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Luminis Health
Doctors Community
Medical Center
1975-2025

Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center Celebrates 50 Years With Events Focused on Reducing Maternal and Infant Mortality

By PRESS OFFICER
Luminis Health

LANHAM, Md. (March 18, 2025)—Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center (LHDCMC) proudly marks its 50th anniversary, celebrating five decades of exceptional care and service to Prince George's County. As part of this milestone, LHDCMC is hosting special events aimed at addressing maternal health disparities and supporting expectant and new mothers in the community.

On Saturday, April 5, LHDCMC will host its 50th Anniversary Golden Gala, an evening of celebration and tribute to the hospital's legacy of providing high-quality care since 1975. The event will bring together healthcare leaders, community advocates, and supporters to honor the hospital's legacy while raising funds to expand services, advance health equity, and eliminate disparities.

Following the gala, Luminis Health's Community Improvement Department will hold a Community Baby Shower on Saturday, April 12, from 12 pm to 4 pm, on the LHDCMC campus. This free event will provide essential resources, education, and support for expectant and new mothers in Prince George's County, featuring:

- Expert-led panel discussions on gesta-



The front entrance of Doctors Hospital in 1990.

tional diabetes, preeclampsia, postpartum depression, nutrition during and after pregnancy, and lactation

- Local vendors offering baby essentials and services
- Diaper and baby essential giveaways
- "We want mothers and loved ones to feel empowered about their health during preg-

nancy," said Temi Oshiyoye, Luminis Health's director of Community Health Improvement. "With 8 out of 10 moms having to leave Prince George's County to give birth, we want them to know that support and resources are available close to home,

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Maryland Legal Aid's Tenant Right to Counsel Project to Partner With Prince George's County Memorial Library System to Host Free Tenants' Rights and Housing Clinic

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Legal Aid

BALTIMORE (March 18, 2025)—Maryland Legal Aid is partnering with the Prince George's County Memorial Library System to host a Tenants' Rights & Housing Clinic on April 2, 2025. The purpose of this clinic is to assist individuals in understanding and maneuvering through the legal landscape. Participants will be able to receive advice and begin the legal intake process with lawyers, aiding them in resolving their housing concerns.

While the primary focus of this walk-in clinic will be focused on issues related to housing, evictions, and tenants' rights, Maryland Legal Aid will also be prepared to assist with a range of other civil legal concerns. This includes criminal record expungement, family law, health, consumer rights, and employment issues, offering advice and legal support to those in need.

Residents who are eligible for the organization's services can receive free legal help from skilled attorneys and paralegals. No appointment necessary.

"As an Equal Justice Works Community Organizing Fellow,

my goal is to ensure that all Marylanders know about and have access to Maryland Legal Aid's free legal services. The Lawyer in the Library: Tenants' Rights and Housing Clinic is just one way that we achieve this objective. By bringing our attorneys into the community and meeting clients where they are, it empowers renters to access free legal services, learn more about their legal rights, and exercise them," said Equal Justice Works Fellow (for Maryland Legal Aid) Avery Shivers.

Event Details:

Lawyer in the Library: Tenants' Rights & Housing Clinic
Wednesday, April 2, 2025
3-5 p.m.

Hyattsville Public Library
6530 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville, MD 20782

For general information about the Tenants' Rights & Housing Clinics, visit <https://www.md-lab.org/free-legal-clinics/>.

Established in 1911, Maryland Legal Aid is a statewide private, nonprofit law firm that provides free, civil legal services to low-income and vulnerable people to address their most fundamental legal problems.



PHOTO COURTESY PGCEA

State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy addresses a crowd of students, educators, and lawmakers during a Walk-In at Dr. Henry A. Wise Jr. High School.

The Prince George's County Educators' Association (PGCEA) amplifies educator voices to promote a brighter future for educators, students, and the community we serve.

"Fewer Teachers, Larger Class Sizes" At School Rallies Across Prince George's County, Parents and Educators Warn of Cuts to Public Education

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCEA

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (March 19, 2025)—Parents, educators, students, and lawmakers rallied and held walk-ins at dozens of area schools on Wednesday, March 19 to defend Prince George's public schools from President Trump's sweeping cuts to public education, which could result in fewer teachers and larger class sizes for students across Prince George's County.

"Our children deserve a bright future. Gutting public education robs them of that opportunity," said School Board Chair, Brandon Jackson. "That's why we are coming together to defend our students and our schools."

At the events, parents, educators, students and lawmakers spoke passionately about the need to defend the area's public schools and the 133,000 children who count on them for a high-quality public education.

"There's 133,000 public school students in Prince George's

County. If public education is cut, they'll be left with fewer teachers and larger class sizes," said County Council Member, Wala Blegay.

At the walk-ins, educators took a moment to recognize the public officials at all levels of government who've been outspoken in their defense of public education.

"We're so grateful to all of the elected leaders who are standing up for our public school students and our public schools," said Dr. Donna L. Christy, President of the Prince George's County Educa-

tors' Association. "This is a fight for the future of our community, and together, we will prevail!"

The events concluded with school walk-ins, where educators walked into their respective schools joined by parents, students, and public officials, to demonstrate the community's commitment to protecting public education. The walk-ins were part of a national day of action, held at public schools nationwide, with tens of thousands of educators, parents, students and lawmakers participating.

As Maryland Youngsters Struggle, Some get Their Best Help From Peers

PART FOUR

By MARWA BARAKAT
Capital News Service

SYKESVILLE, Md. (March 17, 2025)—When Celia Anthony was a high school sophomore, her fellow students nominated her to be a peer leader in her school's student-led mental health support and suicide prevention program.

Anthony, now a junior at Century High School in Carroll

County, said she initially joined the club because she thought it was a good cause and had friends who were already involved. She said her experience has been "eye-opening," as she learned some of her peers were struggling in ways she did not know until they said so at a club meeting.

"We're spreading a really positive message, and we're helping increase positivity and supporting each other throughout our school," Anthony said about

her school's Sources of Strength chapter.

Sources of Strength, a program in schools across the United States and Canada, is just one of many peer-based initiatives working to address rising mental health concerns among young people.

Peer support takes many forms. Some students get trained to help their fellow students. Other peer specialists can share their own experiences with mental health struggles. The latter

programs feature certified peer recovery specialists who, under state law, must undergo training, work or volunteer in a peer support role and complete an application.

The roots of peer support stretch back decades, to the era when many mentally ill people were institutionalized and mistreated, said Kris Locus, transitional age youth coordinator for On Our Own Maryland, which provides peer support training.

"Those people came together and said, 'We could probably



GIUSEPPE LOPICCOLO/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Celia Anthony helps her peers at Century High School in Carroll County through a program called "Sources of Strength."

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

Enjoy theater even if you're hard-of-hearing

If you or anyone you know has hearing loss (like me) and are missing theater (as I do), I have a recommendation: attend a play by the Synetic Theater group. The actors perform with sound effects and expressive (often funny) acting that includes dance and acrobatics. But they don't talk.

Grandson Conor recently took me to the Synetic to see a silent play, "The Immigrant," based on the old Charlie Chaplin film. I loved it—especially because I didn't miss a word (because there were none). The show runs through April 11.

The Synetic Theater is currently moving from one venue to another while their permanent place is being renovated. Right now, it's located in Arlington. For information, call 703-824-8060, or go to <https://synetictheater.org/>.

Cherry Blossom Festival 2025

Cherry Blossom Festival events continue well into April. They include Pink in the Park April 1, 50th Anniversary 10 mile run, Cherry Blossom Family Bike Ride, Blossom Capital Riverfront, and Baseball featuring the Nats and Tampa Bay.

Also, Paws & Petals Yappy Hour, Petalpoolooza, the Cherry Blossom Parade on April 15, and so much more. Go online and see for yourself. Then, go!

The Cherry Trees are all in bloom. Walk the Tidal Basin (I did that). It's all so close to us in the Morningside area. If you've never done it, you're missing something special, right here in your front yard.

Maryland Day

On Maryland 25, 1634, the first English settlers arrived in Maryland, landing

at St. Clement's Island in what is now St. Mary's County. The anniversary is a state holiday. To learn what activities may be offered by the time you read this, go to www.marylandday.org.

Memories of Crossland High School

When I asked daughter Therese about memories of her two years at Crossland (1970–72), she said she remembered several excellent teachers she had there. Her favorite was her chemistry teacher, but she wasn't positive about the name. Maybe Elaine Piccini? If you have any information about that teacher, please contact me.

Therese also had great teachers for physics (David Myers), English (Rosemary Purcell) and choir (Carrol Warren). She hadn't remembered their names either, but fortunately, those three were in the 1972 Crossland Gauntlet yearbook, for which she was one of the editors.

New archbishop

Cardinal Robert McElroy, former bishop of San Diego, was installed as the eighth archbishop of Washington on March 11 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington. He takes over from Cardinal Wilton Gregory who is retiring.

New Patient First opens

It advertises, "Convenient, cost-effective urgent and primary care. Open 365 days a year, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., including weekends and all holidays." You can walk in—no appointment necessary. It's located at 1670 Ritchie Station Court.

B.L.M. Plaza gone

Black Lives Matter Plaza was created June 2020 in Washington during the

George Floyd protests. Mayor Muriel Bowser renamed the plaza after the Department of Public Works painted the words "Black Lives Matter" in yellow 35-foot-tall capital letters.

Two weeks ago, construction workers removed the concrete messaging.

Prince George's Police honored

Prince George's County Police team members received honors from County Police Chief Malik Aziz for their recovery efforts following the Potomac River crash which claimed 67 lives on January 29.

Thank you, Judy!

Happy 96th birthday, Mary!! Here's to another year of great adventures and newsletters (columns) you write and share with all of us. I read them all!!

Love, Jody (Bowman) Nyers, formerly of Morningside, now of South Carolina.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Akwete Bedewi, March 30; Sylvia Barbour and Mark Cummings, March 31; Wayne Booth, Douglas Mangum and James Whipple, April 1; Melissa Lytton, Sophia Cordero and Bernie Saylor, April 3; Motoko Howard, April 4; Earlene Erhardt Righter, Jimmy Shipman and Kaitlin Woods, April 5; Jonathan Charters, April 6; Debbie Callison, April 8; and Donna Wood, April 11.

Happy Anniversary to Walter and Fannie on their 36th Anniversary, April 10; and to Tex and Rickie Beardmore, their 61st on April 11.

Email birthdays and anniversaries to muddmm@aol.com.

Calendar of Events

Something for Seniors Health Expo

Date and time: Wednesday, April 2, 2025, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Description: Let's keep it moving! Participate in fun fitness classes, healthy eating demos, health workshops, and more! Local vendors will be available with community resources and giveaways. Registration required.

Cost: FREE, but registration required: visit PGParksDirect.com, enter code KCC-SPEC-GA-20250402 in the search box.

Location: Kentland Community Center, 2413 Pinebrook Ave, Landover, MD 20785

Contact: 301-386-2278 or kentlandcc@pgparks.com

PGSAO Expungement Fair

Date and time: Saturday, April 19, 2025, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Description: Don't let a criminal record be a barrier to your success. Legal professionals will evaluate your record and assist with expungement filings. Bring identification and court documents. Maryland arrests and convictions only. Presented by the Office of the State's Attorney for Prince George's County, MD, in partnership with Glenarden City Council, James Herring, Ward 1 and Maurice Hairston, Ward II.

Cost: Free, Register via eventbrite.
Location: James R. Cousins, Jr. Municipal Center, 8600 Glenarden Parkway, Glenarden, MD 20706

Contact: Isaac Boateng, PGSAO Municipal Affairs Liaison, IWBoateng@co.pg.md.us.

Greater Washington Region Clean Cities Coalition Earth Day 1st Annual 5K Walk & Alternative Fuel Vehicle Display and Green Expo

Date and time: Saturday, April 19, 2025, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Description: Celebrate Earth Day in the most impactful way possible—by walking for the planet! The GWRCC Earth Day Walk is your chance to get moving while supporting clean transportation and green technology!

Cost: General Admission Adults (13 and up) \$25.00+\$3.52 fee, children 12 and under Free, get tickets at eventbrite.org/gwrcc.org

Location: National Mall, Corner of Madison Dr NW and 3rd St NW, Washington, DC

Contact: gwrcc.org

Growing Green With Pride

Date and time: Saturday, April 26, 2025, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.
Description: Grab your gloves and get ready to ignite change—it's cleanup time! Join "Growing Green with Pride," a countywide litter collection blitz that fuels our Beautification Initiative. Rally your friends, community groups, and neighbors to transform our spaces into sparkling showcases of pride and beauty. Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., and be sure to register by Friday, April 18, 2025. Let's come together, have fun, and make our community shine!

Register: **Registration Deadline: Friday, April 18, 2025**
https://www.princegeorgescountymd.gov/form/growing-green-with-pride-spring?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery
Contact:

2025 Empowering Health Conference

Date and time: Friday, May 2, 2025, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
Description: Join University of Maryland Extension (UME) Marylanders Online for this **free virtual conference** and explore the innovative tools and technologies that are shaping the future of health. Learn about emerging health technologies and discover how they can be leveraged to improve health, reduce disparities, and empower communities.

Conference Topics:

- Digital Literacy and Health Misinformation: Verifying and Sharing Reliable Information
- AI & the Future of Healthcare
- AI, Accessibility, and Bias: Ensuring Fairness in Health Technology
- Best Practices for Reaching Diverse Populations
- Interactive Panel and Q&A: Exploring Key Issues in Health & Technology
- Keynote Presentation from a Special Guest

For a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact Marylanders Online by April 1 at marylandersonline@umd.edu.

Cost: FREE. **Register by April 27:**
<https://go.umd.edu/HealthTech25Register>

Location: Online
Contact: <https://marylandersonline.umd.edu/about/updates/empowering-health-digital-age-umes-2025-conference-explores-future-health-tech/>

Spring Concert: Earth Sea Sky

Date and time: Sunday, May 4, 2025, 4–6 p.m.
Description: In Maryland Choral Society's spring 2025 concert, we celebrate the world around us with a variety of lovely, haunting, and exciting pieces from the past century: the exultation of naturalist John Muir in Come to the Woods; the poetry of Wendell Berry in The Peace of Wild Things; the upbeat spiritual Unclouded Day; a setting of the children's classic Goodnight Moon; and many more. In these troubled times, brighten your day with an afternoon of glorious song!

Cost: General Admission \$26.50 (\$25.00 + \$1.50 Service Fee), Student/Senior \$21.40 (\$20.00 + \$1.40 Service Fee)
Children under 10 Free. Use discount code MCS2025 to save \$5 on advance tickets: <https://www.ticketleap.events/tickets/maryland-choral-society/earth-sea-sky>

Location: Mount Calvary Catholic Church, 6700 Marlboro Pike, Forestville, MD 20747

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

OFFICE OF ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT AND STEWARDSHIP

The Office of Alumni Engagement and Stewardship is celebrating BSU's Winning Women the entire month of March. Teresa Easley ('84). Teresa's remarkable journey and groundbreaking accomplishments embody the very essence of Bowie State University's mission and values. A proud graduate of the Class of 1984, Teresa carries forward a rich BSU legacy that began with her mother, Ann Washington-Easley ('58), and her aunt, Mildred Washington.

Building upon this foundation, Teresa has exemplified determination, excellence, and a pioneering spirit throughout her career. Over three decades at C-SPAN, she has risen from HR Manager to Vice President of Human Resources & Administration, a testament to her extraordinary leadership, resilience and ability to thrive in spaces where African American women remain underrepresented.

Teresa's contributions to C-SPAN have not only shaped the organization but have also opened doors for future generations. Her career serves as an inspiration, proving that dedication and commitment to excellence can break barriers and create a lasting impact. Visit the website to view our BSU Winning Women and read their inspiring stories.

ALUMNI ALL STARS

Celebrating BSU Alumni who give of their TIME, TALENT or TREASURE. Dr. John A. Word, Sr. ('77 & '81). "My love for Bowie State University spans over 50 years. As a student, student-athlete, two-time alumnus, adjunct faculty member, past national alumni association president, foundation board member, and dedicated supporter, Bowie State has shaped my life in profound ways."

"As the national alumni association president for 2012–2016, I championed fundraising efforts and learned about the power of endowments, the gift that keeps on giving. I am founding donor and supporter of several endowments at Bowie State including, the Bulldog One Groove Phi Groove Endowed Scholarship, the Center for Research and Mentoring of Black Male Students and Teachers Endowment, the Classes of 1976/77 Endowment, Professor Barbara Smith Endowment, and the BSU Sports Hall of Fame Endowment."

"In 2024, my wife Marsha ('86, '90 & '05), and I were honored to be inducted into the Nelson Wells Legacy Society for our planned gift to Bowie State. Our commitment ensures that future generations continue to benefit from this incredible institution."

"It is an honor to contribute in any way that I can support this treasure called Bowie State University. I feel a deep sense of responsibility to help provide opportunities for students to receive a higher education while enjoying college life. The need to support and sustain institutions with a legacy of addressing educational disparities is more critical than ever."

THANK YOU #BSU4LIFE FAMILY

The BSU community showed up and showed out at the 2025 CIAA Basketball Tournament from cheering on our men's and women's basketball teams, to visiting the BSU-CIAA Hospitality

Suite, supporting our Vendor Village, and attending various CIAA events—Bowie State University, this year's host institution was well represented! BowieBOLD.

BSU FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Sumanth Reddy's Semester at Sea: A Transformative Teaching Voyage. Dr. Sumanth G. Reddy, a geography professor at Bowie State University, turned his 25-year dream into reality by embarking on an unforgettable Semester at Sea voyage in fall 2024. Alongside his two sons, he sailed across the globe with over 500 students, faculty, and staff, blending classroom lessons with real-world adventure. This journey, covering 18,000 miles and visiting more than 10 countries, is a testament to Dr. Reddy's passion for immersive, hands-on education.

"Teaching while traveling offers an unparalleled opportunity to bring academic concepts to life. "Dr. Reddy said. "It allows both educators and students to engage deeply with diverse cultures and environments, fostering a holistic learning experience."

Dr. Reddy's journey reflects his commitment to immersive education. Since joining Bowie State in 2015, he has coordinated the geography minor and has been instrumental in promoting outdoor activities among students. In 2022, he received the University's Presidential Teaching Award, followed by the University System of Maryland Board of Regents Excellence in Teaching Award in 2023. These accolades underscore his dedication to innovative teaching methods.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Reddy founded the Bowie State Outdoor Club, aiming to connect students with nature and provide alternative recreational activities. The club has organized hiking, fishing, rock-climbing and hunting trips, including a notable 10-day camping and hiking expedition through five national parks in the Rocky Mountains and the American Southwest. Additionally, Dr. Reddy has led short-term study abroad trips to China, London, Ghana and Panama.

"Our goal is to inspire students, especially those who may not have had prior exposure to such environments, to appreciate and engage with the outdoors," Dr. Reddy explained. "These experiences can be transformative, fostering personal growth and a sense of adventure."

His recent voyage with Semester at Sea further exemplifies his belief in the value of global education. He encourages other faculty members and students to consider similar opportunities, highlighting the availability of scholarships and funding to make these experiences accessible.

"Many students on the ship receive scholarships. HBCU students have additional scholarships through SAS and other study abroad sources," Dr. Reddy said. "It is very possible for many of our students to embark on this journey for the same cost as they would pay to be here on campus for a semester."

For students interested in applying, Dr. Reddy recommends contacting Bowie State's study abroad coordinator, Maura Frischman, at mfrischman@bowiestate.edu, who can provide guidance on available funding opportunities. Additional information on Dr. Reddy will appear in The Prince George's Post March 27, 2025 edition.

COMMUNITY

Reese Weaver of Brandywine Performs in McDaniel College Theatre's Production of "Legally Blonde"

By PRESS OFFICER
McDaniel College

WESTMINSTER, Md. (March 14, 2025)—Reese Weaver, a junior Theatre Arts major from Brandywine (20613), performs in McDaniel College Theatre's production of "Legally Blonde." Weaver portrays GM Chad/Sun-deep.

Guest directed by Tad Janes, producing artistic director of the

Maryland Ensemble Theatre in Frederick, Maryland, Harvard's beloved blonde takes the stage by pink storm in this fun, upbeat story of self-discovery. "Legally Blonde" is based on the novel by Amanda Brown and 2001 film with music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe and Neil Benjamin and a book by Heather Hach. *Note: the show contains adult material and is intended for mature audiences.*

Performances are **Thursday, April 3–Saturday, April 5**, at 7:30 p.m. in the Mainstage Theatre in WMC Alumni Hall at McDaniel College, 2 College Hill, Westminster, Maryland.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for students, seniors (over 60), active military members and veterans, as well as those with a McDaniel College ID. For ticket information, call 410-857-2448.

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before, during, and after pregnancy."

As part of its on-going commitment to maternal health, Luminis Health has opened an Ob-Gyn clinic in Greenbelt and launched CenteringPregnancy®, a nationally recognized program that offers group sessions for expectant mothers and personalized consultations with trusted Ob-Gyns and midwives.

LHDCMC is finalizing design plans to add inpatient obstetric services, labor, delivery, and postpartum care with rooms designed for a family-centered birth experience. These initiatives will transform healthcare in Prince George's County and play a crucial role in eliminating maternal and infant mortality, an ambitious goal of Vision 2030, the health system's 10-year strategic plan.

"Prince George's County has a maternal mortality rate that is



PHOTO COURTESY LUMINIS HEALTH

The front entrance of Luminis Health Doctors Hospital.

twice the national average, and this is simply unacceptable," said Deneen Richmond, president of Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center. "Luminis Health is taking bold steps to address these disparities by expanding access to quality prenatal and postnatal care, educating families, and advocating for systemic change. These events are not just celebrations

of our past but reaffirmations of our commitment to a healthier future for mothers and babies in the communities we serve."

Anticipated to open in 2028, the new state-of-the-art women's health center on the hospital's Lanham campus is expected to welcome approximately 2,000 babies each year once fully operational.

Honoring Women Leaders: District 6 & 7 Celebrate Women's History Month

By SONIA STAPLES
Office of Council Member
Wala Blegay

Council Members Wala Blegay (District 6) and Krystal Oriadha (District 7) will host the 3rd Annual Women Who Lead: Barrier Breakers Awards Tea Party on **Saturday, March 29**, honoring outstanding women who are making a lasting impact in their communities in the areas of business, healthcare, law, and advocacy.

District 6 Honorees

Ardania Williams
Philimena Owona
Sharrame Morton
Mel Johnson
Dr. Chinasa Nwaulu
Jill C. Oliver
Bonnie Sermons

Marian Dickson
Katrina Dixon Patterson
Nichole Pinkney
Judge LaKeecia Allen
Kim Rhim
Angela D. Hutchins
Autumn Joi

District 7 Honorees

Tamika Paige
Renee Ford
Tiffany Young
Karen F. Jefferson
Ashley Gale
Hope Love
Pamela Janifer
Faith Ford
Brittany Drakeford
Cynthia Rudolph
Ashley Drakeford
LaVera Manning
Eclair Camargo
Tiffany Young
Mary Touchstone

"We are proud to recognize these incredible women whose work transforms lives," said Council Member Wala Blegay. "Their leadership and service inspire future generations."

"With immense pride and admiration, I congratulate the 2025 Women Who Lead honorees for District 7," said Council Member Krystal Oriadha. "These women are the embodiment of resilience, innovation, and community spirit. I am honored to recognize their exceptional contributions and look forward to celebrating their achievements."

The event will take place from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. at the Seat Pleasant Community Center, 5720 Addison Rd., Seat Pleasant, MD 20743.

'Dating While Grieving' Explores Finding Love After Loss

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (March 18, 2024)—The thought of dating again after the death of a spouse or life partner can feel overwhelming. How do you open your heart to someone new while still cherishing the person you've lost?

The grief experts at Chesapeake Life Center aim to help individuals navigate this difficult journey with their upcoming event, "Dating While Grieving". This heartfelt panel discussion will feature bereavement counselors alongside individuals navigating their own paths through grief. Panelists will share personal stories, challenges and successes they've encountered while re-entering the world of dating.

The event offers a safe and supportive space for attendees to explore the emotional complexi-

ties of finding love again. Whether you are grieving yourself or supporting someone who is, this conversation provides valuable insights, understanding and hope for the future.

"Dating While Grieving" will take place from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 26 at the Hospice of the Chesapeake's new Center for Hope & Healing, on the John & Cathy Belcher Campus at 90 Ritchie Highway, Pasadena, Maryland. Light refreshments will be served. The cost is \$10.

To register, call 1-888-501-7077 or email griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Chesapeake Life Center, a program service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities to enhance the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.

Neighborhood Design Center Announces Regional Placemaking Forum June 5–6 at Joe's Movement Emporium

Regional Gathering Seeks Ideas, Innovations, and Collaboration for Equitable Placemaking

By PRESS OFFICER
The Neighborhood Design Center

(March 20, 2025)—The Neighborhood Design Center (NDC) is pleased to announce The Vision Is Yours: A Transformative Regional Placemaking Forum, slated for June 5–6, 2025, at Joe's Movement Emporium in Mount Rainier, Maryland. This multi-day gathering will unite urban planners, community leaders, designers, artists, and public officials from across Maryland, Washington, D.C., and beyond to explore innovative strategies for creating thriving public spaces that reflect and uplift local voices.

Building on last year's sold-out International Placemaking Week in Baltimore, this year's forum will feature immersive workshops, guided community-led walks, a collaborative "build day," and lively networking opportunities. Attendees will learn hands-on approaches to address challenges such as equitable engagement, funding, measuring impact, and sustaining the momentum of place-based work after projects officially launch.

"This forum is about more than design—it's about communities shaping public spaces that reflect their identity, history, and future," said Jen-

nifer Goold, Executive Director of the Neighborhood Design Center. "We believe that inclusive, collaborative placemaking can spark lasting transformation, and we're eager to bring together leaders, creators, and community advocates to drive that change forward. As Maryland's community design center, we are deeply invested in building and enhancing the culture of community-centered design in our region."

Registration is open, and early-bird registration rates are available through April 4, 2025. Practitioners, community advocates, and artists are also encouraged to submit proposals for sessions, case studies, and workshops that showcase strategies for creative placemaking, cultural stewardship, and long-term community partnership. The deadline for proposal submissions is Monday, March 31, 2025.

With attendance at last year's Placemaking Week reaching 600 participants, demand for collaboration and knowledge exchange continues to grow. In a recent survey of International Placemaking Week participants and other local constituents, 70 percent expressed that networking and peer connections hold high potential to advance their work. The Vision Is Yours Placemaking Forum aims to meet this need by fostering a

diverse, influential network of individuals who understand that creating equitable public spaces requires broad-based action and shared expertise.

For more information on registration, sponsorship opportunities, or proposal submissions, please visit <https://ndc-md.org/vision>.

The Neighborhood Design Center is a nonprofit organization committed to providing design assistance and community development services to low-income neighborhoods and communities across Maryland. With over five decades of experience and more than 4,000 completed projects, NDC has earned a distinguished reputation as a partner in enhancing community environments. Visit www.ndc-md.org



I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study City of Alexandria and Fairfax County, VA Prince George's County, MD

In-person Public Information Meetings
Meeting times: 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Meeting format: Open house with a presentation at 7 p.m.

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
West Potomac High School (Cafeteria)
6500 Quander Rd., Alexandria, VA 22307

Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Oxon Hill High School (Auditorium)
6701 Leyte Dr., Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Monday, April 7, 2025
Thomas A. Edison High School (Cafeteria)
5801 Franconia Rd., Alexandria, VA 22310

Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

Virtual Public Information Room available starting on April 1, 2025, at www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside

Learn about and provide input on the Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT) I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study, an environmental study evaluating the potential extension of the express lanes system on the southern section of the Capital Beltway (I-495) by 11 miles from the Springfield Interchange (I-95/I-395/I-495) in Fairfax County, Virginia, across the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge, to the MD 210 interchange in Prince George's County, Maryland. VDOT, in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state, and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, is conducting an Environmental Assessment in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771.

VDOT will provide information at upcoming public meetings on the three alternatives under study to address identified transportation needs within the study area. These needs include extending and providing continuity of the express lanes system on I-495, providing additional travel choices, reducing congestion and improving travel reliability, improving safety, and providing consistency with local and regional plans. VDOT will also provide preliminary traffic analysis data and updates on study progress and ongoing coordination.

The in-person meetings will be held from 6:30- 8:30 p.m. The meeting format will include an open house with a presentation at 7 p.m. VDOT representatives will be present at various stations to answer questions.

The virtual public information room will contain the meeting presentation and boards, and opportunities to provide input.

Review information on the study webpage (www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside), during the in-person public information meetings, or during business hours at VDOT Northern Virginia District Office, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030. Please call ahead at 703-691-6044 or TTY/TDD 711 to ensure appropriate personnel are available to answer your questions.

Provide your input by submitting oral and/or written comments at the meetings, or via the online comment form at www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside, email to 495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov, or mail to Michelle Shropshire, P.E., VDOT Northern Virginia Megaprojects Director, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030, by Monday, April 21, 2025.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. If you need more information or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775 or TTY/TDD 711.

COMMENTARY

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Killing the MBDA Won't Just Cripple Black Businesses—It'll Weaken America

"We must also provide an expanded opportunity to participate in the free enterprise system at all levels—not only to share the economic benefits of the free enterprise system more broadly, but also to encourage pride, dignity, and a sense of independence. In order to do this, we need to remove commercial obstacles which have too often stood in the way of minority group members—obstacles such as the unavailability of credit, insurance, and technical assistance. Involvement in business has always been a major route to-

ward participation in the mainstream of American life. Our aim is to open that route to potentially successful persons who have not had access to it before."

—President Richard M. Nixon

The Trump administration's efforts to rewrite American history under the guise of fighting a mythical "anti-white" racism took a dangerous turn this week as the White House issued an executive order effectively gutting the Minority

Business Development Agency (MBDA).

Since President Nixon established it over 50 years ago, the MBDA has provided government financing and contracting opportunities that have fueled the growth of minority-owned businesses and strengthened our communities.

The National Urban League waged a decade-long fight to elevate the MBDA to a statutory agency because its role in driving economic equity and closing the racial wealth gap is irreplaceable. In fiscal year 2023 alone, the agency facilitated \$1.2 billion in capital, secured \$1.6 billion in contracts, and generated or saved more than 14,000 jobs.

Dismantling the MBDA is the latest example of right-wing extremists rolling back hard-won civil rights victories that have helped level the economic playing field. Under the pretense of race neutrality, they are actively working to erase policies that acknowledge and address systemic disparities.

In March 2024, a federal judge in Texas appointed by Donald Trump, ruled in favor of a lawsuit brought by white entrepreneurs, arguing that the MBDA's mission of supporting minority business owners amounted to unconstitutional racial discrimination. While the judge acknowledged that racial minorities face greater challenges in accessing capital—including lower

loan approval rates, smaller funding amounts, and higher interest rates—his astonishing ruling was that there was insufficient evidence that government policies contributed to these disparities.

This ruling, coupled with the administration's actions, threatens to undo decades of economic progress. Eliminating race-conscious programs under the false premise of equality ignores the stark realities of systemic discrimination and denies communities of color access to resources essential for closing the racial wealth gap.

The administration's decision is not just unlawful and unjust—it is an economic disaster in the making. Minority-owned businesses contribute trillions to the U.S. economy and employ millions of workers. Stripping them of vital federal support will stifle job creation, weaken local economies, and widen the wealth divide.

At a time when economic inequality remains one of the nation's most pressing challenges, the federal government should be expanding opportunities for underserved businesses, not eliminating them. This is not just a policy fight—it is a battle for economic justice, and we cannot afford to lose.

—March 21, 2025

Marian Wright Edelman

Founder and President Emerita, Children's Defense Fund



ChildWatch:

"Everyone Is Welcome"

An Idaho middle school teacher recently made headlines for refusing to take down a classroom poster she said she was told was "controversial" and "an opinion." The poster shows a drawing of hands in many different skin tones, each with a red heart in the center. The controversial opinion written at the top? "Everyone Is Welcome Here."

Sarah Inama, a sixth-grade world civilization teacher at Lewis and Clark Middle School in the West Ada School District, said in interviews that she first hung that poster when she began working at the school several years ago, but was asked by the principal to take it down in January because only 'content neutral' signs should be in the classroom. She said she was later told by the

school district's chief academic officer that because of changes in the political environment, "what might be controversial now might not have been controversial three, six, nine months ago, and we have to follow that," and was told that her poster qualified as a personal opinion, which was not permitted for classroom signs, because "not everyone believes everyone is welcome here." After thinking about it over a weekend, she said she came to this conclusion: "There are only two opinions on this sign: Everyone is welcome here or not everyone is welcome here." She felt she had to stand up for the one she wanted her students to believe.

Ms. Inama said she was also asked to take down a second poster that had been hanging in

her classroom featuring bars in the colors of the rainbow with these words in block letters: "In this room everyone is welcome/important/accepted/respected/encouraged/valued/equal." She is now involved in an ongoing dispute with the district, but says she has received hundreds of messages from supporters ranging from people within her community to strangers from as far away as South Africa and New Zealand. A local company is making t-shirts featuring the image and message on the "Everyone Is Welcome Here" poster for a campaign started by families and students in the district who are planning to wear them on the day they return to school from spring break. Ms. Inama told a local reporter that all of the attention has been overwhelming, but in a "good way," and explained how her students have responded:

"My students have been talking about it a lot as well and it's been kind of heartbreaking to see them for the first time have to wonder why that sign would be questioned, but they are very resilient and have been just continuously telling me that they support me and support our classroom poster. They truly are my inspiration and every day when I see them, I don't have one ounce of regret. I have received emails from former students, some even mentioning that they know the poster in question and remember it

making them feel welcome and safe in my classroom. Today one of my students said EVERYONE IS WELCOME might not be something that's true everywhere, but in this classroom it's a fact. They have told me that I am doing the right thing. Some wore homemade shirts that say what is written on my posters, and they made friendship bracelets that say everyone is welcome. Some of them want to start a website and make their own posters to give away. They understand why there is nothing wrong with welcoming all unconditionally."

Once again, children and young people are taking action and signaling they understand something some adults do not. How many of us remember a teacher or mentor who went out of their way to let us know we were respected, valued, and welcome? How many of us know and appreciate teachers like this in our communities and schools today? How many parents try hard at home to teach their own children to respect and be kind to other people? How many would want their child in a classroom led by a teacher who did not make them feel accepted or welcome? At a moment when educators and education itself are under attack, those who encourage and welcome every student should be told *thank you*.

—March 21, 2025

Peers from A1

help each other better than what the system at the time was providing," Locus said. "And so that's how the movement was created."

It's one approach to mental health care that's proven to work. Troubled youths who speak with peer support workers often experience increased self-esteem and are less likely to be hospitalized, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

"Peer support workers can help break down barriers of experience and understanding, as well as power dynamics that may get in the way of working with other members of the treatment team," according to the federal agency.

Here's a look at three peer support efforts that aim to help young people in Maryland:

Sources of Strength

With youth spending much of their time in schools, many school-based peer programs empower young people to help each other while building a sense of community.

Sources of Strength, which is listed on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center's National Best Practices Registry, works with young people to stress eight areas of strength: physical health, mental health, family support, positive friends, spirituality, generosity, healthy activities and mentors.

Christine Tobias, the assistant supervisor for health education

at Carroll County Public Schools, helped start the local Sources of Strength program in 2018. The program stood out to the county for its peer model and empowerment of student voices, she said.

"Everybody has big emotions, everybody goes through worry, everybody probably experiences anger, and everybody can experience sadness. Those are human emotions," said Tobias, now a program trainer for Sources of Strength. "But then how we deal with that and how we find health and strength through those struggles are how we build our strength as a human."

Teachers nominate peer leaders at the county's schools, with an emphasis on finding students with leadership skills and who represent students across all social groups. Students can also join if they are interested.

At Century High School in Sykesville, Anthony, 16, and the other peer leaders plan activities, decorate the building and manage social media pages to spread awareness about the club.

When students approach Anthony with struggles, she talks with them about their feelings and asks if they are seeking a listening ear or advice. She then recommends they speak to a trusted adult.

If a student is experiencing suicidal thoughts or discusses self-harm, peer leaders immediately tell an adult even if the student doesn't want them to do so, Anthony said.

"My job as a peer leader is to

be the bridge between someone who is struggling and the sources of strength that can help them," Anthony said.

Tobias agreed. "We're not asking students to be counselors," Tobias said. "We are asking them to notice, in their friends, any changes, anybody that might need help, and then link them to a trusted adult."

Sources of Strength's approach has proven to be successful. In a study published in the American Journal of Public Health in 2011, researchers found the program—in 18 high schools—made students contemplating suicide more likely to think it's acceptable to seek help.

"Sources of Strength is the first suicide prevention program involving peer leaders to enhance protective factors associated with reducing suicide at the school population level," the study's authors concluded.

Through this program, Anthony said she has developed better communication skills regarding how to help those facing mental health issues, in addition to finding a community of peers who can support her.

"It's just really important and kind of awesome to me that we have a good time while also connecting with each other, while also planning and developing our campaigns on a professional level," she said. "We have fun, and we get deep, and we support each other."

Hope Squad

Hope Squad, another program recognized by the Suicide Pre-

vention Resource Center, has made its way into Maryland through Cecil County, according to Grace Babula, the organization's director of marketing and communications.

Hope Squad, which operates in schools across the U.S. and Canada, also takes a peer-to-peer approach to mental health support and suicide prevention.

The state's first program, at North East High School, was implemented with help from the #LiveforThomas Foundation, a nonprofit organization working on mental health awareness and suicide prevention. The organization, which often collaborates with the school's Hope Squad, was started in honor of Thomas Ocasio III, a North East High student who died of suicide in 2019.

In 2024, Cecil County fared worse than the average Maryland county in health outcomes, which depict how long people live on average in a community, according to County Health Rankings & Roadmaps. Melody Smith, a school social worker and Hope Squad advisor at North East High, said generational issues impact students, making them apprehensive about talking to social workers or other adults, which makes peer support helpful.

"By the child seeking help through the Hope Squad, I'm able to make contact and see what the family needs," Smith said. "Because it's never usually just a child issue. It's something deeper going on."

Smith said many students

have a hard time trusting people or being vulnerable because of previous trauma, but word-of-mouth and being a presence around the school has helped more kids reach out and open up to her.

Other states have implemented this program years earlier. In Wisconsin, Ameera Hassan was nominated in eighth grade by her fellow students as a peer they could approach if they needed to talk to someone.

Hassan, who is now 17 and a high school junior, is a Hope Squad member trained to recog-

nize signs of suicidal thoughts in students and to respond when a peer opens up to her about their mental health struggles.

"Knowing that I'm someone that people are comfortable in confiding in, that people are comfortable coming to if they have a hard time, it's helped me self-reflect a lot on the type of person that I am and that I want to be," said Hassan, a Hope Squad National Council member.

See PEERS Page A6

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Will My Medicare Premium Change Because I Sold Investment Property?

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

Dear Rusty: I have questions concerning the deduction of money from my Social Security benefit amount as relates to the sale of investment property. I am 66 years old and have been drawing Social Security since I turned 62. My wife is 56 and is a housewife and has no taxable income. Our income comes from our rental property and my Social Security benefit. I have decided to liquidate two of our properties—one was sold in December 2024, and one is in Escrow and is scheduled to close in March 2025.

My normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) has been running about \$30K–\$32K. However, last year with the sale of the property I will receive a long-term capital gain profit of about \$255K. I did a rough calculation on what my AGI will be for 2024, and it looks to be about \$318K. How will this affect my Social Security benefit, and will it have an effect on the amount I pay for my Part B Medicare Plan going forward? I have a Medicare Advantage plan.

My next question is about 2025 (after the next property closes and I file taxes), my AGI with the long-term capital gain profit could be between \$700K–\$800K. How will this affect my benefits going forward? **Signed: Prudent Investor**

Dear Prudent Investor: Actually, the GROSS amount of your Social Security benefit will not be affected by these transactions, but the NET amount of your SS benefit payment will change due to a provision known as “IRMAA” (Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount). IRMAA affects the Medicare premiums you pay from your Social Security benefit, and a higher Medicare premium will result in a lower net Social Security payment. Here’s how this will work for you:

Your Medicare premiums each year (typically for Medicare Part B and Part D) are determined by looking at your “Modified Adjusted Gross Income,” or “MAGI”, from two years prior (MAGI is your normal AGI plus any non-taxable interest you may have had). Since the property you sold in 2024 will be reflected as part of your 2024 income, IRMAA will cause your 2026 Medicare premiums to be higher than the standard monthly 2026 amount. How much higher depends on how much you exceed the income level for your IRS filing status. Using 2025 rules, if you file as Married/jointly and your taxable income (MAGI) is more than \$212,000 but less than \$334,000 then, instead of paying the standard 2026 monthly Part B premium, you’ll each pay \$370 per month for Medicare Part B (and likely a supplemental amount of \$35.30 if your Advantage plan includes prescription drug coverage).

Your Medicare premiums are recalculated every year (again based on income from two years prior). Thus, in 2027, IRMAA will also affect your Medicare premiums and your net Social Security payment because of your 2025 real estate transaction. If your MAGI in 2025 will be over \$750,000, then IRMAA will increase each of your 2027 Medicare Part B premiums to \$638.90 (and likely also add a supplement of \$85.80 per month each to your Medicare Advantage premium for prescription drug coverage).

The good news is in 2028 all of this will be behind you and your Medicare premiums will revert to whatever the standard monthly premiums are for that year (because your income levels thereafter will presumably be below the then-IRMAA thresholds).

For reference, here is a link to Medicare’s information on the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, or “IRMAA:” <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2025-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles>

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

City Of Greenbelt Economic Development Department

3rd Annual City of Greenbelt Economic Development Business Conference

Thursday, April 3, 2025 • 8–10:30 a.m.

Location: Crowne Plaza College Park, Washington DC, an IHG Hotel
6400 Ivy Lane, Greenbelt, MD 20770

FREE, Register via eventbrite

Come and hear from new Acting Maryland Commerce Secretary, Harry Coker Jr., and a cast of Maryland major state leaders who will discuss Maryland’s new growth strategy for strengthening the state’s business climate, growing key targeted industries and sectors, expanding the state’s workforce talent ecosystem, increasing Small & Minority Business contracting participation, and expanding affordable workforce-housing opportunities. Maryland State government’s seamless partnership with local municipalities is critical to creating an environment that will attract new business investment, while also helping grow existing businesses located with Maryland’s municipalities.

MD CARES Launched to Tackle the Impact of Federal Government Layoffs on Prince George’s County Residents

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland CARES

(March 19, 2025)—In response to the ongoing federal government layoffs and their devastating impact on Prince George’s County residents, MD CARES (Community, Aid, Resources, Empowerment, Sustainability) has been established as a new community coalition supporting residents during this unprecedented crisis. Through mobilizing resources, creating sustainable solutions, and empowering the community, MD CARES seeks to mitigate the hardship families and individuals feel in the wake of these job losses.

“Federal employees are crucial in providing essential public services; they offer even-handed expertise to political leaders, ensure consistent service across presidential changes, and uphold their constitutional duty to serve the public,” said Linda Thornton Thomas, president of the Prince George’s County NAACP. “Given today’s crisis of terminations and furloughs, Prince George’s County NAACP’s role is to provide resources and support to those affected, both now and in the future. Join us in helping others overcome these challenging times.”

Prince George’s County, home to many federal employees, has experienced sig-

nificant economic disruption due to recent government cutbacks. Thousands of local workers and their families are facing financial uncertainty, making it harder to afford basic necessities such as healthcare, housing, and education.

Since February, MD CARES has gathered to discuss proposed solutions and explore how we can collectively push for policies and support systems to fill the gaps caused by layoffs and furloughs. Thus far, the group has created a Facebook group with a robust list of resources, events, and job fairs for those impacted by the massive layoffs.

President/CEO of Educational Services Federal Credit Union Inducted Into the African American Credit Union Coalition’s Hall of Fame

By PRESS OFFICER
ESFCU

GREENBELT, Md. (March 12, 2025)—Girado Smith, President/CEO of Educational Systems Federal Credit Union (ESFCU) has been inducted into the African American Credit Union Coalition’s Hall of Fame. Smith’s induction took place on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, during the AACUC’s Governmental Affairs Conference in Washington, D.C.

“It is truly an honor to be inducted into the AACUC’s Hall of Fame,” said Smith. “This recognition is not just a reflection of my efforts but also the incredible team I’ve had the privilege of working with during the past 18 years. Together we continue to innovate, grow, and make a lasting impact on the communities we serve. I am truly humbled by this recognition and look forward to the bright future ahead of us.”

As President/CEO of Educational Systems Federal Credit Union, where he previously served as the Chief Financial Officer for over 18 years, Smith has led the

credit union’s financial operations and strategic direction. He is committed to serving the education community and expanding the credit union’s reach by offering customized solutions and excellence in member service. He is driven to shape a culture of teamwork and inclusion within our industry and played an integral role in partnering with the AACUC to form the Rosemary Brinkley C-Level Leadership Development Program.

Smith is one of five credit union leaders who was inducted in the AACUC’s Hall of Fame on March 4. Learn more about the other honorees here.

Last December, ESFCU and Howard University Employees Federal Credit Union (HUEFCU) announced that they had merged to significantly expand the range of financial services available to employees, students, alumni and family members of Howard University as well as Howard University Hospital. In April of 2024, the Washington Business Journal named ESFCU as the 12th largest credit union in the Greater Washington area.

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

NAREB Presents Second Annual National Building Black Wealth Day on April 12, 2025, in Over 100 Cities

The National Building Black Wealth Day Follows the Resounding Success of Our Mid-Winter Conference in February, Where We Equipped Our Community with the Tools, Strategies, and Insights Needed to Thrive in an Evolving Industry.

By PRESS OFFICER
NAREB

ST. LOUIS, Mo. (March 19, 2025)—The National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) will present its second annual National Building Black Wealth Day on April 12, 2025, with live events in more than 100 cities across the country. Seminars and one-on-one sessions will empower communities with steps towards homeownership, property investment, starting a business, and other wealth-building opportunities. An internet feed will make virtual sessions accessible to a national audience.

To register for the in-person events in 100 cities, please go to www.nareblackwealthtour.com. To register for the virtual sessions on Zoom, register at www.nareblackwealthtour.com. Act quickly as the virtual sessions have limited spots available. We also encourage you to share this opportunity with your networks to help us reach more Black consumers. Key partners in the tour, include the African American Mayors Association, Inc., Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Church of God in Christ, Inc., the National Baptist Convention, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., National Bar Association, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc. and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

“Participation by our partners underscores their commitment to empowerment and economic development in our communities,” said Dr. Courtney Johnson Rose. “The Building Black Wealth Tour is expanding for 2025. We are bringing together families, lenders, attorneys, and real estate professionals to discuss and implement strategies for increasing Black

homeownership and building wealth within Black communities.”

Rose noted that NAREB’s 2024 State of Housing in Black America report found that more than two million mortgage-ready Black Americans have the income and credit to buy a home but have not yet become homeowners. In addition, 1.75 million Black millennials make over \$100k annually and are poised to be homeowners. Further, Freddie Mac tracks the number of “mortgage-ready” renters nationwide, meaning they can meet certain income and credit requirements to qualify for a mortgage. Their researchers determined that as of January 2021, two million Blacks ages 45 or younger are near mortgage-ready, while another 3.4 million are potentially mortgage-ready.

“Our tour aims to reach these Black consumers,” said Dr. Rose. “We are providing them with data and information on why they should be homeowners. We explain the many benefits of homeownership, such as building wealth, stable communities and building equity for retirements, college educations for their children, starting a business or more.”

On National Building Black Wealth Day, hundreds of families and individuals will be armed with the information needed to make wealth-building decisions. Among the opportunities/Workshops are:

- What to do with Big Mama’s House?
- ABCs of Homebuying
- Real Estate Investing
- One on One with Lenders
- One On Ones with Real Estate Attorneys
- One On Ones with Housing Counselors

The Black Wealth Day comes after NAREB’s successful Mid-Winter Conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, last month.

This year’s conference, themed “Navigating New Horizons,” empowered real estate professionals with the tools, strategies, and insights needed to thrive in an evolving industry. Speakers included Dr. Egypt Sherrod, Host and Executive Producer of HGTV’s Married to Real Estate; Catrese Fields Alston, Philanthropist and CEO of Le-Bleu Diamond Corporation; Hill Harper, Award-Winning Actor and Activist and Laura Escobar, President of Lennar Mortgage and 2025 Chair of the Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA).

“Our Mid-Winter Conference helped NAREB Realtists® prepare for the shifting landscape of the real estate industry,” said Dr. Rose. “Realtists are on the front lines, working with families to secure homeownership and build generational wealth. In today’s challenging market, our members are more valuable than ever, and this conference ensured they have the knowledge and support to make a lasting impact in Black communities.”

The National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) was formed in 1947 to secure equal housing opportunities regardless of race, creed, or color. NAREB has advocated for legislation and supported or instigated legal challenges that ensure fair housing, sustainable homeownership, and access to credit for Black Americans. Simultaneously, NAREB advocates for and promotes access to business opportunities for Black real estate professionals in each real estate discipline. From the past to the present, NAREB remains an association that is proud of its history, dedicated to its chosen struggle, and unrelenting in its pursuit of the REALTIST®’s mission/vision embedded goal, “Democracy in Housing.”

Peers from A4

At Hassan's high school, she hears doubts about the program's effectiveness. But from her encounters with her peers, she has found the program means a lot to those who need support.

More than 98% of school administrators who have implemented Hope Squad said the program "promotes a positive school climate," according to a survey from the program. The vast majority of students in schools with the program say they know how and where to get help for their peers, Babula said.

In his clinical work with youth, Noah Triplett, an assistant research professor in the University of Maryland's psychology department, said he noticed young friends often serve to provide emotional support to each other.

School programs that provide early intervention and support to youth benefit those students as they grow older, Triplett said.

"Youth need robust support systems, and whether that comes from an immediate family or larger peer network or a trusted adult," he said.

Preventing Black suicide

Peer-led support systems also consist of specialists who've themselves struggled with mental illness—who can support others through recovery

from attempted suicide, substance abuse or other struggles.

T-Kea Blackman, executive director of Black People Die By Suicide Too and a Howard University alum, was hospitalized when she was 24 years old after surviving a suicide attempt.

There, she met Jordan Scott, and the pair soon became friends. As they got closer, they realized they supported each other by giving each other space to talk about issues they couldn't talk about with anyone else, such as suicide.

This experience led them to co-found the peer-led organization Black People Die By Suicide Too in 2023. The organization, which is based in Charles County, says it is dedicated to "normalizing the conversation about suicide in the Black community."

The organization serves people around the world through virtual peer-led support groups, which provide a community for people with suicidal thoughts or who have been affected by suicide.

"What I could not find was specific groups for Black people who struggled with suicidal thoughts," Blackman said. "That often felt like that was the missing piece to the groups that I would attend."

Having the space to talk about suicide has given people who are struggling hope and a community, Blackman said, adding the support groups are growing.

While the organization's peer support groups are not meant for school-age children, they have helped young people in their early 20s, Blackman said. The group also hosts wellness workshops with middle and high schoolers to discuss mental health and self-care.

On its website, the organization makes clear that its peer support groups are not intended to replace clinical treatment for those that need it.

But Locus, of On Our Own Maryland, said her own previous experience providing peer support proved it can sometimes accomplish what some clinical treatments cannot.

"There were so many moments where there were young youth and young adults who would never talk to the doctors or the nurses, never came into their appointments, didn't take their medicine, they weren't involved in their recovery at all—and then a peer specialist like me came in and just kind of talked to them like a real person. And then everything shifted," she said. "It really is something beautiful that can happen with peer support."

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide or self-harm, help is available. Call or text 988 to reach the confidential National Suicide Prevention Lifeline or view these resources from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention.

EarthTalk® Is it Better to Repurpose E-Waste or Recycle It?

By Dora Zhao | March 20, 2025

Dear EarthTalk: Can we do a better job repurposing outdated technology instead of recycling or trashing it?
—R.T Smith, via e-mail

The annual production of "e-waste"—electronic products that have reached the end of their useful life and tossed—is rising by 2.6 million tons globally, on track to reach 82 million tons by 2030. While recycling is often viewed as the best solution for managing e-waste, it is a complex and costly requiring substantial resources, specialized equipment, and energy to process hazardous materials. A more sensible alternative is repurposing the technology through practices like IT Asset Disposition. By refurbishing devices, we can conserve resources and achieve financial savings—all while extending the lifespan of technology.

Repurposing technology preserves critical materials like minerals and metals, otherwise often extracted at a significant environmental cost. Redistributing components within a company instead of making new ones saves time and resources—and extends hardware life. "The more metals we re-

cycle, the fewer have to be mined," says Kees Baldé, senior scientific specialist at the UN Institute for Training and Research.

Dell, HP, Microsoft, Apple, Lenovo, Cisco, Google, Amazon and Sony all have programs to take back and find new homes for outdated tech hardware. Also, TechSoup, Good360 and Computers with Causes are non-profits which specialize in redistributing refurbished tech to charitable organizations.

E-waste is one of the fastest-growing waste streams, yet less than a quarter is properly recycled. E-waste contains substances like lead, mercury and cadmium, which can leach into soil and water supplies and are linked to neurological, respiratory and developmental disorders, particularly in vulnerable populations.

Beyond environmental advantages, repurposing technology saves money by selling or trading in old devices through eBay or manufacturer trade-in programs. Leasing arrangements also provide access to updated technology sans frequent disposal. With creativity, you can DIY old devices into something completely new, like a tablet into a digital recipe

book or an old laptop into a home media server.

The EU's "Right-to-Repair" laws highlight this trend: "We expect Council to adopt their position soon, so we can begin negotiations to transform these measures into law and pave the way for a truly circular European economy," European Parliament member Rene Repasi shares. With less than a quarter of e-waste recycled properly globally, adopting a thrifty mindset can drive real change. As a consumer, choose to donate or repurpose outdated devices can conserve resources, save money, and reduce environmental impact. In our technology-dependent world, this shift isn't simply beneficial—it's essential.

CONTACTS: Electronic Waste Rising Five Times Faster than Documented E-waste Recycling, <https://ewastemonitor.info/the-global-e-waste-monitor-2024/>.

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