

# 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.



*Members of the Crossroads ON Youth Council work on artwork for the group's anti-vaping t-shirt campaign. (Photo courtesy of Second Story.)*

## In This Issue...

INTRODUCTION TO ON  
FOCAL AREAS

ON IMPACT - METRICS  
ACROSS ALL SITES

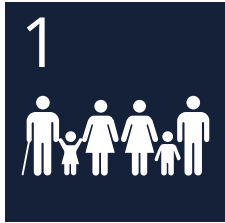
CONTINUING THE WORK  
- PRIORITIES WE ARE  
ELEVATING NOW

ON IMPACT - WHAT DOES  
IT LOOK LIKE?

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.

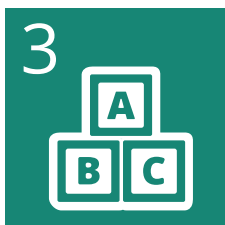
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## CONNECTED & MOTIVATED YOUTH

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 October and December 2021, our ON-wide efforts included:

**42**  
**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

**75**  
**strategic partners\***  
supported ON through  
service, data, or  
sponsorship

**96**  
**attendees**  
participated in training or  
professional development  
through ON, bringing the year-  
to-date total to **403 attendees**

*\*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.*



Annandale-ON  
Community Organizer  
Nayely Lopez and three  
members of the  
Community Council's  
Children's Activities  
Working Group meet  
at a member's home to  
prepare fleece pillow  
kits for the Craft Day.  
(Photo courtesy of  
FACETS.)



# Continuing the Work

## Priorities we are elevating now

Each Opportunity Neighborhood is unique, with different community members, partners, assets, and challenges. Across all five sites, community residents and partners work together to identify and elevate community priorities and aspirations, which evolve over time. These are the areas where community residents in many or all of our ON sites have currently established plans to be involved in systems change; develop community voice, capacity, and programming; and improve outcomes for youth and their families.

- **Community voice in policy and programs** – continuing to build community-led planning and progress in each site (FA1\*)
- **Community safety and security** – working with community leaders on solutions for crime prevention, safe play spaces for children, and safe living conditions for all (FA4\*)
- **Youth development** – increasing access to high quality out-of-school time programming to build protective factors, increase contact with caring adults, and reduce high-risk behaviors like substance abuse/vaping, gang involvement, chronic absenteeism, and relational violence (FA2\*)
- **Child care, early childhood education, and literacy** – increasing access and quality of programs and services where caregivers need them most (FA3\*)
- **Career development** – building capacity and increasing awareness of available programs and services, including career-focused English classes and career visioning for youth (FA5\*)

*\*to see the ON programmatic focal areas and metrics, please see pages 2 and 3*



**Left:** ON-Annandale children tying and stuffing fleece pillows at the Holiday Craft Day. Children made the pillows to give to family members as holiday gifts. **Right:** Council members, their children, other neighborhood leaders and staff pose with a Fairfax County Police Officer dressed up as Santa after the event is over. (Photos courtesy of FACETS.)

# ON Impact

## What does it look like?

### Building and Leading with Community Voice

This edition of the Opportunity Neighborhoods (ON) bulletin explores the different ways the five ON sites are building and leading with *community voice*. Building community voice brings the people who are impacted by the work to the table, and prioritizes trust, listening, and authentic community engagement. It is a complex process that takes time, commitment, and a willingness to change systems, policies, and approaches.

Each ON backbone nonprofit has a long-standing relationship with the community and is taking the lead to re-establish community aspirations with local resident leaders at the table. A great deal of our work is in building capacity and infrastructure to support community voice and build a shared understanding of the change that is needed to achieve better and more equitable outcomes.

Opportunity Neighborhoods is committed to building and elevating community voice in all aspects of its work. These examples illustrate some of the ways Opportunity Neighborhoods is developing and prioritizing community voice across the five ON sites.

#### **ON-Annandale Community Council begins with residents**

ON-Annandale is the newest of the ON sites. Its Community Council was formed just six months ago. The Council has three issue-oriented Working Groups and is composed entirely of residents; the plan is to add non-residents who represent partner organizations by the end of the next quarter. This approach was purposeful in giving the residents a chance to become comfortable in their roles and establish the meeting dynamics, then asking others to enter their space. To that end, meetings are held in Spanish with English interpretation for staff who need it. This will continue as non-residents are added to the group, allowing Spanish-speakers to be more comfortable expressing themselves during meetings, and reinforcing that subject matter experts are participating in support of the community aspirations established by resident leaders.

#### **ONMV Neighborhood Ambassadors learn facilitation skills**

From September to December, 11 Neighborhood Ambassadors from ON Mount Vernon, the first established Opportunity Neighborhoods site, participated in monthly UFacilitate trainings on how to facilitate through a holistic framework. They also learned how to engage within their communities with the hope of potentially leading the monthly COMMUN1TY + working group meetings. Ambassadors learned about roles and expectations, active listening, personal leadership styles, giving and receiving feedback, and speaking in front of groups. Trainings were held in Spanish and English. The pilot cohort was a great start to elevate ONMV's Neighborhood Ambassadors and kick off opportunities they can partake in within their communities. ONMV plans to hold a graduation celebration soon and hopes to bring this training to the rest of its Neighborhood Ambassadors in 2022.

# ON Impact

## What does it look like?

### **RestON Ambassadors provide valuable input and outreach for HCD survey**

Last year, RestON's Neighborhood Ambassadors (NAs) met with Supervisor Alcorn and shared their community's concerns around safety and security with him and his staff. Since then, the NAs have been working with Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) staff on the development of a survey on community conditions. The NAs provided feedback and an implementation plan was created in preparation for survey outreach to the Stonegate community. Stonegate residents have responded to the survey and will have an opportunity to hear the results at an upcoming meeting with HCD. The experience has resulted in valuable lessons that can inform future community surveys.

### **ONMV survey on workforce development shows residents' training priorities**

ONMV created a workforce development survey to learn the specific interests the community has regarding employment and training. An earlier ONMV COVID-19 recovery survey showed that many residents had lost a job, were working fewer hours, or had taken a pay cut during the pandemic; they noted that having access to employment resources is a priority. Members of ONMV's Community Council reviewed the survey questions and provided feedback. In December, ONMV's Neighborhood Ambassadors led the outreach to collect 115 responses at community food distributions and in their neighborhoods. The survey showed participants are most interested in in-person computer classes, culinary training, and classes and workshops related to financial empowerment.

### **Residents take the lead at weekly food distributions**

ON-Annandale residents at Fairmont Gardens not only help unload, organize, and give out the food at weekly food distributions, they also decide how much of each item to pass out and what to do with any leftover food. Legal Aid Justice Center has organized the distributions for many years, and volunteers from local faith communities also help. However, it is generally understood that the residents are in charge and any changes need to be discussed with them first. Most of the members of the ON-Annandale Community Council have come from this group of leaders, and they continue to dedicate their time to making the distributions run smoothly.



*Community leaders decide how much corn to put in each bag at a fall food distribution in ON-Annandale. (Photo courtesy of FACETS.)*



# ON Impact

## What does it look like?

### ON Herndon identifies a need for domestic and sexual violence services in Spanish

During Domestic Violence Awareness Month, ON Herndon and one of its Neighborhood Ambassadors organized the first meeting of a Women's DV Support Group for Spanish-speaking residents (*see flier below*). The group is a collaboration with The Women's Center and was created because residents in Herndon voiced the need to get domestic violence resources in Spanish because services were no longer available at the Herndon Neighborhood Resource Center due to the pandemic. At the first meeting, 11 women attended in-person and 12 women joined the conversation virtually. They talked about what domestic violence looks like, what other behaviors are considered abusive, who to call, and what steps to take to stay safe. The support group will continue to meet and learn about new resources and how to handle different situations that may arise.



**Octubre**  
MES DE  
CONCIENTIZACION  
EN CONTRA  
**Violencia Domestica**

.....  
Acompáñenos a una plática donde aprenderemos como identificar las señales de la violencia doméstica, que hacer y a dónde acudir

Viernes 22 de octubre por Zoom  
5:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m.  
Zoom link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84205053951>  
Meeting ID: 842 0505 3951

Esta información puede salvar tu vida o la de otras mujeres

**Juntas Nos Apoyamos**

Las primeras en entrar a zoom participarán en una rifa de una tarjeta visa con valor de \$100.00 y otra rifa de una máquina de coser!

### Ambassadors share resources with community members

Crossroads ON Community Ambassadors continue to participate in trainings and learn about resources available to community members. Residents have expressed a need to be informed and updated on timely resources, and ambassadors have begun providing information on NextDoor, Facebook, and at the Bailey's Community Center. Most recently, ambassadors learned and shared about financial literacy resources. The class was facilitated by a member of Crossroad ON's Governance Council Focal Area 4 Working Group who is also on the staff at Britepaths. The class was offered in Spanish and English, and ambassadors took notes to share the information with fellow residents. The course was designed to help residents learn how to build and maintain good credit, pull free credit reports, and dispute errors. Crossroads ON and partner Britepaths plan to hold future sessions for interested residents.



Children receive COVID-19 vaccinations at a recent clinic. Crossroads ON has worked closely with Fairfax County Health Department to share information on vaccine clinics with their neighbors. (Photo courtesy of Second Story.)

# ON Impact

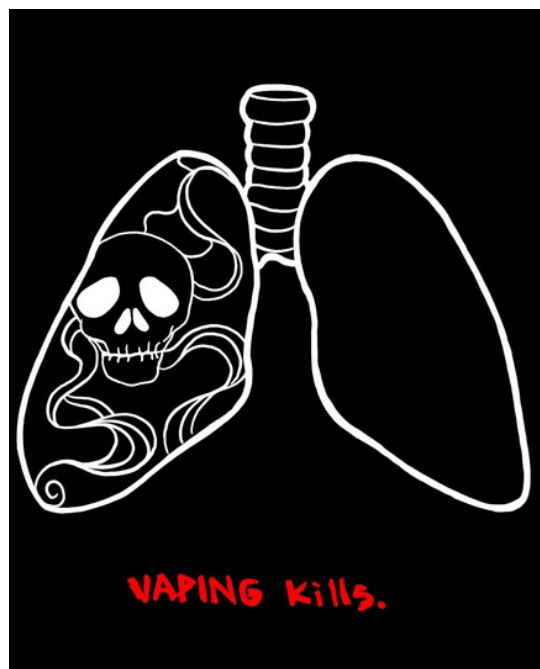
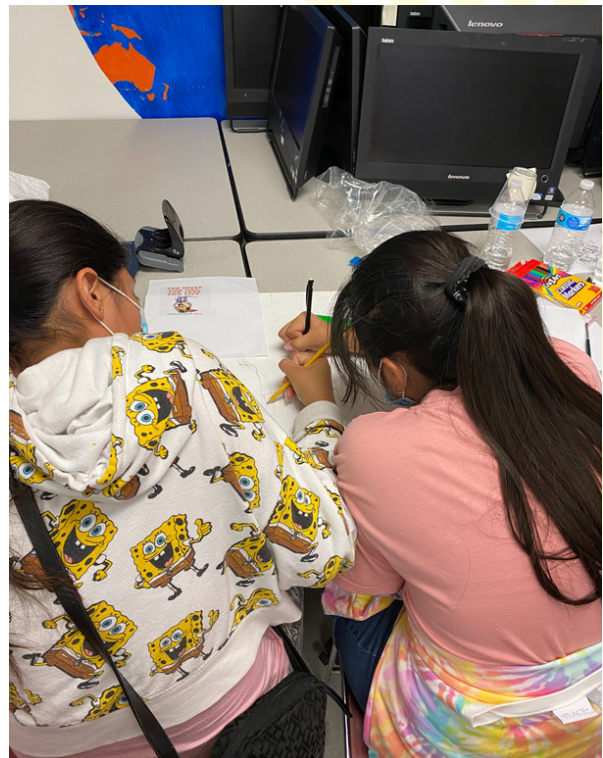
## What does it look like?

### Crossroads ON Youth Council awarded grant for youth-led anti-vaping campaign

The Crossroads ON Youth Council received a Youth-Led Anti-Stigma Mini-Grant from the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. They hope their idea of an anti-vaping t-shirt campaign will help decrease vaping among teens, which can also decrease anxiety and depression. The youth were nervous at first about writing the grant proposal because they were not confident in their idea. But as they worked on their proposal, they realized their idea could help other teens and their excitement grew. The ten Youth Council members worked together to come up with a design to print on 100 t-shirts. They will wear their shirts around the community to promote anti-vaping awareness and participate in the CATCH My Breath vaping prevention program in the upcoming months.

### Community voice shapes Holiday Craft Day in ON-Annandale

ON-Annandale's Children's Activities Working Group partnered with Kids Give Back to host a Holiday Craft Day in the Fairmont Gardens community in December. From the beginning and continuing throughout the planning, the Working Group made their voices heard and gave input to make the activities even more meaningful for the children participating. More than 200 children crafted holiday gifts for their family members. The event was open to children of all ages and did not require advance registration. The Working Group arranged to provide hot chocolate for participants and secured a donation of 37 gallons of milk from United Healthcare, one of several partners who helped make the event a success. It was clear the children took pride in their artistic creations and felt good about having gifts to give their loved ones. (See photos on pages 3 and 6.)



**Top:** Crossroads ON Youth Council members work on their t-shirt designs. **Bottom:** Original artwork that will appear on anti-vaping awareness t-shirts. (Photo and artwork 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 |



**Left and top right:** ON Herndon Neighborhood Ambassadors and Community Connectors collect and sort donations for the victims of the December fire. **Bottom right:** Resident leaders gather with ON Herndon Community Organizer, Jessica Gutierrez-Lugo, and Sarah Newman, Director of Community Partnerships at Cornerstones. The group led the community's response to support the 11 families who were displaced from their homes. They met with the families, collected information on each family's needs, and gathered donations from the community. The overwhelming response showed the trust and relationships ON Herndon staff and resident leaders have built with the community. (Photos courtesy of Cornerstones.)

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