



Neighborhoods
Support S(o)uper
Bowl Food Drive
▶▶ **Page 2**



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Field Teams Compete
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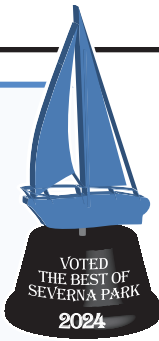
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SEVERNA PARK, MD

FEBRUARY 2024

Vote For The Best Of Severna Park



What are your favorite restaurants, music venues, service providers, nonprofits and businesses in the area? We need your help naming the Best of Severna Park winners for 2024. To participate, fill out the survey and return it to the Voice by Tuesday, March 26. We will tally all the votes and announce this year's winners in our April 11 edition.

You may also cast your ballot by voting online at www.severna-parkvoice.com/bestofsevernapark.

The Rules

- Nominees must be located within the Severna Park Voice distribution area zip codes - 21146 (Severna Park), 21012 (Arnold) and 21108 (Millersville).
- Entries must be made on original newsprint - no photocopies, faxes, scans or emails - and must be mailed to the Voice (one entry per household).
- Responses should not use nicknames. For example, "The Taphouse" could be Severna Park Taphouse or Adam's Taphouse and Grille. Be clear if you want your vote to count.
- Mailing of multiple ballots will not be accepted. Voters must fill in nominations for at least 25 categories for the ballot to be valid. If you are nominating a business that has multiple locations, please specify the exact location you are nominating.
- Entries should be mailed to Severna Park Voice, P.O. Box 608, Severna Park, Maryland, 21146.

The Dates

Deadline for entry is Tuesday, March 26. We will print a reminder in the March issue of The Voice, and the winners will be announced in the April issue.

Thank you for your participation. We look forward to announcing the winners you select!

Find the best of ballot on page 6.

Rise Up Coffee Roasters Opens

By Meredith Winter

Something new is brewing in Severna Park. This month, the popular Maryland-based chain Rise Up Coffee Roasters is opening its 13th café along Route 2 South, adjacent to Homestead Gardens. Rise Up plans to open its doors the week of February 21 barring any delays with final inspections.

The 2,300-square-foot coffee shop is Rise Up's largest location west of the Chesapeake Bay and the first on this side of the bridge to serve customers through a drive-thru. Brandon Bartlett, who operates all five Annapolis-area Rise Ups with his wife, Caite, shared that the new Severna Park café will offer the same food and beverage menus as nearby locations.

Customers can enjoy a robust selection of espresso beverages, teas, drip coffees, cold brew, kid-friendly options and Rise Up's signature original coffee smoothies. Drinks can be paired with pastries — including fresh Carlson's donuts — or made-to-order food items ranging from hearty breakfast sandwiches to vegan- and vegetarian-friendly burritos to avocado toast.

For local residents looking to gather with friends or set up shop for teleworking, the Severna Park Rise Up will offer

» **Continued on page 8**



Severna Park High School Students To Perform Greatest Hits In "Rock 'N' Roll Revival XXXV"

By Meredith Winter

This March, weeks of rigorous rehearsals will culminate in the ever-popular annual Severna Park High School (SPHS) musical production of "Rock 'N' Roll Revival." Roughly 100 talented SPHS students comprising the cast, band and tech team have been preparing since January to delight audiences with their renditions of 29 "Greatest Hits," which is the theme of RNR XXXV.

Karah Parks, director of the show and the drama program at SPHS, shared that this year's eclectic musical repertoire will open with a Michael Jackson medley. Careful not to give too much more away, she pulled back the curtain just enough to pique interest in the upcoming production.

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Margueritte Mills - Volunteer Of The Month

Every month, the Severna Park Voice recognizes the good work of a local volunteer to honor Voice founder and lifelong Severna Park resident Margueritte Mills.

Tech Crew Parent Volunteer Helps Students Set The Stage For SPHS Productions

By Alyson Kay

Trista Rassofsky has volunteered at Severna Park High School (SPHS) since 2021, assisting the unseen, but vital, work of the tech crew in SPHS stage productions.

Her son, Caleb, has been working in the tech crew since seventh grade and is now a senior at SPHS. Rassofsky is also an alumnus of SPHS and the "Rock 'N' Roll Revival" production, though she worked in the cast.

"It's something that's close to my heart to see my son do something that I did as well," she said.

Her volunteer role includes sourcing materials, providing meals, making art, giving rides and selling flair during productions to fundraise for tech crew.

"Anything that needs doing, I'm happy to do it — it's kind of my jam," Rassofsky said.

At times she even provides emotional support for students having a rough day. "Sometimes a kid just needs someone to talk to and I'll sit in the hall and talk to them," Rassofsky said.

Parent volunteers function in support roles for the students, allowing them to take charge. Students are the ones building and painting the sets and running the lights, wires and cords. Seniors and juniors oversee the sophomores and freshmen to make sure they're doing tasks correctly.

Parents also oversee tech crew students as they build the band deck for "Rock 'N' Roll Revival" and test it to make sure it can handle the weight of musical instruments and the stress of a dozen students dancing on it.



Trista Rassofsky has assisted Severna Park High School's tech crew as a parent volunteer since fall 2021, helping with "Freaky Friday," "The Addams Family" and "Rock 'N' Roll Revival."

"We've got parents overseeing and making sure the safety is there, but the kids are the ones doing it," Rassofsky said.

Sometimes helping to build the stage requires looking for some unusual materials. "For 'The Addams Family,' I was asking all of the neighbors for dead plants to decorate the Addams house and stage with dead plants," Rassofsky shared. "The neighbors thought that was pretty funny because I was saying, 'OK, I need all of your dead plants. Please give them to me.'"

Rassofsky has sourced items that might otherwise be thrown out, like a saxophone that's missing a piece. "This is how tech crew makes their magic," she said. "They turn other people's trash into treasure."

She also brings some of her own items to decorate the set, including her Victo-

rian-shaped furniture for "The Addams Family."

Members of the tech crew are not just needed for theater productions. They also work at every school dance concert, music concert and graduation. They even work for non-school-sponsored events held at the high school, including when the U.S. Air Force bands play at the school.

"There has to be someone who's doing the sound and lights and making sure the stage is set up and ready to go," Rassofsky said. "It's far more than just drama."

Rassofsky's skill in sourcing materials comes from volunteering for a variety of organizations. She finds the items that she needs by going to Goodwills as far away as Delaware and by reaching out to people in the community.

"Severna Park is very generous in that regard," Rassofsky said. "They're really good at opening up their garages, basements and attics and finding all of the weird stuff I'm asking for."

Sometimes, she even connects people with organizations that will reuse items that might otherwise be thrown away.

Out of all of the productions that Rassofsky volunteers for, her favorite is "Rock 'N' Roll Revival" because of its long history and the connections it creates in the community across generations.

"Rock 'N' Roll' is looking backward and bringing it forward into the younger generation," Rassofsky said. "You kind of have the younger generation bringing the older generation back into the school."

Food Drive Stocks Seven Pantries

Community captains dropped off donations in February ahead of the big game for the seventh annual S(o)uper Bowl food drive, sponsored by Good Neighbors Group.

"Pantries are reporting that the needs continue to increase as resources decrease. We are thrilled to have been able to add two additional food pantries," said Kathie Hamlett, S(o)uper Bowl coordinator for Good Neighbors Group.

This year, the event comprised 71 neighborhoods and seven food pantries.

"It's amazing how things add up," Michele Sabean, director of development for SPAN, said of the yearly event. "It carries us through the whole summer."

The winning neighborhoods will be announced at a thank you dinner at Cafe Mezzanotte on February 22.



Photo by Lauren Cowin
Colson Lee, 11, hauled a wagon full of donations for SPAN's pantry.

The Severna Park Voice is partnered with Evergreen Printing Company, which examines all aspects of its operation to protect the environment and conserve resources. Evergreen Printing has installed 5,924 solar panels to offset about 40% of the company's electric requirements. The company uses soy- and vegetable-based inks resulting in reduced volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions. Evergreen's process-free plates have no environmental impact and are 100% chemical free. These are just a few of the actions the company has taken to ensure sustainability.



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Tips For Charity

Vida Taco Bar Guest Bartender Events Serve Drinks For A Cause

By Lauren Cowin

Everybody's working for the weekend, and every weekend this winter, guest bartenders at Vida Taco Bar in Severna Park have spent Saturday nights earning tips for charity.

"We just wanted to bring something fun to the Severna Park location in the offseason, and also at the same time do a giveback to multiple charities," said John Miller, co-owner of Vida Taco Bar.

Miller and his business partner Andrew Fox have invited members of the community to take a shift behind the bar every Saturday in January, February and March. Half of all gratuities earned go to the charity of their choice.

That's 13 weeks, and 13 organizations reaping the benefits — plus a competitive twist. The guest bartender who rings up the most sales each of the three months will be awarded an additional \$500 for their charity. The overall winner will earn \$500 on top of that.

"All in all, whoever is the winner of the event is going to have an extra \$1,000 to their charity, plus the money that they raised," Miller said.

For Katie Hofstetter, the chance to raise money for the Fibrolamellar Cancer Foundation came at a time of personal significance — her husband, Kyle, was diagnosed with the rare form of liver cancer nearly five years ago to the date of her January 27 stint as guest bartender.

"We always try to do something once a year to donate to them," Hofstetter said. "It was fun to do the bartending event this time."

Expecting a big crowd, Hofstetter confirmed the patio's capacity prior to her event — 100 max. She counted more than 80 supporters in one of her group photos.

"It's so fun for everyone involved. It's local, it brings everyone that we love together for a good cause, and it helps Vida, too," Hofstetter said.

Her efforts earned more than \$1,000 to support families with a fibrolamellar diagnosis and help find a cure. On top of that, as the top earner for January, Hofstetter earned an additional \$500 from Vida Taco Bar.

Ashleigh Wyble served as guest bartender on January 20, and she referred to the setup as a "win-win."

"We got to see some of our supporters who we don't typically see unless we hold an event, and Vida got some extra people in the door, which was awesome," Wyble said. "It's a cool idea; I'm thankful Vida put it together."

Wyble raised more than \$400 for the For Ellie Foundation, an organization she and her husband, Matt, established following the unexpected loss of their infant daughter in 2016.

The money raised from this event will primarily go toward the foundation's "Hope Totes" — reusable bags containing a blanket, snacks and toiletries that are delivered to pediatric emergency rooms.

"When your kid has to go to the emergency room, you're dropping everything and running out the door," Wyble explained. "We provide these bags to Anne Arundel Medical Center and (UM) Baltimore Washington Medical Center when parents and patients have to either stay for an extended period of time or be transferred to Children's (National Hospital) or Johns Hopkins and they don't have anything with them."

The 50% kickback from the restaurant gives the opportunity for a substantial donation.

"I feel like the venue to host was extremely generous," said Stacey Cassidy, owner of Savvy Consignment, whose bar takeover was January 13. "Most restaurants will give back 10% or 20% (of the profits)."



Savvy Consignment owner and guest bartender Stacey Cassidy raised \$600 for Sarah's House in January.

Cassidy's charity of choice was Sarah's House, a supportive housing program for local families experiencing homelessness and emergency needs. She raised more than \$600 for Sarah's House.

"I can't say enough about that charity," Cassidy said. "I would love more people to see the facility, know where their dollars and stuff would go to help. There's a lot of families there."

Earlier this month, Amy Babst and Karen von Berg filled in to benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, and Euna Aesthetics did so for CRAB.

The duo who kicked things off January 6 were Oak Hill Elementary School PTO co-presidents Li Basagic and Lynn LaRocca, who packed the place with fellow parents.

On tap for the remainder of winter are bartenders benefiting the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, SPAN, Junior League of Annapolis, Anne Arundel County Animal Shelter and Gigi's Playhouse.

Last call for guest bartending is March 30, and Voice staff will serve drinks to benefit the Katherine's Light Foundation.



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Above info is required.

The Categories Are:

COMMUNITY

- Most Desirable Community To Reside _____
- Best Community Beach _____
- Best Community Pool _____
- Best Club/Organization _____
- Best Nonprofit Organization _____
- Best House Of Worship _____
- Best Pastor/Church Leader _____
- Best Preschool _____
- Best School _____
- Best Business To Open In 2023 _____

KIDS' ACTIVITIES

- Best Activity Center _____
- Best After-School Program _____
- Best Children's Dance Company _____
- Best Day Care _____
- Best Music Instruction Program _____
- Best Educational Services _____
- Best Party/Special Occasion Venue _____
- Best Playground _____
- Best Summer Camp _____
- Best Sports Facility _____
- Best Youth Sports League _____

BEAUTY & FITNESS

(Please specify person and company if applicable)

- Best Fitness Club _____
- Best Hair Salon/Barber Shop _____
- Best Martial Arts Program _____
- Best Place For A Massage _____
- Best Nail Salon _____
- Best Spa _____
- Best Weight-Loss Program _____

HEALTH

(Please specify person and company if applicable)

- Best Medical Practice _____
- Best Physician _____
- Best Women's Specialty Practice _____
- Best Chiropractic Practice _____
- Best Dental Practice _____
- Best Orthodontic Practice _____
- Best Eye Care Practice/Ophthalmologist _____
- Best Audiologist _____
- Best Pediatric Practice _____
- Best Pharmacy _____
- Best Physical Therapy Practice _____
- Best Mental Health Care _____
- Best Speech Therapy _____
- Best Veterinary Practice _____
- Best Senior Living Facility _____
- Best In-Home Health Care _____
- Best Health Care Provider Outside Severna Park _____

BEST HOME SERVICES

- Best Fence/Deck Contractor _____
- Best Cleaning Service _____
- Best Home Improvement Contractor _____
- Best HVAC Contractor _____
- Best Electrician _____
- Best Interior Designer _____
- Best Kitchen/Bath Remodeling Service _____
- Best Landscape/Lawn Service _____
- Best Pool Service _____
- Best Plumbing Contractor _____
- Best Home Service Outside Severna Park _____

COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Best Auto Repair _____
- Best Bank _____
- Best Car Wash _____
- Best Dry Cleaner _____
- Best Marine Repair _____
- Best Pet Care _____

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

(Please specify agent and company)

- Best Accountant _____
- Best Insurance Agent _____
- Best Investment Adviser _____
- Best Lawyer _____
- Best Mortgage Lender _____
- Best Real Estate Agent _____

RETAIL/SHOPPING

- Best Overall Customer Service _____
- Best Art/Photography/Frame Shop _____
- Best Bicycle Shop _____
- Best Consignment Shop _____
- Best Clothing Store/Pop-Up Shop _____
- Best Florist _____
- Best Garden Center _____
- Best Gift Shop _____
- Best Grocery Store _____
- Best Hardware Store _____
- Best Home Decor _____
- Best Jeweler _____
- Best Liquor Store _____
- Best Toy Store _____

FOOD/DINING

- Best Restaurant Overall _____
- Best Wait Staff _____
- Best Breakfast _____
- Best Lunch _____
- Best Dinner _____
- Best Kids' Menu _____
- Best Barbecue _____
- Best Burger _____
- Best Coffee _____
- Best Crab Cake _____
- Best Bakery/Cakes _____
- Best Dessert _____
- Best Ice Cream/Frozen Treat _____
- Best Pizza _____
- Best Salad _____
- Best Sandwich/Sub _____
- Best Seafood _____
- Best Wings _____
- Best Fast Food _____
- Best Asian _____
- Best Italian _____
- Best Mexican _____
- Best Gluten-Free Menu _____
- Best Vegetarian Menu _____
- Best Caterer _____
- Best Bar _____
- Best Food Truck _____
- Best Special Occasion _____
- Best Outside Seating _____
- Best Restaurant Outside Severna Park _____

ENTERTAINMENT

- Best Place For Family Entertainment _____
- Best Live Music Venue _____
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- Best Place To Take Out-Of-Towners _____
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Rise Up Coffee Roasters Opens

» **Continued from page 1**
plenty of seating inside and outdoors, where Bartlett said he plans to add a large patio this spring.

Rise Up Coffee, an independent small-batch coffee roaster and retailer, is an “Eastern Shore original” with humble beginnings. It opened in 2005 as a drive-up coffee stand in St. Michaels, serving a town with a population of just over 1,000. Over the years, Rise Up has opened cafés across Delmarva in Cambridge, Salisbury, West Ocean City, Rehoboth Beach and other locales. Its signature organic coffees are roasted in Easton and can be purchased whole-bean or in coffee pods at local grocery stores.

Rise Up’s simple mantra illustrates that the company places as much value on its people as it does its coffee: “Grown by friends. Roasted by friends. Enjoyed by friends.” Through fair trade practices, Rise Up helps provide coffee growers with a more dignified existence. The Bartletts’ business philosophy is to “deliver the highest quality products, served by the highest quality people.” Those people — baristas, kitchen staff, managers and others — work together to create a welcoming atmosphere and serve consistently good coffee.

Bartlett, who grew up playing football against the Green Hornets and has childhood friends in Severna Park, said that Rise Up is looking forward to serving the Severna Park community and giving back as opportunities arise. The company regularly donates to nonprofits, schools, sports groups, the arts and other organizations. Each year, Rise Up honors moms with free drinks on Mother’s Day and those who have served the United States



with complimentary beverages on Veteran’s Day. First responders in uniform drink free every day.

“The high school is close that we can support; there are a lot of great sports in the area — I feel like being involved in the community is going to be an easy thing for us to do,” Bartlett said.

In early February, a team of tradespeople were busy putting the finishing touches on the Severna Park Rise Up. As with other Rise Up cafés, a local artist was tapped to hand-paint a custom mural of coffee plants and Rise Up logos on the walls. High ceilings, live-edge wood counters and a connecting entrance from Homestead Gardens round out the space.

Rise Up’s “Western Shore” locations include Downtown Annapolis, Edgewater, Parole, Arnold and now, Severna Park. The new location will be open seven days a week from 6:00am to 7:00pm; the Mad Eggs kitchen will serve made-to-order food from 6:00am to 3:00pm each day. Grab-and-go sandwiches, pastries and the full drink menu will be available through the drive-thru. Online orders can be placed on the Rise Up website.

To learn more about Rise Up Coffee Roasters, or to apply for employment at the new Severna Park location, go to www.riseupcoffee.com.

“Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival XXXV”

» **Continued from page 1**

“We’re playing with merging styles,” said Parks, who is directing the show for her second year. “If a song has been done by multiple artists, we’re merging both versions. We’re picking and choosing the best parts of every song that we want, and just making it work for us.”

She added, “It’s very creative this year, very involved musically, and it’s going to be a lot of fun.”

Students will perform nearly 30 songs by artists spanning different genres including Outkast, Whitney Houston, Tina Turner, ABBA, Hootie & the Blowfish, and others.

Each year, “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival” brings together students in ninth through 12th grades who support one another on and off stage in roles ranging from vocalists to musicians to sound technicians. Parks noted that the production draws students from outside of the drama program, including teens involved in dance and a few who perform locally in bands, among others.

SPHS junior Sabrina Richter is lending her audio skills for a third year in a row, serving as student sound director. “It’s really a delight to be involved,” Richter said. “Everyone in ‘Rock ‘N’ Roll’ gives up a lot of their free time, and we all work really hard to make the show happen. To see it

happen each year is just wonderful.”

While the students are the stars of the show, it takes more helping hands to pull off the highly anticipated annual production. Parks explained that “Rock ‘N’ Roll” is successful in part because of parent volunteers who give countless hours of support each year. These behind-the-scenes helpers source costumes, oversee advertising for the show, fundraise, man concessions, chaperone, set up the hospitality table, provide meals during tech week and more.

“It certainly takes a village, and we have a really big village,” Parks said of the volunteers. “We are very fortunate in that way.”

In its 35th year, “Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival” will offer audiences the musical variety they’ve come to know and love over the years, but with a fresh approach. “It’s going to be a really fun show and I hope people come out and enjoy it,” Parks said, leaving the specifics of the show to be a surprise.

“Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival” nearly sells out each year, drawing more than 6,000 attendees over seven days. This year’s production will run for two weekends, March 7-10 and March 14-16. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$15 for children and students. To learn more about the show, or to purchase tickets, go to www.sphsdrama.com.

Through Walk MS, Volunteer Supports Pathway To A Cure

By Zach Sparks

Severna Park resident Mike Washabaugh is taking one small step for the multiple sclerosis (MS) community by hosting a fundraiser for Walk MS.

Washabaugh just turned 36. To celebrate, he started a 36-day fundraiser to support the National Multiple Sclerosis Society and Walk MS. From January 31 through March 6, he is seeking to raise \$3,600 in 36 days by getting 100 people to donate \$36.

Walk MS unites the multiple sclerosis community in the largest gathering of its kind to raise funds and make a difference for everyone living with MS.

"MS affects close to 1 million people (in the U.S.)," Washabaugh said, sharing statistics provided by the National Multiple Sclerosis Society. "Since 1946, \$1.1 billion has been invested to advance research. In my opinion, it's not one of the most talked about or research-funded (diseases)."

The Severna Park resident has been involved with Walk MS for three years, but his volunteer service goes back to early adulthood. A Pittsburgh native, he later moved to the nation's capital and spent two years with AmeriCorps. As a volunteer for City Year Washington, D.C., he tutored, mentored and supported inner city youth.

"Since then, I have been professionally involved in supporting and serving the underserved population, fighting for those who need a voice, and in this case, raising money for a cure to this disease that affects nearly 1 million people living in the United States," he said.

That effort to help MS patients started after he pursued a master's degree at Georgetown University. One of his advisors, Chartese Berry, suggested he volunteer for Walk MS. Berry is the president of the National Multiple Sclerosis Society's Greater Washington D.C. — Maryland chapter.

Berry joined the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society years after she was diagnosed with stage 4 non-Hodgkin lymphoma in 1999. Her advocacy with that nonprofit inspired her to work for the National MS Society in 2015.

"Working with people living with MS or battling a debilitating disease of the central nervous system as I was, that has been fulfilling, but MS and cancer are not the same," she said. "After six months of chemotherapy and radiation, I never looked back. I am one of the lucky ones.

"Unfortunately, with cancer, you win that battle or lose that battle," she added. "With MS, there is no cure right now where we can get back what you've lost. It's unpredictable. Every day is different, and how the disease presents itself is



Mike Washabaugh and Christina Taranto were among many people involved in last year's Walk MS event in Bowie, Maryland.

different from person to person."

The National MS Society is focused on a three-pronged approach: research, programs and services for people, and advocacy. Those efforts, she said, will hopefully culminate in a pathway to a cure.

"We want to slow the progression ... so a cure might mean that research reveals blood markers that identify people who might be at risk of MS," she said.

The organization has about 20,000 MS patients in its database for the area that includes Maryland, Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. Being on the senior leadership and management team, Berry meets people all over the country living with the disease.

"I have grown to know and love them, and about a dozen are friends," Berry said.

She has seen a similar response from Washabaugh, who has shown passion and enthusiasm in his role with Walk MS.

"When you meet people living with MS and see the resilience, because it is a fight, you just get hooked and think, 'I want to do something. I have to help,'" Berry said.

Washabaugh also supports area youth through Martin Luther King Jr. days, school revitalization, community clean-ups and a backpack drive supported by his employer, MedStar Family Choice, for which he serves as a community relations coordinator.

"They love it," he said of MedStar. "We get pre-participation. They're good about spreading the word and purchasing supplies and bringing them to our office."

He and his team brought 216 backpacks to students at Watkins Mill Elementary School in Montgomery County and District Heights Elementary in Prince George's County in 2023.

From sports to volunteerism, Washabaugh has learned valuable lessons that he shares through his work with youth and through Walk MS.

"In high school, I played sports a lot and it was friends and family working together for a cause. Through sports, I was set up for greater success and could see the bigger picture ... not to look at people as different but see what we can do when we empower each other."

Anyone can support Washabaugh by going to his fundraising page. Go to www.nationalmssociety.org and click the "Walk MS" tab at the top of the page.

The National MS Society holds walks from April through May in every U.S. state. People can start a corporate team for one of the walks or they can volunteer. To register to participate in a walk, find more information on the Walk MS page.

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Area Houses Of Worship Provide Winter Respite

By Meredith Winter

Fresh haircuts, hot showers, crab-cakes on New Year's Eve, dental cleanings and s'mores around a bonfire are among the many ways that Severna Park area houses of worship are helping community members experiencing homelessness to feel special and loved this winter.

Since 1992, churches and synagogues around the county have partnered with the Arundel House of Hope to provide shelter for local individuals experiencing homelessness throughout the winter months. The program, known as Winter Relief, runs late October through March and is designed to not only provide respite from harsh weather conditions but also help guests experience the love of God and others in simple and practical ways.

Religious facilities are transformed into temporary shelters for one week at a time, and congregations come together to serve the guests while showing them dignity and care. Hundreds of volunteers at each facility give their time and resources to prepare and serve meals, wash laundry, spend time with guests, provide entertainment and more.

This winter, six churches and one synagogue in Severna Park and Arnold are participating in Winter Relief. Guests will be ministered to not only physically, but also spiritually, as they are typically invited to weekend services and are cared for on a personal level by church leaders and volunteers.

Carolyn Heim, who has attended Severna Park United Methodist Church since 1987, shared that she was instrumental in getting her church involved with Winter Relief beginning in 2012. She serves as SPUMC's Winter Relief site coordinator, this year organizing over 200 volunteers to serve guests for two weeks.

In early November, 24 guests shared hot meals with SPUMC hosts, played bingo, and roasted marshmallows around a bonfire. Heim explained that her church also makes it a point to provide haircuts, a shower trailer and



Volunteers from Severna Park United Methodist Church served meals, provided entertainment, washed laundry, and lent helping hands in many other ways in early November 2023 when their church hosted people experiencing homelessness through the Winter Relief program. SPUMC is welcoming guests again mid-February.

professional dental cleanings for their guests, many of whom might otherwise not have access to such basic necessities. An associate pastor even blesses guests with manicures.

"The biggest thing our church and our volunteers do is they show the love of God," Heim said. "They're showing it with their hands, feet and heart."

SPUMC will again welcome Winter Relief guests in mid-February, and volunteers are looking forward to treating them to an ice cream social.

This year, as in years past, the congregation at Temple Beth Shalom volunteered to host Winter Relief for the week of Christmas in an effort to serve not only their guests but also area churches so they could devote the week to celebrating the birth of Christ. Site coordinator Jodi Meisenberg explained that this is just one of the ways participating houses of worship collaborate.

"We work together. We volunteers get to know the volunteers at other sites. We help each other out whenever we can," she said. "We become friends."

Meisenberg spoke to the impact the week has on the roughly 100 members of her congregation who come together to make it happen. One faithful volunteer sets up a card table each night and plays with the guests for hours. Although it is a joy to serve, it can also be difficult to close out the week. "For us, the volunteers, to have this concentrated intense time with the guests, it's a very emotional experience to help them through the week, to get to know their stories, and then to just as abruptly say goodbye knowing the daily challenges they face," Meisenberg said.

For many of the years Temple Beth Shalom has participated since coming alongside Arundel House of Hope in 2012, Anne Arundel County and Annap-

olis' observation of The Longest Night memorial service has fallen during or immediately before the temple's week to host Winter Relief. The annual ceremony, held on December 21, remembers those in the community who have lost their lives due to homelessness. Meisenberg shared the sobering statistic that every year, at least one of the names read during the ceremony is recognized as a Winter Relief guest from years past, a testament to the severe hardships they endure.

The day after Christmas 2023, Winter Relief guests transitioned from Temple Beth Shalom a few miles up Ritchie Highway to St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church. Volunteer site coordinator Bob Svehlak, who has spearheaded the parish's involvement with Winter Relief the last eight of his nearly 30 years attending, shared that the week represents the parish's largest annual volunteer effort and brings together over 200 people eager to serve. Among them are scores of school children who bless the guests by preparing bagged lunches for them each day.

The 31 men and women staying at St. John the Evangelist this winter rang in 2024 with a New Year's Eve feast of crabcakes, ribs, barbecue chicken and various accompaniments before watching the ball drop on TV.

Svehlak demonstrated that his fellow parishioners, among other participating congregations, experience the words of Jesus that "it is more blessed to give than receive." He shared, "The highlight in general that I hear from our parish is that they're glad they can do something to help these folks. There's really a sense of gratification ... (and) reward from helping someone else."

Other area churches participating in Winter Relief this year include Broadneck Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Our Shepherd Lutheran Church, Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church and St. Martin's-in-the-Field Episcopal Church.

To learn more about the program, as well as other services provided by Arundel House of Hope, go to www.arundelhoh.org.

The Real Key To Home Values: Kindness

David Orso

Berkshire Hathaway
Home Services,
PenFed Realty



A recent study from Bank of America found that the No. 1 thing homebuyers valued in their home search was community and friendly neighbors. Also noted, 68% of younger prospective

homebuyers and 75% of young homeowners said safety and security have become greater priorities when choosing where they will live. Could being a good neighbor drive a return on investment of our real estate assets? Absolutely!

This is a different narrative than the media's obsession with interest rates and low inventory. Sure, these are import-

ant factors, and everyone understands how supply and demand operate. In my professional opinion, the reporting about interest rates and low inventory has been superficial and lacked a more discerning examination for the reason behind the local demand spike. Simply put, rate stimulation ended in 2022, yet there are currently more buyers than sellers, therefore current demand isn't about interest rates anymore. It is about something much bigger than interest rates; it is about finding an emotional connection to a community.

During COVID, people had plenty of time at home to reassess their priorities and goals, including how their living space and surroundings fit into their lives. The irony of this movement is that our community was built upon the same principles when sprawl occurred in the late '60s and '70s. The urban migration from Baltimore and Washington to the

suburbs of Severna Park and surrounding areas was driven by remarkably similar desires for great schools, outdoor living, safe communities and kind neighbors. The fabric of our community is woven with volunteerism at community organizations like Green Hornets and GARCI (now BAYS), high school mulch sales, the Fourth of July parade down Benfield and Evergreen roads, the Severna Park Chamber of Commerce holiday tree lighting, and the resurrection of the Severna Park Community Center.

As a practice, I always ask a home seller what they have loved about their home. I do this so I can clearly understand the key attributes to highlight in marketing. Almost unanimously, the first answer out of most seller's mouths will be along the lines of, "Let me tell you about the neighborhood." Stories include shoveling a neighbor's walkway, bringing over a lasagna at a tough time, a weekly

book club, borrowing tools, keeping a lookout for speeding cars, and caring for children as their own. These tangible acts of kindness unequivocally become the underpinning to housing values. Show me a community that has kindness, and I will bet the values are strong. Conversely, show me a neighborhood that lacks respect and kindness, and I will bet the values are weak.

Housing is more than interest rates and inventory. Neighborhoods are more than platted subdivisions. Community is the aspiration! Community takes on a different meaning when approached from the lens of kindness. A wave and a smile never go out of style, supporting a local business owner will always be most appreciated, volunteering locally makes a difference, and kids still need to hear stories of their elders.

Kindness. It is good for your heart and your home value.

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You Can Give Back To AACPS Students Through Mentorship



Dana Schallheim
Board of Education
District 5

A recurring theme I've heard over the past five years is a wanting on the part of parents and community members to be more involved in Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS). As we

all know, school-based volunteering already exists. I can attest to this as an AACPS parent who has drilled math facts, read books, wiped lunch tables, and chaperoned field trips since the moment my child entered the school system. As I routinely say, volunteering feeds the soul!

What is new and growing in every school in our vast county is the #BePresent initiative and mentorship opportunities. From simply being another caring adult in the building as your schedule allows, to making an ongoing commitment to mentor a student or a small group of students, we have a place for you to make a significant contribution in the lives of children.

These types of programs might seem like a no-brainer for a school system as large as AACPS. Every school system has students who can benefit from mentors and there should be no shortage of caring adults willing to give back. Surprisingly, AACPS employs the only full-time staff member in Maryland, Senior Manager of Mentorship Programs Andre Dillard, whose sole job is to develop and scale mentorship opportunities. Mr. Dillard has been in his current role for only a short time but has already done so much, from developing a list of partner organizations, to coordinating non-school-based staff who spend a portion of their working hours per month mentoring students.

Mr. Dillard's goals are twofold - to develop a diverse portfolio of opportunities for community members to serve at our schools during the school day or after school, and to scale mentorship programs beyond those with the greatest need to all students who can benefit from mentorship.

Research shows the myriad benefits mentorship has on our students including:

- Decreased likelihood of initiating alcohol or drug use
- Increased high school graduation rates
- Lower high school dropout rates
- Healthier relationships and lifestyle choices
- Better attitude about school
- Higher college enrollment rates and higher educational aspirations
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improved behavior, both at home

and at school

- Stronger relationships with parents, teachers and peers
- Improved interpersonal skills

The #BePresent campaign is now in all AACPS schools. Developed on the premise that "every child you pass in the hall has a story that needs to be heard and maybe you are the one to hear it," the #BePresent initiative is a community/school partnership designed to increase and improve community relationships within schools. The purpose of #BePresent volunteers is to be another trusted adult in the hallways, making connections with students. A comprehensive, though succinct training session (two to two and a half hours) occurs twice per month. The time commitment and school assignment are mutually agreed upon by the volunteer and Mr. Dillard based on school need. As with the 1:1 or small group mentorship programs, background check and fingerprinting costs are covered by the school system.

For those who have more time to give and want to mentor a student, or perhaps a small group of students, there are plenty of ongoing mentorship opportunities to go around. Both individuals and members of organizations like STAIR and Together We Rise can become ongoing mentors. Every school has a mentor volunteer liaison to assist school administration in identifying students who can benefit from participating in mentorship. Likewise, both students and parents/guardians can contact school administration to request that they or their children become mentees. Of course, before students are placed with a mentor, permission is sought from a parent or guardian.

Students who are mentored are 130% more likely to become mentors themselves. Visit www.aacps.org/bepresent to get started and pay it forward! As always, I am available at 443-534-2660, dschallheim@aacps.org or on social media.

Got An Opinion? Share It With Us!

We want to hear your thoughts regarding what's happening in the neighborhood. Is there a current issue at hand that you feel strongly about? We know our readers are passionate about their neighborhoods, schools, community and so much more — and the Voice would love for you to tell us about it.

Letters to the editor can be emailed to spvnews@severnaparkvoice.com and may be edited for space, clarity, grammar, spelling, etc. We encourage you to express yourself, but please be brief — letters should be limited to 350 words, though we do on occasion run longer letters. We look forward to hearing from you!

Bill Looks To Ease Veteran Parking Burden



Delegate Rachel Muñoz prepared to present House Bill 77 to the Environment and Transportation Committee in Annapolis on February 1. The bill was initiated by Joe Dolan.

By Judy Tacyn

As a commercial airline pilot, Shipley's Choice resident Joe Dolan has traveled to dozens of cities' airports, hotels and restaurants. He's also had to find parking at those locales. He soon realized that Texas airports were far more parking friendly for employees than Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport. This discovery led him to do a bit of parking research. The United States Naval Academy graduate and U.S. Navy veteran learned that Texas has a robust parking code for veterans. Dolan hopes to bring that law to Maryland.

"In Texas, veterans can park in any public parking lot or meter for free," Dolan said. "Special license plates allow veterans — and veterans has a comprehensive definition and casts a very wide net in Texas — to park in any lot or at any meter at no cost."

Dolan thought the veteran parking benefit was a great way to honor veterans, so he shared the Texas parking code with Maryland lawmakers last summer. What started as a lament of cumbersome employee parking at BWI turned into House Bill 77, a proposal for the adoption of armed forces special registration license plates for veteran-owned motor vehicles, exempting the vehicle from metered parking fees in Maryland.

Maryland House Delegate Rachel Muñoz presented the bill in a hearing before the House Environment and

"I am the proud daughter of two United States veterans. I understand deeply the sacrifices our military members and families have willingly made for our country"

— MARYLAND HOUSE DELEGATE RACHEL MUÑOZ

Transportation Committee on February 1 in Annapolis. The committee will deliberate on whether to send the bill to the House. Concurrently, Maryland Senator Bryan Simonaire is presenting the bill before the Maryland Senate.

"I am the proud daughter of two United States veterans. I understand deeply the sacrifices our military members and families have willingly made for our country — in the case of Gold Star families — tragically the ultimate sacrifice," Muñoz said. "This small bill is the least we can do to honor their service and sacrifice."

In its current filing, the issuance of special license plates could be made available to combat-related armed forces veterans and disabled veterans, which is not as comprehensive as Texas, but potentially a step toward that end.

To learn more about House Bill 77, go to www.mgaleg.maryland.gov/2024RS/bills/hb/hb0077f.pdf.

Bruins Swimming Team Completes Three-Peat At County Championships



Broadneck High School seniors posed for a photo on January 26, when the team celebrated senior night.

By **Mauricio Palmar**
Student Intern

As the regular season for swimming ended in January, Broadneck head coach **Colleen Winans** reflected on her group's performance. She was impressed by her team and said she had high expectations for the postseason.

"We're really looking to finish out the season strong," Winans said. "I think it's going to be a commanding

season. We know that other teams are looking to knock us off, and we're hoping to retain our crown in both counties and the regions this year."

After four hours of heated competition on February 2, Broadneck's swim team managed to meet the first of Winans' goals, with both the boys and girls coming out on top at the Anne Arundel County championships. The competition was held at the Arundel Olympic Swim Center in Annapolis, where the teams will return to competi-

tion on February 17 for the regional championships.

For the Broadneck girls, it was nearly a clean sweep, as they managed to take home the championship with a whopping 288 points. They placed first in five out of their 11 events, while finishing in the top three in every event outside of the 100-meter freestyle. The night was punctuated by strong performances from **Ella Deitch**, who won both the 500-meter and 200-meter freestyle, and **Hannah Oslislo**, who won the 100-meter breaststroke.

"It was my worst swim of the season, but it was really cool that I won, and I'm really proud that I was able to help my team win the county championship," Oslislo stated.

A senior on the team, Oslislo is one of the few Bruins who has elected to forgo the club state championships in order to participate in the regional championships.

The Severna Park girls put up a valiant effort of their own, accruing 237 points over the duration of the competition. They managed to win the 200-meter freestyle relay and the 400-meter freestyle relay, and the team of **Lena Rausch, Maggie Goodman, Amelia Goger** and **Sydney Sloan** set a new county record for the 400-meter relay. But it ultimately wasn't enough to stop the Broadneck girls from winning their third consecutive county championship.

As for the boys, the competition was dicier. Broadneck defended their title, taking home their third consecutive county championship. However, they had to share it with Crofton, which tied for first with 225 points.

Winans emphasized the role that the team's depth played in their eventual win, praising her secondary swimmers after the meet.

"With our top kids, we knew that they would finish in the top three, but our next round of kids really performed very well," Winans stated. "I always tell the kids

» **Continued on page 25**

Park Girls Take First At 3A Central Indoor Track Regionals

Broadneck Girls Finish Second In 4A Central

With the indoor track and field state championships approaching on February 20-21, the Falcons and Bruins both put their squads to the test during regionals.

Severna Park's girls team took the 3A Central regional crown, with a commanding 109 points over second-place Arundel (70) at Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex in Landover on February 8. The Falcons finished fourth on the boys side.

The Broadneck girls took second in the 4A Central region championships on February 7. The team's 94.5 points were well ahead of Western (68) and second only to the 4A Central winner, Woodlawn (126). The Bruins finished fifth in the boys competition behind four schools including the top team, Crofton.

Here are some of the notable finishes for both Severna Park and Broadneck.

Top Left: Casey Gish took first place in the girls high jump event, clearing five feet, four inches. **Bottom, Left to Right:** Sophia Clements and Cayman Holmes teamed with Raleigh Kerst and Natalie Crooks to win the girls 4x800-meter relay for Broadneck. **Right:** Ava Zimmerman took first in the 800-meter run during regionals and also helped the Falcons win two relay races.



Photos by Will Faulk

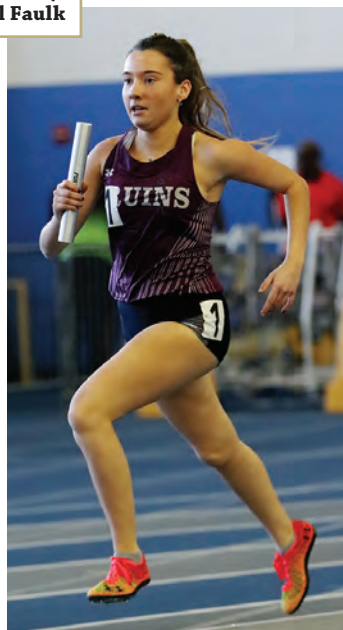
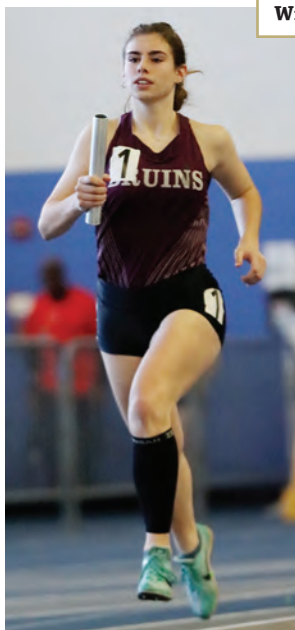


Photo by Naptown Studios

SEVERNA PARK GIRLS

4x400-meter relay

Team of Ava Zimmerman, Ella Baxter, Sallie Honeywell and Kaitlyn Miller — **first (4:10.62)**

4x800-meter relay

Team of Ava Zimmerman, Ellie Ballard, Siena Pegues and Natalie Bowman — **first (10:12.62)**

3200-meter run

Jocelyn DiAngelo — **first (11:27.74)**

Siena Pegues — **second (12:04.57)**

Lila Sandel — **third (12:07.77)**

**CONTINUED
ON PAGE 21**



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STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



DEVIN MCGOWAN

Broadneck Basketball and Baseball

By David Bashore

Two years ago, **Devin McGowan** decided to join the winter scrub league and play some basketball to prepare for baseball season. He took to hoops so well that his coach recommended he try out for the Broadneck High

“I always played basketball growing up, but it wasn’t something that I took as seriously as baseball. The difference is just how fast-paced it is and how nerves can get the best of you. When the big moment comes on the baseball field now, I actually handle it a lot better because of the high emotions I’ve experienced on the basketball court for the last two years.”

— **DEVIN MCGOWAN**

School team the following year.

McGowan made the team as a junior, and now as a senior, he is an integral part of a Bruins squad that is at double figures in wins over the course of the season.

“I always played basketball growing up, but it wasn’t something that I took as seriously as baseball,” said McGowan, also a first baseman for Broadneck’s baseball team. “The difference is just how fast-paced it is and how nerves can get the best of you. When the big moment comes on the baseball field now, I actually handle it a lot better because of the high emotions I’ve experienced on the basketball court for the last two years.”

McGowan stepped into the basketball team with a clearly defined role that he has made his own: do the dirty work and be a high-energy player in the low block.

Setting screens, scrapping for rebounds and playing tenacious defense doesn’t often garner headlines, but it’s what the team needs. And it’s a bonus when he shows up big in the scoring column, as he did in netting 14 points against Severna Park on February 2.

It’s a mixture of hustle and heart that McGowan credits to his father, **Eddie McGowan**, who was lost to ALS when Devin McGowan was 11 but still motivates him to be his best today.

“He showed me what I would need to do to get to where I am now,” McGowan said. “I play with a lot of heart and hustle for him.”

In turn, now, he relays those messages to other athletes. McGowan is part of the Broadneck Athletic Leadership Council, which helps athletes hone their leadership skills in athletic settings.

His leadership, along with an ability to compartmentalize school and athletics, has him set up for big things in the future. He has a 3.6 GPA and hopes to study business in college, playing club sports to fan the athletic flame he hopes will burn for a long time.

“I really just try to separate the two things,” McGowan said. “The senior schedule (with early release) really helps a lot too. I can focus on my classes and prepare myself, study the night before a class, and then I have a gap in the day when I can lock myself in for game time or practice.”

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Falcon Boys Flying High As Season Nears Conclusion

By David Bashore

By all rights, Severna Park's boys basketball team can say they should be undefeated.

A 15-3 record is certainly nothing to sneeze at, though, especially knowing the manner of each loss is both common and correctable.

They just might have corrected it, even, based on their early February play. And that could bode well for their postseason aspirations.

The Falcons enter the final week of regular season play as winners of five straight games, headlined by a 62-55 victory at Broadneck on February 2 that avenged an earlier loss in which Severna Park led by 16 points with just six minutes to play.

The Falcons led by 16 with just two minutes left this time, but unlike the first matchup, they didn't race to a huge lead. Instead, they built it slowly and dropped the hammer late in the third quarter. By the time Broadneck got rolling offensively, there simply wasn't enough time left to overhaul the deficit. It got as close to five, but the Falcons did what they didn't do the first time: bleed clock and score late in the possession to minimize their defensive possessions.

"We learned (from the first game) we needed to get more into our shot clock, so we got into our offense, got more looks and that was it. After a few ball reversals, things started to open up for us, so we worked from there," said Severna Park forward **Upton Young**. "We just kept playing team defense at the end, boxing out, and getting boards. We just needed to hold the ball, play smart, and not rush things."

A decisive performance in the paint from Young helped complement the consistent guard play from **Brendan Abell** that has pushed the Falcons all season. That combination has been significant for Severna Park as they seek to hit peak form with the postseason looming.



"When we are able to use him where we have multiple ball reversals on a possession, and Upton takes it to the glass and scores with five seconds left, that's the way we want to score," said Severna Park coach **Pete Young**. "This year, athleticism helps us out with boxing out also. We can't jump with everyone, but Upton and **Tucker Moran** give us a little margin for error in that department because they both can spring up a little bit."

Also since an early January break, Severna Park beat Northeast (56-55 on January 22), Southern (47-

Photo by David Bashore

Brendan Abell drove the lane as part of a 16-point effort in Severna Park's win over Broadneck on February 2.

43 on January 23), Arundel (53-48 on January 26), Annapolis (37-36 on January 30), Laurel (65-56 on February 5), Chesapeake (60-39 on February 7) and Crofton (51-37 on February 9). They sandwiched wins around a 57-52 loss to Old Mill on January 29, in which they surrendered a late lead.

In fact, the occasional soft fourth quarter has really been the only bugaboo for the Falcons this season: in all three of their defeats, they've seen double-digit leads slip away.

"We're trying to put ourselves in situations where we learn to play from in front because it's almost as much of an art as playing from behind. We have to figure out how to run your offense and find shots at the back of the shot clock to drain the clock a little bit," Pete Young said. "I'd like to say that we've gotten to the place where we've moved by it because we're finding ourselves in that position a lot more often, but it's a little bit of an Uptown problem. There's been years where we've worked and tried to figure out how to get it done, and now we're learning how to protect leads. That's a positive."

With the Falcons chasing a potential county championship in addition to a regional tournament run, every win counts. Even more important is the focus on the bigger prize that Young feels is within reach for this squad.

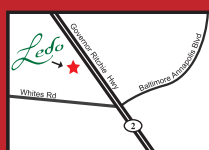
"I want us to enjoy every opportunity when we get a win, but I need them also to have a short-term memory," he said. "Things in the middle of the year can't become your season highlights, especially when you have an opportunity to achieve something bigger."



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Broadneck Boys Take Basketball Fans On Bumpy Ride

By David Bashore

At times this season, Broadneck's boys basketball team has been an amusement park, with each game its own separate ride.

One or two have been predictable and straightforward. A handful have looked mundane but found to be replete with surprises. Many more have been outright wild thrill rides.

As one would expect, that has resulted in a roller-coaster season thus far, where the Bruins find themselves 11-7 but still in the thick of county championship and state tournament contention.

In the last few weeks, after a huge comeback win over Glen Burnie, Broadneck scored big wins over Chesapeake (71-25 on January 22) and North County (75-38 on January 13) but followed that up with four losses out of five. They beat Meade (78-66 on January 31) but fell to Old Mill (54-49 on January 26), Northeast (69-66 on January 30), Severna Park (62-55 on February 2) and South River (65-49 on February 5). The Bruins wrapped the stretch up with a 69-47 win against Southern on February 9.

Broadneck has no trouble matching up athlete for athlete with most teams. They've got an elite scorer in senior guard **Jordan Brown**, a good



Photos by Dennis McGinley

Left: Senior guard Jordan Brown (11), an elite scorer for the Bruins, went up for a shot against the defense of Severna Park's Tucker Moran (4) and Liam Cleary (0) during a game on February 2. **Right:** Broadneck's Devin McGowan elevated as he attempted to score.

supporting cast with ball handlers and shooters, and grinders **Devin McGowan** and **Joey Smargissi** in the paint doing the dirty work.

It's a combination of streaky shooting and a flair for the dramatic that the team is trying to figure out. At the same time, they are enjoying the ride.

"Going behind big has happened often this season — probably way too often," McGowan said. "But it seems like every time we do go down, we come back, and that says something

about a team. It's kind of cool to be a part of that.

"It's a streaky offense. In the fourth quarter, we shoot the lights out, and there's stretches in the first half where we slow down. It's (a matter) of trying to keep that energy all game."

The first time against Severna Park, Broadneck trailed by 21 and won it late. Against Glen Burnie, they trailed by 15 late in the game and won by five. The second game against Severna Park, the Bruins trailed by 16 and attempt-

ed what would have been their most epic comeback yet, but they simply ran out of time and magic.

The biggest thing the Bruins have taken away, while they work on their consistency, is that they're truly never out of a basketball game.

"These guys never give up. We've had three or four 20-point comebacks this year, so we know that we're never out of it until the final buzzer," said Broadneck coach **Jeff Starr**. "You want to be able to look back and say that you gave a complete effort and an honest effort. Hopefully the scoreboard indicates that's a win, but you want to be proud of your effort. We always have fight in us."

As the regular season wraps up and county and region tournaments take center stage, Broadneck is working to make that fight bear fruit across the entire basketball game, rather than in fits and starts.

When things click across 32 minutes, though, the team is confident that it's going to lead to big things.

"I know these guys will bounce back. It's a season where we've had a very challenging schedule and hopefully it pays off for us come playoff time," Starr said. "This was hopefully a hiccup, but we've still got opportunities. We want to be hitting our stride when the playoffs come."

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Falcon Girls Ride Defense To Remain Unbeaten In 3A

Severna Park's Only Two Losses This Season Have Come Against Broadneck



Photos by David Bashore

Above: Peyton Jeffers ran the Falcons' offense against Broadneck on February 2. **Right:** Severna Park's Charley Coward attempted a mid-range jump shot during the Falcons loss to the rival Bruins.



By David Bashore

If only Broadneck weren't on the schedule, Severna Park's basketball team would be undefeated.

But then the Falcons wouldn't see their potential weaknesses and have a chance to shore them up in time for another potential deep postseason run.

Heading into the final week of the regular season, Severna Park sports an impressive 17-2 record. Their only losses have come to Broadneck, each in a tense late-game scenario where the Falcons found themselves rallying late but coming up achingly short.

The second of the two games, a 47-41 loss on February 2 on Broadneck's senior night, saw Severna Park rally from 15 points behind down to four in the final minute, with possession, but they could get no closer.

"You've got to play pretty close to perfect to dig yourself out of a hole, especially against a team like that. We made good adjustments; it just didn't work out," said Falcons head coach **Kristofer Dean**, who eclipsed the 100-win mark at Severna Park in late January. "They're resilient. We'll bounce back real quick. It won't take much. They learn. We'll take this as another learning opportunity, which is good, because some teams don't get a chance to learn."

Aside from the Broadneck setback, it's been nothing more than success on a game-in, game-out basis for Severna Park. Since the January break, they've beaten all other comers: wins have come over Northeast (54-27 on January 22), Southern (50-29 on January 23), Arundel (51-12 on

January 26), Old Mill (47-25 on January 29), Annapolis (40-32 on January 30), Chesapeake (53-33 on February 7) and Crofton (48-42 on February 9).

Severna Park's offensive totals have been up and down over the course of the season, but the defense has remained consistent: They've given up 36 points or fewer in each of their wins, except for the game against Crofton.

Severna Park prides themselves on defense, "and we've learned how we were going to play defense against a team of shooters," senior forward **Ryn Feemster** said after the Broadneck game. "We also know we have the heart to claw back."

That determination will, they hope, pay dividends as the Falcons hit the business end of the season. Last year, they made the state semifinals, and this time around, they want to take another step.

It helps that a lot of the team has been there before, both in basketball and other sports: multiple players from the Falcons' reigning lacrosse and girls soccer state championship teams spend the winter in sneakers and basketball jerseys.

But before that, there's wrapping up the regular season, and then the county postseason, then regionals.

"Our mentality is to focus on the next game. We reset after every one, and every day we'll get at it," Feemster said. "Last year was a high for us, and I think it's just the idea that we come from so many different sports that we use our athleticism to basketball. The defense that comes from athleticism in lacrosse and soccer helps us here too."

With Long Win Streak Over, BHS Girls Turns Attention To Postseason

By David Bashore

The first time Broadneck and Severna Park squared off in girls basketball this season, the Bruins rode dogged defense and clutch offense to the win.

The second time around, it was much more about emotion and sheer will helping tired legs across the finish line.

Playing their fourth game in five days, Broadneck withstood a late Severna Park rally to win 47-41 on February 2, taking a senior night win over their biggest rivals to complete a regular season sweep.

"Our senior night was very hyped, and we wanted to make sure that we secured the win and make sure we got the season victory over them," said senior guard **Mackenzie Wharton**.

The win was part of a 14-game streak the Bruins amassed, as part of a now 16-2 record they take into the home stretch of the season.

Most notably in the Severna Park game, it was other players beyond Wharton and **Samantha Miller**, the Bruins' two leading scorers, who got involved when Wharton and Miller were wiped out of the game.

London Best scored 10 points, all from the foul line, and **Katelyn Kearns** and **Summer Stroop** also added clutch shots.

"As a coach, it's gratifying. It's so, so great to see girls step up in crucial moments of the game. We have four, five, six girls who can score the basketball," said Broadneck coach **Juan McKinney**. "We have girls who have won state championships in other sports, so they're used to it when things get chaotic. You have girls who have been through it before, and we've been through it all this season, so they understand how to handle that pressure and handle that moment."

In addition to the victory over Severna Park, the Bruins stacked up victories over Chesapeake (48-38 on January 22), North County (51-24 on January 23), Old Mill (50-28 on January 26), Bryn Mawr (46-30 on January 29), Northeast (63-25 on January 30) and Meade (56-21 on January 31).

Broadneck had their 14-game winning streak snapped by South River on February 5, with the Bruins offense putting up a season-low point total in a 36-34 loss. They followed that up with a 62-13 win over North County the following night, followed by a 51-28 result on February 9 at Southern.

The South River setback served as a public reminder of what the team privately already knew: there is still plenty of work to do in order to get where they want to be at the end.

As the team looks toward the looming county championships and regional tournament, the Bruins are keeping an even keel, although there is a point of focus. A late stretch of six games in nine days tested their physical and mental mettle. The defense has been stout all season, allowing 40 points only twice. The offense is there — usually.

"Even in wins, we know we could have played better. We're not satisfied, and I think that's what's great about this team is that everyone's hungry to do better both for themselves and for this team," Miller said. "We go through stretches where we just can't score, and we start forcing up rushed shots. I think if we get that under control, we will be fine."



Photos by Dennis McGinley

Top to bottom: Broadneck's Katelyn Kearns, Mackenzie Wharton and Summer Stroop attempted shots during the Bruins victory over Severna Park on February 2. With the win, Broadneck celebrated remained unbeaten in county play and completed a regular season sweep of Severna Park.

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Severn School Having Sensational Hoops Season

Boys Varsity Basketball Undefeated In League Play

By Kevin Murnane

“Look out for Severn basketball” is the advice that Severn School’s varsity boys basketball head coach **Michael Glasby** has for the Baltimore area.

With an undefeated record in league play — and having beaten notable local and larger high schools like Calvert Hall, Broadneck, St. Mary’s and Pallotti — the future has arrived at the Evergreen Road campus.

Glasby has a young and extremely athletic squad that utilizes their quickness and tenacious defense to overwhelm opponents. Severn carried a 13-game winning streak into their February 12 game against Gerstell Academy while averaging just over 70 points per game during that stretch. The Admirals’ record was 18-5 as of February 12.

Severn has only two seniors on their squad and starts one senior, a freshman, a sophomore and two juniors.

The freshman guard is **Corey Dixon**, the son of Juan Dixon, a key member of the University of Maryland’s 2002 national championship team.

In a recent game against Concordia Prep of Towson, the younger Dixon tallied 24 points, 11 rebounds and four steals.

As young as the Admirals are, they rely on the leadership of those two seniors, point guard **Kinston Price** and center **Bo Fowler** of Severna Park.

Price, who recently went over the 1,000-point mark



for his career, has multiple Division I scholarship offers including Wagner University, Coastal Carolina University, William & Mary University, Fordham University and Colgate University. Fowler recently accepted a football scholarship to play at Richmond University.

Price, who carries a 3.9 grade point average (GPA), appreciates how the basketball program is structured. “Coach Glasby gives us the freedom to make plays and makes sure we abide by his philosophies of playing hard, playing good defense and sharing the ball,” Price said.

Fowler reinforced Price’s comments by stating, “This team is so much fun and we have so many great players.” Some of those players are recruited from outside of the

Photo by Kevin Murnane

Freshman guard **Corey Dixon**, the son of former Maryland national champion **Juan Dixon**, has been a welcome addition for the Admirals. In a game against Concordia Prep of Towson, Dixon tallied 24 points, 11 rebounds and four steals.

immediate area by Glasby, who is also an administrator at Severn School.

“We are building a solid program at Severn,” said Glasby, who is in his sixth year as head coach. “We try to get the players and parents to tour our school and open their eyes to Severn School. Parents are blown away by our academics and campus.”

Dixon enrolled at Severn due to its high academic reputation and rising basketball program. “Severn was the best fit for me,” he said. “I really liked the school and coach gives us the freedom to play an up-tempo offense and pressing defense.”

With the school’s young squad gaining confidence and game experience, the Admirals should have strong momentum going into the playoffs at the end of the month.

“We have a fun group to watch on the floor,” said Athletic Director **Julian Domenech**. “As great as they are playing right now, they are even a better group on campus. Coach Glasby and his staff have done a great job.”

With a possibility of a 20-win season and numerous starters coming back, including junior **Jacob Randall** of Severna Park, Severn School’s boys basketball program has an electric future and will offer an entertaining and talented team for the foreseeable future.

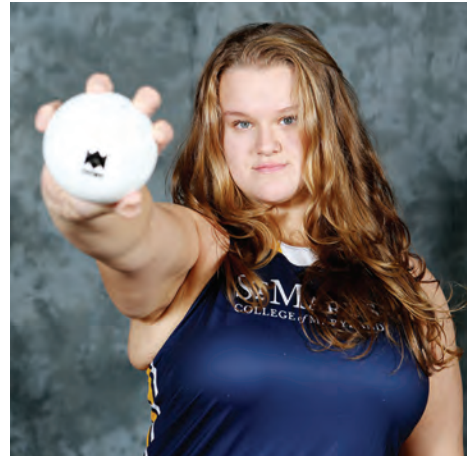
College Teammates Earn Track And Field Honors

Left: **Avery Arizzi** contributed to three school records at the **Spartan Invitational** hosted by St. Thomas Aquinas College on January 12.

Right: **Jillian Zukley** placed ninth in the shot put as she tallied a distance of 11.12 meters. She also finished 24th in the weight throw with a distance of 11.16 meters.



records at the Spartan Invitational hosted by St. Thomas Aquinas College in New York on January 12. The 5-foot-3-inch sprinter clocked a school record and personal-best time of 27.92 in the 200-meter dash to finish 25th. She also posted a school record and personal-best time of 1:04.52 in the 400-meter dash for 28th



place. Arizzi also led off the record-setting 4x400-meter relay, with her team finishing 11th with a school record time of 4:29.94.

“The 400 was slightly disappointing for me,” Arizzi said. “Because I am a freshman and this was my first time running a 400 at the collegiate level, I got entered

into the meet as a ‘no time’ athlete. That led me to get ahead of my heat pretty early on in the race, and I guess I assumed I was running a lot faster than I was. I’ve since reset that record and I am much more pleased with my new time.

“However, I was very happy with my 200,” she continued. “I hadn’t run under 28 seconds in a 200 before that meet, so I was very excited and proud of that record. (The) 4x400s are my absolute favorite event; it combines my favorite distance to run (400-meter) with three other amazing athletes. It’s also almost always the last event to run at a meet, so everyone is watching, which makes it really exciting.”

Zukley also had an impressive performance. She placed ninth in the shot put as she tallied a distance of 11.12 meters. She also finished 24th in the weight throw with a distance of 11.16 meters. The 6-foot-3-inch thrower was the highest-finishing Division III participant in the shot put as the meet was full of Division I and Division II programs.

“I would say that good results like these come from putting in hard work when no one is there watching you, like coming early and staying late for practice and lifts,” Zukley said, reflecting on the competition. “I am grateful to now be on the same team with Avery, who was once on an opposing team during our high school years.

“I am really looking forward to seeing what the rest of the season will bring, especially now that I have just qualified for AARTFC (All-Atlantic Region Track and Field Conference) indoor regionals,” she said. “I definitely wouldn’t have gotten this far without the help of my amazing coaches throughout the years, both from Severna Park and St. Mary’s.”

The AARTFC indoor championships are set for March in New York.

Indoor Track Regionals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

800-meter run

Ava Zimmerman — **first (2:25.38)**

1600-meter run

Kathryn Murphy — **second (5:29.18)**

Pole vault

Alexis Holt — **second (7 feet)**

SEVERNA PARK BOYS

High jump

Kian Williams — **first (6 feet, 6 inches)**

Ryan Graves — **second (6 feet)**

Ty Miller — **third (6 feet)**

Pole vault

John McClain — **first (12 feet)**

Luke Tyler — **second (11 feet, 6 inches)**

Boys 3200-meter run

Caden Lazzor — **second (9:55.47)**

Cooper Alahverdian — **third (10:06.02)**

BROADNECK GIRLS

4x800 relay

Team of Raleigh Kerst, Sophia Clements, Cayman Holmes and Natalie Crooks — **first (10:11.16)**

800-meter run

Natalie Crooks — **second (2:29.93)**

High jump

Casey Gish — **first (5 feet, 4 inches)**

Ciara Haney — **second (5 feet, 2 inches)**

Pole vault

Carson Boteler — **first (11 feet)**

Dana Doubek — **second (9 feet, 6 inches)**

BROADNECK BOYS

800-meter run

Fox Larson — **second (2:00.35)**

1600-meter run

Fox Larson — **second (4:26.23)**

Jack Loomis — **third (4:29.11)**

Repsnakes Win Capital Box Lacrosse Classic



The Severna Park Green Hornets 2032 boys lacrosse team swept all four games across two days en route to the trophy.

Fresh off of winning the Maple Leaf Kickoff box lacrosse tournament in Reading, Pennsylvania, the Severna Park Green Hornets 2032 boys lacrosse team won the Capital Box Lacrosse Classic hosted by Madlax in Sterling, Virginia, on February 4.

Coached by **Brad Reppert, Derek Howells, Kim Bloomfield** and **Eric Wedemeyer**, the team swept all four games across two days en route to the trophy. On February 3, the Green Hornets team, the Repsnakes, began the tournament by blanking the Threshers Box Lacrosse club from Hampton Roads, Virginia, 13-0 before advancing past the Puffins Box Lacrosse club (the Richmond Hawks) 8-4. Severna Park returned to the Dulles SportsPlex the following day to dispatch Team

Money Lacrosse Club from Central, Pennsylvania, 11-1 to advance to the finals, where the Repsnakes beat the Frogmen (Clippers Lacrosse Club) 9-1 to claim the third/fourth grade title.

Throughout the tournament, Severna Park was paced offensively by **Caden Howells, Liam Cooke, River Baker, Bryce Arnold** and **Nathan Feldman. Braxton Reppert, Sammy Coleman, Graeme McDowell, Lawton Bloomfield** and **Brian Staples** also contributed to the scoring. The Repsnakes physicality was put on display by defensive tone-setters **Aiden Cooke, Henry Smith, Hunter Slater** and **George Fewster**, while netminders **Mark Wedemeyer** and **Connor Wild** combined to allow only 1.5 goals per game.

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Severn School's Bo Fowler Signs Letter Of Intent To Richmond



Photo by Kevin Murnane

Severn School offensive and defensive lineman Bo Fowler credits intense weight training and proper nutrition to increasing his weight from 195 as a sophomore to 285 his senior year.

By Kevin Murnane

Severn School head football coach **Demetrius Ballard** believes that if he had three or four players like **Bo Fowler**, he would win the Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) B Conference.

"He's our poster guy," Ballard said. "I'm going to sell Bo 24/7 to all of our recruits and tell them if you work hard enough, you can receive football scholarship offers playing at Severn School."

Hard work is one trait Fowler has demonstrated over his short time at the

Evergreen Road campus. Fowler was at Severna Park Middle School during the pandemic, but his parents liked that Severn was using a hybrid system of learning and switched Fowler to Severn before his sophomore year.

Fowler was a 195-pound left tackle in his first year at Severn and also played basketball and lacrosse. In Fowler's sophomore year, the Admirals finished 0-9 and then athletic director **Julian Domenech** brought in Ballard from Archbishop Spalding High School.

The players rallied around "Coach B" and he recruited lacrosse players who previously played football to give the players a chance and see if they could raise the Admirals from the ashes.

"Coach B brought focus, direction and a winning philosophy to the school," Fowler said. "You could feel the excitement that we were going to be competitive."

Ballard also brought in weight training and conditioning to the program.

"We had a Penn State coach come in and ask about Bo and he inquired about how much could Bo bench press," Ballard said. "At that time, Bo could only bench 185 one time and the Penn State coach said he was too weak to play Division I football. That's all that Bo needed to hear because since then he's been an animal in the weight room. Bo has been in the weight room four days a week and after practices and now can bench 225 pounds 12 times."

Fowler also has outstanding athletic genes as his grandfather played professional football, his father played college

football, and his mother played college lacrosse.

The Severn School athlete was recruited by numerous colleges. His mobility will be useful playing offensive line for the University of Richmond Spiders.

"Both my grandfather and dad played at Richmond, so I was extremely excited when the Spiders offered a scholarship," said Fowler, who was named All-MIAA C division first-team as an offensive tackle. As much as the Admirals will miss

Fowler's size and strength, his coach says he'll miss what Bo means to the school and football program.

"Bo will be harder to replace off of the field," Ballard said. "He leads by example, and what I love about Bo is he'll have lunch with the freshmen to make sure they are doing OK in school, and the underclassmen really look up to him."

Severn School's football program will take a giant leap in competition next fall by joining the MIAA B Conference.

Spalding Players Commit To College



Archbishop Spalding players who signed letters of intent include (l-r) wide receiver RJ Newton to Holy Cross, linebacker Keion Flowers to Maryland (preferred walk-on), linebacker Keyshawn Flowers to Maryland, and defensive back Tyler Brown to James Madison.



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Broadneck Wrestling Finishes Second At 4A State Duals

Broadneck's wrestling team picked up silverware at the regional and state dual meets championships in early February.

The Bruins were seeded seventh in the 4A East Region tournament but made it all the way to the state championship dual, where they fell one victory short as Walt Whitman won 33-31 on February 10.

In the finals, the Bruins picked up victories from **Brandon Whyte-Taylor** at 120 pounds, **Linx Lawless** at 150, **Peyton Miller** at 157, and **Cameron Zachari** at 175. **Jack Joseph** (106), **Austin Combs** (165) and **Peter Seabrook** (285) were awarded wins by forfeit.

Broadneck got to the finals by edging Bethesda-Chevy Chase 34-33 in the semifinal round earlier that day. **Miguel Cabon** (113), Whyte-Taylor, **Cam Wil-**

liams (126), **T.J. Hicks** (132), Lawless, Miller, Combs and Zachari picked up wins on the mat for the Bruins.

Also participating on finals day for the Bruins were **Long Bui**, **Jeremy Abate** and **Dom Ascione**.

The Bruins qualified for the state meet by running through a gauntlet in the region tournament. Seeded seventh of 11 teams, Broadneck beat 10-seed Glen Burnie 43-30 and then knocked off 2-seed Leonardtown 40-27 on February 6. The Bruins then followed that up on February 8 with a 35-24 semifinal win over 6-seed North Point and a 32-30 victory over 4-seed Old Mill in the region championship match.

Next up for Broadneck is the county championship tournament, February 16-17 at Broadneck.

SPMS Wrestler Wins State Title



Years of diligence paid off for Weston Baumgartner on February 10 when he won a state championship in the Maryland State Wrestling Association's 125-pound middle school competition at The Show Place Arena in Upper Marlboro. A Severna Park Middle School eighth-grader, Baumgartner competes for Headhunters Wrestling Club. During the state championship tournament, he won his first two matches by technical fall before winning a 2-1 decision for the state title. In the next few weeks, he will choose which private school he plans to attend next year.

Falcon Wrestlers Fare Well At Winters Mill Invitational



(L-R) Wrestlers Alanna Adams, Nate Kohler and Michael Queen placed first in their respective weight classes for Severna Park during the Winters Mill Falcon Invitational in early February.

Three Falcons placed first in the Winters Mill Falcon Invitational, a wrestling tournament that featured 12 schools in early February. Team captain and senior **Nate Kohler** (175 pounds), sophomore **Michael Queen** (126 pounds) and junior **Alanna Adams** (135 pounds) were top finishers for Severna Park.

Kohler entered the 175-pound bracket as a No. 2 seed. He squared off against an Arundel opponent in the quarterfinals.

"I worked from distance, and I was shooting sweeps," Kohler said. "Like with most guys I face, I tried to gas him out and I was able to pin him."

He faced a Frederick wrestler in the semifinals and won by decision, 7-2, before pinning his opponent from Eastern Tech in the finals.

"The kid was pretty lengthy, so I was trying to keep on my toes, and I was able to pin him," Kohler said.

Kohler quickly forgot about his individual competitions as he watched his teammates, Queen and Adams.

"Mike is just a technically sound wrestler," Kohler said. "He's always moving, pushing the pace and getting in guys' heads. When Alanna is on top, she is always throwing in a (Half Nelson) or a Butcher or pushing people over. She is pretty unassuming, but she weathers the storm. Most people get tired, but (Alanna and Mike) both ramp up during a match."

Falcons **Josh O'Donnell**, **Brett Gleisner** and **Aiden Holly** finished fourth, fifth and sixth in their respective brackets.

The county championship tournament is next, from February 16-17 at Broadneck High School. Kohler complemented 175-pound wrestlers and possible county championship opponents from Chesapeake, Old Mill and Arundel as he looked forward to the competition.

Bruins Swimming Team Completes Three-Peat At County Championships

» Continued from page 14

that it doesn't matter what position you are in. You want to finish as high as you can and get as many points as you can, because it does make a difference and it certainly did that night, especially for the boys."

It took a herculean effort from Crofton to prevent the Bruins from claiming a full share of the title, with **Luke Corey** and **Grant Murphy** setting county records in the 200-meter freestyle and the 100-meter backstroke, respectively. In the process, they broke records that they had previously set at the 2023 county championships.

But a strong team effort by Broadneck earned them a draw, as the Bruin boys finished in the top three in every race. In the process, they placed first in the 200-meter medley relay and the 100-meter freestyle. Broadneck's **Nate Decker** countered Crofton by setting a county record of his own, breaking **Alex Kuriawa's** 2018 record in the 100-meter freestyle. Decker, a senior who has committed to swim for Utah, finished the race at a blazing pace of 47.12 seconds, over three seconds faster than the previous record.



Severna Park's relay team of Sydney Sloan, Maggie Goodman, Lena Rausch and Amelia Goger set a new county record in the 400-meter relay at the county championships on February 2.

The Severna Park boys fared a little worse than the girls at the county championships, finishing fourth with 181 points. While they didn't place first in any of their races, the boys were competitive throughout

the meet, finishing on the podium for the 400-meter freestyle relay with a team consisting of **Samuel Argeles**, **Riordan Kelley**, **Robby Haufe Jr.** and **Caden Tetrault**.

"Both teams, men and women, outperformed my expectations," Severna Park coach **Trevor Brinton** said. "I couldn't be happier with how my team swam. Moving into regionals, the team needs to keep a clear head, with a focus on fast times and good sportsmanship."

Both teams will finish the season short-handed, as the Maryland club state championship is scheduled for the same day as the high school state championship. Since many of the county's top swimmers are unable to attend states, this forces many of them to sit out of regionals, a fact that Winans lamented after the county championship.

"Severna Park's probably lost a couple kids, South River as well, and Crofton will lose their top two boys and a couple of their girls," Winans stated. "So it's really disheartening for the kids, and I think for the coaches as well, because we know that we could compete with Montgomery County, and now we won't even have the opportunity."

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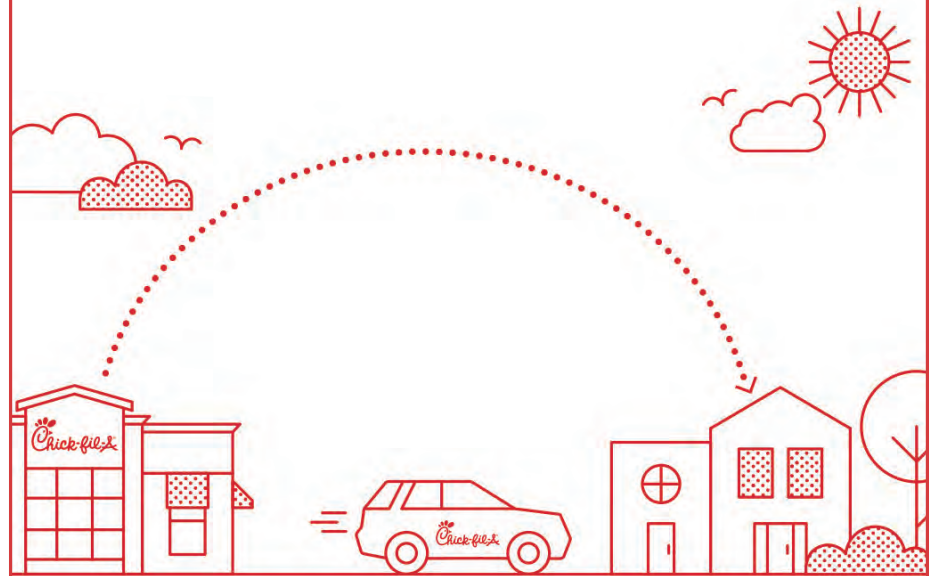
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They're Out Of The Zoo Without A Clue

Folger McKinsey Elementary Students To Perform "Madagascar"



Photo courtesy of Nicole Wise Photography

Forty-two Folger McKinsey students are bringing "Madagascar - A Musical Adventure Jr." to the stage from March 8-9.

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

OK, audience, it's time to just smile and wave, just smile and wave. Folger McKinsey Elementary is preparing for its upcoming show, "Madagascar — A Musical

Adventure Jr." from March 8-9.

Based on the DreamWorks film, the play follows Alex the lion, Marty the zebra, Melman the giraffe, Gloria the hippo, and a group of plotting penguins as they escape from their home in New York's Central Park Zoo and

embark on an unexpected journey to the madcap world of King Julien's Madagascar.

"Madagascar" captures the kids' energy and smiles as well as their anxiety about leaving the nest, or in this case, the zoo," said April Gianvittorio, a par-

ent producer of the Folger McKinsey play. "Last year, we did 'The Little Mermaid,' and we wanted to avoid another drama and jump into a comedy. The kids love it and our director, Atticus, was familiar with the play and it was easy to get crack a lackin' — as Marty the zebra would say!"

Forty-two students are excited to showcase their singing and dancing chops in the comedy. During rehearsals, they have learned some valuable lessons.

"I like that 'Madagascar' has so many characters and everyone gets to have a role," said Carley O'Brien, who plays Zookeeper Zoey. "I have learned to not be afraid and get up there and do your thing!"

Kathryn Sanner said, "I learned that you can do big things if you put your mind to it."

Kathryn also likes all the story's twists and turns. The lighthearted show choice was received well by students.

"My favorite part of rehearsal is you are able to act freely without feeling embarrassed," said Lydia Plessinger, who plays Mason the chimpanzee.

"I like having fun instead of being serious. I also enjoy having a fun and friendly community at practice."

» **Continued on page 32**

Severna Park Schools Tip Food Scales In Annual Food Drive

By Judy Tacyn

For the past 36 years, the Anne Arundel County Food Bank has hosted Harvest for the Hungry, a fall drive to collect food and raise funds for the food bank. A staunch supporter of the drive is Anne Arundel County Public Schools, whose participation in the program teaches children valuable lessons about hunger, engages them in giving, and shows them they have the power to make a difference in their community. This past fall, Severna Park High School collected the most funds (\$19,585.45) and Oak Hill Elementary's 620 students collected the most food (6,115 pounds) to top the county public schools lists.

"We are blown away by the generous support of participating schools in Severna Park, which go above and beyond every year to support their neighbors experiencing food insecurity," said Leah Paley, chief executive officer of the Anne Arundel County Food Bank. "Many of these schools have staff and/or teacher coordinators who are deeply involved in the food drive, working closely with school administrators and parent-teacher organizations to devise creative ways for students and families to participate."

Since 1996, the county's public schools have donated more than 6 million pounds of food to the food bank. This school year, Harvest for the Hungry collected the equivalent of 170,704 pounds of food, and students collected just over 105,000 pounds of shelf-stable food and raised \$65,555, according to food bank tallies.

"This is roughly 7% of the total food donations we receive each year," Paley added. "It may sound like



Severna Park High School students collected donations throughout the Harvest for the Hungry food drive.

a small percentage, but considering the volume of donations we receive from grocery stores, it's a significant amount of community-based giving."

The food bank works with 76 network partners that operate food, baby and senior pantries across 117 distribution points throughout the county. These partners also run feeding centers and soup kitchens, as well as prepare weekend meal kits for eligible Anne Arundel County Public Schools students through the Backpack Buddies program. The funds raised help purchase fresh produce and lean proteins that contribute to well-balanced, nutritional meals for county neighbors in need. Last fiscal year, the Anne Arundel Food Bank distributed more than 3.4 million pounds of food and necessi-

ties to the network partners.

Paley said there is an increased demand at food pantries across the county. Part of this, she said, stems from cuts to federal food benefits last year. On average, food bank network partners are assisting 48,000 neighbors in need each month, which is 13% more than last year at this time.

"I think a lot of us think of Anne Arundel County as being very affluent. But in reality, about 35% of county residents are living below the poverty line or are employed but struggling to pay for basic necessities, like rent, health care, utilities and transportation," Paley said. "Even in Severna Park, about

one in five people are having difficulty keeping up with bills and look for support from organizations like food pantries supported by Anne Arundel County Food Bank."

Paley's own children attend Oak Hill Elementary School, where a week-long spirit week was held to encourage families to donate certain food items frequently requested by neighbors seeking food assistance.

One day during the food-drive week, students were encouraged to bring breakfast items and were allowed to wear their pajamas to school. On

» **Continued on page 32**

Keyed Into Philanthropy

Student Key Club Leader Supports Rwanda From Afar

Izzy Maly and Key Club members have raised more than \$6,500 in donations and prizes. Proceeds will fund construction at a school in Rwanda, Africa.



By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

A Rwandan proverb declares that “help from abroad always comes when the rain has stopped.” Severna Park High School sophomore Izzy Maly wants to bring help from abroad, but her solution is permanent and independent of the forecast.

As the lieutenant governor of Division 4A of the Capital District Key Club, the

high school branch of Kiwanis Club, Izzy works with the nine other Key Clubs in Anne Arundel County. Her current project is a raffle fundraiser to support construction at a school in Rwanda, a landlocked country in Africa.

A few years ago, Izzy and her family traveled to multiple countries in Africa, witnessing both beauty and poverty as they sought to learn more about the area’s culture and landscapes.

“I experienced walking through the slums — two in Nairobi, Kenya — and seeing orphanages,” Izzy said. “I loved connecting with the children who were positive even through their circumstances. One of my favorite memories was playing soccer with some other children my age on the dirt road, with a ball made from trash. The children were so sweet and hopeful, yet they weren’t provided an opportunity to receive an education and have a successful future. They didn’t realize what they weren’t receiving: a chance for a better future, one where they didn’t have to live in a tin room with a fabric roof.”

She knew she wanted to use her position as Key Club lieutenant governor to help children facing similar circumstances. First, she contacted a small school in Rwanda, which works to help children escape their cycle of poverty by providing them the opportunity to attend school.

“The owner and I discussed where they needed help, and I learned that many girls have to miss school every month since the culture only allows them to go through their menstruation if they have a separate girls’ bathroom, which they don’t have the funding for,” Izzy said. “This makes it so much harder for girls to receive an equal education and feel accepted at school while they have a lack of resources. I discovered that by raising \$15,000, I could fund this construction for them.”

After doing research, she determined that a raffle would be the best way to raise money. She called, emailed and visited local businesses to ask for donations. As of early February, she has raised about \$6,500 in donations and prizes.

The Rwanda school, Izzy said, is run by Care and Help Child Organization, found-

ed by Gloria Gatsinzi, who has worked with UNICEF in the past.

“Helping doesn’t have limits,” Gatsinzi said in a statement shared on the organization’s website. “All it requires is a big heart, and what might seem a luxury to you could be a necessity for someone else.”

Elizabeth Meadows, the Severna Park High School Key Club advisor and a math teacher, is impressed by Izzy’s big heart and the sophomore’s level of advocacy as the Key Club lieutenant governor. As a freshman, Izzy approached Meadows upon learning that there was a need for someone to take over a leadership role within the club.

“Izzy is only the second student in my 15 or so years advising SPHS Key Club that has been in a leadership role in the division, and that student was a senior,” Meadows said. “So far, Izzy has taken on the role with ease! She communicates regularly and motivates us to participate in new, exciting projects. She came up with the Rwanda raffle and single-handedly collected over 40 prizes. We are so proud of all of her hard work.”

Severna Park’s Key Club and the other nine Anne Arundel County schools continue to sell raffle tickets and plan to hold a drawing to determine the winner around March 21.

Rain or shine, the new school in Rwanda will bring education to underserved kids.

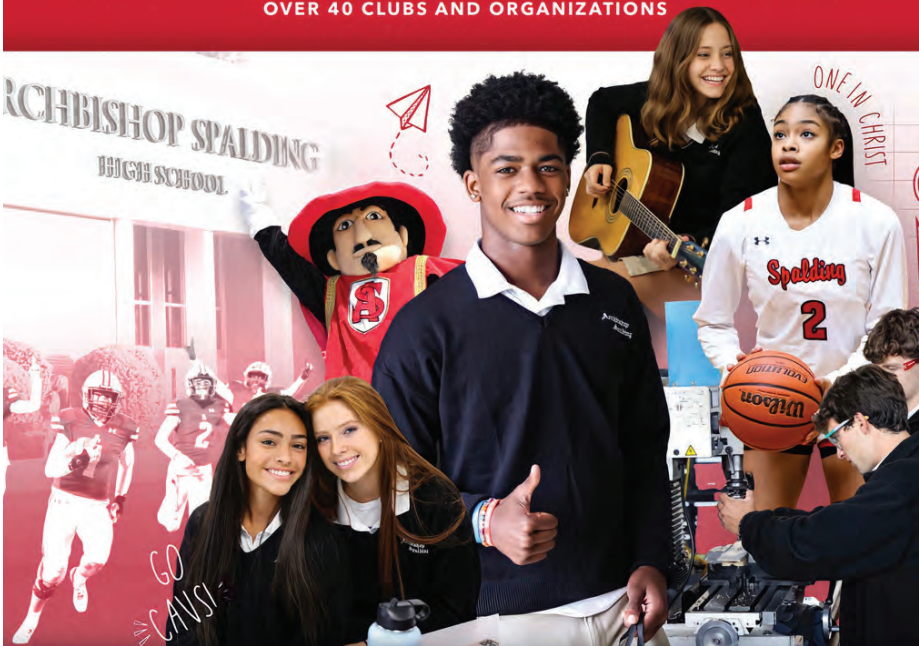
“I look forward to achieving this goal and being able to see all of the gleaming children’s faces when they find out that they will have this safe space,” Izzy said.

Donations can be made through the Anne Arundel County Public Schools online payments portal.

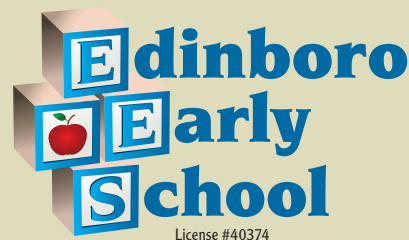


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Too Cool For School



Severna Park High School students participated in the Cool Schools Plunge, a youth-centered event that is part of the broader Maryland State Police Polar Bear Plunge, on February 1. Under the name Arctic Parkies, the Severna Park team raised more than \$18,000 by having more than 100 participants donate at least \$100. By supporting the Cool Schools Plunge, Severna Park students provided funding that will help the 15,588 athletes of Special Olympics Maryland to compete in year-round sports.

News From Scout Troop 993



During a Court of Honor ceremony, Benjamin Single, Zachary Seebold and Pierce Hanlon are Troop 993's newest Eagle Scouts.

Troop 993 recently celebrated three of its newest Eagle Scouts with a Court of Honor held at Severna Park United Methodist Church. The event highlighted the accomplishments of Benjamin Single, Zachary Seebold and Pierce Hanlon.

For Benjamin's Eagle project, he and his fellow Scouts constructed four octagon picnic tables for Kinder Farm Park's new nature education center. To honor his passion, Zachary designed and constructed mallard duck

nesting structures in Lake Waterford Park to increase the nesting rate and protect the ducks from predators. For his Eagle project, Pierce worked with Providence in Arnold to construct two wheelchair-accessible raised garden beds for Providence's greenhouse.

On March 9, Troop 993 will coordinate the annual Scouting For Food event with the Shipley's Choice neighborhood. They plan to fill the SPAN pantry.

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Educator Of The Month

Julie Bresson
Severna Park
Middle School



“I love when my students can show what they know through music or dance, poetry or song. Middle school is the best because they are just fun and so creative!”

— JULIE BRESSON

By Lauren Burke Meyer

Julie Bresson is thankful her family moved to Severna Park’s Whitehurst community in 1975. The youngest of four siblings, Bresson started kindergarten at Folger McKinsey Elementary School that year.

“We rode our bikes or walked all over town, enjoyed time in and on the rivers,” Bresson said. “It was awesome and very much what I see for kids in Severna Park today. Families looked out for each other.”

She attended Severna Park Middle School (SPMS) and Severna Park High School (SPHS) before moving to Frederick County in 1986.

The mom of three received her undergraduate degree in sociology with a minor in psychology from Elon University in North Carolina before pursuing her graduate degree in education from Cambridge College in Massachusetts.

She also participated in Anne Arundel County Public Schools’ resident teacher program for special education through Notre Dame of Maryland University. She has taught second, third, sixth, seventh and eighth grade for both general and special education, and both public and private education, over her 26 years in the field.

Since August 2009, Bresson has taught middle school science.

From St. Mary of the Mills in Laurel, Maryland, to Meade Middle School and Old Mill Middle School North with a quick stop at Wiley H. Bates Middle School during the 2019-2020 school year, Bresson landed at her neighborhood school. She now teaches seventh-grade science at her alma mater, SPMS.

“I can’t tell you how nice it is to be home and to be supported by the fantastic families, administration and staff of Severna Park Middle School,” Bresson said.

SPMS Principal Dennis Kelly shared how Bresson is a tremendous asset to their team, also noting how she’s student-centered in everything she does.

“Specifically, she cares about science but cares more about the learning experience for the whole child,” Kelly said.

Bresson loves teaching science and arts integration.

“I love when my students can show what they know through music or dance, poetry or song,” she said. “Middle school is the best because they are just fun and so creative!”

The science teacher also enjoys seeing kids find their place in the world.

“It’s fulfilling to mentor them through those quirky years,” she said, adding how she teaches “Bresson lessons.”

Kelly views Bresson as a great collaborator too.

“She enjoys working with her colleagues and solving problems that create results that are in the best interest of kids,” Kelly added.

Bresson also volunteers at SPHS for the music program, including marching band, symphonic band, orchestra, percussion ensemble and jazz band.

“I have zero musical talent, but I’m good at organizing kids and helping with events,” she said.

Her kids have participated in Rock ‘N’ Roll Revival as members of the band and cast.

“The music and drama programs are incredible, and I’m so thankful that my kids have had those opportunities,” she said.

Bresson has no plans of letting up on her education endeavors.

Her goal is to bring in more community experts in the various disciplines of science - from human body systems to plastic pollution to the basics of energy and movement and waves of all kinds.

She’d also like to coordinate efforts to plant bulbs in the schoolyard by the bike rack.

“When the school was remodeled, the pretty cluster of trees was removed, and it needs a little TLC,” she added.

Principal Kelly summed up Bresson’s contributions: “We are lucky to have her on our team!”

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I would like to start a tradition where we put out a bag for the Valentine's Day man to come and leave us goodies!

Caleb K.

My favorite Valentine's Day tradition is when my mom and dad give my brother and I valentines. Then, my brother and I give a gift to our mom.

Connor B.

I would like to start a tradition where my family and I make different types of food shaped as hearts.

Gavin S.

On Valentine's Day, my family and I give out cards and gifts to one another, like chocolates and stuffed animals. My dog's birthday is on February 14, so we also celebrate with him, and he receives treats!

Elizabeth L.

I would like to start a tradition where my parents hide a heart. Then, my siblings and I must find it to get candy.

Ethan L.

The Valentine's Day tradition that brings me joy is waking up and seeing my entire family smiling. They are always kind and compassionate.

Ethan S.

For Valentine's Day, my family gets small gifts for each other. I want to start a tradition where my whole family makes heart-shaped waffles!

Evelyn D.

My favorite Valentine's Day tradition is waking up and coming downstairs to small gifts and pancakes.

Francesca C.



My family is planning to make heart-shaped pancakes with honey and syrup!

Lauren B.

A tradition that brings me joy is when we make Valentine's Day cookies.

Lena L.

My favorite Valentine's Day tradition is when my family and I exchange boxes of chocolates and cards. Then, we have breakfast, which includes heart-shaped pancakes.

Liliana C.

My favorite Valentine's Day tradition is when I get home, my family exchanges gifts.

Logan M.

I would like to start making Valentine's Day cards and heart-shaped pancakes with my family.

MacKenzie D.

My family and I make heart-shaped pancakes and they are delicious!

Miller H.

I love it when my mom buys my older sister and I two boxes of candy hearts.

Molly A.

On Valentine's Day, my parents give my sister and I small gifts and candy.

Owen L.

A tradition in my family is making heart-shaped pancakes. Another tradition that brings me joy is making goodie bags for the poor!

Roman O.

My favorite tradition is making chocolate-covered strawberries and spending time with my family!

Ms. McCarley

Each month, the Severna Park Voice poses a question to a local fifth-grade class. This month, students from Ms. McCarley's class at St. John the Evangelist School answered the question:

What is a Valentine's Day tradition that brings you joy, or a tradition you would like to start??

A tradition I would like to start is everyone in my family buying each other small Valentine's Day gifts like chocolate.

Addison H.

For Valentine's Day, my family usually decorates the house, and we receive little gifts in a bucket.

Anthony S.

On Valentine's Day, my family has a tradition where the cupid sends a mail boy to our house with goodies. Sometimes our Elf on the Shelf dresses up and comes to my house too!

Brayden G.

On Valentine's Day, my mom makes pink pancakes that say "love."

Brendan F.

A tradition that brings me joy is making heart-shaped cookies and spending time with my family.

Bria G.

I would love to wake up on Valentine's Day and see candy.

Grant W.

It is my half birthday, so my parents let me have a friend come over.

Grayson H.

I would like to start a tradition where our family put their names in a hat, and everyone hides chocolate candy. Then, we draw names and try to find the candy that someone else hid.

Isabelle M.

I love to make heart-shaped pancakes with my mom. I also make my parents Valentine's Day cards.

Jackson H.

I make cards for my family and we eat cookies!

Jackson L.

In the morning, we make chocolate-dipped strawberries and give them to our neighbors, and in the evening, we go to my aunt's house for dinner.

Jacob P.

My favorite Valentine's Day tradition is eating heart-shaped chocolate.

Julianna E.

My grandma and my parents give my brother and I candy.

Kaelyn M.

Everyone in my house receives a basket from the Valentine's Day man. He knocks on the door, and we always try to catch him, but he is too fast. He leaves behind his shoes and a basket filled with candy.

Lachlan G.



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Severna Park Schools Tip Food Scales

» Continued from page 27

another day, students were asked to bring canned fruit and were encouraged to wear bright rainbow colors.

John and Michelle Mastandrea were the Oak Hill drive co-chairs for the second time. Michelle said classes competed against each other to be the top donating class in their grade level, and top class overall. The top donating class in each grade level earned an extra recess, and the top donating class overall earned a pizza party.

"Many of our students were motivated and interested when they learned of the project's purpose and that it helps children in our local community. This was eye-opening for them to see the need close to home," Michelle said. "It is empowering for our youngest community members to be able to recognize a need and take action to help. Our school focuses on character traits each month and we often discuss empathy. This was a perfect opportunity for our students to put their empathy practices to work."

Severna Park High School set a goal of \$15,000, and the 2,000 students exceeded their goal by more than \$4,500. Math teacher Elizabeth Meadows has led the school's Harvest for the Hungry efforts for 10 years. This year, a March Madness-like bracket system had first period classes facing off against

each other, with the highest donor classrooms advancing to the next round.

"Our community has always done a wonderful job of giving to Harvest for the Hungry," Meadows said. "Our parents and teachers believe it's important for students to be involved in giving back to your community. These kids are the future decision-makers and we want to provide them opportunities to learn about social issues so they have a broader perspective as they head into adulthood."

Paley said she and the food bank really appreciate the many creative ways that Severna Park area students, faculty and staff, and parents come together to raise awareness, food and funds for the organization's important work.

To support the food bank's mission to alleviate food insecurity in Anne Arundel County, volunteer to sort and prepare food donations for distribution to food bank partners. Or host a drive and collect low-sodium, low-sugar, high-fiber, shelf-stable food. Support is always needed.

Paley said donations tend to decline in the spring and summer, so those are great seasons to host a drive. Monetary donations are always welcome and are used to purchase fresh produce, lean proteins, and culturally responsive foods.

Information about food drives, volunteering and donating can be found at www.aafoodbank.org.

They're Out Of The Zoo

» Continued from page 27

Aanya Gnanakkan plays multiple ensemble roles. "I like how it's more upbeat and entertaining," Aanya said when reflecting on the show. "It takes more than actors to make the play. And since I am part of a group, I don't feel as nervous as if I would do it alone."

Director Atticus Boidy is doing his part to make the production upbeat and entertaining. Folger McKinsey teacher Andrea Lawrie is the musical director. Tonya Hogue serves as a parent producer, and Tina Larson is the dance coach. A "small army" of parent volunteers has contributed over five months — twice a week after school — as kids memorized lines and songs, learned where to be onstage, and listened for cues from other actors and the music.

The kids are almost ready to share their zany humor with audiences. Along the way, they are cherishing the fun experience.

"My favorite part of rehearsal is being with my friends and being able to just go out there on the stage and be myself," said Briella Hogue, who plays Alex the lion. "'Madagascar' is full of comedy, and I love when the steaks are dancing around the stage, asking to be eaten. I just love the whole experience."

Students will "move it, move it" during "Madagascar" showtimes on March 8 at 7:00pm and March 9 at 1:00pm and 7:00pm at Folger McKinsey Elementary. Stay tuned for information regarding ticket sales.



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Taking The Lead

Severna Park Students Engage In Community Service

Students are making a difference in their communities this school year through Severna Park High School's (SPHS) Leadership Institute. The three-year course teaches individuals the skills they need to be better leaders. During the last year of the course, students participate in a senior fundraising project through which they raise money for the partnered organization of their choice.

Teachers Elizabeth Colon and Heather Barnstead oversee the Leadership Institute and provide guidance when needed. Here are some of this year's projects:

Kolby Ledford and Jonathan Mazzola

Severna Park High School students Kolby Ledford and Jonathan Mazzola recently partnered with the Annapolis Light House shelter for their Leadership 3 project. Their goal was simple: to provide food, clothes and volunteer hours to members of the shelter to improve their quality of life. The two have worked with younger students in the Leadership 1 class to provide as much service as they can to the shelter. Through the months of November and December 2023, the students had numerous meetings and planned to successfully complete each of their goals for the project.

For their first goal, Kolby and Jonathan wanted to raise around \$250 worth of cans and nonperishable goods. Their efforts exceeded \$400, surpassing all expectations. The next goal was to give the shelter as many donations of winter clothes as possible. Over the next couple months, the boys collected over \$125 worth of clothes through donations and clothes that they bought themselves for the shelter. Their last goal was to volunteer at the shelter in person, and they logged 10 hours serving at their soup kitchen.

These goals helped the two students reach out to struggling members of the Annapolis Light House shelter and aid the Annapolis community. Kolby and Jonathan credit the success of their project to the instruction they have received from the SPHS Leadership Institute.

Gabby Rosati and Ronnie McIntyre



Severna Park High School seniors Gabby Rosati and Ronnie McIntyre have been a part of the school's Leadership Institute for the past three years. Ronnie and Gabby combined what they learned in their time in the institute with something that held meaning to them and created their project, Teach 4 Tomorrow.

Teach 4 Tomorrow is in support of the national organization Teach for America, which raises money for Title I (low-income) schools and uses those funds to fulfill the salaries of qualified teachers in areas of need. Ronnie and Gabby have a strong belief that no child should be without a proper education, and this includes supporting the teachers who are shaping their experience. In partnering with Teach for America Baltimore, the funds that they raised will go directly to Title I schools in the area that need the help of organizations like these to keep their doors open.

Thus far, the senior students have been hard at work to maximize the success of their project and make a difference in the educational community. They have raised over \$350 toward their cause. They are also volunteering at Riverview Elementary School, a local Title I school in Baltimore County. While these aspects of their project are thriving, it is the number of school supply donations they have collected that has succeeded the most. Over the course of their project, Ronnie and Gabby have collected over 100 school supplies from students and teachers at SPHS to be donated to Riverview, a drastic leap from their initial goal of 30 items.

"Our project is really important, especially in days like these as we recover from the effects of COVID-19," Gabby said. "Education suffered in that time when we had to learn online and now that we are in-person, it is crucial that all students receive quality education regardless of their background."

With the help and support of the Severna Park community, Ronnie and Gabby hope to continue to build on the success of their project and make a difference in education locally and nationally.

Paige and Kaitlyn Miller



Leadership Institute participants Paige and Kaitlyn Miller partnered with Hero Dogs to spread awareness and support for veterans and their service dogs in the Severna Park community. Hero Dogs is a foundation that provides support to veterans in the Washington, D.C., area through improving the quality of life of our nation's heroes by raising, training and placing service

dogs and other highly skilled canines free of charge with lifetime support of the partnerships.

To accomplish their goal of supporting veterans, Paige and Kaitlyn planned and executed a Hero Dogs donation table event. Employing the help of six junior leadership students, as well as other friends, they were able to decorate the table, design posters and flyers, and spread awareness about Hero Dogs, contributing to an overall donation of \$458 to Hero Dogs. In addition to this contribution, the pair collected 11 dog supplies including bones, frisbees, dog toys, paper towel rolls and plastic bags for the organization.

"Our time in the Leadership Institute at Severna Park High School was such a great opportunity to take initiative and lead our own project," Paige said. "Our time partnered with Hero Dogs has led us both to understand the importance of service dogs."

Avery Landis and Michael Fallon

Seniors Avery Landis and Michael Fallon led a group of five fellow students and community members to get involved with Wreaths Across America at the Maryland Veterans Cemetery.

The students planned on volunteering with Wreaths Across America to complete the goals of their service assignment called Project Help a Hero for the SPHS Leadership Institute. In addition to this, they attended the Montgomery County Jingle Bell Run and attended a stream on Twitch that was supported by the Wounded Warrior Project.

The students chose to work with the Wounded Warrior Project because both of them have strong military backgrounds within their families. Both of their families have supported the Wounded Warrior Project in the past and have sponsored midshipmen for many years. The two chose to help this cause due to the outrageously high veteran suicide rate and other mental health issues that affect veterans around the nation. They were able to raise \$290 as well as awareness through social media and volunteer events.

Ciena Ellis and Matthew Smith

Severna Park High School seniors Ciena Ellis and Matthew Smith recently led their Leadership 3 project through the school's Leadership Institute. The students decided to partner with a local organization called Fish for a Cure to raise money to help fund the cancer survivorship program at Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center's Geaton and JoAnn DeCesaris Cancer Institute.

The students had set three goals for their project, which they called Hooked on Hope: to raise \$300 in donations, to raise awareness, and to sell five Hooked on Hope sweatshirts. To reach these three goals, the senior leadership students were assigned four sophomore students, also enrolled in the Leadership Institute, to work with them on their project.

The Fish for a Cure organization was founded in 2007 and has raised over \$4.5 million to benefit the Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center's Geaton and JoAnn DeCesaris Cancer Institute. Ciena and Matthew decided to partner with Fish for a Cure because they both love to be out enjoying the Chesapeake Bay and being able to help others.

Taking The Lead

Severna Park Students Engage In Community Service

Brynne August and Cami Carr

Severna Park High School (SPHS) seniors Brynne August and Cami Carr, along with a team of five, attended an event aimed at focusing on bettering people's mental health at the locally owned and operated Yoga Barn. Brynne and Cami planned the fundraising event as part of their senior project for SPHS' Leadership Institute to raise money for their partner organization, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). The seniors set up a donation link in the yoga studio and were able to raise over \$300 in donations, exceeding their goal of \$200. In addition to attending the drop-in yoga session, the seniors' project goals included signing 40 advocacy letters to be sent to government officials, which they have already met. They also plan to attend one more mental health related event as part of their project goals.

Brynne and Cami chose to work with NAMI because they have personally seen the toll that the pressures of society put on students, and this drove them to choose a project focused on fighting for better lives for those struggling with mental illness. After learning that NAMI is the largest national mental health nonprofit organization and works with over 600 local affiliates to better the lives of people all over the nation, the seniors decided to partner with them.

Galen Richardson and Jason Chang

The "Oysters Today for a Better Bay" leadership project team, led by Severna Park High School seniors Galen Richardson and Jason Chang, has been working in recent months to raise awareness regarding the dire situation facing the Chesapeake Bay.



The health of the Chesapeake Bay has declined drastically as a result of human activity throughout the watershed. This has notably led to a decrease in the oyster population, which is necessary for filtering the bay's waters. In recent years, several nonprofit organizations have begun working to restore the oyster population and the health of the bay; however, current efforts are far from sufficient.

Galen and Jason have worked to host several notable events, including a fundraiser night at McGarvey's, oyster gardening with Arundel Rivers, and an upcoming advocacy event that will take place at Severna Park High School. The project has been a resounding success, with over \$300 raised for Oyster Recovery Partnership and awareness of the issue being spread throughout the community.

"When we first started 'Oysters Today for a Better Bay,' we weren't sure how successful we were going to be," Galen said. "Doing an oyster restoration project during the offseason was always going to be a challenge, but we didn't want to let that stop us. We learned the importance of forming connections and expanding our network with people throughout the community. We also learned that plans must be flexible in order to accommodate for unforeseen setbacks, as the end result of our project was much different from what we initially imagined. We couldn't have done this without the skills we learned throughout our years in the SPHS Leadership Institute."

Caitlyn Boucher and Sara Kreis

Severna Park High School (SPHS) seniors Caitlyn Boucher and Sara Kreis teamed up to fight ALS by partnering with the axeALS Foundation to create their own Leadership Institute-sponsored service project. The initiative took place from September until late December 2023. Through the project, the students raised money and awareness for ALS patients who struggle to pay for the treatments that help them stay alive and comfortable. The project also advocated for more research and treatment availability for the patients of this, so far, incurable disease.

Discovering that patients not only have to deal with ALS, but also the huge burden of expensive treatments, inspired the seniors to team up with the axeALS Foundation. Caitlyn and Sara raised \$440 to give back to the foundation for patients to help afford their treatments, as well as sold bracelets for awareness, and wrote advocacy letters to governors and senators about what they can do to help this important cause.

The seniors claim they have been successful thanks to the training and support they have received from Barnstead and Colon. The teachers are just as excited and passionate about the projects as the students, helping them find success.

Ellen Blain and Christina Ballagh



Seniors Ellen Blain and Christina Ballagh, as a part of SPHS's Leadership Institute, partnered with the Anne Arundel County SPCA to raise money, collect donations, and volunteer as a team to help shelter animals in need.

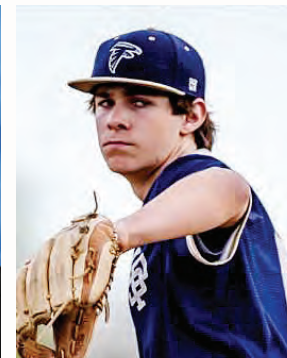
The seniors led a team of students in raising over \$400 and volunteering at the Lights on the Bay event, which benefits the SPCA. They also collected over \$200 worth of donations, such as dog collars, towels and toys. They were inspired to support the SPCA

because they both adopted dogs from animal shelters previously.

"Ever since I brought my dog home from the shelter, she has brought me so much joy, and I wanted to give that back to the community," Ellen said. "It's been amazing to lead this project and make a meaningful impact in our community. As a senior, I feel like this project was a great introduction to the real world in terms of setting goals and then planning and executing the steps necessary to achieve our goals."

The seniors say that the Leadership Institute was hugely influential in their project. "As I have pets of my own, it was really cool to see the impact that our project could have. This project taught me a lot about the benefits of well-organized plans, including the impact they can have on your community," Christina said.

Samuel Cook and Daniel Lynn



Seniors Samuel Cook and Daniel Lynn led a team of fellow students to raise awareness and funds for the organization Challenger Baseball. Their project included raising funds, holding an equipment drive, and creating over 40 supportive cards.

Samuel and Daniel chose to support Challenger Baseball because of their deep connection to the sport. Although they played at different levels, the two seniors came to the realization that everyone should be allowed to play baseball, regardless of physical or mental ability. Challenger Baseball embodied this goal, as the organization created a Little League division for kids with mental and physical disabilities.

The seniors raised \$648, created 41 supportive cards, and held a successful equipment drive that brought 19 new pieces of equipment for the players.

To reach their monetary goal, they held two successful restaurant nights at JB's. Funds from these two nights, as well as successful marketing, resulted in the seniors achieving twice their goal in monetary funds. "Challenger Baseball has been a great opportunity for me to strengthen my connection with my community and help an organization that is extremely important to me," Daniel said.

Liam Bast and Angel Santiago-Cruz

Liam Bast and Angel Santiago-Cruz, along with five others, recently served in Annapolis with the Walk The Walk Foundation (WTWF) through a service project. The foundation is a partner of the annual Bay Bridge Run. This event raises money for their foundation as well as others. Liam and Angel volunteered with WTWF to help prepare and get runners and walkers ready the day before the event.

The seniors chose WTWF because it is a local organization that helps many people in need. Liam and Angel believe in this foundation's cause, and Liam has been a part of a leadership group that has been partnered with the foundation.

Together they set three goals at the beginning of their project: raise \$150 for WTWF, volunteer 10 collective hours as a group, and collect 1,000 diapers to donate to the foundation. As of mid-January, Liam and Angel have exceeded two of those goals. They have raised around \$180 and volunteered 27 collective hours. They are still collecting diapers; so far, they have collected around 100. Liam and Angel credit the success of their project to SPHS' Leadership Institute, which has taught them the skills they need to be successful leaders and how to properly manage their time.

Matthew Pollock and Sam Testerman

Seniors Matthew Pollock and Sam Testerman led a group of Severna Park High School students to get involved in giving back to those who helped ensure American freedom.

Matthew and Sam led a team of four underclassmen to help spread awareness for active-duty service members, veterans and their families. Being a part of the SPHS Leadership Institute, these two Eagle Scouts wanted to give back to a community that gave so much to their families.

Matthew and Sam both come from families that were shaped through the military. Both of their fathers were in the United States Navy, Sam's making a career within it while Matthew's used the Navy to find where life could take him. After working to help veterans with prior leadership projects, they made the easy choice of helping veterans and their families.

The boys discovered Operation Second Chance while trying to find a smaller nonprofit that benefits active-duty servicemembers and veterans. Seeing they were relatively local, and that they truly backed their morals and goals, Matthew and Sam chose to work with them. After reaching out to Operation Second Chance and explaining what they had in mind for their project and how they wanted to help their organization, Matthew and Sam got working. Naming their project "Saving Saviors," they created an Instagram page (@sphs.savingsaviors), reached out to family, friends and their community, opened a fundraising page, and much more. As of now they have raised over \$400 and are currently collecting office supplies needed by Operation Second Chance.

Kate Evans, Francesca Dunoyer, Charlotte Marriner



Severna Park High School students, led by senior Leadership 3 students Kate Evans, Francesca Dunoyer and Charlotte Marriner, partnered with the One Love Foundation to spread awareness about relationship violence.

The group planned and executed the "Love Under the Lights" event, a community walk at Severna Park High School. Employing the help of five sophomore leadership students, they decorated the field, sold merchandise, provided One Love information to participants, and imparted the values of One Love to young athletes, students and parents in attendance that night.

The One Love Foundation was started in 2011 after the death of a University of Virginia lacrosse player, Yeardley Love. Love was a victim of relationship violence, and her death could have been prevented had those around her known the signs of an unhealthy relationship.

"Our event 'Love Under the Lights' was so special to us because not only did we raise money and awareness to support the One Love Foundation, raising awareness for abusive relationships; we also were able to bring our community together for the holidays through a walk at our school, and spread the holiday cheer," Charlotte said.

Ben Freedman and Andy Glesmann

A group of Severna Park High School students led by seniors Ben Freedman and Andy Glesmann spent their fall semester orchestrating a service project raising money and sports equipment donations for Leveling the Playing Field (LPF) to give underprivileged kids a chance to play sports.

LPF was established in 2013 to help alleviate the widening gap in sports participation, caused in large part by the cost of equipment for those struggling financially. The founder, Max Levitt, realized that a great deal of equipment goes to waste as kids grow out of it or stop playing the sport it's for and created what they refer to as a "food bank for sports equipment." LPF's solution is to collect new and gently used sports and playground equipment from local communities and distribute it to schools and other organizations that can distribute the equipment to those who need it.

Ben, Andy and the rest of their team worked hard to connect with the community to collect monetary and equipment donations. They put posters with donation links around the school, made informative posts on multiple social media platforms, and reached out to family, friends and other members of the community. Additionally, they volunteered in person at LPF's Baltimore warehouse where they sorted equipment with other volunteers.

Taylor Denton and Anna Childress



Taylor Denton and Anna Childress are Leadership 3 students at Severna Park High School. To fulfill their capstone project, they partnered with the Blue Ribbon Project in Crownsville, a volunteer organization that supports children in foster care who have been abused or neglected. Their project entailed raising \$900, assembling five backpacks of love, and volunteering with the organization.

They chose the Blue Ribbon Project after learning that 4,237 children in Maryland are in foster care. "Foster care has always been something that is important to me, so I was excited for the opportunity to get more involved," Anna said.

The \$900 they raised will go directly to the organization as well as buying five backpacks of love. Often, when a child is taken out of their home because of abuse or neglect, they are left with nothing but the clothes on their back until a police officer shows up with a backpack of love from the Blue Ribbon Project.

Ryan and Abby Crowley



A group led by Ryan and Abby Crowley teamed up with the Travis Manion Foundation this past fall to spread awareness for the struggle that veterans face when they return home from service as well as raise money for the foundation to provide services to veterans

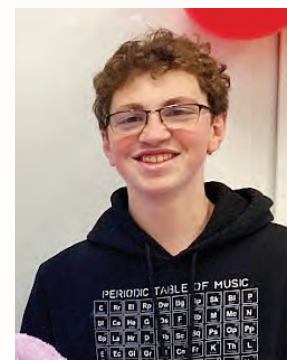
and their families. This in turn provides opportunities for veterans to feel more welcomed and comfortable in civilian life.

The seniors headed up a team of 10 volunteers to help at the 9/11 Heroes Run at the Naval Academy Stadium in Annapolis. At this event, students cheered on the people participating, raised over \$518 for the foundation and sold T-shirts to students at their school to raise awareness for the foundation.

"Being able to help raise money and spread awareness for this foundation that helps veterans with mental health issues really makes you feel good that you're making a difference in many peoples' lives who are struggling to even do basic tasks," Ryan said.

The foundation was started in 2007 in honor of First Lieutenant Travis Manion, a U.S. Marine who made the ultimate sacrifice for the safety of his patrol in 2007.

Alejandro Almodovar-Vives and Liam Cooney



Leadership Institute students, led by seniors Alejandro Almodovar-Vives and Liam Cooney, raised funds to donate to the Epilepsy Foundation.

The foundation was created to help epileptics overcome the challenges of living with epilepsy as well as

furthering medical research. Around 3.4 million Americans are affected by epilepsy.

Through their project, "Seize the Day," Alejandro and Liam planned a purple week that raised over \$425 for the Epilepsy Foundation and spread awareness.

"I am extremely proud of what all we were able to do this semester and am ever grateful to the (Student Government Association) and (National Honor Society) for supporting our efforts as much as they did, Ms. (Heather) Barnstead and Ms. (Christine) Bowman for all of their help and leadership guidance through running the fundraiser, and most importantly, my amazing partner Alejandro Almodovar-Vives for being such a great co-leader," Liam said.

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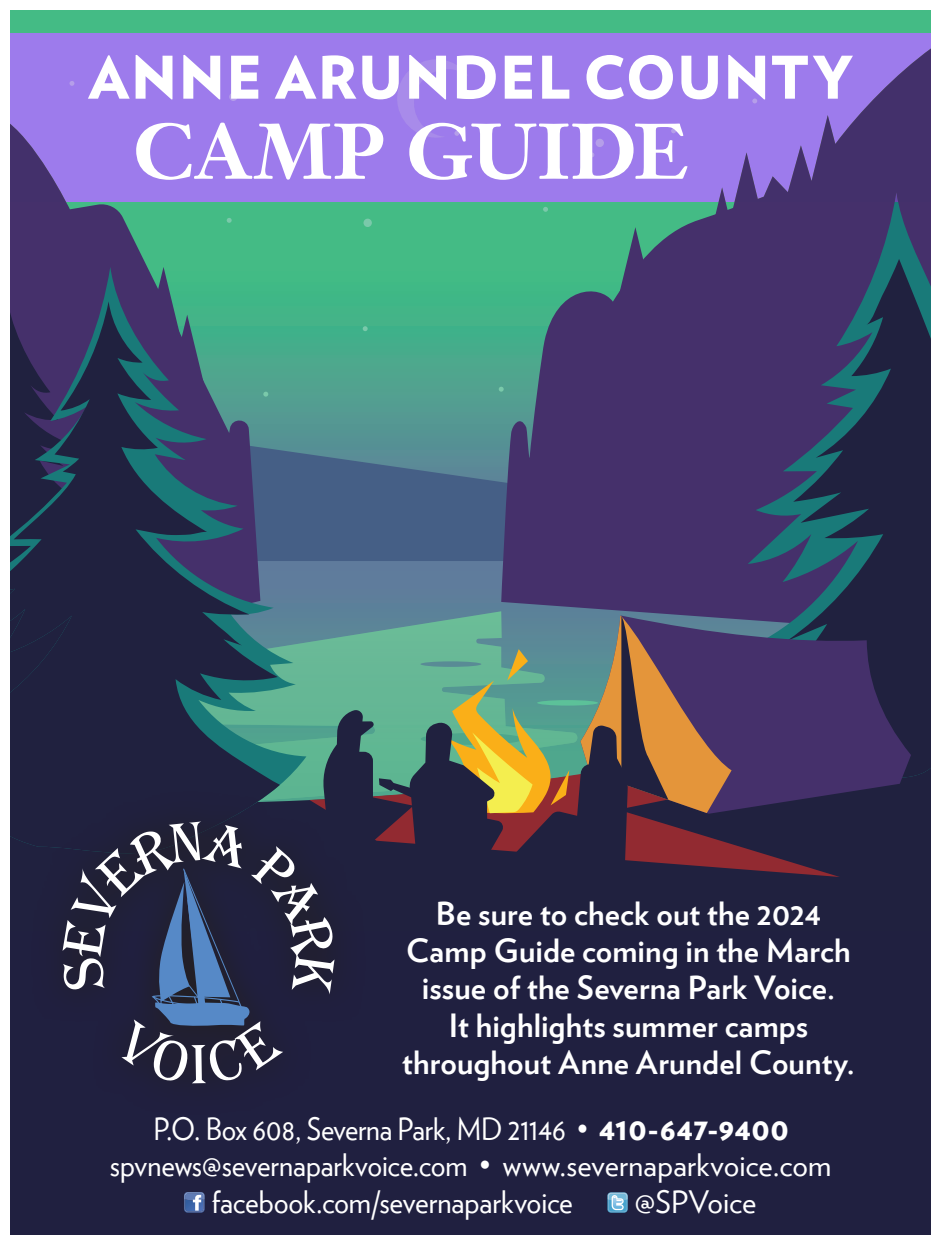
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Arnold Woodworker Carves Out Time For Growing Hobby

By Meredith Winter

For Mike Boone, a summer job during high school sparked an interest that has grown into a gratifying hobby today. When he was 16, the Arnold resident worked for a carpenter and discovered the art of woodworking. He tucked this newfound interest in his back pocket until 2017, when he began to work with live-edge wood. His first project was a custom bench fashioned from salvaged slabs that Boone finished, planed, sanded and cut to size before welding on custom legs that he made from scratch.

Since delving into his woodworking hobby seven years ago, Boone has remained committed to sourcing salvaged wood otherwise destined for landfills. He gets logs of various types from area tree companies and acquaintances having trees removed and transforms them into unique pieces ranging from charcuterie boards to holiday-themed trinket trays.

He's not too particular about the types of wood he receives, though he does have a couple of favorites with which to work. Boone shared that he loves black walnut



Among his many custom projects, Arnold woodworker Mike Boone creates unique wedding cake knives with intricate scrollwork in their handles, coffee ground scoops for perfectly portioned at-home brewing, and ring dishes of various shapes and sizes in his garage-based workshop.



and different oaks. "Ambrosia maple is always fun," he said, explaining that the wood is named after the ambrosia beetle, which leaves trails of fungi as it bores into trees that discolor the wood, creating a unique and intricate pattern in each tree.

Many of the items Boone creates, which he offers for sale online, reflect his personal interests and passions. He loves coffee, so he makes

coffee-measuring scoops of various sizes. He enjoys cigars and has been busy producing intricate custom cigar trays. Butcher-block Maryland flags and wedding cake knives with engraved scrollwork in the handles are among the items available through his small business, East Coast Timber.

Over the years, as Boone has developed his woodworking skills, his methodology has become more complex. His

garage workshop was initially outfitted with hand tools — saws, sanders and a planer — but now includes a CNC router that enables Boone to dream up and create most anything anyone asks of him. The machine uses software that converts computer-rendered artwork into precise and intricate finished products.

Boone said that preparing and designing a project can take hours before the router

ever comes into contact with wood. His tech-savvy wife often assists with the computer work, and when they come across questions they can't troubleshoot themselves, they turn to the helpful online community of woodworkers found in Facebook groups. "It's a big learning curve, but it's fun," Boone remarked of CNC work.

Not only is woodworking fun for him, but it's also a stress reliever for the young dad, who has a 2-year-old daughter and two rescued Dachshunds at home. Boone said he devotes about 15 hours each week to his craft, and that he finds listening to music and transforming fresh concepts into finished products is peaceful for him.

Boone indicated that people with an interest in woodworking shouldn't shy away from it for a lack of experience. "You can start from scratch, from a passion or an idea," he said. "You don't have to have any professional background; you can learn as you go. That's what I did, and I am still learning."

To view some of Boone's work, go to www.eastcoasttimber.com.

Woods Church's Production Of "The Secret Garden" Promises To Dazzle And Inspire



By Doug Schwartz

Student Intern

Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church is putting on a production of "The Secret Garden," a Broadway adaptation of the classic novel written by Frances Hodgson Burnett, from March 8-10 and March 15-17.

"The Secret Garden" follows a lonely and spoiled young girl named Mary Lennox as she is sent to live with her

reclusive uncle Archibald Craven at his manor in Yorkshire, England, after losing her parents to a cholera outbreak in India. Mary meets many new people, including her disabled cousin, a young boy named Colin. The manor is home to many wonders, and as Mary begins to explore, she is met with persistent melodies and the "Dreamers," guiding spirits from Mary's past, that draw her toward a secret garden that has been neglected over time. As

Puppet artist Trishelle Weed and puppet operator and member of the teen ensemble Mallory Owen have been practicing with an almost finished fox puppet for Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church's production of "The Secret Garden."

Mary works to restore the garden to its former beauty, "The Secret Garden" tells a tale of renewal, hope, friendship and forgiveness.

"The Secret Garden" is Woods Church's seventh production. The church's previous musicals included "Godspell," "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and "Jesus Crist Superstar." This year, music director Dave Merrill decided to branch out with a new type of play.

"It's important that we find a musical that is spiritually based, that has teachings of what we teach about here at Woods Church, and we thought this musical fit perfectly," Merrill explained. "It's not scripturally based, but it is definitely spiritually based.

"It talks about where to find your
» Continued on page 45

Severna Park Artist Unveils "A New Endeavour"

By Zach Sparks

zach@severnaparkvoice.com

During the COVID-19 pandemic, psychologist Dr. William N. Collins saw fewer patients and rediscovered his passion for creating art. A Severna Park resident, he painted more than 120 pieces under the name W.N. Collins while people remained isolated and businesses shuttered.

The end of the pandemic did not slow him down; the prolific 87-year-old artist just opened an Annapolis exhibit called "A New Endeavour."

His medium is acrylic. As for his tool of choice, "I work primarily with a scalpel, a knife," he said. "There is very little brush work."

» Continued on page 44

Ballet Theatre Of Maryland Presents “Momentum: A Mixed Bill”

On February 23 and 24, Ballet Theatre of Maryland will premiere seven new works in “Momentum: A Mixed Bill” at Maryland Hall. Giving audiences a taste of diverse neoclassical and contemporary movement styles, this mixed repertory production will feature one-act adaptations of “Macbeth” and a George MacDonald fairytale as well as original stories and non-narrative works.

Artistic Director Nicole Kelsch said, “Over the last few years, ‘Momentum’ has become a unique opportunity to celebrate the choreographic talents of our dancers. While this year’s program features pieces by current and former dancers who have choreographed for the company before, we look forward to sharing the works of three dancers who have not yet choreographed for a mainstage performance. Although each of the seven pieces is unique, their collective themes reflect the strength of the human spirit.”

With support from the Mark Ryder Original Choreography Grant, Roman Mykyta will premiere a one-act “Macbeth.” This narrative work with music by Richard Strauss dramatizes the downfall of Shakespeare’s most charismatic couple. Michael West Jr. will

return to the music of Nashville-based musician Timbre in his “Day Boy and Night Girl: The Romance of Photogen and Nycteris.” Based on the fairytale by George MacDonald, this new work tells a story of mystery, tenacity and wonder.

Company principal Lindsey Bell will present “Linda Rae,” a romantic pas de deux set to Antonín Dvořák’s “Serenade for Strings.” Visiting choreographer Ashley Taylor will premiere “Into the Light,” a journey through human vulnerability with music by Bryan Teoh, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Rafael Krux.

Taylor said, “I’m really excited to return as a choreographer for BTM. This year, I’m looking forward to seeing how the dancers bring to life a more contemporary and story-driven piece. It’s surreal to be at the front of a room where I spent so many hours in rehearsal myself, so my hope is to create a memorable experience for the dancers as well as the audience. ‘Momentum’ is a wonderful opportunity for both dance enthusiasts and newcomers to experience a variety of artistic voices.”

Other works in the program include



Olivia Fohsz’s tribute to her beloved teacher Frank Ohman, a former New York City Ballet soloist and founder of New York Dance Theatre. It is set to four compositions from Brahms’s “The Hungarian Dances.” Hannah Hanson’s “All That Follows After” draws inspiration from its Bedřich Smetana score to explore strength and hope in the face of adversity. Madison Sweeney’s yet untitled work, with music by Maurice Ravel, considers the outcomes of climate change to ask whether we are borrowing from tomorrow.

Experience Ballet Theatre of Maryland’s “Momentum: A Mixed Bill” at Maryland Hall on February 23 at 7:30pm and February 24 at 7:00pm. Discounts are available for seniors, students, children and military. To watch at home, audiences may also purchase a virtual streaming ticket for \$33 per household. For more information, visit www.balletmaryland.org/momentum. BTM cautions that www.balletmaryland.org and www.eventbrite.com are the only official websites for purchasing tickets to “Momentum.” Ballet Theatre of Maryland is not responsible for tickets purchased through unauthorized third parties.

The Suits To Perform At Byzantium In Annapolis



The Suits are comprised of four musicians performing Motown, doo wop, pop and rock tunes. They will perform in Annapolis on February 28.

Sing and dance your way through the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s with The Suits in a high-energy concert at The Byzantium in Annapolis on February 28 at 7:30pm. The concert is being organized by the Severna Park-based Anne Arundel Community Concert Association.

The Suits are comprised of four musicians performing four genres of hit music: Motown, doo wop, pop and rock. Fusing smooth choreography and tight harmonies with exciting showmanship and fun audience interaction, this production promises a night to remember. With

hits such as “Oh, What a Night” by The Four Seasons, “My Girl” by The Temptations, “Can’t Buy Me Love” by The Beatles, “Signed, Sealed, Delivered” by Stevie Wonder, “Uptown Girl” by Billy Joel, and “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey, the show plans to captivate the audience.

Tickets will be available for purchase at the door for \$30. Season tickets for the 2023-2024 concert season are available for \$70 (adults). For more information, visit www.aacconcerts.weebly.com, or call Gale Gillespie (410-647-4881) or Roberta Mason (410-647-6830).

Reservations Are Open For Annapolis Restaurant Week

Downtown Annapolis Partnership is preparing for Annapolis Restaurant Week from February 24 to March 3. This dining event will be hosted at some of the best restaurants in downtown Annapolis and the surrounding areas, including Severna Park, Eastport, Forest Drive and Parole.

Restaurants will offer special fixed-price menus featuring two-course breakfasts, two-course lunches and three-course dinners. Patrons will find an array of cuisine: Italian, Asian, Central American, seafood, steak and all-American. Price ranges for breakfast are \$9.95 to \$15.95, lunch is \$12.95 to \$19.95, and dinner is \$29.95 to \$39.95. Plus, some locations have bonus menu items and specials, which may include half-price bottles of wine, discounted appetizers or specialty drinks.

Several restaurants are offering wine bottle specials during the week. Diners can save 30% to 50% on bottles of wine at select locations during the middle of the week.

For those wanting to bring larger groups, select restaurants offer private and semi-private dining rooms for larger groups of friends and family. These spaces are limited in select restaurants and need to be reserved in advance. The Annapolis Restaurant Week website lists which restaurants have private or semi-private dining rooms as options.

“Annapolis is lucky to have so many great din-

ing options that the area has become a foodie destination,” said Matt Schatzle, chairman of the Downtown Annapolis Partnership. “New restaurants continue to open in the Annapolis area as a testament to this area becoming a foodie destination. The event has a strong local following with over 54,000 people visiting the website last year to see the menus of participating restaurants. We get visitors from the Baltimore, Washington and Philadelphia areas that return to Annapolis every year for restaurant week.”

Social media pages for both the Downtown Annapolis Partnership and Annapolis Restaurant Week will keep diners aware of contests, giving them chances to win gift cards from restaurants.

Participating restaurants, menus and directions for making reservations will be posted at www.annapolisrestaurantweek.com.



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Artist Unveils "A New Endeavour"



Artist W.N. Collins is now showing his new exhibit, which features about 40 paintings.

» Continued from page 41

"A New Endeavour" includes about 40 pieces. Collins hopes his work is thought-provoking.

"It's abstract, expressionistic," he explained. "I'm trying to express difficult emotions."

Collins has experienced an array of emotions over the last year. He retired in March 2023 after 47 years of clinical psychology. His wife died in September after 56 years of marriage.

While grieving, Collins slowly got back to work on his paintings. Much of his exhibit focuses on subception, a concept explored by psychologist Carl Rogers.

"It's reacting to stimulus without knowing why you are reacting to it," Collins said. "It's like meeting someone and you become very excited by them and don't know why. That particular experience becomes realized consciously."

He was also inspired by the work of Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung.

"Carl Jung says every single experience you have is predestined," Collins said. "If you look back at areas in your life where you were blocked and you changed course, you go in a new direction."

For "A New Endeavour," Collins used muted colors and canvases smaller than the 45-by-60-inch ones that he often employed for his paintings.

The exhibit will continue through early April at Collins' Annapolis gallery, located at 162A West Street in the city's art district. Collins is eager to show his work, which is open to anyone who makes an appointment. Call 410-491-6359 or email collins855@yahoo.com to schedule a personal viewing. Learn more at www.wncollins.com.

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Woods Church's "The Secret Garden" Promises To Dazzle And Inspire

» Continued from page 41

home and where you find where you belong," Merrill said when explaining why "The Secret Garden" was selected. "It talks about family, reaching out to the ones you have lost, and how they still guide you in this life. It has been a perfect endeavor to find those themes and bring them to life."

The play will be held in Woods Church's sanctuary. With the support of the pastors, the space is transformed from a place of worship into a vibrant theater, equipped with everything from set pieces to sound systems to an array of lights.

"We bring in our light rig, we have our orchestra, and we have our projector screens," Merrill said. "We try to use every outlet here in this space for the show."

Pete Bishop and John Dawson oversee set design for the play. It is not an easy undertaking to create an immersive set in a sanctuary space, but the design crew has been up for the task. "When it comes to the set, they are the masterminds behind it," Merrill stated.

Members of the church have also stepped up in other aspects of the production, including but not limited to costume design, makeup and choreography. Elysia Merrill, Dave's wife, is the lead choreographer and assistant director of

the show. Not only is Elysia a professional choreographer, but her detail-oriented nature keeps the show together.

"We couldn't do this without her," Dave Merrill said. "Her attention to detail and how she works with people is just phenomenal."

Part of Merrill's goal as music director at Woods Church is to pull internally for people who want to be involved in the production.

"The majority of what gets done is through people here at the church. It's through church members. We utilize their talents and expertise ... It really is a labor of love," he said.

There are 55 people involved in the show this year, and Merrill has worked tirelessly to ensure there is a role for everyone who wants to be included.

Even though the musical production of the show does not traditionally include roles for children, Merrill found a way to incorporate them. In the book, one of the characters, a boy named Dickens, is followed by animals, providing a magical element to the story. It was here that Merrill found a role for the kids.

"We have an amazing puppeteer, Trishelle Weed, who has created lifelike puppets of foxes and deer that the kids are controlling," Merrill said. "That was a fun and creative way to bring the



Woods Memorial Presbyterian Church's dance ensemble has been rehearsing for the church's March production of "The Secret Garden."

youth into the show."

Not only do the puppets allow kids to be involved in the production, but with the help of a black light, the animals are illuminated with an ethereal glow.

Although the show can be dark at times, Merrill said he and his wife have worked hard to reimagine the play in a way that better reflects Woods Church's values.

"You need that darkness before you can have the light," Merrill said. "But in a setting like this, I personally felt it was, at places, too dark. We've really tried our best to find places to keep that light, to keep places that are uplifting. We are not rewriting the story, but there will be areas that will

be tweaked a little bit to make things more joyful."

As members of the production gear up for their performance, Merrill wants to highlight the importance of this play for his community.

"We are using the imagery of this garden to represent the church family," Merrill stated. "Church is about nurturing, it's about growing, and it's about finding where you belong. And that is the same in the story with the centerpiece of the garden ... This show is definitely for the young at heart and any theatergoer. It's going to be great to see."

To learn more about the upcoming production, or to purchase tickets, go to www.woodschurch.org.



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Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra And Broadneck High School Present “A Celtic Collaboration”

An Irish Band, Lúnasa, Will Be Featured In This Collaboration

The Chesapeake Youth Symphony Orchestra (CYSO) invites the community to enjoy “A Celtic Collaboration” on February 24 at 7:00pm at Broadneck High School.

The world-renowned Irish band Lúnasa will join the CYSO’s symphony orchestra, chamber orchestra, senior flute ensemble and the talented students of Broadneck High School to present an evening of music. This performance is part of Lúnasa’s U.S. tour, promising a unique blend of symphonic and Celtic melodies.

Lúnasa was formed in 1997 from members of popular Irish groups of the previous decade. An early review from Folk Roots magazine described the band as an



Lúnasa was formed in 1997 from members of popular Irish groups of the previous decade.

“Irish music dream team.” The band’s complex arrangements and unique sound reshaped traditional music and energized audiences the world over. Critical acclaim followed, with The Irish Echo describing

the band as the “the hottest Irish acoustic band on the planet” and MOJO magazine naming the band “the new gods of Irish music.” Billboard raved that “anybody who listens can’t help but find them

contagious.”

The CYSO and Broadneck High School’s music students have an unparalleled opportunity in the playing of Lúnasa’s music. This collaboration will showcase the talents of the

young musicians as they come together to share the stage.

A pre-concert reception will be held from 4:30pm-6:30pm at Broadneck Grill & Cantina, located at 1364 Cape St. Claire Road in Annapolis. Passed hors d’oeuvres will feature chicken taquitos, Spanish meatballs and chicken quesadillas. The buffet will include a fresh fruit and cheese platter, vegetable platter with dill dip, and Broadneck Grill’s crab fondue. Drinks, included with a reception ticket, include chardonnay, sparkling wine, pinot grigio, merlot, cabernet sauvignon, sangria, draft and bottled beers, house margaritas, and a variety of sodas and tea.

Free parking is available at both venues. Individual tickets to the pre-concert reception are \$45 and tickets to the concert are \$35. A combined ticket to both the reception and concert can be purchased for \$75. Tickets are available at www.cysomusic.org.

Film Festival Seeks Submissions For 2024 Shorts Challenge



As part of the Annapolis Film Festival, five filmmaker finalists will vie to win a production package valued at more than \$30,000 to assist them in making their short film.

The Annual Shorts Challenge, a live pitch competition before industry judges and a live audience, is a staple of the Annapolis Film Festival. In the competition, five filmmaker finalists will vie to win a production package valued at more than \$30,000 to assist them in making their short film.

This year’s overarching theme, “Out of the Box,” invites participants to explore new and unconventional approaches in concept, storytelling, technical presentation or any unique element that

sets their films apart from expectations.

Unlike previous years, the 2024 shorts challenge seeks to broaden its theme, encouraging filmmakers to think beyond traditional norms while still producing live-action narrative or documentary films. The theme is designed to inspire originality, providing filmmakers with the freedom to explore the diverse possibilities of storytelling and filmmaking.

“We are excited to support new talent and fresh voices who are looking to break

through in this challenging industry,” said Patti White, cofounder and festival director. “The shorts challenge will provide filmmakers an opportunity to expand their experiences and break new ground.”

Filmmakers are encouraged to embrace the theme and submit their groundbreaking stories for consideration no later than February 23. For more information on submission guidelines, visit the “Shorts Challenge” section at www.annapolis-filmfestival.com.

The Annapolis Film Festival is grateful for the generous support and sponsorship of the shorts challenge by these industry-leading film companies: The Maryland Film Office, Red Star (Baltimore), Henninger Media, Studio Unknown (Baltimore)/The Sound Department (Los Angeles), and Serious Grip & Electric.

“We are thrilled to have the ongoing support of these outstanding companies as sponsors for the shorts challenge,” said Lee Anderson, cofounder and festival director. “Their commitment to fostering the art of filmmaking here in Maryland aligns perfectly with our mission to provide a platform for filmmakers to showcase their original work.”

Live Arts Maryland Is Bringing Paul Shaffer To Annapolis On Feb. 17



Photo courtesy of CBS

Shaffer is known for his time on “Late Night with David Letterman” and “Late Show with David Letterman.”

As part of its 50th season, Live Arts Maryland is promising an evening of joy, nostalgia and musical artistry as Paul Shaffer performs with the Annapolis Chamber Orchestra at Maryland Hall on February 17 at 7:30pm. Shaffer is known for his time on “Late Night with David Letterman” and “Late Show with David Letterman.”

J. Ernest Green, the artistic director of Live Arts Maryland for 40 years, regularly works with Shaffer and wanted to bring him to Annapolis. Shaffer will share symphonic renditions of his favorite pop, jazz and R&B songs, as well as personal stories and anecdotes of his work in the music industry over the years.

The audience will also have the option to hang out with Shaffer at a VIP reception, with 100% of the net funds from the event supporting future Live Arts Maryland programs and performances. For tickets or more information, visit www.liveartsmd.org/event/paulshaffer.



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Compass Rose Theater To Showcase "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee"



The Cast



LEAH FREEMAN
"Logainne/Marcy" Cover



ADAM KINDLEY
"Chip/Leaf" Cover



KELLY MOK
"Barfee/Panch" Cover



B.J. ROBERTSON
"Mitch" Cover



SHELBY YOUNG
"Rona/Olive" Cover

An eclectic group of six competitors will vie for the championship of a lifetime during Compass Rose Theater's upcoming production of "The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee," which premieres March 15.

While candidly disclosing hilarious and touching stories from their home lives, the tweens spell their way through a series of (potentially made-up) words, hoping never to hear the soul-crushing, pout-inducing, life-un-affirming "ding" of the bell that signals a spelling mistake. Audience participation and the possibility of some notable familiar faces make every performance a uniquely entertaining experience.

"You will never see the same show twice because audience members we may recognize will join the cast onstage and flex their spelling skills, all in fun," said Barbara Webber, executive director of Compass Rose Theater. "The combination of highly skilled professionals onstage and behind the scenes, along with brave audience members, will make for a laughter-filled, entertaining show."

"The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee" features Beth Amann as Rona Lisa, Cera Baker as Marcy, Terrell Chamber as Mitch, Lila Cooper as Olive, Stephen Emery

as Barfee, Preston Grover as Chip, Taylor Litofsky as Logainne, Omar Said as Panch, Sam Slottow as Leaf, and other actors.

VIP spellers will include Jackie Coleman, executive director of Maryland Hall; Ryan Sneddon, publisher of Naptown Scoop; other recognizable community leaders; and spontaneously called audience members.

The production was originally created by Rachel Sheinkin, with music and lyrics by William Finn, and conceived by Rebecca Feldman.

The show runs from March 15 to April 28 at Maryland Hall in the Compass Rose Theater. Performances are Fridays at 8:00pm, Saturdays at 2:00pm or 8:00pm, and Sundays at 2:00pm.

Tickets are \$25 to \$55, available until showtime while supplies last. Reduced prices are offered for students, seniors, members of the military or veterans, and groups of 12 or more. To buy tickets, visit www.compassrosetheater.org.

"We look forward to bringing this bright, boisterous and quirky musical to the Compass Rose stage," said director Tommy Malek. "Exploring all the joys, trials and triumphs that come with being a 12-year-old spelling bee champion, this show is bound to make you laugh and maybe even shed a tear or two."

"The combination of highly skilled professionals onstage and behind the scenes, along with brave audience members, will make for a laughter-filled, entertaining show."

— BARBARA WEBBER

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Toby's Musical "A Chorus Line" Continues Through March



Photos courtesy of Jeri Tidwell Photography

Zach, played by Jeffrey Shankle, led the cast of "A Chorus Line" during a musical number at Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia.



Diana Morales is portrayed by Leela Dawson, a singer/songwriter and recording artist.

Based on real Broadway dancers' stories, "A Chorus Line" won nine Tony Awards and has been heralded as a true celebration of musical theater. Toby's Dinner Theatre in Columbia is putting its own spin on the show, which opened in January and runs through March 10.

The musical follows several dancers as they pursue their Broadway dreams and seek their moment in the spotlight. "A Chorus Line" features the songs "One," "I Can Do That," "At The Ballet," and "What I Did For Love," among other tunes.

To enjoy dinner and the show, visit Toby's at 5900 Symphony Woods Road in Columbia. Tickets and additional information can be found at www.tobysdinnertheatre.com/shows/a-chorus-line-2024.

"Soul Of Langston"



Daron Stewart is bringing his one-man show to Severna Park Library on February 17 at noon. "Soul of Langston" takes the bittersweet wit and wisdom of Langston Hughes' poetry and translates it into an inspiring story of resilience and persistence. Ages 11 and up are welcome to attend. This is one of several Anne Arundel County Public Library events in honor of Black History Month. Find other activities at www.aacpl.net/events/upcoming.

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Five Things To Know About Heart Surgery

Murtaza Dawood, M.D.
Luminis Health



As February marks Heart Health Month, show your heart some love by eating a nutritious diet consisting of fruits, vegetables and whole grains;

exercising regularly; and avoiding smoking. Taking these steps can decrease the chance that you may need heart surgery one day, but if you do need heart surgery, medical advancements have improved options and outcomes for surgery patients. Here are five things you should know about heart surgery:

1 If your arteries are blocked, surgery can help.

A blocked blood vessel can lead to a heart attack, stroke or other problems. Coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG) is the most common type of open-heart surgery performed on adults today. The surgeon uses a blood vessel taken from another part of the body to provide an alternate route for blood to go around the blockage.

2 When you have a valve that doesn't work, doctors can replace it without surgery.

Conditions like aortic stenosis can keep the heart valve from opening fully and make it difficult for blood to flow. Left untreated, aortic stenosis can damage the heart muscle and lead to severe complications.

The good news is that aortic stenosis can be fixed without surgery. Transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) is a game-changer. It is a minimally invasive alternative to a traditional surgical valve replacement, deploying artificial heart valves using small catheters. This avoids the need for open-heart surgery and can lead to less pain and faster recovery.

TAVR demonstrates outstanding results, providing a viable treatment option for patients who previously had limited choices, ultimately extending their lives and enhancing their overall quality of life.

3 Traditional surgery can work for a valve replacement, too.

Certainly, open-heart surgery remains a viable method for replacing a damaged heart valve.

Surgeons have performed the procedure for more than 50 years, yet surgical aortic valve replacement (SAVR) is still considered major surgery since it involves opening the chest to perform the procedure. Nevertheless, it has a high success rate, with a low likelihood of significant complications.

4 You should treat a bulge in your blood vessel before it becomes an emergency.

An aortic aneurysm is an enlargement of the aorta, which is the main blood vessel that carries blood from the heart to the rest of the body. When an aneurysm gets too large, it can tear or rupture, which may be life-threatening.

There is a lot at stake, so it's important to know the warning signs, which can include:

- Chest pain
- Coughing up blood
- Dizziness
- Hoarseness or trouble swallowing
- Pulsing near the belly button
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden and intense abdominal or back pain

If you or a loved one have an aortic aneurysm, treatment often starts with medication and keeping a close eye on it. However, if it's large or fast-growing, surgery may be the best option to replace the weak section of the aorta with a graft or tube.

5 Surgery can correct heart rhythm problems.

Today, doctors can help arrhythmia issues. But when medications and catheter ablations don't work, surgical ablations can be performed with improved success.

If you are concerned about your heart health, schedule an appointment with a primary care provider or cardiologist. If heart surgery is recommended, Luminis Health provides skilled, compassionate surgical care for all heart conditions. Consultations are available in Annapolis, Kent Island and Lanham. This ensures you receive high-quality care conveniently close to home.

Murtaza Dawood is an experienced cardiothoracic surgeon who is recognized for performing operations for complex valve disease and atrial fibrillation. He is known for treating mitral valve regurgitation as well as aortic valve disease.

What Is The Connection Between Diabetes And Cardiovascular Disease?



By Justin Nelms, M.D.

Chief of Vascular Surgery
University of Maryland Baltimore
Washington Medical Center

Did you know that people with diabetes are almost twice as likely to develop cardiovascular disease? Cardiovascular disease is a common health issue that many people have heard of. But the connection between diabetes and cardiovascular disease may not be as well known. It is important to understand what these two conditions are and their interconnected risk factors.

What is diabetes?

Diabetes is an ongoing health condition in which your body doesn't make enough insulin or doesn't use it properly. Insulin is a hormone that helps glucose, or sugar, get into your cells for energy.

There are two main types of diabetes: Type 1 diabetes is when your body fails to make insulin. Type 2 diabetes is when your body can make insulin, but it either doesn't make enough or doesn't use it well. Type 2 diabetes is the most common type of diabetes, and the majority of people with type 2 diabetes will eventually develop cardiovascular disease.

What is cardiovascular disease?

Cardiovascular disease is a general term for conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels. Some of the main types are:

- Coronary artery disease: Occurs when your heart muscle's blood supply is blocked or interrupted by a build-up of fatty substances in the coronary arteries.
- Stroke: An ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot or other blockage impairs blood flow to a portion of the brain. Hemorrhagic strokes occur when a blood vessel opens up and bleeding extends to the brain tissue.
- Peripheral artery disease (PAD): A narrowing or blockage of the vessels that carry blood from the heart to

other parts of the body. It frequently occurs in the legs.

- Aortic disease: A group of conditions affecting the aorta, the largest blood vessel in the body. The most common type is aortic aneurysm, which is where the wall of the aorta becomes weakened and bulges outward.
- Deep vein thrombosis: A blood clot that forms in the deep veins in your legs and sometimes your arms, causing blockage.

What are the risk factors?

Cardiovascular diseases are the most common complication resulting from diabetes. Several factors increase the risk of cardiovascular disease associated with diabetes. Some include:

- High blood pressure
- High low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol
- Smoking
- Age – Risk of developing cardiovascular disease increases at age 40, but is highest after age 70
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity
- Unhealthy diet
- Family history of cardiovascular diseases
- Diabetes

How can it be managed?

Through lifestyle changes like proper exercise and diet, and diabetes management, people with diabetes can reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular disease and the complications that come with it. To monitor cardiovascular health, there are also key screenings that can help, such as blood pressure screening, cholesterol blood test, blood glucose test, and vascular screenings to identify PAD and an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

To learn more about vascular and heart care at UM BWMC, visit www.umbwmc.org/vascular for vascular services and www.umbwmc.org/heart for heart services.



Take a few minutes to check your vascular health.

The experts at the Vascular Center at the **University of Maryland Baltimore Washington Medical Center** are focused on helping you diagnose and treat all types of vascular diseases.

Understanding your risk is the first step to catching vascular disease early, before it becomes debilitating. If you are age 60 or older, we encourage you to take our **free online health assessment** to understand your risk for vascular disease.

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Why You Should Work With A Financial Advisor

Jason LaBarge
LaBarge
Financial



So, you want to retire? Congratulations! That is the first step. Where do you want to go from here? You might imagine creating this pathway is a large part of what I do as a retirement planner. It starts with reviewing your investment needs with your financial advisor. If you do not already have one, you will want to choose one. In your meeting, you will want to discuss your risk tolerance as this may change when you stop earning a paycheck. Rebalancing your portfolio and learning how to withdraw funds and minimize taxes will also be top priorities. Your advisor can work with you to decide when to sign up for Social Security. At this time, you may want to consider an annuity and take note of your guaranteed income sources.

Next up, take inventory of your assets and evaluate your current bud-

get. Write down every debt, liability, savings balances, insurances, etc. This will give you a full view to realign your budget during retirement. Determine how much money you want per year vs. how much you truly need.

There might be unexpected expenses along the way, so build an emergency fund with at least six months' worth of funds to cover your bills if need be. Planning out your health insurance and long-term care is very important. Where will your health coverage come from? Will you be completely covered by Medicare or have supplemental insurance? This will depend on whether you are retiring early or not as well. If you are retiring early and Medicare is not an option, or you do not receive coverage from your former employer or your spouse's employer, you will need to obtain insurance on your own.

Once you have decided on your retirement date, notify your human resources representative or employer. Determine if you will still want to work during retirement and decide where you want to retire. Do you want to move, and do you need to sell or buy a house? Are you staying in your

» **Continued on page 52**

Chamber Update

Liz League
CEO
GSPACC



in our directory at www.gspacc.com.

Coastal Kitchen Bath LLC – Coastal Kitchen & Bath is a premier provider of top-quality kitchen and bath products and services. The business specializes in creating custom solutions that perfectly fit your unique style and needs, from kitchen and bathroom remodeling to cabinetry, countertops and hardware. Coastal Kitchen Bath LLC is especially known for its gorgeous river countertops and live-edge exotic wood countertops.

(www.coastaldesign23.com)

Pain Relief Yoga with Lore Goldstein – Lore Goldstein is a psychotherapist, intuitive consultant, “reader of energy,” Kundalini yoga and meditation teacher, believer in the healing forces of nature, influential speaker and adventurer. She says that the No. 1 affliction of most people is lower back pain. The No. 2 is anxiety. Her yoga classes and services are designed to resolve both ... and so much more!

(www.loregoldstein.com)

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Maryland Livescan Fingerprinting LLC – Maryland Livescan is the most widely utilized, trusted and reliable state and federal livescan fingerprint service provider in the mid-Atlantic region. Licensed by the Maryland Department of Public Safety, Maryland Livescan was the first full-service company in the state to provide a broad range of fast, convenient, safe and secure state FBI electronic fingerprinting to the general public for reasons including, but not limited to, state and/or federal employment, licensing, domestic and international adoption, and immigration visas for traveling abroad and more. The business also provides onsite mobile services.

(www.marylandfingerprinting.com)

Key Group of Cummings and Company Realtors – Results-oriented Realtor Jody Buck has a goal to make sure her clients are stress-free and 100% satisfied with their real estate venture. Judging

» **Continued on page 52**

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Barstow & Sons, An HVAC Company, Expands To Offer Full Plumbing Services



Photo by Judy Tacyn

Chuck Eaton and Carl Lebo are adding plumbing services to the Barstow & Sons lineup of expertise.



By Judy Tacyn

Since 1980, Fred T. Barstow Inc. has been one of the preeminent HVAC companies in Anne Arundel County. The company is built on a solid foundation of exceptional quality and a trusted reputation. Barstow's grandson and Severna Park resident, Chuck Eaton, stepped into the ownership role after the death of his grandfather in 2010, and rebranded the business as Barstow & Sons in 2012.

Last October, Eaton announced the addition of plumbing services to the company's full-service commercial and residential heating and cooling services.

“I started thinking about adding plumbing a few years ago,” said Eaton, who began to work for his grandfather in the business when he was in high school. “It was a ‘want’ for me at the time, not a ‘need.’ I wasn’t going to pull the trigger until

it would be a perfect situation for me.”

After a couple wrenches in his plan, and conversations with multiple would-be suitors, Eaton met Carl Lebo, a Master Plumber who had owned his own plumbing company for 23 years and was ready to take on a new role.

“I did everything that I wanted to accomplish as a small-business owner,” Lebo said. “I was ready to be part of something bigger without having the responsibility of ownership.”

Eaton and Lebo had long known each other's names from the industry and recognized the quality work being done by the other. By chance, the two shared a large commercial customer on the Eastern Shore.

“I came in and saw the impeccable work that had been done and it was by Barstow,” Lebo said. “It was impressive.”

Eaton added, “With parallels with HVAC and plumbing, I can’t just have any plumber. I need to know them personally. I need to know their work.”

In October 2023, the time was right for both men and Barstow & Sons welcomed Lebo on board. They plan to have three plumbing trucks in their fleet by October 2024.

» **Continued on page 52**

“Our HVAC customers already know us. They know our quality work and fair pricing. They trust us. Now with one call, they can also expect that same experience with plumbing.”

— CHUCK EATON, OWNER, BARSTOW & SONS

Liff, Walsh & Simmons Welcomes Kathleen Millrood

Kathleen Millrood joined the Liff, Walsh & Simmons firm in January 2022 as a law clerk and subsequently joined as an associate in August 2023, working with the business law, commercial finance and real estate practice groups. Millrood assists in the firm's diverse practice areas in matters involving commercial property transactions including sales and leasing, business transactions, general business counseling and commercial finance transactions.

While a law student, Millrood served as president of the Maryland Carey Law's alternate dispute resolution team and competed in negotiation and mediation competitions, including the 2022 International Chamber of Commerce International Commercial Mediation Competition. She also was a member of Carey Law's Business Law Society. During her second year of law school, Millrood was a part of Maryland Carey Law's Consumer Protection Clinic where she served as a student attorney under the Maryland Office of the Attorney General Consumer Protection Division. She also served as a legal intern for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, enforcement division.

"Kathleen is extremely passionate about her work and relentless in her pursuit of excellence in pretty much everything she does," said Tom Simmons, Partner at Liff, Walsh & Simmons. "If her accomplishments in law school are any indication of her future success, she is going to do great things at our firm and we are excited to have her on our team."

Millrood obtained her Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland Francis Carey School of Law and received her certification in business law. Millrood holds Bachelor of Arts



Kathleen Millrood

degrees in political science (international relations) and international development with honors from Tulane University. In November 2023, Millrood was sworn into the Maryland Bar to become a licensed attorney to practice law in Maryland.

"I grew up in areas where small and local businesses played a pivotal role," Millrood said. "I felt their impact on the community and witnessed the unique types of issues they faced. My background gave me an appreciation for the importance of protecting those local businesses, which aligns well with the work at Liff, Walsh & Simmons."

"Not only does the firm understand the vitality of these businesses, but the attorneys and professionals at the firm truly understand the importance of the connection with the broader community," she said. "It's exactly the type of firm culture I was looking for."

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We held three ribbon-cutting celebrations this past month. The first was in celebration of our newest restaurant in Severna Park, **Pitaya Mexican Restaurant**. Owner Jorge Landaverde also operates the wonderful **La Sierra Mexican Restaurant** in Annapolis.

Next was the celebration of new ownership and location of **Synergy Home Care**. Karen Burkholder has taken the reins and is planning for a big expansion as well.

Finally, we celebrated the relocation of **Kid Connections Therapy** from Severna Park to Odenton, to a space three times the original size. Owner

Why You Should Work With A Financial Advisor

» Continued from page 51

current home? At this point, try to eliminate all debt. Tackle the debt with the highest interest rates and smaller balances first and leave mortgages for last since they will most likely have a lower interest rate.

Finally, plan out your estate. This will consist of creating a will and appointing a power of attorney. If needed, establish guardianship for living dependents and appoint beneficiaries for life insurance plans, retirement accounts, and shared assets. Coordinate funeral arrangements and designate sentimentally valuable family heirlooms. You will want to review your plans every five years, or when you experience a life-changing event.

If you would like a copy of a retirement checklist, please contact our office and we would be happy to provide one for you. Retiring is a big life decision, but with patience and help from a financial advisor, it can be an easy milestone to achieve.

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Jason LaBarge, financial advisor and president of LaBarge Financial
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Barstow & Sons, An HVAC Company

» Continued from page 51

"I'm excited! I could be thinking about retiring," added Lebo, "but instead I'm looking five to 10 years down the road and building a strong plumbing business with Barstow. Chuck's got nearly 7,000 customers already happy with the DNA of Barstow. I'm happy to be part of that family and eager to show a significant return on Chuck's investment."

Eaton was just 6 years old when his grandfather started the business he now owns. His mission has always been to honor his grandfather by assembling the right people and doing the right

thing for each customer. He knows the reputation he's built and doesn't take customer loyalty for granted.

"Our HVAC customers already know us. They know our quality work and fair pricing. They trust us," Eaton said. "Now with one call, they can also expect that same experience with plumbing."

To learn more about Barstow & Sons' services, including heating, cooling, plumbing, indoor air quality, inspections, ductwork, maintenance and repairs, and more, visit www.barstowhvac.com. Ask about a \$75 discount on your first service call.

Chamber Update

» Continued from page 51

from her 95% client referral rate, her clients wholeheartedly concur. Jody represents an equal number of buyers as sellers and treats each transaction with the same care regardless of price. She's sold houses from \$50,000 to properties exceeding \$3.6 million. To Jody, every client is important, from the first-time homebuyer to the high-level executive.

(www.keygroupmd.com)

Dental FX – Dental FX is the Pasadena dental office of Dr. Judy Yu. The team prides themselves on offering full-service, comprehensive dentistry to each patient, with a specialty in cosmetic dentistry. Additionally, they provide patients with confidence based on beautiful and self-assured smiles. Dental FX's services are always rooted in individualized treatment plans and education for all ages.

(www.fx-dental.com)

Meg Leonard Co. Design – This is an

Shanna Klump is excited to provide more therapeutic services in the new location.

Our Wellness Business Connections group held its monthly meeting at The Social, and we were joined by a variety of practitioners in the health fields. Many thanks to our committee chairs, Lisa Manning and Carol Heckman of **Trillium Wellness**, who are stepping away from committee leadership after two years. They will continue participating in the group.

Our Successful Women in Business "First Cup Club" enjoyed a delicious breakfast and great networking at the beautiful **The Sheridan at Severna Park**. The Sheridan is a new assisted living facility that also has a memory care unit.

We held our 2024 officer installation and general membership mixer at **La Posta Pizzeria & Italian Kitchen** in their private room, and it was a fun and lively gathering of close to 70 members. Our 2024 board of directors was officially sworn in by Judge Kathleen Vitale. I delivered an overview of activities in 2023, which included 45

ribbon-cutting celebrations and goals for 2024.

She then presented the Harmony Award to **Larry Sells of Larry Sells Consulting** and the **Katherine's Light Foundation**. The Harmony Award recognizes a business owner who also makes a huge positive impact on the community, and the chamber could not have selected a better recipient. In addition to all his work with Severna Park High School's athletic department over the years, including being the "voice" of the Falcons, Larry has raised over \$1 million for charitable causes, in particular to support cancer research and services. He and his wife, Robin, founded the **Katherine's Light Foundation** to provide scholarships to students in Anne Arundel Community College's nursing program, of which their late daughter was a graduate.

The event was sponsored by the **Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation**.

For more information about the chamber and our events, please visit www.gspacc.com.



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How Can You Manage Student Loan Payments?

Brian Conrad
Edward Jones



you may have recently been required to resume your payments. How will this affect your overall financial situation?

Of course, the first thing that comes to mind is the effect on your monthly cash flow. But the amount of pressure you feel will depend on your income and the size of the required payments. If these payments do represent a real challenge, you may need to adjust your budget and spending habits as best you can. However, there might be other steps you can take to help ease the burden or possibly reduce the repayment time.

Here are a few suggestions to consider:

Sign up for autopay. Falling behind on your student loan payments can lead to late fees, and if you were

If you have student loans, you likely received a “payment vacation” over the past few years, due to legislation related to COVID-19. But if you’re like millions of other borrowers,

to become truly delinquent, you could face even bigger troubles, such as wage garnishment. To avoid these problems, you can enroll in autopay, in which you move money automatically from a checking or savings account to your student loan provider. In addition to staying current on your loan, you might earn a 0.25% rate reduction, which is offered by many lenders and loan services to those who enroll in autopay.

Refinance your loan. With a steady income, a reasonably good credit score and a manageable number of other debts, you might be able to refinance your student loan and reduce your interest rate, which will enable more of your monthly payments to go toward the principal.

Look for employer benefits. Some employers — typically the larger ones — offer student loan repayment help to employees, so check with your human resources department.

Make extra payments. If you feel strapped just making your regular student loan payments, you may not be able to make extra ones. But if you



can afford to add to your payments consistently, you could pay off your loan earlier than you had thought. But just because you make an extra payment, the money doesn’t necessarily go toward reducing your principal — student loan services generally apply payments first to late fees and then to accrued interest. If you pay online, you should have an option to apply extra payments to the principal. Your loan servicer could also provide you with other ways of paying more toward principal.

Choose a payoff strategy. If you have multiple student loans, and you can make more than the min-

imum payments, you may want to be strategic in how you pay off your loans. You could choose the “snowball” method by getting rid of the smallest loans first — a technique that can give you feelings of momentum and satisfaction. Or you could take the “avalanche” approach by first going after the loans with the highest interest rates. Either route could save you more money in the long run.

It can certainly be challenging to deal with student loan debt. But with patience and diligence, and by exploring all your repayment options, you may be able to make progress toward putting these loans to rest.

Brian Conrad is a financial advisor with Edward Jones. His office is located at 479 Jumpers Hole Road, Suite 202, in Severna Park. To learn more, call 410-544-8970, email brian.conrad@edwardjones.com or visit www.edwardjones.com/brian-conrad.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones financial advisor.

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Putting Market Volatility In Perspective The Dow Through The Decades

By Michael Hilliard

Financial Advisor and Managing Director
Shore to Summit Wealth Management

With the recent stock market volatility, I am reminded of my friend Don Connelly, and a piece he spoke about long ago. In short, there always have been negative news headlines and threats, providing every reason for investors to pause, but here are some attention-grabbing news events from the last eight decades and how the Dow Jones Industrial Average has fared throughout:

In the 1950s, we had the Korean War. It was communism versus democracy that saw almost 37,000 Americans dead. The Soviets tested a hydrogen bomb in the summer of 1953, then launched the first artificial satellite to orbit the earth (Sputnik), and Americans didn’t feel safe in their beds. In the fall of 1955, President Dwight Eisenhower had a heart attack in office. But despite the uncertainty and panic in this decade, the Dow was up over 24% per year on average, according to Macrotrends.

In the 1960s, things got worse! The Berlin Wall went up, further solidifying the west versus the Soviet Union. In 1962, Fidel Castro came to power in Cuba, and for the first time, we had communism in the western hemisphere. This led to the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Soviets placed missiles just 97 miles off the coast of Florida, and for 13 days, no one blinked. John F. Kennedy, a young and popular president, was assassinated, and on November 22, 1963, the American spirit died.

There was the Six-Day War, when Israel faced off against Egypt, Jordan and Syria, and then the Yom Kippur War, when the United States sided with Israel, which started the Arab nations to break ties with the U.S. The war in Vietnam began, with over 58,000 Americans dead and the Civil Rights movement was born. The press painted such a dark picture that an entire generation stopped investing, but the Dow was up almost 18% for the decade, according to Macrotrends.

In the 1970s, OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) put an embargo on the United States as punishment for the Six-Day War and the price



of oil quadrupled. Inflation skyrocketed, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell, and the stock market dropped 45% — the worst decline since the Great Depression. Richard Nixon resigned from office due to Watergate, and Americans were kidnapped in Iran, spending 444 days in captivity.

The end of the decade saw the birth of cable news and CNN, and the negativity in the world and the markets spread. The Dow remained nearly unchanged in the 1970s, going from about 809 to 964 or 1.9% per year on average, according to Macrotrends.

In the 1980s, we had hyperinflation at 14% with 17% government bonds and 13% mortgage rates. President Ronald Reagan was shot less than 100 days into office. Terrorism ran rampant, mostly limited to the Middle East, and the Achille Lauro cruise ship was hijacked, with Leon Klinghoffer — a 69-year-old Jewish American in a wheelchair — thrown overboard and murdered.

It was the first time we used the phrase, “We don’t negotiate with terrorists.” Then 5,500 banks in the United States failed and we had the biggest single-day decrease in the stock market, as the Dow shed 508 points (or 22.6%) on Black Monday, October 19, 1987. Still, the Dow managed almost 22% per-year growth on average.

In the 1990s, we had the first Gulf War, a civil war in Yugoslavia, the Mexican currency crisis, and the Soviets defaulted on 100% of their bonds. Timothy McVeigh bombed a building in Oklahoma City, killing 168 people, and President Bill Clinton was impeached. At the end of the decade, there was the technology stock boom and bust and then the Y2K computer scare. The Dow was up almost 31% per year on average.

In the 2000s, we had 9/11, the second Gulf War and Hurricane Katrina. Gas prices went above \$4 for the first time. There was the housing boom and bust, followed by the 2008 financial crisis, and the stock market plummeted twice. The Dow was negative in the 2000s, retreating from 11,357 to 10,428.

In the 2010s, Obamacare became insurance law, North Korea started challenging us, and China devalued their currency. We saw the rise of ISIS and continued terrorism with the San Bernardino terrorist attack, the Paris theater massacre, and the Orlando nightclub attack. There was Brexit in June 2016, and then the heated Donald Trump versus Hillary Clinton election. The Dow rose almost 17% per year on average.

In the 2020s, so far, we’ve suffered and are recovering from the COVID pandemic, and continued civil unrest stemming from the murder of George Floyd. The term “woke” has taken hold, with a new era of “political correctness,” with people choosing their gender, identity and pronouns. Historic statues have been torn down and professional sports teams were forced to change their names. In February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine, and on October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an unprecedented attack on Israel. The Federal Reserve raised the federal funds rate 11 times since March 17, 2022, from 0.25% to 5.5% and as of mid-February 2024, the Dow stands at 38,635.

So, there it is, a brief summation of some of the most important world events and crises the markets have weathered over more than 70 years. I must admit that I was surprised at how resilient the markets and economy are, and how diversification and asset allocation, combined with active asset management, are so important. I am constantly reminded that our jobs as financial advisors are never done, and our clients’ financial situations are always evolving. Its why consistent client contact and ongoing communication to understand our clients’ financial goals, time frames and risk posture is so integral to financial success!



RETIREMENT CHECKLIST

REVIEW RETIREMENT INVESTING NEEDS

- Risk Tolerance may change as you stop earning a paycheck
- Rebalance your portfolio
- Learn how to withdraw funds & minimize taxes
- When to sign up for Social Security
- Consider an Annuity
- Do you know your guaranteed income sources?

TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR ASSETS

- Evaluate your current budget
- Write down every debt, liability, savings balance, insurance, etc.

BUILD EMERGENCY FUND

- 6 months to a year worth of funds for emergencies

SECURE HEALTH INSURANCE & LONG-TERM CARE

- Where will healthcare coverage come from?
- Will you be completely covered by Medicare or have supplemental insurance?
- If retiring early and Medicare is not an option, if you do not receive from former employer, or spouse's insurance, you will need to get insurance on your own

ELIMINATE ALL DEBT

- Tackle the debts with the highest interest rates and smaller balances first
- Mortgages are good to save for last since most will have lower interest rates

DETERMINE RETIREMENT NEEDS

- How much do you want per year vs. how much do you need per year?
- Where do you want to retire?
- Do you still want to work in retirement?
- Decide on retirement date & notify HR/Employer

PLAN OUT YOUR ESTATE

- Create a Will
- Appoint Power of Attorney
- Establish guardians for living dependents
- Appoint beneficiaries on life insurance plans, retirement accounts, and shared assets
- Funeral Arrangements
- Dissemination of sentimentally valuable family heirlooms
- Review plans every 5 years or when you experience a life changing event

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