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Historic \$222,000 Donation From FedChoice FCU Boosts FedChoice Charitable Foundation

By PRESS OFFICER
FedChoice Charitable Foundation

LANHAM, Md. (Dec. 18, 2024)—The FedChoice Charitable Foundation (FCF) is thrilled to announce the largest donation in its history, a generous \$222,000 contribution from FedChoice Federal Credit Union (FedChoice). This landmark donation comes as FedChoice prepares to celebrate its 90th anniversary, marking nearly a century of service and commitment to the federal community.

Brett Noll, President/CEO of FedChoice Federal Credit Union, stated, "The success of our Foundation was made possible by our Credit Union Board of Directors and those who created the foundation back in 2017. There is an incredible sense of unity



PHOTO COURTESY FEDCHOICE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

See DONATION Page A2 FedChoice FCU Board celebrates with the FedChoice Charitable Foundation's team.

New Affordable Housing Project in Capitol Heights Begins Construction

By PRESS OFFICER
Department of Housing and Community Development

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 20, 2024)—The Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) is pleased to announce the beginning of construction for The Cassidy, a new multi-family affordable housing complex. This transformative project will provide critical housing opportunities to families earning at or below 60% of the area median income (AMI), helping to address the growing need for affordable housing within the County.

The Cassidy will be a 175-unit apartment community, located on a 13.1-acre site at 1200 Karen Boulevard in Capitol Heights. It will consist of three,

4-story apartment buildings and a one-story community building, with a mix of one-, two- and three-bedroom units. Seven units will be reserved for participants in the Prince George's County Fostering Youth Independence Initiative and 3 units reserved for families/individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

DHCD contributed \$1 million, \$50,000 in HOME-ARP funds and \$3.5 million in Housing Investment Trust Funds. The Housing Authority of Prince George's County (HAPGC) issued \$41.4 million in Multifam-

See PROJECT Page A2

'Hello Girl' From Maryland May Soon Win a Medal for her WWI Service

By ROBERT STEWART
Capital News Service

BRENTWOOD, Md. (Dec. 18, 2024)—Marie Edmee LeRoux has been buried at the Fort Lincoln Cemetery here for 79 years, but she may soon win a gold medal for her service in World War I.

LeRoux was one of 223 bilingual women deployed to France as telephone operators, often under combat conditions, as part of the U.S. Army Signal Corps. They were the country's first women soldiers, popularly known as the "Hello Girls."

They've been long overlooked for their service. But now the U.S. Congress has approved a special congressional gold medal as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for the coming year. The measure now goes to President Joe Biden for consideration.

"It's a story that's been forgotten and needs to be told," said LeRoux's granddaughter, Catherine Bourgin of McLean, VA. "With the passage of the Congressional gold medal, that's what I want."

Women like LeRoux braved German submarines on the transport to the war front and disease and bombardment to serve in the signal corps under the American Expeditionary Forces. Their service helped set a precedent



ROBERT STEWART/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Catherine Bourgin holds up a picture of a Hello Girl. Bourgin has a letter from 1936 that indicates her grandmother was the one posing for the picture.

for women's service in the U.S. military and influenced support for the 19th amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote.

General John Pershing requested that bilingual women operators deploy to France. They were more skilled and experienced at operating the new telephone systems of the time, and the AEF needed bilingual people to communicate with the French forces.

LeRoux had those skills. She was born in Montreal and grew up speaking

French and English before moving to the U.S. at age ten, according to Bourgin. She was a passionate singer but, according to Bourgin, LeRoux abandoned her music career to answer the call.

LeRoux traveled to France in 1918, operating the switchboards that connected military commanders with the front lines and their French counterparts. She stayed in France after the war to restart her music studies. When war threatened France again in 1939,

LeRoux fled the country with her four-year-old daughter in tow. She eventually came to live near family in Prince George's County.

She passed away in 1945 and was interred in an unmarked grave here, according to her granddaughter. She did not receive a military headstone because she was not considered a veteran.

Many women who served in the U.S. Army signal corps found out they weren't considered "soldiers" when they applied for benefits after the war. They received no veteran medical care and no federally funded rehabilitation training.

This was only remedied in 1977 when Congress acknowledged them as veterans, following decades of petitioning by Hello Girls like Merle Egan Anderson. Most had already passed away by then.

While Bourgin was researching her grandmother's history, she discovered LeRoux was a member of the Hello Girls. She also learned that a congressional commission had recommended these female veterans receive a Congressional Gold Medal collectively.

So, in 2023, Bourgin began working with others to help her grandmother and the other Hello Girls get that medal.

Bourgin refers to the advocacy group as the "Hello Girls Family," and she joined them to bring their story to Capitol Hill. Elizabeth Cobbs' 2017 book ["The Hello Girls] also helped reintroduce the women operators' war

contribution into the mainstream.

"The telephone," said Cobbs, "was the only way that they could rapidly communicate with troops who were facing mechanized onslaughts of the most destructive machinery ever devised by humans."

Women could operate the war switchboards faster than their male counterparts, she said. They couldn't even vote at the time, nor serve on juries in most states.

Chris Christopher led the advocacy charge.

As a former staffer on the World War I Centennial Commission that recommended in 2018 that the Hello Girls receive the award as part of the coun-

See 'HELLO GIRL' Page A3



ROBERT STEWART/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Chris Christopher stops for a picture after a wreath-laying ceremony at the World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Dec. 14, 2024.

Governor Moore Announces Historic \$129.5 Million in Support for Statewide Community Revitalization and Economic Development

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Dec. 18, 2024)—Governor Wes Moore today announced \$129.5 million in Fiscal Year 2025 awards to support seven state revitalization programs administered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development. The historic level of investment in county and municipal governments, community development organizations, and other community institutions and partners will

fund 304 projects and activities that directly support local revitalization goals in Maryland's disinvested communities.

"For Maryland to win the decade, we must transcend the status quo and continue our work to improve communities across the state," said Gov. Moore. "From creation of affordable housing and community space to improvements to streetscapes and infrastructure, vibrant, revitalized communities not only make Maryland a desirable home for all; they are the cornerstone for a better Mary-

land."

Awards through the seven programs will help support revitalization and redevelopment projects and activities, including: business expansion and retention; façade and streetscape improvements; homeownership and home rehabilitation incentives; commercial improvement programs; community facilities; mixed-use development, and demolition activities.

The Strategic Demolition Fund, a statewide program aimed at catalyzing activities that accel-

erate economic development and job production in existing Maryland communities, awarded \$10.7 million to 33 projects, including:

- Acquisition of a dilapidated Days Inn Hotel to be demolished and redeveloped into a 122-unit multi-family community (Baltimore County);
- Revitalization of the vacant building at 4145 Indian Head Highway to bring a new grocery store into the community (Charles County);
- Acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renova-

tion, reconstruction, site improvement, demolition and capital equipping of the Cheverly Hospital, to make way for a vibrant mixed-use community (Prince George's County);

- And completion of structural and exterior improvements to preserve the Henry Hotel, a local African American heritage site (Worcester County).

The Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative will help eliminate vacant and deteriorating properties in Baltimore City and

make way for green space, affordable and mixed-use housing, and new opportunities for businesses. The Baltimore Vacants Reinvestment Initiative awarded \$20 million to 37 projects, including:

- Revitalization of Reisterstown Road Plaza by transforming it into an inviting "Town Center" where community can shop, work, play and gather;
- Tenant improvements to tailor space for a new grocery store

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To Be Equal: Urban League Movement Has Been Stronger and More Effective in 2024 Than Ever Before

As we face the challenges of 2025 and beyond, we know that together we will endure.

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Maryland Public Libraries to Launch Third Annual Career Success Month

The theme of this year's programs is Upskill and Uplift the Future Workforce. Walter Simmons, President & CEO of Employ Prince George's, will speak on Jan. 21, 2025.

Business and Finance, Page A5

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Woods cleared to make room for new homes

I was very sad to see the woods adjacent to VFW 9619 bite the dust! All the trees cut down and piled up. I'll miss them.

I called Karen Rooker in Morningside to get details. She told me the lot is going to be residential—four new homes along Suitland Road and two along Randolph Road.

Years ago—as Zoning Chairman for the Skyline Citizens Association—I fought the commercial development of that lot. At least, it will apparently be housing, not commercial.

The lot is not in Morningside. So, it's in Skyline. But we in Skyline don't know anything about it. I don't remember a sign being posted.

Changing Landscape

Karen Rooker tells me that the 7-Eleven across from the Morningside VFD is closing at the end of December. Apparently it's had lots of problems.

A new era of childcare and family support began recently at Andrews when leaders and community members celebrated the groundbreaking of the new Child Development Center. It's scheduled for completion in 2026 and will create 80 new childcare provider positions,

Isaiah 58 Skate House, 3132 Branch Avenue in Temple Hills, has reopened. It's open seven days a week. For hours, etc., call 240-619-4746.

There's a new facility added this year, Proglistics/Amazon Distribution Center. It's right next to the Maryland State Police Barracks L at 3700 Forestville Rd. Proglistics is a Professional Warehouse and Logistics company. The two names are listed separately on opposite corners of the building.

A home at 4418 Ridgecrest Drive, in Skyline, recently sold for \$420,000.

Silent Retreat

In mid-December, I did one of my fa-

vorite things—made a 3-day silent retreat at Loyola on the Potomac at the Jesuit Retreat House in Faulkner, Md. Thanks to grandson Conor who signed me up as a surprise Christmas gift.

How does a Retreat work? Drive down to Faulkner and find Loyola, on a hill overlooking the Potomac, a mile or so from the highway (on the way to Captain Peters). Turn at the Retreat sign and head to the Retreat House, a beautiful old building. It's almost always open.

Enter and sign in (an average retreat is about \$245—worth every penny). You are assigned a cell (a small room with twin bed, desk, easy chair, toilet and sink). Then, there will be a welcoming talk. From that time, you are on your own. Silent. Complete silence on the part of the retreatants. (Anyone on a cellphone must go outside.) You can wander the House, visit one of the two chapels, wander the beautiful grounds and (which I do when the weather permits) just sit on a bench and enjoy the Potomac. Or take one of the many woodsy trails.

And there's silence. Complete silence on the part of the retreatants. That's the beauty of a silent retreat. Retreat talks, prayers, three very good cafeteria-style meals a day (we had crabcakes). And all will be silent. Homemade dessert, coffee, always available (even at 2 a.m.—I know because that's what I did). You are under no obligation to attend anything. You can also go to one of the retreat leaders for advice. Or if you're Catholic, to Confession.

Although more Catholics attend, anyone, of any faith (or none), can do so. One retreatant told me he wasn't Catholic, but he'd heard that this Retreat dealt with prayer. He later told me it had changed his life.

There are many kinds of retreat at the Retreat House. A men's retreat, "Lead Me, Lord," is coming up Jan. 17–19. "Praying with Pop Culture with Eric Clayton," Jan. 31–February 2. There are Days of Prayer, including January 3, and "Day of Prayer

on Love," February 15. I've done Retreats at Loyola probably 20 times. Every retreat has been a gift.

By the way, Loyola on the Potomac was established in 1939. Info: 301-392-0819.

Bill Ebersold, of Georgetown U. Foreign Service, dies

William "Bill" Ebersold, 82, of Upper Marlboro, died at home on October 27. He was born in Hartford, Conn., in 1942, to William and Lucille Ebersold.

He was active in the Boy Scouts, achieving the rank of Eagle Scout, attended the Loomis School and graduated from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1964.

Bill served as an Economic Affairs Officer for the UN Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva, Switzerland, and then spent much of his second career writing and consulting for leading cruise industry publications.

He was an active member of St. Mary's Parish in Upper Marlboro.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Vicki, and their four daughters, Kris (Tom) McMahon, Mary (Jamie) Bryant, Karen (Giuseppe) Pulvirenti, and Jenna Vultaggio. Also, six grandchildren and a great-grandson; siblings Katherine Cunningham, John (Mary Kay) Ebersold, and a multitude of other close family.

Mass of Christian Burial was at St. Mary of the Assumption Church on November 6, with burial at Resurrection Cemetery.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Darlie Norton, Ariel Thomas, Sarah Vilky and Terry Foster, Jan. 6; Eva Hugings and Charles Boxley, Jan. 8.

Happy anniversary to James & Yvonne Ealey, their 8th on Jan. 6; Diane & Steve Zirkle, Jan. 9; and David & Lori Williams, Jan. 9.

*A very Happy New Year
2025!*

Brandywine-Aquasco

by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BADEN FIRE DEPARTMENT

Baden Volunteer Fire/EMS Department located in Brandywine, Maryland covers approximately 68 square miles, the largest geographic response area in Prince George's County and serves Brandywine, Aquasco, Croom, Eagle Harbor, Clinton, Marlboro. Provides mutual aid service to Hughesville and Waldorf on an as needed basis.

Congratulations to the newly elected Baden Volunteer Fire Department 2025 Officers. They are Chief Jr Baker, Assistant Chief Matt Loftus, Captain Bill Sadowy, Captain Bobby Szymoniak, Captain Pat McFarland, President Jordan Maddox, Vice President Mike Hrusko, Treasurer Brandi Scott, Secretary Josh Jones. Board of Directors are Mike Loftus, Mike Longo Jr, Mike S Longo, Adam Pearce.

DC BOAT SHOW AT NATIONAL HARBOR

DC Boat Shows are excited to welcome boating enthusiasts to the 3rd Annual DC Boat Show May 2, 2025 to May 4, 2025, at National Harbor. The address is 168 National Plaza National Harbor, Maryland. Join us for a weekend getaway on the Potomac River and kick off the boating season. There will be a wide variety of vessels from Sail to Power, and New to Quality Pre-Owned for immediate sale and to order. Tour the boats, grab food and drinks, listen to live music throughout the show, peruse the vendor tents for the latest in boating gear, meet the experts, and commune with boaters from local and far away harbors! National Harbor is one of the many destinations on the Potomac River, stay for the weekend and take the water taxi to Old Time Alexandria, The Wharf, Georgetown. Visit website and purchase your tickets.

OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT & STEWARDSHIP

Congratulations Class of 2024. From all of us in the Office of Alumni Engagement & Stewardship, we congratulate the Winter Class of 2024. We celebrate their hard work, resilience, and commitment to excellence. We welcome you to the distinguished ranks of Bowie State alumni. This is only the beginning. Continue to make your Bulldog Family proud and remain #BSU4LIFE!

KUDOS TO BSU ALUMNI

Congratulations to Myles Frost ('23) on his outstanding recognition by WhatsOnStage, Britain's leading dedicated theatre website and producer of the publicly voted WhatsOnStage Awards. Myles was nominated for Best Performer, Best New Musical, and Best Choreography for his exceptional contributions to #MJtheMusicalUK. Myles continues to represent Bowie State University with pride and excellence on the world stage. Join us in supporting him by casting your vote today! VOTE HERE: bit.ly/3ZG4Ihx.

Congratulations to Valerie Hough Cromartie ('97 & '01). As an IT Specialist with the Department of Education's Federal Student Aid (FSA), Valerie was recently honored with the prestigious

Cybersecurity Leader Award. Presented annually, the Cybersecurity Excellence Awards recognize Department of Education professionals for their outstanding contributions to fostering a cyber-aware and cyber-safe culture within the agency.

TEEN VOCAL SHOWCASE AUDITION 2025

Teen Vocal Showcase Audition 2025 presented by M-NCPPP, Department of Parks and Recreation will be held on January 18, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Registration fee is free. Pre-teens ages 10–12 and teens 13–18, must be 18yr by March 30, 2025. This event is free. Must attend and show proof of Prince George's County Public Schools via school ID, school max, etc. Audition Video Fee is \$10 (email address required) Audition Attire is DRESS TO IMPRESS taken on day of audition. Location is Publick Playhouse, 5445 Landover Road, Cheverly, Maryland 20784.

Calling all Youth Teen Vocalists. Prince George's County participants will have a chance to perform and compete in a showcase at historic Public House for prizes. First place prize \$1,000, second place prize \$500.00. Audition Music: Acapella or song selection—no lyrics, music on thumb drive for audition. Must come prepared to sing song day of audition. Audition time allotted is five minutes time slots from 10:05 a.m.–3 p.m. Tickets www.pgparcs.com/event_list/teen-vocal-showcase.

SOUP FOR THE SOUL

We love soup! Let us celebrate Soup for the Soul! Come, sit back and relax with us while having a hot cup of soup and other goodies. This is an in-person event, not a grab and go! Thursday, January 23, 2025, from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. PARKS direct: SAARC-SPEC-GA-20250123. FREE in Multi-Purpose A & B. (SAARC) Southern Area Aquatics & Recreation Complex 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Telephone: 301-782-1442 / TTY: 301-699-2544.

TRIBUTE TO THE MUSIC OF FRANKIE BEVERLY AND MAZE

Get ready for an unforgettable evening as we pay homage to the iconic music of MAZE and Frankie Beverly, featuring their greatest hits including "Happy Feeling," "Southern Girl," "Before I Let Go," and more Saturday, January 18, 2025, from 8–10:30 p.m. Spread the word and gather friends for a night of great music and unforgettable memories. Secure your tickets now for what promises to be an evening of soulful tunes and celebration. Ticket Price: General \$30; Senior & Student \$25, all ages. Event Category: Arts Performance Senior Youth. Event Programs & Series: Concert Harmony Hall Arts Center. The event is at Harmony Hall Arts Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland. harmonyhallarts@pgparcs.com, telephone: 301-203-6070.

*"HAPPY NEW YEAR! WISHING EVERYONE A
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR"*

Marietta House Museum Presents

"Fairytale and Fables: A Family Program"

By STACEY HAWKINS

Marietta House Museum

Come in from the cold and join us for imagination and creative fun with our storytelling program! Please join us on **Saturday, January 11, 2025**, from 10 a.m.–11:30 a.m., as Marietta House Museum presents, "Fairytale and Fables: A Family Program".

Children will help create fairytales and fables and participate in a collective storytelling experience with inspiration from European and African folklore.

Guided by museum educator, Karen Holl, participants will make a colorful paper storybook to take home. Light refreshments will enhance the session's fun.

Recommended for ages 5 through 10 (children must be accompanied by an adult). \$5/child, please register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/5aucsebd> or call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pgparcs.com

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.

Donation from A1

at our organization with everyone committed to improving the lives of our credit union members and people in need within the communities we serve. This extremely large and generous gift to the FedChoice Charitable Foundation is a monumental step towards securing the longevity of the organization and the impact of the work being accomplished."

This significant contribution underscores FedChoice's dedication to supporting the Foundation's mission of empowering underserved communities through education and financial literacy. Over the past year, the FedChoice Charitable Foundation has provided financial literacy classes at Title I schools across the Greater Washington DC area, delivered Teachers' Aid Program grants to K–12 educators, awarded scholarships to graduating seniors in local high schools, and established 'Millionaires Clubs' at multiple middle and high schools to teach children concepts revolving around financial management. The Foundation also continues to help federal employees navigate their employment benefits and prepare for retirement.

Impact on Education and Community Development

Thanks to the continuous support from the Foundation, dozens of teachers from Virginia, Washington D.C., and Maryland have been able to complete vital classroom projects, inspiring students to succeed. The FedChoice Charitable Foundation Educational Scholarship Program has provided crucial funding to students from low-income areas, helping them pursue higher education and achieve their dreams.

"Financial literacy has the power to transform lives, and we are immensely proud that our educational programs have impacted so many young people and their families in low-income areas," shared Andrey Gidasov, Executive Director of the FedChoice Charitable Foundation. "We are deeply grateful for this substantial gift from FedChoice, which serves as a testament to the success of our collaborative efforts with community partners, donors and volunteers. This is a major investment in our sustainable future."

The FedChoice Charitable Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and families in underserved communities through education, financial literacy, and community development initiatives. By partnering with local organizations and leveraging the support of FedChoice, FedChoice Charitable Foundation strives to create lasting positive change and empower individuals to achieve their full potential. For more information about the FedChoice Charitable Foundation and its programs, please visit www.fedchoicegives.org or contact foundation@fedchoice.org.

Project from A1

ily Housing tax-exempt bonds. The County Council also approved a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT).

"We are excited to celebrate this milestone and our commitment to creating equitable housing opportunities in Prince George's County," said Jessica Anderson-Preston, Executive Director of the Housing Authority of Prince George's County. "The issuance of \$41.4 million in Multifamily Housing Revenue Bonds for The Cassidy demonstrates our ongoing dedication to supporting projects that make a tangible difference in the lives of our residents. This development will not only provide much-needed affordable housing but will also contribute to the economic and social growth of Capitol Heights and beyond."

The Cassidy will feature modern amenities and community spaces, ensuring families have access to the comfort, stability, and dignity they deserve. With leasing reserved for households at or below 60% of AMI, this project is a cornerstone in addressing housing affordability challenges while promoting inclusive development within Prince George's County. The affordability restrictions will remain in place for 40 years.

"The Cassidy represents a significant investment in the future of Prince George's County, offering high-quality, safe, and affordable homes to working families," said Aspasia Xypolia, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development. "Strategically located in Capitol Heights, this development aligns with the County's mission to expand access to affordable housing while fostering vibrant, sustainable communities for current and future residents."

DHCD and HAPGC extend its gratitude to the project partners, developers, and financial institutions that have made this milestone possible. This collaborative effort underscores the County's on-going commitment to improving housing accessibility and quality of life for its residents.

The Cassidy is projected to be completed by April 2027.

COMMUNITY

New Workshops Focus on Wellness and Creativity for Grievers and Caregivers

Support programs also offered for adults, children, teens and their families

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 19, 2024)—Chesapeake Life Center offers many creative workshops to help adults find a path to healing from loss. This winter, there are also workshops that welcome caregivers. Here are some of the events planned for this season.

- **Chesapeake Life Center Virtual Book Club**—Pick up a copy of “The Pilot’s Wife” by Anita Shreve and prepare for four weeks of literary therapy. Led by a licensed grief counselor, this four-week club will discuss different chapters each week. This is a creative way to process grief feelings while connecting with other grievers. The club will meet via Zoom from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on **Tuesdays, Jan. 7 through 28**. The cost to attend is free—participants must obtain their own copy of the book.
- **Grief and Vision Boards Workshop**—What do you want from the year ahead for you and your grief? In the first month of the year, come together with others who are navigating grief. Share stories and honor your loss or loved one in a creative way. Whether you’re grieving the loss of a loved one, a relationship, or going through a life transition, this workshop offers a creative, safe and supportive space for you. It will take place from noon to 2 p.m. on **Saturday, Jan. 11**, on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is \$15.
- **Winter “Labyrinth of Light” Event at Wellsview Cottage**—Winter is for stillness and going inside—even while we are walking a path outside.

The path is a metaphor for life. How we walk it tells us a lot about ourselves. There is no wrong way to walk it. For centuries labyrinths have been used around the globe as mindfulness tools to help cultivate aspirations and personal growth. All are invited to join us for this special event as we gather to reflect and walk the Labyrinth of Light at Wellsview Cottage. Warm beverages and light refreshments will be served. Dress warmly and wear sturdy shoes. It will take place from 6 to 8 p.m. **Thursday, Jan. 16** at Wellsview Cottage Center for Holistic & Integrative Health, 611 & 613 Ridgely Ave., Annapolis, Maryland. The cost is \$10.

- **Wellness Paint Workshop**—Join our grief counselors for a paint-along event to express your creative side in a safe space. No experience is necessary. It will take place from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on **Saturday, Jan. 18**, on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$20.
- **Sisters in Healing**—Grief can be a challenging and isolating experience, especially for women of color who often navigate unique cultural, familial and societal expectations. Celebrate the start of Women’s History Month with this safe and welcoming workshop to learn about the grief process, share stories about your loved ones, find comfort and connect over the healing journey. The event will be held from noon to 2 p.m. on **Saturday, March 1**, at the center’s office at 9500 Medical Center Drive, Suite 250, Largo, Maryland. The cost is \$15.
- **Navigating Anticipatory and Ambiguous Grief in Dementia Caregiving**—This free workshop is de-

signed to support dementia caregivers and family members in understanding and managing the complex emotions associated with anticipatory and ambiguous grief. Caregivers often experience grief long before the death of a loved one due to the progressive nature of dementia. Anticipatory grief involves mourning the loss of the cognitive and physical abilities of a loved one, while ambiguous grief arises from the uncertainty of what has been lost and what remains in the relationship. It will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on **Tuesday, April 1** on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena.

Registration is required for all workshops and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/ events for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.

Adult grief support programs meeting this winter

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 19, 2024)—Chesapeake Life Center will offer a variety of grief support groups for adults this winter, including a new group that honors some of the many ways Asian cultures work through grief.

Grief Support Group for Grievers in Asian Culture is a free group for those who are experiencing loss as an Asian or Pacific Islander. Grief looks different for everyone, and within Asian cultures, it can vary greatly based on individual backgrounds and values. Together, the group will honor the diverse ways grief is experienced and support each other through this journey. The group will meet from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on **Thursdays, Jan. 9**, Feb. 13 and March

13 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland.

Other grief support groups meeting in person through March are as follows:

- **Drop-In Grief Support Groups** are open to anyone grieving. Groups offer participants an opportunity to share their feelings and obtain support from others who are experiencing loss. There is no fee. These groups will meet in Calvert County as follows: North Beach Senior Center, 9010 Chesapeake Ave., North Beach, Maryland, from 1 to 2 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 5 and March 5. Southern Pines Senior Center, 20 Appeal Lane, Lusby, Maryland, from 2 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 14, Feb. 11 and March 11. Burnett Center for Hope & Healing, 4559 Sixes Road, Prince Frederick, Maryland, from 4 to 5 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 21, Feb. 18 and March 18. Calvert Pines Senior Center, 450 W. Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, from 1 to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 21, Feb. 18 and March 18.

The following groups require registration and, in some instances, may require a fee:

- **SoulCollage Studio**—Join us in person or virtually for a time to create unique collages reflecting and expressing loss and the journey through life. It will meet from 2 to 5 p.m. on **Monday, Jan. 6** at 9500 Medical Center Drive, Suite 250, Largo, Maryland. The supply fee is \$10.
- **Loss of Parent or Parental Figure Support Group** provides space for those grieving the loss of a parent or parental figure to come together to feel supported in their grief. The group will meet from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on **Thursdays, Jan. 9**, Feb. 13 and March 13 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is free.
- **Child Loss Support Group** is for parents grieving the death of a child,

regardless of age or circumstance. It will meet from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on **Mondays, Jan. 13**, Feb. 10 and March 17 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is \$10.

- **Loss of Life Partner/Spouse Evening Group** is a group for individuals grieving the death of a spouse or life partner. It will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on **Tuesdays, Jan. 14**, Feb. 11 and March 11 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is \$10.
- **Parenting While Grieving Workshop**—Gather with your peers for a two-hour event to provide and receive support from others who understand the unique challenge of parenting while grieving. In addition to honoring losses by sharing personal stories, participants will learn about David Kessler’s “Six Needs of the Grieving.” The workshop will take place at the same time as the Breakfast with Your Buddies workshop for children and teens: 10 a.m. to noon **Saturday, Jan. 25**, on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$10. When registering, please indicate if your children will be attending the breakfast.
- **Nature’s Healing Power: A Grief Support Group Series** is a free, nature-informed program that will include immersive walks in nature, time spent focusing on the cycle of the seasons and working with natural objects to contain and express the grief experience. It will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. **Thursdays, Feb. 13** to March 6, at Lake Artemesia Natural Area, 8299 55th Ave., College Park, Maryland. Childcare is not provided and children are not permitted in any of these groups.

See GRIEVERS Page A4

Maryland Department of Health Announces \$19 Million Startup Funding Program to Expand Primary Care Access in Underserved Areas

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Health

BALTIMORE (Dec. 19, 2024)—The Maryland Department of Health, in partnership with the Health Services Cost Review Commission, announced a \$19 million startup funding program to expand primary care access in underserved communities across the state.

The funding, provided through the new Episode Quality Improvement Program for Primary Care, will offer infrastructure investments to support 11 primary care practices in establishing new or expanded advanced primary care locations. The program aims to create additional access to high-quality primary care for approximately 18,000 residents statewide.

The new program builds on the existing Episode Quality Improvement Program, a voluntary program that provides incentive payments to physicians who improve the quality of care and reduce the cost of care that they provide to Maryland Medicare patients.

“The Episode Quality Improvement Program for Primary Care is a major investment in Maryland’s health care landscape, focused on delivering essential services to communities that have historically lacked access to primary care,” said Maryland Secretary of Health,

Dr. Laura Herrera Scott. “This funding reflects our commitment to health equity, ensuring that every Marylander, regardless of where they live, can access high-quality, comprehensive primary care in their community.”

Funded by one-time savings available under Maryland’s Total Cost of Care model, the program’s funding will be distributed over the next three years. Practices will use the funds for infrastructure costs, including building new facilities, recruiting new providers, and establishing services tailored to meet the unique health needs of their local communities. The program is managed by the team at the Maryland Department of Health that operates the Maryland Primary Care Program, and is part of a larger umbrella of programs aiming to increase access to advanced primary care throughout Maryland under the state’s new AHEAD model.

“The Episode Quality Improvement Program for Primary Care is a key component to our broader strategy to make sure all Marylanders can get the right care, at the right time, in the right place,” said Chief Medical Officer for the Maryland Department of Health Dr. Djingie Lindsay. “By investing our resources in communities that our health care system often leaves behind, we are driving a more equitable health care landscape. A strong primary care system

is the foundation for better health for all Marylanders.”

The eleven primary care practices awarded funding through EQIP-PC represent geographic diversity throughout the state. Awardees are:

- Chase Brexton Health Services (Baltimore City)
- Ascension Medical Group (Baltimore City)
- Suyi Park, MD & Associates (Baltimore City)
- Mace Medical (Baltimore County)
- Charm City Healthcare (Baltimore County)
- **Comprehensive Primary Care (Prince George’s County)**
- **Capital Care Clinic (Prince George’s County)**
- Wellspring Family Medicine (Allegany County)
- Lower Shore Clinic (Dorchester, Somerset, and Wicomico Counties)
- Eastern Shore Primary Care & Wellness (Dorchester and Somerset Counties)
- Somerset Primary Care (Somerset County)

The Health Services Cost Review Commission, which regulates hospital rates and tracks hospital performance data, works to ensure equitable, financially sustainable health care services across the state. The Maryland Primary Care Program is a collaboration between the federal government and the Maryland Department of Health, supporting primary care practices by enhancing care quality and improving patient outcomes statewide, through payment incentives for Medicare beneficiaries.

For more information about the program and its impact, visit <https://www.crisphealth.org/learning-system/eqip-pc/>.

‘Hello Girl’ from A1

try’s formal efforts to commemorate the war, Christopher thought getting the award across the finish line was important. In 2023, with no bill passed, Christopher decided to tackle the issue head-on.

“I sat down,” said Christopher, “and wrote a letter to every single senator who was not already a co-sponsor.”



Catherine Bourgin tells stories about her grandmother in her sitting room on Dec. 11, 2024.

If a senator was not a co-sponsor, Christopher said, he researched and included World War I registration documents of a relative or ancestor of that senator to personalize the letters. He then made sure those were hand-delivered to the senators.

Volunteering in his free time, he also coordinated the network of history buffs and Hello Girl descendants and supporters for virtual meetings and lobbying on the Hill.

Catherine Bourgin had just discovered her grandmother’s unmarked grave in Fort Lincoln Cemetery, in a plot next to her great-grandmother’s. She also connected with Christopher at the same time.

Bourgin said her grandmother’s grave was symbolic of what happened to the Hello Girls. LeRoux was in an unmarked grave, Bourgin said, just miles from the nation’s capital but nevertheless lost to history.

While lobbying on Capitol Hill a few months later, Bourgin said, she told other advocates about the unmarked grave. The group got fired up, she said, and decided to change that.

They procured the grave marker and arranged for a military honors ceremony at the cemetery.

“The folks that did what they did for my grandmother,” said Bourgin, “they truly made an indelible mark on my family’s history.”

Bourgin thinks the ceremony drew attention to the gold-medal cause. They made sure members of Congress were invited.

Now it seems the advocacy may have worked. Senators are expected to take up the defense act in the coming days.

Both Bourgin and Christopher hope that the award will bring



ROBERT STEWART/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Tombstones line the hills at Fort Lincoln Cemetery near the resting place of LeRoux on Dec. 9, 2024.

attention to the untold stories of the country’s first female soldiers, and ensure that all of them have veteran’s grave markers.

“There are so many stories out there like this,” said Bourgin, “and we just have to discover them.”

“Hopefully once we get past all this, this is going to be something that will generate an ongoing effort,” said Christopher. He wants “to get all of the Hello Girls their appropriate grave marker.”

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Urban League Movement Has Been Stronger and More Effective in 2024 Than Ever Before

Joy and pain are like sunshine and rain. These are the words of our brother Frankie Beverly, who sadly passed away this year. And they are the words that come to mind when reflecting on the past year's work of the National Urban League and our network of 92 affiliates across the country. The joy is that the Urban League Movement is stronger than we have ever been. We are serving more people than ever before, nearly four million people a year. The combined operating budgets of our affiliate movement are the largest in history. Our Reclaim Your Vote initiative, which we just have completed for the 2024 election season, reached millions of people through the media and personal contact. Voters in every state were brought into the dem-

ocratic process who might otherwise have been disenfranchised or discouraged by racially discriminatory voting laws and misinformation campaigns. Our advocacy helped pass the largest road and bridge building program in American history. Our advocacy helped pass the largest investment in broadband connectivity in American history. Our advocacy helped pass the largest investment in manufacturing in American history. Our advocacy helped elevate, expand, and make permanent the Minority Business Development Agency. Our advocacy urged the Justice Department to launch dozens of investigations into brutal and corrupt law enforcement that brought the killers of Ahmaud Arbery and Brianna Taylor to justice.

Our empowerment programs have helped people become homeowners. Helped people find good-paying jobs. Helped young people find a pathway to college. And helped returning citizens regain dignity and a good job.

I'm so proud of what we have been able to accomplish, and we have accomplished it together. This is the triumph of collective power, collective will, determination, and commitment.

Most joyful of all is the near-completion of our future home, the National Urban League Urban Empowerment Center in Harlem. We are about to launch the Mountaintop Campaign, the final push to raise \$15 million that will get us to the mountaintop of completing the most significant economic development project in recent Harlem history.

It's significant because of its size—18 stories, 414,000 square feet—and because of the homecoming it represents—we're returning to the community that gave birth to our movement 115 years ago.

But its greatest significance—the greatest joy—is that it embodies the very heart of our mission. It is an investment into a culturally vibrant community, historically neglected by city, state, and national leaders, that already is paying enormous dividends.

The Urban Empowerment Center represents the joy of home for the 170 families and individuals who now have a safe and affordable apartment. It represents the joy of fair employment for the thousands who were involved in the construction and finishing of the building and the hundreds who have found permanent employment with our retail partners.

It represents the joy of history and heritage, as the first-of-its-kind Urban Civil Rights Museum in Harlem begins to take shape. It will be New York City's first museum dedicated to the American Civil Rights Movement and one of the only museums in the entire country to explore the history of the Civil Rights Movement in the North.

This year, of course, has also brought pain. The presidential election feels like a painful setback for the issues we in the Urban League Movement hold sacrosanct: An inclusive democracy. Reproductive freedom. Economic opportunity.

The first Trump administration began with an inhumane act of religious discrimination, banning immigrants from majority-Muslim nations. It ended with white supremacists parading the Confederate flag through the U.S. Capitol as part of a plot to overturn an election.

Many of us are puzzled, angry, and upset by the results of the election—distracted at the prospect of having to fight the same battles over and over again.

The National Urban League has never backed down from a battle. We will not ever give up our values or our principles. We will defend democracy at any cost. We will demand diversity, equity, and inclusion because all have a right to the American dream. And we will defeat poverty because a great nation must be committed to shared prosperity.

As Frankie Beverly sang, there will be sorrow, but you will endure. Joy and pain are like sunshine and rain. We have seen both in 2024. As we face the challenges of 2025 and beyond, we know that together we will endure.

—December 20, 2024

Ben Jealous

Executive Director, Sierra Club



The Liberty in Laundry Act Sounds Like a Joke. Sadly It's Not.

The incoming Trump administration is supposedly interested in "efficiency." It has a whole quasigovernmental department—the Elon Musk- and Vivek Ramaswamy-chaired Department of Government Efficiency—purportedly ready to take aim at government waste. So why are the very same people going to such extremes to make wasting energy one of their highest priorities?

Among the final acts of the MAGA-led House of Representatives to end this Congress was the passage of the absurdly named Liberty in Laundry Act. It prohibits the Secretary of Energy from setting or enforcing energy efficiency standards for clothes washers and dryers. It is but one of several legislative attacks on energy efficient home appliances, like dishwashers and refrigerators, advanced by the House's Republican majority. While the bill may have no chance of passing in the Senate, this is a clear signal about the GOP's backwards priorities in the next Congress.

Energy efficiency simply means an appliance uses less energy to do its job. It not only can save households hundreds of dollars a year, it is one of the best—and most readily accessible—ways to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions from homes and buildings, and mitigate our impact on the climate. Not only that, it is an area where the product manufacturers, sellers, and climate advocates agree.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is required by law to regularly evaluate and set energy efficiency standards for a wide range of appliances. Yet every time the DOE wants to ensure we have options that meet at least a minimum standard, it seems there is an extremist politician or talking head ready to scaremonger about Big Government coming into your home to take your beloved appliances. In reality, energy efficiency standards simply provide consumers with better choices—more high-tech products that work even better than outdated inefficient models and will save households money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (a fifth of which in the US come from people's homes).

Donald Trump has railed against water efficient toilets and showerheads, and against replacing inefficient lightbulbs that still use the same basic design from over a hundred years ago and waste up to 90% of the electricity powering them. After

all, Thomas Edison's invention was ground-breaking at the time, but technology has come a long way since then.

In 2023, far-right media and politicians tried to ignite a firestorm over gas stoves, peddling the falsehood that the Biden administration was trying to ban them. In reality, the DOE proposed improved efficiency standards for both gas and electric stoves that would not go into effect until 2027 and would help consumers save as much as an estimated \$1.7 billion. This is part-in-parcel of the myths being used to stoke outrage about regulations that would protect consumers—both their wallets and their health (don't forget that producing excess energy from fossil fuels adds to the climate crisis and the air and water pollution that kills and sickens millions of Americans every year).

While it seems utilities and energy companies might not mind consumers buying more of their product than they use or need, many electric utilities actually support efficiency measures. They bring down overall demand on their grids, reducing costs for them as well as their consumers.

Most news coverage of the issue highlights interest group opposition from homebuilders. However, it seems the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) may actually be inflating the upfront costs, while ignoring the savings on utility bills over time that more than make up for them. Those savings are especially important to low-income families, who carry a higher energy burden by spending a greater portion of their household income on energy bills. Low-income households are forced to spend as much as four times more on energy bills. And there is research that shows families that fall behind on their utility bills are at risk of the state taking their children away.

Of course, not all homebuilders subscribe to

the NAHB's rhetoric. They know that homes can be constructed to be more efficient, solar-ready, and in ways that cut costs and actually enhance quality of living. And for new construction of all-electric buildings, costs are even lower because there is no need to run a gas line, which saves tens of thousands of dollars.

But at the end of the day, opposition to energy efficiency standards is not just about doing the bidding of an industry group like NAHB. More than anything, based on the fallacious claims and outright distortions of what these regulations actually do, it seems to be simply about manipulating voters by making them angry. People do not like being told what to do. They do not like being told the products they like – or at least have no problems with – will be banned or taken from them. When framed in a way that means less choice – or "freedom" – for consumers, too many people are ready to take the bait and believe the lies. The truth is, these standards are simply about providing consumers with better choices on the shelf for when their existing appliances ultimately do need to be replaced.

In Washington and state capitals alike, lawmakers need to put their constituents first, and not traffic in lies and misinformation. No one benefits from wasted energy other than the fossil fuel industry executives whose bank accounts get fatter with the selling and burning of an unnecessary excess of their product. Well, them and the politicians who benefit from misleading voters about what energy efficiency actually means.

—December 23, 2024

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

Grievers from A3

The following groups will meet virtually via Zoom for Healthcare:

- **Loss of Life Partner/Spouse Virtual Group** is a free group for individuals grieving the death of a spouse or life partner. It will meet from 10:30 a.m. to noon **Tuesdays, Jan. 14**, Feb. 11 and March 11 via Zoom.
- **SoulCollage Virtual Support Group for Loss and Transition** is a free group with participants creating collages to commemorate lost loved ones and visually journal the grief process. The group will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. **Monday, Feb. 3** via Zoom.

Except for drop-in groups, registration is required and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/events for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.

Creative grief support programs for children, teens and their families

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 19, 2024)—Chesapeake Life Center has more than 30 years of experience using fun and friendship to help grieving children find a path to healing. Here is what is planned for children and teens this winter:

- **Stepping Stones Grief Support Group for ages 6 to 18**—This group is for children and teens who have lost someone dear to them within the last 12 months. The focus will be on normalizing grief reactions, teaching coping skills and providing opportunities to remember their loved ones. Groups will be divided by age and grade level based on enrollment.

Two four-week sessions will be offered. The first will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on **Tuesdays, Jan. 7 through 28**, at the Hospice of the Chesapeake John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland.

The second will be from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on **Wednesdays, Feb. 5 through 26**, at the Hospice of the Chesapeake Charles County office, 2505 Davis Road, Waldorf, Maryland.

The cost for four weeks is \$40.

- **Rhythm of Life: Drum Circle Support Group**—This free group allows kids and teens ages 9 to 18 to connect through creative expression and the healing power of drumming. Drumming has been shown to relieve symptoms that come with grief and loss, improve physical well-being, help process and regulate emotions ... and it's fun! The group will meet from 10 to 11 a.m. **Saturday, March 22**, at the Burnett Center for Hope & Healing, 4559 Sixes Road, Prince Frederick, Maryland.

- **Breakfast with Your Buddies**—Children and teens (ages 6–18) are invited to a special breakfast where they can connect with friends and participate in guided activities to honor their loved ones through creativity and play. The event will take place on **Saturday, Jan. 25**, from 10 a.m. to noon at the John and Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$10. A workshop for grieving parents will be held at the same time. Details below.

- **Parenting While Grieving Workshop**—Join a supportive two-hour workshop designed for parents navigating the challenges of grief. Connect with others who understand your journey, share personal stories to honor your losses and explore David Kessler's "Six Needs of the Grieving." Participants also can engage in optional activities such as group mindfulness, nature-inspired exercises, expressive arts, skill-sharing and more. The workshop coincides with "Breakfast with Your Buddies" for children and teens, on **Saturday, Jan. 25**, from 10 a.m. to noon at the John and Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$10. When registering, please indicate if your children will be attending the breakfast.

Registration is required for all programs and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org. Visit www.hospicechesapeake.org/events for a complete listing of in-person and virtual groups and workshops for adults and children.

adults and children.

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice fam-

ily members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. Visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Can my Wife Claim Her SS Now and Get Half my SS Benefit Later?

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

Dear Rusty: My wife will reach her full Social Security benefit at 66.5 years of age which is just under 2 years away for her now. If she were to begin to get her monthly check now (i.e. early), would that prevent her from being eligible for the spousal benefit to receive half of what I am currently drawing? **Signed: Curious Husband**

Dear Curious: If your wife claims her own SS retirement benefit now (e.g., at 64.5 years), and you are already collecting your own SS benefit, then she will be automatically deemed to be filing for her spousal benefit immediately when she claims her own benefit (she does not have the option to defer claiming her spousal benefit until later). This is a change made by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which requires all those first claiming SS to file for ALL benefits they are eligible for when they claim. What that would mean is that your wife's benefit now, including her spousal boost from you, would be actuarially reduced by the number of months early she claimed. Her own SS retirement benefit would be permanently reduced by about 15%, and her "spousal boost" (the additional amount she would get as your spouse) would be reduced by about 19%, yielding a combined benefit which is roughly 42% of your full retirement age (FRA) SS benefit.

The only way your wife can get half (50%) of your FRA benefit entitlement is by waiting until her own full retirement age (66 years and 10 months) to claim. Note too that your wife's spousal benefit will be based on your FRA entitlement, so if you claimed earlier or later than your own full retirement age, her spousal benefit will still be based on your FRA entitlement.

Also, your wife should be aware that anyone who claims early is subject to Social Security's "earnings test," which limits how much can be earned while collecting early benefits. Thus, if your wife is working, she will be restricted on how much she can earn before Social Security takes away some of her benefits. FYI, the earnings limit changes annually, but for 2025 it is \$23,420 and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit. And, FYI, the earnings limit goes up a lot during the year FRA is attained, and the earnings test no longer applies once full retirement age is reached.

I hope this answers your question, but if you have need additional information, please feel free to contact us directly at SSAdvisor@amacfoundation.org, or call us at 1.888.750.2622.

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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.

Maryland Public Libraries to Launch Third Annual Career Success Month

Training programs, opportunities for professional development are set for January and February

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland State Library Agency

BALTIMORE (Dec. 19, 2024)—Maryland public libraries are set to launch a series of programs that will provide the communities they serve with the skills employees need to succeed in today's workplace. The third annual Career Success Month, developed by the Maryland State Library Agency and supported in part by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services, features a range of virtual and in-person professional training opportunities hosted by library systems across the state. The events begin in January and continue through February.

"Maryland's libraries are a critical part of the state's workforce ecosystem, providing access to training, technology and expertise for job seekers, businesses and entrepreneurs," said Maryland State Librarian Morgan Lehr Miller. "I'm thrilled our library systems are working on such important programs, and that the Institute of Museum and Library Services continues

to support these efforts to help Marylanders thrive."

The theme of this year's programs is Upskill and Uplift the Future Workforce. Programs include resume building, job search help, mock interviews, computer program training, career workshops, adult learning, entrepreneurship information and other opportunities. A list of the programs can be found on the Career Success Month website.

In addition, Career Success Month will feature two keynote speakers. **Walter Simmons, President & CEO of Employ Prince George's, will speak from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 21, 2025.** Michael V. Morgan, an author and speaker known for his inspirational talks about career development, will speak from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. on **Feb 3, 2025.** Both events will be held virtually. Registration information will be posted on the Career Success Month website as the events draw nearer.

While Career Success Month helps job seekers and current employees im-

prove their skills to keep up with changing industry demands, it also affirms the value of library resources, programs and partnerships. These resources, programs and partnerships help Marylanders stay competitive within the modern job market and workforce, whether they are looking to advance their careers or pivot into new industries.

As the state library agency for Maryland, the Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) administers state and federal funds to support Maryland libraries in their mission to offer outstanding resources, programs and excellent customer service. The State Library Resource Center, located in the central branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, serves as Maryland's state library. MSLA has oversight of the Maryland State Library for the Blind and Print Disabled; Maryland's public libraries; the State Library Network, including the three regional libraries; the Public Library Capital Grants Program; and the Deaf Culture Digital Library.

GSA Accelerates Efforts to Right-size Federal Real Estate With Plans to Reduce Federal Footprint and Save Taxpayer Money

GSA announces plans to dispose of 4700 River Road in Riverdale, Maryland

By PRESS OFFICER
U.S. General Services Administration

WASHINGTON (Dec. 18, 2024)—Today, the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) announced it would begin the disposition process for 4700 River Road in Riverdale, MD. This disposition could lead to a potential reduction of more than 337,000 square feet for the federal government, saving about \$26 million in reinvestment costs. This is the first step in GSA's disposal process, under which the properties could be transferred, exchanged, or sold to a federal, state, or local entity or the public after robust input and engagement with stakeholders.

The River Road Building was built in 1994 and sits on a 12 acre site located within M Square Research Park in College Park, Maryland and is no longer needed by the federal government. This disposition further advances GSA's efforts to right-size and modernize the federal buildings portfolio in order to better support agency missions and reduce costs for taxpayers.

As the nation's federal landlord it is our responsibility to regularly eval-

uate and address the housing needs of our federal agencies in order to meet their space requirements and optimize the federal footprint," said Melanie Gilbert, the Acting Regional Administrator and Regional Commissioner for the National Capital Region. "Disposing of property that is no longer mission critical to federal agencies results in a more efficient use of federal assets and provides significant savings to the American taxpayer."

Today's announcement builds on GSA's record of driving efficiencies and savings throughout its portfolio. Over the past decade, GSA has helped to reduce the footprint of tenant agencies housed in office buildings under GSA's custody and control by disposing of almost 11 million square feet of federally owned space and reducing almost 18 million square feet of leased space.

GSA also assists other landholding agencies in divesting their real property portfolios. Since 2015, over 1,000 properties have been divested by GSA on behalf of the executive branch, reducing over 24 million square feet of federally owned space. These property dispositions have returned over \$2 bil-

lion to American taxpayers.

GSA is continuing its efforts to identify and market surplus federal properties that represent the best opportunities for residential development, including continuing to convene developers, municipalities, and other stakeholders to learn about opportunities and challenges.

The Real Property Disposition program gives GSA and local communities the opportunity to make valuable government real estate available for numerous local government and private sector uses.

GSA provides centralized procurement and shared services for the federal government, managing a nationwide real estate portfolio of nearly 370 million rentable square feet, overseeing over \$100 billion in products and services via federal contracts, and delivering technology services that serve millions of people across dozens of federal agencies. GSA's mission is to deliver the best customer experience and value in real estate, acquisition, and technology services to the government and the American people. For more information, visit GSA.gov and follow us at [@USGSA](https://twitter.com/USGSA).

Historic from A1

at Edmondson Village Shopping Center to enhance food security and provide residents with high-quality, affordable groceries;

- Stabilization and repairs to infrastructure to renovate and restore historic 210 Charles Street into 231 apartment units for individuals and families and 30,000 square feet of commercial space;
- Predevelopment to support Baltimore City's first Net Zero homeownership community consisting of for-sale units that will expand homeownership opportunities and provide a best practice for revitalizing historically disinvested communities.

The Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative is designed to support redevelopment in communities within the Baltimore Beltway. More than \$23.6 million was awarded to 91 projects, including:

- Home rehabilitation for legacy homeowners in Coldstream Homestead Montebello, Darley Park and South Clifton Park for repairs and safety modifications that allow them to continue aging in place in their communities (Baltimore City);
- Home repairs and upgrades for seniors and legacy homeowners to provide safety improvements and address deferred maintenance in order to increase home value and build wealth in the Liberty Corridor (Baltimore City);
- Rehabilitation for older and long-time homeowners so they can age in place, maintain value in their home, and continue to be a vital part of the Central Baltimore community (Baltimore City);
- And upgrades to plumbing, the pool, and redesign locker rooms to improve accessibility at the Druid Hill Y, a vital community hub with nearly 2,200 members (Baltimore City).

Like the Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative, the National Capital Strategic Economic Development Fund provided \$20.8 million in funding for 31 projects in communities in and around the Capital Beltway, including:

- Construction of streetscaping and multi-modal improvements along a 1.3 mile segment of Russell Avenue, between East Diamond Avenue and Montgomery Village Avenue, converting an auto-centric road to shared-use (Montgomery County);
 - Rehabilitate Parkview Towers in Takoma Park, MD, updating an aging 125-unit property to support restoration of structural integrity of the envelope of the building (Montgomery County);
 - **Acquisition of an underutilized parking lot that will be transformed into units of new, high quality affordable housing for seniors near downtown Wheaton (Prince George's County);**
 - **And design and predevelopment of affordable multifamily rental units, part of the first phase of the redevelopment of the Hyattsville Justice Center (Prince George's County).**
- Community Legacy awarded more than \$8 million to 45 projects in designated Sustainable Communities throughout Maryland. Some of these projects include:
- Continuation of the renovating and building 12 affordable for-sale condos in historic downtown Frederick to be sold to Habitat-qualified first-time homebuyers (Frederick County);
 - Adaptive reuse of the historic Howard County Courthouse in Ellicott City, MD, as a Center for Arts, Culture and History (Howard County);
 - Rehabilitation of Building 521 for the purpose of converting the former Fort Ritchie building into a Nature Center (Washington County);
 - And support infrastructure work in the development of the SBY Market Center, a mixed use building (Wicomico County).
- Additionally, \$10.4 million in grants and loans were provided to higher education institutions and hospitals by the Seed Community Development Anchor Institution Fund for community development projects in disinvested areas of the state. The funds supported 25 projects, including:
- Renovation and stabilization at the University of Maryland Baltimore

County to transform a long-vacant property floor into an academic space for students and provide a community space for the residents of Arbutus (Baltimore County);

- Restoration of the exterior of The Hippodrome Foundation's France-Merrick Performing Arts Center building located at the corner of Eutaw and Fayette Streets adjacent to the Hippodrome Theatre (Baltimore City);
- Support the development of "The Perch," an education-based business incubator at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (Somerset County);
- And demolition of the former Wicomico County Library and construction of a new Performing Arts Center (Wicomico County).

The Maryland Façade Improvement Program awarded \$5 million to 36 communities. Funds will be used to enhance the character and attractiveness of local business districts by improving the exterior façades of buildings and facilities.

"This year's investment of more than \$129 million is more than double our Fiscal Year 2024 awards, thanks to Governor Wes Moore and our partners in the General Assembly. These revitalization awards infuse critical and needed dollars directly into communities, all to serve the Marylanders who live, work, and play there," said Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day. "Working with our partners to bring these projects to life stimulates other public, private and nonprofit investment to revitalize communities, a chain reaction that leads directly to community improvement."

For more information about the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development and its revitalization programs, please visit its website: <https://dhcd.maryland.gov/Communities/Pages/StateRevitalizationPrograms/default.aspx>.

