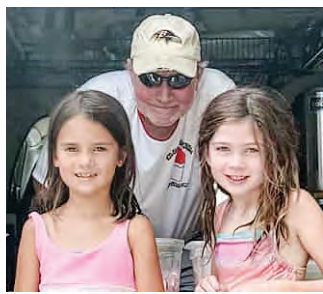




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AUGUST 2025

Channeling Grief For Good: Severna Park Family Fundraises For Library Transformation Following Tragic Loss

By Meredith Winter

As they processed the devastation of losing their first child, Edward and Jessica Nie quickly began to channel their grief and the outpouring of kindness from those around them into something that would not only memorialize their beloved son but also benefit their hometown of Severna Park.

The Nies, who go by Eddie and Jess, grew up in Severna Park and were friends from middle school onward, graduating from Severna Park High School at the top of their class in 2006. They went separate ways for college, but job opportunities brought them to Baltimore, and they began dating.

Eddie, an investment banker, and Jess, an accountant, married in 2015 and moved home to Severna Park in 2020. They welcomed their first child, Hugh, on December 8, 2023. They describe their little boy as “joy personified” because of his contagiously cheerful personality.

Hugh spent many days with his parents and his nanny, Joanna Young, at the Severna Park Library, where he completed the “1,000 Books Before Kindergarten” program just after his first birthday. He loved reading, enjoyed library programs like “Babies in Bloom” and “Toddler Time,” and met most of his



Jessica and Edward Nie welcomed their first child, Hugh, into the world in December 2023. He passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in May 2025. The Nies described Hugh as “joy personified” because of his happy, cheerful spirit.

friends at the library.

Jess shared that Hugh was an “easy” baby who slept and ate well; Eddie added that Hugh grew to be an active toddler who never had any medical complications.

Though many parents of young children are familiar with SIDS, or sudden infant death syndrome, the Nies had never heard of SUDC — sudden unexplained death in childhood. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are about 400 cases of SUDC annually in the U.S., making it extremely rare.

Yet on May 30, 2025, happy, healthy 18-month-old Hugh

Nie passed away in his sleep from SUDC.

Family and friends were quick to offer the Nies love and support following their loss. Their neighbors in Linstead on the Severn created a MealTrain to provide food. As they were inundated with many kindnesses, Eddie and Jess determined to channel their grief and the goodness of others into something benevolent.

Together, they set out to refresh the place Hugh adored: the children’s area at the Severna Park Library.

“Initially it started because we wanted to find something

» **Continued on page 9**

School Redistricting Moves Closer To Fruition With Latest Proposals

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

Some Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) students will move to new schools during the 2026-2027 school year, though they might be different schools than families expected.

AACPS is in the middle of a redistricting process. Phase II — which includes the Severna Park, Broadneck, Annapolis, Arundel, Crofton, South River and Southern clusters — ramped up in January when AACPS shared three redistricting proposals created by private consultant WXY. The school system then gathered public comments, and this July, AACPS officials outlined Superintendent Mark Bedell’s two recommendations.

The two newest options are a win for one group of families and a disappointment for others.

Previously, one redistricting option included moving Jones Elementary graduates to Severn River Middle School instead of Severna Park Middle School. The Jones community is safe from changes in Bedell’s proposals.

Board of Education of Anne Arundel County member Dana Schallheim explained that not every area is exempt from changes, though.

“The first involves the Cypress Creek neighborhood of Severna Park that may move from Folger McKinsey Elementary to Severna Park Elementary to alleviate overcrowding in Folger,” she wrote in her column in this month’s Severna Park Voice. “Also, some neighborhoods in the current Belvedere Elementary School catchment area are being moved to Arnold Elementary School to alleviate overcrowding in Belvedere.”

Bedell’s suggestions are not final. The Board of Education will hold an August workshop, select an option and hold a public briefing in September, and finalize the decision in November.

Why Is Redistricting Necessary?

Anne Arundel County is a growing school district. The current enrollment of over 85,000

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SPECIAL SECTION: HEALTH, BEAUTY & FITNESS

In this edition of the Severna Park Voice, readers will find an expanded health, beauty and fitness section full of news and wellness tips. Flip to **page 19** to find articles on mental health resources, heart health, eye care, and other topics from Voice reporters and industry experts.



Margueritte Mills - Volunteer Of The Month

Every month, the *Voice* recognizes the good work of a local volunteer to honor *Voice* founder and lifelong Severna Park resident Margueritte Mills.

The Margueritte Mills Volunteer of the Month is proudly sponsored by Affordable Outdoor Kitchens.



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Lori Kemp Continues A Family Legacy At Partners In Care

By Jaina Peveto

Arnold resident Lori Kemp started volunteering at the Anne Arundel County location of Partners In Care's (PIC) Upscale Resale Boutique about nine years ago, but her family's history with the nonprofit goes back much further.

Kemp's mother, Betty Todd, volunteered until she was 88 years old, filling out birthday cards for members of the organization. However, it wasn't until after Todd's passing that Kemp was drawn to volunteering. That same year, Kemp retired from her job at the Naval Academy, where she worked for 41 years.

"I needed something to do with all my free time," Kemp explained.

Partners In Care helps older adults live independently in their own homes. Members provide transportation, social engagement or home repairs, as well as donations or volunteer hours at one of Partners In Care's boutiques. Affordable clothing, accessories and home goods are sold at these boutiques to directly support the nonprofit's mission.

Kemp primarily works in the Anne Arundel boutique. She's usually busy straightening the store, putting away clothes from the dressing rooms and displaying merchandise. She also sorts books in the donation area and brings them to the store. When Kemp started, she volunteered once a week, but she slowly added days until she reached four shifts a week.

"She always has a happy smile," PIC volunteer Mary Abel said about Kemp. "She does a lot. She does everything!"

In a single boutique shift, Kemp can walk up to two and a half miles. The exercise she gets is one of her



Photos by Jaina Peveto

Above: Arnold resident Lori Kemp has been volunteering at the Anne Arundel County Partners In Care Upscale Resale Boutique for almost nine years. **Below:** Kemp donated a cedar chest to Partners In Care that belonged to her mother, former volunteer Betty Todd.



favorite parts of volunteering.

"My doctor loves it," Kemp said. "I have a lot of chronic back problems and neck problems, and the doctor appreciates the fact that I stay busy."

Kemp decided to volunteer with PIC after coming across an information table at an event called Boomer Fest, where she learned about the work done by volunteers. "(The woman at the table) told me that they had one volunteer who could not sleep at

night, so she filled out the birthday cards," Kemp said. "And that was my mom! So that was kind of strange. I just felt like it was meant to be, since that person knew Mom."

Though Betty Todd died about nine years ago, her legacy lives on in PIC's Anne Arundel boutique. The organization was looking for a cedar chest to hold artwork, and Kemp had one in her basement that had once belonged to her mother.

"I figured my mom would be happy with the cedar chest being in the store, so I donated it under the condition that they keep it in the store forever," Kemp said.

The chest displays a photograph of Betty Todd from 1940 and a note about its donation. The photo was taken and colorized by Kemp's father.

Kemp has also helped other community members get involved. She's made deliveries for friends and neighbors, introduced people to the nonprofit during yard sales, and has even helped clear hoarder houses and bring items to PIC. When the store lines get long, Kemp encourages people to volunteer.

Kemp enjoys the people she works with, and she's glad that she's been able to connect with people who volunteered with her mom and who worked with her brother, Jim Todd. "It was just funny to be volunteering side by side with someone for a period of years and just one day find out, 'Oh! She knew my brother! And oh! She's been in my house!'" Kemp said.

Kemp encouraged her brother to donate his van after he could no longer drive it. Jim Todd died in April, but he listed Partners In Care as a beneficiary for the van. It will now be used to transport people in electric and battery-operated wheelchairs.

"It's been a family affair," Kemp said.

To learn more about the services offered through Partners In Care or opportunities to volunteer, go to www.partnersincare.org.



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Stefanie Ashdown Memorial 5K Encourages Love, Hope, Kindness

Annual Event Set For Sunday, September 14

Thanks to the support of sponsors, donors, runners and walkers, the nonprofit Stef Ripple raised over \$37,000 last year during the annual Stefanie Ashdown Memorial "Do Your Best" 5K and 1-mile walk. Funds were used to spread ovarian cancer awareness, support ovarian cancer patients and their families, and keep "the ripple" going.

With that same mission in mind, the ninth annual event will be held on September 14 at Anne Arundel Community College in Arnold.

The 5K and walk also honors the legacy of Ashdown, a 1996 Severna Park High School graduate who lost her life to ovarian cancer in 2017. Ashdown's family members want to share the principles of Ashdown's life: be thankful, be helpful, be kind.

Race day will kick off with packet pickup and registration at 7:00am. A kids' fun run will follow at 8:00am, with the 5K run shortly after at 8:15am, and the 1-mile walk at 8:25am. Awards for top finishers will be announced around 9:15am. Raffles will be held onsite and will close at 9:15am.

To register or to learn more, visit www.stefripple.org/events.

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A Toast To Courage, A Night For Heroes

Earleigh Heights VFC To
Hold Gala Fundraiser On
September 12

Anne Arundel County residents can enjoy a night of music, dancing, a silent auction and food while supporting a good cause during the Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company's (EHVFC) inaugural gala on September 27 from 4:00pm-10:00pm.

With the theme "A Toast to Courage, A Night for Heroes," the event will raise money for a new station and hall that will cost \$12 million. Construction will take three years, and Earleigh Heights leadership hopes to break ground on the new building by fall 2026.

"We are trying to do this at no expense to the taxpayer, so every donation helps," said EHVFC Chief Dave Crawford.

Funds will also support apparatus, normal maintenance and other necessary purchases.

To purchase tickets or learn about sponsorship opportunities, visit ehvfc-fundraising.square.site/cocktail-fundraiser.

"Motivational Interviewing For Medical Decision Making" Topic Of Schindler Lecture

Chesapeake Life Center invites the community to the 20th annual Emily Schindler memorial lecture, "Motivational Interviewing for Medical Decision Making," presented by Christopher Wirt. The lecture will be held from 9:30am to 12:30pm on September 12 in the Fellowship Hall at Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church, located at 611 Baltimore-Annapolis Boulevard.

When someone is seriously ill or nearing the end of life, they and their loved ones often face tough medical decisions that can bring up a lot of emotions and uncertainty. Motivational Interviewing (MI) is a practical, evidence-based approach for helping people resolve ambivalence and clarify their values in a way that guides them toward positive change and growth.

This interactive session will introduce the basics of MI — what it is, how it works and how to use it. Wirt will demonstrate how MI can be especially helpful in hospice, palliative care, and hospital settings, and offer opportunities to participants for skill development. By learning how to listen deeply, ask the right questions and build trust, professionals can discover how MI can make challenging conversations more meaningful and supportive for patients and caregivers.

The annual lecture was created in 2005 through a gift to the Schindler



Christopher Wirt

family from the Saint Agnes Cancer Center. Emily Schindler was an 18-year-old freshman at Frostburg State University and a member of the SPY swim team in Severna Park when she was killed in a car accident in 2004.

Registration begins at 9:00am and a light breakfast will be provided. Maryland board social workers can earn three category 1 continuing education credits. The cost is \$30. Preregistration is required and can be completed at education.hospicechesapeake.org/

item/2025-schindler.

For details, call 888-501-7077 or email griefinfo@chesapeakelifecenter.org.

About The Presenter

Christopher Wirt is the executive branch director with Bethany Christian Services. He oversees efforts to serve children and families in Maryland and Virginia, including programs working with children who are unaccompanied refugee migrants, as well as infant and foster care adoption services.

Since 2018, he has been a member of the Motivational Interviewing Network of Trainers (MINT), an international organization committed to promoting excellence in training of Motivational Interviewing (MI). Wirt has offered MI training to a variety of professionals across the country and has presented on MI at national conferences.

Wirt's direct practice experience includes 16 years of working with children and families involved in the child welfare system, primarily in foster care and adoption services. He was a faculty member at the University of Maryland School of Social Work for 12 years and currently teaches a graduate-level MI course at the University of Buffalo. He earned his bachelor's degree in social work from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and his master's degree in social work from the University of Maryland.



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July Fourth Parade Winners Receive Prizes

In the weeks following the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce's 50th anniversary Independence Day parade, businesses around town delivered cash prizes to this year's float winners.



BEST OVERALL

The coveted title of Best Overall went to Linstead on the Severn again this year for the neighborhood's impressive "Chessie the Sea Monster" float. Nancy Greer (far right) of parade sponsor Jing Ying Institute of Kung Fu & Tai Chi presented the community with a \$500 prize.

BEST THEME

The Olde Severna Park Improvement Association won the prize for Best Theme this year for its peace-sign-studded groovy float that nodded to the '70s, when the Severna Park Independence Day parade was born five decades ago. Award sponsor Peake Speech Therapy presented the group with a check for \$500 in mid-July.



MOST PATRIOTIC

Chris Scotti (far left) and Pegah Scotti (far right) of Kitchen Tune-Up presented a \$500 check to Jeanette McDavitt and Chris Middleton, who accepted the Most Patriotic prize on behalf of the Airman First Class Nathaniel McDavitt Memorial Scholarship Fund.



Correction: In the Severna Park Voice's freestanding parade edition that was published in early July, our staff mislabeled a photo of the Airman First Class Nathaniel McDavitt Memorial Scholarship Fund float. We regret the error.

School Redistricting

» Continued from page 1

students is expected to hit over 92,000 students within six or seven years.

"When we build new schools and we open up schools, we have a policy that requires us to balance," Bedell said, "but we also know when you have overcrowding, you have no choice but to balance."

That enrollment balance is one part of the equation, along with programmatic changes mandated by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future legislation. Also, state and county governments are less likely to fund renovations or new buildings when there are empty seats available in the district.

During the initial public comment period, AACPS

considered all feedback provided by Anne Arundel County residents, yet Bedell emphasized that not everyone will be happy with the results.

"Now, I get this as a parent," he said. "People move into a community and they do their research based on a particular school. And so, when you move in that community, you're moving in that community because you want stability for your child. And what I said to folks was that in every case possible, we will try to do everything in our power to minimize the impact of redistricting, but understanding there are going to be some areas where we do not have a choice. We have to balance."

Another Chance To Weigh In

Another feedback period is open now through September 5. Anyone can share input at www.aacpsredistricting.org/webmap.

Compensation For Substandard Pet Care

David V. Diggs, Esq. and Lisa Bogan-Reohr, Esq.



Our pets are beloved members of our families. We love them and care for them as we would a child. In return, they love us and add joy to our days.

When a pet becomes ill, we may notice that it is lethargic and not eating well. In our attempt to give the best care and find answers, we take it to a veterinarian clinic for an examination. But what happens when the veterinarian fails to make a correct diagnosis?

In a recent case, our client brought his Bichon Frisé, Lulu, (all names changed) to the veterinarian because Lulu was bleeding from the mouth. The veterinarian had been treating the dog for six years. Upon examination, it was found that Lulu had suffered a slab fracture of an upper right premolar and had significant tartar buildup on her teeth.

Dr. Vet recommended dental prophylaxis and extraction of the fractured tooth. When our client brought Lulu back to the veterinary clinic for the dental procedure, a complete blood count and chemistry panel was done before the procedure. According to Dr. Vet, the blood work was normal, and he proceeded to perform the tooth extraction and cleaning. The surgery went well.

Unfortunately, Dr. Vet did not interpret the blood work and bleeding gums properly. In fact, Lulu's blood work revealed low platelets and high levels of reticulocytes, which suggested a more serious underlying disease than a broken tooth, potentially making Lulu a poor candidate for surgery. Further diagnostic tests should have been performed, which would have revealed that Lulu had hepatic lymphosarcoma/leukemia (low grade) and splenic lymphosarcoma (intermediate to high grade).

When Lulu's health continued to decline after the surgery, our client brought Lulu back to the veterinarian and further blood work was completed. Again, Dr. Vet misinterpreted the blood work, which revealed severe anemia and indicated significant infection. Dr. Vet should have recommended taking Lulu to the emergency clinic. Sadly, Lulu suffered and died.

Our client came to us, and we were able to investigate the case and obtain a settlement from Dr. Vet's veterinary malpractice insurance company. Fortunately, our client had made a complaint to the Maryland Department of Agriculture Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners, which had reprimanded Dr. Vet.

Maryland law provides compensatory damages to owners for tortious injury to or death of a pet. Currently, the cap is \$10,000. However, it will increase to \$25,000 on October 1 due to the passage of a bill in the recent legislative session. Under the law, "Compensatory damages" means: (I) In the case of the death of a pet, the fair market value of the pet before death and the reasonable and necessary cost of veterinary care, and (II) In the case of an injury to a pet, the reasonable and necessary cost of veterinary care."

If your beloved pet is injured by anyone, including veterinary care providers, you will have questions about these issues. You should consult with an attorney who is familiar with this area of the law and who will assist you in making informed decisions. If you need further information regarding this subject, contact the Law Office of David V. Diggs LLC, located at 8684 Veterans Highway, Suite 302, in Millersville. Call 410-244-1189 or email david@diggsllaw.com.

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EHVFC Carnival Brought Light To A Stormy July



The Earleigh Heights Volunteer Fire Company's annual carnival took place from July 10-19, offering opportunities for summer fun despite the rainy July weather. Community members gathered to enjoy games, rides and carnival food, taking home prizes including stuffed animals and goldfish, as well as memories of time spent with family and friends.

PHOTOS BY JAINA PEVETO

Left: The "Zipper" lit up the carnival and spun thrill-seekers through the air. Below: Carnival attendees on the "Hip Hop" slowly rose to the ride's peak, bracing for it to slam down moments later.

Right: Kids enjoyed the swings, viewing the Ferris wheel from seats high above the rest of the crowd. Bottom Right: Skylar and Seven Johnson were excited to have each won their own fish from the carnival's fishbowl toss game.



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Channeling Grief For Good

» Continued from page 1

to remember Hugh in the community,” Jess shared. “Hugh loved play kitchens. Some of the other libraries have play kitchens, but Severna Park does not have one, so we thought it would be really nice to get Severna Park a play kitchen.”

The Nies collaborated with the Anne Arundel County Public Library (AACPL) Foundation to set up a donation link for friends to give, in lieu of sending food or flowers, with the dream of funding additional improvements to the children’s area of the Severna Park Library.

Both the Nies and the AACPL and library foundation staff have been blown away by the response: As of late July, more than 500 people have donated over \$163,000 to help create what will become “Hugh’s Corner.” Gifts have come from friends, family, colleagues and strangers, from neighbors and from people as far away as Australia and the United Kingdom.

Planning for exactly what a renovated children’s area at Hugh’s hometown library might include is in the early stages — with one exception — as ideas about toys, furniture and more are considered.

“We talked with the Nies about so many things, but I can confirm one thing,” said AACPL Foundation Executive Director Cathleen Sparrow, who along with other library and foundation staff has been working with the family on the project. “Hugh loved his little mini kitchen. He loved it! And that is

something that they would like to see practically in every children’s area. And ... we will make sure there is a little play kitchen in the children’s area in his honor because he loved that so much. That’s the only decision we’ve made.”

Severna Park Library Branch Manager Samantha Zline will collaborate with the Nies and the library foundation to determine what items to select for the library.

“They are lovely, and we really appreciate that they’ve made us a part of this journey,” Zline said of Eddie and Jess. “It’s so sad, but we really appreciate that we’re part of the grieving process with them — and then they’re thinking of the library in this hard time is just amazing to me.”

Skip Auld, chief executive officer of AACPL, described the donations the foundation has received collectively as a major, transformational gift. “It’s just been incredible to see this kind of support happen. Obviously, this child was beloved, and the story of Eddie and Jessica Nie ... has touched a lot of people,” Auld said.

Auld and Sparrow explained that while the county, and to some extent, the state, provides the majority of AACPL’s funding, the library foundation is an independent charitable organization that supports the library with special things like furniture, technology, puppets for story times, and more.

“The power of the library to touch this child in his short lifespan — I think all of us are just overwhelmed by the impact that the library had on



The Severna Park Library was Hugh’s home away from home. Between trips there with his parents and nanny, he completed the library’s “1,000 Books Before Kindergarten” program just after his first birthday.

Hugh’s life,” Sparrow said.

Despite visiting the library multiple times a week — whether it was for weekday events with Young, or weekend adventures with his mom and dad — Hugh still didn’t get his fill of reading at the library. It was also one of his favorite activities at home.

Jess shared that Hugh was always bringing books to his parents to read to him. If they had read him three bedtime stories, he got up and grabbed a fourth before plopping back down in their laps. Some of his favorite books were “Duck & Goose Go to the Beach,”

“Goodnight Moon,” “This Is Baby,” and the “Little Blue Truck” series. “Splish, Splash, Ducky!” would always elicit a reaction from Hugh, as Jess read the story and Eddie interjected with quacking sounds.

Hugh liked toys as well, but he enjoyed organizing things even more. He loved the family labradoodle, Rosie, and would get grumpy on walks if he was denied the opportunity to greet a new dog. He was fascinated by planes overhead, and he delighted in bringing home balloons during weekly grocery store trips with his dad. These things all remind the Nies of their son, along with his favorite books.

“The tradition that we have right now, or the ritual, is every time we go visit Hugh at the cemetery we’ll say hi to him and we’ll read him a book,” Eddie shared.

The Nies expressed that partnering with the library to create Hugh’s Corner has given them a renewed sense of purpose and a positive outlet to cope with grief. Their ultimate desire is twofold: to create something that commemorates Hugh’s life, and to contribute a space that will benefit families and children in the community today and for generations to come.

Two of those future library users will be Eddie and Jess’s daughter, who is due in October, and Young’s daughter, who was born in June. “It brings us some happiness that both of our daughters will know Hugh, both from our stories but also through Hugh’s Corner at the library,” Eddie said.

For those who wish to support Hugh’s Corner, a donation link can be found at www.hughnie.com.

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The Path Of Least Resistance ... And Most Desired

By Heather Yetzbacher
KW Landscaping

Have you ever noticed those well-worn dirt trails cutting diagonally through a lush lawn, totally ignoring the paved walkways nearby? Designers call these “desire paths.” They’re the routes people naturally take, no matter what was originally intended.

A favorite illustration of mine is a comic by Chaz Hutton titled “Desired Path,” where people walk directly across a field while a perfectly laid-out sidewalk sits empty. It’s funny ... and incredibly accurate. Whether it’s people, pets, rainwater or even plant placement, nature tends to follow the path of least resistance.

As a landscape designer, I’ve learned that resisting those instincts (whether it’s foot traffic, water flow, or plant growth) is often a losing battle. The best landscapes aren’t about control; they’re about collaboration. The trick is to stop fighting and start observing.

Follow The People

If folks are constantly cutting across the lawn to get to the patio, maybe that’s where the path should be. Rather than force a rigid layout, take the time to see how the space is actually being used. Sometimes the most inviting design is the one that simply listens.

There are options to consider if you are struggling with people and pets cutting through your plant life:

- Install strong plants that can handle a trampling: liriopse, thyme, ajuga, and creeping phlox. All these are good varieties to plant in between joints of a flag-stone pathway as well.
- Install a pathway. Whether it’s made out of pavers, natural flagstone or wood chips, creating a well-intentioned path is key.

Then, you can plant and create beauty around that space.

Let Water Lead

Water has its own way of doing things, too. Poor drainage can wreak havoc on even the prettiest yard. Instead of trying to block it, why not guide it? Rain gardens, dry creek beds, and permeable paving let water move naturally, without creating erosion or puddles.

Paying attention to where water wants to go can turn a problem into a feature and save you a lot of headaches down the road.

Work With The Willing

And then there are the plants. I get it: everyone falls in love with something they saw on Pinterest. But if it’s a sun-loving diva and you’ve got deep shade, it’s just not meant to be. Also, let’s be honest: AI-designed gardens might be trendy, but they’re rarely right and often not even feasible.

The most successful landscapes lean into what already thrives. Native plants and regionally adapted species know the terrain. They’re genetically built for your soil, your seasons and your pests. When you choose the right plant for the right place, the whole landscape feels like it belongs.

Nature Always Has A Plan

Whether it’s a worn trail through turf or a seedling popping up in a sidewalk crack, nature leaves us clues. Our job isn’t to outsmart it; it’s to notice and listen to it.

So next time you see that scruffy shortcut through the grass, don’t rush to block it off. It might just be your yard trying to tell you something: Don’t be so controlling!

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Artist Refreshes Iconic Mural



The restored mural shows an Olde Severna Park beach and pier overlooking the Severn River. Artist Cindy Fletcher-Holden and intern Liza Love gave letters a new coat of paint.

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

About 20 years ago, artist Cindy Fletcher-Holden turned two sides of the Carr Building — off of B&A Boulevard — into vibrant murals. One side of the building represented Severna Park’s past and the other depicted its present.

This July, she returned to the scene to give a “face lift” to one of the murals that has been aged by sun, dirt and graffiti.

“It took 20 years to get a little bit faded, so it didn’t fade that much,” Fletcher-Holden said, taking a pause as she worked. “I’m going at it with beefier colors this time so that if it does fade, it has more room to fade.”

Fletcher-Holden specializes in murals, paintings and boat lettering. The Severna Park High School graduate’s work is featured all over Maryland, including the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center in Glen Burnie, The Goddard School in Linthicum and Baltimore, all over Annapolis and Bladensburg, and in several other areas.

For the Severna Park mural, which highlights the town’s birthdate with the words “Est 1906,” she wanted to preserve a historic aesthetic.

“We’re giving it kind of a tie-dye, parchment paper look with the background col-

ors and then the letters will get a whole new coat,” she added.

With intern Liza Love helping her one day and her brother, Keith Fletcher, assisting her the following day, Fletcher-Holden restored the artwork. She explained that she came up with the original concept, while the other wall, which faces the B&A Trail, came from a collaboration with building owner Chip Carr.

“This is my idea because Olde Severna Park beach is such a loved spot for people to gather, use the water, and sail to or from, and I grew up on this beach, so this is Olde Severna Park beach looking out to Round Bay out on the Severn River,” she said. “The other side is celebrating 100 years of Severna Park. It used to be very rural, farmland and cars came in, then it became a major train stop and then they had this great Fourth of July parade, and (Chip’s) dad was always in the parade.”

Before she left, Fletcher touched up peeling parts of the mural on the train side of the wall. She expressed her heartfelt thanks to all the people who applauded her work on the mural, both in person and online.

“Liz and I were both commenting on how friendly the people around this area and this strip are,” Fletcher-Holden said.

Helping Neighbors Stay Afloat

Michele Sabean

Director of
Development,
SPAN Inc.



There are times when life can be exhausting. We all have days with a long to-do list, rushing between events and squeezing in errands. I often hear that exhaustion as I help SPAN clients load food into their cars. This is just one stop as they search for more work, care for a sick family member, and take care of their kids while sharing the working car with other family members.

Unexpected expenses add even more stress when money is tight; things such as a trip to the hospital, a needed car repair or an appliance breaking are enough to cause a temporary crisis. Many of our clients fit into the category of earning just enough income to afford the basics, and unexpected expenses can easily put them in a deeper and deeper hole.

The United Way tracks this by location and found that 6% of residents in Anne Arundel County are

below the federal poverty level and another 27% are in the ALICE category (Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed). These are households whose occupants are employed and still have trouble paying for the basics. Many of these households include people working multiple jobs and/or caring for family members, which makes employment more difficult (learn more at www.unitedforalice.org).

SPAN has several families who come regularly for food. We often hear comments about how much the food and toiletries help them be able to make it to the end of the month. As they prioritize what bills to pay, the money that they save on food can go toward their rent and utilities.

SPAN also helps people with medical expenses. Our clients can get up to \$200 per year of assistance with prescriptions and medical bills, and for many people, this makes a big difference. “Steve” needed to use the little money he had left last month for gas, both to get his daughter to her doctor’s appointment and so he could get to a job interview. He was extremely grateful that SPAN was able to help him with his daughter’s prescriptions and with food for his family.

Health issues, whether chronic or acute, are a concern for many of our clients. SPAN helped a family who received a BGE turnoff notice at the same time as a cancer diagnosis. “Mark” was in the hospital for over a month with what started as a kidney stone and then was discovered to be a much larger issue. While in the hospital, he was not working and not getting paid. His family could not pay their utility bill. The family was on budget billing, which is meant to help with consistency in the utility bill by charging an average each month, but there can be a buildup if the average varies from the actual cost.

Year to date, SPAN has helped 462 families with a total of more than \$87,500 toward court-ordered evictions, utility turnoffs and medical expenses. SPAN is primarily known as a food pantry, but thanks to this generous community, we are able to help many community members who need to make tough decisions with limited income. Thank you!

SPAN (Serving People Across Neighborhoods) is an independent nonprofit food pantry and emergency services provider that has been helping local families with eviction prevention, utility turnoffs, medical/prescription bills, and food since 1990. For more information, call 410-647-0889, email spanhelps@yahoo.com or visit www.spanhelps.org.

Hot Temps And High Bills: Behind Summertime Electric Price Hikes

By Hannah Bates

Anne Arundel County residents' wallets may have felt lighter over the past two months due to abnormally high electricity bills. Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE), the main Maryland energy supplier, released a statement in May warning customers of increased electricity prices starting June 1. Since then, electric bills have grown, raising the cost of living and making it more expensive to stay cool this summer.

The reasons for the price increases vary but are mainly due to Maryland power plant closures, outdated electricity infrastructure, and the strain of new data centers.

Anne Arundel County fossil fuel power plants Brandon Shores and H.A. Wagner are scheduled for closure in 2028. They were both scheduled for closure in 2023, but PJM Interconnection LLC (PJM), the largest power grid operator in the United States, ordered the plants to stay open until 2028. This is due to Maryland's electrical infrastructure, which cannot produce enough electricity without the plants. But keeping the old plants open will cost at least \$215 million per year.

That hefty price tag is falling upon the everyday electricity consumers through their utility bills. BGE is investing in new electrical transmission projects to improve Maryland's electric infrastructure, but those projects come with a starting cost of \$725 million. Additionally, PJM's most recent capacity auction, where PJM ensures enough

electricity for the state, saw capacity auction prices for electricity increase by almost 800% because of the power plant closures, the old infrastructure and its necessary updates, and the strain put on the power grid by new Maryland data centers across Frederick and Prince George's counties.

While the problems behind the prices may seem understandable on the surface, they are complex and have given rise to a surge of discontent and dissension among politicians. Maryland's Public Service Commission (MPSC) and more than 80 legislators filed a joint complaint alleging that the energy prices set by PJM are artificially inflated because they ignore the input of the two energy plants initially set for closure. PJM did not include those plants' electricity production in its price setting, leading MPC and legislators to argue that the 800% increase should be much lower.

The power plants are sparking debate for other reasons, too. Brandon Shores and H.A. Wagner were initially scheduled for closure because of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 (CSNA). This bill, labeled Senate Bill 528, requires Maryland to reduce state-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% by 2031, and it requires Maryland to achieve net-zero emissions by 2045.

In December 2023, the Maryland Department of the Environment created the Maryland Climate Pollution Reduction Plan (MCPRP) to support the goals of CSNA. Governor Wes Moore then signed an executive order in June

2024 to intensify the goals of MCPRP and CSNA by reducing the zero-net emissions timeline to 2035.

This new order puts pressure on Brandon Shores and H.A. Wagner to close as soon as possible since they are not considered clean energy producers under Maryland's climate laws. While the plants are set to stay open until 2028, some state representatives are frustrated with the situation because the bills are forcing Maryland to adapt to clean energy producers at a time when the state is already facing serious electricity issues. Republican Senators Justin Ready, Christopher West and William Folden submitted a new bill, SB332, to study and show the impacts of premature power plant retirement. Through this bill, they hope to create "energy reliability solutions that address the imminent energy reliability gap" and "balance the need between economic considerations and the state's commitment to cleaner energy goals."

Another frustration for District 31 Delegate Brian Chisholm and other representatives is a 2024 state law, Senate Bill 1 (SB1), which limits choices for energy suppliers for Maryland citizens. Lawmakers passed SB1 last year, increasing regulations on energy suppliers to combat misleading marketing tactics and ensure consumers are getting appropriate prices for utilities.

"Instead of empowering customers, (the bill) restricts options and pushes providers out of the market," he said.

Chisholm and his colleagues received

welcome news at the end of July. U.S. Energy Secretary Chris Wright announced an emergency order allowing the Wagner station to operate during additional hours through October 26.

"Secretary Wright's order keeps the lights on — but this must be the beginning, not the end, of reform," Chisholm said.

While companies and politicians seek solutions, Marylanders' bills continue to pile up. One way to lessen the load of energy costs is to look at the website of your energy provider and look for possible rebates, incentives and discounts. Utility parent company Exelon donated \$19 million into the Customer Relief Fund on June 12 to assist limited and middle-income Marylanders. The funds are currently being distributed through local nonprofits across the BGE, Pepco and Delmarva Power areas.

Anyone who needs government assistance to pay their utility costs should contact the Office of Home Energy Programs (OHEP) and Fuel Fund of Maryland. Marylanders who already receive government assistance with their utility bills can expect to see increased benefits this year. Moore announced that households already receiving between \$130 to \$575 in electric benefits per year can now expect to see between \$250 and \$1,000, and households receiving between \$150 and \$301 in gas benefits per year will now receive between \$300 and \$550 this year. Those who do not receive energy assistance can apply for it at www.marylandbenefits.gov.



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August Recess

Amanda Fiedler

*Councilwoman
District 5*



August is the one month in the calendar year that the Anne Arundel County Council is in legislative recess. This break from public hearings and meetings gives council staff an opportunity to reconcile the legislative work of the last 11 months and prepare for the next cycle of bills and resolutions that the council will consider and vote on when we return to chambers in September.

When I reflect on the last year of work, I can confidently say that it has been a productive session. While county legislation may not be as exciting as state bills, I honestly believe it can have the most profound impact on your daily life. While television news crews camp out in Annapolis from January through April of every year to cover bills being debated in the House of Delegates and Senate, the county council debates county laws with only the local cable cameras present, and those cameras are affixed to the walls for airing on your local cable channel, if you choose to tune in.

I understand it. Criminal law, education law, energy law, motor vehicle law, etc., are all more exciting than land use law and zoning. Until, that is, you run into an issue in your own backyard and realize the county code may need an update.

Looking back since September 2024, I have been the lead sponsor on 11

bills. Nine have passed. One failed. One will be up for a vote when the council returns to session. Each of these bills has a story behind it, and the story usually starts with someone like you. Someone who hit a roadblock in the county code, and they reached out to me for help.

There's Bill 71-24 that created an exemption for secondhand dealers of children's clothing, allowing them to be exempt from a tedious and costly process for holding and logging items for resale. This bill came from a county resident and owner of a children's clothing store located right in our district.

Then there is Bill 76-24, which added a new marina category to our marina zoning code, the first major addition to our zoning code in over a decade. That bill came directly from a resident in our district who was stuck in the rezoning process, with no real marina category that fit for the property. Bill 76-24 balanced the concerns of the community with the needs of the property's maintenance and upkeep.

This year was one where I introduced multiple animal-related bills. Bills 91-24, 6-25, 13-25 and 58-25 were all related to pets and their care. Bill 91-24 adjusted the lot size needed for a home pet care business, particularly as it related to the care of dogs. This came from a District 5 resident who pointed out that she could have four dogs of her own, but the code did not allow her to watch four dogs in her home business.

Bill 6-25 added miniature pigs as pets but only if you have a large enough lot and the outdoor space for the pet pig is a certain distance from

» Continued on page 16

Superintendent Redistricting Recommendations Released

Dana Schallheim

*AACPS Board
of Education
District 5*



toward finalizing the second and final phase of the school system's comprehensive redistricting plans.

I completely understand how stressful this process has been for some of you these past several months, particularly for families who live in the Jones Elementary catchment area, and want to thank those of you who called, emailed, texted and contacted me on social media to voice concerns regarding the previously released redistricting scenarios. Your concerns were heard!

While two of the three redistricting scenarios unveiled on February 1 called for the Jones Elementary catchment area to leave the Severna Park cluster for middle school before returning to Severna Park for high school, I am delighted to share that both of Dr. Bedell's recommendations keep Jones Elementary within Severna Park schools through 12th grade at Severna Park High School. Barring action from the board, which I find unlikely, all students who previously

attended prekindergarten through 12th grade in Severna Park will remain in Severna Park.

There are, however, some changes announced in Dr. Bedell's recommendations that will impact some District 5 students at the elementary level. The first involves the Cypress Creek neighborhood of Severna Park that may move from Folger McKinsey Elementary to Severna Park Elementary to alleviate overcrowding in Folger. Also, some neighborhoods in the current Belvedere Elementary School catchment area are being moved to Arnold Elementary School to alleviate overcrowding in Belvedere.

For information on redistricting affecting all other clusters and schools, visit www.aacps.org/redistricting and click on "Redistricting Process Phase 2" located on the left-hand side of the screen on a laptop or two-thirds of the way down the menu under "About AACPS" on a phone.

Students currently enrolled in a secondary magnet program will continue to be enrolled in their assigned school under both recommendations; however, APEX Arts students currently at Annapolis High School only will be relocated to a new location under recommendation two to alleviate overcrowding in Annapolis High School. Magnet transportation will continue to be provided.

There are several important dates to keep in mind. A board workshop on the phase II redistricting recommendations is scheduled for August 18 at 6:00pm in the board room in the Parham Building, located at 2644 Riva Road in Annapolis.

» Continued on page 16

Rolling Blackouts Are Now A Real Threat In Maryland

Brian Chisholm

*Delegate
District 31*



Editor's note: PJM's emergency request to keep the Wagner station online was approved after Delegate Chisholm submitted this column.

Dear neighbor,
On July 21, federally regulated regional grid operator PJM filed a request for a Federal Power Act section 202(c) emergency order with the Department of Energy for the Wagner 4 electric generator station in Anne Arundel County.

PJM is asking the feds for this order because they have concluded that an imminent electric reliability emergency may exist that could threaten transmission reliability in the BGE zone due to a shortage of available electric generation supply in the region.

The Maryland Freedom Caucus Was Right

The Maryland Freedom Caucus has steadfastly and consistently warned that extreme environmental policies, radical green activism, and bureaucratic red tape, implemented by the Maryland General Assembly, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), and

groups like the Sierra Club, would push our state into an energy supply crisis.

Now, that warning has become reality.

Maryland Is On The Brink Of Rolling Blackouts

PJM Interconnection has issued a dire warning: **A power emergency in Maryland is imminent.** Its request for an emergency federal order proves what we've been saying all along:

- Wagner Unit 4 is the only generating facility capable of preventing blackouts in the BGE zone under certain emergency conditions.
- That unit is restricted by a 2020 environmental consent agreement pushed by the Sierra Club and MDE, which limits its operation to 438 hours per year.
- As of today, the plant has only 80 hours of runtime left in 2025 — less than four days of emergency power before the lights go out.
- We are only a little over halfway through the year!

Rolling Blackouts Could Begin In 2025

PJM has stated, in no uncertain terms, that without the ability to operate Wagner 4, it may have to shed firm load, a sanitized way of saying forced blackouts for homes, schools, hospitals and businesses in Maryland.

This isn't a conspiracy or political posturing. It's a di-

rect consequence of Maryland's war on energy reliability, where traditional power generation is vilified, shut down or handicapped without any realistic replacement ready.

The Price Of Virtue Signaling

Environmental extremists and their legislative allies have created an artificial scarcity of power in Maryland. The results?

- Maryland now faces some of the highest electricity and utility costs in the country.
- We're running extension cords across state lines, importing electricity from coal and natural gas plants in other states — while shutting down our own.
- We're asking the federal government to override Maryland's own regulations just to keep the grid from collapsing.

This Crisis Was Entirely Avoidable

The Maryland Freedom Caucus has consistently fought to:

- Keep reliable power plants like Wagner fully operational.
- Cut through red tape that strangles energy infrastructure projects.
- Bring common sense to our energy strategy — not ideology.
- Put ratepayers, not radical activists, at the center of energy policy.

» Continued on page 16

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Who Do You Want To Be When You Grow Up?

LaToya Nkongolo
Delegate
District 31



It's not, "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

It's, "Who do you want to be when you grow up?"

That question hits deeper. It's not about the title, the career path, or how much money you make. It's about your character. Your values. The way you treat people. The way you carry yourself when life gets hard — and trust me, it will.

The Therapist In Me Sees This Every Day

I've worked with students, families and adults from all walks of life. So many young people are pushed to figure out what job they want, what major they'll choose, or what path they'll take. But rarely do we stop to ask them who they're becoming in the process.

As a therapist, I try to teach my clients how to handle failure with grace, how to find their voice in chaos, how to walk with purpose even when they feel uncertain. That's not something any job title can give you. That's character.

The Mother In Me Feels This Deeply

As a mom, I don't just want my kids

As a mental health therapist and a mother, I've spent countless hours helping others figure out where they're going in life by asking one question that I wish someone had asked me when I was younger.

to chase titles. I want them to be kind. To be brave. To have integrity. To show compassion to others. I want them to grow up knowing that who they are on the inside matters more than the job they land or the salary they earn.

Because when the going gets tough, it's not your career that pulls you through. It's your heart, your resilience, your sense of who you are.

A Challenge For Students: Your Voice Matters

So, here's a challenge for every student out there returning to school.

Write an essay answering the question: "Who do I want to be when I grow up?"

Twenty-five students will be selected to receive a **\$10 frozen yogurt gift card** — just in time to treat yourself before heading back to school.

More than that, you'll be taking a powerful step in shaping your identity. This isn't about perfection. It's about reflection.

Final Thought

I still ask myself that question today. Even as a grown woman with degrees, titles and a busy life, I pause sometimes and ask, "Who do I want to be?" The answer changes and deepens over time. But asking it keeps me grounded. It keeps me human.

And I hope, by asking that question now, our children will grow up not just chasing success but becoming people they can be proud of.

Because the world needs more good people, not just more good resumés.

For more information about the essay contest, visit my Facebook page **@Delegate LaToya Nkongolo** or follow me on Instagram **@latoya_nkongolo**.

Scan the QR code provided to complete the entry form and submit your essay. Good luck!

August Recess

» Continued from page 14

your neighbor's yard. With the passage of this bill, a District 5 pet pig named Alfred is no longer facing an uncertain future and Anne Arundel County Animal Services (formerly Animal Care & Control) can humanely hold and adopt out abandoned miniature pet pigs (Wellington is currently up for adoption at the shelter).

Bill 13-25 updated and clarified the definitions of "animal veterinary clinics" and "animal hospitals" and allows for non-medical overnight stays (boarding) in certain conditions. This bill was the result of a rezoning of a veterinary clinic in our district that did not fit what the code allowed for but provides an important service to pets and their families.

And finally, Bill 58-25 allows pet grooming as a home occupation. This came from several pet groomers in our district who pointed out that our code allows for human hair salons and pet care businesses (watching a pet for someone out of town or at work) as home occupations but didn't allow for a pet to

be groomed in a home as a business.

In September, the council will discuss Bill 70-25, a bill I introduced that codifies the federal language of reasonable access of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) into county code. While the General Assembly at one point replicated this language in state law, it has not yet been replicated in the county code. Codifying ADA reasonable access law in county code recognizes the importance of access for a person living with a disability who requires a mobility device.

This is just a small snapshot of the legislative work in your District 5 County Council office in the past year. Backyard issues have a significant impact on the life of residents. Good governance tackles those problems with reasonable solutions.

While the council is on legislative recess, rest assured that constituent services continue year-round. My aide and I are ready and at your service for any county matter we can assist with.

It is truly an honor to serve you and your family, every day of the year.

You can reach me at amanda.fiedler@aacounty.org.

Tired Of Early Dismissals? Help Is On The Way

Dawn Gile
Senator
District 33



As parents of students in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS), we've all been there. You do your best to keep up with routines, juggle work and school schedules, and maintain some sense of balance — only to realize there's yet another early dismissal day on the calendar. Let's be honest: these days are tough on everyone. They disrupt learning, create child care challenges, upend work schedules, and make it harder for educators to maximize instructional time.

That's why, as chair of the Anne Arundel County senate delegation — and as a parent of children in AACPS schools — I'm proud that we finally passed legislation during the 2025 session to address this longstanding frustration. This bill, introduced year after year without success, finally crossed the finish line thanks to a focused, collaborative approach.

The result is a pilot program that gives AACPS greater flexibility under state law when it comes to meeting instructional time requirements. State law currently mandates both a minimum number of days and hours in the school year, which limits the district's ability to structure the calendar in a way that works best for stu-

dents and families. This pilot creates room for AACPS to prioritize full instructional days and reduce the number of disruptive early dismissals by meeting the required instructional time through hours rather than days.

As we approach the back-to-school season, I'm excited to share that by this time next year (for the 2026-2027 school year), students and families in Anne Arundel County will see at least four fewer early dismissal days on the school calendar compared to the upcoming academic year.

While a handful of early dismissals will remain, such as those tied to high school exams, this change means more consistent instruction for students and fewer disruptions for families. I know firsthand how much smoother things run when our kids are in school for full, structured days.

This legislative win was truly a team effort. I'm deeply grateful to Delegate Heather Bagnall, Delegate Andrew Pruski, and the Anne Arundel County House delegation for their unwavering partnership, as well as Senators Pam Beidle, Jim Rosapepe and Bryan Simonaire, and the entire Anne Arundel County Senate delegation for their strong leadership. I also want to thank AACPS leadership, including Superintendent Mark Bedell and the Board of Education. In particular, I want to recognize board member Dana Schallheim, whose consistent advocacy and thoughtful engagement on this issue were instrumental in making this progress possible.

This is a meaningful step forward for students, families and educators.

Rolling Blackouts Are A Real Threat

» Continued from page 14

Instead, Annapolis chose environmental absolutism, locking our state into a model that values carbon credits more than public safety and economic security.

A Wake-Up Call To Maryland Voters And Lawmakers

The Wagner Unit 4 situation is not just a technicality; it's a symptom of failed leadership. Marylanders are now facing the real possibility of going without power because the Maryland Democrats and the governor have prioritized headlines and lawsuits over heat and light.

The Maryland Freedom Caucus is

renewing its call for:

- Immediate suspension of artificial runtime limits during emergency periods.
- Maryland to immediately withdraw from the disastrous and voluntary Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which has driven up energy costs, punished ratepayers, and compromised grid reliability in the name of ineffective climate symbolism.
- A rollback of anti-energy mandates that put lives and livelihoods at risk.

We can no longer afford to let radical environmental groups dictate Maryland's energy future. The time for action — real, reliable, commonsense action — is now.

Superintendent Redistricting

» Continued from page 14

This workshop is open to the public; however, as with all workshops, no public testimony will be heard. Public comment is currently being collected online through September 5.

Please visit www.aacps.org/page/redistricting-process-phase-2 to provide feedback. The board will vote on a plan or plans to bring to public briefings and hearings to be scheduled between late September and the end of October during its September 17 meeting, which will begin at 6:30pm in the boardroom. A final redistricting plan to be imple-

mented August 2026 will be adopted by the board during its November 19 meeting. This meeting also begins at 6:30pm in the boardroom. As with all other meetings, hearings and workshops, these will also be streamed live and recorded.

If you have feedback of any kind related to Bedell's recommendations, I strongly encourage you to submit your feedback via the online tool in addition to reaching out to me. I will endeavor to respond to you as quickly as possible. As always, I can be reached at 443-534-2660, dschallheim@aacps.org, or on the socials.

Letter To The Editor: Golfing For Gabi

We recently completed two weeks of basketball camp. Severna Park High School (SPHS) head boys basketball coach Pete Young graciously invites me to be the co-director of the boys basketball camp we started together 22 years ago in the old high school gym. The record number of talented players ages 8 through entering grade nine at camp this summer was staggering. The Severna Park community is special, and this is seen so many times every year.

A tremendous example of this has been the overwhelming support the Severna Park community has shown of hole No. 5 since 2019.

Gabi's Story

On October 16, 2018, 5-year-old Gabriella Pellicani lost her 10-month battle to

glioblastoma, an aggressive and incurable form of brain cancer. Gabi was treated at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute from April to June 2018 as part of an experimental clinical trial that focused on a particular genetic mutation found in her tumor. While in Boston, Gabi was in the hands of some of the country's best doctors and most caring nurses.

Hole No. 5 is an unofficial way to sponsor Golfing For Gabi. Hole No. 5 has become an amazing outlet for individuals and local businesses who want to support the important work at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute but cannot make it to Long Island for the annual Golfing For Gabi tournament, this year held on August 4. These contributors have made donations specifically to hole No. 5, exceeding \$65,000 since the event's inception in 2019.

A few thoughts are at the forefront behind hole No. 5.

1. Hole No. 5 is a short par 3 that runs alongside the pool at Rockville Links in Rockville Center, New York. Gabi would wait inside the pool fence to see her dad, Nick Pellicani, play hole No. 5.
2. Gabi lost her 10-month battle to glioblastoma at the age of 5.
3. Many people giving a little can add up to a great deal. Imagine if every family who had a son at basketball camp this year donated \$5, \$10, \$25 or even more.
4. The ultimate goal of Nick and Fabianna, Gabi's parents, is for a day no other family will have to hear and experience this unimaginable news.

The first year when my wife and I arrived at the first Golfing For Gabi tournament, the emotion was overwhelming when we saw the hole sponsorship sign on that par 3 that said, "This hole is spon-

sored by the community of Severna Park, Maryland." We had no idea that people in Severna Park did this unbelievable act.

Thank you to all the individuals who have supported hole No. 5 in the past, as well as the businesses that have been such generous supporters of Golfing For Gabi. All donations to support hole No. 5 can be made by either check (made out to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute) or Venmo (@golfing4gabi). If you mail a check, please send it to the following: Nick Pellicani, 132 Hempstead Avenue, Rockville Center, NY 11570. Hole #5 should be in the memo line.

All proceeds for hole No. 5 go directly to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

Tax exempt #04-2263040

Learn more at www.golfingforgabi.com.

Paul Pellicani
Resident of Severna Park and South Carolina



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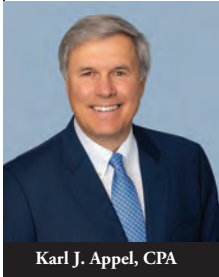
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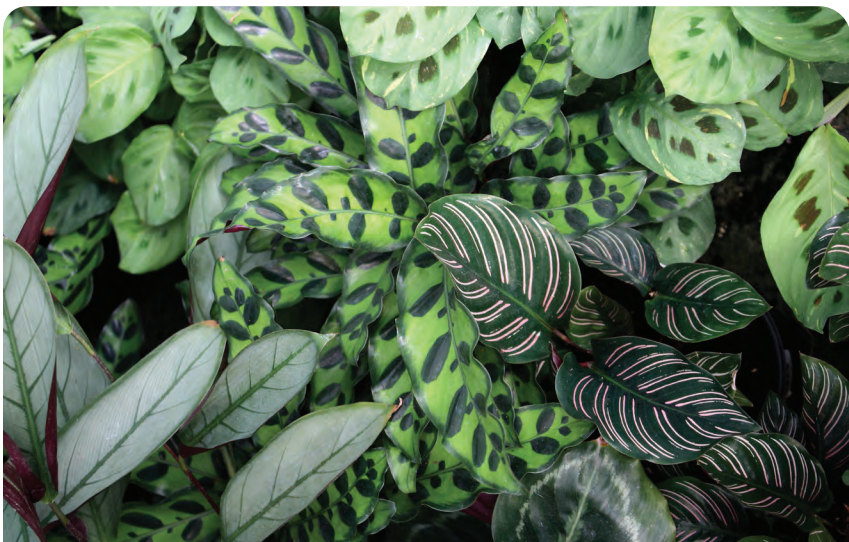
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It's OK To Not Be OK: Community Based Mental Health Resources

By Meredith Winter

It is well documented that heart disease is the leading cause of death in America. Statistically, roughly 40% of Americans, or two out of five, will develop cancer in their lifetime, according to the American Cancer Society. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that as of 2021, almost 12% of Americans — nearly one in eight — had diabetes.

What Americans may be less aware of, however, is that over 23% — more than one in five — of adults in the U.S. are living with a mental illness, according to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). Conditions range in severity, but soberingly, the CDC reported that over 49,000 people in the U.S. died by suicide in 2023, equating to one life lost every 11 minutes.

Mental and behavioral health challenges, like physical health issues, can be diagnosed, treated and improved. There are many providers and services in the greater Severna Park area and across the county that can help people of all ages with mental health.

Nonprofits like the **Woods Counseling & Care Center** (www.woodscare.org) in Severna Park and **NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Anne Arundel County** (www.naimaac.org) offer group- and individual-based mental health support.

Pastor Nancy Lincoln-Reynolds is the director of the Woods Counseling & Care Center, which offers both small-group seminars and individual care with licensed therapists.

Lincoln-Reynolds shared that in the early 2000s, she was doing numerous funerals for people who died by suicide, and the center's providers knew they had to do more. "We were significant in establishing the county suicide awareness team, and we also ended up creating Parenting

for a Different World, and they have continued in existence," she said.

A positive shift Lincoln-Reynolds has observed over her 42 years of practicing therapy is an increased willingness to ask for help.

"We do have — it's not as bad as it used to be — but some of a stigma of what it means if you 'need therapy,'" she said. "We have worked really hard through our education and support groups — and when I say 'we,' I don't mean just Woods Counseling Center, but all of the mental health practitioners — to sort of normalize being able to get help when you need it, and we found that has worked. We're better than we were 20 years ago in terms of people feeling OK asking for help."

Once place that community members can receive help for free is NAMI Anne Arundel County. While the nonprofit does not offer professional therapy or psychiatric services, it does offer support for individuals living with mental health challenges and those caring for them.

"We provide advocacy, education and support for those with a mental illness over (the age of) 18, and then we also secondarily provide the same thing — advocacy, education and support — for the parents and loved ones taking care of those people, so we do both sides," shared NAMI Anne Arundel County Executive Director Fred Delp.

Currently, the county branch of NAMI offers five support groups for parents, loved ones and caregivers of individuals living with a mental health condition, as well as two support groups for those individuals themselves, all facilitated by trained volunteers. In total, the nonprofit serves nearly 1,000 people each year. Delp shared that NAMI also advocates for better services and additional funding in the county.

One thing for which Delp and

» Continued on page 26

Mental and behavioral health challenges can be diagnosed, treated and improved. There are many providers and services in the greater Severna Park area and across the county that can help people of all ages with mental health.



Why Mental Health Days Are Important For Children

Dr. Jesselina Curry
Luminis Health



Kids have busy lives and so do you! If you and your children feel overwhelmed by activities like homework, sports, chores and more, it might be

time for a mental health day. I like to call them "Family Skip Days."

While it might feel challenging to fit mental health days into our busy schedules, it's important to prioritize mental health and well-being to help the whole family recharge.

What Are The Signs?

While everyone feels down at times, you might consider a mental health day if your child is feeling persistent sadness or showing frustration that does not match the situation. You can look for these signs too:

- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Difficulty concentrating or completing tasks
- Increased irritability or anxiety
- Negative comments on social media
- Noticeable stress of feelings of being overwhelmed
- Physical complaints (like stomachaches) without a clear cause
- Withdrawal from social activities

If a child threatens to harm or kill themselves, it's a serious warning sign that should never be ignored.

While some behaviors may be more obvious in teens, they can be harder to spot in younger children. Watch for things like frequent, unexplained temper tantrums; persistent nightmares; or ongoing disobedience and aggression. No matter their age, all children can benefit from mental health days.

Tips For Successful Mental Health Days

Mental health days should be fun and relaxing, not stressful. Here's how I make these days easy to schedule and fun for my own family:

- **Schedule wisely:** Pick a day when your family has the fewest obligations to reduce the stress of rescheduling other events.
- **Start the day strong:** Sleep in and help your children pick out or make their favorite breakfast in their pajamas.
- **Pick enjoyable activities:** It



While it might feel challenging to fit mental health days into our busy schedules, it's important to prioritize mental health and well-being to help the whole family recharge.

will feel more special if your kids can help decide the activity.

- **Connect with your kids:** Ask your child if there's anything on their mind or if something is bothering them. You can talk while you're cooking, playing or walking to a park.
- **Rotate the time:** If you have multiple children, rotate activities so that each child has some one-on-one time with you.
- **Don't be afraid to ask for help:** If your child expresses feelings of anxiety, depression or other mood disorders, you may consider reaching out to a behavioral health professional. It's OK if your kids are not OK.

If you think that your child could benefit from meeting with a behavioral health professional, you can book an appointment online without a referral at www.luminis.health/behavioralhealth.

Lastly, the most important thing is to get out of the house and enjoy your time together. Put away the phones and turn off the TV and game consoles. A mental health day is not about checking out; it's about checking in with your child and being present without any distractions.

Dr. Jesselina Curry is the system medical director for ambulatory behavioral health services at Luminis Health.

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The Light Adjustable Lens Revolutionizes Cataract Surgery

Allan Rutzen, MD
Rutzen Eye
Specialists &
Laser Center



As an ophthalmologist performing cataract surgery since the mid-1990s, I've witnessed remarkable advances in the field — from ultrasound-assisted cataract removal to laser cataract surgery and increasingly sophisticated intraocular lenses (IOLs). Among these innovations, the Light Adjustable Lens (LAL) stands out as a major leap forward, offering

patients an unprecedented opportunity to fine-tune their vision after surgery — often eliminating the need for glasses.

Cataracts are a natural consequence of aging. They occur when the eye's clear natural lens becomes cloudy, leading to blurry or dim vision. Cataract surgery, one of the most commonly performed procedures in medicine, involves removing this cloudy lens and replacing it with a clear artificial intraocular lens (IOL).

Traditionally, IOLs are selected before surgery based on detailed measurements of the eye. While these "fixed" lenses generally offer much-improved vision, there is some expected variability in the healing process that can leave patients still relying on glasses for optimal clarity.

The Light Adjustable Lens (LAL) changes that. Though the surgical procedure is largely the same, the LAL's unique advantage is in what happens after surgery. About three weeks after surgery — once the eye has healed and vision stabilizes — we evaluate a patient's vision to determine if focus can be improved. If so, we use a precise, painless UV light treatment in the office to reshape the lens and adjust its focusing power. Up to three adjustments can be made, followed by two "lock-in" treatments to permanently set the lens.

One of the most exciting aspects of the LAL is that patients can essentially "test drive" their vision. Some patients choose optimal distance



The Light Adjustable Lens (LAL) offers patients an unprecedented opportunity to fine-tune their vision after surgery — often eliminating the need for glasses.

vision in both eyes, while others prefer to adjust one eye for distance and one eye for intermediate vision, ideal for tasks like using a cellphone or computer. This degree of customization isn't possible with traditional "fixed" lenses.

Not every patient is a candidate. The LAL requires additional post-operative visits, and certain eye conditions such as severe macular degeneration, corneal scarring, or small pupils can interfere with accurate measurements and UV light treatments. Additionally, the lens involves an out-of-pocket cost not covered by insurance or Medicare.

For those who qualify, the results can be

extraordinary. One of my patients recently said, "I never imagined I'd see this well after surgery, and without glasses!" While we can't guarantee perfect vision, the ability to fine-tune focus after surgery makes the LAL the most precise and customizable lens I've ever used.

Rutzen Eye Specialists & Laser Center is located at 489 Ritchie Highway, Suite 200, in Severna Park. Learn more about the practice at www.rutzeneye.com or by calling 410-975-0090.

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One of the most exciting aspects of the LAL is that patients can essentially "test drive" their vision. Some patients choose optimal distance vision in both eyes, while others prefer to adjust one eye for distance and one eye for intermediate vision, ideal for tasks like using a cellphone or computer. This degree of customization isn't possible with traditional "fixed" lenses.

Care Prepared Inc. Partners With Compassion & Choices To Offer Online Dementia Values Tool

Care Prepared Inc., a Millersville-based nonprofit, is partnering with the national nonprofit Compassion & Choices to offer a Maryland-specific version of the Dementia Values & Priorities Tool on its website. According to the Alzheimer's Association, dementia is a growing health crisis in Maryland, and recent studies show that in Maryland, 17.5% of people aged 45 and older have subjective cognitive decline.

The Dementia Values

and Priorities Tool is designed to help individuals communicate their wishes regarding future care if they are living with dementia. After answering a series of questions related to the changes commonly seen in the progression of dementia, the tool will provide the user with a document that can be part of their advance care plan, added to their existing advance directive, and shared with others.

The Alzheimer's Association also notes that creating an advance care

plan and documenting wishes as early as possible in the event of Alzheimer's disease or a dementia diagnosis enables individuals to have a say in their future health care.

Jessica Empeño, Compassion & Choices national director of clinical engagement, said, "Compassion & Choices is proud to partner with Care Prepared in an effort to reach Marylanders with vital resources to plan ahead for a dementia diagnosis. Together, we can make real change happen in the lives

of Marylanders looking for guidance, support and information about dementia."

Studies have shown that for individuals with a dementia diagnosis, documenting wishes for future health care interventions before they are needed can help align a person's values and preferences with the care they receive and decrease the decision-making burden for caregivers and loved ones.

Marylanders are invited to create their dementia directive using the Dementia

Values & Priorities Tool at www.careprepared.org/dementia-values-tool.

Care Prepared Inc., an all-volunteer nonprofit established in 2023, aims to increase the understanding, access and documentation of health care planning for all individuals (regardless of race, gender, age, socioeconomic status or sexual orientation), especially those with life-limiting conditions before a medical crisis. Care Prepared provides education and outreach about advance care planning through numerous presentations (in-person and virtual) and participates in various local community events.

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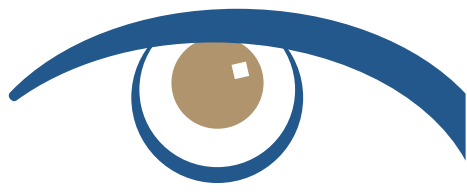
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Seeing The Signs When To Treat Cataracts

Samuel Boles
Anne Arundel
Eye Center



unlike other conditions, are usually a gradual decline in vision. This means that you will not notice how much you are not seeing until the cataracts become advanced. As you gradually get used to seeing less, you begin to lose interest in activities that once brought you joy.

While this may be scary, there is good news. Cataracts are not only a natural occurrence in our lives, but they can be easily removed.

If you have noticed a sensitivity to bright lights or difficulty seeing at night, you may be experiencing the early signs of cataracts.

What Are Cataracts And How Do You Treat Them?

As you age, proteins begin to build up and clump together in the eye's lens, preventing light from passing clearly through the lens and obscuring vision. These protein deposits are known as cataracts and are a normal part of the aging process. When a cataract has progressed to the point that it is interfering with normal, everyday functions, such as driving or reading, surgery is often the recommended course of action.

Treating your cataracts can get you back to doing the things you love. Cataract surgery involves removing the lens of the eye and replacing it with an artificial lens. There are multiple surgical options to enhance your near or far vision, including special lenses that can often give you a range of

vision beyond what it was before the cataracts formed. Approximately 90% of cataract surgery patients report better vision following the surgery.

Why Treat Cataracts Now?

The clearer vision associated with cataract surgery provides many quality-of-life benefits including better near and distant vision, making colors brighter and making it easier to read, work on a computer, watch TV, and even drive. Additionally, many studies show that people over the age of 65 who received timely surgery for cataracts in both eyes not only increased their visual acuity but also minimized their risk of falls and injuries related to falls. This is because with a cataract, the lens of the eye becomes progressively opaque, which can significantly interfere with vision and depth perception.

Vision changes caused by cataracts may become more noticeable during the winter months. Dim

lighting caused by late sunrise and early sunset can make vision changes from cataracts more noticeable. Also, poor weather tends to cause glare and blur from cataracts to be more bothersome. Taking care of cataract surgery prior to the winter season will help you avoid these worsening conditions for untreated cataracts.

So, believe it or not, it's already time to schedule your surgery appointments prior to the holidays. If you treat yourself now, you won't have to worry about squeezing in a much-needed appointment later, and you'll be able to fully connect with the ones you love before the new year.

Want to get winter-ready? Call Anne Arundel Eye Center at 410-224-2010 and let the staff help you restore your vision. The center is dedicated to making the best eye care accessible to everyone.

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Social Workers Are Invaluable Partners In Dementia Caregiving

Steven Watson,
LCSW-C,
APHSW-C
Hospice of the
Chesapeake



a nurse, physician, certified nursing assistant, chaplain, volunteers and social worker. Let's take a closer look at the role of a hospice social worker in dementia care.

Dementia is a disease that is frustrating, confusing and scary — not only for patients but also for the family members caring for them. The journey for these caregivers comes with long-term emotional strain and changing family dynamics.

For families whose loved ones are hospice patients, specialized support comes from a clinical team that includes

Prioritize Self-Care

Social workers offer critical emotional support and help caregivers navigate complex and often difficult family dynamics. For example, an adult child may feel unsure, awkward or even guilty about stepping into the role of decision-maker for their parent. A social worker helps them recognize the importance of what they're doing and reassures them that it's OK to prioritize self-care.

Since dementia caregiving can be a 24/7 responsibility, social workers are often the ones to connect families with essential resources such as respite care, home care aides and community programs designed to ease the load.

Safe and Secure

Dementia caregivers also face the daily challenge of managing memory-related behaviors — confusion, forgetfulness, wandering or agitation. Social workers are familiar with many practical tools that can help keep a loved one safe at home. They also assess a patient's home for safety hazards, offering ways to make it more secure.



In memory care or assisted living facilities, a caregiver's role may shift from daily hands-on care to advocacy. Even in these settings, families play a key role. Hospice social workers help bridge communication between families and facility staff to ensure care remains consistent and centered on the patient's needs.

Ministry of Presence

Perhaps one of the most powerful things a social worker provides is simply being there — what many call the "ministry of presence." Caregivers often feel alone or hesitant to express their deeper emotions. A social worker's calm, non-judgmental presence can offer immense comfort.

Most dementia caregivers are facing a long journey. People with dementia can live eight to 10 years after diagnosis and tend to progress slowly. This brings something called anticipatory grief. This happens when caregivers start mourning their loved one long before they die. Hospice so-

cial workers are skilled counselors in grief care.

Invaluable Partners

Ultimately, social workers help caregivers balance their own well-being with ensuring their loved ones get compassionate, well-coordinated care. By offering guidance, advocacy and emotional support, they become invaluable partners for families navigating the challenges of dementia caregiving.

Steven Watson is a psychosocial clinical practice specialist for Hospice of the Chesapeake, Maryland's largest independent not-for-profit hospice organization. Its mission is caring for life throughout the journey with illness and loss, serving Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles and Prince George's counties. For details, visit www.hospicechesapeake.org or call 410-987-2003.

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Realistic Expectations Of Long-Term Care

Jennifer McAndrews
Assisted Living
Locators



A statement I hear almost weekly is, "I thought Medicare covered assisted living!" If there is one piece of information I can share with anyone who may find themselves in the situation of contemplating options for themselves or a loved one, it is that Medicare does not cover any costs associated with assisted living. Unless Medicaid is a factor, even a skilled nursing facility stay past 10 days (or sooner if Medicare has deemed that a patient has plateaued in therapy) becomes a private pay situation.

I'd suggest taking the opportunity to research and become familiar with resources that are available. Attempting to figure things out while a crisis is ensuing is not ideal. Understanding what options are available and the costs associated before a crisis hits will be invaluable.

The average cost of assisted living in Anne Arundel County starts at about \$5,000 per month. There are some assisted living homes (five to eight residents) that can accommodate a budget in the \$3,500 to \$4,500 range. For some people, even that price point will be hard to afford. Looking outside of Anne Arundel County may be necessary to find a lower price point.

I recommend investigating any resources available that may provide a benefit to help offset the cost. Veterans should learn what

programs they are eligible for before they are needed, as there is usually a bit of lag between applying for and having a benefit implemented.

For those with long-term care insurance, learn what your policy covers. It's good to know details. For example, is there a maximum benefit or an elimination period before coverage begins? Most long-term care policies require the policy holder to have the need of assistance with at least two activities of daily living.

Understanding these requirements is key to having a realistic expectation about utilizing the coverage. Usually, these policies can be used for not just assisted living but also for home care services. Home care is a private pay service that can provide assistance with daily activities, personal care, transportation to appointments, medication reminders, house-keeping, meal preparation and companionship. This option can prolong the ability for someone to stay in their home longer, allowing them to hold off on a move to assisted living. Consult with an insurance agent to learn more about these policies and whether there is still an opportunity to purchase one.

Those without the option of veteran or long-term care benefits can consider consulting with a financial advisor. An advisor can assess your financial situation and help determine a budget. They may also make recommendations for adjusting investments and maximizing retirement accounts. Being aware of your financial means and having the ability to take action in advance of a crisis is preferable to sorting it all out during one.

An estate attorney is also a helpful resource,

especially if Medicaid planning is a potential factor. Knowing sooner rather than later if you or a loved one are a potential candidate for Medicaid is recommended. Some folks I talk to assume they will "just get on Medicaid" if need be. This is not necessarily the case as there are eligibility requirements, and even if they are met, it is not an overnight process by any means. This type of attorney is also important when power of attorney and/or advance directives come under consideration.

The Anne Arundel County Department of Aging and Disabilities is a fantastic asset we all can learn from. Among others, there are opportunities such as the subsidy and the community options waiver programs. These allow for lower-income residents to have full or partial cost coverage in assisted living. These options have wait lists, though; it is necessary to apply in advance. Again, it is not ideal to wait to investigate and take advantage of options available.

The future is always unknown, but arming yourself with knowledge and realistic expectations is best. Unfortunately, I encounter many families who have failed to make themselves aware of their own situations, much less that of a parent or other family member. No one wants to become ill or encounter age-related issues that impede our independence, but there is a good chance many of us will. Being prepared with options and information will lessen the stress if and when an illness or life-altering event occurs.

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Don't Skip The Eye Exam: Why Vision Should Be On Every Back-To-School Checklist



Sydney Tramontano
Woolf Eye Lab

As summer winds down and back-to-school season approaches, families are scrambling to get everyone looking and feeling good for another school year. Haircuts, school shopping, mid-year dentist visits, finding the perfect back-pack — all are important before the school year starts.

But there is one thing missing in the mix. What is it? Your child's back-to-school eye exam.

Vision plays one of the most important roles in a child's development, both in and out of the classroom. It is estimated that 80% of what a child learns is through visual tasks, whether it's reading from the board, completing worksheets, or using technology. But children often don't realize they aren't seeing clearly. They may think everyone sees the



way they do, or they may learn to adapt — by avoiding tasks, acting out, or falling behind.

Children today still receive basic vision screenings in school, similar to those at the department of motor vehicles. But those tests are not foolproof and do not check further into the child's ocular health. According to the American Optometric Association (AOA), one in four school-aged children has an undiagnosed vision problem, which can lead to misdiagnoses like ADHD, developmental delays or learning disabilities.

A comprehensive eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist checks far more than whether your child can see the board — it evaluates how their eyes work together, how they focus, and whether the eyes are healthy overall.

You may seek an eye center that

has techs who work wonderfully with all ages and abilities. A doctor should be able to perform a full vision exam for your child. From testing distance vision to reading up close; checking eye alignment, fatigue and crossing; or just updating a yearly glasses prescription, doctors can get your kids' eyes all caught up before the back-to-school shuffle.

As that shuffle begins, don't forget to keep your family's eye exams in the mix. Including an eye exam in your back-to-school prep ensures your child will walk into the classroom with the clarity and confidence they need to learn, grow and thrive — because clear vision is just as important as clean teeth and a new haircut.

To schedule an appointment with Woolf Eye Lab, or for more information or questions, call 410-255-8056, email hello@woolfeyelab.com or visit www.woolfeyelab.com. Woolf Eye Lab is located at 2446 Mountain Road in Pasadena.

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What Your Resting Heart Rate Says About Your Heart Health

Abid Fakhri, MD
Cardiologist
and Director Of
Cardiac CT
UM Baltimore
Washington Heart
Associates



When you visit a medical provider, checking your vital signs — like blood pressure, blood oxygen level, and heart rate — is typically one of the first steps. These measurements provide important insights into your heart health and overall well-being.

Your Heart At Rest

One key measurement is your resting heart rate, or the number of times your heart beats per minute when you're not active. For most adults, a normal resting heart rate ranges from 60 to 100 beats per minute. Factors like fitness level, stress and medications can affect this rate. Generally, a lower resting heart rate indicates better cardiovascular fitness, meaning your heart doesn't have to work as hard to pump blood.

According to the American Heart Association, a higher resting heart rate is linked to lower physical fitness, higher blood pressure and excess weight, all of which can raise your risk for heart disease.

When Heart Rate Is Too Low

A resting heart rate below 60 beats per minute isn't always a problem. Athletes and people on beta blockers often have slower heart rates. However, if it causes symptoms like dizziness or fatigue, it could be a condition called bradycardia. Some cases of bradycardia are harmless, but others may require medication or a pacemaker.



When Heart Rate Is Too High

A resting heart rate over 100 beats per minute is called tachycardia. The key is that this elevated rate occurs at rest, not during physical activity, which normally raises your heart rate. Tachycardia can lead to symptoms such as shortness of breath, sweating, fainting or even cardiac arrest.

There are several types of tachycardia, and treatment may include medications, implanted devices or a procedure called ablation to correct abnormal heart rhythms. It's also important to note that not all elevated heart rates are due to a heart condition — heat, caffeine, stress and emotions can also temporarily increase your heart rate.

How to Check Your Heart Rate

If you feel your heart is beating unusually fast or slow, take a moment to check it. Sit quietly for a minute or two, then place your index and middle fingers on the artery inside your wrist. Count the beats for 60 seconds to find your resting heart rate.

Have questions about your heart rate? Connect with a cardiologist at University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Heart Associates. Visit www.umbwmc.org/heart to learn more about its heart care services.

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It's OK To Not Be OK: Community Based Mental Health Resources

» Continued from page 19

NAMI have been advocating for more resources for adolescents. He highlighted that the 40 beds available at the county hospitals' in-patient psychiatric facilities are all for adults.

"We're seeing a trend: There's more and more mental health issues (and challenges coming up with adolescents," he said, noting a greater number of middle- and high-school students needing mental health care either through therapy, psychiatric care, or in-patient treatment if necessary.

For people of all ages and with any type of mental health challenge, there is support available in many forms throughout the area.

The First Step: Seeking Help

For those who are experiencing symptoms such as difficulty concentrating, loss of interest in things you enjoy, difficulty getting out of bed due to low mood, irritability, sleeplessness or other changes in mood, a good first step is talking with your primary care provider. According to the NIMH, it can perform an initial mental health screening and refer you to the appropriate mental health professional.

There are hundreds of licensed therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists in the area who can help with mental health challenges.

What To Do When Mental Health Becomes A Crisis

At times, mental health challenges become emergency situations, and there are several options for help in times of crisis.

Under the direction of the Anne Arundel County Mental Health Agency, the Crisis Response System, known as the "community warm-line," is a service that provides county residents in crisis with immediate support. Calls to the county warmline, 410-768-5522, are answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Crisis Response staff intervene

with callers who are experiencing a mental health and/or substance use disorder emergency.

Both Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center (AAMC) and University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center (UM BWMC) offer emergency services for mental and behavioral health as well. The emergency room at AAMC offers areas that focus on substance abuse, psychiatric issues, or a combination of both. If necessary, the staff coordinates transition to a Luminis Health inpatient care unit or other facility. UM BWMC offers both inpatient and outpatient behavioral health programs for adults, providing care for those with bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety disorders, suicidal behavior and many other conditions.

Support For Youth Through Public Schools

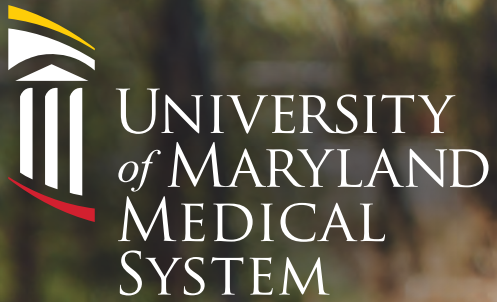
Anne Arundel County Public Schools offers many mental and behavioral health resources for students and families through school counselors, psychologists, pupil personnel workers and social workers. Every school is assigned a psychologist, and counselors are available in all schools. Learn more about school-based resources at www.aacps.org/page/student-services.

Additional Resources

Sometimes, natural occurrences in life — such as grieving the loss of a loved one — can lead to depression. Chesapeake Life Center, a part of Hospice of the Chesapeake, offers support to anyone grieving the loss of a parent, spouse, child or loved one regardless of their relationship to Hospice. More information can be found at www.chesapeakelifecenter.org.

GriefShare is a faith-based organization that offers in-person and virtual 13-week support groups, many of which are hosted at local churches. Find a nearby group at www.griefshare.org.

Anyone experiencing thoughts of suicide can call or text 988, the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, at any time. If you or someone you know is experiencing a life-threatening situation, call 911.



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Fitness On Your Level

Joe Bocek
Park Fitness



“So, what, you’re just not going to work out?” the trainer asked.

It was a question I overheard years ago from a puzzled personal trainer speaking with their client.

Let me give you some context: This was many years ago when I worked at a big-box gym. One evening, while training,

I caught part of a conversation between another trainer and their client. The client was clearly struggling, frustrated that they couldn’t do what they used to do years ago. The trainer, while well-meaning, may have missed the mark on empathy.

The benefits of exercise and the reasons to stay active are undeniable. We all want to live longer, feel better, look our best, and perform at a level we’re proud of. But unless you’re 20 years old, life tends to happen. We get into and out of routines. Careers take over, families grow, injuries pop up. It’s completely normal.

So, what do you do?

People tend to fall at one of two extremes. Some dive back in headfirst — trying the same hardcore workouts they did in their 20s. This works for a few people, but more often than not, it’s a fast track to burnout or injury.

These types of workouts can feel overly competitive, or look cool on social media, but may not be designed for where you are today.

On the flipside, some people convince them-

selves that their only option is light walking (which is great and absolutely better than nothing).

But there’s a better middle ground: a fitness approach that’s smart, sustainable, and meets you where you are. Traditionally, this came from one-on-one training with a knowledgeable coach. However, with group training becoming more and more popular, perhaps this option might work for you?

Here are a few things to look for:

Reputation

Positive reviews matter, but almost everyone loves their gym. A handful of good reviews might not tell the whole story. Dig a little deeper. Look for lots of great reviews spanning several years. That’s where you’ll find the true story.

Relatability

Do the people at this gym remind you of you? Are they working toward goals similar to yours? Also, keep in mind that even though fitness is the closest thing to the fountain of youth, try not to compare yourself and your goals to someone fresh out of college — we all start from different places.

Experience

Time can be the ultimate test. The fitness profession has a high turnover rate. Many trainers don’t stay in it long enough to truly hone their skills and develop a level of nuance to help customize your experience. So, it’s worth asking, “Has this coach or this facility stood the test of time?” Full-time, long-term experience says a lot.



Putting it all together

Can this place really help me? The best way to know is to try it. But if you’re narrowing down your options, look for the big picture: a strong reputation, a community of people like you, and a proven track record over time.

That’s a great place to start your search.

So, if you’re thinking about getting back into a fitness routine, or finding something that just fits your life better, start here. Because let’s be honest: We all want to live well, feel good, look great and keep moving strong.

And it’s not like we’re just going to stop working out, right?

Park Fitness is located at 564 Ritchie Highway in Severna Park. Learn more at www.parkfitssp.com or by calling 410-432-2113.

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Where Are They Now: Ron Green

By Tom Worgo

Ron Green had a good football life. Green, a Severna Park High graduate, won a national championship at the University of Tennessee in 1998 and played four years with future NFL Hall of Fame quarterback **Peyton Manning**.

The 50-year-old Green brims with pride when he talks about those days, but he's prouder that he overcame a learning disability and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology.

Green took advantage of Tennessee's resources that helped students with learning challenges.

He said he was afflicted with expressive writing disorder, which made it difficult to take notes. So, he used a tape recorder in all his classes and a voice-activated computer to write papers.

"I just stood up and let them know, 'Hey, I am just not here to play this sport,'" explained Green, who now lives in Atlanta and works as assistant manager for a property management company. "I am here to make sure I get through school, too. But not with handouts."

Green could talk all day about his high school and college football career. He spent quality time with Manning, who guided the Denver Broncos and Indianapolis Colts to Super Bowl victories.

They were part of Tennessee's 1994 recruiting class.

"Peyton will always be a friend of mine," Green said. "I was very good friends with him. When we lived in the

dorms, he was my next-door neighbor. He was somebody I hung out with a lot. It was amazing."

The biggest on-the-field moment in Green's football life came a year after Manning graduated as Tennessee earned a 23-16 victory over Florida State in the national title game at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe, Arizona, in January 1999.

The Volunteers finished a perfect 13-0, and Green hoisted the winning trophy like many of his teammates.

"It was the highlight of my career," Green said. "I couldn't believe we were there. I felt so good being part of this team and doing it all together. I said, 'Oh, my gosh, we are actually number one in the whole country.'"

Green, a 6-foot-1, 275-pound defensive tackle, played in 39 games — including starting 20 — for the Volunteers across four seasons.

He started six of 12 games as a red-shirt freshman in 1995 and earned a spot on the Southeastern Conference's all-freshman team.

He had his breakout performance four weeks into the 1996 season. He made 10 tackles against Mississippi. Then finished with 11 tackles versus Alabama a few weeks later.

"Ron had everything you would want in a defensive lineman," said ex-Tennessee defensive end **Jeff Coleman**, a four-year teammate of Green. "No one had that combination of strength, speed and power. I watched a lot of college football. I am not just talking about the conference, but just period."

Late in 1996, Green's career began to lose its luster. He suffered from a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee — the second one. Green wasn't as effective in 1997 when he tried to play through pain despite starting 11 games.

Green was part of a rotation as a senior and unfortunately tore his

» Continued on page 34



The Capital Gazette published this photo of Severna Park High School standout Ron Green as colleges around the country offered him scholarships.

Severna Park's Blake Howell Will Command Archbishop Spalding's Offense This Fall

Former Green Hornets Quarterback Will Try to Capture Spalding's Fourth Consecutive League Championship

By Kevin Murnane

Russian author Leo Tolstoy once said that "the two most powerful warriors are patience and time."

Severna Park's **Blake Howell** has been waiting to lead Archbishop Spalding's offense for the last two years as he learned and trained with the Maryland Gatorade Football Player of the Year, Malik Washington, who led the Cavaliers to three consecutive Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) championships. Washington was one of the top quarterbacks in the nation and accepted a football scholarship to the University of Maryland.

Howell's time has come to command the huddle and continue the success of Spalding's football dynasty.

"After last year's championship game, coach (**Kyle**) **Schmitt** came up to me and said, 'You have the keys now. Get ready,'" Howell said.

Spalding's football head coach weighed in. "There were certain things that Malik did that most high school offenses cannot duplicate," Schmitt said. "We will build around Blake's strength as a dual threat quarterback."

Howell is fortunate to have four returning starters on his offensive line as well as a 2024 Capital Gazette All-County first-team receiver and tight end, and two All-County second-team receivers.

"I feel very safe behind that big offensive line, and I have so many weapons as wide receivers; I can't wait to get started," he said.

Howell began playing football in the Pasadena-based Buccaneers system, then began playing in the Green Hornets organization at 8 years old. He participated in Spalding's football camps growing up and attended numerous Spalding football games.

"I remember the first game I attended at Whittles Field, I was so impressed with the spirit of the school," Howell said. "It was insane how loud it was and the stands were packed."

Howell received outstanding coaching in the Green Hornets system as his dad, Kevin, was his head coach through the eighth grade.

"Blake fits the mold of a coach's son," Schmitt said. "He's resilient, tough and consistent."

Howell started as the junior varsity quarterback during his freshman year at Spalding but patiently waited for two years to take the reins while learning from Washington.

"Malik pushed me, helped me with my mechanics, and we trained togeth-



Photo by Kevin Murnane

Blake Howell will try to help his team capture Archbishop Spalding's fourth consecutive conference championship this fall as he takes over as quarterback for the Cavaliers. Howell replaces one of the nation's best high school quarterbacks, Malik Washington, who now plays for the University of Maryland.

er for the last couple of years," Howell said.

Since last fall, Howell has been in the weight room, throwing to his receivers and leading his seven-on-seven summer team. He has worked on his arm strength for the last several years.

"Blake has significantly grown as a passer in his three years with our program," Schmitt said. "His arm strength has matured, and he is throwing the deep ball with very good accuracy. We believe he was one of the top quarterbacks in the MIAA last season based on his growth as a player."

Howell did get valuable playing time last fall as Spalding established sizable leads in a few conference games.

One of the intangibles Howell is working on this summer is becoming a better and more vocal leader.

» Continued on page 35

Clubs Partner For Youth Rugby Clinic



Severn River Rugby Football Club coached young players on running an effective defense, defending one-on-one, proper passing technique, and drop-kicking.

The Severn River Rugby Football Club and Green Hornets organizations connected during the second annual Green Hornets youth rugby clinic on July 10, ahead of the Green Hornets hosting the Maryland Youth Rugby Festival later in the month.

Severn River Rugby Football Club, composed of men's and women's teams and coaches, introduced young players to running an effective

defense, defending one-on-one, proper passing technique, and drop-kicking. The clinic ended with the Green Hornets' U13 and U16 teams scrimmaging against Severn River.

Green Hornets rugby participates in touch rugby from May to July and is open to youth players ages 3 to 16 of all skill levels. The Green Hornets started a program for 3- to 5-year-olds and had kids running around, passing and

scoring tries.

Severn River Rugby runs touch rugby sevens during the summer and participates in rugby union during the fall and spring. The club fields both competitive and social teams and welcomes men and women of all skill levels. The club practices Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:00pm at American Legion Post 175 on Manhattan Beach Road in Severna Park.

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STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH

COLE CAVANAUGH

Severna Park High School — Football

By David Bashore

The moment he set foot onto campus at Severna Park High School, **Cole Cavanaugh** had a goal in mind: play college football and do it at an Ivy League school.

That two-pronged goal requires excellence on the field and in the classroom. Through three years of high school, it's unfolded better than he could have ever dreamed.

The standout Severna Park wide receiver not only has put his name near the top of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools receiving chart during his two years as a starter, but he's also completed seven AP classes with four more on the docket and put together an impressive 3.8 unweighted and 4.25 weighted GPA.

That got him the attention he sought this summer, as he got an offer from the one Ivy League school he wanted most: Brown University in Rhode Island.

"It only took one night to sleep on it, and the next day I decided to commit. That's been my dream school for as long as I can remember," Cavanaugh said. "My cousins and aunt and uncle live a five-minute walk from Brown's main entrance. Growing up, we'd visited them



Photo courtesy of Fincham Photography

a lot, and I went to Brown a lot. They have a beautiful campus, and I love their open curriculum. It takes a lot of the stress out for students, and the academic and physical environment there are just a great fit for me."

The Cavanaugh family has long put academics at the top of the priority chart, which isn't always easy when playing multiple sports at a high level — in addition to being one of the premier

offensive players in the county, Cavanaugh is a defender for Severna Park's state championship boys lacrosse team.

But the internal discipline, the external motivations, and the structures put in place at Severna Park all played a role in helping him keep things balanced.

"Our school does a good job, especially for student-athletes, offering us multiple opportunities to be successful (with study halls and supports)," he said. "I wouldn't say it's *easy* to succeed, but I feel like it's easier to succeed than it is to fail."

Cavanaugh is used to the attention gained from opposing defenses, as he found out last year. He built such a chemistry with the receiving room, notably outgoing seniors **Joey Tramontana** and **Charlie Hartman**, as well as Wagner-bound quarterback **Vince Nguyen**, that playing together became almost second nature.

As he heads into his senior year, Cavanaugh hopes to take on a greater leadership role within both the Falcons football team and in the community.

He will help lead a wide receiver room with virtually no varsity experience, to go with a returning offense with limited experience, on top of perhaps playing some defense as well.

"Stepping up, having two years starting, and we have a lot of good guys

coming in; they just need experience," he said.

Off the field, Cavanaugh plans to continue building relationships in the community through volunteer work, both in the National Honor Society and Spanish National Honor Society, as well as toy and food drives through SPAN.

"I keep my faith pretty straight, and I know they work with the church," said Cavanaugh, who connected with SPAN through his church. "I also feel like it's more than just the money and the donation. It's about building connections with the people that you're giving it to." Before he heads off to Brown, perhaps to study marine biology or environmental engineering, Cavanaugh wants to do one more thing at Severna Park: put the football team on the map.

Sure, there's another lacrosse championship to potentially be won, which would bring their record run to 10, but he hopes that football won't be an afterthought for those in navy and gold.

"I want folks to see the potential for Severna Park football and get the support that maybe we don't deserve yet, but we will in the next few years," he said. "Not necessarily to make Severna Park a football town, but to make people think more about football when they think about Severna Park, growing the football culture in this community."

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Green Hornets Athletes Showcase Their Skills With Fun Summer Competition

Photos by Zach Sparks
Green Hornets track and field teams, along with flag football, put a bow on their 2025 summer campaigns with practices and games at the end of July and beginning of August.



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Athletes Commit To College Sports: Part II

Over 80 local high school student-athletes in the class of 2025 are committing to competitive sports at the college level. The following student-athletes were accidentally omitted from the college signings list published in the July edition of the Severna Park Voice. We regret the error.

Winter Sports

—Men's Basketball

Jacob Randall, Severn School – Chicago

Spring Sports

—Women's Lacrosse

Maeve Byrne, Severna Park – Roanoke

Correction:

Spring College Report

Many local high school graduates are excelling in college athletics. The July edition of the Severna Park Voice included a list of spring athletes, but the listing was missing the following summary that was sent to the Voice staff. We regret the error.

Baseball

Brad DeMoss — Indian Creek University of Valley Forge

A junior pitcher, DeMoss appeared in 10 games for the Patriots. DeMoss received the "I Am Forged" award for exhibiting discipline, hard work, humility and perseverance.

Where Are They Now: Ron Green



Photo courtesy of the University of Tennessee Athletics

University of Tennessee teammates, including Ron Green (far right) and Peyton Manning (center), like to reminisce about their college bond.

» Continued from page 29

knee for a third time in the national championship game. This time, it was his right knee.

"If Ron hadn't gotten injured multiple times, and I saw all of them," Coleman said, "we'd be talking about Ron playing in the NFL. He just wasn't the same after the injuries. Ron would have had a great NFL career."

At Severna Park High School, Green had a stellar career. He finished his senior season with 16 sacks and later ran a 4.64 40-yard dash. In 2007, Severna Park inducted Green into its athletic hall of fame.

That prolific high school stint led Green to scholarship offers from the nation's premier programs, which were coached by college football legends. They included **Lou Holtz**-led Notre Dame; Florida State, coached by **Bobby Bowden**; and **Tom Osborne's** Nebraska team.

Yet Green thought his athletic future would be in basketball. Green said he was recruited by Maryland, Wake Forest and Rutgers in that sport while

starting on varsity for four seasons at guard. He also competed in gymnastics for the Falcons.

Of course, he stuck with football, which he started playing as a freshman. He started for four years for **Andy Borland**, who coached the Falcons from 1963 to 1997.

Green saw time at running back, linebacker, guard and nose guard.

"He was a man child among boys," said the 85-year-old Boreland.

Green worked as a personal trainer for 20 years before getting into real estate. Seeing Green receive a degree meant as much to Borland as anything the lineman accomplished on the field. At Severna Park, he needed to take the college entrance exam six times before passing.

"In the 10th grade, he read on a fifth-grade level," Borland recalled. "We got him a tutor. He had a great attitude about academics."

"When he told me, 'I passed the test, coach,' I had tears in my eyes," Borland said.

Green had a great football life, and as he proved, he had even more to offer.

Green Hornets 8U Baseball Team Prevails In Armed Forces SlugFest



After outscoring opponents 17-4, the Green team won the 8U title during the Armed Forces SlugFest in June.

The Severna Park Green Hornets 8U Green team won three games to capture the 2025 Armed Forces SlugFest championship for their age group. The tournament was held in Emmitsburg, Maryland, in June.

Wins over Ole Liners (7-2), API Academy (5-2) and the Bowie Bulldogs (5-0) led the team to the title.

The Green team got stellar pitching, allowing four runs in three games. **John Bass, Rhodes Metzger, Kit O'Dell, Jay Watson, Jacob Lewis** and **Carter Carroll** each notched at least three strikeouts, and no pitcher allowed more than two runs.

Severna Park's bats were also strong with home runs from **Patrick Cassilly**, Jacob Lewis and **Nathaniel Clause**. Carter Carroll nearly joined them. He had three doubles — two almost being home runs as they hit the top of the wall. **Luke Obringer**

led the team with three RBIs over the weekend. **Harrison Karsner, Jack Logue** and **Padraig Murray** each had an RBI.

The team received a trophy, and each player received their own dog tags. Each set of tags had a different Medal of Honor recipient. Players were told to research their hero and share their story with their families.

Head coach **Steve Metzger** — along with assistant coaches **Scott Clause, Ryan Logue, Mark O'Dell** and **Matt Lewis** — said the Armed Forces SlugFest proved to be a fitting end to an enjoyable season.

"I'm incredibly proud of this group — not just for winning, but for how much they've grown and how much they truly enjoyed playing together," coach Metzger said. "Their hard work and chemistry made this a special season."

Severna Park's Howell Will Command Spalding's Offense

» Continued from page 29

"Blake has also grown into a significant leader for our program," Schmitt said. "He has a different style than Malik, but it is clear that our players are excited for his opportunity."

Defensive back **Sean Johnson** has been teammates with Howell since they were 7 years old in the Buccaneers and Green Hornets organizations.

"Blake is a leader on and off the field," Johnson said. "He cares for everyone and makes sure everyone is playing to their best ability all the time."

Johnson recently accepted a football scholarship to Florida State University.

Spalding has another daunting schedule this year. They will play na-

tional high school football powerhouses Archbishop Hoban of Ohio and The Hun School in New Jersey, as well as the competitive MIAA schedule. This fall, Spalding will have a new offensive coordinator, **Duncan Howard**. A former offensive lineman at the University of Oklahoma, Howard will continue to coach Spalding's offensive line as well.

Howell has used the summer months leading up to his senior year to hone his quarterback skill set and hopefully lead the Cavaliers to a record-setting fourth consecutive MIAA conference title.

"Blake is ready," Schmitt said. "He attacked this offseason with incredible passion for the sport and our program."



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Severn School

Boy Scout Troop 450 Celebrates Milestone Achievement For Five Eagle Scouts



By Meredith Winter

Although over 2 million young men have become Eagle Scouts since the rank's inception in 1912, it is estimated that only about 6% of Boy Scouts attain scouting's highest honor.

On July 19, five dedicated young men from Boy Scout Troop 450 celebrated their own achievement of earning Eagle Scout rank with a Court of Honor

ceremony. Based in Severna Park and sponsored by St. John the Evangelist Church, Troop 450 has helped boys ages 11-17 "build character, foster citizenship and develop fitness" since 1962.

The five local young men who are now among the prestigious 6% shared about their scouting journeys and the projects they planned and executed to earn the rank of Eagle Scout.

A Court of Honor, held on July 19, celebrated five members of Boy Scout Troop 450 achieving Eagle Scout rank. (L-R) Eisenhower Kondo, Jamal Washington, John Schroeder, Sean Gaffney and Asher Kopf each completed unique projects, joining the 6% of Boy Scouts who earn scouting's most prestigious rank.

SEAN GAFFNEY

The memory of meeting a woman experiencing homelessness at the former Emmaus Center in Glen Burnie made an indelible impression on a young Sean Gaffney. She shared that while sheltering in a tent, heavy snow fell and compromised the structure of the tent so badly that it sagged mere inches above her face.

The culmination of a decade in scouting, Gaffney devoted his Eagle Scout project to helping some of the most vulnerable individuals in the community, remembering the woman's story. "I knew I wanted my Eagle Scout project to help homeless people in need of a place to sleep," he previously shared with the Voice.

Gaffney just graduated from Severna Park High School (SPHS), and during his senior year, he devoted many hours to collecting new or gently used tents. He

repaired, waterproofed and cleaned the tents, then donated them to the Arundel House of Hope, which serves people experiencing homelessness.

Reflecting on his scouting experience, Gaffney shared a favorite memory: a camping trip to Hershey Park. He plans to attend Anne Arundel Community College.

EISENHOWER KONDO

Another 2025 SPHS graduate, Eisenhower Kondo became a Cub Scout when he was in kindergarten, embarking on a long scouting journey. He will soon depart for the University of Maryland, College Park to pursue a degree in general biology.

A dog owner and animal lover, Kondo approached Anne Arundel County Animal Care & Control (now Anne Arundel County Animal Services) and asked if he could help with anything.

"For my Eagle Scout project, I made a full dog-walking trail behind the shelter," he shared. "I added one of the little doggy poop bag receptacles, I had a bench, and I basically cleared out a whole section and then laid mulch and logs around the trail."

Service projects were a highlight of Kondo's scouting career. "For my scout troop, we try to do a service project at least around once every month. I just like that it's a way for me to give back to others," he shared.

Kondo emphasized that being a Boy Scout has helped shape who he is. "(Scouting) helped me grow as a person, not just through basic scouting stuff, but it's really helped me improve my

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Kid Entrepreneurs Get Creative With Business Ventures

By Jaina Peveto

It's never too early to turn an idea into a business, as 13-year-old Arnold resident Keely Hardgrove knows well. Keely is the owner of Kiki's Sweets, a small business that sells homemade dog treats in three flavors. Keely won an award for her business at the Acton Children's Business Fair in its first year and has participated every year since.

In a further show of entrepreneurial spirit, last year, she took the leftover treats and sold them at a stand in her front yard. Keely also used to offer a monthly subscription box, which included three bags of treats a month.

"I just like working for myself and designing whatever I want to do," Keely explained. She hopes to try selling her products at another market later this year.

Keely is only one of many kids in the area trying their hand at running a business. Selling at markets gives children experience with what it's like to make products, draw in potential customers, and make smart business decisions. Running a small business also creates the chance for young entrepreneurs' unique ideas to come to fruition. The annual Acton Children's Business Fair hosted by the Maryland Curiosity Lab puts kids and their businesses in front of interested customers.

"I think people come to the event and walk away really excited about the next generation because they see what they're capable of," said Roman Hardgrave, one of the fair's organizers.

Harper and Beckett Van Dam, ages 11 and 9 respectively, teamed up to start Tiny Botanicals, through which they sell handcrafted herbal self-care



Harper (center) and Beckett Van Dam (second from left) of Tiny Botanicals and Max Lester (third from left) of Whopper Dropper posed with their fellow prize winners at the Acton Children's Business Fair.

Photo courtesy of Maryland Curiosity Lab

items such as tea, face cream and lip balm. In addition to Tiny Botanicals, the sisters run a neighborhood business called We Can Help, where they help neighbors move trash cans and water their gardens.

Harper and Beckett put a lot of thought into all the elements of their businesses. Before selling their products, they practiced their setup in their front

yard, and the work they did for their display was one of their favorite parts of running their business. They split the money from Tiny Botanicals and put their earnings in their savings accounts for when they're older.

"It's really fun to create things and see how much

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Kid Entrepreneurs Get Creative

» Continued from page 37

our business has grown from the small idea we had," Beckett said.

Harper and Beckett won the prize for Most Original Business Idea for the 11-16 age group at this year's Acton Children's Business Fair in May. The same category for the 5-10 age group was won by 9-year-old Max Lester, who sold an invention called Whopper Dropper.

Max worked in his grandfather's shop to create gumball machines for Whoppers candy using recycled materials. During the business fair, he made enough money to buy an electric scooter.

Though Max might be finished with his Whopper Dropper business for now, he has other entrepreneurial aspirations for the future. For his next business, he wants to make money by reselling items, and when he's older, Max hopes to play in the NFL and then open a memorabilia shop once he's retired.

"I think it's cool to watch him go through the whole process, like coming up with the ideas, figuring out what a customer would actually pay for, at his age," Max's mom, Maureen Lester, said. "His first idea was to knock on Steve Bisciotti's door, who owns the Ravens, and get him to come and autograph custom jerseys. So we had to scale it back a little bit."

Another opportunity for young entrepreneurs, Children's Business Market, began holding markets throughout Maryland earlier this year. Kids aged 5-17 sell a variety of products, from Jacob's Happy Paws selling homemade paw balm for dogs to Hermit Crab Jewelry, a jewelry business named after 11-year-old Alma's pet hermit crab.

"It's really cool to see them just develop with confidence and talking about their products that they're really proud of," said market organizer Jessica Grady.



Eleven-year-old Harper Van Dam (left) and her 9-year-old sister Beckett (right), owners of Tiny Botanicals, got a lot of compliments on their matching yellow dresses at the Acton Children's Business Fair.

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Severna Park Brothers Make Eagle Scout

Caden And Jase Tetrault Complete Community Service Projects

By Elsa Webster
Student Intern

Two Severna Park High School graduates are giving back to their community while moving up the ranks. Eighteen-year-old brothers Caden and Jase Tetrault have now received the highest honor in Boy Scouts: Eagle Scout rank.

The pair achieved this rank by completing community service projects. Jase partnered with Kinder Farm Park to make mourning dove nesting shelters, and Caden worked with MorningStar Senior Living to clean up its patio space for senior residents to enjoy during the spring and summer.

The Tetraults have been involved in scouting since they were in second grade, starting with Cub Scouts before they graduated to Boy Scouts after elementary school. As Boy Scouts, the brothers were members of Troop 993, which meets at Severna Park United Methodist Church.

Inspired by their friends' involvement with Boy Scouts, the brothers explored the possibility of joining Troop 993 because they were told that the group had great success helping boys become Eagle Scouts.

"Eagle Scout (status is) a really hard thing to earn, but I think once Troop 993 got you to Life Scout, it had like a 93% success rate of (members) becoming an Eagle Scout," Caden said. "So it was just really impressive how they moved their scouts up the ranks. So that's why we chose 993, and we chose to stick with it because a lot of our friends were doing it, and because we had a really good time."

While that long-term goal was always in mind, the boys credit Troop 993 for keeping them engaged over the years with a fun schedule of activities.

"We were camping every month, and we were doing a lot of activities with our troop," Caden said.

With such a difficult-to-achieve rank came a lot of



Jase (left) and Caden Tetrault spent over six months on their projects. They smiled with enthusiasm at the start of the effort.

time-consuming work that both Caden and Jase had to complete before becoming Eagle Scouts. The Tetraults had to fill out a 40-page worksheet as well as complete more than 100 hours of community service each to ensure their plans were foolproof. Overall, the projects took over six months to plan.

Caden chose his Eagle Scout project after MorningStar Senior Living reached out to his troop asking if anyone could fix a rock garden. Ready for the challenge, Caden rid the space of overgrown bushes, planted flowers and built an art storage box so that residents at the nursing home could continue to paint rocks, often painting them as memorials for former residents who died.

Jase opted for a more personal project with his mourning dove shelter boxes. He recalled always being woken up by mourning doves during his childhood, and since he



Jase Tetrault



Caden Tetrault

could no longer hear them, he decided to partner with Kinder Farm Park to create the shelters. Since the project's completion, birds have been nesting in the shelters. Tetrault even saw a cardinal and a dove building nests.

"Ultimately, the project is really the kind of final challenge, so to speak, in scouts and it's to show how far you've come and what the skills have taught you," Jase said. "And also, just how committed you are to a project, and I'm pretty grateful that we were both able to do projects that were really meaningful to ourselves and the community."

Even with the completion of their Eagle Scout projects, the Tetrault brothers feel that their involvement in the

program is far from over. They want to help the next generation learn the practical skills that helped them become Eagle Scouts.

"This is the beginning of the end because scouting is a lifelong journey. It's not really something where, 'Oh, I earn Eagle Scout; let me put this away now,' because you always have to end up giving back and continuing the legacy of all the scouts before you, essentially," Jase said. "And one of the ways I've done that is I've actually gone back as an adult leader, and I've helped out the new scouts by reading them their books and teaching them little skills. Like, I taught the other day how to navigate using the moon and sun and stuff like that. So, you know, it's always nice to give back, especially after you've graduated from scouting. And I think I'm going to continue doing that in the future."



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Educator Of The Month

Daliana Gutierrez The Dance Center at Severna Park Community Center

“She is an experienced and talented dance teacher whose presence has boosted our program.”

— KELLIE GREER, DIRECTOR
THE DANCE CENTER AT
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By Jaina Peveto

Daliana Gutierrez was around the age of some of her youngest current students when she began intensive training to become a professional ballet dancer. From the ages of 7 to 24, performing took precedence over school, planning a future career path, and college. When COVID hit, Gutierrez's dance company shut down, but she didn't let it stop dance from being an important part of her life.

“My dancing days are over — I'm not going to go back on that stage anymore, so it's really important to me to give over all of my knowledge,” Gutierrez said. “I feel like I have a lot of valuable things that I've learned, and I want these kids to just have it all.”

Gutierrez, a Millersville resident, has worked at The Dance Center at Severna Park Community Center since fall 2022, teaching classes for elementary students, middle-schoolers, high school students and adults. During the academic year, Gutierrez teaches classes a few nights a week, leading up to a recital at the end of the year. The students begin each lesson with stretching and barre work then meet back in the middle of the room for the remainder of the class.

Over the summer, Gutierrez taught a pointe class to help students stay in shape and not hurt themselves when they return to pointe in the fall. Her pointe class was a mixed-level class including both beginner and intermediate

dancers. During one of the last days of the class, Gutierrez had former students who had since moved on to college drop by to see her and say hello.

“When you're in this classroom, the entire world almost disappears,” Gutierrez said. “It's just you and your students, and I love building those connections. And whether you're 10 years old or 80 years old, to gain the trust of the student who's willing to learn and keeps coming back to your classes, that's really just a priceless thing, just because you're making these human connections through this art form that's dance.”

In addition to teaching dance, Gutierrez has a day job as an executive assistant at an architecture firm. “I love being like that, like, ‘Go, go, go,’ all the time. But for me, this job here at the community center also helps me, I feel like, because it's really that creative outlet,” she said.

Some of her free time is spent enjoying fishing with her boyfriend on the weekends, but a lot of her time after her day job goes into preparing for upcoming dance classes. In addition to the time she is in the classroom, Gutierrez also spends hours planning what she wants to teach her students. This allows her to figure out the best way to build upon previously learned skills, and she tries to tailor her choreography and lessons to the strengths and weaknesses of the students she's teaching.

“She is an experienced and talented dance teacher whose presence has boosted our program,” dance center director Kellie Greer said of Gutierrez.

While Gutierrez enjoys teaching every age group, her favorites and the ones she teaches most frequently are middle and high school, because she enjoys helping build upon the foundations of dance knowledge that they might already have. One of her favorite parts of being a teacher is getting to watch her students' growth over the course of the year, both in terms of skill and in confidence.

“That's my biggest joy, these kids realizing how much they're capable of,” Gutierrez said.

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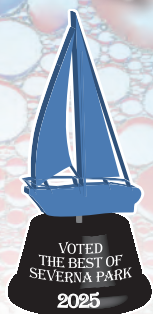
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Severna Park High School Students Place In SkillsUSA Competition



Severna Park High School's SkillsUSA team consisted of the following students: (back row, l-r) Ryan Jamison, Michael Pastine, Ty Miller, Cody Gleason, Jackson DuPee and (front row, l-r) Evie Elder, Holly Braughton and Tiiu Nomm.

This summer, Severna Park High School (SPHS) students traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, for SkillsUSA's National Leadership and Skills Conference from June 25-26.

The school's Entrepreneurship team of Holly Braughton, Jackson DuPee, Evie Elder, Cody Gleason and Tiiu Nomm won the bronze medal out of 22 competing teams. They pitched their student business EcoEssence, in which they designed a smart recycling can, which will not only clean recyclables properly but will also tell customers what is recyclable and offer upcycling ideas for home consumers.

The SkillsUSA championships make up the largest skill competition in the world and cover 1.79 million square feet, equivalent to 31 football fields or 41 acres. More than 6,500 students competed at the national showcase of career and technical education.

"This showcase of career and technical education demonstrates SkillsUSA at its finest," said SkillsUSA Executive Director Chelle Travis. "Our students, instructors and industry partners work together to ensure that every student excels. This program expands learning and career opportunities for our members."

First-place state winners were invited to the event to demonstrate their technical, workplace and personal skills in 114 hands-on competi-

tions including robotics, automotive technology, drafting, criminal justice, aviation maintenance and public speaking. Industry leaders from 850 businesses, corporations, trade associations, and unions planned and evaluated the contestants against their standards for entry-level workers. More than 1,200 industry judges and technical committee members participated this year.

A total of 1,250 gold, silver and bronze medals were presented to students on June 27 at the SkillsUSA awards session. Many winners also received industry prizes, tools of their trade or scholarships. The medalists also received a Skill Point Certificate representing workplace readiness in the student's occupational specialty. Students can add the certificate to an employment portfolio. As an indicator of proficiency, Skill Point Certificates were awarded to national contestants who medaled or who met a threshold contest score for their event.

Severna Park High School's team of Ryan Jamison, Ty Miller, and Michael Pastine also placed 11th in the nation in the category of Business, Management, and Technology for their project. They presented in-school business Ooey Gooley Cookie Sale, in which SPHS students can preorder cookies to be baked and picked up on their way home on Fridays.

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Eagle Scout Project Unveils A Rain Garden

By Aidann Gia Bacolodan

Mason Weight of Broadneck High School kicked off his summer in a different way than many of his peers. After meticulous planning and intensive research, Weight brought together a group of Boy Scout volunteers to complete his Eagle Scout project. The boys rehabilitated and expanded a garden bed behind the Children's Theatre of Annapolis (CTA) in July to ensure its self-sustainability.

Weight, inspired by his older brother, first became a Boy Scout while attending Belvedere Elementary. Since then, he has become a member of Troop 382 in Arnold, holding the positions of junior assistant scoutmaster and crew leader for high school adventure. Weight has been actively involved in Boy Scout philanthropic events, whether he's helping with the funnel cake fundraiser at the Cape St. Claire Strawberry Festival or supporting food drives for his older brother's pantry. To attain his Eagle rank, he completed an eight-month-long community project to expand a local rain garden.

"I definitely got lucky with it. I was struggling to find an idea for what I should do with my project and was approached by someone from the theater who was looking for a new rain garden back in November of last year," Weight reflected. "From CTA, Loy Vélez-Suárez introduced me to the project. Kelly Rollison was the main representative and Amy Schropp helped me with fundraising."



Mason Weight completed his Eagle Scout project at Children's Theatre of Annapolis on July 5. For his project, Weight led Boy Scouts in rehabilitating and expanding the garden at Children's Theatre of Annapolis, converting it to a rain garden with rain barrels and weep hoses and incorporating native plants.

During the workday, the volunteers encountered challenges from heat advisories and refreshment shortages. The high UV index halted progress throughout the day, and the volunteers scheduled breaks every 50 minutes to ensure no one experienced heat exhaustion, while more ice and Gatorade were purchased than anticipated for proper hydration.

"About 16 people showed up. Most of them were scouts and parents of scouts," Weight said. "My Eagle project coach really helped me with the execution, Shawn Callahan. He would look

over my Eagle workbook to make suggestions and review it with me."

The rain garden measures approximately 700 square feet and is complete with rain barrels, weeper hoses, and a multitude of native plants. Weight arranged rows of plants with two slate stone bench areas on the sides. The selection includes black-eyed Susans, milkweed and inkberry bushes. At the edge of the garden sit rain barrels, with weeper hoses running to each pit. Because of these features, the garden retains rainfall. The self-suffi-

cient plantings do not require watering.

Weight's design is unique, as the garden is raised to withstand droughts. After the eight-month process from planning to execution, the expanded rain garden is now complete for the Children's Theatre of Annapolis. The project was funded through a grant from the Community Foundation of Anne Arundel County.

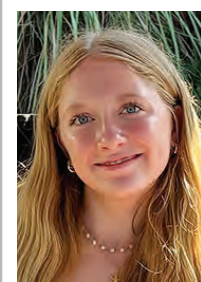
"My next steps are to go to college and study environmental science," Weight shared. "I think Boy Scouts have helped put me on the path of conserving the environment and make living sustainable."

Weight is a rising senior and hopes to attend Dartmouth College or SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry after he graduates.



Student Raises Awareness About AEDs

Severna Park High School student Brooke Latone is working toward earning her Girl Scout Gold Award project by installing an automated ex-



Brooke Latone

ternal defibrillator (AED) along with pediatric pads at her church, Our Shepard Lutheran.

Heart failure is the leading cause of death in the U.S. Approximately one in four deaths are the result of heart disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. After Brooke's aunt died of heart failure in 2023, she learned more about the toll heart disease has caused nationwide.

Heart failure may be caused by high blood pressure, diseases of the heart muscle, heart valve problems, congenital heart defects, and other reasons. Brooke's project addresses the need for awareness of where AEDs are located and the resultant lack of use of AEDs in saving the lives of people suffering from heart attacks or heart failure.

"Rapid access to an AED is the best chance someone with heart failure has — every minute without defibrillation decreases the chances of survival by 7% to 10% — yet many people couldn't tell you if there is an AED in the public building they are in or how to find out," Brooke said.

Her goal is to make people aware of the application PulsePoint AED, which shows AED locations near them, and by doing so, improve the chances that AEDs will be able to assist someone suffering from heart failure in the future.

Boy Scout Troop 450 Celebrates Milestone

» Continued from page 37

leadership (and) my ability to speak in front of others, especially in large groups," he said. He added that he also learned how to teach others while working with younger scouts.

ASHER KOPF

With an aspiration to one day become an exotic animal veterinarian, recent Chesapeake High School graduate Asher Kopf is headed to West Virginia University to study animal science.

He also sought out an Eagle Scout project that would allow him to both give back and work with exotic animals: Kopf helped with light renovations at the Icarus Foundation's Chesapeake Parrot Sanctuary in Annapolis. Kopf noted he is the first to complete an Eagle Scout project there.

For his project, he modified three screen doors, replacing the screens with stainless steel so that the birds at the sanctuary could see out of their rooms without chewing through the screens. He also created two bird perches in addition to a few other renovations.

The motto of the Boy Scouts, "Be Prepared," is one Kopf said has been helpful in many ways and will carry on with him throughout life. A memory he won't soon forget is that of a high-adventure trip he took with about a half-dozen fellow scouts.

"(We) went to SeaBase, and that was in the Bahamas, and we lived on a sailboat for longer than a week and got to explore down there, which was pretty cool," Kopf recalled.

JONATHAN SCHROEDER

Broadneck High School class of 2025 graduate Jonathan Schroeder is not the first in his family to attain the rank of Eagle Scout: Both his grandfather and his uncle achieved the honor as well.

Initially, Schroeder wanted to follow in his uncle's footsteps and create improvements along the B&A Trail for his Eagle project. However, the jobs he was invited to do were small in scale, so he reached out to his grandfather, Lieutenant Colonel Mark Schroeder, who works at the Maryland Defense Force (MDDF) to see if the state military agency had any needs. For the MDDF, he built two picnic benches, which he knows are getting good use.

"We put the benches in the spot behind (my grandfather's) building, so he sends me pictures of people using it daily, and it's actually super cool to see that it's being used and that they enjoy it," Schroeder said.

Schroeder shared that the greatest highlight of his scouting experience — which began when he was in first grade — was a backpacking trip at Philmont, a high-adventure camp in New Mexico. He reflected on the challenging but fun hike, sharing that it was the most beautiful place he's ever been.

Among many life lessons, Schroeder said scouting has taught him to take greater time to enjoy things in life. He is headed to Towson University to study political science.

JAMAL WASHINGTON

Jamal Washington loves to spend time in the kitchen with his mom. That's partly what inspired the recent SPHS graduate, who is headed to Salisbury University to study engineering physics, to serve meals for his Eagle Scout project.

Involved with scouting since he was a Cub Scout, Washington completed his project at Baltimore Station, where he collected, prepared and served meals for veterans.

"Both of my grandfathers ... were in the military, and both of them passed while I was at a young age," Washington shared. "I felt like this was a good way for me to sort of connect with them, and I really wanted to think of a good way to give back to my community."

With donations from the community and the help of his fellow scouts, Washington served food to nearly 60 people.

Like Schroeder, Washington counts his 12-day, 72-mile hike at Philmont as the highlight of his scouting experience. "I would say that the scouts that I went there with, I have a bigger bond (with) ... because it was a lot at Philmont," he said. "It was out in the wild — bears, trail food for 12 days — it was something. But I really connected with them there and I really appreciated that."

During the Court of Honor celebration in July, Washington shared some wisdom he gained through scouting. "I remember telling the younger scouts there that in scouts, you really gain a family. Each one of them helps each other out," he recalled, noting, "When I was struggling, there was always someone there to give me a hand. ... I wouldn't be who I am today without them."

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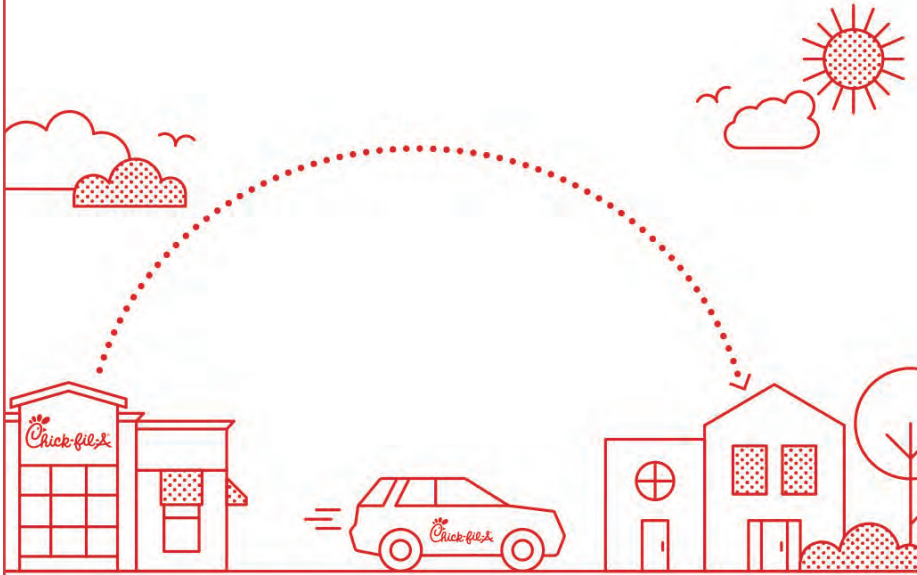
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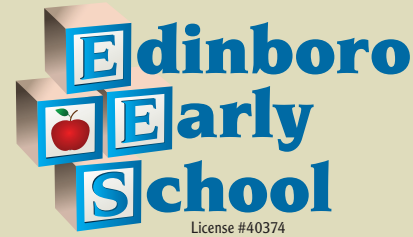
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Jousting Draws Large Crowds At Maryland Renaissance Festival

Photo courtesy of
Michael Baker/Maryland
Renaissance Festival

The athletes performing in the jousting ring don't know who will win, but they all hope to be victorious.



By Jaina Peveto

For the jousters at Debracey Productions, every performance, and every practice, is different. No show has been rehearsed in its entirety before it happens, as the horses would get bored and want to skip to the end. The outcome isn't scripted; during the show, the athletes do their best to come out on top.

"The audience really feels that. They like the competition part of it," said Bill Burch, owner of Debracey Productions.

Jousting is the biggest show at the Maryland Renaissance Festival, or "Renn Fest," each year. According to Royal Court director Mary Ann Jung, each joust can draw between 4,000 and 5,000 people. Because

of the audience the event draws, Renn Fest and Debracey Productions work to integrate the overarching story of Renn Fest into the jousts while also allowing them to tell their own separate stories. A handful of Renn Fest performers,

often including Jung, act as "speakers" during the joust.

Within the context of the Renaissance Festival's storyline, the jousters are knights visiting to provide entertainment, and the reality isn't far off. Debracey Productions travels to different Renaissance fairs throughout the country. Maryland's Renn Fest is Burch's favorite festival to perform at for multiple reasons, including the location, the jousting arena and the support of the festival's management.

"You can really appreciate a show like Maryland, period," Burch said. He added that the event "has the most amazing arena on the circuit."

Renn Fest was the second festival that Burch ever performed at, back when he first began jousting at the age of 21, and though there were about 24 years between that performance and his return to Renn Fest with Debracey Productions, the experience stuck with him. Burch had been sent ahead of the other jousters with a friend to build up the props, and they were taken on a golf cart to find the owners of the fair. When they finally found them, they were busy helping someone build a booth.

» Continued on page 46

ASO To Present Pops In The Park End-Of-Summer Bash

Every year, the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra (ASO) presents two free outdoor Pops in the Park summer concerts. At Downs Park on August 30 at 11:30am and Quiet Waters Park on August 31 at 5:30pm, community members can look forward to an event full of energy, movie music, patriotic favorites and unexpected surprises.

Open to all ages, the concert draws thousands of attendees each year. The event combines lighthearted music with the scenery of Quiet Waters Park in Annapolis or Downs Park in Pasadena.

"This concert is joyful," said José-Luis Novo, artistic director and conductor of the ASO. "It's fun, it's outdoors, and it's free. For many in the audience, Pops in the Park is the first time hearing a live orchestra. That moment of discovery is powerful."

Visitors to Pops in the Park can anticipate classical music, pieces from Broadway and Hollywood, and high-energy symphonic hits. The concerts will open with a performance by Annapolis Symphony Academy (ASA) Orion Youth Orchestra and Aries Youth Chamber Orchestra performing under the baton of Heather Haughn, chair of the ASA strings department. Novo will then take over as maestro, and the sound of over 70 musicians will reverberate across the parks.

Pops in the Park will have food trucks present onsite, but the ASO recommends preordering food from nearby restaurants and caterers. Attire can be casual — attendees may dress for warm weather or



José-Luis Novo will again lead the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra in two free concerts over Labor Day weekend this September.

a backyard party. Audience members are encouraged to bring strollers, lawn chairs, picnic blankets, picnics and snacks. Smoking and alcohol are not permitted in the parks, and pets must be leashed.

Parking is free for both events, though guests must arrive after 10:30am for the Downs Park performance for free entry.

The Quiet Waters Park performance will be held on the concert stage in the southeast corner of the park. The Downs Park performance will be held on the pavilion on the waterfront side of the park. The rain date for both performances is September 1 at Quiet Waters Park.

To learn more, go to www.annapolissymphony.org/events.

Little Free Libraries Build Community Through Reading

By Jaina Peveto

From her job at Park Books to her home on Giddings Avenue, Colby Peters has always filled her life with reading. Peters set up a "Little Free Library" at her house in 2019, one of many throughout Severna Park and nearby towns. The raised enclosure is often packed with books, as community members stop by to take titles that interest them and leave behind stories for others to enjoy.

"I love brief encounters or chance encounters with other people, so I loved the idea of having something where people would stop and we would have the opportunity to have a conversation," Peters said. "And I also thought it's just a really nice way to be of service to the community."

Among the hundreds of thousands of these public book exchanges across the globe, a couple of Little Free Libraries in Arnold serve the community in an additional way. Jackie Hetrick stewards two libraries that were designed by former Severn River Lions Club Past International President Clement Kusiak and built with the help of the Lions Club. The libraries honor Oliver Wittig, former principal of Severna Park High School, and Hetrick's son Sean, a musician who died in 2020.

"It's nice that they're dedicated and have an extra purpose," Hetrick said.

Little Free Libraries like the ones maintained by Peters and Hetrick



Photo by Jaina Peveto

The Little Free Library behind The Big Bean in Severna Park is stocked with books for all ages.

can be found throughout the community. The Little Free Library nonprofit organization makes it easy to set up libraries. Many residents with their own libraries purchased them from the Little Free Library website and built them using kits sent by the nonprofit. Other Little Free Libraries, such as Jim Baer's on Inverness Road, were built almost entirely by their stewards.

Baer first became interested in Little Free Libraries after seeing one while walking through his sister-in-law's neighborhood in Georgia. He built his

» Continued on page 46

Summer Superhero Blockbusters Leave Audiences With Different Takeaways

By Audrey Ruppert

Film Critic

Editor's note: This review contains spoilers.

“**S**uperman” and “The Fantastic Four: First Steps” hit cinemas around the same time and for most moviegoers, the releases have been a breath of fresh air, receiving positive feedback at a time when superhero franchises are getting stale. They both represent a return to the fundamentals while making their stories modern and fresh. But upon closer examination, one shows the heart and soul of what a superhero story used to be all about, while the other, under the hood, is insidious and needs to be challenged.

Let's start with what they both get right.

Both return to the campiness of the source material and don't take themselves too seriously. We are so over the unnecessary, pointless grit of the Zack Snyder era — give us a bad super-dog that causes havoc by chasing flying balls. Give us the visually pleasing aesthetic of the '60s mixed with modern technology.

At their heart, superhero stories are meant to be feel-good fun, centered around super people with relatable non-super problems, all while teaching a simple lesson.

But this last component is where the two films diverge in quality. The moral behind “Superman” is well thought out — a timeless message that the creators likely had in mind from the beginning, one we need to be reminded of. “Fantastic Four” promotes an immoral “lesson” that is also ancient but deeply evil, and it is the exact opposite of what people need to hear right now. Let's compare.

“Superman” manages to have some complexity and a 2025 update, without being too deep. Lex Luthor has become very Elon-coded. He represents the dark



Photo courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures

David Corenswet plays Superman in DC Studios' and Warner Bros. Pictures' “Superman.”

side of the American dream, buying his way to the top through cunning and capital, edging out those like Superman who were born with validation and power he sees as unearned. He craves recognition and will do anything, including interference with world politics and subjugation of entire peoples, to take down his enemy and get the praise he craves — but his efforts are always in vain.

Superman, in contrast to Luthor, lives his life by a simple but solid code of ethics. He has his worldview challenged multiple times throughout the story — by the ghosts of his parents, by his love interest, Lois (rather reasonably), and by society itself. But at the end of the day, in an allegory so unsubtle I'm shocked a modern Hollywood studio made it, Superman says, “You know what? Mass murder and the invasion of a powerless nation is bad. The end. We're not doing it.” That's a moral to live by. The comic book Superman

punched Nazis. I'm glad to see that Superman back in the driver's seat, at a time when he is sorely needed.

For “Fantastic Four,” on the other hand, I think the moral is, “Stand by family and protect those you love, no matter the cost.” Which is a nice sentiment at face value but a lot more complex when the cost is the literal human race.

This isn't a new moral dilemma. It's as familiar as Nosferatu. Galactus is nothing but an appetite, one who requires the ultimate sacrifice to be stopped. It's as well-trodden as the trolley problem.

There are many ways of handling this theme, and the writers chose the path of least resistance. Such a shame that all the budget and attention to detail went to the aesthetic (which to be fair, was brilliant) rather than the writing. Sue Storm is the ultimate entitled boy mom who just expects the entire world to bend over backward and sacrifice their lives for her precious, oh-so-special little baby boy, because he's *her* baby boy. She gets offended at the mere prospect of her husband daring to consider the fate of all humanity, and she shames him thoroughly for his audacity.

The four could have saved the child in many ways — they could have decided not to perpetuate the cycle of planet consumption, for example. The Human Torch could have decided, after realizing the sacrifice the Silver Surfer made to save her planet at the expense of all the other planets, that the cycle stopped with Earth — that they were going to fight, even if their chances were slim, to try to save all worlds, not just their own. They could have made a difficult moral decision and sided with the people who wouldn't pull the lever in the trolley problem, decided it was just wrong to sacrifice even one innocent without their consent, no matter the cost. They didn't do any of that. It's not the saving of the child that's problematic — it's the selfish reasoning behind why they chose to do it.

Little Free Libraries

» Continued from page 45

first one about 12 years ago in his shop, modeling its black and white exterior after his house. Three years ago, he built another one to hold children's books. He plans to rebuild the children's book library later this year, so it will hold up better against the weather and accommodate larger books.

Two other Little Free Libraries have popped up within about a mile of his house, their stewards taking inspiration from Baer's. “It's a landmark by which people navigate in the neighborhood,” Baer said.

Books aren't the only things that make their way into the Little Free Libraries. Baer and his wife often find kindness rocks in the garden beneath their libraries, painted by another community member. Someone else leaves bookmarks with Bible verses.

Susan Mahaffee, who maintains the Little Free Library on Heavytrees Lane in Chartwell, is hoping to install a dog treat container when she replaces the library with a larger one this fall. She put the current one up during the pandemic after observing how many kids get most of their books from school libraries.

“I realized, well, the kids aren't in school,” Mahaffee said. “So if the kids aren't in school, how are they going to get books?”

Mahaffee's library is a popular place in the neighborhood. Kids have used it as a location for lemonade stands. And as Mahaffee hoped, her Little Free Library was an important spot for community members during the pandemic. One woman brought her grandson to

Mahaffee's library every week, giving him time to sit on the bench to read a book before putting it back in the library for someone else to enjoy.

Emily Clement's library on Cypress Road also had a community impact during the pandemic. “During COVID, I was making cloth masks when that was all you could get, and I put some of those in there,” she said.

Clement's library started after a large oak tree in her yard died in 2018. She had seen Little Free Libraries around before and was intrigued by the concept, and her husband, Allen, suggested turning the tree into a library. They cut it down to a stump and gave it a door and a roof, and bookshelves sit directly inside the tree.

“It is a tree stump, so it is deteriorating, and we can see that it's probably not going to last forever,” Clement said. “And I don't know what we'll do next, but whatever we do next, I'd like it to somehow resemble a tree. So the future is some other way of making it the ‘Little Tree Library’ when our stump falls apart.”

Community members including retired schoolteacher Mania Missirian appreciate how Little Free Libraries bring reading to the community. Missirian has donated and borrowed books from the library behind The Big Bean in Severna Park for about four years.

“(The library is) building a sense of community by giving and receiving something so valuable — books!” Missirian said.

To find a map of nearby Little Free Libraries, go to www.littlefreelibrary.org.

Jousting Draws Large Crowds

» Continued from page 45

“Coming from a dairy farm, that really spoke to me,” Burch said. “I feel so lucky to work with people who really care about the product and who put their hands into everything.”

Debracey Productions' show features battlefield-style jousting inspired by the 13th and 14th centuries, a slightly earlier historical period than the story that Renn Fest tells each year regarding Henry VIII and his wives. The jousting they do is different from the Maryland state sport of ring jousting, which doesn't involve the competitors hitting one another. Debracey Productions' story gets told over the course of three shows throughout the day, featuring elements such as full-contact jousting, ring tricks and chariots.

Though jousters might play the same character or wear the same colors throughout each show, other details of the story get changed each time. Debracey Productions wants audience members to get different experiences if they see the show more than once. The jousters are both performers and athletes, competing to come out on top while also exploring the backstories and motivations that brought their characters to where they are now.

“We don't spend a whole lot of time on dialogue,” Burch said. “People came to see horses running, so we spend a lot of time running.”

The cast includes about seven full-time members as well as a revolving cast and crew of an additional 10-15 people. Maryland's cast is Debracey's biggest, and the chariot show takes a minimum

of 13 people to run comfortably.

“I don't think there's a better joust group in the country,” said Jung. “They're wonderful to work with, very accommodating.”

Debracey Productions also works with a lot of volunteers. Some volunteers might have the job of opening and closing doors, while others might just come in to help look after and pet the horses.

The jousters make sure the horses are doing what they love. If the horses don't enjoy something, then they don't have to do it. One of the horses doesn't like to be ridden, but it loves pulling chariots.

“You can't blame him, because the chariot horse only works about three minutes a day,” Burch said.

During the joust, the horses are free to move in whatever direction they want. Burch's horse Copper is a retired racehorse that loves to run fast, so Burch will often wait until his fellow jousting takes off in order not to pull ahead. The headgear they use keeps the horses from feeling anything, so the jousters can hit each other as hard as they want without the horses feeling it.

“They really get depressed if they don't go in the horse trailer and get to go to the show,” Burch said.

This year, the Maryland Renaissance Festival will run from 10:00am-7:00pm on weekends from August 23 through October 19, featuring many other events, performances and vendors in addition to jousting. To learn more, go to www.rennfest.com.

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How The “Big, Beautiful Bill” Impacts Your Retirement Plan

Jason LaBarge
Financial Advisor
and President
LaBarge Financial



Retirement is our expertise at LaBarge Financial, and planning for Social Security plays a significant role in living comfortably in your golden years. This is especially true here in Maryland, where

we have an average Social Security check of \$2,139, the fifth-highest in the country. year, these adjustments mean many retirees could have additional tax breaks to take advantage of. This provides clarity of lower tax rates for at least the next four years, and it presents an opportunity for retirees to capitalize on potentially lower taxable incomes.

Retirement portfolios commonly contain tax-deferred assets such as employer-sponsored 401(k)s. While these allow for larger contributions during their working years, taxes must still be paid when money is withdrawn in retirement. Even if retirees don't need the income, required minimum distributions (RMDs) mandate withdrawals each year, ensuring that taxes will eventually be paid on these assets. Each withdrawal adds to the owner's taxable income and can lead to a higher tax rate.

Roth conversions are a tool to move assets from tax-deferred accounts to tax-free Roth accounts. Here's where the new deductions and continued lower taxes come into play: By lowering your taxable income, there's more room for settling your tax bill now without increasing a tax bracket.

Once the money is in a Roth account, you can enjoy your income and capital gains tax-free. While it seems like an easy decision, there are two reasons you should have some urgency in taking advantage of these new tax laws. The biggest one is that the longer your money sits in a tax-deferred asset, the more it will continue to grow and add to your tax liability when you eventually withdraw or convert it.

We also don't know how long this tax environment will remain after President Trump leaves office in 2028.

» Continued on page 53

Leading up to President Donald Trump's “One Big Beautiful Bill” being passed into law, the most common question I received from clients was whether cutting Social Security taxes would be included. The final act did not cut these taxes, despite a misleading claim by the Social Security Administration. Still, there are a few new tax laws that could offset the taxes Maryland retirees pay on their Social Security income.

A new senior deduction of \$6,000 is available to taxpayers who are 65 and older with annual incomes less than \$150,000 if filing jointly and less than \$75,000 individually. In addition, it increased the state and local tax (SALT) deduction from \$10,000 to \$40,000, which is a huge boon for taxpayers in our state — in 2022, the most recent year for which tax data is available, nearly 20% of taxpayers used the SALT deduction, second only to Washington, D.C.

Combined with making the cuts from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that were set to expire at the end of this

Chamber Update

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» Continued on page 55

University Of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center Celebrates 60 Years Of Caring For Its Community

Medical Center Has Been A Member Of The University Of Maryland Medical System For The Last 25 Years

At the beginning of July, the University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center (UM BWMC) celebrated two milestones: 60 years of caring for Anne Arundel County and 25 years as a member of the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS).

On July 4, 1965, UM BWMC, then known as North Arundel Hospital, first opened its doors. With just four patient care areas, the community hospital became a dedicated center for healing residents, seeing 7,466 patients in its three-bed emergency department within the first six months.

UM BWMC has since grown into a 310-bed medical center committed to improving health outcomes for people in the communities it serves. Today, UM BWMC maintains one of the largest emergency departments in the state, with more than 66,000 visits annually. In addition to the emergency department, the hospital cares for nearly 18,000 people admitted each year and has more than 264,000 outpatient care

» Continued on page 54

Today, UM BWMC is a 310-bed medical center committed to improving the health outcomes of the communities it serves.



Fall Cleanup Checklist: Legal And Financial Planning Before Year-End

Rachel P. Muñoz, Esq.
Muñoz Estates & Trusts



As summer winds down and routines settle back into place, fall offers a natural pause to reflect, organize and plan before the end-of-year rush. Whether you are closing up the garden, preparing for the holidays, or simply catching your breath after a busy season, this is an ideal time to focus on your legal and financial priorities.

From tax planning to gifting strategies and estate updates, here are a few fall checklist

items that can help you finish the year strong and start the new one with confidence.

Prepare Early For Tax Season

Tax Day 2025 may not arrive until April, but many year-end strategies must be implemented before December 31 to be effective. Consider the following:

- **Charitable contributions:** Making donations before year-end can reduce taxable income.
- **Retirement contributions:** Evaluate whether you can contribute more to a traditional or Roth IRA.
- **Income timing:** You may want to defer income or accelerate deductions to manage your 2024 tax bracket.

- **Tax-loss harvesting:** Selling underperforming investments to offset gains can reduce your tax liability.

- **Required minimum distributions:** If you are subject to RMDs from retirement accounts, these must be taken by year-end to avoid penalties.

Consulting with a CPA or financial advisor in the fall allows time to make adjustments and ensures better preparation when tax season arrives.

Holiday Gifts And Gift Tax Considerations

While many people spend the holiday season searching for the perfect present, a significant number of Americans say they would prefer a financial gift. Cash, contributions to a child's savings account, or investment gifts are often well received — and they can also be tax-efficient.

In 2024, the annual gift tax exclusion is \$18,000 per person, or \$36,000 for married couples who give jointly. This means a couple could give up to \$36,000 to each child, in-law, or grandchild without triggering a gift tax return. Gifts above that amount may require filing a return but generally do not result in tax owed unless your lifetime giving exceeds the current exemption limits, which are \$13.61 million for individuals and \$27.22 million for married couples.

It is worth noting that these historically high exemption amounts are set to expire at the end of 2025, making now a smart time to explore strategic gifting as part of your estate plan.

Don't Forget To Review Your Estate Plan

Life rarely stands still for long. A growing family, a change in financial status, or a relocation can all affect your estate plan. Ask yourself the following:

- Has there been a birth, death, marriage or divorce in the family?
- Did you buy or sell property, change jobs, or receive an inheritance?
- Have you had a change in relationships, such as a falling out or reconciliation?

Even small changes can have a meaningful impact on how your plan functions. Fall is a good time to revisit your documents and ensure your plan reflects your current goals, values and circumstances. Your estate plan should work for where you are now — not where you were five or 10 years ago.

Start The New Year With Peace Of Mind

As the holidays approach and schedules fill up, the final months of the year can feel overwhelming. Taking time in the fall to organize and review your plans can reduce stress and ensure your financial and legal affairs are in order.

A little preparation now can make a big difference later — for you and for your family.

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The End Of A Snowball Era: Mr. Rob Retires After 43 Years

Mr. Rob estimates that he has over 75,000 customer signatures inside his truck.

By Lauren Burke Meyer

In the heat of the summer, there are few things better than an ice-cold snowball. The “marshmallow on top” is when Robert Williams — or Mr. Rob, as he is known to his community — is serving them.

After more than four decades in the snowball business, Mr. Rob expected to have his last day of work during the week of August 4.

“My customers are part of my family for nine months (each year),” Mr. Rob said, overcome with emotion. “Part of me is sad, but another part of me knows that this is the right time.”

Mr. Rob began in 1982, helping a friend run a \$500 snowball truck while in college. In 1994, he bought his own retrofitted mail truck, complete with a cassette tape of “London Bridge is Falling Down” — the same tune he plays today.

In 2000, Mr. Rob bought a new, custom-modified snowball truck — now covered with over 75,000 customer signatures inside. As for the truck? Though he's gotten many offers, he plans to keep it for sentimental reasons.

The familiar face — beneath sunglasses and baseball hat — around Severna Park has sold snowballs for 43 years. He's served treats at pools and during sporting events, camps or special events to multiple generations.

One of the things he gets the biggest



kick out of is serving snowballs to the children of kids he first came to know as toddlers themselves.

Running Mr. Rob's snowball business is a nearly year-round, full-time job — starting in March and often stretching through December, weather permitting. During peak summer, he serves eight to nine pools daily, with prep, cleanup and restocking making it a nonstop operation. Mr. Rob wanted to give a shoutout to his helpers: Katie, Ethan, Jenny and Bri.

Over the years, Mr. Rob spent hours thinking up new flavors for the current trends, as well as games, trivia and more to make the kids' time with him more fun. He's celebrated their victories, like making the sports teams, and been a consoling shoulder when they didn't.

A Sweet Sendoff

When the Severna Park Voice asked readers if they had memories of Mr. Rob, the responses were overwhelming. Many noted how he's a Severna Park (and summer) staple. Here are others.

“I vividly remember him coming to the Evergreen pool in the '90s and the Whitehurst pool where my grandparents lived,” Madilyn Gilmore recounted. “When we moved back to Severna Park this winter, I couldn't believe he was still running his business.”

Six-year-old Bennett Baxter wanted to share, “He is the nicest snowball man I know.”

Kendyl Whiteley and her sister used to order sweet flavors so mom wouldn't ask for a bite. “I now live in Arnold, and Mr. Rob has come through my neighborhood a few times,” Whiteley said. “He's met my two children and even comments on remembering the Gardner girls' strategic orders.”

Sarah Kiser, whose sons are now 22 and 25, shared how Mr. Rob's snowballs were always a summer highlight while her sons were growing up. “He is so kind! ... He will surely be missed by many,” she added.

Lifeguard Jonny Reneau noted how Mr. Rob came to his pool every day and would often give him and his coworkers free snowballs.

“He used to let me order a cup of marshmallow (no snowball needed). It made my day every time,” Katie Pumphrey said.

Before Mr. Rob rides into the sunset — Sunset Beach, North Carolina, that is — he has a message for his customers.

“I want to thank them all from the bottom of my heart for accepting me into theirs and thank them for their patronage,” Mr. Rob said.

Luminis Health Chooses Catherine Maloney For Three Key Roles



Catherine Maloney

Following an extensive national search, Luminis Health has appointed Catherine Maloney as the organization's new system chief operating officer and executive vice president. She will also

serve as president of Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center (LHAAMC), a hospital that serves Annapolis, Maryland's Eastern Shore, and surrounding communities. Maloney will begin her new role in late September.

Maloney joins Luminis Health from Emory Healthcare in Atlanta, where she most recently served as chief operating officer for Emory University Hospital and Emory University Orthopaedics and Spine Hospital. During her nearly two-decade tenure there, she led key initiatives to improve quality, patient experience, and operational and financial performance. Maloney championed improvements to patient experience and flow in the emergency department, oversaw strategic expansion construction projects, and led initiatives to reduce first-year turnover and the use of contract labor.

As system chief operating officer, Maloney will oversee operations across Luminis Health and lead system-wide functions. She will succeed Sherry Perkins, who is retiring after a storied career, including 16 years at Luminis Health, the last six as president of LHAAMC.



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“Big, Beautiful Bill”

» Continued from page 49

While this act made the cuts permanent, the federal deficit continues to increase and the Social Security trust fund is set to run out in 2034. Both are likely to be addressed, and the solutions will likely require increased taxation. Roth conversions empower you by allowing greater control over your money without worrying about uncertain tax rates.

Roth conversions aren't for every retirement plan, but tax planning is a crucial part of any retirement plan. The “One Big Beautiful Bill Act” will make a big difference for tax returns in Maryland. You should work with a financial advisor or tax planner to help you understand how it impacts you and determine your strategy to take advantage of it.

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A Decade Of Care: Spring Arbor Of Severna Park Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary



Left: Spring Arbor's first resident, Roy Shiflet, attended the anniversary party this summer in a black and gold suit and a golden sash with the words “10 Year Legend.” **Right:** Doris Johnson marked the occasion with a visit from her family.

By Hannah Bates

Spring Arbor Senior Living is tucked away from the busyness of Severna Park and the noise of Ritchie Highway in a cozy nook of dense woods. The staff at the facility, which opened in 2015, prides themselves on providing excellent service, dignity and respect to residents and their families. Spring Arbor of Severna Park has housed more than 500 residents over 10 years, and this past June 26, residents and employees celebrated a decade of care with a large party.

Over 150 residents, their families, and other guests attended the celebration. Residents enjoyed drinks from a champagne wall, catered food, a photo booth, a live jazz band, and local vendors. Spring Arbor's first resident, Roy Shiflet, attended in a black and gold suit and a golden sash with the words “10 Year Legend.”

In 2013, Shiflet saw a phone number on a sign for Spring Arbor. He called it and was told that the center did not exist; it was still being built. As soon as they could, Shiflet and his wife signed up for residency. They waited two years for construction to finish, but once they received the news that it was done, they were the first to move in.

At Spring Arbor's grand opening, Shiflet stood next to his wife as she cut a purple ribbon strung across the front door, marking the official opening of the facility. Ten years later and now 86 years old, Shiflet continues to enjoy his life at Spring Arbor. Every Monday, he sings for fellow residents at an event called Music with Ernie.

He also enjoys socializing with the residents and keeping in touch with those who came to live at Spring Arbor the first few months after its opening.

A handful of staff members at Spring Arbor have also been part of the team since its opening or joined soon after. Executive Director Rita Chapman believes the long-term appeal to workers and residents alike comes from the cozy feel of the building and community.

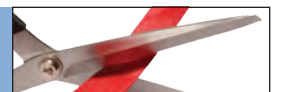
The residential facility is two floors with a maximum capacity of 88 people. The memory care apartments are also limited, housing a maximum number of 27 residents. “(The size) gives (employees) that opportunity to build that rapport with the residents and their family members,” Chapman said, “And we encourage (employees) to have a relationship with the residents.”

Chapman enjoys using her free time at work to form relationships with the residents.

“My favorite part (of the day) is making my rounds in the building and getting to see everybody,” she said. “When I first come in in the morning and before I leave in the evening, I'm through the building. I'm up and down every hall. If a door's open, I'm sticking my head in.”

Spring Arbor of Severna Park provides full-time assisted living, memory care, and short-term stays, with onsite doctors, physical therapists, a spa, a salon, multiple libraries, and a wellness room. For more information, visit www.springarborliving.com.

RIBBON CUTTING



McCarl Dental Group Celebrates New Ownership With Ribbon Cutting

At the end of June, the McCarl Dental Group in Millersville held an open house, and a ribbon-cutting celebration was conducted by the Greater Severna Park and Arnold Chamber of Commerce to mark a change of ownership within the practice. The McCarls and other staff will continue to serve patients under the leadership of new owner Dr. Michelle Ayoroa-Perez, and the practice name will be transitioned to Shipley's Dental Care. Learn more at www.mccardentalmillersville.com.



UM Baltimore Washington Medical Center Celebrates 60 Years

» Continued from page 49
visits annually.

Over the hospital's six decades, UM BWMC has continued to transform health care in the region, providing more access for individuals in Anne Arundel County and the surrounding area.

From expansions that grew the emergency department and critical care capacity to building an eight-story patient care tower and opening centers focused on cancer, women's health and outpatient care, UM BWMC's impact is vast and has connected residents to expert care when and where they need it.

"For 60 years, UM BWMC has been committed to delivering high-quality, accessible care," said Kathy McCollum, president of UM BWMC. "Thanks to our dedicated teams, we've grown in size and scope while staying true to our mission of always caring for our community. We're proud of our history and are equally focused on our bright future – embracing innovation and strengthening partnerships that advance the care we provide and enhance the health and well-being of all those we serve."

A major turning point came on July 1, 2000, when the hospital officially became a member of UMMS, a nationally recognized academic-focused health system that includes some of the most advanced clinical services available. This connection brought cutting-edge treatments including access to clinical trials and the benefits of academic medicine to Anne Arundel County. Today, UMMS provides more than 25% of all hos-

pital-based care in Maryland due in part to the vast service offerings of UM BWMC.

"UM BWMC has played a pivotal role in connecting our mission to all Marylanders," said Mohan Suntha, president and CEO of UMMS. "Together, we've built a nationally recognized medical system grounded in academic excellence and community-focused care. We've strengthened our commitment to discovery-based medicine and elevated patient care across the region. This positive impact is felt every day in Anne Arundel County and beyond."

Having grown up in Glen Burnie a few miles from the hospital, Christine Coursey has watched UM BWMC evolve over the years. Last year, she was diagnosed with lung cancer and sought care at the Tate Cancer Center at UM BWMC.

"I'm here today, one year after my cancer diagnosis, disease-free, thanks to the incredible team at UM BWMC," Coursey said. "The specialists in medical oncology, pulmonary medicine and thoracic surgery came together to create a treatment plan personalized just for me. They collaborated closely, presented my case to multiple experts across UMMS and kept me informed every step of the way. I am incredibly grateful for the excellent care I've received so close to home."

In addition to providing expert patient care, UM BWMC has invested time and resources into workforce development programs that build career pathways for the community into the health care field. UM BWMC currently works with more

than 90 volunteers comprised of community members and high school students participating in internships.

Additionally, UM BWMC has worked closely with community organizations to develop professional pathway programs to support career advancement and education pathways for key nursing and allied health positions.

Stephanie DiRubbo, a Glen Burnie resident and quality improvement manager at UM BWMC, started her career at the hospital when she was just 15 years old as a dietary aide, and has been promoted through many areas of the hospital, including patient care, nursing and clinical education.

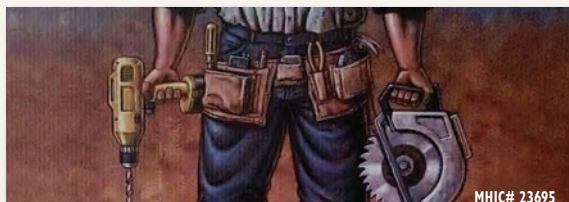
"At every step of the way, I've been supported and encouraged by incredible leaders," she said. "I've also sought expert care for my family here. UM BWMC is not only my employer — it's my community, and I'm proud to be part of it."

Over the years, UM BWMC has been honored with numerous state and national recognitions that highlight its ongoing commitment to clinical excellence, patient safety and a positive work environment. To learn more about UM BWMC's legacy of always caring, including key milestones and photos from its history and information about its expert care services and available career opportunities, visit umbwmc.org/alwayscaring.

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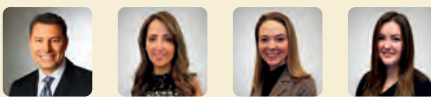
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The highlight of July is always our annual Independence Day parade, and this was a special year as we celebrated the 50th anniversary of this wonderful event that started in 1975 with just a few decorated vehicles, and **American Legion Post 175** and the **Severna Park High School marching band**.

Over the decades, the parade is still going strong as a community tradition with multiple generations lining the roads to enjoy the festivities, even staking out their spots a day in advance.

We had everything! First responders, firetrucks, antique cars, floats, martial arts demos, business vehicles decorated patriotically, horses, miniature animals, scouts, veterans, and even the original participants: **American Legion Post 175** and the **Severna Park marching band!**

Our wonderful grand marshal was **Scott Jay**, lifelong resident and Severna Park historian. He was the perfect choice since we were celebrating such a milestone anniversary.

While the parade entrants were lining up to enter the route, we held a decorated bike contest at the chamber with close to 40 children. They all did a great job decorating bikes, trikes, scooters and wagons. They then entered the parade route to show off their creations.

Our Community Champion sponsors were **Chick-fil-A of Severna Park** and **Kogen Dojo**. They each enjoyed a private tent with breakfast and a direct view of the parade.

Many thanks to the **Severna Park Voice** for organizing the judges. Thank you, **Earl Schaffer**, for serving as our emcee again. We appreciate **Cassilly & Appel** and the **Elmore Law Group** for allowing us to use their space to set up the sound system and judges' table.

We have so many others to thank for making the event a great success. This includes our many sponsors, volunteers, participants, our local reserve officers, the Maryland Mobileers and, of course, our great community that supports us.

For more information about the chamber, go to www.gspacc.com. As always, please shop local and support our community!

Landmark Roofing Attains GAF Three Star President's Club Award



Landmark Roofing recently was awarded the 2025 Master Elite GAF President's Club Three Star Award. The Severna Park business earned this award for its commitment to the highest-quality craftsmanship and customer service. Only three contractors in Maryland are at this award level and Landmark Roofing is the only roofing contractor with this award level in Anne Arundel County. Per GAF, "The 2025 Master Elite GAF President's Club Three Star Award is based on performance, reliability and training efforts. Landmark's performance has installed and registered 6,000 Golden Pledge and Silver Pledge limited warranty squares during 2024. They also installed 10,000 Rewards squares during 2024." This is Landmark Roofing's fifth consecutive President's Club Award.





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