



Golden Gazette

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Susan Voss is a Role Model for Aging Well

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

In November 2023, the Golden Gazette received an email from a 13-year-old named Jonathan D’Cruz. He wrote to recommend that I feature his neighbor, 91-year-old Susan Voss, in the Golden Gazette. Citing her as his role model for when he gets older, Jonathan shared that Susan lived a busy and happy life while making a positive impact on the lives of those around her. Interest piqued, I wanted to meet the woman who inspired this unusual introduction.

Susan Voss was born and raised in Southern California. Growing up, her family was very active in sailing – an activity that became a lifelong passion for her. At age 18, Voss married her husband, Rick. One year later, he joined the U.S. Foreign Service and the couple moved to the East Coast. As their family grew to include two daughters and a son, the family spent about 15 years living abroad in six countries – Iraq, Uruguay, Singapore, Germany, Panama and the Philippines.



Neighbors Susan Voss and Jonathan D’Cruz in Voss’ home in Vienna.

The family engaged in two of Voss’ favorite activities while living overseas – sailing and travel. In Germany, the couple and their three children, then ages 1, 3, and 5, toured and camped all over Europe in their Volkswagen

Bus. The family purchased a boat while living in Manila and often enjoyed sailing. Opportunities to sail also came up when they lived in Panama. Sailing from Southern California to the Caribbean, family friends

would call them, needing extra hands to work the lines while traveling through the Panama Canal. After the nine-hour trip through the canal, they would wave goodbye to their friends and hop on a train to return home.

In 1972, the family moved to the U.S. and settled in Vienna. While living in Panama, Voss had started taking college classes and continued her studies at George Mason University. To help her select a major, she took an aptitude test. “It said you like people, you like being organized and you’re curious. You should be a lawyer. I said, ‘that’s ridiculous, I’m never going to be a lawyer,’” Voss recalls. However, a seed had been planted, so Voss began taking courses

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Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. Call **703-324-5411, TTY 711**. The TTY number for all contacts in this publication is 711 unless otherwise stated.

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 or call **703-324-GOLD**.

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to become a paralegal. After graduating, she decided that becoming a lawyer wasn't a ridiculous idea after all, so at age 48 she went to law school, attending Georgetown University at night while working full time as a paralegal. Although it was difficult, she was grateful for her supportive husband, who was retired at the time and able to help shoulder some of the load. After graduating, Voss practiced real estate law dealing with resorts and condominiums.

Voss' husband, Rick, passed away in 1994. She continued to work for several years while developing an interest in gardening. "I like being outside. I like working in the garden. I even like weeding. I've just gotten fascinated with the whole process," she says. In 2003, she enrolled in a master gardening class at Green Spring Gardens, which led to her volunteering at the gardens. Finally, she decided to retire and devote all her time to the activities she loved, saying "When I got to the point when I had to come in from the garden to answer clients' questions, I decided to retire."

In 2007, Voss joined the board of the Friends of Green Spring Gardens (FROGS), a nonprofit organization that provides financial and volunteer support to the gardens. Her involvement has grown over the years, and she guesses that she now spends about half her time at Green Spring Gardens and the rest in her own garden. Originally, Voss worked with the horticulturists in the gardens, but now spends her time doing propagation, coordinating the art exhibits, preparing monthly plant guides for docents, and planning special events. Her own gardens have also grown and now consist of large front and back gardens with gardens on either side of her home. Her first attempts at gardening consisted of growing vegetables, but her interest grew to encompass a wide variety of plants. She no longer grows vegetables, preferring shrubs, perennials and a few annuals.

In addition to FROGS, Voss is active with many other volunteer and civic organizations. She volunteers with the Committee for Helping Others (CHO), an all-volunteer organization located in Vienna that provides emergency financial and other assistance to people living in Vienna, Oakton, Dunn Loring and Merrifield. She also volunteers with her local Shepherd Center, where she answers the phone, fielding transportation requests.

"When I got to the point when I had to come in from the garden to answer clients' questions, I decided to retire."

For over 10 years, Voss has been a member of the Vienna branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW). In addition to enjoying the work they do to support women in education, she has also made many friends. Several members go to the movies together each month and Voss started a monthly book discussion group for AAUW members. This is in addition to the book group she belongs to at Green Spring Gardens, so Voss can often be found listening to an audiobook while working in her garden. She estimates that she listens to a book each week, using her hearing aids to listen via Bluetooth. "I consider them my \$4,000 AirPods," she jokes.

Voss continues to love sailing and has a cottage in Severna Park, MD, where she keeps a 30-foot catamaran. Her son shares her love of sailing and manages upkeep on the cottage and boat, so she joins him for sailing excursions.

Living abroad for years didn't curb Voss' love of travel. Over the years, she has visited places all over the globe, including China, Egypt, South America and the Galapagos Islands. However, her favorite place to travel is Africa, where she has gone three times, visiting Kenya, South Africa and Botswana. The last trip she took before the COVID-19 pandemic was a dream trip to Patagonia, where she observed ships navigating the channel around the southern tip of South America.

Over the last 20 years, she has shared her love of travel with her grandchildren by taking a special trip with each of them. She's taken three of her grandchildren on separate trips to Los Angeles. She also took a tour of California wine country with one granddaughter not long after her granddaughter's 21st birthday. One memorable trip was to Wyoming with her grandson,

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where the outdoor activities they enjoyed during their tour helped spark his love of outdoor recreation. She hasn't forgotten that she still owes her youngest grandchild a trip.

About nine years ago, the D'Cruz family moved in next door and the neighbors soon became friends. Voss learned that Shona D'Cruz also enjoys gardening, so they decided to start sharing a supply of mulch every spring. Voss also enjoyed talking to Jonathan and his younger sister, Leah, while they played in their yard while she worked in her garden. The D'Cruz family are caring neighbors, doing things like calling and checking to make sure she is okay if they hear her dog barking at night, and bringing her newspaper to the front door every morning after she injured her knee. She is grateful to have such thoughtful and supportive neighbors.

Voss was surprised when she learned of Jonathan's email to the Golden Gazette because she doesn't consider herself a role model. She guesses that her active lifestyle inspired him to write, saying "I think that what he's looking at with me is that I'm outside and active. Someone at my age who continues to be active and doesn't just sit home and feel sorry for themselves." Voss also has a high opinion of Jonathan, who she calls "quite remarkable," and applauds his parents for how they support their children in all their activities.

In many ways, Jonathan D'Cruz is a typical 8th grader. He likes spending time with friends, reading fantasy books, practicing Taekwondo, and coding. He also plays upright bass and is a member of the Children's Chorus of Washington. What sets him apart are his powers of observation and thoughtfulness. He especially admires Voss for her determination. "She has so many excuses that she could say to stop doing the things she does – her age, a knee injury – but she keeps at it and keeps trying her hardest and keeps doing good for the community even though she doesn't have to," he says. Jonathan shares that observing her stick to her daily routine has inspired him to become more organized. As to why she is his role model for getting older, he shares what he has learned from Voss, saying, "Stay active. Also keep at your interests even though they might not be the easiest to do. It gives your life reason and meaning." ✨

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](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/mature-living)

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

Celebrate Older Americans Month in May

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Every year, May is recognized as Older Americans Month (OAM), a time to honor the contributions of older adults and address the issues impacting them. The theme of OAM this year is Powered by Connection, which highlights the impact social connections have on our health and overall well-being. In Fairfax County, many resources are available to encourage connections and reduce social isolation among older adults, including:

- ◆ **Family Services Adult and Aging** – Clients of the Adult and Aging division can participate in programs designed to alleviate social isolation, including:
 - ◆ Companion Pets and the Social Visitors program, both administered by Volunteer Solutions.
 - ◆ Health and Wellness workshops, including A Matter of Balance, Bingocize, the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and more, all administered by Elderlink. Learn more at FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/elderlink.
 - ◆ For additional information and resources, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/olderadults or call the Adult, Disability and Caregiver Resources line at **703-324-7948, TTY 711**, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.



POWERED BY CONNECTION: MAY 2024

- ◆ **Park Authority** – Take a class, play a round of golf, explore local history and more at rec centers, parks, golf courses and historic sites throughout the county. Learn more at FairfaxCounty.gov/parks.
- ◆ **Senior Centers** – 15 senior centers are located throughout the county to serve adults 50 and over. Enjoy activities, stay active and meet new friends. Transportation and meals are also available. Learn more at FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/senior-centers.
- ◆ **Virtual Center for Active Adults** - Join live, interactive programs virtually to learn, stay fit and engage with other adults. Learn more at bit.ly/novaVCAA.
- ◆ **Wellness Center for Older Adults** – Offers both virtual and in-person services for older adults and individuals with developmental disabilities in the community. For more information, visit servicesource.org/virginia-wcoa or call **703-970-3601**. ☀

Report Suspected Abuse in Our Community

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

In FY 2023, 3,525 reports of adult abuse, neglect or exploitation were received in Fairfax County.

Fairfax County Adult Protective Services (APS) receives and investigates reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an adult who is 60 years or older or is 18 years and older and incapacitated. APS staff assess for risk and work alongside the adult whenever possible to determine whether they need protective services. The adult is connected with helpful resources and may be provided case management services to address risk factors.

You can report suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation to the Adult Protective Services hotline, and if you make a report, your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you suspect that someone you know is the victim of abuse, neglect, self-neglect or exploitation, please report it by calling **703-324-7450, TTY 711**.

To learn more, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/adult-protective-services. ☀

Family Caregiver Support: Are You Prepared?

by Allegra Joffe, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

As a caregiver, do you have the legal documents you need if your loved one experiences a medical emergency? Do you know what your loved one's wishes are if they are no longer able to communicate or if they pass away?

When families experience a crisis, many realize too late that they do not have the legal documents they need. Some documents family members should consider having in place include a Health Care Power of Attorney, a Durable Financial Power of Attorney, and a Living Will. Caregivers should speak with a professional to seek advice and guidance on the legal documents that are in place for their loved ones and others that are recommended. 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

A Health & Wellness Vision Board Journey

Friday, May 3, Noon-1 p.m.

During this workshop, Julia Kay, Certified Life Coach and Certified Health & Wellness Coach, will provide step-by-step instructions, tips, and inspiration to help you craft a vision board. Through a series of interactive exercises and discussions, you'll gain clarity on your goals and create a visual representation of your dreams. Whether you want to excel in your caregiver duties, reduce your stress, improve relationships, or enhance your overall well-being, this workshop will empower you to take inspired action. A list of recommended supplies will be sent to registrants in advance prior to the workshop. Register online at bit.ly/StayingWell-123 or call **571-407-6961**.

Filling My Cup: Gratitude Journaling for Self-Care

Friday, May 10, Noon-1 p.m.

In this gratitude journaling workshop, Alina Liao, founder of Zenit, will teach caregivers how to use journaling as a tool to proactively support self-care in

their daily lives. Alina guides you through journaling focused on practicing gratitude to support self-care and mental wellness. This workshop is an inclusive, affirming space for caregivers to slow down, process their thoughts and feelings, and get grounded again. Participants leave the workshop with concrete tools, practices, and inspiration to continue with gratitude journaling and using this tool for self-care in their daily lives. Register online at bit.ly/StayingWell-123 or call **571-407-6961**.

Legal Considerations for Family Caregivers

Wednesday, May 15, Noon-1 p.m.

In this presentation, Elizabeth L. Gray, Esq., CELA and Virginia C. Haizlip, Esq., will educate family caregivers on what legal considerations they should consider in their caregiving role. They will discuss special needs trusts, when is it appropriate to use a special needs trust, and other tools for caregivers of loved ones with disabilities. They will discuss the difference between guardianship and power of attorney and how to decide the best option for your family. In addition, they will share what legal documents are necessary for family caregivers to be able to provide the most effective assistance to their aging and disabled loved ones, including powers of attorney, advance medical directives, revocable living trusts, wills, and special needs trusts. Register online at bit.ly/CAREWEB1 or call **571-407-6961**.

Resistance Training for Caregivers

Friday, May 17, Noon-1 p.m.

In this workshop, Shannon Royce, NAFC Certified Personal Trainer, Functional Aging Specialist, and Certified Training the Older Adult Specialist, will provide caregivers with exercises, stretches, and breathing techniques to help strengthen the muscles in their legs, back, and hips. This will assist with maintaining a more upright posture and longer gait steps. Shannon will discuss the purpose of strength training and talk about its importance in overcoming or slowing down conditions that primarily affect adults as they age, such as sarcopenia (muscle loss), osteopenia (bone loss), and obesity. Register online at bit.ly/StayingWell-123 or call 571-407-6961.

Transformation by Affirmation

Friday, May 31, Noon-1 p.m.

This workshop is taught by Stephan Goldberg, founder and president of Optimus Performance, who will inform and provide practical exercises to utilize affirmations as a tool to achieve personal goals and to affect a change in attitude and perspective. The workshop will focus on the purpose of affirmations, the benefits, and how to write and use affirmations to achieve desired outcomes. Participants will be able to ask questions and practice writing affirmations as the workshop progresses. Register online at bit.ly/StayingWell-123 or call 571-407-6961. ✨

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 April 17 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 through the duration of the Plan.

COA Meeting, Wednesday, May 15, 1 p.m.

In Person:

Pennino Building, 12011 Government Center Pkwy, Fairfax, VA 22035 – Room 200 & 206

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

Grievances in Long-Term Care Facilities

by Katie Patterson, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

A person who lives in a long-term care (LTC) facility maintains all the same rights as an individual living in the community. A person living in a LTC facility gains additional rights as a resident, one of which is the right to raise formal grievances. A resident can present their grievances at any time to facility staff or any other person without fear of discrimination or retaliation. The facility must act promptly to help resolve the grievance, and provide a written decision to the resident, if requested. The resident also has the right to file a complaint with their local state licensing agency or the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP) is often called on to assist residents and consumers advocate for their rights to protect dignity, choices, and self-determination. The NVLTCOP is a resident-directed program that is available to assist with concerns about quality of care, and to educate the community about long-term care services. For more information about residents' rights 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. ✨

Give Your Time as a Volunteer

by Tanya Erway, Volunteer Solutions Recruitment Coordinator

Spring is a time of new growth. Are you ready to try something new? Consider volunteering! Check out the volunteer opportunities below, or the various options found on bit.ly/FFXVOLUNTEER.

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 setting out 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. This is a great opportunity for people who enjoy spending time outdoors, engaging with their community, and helping support local farms and small businesses. Depending on location, there are weekday and 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.

Volunteer Solutions is searching for skilled volunteers to share their talents with older adults at Fairfax County senior centers. The centers need weekday volunteers who are available to lead groups in fitness, dance, art, gardening, piano, languages (including ASL, Spanish, French, ESOL), and more. If you have some free time during daytime hours, consider



Volunteers are needed at ten farmers markets in Fairfax County. Weekday and weekend opportunities are available, depending on location.

sharing your passion with others. Do you play an instrument, sing, or have another talent? Entertainers of all types are needed, too. Social visitors and grocery shoppers are also needed for one-on-one volunteer assistance (especially in the Alexandria region). For more information, go to bit.ly/FXVSVOL, or contact **VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov**, or call **703-324-5406**. Volunteer Solutions is a partnership between the Fairfax County Department of Family Services and Neighborhood and Community Services.

If you wish to submit volunteer opportunities for a future column, contact Tanya Erway at **VolunteerSolutionsRecruitment@FairfaxCounty.gov**. ☀

Domestic and Sexual Violence Services (DSVS) is looking for a few good volunteers!

Sign up to learn about DSVS, the services the division provides and the population it serves. Discover how volunteers can contribute to the DSVS mission and the application process. Orientation is free but **registration** is required. Multiple dates, starting Wednesday, May 1, 2024, are available. Choose the one that works best for you: volunteer.fairfaxcounty.gov/custom/1380/opp_details/189202. ☀

Help Needed at the Polls!

The Fairfax County Office of Elections is looking for community members to serve as election officers for the Tuesday, June 18, 2024 election.

In particular, we need bilingual officers who speak Korean and Vietnamese. This is a great opportunity to get to know your neighbors and help your community!

You will receive \$250 as a thank you for your service.

Learn more and apply at FairfaxCounty.gov/elections/officers/new-officers. ☀

Volunteers Needed for Area Shepherd's Centers

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

The non-profit Shepherd's Centers are sponsored by local area congregations, corporate partners, community groups, and individuals to serve adults 50 and older. The centers offer free transportation for medical appointments and non-medical needs (e.g. grocery shopping) for adults 50+ who live in their center's service area and are able to independently get in and out of a car.

Shepherd's Centers need volunteers! If you are interested in making a difference in the life of an older adult by providing a ride to the doctor, dentist, or grocery store, please contact the center near you:

- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Annandale/Springfield** – call 703-941-1419; visit [ShepherdsCenter-Annandale.org](#); or email shepherdscas@vacoxmail.com.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke** – call 703-323-4788; visit [scfbva.org](#); or email info@scfbva.org.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of McLean, Arlington and Falls Church** - call 703-506-2199; visit [scmafc.org](#); or email contact@scmafc.org.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia** (serving Oakton, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Great Falls, Dunn Loring and Merrifield) – call 703-260-9568; or visit [scnova.org](#).
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of South County** – call 703-799-0505; or visit [scfbva.org/scservices](#).
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Western Fairfax County** – call 703-246-5920; visit [scwfc.org](#); or email scwfc.office@gmail.com. ☀

Hurricane Preparedness

by Moriah Kitaeff, Department of Emergency Management and Security

Did you know that next month marks the beginning of the 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season? The 2024 Atlantic Hurricane Season begins Saturday, June 1, and goes all the way until Saturday, November 30. This means that this month is the time to hunker down and prepare. Key terms that are important to know for hurricane season are:

- ◆ **Hurricane Watch:** Conditions for a hurricane are possible within the next 36 hours.
- ◆ **Hurricane Warning:** Conditions for a hurricane are expected within 24 hours.

Threats from hurricanes include high winds, heavy rainfall, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, rip currents, and tornadoes. That does not mean that all of these threats have to take place for something to be categorized as a hurricane.

To prepare for hurricane season, make sure that your home emergency kit is up to date, and contains items to help your household be self-sustaining during a power outage at home for up to 72 hours. For more information on what to have in your home emergency kit, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/makeanemergencykit](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergency/readyfairfax/makeanemergencykit).



There are also things you can do to strengthen your home to prepare for an upcoming hurricane:

- ◆ Keep trees around your home trimmed before a storm takes place, to lessen the chance of your home becoming damaged from broken branches.
- ◆ Bring loose outdoor items, such as patio furniture, inside before the storm. Loose outdoor items can blow in a hurricane and damage nearby buildings.
- ◆ Move your car inside a garage or to another secure location.

For more information on what you can do before, during, and after a hurricane, visit the hurricane and tropical storm page of the Fairfax County Community Emergency Response Guide: [FairfaxCounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/emergencymanagement/cerg). ☀

Fairfax County Resident Dorothy Hutchins Testifies About the OAA's Positive Impact

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

On Thursday, March 7, 2024, the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions held a hearing entitled “The Older Americans Act: Supporting Efforts to Meet the Needs of Seniors.” The purpose of the hearing was to gather input from stakeholders on policies the committee should consider during the reauthorization of the Older Americans Act (OAA). The OAA was first enacted in 1965 to provide a broad range of services and programs for older adults. It was last reauthorized in 2020 and will expire on September 30, 2024.

Several experts who work in the field of older adult services testified before the committee, including Ramsey Alwin, President and CEO of the National Council on Aging, Ellie Hollander, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels America, Martha (Marti) Y. Kubik, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor of Nursing, College of Public Health, George Mason University, and Michelle Branham, Secretary, Florida Department of Elder Affairs. They testified to the positive impact of the OAA and advocated for expansion of the program to meet increasing demand. Panelists also agreed that programs and services funded by the OAA save lives as well as money by keeping seniors healthier and safer. One example cited was that it costs less to feed a senior home delivered meals for a whole year than for them to spend one night in a hospital.

Also invited to testify was Dorothy Hutchins, a 93-year-old resident of Alexandria, VA. Joining the hearing virtually from her home, she shared that she lived alone but was blessed with a large supportive family. A widow since 1973, Hutchins first experienced the benefits of the OAA in the early 1990s when she began attending two local Fairfax County senior centers – Lincolnia and Bailey’s. At the centers, she enjoyed playing bridge, taking exercise classes, and participating in special events. At the centers, she also participated in their Congregate Meals program.

Hutchins stopped attending the centers during the COVID-19 pandemic and hasn’t returned. However, during the pandemic, she learned that she qualified for the Home Delivered Meals program and began

receiving a weekly supply of meals, delivered to her home every Thursday.



In January 2021, Hutchins suffered a fall in her home that required surgery and rehab. A year later, she fell again, requiring another round of surgery and rehab. Since then, she has been very cautious, no longer drives and wears a life alert device. Hutchins shared that she sometimes feels lonely but tries to stay busy and continue to learn.

Crediting her family and the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging for making it possible for her to continue to live independently in her home, Hutchins concluded her testimony with these words, “Everyone deserves the chance to live where they choose, and for most of us we want to remain in our homes and communities. The services provided under the Older Americans Act make that possible for me and many other seniors. I hope that Congress will continue to support this important work.”

To watch a recording of the hearing, including Dorothy Hutchins’ testimony, visit [youtube.com/watch?v=pHlze8GJOIM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHlze8GJOIM).

Fairfax County Services for Older Adults

Learn more about services and resources for older adults, including:

- ◆ Volunteer Solutions’ Companion Pets and Social Visitors programs to combat social isolation.
- ◆ Fairfax County Senior Centers.
- ◆ Home Delivered Meals Program.
- ◆ A Matter of Balance Fall Prevention Program.
- ◆ And many more!

Call the Aging, Disability & Caregiver Resources Line at **703-324-7948, TTY 711**, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. ☀

Spring Screening

by Danielle Waite, Community Preparedness Specialist, Fairfax County Health Department

May is Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate the health and well-being of our senior citizens. It's also a time to recognize the importance of screening for aging-related diseases. Rates of chronic conditions (like high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, high cholesterol, Type-2 diabetes, and cancer) have continued to rise, underscoring notable disparities in early screening and detection. Therefore, screening is an essential step towards maintaining good health and a healthy community.

Here are three things you can do to make sure your health screening is successful: personal awareness, access to screening, and open dialogue with your healthcare provider.

Personal awareness:

Regular screenings can detect changes that we may not see for ourselves early on. They can help to detect small health problems before they become big ones. Take the time to learn about the health screenings that are available for age-related diseases such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, cholesterol, and kidney disease, as well as strokes. Our health does not only impact us as an individual – it can also affect the entire family and community. So, personal awareness of our health is not just an investment – it's a great way of “giving back” to our family and community.

Access to screening:

- ◆ Ask your healthcare provider what health screening tests are best for you. Look for information from reliable sources like healthcare providers and reputable organizations that can provide accurate information. Also, ask about nearby screening facilities and Medicare coverage options.
- ◆ Setting up routine primary care visits can help you get recommended screening tests. If you have insurance or Medicare, they can help you find care. If you do not have insurance, check to see if you are eligible for Medicaid or find a provider in the community that can provide free or low-cost health care.



Open dialogue:

- ◆ Frequent and open discussions with your healthcare provider are important tools for overcoming healthcare barriers. Share any changes in your health with your medical provider.
- ◆ Have a candid conversation with your healthcare provider. Ask what resources exist to make things easier. Talk about the barriers that you face. By doing so, we can ensure that all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, have equal opportunities for early detection and screening.

Visit the links below:

- ◆ Learn more about medicaid at [FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/public-assistance-employment-services](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/familyservices/public-assistance-employment-services) or call the Department of Family Services Customer Call Center at **703-324-7500**, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- ◆ See free and low cost health care options: [FairfaxCounty.gov/health/sites/health/files/assets/documents/pdf/nova-safety-net-providers.pdf](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/sites/health/files/assets/documents/pdf/nova-safety-net-providers.pdf)
- ◆ A and B Recommendations for Preventative Care Services, United States Preventive Services Taskforce: [uspstf/recommendation-topics/uspstf-a-and-b-recommendations](https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation-topics/uspstf-a-and-b-recommendations)
- ◆ Disparities in Meeting USPSTF Breast, Cervical, and Colorectal Cancer Screening Guidelines Among Women in the United States: [tinyurl.com/wfxs8mh9](https://www.tinyurl.com/wfxs8mh9)

For more information about how you can protect the health of you and your family, go to: [FairfaxCounty.gov/health](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health). 🌟

Finding Community Help for Everyday Technology

by Myles Niedstadt, Communication and Technology Committee Chair, Coordinating Council on Aging and Adult with Disabilities

Embracing and using everyday technology can be daunting. The Fairfax Area Coordinating Council on Aging and Adults with Disabilities (CCAAD) is here to help.

CCAAD has published a new guide to the many Fairfax-area community resources that can help people, particularly older people, better understand and utilize a wide variety of technology, including assistive technologies.



The guide can be accessed online or downloaded in a printable PDF format at tinyurl.com/ffxtechguide. To encourage organizations to make use of the guide, it may be printed and reproduced without restrictions.

The guide is organized by the type of technology. For example, if an older adult or an adult with a disability needs help making a video call using a cell phone

or tablet, a community resource for them is Fairfax County's IT On-Call Program at **703-324-5406** or **703-324-7948** or email volunteersolutions@fairfaxcounty.gov. A program volunteer could assist over the phone or in person.

Another example, if one is seeking more information about using assistive smartphones with voice recognition or adaptive equipment or computer access for hearing, vision, and sensory needs, the ENDeependence Center of Northern Virginia offers in-person classes. They could also visit the Hearing Assistive Technology Demonstration Center at Northern Virginia Resource Center and obtain an initial consultation to discuss possible government or insurance coverage for additional services.

Please note, the guide is designed to assist readers find resources for tech help but is not intended to be inclusive of all providers – either locally or nationally - who might offer similar services. The providers have not been vetted by CCAAD, and there is no guarantee that they are suitable for everyone's situation or needs.

The listed providers offer tech help for older adults and adults with disabilities for technology and some with a focus on assistive technology. However, neither may completely solve all accessibility issues. CCAAD's expectation is that all providers could address the accessibility and useability needs of each individual seeking assistance. ✨

Connect with Your Community – Join a Senior Center

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Want to meet new people, enjoy recreational activities, pursue hobbies and fitness goals, and engage with your community? Join a senior center! In Fairfax, senior centers are both affordable and abundant. Check out the following list to find one near you.

Fairfax County Senior Centers

Fairfax County operates 15 senior centers. Membership is available to adults 50 and older and membership is

\$24-\$48/year for county residents and \$100/year for non-residents. Operating hours of all senior centers are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., unless noted otherwise. Learn more at FairfaxCounty.gov/neighborhood-community-services/senior-centers.

Bailey's Senior Center

5920 Summers Lane, Falls Church
703-820-2131, TTY 711

Herndon Senior Center

873 Grace Street, Herndon
703-464-6200, TTY 711

Hollin Hall Senior Center

1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria
703-765-4573, TTY 711

Huntington Senior Center

5751 Liberty Drive, Alexandria
703-960-1917, TTY 711
Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.;
and Saturday, Noon-8 p.m.

James Lee Senior Center

2855 Annandale Road, Falls Church
703-534-3387, TTY 711

Jim Scott (formerly Providence) Senior Center

3001 Vaden Drive, Fairfax
703-865-0520, TTY 711

Kingstowne Center for Active Adults

6488 Landsdowne Center, Alexandria
703-339-7676, TTY 711

Lewinsville Senior Center

1613 Great Falls Street, McLean
703-442-9075, TTY 711

Lincolnia Senior Center

4710 North Chambliss Street, Alexandria
703-914-0330, TTY 711

Little River Glen Senior Center

4001 Barker Court, Fairfax
703-503-8703, TTY 711

Lorton Senior Center

9520 Richmond Highway, Lorton
703-550-7195, TTY 711

Pimmit Hills Senior Center

7510 Lisle Avenue, Falls Church
703-734-3338, TTY 711

South County Senior Center at the Original Mount Vernon High School

8333 Richmond Highway, Suite 325, Alexandria
703-704-6216, TTY 711

Sully Senior Center

13800 Wall Road, Herndon
703-322-4475, TTY 711

Wakefield Senior Center at Audrey Moore RECenter

8100 Braddock Road, Annandale
703-321-3000, TTY 711



Other Area Senior Centers

The Young at Heart Senior Center

Green Acres Center
4401 Sideburn Rd, Fairfax
703-273-6090

Adults 55 and older are welcome to join. Membership is free for City of Fairfax residents and \$50/year for non-residents. Operating hours are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Learn more at FairfaxVa.gov/government/parks-recreation/the-young-at-heart-senior-center.

City of Falls Church Senior Center

223 Little Falls St., Falls Church
703-248-5027 (TTY 711)

Adults 50 and older are welcome to join. Membership is free for Falls Church residents and \$12/person for non-residents with membership running Sept. 1-Aug. 31. Operating hours are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Learn more at FallsChurchVa.gov/611/Senior-Center.

Seniors in Action

McLean Community Center
1234 Ingleside Ave, McLean
703-790-0123, TTY 711

MCC's Seniors in Action is a recreation program for adults 50+. Membership is \$100 per year/\$48 for MCC district residents. Learn more at McLeanCenter.org/seniors-in-action. ☀

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

by Angela Bates, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Nearly 1 in 5 people experience a mental health concern each year, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). More than 1 in 20 adults experience serious mental illness that interferes with or limits major life activities. Mental illness, including depression, substance use disorders, anxiety, or psychosis can happen to anyone. By talking about mental health this May, you can help shine a light on the presence of mental health issues and eliminate stigma surrounding mental illness.



How to take action:

- ◆ Enroll in one of CSB's Mental Health First Aid courses at [FairfaxCounty.gov/community-services-board/training/mental-health-first-aid](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/training/mental-health-first-aid). Mental Health First Aid is a public education program offered by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board that can help communities understand mental illnesses, seek timely intervention, and save lives.
- ◆ Take CSB's REVIVE! courses which train people on what to do, and not to do, in an overdose situation,

how to administer life-saving Naloxone and what to do afterwards. Learn more at [FairfaxCounty.gov/community-services-board/heroin-opioids/revive](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/community-services-board/heroin-opioids/revive).

- ◆ Take one of CSB's free, confidential online mental health screenings at screening.hfihub.com/northern-virginia. Completing these anonymous screenings will help you determine if your recent thoughts or behaviors may be associated with a common, treatable mental health issue.
- ◆ Practice healthy self-care strategies to improve your mental health:
 - ◆ Exercise. Even a small amount can make a big difference in your day.
 - ◆ Connect with someone. Make a phone call or visit with a friend or family member.
 - ◆ Start a cycle of encouragement; tell others what you appreciate about them.
 - ◆ Listen to music that inspires and motivates you.
 - ◆ Write a poem on something you care about, or an article on something you feel is interesting.

Get involved, learn more, help your community and reduce stigma. Support is available, treatment works and people do recover. Call the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board for guidance and resources at **703-383-8500 (TTY 711)**. CSB Emergency Services are available 24/7 at **703-573-5679 (TTY 711)**. Call 911 for a life-threatening emergency. 🌟

What's Happening to Affordable Internet Programs?

by Doug Povich, Cable and Consumer Services

Internet service, like telephone, water, and electricity, is essential to life in the 21st century. Its importance was brought to the fore during the COVID-19 pandemic when working adults and students needed better internet access for teleworking and online education.

As part of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the federal government provided \$14.2 billion to improve access to affordable internet services and tasked the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with managing a program to offer eligible households

discounts on their monthly internet bills and a one-time discount on the purchase of a laptop, desktop, or tablet.

Since December 2021, that program, known as the Affordable Connectivity Program or ACP, has provided nearly 23 million low-income households with up to a \$30/month discount on internet service and up to \$100 off the cost of a computer or tablet. Unfortunately, the initial funding was expected to run out in April 2024, and the FCC has started to wind down the program.

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... *Community Calendar continued from back cover*

Vienna Parks and Recreation Wellness & Safety Expo 2024

Friday, May 10, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

This event is for adults ages 55+ and features a wide variety of exhibitors, including government agencies, nonprofits and local businesses offering information and answering questions. For more information, call **703-255-7801** or visit viennava.gov/wellness.

Brain Gym

Friday, May 10, 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 May 10, June 7, July 5, Aug. 2 and Sept. 13. Come to one or all of the sessions. No registration. For more information, call **703-256-3800**.

Ayr Hill Garden Club Plant Sale

Saturday, May 11, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.

The sale will take place next to the Freeman Store and Museum, 131 Church Street, NE, Vienna. Purchase plants for sun and/or shade, deer resistant plants, drought tolerant plants, native plants, and more. Watch special demonstrations and get gardening advice. Shop for Mother's Day from crafts made by club members. Proceeds help Ayr Hill Garden Club maintain five public gardens in Vienna.

The Big Plant Sale at Green Spring Gardens

Saturday, May 18, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria
Shop for annuals, perennials, shrubs, trees. Get gardening tips and more from dozens of local vendors and master gardeners. Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/greenspring for more information or call **703-642-5173**.

Sibling Loss Workshop

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

New workshop offered by Haven of Northern Virginia, Inc. Space is limited. For information, call **703-941-7000** or email havenofnova@verizon.net.

Department of Cable & Consumer Services Presents: Your Rights as a Cable TV Subscriber

Tuesday, May 21, 10:15-11:15 a.m.

Learn about federal and local customer service standards for cable TV operators, who oversees them, and how and when to get assistance. For more information, visit bit.ly/novaVCAA; To join the virtual presentation on Zoom, visit bit.ly/VCAAzoom2; Meeting ID: 905 123 5932; Passcode: 3636

Older Americans Month: Powered by Connection Resource Fair

Wednesday, May 22, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Inova Center for Personalized Health, 8100 Innovation Park Dr., Fairfax
Explore diverse aging experiences and learn how communities can combat stereotypes. The event will feature Frontal Temporal Dementia Info and Resources, PowerBraining, Covid Vaccination and Boosters, Door Prizes, Therapeutic Art, Community Resources, Dementia Simulation, and more. For more information, contact Ndidi Uzowihe at Nuzowihe@arlingtonva.us or Delores Clearfield dathey@capitalcitynurses.com.

Pride Month Poetry Reading

Saturday, June 1, 1-2:30 p.m.

Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria
Featuring some of the region's most prominent LGBTQ+ poets, this reading honors the rich legacy and contributions of poets and poetry in the queer community. Poets include Danielle Badra, Gowri Koneswaran, and Brian Teare. For more information, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/greenspring.

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.

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As of February 8, 2024, the FCC stopped accepting new applications for the ACP. Internet service providers (ISPs) are required to notify ACP households about the end of the program.

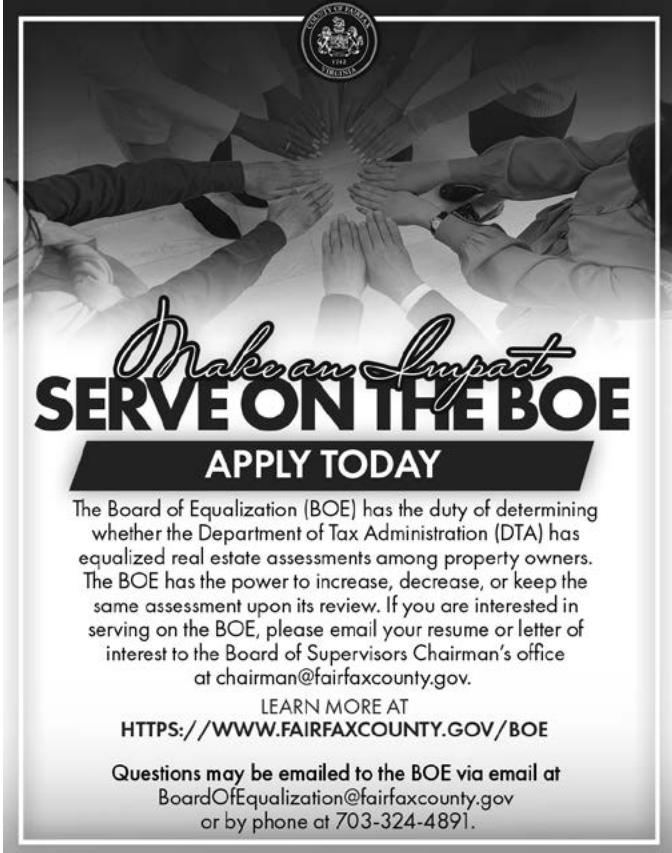
There is some hope that Congress will allocate additional funding as part of the ongoing budget negotiations. Also, some U.S. Senators have introduced the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act, which would provide \$7 billion to extend the ACP at least through the end of 2024.

So, what happens in the meantime if you're an ACP participant? ACP participants who remain eligible are expected to receive the ACP discount through the end of April 2024 and perhaps part of May. You'll receive notice from your ISP regarding the specific date your discount expires.

After the end of the program, in order to switch you to a non-discounted service, your ISP must establish your willingness and ability to pay for internet service. This requirement is met if you 1) previously consented to receiving internet service following the end of the ACP; 2) paid for internet service from the ISP before you started receiving the ACP discount; or 3) currently pay a fee for your ACP-supported service. If none of these requirements is met, an ACP provider must get an opt-in form from you before charging a rate higher than the ACP rate. You should contact your internet company to discuss your options.

In Fairfax County, those options include low-cost internet programs offered by Comcast, Cox and Verizon, whose eligibility requirements parallel those of the ACP. If you weren't eligible for the ACP, you likely also won't be eligible for these programs. They include Comcast's Internet Essentials, Cox's ConnectAssist and Connect2Compete, and Verizon's Verizon Forward. If you're eligible, the monthly charges for the programs range from \$9.95 - \$30 per month. You can contact the providers directly to see if you qualify.

Given the success of the ACP program, and the importance of affordable internet access to all Americans, many hope Congress will allocate funds to extend the program. ✨



Make an Impact
SERVE ON THE BOE
APPLY TODAY

The Board of Equalization (BOE) has the duty of determining whether the Department of Tax Administration (DTA) has equalized real estate assessments among property owners. The BOE has the power to increase, decrease, or keep the same assessment upon its review. If you are interested in serving on the BOE, please email your resume or letter of interest to the Board of Supervisors Chairman's office at chairman@fairfaxcounty.gov.

LEARN MORE AT
[HTTPS://WWW.FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV/BOE](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/boe)

Questions may be emailed to the BOE via email at BoardOfEqualization@fairfaxcounty.gov or by phone at 703-324-4891.

Fairfax County

Services for Older Adults

703-324-7948 | TTY 711

Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults

- Subscribe to **Golden Gazette**, **Access Fairfax**, and **The Update**
- Watch **Mature Living** on Ch. 16
- facebook.com/fairfaxcounty50

FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF **FAMILY SERVICES**

A publication of Fairfax County, Virginia.

COUNTY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA
Adult and Aging Services
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Suite 530
Fairfax, VA 22035-1104

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May Community Calendar

Curiosity Never Retires

Looking for a way to keep your mind active with a bonus of making new friends and finding new adventures? Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University (OLLI Mason) offers over 500 onsite and online courses every year, as well as regional outings, social events, and over 20 different clubs. Take as many classes as you want for one yearly fee. No homework, tests or papers, just the chance to rediscover what you love. For more information or to request a current course catalog, go to olli.gmu.edu or contact the OLLI Mason office at 703-503-3384.

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: goldengirls.org.

Poetry Beneath the Stars

Saturday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.

Turner Farm Park, 925 Springvale Road, Great Falls
During this program you will be asked to dig deep and contemplate the cosmos through poetic form. Examples of star-gazing poetry and writing prompts will be provided. This event will include telescope

viewing in the Roll Top Observatory, weather permitting. Hosted by ArtsFairfax and the Fairfax Poet Laureate as part of the "Poetry in the Parks" series. Learn more and register at FairfaxCounty.gov/parks/event-highlights.

NOVA Symphony Orchestra Spring 2024 Classical Concert

Saturday, May 4, 8 p.m.

Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E Campus Dr.,
Alexandria

NOVA Symphony Orchestra is celebrating our 30th anniversary! For our formal spring classical concert, we'll perform music that we have played during the past thirty years but not recently. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit reunionmusicsociety.org.

Culturally Specific Care for Dementia

Wednesday, May 8, 1-2:30 p.m.

Virtual and in-person program at Insight Memory Care Center, 3955 Pender Drive, Suite 100, Fairfax
Free program. Dementia does not discriminate - it affects people of all cultures and backgrounds. People's backgrounds and beliefs inform their sense of self, how they understand, feel about, and respond to other people and their environment - including diagnoses, health and care organizations and their staff. For more information and to register, visit insightmcc.org/get-involved/events.