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Military Veteran at The Sky Bridge at Town Center Helps Others Receive Rightful Benefits

Leon Parks, whose father died in battle, finds solace in military career and assisting other veterans

By PRESS OFFICER
Watermark Retirement Communities®

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Aug. 17, 2023)—Leon Parks, a resident at The Sky Bridge at Town Center, never wanted to join the military. When Parks was a toddler, his father died during World War II's Battle of the Bulge in 1945 and was buried overseas in Luxembourg. Parks, now 81, never had the chance to know his father, nor say a proper goodbye, and he became angry with the military. Once drafted, his attitude began to change, but not as quickly as his respect grew for all who served. Today, he dedicates his time assisting other veterans, many of whom he meets right in his retirement community.

Parks was living in Kansas when he was drafted into the military in 1963. He begrudgingly reported for duty on his 21st birthday and was stationed in Virginia. Despite a reluctant start, Parks went on to have a prosperous 17-year career in the military. He especially appreciated the opportunities he was given, including ones that helped him purchase a home and attend college to earn a business and marketing degree.

After retiring from the National Guard in 2003, Parks became a Veterans Service Officer in 2007 to help other veterans access a range of benefits. He participates in annual training courses so he can continue to assist veterans and their families daily, including residents and associates at The Sky Bridge at Town Center.

Recently, Parks held a two-part Watermark University class at his community on how veterans can obtain outstanding benefits from the federal government due to their

time of service. His class is part of Watermark University, a series of invigorating programs that promote lifelong learning for residents of Watermark Retirement Com-



Leon Parks, a resident at The Sky Bridge at Town Center, volunteers his time to help veterans receive benefits they qualify for from the government. He recently presented a Watermark University class at his retirement community on this topic to assist fellow residents and associates.

munities, including at The Sky Bridge at Town Center.

"Helping other veterans gives me a reason to wake up every day," said Parks. "My granddaughter says I work harder now than when I was paid, but this is work I enjoy. A lot of vets don't realize all the benefits they have access to, and I'm glad I can share my knowledge with them."

During the recent class, Parks gave a presentation on the different benefits available to veterans, such as the GI Bill and the PACT Act. U.S. Marine Corps. Sergeant Jay West, 39, joined as a guest speaker to share how he benefitted from Parks' assistance. Now retired from the military, West was able to obtain eligibility as a fully disabled veteran with Parks' help. The pair also shared stories and memorabilia from their time in the service.

In addition to helping his residents and associates in his retirement community, Parks visits Andrews Air Force every Tuesday to volunteer his time helping veterans submit their benefits claims. He also is a member of the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), and holds a Level II Certification from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

Parks said The Sky Bridge at Town Center community always supports his efforts and assists him when he needs help, including sending information to veterans or arranging the Watermark University class.

"Leon Parks is an inspiration, and his work has helped numerous veterans," said The Sky Bridge at Town Center Executive

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M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County and RCX Sports Announce Collaboration Offering Commanders Flag Football League for Local Youth

By PRESS OFFICER
Dept. of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (Aug. 17, 2023)—[Last week] the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County and Washington Commanders announced their collaboration to bring NFL FLAG Football powered by RCX Sports to local youth. The co-ed league kick[ed] off with a skills clinic at the Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex in Landover on Saturday, August 19.

The Flag Football League will provide a fun and enriching experience for young Commanders fans ranging from pre-k through 8th grade—focused on building self-esteem, teamwork, and commitment. The seasonal program is designed for children of all ability levels, including those with years of flag football experience and those just beginning their journey.

"We are so excited to expand our youth sports offerings focused on teaching and building confidence in the next generation of athletes in our community," said Bill Tyler, Director of the M-NCPPC, Department of

Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County. "The Commanders Flag Football League will bring newfound fun and energy to our residents that extend beyond FedEx Field. The establishment of this league is yet another way for us to make a positive impact in the lives of our youth."

"As we continue to bring NFL FLAG to new communities around the country, it's encouraging to witness how the sport is positively impacting the lives of young athletes in these communities. I'm excited to see the involvement from our league partners, like the Washington Commanders, an organization fully invested in youth flag football in the DMV area," said RCX Sports CEO Izell Reese. "We strive to increase accessibility and inclusivity in youth sports, so I'm grateful to the Commanders for continuing to be strong champions of flag football at all age levels."

The 2023 Washington Commanders Flag Football League will run October 1 through November 12, 2023. Games will be held each Sunday. Registration is now open through August 31 at www.commandersflag.com.

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation Launches Grow Prince George's "Economic Gardening" Initiative Programs Focus on BIPOC and Women-Owned Businesses

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCEDC

LARGO, Md. (Aug. 15, 2023)—Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation launched Grow Prince George's, an "Economic Gardening" initiative. The program is a comprehensive training series to support Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color (BIPOC) women and Latino entrepreneurs in Prince George's County. Participants will gain valuable knowledge and skills to enhance their entrepreneurial journey and achieve business success.

Grow Prince George's is not just another initiative. It's an "eco-

nom ic gardening" collective specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of established small to mid-sized firms that have surpassed the startup phase and are seeking strategies to propel their growth to new heights.

"Under the Grow Prince George's banner, PGCEDC has produced several training programs that have positively impacted the BIPOC, Latino and Women-owned entrepreneurial community of Prince George's County," said Ebony Stocks, PGCEDC Executive Vice President. "With a varied focus on multiple underserved areas of economic development, this initiative is how we Grow Prince George's.



Expansion starts here."

List of current and past Grow Prince George's programs:

- C-Suite Accelerator Company Showcase And Open House
- Podcast Media Training Program
- Financial Fitness
- Latino Small Business Development Program

- Website Essentials For Small Business
- Next Level Ventures

Economic Gardening® is the country's oldest and best-tested entrepreneurial economic development program. In 1987, Chris Gibbons and Jim Woods brainstormed a groundbreaking idea:

develop an entrepreneurial approach to economic development. At the time, the standard practice was to recruit companies from other communities, called economic hunting. The unconventional thesis suggested that economic developers could stay home and help local entrepreneurs grow their companies, known as economic gardening.

"Grow Prince George's utilizes Economic Gardening which differs from Economic Hunting because it focuses on nurturing and growing existing local businesses rather than actively seeking out and attracting outside companies," said Kimberlee Andrews, PGCEDC Small Business Man-

ager. "This approach fosters sustainable economic development by investing in the community's resources, talent, and innovation, leading to long-term prosperity."

The program's ultimate goal is to cultivate a thriving business ecosystem in Prince George's County, where small and mid-sized businesses of all backgrounds can flourish. We strive to provide inclusive growth opportunities, breaking down barriers that hinder access to technical support services and technology tools due to cost.

This program supports BIPOC and women entrepreneurs, ensuring everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

Actor Lamman Rucker Unveiled as Festival Ambassador: Prince George's Film Festival: Take 2, A Weekend of Cinema Excellence You Cannot Miss!

By PRESS OFFICER
PGAHC

LARGO, Md. (Aug. 15, 2023)—Get ready for a cinematic celebration as we proudly announce actor Lamman Rucker as the esteemed Ambassador for Prince George's Film Festival: Take 2. This lively festival, taking place

from Thursday, September 28, 2023, through Sunday, October 1, 2023, promises an unmissable weekend of creativity, storytelling, and networking happening in Prince George's County, Maryland.

On Thursday, September 28, we kick off our Opening Reception at Prince George's Commu-

nity College, located at 301 Largo Rd, Largo, MD from 5:30–11 p.m. During the reception guests will enjoy an exclusive conversation with Lamman Rucker who will share insights and experiences from his remarkable career, inspiring the next generation of filmmakers. Following the conversation, be

prepared to be enthralled by a special screening of the movie "The Deadly Getaway" produced by one of Prince George's Film Office's grantees, MegaMind Media.

Lamman Rucker's illustrious career began with a guest-starring role in the television series "The Young and the Restless" in

1998, and since then, he has been captivating audiences with his versatility and exceptional performances. He soared to prominence after portraying sheriff Troy Jackson in Tyler Perry's hit film "Why Did I Get Married?" (2007) and its sequel, "Why Did I Get Married Too?" (2010). As a series regular in the Oprah Winfrey Network's mystery drama series "Greenleaf" (2016–2020), Rucker continues to captivate audiences with his immense talent and versatile performances.

This is your chance to immerse yourself in a weekend

filled with workshops, panels, networking opportunities, and captivating film screenings. Don't miss out on the chance to connect with industry peers, gain valuable insights, and be inspired by the art of storytelling. Passes and Tickets Available Now!

Visit www.pgfilmfestival.com for full details.

Founding Festival Partners

The Prince George's Film Festival is founded and generously supported by the Prince George's Arts and Humanities Council and Prince George's Film Office.

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Senior Citizens of Marwood Senior Apartments Demand That Their Corporate Landlord Stop Rent Hikes

Supported by immigrant advocacy organization CASA, senior citizens held this press conference in front of the apartment complex to share their outrage

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To Be Equal: Racist Attacks Can't Hide the Massive Lawlessness on Display in Fulton County, Georgia's, Case Against Trump's "Corrupt Organization"

Future historians will rely on Fulton County's case, not the federal government's, for the full story of one of the darkest chapters in American history.

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FedChoice Charitable Foundation Sponsors Blacks In Government (BIG) DC Chapter's Community Outreach Efforts

This sponsorship will assist the BIG-NCFB Chapter in supporting a range of community activities.

Business and Finance, Page A5

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Come, come, to the Prince George's County Fair, Sept. 7-10!

The Prince George's County Fair is the oldest-running Maryland Fair. It began in 1942 as a friendly gathering for local farmers to showcase their produce and livestock and have a little fun. Eighty-one years later, it's still going strong.

The 2023 Fair will be September 7-10 at the Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro. Hours: Thursday & Friday, 5-10 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Admission: \$5 for age 6-12 and 55+; \$7 for age 13+. Thursday Night: free entry for Seniors (55+). Sunday: free entry for Military Personnel and immediate family members.

Jolly Show Tickets: single tickets, \$1.75; book of 30, \$40; book of 50, \$60. Rides are 3-5 tickets each. All-day Wristband Specials: \$15, Thursday; \$30, Friday; \$30, Saturday; \$30, Sunday.

Competitions include: 4-H Livestock & Crafts, Open Class Livestock & Crafts; Beautiful Baby Contest (Prince George's residents only). There'll be exhibitors, vendors, and performers.

Volunteers are needed from Monday through Sunday. To make sure that they can schedule all volunteers, you must email by August 29 with the times you'd like to volunteer. After that date, call the Fair Office, 301-404-5566. (If you're a student, be advised, you will not be able to volunteer during school hours.)

Debbie Herbert is President of the Fair Board of Directors. Other officers: Amy Blankenship, VP; Nicki Saunders, VP; Roxy Brown, treasurer; and Terry Hampton, secretary.

Just remember: the Fair won't be back for a year. So, go now. For information, e-mail princegeorgescountyfair@gmail.com.

Town of Morningside: Back-to-School

The Morningside Recreation Council has a very special event coming up to celebrate the kids heading back to school. The Ice Cream Social & Roller Skating will be Friday, Sept. 15, 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Morningside Town Hall. Free Make Your Own Ice Cream Bar, skating, and a Give-a-Way Raffle for students. Skating waivers must be signed by a Parent. Also, free ice cream is only while supplies last. For information, call 301-736-2301.

Mosquito spraying continues September 3 and 24. That seems particularly important because mosquitos infected with West Nile virus have been found in Maryland.

The boards covering the accident scene at GI Liquors have been removed! Business should resume any minute now.

Neighbors & other good people

Several Prince George's firefighters have been flown to Hawaii to help with search and rescue operations.

Fr. Jeff Samaha celebrated his 45th year as a priest May 6. He's also celebrating his 30th anniversary as Chief of Chaplains at Medstar Southern Md. Hospital (Aug. 18, 1993, to August 18, 2023).

Mark Russell, who used to comment on politics while standing at a piano with his finger on a piano key, died April 12. He performed regularly at the Shoreham Hotel's Marquee Lounge, at Ford's Theatre, and on PBS and I enjoyed him no matter where. There'll never be another like him. He was buried from Annunciation Parish in Washington; the funeral closed with the congregation singing "The Marine Corps Hymn."

Fatal crash

Two people were killed, and two others seriously injured last Wednesday in a multi-

vehicle crash on the Suitland Parkway in Forestville. The investigation continues but officials say it appears speed was a factor.

This is one of several recent fatal accidents on or near Suitland Parkway. Drive wisely.

Changing landscape

Amazon's first station built for itself from the ground up, in Greater Washington, is due to open this year. It's located at 3700 Forestville Road. The company signed the lease for the site. Amazon says it's expected to open in 2023.

Vegetable and Butcher, the subscription-based food delivery service, has relocated to 6001 Fallard Drive in Upper Marlboro.

A home at 4312 Ridgecrest Drive, in Skyline, has sold for \$183,330.

Places to go and things to do

The Forestville Fire Department has an all-you-can-eat breakfast the second Sunday of the month, for only \$12. Hours: 9 a.m. to noon. (Thank you, Wayne Gordon, for this information.)

Head to Georgetown for an 80-foot-long tour vessel launched last year and the first boat to carry visitors through Georgetown's stretch of the C&O Canal for more than a decade. The cruise takes you from the canal's visitors center on Thomas Jefferson Street NW to a basin on the other side of the Whitehurst Freeway, and back. Tours are offered at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Tickets are \$15 to \$25 for adults; \$10-\$20 for seniors, teachers and active-duty military; and \$8-\$12 for ages 2 to 18. Info: georgetownheritage.org.

See MORNINGSIDE Page A4

Around the County

Senior Citizens of Marwood Senior Apartments Demand That Their Corporate Landlord Stop Rent Hikes

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Aug 22, 2023)—On August 17, the residents of Marwood Senior Apartments publicly denounced their landlord, Conifer Realty, LLC, for unfair rent increases and maintenance issues. Supported by immigrant advocacy organization CASA, senior citizens held this press conference in front of the apartment complex to share their outrage: despite the temporary rent stabilization bill in Prince George's County that caps increases at 3 percent, Conifer Realty, LLC, has continued implementing increases to the rent well beyond the allowed amount.

One of the senior citizens standing up for their rights is Mr. Bishop, a Prince Georgian for 18 years and a resident of Marwood Senior Apartments for 15 years.

"I chose to retire here because it is a great county. But Prince Georgians have been abused when it comes to rent after the pandemic protections ended," stated Bishop.

"When I came here to Marwood Senior Apartments, I was paying \$900 for a two bedroom apartment. Because of rent hikes, I later moved to a 1 bedroom apartment two years ago which was \$1,212. This year, it went up to \$1,523, a \$301 increase. How is this legal?"

Seniors at Marwood unanimously sent a letter of demands to the representatives and owners of Marwood apartments and Conifer Realty, LLC, with the hope to meet with residents in a timely manner. Residents have been trying to meet with their landlord since June of 2023, but their landlord has failed to respond to requests.

Another resident, Synester Scott shared, "I have lived in Prince George's County for over 50 years. I am 81 years old. Two years ago, I moved into the Marwood Senior Apartments and was paying \$1,258 under tax credit for a one bedroom apartment. When I signed a new lease in June 2023, my rent went up to \$1,513. That is an increase of \$255. This increase is more than the 3% rent stabilization law in Prince George's County."

She added, "We have not had air conditioning in the community room for two months now. We have complained to the management as the summer has waned on, but nothing has been done."

The demands to meet with the owners of Marwood, Conifer Realty, LLC, have been neglected since June 2023. Only when tenants

See RENT HIKES Page A3

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

"Bowie State University Athletics hosted the Kevin Durant AAU men's and women's skill camp. Many thanks and great appreciation for KD and the Durant Foundation for their continuous support of Bulldog Nation", VP Doughty.

HOMECOMING CELEBRATION

Save the date you don't want to miss the holy Ghost Part going down on Sunday, August 27, 2023, 11 a.m. at Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church Annual Homecoming Celebration. Spread the word. Come home to worship with Family and Friends. "We've Come This Far By Faith", Hebrews 10:22-25 (NRSV). Sermonettes and Reunion Choir. Rev. Shemaiah Strickland, Pastor. The church address is 15601 Brooks Church, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772. #smallchurchbigvisionbiggerGod.

INAUGURAL BLOOD CANCER & SICKLE CELL 5K

Join us at National Harbor, 165 Waterfront Street, National Harbor, Maryland 20745, September 8, 2023. Thirty dollars includes walk shirt. Join now and join the fun. Start time: 5 p.m.-9 p.m. For vending, partnership opportunities or other questions, contact: info@ednaslove.org. On the website scan the QR code or use the link www.ednaslove. Edna's Love (Every Daughter Needs A Supportive) Love. Showing Seeds of Compassion to Transform Lives Through Service. Special thanks to our sponsors.

This event is to raise awareness and funds to help us make grassroots impact in our communities. It helps to fund critically needed blood drives, provide meals and toiletries to those undergoing treatment and much more. We will also have community partners there to share vital resources to aid those in need. Join us for this auspicious occasion.

UNIVERSITY STARTUPS

University Startups is helping student entrepreneurs build businesses at Bowie State University. Thirty students were selected for accelerator boot camp. Bowie State University in Bowie, Maryland has partnered with the Bowie State University Entrepreneurship Innovation Center to launch the Building Businesses @ BSU program.

After a competitive application process, 30 students at Bowie State University were selected to participate in the Accelerator Boot Camp to develop their business ideas and hone their entrepreneurial skills. By the end of the January program, 90% of students felt confident in their abilities to run a business.

"We are thrilled to announce the partnership between Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center and the University Startups to launch the Building Businesses @BSU program," said Johnetta Hardy, executive director of the Entrepreneurship Innovation Center. "This initiative is designed to empower young entrepreneurs with the skills, resources, and support necessary to transform their ideas into successful businesses. We are proud to have witnessed the creation of over \$3,800 in revenue and the acquisition of 190 new customers across the cohort. The Building Business @ BSU program is a testament to the power of collaboration and the potential of young entrepreneur to drive innovation and economic growth here at BSU."

Arianna Redmond, a sophomore nursing major, launched a business called Tony's Kitchen and Bakery. Redmond's father was an entrepreneur and shared his passion for cooking with her before he passed away in 2021. Redmond felt compelled to continue his legacy of entrepreneurship and their shared love of baking.

"As a growing entrepreneur, the Accelerator Boot Camp is teaching me the mindset, the steps needed, and the fundamentals of launching my own business," Redmond says.

USU instructors taught the students a comprehensive curriculum using lean startup methodology, building prototypes, and interviewing customers for market research. The Boot Camp culminated in a Pitch Competition, where participants received feedback from experienced entrepreneurs on their presentation skills and overall business ideas. Raymond Green, coordinator for the Building Business @ BSU program, instilled his mantra for success in the students: Move the needle one inch every day."

Following the conclusion of the Boot Camp, the SCEOs (Student CEOs) will continue to receive one-on-one business coaching from the entrepreneurial ecosystem at USU. To learn more about how University Startups helps build entrepreneurial ecosystems, contact info@university-startups.com. MEDIA CONTACT: David Thompson, dlthompson@bowiestate.edu, 301-860-4311.

2023 MISSION NUTRITION

Free Fresh Seasonal Produce—monthly distribution schedule at Gwynn Park High School September 19, October 17, November 21, December 19 from 4 p.m.-6 p.m. The school address is 13800 Brandywine Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Please bring your own bags. Sponsored in partnership with Prince George's

See BRANDYWINE Page A6

OFFICE OF CENTRAL SERVICES
Land Acquisition and Real Property Division



NOTICE: REQUEST FOR SPACE ("RFS")
OCS-RFS-DSS-2023-8:

DSS WARM NIGHTS EMERGENCY TEMPORARY HOUSING

Prince George's County's Office of Central Services ("OCS") is seeking offers for land for new construction or existing free standing building(s) that is currently ready for occupancy or could be renovated to be occupied as an emergency temporary housing for residents experiencing an episode of homelessness. It is the County's strong preference to purchase a site, land, or the redevelopment of an existing building in the fulfillment of this requirement, but the County will also consider lease structure or ground lease options that include a path to ownership.

Responsive offers, among other things, should provide space that is within one building and contiguous on a single floor is preferred. However, properties [campus complex] that include multiple buildings may be considered. **ISSUANCE DATE: AUGUST 1, 2023**

DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSALS:

Offers will be received and considered on a rolling basis starting and this solicitation shall remain open until the County has awarded a contract that satisfies the entirety of this requirement.

Offers must be e-mailed to: OCS_RealProperty@co.pg.md.us

ATTENTION:

Ikenna Udejiofor, Administrator
Land Acquisition and Real Property Division (LARP)

REFERENCE:

DSS Warm Nights Emergency
Temporary Housing RFS DSS-2023-8

SUBMISSION FORMAT AND DUE DATE:

Please submit two (2) electronic copies (1 PDF and 1 Word version.) Offers must be submitted to OCS with all required supplemental information and documentation, by 3:00 pm, September 4, 2023, else the offer will not be considered.

Addendum: If it becomes necessary to revise any part of this RFS or if additional data is necessary to enable interpretation of provisions of this RFS, such revisions or additional data will be made available online at <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/4212/Development-and-Solicitation-Opportunity>



No phone calls, please.

1400 McCormick Drive | Suite 336 | Largo, MD 20774

COMMUNITY

Marietta House Museum Presents: "Mindfulness at Marietta," a Forest Bathing Series

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Take some time out of your busy day to relax and reconnect! Join us for "Mindfulness at Marietta", a Forest Bathing Series that includes relaxing afternoons engaged in history and nature through touch, sight, and smell.

"The Mindfulness at Marietta" series is as follows:

Touching History, Saturday, August 26 (rain date, August 27), 1:30–2:30 p.m.

An Eye on History, Saturday, September 30 (rain date, October 1), 1:30–2:30 p.m.

The Fragrance of History, Saturday, October 21 (rain date, October 22), 1:30–2:30 p.m.

The one-hour sessions will be led by Susan West Montgomery who is a certified Outdoor Mindfulness guide. She deepens the mindfulness experience by layering the nature-culture connection outdoors on Marietta House Museum grounds. Susan is an ad-

vocate for helping people connect through nature and history to promote social justice and foster good health and well-being. Forest bathing is based on the Japanese practice of Shinrin-yoku. Forest bathing has been shown to provide tremendous health benefits including stress reduction and a greater ability to concentrate. The sessions are conducted in relative quiet and are not strenuous; all skill levels and most abilities can be accommodated.

Recommended for ages 5 and up. Ages 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult. \$5/person, children under 12 are free. Please call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pgparks.com to register. We look forward to seeing you.

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Rent Hikes from A2

communicated news about the press conference to the landlord did a landlord representative respond, pitching a meeting in late October. The management instead retaliates with threats to not renew their leases.

Marwood resident Ms. Swan explained, "My rent was about \$1,579 for a one bedroom apartment. After 2 years, it went up to

See RENT HIKES Page A4

Accokeek Non-Profit Leader Named a Nation's Finest 50!

Nation's Finest, a non-profit Veteran support organization established in 1972, celebrates its 50th anniversary by honoring 50 leaders from across the country who have gone above and beyond to support Veterans.

A traveling exhibition will raise greater awareness about Veterans' issues, the work of Nation's Finest, and programs available across the country to support Veterans.

By PRESS OFFICER
Nation's Finest

ACCOKEEK, Md. (Aug. 8, 2023)—Petty Officer Third Class Ginger Miller, a service-disabled Navy Veteran and non-profit leader in Accokeek, was named a Nation's Finest 50 today. She was awarded the honor for her exceptional dedication to supporting women Veterans. After experiencing homelessness with her family, Miller founded John 14:2, Inc., a non-profit organization that aids homeless Veterans. She later established Women Veterans Interactive (WVI), which is dedicated to meeting women Veterans' needs through advocacy, empowerment, interaction, outreach, and unification. Under Ginger's leadership, WVI has supported over 5,000 women Veterans, forged partnerships with numerous organizations, and established impactful solutions-based programs to address the unique needs of women Veterans.

"We are proud to award Ginger Miller with the Nation's Finest 50 Award," said Nation's Finest CEO Chris Johnson. "Miller's selfless service has earned her numerous awards, and she continues to inspire and serve on various boards and advisory committees while creating positive change for Veterans."

Nation's Finest is one of the largest and most successful Veterans services organizations in the United States. The organization was founded to support Veterans returning from the Vietnam War 50 years ago by providing critical housing, health, and

employment support to ensure Veterans reach their full potential. Nation's Finest marked its 50th anniversary with a milestone event honoring 50 leaders from across the nation who have gone above and beyond to support Veterans with the first-ever Nation's Finest 50 Award.

"For the past 50 years, Nation's Finest has been guiding our Veterans home. We created the Nation's Finest 50 Award to recognize and celebrate 50 people during this anniversary year who have gone above and beyond to support our Veterans," said Nation's Finest CEO Chris Johnson. "While the world has changed greatly during the past five decades since we were founded to support Vietnam Veterans, the work of so many remarkable individuals and organizations continues to make a tremendous impact in helping support our Veterans. We celebrate and honor 50 of the finest."

During the award ceremony, Nation's Finest announced and unveiled a traveling and online exhibition featuring the Nation's Finest 50 Awardees, along with a social media campaign that shares their personal stories, work, and impact within the Veterans' community. The exhibition will travel to several cities, beginning in California, Arizona, and Nevada this summer. The goal is to raise greater awareness about Veterans' issues, the work of Nation's Finest, and programs available across the country to support Veterans.

Nation's Finest 50 Award honorees were selected from hundreds of hardworking and inspiring individuals nominated by the pub-

lic to receive the prestigious award and selected by a distinguished Blue Ribbon Panel appointed by Nation's Finest. The panel was chaired by Koby Langley, a two-tour Veteran and Bronze Star recipient, and included community leaders and Veterans, including Major General (retired) James A. "Spider" Marks, among others.

The recipients of the first-ever Nation's Finest 50 Awards range from military Veterans, founders and leaders of nonprofit organizations, and community and corporate leaders to actors, musicians, comedians, philanthropists, and researchers. Among the 50 Veterans awardees are Vietnam Veteran Jack Jacobs; NAMVETS founder William Sims; Team Rubicon CEO Art Delacruz; Women Warriors CEO Jodie Grenier; Actor Montel Williams; IAVA founder Paul Rieckoff; Blue Star Families founder Kathy Roth-Douquet; CreatiVets co-founder Richard Casper; country music singer Trace Atkins; actor and filmmaker Tom Hanks; Paramount Global Chief Veteran Officer Rich Jones; and military spouse advocate and author Sue Hoppin.

The programs and impact of Nation's Finest continue to grow, having served over 150,000 Veterans and provided over \$275 million in direct services in more than 30 locations. For more information about the Nation's Finest 50 Award, the full biographies and personal stories of each honoree, and to watch the award ceremony which includes touching video tributes, visit www.nationsfinest.org.



**A better
state of care
right where
you need it.**

UM Laurel Medical Center Now Open.

We're here to help build a stronger and healthier Laurel, connecting you to the innovation of academic medicine all in one new location. And this is just the beginning. Look for additional services as we evolve to meet your ever-changing wellness needs and drive to improve the health of Maryland. That's a better state of care.



umms.org/laurel

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Racist Attacks Can't Hide the Massive Lawlessness on Display in Fulton County, Georgia's, Case Against Trump's "Corrupt Organization"

"With Trump, you don't need to look for a dog whistle. It's a bull horn when it comes to race. And I do think that's deliberate. We've seen the—I mean, slanderous attacks that he has put out against Fani Willis, you know, alleged things I won't even repeat. So, he's not really hiding that he's going to lean into that element, and this is, you know, taking place just outside of Atlanta. When you saw the courtroom, it was a lot of Black men and women who are serving in that courtroom ... It's textbook Donald Trump but it comes as no surprise."

—Former White House Director of Strategic Communications Alyssa Farah

If anything illustrates the depths to which Donald Trump and his supporters have sunk in responding to his racketeering indictment in Fulton County, Georgia, it's his reference to those he falsely accuses of voter fraud as "riggers."

MAGA extremists, who have been using the word as a substitute for the n-word on far-right social media sites, responded with racist delight.

Trump has put a dishonest, racist, and misogynistic spin on the old legal adage: If the law is against you, pound the facts. If the facts are against you, pound the law. If the law and the facts are against you, pound the table and yell like hell.

But amount of pounding and yelling can obscure the breathtaking lawlessness outlined in the sweeping indictment Fulton County District Attorney Fani Willis filed this week against Trump and his 18 alleged co-conspirators. By charging them under Georgia's Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act Willis has at last cast their brazenly corrupt conduct in the proper legal light.

While the narrowly-focused federal indictment that Special Counsel Jack Smith filed against Trump earlier this month acknowledges six alleged co-conspirators, they are neither identified nor

charged. Fulton County's indictment of 18 co-conspirators—and reference to 30 more unnamed, unindicted co-conspirators—illustrates the far-reaching scope of the massive scheme to overturn the 2020 presidential election.

Trump's alleged criminal enterprise operated not only in Fulton County, but "elsewhere in the State of Georgia, in other states, including, but not limited to, Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, and in the District of Columbia." Its members engaged in "various related criminal activities including, but not limited to, false statements and writings, impersonating a public officer, forgery, filing false documents, influencing witnesses, computer theft, computer trespass, computer invasion of privacy, conspiracy to defraud the state, acts involving theft, and perjury."

Omitted from the federal indictment was an alleged conspiracy to breach voting equipment and access voter data. "In Georgia, members of the enterprise stole data, including ballot images, voting equipment software, and personal voter information. The stolen data was then distributed to other members of the enterprise, including members in other states." Nor does the federal indictment refer to a bizarre plan, advocated by Trump lawyer Sidney Powell, to use the military to seize voting machines around the country and re-run parts of the election.

Future historians will rely on Fulton County's case, not the federal government's, for the full story of one of the darkest chapters in American history. The meticulous work of Willis and her team is all the more remarkable given the constant abuse and threats of violence, incited by Trump, that his supporters have hurled at them. Regardless of the outcome, Team Willis as well as the witnesses and grand jurors whom MAGA extremists also have targeted, will emerge as the heroes.

—August 17, 2023

Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita, Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Charles Ogletree

"Tree had everyone's backs; he saw the potential in everyone and sought to nurture it."

So said Tomiko Brown-Nagin, dean of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard and professor of constitutional law at Harvard Law School, and one of Harvard Law School Professor Charles Ogletree's many colleagues, admirers, and friends. Charles Ogletree, who died August 4, was one of our nation's preeminent legal scholars and a lifelong champion for racial and social justice. Many of his friends have noted "Tree" was an appropriate nickname for a man who felt like a giant, standing tall and steadfast and protecting and nurturing others around him. This always included his students, especially the Black students who attended the beloved "Saturday School" enrichment sessions he led at Harvard Law School. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama were both among his brilliant mentees.

As President Obama remembered: "Eventually, Saturday School became so popular that students of every background began showing up to hear Charles explain things in a way they could understand. It was an example of the kind of person Charles has always been: unfailingly helpful, and driven by a genuine concern for others." This concern extended far beyond his own circles. I am especially grateful for his legacy as a steadfast champion of nurturing all children's potential and embracing proven child development strategies before children, especially poor children of color, ended up in the criminal justice system.

He grew up poor himself as the child and grandchild of farm workers in Merced, California, the oldest of seven siblings, and the first in his family to graduate from high school. His parents separated when he was young and he moved between family members' households often. But he loved to read, finding freedom and escape in piles of library books read by flashlight, and as a self-identified "Brown baby" who benefited from the doors opened by Brown v. Board of Education he understood the impact access to education made in his own life: "To me, it is the key that turns things in the right direction. Educating every child makes an enormous amount of difference."

When a high school guidance counselor first

suggested he apply to Stanford University, two hours from home, he had not yet heard of it. But he took the counselor's advice and was accepted with a scholarship. He would later remember that on his way to start his freshman year he thought he had a flat tire and actually turned around and went home, but was surprised by what happened next: "When I got back to my house, my brothers and my sister had moved my bed out completely. I said, 'What's going on here?!' and they said, 'You're the first to go from high school to college and we want you to succeed.' I had no choice." He turned back around and he did indeed succeed, first at Stanford, where he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees, and then at Harvard Law School before beginning his long and storied career. Just as he'd been a role model for his younger siblings, he became one for countless others.

Throughout it all he used his talents to help make sure other young people could also receive fair access to education and opportunity. He testified before Congress, wrote, and spoke often on the need for juvenile justice reform and positive interventions for at-risk children, and moderated a Children's Defense Fund conference panel around the shared mission of ending the Cradle to Prison Pipeline® crisis. As he said in one interview: "It's one thing to talk about trying to change the way we look at children. It's another thing to give it some teeth so that it makes a big difference . . . If we do this, if we really embrace this . . . we will save a generation of children from what others have experienced in the past, and we will create a generation of smart, healthy, excited, energetic, competent, and resourceful young leaders for tomorrow."

Charles Ogletree had a clear vision for how our nation could be better and more just for everyone, and he spent his life fighting for that vision and teaching others the tools they needed to join him. He often quoted one of his favorite gospel songs:

I don't feel no ways tired,
I've come too far from where I started from.
Nobody told me that the road would be easy,
I don't believe He brought me this far to leave me.

—August 18, 2023

Veteran from A1

Director Joy Hart. "His work and his enthusiasm contribute to our culture and our goal to be a community where people thrive and live life to the fullest."

About 10 years ago, Parks finally got to say goodbye to his father. He took a trip to Europe with his family and made a special stop in Luxembourg.

"I'll never forget seeing my father's grave and paying my respects," said Parks. "It was a very emotional experience; I cried."

Much of Parks' work today is out of deep respect for his father and all who made the ultimate sacrifice through their service. Parks said the first step veterans need to take before applying for benefits is getting their paperwork in order.

"You need all of your records from your time in the military and after," said Parks. "Service treatment records, doctor records, insurance information, discharge paperwork, everything. And age doesn't matter; don't think you are too old to

apply. I helped a 100-year-old veteran receive benefits."

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Morningside from A2

Charles County Fair, Sept. 14-17. Info: www.charlescountyfair.com.

Gisele Booker, La Reine HS, Class of '73

Gisele Murphy Booker, graduate of the now-defunct La Reine High School, died July 11. She was born in Shreveport, the daughter of CMSGT Donald and Jimmie Ruth Murphy. As a military family, they lived in London, Bangkok and several states before moving to Washington. She attended La Reine as did her sisters DeEarcie, Donna and Rachel. They were known as The Murphy Girls.

She met Ronald Booker, who was in Marine Corps training at Quantico. They married in 1978 at the Naval Academy and served at a number of bases. Meanwhile, Gisele continued her education at American University, Mary Washington College, Monterey Peninsula College, Hartnell College and Golden Gate University where she got her bachelor's in 1985.

In the early '90s, she watched an Oprah Winfrey special about children in foster care and decided to open her home to children in need; Gisele and Ronald became foster parents of 15 children over 15 years. Gisele was on the staff of two local dance schools, the Christian Dance Academy of Clinton and the OH! Ballet Arts Academy (BAA) of Waldorf.

Funeral services were at Holy Family Parish in Hillcrest Heights.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Chris Busky, William Fowler, and twins Anthony and Avery Simmons, Aug. 27; Dorothy Stevenson, Aug. 28; Lavine Callicott and her husband Bill, both on Aug. 29; my daughter-in-law Michelle McHale, Aug. 20; Wanda Payne Simms, Bria Barbour-Ray, Denis Wood, Jai McCune, Caitlin Rose Woods and Tom Anderson, Aug. 30; Mary Berkley and Travis Mullins, Aug. 31.

Happy 48th anniversary to John and Dorothy Stevenson who were wed August 30, 1975.

Rent Hikes from A3

\$1,807 for this same one bedroom apartment. That is a \$228 increase. That is too much for me. I depend on fixed income. This rent hike is too much for me, I can't afford it. Rents are too damn high."

"I stand with CASA and the seniors at Marwood, in their fight for fair housing," said Prince George's county council member Krystal Oriadha, District 7. "The Rent Stabilization Act was passed by the People's Council to ensure that vulnerable populations would not be at risk of losing their homes. It is disappointing that we now are seeing senior living facilities trying to take advantage of senior residents by raising rents more than the 3% cap. I am committed to con-

tinuing to work on ensuring each senior facility is abiding by the temporary rent stabilization legislation, and we will be ensuring that this issue is front and center in the permanent rent stabilization bill."

"As Prince George's residents continue fighting against rent hikes and for a permanent rent stabilization bill, tenants must know their rights and be united in this housing justice movement," closed Jorge Benitez-Perez, CASA's lead organizer for Prince George's County. "Tenants have for months reached out to Conifer Realty, LLC, in different ways. The landlord is willing to wait five months to meet with their tenants, showing their callous approach. Yet, they had no hesitation to immediately call the police on tenants seeking fair housing conditions and prices."

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

When Should My Wife Claim Social Security?

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

Dear Rusty: My wife will be 65 next year, and her full retirement age is 66 years plus 10 months. Can she collect 50% of my Social Security benefit at her full retirement age and then get her own higher personal amount at age 70? Her own amount at her full retirement age is \$1,100 per month but her age 70 amount is \$1,800. My Social Security is \$2,300. Suggestions welcome. **Signed: My Wife's Helper**

Dear Helper: Your wife cannot separate her spousal benefit from her personal Social Security retirement benefit—whenever she claims she will be automatically deemed to be filing for both her own benefit and her spousal entitlement. Thus, she cannot claim her spousal benefit first at her full retirement age and defer claiming her own SS retirement benefit until she is 70. When your wife should claim is, essentially, a decision which should consider the urgency of her need for the money, her life expectancy, whether she will be eligible for a spouse benefit from you, and whether she is working.

If your wife claims before her full retirement age (FRA) and is working, she'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" which limits how much she can earn before some SS benefits are taken away (Social Security's earnings test goes away at FRA).

Average life expectancy for a woman your wife's age is about 87. If your current \$2,300 benefit is a result of you taking your Social Security at your full retirement age or earlier, then your wife will receive a small "spousal boost" from you. If she claims at her full retirement age, your wife's total Social Security payment will be 50% of the amount you were entitled to at your

FRA and that will be her permanent amount, except for annual COLA increases. However, from what you've shared, your wife's age 70 amount is considerably more than her maximum spousal benefit so, if her life expectancy is long, that suggests she may wish to consider waiting until age 70 to claim her own maximum benefit. By doing so, your wife will get more in cumulative lifetime benefits if she achieves average life expectancy.

The unknown factor is your life expectancy because, as your widow, your wife will be entitled to 100% of the amount you were receiving at your death, instead of the smaller amount she is receiving on her own or as your spouse. If life expectancy is long for both of you, then your wife maximizing her own benefit by waiting until age 70 to claim is a prudent choice. But if your, or your wife's, life expectancy is shorter, then your wife claiming at her full retirement age would be a better decision.

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.

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FedChoice Charitable Foundation Sponsors Blacks In Government (BIG) DC Chapter's Community Outreach Efforts

By PRESS OFFICER
FedChoice Charitable Foundation

LANHAM, Md. (Aug. 16, 2023)—The FedChoice Charitable Foundation is thrilled to announce that it is expanding its partnership with the Blacks In Government Chapter of the Internal Revenue Service at the New Carrollton Federal Building (BIG-NCFB), by supporting its community outreach efforts with a special sponsorship.

Andrey Gidaspov, Executive Director, FedChoice Charitable Foundation, and Marcia Lynch, Business Development Manager, FedChoice Federal Credit Union, presented a \$1,000 community sponsorship to the BIG-NCFB Chapter President, Paula E. Davis, and First Vice President Lynn D. Simpson at the Gerald R. Reed National Office in Washington, D.C.

This sponsorship will assist the BIG-NCFB Chapter in supporting a range of community activities, such as Back-to-School drives, senior citizen community activities, and mentoring. For students of two local schools, BIG provides new backpacks filled with needed school supplies. For a local senior care facility, the organization provides care packages of needed hygiene essentials, special socks, and blankets. It also supports several families during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season by providing food baskets.

On receiving this sponsorship, Ms. Davis expressed: "A BIG round of applause and thanks to FedChoice for encouraging and adding more power beneath BIG-NCFB's wings to further the reach in our community outreach! With this boost of assistance, our reach can be expanded further."

Over the past several years, FedChoice Federal Credit Union has actively collaborated with the chapter and participated in various community activities, including "Lunch-N-Learn" sessions on financial management knowledge, and retirement matters for the New Carrollton Federal Building employees and contractors. Throughout the pandemic, FedChoice continued to support BIG-NCFB's efforts at community engagement, including the

Virtual and Face-to-Face National Training Institutes in 2021 and 2022.

Ms. Davis reflected on this shared history: "The outstanding staff of FedChoice has always been open and receptive to assisting our BIG-NCFB Chapter with multiple needs, guidance to enhance our membership base, and help in meeting our overall mission and goals."

Brett Noll, Chairman of the FedChoice Charitable Foundation, stated, "We are delighted to be able to provide support to the Blacks In Government New Carrollton Federal Building Chapter. The work they do to elevate those in need goes hand in hand with the mission of our Foundation. It's also wonderful to partner with a group that represents the Internal Revenue Service, whose employees founded FedChoice Federal Credit Union nearly 90 years ago."

The FedChoice Charitable Foundation was founded in 2017 and offers financial well-being and positive impacts in local communities while being a resource, advocate, and champion for the Federal Community.



PHOTO COURTESY FEDCHOICE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
(From left to right) Marcia Lynch, Lynn Simpson, Paula Davis, Andrey Gidaspov

Hospice of the Chesapeake Announces Rachel Sherman, DNP as new Director of Nursing and Clinical Advocacy

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Aug 17, 2023)—Hospice of the Chesapeake announced today that Rachel Sherman, DNP, CRNP, FNP-BC, ACHPN, has been appointed to the newly created role of Director of Nursing and Clinical Advocacy.

Sherman previously served as the Director of Medical Services at Hospice of the Chesapeake as well as a supportive care nurse practitioner. Prior to joining Hospice of the Chesapeake, Sherman launched her own primary care practice, Maryland Concierge Primary Care, as well as supported Palliative Medicine of Southern Maryland, Optum-United Healthcare, GWU Medical Faculty Associates, Sibley Memorial Hospital, Hospice of Charles County, and George Washington University Hospital in a variety of patient care roles over the last 10 years.

As Director of Nursing and Clinical Advocacy, Sherman will provide nursing discipline guidance to Hospice of the Chesapeake's 200+ team members under the nursing umbrella including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and certified nursing assistants while simultaneously advocating externally for the evolution of advanced illness care in the com-

munity. Sherman will look to create new partnerships with community healthcare organizations and education institutions to further strengthen the support the organization currently provides to those who need supportive and hospice care. Appreciating that the landscape of nursing and hospice and palliative care are ever-changing, Sherman will make nursing education and innovation a priority in her new role.

In addition to her clinical focus, Sherman is well known to the community as a strong advocate for the underserved communities in Maryland as well as the co-founder of We the People of PG County, a grassroots organization with a mission to address discriminatory and substandard business practices in Prince George's County.

Chief Medical Officer Dr. Marny Fetzer said Sherman's hands-on experience in providing continuum of care options and her history as a community activist made her a perfect choice for this newly created role. "We are honored that Dr. Sherman has accepted this new role and we greatly value her focus on innovation as well as her tremendous experience in the nursing discipline and look forward to her strong advocacy for the community," Fetzer said.

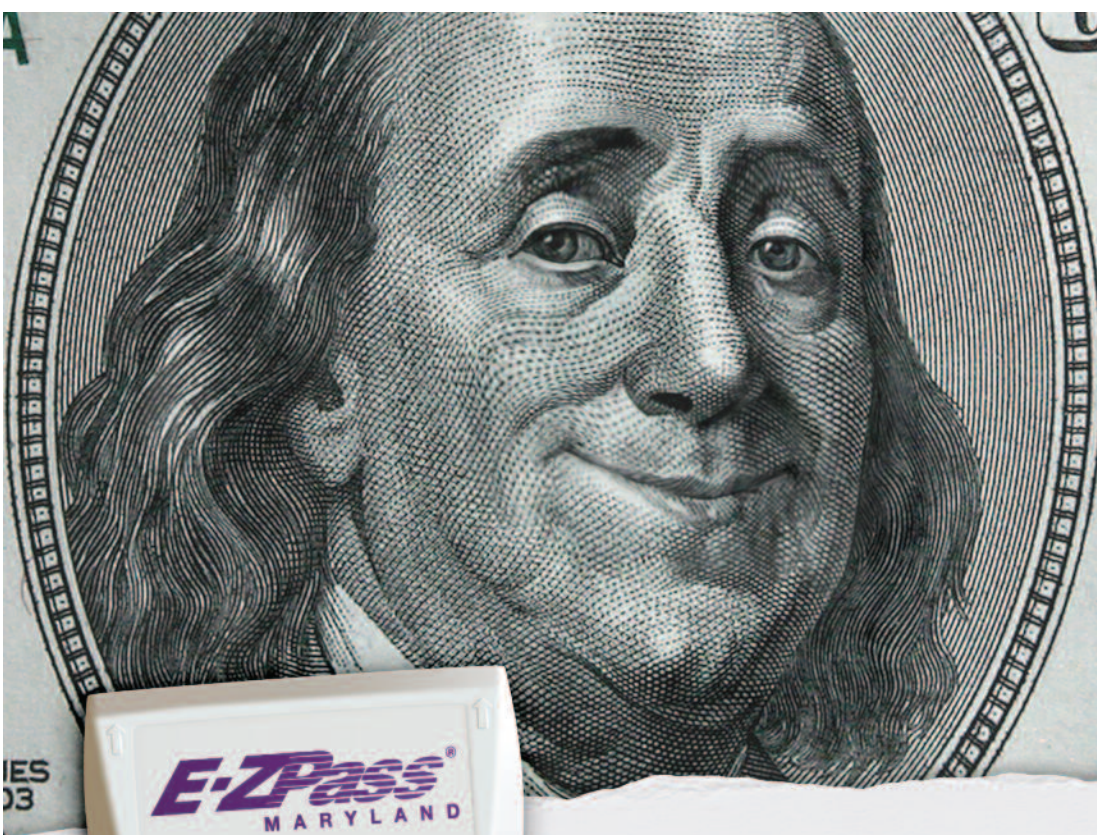


PHOTO COURTESY HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Rachel Sherman, DNP, CRNP, FNP-BC, ACHPN, Director of Nursing and Clinical Advocacy

Sherman earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Trinity Washington University, a Master of Science in Nursing from Chamberlain College of Nursing, and her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Frontier Nursing University. "I am excited to join Dr. Fetzer and the Hospice of the Chesapeake leadership team in focusing on how we can continue to support those in our community living with advanced illness," Sherman said.

Hospice of the Chesapeake is Maryland's largest independent, not-for-profit hospice caring for patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's counties.



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