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Comptroller Franchot Virtually Presents the Prince George's County William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award

The Training Source has provided job skills and youth development to Maryland's underserved for 27 years

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Comptroller

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (June 24, 2020)—Comptroller Peter Franchot has virtually presented the annual William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award for Prince George's County to E. Kim Rhim, founder of The Training Source, Inc., a nonprofit organization offering comprehensive adult and youth job training programs, youth development programs, safety net services for families in need and professional training for employers.

Created in 1993, The Training Source provided an avenue for Ms. Rhim to give

back to community members by offering resources most necessary for life-sustaining and life-fulfilling futures, embodying the principles that Schaefer, the late Baltimore City mayor, Maryland governor and comptroller, held dear. At the heart of the program is Rhim's objective to develop people, not just skills, which is integral to the mission of providing education, training and services that promote positive economic mobility for unemployed and low-income Marylanders.

The virtual presentation can be viewed on the Comptroller's YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/OGHIQP5sxwg>.



PHOTO COURTESY THE COMPTROLLER'S OFFICE

E. Kim Rhim, founder of The Training Source, virtually accepts the William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award.

Since 2012, Comptroller Franchot has annually traveled to each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions to honor an individual or organization serving their community. This year, all Schaefer Award presentations will be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Individual press releases will be sent announcing each of the honorees, along with a link to view the virtual ceremony.

Prince George's County Memorial Library System Announces Phased Reopening Plan

Phase 1—Curbside Service Begins Tuesday, July 21

By NICHOLAS A. BROWN
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (June 26, 2020)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) will gradually resume in-person services at all branches over the course of the coming months. Using a phased approach to reopening, the Library has developed criteria for resuming services based on current and future public health conditions. The health and safety of the Library's customers and staff are of the highest priority and will dictate the progression through the four phases of the Library's reopening, based on guidance from the Prince George's County Health Department. **Phase 1 (Curbside Service) will begin on Tuesday, July 21. Book drops will reopen on Thursday, July 9.**

The Library acknowledges that customers are eager to return to their beloved libraries as soon as possible, however the continued presence of COVID-19 requires a steady and deliberate approach to resuming access to

Phase 1 July 21		Curbside Service
Phase 2 TBD		Limited Branch Access
Phase 3 TBD		Partial Branch Access
Phase 4 TBD		Full Branch Access

physical library materials, branch libraries, and in-person programs. The Phased Reopening Plan is available for review at pgcmls.info/reopening.

The Library's Phased Reopening Plan has been carefully developed with input from the

County Health Department, Board of Library Trustees, and UFCW-1994/MCGEO, which represents the Library's employees. The re-

See **LIBRARY SYSTEM** Page A6

State Fire Marshal Suggests Attending Public Fireworks Displays

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the State Fire Marshal

STATEWIDE (June 25, 2020)—With the arrival of summer, State Fire Marshal Brian S. Geraci is suggesting that Marylanders attend public fireworks displays. "I would highly suggest the safest way to enjoy fireworks is to attend one of the many public fireworks displays throughout the State," stated Geraci. Due to complications of the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for physical distancing, many applicants, including local municipalities and private businesses, have elected not to hold most outdoor displays, however, citizens are permitted to use legal fireworks in approved areas. **Fireworks are**

PROHIBITED in Baltimore City, Montgomery, Prince George's, Harford, and Howard Counties as well as Ocean City.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal will process any application which it receives and will grant approval upon meeting guidelines. To help Marylanders enjoy a safer summer season, the State Fire Marshal offers several ways to enjoy fireworks while avoiding injury:

- Consider attending one of the numerous public fireworks displays scheduled throughout Maryland every year. Leave fireworks to the professionals. For a list of this year's approved public fireworks displays throughout the state, visit the Maryland State Fire

Marshal's website at: mdsp.maryland.gov/firemarshal/Documents/2020%20Firework%20Permits%20List.pdf.

For those individuals who insist on the use of consumer fireworks:

- Purchase the fireworks in the location where you intend to discharge them. Check with the local municipality to determine what fireworks are considered legal for use in that area.
- Read and follow label warnings and instructions.
- Do not allow small children to use fireworks
- Do not consume alcoholic beverages while using fireworks.
- Have a bucket of water or hose available
- Fully extinguish remains of

fireworks in water before disposal.

"Fireworks have been a long tradition of the 4th of July holiday celebrations. Please make safety your number one priority so everyone can enjoy the holiday season," stated State Fire Marshal Brian Geraci. "By acting responsibly, we can help eliminate fireworks injuries in Maryland."

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an agency of the Department of State Police dedicated to helping protect citizens from fire and explosion through a comprehensive program of education, inspection, investigation and fire protection engineering. For more information on fire safety call 1-800-525-3124, visit our website and/or our Facebook Page.

COVID-19 Update: Prince George's County Enters a Full Phase Two Reopening as Of Monday, June 29 at 5 PM

Office of the
County Executive

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (June 26, 2020)—Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks released a statement today announcing the next stage of the county's reopening plan. The press release reads as follows:

Dear Prince Georgians:

I want to thank each and every one of you for your strength and resilience as we adjust to our new normal in Prince George's County. Due to your diligence in following safety guidelines such as wearing a face covering and practicing physical distancing, we are continuing to see downward trends in our number of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Therefore, I am announcing that Prince George's County will enter a full phase two reopening on Monday, June 29, 2020 at 5:00 PM.

We remain cautiously optimistic as we move forward with our phased reopening and recovery of Prince George's County. I am encouraged by the progress that we have made together as a community to slow the spread of this virus, and I know that if we

all continue to take certain precautions that are part of our new normal, we can continue to contain the spread of COVID-19 in this next phase of our reopening.

As part of the full phase two reopening, we are still encouraging everyone to exercise caution and limit non-essential trips. We need all residents to continue to wear a face covering, maintain physical distancing (at least 6 feet of distance between yourself and others) and practice critical hygiene actions such as washing your hands frequently with soap and water. A number of non-essential businesses and services will be able to reopen with modifications that protect the health and safety of employees and residents, including the following:

- Gyms, fitness centers and other indoor physical activities may reopen with 1 patron per 200 square feet of fitness space, not to exceed 50% capacity, with safeguards in place.
- Casinos, bingo halls, bowling alleys, pool halls, indoor skating rinks, miniature golf and other recreational establishments may reopen at 50%

See **PHASE TWO** Page A8

Greater Washington July 4 SoberRide Campaign Suspended Due to Continuing COVID-19 Concerns

By PRESS OFFICER
WRAP

WASHINGTON (June 26, 2020)—With Greater Washington localities still in the early to middle phases of easing public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP) announced today the suspension of its 2020 Independence Day SoberRide® campaign.

WRAP, the organization conducting the region's free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, had similarly suspended its 2020 Cinco de Mayo SoberRide® campaign last month. The charity also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Halloween and the winter holidays and is provided throughout rideshare partner Lyft's Washington, D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and

Prince George's; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 80,047 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Alcohol Program is a coalition of diverse interests using effective education, innovative programs and targeted advocacy to end alcohol-impaired driving and underage drinking in the Washington, DC metro area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with keeping the metro-Washington area's alcohol-related traffic deaths historically lower than the national average. More information about WRAP's SoberRide® initiative can be found at www.SoberRide.com.

INSIDE

County Executive Alsobrooks Names Assistant Police Chief Hector Velez as Interim Police Chief for Prince George's County

Interim Chief Velez has been with this department for 26 years and has served at every level, from a patrol officer to assistant chief.

Community, Page A3

To Be Equal:

"Plan A: Don't Go in a Crowd. Plan B: If You Do, Make Sure You Wear a Mask."

Our choice is between rebuilding the economy safely or risking thousands of lives and throwing the country into an even worse economic crisis.

Commentary, Page A4

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Wins 15 National Awards

"Each of these 15 awards are the result of our team's creativity, advertising expertise and many hours of hard work," said Cheryl Richardson, director of marketing and community relations at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

Business and Finance, Page A5

Amazon Funding Computer Science Education for 132 PGCPSS Elementary Schools

"We are proud to once again partner with Amazon to increase access to STEM education across our district," said Dr. Monica Goldson, Chief Executive Officer for Prince George's County Public Schools.

Education, Page A6

Chesapeake Life Center Offers Online Workshop, Grief Camps

#MasksOnMaryland

Enrollment Period Deadline July 15

Environmental Justice: A Black Lives Matter Priority

Health and Wellness, Page A7

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

William Hay, Former Mayor of District Heights, Dies at 89

William Eugene “Bill” “Gene” Hay Sr., of District Heights, who served with the Marines during the Korean War, died June 4. After discharge from the Marines, he spent his working years at Western Electric.

He was active in his District Heights community where he was City Commissioner and, later, Mayor of District Heights from 1983 to 1985. He spent many years coaching youth sports and served in various positions on the Board of Directors of the District Heights Boys and Girls Club.

He was predeceased by his wife of 64 years, Marjorie Read Hay, who died in 2015, and his brother Jack Hay. Survivors include his children and their spouses, Bill and Holly Hay, Bob and Suzanne Hay, Carol and Donnie Mitchell; grandchildren Bobby, Mary, Kristin, Billy, Melanie, Brett and Angela; great-grandchildren Anabella, James and Rory.

Burial was at Maryland Veterans Cemetery in Cheltenham on June 29. In keeping with coronavirus rules, attendance was limited to 35 people, and masks were required.

Neighbors and Other Good People

Willie Shelton, Jr., longtime resident of Skyline, retired U.S. Capitol Police Officer, and Central HS soccer coach, died May 28. More about this great guy in next week's column.

Congratulations to Craig Olander, Squad Captain at the Morningside VFD, for graduating from the fire academy and starting his job as a career firefighter on June 21.

The Washington Archdiocese has announced these new assignments, effective May 1: Fr. Patrick Lewis, pastor, St. Philip's in Camp Springs; Fr. Samuel I. Plummer, pastor, St. Mary's Piscataway; Fr. Rodolfo A. Salinas-Cabrera, pastor, Most Holy Rosary, Upper Marlboro; and Fr. Chip Luckett, parochial vicar, St. Mary of the Assumption, Upper Marlboro.

The City of District Heights will have an in-person election on July 13, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. All safety precautions will be in effect, including use of PPE and social distancing of 6 feet.

COVID-19 report

I'm still shut in here in Skyline but

doing fine. Report on the virus in Maryland is better but still grim. In Maryland: 65,337 total cases, including 330 new cases through 5 p.m. June 24. Maryland virus deaths: 3,108, including 16 new deaths.

I'm glad that St. Philip's is now having Mass inside the church. But I'm waiting a few more weeks before I venture out. With my mask!

County Schools' Summer Food Program Returns

Prince George's County Schools operates the annual Summer Food Service Program from Monday, June 29 through Thursday, August 13.

“Grab and go” breakfast and lunch meals will be available Monday through Thursday 10 a.m. to noon at 87 school sites and 12 apartment complexes. Updates to services and sites provided as information becomes available. For information, visit www.pgcps.org/foodandnutrition.

House Fire in Suitland

At approximately 5:20 the morning of June 17, Morningside's Engine Company and B Ambulance responded to the 3700 block of Swann Road in Suitland, “in the first due for a report of a house on fire” (as stated on the website). Engine 27 arrived on the scene of a one-story, single-family dwelling with smoke showing from the eaves. A fire was discovered in the attic, and the Engine Company made quick work of the blaze.

All occupants made it out of the home safely. No injuries reported.

Morningside Memories: 1980

Morningside held its very first Annual Independence Day Celebration 40 years ago, on Saturday, July 5, 1980. It was a big success, despite the weather, with an estimated two thousand attending.

The day began at 1 p.m. with refreshments, pony rides, a Senior Citizens' White Elephant Stand, and games. American flags (flown over the Capitol) were door prizes won by Cletus Benden and Mike David Romines.

Prizes of silver dollars or McDonald's Gift Certificates were won in various competitions by children and teens: Lisa Matthews, Josie Koch, Jennifer Kordek, Gary Kline, Monica Swartz, Willy Calloway, Carl Butler, Chris Re-

iter, Wayne Dullaney, Mike Matthews, Ronda Himes, Wayne Musehl, Don Shanks, Steve Knot, Robert Taylor, Margie Panholzer, Diana Joholski, Lashawn Boston, and Lisa Solomon.

A storm smashed through the area around 4 p.m. causing cancellation of a band concert and other fun activities and left the town without power for several hours.

But there were great fireworks at dusk.

Lorraine LaValley, World Traveler

Lorraine LaValley, 98, died at her Ft. Washington home on June 19. She was a native of Troy, N.Y.

She married Earnest LaValley when he was commissioned into the Army Air Corps in 1944. As a military family, the LaValleys moved from station to station in the U.S. and overseas during ballistic and strategic missile development, until 1965 when Lt. Col. LaValley was assigned to the Pentagon, supporting the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Lorraine was active with St. Ignatius Parish, the Ladies of Charity and Andrews AFB Officer's Wives Club. She worked for Woodward & Lothrop. She traveled extensively to Broadway musicals, luncheons in picturesque locations, shopping excursions, museums, grand garden estates, and international capitals. She even sailed on the Queen Mary 2.

She was predeceased by her husband and daughter Patricia. Survivors include her children Carol, Theresa, Brian and three grandchildren. Sarah of Christian Burial was in St. Ignatius School Auditorium on June 26, with burial later at Arlington.

Milestones

Happy 95th birthday to Gloria Grapevine on July 3; and happy birthday to Pat Richardson Conlon, Sarah Booth and Jack Hay II, July 3; Grace Carruth, Matthew Ryan White and Nya Nichols, July 4; Jean Ihrig and Timothy Hollowsky, July 5; Chrissy Bennett and Marie Golihew, July 6; Father Kevin Cusick, Charles “Tony” Haley, Sue Richards and Rev. Dr. Kelvin McCune, July 7; Jimmy Gromen, Karlyn Davis, John Anthony III and my grandson Zachary Seidman, July 9; and my daughter Elaine Seidman, July 10.

Around the County

Local Students Honored

Local Student Graduates from Savannah College of Art and Design

In Spring 2020, **Deyona T. Estep**, of Capitol Heights, MD, graduated with honors cum laude from Savannah College of Art and Design, in Savannah, GA. She received a Bachelor of Arts in Advertising and Branding with a concentration in Copyright. A graduate of Suitland High School, Deyona is the granddaughter of Clark A. Estep and the late Royace T. Estep, both educators in the Prince George's County Public Schools system.

Geneva College Announces Dean's List for Spring 2020

BEAVER FALLS, Pa. (June 22, 2020)—Geneva College announces [that] **Sierra Dunfee** from Upper Marlboro, MD, was named to Geneva College's Dean's List for the spring 2020 semester. To be eligible for this recognition, students in traditional programs must earn a GPA of at least 3.6 while passing 12 credit hours or more.

MCC Announces Spring Term Dean's List

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa (June 24, 2020)—**Quavon Blackwood**, of Laurel, MD, was among the two hundred and eleven students named to the Spring 2020 (January to May) Dean's List at Marshalltown Community College. To be eligible for the Dean's List, students must have taken 12 or more credit hours during the semester (a full-time class load) and have earned at least a 3.5 grade point average. **Quavon** earned a perfect 4.0 GPA.

PGCMLS is “Fine Free” Beginning July 1

LARGO, Md. (June 23, 2020)—The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is proud to announce that the Library will be “fine free” beginning on July 1, 2020. The Library will waive all existing overdue fines from customer accounts when the policy takes effect. The new “fine free” policy ensures that all Prince Georgians have equitable access to the Library's resources and services, while eliminating the financial barrier of overdue fines. Customers who previously had outstanding account balances will be able to resume borrowing physical and digital materials and access online library resources.

“Having access to a thriving public library is one of the great benefits to life in Prince George's County,” said CEO Roberta Phillips. “The elimination of overdue fines is an opportunity for the Library to embrace its commitment to equity by ensuring that all customers can easily borrow and return materials with greater flexibility.”

By adopting a “fine free” policy, PGCMLS will join the ranks of over 200 libraries across North America that have eliminated late fines since 2016, including San Francisco Public Library, Los Angeles Public Library, and Chicago Public Library. This collective effort reflects the 2019 American Library Association “Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity,” which highlights libraries' responsibility to eliminate all barriers to access.

Library systems that have previously transitioned to the “fine free” model have witnessed increases in circulation, an uptick in new library card sign-up, and improved engagement with the community. Chicago Public Library reported a 240% increase in the return of borrowed materials within the first weeks of going “fine free.” An increase in returns will ensure that books and movies return to circulation and are readily available for other customers.

For more information, visit PGCMLS's “Fine Free” FAQs at <https://pgcmls.info/library-card-services-413#finefree>.

—Prince George's County Memorial Library System

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

UMES ALUMNUS

UMES alumnus Ralph C. Paden, Sr. is an admired “father figure” by those whose lives he touched over a three-decade career as a Prince George's County Maryland educator. His father, seeking reliable employment, moved the family from Greenville, S.C. when Paden was 2 ½ to Port Henry, N.Y., a predominantly white community on Lake Champlain. He played football, basketball and ran track, inspired by his “much faster older brother and was the only African American in his graduating class.

An African American music teacher pointed Paden in the direction of Maryland State, where he majored in physical education with a minor in biology. He tried out for the track team coached by the legendary Clifton “Cappy” Anderson and made the roster. That coach-athlete connection set Paden on a path that resulted in parallel tributes.

UMES' track and field venue is named for Anderson. The Fairmont Heights, Maryland High School football stadium, where Paden patrolled the sidelines, for 30 years, was re-dedicated in his honor in 2018. Anderson “was a man with a big laugh,” Paden said. “There was a lot of laughter to him. He tried not to demean anybody. But he could put his foot down when he had to. He had everyone's respect.”

As a member of Maryland State's class of 1967, Paden was among Maryland State students who contributed to the dramatic societal changes that defined the second half of the 20th century. Paden joined fellow students in protesting local business segregation policies, suffering a cut to his face by water from a high-pressure fire hose used to disperse the crowd.

Paden went on to distinguish himself as a teacher and coach in Prince George's County, most of it at Fairmont Heights High School. In a video tribute produced by the Prince George's Public-School system, former colleague George Wake described Paden as “a better person than a coach. I thought he was an incredibly good coach”.

Paden's teams won 177 games, many accomplished by rosters with fewer than 30 players, an achievement the Maryland High School Football Foundation says ranks among the state's top coaching achievements. “The kids I had all those years, they played hard,” Paden said. “I had guards who weighed 165 pounds.” Winning 62 percent of his games earned him induction in the state football coaches association's Hall of Fame in 2003.

Fairmont Heights decided a November 2018 home playoff game was an ideal time to salute “Coach Paden”. A rainy night did not deter former players from attending the stadium renaming ceremony. “He was a great coach (also) a father figure, said Carlos Prillman, a 1987 Fairmont Heights alum who played four years.

Paden said he was humbled by the school system's gesture to honor him with the stadium naming, and by the turnout of former players to celebrate with him. “Our players,” he said, “can have the satisfaction of coming back years from now and saying, “Coach Paden coached me.” Information from UMES The Key, a newsletter for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends (May/June 2020).

VIRTUAL SESSIONS FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Student tutoring assistance. If you

have a student who needs math tutoring assistance, please check out come one come all! Free Virtual Sessions for Middle School Students. Small Group Sessions, Digital Curriculum, #Map: Math Achievers Program. Calling Middle School Students who are interested in enhancing their ability and comfort in math and want to have some Math Fun on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6–8 p.m. starting July 7–August 13, 2020.

For more information, please contact Robert Wilson seacinc@verizon.net or 240-200-0718. Information from Prince George's County Council District 9 <district9@pgccouncil.us>

PRINCE GEORGE'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE HISTORY

The College was founded in 1958, and came into existence because there was perceived to be a need for educational opportunities for the residents of the county, particularly those who were still in the K–12 grades of the public schools in the late 1950s.

For the first ten years, the college offered classes at Suitland High School for those interested in earning a college degree or advancing their career. Prince George's Community College (PGCC) is a public community college in Largo, Prince George's County, Maryland. The college serves Prince George's County and surrounding areas, including Washington, D.C. Prince George's Community College-Wikipedia.

BELATED HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO ALL THE FATHERS AND GRANDFATHERS!

Maryland Humanities Awards Nearly \$65,000 In Grants to Seven Maryland Nonprofits

BALTIMORE (June 22, 2020)—Maryland Humanities is pleased to award \$64,992 in major grant funding to the following Maryland organizations: Bloc by Block News: Maryland; **Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts**; From the Heart Productions; Historic Takoma; Imagination Stage; MedStar Institute for Quality and Safety; and The United Covenant Union. The grantees are located or pursuing projects in Howard County, Prince George's County, Baltimore County, Montgomery County, and Somerset County. Projects funded include a history-based performance series centering on the Black family, a workshop series for immigrant youth, and a multimedia literary journal featuring health-related writing.

Major grants provide support of up to \$10,000 per recipient. Funding goes to nonprofit organizations that use the humanities—literature, philosophy, history, and other disciplines—to inspire Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. Grant criteria encourage free public programming in many forms. Maryland Humanities also offers mini grants with support of up to \$1,200 per recipient.

Maryland Humanities' Grants Program is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Maryland Historical Trust in the Maryland Department of Planning, and the Maryland Department of Labor.

To learn more about our Grants Program, eligibility, and deadlines, visit www.mdhumanities.org/grants.

Coalition for African Americans in the Performing Arts

Generations: Music and the Black Family Series

Prince George's County

Grant Award: \$10,000

Based on the Association for the Study of African American Life and History's (ASALH) Black History 2021 theme, “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity,” CAAPA has developed a multi-faceted, socially significant and relevant, history-based performance arts series. The series explores the three elements based on the ASALH theme (representation, identity, and diversity) and validates how generations of the black family have historically sustained themselves in challenging and perilous times through music. Events include presentations and panel discussions, poetry readings, musical presentations, and a genealogical research workshop, as well as interactive social media experiences.

—Sarah Weissman, Maryland Humanities

Even though some restrictions are lifted, *please continue to:*

- **Wear a mask** • **Practice physical distancing**
- **Wash your hands often, for at least 20 seconds**

COMMUNITY

The American Counseling Association's Counseling Corner

Learning to Relax Is a Great Idea

You may not think of relaxing as a skill that needs to be learned. Doesn't relaxing just happen without our really thinking about it?

Unfortunately, thanks to the current health crisis, relaxing has become more difficult to accomplish for many. While there have always been things that made us stressed or anxious, today's problems really are more serious and deep reaching.

The terrible impact of COVID-19 has affected the way each of us feels, even if we haven't been ill ourselves or know anyone who has been. It's a 24-hour a day problem that has changed the way we live and provides constant uncertainty. When something causes such on-going and long-lasting stress and anxiety, it can have a very real, negative impact on our health and mental well being.

So, that makes this an excellent time to take steps to reduce that stress and anxiety, in other words, to learn to relax. One key is learning how to distract your poor over-worked brain. With continual news reports of the pandemic, and with medical experts still far from definitive answers, stress levels stay high because you're facing something which is invisible and over which you have virtually no control.

As a first step to relaxing more, limit your exposure to the news contributing to your worry and anxiousness. Turn off those constant TV reports and stop reading the bad news stories in the newspaper. Focus your attention on other, more positive things. Music, reading a good book, or turning to an enjoyable hobby are all ways to engage your mind without adding to your stress levels. Yes, jigsaw puzzles and bread baking actually do help.

Next, being in good shape physically can also help you better handle the pressures you may be facing. Staying physically active simply makes you feel better. Getting outdoors for a pleasant walk or jog makes it harder to stay worried about today's bad news. And if you find that negative thoughts start creeping back in, stop and spend a minute taking some deep breaths and focusing on pleasant things around you rather than what you can't control.

Eat healthy, get plenty of sleep, and find more things to do in your life that you find enjoyable. None of this will make all the anxiety and stress disappear, but it will provide some relaxation in your life to help you achieve more balance and less distress.

Counseling Corner is provided by the American Counseling Association. Comments and questions to ACAcorner@counseling.org or visit the ACA website at www.counseling.org. This is the last column; the American Counseling Association will no longer continue these columns.

County Executive Alsobrooks Names Assistant Police Chief Hector Velez as Interim Police Chief For Prince George's County

Office of the County Executive

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY (June 19, 2020)—On Friday, June 19, County Executive Angela Alsobrooks released a statement regarding the resignation of Police Chief Hank Stawinski, naming Assistant Police Chief Hector Velez as Interim Chief for Prince George's County. The press release reads as follows:

Dear Prince Georgians:

Thursday, June 18, Police Chief Hank Stawinski submitted his resignation to me, and I accepted it. I have had the privilege of working with Chief Stawinski over the last decade, and I have enjoyed working with him. He has served our police department and community well and with great integrity.

Chief Stawinski created "Chief on the Go", which allowed him to communicate directly with members of the community. He spearheaded the addition of two new District Stations (District VII and District VIII), which increased police service to the community and reduced response times. We sincerely appreciate his 27 years of service and wish him well. We have seen a lot of successes together, and I am sure we will continue to build on those successes as we move forward.

As they say, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." Right now, we are in a different season, and to help lead us into this new season, I have selected Assistant Chief Hector Velez to be the Interim Police Chief for our Prince George's County Police Department.

While we conduct a national search for a new chief, I know that Interim Chief Velez is immensely qualified and ready to step into this new role. Interim Chief Velez has been with this department for 26 years and has served at every level, from a patrol officer to assistant chief. After he was promoted to lieutenant in 2004, he was selected to the International Association of Chiefs

of Police Fellowship Program (IACP).

During his time as a fellow, one of his most notable accomplishments was the designing, planning and launching of the first Civil Rights Advisory Committee Meeting in Memphis, Tennessee. He continued his work on the IACP's 2006 report: Protecting Civil Rights: A Leadership Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement.

I am confident that he will bring his background and knowledge to his duties as Interim Police Chief during this new season. I am also confident that we will continue to build on some of the successes of our community. In Prince George's County, we've had a 50% reduction in crime over the last 10 years, and that is an accomplishment that no one can take away from us. We owe our success to this community and the hard work of the men and women of our police department.

We have accomplishments that allow us to stand out across the State and around the country, but we still have challenges similar to those that are woven through departments across the nation. Unfortunately, these challenges are not new, and some of them are painfully familiar to me and others who grew up in this community that we love so much.

Although difficult and sometimes frustrating, our challenges are not insurmountable. In this new season we will move forward with courage, honesty and an even deeper resolve to give our level best to the people we serve, who expect nothing less of us. We have a strong police department with intelligent men and women, but Interim Chief Velez also knows the challenges, and he is ready to address them.

I am under no illusion, and we know that there are some things in our department that are broken. I am committed to a comprehensive assessment to determine where our challenges are. Whatever we find that is broken, we will fix it.

As we approach this new season, I want to say thank you to the men and women of



PHOTO COURTESY COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S OFFICE

Interim Police Chief Hector Velez

our police department. I will make sure that they receive everything they need to succeed, including training and healthcare, and together, we are going to hold ourselves accountable. We will do a lot of things right, but when we get it wrong, we will acknowledge it and correct it together.

I also want to say thank you to Prince Georgians, who continue to work with us every day to build a stronger community for all of our families. I want to thank you for your engagement, because Prince George's County is strong due to how engaged you are. We have coffee clubs, we have civically-minded residents, and no matter what, together in partnership, we will continue to make progress in our County.

I want to thank you for your sacrifices, for your engagement, and for always demanding and expecting the very best from us. You are why we continue to aim for excellence and transparency. You deserve nothing less, and we won't give you anything less from your police department and from your County Government.

I am truly excited about this new season for Prince George's County. Together, we will build an even brighter future for our County and for all Prince Georgians.

Yours in service,
Angela Alsobrooks
Prince George's
County Executive

Ibram X. Kendi Joins Prince George's County and Maryland Partners For Virtual Discussion of "How to Be an Antiracist"

By NICHOLAS A. BROWN
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (June 24, 2020)—2019 Guggenheim Fellow and New York Times bestselling author Ibram X. Kendi will discuss his renowned book "How to Be an Antiracist" on Monday, July 20 at 7 p.m. with Dr. Charlene M. Dukes, president of Prince George's Community College. Dr. Dukes is the first African-American woman to serve as president of the College and has 30 years of progressive leadership experience and administrative responsibility in higher education. The conversation will be streamed live online on Crowdcast, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter/Periscope, and will air on PGCC TV on a later date. Register for this free virtual conversation with Dr. Kendi by visiting KendiPGC.eventbrite.com.

Praised as "The most courageous book to date on the problem of race in the Western mind" (New York Times), Kendi's groundbreaking work has provided a major new counterpoint in the national conversation about race in America and resonates in this, our collective moment of reckoning.

Ibram X. Kendi is a No. 1 New York Times bestselling author, a professor of history, and the founding director of the Boston University Center for Antiracist Research. He is a columnist at The Atlantic and a correspondent with CBS News. He is the author of five books including "Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America," which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction; "How to Be an Antiracist"; "Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You," co-authored with Prince George's County

IBRAM X. KENDI
HOW TO BE AN ANTIRACIST
Monday, July 20 at 7 pm
Virtual Event

CO-PRESENTERS: Prince George's County, Prince George's Community College, Joe's Movement, hrc Human Relations Commission, Maryland State Library, Center for Performing Arts, with additional support from Museum Library.

CO-PRESENTERS: Anne Arundel County Public Library, Calvert Library, Carroll County Public Library, CPE, Howard County Library System, Kent County Public Library.

native Jason Reynolds; and "Antiracist Baby," illustrated by Ashley Lukashkevsky.

This special event is presented by a consortium of organizations based in Prince George's County and Maryland, including Joe's Movement Emporium, Prince George's County Memorial Library System and PGCMLS Foundation, Prince George's County Community College's Center for Performing Arts, Prince George's County Human Relations Commission, and Maryland State Library, with generous support from Wells Fargo.

Ibram X. Kendi's appearance is supported in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, through the Library Services and

Technology Act, administered by the Maryland State Library. The following Maryland public libraries are co-presenters of this virtual event: Allegany County Library System, Anne Arundel County Public Library, Calvert Library, Caroline County Public Library, Carroll County Public Library, Charles County Public Library, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Howard County Library System, and Kent County Public Library.

Copies of the "How to Be an Antiracist" ebook and audiobook are available through the Prince George's County Memorial Library System and partner libraries. "How to Be an Antiracist" by Ibram X. Kendi may be purchased through Loyalty Books.

Create New Memories With Us in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
Experience Prince George's

LARGO, Md. (June 22, 2020)—Experience Prince George's and County Executive Angela Alsobrooks announced Prince George's County residents and visitors can now enjoy additional activities including indoor dining with restaurants at 50 percent capacity and outdoor dining where accessible, miniature golf, and other recreation—all in Prince George's County.

In addition, the County has beautiful natural areas and great culture. Home to 26,000 acres of scenic parkland and waterways, 90 miles of biking and hiking trails, and a range of wineries and vineyards—there's outdoor fun for the entire family. For those who choose to remain indoors, the County also offers a range of virtual tours, events, and exhibits to explore.

Prince George's County provides an opportunity for residents and visitors to discover, enjoy and create new memories. "Summertime is ideal for planning new adventures with family and

friends. As our County reopens, we encourage everyone to become 'familiar with the unfamiliar' by venturing outside to experience the activities and places that are unique to Prince George's. Our County offers many spaces that foster social distancing while still having fun," said President and CEO Leslie W. Graves.

Experience Prince George's invites you to visit "your own backyard" as an ideal getaway this summer and beyond.

Learn more at ExperiencePrinceGeorges.com.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

“Plan A: Don’t Go In a Crowd. Plan B: If You Do, Make Sure You Wear a Mask.”

“Look at the guidelines. The leaders, the governors, the mayors, the local leaders at the county level—look at the guidelines. Many of the governors and the mayors are doing well, but it’s the people that are out there that are not listening because, as you said, they’re pent up. Please restrain that. If you follow the guidelines and do it slowly and discreetly and do it very carefully, we’ll get through this.”

—Dr. Anthony Fauci, Head of Infectious Diseases at the National Institutes of Health

Weeks ago, as some governors began to lift stay-at-home orders against federal guidelines, the National Urban League urged people to stay home. In a joint statement with other civil rights organizations, we said the governors’ actions showed “reckless disregard for the health and life of Black residents.”

Now, sadly, a surge in coronavirus infections has confirmed our worst fears. The United States set a record this week for the most infections confirmed in one day: 36,880. That brings the number of confirmed infections to more than 2.4 million.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that only about one in every 10 COVID-19 cases in the U.S. has been identified. That means more than 20 million people in the U.S. may have been infected.

Officially, more than 122,400 Americans have died from COVID-19 in just over four months.

That is more Americans than died in all of World War I, or the Vietnam and Korean wars combined. It’s more Americans than died in the first wave of the deadly flu of 1918. And most experts agree the true death toll is much higher than the official count.

Contrary to the claims of the Trump administration, increased testing does not explain the surge in reported infections. The number of people testing positive is rising much faster than the number of people being tested. 20 states currently have a positivity rate above 5%. The World Health Organization recommends rates of positivity should remain below 5% for 14 days before states consider reopening.

Arizona reported that 21.15% of tests are coming back positive. Florida’s positivity rate is 12.22%.

There’s little question that the surge is related to the rush to reopen the nation’s economy without proper safety measures in place. Earlier outbreaks were linked to nursing homes, prisons, and meat packing plants—places where people had little choice but to be present. The current surge is linked to crowded bars, casinos, and churches—where there is little need for anyone to be present.

It has always been a dangerous fiction that our choice is between saving the economy or saving lives. The stock market tumbled in response to the surge in infections, and states are being forced to shut down businesses again. Our choice is between rebuilding the economy safely or risking thousands of lives and throwing the country into an even worse economic crisis.

Interestingly, at the same time infections are rising due to voluntary large gatherings, a study concluded that the demonstrations against police brutality did not lead to a spike in infections as many had feared. That is partly because a significant percentage of the demonstrators have worn masks.

As the nation’s leading infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci told Congress this week: “Plan A: Don’t go in a crowd. Plan B: If you do, make sure you wear a mask.”

Chris Van Hollen

United States Senator for Maryland



Van Hollen Statement on Historic House Passage of D.C. Statehood

WASHINGTON (June 26, 2020)—Today, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) released the following statement regarding the House of Representatives’ passage of the Washington, D.C. Admission Act, legislation granting Washington, D.C. statehood, making it the 51st state, and giving its citizens full representation in Congress.

“Today is a historic day in our nation’s capital. For far too long

the people of the District of Columbia have faced taxation without representation. The District has been denied the basic right of self-governance even though its residents pay more in taxes than 22 other states—and the population of D.C. is greater than Wyoming and Vermont. The need for urgent action has been further underscored by recent events—from Republicans purposefully robbing D.C. residents

of \$700 million of emergency COVID-19 funding to the President’s unconstitutional crackdown against peaceful protesters. We must right this wrong.

“I commend the House for taking this monumental step forward today. Now Republican Senate Majority Leader McConnell must immediately bring this bill up for Senate consideration. It’s time for Republicans to stop treating the citizens of the District of Columbia as second class citizens and recognize their Constitutional rights as Americans.”

STEPHEN KOENIGSBERG PUBLIC RELATIONS OP-ED

Great American Outdoors Act Nears Finish Line Maryland and the Rest of the Nation Benefit

By MARLIN JENKINS

Growing up in Louisiana, some of my earliest and fondest memories are fishing on Lake Concordia with my family, surrounded by cypress trees draped in Spanish moss. I grew up in the outdoors in a “Sportsman’s Paradise,” the nickname for Louisiana due to its roots in fishing, hiking, hunting and the beautiful bayous where much of these sports take place. When I moved, I was delighted to discover the bigger picture of diversity that is our nation’s public lands, and truly see how America’s lands and waters unite us.

That’s why I was proud to spend a week at our nation’s capital in February talking to lawmakers about the importance of protecting our public lands, and why championing the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is and has been the best way to accomplish this. For 55 years LWCF has been preserving and improving access to more than 5 million acres of land and water in all 50 states. This remarkable bipartisan initiative was enacted in 1964 under a simple premise—those industries that deplete certain natural resources (oil and gas) would be responsible for protecting others (land and water). Using royalties from oil and gas companies, the LWCF has invested nearly \$20 billion in our lands and communities—conserving everything from ball fields to battlefields, keeping America’s land accessible to all Americans.

In Maryland alone, the LWCF has invested \$231.8 million dollars in places like the C&O Canal Na-

tional Park and the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. These investments serve all Maryland residents and bolster a \$14 billion outdoor recreation industry. LWCF grants not only protect large open spaces and rushing waterways, they also fund community parks, playgrounds, and pools in urban and suburban hubs. As a US military veteran, I can add that many of these community parks are places of bonding for veterans, members of the National Guard, and active duty military members, as free or low-cost options for unit training and social functions.

During these extraordinarily difficult times when the U.S. and the world deal with COVID-19, accessing our public lands is especially crucial in helping us to heal, providing the needed support to recover physically, mentally, and economically. Maryland understands the importance of public lands which is why access to public beaches here is free—a perk my wife and I plan on fully enjoying as COVID-19 restrictions loosen up. I am especially thankful that Maryland’s Congressmen Anthony Brown and Steny Hoyer recognize the connection between protected public lands and economic prosperity and have been strong supporters of LWCF.

Just last year, Congress made the critical first step of permanently authorizing the program but stopped short of fully and permanently funding the LWCF at the \$900 million per year originally intended by Congress. But in early March at the president’s behest, lawmakers prepared legislation (\$3.422—the Great American Outdoors Act) which includes

both full funding for LWCF and addresses the National Park System’s long-delayed \$12 billion maintenance backlog. This legislation has just passed in the Senate and may soon become a reality.

Travel industry experts tell us that as COVID-19 restrictions begin to loosen and travel and tourism open up, what will happen first is that people will take day trips or road trips in nature and visit our scenic national parks, places where you can ensure distance from fellow travelers. It’s a powerful reason for enacting GAOA quickly, to improve access to deal with the pent up demand and make overdue repairs to infrastructure such as trails and roads.

For decades, the LWCF has been protecting the spaces that allow us to connect at family cookouts, beach outings, and veteran reunions. As we move through the phases of this pandemic, we will once again connect in these ways. And as we rejuvenate together, our outdoor recreation activities become a powerful engine to restart the Maryland economy. To accomplish this restart a fully funded LWCF is necessary, and to gain that we now must have approval in the House followed by the President signing it into law. I urge Congress and the President to take this across the finish line. Enacting the GAOA to foster outdoor recreation access is a low-cost, long-term economy booster that we can and must utilize right now.

.....
Marlin Jenkins has 21 years of service in the Army National Guard, currently serving in the state of Maryland. He resides in Hyattsville, MD.

Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita, Children’s Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

This Is a Time For Prayer and Action For All of Our Children

**

A Plea That Our Eyes, Ears, and Hearts May Be Opened

Open our eyes that we may see the need all around us.

Open our ears that we may hear the cries of Your children for food and shelter and relief from sickness and danger.

Open our minds that we may understand and live Your word and will in our lives.

Open our hearts so that we may radiate Your loving spirit in all we do.

**

A Prayer for Those With No One To Pray For Them

O God, I pray for those who have no one to pray for and protect them.

For the homeless addicts I have passed on the street today; for the child being sexually assaulted and physically and

emotionally abused right now; for the mothers dying every minute somewhere in our world and whose children are stillborn or will die in the first days of life. Hear our prayer and guide our feet and lift our cries around the world to stop the senseless deaths of mothers and children everywhere.

**

God Bless America

God bless America to live her creed in deed and to reach out to all those in need at home and in all Your world.

God bless America to be a blessing to the nations of the world spreading freedom and justice by example, respect, and help.

God bless America to heed Your prophets’ calls for justice for the weak, the oppressed, orphans, widows, and strangers.

God bless America to protect the futures of all of our world’s children and to pass on to them a better and safer earth where all may dwell in peace.

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Do you have news or events to share? We’d love to hear from you!

Email the editor at pgpost@gmail.com

The Prince George’s Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

District 8 Council Member Monique Anderson-Walker Hosts "MOVING FORWARD - State Of Humanity: Racial Equity Summit"

District 8 Council Member Monique Anderson-Walker, as part of her "MOVING FORWARD" webinar series, hosted the "State of Humanity: Racial Equity in Summit", on Wednesday, June 24. The "MOVING FORWARD" webinar series provides a platform for residents to engage in open and honest dialogue and discuss coping and transformative strategies on challenging topics. The "State of Humanity: Racial Equity Summit," addressed social injustice and systemic racism in law enforcement, education, economic, health and housing, and discussed solutions and action items to achieve equity for Black America. Council Member Anderson-Walker, using ZOOM technology, was joined for the virtual event by a panel of state and regional elected officials, academia leaders, community and youth leaders including City of Bowie Mayor Tim Adams; State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy; At-Large Montgomery County Council Member Will Jawando; Board of Education Vice-Chair Ed Burroughs; Professor of Law and Executive Director, Thurgood Marshall Civil Rights Center, Justin Hansford; and Class of 2020 Oxon Hill High School graduate, and Founder, Resistance Research Coalition, Marisa Miles. The summit was moderated by Strategist Leader, Jennifer Jones.

Watch at <https://youtu.be/QgsYWgAPBgM>

—Council Connections, June 26, 2020

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

About Special Extra Earnings For Military Service

By RUSSELL GLOOR, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Dear Rusty: How do I find out if I get any extra earnings for my military service of 28 years (Navy, 1982–2011), when I begin collecting my full Social Security retirement benefit next year (in July 2021)? **Signed: Retired Veteran**

Dear Retired Veteran: First, as a fellow veteran, I want to thank you for your 28 years of military service, but I need to clarify what those "special extra earnings" are. That's not an additional amount which will be added to your monthly Social Security benefit as a bonus for serving. Rather it is an additional dollar amount which has already been added to your earnings record for the years you served in the military.

Those receiving active duty military pay have contributed to Social Security since 1957, and that record of your military pay is already on file with Social Security. But a long time ago Congress decided to bump up the recorded earnings of those with earlier military service to make it easier for them to qualify for Social Security, and to possibly provide a slightly higher benefit when the earnings from those years in the military are included in the computation of SS benefits.

To compute your benefit, Social Security uses the 35 highest earning years from your lifetime earnings record (adjusted for inflation). So, if your earnings during the years you were in the military are among the 35 years used to calculate your SS benefit, those military earnings were supplemented with an additional amount to make them up to \$1200 per year higher than you were actually paid. And that higher earnings amount possibly means a higher Social Security benefit because it could make your lifetime Average Indexed Monthly Earnings (AIME) higher (a higher AIME translates to a higher benefit amount).

In your case, an extra \$100 for every \$300 in your actual military pay should have been added to your earnings record for each year you served between 1982 and 2001 (maximum of \$1200 for each year).

For service years after 2001, no additional "special credits" are awarded. To verify this, you may wish to obtain a copy of your lifetime Earnings Statement from Social Security and verify that your recorded earnings for 1982–2001 are \$1200 more than you were actually paid while serving. And if not, you should supply a copy of your DD-214 when applying for your Social Security benefits. You can obtain a copy of your lifetime Earnings Statement online if you have a personal "my Social Security" account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount; otherwise you'll need to request a copy directly from Social Security.

For general information applicable to those who served prior to 1978, computation of their "special extra earnings" were computed a little differently. For those veterans, the maximum annual "special extra earnings" supplement was still \$1,200, but the method for computing their extra earnings was to give an extra \$300 for each calendar quarter of active duty military service. But in any case, the special extra earnings are an addition to your military pay record on file with Social Security, not an additional dollar amount added to your Social Security benefit.

About AMAC: The 2.1 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.

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

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center Wins 15 National Awards for Excellence in Healthcare Advertising, Including Best in Show

By PRESS OFFICER
MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

CLINTON, Md. (June 22, 2020)—MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center received six national awards from the 2020 Aster Awards and nine national HealthcareAD awards from the 37th Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards. The HealthcareAD awards included a Best of Show designation for in-house publication, Connections. Only 24 of the 4,200 entries received a Best of Show award, and MedStar Southern Maryland was one of only six entries that did so without the assistance of an outside advertising agency.

"Each of these 15 awards are the result of our team's creativity, advertising expertise and many hours of hard work," said Cheryl Richardson, director of marketing and community relations at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. "I am incredibly proud of the work that went into our entries, particularly our Best of Show winner Connections. This monthly newsletter features compelling stories and news for our associates, which helps keep us all connected and informed."

In addition to the Best of Show award, MedStar Southern Maryland earned eight category-specific HealthcareAD awards:

- One Gold Award for associate newsletter, Connections (Publication Internal)
- Two Silver Awards for their HEALTH magazine (Publication External) and Hospital Week Poster (Special Event)
- Two Bronze Awards for Connections (Newsletter) and Groundbreaking 2019 (Other)
- Three Merit Awards for their Hospital Week Banner (Other), Hospital Week Poster (Special Event) and Hospital Week Program (Special Event)
- MedStar Southern Maryland also claimed six 2020 Aster Awards:
 - Two Gold Awards for Associate Awards Banquet Program (Special Events) and Connections (Newsletter/Internal)
 - Two Silver Awards for HEALTH Magazine (Magazine Publication) and Hospital Week Schedule Poster (Poster/Display)
 - Two Bronze Awards for Groundbreaking Invitation (Invitation) and Nursing Report (Annual Report)

Both national awards competitions recognize excellence in healthcare communication and employ a panel of judges to review all entries in each category. The Healthcare Advertising Awards is sponsored by the Healthcare Marketing Report. These awards are granted based on creativity, quality, message effectiveness, consumer appeal, graphic design and overall impact. To receive a Best of Show award, entries must display outstanding creativity in their advertising. For more information, visit www.healthcare-advertising-awards.com.

Aster Award entries are judged on creativity; layout/design; typography; production; and quality and overall effectiveness. To be considered for an Aster Award, a healthcare facility had to submit all advertising/marketing materials developed, produced and/or distributed during the calendar year 2019 to be eligible for the 2020 program. For more information, visit www.asterawards.com.

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, located in Clinton, Maryland, is a 176-bed acute care hospital serving the Washington, D.C., metro and Southern Maryland area. The hospital is focused on caring for patients and their loved ones utilizing advanced technology under the guidance of expert clinicians. Quality, Safety, Wellness, and Patient Satisfaction are achieved through a spirit of patient centered services that connect us to the community we serve. For more information, visit MedStarSouthernMaryland.org.



PHOTO COURTESY MEDSTAR SOUTHERN MARYLAND HOSPITAL CENTER

From left to right: Erin Glynn, Graphic Designer; Michelyn Bouknight, Marketing and Public Relations Specialist; Lorraine Walker, Graphic Designer; and Cheryl Richardson, Director of Marketing & Community Relations

Maryland Humanities Accepting Nominations for Fall 2020 Election to Board of Directors

By SARAH WEISSMAN
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (June 17, 2020)—Maryland Humanities is seeking nominations for new members to join its dynamic volunteer Board of Directors. Nominees should have a passion for the humanities as well as a deep commitment to our mission of engaging Marylanders in lifelong learning in the humanities, inspiring the open exchange of ideas, and enriching Maryland communities.

Maryland Humanities is an educational nonprofit established in 1973. The organization directly serves more than 50,000 people—from youth to seniors—through hundreds of free events in 170 communities across the state each year, with additional offerings online that reach as many as half a million people annually. Maryland Humanities inspires and promotes lifelong learning and stimulates dialogue about our histories, cultures, and futures as Marylanders. Our programs—like One Maryland One Book and Maryland History Day—use the humanities to foster understanding among people with diverse perspectives and to strengthen our ability to interact meaningfully.

Maryland Humanities specifically seeks humanities enthusiasts with experience in social sciences, community development, organizational development, human resources, and corporate strategy. Nominees should have deep community connections and a willingness to activate them. They should be proactive in generating ideas, perspectives, or approaches that would help clarify, strengthen, and advance the mission of Maryland Humanities.

Maryland Humanities also seeks to add

members who reflect the state's demographic and racial diversity, as well as those who offer a broad geographical representation of the state. Currently, Maryland Humanities is prioritizing interested community members who reside in Baltimore County, Frederick County, Prince George's County, or the Upper Shore counties of Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's.

Board members' primary responsibilities include monitoring the organization's programs and services, ensuring effective fiscal management, fundraising, strategic planning, selecting and orienting new Board members, allocating grant funds, hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, and promoting Maryland Humanities activities. Nominees must be available to attend quarterly Board meetings, periodic committee meetings, and Maryland Humanities events throughout the state. Candidates are expected to make Maryland Humanities a philanthropic priority, with the capacity to contribute the minimum board gift and/or possess the availability and willingness for active solicitation from public or private sources. Members serve without pay and are eligible to serve for as many as three three-year terms. The current Board includes attorneys, business professionals, nonprofit and museum professionals, current and former educators, and financial advisors, among others.

Currently, 26 members comprise the Maryland Humanities Board of Directors. They are: Cynthia Raposo (Chair), Montgomery County; Keith Stone (Vice Chair), Baltimore City; James (Jim) Cornelsen (Treasurer), Charles County; Scott Casper (Secretary), Howard County; Hon. Ronald (Pete) Leshner, Jr.* (Gov-

ernment Liaison), Talbot County; Allyson Black, Anne Arundel County; Mary Callis*, Garrett County; Mary Kay Finan, Allegany County; Mary Hastler*, Harford County; Mark Irwin, Montgomery County; Julia (Julie) Madden*, Howard County; Tiffany McGhee, Baltimore County; Heather Mitchell, Howard County; Ronald (Ron) Nowaczyk, Allegany County; Randy Ontiveros, Prince George's County; Maarten L. Pereboom, Wicomico County; Jeanne Pirtle, St. Mary's County; Hon. Gale Rasin, Kent County; Thomas (Tom) B. Riford, Washington County; Nancy Rogers, Montgomery County; Carmel Roques, Howard County; Hon. Stephen (Steve) J. Sfekas, Baltimore City; Jennifer Shea, Montgomery County; Guffrie M. Smith, Jr., Calvert County; Sharon Whitney, Anne Arundel County; Jayson Williams, Baltimore City.

*Indicates a gubernatorial appointee

Both self-nominations and those of others are welcome. Please complete the Board Nomination Form to nominate yourself or someone you know. www.mdhumanities.org/board-nominations/. All nominations must be received by July 31 to be considered for election in October.

Maryland Humanities is a statewide nonprofit organization that creates and supports educational experiences in the humanities that inspire all Marylanders to embrace lifelong learning, exchange ideas openly, and enrich their communities. For more information, visit www.mdhumanities.org. Maryland Humanities is generously supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities; the State of Maryland; the Citizens of Baltimore County; private foundations such as the William G. Baker, Jr. Memorial Fund, creator of the Baker Artist Portfolios, www.BakerArtist.org; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

EDUCATION

Amazon Funding Computer Science Education for 132 PGCPS Elementary Schools, Benefitting More Than 49,000 Students in Need

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 23, 2020)—Amazon and Prince George's County Public Schools today announced that Amazon is funding computer science education and teacher professional development for 132 elementary schools in the district, impacting more than 49,000 students from underserved and underrepresented communities. Amazon is working with BootUp, a nonprofit professional development provider specializing in elementary school education, to bring computer science to each school as part of its Amazon Future Engineer program. Due to the uncertainty surrounding the upcoming school year, BootUp has modified its professional development to work in a virtual setting.

In addition to Prince George's County Public Schools, Amazon Future Engineer is funding computer science education for nearly 200,000 elementary school students, at more than 400 schools across the country. Providing high-quality computer science education for elementary school students during their school day is a critical piece of Amazon's "childhood to career" approach because it helps bridge equity skill gaps at an age when students are just beginning to formulate ideas about their futures.

"We are proud to once again partner with Amazon to increase access to STEM education across our district," said Dr. Monica Goldson, Chief Executive Officer for Prince George's County Public Schools. "This type of partnership allows us to personalize the educational experience to meet the unique needs of our students. As we continue to shift to online learning, this opportunity will drive innovation and inspire our students to become trailblazers for the future."

Seniors at Prince George's County Public Schools previously participated in the Amazon Future Engineer high school program and were among the first to graduate. Since then, nearly all students who completed the program plan to continue their education and study computer science, mechanical engineering, programming, interactive media design, and cybersecurity to name a few.

"Amazon Future Engineer will be a much needed and welcomed addition for the students in our County schools," said Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "When this pandemic hit our community in March, closing our schools, my concern was and remains the achieve-

ment gap that can widen without intervention. This STEM and computer science education will undoubtedly keep our young people on track to continue their education virtually."

"We've been so impressed with the stories we hear of elementary school teachers who are going above and beyond to keep their young students engaged, nurtured, and smiling, especially during these difficult times," said Jeff Wilke, CEO Worldwide Consumer, Amazon. "As virtual classrooms become more common, we are confident



CREDIT: MCCAINSMCCAIN, MORGUEFILE.COM

that a focus on younger students in need will be an important and timely asset for teachers as they prepare all of their students for a bright future."

"This opportunity will close equity gaps by enabling professional computer science learning for students in under-served communities throughout the nation," said Clark Merkley, BootUp's Executive Director. "It's truly one of the first national sponsorships focused on implementing sustainable, district-wide technology initiatives. We're extremely proud to be a part of something that will have a measurable, positive impact for decades to come."

Amazon's commitment to Prince George's County Public Schools is part of its \$50 million investment to increase access to computer science/STEM education across the country, primarily through Amazon Future Engineer. In addition, Amazon has donated more than \$20 million to organizations that promote computer science/STEM education. Already in Maryland, there are more than 40 high schools participating in the Amazon Future Engineer program, and one student who has received a \$40,000 Amazon Future Engineer Scholarship and guaranteed Amazon internship in the class of 2020.

Amazon Future Engineer is still accepting applications for elementary school com-

puter science education sponsorships with BootUp—US school districts can apply at <https://bootuppd.org/>. In addition, right now, Amazon Future Engineer is supporting students of all ages amid the COVID-19 pandemic with free, online curriculum.

Amazon is committed to bringing more resources to children and young adults to help them build their best future. Amazon's primary computer science access program, Amazon Future Engineer, is a four-part childhood-to-career program intended to inspire, educate, and prepare children and young adults from underrepresented and underserved communities to try computer science. Each year, Amazon Future Engineer aims to inspire hundreds of thousands of young people to explore computer science; awards dozens of schools Amazon Future Engineer Robotics Grants; provides over 100,000 young people in over 2,000 high schools access to Intro or AP Computer Science courses; awards 100 students with four-year \$10,000 scholarships, as well as offers guaranteed and paid Amazon internships to gain work experience; and forms unique partnerships with trusted institutions to bring new coding experiences to students.

Amazon is guided by four principles: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. Customer reviews, 1-Click shopping, personalized recommendations, Prime, Fulfillment by Amazon, AWS, Kindle Direct Publishing, Kindle, Fire tablets, Fire TV, Amazon Echo, and Alexa are some of the products and services pioneered by Amazon. For more information, visit amazon.com/about and follow @AmazonNews.

BootUp Professional Development is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit specializing in district-wide elementary computer science initiatives that focus on creativity and problem-solving. Since 2015, BootUp has worked with almost 300 elementary schools in ten states, directly impacting over 150,000 students. BootUp prepares teachers to facilitate open-ended coding projects that are project-based and personally meaningful in the free platforms Scratch and ScratchJr. Students are empowered with creative and interactive curricula that allow them to explore their personal interests through coding with design, music, animation, games, or stories. APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED AT: <https://bootuppd.org/>.

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), the nation's 20th largest school district, has 206 schools and centers, more than 136,500 students and 22,000 employees. Under the leadership of Dr. Monica Goldson, the school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities located in the Washington, DC suburbs. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.

Cooper Lane Elementary School Educator Named Prince George's County Teacher of the Year

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (June 25, 2020)—Cooper Lane Elementary School third-grade teacher Mary Piccirilli is the 2020 Prince George's County Teacher of the Year. Selected from a pool of 15 other outstanding nominees, the announcement was made today with a surprise visit to Piccirilli's home.

Piccirilli has spent her entire seven-year career teaching in Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), serving Cooper Lane Elementary School students for the past two years. Prior to Cooper Lane, she was a second-grade teacher at Imagine Foundations at Leeland Public Charter School.

"Ms. Piccirilli truly represents what I consider to be a model teacher," said Dr. Monica Goldson, Chief Executive Officer. "Not only does she possess the skills to engage students and

effectively teach the curriculum, she truly cares about equity, academic success and the overall well-being of all students."

Piccirilli will compete statewide for Maryland Teacher of the Year, coordinated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). As the county Teacher of the Year, she will receive a pre-paid three-year lease on a new 2020 Honda from sponsor Pohanka Automotive Group. She was nominated by her peers for her engaging classes, commitment to ensuring student success and dedication to improving instructional techniques. She also performs several leadership roles, including serving as Grade Level Chair, mentor teacher and chair of her school's Culture Committee.

"Ms. Piccirilli's passion for education, love for children and hard work ethic has impressed the Cooper Lane Elementary School community," said Principal Dr. Kishawn Smith. "I am honored

to support such an educator to serve as Teacher of the Year and ambassador for education."

Piccirilli, a Talented and Gifted (TAG) certified instructor, is in the process of earning National Board Certification, considered the "gold standard" for educators. She was previously named Teacher of the Year at Imagine Foundations at Leeland Public Charter School.

Joshua Pleasant, World Culture and Geography teacher at Benjamin Tasker Middle School, is runner-up for this year's Teacher of the Year award. Vitalia Forbes, second grade teacher at Accokeek Academy, and Lindsey Joseph, English teacher at Crossland High School, are finalists.

Other nominees included:

- **Carlos Baez**, Technology/TV Production, International High School at Largo
- **Katelyn Blackburn**, Grade 2, Barack Obama Elementary School
- **Dr. Sameano Porchea Bond**, Math, Benjamin Tasker Middle School
- **Nadia Campbell**, Reading and English Language Arts, Kettering Middle School
- **Ingrid Cruz**, STEM Integrations, Oxon Hill Middle School
- **Deborah Garcia**, English

for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), English Language Arts and Social Studies, Cool Spring Elementary School

- **Christina Harter**, Kindergarten, Deerfield Run Elementary School
- **Karon Johnson**, Dance and Health, Gwynn Park High School
- **Scherie Leak**, Math and Science, Chillum Elementary School
- **Manuela Pagusanan**, Science, Greenbelt Middle School
- **Adelle Winston-Beasley**, Grade 2, Edward M. Felegy Elementary School

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), the nation's 20th largest school district, has 206 schools and centers, more than 136,500 students and 22,000 employees. Under the leadership of Dr. Monica Goldson, the school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities located in the Washington, DC suburbs. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.

Library System from A1

opening timeline is organized in four phases that stagger the return of in-person services at PGCMLS branches. Maximized physical distancing, greatly enhanced sanitization of facilities and materials, and clear communications with customers will be required throughout the process. The reopening plan includes adjustments to the Library's five main areas of operation: customers, staff, facilities, collections, and programs, outreach, and meeting rooms.

Customers with questions about the Phased Reopening Plan should contact PGCMLS by phone at 240-455-5451, via the PGCMLS email reference service, and via social media. In the event of a continued outbreak of new COVID-19 cases, the Library may revert to previous reopening phases, based upon guidance from the County Health Department. Guidelines and procedures are subject to change.

Phase 1—Curbside Service (July 21)

Start Date: Tuesday, July 21
Temporary Hours: Tuesday 1–8 p.m. | Wednesday-Friday 1–6 p.m. | Saturday 1–5 p.m.

Conditions for Phase 1

- The stay at home order is lifted by the state and local government.
 - Physical distancing is required and infection risks remain.
 - Personal protective equipment (PPE) is available for all staff.
- How Curbside Service Works**
- Beginning on July 21, customers may book curbside service appointments using the PGCMLS App, through their account at pgcmls.info, or by calling PGCMLS Ask a Librarian at 240-455-5451.
 - Customers can pick-up existing holds by appointment only.
 - When customers arrive for their appointment, staff will deliver holds to the customer's vehicle and place the items in the trunk. If a customer arrives on foot or by bicycle, the staff will hand the materials to the customer.
 - Staff may not accept returns by hand. Customers must place all returns directly in the outdoor book drops.
 - Customers may not enter library buildings during Phase 1.
 - Customers are limited to 25 items per car or visit.
 - Access to the Library catalog will be online only and customers will reserve materials via the catalog. They may also call into a branch for assistance with placing holds.

Branches Offering Curbside Service (Book Drops Open)

Accokeek, Beltsville, Bladensburg, Bowie, Fairmount Heights, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hillcrest Heights, Hyattsville, Largo-Kettering, Laurel, New Carrollton, Oxon Hill, South Bowie, Spauldings, Upper Marlboro

Closed During Phase 1 (Branches & Book Drops)

Baden, Mount Rainier, Pop-up Locations

Health & Safety

- Staff and customers are required to wear face masks and limit physical contact.
- All staff will receive basic health screenings when they report for duty to ensure customer and staff safety.
- Returns will be quarantined for 72 hours prior to being checked-in.
- Branches and staff areas will be disinfected hourly.

What Services Are Available

- Check out books, movies, and materials through the hold system.
- Virtual programs continue.
- PGCMLS Ask a Librarian support remains available by phone, email, and social media.
- Drive-up WiFi is available at all PGCMLS buildings 24/7.
- New customers may obtain a virtual library card at pgcmls.info. New physical cards will not be issued.
- Books by mail services resume.

What Services Are Not Available

- Customers may not enter the Library's buildings.
- Public computer, printing, and scanning access are suspended.
- In-person programs are suspended.
- External outreach activities are suspended.
- No use of public meeting or study rooms.
- Book/material donations will not be accepted at any PGCMLS branches during the phased reopening.

Overview of Phases 2–4

Phases 2–4 represent a gradual return to public access to the Library's branches. A brief overview of the criteria and highlights for each phase is provided below. Additional details are available at pgcmls.info/reopening and will be announced prior to the start of each new phase.

Phase 2—Limited Branch Access (Date TBA)

Start Date: To Be Announced. Temporary Hours: Tuesday 1–8 p.m. | Wednesday–Friday 1–6 p.m. | Saturday 1–5 p.m.

Overview:

- Criteria: Physical distancing is still recommended, but infection risks are declining.
- 15 of the Library's branches will reopen for limited public access.
- The Bladensburg Branch Library will continue with curbside service only and Baden, Mount Rainier, and pop-up locations will remain closed.
- A limited number of customers will be permitted to enter library buildings concurrently, based on a one person per 500 square feet capacity. There is a 30-minute limit for entry.
- Customers and staff will be required to wear face masks. Plexiglass protective shields will be installed at service desks.
- Customers can schedule public computer appointments (60 minutes maximum per session) at pgcmls.info or by calling

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Chesapeake Life Center Offers Online Workshop, Grief Camps

Workshop Examining Impact of Loss Due to COVID-19
 PASADENA, Md. (June 22, 2020)—Explore the many ways our grieving process has been influenced by the coronavirus pandemic with Chesapeake Life Center's next workshop: "Living with Loss: The Impact of COVID-19." The workshop will be offered online via a telehealth platform from 6–8 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 5. The coronavirus' impact on our communities, families and world has been enormous. Nearly everyone has experienced a loss due to COVID-19, including changes in how we interact or loss of a job or sense of security. For those who are grieving a death-loss, whether from the virus or other causes, the layers of grief can feel endless. Many have been restricted from seeing loved ones in their last days or unable to gather with friends and family to mourn together and offer each other comfort. This informative evening will offer ways we can support and help ourselves and others in coping with our grief. The cost of the workshop is \$10.

To register, call 888-501-7077 or email griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. The center's services are perhaps needed now more than ever in its history, as individuals and the community grapple with grief in physical isolation due to the COVID-19 health emergency. In response, the center has moved as many of its group and individual bereavement counseling services as is feasible to telehealth. The team's counselors have all received training in telehealth to be sure that their services meet best practice standards.

For details on telehealth bereavement services, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/clc-covid-19.

Grief Camps: Children's Camps Go Online; Teen Camp Stays Outdoors Per CDC Guidelines

Chesapeake Life Center is pleased to announce that its renowned grief camps will go on—just in a different way for children ages 6 to 12, and in a new venue for ages 13 to 18. Grief Burst 2020! is a virtual camp for grieving children. Under the guidance of the center's expert grief counselors, children will be able to explore the many ways individuals experience grief. They can learn new ways to heal and grow while connecting with peers who have experienced similar losses. Along the way, kids can share stories, laugh, move their bodies and create things, too. All campers will receive a camp toolbox with a Grief Burst 2020! T-shirt and all the materials needed to participate in each session's camp projects and activities.

- The Zoom telehealth sessions will take place as follows:
- Ages 6 to 8 will meet from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, Aug. 11, and Thursday, Aug. 13.
 - Ages 8 to 10 will meet from 10 to 11:30 a.m., Monday, Aug. 10, and Wednesday, Aug. 12.
 - Ages 10 to 12 will meet from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday, Aug. 10, and Wednesday, Aug. 12.
 - Then, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 13, all campers and their families will meet for the camp finale.

Registration is required by Aug. 7. The cost is \$10 per camper.

The teens' grief camp, Camp Phoenix, will take place from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 15, at Terrapin Adventures at Historic Savage Mill at 8600 Foundry St. By using team building exercises and other activities to help them get to know each other, teens ages 13–18, will find a space where the many emotions of grief are met with care and compassion. Professional counselors offer the expertise to support these teens as they navigate grief while having fun and discovering they are not alone. As this is an outdoor event that has limited participation, the team is confident of it can offer a safe experience for all participants, and will take all the necessary precautions, following guidelines from the Center for Disease Control. **Registration is required by Aug. 3.** The cost is \$40, and includes snacks, meals, activities and a T-Shirt. Scholarships are available for both camps; inquire upon registering. Call 888-501-7077 or email griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org.

The center's services are perhaps needed now more than ever in its history, as individuals and the community grapple with grief in physical isolation due to the COVID-19 health emergency. In response, the center has moved as many of its group and individual bereavement counseling services as is feasible to telehealth. The team's counselors have all received training in telehealth to be sure that their services meet best practice standards. For details on how the center is responding to the pandemic, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/clc-covid-19.

Maryland Department of Health Launches Social Media Campaign to Encourage Use of Face Coverings as Summer Social Activity Increases

By PRESS OFFICER
MD Department of Health

BALTIMORE (June 25, 2020)—The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) today announced the launch of a coordinated social media campaign encouraging Marylanders to continue to wear face coverings as the COVID-19 epidemic continues. The campaign begins as health officials anticipate increased summer activity and jurisdictions across Maryland continue to ramp up COVID-19 testing.

"Summer is here and we understand wanting to be out and about with family and friends, especially after staying at home for such a long time," said MDH Secretary Robert R. Neall. "We've made great progress, but we need to remember we're not out of the woods yet—all Marylanders must continue to exercise responsibility

for themselves and each other by doing everything we can to slow the spread of COVID-19."

Collated by MDH and shared with local health departments, the social media campaign features an array of posts and graphics related to wearing face coverings, including reminders about where to wear them and instructions about how to wear them correctly. The campaign will continue throughout the course of the epidemic, using the hashtag #MasksOnMaryland.

To date, Maryland reports 65,777 total cases of COVID-19 and has tested 8.3 percent of its population, while contact tracing is fully operational throughout the state. Coupled with increased testing and contact tracing, sustained social distancing and wearing face cover-

ings are essential to mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

"To keep the curve flat and prevent a second wave of infections, we need everyone to do their part," said MDH Deputy Secretary for Public Health Fran Phillips. "Practice social distancing and wear a face covering in public spaces. By doing so, you can help prevent the inadvertent infection of others."

Learn more about COVID-19

developments in Maryland at coronavirus.maryland.gov.

The Maryland Department of Health is dedicated to protecting and improving the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management and community engagement. Follow us on Twitter @MDHealthDept and at Facebook.com/MDHealthDept.

#MasksOnMaryland

- You can make masks easily at home from a bandana and hair ties, a t-shirt, or a scarf. **Please don't buy masks intended for health care professionals.**
- Your cloth mask should fit snugly but comfortably and cover your nose and mouth. **As always, avoid touching your face as much as possible.**
- Don't touch the front of your mask, and don't touch your face while removing it. **Wash your hands after taking it off and launder it frequently.**
- Masks can help slow the spread of the virus, but it's still essential to **practice social distancing. Keep gatherings limited in number and outdoors.**

FOR HEALTH RESOURCES, VISIT CORONAVIRUS.MARYLAND.GOV.

Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period Deadline Extended to July 15

By PRESS OFFICER
PGC Health Connect

LANDOVER, Md. (June 22, 2020)—Prince George's County Health Connect (PGC Health Connect), a program of the County's Department of Social Services (PGCDSS), has announced that the deadline for the Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period has been extended. Uninsured residents will have until July 15 to enroll in health coverage through Maryland Health Connection (MHC), the state's health insurance marketplace.

Since March, more than 8,596 Prince George's County residents have received coverage during this special enrollment period, which began with Governor Larry Hogan's State of Emergency declaration due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before this July 15 extension, Maryland already offered one of the longest special enrollment periods in the country.

Individuals who enroll in health coverage through Maryland Health Connection by the July 15 deadline will have a coverage start date of July 1. To enroll, Prince George's County residents can call 301-927-4500; and 240-719-2167 Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. PGC Health Connect Navigators are also available through CASA, a PGC Health Connect partner at 301-270-8432; and 240-270-1318. English, Spanish, and French speaking navigators are available.

"We are pleased that Prince George's County residents are getting this insurance," says Gloria Brown Burnett, PGCDSS Director. "We know that safety, health, and quality of life go hand in hand. This pandemic has shown us that. We want to make sure that residents have what they need to thrive and

survive. This means having health coverage for ourselves and our families."

Under this special enrollment, health insurance provided through MHC covers testing, visits relating to testing, and treatment of COVID-19. Consumers will not be billed for a copay, coinsurance, or deductibles for services to test, diagnose and treat COVID-19.

Says Michele Eberle, Executive Director of Maryland Health Benefit Exchange: "Access to health coverage is important every day. However, the coronavirus pandemic has heightened awareness of that need, and we've seen a tremendous response of people enrolling in health insurance. We want to ensure that as many people as possible get the coverage they need. If you know someone in your family or community who needs health coverage, urge them to get covered by July 15."

An additional special enrollment for Maryland tax filers also runs through July 15. The Maryland Easy Enrollment Health Insurance Program (MEEP) gives tax filers the option to share information, like household size and income, with the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to see if they are eligible for free or low-cost health insurance. Those who check the box on state tax forms (502 and 502B) will receive a letter from Maryland Health Benefit Exchange to let them know if they are eligible for free or low-cost health coverage. To date, nearly 4,000 Marylanders have enrolled in health insurance under this innovative program.

As the state faces high levels of unemployment, many Marylanders are losing health coverage offered by employers. Individuals who lose coverage through their jobs have 60 days from loss of coverage to enroll. If they've missed that deadline, they can get

coverage through Maryland Health Connection's Coronavirus Emergency Special Enrollment Period through July 15.

To talk with a bilingual navigator in Prince George's County, call 301-927-4500, 240-719-2167, or PGC Health Connect's partner organization, CASA at 301-270-8432 and 240-270-1318. Hours are Monday through Friday, from 9 am to 4 pm.

To enroll, visit MarylandHealthConnection.gov. Individuals also can download the free "Enroll MHC" mobile app. Free consumer assistance is available by calling 855-642-8572 from 8 am to 6 pm on weekdays.

Help is available in more than 200 languages through the call center, as well as relay service for the deaf and hard of hearing. Trained navigators and brokers statewide offer free help enrolling by phone. You can find more information at MarylandHealthConnection.gov.

Last year, 9 out of 10 Marylanders who enrolled through Maryland Health Connection were eligible for free coverage or financial help to lower the cost of their health insurance. This special enrollment period is for private health plans. Those who qualify for Medicaid may enroll any time of year.

Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) is a public corporation and independent unit of the State of Maryland government. It was established in 2011 in accordance with the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA) and is responsible for the administration of Maryland Health Connection.

Maryland Health Connection: One of every six Marylanders receives their health coverage through Maryland Health Connection (MHC), the state-based health insurance marketplace. Residents can compare and enroll in health insurance as well as determine eligibility for Medicaid or financial help with private plans.

Earth TALK™ Environmental Justice: A Black Lives Matter Priority

Dear EarthTalk:

Is there any overlap between the #BlackLivesMatter and Environmental Justice movements?

—Jennifer B., Athens, GA

There certainly is: "Environmental injustice"—defined as the unfair siting of pollution and other environmental ills in proximity to certain groups based on race or income status—is on a list of 12 issues Black Lives Matter (BLM) considers pressing right now as part of its #WhatMatters2020 campaign.

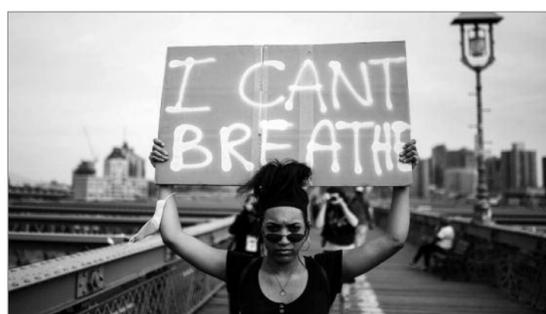
"Environmental racism kills. Air pollution and rollbacks to environmental protections and regulations make it hard for black people to breathe," says Robert Bullard of the non-profit National Black Environmental Justice Network (NBEJN).

Sammy Roth reports in the

Los Angeles Times that there are many links between ecological degradation and inequality: "Consider water contamination in predominantly black and brown communities, such as Flint, Michigan, where experts say the drinking water crisis was rooted in systemic racism." She cites a February 2020 *Los Angeles Times* investigation that found Black, Latino and low-income California residents to be especially likely to live near polluting unplugged oil and gas wells. And many studies show that people of color are more likely than whites to live near power plants, oil refineries and landfills. "In the U.S., the best predictor of whether you live near a hazardous waste site is the color of your skin."

To add insult to injury, climate change is already hitting people of color harder than others in the U.S., a fact not lost on BLM. "We

are not saying that white people do not feel the impact of climate change," BLM activists Patrisse Cullors and Nyeusi Ngunu report in a *Guardian* op-ed. "We are saying that if you are black then you are more likely to die as a result



CREDIT: PEXELS.COM.

"Air pollution and rollbacks to environmental protections and regulations make it hard for black people to breathe," says Robert Bullard, the "father of environmental justice" and founder of the non-profit National Black Environmental Justice Network (NBEJN).

of it—and, if you survive, are more likely to struggle to replace what was lost and will receive little support in doing so."

What can we do to reduce or eliminate this insidious form of injustice? Activists blame governments as well as corporations for discriminating against racial minorities in deciding where to put pollution sources. Attending local zoning or planning board

meetings in your city or town—and speaking up against what's not right—would be a good start. But, of course, there is more to the story.

"While it is clear that discriminatory siting plays a role, other causes may help explain both the behavior of firms and the disparate environmental harms experienced by low-income populations and minorities," reports Shea Diaz in the *Vermont Journal of Environmental Law*. "Regulators may enforce environmental laws and regulations unequally, affected communities may lack political power, and market dynamics may drive both businesses and residents to low-cost real estate." According to Diaz, it's important to understand the contribution of each of these to environmental injustice because they may call for different policy responses. And only when a majority of elected officials agree can we begin to enact laws that regulate how governments and companies treat minority and low-income communities.

CONTACTS:

#WhatMatters2020, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/what-matters-2020/>; "The toxic legacy of old oil wells," <https://www.latimes.com/projects/california-oil-well-drilling-idle-cleanup/>; "As Rising Heat Bakes U.S. Cities, The Poor Often Feel It Most," <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/03/754044732/as-rising-heat-bakes-u-s-cities-the-poor-often-feel-it-most>; "Getting to the root of Environmental Injustice," <http://vjel.vermont-law.edu/getting-to-the-root-of-environmental-injustice/>; National Black Environmental Justice Network, <https://www.nbejn.com/>

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. Check out our other columns at <https://www.emagazine.com/earthtalk-qa/>. To donate, visit <https://www.earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

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seven consecutive weeks to 80 patients so far this week. That is a 67% decrease from the highest average. We have also experienced a decrease in med/surgery bed use, as well as the number of patients with COVID-19 in hospital ICUs, which is now almost half what it was in early June. We have 58.8% of med/surgery beds available and 48.1% of ICU beds available.

We have also successfully increased our testing capacity, now operating four Health Department testing sites. The City of Hyattsville is operating a fifth testing site with supplies from the Prince George's County Health Department. The Health Department, in addition to private entities and hospitals, are testing approximately 10,000 people per week countywide, with the capacity to test more as needed. The positivity rate has now decreased to 7.8%. The Health Department is now offering free testing without appointments at all of its testing locations, and more information on COVID-19 testing in the County is included below.

As we continue moving forward, I want to again remind everyone to use caution and good judgment. This virus has taken a terrible toll on our community and still remains in our County and region. However, we can all continue doing our part to stop the spread of this virus, and together we can ensure that COVID-19 does not have the final say.

Yours in service,
Angela Alsobrooks
Prince George's
County Executive

Phase Two from A1

capacity, with safeguards in place. Amusement parks may reopen at 40% capacity, with safeguards in place.

- Social and fraternal clubs may reopen at 50% capacity, with safeguards in place.
- Shopping malls may reopen up to 50% capacity, with safeguards and physical distancing in place.
- All personal services that have remained closed, including tattoo parlors, massage parlors, and spas, may reopen by appointment only with 1 customer per 200 square feet of service delivery area, up to 50% capacity. Safety and health guidelines must be in place.

Large gatherings may also resume with capacity limits, one person/family unit per 200 square feet or a maximum of 100 persons, whichever is lower. The Venues for large gatherings must adhere to physical distancing requirements and CDC guidelines. A more thorough list of additional openings with modifications is included below.

This decision to move to a full phase two reopening was made under the advice of our public health officials, who made this determination based on the science and data we are monitoring. For the week ending June 13, there were 27 deaths with an average of 3.9 deaths per day. Deaths per week have decreased by 64% from our high of 74 deaths per week in April.

Our hospitalization rate is also declining. In early May, County hospitals had 244 COVID-19 inpatients, on average, per day. That has since decreased for

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Library System from A6

PGCMLS Ask a Librarian at 240-455-5451.

- In-person programs, outreach activities, study room and meeting room use remain suspended.

Phase 3—Partial Branch Access (Date TBA)
Start Date: To Be Announced. Temporary Hours: To Be Announced

Overview:

- Criteria: Physical distancing guidelines by the County Health Department have been relaxed to allow for large gatherings.
- Capacity restrictions for public access will be partially eased, based on current guidance from the County Health Department.
- Partial access to 16 branches will be available to the public. Baden and Mount Rainier may open, depending on the status of County Health Department physical distancing guidelines. Pop-up locations remain closed.
- Customers may access the stacks.
- In-person programs, outreach activities, and meeting room use remain suspended.
- Customers may access study rooms.

Phase 4—Full Branch Access with Physical Distancing (Date TBA)
Start Date: To Be Announced. Temporary Hours: To Be Announced

Overview:

- Criteria: Infection risk is very low or non-existent.
- The Library is fully open to the public with extra precautions and pop-up locations reopen.
- Some physical distancing and use of PPE may be required, based on guidance from the County Health Department.
- In-person programs and outreach activities use may resume.
- Meeting room use may resume if rooms are no longer needed for materials quarantine.
- Curbside service will be suspended.
- Customers may access study rooms.

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