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M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County, Celebrates the Grand Reopening of Marlow Heights Community Center With Ribbon Cutting

By PRESS OFFICER
M-NCPPC

RIVERDALE, Md. (April 23, 2025)—M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, along with elected officials and the community, celebrated the grand reopening of the new Marlow Heights Community Center on Saturday, April 19, marking a new chapter for a beloved neighborhood hub.

The ribbon cutting ceremony featured remarks from Maryland State Sen. Nicholas P. Charles, Maryland State Del. Karen Toles, Prince George's County Council Vice Chair Krystal Oriadha, Peter A. Shapiro, Chairman of M-NCPPC, Prince George's County Planning Board, Bill Tyler, Director of M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, and other community leaders. Speakers emphasized the importance of inclusive, modern public spaces that support recreation and wellness for residents of all ages.

"This is what the Department of Parks and Recreation is all about, we want to make sure the community has the resources and facilities to Live More, Play More," said Bill Tyler, Director of

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, "Marlow Heights Community Center is a result of the community and the Department working together to create a beautiful space where all can come and enjoy."

Following the ribbon cutting, the community got an opportunity to tour the facility, participate in class demonstrations, enjoy family-friendly activities, and celebrate the exciting new beginning for Marlow Heights Community Center.

"This is fantastic, the Department did a wonderful job, everyone needs to come to see this," said Patricia M., a senior participant at Marlow Heights Community Center.

Originally built in 1961, the Marlow Heights Community Center served the community for over half a century before closing in 2023 to undergo major capital improvements. The new state-of-the-art facility is designed to meet the diverse recreational and leisure needs of the community. As a direct response to the input received from the Marlow Heights community, the center is a modern,



PHOTO COURTESY M-NCPPC

M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County, along with elected officials and the community, celebrated the grand reopening of the new Marlow Heights Community Center on Saturday, April 19.

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IMAGE COURTESY PYRAMID ATLANTIC ART CENTER

It's Game On at Pyramid Atlantic

Art Party/Fundraiser Presses Play May 3

By PRESS OFFICER
Pyramid Atlantic Art Center

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (April 22, 2025)—Pyramid Atlantic's HyBall (Hyattsville Ball) asks people to press play while raising money to support Pyramid's studios and programs. The event is a fun way to explore Pyramid's studios; try printmaking, papermaking, and book arts; and experience a unique, immersive art party.

HyBall: PRESS PLAY takes place on **Saturday, May 3, 2025** from 8 p.m.–11ish. Tickets are \$45 and include complimentary beer and wine. The math checks out—everyone wins at HyBall! Tickets at pyramidatlanticartcenter.org or by calling 301-608-9101. Pyramid Atlantic is located at 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville Maryland 20781.

Play STUDIO BINGO to make your very own prize bag by using Pyramid's presses and visiting artist studios around the building. Bid to win in THE PRICE

IS RIGHT SILENT AUCTION that features local makers, businesses, experiences, art, and more. Cheer on contestants in two LIVE GAME SHOW segments inspired by 70s/80s TV game shows and hosted by Donnie Hy and queer drag artist and burlesque performer Betty O'Hellno (the first drag queen to perform with the Washington Wizards during a half-time show). Those who are "game" need to check out the PLINKO BAR to play to win commemorative prints and test our signature cocktail for an additional donation. Start a DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION while DJ Stylus - The Vibe Conductor curates the dance floor's "play button. Plus, thematic treats, photo ops, and other surprises abound throughout the night.

It's not Game Over at 11 p.m. ...stay up later for one more round! HyBall's afterparty AFTERGLOW will feature ska band Eastern Standard Time. Kick back, kick the keg, and kick-it with music that

combines elements of jazz, Caribbean, and R&B, creating a unique sound with rocksteady, reggae, dub, and soul influences. (Afterglow ticket required.)

HyBall is made possible in part by many event sponsors. Please check the event website for a complete list: <https://bit.ly/HyBallPressPlay>

Founded in 1981, Pyramid Atlantic is a nonprofit contemporary art center. Our mission is to sustain and elevate a welcoming arts hub in Hyattsville, MD that champions contemporary printmaking, papermaking, and book arts. We equip, educate, and exhibit while prioritizing artistic integrity, creative growth, and inclusivity. Our vision is to anchor an arts community that recognizes and uplifts the importance of artists, the intrinsic values of working with your hands, and the economy of artist-made work. Visit pyramidatlanticartcenter.org

UniverSoul Circus Returns to the Greater Washington, D.C. Region

Rhythm of the World Show Opening Thursday, June 26, at National Harbor. Waitlist open now!

By PRESS OFFICER
UniverSoul Circus

WASHINGTON (April 25, 2025)—Flying acrobats, gravity-defying stunts, fire breathers, stilt dancers and the coolest clowns around! UniverSoul Circus returns to the greater Washington, D.C. region with its new Rhythm of the World

production from **Thursday, June 26, through Sunday, Aug. 10**, under the iconic big top tent at National Harbor (268 Waterfront St., National Harbor, MD 20745). The waitlist is now open at UniverSoulCircus.com, offering early access to the best seats before they go on sale to the public Friday, May 16.

Celebrating 31 years as one of Amer-

ica's top family events, UniverSoul Circus brings together the best international performers in a high-energy, interactive spectacle featuring world-class talent, vibrant costumes and music from across the globe. Audiences will experience a cultural celebration filled with rhythm, soul and extraordinary performances.

A global stage combining thrills and culture

This year's show features over a dozen new acts from around the world,

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Erick Burke Graduates From Maryland REALTORS® Leadership Academy, Class of 2025

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland REALTORS®

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (April 24, 2025)—Erick Burke, a REALTOR® with 212 Degrees Realty in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, graduated from the Maryland REALTORS® Leadership Academy, a leadership development program that builds leaders for the industry and in the communities they serve.

"We're always thrilled to celebrate a new class of Leadership Academy graduates," said Jenn Klarman, Chair of the Leadership Academy Advisory Group. "We're especially proud of Erick and the leadership he brings to our REALTOR® community—locally through Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR), and beyond, at the state and national levels."

With over 15 years of experience in multifamily property management, Burke brings a deep understanding of the industry to his current role as an Associate Broker, with real estate transactions exceeding \$12 million. His service to the profession includes active involvement on the Property Management Committee of the Greater Capital Area Association of REALTORS® and three years on the PGCAR's County Legislative Committee. Burke also plays a key role in advancing equity and education in real estate as Secretary of the Prince George's County chapter of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB), where he also chairs the Education Committee. A strong advocate for professional development, Burke has earned six industry designations, including AHWD (At Home with Diversity), ABR (Accredited Buyer's Representative), and RENE (Real Estate Negotiation Expert).

The mission of the Leadership Academy is to build tomorrow's



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® (PGCAR)

Erick Burke

strong leaders today: leaders who can address the challenges facing real estate with professionalism, transparency, and leadership.

The Leadership Academy vets hundreds of applications annually to select a diversified group of qualified members for the prestigious program. The program consists of seven sessions held monthly between October and April designed to develop leadership skills and competencies. Courses include legislation and advocacy, communication skills, relationship management and networking. Most who enter the program go on to serve in leadership capacities within their communities and with Maryland REALTORS® at the state level.

"As a 2011 Leadership Academy graduate, the insight that I received from the programming really set the stage for me to make more of a difference in our industry," said Cheryl Abrams Davis, 2025 President, Maryland REALTORS®. "Today, we're celebrating 19 new leaders in the industry. It will be exciting to see how they shape the future of real estate in the months and years to come."

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TOWNS and NEIGHBORS

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

Remembering Morningside's saddest day

On April 9, 1951, a pilotless World War II vintage B-25 bomber flew low over the I.C.E. Club and Suitland Road and crashed into a house on Lombardy Road in Morningside, killing three people. The pilot had disobeyed orders to take his aircraft out to the Chesapeake Bay and bail out.

Firefighting was made difficult by the lack of a main water system. Support began immediately to have Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) build a water and sewer system to replace the Town's three wells.

The crash took the lives of 6-year-old Kay Snyder, 8-week-old Rene Snyder and their uncle, MSgt. Samuel Snyder, visiting from New Jersey. He and his wife were in town for the baptism of little Rene. After the accident, the Snyders moved to another house in Morningside. They never had another child. A new house was later built on the crash site.

The pilot, who had bailed out, was tried. I don't know the outcome of the trial.

This sad event has never gone away: About five years ago I was at the Clinton Library when the librarian asked me if I was Mary McHale. She had had a call from a retired military man living in, I believe, St. Louis. He had been with a military crew from Bolling AFB sent to clean up the accident scene. He saw the bodies of the two little girls and has never been able to get it out of his head. I called and had a long talk with him. I hope it helped.

Mary Margaret Schwartz, born in Suitland, dies at 104

Mary Margaret Schwartz, of Lewes, born in Suitland; died at home in Lewes on April 6, 2025, at the age of 104.

She was born May 26, 1920, in Suitland, Md., the daughter of Elmer and Elsie Lee (Gray) Pumphrey.

She married Frederick Schwartz Nov. 27, 1944, and they shared 62 years.

Margaret—as she was known—enjoyed tap dancing, gardening, ceramics, sewing, crocheting, and other crafts.

She was predeceased by husband Frederick Schwartz. She is survived by her children, Steven Michael Schwartz Sr. (Gayle Silva) of Pittsville, Md., and Marilyn Leslie Schwartz (Carl S. Fisher) of Berlin, N.J.;

her grandson, S. Michael Schwartz Jr. (Crystal Edens) of Berlin; great-grandson Jacob Aiden Schwartz, of Berlin. She also leaves close friends Florence Wood, Lois Kern, Judy Hrin and Dana Jordan; many nieces and nephews; and her cat Suzie.

Burial was at Delaware Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Millsboro. Memorial donations may be made to Lewes Fire Department, P.O. Box 225, Lewes, DE 19958.

Second Baptist Church turns 100

The Second Baptist Church of District Heights is celebrating its 100th anniversary.

In May 1925 charter members organized as a mission congregation and was called the Friendly Baptist Church. The church was located at First and H streets Southwest. The church's first permanent location was at Second and N streets in Southwest, as they then became known as the Second Baptist Church.

In 2011, the church purchased its current home at 5501 Silver Hill Road, in District Heights. The property added more capacity for services, administrative offices, ministry space and a food pantry.

St. Francis Xavier Church celebrating its 100th

St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church at 2800 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE in Washington DC is celebrating its 100th anniversary. Construction began in 1923, and the church opened on December 4, 1924. The official celebration is from December 4, 2024, until December 4, 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 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.

Neighbors & other good people

Handyman wanted. I had a call from Cheryl Nelson, of Goodfellow Dr., who's looking for a handyman. If you are a handyman or know one, call her at 301-736-6162.

Robert 'Bob' Jacobs, better known as 'Jake', formerly of District Heights and a member of the Knights of Columbus, #4076, in Forestville turned 93 on March 7, 2025.

"Thank you!" to Rich Landon who has been helping me find news items! He's good!!

Changing landscape

Dunkin (Donuts) has moved across the street from where it was at The Shops of District Heights to 5904 Silver Hill Road where it is between the 7-11 and Wendy's restaurant. Hours are 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday and 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

DC Water is coming to Prince George's County, more later.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Michael Call, Apr. 27; Hazel Ball, Beverly Gotshall Marquis, DJ Fowler and Jessica Phipps, April 28; Lael McCune and Todd Mullins, April 30; Kathryn Deaver, May 1; Ann Lacey, Ernestine Taylor Wood, Dante Ross Jr. and Janet Booth Kaye, May 2; my daughter Sheila McHale Mudd, Lori Williams, Williams, May 3;

India Goodall and Ruby Haines, May 4; Donald Young, Jim Henderson and Marlyn Meoli, May 5; Gretchen Ennis, May 6; Dwight Holloway Jr., May 7; Brandi Jeter and Buddy Ramsey, May 9; Gladys Locks, Shirley Eppard and Elijah Thomas, May 10; and Carolyn Flaherty Fogle, May 11.

Happy Anniversary to Jan and Cindy Smith, their 53rd on April 28.

Email birthdays and anniversaries to muddmm@gmail.com.

Circus from A1

all showcasing their skills under a brand-new, state-of-the-art big top tent from Italy. The tent is equipped with a dynamic audio and lighting system that adds a new layer to the spectacular performances.

Featured performers include the soul-stirring African Dream hoop divers from Addis Abba, Ethiopia; a tantalizing strongman hand-balance duo called Double Vision from the Dominican Republic; a high-flying acrobatic act from Russia called Zhukau Swing; and a dynamic twirling Cuban-Caribbean dance party and roller skating-themed spectacular. New this year is a vertigo-inducing, electrifying Ethiopian Pole Act featuring dizzying spins and poses on a towering vertical pole.

Audience favorites are also

returning, including the Caribbean Street Carnival, which features 20-foot dancing puppets, fire-breathing stilt dancers and vibrant folklore characters. The hip-hop dancing Fresh the Clowns (with hundreds of thousands of social media followers) will have the crowd dancing, while the daring Wheel of Death stunt artists will keep everyone on the edge of their seats as they perform heart-stopping flips and dives 60 feet in the air.

Ticket and other information

Tickets start at \$25 and are available at [Ticketmaster.com](https://www.ticketmaster.com). Performance times are 7 p.m. on Thursdays and Fridays; noon, 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. on Saturdays; and noon, 3 and 6:30 p.m. on Sundays.

For more information, ticket prices, show times, and schedules, visit [universoulcircus.com](https://www.universoulcircus.com).

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Please Clear Up Our Confusion About Our Social Security Payments?

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 thoroughly confused. What do I need to do to continue receiving automatic Social Security deposits to my bank account, and maintain our Medicare and Supplement health insurance? My wife has received her SS deposit regularly on the 3rd Wednesday each month with automatic bank deposit for many years. I have received my SS deposit regularly the 4th Wednesday each month with automatic bank deposit also for many years. Can you please tell me what to do to continue receiving these automatic deposits?

First, I hear that we do not need to do anything. Then I hear that we must show up in person at our local SS office to visually confirm our identity. We live 100 miles away from our only SS office, and apparently, they don't take walk-ins. Next, I hear that we must contact the SS on the internet and answer their questions in order to continue receiving our checks. I am totally confused and don't know what to do, and we don't want to miss our checks or have our Medicare and supplemental insurance cancelled. Can you please help us? **Signed: Confused in Hawaii**

Dear Confused: I know there have been a lot of news media reports and articles written on the recent changes announced by the Social Security Administration (SSA) with respect to a need to confirm one's identity in-person. Allow me to set your mind at ease because, from what you have described (that you are already receiving Social Security benefits and Medicare insurance), you do not need to do anything to have your Social Security benefits, and your Medicare insurance continue without interruption (and that includes your wife as well).

That which has been reported in the media is sometimes misleading or misinformed, but here at the AMA Foundation's Social Security Advisory Service we are watching these events very closely and can assure you that your regular benefits will continue uninterrupted. The only people who may be affected by the SSA's new processes are those who are applying for Social Security for the first time, or those who need to change where their monthly benefit is deposited. In those cases, the SSA is being very careful that no fraud is being attempted and, thus, the reason for a possible in-person SSA office visit (but only in those specific unique circumstances). But for you and your wife, it will continue to be "business as usual" and you will see no interruption in either your monthly Social Security benefit nor in your usual Medicare coverage and supplement. You don't need to do anything to have all your benefits continue.

So, please relax and do not worry. And rest assured that here at the AMAC Foundation we are watching all events occurring in Washington, D.C., especially those related to Social Security and Medicare, and will promptly inform our members of anything which affects them.

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

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

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

2025 MISSION NUTRITION

Free Fresh Seasonal Produce Monthly Distribution at Gwynn Park Senior High School, 13800 Brandywine Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613, Dyson Road parking lot inside the cafeteria. 2025 Distribution Schedule: May 20, June 17, July 15, August 19, September 16, October 21, November 18, and December 16. Time is 4-6 p.m.

5K WALK/RUN

Calling all Runners, Joggers and Walkers! Lace up your sneakers and join us for the Bulldog 5K Walk/Run in support of our student-athletes. Proceeds from the 5K will benefit the Department of Athletics by funding academic resources and support services that empower our student-athletes to excel in their educational journey at Bowie State University. Early Bird Registration: \$40, Day of 5K: \$50. Walk/Run will begin from Parking Lot J (parking available in Lots H & I). Check-in: 1-2:15 p.m. Cutoff Time: 3:30 p.m.

Remember, if you are unable to walk or run in the race you can make a donation to the Bowie State University Foundation in support of our student-athletes and the Department of Athletics. If you are willing to distribute flyers or share this information with walking/running clubs, please contact Jennifer Coke, Executive Director of Philanthropy 301-860-4778. jcokebowiestate.edu. #BSU4LIFE. You need to register to participate in the race.

MEET AND MAKE

Join us for a fun-filled day at Watkins Nature Center, Thursday, May 8, 2025, from 10-10:45 a.m. where kids can meet a fascinating nature center animal up close and learn what makes them unique. After discovering interesting facts about our critter friends, kids will get creative and make a craft inspired by their new knowledge. This engaging activity is a fantastic way to learn about conservation and nature while connecting with other young nature enthusiasts.

Sign up today and let the critter crafting begin. Ticket price: \$4 R; \$6 NR. Age: 2-7. Event Category: Nature & Outdoor Youth. Event Programs & Series: Watkins Nature Center, Watkins Regional Park, 331 Watkins Park Drive, Kettering, Maryland. Register for event: Watkins Nature Center (301) 218-6702 watkinsnaturecenter@pgparks.com. Address is 331 Watkins Park Drive, Kettering, Maryland.

EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS FCU

Educational Systems Federal Credit Union values are empowering, excellence, trustworthy, caring, collaborative. Vision: To make financial wellness and stability accessible for all the communities we serve. Mission: To empower individuals and communities through accessible financial solutions. We are committed

to fostering financial well-being by providing competitive solutions, personalized services, and educational resources. By building strong partnerships, supporting community growth, and promoting financial literacy, we strive to create a brighter future for our members, ambassadors, and the communities we serve. <https://www.esfcu.org/> 301-779-8500.

"REMEMBER WHEN" MEMORY CAFÉ

"Remember When" Memory Café for caregivers and those with cognitive challenges meets on the 4th Wednesday monthly. The next meeting will be May 28, 2025 from 11 a.m.-1 p.m. DFA South County Remember When Memory Café is a safe place for caregivers and their VIP partner with dementia or early-stage Alzheimer's to socialize, learn new things, relieve stress, challenge the brain with fun activities, connect with old friends and make new ones, delight in music, laughter and stimulating conversation, enjoy a healthy and delicious lunch and more. You have to register to attend. Address is 6634 Saint Barnabas Road, Oxon Hill, Maryland 20745-2905. Telephone number: 301-567-4433. <https://www.stpauloxonhill.org/events/detail/remember-when-memory-cafe/103505-1737522000/>.

KYLE JACKSON FOOTBALL CAMPS

Bowie State University head football coach Kyle Jackson has announced a series of football camps this summer, offering student athletes the chance to train with one of the top programs in the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association (CIAA) Conference.

The Football Camps will feature three events, all held at Bulldog Stadium: May 31: Mega Camp, June 21: DMV Elite Camp, July 19: 7-on-7 Tournament/Big Man Camp. Each camp is designed to provide high school athletes with elite instruction, skill development, and competition in a high-energy environment. Players will have the opportunity to learn from Coach Jackson, his staff, and other experienced coaches as they refine their techniques and showcase their talents.

Registration details, camp locations, and additional information will be available on the Bowie State University Athletics website (bsubulldogs.com). For most up-to-date information on Bowie State University Athletics and its 13 varsity sports teams, please visit bsubulldogs.com.

MOTHER'S DAY CELEBRATION

Mother's Day is a celebration honoring the mother of the family or individual as well as motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society. It is celebrated on different days in many parts of the world, commonly in March or May. Source: Wikipedia.

"HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY TO ALL THE MOTHERS IN THE WORLD."

COMMUNITY

Reopening from A1

inclusive, and community-focused hub for all ages, interests, and abilities.

Spanning more than 20,000 square feet, the new community center features a large weights and fitness room, group fitness studio, three multipurpose rooms, and a spacious lobby—all designed with an emphasis on inclusion and accessibility. The facility also includes a regulation basketball gym that can convert to volleyball or pickleball courts with spectator seating.

Outdoor amenities include a 5,000-square-foot inclusive playground, a 1,500 square foot splash pad, newly surfaced tennis and pickleball courts, walking trails, ample parking and spaces designed to showcase and enjoy public art. Photos and video of the facility can be found here:

<https://mncppcpace.app.box.com/s/r84o5tkzffa54sfzoz41yoybe431fc7e>

Marlow Heights Community Center reopened for normal operating hours on Saturday, April 19. For

more information about programs and hours of operation, visit pgparks.com.

With over 29,000 acres of parkland, trails, athletic fields, playgrounds, and more, the M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County provides an award-winning park system through progressive, quality, innovative leadership and a commitment to its community and environment. The Department delivers first-class recreational activities and programs for people of all ages and ability levels. It strives to improve the quality of life for Prince George's County residents and the communities in which they live, work, and raise families. The Department's Formula 2040 Plan establishes a framework that will ensure the Department can meet future parks and recreation programmatic and facility needs, fulfilling its mission to determine the combination of land, facilities, and programs that will provide appropriate experiences for Prince Georgians in the future. To learn more, visit www.pgparks.com.



PHOTO COURTESY M-NCPPC

The new community center features a large weights and fitness room.

Marietta's Lunchtime Lecture: Preservation Tax Credits

By STACEY HAWKINS
Marietta House Museum

May is Preservation Month! Please join us on **Wednesday, May 7**, noon–1 p.m. for the “Lunchtime Lecture: Preservation Tax Credits.” Daniel Tana from the M-NCPPC Planning Department will provide important information about how to apply for historic preservation tax credits. Often homeowners of historic houses need to have preservation work done on their structures but may not be fully aware of the tax credits and financial help that may be available. This talk is an opportunity to ask those questions!

Free program. Ages 18 & up. Visitors may bring a bag lunch. Walk-ins are welcome. Registration is not required; however, those who would like to register can do so at www.pgparks.com and use this ticket

code: [MHM-SPEC-GA-20250507](https://www.pgparks.com/ticket/MHM-SPEC-GA-20250507)

For more information call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pgparks.com

Marietta is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Marietta's Free Community Day

Please join us with family, friends, and neighbors on **Saturday, May 3**, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. for our free Community Day featuring Maryland's horse culture. Marietta House Museum will commemorate the Black men responsible for horses in 19th century Maryland with a host of activities. Poet Marcia E. Cole will read her original poem about enslaved horseman Randolph Jackson at the on-site

Tack House. At 1 p.m., be sure to attend curator Karen Holl's presentation, “Black Horsemen: Stronger Horse, Stronger Nation.”

Enjoy tours, games, children's crafts, the public opening of the original Tack House, a free photo booth, animal encounters brought to Marietta from Clearwater Nature Center, quilts from the Uhuru Quilters Guild, and hands-on archaeology table with interesting artifacts and horse related items. May 3 is also the official season opening of Marietta's Saturday Farmer's Market featuring food trucks, fresh produce, herbs, and more.

Free program. Ages 6 & up. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Walk-ins are welcome. Registration is not required, but for those who would like to register, please register at www.pgparks.com and use the ticket code: [MHMSPEC-GA-20250517](https://www.pgparks.com/ticket/MHMSPEC-GA-20250517)

Marietta House Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, 20769 and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PART NINE

‘Playworks’ Reinvents Recess as a Learning Experience

By CHRISTINA WALKER
Capital News Service

PHILADELPHIA (April 21, 2025)—You won't find swings, slides or a kickball field outside Rhawnhurst School. Instead, the elementary school's “playground” is a vast expanse of barren blacktop with just a lone basketball hoop.

Yet at this aging two-story school in this deeply diverse

Northeast Philadelphia neighborhood, play is not just encouraged, but deeply embedded in the school's culture.

For the past six years, Rhawnhurst has partnered with Playworks, a national nonprofit dedicated to enhancing children's well-being by engaging them in safe, meaningful play. The program targets life skills that are important to the children's academic success.

“At this age, play is a foundation,” said Samiyah Saunders, Rhawnhurst's in-house Playworks staffer, known to students as Coach Samiyah. “They learn through play.”

The 23-year-old Playworks coach, often called the school's celebrity, spends two weeks each month leading the children in games like duck, duck, goose and human knot. What the kids don't realize is that Saunders' structured recess games teach them lessons in confidence, conflict resolution and inclusivity.

Playworks officials believe recess—often regarded as a way for kids to burn energy—can help students learn and mature.

“Children have the right to play, and it's the language that they understand,” said Tia Mathisen, Playworks' Pennsylvania executive director. “It's the language that they learn through the best across cultural/language barriers.”

Since its founding in 1996, Playworks has partnered with more than 3,000 schools nationwide. During the 2023–24 school year, the organization was active in more than 1,300 schools, and thanks to a \$295,000 state grant, Playworks is now active in Maryland, in Anne Arundel County elementary schools.

The Playworks approach seems to work, both nationally and at Rhawnhurst.

At schools implementing Playworks, teacher-reported rates of bullying and exclusionary behavior were 43% lower compared to schools not using the program, according to an evaluation by Mathematica Policy Research and the John W. Gardner Center in 2013. And a 2017 Rand Corp. review found that Playworks boosted student behavior, class readiness and safety while cutting down on bullying.

At Rhawnhurst, “once Playworks started, there was so much less fighting and ar-

guing, and they were actually playing games that they enjoyed to play and it kept them busy,” said Michelle Bernardi, a fifth grade teacher at the school. “It was just a wonderful difference.”

Game Time

Rhawnhurst's recess may look like typical elementary school chaos—with kids running, shouting and playing—but underneath the noise is structure. Students know the expectations, and they're given clear choices: a variety of games to join if they so choose.

At the start of each 20-minute recess, students line up in single file and listen closely for their “repeat after me” instructions, a set of expectations focused on playing safely, including others and showing respect on the blacktop.

Recess staff or older student mentors then present the games they will be running that day, whether it's monkey in the middle, soccer or something new.

“It's an open recess with more options,” said Sean Finn, the school's guidance counselor.

Playworks also introduced Class Game Time into the school day. During her two weeks on site, Saunders pulls nearly every class, along with their teachers, outside for 35 minutes to learn a new game.

“Instead of the teachers sitting off to the side on their phones, on their computer doing work, they're involved directly in the games,” Finn said. “They're running and playing and jumping through hula hoops and racing.”

That approach strengthens relationships among teachers and students, Bernardi said.

“[During class games] you can just talk to them on a different level,” she said. “They might bring up something that you wouldn't have a chance to talk with them about in class.”

All the play at Rhawnhurst also depends on “climate staff”: employees who manage students' lunch periods and recess, giving teachers a break. These staffers also often step in as teacher aides and handle conflicts.

“The staff have bought in,” Rhawnhurst principal Joy Kingwood-Ellis said. “Climate staff really need to be

developed, and they want to be treated like professionals, and I think Playworks really gives them a template to work from.”

The Playworks approach includes conflict resolution tools for students, which are important because many student spats tend to arise in the recess yard, Mathisen said.

But staffers said kids are increasingly able to manage their own disagreements.

Roshambo, or more commonly known as rock-paper-scissors, is Playworks'—and now Rhawnhurst's—preferred way to settle an argument. It may sound simple, but the staff at Rhawnhurst said the students view it as fair and use it often with or without adult intervention.

“We work with kids to help give them agency on, ‘what does it look like when there is a conflict? How do you resolve that?’” Mathisen said.

Fewer conflicts

Since introducing Playworks, Rhawnhurst has seen a transformation in school climate, marked by fewer conflicts and almost no bullying, according to teachers and staff. Kingwood-Ellis said she hasn't suspended a student in years.

“This office has seen drastically less incidents of conflicts,” Finn said. “We got it out of our system [during recess], we were able to connect with friends, you know, connect with an adult, and get whatever we need kind of out of our system and reset ourselves.”

But Rhawnhurst, an elementary school with more than 600 students, is not a typical Playworks school.

Rhawnhurst has partnered with Playworks for more than six years, and a Playworks staff member is on-site for 40 hours per month. Typically, Playworks aims to make its program sustainable and self-sufficient, often staying for a few years until the school can maintain the practices independently.

This has not yet happened at Rhawnhurst, which hosts a large number of immigrant and refugee students. More than 27 languages can be heard in the school's hallways, but Playworks officials



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

Location Public Hearing To Present Recommended Preferred Alternative Time: 6–8 p.m.

Format: In-person with an open house at 6 p.m., presentation at 6:30 p.m., followed by a formal public comment session

Monday, June 2, 2025

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

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Oxon Hill High School (Auditorium)
6701 Leyte Dr., Oxon Hill, MD 20745

Monday, June 9, 2025

West Potomac High School (Cafeteria)
6500 Quander Rd., Alexandria, VA 22307

Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Nannie J. Lee Memorial Recreation Center
1108 Jefferson St., Alexandria, VA 22314

Virtual Public Information Room available starting on May 19, 2025, at www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside

Learn about and provide comments on VDOT's recommended preferred alternative for the I-495 Southside Express Lanes Study. This study is 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. The study includes an Environmental Assessment, which VDOT is conducting in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and other federal, state, and local agencies in Virginia and Maryland, and in compliance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and 23 CFR Part 771.

VDOT will offer four in-person public hearings to share information about the recommended preferred alternative to address identified transportation needs within the study area. These needs include providing additional travel choices, reducing congestion and improving travel reliability, improving safety, extending and providing continuity of the express lanes system on I-495, and providing consistency with local and regional plans.

All four hearings will be held in-person from 6–8 p.m., and will begin with an open house at 6 p.m., a presentation at 6:30 p.m., and a formal public comment session following the presentation.

A virtual public information room containing the hearing presentation, display boards, and opportunities to submit formal comments will be available starting on May 19 on the study webpage at: www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside.

Review information beginning May 19 on the study webpage, at the in-person public hearings, or during business hours at the 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. Information about potential property impacts, VDOT right of way policies and procedures, and remaining study schedule will be available at the public hearings.

Give your written or oral comments at the in-person hearings or submit them by June 26, 2025, via the online comment form at www.vdot.virginia.gov/495southside, by email to 495southsideexpresslanes@vdot.virginia.gov, or by mail to Michelle Shropshire, P.E., VDOT Northern Virginia Megaprojects Director, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

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COMMENTARY

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



ChildWatch:
Education

A Legacy of Young Changemakers

This month marked a Civil Rights Movement anniversary: the founding of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in April 1960. People often forget that children and young people were major frontline soldiers in the Civil Rights Movement. Six-year-old Ruby Bridges in New Orleans, the Little Rock Nine at Central High School in Arkansas, and other Black students desegregated schools across the South, often standing up to howling mobs. Many, including Bridges (who later became a Children's Defense Fund colleague), continue to write books and speak at schools and college campuses across the country

sharing their experiences with young people, helping students today understand that none of this is ancient history in our country's story. After Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was jailed in Birmingham in April 1963, young people responded with the Birmingham Children's Crusade in May. More than 1,000 students walked out from local schools to march, withstanding fire hoses and police dogs to challenge Bull Connor's brutal rule and topple segregation in that city. College-aged young people coordinated voter registration drives, participated in Freedom Rides testing segregation laws on interstate buses, conducted voter education and Free-

dom Schools during 1964's Freedom Summer in Mississippi, and more. They faced pervasive risks of arrest, injury, or death. My generation was blessed beyond measure to be in the right places at the right times to experience and help bring transforming change to the South and to America, and SNCC was one conduit.

The path to its founding began two months earlier, in February 1960, when four Black freshmen at North Carolina A&T State University—Ezell Blair Jr., Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil, and David Richmond—sat in at the Whites-only lunch counter in the Greensboro, North Carolina Woolworth's store. That was just the spark I and many other Black youths were waiting for that galvanized us to stand up against the segregation that daily assaulted our dignity and lives with similar actions. At first there was no mechanism in place to connect us all. But the visionary Ella Baker, who was working with Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), organized an April meeting at her alma mater, Shaw University in Raleigh, N.C., to bring student activists together. I was a senior at Spelman College in Atlanta at the time, and took my first ever plane ride that Easter weekend on a plane chartered by SCLC to join with about 200 other college students

for the April 15 convening where SNCC was founded.

From the beginning Ella Baker insisted that students find their own voice and form our own organization instead of becoming the youth arm of SCLC or an established civil rights group. She became a trusted SNCC advisor and mentor, and she and some of the other adults who became colleagues with young people in SNCC and nurtured us were some of the most extraordinary people in the Civil Rights Movement. At the same time, the student activism energized the larger movement. Many of the student leaders from that time continued to build on the passion and commitment unleashed as teenagers and twenty-year-olds and dedicated their entire adult lives to advocacy and service. While SNCC lasted only six years, SNCC alumni carried on, following up on the ideals we believed in and doing our part to make a better world for the next generations.

That legacy still matters today. All of the children and young people who were part of the Civil Rights Movement are a reminder, as Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools® scholars know, that you are never too young to make a difference in your nation and world.

—April 25, 2025

Prince George's County Fifth Grader Wins Maryland Arbor Day Poster Contest—and 15 Trees for Capitol Heights Elementary

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Natural Resources

Kaliyah Thorpe of Capitol Heights Elementary School in Prince George's County won first place in the 2025 Maryland Fifth Grade Arbor Day Poster Contest, sponsored by the Maryland Forest Service.

The annual event challenges fifth graders across the state to use their creativity, crafting artful posters capturing a terrific tree-related theme. The 2025 theme was "Trees Are Terrific ... And Forests Are Too."

Thorpe and runners up will receive a Smokey Bear gift package, as well as a tree planting at their school—15 trees for first, 10 for second and five for third.

Entries were judged by a panel including Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Secretary Josh Kurtz and Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman.

"The Arbor Day poster contest is a great seed we are planting to teach young people across the



MARYLAND DNR PHOTO

Maryland Forest Service staff and guests reviewed and voted on the winning posters submitted to the annual Fifth Grade Arbor Day Poster Contest. From left to right, State Forester Anne Hairston-Strang, DNR Secretary Josh Kurtz, State Comptroller Brooke Lierman, and Urban and Community Forestry Supervisor Dan Coy view all submitted posters, displayed at DNR headquarters in Annapolis.

state the value of our trees and all they do for our planet," Comptroller Lierman said. "I applaud the young artists for their hard work, creativity, and appreciation for the environment."

Secretary Kurtz was impressed by the variety and quality of this

year's entries. The poster contest engages children at a stage of life where they are rapidly learning about the world around them, he said.

"These programs allow Maryland students to learn about the critically important benefits of



MARYLAND DNR PHOTO

State Comptroller Brooke Lierman and Department of Natural Resources Secretary Josh Kurtz stand with the top three winning entries of the 2025 Maryland Fifth Grade Arbor Day Poster contest.

trees, which improve habitat and water quality, filter air, and reduce carbon emissions," Kurtz said. "It was a pleasure to view the students' work and I want to give a big congratulations to the winners."

Maya Toze of Maryvale Elementary School in Montgomery

County took home second place. Zack Jenkins of Chesapeake Public Charter School in St. Mary's County took home third place.

Each year, the Maryland Forest Service, in partnership with the Maryland Forest Conservancy District Boards, invites Maryland's fifth graders to submit a

poster following a yearly theme. Posters are first judged on a county level and the winner from each county is forwarded to the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Committee to be included in the annual contest. The judging took place April 23 at DNR headquarters in Annapolis.

Recess from A3

said their program helps break down those language barriers.

"[Rhawnhurst] just loves us," Mathisen said. "Because of the different languages that they have, they are a unique case, and they can see truly the benefit of how play really has infused with their school and how kids are able to connect and really make progress and friends so much faster despite the language barriers."

Finn noted the program has also contributed to improved attendance, as students are eager to participate in recess and class game time.

Elsewhere, many teachers struggle to manage behavior in the classroom. A 2023 survey by the Pew Research Center found that 68% of elementary school teachers report dealing with behavior issues daily. The same percentage indicated they have experienced verbal abuse from students, while 55% have encountered physical violence.

But things are different at Rhawnhurst.

Finn said thanks to Playworks, students with trauma or behavioral challenges often become better at self-regulating and managing their emotions.

"We want to continue that relationship [with Playworks], because we're always evolving with our immigrant and refugee population, but we're also evolving as professional educators here," Finn said. "It's invaluable to our school climate."

'Junior coaches'

For some of Rhawnhurst's students, recess isn't just playtime—it's a job.

Out on the schoolyard, you can find a select group of fourth and fifth graders leading the younger students during recess, sometimes wearing their official purple Playworks T-shirts and blowing their whistles. They raise their voices to announce which games are available that day, take charge of the activities and ensure the games run smoothly while adults focus on safety.

These fourth and fifth graders are part of the Junior Coaches Program, where they take on shifts throughout the week to help guide recess for kindergarten through second grade. In the process, they build leadership skills and confidence that extend far beyond the playground.

"We can inspire kids and we can prove that we're responsible," said Rayanne Musa, a fourth-grade student in the program.

Finn oversees the 18 junior coaches at Rhawnhurst.

"There's a real social-emotional component to having them grow as leaders, practicing being assertive and not aggressive on the playground or not passive on the playground, collaborating, cooperating with each other," Finn said. "These are our future leaders."

While the junior coaches lead many of the recess games, Saunders can focus on identifying students who don't have anyone to play with or those who want to

try a different game than what was originally offered.

Leen Tay, a fourth-grade junior coach at Rhawnhurst, said having students like her out on the playground is especially important for the younger kids. Coaches are more than role models; they can also be friends who feel more approachable and trustworthy than adults.

"When we play with them ... they feel like they have someone they can trust," Tay said. "When I play with them I understand how they feel."

'An important time'

While Playworks has had a noticeable impact at Rhawnhurst, even its supporters acknowledge it may face challenges at other schools.

For one thing, Playworks isn't free. The organization said establishing its Playworks coach service typically costs between \$60,000 and \$65,000 per school, although schools with more than half their students on free or reduced-price lunches are eligible for a subsidy that pays up to 50% of the costs.

In schools without climate staff, implementing Playworks could be more difficult. That's because in such schools, Playworks puts more pressure on teachers to participate in training and recess, all on top of their existing responsibilities.

"[Having climate staff] builds more support and more community," Saunders said. "If you're putting so much on a teacher, they're not giving 100% in the places that matter."

However, many schools across the nation with Playworks do not have climate staff.

"Playworks works best with any school that has full buy-in," Mathisen said. "It doesn't matter if it's a teacher or school aid or climate staff."

In addition, not everyone agrees on how structured play should be. A 2020 study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health found "unstructured play in addition to mindfulness intervention is effective in promoting students' happiness and playfulness, both of which may help maintain mental health and well-being." However, that study also noted unstructured play led to increased disruptive behavior.

"There are people who really feel like play should be kind of free from adults and rules," said Geetha Ramani, a human development professor at the University of Maryland's College of Education. "I take a little bit of a ... different feel about that, because I think that you can have sort of structured or guided play and have it be really rewarding and meaningful to the kids and still be an opportunity for it to be playful."

Ramani stressed recess gives children time to refocus and prepare for the classroom.

"[Recess is] a really important time," Ramani said. "We're seeing recess time often kind of being decreased, but it's really important to maintain that time, otherwise it's going to be hard for children to sort of stay fo-

cusated for long periods of time." Targeting play is potentially a piece of the solution to the nation's growing behavioral problems in elementary schools, the professor said.

"Play becomes really important, both kind of free and structured play," Ramani said. "So ... [students] have opportunities to learn in ways that may be more age-appropriate, and so I think, you know, targeting play as a potential way to help is important."

Gracious Gray, fifth grader and junior coach at Rhawnhurst,

said the program lets her feel like a big sister and brings back memories of her own younger days.

She said for some of the younger students, the extra support Playworks provides on the playground can make all the difference.

"There's kids that don't really have anyone to play with. ... I can step in and play with them and make them feel wanted," Gray said. "It's my responsibility to influence little ones so they could be like us one day and be kind people."

The Prince George's Post

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MEAL IDEAS *for* SPRING

Bring the Family Together With Baked Breakfast Pizzas

(Family Features) If you feel like it's a struggle to get the entire family together for a meal, it might be time to put fun back on the menu. A little creativity and a few favorite ingredients are all it takes to bring back family mealtime and spend precious moments at the table.

These Individual Sweetpotato Breakfast Pizzas are a perfect way to start a weekend morning, offering a delicious invitation to loved ones to join you in the kitchen. Equal parts sweet, savory and nutritious, you can enjoy seeing smiles on their faces while feeling good about what you're serving them.

Providing just the right touch of sweetness are North Carolina Sweetpotatoes, one of the most versatile vegetables in the produce department. They're easy to add to a variety of recipes—even breakfast pizza—to enhance flavor and nutrition. Try them on the stove, baked, microwaved, grilled, slow-cooked or air-fried for quick and easy options that are a breeze in the kitchen.

Spelled as one word to avoid confusion with the white potato (a distinctly different species), sweetpotatoes are rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber, all of which are good for overall health and may help prevent disease. In fact, they're even considered a "diabetes superfood" by the American Diabetes Association. As a natural sweetener, they give recipes that sweet flavor you crave without the added sugar.

Whether they become your favorite oft-used ingredient or you stock up on the abundant veggie, sweetpotatoes also boast a long shelf-life - up to 4 weeks if stored properly in a cool, dry, well-ventilated area away from heat sources—meaning you can buy in bulk without worrying about waste.

Find more ways to cook with sweetpotatoes by visiting ncsweetpotatoes.com.



Individual Sweetpotato Breakfast Pizzas

Recipe courtesy of the North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission
Servings: 4

- 4 medium North Carolina sweetpotatoes (about 2 pounds), divided
- 1 tablespoon, plus 1 teaspoon, olive oil, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- kosher salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- all-purpose flour, for rolling out dough
- 1 pound whole-wheat pizza dough at room temperature, divided into four equal portions (4 ounces each)
- 1 cup freshly shredded Gouda cheese
- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 cup diced chives

Preheat oven to 400 F. Place 1 pound sweetpotatoes directly on rack and bake until soft, about 1 hour. Remove from oven and let cool 5–10 minutes. Peel and puree flesh until smooth; reserve 1 cup.

Increase oven heat to 450 F. Peel remaining sweetpotatoes and dice into 1/2-inch pieces. Toss 2 cups diced sweetpotatoes with 1 tablespoon olive oil, garlic powder, onion powder, paprika, cayenne and salt and pepper, to taste; place in even layer on baking sheet. Roast until softened but not crisp, 15–20 minutes, stirring halfway. Remove from oven.

Lightly flour clean, flat work surface. Roll each ball of dough out to about 1/4-inch thickness (about 7 inches diameter).

With remaining oil, lightly coat rimless baking sheet. Transfer rolled out dough to baking sheet.

Spread pureed sweetpotato over surface of each dough round, about 1/4 cup each, leaving about 1/2-inch border. Top each with 1/4 cup shredded Gouda. Add 1/2 cup roasted sweetpotato cubes, leaving open space in center of pizzas.

Carefully crack one egg into center of each pizza; bake 15 minutes until crusts are golden brown on bottom, cheese is melted and egg whites are fully set. Carefully remove pizzas from oven.

Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Top each pizza with 1 tablespoon diced chives.

#17383

Source: North Carolina Sweetpotato Commission



A Brunch Surprise for Mom

(Culinary.net) Mother's Day is a time to celebrate and treat your mom to a delicious breakfast or brunch. Whether it's a meal in bed or a beautiful spread on the dining room table, make the day special with simple recipes that are sure to impress.

Try this Brunch Fruit Tart with a tasty granola crust and colorful fruit topping to start Mother's Day in style. It's a sweet option to begin her day on the right note.

With a crunchy crust and smooth center, this tart is balanced, easy to make and a beautiful addition to the menu. It's also easy to customize as the fruit topping options are nearly unlimited. Pick your mom's favorites and decorate the top however you please. Or, let the little ones get creative and put their own spin on an essential Mother's Day meal.

For more brunch recipes, visit Culinary.net.

Watch the video for this recipe on Culinary.net's YouTube channel.

Brunch Fruit Tart

Recipe adapted from homemadeinterest.com

Crust:

- 4 cups granola mixture
- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 4 1/2 tablespoons honey
- nonstick cooking spray

Filling:

- 2 1/4 cups vanilla Greek yogurt
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 package gelatin

Toppings:

- strawberries, sliced
- blueberries
- kiwis, sliced

1. To make crust: Preheat oven to 350 F.
2. In large bowl, combine granola, butter and honey. Grease 11-inch tart pan with nonstick cooking spray. Line bottom of tart pan with parchment paper.
3. Press granola mixture into tart pan. Place tart pan on baking sheet and bake 10 minutes. Cool completely.
4. To make filling: Using mixer, combine yogurt, cream cheese, sugar, vanilla extract and gelatin until whipped completely.
5. Pour yogurt mixture into tart crust. Refrigerate at least 1 hour.
6. Top with strawberries, blueberries and kiwis. Source: Culinary.net

A Seasonal Spring Surprise



(Culinary.net) You can almost feel spring in the air, and with the warmer weather comes delicious, delectable foods. From casseroles to fresh fruits and wholesome vegetables, a change of season offers something to look forward to for nearly every foodie.

A spring dish that is sure to impress is this Cheesy Asparagus Tart. It has melty cheese, cooked asparagus and an under layer of puff pastry baked to golden brown perfection.

Start by cooking your asparagus on the stove top in 5 cups of water for 5–8 minutes. Then soak it in an ice bath until cooled. Transfer to a mixing bowl to add vegetable oil, salt and pepper for tasty, seasoned veggies.

Now it's time to work with your puff pastry. Sprinkle some flour on a flat countertop. Roll out the thawed puff pastry to a 16-by-10-inch rectangle. Move to a lined baking sheet and prick with a fork to create a thin, flaky texture. Bake around 12 minutes and cool.

The final steps: mix the cheeses, shallots, egg yolks, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Spread this mixture across the pastry and lay asparagus over the top. Bake 5 more minutes.

For a little extra flavor, add lemon

zest over the tart.

This tart is a perfect appetizer before Sunday brunch or to cut up and take outside for some al fresco dining this spring.

It's got gooey, melted cheeses, is seasoned well and has hearty asparagus on top. Plus, it's a yummy way to add vegetables to your kids' diet (and yours, too).

Find more spring recipes and dining ideas at Culinary.net. Watch the video for this recipe on Culinary.net's YouTube channel.

Cheesy Asparagus Tart

Servings: 8–10

- 5 cups water
- 1 pound asparagus
- ice water
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, plus additional, to taste, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper, plus additional, to taste, divided
- flour, for dusting
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
- 1 cup grated fontina cheese
- 1 cup grated gruyere cheese
- 1 tablespoon shallot, minced
- 2 egg yolks

- 3 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 lemon, zest only

1. Heat oven to 400 F.
2. In large skillet, add water and asparagus. Cook 5–8 minutes until asparagus is bright green.
3. Drain asparagus and soak in ice water.
4. In large bowl, mix drained asparagus, vegetable oil, salt and pepper until combined.
5. Flour surface area. Using rolling pin, roll out pastry to 10-by-16-inch rectangle. Transfer pastry to parchment-lined baking sheet. Prick pastry with fork. Bake about 12 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool slightly on baking sheet.
6. In large bowl, mix fontina cheese, gruyere cheese, shallot, egg yolks, milk, nutmeg and salt and pepper, to taste, until combined. Spread cheese over pastry, leaving 1 inch around edges. Lay asparagus over cheese mixture.
7. Bake 5 minutes, or until cheese has melted.
8. Sprinkle lemon zest over tart and serve. Source: Culinary.net

EarthTalk® Q&A Do Seaweed Farms Live Up to the Sustainability Hype?

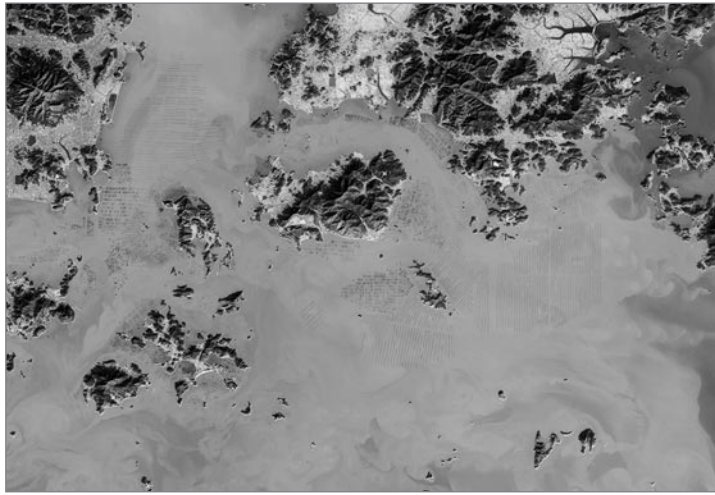
By Grace Lee | April 16, 2025

Dear EarthTalk:
Are seaweed farms good for the planet or is that just industry hype?
—Josiah Barnes

The production of seaweed has boomed to over 35 million tons in the past few years, while the industry has become a \$16.7 billion market. Its popularity is due to its notable ecological benefits, like its absorption of carbon, production of food and marine habitat production. Seaweed proponents praise them for being easy to grow and creating bioplastics while critics argue that there are significant shortcomings.

Seaweed farms are not only fast and easy to grow, but also notably versatile. Unlike terrestrial crops like trees, fruits, vegetables and herbs, seaweed requires no fertilizer, pesticides, freshwater or land to grow. Thus, it can easily adapt to diverse environments and survive without constant human intervention.

Furthermore, the growth of



CREDIT: NASA GODDARD SPACE FLIGHT CENTER, FLICKRCC

Seaweed farms like this one in South Korea promise to provide food with a minimal environmental footprint.

seaweed farms benefits marine life. Beyond improving water quality, the presence of seaweed farms buffers the effects of ocean acidification in surrounding areas, greatly aiding both prosperous and polluted environments. Seaweed farms also create forage and refuge habitats for commercially important fish, like cod and tuna, while acting as a food source for countless other species.

Seaweed can also decrease

the impacts of carbon and other greenhouse gases. By absorbing both nutrients and carbon dioxide to grow, seaweed decreases the number of toxic emissions entering oceans and the atmosphere. Seaweed pulls more greenhouse gases from water than eelgrass, mangroves and salt marshes combined. It can also be cultivated to reduce heavy metals and other pollutants, acting as a sponge to rid the ocean of toxins. It also

plays a critical role in the creation of bioplastics, which mitigate plastic pollution by replacing carbon-intensive products and greenhouse gases.

Despite the benefits, seaweed farms can be expensive and difficult to implement globally. The higher price decreases the demand for the algae, making it difficult for farmers to support the target growth of their farms. Furthermore, 98 percent of farmed seaweed is grown in Asia, illustrating the lack of geographic diversity worldwide.

So, scientists are looking for ways to expand the reach and impact of seaweed farms to maximize their benefits. Specifically, many are experimenting with growing seaweed aimed at reducing water pollutants like metals. Ultimately, Alexandra Cousteau, head of the non-profit Oceans2050, noted that “Seaweed farming offers a scalable, nature-based solution for carbon removal while delivering co-benefits such as biodiversity enhancement, economic opportunities, and food security.”

CONTACTS: With the Right Tools, Seaweed Can Be an Important Piece of the Climate Puzzle, nature.org/en-us/what-we-do/our-insights/perspectives/blue-carbon-seaweed-nature-based-climate-solution/.

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