

# Golden Gazette

Happy New Year!

[www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults](http://www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults)

## Charles Williams: Showstopper!

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

Charles Williams, 85, is a showstopper. His amazing operatic singing voice is rich, warm, and filled with energy—just like him! His dynamic talent and charisma have taken him to the stages of the Spoleto Festival in Italy, the Paris Opera, and the Metropolitan Opera for the 50th anniversary performance of Porgy and Bess—his most favorite performance.

According to Charles his humble beginnings are rooted in rural Haynesville, Louisiana. “As a little boy, I sang while standing on a wooden Coca-Cola box,” he reminisces. “It was at my Uncle Green Hatter’s café.” He sang the old Bing Crosby song, “Pennies from Heaven.”

When Charles was just seven, his parents amicably separated. He and his mother left Haynesville on a Greyhound bus for a better life in Detroit, Michigan. “She wanted more opportunities for us,” he says. And, most

importantly, “my younger sister was already living there with relatives.” Eventually the family—including his grandparents—settled in Dayton, Ohio. After high school, he lived with godparents in Cleveland where he attended the Cleveland School of Music Settlement.

The city of Cleveland is where he landed the role of Og the leprechaun in Finian’s Rainbow. “It was at the Karamu House in 1958,” says Charles. The Karamu House was a theater for an interracial group of performers. According to Charles, he was the



Charles performing in the musical *Godspell* in Munich Germany.



Dancing and . . . Singing in the Rain.

first African American to play Og at the theater. “I still have the review,” he says proudly.

Charles credits his mom and grandmother for encouraging his . . . continued to page 3

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

More Features	5
PSAs	6
Safety	8
Resources	9
Caregiving	10
Volunteering	12
Calendar	13
Sponsors	14

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

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

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## GOLDEN GAZETTE

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## 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?

Email your suggestions to [DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call **703-324-GOLD**.

**Charles Williams**

*... continued from page 1*



*In 1958, Charles portrayed Og in Finian's Rainbow at the Karamu House Theater.*



*Wynton Marsalis, American trumpeter, and Charles enjoying a good laugh.*

musical talents in singing and piano and says that without their faith in him he is unsure where he'd be. "I call them my queens," says Charles, misty-eyed. From elementary school through high school, he sang in his school and church choirs.

After leaving Cleveland, he attended Los Angeles City College earning his associate's degree in music and theater arts. "My father was living in Los Angeles, and it seemed like a good idea." He soon met Ruth Baja, a fellow student. She was born in the Philippines, a diplomat's daughter, and had traveled all over the world. "As soon as I set eyes on her, I knew she was the one for me." They courted throughout college.

Always following his dreams, Charles took his senior year off to perform in the musical Carnival Island at Ebony Showcase Theater. Of course, it wasn't long until he was drafted into the U.S. Army, reported for basic training, and assigned to Germany.

During the Berlin Crisis of the early 60s his assignment was in Augsburg. "I was happy to serve

my country," he says matter-of-factly. He knew that not even an ocean would separate him from his true love Ruth. Happily, he relays, "I proposed to Ruth in a letter soon after I arrived in Augsburg." She said yes, and they were married on Sept. 24, 1961.

A year and a half later after Charles was discharged, they decided to stay in Germany. Ruth had an important job at the U.S. Press Center, and Charles received a full scholarship to study voice and opera at the Berlin University of the Arts. This also allowed Ruth



*Charles appearing in a German television show where he was a frequent guest..*

to continue writing her memoir of experiences while living in Germany. "It was a dream come true," he says, "for both of us."

As it turned out, they spent

the next two decades calling Berlin their home. Charles made a name for himself and was a regular on West and East German television. He appeared in the film Cabaret and traveled throughout Europe acting and singing in theaters and opera houses in Munich, Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Italy.

While in Europe, the couple made many friends. Charles says that being an "exotic" couple and

*... continued to page 4*

**Charles Williams***... continued from page 3*

family, people were drawn to them. “I still have great friends in Berlin and elsewhere that would hop on a plane to the U.S. if they knew or thought I needed them,” he proclaims. “They will be my friends for the rest of my life.”

Charles and Ruth moved back to the States in 1982 with their two children. The kids attended school in Fairfax County, Charles accepted a job at the Levine School of Music in Washington, D.C. as its director of vocal studies, and in 1986 Ruth became a U.S. citizen. “We had a lot going on,” he exclaims.

Charles also experienced a reawakening with his musical roots—spirituals, gospel, folk, and treasures from the American Songbook—a loosely defined canon of American jazz standards, popular songs, and show tunes. He says that his musical repertoire wouldn’t be complete without gospel music. He admits that he even considered the clergy while in high school. “In the end, I decided to do the preaching with my singing voice.”

Charles’ voice lends itself to reciting famous speeches and other great works. He is passionate when he performs Martin Luther King, Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” and King’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech, “I Still Believe.” He feels it’s always an honor to use his voice to replicate the wise words of Black civil rights leaders.

Ruth and Charles were married for sixty years when, sadly, Ruth passed away last April. Charles disclosed that Ruth had Parkinson’s disease, and he lovingly served as her caregiver for several years. In addition, he used several caregiving services provided by the county. He took off almost two years from work to

give Ruth his full attention. “It was an honor to take care of Ruth. She was my soulmate.” Many cherished memories comfort him.



*Charles and his beloved wife Ruth.*

One of his favorites is of a New Year’s Eve years ago. He and Ruth had returned from living and working in Europe. He and Tom Teasley, a world-renowned percussionist, performed Spoken Word and Song at Old Town Alexandria’s First Night. “It was very exciting, performing for wayfaring fellow Americans on such a special evening,” he says. Later, he and Ruth gathered with close friends to celebrate the New Year. “I will never forget it. Ruth and I were so happy to begin a new year in America.” Charles relays that Ruth always chuckled at his New Year’s resolution because it was the same

*“It was an honor to  
take care of Ruth.  
She was my soulmate.”*

*Charles Williams*

every year. “I always resolve to get more exercise, and . . . sometimes I do.”

Although Charles is semi-retired, he still teaches a bit at Levine School of Music. He continues to sing and teach at home where he concentrates on the “mature” voice. “A well-trained voice can make a healthy sound in one’s 70s and 80s,” he explains. Tony Bennett and Ella Fitzgerald are his “top drawer” performers. “I hope that I sound as good at 95 as Tony Bennett,” he says.

As he sang to me with a mask on at this interview, there is no doubt in my mind that Charles will be better than Tony Bennett.☀

## Hope Card Offers Proof of Protective Order and More

*from Domestic and Sexual Violence Services*

Fairfax County now participates in the Hope Card program—a way to enforce a civil protective order and a handy resource for victims of family abuse.

A Hope Card is an easy to read and carry laminated, wallet-sized card that contains all the essential information of an existing, permanent civil protection order.

Hope Cards have been in use in Virginia since 2016, according to Jaime Clemmer, HOPE Card program coordinator with the Supreme Court of Virginia. They were created in Montana in 2004, but they are a new resource in Fairfax County for victims of family violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, or sexual assault.

Though not a substitute for protective orders, a Hope Card lets law enforcement know there is a valid, permanent Order of Protection in place. In case of a potential violation of an order, a law enforcement officer can refer to the Hope Card for more information. The card includes relevant information related to a valid, permanent protection order, including identifying characteristics of the person being ordered to stay away (name, sex, race, eye and hair color, height, weight, and any distinguishing features like scars or tattoos), as well as information

about the person and any children protected by the order.

The Hope Card can reduce the time on scene for officers responding to incidents of protection order violations, allow officers to verify if there is a valid protective order in place, and provide a sense of security to victims. It also helps keep officers safe by informing law enforcement about weapons involved in the incident resulting in a protective order.

“The Fairfax County Police Department in partnership with the Fairfax County Sheriff’s Office, the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court and other community partners, including the Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC), have joined more than five dozen jurisdictions in Virginia offering Hope Cards.

For more information about the Hope Card or to find out how to obtain one, contact DVAC at 703-236-4573, the Fairfax County Police Department’s Victim Services Division main line at 703-246-2141, or the Virginia Supreme Court at 703-246-33467.

Learn more about the services and resources Domestic and Sexual Violence Services provides by calling its 24-Hour Hotline at 703-360-7273.☀

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## Free Virtual 50+ Employment Expo, Friday, Feb. 18 & Thursday, April 21

If you are over 50 and looking for employment, you won’t want to miss the Virtual 50+ Employment Expo sponsored by the Jewish Council for the Aging.

This is your opportunity to:

- ◆ Network with area employers
- ◆ Attend free workshops
- ◆ Learn new job-search skills

There will be multiple employers with available full-time and part-time salaried job opportunities. Visit <https://VirtualExpos.Accessjca.org> for a continually updated list of employers including Fairfax County government.

The expo website also contains a full list of community resources, training, and education information. For questions, email Ann Happ, expo coordinator, at [aHapp@AccessJCA.org](mailto:aHapp@AccessJCA.org).

**PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

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

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

On Dec. 7, COA Chair Cathy Cole provided testimony at the Board of Supervisors Public Hearing to Amend and Expand Eligibility for the county’s Senior Real Estate Tax Relief Program for Age and Income Qualified Individuals.

At the Dec. 15 COA meeting, Volunteer Solutions staff continued the discussion about current and developing initiatives addressing social isolation. *(See page 12)* The commission also brainstormed on their workplan for a SWOT analysis to support the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan development. SWOT is a strategic planning and strategic management technique used to help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to project planning. ✨

### **COA Meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 19, 1 p.m.**

The COA continues to meet virtually this month.

Join from PC, Mac, Linux, iOS or Android:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87035342822>

**Access Code:** COA-m1234!

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

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

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

## SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey for Older Adults Coming in February

*from the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging*

Fairfax County, together with the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church, wants to learn more about the aging experience in our area to plan for a more aging-friendly community. The new SHAPE the Future of Aging Survey, known officially as the Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (CASOA), will be sent to a scientifically random sample of adults ages 50 and older in February. Selected recipients will receive an advance postcard to notify them that a letter and the survey will soon arrive.

The survey will ask for information about the lifestyles of these older adults, including opportunities to work, socialize and volunteer, as well as issues they face, such as retirement, housing, and caregiving, and their use of community services like public transportation and Senior Centers.

The survey will be available in Arabic, English, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese. Information collected will be used to inform the SHAPE Future of Aging Plan, a strategic plan for aging services. Those who receive the survey are encouraged to participate. Those who don’t receive a survey will have a chance to contribute additional insight and feedback during community forums and focus groups scheduled in fall 2022.


The previous CASOA was distributed in 2019 as part of the 50+ Community Action plan. The final report of that survey was presented to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in 2019 and contributed to development of the Fairfax Countywide Strategic Plan. ✨



## Preparedness is a Key Resolution for the New Year

*from the Fairfax County Department of Emergency Management and Security*

Consider emergency preparedness for your New Year's resolution. The steps are easy to follow on the Department of Emergency Management and Security's yearlong calendar page at [FairfaxCounty.gov/EmergencyManagement](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/EmergencyManagement). The calendar outlines how to prepare with just three key steps: 1) make a plan, 2) make an emergency kit, and 3) make the decision to stay informed by using these county resources:


- ◆ Fairfax Alerts—Fairfax County's free public emergency alert system. You can customize your alerts to your preferences like traffic, weather, and community updates. Fairfax Alerts also has the Functional Needs Registry, a subscription that provides additional notifications when emergencies occur. Sign up now at [FairfaxCounty.gov/Alerts](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/Alerts).
- ◆ Social Media. Follow on Twitter [@ReadyFairfax](https://twitter.com/ReadyFairfax) and [@FairfaxCountyGovernment](https://twitter.com/FairfaxCountyGovernment).
- ◆ Community Emergency Response Guide. This guide helps with understanding the vital process of preparedness. See guide at [FairfaxCounty.gov/EmergencyManagement/cerg](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/EmergencyManagement/cerg).

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## Unhappy with Your Medicare Advantage Plan?

*from the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program*

If you are unhappy with your current Medicare Advantage Plan, you can leave it and change to Original Medicare between Jan. 1-Mar. 3. Switching to Original Medicare provides the opportunity to join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan until Mar. 3. Coverage begins the first day of the month after your enrollment form is received.

Questions? Call the Virginia Insurance Counseling and Assistance Program at 703-324-5851.

## Reminder for Everyone to Get Their COVID-19 Vaccine Booster

*from the Fairfax County Health Department*

In early December, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) strengthened the recommendation on booster doses, encouraging everyone 18 and older to get a booster shot.

### Timing Your Booster

- ◆ Those who received a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine should get a booster six months after their initial series.
- ◆ Those who received a Johnson & Johnson vaccine should receive a booster two months after their initial dose.


Getting vaccinated reduces your risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death; it also helps reduce the spread of the virus in the communities. It is particularly important for older adults to receive their booster, as this community has a higher risk for severe disease if they become infected with COVID-19.

### How to Get Your Booster

The vaccine is widely available in the Fairfax Health District. Pharmacies, grocery stores, physician offices offer vaccine, and the Health Department has vaccination centers throughout the area, including at the Fairfax Government Center. The Community Vaccination Center, located at the former Lord & Taylor at the Tyson's Corner Center, is also available for vaccination. Go to [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) or [Vacunas.gov](https://www.vacunas.gov) to search for a vaccine opportunity.

### Encourage Your Family to Get a Booster

Everyone is encouraged to have conversations about the vaccine with their loved ones. Consider reminding those in your family who are eligible to get an appointment.

Do not delay. Get your booster today!

## SAFETY

## Heating Your Home Using a Fireplace or Wood Burning Stove? Be Safe!

from the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department

This is the time of year when the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) begins to see an increase in residential building fires.

According to Fire Chief John Butler, a large percentage of fires are preventable, and he encourages all county residents to take an active role practicing and promoting safe behavior. “If you use a wood-burning stove or fireplace, make sure your chimney is clean and in good working order by having a licensed chimney sweep clean and inspect it,” says Butler. “Do this at least once a year.”

He also says that a dirty chimney flue may result in a chimney fire that can spread and cause significant damage. Here are safety recommendations to follow:

- ◆ Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a covered metal container outside and well away from the house.
- ◆ Have your chimney inspected at least once a year or more.

- ◆ Place a glass or metal spark screen in front of fireplace and install caps on chimneys.
- ◆ Never use a flammable liquid (gasoline, lighter fluid) to start a fire or rekindle one.
- ◆ Keep paper, clothing, trash, and other combustibles at least three feet away from your furnace, hot water heater, or wood-burning device.
- ◆ Follow manufacturer instructions carefully. Many “non-masonry” fireplace/chimney units have heat limitations they can safely withstand.



Chief Butler asks you to share all safety tips with family and friends. For more fire safety information, go to [FairfaxCounty.gov/Fire-ems](http://FairfaxCounty.gov/Fire-ems).☀

## How to Save Money with Home Heating Costs

from the Federal Trade Commission

Experts says it's going to be expensive to heat your home this winter. Here are ways to cut energy costs.

- ◆ **Do** a home energy audit. It'll tell you how efficient your heating system is and where your home is wasting energy. Your utility company may offer free or low-cost energy assessments, or refer you to someone who does. You also can check with your state or local government energy or weatherization office for recommendations, or visit [EnergySavers.gov](http://EnergySavers.gov) for more resources.
- ◆ **Seal** air leaks around windows, doors, and places where pipes and wires come through walls. Check caulking and weatherstripping for gaps or cracks.
- ◆ **Check** ducts for holes and gaps. You can seal some leaks with mastic sealant or metal tape.
- ◆ **Bring** your insulation up to DOE-recommended levels if needed.
- ◆ **Lower** your thermostat before you go to bed or get a programmable thermostat.
- ◆ **Check** filters for cleaning or replacement.
- ◆ **Consider** a budget-billing program. While you won't pay less, your costs will be spread evenly over the year. If you're on a fixed income or have trouble paying your utility bills, contact your utility company or the Fairfax County Crisis Assistance Program at 703-324-4328.
- ◆ **Shop** around. If you use heating oil or natural gas, make sure you're getting a good price.

Learn more at [Consumer.ftc.gov/Homes](http://Consumer.ftc.gov/Homes).☀



## Some Hearing Loss is Preventable

from *Disability Rights and Resources, Department of Family Services*

Are you suffering from hearing loss? Noises that are too loud and long-lasting can damage hearing. Even hearing loud noises for a brief time can do damage. Sometimes this damage can be permanent. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 40 million adults ages 20 to 69 have hearing loss from noise. Loud noise exposure can come from work, home, or leisure activities.

Everyone can suffer noise-induced hearing loss. Things like loud sirens, music played loudly, and lawn equipment can threaten your hearing. Hearing loss from noise can happen instantly—when a loud sound happens very close to your ears—or it can occur gradually. The louder the sound, the more damage it can cause to the sensitive structures of your inner ear. If your hearing loss occurs gradually you may not even recognize it.

The good news is that noise-induced hearing loss is preventable. The National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders suggests these tips to protect your hearing:

- ◆ Lower the volume
- ◆ Move away from the noise when possible
- ◆ Wear hearing protectors, such as earplugs or protective earmuffs

To identify noise levels, use a smartphone app. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health offers a free Sound Level Meter app for iOS devices.

Find more information at [nidcd.nih.gov/News/2021/Noise-Induced-Hearing-Loss-Preventable](https://nidcd.nih.gov/News/2021/Noise-Induced-Hearing-Loss-Preventable).☀

## How to Reduce Mask Mutter

from *the National Institutes of Health*

Wearing a face covering is an important part of keeping you and others healthy. But they can also make talking to those around you more difficult. Face coverings can muffle sound. They can also hide important clues about the speaker's message and emotions. This can make it hard to understand speech, especially for those with hearing loss.

Now, more than ever, it's important to make an extra effort to communicate. Speak more clearly and louder than you normally would, without shouting. Reduce background noise when possible. Be aware that physical distance can also make hearing more difficult.

Make sure the person you're speaking with understands you. You can also offer to use another method—a smartphone or paper and pen—to get your message across. When it's vital that

you understand spoken details, like at a doctor's appointment, bring a friend to help.

Face coverings can make communication challenging for everyone. But people with hearing problems often rely on lip-reading to understand what's being said. Consider using a clear face covering to make your mouth visible. With a little extra effort and problem solving, we can all communicate clearly while staying safe. Learn more tips on improving communication when wearing a face mask at [nidcd.nih.gov](https://nidcd.nih.gov).☀



*No matter what your age, mask mutter can be a challenge.*

## CAREGIVING

**Resolve to Take Care of Yourself this Year***by Giuliana Valencia, Social Services Specialist, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging*

It is common for family caregivers to neglect their own emotional and health needs. In a 2020 AARP and National Alliance for Caregiving report, Caregiving in the U.S., family caregivers are in worse health than five years ago. Additionally, reports suggest that the emotional and physical demands of caregiving put them at a higher risk for injury and adverse events.

According to the Mayo Clinic, if you are constantly worried, often tired, getting too much or not enough sleep, gaining or losing weight, easily irritated, losing interest in activities, sad; frequent headaches, body pain, or other physical problems; abusing alcohol/drugs—including prescription medications, you might be experiencing caregiver stress.

The National Institute of Mental Health reports that long-term stress may contribute to serious health problems like heart disease and diabetes. This also includes mental disorders. It is very important to seek professional help, join support groups, access respite programs, and connect with local caregiver resources.

To learn more about Fairfax County caregiver programs, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults) or call the Aging Disability, and Caregiver Resource Line at 703-324-7948.

**Caregiver Stroke In-Person Support Group**

The Fairfax Health Department offers a caregiver stroke group that provides a safe place to talk about the challenges of stroke survivors. There is no structure or agenda as the topic of each meeting is up to the caregivers. To attend this in-person meeting at the Joseph Willard Health Center, contact Erica Wrenn at 703-246-7151. Before the meeting, you **must** complete a COVID-19 screening questionnaire. Not completing the form will exclude you from the meeting.

Dates for the next 2022 caregiver meetings:

- ◆ Saturday, Jan. 8, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday, April 9, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.



- ◆ Saturday, July 9, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday, Oct. 8, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

For more details, go to: [FairfaxCounty.gov/Health/Speech-Hearing/Services](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/Health/Speech-Hearing/Services) or call Erica Wrenn at 703-246-7151 or 703-246-7120, TTY 711.

**Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research Webinar**

Learn about the four areas of lifestyle habits associated with healthy aging. In this virtual seminar, Phyllis Humphrey from the Alzheimer's Association will discuss information and tools to help incorporate recommendations into a plan for healthy aging adults. This is a Fairfax County Library presentation on Thursday, Jan. 13, 11 a.m.–Noon. Register at <https://bit.ly/LibraryHealthyLiving>.

**Virtual Kinship Cafés**

First Wednesday and third Thursday of the month, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Free.

Are you raising a child for a family member or a grandparent raising a grandchild? If yes, you are a kinship caregiver. Fairfax County's Parenting Education Programs offer support to kinship families through Virtual Kinship Cafés. These cafés help build an important community among kinship caregivers. The cafes offer a supportive and safe environment for kinship caregivers. For more information including a link to participate, email [BuildingStrongerFamilies@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:BuildingStrongerFamilies@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call Mary Elizabeth Fleming at 703-324-7870.☀

## Volunteer Advocates Needed for Ombudsman Program

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

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 (NVLTCOP) is often called on to assist residents and consumers to advocate for their rights to ensure quality of care and quality of life.

The NVLTCOP needs volunteers 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 want to help residents, please consider becoming a Volunteer Ombudsman.

We seek volunteers 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.

In addition, each volunteer will be required to participate in ongoing training opportunities throughout their tenure with the NVLTCOP. The next training will be held in March.

For more information about long-term care services, or nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at 703-324-5861, TTY 711, or contact the Ombudsman Program by email at [NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.gov).

## Free Virtual Caregiver Programs and Support Calls

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

### Live Well: Virtual Chronic Disease Self-Management, Jan. 24- March 7, (no session on Feb, 21, Presidents' Day) 10:30 -12:30. Free.

This program is for individuals interested in learning how to live better by effectively managing symptoms. Learn how to manage pain and fatigue, eat healthier, and remain active. Offered via Zoom. Registration is required at [tinyurl.com/CDSMP123](https://tinyurl.com/CDSMP123) or call Dianne Duke at 703-324-7721.


### ElderLink Monthly Virtual Support Call for Family Caregivers of Older Adults, Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7-8 p.m., Free.

Join us to discuss Maintaining Relationships While Caregiving. Being a caregiver for an older adult can be a very demanding role. It can sometimes leave caregivers with little time or energy to maintain relationships with others who are also important in their lives. However, it is essential to keep these

relationships healthy for many reasons, including the fact that friends and family can help in times of struggle by providing relief from the stresses of caregiving. Please join us for this invaluable and empowering caregiving discussion. For online registration, go to <https://bit.ly/ELinkCall>



### Virtual Diabetes Self-Management, Feb. 2-March 9, 10 a.m.-Noon. Free.

This program is for individuals interested in learning how to effectively manage their diabetes. The program benefits those with diabetes and pre-diabetes. The class is offered via Zoom. To register, contact Dianne Duke at 703-324-7721 or visit [tinyurl.com/DSMP123](https://tinyurl.com/DSMP123).

## VOLUNTEERING

## New Year, New Volunteer Opportunities for Socialization

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Bob Dylan's music may not be for everyone, but most people will agree with the current relevancy of his 1989 hit, "The Times They Are A-Changin'."

For Volunteer Solutions, fortunately, the mission hasn't changed: To mobilize and connect volunteers with meaningful opportunities to improve the lives of older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers.

The issue of social isolation isn't new. It has been a topic of concern for older adults prior to and during the pandemic. To help address this issue, Volunteer Solutions is offering new opportunities for volunteers to provide additional socialization for Meals on Wheels (MOW) recipients.

A mealtime visitor role was created. This position enables volunteers to share a meal, chat, and form connections with MOW recipients. The volunteer visitors bring their own snack or meal and spend time with MOW recipients. They meet once per week at a mealtime that is flexible and predetermined by the recipient and volunteer. According to Tara Turner, Director, Area Agency on Aging, "It's a win-win that provides socialization for both parties."

Volunteer Solutions also offers several additional volunteer opportunities targeted at decreasing social isolation among adults who have an assigned Fairfax County Adult and Aging case manager. Recruitment is currently underway for mealtime visitors, social visiting (in person or virtual), grocery shopping, medical and general transportation, or helping with basic household tasks.

Bilingual volunteers are especially needed. If you're interested in any of these opportunities, please go to [bit.ly/VSVOLOPPS](https://bit.ly/VSVOLOPPS) to learn more or call 703-324-5406.

### Inova Fair Oaks Thrift Shop

Volunteers are needed at Inova Fair Oaks Thrift Shop, 9683 Fairfax Blvd., Fairfax, located near the Fairfax traffic circle. Help receive items, sort, price, place the items out, or, as a cashier. They need volunteers one day a week for four or more hours, Tuesday-Saturday between 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Thrift Shop proceeds go to the purchase of equipment and to support ongoing hospital projects. Call or email Bonnie Rapson at 703-273-3519 or [Bonnie.Rapson@inova.org](mailto:Bonnie.Rapson@inova.org).

*To advertise volunteer opportunities, email Tanya Erway at [Tanya.Erway@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Tanya.Erway@FairfaxCounty.gov).*

## Volunteers Needed for the 2022 Filing Season

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program needs the following volunteers: greeters, interpreters (including ASL), screeners, and tax preparers. No tax training is needed for greeters and interpreters. Free training (classroom and online) is available for screeners and tax preparers. The VITA program offers free income tax preparation and filing services to individuals and families who earned \$58,000 or less in 2021. The program operates from late January until April 15.

Opportunities are available throughout Fairfax and Prince William counties. Hours are flexible, including evenings and weekends. Sign up at [nvaCash.org](https://nvaCash.org). Select the Volunteers tab. Contact Mal Williams for more details at [Mal.Williams@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Mal.Williams@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call 703-533-5702.



## Find Area Shepherd Centers

The Shepherd Centers are a nonprofit organization sponsored by local area congregations, community groups, and individuals to serve adults 50 years and older. Its primary purpose is to assist older adults to live independently in their homes and to offer programs for enrichment and socialization. They also provide transportation services. You must apply for this transportation service. Once accepted into the service, a request for a ride must be made five days in advance.

The centers are also seeking volunteers. Call or email a specific site for information on what is available.

- ◆ **Annandale/Springfield**  
703-941-1419, [ShepherdsCenter-Annandale.org](http://ShepherdsCenter-Annandale.org)
- ◆ **Fairfax/Burke**  
703-323-4788, [SCFBVA.org](http://SCFBVA.org)
- ◆ **McLean/Arlington/Falls Church**  
703-506-2199, [SCMAFC.org](http://SCMAFC.org)
- ◆ **Oakton/Vienna/Reston/Herndon/Great Falls**  
703-281-0538, [SCNOVA.org](http://SCNOVA.org)
- ◆ **South County**  
703-799-0505, [SCSC-Transport@Verizon.net](mailto:SCSC-Transport@Verizon.net)
- ◆ **Western Fairfax County**  
703-246-5920, [SCWFC.org](http://SCWFC.org) ☀

## Local Nonprofit Driving Programs

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

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

## Register Now for NOVA Lifetime Learning Institute Classes and More

Lifetime Learning Institute (LLI/NOVA) invites you to be part of its exciting 2022 spring term. It is also an opportunity to participate in other activities including monthly forums, day trips, classes, special interest groups, and social activities.

The spring term begins Monday, Jan. 3 and ends Friday, May 27. Registration is now open. LLI/NOVA is located at the Northern Virginia Community College, 8333 Little River Tpke., Annandale. To learn more about programs, go to [LLINOVA.org](http://LLINOVA.org).

## Community Calendar

**Tuesday, Jan. 11, 7-8:30 p.m. Crossing the Divide: 20 Lessons to Help You Thrive in Cross-Cultural Environments, Patrick Henry Library, Patrick Henry Room, Vienna, Free**

Are you ready for the new global reality? One where diverse cultures and ethnicities will make up your living and working environments? Can you relate your life experience to others? Can you adapt to changing settings? Journalist Jessica Stone uses her 20 years of adventures, mistakes, and triumphs to give you the keys to conquering these challenges. Books available for sale and signing. Patrick Henry Library, 101 Maple Ave. E, Vienna. For more details, call 703-938-0405.

**Monday, Jan. 17, 8-9 a.m., Wreath Laying Service at the Martin Luther King Memorial, Free**

Pay tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's legacy by attending an early morning wreath laying at the memorial that represents King's vision for Civil Rights in America. The address is 1964 Independence Ave., SW, Washington, D.C. Be sure to check for updates on this event at [TheMemorialFoundation.org/Events/WreathLaying](http://TheMemorialFoundation.org/Events/WreathLaying)

... continued to page 20

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## JANUARY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### **Fridays and Saturdays, Jan. 21, 22, 28, 29. Neil Simon's, The Dinner Party, Vienna Community Center, Vienna**

The Dinner Party is Neil Simon's farcical take on love, marriage, divorce, and what comes after six strangers are invited to a mysterious dinner party. There is an 8 p.m. show time for Friday and Saturday performances. A Sunday show on Jan. 30 begins at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 at Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St., SE, Vienna.

### **Saturday, Jan. 22, 1-3 p.m., Chinese Teas to Celebrate Lunar New Year, Colvin Run Mill**

Known as the birthplace of tea, China produces every type of tea—white, green, yellow, oolong, black, and dark. Learn how each of these unique types can be produced from the same plant and taste the difference. Tea infused treats and a take home tea sampler included in a \$40 per person fee. Register by calling 703-759-2771.

### **Sunday, Jan. 23, 1:30-2:30 p.m., Green Spring Gardens, Virtual Winter Lecture**

The importance of trees and shrubs for sustaining the bird population is not fully understood. By creating the proper habitat in our yards and public spaces, we can help slow the decline of birds. Fee is just \$10. To enroll, call 703-642-5173.

### **Monday, Jan. 24, 7-8:30 p.m., The History of Northern Virginia's Segregated Libraries, Virtual, Free**

Join the African American Genealogy Special Interest Group of the Fairfax Genealogical Society for this free presentation. Email Laura Wickstead, Virginia Room, Fairfax Regional Library, to register at [Laura.Wickstead@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Laura.Wickstead@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call 703-293-2136.

### **Wednesday, Jan. 26, 6-7 p.m., Cooking: Health Benefits of Korean Dishes, George Mason Regional Library, Virtual, Free**

Find out about the amazing health benefits of Korean food while you enjoy homemade Korean cuisine. Participants will receive recipes and food list via email after registration. Register at [LibraryCalendar.FairfaxCounty.gov](http://LibraryCalendar.FairfaxCounty.gov).

### **Friday, Feb. 4, Saturday, Feb. 5, Sunday, Feb. 6, Annual Chocolate Lovers Festival, City of Fairfax, Free.**

The Chocolate Lovers Festival, an annual three-day "love of chocolate" is held on the first full weekend of February and features activities for all ages. For schedule of events, times, and locations, see [www.Fairfaxva.gov](http://www.Fairfaxva.gov) and go to events page.