



Golden Gazette

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Major Norma Roberts: A Lifetime of Courage and Service

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Major Norma Roberts celebrated her 101st birthday in March. Her long life has been one of service to others and to God, especially during her career as an officer with The Salvation Army. Although she has never sought attention for her good works, her courage and commitment to serving those in greatest need has led to recognition and accolades in her later years, firmly establishing her legacy as a trailblazer in the history of the Salvation Army and beyond.

Norma Roberts was born into a family of trailblazing Salvationists. Her father, Brigadier James Roberts, served for 20 years in the interracial New England corps of the Salvation Army before leading a brigade of African American officers dedicated to expanding Salvation Army ministry to African American people in the segregated south. Joined by his wife, the couple worked to establish ministries throughout the

south while performing community outreach. Their progress was slow and often hindered by opposition from segregationists.

Born on March 19, 1922, in Washington, D.C., Norma Roberts joined the family a year and a half after older



101-year-old Norma Roberts is humble about her trailblazing career with the Salvation Army, saying that she only wanted to do right.

sister Doris. At that time, Brigadier and Mrs. Roberts commanded the Washington Corps of the Salvation Army, so the girls' upbringing was fully enmeshed with the church. "It's not like other churches. You don't just sit on the outside, you're really inside. It's just a part of your absolute life," says Roberts.

An excellent student, Roberts attended Minor Teachers College in Washington, D.C. Upon graduating, she accepted a job with the federal government before she felt a call to service with the Salvation Army. Like her father, Roberts felt that she was called to serve in the south. "I had some kind of vision that the south needed help and that is why I wanted to go south. I remember that so clearly," she recalls.

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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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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 1945, Roberts applied at the Salvation Army's Southern Territory's School for Officer Training in Atlanta but was denied admission because of her race. Undaunted, she applied to the Salvation Army's School for Officer Training in New York City and was accepted. After her commissioning as a Salvation Army officer in June 1947, Roberts' first appointment was in the Women's Social Services Department at Booth Memorial Hospital in New York City. She served at the hospital for 18 months before getting transferred to the south as she wished.

In March 1949, Roberts was sent to Little Rock, Arkansas, and put in charge of a Salvation Army center located in an impoverished African American community in east Little Rock. Recognizing the deep needs of the community, Roberts' ministry was extensive and included children's programs and social services. She often visited people in their homes, providing counseling and spiritual support to people experiencing marital problems, domestic abuse, and the humiliation of poverty. During her visits, she witnessed the distressing state of community member's homes, where residents often stuffed cardboard and rags into their walls for insulation and pasted newspapers up to hide decay.

During the first year of her posting, a reporter from the Arkansas Gazette asked if he could write about her ministry in the community. The resulting article and photos documented the daily struggles and poor living conditions of the people Roberts served, spurring the public to action. A local advisory board convened to

plan to build a new community center and in 1952, the new center opened, providing a place for residents to gather, socialize, and enjoy recreation. Roberts remained at her post in Little Rock for 13 years. Despite the difficult conditions, she recalls the time she spent there with fondness, especially her work with the children, saying "I wonder if some of the young people are still living. I don't know."



Norma Roberts served in Little Rock, Arkansas, for 13 years, ministering to and providing counseling and support to the poor and disadvantaged. Photo courtesy The Salvation Army.

After Little Rock, Roberts continued to serve in the south – first in Louisville, Kentucky, and then Tulsa, Oklahoma, before joining the staff of the School for Officer Training in Atlanta. With this appointment, she became the first African American officer to serve on staff at the school. During this time, Roberts also completed her master's degree in social work.

While Roberts was deployed at locations throughout the south, her sister Doris lived and worked in Washington, D.C. but the sisters kept in touch and maintained a close friendship.

Recalling Doris, Roberts said, "She's the most wonderful person you ever met. She had more intelligence than I had."

Robert's final appointment in her career was another first. As territorial social services secretary, she became the first African American Salvation Army officer assigned to the Southern Territorial Headquarters. During her final years of service, Roberts also wrote a book about the history of African American Salvationists, titled "The Black Salvationist." After 38 years of service with the Salvation Army, Major Norma Roberts retired in June 1985.

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Following her retirement, Roberts continued to be active in The Salvation Army of Fairfax while living in a nearby retirement community. She became close friends with fellow church member, Nan Tolbert, attending a weekly Bible study and celebrating Thanksgiving together.

As Roberts neared the century mark, her service with The Salvation Army and the barriers she broke during her career began to garner greater attention and examination. Roberts herself never sought acclaim for her work, believing that she was simply answering God's calling.

In June 2021, Norma Roberts received the Order of the Founder, the highest honor for distinguished service in The Salvation Army. The commendation, signed by General Brian Peddle, world leader of The Salvation Army, states the reason for the honor: "In recognition of her long and distinguished ministry which has pioneered the advancement and leadership influence of officers of African American descent, particularly in the USA Southern Territory. Her faithful service to impoverished, oppressed, and disenfranchised individuals reflects the highest standards of salvation."

One year later, coinciding with her 100th birthday and in honor of her life of service, the Major Norma Roberts conference room was dedicated at Salvation Army National Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia. The room features a wall of framed photos of Roberts, documenting her years of service and ministry.

Today, Norma Roberts lives a quiet life in an assisted living facility in Fairfax, where she enjoys visits from her dear friend Ms. Tolbert. She greatly misses her sister Doris, who passed away 20 years ago. Looking back on her life and her accolades, Roberts is both grateful and humble. She credits her faith for all she achieved during her lifetime, saying, "I didn't think about accomplishing anything, I just did the work of God. I just wanted to do right." ✨



Celebrate the ADA! July 26, 2023

Credit: ADA National Network (adata.org) 1-800-949-4232

Celebrating the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary

by Karen Kelly, Department of Family Services

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, up to 1 in 4 adults in the United States have some type of disability. That's 26% of the population. Anyone can acquire a disability at any point in their life.

The Fairfax County Department of Family Services is honored to celebrate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 33rd Anniversary. The ADA was signed into law on July 26, 1990, by former President George H.W. Bush. The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodations, commercial facilities, telecommunications, and state and local government services. The law ensures that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else.

The national ADA anniversary celebration takes place on July 26, 2023. Individuals can participate by visiting the ADA anniversary webpage: adaAnniversary.org. There you can learn more about this important law, celebrate the anniversary, and share information.

People with disabilities can face barriers to public life daily. Fairfax County Government is proud to support the ADA and strives to promote equal access, rights, and opportunities for all individuals. ✨

Fairfax County's Adult Day Health Care Program Helps Older Adults with Limitations Thrive

by Marjorie Burris, Neighborhood and Community Services

Fairfax County's Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) enables adults with dementia and other physical impairments and intellectual disabilities live their best lives – at home, with their families.

ADHC, which has locations in Herndon, McLean, Alexandria and Mount Vernon, focuses on participants' intellectual, physical and social needs to help them thrive via activities and games that engage critical thinking and promote memory care. The program also works to promote mobility, balance, and strength training through an exercise and falls prevention program. The county offers these services on a sliding fee scale, and in some cases provides scholarships to help make it an affordable option for families. Transportation is available.

Participants are 18 years and older with cognitive and physical impairments. While some participants are



ADHC participants decorate umbrellas for Mardi Gras. Photo courtesy Neighborhood and Community Services.



ADHC participants celebrated Mother's Day with festive hats. Photo courtesy Neighborhood and Community Services.

as young as in their 30s, the average age trends to the mid-80s, with about 85 percent of participants having some form of dementia. Participants have varied backgrounds and experiences and reflect the diversity of Fairfax County.

The majority of program participants find out about ADHC programming online or from Fairfax County Senior Centers. Senior Centers will recommend that participants move to ADHC programs once they need that next level of care and can no longer participate in Senior Center programming independently.

It is Fairfax County's Department of Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) mission to promote the well-being of individuals, families and communities by:

- ◆ providing a variety of recreational, educational and developmental programs and services,
- ◆ facilitating community engagement to identify areas of need and enhance countywide capacity for serving those needs, and
- ◆ connecting residents with a continuum of county- and community-based resources that promote equity and create positive outcomes for people of all ages and abilities.

ADHC has been working for more than 35 years to meet that mission. If you have an older adult in your life who would benefit from some conversation, light exercise or mental engagement, please call **571-585-2790**. ☀

Fairfax Area Student “Shark Tank” Technology Challenge

by Kathleen Thomas, Department of Family Services

The Fairfax Area 50+ Technology Committee is proud to announce the winners of 7th Annual Student “Shark Tank” Technology Challenge.

Students from the Fairfax area were challenged to develop an innovative device or app that will have a positive impact in the lives of older adults, adults with disabilities, or caregivers. The sponsor, INTEGRITYOne Partners, provided cash prizes to the winners.

1st Place: Capture Your Memory

Sampriti Muthuswamy, Ira Gramopadhye, Karen Zhou, Asmita Kodityala

Oakton High School & Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

Capture Your Memory is a web application that helps individuals affected by dementia and their loved ones connect through media such as photos, videos, and audio. Capture Your Memory creates a logging database tailored specifically to those with degenerative neurological impairments, allowing them to increase connections with the most important people and memories in their lives.

2nd Place: The Glove

Rujvi Thakkar, Langley High School

The Glove is a product that helps exercise and increase blood flow in paralyzed areas; specifically, the hands. Its purpose is to help those who have suffered a stroke and/or paralysis patients who have injuries in their hands. While there are drugs and procedures that can assist in reestablishing blood circulation in the body after such an event, it is both time consuming and expensive. This product promotes self-exercise to kick-start muscle movement, in an affordable way.

Honorable Mentions

DesCartes

Neyla Benomar-Iza, Rosary Dela Cruz, Odile de Vachon, McLean High School

DesCartes is designed for people who are visually impaired and is best for those who have recent sight loss and are not familiar with Braille yet. The cards have embossed and texturized letters to help identify what they are by touch.



(L-R) Tara Turner, Director of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Robert O’Quinn, Digital Access and Literacy Coordinator, Neighborhood & Community Services, Sampriti Muthuswamy, Asmita Kodityala, Braddock District Supervisor James Walkinshaw, Ira Gramopadhye, Karen Zhou, and Pete Lamont from INTEGRITYOne Partners.

ColorVeal

Elijah Guison-Dowdy, Abhinav Angirekula, Johnny Liu
Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology

As people spend more time on their computers, the obstacles that color blindness creates have become prevalent, especially for older adults. The ColorVeal web extension program uses built-in color correction to aid those with color blindness while browsing the internet. 🌟

Register Now for the 2023 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Adults aged 50 and older are invited to compete in the 2023 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO), taking place Saturday, September 9, through Sunday, September 24. You can register online at nvso.us beginning Thursday, July 6, through Thursday, August 24. There is a fee of \$20 to register and participants may enter as many events as they like. Please note that a few events require additional fees due to the venue, special personnel, or equipment.

To compete in the NVSO, a person must be 50 or older by December 31 and live in one of the sponsoring jurisdictions – Arlington County, City of Alexandria,



Runners at the start of the 5K trail race at the 2022 NVSO games. Photo credit: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's Photography Group.

City of Fairfax, City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, Fauquier County, Loudoun County, or Prince William County.

Depending on the event, participants compete in five year, 10 year, 20 year and no age groups. Gold, silver, and bronze medals are awarded after each event.

Over 70 individual events will be offered, ranging from recreational physical activities to competitive athletics to non-physical games. New events this year include synchronized diving, advanced Sudoku, and 9-hole par 3 golf. To see the full list of events, visit nvso.us.

If you want to join in the fun without competing, volunteers of all ages are needed. Interested volunteers can visit nvso.us or email nvso1982@gmail.com for more information. ☀



A man competes in the long jump at the 2022 NVSO games. Photo credit: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute's Photography Group.

Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

by Beth Ann Margetta, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

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

At the June 21 COA meeting, the COA continued discussion of potential community partners for the initiative development phase following the Board of Supervisor's May 23rd approval of the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan. Area Plan updates/waivers were also presented at the June COA meeting.

COA Meeting, Wednesday, July 19, 1 p.m.

In Person: Pennino Building,
12011 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax, VA 22035
Room 200 & 206

To obtain meeting materials, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/FamilyServices/Older-Adults/Fairfax-Area-Commission-on-Aging/Meetings or contact Elizabeth.Margetta@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5635. For ADA accommodations, contact Ana.Valdivia@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 571-407-6960 TTY: VA Relay 711. ☀

Caregiver Support Networks

by Allegra Joffe, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Family caregiving is complex and brings new challenges over time. Research has shown that family caregivers are at a higher risk for depression, chronic illness, and death. Family caregivers can combat these high risks by finding the right support network. A support network is where family caregivers can be heard, validated, get advice, and get help. Start building a support network by choosing trusted family, friends, and neighbors you can confide in. Support networks can also include caregiver support groups, care managers, counselors, and advisors who are knowledgeable in caregiving topics.

Since caregiving stress, duties, and diagnoses can change over time, there are benefits to having an established caregiver support network in place. Benefits include feeling less lonely or isolated, learning about solutions and options for care, and overall confidence and improvement of caregiving skills. Caregivers who feel more supported are more empowered and comfortable in their role, which will positively affect their health and their care receiver's health.

Family caregivers are highly encouraged to make their own unique support networks based on their individual situation, personal beliefs, values, customs, and culture. If you wish to learn more about caregiving resources, call our Aging, Disability, and Caregiving Resources Line at **703-324-7948** or visit **FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults**.



Understanding the Aging Process: How Aging Affects Your Nutritional Status

Wednesday, July 19, Noon-1 p.m.

In this webinar, Diane Reinhold, MPH, MS, RDN, from the University of Illinois, describes how the aging process and its associated physiological changes, can impact one's ability to meet their nutritional needs and age well. Participants will learn what steps one can take to navigate the nutritional changes associated with aging. Topics presented include: nutrition basics, impact of lifestyle on overall health, aging effects on nutritional needs, nutritional challenges and needs of aging adults, nutrient-rich foods, and strategies to navigate nutritional challenges. Online registration: bit.ly/CAREWEB1 or call **703-324-2019**.

Aging in Place: Transitional Care from Hospital to Home

Friday, July 28, 2-3 p.m.

Often when a loved one is discharged from a hospital, family caregivers do not anticipate the challenges that can happen during this process. Care transitions involve the coordination and transfer of information between health providers, facilities, patients, and family caregivers. This panel conversation will explore

what family caregivers need to know and be aware of before their loved ones are discharged from the hospital, so they can get appropriate care along the way. Panelists include: Tondra Cahill,

Social Services Director with Birmingham Green; Jessika Eglin, Associate State Director, Advocacy and Outreach with the AARP; Kathryn Mary Powers, MSN RN CCM, with Inova Health System; and Xie Dillon-Vassell, Assistant Program Manager, with Adult Services at Fairfax County Department of Family Services. Online registration: bit.ly/AAAPanel or call 703-324-2019.

See Me at the Smithsonian (See Me)

See Me at the Smithsonian (See Me) is a free, virtual interactive program for adults with dementia and their care partners. During each event, pre-registered participants (12-15 people) explore some of the Smithsonian's most beloved objects through small group discussions and multi-sensory activities. See Me programs provide intellectual engagement, socialization, and an opportunity for loved ones to spend time together in a relaxed setting. Programs happen on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2 p.m. EDT, rotate between Smithsonian museums, and are offered virtually via Zoom. To register for a See Me program, please contact Amy Castine at castinea@si.edu.



Senior Cool Care Program

Are you in need of additional cooling during the summer?

The Senior Cool Care Program is a public-private partnership sponsored by Dominion Energy and administered by the Virginia Department for Aging and

Rehabilitative Services through the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging that helps low-income older citizens in our jurisdiction keep cool during summer months. The program runs May 1 through October 31, 2023.

The program provides additional cooling at home, for eligible older adults, age 60 and older. If you are interested in learning more about the program, contact the Aging, Disability and Caregiver Resources Line at 703-324-7948. ☀

Mature Living - Disability Rights and Resources

This episode explores disability resources for both older adults and adults with disabilities, as well as those who care for them. Joining host Anne Hall is Claudia Vila, Manager of Disability Rights and Resources in the Department of Family Services. She provides a great overview on this topic, and discusses resources available for adults with disabilities, older adults, and caregivers. The Channel 16 crew visited the Wellness Center for Older Adults. It's the first of its kind in Fairfax County and offers both virtual and in-person services for older adults and individuals with developmental disabilities. Rose Robinson, Division Manager, Long Term and Community Integration Services, as well as current clients talk about the benefit of this important resource. We round out the program with a conversation with Susan Shaw, Transportation Options, Programs, and Services Program Manager, better known as TOPS – a valuable Fairfax County resource.

Mature Living can be seen on Channel 16 or 1016 (depending on your service provider) 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. ☀

Is an Over-the-Counter Hearing Aid Right for You?

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

If you experience hearing loss, you aren't alone. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, nearly 30 million adults in the United States have some degree of hearing loss, but only a fifth of those who could benefit from a hearing aid seek help. Unfortunately, the consequences of living with untreated hearing loss are significant. Hearing loss is a risk factor for dementia, cognitive decline, depression, and other health problems.



However, a recent change to how hearing aids are regulated may prove to be a game changer. In August 2022, the FDA issued a rule establishing a regulatory category for over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aids. This means that hearing aids, previously available only by prescription, are now available for purchase in store and online. This change provides greater access and device affordability, allowing more people to correct their hearing loss, improving health outcomes, and quality of life.



The new OTC hearing aids are intended only for people 18 and older who have perceived mild to moderate hearing loss. According to the FDA, signs of mild to moderate hearing loss include:

- ◆ Difficulty hearing speech in noisy places.
- ◆ Difficulty following speech in groups.
- ◆ Difficulty hearing on the phone.
- ◆ Listening makes you tired.
- ◆ Setting the volume on the TV or radio to levels others consider too loud.

OTC hearing aids are not appropriate for people with severe hearing loss or for people experiencing certain diagnosed conditions (such as tinnitus). Signs of severe hearing loss include the inability to hear speech, even in a quiet room, and the inability to hear loud sounds, such as power tools and engines. In those cases, you should seek treatment from an ear-nose-throat (ENT) doctor. You should also seek treatment from an ENT doctor if your hearing loss is sudden or if you lose hearing in only one ear.

If you are considering purchasing a OTC hearing aids, the Hearing Loss Association of America advises asking these questions:

- ◆ Is there a free trial period or money back return policy?
- ◆ Does the device require a smartphone, app, or computer to install, operate, and customize it?
- ◆ Is it compatible with cellphones or smartphones?
- ◆ Does it have connectivity via Bluetooth?
- ◆ Can the amplification be adjusted?
- ◆ Is it water/sweat resistant?
- ◆ How does it control, reduce, or block out background or wind noise?
- ◆ How long is the battery life? Is it rechargeable?

Additionally, a product should be clearly labeled as an OTC hearing aid and not a personal sound amplification product (PSAP). PSAPs are for people with normal hearing who want to amplify sound in certain situations, such as bird watching.

Additional Resources

- ◆ **Hearing Loss Association of America** is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide information, education, support, and advocacy for people with hearing loss. Tips and a shopping checklist for purchasing an OTC hearing aid can be found on their website, **HearingLoss.org**.

- ◆ **Hearing Industries Association** serves as a forum for hearing aid manufacturers, suppliers, distributors, and hearing health professionals. Visit their website for news and information about hearing aids at **BetterHearing.org**.
- ◆ **The AARP Hearing Center** includes articles, tools and resources related to hearing loss and hearing aids. Visit their website at **aarp.org/health/conditions-treatments/hearing-resource-center**. ✨

The End of the Public Health Emergency: What Does It Mean for Residents?

by Camden Doran, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

On May 11, 2023, the federal Public Health Emergency put in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic was lifted. According to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, here's what long-term care (LTC) residents in assisted living or nursing facilities need to know:

COVID-19 Vaccines, Testing, and Masking:

- ◆ All LTC facilities will continue to educate residents and staff on the COVID-19 vaccine and offer to help them get vaccinated.
- ◆ Staff vaccination requirements have ended. All residents, staff, and visitors are encouraged to stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccinations.
- ◆ Routine testing of staff and residents without symptoms is no longer recommended; however, LTC facilities must comply with accepted standards, such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for testing. Residents and staff with signs or symptoms of COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status, must be tested as soon as possible.
- ◆ Requirements for masking in LTC facilities will vary by community. Talk to your facility's administration about their specific policies and procedures. As a resident, you always have the right to wear a mask if you choose.

Residents' Rights:

- ◆ Residents' rights that were waived, such as the right to choose roommates or refuse relocation within the facility, and the right to receive notice before transfer to contain or treat COVID-19 have been reinstated. Residents who were moved for these reasons should be given a choice to return to their original room or facility, or remain in their new location, depending on room availability.

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 advocate for their rights to protect dignity, choices, and self-determination. The NVLTCOP is a resident-directed program that is available to assist with concerns about quality of care, and to educate the community about long-term care services. For more information about residents' rights or other assisted living and nursing facility concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at **703-324-5861**, or contact the Ombudsman Program by email at **NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.gov**. ✨

Emergency Preparedness for Individuals Living with Cognitive Impairment

by the Fairfax County Health Department's Division of Emergency Preparedness and Response

Emergencies and natural disasters can happen without warning and create unique challenges for people living with cognitive impairment, their family members, and caregivers. Older adults with cognitive impairment are especially vulnerable as they may have a limited ability to understand the situation and the emergency procedures they should take to protect themselves. It is crucial for caregivers and families to make sure they have an emergency plan.



Develop an emergency plan:

- ◆ Identify emergency contacts who are willing to help and who understand your loved one's medical needs. Engage family, friends, caregivers, and medical providers. Gather your emergency contacts' phone numbers, email addresses, mailing addresses and other pertinent information to keep in one place. Paper copies are good as a backup to storing these emergency contacts in smartphones and other electronic tools.
- ◆ Make a list of health conditions, allergies, and prescriptions, including dosage and frequency of medication, and provide copies to all emergency contacts. Include your loved one's pharmacy contact information as well.



- ◆ Discuss how you will communicate to keep each other updated, especially if evacuation orders are given. Review your communication plan often and give copies to emergency contacts. For help making an emergency plan, go to bit.ly/43f2lvB.

Build an emergency kit:

- ◆ Start with basic supplies such as nonperishable food, water, flashlights and batteries and tailor to your specific needs keeping health conditions in mind. Be sure to include supplies both the caregiver and a person living with dementia or other health condition may need such as prescriptions, inhaler, oxygen, syringes, eyeglasses, and items of comfort
- ◆ Add copies of the emergency contacts and health conditions created in your emergency plan, medical and legal documents, and usernames and passwords. Store the information on a flash drive.
- ◆ Keep prescriptions stocked and put the kit in a central location that is easily accessible. Assemble your emergency kit, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/Emergency/ReadyFairfax/MakeAnEmergencyKit.

Prepare for evacuation:

- ◆ If your loved one lives in a long-term care facility or attends adult day care, learn about their evacuation procedures and talk with them about the types of assistance your family member will need during an evacuation.
- ◆ Practice emergency evacuation drills with family and caregivers.
- ◆ Avoid leaving a person with cognitive impairment alone and carry a recent photo of your loved one in case you become separated during an evacuation. If evacuated to a shelter, try to find a quiet area to avoid overstimulation.

Enroll in alerts:

- ◆ Subscribe to public safety and weather alerts to stay informed and receive emergency instructions. Sign up at [FairfaxCounty.gov/alerts](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts).
- ◆ Share important household information to help emergency personnel during a response to your residence. Register for Community Connect at CommunityConnect.io/info/va-fairfax-county.
- ◆ Create an Emergency Health Profile to provide critical health and medical information to first responders at [FairfaxCounty.gov/911/emergency-health-profile](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/911/emergency-health-profile). ☀

Preparing for Summer Vacation

by Carly Mullinax, Department of Emergency Management and Security

Summer is the time for adventure or relaxation on vacation. This July, many people will take advantage of the warm weather to travel far and wide. If you are planning a trip, it's important to plan ahead and think about how to be prepared. Are you going to a part of the country that is more susceptible to earthquakes, hurricanes, or coastal flooding? Are you traveling abroad to a country where you don't speak the language? Following these tips will help you stay safe and provide peace of mind so you can fully relax as you soak in some summer sunshine!

- ◆ Make sure you have an emergency kit with you no matter where you decide to go. Think about the items you will need to be able to communicate, maintain your health, purchase supplies, and stay comfortable if you can't get back to your hotel or luggage. If you are flying, it is a good idea to bring essential items with you in your carry on bag, rather than packing them in your checked luggage.
- ◆ Tell a trusted friend or family member your travel plans and update them if anything changes. That way, you will have someone who knows where you are in the event something happens.

- ◆ If you are traveling to a part of the United States that is more susceptible to natural disasters, it is a good idea to brush up on what to do for different types of emergencies. You can learn more about what to do during different types of disasters at [Ready.gov/be-informed](https://www.ready.gov/be-informed).
- ◆ Did you know that not all countries use 9-1-1 as their emergency number? If you are planning an international trip, it is a good idea to research the country you will be staying in and make sure you know what number to call if there is an emergency. It's also a good idea to learn how to say important words like "help" and "emergency" if you don't speak the native language of the country you will be visiting. To learn more about staying safe abroad, visit the State Department's website at bit.ly/43jKnbh. ☀



Explore Opportunities to Help

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator

Are you looking for new ways to help your community? Check out the opportunities below or go to bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER for many more.

Volunteer Solutions offers various opportunities to provide support to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers, one-on-one, or in senior and adult day healthcare centers. Drivers, grocery shoppers, social visitors, and skilled volunteers are needed. Create new connections and help decrease social isolation. To learn more and register go to bit.ly/FXVSVOL, email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov, or call 703-324-5406.

Would you like to inspire a group of girls to be strong, confident, and healthy, while integrating running?

Girls on the Run (GOTR) is a youth development program for girls in 3rd through 8th grade. Teams of volunteer coaches are trained to facilitate an easy-to-follow curriculum with small groups of girls, twice a week over the course of 10 weeks.

You don't need to be a runner or a competitive athlete to coach. Successful coaches serve as role models for girls by showing up prepared and on time, listening attentively, and by demonstrating a positive attitude. Coaches are required to commit to 2-3 hours per week for the 10-week season, with additional time required for coach training and the GOTR 5K race. Practice schedules will vary based on team. GOTR's Fall 2023 Season starts in September and ends in November. For more information or to register, go to gotrnova.org. For questions, contact mfay@gotrnova.org.

The Fairfax County Department of Family Services' **Body Safety Program** needs volunteer classroom instructors to help empower elementary students with



The Body Safety Program is a school-based program that focuses on building safety skills within the child to help them identify risks and empowers them to act.

the tools they need to prevent or interrupt child abuse and exploitation. Visit bit.ly/3nSooIM or contact Francesca at Francesca.Lovitt@FairfaxCounty.gov, or 703-324-7459. Spanish speakers are needed, too. The next training will be in Fairfax on August 11, 2023.

PRS provides behavioral health, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention services. They seek compassionate volunteers with a familiarity or willingness to understand the challenges that can be faced by community members with mental health challenges, or in crisis. Volunteers make it possible for PRS to change and save more lives by providing services to those in need. Volunteers support PRS in a variety of ways: long term, short term, one-time, in groups, or with youth volunteer opportunities. Learn more at prsinc.org/volunteer or call 703-531-6321.

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

Hiking Provides Health Benefits and Enjoyment for All

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Has anyone ever told you to take a hike? Although the intent is rude, it is actually good advice! Hiking is an activity that nearly everyone can engage in, and it provides a host of benefits. Hiking is a great cardiovascular exercise that also works the muscles of your legs and hips, and because walking is a weight-bearing exercise, hiking can help build bone density. In addition to the physical benefits, hiking also provides psychological benefits. Studies have found that walking in nature reduces stress, calms anxiety, and can lower the risk of depression.



Getting Started

If you've never hiked before, here are a few general tips to follow that can help keep you safe, healthy, and prepared for the unexpected during your hike:

- ◆ Check with your doctor before starting this, or any, new exercise.
- ◆ Explore available resources. Websites, books, and hiking groups are all good sources of information for aspiring hikers.
- ◆ Research hiking routes to locate trails whose distance, terrain, and difficulty level are appropriate for your level of fitness and experience.

- ◆ Always wear appropriate footwear when hiking. Choose shoes or boots with good traction that provide support and protect your feet.
- ◆ Protect yourself from the sun by wearing sunscreen, sunglasses, a hat, and sun-protective clothing.
- ◆ Wear breathable, comfortable clothing that you can move in. Bring a raincoat or rain poncho and dress in layers for changing weather.
- ◆ In addition to bringing a phone with GPS, always bring a map and compass (and know how to use them) in case you get lost and find yourself in a dead zone.
- ◆ Bring plenty of water and snacks.
- ◆ Pack a first aid kit, flashlight or headlamp, and a whistle in case of emergencies.
- ◆ There is safety in numbers. Always hike with a friend or a group.

Hiking Information and Resources

There is a treasure trove of information available about hiking. Here are just a few of the websites you can explore to learn the ins and outs of this enriching activity:

- ◆ **American Hiking Society** shares tips and information about everything related to hiking, including how to prepare, outdoor skills, recommended gear, safety and first aid, and more. AmericanHiking.org
- ◆ **Old Geezer Hiking** provides information intended for older hikers but applies to people of all ages. This website directly addresses challenges specific to older adults, providing valuable information and reassurance that hiking is an activity that anyone can enjoy, no matter their age. OldGeezerHiking.com

Fairfax County Public Library's collection includes several books about hiking, including guidebooks detailing hiking trails throughout Virginia and the DMV. Other books provide general advice for

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getting started and hiking tips, including these recent publications:

- ◆ **“Hiking is Fundamental: A Step-by-Step Guide to Hitting the Trail”** by Barbara Ann Kipfer – this book covers the basics of hiking, from preparation to pacing, and is illustrated in fun list-style chapters. *Call number: 796.51 Kipfer 2022*
- ◆ **“How to Suffer Outside: A Beginner's Guide to Hiking and Backpacking”** by Diana Helmuth with illustrations by Latasha Dunston – This award-winning book is described as part humorous critique of modern hiking culture and part how-to guide and is for anyone who wants to hit the trail without breaking the bank. Chapters are divided by topic, with useful checklists and resources. *Call number: 796.51 Helmuth 2021*

Hiking Trails

With a little research, you can find tons of trails to hike, from flat paved paths to more challenging unpaved wilderness trails. Discover trails that are close to home, across the state, or around the country using these resources:

- ◆ **Fairfax County Trail Buddy** lets you explore over 334 miles of Fairfax County Park Authority trails. Type in your address and the map will display the closest paved and unpaved trails near you. Begin your search at FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/trails/trail-buddy.
- ◆ **The City of Fairfax Trails Map** displays paved and unpaved public trails in the City of Fairfax. View the map at FairfaxVa.gov/government/parks-recreation/parks-and-trails/parks-and-trails-maps.
- ◆ **Virginia State Parks** has a wide variety of hiking trails, from beginner level to more difficult hikes, and a variety of terrains, from mountain to central to coastal. Learn more about hiking in Virginia state parks at Dcr.Virginia.gov/state-parks/hiking.
- ◆ **Hiking Project** is a crowd-sourced hiking guide showcasing thousands of trails from around the world. Search for trails by location, then filter your search by difficulty, distance, trail type, rating, and elevation. Listings include interactive maps, descriptions, photos, and ratings from other hikers. A free app is also available from the AppStore and Google Play. Visit the Hiking Project at HikingProject.com.
- ◆ **All Trails** was founded with the goal of encouraging people to spend more time in nature. Search All Trails for trails near you. Like the Hiking Project, listings include interactive maps, descriptions, photos, and ratings from other hikers. You can filter your search by activity type (hiking, running, walking) and suitability (dogs on leash, kid friendly, wheelchair friendly). A free app is also available from the AppStore and Google Play. Visit All Trails at AllTrails.com.

In Fairfax County, here are a few popular trails to get you started:

- ◆ **Bull Run - Occoquan Trail** is located along the Occoquan Reservoir in Fairfax County. This moderately strenuous 17-mile trail rises over steep wooded hillsides, winds through deep ravines and crosses numerous streams and flood plains. Portions of the trail are also used by people on horseback and mountain bikes. For more information, visit NovaParks.com/parks/bull-run-occoquan-trail.
- ◆ Burke Lake Park’s loop trail follows the shoreline 4.7 miles around the lake. The trail is gravel surfaced for most of its length, which makes it easier to navigate. For more information, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/burke-lake.
- ◆ **Gerry Connolly Cross County Trail** is over 40 miles long and connects the entire county from one end to the other, traveling through natural and urban landscapes. The surface of the trail varies, with both paved and unpaved sections. For more information, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/trails/cross-county-trail.
- ◆ **Great Falls Park** has fifteen miles of hiking trails, five of which are multi-use for horseback riding, hiking, and biking. There is a \$20/vehicle fee to enter the park. For more information, visit nps.gov/grfa/index.htm.
- ◆ **Mason Neck State Park** offers more than six miles of unpaved hiking trails and three miles of paved



To make your hike enjoyable, always wear comfortable shoes and choose clothing that provides protection from the sun.

multi-use trails providing a glimpse of nature by the bay. Elevated walkways also allow visitors to explore some of the marsh areas in the park. There is a \$10 parking fee. For more information, visit Dcr.Virginia.gov/state-parks/mason-neck.

- ◆ **Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area** offers 13.4 miles of hiking trails through a variety of terrains and vegetation, including meadows and forests and past ponds and streams. For more information, visit blm.gov/visit/meadowood-special-recreation-management-area.
- ◆ **Seneca Regional Park** is located in Great Falls along the Potomac River and offers a network of trails along with interpretive signage. For more information, visit NovaParks.com/parks/seneca-regional-park.
- ◆ **W & OD Railroad Regional Park (W&OD)** is a paved trail between Shirlington and Purcellville, Virginia. The 45-mile route follows the former roadbed of the Washington & Old Dominion Railroad and travels through both urban and rural areas. Multiple parking areas are available, allowing you to choose a portion of the trail to hike. NovaParks.com/parks/washington-and-old-dominion-railroad-regional-park. ☀

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Meditation for Care Partners Class Series **Thursdays, July 13 and 27, 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Hosted by Insight Memory Care Center. As busy care partners, it's hard to find time to focus on your own health and well-being - especially when you're navigating your caregiver journey. Join us on the second and fourth Thursday of each month for this free class series, open to all care partners and anyone looking to relax, focus, and find peace of mind. For more information and to register, visit InsightMCC.org, email melissa.long@insightmcc.org, or call 703-204-4664, x141.

"Painting through Grief"

Sunday, July 16, 2-4 p.m.

Fairfax Memorial Funeral Home, 9902 Braddock Rd, Fairfax

"Painting through Grief" allows anyone who's lost a loved one to decompress, connect and create via painting. This is a free event open to the public. Please register at FairfaxMemorialFuneralHome.com before Friday, July 7.

Sing With Us This Summer!

Encore Creativity invites older adults to register for a six-week summer rehearsal program. The Chorale program meets from 10:30 a.m.-noon and Fairfax ROCKS, an ensemble singing choral arrangements of classic rock songs, meets from 1:30-3 p.m. The fee to register for either session is \$75. Rehearsals will take place at St. George's United Methodist Church, 4910 Ox Rd, Fairfax, starting July 18. For more information or to register, visit EncoreCreativity.org, email info@encorecreativity.org, or call 301-261-5747.

Arts for the Aging: Healing Connections between Music & Movement

Tuesday, July 18, 1-2 p.m.

Hosted by the Virtual Center for Active Adults. For more information, visit bit.ly/novaVCAA; To join the virtual presentation on Zoom, visit bit.ly/VCAAzoom2; Meeting ID: 905 123 5932; Passcode: 3636

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Adult and Aging Services
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July Community Calendar

Love to Play Soccer?

Players 50 and older are invited to join the Fairfax Over 50 Soccer League. We play outdoor, year-round, full-field, 11 vs. 11 with paid, licensed referees on Fairfax County fields. We strive to play competitively while staying safe. We are also adding an Over 60 Division this season. We are members of USASA. Dues are required to join. For more information, visit leaguelineup.com/welcome.asp?url=fo5sl

Softball Players Needed!

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Women over the age of 40 and all skill levels are welcome. We play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, visit goldengirls.org.

Virtual Memory Café

First Friday of Every Month at 1 p.m.

Please join Senior Helpers & Senior Life Enrichment for a virtual Memory Café. This one hour, once-a-month group is for caregivers and their loved ones living with memory loss, mild cognitive impairment or dementia to meet with others for support, companionship and fun. Attend virtually from **Zoom.com** by clicking on Join and using the

following meeting and passcode: Meeting ID: 863 0646 8210; Passcode: 448135. For questions, please email bdesai@seniorhelpers.com.

Healthy Cooking: Corn & Avocado Salsa

Monday, July 10, 1-2 p.m.

Hosted by the Virtual Center for Active Adults. For more information, visit bit.ly/novaVCAA; To join the virtual presentation on Zoom, visit bit.ly/VCAAzoom2; Meeting ID: 905 123 5932; Passcode: 3636

Parkinson's Dementia

Wednesday, July 12, 1-2:30 p.m.

Insight Memory Care Center, 3955 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax
This free class is a part of our monthly Care Partner Training series and will be held both virtually and in-person. Learn more about what you and your family should know about Parkinson's Disease. We will discuss a basic overview of Parkinson's disease, along with what Parkinson's is, what causes it, common symptoms, treatments, and strategies for managing symptoms. For more information and to register, visit InsightMCC.org, email melissa.long@insightmcc.org, or call 703-204-4664, x141.

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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.