

Golden Gazette



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Mary Ann McKenzie: Proud to Have Served

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Every year, on November 11, we celebrate Veterans Day and thank veterans in our community for their service to our country. Mary Ann McKenzie, who is 99 years old, served in the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve during World War II. Like all veterans, her story of service is unique and significant.

Mary Ann McKenzie was born in central Pennsylvania in 1923. After graduating from high school in 1940, she moved to Maryland to live with an aunt and uncle to work and attend evening classes at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Mary Ann recalls that tuition at that time was \$6/credit hour, a far cry from GW's current tuition.

In December 1941, the United States entered World War II following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. Mary Ann recalls being swept up in a

groundswell of patriotism and a desire to help the war effort. Her wish to serve was also fueled by the newsreels shown at movie theaters before the main feature. Seeing the terrible devastation and suffering caused by the war motivated her to do what she could to help end it.

In March 1943, Mary Ann enlisted in the United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve. The Reserve was created in February 1943 to release male marines for combat duty by replacing them with women in U.S. shore stations for the duration of the war. Mary Ann hadn't originally planned to sign up for the Marine Corps. When she went to the recruiting station, she intended to join the WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service), the United States Naval

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Above, Mary Ann McKenzie in her Marine Corps uniform in 1945.

At right, Mary Ann McKenzie in her garden at her home in McLean.



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Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Call **703-324-5411, TTY 711**. The TTY number for all contacts in this publication is 711 unless otherwise stated.

It is our policy that all articles published in the Golden Gazette must be written by employees of Fairfax County agencies or partner organizations.

READER SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTENT TO THE GOLDEN GAZETTE

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

Do you know a centenarian living in Fairfax County or an older adult who has given back in a significant way? We are always looking for interesting older Fairfax County residents to feature.

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

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Women's Reserve, but an enthusiastic recruiter convinced her to join the Marine Corps instead. Women Marine Corps enlistees had to meet stringent requirements – United States citizenship; 20-35 years old; not married to a Marine; single or married but with no children under 18; height not less than 60 inches; weight not less than 95 pounds; good vision and teeth; and at least two years of high school.

In August 1943, Mary Ann was sent to boot camp for six weeks at Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, NC, the largest Marine training base on the East Coast. After completing her training, she was assigned to live at Henderson Hall barracks in Arlington, VA, and work at U.S. Marine Headquarters for the duration of the war. Mary Ann worked as a secretary in the commandant's office completing typical office work – typing, filing, etc. She recalls that she was always busy, never bored. Unlike civilians, whose grocery purchases were rationed during the war, Mary Ann and her fellow marines were always well-fed. However, her fondest memories are of the women she lived and worked alongside. In the loud and bustling barracks and busy offices, she made many lifelong friends, keeping in touch long after their service ended.

Mary Ann vividly remembers V-E Day (May 8, 1945), the day the war in Europe finally ended. "It was a great feeling," she says. Despite the celebrations taking place, she faithfully showed up for her piano lesson, to the great surprise of her piano teacher. Three months later, the war in the Pacific ended with Japan's surrender on August 14, 1945. Mary Ann had enough points to be discharged, ending her service with the rank of staff sergeant, earning \$75/month for her service. While extremely proud to have been a Marine, Mary Ann was happy to return to civilian life, saying "I was glad to get out of the service. It was too regimented for me. They tell you when to get up, when to sleep, when to eat."

After the war, Mary Ann met her future husband, a career Navy man, and they married in 1949. A few years later, he retired from the Navy to pursue a career in real estate while Mary Ann worked as a stay-at-home mom, raising the couple's two sons. In 1957, the family purchased their home in McLean. Mary Ann recalls that at that time Tysons Corner was largely undeveloped, with only a single gas station at the intersection of Routes 123 and 7.

A United States Marine Corps Women's Reserve recruitment poster used during World War II. Women were urged to join with the slogan "Free a Marine to Fight."



When Mary Ann's younger son entered the fifth grade, she returned to the workforce, working as an administrative assistant.

Mary Ann and her husband divorced in 1976, and she eventually retired in 1988 from Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC).

Retirement for Mary Ann has been a time to explore new interests and devote her time to her true passions. She developed a love of square dancing after taking introductory lessons through the organization Parents without Partners. For 30 years, Mary Ann was an avid square dancer, only stopping when she was no longer able to participate due to decreased mobility. She also devoted many hours to gardening, a lifelong passion. She credits much of her gardening success to her over 60 years as a member of the Falls Church Garden Club.

Mary Ann also indulged her love of travel, something that began when her boys were young. The family often took long trips in their motor home, including two cross country trips to the West Coast, a trip through Canada, and a trip to Key West, FL. Her later travel included everything from one-day bus tours offered by Fairfax County to longer vacations to destinations around the world. She has gone on eleven Elderhostel trips, joined several tours organized by the McLean Community Center, and sailed on a cruise from Alaska. She has also toured Australia, New Zealand, and several European countries. Many of these trips included visits with her younger son, who once lived in London and now resides in New Zealand.

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Volunteering was a favorite activity of Mary Ann once she retired. When McLean's AARP group was in existence, she served for 10 years as Recording Secretary. Twenty years ago, she concluded 10 years of preparing the evening meal for residents of the Bailey's Crossroads Shelter one day each week. The preparation and cooking took place in her church's kitchen with the aid of one helper.

Mary Ann also became an active member of Lewinsville Senior Center, participating in square dancing, fitness classes and computer classes. For 10 years, she served as president of their advisory council and was invited to participate in the ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of their new facility. During her visits, she especially enjoyed the computer classes. As she became more proficient, she discovered that the computer could be a useful tool in her daily life.

In 2019, Mary Ann participated in an oral history interview for The Library of Congress Veterans History Project. The interview was conducted by Jackie Rich, who at that time taught the computer classes at Lewinsville and other senior centers. A DVD of Mary Ann's interview is now part of the archive.

For 30 years, Mary Ann has belonged to the Women Marines Association, an organization created to help foster camaraderie among those who served. She has been able to attend four of the biannual conventions over the years and has attended many of the meetings, once held in-person but now held virtually.

Mary Ann will celebrate her 100th birthday in February. She still lives in the home her family purchased in 1957 and has witnessed the rapid development of Fairfax County, especially Tysons Corner. Although she is not as active as she once was, she continues to do what she loves – working in her garden, baking (especially sweets), and tuning into cooking shows. Mary Ann uses her computer to stay connected, attending garden club meetings virtually and using Facebook to keep in touch with friends and family. Her older son lives locally with his family and visits often. Mary Ann also keeps up with her younger son, despite the miles that separate them. She calls him her “computer guru” and turns to him when she needs technology advice. Mary Ann also has a granddaughter

in this area; and two grandsons, one granddaughter and a great granddaughter in New Zealand.

Mary Ann McKenzie is proud to have been one of the first women to enlist in the United States Marine Corps. In addition to their exemplary service, she and her fellow enlistees also helped pave the way for greater acceptance of women within the Marine Corps and other branches of the armed services.

The Golden Gazette thanks Mary Ann McKenzie and all the Veterans in Fairfax County for their service to our country. 🌟

Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

by Jacquie Woodruff, 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 Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church.

At the October 19 COA meeting, Health Management Associates (HMA), the consultant for the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan, met with the COA to hear commissioner input on the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan.

COA Meeting Wednesday, November 16, 1 p.m.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android via
Zoom: us06web.zoom.us/j/88285630379
Access Code: COA-m1234!

Live audio of the meeting may be accessed by dialing **888-270-9936** (US Toll Free) or **602-333-0032**; conference code: 231525.

For ADA accommodations, contact Ana Valdivia, **571-407-6960** or ana.valdivia@fairfaxcounty.gov; TTY services available via 711. 🌟

Help Someone in Need this Holiday Season

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

The holiday season is a time for family, celebration and giving thanks. Many also use this season of giving to donate to organizations and causes that help people in need. To ensure that your donation directly helps people in your community, consider giving to one of these donation drives.

TOYS FOR TOTS

The Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department is participating in the Annual TOYS FOR TOTS campaign. Donations of new, unwrapped toys can be dropped off at any Fairfax County fire station through mid-December. To find a fire station near you, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/fire-ems/fslocator.

Adopt-A-Family Holiday Program

The Adopt-a-Family Program was developed to help children and families who need clothing, food and toys for the holidays. The program takes donations to support families who are working with Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Children, Youth and Families Division. The program matches generous donors with identified families to make their holidays more joyful.

If your family, business, company, organization or faith-based group is interested in helping to support a family experiencing difficult times during the holidays, consider participating in Adopt-a-Family. To get involved, please email Emily Swenson at dfsadoptfamily@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-324-6898. To learn more, visit FairfaxCounty.gov and search for “adopt-a-family.”

Fairfax County Police Department’s Victim Services Division 9th Annual Holiday Gift Card Drive

In 2021, Victim Services worked more than 300 cases involving families with children involved in domestic and sexual violence. Many of these families face the reality of not being able to celebrate the holidays due to the financial burden that comes with being a victim of crime. Victim Services asks you to help brighten the holidays for these courageous children by donating gift cards. The gift cards will also allow parents to be

active participants in purchasing gifts for their sons and daughters. Suggested gift card retailers

include Target, Walmart, Marshalls, TJ Maxx, Amazon, or local restaurants and grocery stores. Gift cards are being accepted now through December 16, 2022.



Gift cards can be dropped off or mailed to:

Saly Faye, Director, Victim Services Division
Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters
12099 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA 22035
For more information, please contact Saly Faye at 703-246-2141 or saly.faye@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Survivors of Domestic Violence

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services division appreciates gift card donations in \$25 increments to grocery stores, gas stations and big retail stores, as well as Visa, Mastercard and American Express cards to support their Adopt a Family Holiday program. Mail cards by Monday, Dec. 5, 2022, to Cecelia Herrera at the Domestic Violence Action Center, 4000 Chain Bridge Road, Suite 2702, Fairfax, VA 22030, or Gulira Alieva at Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 738, Fairfax, VA, 22035.

Winter Warming Project

Fairfax County Senior Centers are collecting new, homemade, or purchased donations of adult and youth hats, scarves, mittens, and gloves as part of their Winter Warming Project. Donations can be dropped off at any Fairfax County Senior Center. Look for the collection box at the center labeled “Winter Warming Project.”

The donations will go to the local nonprofits Cornerstones, Shelter House, and HumanKind Foster Care. Donations can be made now through January 6, 2023. To locate a senior center near you, visit FairfaxCounty.gov and search for “Senior Centers.” For questions, email Kathy Fries at Kathleen.fries@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-734-3338. ✨

Recognizing the Critical Role of Family Caregivers During National Family Caregivers' Month

by Giuliana Valencia, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

November is National Family Caregivers' Month, and the Fairfax County Department of Family Services, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging recognizes the critical role of family caregivers as partners in care and acknowledges the importance of providing services to support caregivers during a time that can be complicated and stressful.

Each year, an estimated 53 million adults in the United States provide care to an older adult, or an adult with a disability, according to a 2020 report from AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving. The essential care and assistance they provide enables their loved ones to live with dignity and remain in their communities. This has never been more evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic when their responsibilities intensified due to shelter-in-place mandates and the closure of formal services. Many caregivers had to make difficult decisions to keep their loved ones safe and well.

A family caregiver is a person who provides care and assistance to a member of their family or loved one. This includes neighbors and friends. Family caregivers have become the backbone of our long-term care system, and they take on a wide range of responsibilities, ranging from household tasks to assisting with medical and nursing tasks, often with little to no training. Many of them “struggle to balance their caregiving role with other family responsibilities and employment, and they often forgo rest and self-care,” according to the 2022 National Strategy to Support Family Caregivers (acl.gov).

While the caregiving experience can be overwhelming, caregiving can also be a rewarding and enriching journey. During this month, we honor family caregivers for their dedication, commitment, and compassionate care to their loved ones. To learn more about our caregiver programs, visit **FairfaxCounty**.



[gov/familyservices/older-adults/family-caregiver-support-programs](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/family-caregiver-support-programs) or call our Aging Disability, and Caregiver Resource Line at **703-324-7948**, TTY 711.

Nonpharmacological Approaches for Managing Dementia Behaviors- Caregiver webinar

This presentation will cover evidence-based non-medication strategies that (informal and formal) care partners can implement to address a range of challenging behaviors associated with the progression of dementia.

This presentation will be facilitated by Natalie Regier, PhD, Assistant Professor and Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Center for Innovative Care in Aging, Johns Hopkins School of Nursing. Join us on Wednesday, November 16, from noon-1 p.m. Online registration: bit.ly/CAREWEB1 or call **703-324-5484**.

Veteran Family Caregivers: Exploring Unique Challenges and Resources - Panel Conversation

According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, “there are almost 5.5 million caregivers caring for Veterans, and 96% of those caregivers are women. 70%

provide care to a spouse or partner, and [they] provide care for an average of 10 years.” Veteran caregivers play a critical role in supporting the health and wellbeing of returning wounded warriors. In this panel conversation, we will explore the unique challenges they face and learn about different resources available to help them in their journeys.

Panelists include: Ahime J. Harris, Northern Region Veteran Resource Specialist, Virginia Veteran and Family Support, Virginia Department of Veterans Services; Kady Luke, MSW, LCSWA, CFSW, Hope For The Warriors®; Melissa Comeau, Director, Military and Veteran Caregiver Network, American Red Cross; and Anne O’Dell, Vice President, Programs and Operations, Workhouse Arts Foundation, Inc. Join us on Friday, November 18, from 2-3 p.m. Online registration: bit.ly/AAAPanel or call 703-324-5484.

Virtual Dementia Friendly Information Session

Learn how to become a dementia friend and turn your new understanding of dementia into a practical action that can help someone living in your community. During this presentation, you will learn to describe dementia and know the most common type of dementia, state the five key messages about dementia, explain one approach to effectively communicate with a person with dementia, and commit to an action as a Dementia Friend in your community.

This presentation will be facilitated by Allegra Joffe, caregiver specialist, Fairfax Area Agency; and Diane Watson, Dementia Friendly Champion, Dementia Friendly Fairfax. Join us on Wednesday, November 30, from noon to 1:15 p.m. Online Registration: bit.ly/DementiaFriendlyFairfax or call 703-324-2019.

Caregiver Support Group

The Fairfax Adult Day Health Centers invites you to join their family caregiver support group on Tuesday, November 15, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The topic will be Helping Maintain Autonomy. If you wish to attend, please sign onto:

Zoom Meeting: vdh.zoom.us/j/3222872381. ☀

Live and Virtual Medicare 101 Workshops

Medicare 101 Workshops, led by the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP), provide current information on Medicare options. In-person workshops have limited seating. Registration for library events begins 30 days prior to the presentation date. To register, contact the library or call VICAP at 703-324-5851, TTY 711.

Tuesday, November 1, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., In-person

Mary Riley Styles Public Library
120 N. Virginia Ave., Falls Church, VA 22046
bit.ly/MedSession1 or 703-248-5030

Tuesday, November 1, 3-4:30 p.m., In-person

City of Fairfax Regional Library
10360 North St., Fairfax, VA 22030
bit.ly/MedSession2 or 703-293-6227

Friday, November 4, Noon-1:30 p.m., Virtual

Sherwood Regional Library, Alexandria, VA 22306
bit.ly/MedSession11

Monday, November 7, 3:30-5 p.m., In-person

Richard Byrd Library, 7250 Commerce Street,
Springfield, VA, 22150
bit.ly/MedSession3 or 703-451-8055

Monday, November 14, 3-4:30 p.m., Virtual

Burke Centre Library, Burke, VA, 22015
bit.ly/MedSession4 or 703-249-1520

Wednesday, November 16, 5-6:30 p.m., In-person

Chantilly Regional Library, 4000 Stringfellow Rd.,
Chantilly, VA 20151
bit.ly/MedSession12 or 703-502-3883

Friday, November 18, 2-3:30 p.m., In-person

Great Falls Library, 9830 Georgetown Pike,
Great Falls, VA, 22066
bit.ly/MedSession13 or 703-757-8560. ☀

Need Help Meeting Your Heating Needs?

by the Public Assistance and Employment and Training Division of DFS

Fuel Assistance Program

Are you worried about heating bills this winter? The Fuel Assistance Program offsets the cost of primary heating expenses for eligible households. If approved, payments begin in January 2023. The open application period for the Fuel Assistance Program closes on **Monday, November 14.**

Crisis Assistance Program

Are you facing a “no heat” situation? The Crisis Assistance program helps households overcome energy emergencies that cannot be met by other resources. An energy emergency is determined when a household has no heat or is in imminent danger of being without heat. The open application period for the Crisis Assistance Program begins on **November 1, 2022** and closes on **March 15, 2023.**

Households can apply for one or more of the following:

- ◆ **Repair** of inoperable or unsafe heating equipment (11/1/22-3/15/23)
- ◆ **Replacement** of heating equipment for homeowners only (when repair is not possible) (11/1/22-3/15/23)
- ◆ **Provision** of supplemental heating equipment/maintenance (11/1/22-3/15/23)
- ◆ **Payment** of security deposits for primary heat utility when a deposit is needed to establish service or prevent a disconnection (11/1/22-3/15/23)
- ◆ **Payment** of primary heat source utility bills (1/2/23-3/15/23)
- ◆ **Purchase** of primary home heating fuel when the fuel supply is low (1/2/23-3/15/23)



How to Apply

Households can apply for either program in the following ways:

- ◆ **Online:** at CommonHelp.Virginia.gov
- ◆ **Phone:** call the Enterprise Call Center at **1-833-522-5582**
- ◆ **Paper Application:** call our main number at **703-324-7500** to request an application be mailed to you
- ◆ **Fax:** fax a completed application to **703-653-1355**
- ◆ **In Person:** applications are available at these Department of Family Services locations:
 - Annandale - Heritage Center, West Wing, 7611 Little River Turnpike, 5th Floor, Annandale
 - Fairfax - Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 232, Fairfax
 - Reston - Lake Anne Office Building, 11484 Washington Plaza West, 4th floor, Reston
 - Richmond Highway/Alexandria - South County Center, 8350 Richmond Hwy. (Route 1), 4th floor, Alexandria. ☀

Theft and Loss in Long-Term Care Facilities

by Camden Doran, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Theft or loss of belongings, money or other property is a significant concern for many residents of nursing and assisted living facilities. Residents have the right to use personal belongings and have the right to be free from exploitation or misappropriation of their property. Misappropriation of resident property means deliberately using the resident's property without permission. Exploitation means taking advantage of a resident for personal gain through threats, intimidation, or coercion. All long-term care facilities must take reasonable steps to ensure that a resident's property is kept safe from theft and loss. They must have policies and procedures for preventing and responding to theft, misappropriation, and exploitation.

Take steps to prevent your belongings from getting lost or stolen by:

- ◆ Marking all personal items and taking pictures of valuables,
- ◆ Keeping a copy of the inventory list created by staff and update it as needed,
- ◆ Asking the facility about their policies for protecting personal belongings,
- ◆ Ask the facility for a secure place to lock up valuables.

If you or your loved one is a victim of theft or loss, report the loss immediately to appropriate staff at the facility and notify local law enforcement.

As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is often called on to assist residents and consumers to advocate for their rights to ensure quality of care and quality of life. For more information about theft and loss of a resident's personal belongings, or other nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at **703-324-5861, TTY 711**, or contact by email at **NVLTCP@fairfaxcounty.gov**. ✨

Mature Living – Planning for Retirement

The transition into retirement is an exciting time that offers individuals the opportunity to pursue hobbies and interests they may not have had time to enjoy during their working career. Being aware of healthcare costs and taking steps to ensure financial security can help individuals (and their families) as they transition to a new chapter of their lives.

Mature Living host Anne Hall talks with Bill Vaughan, a Volunteer Counselor with the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program (VICAP), about healthcare options and costs, as well as how to navigate resources like Medicare. Denise Pitts, an attorney with Legal Services of Northern Virginia, shares information on the importance of estate planning, and *Mature Living* Producer Fran talks with Carolyn Armstead who shares her experience as a recent retiree, and how she prepared for the new phase of her life.

Mature Living can be seen on Channel 1016 on the following days and times:

- ◆ 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 program can also be seen on your computer: **FairfaxCounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/mature-living**

You can find information on services for older adults at **FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults** or call **703-324-7948, TTY 711**, Monday-Friday. ✨

Volunteer Opportunities in Your Community

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator

Volunteer Solutions (under the Department of Family Services) offers meaningful opportunities to provide support to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. The following roles are needed: drivers for medical appointments and grocery shopping, social visitors, household organizers, and more. If you prefer group settings, senior centers have various needs for activity leaders, skilled instructors, entertainers, and assistants. Bilingual volunteers are needed, too! To learn more and register go to bit.ly/FXVSVOL, email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov, or call **703-324-5406**.

Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) needs friendly volunteers in different roles, at various locations. If you're organized, bilingual in Spanish and English, comfortable greeting people, answering phones, and providing administrative support, you're needed in one of two front offices. NVFS is also seeking classroom assistants for Head Start programs, who enjoy interacting with young children. Thrift Shop Ambassadors are needed to sort and organize donations, tag items for sale, replenish items on the sales floor, process donations, greet customers, and more. Visit NVFS.org for more information or contact Samara Weinstein at sweinstein@nvfs.org or **571-748-2876**.

Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) provides volunteer advocates to children who have experienced abuse and neglect and been referred by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. Volunteers must commit to their assigned children throughout the life of the case (an average of 2 years) and visit them twice per month. The CASA volunteer is often the only consistent adult in that child's life. If interested, please plan to attend one of the upcoming Virtual Information Sessions: November 15 at 7 p.m., or November 29 at 1 p.m. Email volunteer@casafairfax.org to reserve your spot. Visit fairfaxcasa.org for more information.

Mount Vernon at Home is a non-profit organization serving older adults in the Alexandria region of Fairfax County. They need volunteers for grocery shopping, minor home repairs/assistance, and computer and technical support. Licensed and insured drivers (who have their own cars) are especially needed to transport people to medical and other appointments. Mount Vernon at Home can provide a donation receipt for mileage. Schedules are flexible. Please contact them at info@mountvernonathome.org, or **703-303-4060**.

If you wish to advertise volunteer opportunities, email **Tanya at Tanya.Erway@FairfaxCounty.gov**. 🌟

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS) is Looking for a Few Good Volunteers!

Interested in volunteering? Attend the Domestic and Sexual Violence Services' (DSVS) winter 2023 orientation for prospective volunteers to learn about DSVS, who they serve and how you can help! There are several orientation dates; choose the one that's most convenient for you.

- ◆ Tuesday, January 10, 8:30 a.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, January 11, 6 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday, January 17, 9 a.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, January 18, 6 p.m.



- ◆ Friday, January 20, Noon
- ◆ Monday, January 23, 6 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday, January 25, 6 p.m.

For more information, contact Tanisha Cox at tanisha.cox@fairfaxcounty.gov. 🌟

The Words You Use Matter

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Have you been in this situation? You are relating an anecdote to someone, perhaps your adult child or grandchild. At some point in your storytelling, they gently interrupt you, saying “Grandpa, people don’t use that word anymore.” It can be embarrassing, especially if you thought you were using current terminology. Before you blame the situation on “political correctness,” remember that, like many things in our society, language is constantly evolving. It can be challenging to keep up.

When discussing disability, it is generally acceptable to use “People-First Language.” The intent being that one’s disability does not define the whole person. An example is, “Joe is a person with a disability” rather than “Joe is handicapped.” Another example is “Gina is a person who uses a wheelchair,” instead of “Gina is wheelchair bound.”

Word choice is also important. Many terms once considered acceptable are now considered outmoded or offensive. The Northwest ADA Center put together a helpful guide (at right).

We all want to be treated with dignity and respect. The words we choose to use are an important way to show others that same courtesy. ✨

Terms Generally Discouraged	Terms Generally Recommended
a handicap	a disability
suffers from, afflicted by, victim of	has a disability
The handicapped, handi-capable, differently-abled	People with disabilities
Able-bodied, normal	People without disabilities
Mental retardation	Intellectual disability
Wheelchair bound	Person who uses a wheelchair; person with a mobility disability
Hearing impaired	Person who is deaf or hard of hearing
Mental illness, mental disorder, crazy, insane	Psychiatric disability
Midget	Person of short stature; little person; person with dwarfism
Epileptic	Person who has epilepsy; person who has seizures
fits, spells, attacks	seizures
Brain damaged	People with brain injuries
Slow learner	Person with a learning disability
Diabetics	People who have diabetes

Cooking Safety Tips for Thanksgiving

by Courtney Arroyo, Department of Emergency Management and Security



The kitchen is the heart of the home, especially at Thanksgiving. Kids love to be involved in holiday preparations. Safety in the kitchen is important, especially on Thanksgiving Day

when there is a lot of activity and people are home. Thanksgiving Day is the busiest day of the year in

the United States for home fires involving cooking equipment. It is a very important day to have a fire extinguisher on hand and know how to use it properly. Always stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stovetop, and make sure children stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.

Cooking Safety Information:

[nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Top-fire-causes/Cooking](https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Top-fire-causes/Cooking). ✨

What You Need to Know Before Purchasing a New TV

by Fairfax County Department of Cable and Consumer Services

Two of the biggest shopping days of the year take place in November – Black Friday and Cyber Monday – and TVs are always a popular item with shoppers. If you are thinking about purchasing a new TV, make sure you understand the features and know what to look for so you can purchase the best TV available within your budget.

TV Prices

The good news is that you can now buy a 50-55” LED 4K TV starting at approximately \$250-\$350 (as of October 2022), which is a good value, high quality TV. Good quality name brand large TVs have come way down in price. Higher quality 55” TVs, such as QLED TVs, start from \$400-\$500.

Smart TVs vs. Regular TVs

Most TVs sold today include the smart feature which is very useful. A smart TV connects to the Wi-Fi in your home, so you can watch streaming video channels from the Internet such as Netflix (with a subscription), YouTube, or many other free channels over the Internet. Smart TVs cost about \$50 more than regular TVs. If you decide to buy a regular digital TV without the smart feature, you can add video streaming capability by purchasing a streaming media player such as a Roku stick or Amazon fire stick. You must have Internet service (for example from your cable provider) to stream video over the internet with your TV.

Screen Size

Televisions are getting bigger and bigger, and you should not be fearful about getting a larger TV than you owned in the past. Most people buy at least 55”-65” TVs today for their living rooms. What size is appropriate for you? A good rule of thumb is to measure the seated distance from the TV in inches and divide by 1.5 to get a recommended screen size. For example, if your seating is 7 feet (84 inches) away from the screen, divide 84 by 1.5 to get a recommended screen size of 55”.



Recommended Screen Sizes

Screen sizes are determined by measuring the screen diagonally. You can go slightly bigger than recommended below (up one category) without a problem.

Seated Distance From TV	Recommended Size of TV Screen
3-4 Feet	32”
4.5-5.5 Feet	40”-45”
6-7 Feet	48”-55”
7.5-8.5 Feet	57”-64”
8.5-9.5 Feet	65”-76”

Types of Digital TVs

There are several types of TVs currently available (LCD TVs and Plasma TVs are no longer produced). TV Types starting with the lowest cost (and viewing quality) first:

- ◆ LED TVs are the most common type of television displays now sold and produce much higher quality pictures compared to the older analog CRT TVs we once used. LED TVs are backlit with “Light Emitting Diodes” (LED) – similar to light technology used in a LED head-band flashlight.
- ◆ QLED (made by Samsung) – higher quality than the LED TV. Samsung’s Quantum Dot technology enhances everything you see on your screen, like the colors and the brightness of images, which makes for a clearer picture.

- ◆ Mini-LED (made by TCL) – Very high quality with much better contrast than the LED. Consists of an array of many mini-LED lights which means more light pixels per inch of screen and therefore brighter than an OLED TV.
- ◆ OLED (organic light-emitting diode made by LG). Very high-quality TV that uses an organic substance that glows when an electric current is introduced. The light passes through a combination of filters to reproduce spectacular high-definition images.
- ◆ Make sure the TV you choose has enough HDMI or HDMI-2 inputs to accommodate all your devices such as a videogame console, Blu-ray player, cable box, A/V receiver or streaming media player.
- ◆ To play 4K (or HDR) content on your 4K TV from a 4K HDR Blu-ray disk, your device must also be a 4K, UHD or HDR-capable Roku Player, or 4K UHD HDR Blu-ray player, etc.
- ◆ Your connections (cables) should also be 4K capable HDMI 2, not HDMI 1.
- ◆ If you purchase an over the air antenna you can receive local broadcast channels in a digital format (including in high-definition broadcasts). Purchase an antenna (at Best Buy, Walmart or online for example) that is capable of receiving a signal from at least 65 miles (it says on the box).
- ◆ Decide how you want your TV to be displayed – freestanding or wall-mounted – and purchase the correct equipment. If you can't install the TV yourself, you can also hire a reputable contractor or staff from the store where you purchased the TV may be able to install it.
- ◆ Always use a surge protector to protect your TV and other devices. ✨

TV Resolution

The larger a TV's resolution, the higher the definition and picture quality. Most TVs in the store today will be 4K or greater. Buying a TV with lower than 4K resolution is fine if it is viewed on a TV of less than 40", otherwise a 4K TV is recommended.

Other Considerations

To get the most out of your new TV, make sure you consider the following before taking your purchase home:

VITA Volunteers Needed for Tax Season

by Kayla May, Department of Family Services

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program provides free tax preparation to qualified individuals and families in Northern Virginia. The Fairfax County Department of Family Services is recruiting volunteers to act as greeters, interpreters (including ASL), screeners, tax preparers, online tax coaches, social media outreach, and IT support. No experience is necessary, but volunteers must be 18 and older. Free training (classroom and on-line) is available for screeners and tax preparers. No tax training is needed for greeters and interpreters.

Opportunities are available throughout Fairfax and Prince Williams counties. Hours are flexible, including evenings and weekends. For more information about the VITA program, go to nvcash.org.

The Department of Family Services will continue to consult with the IRS Stakeholder Partnerships,

Education and Communication (SPEC) Officers and monitor state, local, and national guidelines when administering the VITA and TCE programs for Tax Year 2022. Volunteer training begins in late November and volunteers are needed through mid-April. More information will be available in the upcoming months regarding Tax Year 2022 specific training schedule and VITA site operations.

To register as a volunteer for VITA please visit volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov and search for "Volunteer Income Tax Assistance." Please note that volunteers must be fully vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus and submit proof of vaccination prior to reporting for service. Email proof of vaccination to Loulit Tadesse, VITA Coordinator at loulit.tadesse@fairfaxcounty.gov. ✨

Prepare Your Home for Winter Weather

Content courtesy of Fairfax County's Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination and Fairfax County Public Library

Fall is here and so are colder temperatures. Now is a good time to prepare your home for winter by taking steps to weatherize your home. In addition to making your home more comfortable, these changes will save energy and can help reduce your utility bills.

Fairfax County's Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination suggests some simple steps you can take to prepare for cold weather:



Heating and Cooling

- ◆ Dirty filters make heating and cooling systems less efficient, meaning they use more energy to achieve the same results. Clean or replace filters regularly. Check your owner's manual for guidance.
- ◆ Keep vents, radiators or baseboard heaters clean to help them deliver conditioned air more efficiently. Be sure that they are not blocked by furniture, carpeting or drapes.
- ◆ Install a programmable thermostat to automatically control the temperature of your home based on a set schedule. You can also adjust the thermostat manually when you leave the house. Turning the temperature up in the summer and down in the winter when you won't be home saves on heating and cooling costs.
- ◆ Have your heating and cooling system professionally checked on an annual basis. Your system will perform better and last longer with proper maintenance.

- ◆ Ceiling fans can make rooms feel more comfortable without the need to adjust the temperature. In the summer, spin fans counterclockwise to push air straight down. In the winter, spin fans slowly clockwise to move warm air around the room. Remember to turn fans off when rooms are unoccupied.

Air Leaks and Insulation

In addition to saving energy and money, eliminating drafts will make your home more comfortable. Although some drafts can be felt with your hand, many are harder to detect. A useful tool to detect leaks is a thermal imaging camera, which uses color to show the relative temperature of an object. This allows you to see where you might have leaky outlets, drafty doors, missing insulation, and more.

Residents can borrow a thermal imaging camera from Fairfax County Public Library. Please note that a smartphone (Apple or Android) is required to operate the camera. You can place a hold online or in a branch and the camera will be shipped to your local library branch for pick-up. For more information, ask at your local branch or visit [Research.FairfaxCounty.gov/lot/thermal-cameras](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lot/thermal-cameras).

Once you've found your problem areas, here are some simple solutions to address the issue:

- ◆ Install foam socket sealers behind exterior wall outlets and switch plates to block potential air leaks.
- ◆ Install door sweeps on exterior doors to minimize air filtration.
- ◆ Add weatherstripping around windows and door frames to ensure there is a tight seal when closed.
- ◆ Caulk cracks and gaps that can be found in concrete, around joists or between a home and its foundation. Also caulk around openings to the outside such as plumbing pipes and electrical or cable wiring.
- ◆ Have a wood-burning fireplace? Once all embers are finished burning and the ashes are cold, the damper should be closed. You can also purchase a fireplace plug to seal up your chimney in the warmer months of the year.

- ◆ Inadequate or missing insulation is often "hidden" in attics, walls, ceilings and floors. A professional energy auditor can assess your home's insulation level and provide cost-effective recommendations. For tips on hiring an auditor, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov) and search for "Home Energy Assessment."

Conserve (Energy) Kits

To help county residents weatherize their homes and save money, Fairfax County Public Library has created Conserve (Energy) Kits. Each kit includes tools and consumable items that will seal leaks in your home and help you understand more about how various appliances and devices use energy. Some of the items included in the kit are considered consumables – use what you need and return the rest; all other items are to be returned with the kit along with any unused consumables.

Conserve Kits may be borrowed for two weeks and are renewable if there are no existing holds. You can place a hold online or in a branch, but the kits may only be picked up at one of five branches – Chantilly Regional, George Mason Regional, Pohick Regional, Reston Regional or Sherwood Regional – and must be returned to the same branch.

Items included in the kit (asterisks indicate consumable items):

- ◆ **Kilowatt Usage Meter** – Measures the amount of electricity used by a particular device to help you understand its power consumption.
- ◆ **Laser Thermometer** – Allows you to safely read temperatures without touching the item being measured. Intended for HVAC, ovens, engines, breaker boxes, doors, and many other uses.
- ◆ **Mechanical Timer** – Turns lamps, fans, seasonal lighting, and other small devices off and on based on your desired times, saving you energy and possibly deterring crime when you are away from home. Try this one out to see if you want one of your own.
- ◆ **Moisture Meter** – Detects moisture content in materials, such as drywall, hardwood, masonry, or



Conserve Kits, available from the library, contain a variety of tools and consumable items that can aid you in weatherizing your home.

softwood, letting you know if it is within normal ranges.

- ◆ **Thermometer / Hygrometer Gauge** – Mini digital thermometer hygrometer allows you to easily know the environment's temperature and humidity in a space. Great for garage, cellar, closet, greenhouse, refrigerator, freezer, and humidifier use.
- ◆ **Caulking Gun, Caulk*, Finish Tools** – Caulk is a flexible material used to seal joints or seams against air or water leaks through cracks, gaps, or joints less than ¼" wide.
- ◆ **Outlet / Light Switch Insulation Gasket*** – Insulation gaskets fit behind the wall plate of light switches and outlets, to seal off draughts of air that flow through your switches.
- ◆ **Weather Stripping*** – Used to stop air leaks on objects that open and close, making heating and cooling your home more efficient. The weather stripping can be used at the bottom of sliding window/door, plastic-steel windows, thresholds, or shower doors.
- ◆ **Window Insulation Shrink Kit*** – Used to add an extra thermal barrier to older windows. Kits feature a clear plastic sheet that shrinks tight and wrinkle free with an ordinary hand-held hairdryer and can be easily installed on metal, painted, varnished wood or vinyl clad window frames.

For more information about the Conserve Kits, visit [Research.FairfaxCounty.gov/lot/conserve](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/lot/conserve). 🌟

Protect Yourself from Scams

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Scammers are relentless and will use any means available to scam you out of your money or personal information. Familiarize yourself with these warning signs and precautions you can take to protect yourself from being a victim.

Signs It's a Scam:

- ◆ You are told that you won something or are getting something for free. Remember the adage – if something sounds too good to be true, then it probably is.
- ◆ You are contacted about a purchase, delivery, or transaction that you don't remember.
- ◆ You are contacted out of the blue and didn't initiate the communication.
- ◆ You are asked to pay using nontraditional methods (gift cards, cryptocurrency, wire transfers, or peer-to-peer payment apps like Venmo, Cash App, PayPal or Zelle.)
- ◆ You are asked to donate to a cause related to something that has been in the news recently, such as a natural disaster.
- ◆ You are contacted by someone claiming to be from a federal agency. Federal agencies will not call you. They will only communicate via the U.S. Mail.

Safety Precautions You Can Take:

- ◆ Treat all texts, emails, direct messages, and phone calls with skepticism.
- ◆ Don't pick up calls from unknown numbers.
- ◆ Don't click on links in texts, emails, or other messages.
- ◆ Don't answer the door to people you don't know.
- ◆ Assume people and companies aren't who they say.
- ◆ Reach out through a secondary contact to verify that a person or company are who they say and that they contacted you.



- ◆ Ask a trusted friend or family member about suspicious messages.
- ◆ Take your time to make a decision. Do not allow anyone to pressure you into making a purchase, signing a contract, or donating if you feel unsure.
- ◆ If you sign a contract in your home, there are federal and state laws to provide consumers a three-day cooling off period to cancel the contract.

Protect Yourself During the Holidays:

- ◆ Make a list and a budget and stick to it.
- ◆ Do your research before you shop.
- ◆ Look for the best deals before making a purchase.
- ◆ Keep track of your purchases.

If you are unsure about what you are being told, contact:

- ◆ Fairfax County Consumer Affairs at **703-222-8435**.
- ◆ For non-emergency crime reporting, contact the Fairfax County Police Department at **703-691-2131**. ☀

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NOVEMBER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

LLI/NOVA November Forum

Wednesday, November 2, 9:30-11 a.m.

Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale
Guest speaker Ms. Ellen Crosby, local author of the Virginia Wine Country Mysteries, sets many of her books in the heart of horse and hunt country in the fictitious village of Atoka, Virginia. What links the series together is a present-day mystery that always intersects with an event from Virginia's rich, fascinating history. All are welcome. For more information go to llinova.org

36th Annual Caregiver's Conference: Caregiving with Hope and Inspiration

**Virtual sessions: Wednesday, November 9, to
Friday, November 11, 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

Hosted by the Northern Virginia Dementia Care Consortium.
Become better prepared to provide care and support at home or in a facility, learn new ways to engage individuals with dementia, and visit with exhibitors who offer supportive services. Topics include Unmasking Alzheimer's: Evaluation, Treatment, and Clinical Trials; Communicating with a Loved One with Dementia; Meaningful Music; and Celebrating Creativity in Elder Care. To learn more and register, visit nvdcc.com or call 703-204-4664 ext. 131.

Fairfax County HomeWise Event

Thursday, November 17, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Herndon Fortnightly Library, 768 Center St., Herndon
HomeWise volunteers will give away free home efficiency kits to the first 100 event attendees. Kits contains energy efficient LED lightbulbs, low-flow faucet aerators, socket sealers for outlets and switch plates, weather stripping for windows and doors, and more! Learn how to use these items and talk with volunteers about home energy and water efficiency or conservation. Free event, no registration is required.

Senior Planet by AARP Free Technology Classes

Wellness Center for Older Adults
4027B Olley Lane, Fairfax

Thursday, November 10, 9:15-10:30 a.m.

Getting Started with Zoom

Learn Zoom basics, including how to sign up for an account, schedule a meeting, and more. RSVP at events.aarp.org/SPzoom or call 1-877-926-8300.

Tuesday, November 29, 1:15-2:30 p.m.

Causes Website and App

Causes allows you to identify and contact your representatives in Congress. Learn its main features and how to sign up for a free account. RSVP at events.aarp.org/SPcauses or call 1-877-926-8300.

Please note that dates, prices, and times are correct at publishing. However, please confirm information by calling or checking using the phone numbers or websites provided.