

# The Prince George's Post



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## Bowie Native Provides Instruction to a Search and Rescue Swimmer Aboard USS America



U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST SEAMAN JEADAN ANDRE

**250122-N-QR506-1022 PHILIPPINE SEA (Jan. 22, 2025)** Ensign Elise Lindsay, right, from Bowie, Maryland, assigned to the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6), provides instruction for a Search and Rescue (SAR) swimmer to enter the water during small boat operations, Jan. 22. America, lead ship of the America Amphibious Ready Group, is operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

## PGCPS Science Teacher Receives Presidential Award for Excellence in STEM Education

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Jan. 28, 2025)—Kenmoor Middle School science teacher Modupe Olafunmiloye is one of just four educators in Maryland and 110 nationwide to receive the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST), the nation's highest award for teaching in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

"We couldn't be prouder of Ms. Olafunmiloye for earning this prestigious recognition in STEM education," said Superintendent Millard House II. "Her dedication to inspiring and empowering students exemplifies the excellence and passion our educators bring to the classroom every day."

After leaving public education to found STEMWonders Education and Enrichment, an organization that provides hands-on STEM opportunities for all students, Olafunmiloye

returned to Kenmoor in October 2024 at the request of former colleague and Talented & Gifted (TAG) teacher Beth Novick.

"Ms. Olafunmiloye's innovative approach to teaching and dedication to creating inclusive, engaging learning experiences is a model of excellence," said Kenmoor principal Rebecca Turner. "We are thrilled to have her return to our Kenmoor Middle School family."

Prior to her years of work with STEMWonders Education and Enrichment, Olafunmiloye served Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) students with cognitive disabilities at Buck Lodge Middle School for five years and spent eight years at Kenmoor Middle School teaching general education science and high school biology to gifted students.

A passionate advocate for accessible STEM education, she created after-school clubs for robotics, environmental science, and STEM competitions. Her

students won multiple Maryland State awards, including in eCybermission. Olafunmiloye has also served as a mentor teacher and held a lead technology role, earning recognition at both the school and county levels.

Olafunmiloye holds a bachelor's degree in zoology from the University of Ilorin and a master's degree in zoology from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She is certified in both biology and K-12 special education.

Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 201 schools and centers, more than 133,000 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.

## Resident of the Sky Bridge at Town Center Helps Spread Love With Unique Hand-Crafted Cards

Renee Manago Griffin leads Watermark University class to create heartfelt pieces and memories with fellow residents

By PRESS OFFICER  
Watermark Retirement Communities

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (Jan. 31, 2025)—Giving and receiving cards for Valentine's Day has a long tradition of bringing joy and love to others. For one resident of The Sky Bridge at Town Center, a Watermark retirement community, this tradition has taken on new life as she now leads a Watermark University class to teach her fellow residents how to make their own unforgettable cards by hand.

Renee Manago Griffin has always been a crafter, enjoying

the process of making something by hand, especially when it's for others. "For years, I've done a lot of different crafts; I've tried my hand at flower arranging, clothing designs, jewelry, crocheting, and of course, card making."

"I decided to make a few cards for the women at my church. After the holidays they

**Renee Manago Griffin, a resident of The Sky Bridge at Town Center, teaches a Watermark University class on making holiday cards by hand in December 2024.**

PHOTO COURTESY WATERMARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES



told me that they threw out most storebought cards but kept mine because they loved that they were specially made," said Griffin. "It's not as common to get cards these days so handmade cards are extra special."

Around major holidays she began to send out even more cards, a pursuit she enjoyed with fellow artists at Riverdale Baptist Church, where "everyone would come to just talk, do art, eat together, and socialize." During the pandemic, she and the church community used cards to cheer up others in the community during that difficult time.

This passion for card making



PHOTO COURTESY WATERMARK RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Examples of cards made in Griffin's class.

has followed her into her new home at The Sky Bridge at Town Center, as well. After moving to the community in August 2023, Griffin embraced having an entire room dedicated to crafting and started teaching a class on card marking for her fellow residents.

Now, around major holidays, residents in the community come together to bring out their creative side and brighten the spirits of those around them. This month, they will get to pour

some extra love into their creations in honor of the Valentine's Day holiday.

"I'm so pleased with the group," she said. "We just have a lot of fun."

Griffin's work with card making has even drawn national attention throughout the Watermark Retirement Communities. She was featured in the Expressions calendar for the 2025-26 year. "No matter what, it brings people joy to get a card and to make a card," she said.

## The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission Teams Up With Maryland Stadium Authority and Attain Sports for \$50 Million Renovation of Prince George's Stadium

Transforming Bowie's Beloved Stadium with State-of-the-Art Upgrades

By PRESS OFFICER  
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (Jan. 29, 2025)—The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), in partnership with the Maryland Stadium Authority (MSA) and Attain Sports, owner of the Chesapeake Baysox—the Double-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles—today announced plans to design and construct significant renovations to Prince George's Stadium in Bowie, Maryland.

Originally opened in 1994, Prince George's Stadium, owned by M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, has been a beloved destination for family entertainment and professional baseball in Prince George's County for over three decades. The

planned renovations are part of a broader initiative by the State of Maryland, which in 2022 authorized MSA to issue up to \$200M for sports entertainment facilities across the state. This initiative prioritizes addressing identified by Major League Baseball (MLB) Player Development League (PDL) deficiencies in the minor league stadiums located throughout the state.

Attain Sports, which acquired the Chesapeake Baysox (formerly the Bowie Baysox) in 2021, holds a lease for Prince George's Stadium through 2032, with options to play through 2042.

Prince George's Stadium has received MSA's approval for approximately \$50 million in targeted renovations in the facility. M-NCPPC, MSA, and Attain Sports have selected Gilbane, with design partner EwingCole, as the design-build team to execute the upgrades. Additionally, the Canopy

Team will assist Attain Sports and M-NCPPC through the design process.

The design phase will continue into early 2025, with construction projected to begin in March 2025 and extend into 2026. Notably, the renovation work is not expected to disrupt the Chesapeake Baysox's playing season, ensuring that fans can continue to enjoy baseball and family-friendly entertainment at Prince George's Stadium throughout the project.

Complementing the broader renovation project, M-NCPPC and Attain Sports also announced the installation of two new state-of-the-art videoboards for the 2025 season. These videoboards will enhance the fan experience by delivering high-definition, dynamic visuals and engaging in-game content, and an interactive atmosphere for baseball games and special events alike.

"Prince George's Stadium has been a cherished

gathering place for families, fans, and the community for over 30 years, and these renovations mark an exciting new chapter in its history," said Peter A. Shapiro, Chair of the Prince George's County Planning Board and M-NCPPC. "This project reflects our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for our residents by delivering state-of-the-art amenities and preserving this beloved venue as a hub for sports, entertainment, and community pride. We are proud to work alongside our partners to ensure that Prince George's Stadium continues to inspire and bring people together for generations to come."

"These renovations represent a significant investment in the future of Prince George's Stadium

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

### Passenger plane and military helicopter collide over Potomac—no survivors

Back on January 13, 1982, I was driving home from a college class when my car radio announced that Air Florida Flight 90 had crashed into the 14th Street Bridge, broke up, and fell into the river. Most passengers were lost. For weeks there was hardly any other news.

That all came back to me with the news that an American Airlines flight with 60 passengers had collided with a military helicopter with three passengers, near National Airport, plunging both flights into the Potomac River. It was January 29 and, once again, there's no other news. It is unbelievably tragic. Again.

### Who were the passengers?

"Prayers for our sister Christina Stovall (Lovey) and her family," is the message Elaine Seidman sent out to friends. Christina, apparently, was a La Reine High School grad. She has lost her son Mikey and six of his friends in the crash. They belonged to an ice-skating team.

About a third of the victims were skaters, coaches and family members returning from the 2025 U.S. Figure Skating Championships held last week in Wichita.

Steve Johnson, of Waldorf, and seven of his Maryland friends also died in the crash. They were returning from a Kansas hunting trip. He was a member of UA Steamfitters Local 602.

More sad and tragic stories will surface over the next weeks. The investigation will go on for months. And all of us will remember this tragedy, forever.

### Town of Morningside

Morningside Mayor Benn Cann was the first customer when the new McDonald's, at Suitland and Allentown Road, finally opened on January 30. I didn't think to ask what he ordered.

Town Elections will be held Monday, May 5. Up for election will be the Mayor and 2 Council Members. Candidate Petitions, for those who want to run for Of-

fice, must be turned in by March 3, 5 p.m.

Morningside holds a Work Session February 11 and a Town Meeting Feb. 18, both beginning at 7.

Last week a rabid racoon was reported at the entrance to the Foulis HS parking lot. The Morningside Chief checked out the racoon, found it in a sad state, and put it out of its misery.

### Vote for County Exec

The vote for Prince George's County Executive continues through March 4. If you live in the County, you should have received a ballot. You can vote in the quiet of your home. I did.

The last County Exec was Angela Alsbrooks who resigned December 2, 2024, after being elected Senator.

Running for the office are Aisha Braveboy, Rushern Baker, Calvin Hawkins, Alonzo Washington, Tonya Sweat, Marcelles Crews, Ron Hunt, Albert Slocum and Jesse Peed. And maybe more as this column goes to press.

Fill out your ballot and mail it or find a Drop Box.

Prince George's County needs a County Executive.

### Blood Drive

VFW Auxiliary and the Red Cross are hosting a blood drive and invite you to participate. It will be held at the Morningside Municipal Center, 6901 Ames Street, on Saturday, March 16, 11 a.m. For more information, call 301-736-2301.

### Black History Month Family Day

The Wayne K. Curry Sports and Learning Center comes to life on February 22 with local Black vendors, food offerings from local chefs, performances, interactive activities and workshops for all ages on February 22, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free.

The Wayne K. Curry Sports and Learning Center is at 8001 Sheriff Road, Hyattsville.

### Tagalog Mass

Pastor of St. Philip's Parish, Father

Ryan Islo Pineda, who hails from the Philippines, offers Mass in their language (Tagalog) every second Sunday at 4 p.m. The next Tagalog Mass will be February 9. He also invites attendees to stay on for Filipino food in the social hall after Mass.

St. Philip's is at 5416 Henderson Way, in Camp Springs. Information: 301-423-5821.

### Judith Busky, longtime Skyline resident

Judith Ann Busky, who formerly lived on Elmendorf Drive in Skyline and worked at the Census Bureau, died January 24 at Heritage Village Memory Care in Gainesville, Va. She was 86.

Judy (as I always knew her) was born in Pineville, W.Va., daughter of Willie Garnet Short and Mae Eliouse (Jerrell) Short.

She began her career on Capitol Hill, working as a secretary in the office of Congressman John Rooney (D-NY). Later she worked for the Census Bureau in the Human Resources office.

She was a founding member of the Skyline Citizens Association, a devoted homemaker, and a good friend.

She's survived by her husband of almost 61 years, Henry; sons Michael, Steven, Christopher and daughter-in-law Krista (Wright) Busky. She also leaves grandchildren, Evan, Dominic, Nicholas, Matthew, Joshua and wife Maddy (Pora) Busky. She was predeceased by her brother David Short. Visitation was February 1 at Lee Funeral Home.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Connie Waby and Mary (Stakem) Crane, Feb. 9; Alma Richardson and Winnie Jones, Feb. 10; Ginny Call, Dawn Witherow and David Chambers, Feb. 11; Sophia Grace Shives, Angie Miller, Katelyn Dudding and Pat Miller, Feb. 13; Joan Rose and Scott Jenkins, Feb. 14; Father Ted Hegnauer, Mary Desmarais, David Chambers, Mary Young and Yveta Sears, Feb. 15.

Happy Anniversary to Frank & Soo Wilson on Feb. 15.

## Black History Calendar of Events

### The Legacy of Harriet Tubman:

#### A Performance by Cortenia Smith

Date and time: Tuesday, February 11, 2025, 6:00–7:00 p.m.

Description: Step into the remarkable life of Harriet Tubman with this one-woman show featuring Cortenia Smith. Known for leading enslaved people to freedom via the Underground Railroad, Tubman's legacy also includes her work as a spy during the Civil War and as a suffragist, tireless in her advocacy for justice and equality. This performance brings to life her strength, determination, and commitment to freedom.

Cost: Free

Location: Joe's Movement Emporium, 3309 Bunker Hill Road, Mount Rainier, MD 20712

Contact: <https://ww1.pgcmis.info/events>; Mount Rainier Library 240-455-5451

### Ekphrastic Poetry Workshop

Date and time: Saturday, February 15, 2025, 1–3 p.m.

Description: Led by esteemed poet Sistah Joy and featuring the striking black & white photography of Amira Rasayon, this immersive workshop invites you to explore the intersection of poetry and visual art. Discover the art of ekphrastic poetry, craft your own inspired pieces, and hear from the featured artist herself. Don't miss this intergenerational & interdisciplinary creative experience! Limited Spots.

Register: [www.pgahc.org/events/bhm-poetry](http://www.pgahc.org/events/bhm-poetry)

Cost: FREE

Ages: Ages 10–Adult

Location: Arts'tination, National Harbor, 162 Waterfront St, Oxon Hill, MD 20745

### The Sound of D.C.:

#### A Visual History of Go-Go Artist and Curator Talk

Date and time: Saturday, February 15, 2025, 2–4 p.m.

Description: The Sound of DC: A Visual History is a four-part exhibition series focused on the rich history of the music scene in the DMV area. The newest chapter of this series focuses on Go-Go, a style of funk that originated in D.C. in the 1970s; leading into a look at how fashion factored into these unique D.C. music scenes; and concluding with photography from behind-the-scenes at prominent local music venues. Each section will collaborate with local stakeholders and exhibit artifacts such as posters, flyers, zines, photographs, and audio recordings.

Cost: FREE

Location: Brentwood Arts Exchange, 3901 Rhode Island Avenue, Brentwood, MD

Contact: (301) 277-2863, [brentwoodarts@pgparks.com](mailto:brentwoodarts@pgparks.com)

### Marietta House Museum Black History Month Talk:

#### Nottingham Middle Passage

Date and time: Thursday, February 20, 2025, 6:30–8 p.m.

Description: Enslaved Africans disembarked in Nottingham in Prince George's County, MD between 1751 and 1771. Join historian Janis Hagey to learn about ongoing research about the people who were trafficked in the trans-Atlantic human trade along the Patuxent River, a site of memory today. This is a hybrid event. Registration is required for online participants to receive the TEAMS link. Walk-ins welcome. Register at this direct link: <https://tinyurl.com/4na8j9yu>

Cost: \$5/adult, Ages under 12 free. Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Ages: 12 & up

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

### Elegance through the Eras

Date and time: Saturday, February 22, 2025, 6–9:30 p.m.

Description: Join us for an unforgettable evening, honoring the rich heritage and timeless style of Black Culture. Experience live music, fashion, entertainment, and décor that pays homage to Black excellence. Come celebrate the past, present, and future—TOGETHER!

Cost: \$20 Register through ParksDirect

Location: William Beanes Community Center, 5108 Dianna Drive, Suitland-Silver Hill, MD

Contact: (301) 568-7719 [williambeansc@pgparks.com](mailto:williambeansc@pgparks.com)

### Tribute to Gladys Knight

Date and time: Saturday, February 22, 2025, 8–10:30 p.m.

Description: Gladys Knight is a legendary singer known for her powerful vocals and captivating performances. Her music has touched the hearts of millions and has inspired countless artists across generations. This tribute to Gladys Knight highlights her incredible talent, her contributions to music, and her impact on the industry. Join us as we celebrate her iconic songs, her soulful voice, and her lasting influence on the world of music. Gladys Knight is a true icon, and this tribute honors her enduring legacy.

Cost: General \$30; Senior & Student \$25. Buy Tickets through ParksDirect

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

Contact: (301) 203-6070 [harmonyhallarts@pgparks.com](mailto:harmonyhallarts@pgparks.com)

### Book Talk & Tour: "Memories of a Tuskegee Airmen Nurse"

Date and time: Saturday, March 8, 1–3 p.m.

Description: The Tuskegee Airmen were African American aviation pioneers who trained as combat pilots during World War II. But the "Tuskegee Experience" encompassed more than just pilots and it included women of the Army Nurses Corps. Join author Ms. Pia Marie Winters Jordan as she discusses her book, "Memories of a Tuskegee Airmen Nurse and Her Military Sisters," and shares stories about these educated, brave, and pioneering women, including her mother, First Lieutenant Louise Lomax Winter. This program includes entry to the museum and a guided Black Aviators gallery tour. Limited seating. Registration required by March 7.

Cost: \$5/Person. FoFF Members FREE. ParksDirect ticket link available Feb 1.

Ages: 18+

Location: College Park Aviation Museum, 1985 Corporal Frank Scott Drive, College Park, MD

Contact: (301) 864-6029 [collegeparkaviation@pgparks.com](mailto:collegeparkaviation@pgparks.com)

## Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

### CIAA ALUMNI VOLUNTEER TEAM

Calling all volunteers! We need your help! The Bowie State University Office of Alumni Engagement and Stewardship is looking for committed alumni who will join us in our mission to make a positive impact as host of the CIAA 2025. Sign up and be a part of this exciting volunteer opportunity. [www.bowiestate.edu/ciaa](http://www.bowiestate.edu/ciaa).

### BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Join St. Philip's Church located at 13801 Baden Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20603 in celebrating Black History Month. Financial Check-up Informational Session Saturday, February 8 from 2–3 p.m. Learn about tools that can help protect families and increase generational wealth. Taste of Soul Food Sunday, February 9 after the 9:30 a.m. Service. Enjoy a taste of the ethnic cuisine associated with African American history and culture. Black Love Saturday, February 15 (2–3:30 p.m.). Fashion Show Saturday, February 22 (2–4 p.m.). Celebrate our style and grace as we walk the runway in African, urban style, smart casual, and formal wear. Black Success Sunday, February 23 (During the 9:30 a.m. Service). Opportunity to look back to look forward as we explore the Black success stories. Let us come together to reflect, learn, and celebrate. We look forward to seeing you. Wear your Black History and African prints all month.

### TRIBUTE TO RUTH TURNER

In 1964, Ruth received a Licensed Practical Nursing degree from Prince George's Community Hospital School of Nursing in Cheverly, Maryland where she served in the surgical wing as the post operating Charge Nurse. Because of her leadership and academic achievement she was awarded the 1964 Honor Bar for attaining the highest-grade point average in Theory and Practice for Obstetrical Nursing. Ruth entered the Prince George's County Public School's System to serve as school nurse at Bethune and Gwynn Park Middle Schools until her retirement in 1988.

During her years as a member of Christ United Methodist Woman, Ruth was President of the Washington East District Auxiliary and Volunteer Service of the N.M Carroll Home in Baltimore, Maryland. A highlight of her church life was serving as a Certified Lay Speaker who used her gifts to share God's Word in sermons and acts of ministry. She served on the Board of Trustees as a member and secretary; on the Usher Board for 21 years with 20 years as President; on the Communications Ministry as a member and chairperson; on the Health and Welfare Ministry as a member who offered bold pressure screenings and taught CPR.

A core belief in Ruth's life was giving back to her community. Her commitment to volunteer and community work was acknowledged by her receiving numerous certificates and awards. Among those recognitions were: Service Ministry

Award in Christian Education, Certificate of Merit from Regency Nursing and Rehabilitation Treatment Center, and a Certification of Appreciation for the Food Distribution Program for Prince George's County, Maryland. Ruth was awarded the State of Maryland Governor's Volunteer Service Certificate from Governor Parris Glendening in 1999. Ruth was a columnist for the Prince George's Post, covering the Brandywine-Aquasco area for many years. Ruth was a pillar in her community always helping people. She had a kind and loving heart.

### CONGRATULATIONS

"Continued gratitude for all that have prayed and supported MaKayla, especially this past year. Fall Semester straight A's North Carolina A&T USDA Agricultural Export Market Challenge Team (Spring). Continuing her school leadership with the Honors College, MANRRS and NBS while working at the student center. Preparing dance minor study abroad to Senegal. Prince George's County Farm Bureau Farm as the 2024–2025 AG Ambassador". Stephanie Deville Eugene. MaKayla is the daughter of Curtis and Stephanie Eugene of Brandywine, Maryland.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 'I Have a Dream Award' was presented to McKinley Hayes by Southern Christian Leadership Conference of Prince George's County on January 18, 2025. Dr. Josephine Mourning, President SCLC.

"The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is proud to celebrate your outstanding achievement in receiving the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream Award." Your dedication to service and leadership exemplifies the values we hold dear, and your commitment to making positive impact in the community is truly inspiring. We are honored to call you an alum and look forward to witnessing your continued success." #HawkPride#UMESAAlumni#MakingADifference.

### NOTTINGHAM MYERS UMC

"\*Proud Pastor Alert!!\* Nottingham Myers' Health and Welfare Ministry broke their own record this year in the annual Advent Challenge! We donated over 1300 lbs. of food and provided nearly \$300 in cash and gift cards to our community's CSS Food Pantry! We want to thank everyone who participated to make this the best year we have ever had! Our local CSS Food Pantry is a staple in our community, and it blesses families weekly! They provide non-perishable items and fresh food items to families in need. Nottingham Myers believes in connecting with our community to serve and assist the programs here so all may continue to be prosperous. So proud of the Small Church with a Big Vision serving a Bigger God!" #nmc1867. Pastor Shemaiah Strickland, Nottingham Myers United Methodist Church.



# COMMUNITY

## Passing of Flight Passenger Olivia Ter

*Tucker Road's Inspiring Skater*

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (Jan. 31, 2025)—The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County is deeply saddened by the passing of Olivia Ter, a beloved member of our Tucker Road Ice Rink and exceptional youth figure skater. Olivia lost her life in the crash of American Airlines flight 5342 on January 29, 2025. She was 12 years old.

Olivia was one of only four elite youth skaters from the region attending the U.S. Figure Skating National Development Camp in Wichita, Kansas that targets promising young skaters. The training camp serves as a launchpad for athletes vying for a spot on Team USA in upcoming world championships.

"The impact of Olivia's life will continue to resonate in our youth sports community, and she will be sorely missed," states Bill Tyler, Director of the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County. "We extend our deepest condolences to the Ter family, friends, teammates, and all those affected by this devastating loss."

Olivia not only excelled in figure skating programs, but inspired others through her talent, determination and sportsmanship. Her passion for the sport and positive influence on her peers and coaches will not be forgotten.

*With over 29,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for Prince George's County residents and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. To learn more, visit [www.pgpc.com](http://www.pgpc.com).*

## Honors for Local Students

**Austin Peay State University Congratulates Scholarship Awardees**  
CLARKSVILLE, Tenn. (Feb. 4, 2025)—Austin Peay State University congratulates students on being offered a scholarship for Fall of the 2025–2026 academic year.

Their hard work and commitment to academic excellence has paid off, and APSU is excited to award them a scholarship!

**Jibreel Ahmed** of Glenn Dale, MD

**Lawrence Washington** of Bowie, MD

**Ft Washington Student Performing With Trine Wind Ensemble**  
ANGOLA, Ind. (Feb. 3, 2025)—The Trine University Wind Ensemble will bring "Music from the Silver Screen" to the Ryan Concert Hall in the T. Furth Center for the Performing Arts, beginning at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 23.

**Danita Hillman** of Ft Washington, majoring in Chemical Engineering, will perform with the wind ensemble on baritone saxophone.

**Darren Greenwood Named to Middle Atlantic Conference Academic Honor Roll**

ANNVILLE, Pa. (Feb. 3, 2025)—Darren Greenwood of Lenham, Md. was one of more than 150 Lebanon Valley College student-athletes to be named to the Middle Atlantic Conference's (MAC) Fall Academic Honor Roll.

Greenwood, a graduate of Bishop McNamara High School, is a member of the Lebanon Valley College men's soccer team, and is pursuing a bachelor of arts in exploratory.

**Local Student Earned Fall 2024 Dean's List Honors at Bemidji State University**

BEMIDJI, Minn. (Feb. 3, 2025)—**Juliana Nixon**, a Bemidji State University student who is originally from Upper Marlboro, has earned dean's list honors at BSU for the Fall 2024 semester.

To be eligible for BSU's dean's list, students must enroll in at least 12 credits and earn a grade-point average of 3.5 or higher for the semester. Nixon was one of 703 students who earned Fall 2024 dean's list honors at BSU.

**Harriet Komlatse Named to Muhlenberg College Dean's List**

ALLEN TOWN, Pa. (Feb. 3, 2025)—A graduate of High Point High School, Harriet Komlatse of Beltsville, MD, has been named to the fall 2024 Dean's List while studying Psychology at Muhlenberg College.

To be eligible for the Dean's List, Muhlenberg College students must earn a GPA of 3.5 or better while taking three or more course units during a semester.

**Collins Fiscus Named to Mississippi State University's fall 2024 President's List**

MISSISSIPPI STATE, Miss. (Jan. 31, 2025)—Collins Fiscus, of Fort Washington, MD, was named to the Mississippi State University fall 2024 President's List.

Fiscus is among 4,569 students who have attained this honor. Students on the President's List achieved a 3.80 or better grade-point average, based on a 4.0 scale, while completing at least 12 semester hours of coursework with no incomplete grades or grades lower than a C.

**Michael Barnes of Bowie, MD Awarded Gold Stars for Fall 2024 at The Citadel**

CHARLESTON, S.C. (Jan. 30, 2025)—Michael Barnes of Bowie, MD is one of the more than 670 cadets and students recognized for their academic achievements during the fall 2024 semester.

Gold stars are awarded to cadets and students at The Citadel who achieved a 3.7 grade point average or higher. Cadets and students who achieve gold star recognition are also placed on The Citadel's dean's list.

Those cadets may wear gold stars on their uniforms throughout the semester following their academic achievement. A gold star recognition certificate is awarded to non-cadet students who meet the requirements; veteran and active duty students are also awarded challenge coins.

## Prince George's County Department of Social Services Offering New Tax Assistance Preparation Service to Residents

By PRESS OFFICER

Department of Social Services

LANDOVER, Md. (Feb. 4, 2025)—The Family Investment Division (FID) of the Prince George's County Department of Social Services (PGCDSS) in partnership with the CASH Campaign of Maryland, Maryland Department of Human Services, and the IRS, is opening its first Tax Preparation Site at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at its Temple Hills office location.

County residents with a household income of \$67,000 or less from the last taxable year, now have the opportunity to get assistance with their taxes with on-site

IRS-certified volunteers for free and will file their returns with the IRS and the State of Maryland electronically at no cost.

"The addition of this service furthers our mission and commitment to improving the quality of life and economic mobility of our families and residents in Prince George's County," said Stephen Liggett-Creel, Director of the Prince George's County Department of Social Services. "We are grateful for our partners on this effort, who have come together to offer this first-of-its-kind service within our agency."

The FID Tax Preparation Site will be located at 4235 28th Avenue Temple Hills, MD 20748. **The site is anticipated to be**

**open from February 5, 2025, until April 11, 2025**, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Service at this site will be by appointment only. Call 301-316-7900 to schedule your appointment today. For more details, please visit: <https://bit.ly/VITAscope>.

*The Prince George's County Department of Social Services is in the business of providing opportunities for residents of the County to become independent, responsible and stable members of the community. We do this by providing intervention services that strengthen and protect families, children and adults through encouraging self-sufficiency and promoting personal responsibility.*

## Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union Announces \$10,000 Annual Scholarship Program

*Empowering high school, college, and non-traditional students in Prince George's County.*

By PRESS OFFICER

Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union

BOWIE, Md. (Jan. 24, 2025)—Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union (PGCFU) is excited to announce the return of its annual scholarship program, reaffirming its dedication to supporting education in the local community. This year, the credit union will award four \$2,500 scholarships to deserving high school, undergraduate, graduate, and non-traditional students who live, work, volunteer, worship, or attend school in Prince George's County.

The scholarship, named in honor of two esteemed credit union pioneers, Virginia Stallings and Cindy Prestandrea, reflects PGCFU's longstanding commitment to empowering its members through financial support and community investment.

In 2024, under the leadership of President and CEO Diane Coleman Brown, the program saw significant expansion. The number of scholarships doubled from two to four, and the total award amount increased from \$2,000 to \$10,000.



The eligibility criteria were also broadened to include non-traditional students and applicants pursuing trade school education.

"Prince George's County is brimming with future leaders and passionate professionals striving to make a difference through education," said Coleman Brown. "We are honored to support their journeys. This program is a testament to the power of community and the contributions of our members, whose dedication enables us to make initiatives like this possible."

To apply, candidates must complete an

application detailing their academic achievements and community involvement, as well as submitting a video essay. Applicants must also be members of PGCFU or become members by opening a savings account with the minimum required deposit.

**Application Deadline: Saturday, March 1, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.**

For additional details and to apply, visit [www.princegeorgesfcu.org/scholarship](http://www.princegeorgesfcu.org/scholarship).

*Established in 1967, the Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union was created to offer financial services to Prince George's County employees. Over the years, the organization has expanded its reach to serve more than 19,500 members across the county. With assets exceeding \$300 million, our community-based credit union welcomes individuals who live, work, own businesses, volunteer, worship, or attend school in Prince George's County to open an account. For more information about the organization or to become a member, please visit [www.PrinceGeorgesFCU.org](http://www.PrinceGeorgesFCU.org) or call 301.627.2666.*

## Library Hosting Exciting Black History Month Events Throughout February

By PRESS OFFICER

PGCMLS

LARGO, Md. (Jan. 31, 2025)—This February, the Prince George's County Memorial Library System (PGCMLS) is celebrating Black History Month with over 75 free programs and events to give library customers of all ages a lively and engaging experience centered around the heritage and community of Black culture in Prince George's County and beyond.

Audiences will have a diverse range of events to participate in, from the historical musical program "Jazz Journeys: From Blues to Now" with Trumpeter & Jazz Historian Muneer Nasser to "Jump Into Black History Month: Double Dutch Fitness," a fun fitness event for the whole family presented by DC Retro Jumpers.

"Our staff and community of partner organizations have really outdone themselves this year. The amount of passion and ingenuity shown in curating these events is truly inspiring, and we are proud to share these offerings with our customers," said PGCMLS CEO Dr. Mark Winston.

Throughout the year, PGCMLS' Black Heritage hub serves as a cultural resource for upcoming library events, research databases, book recommendations, and much more. It is available 24/7 by visiting: [pgcmls.info/black-heritage](http://pgcmls.info/black-heritage).

**Featured PGCMLS Black History Month Events**

**Jazz Journeys: From Blues to Now—Presented by Muneer Nasser, Trumpeter & Jazz Historian**

Explore the rich history of jazz through live music, rare recordings, and interactive demonstrations. Perfect for music lovers and history enthusiasts interested in discovering jazz's Memphis blues roots. For

Teens and Adults

- **Saturday, February 8** at 1 p.m. at the Greenbelt Branch Library | Free
- **Saturday, February 15** at 1 p.m. at the Hyattsville Branch Library | Free

**Heroes of Black History Puppet Show—Presented by Ebony Sonshine Puppets**

Children are invited to watch history come alive in this engaging theatrical performance by Ebony Sonshine Puppets. Audiences will discover the inspiring stories of Black history makers who changed our world through dynamic storytelling, music, and puppetry. For Ages 3–8

- **Tuesday, February 18** at 4:30 p.m. at the Oxon Hill Branch Library | Free

**Ms. Story's Living History**

Step back in time with Ms. Story (Shemika Berry) as she brings remarkable Black women from history to life. Through first-person storytelling and authentic costumes, experience history from the Colonial era through the Civil Rights Movement. For Kids to Adults

- **Tuesday, February 11** at 6 p.m. | Glenarden Branch Library | Free
- **Wednesday, February 12** at 6 p.m. | Laurel Branch Library | Free
- **Tuesday, February 18** at 6 p.m. | Bladensburg Branch Library | Free
- **Wednesday, February 19** at 5:30 p.m. | Hillcrest Heights Branch Library

**Jump Into Black History Month:**

**Double Dutch Fitness—Presented by DC Retro Jumpers**

Master jump rope techniques while having fun and getting active! This interactive fitness program for kids to adults focuses on building your skills, improving coordination, and getting fit through Double Dutch jumping. All skill levels are

welcome!

- **Saturday, February 15** at 1 p.m. at the New Carrollton Branch Library | Free
- **Tuesday, February 25** at 6 p.m. at the Accokeek Branch Library | Free
- **Wednesday, February 26** at 4:30 p.m. at the Bowie Branch Library | Free

**Saturday Magic: A Hoodoo Story**

Author Kenda Bell-Spruill presents an interactive storytelling event that brings the "Saturday Magic" characters' adventures to life—kids will help shape the story, share ideas, and discover the wonders of family, culture, and self-discovery. Participants will also explore Ancestor Notes featuring inspiring figures like James Baldwin, Harriet Tubman, Henrietta Lacks, Bessie Coleman, Chadwick Boseman, and more! Children can learn about these amazing heroes while having fun with a tale full of magic and mystery! For Ages 4-8

- **Saturday, February 22** at 1 p.m. | South Bowie Branch Library | Free
- **Saturday, February 26** at 4:30 p.m. | Baden Branch Library | Free

**More Featured Events**

**Celebrating Black History Through Poetry—Presented by Poet Sistah Joy**

- **Saturday, February 8** at 1 p.m. | Spauldings Branch Library | All Ages | Free

Former Prince George's County Poet Laureate, Sistah Joy, will share her original poetry that inspires, informs, and empowers the community. This Black History Month literary celebration will include African drumming and an open mic.



# COMMENTARY

## Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



promise to “let freedom ring.” Civil rights giants Dr. Dorothy Height and Congressman John Lewis, the Tuskegee Airmen, and many other trailblazers for liberty bore quiet witness by their presence. Finally, there was the benediction by Rev. Joseph Lowery, who began by quoting a stanza of the poem and hymn we know as the Black National Anthem, “Lift Every Voice and Sing”:

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou, who has brought us thus far on the way,  
Thou, who has by Thy might  
Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray...  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God, true to our native land.

For all of us raised on those beloved words, the symbolism of hearing them there was overwhelming. For more than a hundred years, every time “Lift Every Voice” has rung out in a church hall, school auditorium, or community meeting, it enabled Black Americans to stand up and sing our own song about our faith in and struggle to make America’s promise real. Rev. Lowery didn’t recite

every line that day, like those that speak of the bitter obstacles overcome and the blood shed along the way. He didn’t need to. We understood all that had been required for our Black National Anthem to become—at long last—part of the larger American hymn.

It goes without saying that the obvious contrasts between that joyful, hope-filled moment and this one are stark. We begin Black History Month this year with public observations of Black History Month itself—like so much else in our nation—under targeted and chilling attack.

Yet we still know that Black history, and American women’s history, and LGBTQ history, differently abled people’s history, Native American history, Latino history, Asian American history, immigrant history, and every other line of each of our American stories are all deeply embedded chapters in American history that cannot actually be rewritten or erased by any memos or executive orders. We also know that history continues to reward those hope-filled people who have been willing to struggle and fight to keep moving America forward. When the current dangerous chapter is over, the question remains of what we want the next chapter of our shared history to say.

—January 31, 2025

### ChildWatch:

## Writing the Next Chapter

In the days following President Barack Obama’s first inauguration, the preparations for Black History Month felt especially joyful. That was a moment when the entire nation could see Black history and American history being written at the same time. The record-breaking sea of nearly two million multicolored faces of all ages and from every nook and cranny of America cheering together on the National Mall during the inauguration ceremony was a visual representation of the way the threads of our diverse stories were woven together, and everywhere one looked were reminders of how Black history and American history converged. Historians pointed out that the

Capitol and White House were built with enslaved people’s labor and the Mall itself sits on land that once held markets where people were sold. At a ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial earlier in the week, then President-elect Obama, surrounded by monuments to our most revered leaders, reminded the nation of how the Civil Rights March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom took place on the same sacred ground. He told us the pool in front of the Memorial “still reflects the dream of a King.”

Aretha Franklin sang “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” at that inauguration, the Queen of Soul reminding all Americans of our nation’s original

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



world-class athletes would have been seriously considered for the position of quarterback. In the league’s early years, they wouldn’t have had the opportunity to play any position at all.

It’s easy to see that opening the doors of opportunity for athletes of color has raised standards in every sport.

It would be ludicrous to argue that Black baseball players lacked the skill to compete in the Major Leagues before Jackie Robinson broke the color line in 1947, or that admitting Black players has diminished the level of play.

Yet that’s exactly what President Trump and other opponents of racial equity initiatives are trying to claim when they baselessly blame “DEI” for tragedies like this week’s deadly plane crash in Washington, D.C.

Anyone who assumes—or falsely claims—that the bar of achievement is always set by white men should consider the case of Johnny Weissmuller’s world record. Weissmuller, an Olympic swimmer who achieved greater fame as Tarzan in the movies, set the record for 100-meter freestyle in 1922 at 58.6 seconds. In 2008, Lea Neal swam the 100-meter freestyle in 56.87 seconds. She was 12 years old. A Black swimmer who medaled in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, Neal was able to compete because of a scholarship intended to diversify the sport. The opponents of DEI would eliminate scholarships like the one that gave Neal her opportunity.

The recruitment and development of Black athletes has undeniably raised standards in every sport. It was the barriers to their participation, in

fact, that kept standards low. The same is true for every facet of society.

By giving organizations and institutions access to the broadest possible pool of talent, DEI policies unfailingly raise the level of performance by every metric. This is glaringly obvious to anyone who isn’t peering through the lens of resentment and entitlement. The problem, for those with such impaired vision, is that these policies increase competition.

Before Negro League statistics were officially incorporated into the Major League record, Ty Cobb held career batting average record with .366. Josh Gibson, who never had the opportunity to compete against white players during his lifetime, now holds the record with .372. World-class athletes come in every shape, size, color, and creed, but it’s undeniable that there are white players who might not have made the team if they’d had to compete against the talent of a Josh Gibson.

This is what is behind the attacks on DEI. Opponents use vague and undefinable terms like “woke ideology” to conceal the fact that what they’re trying to eliminate is competition. What they’re trying to reinforce is white advantage.

The two teams who will take the field next Sunday represent not only the highest level of excellence their sport has to offer, but an incredible range of ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity. A team comprised of nothing but place kickers wouldn’t go very far in the NFL. Eliminating DEI policies makes about as much sense.

—January 31, 2025

### To Be Equal:

## Super Bowl LIX Demonstrates the Strength of Diversity and the Dishonesty of its Opponents

*“This is the thing people seem to have intentionally forgotten: that discrimination is real and prevents qualified people from getting opportunities that they would otherwise have and the goal of DEI is to prevent that as much as possible. But there are plenty of influential people on the intellectual right who see outlawing this kind of discrimination as a fundamental perversion of what the political order is supposed to be ... which should tell you something about what the crusade against DEI actually was all about. It wasn’t about restoring merit. It wasn’t about fairness. It was about removing undesirable classes of people from the competition pool for jobs that bring high pay and high status.”*

—Janelle Bouie

Of the many lies behind the current assault on racial justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, the most vicious is that DEI policies lower standards.

Nothing exposes that lie more nakedly than the world of elite and professional sports.

The two quarterbacks who are about to face off in Super Bowl LIX have led their teams to the playoffs every season that they have started. Jalen Hurts has taken his team to the Super Bowl twice in four seasons as starting quarterback for the Philadelphia Eagles, and Patrick Mahomes’ has done it five times in seven seasons starting for the Kansas City Chiefs. There is no denying their excellence.

Yet for most of NFL history, neither of these

### Renovation from A1

and our community,” said Bill Tyler, Director, M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George’s County. “Blending these modern innovations with the timeless tradition of baseball provides more opportunities for residents and visitors to Live More, Play More!”

“We are thrilled to partner with M-NCPPC and MSA to deliver these much-needed improvements to Prince George’s Stadium,” said Greg Baroni, CEO and Managing Partner, Attain Sports. “This investment not only ensures that the Chesapeake Baysox for years to come, but also strengthens the stadium’s role as a centerpiece of family entertainment and economic growth in Bowie and the greater Chesapeake Bay region. With these planned upgrades, Prince George’s Stadium is poised to continue its legacy as a premiere

destination for fans and a cornerstone of the community for years to come.”

*With over 29,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George’s County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for Prince George’s County residents and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. To learn more, visit [www.pgpc.com](http://www.pgpc.com).*

*The Chesapeake Baysox are the Double-A affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles and play in the Double-A Northeast. The team plays their*

*home games at Prince George’s Stadium in Bowie, Maryland. For more information, please call 301.805.6000 or visit us online at [baysox.com](http://baysox.com).*

*Attain Sports brings a community-focused, values-driven, and player-centric approach to connect diverse groups and create impact through the power of sports. Attain Sports owns and manages four baseball teams: the Baltimore Orioles Double-A affiliate Chesapeake Baysox, the Baltimore Orioles High-A affiliate Aberdeen IronBirds, the MLB Draft League Frederick Keys, and the Atlantic League Professional Baseball Club Spire City Ghost Hounds. Additionally, Attain Sports is the controlling owner of the United Soccer League (USL) Championship Club Loudoun United FC. For more information, please visit [attainsports.com](http://attainsports.com).*

### Library from A3

#### Underwater Archaeological Slave Wrecks Project—Kamau B. A. Sadiki

• **Saturday, February 15** at 1 p.m. | Greenbelt Branch Library | Teens and Adults | Free

The Greenbelt Black History and Culture Committee and the Prince George’s County Office of Human Rights present a special presentation by Kamau B.A. Sadiki of Diving with Purpose. Mr. Sadiki will discuss the archaeological underwater research of the Slave Wrecks Project of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American Culture and History in partnership with the Izeko Museum of South Africa, George Washington University, and Diving With Purpose.

#### We Are Zion Music Presents Freedom Songs

• **Tuesday, February 18** at 7 p.m. | New Carrollton Branch Library | All Ages | Free  
Experience Freedom Songs by We Are Zion Music (WAZM)—a vibrant Black History Month celebration featuring a powerful performance that honors the spirit of freedom and resilience. Discover the rich heritage of African American history, paying tribute to the past while inspiring the future. Let the

spirit of unity and resilience lift your soul in this unforgettable musical experience!

#### I Want To Write Workshop

• **Saturday, February 22** at 11:30 a.m. | Oxon Hill Branch Library | Adults | Free

Join Marita Golden, author and creative writing coach, for an inspiring workshop designed for writers of all levels! In this session, participants will explore effective techniques and tools to help them conquer their fears of writing and break free from self-censorship. Together, the group will discuss strategies to initiate and maintain a fulfilling writing practice while tapping into the depths of their imagination and memories.

#### African American Heritage in the Armed Forces: Highlighting the Military Service of African American Unsung Heroes

• **Saturday, February 22** at 12 p.m. | Surratrs-Clinton Branch Library | Kids to Adults | Free

A lively discussion and storytelling about African American and minority service members who influenced and impacted the landscape of the Armed Forces in the United States. In partnership with the Prince George’s County Office of Veterans Affairs and other esteemed guests.

#### Author Marita Golden on “How To Become A Black Writer”

• **Saturday, February 22** at 1 p.m. | Oxon Hill Branch Library | Teens and Adults | Free

For Black History Month, come out for an engaging book reading and signing featuring Marita Golden, acclaimed author of “How To Become A Black Writer,” “The Strong Black Woman,” and “The Wide Circumference of Love.” During the event, Sonyrea Tate will interview Golden following her reading, offering a deeper insight into the themes and inspiration behind her works.

#### Lunch and Learn: “Flamboyants: The Queer Harlem Renaissance I Wish I’d Known” by George M. Johnson

• **Tuesday, February 25** at 12 p.m. | Virtual Event | Adults | Free

This spring, grab your favorite lunch at noon and tune in to virtual conversations with PGMLS and the Prince George’s County Office of Human Rights on topics from repairing the effects of racial injustice to fighting for equitable access to recovering from exile and loss. Let’s learn together! George M. Johnson will be discussing their latest book “Flamboyants: The Queer Harlem Renaissance I Wish I’d Known,” and the queer stories you may have missed.

## The Prince George’s Post

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Leadership Maryland Announces Emerging Leader Program 2nd Class

36 rising stars and high-potential employees chosen to participate in Leadership Maryland's six-month professional development program

By PRESS OFFICER  
Leadership Maryland

EASTON, Md. (Jan. 30, 2025)—Leadership Maryland, the statewide non-profit offering professional development programs dedicated to building a better Maryland by harnessing the strength of its business and community leaders, announces today the 36 individuals selected to participate in the Emerging Leader Program 2nd Class. The class consists of 36 rising stars and high-potential employees from across the state who are poised for upward growth within their organizations and who are eager to hone their core leadership skills.

Leadership Maryland's Emerging Leader Program will run from June to November, consisting of monthly day-long sessions that will include both interactive training led by a facilitator and panel discussions featuring leaders from across the state as guest speakers. The program's curriculum offers a holistic approach to leadership development, designed to help each applicant increase their self-awareness and gain behaviors, skills, and tools to become more adaptive, inclusive, strategic, and impactful leaders.

"We are excited to announce the new Emerging Leader 2nd Class and

welcome these motivated and forward-thinking individuals to our program," said David Fike '16 (LM) president and CEO, Leadership Maryland. "After the program's successful first year in 2024, we are excited to build on that momentum with a class that represents a dynamic cross-section of ambitious and promising rising leaders. The knowledge, experience, and connections they will gain in our program will prepare them to become more adaptive and impactful leaders in their careers and communities."

Leadership Maryland's Emerging Leader Program is open to individuals who are advancing in their careers, are actively involved in their communities, and desire to become stronger leaders in both areas. Ideal Leadership Maryland members have a desire to learn more about Maryland's most critical issues and a personal commitment to be a force for positive change in their organizations, their communities, and their state. For more information about Leadership Maryland, please visit leadershipmd.org, call 410-841-2101 or email info@leadershipmd.org.

### Leadership Maryland's Emerging Leader Program 2nd Class participants:

Karalyn R. Aanenson EL 2nd Class

Director of Legislation Policy and Reform  
Maryland Department of Juvenile Services

Sharon Abraham EL 2nd Class  
Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
Abraham Consulting

Mark Balthrop EL 2nd Class  
Account Manager  
Stryker

Chantal Bowlah EL 2nd Class  
Controller  
Vehicles for Change

Alex J. Brice EL 2nd Class  
Economic & Inclusion Manager  
Johns Hopkins University – Facilities & Real Estate Design & Construction

Dominic J. Butchko EL 2nd Class  
Director of Intergovernmental Relations  
Maryland Association of Counties

Kathryne Carter EL 2nd Class  
Planner/Owner  
Grace and Virtue Events

Ira C. Cohen EL 2nd Class  
Senior Project Manager  
The Whiting-Turner Contract Company

Dr. Sharon G. Cooper EL 2nd Class  
Senior Faculty Specialist  
University of Maryland Institute for Governmental Service and Research

Benita T. Dawson EL 2nd Class  
Firefighter/Paramedic Battalion Chief  
Prince Georges County Fire and EMS Department

Dolores Deel EL 2nd Class  
Portfolio Administrator  
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

Jason Dicembre EL 2nd Class  
Director – Office of Transportation Mobility & Operations  
Maryland State Highway Administration

Bridget E. Flaherty EL 2nd Class  
Out-of-School Youth Program Manager  
Worksource Montgomery

Austin W. Flowers EL 2nd Class  
Sports Program Supervisor  
Charles County Commissioners

Larry S. Fortino EL 2nd Class  
Accounts Manager II Sales  
Chesapeake Utilities Corporation

Zhao Gong EL 2nd Class  
Scientific Program Manager  
National Institute on Aging

Cari Harris EL 2nd Class  
Principal Consultant  
The Butterfly Effect

Schevon R. Hendrick EL 2nd Class  
Program Director  
Sheppard Pratt

Anderson Jean EL 2nd Class  
Professor  
Baltimore City Public Schools

Lauren E. Lahman EL 2nd Class  
Senior Staff Accountant  
Easton Utilities

Subrat Mahapatra EL 2nd Class  
Director, Asset Management Office  
Maryland State Highway Administration

Sarah Manuel EL 2nd Class  
Principal Program Manager  
Baltimore Gas and Electric

Austin Merritt EL 2nd Class  
Director of Development  
Jeremiah Program

Renesha Miles EL 2nd Class  
Chief Equity Officer  
Charles County Government

April N. Moeller EL 2nd Class  
Acting Director of Government Affairs  
Maryland State Highway Association

Justin E. Mohr EL 2nd Class  
Office of Structures Division Chief  
Maryland State Highway Association

Jordan L. Pearlstein EL 2nd Class  
Acquisition Specialist  
Mayvin, Inc.

Ngounou Pesseu, Ph.D. EL 2nd Class  
Senior Project Construction Manager  
PEPCO

Ryan Shifler EL 2nd Class  
Associate Dean, Henson School of Science and Technology  
Salisbury University

Adam Spangler EL 2nd Class  
Legislative Aide, Office of the Attorney General  
Maryland Office of the Attorney General

Katie A. Stevens EL 2nd Class  
Director, Office of Agriculture  
Frederick County

Kay Starr EL 2nd Class  
Grant Writer  
City of Bowie

Taylor J. Swanson EL 2nd Class  
Assateague Coastkeeper  
Assateague Coastal Trust

Eddie F. Westerfield EL 2nd Class  
Supervisor of Electrical Design & Inspection  
Easton Utilities Commission

Amanda C. Winters EL 2nd Class  
Assistant Director of Communications  
Maryland Department of Commerce

Hua Xiang EL 2nd Class  
Deputy Director of Policy and Research  
Maryland State Highway Administration

Leadership Maryland is a statewide non-profit offering professional development programs dedicated to building a better Maryland by harnessing the strength of its business and community leaders. Established in 1992, Leadership Maryland's Executive Program selects as many as 52 diverse and accomplished senior-level leaders from Maryland's public and private sectors each year to come together as a class for an eight-month learning program focused on the state's most vital social, economic and environmental issues. Introduced in 2024, Leadership Maryland's Emerging Leader Program brings together a class of the state's rising stars and gives them the skills and tools they need to advance in their careers. With an alumni network comprised of leaders from all industries and regions of the state, Leadership Maryland has established thousands of Marylanders on their career leadership path, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and connections needed to influence positive change. To learn more, please visit leadershipmd.org.

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## About Social Security Benefits for Someone With Multiple Ex-spouses

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

**Dear Rusty:** If a financially well-off individual had multiple ex-spouses, could it happen that the multiple ex-spouses could each be collecting Social Security based on their own financial situation as compared to their rich ex-spouses? Thus, multiple payouts by SS? Just curious, because there are probably many people in this situation as a result of the ever-increasing number of people involved in multiple marriages that each lasted more than ten years. **Signed: Curious Ex-Spouse**

**Dear Curious Ex-Spouse:** A former spouse can only collect one SS benefit—either their own SS retirement amount, or an amount as an ex-spouse if the marriage lasted 10 years or more. And it is possible for multiple ex-spouses of a marriage to the same person to qualify for benefits from those unions, if each marriage lasted at least 10 years. But each ex-spouse can only qualify for one benefit payment—either their own earned SS benefit, or their benefit as an ex-spouse. In other words, someone with two (or more) ex-spouses might have their ex's collecting full benefits on their record, provided that each marriage lasted at least 10 years. But an ex-spouse can only get one benefit—their own SS retirement amount or an ex-spouse amount—whichever is higher.

It's possible, also, that an ex-spouse can collect benefits from a former spouse at the same time as a current spouse is also collecting spouse benefits on the same record. And there is no detriment to either's amount because multiple spouses or ex-spouses are collecting on a one person's SS record (Social Security is, after all, a means for spouses, or ex-spouses, to avoid poverty). However, an ex-spouse's own SS retirement benefit (from their personal lifetime work record) must be less than any ex-spouse benefit they are entitled to from a former spouse. Essentially, if the "10-years-married" rule is satisfied, ex-spouses are subject to the same benefit rules as a current spouse.

You are correct that we see some cases like this these days, but each eligible ex-spouse can only get one benefit, and their ex-spouse benefit is always offset by any personal SS retirement benefit the ex-spouse may also be entitled to on their own lifetime work record.

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

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

## MONEY

## Top Scams to Watch Out for This Tax Season

(StatePoint) The days of filing paper tax returns are gone, and criminals are taking advantage. With taxpayers managing their sensitive information online, thieves are finding new ways to scam victims. In 2023 alone, the IRS reported \$5.5 billion lost to tax fraud schemes. And the increased prevalence of artificial intelligence means tax scams this year will likely be more sophisticated than ever.

Scammers have an arsenal of weapons, but no matter their tactics, the goal is the same—to have you give them money or access to it. Here are scams to look out for this tax season:

**Tax avoidance scams.** These scams often promise rewards too good to be true. Scammers claim to have specialized knowledge on exploiting loopholes to avoid taxes or maximize returns. High-income filers are heavily targeted through offers of seemingly legitimate annuities or tax shelters.

**Refund scams.** In this scam, a criminal will claim to be someone official notifying of an unclaimed or incorrectly calculated refund, prompting the victim to share information—and possibly bank account numbers—to claim it.

**Violation scams.** This is a fear-based scam, where the criminal poses as an IRS official threatening some punitive action, claiming the victim committed a violation and needs to contact them to resolve the situation.

**Filing support scams.** Similar to tech support scams, criminals offer to help create IRS accounts to assist with the online filing process. Frequently posing as tax preparers, scammers will go through the motions of gathering the victim's personal information for tax



PHOTO SOURCE: ©SCYTHERS/ISTOCK VIA GETTY IMAGES PLUS

forms they never intend to file.

**Social media scams.** Social media serves as a great place for criminals to find potential victims and carry out tax scams, fraudulently claiming to offer different types of services or possessing unique knowledge or access.

**Recovery scams.** Once a victim is scammed, criminals will try to strike again—believing the victim is gullible. Exploiting a time of vulnerability, they'll contact the victim with promises of helping them recover their losses and will leverage this as an opening to commit additional crimes.

While it is not always easy to pick out a scam, here are indicators to watch for:

- **Promise of a big pay-out.** If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- **Request for your account information.** The IRS will never ask for your credit or debit account information over the phone.
- **Random contact.** The IRS contacts taxpayers by mail first and will never contact via random phone calls or digital means. The IRS will not leave prerecorded, urgent, or threatening voicemails.
- **Demands or threats.** The IRS can't revoke your driver's license, business licenses or immigration status and

cannot threaten to immediately bring in local law enforcement. Taxpayers are allowed an appeals process, so any message of "now or else" won't come from an official channel.

- **Request for you to click a weblink.** Odd or misspelled web links can take you to harmful sites instead of IRS.gov.

The IRS recommends these best practices to protect against tax fraud:

- **Get an early start.** File early so criminals have less time to impersonate you.
- **Set up a verified account.** Set up your own IRS account before someone else can and use an Identity Protection PIN—a six-digit number known only to you and the IRS.
- **Wait for written notice.** Do not respond to any supposed communications from the IRS if you haven't first received official notification through U.S. mail. If you get a call from someone claiming to be the IRS, hang up and call the official number on the website before engaging. Further, never click a link sent digitally as initial contact.
- **Apply good cyber hygiene.** Do not use public Wi-Fi when filing your tax returns. Do use strong passwords, secured network connections and multifactor authentication. Run all software updates and keep systems current.

If you fall victim to a tax scam, report it to the IRS. For more scam protection tips, visit PNC's Security & Privacy Center at pnc.com.

One wrong click can cause tremendous damage that ends up earning bad guys a windfall. However, a little caution can go a long way in helping you avoid a costly tax scam.



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## EarthTalk® Greener Music Gear: Q&A Harmonizing With Mother Nature

By Grace Lee | January 23, 2025

*Dear EarthTalk:*  
*What are some ways music gear makers are going green?*  
—Peter B., Groton, CT

Music gear production, from collecting materials, producing gear and packaging with excessive plastic, has numerous negative environmental effects. Collecting wood has led to overharvesting at an unsustainable rate, an increasingly urgent issue for forests and woodlands. Plastic and metal waste have risen, too. These issues have led many music gear makers to implement sustainable changes.

The good news is that some instrument producers have begun harvesting wood from dead or dying trees to prevent the overharvesting of rich woodlands, while others have shifted toward less-used "alternative tonewoods" like basswood and kaya. To decrease metal waste in sourcing for strings, makers are beginning to purchase strings in the form of rods.

Small changes are also happening in the production are. Manufacturers have replaced traditional materials with eco-friendly options when producing the picks, straps and other

accessories. It is now commonplace to find bioplastic or even shell for guitar picks and vegan leather for straps. String company Stringjoy now has a recycling program, encouraging players to mail back old strings to repurpose the material.

When packaging manufactured goods, music gear makers have begun using paper tape, boxes and envelopes over the traditionally used plastic. Unique innovations have also made packaging greener, such as color-coding each guitar string and its packaging to avoid the environmentally harmful practice of purchasing an entirely new set of guitar strings when only one needs a replacement.

Together these changes have led to a plethora of significant positive outcomes. Increased use of alternative wood sources has caused a notable decrease in pressure on certain wood species commonly used for instruments like mahogany, rosewood and spruce. Moreover, changes made in packaging and material collection have reduced the vast amounts of plastic and metal waste from entering landfills or oceans. Exemplified by the color-coded guitar strings, unique innova-

tions have also made an impact, with the director of product management at music instrument company D'Addario, Brian Vance, commenting that color-coding has eliminated total packaging mass by 70 percent.

More can still be done. Companies advocate for government policies cementing environmentally friendly decisions made by manufacturers, or work toward simpler changes by implementing more recycling programs for their customers. Ultimately, strategic efforts have significantly boosted the sustainability of music gear production, proving that these efforts must be continued and expanded.

**CONTACTS:** The rise of sustainable guitars, [frontiergroup.org/articles/the-rise-of-sustainable-guitars-how-an-industry-is-innovating-to-save-our-forests](http://frontiergroup.org/articles/the-rise-of-sustainable-guitars-how-an-industry-is-innovating-to-save-our-forests).

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