

# Alexandria Gazette Packet

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MAY 7, 2026

## Cheers to 40 Years!

Gala raises vital scholarships for ACHS students.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

One of Northern Virginia's most prominent community events returned this spring as the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria marked a major milestone with its annual gala, raising critical support for local students pursuing higher education.

The organization's "Ruby Gala," held April 18, celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria (SFA), a non-profit dedicated to helping Alexandria City Public Schools students afford college and career training.

Hosted at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, the black-tie event drew a sellout crowd of 500 at-

**"Two generations and counting have benefited thus far."**

— SFA executive director  
Jasmine Milone

tendees, including business leaders, educators, elected officials and community members united in support of expanding access to postsecondary education.

"Two generations and counting have benefited thus far and thousands more will attend our signature workshops, meet one-on-one with our expert team of advisers, receive an SFA scholarship, and succeed," said SFA Executive Director Jasmine Milone. "They'll experience that feeling our recipients describe to us time and time again; their astonishment to learn that people they have never met care about them and believe in their potential to do incredible things."

The annual gala is the organization's largest fundraiser and widely regarded as one of Alexandria's biggest social events of the year. Proceeds from ticket sales, auctions and donations go directly toward scholarships for graduating students and renewal funding for current recipients.

The Scholarship Fund of Alex-



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

ACHS Juniors for Seniors Scholars Salem Tekle, Peyton White, Maya Fitzgerald and James Heiden.



Former ACPS School Board members Hal Cardwell, left, and Chris Harris, right, with Devin Reese and Frances Jeffrey-Coker.

andria has awarded nearly \$22 million in scholarships since its founding in 1986, assisting more than 6,200 of students in accessing higher education, according to recent reporting.

The 2026 gala featured a full evening program, including a cocktail reception, formal dinner, silent and live auctions, and a

SEE GALA RAISES, PAGE 8



Scholarship Fund of Alexandria board chair Kevin Jahns and executive director Jasmine Milone welcome the crowd to the 40th anniversary SFA Gala April 18 at the Hilton Mark Center.



Former ACHS principal Peter Balas, center, with Amy Creed and Jodie Kuleck.

# The Scholarship Fund of Alexandria's GALA & AUCTION

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and to the volunteers of the  
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[alexscholarshipfund.org](http://alexscholarshipfund.org)



# APD Honors Excellence

Officers, personnel honored at annual awards ceremony.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Police Department recognized outstanding service, leadership and community partnership during its annual employee awards ceremony on April 29 at the Old Town Hilton.

The event brought together officers, civilian staff and community partners to celebrate the individuals who exemplify the department's commitment to public safety and professionalism.

Held as one of the department's signature annual events, the ceremony honored personnel across all ranks and functions. The program highlighted the diverse contributions that support law enforcement operations from frontline patrol officers to investigators and professional staff working behind the scenes.

APD Chief Tarrick McGuire presented the awards in a ceremony that emphasized the collective strength of the department, recognizing achievements "across every rank, assignment and role." The Alexandria Police Foundation supported the event, reinforcing its mission to enhance agency programs and recognize excellence beyond what city funding provides.

"This is an important event and opportunity to recognize and support the personnel of our police department," said APF board chair Charlotte Hall.

In a statement accompanying the awards, the department praised honorees as "the



APD Chief Tarrick McGuire, left, congratulates the sons of Officer Osman Siddiqi, who was named Police Officer of the Year at the annual APD Employee Awards April 29 at the Old Town Hilton.



Sgt. Alexa Mastostefano, right, receives the Chief of Police Award, the highest APD honor bestowed on a police officer by Chief Tarrick McGuire.

best of the best," noting that their dedication and professionalism help strengthen the entire Alexandria community.

Several awards highlighted exceptional individual and team performance including: Employee of the Year - Sgt. Gregory Holden, Officer Abby Mishler and Detective Sarah Parker; Police Officer of the Year - Officer Osman Siddiqi; Detective of the Year - Detective Colton Vanderah; and Chief of Police Award - Sgt. Alexa Mastostefano.

Sgt. Holden received multiple distinctions, including Employee of the Year (shared)

and Sworn Supervisor of the Year, marking a standout achievement during the ceremony.

The event also honored excellence across specialized categories and supporting roles: Professional Staff Member of the Year - Tiffany Hyndman; Professional Staff Supervisor of the Year - Parking Enforcement Supervisor George Randolph; Rising Star (Sworn) - Officer Joshua Redfield; Rising Star (Professional Staff) - Rebekka Heite; Community Partnership Award - Islamic Relief USA.

Beyond individual achievements, the ceremony highlighted APD's broader mission

of community engagement. The inclusion of a Community Partnership Award reflects the increasing role that collaboration plays in public safety efforts, particularly in a city with a diverse and growing population.

Events like the annual awards ceremony serve not only as internal recognition but also as a public reaffirmation of those values.

Said McGuire, "Our annual awards ceremony recognized the men and women of our department for their hard work and accomplishments over the past year."



Officer Joshua Redfield receives the Rising Star Award from APD Chief Tarrick McGuire



Det. Colton Vanderah is honored by Chief Tarrick McGuire as Detective of the Year.



Sgt. Gregory Holden receives the Sworn Supervisor of the Year award from APD Chief Tarrick McGuire.

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## NEWS

# 40 Under 40

2026 honorees to be celebrated July 16.

The Chamber ALX has announced the 2026 40-Under-40 honorees. Each honoree was selected for their professional accomplishments, scholastic achievement, community impact and personal story. The 40-Under-40 program was established in 2016 to recognize those age 40 and under engaged in a variety of fields including business, technology, nonprofit management, civic life, public service, education and the arts, who are shaping Alexandria for the future.

This year's honorees will be celebrated at a reception on July 16.

The 2026 honorees include: Sara Acheson, Athena Wellness and Physical Therapy; Grace Adofoli, Shifting Waters Leadership Institute; Drew Altizer, Old House Provisions; Elizabeth Arrazola, Casa Chirilagua; Charles Augustine, Revolutionary Fitness; Erynn Barfield, Innovative Strategies & Junior League of Northern Virginia; Katharine Corcoran, American College of Cardiology; Meg Czaikoski, Consumer Technology Association; Marielena D'Costa, Potomac-Wave Consulting; Sarah DeBlock, Soma Yoga Healing Center; Charles L. Everett III, Leidos; Reland Finch, LPC, Healthy Minds Therapy; Matthew Gorman, CPA, Sikich; Kateleen Hall, ATI Physical Therapy; Mallo-

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For more information visit [www.thechamberalx.com](http://www.thechamberalx.com)

### BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at [ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar](http://ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar). Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or email to [calendar@connectionnewspapers.com](mailto:calendar@connectionnewspapers.com)

#### VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Alexandria Families for Safer Streets - Executive Assistant to AFSS Board of Directors. The agency is seeking an executive assistant to help coordinate a diverse group of tasks necessary to keep us on track and moving forward. Someone with office manager skills would be the ideal candidate. [www.volunteeralexandria.org](http://www.volunteeralexandria.org)

ALIVE! Volunteers are needed to assist with multiple programs relating to their Food Program, ALIVE! House, and Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership Program will distribute food at Mobile Pop-ups and Truck to Trunk events, etc. <https://www.volunteeralexandria.org/ALIVE>

Assistance League of Northern Virginia is an all-volunteer non-profit organization that feeds, clothes and provides reading assistance and books to children in need. Assistance League's programs touch the lives of hundreds of children in Fairfax and Prince William Counties and the City of Alexandria. There are many volunteer opportunities for community members to contribute to helping those in need. To learn more, email [info@alnv.org](mailto:info@alnv.org), or visit [www.alnv.org](http://www.alnv.org).

Join Friends' Board. Those who care about mental health, the Alexandria community, and collaborating with fellow residents to make sure the City's most vulnerable residents have a chance to thrive, then consider joining the Board of Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center. The Friends Board is an all-volun-

teer group of residents that oversees the administration of one of Alexandria's top mental health charities. Friends has no paid staff, so Board members, working on average 10 hours per month, share the day-to-day work needed to accomplish its goals. Interested candidates should email [FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com](mailto:FriendsofAMHC@gmail.com).

STEM Professionals Needed. Help assist K-12 STEM teachers as part of the American Association for the Advancement of Science's STEM Volunteer Program, [stemvolunteers.org](http://stemvolunteers.org), during the 2018-19 school year. In the 2017-18 school year, there are 85 volunteers in 6 Northern Virginia school districts. Contact Don Rea at 571-551-2488, or [donaldrea@aol.com](mailto:donaldrea@aol.com).

ALIVE! offers numerous programs that aid low-income families in Alexandria that rely on volunteers: monthly food distributions, furniture, houseware and emergency food deliveries, and community food drives. Individuals, families and groups are encouraged to participate. Students can earn community service hours by participating. Visit [www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm](http://www.alive-inc.org/volunteer.htm) or contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteers@alive-inc.org](mailto:volunteers@alive-inc.org).

RSVP, a volunteer network for seniors seeking service opportunities in and around Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria, offers a wide array of opportunities for volunteers 55 and older. RSVP volunteers enjoy flexible schedules, free accident and liability insurance while serving, optional mileage and meal reimbursement and are invited to volunteer group projects and social gatherings. To sign up for an upcoming orientation, email Carly Hubicki at [chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org](mailto:chubicki@volunteerfairfax.org) or call RSVP at 703-403-5360. To learn more about RSVP visit [www.rsvpnova.org](http://www.rsvpnova.org).

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# Good Friday Fish Fry

DPC continues fundraising tradition.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Departmental Progressive Club once again held its annual Good Friday Fish Fry April 3 at the organization's headquarters on Gibbon Street.

With DPC member Bill Campbell at the grill, DPC members prepared and served fried trout and sides to patrons, who filled the DPC facility throughout the afternoon either dining in or picking up takeout orders.

DPC members and volunteers spent the day cooking and serving up dinners that included generous servings of trout and sides that included mac and cheese, potato salad, green beans and cole slaw. The popular event continues to be a sell out and serves as a fundraiser for the historic organization.

"This is a great event for us and is a way of bringing the community together," said Departmental Progressive Club member Merrick Malone said. "And the fish is darn good."

[www.dpc1927.org](http://www.dpc1927.org)



Chef Bill Campbell prepares the fried fish for the annual Departmental Progressive Club's Good Friday Fish Fry April 3 at DPC headquarters in Old Town.



DPC members Daniel Selby and Robert Worthy serve the annual Good Friday Fish Fry meal to patrons April 3 at DPC headquarters in Old Town.



DPC member Merrick Malone, standing, with a group of patrons at the annual Good Friday Fish Fry April 3 at DPC headquarters.

PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

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# Localizing Mental Health

## HopeLink answers the 988 calls.

BY JOSEPH GETCH  
CEO, HOPELINK  
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

**M**ay's Mental Health Awareness Month is another touchstone to help remind our community about the resources available to them and their loved ones here in our hometown. Chief among these is the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

Behind each call, text, and chat is a real person. I know this because I lead HopeLink, a regional mental health nonprofit that operates the 988 service for Northern Virginia. We have been connected to this community as a provider of behavioral health services since 1963. Our crisis workers are trained in active listening, safety assessment, crisis de-escalation, and to collaborate with callers, texters and chatters to reduce distress and, when appropriate, to connect individuals to appropriate local services.

These dedicated crisis workers answered nearly 400,000 calls, chats and texts last year from individuals that were facing a life crisis. HopeLink's workers are the empathetic voice that listens, providing help, hope and comfort.

As one of our workers explained, "I have spoken to hundreds of callers. While no two calls are exactly alike, I find callers asking the same question again and again: 'Will I be okay?' What I can tell them is yes, one day, they will be okay, and this call is one step closer to breathing a sigh of relief. Together, we sit in that uncertainty and that pain, until they are empowered to seek longer-term support and explore what life might look like around the corner. When a caller tells me that they see a way forward, that's when I know I've made a difference."

Nationally more than 59 million people experience mental illness and nearly 46% of Americans are expected to meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition in their life, according to Mental Health America. That's why May's Mental Health Awareness Month is important.

While we shine a light on mental health this May; there are ways each of us can help. It's important to know the signs and ways that you can make a difference. This



A crisis worker at HopeLink.



Joe Getch

list provides ways to be part of the solution to change and even save lives:

**Listen:** Listen for signs of distress from loved ones or friends such as talking about wanting to die, ending their life, having no reason to live, being trapped, or being a burden to others.

**Ask:** Ask the tough question. When somebody you know is in emotional pain, ask them directly: "Are you thinking about killing yourself?"

**Connect:** Help connect people to resources. For an immediate crisis, encourage them to call or text the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988. Or visit HopeLineBH.org or your county's local community services board for more resources.

**Donate:** Support local and national mental health nonprofits that are working to save and

change lives. It matters and works. Advocate: Being a voice with local, state, and federal government ensures that mental health is front and center and that funding for mental health programs exists. Write letters/emails to officials in support of mental health funding and legislation.

Much progress has been made in

mental health services, but tough times can exacerbate the need. This May, I hope you will join us and Connection Newspapers to make mental health a priority for you, your loved ones, and the community. Tap into the local resources that are available. Learn more tips on our website at HopeLink-BH.org.



PHOTO BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

**A RENAISSANCE EVENING - Il Porto Ristorante owners Akbar Zadrans and Wali Zadrans are joined by Alexandria business leader Charlotte Hall in celebrating a Renaissance Evening April 30 at the Old Town restaurant. In business for more than 53 years, the evening featured throwback pricing on signature dishes to celebrate the iconic restaurant's heritage. [www.ilportorestaurante.com](http://www.ilportorestaurante.com)**

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# In the Stillness, She Saw More

For nearly three decades, Charity Campong has built her nursing career on presence, patience, and the lessons she carried from her childhood in Ghana.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
GAZETTE PACKET

**O**n a late afternoon in Alexandria, the light slants through the windows of a resident's room, softening the edges of the day. Making her rounds at the Goodwin Living Alexandria campus, a nonprofit that operates senior-living communities and health-care services, Charity Campong stepped inside and did something that doesn't appear on any checklist. She stopped. She watched.

Nothing about the moment was urgent. No alarms. No hurried footsteps in the hall. Just a resident living with Parkinson's — quiet, mostly unresponsive — and a nurse willing to stay a little longer than her schedule allowed.

"I made a deliberate decision to

**"The primary source of my motivation is the residents."**

— Charity Campong,  
Director of Nursing,  
Goodwin Living

spend more time," she says. "More than I typically would."

In a profession where minutes are often rationed, that choice became a turning point. In the stillness, Campong noticed what others had missed: faint signs of awareness, small attempts at communication that had slipped past in the rhythm of routine care.

That moment reshaped the team's approach to the resident's treatment and later became a model presented at one of the organization's national health-care conferences.

Her instinct to pause didn't come from her professional training. It came from much earlier.

In Ghana, where Campong grew up, caring for elders wasn't a job, it was simply part of life. Families shared the responsibility. As a child, she helped tend to her great-grandmother after school. No manuals. No protocols. Just the steady practice of being present.

Those early lessons shaped more than her skills. They shaped her way of seeing.

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From left: Sallay Kanu, charge nurse and wound-care nurse; center: Dr. Thomas Brughan, wound-care physician; right: Charity Campong, Director of Nursing, during a wound-care collaboration at Goodwin Living.

Years later, when she began working as a certified nursing assistant at Goodwin Living, she moved through even the most complex care situations with a calm that surprised others. Residents responded. Families noticed. Colleagues paid attention. What came naturally to her — patience, attentiveness, meeting people where they are — became the foundation of a career that has now spanned more than twenty-five years, carrying her from certified nursing assistant to her current role as Director of Nursing.

It was the residents, she says, who pushed her forward.

"They encouraged me to go back to school," she recalls. "They supported me through that decision."

Their encouragement led her to earn an associate degree, then a Bachelor of Science in Nursing, along with certifications in wound care and staff development. Each step expanded her ability to care for residents and to mentor the



Director of Nursing Charity Campong at Goodwin Living's Alexandria campus.

next generation of caregivers.

As one of the region's early wound-care nurses in senior living, she helped reduce hospital visits for Goodwin Living residents. She advocated for small, practical changes in how staff interacted with patients, adjustments that added up



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GOODWIN LIVING.

Charity Campong with Jackie Barbarito Scholar, health-care administrator, after receiving a service award.

to something larger: more comfort, more dignity, more time spent in familiar surroundings.

"Early in my career, I realized I could meet the needs of all residents even those others found challenging," she says.

Still, when asked what keeps her in the work after nearly twenty-six years, she doesn't mention credentials or accomplishments.

"It's the residents," she says. "Seeing the outcomes. The appreciation. The connection."

For Campong, the relationship between nurse and resident is reciprocal. What she gives returns in trust, in gratitude, in the quiet understanding that forms between caregiver and patient.

That sense of shared purpose extends beyond individual interactions. As Director of Nursing, she mentors other health-care professionals, emphasizing not just skill but perspective: that they are part of a team working toward a common goal.

"I've seen my team take greater ownership and pride in their work," she says. "They're not just showing up — they're contributing to something larger."

Even so, she worries about the future. Staffing shortages have grown more pronounced, with positions taking longer to fill and fewer applicants stepping forward. For an industry already stretched thin, the implications are serious.

"We're seeing longer recruitment timelines," she says. "Positions remain open for weeks before we receive applicants."

During National Nurses Week, May 6-12, Campong's work offers a quieter model of nursing — one rooted in patience, presence, and the belief that care begins in the smallest moments. The pause in a doorway. The decision to stay. The instinct to notice what others might miss.

It's the kind of nursing that doesn't call attention to itself, but changes everything just the same.



TC Titans alumni Bret Hewitt, Brett Sirois, Andrew Mitchell and Danny Bryant.



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET  
Julianne Edlevetz and Amy Berelen.



Marna Eorieen, Jodie Kuleck, scholarship recipient Allison Castillo and Dr. Rina Bansal.

# Gala Raises Vital Scholarships for ACHS Students



Former School Board member Arthur Peabody, center, with daughters Tory Peabody and Elizabeth Peabody.



Former City Councilman Paul Smedberg, seated left, with former State Senator Adam Ebbin and Mike Molesky.



Tim Laderach, Elissa Laderach and Vince Crisler.

FROM PAGE 1

“paddle raise” fundraising segment.

Special guest speakers were the highlight of the anniversary gala. Attendees heard personal stories from two of the Class of 2026 scholarship awardees alongside a Class of 1995 recipient. The 2026 scholars represent the 215 students who will be awarded scholarships this spring. Alexandria City High School English and Journalism teacher, Class of 1995 scholarship recipient and 2003 Portrait of Success Kamilah Lawson delivered remarks emphasizing the impact of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria on two generations of Titans.

Longtime supporter Alexandria Toyota once again donated a car, with Melissa Bennett holding the winning raffle ticket for the 2025 Toyota Corolla.

“I am so excited,” exclaimed a surprised Bennett. “I have four drivers in my house. This is terrific.”

The assembled crowd also paid tribute to the SFA’s founders being recognized with commemorative scholarships to help graduating Titans succeed.

“In honor of these founders, seven graduates from the class of 2026 are each receiving an SFA Founder Award in the name of one of these seven individuals,” announced Jahns. “Each of those scholarships are being presented at \$10,000 per year for a four-year total of \$40,000.”

The honorees include the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria’s founder Kitty Porterfield, along with founding members Hon. Timothy Elliott, Dr. Robert Peebles, Hon. Robert Calhoun, Lou Cook, and John Porter. Jack Taylor, former owner of Alexandria Toyota, was among those recognized for his steadfast and generous support of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria throughout the years.

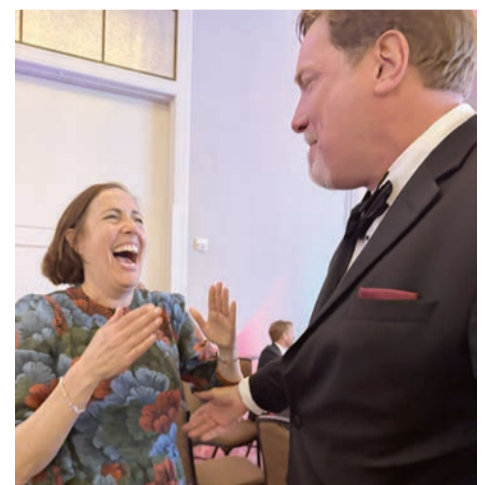
Members of the ACHS Juniors for Seniors organization were on hand after raising \$12,000 for the fund.

“We made calls and used social media,” said student member Salem Tekle. “We organized fundraisers and did what we could to help other students.”

Scholarships can be used at accredited colleges, universities, and technical programs, reflecting the organization’s commitment to



Former SFA executive director Gwen Mullen with John Mullen.



SFA board chair Kevin Jahns, right, congratulates Melissa Bennett as the winner of a 2025 Toyota Corolla donated by Alexandria Toyota.

diverse postsecondary pathways.

This year’s 40th anniversary celebration raised one half of the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria’s 2026 first-year scholarship funding.

For information about volunteering or donating to the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria, contact Executive Director Jasmine Milone at 703-824-6730; jasmine.milone@acps.k12.va.us

# Play Ball!

Miracle League opens 15th anniversary season.

By JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The Miracle League of Alexandria officially opened its youth spring season April 22 with a celebration at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field. Marking the league's 15th year of operation, the event brought together players, families, volunteers and community leaders for the start to another season of inclusive baseball.

The opening day ceremony began at approximately 4:15 p.m., followed by the first game at 4:30 p.m., setting the stage for an evening filled with excitement and encouragement. The Miracle League, a program designed for children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities, continues its mission to remove barriers and ensure that every participant can experience playing baseball in a supportive environment.

Families gathered along the sidelines as players took the field, many wearing team jerseys and hats provided through the league's ongoing partnership with the Washington Nationals' Team Up Program, which supplies authentic uniforms to participants. Volunteer cheerleaders joined families and

friends in providing cheers and applause, encouraging the players as each one circled the bases.

Organizers recognized youth participants, as well as the parents, Therapeutic Recreation staff, and the dedicated volunteers affectionately known as "Angels in the Outfield." These volunteers play a crucial role, assisting players with batting, catching and running the bases, ensuring that everyone can participate fully and safely.

This year's event also welcomed Alexandria City Manager Jim Parajon as a special guest. During the ceremony, he was presented with honorary Miracle League membership and participated in the ceremonial first pitch, officially launching the season.

The April 22 youth opening day followed the league's adult opening day on April 18.

The youth league includes 30 participants who will compete in weekly games held on Wednesdays at 4:30 p.m. through the end of May. The games provide athletic opportunities, foster friendships and boost self-confidence.

The games take place at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field, a specially designed facility featuring a rubberized surface that accommodates wheelchairs and assistive devices. This accessible design ensures that every player can safely navigate the field, reinforcing inclusion and equal participation.

The field, located at the Nannie J. Lee Center in Alexandria, serves as a hub for the community, hosting games, ceremonies and special events that celebrate athletes of all



PHOTOS BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Volunteer cheerleaders hold signs of encouragement on opening day for the Miracle League of Alexandria April 22 at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

abilities.

Volunteers from local schools, businesses and organizations contribute their time and energy, while supporters and sponsors help sustain the program's operations and outreach efforts.

The Miracle League season will continue with games scheduled throughout late April and May, offering multiple opportunities for the community to attend and show support. The Miracle League encourages residents to come out, volunteer and cheer on the players as they experience baseball in an inclusive and welcoming environment.

For more information or to volunteer, visit [www.miracleleagueofalexandria.com](http://www.miracleleagueofalexandria.com)



A Miracle League player gets high fives to celebrate scoring on opening day.



City Manager Jim Parajon, left, throws out the first pitch to open the 2026 season for the Miracle League of Alexandria April 22 at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field. At right is Miracle League executive director Mac Slover.



A Miracle League player takes a swing at bat as MLA executive Director Mac Slover looks on.



Alexandria Therapeutic Recreation director Jackie Person, left, escorts the youth Miracle League team onto the field for Opening Day April 22 at the Kelley Cares Miracle Field at the Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

## LIVING LEGENDS

# Iburia Hall-Haynes

**Lifelong educator continues to inspire.**

BY SUSAN LAUME  
GAZETTE PACKET

**A** dedicated, life-long educator, Iburia Hall-Haynes wears many additional hats: author, historian, researcher, champion of youth, scholarship donor, business technology advisor, and church and community stalwart, as seen through her extensive participation in community service activities.

Born in Alabama and graduating in the top five percent of her high school class, Hall-Haynes stayed in-state to receive her undergraduate college degree, studying business education and English. She made her way to Virginia to work at a few jobs before settling in on her passion.

After earning her master's degree from Antioch University in Ohio in Human Services Administration and Organization Development, she started teaching. She began her teaching career in Alexandria in 1976 at T. C. Williams High School (now Alexandria City High School). Her focus was on linking business concepts to career skill development for junior high and high school students. It was a teaching career that would span 30 years, with many achievement milestones along the way.

While with the public school system, Hall-Haynes coordinated programs and initiatives to teach students how to enter a career in the business world, exposing them through such programs as Future Business Leaders of America, School Business Partnerships, Project Achievement/ Minority Achievement Program and career days that would draw up to 100 business participants.

Her tenure as business teacher spanned the period of the '90s when computers and the internet were rapidly changing the way business and business communications were conducted; and the way in which schools were managed as well. She used project-based learning and multimedia resources to motivate students to learn office management and economics, business law, accounting, keyboarding and word-processing. She also assisted teachers and administrators with making the leap into the computer world. The National Education Association included her work, "Technology Infusion" in its National School Business Partnership Directory, a listing of valuable resources for professionals. She was invited to participate in NEA's national conference series on "The Transition from School to Work" in 1997 and in 1998. Not surprisingly, she was nominated for Teacher of the Year in 1999.

In the later years of her tenure with the



PHOTO BY STEVEN HALPERSON/TISARA STUDIOS

**Educator Iburia Hall-Haynes is a 2025 Living Legend of Alexandria.**

school system, Hall-Haynes was serving as a curriculum specialist for the technology integration discipline and systemwide technology infusion instructor. As such, she was able to continue her passion for integrating technology into learning. She developed an interactive handbook as a technology integration tool and developed and conducted workshops on areas including word processing, database design, spreadsheet creation and managing computer files. Her work assisted teachers, administrators and staff professionals in meeting Virginia Department of Education certification requirements.

While most might leave their profession behind after retirement to pursue lighter interests or travel, Hall-Haynes embraced a more difficult journey — continuing pursuit of the higher education degree she had begun seven years earlier - her Doctor of Philosophy Degree at George Mason University. She describes her Ph.D pursuit in those years as, "It was as was intended to be - a test of endurance and also enjoyable because I learned a lot and acquired skills I was able to integrate into school systems." She earned her Ph.D in Education Leadership and Technology in 2007, the year following her retirement, in time to join a family celebration alongside her daughter's celebration of law school graduation.

Post retirement, away from the rigors of daily classroom instruction and curriculum development, Hall-Haynes delved into

researching other ways to help students thrive. She conducted research into the drivers of school truancy and dropout. In 2007 she published the study, *Truancy and Truancy Interventions: Perceptions of Students and Education Leaders*. The study has been used by ACPS and other school systems and researchers to assist with truancy issues.

Additionally, after her official retirement from teaching, Hall-Haynes continued working to further the education of young people through Project Discovery of Alexandria. For over 10 years she served as a member of Project Discovery's advisory board, for five years as its vice-chair. She assisted in the program preparing and motivating low income and first-generation college-eligible students to access opportunities for higher education. For that organization, she performed such diverse duties as coordinating annual fundraisers, designing their website, creating an online scholarship application, serving as editor of the newsletter, creating a scholarship orientation video, and serving on the scholarship committee. She was able to acquire the interest, mentoring, and donations of healthcare service company AR Services, which became a major contributor to the project. She now serves as a consultant to the Vickie Belk Scholarship Foundation and is a former foundation board member. She designed their website to inform students and the community about the scholarships and foundation activities. This year,

she moderated a workshop, "The Path to Scholarships," compiling a resource booklet for students preparing for college titled, "Scholarships and Resources for Scholars - 2025." Hall-Haynes herself is a significant donor, sponsoring three students in attending the Northern Virginia Community College's Science, Technology and Math Program in the summer of 2016. Her service on the Project Discovery of Alexandria Advisory Board was acknowledged in proclamations by the City of Alexandria in 2018 and 2019.

Beyond her significant contributions to educating young people, Hall-Haynes has helped her church, Oakland Baptist Church, in solidifying its place in history. Established in 1892, the historic church was built on the grounds of Civil War era Fort Ward, which became the site of an emancipated African American community after the war. Known as The Fort, Hall-Haynes researched and documented the church cemetery and successfully applied for its recognition by both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. Further, she applied for and received a grant award of over \$20,000 from the Virginia Historical African American Cemetery and Graves Fund for the restoration and care of the cemetery.

Hall-Haynes, who maintains strong ties to her home community in Alabama, was inducted into their R. R. Moton High School Museum Hall of Fame in 2017, honoring her contribution to Civil Rights in education. The former school is on its way to placement on the register of historic schools due in part to Hall-Haynes' activism.

One of her nominators, Carolyn B. Lewis said, "Iburia Hall-Haynes is a role model for youth as well as her peers. Her contributions have helped to shape minds, inspire curiosity and foster growth in the community. She has a unique blend of talents and skills that she readily and graciously shares. Her efforts inspire students now and will for generations to come."

Addressing her devotion to education, Hall-Haynes says "Education has been important to me over the decades because it provided the foundation necessary for growth. At each level of growth, and once achieved, I was able to give back to my home and resident communities.

Education was the driving force for my ability to give back."

Iburia Hall-Haynes has given back to her community in great measure. She is a Living Legend of Alexandria.

The mission of Living Legends of Alexandria is to identify, honor and chronicle the lives of individuals who have contributed to the community in an exemplary and lasting way that has significantly impacted the quality of life in Alexandria and serves as an inspiration to others.

To nominate a Living Legend, visit [www.AlexandriaLegends.org](http://www.AlexandriaLegends.org)

# Behind the Brick and Bloom

Alexandria's Old Town Historic Garden Tour offers horticulture and storytelling.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL  
GAZETTE PACKET

**U**nder a sunny spring sky in Old Town, the past felt unusually close.

The Garden Club of Virginia's Historic Garden Week Tour in Alexandria welcomed visitors into five private homes and gardens, offering a rare glimpse behind brick façades that have witnessed nearly three centuries of American life. Organized jointly by the Hunting Creek Garden Club and the Garden Club of Alexandria, the annual tour once again transformed cobblestone streets and shaded courtyards into a living museum of preservation and horticulture.

For Kim Davis, who coordinates publicity for the Old Town Garden Club, the day reflected both continuity and momentum.

"We estimate we had around 1,500 attendees," Davis said. "It was as strong, if not stronger, than previous years. Each home is unique — each one tells its own story."

Those stories stretched from colonial land grants under King Charles II to 20th-century renovations and modern stewardship. Yet what united them was not just age, but care — an ongoing dialogue between past and present, history and habitation.

One of the most talked-about stops was 209 South Fairfax Street, a home layered with centuries of transformation. Originally tied to early industrial uses including a tannery and coach-building shop, it was later reshaped by prominent Alexandrians and even reno-

vated during the tenure of former Treasury Secretary Henry Fowler. Today, its current owners have uncovered hidden infrastructure within its walls, including old secure telephone lines once used for direct government communication in the 1960s.

"The restoration there really stands out," Davis said. "It shows how these homes evolve, but still hold onto their character."

Another highlight was 317 South Saint Asaph Street, widely considered one of the most architecturally authentic homes on the tour. With origins tracing back to an early "flounder house" built between 1750 and 1770, the property preserves its original staircase, early fireplaces, and layered additions from the 19th and 20th centuries. Its garden, designed for sequential seasonal bloom, reflects the same philosophy of thoughtful continuity.

"This one feels like stepping directly into early Alexandria," Davis said. "It has changed very little compared to some of the others."

By contrast, Miguel Estrada's home at 312 Queen Street offered a sweeping blend of restoration and refinement. Once home to figures ranging from Fleet Admiral William "Bull" Halsey to diplomat George Kennan, the property now balances 18th-century structure with contemporary elegance. A restored courtyard pool framed by espaliered jasmine served as one of the tour's unexpected focal points.

"It's a beautiful home and garden," Davis noted. "It was definitely a standout surprise for many visitors."

Across the tour, preservation



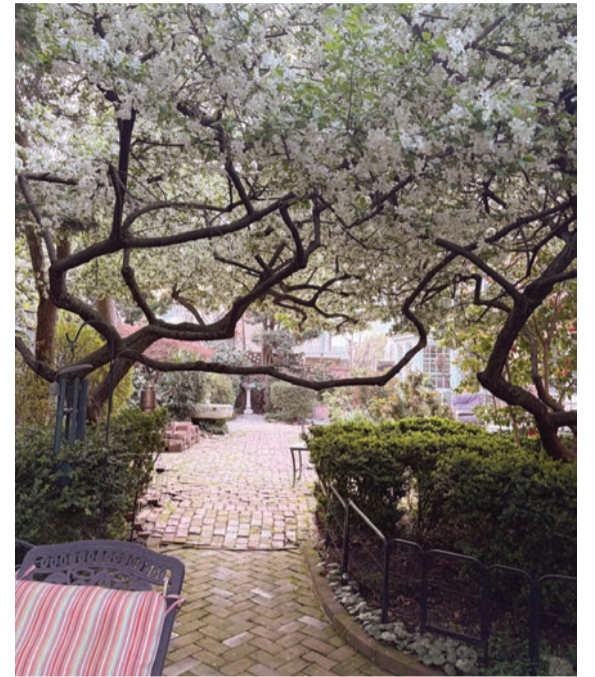
Emily Sawyer Jones and Stacy Carter of the Garden Club of Alexandria showcase local crafts during Historic Garden Week in Old Town.

was the unifying theme, not only in architecture, but in landscaping as well. Several properties, including Ruthi Birch's residence and 209 South Fairfax, incorporated native plantings and pollinator-friendly designs, reflecting a broader shift in how historic gardens are being maintained.

"There were definitely more native plants this year," Davis said. "And Bartlett Tree Experts handing out seedlings was a big hit — you saw people walking around all day with little saplings in their hands."

Indeed, the presence of such knowledgeable practitioners added an educational layer to the

SEE BEHIND THE BRICK, PAGE 14



In the garden of Ruthi Birch, a canopy of spring blossoms arches over a brick walkway, reflecting the tour's emphasis on natural plantings and thoughtful preservation.



A spring bouquet of soft pink and white roses, sunny yellow blooms and fresh greenery brightens the dining room table inside one of Old Town Alexandria's historic homes featured on the Historic Garden Week in Virginia tour.

## Alexandria Historical Society Presents Shipwreck on the Potomac: Disaster in Pursuit of Lincoln's Killer with Karen E. Stone

**A**uthor Karen E. Stone will speak at the Alexandria Historical Society for a lecture on her book, "Shipwreck on the Potomac: Disaster in Pursuit of Lincoln's Killer," on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 7 p.m. at The Lyceum, 201 South Washington Street, Alexandria. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m., and light refreshments will be available. Admission is \$5 for non-members and free for members.

Stepping away from Revolu-

tionary War topics this month, the Alexandria Historical Society will present a compelling program on a little-remembered Civil War-era tragedy tied to the aftermath of Abraham Lincoln's assassination.

It was a calm, moonless night in late April 1865. Robert E. Lee had surrendered. Abraham Lincoln was dead. Assassin John Wilkes Booth and accomplice David Herold, after hiding in the swamps of Southern Maryland, had crossed the Potomac River to safety. The barge Black Diamond was an-

chored with the Potomac Flotilla near Blackstone Lighthouse, hoping to prevent that crossing and capture the fugitives. Those aboard did not know they were already too late.

At the same time, the steamer Massachusetts was heading downriver, carrying United States soldiers back to their regiments. By dawn, the Black Diamond lay at the bottom of the Potomac, the Massachusetts was badly damaged, and eighty-seven men were dead.

In her talk, Stone will recount this dramatic and largely forgotten disaster — a heroic pursuit that ended in tragedy.

Karen E. Stone has served as Museum Division Manager for St. Mary's County, Maryland, where the event took place, since 2017. She completed her undergraduate studies at Gettysburg College and earned her master's degree from Penn State University.

A lifelong admirer of Abraham Lincoln and a student of his assassination since childhood, Stone

was immediately drawn to this story because of its connection to Lincoln, Booth, and the desperate pursuit that followed the assassination. Surprised that such a dramatic event had been largely overlooked by history, she set out to research and share it more fully. Shipwreck on the

Potomac is her first book, though she has published numerous articles and lectured frequently on United States, state, and local history.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## MEETS EVERY SUNDAY

**Bird Walks. 8 a.m.** At 6401 George Washington Memorial Parkway, Alexandria. Friends of Dyke Marsh organizers lead bird walks every Sunday morning. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and everyone is welcome to join.

## MEETS EVERY MONDAY

**Monday Morning Bird Walk. 7 a.m.** Meets at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard Alexandria. The Monday Morning Bird Walk is sponsored by the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and takes place every Monday at 7 a.m. April-September and 8 a.m. October-March. Following the walk, members of the group gather at the nearby Denny's for breakfast and to compile the morning's bird list. Call (703) 768-2525.

## WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

**Wednesday Night Bingo. 7 p.m.** At Atlas Brew Works, 2429 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. The Capital City Showcase, the company that brings you some of the DC area's best events, is hosting an amazing night of everyone's favorite game at Atlas Brew Works Alexandria. Win prizes on every round, and the winner of the final round gets a \$50 Atlas Brew Works gift card for your next visit! There's also \$6 select Atlas drafts! Plus pizza served from the world famous Andy's Pizza! Email at capitalcityshowcase@gmail.com

## MGNV PLANT CLINICS ARE OPEN

**The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic** at 301 King St., Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 7 - 9:30 a.m. Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 8:30 - 11 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N. 14th and N. Courthouse Roads, Arlington operates on Saturdays from 8 - 11 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, operates on Sundays from 9 - 11 a.m.

## YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

**Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.** At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every Sunday 9-1 p.m.

## AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY

**Starting now through summer 2026**, Alexandria will host major events and experiences commemorating America's 250th birthday. Located on the Potomac River just minutes from Washington, D.C. and George Washington's Mount Vernon, Alexandria, Virginia invites families, friends and history-lovers to stay in, explore and commemorate America's 250th birthday in a city older than the United States itself with a dynamic lineup of events and immersive experiences. Learn more and find additional details on these and other events at [VisitAlexandria.com/250](http://VisitAlexandria.com/250).

### 250th Events Itinerary:

- ❖ May-November: A temporary public art installation from artist Sandy Williams IV will commemorate the signing of the Declaration of Independence as part of the City of Alexandria's Time & Place public art series.
- ❖ June 12-14: Alexandria's major signature 250th event, Sails on the Potomac, will host iconic tall ships as a Sail Virginia 2026 Affiliate Harbor and will feature a weekend packed with activities including Alexandria Jazz Fest performances.
- ❖ June: A new exhibit will open at the Alexandria History Museum at The Lyceum. Called Stories of U.S. Collections Capture our History, the exhibit will bring out objects from the collection that are seldom seen.
- ❖ July 3-4: Enjoy evening Fourth of July fireworks shows at George Washington's Mount Vernon on July 3 and 4, and a daytime fireworks show on July 4.



The Royal Restaurant features Mother's Day Dining on Sunday, May 10, 2026 in Alexandria.

❖ July 11: Take part in the City of Alexandria's 277th/USA 250th Birthday Celebration complete with fireworks, music and more at Oronoco Bay Park along Alexandria's waterfront.

## CITY OF ALEXANDRIA DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION, PARKS & CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

**From glow parties and jazz on the waterfront to family picnics and fireworks on the Potomac**, there is something happening in every corner of our city. Grab your calendar. You are going to want to mark a few dates.

❖ Events are free unless otherwise stated.

**Asian American Pacific Islander Month Celebration**

Saturday, May 30, 3-7 p.m. | Patrick Henry Recreation Center

Celebrate culture, history, and community through food, live performances, art, youth activities, and storytelling in this vibrant family-friendly event.

**48th Annual ALX Jazz Fest**  
Friday, June 12, 12-6 p.m.; Saturday, June 13, 12-9 p.m.; Sunday, June 14, 12-6 p.m. | Waterfront Park

ALX Jazz Fest celebrates its 48th annual event as part of the Sails on the Potomac series honoring the USA's 250th anniversary, featuring three days of music: Americana Roots (Friday), American Jazz and Poetry (Saturday), and Future Sounds of America (Sunday).

**Juneteenth Block Party**

Friday, June 19, 4-7 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Come and celebrate the people, contributions, traditions and culture of Black Americans who have helped build and shape America. Enjoy food, live music, dance presentations, and recreation programming in celebration of this national holiday.

**Alexandria and USA Birthday Celebration**

Sunday, July 12 | Oronoco Bay Park  
Celebrate Alexandria's 277th birthday and the USA's 250th with live music, food, and a fireworks finale over the Potomac River at 9:30 p.m. A can't-miss summer night.

**Kids and Teens**

Nerf the Turf

\$19, Ages 7-12

Friday, June 5, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Patrick Henry

**Elementary School**

Build teamwork and sportsmanship in this instructor-led foam dart showdown. Bring your gear; we'll provide the ammo.

**Dodgeball Fanatics**

\$19, Ages 7-12

Friday, May 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Patrick Henry Elementary School

Duck, dip, dive, and dodge in a safe and structured environment designed for skill building and fun.

**Parents Night Out**

\$25, Ages 5-12

Fridays, May 8 & June 12, 6:30-8:45 p.m. | Mount Vernon Recreation Center

Enjoy an evening out while your kids enjoy games and activities in a safe and energetic setting.

**Charles Houston Kiddie Cabaret**

\$6, Ages 1-5

Saturday, June 13, 10 a.m.-12 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Dress up, dance to kiddie favorites, enjoy lunch, and celebrate in style with a parent or guardian.

**For Adults**

**Charles Houston Line Dance Social**

Ages 18+

Tuesday, May 12, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Charles Houston Recreation Center

Enjoy an evening of toe-tapping fun. No experience needed. Just bring your enthusiasm.

**Live on Top of The Hill Concert Series**

Ages 18+

Fridays, June 27 & July 25, 12-3 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center

Relax with live folk, cover, and mariachi music in a welcoming community setting.

**Top of The Hill Adult Social**

Ages 18+

Friday, July 31, 6:30-9 p.m. | William Ramsay Recreation Center

Connect, unwind, enjoy games and themed nights, and meet new friends in this casual summer gathering.

Explore full details and register at [alexandriava.gov/RPCA/Events](http://alexandriava.gov/RPCA/Events).

## ALEXANDRIA ACES SEEK LOCAL HOSTS

The Alexandria Aces collegiate summer baseball team, the reigning heart of Alexandria's summer sports scene, is officially seeking

local families to host student-athletes for the upcoming 2026 season. Celebrating 18 years of premier competition in the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League (CRSCBL), the organization is looking for residents to provide housing for players from May 30 through July 25. Requirements for hosting are simple: families provide a private bedroom and access to laundry facilities. In return, families receive all-access season tickets for their household and an invitation to the team's annual Host Family Appreciation Night at Frank Mann Field. How to Apply: Interested families can find full program details and application forms by visiting the "Host Families" section at [alexandriaaces.org](http://alexandriaaces.org). For more information, contact Maggie Crane, Host Family Coordinator, at 617-645-5860 or email her at [magiccrane19@gmail.com](mailto:magiccrane19@gmail.com).

## NOW THRU MAY 17

**UNSETTLED Exhibit.** At Multiple Exposures Gallery, in Studio 7 at the Torpedo Factory, Alexandria. Multiple Exposures Gallery (MEG) is excited to present UNSETTLED, a fine art photography exhibition exploring moments of unease, transition, and decision. Juried by artist and educator Susan Ruddick Bloom, the exhibit features 29 photographs that capture fleeting, pivotal moments, both physical and emotional.

## MAY 1-23

**The Alexandria City High School Titan Student Art Exhibition.** At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience student creativity firsthand. Gallery hours: Thursdays 12-6pm, Fridays 12-9pm, Saturdays & Sundays 12-6pm. Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits](http://DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits)

## MAY 5 TO JUNE 28

**"Catching the Light" 2026 Art Exhibition and Sale.** At Green Spring Gardens Horticultural Center, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Artists Reception - Sunday, May 17 from 1-3 p.m. Potomac Valley Watercolorists presents "Catching the Light," the 2026 edition of their annual nature-focused Art Exhibition and Sale. Green Spring Gardens "Art in The Garden Program" sponsored by the Friends of Green Spring invites visitors to enjoy this

# ENTERTAINMENT

local, creative event. This annual fine art show spotlights many of our region's most highly-skilled and well-known water media artists, and features more than 100 original framed works on display and available for purchase. Visit [www.potomacvalleywatercolorists.org](http://www.potomacvalleywatercolorists.org)

## WEDNESDAY/MAY 6

**History Talk. 12 to 1 p.m.** At National Museum of the U.S. Army, 1775 Liberty Drive, Fort Belvoir. In this History Talk, trace the Army's foundational role in American memorialization, from General John J. Pershing's influence and the symbolism of white marble crosses to debates over repatriation and permanent overseas burial. Follow the transition from a military program to a civilian agency, the expansion of memorial efforts after World War II, collaboration with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, and modern-day Memorial Day commemorations worldwide. Visit the website: <https://www.thenmusa.org/events/>

## FRIDAY/MAY 8

**Fiesta Asia Dances. 7-8:30 p.m.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Community based social and line dancing – from Joget to Bhangra, Todo Toto to Dabke - are incredibly popular across Asia. It is a big part of vibrant celebrations and everyday communal life. Whether you are on bustling streets, attending weddings, or celebrating festivals, you are likely to be invited to join in the lively swaying, shaking, stepping, and sashaying. If you love social and line dancing, this event is perfect for you.

## MAY 8-10

**Nepenthe Gallery Presents Bruce Springsteen Exhibition.** At 7918 Fort Hunt Rd. in Alexandria. The exhibit, "Greetings From Alexandria, VA," celebrates the enduring legacy of Bruce Springsteen. Timed to coincide with Springsteen's Washington, D.C. concert at Nationals Park, this three-day event offers fans a rare opportunity to experience and acquire historic images and memorabilia honoring one of rock's most iconic performers. Admission is free, and all photographs and memorabilia on display will be available for purchase.

Exhibition Hours:

Friday: 11 AM – 6 PM  
Saturday: 9 AM – 4 PM  
Sunday: 9 AM – 4 PM

## SATURDAY/MAY 9

**Mandoleers. 2 p.m.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Join the Mandoleers for a joyful and musically diverse performance by a one-of-a-kind conductor-led mandolin orchestra. The Mandoleers feature guitars, mandolins, mandocellos, and a double bass and are the longest continuously operating mandolin orchestra in the United States. Their repertoire reflects the rich versatility of the mandolin and guitar and ranges from classical and semi-classical works to jazz, folk and contemporary pieces. They embrace traditional and modern styles, offering audiences a diverse and engaging musical experience.

## SATURDAY/MAY 9

**Del Ray Artisans' Spring Art Market. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.** At Mount Vernon Rec Center Fields adjacent to Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Features original creations by local artists in a variety of mediums, including ceramics, fiber, jewelry, mixed media, photography, and more. Perfect gifts for your home, Mother's Day, or other occasions! Details at [DelRayArtisans.org/event/spring-art-market-2026](http://DelRayArtisans.org/event/spring-art-market-2026)

## SUNDAY/MAY 10

**Side-by-Side Concert. 3 p.m.** At Schlesinger Concert Hall, 4915 E Campus Drive, Alexandria. The Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic (WashMetPhil) with the Washington Metropolitan Youth Orchestra (WMYO) featuring pianist Stewart Goodyear, is proud



The Nepenthe Gallery presents an exhibition on Bruce Springsteen, "Greetings from Alexandria, VA" on May 8-10, 2026.

to present a Side-by-Side Concert.

Program Highlights:

- ❖ Jessie Montgomery's Hymn for Everyone – played Side-by-Side with WMYO, opens the concert with a radiant spirit of unity and collective voice, blending lyricism and rhythmic vitality in music that feels both deeply personal and broadly communal.
- ❖ George Gershwin's Concerto in F for Piano and Orchestra – performed by guest artist Stewart Goodyear. Proclaimed "a phenomenon" by the Los Angeles Times and "one of the best pianists of his generation", Mr. Goodyear brings his signature brilliance to this iconic work. Gershwin seamlessly blends classical form with jazz idioms, creating music that is lively, expressive, and full of character.
- ❖ Modest Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition – played Side-by-Side with WMYO, our concert concludes with a journey through vivid musical "pictures" inspired by a gallery of artwork. Each movement transports listeners to a different scene, from playful and whimsical to grand and powerful, inviting audiences to imagine themselves walking through an exhibition brought to life by the orchestra.

Visit [wmpmusic.org](http://wmpmusic.org)

## MOTHER'S DAY DINING ON SUNDAY, MAY 10

**Mother's Day is just around the corner**, and several North Virginia restaurants are setting the table with a lineup of celebratory brunches and dinners designed to make Mom feel truly special.

**The Majestic:** This Mother's Day, gather around the table at newly opened The Majestic by Chef Santiago Lopez and celebrate moms who make every neighborhood, every family, and every moment a little more meaningful. Join the restaurant for brunch or dinner – no prix fixe, no fuss. Just a beautiful meal in a place that feels like home, surrounded by the people who matter most. Every mother and

mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Palette 22:** Located in Arlington, Palette 22 offers a colorful, celebratory take on Mother's Day, with special dishes available alongside its signature Bottomless Brunch and dinner experience. Brunch feels lively and generous, with a continuous flow of globally inspired small plates designed for sharing. In the evening, the menu leans into bold, expressive flavors with specials like Watermelon Aguachile, Stuffed Calamari layered with white paella, manchego, and black sofrito, and a deeply comforting Braised Lamb Stew. It's a vibrant, feel-good setting where every detail invites you to slow down, connect, and celebrate Mom in a way that feels personal and memorable. Every mother and mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Vola's Docksides Grill:** Vola's Docksides Grill sets the scene for a laid-back, waterfront Mother's Day with comfort-driven dishes that still feel special. On Mother's Day, guests can enjoy brunch and dinner specials including a rich Crab Cake Benedict, alongside bright Lemon Ricotta Pancakes topped with berry compote and lemon-maple syrup. Come evening, bold yet approachable flavors take over with a Grilled Bone-In Pork Chop paired with roasted sweet potatoes and cherry-apricot chutney, and Pan Seared Rockfish served with parmesan polenta, spring vegetables, and lemon butter. It's easy, craveable dining by the water. Every mother and mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Royal Restaurant:** Royal Restaurant offers a warm, neighborhood setting for Mother's Day, with special brunch and dinner dishes available for the occasion. Brunch brings bold, comforting flavors with Crab Chilaquiles topped with salsa roja, queso fresco,

and a sunny egg, alongside a refined Lobster Benedict featuring South African lobster tail and Old Bay hollandaise. In the evening, the specials continue with a Korean Marinated Skirt Steak, and Pan Seared Rockfish paired with jambalaya rice and andouille sausage. It's a thoughtful, flavor-driven experience perfect for a relaxed celebration. Every mother and mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Mia's Italian Kitchen:** Mia's Italian Kitchen brings a warm, festive spirit to Mother's Day with specials available alongside its signature Bottomless Brunch and dinner. Brunch is lively and abundant, with a steady flow of Italian favorites made for sharing—think passed plates, flowing glasses, and a table that feels full in every sense, perfect for celebrating together. In the evening, the specials lean into bold, comforting flavors with Frutti Di Mare Linguini in a rich lobster-tomato broth with garlic, herbs, and seafood, alongside Grilled Sirloin served with risotto alla milanese and chianti demi-glace. It's a joyful, generous dining experience designed to bring everyone together and make Mom feel truly celebrated. Every mother and mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Barca Pier & Wine Bar:** Barca Pier offers a Mother's Day experience that feels like an escape with all day specials. Items like Seared Duck Breast with harissa brussels sprouts and pomegranate molasses bring depth and warmth, while Surf And Turf pairs za'atar scallops with blackened tenderloin and bright citrus notes. Bacalao Tostada adds a fresh, savory bite with salt cod brandade and herbs. Designed for sharing, sipping, and taking in the waterfront energy, it is the kind of celebration that unfolds naturally. Every mother and mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Ada's on the River:** Ada's on the River sets the tone for an elegant, thoughtfully elevated Mother's Day, with special brunch and dinner dishes available alongside its signature waterfront experience. Brunch feels indulgent yet refined, with highlights like Lobster Benedict with Maine lobster, crème fraîche, and bear-naise, and Wagyu Steak and Eggs featuring ultra-grade wagyu skirt steak, potato pavé, and chimichurri—all best enjoyed against sweeping river views. In the evening, the celebration continues with a menu that balances bold flavor and finesse, from the richly marbled 15 oz Mishima Reserve Wagyu Ribeye with sherry mushrooms and a chorizo-manchego twice baked potato, to Blackened Rockfish with lemongrass coconut curry, asparagus, and fresh herbs. End on a high note with the Grand Marnier Soufflé, a signature finale that makes the entire experience feel truly special. Every mother and mother figure will enjoy a complimentary mimosa at brunch or a glass of sparkling wine at dinner.

**Theismann's Restaurant & Bar:** This Mother's Day, Theismann's Restaurant & Bar is inviting families to gather, celebrate, and enjoy a meal that's as easygoing as it is satisfying, with special brunch and dinner offerings available. Brunch brings a lively, crowd-pleasing energy with its Bottomless Brunch, perfect for sharing favorites, raising a glass, and settling in for a relaxed celebration. In the evening, classic dishes take the spotlight, from Grilled Filet Mignon with garlic mashed potatoes and red wine demi-glace to Pistachio Crusted Halibut with lemon risotto and asparagus. It's a welcoming, no-fuss way to celebrate Mom—where everyone leaves full, happy, and well taken care of.

## TUESDAY/MAY 12

**The Chamber ALX's Young Leaders Network.** After Hours. 5:30-7:00 p.m. At Dive Del Ray, Alexandria. Join in on May 12th for the first installment of our Young Leaders After Hours! Be among the first to check out Del Ray's brand new seasonal pop-up—Dive Del Ray—bringing a bold dive bar aesthetic and fresh energy to the neighborhood. Sip, snack, and

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 15

# Behind the Brick and Bloom

FROM PAGE 11

event, with visitors learning about tree care while receiving free seedlings. It was a small but symbolic gesture. Preservation is not something frozen in time, but something growing forward.

One of the most vibrant additions to this year's tour was the Spring Marketplace Boutique at the Athenaeum on Prince Street, hosted by the Hunting Creek Garden Club. Open from morning through late afternoon, the marketplace featured local artisans, authors, jewelers, textile designers, and specialty food vendors.

"It was a huge success," Davis said. "There were lots of great vendors, and people really enjoyed the energy there."

Inside the homes, floral arrangements played their own supporting role. Volunteers and designers filled mantels, tables, and entryways with seasonal blooms, adding color and fragrance to rooms already rich with history.

"[They] were fabulous this year," Davis added. "They really elevated the experience in every home."

Despite the historical weight of the properties, the atmosphere throughout Old Town remained light and celebratory. Visitors moved steadily from house to



PHOTO COURTESY OF GARDEN CLUB OF ALEXANDRIA

Visitors wait in line to enter one of Old Town Alexandria's featured private residences during the annual Historic Garden Week in Virginia tour, waiting for a chance to step inside and explore the home's architecture, design and garden inspiration.

house under clear skies, pausing in gardens, chatting with volunteers, and gathering inspiration from spaces that were both private and deeply public for one day only.

"There was a gorgeous energy in the neighborhood," Davis said. "People were just enjoying it: walking, talking, taking it all in."

Proceeds from Historic Garden Week support the Garden Club of Virginia's statewide preservation efforts, funding restoration projects for historic landscapes across

the Commonwealth.

As Davis reflected, the meaning of the day extended far beyond attendance numbers or floral displays.

"Each home is unique," she said again, returning to a central truth of the tour. "They are all different, but together they tell the story of Old Town."

Alexandria's 2026 Historic Garden Week Tour offered something rare: a reminder that preservation is not just about what is saved, but also about what is shared.

## City of Alexandria to Host Bike to Work Day – May 15

The City of Alexandria invites the community to participate in National Bike to Work Day on Friday, May 15. This annual free event encourages the public to consider bicycle commuting as an affordable, fun, and environmentally friendly mode of transportation to get to work.

Alexandria residents will be among the thousands of area commuters who celebrate Bike to Work Day by cycling to pit stops on their way to work (or back home,

if applicable) and participating in special events around the City and throughout the region.

The City will be hosting a pit stop in Old Town next to City Hall in the 100 block of North Royal Street on Friday May 15 from 7:30 to 9:30 a.m. Participants can register here <https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/register/>

Join in for grab-and-go refreshments, raffle prizes and a limited-edition Bike to Work Day t-shirt while supplies last. Whether you're

already an avid cyclist or just looking to get started, the pit stop will feature resources that can enhance your commute. Register today at [biketoworkmetrodc.org/register](https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/register/).

This year, Alexandria will have six pit stops throughout the City: Old Town at City Hall (City-sponsored); John Carlyle Square Park; Del Ray; Fairlington Centre; Mark Center; National Landing at APTA (afternoon stop)

<https://www.biketoworkmetrodc.org/pit-stop-locations/>

## Alexandria Aces Seeking Summer Host Families

The Alexandria Aces collegiate summer baseball team, the heart of Alexandria's summer sports scene, is officially seeking local families to host elite student-athletes for the upcoming 2026 season.

Celebrating 18 years of premier competition in the Cal Ripken Sr. Collegiate Baseball League (CRSCBL), the organization is looking for residents to provide a "home away from home" for players from May 30 through July 25. This essential program allows the Aces to recruit top-tier talent from major universities nationwide, players who often go on to be drafted by Major League Baseball.

Requirements for hosting are simple: families provide a private bedroom and access to laundry facilities. In return, families receive all-access season tickets for their household and an invitation to the team's annual Host Family Appreciation Night at Frank Mann Field.

"Our host families are more than just housing; they are the heartbeat of the Alexandria Aces," said Frank Fannon, Aces Team President. "Opening your home to these talented young men creates lifelong bonds. Many of our families have watched their former 'house guests' debut in the Major Leagues, but the real reward is the friendship that lasts long after the final

out of the season."

For many Alexandria families, hosting has become a summer tradition. "Hosting a player changed the way my kids see the game," says one long-time host. "They aren't just athletes on a field; they become big brothers to our children and a part of our family dinner table."

Interested families can find full program details and application forms by visiting the "Host Families" section at [alexandriaaces.org](http://alexandriaaces.org).

For more information, please contact Maggie Crane, Host Family Coordinator, at 617-645-5860 or email her at [maggiocrane19@gmail.com](mailto:maggiocrane19@gmail.com).

**200% OF BUSINESSES** using commuter benefits to save money say it's a good idea

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BY DRPT

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*This math may not add up, but offering your employees commuter benefits makes perfect sense.*

[ConnectingVA.org](http://ConnectingVA.org)

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WHERE THEY FELL      WHAT THEY CLAIMED

Their lies come out of your wallet. Insurance fraud costs everyone in Virginia \$1,000 per year. Learn how to spot it and report it at [TheCostOfFraud.com](http://TheCostOfFraud.com)

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# ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 13

connect with fellow young leaders in one of the hottest new spots around. Don't miss your chance to experience it first.

## THURSDAY/MAY 14

**The Chamber ALX's 2026 City Council Breakfast. 8-10 a.m.** At the Hilton Alexandria Old Town, Alexandria. Take an inside look at Alexandria's future as City Council members unpack the newly adopted City budget, highlight key investments, and share updates on major initiatives already underway. Learn how local priorities are shaping decisions and driving progress across neighborhoods, services, and community development efforts. This is your opportunity to connect with the leaders guiding Alexandria's path.

## THURSDAY/MAY 14

**2026 City Council Breakfast. 8-10 a.m.** At Hilton Alexandria Old Town, 1767 King Street, Alexandria. The Chamber ALX presents the 2026 City Council Breakfast. An inside look at Alexandria's future as City Council members unpack the newly adopted City budget, highlight key investments and share updates on major initiatives already underway. Legislators confirmed: Mayor Alyia Gaskins, Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley, Councilman Canek Aguirre, Councilman John Chapman, Councilman Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi, and Councilwoman Jacinta Greene.

## SATURDAY/MAY 16

**Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop. 1 p.m.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. Enjoy an afternoon of engaging conversation and writing! Facilitated by poet, author, and Athenaeum Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta, this workshop welcomes amateur to professional women writers ages 18-100. Each workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing and allows participants to enhance their writing styles. Space is limited, please

RSVP to [greatpublishing@yahoo.com](mailto:greatpublishing@yahoo.com)

## SUNDAY/MAY 17

**The Washington Metro Concert Orchestra. 5 p.m.** At the Athenaeum, Alexandria. The Washington Metro Concert Orchestra is a 6th-9th grade full orchestra ensemble bringing together some of the best middle school musicians in the Alexandria area. Through a variety of music selections, students heighten their technical abilities and learn the collaboration skills of playing in an ensemble with string and band instruments for the first time. The WMCO performs works by classical masters and reaches into contemporary and educational works by modern day composers from around the world.

## SUNDAY/MAY 17

**Old Town Festival of Speed & Style. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.** In Old Town Alexandria on the 400-600 blocks of King Street, and the 100 blocks of North and South St. Asaph Street and North and South Pitt Street. One of the East Coast's most stylish and celebrated car events, Old Town Festival of Speed & Style presented by Burke & Herbert Bank, returns to Alexandria for its seventh year. The Festival offers a one-of-a-kind opportunity for the public to see rare and exotic sports and supercars stopped in their tracks for up-close viewing and observing.

Schedule:

7:05 am Sponsor Canopy Set-up  
8:00 am Vehicle Arrival and Placement  
8:45 am Car Judging Begins  
10:00 am Opening Ceremony – Event Producer and Emcee, National anthem  
10:10 am Live Music | TBD  
12:00 pm Style Celebration  
12:45 pm Awards Ceremony and Trophy Presentation  
1:10 pm Live Music F | TBD  
3:15 pm Cars Depart/Sponsor Canopy Tear-down  
4:00 pm Streets Reopen

## MONDAY/MAY 18

**Agenda: Alexandria. 7 p.m.** At The Forum, Minnie Howard Campus, 3775 W. Braddock Road, Alexandria. Agenda: Alexandria, the city's premier organization dedicated to examining local issues from a variety of viewpoints, will be focusing on a variety of issues related to immigration in Alexandria.

## TUESDAY/MAY 19

**American Revolution Lecture. 1-3 p.m.** At Hollin Hall Senior Center, Room 218, 1500 Shenandoah Road, Alexandria. History Professor Richard Bell will discuss how the American Revolution not only liberated the colonies but also served as a catalyst for changing the way the world works. Sponsored by the Mount Vernon Genealogical Society, no registration is necessary for this free in-person meeting.

## SUNDAY/MAY 31

**Arts & Crafts Fair. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.** At Tavern Square in Old Town Alexandria, 415 King Street. Presented by Volunteer Alexandria and Made in ALX. Discover a curated selection of jewelry, pottery, soaps, home décor, and unique gifts while supporting local artists at this free event. This family-friendly gathering invites you to shop local and explore beautiful crafts in the heart of Old Town Alexandria at Tavern Square.

## SATURDAY/JUNE 6

**First Saturday Used Book Sale: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.** at Sherwood Regional Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane. Selection of over 20,000 gently used children's books, fiction, history, biography, home and garden, cooking, crafts, sports, religion, travel, CDs, DVDs, and more. Unless specially priced, \$1 for hard backs and large paperbacks, and 25 cents for mass market paperbacks. Open every day, various hours. Visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/library/branches/friends-of-sherwood-regional> for information on other days and times for the library's ongoing book sale.

## Soap du Jour



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

As I'm sure you don't know - and even more sure that you don't care, I prefer using a bar of soap rather than liquid soap/body wash. This point may not be worth making, but as a cancer patient still under treatment, with monthly lab work and quarterly PET scans keeping me on the precipice, I react to things differently than one who was not given - as I was, a "13 month to two-years" prognosis, back in late Feb. 2009. Moreover, having been diagnosed (at the time, it has since changed) with stage IV, non-small cell lung cancer, a killer cancer if there ever was one - and there are many (though lung cancer kills more people than the next four cancers combined); my prospects were not encouraging. Yet, here I sit, pen in hand, 17+ years later alive and reasonably well - all things considered (and you bet I consider all things; it helps to keep my sane); still waiting for the other shoe to drop (expect it really) and viewing my life through a cancer-affected prism.

And through that prism I saw an eight-count package of soap the other day in my local supermarket advertising circular, and since it was my brand, I thought I should buy it, especially since it's not often advertised and rarely available, given the popularity/marketing of liquid soaps - apparently. Seeing this advertisement reminded me of a similar experience I had 17+ years ago during the early, hairless stage of my heavy-duty chemotherapy infusions. I went ahead and instinctively (bulk/value purchases appeal to my consuming nature - then and now) bought the eight-count then without factoring in my mortality (or rather lack thereof - at the time). However, soon-ish after I returned home and incorporated this eight-count of soap into my bathing routine, and realized how long a bar was lasting, I "stopped short" like Mr. Costanza did in his car - on a long ago "Seinfeld" episode, but in my house and I thought/wondered/worried if I had just wasted my money - considering my prognosis. A variation of the common-sense advisory to not buy green bananas if it's presumed that time is not on the buyer's side.

But survived I have - and eventually "soaped up" this eight count. Nevertheless, the purchase/experience made me gun shy and up until this recent advertisement, I hadn't noticed this item for sale anywhere and likewise hadn't purchased another eight count. Though I survived, I always thought that previous soap purchase was a bit of reach. Seeing the eight count of soap once again reminded me of my earlier what-I-subsequently-described as a mistake and as such was not keen to repeat my error/waste my money (I have plenty of other shorter-term needs/pleasures I'd rather purchase that carry no such financial implications - to me anyway).

All of which brings me - finally, to the meat of this column's bone - so to speak: a cancer's patient's presumptive/predicted/anticipated mortality and the effect it has on one's thinking/planning. A constant worry for me - then and now, has been and still is: whenever I buy anything, I consider/calculate - figuratively speaking, if I will live long enough to actually use this product/item. (I still remember cleaning out my uncle's condo in Florida and finding five bottles of mouthwash underneath the bathroom sink.) I'm constantly worrying about whether I might outlive my money. Money which is hardly unlimited. Moreover, it's very difficult to live/plan financially for a definite maybe. This angst is further complicated by the amazingly good fortune I've had to outlive by prognosis. It's been a blessing but when looking ahead, I can't help thinking that my past will catch up to me. A past which hardly guarantees a future.

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

# Spring2ACTion Raises \$3.5 Million

More than 200 local organizations participate in online fundraiser.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN  
GAZETTE PACKET

The City of Alexandria continued its strong spirit of giving during the annual Spring2ACTion fundraiser, held April 22 online and at venues across the city. Organized by ACT for Alexandria, the event is a 24-hour online "Giving Day" designed to connect residents, businesses and donors with local nonprofit organizations.

"This year was another record-breaking giving event for Alexandria," said ACT President and CEO Heather Peeler. "Spring2ACTion spotlighted the power of collective giving and funds raised will continue to support the organizations that make Alexandria a vibrant place for everyone."

Spring2ACTion has become one of the city's most impactful community initiatives, encouraging people to support causes ranging from education and housing to arts, health and environmental programs. Since its launch in 2011, the event has raised more than \$26 million for hundreds of nonprofits serving Alexandria.

The 2026 fundraiser continued that tradition of success. More than 7,000 donors contributed more than \$3.5 million, benefiting nearly 200 nonprofits across the city. These funds will help organizations provide essential services, support vulnerable populations and enrich the quality of life in the community.

Spring2ACTion allows donors to easily search for causes and give online, while nonprofits compete for bonus prizes and matching funds to maximize their impact. Early giving opportunities and community events leading up to the day helped build momentum and increase participation.

Organizers emphasize that the event is about community connection. As ACT for Alexandria leaders have noted, the giving day reflects neighbors helping neighbors and demonstrates the collective power of philanthropy.

[www.spring2action.org](http://www.spring2action.org)

[WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM](http://www.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM)



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

Representatives from Casa Chirilagua participate in Spring2ACTion April 22. The organization raised \$180,000 during the community online giving event.

# corcoran

MCENEARNEY



## Fords Landing 28 Alexander Street

\$2,739,000 | Totally renovated 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath home features ash hardwood floors, sleek Thermador kitchen, spa-like primary suite, and seasonal views of the Potomac River.

**Babs Beckwith** : 703.627.5421  
OldTownAlexandriaLiving.com



## Beverly Hills 504 Kentucky Avenue

\$2,095,000 | Experience a masterclass in design in this thoughtfully expanded and renovated 5-bedroom, 5-bathroom sanctuary by renowned builder Morris Construction.

**Jen Walker Team** : 703.622.1080  
JenWalker.com



## Belle Haven 6108 Vernon Terrace

\$1,870,000 | Built in 1926 and pristinely updated while preserving the classic features, this ideally positioned home offers 6 bedrooms and 4.5 baths on an enviable landscaped lot!

**Janet Catterson Price** : 703.622.5984  
JanetPriceHomes.com

OPEN SAT 5/9 & SUN 5/10, 1-4PM



## Chatham Square 400 Oronoco Street

\$1,499,990 | End unit, 3-bedroom/den, 3.5-bath townhouse with 2-car garage. Almost 3K square feet. 4 blocks to King Street and 4 blocks to the Potomac River

**Brian Hong** : 703.929.5764  
**Jery Beamer** : 703.929.5763

OPEN FRI 5/8, 4-7PM & SAT 5/9, 2-4PM



## Yates Gardens 922 S Saint Asaph Street

\$1,375,000 | Fall in love with this end-unit row home in the desirable SE Quadrant with private parking for residents. The generous lot is a nature lover's paradise in the city.

**Sarah Bobbin** : 571.225.8716  
SophisticatedLivingNOVADC.com



## Del Ray 411A E Howell Avenue

\$899,000 | Discover the perfect blend of modern style and neighborhood charm. Beautifully updated 3-bedroom, 2-full bath duplex situated right in the vibrant heart of Del Ray.

**Jen Walker Team** : 571.237.2449  
JenWalker.com



## Nethergate 711 W Abingdon Court

\$890,000 | This stunning 4-level townhouse embodies style and design. Offering a European kitchen, lush brick-walled garden, sumptuous primary suite, and 2 off-street parking spaces.

**Kate Patterson** : 703.627.2166  
katepattersonhomes.com

OPEN SAT 5/9 & SUN 5/10, 12-2PM



## Cameron Station 5091 Donovan Drive

\$625,000 | Welcome to Cameron Station living at its finest. 2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 2 private parking spots, shaded balcony, and many updates!

**Jillian Hogan Homes** : 703.951.7655  
JillianHoganHomes.com

OPEN SAT 5/9, 12-2PM & SUN 5/10, 2-4PM



## Woodstone 7134 Westfield Court

\$535,000 | A beautifully maintained 3-bedroom, 2.5-bath townhome with prime location, extensive updates, and an inviting community.

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