

A+ Education Learning Fun



Oak Hill/Herndon Connection
● Camps & Schools

Summer Fun in Herndon

Campers stay busy with swimming, games and arts and crafts at the Herndon Community Center.

Viewpoints: What is your favorite part of Summer Fun Camp?

Asked at Town of Herndon Department of Recreation summer camp.

By Anna McCormally
The Connection

The Town of Herndon Department of Parks and Recreation's Summer Fun Camp is unusual in a time of specialized camps for everything you can think of from horseback riding to piano to martial arts—the theme of Summer Fun Camp is nothing but what it sounds like— fun.

"It's very much centered around fun," said the camp's director, Harriet Van De Riet. "Fun is a big word around here."

The camp, which is based out of the Herndon Community Center, is for rising first through sixth graders, who are divided into groups by grade level: first and second graders, third and fourth graders, and fifth and sixth graders. Summer Fun operates in three sessions: one four-week session, one three-

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Ajani, age 7
"Playing games in the shady tree area."



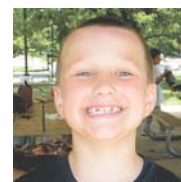
Gavin, age 6
"Doing cannonballs in the pool!"



Brianna, age 7
"I think...swimming."



Jasmine, age 7
"Going on field trips to Splashdown!"



Connor, age 8
"Playing kickball!"



Mihika, age 6
"Going outside."



Anna McCormally/The Connection

Campers with a counselor at Bready Park

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NVCC

'Guarantees'

Community college graduates with certain GPA, courses, can win automatic acceptance.

By **Julia O'Donoghue**
The Connection

When Suzanne Spatz graduated from Woodson Secondary School in 2007, her family knew she wouldn't be able to attend a four-year college or university right away.

Even though she received excellent grades in high school, Spatz suffered from Lyme disease and was too sick to go away to college at the time. So the teenager opted to attend Northern Virginia Community College and live at home while her health stabilized.

"We never would have thought about it until she became ill," said Melody Spatz, about the decision to enroll her daughter, Suzanne, at a community college.

Both Melody Spatz and her husband had attended the University of Virginia and always assumed their children would enroll in traditional four-year undergraduate programs. Initially, Melody Spatz worried Suzanne would not be an attractive transfer applicant for selective four-year universities because she would be coming from a community college.

BUT Suzanne Spatz's time at Northern Virginia Community College helped, rather than hindered, her admission to one of the top public universities in the country.

The teenager was automatically accepted to the University of Virginia after meeting all the requirements laid out in a "guaranteed admissions" agreement between Northern Virginia Community College and the highly competitive state school in Charlottesville.

The arrangement allows the community college graduates to bypass the regular application process and ensure their transfer to the University of Virginia if they meet certain academic thresholds while earning their associate's degree.



Pre-med students Aisha Bashir and Rabia Aslam relax in the courtyard between classes on the Northern Virginia Community College Annandale campus.

Photo by Louise Krafft/Connection

Find Out More

For more information on Northern Virginia Community College's guaranteed admission program, see www.nvcc.edu/about-nova/directories-offices/administrative-offices/academic/guaranteed-adm/

Students like Spatz, who earn a grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.4 on a 4.0 scale, can be assured a slot at the University of Virginia through the arrangement.

In addition to the GPA cut off, the students must earn at least a "C" or higher in all of their community college classes and a "B" or higher in two required English courses. They also have to take a certain number of community college credit hours in foreign language, social science, humanities and historical studies.

They must enroll in at least one "non-

Western perspective" course.

"I am very happy that I did it. It was kind of nice to know I could guarantee my admissions somewhere," said Spatz.

IN ADDITION to the University of Virginia, about 38 other colleges and universities have signed "guaranteed admissions" agreements with Northern Virginia Community College over the last two years.

Some of the schools participating are among the state's most prestigious – including the College of William & Mary, Virginia Tech, James Madison University, George Mason University, The George Washington University and Georgetown University.

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Transfer, Guaranteed

Northern Virginia Community College students earning an associate's degree can earn guaranteed admission to many four-year colleges, including UVA and William and Mary, if they meet certain course requirements and earn a certain grade point average (GPA.)

Those who use the community college's "guaranteed admissions" program transfer into undergraduate programs as juniors because the credits earned for their associate's degree count toward their freshman and sophomore years of school.

The exact GPA and extra course requirements needed for automatic admission vary, depending on the university or college the student wishes to attend.

Here is a list of schools that will automatically accept Northern Virginia Community College graduates if certain requirements are met, including the following GPA threshold:

School	GPA Needed
Art Institute of Washington	None listed
Christopher Newport University	3.5
College of William & Mary	3.6
ECPI College of Technology	2.5
Emory & Henry College	2.5
Ferrum College	2.0
George Mason University	2.75
Georgetown University - Liberal Studies	3.0
The George Washington University - Pharmacogenomics	3.0
Hollins University	2.5
James Madison University	3.0
Liberty University	2.0
Longwood University	2.5
Lynchburg College	2.0 *
Mary Baldwin College	2.5
Marymount University - Business Administration	2.5
Marymount University - Interior Design	None listed
National-Louis University	2.5
Norfolk State University	2.0
Nyack College	2.0
Old Dominion University	None listed
Park University	None listed
Radford University	2.8
Randolph College	3.0
Regent University	2.0
Regis University	2.0
Strayer University	2.0
Sweet Briar College	2.5
Trinity University (Washington D.C.)	2.5
Troy University	2.0
United States Sports Academy	2.0
University of Mary Washington	3.25
University of Virginia - College of Arts and Sciences	3.4
University of Virginia's College at Wise	2.5
Virginia Commonwealth University	2.5 **
Virginia State University	2.0
Virginia Tech	3.4
Virginia Tech - College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	3.0
Virginia Tech - College of Engineering	3.0
Virginia Union University	2.0
Virginia Wesleyan College	2.5

*Community college students earning a 3.5 GPA or higher will automatically receive a \$10,000 scholarship to Lynchburg, students earning a 3.0 to 3.49 GPA will receive a \$7,500 scholarship to Lynchburg, students earning a 2.5 to 2.99 GPA will receive a \$5,000 scholarship to Lynchburg

**Community college students earning a 2.75 GPA or higher will be eligible to compete for a special scholarship at Virginia Commonwealth University

NVCC 'Guarantees'

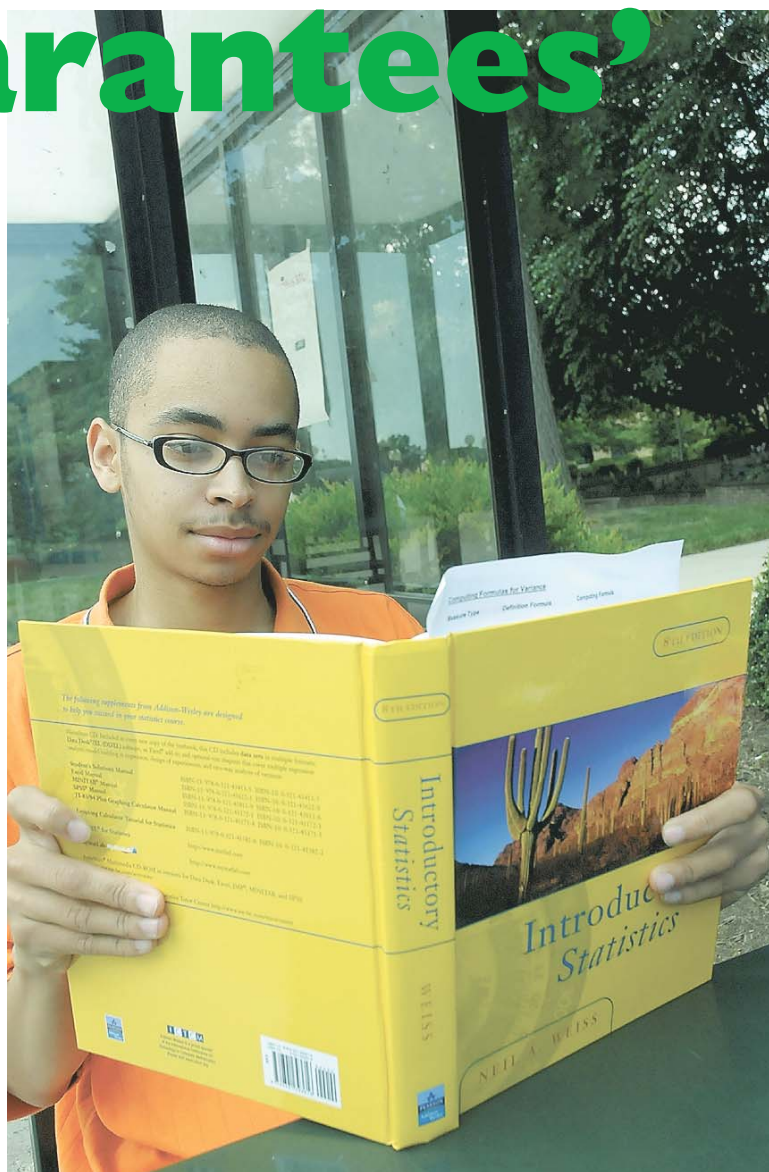


Photo by Louise Krafft/Connection

Kyle Hollis looks over his statistics textbook in between classes at Northern Virginia Community College.

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“The arrangement covers some private and virtually all the public institutions in Virginia, except for [Virginia Military Institute],” said Bob Templin, president of Northern Virginia Community College.

Required coursework and GPA cut offs for automatic acceptance vary, depending on which four-year college or university a student would like to attend. But all students are obligated to earn an associate’s degree before taking advantage of the “guaranteed admissions” arrangement.

Students who take some community college classes but do not earn their associate’s degree are not eligible for “guaranteed admissions” and have to use the traditional application process at all colleges and universities who participate in the program.

According to Templin, students who earn an associate’s degree tend to perform better academically at four-year institutions.

“When you complete the degree program, your chances of doing well at the university are much better than if you come in and sample a few courses before transferring,” said Templin.

AS THE PUBLIC hears more about the “guaranteed admissions” arrangements, Northern Virginia Community College will become more popular among students who have always intended to earn a bachelor’s degree, said officials.

Competition to get into Virginia’s top-tier state colleges and universities has grown so fierce among Northern Virginia high school students that even one of the South County Secondary School’s recent valedictorians was not able to get into the University of Virginia.

“For students who are interested in going to some of the more selective universities in the state, this is a huge opportunity. For a lot of students, they find it difficult to get into these institutions from Northern Virginia,” said Greg Schuckman, president of the Northern Virginia Community College’s Board of Trustees.

Despite being a good student, Spatz said she is unsure she would have been accepted to the University of Virginia directly out of high school.

“If I had applied to UVA out of high school, I honestly probably wouldn’t have gotten in. My grades were pretty

good but my SAT scores were not very good and I couldn’t take as many [Advanced Placement] courses as I normally would have because of my health,” said Spatz, who graduated from Northern Virginia Community College’s honors program with almost a perfect 4.0 GPA.

STUDENTS WHO are accepted to four-year undergraduate programs could also save a lot of money by attending community college for two years and transferring to a four-year school for the second half of their undergraduate program.

Community college graduates who use the “guaranteed admissions” program are given the same academic standing as a regular junior when they transfer to their new school. They could graduate in the same amount of time as students who attended the four-year institution for their entire undergraduate career, thereby saving a lot of money.

“[Northern Virginia Community College] is cheaper than any other school in our area and it can save our students a ton of money. ... They pay less in tuition. They can stay at home and not pay room and board costs. And they can maintain their current job,” said Joan Zanders,

“I am very happy that I did it. It was nice to know I could guarantee my admissions somewhere.”

— Suzanne Spatz

Northern Virginia Community College’s director of financial aid.

The two-year school’s tuition is approximately \$105 per credit hour compared to approximately \$573 per credit hour at George Mason, \$282 per credit hour at Virginia Tech and \$790 per credit hour at the University of Virginia, according to those school’s Web sites.

“We are a good option for lots of folks who would normally go to a four-year school directly but are having a difficult time because of the economic crisis. ... You can still get the degree of your choice but, for two years, you will have

much lower tuition.” said George Gabriel, vice president for college advancement at Northern Virginia Community College.

NOT ONLY is it more affordable but students who perform well at Northern Virginia Community College tend to be very good pupils at four-year schools.

The University of Virginia found Northern Virginia Community College graduates who transferred to their programs achieved as much or more than those who came to the school directly from high school, said Schuckman.

George Mason University found similar results when it compared community college transfers to its other undergraduates, said Andrew Flagel, Mason’s director of admissions.

“There is a pretty strong correlation between a student’s GPA at a community college and a student’s GPA at a four-year college. Actually, the indicators we have for student success from high school – their GPA and test scores – are very weak predictors of how they will do in college,” said Flagel.

THERE IS some fine print to read as students navigate the guaranteed admissions program.

The guaranteed admissions arrangements do not always apply to specialized or highly competitive programs at a particular college or university.

For example, McLean resident William Law was interested in using the guaranteed admissions arrangement at the University of Virginia, until he discovered it did not apply to the school’s business program, the McIntire School of Commerce.

“Since I had my heart set on getting into McIntire, I did not want to make a binding agreement with any other college/program,” said Law, who will attend the business school next fall, in an e-mail. “I think the [guaranteed admissions agreements] are an excellent tool and certainly a major selling point for those considering NVCC. When I talk to people about NVCC, that is generally one of the first things I mention.”

But Melody Spatz said it can often be very difficult to keep up with all the requirements and dead-

lines associated with the guaranteed admissions agreements. For example, students have to send a letter of intent to many schools – declaring that they will definitely attend that school if admitted by a certain deadline. If they are deciding between more than one school, students also must keep on top of the various course requirements that each college wants students using the guaranteed admissions arrangements to have completed.

“I think it is a good program but you have to be really well informed. We made flow charts with all of the deadlines on them. ... It is not an easy process. There are a lot of things you have to keep up with,” said Spatz.

STILL, Northern Virginia Community College’s enrollment numbers are up 15 percent from last year, when the total student population was approximately 67,000. Officials said there has been a surge particularly among younger students.

Northern Virginia high schools collectively graduated the largest class of seniors in the history of the region this year, said Schuckman, president of the NVCC’s Board of Trustees. Among Fairfax County Public School students, Northern Virginia Community College is the most popular destination, he said.



Anna McCormally/The Connection

Fifth and sixth graders at Summer Fun Camp walk back to the Herndon Community Center after a trip to Trailside Park

Summer Fun

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week session, and a last week of what is called “express camp.”

“Some children sign up for two sessions, some just for one session, so it varies, said Van De Riet. “And of course people sign up and then they go on vacation for a week or two, so the children are signed up but they might not be here every day.”

The camp offers care for children from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., though the core daily activities—outdoor games in the morning, lunch outdoors, arts and crafts and gym time in the afternoon—are planned between ten and four.

“We stay very busy,” said Van De Riet, holding up a schedule that showed hourly activities that change daily, like tie-dye and capture the flag.

“On Thursday morning we often go to the farmer’s market,” she said. “I always get a kick out of seeing what they buy.”

Favorite activities vary by age group. “There’s a game called ghost in the graveyard that most of them like,” said Van De Riet. “An awful lot of the older children like dodgeball.”

The camp’s college-aged counselors receive a week’s worth of first-aid training before starting work, and Summer Fun

has ten or twelve camper to one counselor.

The campers use the outside areas around the community center—Trailside Park, Bready Park, the kickball field, and what Van De Riet called “the shady tree area”—as well as the gymnasium and swimming pool inside the center.

“That way they get to come inside in the afternoon, take a break from the heat,” Van De Riet said.

Campers pack their own morning snack, bag lunch and water bottle, but are given water throughout the day and an

afternoon snack after lunch. Hydration and sunscreen are encouraged.

Van De Riet estimates that each session holds about two hundred campers, many of whom return year after year to Summer Fun.

“That’s part of what’s fun,” said Van De Riet, who has been the camp’s director for five years now.

“There are now children in Teen Discovery, an older camp, that I knew when they were in second grade or third grade. I’ve enjoyed having the opportunity to watch children grow up.”



Anna McCormally/The Connection

ON THE COVER: First and second graders at Summer Fun Camp play on the playground at Bready Park

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