



# Golden Gazette

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

## Christopher Johnston: Creating Connections Through Music

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Christopher Johnston believes that music, more than any other art form, has the power to affect people in positive and profound ways. As the long-time music director and conductor of the NOVA Symphony Orchestra, his goal with every performance is to create a beautiful, shared experience for both the musicians and their audience. As the orchestra celebrates their 30th anniversary, Johnston reflects on his musical career and looks forward to what comes next.

Christopher Johnston was born in Washington, D.C. to Norman and Jacklyn Johnston, both consummate music lovers. During his childhood, the family moved out to the country, aka Fairfax County. Johnston's



*Christopher Johnston has been the Music Director and Conductor of the NOVA Symphony Orchestra since 1996.*

musical education began when he was eight years old with piano and flute lessons. His father, also a musician, enjoyed playing guitar in his favorite genre – jazz. Johnston went to Fairfax County Public Schools and attended Lake

Braddock Secondary School starting in 1973, the year it opened. He was very involved in music during high school and began composing as a teen. Johnston went on to Indiana University, where he received his Bachelor of Music in composition.

Johnston returned to Fairfax County after college and initially worked as an independent contractor – composing, conducting and teaching. He then served as Music Director at Lord of Life Lutheran Church, a large congregation in Fairfax, where he spent eight years composing and directing their music program. In 1995, he began teaching at the Annandale campus of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA). From 1995-1996, he attended George Mason University, earning his Master of Arts in conducting.

In 1992, the Reunion Music Society (RMS) was co-founded by Dr. Claiborne Richardson, a lifelong educator who was first vice president of the Fairfax County Branch of the NAACP, and served on the College Board of NOVA for eight years as vice chair and chair. A nonprofit organization, the RMS was created with the mission of supporting young and

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Caregiving and Men's Health	5
Virtual Reality Training	8
Elder Abuse Awareness Day	10
Charge Up Fairfax	11
Farmers Market Programs	12
Bank Imposter Scam	14
Sponsors	17
Community Calendar	20

... continued to page 3

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## GOLDEN GAZETTE

Adult and Aging Services  
12011 Government Center Pkwy.  
Suite 530  
Fairfax, VA 22035  
[FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults](http://FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults)  
[DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov)  
703-324-GOLD (4653)

**Michael Becketts**  
Director, Department of Family Services

**Trina Mayhan-Webb**  
Division Director, Adult and Aging  
[Trina.Mayhan-Webb@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Trina.Mayhan-Webb@FairfaxCounty.gov)

**Gwen Jones**  
Editor, Golden Gazette  
[Gwendolyn.Jones@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Gwendolyn.Jones@FairfaxCounty.gov)

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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](mailto:DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call **703-324-GOLD**.

... continued from page 1

unknown composers and performers and helping them introduce their works to the community; discovering and presenting little-known composers and seldom heard music; and promoting music of different cultures and heritages for diverse audiences. Christopher's father, Norman, was also a founding member of the RMS and both his father and mother served on the board.

Two years after its founding, the RMS and NOVA President Richard J. Ernst formed a partnership to create the NOVA-Annandale Symphony Orchestra (later renamed the NOVA Symphony Orchestra) with Dr. Richardson serving as Music Director. At the time, NOVA was one of the only community colleges to have a symphony orchestra. The orchestra commissioned Johnston to compose a piece for their first inaugural concert, which he also conducted. Not long after, in 1996, he was asked to take over as music director of the orchestra, a role he's held ever since.

The NOVA Symphony Orchestra is comprised of volunteer musicians and NOVA students, who earn college credit while playing with the orchestra. In the 28 years that Johnston has served as director, it has grown significantly and now numbers about 90 musicians, with a waitlist of musicians who want to join. Johnston understands the appeal, saying, "I think it's the literature that we play, the experiences that we offer, and the venues that we play that are really attractive to people."

Auditions aren't required to join the orchestra, just a desire to play, perform, and learn from other musicians. Johnston considers the unique mix of musicians a plus, saying, "The NOVA Symphony Orchestra is probably the most intergenerational group in the area. And by that, I mean we have retired marine band musicians, current Fairfax County Public School teachers, and college students playing with us, so the age range is somewhere from 18 to 80." As leader, it is his role to manage and motivate the musicians, mediate conflicts, and remind them of their primary goal – to create a positive experience for their audience.

It is also Johnston's responsibility to serve as conductor, a role he loves. "The conductor is a performer who controls and maintains and projects the artistic vision for the group," he says. He enjoys how each performance

is unique, saying "There is something quite magical about it. It's not the same ever. Every performance is going to be different in some way and you just don't know what that's going to be until you're actually in it. "

In the summer of 2000, Johnston was hired to lead a new Music and Computer Technology (MCT) program at Fairfax Academy for Communications & the Arts. The academy is a special Fairfax County Public School program offering elective courses to help prepare students for careers in the arts. Students enrolled in MCT learn how to use computers and software to produce and publish their own music, record music digitally, and improve their basic musicianship skills. After accepting the role, Johnston discovered that no MCT curriculum existed, so after teaching for a year, he wrote the curriculum, which has since been adopted by a second MCT program at West Potomac High School, as well as other MCT programs. A year after he joined Fairfax Academy, Johnston's wife, Song, was hired to lead the academy's Korean language program. The couple juggled their demanding careers while raising their son, Andrew.

One goal of the NOVA Symphony Orchestra is to support young composers and help them successfully introduce their works to the community. With Johnston leading both the orchestra and the MCT program, a relationship developed between the two. "We premiered numerous works by kids from the academy and because I wore both hats, teaching composition for the county at the academy and conducting the symphony orchestra, I could make those things work in tandem with each other. It was a great relationship," he recalls. For one student, having his work performed by an orchestra was a turning point. The student went on to study music at The University of California, Berkeley, and now composes music for films. NOVA Symphony Orchestra has also performed the work of NOVA students, including a recent instance where the student not only composed the piece but conducted it as well.

In addition to serving as music director and teaching, Johnston continued to compose original works. He often draws from one of his favorite musical genres – folk music – for his compositions. In 2005, the NOVA Symphony Orchestra premiered his work, "Variations on Arirang," based on a Korean folk song. Years later, he

... continued to page 4

... continued from page 3

composed a variation to the piece that they performed. Johnston has also been inspired by folk tales, writing a piece based on the tall tales of Stormalong, a 30-foot-tall mythic New England sea captain. He also enjoys writing music for children and believes more works like Sergei Prokofiev’s “Peter and the Wolf” are needed.

Johnston believes that music can impact lives in profound ways. Attending a concert and experiencing music together creates a sense of connection among the audience. Additionally, listening to music has been shown to lower blood pressure, alleviate anxiety and relieve depression. He recalls that during the last years of her life, his mother sought refuge from her illness in her favorite music, saying, “She didn’t want to do anything else except listen to music. She said she always felt better after listening. That music spoke to her, and it made those last months and years of her life better and made her illness more bearable.”

At the end of the 2022 school year, the Johnstons retired from Fairfax Academy. Retirement has allowed the couple to devote more time to travel, finally visiting places they weren’t able to while teaching full time. They took a memorable cruise through the Panama Canal, a place Johnston has always dreamed of visiting. The couple also hopes to visit Antarctica and Southeast Asia.

In addition to leading the NOVA Symphony Orchestra, Johnston teaches music composition and serves as music director of his church. He is also teaching himself how to tune pianos using online tutorials and YouTube videos. Someday, he hopes to create, produce and host a podcast for young musicians.

To celebrate NOVA Symphony Orchestra’s 30th anniversary, the orchestra board has been combing through the works they’ve performed over the years and selecting pieces to bring back and perform during their 2024 concerts. Over the summer, they will perform three concerts as part of Fairfax County Park Authority’s Summer Entertainment Series. They will also be the first orchestra to perform at Green Spring Village’s newly renovated space. For their Fall concert, they are excited to perform Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. To learn more about upcoming concerts and celebrations, visit [reunionmusicsociety.org](https://reunionmusicsociety.org). 🌟

## Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

by Linda Hernandez-Giblin, 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 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 May 15 COA meeting, 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 throughout the duration of the plan. The COA also heard a presentation from Robert O’Quinn, Neighborhood and Community Services, on the technology instruction provided at Fairfax County Senior Centers. The June 12 meeting is scheduled one week earlier than the regular date, due to the Juneteenth holiday. The COA will hear a presentation from Dr. Tracey Gendron, from Virginia Commonwealth University, on disrupting ageism.

### COA Meeting, Wednesday, June 12, Noon

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86440398946?pwd=YtLbCd1VyKkZ4EEMyYA7QbeaY66Vtf.1>

Password: @COA062024

Or Telephone: 888-270-9936 (US Toll Free) or USA 602-333-0032; Conference code: 985044

To obtain meeting materials, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/fairfax-area-commission-on-aging/meetings](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/fairfax-area-commission-on-aging/meetings) or contact [Linda.Hernandez-Giblin@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Linda.Hernandez-Giblin@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call 703-324-5859. For ADA accommodations, contact [Ana.Valdivia@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:Ana.Valdivia@FairfaxCounty.gov) or call 571-407-6960 TTY: VA Relay 711. 🌟



## Caregiving and Its Impact on Men's Health

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

June is Men's Health Month, an annual recognition created to increase awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys. While it is important to guard against disease, circumstances in your life can also significantly impact your health and well-being, so it is important to be aware of resources available to help.

Increasingly, older men are taking on the role of caregiver for a loved one, often following a health emergency or diagnosis. This situation can take an enormous physical and/or mental toll on the caregiver.

Mike Keel, who is 80 years old, became a caregiver to his wife Susan when she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2011. Initially, he was able to cope as a full-time caregiver, crediting his family and Alzheimer's caregiver support group for providing emotional support. However, the burden of caregiving eventually became too much, so Keel searched online for help. "As a caregiver, it gets to a point when you have to get help," he shares.

He contacted the Adult and Aging Division of Fairfax County's Department of Family Services and after finding out that they qualified for services, a social services specialist lined up a respite caregiver for Susan several times a week, giving Keel some much needed time for himself. After a decade of caring for Susan, her condition deteriorated, and it became unsafe for her to remain at home. She needed to live in a facility that could provide 24-hour care. Again, the social services specialist stepped up, providing Keel with assistance to determine his wife's eligibility for Medicaid and helping him locate a facility nearby that could provide the appropriate level of care.



*Mike Keel became a full-time caregiver to his wife, Susan, after she was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease in 2011. Photo courtesy Mike Keel.*

While Keel doesn't believe that caregiving impacted him physically, he recalls that the emotional toll was terrible. "You just deal with it. You reach a point when you have no time for yourself. Everything you do revolves around taking care of them," he shares. The experience of caring for Susan also resulted in Keel becoming socially isolated. "I used to do a lot of activities with friends. When Alzheimer's comes along you lose those relationships because people keep going but you're not," he says.

Keel credits his religious faith and his Alzheimer's caregiver support group with getting him through the most difficult times. Having navigated a difficult caregiving journey, he encourages other men

to seek help, saying, "Don't be embarrassed about your situation. Men are hesitant to reach out for help. You're going to need help and you can't do it by yourself. Take all the help you can get." He also advises caregivers to learn as much as they can about their loved one's condition and to contact the Adult and Aging Division of Fairfax County's Department of Family Services to find out about available resources and get advice on caring for their loved one. Caregivers may also find some comfort in Keel's advice, "You learn that this disease is not a problem you can solve. It's a big change and it's hard at first but it gets easier. Take it day by day."

To learn more about Family Caregiver Support Programs available from the Department of Family Services Adult and Aging Division, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/family-caregiver-support-programs](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/family-caregiver-support-programs). You may also contact the Adult and Aging Division's Aging, Disability and Caregiver Resources (ADCR) phone line to speak with a social services specialist Monday through Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. by calling **703-324-7948**. 🌟

## Family Caregiver Support: Education for Family Caregivers

by Allegra Joffe, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

Family caregivers can feel confused, lost, and overwhelmed when trying to know how to best care for their loved ones. Family caregivers are often not trained or educated in their loved one's diagnosis, even though they are responsible for providing the majority of day-to-day and medical care. Without education, caregivers may feel increasingly frustrated and less hopeful about their caregiving journey. There are several organizations that provide family caregiver education and training free-of-cost. Caregivers who participate in caregiving education sessions, workshops and conferences often share that they feel less stressed, more empowered, and more empathetic towards their loved ones.

Consider reaching out to the Area Agency on Aging, a non-profit organization that focuses on your loved one's diagnosis, and/or State caregiving organizations, that provide free education and training opportunities. Educational opportunities may include on-demand virtual webinars to accommodate caregivers with unpredictable and busy schedules.

Family caregiver education is a powerful tool for caregivers to utilize during their journey. If you wish to learn more about caregiving resources, call our Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resource Line at **703-324-7948** or visit **FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults**.



### Family Caregiver Learning Opportunities

#### Virtual Dementia Friendly Information Session

**Wednesday, June 12, Noon-1:15 p.m.**

Join this presentation and learn how to become a dementia friend. Turn your new understanding of dementia into practical action that can help someone living in your community. Presented by Allegra Joffe, Supervisor with the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, and Diane Watson, Dementia Friends Champion Volunteer. Register online at [bit.ly/DementiaFriendlyFairfax](https://bit.ly/DementiaFriendlyFairfax) or call **571-407-6961**.

#### Financial Steps and Resources for Family Caregivers

**Wednesday, June 26, Noon-1 p.m.**

In this virtual presentation hosted by the Fairfax County Area Agency on Aging, Dr. Laurel Beedon, Senior Fellow with the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement (WISER), will educate family caregivers on financial steps and resources that caregivers need to be aware of. Caregiving today often involves addressing daily financial tasks and taking on complicated decision-making responsibilities. Caregivers need to have financial and money management strategies to ensure the best decisions are made to protect both the care recipient and the caregivers' own financial future. This session will explore financial responsibilities and decisions frequently required across the caregiving lifecycle and educate attendees about information and tools available to help caregivers plan ahead. Participants will learn about common mistakes to avoid as well as the need for advanced care documents, family caregiver agreements, and tools for managing finances and expenses. Finally, attendees will learn about other resources to assist caregivers, including WISER's Financial Caregiving Hub. Register online at [bit.ly/CAREWEB1](https://bit.ly/CAREWEB1) or call **571-407-6961**.

### Are you in need of additional cooling during the summer?

The Senior Cool Care Program is a public-private partnership sponsored by Dominion Energy and administered by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services through the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging that helps low-income older adults in our jurisdiction keep cool during summer months. The program runs from May 1 through October 31, 2024.



The program provides additional cooling at home for eligible older adults, age 60 and older. If you are interested in the program, contact **703-324-7948**.

### Music For Social Well-Being

**Tuesday, June 18, 7:00-8:15 p.m.**

Hosted by the Martha Washington Library, this in-person program uses music and storytelling to bring people together and to re-engage and uplift our shared humanity in our communities. Simply put, it will help us get reacquainted with our neighbors again after the long COVID isolation. Music selections are chosen from our very diverse American Songbook from Spirituals to Rock & Roll. Calvin Earl, the US Spokesman for the African American Spirituals as a National Treasure, will guide this program with singing and storytelling in a fun and joyful gathering. Co-sponsored by the Fairfax Library Foundation. Register online at [bit.ly/SocialWell-Being](https://bit.ly/SocialWell-Being). 🌟

### Public Comment Opportunity

Please join the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging meeting on Wednesday, June 12, at Noon to provide input on the needs of older individuals and the Fairfax Area Plan.

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86440398946?pwd=YtLbCd1VyKkZ4EEMyYA7QbeaY66Vtf.1>

Password: @COA062024

Or Telephone: **888-270-9936** (US Toll Free) or USA **602-333-0032**; Conference code: **985044** 🌟

### Advocating for LGBTQ+ Elders

by Katie Patterson, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

The Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP) serves a diverse population of consumers receiving long-term care (LTC) services and must be able to offer appropriate and culturally competent services to resolve issues in a way that responds to each individual. As part of the NVLTCOP's commitment to providing inclusive services, the program maintains certification as a SAGECare Platinum credentialed organization. SAGECare credentialing includes aging LGBTQ+ cultural competency training, which supports an inclusive, person-centered approach to care and furthers the mission of the NVLTCOP to promote quality of care and life for persons receiving LTC services. For more information about SAGE advocacy and services for LGBTQ+ elders visit the SAGE website at [sageusa.org](https://sageusa.org).



As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the NVLTCOP is a resident-directed program that is often called on to assist LTC residents and consumers to advocate on their behalf to protect their rights, dignity, choices, and self-determination. For more information about inclusive and person-centered care, 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](mailto:NVLTCOP@fairfaxcounty.gov). 🌟



## Using Virtual Reality to Explore Social Isolation in Older Adults

by Lauren Elcesser, ElderLink, and Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

It can be hard to understand the difficulties and frustrations of older adults, even for those who work with older people, or are a caregiver, family member, or friend of an older adult. However, a new initiative is working to change that by allowing participants to “see through the eyes” of older adults to better understand what it is like for them while they encounter various challenges in daily life. Exploring the Dimensions of Aging through Virtual Reality is a training series offered and facilitated by ElderLink, a partnership program between the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging and Inova.



The free 75-minute facilitated virtual sessions are held via Microsoft Teams and utilize virtual reality simulations developed by Embodied Labs to highlight challenges commonly faced by older adults. Topics include how social isolation impacts an older adult, learning about the early signs and progression of Lewy Body Dementia and Parkinson’s Disease, how to navigate caregiver burnout, how to support someone with PTSD, de-escalation techniques and more.

The Frank Lab focuses on social isolation and its impact on older adults and consists of three modules – Recognizing Common Causes of Social Isolation, Identifying the Consequences of Isolation, and Creating Communities of Supportive Connection. While experiencing the Frank Lab, participants embody Frank, a 72-year-old man whose wife recently passed away. During the modules, participants experience the

destructive impacts of social isolation through Frank’s eyes and learn how it can overlap with loneliness, poor family relationships, and health. Later, while embodying Frank, participants witness how Frank can have better health, more rewarding relationships, and find purpose again when offered proper support.

Attendees are requested to complete a brief electronic pre and post survey so ElderLink can best evaluate the program’s impact. Some of the statements they are asked to respond to include:

*“I am confident in my ability to recognize the signs of social isolation in Older Adults.”*

- ◆ On a scale from 1-10 where 1= “Not confident” and 10= “Very confident,” the average pre-survey response was 5.5 and the average post-survey response was 8.7.
- ◆ Pre to post survey results indicate a 58.2% increase in confidence in participant’s ability to recognize the signs of social isolation in older adults.

*“Social isolation can strongly affect an older adult’s physical health/wellness.”*

- ◆ On a scale from 1-10 where 1= “Strongly disagree” and 10= “Strongly agree,” the average pre-survey response was 8.8 and the average post-survey response was 10.0.
- ◆ Pre to post survey results indicate a 13.7% increase in understanding social isolation’s impact to older adult’s physical health/wellness.

*“I feel confident that I can take action personally or in my community to reduce social isolation for older adults.”*

- ◆ On a scale from 1-10 where 1= “Not confident” and 10= “Very confident,” the average pre-survey response was 6.3 and the average post-survey response was 9.2.
- ◆ Pre to post survey results indicate a 46% increase in confidence in taking action personally or in their community to reduce social isolation for older adults.



The Frank Lab has been provided to human service workers, family caregivers, community members with a vested interest in the needs of older adults, and medical professionals.

One hundred percent of The Frank Lab trainees shared that they are “Very likely” to recommend Exploring Dimensions of Aging through Virtual Reality: The Frank Lab based on their training experience.

Participants provided the following comments regarding how the Dimensions of Aging through Virtual Reality: The Frank Lab, made a positive impact on them:

- ◆ “It was a wonderful training. I really got a different perspective and made me appreciate even more the importance of looking at social isolation when speaking with clients and even family members.”
- ◆ “It reminded me (of) the importance of one-on-one connection and asking the right questions. Addressing one item at a time.”
- ◆ “It highlighted techniques I can apply in current situations.”
- ◆ “I thought the virtual experience was quite effective.”
- ◆ “It reinforced the fact that older adult are underserved.”
- ◆ “More empathetic and understanding of the changes that aging has on people and how small incidents can snowball.”
- ◆ “Gave a real sense of the loneliness and isolation an older adult in Frank's circumstances might feel.”
- ◆ “I am more aware of what my family member experiences and how I can better help.”

Register online for Exploring Dimensions of Aging Labs at [tinyurl.com/exploring-aging](https://tinyurl.com/exploring-aging).

To inquire about a private training session for a community organization, please contact Deme Warner, 703-237-6027, [Demetra.Warner@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:Demetra.Warner@fairfaxcounty.gov). 🌟

## ElderLink Health & Wellness/ Caregiver Support Workshops

### Exploring the Dimensions of Aging

**Mondays, June 3, 10, and 17, Times Vary**

Join Inova ElderLink in partnership with the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging for virtual training sessions to benefit family and professional caregivers. Through the use of an immersive training platform, Embodied Labs, you will “see through the eyes” of older adults who are facing real-life challenges to their well-being. Engage in a unique experience to gain greater perspective and insight into working with older adults and caregivers, and help to promote greater empathy, inclusivity, and equity to all. Following the training, participants will receive a license to access the Embodied Labs platform on demand, providing the opportunity for continued learning. For the best user experience, training sessions will be limited to 12 participants. Register online at [tinyurl.com/exploring-aging](https://tinyurl.com/exploring-aging).

### Caring for You, Caring for Me

**Thursdays, July 11-August 8, 10 a.m.-noon**

Facilitated by Inova ElderLink, this virtual interactive workshop series offers a blend of support and education for family caregivers, focusing on advocacy and care for both the caregiver and care recipient. This signature program of the Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregivers was created to support caregivers, helping them cultivate relationships and develop skills that research has demonstrated to be most beneficial to them and the care recipient. Participants report increased confidence and competence when caregiving. Class offered via MS Teams. Contact Julie Mezainis at 571-407-6584 or visit [tinyurl.com/CFYCFM4U](https://tinyurl.com/CFYCFM4U) to register. 🌟

## June 15 is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day was created to raise awareness of the factors that contribute to the abuse of older adults worldwide and acknowledge elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. The abuse of older adults has far-reaching impacts both on individuals and the larger community, so it is important that we learn to recognize the signs of abuse and report it, while also taking steps to help prevent abuse.

### Recognize the Signs of Elder Abuse

Elder abuse is an intentional act or failure to act that causes harm to an older adult. Types of abuse include physical, sexual, emotional/psychological, financial, neglect, or self-neglect. Elder abuse impacts people of all ages, identities, and backgrounds. Signs of abuse include:

#### Physical Signs

- ◆ Dehydration or unusual weight loss
- ◆ Missing daily living aids (glasses, walker, or medication)
- ◆ Unexplained injuries, bruises, cuts, or sores
- ◆ Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- ◆ Unattended medical needs
- ◆ Unexplained sexually transmitted diseases

#### Emotional and Behavioral Signs

- ◆ Increased fear or anxiety
- ◆ Isolation from friends or family
- ◆ Unusual changes in behavior or sleep
- ◆ Withdrawal from normal activities

#### Financial Signs

- ◆ Fraudulent signatures on financial documents
- ◆ Unusual or sudden changes in spending patterns
- ◆ Unpaid bills

If you see signs of abuse or suspected abuse, exploitation, neglect or self-neglect of an adult who is 60 years or older or is 18 years and older and incapacitated, call Adult Protective Services (APS) at **703-324-7450, TTY 711**.



### Prevent Abuse in Our Community

Reducing isolation of older adults is one way we can help prevent the abuse of older adults, especially self-neglect. Actions you can take include:

- ◆ Check in regularly with older relatives, friends, or neighbors by calling or visiting.
- ◆ Volunteer with Volunteer Solutions to assist older adults. Opportunities range from providing rides for doctor's appointments and grocery shopping to social visits with older adults and family caretakers, either in person or by phone. Learn more at [FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/volunteer-solutions](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/volunteer-solutions).
- ◆ Volunteer with the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman program to advocate for residents of Long-Term Care facilities. Learn more at [FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/long-term-care-ombudsman-program](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/long-term-care-ombudsman-program).
- ◆ Join an existing Village program in your community or create one in your neighborhood. Village programs offer support and access to services for older adults in the community. Learn more at [FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/villages](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/villages).
- ◆ Volunteer to drive older adults to medical appointments and other necessary trips. Learn about volunteer opportunities at [nvrides.org](https://nvrides.org).

### Finish the Sentence Campaign

You can help raise awareness about elder abuse and champion elder justice! Participate in the Finish the Sentence campaign to encourage everyone to stand up to elder abuse by raising awareness, promoting education, and advocating for the rights of older adults. Learn how you can participate at [eldermistreatment.usc.edu/finish-the-sentence](https://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/finish-the-sentence). ✨

## Community Associations Can Apply Now to Charge Up Fairfax

by the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination

The Charge Up Fairfax program is making it easier and more affordable for community associations to install electric vehicle charging stations for their residents.

Through June 30, community associations can apply to the program to receive technical and financial assistance – including reimbursement for up to one-third of the cost.

Electric vehicles, or EVs, are better for the environment and less expensive to fuel and maintain than gas-powered vehicles. Rebate and incentive programs for the purchase of EVs – including federal tax credits of up to \$7,500 – are reducing the cost and driving up demand. And community associations that offer green amenities like EV charging stations are more attractive to homeowners and renters.



Fairfax County will pay for the site visit and assessment from an engineering firm for community associations accepted into the Charge Up Fairfax program. Photo courtesy the Office of Environmental and Energy Coordination.

The convenience of at-home charging makes EV ownership more practical, but that can be a barrier for residents who may not have a private garage or driveway.

That's where the Charge Up Fairfax program can help! Community associations – including HOAs, condominiums, clusters and co-ops – that apply and are accepted into the Charge Up Fairfax program will receive a site visit and assessment from an engineering firm, paid for by the county. If the community decides to proceed with the purchase and installation of Level

2 electric vehicle charging stations, they'll hire a contractor of their choice to perform the necessary permitting, electrical upgrades, installation of equipment, and final inspection.



Following installation, communities participating in the program can receive a reimbursement grant to cover one-third of eligible expenses, up to \$5,000. A new grant-only option is available to community associations that are ready to install charging stations but need financial support. Communities in certain equity designated areas may be eligible for up to \$12,000 in some cases.

Beginning in 2023, OEEC worked with 10 pilot program communities to ensure the Charge Up Fairfax program was designed to meet their needs. Pilot communities are contacting contractors and coordinating with OEEC to prepare for the installation of EV charging stations.

“As a pilot community, our experience was overwhelmingly positive,” said Stan Beyderman, president of the Harpers Square Cluster Association in Reston, which is in the process of installing charging stations. “We had excellent support from the county.”

Beyderman said the two biggest benefits of the program were getting the feasibility assessment and being connected with other communities who were also exploring EV charging stations.

This application period for Charge Up Fairfax will close on **June 30, 2024**.

More information and the online application form can be found on the Charge Up Fairfax webpage at [Fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/charge-up-fairfax](https://Fairfaxcounty.gov/environment-energy-coordination/charge-up-fairfax). 🌟



## Applications Open for Senior Farmers Market Program

by Victoria Scarangella, Food Access Program Manager, FRESHFARM

Applications are open for Fairfax County residents interested in enrolling in the Senior Farmers Market program!

Older adults and seniors enrolled in the program receive a one-time \$50 voucher booklet to spend on fresh fruits, vegetables, and cut herbs with participating farmers at local farmers markets and farm stands from June through November. It's similar to spending checks directly with farmers to make your purchase.

Community members who meet the following criteria can apply online at [freshfarm.org/virginia-senior-fmnp/apply](https://freshfarm.org/virginia-senior-fmnp/apply) to join the program. The application closes on Sept. 30. Submit your application as soon as possible.

- ◆ Age 60 and older
- ◆ Live in Fairfax County
- ◆ Monthly income at or less than \$2,322 (1 person household) or \$3,152 (2 people household)
- ◆ Has a mailing address

Starting in June, participants will receive notification as to whether they're enrolled in the program. Notifications will be sent via text, phone call, and/or email depending on the participant's communication preference.

Once enrolled, a packet will be mailed within 10-15 business days of the approval notice. This packet contains each participant's vouchers and all the information needed to use them. In addition to vouchers, you'll receive a welcome letter and FAQ, nutrition education materials, and a shopping guide.

Participating in the Senior Farmers Market program is a great way to take home more fruits, vegetables, and cut herbs of your choice. What's more, you'll have the opportunity to meet local farmers, learn about your produce, and enjoy the social benefits of visiting the farmers market.

This program is funded by the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services and administered by FRESHFARM in Fairfax County. Please visit the website for detailed program information: [freshfarm.org/virginia-senior-fmnp](https://freshfarm.org/virginia-senior-fmnp). ☀

## SNAP at Fairfax County Park Authority Farmers Markets

by Fairfax County Park Authority

Use your SNAP benefits at select Farmers Markets and get up to \$40 dollars of additional fruits and vegetables for FREE. Come to the SNAP information tent to swipe your EBT card in exchange for tokens. Use your tokens like cash, but only at the market at which they were purchased. Tokens never expire.

### Participating Markets:

#### McCutcheon/Mount Vernon

Wednesdays, April 17-December 18, 8 a.m.-Noon  
Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane,  
Alexandria

#### Wakefield

Wednesdays, May 1-October 30, 2-6 p.m.  
Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road, Annandale

#### Annandale

Thursdays, May 2-November 14, 8 a.m.-Noon  
Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike, Annandale

#### Reston

Saturdays, April 27-December 7, 8 a.m.-Noon  
Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza,  
Reston

#### Lorton

Sundays, May 5-November 10, 8 a.m.-Noon  
VRE Parking Lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd, Lorton

For more information, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/snap](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets/snap).

To apply for SNAP, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/public-assistance-employment-services](https://FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/public-assistance-employment-services). ☀

## Dive Into Volunteering

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator

Have you been considering “taking the plunge” and becoming a volunteer? Summer is a great time to explore opportunities. Check out the selections below, or the various options found on [bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER](https://bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER).

Are you available during weekdays and enjoy working with kids? The **Department of Family Services’ Body Safety Program** needs volunteer classroom instructors to help empower elementary students with the tools they need to prevent or interrupt child abuse and exploitation. Visit [bit.ly/BodySafeVol](https://bit.ly/BodySafeVol) or contact the Body Safety staff at [DFSBodySafety@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:DFSBodySafety@FairfaxCounty.gov), or **703-324-7459**. Spanish speakers are also needed. Their next training will be on August 16, 2024.

Would you like to make a difference in the life of a young child? Are you available on the weekends? The Department of Family Services’ **BeFriend-A-Child** program may be the opportunity for you. You can work around your schedule of availability to spend time with your mentee. Build social skills and increase a child’s self-esteem while preventing child abuse and neglect through fun activities! Their next training will be held on Saturday, July 27, 2024. Check out [bit.ly/DFSBAC](https://bit.ly/DFSBAC) for more information.

Bring healthy, fresh food to your neighborhood by volunteering with the **Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) Farmers Markets**. The FCPA is searching for volunteers to ensure their ten farmers markets run smoothly this season. Responsibilities include placing signs and cones, setting up and staffing the market information tent, directing vendors to their assigned spots, enforcing market rules, and answering questions from customers. If you enjoy spending time outdoors, engaging with your community, and helping support local farms and small businesses, this is for you. Depending on the location, there are weekday or weekend opportunities available in Annandale, Burke, Herndon, Kingstowne, Lorton, Mount Vernon, McLean, Oakton, and Reston. Contact **Elizabeth.Moore@fairfaxcounty.gov** or call **703-642-0128** for more information.



*Body Safety Program volunteers help empower elementary students with tools to prevent child abuse and exploitation.*

**Inova Elderlink Respite Care** volunteers are needed to give family caregivers of older adults a well-deserved break so they can go shopping, attend a doctor's appointment, or have coffee with a friend. Volunteers visit and oversee the safety of the older adult for approximately 6 hours each month as companions. Support and training are provided. There’s no “hands on” care. Bilingual volunteers are also needed. Locations vary within Fairfax County. Go to [bit.ly/RespiteCareVol](https://bit.ly/RespiteCareVol) for more information or call **703-324-5374**.

Do you enjoy thrifting? **Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Thrift Shop**, at 9683 Fairfax Blvd, Fairfax VA 22031, needs volunteers. Volunteers help with receiving, sorting, pricing, and merchandising donations along with customer service areas such as cashiering and bagging. They are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It’s a one-day, four-hour per week commitment. Contact Jessie Johnston at [Jessamyn.Johnston@inova.org](mailto:Jessamyn.Johnston@inova.org), or call **703-273-3519**, and speak to Jessie or Veronica.

**Inova Fair Oaks Hospital Gift Shop**, at 3600 Joseph Siewick Drive, Fairfax, also needs volunteers. They are open Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The shifts are either 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. The thrift shop and gift shop proceeds get donated to Inova Fair Oaks Hospital and are used for purchasing equipment and funding hospital projects. Contact Jessie Johnston at [Jessamyn.Johnston@inova.org](mailto:Jessamyn.Johnston@inova.org).

If you wish to submit volunteer opportunities for a future column, contact Tanya Erway at [VolunteerSolutionsRecruitment@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutionsRecruitment@FairfaxCounty.gov). ☀

## Fraud Alert! Fairfax County Police Department's Tips to Spot a Bank Imposter Scam

by Fairfax County Police Department

Fairfax County Police Department's (FCPD) Financial Crimes Unit wants to provide our community with the tools to spot a scammer posing as a bank or financial institution.

Scams take many forms, but one of the most common is the bank imposter scam. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) ranked this the top scam of 2022. According to the FTC, the median reported loss for this scam was \$3,000 from 2019-2022. Understanding the scam and ways to spot it is the first step to protecting your hard-earned money.



### The Scam:

These scams begin when suspects text or call posing as banks and notifying victims of fraud alerts or breaches on their account. If you reply to these text messages or answer these cold calls from unknown numbers, the scammer will contact you pretending to represent the bank's fraud department and ask you to verify personal and banking information. Scammers can "spoof" phone numbers and appear on your caller ID as coming from a known number. At some point, they may ask you to log in to your bank and provide them with a confirmation code sent to your phone or recent bank transaction information. The scammer then uses this personal and banking transaction information to contact your bank pretending to be you and steal money from your account.

### Prevention:

- ◆ **Just HANG UP:** If an unsolicited call or text comes from an unknown number just hang up or delete it. You may independently verify the contact information of your bank's fraud department through their official phone app or website contact information and contact them yourself.
- ◆ **Don't Share Personal Information:** Never share personal or financial information over the phone

unless you initiated the call and are certain of the recipient's legitimacy.

- ◆ **Never Let Anyone "Remote" into your Computer:** Scammers may pretend to be trying to "fix" your computer or refund money for an alleged fraud charge.
- ◆ **Verify Caller Identities:** Always confirm the identity of the person or organization contacting you; hang up and call the institution by using their known contact information from official websites, official bills, invoices, etc. APPLE, MICROSOFT, Norton, MacAfee, eBay, PayPal, AMAZON, or GOOGLE will never call you on the phone and ask for any kind of payment.
- ◆ **Nobody Asks for Payment in Gift Cards:** Anyone who calls you on the phone, requires you to stay on the phone, and asks for payments with gift cards of any kind (GreenDot, iTunes, Google Play, Target, Walmart etc.) should be considered suspicious. It is likely a scam. Other fraud indicators are requests for money through wire transfers (MoneyGram, Western Union, Walmart to Walmart, Zelle, Venmo, CashApp) or deposits into Bitcoin ATMs.
- ◆ **Consult with Family or Friends:** Before making any financial decisions, especially those involving large sums or unfamiliar technologies, consult with trusted family members or friends.



## Other important tips:

- ◆ **Law Enforcement will never call you on the phone and ask you to pay money** to avoid arrest or post a bond. Other common scams include notices of missing jury duty or a federal agent calling you to say your name and identity have been discovered being involved in criminal activity or money laundering. Federal agencies and local police will never call you on the phone and ask for money for any reason.

If you have been a victim of a financial crime, please file a report through the FCPD Financial Crimes Online Reporting (FiCOR) website at **FairfaxCounty.gov/Police\_FiCOR**. If you are unable to file a report on the computer, call our non-emergency line at **703-691-2131** to have an officer assist you with making a FiCOR report.

For more information about elder fraud, visit the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crimes website by at **ovc.ojp.gov/program/stop-elder-fraud/common-scams-and-warning-signs**. If you have been a victim of elder fraud and reside outside of Fairfax County, you can call the National Elder Fraud Hotline at **1-833-372-8311** or your local police department. ✨

## Scam Jam 2024 a Success!

On Friday, April 19, AARP Virginia and Fairfax County's Silver Shield Task Force hosted Scam Jam 2024. The event featured top experts and law enforcement officials discussing scams targeting older adults. They also shared how to spot scams and how to protect yourself from being scammed.

Nearly 300 people attended the event, learning about scams and visiting 22 exhibitor tables. The event also included a shred truck, where approximately 7,700 lbs. of material was shredded. Prior to the event, volunteers worked with senior centers to deliver 480 bags containing fraud prevention materials to isolated seniors.

The event was broadcast live on Channel 16 for those who couldn't attend in person. If you missed Scam Jam 2024, a recording of the event is available at **FairfaxCounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/scam-jam-fairfax-2024**. ✨

## Pet Preparedness

by Moriah Kitaeff, Department of Emergency Management and Security

Preparing for emergencies with your pets' needs in mind will ensure their safety and well-being during unexpected situations. Begin by assembling a designated emergency kit specifically tailored for your companions. Stock it with essential items such as food, water, medications, medical records, and comfort items like toys or blankets. Compile a list of emergency contacts, including veterinarians and local animal shelters, for quick response and assistance, if available.

Ensure your pets are properly identified by equipping them with identification tags or microchips containing up-to-date contact information. This increases the



likelihood of being reunited with a lost pet in case of separation during an emergency. Regularly practice evacuation drills with your pets to reduce stress and ensure a smooth evacuation process when faced with a real emergency.

By prioritizing pet emergency preparedness, you can effectively safeguard the well-being of your beloved companions during unforeseen crises. To learn more about how to prepare your pets for the unexpected, visit the pet section of the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Guide: **FairfaxCounty.gov/emergencymanagement/ceerg**. ✨

... *Community Calendar continued from back cover*

Join us for this free event. The topic this month is HomeFit by AARP. 9:30 a.m. coffee and light fare; 9:45 a.m. presentation begins. Register by calling 703-385-5738 or emailing [village@fairfaxva.gov](mailto:village@fairfaxva.gov).

### Insight Memory Care Presents: Brain Health as You Age

**Tuesday June 18, 1-2 p.m.**

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

### Burke Historical Society June Meeting

**Sunday, June 23, 3 p.m.**

Pohick Regional Library, 6450 Sydenstricker Rd, Burke

Local author P. O'Connell Pearson will discuss her latest book, "WE ARE YOUR CHILDREN TOO: Black Students, White Supremacists, and the Battle for America's Schools in Prince Edward County, Virginia."

### Who's In Your Circle?

**Wednesday, June 26, 7-8 p.m.**

Virtual event. Zoom link provided upon registration. Join us for this special discussion during Pride Month! Being LGBTQ and living with dementia and/or caring for someone with dementia brings many unique challenges to the journey. Join us to discuss the importance of creating social circles of support and strategies for doing so. We will also identify community resources to support caring for someone living with dementia. Learn more and register at [insightmcc.org/get-involved/events/event\\_calendar.html](http://insightmcc.org/get-involved/events/event_calendar.html).

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.

## Mature Living – Staying Active and Healthy

Staying healthy and active is necessary for any stage of life, but it's especially important for older adults. Physical activity can help to prevent the onset of diseases like diabetes and Alzheimer's disease and can also provide a big boost to our mental and emotional well-being.

Host Anne Hall begins the conversation with Julie Frederickson, the Fitness & Wellness Section Manager with the Fairfax County Park Authority, to explore how the resources in the county can help us achieve our fitness goals for little or no cost.

Two representatives from the Fairfax County Health Department add their expertise to this discussion. Monali Malaveetil, an Immunization Specialist, and Magda Garcia Narvaez, a Public Health Nutritionist, offer information on the importance of immunizations and healthy eating, and how these contribute to a healthy lifestyle. This episode also includes personal stories from two active seniors who share how staying active helps them with their overall good health and well-being.

*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](http://FairfaxCounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/mature-living)

You can find information on services for older adults at [FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults](http://FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults) or call 703-324-7948, TTY 711, Monday-Friday. ☀

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Adult and Aging Services  
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Fairfax, VA 22035-1104

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## June Community Calendar

### Love to Play Softball?

The Golden Girls of Northern Virginia, a senior women's softball league, is looking for players. Any woman over the age of 40 is encouraged to join. All skill levels are welcome. We play most Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings in Vienna from May-July and September-October. For more information, please visit our website: [www.goldengirls.org](http://www.goldengirls.org).

### Brain Gym

#### Friday, June 7, 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. Join us on Fridays from 2-3 p.m. on June 7, July 5, August 2 and September 13. Come to one or all of the sessions. No registration. For more information, please contact George Mason Regional Library at **703-256-3800**.

### Widow/Widower/Partner Loss Support Group

#### Saturdays, June 8, 15, 22, 29, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

Haven of Northern Virginia will be hosting a Widow/Widower/Partner Loss Support group in June. It is tailored to those who are grieving and have lost their spouse or partner. For more details, call **703-941-7000** or email [havenofnova@verizon.net](mailto:havenofnova@verizon.net).

### Insight Memory Care Presents: Dementia 101

#### Tuesday June 11, 1-2 p.m.

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

### Reducing Falls and Improving Cognition with Exercise

#### Wednesday, June 12, 1-2:30 p.m.

Hybrid event - virtual and in-person at Insight Memory Care Center, 3955 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax  
Age-related cognitive decline has a profound impact on the daily functioning of older adults, their families and healthcare systems. We will discuss dementia statistics and how a structured exercise program in a community setting for older, sedentary adults is associated with benefits to physical and cognitive health. Learn more and register at [insightmcc.org/get-involved/events/event\\_calendar.html](http://insightmcc.org/get-involved/events/event_calendar.html)

### Fairfax Village in the City's Friday Morning Speaker Series

#### Friday, June 14, 9:30 a.m.

Sherwood Center, 3740 Blenheim Boulevard, Fairfax, VA 22030

. . . continued to page 16