



October 1, 2020

In This Issue...

- **Schools: In-Person Learning, Sports, and TJHSST** - With the first quarter underway, three things are abundantly clear: teachers are working harder than ever, many students are underperforming and struggling, and we need to reopen safe, in-person learning for much of our student population. As long as we maintain a positivity rate below 5%, the school system needs to get our children back in school with a well-thought-out safety plan including daily temperature and wellness checks, mask requirements and many of the safety protocols the County is now using in its Safe Return to School (SRS) Program. Being in school is critical for childhood development - a point echoed by the CDC and child psychologists. This is especially true for special needs, elementary school children and those that do not have a support system. For our older students, I am disappointed VHSL continues to sideline student athletes, even though our community sports leagues have been playing for some time. Finally, I am opposed to the school system moving toward a lottery system for our top performing school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST), in the name of One Fairfax. This is an economic development issue as well as a school issue.
- **Working to Stop Over 85 Suspected Illicit Massage Businesses** – In my [March newsletter](#), I shared with you that the Board unanimously approved my motion to form an interdepartmental working group to close loopholes that are allowing over 85 suspected illicit massage businesses (IMBs) to exist in Fairfax County and to provide aid to survivors. Last week, I joined one of our nonprofit partners, the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative (NOVA-HTI), for the release of their study evaluating buyer demand at illicit massage businesses in Fairfax County which provides

additional details on the depth of this problem. There is no more heinous crime than human sex trafficking. These findings underscore the need for a coordinated County response to shut down these IMBs that hide in plain sight in our shopping centers and business parks. NOVA-HTI's research shows the terrible truth about how many women are being exploited for sex through coercion here in Fairfax County. It is a heartbreaking truth that we must address.

Other News & Information

- Early Voting Underway at Fairfax County Government Center!
- Ballot Drop Off Box Available at Fairfax County Government Center
- Become an Election Officer
- Property Taxes Due October 5!
- 50+ Flu Clinics Available
- Upcoming Low-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics
- NCS Connects: A Way to Keep Your Students Engaged
- Hiring + Reskilling Virtual Career Fair – October 8
- Putting for Pets 2020
- Nightmare Alley: Drive-Thru Terror at the Workhouse
- On the Lighter Side
- Four-Legged Friend of the Month: Oliver

Schools: In-Person Learning, Sports, and TJHS

In-Person Learning With the first quarter underway, three things are abundantly clear: teachers are working harder than ever, many students are underperforming and struggling, and we need to reopen safe, in-person learning for much of our student population. As long as we maintain a positivity rate below 5%, the school system needs to get our children back in school with a well-thought-out safety plan including daily temperature and wellness checks, mask requirements and many of the safety protocols the County is now using in its Safe Return to School (SRS) Program. Being in school is critical for childhood development - a point echoed by the CDC and child psychologists. This is especially true for special needs children, elementary school children and students that do not have a support system.

We are doing children more harm keeping them out of school. There are many school districts and private schools that have demonstrated that children can go to school in-person safely. Our children's safety is paramount, which is why we work to mitigate as many risks as possible, pandemic or not. There are strategies that can and have been implemented to significantly reduce risk of transmission.

We do not need to look far for a model. Fairfax County government (not the school system) successfully ran a summer camp program in our schools during the summer and is running the Safe Return to Schools (SRS) program (extended

School Age Child Care) in our schools currently. I have seen firsthand how these two Fairfax County programs provided safe instruction and programs for our children. The school system should already have a plan for in-person schooling to ensure that our children do not fall behind for another semester and that our disadvantaged and vulnerable populations are not failed by our school system.

I've heard from many teachers who are working incredibly hard to make virtual learning work for their students. They have done an outstanding job being flexible to change their teaching styles and shoulder the additional burdens of virtual learning. Transitioning back to in-person learning will mean even more adjustments as well as tools, training, and PPE to prepare them. I believe they are up to the challenge.

Earlier this year Fairfax County Schools offered parents a path towards a hybrid education model as well as a choice for remote learning when they asked for community input in their survey, yet without feedback from the community, this option was rescinded. I was disappointed by this decision and by the lack of process. Now school systems in our surrounding jurisdictions are leading the way and have actual plans to give students the opportunity to return to in-person learning and unfortunately, once again we are behind and failing our students.

The school systems should be sharing the plan for a return to in-person schooling to ensure that our children do not fall behind for another semester. There are no federal, state or county mandates that are keeping our schools from having in-person instruction. Ultimately the opening of our schools rests with our School Board members and they should be directing the Superintendent to get them open.

“Let the Kids Play” While reopening schools is the School Board's call, high school sports are being held up by the Virginia High School League (VHSL). As our community sports leagues have been playing for some time, I am disappointed VHSL continues to sideline student athletes. There is no evidence that these ongoing sports have been the cause of transmission in our community, instead they have improved the health of many who are struggling to find meaningful activity. Mental health is at a low for many right now, especially our students. For many student athletes, sports give them a sense of purpose, community, discipline, and achievement that fuels them to not give up on other areas where they may be struggling. If we have a safe model to restart high school sports, then as Senator Chap Petersen said in his recent *Petersen Senate Sentinel* September 20th newsletter, from we need to “let the kids play.”

Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology I am opposed to the school system moving toward a lottery system for our top performing school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology (TJHSST). This is an economic development issue as well as a school issue. The school system is considering a change to the Thomas Jefferson merit-based admissions process to a

lottery in the name of the One Fairfax policy. TJHSST's competitive admissions program is a big reason it is one of the best high schools in the nation and the world. While the student population is currently about 75 percent Asian, all students can compete for spots at TJHSST based on their academics.

Addressing deficiencies in student demographics or enrollment in TJHSST should be addressed in our elementary and middle schools so all students are better prepared for TJHSST's rigorous standards and admissions process. While a change to the lottery may temporarily impact the racial mix of students, it will be unfair to both the deserving students that were not selected because of the lottery and also to those selected by this method that may not have the stamina, education or work ethic necessary to keep up with the pace at TJHSST.

Schools are the number one reason businesses choose to locate in Fairfax County and TJHSST is a primary reason our schools are recognized as the best in the nation. For that reason, keeping TJHSST the best is not just a school issue; it is an economic development issue. Many of our businesses serve as partners to FCPS in supporting Booster programs, the PTA, fundraisers, internship opportunities, and more that enhance the educational experience of students. The move to a lottery would be a considerable detriment to our students and our ability to attract businesses.

Ultimately decisions about our schools are governed by the Fairfax County School Board and administration of our Governors' Schools is managed by the Virginia Department of Education. I encourage you to contact your [local school board member \(s\)](#) and the [Virginia Department of Education](#) as well.

Fairfax County Working to Stop Over 85 Suspected Illicit Massage Businesses

In my [March newsletter](#), I shared with you that the Board unanimously approved my motion to form an interdepartmental working group to close loopholes that are allowing over 85 suspected illicit massage businesses (IMBs) to exist in Fairfax County and to provide aid to survivors. Last week, I joined one of our nonprofit partners, the Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative (NOVA-HTI), for the release of their study evaluating buyer demand at illicit massage businesses in Fairfax County which provides additional details on the depth of this problem. There is no more heinous crime than human sex trafficking. These findings underscore the need for a coordinated County response to shut down these IMBs that hide in plain sight in our shopping centers and business parks. NOVA-HTI's research shows the terrible truth about how many women are being exploited for sex through coercion here in Fairfax County. It is a heartbreaking truth that we must address.

Prior to the pandemic, these IMBs operated under the radar through loopholes that County agencies can work together to close. Even during the pandemic, they have continued to operate, further exploiting, and endangering the women there and our community. The County working group will bring together multiple relevant departments including the Health Department, Fire and Rescue Department, Police Department, Department of Licensing and Regulations, Department of Tax Administration, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, Department of Code Compliance, the County Attorney's Office, as well as nonprofit partners to develop a coordinated plan to address IMBs and other forms of human trafficking. While the pandemic has slowed the progress of the task force, the effort is now underway.

To learn more about NOVA-HTI's work, the report and to support their mission, [please visit their website.](#)

Other Helpful News & Information

Early Voting In Progress at Fairfax County Government Center!

Early voting is currently in progress at the Fairfax County Government Center in Fair Oaks. Hours are from 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. Voting will also be available on Saturdays from Oct. 14-31. Any registered Fairfax County voter can vote early and can cast their ballot at any early voting site. Satellite voting sites including the West Springfield Government Center will also be open for early voting starting on October 14. For more information, [please see this page.](#)

Ballot Drop Off Box Available at Fairfax County Government Center

The Fairfax County Government Center in Fair Oaks (12000 Government Center Pkwy) currently has two ballot drop off boxes located on-site. The box outside the entrance is open 24 hours per day and is under camera surveillance. The inside box is only open during absentee in-person voting hours. Drop boxes will also be available at satellite voting locations including the West Springfield Government Center beginning October 14. As guidance from the General Assembly indicated that the drop boxes must be monitored, the drop boxes will be available only during the hours when the satellite voting location is open. There will also be an elections official standing with the drop box during the hours it is available for use.

Become an Election Officer

In response to predicted demand to staff satellite voting sites as well as to sort ballots sent by mail, Fairfax County continues to recruit members of our public to serve as Election Officers. Deadline to apply for these positions is Friday, October 9. To fill out your application today, [please apply at this link.](#)

Property Taxes Due October 5!

Just a reminder that property taxes are due on Monday, October 5. Tax bills are typically mailed 30 days before the deadline. To pay your property taxes online, [please visit the Department of Tax Administration portal.](#)

50+ Flu Clinics Available

At select senior centers in the County, The Fairfax Department of Health and Neighborhood and Community services are partnering up to offer flu and pneumonia vaccines. Services start October 6 by appointment only. To locate a clinic site near you, please see the flyer below:



We got you covered

Flu vaccination clinics at select senior centers

October 6, 9am - 3:30pm

Herndon Senior Center, 873 Grace St., Herndon
(times also available Oct. 8 & 9)

October 19, 9am - 3:30pm

Lincolnia Senior Center, 4710 N. Chambliss St., Alexandria
(times also available Oct. 21 & 22)

October 26, 9am - 3:30pm

Original Mt. Vernon High School, 8333 Richmond Hwy., Alexandria
(times also available Oct. 28 & 29)

November 2, 9am - 3:30pm

Little River Glen Senior Center, 4001 Barker Ct., Fairfax
(times also available Nov. 4 & 5)

November 9, 9am - 3:30pm

Lewinsville Senior Center, 1613 Great Falls St., McLean
(times also available Nov. 10 & 12)

FOR YOUR SAFETY

Limited appointments
Face coverings/masks required
Temperature checks at entrance
Clients spaced 6 ft. apart
NO covid-19 services offered

Available by appointment only: 703-246-6010, TTY 711

Flu Vaccine Protects You & Your Community

The flu can be a serious illness, especially for older adults and those with underlying health conditions. An annual flu vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of getting sick. Flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. Fairfax County Health Department and Neighborhood and Community Services are offering flu vaccine clinics at select senior centers for Fairfax residents 50 years of age and older. Take control of your health this season and get a flu vaccine.

Call for details.

Pneumonia vaccine also available. Must be requested when making your appointment.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/flu

A Fairfax, Va., publication. Sept 2020. For more information or to request information in an alternate format, call the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2411. TTY 711.



Upcoming Low-Cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics

No contact, low-cost rabies vaccination clinics will be available through the Fairfax County Animal Shelter on:

- Sunday, October 18
- Sunday, December 6

Pet owners may bring dogs, cats, and ferrets on each of these clinic dates. There is a high demand for these clinics and pre-registration is required. To sign up and for more information, please [click on this link](#).

NCS Connects: A Way to Keep Students Engaged

Looking for a way to keep your children engaged with learning during remote learning? A new program called NCS Connects is offering live activities remotely each weekday from 3-6PM. Offerings include crafts, sports, and art classes. To learn more [click here](#).

Hiring + Reskilling Virtual Career Fair – October 8

The Fairfax County Economic Development Authority will be hosting The Hiring + Reskilling Virtual Career Fair on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2020 from 1PM-4PM. Participating employers include Amazon, Walmart, Navy Federal Credit Union, Securitas, Cox, to name a few. To register, [please click on this link](#).

Putting for Pets 2020

Golfers, looking for a way to support the Fairfax County Animal Shelter? Friends of Fairfax County Animal Shelter is hosting their annual Putting for Pets Gold Tournament at Westfields Golf Club in Clifton on Wednesday, October 21. To register, [please go to this link](#).



Nightmare Alley: Drive-Thru Terror at the Workhouse

Looking for a fun, socially distant way to enjoy Halloween? "Nightmare Alley: Drive-Thru Terror" is the latest addition to the Workhouse Art Center's annual "Haunt" tradition, with a contemporary twist. This year's attraction is Northern Virginia's first-ever haunted drive-thru, meaning that visitors can experience all the thrills of Haunt while staying safely socially distanced in their cars. The event runs every weekend in October starting the 2nd and ending the 31st. Specific times and dates (as well as a special promo code) [can be found on their website](#).

On the Lighter Side

A Marine Veteran recently lost his medals, but diligent Detectives quickly worked to replace them. To learn more about this case in Spotsylvania, [click here](#).



PHOTO CREDIT: Spotsylvania Sherriff's Office



Four-Legged-Friend of the Month

Oliver is a super playful dog that needs a caring home that can accommodate his unique background! Oliver is nearly 2 years old and weighs 90 pounds. His previous owners could not take care of his medical needs, so he is looking for a new family that can! Oliver has a history of seizures and requires medication to manage them. He's a very friendly dog and needs a special owner that can go the extra mile to make sure he takes his medication and stays

healthy. To meet Oliver and schedule an in-person visit, [please visit his profile](#).

Successful Adoptions: Two of the previously featured Four-Legged-Friends of the Month have been successfully adopted. Slim and Leo have been successfully adopted and found new homes since they were featured. Thank you to our neighbors who took these dogs into their homes.