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Washington Intl. Horse Show Spurs \$9.1M Boost in Local MD Economy

Prestigious equestrian event draws global visitors and elevates Upper Marlboro as a sports tourism destination

By PRESS OFFICER

Washington International Horse Show

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 26, 2025)—The Washington International Horse Show (WIHS), one of North America's most prestigious equestrian events, today announced it delivered a \$9.1 million total economic impact to Prince George's County in 2024—a \$600,000 year-over-year increase from the 2023 show. The announcement underscores WIHS's pivotal role in Maryland's \$3 billion horse industry that supports 25,000 jobs statewide and highlights its value to the region's tourism, hospitality and small business sectors.

Held at The Show Place Arena, WIHS welcomed more than 15,000 spectators, with 90% from outside the county and 45% from outside Maryland, amplifying local business activity and drawing national and international attention to the region. The show's 666 participants, including owners, riders, and trainers, featured 10 Olympians, including members of the silver medal-winning team from Paris 2024, which brought a significant media spotlight.

"There is no greater demonstration

"In a moment when Maryland is focused on growing our economy, we are proud of the powerful economic momentum coming out of the equine industry," said Governor Wes Moore. "The Washington International Horse Show has a distinguished history of lifting Maryland communities over the decades. We look forward to building on that foundation, as we move in partnership to create jobs, drive growth, attract visitors, and unite behind a sport that stands at the heart of what makes Maryland strong."

of ROI for our state than the numbers behind this show, and the many other equine-related events in Maryland which positively impact all of us on local and state levels," said Terry Haseltine, executive director of the Maryland Sports Commission. "WIHS isn't just a sport; it's an economic catalyst."

The 2024 show drew visitors from 35 states, Washington, D.C. and 13 countries, generating more than 4,800 local hotel room stays and resulting revenue for restaurants, retailers and small businesses. As a direct result of the 2023 WIHS economic impact, the 2024 show's International Embassy Night's attendance grew by more than 120%, demonstrating the global draw and interest this event brings to the DMV. As

Chair of the Maryland Horse Industry Board Sheila Curry explains, "the show is more than just competition—it's a celebration of culture, community and commerce."

"WIHS brings tremendous value to the state and local economy while also elevating Prince George's County as a sports tourism destination," said President of WIHS Vicki Lowell.

In addition to its rising international profile, WIHS brings equestrian sport to the community in meaningful ways, promoting youth development, local engagement and philanthropy. Its impact includes a \$25,000 donation in 2024 to

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Dr. Almena Pointer, Imagine Foundations at Morningside, Named 2025 National Teacher of the Year

By PRESS OFFICER

Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Region

LANHAM, Md. (June 24, 2025)—Imagine Schools and its entire Mid-Atlantic region is proud to announce Dr. Almena Pointer, a 3rd grade Math & Science teacher at Imagine Foundations at Morningside (Prince George's County Public Schools) in Morningside, MD as the 2024/2025 National Teacher of the Year.

Selected from a pool of exceptional Imagine Schools educators across the country, Dr. Pointer was chosen for her innovative teaching methods, and living the Imagine shared values: JUSTICE, INTEGRITY & FUN in order to perform her utmost best as an educator. She has made a profound impact on both scholars, colleagues (team and family) and the broader school community.



PHOTO COURTESY IMAGINE SCHOOLS MID-ATLANTIC REGION

Dr. Almena Pointer

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Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® Partners With City of Greenbelt to Honor the Final Resting Place of Enslaved People

By DARLENE SPEARS-REED

Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

GREENBELT, Md. (June 25, 2025)—Members of the Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter (PEO) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.® recently answered the call to help honor enslaved people buried at the historic Turner Family Cemetery. The City of Greenbelt and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan invited members of the chapter's "Enhancing Our Environment" Committee to tidy up the unmarked graves by removing brush, weeds and debris. City of Greenbelt Environmental Coordinator Kevin Carpenter-Driscoll and Park Ranger Liz Thomas led the team to the historical site and pointed out the moss-covered stones that represented markers

for the individual burial plots of enslaved people.

Turner Cemetery is named for the Turner family, who also established a plantation in the area. A glass covering protects the one remaining gravestone, and located nearby is a sign explaining its history. Over the years, the cemetery has expanded to become part of the Greenbelt Cemetery.

The hallowed ground with the unmarked stones is located under many large, shady trees not far from a section of the cemetery still in use today. Greenbelt's unmarked stones at the historic Turner Cemetery are featured in the powerful, 40-minute documentary "Unmarked". To learn more about this part of America's history, view the trailer for Unmarked at

<https://www.unmarkedfilm.com/>.

"It is important that we honor the lives of the enslaved by treating their final resting places with the dignity and respect they were denied in life," said Karen S. Hicks, PEO President. "Preserving these graves serves as a powerful reminder to the community of the vital role enslaved people played in building and sustaining the state of Maryland."

PEO First Vice President Marsha A. Mims-Word, alongside a member of PEO's "Enhancing Our Environment" committee, clears overgrowth and debris from gravesites at Turner Cemetery.

PHOTO COURTESY PSI EPSILON OMEGA CHAPTER (PEO) OF ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA SORORITY, INC.®



Signal Financial Announces Two New Partnerships That Highlight Efforts to Support Local Communities and Promote Financial Education

By PRESS OFFICER

Signal Financial Federal Credit Union

KENSINGTON, Md. (June 25, 2025)—Signal Financial Federal Credit Union is proud to announce its official partnerships with two athletic organizations for their upcoming 2025–2026 seasons, reinforcing its dedication to supporting the communities it serves. The credit union aims to foster community spirit and financial empowerment by partnering with the PG Braves, a semipro football team, and The Mecca Society, the official NIL collective for Howard University's scholar athletes. This initiative is part of Signal Financial's ongoing efforts to empower its members to take ownership of their financial journeys.

The PG Braves is a newly formed semi-pro football team in Prince George's County that will have its inaugural season this fall. Signal Financial is the Platinum partner for the organization, and will have a presence at all home games, including



door prizes, in-game activations, and more. Signal team members will be on-site to chat with attendees about the credit union. This partnership holds special importance to Signal due to its strong membership base in the county. Signal Financial is also proud



to partner with The Mecca Society and Howard University scholar athletes. During the 2025–2026 academic year, Signal Financial will have a presence at all Football, Men's and Women's Basketball, and Women's Volleyball home games. In addition to in-game

activations, Signal Financial will host four financial education workshops aimed at providing students, scholar athletes, and faculty with knowledge and tools to understand key topics such as budgeting, credit, and more.

"Signal Financial is thrilled to be partnering the PG Braves and The Mecca Society," stated Signal Financial CEO, Kenyahda Cahoon, "Both organizations have strong missions that align so well with our credit union's core values and strategic direction. In particular, being able to interact with our members within their local community and drive educational

awareness with students and scholar athletes just starting to manage and understand their finances is so important. We look forward to showing our support and meeting both athletic organizations' fans later this year."

To learn more about the PG Braves and The Mecca Society visit www.pgvalor.com and themeccasociety.org.

For additional information on the partnerships, please reach out to Kate Purdy, VP of Marketing and PR at kpurdy@signalfinancialfcu.org.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

Morningside Parading on the 4th

I hope to be under the Baptist tree, corner of Suitland Road and Skyline Drive, waving a flag, maybe tossing candy, on the Fourth of July.

I have come to know several neighbors just by joining them on that corner to wave and chat. I'm talking about years and years of 4th of Julys. (Though, on several occasions, I was actually in the Parade.)

I understand the Parade is shoving off at 11 (though with the heat, maybe 10).

If you just maybe might be there on the corner, introduce yourself. (I remember less and less.) I love to meet other waving neighbors.

Shortly after the Parade, the party continues in Morningside. Call the Town for the exact time.

Also on the 4th—fireworks at dusk!

St. Philip the Apostle School closing

In August of 1960, at the request of Archbishop Patrick O'Boyle and Pastor, Fr. Joseph Teletchea, the Bernardine Sisters (a branch of the Franciscan Third Order) arrived in Suitland to prepare for the opening of St. Philip's School. While they awaited final construction of the school, the Sisters conducted classes in an unoccupied wing of La Reine High School. Two of my children—Therese and John—were among them.

The school temporarily opened on September 19, 1960, with grades 1 and 2. In September 1961, grade 3 was added. Sister Gerald was named the first principal. Construction of the school building began April 2, 1962.

St. Philip's School officially opened September 10, 1962, with six grades. In September 1963, first grade students numbered 59. In September 1964 there were 72 first-graders, the largest class the school ever had.

That same year, a 7th grade was added, and a children's choir formed. One of the choir's first performances was a Latin Mass, on Christmas night.

Over the years, grades 7 and 8, kinder-

garten, and Pre-K, were added. The first 8th grade graduation was in 1965. My daughter Kathleen was one of those graduates.

The Bernardine Sisters were transferred. But, St. Philip the Apostle has continued to open every year, graduating thousands of students (including my seven).

Now, 65 years later, it's closing. A letter has gone out to the parishioners from our pastor, Fr. Ryan Pineda, with the word that St. Philip's is closing due to declining enrollment.

There will be meetings with neighboring Catholic schools and help for current school families.

My great-grandson Wesley—now a senior at McNamara—will be the last McHale to graduate St. Philip's School.

Now, I wonder what will happen to that building. The building that holds so many memories.

John Whipple, St. Philip's musician, dies

John Whipple, extraordinary guitarist, has died at 72. I will pay tribute to him in next week's column. In the meantime, remember John and his family in your prayers.

Town of Morningside

Morningside Town Work Session, July 8. Town Meeting, July 15.

A home at 6718 Larkspur Road has just sold for \$257,000. For more Morningside information, call 301-736-2300.

Vacation Bible School at Clinton UMC

Clinton United Methodist Church is holding Vacation Bible School, 9 a.m. to noon, July 14 through July 18. For more information or to register, call 301-868-1281.

Changing Landscape

Crabs in the Chesapeake Bay have dropped to a concerning low number, according to experts.

Note from Sue

Sue Stine Mason often sends me news and comments. Here is a recent note from her regarding Fort Washington where we had a family picnic to celebrate Mother's Day.

"Re: Fort Washington. My late first husband, Richard McConkey, and his family and I used to go there on some Sunday afternoons and play baseball. We would explore the catacombs or caves the soldiers used. It was great fun. I know it has all changed now as that was in 1962 era.

"It's hot here in Florida in 90s this week and no rain. I just had some Areca Palm trees, and some Bamboo trees planted in my back yard adding to my other trees and flowers and several Hawaiian Plumeria trees. Those are the ones as you probably know are the flowers the Hawaiians make their Leis from and smell divine, so between those and my huge Jasmine vines my yard smells "Heavenly"! Take care Mary, Luv and hugs," Sue Stine Mason.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Ruth LaBelle and Jordan Foster, July 1; Sharon Simms, Matthew Clark, Megan Frostbutter, Gloria Grapevine, Pat Richardson Conlon, Sarah Booth and Jack Hay II, July 3; Grace Carruth, Matthew Ryan White and Nya Nichols, July 4; Jean Ihrig and Timothy Hollows, July 5; Chrissy Bennett and Marie Goliheh, July 6; Father Kevin Cusick, Charles "Tony" Haley, Sue Richards and Rev. Dr. Kelvin McCune, July 7; Jimmy Gromen and Anthony Curcio-Bobbitt, July 8; Karlyn Davis, John Anthony III and my grandson Zachary Seidman, July 9; my daughter Elaine (McHale) Seidman, July 10; Kevin Kline, Nicole Wade, Dee (Curcio) Brown and Dave Williams Jr., July 11; and Kenard Simms, July 13.

Happy Anniversary to Dave and Carolyn Williams who wed July 11, 1975.

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BULLDOG GOLF CLASSIC

Join the Bowie State University Department of Athletics for the 14th Annual Bulldog Golf Classic as we hit the greens in support of our #BowieBold student-athletes October 7, 2025, at The Country Club at Woodmore.

Your participation directly benefits scholarships, equipment, and resources that empower our Bulldogs to excel both in and out of the classroom. Take advantage of the Early Bird registration fees through September 1, 2025. Per Foursome \$700, Per Golfer \$200. Registration includes 18 holes; greens fee and golf cart, continental breakfast, lunch during tournament, post-networking event, gift bags, and so much more.

About The Course: Do not miss your opportunity to play at the exclusive Country Club at Woodmore—an Arnold Palmer-designed, 18-hole course nestled in the beautiful Woodmore community. Maintained to the highest standards, the Woodmore golf course has a distinguished reputation of being one of the region's most challenging and prestigious venues.

We look forward to seeing you at the 14th Annual Bulldog Golf Classic. For more information, and to learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please visit bowiestate.edu/bulldog-classic or contact Jennifer Coke, Executive Director of Philanthropy 301-860-4778 jjcoke@bowiestate.edu.

ANNUAL DINNER

St. Philip's Church-Baden Annual Dinner will be held Saturday, July 19, 2025, from 12 p.m. until sold out. Dinners: Fried Chicken \$18, Fried Fish \$20, BBQ Ribs \$20. All dinners come with potato salad, baked beans, corn on the cob, green beans and bread. Sandwiches: Fried Chicken \$12, Fried Fish \$14, BBQ Ribs \$14, Hot Dogs \$3. Ribs, Chicken & Fish PRE-ORDER UNTIL JULY 13. St. Philip's Church Baden Parish address is 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613.

Celebrate LOCAL VENDORS: Art, Crafts, and Resale, Bake Sale, Fun & Games. Dinners Pre-Orders: Vivian 804-301-9530, Trena 703-201-3863, Debra 301-520-3145, Michele 240-882-3369, Jackie 301-385-2620, Doretha 301-233-3136. Vendor Tables (\$20) Trena 703-201-3863.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join Clinton United Methodist Church's Vacation Bible School July 14–July 18, 2025, from 9 a.m.–12 p.m. every day. Each day our K–5 graders will discover God is with us everywhere we go. Grades 6 and above will be helpers. You are also invited to join us for our fellow up Vacation Bible School Sunday, July 20, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. We will have a summary presentation. Please register your child for VBS Registration 2025 on our website at <http://cumcmd.org/>. Please contact our office 301-868-1281 if you need a printed form, or call Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384.

ST. THOMAS PARISH ANNUAL CRAB FEAST

St. Thomas Parish Annual Crab Feast will be held Saturday,

August 16, 2025, from 2–5 p.m. All you can eat Crabs, Fried Chicken, Potato Salad, Corn on the Cob, Drinks. There will be a 50-50 Bake Sale. Advance tickets: adults \$55, children \$25 (12 and under). At door: Adults \$65 and children \$25 (12 years and under). St. Thomas Church, 14300 St. Thomas Road, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772.

Contact: Parish Office (301) 627-8469 or Debbie Richards (301) 980-5274. Tickets can be purchased at the Office or <https://www.stthomascroom.org/crab-feast> online; sale ends August 14.

NURSE JOHN: THE SHORT-STAFFED TOUR

Nurse John: The Short-Staffed Tour will perform Friday, July 11, 2025, 8 p.m. at MGM National Harbor, Oxon Hill, Maryland. John Dela Cruz's (a.k.a Nurse John's) comedy is like talking to your work bestie; you trauma dump, cry, scream, and laugh together through all the high and lows of working in the service industry. It is the feeling of relatability and instant relief that you are not crazy from experiencing all the roller coaster of emotions working short staff while being underpaid, undervalued, and underappreciated. His relatable humor helped him garner over 12 million besties and followers across the globe and growing each day in all his social media platforms. John also hosts 'I Beg Your Pardon'; one of the top comedy podcasts in North America that currently has 3 million downloads and serves a weekly therapy for many. It highlights all the good, the bad, and the ugly of working in healthcare and the service industry. Healthcare Nurse by profession and an accidental comedian at heart, his portrayal of life working in healthcare has proven hilariously relatable to those both in and out of the healthcare industry. Box office hours: On Show days: 3 hours prior to ticketed event.

JULY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Daniel and Bonnie Droter, Karl and Romonia Pinkney, Ugo and Mamou Mbakwe, Kennedy and Nana Akwo, Anthony and Dr. Joelle Oghogho who are Clinton United Methodist Church members in Clinton, Maryland celebrating Wedding Anniversaries in July.

2025 WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Walking in My Purpose 2025 Women's Conference will be held July 12, 2025, 10 a.m.–3 p.m. at St. Philip's Church Baden Hall, 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Guest Speaker Rev. Shemaiah Strickland. Special Mime Presentation Pastor Tae Ron Flemming. Host Lady Johnson. Continental Breakfast and lunch provided. \$25pp \$15 T-shirt (worn at the conference). Contact Michele Chase 240-882-3369 or Lady Johnson 240-926-9199 for Tickets. Cash App: [Sstphilipschurchbaden](https://www.stphilipschurchbaden.com) (memo "Conference").

Students Honored

Zainab Sesay of Bladensburg Receives Outstanding Graduate Award

SCRANTON, Pa. (June 24, 2025)—Zainab E. Sesay of Bladensburg was among The University of Scranton 35 outstanding master's and doctoral degree graduates recognized at its graduate commencement events the weekend of May 16–18, including at the graduate commencement ceremony at Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza, Wilkes-Barre.

Sesay received the Outstanding Student Award for Applied Behavior Analysis.

Marlon Ellerbee '24 MBA '25 among Thiel College spring student-athletes recognized by PAC for academic achievement

GREENVILLE, Pa. (June 23, 2025)—Marlon Ellerbee '24 MBA '25 was among the Thiel College spring sports athletes that nearly propelled the College to a new school record. Ellerbee joined 83 other student-athletes on the Spring Presidents' Athletic Conference Academic Honor Roll.

The 84 student-athletes represent the second-most in Thiel athletics' history on the Spring Academic Honor Roll.

Ellerbee, of Temple Hills, Md., is a Business Administration major and a member of the men's basketball team(s).

The PAC Academic Honor Roll recognizes student-athletes on varsity sports teams who have earned a grade-point average (GPA) of 3.6 or higher on a 4.0 scale during their semester of competition. Sports included in the PAC Academic Honor Roll for the Spring 2025 semester that Thiel students have participated in are baseball; men's basketball; men's golf; men's indoor track and field; men's lacrosse; men's outdoor track and field; men's tennis; men's volleyball; women's basketball; women's golf; softball; women's indoor track and field; women's lacrosse; women's outdoor track and field; and wrestling.

Deangela Fobbs Graduates from Elms College

CHICOPEE, Ma. (June 23, 2025)—Deangela Fobbs of Bowie received a Master of Science from Elms College following the conclusion of the Spring 2025 semester.

Fobbs was among 279 students who received their degrees in December.

Emmy Sema Honored by Hartwick College

ONEONTA, N.Y. (June 23, 2025)—Emmy Sema '25 of Upper Marlboro Md., was presented with two awards during Honors Convocation held on April 30.

Sema was awarded The Diener Fellowship. Established by the Department of Computer and Information Sciences in honor of Dr. David Diener, professor of mathematics from 1968 to 2000, this fellowship recognizes a rising junior on the basis of high academic achievement in either computer or information science.

Additionally, Sema received The Departmental Award for Excellence in Computer and Information Science, given to a student who has demonstrated outstanding work in the field.

New York Tech Welcomes Local Students

OLD WESTBURY, N.Y. (June 23, 2025)—New York Institute of Technology welcomes incoming students for the fall 2025 semester, including:

Mateo Vasquez Palacios of Accokeek

Kimora Brooks of Bowie

Victoria Odenyo of Clinton

AJ Harris of Clinton

Ludwin Raymundo of Clinton

Shamier Woods of Capitol Heights

Simone Muirhead of Upper Marlboro

Kyla Hebert Named to Middle Atlantic Conference Academic Honor Roll

ANNVILLE, Pa. (June 20, 2025)—Kyla Hebert of Upper Marlboro, Md. was one of more than 250 Lebanon Valley College student-athletes to be named to the Middle Atlantic Conference's (MAC) Winter/Spring Academic Honor Roll.

Hebert, a graduate of Northern High School, is a member of the Lebanon Valley College women's lacrosse team, and is pursuing a bachelor of science in nursing in nursing.

The academic honor roll is comprised of student-athletes who compete in a varsity-level sport and register a term/semester GPA of 3.20 (on a 4.00 scale) or higher. The MAC honored student-athletes across all of the conference's institutions who competed in winter and spring sports.

Anthony McDonald Named to Kennesaw State's Spring 2025 President's List

KENNESAW, Ga. (June 20, 2025)—Anthony McDonald of Clinton has been named to the Kennesaw State University Spring 2025 President's List.

Majoring in Theatre and Performance Studies, McDonald is among more than 6,100 undergraduate students recognized on the Spring 2025 President's List.

To qualify, students must achieve a term grade point average of 4.0 while completing a minimum of nine credit hours.

UW-Madison Announces Dean's List

MADISON, Wisc. (June 20, 2025)—The University of Wisconsin-Madison has recognized students named to the Dean's List for the spring semester of the 2024–2025 academic year.

Students who achieve at a high level academically are recognized by the dean at the close of each semester. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must complete a minimum of 12 graded degree credits in that semester. Each university school or college sets its own GPA requirements for students to be eligible to receive the distinction.

The students from your area who have received this honor are:

Bowie, MD: **Ruth Olawumi**, Col of Agricultural & Life Sci, Dean's List; Laurel, MD: **Daniela Luseko**, College of Letters and Science, Dean's List

COMMUNITY

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department's Neighborhood Planning Academy Earns National Achievement Award

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (June 25, 2025)—The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission announces that its Neighborhood Planning Academy has been recognized with a 2025 Achievement Award for Civic Education and Public Information from the National Association of Counties (NACo).

Designed specifically to engage Prince George's County residents and community stakeholders, the Neighborhood Planning Academy explains the County's planning framework and how to engage in the development review process. The free program empowers participants to become better advocates for their communities' goals and visions and establishes ambassadors in each councilmanic district to provide more meaningful engagement during planning efforts, such as master plans, and for updating Plan Prince George's 2035 Approved General Plan to reflect the

needs of all County residents. Since the launch of the program in the fall of 2023, nearly 200 individuals—reflecting all regions of the County—have participated in the Neighborhood Planning Academy.

"We are excited to add this honor to other international, national, and state-level recognition for the Neighborhood Planning Academy," said Lakisha Hull, Director of the M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department. "We are proud of our team who work continuously to enhance the award-winning program and the County residents who embark on the educational journey with us."

The Neighborhood Planning Academy earned the 2024 Maryland Planning Award in community engagement/education from the American Planning Association (APA) Maryland Chapter and Maryland Planning Commissioners Association, a 2024 Gold MarCom Award for government publications/magazine, and a 2024 Grand Award and 2023 Award of Excellence for campaigns, programs, and plans

from APEX—the Awards for Publication Excellence.

The NACo Achievement Awards Ceremony will take place on July 13, 2025, at NACo's Annual Conference and Exposition in Philadelphia, PA. Each year, NACo's Achievement Awards recognize outstanding programming in 18 categories aligned with the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, libraries, management, information technology, health, civic engagement and more. Launched in 1970, the program is designed to celebrate innovation in county government. Each nominated program is judged on its own merits and not against other applications.

"The Achievement Awards shine a spotlight on the hard work and innovation happening in county governments across the nation," said NACo President James Gore. "This year's winners highlight the dedication and creativity of county leaders and our teams to building thriving communities and providing the

best possible services to our residents."

For more information on the Neighborhood Planning Academy, visit: <https://academy.pgplanning.com>. Prince George's County residents and stakeholders may join the mailing list to receive announcements on applications for the Fall 2025 cohort and upcoming courses.

For more information about NACo's Achievement Awards, visit https://www.naco.org/page/achievement-awards?_page=1.

The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is responsible for preserving, protecting, and managing the county's resources through high-quality planning services and growth management guidance. Our mission is to promote economic vitality, environmental sustainability, design excellence, and quality development in Prince George's County. Visit our website, www.pgplanning.org, to learn how you can become engaged in shaping the future of your community.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, including nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate for county government priorities in federal policy-making; promote exemplary county policies and practices; nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks; optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings; and enrich the public's understanding of county government. www.naco.org.

Assistance

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of persons with disabilities in all its programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation. Call the Public Affairs Office at 301-952-3038, email PublicAffairs@ppd.mncppc.org, or complete the online form.

Teacher from A1

Dr. Pointer will serve as a nationwide spokesperson and advocate for excellence in education throughout the next school year. "I am deeply honored for this title and to represent the incredible educators Imagine Schools encompasses. We work tirelessly to empower every scholar to succeed; and therefore, seeing this adjudgment confirms that our work does not go in vain."

Dr. Pointer's classroom is known for integrating culturally responsive teaching practices, project-based learning that con-

nects scholars to real-world issues. She helps scholars not only master academic content but also develop critical thinking, empathy, and civic responsibility.

She exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding teacher—through compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to scholars. She inspires both learners and fellow educators. The Imagine Schools Mid-Atlantic Region officially awards Dr. Almena Pointer at the 2025 Summer Forum on Thursday, August 21, 2025, at The College Park Marriott Center, 7:30 a.m.

Prince George's County Board of Education Finalizes Contract With Dr. Shawn Joseph as Interim Superintendent

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 26, 2025)—The Prince George's County Board of Education has officially finalized contractual terms with Dr. Shawn Joseph to serve as the Interim Superintendent of Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), marking a powerful return to a community he once helped lead with distinction. Dr. Joseph, a nationally respected educator and champion for equity, assumes the role at a critical juncture for the district, bringing a bold commitment to collaboration, academic excellence, and measurable results.

Dr. Joseph previously served as Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning in PGCPS from 2014 to 2016, where his leadership helped increase graduation rates, raised kindergarten readiness, and significantly improved reading performance among African American students across multiple grade levels. He also led the development of a comprehensive literacy plan modeled after nationally recognized turnaround strategies and helped remove PGCPS from intensive state special education support through targeted reforms.

Following his tenure in Prince George's

County, Dr. Joseph served as Superintendent of Metro Nashville Public Schools—one of the nation's largest and most diverse urban districts. There, he led a system-wide literacy overhaul, launched 18 STEAM middle schools, and developed a nationally recognized early college program. Under his leadership, student achievement in reading outpaced national growth and disciplinary actions declined significantly.

In accepting the role, Dr. Joseph expressed deep gratitude and determination: "I return to Prince George's County with a sense of responsibility, humility, and urgency. Our children, families, and educators deserve an unwavering focus on results and a culture of collaboration that empowers everyone to succeed. We cannot afford to wait. Together, we will confront our challenges, celebrate our strengths, and build a school system worthy of our students' brilliance."

Dr. Joseph has also received an outpouring of support from both educational and public service leaders in the community.

"This is a moment of unity and opportunity for our school system," said Brandon Jackson, Board President of Prince George's County Public Schools. "Dr. Joseph is a proven leader who not only

knows this district but has demonstrated his ability to deliver results. The Board is confident that under his interim leadership, we will sharpen our focus, accelerate progress, and strengthen trust with the community."

Prince George's County Executive Aisha Braveboy echoed the board's enthusiasm: "Dr. Joseph's return is a celebration of our shared commitment to excellence in public education. His track record of academic improvement, community engagement, and strategic innovation make him the right leader at the right time. This partnership reflects our county's collective resolve to uplift every child."

County Council Chair Edward Burroughs III added, "We stand united in our support of Dr. Joseph. His leadership is rooted in vision, experience, and urgency—three things our students and families deserve. With him at the helm, Prince George's County is poised for a new chapter of growth and impact."

Dr. Joseph begins his tenure immediately. The Board of Education will initiate a national search for a permanent superintendent while continuing to work in close partnership with Dr. Joseph to maintain continuity and momentum in district operations.

Partnerships from A1

About Signal Financial Federal Credit Union: Chartered in 1947 as the Washington Telephone Federal Credit Union by a group of telephone company workers, the credit union was formed to help people seeking a better financial alternative and to improve the quality of their financial lives. While much has changed since 1947, the mission of the credit union remains true to this day. In 2007, the Washington Telephone Federal Credit Union officially became Signal Financial Federal Credit Union to be more inclusive of the many diverse businesses in the field of membership, in addition to the founding telephone company group. The credit union also encompasses over 250 small to medium-sized companies, as well as individuals who live, work, worship, or attend school in Washington, D.C., or Prince George's County, MD (inside the beltway). Signal is regulated by the National Credit Union Administration (NCUA), with deposits insured by the National Credit Union Share Insurance Fund (NCUSIF) up to \$250,000. For more information, visit www.signalfinancialfcu.org.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART EIGHTEEN

Anne Arundel Schools Pioneer Rapid-Response Program for Teens Dealing With Substance Abuse

By LIZZY ALSPACH
Capital News Service

Karen Siska-Creel, Anne Arundel County's school health and support director, knows from experience that if a problem pops up in the community, it won't take long for it to appear in schools.

When the opioid epidemic began to spread in Anne Arundel County around 2016, Siska-Creel saw local fire departments establish pop-up stations to help people suffering from addiction. But it wasn't until a high schooler pleaded with school nurses and the health department for help with their addiction that she realized the depth of need in the public school system.

"The nurse tried and tried and tried—so did the school counselor—tried to plug this student into services. And we couldn't do it," Siska-Creel said. "The child left, was very upset, left, didn't show up for two weeks, and had died of an overdose."

Within the next year, Siska-Creel helped create the Screening Teens to Access Recovery Program in Anne Arundel County Public Schools. Called the STAR program, it's a partnership with the county Department of Health that allows school nurses to pair middle and high schoolers with substance abuse treatment services. Siska-Creel said since its inception, about 50 students have been referred to services.

For Ryan Voegtlin, the assistant superintendent of student services at Anne Arundel County Public Schools, the program was born from a "gap in service" in substance abuse treatment for youth.

"It's not like we have hundreds of kids coming to access screening through the STAR Program every year," Voegtlin said. "But it is an opportunity for them to get a screening and to get pointed in the right direction."

How it works

About a day after the STAR Program's launch was announced, Siska-Creel said, a student walked into their school's nurse's office with a paper in hand.

"My dad said to either get help or don't come home," Siska-Creel recalls the student saying.

The youngster, who went to their nurse's office, was then given an iPad in a private room, where they were connected to a licensed therapist and asked questions about their possible addiction or mental health struggles. The same process is used for any student in the program, Siska-Creel said.

From there, the student will then receive a list of services, said Darin Ford, the program manager of the adolescents and family services division in the health department.

The STAR Program also requires a student's consent for their parents or guardians to be told about them seeking services, Ford said.

"It really creates a safe space for teens, for youth, to feel like they don't have to worry about what others might be thinking about them. It's all protected," Ford said. "It's really, especially during this day and age, for teens to know if they're dealing with substance use or substance misuse, that there's a safe space for them to go to get the help that they need."

The health department will check in with a student who sought services a week after their screening to see if they contacted the resources or needed any others, Ford added. This way, the program provides treatment that lets students come when they need it—a strategy highly recommended when treating substance abuse, according to Jen Corbin, the director of Anne Arundel County's crisis response.

Continuing to push students to receive treatment could be read as applying too much pressure, Ford said.

The strategy—scientifically recognized as the Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment approach—is widely used to identify people who might show symptoms of addiction or possibility of developing an addiction in the future, according to the National Institutes of Health.

It's mainly used for youth and is expanding beyond doctors' offices, an approach that studies in the Journal of Adolescent Health evaluated to be highly effective, especially once they're added to schools.

"When you ask the question, 'What was the age that you first used the substance? What substance was it?' Most of the gateway stuff was, 'I used at 13, 14, 15,'" Corbin said of her screenings at Safe Stations, a program that she helped start that hosts mental health and substance abuse screenings in the county's police and fire stations. "The conversation grew to, do we need to go back to making sure we're educating our kids?"

Origin and limitations

Under the STAR Program, school nurses' offices act as the safe stations where students can be connected to treatment, Corbin said.

"When someone comes walking in, they're more likely to grab the hand of the person out and say 'Hey, I'm ready to get help,' versus if I go to you and say 'Hey, you overdosed, would you like help?'" Corbin said. "They may not be ready, they may not even want to talk to you, they may deny overdosing."

Other school systems, such as in King County, Washington state, have somewhat different programs. There, the Snoqualmie Valley School District administers screenings to all middle school students.

Families are also able to withdraw their students from taking the screening, according to the district's website. The same goes for

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

The Big Ugly Bill Would Deny Ordinary Americans the Right to Seek Justice Through the Courts

“Senate Republicans tried to write Donald Trump’s contempt for the courts into law—gutting judicial enforcement, defying the Constitution, and bulldozing the very rule of law that forms our democracy,” Schumer said in a statement. “It was nothing short of an assault on the system of checks

and balances that has anchored this nation since its founding, and a brazen attempt [to] crown Trump king.”

—Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer

With an intimidated Congressional majority

unwilling to stand up to even the most egregious actions by the Trump administration, it falls to the courts to protect the rights of vulnerable Americans.

A provision in the “Big Ugly Bill”—the budget reconciliation bill currently pending in the Senate—would make that nearly impossible.

The provision would require anyone suing the federal government for a violation of their rights to post enormous bonds to cover any potential costs to the government before a court could issue an order that would stop that violation.

Only billionaires and massive corporations would have the means to seek justice. The right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances, enshrined in the First Amendment, would be denied to ordinary Americans.

The good news is that the Senate parliamentarian has determination that the provision violates the so-called “Byrd Rule,” which restricts the content of reconciliation legislation. The reconciliation process protects the Big Ugly Bill from a filibuster, and the majority does not have the 60 votes required to avoid one.

That means the provision is likely to be struck from the bill before the Senate begins debate next week. Senate Majority Leader John Thune has promised not to eliminate the filibuster; on the other [hand], he has been known to ignore the parliamentarian’s ruling.

The National Urban League is among the scores of Individuals and organizations who have filed at least 300 lawsuits against the Trump administration. Federal courts have at least temporarily blocked the administration’s actions at least 198 times. But the courts would be powerless to stop even blatantly violations of the Constitutional unless the plaintiffs are outrageously wealthy.

Most of us learned in elementary school about the separation of powers. The legislative branch makes the laws. The executive branch enforces the laws. The judicial branch interprets the laws.

But the Trump administration wants all these powers for itself. The Senate must now decide whether to abide by the oath each Senator has sworn and defend the American people from a would-be dictatorship.

—June 27, 2025

Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita, Children’s Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

KIDS Count

Following the Facts on Child Well-Being

Earlier this month, the Annie E. Casey Foundation released its 2025 edition of the KIDS COUNT® Data Book, an annual resource that measures national and state data on economic well-being, education, health, and family and community factors. As they sum up their latest findings: “This year’s trends paint a complex picture: steady progress in some areas, setbacks in others and persistent opportunities to do better for kids and their families. Since 2019, seven of

the 16 key indicators have improved, six have worsened and three have not changed.” Among the troubling results, “the number of teenagers disconnected from school or work has risen sharply, academic outcomes are still worse than before the COVID-19 pandemic, and, most concerning, more young people are dying.”

As members of Congress continue to debate their spending—and slashing—priorities for the federal budget, and as Children’s Defense Fund

continues to urge Senators to reject proposed cuts to critical health, nutrition, and financial stability programs, this is among the many kinds of data that could help Congress determine what choices children, young people, and families in their states need them to make. Our nation should embrace every opportunity to lift up what is working and what remains necessary in order for children and families to thrive.

One of the report’s features is its breakdown of indicators by state, ultimately giving each state a ranking: “Where a child lives continues to matter deeply, with stark geographic disparities shaped by local and state policies, economic conditions, community investment and infrastructure. This year’s Data Book highlights these patterns clearly: States facing the biggest challenges are largely in the South and Southwest—Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and West Virginia. In contrast, many Northeast and Midwest states rank near the top—Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, North Dakota and

Vermont. Utah also stands out as a strong performer.” This year, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts ranked first, second and third for overall child well-being, and Mississippi, Louisiana, and New Mexico ranked 48th, 49th, and 50th.

Where does your own state fall in studies like this, and where do your state’s elected officials stand right now on the budget choices that matter most to children and families in your community? Strategic investments in basic needs programs like Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Child Tax Credit, and the Social Services Block Grant are more than optional line items on a spreadsheet; they are essential, proven tools that help families stay afloat and help children and young people thrive as they grow into healthy, productive adults. There are many ways to tally the facts on how much “kids count” in our nation. Choosing children over corporations should be a test too simple to flunk.

—June 27, 2025

Council Member Wala Blegay to Introduce ‘Food as Medicine Health Program Act’ to Transform Health Outcomes in Prince George’s County

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George’s County Council Media

On Tuesday, July 1, at the Prince George’s County Council’s 1 p.m. meeting, Council Member Wala Blegay (District 6) introduce[d] her ‘Food as Medicine Health Program Act of 2025’. The bill, CB-67-2025, proposes a new countywide initiative that will use food-based interventions as part of a comprehensive healthcare approach to reduce chronic disease, address food insecurity, and improve long-term health outcomes for residents.

“This legislation is rooted in a simple truth: what we eat matters. We must move toward a future where our healthcare system doesn’t just treat illness, but helps prevent it. Through this program, we are recognizing the healing power of nutritious, natural foods and supporting a system that prioritizes health equity for all Prince Georgians,” said Council Member Blegay.

The program—modeled on national best practices—would encourage the county’s Department of Health to collaborate with

healthcare providers, food banks, local farmers, and community-based organizations. The Health Department would administer grants, coordinate delivery of medically supportive meals, and issue produce prescriptions for individuals with diet-related conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease.

“The Capital Area Food Bank applauds Council Member Blegay for introducing this important legislation. With half of the county’s residents confronting hunger, this bill would deliver a triple win: improved health outcomes, greater food security, and lower healthcare expenditures,” said Joe Liu, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at the Capital Area Food Bank.

The bill provides funding, prioritizes partnerships with minority and socially disadvantaged food producers, and includes evaluation and reporting requirements to track health and economic outcomes.

“Value-based care recognizes that investing in ‘food as medicine’ today yields significant health dividends tomorrow, building a future where health is built on plates, not prescriptions,” said health advocate Arthur Summerville.

Prince George’s County Health Department Headquarters Has Moved

The Prince George’s County Health Department headquarters has relocated to the new Health and Human Services (HHS) Building at 9187 Central Avenue, Capitol Heights, MD 20743.

Hours of Operation: Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.

About the Health Department

Behavioral Health: Behavioral Health offers a variety of services and treatment options to promote the emotional and physical well-being of Prince George’s County residents.

Environmental Health: Environmental Health promotes and protects the safety of County residents through environmental regulation, inspections, public education, emergency preparedness, and disease control.

Family Health Services: Family Health Services provides preventive, clinical, and outreach health services to Prince George’s County residents.

Health & Wellness: Health and Wellness is responsible for encouraging behavioral changes that will improve the health and longevity of Prince George’s County residents.

If you have questions, please call us at 301-883-7879.

—www.princegeorgescountymd.gov

Program from A3

some state-mandated programs, such as one established in Massachusetts in 2016.

But Anne Arundel County Public Schools are taking a different approach: one that relies on students to seek help.

“There’s a balance in really respecting the student, just like you would respect an adult,” Ford said. “It’s really client-centered and motivated, versus directive.”

Down to the numbers

Researchers discovered that programs such as STAR are generally effective. In a Journal of Adolescent Health study conducted in 2022, researchers discussed student-based programs like STAR with 26 students in middle school—or grades six to eight—who had received screenings and interventions. The surveyed students overwhelmingly said they were satisfied with the approach, the study found.

Sharon Reif, a faculty member at Brandeis University’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management in Massachusetts and lead author of another 2022 paper in the Journal of Adolescent Health, found that screening and intervention services such as the STAR Program are typically low cost.

But her study also acknowledged the costs

of these programs are generally unknown past being integrated into schools that can receive state or federal grant funding.

“The issue is when you’re outside of those healthcare settings, insurance tends to actually say, ‘No, we’re not going to pay for things that are out there,’ even if they’re sort of healthcare,” Reif said. “And if you want to get kids, if you want to get youth, the healthcare setting is not the best place to get them, because they’re not there that often in the way that older people are.”

The implementation cost also depends on who conducts the screenings, Reif added. Having a doctor screen students is typically more expensive than having a school nurse or other aide do it, Reif said.

“Having a doctor do something is very expensive, having a nurse is less expensive, having a PA or an aide is less expensive,” Reif said. “So it partly gets to that in terms of, how do you pay for it, and whose time is the most valuable?”

Safe Stations is predominantly funded by grants from the Anne Arundel County Health Department, Corbin said. The STAR Program is also primarily funded by the department, as well as Anne Arundel County Public Schools for its middle school portion.

A 2024 Maryland Community Health Resources Commission showed more than \$6

million in grants allocated toward the Anne Arundel County Department of Health for Thrive Behavioral Health, one of the contracting services that conducts screenings for middle schoolers, along with other substance abuse grants.

“It’s just continuing in getting the word out and figuring out where those gaps are and offering services,” Voegtlin said. “Definitely scouring for grants where we can find grants that meet our needs. That’s the name of the game right now.”

Anne Arundel County has continued to increase funding for its Health Department. Its budget has increased by nearly 23% since fiscal 2023, according to county budget documents.

Moving forward

About 48.5 million people suffered from a substance abuse disorder in 2023, according to a survey conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

But of that amount, just about 7.1 million people received treatment.

The state’s Youth Risk Behavior Survey

See PROGRAM Page A6

The Prince George’s Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Boots to Business Veteran Entrepreneurs Summit

Friday, July 11, 2025 • 12–2:30 p.m.

Location: 6901 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, MD 20744
Cost: Free of Charge **Get Tickets at Eventbrite**

Unity in the Community Nonprofit is proud to present the Boots to Business: Veteran Entrepreneurs Summit, an event dedicated to advancing veteran entrepreneurship. It will take place on Friday, July 11, 2025, at the Unity Veteran Center, 6901 Livingston Rd., Oxon Hill, MD 20745. The summit is led by Dr. Arthur Darby III, veteran, scholar, and CEO of Unity in the Community Nonprofit.

This important summit will offer valuable learning opportunities focused on government contracting, veterans' benefits, and certification programs that unlock economic potential for those transitioning from military to civilian life. The event reflects the organization's continued commitment to equipping veterans not only with housing and healthcare, but also with tools for financial growth and professional development.

Why attend? Events like this are essential because they provide veterans with practical resources, trusted guidance, and access to life-changing opportunities. Attendees will benefit from expert-led workshops, networking, and real-world strategies that can turn business ideas into reality.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

When Will Funds Stolen From Social Security Be Replaced?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

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

Dear Rusty: When will the funds stolen from the SS Fund be replaced? They used Social Security when the government ran out of money and used it for illegals. I think the funds should be replaced except for legitimate payments to Social Security recipients. This money was never meant to be used by the federal government to pay their bills. **Signed: Concerned Senior**

Dear Concerned Senior: I must tell you that no funds have ever been "stolen" from the Social Security Administration (despite the persistent myth). All money received by SS (from payroll taxes, interest on investments, and income tax on SS benefits) is—and always has been—immediately converted to special issue government bonds (investments) which are held in the Social Security Trust Funds, and which pay interest (at the current federal bond rate). Those bond investments held in reserve have been, and are, used only to pay benefits to those who have earned them by contributing to Social Security via payroll taxes for at least 10 years (40 quarters). Only US citizens and legal residents can get Social Security benefits (illegal aliens cannot receive Social Security benefits).

For information, repayment of the special issue bonds held in SS reserves occurs every day, because incoming revenue has been insufficient to pay all Social Security benefit costs for several years now, which means that the bonds must be redeemed regularly so that full benefits can be paid to all SS recipients who have earned them. There were about \$2.8 trillion in SS reserves as of the end of 2023, but that balance is steadily decreasing (due to being redeemed to pay full benefits). As of the last report by the Trustees of Social Security, the reserves will be depleted in about 2033, unless Congress passes reform legislation to restore SS to full solvency.

FYI, the Association of Mature American Citizens (AMAC) is working hard to prevent depletion of the Trust Fund, suggesting to Congress a way to reform the program so future generations can fully benefit from it, with AMAC's Social Security Guarantee proposal (see this: <https://amac.us/social-security-guarantee/>). AMAC is constantly working to prevent depletion of the SS Trust Funds, which would result in an across the board cut in everyone's benefit by about 23%. AMAC works every day in Washington D.C. to ensure Social Security is here for many 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.

Boost from A1

its official military charity partner, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) in support of military families, a longstanding partnership with Teach for America to champion educational equity and the continued success of its Junior Committee, now celebrating its 16th year of empowering young leaders. Additionally, WIHS fosters a culture of inclusivity within the sport through its Kind Wins initiative, an anti-bullying campaign that

encourages empathy and respect both in and out of the ring. And with a dedicated Kids Day for unique and up-close fun for children, a great shopping destination for equestrians and general fashion-forward consumers—it's a complete destination event that generates interest for the community all week long.

The competition brings along as much historic importance as it does current-day impact. Founded in 1958, WIHS has been closely connected with the American presidency over the

Bowie Businessman Brings Innovative Mobile Flooring Solutions to the Washington, D.C. Area With Floor Coverings International

By PRESS OFFICER

Floor Coverings International

BOWIE, Md. (June 9, 2025)—Floor Coverings International (FCI), North America's leading mobile flooring franchise, proudly announces the grand opening of its newest location serving Bowie, Crofton, Gambrills, Glenn Dale, Hanover, Harman, Mitchellville, Odenton, Severn, Upper Marlboro, and surrounding communities. Owned and operated by Ramsey Moorman, this Bowie-based franchise is revolutionizing the flooring industry with its unique Mobile Showroom concept, delivering more than 3,000 flooring options directly to customers' homes and businesses.

With over 23 years of leadership experience in the telecommunications industry, Ramsey Moorman brings a customer-focused approach and strong business acumen to the flooring sector. "One of my core strengths is Emotional Intelligence and understanding how to identify and navigate challenges to find the right solution," said Moorman. "By leading with a customer-centric philosophy, we ensure every client receives flooring options tailored to their vision and needs, all from the comfort of their home."

Moorman's passion for service and innovation is supported by his wife, Caryl Moorman, who plays an integral role in operations and community engagement, and their two children who contribute to the family-run atmosphere as "junior marketers."

Floor Coverings International's Mobile Showroom eliminates the inconvenience of traditional flooring shopping by bringing an extensive selection of flooring materials—including sustainable laminates,



PHOTO COURTESY FLOOR COVERINGS INTERNATIONAL

Ramsey and Caryl Moorman

authentic wood-look planks, waterproof laminates, advanced vinyl flooring, cozy carpets, and luxury engineered hardwood—right to the customer's doorstep. This approach allows homeowners to view samples in their own lighting and decor, making flooring decisions easier and more confident. The Bowie location aims to meet the growing demand for pet- and kid-friendly floors that combine durability with style.

Looking ahead, Moorman envisions significant growth for his franchise: "In five years, I aim to grow FCI of Bowie into a \$5 million business with 10 team members and five Mobile Showrooms. We plan to expand commercial partnerships and deepen our community involvement through local sponsorships and giving back. Most importantly, I want to build a legacy that benefits my family and the community."

For more information about Floor Coverings International of Bowie, MD, or to schedule a consultation, please visit <https://floorcoveringsinternational.com/locations/us/md/bowie/> or call (443) 332-7447. Email: ramsey.moorman@fcifloors.com

Floor Coverings International is the #1 Mobile Flooring franchise in North America. Utilizing a unique in-home experience, the mobile showroom comes directly to the customer's door with more than 3,000 flooring choices. Floor Coverings International has 270-plus locations throughout the U.S. and Canada with plenty of opportunity for continued expansion. For franchise information, please visit <https://flooringfranchise.com/> and to find your closest location go to www.floorcoveringsinternational.com.

Salad House Expands Into Maryland With Three New Locations Coming Soon

New Jersey-Based Fast-Casual Concept Signs Development Deal in Prince George's County and Annapolis

By PRESS OFFICER

Salad House

NEW JERSEY (June 23, 2025)—Salad House, a fast-casual health-focused franchise known for its fresh chopped salads, sandwiches and wraps, made to order proteins and its Create-Your-Own salad option, is bringing its craveable, convenient healthy fare to Maryland, marking its third expansion beyond its home state of New Jersey. This follows a late 2024 territory agreement in Virginia for new development, and the opening of its Brooklyn, NY location. The brand has now signed a two-store development deal focused on Prince George's County and Southern Maryland, with targeted locations including the areas in and around Glenarden, Bowie, Brandywine, Waldorf, Oxon Hill, and Fort Washington. In addition, a separate unit is slated for Annapolis.

The two Prince George's County locations, with the opportunity for more, will be owned and operated by local entrepreneurs Toshia and Marcus Ellis of Another Surrender LLC. The husband-and-wife duo are Bowie State University alumni and longtime residents of the area, combining deep community roots with impressive professional backgrounds.

Toshia brings two decades of leadership experience in the tech and real estate sectors, including her tenure as a sales executive for Amazon Web Services and Dell Technologies. Marcus serves as Deputy of Impact at Cities United, working nationally to reduce community violence and

advance equity. Together, they are creating a community hub rooted in wellness, empowerment, and access to healthy food.

"We were immediately drawn to Salad House's mission of making healthy, delicious food accessible to everyone," said Toshia. "This isn't just a business for us, it's a way to nourish our community and create a space where wellness, flavor, and connection come together. We can't wait to open our doors and welcome guests into something truly special."

A separate unit will open in Annapolis, marking Salad House's entry into Anne Arundel County and expanding the brand's presence in the Mid-Atlantic. Sunil Patel and Parag Patel are the franchise partners who own and manage the location.

Parag is a software engineer with six years of experience in the tech industry, where he developed innovative solutions that helped businesses grow and thrive. Outside of coding, he's always had a strong appreciation for staying active, whether it's through sports, spending time outdoors, or connecting with his local community.

"I believe in food that fuels—not just fills. Healthy options like fresh salads empower people to live sharper, feel better, and do more. That's why I chose Salad House—it's a brand that aligns with my values and vision for community well-being. I'm proud to bring that to this area," said Parag.

Joey Cioffi, Founder and CEO of Salad House, said: "With growing demand for healthy, made-to-order meals, we're ex-

cited to bring our fan-favorite menu and welcoming environment to Maryland. These new locations are part of our continued growth strategy to partner with passionate franchisees and meet guests where they live, work, and play."

Site selection is currently underway, and all three new Maryland restaurants are targeting openings by the end of 2025.

Founded in New Jersey, Salad House has earned a loyal following for its chef-crafted recipes, seasonal specials, and commitment to flavor without compromise. The brand continues to expand through strategic franchise partnerships and community-focused development.

For more details, visit thesaladhouse.com. For more information about franchising opportunities with Salad House, visit www.saladhousefranchising.com.

Salad House is a fast-casual health-conscious franchise focused on fueling America and rocking the marketplace with a new approach to fresh food dining. Founded in 2011 in New Jersey, the quickly growing franchise is set to expand throughout the East Coast, with an insatiable commitment to high quality salad creations, sandwiches, wraps, grain bowls, smoothies and more. Salad House was named one of Fast Casual's 2025 Top 100 Movers & Shakers. To learn more about Salad House and its franchise opportunity, visit www.thesaladhouse.com or www.saladhousefranchising.com.

show possible. WIHS is committed to ensuring sponsor investment continues to have a tangible return in both community development and economic output.

The next Washington International Horse Show will take place October 20–26, 2025, and continues to welcome new partners, visitors and community supporters.

For more information, visit wihs.org.

Established in 1958, the Washington

International Horse Show FEI CSI5*-W is one of North America's most prestigious and entertaining equestrian events with competition for professionals, amateurs, juniors, and children. Highlights include the Longines FEI Jumping World Cup™ Washington for the President's Cup and the WIHS Equestrian Finals plus community and charity events. WIHS, an official USEF Heritage Competition, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization. For more information, visit wihs.org.

Program from A4

does not track addiction, but it does study drug use by Maryland high school students. The latest survey, from the 2022-23 school year, showed 11.1% of high school students statewide had used prescription opioids without a prescription. That's down from 15.2% 10 years earlier, but drug abuse continues to be a grave concern for those who work with teens.

For Voegtlin, ensuring students know where the services are is most important for the program to grow, while also protecting students' autonomy in the process.

"It's just kind of this balance," Voegtlin said. "We want kids to come, but don't want them to feel stigmatized about going there, right?"

As struggles with substance abuse evolve, Siska-Creel said she's not sure where the STAR Program will grow, either. She focuses on the community to tell next steps about the program, she added.

"It's really what's ever going on in the community," Siska-Creel said. "I'll see it in the schools. It eventually comes in."

EarthTalk® Q&A Community Solar: Renters Join the Renewables Revolution

By Kristy Chan | June 20, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:

I'm a renter and can't put solar panels on my building's roof even though I would like to. Someone suggested I look into "community solar" but I don't get how that works let alone where to find such a program near me.

—Peggy B., Austin, TX

For many Americans, solar energy is still a luxury rather than the energy of the future. In fact, only around 25 percent of Americans can install a rooftop solar system. However, community solar is a workaround for renters because it's a subscription-based solar energy model, and subscribers pay a monthly fee to a local provider in return for a portion of the electricity produced. In this case, the local utility company purchases the generated power from a nearby solar farm, and a credit reflects this on the electricity bill, which helps to reduce overall costs. Most important, subscribers still pay for solar power and can join the green transition movement, but don't need to own or maintain solar panels.

According to Laurel Passers from the Coalition for Community Solar Access, "It's like subscribing to Netflix" because it's an extremely straightforward process that only requires a verification that you live within the service area and a basic credit check. Ad-

ditionally, subscribers receive solar credits on their utility bill, amounting to annual savings up to 15 percent. However, the accessibility of community solar depends on location. For example, many Southern states have monopolistic solar farms that can charge higher subscription fees and raise the cost barrier. To quote Jill Kysor from the Southern Environmental Law Center, "The way that they price those products, it's been more of a premium product."

Community solar is subject to massive changes following President Trump's recent pausing of federal funding for the \$7 billion Solar for All initiative, which helped 900,000 low-income households subscribe to community solar and provided grants to 60 solar farms. Moreover, Trump has halted energy grants under the Inflation Reduction Act, causing states like Nevada to lose access to \$156 million in community solar funding. While the effects on subscription pricing are still uncertain, the massive cuts towards community solar can mean that all involvement with solar energy will become indefinitely more expensive, as Trump seems unwilling to relent. After all, one of his primary messages in his campaign was "not wasting American taxpayer dollars on expensive, unreliable green energy projects."

In light of the unforeseeable future of community solar, all prospective subscribers should reach out to providers to inquire about how recent events can in-

fluence community solar availability or fees before subscribing. Many community solar projects have helpful customer services, and resources are linked below in the contacts section to help prospective subscribers make an informed decision. Lastly, it's most important to spread the word about community solar. Buildings in the United States account for 40 percent of the country's total energy consumption, and empowering renters to go solar is essential to accelerating the green transition.

CONTACTS: The National Renewable Energy Laboratory State by state Community Solar data: <https://data.nrel.gov/submissions/249>; Energysage Local Community Solar Search tool: <https://www.energysage.com/community-solar/solar-panels-for-apartments-and-rental-properties/>; Groundswell No-cost Community Solar Subscription for Low-income Earners (D.C. and Maryland): https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-01/groundswell-sharepower-community-profile_2024-01-26_508.pdf.

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