

MOUNT VERNON REC CENTER OPENING SOON!



Mount Vernon Rec Center has been a cornerstone of the community for more than 42 years. Fairfax County Park Authority is excited to welcome everyone back to the renovated, expanded and upgraded facility.

The 139,000-square-foot facility has experienced a transformative 75,000-square-foot expansion and opens its doors with some never-seen-before amenities for the Park Authority. Here are a couple of features of the newly renovated Rec Center:

ICE ARENA

Two National Hockey League (NHL)-size indoor ice rinks with skate rentals and sharpening services, team and referee locker rooms, party room and warming pantry. Enjoy figure skating and hockey events/rentals, classes and public skate sessions!

POOL

The world-class, Olympic size swimming pool features beach entry as well as play features, lap lanes and diving boards. Try out the Park Authority's first aquatic climbing wall — a fun new play feature for ages 6 and older. The natatorium area boasts bleachers for spectators as well as a wet classroom perfect for lifeguard trainings, water safety education and events.

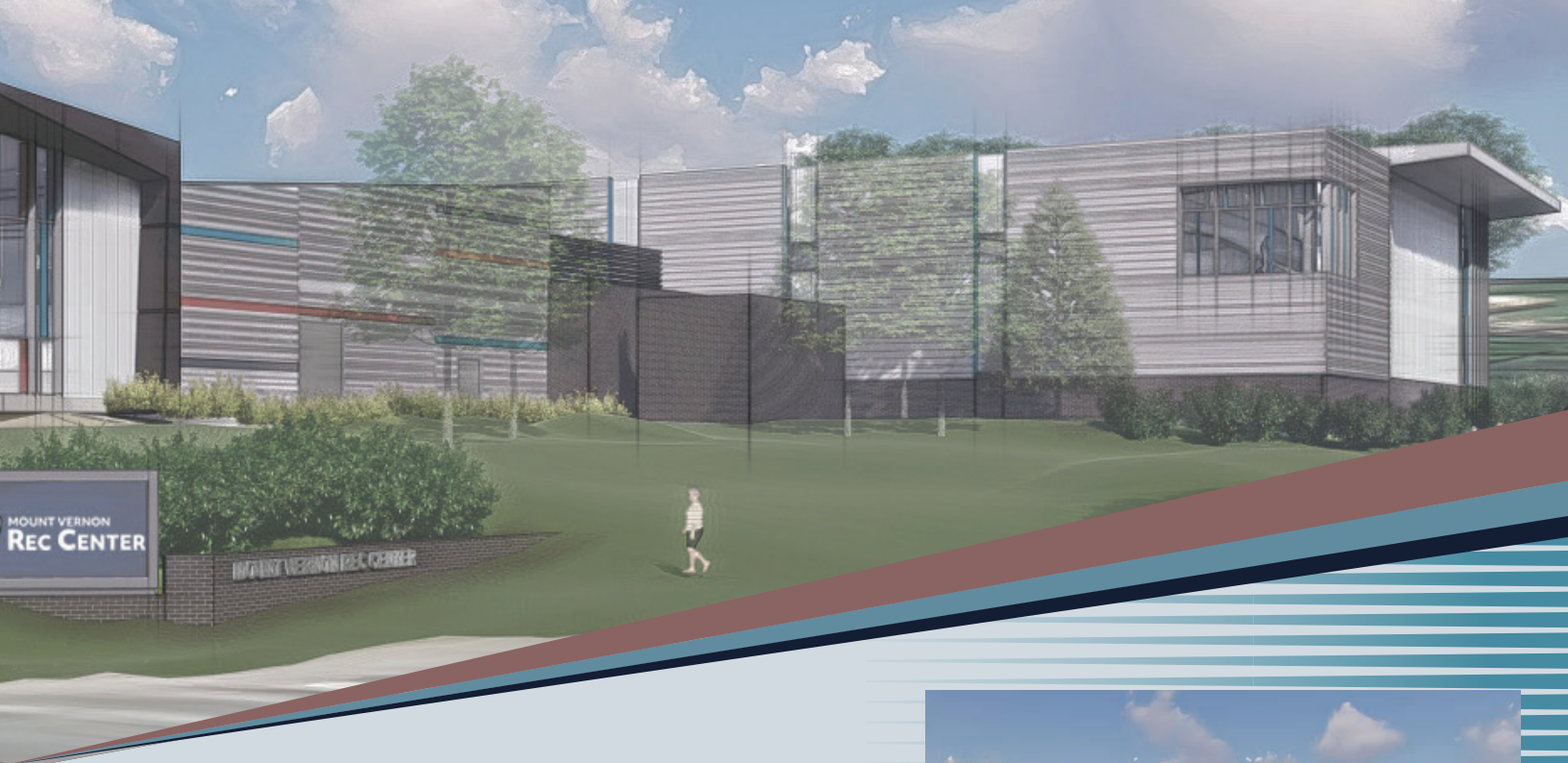
FITNESS CENTER

Get moving in the two-level Fitness Center! Work out your way using various types of cardio and strength equipment, join in drop-in group fitness classes hosted in the center's four classrooms or purchase personal training sessions.

CLIMBING WALL

Reach new heights with the Park Authority's first indoor climbing wall. This two-story artificial rock wall features auto-belays as well as boulder areas for additional challenge. Climbing parties will be available for your next event!





OTHER AMENITIES

Mount Vernon Rec Center features numerous other amenities including:

- **Drop-In Childcare** Rec Center patrons can use drop-in childcare services for an added fee. With discounted rates for Rec Center members, adults can participate in fitness, classes, activities and events inside the Rec Center while their child/children enjoy safe, age-appropriate activities while under the supervision of our experienced staff!
- **Indoor Track** Get your steps in using the indoor track above the ice arena.
- **Parties** Party packages for groups will offer access to exciting recreational amenities such as the pool, indoor climbing wall and ice rinks. Explore opportunities to host larger events in the spacious multipurpose rooms.
- **Exterior** There is a new, beautifully landscaped walkway between the Mount Vernon Rec Center and the Mount Vernon Library. There will be a beautiful outdoor green space for programmed and leisure activities.



Mount Vernon Rec Center Staff (left to right): Sands Smith, Katie Knopes, Bryan Jewell, Ilana Danger, Scott Garland, Josh Allen, Ashley Hudak, Davis Amey, Collin Hayes

Visit the website to learn more about opening dates and upcoming celebrations where you can explore Mount Vernon Rec Center for yourself: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/reccenter/mount-vernion/.

Find your community at the new and improved Mount Vernon Rec Center (2017 Belle View Blvd., Alexandria)!



MEET MOUNT VERNON REC CENTER'S MANAGER, SANDS SMITH

Sands Smith has 10 years of experience working his way up the ranks of the Park Authority, previously serving as manager of Audrey Moore Rec Center. He has more than 15 years of experience focused in aquatics.

"I look forward to seeing the community enjoy everything Mount Vernon Rec Center has to offer," Sands says.

NEW SUMMER CLASSES

The Park Authority has hundreds of new classes and programs this summer, from rock climbing to fitness classes and to Sports and Exercise classes, there is something for every age and interest. Here is a small sampling of what the parks have to offer!



Aqua Fiesta, pg. 32

Wake Up & Dance, pg. 65

Morning Unwind, pg. 69

Intro to Rock Climbing, pg. 76

H.I.I.T., pg. 77

Pride Picnic in the Gardens, pg. 85

Juneteenth Smudge Stick Floral Workshop, pg. 86

Summer Garden Tour, pg. 86

Top Perennials for the Summer, pg. 86

Picnic in the Park, pg. 94

The Civil War at Sully, pg. 94

Remembrance - Enslaved Lives at Sully, pg. 94

Digging Actual Dinosaurs for Adults, pg. 108

Gall Hunt Hike, pg. 109

Pride Party on the Potomac, pg. 112

THE ABC'S of FCPA PRESCHOOLS



You may be surprised when you hear the bubble of laughter or see a line of littles walking down the corridor of a Rec Center — but Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) runs fully licensed preschools helping children grow, learn and prepare for full time school.

FCPA's preschools provide a welcoming space that nurtures the emotional, social and intellectual growth of young minds. Children engage in a variety of age-appropriate activities that focus on art, science, music and more. Through outdoor play, circle time and center activities, children are guided by caring and dedicated educators and encouraged to explore, play and learn alongside their peers. While attending

these safe, inclusive programs, children can reach their potential for socializing with others. Programs range from two to five days a week and promote independence, enhance school-readiness and foster positive self-image.

"We are grateful knowing that our child is in such capable and loving hands," says a 2024 FCPA preschool parent.

Our preschools are licensed by the Virginia Department of Social Services. Staff working at FCPA preschools are CPR- and First Aid-certified, complete required background checks and have prior experience working with children.

Learn more online at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/reccenter/preschool/.

FCPA PRESCHOOL LOCATIONS:

FRANCONIA REC CENTER

6601 Telegraph Road • Alexandria

STONE MANSION

3900 Stoneybrooke Drive • Alexandria

SPRING HILL REC CENTER

1239 Spring Hill Road • McLean

SUMMER '25 CALENDAR

*Classes, Events, Programs
and Registration Dates*

Wednesday, April 16		
Farmers Markets Begin to Open	Various FCPA Sites	pg. 73
Tuesday, April 22		
Registration starts for Summer Classes		pg. 126
Saturday, April 26		
Earth Day Fairfax	Sully Historic Site	pg. 70
Saturday, May 3		
Healthy Strides Fanatasy Forest 5K/10K/Fun Run	Burke Lake Park	Online
Saturday, May 10		
Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Festival	Mason District Park	pg. 70
Saturday, May 24		
The Water Mine Family Swimmin' Hole Opens	Lake Fairfax Park	pg. 72
Sunday, June 1		
Pride Party on the Potomac	Riverbend Park	pg. 112
Friday, June 6		
Summer Entertainment Series Performances begin	Various FCPA Sites	pg. 74-75
Saturday, June 7		
Summer Scramble	Jefferson Golf Course	pg. 89
Saturday, June 14		
Pride Picnic in the Gardens	Green Spring Gardens	pg. 85
Father's Day Golf Tournament-Parent Child Family Challenge	Burke Lake Golf Center	pg. 89
Sunday, June 15		
Sully Antique Car Show	Sully Historic Site	pg. 70
Father's Day Mill in Motion	Colvin Run Mill	pg. 93
Thursday, June 19		
Juneteenth Smudge Stick Floral Workshop	Green Spring Gardens	pg. 86
Juneteenth Celebration	Sully Historic Site	pg. 70
Saturday, June 21		
Exploring our Historic Meeting House and Grounds	Frying Pan Farm Park	pg. 70
Saturday, June 28		
Fireworks, Food and Family Fun	Lake Fairfax Park	pg. 72
Saturday, July 5		
Red, White & Blue Tournament	Burke Lake Golf Center	pg. 89
Saturday, July 12		
Modified Stableford	Jefferson Golf Course	pg. 89
Junior Club Championship	Oakmont Golf Center	pg. 89
Sunday, July 13		
Red, White & Blue Tournament	Pinecrest Golf Course	pg. 89
Thursday, July 31-Sunday, August 3		
Fairfax County 4-H Fair & Carnival	Frying Pan Farm Park	pg. 73
Saturday, August 16		
Junior Club Championship	Burke Lake Golf Center	pg. 89
Club Championship	Jefferson Golf Course	pg. 89
Saturday, August 30		
Annual Begonia Show and Sale	Green Spring Gardens	pg. 85
Saturday, September 6		
Dog Daze	The Water Mine at Lake Fairfax	pg. 116





Camping

- IN FCPA PARKS -

A Staycation Destination



Picture this. Across the glow from a small campfire you see the warmly lit faces of those most important to you. The marshmallows bought at the camp store are bobbing up and down over the flames as laughter gently fills the air. A picnic table nearby is covered in small containers and backpacks, your car is parked under a tree on a short gravel driveway, and the large family tent is stuffed with sleeping bags and pillows set up just outside the glow from the fire. The light of the lantern from within the tent makes it appear as if the nylon shelter were a giant inflatable night light. In the distance you hear what might have been an owl. The stars fill the night sky, appearing to be pinholes of light – some twinkling, some bigger, some brighter, others small. You pause and enjoy it with a sense of relaxation and peace.

For many of us, finding time to connect with our friends and families can be a challenge. When you do have time figuring out an activity or trip for everyone, the task can be just as daunting. The Fairfax County Park Authority offers two campgrounds for a “Staycation” option between Burke Lake Park and Lake Fairfax Park. Our campground options include electrical and non-electrical sites with centralized bathhouses and grills. Individual or group campsites can accommodate between 6 and 100 people. For those seeking to do activities while camping, each park includes different activities. Burke Lake Park has a carousel, mini golf, miniature train rides, disc golf, fishing, hiking and boating. Lake Fairfax features The Water Mine Swimmin’ Hole waterpark, fishing, hiking, skatepark and boating.

So, give Burke Lake Park or Lake Fairfax a visit and unplug (or not) and enjoy an evening with friends or family and experience some much-deserved relaxation and fun.



ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE Festival

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Celebration returns to Mason District Park on Saturday, May 10 from noon to 4 p.m., offering a meaningful opportunity to experience and honor the traditions that have shaped AAPI communities.

The free event will feature music, dance, storytelling and hands-on activities including Lion and Dragon Dances and a Cultural Parade. Families can explore interactive community exhibits that provide insight into histories, customs and contributions that continue to enrich the community today. Art contests, crafts, games and prizes are sure to delight participants of all ages.

Food has long been a way to share culture and history, and guests can experience authentic flavors from local vendors. Artisans will also showcase handcrafted goods, preserving and passing down traditional craftsmanship.

The event is free and open to all. And will be held at Mason District Park in Annandale. For more information, please turn the Events section.



Bringing Style & Passion to Women's Golf



Huyen Pham first picked up a golf club in her 20s at a networking event while living in the Netherlands. That casual introduction sparked a lifelong love for the game. Rain or shine, she dedicated herself to learning and taking lessons, approaching golf with the same adventurous spirit she brings to everything she does. Life took her around the world, from Shanghai to Hulst, and despite stepping away from the game when her kids were small, she rediscovered her love for golf when she and her family settled in Northern Virginia.

Now a manager at Pinecrest Golf Course, Pham is deeply connected to the sport both professionally and personally. Whether she's welcoming golfers for a round or playing on her days off, Pinecrest has truly become her second home. Pham can be found chatting with customers over hot chocolate in winter or a cold beverage after a hot summer round, sharing stories and building connections. As a member of the Pinecrest Women's League, she enjoys the camaraderie, regular play and the healthy competition. "The league gives me a chance to play regularly, meet amazing women who share my love for golf and challenge myself in a fun and supportive environment," she says.

Pham is also known for her bold and stylish golf fashion. She and her friend Anja coordinate outfits for events, and love to rock themed outfits for holidays like St. Patrick's Day and the Fourth of July. She believes golf gear can be stylish and practical and reflect who you are while boosting your play.

Pham's adventurous spirit extends beyond fashion. She loves traveling to play golf, from rounds in Myrtle Beach to tournaments in Portugal. She is passionate about encouraging women to pick up the game, emphasizing that every golfer starts somewhere. She hopes to inspire others to find joy, confidence and community through golf. "We play not just to win," she says, "but to challenge our limits and inspire others to do the same."

Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/women to learn about Golf Fairfax women's golf.

Whether you are new to the greens or looking to mix things up, Burke Lake Golf Center offers players a chance to unwind, connect and build lasting friendships. Founded in 2016, the Burke Lake Golf Club Mixed League (BLGCMML) has grown from a casual foursome to a thriving community of 70 golfers.

What started as a small group of friends looking to play more regularly has blossomed into an inclusive league that welcomes players of all skill levels. With tee times on Friday afternoons, the league provides a flexible and inviting environment, especially for those with busy weekday schedules. The league runs April to September.

More than just a league, BLGCMML is a community where all genders build friendships and share their love for the game. As one league member put it, "Golfing nine holes with someone gives you two hours to get to know them, and that's what makes this league special."

Members bond on and off the course with laid back, friendly rounds and post round gatherings at Burke Lake's, Mulligan's Grill. The league kicks off with a spring potluck social to welcome new golfers, and closes out the season with a fall celebration. Looking ahead, new organizer Trish Konczal hopes to expand the league's offerings, adding clinics with Burke Lake's golf pros and outings at other Golf Fairfax courses.

"The only way to improve (at golf) is to actually play, and this league is a welcoming group for casual golf," said Konczal.

Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/golf/burke-lake/leagues for more information.

Friendships on the Fairways Burke Lake's Mixed Golf League





NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS MONTH

DOUBLE DOSE OF WELLNESS IN MAY

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

May arrives with a powerful dual focus: National Physical Fitness Month and Mental Health Awareness Month. This convergence offers a timely reminder of the interconnectedness of our physical and mental well-being.

While we often consider exercise for its physical benefits, its impact on mental health is profound and deserves equal recognition. Regular exercise releases endorphins, which

have mood-boosting effects that help to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression. Furthermore,

engaging in physical activity can improve sleep quality, reduce stress levels and enhance overall cognitive function.

Fairfax County Park Authority's Rec Centers offer the following drop-in group exercise formats that have proven to aid mental well-being:

Yoga: When you do yoga, it changes parts of your brain that help you make good choices, handle stress and control your feelings. Yoga is really good at helping with stress, anxiety and depression.

Cycle: By boosting blood circulation to the brain, cycling promotes neuron growth and mental clarity. This leads to improved concentration and memory. Studies have shown that even a 30-minute stationary bike session can significantly enhance memory, reasoning and planning skills.

Zumba: Dance-based exercise, like Zumba, not only releases happiness-inducing chemicals in the brain such as serotonin but also fosters social bonds through group participation and community building.

The benefits of exercise on mental health are multiplied even further when exercise occurs outdoors in a natural environment. Spending time in nature can also significantly decrease anxiety and stress while also improving our mood and cognitive performance.

For more information about class offerings, turn to the Fitness section starting on page 76.

The Park Authority offers a variety of outdoor fitness classes that will provide you with this double dose of improved physical and mental well-being. Check out and register for the following classes happening this summer:

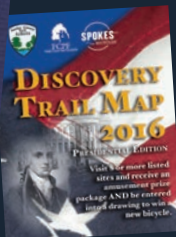
- Healthy Strides Walking at Providence Rec Center
- Hatha Combo at Frying Pan Park
- Tai Chi at Green Spring Gardens Park
- Yoga & Walking at Lake Accotink
- Yoga & Bonfire Evening at Lake Accotink



75 YEARS

The Discovery Trail Map Returns!

In time to celebrate the Park Authority's 75th Anniversary, the Discovery Trail Map will return this summer. To participate, patrons are encouraged to pick up a map at any FCPA staffed site or online. There are 12 parks featured on the map. This year's map has a new twist—participants are asked to answer a question that can only be found by visiting the 12 parks. Once participants have visited at least 8 parks and filled in the answers on the map, they can then visit one of the four prize redemption sites to receive a prize packet. Participants can choose to be entered for a drawing for a grand prize. There will be 25 grand prizes awarded. This popular activity is open to all ages and will run Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend. The Discovery Trail Map is sponsored by the Fairfax County Park Foundation.



Diving Into Water Safety

Water safety education is making waves far and wide in 2025. From March to June, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) staff will host Get Set, Get W.E.T. (Water Education Training). This program educates preschoolers about the role of lifeguards in keeping swimmers safe and the essential rules everyone should follow to ensure safety at the pool. This year's goal is to reach 4,000 children through more than 200 presentations.

As warmer weather approaches, Get Set, Get W.E.T. provides a crucial foundation in water safety for children. The program features an interactive 20 to 30 minute presentation designed for small groups of kids. Sessions are packed with engaging stories and games that make learning about water safety both fun and

memorable. Children get introduced to various water safety props, including life jackets and rescue tubes, to help them understand their importance and use. Additionally, children will receive coloring sheets to take home, reinforcing the key messages of the program.



The best way for children to learn about water safety is to participate in a swim class offered by the FCPA. Classes are offered for all ages and abilities, from infants to seniors. Children learn how to act in and around water by certified swim instructors. Swim instruction is conducted through registered classes and group and private one-on-one lessons.

Please contact Levi Lainhart at Joshua.Lainhart@fairfaxcounty.gov if you are interested in a Get Set Get W.E.T. program. For information about swim classes, please turn to the Aquatics section.



HIDDEN
GEM



Skating Galore

Glide out to a Fairfax County Park Authority location and get skating this summer. Whether it's on blades or wheels, find your perfect venue in our parks.

Franconia Rec Center: The Franconia Rec Center's gym transforms into a roller-skating rink welcoming all ages to come enjoy festive, themed events. All ages and abilities are invited to purchase a ticket, bring their own skates (or dancing shoes), dress to impress for the theme and enjoy a night of music and fun.

Lake Fairfax: Roll out to enjoy two outdoor venues — the skate park and the inline skate rink. Skateboarders and skaters can enjoy the 15,000 square-foot, plaza-style skate park with various obstacles and bowl with 4-, 6- and 8-foot sections. The 85-foot by 185-foot Inline Skate Rink is constructed of sport floor tiles ideal for roller hockey and skating. Try roller hockey, street hockey and inline/roller skating at the rink, which is available for public use whenever it is not reserved.

Mount Vernon Rec Center: Experience ice skating and ice hockey at this renovated facility scheduled to reopen in May. The Rec Center boasts an expanded ice arena with two indoor National Hockey League-size rinks. Features include a skate rental area, skate sharpening, various locker rooms and party rooms with skate-friendly flooring. Programs will include public skate sessions, community events, classes and rentals for everything from parties to shows to coaching and team games.

Wakefield Park: Drop into thrills and excitement of skateboarding, skating and BMX biking at this skate park. The skate park features a freestyle course and a competition course with various obstacles and a competition-style bowl that promises a challenge for all ages and skill levels.

For more information, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks.



NOURISH YOUR NEIGHBOR

Food holds a special meaning for everyone, whether it means sustenance, energy, nostalgia, comfort or community. Unfortunately, for about one in four Fairfax County residents, it also means scarcity.

About 17% of food insecure households are enrolled in federal nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP, but many households rely on food distributions at local pantries or charitable food donations. While there are a variety of grains, canned vegetables, meats, and dairy at food pantries, fresh fruits and vegetables can be hard to come by.

That is why in 2024 the Fairfax County Park Authority started the “Nourish Your Neighbor” program at the Farmers Markets. The program is an easy way to support local farmers and increase the amount of produce available at local food pantries. Customers at the Farmers Markets are encouraged to buy additional produce such as leafy greens, peppers, or apples to donate on site to a local food pantry. Donations don’t have to be large – if every customer at the Burke Farmers Market donated just one apple, there would be about 2,000 apples by the end of one market day! Donated produce is picked up at the end of the market and then distributed to the community at one of our partner’s sites. Last season, we collaborated with nine partners including United Community, Western Fairfax Christian Ministries, Annandale Christian Community for Action, LINK Against Hunger, Share of McLean, the Koinonia Foundation, Burke United Methodist Church, Cornerstones and the Lorton Community Action Center. Together, we were able to donate 3,800 lbs. of fresh produce to the community. Help us continue providing fresh produce to the community by participating in the Nourish Your Neighbor program this season! The program runs May through October at all 10 market locations.

For more information about Farmers Market locations and hours, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/farmersmarkets.

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The Fall 2025 issue of Parktakes will be available in late July.

Park Authority Board meetings are open to the public.

For more information about dates and times, visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/board.

About Parktakes

Advertising: Paid advertising included in Parktakes does not imply endorsement of the advertised goods, products or services by the Fairfax County Park Authority. To place an ad in Parktakes, contact Cindy Fortuno at cindy.fortuno@fairfaxcounty.gov.

Publication and Subscriptions: Free subscriptions are available for both printed and electronic formats through our registration office 703-222-4664 or by signing up online: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ptsubs.htm. Parktakes copies are also

available at all staffed park locations, county libraries and government centers.

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Photos: The FCPA reserves the right to photograph and videotape all its activities, events, classes, programs and facilities for promotional purposes. Vehicle safety audio/video systems may record program participants when they are being transported in Park

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Authority vehicles.

Prices, hours, programs and services are subject to change without prior notice.

Fairfax County’s programs, services and facilities are available to all citizens regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To request reasonable accommodations under the ADA, call 703-324-8563 or TTY Va. Relay 711.



DONOR PROFILE

Microsoft



The Fairfax County Park Foundation is grateful to Microsoft Corporation for their support of the Park Authority's IMA (Invasive Management Area program) and the Garden Plot Stewards.

Through their partnership with the Society for Ecological Restoration, Microsoft donated more than \$31,000 in 2024 and 2023 to help remove invasive species and plant native plants in parks.

The Park Authority has more than 23,000 acres. Unfortunately, more than one-third is infested with non-native invasive species of plants and shrubs that cause ecological or economic harm. Non-native invasive species reduce tree cover, decrease water quality, increase erosion and litter and create more habitats for other invasive species. The more than 300 invasive plant species in our area further degrade the natural resources by threatening native tree, shrub and understory species diversity, weighing down tree trunks and branches and creating impenetrable thickets that block out sunlight. Invasive species also diminish the quality of wildlife habitat and the outdoor recreation experience for residents, making parkland unattractive and uninviting. Each natural area in Fairfax County is valuable and these ecosystems should be healthy, native forests.

Partnerships with corporations like Microsoft bring critical resources to help beautify our parks.

Microsoft also donated \$10,000 worth of garden folding seats and toolkits that were donated to our garden plot stewards who had been with the program for ten years or more.

The mission of the Fairfax County Park Authority Community Garden Plot Rental Program is to give Fairfax County residents the opportunity to garden. The Fairfax County Park Authority rents more than 700 garden plots in 11 county parks to Fairfax County residents on an annual basis.

The Garden Plot Program is on the forefront of the One Fairfax Initiative. Our garden tenants represent the full range of diversity that is present in the County, including all socioeconomic strata.

The gardeners appreciated the garden kits that helped them to work low to the ground in a comfortable position. "Due to knee replacements, I can't kneel, so being able to sit while I plant and weed will solve a problem for me. What a nice donation from Microsoft," stated a grateful gardener.

WHAT IS THE PARK FOUNDATION AND WHAT DO THEY DO?

The Fairfax County Park Foundation (FCPF) is the fundraising arm for the Fairfax County Park Authority (FPCA). FCPF raises funds from individuals and businesses, obtains grants and creates partnerships. Specifically, FCPF provides funds for many FPCA programs and projects including:

- The Wonder Wagon Mobile Nature Center and FPCA camps
- Community events like the Summer Entertainment Series, Earth Day Fairfax and Healthy Strides 5K/10K
- Environmental projects like the invasive management area program (IMA)
- Beautification projects like the Moon Gate at Green Spring Gardens and Eakin Community Park.

Learn more by visiting www.fairfaxparkfoundation.org, emailing FairfaxParkFoundation@fairfaxcounty.gov or calling 703-324-8581.

