

## ON Community Briefing

*Highlighting the priorities and progress of ON communities and partners*

Opportunity Neighborhoods (ON) is the county-wide organizing framework for residents, community-based partners, FCPS, Fairfax County, and other supporters to work together and deliver needed resources that are equitable, accessible, and effective for youth and their caregivers.



*ON-Annandale Community Council members learned how to log on to their tablets during the August meeting. Tablets help Council members access resources and participate in virtual meetings and training. (Photo courtesy of FACETS.)*

### In This Issue...

INTRODUCTION TO ON  
FOCAL AREAS

ON IMPACT - METRICS  
ACROSS ALL SITES

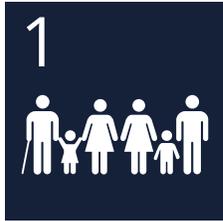
ON IMPACT - WHAT DOES  
IT LOOK LIKE?

CONTINUING THE WORK  
- PRIORITIES WE ARE  
ELEVATING NOW

SITES, LEADS, AND  
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

# ON Focal Areas

ON develops capacity and infrastructure in five primary focal areas. We engage residents and partners to work towards positive change in each area.



## INCLUSIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Youth and caregivers are active leaders and contribute and benefit fully from a community that supports and encourages them to thrive.

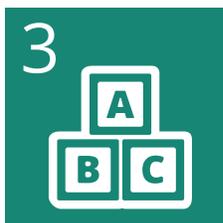
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## CONNECTED & MOTIVATED YOUTH

Youth are plugged in to a comprehensive network of caring adults that encourages and guides their positive academic and personal goals.

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## SCHOOL READINESS & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Children and adults have access to an array of evidence-based, quality resources that prepares them for and addresses barriers to lifelong learning.

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## WELLNESS & FAMILY STABILITY

A continuum of supports allows youth and families to identify their goals for health, safety, stability and self-sufficiency, and to access resources for reaching them.

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## WORKFORCE READINESS & STUDENT CAREER PREPAREDNESS

Students and parents are empowered to take advantage of the academic and career preparatory resources that are best tailored to their personal skills and assets.

# ON Impact

## Metrics across all sites

Between July and September 2021, our ON-wide efforts included:

**65**  
**residents**  
of prioritized  
communities served in  
an ambassador or  
other leadership role

**26**  
**active teams**  
organized to move ON work  
forward, including community  
councils, working groups,  
steering committees, and the  
ON Partners' Network

**50**  
**strategic partners\***  
supported ON through  
service, data, or  
sponsorship

**307**  
**attendees**  
participated in training or  
professional  
development through ON

*\*Strategic partners are those partners that contribute programming, data, and/or sponsorship to prevent and address root cause issues, and/or increase access, quality, and utilization of needed resources in the community.*



*Audubon Estates residents attended a Neighborhood Safety Q&A session with representatives from Fairfax County Police Department. ON Mount Vernon hosted three events at locations in the community. More than 120 community members attended the sessions. (Photo courtesy of United Community.)*

# ON Impact

## What does it look like?

*Bringing community residents to the table to share safety and security concerns, build connections, and identify solutions*

### **Safety Q&A Sessions in ON Mount Vernon.**

ONMV partnered with Fairfax County Police Department and Anthem HealthKeepers to host three Neighborhood Safety Q&A Sessions during September and October. FCPD representatives answered questions from residents, addressed some common misconceptions, and shared actions residents can take to increase their safety. The family-friendly events were publicized in English and Spanish, and flyers included a QR code linked to a survey for residents to provide anonymous input about the safety topics of greatest interest to them to help guide the conversation. An event sponsor provided free food and drinks. Holding the Q&A sessions at accessible locations in the community made it easier for more than 120 interested residents to participate and gave neighbors an opportunity to meet each other. ONMV continues to share resources with partners and community members, including FCPD's tips for calling police (available in English and Spanish) and spreading the word about Neighborhood Watch programs.

### **Gang Prevention Activities in Crossroads ON.**

As part of work focused on gang prevention and building resiliency through forming connections, youth in the Crossroads ON area participated in activities to build community connections. Youth recently took field trips to nearby sites, including a trip to Six Flags and tour of Old Town. Ten students attended a seminar "Good Choices, Better Futures" where they discussed the possible consequences of gang involvement, and steps they can take to achieve their goals. A group of 20 youth also gathered regularly to work together to maintain a local garden. Youth who have at least 3 positive, protective factors (or assets) in their lives are more likely to develop healthy habits, make better choices, and manage stress. Protective factors are supports, opportunities, and relationships that youth need to thrive. They also include personal skills, values, and commitments that build resiliency.

### **Identifying Safety Priorities in ON-Annandale.**

At a Police Safety Fair held at Annandale High School, community members voted on what would make them feel safer in their neighborhood. ON-Annandale staff provided envelopes labeled with possible solutions, written in English and Spanish, and residents voted by dropping their ballot into the envelopes of their choosing. Possible solutions included better lighting, more police on foot and bikes, a neighborhood watch, gang prevention, safer places for children to play, and security cameras at the door to homes and buildings. ON-Annandale will focus its work on the solutions that received the most support.



*Herndon residents gathered at a National Night Out event hosted by a Herndon ON Neighborhood Ambassador. (Photo courtesy of Cornerstones.)*

# ON Impact

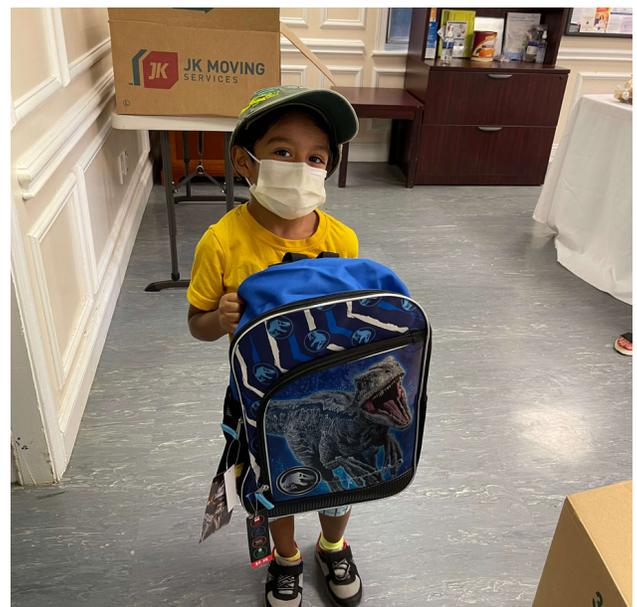
## What does it look like?

*Building community voice through training and professional development*

**Providing Opportunities to Elevate Community Priorities.** Neighborhood Ambassadors (NAs) are residents of prioritized communities in each ON site who serve as a voice for their communities on a wide range of issues. NAs participate in training to develop their leadership skills so they can participate and engage confidently and effectively no matter the setting, including speaking out at a public hearing, serving on an engagement committee in their own ON, or sharing valuable resources with neighbors. RestON's Neighborhood Ambassadors meet regularly with Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn and his staff to discuss community priorities. At a recent meeting they raised concerns about living conditions at apartment complexes. Having community members who can speak with confidence to leaders about needs in their communities elevates these issues and can set the stage for developing system-level solutions to challenges that are often shared across communities.

**Embracing Strategies for Inclusive Participation.** In ON-Annandale, Community Council meetings are run in Spanish with English interpretation available for anyone who needs it. Council members, who received tablets so they can join meetings remotely when needed, recently received a tutorial on logging on and accessing resources from an ON-Annandale intern. ON Herndon recently partnered with Office for Children and Catholic Charities to provide information sessions in Spanish and English for interested residents on obtaining a home-based child care license, and services available for ESOL child care providers. Between the two sessions, 15 residents learned what is needed to become a licensed provider. Recordings will be used to for future information sessions.

**Partnering to Offer English Classes with a Focus on Community Engagement.** Through a recently formed partnership between Opportunity Neighborhoods and the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia (LCNV), ON ambassadors can participate in a new Destination Workforce program developed out of the need for leadership and engagement classes for ambassadors whose primary language is Spanish. Led by United Community and ONMV, ON Strategy Directors worked with LCNV to build an English-learning curriculum with a focus on skills that residents need to become leaders in their communities, in addition to learning skills that will help them in the workforce. The first session of English for Community Engagement is underway with 12 Neighborhood Ambassadors from the Mount Vernon, Crossroads, and Annandale ONs. The class meets virtually twice a week. Ambassadors will leave the class equipped with the skills and confidence to communicate and participate more fully in community meetings and share information with their neighbors.



*Crossroads ON area students of all ages picked up backpacks filled with school supplies before the new school year began. ON backbone orgs lead efforts to prevent gaps and redundancies in key services (Photo courtesy of Second Story.)*

# Continuing the Work

## Priorities we're elevating now

Each ON site is unique, with different community members, partners, assets, and challenges. Across all five sites, community members and partners work together in a variety of ways to identify and elevate priorities as themes emerge. These priorities evolve over time. In the first quarter of FY22, these are the areas where community residents in many or all of our sites have established plans to develop community voice, capacity, and programming, and improve outcomes for youth and their families.

- **Community voice in policy and programs** - to continue building community-led planning and progress in each site
- **Infrastructure** - to support capacity development and desired outcomes that align with major countywide initiatives to address systemic problems
- **Community safety and security** - crime prevention; child supervision; safe play spaces for children; living conditions
- **Child care and early childhood education access** - increasing access and quality where our community members need it most
- **Workforce and career development** - building capacity and increasing awareness of available programs and services
- **School attendance and extracurriculars** - working with partners to address root causes and address chronic absenteeism



**Left:** Crossroads ON families received backpacks filled with school supplies to start the 2021-22 school year. Crossroads ON coordinated a Back to School event at the Bailey's Community Center with community ambassadors and partners. Concentrated door to door outreach was done at Oakview Gardens Apartments. 500 students received new backpacks filled with school supplies through Crossroads ON. **Right:** Crossroads ON youth worked together to maintain a local community garden. (Photos courtesy of Second Story.)

To learn more, visit  
<http://bit.ly/opportunityneighborhoods>

# Sites and Leads

	Mount Vernon	Reston	Crossroads	Herndon	Annandale
Established	2011	2016	2020	2020	2021
Lead Nonprofit	United Community	Cornerstones	Second Story	Cornerstones	FACETS
FCPS Region	3	1	2	1	2
HHS Region	1	3	2	3	2
Site Scope	Prioritized communities in zip codes 22306 and 22309, and schools in the Mount Vernon and Lewis pyramids that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip codes 20190 and 20191, and schools in the South Lakes pyramid that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip codes 22041 and 22044, and schools in the Justice pyramid that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip codes 20170 and 20171, and schools in the Herndon and Westfield pyramids that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip code 22003, and schools in the Annandale and Falls Church pyramids that serve those communities



ON-Annandale community members from the Vistas, Fairmont Gardens, and Wedgewood neighborhoods take a picture with the Police Chief at "Meet the Chief" night at Bailey's Community Center in July. Community members from Crossroads ON also attended. Residents from both ON sites asked questions and voiced opinions relating to safety in their communities. (Photo courtesy of FACETS.)

**Opportunity Neighborhoods**  
<http://bit.ly/opportunityneighborhoods>

