

# The Prince George's Post



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## Capitol Technology University Partners With FIRE STEM for Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship

By ERICA DECKER  
Capitol Technology University

LAUREL, Md. (Feb. 18, 2025)—Capitol Technology University and Future Innovative Rising Engineers & Entrepreneurs (FIRE STEM) have signed a memorandum of understanding agreement to promote awareness for youth of STEM disciplines, education, and career opportunities. Saneetra Newman, Director of FIRE STEM, visited with Capitol Tech leadership President Bradford L. Sims, Vice President of Cyber Science Outreach and Partnerships Dr. Bill Butler, and Director of Astronautical and Space Engineering Programs Jeff Volosin to discuss the exciting ways in which this partnership could expand educational opportunities in our community.

FIRE STEM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (S.T.E.A.M.) program associated with the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE, NSBE Jr.), NASA, and NIAA.

They offer access to training, competitions, and programs in cybersecurity, rocketry, robotics, mathematics, medical technology software engineering, uncrewed and autonomous vehicles (UAS), and more. Their mission is to engage students in underprivileged and underrepresented communities to pursue science and engineering in a way that provides them with proficiency, skills, and confidence needed to succeed in the S.T.E.M. and entrepreneurial arenas.

"FIRE STEM is dedicated to creating opportunities that inspire and equip the next generation of innovators, engineers, and entrepreneurs," stated Saneetra Newman, Director of FIRE STEM. "Partnering with Capitol Technology University expands our ability to provide hands-on experiences, mentorship, and educational pathways that empower students to pursue STEM careers confidently. Together, we are shaping a future where every student has the resources and support needed to thrive in science, technology, and entrepreneurship."



From left to right: Saneetra Newman (FIRE STEM), Dr. Bradford Sims (Capitol Tech) signed a memorandum of understanding agreement to promote awareness for youth of STEM disciplines, education, and career opportunities.

Previously, FIRE STEM has collaborated with Capitol Tech and the National Security Agency (NSA) to offer work-study, internship, and co-op opportunities as well as hands-on cyber training and challenge competitions. FIRE STEM also collaborates with Fire Rockets, providing middle and high school students with instruction

and mentorship for regional, national, and international competitions.

Through this new partnership, Capitol Tech and FIRE STEM will share resources, knowledge, and foster innovation to further provide local

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## Bowie Business Innovation Center Welcomes the 11th Cohort to Its Signature 8(A) Accelerator Program

Award-Winning Hub in Collaboration with U.S. Small Business Administration Continues Commitment to Innovation and Growth For 8(a) Certified Companies

By PRESS OFFICER  
Bowie BIC

BOWIE, Md. (Feb. 21, 2025)—After the five-year completion of 10 cohorts of the 8(a) Accelerator Program, Bowie Business Innovation Center (Bowie BIC), in collaboration with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and funded by Capital One, welcomed its 11th cohort of 8(a) certified small businesses on February 7, 2025. This unprecedented business development program is designed to equip companies with the competitive advantage needed to successfully secure government contracts.

As the first 8(a) Accelerator in the U.S. and in the state of Maryland, the award-winning Bowie BIC 8(a) Accelerator Program combines practical business training in a cohort-based

group setting practical business training with access to mentors and structured networking activities to help federal government contractors in SBA's 8(a) business development program learn how to gain competitive advantage needed to successfully win more federal government contracts and generate

"The Bowie Business Innovation Center plays a vital role in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, empowering small businesses to create, scale, and succeed which drives economic growth," said June Evans, Director of Bowie BIC. "The central goal is to support the business community, by equipping 8(a) companies with tools, resources, and strategies they need to navigate the federal landscape and succeed."

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## Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union Renews Annual \$10,000 Contribution to Bowie Food Pantry

Credit union continues to support local food assistance efforts through food drives, volunteerism, and financial donations in 2025.

By PRESS OFFICER  
PGFCFCU

BOWIE, Md. (Feb. 25, 2025)—Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union (PGFCFCU) proudly announces the renewal of its \$10,000 annual pledge to support the Bowie Food Pantry in 2025. This commitment includes non-perishable food donations, volunteer efforts, and a direct financial contribution to aid the pantry in providing essential food assistance to Prince George's County residents.

In 2024, PGFCFCU strength-

ened its community impact through expanded philanthropic initiatives, including donation drives and partnerships with local nonprofits. The Bowie Food Pantry is a central beneficiary of these efforts, with PGFCFCU members and staff contributing non-perishable goods throughout the year.

For 2025, PGFCFCU's support will include:

- **Donation Bins at All Branches:** Each of the credit union's four branches will have bins available for employees and members to con-

tribute non-perishable food items.

- **Monthly Deliveries:** Donated goods will be delivered to the pantry each month to ensure consistent support.

- **Volunteerism:** PGFCFCU staff will assist the pantry as volunteers on an as-needed basis.

- **Financial Contribution:** A monetary donation will be provided at year-end, helping the pantry address critical needs, particularly during the challenging winter months.

Michaeline Gandolph, Executive Director of the Bowie Food

Pantry, expressed gratitude for the ongoing partnership:

"We are thrilled to have the continued support of Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union in our mission to provide vital food assistance to residents of Prince George's County. The generosity of PGFCFCU ensures we can meet the growing needs of our community and make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve."

Diane Coleman Brown, President and CEO of PGFCFCU, highlighted the importance of

community involvement:

"Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union is dedicated to fostering a strong and supportive community. The Bowie Food Pantry plays a crucial role in serving so many of our neighbors throughout the county and we are honored to continue supporting their invaluable mission."

The Bowie Food Pantry, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, is located at 2614 Kenhill Drive, Suite 134, Bowie, MD 20715. The pantry accepts donations on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fri-

days from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. For more information about their services or ways to contribute, visit [www.bowiefoodpantry.org](http://www.bowiefoodpantry.org).

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, 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.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org](http://www.PrinceGeorgesCFCU.org) or call 301.627.2666.

## Craving More Energy, Maryland Looks to Nuclear Power

By RACHEL MCCREA  
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 20, 2025)—In a legislative session dominated by energy issues, some state leaders are exploring the idea of more nuclear energy as an option for power generation in Maryland.

Bills introduced by Gov. Wes Moore and Democratic leadership would open the door to building new nuclear energy projects in Maryland. The governor's bill would also count nuclear energy towards the state's clean energy goals.

"To address resource adequacy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, I think there's a large number of people who say we should pursue this as aggressively as we can," said Paul Pinsky, director of the Maryland Energy Administration.

The state's clean energy goals and worries about having enough

power are putting pressure on lawmakers to consider building more nuclear. Maryland already has one nuclear power plant, which provides about 40% of all energy produced in the state.

Both the ENERGIZE Maryland Act and the Next Generation Energy Act would create a procurement process for new nuclear projects. The ENERGIZE Act is being sponsored by state leaders in the House and Senate at the governor's request, and the Next Generation Energy Act is part of an energy package introduced by Maryland General Assembly leadership.

"Alongside the state legislature and other stakeholders, the Moore-Miller Administration is continuing to explore all available options, including nuclear energy, to help meet Maryland's environmental and clean energy goals," the governor's office said in an emailed statement. "The governor understands the

need for sustainable and cost-effective infrastructure to ensure the reliability of our grid and build the economy of the future in our state, which is why this session he has introduced the ENERGIZE Act, to help create more in-state clean energy generation, invest in Maryland's workforce, and help Maryland ratepayers."

The ENERGIZE Act would also classify nuclear as clean energy. It may not be a renewable source of energy, Pinsky said, but nuclear doesn't emit greenhouse gases and the bill would count it towards the state's clean energy goals.

"I think if you're looking for affordable and reliable and clean energy, nuclear does check those three boxes," said House Minority Whip Del. Jesse Pippy, a Republican from Frederick County.

Del. Chao Wu, a Democrat from Howard and Montgomery counties, is a co-sponsor of the



ANGELIQUE GINGRAS/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Lawmakers are considering measures this legislative session that could encourage more nuclear energy in the state.

ENERGIZE Act and supports nuclear as a source of clean, affordable energy.

"I think by managing nuclear power safely, we can offer a better future for our residents," Wu said.

Not everyone is supportive of new nuclear energy in the state.

These plants would be expensive to build and produce hazardous nuclear waste, he said. He thinks Maryland should be pushing the grid operator to approve renewable energy projects faster.

"I think Maryland leaders really need to double down on truly clean energy, like wind and solar, as well as batteries," he said. "Not nuclear."

Wu says that the state has been safely managing its nuclear energy for decades.

"We have nuclear power in Maryland already," he said. "It's not [like] we're doing something new."

Del. Lorig Charkoudian, a Democrat from Montgomery County, said that new nuclear power may be built in Maryland if these bills pass. She's uncertain when any new projects would be built, though, because modern nuclear technologies are still too new.

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This week, the National Urban League filed a federal lawsuit challenging three of those orders.

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# TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

### One dead, four injured in Suitland Parkway crash

A single-car crash on Suitland Parkway about 11:20 Sunday morning, Feb. 16, resulted in the death of an adult and left four minors injured, according to United States Park Police. Helicopters landed on the Beltway and airlifted the minors to a hospital for further medical treatment.

This accident occurred on the eastbound side of the Parkway near Suitland Road.

The crash is under investigation and no additional information has been released. If any of you, dear Readers, know more, call me at 301-735-3451. Meanwhile, pray for this grieving family.

### Town of Morningside

A St. Patrick's Day celebration is coming up in Morningside, and, of course, the annual Easter Eggstravaganza.

March meetings include the Work Session on Tuesday, March 11, and the Town Meeting March 18, both beginning at 7.

For all things Morningside, you can call 301-736-2300.

### Mardi Gras at Camp Springs Senior Center

Camp Springs Seniors' Spring Calendar is out, and it's filled with good stuff, like Mardi Gras on Tuesday, March 4, noon to 2:30 p.m.

This celebration features French Quarter vibes with live music performed by Memphis Gold and Trio. Purple, Green and Gold are the colors of the day.

Wear your festive mask. Bring your handkerchiefs. There'll be the crowning of the King and Queen and a parade with beads and festive treats. The fee is \$25 and includes a Louisiana-style catered meal.

The next day will be Ash Wednesday, first day of Lent.

### Selling your home? Join the Center?

Among the other offerings at Camp Springs Senior Center is "Preparing Your Home for the Selling Market," on March 13, 1–2 p.m.; Blood Pressure Screening by MedStar, in the Blue Heron, March 19, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Join them Friday, March 14, 1–3 p.m., for a movie with popcorn and a drink. Name of the film will be at the front

desk and on the digital marquee in the hallway.

If you are a senior like me, you can see that the Center has delightful and helpful offerings. Go by. Pick up the Spring Calendar and ask about joining.

### Potomac crash

Eleven more bodies were found in the river February 3, bringing to 55 the number of victims found. The crashed plane was carefully brought to the surface with the help of Navy salvage experts. Details continue to surface on what caused the tragedy.

### Changing landscape

The new Capitol Heights Patient First is now open at 1670 Ritchie Station Court. Hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., 365 days a year. Walk-in, no appointment necessary. Phone: 240-765-1406.

D.C.'s Landmark E Street Cinema—a "subterranean hub for independent and international cinema" in downtown Washington—is closing its doors this spring. The final show will be March 6, a 7 p.m. showing of "Mickey 17" starring Robert Pattinson. Back in my foreign movie days, the E Street was one of my favorite theaters.

### Valencia Ferguson, Suitland High grad

Valencia Renee Ferguson, 57, of Camp Springs, a graduate of Suitland High School, died February 8. She was the daughter of Jacqueline and Gene Ferguson and the sister to Leonard, Yolanda and Lionel.

After high school, she earned a bachelor's from Potomac College and a master's at Capitol Technology University. She had a career in pharmacy.

Survivors include her son Jarrett Dwight Adams, and she also cherished her nieces and nephews, Kendra Hyater-Davis, Keonna Hyater, Labarron Dante Davis and their children. A service was held February 21 at Briscoe-Tonic Funeral Home in Waldorf.

### Paul Merriman, Crossland graduate

Paul E. Merriman, Jr., 77, of Dunkirk, died at his home on January 30. He was born in Washington, lived in Oxon Hill and graduated from Crossland.

He joined the I.B.E.W. apprentice program and was a member of Local 26 for 42 years. He worked on many industrial projects, including the opening of the Metro rail system, the renovation of the Washington Monument, and the construction of the new Woodrow Wilson Bridge.

He was an avid reader, a passion he shared with his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed fishing and rooting for the Washington Redskins. He never missed a family celebration, especially a birthday for one of his grandchildren who knew him as "Pop Pop."

Survivors include two sisters, Ana Mae Merriman and Vicki Griffin, and three children, Tammy Merriman Kost, Tracy Merriman Kost, and Eric Merriman, eight grandchildren and a great-grandchild. He was preceded in death by his brother Vernon "Mickey" Merriman and parents, Paul Eugene Merriman and Frieda Omega Merriman (White).

Services were at Lee's Chapel, followed by interment at Southern Memorial Gardens in Dunkirk.

### David Wheeler, Crossland graduate

David A. Wheeler died suddenly on January 10 at his home in Pittston, Maine. He was born in Washington to John and Gladys Wheeler.

He graduated from Crossland and worked the rest of his life as a builder, carpenter and cabinetmaker. As his official obit states, he was "a born craftsman. He attained great skill in joinery, boatbuilding, and fine woodworking." He worked in Maine shipyards including Renaissance Yacht, Sample's Shipyard, and Hodgdon Yacht, and launched boats including Signe, Antonisa, and Scheherazade.

He and his first wife, Julia Moore, had three children, Anais, Morgan and Piper.

### Milestones

Happy Birthday to Winifred Lanehart, March 1; Karen (Elborne) Stern and Harold Titus, March 2; Jennifer Vilky, March 3; Amy Schlor, March 4; Matthew Flaherty, March 4; and Roy Derrick, March 6.

Happy Anniversaries to Tom and Sarah Shipman, their 66th on March 4; and to Larry and Susan Frostbutter, March 5.

## Calendar of Events

### National Premiere Tour: 'THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE'

Date and time: February 21 through April 19, 2025, three showtimes between 10:30 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Description: Featuring larger-than-life puppetry, professional actors, and one of the most captivating theaters in Washington D.C., the production of the beloved C.S. Lewis classic is the largest in the U.S. to date. It tells the timeless story of four children and their journey into the magical world of Narnia, where they meet the great lion Aslan and help break the reign of the evil White Witch.

Cost: Tickets ranging from \$59–\$85. Get tickets:

<https://www.museumofthebible.org/events/lww>

Location: Museum of the Bible, 400 4th St SW, Washington, DC 20024

### Lunchtime Listening with Tomika Arnold

Date and time: Wednesday, March 5, 2025, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Description: Celebrate Women's History Month with vocalist Tomika Arnold, hailed for her "captivating" and "powerful" voice. Ms. Arnold has shared the stage with music giants such as Michael Jackson, Sting, Bon Jovi, Beyonce, CeCe Winans, Stevie Wonder, Ray Charles, and Gloria Estefan among others. She has sung for three U.S. Presidents; President George W. Bush, President William Clinton, and for the inauguration of President Barack Obama. A true powerhouse vocalist, this performance is not one to be missed!

Cost: Ticket Price: \$5 Registration Code: ACHD-SPEC-GA-20240305 on PARKS DIRECT

Ages: All

Location: Southern Area Aquatics and Recreation Complex, 13601 Missouri Avenue, Brandywine, MD 20613

Contact: (301) 782-1442; [saarc@pgparks.com](mailto:saarc@pgparks.com)

### Baysox FREE Family Fun Fest

Date and time: Saturday, March 22, 2025, 10 a.m.–1 p.m. with National Anthem Auditions following

Description: The Chesapeake Baysox, Double-A Affiliate of the Baltimore Orioles, announce their annual FREE Family Fun Fest, in conjunction with Macaroni KID Bowie-Crofton-Odenton. National Anthem Performance Auditions to take place after the event's conclusion for all those interested. There will be multiple activities for attendees to enjoy including: Facepainting; FREE kids' attractions and inflatables; FREE stadium tours; Chesapeake Baysox merchandise for sale at the Baysox team store, The Tackle Box; GAME-WORN merchandise sale on the concourse!; Sponsor tables with interactive activities; Ticket and bobblehead pickup for ticket holders; Concessions available for purchase

National Anthem Auditions will begin after the Family Fun Fest wraps up at 1 p.m. Walk-up registration will begin at 1:30 p.m. for those interested and auditions will start at 2 p.m. It is free to audition. Auditions should be kept under 90 seconds.

Macaroni KID returns as the official sponsor of the Baysox Family Fun Fest. Macaroni KID is your local online source to find family fun events, engaging activity ideas, resource guides, and to connect with locally owned family-friendly businesses throughout the region.

Register on eventbrite to attend for FREE

Location: Prince George's Stadium, 4101 Crain Highway Bowie, MD 20716

### "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course

Date and time: March 24 to June 2, 2025

Description: Registration is now open for the spring 2025 "The Woods in Your Backyard" online course from the University of Maryland Extension's Woodland Stewardship Education program. Our self-directed, non-credit course runs 10 weeks from March 24 to June 2, 2025. The course will help landowners convert lawn to natural areas, and enhance stewardship of existing natural areas. The course provides strategies to landowners of small parcels of land (1–10 acres) that improve the stewardship of their property for personal enjoyment and environmental quality. It uses a hands-on learning approach to help participants develop and implement a plan for their property. Activities include how to map habitat areas, understand basic ecological principles about woodland and wildlife, choose and implement a few habitat management projects, and how to set a timetable and record your progress. Online discussion groups will allow participants to interact with others taking the course. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

Cost: The course costs \$125.00 per person, which includes the 108-page "Woods in Your Backyard" guide, workbook, and a tree identification guide. The course is limited to 25 participants, so sign up now! Registration closes March 31 or when filled. Registration is through Eventbrite; go to [https://go.umd.edu/WIYB\\_Spring25](https://go.umd.edu/WIYB_Spring25).

Contact: For more information, go to [https://go.umd.edu/the\\_course](https://go.umd.edu/the_course), or contact course coordinator Andrew Kling, University of Maryland Extension, [akling1@umd.edu](mailto:akling1@umd.edu), 301-226-7564.

The University of Maryland Extension programs are open to any person and will not discriminate against anyone because of race, age, sex, color, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, religion, ancestry, national origin, marital status, genetic information, political affiliation, and gender identity or expression.

### 4th Annual Make a Difference Walk and Resource Fair

Date and time: Saturday, April 19, 2025. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Event begins at 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Description: Maryland Crime Victims' Resource Center, Inc.: Stand with victims of crime and their survivors to let them know that you support them. Together we will honor those fighting for justice and remember lives lost due to violence. This is your chance to make a difference while enjoying a day of community and connection. Please create a team and/or register to attend and, if you feel it in your heart to support us, you can also set a goal to fundraise. (Please note that if you raise \$250 by April 4 you can earn a personalized sign)

Cost: FREE

Location: Watkins Regional Park, 301 Watkins Park Dr, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774

Contact: Sandra Sanna-Buckles, [ssannabuckles@mdcrimevictims.org](mailto:ssannabuckles@mdcrimevictims.org) or call/text 240-335-4037

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

### ANGELA ALSOBROOKS

Almazi Matthews, a senior agriculture major and Prince George's County resident said she looked forward to the opportunity to talk and meet with Alsobrooks. "I have never had an experience like this," Matthews said. "My heart was pounding, and I was so excited. It was great seeing how many people who were here are also invested in this election season and its importance."

When Angela Alsobrooks arrived at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore on October 2, it felt like a reunion. Flanked by members of her campaign team and UMES alumni, Alsobrooks, the Prince George's County Executive and U.S. Senate candidate for Maryland, was greeted with hugs and handshakes from members of a UMES contingent including president Dr. Heidi M. Anderson, SGA president Jada Wilkinson, and others.

Angela said, "the only way to truly understand the people we represent is to show up where they are, listen to them, and talk with them. I think every race, gender, and background should be represented because it makes our politics better," she said. "The lived experiences of every person in our community should be reflected in that," Alsobrooks said.

### CHILD CARE PROGRAMS (AFFORDABLE QUALITY CARE)

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation strives to meet the childcare needs of families in Prince George's County by offering fun, recreational programs at affordable prices; licensed by and operated under the guidelines of the Maryland State Department of Education Office of Child Care. With convenient locations throughout the county, these childcare facilities are staffed by caring, qualified people dedicated to creating a nurturing environment for every child.

Our programs operate at select M-NCPPC sites during the school year for children aged 5–12. The program operates in conjunction with Prince George's County School System's calendar. When County schools are closed for full days, all childcare programs are also closed. For Prince George's County residents only. Completed health forms are mandatory for participation in this program. Bus transportation is provided by Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS).

### FOOD PANTRIES

Mission Nutrition, Gwynn Park High School, 13800 Brandywine Road, Brandywine, Maryland. Distribution 3rd Tuesday from 4–6 p.m. Baden Food Pantry, St. Paul E. C. Hall, 13500 Baden-Westwood Road, Distribution Fridays 9:30 a.m.–11 a.m.

### CONGRATULATIONS ALMAZI

Standout winter grad to successors: Put yourselves out there.' Almazi Matthews graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in general agriculture during UMES' Winter 2024 com-

mencement. She attributes the knowledge, hands-on research, and professional opportunities afforded her as a School of Agricultural and National Sciences undergraduate student and USDA 1890 National Scholar to instilling the ingredients for her present and future success.

"Agriculture, Food and Resource Sciences is a very close-knit department with professors and faculty members who want you to succeed," Matthew said, "I got an amazing job on campus. Travel abroad and have been to numerous conferences because I put myself out there. Eventually, you even come to a professor's mind when the next fitting opportunity arises."

A transfer student from Waldorf, Maryland, Matthews decided to continue her education at UMES after learning of her family's agricultural heritage. At the time, she was taking a botany class at a community college and working at a local plant nursery. "When I expressed my interest in agriculture to my family, they shared stories of my late maternal and paternal grandparents' involvement with farming and gardening. It was the push I needed," Matthews said.

While at UMES, the budding agronomist worked under the tutelage of research assistant professor Corrie Cotton. "She allowed me to explore my interests in agriculture by conducting my own research," Matthews said. "I also assisted graduate students with their work, which helped me learn how to properly conduct research". A summer internship in her junior year gave Matthews a chance to participate in an experiential learning opportunity in Costa Rica. "I will carry that experience with me in any career path I end up taking," she said.

When she returned to campus, her interest in international agriculture grew. Matthews participated in the Global Orientation to Agricultural Learning (GOALS) program and was selected to attend the Borlaug Dialogues of the World Food Prize Foundation's annual conference in Des Moines, Iowa. Having attended presentations and networking opportunities with world leaders, experts in global food security and peers, the weeklong national event fueled her interest in global food security.

"I have undergone tremendous personal development," Matthews said of her undergraduate experiences. "I had to become comfortable being uncomfortable when facing difficult challenges. The best piece of advice I could give other students is to ask for what you want and put yourself out there." Matthews is returning to campus following graduation to pursue a master's degree in food and agricultural sciences.

Information from University of Maryland Eastern Shore (THE KEY), a newsletter for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends, October 2024. Gail Stephens, agricultural communications, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, School of Agricultural and National Sciences, UMES Extension [gstephens@umes.edu](mailto:gstephens@umes.edu), 410-621-3850.



# COMMUNITY

## Local Students Honored

**Brenda Wilson of Capitol Heights Named to Dean's List at Youngstown State University**

YOUNGSTOWN, Ohio (Feb. 24, 2025)—Brenda Wilson of Capitol Heights, Maryland, majoring in Business Management, has been named to the Dean's List at Youngstown State University for Fall Semester 2024.

Dean's List recognition is awarded to full-time undergraduate students who have earned at least a 3.4 grade point average for not less than 12 semester hours of credit in the Fall semester.

**Samantha Battersby-Roberts Awarded Degree from Miami University**

OXFORD, Ohio (Feb. 22, 2025)—Samantha Battersby-Roberts of Fort Washington, Md. was among students from Miami University who received

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## Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

### Can I Get Extra Social Security for my Military Service?

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

**Dear Rusty:** Please help. I served from 1964 to 1966 in the US Army. I have been trying to contact Social Security in order to request extra benefits for veterans. The telephone is a recording, and you never get to speak to anyone. The web site at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov) is useless to me. I went to the SS office and there was a huge line outdoors in the freezing cold. I am disabled and cannot stand on a line in this cold. Please advise me about my options. Financially, is it worth the trouble? **Signed: Disabled American Veteran**

**Dear Disabled Veteran:** My profound thanks for your service to our country. FYI, the "special extra credit for military service" you refer to does not provide an incremental Social Security benefit amount for military veterans. Rather, it adds an additional amount to your recording earnings for the years you served, which may—or may not—affect your Social Security benefit. FYI, I've written numerous articles on this topic, one of which you can read at this link: [www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-older-veteran-asks-about-special-social-security-credit-for-military-service/](http://www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-older-veteran-asks-about-special-social-security-credit-for-military-service/).

In your case (serving between 1964 and 1966), if you told Social Security of your military service when you applied for benefits (or gave them a copy of your DD-214), they would have added up to \$1,200 per year to your recorded military pay record (FYI, those who served after 1967 were automatically given earnings credit for their military service years). However, whether those special extra credits would affect your SS benefit depends on what your lifetime earnings record was when you later claimed SS. When you applied for benefits, Social Security reviewed your lifetime earnings record and used the highest earning 35 years of earnings over your lifetime (adjusted for inflation) to calculate your "Primary Insurance Amount" (or "PIA," which is what you get if you claim benefits to start at your SS full retirement age. If, after your military service, you had 35 or more years of earnings which were higher than what you earned while serving, Social Security would have used those later higher earnings to calculate your benefit, and your military earnings wouldn't affect your benefit. If, however, any of your military earnings (including the "special extra credits") were among the highest over your lifetime, then those higher military earnings would be included when calculating your benefit.

So, whether you will benefit from these "special extra credits for military service" depends largely on your post-service earnings history. If your military earnings were among the highest earning years over your lifetime, and you provided SSA with a copy of your DD-214 when you applied for Social Security, then your current SS benefit already includes consideration of your military service. Social Security should have asked about your military service when you applied. If you didn't advise SS of your military service when you applied for Social Security, or if you aren't sure, you should contact the SSA at 1.800.772.1213 and ask if you were given those "special extra credits for military service" when you applied. However, if you had at least 35 years of higher earnings after you left military service, your current SS benefit is already based on those later higher earning years, and you will not get anything additional from those "special extra credits" for your military service years.

FYI, we know it is often difficult to contact the Social Security Administration by phone, as well as trying to visit SSA offices without an appointment (which is why our AMAC Foundation provides this free service). SSA is now allowing in-person visits "by appointment only" and you can call the above number to schedule an in-person appointment at your local SSA office. But before you do, please consider what I've said above. And remember that your SS benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over your entire lifetime and each year represents only 1/35th of your benefit amount. So, is it worth the trouble? That depends on whether your military earnings, including the "special extra credits for military service," are among the highest over your entire lifetime. If the answer is "yes" then it is likely worth it; if "no" then perhaps not.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).*

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

## Marietta's Lunchtime Lecture: Jane Austen and Today's Historic Houses

By STACEY HAWKINS  
**Marietta House Museum**

Please join us on **Wednesday, March 5**, from noon-1 p.m. for Marietta's Lunchtime Lecture: Jane Austen and Today's Historic Houses. Jane Austen turns 250 in 2025! Mark Women's History Month by joining curator Lucinda Dukes

Edinberg for her talk on the decorative arts during Jane Austen's lifetime.

Ms. Dukes Edinberg is an expert in American art and decorative arts and serves as the curator at Hammond Harwood House in Annapolis, MD.

Free program. Walk-ins are welcome. Guests may bring a bag lunch. Ages 12 & up. Children must be accompanied by

an adult. Registration is recommended but not required. Please register at [www.pgparcsdirect.com](http://www.pgparcsdirect.com) with the ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20250305

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.

## Adult Grief Support Programs and Workshops Meeting This Spring

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
**Hospice of the Chesapeake**

PASADENA, Md. (Feb. 18, 2025)—From free, come-as-you-are drop-in grief support groups to online groups that explore grief through imagery, Chesapeake Life Center offers a variety of grief support groups for adults this spring.

- **Drop-In Grief Support Groups** are open to anyone grieving. Groups offer participants an opportunity to share their feelings and obtain support from others who are experiencing loss. There is no fee. These groups will meet in Calvert County as follows:
  - North Beach Senior Center, 9010 Chesapeake Ave., North Beach, Maryland, from 1 to 2 p.m. Wednesdays, April 2, May 7 and June 4.
  - Southern Pines Senior Center, 20 Appeal Lane, Lusby, Maryland, from 2 to 3 p.m. Tuesdays, April 8, May 13 and June 10.
  - Calvert Pines Senior Center, 450 W. Dares Beach Road, Prince Frederick, Maryland, from 1 to 2 p.m. Tuesdays, April 15, May 20 and June 17.

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

- **SoulCollage Studio**—Join us in person or virtually for a time to create unique collages reflecting and expressing loss and the journey through life. It will meet from 2 to 5 p.m. on Monday, April 7 at 9500 Medical Center Drive, Suite 250, Largo, Maryland. The supply fee is \$10.
- **Loss of Life Partner/Spouse Evening Group** is a group for individuals grieving the death of a spouse

or life partner. It will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays, April 9, May 14 and June 11 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is \$10.

- **Loss of Parent or Parental Figure Support Group** provides space for those grieving the loss of a parent or parental figure to come together to feel supported in their grief. The group will meet from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Thursdays, April 10, May 8 and June 12 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is free.
- **Child Loss Support Group** is for parents grieving the death of a child, regardless of age or circumstance. It will meet from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Mondays, April 28, May 19 and June 30 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. The cost is \$10.
- **Nature's Healing Power: A Grief Support Group Series** is a free, nature-informed program that will include immersive walks in nature, time spent focusing on the cycle of the seasons and working with natural objects to contain and express the grief experience. It will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Thursdays, May 1, 8, 22 and 29, at Greenbelt Park, 6565 Greenbelt Road, Greenbelt, Maryland. Childcare is not provided and children are not permitted in any of these groups. The following groups will meet virtually via Zoom for Healthcare:
  - **Loss of Life Partner/Spouse Virtual Group** is a free group for individuals grieving the death of a spouse or life partner. It will meet from 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesdays, April 8, May 13 and June 10 via Zoom.

• **SoulCollage Virtual Support Group for Loss and Transition** is a free group with participants creating collages to commemorate lost loved ones and visually journal the grief process. The group will meet from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday, May 5 via Zoom.

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

### New workshops focus on wellness and creativity for grievers and caregivers

PASADENA, Md. (Feb. 18, 2025)—Chesapeake Life Center offers many creative workshops to help adults find a path to healing from loss. From painting to mindfulness, there are options for grievers and caregivers. Here are some of the events planned for this season.

- **Navigating Anticipatory and Ambiguous Grief in Dementia Caregiving**—This free workshop is designed to support dementia caregivers and family members in understanding and managing the complex emotions associated with anticipatory and ambiguous grief. Caregivers often experience grief long before the death of a loved one due to the progressive nature of dementia. Anticipatory grief involves mourning the loss of the cognitive and physical abilities of a loved one, while ambiguous grief arises from the uncertainty of what has been

See GRIEF SUPPORT Page A4

## Maryland Farm & Harvest Visits Brandywine Cow Cuddles in Prince George's County During March 4 Episode

By PRESS OFFICER  
**MPT**

OWINGS MILLS, Md. (Feb. 20, 2025)—Maryland Public Television's (MPT) original series Maryland Farm & Harvest, currently in its 12th season, will feature farms and locations in Anne Arundel, Carroll, and Prince George's counties during an episode premiering on Tuesday, March 4. An episode preview can be found on the series' webpage at [mpt.org/farm](http://mpt.org/farm).

Maryland Farm & Harvest airs on Tuesdays at 7 p.m. on MPT-HD and online at [mpt.org/livestream](http://mpt.org/livestream). Episodes are also available to view live and on demand using the free PBS app and MPT's online video player.

The popular weekly series takes viewers on a journey across the Free State, telling engaging and enlightening stories about the farms, people, and technology required to sustain and grow agriculture in Maryland, the state's number one commercial industry.

Joanne Clendinning, who has earned two Emmy® awards from the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences for her work on Maryland Farm & Harvest, serves as series host. She is joined by Al Spoler, host of "The Local Buy" segments, and by a variety of local chefs who serve as guest hosts of the series' "Farm to Skillet" segments.

With introductions filmed at Church View Farm in Millersville (Anne Arundel

County), the March 4 episode features the following stories:

- **Brandywine Cow Cuddles (Prince George's County)**—As a former executive of a vascular surgery center, Aiden Dart is very familiar with stress. Cow cuddling—or "bovine-assisted therapy"—involves interacting with cows for therapeutic benefit. After seeing the solace her daughter found being around cows in high school, Dart purchased three highland cows for her family's six-acre property in Brandywine. Then, she started Brandywine Cow Cuddles to help others experience the same calming effect. Today, Dart operates Brandywine Cow Cuddles as a full-time job, introducing people to the scientifically proven benefits of interacting with cows.
- **Farm to Skillet: Chef Matt Lego (Anne Arundel County)**—Chef Matt Lego of Leo in Annapolis leads viewers through the Anne Arundel County Farmers' Market, where he finds fresh ingredients including meats from P.A. Bowen Farmstead (Brandywine) and vegetables from Knopps Farm (Severn) and Shlagel Farms (Waldorf). Back at the restaurant, Lego uses the locally produced ingredients to cook up a continental chicken dish he's honed since childhood. The recipe will be available to download at [mpt.org/farm](http://mpt.org/farm).

More than 19 million viewers have watched Maryland Farm & Harvest on the statewide public TV network since

its debut in 2013. The series has traveled to more than 500 farms, fisheries, and other agriculture-related locations during its 11-plus season run, covering every Maryland county, as well as Baltimore City and Washington, D.C.

Encore broadcasts of Maryland Farm & Harvest air on MPT-HD on Thursdays at 11 p.m. and on Sundays at 6 a.m. Episodes also air on MPT2/Create® on Fridays at 7:30 p.m. Past episodes can be viewed on the free PBS app and MPT's online video player, while episode segments are available on the series' YouTube channel at [youtube.com/c/MarylandFarmHarvest/featured](http://youtube.com/c/MarylandFarmHarvest/featured).

Audiences are invited to engage with the series on social media @MarylandFarmHarvest on Facebook and @md-farmtv on Instagram.

The Maryland Department of Agriculture is MPT's co-production partner for Maryland Farm & Harvest. Major funding is provided by the Maryland Grain Producers Utilization Board.

Additional funding is provided by Maryland's Best; MARBIDCO; a grant from the Maryland Department of Agriculture, Specialty Crop Block Program; Farm Credit; Maryland Soybean Board; Maryland Nursery, Landscape & Greenhouse Association; Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts; Maryland Farm Bureau; The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment; Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation; and by the citizens of Baltimore County.



# COMMENTARY

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## National Urban League's Lawsuit Challenges the Big Lie of the Extremist Anti-Equity Movement

*"An elective despotism was not the government we fought for; but one in which the powers of government should be so divided and balanced among the several bodies of magistracy as that no one could transcend their legal limits without being effectually checked and restrained by the others."*

—Thomas Jefferson

The foundational principle of the United States Constitution is the separation of powers, com-

monly described as "checks and balances." The authority of each of the three branches of government is limited by the other two.

While previous administrations have pushed the boundaries of those limits, no administration in modern American history has tried to disregard them as thoroughly and wantonly as the current one. The New York Times is keeping a running list of examples.

If allowed to stand, the administration's anti-

equity executive orders would hamstring the National Urban League's ability to advance fair housing, equal employment, financial opportunity, health care access, and the rest of our empowerment agenda.

But even more critically, the orders represent a violation of the First Amendment right to free speech, by censoring and chilling views on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Because the orders are vague as to what is and is not prohibited, they represent a violation of the Fifth Amendment right to due process. And, because the orders discriminate against people of color, women, and LGBTQ+ people, they represent a violation of the Fifth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection.

And so we are asking the judicial branch to exercise its constitutional duty to check the power of the executive branch. This week, the National Urban League filed a federal lawsuit challenging three of those orders. Represented by the Legal Defense Fund and Lambda Legal, we are joined in the lawsuit by co-plaintiffs, the National Fair Housing Alliance, and the AIDS Foundation of Chicago.

Key to our complaint is the administration's wildly false assertion "that DEIA programs and activities are illegal and inconsistent with merit,

hard work, and standards of excellence."

This misconception is the big lie behind the extremist anti-equity movement, which is nothing more than a desperate scramble to protect and preserve white, male advantage.

The day after Inauguration Day, the National Urban League launched the Demand Diversity Roundtable to combat the disinformation campaign aimed at undermining the principles of DEI.

Make no mistake—disinformation is the only hope the anti-equity movement has of succeeding, because the vast majority of Americans support diversity initiatives and understand their positive impact. Multiple studies show that companies with diverse leadership teams tend to have higher profitability, better innovation, and improved decision-making.

Only by amplifying what LDF President and Director-Counsel Janai Nelson called "inaccurate, dehumanizing, and divisive rhetoric" can the Trump administration advance its anti-equity, anti-diversity agenda. We are hopeful that the court will act quickly, as Nelson added, "so the arduous work of advancing and sustaining our multiracial democracy can continue without unlawful interference from the Trump administration."

—February 21, 2025

### Partners from A1

youth with a strong foundation in STEM education and hands-on training.

As outlined by the agreement, Capitol Tech will host FIRE STEM rocket challenge competitions throughout the academic year and plan college workshops for FIRE STEM participants and their parents. Additionally, Capitol Tech is proud to offer a scholarship opportunity to students who participate in and successfully complete a FIRE STEM program. FIRE STEM will also be participating in select Cyber Saturday workshops, as well as Capitol Tech's STEM Challenge event for middle through high school students.

"At Capitol Technology University, we are committed to fostering the next generation of STEM leaders through hands-on education and real-world experiences," stated Dr. Bill Butler, Vice President of Cyber Science Outreach and Partnerships. "Our partnership with FIRE STEM aligns perfectly with our mission to provide students—especially those from underrepresented communities—with the tools, knowledge, and mentorship they need to innovate and thrive in STEM and entrepreneurship."

FIRE STEM is a 501(c)(3) non-profit S.T.E.A.M. program associated with the NSBE, NASA, and NAA. Their vision is to empower innovative and entrepreneurial-minded youth in the S.T.E.A.M. disciplines from underprivileged and underrepresented communities. By engaging students in science and engineering programs as well as educational opportunities through partnerships and collaborations, FIRE STEM provides them with the proficiency, skills, and confidence needed to succeed in the S.T.E.M. and entrepreneurial arenas. Visit [www.firestem.org](http://www.firestem.org) for more information.

Capitol Technology University is a leading STEM university located in Laurel, MD, near the vibrant Maryland, Virginia, and DC metropolitan technology corridor. The university's mission is to educate individuals for successful professional careers in STEM research, engineering, management, and business by providing relevant learning experiences. Through industry-expert faculty, technical skills development, and innovative partnerships, Capitol Tech fosters career advancement opportunities for the evolving global community. Visit [www.capttechu.edu](http://www.capttechu.edu) for more information.

### Cohort from A1

The 11th cohort for the Bowie BIC 8(a) Accelerator currently has eighteen 8(a) certified small businesses participating that will learn from the SBA's subject matter experts, the Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), and various government contracting resources. In addition, participants will benefit from the experience shared during the sessions led by business executives, resource partners, and successful program graduates.

The 8(a) Accelerator program consists of a series of immersive sessions conducted over seven consecutive weeks at Bowie BIC's headquarters at Bowie State University and runs through March 21, 2025. The program provides targeted networking opportunities for new 8(a) government contractors, cohort-based training focused on the development of each company's capture management strategy, reviewing and providing feedback on each company's implementation strategy, and pitch opportunities for 8(a) companies to present their business capabilities to senior federal contracting officials.

For more information about the 8(a) Accelerator program, please visit [www.bowiebic.com/8a-accelerator/](http://www.bowiebic.com/8a-accelerator/)

Bowie BIC is an award-winning hub for business acceleration located at the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community on the campus of Bowie State University, the oldest historically Black college or university (HBCU) in Maryland. Bowie BIC provides key business scale-up resources, customized business support, professional counseling, mentoring, and competitively priced collaborative workspace. The center's commitment to innovation and growth is reflected in its signature business support initiatives, including the newly launched 8(a) Center of Excellence. For more information: [www.bowiebic.com](http://www.bowiebic.com)

### Nuclear from A1

"I think at some point it will probably be available, and if we pass these bills, I suspect it will get built here at some point," she said.

Charkoudian supports other bills about long-term energy planning and analysis to get a better idea of when new nuclear installations could be up and running.

New nuclear technologies include small modular reactors, or SMRs. They're supposed to be quicker to build and take up less space, Pinsky said, though none are operating in the United States yet.

Charkoudian is sponsoring the Abundant, Affordable Clean Energy Act, which focuses on building quickly deployable energy projects like battery storage and solar. It also supports relicensing the state's nuclear plant.

"It is clear to me that we need to keep our current nuclear plants running and relicensed," she said.

Resource adequacy—making sure energy supply matches demand—has been part of this push to explore nuclear.

The grid operator, PJM, "has made a whole lot of mistakes," said Sen. Jim Rosapepe, a Democrat from Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties, leading to high rates and worries about energy reliability.

He's co-sponsoring the Decarbonization Infrastructure Solutions Act that would classify nuclear as

renewable energy and set up a procurement process.

"Nuclear is not the solution. Nuclear is potentially a part of the solution," he said, one of many options for the state to consider.

High energy prices have led lawmakers to consider more nuclear energy, said Adam Dubitsky, the consulting state director of the Maryland Land & Liberty Coalition. He supports relicensing the nuclear power plant in Calvert County and exploring new nuclear development in the state.

"It's really only been over the last couple of months in Maryland that families and businesses have seen their electric bills go through the roof. As a result, politicians are scrambling to find a solution," he said.

Pippy said that recent state energy policy is at fault because its emphasis on environmental goals caused energy producers to leave Maryland. Maryland's current energy situation represents "self-inflicted wounds," he said, and he hasn't heard of any proposed short-term solutions.

"I think Marylanders are at a point where they're fed up," Pippy said. "They expect their government to assist them in providing affordable and reliable energy."

"When you consider nuclear, the fact that it is reliable, affordable, and clean energy ... I think that's certainly something that we should look at," he said.

### Students from A3

degrees during the fall commencement Dec 13, 2024.

Battersby-Roberts graduated with a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Biology degree, majoring in GFP.

### USCB Student Anyya Jones of Capitol Heights Graduated in December Ceremony

BLUFFTON, S.C. (Feb. 19, 2025)—University of South Carolina Beaufort student Anyya Jones of Capitol Heights graduated with a BS in Biology on December 14, 2024 in a ceremony on the Bluffton campus.

### More than 3,000 Students Earn Certificates and Degrees from Georgia State University for Fall 2024

ATLANTA, Ga. (Feb. 19, 2025)—More than 3,000 students earned certificates and degrees at the associate's, bachelor's, and graduate levels from Georgia State University at the end of the fall 2024

semester. Students were recognized during commencement in December.

Students from your coverage area include:

**Jaron Hinton-Bruce** of Greenbelt (20770), a Bachelor of Science degree in Music Management  
**Badi Joyce** of Upper Marlboro (20774), a Master of Science degree in Sport Administration

### Grief Support from A3

lost and what remains in the relationship. It will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, April 1 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland.

- **Creating Hope: Therapeutic Art Exercises in Griefwork**—Creating can help us express things we have no words for, discover more about ourselves and glean beauty through our sorrow. In each session, people will participate in a therapeutic art project to help with personal grief work and connect with one another. This workshop is open to teens and adults. Supplies are provided. No art skills are required. It will be held from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, April 5, May 3 and June 14 at the Burnett Center for Hope and Healing, 4559 Sixes Road, Prince Frederick, Maryland. The cost is \$10 per session.
- **Parent Loss Workshop**—This workshop provides space for those grieving the loss of a parent to come together to feel supported in their grief. Join others for a time of sharing and reflection. The group will meet from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, April 5 at the Chesapeake Life Center offices at 9500 Medical Center Drive, Suite 250, Largo, Maryland. The cost is \$10.
- **Monday Morning Mindfulness**—Start

your week with intention and clarity with this morning session. Whether you're new to mindfulness or have an established practice, this session offers guided meditation, gentle breathwork and reflective prompts to help you center yourself for the week ahead. It will take place at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, April 7, May 5 and June 2, at the Center for Hope & Healing on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. This is a free program.

- **Suicide Support Workshop**—This workshop will provide a supportive environment to process loss and develop coping strategies for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. It will take place from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Monday, April 28 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$10.
- **Mindful Art—Let's Have Fun with the Brilliant Blob Family!**—Relieve stress and let your creativity flow with this workshop where you'll tap into your strength, instincts, courage and imagination. A simple watercolor and marker project focuses on the process, not perfection. The more we practice creativity, the more we allow ourselves to let go and be free from judgment, rules and fear. There's no wrong in art—just fun, ex-

pression and a deeper connection to your inner self. It will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, May 14 at the Center for Hope & Healing on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$10.

- **Mother's Day Sip and Paint Wellness Workshop**—Join the Chesapeake Life Center team for an event where participants paint while enjoying drinks and socializing. It's a fun way to celebrate and honor Mom by creating a unique painting! It will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, May 17 on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus, 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena. The cost is \$10.

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

*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](http://www.chesapeakelifecenter.org).*

## The Prince George's Post

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# HEALTH *and* WELLNESS



PHOTO COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK

## Know These 4 Core Factors to Avoid a Heart Health Syndrome

(Family Features) In the U.S., 1 in 3 adults is at risk for a newly recognized syndrome that comes from a combination of heart disease, kidney disease, type 2 diabetes and excess body weight. This cluster of conditions, called cardiovascular-kidney-metabolic (CKM) syndrome, is an example of how problems in one part of your body can affect other parts.

To avoid CKM syndrome, health experts suggest paying close attention to four of the American Heart Association's Life's Essential 8—blood pressure, lipids, body weight and blood sugar level—which are core health factors that impact your metabolic health.

Good metabolic health means your body uses energy well and keeps these factors in a normal range. However, when numbers are off in one area, it can affect others, raising your risk for heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and diabetes.

Consider these tips from the American Heart Association to help keep your core health factors under control.

### Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension, happens when the force of your blood pushing against the walls of your blood vessels is too high. High blood pressure is a leading cause of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease.

Because high blood pressure doesn't have symptoms, the only way to know you have it is to get your blood pressure checked. Healthy blood pressure is below 120/80. If your blood pressure is 130/80 or higher, talk to your doctor about checking your other core health factors.

Lifestyle changes can help reduce high blood pressure. One example is a Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating pattern that's low in fat and rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. Losing 10 pounds and reducing alcohol consumption can also reduce blood pressure.

### Cholesterol

Cholesterol is a waxy substance your liver makes then circulates in the blood where your body uses it to build cells and make vitamins and hormones. You may also get cholesterol from eating animal products. If there's too much cholesterol cir-

culating, your risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke may increase.

For optimal CKM health, your LDL cholesterol should be below 100 and triglycerides below 150. Triglycerides are the most common type of fat in the body. If your triglyceride level is 135 or higher, talk to your doctor about decreasing your risk.

Losing body weight and increasing physical activity decrease triglyceride levels. In addition, DASH and Mediterranean (plant-based, high-fiber, low-fat) eating patterns support healthy LDL and triglyceride levels.

### Body Weight

Healthy weight may be determined by body mass index (BMI), a number that represents your weight in relation to your height. Extra body fat can mean a higher risk for many health problems, including heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

CKM syndrome starts when BMI is 25 or higher and waist circumference is 88 centimeters or higher for women and 102 centimeters or higher for men. Aim for a BMI between 18.5–25.

To lose weight and keep it off, start by setting realistic goals. Understand how much and why you eat, manage portion sizes, make smart snack substitutions and be physically active.

### Blood Sugar

High blood sugar can slowly damage the kidneys. In fact, diabetes is the leading cause of kidney disease, and it increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Blood sugar is measured in two ways: a fasting blood glucose test (short term blood sugar) and an A1C test (long term blood sugar control). A normal fasting blood glucose level is 70–99 and a normal A1C level is below 5.7%. Fasting blood glucose above 125 and A1C of 6.5% or higher means you have diabetes.

Habits that help you avoid high blood pressure, weight gain and high cholesterol also keep your blood sugar in check. These are especially important if you have a family history of diabetes.

Learn more about CKM syndrome and how to manage your risk at [heart.org/CKMhealth](http://heart.org/CKMhealth).

## Advanced Cardiac Care Program Seeks to Reduce Hospital Visits

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN  
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (Feb. 20, 2025)—Hospice of the Chesapeake, in collaboration with the American Heart Association (AHA) and the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) announces the Advanced Cardiac Care Program to address one of the nation's largest killers of Americans—heart disease.

Each year, more Americans die from heart disease than any other condition, including cancer. Heart disease is also a leading cause of hospitalization: patients with congestive heart failure alone account for more than one million inpatient admissions annually.

Available for immediate use, the program's patient and caregiver guide helps avert multiple hospital and emergency room visits that are a huge source of stress for the patient, their family, and the medical facility.

"By offering heart disease patients the right educational resources, we empower them to take control of their health," Hospice of the Chesapeake Vice President of Medical Affairs & Hospice Medical Director Dr. Sonja Richmond said. "The resources available through the Advanced Cardiac Care Program can help patients and caregivers better manage their condition, reduc-

ing the likelihood of hospital visits and improving their quality of life."

"It is a complete and unnecessary tragedy that only five percent of heart failure patients who are discharged from the hospital ever utilize in-home hospice services," said Carole Fisher, President of NPHI. "Far too many die alone in a hospital or nursing facility, when instead our hospice teams could care for them wherever they reside and they could enjoy a far higher quality of life surrounded by loved ones."

To learn more about the program and for copies of the guide, visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org/cardiac](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org/cardiac).

Hospice of the Chesapeake is the leading provider of compassionate, expert care for individuals and families facing serious illness across Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's counties. As Maryland's largest independent, not-for-profit hospice, the organization is committed to enhancing the quality of life for patients by managing symptoms, providing education, and focusing on what matters most to each individual and their loved ones. With a team of highly skilled professionals, Hospice of the Chesapeake offers personalized support to help families navigate the challenges of advanced illness and loss, ensuring comfort, dignity,

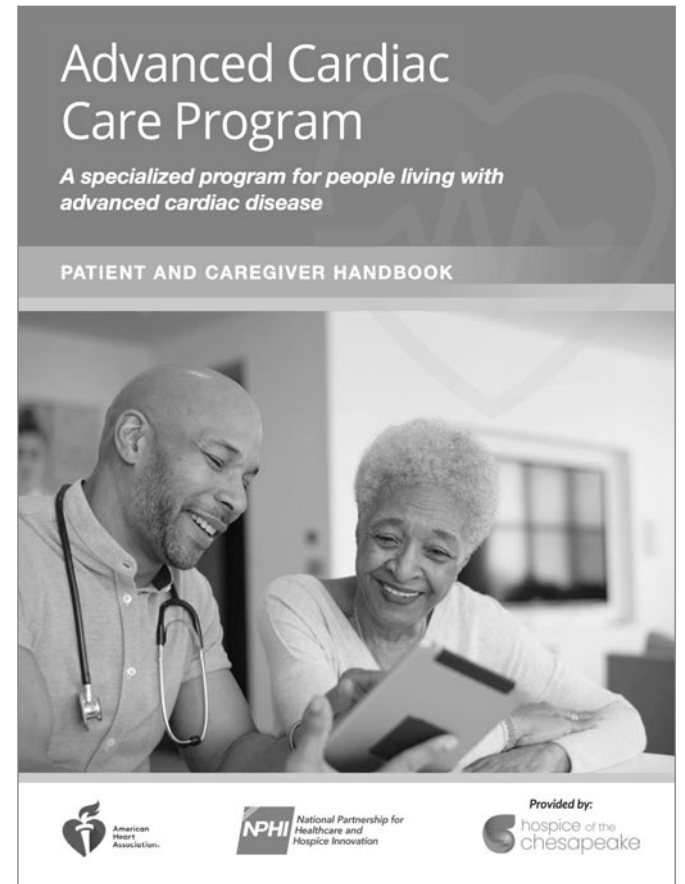


IMAGE COURTESY HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

and peace of mind throughout the journey. For more information, visit [www.hospicechesapeake.org](http://www.hospicechesapeake.org).

The National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) is a membership organization comprising 100+ not-for-profit, community-integrated hospice, and palliative care providers dedicated to ensuring patients and their families have access to care that reflects their individual goals, values, and preferences. Representing providers from 37 states and the District of Columbia, NPHI and its members help design more innovative and effective models of care, advocate for comprehensive and community-integrated care customized to meet each person's unique needs, and build collaboration between national thought leaders, decision-makers, and other healthcare stakeholders to improve hospice care. Learn more at [www.hospiceinnovations.org](http://www.hospiceinnovations.org).

## Hair-Loss Researchers Discover Potential Key to Reversing Baldness

Unexpected Findings Defy Conventional Understanding of Hair Growth

By PRESS OFFICER  
UVA Health

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (Feb. 19, 2025)—A surprising discovery from the University of Virginia School of Medicine is transforming our understanding of hair growth and could set the stage for new approaches to cure baldness.

Researchers led by UVA's Lu Q. Le, MD, PhD, have discovered that a previously under-appreciated stem cell population in the upper and middle sections of the hair follicle is essential for hair growth. When these cells are depleted, hair growth stops. That suggests that replenishing or activating these stem cells could restore hair growth, the researchers report.

These malleable stem cells in the upper- and mid- hair follicle region are early ancestors of our hair, Le's team found. That upends the long-accepted belief that hair growth begins with stem cells in an area near the bulbous base of the follicle technically known as "the bulge."

"These findings add new foundational knowledge to hair follicle biology, showing, for the first time, that the bulge cells actually arise from this novel stem cell population," said Le, chair of the Department of Dermatology at the UVA School of Medicine and UVA Health. "It is our

hope that these stem cells could one day provide a novel therapy for treating hair loss in people."

### Understanding Hair Growth—and Loss

Each of the millions of hairs on our bodies grows from an individual follicle, like a tulip grows from a bulb. Le's research casts new light on how these follicles form. The bulge above the bottom of the follicle, Le found, develops from stem cells located closer to the surface of our skin.

The stem cells—cells that can turn into other types of cells—continue to play an essential role in hair growth after the follicle is established, the researchers discovered. Positioned along the hair shaft beneath the surface of the skin, the stem cells move downward to nourish and resupply the bulge at the follicle's base. These cells serve as the earliest raw material for hair formation, Le and his collaborators believe.

In their lab tests, the researchers found that depleting these stem cells at certain times halted hair growth. That speaks to their essential role in hair formation and to their potential role in hair loss.

Based on their findings, Le and his team believe that keeping the stem cells active to ensure the follicle has adequate

supply for hair growth could, with further research, offer a new way to combat hair loss. They are continuing their investigation but excited by the possibilities.

"We plan to fully investigate the potential of these stem cells in human hair follicles," Le said. "Importantly, we found that in human bald scalp, although the hair shafts are gone, this population of novel hair stem cells is still present in the upper hair follicle. This means that if we could reactivate these cells to migrate down and repopulate the bulge, they could potentially regrow hair in bald scalp."

### Findings Published

The findings have been published as a cover story in the Journal of Clinical Investigation. The research team consisted of Elnaz Ghotbi, Edem Tchegnon, Zhiguo Chen, Stephen Li, Tracey Shipman, Yong Wang, Jenny Raman, Yumeng Zhang, Renee M. McKay, Chung-Ping Liao and Lu Q. Le. The researchers have no financial interest in the work.

The research was funded by the National Institutes of Health, grants R01CA166593 and R01EY033344.

To keep up with the latest medical research news from UVA, subscribe to the Making of Medicine blog at <http://makingofmedicine.virginia.edu>.

## House of Delegates Passes Bill to Expand the Authority of the Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board

Legislation will help bring down the cost of high-cost drugs for all Marylanders

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland Health Care for All

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (Feb. 21, 2025)—The Maryland Health Care for All Coalition congratulated the Maryland House of Delegates for passing critically important legislation to expand the authority of the state's Prescription Drug Affordability Board. The Board now has the authority to limit high drug costs for state and local governments, but not yet

for most average Marylanders.

"We thank the House for overwhelmingly approving this important bill. When fully enacted, it will give the Board the authority to continue its great work and bring down costs for all Marylanders," said Vincent DeMarco, president of the Coalition. "It's time to act to make drugs more affordable for all. Big drug corporations are making enormous profits and spending lavishly on advertising, even as many people struggle to

pay for the prescriptions they need to live healthy lives. This bill will help fix that, and we urge the Senate to approve the bill and for Governor Moore to sign it."

The legislation, HB 424, is sponsored by Delegates Bonnie Cullison and Jennifer White Holland. A companion bill, SB 357, sponsored by Senators Dawn Gile and Brian Feldman. The Maryland Prescription Drug Affordability Board was the first of its kind when created by

the General Assembly in 2019; today, several other states have followed Maryland's lead. We thank Governor Wes Moore for his leadership on this issue and we thank the Maryland Department of Health, the Maryland Insurance Administration and the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange for providing testimony in support of the legislation.

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## EarthTalk® Q&A Why So Many Eastern U.S. Wildfires?

By Mason Asakura | February 19, 2025

*Dear EarthTalk:*  
*Are increased shrub and tree plantings in the eastern U.S. in recent decades partially responsible for the recent uptick in wildfires across the region?*  
—M. Major, New York, NY

Wildfires are uncontrolled destructive fires that spread over natural areas, like forests or brush. They can happen for many reasons, natural or man-made. Climate change has made wildfires increasingly more destructive throughout the world. One study from the University of Maryland suggests that current wildfires burn nearly six million more hectares of tree cover per year compared to wildfires from 2001.

The eastern U.S. is no exception to this devastation, with certain regions' wildfire frequencies having grown tenfold in the last 40 years. There are many explanations for this, but one example is flammable resin being applied to forests by timber companies. It is also theorized that increased shrub and tree planting efforts across the eastern United States are contributing to this uptick in major wildfires.

Researchers believe that these factors combine to explain in-

creased wildfire odds. Per a recent study led by University of Florida researcher Victoria Donovan, in the east a one percent increase in woody cover leads to a 3.9 percent increase in odds of a wildfire the next year. Some recent studies have noted that the planting of invasive species can also increase wildfire frequency. UMass Amherst researchers noted that wildfire occurrences have increased by up to 230 percent because of eight species of nonnative grass.

There are many ways that the average person can help combat wildfires. According to Donovan, reducing fuel usage is the easiest way to prevent wildfires. Supporting climate laws is also vital in achieving environmental justice. Signing the petition led by the Center for Biological Diversity urging FEMA to declare both extreme heat and wildfire smoke as major disasters will support such laws.

Despite research exhibiting a correlation between woody cover and wildfire odds, shrub and tree planting efforts are not in vain. One study published in Geophysical Research Letters noted that the temperature across the east actually dropped by 0.5 degrees F over the last century. "Some vegetation in those really harsh sites

might actually facilitate tree establishment by providing shade," reports University of California, Davis researcher Derek Young. Compared to the whole nation, which actually warmed by 1.2 degrees F over the last century, this compelling evidence suggests that the current planting of trees across the east is a step in the right direction in combating global warming. However, officials also encourage thinning out forests and increasing planting of native vegetation to help prevent more wildfire risk.

**CONTACTS:** Center for Biological Diversity's petition to Save People From Deadly Heat and Smoke, <https://biologicaldiversity.org/action/alerts/>; Assistant Professor Victoria Donovan, <https://wfrec.ifas.ufl.edu/directory/dr-victoria-donovan/>; Assistant Professional Researcher Derek Young, <https://www.plantsciences.ucdavis.edu/people/derek-young>.

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