When people waste energy because they unknowingly buy inefficient products, the fossil fuel industry makes more money.

That is the whole ballgame. It is a rigged system that leaves working Americans with higher bills while big polluters cash in. The Energy Star label helps consumers break that cycle.

Cutting Energy Star would be a betrayal of the millions of Americans who are already struggling to afford groceries, gas, and electricity. It would hurt seniors trying to stay warm in winter. It would hurt young families buying their first refrigerator. It would hurt renters in cities and homeowners in rural towns alike. No one benefits—except the lobbyists and the oil barons.

Energy Star gives every American the chance to choose better, smarter options. Scrapping it to score cheap points with the same special interests that are holding our country back defies common sense.

Americans deserve leaders who will fight to keep our bills low, our homes efficient, and our future sustainable.

—May 13, 2025

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

Prince George’s County Unveils Ambitious Transit Vision Plan to Guide Future Mobility and Economic Growth

Five-Year Plan Makes Room for Enhanced, Interconnected Transportation Network

By PRESS OFFICER
Department of Public Works and Transportation

LARGO, Md. (May 19, 2025)—The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) has released its Prince George’s County Transit Vision Plan (TVP), a strategic roadmap for creating a more vibrant and connected County public transportation network. The TVP will simplify the existing network while improving accessibility and reliability. Goals highlighted in the plan include decreased travel times, more direct trips, improved customer facilities, and increased trip frequency.

“The Transit Vision Plan is more than a roadmap for the next five years; it is our commitment to a more connected, equitable, and sustainable future for generations to come,” said DPW&T Director Michael Johnson.

The TVP aligns with countywide goals to improve mobility, reduce traffic congestion, address climate change, and ensure all communities benefit from transportation investments. Shaped by robust community input and data-driven analysis, the TVP short-range plan outlines strategies to create a more efficient, reliable, and connected transit system for County residents, workers, and visitors.

“DPW&T remains committed to moving beyond updating the plan every five years,” said DPW&T Deputy Director Oluseyi Olu-



benle. “We are laser-focused on creating a plan that is relevant and adaptive to change, while creating a clear path towards enhancing and expanding transit services.”

Representing the first step in the TVP is the Better Bus Network Redesign (BBNR), scheduled to begin in Prince George’s County on Monday, June 30. Since 2022, TheBus has partnered with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) on the BBNR with making bus service faster, more reliable, and easier to use. The redesign will expand transit service in the County by 30% over the next five years.

Transit Vision Plan Key Elements:
• Improved Bike and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Additional PGC Link Zones
- Expansion and Diversification of Existing Fleet
- Development of High-Capacity Transit Corridors
- Better Bus Network Redesign Implementation
- Fast Track BRT and Bus Priority Projects

Community Engagement:

DPW&T will introduce the Transit Vision Plan to residents and interested stakeholders during a series of virtual and in-person open house events. Discussions will include plan details, transit investment impacts, and ways to get involved, followed by a question-and-answer segment. ***Open houses will be held on the following days:***

Virtual Event: RISE Prince George’s
Thursday, May 22, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Register: https://tvp-princegeorges.hub.arcgis.com/pages/get-involved?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

Saturday, May 31, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Oxon Hill Branch Library
6200 Oxon Hill Rd, Oxon Hill, MD

Monday, June 2, 3–5:45 p.m.

Hyattsville Branch Library
6530 Adelphi Rd, Hyattsville, MD

Next Steps:

Success of the TVP depends on feedback from drivers, riders and members of the public. Residents are encouraged to help shape the Transit Vision Plan by sharing their feedback or transportation experiences. Please visit the [Transit Vision Plan | Transit Transformation website](#) to “Get Involved.”

Learning from A3

cision-making or offload reliable tasks is great,” Haroz said.

A gap in suicide research

As machine learning models continue to develop, they often confront a key misperception in how some view suicide: that it’s just a mental health issue.

While some machine learning models predicting suicidal behavior rely on electronic health records, researchers believe labeling suicide as a mental health issue simplifies a complex topic. Craig Bryan, a psychologist at the Ohio State University College of Medicine cited in Resnik’s research, argues outside factors such as decision-making skills, financial troubles and access to lethal weapons play just as significant a role as psychiatric disorders.

A 2024 study led by Mayyas Al-Remawi, a researcher at the University of Petra in Jordan, used machine learning models to examine the role of water contaminants and diets in suicidal ideation. The team found that increased consumption of alcohol, low-nutrient diets and chemicals like mercury in water contribute to higher suicide risks.

Meanwhile, Kumar’s study incorporated data such as race and income to determine suicide vulnerability, and Haroz cites chronic illnesses and childhood trauma as potential contributing factors.

This research differs from Resnik and Schafer’s in one significant way.

“[Our research is] more intervention-focused as opposed to a more risk-focused [model],” Schafer said.

Limitations and criticism

The machine learning revolution in suicide research comes with some risks.

Haroz said one concern is that doctors will treat suicide risk prediction models as official diagnoses rather than guidelines to help at-risk patients.

A 2020 article in the Journal of Medical Ethics by researchers Thomas Grote and Philipp Berens references “peer disagreement,” the idea that two qualified doctors can offer different diagnoses, as a growing problem in suicide prevention machine learning models. The authors argued machine learning can remove nuance from medical opinions, as clinicians may rely solely on the machine learn-

ing model’s diagnosis as the “correct” answer.

Machine learning models can also detect a patient who might not think they have a history of suicide ideation as being at risk for suicide, Haroz said. She hopes researchers look into ways to guide these potentially difficult conversations with patients.

The authors of several scientific journal articles also criticize utilizing electronic health records to “train” data models, arguing it raises ethical questions about patient privacy and data security.

To combat this, large research institutions like Johns Hopkins work to ensure the safety of the data, such as establishing an institutional review board that weighs the benefits and risks of research.

“We’re very careful about having a very secure web storage that’s up to legal standards and beyond,” Haroz said.

Beyond the research

Despite those concerns, supporters of machine learning research believe it can revolutionize the world of clinical care by increasing the focus on intervention for those at risk of suicide.

This intervention can extend far past a therapist’s office, Haroz said. Social media sites and even video game chat rooms—which are particularly popular with young people—are potential places where clinicians could monitor concerning behavior, as people may be more comfortable interacting on such platforms.

Kumar envisions a similar use of technology, where a machine learning model can “train” on an individual users’ behavior to detect any unusual changes over time that may lead to suicide risks.

As for Resnik, he hopes research like his exposes clinicians to the “lived experiences” of patients who have considered suicide.

Whether it’s prediction, analysis or intervention, Haroz hopes machine learning can help clinicians rethink how we view suicide prevention, especially among young people.

“No one should lose a child to suicide ... this is an issue that crosses all people,” Haroz said. “Caring about suicide prevention is incumbent on all of us to help continue to save lives and save the suffering that happens to people around them.”

Morningside from A2

McHale, May 25; Christopher Nichols, May 26; Gary Lewis, Sr, and Steven Busky, May 27.

Happy Anniversary to Donna & Wayne Anderson on May 14; Aidan and Mary Kilbride, their 62nd on May 18; Dennis & Leigh D’Avanzo, their 36th on May 20; Ronnie and Karen Ellis, their 59th on May 20; and John and Nichole Barbour, on May 25.

My Milestones Birthdays and Anniversaries list is getting pretty thin. Send me some! Send me yours.

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HEALTH *and* WELLNESS

SAVE A LIFE FROM STROKE

FAMILY FEATURES

Strokes can happen to anyone, at any age – even young people. Despite being one of the leading causes of death and long-term disability in the United States, strokes are largely preventable, treatable and beatable – if you can control your risk factors. According to the American Stroke Association, a division of the American Heart Association, every 40 seconds, someone in the U.S. has a stroke. Keeping blood pressure in check, living a healthy lifestyle and knowing stroke warning signs may help protect you and your loved ones. Here are key insights from the American Stroke Association’s Together to End Stroke initiative, nationally supported by the HCA Healthcare Foundation.

ACT F.A.S.T. HOW TO DETECT SIGNS OF STROKE

Most adults in the U.S. don’t know the stroke warning signs, nor that stroke is largely treatable if you call 911 as soon as you recognize the symptoms. Learning the acronym F.A.S.T. can help you recognize that someone may be having stroke symptoms so you can take life-saving action.

F: Face Drooping. Does one side of the face droop, or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person’s smile uneven?

A: Arm Weakness. Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?

S: Speech. Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like “The sky is blue.”

T: Time to Call 911. If you or anyone else shows any of these symptoms, call 911 immediately.

F.A.S.T.

Face Drooping	Arm Weakness	Speech Difficulty	Time to Call 911
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Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

Controlling Risk Factors

Up to 80% of strokes may be preventable, according to the American Stroke Association. You can take action to prevent strokes by managing your risk factors, like high blood pressure, a leading cause and controllable risk factor for stroke and heart disease. Other risk factors include diabetes and obesity, which can be kept in check with healthy lifestyle behaviors such as good nutrition. Quitting smoking and being physically active are important. Atrial fibrillation, or AFib, which is a quivering or irregular heartbeat, also increases stroke risk. In fact, people with AFib are five times more likely to have a stroke, according to the American Heart Association.

Preventing a Second Stroke

Nearly 1 in 4 strokes occur in people who had a previous stroke, sometimes because they don’t know what caused the first, making identifying the cause of the stroke a key step toward future prevention. Treatment depends on the type of stroke someone is having, which can be determined with a series of medical evaluations and tests.

Work with your health care professional to develop a plan that helps you move forward after a first stroke while preventing a second. This plan should include controlling risk factors, like achieving and maintaining healthy blood pressure, blood sugar and cholesterol levels. “Preventing a second stroke is possible with the right approach,” said Teresita Casanova, MD, HCA Healthcare affiliated neurologist and American Stroke Association volunteer expert. “Taking medicines as prescribed, monitoring health numbers, and making small, consistent lifestyle changes can make a big difference. Stroke survivors should feel empowered to take control of their health and work with their care team to build a strong prevention plan.” To help you in your journey, you can rely on tools such as the Heart & Stroke Helper, a free self-management app available for stroke survivors and their caregivers. The app allows patients to oversee their health in one place with features that track progress on lifestyle habits, manage medications, track health numbers, provide information about stroke and allow patients to connect with others for inspiration. Find more ways to manage second stroke risk at [Stroke.org](#).

What Women Should Know About Their Heart, Kidney and Metabolic Health

FAMILY FEATURES

Some women may be unaware they’re living with risks for heart disease, kidney disease and metabolic conditions like diabetes, which drive risk for cardiovascular disease. The interplay among these conditions is called cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic (CKM) syndrome, according to the scientific experts at the American Heart Association. Consider these facts women should know about CKM syndrome.

Cardiovascular Disease is the No. 1 Killer of Women

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), which includes heart disease and stroke, affects nearly 45% of women ages 20 and older, and 1 in 3 women will die from it, according to the association. “Despite heart disease being the leading cause of death for women, most women are not aware of their risk for heart disease,” said Sadiya S. Khan, M.D., M.Sc., FAHA, American Heart Association volunteer and a member of the science advisory group for the association’s CKM Health Initiative, supported by founding sponsors Novo Nordisk and Boehringer Ingelheim and champion sponsor DaVita.



Photos courtesy of Shutterstock



Women may develop heart disease differently than men and experience symptoms uncommon in men. Women are more likely to have blockage in smaller blood vessels around the heart and, while chest pain is the most common heart attack symptom, women are more likely than men to experience pain in the arms, jaw and neck, too.

Early Action is Key

According to a study presented at an American Heart Association scientific conference, women with either Type 2 diabetes or chronic kidney disease are predicted to reach elevated risk for CVD 8-9 years earlier than women with neither condition while women with both conditions may reach high risk 26 years earlier.

Risk Factors are Connected

The health factors that comprise CKM syndrome are connected. They include high blood pressure, abnormal cholesterol, excess weight, high blood glucose sugar and low kidney function. If something goes wrong in one area, it affects others. “Knowing your health numbers is critical to optimize your CKM health and prioritize prevention of heart, kidney and metabolic disease,” said Khan, who is also the Magerstadt professor of cardiovascular epidemiology and an associate professor of cardiology and preventive medicine at Northwestern School of Medicine. Since high blood pressure and early stages of kidney disease and diabetes often don’t have symptoms, regular screening is necessary to be aware of your risk.

Pregnancy and Menopause Affect Women’s CKM Health

Each pregnancy is a window into later heart and kidney health, according to Janani Rangaswami, M.D., FAHA, professor of

medicine at the George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences and co-chair of the scientific advisory group for the American Heart Association’s presidential advisory that defined CKM syndrome. Pregnancy complications such as pre-eclampsia, gestational diabetes and gestational hypertension are risk factors for future chronic kidney disease and cardiovascular disease, Rangaswami said. Changes during menopause also influence long-term heart and metabolic health. This includes declining estrogen levels, increased body fat around the organs, increased cholesterol levels and stiffening or weakening of blood vessels, per the American Heart Association. Early menopause (before age 45) is linked to a higher risk for kidney disease, Type 2 diabetes and CVD. “Women can mitigate those risks by getting appropriate treatment for their menopause symptoms,” Rangaswami said. **Social Factors Affect Women’s Health** Negative economic, environmental and psychosocial factors are associated with lower levels of preventive health behaviors like physical activity and healthy eating and higher levels of conditions like obesity and diabetes. Some factors affect women differently than men. For example, marriage is associated with worse health for women, and women are more likely than men to delay medical care because of costs, according to an American Heart Association scientific statement. Women are also more likely to have their health concerns dismissed, Khan said.

Women should know their risk and self-advocacy is critical. They should request thorough screenings that assess heart, kidney and metabolic health at visits with their health care providers. Visit [heart.org/myCKMhealth](#) to learn more.

EarthTalk® Q&A U.S. Air Quality Better Than Ever—But Still Room For Improvement

By Marium Zahra | May 8, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:

How is air quality across the U.S. these days?

—Paul Jackson, Washington, DC

Air quality is defined as the degree to which the air of a set place is pollutant-free. In the United States, air quality is measured through the Air Quality Index (AQI) created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The AQI uses six categorizations of air quality, from Green (0-50) to Maroon (301<); the higher the index, the greater the pollution and health concern. To the EPA, air values below 100 are adequate, while above 100 means unhealthy air, especially affecting minority and low-income groups who, according to the American Lung Association, are disproportionately affected by air pollutants.

In 1970, President Nixon passed the Clean Air Act, creating federal and state regulations on emissions from both industrial and mobile sources. This regulation drastically improved American air quality. Since the 1970s, the emissions from key pollutants like carbon monoxide, lead and sulfur dioxide have decreased by 78 percent. EPA data shows that even through prioritizing public health and regulating contamination, “the U.S. economy remained strong, growing 272 percent over the same time.”

U.S. air has improved in recent decades, but it must still address concerns. In 2023, some 140 million Americans lived in areas

below AQI standards. Moreover, with recent wildfires and extreme heat waves, this number will increase by 50 percent in coming decades. Despite federal regulations, air pollution grew between the years 2010 and 2016, and because the EPA recognizes wildfires as “exceptional events” that are not counted against quality, the AQI may not be a completely accurate measure of air quality.

“If we’re going to start thinking about solutions, we have to start combating the origin of the air pollutants, which are wildfires and extreme heat,” Jeremy Porter, head of climate implications at First Street, a research company focused on climate risk financial modeling, told The Guardian.

To help improve air quality in individual spheres, citizens should strive for sustainable and climate-conscious practices in their everyday lives. This can mean investing in electric lawn mowers, using water-based cleaners to avoid harsh chemicals, carpooling to work, using less gas and turning off idling car engines. We can also improve air in our communities by starting recycling programs, setting community-wide emission goals and creating local low-emission zones. National organizing is also a great way to advocate for sustainable environmental practices. This can be done through taking the American Lung Stand Up for Clean Air Pledge, raising awareness on social media, researching local air policy, and urging state representatives to pass conservation-focused bills.



Air quality has never been better across the United States, but some communities still struggle with bad air days.

CONTACTS: American Lung Association Clean Air Pact, <https://www.lung.org/clean-air/stand-up-for-clean-air/pledge>; Air Now Clean Air Education, <https://www.airnow.gov/education/what-you-can-do/>.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit **EarthTalk**. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to question@earthtalk.org

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A black and white photograph showing two women sitting on a modern outdoor sofa. They are under a striped awning that has been extended over the seating area. The background shows lush foliage and a garden setting.

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[illegible]

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