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Council Issues Proclamations Honoring Pair of Outstanding Community Members

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County
Council Media

On Tuesday, April 8, the Prince George's County Council issued two proclamations honoring members of the community who have made outstanding and life-saving contributions. Chair Edward Burroughs III (District 8) and Council Member Wala Blegay (District 6) presented the proclamations to Egypt Middleton, the school nurse at Kettering Middle School who received a top honor, and Rodney Cook, a retired US Marine who intervened following a crash.

Egypt Middleton was named the 2025 School Nurse of the Year by the Maryland Association of School Health Nurses. She is the first Black nurse in



Chair Edward Burroughs III (District 8) and Council Member Wala Blegay (District 6) presented the proclamations to Egypt Middleton, the school nurse at Kettering Middle School (left photo), and Rodney Cook, a retired US Marine who intervened following a crash.

the State of Maryland to receive this honor, as well as the first nurse from Prince George's County Public Schools. Middleton, a nurse for more than two decades who has worked for PGPCS since 2011, was honored

for her dedication to student well-being, advocacy and community engagement. She has also served as a visiting professor and clinical faculty member at Chamberlain College of Nursing for the past three years, men-



PHOTOS COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL MEDIA

toring the next generation of healthcare professionals.

"I've had the pleasure of knowing Egypt Middleton for years, dating back to my time as legal counsel for the DC Nurses Association," said Council Mem-

ber Blegay. "Her passion for nursing and commitment to student health have always stood out. As the school nurse at Kettering Middle School, she continues to be a powerful advocate for our children and a shining example of ex-

cellence in school health. We are proud to honor her as Maryland's School Health Nurse of the Year. This is a historic and well-deserved recognition."

Rodney Cook, a Retired Marine, jumped into action to help save the life of a driver who crashed his car, due to a medical emergency, on Allentown Road, near Joint Base Andrews, in Morningside on January 24, 2025. Cook helped pull the man from his car, called 911, and rendered aid prior to the arrival of first responders. The driver spent two weeks in the hospital following the crash and said he believes Rodney Cook saved his life.

"Rodney Cook represents the values and ideals that all Prince Georgians should strive for. His willingness to help in a time of crisis shows the true value of neighbors helping neighbors," said Chair Burroughs. "The Council is so grateful for Mr. Cook's service to our country and his continued service to our community. There are heroes among us!"

Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union Announces 2025 Scholarship Winners

Credit Union awards \$10,000 in scholarships to four dynamic Prince George's County scholars

By PRESS OFFICER
PGFCFU

BOWIE, Md. (April 10, 2025)—Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union (PGFCFU) proudly announces the recipients of the 2025 Virginia Stallings and Cindy Prestandrea Scholarships. Four exceptional credit union members—Khalil Jackson (Bowie, MD), Cameron Baldwin (Brandywine, MD), Taunya A. Melvin (Bowie, MD) and Dionna Stone (Waldorf, MD)—have each been awarded \$2,500 to support their educational journeys.

This distinctive scholarship program is open to all credit union members pursuing undergraduate, graduate, trade, or vocational studies. Applicants were asked to submit an application detailing their academic achievements and community involvement. Instead of a traditional essay, candidates were invited to creatively express their thoughts on the importance of financial literacy through a video post on Instagram or Facebook.

Khalil Jackson, a senior at Bowie High School, will study Automotive Design at Morgan State University this fall. Cameron Baldwin is currently weighing several col-



PHOTO COLLAGE COURTESY PGFCFU

2025 Scholarship Recipients (From top left to right) Jackson, Baldwin, Melvin and Stone

lege acceptances and intends to pursue a career in Dentistry. Taunya A. Melvin and Dionna Stone are both furthering their education in doctoral programs at Liberty University and St. George's University, respectively.

"We are proud to celebrate the achievements of this year's scholarship winners—an inspiring group of Prince Georgians whose diverse paths and shared commit-

ment to excellence reflect the values our credit union holds dear," said Diane Coleman Brown, President and CEO of Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union. "Their success reminds us that when opportunity meets determination, the future shines brighter for us all."

Information about the 2026 Virginia Stallings and Cindy Prestandrea Scholarship will be announced in Winter 2025. To learn more or sign up for updates, please visit: www.princegeorgescfcu.org/scholarship.

Established in 1967, the Prince George's Community Federal Credit Union was created to offer financial services to Prince George's County employees. Over the years, the organization has expanded its reach to serve more than 19,500 members across the county. With assets exceeding \$300 million, our community-based credit union welcomes individuals who live, work, 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 or call 301.627.2666.

City of Laurel Housing Resource Fair Event—April 19, 2025

By PRESS OFFICER
City of Laurel

The City of Laurel and Department of Economic and Community Development is happy to announce a Housing Resource Fair Event. Connect with renters, landlords, property managers,

banks, legal professionals and community members for housing assistance—come down to the Laurel Multiservice Center located at 204 Ft. Meade Road Laurel, Maryland 20707 on **Saturday, April 19, 2025**, from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. This is a free event.

Non-Traditional High School Science Educator Named Prince George's County Teacher of the Year

By PRESS OFFICER
PGPCS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (April 10, 2025)—Lafiyi Tunstall, Science Department Chair at Non-Traditional Program South, has been named the 2025 Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made during a celebratory event at the University of Maryland, College Park, where Tunstall received a three-year leased vehicle courtesy of Pohanka Automotive Group and NAI Michael.

Angela Grooms, fifth-grade reading teacher at Kingsford Elementary in Mitchellville, and Madelaine Galarza, K-5 reading teacher at Tulip Grove Elementary in Bowie, were first and second runners-up for the award, respectively.

Tunstall, a high school science teacher serving 11th and 12th grade students, brings both academic rigor and real-world relevance to her Environmental Science and Earth & Space Science courses. She is celebrated for her dedication to educational equity, her innovative and engaging teaching approach, and her unwavering belief that every student can succeed.

"Ms. Tunstall is a true example of what it means to lead with heart, purpose, and vision," said

PGCPS Superintendent Millard House II. "Her passion for science and commitment to student and staff growth make her an outstanding representative of our profession. We are proud of her work—and equally proud to celebrate all of our finalists, who exemplify the excellence, dedication, and innovation found across Prince George's County Public Schools."

With six years of service in Prince George's County and a career that spans multiple districts—including Baltimore City Public Schools and Purpose Built Schools of Atlanta—Tunstall has long championed students who thrive in non-traditional settings. At Non-Traditional Program South, she focuses on empowering students who face academic or personal obstacles in conventional classrooms.

"I know many educators are deserving of this award, but no one—in my eyes—deserves it more," said Non-Traditional Program South Principal Wendell Coleman. "Ms. Tunstall works tirelessly every day for our students, engages them, motivates them, inspires them, introduces new things to them, and doesn't limit them in any way."

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YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART SEVEN

Rapid-response Teams Aid Troubled Youths in New Jersey—but Funding Limits Maryland's Similar Effort

By COLIN MCNAMARA
Capital News Service

A young New Jersey girl tormented others in her kindergarten class. Alienated from her classmates, she physically attacked other students and colored the bathroom walls with a permanent marker.

Access to mental health care was complicated in her rural county, and school officials considered suspending the 6-year-old. That was when the school notified New Jersey's Mobile Response and Stabilization Services—an urgent response system built to aid those in crisis without sending them to the emergency room or getting the police involved.

The rapid response provider worked with

the girl and her family over eight weeks to find the treatment that best fit them. A year later, the girl's behavioral issues—which stemmed from her home—nearly disappeared, according to Liz Manley, a former New Jersey mental health specialist who recounted the child's story.

Manley said the girl transformed from a smart kid with few social skills to one of the most popular first graders in the school, with her classmates now eager to come to her birthday party.

"We found out there [was] a lot going on at home," said Manley, who now serves as a senior advisor for health and behavioral health policy at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work's Innovations Institute. "The father [had] a new job. He [wasn't]

around as much; he [had] to work a lot. Their other children were struggling and just needed some time. They're not big things; these are just normal things that happen."

Without the help of rapid response, that young girl could have been suspended from school or sent to an emergency department to receive inpatient care, even though that type of high-intensity treatment was not needed, Manley said.

The young girl's story serves as a lesson learned for Maryland, which began to implement a rapid response program similar to New Jersey's in 2022 but lacks the funding necessary to provide the same comprehen-

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90 Students Celebrate 90 Years of Service!

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ChildWatch:

Transforming the Road

But Dr. King reminded us that true compassion—true justice—requires also attacking the forces that leave others in need in the first place.

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Innovative Health Care Program Empowers Lung Disease Patients, Caregivers and Providers

In 2016, there were more than 2 million emergency department visits and more than 650,000 hospitalizations due to COPD, which is one of the most prevalent chronic lung diseases.

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TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

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

Surprise speaker for U. of Md. graduation

University of Maryland graduates will soon be center stage at commencement on May 21. And they will have, as commencement speaker, a superstar who got his start right here: Kermit the Frog, created by Jim Henson.

The Kermit the Frog puppet was created by Jim Henson in 1955 for Sam and Friends. It is the first Kermit puppet.

Jim Henson was a home economics major with an eye for innovation. He created Kermit using one of his mother's coats and a ping-pong ball cut in half. From those humble beginnings, Kermit has gone on to become one of the world's most beloved and enduring cultural icons, sharing a message of optimism and believing in yourself.

And now, Kermit will be Commencement Speaker for University of Maryland 2025.

Military Appreciation Cookout, May 18

American Legion Auxiliary Clinton Unit 259 is partnering with the Prince George's County Police Department to host a Military Appreciation Cookout for active duty service members and Veterans on Sunday, May 18, from 12 noon to 6 p.m.

In addition to food and fun, there will be representatives from various active-duty military and Veteran resource services.

They are also able to provide bus transportation to and from Andrews Air Force Base.

It is free to attend; however, attendees must register by scanning the QR code or going to <https://bit.ly/3F263S5> so that they may have a headcount.

Karen Rooker is one of the contact persons for this event. Please feel free to contact her if you have any questions or concerns or require additional information. Please call her on her personal cell phone at (718) 909-1626.

One Maryland One Book 2025

"Kin: Rooted in Hope" has been named One Maryland One Book for the year. The author is Carole Boston Weatherford who recently received the 2025 Children's Literature Legacy Award from the American Library Association. In the past, she has also been awarded a Newberry Honor.

"Kin: Rooted in Hope" is a family saga dating back to colonial Maryland. Author Carole said, "It conjures the past, reclaims lost ancestral narratives and brings us to the realization that knowing your history is generational wealth."

Measles are back in the news

When I was growing up (in the olde days), every kid got measles. Sometimes, the Health Department posted a warning sign on your front door. Since then, it seems to me, measles has not been a big issue. Now, it's back in the news.

As of today, April 10, 2025, there have been 3 confirmed measles cases in Maryland this year. One is in Prince George's County, and two are in Maryland residents who recently traveled abroad, according to County health officials.

Maryland residents—especially parents—should vaccinate their children against measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) to protect themselves as well as their children.

If you suspect you or your child has measles, contact your healthcare person immediately and stay home from public places.

Town of Morningside

Some facts: Morningside is located within Prince George's County Council District 7. The current council member representing this district is Krystal Oriadha.

Neighbors & other good people

Father Gustavo C. Buccilli, S.M.A., is the new pastor of St. Margaret of Scotland Parish, in Capitol Heights, taking over from Father Michael P. Moran who

has moved to assignment within the community.

McNamara's Archery Team places third

I congratulate Bishop McNamara's Varsity Archery Team for placing third at the annual Maryland NASP State Championship!

The top 3 shooters for the team were: Oliver Szczpanski '25 with 274 out of 300, a personal best; Antoine Penagunda '25 with 271, a personal best; and Ayden Nguyen '28 with a 262. Several other students scored their personal best which was instrumental in their placement at States.

NASP, by the way, is National Archery in the Schools Program. And my great-grandson Wesley McHale is a member.

Graduates Honors, send me yours

For the next three months, I'll be running the names of graduates, and of honors. You must know some of them. Email the graduate to me at muddmm@aol.com or write it up and stick it in my mailbox (4304 Skyline Drive) or call me (301-735-3451).

Changing landscape

A home at 6201 Tamara Court, in Skyline, has been sold for \$428,000.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Jill Gilmartin Booth and Tiffany Jackson, April 21; Taylor Foster, April 22; Cindy Pitts, Jim Reilly, David Titus, Barbara Sparks and Margaret White, April 23; Edna Lucas, April 24; Sue Stine McConkey-Mason, Daisy Young, Kenia Spivey and my grandson David McHale, April 25; and G.A. DeFelice, April 26.

Happy Anniversary to John and Ruth Anthony, Jr., their 47th on April 22; Lewis and Trisha (Pitts) Woods, their 36th on April 22; and Janet and Brian Spivey, April 23,

Email your birthday or anniversary to muddmm@aol.com.

Calendar of Events

St. Philip's Little Chapel Food Pantry Distribution

Date and time: SATURDAY, April 19, 2025, 9 a.m. to noon

Description: Our next St. Philip's Little Chapel Food Pantry is on SATURDAY, April 19 from 9 am to NOON. There will be fresh produce and some frozen items available as well as non-perishable items, while supplies last.

Location: Corner of 6th and Prince George Streets, behind the church off of Main Street, Laurel, MD 20707

NOTE:
different
distribution
day!

City of Laurel Housing Resource Fair Event

Date and time: Saturday, April 19, 2025, 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Description: The City of Laurel and Department of Economic and Community Development is happy to announce a Housing Resource Fair Event. Connect with renters, landlords, property managers, banks, legal professionals and community members for housing assistance.

Cost: Free

Location: Craig A. Moe Laurel Multiservice Center, 204 Ft. Meade Road, Laurel, MD 20707

City of Greenbelt: Touch-A-Truck Event

Date and time: Saturday, April 26, 2025, 11 a.m.–2 p.m.

Description: An interactive experience to explore emergency vehicles, heavy machinery, and more! Family-friendly event. Food, games, Trucks!

Cost: Free

Ages: All ages

Location: Beltway Plaza, 6000 Greenbelt Rd, Greenbelt, MD 20770, parking lot behind AMC

Contact: Gizelle Alvarez, galvarez@greenbeltmd.gov

FREE Classical Recital: Penelope Shvarts, guitar

Date and time: Saturday, April 26, 2025, 1 p.m.

Description: Penelope Shvarts has played both classical and flamenco guitar since she was five years old and is currently studying at the Peabody Institute, where she was given an award to continue her research into non-male composers and their works for guitar. She hopes to diversify the standard classical guitar repertoire and make music more inclusive.

Cost: FREE; \$5/person donations appreciated at the door

Ages: All ages

Location: Montpelier Arts Center, 9652 Muirkirk Road, Laurel, MD 20708

Contact: 301-377-7800

The Lives & Works of George Schuyler, Richard Wright, Paul Robeson, Margaret Walker & Jean Toomer

Date and time: Tuesday, April 29, 2025, 5 p.m.

Description: Presented by PGC Poet Laureate, Dr. Khadijah Ali-Coleman. This National Poetry Month event will explore the lives and legacies of key Harlem Renaissance figures: George Schuyler, Margaret Walker, Paul Robeson, and Jean Toomer. The discussion will highlight their significant contributions to shaping America's cultural and artistic landscape.

Cost: Free

Ages: Adults

Location: Laurel Branch Library, Large Meeting Room A (Dorothy Height Room), 507 7th St, Laurel, MD 20707

2025 Empowering Health: Advancing Access, Inclusion, & Integrity through Emerging Technologies

Date and time: Friday, May 2, 2025, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.

Description: Join Marylanders Online and the University of Maryland Extension for a day filled with exploration into the technologies transforming the health sector. Gain insights into tools to navigate emerging health technologies, fostering equity, access, and stronger community support.

Cost: Free, **Register by April 27:**

<https://go.umd.edu/HealthTech25Register>

Location: Virtual Conference

Contact: 1-866-206-8467

Old-Fashioned Community Spaghetti Dinner Prepared By Meals On Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring

Date and time: Wednesday, May 7, 2025, 5:30–8 p.m.

Description: Brought back by popular demand coupled with a calling to support those who have suffered from job loss under the new administration, Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring is hosting its second annual spaghetti dinner fundraiser. Enjoy spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, and dessert; additional beverages will also be available, including a cash bar with wine and beer. "The buffet meal will accommodate everyone from plant-based through omnivores, from low-carb to no dairy." The organization is still accepting auction items and sponsors. Silent auction closes at 8:15 p.m.

Cost: \$15/person at: <https://ourfundraiser.link/> Tickets expected to sell out. All proceeds directly benefiting meal delivery to hungry homebound neighbors.

Ages: All ages are welcome

Location: Meals on Wheels Takoma Park/Silver Spring, 7410 New Hampshire Ave., Takoma Park, MD

Contact: 301-434-1922

M-NCPPC 10th Annual Tots to Teens Expo

Date and time: Saturday, May 17, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Description: Hosted by The Better Family, this exciting event offers over 100 interactive exhibitors, including a health pavilion with free dental and vision screenings, a reading lounge, a fresh market with free fruits and vegetables, and a STEM zone featuring robotics and flight simulators. Families can also enjoy activities like kids' cooking, fitness challenges, pony rides, petting zoos, roller skating, face painting, and sports such as tennis, boxing, and fencing. The event is free to attend, but registration is required. Attendees will also have access to food vendors and educational opportunities through the Honors Scholars College & Career Row.

Cost: Free, **registration required:** TotsToTeensExpo.com.

Ages: All ages

Location: Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex, 8001 Sheriff Rd, Landover, MD 20785

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BSU LEGACY FAMILIES

The BSU Legacy Family shares a deep loyalty to the institution and shares great pride in their connection to Bowie State University. To each of you we extend our heartfelt gratitude. We are excited and honored to celebrate and showcase your family's BSU legacy throughout the month of April. #BSU4Life.

SISTERS OF TODAY AND TOMORROW (SOT)

Shout out to Carla Morrison ('92), CEO of Chitchat Communications and founder of Sisters of Today and Tomorrow (SOT, an organization dedicated to fostering leadership, service, and political engagement among women). Morrison was recently profiled by Rollingout.com for Women's History Month, highlighting her efforts in honoring and uplifting female leaders. #BowieBOLD.

A TRIBUTE

A tribute to the music of Jeffrey Osborne and L.T.D. April 12, 2025, at Harmony Hall Arts Center from 8–10:30 p.m. Ticket Price: General \$30; Senior & Student \$25. All ages. L.T.D. (which stands for Love, Togetherness, Devotion) was formed in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1968 and is best known for hits like "Back in Love Again" and "Holding On", as well as their soulful ballads such as "Love Ballad" and "Where Did We Go Wrong?" This tribute promises to take you back to the days of sweet love ballads with the music of Jeffrey Osborne and L.T.D. Visit website to purchase your tickets at harmonyhallarts@pgparks.com. Address is Harmony Halls Arts Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland. Telephone number is 301-203-6070.

SECOND NATIONAL URBAN FARM FESTIVAL

Join us Sunday, May 4, 2025, at 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. to nourish your Mind, Body, and Spirit at the National Urban Farm Fest Family fun for all ages in Brandywine, Maryland. Get ready for a day filled with fun, learning, and delicious food. This in-person event celebrates the importance of urban farming. Discover innovative farming techniques, taste fresh organic produce, and connect with local farmers. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or just starting out, there is something for everyone at this festival. Do not miss out on the chance to explore the world of urban farming and be inspired to grow your own food. Mark your calendars and join us at the National Urban Farm Festival. General admission is free. Address is 7310 Moores Road, Brandywine, Maryland. Tickets can be purchased on website: <https://allevents.in/brandywine/the-2nd-national-urban-farm-festival/100001068702179989>.

THE CAPITAL WHEEL

Plan your next adventure. Welcome to The Capital Wheel at National Harbor, the premier attraction for panoramic views of the Washington, D.C. skyline on our iconic 180-foot observation wheel. Here you will soar high above the Potomac

River and take in stunning vistas of the nation's capital while seated in warm and cozy climate-controlled gondolas. Check out our packages which all include tickets to The Capital Wheel. Military tickets are available for purchase at the Ticket Booth for \$16.50+tax per person with a valid military ID.

FOUNDERS' DAY CELEBRATION

Join Bowie State University in celebrating 160 years of excellence during our Founder's Day as we honor the legacy of alumni students, faculty and staff who embody what it truly means to be Bowie Bold. April 16, 2025, from 10 a.m.–2 p.m.

JUNETEENTH

"On June 19, 1865, Union soldiers landed in Galveston, Texas with the news that the war had ended and all slaves were free. This was two- and one-half years after President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation that became official on January 1, 1863. Since that time African Americans have celebrated with food, fellowship, prayer, and reassurance."

Juneteenth not only celebrates the freedom of African Americans from slavery, but it is also a time to reflect on the history and the progress that has been made and to encourage continuous self-development. Here is what National Harbor has going on to celebrate and honor Juneteenth.

Understand the history and celebration the emancipation of African Americans from slavery in the United States at National Harbor. Our annual National Harbor Juneteenth Celebration is back on Thursday, June 19 starting at 11 a.m. Visit our Freedom Day Black-Owned Marketplace in the Capital Canopy, support the community and check out a variety of black owned businesses, food vendors and more.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ALUMNI CHAPTER

"The Prince George's County Alumni Chapter of Bowie State University National Alumni Association, Inc. continues to understand, first-hand, the tremendous value of providing scholarships to deserving young people at our beloved Bowie State University. This is why our Annual Scholarship event continues to be our signature event."

"Our Alumni Social Affair will be at Martin's Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland on Sunday, June 22, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tickets: \$80 per person; \$800 per table. Ads for our souvenir booklet are: Full page \$100; Half page \$50; Back page \$150; Patron \$25 each. Email to: Marketingmanager@pgcac.org

"If you are unable to come, and would like to make a donation, any amount is appreciated. Payments for tickets, donations, ads or patrons, please make checks payable to (PGCAC) and mail to: Prince George's County Chapter, 6710 Laurel Bowie Road, PO Box 1122, Bowie Maryland 20718. Note: Payments can also be paid by CASHAPP: \$princegeorgecac or Zelle: treasurer@pgcac.org." Submitted by Anita D. Ford, PGCAC President.

COMMUNITY



PHOTO COURTESY FEDCHOICE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

Staff from FedChoice Federal Credit Union along with Teachers, Parents and Students from Cora L. Rice wrap up a tour of the credit union's headquarters location on April 1, 2025.

90 Students Celebrate 90 Years of Service!

By PRESS OFFICER
FedChoice Federal Credit Union

LANHAM, Md. (April 7, 2025)—On Wednesday, April 1, FedChoice Federal Credit Union (FedChoice) and FedChoice Charitable Foundation (Foundation) hosted 90 fourth-grade students and teachers from Cora L. Rice Elementary School for a tour of the credit union's headquarters location.

In honor of the 90th Anniversary of FedChoice, the entire team was thrilled to open the doors to 90 bright young minds. The students' time at FedChoice was packed with highlights such as visits to each department where the staff stepped in to explain how the credit union serves its 25,000 members. The FedChoice team taught the children about debit cards, loans and loan repayment, and branch operations. They even had the opportunity to speak with a Board Member. A key tenet of the Foundation is financial literacy, so the visit included an interactive budgeting workshop. The budding savers budgeted their way through needs and wants, earning a gold dollar for their efforts.

Additionally, the group learned a bit about the credit union governance structure from Brett Noll, President/CEO of FedChoice and Chairman of the Board of the Foundation. Several students had a chance to sit in the President's chair and be Credit Union CEO for a moment. The students streamed into the Boardroom as Mr. Noll stressed to the kids that in the credit union world, even the President reports to someone. He mentioned the Board of Directors is his boss and ultimately,

everyone at the credit union works in the best interests of its members. Noll was thrilled with the time spent with the children, stating, "Since our founding, we have been committed to empowering our members with the financial knowledge and tools they need to succeed. It was an honor to share this day with the next generation of young learners, and we hope this experience will spark their curiosity and inspire them as they continue their educational journeys and seek career opportunities."

The Foundation is strongly committed to bringing financial literacy and education programs to local communities and was happy to partner with the Cora L. Rice Elementary School, a Title I community school in Landover, MD, to engage students with activities centered around savings, budgeting, investments and other important financial literacy skills to enable them to build a foundation to financial independence.

FedChoice Federal Credit Union was originally chartered in 1935 when a group of Bureau of Internal Revenue (aka IRS) employees decided to establish a credit union to meet their financial needs. Since then, FedChoice has grown stronger each year by serving all federal employees, retirees, and their immediate family and household members in the Washington DC, Baltimore and Philadelphia metro areas. With access to over 60,000 surcharge-free ATMs, over 5,000 CO-OP Shared Branches, plus online and mobile banking, members may access their accounts 24/7/365. FedChoice serves 25,000 members and has \$446 million in assets.

Teams from A1

sive statewide care.

It's also a lesson for the nation. In the 2021–22 school year, 67% of public schools in the U.S. reported having at least one violent incident, according to a survey from the National Center for Education Statistics. One in six children aged 6-17 in the U.S. experience a mental health disorder each year, according to 2021 data published by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Mobile response has proven

to help. A 2019 study published in the Psychiatric Services journal found that when compared to other troubled youths, those treated by mobile response teams stood a substantially lower risk of suffering a crisis culminating in an emergency room visit.

That being the case, the Bipartisan Policy Center issued a report in January advocating an expansion of mobile response teams to serve youths nationwide.

"The primary objective is to deliver community-based sup-

port and immediate assistance to families facing behavioral health crises related to their children, with a focus on de-escalation and stabilization within the home and skill-building," the report said.

Better than 911

Mobile response aims to steer clear of the problems that can occur when parents call 911 in response to a child's behavioral health crisis. In such cases, police

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Two Schools Earn Maryland Purple Star Designation for Outstanding Support of Military-Connected Students

Stephen Decatur Middle and Imagine Andrews recognized for commitment to military families

By PRESS OFFICER
PGCPS

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (April 11, 2025)—Stephen Decatur Middle School and Imagine Andrews Public Charter School were announced as Purple Star Schools by the Maryland State Department of Education, a designation that reflects each school's comprehensive support systems for students whose family members serve in the armed forces. The honor comes during April's national observance of the Month of the Military Child, which celebrates the resilience and sacrifices of children in military families.

"This recognition speaks to

the many military-connected families, students, and staff across our district whose experiences and service strengthen our school communities," said Superintendent Millard House II. "The Purple Star designation earned by Stephen Decatur and Imagine Andrews reflects our commitment to ensuring every student has the support and opportunity to thrive."

Located on Joint Base Andrews, Imagine Andrews Public Charter School serves a significant number of military families and has developed a strong culture of support and inclusion. The school offers resources tailored to the mobility and deployment challenges many of its students face.

Valid for two years, the Purple Star designation is awarded to schools that go above and beyond in meeting the unique needs of military-connected students—from easing school transitions to providing social-emotional support and academic continuity.

Stephen Decatur Middle School, in Clinton, has similarly distinguished itself by creating an environment where military-connected students feel understood and valued. From staff training to dedicated supports, the school ensures students feel at home regardless of where they come from or where they may go next.

Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum Presents Night of Sacred Sounds: An Evening of Jazz + The Spoken Word

By JAN F. LEE
Maryland Commission on African American History & Culture
Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 9, 2025)—Experience an unforgettable night of music, poetry, and cultural celebration at the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum's Night of Sacred Sounds: An Evening of Jazz + The Spoken Word on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, from 6–8 p.m. In solidarity with UNESCO's International Jazz Day and in celebration of National Jazz Appreciation Month and National Poetry Month, join us for a celebration of rhythm, soul, and inspiration featuring the Kweku Sumbry Quartet and Wesley "Panama" Watkins, Jr. and the Count the Cost Band! This special fundraiser will support the museum's upcoming programming while honoring the rich cultural heritage of jazz and poetry, two art forms deeply rooted in the African Diaspora.

Experience multi-percussionist Kweku Sumbry's signature blend of jazz and West African roots. Sumbry has performed globally (and NPR's Tiny Desk!) with artists such as Meshell Ndegeocello and Immanuel Wilkins. Set against the backdrop of the museum's Sacred Spaces exhibition, this event will explore the profound ties between spirituality, artistry, and the African diasporic experience, offering a night of reflection, joy, and community.

Director of Programs, Sabriyah Hassan-Ismail, stated, "The Sacred Spaces exhibition provides the perfect backdrop for this event—it reminds us that art and music are not just expressions, but sacred practices that have sustained and strengthened Black communities for generations."

Chanel Johnson, Executive Director of the Banneker-Douglass-Tubman museum, shares, "Jazz and spoken word have long been vehicles for storytelling, healing, and resistance within the African American tradition. Through Night of Sacred Sounds, we hope to create an evening that not only entertains, but also uplifts through the power of these art forms."

Between performances, join us for a community-led poetry jam session! Are you a poet or spoken word artist eager to share your talent with the BDTM community? Sign up now to participate—space is limited. Signup here: <https://bit.ly/BDTMSacredSoundsPoetryOpenMic>

Event Details:

Wednesday, April 30, 2025 | Time: 6–8 p.m.
Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum, 84 Franklin Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Tickets:

nightofsacredsoundsbdtm.eventbrite.com

General Admission: \$50 | Student Admission: \$30 | Wine & Refreshments Add-on: \$20.00

Program Highlights

- Live Jazz & Spoken Word Performances
- Supporting Future Museum Programming
- Immersive Artistic Atmosphere within the Sacred Spaces Exhibition

The Kweku Sumbry Quartet

Washington, DC-based multi-percussionist Kweku Sumbry blends Djembe orchestra traditions with jazz innovation. Having performed globally with icons like Ambrose Akinmusire, Cyrus Chestnut, Meshell Ndegeocello, and Immanuel Wilkins (on NPR's Tiny Desk!), Sumbry leads WAR TRIO with Elijah Easton (Tenor Saxophone), Obasi Akoto (Bass), and Kweku Sumbry (Drums), featuring a special guest vocalist. Learn more on Kweku Sumbry's Instagram page: [@kwe.drums](https://www.instagram.com/kwe.drums) (14.2K followers)

Wesley "Panama" Watkins, Jr. and the Count the Cost Band

Founded in 2005, this D.C.-based Jazz, R&B, and Gospel band infuses soulful energy into every performance. Wesley "Panama" Watkins, Jr., originally from Panama, FL, has made the DMV and Florida music scenes his home, delivering powerful performances at fundraising events and cultural celebrations.

About the Sacred Spaces Exhibition

The Sacred Spaces exhibition, open from February 8–December 30, 2025, features the work of Jabari Jefferson, curated by Martina Dodd. Jefferson's art, including oil paintings, sculptures, and a large-scale community installation, transforms salvaged materials into thought-provoking reflections on history, memory, and Black cultural spaces. This immersive exhibition offers a compelling complement to Night of Sacred Sounds. bdtmuseum.maryland.gov/exhibitions.

The Banneker-Douglass-Tubman Museum is the State of Maryland's official museum of African American heritage and culture. It is operated by the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture. To learn more, visit <http://bdtmuseum.maryland.gov>. Follow us on social media: Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

The Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture is committed to discovering, documenting, preserving, collecting, and promoting Maryland's African American heritage.


Teacher from A1

I'm so grateful that she's been recognized for her work—she deserves it."

Tunstall holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Howard University, with a minor in Chemistry, and a Master of Science in Organizational Leadership from Nyack College. Beyond the classroom, she leads monthly professional development for novice educators, mentors new teachers, and serves as an instructor for the district's Climate Change En-ROADS program in partnership with the Schmidt Outdoor Education Center.

Her leadership extends into school life as well—she has served as Senior Class Sponsor for multiple graduating classes and led science clubs and academic contests that build a love of learning beyond the bell schedule.

As Teacher of the Year, Tunstall will represent Prince George's County in the Maryland State Department of Education's statewide competition. The Maryland Teacher of the Year will be announced this fall and will go on to compete for National Teacher of the Year.



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COMMENTARY

Marian Wright Edelman
*Founder and President Emerita,
 Children's Defense Fund*



ChildWatch:

Transforming the Road

"A true revolution of values will soon cause us to question the fairness and justice of many of our past and present policies. On the one hand we are called to play the Good Samaritan on life's roadside, but that will be only an initial act. One day we must come to see that the whole Jericho Road must be transformed so that men and women will not be constantly beaten and robbed as they make their journey on life's highway. True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring."

This passage is from Dr. Martin Luther King,

Jr.'s sermon at New York City's Riverside Church on April 4, 1967, a year to the day before his assassination. In his speech in Memphis the night before his murder, Dr. King repeated the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan who stopped and helped the desperate traveler who had been beaten, robbed, and left half dead as he journeyed along the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. The Good Samaritan is traditionally considered a model of charity for his willingness to treat a stranger as a neighbor and friend. Dr. King agreed that we are all called to follow his example and serve those around us who need help. But he reminded us that true compassion—true justice—requires also at-

tacking the forces that leave others in need in the first place.

If travelers are being assaulted on the Jericho Road, we should help bind their wounds, but also work to make the road a safe passageway. If our communities have neighbors in need and we volunteer at shelters or donate to food pantries and think we've done our part, we are only partially right. We have done an important part. But we are not finished if we are not also fighting to prevent and eliminate the violence of joblessness, poor education, poverty, and hunger and the inequalities and injustices that feed and accompany them and unjust systems that create them. With true structural change there would be far less need for charity; without it the very best charitable efforts will never be enough.

Dr. King, our great 20th century American prophet, understood this—yet like so many other prophets, his voice was often at odds with leaders or conveniently left unheard by the people in his own land. During Dr. King's lifetime, President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty attempted to address some of the inequalities in the United States that needed redressing and restructuring, but that vision was not permanent. By August 1968, Richard Nixon accepted his party's presi-

dential nomination already criticizing President Johnson's anti-poverty tactics, and suggesting instead: "Let government use its tax and credit policies to enlist in this battle the greatest engine of progress ever developed in the history of man—American private enterprise. Let us enlist in this great cause the millions of Americans in volunteer organizations who will bring a dedication to this task that no amount of money can ever buy." Instead of worrying about restructuring the edifice that had produced America's beggars, he believed giving the edifice more power would help; instead of worrying about transforming the Jericho Road, he recommended relying on millions more Good Samaritans. The same threads have been remixed and repeated again and again, alongside the arguments that the safety net is actually a snare, ripe for shredding.

Our nation is now at a moment when even acknowledging that inequities exist in the edifice is under attack. Will Americans embrace attempts to hide and accept the deep unjust structural inequalities and injustices that favor the powerful at the expense of the powerless, the rich at the expense of the poor, and the greedy at the expense of the needy—or return to the call to transform the road?
 —April 11, 2025

Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



To Be Equal:

Trump's Budget Is a Betrayal of His Promise to Working-Class Americans

"Donald Trump and extreme MAGA Republicans are doing everything they can to tank our economy, drive us toward a recession and gut the healthcare of the American people by visiting upon them the largest Medicaid cut in history, along with the largest cut to nutritional assistance in American history, all in service of enacting massive tax breaks for their billionaire donors like Elon Musk. It's a toxic scheme that they cannot hide from because it continues to be on full display on the House Floor and on the Senate Floor for the American people."

—House Democratic Leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries

I call it the great bait-and-switch. Betraying his promise not to cut Medicaid, President Trump has pushed through Congress a

budget that will require the deepest cut to Medicaid in history, while gutting programs and services that are essential to the health, safety, and financial security of millions of average Americans.

Trump and his allies in Congress are betraying the working-class Americans who trusted them to feed the insatiable greed of billionaires.

In fact, even swiping food from the tables of working families and stripping health care from children and disabled Americans isn't enough; future generations must be burdened with debt so today's wealthiest can reap even more. With this week's vote, Congress not only agreed to slash \$1.5 trillion from programs that benefit communities, but also to raise the debt ceiling by \$5 trillion—all to pay for an astonishing windfall for the wealthiest 5% of Americans.

While the Trump administration and some Re-

publican lawmakers continue to claim they won't cut Medicaid benefits, they're all fully aware that the budget to which they've committed absolutely requires cutting Medicaid benefits. Every member of Congress received a memo from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office confirming it is impossible to cut \$1.5 trillion in spending without slashing Medicaid.

Nearly every Republican in both the House and the Senate voted for the budget anyway.

Adding insult to injury, the gutting of the social safety net comes just as many more Americans are likely to need to rely on it, as a chaotic tariff policy risks massive job loss and soaring inflation.

The cuts to Medicaid that the budget requires endanger the health and financial security of more than 70 million children, seniors, people with disabilities and working families, according to a report issued last month by the National Urban League and 10 other leading civil rights and health equity organizations. While the cuts threaten Americans of all backgrounds, communities of color would suffer especially widespread harm: nearly 42 million people, or approximately a third of all people of color in the U.S., rely on Medicaid for health care.

Achieving the spending cuts to which Congress committed will require either:

- Stripping health care away from every single one of the 31 million children covered by Medicaid,
- Ending coverage for all adults age 65 and older who use Medicaid to obtain essential health

care; or

- 75% of all Medicaid funding for nursing home services or home and community-based care for older adults and people with disabilities.

The looming cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, meanwhile, endanger the health and financial security of more than 42 million American—nearly all of them in families with children, older adults, or people with disabilities. The meager \$6.20 per person per day that provides necessary nutrition and a measure of balance to precarious household budgets will be diverted to billionaires.

The reality of Trump's budget stands in stark contrast to his campaign's pandering to the working class, whom he promised to end "the inflation nightmare" and bring down the cost of "groceries, cars—everything." Instead, his tariffs will cost the typical American household an average of \$4,600 a year.

This is a moment that will test lawmakers in both parties. When they no longer can avoid the harsh reality of the budget they approved, will Republicans honor their new rhetoric about being the party of the working class? Will Democrats stand up against a reckless fiscal blueprint?

For our part, together with our partners in the newly-launched Fair Budget Coalition, the National Urban League will continue to demand a responsible federal budget that centers fairness, opportunity, and economic security for all Americans.

—April 12, 2025

TSA Begins REAL ID Full Enforcement on May 7

Travelers with a non-compliant ID will face additional screening measures, possible travel delays

By PRESS OFFICER
Transportation Security Administration

WASHINGTON (April 11, 2025)—Today, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced the imminent implementation of its REAL ID enforcement measures at TSA checkpoints nationwide.

"Secretary Noem and the Trump administration are enforcing the 2005 REAL ID Act and regulations on May 7, as directed by Congress and the American people," said Adam Stahl, TSA Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Administrator. "The Real ID

requirement bolsters safety by making fraudulent IDs harder to forge, thwarting criminals and terrorists. TSA will implement REAL ID effectively and efficiently, continuing to ensure the safety and security of passengers while also working to minimize operational disruptions at airports."

On May 7, TSA will no longer accept state-issued identifications that are not REAL ID compliant at TSA security checkpoints. All airline passengers 18 years and older, including TSA PreCheck® members, must present REAL ID-compliant identification or another acceptable ID, such as a passport, at TSA security checkpoints. Noncitizens illegally present in the U.S. who are voluntarily self-

deporting on international flights will not be denied boarding under this requirement.

Passengers who present a state-issued identification that is not REAL ID compliant and who do not have another acceptable alternative (e.g., passport) can expect to face delays, additional screening and the possibility of not being permitted into the security checkpoint.

Currently, 81% of travelers at TSA checkpoints present an acceptable identification including a state-issued REAL ID. TSA expects the number of passengers obtaining REAL IDs to steadily increase and will continue with additional screening measures for those without a REAL ID until it is no longer considered a security vulnerability.

More information on REAL ID can be found at this link [TSA.gov/real-id](https://www.tsa.gov/real-id).

City of Greenbelt Celebrates Staff Key Appointments to Key Regional Leadership Roles

By PRESS OFFICER
City of Greenbelt

GREENBELT, Md. (April 11, 2025)—The City of Greenbelt is proud to announce the recent appointments of three distinguished staff members to key leadership roles at the county and state levels. These appointments reflect the City's continued commitment to excellence in public service and community engagement.

Dawane Martinez, Director of Human Resources, and Chondria Andrews, Public Information Officer, have been appointed to the Board of Directors of the Prince George's County Society for Human Resource Management Chapter (PG-SHRM). Martinez will serve as President-Elect, and Andrews will take on the role of Director of Communications. These leadership roles recognize their exceptional professionalism, strategic vision, and dedication to advancing workforce development and effective communication

within Greenbelt and throughout the region, impacting over 11,000 Human Resource professionals in the DC-Maryland-Virginia (DMV) area.

In addition, the City proudly announces that Dr. Liz Park, Director of Greenbelt CARES, has been named to the Maryland Commission on Juvenile Justice Reform, a statewide body that plays a critical role in shaping policies to support youth and families across Maryland.

"We are incredibly proud of Dawane, Chondria, and Dr. Park for being acknowledged by their peers and stepping into these influential roles," said Josue Salmeron, Greenbelt City Manager. "Their appointments underscore their expertise and demonstrate the City's ongoing investment in innovative, high-impact public service."

"This recognition is not only a personal achievement for each of them but also a testament to the values and impact of our City programs," added Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

"Their involvement at the county and state levels ensures Greenbelt remains a model for compassionate and community-driven governance."

These notable appointments exemplify Greenbelt's ongoing dedication to nurturing leadership, advocating for community well-being, and fostering collaborative efforts that extend beyond City limits.

The City of Greenbelt is a diverse, welcoming community of 25,000 residents and 600 businesses outside Washington, D.C. It is widely known as an affordable public cooperative community founded in the New Deal era. Greenbelt prioritizes being environmentally friendly and has abundant parks, trails, and lakes to enjoy. The city has a national historic landmark district. It is home to the nation's first space flight complex, the NASA Goddard Flight Center, and the future home of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). For more information, go to www.GreenbeltMD.gov.

The Prince George's Post

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HEALTH *and* WELLNESS

Microplastics and Your Water Supply: What Your Family Needs to Know

(StatePoint) Statistics show if that if you're not filtering your water the right way, your family is likely consuming microplastics.

An overwhelming 94% of U.S. tap water is contaminated with fragments of plastic pollution called microplastics, and bottled water does not fare much better—microplastics are found in 93% of 11 popular water bottle brands around the world.

Microplastics found in drinking water are not just an environmental hazard—mounting evidence indicates that they are also a potential human health hazard.

So what can you do to help make your drinking water safer? Investing in the right water filter is a great start. Be sure to choose one that meets internationally-recognized testing standards and is backed by independent testing. For example, all of LifeStraw's water filters feature a membrane technology capable of filtering out microplastics and a host of other contaminants, such as bacteria and parasites.

To ensure your family has higher-quality water wherever you

go, tackle the problem with this two-pronged approach:

At home: Supply your household with safer water using the LifeStraw Home High-Capacity Dispenser. In addition to microplastics, this sleek, 35-cup dispenser also removes bacteria and parasites, and reduces lead, mercury and chemicals, including PFAS, as well as chlorine, herbicides, pesticides, dirt, sand and cloudiness, while retaining essential minerals.

On the go: Access healthier water when you are at school, work or out and about using the LifeStraw Go Series Water Filter Tumbler. This insulated, travel-sized stainless steel water filter improves taste and protects against contaminants, including microplastics.

To learn more about safe drinking water, as well as efforts being made to improve drinking water around the world, visit lifestraw.com/blogs.

When it comes to your family's health and well-being, don't take chances. Simple steps can vastly improve your water supply and reduce your consumption of harmful pollutants.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Will My Social Security Increase if I Keep Working After Applying?

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 am going to be 67 in a few weeks & I plan on working for another year or two. According to Social Security, they count the best 35 years to come up with your benefit. I currently have 30 years, with 2024 and 2025 taxes yet to be filed. If I take my benefit now, will I get an upward adjustment after filing my taxes for those years, or do I need to wait to apply for SS until after filing my taxes to get credit for those years? **Signed: Still Working**

Dear Still Working: Whenever you claim your Social Security benefit, SSA will look at your lifetime earnings record on file at the time (as received from the IRS) and calculate your "primary insurance amount" (PIA) using that record on file. They will use your highest earning 35 years to do that calculation and, if you do not yet have 35 years, they will use "zero \$\$" enough times to make it 35 years. In other words, your benefit will always be calculated using 35 years, whether you actually have 35 years of earnings on record, or not.

However, Social Security revisits your earnings record whenever additional information is received from the IRS, so if file your taxes and add the additional year's income after you start your Social Security benefits, you will get credit for those additional earnings. Essentially, you will be replacing one of the "zero \$\$" years originally used to calculate your benefit amount, and Social Security will recalculate your monthly amount to reflect that, resulting in an increase to your monthly benefit.

Thus, as long as you work and earn and report your earnings to the IRS, Social Security will update your record and automatically give you a higher benefit if warranted by your more recent earnings. That recalculation usually happens later in the year (after April 15), but Social Security will make any increase retroactive to the beginning of the calendar year, so you will get any higher benefit effective with January.

So, since you have already reached your full retirement age (FRA), you can (if you wish) apply for Social Security now and be confident that Social Security will give you credit for any additional earnings after you apply. And for clarity, if you choose to wait beyond your full retirement age to claim, you will earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) which will continue to increase your monthly benefit amount until you are 70 years of age. DRCs will add 8% to your PIA for each full year you delay (.667% for each month you delay past your FRA).

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

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

Innovative Health Care Program Empowers Lung Disease Patients, Caregivers and Providers

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA, Md. (April 9, 2025)—Hospice of the Chesapeake, in collaboration with the American Lung Association and the National Partnership for Healthcare and Hospice Innovation (NPHI) announces the launch of its Advanced Lung Care Program. The program will improve the quality of care and access to hospice and supportive advanced illness care. It is specialized for patients experiencing severe symptoms from chronic lung disease, which includes chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic bronchitis, emphysema, asthma, cystic fibrosis, bronchiectasis, pulmonary fibrosis, sarcoidosis, and pulmonary hypertension.

The program includes free access to the "Advanced Lung Care Patient and Caregiver Guide." The guides can assist people living with lung disease and their caregivers in learning and practicing skills to prevent or manage respiratory symptoms at home while under the care of their care team. The Patient & Caregiver Advanced Lung Care Guide was created with the collective input of over 100 advanced illness and hospice care organizations.

Chronic lung disease is a tremendous burden for the 34 million Americans who live with the disease as well as their families and caregivers. In 2016, there were more than 2 million emergency department visits and more than 650,000 hospitalizations due to COPD, which is one of the most prevalent chronic lung diseases. COPD also costs the healthcare system more than \$50 billion a year—mostly due to emergency department visits and hospitalizations.

"The Advanced Lung Care Program can empower everyone involved in the care of patients with lung disease—providers, patients, and caregivers alike—

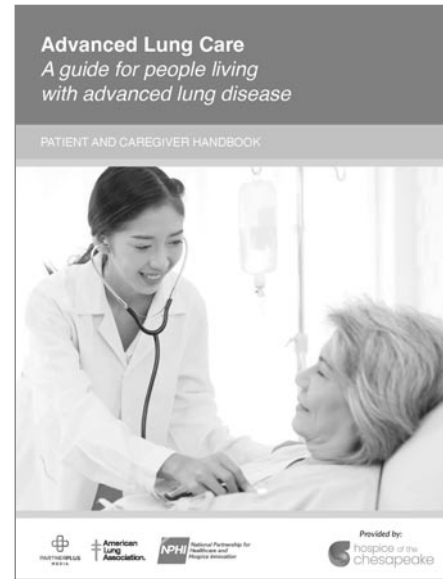


PHOTO COURTESY
HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Front cover of the Advanced Lung Care Patient and Caregiver Handbook.

by equipping them with the knowledge and tools to manage symptoms proactively," Hospice of the Chesapeake Vice President of Medical Affairs & Hospice Medical Director Dr. Sonja Richmond said. "It is a patient-centered yet collaborative approach to care that inspires confidence, encourages self-management, and promotes a higher quality of life for those living with chronic conditions."

To learn more about the program and for copies of the Patient and Caregiver Handbook, visit <https://www.hospicechesapeake.org/hospice-supportive-care/lung-care/>.

At Hospice of the Chesapeake, we strive to help individuals and families facing progressive, serious illness to reimagine hope—living each day with intention and peace—while ensuring our nonprofit organization remains a vital resource for future generations. We develop care plans to

minimize symptoms and focus on what matters most for patients and families in Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties. Caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss is the mission of Hospice of the Chesapeake. For more information, please visit 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 health-care stakeholders to improve hospice care. Learn more at www.hospiceinnovations.org, or to find a high-quality advanced illness care provider, call 844-GET-NPHI (438-6744).

The American Lung Association is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through education, advocacy, and research. The work of the American Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer; to champion clean air for all; to improve the quality of life for those with lung disease and their families; and to create a tobacco-free future. For more information about the American Lung Association, which has a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator and is a Platinum-Level GuideStar Member, or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) or visit: www.lung.org.

Teams from A3

typically respond, but not all are trained to handle such situations.

"Just their very presence can make the situation worse," said Ann Geddes, director of child and older adult policy at the Mental Health Association of Maryland. "If they need to go to the hospital, sometimes the child is taken in handcuffs in the police car, which can be incredibly traumatizing to a child."

Once at the hospital, children could wait hours to be screened, during which the situation could deescalate and the child may be sent home without any care, even if they needed it.

In some instances, families called the police 10 times over the span of a few months and were caught in a revolving door of inadequate care because a mental health professional never met with the family during their time of need, Geddes said.

For children who needed hospitalization, it could still take months to get a bed, and even after they get one, their symptoms could worsen because they are separated from their parents, she added.

Manley agreed. "In behavioral health, that [child] is separated from their parent, as if the parent is the bad guy," she said, "and the parent of the [child] is not the bad guy. They need the ability to be identified as part of the solution."

The New Jersey way

Every state that offers mobile response has a different step-by-step process. But in most places, mobile response isn't specifically targeted to troubled youth. According to a 2023 survey funded by the federal government, 85% of mobile response providers nationwide serve all ages, while 11% serve only adults and 4% focus solely on children.

Many mobile response programs face problems, too, according to an analysis of the survey data by NRI, a nonprofit dedicated to mental health research. In 30 states, agencies reported staffing shortages, and in 13 states, providers said it was difficult to establish mobile response teams in rural areas.

Against that backdrop, New Jersey's Mobile Response and Stabilization Services for families is seen as the national gold standard, Geddes said.

If a child experiences a behavioral health crisis in New Jersey, the parents' first step

is to call a state hotline. The person who takes the call first makes sure it is not an emergency—in which 911 would be notified—then takes down information about the situation before transferring the caller to a nearby mobile response provider.

The provider arranges a time and place to meet with the family, which could be within an hour or later that day depending on the family's needs. The mobile response team assesses the situation and recommends which form of care—such as medication or therapy—is best, and links the family to the appropriate service.

Team members then meet with the family weekly for eight weeks to make sure the treatment is effective. After the eight weeks, the mobile response team communicates with the family to figure out the best next step.

The team does not follow a script. Instead, everything is based on what the family and child need.

"Mobile response will act like a conductor in an orchestra," said Danielle Perri-Gasperini, division director of children's services at CPC Integrated Health in New Jersey. "Our job is really to make sure everybody's on the same page and no one's working in a silo. So, if there's a doctor involved, or a therapist involved, or a school counselor, we're going to reach out to all those people, loop everybody in [and] make sure everybody's on the same page."

Signs of success

New Jersey pioneered the first statewide effort to provide mobile response to youth mental health crises, rolling out its effort from 2001 through 2006. Statistics indicate New Jersey's effort has been a success.

In 2023, 32,896 unique youths were served by mobile response teams across the state—nearly 11,000 more than in 2020—and 97.5% remained in their same living situation from the start to the end of their mental health service, according to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. As of Sept. 30, 2021, New Jersey also had the fewest children in foster care per 100,000 residents at 143, according to USAFacts, a nonpartisan data collector.

Additionally, only 19.4% of adults in New Jersey experienced any mental illness in 2022, the lowest in the country, according to Mental Health America.

"You don't get to fix the adult system unless you fix the kid system," said Manley, who noted that according to the National

Alliance on Mental Illness, three-fourths of all adult mental health challenges start before the age of 24.

During Manley's time at the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, officials from more than 20 states—including Maryland—visited New Jersey for ride-alongs and to see how response teams operated there.

Mobile response is just one piece of New Jersey's success, Manley said. The state also offers youth and parent peer support for families impacted by a behavioral health crisis and intensive care coordination, which prepares youth for high-intensity services. Maryland has yet to implement either.

"If states only do one, it's like a three-legged stool," Manley said.

Maryland's challenge

Maryland began implementing mobile response in 2022, but the effort started with only eight of the 23 counties, not including some of the state's largest jurisdictions: Baltimore City, Baltimore County and Montgomery County. The state's effort is so new that there is not yet any data to evaluate its performance, Geddes said.

Limited funding has significantly hampered Maryland's implementation process, she added.

Even the eight counties in the state's pilot mobile response program—Allegany, Garrett, Frederick, Harford, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's and Washington—do not have the resources to support the program fully, Geddes said. Ideally, the service is a free statewide program that operates 24/7 and guarantees a response within an hour of the initial phone call, but Maryland does not have the funding to support either.

But iMind Behavioral Health has emerged in the past year as a mobile response provider in Prince George's County—Maryland's third-largest jurisdiction—after receiving a \$3.5 million grant from the state's new program focusing on youth mental health.

"It's been very instrumental in allowing us to provide a significant amount of training for our staff and to implement, essentially, a very robust model," iMind CEO Steven Flynn said of the local funding.

iMind uses a similar mobile response process to New Jersey, providing 24/7 care

Teams from A5

and typically responding to calls in 45-60 minutes. iMind responds to more than 100 crisis calls per month in the county.

Although iMind would be open to expanding in Maryland, the organization's focus remains on providing quality care in Prince George's County, Flynn said.

Maryland's mobile response effort is not funded by a singular bill or source. Much of its budget—\$15 million—came from federal pandemic relief funding that ran out this year. That's forcing mental health advocates to push for funding in an increasingly tight state budget.

The New Jersey Department of Children and Families expects mobile response to cost the state more than \$36 million in 2025. Manley said a full statewide program could cost Maryland even less, given its smaller population and geographical coverage.

She also said fully implementing mobile response could save the state additional money by cutting down on emergency department visits and inpatient care.

Juvenile detention costs could drop, too. New Jersey closed multiple youth detention centers since 2006, with the state's largest set to close within the next few years, New Jersey Attorney General Matthew Platkin announced in July.

In Maryland, though, many state officials don't fully understand mobile response and its impact, both financially and on children, Manley said.

"We say it's too expensive to do that, and yet, we have no problem spending lots of money for young people to end up in the wrong places that have lifelong consequences," she said.

Geddes said the state first has to find the funding to sustain the pilot programs now underway. But with the state facing a budget crunch prompting the General Assembly to make \$2.5 billion in funding cuts overall for fiscal 2026, Geddes acknowledged that any expansion may take some time.

"It's something aspirational, but it's not done quickly—especially [with] the funding right now," she said. "I mean, the state is in a fiscal crisis right now."

EarthTalk® Q&A Wild in the City: Some Animals Thrive in Urban Environments

By Chuhan Wang | April 4, 2025

*Dear EarthTalk:
Why do some wild animals live in cities more than in rural areas?*

—L.K. via email

When people think of wildlife, they often picture animals wandering in nature. However, in the past 15 years, scientists have found more animals moving into and thriving in cities—sometimes even more successfully than in their natural habitats.

Before learning about why animals are moving to cities, it's important to understand what urban and rural mean. Urban areas are densely populated regions dominated by human activity. Rural areas are sparsely populated with more natural ecosystems. Wildlife that successfully adapt to city life are often called urban wildlife. Unlike rural areas, where animals rely on seasonal food cycles, the urban environment provides them with more predictable food sources like waste bins, pet foods and restaurant waste, ensuring a steady food supply. Thus, animals endure harsher habits in rural areas, leading to greater migration into the city.

"Anecdotally, we see high densities of

coyotes in nature preserves and urban parks," said Emily Zepeda, of the School of Environment and Natural Resources from Ohio State University. "Also, in low-income areas, coyotes are 1 1/2 times more likely to survive to age two than in high-income areas," due to the amount of human food waste. The presence of humans discourages natural predators, unlike rural areas where predation is a major threat to wildlife. Thus, animals prefer cities, as they can thrive with less competition. Moreover, urban settings provide animals with shelter, like parks and suburban green spaces. Also, warmer microclimates in cities make survival easier for animals that struggle in colder rural areas.

Urban wildlife is adapting to cities in many ways. Lauren Stanton, a PhD candidate at the University of Wyoming, says that raccoons in Toronto "are making rapid associations, and they can alter their behavior." To find more food sources, animals have learned to synchronize their behavior with human activity; for example, raccoons have learned to get inside rubbish bins with securely locked lids. And pigeons typically nest on cliffs, and a multi-story building is indeed a type of cliff, albeit manmade.

Therefore, adapting to cities isn't hard for the pigeons due to preadaptation.

Living in cities as urban wildlife isn't easy. There is a risk of vehicle collisions, habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict. Thousands of animals die each year on roads. Humans are also at risk. Animals cause serious road hazards. Bears break into homes and garages to search for food. Ultimately, humans need to balance urbanization with wildlife needs, like expanding natural habitats, thoughtful city planning and wildlife corridors to ensure a future where both species can live together safely and peacefully.

CONTACTS: Deer, Bear and Everywhere: Animals Move Into the City, [state-line.org/2020/03/09/deer-bear-and-everywhere-animals-move-into-the-city/](https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200416-how-city-life-can-breed-smarter-pests); Does city life make animals smarter?, <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200416-how-city-life-can-breed-smarter-pests>.

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