

# The Prince George's Post



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PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Newly elected and installed 2025 Officers and Directors of The Prince George's County Association of REALTORS®.

## Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® Installs 2025 President, Officers, and Directors and Recognizes REALTOR® of the Year

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCAR

REALTORS®, friends, family, and colleagues gathered to celebrate the Installation Ceremony of PGCAR's 2025 President, Arnita Greene, of Capital Structures Real Estate LLC. Greene was installed by her longtime friend and broker,



2021 PGCAR President, Shameeka Price. Arnita officially assume[d] leadership of the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR) on October 1.

In a momentous event filled

**2025 President  
Arnita Greene**  
PHOTO COURTESY PGCAR

with excitement and anticipation, we proudly congratulate our newly elected President and the distinguished members of the 2025 Board of Directors. This significant occasion marks the beginning of a new chapter for PGCAR, as we embrace a

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## Prince George's County Hosts Fall 2024 'Growing Green With Pride' Litter Cleanup and Community Planting Event

Residents and Communities Are Invited to Participate in Countywide Beautification Effort

By PRESS OFFICER  
DPW&T

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 1, 2024)—Prince George's County will hold its bi-annual Fall 'Growing Green with Pride' cleanup event on **Saturday, October 19, 2024**, from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. This countywide event supports County Executive Angela Alsobrook's Beautification Proud Priority and will focus on eliminating accumulated litter and enhancing the overall atmosphere of the County. Growing Green with Pride will take place rain or shine.

The ongoing issue of litter accumulation along roadways, in parking lots, and public spaces affects many cities and communities across the country, and Prince George's County is no exception. County Executive Angela Alsobrooks has implemented numerous initiatives to address this challenge, while

also investing in programs aimed at reducing all forms of pollution and its harmful effects. DPW&T's Residential Street Sweeping Program and the Department of the Environment's (DOE) PGC LitterTrak mobile application reflect this effort.

"As a community, we must work together to keep Prince George's County clean and beautiful," said County Executive Alsobrooks. "Litter doesn't grow like grass, and each of us has a responsibility to pick up after ourselves and remind those close to us to do the same. The less time and money we spend collecting litter, the more we can spend expanding our County's beautification efforts."

For registered participants and organizations, DPW&T will provide plastic gloves, trash bags, safety vests, plants, trees,

See LITTER Page A2

## Kick Off Autumn at the Oxon Hill Farm Fall Festival

By PRESS OFFICER  
National Park Service

OXON HILL, Md. (Oct. 7, 2024)—The National Park Service invites the community to attend the annual Oxon Hill Farm Fall Festival on **October 19, 2024**, from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. (6411 Oxon

Hill Rd, Oxon Hill, MD 20745)

The Fall Festival is an annual tradition that encourages the community to participate in fall themed activities at a national park. The theme of this year's festival is "Art in the Park" and will feature pumpkin painting, a drum circle, square dancing and story time with the local library.

Skilled artisans will be present throughout the day to share their crafts along with live musical performances in the afternoon. This is a free family friendly event that will have something for everyone to enjoy.

Oxon Hill Farm is located within Oxon Cove Park and offers an escape from the nearby city

life. Enjoy every season at Oxon Hill Farm with activities such as hiking, biking, viewing nature and meeting the resident farm animals or delving into the extensive and interesting history of the land now known as Oxon Cove Park. Park grounds are open daily from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

## Motivating OUR Future Concert Kickoff Empowers Prince George's County Students

By PRESS OFFICER  
StaySOLID Youth Mental Health

BOWIE, Md. (Oct. 1, 2024)—On the evening of September 26, over 300 high school students from Prince George's County gathered at the Bowie Center for Performing Arts for the Motivating OUR Future Concert Kickoff. Hosted by LiveLIVE and StaySOLID Youth Mental Health, in partnership with Bowie High School SGA and Students Demand Action, the event sought to inspire and uplift local students through music, self expression, and messages of nonviolence.

### Inspiring Self Expression and Community Unity

Executive Director of StaySOLID, Cornelius Neal McDonald and Justin Murray, Ambassador for Student Demand Actions, explained the importance of the event's mission: "Understanding the need for these events in school is the best part about this tour. Allowing students voices to be heard and express themselves is how we get them to align with school system guidelines." With a focus on promoting nonviolence and academic achievement, the event brought to light critical issues like gun violence while encouraging self expression and community solidarity.

The night was filled with interactive games, gift card giveaways, and live performances by local hip hop artists Jaey Chino, Nino Paid, and Yung



PHOTO COURTESY STAYSOLID YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Students with Students Demand Action merchandise

Manny. Hosted by Neal and radio personality Marky Marc from 93.9 WKYS, the concert combined entertainment and meaningful discussions about success, empowerment, and positive life choices.

### Bringing Together the Arts and Advocacy

David Duba, a teacher at Bowie High School, reflected on the concert's impact: "The concert not only entertained our students but also inspired them in ways that are difficult to quantify. It fostered a love for the arts and created lasting memories. You empowered our students, created a fun, uplifting event, and connected them with regional leaders."

The concert served as a precursor to

the upcoming "Motivate OUR Future Summit," set to take place at 10 schools throughout the DMV area and Maryland Eastern Shore. Summit dates include: October 9, October 16, October 22, October 24, October 30, November 4, November 6, November 12, and November 14. The summit aims to continue empowering students by offering practical advice, role models, and tools to overcome challenges and achieve their goals. Interested schools may register at <https://www.staysolid.org/motivate-our-future-summit>.

### Setting the Stage for a Brighter Future

The Motivating OUR Future Concert



PHOTO COURTESY STAYSOLID YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Cornelius "Neal" McDonald, CEO, StaySOLID Youth Mental Health



PHOTO COURTESY STAYSOLID YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Mr. David Duba and Cornelius "Neal" McDonald

Kickoff was more than an evening of music; it was a catalyst for positive change. By reinforcing nonviolence and providing a platform for students' voices to be heard, the event supported Students Demand Action's mission to reduce gun

violence in schools and communities. Through music, unity, and education, the concert left a lasting mark on Prince George's County students, motivating them to strive for academic success and make positive life choices.

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# TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

## In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return soon!

### Brandywine-Aquasco

#### INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY

Clinton United Methodist Church in Clinton, Maryland celebrated International Sunday "New Beginnings: Awakening to God's Presence" on Sunday, September 22, 2024. Rev. Melania Trice, Pastor. Rev. Stella S. Tay, Retired Clergy Baltimore Washington Conference the United Methodist Church delivered the Sermon "Courage to Embrace God's 'New Thing'".

Rev. Stella Tay is a native of the Republic of Panama. She grew up in a Christian home, and from an early age she was active in the church and was nurtured in the faith. At the age of 12 she committed her life to Christ and was baptized. As a youth growing up in Panama and throughout her adult life, she served in various capacities within the church. She migrated to the United States after completing her high school education and resided in New York. Her first marriage ended in divorce. In 1981 she earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a major in Sociology (cum laude) from Brooklyn College.

In 1982, she married the late Rev. Manuel R. Tay, Sr., an Elder in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, and relocated in Baltimore, Maryland, where she was the appointed Pastor of Caroline Street UMC. She answered the call to ministry in 1989 and began her seminary education. In 1995, she earned her Master of Religious Education Degree from Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC, and was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister in the United Methodist Church on June 11, 1995. She was ordained as a Deacon in Full Connection in 1998.

For 48 years she held secular jobs as an Administrative Assistant, which included 10 years with St. John's Episcopal Hospital, Brooklyn, New York, seven years with Bon Secours Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, and in 2011 she retired from Milliman, Inc., an actuarial firm in Vienna, Virginia, after 22 years of service. For her these were more than just jobs, they were ministries.

Currently, Rev. Tay served alongside her husband in the Baltimore Washington Conference, at the local, district, and conference levels, first as laity, and later as appointed clergy. Her service included Leadership Day Instructor, Conference Christian Education Trainer, as well as serving on the Ethnic Local Church and Conference Committees, District Council on Ministries, and Board of Ordained Ministry. In addition to Caroline Street UMC, churches served included Homestead UMC, Baltimore, MD, Congress Heights UMC, Washington, DC, Lewin UMC, St. Marks UMC in Baltimore, MD, Christ Church, Aquasco, MD, Oakland Union Cooperative Parish, West River/Lothian, and Union UMC, Lothian, MD. She served as the Pastor of Union UMC, Lothian MD, until her retirement at the 2014 Annual Conference Session. She also serves as a mentor to candidates for ordained ministry.

Rev. Tay's passion is helping others to get to know God, and to grow in their faith so that they are emboldened in their witness

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

for Christ. Rev. Tay is the mother of three, and the stepmother of six adult children. From this blended family, she has fourteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. "There is only one life, it will soon be passed. Only what is done for Christ will last."

#### JOHNSON FAMILY REUNION (PART TWO)

Recognition and achievements. The Family of Lucille and James Contee. Airman William "Andre" Washington joined the U.S. Air Force in February 2024. Jamiah Aniya Jones graduated from KIPP DC College Preparatory June 2024. Attending Bowie State University, Major: Nursing. Jace Qasim Butler is 3 years old. He loves monster trucks, race cars and helping in the kitchen. He started Pre-K 3 this year and this is his very first family reunion. He is the son of Jonathan Butler and Quianna Ford. Also, he is the first grandchild to the proud grandparents of John and Geneva Butler.

The Family of Richard A. Johnson. Congratulations on all of your accomplishments. Dr. Lynnell Johnson, Teaching Assistant Professor, North Carolina A&T State University Department of Mathematics and Statistics. Howard Matthews, III, Inventory Technician, M-NCPPC. Almazi Matthews Senior, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Major: Agriculture. Steven Matthews, Jr., Junior North Carolina A&T State University, Major: Journalism/Mass Communications. Bernita Johnson, Social Services Specialist, Fairfax County Department of Family Services. Richard Johnson, Sophomore, Chowan University, Major: Cybersecurity. Charles Johnson, Junior, Bishop McNamara High School. Michael Johnson, Freshman, Bishop McNamara High School.

The Family of Richard A. Johnson. Congratulations on all of your accomplishments. Cynthia Parker retired with 37 years of dedicated federal government service in January 2017. She is enjoying being an awesome supportive, encouraging mother and grandmother to her two daughters and all of her grandkids. Carson Pinkney graduated from the University of North Carolina Charlotte in 2019. He is currently working as a Contractor for Sigmatch supporting the United States Army.

#### CRAB FEAST

There will be a CRAB FEAST October 13, 2024, from 2-5 p.m. at St. Philip's Church Hall, 13800 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Hosted By: Peter A. Gross, Sr. Scholarship Committee.

All You Can Eat: Crabs, hamburgers, hot dogs, corn on the cob, baked beans, potato chips. Donation is \$60.00 per person. "Proceeds go to future scholarships. Call 240-882-3369, 804-301-9530, 302-690-4260 for tickets. No Tickets Sold at Door." Peter A. Gross, Sr. Scholarship/Memorial Fund Inc. 16950 Horsehead Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613-8302 (301) 888-1475.

## National Agape Gift Bag & Sock Ministry Opening Day for New Program Benefitting Citizens Needing Services in the Suitland and Surrounding Communities

By PRESS OFFICER  
21st Century Church of Christ

SUITLAND, Md. (Oct. 3, 2024)—On September 26, 2024, from 12-3 p.m., the National Agape Gift Bag & Sock Ministry, in partnership with the Suitland Civic Association, hosted a new program offering much-needed services for homeless men, women, children and Veterans, and empowerment options for individuals needing assistance to improve their quality of life.

The opening day at the Suitland Water Tower at 4211 Suitland Road was very successful. Approximately 15 men and women stopped in to hear details of the services offered. Many of them stayed until the event was over at 3 p.m. Services will be offered once a month until adequate funding can be obtained to provide some of the basic supplies requested by community members. The National Agape Gift Bag & Sock Ministry provides knit hats, gloves, hand warmers, foil blankets, ponchos, drawstring bags to carry their valuables, white socks, lotions, body wipes, toothbrushes and paste, hand sanitizers, deodorants, bottles of water and treats to name just a few. Now that the weather is changing, keeping warm and healthy will be much more challenging. Donations of sweaters and coats are very much appreciated.

Pastor John McCain of the 21st Century Church of Christ, Founder of the National Agape Gift Bags Sock Ministry, and Janice Euell, Vice President of the National Agape Gift Bag & Sock Ministry are seeking partners to help provide much-needed supplies, especially white socks, which are in high-demand in shelters or those who find themselves in a homeless situation or those requiring quality of life services that are readily available to them who reside in either Suitland, District Heights, Forestville and other areas where services are in need for the elderly or the handicapped to give them the necessities that most take for granted.

Our distribution schedule for our program is from 12 to 3 p.m. **October 24, November 21, and December 19** at the Suitland Water Tower.

Pastor John said, "I had a vision that he saw males under a bridge in tents whose feet were exposed to the elements without socks." In consultation with Ms. Euell, they decided that if they need socks, they will also need other items to help them take care of their basic needs to stay healthy and safe—toiletries, hair grooming, deodorant, shampoo, moisturized towels, toothbrushes and toothpaste, to name a few. "Hats, gloves, scarves, foil blankets, and ponchos are provided seasonally to help keep them warm, and hand sanitizer, masks to protect against the spread of disease."

Pastor John also has this to say, "The Lord has blessed us with being able to donate all of these items to those in need. I never imagined that in such a short time my vision would come to light. We must continue to carry on the work of Jesus who commands us to help those in need. With the help of the community, we can, and we should do our best to affect the change we want to see happen in the lives of our homeless brethren."

For more information or to donate supplies, volunteer or make a tax-deductible donation, please use one of these websites to inquire or to donate: Please visit: [www.21ccoc.org](http://www.21ccoc.org) or [www.agapeministry.info](http://www.agapeministry.info) or email or call Janice Euell at [janice\\_euell@21ccoc.org](mailto:janice_euell@21ccoc.org), 301-523-2677.

#### Litter from A1

litter grabbers, and a maximum of 6 bags of mulch. **Registration for 'Growing Green with Pride' closes Friday, October 11, 2024.** Growing Green with Pride student participants will receive community service credits. Verification forms for community service can be obtained at the schools. Register at <http://MyPGC.us/GrowingGreen> to join this Countywide event.

"We are Prince George's Proud to be hosting the County's bi-annual litter cleanup again this year, and we look forward to welcoming new and familiar faces," said DPW&T Director Michael Johnson. "Together we can make a significant impact on Prince George's County communities. Every piece of litter we pick up and every tree planted beautifies our communities and contributes to a healthier community for us all."

For additional information, please contact the DPW&T Office of Highway Maintenance at (301) 499-8641 or e-mail Tonya Hairston at [GrowingGreenwithPride@co.pg.md.us](mailto:GrowingGreenwithPride@co.pg.md.us).

## One Maryland One Book Author Tour Kicks Off in Central Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland Humanities

BALTIMORE (Oct. 2, 2024)—Maryland Humanities is delighted to launch its 2024 One Maryland One Book Author Tour featuring Myriam J. A. Chancy at The Allan Lefcowitz Theater at The Writer's Center (4508 Walsh Street in Bethesda) on **October 12, 2024** at 2 p.m. Chancy will present a talk about her novel *What Storm, What Thunder*, which follows a cast of characters during the 2010 earthquake that struck Haiti. A Q&A session with the audience and a book signing will follow the Author Talk. This event is free and open to the public. Tickets are required and available: <https://mdhumanities.wufoo.com/forms/ml1bvdyvmn0r9ui2q/>.

In Chancy's fourth novel, the Haitian-Canadian-American author masterfully charts the inner lives of the characters affected by the disaster in scenes before, after, and during the earthquake. She artfully weaves together the lives of an NGO architect, an expat and water-bottling executive; Sara, a mother haunted by the ghosts of her children; Leopold, a small-time drug trafficker; Didier, a musician and cab driver who lives in Boston; and many more.

Chosen as the 2024 One Maryland One Book Selection, *What Storm, What Thunder* is an inspiring novel that was named a Best Book of the Year by NPR, Kirkus, Library Journal, The Boston Globe, and The Globe and Mail. The book



PHOTO CREDIT N. AFFONSO

Author Myriam J.A. Chancy



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND HUMANITIES

Front cover of *What Storm, What Thunder*

made the shortlist for the Aspen Words Literary Prize and the longlist for the OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature. Chancy's 2010 novel, *The Loneliness of Angels*, also made the latter list. This April, Chancy released her latest novel *Village Weavers*, which confronts the intersectionality of race, class, and nationality through the lives of Haitian and Dominican families in 1950s Haiti.

When asked about her novel *What Storm, What Thunder* Chancy shared that, "The novel takes its title in part from an epigraph by Frederick Douglass. 'Himself from the Baltimore area, writing in his essay, 'What to the Negro is the fourth of the July?' in 1852 [Douglass writes] 'For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.'"

Maryland Humanities CEO Lindsey Baker says: "This year's One Maryland One Book

theme feels important and timely. I'm looking forward to seeing what resonates with Marylanders about *What Storm, What Thunder* and the amazing programming I know our partners will come up with."

Finally, all are invited to support Maryland Humanities by attending the annual VIP Author Reception on **October 12** at 6 p.m. Located in the Ellsworth Room of the Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza (located at 1 Veterans Place), a \$75 ticket includes a signed copy of Chancy's book, hors d'oeuvres and beverages, in addition to a meet-and-greet. "We hope you will join us for a spectacular evening featuring Myriam J. A. Chancy and individuals committed to heritage, culture, and the future of Maryland," says Maryland Humanities Director of Advancement, Claudia Allen. Visit Eventbrite to purchase your tickets to the One Maryland One Book VIP Author Reception.

For more information on the One Maryland One Book Author Tour, visit our website at [www.mdhumanities.org](http://www.mdhumanities.org) For questions about our upcoming Author Reception, reach out to our Director of Advancement Claudia Allen at [callen@mdhumanities.org](mailto:callen@mdhumanities.org).

One Maryland One Book is a program of Maryland Humanities presented in partnership with The National Endowment for the Humanities and Howard County Library System. It is sponsored by The Institute of Museum and Library Services via the Maryland State Library Agency, with additional support from the Haitian Studies Association at University of Maryland, College Park; Gender & Women's Studies at University of Illinois at Chicago; University of Florida Center for Latin American Studies; Salisbury University; Brown Advisory; Jennifer Shea; Bruce and Kate Beveridge; Dr. Kimberly Moffitt; Saima Sitwat; President Ronald Nowaczyk, PhD; and Frostburg State University.

Maryland Humanities creates and supports bold experiences that explore and elevate our shared stories to connect people, enhance lives, and enrich communities. Visit [www.mdhumanities.org](http://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; corporations; small businesses; and individual donors. Connect with Maryland Humanities on Facebook, X, Threads, Instagram, YouTube.

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# COMMUNITY



COURTESY PHOTO

(Oct. 21, 2023)—Marine Corps veteran Albert Willis is presented with a certificate of appreciation for his military service from Air Force Master Sgt. Akasha Lowry during his honor salute. Hospice of the Chesapeake is always in need of volunteers like Lowry to perform these brief but powerful ceremonies for veterans who are hospice patients.

## Volunteer With a Nonprofit With a 45-year Tradition of Caring for Life

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Oct. 1, 2024)—Forty-five years ago, Hospice of the Chesapeake began its journey of caring for life with four volunteers serving four patients. Since then, it has become Maryland's largest independent not-for-profit hospice, caring for more than 59,000 hospice patients in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties. Well over 5,500 volunteers played a role in that care.

Volunteers play a vital role on the hospice team by visiting and providing comfort to patients, performing honor salutes, supporting caregivers, serving as facilitators for grief programs, acting as advocates at community events and assisting in our offices and inpatient care centers.

There is an immediate need for military personnel—active or veteran—to perform honor salutes for veteran patients, with the greatest need for patients in Prince George's and Charles counties. More than 25 percent of hospice patients are veterans, which is why Hospice of the Chesapeake has focused much energy on addressing their unique needs. These brief yet powerful ceremonies are performed at the homes and bedsides of dying veterans, leaving a lasting impact on not only the patient, but their family and friends.

The need for volunteers is constant. Other available volunteer roles include:

- **Compassionate Care Volunteers** provide companionship and a supportive presence for our patients and respite for family caregivers. They offer a listening ear, open mind and loving heart to those in our care.
- **Integrative Arts Volunteers:** Aromatherapy, Compassionate Touch, reiki practitioners, and certified pet therapy teams.

Become a hospice volunteer if you are age 18 or older and willing to complete volunteer training to prepare you for your volunteer role. To inquire about becoming a volunteer, contact [volunteers@hospicechesapeake.org](mailto:volunteers@hospicechesapeake.org) or 443-837-1508. People also can apply online at [www.hospicechesapeake.org/volunteer](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org/volunteer).

## Black Panther Author Coming to Maryland

Nnedi Okorafor will speak at Leonardtown High School on Oct. 11

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland State Library Agency

BALTIMORE (Sept. 30, 2024)—Award-winning author Nnedi Okorafor, whose work on the Marvel Black Panther comic book series garnered international acclaim, is coming to Southern Maryland. Okorafor will take part in a moderated discussion from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on **October 11** at Leonardtown High School. **The event is free and open to the public, but registration is required. It will also be available virtually.**

"This event is a terrific example of Maryland libraries working together to develop programs that support and strengthen literacy efforts across the state," said Maryland State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller. "I'm thrilled such an esteemed and accomplished author will join us to share her knowledge, insights and perspective with the Southern Maryland community and beyond."

Okorafor is a novelist of African-based science fiction and fantasy for children and adults. Building on the work of Stan Lee and Ta-Nehisi Coates, whose Black Panther comics were adapted into a blockbuster movie in 2018, Okorafor authored several issues of Black Panther—Long Live the King, a continuation of the series and Hugo nominee for

Best Novella. In addition, Okorafor authored *Wakanda Forever*, also adapted into a global hit movie, and the spin-off *Shuri*.

Among Okorafor's many other works are the *Binti* trilogy, the *Akata Witch* books (both optioned for the screen), and her latest, *She Who Knows*. Okorafor holds a Ph.D. in Literature and is a winner of the Hugo, Nebula, World Fantasy, Locus and Lodestar awards.

The discussion at Leonardtown High School will be live-streamed and available to view online through the St. Mary's County Public Library Youtube channel. Okorafor's books will also be available for purchase. She will participate in a book signing after the event.

The program is made possible through a partnership with Maryland Libraries Together, St. Mary's County Library, Calvert Library, St. Mary's College of Maryland and Howard County Library System. It 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 Agency.

"We are grateful to the many partners who are bringing to Southern

See **AUTHOR** Page A4

## Good Trouble Think-Tank: "Your Voice & Your Vote Matters in 2024"

By PRESS OFFICER  
Good Trouble Think-Tank

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (Oct. 5, 2024)—The Good Trouble Think-Tank's video campaign urges first-time voters and young adults to participate in the upcoming election. The Good Trouble Think-Tank received a Hatch micro-grant to produce a special video to implore everyone to vote during this upcoming election on November 5, 2024. The video is a powerful reminder of the importance of voting. Young voices share their concerns and hopes, and they understand how

democracy is essential to shaping the future.

Established in August of 2020, the community think-tank continues to honor the life and legacy of late Congressman John R. Lewis. The Good Trouble group serves as a grassroots answer to Congressman Lewis's challenge to organize and seek change, justice, and equality for all.

"Your Voice & Your Vote Matters in 2024" is a video campaign to inspire young adults, first-time voters, and everyone to use their voice in the 2024 election. We hope the video will energize the com-

munity and show that every vote matters in the presidential general election.

In this video, our young adults and first-time voters share their thoughts and what they believe are character traits of a president, their thoughts about today's climate, and why everyone should exercise their right to vote.

First-time voter and high school student said, "I am concerned about gun violence. No one should be afraid to leave their homes."

The campaign video is posted on our website at Good Trouble Think Tank | John Lewis ([getn2goodtrouble.com](http://getn2goodtrouble.com)).

## Bringing the Community Together: Operation Earnie's Plate and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Partner to Fight Food Insecurity

By PRESS OFFICER  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

TEMPLE HILLS, Md. (Sept. 28, 2024)—On September 28, 2024, a powerful collaboration took place at St. Stephens Baptist Church (5757 Temple Hill Road, Temple Hills, MD 20748), where 175 volunteers came together in a spirited effort to fight food insecurity. This interfaith event, led by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Eric Hawkins, founder of Operation Earnie's Plate (OEP), brought hope and unity to Southern Maryland under the banner of the "Bag Hunger" initiative.

The day began at 7 a.m. with a prayer, setting a thoughtful and purposeful tone for the work ahead. Eric Hawkins addressed the volunteers, saying, "Our goal isn't just to assist those in need; we aim to collaborate with them to ensure we're doing everything possible to improve their current circumstances."

Volunteers were provided breakfast by Mrs. Ravenell Hawkins, received "Bag Hunger" orange wristbands, and enjoyed lively music from DJ Rattlesnake, the official DJ for the number one local news station, who kept the atmosphere fun and energetic. Volunteers signed up through [Just-Serve.org](http://Just-Serve.org).

This community-wide effort, coordinated by Eric Hawkins and Angalise Brinkley, Suitland Stake Communication Specialist Assistant, aimed to support nonprofit organizations focused on food insecurity. At this location, volunteers filled bags with dry ingredients for Chicken Flavored Rice & Vegetable Soup, sealed them, and packed meals into boxes for distribution to food pantries and homeless shelters throughout Southern Maryland.

The impact was nothing short of remarkable—73 boxes were packed in just four hours, totaling 31,536 meals. Volunteers, young and old, contributed to the cause. High school students earned service hours, and younger children added a



ALL PHOTOS COURTESY THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Eric Hawkins of Operation Earnie's Plate, and Angalise Brinkley

special touch by decorating the boxes and adding stickers to the meal bags. One high school student shared, "I had so much fun that I didn't realize I had been here for two and a half hours!"

See **FOOD INSECURITY** Page A4



DJ Rattlesnake and Mrs. Maryland America 2023, Nadine Jones

## Hospice of the Chesapeake Popular Golf Tournament Brings \$225K

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Oct. 7, 2024)—With a long list of sponsors, volunteers and more than 250 golfers to thank for it, Hospice of the Chesapeake's annual Golf Tournament was a fantastic success. It raised nearly \$225,000 for the not-for-profit that serves Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties.

No doubt the venue and joyful attitude accompanied by food, drinks and giveaways helped to make it another successful year.



Community members cluster around tables, packaging meals for distribution.



PHOTO BY ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN, HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

(Sept. 26, 2024)—Queenstown, Maryland) Hospice of the Chesapeake's Golf Committee stands on the putting green before the start of the tournament. Pictured from left are Tony Toskov, Mary Lombardi, Jerray Slocum, Chris Wilson, Brian Chisholm, Nicole LaPier, Tom Hogan, Randy Pleasant, Lauren Thurston, Scott Mielke and Pat Taylor. Not pictured are Brian Flynn, Challie Samaras, Laura Toskov and Jimmy Wilburn.

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# COMMENTARY

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## Preparing to Vote

There is now just one month to go until Election Day in the United States, and in some states early voting and mail-in voting has already begun. In others, deadlines to register to vote or make sure a voter registration is current and correct are approaching over the next few weeks. This means the time for all eligible voters to make sure they have a plan to vote is now! Any voter who isn't enthusiastic about the ability to place a vote and have her say—in midterms and general elections,

for local, state, and national leaders—is wasting an opportunity others have struggled and died for. Those of us who participated in and lived through the Civil Rights Movement know firsthand that the right to vote is something Black Americans were fighting and dying for not that long ago. Many of them could not have imagined, as Senator Robert Kennedy correctly predicted, that in a generation we would have our first Black president. In places around the world others are still strugg-

ling and sacrificing for a freedom some Americans now take for granted. We have a responsibility to those who could not vote and those who still can't, including children, to make our own votes count.

Making a plan is especially urgent at a moment when some lawmakers are desperately trying to make it harder, not easier, for many citizens to vote. We cannot let that happen. We must fight any and all efforts to suppress our votes and must start by resolving to take every necessary step to cast a vote in every election, every race, every time. So please get informed right now. Find out what identification and documentation are needed to vote in your state. Check where your polling place is if you plan to vote in person, since it may have changed since the last election. If you are eligible to vote by mail, review the requirements for submitting your ballot very carefully. Make sure family members, friends, and neighbors are doing the same and all have a plan to vote too.

Be sure you are also making a plan for how you intend to fill out your ballot. Take the time

now to learn about every candidate's views, including state and local candidates, and the issues that will be on the ballot where you live. As candidates continue to ask for your support over these final few weeks listen especially carefully to how their plans and policies would affect children, young people, and families. As I wrote in *The Measure of Our Success: A Letter to My Children and Yours*, use your political power for others less fortunate. Vote and hold those you vote for accountable. In a democratic society, if we like or don't like what our political leaders are doing, we must make that clear through our voices and our votes. And we cannot accomplish that by staying home.

Above all, remember: people who do not vote have no line of credit with people who are elected and thus pose no threat to those who act against their interests. Democracy is not a spectator sport. At a moment when many believe democracy and the equal right to vote remain on the line, prepare now to do your part and vote!

—October 4, 2024

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## The Ghost of George Wallace Still Haunts Alabama

*"Targeting naturalized citizens is the latest move in the playbook for voter intimidation. The state of Alabama illegally took the right to vote away from eligible citizens and must be stopped. We can't allow registered voters to bear the brunt of these dangerous lies that threaten our democracy."*

—Celina Stewart, CEO, League of Women Voters of the United States

The law is clear.

According to the National Voter Registration Act of 1992, "A State shall complete, not later than 90 days prior to the date of a primary or general election for Federal office, any program the

purpose of which is to systematically remove the names of ineligible voters from the official lists of eligible voters."

In defiance of the law, 84 days before Election Day, Alabama's Secretary of State ordered county election officials to remove the names of people his office had identified as noncitizens.

The tactic is not only a clear violation of federal law. It's a racist ploy to disenfranchise naturalized citizens who have the legal right to vote while stoking the flame of anti-immigrant hatred.

It's also part of Alabama's long history of blocking non-white citizens from the polls, stretching back nearly a century and a half.

The U.S. Department of Justice last week sued

Alabama for violating the NVRA, seeking the restoration of the affected citizens' voting rights in time for Election Day, along with the prohibition of future violations, mailings to educate eligible voters about the restoration of their rights, and adequate training of local officials and poll workers to address confusion and distrust among eligible voters accused of being noncitizens.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, Campaign Legal Center, and Fair Elections Center last month filed similar lawsuit on behalf of Alabamians who were unfairly targeted, the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice, the Alabama NAACP and the League of Women Voters of Alabama.

Alabama's hostility to voting rights for non-white citizens was largely responsible for passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Alabama's hostility to voting rights was responsible for gutting the Act's preclearance provision in 2013. In the five decades in between, the preclearance provision stopped Alabama from imposing racially discriminatory voting restrictions more than 100 times.

Three days after the Supreme Court's Shelby decision, Alabama announced plans to enforce the restrictive photo I.D. law at the heart of the case. After making driver's licenses one of the few forms of I.D. required to vote, Alabama announced it would shutter 31 driver's license offices around the state.

A series of additional laws and policies, including closing polling places in predominately Black counties and purging hundreds of thousands of people from voter rolls, have driven the white-nonwhite voter turnout gap from 6% in 2014 to 13% in 2020. In some counties, the Black-white voter registration gap has grown to double digits.

Election changes in Alabama have prompted at least 17 lawsuits since Shelby.

Alabama is where school children peacefully protesting segregation were pummeled with water hoses and savaged by police dogs. It's where Gov. George Wallace declared in his inauguration speech, "segregation now, segregation tomorrow, segregation forever," and stood in a University of Alabama doorway to block Black students from registering. It's where white supremacists murdered four little girls in the bombing of Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. It's where the late John Lewis and other activists were beaten nearly to death as they marched from Selma to Montgomery.

The savage brutality America witnessed on the Edmund Pettis Bridge galvanized support for the Voting Rights Act in 1965. We can only hope Alabama's ongoing hostility to voting rights galvanizes support for the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the Freedom to Vote Act.

—October 4, 2024

## Ben Jealous

Executive Director,  
Sierra Club



## The Plastics Inside of You Right Now

If you are reading this indoors, there is a good chance there are hundreds of invisible plastic particles floating around in the room you are in. There is also a good chance you may be breathing some of them in.

And we are not just breathing in plastic pollution. We are eating it and drinking it. To add insult to injury, much of that plastic pollution came from items like plastic water bottles that consumers thought would be recycled.

The world's largest producer of plastic polymers for single-use plastics is ExxonMobil. Right now, Attorney General Rob Bonta of California, along with the Sierra Club and other environmental groups, is suing ExxonMobil for their years-long campaign of deception about the recyclability of plastic products.

In discussing the suit, Attorney General Bonta told a story of a 14-year old who "was just distraught over the fact that all of the plastic items that she carefully selected to make sure they have the chasing arrows on it and then make sure that after she used it, she

placed it thoughtfully and diligently in the blue container for recycling—that 95 percent of the time, that item was not recycled."

The world produces about 430 million tons of plastic each year. Much of that is single-use plastic that ends up in the environment. About 22 million pounds of plastic enter the Great Lakes alone each year, with half of it going into Lake Michigan. And the plastic-contaminated water from lakes, rivers, and streams ends up in our drinking water and our oceans. Globally, about 12 million tons of plastic enter our oceans each year. That is a garbage truck worth of plastic every minute.

Plastics do not decompose. They just break down into smaller and smaller pieces of plastic, down to tiny particles called microplastics and nanoplastics.

As a result, microplastics are everywhere and in everything. The plastic bags and bottles that find their way into landfills and waterways eventually become microplastics. Microplastics are also tiny enough to be airborne.

Dr. Sherri A. Mason is a leader in plastic pollution research who has called attention to freshwater contamination from microplastics. She has pointed out, "Because we find plastic pollution within fresh water throughout the planet, it's not surprising that we find it in our tap water. In 2017 we examined 159 samples of tap water collected from 14 different countries. Eighty-eight percent of these samples showed evidence of microplastic contamination, with an average of 5.5 particles per liter. Almost all (98 percent) of these particles were microfibrils, which suggests that air is the primary source of contamination."

Plastics get into our waterways in a variety of ways—"microbeads" in shampoos and laundry detergents, small pellets used in pre-production manufacturing known as "nurdles," and more ways. Nurdles are a major source of the microplastic contamination in the Great Lakes because many manufacturing facilities in the region use them. All that plastic then enters the food chain. One way is that it breaks down into tiny plastic grains that are mistaken as algae and microplankton by fish.

Over the past four years studies have found microplastics in human placentas, breast milk, and liver. More recent research over the past year has now found them in people's lungs, testicles, and brains.

The studies that found microplastics present in testicles found them in every single sample analyzed. Scientists think it could be linked to downward trends in sperm counts and fertility.

The microplastics found in human brains were found in the ol-

factory bulb, suggesting they could be getting inhaled through the nose. Phoebe Stapleton, a professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology at Rutgers University, told CNN, "I really do think that plastics are going to be in every place in the body that we look. This is just more evidence."

We know plastic contamination is toxic. Plastic is made from petrochemicals that, in addition to reproductive health issues, can cause cancer, endocrine disruption, neurological disorders, immune disorders, and more.

As our awareness of plastic contamination in every facet of our lives and part of our bodies grows, let us remember Big Oil produces petrochemicals behind plastics. So add that to the list of ways—in addition to pollution, climate change, and the megastorms the climate crisis produces—the fossil fuel industry is taking a disastrous toll on our health. The lawsuit to hold ExxonMobil accountable is a good start in addressing the problem, but we also need to address the microplastic contamination that is already so prevalent. And we need to change and reduce our use of plastics.

—October 7, 2024

Ben Jealous is the Executive Director of the Sierra Club and a Professor of Practice at the University of Pennsylvania.

### Food Insecurity from A3

The event also welcomed Mrs. Maryland America 2023, Nadine Jones, who praised the effort, stating, "It's heartwarming to see such a huge initiative to combat food insecurity. This event exemplifies the power of community."

A special highlight was the involvement of Clarence Rucker and Quan Holmes,

brothers of Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, who organized 70 volunteers from across Divine Nine African American sororities and fraternities, including the Archonettes, a group of high school young ladies dedicated to scholarship, sisterhood, and community service.

Throughout the day, volunteers danced, helped with parking and food preparation, and showed unwavering kindness and ded-

ication, with many even working multiple shifts.

Founded in 2018, Operation Earnie's Plate (OEP) Inc. is a non-profit organization committed to empowering and engaging homeless individuals in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Since its inception, OEP has provided assistance to over 500,000 families and continues to lead the charge against food insecurity.

### Author from A3

Maryland an author whose work uses fantastic elements and Nigerian images and culture to realize a powerful vision of a more just future for all of us with wit, dramatic flair and wisdom," said St. Mary's County Library Director Michael Blackwell. "She challenges readers to face social problems while providing profound examples of the human spirit that can overcome those problems. She is an important voice for

our times."

Learn more about the event and register here:

[https://stmalib.libnet.info/event/11842751?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://stmalib.libnet.info/event/11842751?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery).

As the state library agency for Maryland, Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) administers state and federal funds to support Maryland libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources, programs, and excellent customer serv-

ice. The State Library Resource Center, located in the central branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, serves as Maryland's state library. MSLA has oversight of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled; Maryland's Public Libraries; the State Library Network including the three regional libraries; the Library Capital Grants Programs; and the Deaf Culture Digital Library. Maryland Libraries: Inspiring Library Innovation.

## The Prince George's Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Installs from A1

future of growth, innovation, and community-building.

Under President Greene's leadership, the focus will remain on professionalism and emphasizing to consumers that REALTORS® are indispensable partners in real estate transactions, whether buying or selling.

Additionally, at this prestigious event, Gene Sementelli, the 2024 REALTOR® of the Year, was honored for his outstanding business achievements, commitment to the Code of Ethics, leadership, and civic and community involvement, as well as his contributions to local, state, and National Association activities.

Other newly elected and installed Officers and Directors include:

### Officers

President-Elect, Carole Webb, Samson Properties  
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Yolanda Burgess, Platinum Partners Realty  
Carole Warren, Keller Williams Preferred Properties

The Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® is the voice for real estate in Prince George's County, Maryland, representing nearly 4,000 real estate professionals in the national capital area. PGCAR is an affiliate of the Maryland and National Association of REALTORS®. We are proud to serve our members and our community and work to ensure professionalism in the industry. Our volunteers and staff work to offer services to real estate professionals and to provide avenues for our members to become more successful. We proudly work to promote and protect home ownership and private property rights.

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## Will my Wife's Survivor Benefit Be Less if she Claimed Her Social Security Early?

By RUSSELL GLOOR,

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

**Dear Rusty:** I claimed Social Security at 70. My wife claimed her own SS at 62, and her earnings were significantly lower than mine. I understand my wife will be eligible to claim my benefit if I pass before she does, but will Social Security reduce that benefit because she didn't wait until age 65 to claim hers?  
**Signed: Concerned Husband**

**Dear Concerned:** Your wife's benefit as your surviving spouse will be based on two things:

- Her age when she claims her survivor benefit,
- The amount you were receiving at your death.

If she has reached her own Full Retirement Age (FRA) when she claims her surviving spouse benefit, she will get 100% of the amount you were receiving when you died (instead of her own smaller SS retirement amount). However, if she claims her survivor benefit at any time before her full retirement age, it will be reduced for claiming the survivor benefit early.

Thus, when your wife claimed her own Social Security retirement benefit (in her case, age 62) doesn't matter and doesn't affect her potential surviving spouse benefit—what matters is her age when she claims her survivor benefit. If she claims before reaching her own FRA, her survivor benefit will be reduced according to the number of months before her FRA that the survivor benefit is claimed. That reduction would be about 4.75% for each year earlier than her FRA she claims it. But if she claims her surviving spouse benefit at or after she reaches her full retirement age, she will get the amount you were receiving at your death, instead of her own smaller age 62 Social Security retirement benefit amount. FYI, your wife's full retirement age is somewhere between 66 and 67, depending on the year she was born (born in 1960 or later, her FRA is age 67).

And, just for clarity, your wife's payment as your surviving spouse will consist of her own SS retirement benefit plus an auxiliary amount to bring her monthly payment up to what she is entitled to as your surviving spouse.

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

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://www.amac.us) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation ([www.Amac-Foundation.org](http://www.Amac-Foundation.org)) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at [www.amac.us/join-amac](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

## Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition to Host Clean Energy and Transportation Conference

By PRESS OFFICER  
GWRCCC

WASHINGTON (Sept. 30, 2024)—The Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC) is thrilled to inform everyone about the upcoming 2024 Annual Clean Energy and Transportation Conference, where we strive to promote sustainable solutions in energy and transportation.

**The conference will include a Virtual Pre-Conference on Tuesday, October 15, and an in-person meeting on Wednesday, October 16, at Martin's Crosswind in Greenbelt, Maryland.**

This event features expert panels on alternative fuel corridors, sustainable aviation fuels, and emerging technologies for reducing emissions in heavy-duty vehicles. Attendees will learn how alternative fuel passageways are becoming essential for securing federal funding for transportation projects, along with the aviation industry's efforts to reduce carbon emissions using

sustainable aviation fuels.

Registration for the Virtual Pre-Conference is free, while the main conference costs \$150 for members and \$175 for non-members. Attendees can register through Eventbrite. Key sessions at the in-person conference will address the electrification of school buses, legislative updates on clean energy policies, and strategies for fleet electrification.

Fleet training sessions led by Kae Tuit and Lindsay Shigetomi will explore the best practices in fleet management, ensuring that attendees leave with insights to enhance their fleet operations.

The conference will honor outstanding achievements in the field and present awards to notable organizations and individuals. Award recipients include Paul S. Andrade, winner of the VA Visionary Award; Prince George's County MD - DPW&T - Office of Transportation for the MD Visionary Award; and SWMID for the DC Visionary Award. Other awards include the GWRCCC

Partner of the Year awarded to SESI and recognition for Alexandria Hyundai and Genesis of Alexandria as the Automotive Dealership of the Year.

Sponsorship opportunities are available, as well as exhibit tables and advertising placements in the souvenir conference journal. We also invite companies with alternative fuel vehicles to showcase them at the event, demonstrating the real-world application of clean transportation technologies.

For more information, please visit the GWRCCC website.

*The Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC), focused in the Washington, D.C. metro area, is one of nearly 80 coalitions in the U.S. that fosters economic, environmental, and energy security by working locally to advance affordable, domestic transportation fuels, environmental justice, energy efficient mobility systems, and other fuel-saving technologies and practices. <https://gwrccc.org>.*

## PGCPS Celebrates Green Leadership at 'Driving Green Action' Event

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Oct 2, 2024)—Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) reaffirmed its commitment to climate action and sustainability on Wednesday, October 2 at Ellen Ochoa Middle School, the district's newest net-zero energy school.

Superintendent Millard House II thanked state and local partners for their continued support in advancing PGCPS's sustainability efforts and highlighted the district's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), the first of its kind for a Maryland school district. During the event, members of the CCAP workgroup were recognized for their contributions to advancing the district's climate goals.

"PGCPS operates with limited resources, like many school districts. This plan guides our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, improve energy efficiency, and foster a culture of environmental stewardship," House said.

The event, which brought together PGCPS environmental leaders, elected officials, community advocates, and partners, highlighted the district's green education initiatives and sustainable practices.

"I want to congratulate PGCPS on the fantastic leadership. Capitol Hill can feel very far away from what's happening in the county," said Congressman Glenn Ivey. "The number of schools we've been able to build, the caliber of the environment they provide, and now the environmental impact have all come together in such short order."

Attendees had an up-close look at one of the district's electric school buses and



PHOTO COURTESY PGCPS

**The October 2 event at Ellen Ochoa Middle School, which brought together PGCPS environmental leaders, elected officials, community advocates, and partners, highlighted the district's green education initiatives and sustainable practices.**

heard about PGCPS's transition from diesel to electric, which includes a new Mullikin pilot electrification microgrid that will provide charging infrastructure for 90 school buses.

Guests also toured Ellen Ochoa Middle School, powered by geothermal and solar energy systems that generate 111% of the school's energy needs.

Several additional PGCPS schools under construction are being designed as net-zero energy facilities, thanks in part to more than \$3.4 million in grants from the Maryland Energy Administration's Decarbonizing Public Schools program, aimed at creating healthier, more energy-efficient learning environments.

"Funding the transition to clean energy

in our state's schools is an important goal for the Maryland Energy Administration," said Director Paul G. Pinsky. "This project demonstrates our state's strong commitment to clean energy and sustainability in our state's public institutions for future generations."

With 149 Maryland Green Schools—the most in the state—PGCPS also showcased its dedication to climate education and sustainability districtwide.

"Sustainability starts with student action," said PGCPS Science Supervisor Donald Belle. "All of these initiatives are excellent, but for them to be truly sustainable we have to reach our students. Curriculum, instruction and environmental justice are key to this plan."

## Compare 2025 Health Plans and Prices on [marylandhealthconnection.gov](http://marylandhealthconnection.gov)

By PRESS OFFICER

### Maryland Health Benefit Exchange

BALTIMORE (Oct. 1, 2024)—Marylanders can now preview 2025 health plans and prices on MarylandHealthConnection.gov, the state's online health insurance marketplace. Use the "Get an Estimate" tool to compare health plans and savings.

Open enrollment to sign up for a 2025 health plan runs from Nov. 1, 2024 through Jan. 15, 2025. New this year, Marylanders can enroll in plans from Wellpoint Maryland, Inc. Other insurance companies include: Aetna, CareFirst, Kaiser Permanente, and UnitedHealthcare. Vision and dental plans also are available.

"Health insurance makes an impactful difference in the lives of Marylanders every day," said Michele Eberle, executive director of the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange. "With savings through Maryland Health Connection, health care is within reach. In fact, 9 out of 10 Marylanders who enroll get financial help with their health coverage."

As an example, a 40-year-old living in the Baltimore metro region who makes \$50,000 a year will pay a monthly premium of \$273 for the lowest cost gold plan.

All plans available through Maryland Health Connection cover important health benefits, including doctor visits, prescriptions, mental health services, and more.

These plans and prices are for private plans only. Those who qualify for Medicaid may enroll any time of year.

*Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE), a public corporation and independent unit of state government established in 2011, administers Maryland Health Connection.*

*Maryland Health Connection (MHC) is the state-based marketplace for Marylanders to shop and enroll in health insurance, as well as determine eligibility for Medicaid and other assistance programs. It is the only place where Marylanders can access financial help such as tax credits to make coverage more affordable.*

## Tournament from A3

Held Sept. 26 at Queenstown Harbor Golf Course, the tournament offered hospitality that began with an omelet bar in the morning, shrimp, oysters and bourbon along with grilled lunch at the turn and a gourmet awards banquet to cap off the day.

The great success of this tournament was made possible by the generous support of its sponsors, including the Masters sponsor, Saford Brown Toyota of Glen Burnie; U. S.

Open sponsors, All Green Management, First National Bank and Greenberg Gibbons; Augusta sponsors, The Michael Stanley Foundation and Waterfront Engineering Design and Construction, Inc.; Heritage sponsors, Crescent Cities Charities, Inc., Flooring Partners, George W. Stone Family Foundation, Inc., Heinsohn Contracting Inc., SMART, and The Wilburn Company, Inc.; and Pebble Beach sponsors Bagley & Rhody Estate and Business Law, Davies Family Foundation, Dragonfly Health, Mark Frazer, Green Point

Wellness, Gunther Refuse Services, Inc., MBG Refuse, Inc., Peggy McKelly, National HME, ServPro of Annapolis and Severna Park, Twin Oaks Consulting, and Winegardner GMC Prince Frederick.

The event is planned by the Hospice of the Chesapeake Golf Committee, an incredible group of volunteers who each year create a memorable outing focused on supporting the programs and services this hometown hospice provides for those living with and affected by advanced illness.

# COUNTY CHURCH DIRECTORY

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www.fbc-cp.org

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Sunday Worship 11a.m.  
Holy Communion 1st Sunday  
Wednesday Bible Study 7-8p.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Service 8p.m.

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Church School - 9:15 a.m.  
Morning Worship Celebration - 10:30 a.m.  
Wed. Night Bible Study - 7:45 p.m.  
Elder Willie W. Duvall, Pastor

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**Church (301) 627-7389**

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www.uumchurch.com

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Office (301) 839-1166  
Fax (301) 839-1721  
E-mail: [FHBC@verizon.net](mailto:FHBC@verizon.net)  
Pastor: Rev. Waymond B. Duke

## EarthTalk® Q&A Hidden Harm: Hazardous Chemicals Lurk in Our Food Packaging

By Tim Weighart October 2, 2024

*Dear EarthTalk:*  
*Are we really all exposed to many hazardous chemicals that come off the packaging our food travels in? What can we do to minimize our exposure to these potential toxins in our food?*

—William Freleigh, Newark, DE

A large percentage of our food packaging contains toxic Food Contact Chemicals (FCCs), which are chemicals that come into contact with foods during manufacturing, packaging or transportation. Notable FCCs include BPA, BPS and BPF, all commonly found in soda and soup cans, plastic food linings, and DVDs, and plasticizers or phthalates, which are widely used to make plastic products more flexible and durable. At least 25 percent of FCCs, including BPAs and plasticizers, can be found in the human body due to exposure to food packaging, and can be extremely hazardous to our health. Some health risks include harm to the immune system, cancer, liver toxicity, thyroid effects and reproductive toxicity. BPAs are especially hazardous for women, as they are also toxic to the ovaries and uterus.

Due to the prevalence of

FCCs in so much food packaging, it is impossible to fully avoid them. However, there are ways to reduce our exposure to toxic chemicals in our food. For one, buy food that is stored in glass jars or BPA-free boxes instead of metal cans and plastic containers, which are more likely to contain FCCs. Also, wash your hands often and always before eating, steer clear of fast-food and fatty foods and eat fresh, unprocessed foods, especially organic fruits and vegetables. You can also reduce risks when preparing food by using wooden, stainless steel or silicone kitchenware, and avoiding non-stick pans, disposable packaging, packaging with recycling codes 3 or 7, and black plastic kitchenware.

FCCs are also prevalent in cleaning products and other household items. You can reduce your exposure to chemicals in these products by using glass or stainless-steel reusable water bottles, buying fragrance-free soaps, cosmetics and cleaners, refusing paper receipts and avoiding vinyl carpets and fabrics. It is also recommended that you keep your windows open for ventilation whenever possible, as synthetic chemicals often deteriorate into dust particles that are easily inhaled.

Unfortunately, the only way that we will be able to permanently get rid of FCCs is to campaign for them to be banned by the government and by national retailers. Several volunteer-led campaigns have already spoken out on the issue, and a lot of headway has been made in banning specific toxic chemicals, including BPAs, in California. If you would like to help canvas for the banning of toxic chemicals in food packaging, consider volunteering for Take Out Toxics or other local campaigns that are pressuring their local governments and retailers to call for chemical bans.

**CONTACTS:** Reduce Exposure To FCCs, [www.consumerreports.org/health/food-contaminants/how-to-reduce-exposure-to-plastic-in-food-everywhere-else-a9640874767](http://www.consumerreports.org/health/food-contaminants/how-to-reduce-exposure-to-plastic-in-food-everywhere-else-a9640874767); Take Action With Take Out Toxics, <https://toxicfreefuture.org/research/take-out-toxics-pfas-chemicals-in-food-packaging/>.

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