



Golden Gazette

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Kofi Dennis: Bringing Play into Learning, Work, and Everyday Life

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Kofi Dennis is many things – artist, performer, educator, cultural ambassador, husband, father, and friend. He uses tools such as storytelling, drumming, movement, and dance to educate and connect with others. Using these nontraditional tools, learning occurs through play. Dennis approaches his own work with the same attitude, saying “Whenever I find myself doing anything, I don’t see work as work, I see it as play.” This approach, along with his generous spirit and joyful attitude, has allowed him to make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of the people he’s worked with in Fairfax and around the world.

Kofi Dennis was born in Ghana, the fifth of eight children. After completing his secondary school education, Dennis attended Komenda College, earning a degree in Early Childhood Education in 1981. He taught middle school for several years before enrolling at the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana to

study drama in education and music, earning a degree in 1990.

Dennis’ decision to return to school to study performing arts was fueled by his passion for Ghanaian culture. After having been educated in a post-colonial system that taught little



Wearing a traditional Ghanaian top and hat, Kofi Dennis drums on a large djembe drum. At his elbow sit two smaller djembe drums.

about African culture, he began to investigate the culture of Ghana, learning about their food, clothing, dance, religion, and lifestyle. He was excited about what he learned and wanted to share it with others to create awareness and instill pride in their shared culture. He felt that studying performing arts would give him the skills to share what he learned on a larger scale. After graduating, he began appearing at institutions to give educational performances about Ghanaian culture.

In 1993, Dennis, his wife and infant daughter moved to the United States so his wife could pursue a degree in nursing. They settled in Fairfax County and while his wife attended school, Dennis was a stay-at-home dad. While taking care of his daughter, Dennis observed his daughter and was fascinated by how she moved, made sounds, and interacted with her surroundings. A year after moving to the U.S., Dennis joined the Montessori School of Northern Virginia (MSNV) as a storyteller. Joining MSNV offered an additional benefit – Dennis’ daughter could attend the school while her dad worked.

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

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GOLDEN GAZETTE

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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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Observing how children learned in the classroom, Dennis began to develop strategies to make learning fun using music, dance and storytelling.

In 1995, Dennis invited his friend Kwame to visit his classroom of 3- to 6-year-olds and give a djembe drumming demonstration. The djembe drum originated in French-speaking West African countries such as Mali, Guinea, and Senegal. After Kwame's visit, the children continued to be fascinated by the drum and talked about it so often that Dennis borrowed it from Kwame. In the classroom, he and the children began to explore the many ways they could incorporate the drum into their learning – creating patterns, identifying shapes, sounding out syllables, and counting. Eventually, Dennis got a djembe drum of his own and learned how to play. He began incorporating it regularly in his teaching and storytelling and he became known as a drummer, a title he loves.

In 1998, Dennis joined the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts as a Master Teaching Artist. He works directly with teachers in the classroom, providing them with tools and strategies to teach math, science and language in a fun way using drama, music and dance. His work has taken him into classrooms and Head Start programs in 20 states as well as Singapore. He also teaches Wolf Trap Institute's Baby Artsplay, an early childhood music, movement and drama program for infants, toddlers and their caregivers that supports children's development.

In addition to his work in early childhood education, Dennis has continued to serve as a cultural ambassador, teaching about Ghanaian and African culture through music and dance. He regularly receives requests to host djembe drum circles and give interactive performances. During these events, he often shares the story of the origin of the djembe drum while encouraging participants to experiment and have fun.

Dennis has also enjoyed introducing drumming and storytelling to an older adult audience. Prior to the pandemic, he participated in the Creative Aging Festival, hosting interactive programs with participants at senior centers. His goal during these workshops was to listen to the participants and encourage them to participate in their own way, saying "You must believe in the joy of doing

these things. If you do, you can share it with others and have fun. There is no right or wrong. Start from where you are coming from and what they are able to do." His goal is to offer more hands-on drumming/storytelling and movement workshops to older adults in Fairfax.

Dennis likes to put his skills to use in his volunteer work in the community. He hosts storytelling/drumming programs for the children of patients being treated at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. He also hosts interactive drumming programs for incarcerated adults and juveniles in Washington D.C. and Montgomery County, MD. He welcomes the opportunity to work with incarcerated people in Northern Virginia too. No matter the participants, his goal is always the same – to draw people out, bring them together, and experience joy.

After moving to the U.S. in 1993, Dennis wasn't able to return to Ghana until 2001, but he has tried to visit every year since then. During his visits, he looks for opportunities to give back. He works with former colleagues and other educators, identifying areas where he can help by sharing tools and strategies he's developed. He also seeks out volunteer opportunities, hosting storytelling/drumming programs in the community and for people who are incarcerated. Last summer, Dennis stayed in Ghana for several months following the death of his father. During that time, he was able to visit many communities and host programs.

Dennis and his wife raised three daughters together but are now empty nesters. In their free time, the couple enjoys going on long walks and watching birds. They are also avid gardeners, growing a variety of fruits and vegetables every year. Their garden produces enough to share with friends and neighbors as well as store some of the vegetables for use during colder months.

Dennis dreams of someday establishing a nonprofit creative center in Ghana to educate people about Ghanaian culture through community outreach. After participating in volunteer opportunities and seeing the importance placed on volunteering in Fairfax, he plans to use the center to encourage older adults to put their free time to good use by volunteering. While he works toward his dream, Dennis continues to approach every day and each task with joy and gratitude. 🌟

Celebrate 60 Years of Older Americans Month in May!

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Older Americans Month (OAM) was established in 1963 as a time to recognize and celebrate the contributions and achievements of older Americans. This year's theme, *Aging Unbound*, encourages older adults to explore a wide range of experiences and fulfilling activities while enjoying their independence. Here are a few ways to participate in OAM:

- ◆ **Embrace the opportunity to change.** Find a new passion, go on an adventure, and break out of your comfort zone. Invite creativity and purpose into your life by trying new activities in your community to experience growth, joy, and energy.
- ◆ **Explore the rewards of growing older.** With age comes knowledge, which provides insight and confidence to understand and experience the world more deeply. Continue to grow that knowledge through reading, listening, classes, and creative activities.

**OLDER
AMERICANS
MONTH**



AGING UNBOUND: MAY 2023

- ◆ **Stay engaged in your community.** We all benefit when everyone is connected and involved. Stay active by volunteering, working, mentoring, joining a club, and taking part in activities at your local senior center or elsewhere in the community.
- ◆ **Form relationships.** Relationships can enhance your quality of life by introducing new ideas and unique perspectives. Spending quality time with people will lead to deeper connections with family, friends, and community members. ☀

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. ☀

Celebrating the Wellness Center for Older Adults One Year Anniversary!

by Rose Robinson, ServiceSource, Inc.

ServiceSource is honored to celebrate the Wellness Center's first anniversary. The Wellness Center for Older Adults (WCOA) is a first-of-its-kind center supporting preventative health by offering free and easy access to programs and resources for older adults and adults with disabilities in Fairfax County, including recreation activities, technology access, assistive technology, and health screenings for community members, together with a day program for people with disabilities. We have several partners committed to offering programs, presentations, and services at the WCOA to assist in meeting the needs of the populations we serve.



The anniversary celebration will occur on Friday, May 19, at the WCOA, located at 4027B Olley Lane, Fairfax. There will be an open house from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Breakfast will be available at 10 a.m., and tours will occur throughout the day. Individuals can also visit the WCOA's webpage at www.ServiceSource.org/Virginia-wcoa/. There you can learn more about our new Wellness Center program.



Older adults and adults with disabilities can face barriers to accessing health screenings, assistive technology and recreation opportunities. The Wellness Center is proud to support the engagement of meaningful activities and strives to promote accessibility and full inclusion for all participants. ✨

Top: The Wellness Center for Older Adults. Left: A WCOA staff member gathers with participants of the day program to play a card game. Photos courtesy the Wellness Center for Older Adults.

Grievances in Long-Term Care

by Camden Doran, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

A person who lives in a long-term care (LTC) facility maintains all the same rights as an individual living in the community. A person living in a LTC facility gains additional rights as a resident, one of which is the right to raise formal grievances. A resident can present their grievances at any time to facility staff or any other person without fear of discrimination or retaliation. The facility must act promptly to help resolve the grievance, and provide a written decision to the resident, if requested. The resident also has the right to file a complaint with their local state licensing agency or the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

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 nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at **703-324-5861**, or contact the Ombudsman Program by email at NVLTCOP@FairfaxCounty.gov. ✨

Caregiver Alert Notifications Program Receives Honorable Mention

by Allegra Joffe, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging is pleased to announce that its Fairfax Caregiver Alert Notifications Program (FCANP) received an Honorable Mention in the 2023 Best Practices Awards Program sponsored by the Commonwealth Council on Aging program. The Best Practices Awards recognize and encourage the replication of model programs, particularly those that foster aging in place, livable communities and home and community-based services. The FCANP enables family caregivers to remain informed, receive education, and access programs and services offered by the Area Agency on Aging and other Fairfax County departments via text messages, emails and/or voice communication. Since 2019, the FCANP has sent out 360 notifications through texts, emails, and voice communication messages to 1,150 people about educational programs, support calls, consultations, and other resources.

To subscribe to the FCANP and receive information about existing and upcoming workshops, webinars, and other supportive services, visit **FairfaxCounty.gov/Alerts** and create or sign into your Fairfax Alerts account. Next, select Area Agency on Aging/Caregivers. "It's simple, if we can't reach you, we can't alert you."

Advances in Our Understanding of Chronic Pain - Caregiver Webinar

Wednesday, May 17, Noon-1 p.m.

In this presentation, Daniel Clauw, M.D., Professor, Anesthesiology at the University of Michigan, and Director of the Chronic Pain and Fatigue Research Center, University of Michigan, will discuss advances in the diagnosis and treatment of chronic pain. He will emphasize that some pain is not a problem in the area of the body someone is experiencing pain but instead comes from the brain and nervous system. This type of pain is called centralized pain and does not respond to drug (e.g. opioids) or non-drug (surgery) therapies that often work well for pain that is due to a problem in that area of the body. He will also discuss a number of self-management options. Online registration: bit.ly/CAREWEB1 or call 703-324-2019.



Intergenerational Exploratory Ballet Class

Friday, May 26, 11 a.m.-Noon

Join Leanne Mizzoni, instructor from Virginia Ballet Company and School, for an exploratory ballet class for the whole family. Develop an awareness of the art of ballet. We will be exploring the different positions of the feet, body, and arms, as well as correct alignment. You will have a fun time learning the secrets behind becoming a ballerina! Online registration: bit.ly/StayingWell-123 or call 703-324-2019.

Intergenerational Crafts for the Family

Friday, June 2, Noon-1 p.m.

Join Dr. Cate, Dementia Coach, as she provides an intergenerational workshop geared for the entire family who may have a loved one living with memory loss. Dr. Cate will guide your family through hands on craft projects that all ages and abilities can enjoy together. A supply list will be given to participants prior to the workshop and will be items you can find at home. Online registration: bit.ly/StayingWell-123 or call 703-324-2019.

International Spy Museum

The International Spy Museum offers specialized programming for individuals living with dementia and their care partners. Join SPY with Me for an interactive virtual program that uses music and artifacts to explore some of their favorite spy stories. Programs last one hour and are held virtually through Zoom. Every month the same program is offered on two dates. In May, the dates are Tuesday, May 23, and Thursday, May 25, at 2 p.m.

To register, please email soltmans@spymuseum.org. Space is limited. ✨

Bingo + Gentle Exercises = BINGOCIZE®

May 10-July 14, 1-2 p.m., Free. We meet two times a week on Wednesdays and Fridays. Bingocize® is a program that combines the game of bingo with fall prevention exercises (seated or standing). Come play bingo, win prizes, and meet new people while learning about techniques to reduce falls and increase activity. Classes offered in person at George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale 22003. For more information, please contact Kathy Akindemowo, 703-324-9814, TTY 711 or Katherine.Akindemowo2@FairfaxCounty.gov or register at: tinyurl.com/Bingocize123.

Celebrate National Mobility Awareness Month!

by Carly Mullinax, Department of Emergency Management and Security

May is National Mobility Awareness Month! This month is about raising awareness of the challenges faced by those with mobility disabilities as well as celebrating innovative ways mobility independence can be achieved and maintained. The Department of Emergency Management and Security (DEMS) is celebrating by reminding readers that if you or a loved one rely on a device such as a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or cane, it is important to incorporate them into your emergency preparedness plan. This will help ensure that you can maintain safety and independence in the event of a disaster. Here are some points for you to take into consideration when drafting your emergency plan or making an emergency kit:

- ◆ You may need to include some additional items in a “go-bag” which will help you maintain and repair your mobility device in the event you have to evacuate your home. Disasters often leave debris in their wake. Glass, metal, or other sharp objects could puncture a tire on a wheelchair and standing water may cause electrical circuits to malfunction. Plan for the worst-case scenario so that you will be ready for anything.

- ◆ If you buy or receive a replacement for an old piece of equipment, think twice before throwing the old one away. If it is still in working condition, it may be a good idea to keep it as an emergency back-up.



- ◆ Think about the equipment in your life or the lives of your loved ones which would be difficult to do without. You will want to have a plan to replace these items as quickly as possible if they are ever damaged or destroyed. Writing down the make, model, and serial numbers of your devices, as well as taking pictures of them, will make it easier to file an insurance claim and replace them if needed.

The United Spinal Association’s program, Ready to Roll, has lots of great tips on emergency preparedness for those with mobility disabilities. To learn more about the unique challenges a mobility disability may present when planning for an emergency, and how to overcome them, visit their website at UnitedSpinal.org/ready-to-roll. ✨

Recognizing the Signs of Elder Abuse and How to Report It

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Elder abuse, the mistreatment or harming of an older person, may take the form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Neglect and financial exploitation are also forms of elder abuse. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, at least 15 percent of older adults in the U.S. experience elder abuse each year. Elder abuse has been directly linked to poor health outcomes in older adults. Physical forms of abuse are directly tied to injury, institutionalization, hospitalization, poor health, and mortality. Financial exploitation and fraud may also contribute to poor health outcomes by depriving older adults of the resources they need to maintain their health, including seeking medical care and purchasing prescriptions.



According to the National Center on Elder Abuse, the types of elder abuse and behaviors associated with them include:

- ◆ **Physical abuse:** use of force to threaten or physically injure an older person.
- ◆ **Emotional abuse:** verbal attacks, threats, rejection, isolation, or belittling behavior that causes mental distress.
- ◆ **Sexual abuse:** sexual contact that is forced, tricked, or coerced; this includes anyone who is unable to grant consent.

- ◆ **Exploitation:** theft, fraud, misuse or neglect of authority; exerting undue influence to gain control over an older person's money or property.
- ◆ **Neglect:** failure or refusal to provide for an older person's safety, physical, or emotional needs.

It's not always obvious when abuse is taking place, so signs to watch for include:

- ◆ Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
- ◆ Fear or anxiety
- ◆ Isolated or not responsive
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Broken bones, bruises, and welts
- ◆ Cuts, sores or burns
- ◆ Untreated bed sores
- ◆ Torn, stained or bloody underwear
- ◆ Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases
- ◆ Dirtiness, poor nutrition or dehydration
- ◆ Poor living conditions
- ◆ Lack of medical aids (glasses, walker, teeth, hearing aid, medications)
- ◆ Unusual changes in bank account or money management
- ◆ Unusual or sudden changes in a will or other financial documents
- ◆ Fraudulent signatures on financial documents
- ◆ Unpaid bills

If you suspect abuse, exploitation, or neglect of an adult who is 60 years or older or is 18 years and older and incapacitated, call Adult Protective Services at **703-324-7450, TTY 711**, to report it. Reports can be filed for people who live alone or with relatives or who are residents in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, hospitals, or group homes. If you report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation, your identity is kept strictly confidential, as required by state law. Additionally, people who report suspected abuse are immune from any civil or criminal liability unless they act in bad faith or with a malicious purpose.

Once a report of suspected abuse is received, Adult Protective Services (APS) will determine validity, and if a case is assigned, APS will determine whether the adult in question needs protective services. They may also provide case management services. The goals of Adult Protective Services include:

- ◆ Preventing abuse, neglect or exploitation of older adults and incapacitated adults.
- ◆ Helping older and incapacitated adults continue to live in their own homes as long as possible.

- ◆ Helping older and incapacitated adults find appropriate placements in nursing homes or other institutions only when necessary.
- ◆ Helping older adults and incapacitated adults become as self-sufficient as possible.

By knowing and recognizing the signs of abuse, and having the courage to report it, you can dramatically improve the life of an older adult experiencing abuse in our community. ☀

“Spring” into Action as a Volunteer

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.

Assistance League of Northern Virginia (ALNV) needs volunteers who want to help children by supporting the food, clothing, and literacy programs it offers at several Title 1 elementary schools. ALNV will be starting an additional reading program at a school in Reston. As a member, you can participate in hands-on events, such as packing weekend food bags, toiletries, and “Hugs” pillows, weekly reading programs, and book fairs at the schools. Members also help by drafting grant applications, news releases, and letters to supporters. Skills in technology, writing, graphic design, or photography are also needed. Dues are required to become a participating member. To learn more, go to alnv.org or email membership@alnv.org.

Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Thrift Shop needs volunteers to help with receiving, sorting, pricing, and merchandising donations, and in customer service as cashiers and baggers. It’s located in the Fairfax Circle shopping center, at 9683 Fairfax Blvd, Fairfax VA 22031. The shop is open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Volunteers are asked to work a minimum of 4 hours, one day per week. Shop proceeds get donated to Inova Fair Oaks Hospital for purchasing equipment and funding hospital projects. Contact Jessie Johnston at jessamyn.johnston@inova.org, or call **703-273-3519** and ask for Jessie or Veronica.

Fairfax County Park Authority

is looking for volunteers to help at the Twin Lakes Golf Course in Clifton. Duties



include assisting golfers, coordinating the pace of play as the course marshal, and managing the tee sheet. A driver’s license is required. The time commitment is one day a week (6-hour shift), between sunrise and sunset, during their regular season from March to December. For more information, contact John Mandell at John.Mandell@FairfaxCounty.gov.

Volunteer Solutions offers opportunities to provide support to older adults, adults with disabilities, and family caregivers in one-on-one or group settings. Do you have a skill to share? Fairfax County Senior Centers need activity leaders and instructors for line dancing, fitness, languages, cooking, art, crafts, pottery, music, and more! The following roles are also needed: drivers (for medical appointments, errands, grocery shopping), social visitors, and household organizers. To learn more and register go to bit.ly/FXVSVOL, email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov, or call **703-324-5406**.

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

Be Stroke Smart: Recognize the Signs of a Stroke and Take Action

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Did you know that strokes are the number one cause of disability and a leading cause of death in the United States? This is not surprising considering that one in six people will suffer a stroke during their lifetime. In the U.S., someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds and someone dies of a stroke every four minutes. Although strokes can happen at any age, the chances increase as we age, so it is important to recognize the signs of a stroke and know what to do. Equally important is to share this information with family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is interrupted. When this happens, brain tissue immediately begins to die, damaging the brain. Simply put, the signs and symptoms of a stroke are indications that brain damage is taking place. Thankfully, medication exists that can stop more damage from occurring, but only if it is administered soon after symptoms begin. Unfortunately, many people wait too long to seek treatment, often because they and those around them don't recognize the signs of a stroke.



Signs of a Stroke

The signs of a stroke are not always clear, dramatic or obvious. Sometimes the signs are calm and subtle, causing people to delay seeking medical treatment. In such cases, people may attribute their symptoms to something else, such as fatigue, and take a nap. Others may schedule an appointment to see their doctor. These decisions can have catastrophic consequences.

The symptoms of a stroke can differ from person to person, but the most obvious sign of a stroke is the sudden and unexplained onset of the symptoms. Stroke symptoms vary depending on the part of the brain where the blood flow interruption occurs. For example, if blood flow is interrupted to the cerebellum, you may experience a loss of balance or dizziness, because that portion of your brain is responsible for motor control. 90-95% of stroke patients exhibit at least one of these symptoms:

- ◆ Loss of balance/dizziness
- ◆ Vision changes or loss of vision
- ◆ Facial drooping
- ◆ Body weakness on one or both sides
- ◆ Difficulty understanding or forming words, slurred speech

Approximately 60-70% of people experiencing stroke will display one-sided facial drooping or body weakness, but you can still be having a stroke without displaying either of those symptoms, so be aware of all the symptoms. You only need to be exhibiting one of the symptoms to be experiencing a stroke. You should also be aware that the symptoms of a stroke can stop and start. If they stop, you still need to seek treatment immediately.

What to Do (and Not Do) if You Suspect a Stroke

If you suspect that you, or another person, is having a stroke, immediately call 911. This is the best way to ensure that a person reaches the emergency room in time to receive effective treatment, increasing the chance of recovery.

Do not delay seeking treatment, hoping the symptoms will go away. Do not take a nap or make an appointment to see your doctor later. Every minute during a stroke, 2 million brain cells die. While you wait to seek treatment, your brain is dying.

If you think you are having a stroke, do not drive yourself to the emergency room. Call 911. Having a stroke means you are suffering brain damage, which makes you a danger to yourself and others on the road.

A car crash will delay treatment if you are injured in a crash, and could injure others. Your stroke diagnosis could be delayed further as paramedics address your other injuries.

Do not drive others experiencing stroke symptoms to the emergency room. Call 911. Not all emergency rooms are equipped to treat strokes because of the special medication and training required, so you may take them to a location that is not equipped to provide treatment. By calling 911, you ensure that paramedics take the patient to the closest emergency room equipped to treat strokes. Paramedics will also communicate with emergency room staff en route, so they will be prepared to receive and treat the stroke patient immediately.

When speaking to medical personnel, be sure to advocate for yourself or a loved one using Stroke Smart language, e.g. “I am experiencing sudden onset facial drooping and dizziness.” If you feel like your symptoms are being dismissed by the doctor, don’t be afraid to ask for a different doctor.


Help Others be Stroke Smart

Considering how frequently strokes occur and the damage they inflict, you may assume that most people know to call 911 at the first sign of a stroke. However, only 38% of confirmed stroke cases called 911. In most of those cases, the calls were made by family, friends and coworkers, not the patient themselves, so it is vitally important that everyone in our community be Stroke Smart.


The first step is to have a Stroke Smart conversation with the people you spend time with, so they are able to recognize the signs of a stroke and know to call 911 immediately. Additionally, if you are a member of a congregation, civic group, or community organization, you can order free Stroke Smart BE FAST magnets or wallet cards to share. The magnets and wallet cards identify the signs of a stroke and instruct people to call 911 immediately if they experience or witness any of those signs. Bulk quantities of the magnets and cards are available in English and Spanish from the Virginia Department of Health using this link: [vdh.Virginia.gov/stroke/chronic-disease-health-promotion-materials-order-form/](https://vdh.virginia.gov/stroke/chronic-disease-health-promotion-materials-order-form/)

Be Stroke Smart

STROKE SIGN TEST: SMILE




Pass




Fail One side droops.
CALL 911

STROKE SIGN TEST: RAISE ARMS



Pass



Fail
Arm drifts downward.
CALL 911

OTHER STROKE SIGNS

SUDDEN TROUBLE:

- Speaking or Understanding
- Walking or Balance
- Seeing
- Weak or Numb on one side of body

CALL 911 for even ONE SIGN

CALL 911 even if SIGNS STOP

BE FAST

Balance Loss
Eyesight Changes
Face Drooping
Arm Weakness
Speech Difficulty
Time to call 911

VIRGINIA

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Free BE FAST magnets are available in bulk quantities from the Virginia Department of Health for distribution to congregations, civic groups and community organizations.

To learn more about strokes and the Stroke Smart campaign, visit the Northern Virginia EMS Council website at nvems.org. 🌟

Health Preparedness for Stroke Survivors and Caregivers

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

During Stroke Awareness Month, the Fairfax County Health Department would like to provide stroke survivors and their caregivers with customized tips for personal and family preparedness.

As a stroke survivor or caregiver to one, it is vital to stay prepared in the event of an emergency. Having a plan and practicing the plan with all household members can quicken your response to unexpected events such as natural disasters or disease outbreaks. Personal preparedness also relieves the stress of coming up with a plan in the spur of the moment.

For general preparedness information go to **ReadyNova.org**.

Fairfax County residents can also access the Community Emergency Response Guide - **FairfaxCounty.gov/EmergencyManagement/cerg**.

Consider three tips for health preparedness:

1. Invest in accessible warning systems.

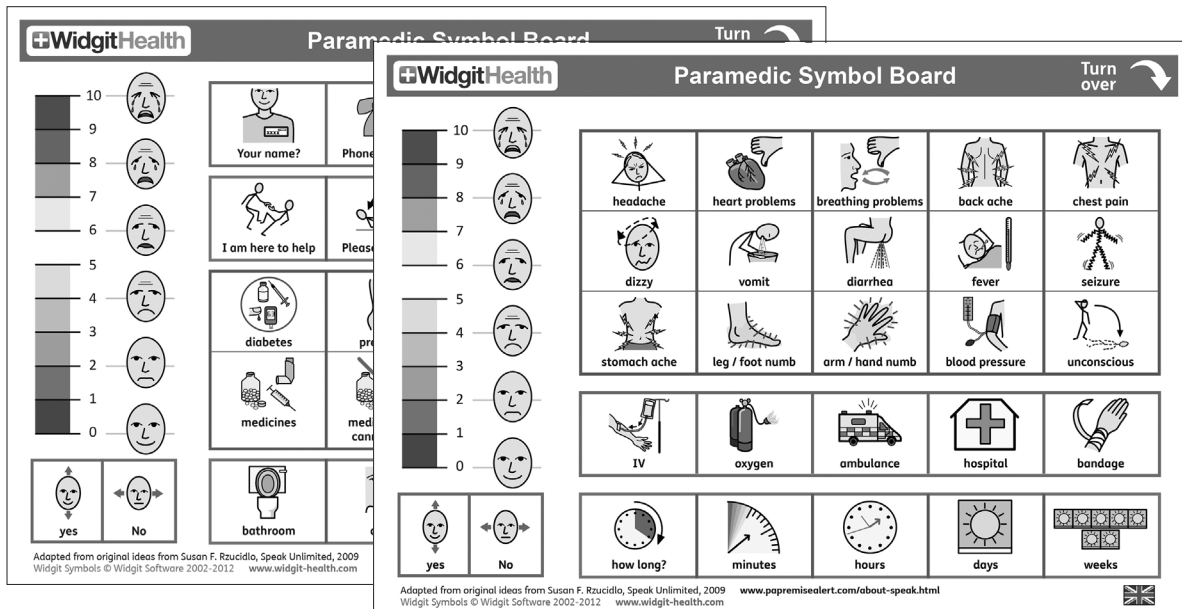
- a. Sign up for Wireless Emergency Alerts to know about disasters and hazards that could affect your area. Fairfax Alerts helps you be in the know. Register at **FairfaxCounty.gov/Topics/Alerts**.

- b. For stroke survivors with speech and mobility challenges, invest in specific warning systems such as bed shakers/pillow shakers, strobe lights, or high-pitched alarms.



2. Plan for non-verbal communication options.

- a. Create an emergency contact information list to be kept in your emergency kit, purse, or wallet.
- b. Ensure access to a speech assistive device for stroke survivors that is fully charged and ready to use. A small chalkboard or whiteboard can also be used if the survivor still has the ability to write words or short sentences.



A health communications card can be used for nonverbal communication during an emergency. The Paramedic & EMS Symbol Board shown can be downloaded for free at <https://widgit-health.com/downloads/paramedic-board.htm>

- c. Write down common communications phrases to show to an emergency responder.
 - d. Purchase a health communications card and store it in a waterproof, clear bag.
3. Don't forget your medication when building an emergency kit.
- a. Always keep copies of your current medication prescriptions with you.
 - b. Store a 7-day emergency supply of prescription medication. Speak with both your healthcare provider and health insurance provider about your plan for emergencies and the need to stockpile medications.

Finally, surviving a stroke makes it likely that you will have another. In fact, recurrent strokes make up almost 25% of the nearly 800,000 strokes that occur annually in the United States. Seek immediate assistance if you or your family member is in distress. Learn the signs and symptoms of stroke. ✨

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.

At the April 19 COA meeting, Irv Katz, Mason District Commissioner on the COA, presented on “From Intergenerational Programs to Intergenerational Community.”

COA Meeting, Wednesday, May 17, 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 Jacquie.Woodruff@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **703-324-5403**. For ADA accommodations, contact Ana.Valdivia@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **571-407-6960 TTY: VA Relay 711**. ✨

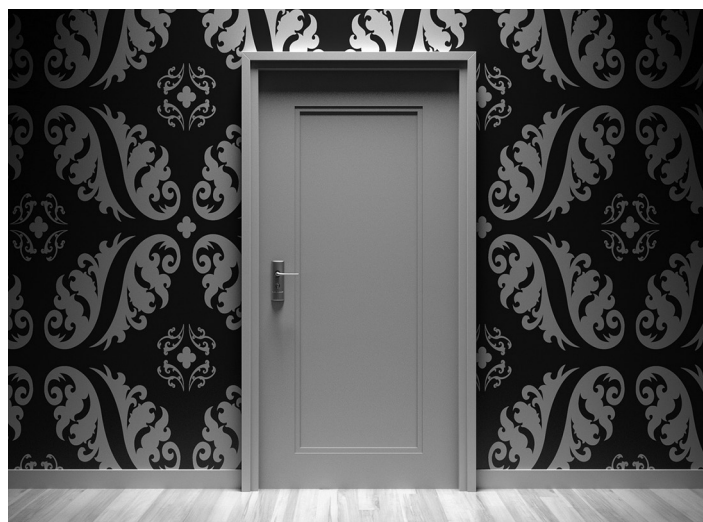
Close Before You Doze

by Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department

Did you know: Because of synthetic materials, furniture and construction, fire spreads faster than ever before.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department reminds residents how important it is to have working smoke alarms, escape plans, and a designated meeting place in case of a fire. Closing your doors is also important for your safety. Closed doors can reduce fire growth, limit damage to your home, keep temperatures down, and can even save your life if you become trapped.

If there is a fire in your home and you can implement your home escape plan to get out – get out! But if you can't, a closed door could make a life-saving difference. ✨



May is Building Safety Month

by Mary Mulrenan, Land Development Services

Spring is the time of year when Fairfax County highlights building safety. International building codes and state building codes exist to ensure the integrity and safety of all building occupants in the county, for those in residences such as single-family homes to everyone frequenting commercial buildings such as offices and restaurants.

According to the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, its purpose is “to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the Commonwealth of Virginia, provided that buildings and structures should be permitted to be constructed at the least possible cost consistent with recognized standards of health, safety, energy conservation and water conservation, including provisions necessary to prevent overcrowding, rodent or insect infestation, and garbage accumulation; and barrier-free provisions for the physically handicapped and aged.”

One of the key agencies involved with the implementation of building codes in the county is Land Development Services (LDS). If you have ever needed a building permit to make home improvements – adding a new deck or enclosed porch, for example – then you have experience with the Fairfax County permitting process.

We know it’s not the most fun part of improving your home; the fun comes when you invite your family and friends to enjoy the new addition. But the permit, plan review and inspection process ensure that all your loved ones you invite into your home are safe.

Safety is ensured by the hardworking professionals at LDS (and other county agencies) who continually train throughout their careers to learn the most up-to-date safety measures related to construction. Of course, building safety is also dependent on the registered designers and professional contractors who do the work on your home. Make sure you invest time in hiring contractors who will do quality work for you.



2023

It Starts with YOU!



If you have not applied for construction permits recently, you may not have used the new Planning and Land Use System (PLUS) yet. We have some great introductory videos for you to get started. And if you are thinking about buying a new home in the area, make sure you do a search of the address to confirm there is no unpermitted work. Discovering unpermitted work can be costly and annoying. How can you be sure the work was done safely?

So, during this Building Safety Month, we thank construction workers, contractors, homeowners, building owners and county staff for working together toward safe buildings and safe communities.

Learn more about LDS and the permitting process at **FairfaxCounty.gov/LandDevelopment**. Search for “permit library” to see what permits will be needed for your project. ✨

Mark Your Calendars for These Upcoming Car Shows

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Do you remember the family automobile from your childhood? How about the first car you ever drove? Cars can be a great topic for storytelling and reminiscing. Perhaps you just enjoy marveling at the design of automobiles, old and new. Whatever your reason, car shows are a popular attraction and a fun activity for all ages. Here are some of the car shows taking place in our community this spring and summer.



Deutsche Marque Concours d'Elegance Car Show

Sunday May 7, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Occoquan Regional Park, 9751 Ox Road, Lorton

This show features fine German collector vintage and modern cars. Cars are judged by guest judges and winners announced at the end of the show. The event is free to attend. For more information, visit dmconcours.com.

Antique Car Show

Saturday, May 20, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Fairfax City Hall, 10455 Armstrong Street, Fairfax

Check out an assortment of vehicles 25+ years old. Enjoy fire and safety activities, food and live music. The event is free to attend. For more information, visit FairfaxVa.gov/Government/Parks-Recreation/Special-Events/Antique-Car-Show.

Old Town Festival of Speed & Style

Sunday, May 21, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

View dozens of rare and exotic cars, famous for their speed, performance and elegance. This festival includes other activities, including live music. The festival will take place in the 200-400 blocks of King Street, and the 100 blocks of North Royal and North Fairfax in Old Town Alexandria. The festival is free to attend. For more information, visit FestivalSpeedStyleAlex.com.

AutoWorks Festival

Saturday, June 3, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Workhouse Arts Center, 9518 Workhouse Way, Lorton

The AutoWorks Festival, Celebrating the Art of the Automobile, will take place in the Workhouse Arts Center North Parking Lot. The event is free to attend. For more information, visit WorkHouseArts.org/calendar/auto-works-festival.

Sully Antique Car Show

Sunday, June 18, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly

Celebrate Father's Day at the 48th Sully Antique Car Show presented by the George Washington Chapter of the Model A Ford Club of America and Fairfax County Park Authority. Enjoy antique cars, live music, food vendors, a flea market, and tours of the first floor of the historic house. Admission is \$12/Adult, \$10/Seniors (65+), \$8/Children (5-15), Children 4 and under are free. Parking is free on the grounds at Sully. For more information, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/Parks/Sully-Historic-Site.

24th Annual Labor Day Car Show

Monday, September 4, 8 a.m.- 3 p.m.

Old Town Fairfax, Adjacent to Fire Station 3, 4081 University Drive, Fairfax

See antiques, classics, foreign, custom, street rods, muscle cars, trucks, motorcycles and more at this annual Labor Day Car Show produced by the City of Fairfax and the Clifton Lions Club. All proceeds from the show are donated to local charitable service organizations including Life with Cancer and the Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program. The show is free of charge, but donations are encouraged. For more information, visit FairfaxVa.gov/Government/Parks-Recreation/Special-Events/Labor-Day-Car-Show. ☀

May Community Calendar

Alzheimer's Association Series

In partnership with the Alzheimer's Association, the Fairfax County Public Library this spring is hosting an eight-part virtual series for those caring for patients with Alzheimer's and dementia. For more information and to register, visit bit.ly/FCPL_Alzheimers.

Open House to Celebrate Older Americans Month

Wednesday, May 3, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Young at Heart Senior Center, 4401 Sideburn Rd., Fairfax

Join us at the Green Acres Senior Center to kick off and celebrate Older Americans Month!

Virginia Cooperative Extension Presentation: Healthy Nuts & Seeds

Tuesday, May 9, 10:15-11:15 a.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; Password: 3636

Historic Fairfax City, Inc. Annual Meeting

Wednesday, May 10, 7 p.m.

Historic Blenheim, 3610 Blenheim Blvd., Fairfax
This meeting is open to the public. The featured speaker will be Dr. Lynn Rainville, Executive Director of Institutional History & Museums at Washington & Lee University. She will speak about "Virginia's Role in World War I," including the Red Cross, nurses, sailors, army combat troops, steelworkers, shipbuilders, food suppliers, pilots, stenographers, doctors and other civilian roles, as well as the 100,000 draftees, and 3,600 lives lost. Reservations are free and advised. For more information, email lindamb3510@yahoo.com.

Guided Tour of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial

Thursday, May 11, 10-11:30 a.m.

Occoquan Regional Park, 9751 Ox Road, Lorton
Join AARP Virginia for a guided tour of the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, commemorating the millions of women who engaged in the suffragist movement. The tour will be conducted rain or shine. Parking is available next to the Memorial with easy access for wheelchairs. After the tour, join us for lunch – either bring your own or purchase a meal at the Brickmakers Café. This tour is free, but you must register at events.aarp.org/TP05112023. Email aarpva@aarp.org for more information.

Vienna's Wellness & Safety Expo for Adults 55+

Friday, May 12, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry St SE, Vienna
Join Vienna Parks and Recreation for a Wellness and Safety Expo. Older adults can benefit from medical screenings and educational opportunities from local vendors providing a wide range of resources to enhance physical and mental wellbeing. This event provides a wonderful environment to nurture personal interests, learn something new, foster friendships and gather vital information. For more information, call **703-255-7801** or visit ViennaVa.gov/Residents/Concerts-and-Events/Wellness-and-Safety-Expo.

Mason District Station Open House

Saturday, May 13, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

6507 Columbia Pike, Annandale
Learn about community and county resources provided by public safety personnel from the Office of Emergency Management, Fire & Rescue, Police, and Sheriff's Office. For more information, call **703-256-7717**.

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.

Register now for Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia (LLI/NOVA) Classes and More Starting May 15

LLI/NOVA invites you to be part of its exciting 2023 Summer Term (May 30-September 1) You can also participate in other activities, including monthly forums, day trips, classes, special interest groups and social activities. LLI/NOVA is located at the Northern Virginia Community College, 8333 Little River Tpke., Annandale. To learn more about programs, go to llinova.org.

Six Pillars of Brain Health

Wednesday, May 24, 1 p.m.

Wellness Center for Older Adults, 4027 Olley Lane, Fairfax

Hosted by AARP Virginia. Learn about the six pillars of a brain-healthy lifestyle, share your brain-boosting activities, and be inspired by others. This session is a good overview for anyone interested in improving their brain health and will provide you with actionable steps you can take along with resources to learn more. For more information, visit events.aarp.org/WCOA05242023.

Aging Unbound: In Recognition of Older Americans Month

Wednesday, May 31, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Abiding Presence Lutheran Church, 6304 Lee Chapel Rd, Burke

Join us this year as we focus on the positive aspects of growing older, why everyone has a role to play in combating ageism – and how we all benefit when older adults remain engaged, independent, and included in their communities. Join us for Frontal Temporal Dementia (FTD) information, PowerBraining, Covid vaccination/boosters on-site, door prizes, therapeutic art, community resources, and dementia simulations. Contact Ndidi Uzowihe-Nuzowihe@arlingtonva.us or Delores Clearfield-dathey@capitalcitynurses.com for details.

Q: What are some of this week's programs on VCAA?

A: Thai Chi, Mixed Media Monday and Heart Nutrition.



Virtual Center
for Active Adults



Join us daily to participate in exercise, music, arts, social activities and more.


View the VCAA's full event calendar, visit bit.ly/NCSvcaa or scan here:



Brought to you in partnership Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services and ServiceSource.

Fairfax County

Services for Older Adults

703-324-7948 |  TTY 711

Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults

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 Watch **Mature Living** on Ch. 16

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FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES



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