

The Prince George's Post



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DMV Student Chefs Win Top Honors at 14th Annual Real Food For Kids Culinary Challenge

Winning recipes highlight healthy, culturally inspired meals designed for school cafeterias
Oxon Hill High School was a Community Choice winner for Smart Snack

By PRESS OFFICER
Real Food for Kids

WHAT: Student chefs from across the Washington region competed in the 14th Annual Real Food for Kids Culinary Challenge, a student-led, work-based learning competition that mirrors real-world school nutrition programs.

Middle and high school teams developed original recipes specifically designed for school cafeterias, working within strict guidelines around cost, nutrition standards, scalability, and USDA compliance. Students presented their dishes to a panel of leading local chefs and school nutrition profession-



PHOTO CREDIT: DEB LINDSEY

Bonnie Moore (Executive Director, RFFK), Ype Von Hengst (Co-Founder and Chef, Silver Diner), 3 Students, Julie Onwonga (Teacher, Oxon Hill High School)

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Prince George's County 330th Community Celebration

This April Prince George's County will turn 330! The journey toward this historic milestone is an opportunity to pause and reflect on our County's past, honor the contributions of all residents, and look ahead toward the future we want to create for the next generation and beyond. The Office of Community Relations will host PGC330th Community Celebration: Food trucks, games, prizes, live music, hand & line dancing, entertainment, kids area, health and wellness pavilion, game truck,

roller skating and much more! **This event is free and open to the public.**

Saturday, April 18, 2026
3:30–6:30 p.m.

Northwest Stadium Parking Lot F, Bishop Peebles Road
Landover, MD
Gates Open at 3 p.m.
Rain or Shine
Presenting Sponsor:
Andrews Federal Credit Union
Gold Sponsor:
Cigna Healthcare

Clean and Green: Elevate the Scene

Spring 2026 Event: **Saturday, April 25, 2026**, 8 a.m.–12 p.m.

Registration Deadline: Monday, April 20, 2026

It's clean up time! Grab your gloves, roll up your sleeves, and let's get ready to ELEVATE Prince George's County! Let's come together, have fun, and make our community shine!

REALTORS® Recognize Excellence in Sales Production and Service

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR)

LANDOVER, Md. (March 20, 2026)—On Wednesday, March 18, 2026, the Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR) recognized its "Top Producer" REALTOR® members for their 2025 sales production. The winners were honored at a gala event held at Martins Crosswinds in Greenbelt, Maryland.

The 2026 Awards Showcase stands as the Association's foremost acknowledgment of exceptional agent performance throughout the entirety of 2025. Preceding the event were exclusive red-carpet interviews with attendees, broadcasted live on Facebook, adding an extra layer of excitement and anticipation—<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17oTQco7j9/>

Approximately 140 County REALTORS® received awards recognizing their "personal best" in sales production.

Taking home the top prize of the evening, First Place Platinum Individual General Brokerage, was Hazel Shakur of REDFIN, with \$46.2 million in sales activity. Placing first in the Platinum Team Competition was GK Legacy



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

Group with Keller Williams Preferred Properties with \$43 million in team sales production. Lisa Brooks of Keller Williams Preferred Properties was named the 2025 ROOKIE OF THE YEAR for Highest Sales Volume at \$1.5 million.

In acknowledgment of her decade's long dedication, expertise, and tireless efforts in chairing committees and rally-

ing support for our political endeavors, REALTOR® Veera Phillips, of Keller Williams Preferred Properties, was honored with the esteemed 2025 Distinguished Service Award.

The prestigious title of Distinguished Sales Associate of the Year was awarded to Arnita Greene of Compass Real Estate in recognition of her leadership of PGCAR's Young Professionals Net-



PHOTO COURTESY PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

work and other invaluable contributions to PGCAR. Clinton Thompson with Interstate Moving and Storage was named Affiliate of the Year in recognition of his industry support, exceptional professional acumen, and many contributions to PGCAR in 2025.

PGCAR's REALTOR® Political Action Committee (RPAC) Hall of Fame

inductees are 2021 President, Shameeka Price, 2022 PGCAR President, Melanie Gamble, Pamela D. Jenkins and DeAnne Sutton. They were honored for their cumulative RPAC contributions exceeding \$7500.

Host of the event, Leisel Taylor,

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The Arc Prince George's County Partners With Uber to Tackle Hidden Crisis: People With Disabilities Struggling to Get to Work and Care

Uber for Business credits will help remove one of the biggest barriers to independence: getting where you need to go

By PRESS OFFICER
The Arc Prince George's County

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (March 23, 2026)—In a move aimed at breaking down one of the most persistent barriers faced by people with disabilities—reliable transportation—The Arc Prince George's County has announced a new partnership with Uber Technologies, Inc. to expand mobility and independence for the people it supports.

Through this partnership, Uber is providing free rides to help individuals access critical services, employment opportunities, medical appointments, and community activities.

For many people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, transportation is not just a convenience—it's the difference between isolation and opportunity.

"This partnership is about more than rides—it's about access,

dignity, and independence," said Rob Malone, President & CEO, at The Arc Prince George's County. "Too often, the people we support face limited or unreliable transportation options. Uber's support helps us close that gap and open doors to opportunity."

Transportation remains one of the top barriers to employment and community inclusion for people with disabilities. Missed rides can mean missed job shifts, delayed healthcare, or lost chances to participate in everyday life.

This initiative comes at a critical time, as disability service providers face increasing pressure from funding challenges and workforce shortages—making flexible, on-demand solutions like Uber more important than ever.

The Uber credits will be used strategically to support individuals in moments that matter most, including:

- Getting to and from jobs and job interviews
- Attending medical and behavioral health appointments

- Participating in community activities and social events
- Accessing essential services when traditional transportation is unavailable

"Transportation shouldn't be a barrier to living a full life," said LáVita Gardner, Public Policy & Communications Manager at Uber. "We're proud to support The Arc Prince George's County in helping more people move freely and access their everyday needs."

In 2027, The Arc of Prince George's County marks 75 years of supporting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families honoring the people, progress, and persistence that have shaped our work since 1951. The Arc Prince George's County legacy and commitment is showing what equity and inclusion looks like in real life by celebrating where we've been, recognizing the community that made it possible, and reaffirming our belief that everyone deserves dignity, opportunity, and belonging.

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Juniors and seniors from High Point High School in Beltsville and Potomac High School in Oxon Hill participated.

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Housing Authority of the City of College Park Awarded \$3.15 Million in Federal Funding 2026 for Attick Towers Renovation

Venture X College Park and PGCEDC Celebrate Grand Opening of First Flexible Office Space in Prince George's County Business and Finance, Page A5

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

Bowie State University Graduation will be held Friday, May 22, 2026, from 9 a.m. to 12 Noon. Please join us as we prepare to honor the graduates' dedication and perseverance. Our newest Bowie State Graduates are boldly stepping into tomorrow.

ALOHA

Pomonek High School Alumni Association invites you to a Hawaiian Luau Party Saturday, May 23, 2026. Time: 1-5 p.m. Benefit: Building Fund. Catered Hawaiian Cuisine, DJ, Raffle Drawings, Limbo Contest, Special Surprise. Tickets: \$50. Wear your finest, casual Luau attire and maybe win Best Dressed. Or best dancer even. Hoping to see you there.

Contact: Beverly Coger: 202-378-7891, Yvonne Taylor: 301-753-8662, Philip Thomas: 301-751-1823. The Hawaiian Luau Party will be held at Indian Head Village Green Pavilion, 100 Walter Thomas Drive, Indian Head, Maryland.

CLINTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Our Guest Speaker Sunday, March 15, 2026, was Rev. Dr. Jalene C. Chase who is a Retired Elder in Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church and a 2025 Inductee and Preacher in the Preachers Hall of Fame. She is a scholar, pastor, advocate, and seasoned leader whose ministry spans the pulpit, the academy, and the public square. Dr. Chase holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Maryland, College Park; and a Master of Divinity; and a Doctor of Ministry from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC, where she now serves as Adjunct Faculty in the Practice of Ministry and Mission Department. She has led congregations in Washington, DC, and Maryland and is widely respected for preaching that is biblically grounded, culturally aware, and spiritually compelling.

Her ministry has consistently extended beyond church walls. She has collaborated on research initiatives addressing mental and behavioral health disparities among Black youth, partnered with organizations serving survivors of youth sex trafficking, and serves on the board of Hyacinth's Place, supporting women rebuilding their lives after homelessness and mental health challenges. She currently serves as Chair of Gender Equity-Commission on the Status and Role of Women in her conference and as Parliamentarian for the National Black Clergy Women of the United Methodist Church.

A Life Member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc., Dr. Chase has held leadership roles of every level of the

organization, including International Parliamentarian and Immediate Past International Chaplain. She is also the author of "WAKE U.P.: Unrestrained, Powerful, STAY W.O.K.E.: Wise, Optimistic, Knowledge, Empowered", "31 Days: Spirit Scriptures and Songs-A Devotional", co-author of "The Spirit of Sisterhood-A Devotional".

Before her ministry, she worked as a Metro Transit Police Officer in Washington, DC. Previously, she stood out at Old Mill High School and the University of Maryland, College Park, as a National Champion and Olympic Trials high jumper. Rev. Dr. Chase brings to the pulpit a disciplined spirit, prophetic clarity, pastoral warmth, and an unwavering commitment to strengthening the whole body of Christ.

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

Prince George's County Police Special Crimes Division Domestic Violence Unit, 7600 Barlowe Road, Landover, Maryland 20785. Phone: (301) 772-4433. "Stop the Silence about Domestic Violence." Police_DomesticViolence@co.pg.md.us.

Where to turn for help. There is hope. We can help. The Prince George's County Police Department has a specialized unit that can assist you in breaking the silence about domestic violence. The Criminal Investigation Division, Domestic Violence Unit is your first point of contact to get help; however, there are many resources available to assist you in protecting yourself. The Domestic Violence can connect you to services that can provide you with options and support.

THE SEVEN RINGS OF MARRIAGE

Clinton Baptist Church presents The Seven Rings of Marriage One Day Conference. WE GROW. WE SERVE. WE LOVE. Strong marriages don't just happen, they are built with intentionality, commitment, and Christ at the center. Join us at Clinton Baptist Church on April 11 from 8 a.m.-3 p.m. for a powerful day designed to strengthen, encourage, and refresh your marriage. The cost is \$65 per couple, which includes Continental Breakfast, lunch, the book "Seven Rings of Marriage", special giveaway.

This conference will be facilitated by Pastor Colin Pugh & Jeanette Pugh and will provide practical, biblical insight to help you grow together. Clinton Baptist Church, 8701 Woodyard Road, Clinton, Maryland. Register today at ClintonBaptistChurch.org. Let's continue to build marriages that reflect Christ. #WeGrowWeServeWeLove

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

Arrest Made in Non-fatal Shootings

The Maryland State Police have made an arrest for a string of non-fatal shootings in Prince George's County on the night of March 16 into the early hours of March 17.

The first incident was at 10:30 p.m. on Branch Avenue at Allentown Road, when a driver told police their car had been shot. At 10:47 p.m., another driver reported their car being shot as they were driving on the ramp from Branch Avenue onto the Outer Loop of the Beltway.

The gunman stood by a car parked on the shoulder of the ramp and fired at the victim repeatedly.

The final shooting was at 1:30 a.m. on the Inner Loop of the Beltway at Ardwick Ardmore Road, and the driver reported being struck through his vehicle. He drove to a local hospital and was treated for his injuries.

Maryland State Police, assisted by Prince George's County Police, investigated the shootings, and appealed to the public in their search for a car described as "a red or burgundy sedan, possibly a Dodge Challenger or Charger," driven by a man in a dark sweatshirt and light pants.

That information brought them to Kendrick Lamont Savoy, a 44-year-old from Lothian, whom they arrested without incident at 2 p.m. on March 18 in Temple Hills. A search of the car turned up two handguns.

Savoy has been charged with multiple crimes, including five counts each of attempted murder and assault, and possession of a stolen firearm. He is being held without bond.

While his motives still are unclear, police say road rage does not seem to be a factor, and that the victims were random. As police con-

tinued to investigate the shootings, they ask anyone with information to call the Maryland State Police at 301-345-3101

Pipe Bombs found in Fort Washington Park

Fort Washington National Park was closed for several days following a report at 2:15 p.m. on March 22 of a "suspicious package" found in a remote area of the park.

U.S. Park Police investigated, finding devices that appear to be home-made pipe bombs. They closed the park and called in the Prince George's County Fire and EMS bomb squad, who defused the devices.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives sent members of their Baltimore Field Division to help search the park. The first day of searching uncovered a total of five pipe bombs, with another four found the following day.

All nine devices were removed without incident and taken to the ATF's National Laboratory Center in Ammdale, Md., as part of the continuing investigation into where they came from and why they were placed in the park.

Nobody was injured, and authorities note that the pipe bombs had not been left recently. Since the investigation determined there was no immediate threat to the public, the National Park Service reopened the park at 6 a.m. as usual on March 25.

New Community Bulletin Board

The Morningside website has a brand-new online Community Bulletin Board, which will be a space for residents to post town news and events, recommendations, advertisements, and announcements.

Go to <https://morningsidemd.gov/community-bulletin-board/> to find out

what's going on in Morningside.

Although the town reviews all posts, the website emphasizes that it does not sponsor, endorse, or assume responsibility for the contents of the posts.

If you want to post something, please send event details, flyers, contact information, and other relevant info to: generalmailbox@morningsidemd.gov.

Be sure you include when you want the post removed. You will receive a confirmation email once the post is approved for the bulletin board.

As of right now, the bulletin board is so new that it's still waiting for its first post. If you act quickly, maybe you can be the very first post that gets the ball rolling.

Get Well Soon, Susan!

I want to wish a speedy recovery to Susan Mullins, who recently suffered a fractured shoulder and torn rotator cuff. Susan, wife of Council Member Todd Mullins, is a member of the Recreation Committee, which will be missing all her help, especially with cooking food for the town's many events.

Upcoming Meetings

The next Morningside Work Session meeting will be held Tuesday, April 14, at 7 p.m. in the Morningside Municipal Center. The Town Meeting will be the following Tuesday, April 21, also at 7 p.m. and in the Municipal Center.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Melissa Lytton, Sophia Cordero, and Bernie Saylor, April 3; Earlene Erhardt Righter, Jimmy Shipman, and Kaitlin Woods, April 5; Jonathan Charters, April 6; Debbie Callison, April 8.

Events Around the County

April Programs at Marietta Historic Site & Museum Marietta Historic Site & Museum Presents "Unfinished Revolutions" 5th Annual Giving Voice Initiative Event

Please join us in person on **Saturday, April 4**, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. for Unfinished Revolutions: 5th Annual Giving Voice Initiative Event. This moving poetry reading is to help mark the nation's 250th anniversary. Marietta House Museum and a regional poetry organization mentored local poets to write this collection of poems inspired by the history of Marietta House, using the theme "Unfinished Revolutions".

Poets will read their poems and discuss them with the audience. Refreshments will be served. This event is recommended for ages 12 and older. Children who are attending the event must be accompanied by an adult. This is a FREE event. Walk-ins welcome; registration is requested. Register at www.pgparksdirect.com and use ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20260404.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pg-parks.com. Marietta Historic Site & Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Marietta Historic Site & Museum Presents A Book Talk With Zaakir Tameez on "Charles Sumner: Conscience of a Nation"

Please join us for a virtual talk by Zaakir Tameez on **Thursday, April 16**, from 6:30-8 p.m. Author and historian, Zaakir Tameez will discuss his book "Charles Sumner: Conscience of a Nation". Mr. Tameez will consider the courageous Massachusetts senator Charles Sumner, who is remembered for receiving a physical beating while serving in Congress and for his leadership during and after the U.S. Civil War for civil rights. Drawing from hundreds of letters, newspapers, and speeches, Mr. Tameez shares a remarkable portrait of a complex man who faced many personal challenges.

"Charles Sumner: Conscience of a Nation" is a moving portrayal of a courageous, long-overlooked American who, in the words of one contemporary, "stood in the vanguard of freedom."

Visitors must register to receive the TEAMS link to the program. \$5/county resident & \$7/non-county resident. Visitors must register to receive the TEAMS link. Register at www.pgparksdirect.com and use ticket code: MHM-SPEC-GA-20260416.

This program is in partnership with Prince George's County Historical Society.

For more information, please call 301-464-5291 or email mariettahouse@pg-parks.com. Marietta Historic Site & Museum is located at 5626 Bell Station Road, Glenn Dale, MD, and is a property of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

Community Impact Day

Generations of Impact Network (GOIN) is inviting you to be part of something that goes beyond inspiration.

The Wealth Shift : A Community Impact Day
Saturday, April 11, 2026, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Accokeek, Maryland

Free and open to the community.

You will experience a powerful day filled with connection, insight, and real conversations around business, income, and legacy.

But for those who are ready to move from conversation to execution...

We are extending a special invitation to our Premium Workshop.

This is where strategy meets action.

If you have been:

- Sitting on ideas but unsure how to turn them into income
- Growing your business but not seeing consistent results
- Ready to increase your income and build something sustainable

This workshop was designed for you.

Inside, you will walk away with:

- Clear direction on how to turn your ideas into income-producing opportunities
- Practical strategies to strengthen your visibility and increase revenue
- A simple, structured system you can actually execute
- A real plan for your next level of growth

This is not theory. This is implementation.

The community event will open your mind.

The workshop will challenge you to move.

In partnership with Stella's Girls, Inc., we are creating space not just for business growth, but for family impact and generational change.

Reserve your free ticket and secure your workshop seat:

<https://bit.ly/TheWealthShift>

Space is limited.

If you are ready for more than motivation...

This is your next step.

Luminis Health Hosts Third Annual Community Baby Shower for Prince George's County Families

Event Aims to Combat Rising Delays in Prenatal Care

GLENN DALE, Md. (March 25, 2026)—As new federal data shows more women are delaying prenatal care, Luminis Health Doctors Community Medical Center (LHDCMC) is hosting its third annual Community Baby Shower **Saturday, April 11, 2026** from noon to 4 p.m.

Due to growing popularity and a desire to reach more families, LHDCMC is partnering with Reid Temple A.M.E. to host this year's Community Baby Shower at the church's campus in Glendale.

The Community Baby Shower is free and open to the public and will support expectant mothers and families with children up to age 2 through:

- Educational presentations on pregnancy, maternal mental health, and lactation.
- Local vendors offering baby essentials and supportive services.
- A raffle for breast bumps, a car seat, and stroller.
- Diaper and other baby giveaways.

"During the pandemic, Reid Temple A.M.E. Church was a trusted partner in helping us educate and vaccinate the community against COVID-19," said Temi Oshiyoye, Luminis Health's director of Community Health Improvement. "We are proud to partner again to ensure families have the knowledge, resources, and support they need for a healthy pregnancy, birth, and postpartum journey."

The need for early and consistent care is more urgent than ever. A new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that a quarter of women delay prenatal care, which increases the risk of complications and maternal mortality.

The trend is especially concerning in Prince George's County, where eight out

COMMUNITY

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of 10 women leave the county to deliver their babies. Black women also continue to face disproportionately high maternal mortality rates, approximately 50% higher than the national average.

LHDCMC is committed to addressing the maternal health crisis. Next month, the hospital will break ground on a new Women's Health Pavilion on its Lanham campus. The pavilion will have inpatient obstetric services, including labor, delivery, and postpartum care.

These expanded women's health services are scheduled to launch in early 2029. Once fully operational, LHDCMC expects to deliver approximately 2,000 babies each year.

"By expanding access to comprehensive women's health services, we can help reduce maternal and infant mortality rates in our community and build healthier, thriving families for generations to come," said Deneen Richmond, president of LHDCMC. "Our annual Community Baby Shower is one way we are helping families start that journey with the support they deserve."

In addition to expanding hospital-based services, Luminis Health is strengthening its investment in community-based prevention efforts. This summer, the health system will launch the Start Well Preconception Program, a cohort-based initiative designed to support women before pregnancy. Led by registered nurses, midwives and doulas, and community health team members, the program connects participants with trusted clinical guidance and a supportive peer network as they navigate important health decisions.

Sessions include education and on-site health screenings such as A1C testing, diabetes risk assessment, nutrition counseling and blood pressure checks. Thanks to a generous grant from Care First and the Greater Washington Community Foundation, the program will be offered free of charge beginning in July, and no insurance is required.

Together, these efforts reflect Luminis Health's commitment to ensuring every family in Prince George's County has access to the care, education, and support needed for a healthy baby before, during, and after pregnancy.

Luminis Health is a non-profit regional health system headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland. Comprised of Anne Arundel Medical Center, Doctors Community Medical Center (DCMC), J. Kent McNew Family Medical Center, Pathways, DCMC Rehab, and Luminis Health Clinical Enterprise, the system serves a population of 1.5 million people. As one of the area's largest charitable organizations, Luminis Health contributes more than \$120 million in community benefit annually. Learn more at LuminisHealth.org and connect with us on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Community Forklift Announces 2026 Events Celebrating Reuse, Sustainability, and Community

Free First Friday series, seasonal markets, and special pop-ups bring neighbors together around reuse

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (March 25, 2026)—Community Forklift, the DC region's nonprofit reuse warehouse for home improvement supplies and home goods, has announced its lineup of community events for 2026. The calendar features seasonal pop-ups, a themed First Friday series, and special community partnerships that celebrate sustainability, creativity, and connection.

Community Forklift's reuse warehouse is in Hyattsville, Maryland. The events invite residents from across the region to explore salvaged materials, meet local organizations, enjoy live music and food, and learn how reuse can support stronger communities.

"Community Forklift has always been more than a store," said Trey Davis, Executive Director of Community Forklift. "Our events bring people together to celebrate reuse, share skills, and connect with neighbors who care about building a more sustainable and creative future."

Highlights from the 2026 event calendar include:

Garden Supply Pop-Up Shop (April 17-19)

A weekend of reused garden tools, planters, and outdoor materials, along with a plant swap, seed giveaway, and garden-inspired mocktails.

First Friday Series (May, June, September October)

Community Forklift's popular First Friday events return with themed evenings celebrating reuse and local partnerships. Each event features live music, food trucks, drinks, and special discounts in the reuse warehouse.

Themes include:

- River & Reuse (May 1) celebrating the Anacostia River
- Salvage & Cycle (June 5) highlighting cycling and sustainable transportation
- Old Homes, New Stories (September 4) honoring historic preservation and architectural salvage
- Horkus Forkus! (October 2), a Halloween-themed night of reuse and community fun.

Forklift Flash Shop at metrobar (August 20)

A one-night pop-up shop in Washington, DC featuring a curated selection of salvaged materials in metrobar's creatively repurposed space.

Small Business Saturday Market (November 28)

An expanded holiday market at Community Forklift featuring local vendors, salvaged gift items, and seasonal décor.

Unless otherwise noted, Community Forklift events are free and open to the public, and feature partnerships with local nonprofits, artists, and community groups.

Founded in 2005, Community Forklift works to reduce waste and strengthen communities by collecting surplus building materials and home goods and redistributing them to the public at low cost or free through community giving programs. Each year, the organization diverts hundreds of thousands of items from the landfill while supporting affordable home repair, environmental sustainability, and local green jobs. For a full schedule of events and updates, visit: <https://www.communityforklift.org/events/>

United Way of the National Capital Area's Women United Mentors, Build Connections for 50 Area High School Students to Honor Women's History Month

By CYNDI SUTTON
United Way National Capital Area

WASHINGTON (March 26, 2026)—On Wednesday, March 25, 50 high school juniors and seniors gathered for a day of mentorship and connection building in honor of Women's History Month. Hosted by United Way of the National Capital Area's Women United and sponsored by Washington, D.C.-based public affairs firm Beekeeper Group, the event welcomed student participants from H.D. Woodson High School in Washington, D.C., High Point High School in Beltsville, Maryland, and Potomac High School in Oxon Hill, Maryland.

Women's History Month Event: Pathways to Success featured a Career Pathways Exhibition focused on exploration and networking, and an interactive panel discussion offering real advice and candid insights. The event also included a series of roundtable sessions where student participants and 20 women leaders from a diverse range of backgrounds, organizations, and professional pathways talked about their experiences, career choices, and lessons learned along the way. The day ended with participants packing menstrual hygiene kits to be distributed to their home schools.

Dr. Nicole Cooper, Chief External Affairs and Transformation Officer, United Way of the National Capital Area, said:

"Our hope is that the 50 students spending time with us yesterday left with the belief that success is whatever they define it to be, and that showing up for every opportunity to learn, grow, and network with others is the first step toward that success. Every student leaned into their potential and curiosity to plant seeds that they'll grow—whether it's in college, through entrepreneurship, by earning specialized certifications, or through corporate leadership, as they contribute to nonprofit missions they believe in, or all of the above. On be-



PHOTO COURTESY UNITED WAY OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL AREA

On Wednesday, March 25, United Way of the National Capital Area's Women United hosted 50 high school juniors and seniors for a day of mentorship and connection building in honor of Women's History Month. The event was sponsored by Washington, D.C.-based public affairs firm Beekeeper Group.

half of your United Way of the National Capital Area, we're excited to see what the future holds for each of them and honored to play a small part in it."

United Way of the National Capital Area's Women United is a powerful network of philanthropists and civic-minded women committed to fostering a community in which women can thrive. The Women United Leadership Council members are:

- Kelly Burks—President, Management Solutions Consulting Group, Inc.
- Stacy Richardson Burnette—Senior Director, Government and External Affairs, Comcast Corporation
- Marie Caputo—Principal, CliftonLarsonAllen
- Cathy Jerome—Chief of Staff, BECA and Adjunct Professor, Sports Marketing, Howard University
- Mary Johnson—Manager, Deloitte
- Sonia B. McCormick—Senior Vice President, PNC Bank
- Elise Schutzer—Vice President, Public Affairs, PhRMA
- Kelly Waldron—Director, Business Op-

timization - AARP

For more photos and video from the 2026 Women United event, please contact Cyndi Sutton at cyndi@jrcommunications.com.

For nearly 100 years, United Way of the National Capital Area has worked to mobilize communities to action so all can thrive. Guided by our mission, we are committed to creating measurable impact in the areas of Healthy Communities, Youth Opportunity, and Financial Security for every person in Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax/Falls Church, Loudoun County, Prince William County, Rappahannock County, Culpeper County and Fauquier County in Virginia; Calvert County, Charles County, St. Mary's County, Montgomery County and Prince George's County, in Maryland; and the District of Columbia. In 2020, United Way NCA was among 384 organizations across the United States to receive a generous transformational investment from novelist and venture philanthropist, MacKenzie Scott. For more information, visit UnitedWayNCA.org.

Maryland Lawmakers Aim to Make Removing Ice From Cars More Than a 'Common Courtesy'

It may be warm outside, but Maryland lawmakers are pushing bipartisan legislation aimed at addressing the problem of dangerous icy projectiles saying it could improve safety on the roads. "Some may say that this is legislating common courtesy," Del. Marc Korman, D-Montgomery, said. "But really what we're trying to do is not only have government accountability... but also having personal accountability."

By IAN FERRIS
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (March 25, 2026)—It was still dark that January morning when Anne Arundel County Deputy Sheriff Robert Werner drove down Route 97 and saw the sheet of ice hurtling toward his windshield from two cars ahead.

"I saw it coming, so I braced for it," Werner recalled.

He gripped the wheel, steering the car to safety on the right side of the highway, then carefully drove two miles to the police department.

Werner and some Maryland lawmakers support a measure aimed at addressing the problem of dangerous icy projectiles saying it could improve safety on the roads. The bipartisan "Clear Before You Drive Act" would require people to clear snow and ice off their vehicles before operating or towing them.

"We should and we must have legislation that addresses visibility and hazards of ice and snow on moving vehicles," said Del. Edith Patterson, D-Charles, the lead sponsor of the bill.

The House and Senate unanimously passed the bill earlier this month.

Under the measure, people would be required to clear their vehicle's hood, trunk, windshield, windows and roof of snow and ice. If not, they could be fined \$25 to \$200 for a non-commercial vehicle based on

the number of offenses. They could be fined up to \$1,000 if ice or snow contributes to property damage or serious bodily injury.

The fines are steeper for commercial vehicles.

"It would not allow law enforcement to just pull people over willy-nilly, only a second-



PHOTO COURTESY OF CPL. ANGIE HINES

Anne Arundel County Deputy Sheriff Robert Werner's car is damaged after a sheet of ice from another car slammed into the windshield Jan. 28.



PHOTO CREDIT CHRISTINE ZHU/CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Del. Edith Patterson, D-Charles, (center), introduced a bill to require Marylanders to remove snow and ice from their vehicles.

ary offense unless your failure to do so caused a crash," said Del. Marc Korman, D-Montgomery, chair of the Environment and Transportation Committee.

Korman said the measure may encourage people to be more mindful.

"Some may say that this is

legislating common courtesy," he said. "But really what we're trying to do is not only have government accountability... but also having personal accountability. That's what this bill does."

Werner called the bill a step in the right direction.

"I just want to see people safe out here and this is one way we can do it," he said.

Werner suffered facial injuries. He also had cuts on his hands and arms, and a bruise on his shoulder. He said without his police training he believes the injuries could have been worse.

"Had it been an inexperienced driver they probably would have crashed," said Werner.

Patterson pointed to the major snowstorm in late January as another reason for the bill.

"It became crystal clear what can happen when you have ice and snow and people are driving," she said.

Patterson said the legislation is modeled after "Christine's Law" in Pennsylvania. The law authorizes local police to fine drivers if they don't make "reasonable efforts" to clear snow and ice from their vehicle within 24 hours of a snowstorm before operating it.

The Pennsylvania law is named after Christine Lambert, who was struck and killed by an icy projectile that fell off a

COMMUNITY

Prince George's County Board of Education Adopts New Policy Limiting Immigration Enforcement in Local Schools

New policy establishes protections for students, and sets clear limits on immigration enforcement in Prince George's County schools

By JOSE D. CEBALLOS
CASA

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. (March 27, 2026)—In a move to protect local student safety and immigrant families, the Prince George's County Board of Education approved a new policy that establishes clear guidance for school staff regarding interactions with immigration enforcement agents. The policy, which reflects the Board's commitment to student privacy protections and compliance with the Maryland Values Act, comes after months of advocacy from We Are CASA members and students.

"Our families deserve the peace of mind that comes from knowing that our school system is committed to doing everything possible to put the safety of our students first. Our schools are safe zones for every child, regardless of background, race or immigration status, and they have a right to learn in a secure and welcoming environment," said We Are CASA Organizer Austen Asahtong. "Our school leaders have a responsibility to ensure

that every campus is an environment of trust and protection. When students feel safe, attendance improves, engagement increases, and families become more involved. This new policy will deliver on that goal, strengthening not only our schools but our entire community."

The newly adopted policy establishes comprehensive protocols designed to safeguard students and limit cooperation with immigration enforcement. Key provisions include:

- **Defining School Facilities as Private Spaces:** All PGCPs facilities and spaces are considered "private spaces," meaning immigration agents cannot enter without a judicial warrant. Student records are also designated as private and cannot be accessed without a judicial warrant.
- **Designating a Point of Contact:** PGCPs will designate a specific staff member to be responsible for all communications and interactions with immigration agents, ensuring a centralized and controlled response.
- **Improving Communication and**

Family Notification: The district will develop a communication plan to inform families when immigration agents are present at a school. Additionally, PGCPs will immediately notify a student's emergency contact if they believe the student has been detained by immigration agents.

- **Enhancing Safety Protocols:** To ensure physical safety, schools will initiate a "shelter in place"—moving everyone inside and locking all external doors while class continues—if immigration agents are within 1,000 feet of school property. This applies to all school property, including buildings, athletic fields, playgrounds, parking lots, walkways, and school buses.
- **Providing Training and Resources:** PGCPs will provide training to all staff to ensure they understand the new policy. The district will also provide students and families with information about their rights within the public school system, along with information about community resources, including free

and low-cost legal services. Furthermore, families will receive information about Standby Guardianship, allowing a trusted adult to be legally responsible for a student if their parent or guardian is detained.

"This policy represents months of careful design created in consultation with those most deeply impacted by the aggressive, racially motivated deportation machine," said We Are CASA's Director of Education, Shannon Wilk. "It was designed in recognition that our children cannot fully participate in their school community and their own academic growth while battling chronic fear and anxiety. It represents an authentic desire to protect all students, particularly our Black and brown students, in a practical and culturally responsive manner."

"As a father and interim superintendent, I know that a child cannot learn if they are living in fear. Our mission in Prince George's County isn't just to hand out diplomas; it is to nurture the soul of this community," said Interim Superintendent Dr. Shawn

Joseph. "When we talk about these policies, we aren't just talking about legal protocols or administrative boundaries—we are talking about a sacred trust."

This policy prioritizes student safety, dignity and access to education. At a time of uncertainty for immigrant families, Prince George's County Public Schools has set clear rules that keep schools focused on learning, not enforcement. It offers a model for how districts can protect students while complying with state law.

With over 190,000 lifetime members across 46 U.S. states, CASA is a national powerhouse organization that builds power and improves the quality of life in working-class Black, Latino/a/e, Afro-descendant, Indigenous, and immigrant communities. CASA creates change through its power-building model, which blends human services, community organizing, and advocacy to serve the full spectrum of its members' needs, dreams, and aspirations.

Ocean State Job Lot Donates 33,000 Seed Packets to Maryland Master Gardeners

By LAURA WORMUTH
University of Maryland Extension

What started as a routine stop for discounted seeds turned into one of the largest donations the Master Gardeners of Maryland program has ever received.

Rachel Rhodes, University of Maryland Extension (UME) Master Gardener coordinator in Queen Anne's County, had gone into Ocean State Job Lot after learning that seeds were 40% off. With limited funding and no major seed sponsor for the year's upcoming seed swap, an annual event to support home gardeners in diversifying their personal plots, Rhodes was prepared to use reserve funds to obtain additional seeds for the spring plantings.

"I send out mass emails to about 38 seed companies every year," Rhodes said. "If they say yes, I might get 10 or 50 seed packets. Usually about nine companies bite, which isn't bad. But it's never a giant donation."

This year was different.

A Random Ask—and a Remarkable Yes

Rhodes approached her local store manager to ask about a donation—her typical strategy when seeking support.

"The manager said I'd have to contact corporate offices in Rhode Island," she explained. "I didn't even know they had a charitable foundation."

After visiting the company's website, she reached out to the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation. "It doesn't hurt to ask," she said. "If they say no, we move on."

Instead, they said yes—in a big way.

The Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation donated 33,000 seed packets, valued at approximately \$66,000, along with spring-flowering bulbs worth another \$2,000. The seeds will be divided among Maryland's 24 county Master Gardener programs—about 1,300 packets per county.

"We began donating seeds over 10 years ago in our home state to the Master Gardener Program at the University of Rhode Island," said the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation Vice President of Corporate Giving, David Sarlito. "As part of our Sow and Grow program we aim to help Master Gardener Programs in the communities where we operate."

"That's a huge donation for a state program," Rhodes said. "I never expected a company to be so generous."

A Community Investment

While many counties host annual seed swaps, the impact of the donation extends far beyond those events.

Master Gardeners across Maryland support school gardens,



Master Gardener teams in Queen Anne's County sorting the seeds for distribution across the state.

demonstration gardens, community gardens, and "Seed to Super" programs. They also partner with mobile libraries and food pantries to reach residents facing food insecurity. Rhodes hopes to distribute seeds not only at public seed swaps but also through local food banks and pantries.

Food insecurity in Maryland has grown significantly. The Maryland Food Bank estimates that one in eight Maryland residents experience food insecurity, with some estimates suggesting one in three Marylanders are struggling with food costs. "We have Master Gardener volunteers across the state that are involved in community gardens—putting seeds in their hands to distribute out to the community, or use for

teaching, has the potential to support food-insecure residents across our state," Rhodes said. "These 33,000 seeds will be used for countless community initiatives," she said. "They're supporting all of this work—not just seed swaps."

"Giving back is central to our mission. We believe in supporting local communities to help them thrive. These donations are a tangible way to provide resources directly to those who can make a real difference in their neighborhoods," said Sarlito. "We hope this donation will support educational outreach and hands-on gardening projects across Maryland, helping Master Gardeners teach communities about gardening and fostering local food production."



PHOTOS CREDIT UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION

The donation includes a wide variety of vegetables—corn, tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, broccoli, cabbage, peas, and more—along with flower seeds and spring-flowering bulbs.

Some of the most exciting items are curated variety packs, such as heirloom garden collections that combine sunflowers, zucchini, and tomatoes—ideal for beginners who want crops that grow well together. The foundation also included seed tape, a dissolvable strip embedded with tiny seeds. "That would be great for senior centers," Rhodes said. "It's not just middle-aged people facing food insecurity, many seniors are, too—and this makes it easy to get started."

Thanks to one ask, and one generous response, tens of thousands of Maryland residents will have access to seeds this growing season. From school gardens to senior centers, food pantries to backyard plots, the donation will help communities grow not only food, but resilience and beauty across the state.

For more information on University of Maryland Extension's Master Gardener programs, go to <https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/home-and-garden-information-center/master-gardener-program/>, and to find local programs, go to <https://extension.umd.edu/locations/> and choose your county of residence.

Chefs from A1

als, with winning recipes recognized for their creativity, flavor, and feasibility for school menus.

Many Culinary Challenge recipes go on to be adapted for real school meal programs, giving students a direct role in shaping healthier cafeteria food.

WHO: 2026 Culinary Challenge Winners—Lunch Category

1st Place: Potomac Middle School (Prince William County Public Schools)

• Teachers/Advisors: Cassey Jones and Ashley Ellison

• Winning Dish: BBQ Tofu Sliders and Strawberry Fields Salad with Chickpeas and Vinaigrette

2nd Place: Lightridge High School (Loudoun County Public Schools)

• Teachers/Advisors: Kelsy Zaremski and Maria Gore

• Winning Dish: Cauliflower and White Bean al Pastor Tacos

3rd Place: Luther Jackson Middle School (Fairfax County Public Schools)

• Teacher/Advisor: Neha Mathur

• Winning Dish: Zesty, Zingy, Zen Bites over Rice, Crunchy Cukes, and Pearls of Sunshine

Community Choice Awards Smart Snack Winner: Oxon Hill High School (Prince George's County Public Schools)

• Teacher/Advisor: Julie Onwonga

• Winning Dish: Tropi-Berry Cup Breakfast Winner: Freedom High School (Prince William County Public Schools)

• Teacher/Advisor: Terri Benedict

• Winning Dish: Eagle Harvest Rollups Judges & Event Leadership

• Event Chair: Chef Kevin Tien, Moon Rabbit

• Culinary Mentor: Ype Von Hengst, Co-Founder and Chef, Silver Diner

2026 Judges:

• Jamie Leeds, Founder, Hank's Oyster Bar + Hank's Pasta Bar

• Paolo Dungca, Executive Chef and Owner, Kayu

• Matt Adler, Chef-Partner, Caruso's Grocery + Osteria Morini

• Robbie Reyes, Executive Chef, Lucky Danger

• Alex Levin, Executive Chef, Sidwell Friends School

• Sara Bennett, Director of School and Community Nutrition Programs, Virginia Department of Education

• Sydney Ide, 2025 Culinary Challenge

First-Place Winner, Herndon High School WHEN: February 28, 2026

WHERE: Hayfield Secondary School, Alexandria, Virginia

WHY: The Culinary Challenge brings together students, educators, chefs, and school nutrition leaders to redesign what school meals can be. By working within the same constraints faced by school districts, including nutrition standards, cost limits, and large-scale preparation, students gain hands-on experience designing meals that are both healthy and practical for cafeterias.

Since launching in 2012, the Real Food for Kids Culinary Challenge has empowered hundreds of students across the DMV to reimagine school food as nutritious, culturally diverse, and student-driven.

Real Food for Kids is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality of school meals by bringing students, school nutrition professionals, and chefs together to create healthier, scratch-cooked meals that work in real cafeterias across the Washington region. Learn more about our work at <https://www.realfoodforkids.org/>. You can also follow along at <https://www.instagram.com/realfoodforkids>.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

I'll be 70 on New Year's Day. When Should I Apply for Social Security?

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 was born on January 1, 1958, so I believe Social Security considers me to be 70 as of December 2027. I'm planning on filing when I turn 70 to maximize the payment. I'm not sure if I should start in December, with the first payment in January 2028. Or should I start in January with the first payment in February 2028? I know I can start anytime, however I don't want to file before the maximum payment, even by one month. **Signed: Wanting Maximum Benefit**

Dear Wanting: You are correct that if your birth date is January 1, 1958, you are entitled to your full age 70 benefit in December 2027. So, if you claim your SS benefit to start in December 2027 you will get your maximum benefit amount and you will receive that payment in January 2028 (on the 2nd Wednesday). Basically, anyone born on the first of any month is considered to have been born in the previous month for SS benefit purposes.

You can apply for your benefits up to 4 months prior to your birthday month, and SS usually suggests applying about 3 months in advance to give them time to process your application. When you complete the application, you will specify the month you wish your benefits to start, so applying early does not present a problem. You can either call SSA at 1.800.772.1213 to make an appointment to apply over the phone, or you can apply online at www.ssa.gov/apply.

The one thing you might want to do is put the following in the "Remarks" section of your application for SS benefits: "I do not wish to receive any retroactive Social Security benefits. I want my benefits to become effective with the first month of my age 70 eligibility (December 2027 because I was born on the first of January)."

Including that remark will ensure that your benefit will be the full maximum amount you are entitled to at 70 years of age, without any reduction. And I congratulate you on choosing a strategy which maximizes your monthly benefit and will likely provide you with the most in cumulative lifetime Social Security benefits.

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.

Excellence from A1

Chairwoman of the Awards Committee was excited. "2025 tested the industry, but REALTORS proved their strength—showing up, staying committed, and delivering for their clients every step of the way." said Taylor.

Thank you to our numerous sponsors who helped make the evening a resounding success.

Top Winners Included:

Individual General Brokerage—Platinum (Over \$12 million):

- #1. Hazel Shakur—\$46.2 Million
- #2. Wemmy Collins—\$38.8 Million
- #3. Tracy Goins—\$38.3 Million

Team General Brokerage—Platinum (Over \$15 million):

- #1. GK Legacy Group—\$43 Million
- #2. The Franklin-Anderson Group—\$40.8 Million
- #3. DAPO GROUP—\$22.1 Million

Prince George's County Association of REALTORS® (PGCAR) is the voice for REALTORS® in Prince George's County, Maryland. Representing more than 3,500 real estate professionals in the national capital area, PGCAR is an affiliate of the Maryland and National Association of REALTORS®. We are proud to serve our members and our community, and work to ensure professionalism in the industry. Our volunteers and staff work to offer services to real estate professionals and to provide avenues for our members to become more successful. We proudly work to promote and protect homeownership and private property rights.

SCORE

Bookkeeping for Small Business 04/21/2026
April 21, 2026, 12 p.m.

Online • Free **Registration:** <https://www.score.org/washingtondc>
Join this webinar to learn practical, real-world strategies for managing your own bookkeeping with confidence. Retired CPA and Certified SCORE mentor Cornel Mhley will guide you through:

- Setting up your books properly from Day 1
- Reconciling accounts and catching errors before they grow
- Understanding your Profit & Loss and what it's really telling you

Housing Authority of the City of College Park Awarded \$3.15 Million in Federal Funding 2026 for Attick Towers Renovation

By MICHELLE CRITTENDEN-JOHNSON
Housing Authority of the City of College Park

The Housing Authority of the City of College Park (HACCP) proudly announces that it has been awarded \$3,150,000 in Fiscal Year 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funding, secured by U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks and Congressman Glenn Ivey (all D-Md.), for the renovation of Attick Towers Apartments, a critical affordable housing community serving seniors and residents with disabilities.

"There are too few affordable housing options that meet the needs of our seniors and community members with disabilities. That's why we fought to secure over \$3 million in direct federal funding to support the renovation of Attick Towers. This investment will help modernize these homes, improve accessibility, and ensure College Park residents have a safe, stable housing option that allows them to live with dignity and independence," said Senator Chris Van Hollen, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The project was included in the FY26 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Spending

Bill, recently passed by Congress and signed into law by the President of the United States. This significant federal investment will support long-planned improvements aimed at enhancing safety, accessibility, and overall quality of life for Attick Towers residents.

"We are deeply grateful to Senator Chris Van Hollen and Senator Angela Alsobrooks for their leadership and unwavering support of this project," said Michelle Crittenden-Johnson, Chief Executive Officer of the Housing Authority of the City of College Park. "This funding represents a transformative opportunity for our residents and ensures that Attick Towers can continue to provide safe, dignified, and affordable housing for years to come."

The renovation of Attick Towers will focus on modernization, infrastructure improvements, and accessibility enhancements designed to better serve elderly and disabled residents. The project aligns with HACCP's broader mission to preserve and expand quality affordable housing opportunities within the City of College Park and the surrounding region.

HACCP extends its sincere appreciation to its federal partners, community supporters, and residents whose voices helped make this achievement possible, and looks forward to the positive impact these improvements will bring for years to come.

Venture X College Park and Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation Celebrate Grand Opening of First Flexible Office Space in Prince George's County

By RHETT BUTLER
PGCEDC

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (March 23, 2026)—Venture X®, in partnership with the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC) and the Prince George's Chamber of Commerce, hosted the grand opening and ribbon cutting of Venture X College Park, the County's first flexible office and coworking space, on Friday, March 27, 2026.

Located in Discovery District Maryland, Venture X College Park represents a major addition to Prince George's County's growing ecosystem for entrepreneurs, startups, and innovative businesses. The new 13,898-square-foot facility is designed to support companies at every stage of growth while fostering collaboration, connectivity, and access to resources.

"Venture X College Park represents the kind of entrepreneurial infrastructure that helps businesses launch, scale, and thrive in Prince George's County," said Ingrid S. Watson, President & CEO of the Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation. "Spaces like this foster collaboration, innovation, and opportunity by bringing together entrepreneurs, startups, and growing companies in one supportive environment. We are excited to welcome Venture X to the Discovery District and celebrate the continued growth of our county's innovation economy."

Owned and operated by Moniesha Jackson Shorter, Venture X College Park was created to provide more than just workspace—it offers a community-driven environment designed to empower entrepreneurs and small business owners.

"When I began my own founder journey in 2018, I realized how powerful it would have been to have a space that offered not just an office, but a true community of support," said Moniesha Jackson Shorter, Owner and Principal of Venture X College Park. "Venture X College Park was created to be the kind of environment I needed in those early days, a place where entrepreneurs, small business owners, and innovators can connect, collaborate, and grow. I believe that when entrepreneurs have access to the right resources, networks, and support systems, they are better positioned to succeed. I'm proud to bring that kind of energy and opportunity to Prince George's County and to help build a thriving ecosystem for the next generation of business leaders."

The facility features 60 private offices ranging in capacity from 1 to 5 people, shared coworking space, two conference rooms, a training room, and a café-style lounge that doubles as an event space. Additional amenities include free parking, electric vehicle charging stations, and convenient access to nearby dining options, creating a modern, dynamic environment for today's workforce.

Strategically located near the University of Maryland and key research institutions, Venture X College Park is positioned at the intersection of innovation, talent, and opportunity—further reinforcing Prince George's County as a destination for business growth and entrepreneurship.

Venture X® is a shared workspace and flex office community that is a blend of a boutique hotel and modern office styles, with a high level of design that feels professional and welcoming. Each Venture X location features beautifully designed spaces and a highly developed environment within a community where people love coming to work every day. Venture X is part of Vast Coworking Group™, the world's largest privately-owned franchisor of coworking spaces and the third-largest network globally. For more information about Venture X, visit www.venturex.com, and for information about franchise opportunities, please visit www.venturexfranchise.com.

Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation (PGCEDC)'s mission is to cultivate and promote a strong local economy supporting entrepreneurs' and businesses' growth and prosperity. It is dedicated to strengthening communities through business development and job creation. For more information about Prince George's County Economic Development Corporation's services to local companies, visit www.pgcdc.com.

Maryland Mortgage Program Recognizes Top 2025 Lender and Realtor Partners at Annual Awards Ceremony

By PRESS OFFICER
Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development

NEW CARROLLTON, Md. (March 26, 2026)—The Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development recognized the top performing lender and realtor partners of 2025 today during the Maryland Mortgage Program's annual awards event.

For more than 40 years, the Maryland Mortgage Program has provided sustainable, fixed-rate mortgages, primarily to first-time homebuyers. Program borrowers receive access to down payment and closing cost assistance and, if eligible, student debt relief through the popular Maryland SmartBuy initiative.

"Every year the Maryland Mortgage Program helps thousands of people achieve the dream of owning a home," said Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development Secretary Jake Day. "I'm grateful to our lenders, realtors, title companies, housing counselors and other industry partners who work with the Department on a daily basis to make that dream possible for so many Marylanders."

The Maryland Mortgage Program offers competitive rates and critically important down payment assistance options responsive to an ever-changing housing

market. The program has averaged \$1 billion in mortgage loan reservations annually and provided 3,070 mortgages for Maryland homebuyers in Fiscal Year 2025.

The program was recently awarded Outstanding Achievement in Affordable Homeownership as part of U.S. Bank's 2026 Housing Finance Agency Homeownership Awards. The awards celebrate organizations that drive strong loan production outcomes and help expand access to sustainable homeownership within their communities.

The Maryland Mortgage Program 2025 Top Performers include:

TOP PERFORMING LENDER
First Home Mortgage Corporation

GOLD TIER LENDERS
First Home Mortgage Corporation
NFM, Inc. dba NFM Lending & Main Street Home Loans
Direct Mortgage Loans, LLC
Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation
Lower, LLC
Primary Residential Mortgage, Inc.
FitzGerald Financial, a Division of TowneBank Mortgage

SILVER TIER LENDERS
Embrace Home Loans

First Heritage Mortgage, LLC
Ameris BankCrossCountry Mortgage, LLC
Prosperity Home Mortgage, LLC
AnnieMac Home Mortgage Movement Mortgage, LLC

RISING STAR
All Western Mortgage, LLC

TOP PRODUCING LOAN OFFICER
Alexis Vining
Pamela Vroman – Direct Mortgage Loans, LLC
Tammi Printz – First Home Mortgage Corporation

TOP PRODUCING PROCESSOR
Ashley McGregor – Fairway Independent Mortgage Corporation
Genie Bapisteller – NFM Lending / Main Street Home Loans

TOP PRODUCING REALTOR
James Archie – Own Real Estate
Diego Rodriguez – Spring Hill Real Estate
Jhojan Coronado – Fairfax Realty

TOP PRODUCING SMARTBUY LOAN OFFICER
Ryan Paquin – First Home Mortgage Corporation

