

# The Arlington Connection

Nazaire Kunlpe, a senior at Marymount, (left) and Meghan Mitchell stand next to the Sycamore they planted.

ENTERTAINMENT, PAGE 7 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

PHOTO BY EDEN BROWN/THE CONNECTION

Did Missing Middle  
Start as a Done Deal?

PAGE 3

4H in the  
Urban Suburbs

PAGE 8

Solving Future  
Heat with Trees

PAGE 4

# Cherry Blossoms



PHOTOS BY PAT MCGEEHAN

Pat McGeehan from Arlington made her annual trip to see the Cherry Blossoms, a trip she has made nearly every year while her four sons were growing up. Now she makes the trip with a friend, and they choose well — a cloudy day at 7:30 am where they find a coveted parking spot. “A little gray but still gorgeous.”

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# NEWS

## Arlington Approves ‘Missing Middle’

Expands housing options in portions of Arlington that currently only allow single-detached homes.

This news release is reprinted from the Arlington website <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Housing/Housing-Arlington/Tools/Missing-Middle>

The Arlington County Board voted to expand housing options in portions of the County that currently only allow single-detached homes on Wednesday, March 22, concluding a multi-year process.

The Board adopted a series of Zoning Ordinance and General Land Use Plan amendments related to the Missing Middle Housing Study. These amendments will allow for expanded housing options (EHO) development for up to 6 units per residential lot if certain conditions are met, including the same building height, setbacks, and size as allowed for single-detached homes. The adoption also caps annual permits at 58, distributed around the county. The changes will take effect July 1, 2023, in approximately 3 months.

“After years of study, thousands of emails, phone calls, and community conversations, and thousands more staff hours working on this project, I am proud of the sensible framework that the Board has adopted to permit, by right, options for different housing types in every residential zoning district,” Board Chair Christian Dorsey said. “By allowing natural increases in the housing supply, we will lower the barriers of entry into all neighborhoods and, in doing so, address the housing crisis and our history of exclusionary zoning head-on.”

The Board actions came after nearly 250 community members and organizations spoke in two days of public hearings, in addition to the thousands of people who engaged with the County throughout the study, which began in 2019. Many details in the final Board action reflect input received from the Arlington community since the initial framework for expanded housing option development was released almost a year ago.



The Zoning Ordinance text focused on several policy areas. The Board took the following actions:

**Uses:** Allow up to 6 units on a residential lot (duplexes, townhouses, and multiplexes with 3-6 units)

**Applicability:** Allow EHO development by right on properties in the R-20, R-10, R-8, R-6, and R-5 districts

**Annual Development Cap:**

Set an annual cap of up to 58 permits with the following distribution method:  
21 permits total spread across R-8, R-10, and R-20 districts

30 permits in the R-6 district  
7 permits in the R-5 district

**Set a five-year sunset of the annual cap**

**Maximum Lot Coverage:** Duplicate base lot coverage standards for single-detached homes and provides additional allowed coverage even if a detached garage is not built

**Parking:**  
Vary parking requirements based on transit proximity

At least 0.5 parking spaces per unit on sites located entirely within a 3/4-mile radius of a Metrorail station entrance or within 1/2-mile radius of a transit stop along the Premium Transit Network

At least 1 space per dwelling unit for all other locations—including those residential lots fronting on a cul-de-sac in transit-proximate areas

**Trees:**  
For 2-4 units: Require a minimum of 4 shade trees  
For 5-6 units: Require a minimum of 8 shade trees

**Minimum Site Area:**  
For 2-4 units: Set minimum site area to the same standards for single-detached homes in all districts  
For 5-6 units:

Set minimum site area to the same standards as single-detached homes in R-6, R-8, R-10, and R-20 districts.  
Increase the minimum site area to 6,000 square feet for the R-5 district

**Gross Floor Area:**  
Set the maximum floor area based on the housing types and/or unit type at the following square footage:

Duplex: 4,800  
Semidetached: 5,000  
3 townhouses: 7,500  
3-unit multiplex: 6,000  
4-unit multiplex: 7,200  
5- and 6-unit multiplex: 8,000

ARLINGTON COUNTY GRAPHIC

**Accessory Dwellings:** Allow accessory dwellings (ADs) only in two scenarios (interior units within a townhouse or semi-detached home, exceptions for pre-existing Accessory Dwellings)

**Design and Site Layout Guidelines:**  
Make the maximum building height, footprint, and minimum setbacks for expanded housing option development the same as currently exist for single-detached homes

Require expanded housing option development to comply with site layout and design standards for compatibility with surrounding neighborhood

WATCH: County Board Discussion

The Board’s action marked the end of the Phase 3 of the Missing Middle Housing Study. The study began in 2019, and Phase 1 continued through fall 2021. In the first phase, the study team relied on community engagement to identify priorities and concerns related to expanding housing options in Arlington and prepared a Research Compendium of Arlington-specific data and existing conditions.

Phase 2 was a focused study of specific housing types that sought to balance the community’s priorities and concerns identified in Phase 1. A draft framework for expanding housing options was released in April 2022, and the County embarked on a multifaceted public engagement period that culminated with a Board work session in July 2022. During that work session, Board members provided guidance to staff that resulted in the draft zoning text and amendments presented in the fall. The Board also hosted 20 community conversations throughout fall 2022.

In addition, several County commissions, including the Planning Commission, Housing Commission, Transportation Commission, Disability Advisory Commission, and Commission on Aging, reviewed and made recommendations on the General Land Use Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments.

To learn more about the Missing Middle Housing Study, visit the County website. <https://www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Programs/Housing/Housing-Arlington/Tools/Missing-Middle>

## Was Missing Middle a Done Deal?

Most feedback was negative.

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

In 2019 Arlington County began a process to address shortfalls in housing supply, fewer options in housing types and rising housing costs and the underlying racism surrounding single-family housing. The County announced that it was starting from a blank slate with no proposed policy or zoning changes. A staff report to the County board in December of that year emphasized

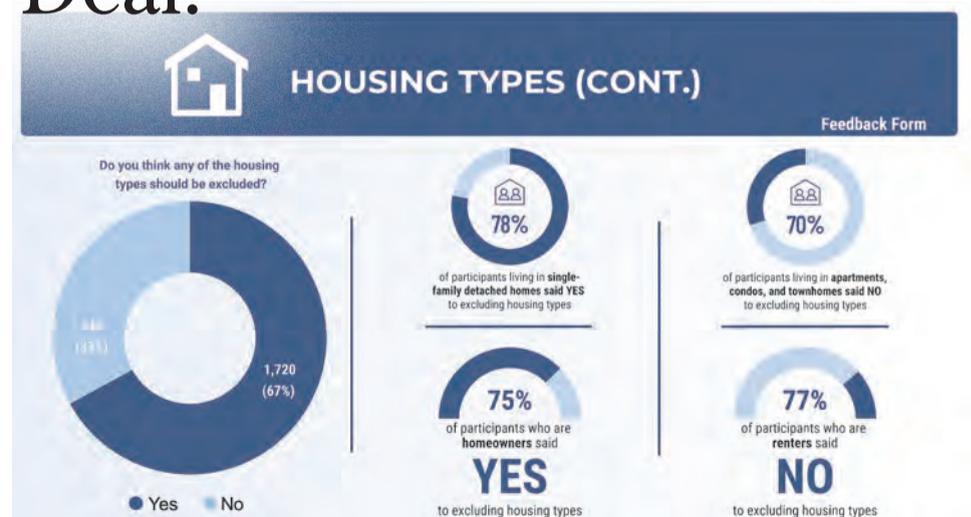
that neither an across-the-board rezoning, nor an elimination of single-family zoning would be the right fit for Arlington. “Solutions will need to be context-sensitive — not a one-size-fits all approach.”

Now the County Board has adopted a proposal that does mandate an across-the-board approach by opening up portions of the county that currently allow only single detached homes to multi-unit development.

SEE FEEDBACK, PAGE 7

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ARLINGTON COUNTY GRAPHIC





Meghan Mitchell (right) and Nazaire Kunlpe, stand next to the tree they just wrestled from its root wrap and rolled into the hole they dug despite the wet, compacted, stoney Virginia clay. The native Sycamore will offer shade to generations to come. Mitchell is a graduate assistant for the Saints Service Network, part of the Office of Volunteer Opportunity, getting her degree in school counseling.



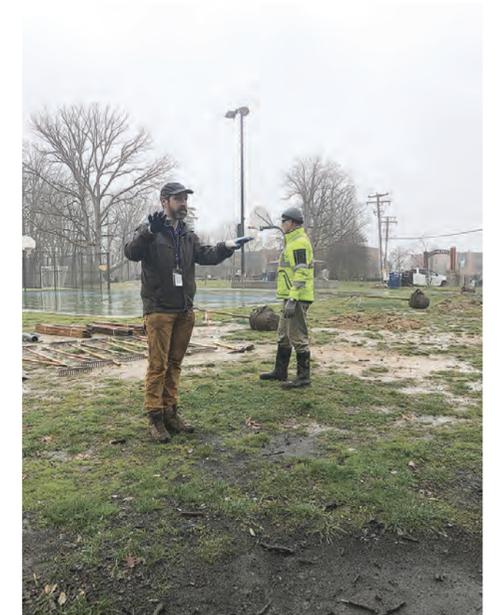
Luke Albrecht stands next to the Oak he and his team wrestled into the ground. Albrecht was there to fulfill his service hours, a Marymount University requirement.



Luke Albrecht and Tree Steward Romana Campos struggle with pounding a stake into the compacted Virginia Clay.



Claire Smith and Sym Shackelford use their backs to dig up a hole that is twice as wide and as deep as the tree root ball, assisted by a Tree Steward.



Vincent Verweij, Urban Forest Manager, Arlington County Parks and Natural Resources and Otis Marechaux, Tree Planting Coordinator, Arlington County Parks and Natural Resources, instruct the crowd on how to properly plant a tree. Verweij also picked which trees would do well in the urban environment of the park.

# Planting Trees To Relieve Future Heat

Previous work mapping hotspots informs placement of canopy trees by Marymount students and tree stewards.

BY EDEN BROWN  
THE CONNECTION

A dozen brave Marymount students got up way too early on a Saturday morning to go dig holes in the pouring rain, joined by a bevy of Tree Stewards who lent their expertise — and muscle — to the three hour project. A park in South Arlington will be shadier and offer branches to climb on in about twenty years because of this effort to plant 25 canopy trees. The soil will improve, the drainage will be more effective, and carbon will be sequestered. Birds will have a place to hang out and bugs to eat.

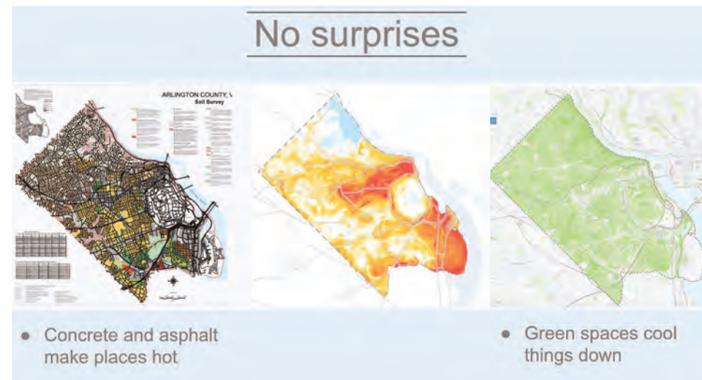
Susan Agolini, a professor of cell biology at Marymount explained the genesis of this impressive community service project. It all started with a member of the Virginia Foundation of Independent Colleges (VFIC) visiting the Richmond Science Museum a couple of years ago and talking to Jeremy Hoffman, the David and Jane Cohn Scientist at the Science Museum of Virginia. He talked about

the Heat Watch program being done by CAPA Strategies, a company in Oregon that helps communities map out the hottest parts of their cities and towns in order to tackle climate change.

Each of the participating colleges decided they would map their own localities.

Although Susan Agolini is a cell biologist, she was on a committee at Marymount that was hoping to begin a research project to see if members of VFIC could work together. They put together a team including the localities of ten of the 16 colleges in the VFIC: Richmond, Arlington, Abingdon, Farmville, Lynchburg, Virginia Beach, Winchester, Salem, Petersburg and Harrisonburg.

CAPA Strategies met with each location and they came up with several driving routes in Arlington covering the whole county. Each route was driven three times a day. It took an hour for each driver and navigator to cover the route, using a special monitor CAPA had given them, going in the early morning, noon, and night. The monitor took heat and humidity readings every second. To get this



The heat map of Arlington shows the connection between lack of tree canopy and heat.

done, Marymount had help from Eco-Action Arlington which came out in force to do it with students. They tried to pick the hottest day of the year, which was tricky for planning purposes, but they finally landed at the end of July. It took a village, as schools were out and volunteers who had committed earlier weren't in D.C. in July, but eventually, with even Agolini's 24-year-old daughter joining the effort to help drive routes, and with the help of partners like the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency,

and National Integrated Heat Health Information Systems who also collaborated with the group, they got enough data.

Marymount sent the monitoring devices back to CAPA and they generated the heat maps. VFIC then applied for a grant to see their project to completion. Each location was given up to \$15,000 to plant trees.

At that point, the Arlington/Marymount group got in touch with Vincent Verweij, County Forester, to decide where within the hottest areas of Arlington they would plant



The Tree Stewards gathered for a photo after the planting.

trees. "We wanted to plant them on public land," said Agolini, who coordinated the whole effort here, "because the trees will be taken care of by the County and will benefit more people as they come to the park."

"Of course, the Pentagon parking lot was really hot," said Agolini, "and so was National Airport, but we can't plant trees on the airport." Verweij picked the Tyrol Hills Park, 5101 7th Rd South.

"One of the things that I thought was cool and sad at the same time - historically the hotter areas are in areas of lower income, typically underrepresented or underserved areas, and since there are already discrepancies in healthcare in those areas, and the heat effect just exacerbates that, the planting of trees is particularly important there," said Agolini.

Marymount University has a strong emphasis



After almost an hour struggling to dig this hole, take off the wrap around the root ball, put on deer protection, pound in the stakes, and tie on the support ties, three planters showed off their sodden, "clay infused" footwear.



The group of volunteers listens to Vincent Verweij instruct them on proper hole digging and tree planting, while hoping the rain would stop. It didn't.

The trees, purchased from Casey Trees, didn't cost the whole \$15,000, so Marymount will be looking to plant more trees or return the funds, if they can't be used by the end of the year.

For more information: see <https://www.capastrategies.com>, and <https://www.vfic.org>, and to help out next time, see <https://treestewards.org> or [www.ecoactionarlington.org](http://www.ecoactionarlington.org)

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# The Arlington Connection

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# Most Feedback Was Negative

FROM PAGE 3

Currently 70 percent of Arlington is zoned for single-family housing.

Proponents say this new policy will reverse the 90-year-old governmental zoning action that perpetuates racism with Arlington's single-family zoning. The YIMBYs (Yes In My Backdoor) herald the plan as helping low-and moderate income residents. YIMBYs state this Missing Middle Housing plan will allow low-income retail and service workers to live near their jobs and will shorten the commute of school teachers who will be able to live in the County where they teach.

YIMBY is a national organization started in northern California in 2013 with an Arlington chapter whose purpose is to enact policies that promote more housing affordability and prevent displacement, especially for marginalized and low-income residents.

Proponents also point out the study began in 2019 and a draft framework was released with multiple engagement opportunities. "In addition, the proposal was reviewed by the Planning Commission, Housing Commission, Transportation Commission, Disability Advisory Commission and Commission on Aging." They say the opponents are older white people who don't want their status quo disturbed.

Opponents say the proposal ignores the majority of Arlington residents who signed petitions, appeared at County Board meetings and argued at community conversations.

The purchase of a unit in a six-plex would require an annual income of \$193,000 a year, and 72 percent of the residents who earn that amount are white.

Opponents add the plan won't allow Arlington to open up housing opportunities for firefighters and teachers who earn on average \$62,198 for a teacher and \$70,118 for a firefighter.

One opponent says that missing middle housing was a done deal from the beginning. "They just had to go through the required procedural hoops."

The Arlington County press release states there have been years of study, thousands of emails and community conversations in the last three years about missing middle. "However, they don't inform you the community input was heavily negative and the final proposal has ignored most of the community input." See a summary of feedback here <https://www.arlingtonva.us/files/sharedassets/public/housing/documents/missing-middle/cb-work-session-mmhs-phase-2-2022-07-12.pdf>

## CALENDAR

### CHECK OUT THE PLANT CLINICS

The Arlington Central Library Plant Clinic at 1015 N Quincy St, Arlington opens on Wednesday, March 29 from 6:00 - 7:45 p.m. The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic at 301 King St, Alexandria opens Saturday, May 6 at 7:00 - 9:30 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N 14th and N Courthouse Roads opens Saturday, April 22 at 8:00 - 11:00 a.m. The Del Ray Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria opens Saturday, May 6 from 8:30 - 11:00 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S Stafford St, Arlington, opens Sunday, May 7 at 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

### NOW THRU APRIL 8

"Singing in the Rain." At Thomas Jefferson Community Theater, 125 S. Old Glebe Road, Arlington. Show times are Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m.; Sundays at 3 p.m. Presented by the Arlington Players; screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green; songs by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed. Based on the classic Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer film.

### WEDNESDAY/MARCH 29

Water Where It Counts. 6:45 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. Part of Garden Talks 2023. Irrigation, rain barrels and ollas (in-ground vessels) deliver water where and when it is needed to help your vegetables survive our hot and humid summers.

### SATURDAY/APRIL 1

Arlington Civitans Open Air Flea Market. 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 4001 15th Street North, Arlington. And every first Saturday through November 4, 2023. The Civitan Open Air Flea Market, one of Northern Virginia's largest and oldest public flea markets, is located in the I-66 garage in North Arlington adjacent to Washington-Lee high school and the Arlington Planetarium at 15th and North Quincy Streets, in Arlington. Here you'll find over 150 vendors selling a variety of goods rang-

ing from books, clothes, furniture, garden tools, household goods, jewelry, shoes, toys, records, and so much more.

### WEDNESDAY/APRIL 5

Bees & Beekeeping. 6:45 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. Part of Garden Talks 2023. Get the latest buzz on basics about the care of bees, hives, and other basics to produce your own honey.

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 12, 19, 26,

Expert Garden Speakers. 6:30 - 7:45 pm, Arlington Central Library, 1015 N Quincy St, Arlington. Arlington Central Library Talks. Join Arlington/Alexandria VCE Master Gardeners and other expert speakers as they provide information on a variety of garden topics each Wednesday. April topics are: 4/5-Bees and Beekeeping; 4/12-Edible Landscaping/Growing in Small Spaces; 4/19-Top 10 Vegetables; 4/26-Container and Balcony Gardening. Programs will continue on Wednesdays through September.

### SATURDAY/APRIL 8

Comedy Karaoke Trivia Funtime Show. 7:30 p.m. At Highline RxR, 2010 Crystal Drive, Arlington. The Capital City Showcase, which produces some of the best events in the DC area, returns with its new one-of-a-kind blend of entertainment! Bring a team or fly solo and win prizes by dropping knowledge in a trivia competition, then duking it out in a karaoke battle. Hosted by Christian Hunt, this experience features comedy from the DC area's finest comics. The headliner for April's show is the hilarious musical comedy duo Griefcat!

### WEDNESDAY/APRIL 12

Edible Landscaping. 6:45 p.m. Meets at Arlington Central Library, 1015 North Quincy Street, Arlington. Part of Garden Talks 2023. Imagine a border of lush lettuce with bright red

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 8

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Each local newspaper's mission aspires to provide greater community service, and we do know that our communities are better off if we continue to publish. Last year's financial support from readers and supporters like you bridged the shortfall before Federal PPP-funding arrived, and both made our survival possible. We now await a decision for a grant from Rebuild Virginia in early February that we hope will help us in 2022 and beyond. But we need help to survive the first quarter, always a brutal time for cash flow in weekly newspapers. Thank you.

Please, help save these historical papers.

All gifts will be used to fund our printed newspapers and websites and to meet obligations to our loyal and patient employees, writers, contractors and suppliers.

The ongoing pandemic continues to crush many newspapers across the country, and our newspapers continue to be at risk. The Northern Virginia area's best read and most trusted source for community news includes the Alexandria Gazette Packet, Mount Vernon Gazette and all Connection Newspapers in the metropolitan region.

The pandemic has hit small businesses hard, which in turn has reduced advertising revenue that keeps these local newspapers alive to provide hyper local news to residents. It feels like no small miracle to be looking forward into 2022.

The pandemic has been a bear, financially and otherwise. Revenue plummeted at the beginning in 2020. Some beloved advertisers have stayed the course supporting us throughout, and many more have done what they can. In the fall of 2021 we saw the return of some advertising for events and Grand Openings, but now omicron clouds the horizon in so many ways. Revenue still remains short of expenses despite our greatly curtailed costs.

Connection Newspapers has been offering these local newspapers to residents for over 200 years. Countless residents have grown up with these papers covering significant moments in the lives of family and children, news, community events, school activities, and even pictures of your dogs and cats. Internet news and large national newspapers cannot provide the local connection or historical connection that local papers like Connection Newspapers and the Alexandria Gazette Packet provide. If your child, dog, mother, father, neighborhood, school has been featured, you understand the value of local community newspapers.

Visit [www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing](http://www.gofundme.com/f/help-keep-your-newspaper-printing)  
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## A Definite Maybe



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the first time in 14 years, my current scan interval has been almost five months. This represents a quantum leap from my long-standing every-three-month scan and is a record. After years of "stable" results, my wife, Dina, who has been a part of every Kenny-with-cancer decision acquiesced at our last – and first face-to-face meeting with my oncologist (the first in two+ years) and agreed, per my oncologist's suggestion, to increase the time between my previously quarterly scans (a recurring discussion between Team Lourie and my oncologist). The apparent slow-growing cancer that I have combined with the risk of accumulating radiation from the various scans I regularly have, leading to possible new cancers/tumors as a side effect, convinced her to agree/allow this change. This month (March) is that first scan at the 'record' interval.

To say I'm anticipating trouble when the results are emailed to me is a bit of an overstatement. To say I'm worried about the possible consequences of having waited an extra two months – to see what's going on inside my lungs, where my papillary thyroid cancer has spread, is more accurate. Though the reason for extending the interval seems logical and prudent, all things considered (14 years a cancer patient and the tumors have moved and/or grown so marginally that what amount of growth or movement would likely occur during that extra month or more is a minimal risk, according to my oncologist). Still, the waiting and wondering during that extra month or two is hardly for the weak of heart. Nevertheless, it is a goal of every cancer patient to be able to increase the interval of their scans because they conquered or at least stalled/survived, the cancer. That's progress and the beginning of a less cancer-centric lifestyle. It's what every cancer patient undergoing treatment dreams about.

I'd be lying if I said waiting for the results of the first scan after having extended the quarterly interval was just another day in the office, so to speak. Hardly. I kind of feel that my future hangs in the balance somehow. I'm not any more symptomatic than I've been, I'll just have to wait longer to find out/have it confirmed. Even though I've been down nearly every road in my 14-plus years as a cancer patient, this road (interval) represents a road not travelled and as such, it seems to be giving me pause. Not fits by any means. But a more challenging fall-asleep at night.

Part of this anxiety/insecurity comes from having been given a "terminal" diagnosis originally in Feb. '09. Ever since I've lived with the inevitability that one day, to invoke Bob Marley, "the bottom will drop out" and one of these scans is going to show tumor growth and movement or involvement with another major organ (like my kidneys, as an example); end-of-life-type trouble. That's the fear I've been loathing every time I've had these scans until I receive the all-clear (sort of) from my oncologist. The reality is cancer is an insidious and semi unpredictable intruder and quite often it wins, while the patient loses. And 14 years is an awfully long time for a "terminal" patient like me to keep winning while the cancer is losing/not doing what it almost always does: create havoc and in many cases, death.

Every time, in person when we had post-scan appointments with my oncologist or I received an email indicating that scan results were in, I almost always closed my eyes, took a deep breath and said a bit of a prayer when the oncologist knocked on the door of the examining room where Dina I were waiting or when at home, when I would I click on the message on the provider's website.

The evolution of our sitting and waiting experience has matched the evolution of how we all communicate nowadays. Back in the day, we always had to go to the facility for an in-person appointment with the oncologist specifically to discuss the results of my most recent scan. Now, the results are released automatically from the radiologists before my oncologist has likely even seen the report. The report is not lay-person friendly. It is in doctor-speak and not particularly clear. Though there are sections titled "Findings" and "Impressions," there's a lot of additional information that might be telling, that is if I knew what I was being told.

This has been my life every three months for the past 14 years. Now it's my life every four months. Is it better or worse? I can't say yet. As long as the results are "stable," then I'd say it's better.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

# Arlington and Alexandria Bring Home the 4-H Ribbons

PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

BY SHIRLEY RUHE  
ARLINGTON CONNECTION

If you grew up in the Midwest like I did, 4-H would be about the best strawberry jam and the handsomest looking hog at the state fair. But Deborah Madden, Associate Extension Agent for Arlington, says, “The program really reflects what area you live in.” Locally the kids are surrounded by defense and the government. “We don’t have an agriculture program here.” She explains that in Fairfax they still do a lot of animal science and horses.

But she says that when they did a survey of 4-H summer camp participants the youth said they wanted to learn about agriculture in Virginia which is the number one industry in the state. So they are going to bring the Virginia State University mobile agriculture van to summer camp this year where the campers will be able to walk in and learn about agriculture in Virginia.

Sharon Toth, 4-H Youth Extension Agent for Alexandria says the 5-day overnight summer camp at Front Royal is the biggest event they do. There will be 200 youth from the northern Virginia area participating in canoeing, yoga, archery, high ropes and this year performing arts. It will be technology free and will concentrate on leadership, teamwork and self motivation.

Madden says the 4-H core values of learning self-reliance, to be a good citizen and life skills have always been the same over time; it’s just that the programs are designed to fit the environment. For instance, in Arlington they have programs in recreation centers and schools that focus on things like urban gardening, culinary education and STEM. She adds they are rebuilding programs on entomology and embryology where they will hatch chickens from eggs.

Barcroft Elementary has an after school club focusing on water and air quality. She says they also have a military club at Henderson Hall that concentrates on STEM. This club has also included creative writing, aviation and cooking. “The youth director decides.”

Madden says, “Currently I am still working with Williamsburg Middle School on Teen Cuisine, a six-week program offered during extended day. It looks at nutrition.”

She recalls the chicken bite salsa. “We’re also looking at sugary snacks, good and bad fat. Next they will head into embryology and then a gardening program.”

“We plan to have a full 4-H Club at Drew Elementary in two months, then Carlyn Springs library in the fall with drop in activities for teens.

“I’d like to test the waters on a teen club. We’re missing out on the biggest opportunity in this age group.”

In Alexandria Toth says they are working in recreation centers and schools to rebuild programs. Currently there are two clubs, one focusing on wellness and adventure at John Marshall Library and the other focusing on nature and animals at Billy Ford Nature Center. “All it takes to set up a 4-H club is an adult mentor to serve as a leader and positive role model and with a topic the youth have an interest in. The programs are youth-driven to instill leadership. And when kids are busy, they are less likely to engage with drugs.”

She remembers she was in a traditional 4-H program in New Jersey. It had the same goals, same focus on youth leadership. 4-H is designed to fit its environment.

Toth says she would really like to start a dog training club — how to take care of your animal, the different breeds. “I think it would really do well in Alexandria. They really love their dogs.”

She adds that Gabriella Coussens Douglas MacArthur Elementary School in (4th grade) Alexandria recently won a blue ribbon for her project on entomology at the 4-H Fairfax County Contest Day. It focuses on the importance of insects and why they are important to the ecosystem.

In Arlington blue ribbon winners included: Landon Gould (10), Taylor Elementary—1st place Presentations; 1st place, Extemporaneous Speaking; 2nd place, Share-the-fun. Meridian Nilles (9), Oakridge Elementary—1st place, Table Setting; 1st place, Extemporaneous Speaking. Annabelle Cunningham (12), Gunston Middle School, 1st place Table Setting. Samien Chowdhury (11), Barcroft Elementary—1st place, Presentations; 1st place Extemporaneous Speech.

These winners will advance to the Northeast District Contest in Spotsylvania, Va. on April, 15, 2023. Toth says 4-H programs are open to kids age 5-19.



Arlington blue ribbon winners (from left): Landon Gould, Meridian Nilles, Annabelle Cunningham, Deborah Madden (Arlington County 4-H Agent), Samien Chowdhury.



Alexandria 4-H outing in October 2022 to team build with youth and leaders and support Virginia farmers.

## CALENDAR

FROM PAGE 7

tomatoes on lattice work. Gain practical tips and inspiration to make vegetables a beautiful part of your landscape, using small spaces to the best advantage.

### FRIDAY/APRIL 14

Case Studies in Lawn Replacement. 10:00 – 11:30 a.m., Online. Have you been thinking about reducing the size of your lawn? Or switching it from grass to something more environmentally friendly? Join Extension Master Gardeners

Alyssa Ford Morel and Carolyn Vincent to see examples of similar efforts by several Extension Master Gardeners. They will share how the process went in their own Northern Virginia yards and what lessons were learned. Free. RSVP at <https://mgnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.

### APRIL 14-16

Spring Artful Weekend. At Fort C.F. Smith Park, 2411 24th St. N, Arlington. Show Hours: Friday, April 14, 2023, 4 p.m.-8 p.m.,

Opening Reception 6 p.m.-8 p.m.; Saturday, April 15, 2023, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sunday, April 16, 2023, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The Arlington Artists Alliance is thrilled to return to the historic Hendry House at Fort C.F. Smith Park for “Spring Artful Weekend.” Spring Artful Weekend features artwork by 30+ talented Arlington Artists Alliance members and has been an annual show for the Arlington-based arts collective for over 20 years! With a large variety of art genres to choose from—paintings, ceramics, jewelry, sculpture, glasswork, artist’s cards,

and more—this show is perfect to kick-off Spring! This event is free and open to the public. Visit <http://www.arlingtonartistsalliance.org>

### FRIDAY/APRIL 21

Best Bets: Native Plants for Shade. 10:00 - 11:30 a.m., Online. Gardeners often consider it a challenge to plant in the shady parts of their gardens, but home landscapes with trees can bring welcome relief from the increasing summer heat we are experiencing in our region. Join Extension

Master Gardener Elaine Mills to learn how to make the most of your shady yard. After discussing degrees of shade, the importance of using layered vegetation, and techniques for building your soil, she will introduce a variety of native plants from trees and shrubs to wildflowers, ferns, and ground covers that will bring beauty through the year while providing important support to local wildlife. Free. RSVP at <https://mgnv.org/rsvp-for-public-education-classes/> to receive a link to participate.