

Golden Gazette



FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Romuald Lipinski: A Survivor Whose Perseverance was Fueled by Optimism

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

At age 98, Romuald Lipinski spends a lot of his time reflecting on the past. Much of his youth was devoted to simply surviving. His perseverance allowed him to escape Siberia, survive combat during World War II, and get an education. He credits his innate optimism with helping him overcome the many obstacles he encountered, allowing him to finally enjoy a happy and fulfilling life.

Romuald Lipinski was born in 1925, the youngest child of Edward and Salomea Lipinski. The family lived in Brzesc, Poland, where Edward’s job as a railroad physician and Salomea’s work as a midwife provided a nice middle-class life. Lipinski recalls a happy childhood, where his favorite activities included climbing trees and reading. At 10-years-old, he was an avid reader, and by age 14 was devouring huge books in a single day.



Romuald Lipinski proudly wearing the jacket, adorned with his service medals, and beret of his military uniform from his service with the Polish Army during World War II.

where despite the small space, they often welcomed refugees, Polish soldiers, and anyone else who needed a meal and a place to stay. In the chaos, Lipinski missed a year of school. The following year, he was able to attend school but found that communist indoctrination had become a major part of the curriculum under Soviet rule.

In February 1940, the Soviets began deporting Polish citizens to Siberia. On June 21, 1941, two Soviet soldiers came to the Lipinski home, telling them that they had an hour to pack, then loaded them on a truck destined for the train station. By this time, Lipinski

... continued to page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Martha Glennan Awards	5
AI and the Grandparent Scam	7
A&A Blanket Drive	10
Recognizing Captain Stuntz	11
New Year's Resolutions	14
JCA 50+ Employment Expos	16
Sponsors	18
Community Calendar	20

In September 1939, Germany invaded western Poland while Soviet forces began occupying eastern Poland, where Brzesc was located. Under Soviet occupation, the family was forced to move to a one-room apartment,

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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**.

... continued from page 1

was the only child still living at home. Although the experience was terrifying, they were lucky because they were allowed to stay together while other families were separated. Lipinski considers his deportation to be the beginning of his own odyssey, where he would endure many things while hoping only to someday return home. "Somehow, I never lost my firm belief that our experiences are only temporary and things will turn for the better. This strong optimism throughout the entire duration of my odyssey helped me enormously," he remembers.

Eventually, the family learned that the Soviets had granted amnesty to Polish exiles so they could form an army to fight against Germany. The family was able to join the Polish army – his father serving as a doctor, his mother as a nurse, and Lipinski as a volunteer.

The army was being evacuated to Persia, but the family was prevented from traveling with them when Lipinski contracted Typhus. After weeks of illness marked by delirium and a high fever, Lipinski recalls finally being able to sit up on Easter Sunday, 1942. In July 1942, the family was able to get on another transport to Persia, happy to escape the Soviet Union.

In January 1943, Lipinski was drafted into the army, said goodbye to his parents and traveled to Khanaqin, Iraq, where the Polish Army, which fought as part of the Eighth British Army, was stationed.

Lipinski was assigned to the 12 Podolski Lancers Regiment as a member of the mortar platoon. Every day they practiced operating the mortars, handling their side arms, and driving trucks and infantry

carriers. After traveling to Palestine and then Egypt, they were loaded onto transport ships destined for Italy. They arrived on December 21, 1943, at Taranto, located at the base of the heel of the Italian boot. Weather conditions were bad and food scarce, but after several

weeks, they began their trek north. The regiment's first combat position was a small village in the mountains where soldiers slept in a bombed-out church and a goat stable. The greatest danger came from the mines that were buried everywhere.

The regiment trained before being sent to Monte Cassino on April 30, 1944. After ascending single file on a narrow footpath, the soldiers dug in, hunkering down in shelters not far from the enemy. On the night of May 11, 1944, they began their offensive and after days of fighting, the Germans withdrew, leaving some of their wounded behind in the ruins of a monastery.

On the morning of May 18,

Lipinski's regiment placed their banner on the highest point of the monastery, signaling that they had taken it. Lipinski's service continued in Italy before being sent to Cadet Officers school, where he graduated in May 1945, just as the war in Europe ended.

After the war, Lipinski remained in Italy, determined to get an education, having become proficient in the language during his service. He studied chemical engineering in Turin. After a year, he traveled to Beirut, Lebanon, to visit his parents and decided to stay and study at the French University where his tentative French was helped by his knowledge of Italian and Latin. Although he enjoyed living in Beirut, he was ordered to join his regiment in England, so he and his parents set sail for England in summer 1947.



Romuald Lipinski, 1945. Photo courtesy Romuald Lipinski.

... continued to page 4

... continued from page 3

Lipinski considers the four years he spent in Leicester, England, pursuing his education to be the most difficult of his life. He was required to start all over and struggled to master English, all while navigating an unfamiliar educational system. He became so obsessed with studying that he developed insomnia.

A bright spot during this time was reuniting with his brothers – Wladek and Tadek. Wladek was injured while serving with the Polish Parachute Brigade and married a Scottish nurse following the war, and Tadek worked in Manchester as a structural designer. In November 1951, Lipinski visited Tadek and they attended a dance at the Polish Combatants Association Club. At the dance, Lipinski met Izabela (Iza) Zienkiewicz. Iza was also a Polish refugee whose family had been deported to Siberia in April 1940.

After knowing her only a short time, Lipinski loved Iza but learned that her family was planning to emigrate to the United States on January 15, 1952. On New Year's Eve, he traveled to Manchester and proposed to her. After a long separation, Iza returned to England in August 1952 and the two were wed. Iza believed that the U.S. offered the couple more opportunity than England, so with his father's encouragement, Lipinski agreed to emigrate to the U.S. After waiting for a visa and passage on a ship, he finally arrived in the U.S. on December 21, 1953.

The couple settled in Perth Amboy, NJ, and Lipinski began taking night classes at the Newark College of Engineering while working during the day. In 1956, their son Adam was born. In 1957, Lipinski graduated with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and the following year, he and Iza became U.S. citizens. The couple had two more children – Eva in 1960 and Yolanda in 1964. Lipinski earned his master's degree in civil engineering in 1961.

“I have to confess that when I came to the marketplace in Warsaw, I knew that every cobble was soaked in the blood of young people, I started to cry. For me, it was very, very emotional.”

-Romuald Lipinski

After working various jobs, Lipinski set his sights on a career with the federal government. He accepted a job as a civilian employee with the U.S. Navy designing antenna towers. The job was in Washington, D.C., so the family moved to Annandale in July 1965. Iza chose their home because it had a large yard for their children. After four years with the Navy, Lipinski joined the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, where he worked for 22 years. After retiring from the NRC, he worked for the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory for six years. In addition to his 9-5 job, Lipinski

taught courses at the University of Virginia, the Department of Agriculture Graduate School and Northern Virginia Community College.

The Lipinskis returned to Poland several times after emigrating to the U.S. In 1972, while visiting the site of the Warsaw Uprising, Lipinski remembers experiencing deep grief, saying, “I have to confess that when I

came to the marketplace in Warsaw, I knew that every cobble was soaked in the blood of young people, I started to cry. For me, it was very, very emotional.”

In 1994, the couple visited Italy to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino. While there, Lipinski and a fellow service member crossed paths with three German ex-paratroopers and the old soldiers began reminiscing. “That was an interesting conversation. We were telling them how we tried to kill them, and they were doing the same – how they were trying to kill us,” he recalls.

In 2019, Iza passed away suddenly. The couple had been married for 67 years and shared three children, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild. To his knowledge, he is the last Polish WWII veteran still living in the area. ✨

Congratulations to the Winners of the 2023 Martha Glennan Disability Inclusion and Equality Awards

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

On Dec. 11, the Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board presented Martha Glennan Disability Inclusion and Equality Awards to Cheryl Johnson, Jeremy Smith, and University Mall Theatres and Cinema Arts Theatre. This annual award recognizes people, businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, and other organizations that excel in demonstrating a commitment to promoting equal rights and community inclusion for people with disabilities in the Fairfax area and highlight how people with disabilities have significantly benefited from their efforts.

Penelope A. Gross, Vice Chair of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, provided opening remarks at the ceremony, which was hosted by the Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board and Disability Rights and Resources staff. The award recognizes people in three categories – Individual, Self-Advocate, and Group.

Cheryl Johnson, Individual Category Winner



(L-R) David Simon, chair, Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board, Supervisor Penny Gross (Mason), Cheryl Johnson, Supervisor James Walkinshaw (Braddock).

The individual category recognizes people whose work has benefited the lives of those with disabilities in the Fairfax area. Cheryl Johnson has been devoted to the disability services field for over 25 years. Since 2006, she has worked at The Arc of Northern Virginia, always with a person-centered focus. Her passion and work continue to lead to more equitable services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Specifically, her work led to an expansion of access to dental care.

Since 1998, Cheryl has also served as a companion for an individual with a disability living in a group home.

Jeremy Smith, Self-Advocate Category Winner

The Self-Advocate category recognizes an individual who has been a strong self-advocate or worked to better the lives of people with disabilities in the Fairfax area.

Jeremy Smith is fulfilling his lifelong goal of being a role model and supportive advocate for himself and others with disabilities. In 2016, he graduated from Gallaudet University with a degree in Communication Studies, and he uses social media platforms to build communities. Jeremy serves on the Board of Directors at the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons and is active with the ENDependence Center of Northern Virginia. He is currently working on a website with his Deaf Plus Advocate mission, which he is planning to launch in early 2024.

University Mall Theatres and Cinema Arts Theatre, Group Category Winner

The group category recognizes a business, non-profit,

... continued to page 6



(L-R) David Simon, chair, Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board, Supervisor James Walkinshaw (Braddock), Jeremy Smith, Supervisor Penny Gross (Mason).

... continued from page 5

or organization that has worked to benefit the lives of people with disabilities in the Fairfax area. University Mall Theatres and Cinema Arts Theatre, both owned by Mark O'Meara and managed by Dan Collins, foster an environment where high school students and adults with special needs thrive. They provide students with learning and leadership opportunities, and hire individuals with disabilities as theatre staff. The theatres also provide equitable accessible seating, food, and access for community groups, such as group homes and assisted living facilities.

The Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board congratulates these winners and thanks everyone who is continuing to support people with disabilities in all aspects of community life! ☀️



(L-R) Supervisor Penny Gross (Mason), Supervisor James Walkinshaw (Braddock), Mark O'Meara, David Simon, chair, Fairfax Area-Disability Services Board.

Program Offers Grants to Organizations Making Energy and Resiliency Upgrades

by the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination

Is your homeowners' association, nonprofit organization, or place of worship looking to make your buildings and grounds more energy efficient and resilient to climate change? The Energy Conservation Assistance Program may be able to help.

Through the program, qualifying organizations in Fairfax County can now apply for up to \$15,000 each year in reimbursement grants for conducting energy audits, improving building energy efficiency, installing solar panels, along with many other improvements.

The Energy Conservation Assistance Program is managed by the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination (OEEC) with support from the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District (NVSWCD).

Organizations eligible for assistance include common-interest communities, such as homeowners or condominium owners' associations, nonprofit organizations, and charitable institutions or associations, including places of worship in Fairfax County.



Projects that qualify for matching reimbursement grants include energy audits, LED lighting replacements, weatherization projects, smart thermostats, window replacements, ENERGYSTAR® appliance upgrades, solar panels, and cool roofs, among others.

Applications can be submitted any time of year and projects will be accepted as long as they meet eligibility requirements and funding is available.

Visit the Energy Conservation Assistance Program page at FairfaxCounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/energy-conservation-assistance-program to see if your organization is eligible to receive financial support to make energy efficiency and resiliency upgrades! ☀️

Artificial Intelligence: Taking the Grandparent Scam to the Next Level

by Martin Bailey, AARP Community Ambassador, Silver Shield Task Force

By now, you've probably heard of the grandparent scam. If not, it goes like this: the phone rings and you pick up, only to hear the voice of a person you believe is your grandchild. They explain that they have been in an accident, or arrested, or kidnapped, and are begging you to immediately send money to help them. This scam relies on emotional manipulation, creating a panic response that causes you to abandon all rational thought and simply react.

This scam originally relied on a scammer's ability to do a decent impersonation of your loved one's voice, but scammers are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to make the scam even more convincing. A March 2023 Washington Post article warned that, "Advancements in artificial intelligence have added a terrifying new layer, allowing bad actors to replicate a voice with just an audio sample of a few sentences. Powered by AI, a slew of cheap online tools can translate an audio file into a replica of a voice, allowing a swindler to make it 'speak' whatever they type."

To clone a voice, a scammer needs a sound bite between three and 30 seconds long. The longer the sound bite, the better the clone. The scammer uses AI voice-generating software to analyze what makes a person's voice unique, then produces a very convincing cloned voice that they employ in the scam. Think about all the times our voices and the voices of our loved ones have been recorded and are available online, especially on social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook.

Faced with this increasingly sophisticated scam, how can we protect ourselves? The AARP Fraud Watch Network recommends taking these steps to protect yourself:

- ◆ Set the privacy settings on your social media accounts so that only people you know can access your posts, photos and videos, and tell your loved ones to do the same. Scammers search social media for content they can use to fool you.



- ◆ If you receive a call like this, don't panic. Scammers succeed by manipulating your emotions.
- ◆ Don't engage with the caller. Hang up and call your grandchild or other family members to confirm that your grandchild is safe.
- ◆ If someone calls you claiming to be a police officer, call the law enforcement agency directly to verify that their identity and the information they provided is true.
- ◆ If you are asked to send money using a gift card, cryptocurrency or peer-to-peer payment app, it's likely a scam. Scammers like those payment methods because they're difficult to trace.

Finally, always trust your instincts. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. It is also important to stay up to date on the latest scams and fraud tactics. Visit AARP's Fraud Watch Network at aarp.org/scams for latest news as well as tips and tools to help protect yourself.

Want to learn more about how AI is being used by scammers? Join us on April 19, 2024, at Fairfax County's 7th annual Scam Jam. Check out the March 2024 issue of the Golden Gazette for additional information. 🌟

Battling Caregiver Guilt

by Allegra Joffe, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Family caregiving brings a complex combination of positive and negative emotions. Guilt is one emotion many caregivers face. There are numerous reasons why a caregiver may feel guilt, including:

- ◆ Feeling they are not taking care of their loved ones well enough.
- ◆ Blaming their loved one's deteriorating health on themselves.
- ◆ Not having enough time for their friends, spouses, children, and jobs.
- ◆ Moving their loved ones to a higher level of care.
- ◆ Not taking care of their own needs.

Feelings of guilt can impact a caregiver's mental health negatively and should be addressed. Identify your guilt by writing down what makes you feel guilty. Talk to a trusted person or professional about your feelings.



Join a caregiver support group and learn how others overcome caregiving guilt. If you wish to learn more about caregiving resources, call our Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources Line at **703-324-7948** or visit FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults.

Stroke Support Group, Helping Hands Stroke Club Fridays from 1 to 2 p.m.

Are you caring for a loved one who is a stroke survivor? The Helping Hands Stroke Club hosts support groups for stroke survivors and caregivers. The group focuses on understanding stroke and its impact, reducing risk, adjusting to life after stroke, and much more. To receive location details and register, email Erica Wrenn at Erica.Wrenn@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **703-246-7151**.

Caregiver Stroke Support Group Friday, January 12, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

The Fairfax Health Department offers a caregiver support stroke group that provides a safe place for caregivers to honestly talk about challenges regarding a beloved stroke survivor.

To receive location details and register, email Erica Wrenn at Erica.Wrenn@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **703-246-7151**.

Chronic Disease Self-Management Program Wednesdays, Jan. 10 – Feb. 14, 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Messiah United Methodist Church, 6215 Rolling Rd, Springfield 22152

Don't let ongoing health problems stop you from living the life you enjoy. Fairfax County's **Chronic Disease Self-Management Program** is a FREE six-week group interactive workshop series for individuals who are interested in learning how to live better by effectively managing their ongoing health conditions. Learn positive strategies for better overall health, such as managing pain and fatigue, sleeping and eating better, increasing physical activity and so much more! Connect with others managing similar concerns. Take control of your health and improve your overall happiness! Space is limited, and preregistration is required: tinyurl.com/CDSMP123. For more information, please call Kristin Martin, **703-324-7577**, TTY 711, or email Kristin.Martin@fairfaxcounty.gov. ☀

Caregiver Consultations

Between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday

Need an in-depth conversation with a social worker about the caregiving needs of a loved one? Free one-hour consultations are available through ElderLink. Call **703-324-5374**, TTY 711, and ask for a caregiver consultation.

Tai Chi Classes

January through April 2024 on Sundays from 1-2 p.m.

Fairfax County Public Library is hosting free Tai Chi classes in-person at the Sherwood Regional Library. This style is also known as the Chen Short Form or the Yang Short Form. While this style has its roots in martial arts, the form is taught as a method of meditation and relaxation. The form emphasizes posture, relaxation, and smooth continuous motion. This is a beginner class, appropriate for students with little or no experience in Tai Chi. Learn more and register at bit.ly/FFXTaiChi. ✨

The Crisis Assistance Program Can Help with Heating Emergencies

by the Public Assistance and Employment Services Division of DFS

Are you facing a “no heat” situation? The Crisis Assistance Program helps households overcome energy emergencies that cannot be met by other resources. An energy emergency is determined when a household has no heat or is in imminent danger of being without heat. The open application period for the Crisis Assistance Program closes on March 15, 2024. Learn more and apply for the Crisis Assistance Program at CommonHelp.Virginia.gov or by calling **1-833-522-5582**. ✨



Mature Living – SHAPE the Future of Aging

Fairfax County’s aging population is increasing. In 2019, 1 in 7 county residents were aged 65 and older and that number is expected to grow to 1 in 5 residents by 2035! To meet that demand, Fairfax County is working on the SHAPE the Future of Aging initiative to continue to improve Fairfax County’s ability to be a place to age well, and for older adults to live safely, independently and with dignity.

Tara Turner, Director of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging joins host Anne Hall to discuss SHAPE:

- ◆ Services for Older Adults and Family Caregivers
- ◆ Housing and Neighborhood Supports
- ◆ Access to Mobility Options
- ◆ Personal Well-Being
- ◆ Economic Stability and Planning

Channel 16 also spoke with Cathy Cole, Chair of the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging. She shared her experience on the commission, and the important work she and the other volunteers do on behalf of our older residents.

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. ✨

The Holidays are All Wrapped Up!

by Emily Swenson, Volunteer Solutions

The Fairfax County Department of Family Services' Adult & Aging (A&A) annual holiday project provides an opportunity for community partners and A&A staff to sponsor and bring holiday cheer to older adults and adults with disabilities in the Fairfax area who have limited or no social supports. Each sponsored adult receives a gift bag made up of donations from local organizations and individuals. The donations vary from year to year, but in recent years have included some combination of the following items: handcrafted holiday crafts, comfort care kits, toys for their pet, and emergency kits. This year we held a new blanket drive with individuals, civic groups and businesses donating 200+ warm cozy blankets that helped to "wrap" our clients in warmth this holiday season.

Due to the hard work and dedication of community members, businesses, and the A&A employees, the annual holiday project served 200 older adults and adults with disabilities in December 2023.

Our sincerest thanks to the members of the following organizations for their kindness, generosity, and support.

- ◆ The Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads for contributing personal care and comfort items.



Top, (L-R) Jim Hickey, (Fairfax County Health Department Medical Reserve Corp volunteer), Carol Wright (A&A staff), Alycia Blackwell (DFS staff), Sarah Shannon (Rotary Club of Bailey's Crossroads), Jeannine Deem, Emily Swenson, Nadia Hoonan and Jodi Smith (A&A staff) gathered to assemble the gift bags. Right, a donation box overflowing with donated blankets.



In addition to a new blanket, the gift bags included handcrafted holiday crafts, comfort care kits, pet toys and emergency kits.

- ◆ The Young Men's Service League of Vienna-Oakton and multiple service groups for donating holiday cards.
- ◆ Northern Virginia Handcrafters Guild contributed charming crafts.
- ◆ Fairfax Pets on Wheels contributed cat and dog toys for the clients with pets.
- ◆ The many individuals and groups that donated blankets!

We greatly appreciate our compassionate, dedicated community partners and donors who help us remind isolated older adults that others care. ☀

White Oaks Elementary School Recognizes Longtime Volunteer Captain Stuntz

by Fairfax County Public Schools Office of Communications

At White Oaks Elementary School in Burke, one of their most beloved volunteers is a 91-year-old Navy veteran. Captain Harley Stuntz, known to everyone in the building simply as “Captain,” has volunteered at the school for 25 years. Before that, he had a storied career in the Navy, which started when he enrolled in the United States Naval Academy in 1951. Before his retirement in 1978, Stuntz spent 20 years as a Naval Airman, going on six tours in Vietnam.

Looking back on his time serving, Stuntz said, “I enjoyed it. To me, it was an adventure.”

Stuntz recalled when he played a role in an adventure for all humankind. On July 24, 1969, the aircraft carrier USS Hornet recovered the Apollo 11 command module after it splashed down in the Pacific Ocean. Inside the capsule were astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins, back on Earth after making history as the first men to land on the Moon.

Stuntz was the retrieval officer aboard the Hornet, stationed at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii.

“That was exciting,” said Stuntz. “President Nixon came aboard with his entourage and watched the



Captain Stuntz with some of the students who attend White Oaks Elementary School. Photo by Donnie Biggs.

retrieval of the capsule. That was probably the highlight of my career.”

White Oaks Elementary was a brand-new school when Captain began volunteering in a classroom. Today, he’s in the workroom two days a week, running the copy and laminating machines. Stuntz has logged at least 7,500 volunteer hours at White Oaks since he started in 1998, and both the teachers and the students are thankful for every minute of it.

“His dedication to our school is unbelievable,” said Principal Ryan Richardson, “He’s a cornerstone here. When he’s not here, people notice. And let me tell you, he’s missed very few days in the 10 years I’ve been here.” ✨

Volunteer Advocates Needed!

by Katie Patterson, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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

those who are willing to complete a comprehensive initial three-day training, commit to a minimum one year of service, and who can devote at least four hours per week assisting residents at assigned facilities close to home or work. In addition, each volunteer will be required to participate in ongoing training opportunities throughout their tenure with the NVLT COP. For more information about NVLT COP’s volunteer program, or other nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLT COP at **703-324-5861, TTY 711**, or contact Claire Yeomans by email at Claire.Yeomans@FairfaxCounty.gov. ✨

New Year, New Possibilities to Help

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator

It's a new year and a great time to consider how you might serve your community as a volunteer. Below are two organizations to check out. If these don't fit your current interests, there are many opportunities at bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER.

Retired and Senior Volunteer Program - Northern Virginia (RSVP-NV) is one of the core programs of AmeriCorps Seniors and is sponsored by Volunteer Fairfax. RSVP-NV's mission is to mobilize the skills and experience of its volunteers, aged 55+, to help meet community needs in Arlington County, Fairfax County, and the cities of Fairfax, Falls Church, and Alexandria. The program focuses on matching volunteers within the specific framework that is required through the AmeriCorps Seniors federal grant that funds the program. The different types of volunteer activities currently range from community food support, education success, transportation assistance for seniors, workforce preparation, and emergency preparedness.

Volunteers connect to opportunities that best match their interest, location preferences, and preferred time commitment. Volunteers can serve directly with one of the program's 40 community partners, comprised of non-profit and public agencies, and/or participate in group service projects that are coordinated by the RSVP staff. Some benefits of joining RSVP-NV include personalized volunteer experiences, recognition events, optional mileage reimbursements, and supplemental volunteer insurance.

RSVP-NV volunteers through AmeriCorps Seniors make a tangible impact on the community through regular volunteer and service projects to assist nonprofit organizations and initiatives across the region. Join other RSVP members and consider serving in the local RSVP-NV program to support causes you care about.



RSVP volunteers working together to pack 100 hospital comfort kits for the American Red Cross.

Go to bit.ly/RSVPNova to learn more and register. You can also reach out to Karen Coon for more information at kcoon@volunteerfairfax.org or **703-403-5360**.

Do you have a skill you'd like to share with older adults at a Fairfax County senior center? The centers need volunteer instructors in fitness, dance, art, music, languages and more. They're always looking for entertainers, too. Go to bit.ly/SeniorCtrOpps for the current list and bit.ly/FFXSVOL to learn more about Volunteer Solutions, a partnership between the Department of Family Services and Neighborhood and Community Services. Email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **703-324-5406** with questions.

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

Winter Weather Safety

by Moriah Kitaeff, Department of Emergency Management and Security

When winter weather is in the forecast, the safest thing you can do is stay inside. That said, if you must go outside in icy or snowy conditions, there are precautions you should take:

- ◆ Make sure steps and walkways are clear before you walk. Be especially careful if you see wet pavement that could be iced over.
- ◆ Wear boots with non-skid soles.
- ◆ If you use a cane, replace the rubber tip before it is worn smooth.
- ◆ Wear multiple loose layers of clothing. The area between the layers helps to keep you warm.
- ◆ Put on a hat and scarf, as a large amount of body heat is lost from the head and neck when uncovered.
- ◆ Change your clothes right away if they get damp or wet.

Power outages are another concern with winter weather, as ice and snow can cause trees to fall and damage power lines. When this happens, it makes sense to want to look for ways to warm your home, but it must always be done in a safe manner:

- ◆ Install working carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can kill you.

- ◆ Never heat your home with a gas stovetop or oven.
- ◆ Generators and fuel should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows, doors, and attached garages.

To learn more about winter weather safety, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/winterweather](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/winterweather). ☀

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 COA are appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church.

At the meeting on Dec. 20, the COA continued discussion of the implementation of the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan and Initiative Development Committees. SHAPE Initiative Development Committee meetings will be ongoing through the duration of the Plan.

COA Meeting, Wednesday, January 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](https://www.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. ☀

READY FAIRFAX

ABOUT CO DETECTORS...

WHAT ARE THEY ANYWAYS?



Carbon monoxide is a harmful, odorless gas that is hard to detect. Having a CO detector can protect you and your whole family! If you hear your CO alarm go off, get to fresh air! Don't forget to evacuate pets and any family members who may need help!

@Readyfairfax
Ready Fairfax

These New Year's Resolutions are Keepers

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Making a New Year's resolution is easy. Keeping the resolution is the difficult part. Often the issue is that we identify the goal but not the steps and resources needed to achieve it. To help you make a resolution you will keep, here are a few suggestions and helpful resources to get you started.

Resolve to Learn Something New

Learning is a lifelong pursuit and can take many forms. It's never too late to explore a new subject, learn a new skill or master a new language. Check out these educational resources:

- ◆ **The Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia**, affiliated with the Annandale campus of Northern Virginia Community College, offers adults 50 and older the opportunity to take classes on various subjects, attend guest lectures, and enjoy cultural and social events. Membership is \$110/year. Learn more at LLINova.org.
- ◆ **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute** at George Mason University offers classes and activities at three area locations, trips to local destinations, and more than two dozen clubs for members to join. The fee for new members is \$300/year; \$450/year for returning members. Learn more at Olli.gmu.edu.
- ◆ **FCPS Adult and Community Education** offers classes for adults, including many world languages. Most courses run 10-12 sessions and many meet online. Fees vary by class. Learn more at AceClasses.fcps.edu.
- ◆ Fairfax County Public Library cardholders can access a variety of free online learning resources, including **Mango Languages**, offering conversation language learning in over 70 languages, **LinkedIn Learning**, covering a variety of topics in business and technology, **Universal Class**, offering hundreds of online courses, and more. Learn more at FairfaxCounty.gov/library.



Older adults in Fairfax County are fortunate to have an array of lifelong learning opportunities available to them.

Resolve to Take up a New Hobby

Did you know that January is National Hobby Month? What perfect timing if your resolution is to pursue a new hobby. Here are some ideas and resources to inspire you:

- ◆ **Birdwatching** – birds are fascinating, especially when you take the time to observe them. Birdwatching is one of the easiest hobbies for a beginner because it requires little equipment – sturdy walking shoes, a field guide and a pair of binoculars. Watch birds in your own neighborhood or visit local parks. Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/parks and NovaParks.com for a park near you.
- ◆ **Reading** – If you want to read more but find it difficult to sit still, consider audiobooks. You can enjoy them while performing other activities, like cooking or loading the dishwasher. If you love reading and want to discuss your latest read, consider joining a book club. Learn more about audiobooks and book clubs at your local library branch or on the library's website.
- ◆ **Gardening** – Developing a green thumb takes hard work, patience and most importantly, knowledge. Get advice, resources, news and information from the masters – Fairfax County Master Gardeners (FairfaxGardening.org) and Green Spring

Extension Master Gardeners ([FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/green-spring/extension-master-gardeners](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/green-spring/extension-master-gardeners).)

- ◆ **Puzzles** – In addition to the satisfaction you feel upon completing a puzzle, this hobby is also good for your health. Studies have shown that working on puzzles reduces stress and helps improve memory. To tap into a steady supply of puzzles, consider swapping them. Puzzle swapping opportunities can be found on Facebook by joining your local Puzzle Swap and Give Freely groups. Puzzle swaps are also hosted at library branches. Ask at your local branch or check the library website for upcoming swaps.



Joining a senior center is a great way to connect with your peers while enjoying a variety of activities, including fitness classes.

Resolve to Make Connections

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation was an issue for older adults. Family members may live far away, and friends often move after retiring. Here are a few ways to get involved and make some new connections:

- ◆ **Volunteer** – opportunities to give back abound in our community and are a great way to connect with like-minded people. Find volunteer opportunities at bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER, bit.ly/FXVSVOL, and [VolunteerFairfax.org](https://www.VolunteerFairfax.org).
- ◆ **Join a Senior Center** – Meet new friends while enjoying a wide variety of activities.
 - ◆ **Fairfax County** operates 15 senior centers. Membership is available to adults 50 and older and costs \$24-\$48/year for county residents and \$100/year for non-residents. Learn more at [FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/senior-centers](https://www.FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/senior-centers).

- ◆ **The Young at Heart Senior Center** in the City of Fairfax welcomes adults 55 and older to join. Membership is free for City of Fairfax residents and \$50/year for non-residents. Learn more at [FairfaxVa.gov/government/parks-recreation/the-young-at-heart-senior-center](https://www.FairfaxVa.gov/government/parks-recreation/the-young-at-heart-senior-center).
- ◆ Adults 50 and older can join the **City of Falls Church Senior Center**. Membership is free for Falls Church residents and \$12/person for non-residents with membership running Sept. 1-Aug. 31. Learn more at [FallsChurchVa.gov/611/Senior-Center](https://www.FallsChurchVa.gov/611/Senior-Center).
- ◆ McLean Community Center's **Seniors in Action** is a recreation program for adults 50+. Membership is \$100 per year/\$48 for MCC district residents. Learn more at [McleanCenter.org/seniors-in-action](https://www.McleanCenter.org/seniors-in-action).

Resolve to Safeguard Your Health

Does anyone enjoy getting a check-up, visiting the dentist, or getting a shot? It's safe to say that the answer is usually no. Despite this, each of us should resolve to make and keep these appointments to safeguard our health and wellbeing.

- ◆ An annual checkup is the best way to detect signs of illness or disease early.
- ◆ Five health screenings are vital to maintaining overall health and fitness: eye exam, hearing test, blood pressure check, bone density scan, and cancer screenings (breast, prostate, and colon cancer).
- ◆ Stay protected by getting the vaccines recommended for you. Flu shots, COVID-19, shingles vaccine, and pneumonia vaccine will help protect your health. Learn more about vaccines for adults at [FairfaxCounty.gov/health/immunization/adult](https://www.FairfaxCounty.gov/health/immunization/adult).
- ◆ Visit your dentist at least once a year, even if you have no natural teeth or have dentures. Studies have found a link between heart disease and periodontal disease so maintaining your oral health can provide benefits beyond a nice smile. ☀

Looking for Employment Opportunities and Job Search Skills? JCA has Two Terrific Employment Programs to Help 50+ Jobseekers!

by Jodie Rasch, Director of Employment Programs, Jewish Council for the Aging



The Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) has two exciting programs designed for people 50 and better who are looking for employment. The Virtual 50+ Employment Expos and The Career Gateway help the 50+ community retool, recharge, and reinvent themselves for today's amazing job market. Both programs offer the 50+ jobseeker opportunities to learn and develop critical job-seeking skills to find meaningful employment.

JCA's Career Gateway program is an intensive, online, interactive, job-search skills training program designed to help adults over age 50 prepare resumes, develop critical job-seeking skills, and link them with opportunities to find meaningful employment. The Career Gateway program assists jobseekers with their resume writing (and rewriting), their use of LinkedIn and other social media sites in their job search, the navigation of their online job search and application process, and provides personality quizzes, interview techniques, elevator pitches, and even a mentor – all for the nominal fee of \$75! Each session consists of five days of online, interactive, training in small groups conducted by a skilled facilitator from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

We have four remaining Career Gateway sessions before Summer 2024. The January session will be held on Jan. 16, 17, 19, 22, and 24, and will be held virtually as an interactive, online, Zoom program. Find session dates

and additional information at accessjca.org/career-gateway. Registration for all four sessions is open. Space is limited and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. To register, please call **301-255-4215** or email **Career.Gateway@AccessJCA.org** to secure your spot in your desired session. We also offer optional employment-related tech classes (CareerTech) in Excel, PowerPoint, Windows/Word, and additional LinkedIn training. New to our tech offerings is a course on "Becoming a Cyber Savvy 50+ Jobseeker."

The JCA's free **Virtual 50+ Employment Expos** are for Montgomery County, MD, and Northern Virginia residents and employers. The Expos successfully link employers with job seekers age 50+ in a fun, informative, and mutually beneficial way. If you are an age 50 or better job seeker, you won't want to miss these Expos! On the day of the Expo, join us from 10 to 11:45 a.m. for two morning workshops to learn about current hiring trends and practices to improve your job search. Then, from noon to 2 p.m., network and virtually meet eight to 12 employers hiring 50+ jobseekers like yourself. Registration is free and required for each Expo you attend.

The next Northern Virginia Expo is Thursday, Feb. 15. Be there for the first morning workshop and learn about the Fairfax County hiring process - they are hiring! The second workshop will discuss Fairfax County employment services for county residents. At noon, hear from area employers who hire age 50+ jobseekers! All jobseekers age 50+ are welcome to attend all the Expos. Register today at virtualexpos.accessjca.org.

Fairfax County employers with at least three different professional job openings: if you are looking for smart, accomplished professionals, register today to be an Employer Presenter and find your next standout employee. Registration is required and complimentary for all at virtualexpos.accessjca.org. 🌟

... Community Calendar continued from back cover

Arts for the Aging Presents: Movement w/ Sandra Roachford

Wednesday, January 31, 1-2 p.m.

Participants will explore seasonal flowers through movement, music and sound. Feel free to bring something you can dance with such as a scarf or cloth to enhance the movement experience.

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

Dementia Man: An Existential Journey - Live Performance

Wednesday, January 31, 7-8 p.m.

Insight Memory Care Center – Fairfax, 3953 Pender Drive Suite 100, Fairfax

Join us for the autobiographical story of a man who faces his diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease by actor and playwright Samuel A. Simon. In this full-length theatrical piece, Simon takes the stage as a man facing his cognitive decline and asks the hard questions of what to do next in the face of what he calls "an existential journey." It is a peek into the head and heart of the struggle with a broken medical system and a personal and family challenge. Register online at InsightMCC.org/events.

Aging Smartly Class

Saturday, February 24, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 8304 Old Keene Mill Road, Springfield

Experts in their fields will cover various topics including estate planning, living arrangements, downsizing, aged driving, preparing for death, funeral prep, what to do after the death of a loved one, and more. Fee of \$20 (prepaid) which includes lunch. For more information, call **703-451-5855** or visit www.poplc.org/care.

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.

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](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults)

- Adult Protective Services
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Case Management Services
- Disability Resources
- Health & Wellness Programming
- Home Delivered Meals
- Information and Referrals
- In-Home Care
- Long Term Care Ombudsman
- Medicare Counseling (VICAP)
- Nutritional Counseling & Education
- Respite
- Screenings & Assessment
- Support Services

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 Watch **Mature Living** on Ch. 16

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FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES



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January Community Calendar

Love to Sing? Join the Encore Chorale of Fairfax or Fairfax ROCKS

Encore Creativity for Older Adults ensembles are non-auditioned choirs for adults 55+ with no experience required. The Encore Chorale of Fairfax, singing everything from choral classics to Broadway hits, meets Tuesdays starting Jan. 9 from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at St. George's United Methodist Church. Fairfax ROCKS, singing choral arrangements of rock 'n' roll hits, meets Fridays starting Jan. 11 from 10:30 a.m.-noon at Church of the Good Shepherd in Vienna. For additional information, including registration fees, and to register, visit encorecreativity.org/register.

Vendors Needed! Young at Heart Senior Center Advisory Council Craft and Vendor Market

The market will take place on Saturday, March 9, 2024, 9 a.m.-2 p.m., at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center. If you are interested in selling your crafts or merchandise, spaces are \$45 each. For information and/or a Vendor Registration form, please call Mary Fazio at 571-623-4979, email CRAFTV2024@gmail.com, or call the Green Acres Senior Center at 703-273-6090.

Brain Gym

Fridays, Jan. 5, Feb. 2, 2-3 p.m.

George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale

Improve your brain health with fun exercises like sudoku, word puzzles, memorization games, and more. Come to one or all the sessions. No registration. For older adults. For more information, call 703-256-3800.

Elder Fraud Prevention

Wednesday, January 10, 1-2:30 p.m.

Virtual and in-person at Insight Memory Care Center - Fairfax, 3953 Pender Drive Suite 100, Fairfax
Worried about your loved ones falling victim to fraud? We will discuss the connection between elder fraud and other schemes. Learn about social engineering scams, how to avoid falling victim to fraud, and steps to take if you are a victim of fraud. This class will be held both virtually and in-person. Select your attendance type when you register at InsightMCC.org/events.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Presents: In Our Own Voices

Tuesday, January 23, 10:15-11:15 a.m.

The presentation provides a personal perspective of mental health conditions, as leaders with lived experience talk openly about what it's like to have a mental health condition. 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

... continued to page 17