THE FAIRFAX COUNTY ATHLETIC COUNCIL

*presents the*

# STEPHEN A. M'LAUGHLIN Champions of Character AWARDS

NCS

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026**

RESPONSIBILITY • RESPECT • CARING

TRUSTWORTHINESS • CITIZENSHIP • FAIRNESS

# Program

## *Opening Remarks*

**Keisha Dotson**
*Deputy Director*
*Fairfax County Department of*
*Neighborhood and Community Services*

**Lula Bauer**
*Chair*
*Fairfax County Athletic Council*

**Jeffrey McKay**
*Chairman*
*Fairfax County Board of Supervisors*

**Bryan Hill**
*County Executive*
*Fairfax County*

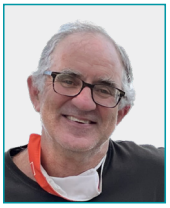
## *Awards Presentation*

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors

Fairfax County School Board

Fairfax County Athletic Council

# Stephen A. McLaughlin Fairfax County Champions of Character Awards



In 2023, the Champions of Character ceremony was renamed in honor of Stephen A. McLaughlin, the former Providence District Representative on the Fairfax County Athletic Council who served for 26 years under numerous leadership changes.

For more than three decades, the Athletic Council has been a major force of positive influence for Fairfax County citizens. The council has forwarded many important recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on programs, policies, procedures and budget impacts. Steve was a key voice as a member on committees or in leadership positions. Steve embodied all the traits we honor tonight: Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Trustworthiness, Citizenship and Fairness.

The Stephen A. McLaughlin Fairfax County Champions of Character Awards program honors youth, coaches and parents for extraordinary service in pursuing victory with honor on and off the field of competition. Instituted by the Fairfax County Athletic Council, this program aims to support the tradition of amateur athletics in cultivating teamwork, leadership, good sportsmanship and community service.

## 2026 Champions of Character Award



We are honored to give the 2026 Champion of Character Award to former **Deputy County Executive Chris Leonard for his 17 years** of service with Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services. Leonard retired from Fairfax County in summer 2026.

This award is given to an individual for their longstanding service to athletics in Fairfax County and commitment to the values of the Champions of Character.

# Fairfax County Stephen A. McLaughlin Champions of Character Awards

The Champions of Character Awards were first presented in 2001 to recognize those who go above and beyond in demonstrating good sportsmanship and character in youth sports.

The benefits of playing sports are well documented:

- Participants experience improved health, community involvement, family attachment and academic performance.
- Young athletes are less likely to become involved in gangs, violent behavior, drug use and other problem behaviors.

Sports can only work their magic when they are enjoyable, and enjoyment stems from good sportsmanship. Among the thousands of parents, coaches and athletes in Fairfax County, we are proud to honor Champions of Character from each magisterial district in the following categories:

**Female Athlete** **Male Athlete** **Coach** **Parent**

Each honoree has proven to be a Champion of Character by exhibiting the following qualities outlined in each award category.

## Athlete Awards

- Being respectful to opponents and game officials.
- Treating all team players fairly, giving attention to all players regardless of skill level.
- Giving respect and consideration to other team members.
- Helping teammates with words of encouragement and inspiration.
- Playing true to the spirit and rules of the game and promoting friendly competition.
- Exhibiting courage in defeat and moderation in victory.
- Showing a willingness to sacrifice personal goals for those of the team.
- Giving back to the team or program by helping out when able.

## Coach Awards

- Being respectful to opponents and game officials.
- Treating all team players fairly, giving attention to all players regardless of skill level.
- Recognizing the efforts of individual team members.
- Motivating teams and individuals in a positive manner.
- Focusing on long term goals, not just win/loss records.
- Promoting the concept that success is measured by individual and team effort, not by a scoreboard.
- Imparting knowledge and love of the game to the team in a positive manner.
- Taking responsibility for the behavior of self, team and parents.

## Parent Awards

- Being respectful to players, coaches, and game officials.
- Treating all players, coaches and parents fairly.
- Recognizing the efforts of individual team members and opposing team members.
- Motivating parents, teams, coaches and fans in a positive manner.
- Promoting the concept that success is measured by individual and team effort, not by a scoreboard.
- Demonstrating good sportsmanship by approving and applauding good team play, individual skill, and good sportsmanship exhibited by players and coaches on both teams.
- Accepting volunteer roles to improve the communication and the needs of the coach and team.

# Braddock District

**Supervisor Rachna Sizemore Heizer**
Athletic Council Representative Marcia Pape Daniels

### Male Athlete
***Sammy Araya***
**Soccer, Braddock Road Youth Club**

### Female Athlete
***Sophia A. Daniel***
**Soccer, Braddock Road Youth Club**

### Coach
***Ethan Golden***
**Flag Football, Braddock Road Youth Club**

### Parent
***Trish Moxie***
**Soccer, Braddock Road Youth Club**

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# Dranesville District

**Supervisor James N. Bierman Jr.**
Athletic Council Representative Ian Harper

### Male Athlete
***Devron Smith***
**Flag Football, Flag Star Football**

### Female Athlete
***Sena Elston***
**Volleyball, South Lakes High School**

### Coach
***Trevor Lamb***
**Soccer, McLean Youth Soccer**

### Parent
***Todd Shea***
**Multiple Sports, Reston Hoops & Reston Volleyball**

# Franconia District

**Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk**
Athletic Council Representative William Bright

### Male Athlete
***Roman R. Parada***
**Multiple Sports, Lee Mount Vernon Sports Club**

### Female Athlete
***Karoline Folk***
**Soccer, Lee Mount Vernon Sports Club**

### Coach
***Jamie Frogale***
**Softball, Northern Virginia Girls Softball Association**

### Parent
***Shannon McLaughlin***
**Soccer, Lee Mount Vernon Sports Club**

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# Hunter Mill District

**Supervisor Walter L. Alcorn**
Athletic Council Representative Harold Leff

### Male Athlete
***Mason Neforos***
**Soccer, Vienna Soccer**

### Female Athlete
***Norah Jacques***
**Softball, VA Glory**

### Coach
***Josh Dalton***
**Soccer, Great Falls - Reston Soccer**

### Parent
***Laurie Lutz***
**Volleyball, Vienna Youth Inc.**

# Mason District

**Supervisor Andres F. Jimenez**

Athletic Council Representative Scott Anderson

### Male Athlete

***Will Cordon***

**Soccer, Villareal Soccer**

### Female Athlete

***Juliet Quint***

**Soccer, Villareal Soccer**

### Coach

***JJ Foster***

**Softball, VA Glory Fastpitch**

### Parent

***Carrie McCall***

**Soccer, Villareal Soccer**

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# Mount Vernon District

**Supervisor Daniel G. Storck**

Athletic Council Representative Tom Fitzpatrick

### Male Athlete

***Jake Tickner***

**Basketball and Lacrosse, Lee Mount Vernon Sports Club**

### Female Athlete

***Janine Sosa Cruz***

**Soccer, Lee Mount Vernon Sports Club**

### Coach

***Mike Hendrickson Sr.***

**Football, South County Athletic Association**

### Parent

***Trey Reed***

**Soccer, Gunston Soccer Club**

# Providence District

**Supervisor Dalia A. Palchik**

Athletic Council Representative Kelly Ego-Osuala

### Male Athlete

***Jeremiah Yeh***

**Football,** Flagstar Football – Mclean Youth Athletics

### Female Athlete

***MJ Melvin***

**Softball, VA Glory**

### Coach

***Truong Dang***

**Volleyball, VolleyViet**

### Parent

***Ashlee Webb***

**Basketball, Legends Basketball**

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# Springfield District

**Supervisor Pat Herrity**

Athletic Council Representative Michael Thompson Jr

### Male Athlete

***Kylas Jai Kumar***

**Swimming, Poplar Heights Swim Team**

### Female Athlete

***Grier Campbell***

**Soccer, Virginia Valor FC – Chantilly Youth Association**

### Coach

***Leah and Brian Smith***

**Softball, Chantilly Youth Association**

### Parent

***Alicia Kuehn***

**Field Hockey, Chantilly Youth Association**

# Sully District

**Supervisor Kathy L. Smith**

Athletic Council Vice Chair Gary Flather

## Male Athlete

***Kanan Bae***

**Multiple Sports, Southwestern Youth Association**

## Female Athlete

***Natalie Mae Jones***

**Softball, Southwestern Youth Association**

## Coach

***John P. Markey***

**Rugby, Southwestern Youth Association**

## Parent

***Piper Deskins***

**Rugby, Southwestern Youth Association**

**Congratulations, Champions!**

**Photos and video of this event will be available:**

**bit.ly/FairfaxChampions**

# Do You Know a Champion of Character?

We are now accepting nominations for our 2027 Stephen A. McLaughlin Champions of Character Awards. Help us recognize and honor those Champions of Character in your community. If you know an athlete, coach or parent who you feel is deserving of this recognition for their dedication on and off the playing field or court, we want to hear about them.

**Program details and nomination forms are available online at:**

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs *Search:* Champions of Character

**Attach a narrative of one page or less and submit it to:**

Fax: 703-324-5546

Mail to: **Champions of Character Awards**
12011 Government Center Parkway
10th Floor, Athletic Services
Fairfax, VA 22035

# The Athletic Council

The Fairfax County Athletic Council serves in an advisory capacity to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, School Board and county agencies on matters relating to sports in Fairfax County. The council, comprised of 23 voting members, advises on policy and establishes priorities for enhancing the availability of sports programs to the citizens of Fairfax County.

Council appointees include one representative from each of the nine magisterial districts; a member-at-large; a representative from women's sports programs; a diversity-at-large representative; representatives from the Towns of Vienna, Herndon, and Clifton; and seven sports specific representatives.

## Fairfax County Staff

**Serving on the Athletic Council**

**Lloyd Tucker**
***Director***
Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

**Keisha Dotson**
***Deputy Director***
Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

**Karen Avvisato**
***Manager***
***Athletic Services***
Department of Neighborhood and Community Services

**Kim Eckert**
***Director of Park Operations***
Park Authority

**Melanie Meren**
***Board Member***
Fairfax County School Board

**Tom Horn**
***Director of Student Activities and Athletic Programs***
Fairfax County Public Schools

# Athletic Council Members

**Marcia Pape Daniels**
Braddock District

**Ian Harper**
Dranesville District

**Harold Leff**
Hunter Mill District

**William Bright**
Franconia District

**Scott Anderson**
Mason District

**Tom Fitzpatrick**
Mount Vernon District

**Kelly Ego-Osuala**
Providence District

**Michael Thompson Jr.**
Springfield District

**Gary Flather**
*Vice Chair*
Sully District

**Katherine Quinn**
Member-at-Large

**Eric Sohn**
Diversity-at-Large

**Jeffrey E. Stein**
Town of Clifton

**Roland Taylor**
*Secretary*
Town of Herndon

**Tom Hanton**
Town of Vienna

**Suzy Willemssen**
Softball Council

**Vacant**
Baseball Council

**Vacant**
Basketball Council

**Ted Hollingsworth**
Football Council

**Vacant**
Lacrosse Council

**Lula Bauer**
*Chair*
Soccer Council

**Rob Baily**
Volleyball Council

**Caren Penso**
Women's Sports Programs

Children's Bill of Rights *in Sports*

# MAKE THE COMMITMENT

**Fairfax County is committed to upholding the Children's Bill of Rights in Sports and ensuring our programs, policies and practices support safe, positive and inclusive experiences for every young athlete.**

Developed by the Aspen Institute through its Project Play initiative, the framework identifies eight fundamental rights that organizations can use to examine their programs, policies and practices and consider how they are creating positive experiences for every young athlete:

- **To play sports.** Organizations should make every effort to accommodate children's interests to participate, and to help them play with peers from diverse backgrounds.
- **To safe and healthy environments.** Children have the right to play in settings free from all forms of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), hazing, violence, and neglect.
- **To qualified program leaders.** Children have the right to play under the care of coaches and other adults who pass background checks and are trained in key competencies.
- **To developmentally appropriate play.** Children have a right to play at a level commensurate with their physical, mental and emotional maturity, and their emerging athletic ability. They should be treated as young people first, athletes second.
- **To share in the planning and delivery of their activities.** Children have the right to share their viewpoints with coaches and for their insights to be incorporated into activities.
- **To an equal opportunity for personal growth.** Programs should invest equally in all child athletes, free of discrimination based on any personal or family characteristic.
- **To be treated with dignity.** Children have the right to participate in environments that promote the values of sportsmanship, of respect for opponents, officials, and the game.
- **To enjoy themselves.** Children have the right to participate in activities they consider fun, and which foster the development of friendships and social bonds.

**Learn more** about Fairfax County's commitment to this initiative at https://tinyurl.com/Childrens-Rights-Sports

# Fairfax County Athletic Council and Neighborhood and Community Services

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*Fairfax County*
**Neighborhood and Community Services**

## www.fairfaxcounty.gov/NCS

Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For more information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.

A Fairfax County, Virginia publication. October 2026