

Golden Gazette



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Barry and Rita Altman: Devoted to Helping Animals

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Barry and Rita Altman have shared many experiences over their 55 years of marriage that have strengthened their bond – raising two daughters, moving to new places, and building a life together. However, one thing that has always united the couple is their deep love of and commitment to caring for animals.

Although Barry and Rita have had many pets over the years (typically 3-4 dogs and 1-2 cats at any given time), very few were sought out. Nearly all of the animals who joined their family were rescued by the Altmans. In fact, the couple has a reputation among neighbors for being the go-to family for found animals, as Barry jokingly says, “if you find an animal, bring it to the Altmans!”

The first dog the couple adopted was a stray that Rita befriended on her college campus in Bridgeport, CT.

The couple had decided to hold off on adopting a pet during their first years of marriage, but when Rita discovered that her “friend” had been taken to the local animal shelter and would likely be euthanized, their plans went out the window and they adopted Zack.

Similar circumstances marked the couple’s many pet adoptions over the years. While the family was living in Fullerton, CA, a neighbor discovered that a hamster had built a nest in his garage, so he called the Altmans. Barry and Rita went to the local pet store and bought a habitat for the hamster. After that, Fluffy lived a full and happy life with the family.

In 1995, Rita wanted to find other ways to help animals, so she became a volunteer at the Irvine Animal Care Center. Her work at the shelter included walking and socializing the dogs and helping with pet adoptions.

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Barry and Rita Altman at home with their dogs, Tessie and Nia.

DON'T MISS A SINGLE ISSUE OF THE *Golden Gazette*!

The *Golden Gazette* is a free monthly publication published by the Fairfax County Department of Family Services. It covers local news-to-use and human interest stories for older adults and caregivers.

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GOLDEN GAZETTE

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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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In 2002, the Altmans relocated to Vienna, VA. Rita, a special education assistant teacher, got a job with Fairfax County Public Schools, while Barry, an engineer, worked in operations and general management for a small defense contractor that specialized in servers designed to operate in harsh environments.

Rita recalls driving down Maple Avenue when they first arrived, seeing all the shops and restaurants and being impressed by how convenient everything was. The couple, who are vegetarians, also appreciate the number of restaurants nearby that offer vegetarian fare.

Rita began volunteering at the Fairfax County Animal Shelter in 2004. She and three others became the “Monday Crew,” walking and caring for dogs. Although the work was hard, Rita enjoyed taking care of the animals and spending time with shelter staff and her fellow volunteers. She said, “It’s a lot of fun working with and being with like-minded people. You always have a common bond and can talk about your experiences.”

In 2011 Rita joined the all-volunteer board of the Friends of the Fairfax County Animal Shelter (FFCAS), an independent, nonprofit fundraising organization that supports programs and needs at the shelter that otherwise would not be provided. The programs include dental care, lifesaving medical care, parasite prevention, and free collars, tags and leashes for every adoptable cat or dog. The FFCAS recently paid for trees to be planted at the shelter to serve as a sound barrier against the traffic noise on Interstate 66. Rita is currently the Vice President of the FFCAS.

Barry joined Rita in volunteering at the shelter but took on a different role. He works in customer service – manning the phones, answering questions, and assisting visitors. After he retired, Barry missed the camaraderie he shared with his colleagues and feels that volunteering at the shelter has helped fill the void. He also loves witnessing the animals leaving with their new families, saying, “Every time you see one of those little guys go

out the door, it’s very gratifying. I feel like I’m making a difference.”

Rita eventually had to give up working with the dogs at the shelter because it was too physically taxing, so she found other ways to serve animals. She volunteers with Homeward Trails Animal Rescue, a nonprofit organization that provides pet adoption in Virginia, Washington, D.C., and Maryland. Her work primarily involves transporting animals to medical appointments and delivering medicine to animals in foster homes.



The Altmans fostered Tessie for six weeks while she recovered from a surgical procedure. When the time came to return her, the couple decided to adopt her.

She and Barry also enjoy helping several animal rescue groups transport dogs and cats from high kill shelters located in southern states to shelters in northern states where they can be placed in rescues and foster situations, and eventually find their forever homes. Although this work may sound like an exhausting road trip, the rescue groups have made it easy for volunteers to participate by breaking the drive into shorter legs, so the process resembles a relay race. Instead of passing a baton, volunteers meet at predetermined locations to “pass” the animals along to the next driver. The animals are walked, fed, and watered

during these stops to reduce their stress.

Three years ago, the couple also decided to foster animals. Fostering means bringing an animal into your home temporarily to give them a break from the stress of the shelter. The Altmans have grown to love the experience. “They (the animals) come to you shy and withdrawn – not used to having any space or love. You see their personalities emerge. It is a very rewarding experience,” said Barry.

Of the three pets they currently have, two are foster fails, meaning the couple decided to adopt the animals rather than return them at the end of the foster period. Oscar, a one-eyed cat arrived at their home and hid under their bed for two weeks. When he finally emerged and warmed up to the couple, they decided

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to adopt him. Now he sleeps in their bed every night and likes to cuddle on the couch. They fostered their dog Tessie for six weeks following a surgical procedure. During that time, she had to stay immobile, so she spent most of her time in one of the Altman's laps. By the time she recovered, the Altmans had fallen in love with Tessie and adopted her.

Although Barry took a break from volunteering at the shelter during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, he returned at the first opportunity. He anticipates being even busier since the shelter resumed walk-in visitors in July.

Rita is also looking forward to a busy fall. The FFCAS will be hosting one of their large annual fundraisers on Monday, September 19. The Putting for Pets Captain's Choice Golf Tournament will be held at the Chantilly National Golf and Country Club in Centreville. Single golfers or groups of up to four players can sign up for a day of fun activities including 18 holes of golf, food and drinks, raffles, a silent auction and more. All proceeds from the event will benefit the animals at the shelter. For more information about the event, visit ffcas.org.

Rita is an enthusiastic supporter of the shelter's Pet Assistance and Wellness Services (PAWS) Program's Pets Services Events, which take place several times a year in vulnerable communities in Fairfax County. For these events, a mobile team from the shelter is dispatched to offer services such as rabies shots, microchips, spay and neuter registration, parasite prevention, and behavior assistance for free.

Barry and Rita offer advice to anyone considering volunteering with Fairfax County Animal shelter. Take the commitment seriously. If you sign up, you need to show up – the staff and the animals are counting on you. If you are concerned about the physical demands of the job, keep in mind that not all tasks are as strenuous as walking dogs. There is always a need for volunteers willing to wash dishes and do laundry. Finally, Barry says, "If you love animals, you will make lifelong friends of the animals. Just being with them is heartwarming and it makes such a huge difference!"

To learn more about the shelter, including how to volunteer, visit FairfaxCounty.gov and search "Animal Shelter." 🌟

Mature Living – Continuing Community Connections

COVID-19 has impacted all of us on so many levels and significantly altered the way we connect to one another. In this episode, representatives from three county agencies share how COVID affected their services, and what adjustments they have made to their programs now that we are slowly emerging from the pandemic.

Mature Living host Anne Hall talks with Dianne Duke, Social Work Case Manager with ElderLink, about how her clients have adjusted, and what the future looks like for her agency's programs and services. Rabinder Singh, Adult Programming Assistant with the Fairfax County Public Library, reveals how library programs have been affected, and reveals plans for future programs. Lynne Lott, Director of the Sully Senior Center, tells *Mature Living* producer Fran about how the county's senior centers and how clients and staff have coped during the pandemic, and what their planning for both in person and virtual programs in the future.

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.** 🌟

Fraudsters Distort Civic Duty to Confuse Citizens

By Gerarda Culipher, Deputy Clerk, Fairfax Circuit Court



“Can you believe the gall?” a colleague remarked when we discovered jury duty scams used in Fairfax County.

Scammers who attempt to criminally defraud unsuspecting citizens have gone so far as to claim to be law enforcement officers or court personnel, calling and demanding fines be paid for purported failure to appear for jury duty.

As the largest trial court in the Commonwealth of Virginia, we can report that no one from the Fairfax Circuit Court Clerk’s Office is going to call and demand payment over the phone for failure to appear for jury duty. While you must serve your jury duty if you receive your summons in the mail, if someone seeks money from you, have your fraud detection hat on.

The aim of this scam is to lure law-abiding and unsuspecting citizens – who deeply respect their civic duties like serving on a jury – into believing they

forgot or missed a summons for jury service. Once the scammer convinces the person that they are in trouble, the target is told to purchase a prepaid money card from a local convenience store to pay the court costs over the phone.

Don’t believe this fraud or any variation of it. While there are some rare occasions when the Clerk’s Office will call you regarding your upcoming jury duty, it will only be for scheduling or rescheduling your service and it will not involve paying any fees. Under Virginia law, the court reimburses you \$30 per day for every day that you come to the courthouse to serve on a jury.

Jury duty scams and other frauds that distort legitimate justice agencies, or that impersonate law enforcement officers, play to your natural civic mindedness. Don’t be fooled! If someone is calling and demanding payment over the phone from you, your fraud antennae should go up. If you receive such a scam call, contact your local, non-emergency police to report it, so that our law enforcement and justice partners can respond swiftly.

To read the full fraud alert, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov) and search “Jury Fraud Alert.” ✨

Volunteer Advocates Needed!

by Camden Doran, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

Many residents in long-term care (LTC) facilities can sometimes feel alone, isolated, and powerless. As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLT COP) is often called on to assist residents and consumers to advocate for their rights to ensure quality of care and quality of life. The NVLT COP is looking for individuals who can advocate for the rights of residents in LTC facilities and help them with concerns that they are unable to resolve alone. If you possess skills in listening, communicating, problem solving, empathy and wish to help residents, please consider becoming a Volunteer Ombudsman and help our program expand our impact in the

community. We seek those who are willing to complete a comprehensive initial three-day training, commit to a minimum one year of service, and who can devote at least four hours per week assisting residents at assigned facilities close to home or work. Our next training will be offered in October 2022. In addition, each volunteer will be required to participate in ongoing training opportunities throughout their tenure with the NVLT COP.

For more information about NVLT COP’s volunteer program, please call the NVLT COP at **703-324-5861, TTY 711**, or contact Camden Doran by email at camden.doran@fairfaxcounty.gov. ✨

How to Help a Loved One Age in Place

by Giuliana Valencia, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Helping a loved one remain in their home and community as they get older is a process that requires an understanding of all the potential barriers of aging in place, such as new illnesses and safety of the home environment.

Knowing and planning what our loved ones' needs will be in the future is difficult, but one way to begin the process is to look at any existing diagnosis that might affect a person's ability to remain in their home. For example, if a loved one has dementia, think about how their ability to keep up with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, toileting, medication management, etc. might change over time and whether additional support might be needed. In addition, consider how this diagnosis might change the person's ability to socially connect with others and participate in their community.

Another important aspect of aging in place is the home environment, and how conducive it is to age in place. For instance, if your loved one has difficulty using the stairs, but he or she lives in a two-story house, this might pose a challenge to live safely, and therefore, home modifications might be needed to address the issue. Think about how a few modifications, such as a ramp at the front door, handrails, and nonskid floors could provide a safer environment.

If you would like to learn more about the community resources available and how to plan for aging in place, call our Aging, Disability, Caregiver Resource line at **703-324-7948** and request a caregiver consultation.



Panel Conversation: Aging in Place- Program Models and Community Resources

Most of us want to age in place and remain in our community, but as we get older, the odds of becoming more dependent and socially isolated are higher. Therefore, to age in place, it is important to have different services and supports to help us meet our basic daily and health needs. In this panel conversation, we will explore different community models that promote social connection, health, quality of life, and in turn, aging in place.

Panelists include Season Zellman, Fairfax County Health Department; Sherri L. Parker, LCSW, Capital Caring Health; Mia Grigg, Institute on Aging, Friendship Line; and Sara T. Pappa, PhD, Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance. Join us on Friday, September 30, from 2-3 p.m. Online Registration: bit.ly/AAAPanel or call **703-324-5484**.

Caregiver Webinar: What Legal Tool is Right for Me and My Family?

Not sure what legal tools you need to assist in your caregiver journey? Attend this presentation by Legal Services of Northern Virginia and learn the single most valuable legal tool that everyone should have and use. Figure out if you need a will or a trust; determine if you need a guardianship over your loved one. Plenty of time for questions and answers. Learn more about free legal services provided through Legal Services of Northern Virginia. This presentation will be facilitated by Denise Pitts, Elder Law Attorney, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, Inc. Join us on Wednesday, September 21, from Noon-1 p.m. Online Registration: bit.ly/CAREWEB1 or call 703-324-5484.

Caregiver Support Group

The Fairfax County Adult Day Health Centers invites you to join their family caregiver support group on Tuesday, September 20, from 10:30 a.m. to noon. The topic will be on Sleep Challenges. If you wish to attend, please join the Zoom meeting: vdh.zoom.us/j/3222872381

Emergency Preparedness for Caregivers

Join the Area Agency on Aging and the Department of Emergency Management and Security for a preparedness workshop featuring a panel of experts from the Department of Emergency Management and Security, Department of Public Safety Communications (9-1-1), Fire and Rescue, Police Department, Sheriff's Office.

Join us on Wednesday, September 14 at noon. Online registration: bit.ly/EmergencyWeb. ☀

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 Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church.

The COA was in recess in August.

COA Meeting Wednesday, September 21, 1 p.m.

The COA continues to meet virtually this month. Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android: us06web.zoom.us/j/87835647834. Access Code: COA-m1234!

For live audio, dial 888-270-9936 or call 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.

Meeting will be held virtually unless otherwise impacted by Fairfax County's State of Emergency Status due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For meeting updates, visit:

bit.ly/DFS-BAC-COA-Meetings. ☀

Reminder!

Personal property tax payments are due on **Wednesday, October 5.**

To ensure that you never miss a deadline, sign up to receive county tax deadline information via Fairfax Alerts. Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/alerts to sign up. ☀

50+ Expo Celebrates 23rd Year

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

The Beacon Newspaper is happy to announce that the 50+ Expo will be held in-person this year after being held virtually for the past two years. Now in its 23rd year, the event will take place on Sunday, October 23, from noon to 4 p.m. at Springfield Town Center in Springfield, Virginia. A similar event with Maryland vendors will take place the following Sunday, October 30, from noon to 4 p.m. at Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Older adults are invited to attend this free event, featuring:

- ◆ Informational speakers, including keynote John Kelly, columnist for The Washington Post
- ◆ Screenings for blood pressure, glaucoma, and Alzheimer's genes
- ◆ Flu shots and other vaccines
- ◆ Information on programs and resources for older adults

In addition to the scheduled lineup of events, visitors can visit dozens of exhibitors, including government agencies, nonprofits, and local businesses, to learn about programs and services available to older adults. Other exhibitors will share information about retirement communities, home remodeling, financial planning, healthcare, travel, fitness, senior services and more.



Exhibitors and visitors interacting at a 50+ Expo event held prior to the pandemic. Photo courtesy the Beacon Newspaper.

Sponsors include Gold Sponsors AARP Virginia and Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center, Silver Sponsors ReCognition Health, Harmony Senior Living, the Montgomery County Recreation Department, and Giant Food, and Bronze Sponsors the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Maryland Relay and Habitat America.

To receive a vaccine at the event, please bring your Medicare and insurance cards.

For more information, or to sponsor, exhibit or volunteer, please call **301-949-9766** or visit **[TheBeaconNewspapers.com/50expos](https://www.thebeaconnewspapers.com/50expos)**. 🌟

September: See Something, Say Something

by Courtney Arroyo, Department of Emergency Management and Security

The “If You See Something, Say Something®” campaign works with partners year-round to empower and educate the public on suspicious activity and how to report it. The campaign has designated September 25 as “If You See Something, Say Something” Awareness Day, also known as **#SeeSayDay**. It is more than a slogan. It’s how we protect ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities.

You play a key role by recognizing and reporting suspicious activity. This September, we encourage you to build awareness in your community about what suspicious activity is and how to report it. To raise awareness about how to recognize and report suspicious

activity during National Preparedness Month, we invite the public to share why they **#SeeSay** on social media using **#WhyISeeSay** and **#SeeSayDay** and tag **@ReadyFairfax**.

Remember, if it is an emergency, always call 9-1-1 first. Call if you can, text if you can’t.

Fairfax County Non-Emergency Number:
703-691-2131

To learn more about “If You See Something, Say Something®”, visit **dhs.gov/see-something-say-something**. 🌟

Directive Aims to Make Citizenship Process More Welcoming to Older Adults and People with Disabilities

by Delali Osei Boateng, DFS Disability Rights and Resources

The goal of a recent executive order is to recognize the contributions of immigrants and strengthen the integration, inclusion and naturalization of new Americans. The directive aims to identify and remove the sources of fear and other barriers preventing immigrants from accessing immigration benefits and government services. The order is also part of an effort to improve the existing naturalization process so that immigration processes and other benefits are delivered effectively and efficiently and encourage immigrants' full participation in civic life.

Lawful permanent residents aged 50 and over are encouraged to apply for naturalization. U.S. citizenship offers many benefits and responsibilities, including:

- ◆ Voting in federal elections.
- ◆ Serving on a jury.
- ◆ Accessing several federal benefits, grants and scholarships.

To help ease the path to citizenship, the order stresses the need for a notable reduction in the current processing times and making the naturalization process more accessible to all eligible individuals. To qualify

as a U.S. citizen through naturalization, a lawful permanent resident for at least five years must be able to read, write and speak basic English. They must also complete a naturalization interview and a civics test.

However, special considerations, exceptions, and accommodations are available to applicants with limited English proficiency, physical or developmental disability, mental impairment, or 50 years of age or older, including:

- ◆ Applicants aged 50 and older and a lawful permanent resident for 20 years or more, or aged 55 or older and a lawful permanent resident for 15 years or more, are exempted from the English language test.
- ◆ These applicants must take a civics test administered in a language of the applicant's choice.
- ◆ Applicants must bring an interpreter fluent in English and the applicant's native language to their interview.
- ◆ 65 years and older applicants who have been lawful permanent residents for 20 years or more are exempted from the English language test and will be offered a specially designated civics test.
- ◆ Individuals with physical or developmental disabilities or mental impairment will be offered an exception to the English and civics naturalization requirements.
- ◆ Applicants with physical and mental impairments will be offered accommodations or modifications to complete the naturalization application process.

Learn more about exceptions and accommodations at uscis.gov/citizenship/exceptions-and-accommodations. Get more information about applying for naturalization at uscis.gov/n-400. 🌟



Vietnamese and Korean Speakers Needed as Election Officers for the November General Election

by R. Kurt Mockenhaupt, Office of Elections

The Fairfax County Office of Elections needs additional bilingual election officers to assist voters in the General Election, Tuesday November 8, 2022, and in future elections.

Specifically, individuals who speak Vietnamese and English fluently or Korean and English fluently are needed to serve in Annandale, Centreville, Chantilly, and Falls Church.

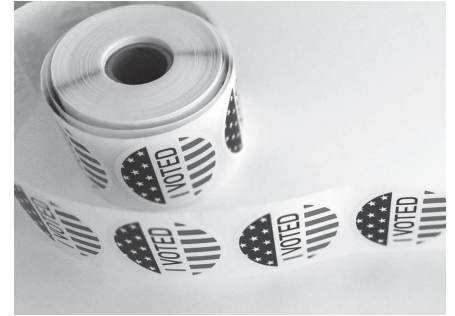
You will perform all regular election officer duties, including assisting most voters in English, but will be assigned to precincts with a significant number of voters who may primarily speak Vietnamese or Korean. To serve as a designated bilingual election officer, you must also complete a short oral language skills assessment.

Fairfax County is the largest voting jurisdiction in Virginia with 264 precincts

countywide. It takes thousands of enthusiastic and trained election officers to ensure that we have efficient and well-run elections. Compensation begins at \$175, and training is provided online for new officers.

To apply, visit Vote4Fairfax.com/Apply (be sure to indicate if you speak Vietnamese or Korean).

For more information, visit FairfaxCounty.gov and search “Working at the Polls.” ☀



Got Yarn?

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services



Senior center members used looms to knit winter hats for the 2021 Winter Warming Service project.

Looking toward fall and winter, Fairfax County Senior Centers are preparing for the fourth year of their Winter Warming Service Project.

The project, which kicks off in October, is a donation drive to collect new or handmade hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks for adults and

children in Fairfax County. The items are given to area nonprofits who distribute them to individuals in need, including adults and families experiencing homelessness. Over 2000 items were collected and donated last year. Organizers are hoping to exceed that number this year with the community’s assistance.

Senior center staff directly support the service project by providing loom knitting classes. The classes teach a lifelong skill while also helping to build social groups and community inclusion among members. Members who attend the classes often use yarn donated by the community to create their handmade donations. Over 80 percent of the hats donated to the drive are made by senior center members, community partners and center staff.

To set the drive up for success, organizers are asking for support in the form of new, clean yarn – any color, size or blend is welcome! If you are in the process of cleaning out a craft drawer, closet or room, please consider donating your unused yarn to the project. To donate, please email Kathleen.Fries@fairfaxcounty.gov or call 703-734-3338. ☀

Many of the hats donated to the 2021 Winter Warming Service project were knit by senior center members and staff.



Celebrate Communication 2022 Coming to Springfield Town Center on Saturday, September 17

by Bonnie O'Leary and Dr. Eileen McCartin, Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons

Would you like to learn about the latest technologies and apps for people who have hearing loss? Cochlear implants and hearing aids? Telephone relay services, captioning, and American Sign Language (ASL)? Support groups for people who are deaf or hard of hearing?

Join us for *Celebrate Communication* at the Springfield Town Center on Saturday, September 17, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Now in its 20th year, this free, unique information fair is hosted by the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC.org). The fair is specifically designed for the deaf and hard of hearing community, their families and friends. Interpreters will be available to assist in communication where needed, and live captioning options will be available, including showcasing some communication apps on devices provided by Google. Special thanks to our generous sponsors and donors thus far: AARP, Med-El, Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Lesner Hearing Center, Virginia Relay and CapTel, and Cerf's Up.

There will be a variety of vendors and opportunities to win door prizes! Representatives will be on hand to tell you about local services. The Virginia Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will have information to share about their Technology Assistance Program. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority



Dr. Eileen McCartin, Executive Director, NVRC, talking with visitors at a previous Celebrate Communication event. Photo courtesy Pam Gannon, NVRC.

will be issuing reduced fare ID cards for people with disabilities (bring your ID and proof of disability). Learn about a \$5,000 Medicare hearing aid benefit. Browse items from our popular deaf crafters, many of whom will be selling ASL-themed products. Chat with NVRC's team to learn about our ASL classes, tinnitus support, and free hearing screenings.

Check out face painting for kids from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and photo ops with our Yellow Dog mascot! For more information, visit nvrc.org/celebratecommunication. Questions? Contact Bonnie O'Leary at boleary@nvrc.org. 🌟

September is Kinship Care Awareness Month

by Angela Folly Morlu, Department of Family Services

When children must be separated from their parents, kinship care provides children with the opportunity to grow and learn in a supportive, loving, safe home environment while retaining family, cultural, and community ties. During Kinship Care Awareness Month and year-round, we acknowledge the nearly three million children in the United States, nearly 70,000 children in Virginia, and nearly 4,000 children in Fairfax County who are being raised in kinship

care by grandparents, relatives, or close family friends when their parents are unable to do so. Fairfax County partners with public and private organizations to prioritize a kin-first culture where children are raised within their families whenever possible. We celebrate kinship families for their strengths and expertise and help to connect kinship families with county and community resources. For more information, visit FairfaxCounty.gov and search "kinship." 🌟

Volunteer to Make a Difference

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions

Help Students Improve Their Reading Skills

The Assistance League of Northern Virginia (ALNV) helps improve reading comprehension for young students in elementary schools. They currently have tutoring programs at two schools in Fairfax County. At one school, volunteers provide support in individualized reading practice to first graders who need help with reading, comprehension, and vocabulary skills. At the second school, read-aloud practice is provided for first, second, and third graders. The kids are very appreciative and relish having the individual attention when they practice. It's a weekly time commitment unless you choose to be a substitute. Both roles are needed and ALNV plans to expand its reach.

To become a part of this program, volunteers must first join their ALNV chapter, and complete a county background check. Go to alnv.org to learn more, to the "Volunteer" tab to register, or send any questions to membership@alnv.org.

Volunteer Solutions

Volunteer Solutions offers opportunities to provide support to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers. Do you enjoy socializing or driving? Would you like to help as a grocery shopper? Are you organized and efficient with household tasks?

If you prefer group settings, senior centers have various needs for activity leaders, skilled instructors, entertainers, and assistants. Are you bilingual? You're needed, too! To learn more and register go



A volunteer with ALNV provides individual reading practice to an elementary school student to improve her reading comprehension.

to bit.ly/FXVSVOL, email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov, or call **703-324-5406**. Volunteer Solutions is a program under Department of Family Services, in partnership with Neighborhood and Community Services.

Befriend-A-Child Program

Department of Family Services needs mentors for children 5 to 12 years old. Males and bilingual English-Spanish speakers are highly encouraged to apply. Mentors must be able to make a two-year commitment, spend at least eight hours per month with their mentee and participate in monthly group outings. Fill your time in a fun, new

way, while making a positive impact on a child. Go to bit.ly/DFSBAC. Contact the Befriend-A-Child Program Coordinator at **703-324-7072**, or DFSBefriend-A-Child@fairfaxcounty.gov.

GrandInvolve

Older adult volunteers are needed to help in Title I elementary schools as mentors, tutors, classroom assistants, and more. They help students achieve and maintain grade-level skills in reading and math, and build confidence. This program fosters intergenerational relationships which are beneficial to all involved. If you're patient, encouraging, dependable, and interested, email volunteer@grandinvolve.org. For more information go to Grandinvolve.org.

Submit volunteer opportunities to Tanya Erway at VolunteerSolutionsRecruitment@FairfaxCounty.gov. ☀

How to Correctly Dispose of Your American Flag

by Christine McCoy, Fairfax County Solid Waste Management Program

Did you know the average outdoor flag lasts only about 90 days? Flying the stars and stripes outside your home is a great way to showcase pride in our county. But the ever-changing weather and the blasting rays of the sun will inevitably result in a worn-out flag.

It is against etiquette to fly one that is worn out. It is also disrespectful to simply throw the American flag out with the trash. So, what should you do with Old Glory after it is too tattered to represent our country?

Because it is important to regularly replace flags that are faded or torn, the United States has a set of laws pertaining to disposal known as the United States Flag Code, or “retiring the flag.”

There are four ways to respectfully retire an American flag:

Donate Tattered Flags

Donating is a great American flag disposal technique. This provides a quick and easy solution for those who are busy and want to make sure their old flags are taken care of properly.

Where to dispose of American Flags in Fairfax County:

- ◆ **Fairfax County Government Center** – There is a flag disposal box in the main lobby near the information desk – 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax. Collected flags are retired properly by The American Legion.
- ◆ **I-66 Transfer Station and I-95 Landfill Complex** – Flag disposal boxes are located at the I-66 Transfer Station, 4618 West Ox Road, Fairfax, VA, 22030, and I-95 Landfill Complex, 9850 Furnace Road, Lorton, VA, 22079, during residential hours. Hours are Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sat. & Sun. 7 a.m.-4 p.m. Collected flags are retired properly by The American Legion.
- ◆ **Fairfax County Police Stations** – All Fairfax County Police Stations accept American flags. They are collected twice a year by Police Honor Guard for proper disposal.

Burning

The U.S. Flag Code states that if the flag is not in good enough condition to represent our country, it should be taken down and destroyed. The dignified manner they recommend is burning. This is the manner of retiring the flag that is used in the military. This method is probably not something most of us would consider using. If you choose to use this method, first check with your local fire marshall about what state and local fire codes and ordinances you must follow prior to burning a flag.

Special steps are recommended when using this method of disposal, including folding the flag properly, saluting the flag and observing a moment of silence, or reciting the Pledge of Allegiance while the flag burns.

Flag Burial

You can bury a flag in the ground in a well-constructed container to keep it protected. The U.S. Flag Code states the cloth should not come in contact with the ground or dirt. Fold it properly and place it in the box. Take a moment of silence or respectfully say a few words as you bury the box.

Shredding

Shredding gives you multiple options to either burn, bury, or recycle the material once it is disassembled. Two methods are recommended for shredding a flag.

In the first method, you separate each of the white and red stripes. The second option is to cut the flag in half vertically, and then again horizontally. The most important step for both procedures is to make sure the blue section with the stars stays intact.

Shredding gives you the option to either burn, bury or recycle the material once it is disassembled. It is common to recycle synthetic and nylon flags because burning these materials can be hazardous. ☀



A Primer on the Risk of Falls and Older Adults

by Leah Freij, Center Nurse Coordinator, Herndon Harbor Adult Day Health Care

Falls are not a normal part of aging. In older adults, falls can jeopardize an individual's safety and independence. Falls account for 70 percent of accidental deaths in individuals who are age 75 and older.

Risk factors for falls in older adults include:

- ◆ Increasing age
- ◆ Use of four or more medications
- ◆ Cognitive impairment
- ◆ Sensory deficits
- ◆ Muscle weakness
- ◆ Stiff joints
- ◆ Pain
- ◆ Fear of falling
- ◆ History of falls
- ◆ Presence of two or more chronic illnesses

Data from the National Council on Aging indicates:

- ◆ 1 out of 4 individuals aged 65 and older falls each year
- ◆ Every 11 seconds, an older adult is treated in the emergency room for a fall
- ◆ Every 19 minutes, an older adult dies from a fall
- ◆ Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries in older adults

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), individuals suffering from dementia are eight times more likely to fall compared to individuals without dementia.

Research shows that less than half of older patients who fall do not tell their physician. For this reason, it is very important that you notify your loved one's primary care physician of a fall, even if there are no injuries. The doctor will assess your loved one to rule out a new medical condition, medication issue, or eyesight problem. The doctor will also look for any injuries and fractures that you might not be aware of, and might recommend physical therapy, or other measures to prevent falls.



Caregivers concerned about falls can take the Falls Risk Quiz by visiting [FairfaxCounty.gov](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov) and searching for "Falls Risk Quiz." It can help you determine if your loved one is at a greater risk to experience a fall. ✨

Falls Prevention Resources

ElderLink Falls Prevention Programs

Bingo + Gentle Exercises = BINGOCIZE®

Bingocize® is an evidence-based program that combines the game of bingo with falls prevention exercises (seated or standing). Participants play bingo, win prizes, and meet new people while learning about techniques to reduce falls and increase activity. Group meets 2 x week, for 1 hour, for 10 weeks. Conducted virtual or in-person. Conducted by a certified facilitator.

- ◆ September 12-November 17, 10:30-11:30 a.m., City of Falls Church Senior Center, 223 Little Falls Street, Falls Church
Free, in-person class meets two times per week on Mondays and Thursdays. Contact Dianne Duke at 703-324-7721 or visit [tinyurl.com/Bingocize123](https://www.tinyurl.com/Bingocize123) to register.

- ◆ September 13-November 17, 1-2 p.m., Reston Community Center, 2310 Colts Neck Rd, Reston
Free, in-person class meets two times per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Contact Reston Community Center at **703-476-4500**.

A Matter of Balance: Managing Concerns About Falls

This award-winning, evidence-based program is designed to reduce the fear of falling and increase activity levels among older adults. Participants learn fall prevention strategies, connect with others, and exercise to strengthen balance, flexibility, and coordination. Group meets 1 x week, for 2 hours for 8 weeks. Conducted virtual or in-person. Conducted by two certified facilitators. Each participant receives a free Matter of Balance workbook.

- ◆ September 12- October 31, 10 a.m.-noon. Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St SE, Vienna.
Free. Preregistration required. To register, call Vienna Community Center at **703-255-6360**.

Virtual Walk with Ease

This program, created by the Arthritis Foundation, allows individuals to walk at their own pace 3 x week. Group meets weekly to discuss successes, challenges, encourage one another, and learn information to stay healthy. Group meets once a week for 1 hour for 6 weeks. Conducted virtually by a certified facilitator. Each participant receives a free Walk with Ease guidebook.

Make the Switch – Sign up for the Golden Gazette Email!

By swapping your paper subscription for an email subscription, you will help us reduce paper and cut costs!

How to sign up for the Golden Gazette email:

1. Go online to **FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults**
2. Look for the Golden Gazette header with the "Make the Switch" headline; follow the "Sign me up!" link to the Golden Gazette page.

Fairfax County Senior Centers: SAIL (Stay Active and Independent for Life) Classes

SAIL exercise class is a strength, balance, and fitness program. Performing exercises that improve strength, balance, and fitness can help adults stay active and reduce their chances of falling. The entire curriculum of activities in the SAIL program can help improve strength and balance if done regularly.

- ◆ SAIL classes are offered at many Fairfax County Senior Centers. You must be a senior center member to participate in their in-person classes. To view senior center event calendars, visit **FairfaxCounty.gov**, search for "NCS Activity Calendars," and select the name of a senior center.
- ◆ Pre-recorded SAIL classes are available at **bit.ly/VCAAvideos**

Northern Virginia Falls Prevention Alliance (NVFPA)

The NVFPA is dedicated to maximizing independence and improving the quality of life for older adults by reducing falls and fall-related injuries. Visit the NVFPA at **NovaFallsPrevention.com** for information and events, including special presentations during Falls Prevention Week, September 18-24, 2022.



3. At the top of the Golden Gazette page, in the dark blue box, you will see the link to subscribe to the "electronic" version.
4. Don't forget to unsubscribe from the paper version! Call **703-324-GOLD (4653)** and leave a message or send an email to **DFSGoldenGazette@fairfaxcounty.gov**. Please include your full name and mailing address in your message or email. ☀

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SEPTEMBER COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia/LLI/NOVA September Forum

Wednesday, September 7, 10-11:00 a.m.

Presentation: Fairfax County Recycling and Disposal Center. This virtual event will take place using Zoom. Please register by September 5 at llinova.org.

Life@50+ | Planning for Your Health, Wealth & Happiness

Saturday, September 10, 9 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

AARP Virginia and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University (OLLI Mason) invite you to join us for a special half-day virtual event designed to help you make plans for better living. Learn about the positive powers of lifelong learning, tips for determining if you are on track for a secure financial retirement, practical strategies to help you maximize your Social Security and achieve retirement peace of mind, and more. Follow this link to register: aarp.org/boomeracademy

Northern Virginia Senior Olympics

September 10-24

Watch participants compete in 77 individual events held at 25 venues throughout Northern Virginia. For more information, visit nvso.us.

Sully Community Center Ribbon-Cutting

Saturday, September 17, Noon-4 p.m.

13808 Wall Road, Herndon, VA 20171
Join Supervisor Kathy Smith and the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services for a ribbon-cutting ceremony at noon followed by Community Day from 1-4 p.m. This event will be held rain or shine. Registration is preferred, but not required. For more information and to RSVP, visit bit.ly/SullyCCOpening.

"Restoring the Little Things that Run the World" with Doug Tallamy

Sunday, September 25, 3-5 p.m.

Join entomologist, ecologist and conservationist Doug Tallamy for a talk on the alarming decline of insects from our environment. Learn about the essential roles insects play and some of the simple changes we can make in our landscapes to restore them to our environment. Virtual event. Tickets are \$10. For more information and to register, visit audubonva.org/news/2022-workshops-classes-events.

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.