

Oak Hill Herndon CONNECTION

Medha Gupta, 16, of Herndon won the 2017 Congressional App Challenge for Virginia's 10th District with her original app, "Safe Travel." Gupta taught herself how to code in two days and built her winning app in one week.



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PHOTO COURTESY OF MEDHA GUPTA

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ONLINE AT WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

OPINION

Pulling Legal Status from Local Salvadorans

Bad for communities, bad for the economy, bad for the families, and no upside.

It's going to hurt right here in Northern Virginia.

As this administration continues its persecution against immigrants, it will move to end protected status for more than 200,000 Salvadorans, tens of thousands of whom live among us as neighbors, coworkers, friends, business owners, homeowners.

These neighbors, Salvadorans who came here in the wake of terrible natural disaster and political unrest, have been living and working here legally since 2001 at least. Temporary Protected Status was given to approximately 217,000 Salvadoran immigrants living in the United States at the time of the disasters.

Their families have added almost as many U.S.-born children. They are intertwined with naturalized citizens and other legal residents from their country, with the withdrawal of protected status affecting a community far larger than the TPS recipients. These communities are concentrated, intensifying the overall impact, and more live here in the D.C. suburbs than anywhere else.

On average, Salvadoran TPS recipients have been in the U.S. for 21 years; one-third have mortgages. These are people who have had legal work permits, who suddenly will not be able to work legally here. Their mortgages, and the mortgages of people who depend on them, will be at risk. Removing the ability of recipients to work legally will increase the risk of foreclosure, with negative economic impact across communities.

Salvadorans with protected status pay sales and property taxes. The communities they live in will be damaged. Their children will be more at risk. Our economy will be damaged.

THE SALVADORAN IMMIGRANT population is most concentrated in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, where 165,000 El Salvador-born residents make up 2.9 percent of the population.

Salvadorans in the United States sent \$3.6 billion home to El Salvador in 2012, 16.5 percent of that country's GDP.

Virginia has nearly 45,000 El Salvadoran TPS residents, almost all in Northern Virginia, and

concentrated in particular neighborhoods. Arlington has identified just four census tracts with more than 1,000 Salvadoran residents each (two with more than 1,400). In 2015, the most common birthplace for the foreign-born residents of Virginia was El Salvador, accounting for 96,515 Virginia residents. Fairfax County in 2010 was home to 43,566 Salvadorans.

Analysis shows that when Salvadoran, Honduran, and Haitian workers with TPS are removed from the labor force, the United States will lose \$45.2 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) over the next decade, according to Immigrant Legal Resource Center. When TPS holders lose their work authorization, it will result in a \$6.9 billion reduction to Social Security and Medicare contributions over a decade, as calculated by the ILRC.

All of that shows why this will damage communities and the economy. It says nothing about the harm to families. But the harm is great.

— MARY KIMM

MKIMM@CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Sources: American Progress, Pew Hispanic, Center for Immigration Studies, U.S. Census, Immigrant Legal Resource Center, local government demographic data.

Here's What Makes America Great

BY ERIC WOLF WELCH

In the spring of 1937, my grandmother realized she and her family had to leave Germany. My aunt had just come home from school, her hair dyed black with ink and the words "Jew" written all over her clothes. This was the final straw. Within a matter of days, my grandmother, grandfather, aunt, and my mother (only 3 years old) snuck out of the little town of Dudelsheim, Germany, leaving everything behind and paying

COMMENTARY bribes to officials to obtain visas to exit the country. They boarded a ship to New York and were fortunate enough to have cousins who could sponsor their entry into America.

My aunt and mother were educated in America's public schools and universities. My mother became a teacher and my aunt a doctor. My grandmother worked for the Girl Scouts of America and my grandfather became a die-hard Yankees fan. They became Americans. They loved this country and had a deep sense of patriotism, which continues through their children and grandchildren today. They would not have lived and I would not exist without America opening her doors to my family.

I am a high school teacher in Fairfax County. I teach many students who remind me of my mother and my aunt. These students and their families also came to America to escape violence, poverty, and religious or political persecution. And just like my family, they are Americans (whether a document officially says it or not). They love the opportunity this country has provided to them and want to make the most of it.

Each generation, the American dream is re-

newed and continued, by the ancestors of previous immigrants and by new immigrants. What made America great, and what will make America great again, is immigration. The first European immigrants to America came with the hope of religious freedom and economic prosperity. How is this any different than a family today wanting to come to America from Yemen or Guatemala? John Winthrop, an early leader of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, said America needed to be a "city on a hill" whose light is a beacon. Leaders, such as President Ronald Reagan, have reminded and challenged us to live up to this vision that truly makes America exceptional among the nations of the world.

The current anti-immigration movement, spurred on by President Donald Trump suspending the DACA program, demanding a border wall be built, and calling for an end to so-called "chain immigration," is troubling because it attempts to move our country in a direction different than our past. "Chain immigration" is why I am alive. It's also why students from Iraq, Sierra Leone, and El Salvador are in my classroom, safely learning and thriving, rather than being killed or living in squalor. Should we stop being a beacon to these people?

Unfortunately, the anti-immigration movement is fueled by a belief that to allow others to have the opportunities we have as Americans is going to take away from our own wealth and prosperity. A prime example of this is the argument Virginia state Sen. Richard Black made against DACA students receiving in-state tuition, "Every time you give free stuff to people here illegally, you have to take it away from an American." This understanding of econom-

ics is misguided as well as selfish. History has proven that the contributions of immigrants to America improves our economy, increases our tax base, and creates more jobs and opportunities for all Americans. Our region's economy is a prime example of this. DACA students, and their families, are trying to live the American dream, and in doing so, they are contributing to, not taking away from, what makes America great.

From a moral argument, I am reminded of the story a Lutheran pastor recently told. He said imagine two rooms. One is well-lit and another right next to it is completely dark. When the door is opened, the light from the well-lit room enters the dark room and illuminates it. Yet, as that light spreads, the well-lit room continues to stay just as bright as it was before.

When America opens its doors, we do not lose our own wealth, prosperity, and well-being. Rather, we allow it to grow and spread and become greater than it was before. I urge you to remind Congress, our President, and all of us who make up this country to remember that immigration is what has and will continue to make America great.

The writer, an Arlington resident, is a social studies teacher at JEB Stuart High School and coordinator of the "AVID" program, an academic mentoring program to help students attend college, many of whom are the first in their family to attend college.

Write The Connection welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must include full name, home address and home and business numbers. Letters are routinely edited for libel, grammar, good taste and factual errors. Email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

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Jeanne Lavelle of Fairfax, with the assistance of interpreter Jessica Holt, addresses the Fairfax delegation to the General Assembly. Lavelle advocated for funding to ensure that deaf and hearing impaired children are not left “functionally illiterate” because they are not given the opportunity to learn language skills.



PHOTOS BY ANDREA WORKER/THE CONNECTION

Theresa Sheipe of Fairfax was one of many members of the “More Recess for Virginians” group who either spoke or supported from the audience in favor of protecting and expanding recess in Virginia schools.

Citizens Shape Assembly Agenda

Fairfax delegation to General Assembly hears from public before heading to Richmond.

BY ANDREA WORKER
THE CONNECTION

The 2018 Regular Session of the Virginia General Assembly convenes on Wednesday, Jan. 10. Before the state senators and delegates head off for Richmond, many of the Fairfax County contingent met with constituents in a Saturday, Dec. 6, public hearing at the County Government Center.

More than 100 registered speakers and their supporters braved single-digit temperatures for the opportunity to tell their elected representatives just what they hoped to see included in the upcoming legislative agendas.

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Sharon Bulova welcomed the delegation, and then began the hearing as “Speaker # 1,” representing the interests of the entire county.

Funding for the educational needs of the county was first on Bulova’s ask list — a theme that was often repeated during the marathon five hour-plus hearing. She followed that request with an appeal for funding for WMATA, citing that reliable and safe public transportation is critical to the economic health of the region.

THE GROUP “More Recess for Virginians” came out in full, green t-shirted force, asking the delegation to support legislation that would include recess as part of the “instructional hours” in elementary schools. Recess supporter Theresa Sheipe from Fairfax asked the legislators to provide the School Board more flexibility to better serve the children, and Shannon Hamilton, Ph.D., a neuroscientist from Alexandria, added “Science is on the side of recess. We hope you are, too.”

Other topics included concerns for the environment and climate change impact, with many arguing for renewable energy

sources, and several opposing what they consider the “influence of Dominion Energy” on Virginia policies. The Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions, 350 Fairfax, and The Climate Reality Project put forth speakers representing their organizations, among the dozen or so individuals who also spoke on the issue.

Social services advocates were also well represented. Speakers from the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, The ARC of Northern Virginia, Fairfax County Community Action Advisory Board, Northern Virginia Family Services, and Social Action Linking Together, along with numerous individuals, like Jeanne Lavelle with the Virginia Association for the Deaf, urged the delegation to consider the needs of the community’s less fortunate and the more vulnerable.

Several of the social service organizations also supported the expansion of Medicaid in the Commonwealth, as did speakers from the county government employees union, SEIU Virginia 512. State Sen. Dick Saslaw (D-35) responded to the “expansionists” that they wouldn’t find many dissenters on that topic among the legislators on the dais.

Advocates for stronger gun safety laws, bipartisan redistricting and voter protection, the decriminalization of marijuana, banning solitary confinement in prisons, funding of judgeships, immigrant support, and providing more powers to the civilian police force review panel and auditor all had their turn



State Sen. Chap Petersen (D-34) meets with Bill Barfield, second vice president, Legislative Committee co-chair for the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations. Barfield, a mathematician who lives in Fairfax, and Tim Thompson, the Federation’s president, presented their representatives with a list of 11 legislative issues for consideration.

at the microphone.

In past years, citizens had more opportunity to talk with their representatives after the hearing, but the length of this year’s event saw several of the legislators called to other duties before the close, and even the majority of the citizen activists did not make it to the moment when Saslaw called “time.”

A HANDFUL of the delegation did linger, including state Sen. Chap Peterson (D-34), state Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31), and Del. Jennifer Boysko (D-86).

Petersen took a few moments to chat with his constituent Bill Barfield, who had testified and presented the legislative issues put forth by the Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Association.

Boysko will be sponsoring the Dignity Act this session, and supporting in-state tuition legislation, as part of her agenda.

Favola provided information on her 2018



State Sen. Barbara Favola (D-31) admits she has her work cut out for her in the 2018 Regular Session of the Virginia Legislature. She’s tackling Paid Family Leave, Gun Safety, Domestic Violence Prevention, Medicaid Expansion, K-12 education reforms and improvements, and Equal Taxing Authority for Counties, to name a few.

Legislative Agenda.

High on the list is working to get counties the same taxing authority as cities. “Counties are providing the same services as cities, and the discrepancy in taxing authority is really unfair,” she said.

Paid Family Leave, Gun Safety, K-12 Education reforms and enhancements are also in her sights. Favola admits that some of her proposed legislation requires taking some “big steps,” but that on many of the issues, “many small steps have already been taken, so there’s reason to be optimistic.”

To track what state senators and delegates are up to in the General Assembly, to contact them, or to track the progress of proposed legislation, visit www.virginiageneralassembly.gov.

CALENDAR

Submit entertainment announcements at www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar/. The deadline is noon on Friday. Photos/artwork encouraged.

ONGOING

Art Exhibit. Through Feb. 17, various times at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Featuring the work of Paulina Peavy, namesake of "Paulina Peavy: A Message to Paulina," the first exhibition to bring together a selection of Peavy's works across disciplines including works on paper, paintings, films, texts, and numerous mixed media masks. Visit www.restonarts.org for more.

All-comers' Group Fun Run at Potomac River Running. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Reston Town Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. For beginners or competitive runners, come out for a fun, low-key run that is safe and social. Call 703-689-0999 potomacriverrunning.com.

Over-40 Softball League. A Fairfax-based league is looking for enough players to form another team. Players must be at least 40 years of age to be eligible. All games are doubleheaders - played on Sundays at Bready Park in Herndon between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. If interested, email skeduman@aol.com for more information.

THURSDAY/JAN. 11

Yoga at the Library. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Local yoga instructor Madhavi Rao will lead this yoga session. Water provided. Bring a mat. Sponsored by the Friends of the Reston Regional Library. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

JAN. 11-FEB. 4

"45 Plays for 45 Presidents." NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. NextStop Theatre Company opens a hysterical take on history with the play "45 Plays for 45 Presidents". The play, which is already selling out performances, presents a series of 45 two-minute plays — one for each American President. In a female-forward twist to the amusing premise, NextStop's production also casts five women as all the presidents. Performances are Thursdays through Sundays. General admission, \$20-\$55 at www.NextStopTheatre.org or by calling 866-811-4111.

SATURDAY/JAN. 13

Community Service Projects. 9 a.m. at Southgate Community Center 12125 Pinecrest Road, Reston. Join friends and neighbors in honoring Dr. King's legacy by serving your community. Call 703-435-7986 or visit www.reston.org.

Musical Commemorative. 3-4 p.m. at the Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Reston Community Orchestra celebrates the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through symphonic works, spirituals, and songs inspired by his legacy. Featured performers will include students from Al Fatih Academy, the Men's Chorus of Martin Luther King Christian Church of Reston, song stylist Beverly Cosham and Bryan Jackson. Visit www.leagueofrestonartists.org for more.

Curator's Talk at GRACE. 3 p.m. at the Greater Reston Arts Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Lily Siegel, executive director and curator at GRACE, will discuss Paulina Peavy: A Message to Paulina through the lens of Peavy's life and relationship to the art of her time. Free and open to the public. All ages. Call 703-471-9242 or visit restonarts.org.

SUNDAY/JAN. 14

Voices of Inspiration. 4 p.m. at Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation, 1441 Wiehle Avenue, Reston. 28th Anniversary program honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This event is sponsored by the Martin Luther King Jr. Christian Church and includes many Reston faith communities. Call 703-435-7986 or visit www.reston.org.

MONDAY/JAN. 15

Children's Performing Arts Series. 10:30-11:15 a.m. at Herndon Community Center, 814 Ferndale Ave., Herndon. *Doggie Doodles* by Bob Brown Puppets. Like doggies? Come watch these



Left: Tamika D. Mallory, co-chair of the 2017 Women's March on Washington, will give the keynote address at the 2018 Reston Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration.



On Tuesday, Jan. 16 it's a Cricket Concert, 7 p.m. at Amphora, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. "Cricket Tell the Weather" is an indie string band from the CT-NY area featuring bluegrass-inspired original music. \$11 Members, \$12 Non-members. Visit www.restonherndonfolkclub.com for more.

pups perform with their buddy Samson, the strong man. This puppet show is full of doggie antics sure to delight little ones. Ages 1-10. \$4 in advance/\$5 at the door per person, per show. Children under the age of one are free. Call 703-787-7300 or visit herndon-va.gov.

Social Justice Advocate Speech. noon at Reston Community Center, Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Tamika D. Mallory keynote address is at noon, followed by a community lunch. \$5 for Reston residents and employees, and \$10 for all others. Visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com or call 703-476-4500.

Especially for Youth. 4 p.m. at RCC-Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. Children will rotate through a series of activities including a performance, an age-appropriate video, and arts and crafts. All activities will be based on the history of Dr. King and the civil rights movement. Call 703-435-7986 or visit www.reston.org.

TUESDAY/JAN. 16

Sam's Book Club. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Join former library director Sam Clay as he leads a book discussion. January's title is "God Bless the Child" by Toni Morrison. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

Cricket Concert. 7 p.m. at Amphoras, 1151 Elden St., Herndon. "Cricket Tell the Weather" is an indie string band from the CT-NY area featuring bluegrass-inspired original music. \$11 members,



The "45 Plays for 45 Presidents" ensemble includes Caroline Kashner, Brittany Martz, Chloe Mikala, Mary Myers, and Sarah Anne Sillers.

'45 Plays for 45 Presidents'

NextStop Theatre Company opens a hysterical take on history with the play "45 Plays for 45 Presidents." The play, which is already selling out performances, presents a series of 45 two-minute plays — one for each American President. In a female-forward twist to the amusing premise, NextStop's produc-

tion also casts five women as all the presidents. Performances are Thursdays through Sundays from Jan. 11 to Feb. 4 at NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. General admission, \$20-\$55 at www.NextStopTheatre.org or by calling 866-811-4111.

mushroom tartare with cheese toast, Merquez burger with cream cheese spread and hand-cut fries, and malted chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwiches for dessert. Recipe booklet included. \$55 per person. Call 703-707-0233 or visit monamigabi.com/news.

Weaving Workshop at GRACE. 5 p.m. at Greater Reston Arts Center, 11900 Market St., Reston. Exploratory weaving workshop for ages 18 and up. Students will leave with a completed wall hanging. \$45 for Reston residents/\$55 for nonresidents. Register at restoncommunitycenter.com. Call 703-471-9242 or visit restonarts.org.

Meet the Tattoo Artist. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Meet Gilda Acosta and explore getting a tattoo. Her work will be on display Jan. 9-Feb. 10. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org/ for more.

Flower Photography Expert. 7:30-9:30 p.m. in Room 6 at the Reston Community Center Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road. The Reston Photographic Society invites photography enthusiasts to attend Patty Hankins' presentation on how to take fabulous photographs of flowers, both in the garden and in the wild. Hankins is the author of "Wildflower Meditations: A Gift for the Spirit" and BeautifulFlowerPictures.com. Visit www.leagueofrestonartists.org for more.

SUNDAY/JAN. 21

Multi Cultural Hip Hop. 3 p.m. at RCC-Hunters Woods, 2310 Colts Neck Road, Reston. The Color Orange: A Hip-Hop Concert about friendship and multiculturalism. Call 703-435-7986 or visit www.reston.org.

WEDNESDAY/JAN. 24

Red Cross Blood Drive. 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

Meet Me at the Movies. 10 a.m. at at Bow Tie Cinemas, Reston Town Center, 11940 Market St. Reston Association presents "LBJ." Refreshments and door prizes provided prior to movie. Free to 55+. Email Ashleigh@reston.org or call 703-435-6577.

THURSDAY/JAN. 25

Dollars and Sense. 7 p.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Monthly group discussion focuses on business leaders and markets. The discussion will focus on "Boomerang: Travels in the New Third World" by Michael Lewis. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 27

Post-Rock, Jazz Band. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. Featuring the Touch Combo band where pop, blues, and folk meld with classic melodies and rhythmic innovation. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org/ for more.

\$12 non-members. Visit www.restonherndonfolkclub.com for more.

THURSDAY/JAN. 18

Yoga Storytime with Little Twisters. 10:30 a.m. at Reston Regional Library, 11925 Bowman Towne Drive. Read a classic children's book, then act it out using yoga moves and poses. Cosponsored by the Friends of Reston Library. Age 3-5 with adult. Call 703-689-2700 for more.

Community Food Packing. 10-11:30 a.m. at Dominion Energy, 3072 Centreville Road, Herndon. Assistance League of Northern Virginia will hold its next monthly Weekend Food for Kids packing. For further information contact Lynn Barron: LynnB517@verizon.net or visit www.northernvirginia.assistanceleague.org.

FRIDAY/JAN. 19

Improv-Extravaganza. 7-9 p.m. at ArtSpace Herndon, 750 Center St., Herndon. For one-night-only, The Alden's (the) Unruly Theatre Project and Loudoun County High School's Improvasaurus will bring their signature improv styles to ArtSpace Herndon. Suggested Donation of \$10. Visit www.artspaceherndon.org/ for more.

SATURDAY/JAN. 20

French Cooking Class. 10 a.m.-noon at Mon Ami Gabi, 11950 Democracy Drive. Join Chef Phil Frederick and learn to prepare wild

2018 Color of the Year: Ultra Violet

Mixed reactions from local tastemakers who offer design ideas.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL

It's a moment that interior designers anticipate all year: the announcement of the Pantone Color of the Year. Ultra Violet is the selection for 2018, and local designers are giving it a mixed reception.

"Interiors have gone so neutral, I look forward to suggesting... Ultra Violet, a color [that] can bridge warm and cool gray neutrals," said Moira Denson, interior designer and assistant professor of Interior Design at Marymount University.

"There's nothing subtle about Ultra Violet. It's one-dimensional and difficult to decorate with, except in very small doses," said interior designer Annie Elliott of Annie Elliott Interiors and Bossy Color. "I find the color loud. 'Look at me!' It screams."

The selection by Pantone, the self-described global authority on color, is intended to be a harbinger of the hue that will be on trend in the coming year. The organization's color gurus spend about nine months observing trends in industries ranging from film and entertainment to art and fashion.

This year's pick can add a burst of vibrancy to a home's interior in impermanent ways, advises interior designer Cathleen Gruver of Gruver Cooley. "Some quick easy ways to use the color are adding throw pillows, which are relatively inexpensive and easy to trade out," she said. "Accent plates on a dining table are an option for those who may not want to commit in their home."

"Use this color in extremely small doses," added Elliott. "If you really love this color, I suggest using it as part of a larger pattern. Don't buy a solid purple pillow; choose a pretty floral that has some Ultra Violet in it."

For those with less trepidation about Ultra Violet, interior designer Sarah Glenn of Braswell Design + Build in Alexandria, said, "The powder room is a great place to incorporate deep colors in interesting ways. Install a graphic violet wallpaper behind a bright white pedestal sink, or paint the ceiling a high gloss violet to reflect the decorative lighting in the room."

Dark and dramatic cabinetry, which Glenn says is trending this year, offers an-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MOIRA DENSON

"Ultra violet sets a mood that allows all my landscapes to feel grounded," says artist Moira Denson, who is an assistant professor of Interior Design at Marymount University

other use for the Pantone pick. "Go bold and incorporate a deep violet island or base cabinets into a new kitchen," she said. "Incorporate a violet glass mosaic tile on your shower floor or as an accent stripe around tub walls. I especially love violet glass paired with the grey and taupe tones of

wooden white marble tile."

Some designers describe Ultra Violet as commanding, particularly when used inside a home. "This shade of purple is a powerful color and one that I would use as an accent," said interior designer Marika Meyer of Marika Meyer Interiors. "A little bit will go a long way. It is also a great color to pair with other colors, it is a very friendly complementary color."

"Good pairings include green and purple, a classic combination, but I've always liked red with purple," added Elliott. "Ultra Violet is a vivid color, so make sure you use equally strong colors with it so it doesn't dominate a palette."

Pair it with gold and yellow tones, suggests Denson, who is also an artist. "I paint skies all the time," she said. "It's what watercolorists do. To me, shades of the ultra-violet are the most pleasing sky. It works super well with what we traditionally think of skies: blue toned. It sets a mood that allows all my landscapes to feel grounded."

In announcing the selection, Laurie Pressman, vice president of the Pantone Color Institute described Ultra Violet as, "a blue-based purple that takes our awareness and potential to a higher level. Ultra Violet communicates originality, ingenuity and visionary thinking that points us toward the future."

lost (adj): 1. unable to find the way. 2. not appreciated or understood. 3. no longer owned or known

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COMMUNITY



Despite the below-freezing temperatures, Food For Neighbors volunteers were happy to help make a difference.



Ashley Gaffey, a senior at Herndon High, gives a "thumbs up" to volunteering with Food For Neighbors.



Herndon High senior Hannah Overton sorts food for delivery to area schools. Hannah is one of the many, reliable teen volunteers who have helped to make Food For Neighbors a success.

Volunteers Brave the Cold To Combat Teen Hunger

On Saturday, Jan. 6, Food For Neighbors kicked off 2018 with another food collection event in support of students at multiple area middle and high schools. Volunteers by the dozens endured the below freezing weather to collect, sort, and distribute food with enthusiasm, fueled by hot coffee, donuts, and kind surprises.

One of many dedicated drivers was delighted to discover an unexpected note in a red food donation bag she collected during the early morning hours. "Thank you for braving the cold to pick up all the food this AM," it read. "We appreciate all the hard work that goes into making 'Food For Neighbors' a success!"

Food For Neighbors founder Karen Joseph said, "I appreciate the many contributions of the volunteers. As a result of their hard work, 2017 was an incredible year of growth for the nonprofit, which now provides food to eight different schools and is fielding additional requests for support."

To find out how you can help this local charity, visit www.foodforneighbors.org/get-involved/.



PHOTOS BY KRISTINA ALCORN

Herndon High School students represented one of many volunteer communities helping to sort food.

Herndon Village Network Encourages Seniors to Get Out and About

Herndon Village Network is kicking off another year of serving senior citizens residing in the Herndon 20170 area. The nonprofit organization's vetted volunteers provide the elderly much-needed transportation for appointments, shopping, social outings, and more. This more organized concept of neighbors helping neighbors encourages older residents to age in the Herndon community and allows them to maintain established routines and connections, which results in a higher quality of life.

In 2017, Herndon Village

Network saw its organization grow to include 63 senior citizen members, who pay only \$20 per year for unlimited access to day and evening transportation on weekdays and weekends. During the year, 28 volunteer drivers provided members 440 rides, totalling 7,894 miles. Based on feedback from members, even more impressive was the way in which drivers interacted with their senior riders.

Herndon Village Network invites every senior citizen, age 55 or older, who no longer can drive — or who feels uncomfortable driving — to become a member this year. The only requirements are

that members pay a \$20 annual fee, schedule transportation at least 48 hours in advance, and reside, permanently or temporarily, in the Herndon 20170 zip code. Herndon Village Network also invites volunteers interested in making a difference in the lives of the elderly to become a member of its vetted driving team. For more information about becoming a member, volunteering as a driver, or making a donation, call 703-375-9439, send an email to herndonvillagenetworkinfo@gmail.com, or visit www.HerndonVillageNetwork.org.



PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Recently retired Town of Herndon Town Manager, Art Anselene, was presented with the Eileen D. Curtis Lifetime Achievement Award, formerly known as the Lifetime Achievement Award, by the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce at its Awards Luncheon held Wednesday, Dec. 13.



Laura Readyoff, Owner and CEO of The Music Loft LLC, pictured with James Lawson, Chairman of the Board, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce after receiving the Chamber's Arts Leader award for her significant impact on the arts in Herndon and her generosity funding music scholarships for the needy.

'Stars Over Dulles' Shine

Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce holds annual Awards Luncheon.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce celebrated the businesses and organizations that make the Dulles area shine at their Awards Luncheon 2017, "Stars Over Dulles," held Wednesday, Dec. 13 at the Hilton Washington Dulles Airport, 13869 Park Center Road in Herndon.

The Dulles Chamber is one of the largest chambers in the region with more than 800 members. Situated in one of the nation's leading high-tech corridors, it serves Dulles, western Fairfax and eastern Loudoun counties, Reston, Herndon, and Chantilly.

The luncheon celebrated the achievements of approximately 50 business and nonprofit finalists for the Chamber's 2017 Leader Awards. With 15 awards categories, among them Transportation, Nonprofit, and Distinguished Veteran, the ballroom was packed to capacity with family, friends, and co-workers of the finalists.

John Boylan, President and CEO, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce presented the awards; James Lawson, Chairman of the Board, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce emceed the celebration.

This year, the Chamber had difficulty naming just one person for its Lifetime Achievement Award. The names of two individuals, both now retired, kept rising to the top, Art Anselene, Town Manager of Herndon, 1976-2017 and Eileen Curtis, Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce President and CEO, 1994-2017.

Wanting to recognize both individuals for their exceptional performance and dedication, the Chamber solved the selection problem by renaming the Lifetime Achievement Award to The Eileen D. Curtis Award Lifetime Achievement Award and presenting it to Anselene.

"I was completely surprised at this week's Awards Luncheon to find out that the Dulles Regional Chamber has named their Lifetime Achievement Award

Category Award Winners

Chairman's Lifetime Achievement Award: Art Anselene, Town of Herndon, Retired
Transportation Leader: Paul J. Wiedefeld, General Manager and CEO, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Workforce Leader: Madhu Garlanka, CEO, Software Products, Allwyn Corporation
Bank Leader: MainStreet Bank
Hospitality Leader: Westfields Marriott Washington Dulles
Small Business Leader: Jay Johnson, CEO, Five Minute Productions
Business Leader: Geoffrey Lawson, VP & GM, The National Conference Center
Innovation Leader: Praduman Jain, CEO, Vibrent Health
Arts Leader: Laura Readyoff, Owner, The Music Loft, LLC
Distinguished Veteran: Jim Kuiken, The Kuiken Group
Nonprofit Leader: Children's Science Center
Corporate Social Responsibility: John Sekas, Sekas Homes, Ltd.
New Chamber Member: Mustang Sally Brewing Company
First Responder Agency of the Year: Loudoun County Sheriff's Office

after me," said Eileen Curtis, former Executive Director of the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce, Retired. "What a lovely tribute! Thank you."

Anselene also was taken aback to receive an award. "It was a great surprise and honor to receive the first Eileen D Curtis Lifetime Achievement Award from the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce. It had been a tremendous pleasure to work in Herndon and with the community in advancing common initiatives to enhance the sense of community and place for the town. I will always be grateful and humbled for my work experience with the town and proud that Herndon is home," said Anselene in an interview after the awards luncheon.

Among the other recipients who received awards were Laura Readyoff, Owner and CEO of The Music Loft LLC and James Kuiken, Kuiken Group. Readyoff, who works and resides in Herndon, received the Arts Leader Award. As a small business owner, she awarded more than \$15,000 in Music Loft Scholarships this year to students who have the talent and passion for studying music but not the means to do so.

Kuiken, who lives in Vienna, received the Distinguished Veteran Award. Through his first-hand knowledge of combat and the impact of Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury, Kuiken is committed to helping returning combat veterans find healing, education, and meaningful employment. "I do what I do for those who did not make it home, physically, psychologically or emotionally," said Kuiken to the audience after accepting the award.

Herndon Teen Wins App Challenge

Gupta, 16, saw a problem, and solved it.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

U.S. Rep. Barbara Comstock (R-10) announced in a press release on Jan. 5, 2018, that Medha Gupta, a 16-year-old student from Herndon, won the 2017 Congressional App Challenge for Virginia's 10th District. Gupta, who attends Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, was one of the more than 4,100 high school students who signed up to participate in the national challenge aimed to engage students in coding and computer science.

In the district-wide competition hosted by Members of the House, students created and submitted original software applications or apps, coded for mobile, tablet, or desktop devices. Code is the language of technology. It helps build apps that bring ideas to life utilizing STEM and computer science education to solve real-world problems.

WINNERS were named from each of the participating 190 Congressional Districts. Comstock explained that Medha's winning app, called Safe Travel is designed to help people who are commuting alone feel safer in their commute.

Comstock explained, "The Safe Travel App sets a timer that will count down and automatically sends an emergency message to your predetermined contact, letting them know you are in trouble if you do not notify the app that you have arrived safely."

On the entry form for the Congressional App Challenge, it stated the submission would be judged on the quality of the idea, including creativity and originality; implementation including user experience and design; and demonstration of excellence in coding and programming skills.

Comstock reported Virginia's 10th District, "...is full of hardworking students who have each built innovative apps on their own time as part of



PHOTO COURTESY OF MEDHA GUPTA

Medha Gupta

their desire to succeed in the STEM fields which continue to be critical in today's economy."

She added, "Medha's hard work and skill in building this app were exemplary. I applaud her, as well as each of her fellow 10th District students who competed this year, for the time and effort they put into building their Apps and developing practical technological solutions for an everyday problem."

In the YouTube video that accompanied her application, Gupta said she got the idea for her app when walking home from the school bus stop. "I felt really unsafe. It was getting late. It was dark. And that's not how someone should feel... I thought there had to be a solution... I decided to create an app called Safe Travel."

In an interview for this story, Gupta said she did not know how to code when she got the idea for her app. "I sat down for two days and learned Swift which is a programming language for iOS apps. After that, I developed it over a week-long period. Once I felt it was done, I revealed it to my family."

AS FOR THE FUTURE, Gupta said, "I'd like to create an Apple Developer account. Then I would like to improve some of the features of Safe Travel to make it more efficient for the user."

Asked what the cost of the app would be for the consumer Gupta replied, "I'd like to make it a free app so that the everyday person has access to it."

Gupta stressed the app would be beneficial to college students, joggers and kids like herself. "I think that it is important to practice safety while traveling. And hopefully this app, Safe Travel makes it very easy to do so," she said.