

The Prince George's Post



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Silver Spring Native Serves in the South China Sea Aboard USS Carl Vinson



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN APPRENTICE PABLO CHAVEZ

241228-N-GC571-2025 SOUTH CHINA SEA (Dec. 28, 2024)—Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Myra Abotsi, of Silver Spring, Md., performs maintenance on equipment in the aircraft intermediate maintenance department shop aboard the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), Dec. 28, 2024. Vinson, the flagship of Carrier Strike Group ONE, is underway conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

Dr. Gary Sprouse, “The Less Stress Doc,” to Take the Stage at Busboys & Poets in Hyattsville for a Fun, Free Event

Dr. Gary Sprouse is a leading expert on stress reduction

By PRESS OFFICER
The Less Stress Doc

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (Jan. 3, 2025)—Kick off the New Year with a little less stress and a lot more joy! Dr. Gary Sprouse, also known as The Less Stress Doc, will appear live at Busboys & Poets in Hyattsville on Monday, January 13, for an unforgettable presentation of How to Have Less Stress & More Joy.

This free event, inspired by Dr. Gary's best-selling book, Highway to Your Happy Place: A Roadmap to Less Stress, promises to be as entertaining as it is enlightening. Whether you're feeling overwhelmed, seeking balance, or simply curious about improving your well-being, this event offers tools you can use right away. Attendees will discover relatable tips for reducing stress while increasing joy in their daily lives—all delivered with Dr. Gary's signature blend of humor, warmth, and real-world wisdom.

Event Details:

- Date: Monday, January 13, 2025
- Time: 6 p.m.
- Location: Busboys & Poets, 5331 Baltimore Ave, Hyattsville, MD 20781
- Admission: Free Seats are limited; reservations encouraged. RSVP at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/highway-to-your-happy-place-a-busboys-and-poets->

Whether you're a fan of Dr. Gary's work or simply curious about how to lead a happier, more balanced life, this event has something for everyone.

books-presentation-tickets-1086499080999

What to Expect:

- A lively and engaging presentation packed with actionable advice.
- An opportunity to purchase Highway to Your Happy Place on-site.
- A chance to meet Dr. Gary in person and get your book signed.

Don't miss this chance to connect with a nationally renowned stress management expert and take the first steps toward making 2025 your most joyful year yet. Whether you're a fan of Dr. Gary's work or simply curious about how to lead a happier, more balanced life, this event has something for everyone.

Reserve your spot today at this Eventbrite link before seats fill up!

Dr. Sprouse is extremely passionate about bringing happiness into people's lives through humor, compassion, and understanding. He has a unique perspective on stress that no one else is talking about. He has uncovered a groundbreaking new way to define where the majority of human stress originates. This new insight—and the tools he developed to deal with stress—CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE!

For more information about Dr. Gary Sprouse and his work, visit <http://www.thelessstressdoc.com>.

Dr. Gary Sprouse, affectionately known as The Less Stress Doc, is a best-selling author, speaker, and expert in stress management. Through his books, Highway to Your Happy Place and Mindset Matters and

engaging live events and seminars, he helps people reduce stress and discover more joy in their personal and professional lives. Best-selling author Jack Canfield reviewed Highway to Your Happy Place and said, "In the span of getting to know Dr. Gary Sprouse and reading his book, I have been introduced to many new concepts and ideas. His ideas and models for stress reduction are life-changing. You will absolutely love this. A must read." Highway to Your Happy Place is available in paperback, hardcover, and ebook on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Dr. Sprouse's "Happiness Highway" podcast is on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@HappinessHighway-vk3xu> Follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/lessstressdoc/

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/5aucebd> or call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pgparks.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.

M-NCPPC Prince George's County Planning Board and Department Announce January 2025 Events and Meetings

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

LARGO, Md. (Dec. 30, 2024)—The Prince George's County Planning Board and the Prince George's County Planning Department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) announce their upcoming public events and meetings for January 2025. For more details, review the list of events and meetings below or visit www.pgplanningboard.org and www.pgplanning.org. Events and meetings are subject to change.

Prince George's County Planning Board Meetings

Thursday, January 16 | 10 a.m.
Thursday, January 23 | 10 a.m.
Thursday, January 30 | 10 a.m.

The Prince George's County Planning Board meets virtually on Thursdays to consider planning, zoning, subdivision, and other matters within its jurisdiction. The meetings may be viewed via live streaming video. Public participation is encouraged either through a phone bridge or by using GoTo Meeting. Everyone who wishes to speak at the Planning Board meeting must register online by Noon on the Tuesday, two days prior to the Planning Board meeting. Written comments, documents, and exhibits must be received via email, fax, or mail by Noon on the Tuesday before the Planning Board meeting to be included in the record. For more details, visit: www.pgplanningboard.org.

Subdivision and Development Review Committee Meeting

Friday, January 17 | 9:30 a.m.
Friday, January 31 | 9:30 a.m.

Subdivision and Development Review Committee (SDRC) is a coordination and interagency meeting early in the development review process with the applicant and

M-NCPPC staff, where the public can be invited to virtually view the meeting only. The meetings are held virtually and may be viewed via live streaming video. The agendas are posted online.

Brown Bag Lunch Series: Transportation Procedures

Tuesday, January 14 | noon–1 p.m.

1616 McCormick Drive, Largo, MD 20774

The Prince George's County Planning Department will host a monthly Brown Bag Series covering various Development Review topics at the M-NCPPC Largo Headquarters. The session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, will cover Transportation Procedures, including Bicycle and Pedestrian Impact Statements (BPIS). Register at least a week in advance at <https://pgplan.org/brownbag>.

Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission

Tuesday, January 21 | 6:30 p.m.

Hosted by the Prince George's County Planning Department, the Prince George's County Historic Preservation Commission meeting will be held virtually on the third Tuesday of the month. For meeting details, visit <https://www.pgplanning.org/countywide-planning/historic-preservation> or call 301-952-3680, or email HistoricPreservation@ppd.mnccp.org.

M-NCPPC Full Commission Meeting

Wednesday, January 15 | 10 a.m.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission will hold its Full Commission meeting in a hybrid format from the M-NCPPC Parks and Recreation Administration Building in Riverdale and via video conference. Agenda packets will be available online.

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

In & Around Morningside-Skyline by Mary McHale 301-735-3451

Remembering Kenny on January 12

It was 33 years ago that, on January 12, 18-year-old Kenneth Michael Hedrick, volunteer with the Morningside Fire Department and son of Morningside Chief Les Hedrick, rescued 7-year-old Shawn Sanchez from a burning house on Walls Lane in Suitland. Then, he went back into the burning building to continue fighting the fire. He was caught by fallen debris and died.

Young Shawn also died. Of burns, at Children's Hospital.

In 1994, a brick memorial to Kenny was unveiled in front of the firehouse. Two bronze plaques inscribed along the memorial's base. One states, "All give some, some give all..." The other bears the message that Kenny died "in the line of duty at 3807 Walls Lane, Suitland, Md., on Jan. 12, 1992." Also, that it was his 1,380th alarm. January 12 was named Kenneth Hedrick Day on January 12, 2022.

Drive by the Morningside firehouse, read the plaques, and say a prayer for him and firefighters everywhere.

Town of Morningside

We are fortunate to have, only blocks away, the Morningside Volunteer Fire Department! During the year 2024, they handled 3,430 "unit responses." They also added a new ambulance. And don't forget that they're 100% volunteer 100% of the time.

Camp Springs Senior Activities

New Belly Dance classes began in December and are continuing. Also, I note that there is no fee.

Also continuing: Defensive Driving, Computer Levels 1 and 2, Creative Paper Crafting, Total Body Workout, Sign Language, Low Impact Aerobics, Quilting and more. For information call 301-449-0490.

WWII Memorial Architect dies

Friedrich St. Florian, an Austrian-American who designed the World War II Memorial on the Mall, died Dec. 18 in Providence, R.I. He was 91.

The Memorial—which honors the sacrifices of the 16 million Americans who served in the war and the millions more who supported them—was formally dedicated on Memorial Day weekend 2004. The ceremony was attended by tens of thousands of WWII veterans.

When I visit the Memorial, I've often chatted with WWII veterans hanging out there, who just want to talk about the war and what those days—and this Memorial—means to them. My family had several WWII vets: My father, Colonel Richard Dyer Mudd headed the Medical Department at Kelly Field, Texas, for the four years of the war. My brothers were too young for that war but served in Viet Nam. My brother Joe died in a helicopter crash in Korea.

Do you have family who served in WWII? Have you visited the Memorial? Go—you'll be glad you did.

Neighbors & other good people

Last year was Ron James' first as head coach. His girls team at

Bishop McNamara High School won the Maryland Private School State Basketball Tournament. This year those Mustangs may do even better. On Dec. 17, they were no. 1.

Changing landscape

According to The Washington Post, "2024 is set to go down as D.C.'s warmest year on record."

The Monarch Butterfly has been granted threatened status. McDonald's at Suitland & Allentown Roads should be opening soon. The building itself—though sort of a boring exterior—doesn't look like a McDonald's.

At 2 p.m. on New Year's Eve, the Circulator bus took its last ride, followed by a toast at Clyde's on M St. NW. It has been in business for about 20 years.

A home at 6011 Ladd Road, in Skyline, recently sold for \$370,000.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Patty Gallatin, Jan. 11; Martin Miller, Frank Binsted and Roc Wheeler, Jan. 13; Curtis DeMarco Knowles, my son Mike McHale, Kathleen Giroux and Joanie Mangum, Jan. 14; Robert Koch, Jan. 15; Dolly Wood, Jan. 16 and Nikial M. Boston, Jan. 17.

Happy Anniversary to Gary and Melody Barnes on Jan. 14; and to Frank and Sharleen Kelly Cappella, their 70th on Jan. 15. Hey, send me birthdays! Send to muddmm@gmail.com.

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

M-NCPPC FREE SENIOR MEMBERSHIP

Benefits: Senior ID provides Free access to 45 Community Centers and their fitness rooms; six senior activity centers and their fitness rooms; The Sports and Learning Complex to work out; swim, or walk the indoor track on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 8 a.m. to 12 noon; weekly e-connect newsletter highlighting upcoming Department of Parks and Recreation programs and events.

To get a free M-NCPPC Senior ID, bring proof of age and residency to any Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) community center during operating hours. You must be 60 & better and reside in either Prince George's or Montgomery County.

WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Congratulations to Elvin and Joan Falby, George and Mildred Rucker, Nurbert and Carol Hughes, Buddy and Betty King, Walter and Theresa Lindsay, Oiuwa and Assiatu (Lilly) Jalloh) Adeyemo who are celebrating wedding anniversaries in January.

INAUGURATION DAY COVERAGE

Bring your lunch or purchase it at (SAARC) Southern Area Aquatics & Recreation Complex Monday, January 20, 2025, from 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m. FREE in Multi-purpose Room A & B. Bring your lunch or purchase it at SAARC's Café as we sit and watch the new President of the United States of America take oath. The address is 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Telephone: 301-782-1442/ TTY: 301-699-2544.

BADEN FOOD PANTRY

Our original pantry is the Baden Food Pantry and is located at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 13500 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. This pantry is open on Fridays, 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Our Baden pantry provides Home Delivery for neighbors who are unable to make it to the pantry on their own.

And, for our neighbors who do not have transportation, CSS arranged with the Prince George's County Call-a-Bus to provide door-to-door transportation to and from the Pantry. This collaboration is crucial in order to provide access to the Pantry for many of our homebound clients.

ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

"Achievement Award goes to Philip Thomas. We would like to take time out to give thanks and recognition to our Past President, Philip Thomas. Thanks for his outstanding leadership, true dedication, and tireless commitment in managing the works of PHSAA for the past ten plus years. His flexibility, adaptability, dedication, and commitment have been beyond measure and appreciated beyond belief."

"We are not losing you. It is just a shift in roles and responsibilities. We know your service and time commitment will continue as you take on full time the role of Building Manager. No one knows the ins and outs of the restoration like you do and we know it will continue to flourish in your hands. We are forever grateful to you." PHSAA Newsletter (Pomomkey High School Alumni Association, Inc.)

READY 2 READ STORYTIME

Ready 2 Read Story time is for ages 3–5. Bring your preschooler and enjoy stories, songs, fingerplays, and more Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.–11 a.m. Age Group: Young Children (0–5 yrs.), Event Type: Storytime or Playday, Tags: Ready 2 Read Storytime.

Accommodations for individuals with disabilities are available upon request. Telephone number is 301-888-1152. Baden Library address is 13601 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. About the Branch ask a Librarian telephone Reference 240-455-5451. Dial 7-1-1 to place a call through Maryland Relay.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Steven Carter, Dr. Sandra Jones, Davion Dorsett, Veronica Quarm, Khadija Hakim-Hinton, Nurbert Hughes, Jr., Walter Joiner, Bernestine Bryan, Mwezi Nsimba Mbakwe, Okezie Nzuzi Mbakwe, Nicole Falby, Beatrice Chapman, Abu Davies, Judanne Thomas, Brandon Holmes, Lawrence Omoregbe, Jordan Joseph, Marian Thomas, Roseline Omoregbe, Yannick Bourne, William Terry, Donovan Cain, Anne Kauffman, Florella Wallace, Ethel Cook, Rev. Stella Tay who are Clinton United Methodist Church members celebrating birthdays in January.

FALL FACTOR FITNESS WITH GALA

Come and partake in exercise that builds leg strength and improves body mechanics and balance, which is all important to reducing falls. Fall Factor Fitness with Gala is FREE in Multi-Purpose Room C Wednesday, January 21, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. at SAARC (Southern Area Aquatics & Recreation Complex), 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Telephone: 301-782-1442 / TTY: 301-699-2544.

SAARC SENIOR PROGRAM: INFORMATION CORNER

Senior Nutrition/Transportation 301-265-8475, Legal Aid 800-896-4213 x7750, Department of Family Services 301-265-8401, Seniors County Information 301-265-8450, Medicare Information 800-633-4227, Call-A-Bus 301-499-8603.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Celebrate Valentine's Day at THE WALRUS. Celebrate love at The Walrus Oyster and Ale House with their exclusive menu created just for the special day. Visit on February 14th and enjoy the exclusive three-course menu for \$65 per person at National Harbor.



People walk along the Labyrinth of Light at Wellsview Cottage. COURTESY PHOTO

Winter Labyrinth of Light: A Path to Hope and Healing

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Dec. 27, 2024)—For centuries, labyrinths have been used around the globe as mindfulness tools to help cultivate aspirations and personal growth. You are invited to find your footing to hope and healing with Chesapeake Life Center at Wellsview Cottage's Winter Labyrinth of Light.

Wellsview has selected Hospice of the Chesapeake as the recipient of all donations from those visiting the labyrinth this winter. **The labyrinth is open every night through March 1.** They are hosting a special night from 6 to 8 p.m. on Jan. 16 to celebrate the Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of the hospice.

Whether you are grieving a loss, serving as a caregiver, or simply looking for light and warmth in the darkness of winter, this event is open to anyone seeking a time for contemplation, stillness and fellowship. Participants will

gather in the studio space for a time of reflection led by Chesapeake Life Center grief counselor Roberta Rook before heading outside to walk the lighted labyrinth.

People should wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather. Refreshments and warm beverages will be served. The cost is \$10. Registration is required and can be completed by calling 888-501-7077 or emailing griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Wellsview Cottage: Center for Holistic & Integrative Health is at 611 & 613 Ridgely Ave., Annapolis, Maryland. For details about the center and the labyrinth, visit <https://www.wellsviewcottage.com/about-2-1>.

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family 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. For details, visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Your Infinite Paths Foundation Presents “The Longest Living Jane Doe” Movie and Panel Discussion

By PRESS OFFICER
Your Infinite Paths Foundation

WALDORF, Md. (Jan. 2, 2025)—Your Infinite Paths Foundation is proud to announce an exclusive screening of the thought-provoking documentary film, *The Longest Living Jane Doe*, followed by an engaging panel discussion with filmmakers, advocates, and subject matter experts. This event will take place on January 18, 2025, at 12:30 p.m., hosted at The Space, 2901 Festival Way, Waldorf, MD 20601.

The *Longest Living Jane Doe* tells the extraordinary true story of an unidentified woman who defied the odds and lived a life full of resilience, mystery, and determination. This compelling documentary sheds light on the societal challenges faced by the forgotten and the voiceless, inspiring audiences to reflect on issues such as identity, community, and humanity.

The event will feature:

- Film Screening:** A full showing of *The Longest Living Jane Doe*.
- Panel Discussion:** An insightful conversation with S. Monique Smith multi award winning Author and the person

behind the movie, Kathy Myers of The Center for Children, Dr. Astril Webb of Healthy Kinder International, and Kathryn Young, CEO of Your Infinite Paths Foundation are leading advocates for social justice, and experts in trafficking, and trauma.

- Audience Q&A:** An opportunity for attendees to engage with the panelists and explore the film's themes and Human Trafficking.

Event Details:

- Date:** January 18, 2025
- Time:** 12:30 p.m.
- Venue:** The Space 2901 Festival Way, Waldorf, MD 20601.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1051056447127?aff=oddtcreator>

“Through *The Longest Living Jane Doe*, we aim to spark dialogue about the unseen struggles of individuals who slip through society's cracks and are at risk of being trafficked,” said Kathryn Young, CEO of Your Infinite Paths Foundation. “This film is a powerful reminder of our shared humanity and the importance of recognizing and supporting those who are often overlooked.”
Your Infinite Paths Foundation

is dedicated to empowering individuals and communities by fostering understanding, compassion, and action through coaching principles. Our plan to open a Program House to support survivors of trauma and trafficking is just one way to meet that goal.

How to Attend: Tickets for the event can be reserved at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1051056447127?aff=oddtcreator>. Space is limited, so early registration is recommended. For media inquiries, sponsorship opportunities, or additional information, please contact Kathryn Young at info@yourinfinitepathsfoundation.org or 240-970-0163.

Join us for an unforgettable afternoon of storytelling, reflection, and dialogue. Together, let's honor the resilience of the human spirit and advocate for a world where no one is left without a name or a voice.

Your Infinite Paths Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to uplifting marginalized voices and creating pathways to empowerment through education, resource acquisition, and coaching. For more information, visit www.yourinfinitepathsfoundation.org.

BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

I Use Only VA Healthcare; Can I Get Back Medicare Taxes Paid?

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

Dear Rusty: I'm 72 years old with 20 years of military service. I am retired collecting Social Security, my military pension, and State retirement benefits. According to my SSA statement, over my working lifetime I paid \$14,302 into Medicare, but I never used that medical plan. I only bring in \$33,000 in annual income. Can I get those Medicare taxes back somehow? I've run into dead ends at SSA, Medicare and IRS websites. **Signed: Veteran Seeking Answers**

Dear Veteran Seeking Answers: First, I want to thank you for your military service to our country. You may find the "For Veterans" section of our www.amacfoundation.org website of interest.

Regarding the contributions you have made over the years to federal Medicare, I'm afraid you cannot get any of those taxes back even though you have never used Medicare healthcare services. That's because Medicare, like Social Security, is a "pay as you go" program where all contributions received from workers are used to pay for benefits for current beneficiaries (contributions aren't put into a separate account to pay for your coverage). It's also important to know that your Medicare taxes were used only to fund Medicare Part A, which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization services. Those contributions (via payroll taxes) did not entitle you to outpatient healthcare services, as provided by Medicare Part B (for which there is a monthly premium).

FYI, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part A to collect Social Security benefits after age 65. Medicare Part B isn't mandatory to collect Social Security, but assuming that, as a retired military veteran, you now receive healthcare benefits under the military's TriCare-for-Life program for retired veterans, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B to maintain your TriCare-for-Life coverage. Your military TriCare coverage coordinates with Medicare to pay for your healthcare costs. Thus, even though it may not be transparent to you, you may be benefiting from your current enrollment in Medicare.

Note that some non-career veterans can use VA healthcare services based on their service years, instead of TriCare-for-Life for retired military veterans. Non-career recipients of standard VA healthcare services are not required to be enrolled in Medicare but, in any case, cannot receive their past Medicare Part A contributions back if they choose to decline Medicare. You may have interest in this article I previously published on the topic of VA benefits versus Medicare: www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-i-have-va-coverage-should-i-get-medicare-part-b/

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.

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

VSJ & Co. Names Communications & Public Relations Manager

By PRESS OFFICER VSJ & Co.

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (Dec. 23, 2024)—VSJ & Co. has named Tiffany Young as its Communications & Public Relations Manager. With over 15 years of expertise in strategic communications, public relations, and special events across federal government agencies, nonprofits, and higher education institutions, Young brings a wealth of experience to the team.

Young emphasizes the importance of creating meaningful and measurable impact for the company's clients. In her role, she will lead public awareness initiatives, community outreach, and public relations campaigns. "I'm excited to bring my knowledge and skills to VSJ & Co.," stated Tiffany Young, "I value the work that this organization is doing in the business community and its commitment to bringing a high-level of professional communications to its clients. It is my goal to continue to provide excellent customer service to clients in need."

A native of Prince George's County, Young has a deep understanding of the Maryland-DC-Virginia region. Her proven ability to strengthen corporate identities and build community connections will be instrumental as she supports VSJ & Co.'s clients.

"Tiffany's extensive experience and passion for impactful communication will undoubtedly strengthen our ability to meet



PHOTO COURTESY VSJ & CO.

Tiffany Young

the growing demand for strategic communications and public relations services," said Veronica Jeon, CEO of VSJ & Co. "At VSJ & Co., we are driven by a mission to inspire, connect, and elevate. Tiffany embodies these values and will play a vital role in driving innovative solutions for our clients and achieving transformative outcomes."

VSJ & Co. is part of V. Companies, a dynamic portfolio of businesses founded and led by Veronica Jeon. V. Companies includes a range of industry-leading ventures spanning communications, government relations, event architecture, and

sports and entertainment. At its core, V. Companies is dedicated to creating transformative experiences that inspire, connect, and elevate. United by a commitment to elevating brands, inspiring change, and drive success, V. Companies continues to innovate and deliver transformative results for its clients.

V. Companies is a premier portfolio of high-performing brands led by Veronica Jeon, dedicated to inspiring transformation, fostering connection, and driving success. Spanning industries such as communications, government relations, event architecture, and sports and entertainment, V. Companies delivers innovative solutions that elevate brands and create meaningful impact.

Founded in 2007 and a part of V. Companies, a dynamic portfolio of ventures led by Veronica Jeon, VSJ & Co. is dedicated to creating transformative communication experiences. From strategic branding and media relations to crisis management and executive branding, VSJ & Co. helps clients navigate challenges, elevate their presence, and achieve success. As an award-winning, minority, and woman-owned firm, VSJ & Co. is recognized as a leader in innovation, diversity, and strategic communications that empowers organizations to refine their narratives, strengthen their reputations, and connect meaningfully with their audience.

CEO Spotlight: Girado Smith

Credit Union CEO Banks on Strategic Leadership and Workforce Development for Growth

By PRESS OFFICER EFSCU

GREENBELT, Md. (Dec. 23, 2024)—The career journey of Girado Smith, President & CEO of Educational Systems Federal Credit Union (EFSCU), is nothing less than inspirational. Working his way through the ranks of a top credit union in the State of Maryland is no small feat. Starting as Accounting Manager, then Assistant Vice President of Account, Vice President of Accounting & Finance, and Executive Vice President & Chief Finance Officer has given Smith an in-depth skill set and experience that is highly needed in today's financial services industry. "My journey is a testament to the incredible growth and development opportunities that exist here."

The big news is that EFSCU and Howard University Employees Federal Credit Union (HUEFCU) announced that they have merged to significantly expand the range of financial services available to employees, students, alumni and family members of Howard University as well as Howard University Hospital. "We are excited to welcome Howard University Employees Federal Credit Union members to the EFSCU family," said Smith. "We are committed to fostering financial well-being by providing competitive solutions, personalized services, and educational resources to the Howard University community." Under Smith's leadership, strategic partnerships like this don't just happen, it takes tenacity, solid leadership skills, and a commitment to creating a supportive workforce culture.

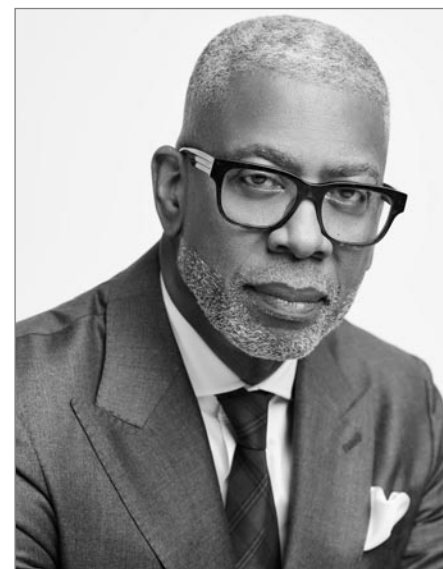


PHOTO COURTESY EFSCU

Girado Smith

Growth Through Leadership and Workforce Support

Smith is most proud of EFSCU's culture that prioritizes frequent, transparent communication, provides opportunities to participate in various initiatives, and fosters an environment that encourages professional development. "We want our employees to thrive in a workplace where they feel valued, appreciated, and empowered every day." In fact, during the past two years, Smith has deliberately made the credit union's focus on creating a welcoming and supportive culture a top priority. "Our employees are our differentiating factor and our greatest investment," he says. EFSCU employees are referred to as Ambassadors, which Smith adds, "because they are integral part of our team

and critical to our success, they also represent our brand and our mission daily with unwavering dedication."

Smith sees a bright, lucrative future for EFSCU. Under his leadership, and with the credit union's partners, EFSCU will continue to be a major player in the financial services industry in the state and region. In April of this year, the Washington Business Journal named EFSCU as the 12th largest credit union in the Greater Washington area. "It's not just about the numbers," Smith says. "From the very first loan we made until now, it's about deepening the trust and impact we have within our community. Every member's success is our success."

In 1955 a small, dedicated group of educators founded Educational Systems Federal Credit Union by volunteering their time and pooling their financial resources together to make affordable loans to their colleagues. Educational Systems Federal Credit Union is a member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative, founded in 1955 to serve the education community. With \$1.3 billion in assets, 14 branches and 95,000 members, the Credit Union strives to make financial wellness and stability accessible for all the communities they serve. Through the Support Education Foundation, the Credit Union provides student scholarships, professional development awards, and other programs to help the education community achieve excellence. EFSCU's Support Education Foundation offers professional development awards, scholarships, and provides students with the tools they need to be successful.

MONEY:

5 Tips to Outsmart Scammers

(StatePoint) Scammers don't take days off. From phishing emails to package theft, fraudsters and scammers can cost you money. Fortunately, you can stay one step ahead of them with these simple tips to help protect yourself.

1. Strengthen your online security: Safeguard your accounts by using unique, 12-character passwords and enabling multi-factor authentication whenever possible. Avoid using public Wi-Fi, such as free internet connectivity in coffee shops or libraries, where cyber criminals might be lurking to access

your information. Instead, it's safer to use your phone's mobile hotspot. Be cautious of unsolicited emails or messages promising prizes or freebies—if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Block and report anything suspicious before deleting it. And ask your provider what services they offer for safe browsing, such as Safe Browsing from T-Mobile 5G Home Internet to block malicious links.

2. Donate only to trusted charities: Before making charitable donations, check online reviews by looking up the organization and "complaint"

or "scam," or use trusted resources like Charity Navigator. Use a credit card instead of a debit card as they offer stronger fraud protections and don't give scammers direct access to your bank account.

3. Use your wireless provider's scam protection: Scammers often rely on robocalls and spoofed numbers to make calls look inviting to answer. Most providers have protection from robocalling and spoofing, including T-Mobile and Metro by T-Mobile, which give customers Scam Shield, a free feature that labels scam calls as "Scam Likely." These

calls can be blocked by dialing #662# or turning on Scam Block in the Scam Shield and T-Life apps. Scam Shield blocked 19.8 billion calls in 2023, giving users peace of mind. Lastly, forward suspicious texts to 7726.

4. Monitor deliveries and protect packages: Mail and package theft happen all year round, especially as online shopping continues to grow. Track your shipments in real-time using delivery notifications and apps. Consider installing a smart door camera to monitor activity on your front porch. Many models offer live video feeds and motion detection, sending real-time alerts so you can quickly contact authorities if needed.

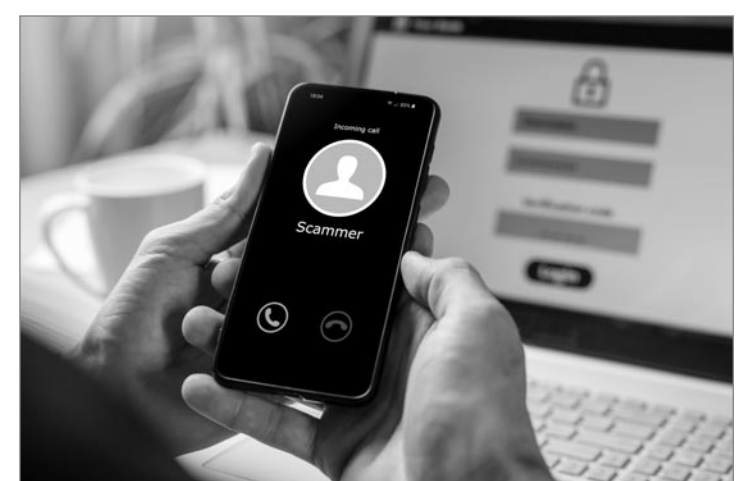


PHOTO SOURCE: © RONSTIK / ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

5. Stay informed and report suspicious activity: Stay updated on the latest scams with resources like T-Mobile's Privacy Center and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). If you encounter suspicious or

fraudulent activity, report it to the FTC at ftc.gov/complaint and the National Center for Disaster Fraud. By reporting scams, you can help protect others and reduce the spread of fraudulent schemes.

COMMENTARY

Ben Jealous
Executive Director,
Sierra Club



Gas is Dirty. LNG Proponents Don't Just Ignore the Facts, They Ignore the Human Toll.

Not long after her adopted twins came to live with her in Freeport, Texas, Melanie Oldham saw their health start to decline. Both children were diagnosed with severe asthma.

As Oldham sent the twins to school—every day with their inhalers—she realized a lot of the kids in her part of Brazoria County had bad asthma. She also began to see that other serious chronic illnesses were rampant in her community.

“It’s shocking the number of people in their 50s that already have severe COPD, all the skin problems we know are caused by different types of emissions, premature heart attacks, spikes in certain types of cancers—including one form of childhood leukemia—and the number of children with asthma is staggering.”

Those emissions she is referring to are from the oil, gas, and petrochemical plants peppering the landscape of her part of the Gulf Coast.

Increasingly, the source of that pollution is the growing number of liquefied methane gas (commonly referred to as LNG) facilities in the region.

Freeport LNG, in Oldham’s town, is the third largest LNG export terminal by capacity in the country. The largest is Sabine Pass LNG, just a few hours along the coast from Freeport. That facility sits just over the Louisiana border from Port Arthur, TX—which is also home to Port Arthur LNG, currently under construction.

Port Arthur, like Freeport, is a textbook environmental sacrifice zone. John Beard, a Port Arthur community leader, says the entire region is a “sacrifice coast.” Texas Monthly once labeled this part of the state the “Cancer Belt.” Beard speaks of members of his community like Etta Hebert, a two-time cancer survivor whose daughter also has cancer and whose husband Roy just passed away from a long battle with cancer on November 30. And Beard’s own family has been impacted by the intense pollution in the area. His oldest son had to have a kidney transplant—despite no family history of kidney disease—and his daughter had a brain tumor removed.

This is what the extractive fossil fuel industry does to human bodies and communities. It is the

real-life human toll of our continued reliance on fuels like methane gas. And it is a toll that will get significantly steeper if the US expands LNG exports and the infrastructure to support a continued LNG boom.

Despite decades of branding and rebranding efforts by the industry, the fact remains: methane gas is simply yet another dirty, dangerous fossil fuel polluting our communities.

LNG takes the deadly threats methane gas poses to the extreme, not just by increasing the amount of gas fracked, but by adding dangerous and pollution-heavy steps to the process. From fracking to pipeline transmission to the compression and liquefaction of the gas and the shipping of the LNG overseas, virtually every stage of the lifecycle leaks methane (which captures 80 times more heat than carbon dioxide), is powered by the burning of other dirty fossil fuels like oil, and carries the risk of catastrophic ruptures and explosions.

Yet fossil fuel interests and their allies in government continue to promote the fallacy of methane gas as a “bridge” fuel. Former presidential climate envoy John Kerry rightfully points to a “massive movement in the fossil fuel industry” to sanitize fracked gas’s image and brand it as part of our clean energy future. And the push to further build out LNG exports not only threatens the pace and success of the necessary clean energy transition already underway, it threatens to drive up energy costs for American households. The Department of Energy released an updated analysis just this month confirming that unfettered LNG exports would drive up domestic energy prices—and clearly showing that approving new or expanded gas exports is bad for the American people.

Part of the fossil fuel industry’s “massive movement” is an effort to use former politicians to sway core constituencies. One industry front group, Nat-

ural Allies for a Clean Energy Future, sends out politicians like former Ohio Congressman and presidential candidate Tim Ryan to tout the virtues of methane gas at events and on news shows without disclosing that they’re on the gas industry’s payroll.

According to the organization’s IRS 990 tax form, Natural Allies seems to have compensated Tim Ryan to the tune of \$246,943 in 2023 alone. The same 990 shows Natural Allies also spent \$290,723 on public relations services from a firm where former Senator Mary Landrieu (one of their other key voices) works.

Natural Allies also pays Black leaders to deceive Black audiences about how methane gas power is needed to keep their home energy costs down. Former Philadelphia mayor Michael Nutter and former Florida Congressman Kendrick Meek work in tandem to peddle that fossil fuel industry lie at events and in the Black press.

Meanwhile, as former Mayor Nutter and former Rep. Meek make the case that more methane gas will help Black, brown, and low-income communities, what about the communities of color and low-income communities bearing the brunt of the deadly pollution from this toxic industry? What about a place like Port Arthur, a majority Black and Latino city where nearly 30 percent of its people live below the poverty line?

To that, Port Arthur’s John Beard says: “By bringing more gas into play, you say that you’re helping me? When my town has some of the worst air quality in the country? When we’re already suffering from twice the state and national average for cancer, and high rates of heart, lung, kidney disease? When there’s already rampant air, land, and water pollution in my community? And that’s ‘helping me?’ My God, then I hate to see what you’re going to do if you want to hurt me!”

—December 27, 2024

Prestigious Maryland Humanities SHINE Grant and Artistic Insights Fund Grant Awarded to Chesapeake Film Festival

By PRESS OFFICER
Chesapeake Film Festival

EASTON, Md. (Jan. 1, 2025)—The Chesapeake Film Festival (CFF) is proud to announce that it has been awarded the prestigious Maryland Humanities SHINE Grant highlighting the festival’s commitment to fostering cultural enrichment and storytelling through film and film-related events. The acronym stands for Strengthening the Humanities Investment in Nonprofits for Equity. Notably, CFF is the sole organization in Talbot County to receive this distinguished grant and stands as the only film festival among the 2025 awardees of this esteemed grants program. This honor underscores the festival’s dedication to bridging the humanities and the arts, further solidifying its role as a vital cultural cornerstone in the region.

The Chesapeake Film Festi-



PHOTO COURTESY CHESAPEAKE FILM FESTIVAL

Monda Raquel Webb, director/producer & CFF Vice President, Amber Monet, director/producer & CFF Programmer.

val is also excited to announce that it has been awarded a 2025 Artistic Insights Fund Grant from the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. This prestigious grant will support the festival’s mission to celebrate and show-

case outstanding independent films, fostering creativity and cultural engagement throughout the region. With the support of the Mid-Shore Community Foundation, the Chesapeake Film Festival is poised to en-

hance its programming, bringing unique and diverse cinematic experiences to the Eastern Shore. The festival is grateful for the foundation’s commitment to the arts and looks forward to the opportunities this grant will provide in 2025 and beyond.

These generous contributions will play a vital role in enhancing the festival’s ability to bring diverse, high-quality films to the Eastern Shore, as well as expanding our community engagement through arts education and outreach programs.

Free Upcoming Festival Screening—January 17, 2025

In addition, the Chesapeake Film Festival in partnership with the Maryland State Arts Council and the Talbot County Free Library is thrilled to present a FREE back-by-popular demand screening of the critically acclaimed film “Call Me Dancer” at the Talbot County Free Li-

brary in Easton, Maryland on Friday, January 17, at 4:00 PM. The award-winning film was a prominent festival highlight this year. It tells the story of a young street dancer from Mumbai whose passion and determination lead him on a transformative journey to pursue his dreams of becoming a professional dancer against all odds.

This event is part of the Chesapeake Film Festival’s ongoing commitment to bringing thought-provoking and engaging cinema to the community, fostering a love for the arts and encouraging dialogue through film. Attendees will not only experience the artistry of this powerful story, but will also have an opportunity to connect with the local arts community in a welcoming and enriching environment. Don’t miss this chance to be inspired by a tale of perseverance and the universal language of dance. There is no registration required to attend this event. Thank you Talbot County Free Library and MSAC! To discover more about the Maryland State Arts Council and how they impact Maryland, visit msac.org.

Festival Opens Submissions For 2025 Consideration February 1, 2025

The Chesapeake Film Festival (CFF) is delighted to announce that film submissions for its highly anticipated 2025 edition will open on February 1, 2025. As the festival celebrates its 18th year, filmmakers from around the globe are invited to submit their works for consideration in a variety of categories, including narrative features, environmental films, documentaries, shorts, and student films. Don’t miss the chance to showcase your film in this prestigious festival, which continues to highlight thought-provoking stories and innovative filmmaking. Details on submission guidelines and deadlines can be found on the CFF FilmFreeway page beginning on February 1, 2025.

For more information visit www.chesapeakefilmfestival.com.

The MD Humanities Grant has been financed in part with State Funds from the Maryland Historical Trust, an agency of the Maryland Department of Planning which is part of the State of Maryland.

State Fire Marshal Warns of Indoor Fire Pit Hazards and S’mores Risks

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland State Fire Marshal

STATEWIDE (Jan. 2, 2025)—As the winter season brings families together for cozy gatherings, indoor fire pits have become an increasingly popular addition to homes looking to recreate the warmth and ambiance of an outdoor campfire. However, Acting State Fire Marshal Jason M. Mowbray is urging caution when using these devices indoors, especially when preparing a beloved treat—s’mores—over an open flame.

Indoor Fire Pit Hazards:

While indoor fire pits can create a charming atmosphere, they pose significant risks. The main concern involves flame jetting, a dangerous phenomenon when refilling alcohol- or liquid-fuel-burning fire pits while any flame remains.

“Flame jetting happens when

the fuel source, often alcohol-based, is added to the fire pit and vaporizes, causing a burst of flame to jet out of the pit,” said Mowbray. “If any open flame is nearby during refueling, the vapor can ignite explosively, leading to serious burns, property damage, or even fatalities. This is especially dangerous in indoor settings where confined spaces compound the risks.”

Three reported incidents involving indoor fire pits in Maryland have occurred in the past few months. Earlier this week, investigators with the Anne Arundel County Fire & Explosive Investigation Unit reported that an adult female and a nine-year-old child had both suffered burns as a result of the fire. While the adult was treated on the scene, the child was transported to the Pediatric Burn Center and Johns Hopkins Children’s Center with severe burns.

S’mores Safety Concerns:

The festive tradition of roasting marshmallows over fire pits to make s’mores is also at risk. In particular, the proximity of children and guests to the flame increases the likelihood of burns or accidental fires. With rising indoor fire pit sales, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has reported two deaths and dozens of serious burn injuries.

Preventing Fire Pit Accidents:

To minimize the dangers associated with indoor fire pits and enjoy s’mores safely, the Office of the State Fire Marshal recommends the following precautions:

- **Always extinguish the flame before refueling**—Ensure the flame is completely out when refilling a liquid-fuel fire pit. Let the fire pit cool for several minutes to avoid the risk of flame jetting.

- **Use safe fuels**—Only use fuels specifically recommended for indoor fire pits. Avoid alcohol-based fuels unless specified for indoor use, and opt for safer alternatives like gel fuels.

- **Keep children and pets at a safe distance**—An adult should always monitor fire pits. Keep children and pets away from the flame, and be cautious when roasting marshmallows.

- **Proper ventilation**—Always ensure the room is well-ventilated when using an indoor fire pit to prevent the buildup of harmful gases like carbon monoxide. *Never leave a fire pit unattended.*

- **Install a smoke and carbon monoxide detector.** A reliable detector system is essential for early detection of hazardous gas buildup.

“The recent incidents in Maryland, including the serious injury of a child, underscore the importance of following safety guidelines to prevent tragic accidents. By taking proper precautions, families can safely en-

joy their fire pits and ensure that their gatherings remain fun and accident-free,” stated Mowbray

For more information on safe

fire pit use, visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s Stop Using Alcohol or Other Liquid-Burning Fire Pits.

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A New Start to the New Year!

Convenient Breakfasts to Kickstart the New Year

FAMILY FEATURES

Starting the morning on the right foot can set the tone for a productive day. Even when crunched for time before work or school, eating a filling breakfast before heading out the door is an important part of setting yourself up for success.

Between work, kids and making it to that early morning workout session, finding time to prepare a quick and tasty meal can be a real challenge. For a flavorful and easy breakfast that can be on the table in just 8 minutes when you're in a rush, try this Quick Breakfast Skillet. With crispy bacon, scrambled eggs and rich cheddar cheese, it's a perfect way to fuel your morning.

The secret, convenient ingredient: fluffy Minute Butter & Sea Salt Jasmine Rice Cups. Ready in just 60 seconds to fit into the day with no hassle, this versatile and flavorful ingredient is perfectly portioned in a BPA-free cup and features a delicious blend of familiar flavors to liven up breakfast.

Or try something new and delicious with this One-Pot Rice Shakshuka. A dish with origins in the Middle East and Northern Africa, shakshuka is traditionally made with a base of tomatoes, vegetables and seasonings, such as cumin and paprika. Then eggs are cracked on top and cooked in the sauce.

This version takes it a step further with the addition of Minute Instant White Rice, which provides a heartier texture to keep you feeling satisfied longer. Simply precooked and dried — nothing added but convenience — you can enjoy its light, fluffy texture after just 5 minutes in the microwave or on the stove. Plus, it works for those with dietary restrictions, including gluten-free, vegan or vegetarian.

Find more breakfast inspiration to keep you energized and ready to conquer the day at minuterice.com.



Quick Breakfast Skillet



One-Pot Rice Shakshuka

One-Pot Rice Shakshuka

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 25 minutes
Servings: 6

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and diced
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes with garlic and herbs
- 2 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups Minute Instant White Rice
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley

Heat oven to 400 F.
In high-sided, ovenproof skillet

over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion, bell pepper, cumin and smoked paprika; saute 8-10 minutes until vegetables are tender.

Add tomatoes and water to skillet. Bring to boil. Stir in rice and reduce heat to low. Cover and cook 3-5 minutes, or until most water is absorbed.

Using spoon, create six small wells in rice mixture. Crack one egg into each well. Transfer skillet to oven; cook 12-15 minutes, or until rice is tender, egg whites are set and yolks are runny, or until cooked as desired.

Garnish shakshuka with parsley before serving.

Tip: For spicy eggs, stir 1 tablespoon harissa paste into rice mixture before adding eggs. Or serve shakshuka with hot sauce.

Quick Breakfast Skillet

Prep time: 2 minutes
Cook time: 6 minutes
Servings: 1

- 1 Minute Butter & Sea Salt Jasmine Rice Cup
- 1 slice bacon, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- cracked black pepper

Heat rice according to package directions. Heat medium frying pan over medium heat and add bacon. Cook about 4 minutes, or to desired doneness.

Scramble egg and add to frying pan. Cook 1 minute, or to desired doneness.

In bowl, mix rice, egg and bacon mixture and cheese. Top with cracked black pepper.

Tips: Breakfast sausage or breakfast potatoes can be substituted for bacon. Add favorite hot sauce for a little heat.

Tackle Wellness Goals by Adding a Touch of Green

Better-for-you recipes inspired by savory salad kits

FAMILY FEATURES

Around the start of a new year, many people are setting their wellness intentions, from incorporating a variety of greens into meals to boosting daily step goals, drinking more water and practicing gratitude.

As part of the journey, it's important to rethink nutrition and your recipe repertoire to include better-for-you meals. For example, you can satisfy seafood cravings while getting your protein fix with Italian Crusted Salmon with Creamy Truffle Caesar Salad. This one-pan solution is paired with a Fresh Express Twisted Creamy Truffle Caesar Chopped Salad Kit, inspired by high-end dining experiences with flavors that transport you to the finest restaurants around the world.

The kit allows you to indulge in crunchy garlic brioche croutons paired with garden

fresh crispy romaine lettuce, delicate sprinkles of truffle Parmesan cheese shreds and creamy dressing, transforming every bite into a sensation to be savored.

With more than 100 varieties of fresh, healthy and convenient ready-to-eat salads, Fresh Express can also provide recipe inspiration and support on your journey toward a healthier lifestyle. The unique blend of little red and green baby butter lettuces in the Sweet & Crunchy Salad Blend is perfect for adding to Grilled Zucchini Nachos, a delightfully tasty alternative to traditional nachos. This veggie-forward version offers a healthier dinner idea or an easy snack for game day gatherings and other group celebrations.

Visit freshexpress.com to discover more than 380 fresh recipes and find a store near you.



Italian Crusted Salmon with Creamy Truffle Caesar Salad

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 2

- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons chopped, fresh rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon honey
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons panko breadcrumbs
- 3 tablespoons finely chopped walnuts
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 salmon fillets
- nonstick cooking spray
- 1 bag (9.3 ounces) Fresh Express Twisted Caesar Creamy Truffle Caesar Chopped Kit Salad
- 2 lemon wedges (optional)

Heat oven to 425 F. Line sheet pan with parchment paper. In small bowl, combine garlic, lemon juice, rosemary, honey and salt. In another small bowl, combine breadcrumbs, walnuts and olive oil.

Place salmon on prepared sheet pan. Spread mustard mixture over fish; sprinkle with panko mixture, pressing to adhere. Lightly coat with nonstick cooking spray.

Bake 12-15 minutes, or until fish flakes easily with fork.

Place greens from salad kit in large bowl. Drizzle with dressing; mix well.

Evenly divide salad among two plates. Top with salmon. Serve each with lemon wedge, if desired.

Grilled Zucchini Nachos

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 8 minutes
Servings: 4

- 4 medium zucchini, sliced into 1/4-inch thick rounds
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste
- 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 bag (5 ounces) Fresh Express Sweet & Crunchy Salad Blend
- 1 cup canned corn, cooked and drained
- 1 cup canned black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup tomato, diced
- 1/4 cup green onions
- 1/4 cup red onions
- 1 jalapeno, finely diced (optional)
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sour cream

Heat grill to medium heat.

In large bowl, toss zucchini and olive oil to coat. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Place zucchini on grill pan; grill 4-5 minutes until just tender. Top zucchini with cheese and cook until cheese melts, 1-2 minutes.

Remove from grill and place on plate or large platter. Top cheesy grilled zucchini with salad blend; corn; black beans; tomato; green and red onions; jalapeno, if desired; avocado; cilantro; and sour cream.



