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The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc. Receives \$2 Million Federal Award to Complete Transformative Nonprofit Incubator Complex

U.S. Senators Chris Van Hollen and Angela Alsobrooks Secure FY2026 Congressionally Directed Spending to Complete the Ivy VINE Training Center and Office Suites in Suitland

By CHERYL PETTY GARNETTE
The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc.

SUITLAND, Md. (June 9, 2026)—The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc. (Charities), a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering youth, strengthening families, and building generational success since 1986, today announced it has been awarded \$2 million in Fiscal Year 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) funds to complete construction of the Ivy Village Incubator for Nonprofit Excellence (Ivy VINE) complex.

The Ivy VINE is a groundbreaking capacity-building initiative designed to strengthen the economic power of nonprofits in Prince George's County, Maryland, particularly those serving communities of color. This \$2 million federal investment will fund completion of two purpose-built facilities: the Ivy VINE Training Center and Podcast Studio, which will accommodate up to 50 participants in a state-of-the-art learning environment, and the Ivy VINE Office Suites, a two-story facility at 6112 Walton Avenue that will provide shared office space for up to 10 nonprofit organizations with meeting rooms and collaborative work areas.

A Proven Model for Nonprofit Excellence

The Ivy VINE is more than a building. It is a proven model for transforming the nonprofit sector. Since launching its inaugural capacity-building program in February 2023, the Ivy VINE has guided its first cohort of six small, emerging nonprofits through an intensive two-year program of workshops, one-on-one coaching, and peer learning in areas including board development, financial management, strategic planning, grant writing, and program evaluation.

The results have been remarkable. All six Cohort 1 nonprofit partners completed the program in December 2024 with 100% reporting they would recommend the Ivy VINE to other organizations. Participating nonprofits, all of which entered the program with disengaged boards and no experience submitting grant applications to local officials, emerged with strengthened governance, documented strategic plans, active community partnerships, and new funding. Every organization that applied for grants through the program received at least \$5,000 in awards, exceeding Charities' own 80% target. Two organizations have



PHOTO COURTESY THE IVY COMMUNITY CHARITIES OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, INC.

Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen presenting the \$2M check to The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County Board, Staff, and Supporters.

See AWARD Page A2

Smithsonian Names Maryland Educator Dr. Lynson Ablaza as Inaugural 2026 Educator Excellence Award Recipient

By PRESS OFFICER
Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian Institution has named Dr. Lynson Ablaza, a science educator at International High School at Largo in Prince George's County, Maryland, as the inaugural recipient of its Smithsonian Educator Excellence Award.

The annual Smithsonian Educator Excellence Award honors a Pre-K–12 educator who demonstrates exceptional instructional excellence, creativity and impact. The award recognizes educators who meaningfully integrate Smithsonian collections, research and educational resources across science, history, art and culture to create engaging, inquiry-driven learning experiences.

"Dr. Ablaza exemplifies all of the



COURTESY SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION
Dr. Lynson Ablaza

exemplar teaching practices we want to celebrate," said Dr. Monique M. Chism, the Smithsonian's Under Secretary for Education. "He transforms Smithsonian research and resources into meaningful, hands-on learning experiences that promote curiosity, critical thinking and deep understanding. As our inaugural recipient, he sets a strong and inspiring standard for this award in the years ahead."

Ablaza was selected for his innovative teaching and sustained collaboration with scientists and educators across the Smithsonian, including at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, the Smithsonian's National Zoo and Conservation Biology Institute and

See RECIPIENT Page A5

Governor Moore Announces Nicole Earle as Chair of the Maryland Racing Commission—First Woman and First African American in This Leadership Role

By PRESS OFFICER
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (June 5, 2026)—Governor Wes Moore today announced the appointment of Nicole Earle to chair the Maryland Racing Commission. She is the first woman and first African American to serve in this state leadership role, and her tenure begins on June 10, 2026. George Mahoney, outgoing chair, will continue to serve as a Commission member.

"Nicole Earle is the right leader at the right time and I am proud to ap-

point her as Chair of the Maryland Racing Commission," said Gov. Moore. "This appointment is a historic milestone for Maryland and I am confident her expertise and experience will guide her while leading our horse racing industry."

"The horse racing industry is in an exciting chapter of transformation as we prepare for a revitalized Pimlico," said Maryland Department of Labor Secretary Portia Wu. "Ms. Earle's extensive expertise in development finance and community investment makes her uniquely suited for this role.

She brings a vital perspective that ensures Maryland racing remains an economic engine that uplifts local communities and that we uphold the integrity of this Maryland tradition."

Earle is the President and CEO of Dominion Real Estate and Dominion Community Development Corporation and has over two decades of experience in the real estate industry. She has financed and managed over \$1 billion in real estate projects focusing on eco-

See CHAIR Page A6

Council Chair Krystal Oriadha Announces 'Planted: Mothers First Initiative Summit' Focused on Maternal Wellness, Identity, and Community Support

June 20 Summit to Provide Resources, Community, Wellness Experiences, and Honest Conversations About the Realities of Motherhood

By PRESS OFFICER
Prince George's County Council
Media

Prince George's County Council Chair Krystal Oriadha (District 7), in partnership with Nu You and Community on the Frontline, will host the inaugural Planted: Mothers First Initiative Summit on Saturday, June 20, bringing together mothers from across Prince George's County for a day dedicated to healing, empowerment, community, and practical resources.

The summit is part of Chair Oriadha's Mothers First Initiative, a countywide effort focused on improving the health, well-being, and support systems available to mothers throughout Prince George's County.

Planted: Mothers First Initiative Summit was created to address the realities many women face after becoming mothers, including navigating identity shifts, balancing family responsibilities, managing mental health, overcoming isolation, and finding community in a world that often celebrates motherhood while overlooking the needs of mothers themselves.

Throughout the day, attendees will participate in candid panel discussions led by mothers, experts, and community leaders covering topics including:

- Drowning in Motherhood: Managing the Mental and Emotional Load
- Reclaiming Your Identity Beyond Motherhood

EVENT DETAILS

Planted: Mothers First Initiative Summit

Date: Saturday, June 20

Time: 9 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Location: 3501 University Blvd E, Hyattsville, MD 20783

Registration is required and space is limited:

<https://www.mothersfirstinitiative.com/event-list>

- The Pressure of Social Media Validation and Comparison
- The Fourth Trimester: What Happens After the Baby Arrives
- Building Healthy Support Systems and Community
- Prioritizing Maternal Mental Health and Self-Care

In addition to educational sessions, participants will enjoy wellness-focused experiences including a fragrance bar, chair massages, networking opportunities, and connections to local organizations and resources designed to support mothers and families.

"Too often we celebrate motherhood without creating spaces to sup-

See SUMMIT Page A3

INSIDE

Brandywine-Aquasco

In & Around Morningside-Skyline

Towns and Neighbors, Page A2

Prince George's County Track Standout Voted Refuel With Chocolate Milk Athlete of the Year

American Dairy Association North East has named Brooklyn Little of Elizabeth Seton High School of Bladensburg, Md. Girls' Field Athlete of the Year.

Community, Page A3

Prince George's County Native Matthew Crittenden Sets Sail as Mainstage Performer on Disney Wish

SUPERIMPOSED: A Juried Exhibition of Collage

Community, Page A4

Part 5—A Region Reshaped: Federal Layoffs in Maryland a Year Later Federal Workers Continue to Turn to Faith Institutions a Year After Mass Layoffs

Business and Finance, Page A5

TOWNS *and* NEIGHBORS

Brandywine-Aquasco by Audrey Johnson 301-922-5384

SUNNY SUMMER NIGHTS

County Executive Aisha N. Braveboy presents Sunny Summer Nights with the Office of Community Relations. SUNSET DANCING AND WIND DOWN free and open to the public. Hand & Line Dancing, Music, DJ, Give-A-Ways, Sun, Fun from 6–8 p.m. Rain or Shine. Bring your own chair.

Come out and join us at North County Mall at Prince George's first Tuesdays July 7 & August 4 National Night Out. South County Plaza at National Harbor first Wednesdays July 1 & August 5. Ritchie Station 9 Capitol Heights: (1st Thursday of the month, July 2, and August 6). For official details and up-to-date location maps, check the Prince George's County Events Calendar.

JOHN E. HOWARD DAY

Join us for a fun-filled community celebration Saturday, June 20, 2026, at John E. Howard Community Center, 4400 Shell St., Capitol Heights 20743. For Questions, call: 301-735-3340. Activities will include Moon Bounce, Gaming Truck, Yard Games, and more. Free Food while supplies last.

SUMMER TEEN FEST

Summer Teen Fest will be held June 27, 2026, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Free for ages 13–18 at Allentown Splash, Tennis & Fitness Park, 7210 Allentown Road, Fort Washington, 20744. Teens can enjoy games, challenges, entertainment, food and more. Water Games, Foam Party, Roadster Course.

REGISTER TODAY! Spaces are limited. To register, visit pgparksdirect.com and enter the Ticket Code, visit pgparksdirect.com and enter the Ticket Code: SRLS-SPEC-GA-20260627. Bring swim clothes for water activities and Youth Rec. Card. For more information, contact Christine.Roland@pgparks.com or call 301-203-6048.

The Department of Parks and Recreation encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Register a minimum of two weeks prior to the program start dates to request and receive a disability modification.

BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University is a public, historically Black university in Prince George's County of the U.S. state of Maryland, north of Bowie. It is part of the University System of Maryland. Founded in 1865, Bowie State is Maryland's oldest historically Black university and one of the ten oldest in the country. Address: 14000 Jericho Park Road, Bowie, Maryland 20715. Mascot: Bulldog. President: Aminta H. Breaux. Wikipedia.

AN ALUMNI SOCIAL AFFAIR

Bowie State University National Alumni Association Prince George's Alumni Chapter presents an Alumni Social Affair Brunch, Sunday, June 28, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Martin's Crosswinds, 7400 Greenway Center Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland. Tickets: \$80.00 (\$20 Taxable Deductible contribution funds to support the PGCAC Scholarship Fund). \$PRINCEGEORGEACAC, TREASURER@PGCAC.ORG. Rose Coleman 301-518-4861. Marketingmanager@PGCAC.ORG or any Chapter Member.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Happy Birthday to Stephnie Samuel, Jasmine Taylor, Sandra

Miley, Ruth Wilson, Rendell Crawford, Rita Pinkney, June Fauber, Louise Gordon, Sally Fauber Lucas, Atara Serene Scott-Bourne, Avis Balkcom-Williams, Tawana Lindsay, Naasir Greenhill, Carol Bell, Barbara Marsh, Beverly Baker, Madison Falby, Raymond Porchea, Alston Knight, Kimberly Fields, Kendra Neal, Christopher Quarm, Rodney Tyree, Shiloh Bell, Barbara Harris, Rahsaan Thomas who are Clinton United Methodist Church Members celebrating birthdays in June.

STEPPIN' SATURDAYS

Heir Steppaz presents STEPPIN' Saturdays Line Dance Class every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Studio Heir 11408 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland. Come join us for an energy-filled morning of line dancing with Steppaz at Studio Heir Event Venue in Fort Washington, Maryland. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, this event is perfect for anyone looking to groove and move while having fun. Get ready to put your boots on and learn some new moves while enjoying the company of fellow line dance enthusiasts. Visit www.studioheirevents.com for more information.

BADEN COMMUNITY CENTER

Baden Community Center features picnic areas, picnic tables, picnic shelter, basketball court, gym, baseball/softball diamond, horseshoe pits, playground, soccer, soccer field, fitness room and healthy vending.

Programs are licensed before and after school kids' care programs, line dancing, TKA Karate, Xtreme Teens Programs, Yoga Programs, summer playground. Annual special events are Baby Bunnies Spring Fling, Breakfast with Santa, Celebrate Baden Day and Trunk or Treat.

Contact us: Baden Community Center, badencc@parks.com. Physical Address: 13601 Baden-Westwood Road, Brandywine, Maryland 20613. Phone: 301-888-1500. Maryland Relay 7-1-1 for customers who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability. The hours are Monday to Thursday 2–9 p.m. Friday 2–7 p.m., 7–10 p.m. (Teens), Saturday 9 a.m.–2 p.m., Sunday closed.

CLINTON UMC VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join us at Clinton United Methodist Church for Vacation Bible School (Theme: SNOWBALL MOUNTAIN CHALLENGE) Monday, July 13–July 17, 2026, from 9 a.m.–12 p.m. Pre-K–5th grade. Phone (301) 868-1280 Register today at <https://cumcmd.org/> or contact Audrey Johnson Vacation VBS Director at 301-922-5384 or ajohnson12906@yahoo.com. Church address is 10700 Brandywine Road, Clinton, Maryland. Rev. Melaina Trice, Pastor.

IT'S A GRAND OLD FLAG

June 24, 2026, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. students will discover the origins of the American flag, from its inception at the dawn of the revolution to the many changes since, and learn about key figures who shaped the symbol of our nation. Ticket Price: \$5/Child. Address is Harmony Hall Art Center, 10701 Livingston Road, Fort Washington, Maryland 20744.

"HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO ALL FATHERS"



PHOTO COURTESY THE IVY COMMUNITY CHARITIES OF PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, INC.

Executive Director of The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc., Cheryl Petty Garnette (L), Maryland Senator Chris Van Hollen (C), President of Alpha Kappa Alpha - Iota Gamma Omega Chapter, Dr. Kristi L. Matthews (R)

Award from A1

already earned Maryland Nonprofits' Standards for Excellence recognition, and two more are on track to apply in 2025. Cohort 2, including six new nonprofit partners, started the capacity building program in September 2025 and will continue through December 2027.

The urgency for a facility like the Ivy VINE is clear. Prince George's County is home to approximately 5,000 nonprofits, yet approximately 75% report annual revenues below \$25,000 and have no paid staff, according to Maryland Nonprofits. The new Ivy VINE complex will give these organizations a physical home—a professional, resource-rich environment where they can grow, collaborate, and build the infrastructure needed to deliver greater impact in their communities.

"I congratulate The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc. and Iota Gamma Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated®, its affiliated organization, for this tremendous accomplishment. This \$2 million award will help The Ivy VINE Training Center and Office Suites open the door to valuable services and benefits for nonprofits who in turn will be well-positioned to share their expertise and services with the community in a variety of important ways. On behalf of the 16,000 members of the North Atlantic Region of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, where Ivy Community Charities is located, we are extremely proud to have an influential partner making such a positive impact on the residents of Prince George's County."—Elicia Pegues Spearman, North Atlantic Regional Director, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

"I am extremely grateful that we have been awarded Congressionally Directed Spending funds in the amount of \$2 million to complete construction of the Ivy Village Incubator for Nonprofit Excellence (Ivy VINE) complex. Since 1986, our work has centered on empowering youth, strengthening families, and building generational success, and this investment allows us to expand that legacy in a transformative way. The Ivy VINE Training Center and Podcast Studio, along with the Ivy VINE Office Suites at 6112 Walton Avenue, will create a dynamic hub where nonprofit leaders, particularly those serving communities of color, can learn, collaborate, and grow. This moment represents more than funding; it reflects confidence in our vision and a bold step forward for the future of Prince George's County."—Dr. Kristi L. Matthews, President, The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc.

"The Ivy VINE is more than a building. It is an opportunity for nonprofits to grow and excel. This \$2 million award is a game-changer—not just for Charities, but for every small nonprofit in Prince George's County that has been doing extraordinary work without the tools, space, or support they deserve. We are deeply grateful to Senators Van Hollen and Alsobrooks for championing this investment in our community."—Cheryl Petty Garnette, Executive Director, The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc.

Building the Future: What the \$2 Million Will Accomplish

The Ivy VINE complex was designed by the Redlef Group Architects, a Black-owned, woman-led firm in Prince George's County, and groundbreaking for the project was held on September 26, 2021. The \$2 million federal investment will enable Charities to complete both facilities and fulfill a vision that has been years in the making:

- **The Ivy VINE Training Center and Podcast Studio** at 6118 Walton Avenue will offer a professional learning space for up to 50 participants, a podcast studio, reception area, kitchenette, and storage space. It will serve as the central hub for ongoing capacity-building workshops, cohort training, and community convenings.
- **The Ivy VINE Office Suites** at 6112 Walton Avenue will provide affordable office space for up to 10 nonprofit organizations, along with shared meeting rooms, a supply room, kitchenette, and reception area creating a collaborative hub for the county's nonprofit sector.

Founded in 1986, and proudly celebrating its 40th anniversary, The Ivy Community Charities of Prince George's County, Inc. (Charities) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering youth, strengthening families, and building generational success in Prince George's County, Maryland. Charities' programs include reading enrichment for elementary school students; team building, STEAM and leadership development for middle school girls; college and career preparation for high school students, including more than \$50,000 annually in scholarships to high school seniors and continuing college students; workshops for parents to help them support their students; a Shoe Bank where children and families in need receive new shoes; and backpacks of food items provided to Title I elementary school students so that they have food over the weekend. Charities has earned the highest level of Maryland Nonprofits' Standards for Excellence Accreditation status. For more information, visit <http://www.icpcgc.org>

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

André Jordan, Skyline resident and assistant Park Police chief

André Reynaud Jordan, of McKeldin Drive, died March 21 at the age of 81.

A D.C. native and longtime Skyline resident, André spent his early 20's with the U.S. Postal Service before switching to a career with the U.S. Park Police. He was promoted to Commander of Training and then Commander of Patrol before retiring in 1997 as the Park Police's first African American Assistant Chief.

Never one to just settle down, André joined General Services Administration that same year, spending five years as director of the Law Enforcement Division, Office of Federal Protective Services.

In addition to being an active member of numerous law-enforcement and social organizations, André was an avid sports fan and a gifted gardener who "delighted in giving away to family and friends" the fruits (and vegetables) of his labor.

In addition to the neighborhood connection, I knew André from St. Philip the Apostle Catholic Church in Camp Springs where he was very active, and very friendly. He was particularly appreciated for the several years when he ran the annual Parish Crab Feast, where everyone had a good time and nobody went away hungry.

He's survived by his wife of 63 years, Cynthia "Pinky" Jordan; children Kim, André Jr. and daughter-in-law Andrea, Aaron and daughter-in-law April, Kellie and son-in-law Joseph; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; siblings Frederick Jordan and Monica Jordan.

His funeral Mass was at Mt. Calvary Catholic Church in Forestville, with interment at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Suitland.

Former Skyline resident Chris Busky retires

The other day, I got actual, real mail from Dr. Henry "Hank" Busky, who used to live with his late wife (my friend Judy) on Elmendorf Drive in Skyline. Henry now lives in Gainesville, Va. He sent me a copy of an

article about his son, Chris Busky, from a January issue of CEO Update magazine.

Chris Busky has stepped down after spending nine years as CEO of the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), an Arlington-based medical association for doctors and researchers who work on infectious diseases.

His tenure was at IDSA was an alarming period in the field, covering the COVID pandemic, the 2022–23 Mpox outbreak, and the recent resurgence of measles. In addition to navigating those challenges, Chris also prides himself on having reshaped the IDSA culture to help make it more inclusive and equitable. On his watch, IDSA membership and revenue increased substantially, expanding their efforts to support research and outreach.

Prior to the IDSA, Chris spent a decade at the Heart Rhythm Society in Washington, a nonprofit devoted to education and advocacy for cardiac arrhythmia, where he rose to executive vice president and chief operating officer.

After all that, it's understandable if Chris might be ready to take some time off. Even though he loved his work at IDSA, he wants to be more available to help his wife manage a major health issue, as well as to spend more time with his father, Hank, who is now 92 years old.

Congratulations to Chris, and good luck to him and his family!

Sheila does Ocean City with old friends

Earlier this spring, my daughter Sheila Mudd spent three days in Ocean City with Mary (Stakem) Crane and Jill (Gilmartin) Booth, visiting Peggy Eskew and her daughters Dee and Mary Catherine. She had a great time hanging out with a whole bunch of people from the old neighborhood. I hope nobody had to call the police on them.

New grocery store coming to Capitol Heights

Capitol Heights hasn't had a large grocery store since late last year, when Shoppers

Food Warehouse in Coral Hills Shopping Center closed. Now, Richard Landon tells me New Grand Mart is planning to open a location in that space. New Grand Mart is a local chain of international supermarkets that was founded in 2013. They have four locations in Virginia, and Capitol Heights will be their third Maryland location. Their website boasts of their "variety of fresh produce, fish, meats, and ethnic specialty items" with "high quality, value and selection." They stock Latin American, African, and Asian foods, in addition to grocery staples useful across many cultures.

Morningside food truck update

Morningside is back down to only one resident food truck, as Delicias Las Hermanas has left the parking lot of My Morningside Beer & Wine and moved to the Exxon at Allentown and Old Branch.

The original Morningside food truck, Ruth Mexican Food, is still going strong at 6815 Suitland Road, specializing in traditional Mexican-style tacos, among other good things. If you haven't eaten there yet give them a try!

Information on Sonny Jordan?

A little while ago, Suzanne Kenney, who lives in Skyline, shared with me that her neighbor Stanley "Sonny" Jordan died. I've tried to find more information about him, but I'm coming up blank. If anybody out there knows more about him, please pass it along and I'll give him a proper obituary.

Milestones

Happy Birthday to Stephanie Phipps, June 19; Christian Nichols, June 20; grandson Conor McHale, Aletheia Fadness, Mark Witherow Sr., and Antonio Jackson, June 21; Gary Fadness, June 22; Edson Cook, June 23; Gloria R. Johnson, June 24; Michael Taylor and Larry Frostbutter, June 25.

Happy Anniversary to Calvin and Debbie Brown, June 20; Tim and Becki Cordero, June 23; Mary and Mike Dawes, June 23.

COMMUNITY



IMAGE COURTESY [HTTPS://WWW.MOTHERSFIRSTINITIATIVE.COM/](https://www.mothersfirstinitiative.com/)

Summit from A1

port mothers,” said Chair Oriadha. “Planted is about ensuring mothers have an opportunity to pour back into themselves while building meaningful connections with other women who understand the journey. Through the Mothers First Initiative, we are creating opportunities for mothers to find community, access resources, and prioritize their own healing, growth, and well-being.”

Chair Oriadha also highlighted the importance of collaboration in bringing the summit to life.

“The success of this summit is rooted in partnership,” she said. “We are grateful to work alongside Nu You and Community on the Frontline, two organizations led by incredible mothers who understand firsthand the realities many women face. Their leadership, vision, and commitment to supporting mothers has helped transform this idea into a meaningful experience that will impact families across Prince George’s County.”

The summit is intentionally designed to create a welcoming, judgment-free environment where mothers can engage in honest conversations about the challenges and triumphs of parenting while connecting with others who share similar experiences.

Participants will leave with practical tools, new connections, wellness experiences, and access to resources that support mothers long after the event concludes.

The Mothers First Initiative, launched by Chair Krystal Oriadha, is dedicated to advancing maternal health, supporting mothers and families, and ensuring women have access to the resources, services, and community support needed to thrive before, during, and after pregnancy. Through community engagement, advocacy, education, and direct support, the initiative seeks to create a county where mothers are valued, supported, and empowered. For more information and events, please visit <https://www.mothersfirstinitiative.com/>

Prince George’s County Track Standout Voted Refuel With Chocolate Milk Athlete of the Year

By JANENE GEISS
American Dairy Association North East

NEW YORK, N.Y. (June 10, 2026)—American Dairy Association North East has announced the winners of the second annual Refuel with Chocolate Milk Athletes of the Year, including **Brooklyn Little** of Elizabeth Seton High School of Bladensburg, Md.

A total of 24 student-athletes across three disciplines were nominated based on performances at The Armory in New York City during the 2025–26 indoor track and field season. Following a public vote that wrapped up in May, the final six honored athletes included:

- Girls’ Sprinter of the Year: Jane Hickey | The Ursuline School | New Rochelle, N.Y.
- Boys’ Sprinter of the Year: Cameron Homer | Bullis School | Potomac, Md.
- Girls’ Distance Runner of the Year: Naomi Douglas | LaGuardia High School | New York, N.Y.
- Boys’ Distance Runner of the Year: Ryan Sykes | Horace Greeley High School | Chappaqua, N.Y.
- **Girls’ Field Athlete of the Year: Brooklyn Lyttle | Elizabeth Seton High School | Bladensburg, Md.**
- Boys’ Field Athlete of the Year: Owen Proskin | Plum Senior High School | Plum, Pa.

The Refuel with Chocolate Milk Athlete of the Year Awards are one example of how dairy farmers, represented by American Dairy Association North East, partner with The Armory to support student-athletes in their pursuit of excellence.

The partnership also helps raise awareness of chocolate milk as a science-backed recovery beverage. With an ideal ratio of carbohydrates to protein, chocolate milk helps rehydrate the body, repair muscles, and replenish energy after intense activity.

“As dairy farmers, we take great pride in



PHOTO COURTESY AMERICAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION NORTH EAST

Winner of the second annual Refuel with Chocolate Milk Athletes of the Year Brooklyn Lyttle of Elizabeth Seton High School of Bladensburg, Md.

providing nutritious products that help fuel the ambitions and achievements of young athletes,” said dairy farmer and American Dairy Association North East Board President Audrey Donahoe, whose family operates ATRASS Farm in Clayville, N.Y. “Chocolate milk, in particular, plays a crucial role in their performance and recovery.”

“Everyone here at The Armory is delighted to team up with local dairy farmers and share the wonderful product of chocolate milk as a delicious and effective refuel and recovery beverage for all of our athletes,” said Rita Finkel, Co-President of The Armory.

In addition to honoring this year’s Refuel with Chocolate Milk Athlete of the Year Award winners, American Dairy Association North East served as the presenting sponsor of the Refuel with Chocolate Milk Officials Hall of Fame Invitational in January.

Through its ongoing partnership with The Armory—which hosts over 220,000 athlete

Brooklyn Lyttle | Elizabeth Seton High School | Bladensburg, Md.

Lyttle visited The Armory three times during her season, tallying four individual wins across two field and two sprint events. A University of South Carolina commit, Lyttle had a double victory at the Holiday Classic, winning both long jump and triple jump. Her other victories at The Armory occurred at the Garden State TC Invitational where Lyttle won the long jump and 55-meter dash. Lyttle also had the opportunity to compete in the triple jump at the 118th Millrose Games.

visits annually—the association engages athletes through on-site branding, signage, chocolate milk sampling, and as a sponsor of the Refuel Zone, where athletes and spectators alike can purchase chocolate milk to recharge after competition or simply enjoy nutritious refreshments.

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COMMUNITY

Prince George's County Native Matthew Crittenden Sets Sail as Mainstage Performer on Disney Wish

By PRESS OFFICER
Matthew & Crissy Crittenden

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (June 11, 2026)—Matthew Crittenden, a 20-year-old professional dance artist from Prince George's County, Maryland, is preparing to set sail as one of the newest cast members and mainstage performers aboard Disney Cruise Line's Disney Wish. Known on social media as Thatboy Matthew, Crittenden will begin performing June 15 through December 14 in featured shipboard productions and special entertainment experiences.

Crittenden's performance lineup aboard Disney Wish includes Set Sail, Aladdin, The Little Mermaid and Seas the Adventure, along with special performances such as the Pirate Deck Party, Halloween and holiday shows. He recently spent two months in Toronto, Canada, training at Disney's rehearsal studio in preparation for the opportunity.

"This opportunity represents years of dedication, training and love for the performing arts," said Crittenden. "I am excited to bring energy, storytelling and joy to audiences from around the world aboard Disney Wish."

Crittenden began dancing at age 5 and has trained and performed

with renowned dance schools and companies, including The Washington School of Ballet, The Alvin Ailey School, Debbie Allen Dance Academy, Dance Dimensions and the Washington Wizards WizKids Dance Team. His stage credits include The Nutcracker, Cinderella, Debbie Allen's Brothers of the Knight, Washington National Opera's AIDA, Broadway Across America's A Christmas Story, MC Hammer's House Party concert and the Special Olympics ceremonies in Los Angeles.

A rising senior at Boston Conservatory at Berklee, Crittenden is pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Contemporary Dance and is expected to graduate in May 2027. He is a 2023 graduate of Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, D.C., where he was recognized as a notable alumnus and received the D.C. Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in Performing Arts. Disney Wish offers three- and four-night itineraries from Port Canaveral, Florida, to Nassau, Bahamas, and Disney's private island destinations.

Matthew Crittenden is preparing to set sail as one of the newest cast members and mainstage performers aboard Disney Cruise Line's Disney Wish.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MCCRAEMEDIA



SUPERIMPOSED: A Juried Exhibition of Collage

Opens June 26 with Local, National, and International Artists

By KATE TAYLOR DAVIS
Pyramid Atlantic Art Center

HYATTSVILLE, Md. (June 11, 2026)—When Pyramid asked for submissions for a show of collage art, over 200 artists answered the call with over 700 pieces of work. Artist-Jurors Carlos Hernandez, Shanna Strauss, and Chadwick Tolley carefully reviewed the submissions, ultimately accepting about 10% to craft a wide-ranging exhibition that explores the act of layering.

SUPERIMPOSED opens Friday, June 26, 2026 with a reception from 6 - 9 pm. The exhibition runs through August 9 in Pyramid's Helen C. Frederick Gallery. Gallery hours are Wed & Thu, 10 - 8 pm and Fri - Sun, 10 - 6 pm. Pyramid is located at 4318 Gallatin Street, Hyattsville, Maryland 20781. For more information and an RSVP link, visit pyramidatlantic.org or call 301-608-9101.

"As a place that champions printmaking ... we love layers!," laughs Pyramid Atlantic Executive Director, Kate Taylor Davis. "We were hoping for submissions that spoke to our core disciplines of printmaking, papermaking, and book arts, while also pushing them in new directions. And we were not disappointed."

While there are some traditional prints in the exhibition that use collaging to craft their imagery, the work has a lot of material exploration, including fabric, currency, thread, plant matter, stamps, lotto tickets, gum wrappers, and dictionary pages. These media are expertly collaged through methods such as printing, sewing, gluing, and screwing. Superimposed exemplifies how practices can converge and be enhanced by the art of collage.

Artists from across the country and parts of Europe were selected, including several who use Pyramid's studios to make their work. Pyramid finds it exciting to bring together the work of local artists, some of whom make work in its studios, and those from farther afield. Hung together, there's a dialogue created between the individual pieces as well as from wall to wall. In many ways the exhibition itself is a layering - one of lived experiences, geographic influences, and modes of expression.

ARTISTS: Mark Banfill | Maria Barbosa | Veronica Barker-Barzel | Brian Barr | Suzanne Bartlett | Jeffrey Berg | Matthew Bindert | Jerry Bleem | Nathalie Borozny | Kate Bramante | Mark Bravante | Sharon Burton | Quinton Butler | CamCurated | Elizabeth



PHOTO COURTESY PYRAMID ATLANTIC ART CENTER

Mark Wagner's "The Court of Common Pleas," 4.25x3.5" collaged dollar bills.

Castaldo | Mei Mei Chang | Marika Christofides | Eliza Clifford | Destiny Crockett | Jesse Ryan Crosby | Michael Crossett | Patricia Dahlman | Julianna Dail | Jared Davis | Elizabeth DeLuna | Dorian Diaz | Ben DiNino | Fiocco | Chas Foster | Jonathan Fuentes | Marie-Béatrice Gauthiez | Caitlin Gill | Alisa Golden | Beth Hansen | Abby Huston | Khadija Jahmila | Barbara Justice | Racquel Keller | Caitlin Kelly | Noah Lagle | Warren Linn | Brittany Mona' | Tim Moran |

Kelly Moran | Marjon Mudde | Rashad Ali Muhammad | Jillian Ohl | Nathan Pietrykowski | Walter Plotnick | Sarah Presley | Phil Rached | Francisco Ramirez | Sharon Robinson | Ellen Rosenthal | Cameron Sands | Evi Sargeant | Gail Shaw-Clemons | Lisa Sheirer | Alexandra N. Sherman | Gloria Shows | Neil Stavely | Brett Taylor | Liam Thomas | Jordan Thornton | UMD Print Media Students | Maddy Underwood | Laura Unger | Mark Wagner | Michael Waraksa | Jeffrey Wheeler | Cassie Normandy White | Julie Wilkinson | Rebecca York | Barbara Ziselberger

About The Jurors

Carlos Hernandez: A Texas-based serigraphy artist, Carlos has been showcased through a variety of gallery shows and projects that include the music industry, restaurant and retail design, and corporate work. He is a founding partner of Burning Bones Press and has served as an instructor of Screen Printing at Rice University, Department of Visual and Dramatic Arts.

Chadwick Tolley: Chadwick is based in Georgia and teaches Printmaking and Drawing at Augusta University. Chadwick's work is created using screen printing techniques, combined with digital tools, collage and painting. Currently he is working on various projects that include solo and group exhibitions, zines and portfolio exchanges. He has exhibited widely across the US and his work is included in over 15 public collections.

Shanna Strauss: A Tanzanian-American-Canadian mixed media artist and printmaker, Shanna's work centers on honoring and celebrating the stories and experiences of women of color. She lives and works in Oakland, California/Huchiu, unceded Ohlone territory and her art has been shown at Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, SomArts in San Francisco, and SPARC Gallery in Los Angeles, among others, as well as featured in documentaries and several publications.

Pyramid is proud that each of these Jurors has previously had featured exhibitions in its gallery, and that a work from each will be part of the SUPERIMPOSED exhibition.

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.

'Come S.I.T. Awhile' Is a Free Grief Retreat to Help Women in the Community Find Healing

By ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN
Hospice of the Chesapeake

PASADENA Md. (June 9, 2026)—Chesapeake Life Center is excited to host "Come S.I.T. Awhile," a grief retreat from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **July 25** at the Center for Hope & Healing on Hospice of the Chesapeake's John & Cathy Belcher Campus, Pasadena, Maryland. The retreat is made possible by Sisters In Truth, a traveling seminar retreat organization dedicated to making grief care accessible and affordable for women.

Founded by Morgan Banks, a Baltimore-based artist with a master of fine arts degree from MICA, Sisters in Truth was born from Banks' own journey through profound loss. While navigating her graduate program, she lost four family members in a span of a year. Knowing she needed help, she struggled to find affordable counseling until she learned about Roberta's House, a Baltimore-based grief support center. She was diagnosed with prolonged grief disorder, a condition that is widely

underdiagnosed among Black women. Her journey inspired her to create accessible grief resources for women nationwide. "Sisters in Truth is a bridge," said Banks. "We wanted to bring community and resources together to provide holistic options and inexpensive tools that women can use every day, so that getting help doesn't become another source of stress."

This all-day retreat will welcome a maximum of 20 participants for an intimate, immersive day of healing. The retreat is designed around foundational grief care and engages all five senses through a rich lineup of interactive programming, including:

- **Horticultural therapy**—A hands-on session with horticultural therapist Cathy Allen exploring how caring for plants can nurture the self.
- **Art workshop**—After learning to care for plants and oneself, Cheyenne Adams, the founder of SOLACE, will lead participants to create a personalized plant display to take home.
- **Movement therapy**—Guided by Danielle Branch from The



PHOTO COURTESY HOSPICE OF THE CHESAPEAKE

Morgan Banks, founder of Sisters In Truth, stands with her photographs.

- Self-Care Academy.
- **Reiki Healing Sister Circle**—Reiki master Tiarra A. will share the healing energy of this ancient Japanese practice.
- **Sound healing**—Includes a sound bath, led by Tiarra A.

- **Panel discussions**—A panel of authors and grief professionals, including Eleanor Haley, Alexis Solis, Sadija Smiley and Sharon Harris, will discuss their work and personal experiences with loss.
- **Doula perspectives**—Birth doula Nahid of Doula Noire and death doula Sharon Harris talk about support at life's most significant transitions.

Continental breakfast will be provided by Sisters In Truth and lunch will be provided by Boo'Gee Taste Catering, a woman-owned business with its own story of grief and resilience. "It's a day of support—mind, body, and spirit," said Jennifer Ward, a grief counselor with Chesapeake Life Center. "People aren't just talking. It's interactive, it engages all the senses, and it gives women a real space to connect, release, and find community."

The event is made possible through a grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, which means the event is free for women to attend, though \$5 is requested to secure a spot. The

fee will be refunded at the event or participants can opt to donate it to Hospice of the Chesapeake. To register or learn more, email griefinfo@chesapeakehospice.org or call 1-888-501-7077.

Chesapeake Life Center, a pro-

gram service of Hospice of the Chesapeake, serves hospice family members and the community with bereavement services and activities aimed at enhancing the quality of life for those grieving the loss of a loved one. For details, visit www.chesapeakehospice.org.

The Prince George's Post

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BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty:

Why Don't We Have a Minimum Social Security Benefit?

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 think we should have a Social Security baseline of \$2,500 for each person. When I retire, my Social Security benefit will not be enough to survive. There are many of us who worked low paying jobs all our lives because we raised families and only started saving later in life. Considering all the money our government wastes on other countries and welfare programs for people who have not worked, it seems unfair that they will not reward those of us who contributed to society all our lives. **Signed: Needs More Social Security.**

Dear Needs More: For information, the concept of a "minimum" Social Security benefit is not new and, indeed, already exists—but it is one which few beneficiaries qualify for. The so-called "special minimum benefit" was meant to lift low-earning workers above the poverty line, but less than 32,000 SS beneficiaries (out of about 59 million retirees) currently qualify. That's because Social Security's benefit formula turns out to be more generous because it is based on lifetime earnings (wages), while the "special minimum benefit" program is based on consumer prices. That causes the SS benefit formula to provide a higher SS benefit than is provided by the "special minimum benefit" option. In other words, people get a higher benefit because their SS benefit is based upon their actual lifetime earnings vs. an artificially created special minimum benefit. In short, the existing SS benefit formula usually provides more than the established "special minimum benefit."

The SS benefit program is based on each person's average monthly income over their lifetime. However, it is very important to understand that the program is also designed to provide a higher monthly benefit to those with a lower lifetime income. Thus, the percentage of "replacement income" for those with lower lifetime earnings is more than it is for those with higher lifetime earnings. Typically, a lower-lifetime income person will get about 40% of their average pre-retirement monthly income as their Social Security benefit, whereas a higher-income person will get about 20% or less of their pre-retirement monthly average income. In this way, Social Security is already a "progressive" program. But it's important to understand also that Social Security, from its beginning, was never meant to provide 100% of a person's income needs in retirement. Thus, each beneficiary should plan to supplement their retirement income in other ways (such as retirement savings, investment income, working longer, working part-time, etc.).

Having said that, it is also important to know that Social Security is a completely self-sustaining program and not dependent on general public funding, which would make it more susceptible to political shenanigans (imagine giving re-election seeking politicians easy access to Social Security's separately held resources). While it is certainly true that the government spends freely on "welfare programs" for those who have not worked, Social Security is not a program which is dependent on government largesse. Rather, it is a benefit which is earned by working and contributing to the program, which provides retirement benefits based upon each person's average lifetime work income.

If you expect financial difficulties when you retire, I encourage you to visit this website sponsored by the National Council on Aging (www.benefitscheckup.org). Here you can enter your zip code and find many public programs which you might be eligible for where you live, including assistance with healthcare costs, housing, utilities, etc.

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

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

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PART 5—A REGION RESHAPED: FEDERAL LAYOFFS IN MARYLAND A YEAR LATER

Federal Workers Continue to Turn to Faith Institutions a Year After Mass Layoffs

Faith groups from synagogues to Black churches stepped up last year to help their congregations impacted by the mass federal layoffs. The effort continues.

By ALINE BEHAR KADO and
IRIT SKULNIK
Capital News Service

Soon after the mass layoffs of federal workers in Maryland last year, Ebenezer A.M.E. Church handed out \$100 grocery gift cards and offered dinner boxes for community members in need.

"If you suddenly lose employment and you don't know when the next paycheck is or how to make ends meet, you definitely rely on your faith," said Kenneth Brown, church administrator for Ebenezer in Fort Washington.

When thousands of Marylanders suddenly lost their jobs, faith institutions across the state stepped up to help. They gave out gift cards, hosted support groups, organized networking sessions and offered prayers.

A year later some houses of worship continue their efforts to help former federal workers get back on their feet. Leaders said providing aid over the months has strengthened community relationships.

"That has lasting impact," said Uri Topolosky, rabbi of Kehilat Pardes synagogue in Rockville. "The way people felt they were cared for made them feel this is a community or this is a faith community that will be there for them in difficult times and in beautiful times."

Maryland, home to one of the nation's largest federal employee populations, was hard hit by the Trump administration's move to downsize the federal workforce.

Brown said some people leaned on faith when they felt "backed into a corner."

Ebenezer, an African Methodist Episcopal Church, has continued to support its members still struggling by providing \$2,050 food cards every two to three months.

"We continue to provide prayer for them and try to provide whatever kind of job resources," Brown said.

United Methodist Churches in the region have awarded \$150,000 to 67 congregations through their Love in Action Grant program.

"The grant was a result of the federal worker layoffs and the threat to SNAP benefits," said Alison Burdett, director of communications for the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides food benefits to low-income families.

"There's a whole wealth of resources that we offer," said Burdett, adding that the grant will provide financial assistance, legal aid and pastoral care, among other resources.

Though applications for grants have closed, Burdett said they may reopen as needed. She said they are able to fund the grant through church offerings.

Recipient from A1

the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center. Through these partnerships, he integrates field research, scientist mentorship and real world scientific investigations into classroom learning focused on biodiversity, environmental science and conservation.

His approach emphasizes inquiry, collaboration and applied learning, enabling students to engage directly with authentic scientific questions. Reviewers noted his consistent ability to cultivate intellectual curiosity and empower students to see themselves as contributors to scientific discovery.

District leaders praised the recognition as a reflection of Ablaza's leadership and the strength of instructional practice across Prince George's County Public Schools.

"This recognition highlights Dr. Ablaza's exceptional skill as an educator and his ability to create rigorous, engaging learning experiences," said Dr. Melissa Nankin, the principal of International High School. "His work reflects a commitment to academic excellence and meaningful instruction that prepares students for future success."

The award is supported by the Horace Mann Educator Excellence Award Endow-



PHOTO COURTESY OF EBENEZER A.M.E. CHURCH

Community members stood in line in October 2025 to get gift cards from Ebenezer A.M.E. Church during the federal furlough.

"People turned to their houses of worship"

Throughout the layoff crisis, religious institutions played a pivotal role in providing spiritual reassurance and resources for workers, said Ron Halber, chief executive officer of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington.

"When it was happening, and I was in synagogue, I saw a slight rise in participation," said Halber. "I've heard anecdotally that throughout the region, people turned to their houses of worship to just get some spiritual assistance."

At Emory United Methodist Church, leaders set up a fund to help laid-off federal workers.

"We felt compelled to respond in some sort of way," said Joseph Daniels Jr., pastor of the church, also known as Emory Fellowship. "Whether it was rent, whether it was food, whether it was something else, we just set up a separate fund for folks to be able to access if they had need."

Daniels said he noticed during the layoffs a rise in attendance at the church, which is in Washington, D.C., but has many members from Maryland.

"I find that when there is suffering, people tend to go to church," he said.

Daniels said the only way people get through those tough times is "by going deeper spiritually, by grounding ourselves in the Word, grounding ourselves in worship, grounding ourselves in spiritual disciplines of prayer and fasting, of taking care of our bodies, of exercising."

Jewish institutions like JCRC, the Jewish Social Service Agency and the Jewish Community Center rallied around members, providing free legal services, voca-

tional training and networking opportunities for those who had been laid off, regardless of their spiritual beliefs, said Halber.

Topolosky said the first thing Kehilat Pardes did to support impacted community members was set up weekly Zoom calls.

He said the calls were to help create a stable space where those laid off could check in and share feelings. The sessions also helped the synagogue staff understand what people needed so they could best leverage resources.

"It was really a beautiful and helpful space," Topolosky said. "It was also a way for me, as the rabbi, to know who in my community was really hurting."

For Michael Weinraub, who was laid off from his federal contracting job last February, the weekly sessions were a chance to support others.

Weinraub said that the group offered the opportunity to build relationships within the synagogue.

"You've got some people who are just really, really desperately struggling," said Weinraub, of Rockville. "They benefit from having others who are going through something similar, but maybe having a different experience."

Halber, of JCRC, said some affected community members continue to network and support one another. Some found new jobs, others took early retirement and some were rehired by the federal government.

"There are some people who are still looking," said Halber. "It may not be exactly the way they want it to end, but I think most people at this point that I have heard have found their new path."

Capital News Service reporter Ian Ferris contributed to this story.

ment, established by the Horace Mann Educators Foundation to recognize outstanding educators and their lasting impact.

"At Horace Mann, we believe educators deserve to be recognized for the lasting impact they have on the lives of their students," said Marita Zuraitis, president of the Horace Mann Educators Foundation. "By supporting the Smithsonian Educator Excellence Award Endowment, we're helping ensure that outstanding educators are honored for generations to come. We congratulate Dr. Lynson Ablaza as the inaugural recipient, whose work reflects the lasting impact educators have on their students and communities."

Ablaza will receive a \$5,000 cash award and support to attend the Smithsonian's National Education Summit, "Together We Thrive: Towards a More Perfect Union," Tuesday, July 14–Thursday, July 16. The award will be presented during an evening reception at the Smithsonian's Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture Wednesday, July 15.

For more information about Ablaza, visit the International High School's website: <https://www.pgcps.org/schools/international-high-school-at-largo>. For more information about the Smithsonian's Na-

tional Education Summit, including the session lineup and free registration—open now, visit its website: <https://smithsonianeducation.swoogo.com/ses2026/about>.

The Smithsonian Institution's Office of the Under Secretary for Education (OUSE) advances the Smithsonian's mission to increase and diffuse knowledge through educational leadership, research and collaboration. OUSE works across the Smithsonian's museums, research centers and programs to develop and share high-quality educational resources, professional learning opportunities and partnerships that support teaching and learning nationwide. Through its work, OUSE helps connect learners of all ages to the Smithsonian's collections, scholarship and expertise. The Horace Mann Educators Foundation is an independent charitable organization established in 2020 by Horace Mann Educators Corporation to recognize the dedication of educators who help each student reach their full potential. The foundation advances education and community well-being by addressing basic needs, reducing systemic barriers, supporting educator professional development and wellness, and championing causes important to Horace Mann Service Corporation employees.

EarthTalk® Spotting Social Media Misinformation on Climate Change Q&A

By Rachel Berliner | June 7, 2026

Dear EarthTalk:

How can I spot social media misinformation regarding climate change and what can I do to combat it?

—Maurice Maloney, Providence, RI

Climate misinformation is a term that refers to false or deceiving claims about climate change, sustainability, or climate solutions. Disinformation spreads rapidly and creates tension around environmental issues. Misinformation also “fuels political extremism and puts lives at risk,” according to COP30 Special Envoy for Information Integrity Frederico Assis.

Researchers at Texas A&M University and Ripple Research, a non-profit advisory firm, found that misinformation is typically centered around two narratives, claiming either environmental research is invalid or solutions are not viable. “One of the most powerful [types of disinformation] is saying that it’s too late,” says UN Verified Champion Maria Clara Moraes. These false claims are hindering advancements towards climate change solutions and sustainability initiatives, as recognized in November 2025 at COP30, the United Nation’s 30th Climate Change Conference. “There is a broad recognition that disinformation can affect and compromise every part of the COP process,” says Assis, “diplomatic negotiations, the action agenda, or mobilization and summits. All out efforts will be at risk if we fail to tackle disinformation properly, which stems from denialism.”

Communities and organizations around the globe are working

together to fight the spread of misinformation. For example, COP30 hosted twelve nations who created a program against misinformation and signed the first Declaration on Information Integrity on Climate Change. Brazil’s Secretary of Digital Policies João Brant says the goal is to “create a wave of truth”. Brazil was one of the many initiators of the Declaration. The initiative’s global fund has generated support from around 100 countries who have submitted about 450 proposals, according to UN News.

In addition to global action, individual decisions can weaken the influence of misinformation. If a post or article lacks a credible source, employs strong emotional appeals, presents logical fallacies, or includes cherry-picked data, conduct more research to determine the statement’s credibility. Readers can use fact-checking websites such as Science Feedback and FactCheck to help assess a source’s reliability. If a reader chooses to respond to or comment directly on the misinformation, they must act diligently to not inadvertently magnify the false claim on a social media algorithm. For example, when responding to misinformation, do not repeat the false claim itself. Experts say anyone commenting on a misinformation post or article should address it with a “truth sandwich”: start by relaying the truth, address the false claim without repeating it, and then end the comment with a truthful statement. Commenters should also include credible sources and scientific studies when responding. Additionally, many social media algorithms allow users to report posts that include false claims. Readers can work together to stop misinformation by staying alert online, acting diligently, and responding to false claims in an effective way.



PHOTO CREDIT: PEXELS.COM

We can all get better at detecting misinformation about climate change.

CONTACTS: How to fight climate change misinformation, <https://www.edf.org/how-we-can-fight-climate-change-misinformation>; Spotting and Stopping the Spread of Climate Misinformation, <https://www.netzero.im/latest/spotting-and-stopping-the-spread-of-climate-misinformation/>; Climate Disinformation Booms As Extreme Weather Threats Grow, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/emmanuella-cott/2025/02/12/climate-disinformation-set-to-boom-this-year/>; ‘A wave of truth’: COP30 targets disinformation threat to climate action, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/11/1166351>.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org

Calendar of Events

Veterans Benefits Information Seminar

Date and time: Saturday, June 20, 2026, 9 a.m.–3 p.m.
Description: Staffed by DAV national service officers, our information seminars provide professional support throughout the claims and appeals process. Veterans attending a seminar should bring identification, their Social Security number and any other pertinent documentation regarding their military service. DAV membership is not required to utilize these free services.
Cost: Free
Location: DAV Chapter 7, 8205 Laurel-Bowie Rd, Bowie, MD 20715
Contact: DAV.org.

Men’s Health Summit and Resource Fair

Date and time: Saturday, June 27, 2026, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
Description: In recognition of National Men’s Health Month, the Prince George’s County Office of Community Relations invites residents to attend the Men’s Health Summit and Resource Fair. This free community event will provide valuable health information, screenings, resources, and wellness activities designed to help men and their families live healthier lives. Attendees will have the opportunity to connect with healthcare professionals, community organizations, and wellness experts while accessing free services and resources.
Special Guest: Christian Okoye (#35)
Former Kansas City Chiefs Hall of Fame Running Back
Register at: <https://forms.office.com/g/21JNr5A3TP>
Ages: ALL ages
Location: Kentland Community Center, 2413 Pinebrook Avenue, Landover, MD 20785
Contact: Montré Dupree, Email: ymdupree@co.pg.md.us

University of Maryland Memorial Chapel

All-Event Open Houses
Date and time: Saturday, July 18, 2026 from 12–2 p.m.
Description: The University of Maryland Memorial Chapel invites the College Park community and beyond to attend our upcoming All-Event Open Houses. Whether you are planning a wedding, a memorial service, or a special milestone celebration, our historic Chapel offers a serene and stunning backdrop for your most cher-



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEMORIAL CHAPEL

ished moments. During these open houses, visitors are welcome to explore our beautiful sacred spaces, speak with our professional staff about event coordination, and envision how our venue can bring their unique visions to life.
Cost: Open house is free. We welcome you to make a tour appointment. We look forward to welcoming you to the Memorial Chapel and helping you begin the journey of planning your next meaningful event. For more information, please visit our website or contact the Chapel main office.
Location: 1101 Memorial Chapel, College Park, MD 20742
Contact: chapel@umd.edu, 301-314-9866, chapel.umd.edu

2026 Price Benowitz Back-to-School Carnival

Date and time: Wednesday, August 19, 2026, 5–8 p.m.
Description: Join us for a free community event for local families. The event will provide free school supplies, family-friendly activities, entertainment, community resources, and opportunities for families to prepare for the upcoming school year.
Cost: Free. Register at: <https://pricebenowitz.com/back-to-school-carnival/>
Audience: Students, parents, families, educators, and community members
Location: District Heights Recreation Center, 2000 Marbury Drive, District Heights, MD 20747
Contact: <https://pricebenowitz.com/back-to-school-carnival/>

Chair from A1

conomic growth, affordable housing, and community revitalization. She has served as a member of the Maryland Racing Commission for a year.

A prominent leader in the Park Heights community, Earle previously served as a Commercial Community Development Lender for Fulton Bank and as Development Manager for the Housing Authority of Baltimore City, where she managed complex projects like the \$400 million Uplands mixed-income development. She holds a master’s degree in management and public policy with a concentration in financial management and economic development from Carnegie Mellon University.

“It is an honor to serve as Chair of the Maryland Racing Commission during this important period for Maryland racing,” said incoming Maryland Racing Commission Chair Nicole Earle. “I look forward to working with my fellow Commissioners and industry stakeholders to uphold the integrity of racing, support a safe and vibrant racing environment, and contribute to the success of Maryland racing as investments in Pimlico and Laurel shape a sustainable future for this longstanding Maryland tradition.”

“I am thrilled to welcome Ms. Earle as our new chairperson, after a year of service as a Commission member,” said Maryland Racing Commission Executive Director Chris Merz. “Her impressive background in large-scale project analysis and strategy will be a vital asset to this leadership role. I look forward to working closely alongside her as we honor Maryland’s rich racing heritage while building a modern and sustainable future for the sport.”

The chair of the Maryland Racing Commission leads the nine-member body appointed by the Governor to regulate thoroughbred, standardbred and pari-mutuel wagering in Maryland. Key responsibilities include presiding over the commission during meetings, overseeing hearings on appeals, and participating in decisions involving licensing, disciplinary actions, racing dates, purse structures, and regulatory approvals.

Maryland Racing Commission is dedicated to safeguarding health and safety in horse racing, enforcing rules for fair racing, and protecting the public through transparent betting operations. Committed to the highest standards of equine welfare, jockey safety, and regulatory integrity, the Commission supports horse racing as a cherished Maryland tradition and a high-value economic driver that supports thousands of jobs across the state.

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