

Golden *Wrap Yourself in Holiday Activities* Gazette

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

José Acosta Gifts Nature Center with His Animal Caregiving Skills

by Mary Jane Dye, Editor, Golden Gazette, Department of Family Services

José Acosta was not a newcomer to Fairfax County when he decided to visit Hidden Oaks Nature Center. “I had driven by the center for years, but never stopped to explore,” he says. So, in early 2018, just after his retirement from the federal government as an information systems design manager, that’s exactly what José did.

Hidden Oaks Nature Center is nestled inside the Annandale District Park. There are live animals, exhibits, a pond, creeks, woodland trails, gardens, play areas, a resource library, and a rain garden. “I was truly impressed with the center,” says José. “It felt good to be there.” As he was leaving, he noticed a sign asking for help—he immediately signed up to be an animal care volunteer.

Training was required, but he didn’t mind. “I have an undergraduate degree in

biology, so, obviously, I am interested in science and like to learn,” says José.

His assignment included all aspects of animal care from making salads, to feeding crickets, worms, and fish to various critters. “It’s not as easy as you think,” says José. According to Avery Gunther, Hidden Oaks Nature Center naturalist, Jose’ really likes caring for the snakes, turtles, hamsters, and bearded dragon. “He knows each animal’s personality and quirks,” she laughs.

José is also the “volunteer on duty” every other Saturday. This position greets visitors, monitors the use of the center, and helps with whatever is needed. “I like showing off the center and telling visitors about its rich environment,” he says. “Greeting people sets the tone for their visit.”



José Acosta, volunteer, Hidden Oaks Nature Center.



José has a gentle touch with animals.

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GOLDEN GAZETTE

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We'd like your feedback! What topics would you like to see in future issues? How can we make this publication even better?

Email your suggestions to DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **703-324-GOLD**.

José Acosta*... continued from page 1*

As a bonus to his regular duties, José gets to assist staff when they are presenting animal programs. José says that it is fun to help with the live programs, and “I get to see the excitement of the visitors which makes me proud of our center and its animals.”

According to Gunther, seven months into the pandemic, when volunteers were once again permitted, José was the first one back. “It was something I wanted to do,” José states, and “I knew that the staff and animals needed me.” He also says

*I have the background
and resources to help people,
so why not?*

José Acosta, Volunteer

that he was vaccinated and figured that by following masking and social distancing mandates by the county, everyone would be safe. “It was so good to have José back to help with 17 tanks of critters,” she says. Then, according to Gunter, he offered to take on more hours when a fellow volunteer was out for two months. “He is such a valuable member of our team!”

Amazingly, José doesn’t own a pet. “Growing up I had pets, including dogs, guinea pigs, chickens, rabbits, hermit crabs, and fish, in Puerto Rico,” he says. “I had a turtle and fish in Madrid, Spain, where my family lived while my father was stationed there in the Air Force.”

José credits his niece for his renewed interest in animals. “She worked as a veterinary assistant and at the St. Augustine Alligator Farm.” Jose mentions that his niece also has a Florida venomous animal certification and was in the National Geographic

Snakes Underworld television special handling a large cobra!

While he may not be handling a cobra, he does handle nonvenomous snakes but . . .

there is a painted turtle that he enjoys. Apparently, it splashes water everywhere when waiting to be fed. “Each animal is unique which makes them interesting and fun, and they all need to be cared for to survive at the center.”

José gets satisfaction in volunteering for the community. He says that he also enjoys helping older adults with IT and other technology problems with RSVP Northern Virginia, a part of AmeriCorps Seniors. He even refurbishes old computers, tablets and cell phones for Computer CORE, a Falls Church non-profit organization that prepares underserved adults with foundational digital and professional skills. “I have the background and resources to help people, so why not?” he simply states.

José is a recent recipient of the Elly Doyle Park Service Award presented by the Fairfax County Park Authority. This award is given to those making a significant contribution to parks and their volunteer activities. “José has provided critical service with his exceptional care for Hidden Oaks Center’s exhibit animals when volunteers were limited due to COVID-19,” says Avery. “We are so glad that Jose Acosta is a member of the Hidden Oaks Nature Center animal caretaker staff!” 🌟



José is happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the center.

Robotic “White Cane” Offers New Way to Navigate

from *Disability Rights and Resources*

An innovative “white cane” can assist blind and visually impaired users in navigating inside buildings and avoiding obstacles. The improved robotic cane now has a 3D camera, on-board computer and an inertial measurement sensor. When the device has a building’s architectural drawing, it can map the user’s precise location to the existing architectural drawing or floor plan and accurately guide users to their chosen location. The cane provides both auditory and sensory cues. In addition, it concurrently helps users avoid running into things like chairs, cabinets, boxes and overhangs. The cane has the ability to easily switch between its “automated mode” and a simpler, non-robotic “white cane mode”.

The National Institutes of Health’s National Eye Institute and the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering co-funded the development of the device. Cang Ye, Ph.D., and colleagues added the color depth camera so its

infrared light, along with the system, could determine the distance between the cane and other objects. This corrected an issue with earlier versions which could guide users to their destination.

However, if used for long distances, the inaccuracies in the user’s location could mount, eventually leaving the user at an incorrect location.

A few flaws are being worked out before it’s market-ready. However, this could be a useful tool in helping provide independence for the blind and visually impaired. Learn more at [NEI.NIH.gov](https://www.nei.nih.gov) ✨



The robotic “white cane” provides auditory and sensory cues.

Seasonal Change for Seniors Experiencing Interpersonal Violence

from *Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, Department of Family Services*

Most people look forward to seasonal change—especially fall. But for some, fall’s shorter days and the impending cold of winter brings feelings of isolation, lower energy, and depression. There may also be greater risks for those experiencing interpersonal violence (IPV) at home or from caregivers.

Although Domestic Violence Awareness Month was in October, it’s important to raise awareness year-round, particularly during the holidays. IPV affects millions of women and men, of every race, religion, culture, age, and income level. It’s not just physical abuse. IPV can also be yelling, humiliation, stalking, manipulation, coercion, threats, and isolation.

Unfortunately, an often-forgotten population affected by IPV is seniors. Older individuals face

unique challenges when IPV happens to them and are often at a greater risk of harm. While every person’s experience with IPV is different, seniors in abusive relationships experience unique challenges when seeking help. Many older adults do not report domestic violence for several reasons. They may be dependent on the person causing them harm to supply basic needs, such as housing, food, or care. They may also be embarrassed or confused about their situation. They may even be isolated and have difficulty leaving the home to seek help.

Signs of Domestic Violence in Older Adults

The first step in helping an older adult seek help is to recognize the signs and patterns of IPV. If you

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Interpersonal Violence

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suspect something is going on, look for these five indications of potential IPV:

1. Unexplained bruises or other injuries.
2. Withdrawal from enjoyed activities, sudden changes in alertness, or unusual depression.
3. Abrupt changes in financial situation.
4. Poor hygiene, bedsores, unusual weight loss, or unattended medical needs.
5. Belittling, threats, or frequent arguments with a caregiver.

What You Can Do to Help

If you've noticed a senior in your life may be the victim of IPV, or you are experiencing IPV, there are steps you can take. If danger is immediate, call 9-1-1. Otherwise call the Domestic and Sexual Violence 24-Hour Hotline at 703-360-7273; TTY 711. Staff and volunteers are trained to provide information and resources that can help make choices right for you. ☀



Safe Travel with Older Adults

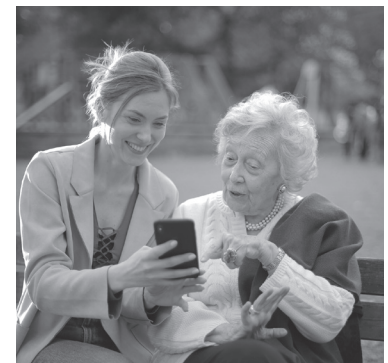
from Kristin Martin, ElderLink, Department of Family Services, Adult and Aging Services

When preparing to travel with an older adult, no matter what the season or reason, consider the factors below to lessen stress and allow for an enjoyable trip.

- ◆ **Talk** with their doctor to ensure ample time in addressing medical issues or concerns.
- ◆ **Seek** their input so they feel involved in the planning process. You'll also learn about preferences and concerns.
- ◆ **Consider** items that you need to have readily available. This includes medications, water, snacks, change of clothing, and medical equipment. Also, be sure to pack photocopies of important documents: vaccination card, Power of Attorney, advanced directives, insurance cards, identification, list of current medications along with dosages, and emergency contact details.
- ◆ **Inform** other family members and your social support network of travel plans.
- ◆ **Adhere** to a familiar routine—especially if they have a cognitive impairment. Be sensitive to situations that may increase anxiety or agitation. If they have a physical impairment, consider accessibility issues. Even with accessibility accommodations, additional assistance may be required due to an unfamiliar environment

- ◆ **Consider** traveling when they are at their best. This might be when they are less prone to agitation or anxiety. It may also be after a prescribed dose of medication has taken effect. Be realistic about the amount of activity your loved one is capable of, as well as the amount of activity that you are capable of as a caregiver. Keep in mind that being outside the familiarity of the home environment, you may need to be doing more as caregiver to provide support.
- ◆ For longer journeys, you'll also want to plan for the comfort level of your loved one. Schedule regular breaks to encourage movement.

Travel provides the benefits of social connection and engagement, as well as opportunities for cognitive stimulation and mental activity. Although there are bound to be stress filled moments, taking the time to carefully plan your trip will encourage cherished memories for years to come. ☀



When traveling with an older adult, involve them in the planning process.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

by *Jacquie Woodruff, Legislative and Policy Supervisor,
Fairfax Area Agency on Aging*

The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) is an advisory board mandated by the Older Americans Act. Commissioners for the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging are appointed by the Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church.

At the Nov. 17 COA meeting, Kathleen Thomas, communications specialist for the Division of Adult and Aging Services, shared a communications plan for the upcoming SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey that will be sent to older adults in the community in early 2022. In addition, the COA is developing commissioner outreach strategies in individual magisterial districts to support the Survey.

The COA and Fairfax Area Agency on Aging continue to be concerned about social isolation and loneliness among older adults. Theresa Brown, supervisor, and Linda Hernandez-Giblin, planning coordinator, presented about current and developing AAA initiatives to address social isolation.☀

COA Meeting, Wednesday, Dec. 15, 1 p.m.

The COA continues to meet virtually this month.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android:
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86012440028>

Access Code: COA-m1234!

For live audio dial, 888-270-9936 or call 602-333-0032; Conference Code: 231525

For ADA accommodations, contact:
Hilda Naranjo, 703-324-7496 or
Hilda.Naranjo@FairfaxCounty.gov;
TTY services available via 711.

For meeting updates, visit:
<https://bit.ly/DFS-BAC-COA-Meetings>☀

SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey Coming in Early 2022

from the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Fairfax County, along with the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church, will survey thousands of residents ages 50 and older to learn more about the aging experience in the Fairfax area.

The information will be used to create the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan for a more aging-friendly community.

The SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey will be sent to a group of randomly selected adults in February. The survey will ask information about lifestyles of the individuals including opportunities to work, socialize and volunteer; issues facing these adults such as retirement, housing, and caregiving; and their usage of community services like public transportation and Senior Centers.

The 50+ Community Survey was administered in 2019, and the results were used to formulate the 50+ Community Action plan to address initiatives around housing, transportation, safety, health, and community engagement.

More details about the SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey will be provided in January.☀

There Are No VICAP Medicare 101 Workshops in December

Please note that the Medicare open enrollment period ends Dec. 7, and there will be no Medicare 101 Workshops in December. However, if you have any questions or concerns, call the Virginia Insurance Counseling line at 703-324-5851.☀




Free Legal Services

from the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging


Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) is a free resource for eligible applicants in Fairfax County (and all of Northern Virginia). LSNV's intake team will ask you a few questions to determine your eligibility. The questions will be about demographic information on household size, income, and asset information. They will also conduct a check for conflicts of interest, and get a brief description of your problem.

So, if you are looking for legal help with a simple will or power of attorney or just befuddled about guardianship and advanced directives, call LSNV at 703-778-6800. Attorneys and paralegals can assist with telephone advice or even court representation where needed. The program serves Virginians 60 and older as well as those calling on their behalf.


Callers can also request help with financial exploitation, landlord/tenant problems, family law, public benefits, tax issues, and consumer issues. Call 703-778-6800 or apply online at [LSNV.org](https://www.lsnv.org).

New Location for Alexandria Social Security Office

from the Social Security Administration

The Alexandria Social Security Office has moved from Edsall Road to 5510 Cherokee Ave., Suite 200, Alexandria. Please remember that most Social Security services are available online at [SocialSecurity.gov](https://www.SocialSecurity.gov). Go to [SocialSecurity.gov/MyAccount](https://www.SocialSecurity.gov/MyAccount) to create a personalized account. Many Social Security services are also available toll-free at 1-800-772-1213, TTY 1-800-325-0778.

Fairfax County Government December Holidays

Fairfax County offices are closed for a half-day on Thursday, Dec. 23 and all day on Friday, Dec. 24. In addition to Friday, Dec. 31—New Year's Eve.

Get Your Vaccine Booster this Holiday Season

from the Fairfax County Health Department

Planning your holiday celebrations? Make sure that your COVID-19 booster is part of your prep!

Booster doses are available for eligible individuals who received any of the three approved COVID-19 vaccines. You can choose which vaccine you would like to receive as a booster and you are not required to get the same type (Pfizer, Moderna, or Johnson & Johnson) as their initial vaccine series.

Those eligible for the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna booster include:

- ◆ Everyone age 65+ who received their initial series at least six months ago
- ◆ People 18+ who live in long-term care settings who received their initial series at least six months ago
- ◆ People 18+ who work or live in places with high risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19 who received their initial series at least six months ago
- ◆ People 18+ who have underlying medical conditions who received their initial series at least six months ago

All individuals 18+ who received the Johnson & Johnson vaccine are recommended to get a booster shot at two or more months after their initial dose.

Those who are eligible can receive booster doses from healthcare providers, pharmacies, local Health Department clinics, and the Community Vaccination Center (CVC) in Tysons. Vaccination sites run by the Health Department only offer Pfizer and Moderna booster shots. Johnson & Johnson booster doses are available at the CVC in Tysons.

To find an appointment, visit [Vaccines.gov](https://www.Vaccines.gov). Find more information at [FairfaxCounty.gov/Covid19](https://www.FairfaxCounty.gov/Covid19) or [CDC.gov](https://www.CDC.gov).

Don't forget your flu shot, too! Booster doses can be received before, on the same day, or after your flu shot.

SAFETY

Put a Freeze on Holiday Fires

from the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management

Did you know that nearly half of holiday decoration fires happen because ornaments are placed too close to a heat source? It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. Here are a few tips to help keep you safe:

- ◆ Only use decorations that are flame-retardant or not flammable.
- ◆ Check holiday lights each year for frayed wires or excessive wear.
- ◆ Don't link more than three strands of holiday lights.
- ◆ Never leave a burning candle unattended. Consider using battery-operated flameless candles.



Make family safety part of your holiday decorating.

- ◆ Water your live tree daily to prevent it from getting dry. When your tree does become dry, discard of it promptly.
- ◆ Check to make sure your smoke alarms are working properly. Did you know... three out of five home fire deaths result from fire in properties without working smoke alarms.☀

For more information, visit: [USFA.FEMA.gov/Prevention/Outreach/Holiday](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/Prevention/Outreach/Holiday)

SCAMS

'Tis the Season to Stay Clear of Common Scams

from the Silver Shield Task Force

Now that it's the holiday shopping season, scammers are shopping too. Here are some tips to outsmart those bah-humbug scammers.

Online shopping? Pay by credit card. Credit cards give you extra protection for most online purchases. And, many cards offer benefits like protection for returns and purchases. If unauthorized charges pop-up on your statement, you'll be able to dispute them. Check with your issuer for your card's protections.

Buy gift cards for gifts, not for payments. Gift cards are a scammer's favorite way to steal your money. Anyone who demands that you pay them with a gift card, for any reason, is a scammer. Report gift card scams directly with the card issuer, then report it to the FTC at [FTC.gov/Complaint](https://www.ftc.gov/Complaint).

Research charities before you donate. With the generous spirit of the holidays, and with year-end

fundraising, 'tis the season for donations. Make sure your donation doesn't go into the hands of a scammer. If someone calls and asks you to give to a charity, research the charity to make sure it's legitimate.☀

Scam Slam Holiday Podcast Audio Bulletin

Martin Bailey, who represents AARP Virginia, the Senior Medicare Patrol, and Fairfax County's Silver Shield Anti-Scam Task Force, has some important information about two holiday scams: Avoiding Holiday Scams and Staying Safe Online When Holiday Shopping.

Tune in to Scam Slam at FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults and scroll to the Scam Slam Box or follow on Facebook.com/FairfaxCounty50.☀



Food Safety During the Holidays

by Maria Loh, Program Coordinator, Congregate Nutrition, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging.

1. Wash your hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds when switching tasks, after handling raw meat or poultry, after touching pets, after using the restroom, after sneezing and blowing your nose, and after touching your face or hair.
2. Use separate cutting boards for raw meat, poultry and seafood and ready-to-eat foods such as fruit.
3. Store raw poultry and meat on the bottom shelf and ready-to-eat foods on the top shelf of the refrigerator to avoid raw meat juices from dripping and contaminating ready-to-eat foods.
4. Use a food thermometer to ensure that foods are cooked to proper internal temperatures. When reheating cooked foods, heat to a minimum of 165° F for at least 15 seconds.
5. During gatherings, all foods need to be refrigerated within two hours of serving. Ensure your refrigerator is set at 37-38° F.



Arugula, Apple and Cranberry Salad with Nuts

Ingredients

- 1 package triple washed arugula or spinach
- 1 Fuji apple thinly sliced
- ½ cup pecans (or sliced almonds)
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- Citrus Vinaigrette Dressing (store bought)

Directions. Toss greens, sliced apples, nuts and cranberries with dressing, to taste, in a large bowl. Garnish with more nuts and cranberries. Serve. ✨

Having Difficulty Preparing Meals?

from the Department of Family Services

The Meals on Wheels program provides nutrition services for persons 60 years of age or older as well as younger individuals who may have a disability and are temporarily unable to prepare meals for themselves. Weekly meals are available for in-home delivery. Priority is given to older adults with the greatest economic and social need with emphasis on individuals with low income, individuals in underserved communities, older individuals,

minority individuals, older individuals with limited English, and individuals at risk for institutional placement. The program supports eligible adults to remain independent in their homes. The program currently provides a weekly, contact-free meal delivery of 11 flash frozen meals. They are delivered one time per week. Apply by calling the Department of Family Services at 703-324-5409. ✨

Are You Eligible for SNAP?

from the Department of Family Services

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is used like cash to buy food from authorized retailers and online from Amazon Walmart and more. It cannot be used for delivery fees. Recipients receive an Electronic Benefit Transfer card. Your account is debited when eligible food items are purchased. A Personal Identification

Number is required. Households must meet certain requirements to qualify. Applications can be completed by computer or phone—no need to come in-person. Apply at [CommonHelp.Virginia.gov](https://www.commonhelp.virginia.gov) or call 1-855-635-4370. For details, call our Customer Care Line at 703-324-7500, TTY 711. ✨

CAREGIVING

Caregiving During the Holidays

by *Giuliana Valencia, Social Services Specialist, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging*

For many families, the holidays are a time to gather and create joyful memories. However, for those who are away from family or have loved ones who are struggling with a chronic illness or terminal diagnosis, this time is not very pleasant. Caregiving during this time is also challenging due to corona virus and influenza.

During this time, many caregivers find themselves stressed and frustrated about the pressure of hosting a dinner celebration, preparing special dishes, decorating, buying presents, or traveling to visit family or friends. If you are struggling to balance your own needs and those of your loved ones, here are some tips to help navigate this moment:

- ◆ Acknowledge your own feelings and take a moment to understand why they are surfacing.
- ◆ Remember that you can always create new memories and that you are doing the best that you can with what you have.
- ◆ Talk with your health care providers to plan and make decisions that can help both of you.

Caregiver Consultations. Caregiver consultations are provided free of charge. They typically last about an hour and provide the space for a caregiver to talk more thoroughly about a caregiving situation that they are currently experiencing. In some situations, we might help troubleshoot by providing some additional guidance and options for the caregiver to consider, and in some other situations, we might offer reassurance that the caregiver is already on the right path with the steps they are taking. To request a caregiver consultation, call 703-324-5374, TTY 711 and ask for a caregiver consultation, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Virtual Social Visitor Program for Caregivers. The Virtual Social Visitor Program for Caregivers enlists vetted volunteers to provide support through regular



phone calls made to family caregivers, many of whom are or have been caregivers themselves. Benefits from this program include:

- ◆ Alleviating some loneliness/isolation
- ◆ Chatting with a volunteer about lighthearted topics as well as sharing stories
- ◆ Developing a supportive relationship with a volunteer
- ◆ Supplying a listening ear/sounding board

Email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406, TTY 711 to sign up.

Fairfax Caregiver Alert Notifications! If we can't reach you, we can't alert you. Now, family caregivers can receive email or text notifications of Fairfax County caregiver services and programs. These programs include case management, in-home respite, caregiver support and webinars, wellness workshops, and much more. Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/Alerts to create or sign into your Fairfax Alerts account and then select Area Agency on Aging.

Military in the Arts/Workhouse Arts Foundation.

This initiative, located at the Lorton Workhouse Arts Center, provides art therapy services and free classes in art for current and former military members and their families. There are tuition subsidies for military families interested in taking other Workhouse classes. Learn more at WorkhouseArts.org/wmai, and join a monthly mailing list to learn about new activities before anyone else. ✨

Ombudsmen Address Care Concerns in the Community

by Camden Doren, Social Services Specialist, Ombudsman Program, Department of Family Services

Do you or someone you know receive long-term care services in the community? The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP) can assist in resolving care concerns and provide information about community based long-term care services such as home health, hospice, and adult day health care. Consumers can also search for information about these services on Medicare's website, **Medicare.gov**. There a consumer can locate services near where they live, read recent survey results, and compare agencies to make an informed decision about long-term care services.

As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the NVLTCOP is often called on to assist

residents and consumers to advocate for their rights in order to ensure quality of care and quality of life.

The NVLTCOP is a resident-directed program that is available to assist with concerns and to educate the community about long-term care services. For more information about long-term care services, or nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at 703-324-5861, TTY 711, or contact the Ombudsman Program by email at **NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.gov**.☀



Free Virtual Caregiver Self-Care Support Call

from ElderLink, Department of Family Services, Adult and Aging Services

Caregivers often put others ahead of themselves—especially during the hectic holidays. They may neglect to prioritize their own needs leaving themselves vulnerable and sometimes unable to stay physically and emotionally strong. Take part in this free December support call about how to be a healthy caregiver.

Tuesday, Dec. 14, 7-8 p.m., via Zoom. You can use your phone or computer. A link and alternate phone number to join this free session will be provided after registration is completed.

Register by calling Jennifer Purcell at 703-324-5374 or go to **www.tinyurl.com/CaregiverTSG**.☀

Caregiving Around the Clock Now Through January on Channel 16

from Amy Carlini, Director of Communications, Department of Family Services

Watch Fairfax County's Channel 16 for the latest edition of Mature Living, Caregiving Around the Clock.

- ◆ Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- ◆ Monday at 5 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday at 4 p.m., 8:30 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday at 8:30 a.m., 4 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday at 9:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday at 9:30 a.m., 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

This episode runs through January. Giuliana Valencia, social services specialist, Department of Family Services, and Kristin Martin, ElderLink case manager, talk about the myriad of services and resources available to help family caregivers including classes, respite, and more.

You'll also meet Benitta Bettard, who cares for her husband in their home. Visit **FairfaxCounty.gov/CableConsumer/Channel-16/Mature-Living** to view it on your computer.☀

VOLUNTEERING**Meaningful Ways to Volunteer and Help Our Community***by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging***Volunteers Needed for the 2022 Filing Season**

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program needs the following volunteers: greeters, interpreters (including ASL), screeners, and tax preparers. No tax training is needed for greeters and interpreters. Free training (classroom and online) is available for screeners and tax preparers. The VITA program offers free income tax preparation and filing services to individuals and families who earned \$58,000 or less in 2021. The program runs from late January to April 15. Opportunities are available throughout Fairfax and Prince William counties. Hours are flexible, including evenings and weekends. To sign up, go to nvaCash.org and select the “Volunteers” tab. For more information, contact Mal Williams at Mal.Williams@FairfaxCounty.gov or 703-533-5702.

Help Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities

Volunteer Solutions offers various opportunities to help older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. Volunteers assist in one-on-one or group settings, or with one-time opportunities, such as yard work and more. Do you enjoy driving? Do you speak Spanish or Portuguese? Bilingual grocery shoppers and social visitors are needed. For more information, go to bit.ly/FXVSVOL. Questions? Email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.

Bilingual, Front Desk Assistant at a Reston Community Center

Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) needs one or two Spanish-speaking volunteers to assist with front-desk customer service and respond to inquiries, by phone or in-person, at Southgate Community Center in Reston. The

volunteer will provide administrative support as needed, share information about NCS programs and county services with the community, and assist with Spanish translation and interpretation. This assistance is needed Monday-Friday from 3-7 p.m. For more information and to register go to bit.ly/NCSFRONTDESK. Questions? Email Julie Tran at Julie.Tran@FairfaxCounty.gov.

Help PRS Transform Lives

PRS provides behavioral health, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention services. PRS seeks compassionate volunteers with a familiarity or willingness to understand the challenges that can be faced by the community members they serve. Volunteers make it possible for PRS to transform more lives by providing services to those in need. Volunteers can support PRS in a variety of ways: long term, short term, one-time, in groups, or with youth volunteer opportunities. Learn more at PRInc.org/Volunteer or call 703-531-6321. You can also help PRS continue to meet the needs of the community by making a gift at PRInc.org/Donate.

Local Nonprofit Driving Programs

A medical appointment or trip to the pharmacy is a challenge if you no longer drive. Consider becoming a volunteer driver or office assistant/ride scheduler through one of these organizations:

- ◆ **Herndon Village Network**
703-375-9439; HerndonVillageNetwork.org
- ◆ **Mount Vernon at Home**
703-303-4060; MountVernonAtHome.org
- ◆ **Reston Community Center**
703-390-6198; RestonCommunityCenter.com/About-Reston/rcc-Rides ☀

To advertise volunteer opportunities, email Tanya Erway at Tanya.Erway@FairfaxCounty.gov.

Senior Centers Kick Off Winter Warming Service Project

from Neighborhood and Community Services

Fairfax County Senior Centers have kicked off their Winter Warming Service Project. The annual project collects new or handmade hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and socks for adults and children in the county.

Started by Kathy Fries, Pimmit Hills Senior Center, the drive has grown each year as more senior centers and groups join the effort. Last year, the drive collected over 500 items and is on track to exceed that number this year. Donated items are given to Cornerstones, Homestretch, and ShelterHouse, who distribute them to the people they serve, including adults and families experiencing homelessness.

Senior Center members and staff have embraced the project and enjoy using their knitting and crochet skills to create pieces to donate.

Donations of new or handmade items and yarn are welcome. Senior Centers are accepting donations



Hats already collected at Herndon Senior Center.

now through Jan. 5. Visit any of the locations below and look for the donation box in the entry/lobby:

- ◆ Herndon Senior Center
873 Grace St, Herndon
- ◆ Kingstowne Center for Older Adults
6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria
- ◆ Lewinsville/Pimmit Hills Senior Center
1613 Great Falls St., McLean
- ◆ Little River Glen Senior Center
4001 Barker Ct., Fairfax
- ◆ Mott Community Center
12111 Braddock Rd., Fairfax ☀

December Community Calendar

Now until Sunday, Jan. 2, 5:30-10 p.m., Winter Walk of Lights, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens

The Winter Walk at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens is a half-mile, one way route that provides an enchanting, sparkling, and safe evening activity. Go at your own pace. To purchase tickets, call 703-255-3631 or go to NOVAParks.com.

Tuesday, Dec. 7, & Tuesday, Dec. 21, 6-7 p.m., Bollywood Dance Fitness, Virtual, Free

Join in the fun at Bollywood Dance Fitness with instructor Aparna Rao. Bollywood is a mixture of many styles of dance. Register at <https://LibraryCalendar.FairfaxCounty.gov/>

Wednesday, Dec. 8, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Deeper into Meditation, Virtual, Free

Too often incessant stress, distraction, and constant challenges leave us worn down—especially during the holidays. This workshop will provide a simple yet effective method to help still our restless mind, and achieve a state of lasting happiness. Register at <https://LibraryCalendar.FairfaxCounty.gov/>

Saturday, Dec. 11, 2-3 p.m., Winter Wreath- Making, Tysons-Pimmit Meeting Room 1 & 2, Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, Free

Welcome this season's change with a festive homemade wreath. All workshop supplies will be provided, just bring your creativity. Register at <https://LibraryCalendar.FairfaxCounty.gov/>

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Adult and Aging Services
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DECEMBER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Saturday, Dec. 11, Noon-7 p.m., WinterMarkt, Historic Herndon, Free

The Herndon WinterMarkt brings old-world holiday charm to town. The market, on Lynn Street in front of the Municipal Center, will showcase community diversity with events and entertainment. For details, go to Herndon-va.gov/Recreation/Special-Events/Wintermarkt

Tuesday, Dec. 14, 6:30-8:30 p.m. Refuse to be a Victim, Patrick Henry Library, Free

Refuse to Be a Victim presents crime prevention and personal safety strategies. Learn about home, automobile, phone, technology, and personal safety—plus much more! The instructors are crime prevention specialists with the Fairfax County Police Department. Call 703-938-0405 to register. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E, Vienna.

Wednesday Dec. 15, 10-11:30 a.m., Parkinson's Café, Parkinson Social Network, Insight Memory Care Center, Free

Hear about resources for living well with Parkinson's from someone who has been living with it for more than 30 years. For details about the Parkinson Social Network and support groups, call Nancy Fiedelman at 571-286-5000.

Saturday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m., Christmas in Fairfax, Fairfax Choral Society, Fairfax High School

Listen to a beautiful blend of music and song this season performed by the Symphonic Chorus and the City of Fairfax Band. For ticket information, go to FairfaxChoralSociety.org. Fairfax High School Auditorium, 3501 Lion Run, Fairfax.

Saturday, Dec. 18, 4 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 19, 4 p.m. The Nutcracker in Fairfax, George Mason University, Concert Hall

Experience this timeless holiday classic as the Fairfax Ballet dances to Tchaikovsky's score performed by the Fairfax Symphony. This performance is one of the only Nutcracker performances in the local area with live musical accompaniment. Tickets available at the GMU Center for the Arts or FairfaxSymphony.org.

Thursday, Dec. 23, 4-6 p.m., Exploring Broadway: Fiddler on the Roof, Virtual, Jewish Community Center of N Virginia

Fiddler on the Roof is the last of Broadway's "Golden Age" musicals. This touching story and score, captures the spirit of love, community, freedom, and family. For details and ticket prices, call 703-537-3068.