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Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Supports Laurel Families With Thanksgiving Food Donations From Community Garden

By RACINE TUCKER-HAMILTON
Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®

Seeds that were planted this summer helped families in need during this holiday season. Psi Epsilon Omega (PEO) Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA) donated fresh produce items to Elizabeth House, a nonprofit all-volunteer food pantry and soup kitchen in Laurel.

The donations were provided to 210 homeless and low-resource families of the greater Laurel area on Nov. 19. This date coincided with Elizabeth House's annual Thanksgiving giveaway to residents. The food largely consisted of produce grown via PEO's 1908 Harvest Project, an initiative that continues to address food insecurity in Prince George's County.

"The purpose of the 1908 Harvest Project, under PEO's Environmental Justice Subcommittee, is to grow and harvest healthy and nutritious vegetables to fight against food insecurity in Prince George's County," said Benita A. Swindell, PEO president. "We have been watering and weeding all summer and are wrapping up our gardening season by providing fresh vegetables to residents of one of the Maryland communities we serve. Service is the heart of Alpha Kappa Alpha."

The sorority is hoping its 1908 Harvest Project will increase the crop yield and a



Members of Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® deliver and distribute fresh produce to Laurel, Md. families.

variety of fresh produce they can continue to donate. The chapter has reserved additional space in a Bowie community garden, which has already yielded tomatoes, cabbage, broccoli, carrots, and much more.

"In addition to our community garden, PEO has also incorporated a home gardening component for our chapter members to increase their knowledge of the associated health benefits of eating fresh produce and to learn simple techniques for growing fresh

fruits and vegetables at home," added Swindell.

Planting began in May of 2022, and 190 pounds of produce has been donated to Elizabeth House since August.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated®, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter was chartered in 2007. Since its founding, the chapter has implemented its service programs in Laurel, Bowie, and Greenbelt, Maryland.

2022 Inauguration Ceremony

By PRESS OFFICER
www.princegeorgescountymd.gov

The 14th Inaugural Ceremony for the Prince George's County Executive and members of the Prince George's County Council will be held on Monday, December 5, 2022, at the Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

In accordance with the Prince George's County Government Charter, on the first Monday in the month of December, newly and re-elected leadership will be administered the Oath of Office for the Prince George's County Executive and members of the County Council, to be witnessed by and for the people of Prince George's County.

This event is open to the public.

Who:
Prince George's County Executive and Members of the County Council

What:
14th Inaugural Ceremony
When:
Monday, December 5, 2022
Where:
Show Place Arena
14900 Pennsylvania Avenue
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
Time:
10 a.m.–12 p.m.

Tips upon your arrival:
Please note that a large attendance is anticipated. It is recommended to allow for ample parking time. In addition, please be advised of security checks prior to entering the main areas of the Arena. Entrance may be delayed once the swearing-in portion of the program begins. The County Executive and County Council Members must be sworn in by noon in accordance with the County Charter. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Governor Hogan Proclaims November 25 as American Indian Heritage Day in Maryland

Annual holiday recognizes the contributions and achievements of Maryland's Tribes and Indigenous Peoples

By PRESS OFFICER
Governor's Office of Community Initiatives

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 25, 2022)—Governor Larry Hogan proclaimed November 25 as American Indian Heritage Day in Maryland. The annual holiday, observed in the state since 2008, recognizes both the historical and contemporary contributions and achievements of Maryland's tribes and indigenous peoples.

"American Indian Heritage Day is a time to honor and reflect upon the rich American Indian culture that is a deeply rooted part of Maryland's history, present, and future," said Governor Hogan. "Today we honor Maryland's diverse American Indian communities, and thank them for their many contributions to our great state."

The United States House of Representatives introduced legislation to establish American Indian Heritage Day in the United States in 2007, designating the Friday after Thanksgiving as a day to pay tribute to Native Americans across the country. The bill became law in October 2008. Prior to the national institution of the holiday, the Maryland General Assembly established American Indian Heritage Day in Maryland during the 2008 legislative session.

Earlier this month, Governor Hogan proclaimed November as American Indian Heritage Month in Maryland.

To observe the holiday this year, the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives and the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs will attend an event at Port Discovery Children's Museum in Baltimore. Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs Administrative Director E. Keith Colston will present Governor Hogan's proclamation, with Chair Sherry Ayers and invited guests in attendance.

In addition to coordinating programs to advance the cultural, educational, economic, and social development of Maryland's diverse American Indian communities, the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs oversees the process of designating Maryland American Indian status. Maryland's state-recognized tribes include the Accohannock Tribe, the Piscataway Indian Nation, and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe. Maryland's American Indian communities also include the Nause-Waiwash Band of Indians, the Pocomoke Indian Nation, the Assateague Indians, and the Youghiogheny Shawnee.

"Throughout the tenure of the Hogan administration, we have forged invaluable relationships within Maryland's American Indian communities," said Governor's Office of Community Initiatives Executive Director Steven J. McAdams. "Partnership and collaboration are key to engaging communities as we look to the future and honor the Marylanders we serve."

For more information about the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs, visit goci.maryland.gov.

The Governor's Office of Community Initiatives connects Marylanders to economic, volunteer, and human service opportunities by meeting with Marylanders at more than 700 engagements every year. Learn more by visiting our website at goci.maryland.gov and connect with us on Facebook and Twitter.

Prince George's Community College Recognized as a 2022 ALL IN Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting

PGCC is one of 394 college campuses recognized for its efforts to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement in the 2022 election.

By COURTNEY DAVIS
Prince George's Community College

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 22, 2022)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) announced today that ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge (ALL IN) has recognized it as a 2022 ALL IN Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting. The ALL IN Most Engaged Campuses for College Student Voting recognizes colleges and universities for making intentional efforts to increase student voter participation. PGCC joins a group of 394 colleges and universities recognized by ALL IN for completing these four actions:

- Participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Shared 2020 NSLVE Reports with campus voting data with ALL IN
- Developed and submitted a 2022 democratic engagement action plan with ALL IN
- Have a current signatory to ALL IN's Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

"As the designated voting coordinator for the College, I worked with various organizations and student clubs to host several voter education and registration events to promote student voting and the importance of the primary and mid-term elections," said Paulett McIntosh, program director for Student Engagement and Leadership at PGCC. "Some of our engagement events included a commitment to voting pledge drive, transportation to and from polls during early voting, and a 'Know Before You Vote' campaign to promote the use of the 411 voter's guide. These activities

helped to increase student engagement across our community and will help us meet our goal to increase student voting by 56% in the 2024 elections."

"College student voter turnout has increased since 2016, and this increase has been driven by students. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge is excited to expand our ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll to recognize these student voting champions across the country," said Jennifer Domagal-Goldman, executive director of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. "These students registered voters, served on their campus voting coalitions, spearheaded voter education efforts, advocated for campus polling locations and organized other voter engagement efforts to ensure their peers were confident and informed voters. We are excited to see what they continue to accomplish ahead of the 2022 midterms."

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge empowers colleges and universities to achieve excellence in nonpartisan student democratic engagement. Campuses that join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge complete a set of action items, with the support of ALL IN Challenge staff, to institutionalize nonpartisan civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation on their campus. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge currently engages over 9 million students from more than 950 institutions in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Campuses can join the ALL IN Challenge at <https://allinchallenge.org/join/>

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

(ALL IN) is a national nonpartisan initiative of Civic Nation, a 501(c)(3) organization. The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge strives to change civic culture and institutionalize democratic engagement activities and programs on college campuses, making voter participation a defining feature of campus life. ALL IN, in collaboration with over 960 higher education institutions, seeks to make participation in local, state, and federal elections a social norm; substantially increase the number of college students who are democratically engaged on an ongoing basis, during and between elections, and not just at the polls; and make educating for democratic engagement on college campuses an accepted and expected part of the culture and curriculum so that students graduate with the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and values needed to be an informed and active citizen.

Named a National Center of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance designated by the National Security Agency and Department of Homeland Security (2015–2020), Prince George's Community College (PGCC) provides high-quality education and training for the progressive and career-oriented residents of Prince George's County. From new high school graduates and career seekers to more seasoned professionals and senior citizens looking to enhance their skillsets, PGCC is comprised of students who represent a wide range of ages, backgrounds, and goals. Serving nearly 35,000 individuals annually, the College is the first choice for higher education for residents of Prince George's County. For more information, visit the college website at www.pgcc.edu.

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...the discussion of cancer screening remains taboo in our community. Now is the time to start having conversations about cancer screening and having it often.
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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Places to go and things to do this holiday season

The Annual Gingerbread House Contest & Show is open Fridays through Sundays, December 2–4 and 9–11, noon to 5 p.m., for the amazing display of edible gingerbread houses and a chance to vote for favorites. Admission \$2/person (cash only); children 4 & under free. Darnall's Chance House Museum is at 14800 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro. Info: 301-952-8010.

Craig Wallace has returned as Scrooge in Ford's Theatre's "A Christmas Carol," through Dec. 31. I've seen it and it's great! For ticket information, call 888-616-0270.

Winter Festival of Lights is back at Watkins Regional Park in Upper Marlboro, and so are the horse-drawn carriage rides. You can drive your car through three miles of whimsical lights, more than 2.5 million LED lights, past the 54-foot LED musical tree. This is the 36th year for the Festival. I love it; there's always something new. Hours daily through January 1, 5 to 10 p.m. Admission fees based on vehicle type and method of payment. You can register online for \$10—it's \$15 otherwise. <https://www.pgparcs.com/742/Festival-of-Lights>. Preregistration is required for carriage-rides.

New Year's Eve Party at VFW 9619, Morningside, is only a month away. Hand Dancing and Steppin' with DJ Disco Bird. Ballroom-R&B with DJ E-Luv with Special guest DJ. Tickets \$30 per person include buffet and party favors. You can visit the office for tickets or to reserve a table for your group. After 5 Attire—no blue jeans. Dress to Impress.

The Town of Morningside

Breakfast with Santa, Saturday, Dec. 10, starting at 9 a.m. at the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department. Pancake breakfast, entertainment, Santa Secret Shop and a visit and gift from Santa himself, all for \$7.00 per person. (Santa Secret Shop is not included in admission, but all its items will be \$2 each.)

Morningside is sponsoring a Food & Toy Drive to support three local families in the area. If you wish to donate a non-perishable food item, new toy or a cash donation, you can bring it to the Town office Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Dec. 21.

Next Morningside work session, Dec. 13, 7:30 at the Municipal Center. For information about All Things Morningside, 301-736-2300.

Senior Holiday Luncheon: turkey and Bingo

I enjoyed being with the other old folks at the Morningside Senior Holiday Luncheon, a full turkey dinner with all the trimmings. Thank you to the Recreation Committee: Susan Mullins, Regina Foster, Shaniqua Townsend and Micheryl Townsend. Student Volunteers included Savannah Foster and Kaleena Pearson.

Also, Town Council Members, Liaison Sharon Fowler, Vice Mayor Brad Wade, Councilman John Anthony, and Morningside Police Officers Chief Stevenson, Corporal Mitchell, and Sgt. Szmidi, the Bingo Caller. Sgt. Szmidi did a great job!

Don Lampton was the first Bingo winner, followed by Johnny Richardson, Mary Lampton, Marge Trebley and Rutha Thompson. I didn't win at Bingo, but I won a drawing for one of the center pieces. It was a fun event. Thanks!

Academia

In honor of the late lamented La Reine High School, Bishop McNamara HS invites you to their La Reine Throwback Basketball Game on Jan. 27, 2023, at 7 p.m. The La Reine players will be sporting special uniforms as they take on Elizabeth Seton HS. Tickets go on sale the week of the game through the BMHS website.

The La Reine Science & Innovation Center will have its Grand Opening Saturday, March 18, 2023. The Center is in Bishop McNamara's front yard, on Marlboro Pike.

Henry A. Wise, Jr. High School, attended by highschoolers in the Morningside-Skyline area, is rated #8 football team by The Washington Post. It currently has a standing of 10-1.

Changing landscape

The Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum reopened Oct. 14 with eight new and renovated galleries in the west wing. The planetarium and museum store also reopened, along with the new Mars Café. The east wing of the museum will remain closed while it is renovated. Free timed-entry passes are required to visit the west wing and can be reserved on the museum's website.

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, next door to Air & Space, will undergo a major renovation of its interior and plaza starting in 2025, the largest reimagining of the museum in its history.

Sheriff High

Sheriff Melvin C. High, of Upper Marlboro, died Nov. 17 at the Washington

Hospital Center. He was 78. I have a special fondness for him because he gave a beautiful eulogy at my husband Jack's funeral. At that time High was Prince George's Chief of Police, just as Jack had been some years earlier. Sheriff High had a long career in law enforcement, having served with the Metropolitan PD and as Chief of Police in Norfolk and Prince George's, before serving 12 years as Sheriff. He is survived by his wife Brenda and their daughter, Tracy.

John Alishouse

John C. Alishouse, 87, of Upper Marlboro, died Oct. 17 at Fort Washington Health Center. He grew up in Indiana and was a longtime booster of Indiana U. He moved to Maryland to work at the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. He retired in 1996 after 38 years, to focus on skiing and tennis. He was an active member of the DC Ski Club. Survivors include nephews Robert and Thomas Legg.

George Proctor

George Edward Proctor, Jr., 70, of North Carolina and formerly of Ft. Washington, died Aug. 20 at Kitty Askins Hospice Center in Goldsboro, N.C. He was the third of the twelve children of George and Mary Lucille Proctor. He graduated from the Maryland Drafting Institute. He leaves a large extended family, many of whom were at St. John's in Clinton for the funeral and burial on Sept. 9.

Joseph A. Neal

Joseph Arthur Neal, 90, died at his home in Clinton on Oct. 24. After graduating with honors as Valedictorian from Lakewood High School, Joseph graduated from Rutgers University, received a Medical Degree from University of Pennsylvania, and joined the United States Air Force where he served with distinction for 30 years retiring at the rank of Colonel. He's survived by his wife of 64 years, Margaret; sons David and Jonathan, daughter Janice; and brother Alvester. Services were at Lee's with later burial at Arlington.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Louise Lantz, Mary Straud and longtime Senator Mike Miller, Dec. 3; Mark Witherow, Jr. and La'Keshia Johnson, Dec. 4; Denise (Eskew) Simms, Dec. 5; Mae Boone, Sandra Mickey and Brian Doyle, Dec. 7; Washington Cardinal Wilton Gregory, Dec. 7; Crystal Pruitt and Charles Boxley, Dec. 8.

of all involved, indicating that the trustees had taken to meeting every incoming stage in expectation of a teacher's arrival. Addressing the extent to which the community was vested in this effort, he stated: "Many parents have gone beyond their means in fixing up their children, giving them such clothing as will cause them to make a decent appearance at school. The most on earth, the only needed thing, is a good teacher." The community was getting some good use from its newly constructed school building. Douglas informed Re. Kimball that the congregation of John Wesley Methodist Church was holding worship services there.

Rev. Kimball, in response, recruited and confirmed the appointment of Mary A.C. Coakly, a Black woman, to teach at Woodville. Although confirmation was relayed to Major Stuart Eldridge on April 15, 1869, Douglas was not informed of the Coakly appointment. He wrote to Kimball a second time on April 21st. His letter contained a more than a hint of the frustration his community was feeling over this dilemma. In part, his letter said: "I should like very much to hear something of your arrangements about the teacher. I can hardly tell what to think sometimes. I think you have forgotten us."

Before Douglas could receive a reply, Mary Coakly arrived at Woodville. On April 29th, she wrote to Rev. Kimball of her progress from Woodville. Coakly had arrived the previous Thursday and began school the following Monday morning. Twenty-one students had attended school on the first day of classes. Her most immediate need was books; she requested forty-five first and second grade readers, twenty-five primers, twelve arithmetic's for beginners and thirty writing slates.

Upon receipts of her letter, Kimball responded with uncharacteristic haste, forwarding her order the very next day to Ballantine Books in Washington, D.C. In reporting his actions to Miss Coakly, he chided: "I hope you will use a little more care about your writing. You spelled some words wrong."

Coakly's tenure as teacher at Woodville was to end after little more than two months on July 1. During the short time she taught, pupil count had risen from 21 to 53. She had also established a Sabbath school and a temperance society called "The Vanguard of Freedom-Howard Division." It was during her tenure that the school became officially known as "John Wesley". Information received from Historical document from Prince George's County Public School.

Around the County

Hilltop Plaza in Bowie Welcomes Back Black Santa on Friday, December 2 from 5 to 7 p.m.

Soulful Santa Experience is back for second year at the shopping center along with free photos, hot chocolate bar, holiday crafts, a live DJ and more!

BOWIE, Md. (Nov. 28, 2022)—On **Friday, December 2**, Santa will be inside at Hilltop Plaza Shopping Center (6806 Race Track Road, Bowie, Md. 20715 next to T-Mobile,) from 5 to 7 p.m. to meet area families and take photos. "This is the second year we've had a Black Santa at the center," said Kellen Hunte, director of marketing for Rappaport (management company for Hilltop Plaza.) "He was so popular last year that we invited him back for this year."

"We brought in Black Santa last year after we received multiple requests for more diverse representation during the holiday season. We thought it was a great time to have a Santa that is a better reflection of the community," said Hunte.

In addition to free photos with Santa, there will be a hot chocolate bar, holiday crafts and a live deejay.

Hilltop Plaza is managed by Rappaport. For more information, visit www.myhilltopplaza.com.

Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Announces Winter Events at Publick Playhouse

RIVERDALE, Md. (Nov. 22, 2022)—The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County, part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, is pleased to announce a variety of programs available this Winter at Publick Playhouse in Hyattsville, MD. Currently scheduled for December are:

Hope & Faith: Eleisha Faith and Tonisha Hope McCorkle

Art Exhibition: Tuesday, November 22, 2022–Friday, February 3, 2023

Artist Reception: Sunday, December 18, 2022, 1–3 p.m.

Twins, Eleisha Faith and Tonisha Hope McCorkle, have been curating, studying, and creating art since they were 13. The two have used their art as a space of healing and creating immersive experiences that engage with loss, grief, and identity. Their work speaks to the candid, yet uncanny truth of black life, while simultaneously severing from a cyclical narrative deeply rooted in pain and disenfranchisement. By deconstructing materials in their practice, the duo reconstructs narratives through veracious and symbolic imagery to communicate stories of black life, food, rituals, healing, and magic.

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Family Film Day with Santa

December 4, 2 p.m.

Share in some community holiday spirit on our December Family Fun Day. Enjoy a classic holiday film with a famous puppet cast, a sweet treat, as well as a chance to visit with a special someone from the North Pole! For All ages. FREE

National Players: August Wilson's Fences

December 9, 7 p.m.

Set in segregated Pittsburgh in the 1950s, Fences depicts the life of Troy Maxson, a former Negro League baseball star now scraping by as a sanitation worker. Part of August Wilson's 10-play Century Cycle, Fences explores the walls we build around ourselves and our loved ones while also illuminating one family's struggles in the Jim Crow era. All Ages. Tickets: \$20/person, \$15/person For seniors, students, and groups of 20 or more.

Motown Holiday Show

December 16, 8 p.m.

Get into the holiday spirit and enjoy Motown holiday favorites by The Temptations, Stevie Wonder, Boyz II Men, Nat King Cole, The Jackson 5, James Brown, Chuck Brown, and more! For All Ages.

Tickets: \$25/person, \$20/person for seniors, students, and groups of 20 or more.

For information on these and other offerings, visit www.pgparcs.com/2280/The-Prince-Georges-Publick-Playhouse.

Save the Date! MCS Concert, a Ceremony of Carols on Sunday, December 11 at 4 p.m.

Mt. Calvary Catholic Church, 6700 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, MD 20747

Join Maryland Choral Society for a holiday celebration featuring Benjamin Britten's Ceremony of Carols and classic carols of the season. Sure to be a family favorite!

Purchase Tickets at:

https://maryland-choral-society.ticketleap.com/a-cer/dates/Dec-11-2022_at_0400PM

Purchase your tickets in advance and save \$5!

Use code MCS2022 at checkout.

Maryland State Independence Card/EBT cardholders and their families can attend free of charge—just show your card at the door for free admission.

Face Masks Required During Concert

Nominations Are Now Open for County Waste Diversion and Recycling Awards

Annual event recognizes businesses, schools, and individuals demonstrating exceptional achievement in source reduction

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 23, 2022)—Nominations are now open for the Prince George's County Department of the Environment (DoE) and Keep Prince George's County Beautiful (KPGCB) 2022 Waste Diversion and Recycling Virtual Awards. The awards recognize Prince George's County commercial businesses, schools, and other entities who have

COMMUNITY

COVIDReady: State of Maryland Surpasses 1 Million Bivalent Booster Milestone

Governor Hogan, State Health Officials Honor Contributions of 100 GoVAX Ambassadors

By MICHAEL RICCI
Executive Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 21, 2022)—Governor Larry Hogan and the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) today announced that more than one million Marylanders have received their COVID-19 bivalent booster since September in order to be COVIDReady in time for the holidays.

“Through our COVIDReady plan, Maryland continues to be one of the most vaccinated and boosted states in the country,” said Governor Hogan. “We are grateful for the everyday vigilance of Marylanders, and the leadership of our GoVAX ambassadors, who have reminded us that we truly are all in this together.”

Recognition for GoVax Ambassadors. The state is recognizing the efforts of the state’s GoVAX ambassadors from all walks of life with governors’ citations and a new ad, which will play on WBAL during Thanksgiving programming. First launched in January 2021, the initial GoVAX campaign highlighted around a dozen Marylanders—including former UMBC President Dr. Freeman Hrabowski, Del. Joseline Peña-Melnyk, and Associate Professor of Medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine Dr. Kathleen Page.

Enthusiasm quickly grew for the campaign, attracting many more ambassadors, including community leaders, health care workers, faith leaders, and Maryland families. Each of these Marylanders have been essential in sharing information

about the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines and boosters, helping Maryland earn national recognition for its COVID-19 response.

“Surpassing one million COVID-19 bivalent booster shots administered since September shows that Marylanders understand the importance of staying COVIDReady,” said MDH Secretary Dennis R. Schrader. “Fighting COVID-19 has always been a statewide effort, and Marylanders have pulled together to protect ourselves and our families against this virus by getting boosted. We are grateful for our GoVAX ambassadors who have played a role in this effort.”

COVIDReady Maryland. Marylanders can protect themselves from flu and COVID-19 by getting a “Flooster,” a flu shot and COVID-19 booster. It’s safe to get both at the same visit and is the best way to protect against severe illness and death. As always, Marylanders are encouraged to practice basic health hygiene by washing your hands, covering your cough, and staying home from work and school when sick. This helps slow the spread of respiratory illness like RSV as well, which can be dangerous to small children and older adults and doesn’t have a vaccine.

Find a vaccine provider at covidvax.maryland.gov or by calling 1-855-MDGOVAX (1-855-634-6829). For more information about COVID-19 vaccines in Maryland, visit covidLINK.maryland.gov. For the most recent Maryland COVID-19 vaccine data, visit coronavirus.maryland.gov.

Governor Hogan Welcomes ‘Hogan’ the VetDog to State House in Annapolis

Newest Service Dog-In-Training Named as Tribute to Governor’s Commitment to Helping Wounded Veterans Governor Launched Major Expansion of Program to Reduce Backlog of Veterans Waiting For VetDogs

By MICHAEL RICCI
Executive Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 18, 2022)—Governor Larry Hogan recently welcomed the newest member of the state of Maryland’s partnership with America’s VetDogs to the State House in Annapolis. Named as a surprise tribute to the state’s commitment to helping wounded veterans, ‘Hogan’ is currently being trained by incarcerated individuals at the Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown as part of an innovative partnership between America’s VetDogs and the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS). The newest VetDog-in-training will learn more than 100 commands in order to one day work as a service dog for a disabled veteran.

“This is an incredible program, and I have been so inspired by the stories of trainers and veterans who have formed a strong bond with these service dogs,” said Governor Hogan. “I am humbled by this honor, but more importantly, we are proud that Maryland has become the top state in the program.”

Governor Hogan visited the DPSCS VetDogs program at Western Correctional Institution in Cumberland last year, where he met with some of the trainers and puppies. After hearing the inspiring testimony of Al Moore—a Marine who says his VetDog saved his life—the governor directed DPSCS to immediately expand the initiative in order to reduce the backlog of veterans waiting for VetDogs.

“Maryland is one of our greatest programs, and for the first time ever, we are naming a dog after a sitting governor,” said America’s VetDogs President and CEO John Miller.



PHOTO CREDIT PATRICK SIEBERT, ANTHONY DEPANISE

Nov. 7, 2022—Governor Hogan Meets Hogan from the VetDog Program at 100 State Circle, Annapolis, MD 21401

“This is in honor of the governor’s contributions to the legacy of the program.”

Since the governor’s visit, the state’s correctional facilities have trained a total of 21 dogs. Thirty-two dogs are currently in training, making the State of Maryland the top-producing VetDog prison system in the nation. DPSCS has increased the number of correctional facilities training VetDogs from three to five, and a sixth facility is currently in the pipeline.

In addition to ‘Hogan’ the VetDog, the governor was also joined at the State House by DPSCS Secretary Robert Green, America’s VetDogs CEO John Miller, and Officer Mark Clevenger, who oversees the VetDogs program at the Maryland Correctional Institution-Hagerstown.

FSC First Announces Dawn R. Medley as New President & CEO

By PRESS OFFICER
FSC First

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 22, 2022)—FSC First is pleased to announce that Dawn R. Medley will assume the position of President & CEO, effective January 1, 2023. Medley will succeed Shelly Gross-Wade, who steps down in December 2022 after nearly 25 years of service.

Medley currently serves as FSC First’s Senior Vice President - Business Finance Programs and the Prince George’s County Economic Development Incentive Fund Manager (EDI). She is an industry thought leader with over 20 years of experience in public and private funding programs. Over the course of her career, Medley developed, implemented, and managed operations in several funding sectors including commercial banking, economic development, and small business finance.

A subject matter expert in the U.S. Small Business Administration’s 504 and 7(a) loan guarantee programs, Medley champions local entrepreneurship, managing a complex portfolio of over \$60 million in assets that broaden the commercial tax base, retain and attract jobs, increase the growth of key industry sectors and support energy conservation. At FSC First, Medley’s strategic guidance elevates the outcomes for underserved businesses and geographic areas identified for investment. Her stewardship of grant programs, technical assistance, and other financial services put momentum behind promising community businesses. During her tenure, Medley has led the CEO’s vision in the

development and implementation of 10 new loan and grant programs.

“Dawn has been a part of the organization for over 10 years and has created and implemented many new programs, refined the lending process, provided advisory services and education to businesses in the region and led the lending team at the organization. She has also represented us through advocacy and engagement with all our various partners and stakeholders in Prince George’s County and the State of Maryland. We look forward to Dawn’s continued contributions to FSC First’s legacy,” said Diane Brown, Chair of the FSC First Board of Directors, and Chief Operating Officer of the Prince George’s Community Federal Credit Union.

Prior to joining FSC First, Medley began her lending and finance career with Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac and National Cooperative Bank. She served the citizens of Maryland as the Director of Business Lending at the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. She served as a Governor’s Task Force member for business forward initiatives, provided testimony to the Maryland General Assembly, and drafted legislation to provide access to capital for emerging small businesses, which subsequently became law.

Medley holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration with a focus in business law and public policy from the University of Maryland University College. She is a graduate of the Class of 2016 Leadership Maryland program and serves on the Maryland Economic De-



PHOTO COURTESY FSC FIRST

Dawn Medley

velopment Association (MEDA) Board of Directors.

FSC First is a U.S. Treasury-designated Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), an SBA 504 Certified Development Company (CDC) and SBA Community Advantage 7(a) Guaranteed Lender. FSC First serves as a fund manager for several local and statewide loan programs. As a mission-driven financial institution, FSC First is focused on providing creative and innovative financing solutions to small and minority-owned businesses primarily in Prince George’s County, and throughout the state of Maryland.

BetMGM Launches Mobile Sports Betting in Maryland

Online platform complements MGM National Harbor’s Retail Sportsbook

By PRESS OFFICER
BetMGM

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Nov. 23, 2022)—BetMGM, a leading sports betting and iGaming operator, launched its mobile app in Maryland today giving customers access to a variety of online betting options and benefits tied to MGM Resorts’ premier destinations nationwide, including MGM National Harbor.

“This is a significant milestone that elevates our vision to deliver world-class entertainment to sports fans in the DC-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) region,” said BetMGM CEO Adam Greenblatt. “The convenience of our best in-class mobile app connects directly to the engaging atmosphere we’ve created in our retail sportsbooks at MGM National Harbor and Nationals Park.”

The BetMGM app offers a user-friendly sports betting platform experience, giving Maryland sports fans the ability to customize pre-game, live in-play, futures

and parlay wagers. Additionally, integration with MGM Rewards allows Maryland’s BetMGM users to redeem their gameplay for world-class experiences at MGM Resorts properties nationwide including MGM Grand, Bellagio and ARIA in Las Vegas, Borgata in New Jersey, and Beau Rivage in Mississippi.

The mobile app complements the BetMGM Sportsbook & Lounge at MGM National Harbor that opened in December 2021. The BetMGM Sportsbook features a 360-degree jumbotron and 110-foot state-of-the-art wrap-around screen. MGM National Harbor has more than 40 sports betting kiosks located throughout the casino, a second BetMGM Sportsbook on the casino’s second level and a BetMGM betting counter and four kiosks at TAP Sports Bar.

Melanie Johnson, MGM National Harbor’s President & COO, said, “Today’s announcement is monumental as it allows us to expand our sports betting offerings and connect with guests beyond our re-

sort’s walls. The BetMGM Sportsbook & Lounge is an incredible amenity, and the addition of the mobile app further enhances our customer experience.”

BetMGM strengthened its commitment to the DMV in January 2022 when it opened the first retail sportsbook connected to a Major League Baseball stadium at Nationals Park in Washington, D.C. That followed the launch of the BetMGM mobile app in Virginia in January 2021.

As BetMGM continues to expand to new markets, responsible gambling education remains a key focus. BetMGM is proud to provide resources to help customers play responsibly including GameSense, an industry leading program, developed and licensed to MGM Resorts by the British Columbia Lottery Corporation. Through the integration within BetMGM’s mobile and desktop platforms, customers can receive the same GameSense experience they have grown to count on at MGM Resorts properties nationwide. This complements BetMGM’s already existing responsible gambling tools which serve to provide customers with an entertaining and safe digital experience.

The BetMGM app is available for download in Maryland on iOS, with Android soon to follow, as well as on desktop at www.betmgm.com.

Mario Lopez, Hosted ‘Home for the Holidays’ Kickoff Concert at Westfield Montgomery, Benefiting Children’s National Hospital

By PRESS OFFICER
Westfield Montgomery

BETHESDA, Md. (Nov. 21, 2022)—On Nov. 20, Mario Lopez hosted ‘Home for the Holidays’ the official kickoff concert/celebration at Westfield Montgomery located in Bethesda, MD. The family-friendly event, jam-packed (over 2,000 people in attendance) with over-the-top festive programming, was to honor the center’s holiday mission to raise critical funds for Children’s National Hospital. With every dollar donated through December 31, Westfield has pledged to match up to \$10,000.

Lopez, host of NBC’s “Access Hollywood” and “Access Daily” led Montgomery’s free festivities alongside Westfield Montgomery’s Marketing Director, Zeina Davis.

To date, Westfield Montgomery along with a generous

public have collectively raised \$6,000.

Donations are encouraged throughout the holiday season

“We were so happy to have a bit of magic brought to Montgomery to kick off the season. As a parent of a patient of Children’s National Hospital, I can personally say that they change the lives of so many in our community and beyond.”

to benefit Children’s National Hospital—available via: www.westfield.com/montgomery (click on Jingle Lounge).

Additional upcoming holiday programming details a children’s pajama party (11/26), can be found at https://www.westfield.com/montgomery.



PHOTO CREDIT HYON SMITH / NABIL ABDULKADIR

A Maryland Youth Ballet member performing highlights from The Nutcracker.

Contributions raised throughout the season will directly benefit Children’s Patient Experience Program which supports each child’s psychological and emotional wellness through exciting, stimulating activities to feed their growing minds; specifically, Seacrest

Studios, a state-of-the-art facility gives kids an interactive space to explore radio, television, and social media, share their on-air talents and participate in entertaining programs that are broadcast directly to patient rooms.

COMMENTARY

Conversations About Cancer Screening Should Be Priority This Holiday Season—It Can Save Your Life

By DAVID FORD

Two-time cancer survivor, Senior Government Relations Manager at Southern California Edison, and member of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Board of Directors

The holidays are a time to gather with friends and family for food, fun, and great conversations. But imagine those conversations not going as planned and the joy of being with your loved ones overshadowed by someone sharing that they have cancer. You may not have been ready to have that discussion, yet it was happening. And you may not be prepared to talk about screenings with your loved ones, but it's necessary. As someone who has had two different cancers in my life, I cannot stress enough the importance of getting screened.

It was 2015 when I first heard those earth-shattering words, "it's cancer." I thought back to a conversation with my doctor just a few months earlier when they recommended a routine colonoscopy screening. Instead of getting it done right away, I kept putting it off. My life was busy. I had a family and was in the midst of a successful career. It just wasn't a priority for me, and all the while, I was

unknowingly putting myself at risk. Then flash-forward to a critical moment with my doctor. It was too late; surgery was needed to treat my cancer.

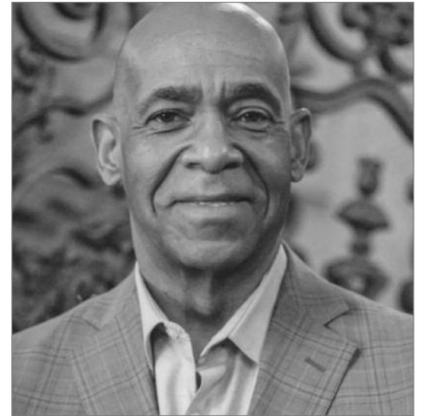
If I'd gotten my colonoscopy, a screening for colon cancer, when it was recommended, it's possible that I could've avoided surgery, treatment, and the emotional toll I put on my family. Even though the treatments saved me, I had to learn the hard way not to take unnecessary risks with my life. So, three years later, when my doctor recommended screening for prostate cancer, I did not wait. I completed the screening immediately, and we were able to find and treat my second cancer at an early stage. Now, I am once again cancer free and sharing my story to help others understand why they should be getting screened.

According to the American Cancer Society, 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women will face a cancer diagnosis in their lifetime, yet the discussion of cancer screening remains taboo in our community. Now is the time to start having conversations about cancer screening and having it often. Be an example for your friends and family. It's okay to say, "Hey, as your buddy, I want us to be together 20 years from now. Make sure you're taking care of yourself.

That includes going to the doctor and getting screened for cancer." It may be a tough conversation to have, but you may be the one that could make a lifesaving difference.

Cancer wasn't something I was prepared to factor into my life. But through my experience, I learned some tough lessons. It is important to listen to my doctor. I need to take the time to share with others, so they don't make the same mistake. It's necessary to go to the doctor on a timely basis. It's okay to have scary conversations about health with loved ones. And if a doctor recommends cancer screening, get screened.

Through my work with the American Cancer Society, I have seen that cancer doesn't discriminate. It's not just older people getting cancer, anyone can be at risk. This is the reason why it is so important for you to talk to a doctor about the type of health care and screening you may need. You can't play around with your life. It's more than just a cancer screening, it's a way to help ensure that we will be around for our families. The longer we are around, the more opportunities we have to live our dreams and to see our loved ones achieve their goals.



COURTESY PHOTO

David Ford

As we prepare to gather for the holidays, whether it's a large gathering or with immediate family, I encourage you to have a conversation with your loved ones about regular cancer screening. I hope that you take the steps yourself to schedule an appointment to get screened. If you need cancer screening recommendations, resources, as well as tips to start the conversation visit cancer.org/get-screened. A small discussion can make a lifesaving difference, so please don't wait.

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Nancy Pelosi Is the Most Successful and Effective Speaker of the House in U.S. History

"History will note she is the most consequential Speaker of the House of Representatives in our history. There are countless examples of how she embodies the obligation of elected officials to uphold their oath to God and country to ensure our democracy delivers and remains a beacon to the world. In everything she does, she reflects a dignity in her actions and a dignity she sees in the lives of the people of this nation." —President Biden

When the National Urban League convened our first in-person conference in three years, in July, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi joined us for the opening rally at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial.

"There's an assault on our democracy," she said. "That's why we have to fight for voting rights, and we will not stop until we achieve voting rights: removing obstacles of participation and the voter suppression laws, doing away with their nullification of elections, removing big special interest money from suffocating our political system, so that everyone's voices are heard."

As her historic fourth term as Speaker of the House draws to a close, it is nearly impossible to express the full impact of her decades of leadership and the profound legacy she leaves behind.

It has been my privilege to know and collaborate with Speaker Pelosi since her earliest days in Congress, when I was a Louisiana State Senator,

throughout my two terms as Mayor of New Orleans and the last two decades with the National Urban League. One of my most treasured mementos is a pen she gave to me that President Obama used to sign the Affordable Care Act.

Of all the legislative and policy initiatives on which she and I have worked together, it was the passage of the ACA that demonstrated her unmatched mastery of the legislative process and the power of her determination. When her party's loss in a Senate special election cost them a filibuster-proof majority, many—including President Obama's own chief of staff—publicly declared the ACA dead and advocated for a watered-down, piecemeal approach. Speaker Pelosi derided the proposal as "eensy weensy bill," telling President Obama, "I know there are some on your staff who want to take the namby-pamby approach. That's unacceptable."

The vote-wrangling that Speaker Pelosi employed to bring the bill to meet the pen I now treasure will be the subject of graduate seminars on public policy for generations to come.

But as large as her speakership may loom in the history books, she was no less bold or impressive as minority leader.

In 2018, she broke the record for longest House speech, spending eight hours and seven minutes reading the emotional letters of young DREAMers, undocumented immigrants brought to the United States as children who aspire to become U.S. citizens. Characteristically, she wore her four-inch

heels the entire time. Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy bested her record by four minutes last year, "but if he wanted to outdo her, he should've done it in stilettos," Rep. Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez said.

Whether leading the majority or minority, she has long been a target of misogynistic attacks, false accusations and conspiracy theories, and threats of violence led by members of the opposing party. Tragically, this campaign of demonization culminated in a brutal attack on her husband, Paul Pelosi, by a right-wing conspiracy theorist intent on abducting her. Yet she herself has never resorted to personal attacks. She has risen above the rancor and insults leveled at her without responding in kind. She continues to exude grace and is the personification of the iron fist in a velvet glove.

When she was sworn in as the first woman Speaker of the House in 2007, she noted that women had waited more than 200 years to shatter the "marble ceiling" of Congress. As she said, "Women weren't just waiting, women were working. Never losing faith, we worked to redeem the promise of America, that all men and women are created equal."

Her commitment to that promise never has wavered throughout her illustrious career. She has been steadfast in her support for civil rights and civil liberties. I'm proud to call her my friend. On behalf of the National Urban League and our nationwide network of affiliates, I thank Speaker Pelosi for her years of dedicated service and her friendship to the League. —November 23, 2022

Civil Rights Leaders Urge Administration to Place New, Consolidated FBI Headquarters in Prince George's County

From Congressman Steny Hoyer's Office

(Nov. 28, 2022)—Wanted to make sure you saw this letter released last week by National Urban League President and CEO Marc H. Morial, Greater Washington Urban League President and CEO George H. Lambert, Jr., National Action Network Founder and President Rev. Al Sharpton, and Nia 2X, President of the National Action Network Greater Washington, D.C., Chapter, urging the Biden Administration and GSA to select Prince George's County as the home to the new, Consolidated FBI Headquarters.

"Prince George's County is home to the largest suburban majority Black population in the region and one of the largest in the nation," the leaders wrote. "Though there is a talented and educated workforce in the county, this community has historically been left out of federal office space allocations and other investments from the Federal Government. Such disparities in the county contribute to a median income that is 18% lower than the median income of the region as a whole and 48% lower than the median income of Fairfax County."

"Prince George's County has 48% of federal warehouse space and 20% of the region's federal workforce, yet only 4% of the region's federal office spaces are housed in the county," the leaders continued. "A federal investment in this county the size and significance of the new FBI headquarters would begin to address the low rate of federal office space and bring economic growth and development to this community that has been historically underserved."

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Robin Carnahan
Administrator of General Services
United States General Services Administration
1800 F Street NW Washington, DC 20405

Dear Mr. President and Administrator Carnahan: On behalf of the National Urban League, National Action Network, the Greater Washington Urban League, and the National Action Network's Greater Washington, DC Chapter, organizations with a demonstrated history of advocating for policies that promote equitable access to adequate economic opportunity for African Americans and other historically underserved communities, we write to strongly encourage the Biden-Harris Administration (Administration) to select a Prince George's County site—Greenbelt, MD or Landover, MD—to house the new consolidated Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) headquarters. The selection of a Prince George's County site is consistent with

the Fiscal Year 2022 Consolidated Appropriations Act and the Administration's commitment to equity and empowerment initiatives.

Prince George's County is home to the largest suburban majority Black population in the region and one of the largest in the nation. Though there is a talented and educated workforce in the county, this community has historically been left out of federal office space allocations and other investments from the Federal Government. Such disparities in the county contribute to a median income that is 18% lower than the median income of the region as a whole and 48% lower than the median income of Fairfax County.

In January 2021, the Biden Administration solidified its commitment to racial equity when it announced the "Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government" (Executive Order).¹ The language in the Executive Order acknowledges the "unbearable human costs" of the entrenched racial disparities in our laws and policies and affirmatively commits the Federal Government to a comprehensive approach in advancing equity for all. Selecting a Prince George's County site to house the consolidated FBI headquarters would help effectuate the Administration's written commitment to racial equity.

Section 6 of the Executive Order—titled, "Allocating Federal Resources to Advance Fairness and Opportunity"—is especially relevant here. Section 6 reads in part, "The Federal Government should . . . allocate resources to address the historic failure to invest sufficiently, justly, and equally in underserved communities."² Prince George's County has 48% of federal warehouse space and 20% of the region's federal workforce, yet only 4% of the region's federal office spaces are housed in the county. A federal investment in this county the size and significance of the new FBI headquarters would begin to address the low rate of federal office space and bring economic growth and development to this community that has been historically underserved. This selection therefore squarely aligns with the Federal Government's stated commitment in Section 6 of the Executive Order.

The Federal Government's commitment to racial equity is also highlighted in one of the five criteria for selecting the location of the new consolidated FBI headquarters. Part of Criteria #4, as outlined by the General Services Administration (GSA), is to advance "racial equity and support for underserved communities through the Federal Government."³ The Administration has therefore given two clear indications that holistic pursuit of an equity agenda is a priority for the Federal Government.

We implore the Administration to select Greenbelt, MD or Landover, MD as the home of the new consolidated FBI headquarters. Doing so would represent an important step toward addressing the historic failure to invest equitably in Prince George's County. It is similarly an important step toward making real the Administration's commitment to racial equity.

The National Urban League, Greater Washington Urban League, National Action Network, and National Action Network's Washington DC Chapter appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,
Marc H. Morial, President & CEO, National Urban League
Reverend Al Sharpton, Founder & President, National Action Network
George H. Lambert, Jr., President & CEO, Greater Washington Urban League
Nia 2X, President, Greater Washington, DC Chapter, National Action Network
cc: Shalanda D. Young, Director, Office of Management and Budget

¹ Exec. Order No. 13985, 86 Fed. Reg. 7009 (2021).

² Id. at 7010-11.

³ Site Selection Plan: Federal Bureau of Investigation Suburban Headquarters, General Services Administration (September 22, 2022), [https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/2022-09-22-FINAL-FBI%20HQ%20Site%20Selection%20Plan%20\(Signed%20and%20Redacted\)_0.pdf](https://www.gsa.gov/cdnstatic/2022-09-22-FINAL-FBI%20HQ%20Site%20Selection%20Plan%20(Signed%20and%20Redacted)_0.pdf).

The Prince George's Post

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5 Tips to Pull Off *Holiday Hosting*

FAMILY FEATURES

With stay-at-home holidays a thing of the past for many families, they're now busy preparing for full-blown celebrations. The return of traditional festivities brings seemingly never-ending to-do lists and pressure to be the perfect host.

From mastering a mouthwatering menu and donning your home with decadent decor to ensuring guests enjoy the evening to the fullest, hosting duties bring plenty of responsibilities. This year, though, you can avoid those anxious feelings with some preparation ahead of the big day.

To help pull off a sensational seasonal soiree, consider these tips from the entertaining experts at Sun-Maid to make the holidays brighter and more manageable so you can navigate the stresses of hosting.

Invite Others to Share Favorite Traditions

Especially with stay-at-home holidays in recent years, some friends and family members may have developed their own special traditions from new recipes and foods to seasonal games and activities. Inviting your guests to bring or share something that represents their favorite part of the holidays can help everyone feel welcome.

Take Time for Yourself

Remember to make time for yourself so you can enjoy the fruits of your labor right alongside guests. The busyness of this time of year can add stress but reflecting on the true meaning of the season and reveling in your favorite parts of the holidays can help you avoid feeling overwhelmed.



Photos courtesy of Getty Images



Add New Ingredients to Your Menu

While pairing this year's turkey or ham with the classics provides comfort and calls to mind holiday memories of the past, cooking with new ingredients and adding fresh recipes to the menu can put a fun spin on the season and maybe even create your own traditions to carry forward.

For example, baking with an option like Sun-Maid Raisins provides a whole fruit option with zero grams of added sugars per 1/4-cup serving. They're an easy, better-for-you substitution to reduce overall sugar intake without compromising flavor or texture when compared with dried cranberries, which contain 27 grams of added sugars per 1/4-cup serving. The natural sugars of raisins make them a versatile, useful addition to a wide variety of holiday-worthy dishes.

Hop On Hot Food Trends

One of this year's most popular trends in the kitchen is food boards, a fun and easy way to elevate flavor while incorporating favorites like cured meats, cold cuts, cheese slices and cubes, dips, nuts and more. Plus, you can keep your board balanced with nutritious items like vegetables and fruit, such as raisins, which provide sweet flavor without the added sugars.

A Time for Truce

Gathering for the holidays is about coming together with loved ones, family, friends and neighbors — and pulling it off means catering to everyone's needs and wants. It's a time for compromises and truces. To help add a little extra spark this year, try incorporating a theme to the party or coordinate fun activities and games that can be enjoyed by all. For example, holiday-themed charades, a seasonal "name that tune" game and gift exchanges all give guests ways to get in on the excitement.

To find more holiday entertaining inspiration and recipe ideas, visit SunMaid.com/PullOffTheHolidays.

Pediatrician-Approved Tips to Conquer Holiday Travel with Little Ones

FAMILY FEATURES

The holiday season is a time for joy and togetherness, but it can often bring stress for parents of young children with the amount of "newness" in each experience, particularly when it comes to seasonal travel.

To help make holiday travel with little ones more manageable — whether traveling by bus, train, car or plane — Dr. Whitney Casares, MD, MPH, pediatric medical consultant for Gerber, offers this guidance for families.

Travel Light

Especially if traveling by plane, pack as light as possible (or check most of your luggage) so you have less to maneuver through security gates and on the plane. However, for longer trips, packing small, developmentally appropriate toys and snacks can provide perfect entertainment for little ones.

Prepare for Ear Pressure

Babies often scream during takeoff and landing on flights because they can't easily equalize the pressure in their eustachian tubes, the connection between their ears and the back of the throat. When you're ascending and descending, give your baby something safe to suck on, like a pacifier, to reduce the buildup of pressure in the ears. Taking small sips of water, breastmilk or formula and yawning are also ways to help babies and toddlers experiencing ear pressure during flights.

Plan for Time Adjustments

For long trips that include time zone changes, expect children to take several days to grow accustomed to their new schedules. Plan an extra day or two for that time adjustment, if possible, when mapping out your trip and make time for stops to stretch, snack and take bathroom breaks.

Pack Convenient Snacks

Having easy-to-access snacks that don't make a large mess can make travel easier and less stressful. For example, Gerber Plant-Tastic Banana Berry & Veggie Smash with Oats Organic Pouch and Plant-Tastic Lil' Crunchies White Bean Hummus are nutritious snacks for toddlers that come in resealable containers that are easy to pack for on-the-go families.



Photos courtesy of Getty Images



Bring Sanitizing Products

Having your own sanitizing wipes on-hand makes it easier to freshen up often-touched surfaces in public spaces like seatback trays, chairs and tables. While safe on most hard surfaces, check the label before using the wipes then allow the area to dry completely before letting your child touch it. Warm, soapy water can also be used to clean toys and other personal products.

Maintain a Consistent Schedule

Keeping your child on his or her normal schedule during the holidays isn't always feasible and a few imperfections are to be expected during the busy season. However, if your baby's feeding or sleep schedule does get thrown off by holiday events, try to return to a consistent routine as soon as possible. Be patient with yourself and your little one as you both adjust.

Be Mindful of Anxiety

While attending holiday gatherings, your child may become overwhelmed when meeting new

people, including family members. Babies start to develop separation anxiety and apprehension to strangers at about 6 months old as their brains start to understand the concept of object permanence (that something still exists when it is not present). Educating loved ones about this developmental stage can help you feel less anxious about big family gatherings with your little one. If your child is particularly sensitive, try introducing new people in smaller cohorts, as opposed to introducing him or her to the whole group at once.

Take Time for Yourself

While traveling with little ones can be a "bumpy road," it's important for parents to also try and enjoy the holidays as much as possible. Making some time for yourself — taking deep breaths, listening to a meditation on an option like the Calm app or playing a favorite song, for example — can help you recharge and relax ahead of a big event.

To find more expert tips and resources to help conquer the holiday season, visit Gerber.com.

