

# The Prince George's Post



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## Historic Annapolis, Inc., Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, and Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts to Present “A Conversation With Abby Phillip”

By PRESS OFFICER  
**Historic Annapolis**

Historic Annapolis, Inc., Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, and Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts are pleased to present “A Conversation with Abby Phillip” at Maryland Hall on **October 12, 2025** at 6 p.m.

Anchor of CNN's News Night with Abby Phillip, Ms. Phillip will share her thoughts on her lived experience, from her Maryland childhood to her noteworthy career as a journalist.

Phillip grew up in Bowie, Maryland, graduated from Harvard University, and has made her extraordinary career reporting on and interviewing the most remarkable people of our time. Phillip combines her political experience and reporting savvy to help viewers understand all sides of an issue.

The conversation will be led

by WHUR radio news host Harold T. Fisher and will touch on a number of subjects from Phillip's exciting life and career. Phillip's visit comes just ahead of the release of her highly anticipated debut book, *A Dream Deferred: Jesse Jackson and the Fight for Black Political Power*, arriving October 28, 2025.

This presentation has been produced through the generosity of Carroll H. Hynson Jr. Hynson says, “Abby Phillip coming to Annapolis makes my dream a reality.”

“Historic Annapolis, in partnership with the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum and Maryland Hall, is delighted to provide the public with a unique opportunity to hear from such a gifted journalist,” says Karen Theimer Brown, President and CEO of Historic Annapolis.

“Welcoming Abby Phillip to Maryland is a tremendous honor.



PHOTO COURTESY HISTORIC ANNAPOLIS

### Abby Phillip

Her voice as a journalist and storyteller resonates deeply with our values of truth, justice, and cultural empowerment as an institution, and we are proud to be a part of it,” says Chanel C. Johnson, Executive Director, Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum.

“Bringing luminary speakers and thought leaders like Abby Phillip to our stage allows us to further expand our mission of Art for All. We are grateful to our presenting partners for this opportunity,” says Jackie Coleman, Executive Director, Maryland Hall for the Creative Arts.

The event is FREE, but advanced registration is required. Seats can be reserved via Maryland Hall's website, <https://marylandhall.org/maryland-hall-presents>.

*Historic Annapolis is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Maryland's capital city. Through stewardship of historic sites and educational programming, Historic Annapolis connects visitors and residents to the stories that shaped the nation. Historic Annapolis operates four local museums and hosts a wide array of activities year-round, including guided tours, educational field trips, and living history events. For more information, visit [www.annapolis.org](http://www.annapolis.org).*

*As the State of Maryland's official museum of African American heritage, the Banneker-Douglass-*

*Tubman Museum serves to document, interpret, and promote African American history and culture in Maryland through exhibitions, programs, and projects in order to improve the understanding and appreciation of America's rich cultural diversity for all. The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum is operated by the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture.*

*At Maryland Hall, visitors can enjoy the arts in countless ways whether signing up for a class, attending a performance, visiting the on-site galleries, meeting artists-in-residence, volunteering, or spending time on the campus. Maryland Hall is proud to welcome more than 100,000 people to enjoy the arts each year. This campaign is a reinforcement of the organization's continual commitment to Art for All.*



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

**Dr. Eid Gul, Daniela Ochoa Gonzalez and Nicole Fisher engage with community visitors at the PG County Community Garden Summit.**

## NourishNet Team Showcases AI-Driven Food Systems Innovation at the 2025 Prince George's County Community Garden Summit

By DR. EID GUL  
**University of Maryland**

At the 2025 Prince George's County Community Garden Summit, the University of Maryland's NourishNet Project showcased its AI-powered Scenario Analysis Engine, a groundbreaking tool designed to help government institutions, nonprofits, and local organizations reduce food waste and make smarter sustainable decisions. The tool, part of the project's FoodLoops app, which supports smarter food redistribution in Prince George's County and beyond, predicts and ranks strategies for handling sur-

plus food from donation and composting to anaerobic digestion, animal feed, and landfill disposal.

By analyzing factors such as greenhouse gases, costs, and potential for food recovery, the engine helps organizations identify the most effective strategies. Summit attendees called it a “game-changer for sustainable food management.”

“This event allowed us to connect science with real community impact,” said lead developer and Postdoc in the university's Department of Environmental Science and Technology, Dr. Eid Gul. “Our AI models help institutions save money, reduce green-

house gas emissions, and strengthen local food systems.”

Visitors at the NourishNet booth engaged with interactive visuals, and flyers explaining how the Scenario Analysis Engine works. The dashboard allows users to input their own data such as food type, quantity, and location and instantly receive ranked diversion strategies, complete with maps, cost-benefit analyses, and downloadable reports.

The project encourages local nonprofits, food distributors, those who may be experi-

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## Promising Student Gains Mark Start of 2025–26 School Year in PGCPSS

*New leadership, rising achievement signal upward momentum.*

By PRESS OFFICER  
**PGCPSS**

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Aug. 26, 2025)—On Tuesday, August 26, more than 130,000 students returned to Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) as the 2025–26 school year began with fresh momentum and a focus on accelerating growth for every learner. Newly released Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) results—coinciding with the first day of school—show steady gains in reading and math, with especially strong progress among multilingual learners and students with disabilities.

“These results send a powerful message—our students are

moving forward,” said Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. “It's the best way to start a school year and the perfect moment to push harder. For multilingual learners and students with disabilities, that means high expectations, excellent instruction, and systems designed to deliver results. Our goal is to meet every student where they are and ensure they make measurable progress.”

To highlight the academic momentum, Dr. Joseph—joined by County and district leaders—visited several schools that posted significant MCAP gains. Some of these campuses are designated Comprehensive Support

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## Heart of America Launches Multi-Million-Dollar Library Transformation Project At 46 Prince George's County Public Schools in Maryland

*This initiative is one of the most significant public-private partnerships in the country dedicated exclusively to reimagining libraries at a top 20 public-school district.*

By PRESS OFFICER  
**Heart of America**

WASHINGTON (Aug. 26, 2025)—Heart of America (HOA), a Washington, DC-based nonprofit dedicated to transforming learning spaces for underserved students since 1997, has launched a multi-million-dollar, year-long initiative to transform 46 libraries across Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) in Maryland that will shape the future of learning for generations to come. The partnership also includes constructing a brand new 47th library dedicated to training and professional development for the district's librarians and educators.

In an era when many K–12 schools face critical funding shortfalls, this public-private partnership is bridging the resource gap with modern, innovative spaces designed to prepare students for 21st-century careers.

PGCPS, the second-largest public school system in Maryland and the 18th largest in the nation, serves more than 132,854 students in 200 schools and centers. Its student body is one of the most diverse in the country. More than 26,000 students and educators will benefit from the custom-designed libraries, tailored to the unique needs of each school and community.

“It's incredibly rare to have the opportunity to contribute to such a transformative change within a school district. With the Prince George's County Public Schools' library initiative, we're making a system-level investment that will shape student experiences for generations to come, said Jill Hardy Heath, HOA President and CEO. “This effort is about more than remodeling spaces—it's about reimagining the role of libraries as vibrant, inclusive hubs of learning. We're creating dynamic environments that foster curiosity, support every student's growth, and unlock

their full potential.”

The library transformations, each taking 12–14 weeks, will be completed in three phases, with the final phase wrapping up in early 2026. Each school will select from innovative library models, such as:

- Collective Learning & Literacy Hubs
- STEAM Innovation Labs
- STEM Exploration Centers

HOA will be providing more than 72,000 culturally relevant books that represent the diversity of the student population to complete each transformation space. HOA's nature-inspired design aesthetic will incorporate natural, fresh materials and lighting to create a relaxing environment for students, while a variety of high-tech educational resources will also be featured to inspire learning, including:

- High-tech tools: smart TVs, projectors,

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• History of Fairview and Enslaved Family Research, Thursday, Sept. 25

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**ChildWatch: A Child Watch Coda**

After 40 years, today's column will be the last in the weekly Child Watch® series. Today is *not yet* the conclusion to the reasons this column began, nor to the need to stay vigilant.

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**Active Driving Assistance: Promising Technology, Lingering Challenges**

Adding advanced vehicle technology into our daily routines offers both benefits and challenges.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

## Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### FAMILY AND FRIENDS DAY

Clinton United Methodist Church located at 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland celebrated Family and Friends Day Sunday, August 17, 2025. Rev. Melaina Trice, Pastor. The Worship Leader was Mrs. Stephnie Samuel, CLM. Music by the Gospel Choir and Mrs. Avis Balkcom-Williams Director. Special music rendered by Soloist Margaret Hayman, “God Is” and “Hold on to God’s Unchanging Hand.” Guest Speaker was Dr. Elliece Smith Bryant who delivered a powerful sermon.

### NOTTINGHAM MYERS UMC

Guest Speaker for Nottingham Myers United Church Homecoming was Rev. Brian T. Walker, a native of Upper Marlboro, Maryland. Reverend Brian T. Walker accepted the Lord at an early age and began preaching at the age of 22 under the leadership of Reverend Benjamin T. Hailey, Sr. of Friendship Baptist Church in York, PA. where he served as Assistant Youth Director. This position inspired his passion to mentor and counsel youth. This service became a staple throughout Reverend Walker’s life allowing him to hold numerous occupations in youth services and youth mentorship.

Throughout his Christian journey, Reverend Walker served as Youth Minister at St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church and Westphalia United Methodist Church. He was ordained in 2011 and in 2016 founded Grace Tabernacle Community Church where he served as pastor for five years. On January 2, 2022, Grace Tabernacle merged with Tabernacle of Faith Worship Center; Rev. Walker was installed as their second pastor in July of the same year. During this time, he was also privileged to be appointed Overseer of the National Youth Ministry of Kingdom Builders Fellowship, Providence Forge, VA, under the leadership of Archbishop Raymond L. Otey, Sir.

Reverend Walker graduated from Teamwork International Bible College with a Bachelor of Arts in Ministry and is pursuing his Master of Divinity degree from Christian Bible Institute & Seminary. He is certified in Crisis Management and Prevention from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. In addition, he holds a certificate in mental health first aid. Reverend Walker is married to the love of his life, Deirdra Walker. They have three beautiful daughters, Diamond, Brooke, and Ava. His favorite scripture is Proverbs 22:6—Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to jazz, reading God’s word and spending time with family and friends. He aspires to reach as many lost souls as possible.

### ELECTION JUDGES INTEREST REGISTRATION 2026

Anyone interested in working as an Election Judge, please register. Location: Charles County Board of Elections, 201 East Charles Street, P.O. Box 908, La Plata, MD. About this event: 2026 Election Recruitment: General Election-Novem-

ber 3, 2026, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Primary Date: June 2026.

Registration for training sessions will be required after the training dates have been scheduled. If you wish to be notified of the trainings, please be sure to provide us with an email address. Notice: All interested persons are required to attend training regardless of previous experience as a Judge. Previous assignments and/or locations are not guaranteed. Maryland State Law requires training; if you do not attend a training, you CANNOT be an Election Judge. If you have questions, please feel free to call Office: 301-934-8972 or 301-870-3167 for General information. Thank you for your interest and we look forward to another successful election in Charles County. By Charles County Board of Elections.

### MGM NATIONAL HARBOR

The Theater at MGM National Harbor is the premier entertainment destination in the region. With 3,000 seats, state-of-the-art sound, video and lighting, you will experience your favorite artists in an intimate setting unlike any other. Box Office hours: On Show Days: 3 hours prior to ticketed event. Contact general information: 844-346-4664.

### SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Senior Nutrition Program, operated by The Prince George’s County Department of Family Services, to individuals who are 60 or better Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. offers a delicious nutritionally balanced lunch at this Meal Registration: Call the Department of Family Services, Aging Services Division at 301-265-8475. You must register at least one day in advance. The suggested donation is \$4. If you need to cancel your meal, please do so at least two days in advance. Please bring the exact change to cover your donation. Note: There will be no lunch program when Prince George’s County Schools have delayed openings or are closed due to inclement weather conditions. Additional Information: For more information on Nutrition and Transportation Program, please visit <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/family-services/older-adult-services/nutrition-services> and <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/public-works-transportation/metrotransportation/senior-transportation-services>.

### TRIBUTE TO BERLINE BROOKS

A tribute to my Aunt Berline Brooks who is a wonderful loving, caring, and Christian lady who celebrated her 103rd Birthday, August 19, 2025. When I was growing up, Aunt Berline and my Uncle Ernest used to take me to the beach and amusement parks. After she stopped driving, I would go to Oxon Hill, Maryland and pick her up to attend Nottingham Myers in Upper Marlboro, Maryland. She loved wearing her fancy hats to match her suits to church. Happy Birthday to my favorite Diva.

## MPT’s Sixth Annual HBCU Week Lineup Runs September 8–14

*MPT-produced PBS primetime special Becoming Thurgood: America’s Social Architect anchors special program lineup highlighting historically Black colleges and universities in Maryland and beyond*

By PRESS OFFICER  
**Maryland Public Television**

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (Aug. 28, 2025)—Maryland Public Television (MPT) will celebrate historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in September during its sixth annual HBCU Week, a slate of programs sharing informative and inspiring stories about HBCUs and the people who attend, graduate, administrate, and advocate for these important institutions of higher learning. A preview is available at [mpt.org/hbcu](http://mpt.org/hbcu).

During the week of September 8–14, MPT will offer 30 hours of content—including 12 MPT program premieres—across TV, social media, and online platforms exploring the past, present, and future of HBCUs in the statewide public TV network’s viewing area and throughout the United States.

The 2025 HBCU Week lineup is anchored by the local premiere of MPT’s newest national PBS film, *Becoming Thurgood: America’s Social Architect*. The one-hour documentary traces Marshall’s journey from his birth in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1908 to his formative years at HBCUs Lincoln University and Howard University School of Law to his groundbreaking career as a lawyer championing civil rights and dismantling segregation. More information and clips from the film are available at <https://www.hbcuweeknow.com/featured-films/becoming-thurgood>.

With a combination of oral history, animation, and evocative sound design, *Becoming Thurgood* brings Marshall’s story to life not as myth, but as a man of action—strategic, courageous, and deeply committed to justice. Through his work, Marshall held the nation accountable to its founding promises, redefined what was possible through the law, and helped move America closer to its highest ideals.

*Becoming Thurgood: America’s Social Architect* will premiere exclusively on MPT-HD and the MPT livestream at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, September 9. Then, at 10 p.m., the film will make its national debut on PBS stations throughout the country, including MPT.

Other MPT productions premiering as part of this year’s HBCU Week lineup are special episodes of *State Circle* and *Direct Connection*, four 30-minute *One On One* programs featuring interviews with presidents of HBCUs in the state, *Artworks: The Art of HBCU Art*, and *Inside the CIAA: Her Story*.

Viewers can find more information about HBCU Week offerings at [mpt.org/hbcu](http://mpt.org/hbcu). Audiences are encouraged to contribute to the conversation on social media using the hashtag #HBCUWeekNOW.

In Title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Congress defined an HBCU as a school of higher learning that was accredited and established before 1964 and whose principal mission is the education of African Americans. The six HBCUs in MPT’s viewing area are Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Howard University, Morgan State University, University of the District of Columbia, and University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

MPT’s 2025 HBCU Week lineup is made possible in part with support from Coppin State University, HBCU Week NOW, HBCU GO, STEM City USA, Fulton Bank, and the CIAA.

***HBCU Week 2025 premieres Direct Connection Special: Welcome to Coppin State—Monday, September 8, 7–8 p.m.***

From the campus of Coppin State University in Baltimore, this one-hour special features conversations with Coppin State students and leaders, explores the insti-

tution’s academic programs, and provides a sneak peek into the 2025 HBCU Week program lineup.

**One On One: Dr. Anthony Jenkins, Coppin State University—Monday, September 8, 8–8:30 p.m.**

MPT’s Jeff Salkin, news anchor, visits Coppin State University for an in-depth interview with President Anthony L. Jenkins, Ph.D. The episode also features reports about how Coppin State students are learning to procure, protect, and analyze patient health records and introduces viewers to the university’s youngest student, 14-year-old rising sophomore West Muhummad.

**Local, USA | HBCU Week: Changemakers—Monday, September 8, 8:30–9 p.m.**

HBCU Week: Changemakers illustrates the power and success of peaceful protests led by students. Witness how Morehouse College’s youth leaders exemplify social grace during demonstrations against social injustices in the U.S., and at Morgan State University, the untold story of how this HBCU became one of America’s fastest-growing universities following the largest student-led protest in Maryland.

**Local, USA | HBCU Week: Innovation—Monday, September 8, 10:30–11 p.m.**

HBCU Week: Innovation explores how HBCU programs are changing and saving lives. Howard University is making history with the only Division One swim program at an HBCU while also teaching the Black community to swim. Claflin University’s SmartHOME technology connects a person’s physical state

## Around the County

### Fall into Fun! M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County Announces Events for September

RIVERDALE, Md. (Aug. 27, 2025)—Fall into fun this September with M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County with a series of exciting, family-friendly events that celebrate culture, history, and community. From live. From live music and artisan markets to meaningful historical experiences, there’s something for everyone to enjoy.

#### Upcoming events include:

Hispanic Heritage Month  
September 14–October 15, 2025  
Various Locations

The community is invited to join the Department in honoring the vibrant traditions, history, and cultural contributions of Hispanic and Latino Americans. The month-long celebration will feature lively interactive activities, live music, traditional dance performances, art exhibitions, and a variety of family-friendly events.

#### ***Family Health & Fitness Day and Athlete Showcase at SPLEX***

Saturday, September 27, 2025, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.  
Prince George’s Sports and Learning Complex  
8001 Sheriff Road  
Landover MD 20785

Discover the fun side of fitness! Enjoy this family-friendly day filled with fitness demos, group exercise demonstrations, fitness center tours, raffles, and giveaways. Performance testing will be available for all sports or athletes ages 13 and up.

#### ***Unwine Festival***

Saturday, September 27, 2025, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Patuxent River Park  
16000 Croom Airport Road  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Unplug, uncork, and unwine! The highly anticipated Unwine Festival returns to the scenic Patuxent River Park. Enjoy tastings of wines, as well as craft beers and ciders, all poured into a commemorative stemless wine glass. Dance or lounge to live music from noon to 5 pm, and stroll through offerings from over 20 local food and artisan vendors. Elevate your afternoon with the limited-availability VIP packages, offering an exclusive tent, gourmet hors d’oeuvres, and prime stage views. Or gather your friends under one of the group tents for eight, complete with shaded comfort.

#### ***Echoes of the Enslaved***

Saturday, September 27, 2025, 4–9 p.m.  
Montpelier House Museum  
9650 Muirkirk Road  
Laurel, MD

Explore the lasting legacies of enslavement in Prince George’s County at *Echoes of the Enslaved*. This free, family-friendly event offers a meaningful commemoration of history, inviting guests to walk through the grounds of the Montpelier House Museum where the enslaved lived and worked, learn how archaeology helps uncover the stories of underrepresented individuals, and listen to reflections about how the legacy of enslavement continues to shape our world today.

#### ***Celebrate Africa Festival***

Sunday, September 28, 2025, 1–6 p.m.  
Fairwood Community Park  
12390 Fairwood Parkway  
Bowie, MD 20720

The vibrant Celebrate Africa Festival returns to Fairwood Community Park this September in honor of African Heritage Month. This cultural celebration highlights the history, contributions, and rich cultural traditions of the African immigrant community in the DMV region. Guests will enjoy live performances from KanKouran West African Dance Company, TolumiDE, and Coyaba Dance Theater, along with family-friendly activities, artisan vendors, and, new this year, a soccer clinic. Admission is Free and open to all ages.

For more information about upcoming M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation events, visit [pgparks.com](http://pgparks.com).

### Excel Academy Public Charter School to Close Ahead of 2025–26 School Year

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Aug. 22, 2025)—EXCEL Academy Public Charter School announced today that it will not open for the 2025–26 school year.

On August 21, EXCEL Academy’s CEO informed PGCPs that it would not be prepared to open and serve students for the start of the school year. EXCEL Academy surrendered its charter after determining the school could no longer sustain the financial stability needed to provide the quality education students deserve. Despite earnest efforts, EXCEL was unable to close critical funding gaps or demonstrate long-term financial viability.

PGCPs is working with EXCEL families to support their transition into new school communities across the district. Students will be assigned to their home schools and families will be given additional options that may include charter schools and neighborhood schools where seats are available. Families will receive additional communication with enrollment details and next steps.

All PGCEA, ASAP and AFSCME 2250 staff will be placed in other PGCPs schools.

“Our goal is always to support all of our charter schools to be successful,” said Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. “EXCEL has been a strong partner and served families well for nearly two decades. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts, they could not overcome the financial challenges they faced. While this is a deeply unfortunate situation, closing now prevents greater disruption for students. PGCPs will continue to stand with families and staff to make this transition as smooth as possible.”

PGCPs remains committed to strong school choices for families,



# COMMUNITY

## Around the County from A2

including charter schools, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, language immersion and career and technical education programs, as well as expanded pathways in STEM, the arts and career readiness. The district remains confident that EXCEL students and staff will continue to thrive as they join new school communities across Prince George’s County.

A list of Frequently Asked Questions to assist families and the public during this transition can be found below.

### Frequently Asked Questions: EXCEL Academy Public Charter School

**1. Did PGCPs close EXCEL Academy?**

No. EXCEL Academy’s governing board made the decision to close and voted to surrender its charter. On August 21, the EXCEL board informed PGCPs it would not be prepared to open for the 2025–26 school year.

**2. Why is EXCEL Academy closing?**

EXCEL faced ongoing financial challenges, including enrollment declines and the impact of the pandemic. Despite months of support from PGCPs, external partners and potential funders, the school was unable to resolve critical funding gaps or demonstrate long-term financial viability.

**3. Why did this happen so close to the start of the school year?**

PGCPs learned on the evening of August 21 that EXCEL’s board had determined the school could not open. PGCPs did not close the school. The timing reflects EXCEL’s final efforts to stabilize its finances. Once it became clear that opening was not possible, the board made the decision to surrender its charter rather than risk further disruption for students.

**4. What is PGCPs doing to help students and families?**

PGCPs is working directly with EXCEL families to ensure smooth transitions into new school communities. Options may include charter and other schools where space is available. Families will receive direct communication with enrollment details and next steps.

**5. What will happen to EXCEL Academy teachers and staff?**

PGCPs is collaborating with EXCEL leadership to connect staff with placement opportunities in district schools, so their expertise continues to serve Prince George’s County students.

**6. How does this affect school choice in Prince George’s County?**

PGCPs remains committed to strong school choice for families. The district continues to expand International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, language immersion, career and technical education, STEM, arts, and career readiness programs.

## September at Greenbelt Cinema

Greenbelt Cinema’s September programming includes a variety of screenings and events for every movie lover in Prince George’s county and beyond.

**Upcoming September films and events:**

**Sunday, September 7–Saturday, September 20**—Nepali Film Series  
Tickets and more information:  
<https://www.greenbeltcinema.org/nepali-film/>

In partnership with the Nepal American Film Society, experience four acclaimed new films highlighting the rich culture of Nepal, including Tel Visa, filmed in Maryland.

**Friday, September 12** (Various Showtimes)—DOWNTON ABBEY: THE GRAND FINALE

More information available:  
<https://www.greenbeltcinema.org/movie/downton-abbey-the-grand-finale/> - tickets go on sale to members Friday, August 29

Greenbelt Cinema proudly opens the latest and final installment of the beloved British period drama Downton Abbey.

**Saturday, September 13** at 2p.m.—Storytime On Screen

*Free Community Event! No ticket or RSVP required*  
This special Storytime On Screen event features author Amy Hansen and other special guests! Greenbelt Cinema and Prince George’s County Memorial Library System offer a free program of stories, songs and a short film, best suited for children ages 4–9 and their caregivers.  
*Also offered Monday, September 15 at 10:30 a.m.*

**Sunday, September 21** at 1 p.m.—MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL (dir. Terry Gilliam, Terry Jones)

Tickets and more information:  
<https://www.greenbeltcinema.org/movie/monty-python-and-the-holy-grail-50th-anniversary/>

Celebrate the 50th anniversary of this hysterical, historical tour-de-force from Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, a “cult classic” comedy from the Monty Python team.

**Monday, September 29** at 7 p.m.—MULHOLLAND DRIVE (dir. David Lynch)

Tickets and more information:  
<https://www.greenbeltcinema.org/movie/mulholland-dr/>

Honor David Lynch’s life and work with a Film in Focus screening of the 2001 cult classic, followed by a lecture led by Paul Fileri, Professorial Lecturer in the Cinema Studies program in the Department of Literature at American University.

Looking ahead to October, Cinema Classics continues with The Man Who Knew Too Much (October 6 and 9), as well as a special screening of BROADCAST NEWS hosted by longtime entertainment journalist and local legend Arch Campbell, and more special events to be announced.

## Innovation from A1

encing food insecurity, and other partners to get involved by completing a short survey and joining beta testing for FoodLoops. The QR code below provides quick and easy access for participation. Feedback from the community is crucial as FoodLoops seeks to refine its AI-powered solutions. For more information on the beta testing process, please connect with Michelle Burton at [mburton@institutephi.org](mailto:mburton@institutephi.org). The NourishNet Project, led by Professor Stephanie Lansing in the Department of Environmental Science and Technology at the University of Maryland and funded by the National Science Foundation, bridges cutting-edge research with real-world community needs. By combining machine learning, greenhouse gas and cost modeling, GIS-based routing, and an intuitive dashboard, the project empowers institutions to make data-driven, sustainable decisions about food diversion.

Through innovation, data, and community engagement, the NourishNet team is helping Maryland move toward equitable, efficient, and sustainable food systems.

## Marietta House Museum September Events

By STACEY HAWKINS  
**Marietta House Museum**

### Marietta House Museum Presents: “HARRIET”, the Movie

*Includes closed captions and an ASL interpreter signing the Q & A portion of the program*

Please join us on **Saturday, Sept. 13**, 1–3 p.m., when Marietta House Museum will show the movie “Harriet”. The program includes closed captions for the movie and an ASL interpreter will sign the Q & A portion of the program. Dr. Dennis Doster will lead the Q & A following the program.

This presentation is in partnership with the Prince George’s County Office of Human Rights, the Black History Program of Prince George’s County Parks and Recreation, and the Prince George’s County Historical Society.

This is a free program. Light refreshments will be served. Ages 12 & up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Registration is requested. Walk-ins are welcome. Please register at [www.pgparksdirect.com](http://www.pgparksdirect.com) and use the ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20250913

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email [mariettahouse@pgparks.com](mailto:mariettahouse@pgparks.com)

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

## Gains from A1

and Improvement (CSI) schools that have historically struggled, making their progress especially noteworthy.

At District Heights Elementary School, English Language Arts (ELA) proficiency rose 12% and math 5%, with multilingual learners achieving double-digit growth in literacy. Andrew Jackson K-8 Academy posted one of the district’s strongest year-over-year ELA gains, climbing 13%—a result the school attributes to focused community partnerships. Crossland High School students recorded a 12% jump in math proficiency and continued a multi-year upward trend in graduation rates. Catherine T. Reed Elementary, recognized for success and innovation serving special education students, posted gains of 11% in math and 8% in ELA.

Dr. Joseph closed the day at two high schools aligned with his school year priorities: boosting attendance and advancing multilingual learners. Largo High School reduced chronic absenteeism by more than 11%, and the International High School at Largo im-

proved literacy proficiency for multilingual learners by 6%.

This academic growth comes at a pivotal moment, as PGCPs implements key elements of the Blueprint for Maryland’s Future while also launching a new multi-year strategic planning process centered on academic excellence, equity, innovation and whole-child development.

### Academic Achievement & Innovation

PGCPs enters the new school year with a sharp academic charge: accelerate learning, act early and ensure resources, leadership and instruction are aligned for impact—especially in schools that have historically struggled. Several of these campuses are now part of the new Innovation Zone, a focused improvement initiative that pairs proven principals with greater resource flexibility, targeted supports for multilingual learners and students with disabilities, and real-time data monitoring to speed progress.

Short-term benchmarks and formative assessments are now central to measuring and responding to student learning.

“We can’t wait until May to find out a student didn’t master a concept in Sep-

tember,” Dr. Joseph said. “Real-time data must drive real-time action.”

Twenty-four schools identified as consistently underperforming will receive targeted support beginning with proven principals, sustained coaching, and strengthened operational assistance. A new Associate Superintendent for Innovation and Performance will lead improvement efforts across high-need campuses.

The district is also reviewing Title I and Community School resource use with a focus on transparency and measurable outcomes, and has introduced real-time dashboards—soon to include an additional public-facing dashboard offering a performance snapshot highlighting academic outcomes and school climate measures, with an emphasis on growth and gains, for every school.

### Community-Centered Leadership

Dr. Joseph’s 100-Day Plan includes countywide community sessions—nine virtual sessions completed in July and nine in-person sessions underway—to elevate stakeholder voices. Feedback will directly shape the new strategic plan.

### Transportation Improvements

PGCPs begins the school year navigating a bus driver shortage—part of a national trend—that is expected to cause delays and longer travel times for some students. To help families plan, the district launched a new online portal with regularly updated route and delay information. The district is also piloting a new mobile app offering real-time bus tracking and arrival alerts, ahead of a wider rollout later this year.

### New School Construction

PGCPs recently broke ground on Hyattsville Elementary School and Brandywine Area 3-8, part of the second phase of the Blueprint Schools initiative. These projects join four other Blueprint Phase II schools already in progress with staggered delivery of eight total schools through 2028.



PHOTO COURTESY PGCPs

**Third grade teachers at Catherine T. Reed Elementary were recognized for their role in student MCAP gains.**

## Library from A1

- computer stations, 3D printers, robotics kits, Arduino and Raspberry Pi tools, LEGO MINDSTORMS, VEX Robotics, and Sphero robots.
- Media production gear: Green Screens, video equipment, and editing tools.
- Hands-on learning tools: makerspaces with engineering instruments, digital calipers, and construction kits.

“We’re thankful for our partnership with Heart of America, whose support will help transform more than 46 school libraries across our district,” said Dr. Shawn Joseph, Interim Superintendent of Prince George’s County Public Schools. “Early in my career, I met a student who struggled to read, and that moment ignited my lifelong mission to ensure every child has the tools to succeed. These new library spaces are more than buildings—they are gateways to literacy, a love of reading, and brighter futures for our students.”

This initiative is one of the most significant public-private partnerships in the country dedicated exclusively to reimag-

ining libraries. Pull Up Fund is the proud supporter and funding partner for the PGCPs transformation project. Pull Up Fund, based in Prince George’s County, has deep local ties and a history of supporting a variety of educational, youth and health development initiatives in historically excluded communities.

With these modern, flexible learning environments, HOA and PGCPs are setting a national example for how thoughtful design can address inequities in education and equip students with the skills they need to thrive for generations to come.

Heart of America is a 501c3 nonprofit that transforms learning spaces and helps bridge resource gaps. Our work focuses on the whole student, knowing that the physical spaces where young people learn are just as important as what they are learning. Since 1997, we’ve worked towards education equity by renovating nearly 1,400 spaces in classrooms, libraries, STEAM labs, college/career centers, school gymnasiums, and community centers, and more. We have provided cur-

rent resources, including over 4.4 million books, and infused over \$14.3 million in technology.  
<https://www.heartofamerica.org/>

Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPs), one of the nation’s 20th largest school districts, has 200 schools and centers, more than 132,854 students and nearly 20,000 employees. PGCPs’s mission is to ensure all students graduate with the skills and knowledge to thrive in a globally competitive world.  
<https://www.pgcp.org/>

Pull Up Fund proudly supports the youth of Prince George’s County. We are pulling up communities around the county and connecting them with resources to help them thrive. Prior Pull Up Fund grants have supported an array of different issues including increasing access to mental health services, supporting youth development initiatives, and providing resources for individuals returning to the community after incarceration.  
<https://pullupfund.org/>



# COMMENTARY

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,  
Children’s Defense Fund



prayer for every servant-leader carrying on this good work.

Lord I cannot preach like Martin Luther King, Jr. or turn a poetic phrase like Maya Angelou and Robert Frost  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

Dorothy Day’s love, or Cesar Chavez’s gentle tough spirit  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

God it is not as easy as in the 60s to frame an issue and forge a solution  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

ChildWatch:

## A Child Watch Coda

The original Children’s Defense Fund logo came from a drawing I saw in a gallery window during a walk through Cambridge, Massachusetts, where CDF had its beginning. The artwork was by five-year-old Maria Coté, and shows a bright sun shining on a tiny boat adrift on a very wide sea. Above the boat in Maria’s handwriting is the ancient fisherman’s prayer: *“Dear Lord, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small.”*

In 1974, when CDF completed its first report, I asked permission from Maria’s mother to use the drawing on the cover. A few years later, after someone suggested CDF ought to have a logo, I looked at Maria’s drawing hanging above my desk, and realized it reflected the Children’s Defense

Fund mission more truthfully than any abstract piece prepared by the graphic arts firm we’d consulted ever could. Maria’s mother agreed to our trademarking her daughter’s piece.

After 40 years, today’s column will be the last in the weekly Child Watch® series. Today is *not yet* the conclusion to the reasons this column began, nor to the need to stay vigilant. The call still remains for faithful readers who are willing to stand for children every single day; ready to do their part to ensure every child a healthy start, a head start, a fair start, a safe start, and a moral start in life; and determined to build the bigger boat with stronger oars that will finally leave no child behind.

I share one more time the following grateful

I do not have Harriet Tubman’s courage, or Eleanor Roosevelt’s and Wilma Mankiller’s political skills  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

I cannot sing like Marian Anderson or Fannie Lou Hamer or organize like Ella Baker and Bayard Rustin  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

My mind and body are not so swift as in youth and my energy comes in spurts  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

I’m so young nobody will listen I feel invisible and hopeless and I’m not sure what to say or do  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

I am not holy like Archbishop Tutu, forgiving like Nelson Mandela, or disciplined like Mahatma Gandhi  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

I am not brilliant like Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois or Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or as eloquent as Sojourner Truth and Booker T. Washington  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

I have not Mother Teresa’s saintliness, The Dalai Lama’s or

I can’t see or hear well or speak good English, I stutter sometimes, am afraid of criticism, and get real scared standing up before others  
*but I care and am willing to serve.*

God, use me as You will today and tomorrow to help build a nation and world where every child is valued and protected, where everyone feels welcome and justly treated and no child is left behind.

—August 29, 2025

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

## The NCAA Settlement Is Unjust and Discriminatory. Student-Athletes Deserve a Deal That Reflects Their True Value They Bring to College Sports

*“The bottom line is that the NCAA and its member colleges are suppressing the pay of student athletes who collectively generate billions of dollars in revenues for colleges every year. Those enormous sums of money flow to seemingly everyone except the student athletes. College presidents, athletic directors, coaches, conference commissioners, and NCAA executives take in six- and seven-figure salaries. Colleges build lavish new facilities. But the student athletes who generate the revenues, many of whom are African American and from lower-income backgrounds, end up with little or nothing.”*

—Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh

The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *NCAA v. Alston* was clear: the NCAA had taken advantage of

college athletes in violation of antitrust laws, and the matter had to be addressed.

“The NCAA’s decision to build a massive business on top of student-athletes who are not fairly compensated is not just old-fashioned; it is legally flawed,” Justice Neil Gorsuch wrote.

“The NCAA couches its arguments for not paying student athletes in innocuous labels.” Justice Brett Kavanaugh concurred. “But the labels cannot disguise the reality: the NCAA’s rules fix the price of student-athlete labor.”

It was the responsibility of the lower court in the House v. NCAA case to correct this injustice. However, the House settlement completely missed the mark.

The proposed settlement to reform the NCAA’s name, image, and likeness policies is a structurally

unjust system masked as reform. College athletics has long operated as a plantation-style economy, where predominantly Black athletes generate billions in value while being denied basic pay and labor protections.

No professional sports league in America would accept a framework without adequate revenue-sharing or player protections. Yet the proposed settlement enshrines this exploitation into federal law under the false pretense of fairness.

In a letter to the Congressional Black Caucus this week, I urged the members to oppose proposed NIL reform legislation including Rep. Gus Bilirakis’ SCORE Act, Senate Majority Leader John Thune’s Athlete Opportunity and Taxpayer Integrity Act, and Sen. Ted Cruz’s draft NIL bill, President Trump’s Saving College Sports executive order, and any other antiquated proposal that limits the rights of student-athletes.

NIL is about more than college sports—it is about race, justice, and generational wealth.

Contrary to the Supreme Court’s unanimous 2021 decision in *NCAA v. Alston*, the House settlement finalized last month—which caps the revenue universities share with student-athletes at \$20 million per year per school—further entrenches exploitation in the system.

That amount is a drop in the bucket—less than one percent of the \$16 billion college sports industry—especially when compared to professional leagues where athletes typically receive close to half of total revenues.

The settlement excludes NCAA media rights revenue altogether, cementing the dominance of Power Five conferences, sidelining HBCUs, women’s sports under Title IX, and Olympic programs from meaningful participation in the NIL economy.

Furthermore, it denies student-athletes basic labor rights by refusing to recognize them as employees, while placing control of NIL operations in the hands of the newly created College Sports Commission—effectively led by the Power Five conferences—and Deloitte, who will manage the athletes’ third-party NIL deals.]

President Trump’s executive order would make matters worse. By seeking to ban third-party NIL deals and opposing employment rights for student-athletes, the order reinforces a status quo in which schools profit while Black athletes, women athletes, and HBCUs are left behind.

This moment demands more than performative reform. To pretend amateurism still exists is not just outdated—it’s dangerous.

In my letter, I urged the CDC to pursue a deal that reflects the true value student-athletes bring to college sports and ensures fairness, opportunity, and generational wealth, and to:

- Reject any federal NIL framework—legislative or executive—that excludes revenue-sharing, lacks transparency, or fails to empower athletes as employees.
- Refuse any antitrust exemption for the NCAA unless paired with a statutory model that includes revenue-sharing, athlete protections, and oversight.
- Support a tiered NIL compensation framework that uplifts HBCUs, Title IX sports, and non-revenue-generating programs.

We must choose whether college athletics continues as a plantation economy—exploiting young Black talent for the benefit of unrelenting institutions—or whether we chart a new course.

—August 22, 2025

### HBCU Week from A2

to actions to help mitigate health risks, hoping to combat healthcare disparities in minority communities.

One On One: Dr. Heidi Anderson, UMES—Tuesday, September 9, 7–7:30 p.m.

Jeff Salkin visits the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) for an in-depth interview with President Heidi M. Anderson, Ph.D. Viewers also observe a unique program in the university’s Fine Arts department that’s drawing students from across the state and beyond and witness a UMES art exhibit featuring important works on loan from the Chrysler Museum in Norfolk, Virginia.

Becoming Thurgood: America’s Social Architect—Tuesday, September 9, 9–10 p.m. (local)

This landmark documentary explores the life and legacy of Thurgood Marshall, from his trailblazing legal battles to his historic role as the first Black Supreme Court justice. Featuring rare archival materials and interviews with leading HBCU voices, the film reveals how Marshall helped America confront its deepest contradictions – and how his vision for justice continues to shape the country today. Following its 9 p.m. MPT premiere, *Becoming Thurgood: America’s Social Architect* will air on PBS stations nationwide (including MPT) at 10 p.m. Check local listings for additional showings.

One On One: Dr. David Wilson, Morgan State University—Wednesday, September 10, 7–7:30 p.m.

Jeff Salkin visits Morgan State University for an in-depth interview with President David K. Wilson, Ed.D. Next, viewers learn about a new one-year master’s degree program designed to help teachers meet state certification requirements and provide an alternative career path for displaced federal workers. Then, audiences meet Donal Ware, a Morgan State alumnus and national sportscaster.

Artworks: The Art of HBCU Art—Wednesday, September 10, 8–8:30 p.m.

This episode of the MPT original series *Artworks* surveys the talents, institutions, and creativity found at HBCUs throughout the

region. From the worlds of Jasmine Barnes and Reginald F. Lewis to the inner workings of Howard University’s dance company, *Complexions, Artworks: The Art of HBCU Art* reflects on the creative impact of HBCU art.

One On One: Dr. Aminta Breaux, Bowie State University—Thursday, September 11, 7–7:30 p.m.

Jeff Salkin visits Bowie State University for an in-depth interview with President Aminta H. Breaux, Ph.D. The episode also features reporting on how students are blending the technical precision of computer science with the creative expression of visual arts through Bowie State’s virtual reality and gaming bachelor’s degree program.

Inside the CIAA: #Her Story—Thursday, September 11, 8:30–9 p.m.

This Inside the CIAA episode celebrates 50 years of women athletes shaping the long-standing legacy of the CIAA Tournament.

State Circle Special: HBCUs in Washington, DC—Friday, September 12, 7–8 p.m.

With interviews and reporting from the Washington, D.C., campuses of Howard University and University of the District of Columbia, this one-hour special edition of *State Circle* explores the rich history of HBCUs in the nation’s capital.

Opportunity, Access & Uplift: The Evolving Legacy of HBCUs—Saturday, September 13, 8–8:30 p.m.

This half-hour documentary focuses on the changes, misconceptions, and current state of HBCUs through the personal stories of students and insights from experts. Hosted by HBCU graduate Brandis Griffith-Friedman, the program follows five students from two HBCUs located on opposite sides of the country to explore the rich history and current issues facing HBCUs nationwide.

Maryland Public Television (MPT) is a statewide, public-supported TV network and Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) member offering entertaining and educational content delivered by traditional broadcasting and streaming on TVs, computers, and mobile devices via its online video player and the free PBS app. A state agency operating

under the auspices of the Maryland Public Broadcasting Commission, MPT also produces local, regional, and national programming and frequently earns regional Emmy® awards for its work. MPT’s commitment to educators, parents, caregivers, and learners of all ages is delivered through its Maryland Center for Media Literacy & Education and Thinkport.org. MPT’s year-round community engagement activities connect viewers with resources covering a wide range of topics. More information is available at [mpt.org](http://mpt.org).

## The Prince George’s Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### I’m in Poor Health and Need to Know my Social Security Options

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 plan to stop working very soon. My health is not good. I am 66 years old, born in June 1959, so my full retirement age is 66 years and 10 months. My wife passed away in March 2024, and she was collecting SS benefits when she died. I have no dependent children. In general, what benefits am I entitled to? **Signed: Unhealthy and Struggling**

**Dear Unhealthy and Struggling:** Sorry to hear that your health is failing, and that you will need to stop working soon. But do not fear—Social Security will be there for you. Here is some info to help you decide your next possible steps:

Since you will not reach your full retirement age until next year (in April 2026), your earnings limit from working for this year is \$23,400 (or \$1950/month). The earnings limit will apply only if you decide to claim Social Security early (this year). If you decide to take Social Security this year, your earnings from before you take SS won’t count, but your monthly earnings for the remaining months of this year will be subject to the 2025 monthly limit (\$1950). If your monthly earnings exceed that amount, you won’t be entitled to SS benefits for that month, unless your total earnings for 2025 are less than \$23,400). If you don’t exceed the annual limit, your 2025 Social Security benefits won’t be affected by your work earnings.

Next year, the year you attain your full retirement age (FRA), your earnings limit will be much higher (about 2.5 times more, or something more than about \$63,000). If your 2026 earnings up through March do not exceed that limit, then you can claim your SS benefits a bit earlier in 2026 (before your FRA), and your benefits won’t be affected, except that your monthly benefit amount will be permanently reduced by .56% for each month you claim before your FRA. For example, if you were to claim for your SS to start in January 2026, you would get 98.3% of your FRA amount. So, provided your work earnings won’t exceed about \$63,000 between January and March 2026, you could claim effective January 2026 without worrying about Social Security’s earnings test. So, depending upon your health, you could claim SS to start in January 2026, likely without worry about the earnings test, and would get about 98.3% of your FRA benefit. Or, health permitting, you could wait to claim SS starting in April 2026 to get 100% of the benefit you’ve earned from a lifetime of working. Point is, you just need to be careful not to exceed Social Security’s earnings tests prior to reaching your full retirement age, or SS will take away some of your benefits. They “take away” by withholding future monthly payments as long as needed to recover what you owe. Worse case penalty for exceeding the 2026 monthly limit would be no benefits for any month you exceed about \$5300, or a penalty of \$1 for every \$3 over the limit if you exceed the 2026 annual limit before your FRA.

You do, however, have another option as your wife’s surviving spouse: You can claim your benefit as a surviving spouse prior to claiming your own SS retirement amount. But the earnings test described above (if you claim before your FRA) would also apply to your survivor benefits. So, again, your plans for working enter this decision. If you decide to stop working this year, you could, for example, decide to claim your survivor benefit this year and collect that until you reach your FRA in April 2026 when you would get 100% of your personal SS retirement amount. In fact, you might even decide to collect your survivor benefit longer, allowing your own SS benefit to grow until you are 70, at which time you would get about 25% more than your FRA amount. Indeed, if your survivor benefit is higher than your personal age 70 amount, you can just continue to claim the higher amount.

I suggest that when you decide that you must stop working full time, you contact Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 to discuss whether it is best to claim your survivor benefit from your wife first and delay claiming your own until a later time (to get a higher amount). You can make an appointment to discuss your options with SS over the phone, before deciding when (and what) to claim. And, of course, if you have any further questions, we are always here to assist you with your decision.

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

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://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](http://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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

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## Active Driving Assistance: Promising Technology, Lingering Challenges

AAA Study Reveals Notable Events Occurred Every 9 Minutes in Heavy Traffic, Highlighting Frequent Safety Concerns

By PRESS OFFICER  
AAA

WASHINGTON (Aug. 21, 2025)—Advanced vehicle technology is becoming increasingly common, presenting both opportunities and challenges. AAA Automotive Engineers evaluated five passenger vehicles with low-speed-capable Active Driving Assistance (ADA) systems, also known as Traffic Jam Assistance, in heavy traffic. The study compared hands-on and hands-off ADA performance. Notable events occurred every 9 minutes on average. The most common events were cut ins and poor lane centering.

“Even though ADA systems can help out in certain driving situations, they’re not a replacement for paying attention behind the wheel,” said Greg Brannon, director of automotive engineering research. “What we’ve found is that drivers really need to stay alert and cut down on distractions, especially when things get busy on the road.”

### Overall Results

- In total, notable events were recorded every 3.2 miles, which is approximately every 9.1 minutes on average. A “notable” event was defined as any situation in which the ADA system failed to handle the driving conditions adequately, as determined by the researcher driving the vehicle.
- The most common incidents reported were inadequate responses to cut ins, which required a researcher to intervene 90% of the time. Cut ins are defined as instances when a vehicle enters the lane directly in front of the test vehicle.
- The second most frequent issue was inadequate Lane Centering Assistance. Lane Centering is a driver assistance system that uses cameras and other sensors to keep a vehicle centered within its lane, providing steering assistance to prevent drifting.

### Comparison of Hands-on and Hands-off Systems

Engineers reported a difference between hands-on and hands-off ADA systems. Hands-on systems require the driver to keep their hands on the steering wheel while the ADA system is in use. The ADA system utilizes sensors such as cameras and radar to monitor the driving environment (road condition, lane lines, etc.).

Hands-off systems allow the driver to remove their hands from the steering wheel in most situations but may require them to put their hands back on in certain conditions. These systems use similar sensors, but they also commonly rely on roads that are pre-mapped in the system.

- The findings revealed that drivers of



PHOTO COURTESY AAA

**“Even though ADA systems can help out in certain driving situations, they’re not a replacement for paying attention behind the wheel,” said Greg Brannon, director of automotive engineering research.**

hands-on systems had to intervene due to driving events three times more frequently than those for hands-off systems.

- Though hands-free most of the time, drivers using hands-off systems were asked to re-engage by placing their hands back on the wheel approximately once every 5.5 miles or every 15.3 minutes, requiring continuous driver engagement.

### Recommendations

- Adding advanced vehicle technology into our daily routines offers both benefits and challenges. To help improve road safety, AAA recommends:
- Remain in control and be prepared to intervene by braking or steering at all times while using ADA systems. Evaluated ADA systems are never a substitute for an engaged driver.
  - Eliminate distractions, including interacting with a smartphone. The need for the driver to intervene while using ADA systems can be frequent, especially in high traffic areas.
  - Maintain awareness, stay engaged, and remain in complete control of the vehicle at all times, regardless of the advanced driving assistance systems in use.
  - Be familiar with how their system operates. Read the vehicle owner’s manual to learn when, where, and how to use them.
  - Select a following distance that suits the driving situation to allow for more time to react to a situation and intervene when needed.
- It’s important to prioritize safety when developing and utilizing this technology. AAA aims to collaborate with industry leaders to enhance testing and expand consumer education about autonomous systems as they become more widely used. AAA encourages automakers to focus on:
- Enhancing ADA performance, partic-

ularly focusing on improving cut-in response and lane-centering behavior.

- Improving the visibility of alerts related to the deactivation of ADAS features to ensure drivers are aware when features are active or inactive.

The full research report, fact sheet and additional information may be found at <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2025/08/active-driving-assistance/>.

### Previous Research

Read “Clearing the Confusion”, a set of expanded and updated recommendations for universal terms for advanced driver assistance system (ADAS) features. <https://article.images.consumerreports.org/image/upload/v1658777041/prod/content/dam/CRO-Images-2022/Cars/07July/Clearing-the-Confusion-7-26-22.pdf>

AAA, in partnership with the Automobile Club of Southern California’s Automotive Research Center, tested vehicles on limited-access highways, following designated routes during the day, to evaluate high-traffic situations. Each vehicle was driven an average of 342 miles over a period of 16.2 hours, with GPS data, video, and audio continuously recorded to capture traffic conditions, vehicle behavior, and driver observations.

*AAA provides automotive, travel, and insurance services to more than 65.2 million members nationwide, over 80,000 members in Washington, D.C. and more than 1 million members in Maryland. AAA advocates for the safety and mobility of its members and has been committed to outstanding road service for more than 100 years. AAA is a non-stock, not-for-profit membership corporation working on behalf of motorists, who can map a route, find local gas prices and electric vehicle charging stations, discover discounts, book a hotel, and track their roadside assistance service with the AAA Mobile app (AAA.com/mobile). Visit [www.AAA.com](http://www.AAA.com).*

## MONEY: 5 Financial Moves to Make Right Now

(StatePoint) Smart money decisions can give you a head start on the future you want!

Whether you’re newly graduated or well into your career, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals say you should make these five financial moves right now:

**Create a budget.** Research finds that 83% of Gen Z-ers and millennials have experienced regret about their spending decisions. Crafting a budget means making mindful choices about how you spend your money, which can eliminate financial stress. However, if the term “budget” fills you with dread, try calling it a “spending plan” instead. The important thing is to get started and find a process that works for you.

**Build an emergency fund.** According to the Federal Reserve Board, only 55% of Americans had three months’ worth of expenses in emergency savings in 2024. In the event of an unexpected expense, such as hospitalization or home repairs, a rainy-day fund can save you from accumulating debt or dipping into retirement savings. A CFP® professional can help you adjust your budget to divert



PHOTO SOURCE: © MILJAN ZIVKOVIĆ / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

savings into an emergency fund to cover at least three to six months’ worth of fixed expenses.

**Start saving for retirement now.** It’s never too early to begin saving for a comfortable retirement. If your employer offers a retirement savings plan, sign up for it now and put as much in as you can, especially if your company offers matching contributions. You don’t need an employer-sponsored plan to save for your golden years, though. Traditional IRAs and Roth IRAs are also good vehicles for retirement savings.

**Take a big-picture approach.** From

paying down debt and growing your investments to managing taxes and insurance, reviewing your overall financial picture can help you reach your personal goals. That’s where the help of a financial advisor who has your best interests in mind comes into play. A CFP® professional can serve as a financial coach, integrating the many components of your financial plan and providing valuable advice at any stage of your life.

**Don’t make a move.** It may sound counterintuitive, but once you’ve charted a financial path, sometimes you should simply leave it alone. According to financial experts, historically speaking, world events and the volatility of the market are not reasons to rethink your investment strategy or rewrite your game plan. However, tweaking your plan to accommodate changing personal circumstances is important.

To hire a CFP® professional, visit [www.LetsMakeAPlan.org](http://www.LetsMakeAPlan.org).

These five financial moves will create the foundation for a strong financial future. A financial planner can help you start strong and reach your money goals.



