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Scholarship Fair and Expo Resounding Success in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER
LLD Scholars

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (Oct. 23, 2024)—The LLD Scholars Scholarship Fair and Expo held at Suitland High School on October 16, 2024, was a resounding success, thanks to the dedication of community organizers, school administrators, and participating institutions.

Over 359 students attended the event, receiving an estimated \$15.2 million in scholarship offers. This remarkable outcome is a testament to the students' hard work and dedication and the community partners' generous support.

"We are incredibly proud of the success of this year's Scholarship Fair and Expo," said Dr. Laura Dorsey, Founder/President of LLD Scholars. "The event provided students with invaluable opportunities to explore higher education options and secure scholarships."

Special thanks go out to Suitland High School, represented by Principal Mr. Maurice Wright and Vice Principal Mrs. Tashua Parker; Mrs. Miyoshi Levy, Classroom Teacher U.S. History and College Summit 10 World History; SCLC PG County; S4SN Inc. and the numerous colleges, universities, and career vendors who participated.

The event's success underscores the importance of community partnerships in supporting students' educational aspirations.

LLD Scholars was founded by Dr. Laura Lenear Dorsey, an educator for over 30 years and a retired college professor. LLD Scholars' mission is to create a safe environment where students can be embraced by the community, educated, and guided along their chosen life path, whatever that may be. Over the past 15+ years, Dr. Dorsey has dedicated her life to that mission, assisting



PHOTO CREDIT: DWAYNE BROWN, MEDIA FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS

LLD Scholars Team

over 150,000 students in their post-secondary school direction. During this time, she has facilitated scholarships for students for over \$1 Billion. She has guided students into major positions in Fortune 500 companies and assisted entrepreneurs in living their dreams by starting and establishing successful businesses. For more information, visit www.lldscholars.org.

Delegate Denise Roberts, Principal Maurice Wright, Student receiving Scholarship and Vice Principal 12-grade Tashua Parker

PHOTO CREDIT: DWAYNE BROWN, MEDIA FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Harmony Hall Arts Center Presents "Contextual Remnants"—An Exhibition by Renowned Award-Winning Fiber Artist Kristina Penhoet

By PRESS OFFICER
Harmony Hall Arts Center

FORT WASHINGTON, Md. (Oct. 23, 2024)—Harmony Hall Arts Center proudly invites the public to visit the dramatic and thought-provoking exhibition "Contextual Remnants" by Kristina Penhoet. Ms. Penhoet, who has exhibited with the prestigious Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., uses handwork methods to create sculptural objects and installations. Her crochet work addresses pressing issues within our current cultural context such as bodily autonomy, an overabundance of information, and societal paralysis. The artist's creations encourage the viewer to reflect on the human experience.

In "Contextual Remnants," whose pieces feature titles such as "Not So Black and White," "How a Little Becomes Too Much," "A Private Mutiny," and the award-winning installation artwork "When We Are They Are Us," bring an emotional intensity and impactful statement to the Main Gallery of Harmony Hall.

Kristina Penhoet is based in Washington, D.C. and has held artistic residencies and/or fellowships in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Japan. Her work has been shown in many art facilities throughout the Mid-Atlantic Region. She has also shown throughout the United States and in Brazil and has done several commissions.

On Saturday, November 2, 2024, from 2 to 4 p.m. Harmony Hall Arts Center encourages the public to attend a free and all ages Opening Reception for this exceptional exhibition "Contextual Remnants."

For more information, please contact Harmony Hall Arts Center at 301-203-6070 or visit https://www.pgparcs.com/event_list/kristina-penhoet-contextual-remnants



PHOTO COURTESY HARMONY HALL ARTS CENTER

On display is an award-winning and dramatic dark red piece, which is currently hanging from the ceiling, called "When We Are They Are Us," 2023.



PHOTO COURTESY HARMONY HALL ARTS CENTER

"How a Little Becomes Too Much", 2024, is another piece that brings an emotional intensity and impactful statement to the Main Gallery of Harmony Hall.

Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, Announces Dinosaur Festival at Clearwater Nature Center: A Celebration of Prehistoric Wonders

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Oct. 29, 2024)—Get ready to embark on an adventure through time at Clearwater Nature Center's Dino Fest on **November 9, 2024**. Presented by the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County—this exciting event invites families, dinosaur enthusiasts, and curious minds of all ages to explore the fascinating world of dinosaurs through interactive VR experiences, fossil-digging, campfire activities, and more.

Join us for a day packed with thrilling attractions, including:

- **Dino dig:** Experience the thrill of paleontology with hands-on fossil digs
- **Exhibits:** Explore fascinating Fossil Exhibits
- **Arts & crafts:** Get creative with Dino-themed arts & crafts; Make art with gemstones in a Lapidary workshop
- **Virtual reality:** Fly amongst dinosaurs with the Birdly VR experience*

See **DINO FEST** Page A3

Council Member Wanika Fisher Sponsors Bill to Create DPIE Investigation Unit

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Council Media

Council Member Wanika Fisher (District 2) has sponsored a bill that aims to reduce critical and persistent housing code violations in the county by establishing an Investigation Unit in the Department of Permitting, Inspections, and Enforcement (DPIE). The bill, CB-79-2024, would require the new unit to work alongside the Department of the Environment and the Revenue Authority to investigate and enforce code violations. It [was] under consideration in Committee of the Whole on Tuesday, Oct. 22.

"There's a home in my neighborhood that's basically running an entire junkyard out of their house. There's another house that appears to be running an autobody shop. One citation is just not enough," Council Member Fisher said. "I believe that DPIE, DOE, and Revenue Authority really need to work together to build cases that hit hard and eliminate bad actors in our communities."

Council Member Fisher's intent is to

create a dedicated team of DPIE staff who are tasked with investigating issues that persist, even after multiple citations, while other DPIE staff handles typical work and inspections.

Additionally, Council Member Fisher has two other bills moving through committee: CR-92-2024 and CR-32-2024.

CR-92-2024 is a resolution currently in the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee that would encourage the creation of a pilot program exploring the establishment of a regional service director position for Langley Park, MD.

CR-32-2024 is a resolution currently in the Health, Human Services and Public Safety Committee that would express Council's strong support and encouragement for the creation of a Criminal Justice Coordination Council in Prince George's County, similar to those in Washington, D.C., Montgomery County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and surrounding jurisdictions in Virginia. This new body would aid in the coordination of law enforcement efforts, resources, and knowledge.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Public Works announces new street-sweeping program

The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW&T) is offering Residential Street Sweeping for the first time in Prince George's County's history!

As DPW&T prepares for regular street sweeping, you might notice new signs in your neighborhood announcing the program and listing sweeping days. One sign is posted on my corner, Skyline Drive at Pine Lane.

The Residential Street Sweeping Program will significantly reduce the debris along residential roadways. It will help prevent litter buildup and "mitigate potential pollutants in our ecosystem."

This new program—set to launch September 3—is being implemented in two phases and covers more than 2,000 total curb miles.

While it is important to ensure their sweeper trucks are ready to go to work, it is also important to provide residents with information. Go to mypgc.us/sweep to learn more.

Town of Morningside

Seniors will be honored with Luncheon in the Town Hall on Nov. 21, 11:30 a.m. Morningside's November meetings include the Working Session, Nov. 8, and the Town Meeting, Nov. 15. Both at 7 p.m.

The Annual Breakfast with Santa is coming up December 14, 9 a.m. at the Firehouse.

To contact the Morningside Rec Committee (which plans all the delightful activities the Town offers) go to Morningsiderec@morningsidemd.gov or call 301-736-2301.

Remember, Morningside has two new speed cameras along Suitland Road. Lots of drivers are getting caught. And griping to me about it. Slow down!

Neighbors & other good people

Granddaughter Leah sent me a note saying her workplace has a monthly cook-

ing/baking competition. Last month's theme was "Ye Old Family Recipe." She entered with my mother's S Cookies, and she won. My mother, Rose Mudd, would be so proud! The prize was bragging rights, and you got to pick the next month's theme. Leah chose Dips & Spreads for next month.

Daughter Therese and I went down to Charles County to visit Dolores Steinhilber recently. Dolores—now bedridden—was a longtime resident of Skyline and the first president of the Skyline Citizens. She was also very active at St. Philip's. When she and her husband Gus moved, it was a sad day for all of us. Anyway, we had a lovely visit with her.

Fall at Miller Farms

Miller Farms has been owned by the Miller family since 1879 and is billed as the largest vegetable grower in Prince George's, with more than 200 acres dedicated to production.

Come fall, the farm opens its fields and barn to the community on Saturdays and Sundays for Fall Family Fun, with hayride tours of the fields, a corn maze, jumping pads and slides, games and meet-and-greets with farm animals.

The Farm is at 10140 Piscataway Road, in Clinton, about 8 miles from the Beltway. Go and enjoy Fall.

All Souls Day Mass at Resurrection

Come pray for the souls of our beloved dead on All Souls Day, Saturday, Nov. 2, 9 a.m. at Resurrection Cemetery, 8000 Woodyard Road, in Clinton. All Souls Day Mass is also celebrated at Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Silver Spring, 9 a.m., and Mount Olivet Cemetery on Bladensburg Road in Washington, 9:30 a.m.

Fall Gala and Auction at St. Philip's

There'll be Auction Fun at St. Philip's on November 16!!

New and exciting items are arriving every day for auction, like a Wintergreen resort gift certificate, Baysox tickets, Monster Mini-golf passes, Olney Theatre

passes, and restaurant gift certificates for your special date nights!

Get your tickets early—only \$25, which includes dinner. Adults, 21 and over, as beer and wine are available for purchase. Donations of items are still being accepted. St. Philip's is at 5416 Henderson Way, Camp Springs. For more information, call 301-423-4740 or email office@stpamd.org.

Changing landscape

Several readers have asked when McDonald's is reopening at the corner of Allentown & Suitland Rd. Well, this week the beginnings of the actual building have appeared. The rest shouldn't be too far behind.

National Geographic plans to open a new, very large museum in downtown D.C. by 2026. This Museum of Exploration will feature immersive exhibits containing artifact and work from explorers, a 400-seat theater that will showcase Nat-Geo films, an education center, a restaurant and a "nighttime courtyard experience" with audio and visuals media. (That, I really want to see—and hear.) Visitors will enter the building through an 11-foot yellow rectangle, as a nod to the magazine's classic yellow border.

A house at 4608 John Street, in Skyline, has recently sold for \$400,000.

Wanted: reporters

I know some Morningside residents read this column. What I need, to make it a real Morningside source, is residents who'll give me the news. I'll accept gossip, as long as I don't get arrested. But most of all I'd like items like births and deaths, retirements, birthdays, graduations, awards, new residents or (sad to say) residents who move away after many years. Get well soon messages. Humorous events. Congratulations. Missing pets. I want all such kinds of things.

You could email news to me at muddmm@gmail.com or write it up and stick it in my mailbox at 4304 Skyline Drive. Your pay, I fear, would be the same as mine: zero. But the satisfaction is getting the news out. I know—I've been writing this column since 1976. Email me as above or call 301-735-3451.

See MORNINGSIDE Page A3

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

THE FUTURE OF HAIR

Marcella Ellis Hair Care Products presents The Future of Hair, the Biggest Hair Show and After Party in the DMV! Join us for a night of entertainment and high energy at Martin's Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, MD 20770. This event will highlight the incredible talent within the DC, Maryland, and Virginia areas. The event lasts five hours. Ages 18+ and free parking.

Get ready to witness the top stylists, barbers and hair salons showcasing their work on the runway. An after-party will follow with live performances from Backyard Band and Chalys. This unique gathering is not just a celebration of hair artistry but a night of showcasing the innovation, creativity, and passion driving this vibrant industry forward. Come out, party, and be entertained for a night you will not forget. Upscale black attire is requested.

The Future of Hair Show: Doors open at 6:30 p.m. November 17, 7 p.m.—November 18, 12 a.m. All Black Attire After Party: 9 p.m.—12 a.m. featuring Backyard Band and Chalys Band. Live music, food, cash bar, and fabulous people all night long. VIP tables, red carpet and ample parking. Ticket \$44.52—\$650. For more information contact Marcella: 240-481-3474, Cherish: 404-468-5422, Bryant: 240-481-3474. For out-of-town guests, nearby hotels are Holiday Inn, Hilton Garden Inn, Residence Inn.

JOHNSON FAMILY REUNION (CONCLUSION)

The Family of Bernice and Johnny Richardson Granddaughter of Joniece Mason. Kelly Mason is preparing to graduate in 2025. As a senior at Atholton High School, Kelly reflects on the years she has dedicated to playing varsity and club volleyball, where she has enhanced her skills and forged lasting friendships. Throughout high school, volleyball instilled leadership, perseverance, and teamwork values. With graduation on the horizon, she is applying to colleges that will nurture her academic and career goals by majoring in dietetics or biology. As she reviews her college acceptance letters, she will carefully consider which path will best support her aspirations.

The Family of Bernice and Johnny Richardson Granddaughter of Joniece Mason. Kyndall Mason is a junior at Susquehanna University studying accounting and French. She is also a member of the university's volleyball team, where she is an outside hitter and defensive specialist. This past spring, Kyndall spent five months studying in Strasbourg, France, which was an unforgettable experience for her. While there, she made many friends at a French University and truly immersed herself in the French culture while staying with a host family. The French taught her a lot, but the most important thing she learned was that life is too short not to spend quality time with your loved ones.

The Family of Teresa and Hebert Jackson Mya Shands Daughter of Belinda Jackson and Granddaughter of Eleanor Adams. Mya is entering her Sophomore year at Bishop McNamara. Participates in All-Star Cheerleading (TaylorMade Allstars). Level 2 (Starstruck) 2022 (Grand Champions) ranked #1 Nationally. Level 2 (Starstruck) and Level 3 (Prime Tyme) 2023 (Grand Champions) ranked #1 Nationally. Level 3 (Prime Tyme) 2024 (Grand Champions) ranked #1 Nationally.

The Family of Teresa and Herbert Jackson. Tonda Swinson October 2023: Retired from Metropolitan Police Force after 31 years. Jonathan Swinson, Jr. August 2015: Retired from Metropolitan Police Force after 27 years of service. Returned to MPD as a contractor from 2017–2020. Bryan Adams October 2022: Retired from Metropolitan Police Force after 25 years of service.

The Family of Maurice and Josephine Johnson Franklin D. Johnson (aka: Darnell, Dee, DJ, Lil Dee). Darnell is a Master Control Operator w/Warner Bros Discovery. He has been working since 2016. Some of the places and projects he has worked on are: Kennedy Center Ceremony of the Opening of the African American Museum, BET Honors, BET Awards, NBA All-Star Games, Kennedy Center Honors, Peace of Mind Talk show with Taraji P Henson, ESPN Mon Night Football for the Texans VS Ravens Playoff Game 1/2024, Discovery's "Secret Stops of the Underground Railroad" which won a Canadian Screen Award for best Docuseries, Dave Chapelle Netflix Special, 2023 Black Caucus, The White House Easter Egg Roll, Lil Mermaid Live w/Queen Latifah, Good Times "Live in Front of a Studio Audience."

The Family of Richard Johnson the Carter (Myers) Family. Congratulations 2024 has been a busy year for the Carter (Myers) Family. Most importantly, we welcomed baby Bryson on June 18, 2024. He has completed our family, and we are all so smitten with him. Torrance especially has made the transition to big brother wonderfully. He is always ready to lend a helping hand. Kevin and I cannot wait to watch their sibling bond grow. And to round things out, 5-year-old Torrance is excited about starting Kindergarten this year. He is kicking off his elementary debut with a continuation of his Spanish immersion learning.

A special Celebration. We are the "3 AMIGOS", Tojo, Little Richard, Eric (Bill) all born the same year celebrated our birthday at Georgetown-Fiola Mare. We are friends first and then cousins.

Thanks to the Richard, Benjamin, John Johnson Family Reunion Committee for all the hard work that you did to make the Family Reunion a wonderful day to remember. "A Legacy Journey Kinship Across Generations."

Calendar of Events

Maryland Choral Society 2nd Annual Afternoon Tea & Silent Auction

Date and time: Saturday, November 2, 2024, 2–4 p.m.

Description: Join us Saturday afternoon Nov. 2, for our second annual Afternoon Tea fundraiser. There's entertainment along with the tea and pastries: show tunes and cabaret with singer Valerie Holt and pianist David Lécyer; harmonies with our ensemble the Grace Notes; and our director, Ben Buchanan, has something for us on ukelele. And plan on some holiday shopping at our silent auction.

Cost: Buy tea tickets at <https://maryland-choral-society.ticketleap.com/2nd-annual-afternoon-tea/>

Location: Antioch Baptist Church of Clinton, 9107 Pineview Lane, Clinton, MD 20735

Contact: MarylandChoralSociety.org

Exhibition Opening Reception: "Household Economics"

Date and time: Saturday, November 2, 2024, 2–4 p.m.

Description: In "Household Economics", Cora Olson creates unique forms and surface designs to engage with contemporary and historic cultural issues, focusing on gender equality in household economics. Ms. Olson is a ceramicist whose sometimes abstract mixed media sculptures and vessels, featuring reclaimed windows, explore the contrast between materials and aesthetics, reflecting on tradition and cultural responsiveness. Olson is a member of Arlington's Lee Arts Center (LAC) and teaches ceramics at the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington through Marymount University. Her work reflects the challenges women have faced, and explores the dynamic interplay between masculine and feminine energies. She brings them into balance through her creative process.

Cost: FREE

Ages: All ages

Location: Harmony Hall Arts Center, 10701 Livingston Rd, Fort Washington, MD 20744

Contact: pgparks.com/facilities/harmony-hall-art-center

Community Conversation with Dr. James Dula, Veteran's Affairs Liaison—Virtual Event

Date and time: Thursday, November 7, 2024, 4–5 p.m.

Description: Join the Prince George's County Office of Human Rights and PGCMLS for a Community Conversation with Dr. James A. Dula about the services and resources available to veterans in Prince George's County. Major James A. Dula, PhD, U.S. Air Force Retired, and former Air Force Commander, is the Veterans Affairs Officer and Military Veterans Liaison to the County Executive, Prince George's County. In this position, he serves the largest number of veterans in the State of Maryland and is responsible for health, morale, and general welfare for men and women veterans (and their family members). He is also a retired educator, former college professor, former President and CEO of the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce, and former Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Health and Human Services for Prince George's County's. A Vietnam Veteran, he also served in the Pentagon, Central and South America, Guam, Air Force District of Washington, and as Headquarters Squadron Commander for Special Air Missions on Andrews Air Force Base.

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9-VPV9CaoDM>

CMR Impact Productions Presents: "Not the Man I Married" Stage Play

Date and time: Saturday, November 9, 2024, 6 p.m.

Description: NOT THE MAN I MARRIED is a play written and Produced By C. Michelle Lee. This playwright has been on the rise for over ten years or more with plays like He's Not Your Soul Mate and The TEA. Her comedic viewpoint is done with style and grace, bringing comedy to reality with real-life experiences. "Not the Man I Married is based on a dysfunctional family that has endured years of domestic violence. Aunt Robin is not only funny but she is suffering from "CMS"—"Can't Member Smack" disorder, living in the house with her brother who goes to strip clubs with a bag of quarters to make it rain.

Cost: \$45 Early Bird tickets \$45 Regular Balcony \$55 Regular Orchestra

Location: Bowie Center for the Performing Arts, 15200 Annapolis Road, Bowie, MD 20715

Contact: (301) 805-6880

"Resilience and Resistance through Food with Historian Marvin-Alonzo Greer

Date and time: Sunday, November 10, 2024, 1 p.m.

Description: Join us for an in-person discussion about the power of food and resistance in the 1800s with this foodways program. Recommended for ages 12 & up (ages 17 & under must be accompanied by an adult). Please register at pgparksdirect.com. (Registration is recommended but not required.) Walk-ins are welcome.

Cost: Ticket Price: FREE, walk-ins welcome

Ages: All

Location: Marietta House Museum, 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD 20769

Contact: (301) 464-5291, mariettahouse@pgparks.com

Smooth Sounds for Seniors: Karen Linette

Date and time: Thursday, November 14, 2024, 12 noon

Description: Karen Linette is the go-to person for vocals in the Washington, D.C., area. A pillar in the music community known for her four-octave climb and her gentle, jazzy approach, she has more than 20 years of experience as a singer and collaborative artist. Linette has shared the stage with national recording artists such as Norman Connors, Mikki Howard, Regina Belle, and Dexter Wansel, and performed in the legendary Blues Alley, the world-renowned Apollo Theater, and beyond.

Cost: Tickets \$15, https://www.pgparks.com/event_list/karen-linette

Ages: Ages 60 & better

Location: Montpelier Arts Center, 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD

Contact: 301-377-7800 montpelierarts@pgparks.com

COMMUNITY

Governor Moore Announces Appointment of Katrina Wiggins as Acting Administrator of the Property Tax Assessment Appeals Boards

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Oct. 25, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the appointment of Katrina Wiggins as acting administrator of the Property Tax Assessment Appeals Boards. Wiggins will oversee the operation of local boards in each of Maryland's jurisdictions; her appointment is subject to confirmation by the Maryland Senate during the 2025 legislative session.

"Katrina Wiggins possesses the leadership, dedication, and experience to serve the people of Maryland with distinction. I am confident that she will be the kind of partner our local boards deserve as they continue their critical work throughout the state," said Gov. Moore. "We thank Katrina for raising her hand and taking on this role."

Established in 1973, local property tax assessment appeals boards in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City hear appeals regarding property tax assessments, local tax credits, local taxes, and special taxing areas. The state administrator coordinates administrative, regulatory, budgetary, personnel and legal support to the local boards, in addition to promoting uniform rules and regulations, providing advice to taxpayers regarding their right to appeal, and preparing reports required by local boards.

"It is a privilege and honor to serve as the acting administrator of the Property Tax Assessment Appeals Boards. I am honored to advance the boards' mission and to serve the State of Maryland," said Katrina Wiggins. "I look forward to working with local property tax assessments appeals boards across the state."

Katrina Wiggins brings more than thirty years of leadership experience in organizational management, human resources, business development, and compliance to her new role. She previously served as chief of staff for the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority. She also served as director of human resources for several organizations including DC Water, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority, and the National Capital Chapter of the American Red Cross. Having recently served on Prince George's County Property Tax Assessment Appeals Board, she brings extensive knowledge of local board operations.

Wiggins holds a B.A. and an M.S. from American University.

Dino Fest from A1

- **Outdoor activities:** Enjoy toasty campfire fun
- **Live animal encounters:** Park Naturalists will have animals for attendees to see up close
- **Meet our experts:** Paleontologists will discuss the dinosaurs found at our Dinosaur Park in Laurel

"We're excited to bring the joy of discovery to our community," said Juan Rodriguez, Program Manager at the Center. "Dino Fest is not just about learning; it's about igniting a passion for science and exploration in people of all ages."

Don't miss this chance to dive into the prehistoric past and create lasting memories with your family and friends. Registration is required and FREE at pgparks.com/event_list/dino-fest-2024.

* VR experience has \$5 fee and arm length requirement, likely met by ages 7 and up.

With over 28,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for residents in Prince George's County and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. The Department's Formula 2040 Plan establishes a framework that will assure the Department can meet future parks and recreation programmatic and facility needs, fulfilling its mission to determine the combination of land, facilities and programs that will provide appropriate experiences for Prince Georgians in the future. To learn more, visit www.pgparks.com.

Morningside from A2

Milestones

Happy Birthday to my son-in-law Luke Seidman and Flossie Keck, Nov. 3; Bella Cordero, Nov. 4; Brandon Wood and Bob Elborne, Nov. 5; Steve Call, Linda Beatty and Dennis Waby, Nov. 6; and Davey Capps, Jr., Nov. 9.

Happy Anniversary to Al and Debbie Callison, on Nov. 4; John and Dineen Whipple, their 49th on Nov. 8; Becky and Dave Capps, their 61st on Nov. 9; Roseann and Franny Rohan, their 61st on Nov. 9.

And a very happy 77th birthday for V.F.W. Post 9619 on November 4!

SciTech2U to Celebrate Afterschool Programs on November 1 in Gaithersburg

Lights On Afterschool to feature game night and program demonstrations

By PRESS OFFICER
SciTech2U

On Friday, November 1, SciTech2U will join the 25th annual Lights On Afterschool celebration, a nationwide series of rallies for afterschool organized by the Afterschool Alliance.

The Lights On Afterschool rally will feature a game night and activities including laser tag, mini putt-putt, board games, art, lawn games, STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) activities and program demonstrations.

What: Lights On Afterschool Open House and Game Night With STEAM

When: 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, November 1, 2024

Where: 202 S. Summit Ave., Gaithersburg, MD

Who: Montgomery County Councilmember Laurie-Anne Sayles will join SciTech2U students and their families. The event is open to the public.

More than a million people are expected to participate in over 8,000 Lights On Afterschool events taking place around the country this month. Events will amplify the voices of youth and showcase the many ways afterschool programs support student success and well-being.

The Afterschool Alliance organizes Lights On Afterschool to underscore the need to invest in afterschool programs, which help students succeed in school and in life. This year's event comes as federal pandemic relief funds that helped afterschool programs meet rising costs wind down. The unmet need for programs is enormous. For every one child in an afterschool program in the United States, four more are waiting to get in.

R&B superstar Usher has joined forces with the Afterschool Alliance to lend his voice to the call for more afterschool programs nationwide. As part of that work, Usher will serve as Honorary Chair of Lights On Afterschool this October.

SciTech2U serves more than 400 stu-

dents a year from diverse backgrounds in the DMV, including African American, Asian American, Latino, mixed and other races. Approximately 67% of SciTech2U students live in families with incomes at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines, which is considered low-income in the DMV area. Therefore, SciTech2U offers most of its programs for free or at very low costs to ensure equal access to its high-quality, out-of-school programs. Currently SciTech2U offers programs virtually in Montgomery and Prince Georges County, Teen Cafés around the DMV, and community centers. More information is available at: <https://www.scitech2u.org>

In 2023, SciTech2U's Chief Executive Officer Zainab Abbas was selected to serve a one-year term as an Afterschool Ambassador by the Afterschool Alliance—a national nonprofit public awareness and advocacy organization working to ensure that all children and youth have access to quality afterschool programs.



PHOTO COURTESY FEDCHOICE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Front Row: Ms. Jimenez, FedChoice Executive Assistant/Facilities Manager, IRS Commissioner Werfel, Mr. Buckles, Vice Chairman FedChoice Board of Directors, Mr. Noll, FedChoice President/CEO, Ms. Park, FedChoice Chief People & Strategy Officer

FedChoice Federal Credit Union Celebrates Grand Reopening of IRS National Financial Service Center

By PRESS OFFICER
FedChoice Federal Credit Union

LANHAM, Md. (Oct. 24, 2024)—FedChoice Federal Credit Union is excited to announce the grand reopening of its IRS National Financial Service Center (FSC), located at 1111 Constitution Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20224. The celebration took place on October 22, 2024, following a period of renovation and modernization. The FSC is now ready to welcome members back with an enhanced experience and improved services.

The updated FSC, located within the IRS Headquarters Building, now features a brand-new Interactive Teller Machine and dedicated staff on-site. These enhancements are designed to make banking more accessible and convenient for all members.

The Credit Union was honored to have IRS Commissioner Werfel speak at the event and participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

This reopening marks nearly 90 years of service to IRS employees and reinforces our long-standing partnership. We invite all members to visit and discover the exciting new features at FedChoice.

During the ceremony, FedChoice President and CEO Brett Noll said, "We are so delighted to have Commissioner Werfel joining us on this wonderful and important occasion. FedChoice will be celebrating its 90th anniversary next year and our Credit Union was created right in this building, by federal employees for federal employees. These are words we use to this day, 90 years later, and we will continue to serve those members of the federal com-

munity who serve our great nation every day."

For more information, please visit fed-choice.org or contact us at 301.699.6100.

FedChoice Federal Credit Union was originally chartered in 1935 when a group of Bureau of Internal Revenue (aka IRS) employees decided to establish a credit union to meet their financial needs. Since then, FedChoice has grown stronger each year by serving all federal employees, retirees, and their immediate family and household members in the Washington DC, Baltimore and Philadelphia metro areas. With access to over 60,000 surcharge-free ATMs, over 5,000 CO-OP Shared Branches, plus online and mobile banking, members may access their accounts 24/7/365. FedChoice has over 24,500 members and \$439 million in assets.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/ Prince George's County Public Service Announcement:

Make a Positive Impact on the Life of a Child or Teen in Foster Care

CASA Volunteers make a difference in the lives of children and youth living in foster care in Prince George's County. Through our partnership with the Prince George's County Child Welfare Court, we serve approximately 200 youth per year. At any given time, there are 500 youth experiencing foster care in Prince George's County. We need your help to close that gap!

By becoming a CASA Volunteer today, you can positively impact the lives of youth in foster care by serving as a mentor and an advocate.

CASA provides free training and professional support to ensure our volunteers can advocate for the best interest of the child. Our training services and advocacy efforts can be utilized to increase your civic participation, professional development

skills, and community service requirements.

To learn more about volunteering with CASA, join us for a virtual information session. Visit <https://us02web.zoom.us/join/registration/tZArcO-oqjsoG9fts-BDm6k9j6avT29u3rBtu#/registration> or email volunteer@pgcasa.org to RSVP for the Volunteer Information Session.

Please note: Applicants must be at least 21 years old and must pass a background check.

Contact: Volunteer Coordinator, Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) / Prince George's County, Inc
6811 Kenilworth Ave, Suite 402
Riverdale MD, 20737
volunteer@pgcasa.org

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COMMENTARY

Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,
Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Prayers for Our Nation's Young People

Amidst the final few weeks of calls for adults to vote right now for people and policies that will ensure children and young people's well-being and joy, I share these prayers for all of our nation's children and the country they need and deserve.

A Prayer for Children® (By Ina J. Hughs)

We pray for children
who put chocolate fingers everywhere,
who like to be tickled,
who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,
who sneak Popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those
who stare at photographers from behind barbed
wire,

who've never squeaked across the floor in new
sneakers,
who never "counted potatoes,"
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught
dead,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an X-rated world.

We pray for children
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dan-
dellions,
who sleep with the dog and bury goldfish,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch
money,
who cover themselves with Band-aids and sing
off key,
who squeeze toothpaste all over the sink,
who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those
who never get dessert,
who watch their parents watch them die,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children
who spend all their allowance before Tuesday,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store and
pick at their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under their bed and
never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the car-
pool,
who squirm in church and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at and
whose smile can make us cry.

And we pray for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and
cry themselves to sleep,
who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children who want to be carried,
and for those who must.
For those we never give up on,
and for those who don't get a second chance.
For those we smother,
and for those who will grab the hand of anybody
kind enough to offer.

O God, forgive and transform our rich nation
where small babies die of cold quite legally.

O God, forgive and transform our rich nation
where small children suffer from hunger quite
legally.

O God, forgive and transform our rich nation
where toddlers and schoolchildren die from guns
sold quite legally.

O God, forgive and transform our rich nation
that lets children be the poorest group of citizens
quite legally.

O God, forgive and transform our rich nation
that lets the rich continue to get more at the expense
of the poor quite legally.

O God, forgive and transform our rich and pow-
erful nation which thinks security rests in missiles
and bombs rather than in mothers and in babies.

O God, forgive and transform our rich nation
for not giving You sufficient thanks by giving to
others their daily bread.

O God, help us never to confuse what is quite
legal with what is just and right in Your sight.

Help us to stand together to make America just
and right for all Your children.

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

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

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

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

—October 25, 2024

Ben Jealous

Executive Director,
Sierra Club



The Clock is Ticking for the Government to Do What is Right for this Flooded Historic Black Community

The state of Alabama destroyed their homes. Your federal tax dollars helped pay for it.

We are checking back in on the historic Black Shiloh community in Elba, Alabama.

Ever since 2018, when the Alabama Depart- ment of Transportation (ALDOT) expanded a highway running through the town, stormwater runoff floods the homes in this community when- ever it rains. It is an ongoing crisis.

Members of this community have lost every- thing. Some of the families here have owned these homes for generations. Their generational wealth has been wiped out. They deserve justice. They deserve to be made whole. Now, the federal gov- ernment could be running out of time to help.

Pastor Timothy Williams is a Shiloh community member who has been a leader in the fight to get justice for his neighbors and his own family. Back in March, when I spoke with Pastor Williams, he told me, "My house has already sunk two feet into the mud. I see my inheritance and my children's American Dream being washed away and stolen."

Since then, Pastor Williams says things have only gotten worse. He now says the frustration and hopelessness taking root in the community has led to people using alcohol and drugs as an escape, whereas several years ago that would be unheard of in this community.

It speaks to the toll on this community being more than just economic. Watching your home and community be destroyed, and your genera- tional wealth evaporate, has physical, mental, and emotional impacts just like any trauma does. Peo- ple are watching their homes sink, and living with the danger all this physical upheaval of their land has caused with power lines and gas and sewage pipes. Pastor Williams himself has been warned his sinking house could eventually hit a natural gas pipeline causing a rupture or even an explosion. Think about the impact this must have not only on the entire community's mental health, but what it must do to the kids in the community and their ability to succeed in school.

Beyond that, there is the clear racial factor here. This is Alabama after all. The reckless disregard for this rural Black community in the state's high- way project was not something unfamiliar to peo- ple who have lived there for decades. Nor were years of inaction and being left behind by the state (and now the federal government) since then. And there have been acts of intimidation by outsiders aimed at community members like Pastor Williams who have spoken up—in March, Pastor Williams told me the restaurant he owns had been the target of a boycott by some local whites. And white peo- ple make up most of his clientele.

In a place where the shadow of Jim Crow still looms large, that justice for this Black community seems so elusive seems like no mere coincidence. It is understandable that some in the community

believe the storm drainage pipes were aimed at their community intentionally.

In the months since I first spoke with Pastor Williams, I have visited Shiloh. And I have been working closely with Dr. Robert Bullard, known as Father of Environmental Justice and this coun- try's preeminent voice exposing environmental racism, to build pressure on both the state and fed- eral governments to act. Elba, Alabama is Dr. Bullard's hometown. It is an example of the per- vasiveness of environmental racism, that such in- justice could continue in the hometown of a promi- nent expert who sits on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council.

Someone else who visited Shiloh the past few months is Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg. And on October 4, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) announced a Voluntary Resolution Agreement (VRA) with ALDOT to ad- dress the ongoing flooding in Shiloh every time it storms. The VRA is one product of an investigation under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Title VI prohibits racial discrimination—among other kinds of discrimination—in projects that receive federal financial assistance, like the Alabama highway project that destroyed the Shiloh community.

But the VRA is not a solution for the harm that has already been done to the people of this com- munity. It is an insult to them. The agreement re- quires infrastructure improvements to mitigate flooding. But these people's homes are already ru- ined, their families are traumatized, and their prop- erty values are decimated.

Perhaps Army veteran Willie Horstead Jr., who has watched his home sink into the flood-soaked ground similarly to Pastor Williams, put it best when he told the visiting US Secretary of Trans- portation, "I'll tell you—I just want to be made whole."

In his 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail, Dr. King wrote, "justice too long delayed is justice denied," paraphrasing an old legal maxim.

Justice has been delayed for far too long for the residents of the Shiloh community. And the clock is ticking.

We don't know what will happen with the presi- dential election. But it is possible it could result in some of the same people returning to the US Department of Transportation who originally ap- proved the use of federal funds for the disastrous Alabama highway project back in 2018. Or people willing to have the federal government turn a blind eye to racial discrimination by a state with a deep history of it. Any more delay could mean justice being permanently denied to members of the Shiloh community.

—October 27, 2024

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

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Defamation Lawsuit May Finally Hold Trump Accountable for His Lies About the Exonerated Five

"Starting when I was 15, my life was not my own. For years, I had no control over what happened to me. Being in the spotlight makes me wary and self-conscious again. I am overwhelmed with fear that an overzealous Trump supporter might take matters into his or her hands. Doing something simple like picking up dinner for the family or going to the aquarium now fills me with dread. I'm constantly looking over my shoulder; keeping an eye out for people who stare too long. Like a soldier always on high alert, I can never enjoy myself fully; with all the adrenaline that comes with that. It's a scary feel- ing."

—Yusef Salaam

Matias Reyes violently raped a 28-year-old woman who was jogging in Central Park on April 19, 1989. He beat her so badly she remained in a coma for 12 days.

Reyes confessed to the attack in 2002. DNA evi- dence confirmed his guilt. The five men wrongly

convicted of that brutal attack and another assault the same night were cleared of all wrongdoing.

But Donald Trump, who advocated for their ex- ecution before they even had been indicted, can't stop lying about them.

During the September 10 presidential debate, Trump falsely claimed, "They pled guilty. And I said, well, if they pled guilty they badly hurt a person, killed a person ultimately."

Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana, Kevin Richard- son, Antron Brown, and Korey Wise— now known as the Exonerated Five—this week sued Trump for defamation.

"At the September 10, 2024, presidential debate, Defendant Trump falsely stated that Plaintiffs killed an individual and pled guilty to the crime. These statements are demonstrably false. Plaintiffs never pled guilty to any crime and were subsequently cleared of all wrongdoing. Further, the victims of the Central Park assaults were not killed."

Trump can hardly claim ignorance about the case.

In 2013, he attacked the acclaimed documentary The Central Park Five as "a one-sided piece of garbage." When New York City reached a \$41 mil- lion settlement with the exonerated men in 2014, Trump penned a guest editorial in the New York Daily News calling the settlement "a disgrace." A 2019 television miniseries about the case, When They See Us, was streamed by more than 23 million viewers within a month of its release and was one of the most celebrated television dramas of the year.

In the immediate aftermath of the Central Park Attack, Trump spent a reported \$85,000 to place a full-page ad in four New York City newspapers on May 1, 1989, calling for a reinstatement of the death penalty and decrying "rov- ing bands of wild criminals"—an unmistakably reference to the teens, who had already been dubbed "The Wolf Pack." Trump's ad "contributed to an at- mosphere that deprived these men of a fair trial," according to Barry Scheck, a founder of Innocence Project and one of the lawyers who worked with prosecutors to reinvestigate the case.

"He was the firestarter," Salaam said. He was 15 at the time of his arrest and served seven years in prison.

Salaam, now a New York City Council member, tried to correct Trump's false statement and seek an apology immediately after the debate. According to the lawsuit, Salaam approached Trump in the

post-debate "spin room" and said, "President Trump, I'm Yusef Salaam, one of the Exonerated Five. How are you doing?"

Trump inexplicably responded, "Ah, you're on my side then."

Salaam responded, "No, no, no, I'm not on your side."

Trump waved his hand and walked away.

—October 25, 2024

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

About Taxation of Social Security Benefits

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 am past my Social Security full retirement age, and I am still working. I am married and we file our income tax jointly. My husband is 64 and is not working now, but he may, or may not, be able to work in the next year or so. At what point will my Social Security benefits be taxed, if I decide to take them now? **Signed: Worried About Taxes**

Dear Worried: Many Social Security recipients are surprised to find that their benefits may be considered taxable by the IRS, so I welcome the opportunity to clarify this topic for you.

Whether or not your Social Security benefits are taxable depends on your overall combined taxable income for your IRS tax filing status. Taxation of Social Security benefits for a married couple (filing jointly) depends on your combined income as a couple, which is called your "Modified Adjusted Gross Income" (MAGI) by the IRS. Your MAGI consists of your normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on your IRS tax return, plus 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had.

If your MAGI (filing jointly) exceeds \$32,000, then 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year becomes taxable, but if your MAGI as a couple exceeds \$44,000 then up to 85% of your received SS benefits becomes taxable (at your standard IRS tax rate). Note that these tax thresholds are less for those who file their taxes as a single—e.g., for someone whose IRS filing status is "single," half of their Social Security benefits become part of their taxable income if their personal MAGI is over \$25,000, and up to 85% of their SS benefits are taxable if their individual MAGI is over \$34,000.

Another factor often misunderstood is that only a portion of SS benefits are added to your income amount taxed by the IRS. The amount added—somewhere between 50% and 85% of the SS benefits received during the tax year (depending on your MAGI)—becomes taxable income at your normal IRS tax rate.

So, in your case, if you claim your SS benefits now, and your combined income (your MAGI) exceeds the above levels for a married couple, then a portion (either 50% or up to 85%) of your SS benefits received during the tax year will be included in your income taxable by the IRS. Note, too, that it is possible to have income tax withheld from your Social Security benefits by submitting IRS form W-4V to your local Social Security office. You can download this IRS form at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw4v.pdf.

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

HOLIDAY SEASON

Don't Let the Holiday Season Set You Up for Debt in 2025

(StatePoint) The holiday season may be warm, merry and bright, but it's also a time when it's all too easy to spend more than you plan to and rack up debt you can't manage.

According to CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals, here's how to celebrate the season in style while positioning yourself for a financially healthy 2025:

Create your budget: Take a look at your budget to determine how much you can earmark for holiday expenses. Do you need to cut back on any nonessential spending to afford the holiday season you desire? Make a comprehensive list of all your expected expenditures, including for travel, hosting, decorating, gifting and charitable giving. Don't have a budget? A CFP® professional can help you create one to stay on track with your financial goals during the holidays and beyond.

Stretch your budget: Stretch your holiday budget creatively. When shopping online or booking travel, find the best deals by using a browser extension that comparison shops. Entertaining? Rather than providing every dish yourself, host a cookie exchange or potluck. If

The Children's Guild Welcomes New Chief Financial Officer and New Managing Director of Program Operations

By PRESS OFFICER
The Children's Guild

BALTIMORE (Oct. 21, 2024)—The Children's Guild (TCG) a leading Mid-Atlantic nonprofit human-services and education organization is thrilled to announce the appointment of Andrew "Andy" Simone as the new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Dawn RobertsMark as the new Managing Director of Program Operations. The Children's Guild (TCG), founded in 1953, offers charter schools, special education, school-based mental health services, treatment foster care, autism services, and family mental and behavioral health services.

"We are thrilled to welcome Andy and Dawn to the leadership team of The Children's Guild. Andy Simone brings over 25 years of experience in finance and accounting to The Children's Guild, with a passion for promoting a collaborative culture that aligns financial strategies with our mission," said Jenny Livelli, CEO of The Children's Guild. "Dawn RobertsMark brings a strong background in elementary education and teacher development, to The Children's Guild and throughout her career has contributed to various educational settings, from classroom teaching to school leadership roles, consistently promoting student achievement and staff development."

Andy Simone believes in connecting his team to the heart of The Children's Guild's work, so that financial decisions support the greater goals of serving children and families. As the Chief Financial Officer, Andy will oversee the organization's financial strategy and operations, using his wealth of experience to guide



PHOTO COURTESY THE CHILDREN'S GUILD
Andy Simone

The Children's Guild toward continued growth and success. In previous roles across non-profit, healthcare, technology, and other industries, Andy has successfully led companies through initial public offerings, mergers & acquisitions, divestitures, and record-setting growth. He prides himself on his ability to enhance financial performance and build high-functioning teams. Andy holds an MBA with an emphasis in Management from California State University Fullerton and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance from Santa Clara University. He is excited to be a part of The Children's Guild's leadership team and to contribute to the organization's growth and mission.

Dawn RobertsMark has been appointed Managing Director of Program Operations. Dawn holds a Master of Science in HR Development in Educational Leadership and a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from Towson University. She is a certified Administrator I in Maryland and a Restorative Practices Trainer of Trainers. Her career is marked by a dedication to equitable and diverse learning environments through strategic staff development, coaching, and program implementation. During her time at Baltimore City and Baltimore County schools, Dawn developed and implemented school-wide behavior management procedures and training programs to enhance student engagement and academic achievement. Her focus on equity coaching and SEL training has consistently yielded positive results. Dawn has led significant organizational restructuring, holding rigorous program evaluations and maintaining high-quality standards in finance, administration, and communications. Additionally, she implemented restorative practices, provided continuous professional development and support to staff, and fostered positive relationships within school communities. Dawn is thrilled to join the TCG Leadership Team and move the organization's mission and vision forward.



PHOTO COURTESY THE CHILDREN'S GUILD
Dawn RobertsMark

Schools and programs of The Children's Guild include Monarch Academy Annapolis, Monarch Academy Glen Burnie, Monarch Global Academy Laurel, Monarch Preschool College Park, The Children's Guild DC PCS, The Children's Guild School of Baltimore, The Children's Guild School of Prince George's County, The Children's Guild - Transformation Academy, Treatment Foster Care, and Outpatient Mental Health Clinic (OMHC). For more information, visit <https://childrensguild.org/>.

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department Wins Two 2024 Maryland Planning Awards

Planning Department Recognized for Neighborhood Planning Academy and Woodland and Wildlife Conservation Ordinance Amendment

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 22, 2024)—The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) won two prestigious Maryland Planning Awards from the American Planning Association Maryland Chapter (APA MD) and the Maryland Planning Commissioners Association (MPCA) for outstanding work on projects and programs. With more than 55 nominations from across the State of Maryland in multiple award categories, the award review committee comprised of planning professionals selected the Prince George's County Neighborhood Planning Academy for the Community Engagement / Education Award and the Woodland and Wildlife Conservation Ordinance Amendment for the Zoning/Regulation/Process Reform Award. The awards were presented at the 2024 APA MD & MPCA Conference on Monday, October 21, 2024, in Ellicott City, Maryland.

"This recognition is a reflection of our unwavering commitment to engage with residents and stakeholders throughout the planning process," said Lakisha Hull, Director of the Prince George's County Planning Department. "Through collaboration, we have produced innovative programming and policy that enhance the environment and diverse and dynamic communities throughout Prince George's County and the region."

About the Neighborhood Planning Academy

The Prince George's County Neighborhood Planning Academy addresses citizen complaints that the government process for zoning and development approvals is complicated for laypeople to understand specifically their place to participate. The Academy provides an opportunity for county citizens to learn how to engage in planning and development review process by demystifying the county's planning



PHOTO CREDIT M-NCPPC

(Oct. 21, 2024)—M-NCPPC's Planning Department staff celebrate Prince George's County Neighborhood Planning Academy winning the Community Engagement / Education Award.

process, removing barriers to meaningful engagement and empowering students to become stakeholders in the future of their communities. The seven-week Academy—with six virtual sessions led by staff experts on the basics of understanding the county's planning—culminates in an in-person session with capstone project presentations and a graduation celebration. The capstone project enables each student to express their personal or neighborhood concern and their solution based on the tools they learned through the Academy.

About the Woodland and Wildlife Conservation Ordinance Amendment

Facing the challenges to achieve no net loss of forest while experiencing the urban development pressure of being contiguous to the Nation's Capital and within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, M-NCPPC Planning Department updated the County's Woodland and Wildlife Habitat Conservation Ordinance to both reflect Plan Prince George's 2035 General Plan and the legislative mandated revisions of the Maryland Forest Conservation Act. The Planning Department, in collaboration with interested stakeholders and legal counterparts, developed cutting edge techniques to meet the general plan's goal of encour-

aging development in the transit-oriented development centers, preserving the rural areas, enhancing urban tree canopy in underserved areas, and conserving forest in stream focused priority areas.

The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) is responsible for preserving, protecting, and managing the county's resources through high-quality planning services and growth management guidance. Our mission is to promote economic vitality, environmental sustainability, design excellence, and quality development that promotes healthy lifestyles in Prince George's County. Visit our website, www.pgplanning.org, to learn how you can become engaged in shaping the future of your community.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of persons with disabilities in all its programs and services. Register at least a minimum of two weeks in advance of the program start date to request and receive a disability accommodation. Call the Public Affairs Office at 301-952-3038, email PublicAffairs@ppd.mncppc.org, or complete the online form.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Redevelopment Authority Announces \$1 Million in Funding for Commercial Property Improvement Program

By PRESS OFFICER
Housing & Redevelopment,
Prince George's County

LARGO, Md. (Oct. 21, 2024)—The Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County (RDA) announced today that \$1 million in funding is available through the Commercial Property Improvement Program (CPIP) and applications for funding are now being accepted. Applications are available starting October 21, 2024, and the deadline to submit the application is **December 9, 2024, by 12 p.m.** The CPIP was established to assist owners of shopping centers and retail street storefronts properties with improving exterior facade, place making, lighting, and major building systems improvements that enhance retail competitiveness and viability.

"We are excited to announce this year's round of Commercial Property Improvement Program funds," said County Executive Angela Alsobrooks. "Economic development has been a key priority throughout my administration. These types of grants are crucial in supporting our growing business commu-

nity and our overall efforts to strengthen Prince George's. Through this grant opportunity, we are able to support the revitalization of shopping centers and other retail spaces, which will attract new businesses to the County and create jobs for Prince Georgians right here at home."

The CPIP will require a 50% applicant match for all program funding awarded to approved shopping centers and retail space for eligible improvements. Therefore, applicants must be able to pay for half of the total project cost in order to apply for the CPIP funding. The minimum grant is \$50,000 for \$100,000 in total project costs and the maximum grant is \$350,000 for \$700,000 or more in total project costs.

The goal is to select applicants with the strongest market potential for investment. Commercial space occupied exclusively by places of worship or non-retail uses will not be funded. Shopping center owners who were the recipients of the 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 or 2023 CPIP funding are not eligible to apply for this year's funding.

While CPIP will reimburse up to 50% of approved construction costs as

costs are incurred and documented, architectural design and permit costs will not be reimbursed until after construction is completed. In addition, construction on the approved project must begin within 90 days after grant approval and must be completed within 180 days after approval. Incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

The CPIP Notice of Funding, application, and responses to questions can be found on the RDA website: <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/departments-offices/redevelopment-authority/grants/commercial-property-improvement-program>.

Questions may be sent to Victor E. Sherrod at CPIP@co.pg.md.us. RDA will post responses to all submitted questions by Tuesday, November 12, 2024. Please hand deliver four (4) hard copies of your submission to:

Redevelopment Authority of Prince George's County
9200 Basil Court, Suite 504
Largo, MD 20772
Attention: Victor E. Sherrod, Project Manager

For more information, e-mail Mr. Victor Sherrod: CPIP@co.pg.md.us

IRS Releases Tax Inflation Adjustments for Tax Year 2025

By PRESS OFFICER
Internal Revenue Service

WASHINGTON (Oct. 22, 2024)—The Internal Revenue Service announced today the annual inflation adjustments for tax year 2025.

Revenue Procedure 2024-40 provides detailed information on adjustments and changes to more than 60 tax provisions that will impact taxpayers when they file their returns in 2026.

Notable changes for tax year 2025

The tax year 2025 adjustments described below generally apply to income tax returns to be filed starting tax season 2026. The tax items for tax year 2025 of greatest interest to many taxpayers include the following dollar amounts:

- **Standard Deductions.** For single taxpayers and married individuals filing separately for tax year 2025, the standard deduction rises to \$15,000 for 2025, an increase of \$400 from 2024. For married couples filing jointly, the standard deduction rises to \$30,000, an increase of \$800 from tax year 2024. For heads of households, the standard deduction will be \$22,500 for tax year 2024, an increase of \$600 from the amount for tax year 2024.

- **Marginal Rates.** For tax year 2025, the top tax rate remains 37% for individual single taxpayers with incomes greater than \$626,350 (\$751,600 for married couples filing jointly). The other rates are:

- 35% for incomes over \$250,525 (\$501,050 for married couples filing jointly).
- 32% for incomes over \$197,300 (\$394,600 for married couples filing jointly).
- 24% for incomes over \$103,350 (\$206,700 for married couples filing jointly).
- 22% for incomes over \$48,475 (\$96,950 for married couples filing jointly).
- 12% for incomes over \$11,925 (\$23,850 for married couples filing jointly).
- 10% for incomes \$11,925 or less (\$23,850 or less for married couples filing jointly).

- **Alternative Minimum Tax Exemption Amounts.** For tax year 2025, the exemption amount for unmarried individuals increases to \$88,100 (\$68,650 for married individuals filing separately) and begins to phase out at \$626,350. For married couples filing jointly, the exemption amount increases to \$137,000 and begins to phase out at \$1,252,700.

- **Earned Income Tax Credits.** For qualifying taxpayers who have three or more qualifying children, the tax year 2025 maximum Earned Income Tax Credit amount is \$8,046, an increase from \$7,830 for tax year 2024. The revenue procedure contains a table providing maximum EITC amount for other categories, income thresholds and phase-outs.

- **Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit.** For tax year 2025, the monthly limitation for the qualified transportation fringe benefit and the monthly limitation for qualified parking rises to \$325, increasing from \$315 in tax year 2024.

- **Health Flexible Spending Cafe-**

teria Plans. For the taxable years beginning in 2025, the dollar limitation for employee salary reductions for contributions to health flexible spending arrangements rises to \$3,300, increasing from \$3,200 in tax year 2024. For cafeteria plans that permit the carryover of unused amounts, the maximum carryover amount rises to \$660, increasing from \$640 in tax year 2024.

- **Medical Savings Accounts.** For tax year 2025, participants who have self-only coverage the plan must have an annual deductible that is not less than \$2,850 (a \$50 increase from the previous tax year), but not more than \$4,300 (an increase of \$150 from the previous tax year).

The maximum out-of-pocket expense amount rises to \$5,700, increasing from \$5,550 in tax year 2024.

For family coverage in tax year 2025, the annual deductible is not less than \$5,700, increasing from \$5,550 in tax year 2024; however, the deductible cannot be more than \$8,550, an increase of \$200 versus the limit for tax year 2024. For family coverage, the out-of-pocket expense limit is \$10,500 for tax year 2025, rising from \$10,200 in tax year 2024.

- **Foreign Earned Income Exclusion.** For tax year 2025, the foreign earned income exclusion increases to \$130,000, from \$126,500 in tax year 2024.

- **Estate Tax Credits.** Estates of decedents who die during 2025 have a basic exclusion amount of \$13,990,000, increased from \$13,610,000 for estates of decedents who died in 2024.

- Annual Exclusion for Gifts increases to \$19,000 for calendar year 2025, rising from \$18,000 for calendar year 2024.

- Adoption Credits. For tax year 2025, the maximum credit allowed for an adoption of a child with special needs is the amount of qualified adoption expenses up to \$17,280, increased from \$16,810 for tax year 2024.

Unchanged for tax year 2025

By statute, certain items that were indexed for inflation in the past are currently not adjusted.

- **Personal Exemptions** for tax year 2025 remain at 0, as in tax year 2024. The elimination of the personal exemption was a provision in the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

- **Itemized Deductions.** There is no limitation on itemized deductions for tax year 2025, as in tax year 2024 and preceding, to tax year 2018. The limitation on itemized deductions was eliminated by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

- **Lifetime Learning Credits.** The modified adjusted gross income amount used by taxpayers to determine the reduction in the Lifetime Learning Credit provided in Sec. 25A(d)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code is not adjusted for inflation for taxable years beginning after Dec. 31, 2020. The Lifetime Learning Credit is phased out for taxpayers with modified adjusted gross income in excess of \$80,000 (\$160,000 for joint returns).

IR-2024-273

Rachel Jordan Honored by DNPs of Color



COURTESY PHOTO

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. (Oct. 19, 2024)—Rachel Jordan, DNP, APRN, FNP-BC, ACHPN, at the DNPs of Color Gala. Jordan received the Dr. Virginia Allen Distinguished Honorable Service to Humanity in Nursing Practice Award.

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Oct. 23, 2024)—Hospice of the Chesapeake Director of Advocacy & Legislative Affairs Rachel Jordan was honored by DNPs of Color with the Dr. Virginia Allen Distinguished Honorable Service to Humanity in Nursing Practice Award. She received the award at the Dr. Virginia Allen & Mary Eliza Mahoney Scholarship and Awards Gala held Oct. 19 at the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.

Jordan was celebrated along with other outstanding individuals from across the country who are dedicated to advancing nursing practice and health equity while celebrating the creativity and leadership within our community.

In his letter of recommendation to the organization, Prince George's County Council Vice Chair and District 9 Council Member Sydney Harrison wrote, "The rapport she's built with the community and external organizations are commendable. Her selfless service

demonstrates the will to positively influence and inspire those around her to achieve their goals. As a councilman, I seek community leaders who believe in producing quality outcomes and it brings me joy to know that nurses like Dr. Jordan share their knowledge and expertise so that others may thrive."

The award Jordan received is named for a woman who was among a group of Black nurses who cared for tuberculosis patients at Sea View Hospital in New York when few nurses would. Known as the Black Angels, their commitment to caring for these patients was no doubt an important part of the journey to finding a cure.

"To receive this award that pays homage to such a remarkable woman is overwhelming," Jordan said. "I aspire to be the kind professional who is so dedicated to health equity and the highest of standards in nursing. Dr. Allen is an inspiration to Black women like me in the medical field and in the community."

Hospice of the Chesapeake creates

meaningful experiences for those in the communities they serve who are experiencing serious advanced illness and loss. They believe truly meaningful experiences come from a partnership between highly skilled and compassionate professionals, healthcare partners and the patient and family with a primary focus on fully living each day. They develop care plans to minimize symptoms, articulate what matters most, and remember that each moment matters for patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's counties. Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of Hospice of the Chesapeake. For more information, please visit www.hospicechesapeake.org.

DNPs of Color (DOCs), is a 501c3 nonprofit nursing organization, whose mission is to serve Doctors of Nursing Practice of Color through networking, mentorship and advocacy to increase diversity in doctoral studies, clinical practice, and leadership for nurses. Please visit their website www.dnpsocolor.org.

Debt from A5

you have a large extended family or circle of friends that holds a traditional gift exchange, suggest a Secret Santa or white elephant exchange instead.

Maintain your credit: While it's fun to be extravagant and give big-ticket items that will wow your recipients, your holiday spending shouldn't harm your credit. Keep an eye on your debt-to-credit ratio throughout the season and set re-

mindings of when credit card payments are due. If you purchase an item using a Buy Now Pay Later plan, put payment due dates in your calendar to avoid late fees.

Give wisely: Many people make charitable contributions around the holidays. If you plan to give, do it in a way that offers a tax advantage. From deductions to donating appreciated assets to using a Donor Advised Fund, a CFP® professional can help you find a strategy that is good for you and for the cause you care about.

Save all year: Diverting a small portion of each paycheck into a special savings fund all year long can help ensure you're prepared to meet holiday expenses. Once this current season wraps up, you can begin to plan for next year. A CFP® professional can help you set this fund up and offer suggestions for maximizing these savings.

Make your resolutions now: Whether it's to pay down debt or set up a retirement fund, you don't have to wait until the new year to get started on your resolutions. Get a healthy money mindset

now so that come January, you'll have already established habits that move you toward your goals.

Working with a financial advisor to prep for the holidays can help ensure you have a stress-free season. Find your CFP® professional, trained to offer comprehensive solutions for your unique situation, by visiting letsmakeaplan.org.

During a season of festivities, financial planning may not be top of mind. However, smart spending habits can help ensure you enter 2025 in the black.

ENVIRONMENT

Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition Hosts the Clean Energy and Transportation Conference

By PRESS OFFICER
GWRCCC

WASHINGTON (Oct. 21, 2024)—The Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC) Celebrates the Success of the 2024 Annual Clean Energy and Transportation Conference.

The Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition (GWRCCC) is excited to announce the successful conclusion of the 2024 Annual Clean Energy and Transportation Conference, held on October 16 at Martin's Crosswinds in Greenbelt, Maryland. This year's event brought together industry leaders, policymakers, and advocates to explore sustainable solutions in energy and transportation.

The conference featured insightful discussions and expert panels on key topics, including alternative fuel corridors, sustainable aviation fuels, and strategies to reduce emissions in heavy-duty vehicles. Attendees were particularly engaged in sessions focused on the electrification of school buses, legislative updates on clean energy policies, and innovative approaches to fleet electrification.

With over 40 expert speakers from various sectors—including government and industry—participants gained valuable insights into the latest trends, challenges, and innovations in clean energy and sustainable transportation. The collaborative environment sparked new ideas and inspired meaningful conversations about the future of clean transportation.

The conference featured an awards luncheon, where GWRCCC honored individuals and organizations for their significant contributions to advancing clean transportation. This celebration highlighted the dedication and achievements of those committed to promoting sustainable practices in the industry.

Highlights from the Conference:

- Engaging panel sessions and interactive workshops fostering collaboration among participants.
- Launch of the new GWRCCC brochure, "Leading with Equity in Fleet Electric Vehicle Deployment," which emphasizes inclusive access to electric vehicle infrastructure and benefits for communities historically affected by pollution.
- Announcement of the 2024 Ron Flowers Future Green Leaders Scholarship recipients, recognizing recent graduates, committed to pursuing degrees in sustainability or environmental studies. Each recipient received a \$1,000 scholarship to support their educational journey.
- A networking mixer, allowing attendees to connect, share ideas, and build relationships within the clean energy and transportation community.

"We are thrilled by the momentum GWRCCC is building. The awardees, speakers, and attendees made the conference truly memorable. Together, we can continue to drive intentional and impactful progress toward a cleaner transportation future that benefits all communities in our region," said Antoine M. Thompson, CEO & Executive Director of GWRCCC.

The GWRCCC thanks all attendees, sponsors, and partners for their participation and support.

For more information on the conference and future events, 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. Find out more at <https://gwrccc.org>.



PHOTO COURTESY GWRCCC

Panel #1, "Clean School Buses: We Did It, You Can Too!" featured industry leaders Sheryl Ponds, Keba Baldwin, Sydney Stern, Katherine Robot, and Kevin King discussing the implementation of low to zero-emission school buses nationwide.



PHOTO COURTESY GWRCCC

Maryland's first woman Comptroller, Brooke Lierman, shared her inspiring vision for the future, drawing from her strong background in law, public service, and advocacy for civil rights. At right is Antoine M. Thompson CEO/Executive Director of GWRCCC.

For the Birds: Feed 'em in Fall to Welcome Them Back in Winter

(Joan Casanova) (Family Features) Humans aren't the only ones who look forward to autumn harvest. Fall brings a bounty of natural foods for our feathered friends, too. But while they're feasting on fall's cornucopia of delicacies, birds are also planning ahead, taking note of yards with bird feeders that can help them weather winter's cold.

Many of birds' favorite foods are actually more abundant in fall. Summer weeds ripen with seeds by October. Many berries only begin to emerge in late summer or early winter, and insects are plentiful. You may think there's no need to feed birds during the fall, but if you want them to find your home in winter, start feeding in autumn.

The birds who visit feeders in fall are scouting, becoming familiar with feeding stations and making decisions on which backyards they'll visit this winter. The feed you put out in fall lets birds know they'll be welcomed and fed in your backyard when seriously cold weather arrives—and they no longer have the luxury of exploring for food.

Winter weather is hard on birds. Their calorie requirements increase, food becomes hard to find, snow covers up seeds and ice storms seal away tree buds and wild fruits. Tiny birds must eat one-third to three-quarters of their weight each day. When temperatures dip below zero, easy meals at a feeder can mean the difference between life and death.

An important rule of fall and winter feeding is to be prepared. By stocking up now on premium bird seeds and feed, bird lovers can help secure a wholesome food source without having to brave stormy weather.

It's important to stock your feeders with high-quality foods that provide birds with the most fat, nutrients and energy. Look for a feed like Cole's that packs nutrition, preserves freshness and gives

you the most feed for your dollar. For example, Cole's Wild Bird Products' Oil Sunflower is more than 99% pure and cleaned four times to ensure there are more seeds and fewer sticks in each bag. Feed is also nitrogen-purge packaged, just like potato chips, to ensure freshness and insect-free feed.

In addition to seed, serve up some suet either in the form of Suet cakes for non-seed eating birds or suet mixed with seed. Consider Cole's Nutberry Suet, which is a seed blend mix of premium fruits, preferred nuts, nutritious insect suet kibbles and whole-kernel sunflower meats that appeals to fruit and insect-loving songbirds. Or try Suet Kibbles, bursting with berry flavor and loaded with energy for increased stamina. These feed choices provide fat and a high-protein energy source to assist wild birds in weathering winter and may actually boost their chance of survival.

Just as birds need food year-round, they also look for water. This can be tricky in regions where water spends the winter as ice, but bird lovers can still help in a few ways. Experts suggest leaving icicles on the eaves to provide a regular source of water for birds that drink drops as the icicles melt. Birds are drawn to running water sounds, so spritzers or small fountains are beneficial. In the winter, try using quality bird bath heaters to keep water from freezing, plus they're more convenient than setting out water every day.

Don't worry about the birds if you must leave home for a while in winter. Birds are familiar with food sources disappearing. It might take them a while to rediscover your feeders when you return, but they'll be back, grateful for your assistance.

For more ideas to help birds eat well through winter, and to learn about more feed choices, visit coleswildbird.com.

Source: Cole's Wild Bird Products

Make a Positive Impact by Planting a Tree

(Family Features) There are countless ways you can make your environmental contributions felt. If you'd like to join millions of others in the fight for Mother Earth, consider one of the most popular gifts given back to the world each year: planting a tree.

Consider these tips to properly plant a tree in your own yard.

Choose the Right Tree and Location

Depending on where you live and your desired outcome, choosing the right tree and planting location are critical factors. Larger shade trees help cool homes in warmer climates, evergreens provide privacy and fruit trees offer a grocery store right in your backyard. Consider your available space along with conditions that will impact the tree itself, such as soil conditions, sun exposure, drainage and more.

Dig Safely

Before digging, remember that proper tree placement requires factoring in underground utility lines, overhead power lines and proximity to sidewalks, driveways and homes.

Dial 811, the national call-before-you-dig number, to locate underground utilities and consider contacting an arborist or tree care professional to make sure you've weighed all the important factors.

Break Ground

Dig a hole that's roughly 2-3 times wider than the root ball of your tree and equally as deep as the root ball. Be sure the trunk flare (where the trunk expands at the base of the tree) is partially visible when planted. Remove any wrapping or cover from the root ball and trunk. Lift from the root ball, not the trunk, to place in the hole then straighten vertically and firmly backfill soil around the root ball to stabilize.

Add Mulch

Mulching helps maintain moisture and improve soil conditions while controlling weed growth. Place a 2-3-inch layer in a 3-foot radius around the base of the tree without touching the trunk itself.

Keep Soil Moist

Make sure your tree has enough water to grow strong by keeping the soil moist. Typ-

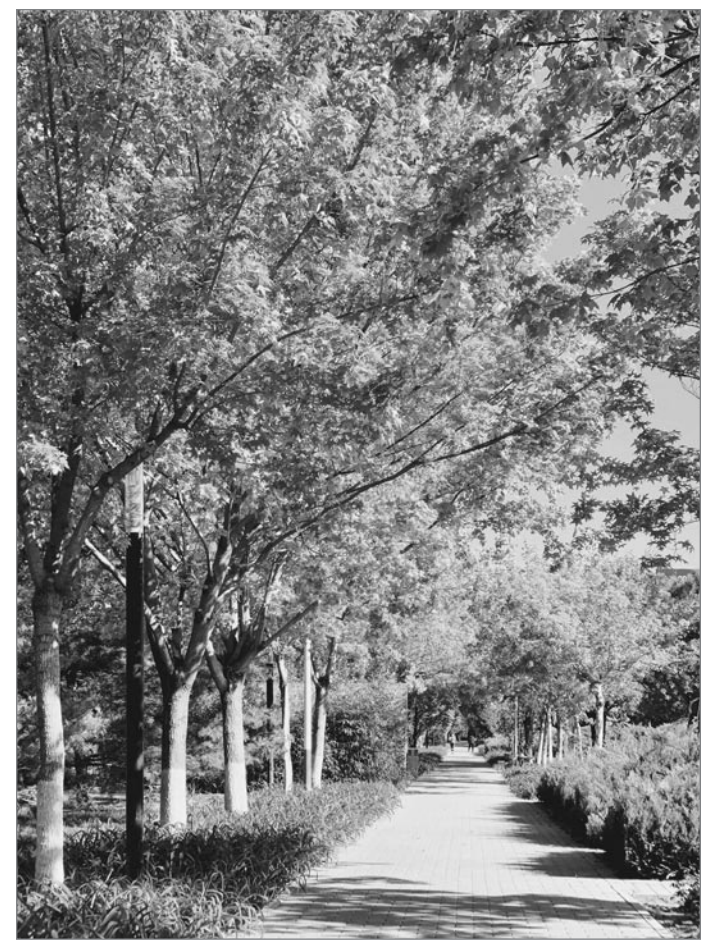


PHOTO COURTESY OF UNSPLASH

One of the most popular gifts given back to the world each year: planting a tree.

ically, this means watering just once per week, barring rain, but may require more frequency during especially hot weather.

Find more tips for giving back to Mother Earth at eLivingtoday.com. Source: eLivingtoday.com

5 Steps to Winterize Your Home

(eLivingtoday.com) (Family Features) Without a little prep work and routine maintenance, winter weather can wreak havoc on your home. Following a few simple steps can help you avoid frozen pipes, drafty rooms and slippery sidewalks.

- 1. Clear Gutters**—Melting snow will have nowhere to go if gutters are clogged with leaves and debris.
- 2. Protect Pipes**—Open cabinet doors under kitchen and bathroom sinks so warm air can surround pipes. Drain outside spigots before temperatures drop below freezing.
- 3. Improve Insulation**—Cold air can seep in through

openings around windows and doors. Install weather stripping and seal openings with caulk to insulate cracks and crevices.

4. Prevent Slips and Falls—Keep sidewalks and driveways clear of ice and snow. Sprinkle deicing salt on steps, sidewalks and driveways to prevent accidents.

5. Control the Temperature—Set the thermostat to at least 65 F during winter months. Consider installing an energy efficient or programmable thermostat.

Find more home maintenance advice at eLivingtoday.com. Source: eLivingtoday.com



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Improve insulation by installing weather stripping and seal openings with caulk to insulate cracks and crevices.

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Have a Safe Weekend

EarthTalk® Q&A

By Amy Ryan | October 16, 2024

Dear EarthTalk:
How are efforts to electrify school buses coming along so that our young people aren't exposed to noxious exhaust fumes?

—Will Durk, Waterbury, CT

Over 21 million children ride the school bus each day, making student transportation the largest U.S. mass transit system. Some 90 percent of these buses run on diesel, a known carcinogen with serious public health and ecological impacts. Pollution from diesel fumes has been directly linked to increased asthma and reduced cognitive development in children, excessively affecting low-income communities. Says Jessica Keithan, co-founder and director of the Texas Electric School Bus Project, "We're poisoning our kids on the way to school."

Thankfully, advocacy groups across the U.S. have been making great strides in addressing electrification of school buses, from involving underserved communities and educating policymakers to working with school districts on this issue—and prompting action.

The U.S. government has

Electric School Buses Roll Out Across the Country

made significant investments to help school districts transition to electric. Through its Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act signed into law in 2021, the Biden-Harris administration created the Clean School Bus Program, a \$5 billion Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funded grant program to replace diesel-run buses with zero-tailpipe-emission, electric vehicles. To date, this program has successfully integrated over 12,000 electric buses into school districts nationwide.

In addition to this noteworthy investment, states across the nation have adopted their own laws to replace diesel-fueled school bus fleets with electric. California, New York and Illinois lead the "charge."

There are inherent roadblocks in mass electrification of school buses. More than 800 school districts have at least one electric school bus in service, but many simply don't have the budget available to commit to more. According to the U.S. House of Representatives "Majority Staff Report Examining the EPA's Clean School Bus Program", the long-term fuel maintenance savings are barely worth the up-front investment in electric school buses, which cost an estimated

\$350,000 per bus, on top investment needed in a charging infrastructure. The EPA program tremendously assists districts, but it's only due to run through 2026 or once the \$5 billion is depleted. Also, the politics behind going electric could reduce funding opportunities depending on who is in the White House next year. "If Trump is elected, the fact is that we would lose this funding," says Leah Stokes, an associate professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

With or without funding, school bus electrification needs to be made more affordable. Shifting from diesel to electric will only happen when leaders at every level understand and rally behind it.

CONTACTS: Electric School Bus Initiative, <https://electricschoolbusinitiative.org>.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit **EarthTalk**. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org

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