

# The Prince George's Post



A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER FOR PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY SINCE 1932

Vol. 92, No. 51 December 19 — December 25, 2024 Prince George's County, Maryland Newspaper of Record Phone: 301-627-0900 25 cents

## Public Library Celebrates Giving Milestone One Millionth Free Book to Young Children in Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 9, 2024)—This December, the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is celebrating the major milestone of sending over a million free books to children in Prince George's County as part of its Books From Birth program in partnership with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library. Since 2017, thousands of children and their families have benefited from the free books, helping to build their home library and establishing a solid foundation for their lifelong journey of literacy and reading.

The Library also partners with two hospitals in the county to give parents immediate access to the information needed to register for the program right when their babies are born. PGCMLS has been working with the University of Maryland Capital Region Medical Center since December of 2022, and most recently, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital since June of 2023.

PGCMLS CEO Dr. Mark Winston and COO Megan Sutherland, along with Books From Birth program leads, visited the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 3, 2024, to



PHOTO CREDIT PGCMLS

(Left) Pamela Hamlin, the Library's family literacy specialist, presents information about the Books From Birth program to Charlene Lopez (center), the coordinator of Lactation Services and Child Birth Education at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital.

meet with organizational partners and leaders and present forty early literacy "baby bundles" for the institution's Newborn and Women's Center.

"I truly appreciate the partnership with MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital," said Pamela Hamlin, the Library's family liter-

acy specialist. "The team has helped share our program with so many families. They are a pleasure to work with and understand the importance of books for babies!"

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## NASA to Maryland Lawmakers: 'High Risk' Goddard Project Had Unrealistic Launch Schedule

By SHAUN CHORNOBROFF and  
JAMES MATHESON  
Capital News Service

WASHINGTON (Dec. 10, 2024)—NASA described a plan to launch a multi-billion dollar spacecraft in 2026 as "overly optimistic and not credible" in a September letter to Maryland lawmakers that Capital News Service obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests.

On Sept. 4, NASA informed Congress it was ending the \$2 billion OSAM-1 project, which was expected to service existing satellites and expand their lifespans in space, among other capabilities.

Twelve days after the announcement, nine Maryland lawmakers demanded that NASA explain why it cancelled the project, which was based at the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland.

In its response, dated Sept. 25, NASA cited numerous risks, an overly ambitious plan and a low return on investment as rationales for ending the project.

"The majority of NASA technology demonstrations are less complex and have orders of magnitude lower project lifecycle costs (in the \$10 million-\$100 million range) than OSAM-1," said the letter signed by Alicia Brown, NASA's associate administrator for the office of legislative and intergovernmental affairs. "Therefore, NASA is willing to take more risk in managing these technology demonstration projects. ... OSAM-1 is considered by NASA to be a high cost and highly complex project."

Multiple parts of NASA's response were redacted in the copy of the letter CNS obtained.

Since its start in 2015, the OSAM-1 project has been subjected to sizable cost increases and delays, leading to NASA first announcing the mission's shutdown on March 1. The agency has stood firm on its decision despite urging from the Congress, especially members of the Maryland delegation.

The NASA website for the project says the OSAM-1 mission "is developing an un-

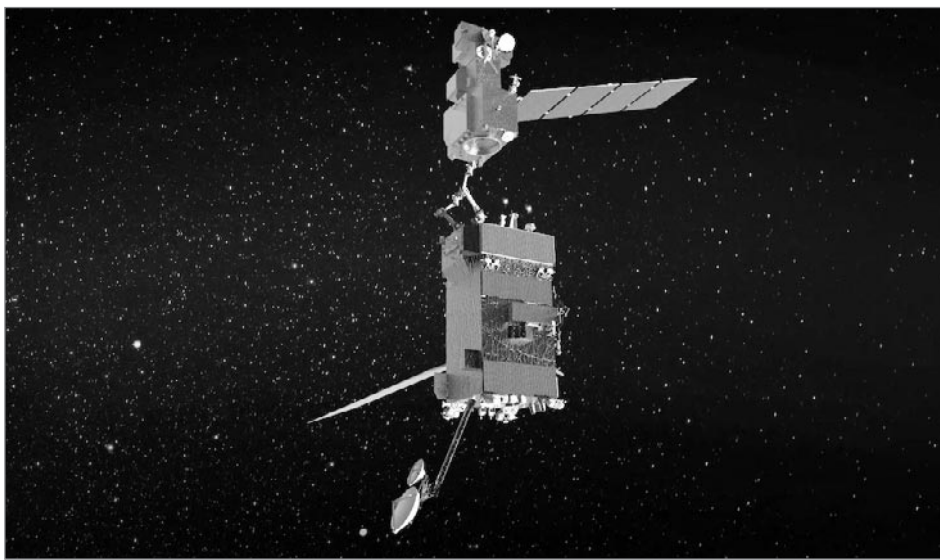


PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA

WASHINGTON—This is a rendering of the On-orbit Servicing, Assembly, and Manufacturing 1 (OSAM-1) satellite NASA is cancelling. Maryland lawmakers asked the agency to provide details behind the decision.

precedented capability for a robust, cost-effective space infrastructure."

Despite NASA's insistence on cancelling the mission, Maryland lawmakers continually have advocated for OSAM-1 to proceed, citing the importance of the project and the efforts of the workers at Goddard. As of Aug. 31, OSAM-1 had 249 contractors and 76 civil servants associated with the project, the letter said.

In a statement, Maryland Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, as well as Maryland Reps. Steny Hoyer and Glenn Ivey, maintained their criticism of NASA for ending the mission. Rep. Dutch Ruppersberger separately told CNS he concurred with the sentiments of his fellow Democrats.

"This critical program provided NASA a distinct solution to a difficult challenge: maintaining our satellites in space," the lawmakers said.

"With the capabilities being developed by OSAM-1, NASA had the opportunity to both service satellites while still in orbit and extend the useful lives of these valuable assets," they said. "In its shortsighted decision to cancel this mission, NASA has put

these important long-term benefits aside, while also undermining the tireless efforts of our Goddard workforce."

An OSAM-1 independent review estimated development of the mission would cost \$1.6 billion, a 200 percent increase since its inception. Originally targeted to launch in 2020, OSAM-1 was years behind schedule.

Congress provided \$227 million for OSAM-1 in the 2024 fiscal year budget and had a 2026 target launch for the spacecraft.

In the letter, NASA said any plan for a 2026 launch would involve risks not normally taken for a project this expensive. To execute the mission, NASA would have had to treat OSAM-1 as a Class D mission according to the letter, which normally represents a "lower priority mission with medium to low complexity."

The cost to launch the proposed mission would be \$353 million as of Oct. 1, while the shut down costs are \$29 million, according to the letter.

One of the major dangers of the 2026

See GODDARD Page A2

## Council Sets Special Election Dates

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's County Council Media

[On December 10] the Prince George's County Council set dates for special elections to fill vacancies in the Office of the County Executive and in Council District 5. The special primary election will be Tuesday, March 4, 2025, and the special general election will be Tuesday, May 27, 2025. The date by which a certificate of candidacy must be filed with the Board of Elections is Friday, December 20, 2024.

The special election will be conducted by mail with drop boxes available. District 5 voters will vote for a Council represen-

tative and County Executive on the same ballot.

Council Chair Jolene Ivey (At-Large) and Council Member Calvin Hawkins (At-Large) recused themselves from today's meeting due to their County Executive candidacies.

The vacancy in the County Executive's Office occurred when U.S. Senator-elect Angela Alsobrooks resigned as County Executive on December 2, and the vacancy in Council District 5 happened when Council Chair Jolene Ivey was sworn in as an At-Large Council Member on December 5.

## Public School Athletic Field Reservations Migrating to M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County

By PRESS OFFICER  
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Dec. 10, 2024)—The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is happy to announce the migration of athletic field reservations from Prince George's County Public Schools to [pgparks.com/fields](http://pgparks.com/fields). The one-stop shop will offer a convenient, 24/7 online booking system for individuals, sports teams, and organizations to secure time on the county's top-quality artificial turf fields. To streamline the process, the Department has entered into a joint agreement with the Public Schools for the construction and operation of athletic field permitting.

The permitting process features an intuitive interface that allows users to easily check field availability, make reservations, and manage bookings in a few simple steps. Whether you are booking an athletic field for a youth league or organizing a community event, the platform is designed to meet the needs of all types of users.

**Key Features of the Reservation System:**

- Real-Time Availability: View open time slots and request fields
- Easy Online Process: Make reservation requests from any device, anytime
- Flexible Payment Options: Secure online payment for all reservations
- User Accounts: Track your bookings, receive reminders, and manage payments
- Field Information: Access de-

tails on field capacity, bathroom type, and sport

"We are glad to offer this new, accessible way for people to reserve public school athletic fields," said Bill Tyler, Director of the Department of Recreation in Prince George's County. "Our goal is to make the booking process as seamless and efficient as possible, and we believe this migration will greatly enhance the experience for sports teams, event organizers, and community members."

Reservations will be able to be made on January 6, 2025, but users can visit [pgparks.com/fields](http://pgparks.com/fields) today to explore the system.

*With over 29,000 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 Prince George's County residents and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. The Department's Formula 2040 Plan establishes a framework that will ensure 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](http://www.pgparks.com).*

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Staying up to date with vaccinations to prevent and reduce the severity of new strains of the virus is the best way to protect ourselves from falling seriously ill.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

## In & Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

### Happy Anniversary, Jerry & Jean

It all began in August 1941, at the five-and-dime in Lincoln, Nebraska. Jean was a clerk and Jerry a shopper, and quite impressed with her. He asked for a date. But she was 17 and said she had to get permission from her folks. Jerry was a 21-year-old sailor, on leave from the USS San Francisco.

Four months later, on December 7, 1941, the San Francisco was anchored in balmy Pearl Harbor. Jerry had spent the evening with friends in Honolulu but, early in the morning, a frenzied announcement came: "All sailors report to their ships!" As Jerry and friends piled into his 1932 Graham-Paige roadster, they saw billowing black smoke and heard bombs exploding. At the base, they dashed from the car and boarded. Jerry never saw that car again.

Around them, bombs were falling, ships were sinking. But the San Francisco made it through the bombardment. On December 8, 1941, the day after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt delivered his "Day of Infamy" speech, Congress declared war, and the United States entered World War II.

Over the next four years, loving letters traveled back and forth between Nebraska and the Pacific. And so, on December 23, 1942, Gerald August Glaubitz and Jean Loree Quapp were married at the American Lutheran Church in Lincoln, Nebraska.

That was 82 years ago this week.

Morningsiders—and all who knew and loved the mayor and his family—might want to remember their anniversary: December 23.

In August 1947 the Glaubitz Family moved to 507 Maple Road in Morningside, and Jerry went on to become one of the longest-serving mayors ever in Maryland.

Jerry died April 26, 2005. Jean died March 19, 2014.

### Town of Morningside

Stop sign cameras will soon be added, including two at Beauford & Marianne, one at Pine Grove & Maple, and more.

The Town had a Staff holiday on De-

ember 8, with lunch at Dave & Busters.

The Morningside Police have been working hard and have been awarded a unit citation.

My grandson David McHale has been in town from Denver, staying with me. I thought I should introduce him to a small town. Karen, Morningside's Clerk/Treasurer, welcomed us and started talking news when one of the Council Members came in, then the Police Chief and then the Fire Chief. They all had something to say.

David has seen how a small town operates—he's seen the best. He'll remember Morningside.

A home at 4700 Pickett Court, in Morningside, just sold for \$180,000.

### Southern Md. Hospital Chaplain honored

Father Jeffrey Samaha, longtime chaplain at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center in Clinton, has been presented the John Cardinal McCloskey Award from Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md., for his 46 years as a hospital chaplain.

Father Jeffrey, 72, is currently in residence at Holy Spirit Parish in Forestville. A native of Denver and son of the late Dr. Francis Samaha, Father grew up in Camp Springs, attended St. John the Evangelist School in Clinton, St. John's College High School in Washington, and Mount St. Mary's Seminary in Emmitsburg.

Now, on a typical day at the hospital, Father might serve 25 to 30 patients and their families. "It's my home away from home," he says. After receiving the award, Father Samaha said his greatest blessing in health-care ministry is "being able to bring Jesus to the sick, and to see Jesus in the sick..."

### Neighbors & other good people

Theresa O'Connell, longtime resident of Camp Springs, died November 29. I'll run her interesting obituary in next week's column.

My granddaughter Sarah McHale is graduating from the University of Mary-

land Baltimore County (UMBC) this month as a dance major. I attended the Fall Dance Showcase, for which she choreographed "Intrusive Daydreams" and danced in "Palaistes." Both beautiful. Sarah is the daughter of my son John and his wife Michelle.

I went recently with family to Franklins Restaurant and General Store in Hyattsville. There is still nothing else like it. It advertises "Serves happy hour food · Serves great cocktails · Doesn't accept reservations." I love it.

### McNamara celebrates its 60th

In 1962 the Holy Cross Brothers established Bishop McNamara High School, a boys' school in Forestville, at a time when desegregation of schools was an issue. But they simply created a high school for boys. In 1992 they opened the doors to girls.

Now they are celebrating their 60th anniversary. My sons Mike and Brian graduated from McNamara, and last year, great-granddaughter Mary. Her brother Wesley is a junior there now. And is on the Archery Team.

Happy 60th, McNamara! And many, many more.

### Changing landscape

Beneath the Lincoln Memorial, in Washington, workers are carving out a multimillion-dollar visitor area with amenities focused on President Lincoln's legacy.

McDonald's, corner of Allentown and Suitland roads, looks to be almost ready to open—as soon as the grounds are shaped up.

Southern Style Chicken & Waffle is open at 6711 Marlboro Pike in District Heights. It advertises: "Casual, fast-food spot serving up all-you-can-eat chicken and waffles plus cheeseburgers, mac 'n' cheese, and banana pudding." Give it a try and let me know.

A home at 4605 Eaton Drive, in Suitland, recently sold for \$381,000.

See MORNINGSIDE Page A5

## Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### MERRY FITNESS BOOT CAMP

Come and burn some of those holiday calories Monday, December 30, 2024, from 8:30 a.m.–Noon at Southern Area Aquatics and Recreation Complex, 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. This boot camp consists of structured group exercises such as cardio, strength training, and agility drills which will challenge you both physically and mentally, while helping to achieve your 2025 fitness goals. A light lunch, good music and fun times provided. FEE: \$12(R); \$16(NR) Parks Direct: 17511-175A.

### FOOD PANTRIES IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

Food pantries and distribution centers in Prince George's County administer several assistance programs. The locations may have meals, free food, gift baskets and items such as clothing available to the low-income seniors and disabled in the community. Resources offered by these centers can range from groceries and boxes of food through limited amounts of financial help for bills, housing, basic needs such as diapers or baby formula.

Anything noted above would of course be in addition to helping needy families by providing free or low-cost food, meals, and perishable items. The goal is to prevent hunger in the region. Some of the food pantries in the area are Bethel House, 6810 Floral Park Road, Brandywine, Maryland, 20613. Telephone: 301-372-1700. Fresh fruits and vegetables can be provided along with snacks for students in Prince George's County.

FISH of Greater Baden, PO Box 858, Bowie, Marland, 20718. Main phone: 301-262-8479. The disabled and elderly can receive a Meals on Wheels service or transportation. Free groceries and Christmas food baskets as well as gifts are also available.

Bowie Pantry and Emergency Aid Fund, 3120 Belair Drive, Bowie, Maryland, 20715. Telephone: 301-262-6765. Emergency food is provided. Other support may help pay bills, offer grocery and prescription vouchers, shelter, and other services for the low income and people facing a hardship.

Jericho Baptist Church Food Pantry, 8501 Jericho City Drive, Landover, Maryland 20785, phone 301-333-0500. Groceries, personal hygiene items, clothing, and more is available in Prince George's. Many other pantries operate in the region. For more details, call 410-737-8282. Callers can also learn about Meals on Wheels for senior citizens or Christmas and Thanksgiving programs.

Greater Refuge Ministries Food Pantry, 9512 Piscataway Road, Clinton, Maryland, 20735. Phone: 866-515-1317.

The First New Horizon Baptist Church, 9511 Piscataway Road, Clinton, Maryland, 20735. Telephone: 301-856-9177. Free meals, including delivery to the homebound, can be arranged.

Beltway Church of Christ, 6000 Davis Boulevard, Camp Springs, Maryland, 20746. Dial the church at 301-423-2320 for hours.

### FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

Drive through a spectacular trail that perfectly matches your car radio playing the Christmas favorites until January 1, 2025,

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, and \$15 at the gate.

### CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Happy Birthday to Taylar Terry, Shawnee Hendricks, Nadia Prah, Anthony Bell, Elvin Falby, Valentine Grant, II, Somto Mbakwe, Doris Mackall, Lily Jalloh, John Stahl, Alaya Bell, Jah-maiyah Dorsett, Elijah Kerrick, Carolyn, Donald Hill, B. Kent Mauldin, Theodore (Ted) Mosley, Carol Hughes, Juliette Adaku Onyiba Mbakwe, Iyana Rojas, Keinel Peralta, Ikechi (Ike), Latsha Bell, Betty Rivers, Dr. Joelle Robinson Oghogho, Wendell Wallace, Luz Knight, Joanne Quarm who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in December.

### WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Ronald and Dr. Sandra Jones, Dr. Francis and Agatha Nicol, Ikechi (Ike) and Chidinma (Chidi) Mbakwe who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating wedding anniversaries in December.

### THE METROPOLITAN FOLLIES

The Metropolitan Follies: A Holiday Revue! is a revamped 30-minute Broadway-style show that 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 a season to laugh, sing, and spread joy together. The address is 150 National Plaza, National Harbor, Maryland. Visit website: <https://metropolitanarts.org/>.

### SUBURBAN MARYLAND SPRING HOME SHOW

The Suburban Maryland Spring Home Show will be held at Show Place Arena, Saturday January 11, 2025, from 10 a.m.–8 p.m. and Sunday, January 12, 2025, from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Address is 14900 Pennsylvania Avenue, Upper Marlboro, Maryland. The Home Show is for everything in and around your home. Sponsored by American Consumer Shows. The event features a wide selection of home improvement professionals in a fun, interactive environment. After meeting with and comparing our expert exhibitors, we know you will be inspired and motivated to start planning with confidence. More importantly, we want you to be excited for all the fantastic possibilities that come with your project. Get your free passes on the show's website: [www.mdhome-shows-sp.com](http://www.mdhome-shows-sp.com). Visit the website for the latest information.

"WISHING EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS"

## Goddard from A1

plan, according to the letter, was a reduction in testing. With the new plan, there would be less testing on the overall system, on the launch site and on some of the systems within the spacecraft.

"The project replanned OSAM-1 to adopt a 'Class D-like' risk posture typically reserved for smallsats and lower value, high risk tolerant assets—not a \$2 billion spacecraft," the letter said.

Despite OSAM-1 ending prematurely, NASA emphasized to the Maryland delegation that it sees Goddard as vital.

Goddard is home to the Nancy Grace Roman telescope, the Atmosphere Observing System mission and plays an important role in managing the Near Space Network, which provides communications services to missions within one million miles of earth, including the International Space Station.

Despite their disappointment, the Democratic lawmakers said they were committed to supporting contributions to space exploration coming out of Goddard.

"We strongly disagree with NASA's decision and are deeply disappointed with their moving forward, despite clear Congressional opposition," the lawmakers said. "Together, we will be fighting to secure critical funding for Goddard and Maryland's major future programs."

## Around the County

### Holiday Events for the Whole Family Announced by M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County

RIVERDALE, Md. (Dec. 11, 2024)—The M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is excited to announce a host of festive holiday events, perfect for residents of all ages to enjoy. These are designed to bring the community together and create lasting memories as we celebrate the season. From holiday light displays to concerts and family-friendly activities, the Department has planned a variety of offerings to bring joy and cheer in December. Just a few include:

**Now—January 1—Winter Festival of Lights, Watkins Regional Park**—Enjoy a dazzling display of 2.5 million holiday lights throughout the park from the warmth of your car, or on a tractor-pulled hayride.

**Dec. 20—Yule Spy, Tucker Rd Community Center**—Channel your inner spy at a secret intelligence themed holiday party. Dress in semi-formal attire and step into a Bond-style world with a festive twist.

**Dec. 20–21—In The Water Basketball Showcase, Show Place Arena**—This two-day event brings some of the best coaches, players and fans from the DMV under one roof for highly competitive basketball. Student/Senior discounts and family packs are available.

**Dec. 21—Sylver Logan Sharp: Home for the Holidays, Publick Playhouse**—Enjoy a performance from former lead singer of legendary group CHIC, as she blends soulful holiday classics with her unique flair.

"The Department is committed to offering activities that help build community and provide a fun, safe environment for families to enjoy. We invite residents and visitors to join us for these wonderful holiday events," states Bill Tyler, Director of M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County.

The Department's events are a great way to bring the community together, creating a festive atmosphere and sense of connection during the holiday season. Several are free, though some do require pre-registration—so patrons are encouraged to sign up early to secure admission. For more information on these and many other holiday offerings, visit [www.pgparcs.com](http://www.pgparcs.com).

### Southern Maryland National Heritage Area Awarded Grant for Groundbreaking Research on African American Heritage

HUGHESVILLE, Md. (Dec. 12, 2024)—The Southern Maryland National Heritage Area is pleased to announce a \$58,000 grant from the Maryland Historical Trust's FY 2025 Historic Preservation Non-Capital Grant Program. This funding will support comprehensive research and documentation of African American historic resources throughout Southern Maryland. The grant will be matched by the National Heritage Area dollar for dollar, bringing the total project funding to \$116,000.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Maryland Historical Trust for this funding, which will shine a light on the rich and diverse history of African Americans in Southern Maryland," said Lucille Walker, executive director of the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area. "This groundbreaking project marks Maryland's first regional survey of African American heritage sites and will help preserve and honor vital stories across Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, and Southern Prince George's counties."

This project will identify, inventory, and assess the significance of African American historic sites, buildings, and associated histories throughout Southern Maryland. The project's findings will be presented publicly in 2026, making them available for educational materials, academic and genealogical research, and other purposes throughout the state and nation. The study will lay the groundwork for future National Register nominations.

To learn more about the Maryland Historical Trust Preservation Grant Program, visit <https://mdhistoricaltrust.wordpress.com/>. It is important to note that funding for this grant opportunity is made possible through the Maryland Heritage Area Program.

*Launched in 2023, the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area represents Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's and southern Prince George's counties with a mission to enhance the region through heritage tourism, cultural and natural resource conservation, and educational opportunities. To learn more, visit our website: <https://destinationsouthernmaryland.com/>.*

# COMMUNITY

## Free Holiday LYFT Rides Offered Throughout Greater Washington to Prevent Drunk Driving

*Over a third of U.S. traffic deaths during Christmas and New Year's Involve Drunk Drivers*

By PRESS OFFICER  
Washington Regional Alcohol Program

TYSONS, Va. (Dec. 9, 2024)—Preparing to combat that time of year when according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, well over a third (38% Christmas; 37% New Year's Day—NHTSA 2022) of U.S. traffic deaths involve drunk drivers, a local nonprofit organization announced today that free safe rides will be offered to would-be drunk drivers throughout the Washington-metropolitan area during this holiday season.

Offered by the nonprofit Washington Regional Alcohol Program (WRAP), the 2024 Holiday SoberRide® program will be in operation nightly from 10 p.m. until 4 a.m. from **Friday, December 13, 2024 until Wednesday, January 1, 2025** as a way to keep local roads safe from impaired drivers during this traditionally high-risk holiday period.

Each evening during this six-hour period, area residents ages 21 and older celebrating with alcohol may download the Lyft app to their phones then enter the SoberRide® code in the app's 'Payment' tab (under the 'Add Lyft Pass' option) to receive their no-cost (up to \$15) safe transportation home. WRAP's separate 2024 Holiday SoberRide® promo codes will be posted at 9 p.m. on December 13, 20 and 31 on [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

"Over a third of all U.S. traffic fatalities during Christmas and New Year's in 2022 involved drunk drivers according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration," said Kurt Erickson, WRAP's President.

Last New Year's alone, over 800 (831) persons in the Washington-metropolitan area used the free safe ride service rather than possibly driving home impaired. The charity also offers its SoberRide® program on St. Patrick's Day, Cinco de Mayo, Independence Day and Halloween.

"Lyft is dedicated to providing access to reliable and responsible rides, and we're proud to partner with programs like WRAP to offer Lyft as an alternative to impaired driving," said Kamillah Wood, Director of Public Policy for Community Safety at Lyft. "Through our Roadway Safety Program and our partnerships with the public, we hope to empower our community with the tools to protect themselves and those around them this holiday season."

SoberRide® is offered throughout Lyft's Washington D.C. coverage area which includes all or parts of: the District of Columbia; the Maryland counties of Montgomery and Prince George's and towns therein plus the cities of Bowie, College Park, District Heights, Gaithersburg, Glenarden, Greenbelt, Hyattsville, Laurel, Mount Ranier, New Carrollton, Rockville, Seat Pleasant and Takoma Park; and the Northern Virginia counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William and towns therein plus the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park.

Sponsors of WRAP's 2024 Holiday SoberRide® campaign include 395 Express Lanes, Anheuser-Busch, Beer Institute, Brown-Forman, Constellation Brands, Diageo, District of Columbia Association of Beverage Alcohol Wholesalers, Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility, Giant Food, Glory Days Grill, HEINEKEN, Lyft, Molson Coors Beverage Company, New Belgium Brewing, Restaurant Association Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Area New Automobile Dealers Association. WRAP's 2024 Public Partner SoberRide® Sponsors include the District of Columbia Highway Safety Office, Maryland Highway Safety Office/Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration and Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles.

Since 1991, WRAP's SoberRide® program has provided 91,504 free safe rides home to would-be drunk drivers in the Greater Washington area.

Founded in 1982, the nonprofit [501(c)(3)] Washington Regional Program (WRAP) is an award-winning public-private partnership working to prevent drunk driving and underage drinking in the Washington-metropolitan area. Through public education, innovative health education programs and advocacy, WRAP is credited with helping to keep the annual percentage of metro-Washington traffic deaths involving alcohol-impaired driving historically lower than the national average. WRAP, however, may best be known to area residents via the organization's popular free safe ride service to prevent drunk driving, SoberRide®.

More information about WRAP's SoberRide® initiative can be found at [www.SoberRide.com](http://www.SoberRide.com).

## Maryland Department of Health Celebrates Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities 20th Anniversary at Health Equity Conference

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland Department of Health

BALTIMORE (Dec. 10, 2024)—The Maryland Department of Health marked the 20th anniversary of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities at its annual health equity conference held today at Morgan State University in Baltimore, MD.

This year's conference highlighted the Office's commitment to health equity while emphasizing the need to address the social and systemic inequities that impact the health and well-being of individuals and communities in Maryland.

The Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities was established in 2004 to address social determinants of health, reduce health disparities, and promote health equity using resources from the Maryland Department of Health. This office is tasked with collecting, compiling, and analyzing data on race and ethnicity to enhance health outcomes. Additionally, it strives to build strong public and private partnerships within the community to advocate for health equity and education.

Conference attendees included hospital administrators and staff, health organizations, academic institutions, community advocates, and members of the public. The conference featured vendor exhibits and topical programming, including health equity and criminal justice, meeting health care needs of women and female presenting persons, the economic aspects of health equity, and more.

For more information about the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities, visit [health.maryland.gov/mhhd](http://health.maryland.gov/mhhd).



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Health Equity Visionary Award honoree Shirley Nathan-Pulliam (left) addresses the audience alongside Camille Blake Fall, Director of the Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities

*The Maryland Department of Health is dedicated to protecting and improving the health and safety of all Marylanders through disease prevention, access to care, quality management and community engagement.*

## MGM National Harbor Celebrates Landmark Eighth Year

By PRESS OFFICER  
MGM National Harbor

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md., (Dec. 12, 2024)—MGM National Harbor, the DMV's first fully-integrated resort experience, is celebrating the completion of its eighth year in business and is reaffirming its commitment to making a difference in the lives of its employees, guests and communities through job creation, workforce development and support for community organizations and local non-profits.

"We have always been focused on positively impacting the lives of our neighbors, team members and guests and it is remarkable to reflect on the past eight years and the people who have been part of our journey," said Melonie Johnson, MGM National Harbor President & COO. "I couldn't be prouder of the MGM National Harbor family who have grown with us and now have new skills, new opportunities for advancement and a promising career path ahead."

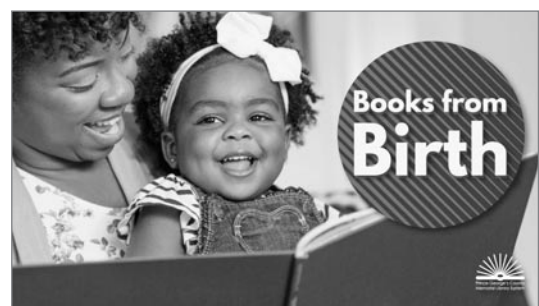
Highlights of MGM National Harbor's eight-year achievements [are presented at right.]

*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. For more information, visit [mgmnationalharbor.com](http://mgmnationalharbor.com) or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.*



### Milestone from A1

These bundles, intended for the families of newborn babies, are a gesture of both celebration and gratitude for the shared achievement of reaching so many young minds in Prince George's County. The bundles include items to help families get a jump start into early literacy such as a bilingual board book, an egg shaker, a finger puppet, information on local early childhood education, and more.

Charlene Lopez, the coordinator of Lactation Services and Child Birth Education for the hospital, helped solidify the current relationship with PGCMLS and has her own personal experiences with the life changing potential of early literacy.

Having a child who is neurodivergent, she "realized that early literacy actually made [Lopez's daughter] do better in school." Having access to books as a child helped Lopez's daughter develop her own unique skills that helped her find her own way to excel in school.

Joyously, Lopez shared: "and that daughter, who's dyslexic, just had a baby two weeks ago, and I was very happy to sign him up for Books From Birth."

Books From Birth, launched in July 2017, has become a cornerstone literacy initiative in the region. Currently, 16,912 Prince George's County residents are enrolled, and an impressive 19,042 children have graduated from the program. The Library receives financial support for the program from the Prince George's County Government, Maryland State Library Agency's Young Readers Matching Grant Program, and the PGCMLS Foundation.

A parent of a Books From Birth participant, who is also a public school reading teacher, recently shared: "I am proud to say that my son is a strong reader with a diverse range of interests, and he is currently scoring above his grade level in reading. This achievement is a testament to the early and continued exposure to the written word that programs like 'Books from Birth' provide."

In continued celebration, PGCMLS is hosting themed library events during the month of December to welcome young readers and their families into the larger, wondrous world of public libraries and literature.

*Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is the flagship program of The Dollywood Foundation. It reaches more children than any other early childhood book gifting program, and mails free, high-quality, age-appropriate books to children from birth until age*

*five, no matter their family's income.*

*The Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) helps customers discover and define opportunities that shape their lives. The Library serves the 967,000+ residents of Prince George's County, Maryland through 19 branch libraries, a*

*24/7 online library, the County Correctional Center Library, and pop-up services throughout the community. PGCMLS is the recipient of two Top Innovator Awards from the Urban Libraries Council (2023 - Democracy; 2021 - Workforce and Economic Development). Learn more at [pgcmls.info/about-us](http://pgcmls.info/about-us).*



PHOTO CREDIT PGCMLS  
(Far right) PGCMLS CEO Dr. Mark Winston and COO Megan Sutherland (second from right), along with Books From Birth program leads, visited the MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 3, 2024, to meet with organizational partners and leaders and present forty early literacy "baby bundles" for the institution's Newborn and Women's Center.

# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## Working to Close the Vaccine Gap Is a Collective Effort

It is no secret how devastating the COVID-19 pandemic has been for marginalized communities in this country. The National Urban League quantified this impact in the 2020 edition of our annual capstone report, the State of Black America.

As COVID-19 swept across the country, we sprang into action through combined efforts from our affiliate movement and public/private partnerships to save lives across the country. In 2021, we

launched All In, a joint effort with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to close the vaccination gap in communities of color and underserved neighborhoods with the help of our affiliates.

Even though we are past the peak of the pandemic, this is the stark reality of our present situation:

COVID-19 remains a severe health threat. Over 43,000 Americans have died from COVID-19 in

2024 alone—and as we enter the colder months, flu season, and holiday season, the risk of severe infections and hospitalizations will continue to rise.

We know that those with pre-existing conditions like COPD, high blood pressure, and obesity are at greater risk of falling seriously ill. People of color and marginalized communities are also affected by these conditions at a disproportionate rate. And beyond the risk of an acute COVID-19 infection, we cannot ignore the devastating toll of Long COVID, which has impacted roughly 18 million Americans. Long COVID can affect anyone, regardless of age and health status, and is linked to more than 200 symptoms, including brain fog, debilitating fatigue, and chronic pain.

Staying up to date with vaccinations to prevent and reduce the severity of new strains of the virus is the best way to protect ourselves from falling seriously ill. According to one study, the total COVID hospitalization rate is approximately 11 times higher in unvaccinated adults. At the same time, receiving an updated COVID-19 vaccine is the best way to fend off longer term symptoms—

studies show vaccination reduces an individual's risk of developing Long COVID by 70%.

The good news is that updated COVID-19 vaccines are available at pharmacies, doctor's offices, and health clinics across the country. For most Americans, the COVID-19 vaccine is free because private insurance and other programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program cover the full cost. Americans who don't have insurance can typically find no-cost options in their communities through local immunization programs. The Department of Health and Human Services also provides up to four free COVID-19 tests per household.

Increasing COVID-19 vaccination rates will require the work of all of us. The same concerted efforts to fight misinformation, direct people to resources, and keep people informed of ways to stay safe are just as important as they were at the beginning of this pandemic.

Let's do our part to keep ourselves safe and protect those who are most vulnerable this holiday season.

—December 11, 2024

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita, Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## Nikki Giovanni

When poet, essayist, scholar, and activist Nikki Giovanni passed away on December 9, the world lost a singular voice. Young readers especially adored the dozen books she created for children, including beloved works like the Caldecott Honor Book and Coretta Scott King Award-winning *Rosa*, illustrated by Bryan Collier. In a 2022 interview with the Washington Post, when asked what she believed the role of children's literature was, she answered: "Children's literature is the foundation of the rest of the literature that we do." She went on: "If children are hearing words and hearing poems and hearing stories as they grow up, they one, get used to it, but two, they use their imagination. They begin to wonder, well, where do I fit in that? And that's why it's so important to have children's stories of all of the children—not any one child, but all of the children, from all over the planet."

For decades, Nikki Giovanni's voice allowed readers and listeners to recognize their own stories and helped them see where they too might fit in.

In 1999, Children's Defense Fund was grateful when she joined then-First Lady Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, Secretary of Labor Alexis Herman, Dr. Maya Angelou, Dr. John Hope Franklin, Dr. Dorothy Height, U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove, Toni Morrison, Joyce Carol Oates, Walter Dean Myers, and more than 200 other guests for CDF's National Symposium on the Arts and Scholarship, which celebrated the dedication of the Langston Hughes Library at CDF Haley Farm. Haley Farm, CDF's center for training and spiritual renewal, is sited on grounds formerly owned by Roots author Alex Haley in Clinton, Tennessee. It is outside Knoxville, where Nikki Giovanni was born and

spent much of her childhood visiting and eventually living at her grandparents' home. She returned to Knoxville often in her work, including the poem "Knoxville, Tennessee," which described simple summer joys that would leave a child "...warm/all the time/not only when you go to bed/and sleep". She also returned to Knoxville memories in "Saturday Days," the essay she generously included in *Dream Me Home Safely: Writers on Growing Up in America*, a 2003 anthology celebrating CDF's 30th anniversary. That essay remains a beautiful, evocative description of Black childhood joy.

Her grandparents lived near Cal Johnson Park, built on land that had been purchased and then willed to the city by its namesake Black donor for the use of Black children, and in "Saturday Days" Nikki Giovanni described how much she loved going there the moment her grandmother agreed they were done with their careful weekly house-keeping routine ("I'm still not sure what it is about living rooms that makes black women crazy..."). She explained that a different segregated park had the only local swimming pool for Black children, "but we at CJP had the swings":

"I've always thought swinging should be an Olympic sport. I knew, in fact, when synchronized swimming became a 'sport' that double dutch would be next. I admire double dutch. Those ropes would pop and the girls would turn faster and faster and the girls running in and jumping out

would dance a dance that would make ballet dancers weep from envy...I have no sense of rhythm. All my rhythm is in my head. But I could swing.

"Swinging took courage and patience and balance and the most difficult maneuver is the dismount. I grew up with iron swings that were set in concrete; none of those recycled things for me. The swing was hard black rubber connected to links of iron. These were swings to take you to the moon. The object, for those who do not swing, was to stand in the seat and pump up. You pumped up as high as you could go. You were actually trying to reach parity with the top bar. When you got 'even with the bars' (to which I ascribed 10 points) you 'kicked out and sat down in the seat' (10 points). If you missed the seat you could still hold on but it looked really ragged. You then pumped once or twice more to show control (10 points) then (and this was the final crucial ending) you 'bailed out.' You got 20 points for a perfect landing. If you fell or tumbled over you lost points accordingly. Sort of like a poor girl's parallel bars. The dismount was everything! And I would practice and practice. Pump and jump; pump and jump. Then Grandmother would call me to lunch. But," Nikki Giovanni concluded, "I was ready. I knew I was ready. I was prepared to go for the gold medal. All I needed was a chance."

—December 13, 2024

## Ben Jealous

Executive Director, Sierra Club



## There is No Moral Case for Fossil Fuels. The Bible Even Tells Us the Opposite.

Reflections on God are common right now.

We are about to enter a new year. Many of us are getting ready to celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah. With 2024 "virtually certain" to be the hottest year on record, some may look at the symptoms of the climate crisis—the extreme heat, the fires and floods, the climate-charged cyclones—as signs of God's wrath.

Whether you believe in the Bible, the Torah, the Quran, or are an atheist, we can all agree there is a moral imperative to address the climate crisis. After all, it kills people and destroys lives. The cause of the climate crisis—the burning of fossil fuels—is also responsible for plenty of death and destruction.

Donald Trump's choice for Secretary of Energy Chris Wright and one of his picks to co-lead the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Vivek Ramaswamy seem to have a different mes-

sage. It is one that turns the concept of morality on its head and distorts reality.

Wright has invented a warped "moral case" for the rampant extraction and burning of fossil fuels. Wright portrays fossil fuels like oil, gas, and coal as virtuous. He has even called goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions "perverse."

What he leaves out is that the current and future American economy is powered by clean energy. The clean energy revolution is behind the rebirth of American manufacturing and is lifting people out of poverty. The jobs created pay well and are safer. And consumers are saving money with renewable clean energy sources like solar and wind because they are now both more resilient and less expensive to produce than fossil fuels.

And if we want to talk poverty, what about the countless families that have been bankrupted and sent into poverty be-

cause of pollution, fossil fuel leaks and explosions, and unbearable health care costs to treat the diseases fossil fuels cause? Or the extreme weather disasters we see ravaging communities with increasing frequency and intensity?

Ramaswamy said last year, "The reality is more people are dying of bad climate change policies than they are of actual climate change."

It is a claim utterly backwards, even Orwellian. The New York Times fact checked the statement and correctly rated it "false" with "no evidence to support this assertion."

To pretend there is a moral case for fossil fuels requires more than mental gymnastics. It requires willful dishonesty.

But let us look to scripture. It is as good a place as any to start, since the Bible and its lessons help guide so many people's idea of morality. In it, God gave us a formula that certainly seems to

be coming into focus today.

In the Book of Genesis, God charged people with being stewards of the Garden of Eden. He told Adam and Eve to cultivate and care for it. This early commandment recognizes nature—also known as God's creation—as something to be grateful for and respected.

Going back all the way to the beginning, God gave us the means to our own salvation or our demise. He gave us free will—along with His many commandments was the free will to choose whether or not to follow them. The other thing God gave us was fire.

Ultimately fire became electrical power. But it was the tool that allowed humanity to thrive; to give us light in the dark and warmth in the cold.

So, the energy we needed for warmth, light, and eventually transportation and more, came from burning things. And what people burned were the things that were most readily accessible and easy to harness—starting with wood, then oils from animals and trees, then coal, then petroleum, and so on. Over the eons, as the number of people increased exponentially, the accessibility of these finite sources began to shrink exponentially. Whale species were hunted to the brink of extinction for their oil. Island nations and huge swaths of the continents were deforested.

For a long time, we thought the answer was to replenish the finite things to burn as best we

could. But along the way, we realized God gave us infinite sources of energy that had always been abundant in the Garden: the sun and the wind. We realized the terrible cost of burning through the finite sources was not simply running out of things to burn, it was extreme weather and our planet becoming ever less hospitable due to warming. The signs all pointed to the need to make the switch from the finite sources of energy—and the destruction they cause—to the infinite sources, which are kinder both to people and to all of God's creation. We can power our world and tend the Garden at the same time.

In the Bible, when humans finally understood the message and acted in ways God wanted, flood waters receded; fires stopped. So if saving lives, improving health outcomes, and expanding economic opportunity through more and better jobs are not enough of a moral calling to prioritize the clean energy transition, look to the Bible and listen to God. His message seems to be pretty clear.

—December 7, 2024

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

## The Prince George's Post

The Prince George's Post  
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Contents © 2024, The Prince George's Post

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Prince George's County, Md. Member National Newspaper Publishers Association, and the Maryland, Delaware, District of Columbia Press Association. The Prince George's Post (ISSN 10532226) is published every Thursday by the New Prince George's Post Inc., 15207 Marlboro Pike, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20772-3151. Subscription rate: 25 cents per single copy; \$15 per year; \$7.50 senior citizens and students; out of county add \$1; out of state add \$2. Periodical postage paid at Southern Md. 20790. Postmaster, send address changes to Prince George's Post, P.O. Box 1001, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20773.

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### About How Medicare Premiums Are Determined

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

**Dear Rusty:** Please explain the Medicare premium increase based on income reported to Social Security? For those of us that waited to draw Social Security until age 70, and who are still working—drawing a salary, and planning to retire at age 75 after RMDs kick in at age 73—how do we make sure that Social Security reports our earnings accurately, so we don't wind up with increased Medicare premiums? Why not charge increased Medicare premiums when we are younger, instead of waiting to sneak up on us when we are older?  
**Signed: Confused about Medicare Premiums**

**Dear Confused:** I believe you are referring to Medicare's "Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount," or "IRMAA." IRMAA increases the Medicare Part B (and Part D) premium amounts for those whose combined income from all sources exceeds specified levels for their IRS tax filing status. Social Security (and Medicare) get your earnings information from the IRS and use your reported IRS income (on your income tax return) to calculate your Medicare premium each year. But there is a twist—they use your reported combined income (also known as your "MAGI" or "Modified Adjusted Gross Income") from 2 years ago to determine your current year's Medicare premium. For example, they will use your 2023 MAGI to determine your 2025 Medicare Part B premium (and your Part D premium if you have Part D). So, if your income reported to the IRS on your tax return in 2023 is correct, Social Security will use that amount to determine next year's Medicare premium.

IRMAA uses a sliding income scale to determine your Medicare premium. If you filed your 2022 taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income for that year was \$206,000 or less, for 2024 you are paying the standard Medicare Part B premium of \$174.50, and there is no additional amount added to your Part D premium. But if your MAGI as a married couple was over \$206,000 your Medicare premiums will be more—e.g., MAGI up to \$258,000 makes your Part B premium \$244.60 and results in a Part D supplement of \$12.90 per month. And so on—as your MAGI further increases, so will your Medicare premiums until you reach the maximum. MAGI over \$750,000 means a Part B premium of \$594/month and a Part D supplement of \$81/month. Thus, Medicare premiums are "means-tested" (those with higher income pay higher premiums).

A word about "MAGI"—MAGI starts with your Adjusted Gross Income on your tax return, to which is added any non-taxable interest you may have had, and 50% of the Social Security benefits (if any) you received during the income tax year. The total of those three amounts is your MAGI, from which your Medicare premium is determined for the forthcoming year.

So, if your 2023 combined income (your "MAGI") as a couple was under \$206,000 you will pay the standard 2025 Medicare premium which, for Part B, will be \$185/month. If your 2023 MAGI as a married couple is more than \$206,000, you will pay higher Medicare premiums in 2025 due to IRMAA.

Why not pay higher Medicare premiums when we are younger? Well, that's because IRMAA only applies when you are enrolled in Medicare, and your premium relates to your income while receiving Medicare benefits.

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

The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://www.amac.us) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation ([www.AmacFoundation.org](http://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](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).

## Morningside from A2

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Timothy Flaherty and former Morningside Mayor Irving Robinson, Dec. 22; Paul Ford and Russ Kyser, Dec. 23; Kendall Lanehart and Ken Miller, Dec. 24; Jean Nichols, Jason Tomlinson, Samantha Bowie and Christine Mucker, Dec. 25; Jeffrey Norton and Michael Nichols, Dec. 26; Virginia Simms, Carolyn Jeffcoat and Kirra Starr Mears, Dec. 27; Christopher Garris, Anne Lucas, Patsy Anderson and my granddaughter Samantha McHale, Dec. 28.

Happy Anniversary to Gerald and Arvilla Atkinson, their 70th, on Dec. 27; and Nola and Bruce Thomas, their 47th on Dec. 27.

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## Project Opportunity: Free Entrepreneur Training for Veterans

By PRESS OFFICER  
Project Opportunity

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Want to know more? Register for the Project Opportunity Prince George's Spring 2025 Orientation Session

which will be held on **Thursday, February 20, 2025** from 6:30–8:30 p.m. at Prince George's Community College Lanham Hall (Room 203), 301 Largo Road, Largo, Maryland [www.projectopportunity.com/class/registration](http://www.projectopportunity.com/class/registration)

Attendance at the Orientation Session is a mandatory step in our application process. If you are interested in this class but unable to attend you must contact Program Director

Joe Giordano,  
[joe.giordano@project-opportunity.com](mailto:joe.giordano@project-opportunity.com)

Classes begin Thursday March 13, 2025. Project Opportunity is an intensive curriculum based 10-week cohort program. The Spring 2025 program will meet every Thursday, March 13–May 15, 2025, from 6:30–9:30 p.m. at Prince George's Community College, Lanham Hall, Room 203. Sponsored By PenFed Found-

ation this program is free to all veterans. The curriculum and material are facilitated by small business professionals and subject matter experts. The program concludes with a formal business pitch and Graduation Ceremony on Wednesday May 22, 2025.

Thank You to Our Class Sponsor:



## Acting Prince George's County Executive Tara H. Jackson and Prince George's County Council Issue Joint Statement on Senior Property Tax Credit Bill

By PRESS OFFICER  
Prince George's County Maryland

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 10, 2024)—Acting Prince George's County Executive Tara H. Jackson and the Prince George's County Council are pleased to announce a collaborative effort to refine and improve upon the goals outlined in the Senior Property Tax Credit Bill passed by Council in November. While the bill, CB-007-2024 (DR2), reflects important intentions, the Acting County Executive and Council collectively recognize the need for revisions to ensure its clarity, fiscal responsibility, and ease of implementation.

To achieve this, the Acting County Ex-

ecutive and Legislative Branch will work together to draft a new bill that prioritizes:

- Clarity for applicants,
- Administrative feasibility,
- Fiscal responsibility, and
- Equitable access for our senior residents who need assistance the most.

This partnership will result in improved legislation to be introduced at the beginning of the 2025 Council legislative session. As part of this process, the Acting County Executive and Legislative Branch will submit a Joint Resolution to suspend CB-007-2024 (DR2) while finalizing the revised legislation.

Acting County Executive Jackson will neither sign nor veto CB-007-2024 (DR2),

allowing for this collaborative path forward.

This effort underscores a shared dedication to crafting solutions that best serve the residents of Prince George's County. The Acting County Executive and County Council remain committed to working together to ensure the well-being and support of our senior community.

Read the joint letter from the Acting County Executive and County Council at <https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/sites/default/files/media-document/Joint%20Letter%20-%20Senior%20Tax%20Credit%20Bill%20Update%20%28with%20signatures%29.pdf>.

## Governor Moore Announces Maryland Soft Landing Exchange Business Incubator and Accelerator Program Now Open

By PRESS OFFICER  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 9, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today announced that applications are being accepted for the Maryland Soft Landing Exchange Program, which allows Maryland companies to explore international markets at a reduced cost by connecting them with business incubators and accelerators abroad. The program, administered by the Maryland Department of Commerce, is designed to support companies who are ready to expand their existing export capabilities, and serves as an important enhancement to existing state export assistance.

"Maryland companies are some of the most exciting and innovative businesses in the world, and this terrific new program

will help them grow by connecting them to international partners and markets," said Gov. Moore. "Not only will this help those businesses, but it will boost Maryland's competitiveness by showing the world what we have to offer."

The program connects participants to a network of organizations in strategic markets around the world who will host the Maryland companies and provide access to facilities, resources, networking, advisors, and more. The list of partners, which is expected to expand in the coming months, includes:

- Cicada Innovations (Australia)
- EuroTechnologies (France)
- Guinness Enterprise Centre (Ireland)
- InnovationQuarter (Netherlands)
- Kanagawa Science Park (Japan)
- Plexal (United Kingdom)
- Shonan iPark (Japan)

Participating Maryland companies are also eligible to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 to help offset costs associated with this program. These funds can be used to cover travel, lodging, transportation, and the cost of participating in the partner program.

"The Maryland Soft Landing Exchange Program represents a new opportunity for Maryland companies to expand and grow," said Maryland Department of Commerce Secretary Kevin Anderson. "Maryland Commerce is excited to help these businesses connect with international clients and share their products, services, and innovations with the world."

Applications are open now. Additional details, including webinar registration and eligibility terms, are available through [commerce.maryland.gov](http://commerce.maryland.gov).

## MONEY

### Now Is the Time to Set Your Financial Resolutions for 2025

(StatePoint) January is a time for setting goals, new habits and fresh starts.

Here are five financial New Year's resolutions you can set for yourself, along with how a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professional can help you achieve them:

**Boost your financial IQ:** Financial literacy is critical to building wealth. It will help you break bad habits and make better choices. From managing debt to investing, a CFP® professional can educate you on potential strategies for reaching your goals. When you work together to execute those strategies, you'll do so with a clear understanding.

**Plan for the future:** Because of compound interest, the right time to get serious about your investments and



PHOTO SOURCE: © RIDOFANZ / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

savings is always as soon as possible. If you've delayed this goal, make 2025 the year to open or increase your retirement account contributions. Your CFP® professional can make recommendations for what type of accounts to open. They can also help you calculate how much you need to

contribute monthly to have the retirement you desire and to meet your other long-term goals.

**Reduce your tax burden:** It's not too early to begin planning for tax season. Work with your advisor to use tax-advantaged investments and deductions to keep more of your money next year.

**Review your insurance policies:** Figuring out whether you have the right types of insurance coverage in place and in the proper amounts can be tricky. Review your policies with your CFP® professional to better understand this important aspect of your overall financial plan.

**Make a budget:** Whether you're currently spending more than you earn or earning more than you spend, creating and adhering to a budget is the best way to get smart about your finances. If you're in a net deficit, you can look to your budget to identify where you can reasonably reduce expenses, or alternatively, boost your income. Your budget can also show where to direct any surplus.

You can find a CFP® professional by visiting [LetsMakeAPlan.org](http://LetsMakeAPlan.org).

This new year, let a financial advisor trained to examine every facet of your finances help you get your ducks in a row.

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Wed. Night Bible Study - 7:45 p.m.  
Elder Willie W. Duvall, Pastor

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## EarthTalk® Q&A Greener Dish Soap: Why Not?

By Isabella Sollazzo | December 4, 2024

**Dear EarthTalk:**  
*Are mainstream dish soaps really that bad for the planet? And if so, what are some greener alternatives?*  
—P. McGrath, Boulder, CO

Popular dish soaps often claim to easily tackle grease, leave dishes sparkling clean and uphold commitments to sustainability and safety. But these promises are often misleading. These products may deliver on cleaning power, but they often come at a high cost to human health, animal welfare and the environment. Many well-known dish soaps contain synthetic chemicals and additives that are harmful.

The main chemicals in dish soaps include Methylisothiazolinone, 4-dioxane, and fragrance and dye additives. Methylisothiazolinone is a synthetic preservative which inhibits the growth of bacteria and fungi, helping to give sponges a long useful life. The chemical is also a skin irritant for many and highly toxic in aquatic environments. 4-dioxane, though not intentionally added into dish soaps, is the byproduct of other chemical reactions. As a recognized groundwater pollutant, 4-dioxane is notoriously difficult to filter out during water treatment. The

lemony-fresh scent many associate with cleanliness comes from synthetic fragrances, which act as air and aquatic pollutants. Dyes, which create visual appeal, are persistent pollutants that can linger in the environment for decades, contaminating waterways.

The environmental harm of dish soap extends beyond usage to its production. The industry ranks as the fourth-largest contributor to toxic pollution, with weighty impacts on communities near production facilities. The factories emit high levels of harmful chemicals, worsening climate change and exposing local populations to increased cancer risks. The toxic footprint also extends along transportation routes, especially from South Carolina through Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

Luckily, there are several options that are better for the environment and individual health. Cleancult Liquid Dish Soap is made from plant bases and does not use animal testing. It cleans efficiently, is easy on sensitive skin, does not contain harmful chemical, and received an "A" environmental rating. Dr. Bronner's Pure Castile Liquid Soap, generally known as a camping dish soap, is another grade "A"

certified soap with strong Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles guiding production. It uses basic ingredients, designed to be safe in waterways. Koala EcoNatural Dish Soap is made without synthetic fragrances, using essential oils instead, and holds two toxic chemical-free certifications. These alternatives are available at a slightly higher price point, but are much worth the investment.

**CONTACTS:** The 9 Best Eco-Friendly Dish Soaps, <https://www.treehugger.com/best-eco-friendly-dish-soap-5115036>; Dish Soaps: The Good, The Bad, and The Toxic, <https://www.practiganic.com/2014/05/dish-soaps-good-bad-and-toxic.html>; The Dirty Secret of America's Clean Dishes, <https://www.propublica.org/article/the-dirty-secret-of-americas-clean-dishes/amp>.

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](mailto:question@earthtalk.org)

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