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M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department Recognizes the Neighborhood Planning Academy Fall 2024 Cohort With Graduation Ceremony

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (Nov. 22, 2024)—The Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission hosted a graduation ceremony to celebrate the Fall 2024 Cohort of the Neighborhood Planning Academy on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at the M-NCPPC Largo Headquarters. Designed specifically for Prince George's County residents and community stakeholders, the Neighborhood Planning Academy demystifies the often-complex process of planning and development and empowers participants to become advocates for the current needs and future of their neighborhoods.

This fall, 60 representatives, reflecting all regions of Prince George's County, were selected



PHOTO COURTESY M-NCPPC

Designed specifically for Prince George's County residents and community stakeholders, empowers participants to become advocates for the current needs and future of their neighborhoods.

from more than 200 applications to participate in a seven-week program to learn the ins and outs of the planning framework in Prince George's County, how to

engage in the development review process, and how to advocate for their community goals and visions. Since the launch of the program in the fall of 2023,

the Neighborhood Planning Academy has received more than

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Council Member Wanika Fisher Issues Statement on Fatal Brentwood Fire

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Council Media

District 2 Council Member Wanika Fisher extends her heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of the man tragically killed in a Sunday (Nov. 24) morning house fire in Brentwood.

"This devastating incident highlights the critical importance of having working smoke alarms in every home," said Council Member Fisher. "I commend the brave members of the Prince

George's County Fire/EMS Department for their swift response and dedication to protecting our community."

Residents in need of a free smoke detector can call 301-583-2200 to have one installed by the Prince George's County Fire/EMS Department.

For more updates, follow the Fire/EMS Department on Twitter/X: @PGFDNews.

Gov. Moore Puts \$1.8 Million Toward Making Maryland the "Cyber Capital" of the Nation

By STEVEN JACOBS JR.
Capital News Service

COLUMBIA, Md. (Nov. 22, 2024)—Gov. Wes Moore this week announced a \$1.8 million award to all 16 community colleges in the state to boost cybersecurity training and career opportunities.

The Maryland Association of Community Colleges and BCR Cyber, a private company that provides cybersecurity training programs and job placement services.

In his remarks at Thursday morning's announcement, he said he hopes that Maryland will become the hotbed for aspiring cybersecurity professionals.

"Maryland's pathway to national leadership in cybersecurity runs through our community colleges," Moore said. "Today marks the latest chapter in our work to make Maryland the cyber capital of the United States and connect all Marylanders with the training they need to compete for jobs of tomorrow."

Moore's administration secured the award for the MACC and for BCR Cyber. The funding comes from the

Accelerating Cyber Careers grant by the Maryland Department of Labor.

BCR Cyber, an interactive computer platform that simulates real-world cyberattacks, will provide experiential learning for students.

"By leveraging extensive current federal, state, and local investment in cyber ranges, this partnership offers a statewide unified program that will dramatically increase Maryland's capacity to generate cyber workforce talent in a statewide unified program," said Michael Spector, president of BCR Cyber.

Brad Phillips, executive director of the Maryland Association of Community Colleges, agreed.

"This investment solidifies Maryland community colleges as a national leader on cyber and workforce development," said Phillips. "We're honored to be chosen for this award and look forward to working with our partners to fill critical skills gaps in the cybersecurity industry."

MGM National Harbor Welcomes Holiday Cheer With Joyful New Winter Display

'Tis the Season with a 20-foot-tall toy snowman, 15-foot snow globe and more festive delights

By PRESS OFFICER
MGM National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Nov. 25, 2024)—MGM National Harbor is capturing the spirit of the season with a new Conservatory display featuring 10,000 glittering ornaments, snowy Christmas trees and a colossal 20-foot-tall toy snowman. On display now through January 5, MGM National Harbor's holiday Conservatory will transport guests to a winter wonderland.

Fun Facts

- The Conservatory is comprised of nearly 1,800 poinsettias
- The centerpiece of the holiday display features a 20-foot-tall toy snowman with a little girl adding a carrot nose atop a 12-foot wooden ladder
- Nine oversized ornaments hang overhead with each featuring 10,000 small ornaments within
- The Conservatory showcases a 15-foot snow globe with a Christmas village and Santa with reindeer
- Seven large white Christmas trees ranging from 16-to-25-foot-tall stand throughout with gold stars atop
- The Conservatory also includes:
- A 25-foot-tall red/green/gold Christmas tree with an ornament spire



PHOTO COURTESY MGM NATIONAL HARBOR

A 16-foot-tall rocking horse is part of the new Conservatory display.

- A 16-foot-tall rocking horse
- An 8-foot-tall red ornament ball with a cap and hook

Located in an unrivaled setting, MGM National Harbor offers stunning panoramic views of the Eastern shore of the Potomac River in Maryland. The \$1.4 billion LEED® Gold Certified resort sits a short distance from Washington, D.C. to the north and historic sites, including George Washington's Mount Vernon estate across the river in Virginia. MGM National Harbor is owned by MGM Resorts International (NYSE: MGM). For more information, visit mgmnationalharbor.com or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

County Councilmember Wala Blegay Distributes Thanksgiving Turkeys to Older Adults at Largo Landing Fellowship House

By PRESS OFFICER
Fellowship Square

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Nov. 27, 2024)—On Saturday, November 24, Prince George's County Councilmember Wala Blegay distributed forty Thanksgiving packages to the older adult residents at Largo Landing Fellowship House who often struggle to make

ends meet financially.

Providing a home for vulnerable Prince George's County seniors since its opening by Fellowship Square in 1984, Largo Landing Fellowship House is an affordable housing community for seniors who live on less than \$15,000/year. Rental income assistance from the US Department of Housing (HUD) helps ensure residents

pay no more than 30% of their income in rent. Fellowship Square relies on volunteers, community partners, financial donors and others to provide quality programs and activities for Largo Landing residents.

"Thanksgiving is a time to express gratitude, and there's no better way to do that than by giving back to our senior community, who have laid the

foundation for all of us," said Councilmember Blegay. "Our seniors are pillars of wisdom, strength, and resilience, and this distribution of turkey and other Thanksgiving food is a small token of appreciation for their countless contributions."

The donated packages included a turkey, produce, and all the fixings for residents to enjoy a festive Thanksgiving

meal. The giveaways are a partnership between Council Member Blegay's office, the Community Impact Office, Abundant Life Church, and local businesses.

"We're thankful to have a wonderful partner in Councilmember Blegay," said Christy Zeitz, CEO of Fellowship Square. "Her support and dedication to our mission has a

tremendous positive impact on the 100+ seniors that call Largo Landing Fellowship House home. We greatly appreciate the time she took to organize, collect and distribute everything the residents would need to have a healthy and joyful Thanksgiving meal."

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In and Around Morningside-Skyline

With Mary McHale, will return soon!

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

LIVE MUSIC & SANTA OH MY!

Love traditions? Who does not. This is one that you are going to want to add to the calendar year after year. Santa, we know him! Enjoy an afternoon of family fun with our all-request live music show plus buffet meal. As if this activity is not fantastic enough, huge bonus is you will get Santa photos all in one afternoon. This show will have you laughing, singing and clapping along while the kids' get up out their seats and dance around. Santa will happily take photos with all families in attendance and listen to all of your Christmas wishes. Each date will offer both a brunch and an afternoon option. These shows sell out every year, so do not delay. "This is our favorite holiday tradition." S. Nick. The event will be held Saturday, December 14, 2024, 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at 172 Fleet St. National Harbor, Maryland. Visit Website: <https://www.bobbymckees.com/kids-teen-show-tickets/>.

THE METROPOLITAN FOLLIES

The Metropolitan Follies: A Holiday Revue! Is a newly vamped 30-minute Broadway-style show will be held Saturday, December 21, 2024, from 2-2:30 p.m. featuring MSA students of all ages. This show includes many of your favorite holiday characters: Mrs. Claus, Frosty, Rudolph, Cindy-Lou Who, the Nutcracker Doll and other holiday friends. This upbeat, high-energy, and engaging performance travels throughout the DMV area to perform and spread holiday joy in both private and public performances. It is the season to laugh, sing, and spread joy together. The address is 150 National Plaza, National Harbor, Maryland. Visit Website.

WOMEN'S DAY

Clinton United Methodist Church women celebrated Women's Day Sunday, November 17, 2024. Embracing Change and Trusting God's Plans. Our Pastor Rev. Melaina Trice delivered the morning message. Rev. Melaina Trice is a Philadelphia native who graduated from Morgan State University in 2003 with her Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature. She later graduated from Palmer Theological Seminary with a Master of Divinity (M.Div.). Additionally, she studied Urban Development at Eastern University alongside her M.Div.

She served as a Children & Youth Director for over 12 years at St. Luke UMC (Bryn Mawr, PA) and Ashton UMC in Ashton, Maryland. She was ordained as a Full Member Elder at Annual Conference 2023. She served as an Associate Pastor for Worship & Communications at Glen Mar UMC and was there since 2020. She was appointed to Clinton United Methodist Church in Clinton, Maryland on July 1, 2024, where she happily serves as lead pastor.

The kingdom of God and "Jesus is Lord" are the foundation

of her theology. She believes everyone bears the image of God, are beloved and invited to the banquet table of God and are free to accept God's love and be loved. She is passionate about social justice and removing barriers to the inclusivity and diversity of God's kingdom especially for the poor, marginalized, and oppressed.

She has been married to Shelton Price for nearly 13 years and they have two children, Israel and London. She loves fine arts including music, fashion, dance, visual arts, theater, and motion pictures. She enjoys various genres of music including hip hop, gospel, pop, CCM, R&B, rock, jazz, and a little country music. She also loves the art of standup comedy. In her spare time, she writes poetry, short stories, crafting, and paints abstract art.

EMBRACING CHANGE

"We are women gracefully evolving experiencing many things throughout the course of our lives and the emotions that they bring not only in our bodies. Fearfully and wonderfully made but with our hopes and dreams careful to not let them fade. We face all the changes with each high and with each low. Trusting God to be our Guide where his will goes. Sometimes it is not so easy to try something new not realizing the impact made when we let do. The possibilities are endless. May we occupy until Jesus comes. Never too young or too old to help get the job done. Changes can be for our God leading us to the best next place. We look to the Lord, moving forward in faith and to the future let us embrace." Words by Kendra Neal who is a member of Clinton United Methodist Women.

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Drive through a spectacular trail that perfectly matches your car radio playing the Christmas favorites November 29-January 1 from 5-9:30 p.m. The most popular displays include reindeer, colorful snowflakes, toy soldiers, gingerbread men, candy canes, and of course, Santa Claus. Stop by a dazzling life-size Gingerbread House and an enchanting Carousel of Lights. Located at Watkins Park Drive, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20774. Fee is \$10 advance, \$15 at the gate.

SENIOR HOLIDAY CONCERT

Join us for a festive celebration this holiday season with a lively concert by The Rise Band and Show, Thursday, December 12 from 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Their music is sure to get you into the holiday spirit. Doors open at 10:15 a.m. Be sure to register early, as seating is limited. The ticket fee includes admission to the performance. Bring a printout of your receipt for entrance to the show. The address is Laurel-Beltsville Senior Activity Center. FEE: \$10(R); \$13(NR) PARKS DIRECT: SPD-SPEC-GA-20241212.

Two Holiday Events in District Heights You Don't Want to Miss!

By PRESS OFFICER
The City of District Heights

First up is our Holiday Bazaar & Tree Lighting Ceremony: **Saturday, December 7** at 2 p.m. Shop for unique holiday gifts from local vendors and experience the

magic as we light up the holiday tree!

Next is our Annual Senior Holiday Party on **Friday, December 13** at 12 p.m. (doors open at 11:30). Celebrate the season with food, fun, and festivities exclusively for our amazing senior community of District Heights! Register on eventbrite.

Both events will be at the City of District Heights Recreation Center, 2000 Marbury Drive, District Heights, MD 20747. Questions? Call (301) 336-5633.

Celebrate the season with us, bring your holiday cheer and join us for back-to-back weekends of festive fun!

Prince George's County Health Department to Transition Medication Assisted Treatment Services by March 2025

Health Department shifts focus to community partnership for enhanced access to Medication Assisted Treatment services

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Health Department

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 2, 2024)—The Prince George's County Health Department announces an important shift in its approach to providing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services. Effective March 31, 2025, the Health Department will transition from directly offering MAT services to focusing on facilitating partnerships that enhance access to these vital services within the community.

This strategic decision aligns with the principles of Public Health 3.0, emphasizing collaboration, sustainability, and community-centered solutions. In partnership with the Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA), the Health Department is actively supporting the establishment of a new methadone treatment clinic in central or southern Prince George's County. This initiative aims to ensure individuals seeking MAT services have uninterrupted access to care in a more coordinated and effective manner.

"Our priority has always been to serve our residents with the

highest level of care and support," said Dr. Matthew D. Levy, Prince George's County Health Officer. "This transition reflects our commitment to building a stronger healthcare system that fosters collaboration, sustainability, and equitable access to services."

The Health Department is dedicated to ensuring that current patients receive comprehensive resources and guidance to facilitate a seamless transition to new treatment providers. Prospective and current patients will be connected with care coordination, case management, and peer recovery coaches to help navigate the process.

Patients seeking new or continued treatment will have access to a variety of nearby options, with the Health Department providing assistance in transferring medical records to their chosen providers.

This realignment represents the Health Department's broader strategy to enhance public health services in Prince George's County through innovative partnerships and by addressing the dynamic needs of its residents.

Calendar of Events

1st Annual Maryland Holiday Light Spectacular

Date and time: December 12-30, 2024, 5:30 to 10 p.m.
Description: The fairgrounds infield will be transformed into a dazzling wonderland, featuring an outdoor half-mile immersive walking trail adorned with over a million spectacular lights, larger-than-life holiday scenes and Maryland themed scenes, including Mistletoe Marina, Jinglebell Junction Farm and the Symphony of Illumination, plus many more. Festive music promises to enchant visitors of all ages. Pathways will be safe and accessible, making them suitable for scooters, strollers, and wheelchairs. Advance tickets are strongly encouraged, as they are first come, first served, and some dates and times will sell out quickly. A portion of event proceeds go to Spirit of Hope Children's Foundation: www.spiritofhopechildrensfoundation.org

Cost: General Admission: Starting at \$10 (Monday-Thursday, 8-10 p.m.); \$15 from 5:30-8 p.m., Monday-Thursday and 8-10 p.m., Friday-Sunday; \$20 from 5:30-8 p.m., Friday-Sunday; \$25 for Any Night General Admission tickets
Free parking is available. Add-On Experiences available.
VIP Admission: \$39 (Valid Monday to Sunday). Includes a souvenir Hot Chocolate Mug with bottomless hot chocolate, access to the VIP Lodge & Bar, VIP Washrooms, and a VIP Entrance.
Location: Maryland State Fairgrounds, 2200 York Rd., Timonium, MD 21093
Contact: mdholidaylights.com

Holiday Trains & Planes

Date and time: Dec. 13, Dec. 14, Dec. 15, 2024, 10 a.m.
Description: Join us during the holiday season and experience the thrill of our annual Trains and Planes program. Meet and greet train hobbyists, and go back in time experiencing the sights and sounds of their train displays.
Cost: Age Dependent: Free-\$5. Register at PARKSDirect
Location: College Park Aviation Museum, 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD 20740
Contact: (301) 864-6029 collegeparkaviation@pgparks.com



Gwynn Park High School Winter Dance Showcase

Date and time: Friday, December 13, 2024, 7 p.m.
Description: This year's showcase will feature a unique reimagining of George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker*, incorporating ballet, Horton, and acro dance styles, performed by our talented students. This performance represents months of dedication, creativity, and hard work from our dancers, and we believe it will be an inspiring event for the entire community.
Cost: \$6.25-\$11.50, purchase at the link below:
<https://www.etix.com/ticket/o/16034/GPHSdance>
Location: Oxon Hill High School, 6701 Leyte Dr, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Holiday Craft Fair

Date and time: Saturday, December 14, 2024, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Description: Support local artists at our Holiday Craft Fair and enjoy live music, while sampling delicious brews from Maryland Meadworks! Experience our exhibits "The Sound of DC: A Visual History of Punk DIY" and "Beyond Networks," while you shop for special gifts from over fifteen local vendors. Bring your friends and family to our craft station, where you can create your own wreaths and ornaments. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to celebrate the holiday season together!
Cost: FREE, All Ages
Location: Brentwood Arts Exchange, 3901 Rhode Island Avenue, Brentwood, MD 20722
Contact: (301) 277-2863 brentwoodarts@pgparks.com

Special Event:

A Charlie Brown Christmas with The Eric Byrd Trio
Date and time: Saturday, December 14, 2024, 4 p.m.
Description: Christmastime is here! Montpelier Arts Center and The Eric Byrd Trio celebrate the season with an afternoon filled with festive music from the Peanuts' special. Featuring pianist/vocalist Eric Byrd, bassist Bhagwan Khalsa, and drummer Alphonso Young, Jr., the Trio has traveled the world as enthusiastic ambassadors of jazz. Bringing fresh arrangements to these familiar songs, they are sure to put you in a holiday mood. "Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown!"
Cost: Tickets \$15: https://www.pgparks.com/event_list/a-charlie-brown-christmas-with-the-eric-byrd-trio
Ages: All ages
Location: Montpelier Arts Center, 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD 20708
Contact: 301-377-7800, montpelierarts@pgparks.com

The Polar Express—Holiday Movies on the Potomac

Date and time: Sunday, December 29, 2024, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Description: What's winter without some classic movies? Bring your blankets, grab food to-go from one of our restaurants and enjoy your favorite holiday films on our jumbo screen.
Cost: FREE
Location: 150 National Plaza, National Harbor, Maryland

The Prince George's Post

Serving Prince George's County Since 1932

COMMUNITY

Marietta's Annual Winter Holiday Open House With a Special Appearance by Papa Noël

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

Join the fun on **Saturday, December 7**, 4–8 p.m. for Marietta's Annual Winter Holiday Open House with a special appearance by Papa Noël. Experience a beautiful evening of tours, decorations, music, sweets and refreshments. Guests always marvel at the unique new designs each year as they walk through the wonderfully decorated historic house meeting trained staff who share stories about the historic kitchen, parlor, dining room, and more.

Because the Duvall family's roots go back to France, the museum makes sure that visiting children can meet Papa Noël (from 4–6 p.m.) who gives them treats and sends the children to seek-and-find little gifts throughout the historic house. Families take photos with Papa Noël. Light refreshments will be served. Celtic harp music is provided by Chris Van Dyke.

All ages, children must be accompanied by an adult. \$5/ person, ages 12 and under Free. Register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/23rpt7yp> Call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pgparks.com for more information. Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD. 20769 and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Reese Weaver of Brandywine Performed in McDaniel College Student Solo Recital

By PRESS OFFICER
McDaniel College

WESTMINSTER, Md. (Nov. 22, 2024)—Reese Weaver of Brandywine (20613) performed Friday, Nov. 8, in the Student Solo Recital held at McDaniel College, 2 College Hill, Westminster, Maryland. Weaver is a junior Theatre Arts major at McDaniel.

Reese Weaver was a vocalist and performed "A Horse with Wings" by Ricky Ian Gordon.

The recital featured a selection of vocal and instrumental soloists performing a variety of music spanning from classical to contemporary. Students involved study under McDaniel music faculty members Rachel Andrews, staff accompanist; Kyle Engler, senior lecturer; and Waka Osifchin, senior adjunct lecturer.

For more information about McDaniel College, visit www.mcdaniel.edu

Ceremony from A1

700 applications from interested Prince George's County residents and stakeholders.

"M-NCPPC sees the importance of an empowered community, and the Neighborhood Planning Academy provides a platform for residents, community stakeholders, and municipal leaders to learn how to engage in the different stages of the planning and development review process," said Peter A. Shapiro, Chair of the M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board. "The capstone project presentations provide fresh perspectives on community challenges."

"The Neighborhood Planning Academy is an award-winning program that sets a standard for other regional and national programs to follow," said Lakisha Hull, Director of the M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Department. "The well-designed program, instructed by our team of professional planners, empowers residents to advocate for the needs of their communities and prepare to become active participants in public meetings."

The Fall 2024 Cohort of the Neighborhood Planning Academy included Shahidat Abbas, Oluwadamilare Abidakun, Felix Adams, Chineme Aghazu, Sydney Allen, Corina Atherson, Christian Bacon, Stephanie Beatty, C.A. Bell, Vivian Bell, Chris Brittan-Powell, David Brown, Senetra Burgess, Monica Casañas, Chelsea Champlin, Tyrath Cobb-Davis, Annette Copeland, Egenia Dixon, Rhonda Dorsey, Sherri Downing, Pat Fletcher, Renita Flood-Bennett, Sean A. Floyd, Daniela Fontecha, Patrick Aurelien Fotsing, Delores Furman, Linda Moore-Garoute, Sherman Hardy, Alan Hew, Quantane Higginbotham, Christopher Hoover, Nicole Jackson, David Janifer, David Lampen, Robyn Marbray, Aaliyah Matin, Paula Noble, Eileen O'Brien, Yvonne Odoi, Favour Oluyemi, Shanetta Ore, Richard Potts, Belinda Queen, Alexander Rauda, Kareem Redmond, Dannette Redmond, Senika Romulus, Sheila Salo, Kimberly SESCOE, Christine Stewart, Rochelle Mincey-Thompson, Lester Lamar Thornton III, Patricia Villone, Stacy Watson, Sonja Welborne, Joan Williams, and Shamelle Yemofio.

During the graduation ceremony, participants delivered capstone project presentations that incorporated independent research findings as well as lessons and topics from the curriculum. Through weekly classes, participants explored the History, Present, and Future of Prince George's County, Planning 101, the Development Review Process, Building Healthy, Sustainable and Resilient Communities, Multimodal Transportation and Street Safety, and PGAtlas.com—a free public web application and online mapping tool.

For more information on the Neighborhood Planning Academy, visit: <https://academy.pgplanning.com>. Prince George's County residents and stakeholders may join the mailing list to receive announcements on applications for the Spring 2025 cohort and upcoming courses.

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 in Prince George's County. Visit our website, www.pg-planning.org, to learn how you can become engaged in shaping the future of your community.

Assistance
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.

AT&T Announces the 2024 Rising Future Makers Showcase Winners

25 HBCU Students recognized as Rising Future Makers and awarded for their positive community impact.

By PRESS OFFICER
AT&T News

Key Takeaways:

- The 2024 Rising Future Makers Showcase saw a 3% YoY increase in qualified submissions
- Since the start of the Rising Future Makers Program in 2021, AT&T has awarded \$500,000 to 100 HBCU students nationwide
- Each 2024 winner will receive \$5,000, a 5G-enabled tablet with a year of AT&T service, and access unique professional development and networking opportunities

AT&T is proud to announce the (25) winners of the 2024 Rising Future Makers Showcase, a dynamic initiative recognizing and supporting students from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) who are making an impact in their communities and on their campuses.

Each winner will each receive \$5,000, a 5G-enabled tablet with one year of AT&T service, and access to professional workshop opportunities, including mentoring sessions with AT&T executives aimed at expanding their networks and furthering their professional development.

"Our Rising Future Makers program hit a significant milestone this year, helping 100 HBCU students advance their careers and make the valuable connections they need to make impactful change in the world," said Sabina Ahmed, Assistant Vice President of Sponsorships & Experiential at AT&T. "Through our purpose-driven sponsorships, we continue to champion innovation and growth by connecting the next generation of changemakers with the tools and resources they need to bring their ideas to life."

Now in its fourth year, the Rising Future Makers Showcase continues to build upon AT&T's commitment to empowering communities by dedicating resources to fostering growth and helping to bridge the digital divide. To date, the program has awarded \$500,000 to 100 students, helping them further their dreams and connect to greater possibilities.

Rising Future Makers Class of 2024

- Keith Quick, Winston-Salem State University
- Morgan Olivia Norris, Hampton University
- Chelsea Mendes, Spelman College
- Jaquavous Doucette, Prairie View A&M University
- Isaiah Clark, Savannah State University
- Keith Jackson, Grambling State University
- Calandrea Carter, Alabama State University
- Tierney Macon, Tuskegee University
- Brooklynn Tucker, Howard University



PHOTO COURTESY AT&T NEWS

Taylor Payton, Bowie State University

- Lea Elena Hebert, Grambling State University
- Kenaji Blevins, Morehouse College
- Makaela Reed, Bennett College
- **Taylor Payton, Bowie State University**
- Cierra Solomon, North Carolina A&T State University
- Goodwill-Munashe Kwenda, Alabama A & M University
- Emmanuel Durojaiye, Morgan State University
- Savion Briggs, Kentucky State University

See **WINNERS** Page A5

Senior Health and Wellness Day Offers Free Prostate Cancer Screenings

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and Clinton Baptist Church partnered on the community outreach event.

By PRESS OFFICER
MedStar Health

CLINTON, Md. (Nov. 26, 2024)—Health-conscious community members in Prince George's County visited Senior Health and Wellness Day, a resource fair held by Community Health at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and Clinton Baptist Church on Saturday, Nov. 23. At the event, MedStar Health clinicians offered on-site prostate cancer screenings for eligible men at no cost. Participants were also not asked for their insurance information.

Prostate cancer affects Black men living in Prince George's County at an alarmingly high rate. They are diagnosed almost 40% more often than U.S. men on average and die from the disease almost 80% more often, according to county statistics. Physicians currently recommend all men over age 50 receive a digital rectal exam screening. For black men, or men with a family history, screenings are recommended starting at age 40.

Chile Ahaghotu, MD, vice president of Medical Affairs at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and a board-certified urologist, provided the free

screenings at the church.

"The good news is that when prostate cancer is detected early, it is highly treatable," Dr. Ahaghotu said, "That's why we need to make sure all men are getting their screenings at the recommended age. Bringing free screenings directly into the community is a way to make this kind of preventative care more accessible and empower more men to checked."

"It is devastating to learn that prostate cancer is the second leading cause of can-

See **SCREENINGS** Page A4

Turkeys from A1

Fellowship Square ensures that residents have the support they need to live independent and fulfilling lives even in the face of serious obstacles, such as the high costs of housing in the greater Washington DC area. For more information on Fellowship Square housing options, volunteer opportunities or donations, visit fellowshipsquare.org

Prince George's County Councilmember Wala Blegay dropped off donated turkeys and other food items to make the Thanksgiving holiday special for residents at Fellowship Square's Largo Landing Fellowship House in Upper Marlboro. The community provides affordable housing to financially vulnerable older adults—many who live on average annual fixed-income of less than \$15,000/year—and ensures they have the support they need to live independent, fulfilling lives even in the face of obstacles such as the high costs of housing in the greater Washington DC area.

PHOTO COURTESY FELLOWSHIP SQUARE



University of Maryland Welcomes The Pink Bakery; Offers Inclusivity in Every Bite for Campus Dining

The University of Maryland is raising the bar for allergen-friendly dining by welcoming The Pink Bakery to its acclaimed Purple Zone, a designated allergen-free dining area. This move reflects the university's dedication to creating an inclusive dining experience for all students, particularly those managing severe food allergies and dietary restrictions.

By PRESS OFFICER
The Pink Bakery, Inc.

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (Nov. 28, 2024) (PR.com)—The Pink Bakery Mixes Now Featured in the University of Maryland's Purple Zone.

The University of Maryland is raising the bar for allergen-friendly dining by welcoming The Pink Bakery to its acclaimed Purple Zone, a designated allergen-free dining area. This move re-

flects the university's dedication to creating an inclusive dining experience for all students, particularly those managing severe food allergies and dietary restrictions.

The Pink Bakery's products, including its brownies, cookies, pancakes, and biscuits, are designed to delight all palates while providing peace of mind to those with dietary concerns. The addition to the Purple Zone further cements The Pink Bakery's position as a

leader in allergen-friendly dining solutions.

"I'm grateful to the University of Maryland for having the awareness to have a safe haven for those with food allergies on their campus and am excited and honored to have our products play a prominent role in the Purple Zone," said Nubian Simmons, CEO and

See **INCLUSIVITY** Page A5

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Malcolm X Lawsuit Is an Opportunity for NYPD & Federal Law Enforcement to Draw the Curtain on an Era of Corruption and Injustice

“For decades, [U.S. government agencies and the NYPD] viewed Black activism as a threat to national security, resulting in the unchecked targeting of prominent leaders, including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Marcus Garvey. This lawsuit seeks accountability for the systemic negligence and intentional actions that deprived Malcolm X’s family and the world of his life and legacy.”

—Civil rights attorney Ben Crump

Six days before Malcolm X was gunned down

at the Audubon Ballroom in New York City, an undercover NYPD detective told the department he’d seen “a dry run” of Malcolm X’s assassination, which he believed would happen on the upcoming Sunday.

The next day, two members of Malcolm X’s security team were arrested and detained in connection with a bogus plot to bomb the Statue of Liberty.

Malcolm X’s daughters charged in a lawsuit filed [recently] that the arrests were coordinated

by the NYPD and federal law enforcement agencies “to weaken Malcolm X’s security, which knowingly facilitated his assassination.”

In a letter written in 2011 and unveiled after his death in 2020, the undercover officer who drew the men into the plot wrote, “It was my assignment to draw the two men into a felonious federal crime, so that they could be arrested by the FBI and kept away from managing Malcolm X’s Audubon Ballroom door security on February 21, 1965.”

The lawsuit pulls together years of systemic and institutional corruption within the NYPD, the FBI, and the CIA. A swift settlement would allow these agencies to draw the curtain on an ugly period of rank injustice and usher in a new era of integrity and decency.

Accusations of conspiracy and corruption have surrounded Malcolm X’s assassination from the moment the bullets were fired. Earl Grant, a close associate, wrote of the immediate aftermath, “Here were New York City policemen, entering a room from which at least a dozen shots had been heard, and yet not one of them had his gun out! As a matter of absolute fact, some of them even had their hands in their pockets.”

Two of the men who were convicted of the murder, Muhammad A. Aziz and Khalil Islam,

were exonerated last year after an investigation by the Manhattan District Attorney’s Office determined that the NYPD and FBI withheld key evidence that likely would have led to their acquittal.

Mujahid Abdul Halim, who confessed to the murder at trial, has always insisted Aziz and Islam were innocent. He initially declined to name his co-conspirators but later identified them as Leon Davis, Benjamin Thomas, and two men whose full names he did not know, “William X” and “Wilbur or Kinly.”

The Manhattan D.A.’s investigation did not confirm the guilt of those men or outline a conspiracy among local and federal agencies. But the lawsuit claims the reason Malcolm X was denied entry into France 12 days before his assassination was that French authorities had learned of a CIA plot to murder him and feared he would be “liquidated” on French soil.

The CIA’s unofficial motto is the Biblical verse “And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” Until these agencies acknowledge the truth surrounding Malcolm X’s assassination, we cannot truly claim to be free.

—November 22, 2024

Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita, Children’s Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

Saying Grace

During the Thanksgiving season I often share the description of an editorial cartoon my father kept pinned up in the vestibule of our church that made a deep childhood impression on me I have never forgotten. It was a black and white drawing by the Pulitzer Prize-winning artist Herblock that was originally published in the Washington Post in October 1947. The picture showed a group of well-dressed, happy people, sitting at a banquet table overflowing with place settings, goblets, and so much food the table cannot hold any more: a roast,

gravy boats, bread and butter, covered dishes, heaping platters of sides. Hovering behind them and filling the rest of the image is a crowd of gaunt, wide-eyed hungry children dressed in rags. There are too many of these skeletal figures to count; the starving masses go on and on into the distance. Back at the table, one of the dinner guests is speaking cheerfully to his smiling companions. The caption reads: “Shall we say grace?”

In some houses Thanksgiving dinner will look a little like that cartoon, with tables overflowing

with favorite foods as family and friends crowd around them to give thanks and say grace. But for too many families, Thanksgiving will be like any other meal: not a time of plenty but a time of want. In his final book, *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., asked: “Why should there be hunger and privation in any land, in any city, at any table, when man has the resources and the scientific know-how to provide all mankind with the basic necessities of life? . . . Ultimately a great nation is a compassionate nation. No individual or nation can be great if it does not have a concern for ‘the least of these.’” We are reaching another crossroads when we must decide whether Dr. King’s definition of a truly great nation will stand as our goal, or whether other loud voices and competing visions will allow the gulf between the haves and have-nots to grow, reveling in their own successes while millions of others are left outside and left behind.

Some years ago, Children’s Defense Fund pro bono advertising partner Fallon Worldwide created a campaign for CDF that very simply updated the

moving words of Langston Hughes’s poem “God to Hungry Child”:

Hungry child,
I did not make this world for you.
You didn’t buy stock in my corporation.
You didn’t invest in my mutual fund.
Where were you when my company went public?
I made the world for the rich
And the will-be-rich
And the have-always-been rich.
Not for you,
Hungry child.

As we are giving thanks to God for all our blessings this season, is that the message we believe God wants us to send to hungry children, young people, and families in our nation? If it is not, will we be among the persistent voices who continue lifting up Dr. King’s definition of greatness and keep insisting we find another way?

—November 22, 2024

IRS Encourages Taxpayers to Prepare for 2025 Filing Season With Online Tools and Key Reminders

By PRESS OFFICER
Internal Revenue Service

WASHINGTON (IR-2024-297, Nov. 22, 2024)—As the nation’s tax season approaches, the Internal Revenue Service is reminding people of simple steps they can take now to prepare to file their 2024 federal tax returns.

This reminder is part of the IRS’s “Get Ready” campaign to help everyone prepare for the upcoming filing season in early 2025.

“Our focus at the IRS continues to be on making tax filing easier and more accessible for everyone,” said IRS Commissioner Danny Werfel. “We’ve added more digital tools to help taxpayers. But as tax season quickly approaches, the IRS reminds taxpayers there are important steps they can take now to get ready for 2025. From reviewing withholding to signing up for an IRS Online Account, there are multiple ways for people to help make the 2025 filing season easier.”

As the IRS continues its historic transformation work, the agency continues introducing new online tools as well as expanding and updating other digital tools. These are designed to help taxpayers and make tax filing easier.

Access IRS Online Account for helpful information

Taxpayers can create or access their IRS Online Account, where they can find all their tax related information for the 2025 filing season. New users will need to have a photo ID ready to verify their identity. Through their IRS Online Account, taxpayers can:

- View key details from their most recent tax return, such as adjusted gross income.
- Request an Identity Protection PIN.
- Get account transcripts to include wage and income records.
- Sign tax forms like powers of attorney or tax information authorizations.
- View and edit language preferences and alternative media (such as braille, large print, etc.).
- Receive and view over 200 IRS electronic notices.
- View, make and cancel payments.
- Set up or change payment plans and check their balance.

Gather and organize tax documents

Having well-organized tax records can make filing a complete and accurate return easier and help avoid errors that can delay refunds. This may also help identify deductions or credits that may have been overlooked.

Most income is taxable, including unemployment compensation, refund interest and income from the gig economy and digital assets. Taxpayers should watch for and gather essential forms, such as Forms W-2, Wage and Tax Statement, and other income documents.

It’s also important to notify the IRS of any address changes and the Social Security Administration of any legal name changes.

Check withholding before the end of 2024

The IRS Tax Withholding Estimator on IRS.gov can help tax-

payers make sure the correct amount of tax is withheld from their paychecks. This tool is especially useful for individuals who owed taxes or received large refunds last year, or those who have experienced life changes such as marriage, divorce, or the welcoming of a child. Taxpayers who need to adjust their withholding can update their information with their employer using Form W-4, Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate.

Time is running out to make changes for 2024, as only a few pay periods remain in the year. Taxpayers need to act quickly to make any adjustments.

Get refunds faster with direct deposit

The fastest and most secure way to receive a tax refund is through direct deposit. Taxpayers can direct their refund to a bank account, banking app or reloadable debit card by providing their routing and account numbers. If the routing and account number cannot be located, taxpayers should contact their bank, financial institution or app provider.

According to Treasury’s Bureau of the Fiscal Service, paper refund checks are 16 times more likely to be lost, misdirected, stolen or uncashed compared to those paid using direct deposit.

Individuals without a bank account can explore options for opening one through FDIC-insured banks or a credit union using the National Credit Union Locator tool. Veterans can use the Veterans Benefits Banking Program to find participating financial institutions.

Volunteer to help others with their taxes

The IRS and its community partners are seeking volunteers from around the country to join the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs. These programs offer free tax preparation services to eligible taxpayers. Interested individuals can learn more and sign up by visiting IRS.gov.

Helpful IRS resources and online tools

IRS.gov is a valuable resource for taxpayers, offering a variety of online tools like the Individual Online Account available 24/7. These tools help individuals file and pay taxes, track refunds, access account information and get answers to tax questions. Taxpayers are encouraged to bookmark these resources for easy access.

Choosing a tax professional

Tax professionals play an essential role in the U.S. tax system. Certified public accountants, Enrolled Agents, attorneys and others without formal credentials are just a few of the professionals who help taxpayers file their returns accurately. It is important to choose a professional who is skilled and trustworthy.

Most tax return professionals provide great service but picking the wrong one can hurt taxpayers financially. The IRS offers tips for choosing a tax preparer.

People can use the IRS Directory of Federal Tax Return Preparers with Credentials and Select Qualifications to find qualified professionals.

Screenings from A3

cer death in U.S. men, especially amongst African American men,” said Colin Pugh, pastor of Clinton Baptist Church. “I led by example by signing up first for an exam, and many who joined us were getting checked for the first time. I appreciate that our partnership with MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center helps us promote better health in our community and carry out our vision: We Grow, We Serve, We Love.”

At the event, Community Health team members also arranged for several local organizations and vendors to offer a variety of resources and information for visitors aged 55 and older, along with their caregivers. The attending organizations included the Prince George’s County Health Dept. and Dept. of Aging, Maryland Insurance Administration, Pathways, Inc., Employ PG County, Giant Foods, and more.

“We at MedStar Health are constantly looking for ways to enhance the health and wellbeing of our communities,” said Jessica Gamero, community health program manager at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, “By bringing our invaluable partners together, both inside and outside the walls of our hospitals, we have the opportunity to make a real difference on health issues and also address the social determinants of health affecting our communities.”

Saturday’s Senior Health and Wellness Day marked the third collaboration between MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center and Clinton Baptist Church that provided free prostate cancer screenings to the community.

The Prince George’s Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Am I Entitled to More Social Security From my Ex-husbands?

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 76 years old and a retired high school counselor/teacher. I was married to my first husband from 1968 until 1981. He is still living, and he remarried two more times and, I believe, he is currently divorced. He is 77 years old. His income was always much higher than mine. I was married to my second husband from May 1989 until we divorced in April 2017. My second husband died in June 2023. What I wonder is if I am entitled to receive Social Security benefits based upon the income of either of my ex-husbands? **Signed: Twice Divorced Spouse**

Dear Twice Divorced: Divorced spouses are entitled to the same benefits as a current spouse if their marriage lasted at least 10 years which, in both cases, yours did. The other caveat is whether your own SS retirement benefit is less than you are entitled to from either of your ex-husbands. If your own SS retirement benefit is less, then you will get an incremental amount on top of your own SS retirement to bring your total monthly benefit up to your spousal (or surviving spouse) entitlement.

Since your first husband is still living, it is likely that your best financial option is to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit from your deceased 2nd husband. The reason is that survivor benefits from husband #2 are based on his actual benefit at his death, whereas benefits from a living ex-spouse (husband #1) are based upon his full retirement amount. In other words, it is likely that 100% of deceased husband #2's benefit at his death is more than 50% of living husband #1's current benefit at his full retirement age (FRA).

It is, of course, possible that 50% of your first husband's FRA entitlement is more than 100% of your second husband's benefit at death, in which case your ex-spouse benefit from your first husband could be more. The only way to sort this out is to contact Social Security (1.800-772-1213) to make an appointment to apply for surviving ex-spouse benefits from your deceased second husband. Explain that your first ex-husband is still living, and that you are unsure of what your benefits are as your first husband's ex-spouse. Social Security will be able to determine from their records which one provides you with a higher benefit amount (provide each husband's Social Security number when you call). As I said, your best financial option will likely be to take your survivor benefit from your deceased second ex-husband (note, however, if your first ex-husband also dies before you, you can subsequently file for a survivor benefit from him, if that is more than you are getting from your second husband's record).

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.

Winners from A3

- Richard Obi, North Carolina A&T State University
- Ashley Sanders, Spelman College
- Landon A. Hale, Alabama State University
- Haley Cree Campbell, Hampton University
- Ann Laurie Pierre, Howard University
- Joshua Holmes, Clark Atlanta University
- Damani Lanes, Hampton University
- Matthew Dormus, Oakwood University

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Governor Moore Announces Nation's First-Ever Public Procurement Apprenticeship Program

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 22, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the Maryland Department of General Services launch of the Future of Procurement Apprenticeship pilot program. As the nation's first public procurement apprenticeship initiative, the program positions Maryland as a procurement and workforce development innovator, fostering economic growth both by making Maryland more competitive and the state that serves.

"I took an unconventional path from school to the workforce. As governor, I want to make sure that all Marylanders can access work, wages, and wealth, no matter the shape or structure of their journey," said Gov. Moore. "As we close out National Apprenticeship Week, our administration is proud to make history once again, with this pace-setting program that will grow opportunity for our entire state. Together, we are leaving no one behind."

The program focuses on setting students up for success by providing a structured pathway that equips participants with essential skills for meaningful careers in public service. Participants will receive comprehensive educational instruction through a procurement-related associate degree from a Maryland community college and participation in state procurement certification programs, including the first-tier Certified Maryland Procurement Associate program and the

Certified Maryland Procurement Officer program.

"As the first public procurement apprenticeship program in the nation, Maryland proudly serves as the flagship for establishing a strong foundation for future expansion and the potential to enrich our country's workforce significantly," said Maryland Department of General Services Secretary Atif Chaudhry. "In partnership, we're building a legacy that empowers future generations of public service."

By investing in apprenticeship programs, the Department of General Services not only will grow a dedicated pipeline of skilled professionals, but also foster commitment to service among participants, attracting and cultivating talent specifically tailored to meet the unique demands of public procurement in Maryland. By training professionals from the ground up, the department will instill foundational knowledge and best practices from day one, enhancing workforce development by equipping participants with the specialized skills needed in today's dynamic labor market.

"We are grateful for the strong collaboration between the Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of Budget and Management, and our own team in developing comprehensive program standards and creating dedicated apprenticeship positions within the State's executive branch," said Maryland Chief Procurement Officer Wallace Sermons II. "This partnership reflects the power of working together toward bold

initiatives that not only enhance workforce development but also deliver lasting value to all Marylanders. When we unite our efforts, we create opportunities that drive progress and provide a significant return on investment for our communities."

The program was made possible through a memorandum of understanding with the National Association of State Procurement Officials. Upon completion, program participants will be prepared and qualified to apply for Procurement Officer I positions across state government.

"NASPO is thrilled to partner with the State of Maryland on the Future of Procurement Apprenticeship Pilot," said National Association of State Procurement Officials Director of Procurement Talent Development Daniel May. "Maryland's leadership in championing innovative workforce development initiatives demonstrates a strong commitment to public service excellence. This program reflects NASPO's vision of elevating public procurement as a dynamic and impactful career path and further harnesses Maryland's vision of empowering its workforce through apprenticeship career paths. Together, we are shaping the next generation of skilled professionals who will bring innovation, efficiency, and excellence to the field."

For more information about the Future of Procurement Apprenticeship, visit procurement.maryland.gov.

Governor Moore Announces \$24 Million Federal Investment in Training to Prepare Marylanders for Careers in Transportation

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Nov. 21, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the launch of the Road to Careers grant program, a multi-year \$24 million federal investment to prepare workers for skilled careers in Maryland's transportation and construction sectors. Leveraging federal transportation funding, the program will provide workforce development grants to make Maryland more competitive by training new workers in transportation construction trades.

"Making this Maryland's decade means building out a workforce that can compete for the jobs of today—and help us win the fights of tomorrow," said Gov. Moore. "Our Administration's innovative strategy to bring new workers into the construction trades will help more Marylanders receive the training they need to access work, wages, and wealth."

The Road to Careers grant program represents one of the largest commitments to transportation-related workforce development in the country and is made possible through a close partnership with the Maryland Department of Labor, the Maryland Department of Transportation, and the Federal Highway Administration. Grants will fund workforce training and support services, creating a new generation of workers to build the state's critical transportation infrastructure. The program will invest \$4 million annually over six years.

"When we voted for the historic infrastructure bill, we knew the importance of ensuring that new federal investments in our transportation infrastructure would be complemented by investments in our

workers and apprenticeship programs. That is why the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act expanded opportunities for states to establish programs like Roads to Careers," said Maryland federal lawmakers. "This initiative will help create pathways to career success and train a skilled workforce to build the future of transportation in Maryland. It is a prime example of how our partnerships with the Biden-Harris Administration and the State are strengthening our workforce, infrastructure, and economy."

The program is focused on serving Maryland women and other job seekers who often face barriers to employment, promoting pre-apprenticeships and registered apprenticeships as means to overcome barriers. Participants will receive on-the-job training and mentorship that will help connect them directly to careers.

"An inclusive approach to growing our transportation workforce is vital to our economic growth. This historic investment couples time-tested training models like apprenticeship with critical supports like childcare, access to counseling, or basic needs like uniforms," said Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Portia Wu. "We thank Secretary Wiedefeld and MDOT for their forward-thinking leadership and partnership on this effort."

Since Baltimore was announced as one of the Biden Administration's Workforce Hubs, the State of Maryland has worked closely with the U.S. Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration to craft a workforce development program that brings together best practices and smartly deploys federal transportation dollars to strengthen

Maryland's ability to deliver future infrastructure projects for years to come.

"Thanks to the historic investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law there is an even greater need for skilled workers to help build our state's future transportation system," said Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary Paul J. Wiedefeld. "The Roads to Careers grant program will train electricians, welders, heavy equipment operators, construction workers and all skilled trade workers who are in demand while providing family-supporting, good-paying careers for Marylanders. I join in thanking Secretary Wu and the team at the Department of Labor for their partnership and look forward to continuing to work closely with them to meet the state's employment needs."

To ensure participants successfully complete the program and secure employment, grantees are required to develop comprehensive, individualized support that helps reduce barriers to employment. Grantees may also use portions of their awards to support participants' transportation, childcare, mental health, or work equipment costs.

Applicants are encouraged to work with partner networks to ensure that individuals with barriers to employment—including those who are low-income, justice-involved and English language learners—have access to the program.

Applications are due February 28, 2025 and grants will begin in May 2025. Awards are capped at \$500,000.

To learn more about Road to Careers and for application documents and corresponding policy, visit the Maryland Department of Labor's Road to Careers website.

Inclusivity from A3

Founder of The Pink Bakery. "As someone who has struggled to find safe and satisfying food options, it is my calling to help support students enjoy delicious food options without worry."

"We are thrilled to be serving The Pink Bakery in the Purple Zone," said Senior Executive Chef John Gray. "These bakery products align with our mission to provide delicious, inclusive and safe options for our students with special requirements. The Pink Bakery helps us to

meet diverse dietary needs while ensuring no one feels left out at the dining table."

The University of Maryland joins a growing list of colleges & universities such as Penn State University and Marquette University that have embraced The Pink Bakery's mixes as part of their commitment to allergen-aware dining.

The Pink Bakery is the 1st premium top allergen-free baking mix company in the US founded by Nubian Simmons, a trail-blazing Black woman entrepreneur who

was born with severe food allergies, to serve those with food allergies and dietary restrictions. Based on the principles of love, inclusivity, and indulgence, its products are free from the top 14 allergens, in addition to being kosher, gluten-free, vegan, and made with organic, non-GMO, and fair-trade ingredients, providing a safe and delicious experience for everyone. For more information about The Pink Bakery, its products, and standards, visit www.thepinkbakery.com.

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Have a Safe Weekend

EarthTalk® Q&A Robots to the Rescue of the Environment?

By Isabella Sollazzo | November 20, 2024

Dear EarthTalk:
 Is it true that using robots can help us reduce our carbon footprint? This sounds great but what are the tradeoffs of increased utilization of robots?
 —Robert Pardue, Reno, NV

Robots are increasingly integral to addressing environmental challenges, from cleaning oceans to aiding reforestation. For instance, Clearbot removes some 15 liters of oil and 200 kilograms of trash from oceans daily, mitigating marine pollution. Robots also accelerate tree planting, restoring forests faster and more precisely than humans. In cities, robots are helping lower carbon footprints. Delivery robots can cut road congestion by 29 percent and reduce emissions by 16 percent compared to traditional vehicles. Often powered by renewable energy like solar, these robots further minimize environmental impact.

Similarly, robots are making an impact in transportation. Electric vehicles equipped with self-driving features are becoming more common, following Tesla's lead. Since EVs run on electricity rather than gas, they help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many of these au-

tonomous vehicles also include features like automatic braking, lane detection and speed control, which can enhance safety and efficiency on the road.

Robots have also made their way into industrial settings, where they improve efficiency and help cut down carbon emissions. A 2022 study found that the use of robots in manufacturing has enhanced carbon emission reduction efforts across 35 countries. By automating repetitive tasks, robots can help reduce errors and improve the overall energy efficiency of production processes.

However, the environmental benefits of robots come with significant tradeoffs. Most robots rely on batteries made from lithium and cobalt, which are not evenly distributed around the world. Mining these materials is resource-intensive and often leads to environmental degradation. The extraction process consumes large amounts of energy, releases air pollutants and can contaminate local water supplies.

Once in use, robots—like any other technology—are subject to wear and tear. When they break or become outdated, they add to the growing problem of electronic waste. The faster pace of production enabled by robots

also fuels consumer demand, further increasing waste. And these impacts often hit poorer nations hardest, as they are disproportionately affected by pollution and resource depletion.

Long term, as robot designs improve and new technologies are developed, some of these challenges may be mitigated. Companies like AI for Good, Echo Tech Daily and Redwood Materials are developing more sustainable robots. But for now, it's important to weigh the benefits and tradeoffs carefully. While robots hold great promise for helping us reduce our carbon footprint, they are far from a perfect solution.

CONTACTS: Impact of industrial robots on environmental pollution, www.nature.com/articles/s41598-023-47380-6; Can robots reduce carbon footprint? www.plainconcepts.com/robotics-sustainability.

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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Part-Time Administrative/Social Media Assistant Position

The Town of University Park seeks a **part-time Administrative/Social Media Assistant** to support the Town Administrator and Mayor. The Administrative/Social Media Assistant is responsible for performing a variety of administrative tasks; and managing and improving the Town's online presence with the community. This position requires a person who enjoys working with the public, is friendly and professional, detail oriented, able to prioritize and can multi-task. Please go to www.upmd.org for a detailed job description. Interested applicants need to submit a resume and cover letter to dsandlin@upmd.org no later than December 16th.

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