

PEOPLE AND PLACES



COURTESY PHOTO

Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chair Jeff MacKay receives an award for his work to prevent homelessness from Pathway Homes board member Dan Gray, Cooper, Ginsburg and Gray, and Sylisa Lambert-Woodard, Pathway Homes. MacKay and housing leader Michelle Krocker were honored at last week's Steps to Pathways Breakfast for their efforts to ensure vulnerable members of the community have needed services and a place to call home.



COURTESY PHOTO

Attendees enjoy trunk or treat at Fairmont Gardens Apartments hosted by FACETS, a county nonprofit that serves those affected by poverty, hunger and homelessness. CASA won the award for best-decorated trunk. The project is part of FACETS' Opportunity Neighborhood - Annandale initiative, which provides increased opportunities for young in lower-income Annandale neighborhoods to break down barriers to success.



COURTESY PHOTO

Jay Rachakonda

Student, group honored by governor for volunteerism

Last week Governor Glenn Youngkin announced the recipients of the 2022 Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Awards. The annual awards program spotlights the outstanding efforts of individual volunteers and organizations that have aided our communities, Virginians and the Commonwealth.

"It is my pleasure to recognize these honorees for the positive impact they have had on our Commonwealth and in the lives of their fellow Virginians. Each honoree has demonstrated resilience, generosity and commitment, exemplifying the remarkable spirit of Virginia," said Youngkin.

Jay Rachakonda, of Herndon, was honored as the Outstanding Youth Volunteer. Rachakonda built on his long standing passion for STEM and robotics by taking a leadership role in Funbotics. He saw ways the program could be made more available for underserved and marginalized students, and dedicated his time, talent, and energy to making sure every student had the option to participate.

"Jay's passion for community impact drives his continuous desire to take Northern Virginia Funbotics to new heights," said Pranav Avasarala, the founder of Funbotics.

When Rachakonda joined Funbotics, there were less than five active volunteers and looming funding challenges. With a spirit of dedication, determination, and creativity, Jay secured new funding, connected with community partners, and inspired others to join as co-leaders and volunteers to expand availability of summer camp and regular school year programming. The Northern Virginia chapter of Funbotics is proud to now have more than 50 active volunteers and an annual budget that supports program growth, due in great part to his contributions and service.

"Although small in the grand scheme of Jay's work with Funbotics, [seeing the impact he had on a disinterested student] was one of the incidents that brought me to respect him as a volunteer at heart, working through Funbotics because of a true desire for community impact and the smiles on kids' faces," said Tonya Kirkland, a community partner that worked with Rachakonda to host a summer camp program. "As part of Funbotics, outside his organizational and leadership duties, Jay has influenced numerous students as an outstanding teacher."



COURTESY PHOTO

Kids Give Back, of Fairfax County, received the Outstanding Community Organization Volunteer Group.

Established as a nonprofit in 2019, Kids Give Back grew out of an afterschool club and a realization that there were not enough opportunities for children between 6 and 12 years old to volunteer. Since then, more than 300 volunteers have completed over 3,000 volunteer hours, contributing more than 2,000 in-kind donations in 2022. Youth are engaged in virtual volunteer events, family volunteer days, summer volunteer camps and more. Every project completed meets an identified need in the community, while inspiring the next generation of volunteers. Volunteer leaders and board ensure that students are actively engaged in projects that make a difference in their community and feel relevant to young volunteers.

"Kids Give Back does a wonderful job connecting our local youth to service opportunities while educating them on any nonprofits doing important work in our communities," said one partner organization. "This year students provided 100 summer supply bags for our students to use in Aspire!'s six-week summer learning camp. The supplies were a tremendous help to our organization, especially at a time we saw record enrollment and need."

"It is a great privilege to recognize these nine individuals and groups for their efforts this year. They represent the incredible commitment of the more than 2 million volunteers that give their time and talents each year to help their communities," said Cliff Yee, Chairman of the Virginia Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DPWES

Participants plant seeds at the new pollinator garden.

New pollinator meadow project unveiled at I-66 Transfer Station

The official 'Making Trash Bloom' signs were installed last week at the new pollinator meadow high atop the county's I-66 Transfer Station in the Springfield District. They were unveiled during a 'Lunch at the Landfill' event held jointly by the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services and Sustainability Matters, a grassroots environmental non-profit based in the Northern Shenandoah and Piedmont regions.

The meadow is on approximately one acre of land, which was cleared and seeded with native perennial wildflowers in mid-October. The flowers will be pollinated next spring by bees and butterflies. This is the first of two phases of the project.

By implementing 'Making Trash Bloom', DPWES is enhancing the community's natural resources and providing an example of the usefulness and viability of native plants. The new meadow is a showpiece of nature that will be visible as residents drop off recycling and food scraps. Hopefully, they will see the meadow as something they can plant in their own yards or neighborhood. DPWES solid waste team did the planting, working collaboratively with Sustainability Matters to make it a reality.

The new meadow aligns with the County's "Natural Landscape Policy" under which the Solid Waste Management Program has installed native plants and trees at I-66 as part a site modernization project. 'Making Trash Bloom' also gives the county a unique opportunity to scale up its conservation impact by creating yet another exciting opportunity for community outreach.

This project is an excellent complement to SWMP's work with George Mason University's Honeybee Initiative, where three beehives are hosted at the I-95 Landfill and have pollinator meadows converted from traditional turf cover.



COURTESY PHOTO

Representatives from American Legion Post 177 in Fairfax presented Britepaths with a check for \$2,500 to help send gift cards to families for holiday meals. In the photo, (left to right) Post 177 Finance Officer Mike Kimlick, Britepaths Executive Director Lisa Whetzel, and Post 177 Commander Jeffrey White.

Britepaths looks to help more than 250 families this holiday season

Fairfax-based nonprofit Britepaths is seeking donations from the community to provide holiday meals and gifts for children in 265 Fairfax County area families.

Britepaths is distributing gift cards that will allow parents in referred families to purchase food for Thanksgiving and December holiday meals and gifts for their children. Donations of funds or gift cards are greatly needed to meet the commitment to these families.

To donate and learn more, visit Britepaths' Holiday Program page at <https://bit.ly/3TWpttQ>. Britepaths' online donation form makes it easy for users to give and also create their own donation campaigns to share with friends and colleagues. Checks or gift cards may be mailed to Britepaths at 3959 Pender Drive, Suite 200,

Fairfax, VA 22030. Please write "Holiday" in the check memo line. For more information, contact Britepaths at 703-273-8829 or [events@britepaths.org](mailto:events@britepaths.org).

Community members may also help by attending Britepaths' Wine & Wonderment wine tasting event on Nov. 9, 6 to 8 p.m., at 2941 Restaurant in Falls Church. All proceeds from the evening will go to the Holiday Program. Attendees will enjoy wines selected and appetizers prepared by 2941 Restaurant and will have the opportunity to bid in a silent auction. Auction items include a diamond pendant from Diamonds Direct Tysons, beauty and spa gift baskets from Alya Salon & Spa in Vienna, and an artistic photography package by Viktoria Art Photography. Event tickets are \$75 per person. Purchase tickets and preview the auction at <https://bit.ly/3TTECFv>. Advance registration is recommended, but walk-in registration may be available.

Britepaths partners with several Fairfax County Public Schools to receive referrals for families with demonstrated need for holiday assistance. Participating schools are in the Fairfax High School and

Justice High School pyramids, City of Fairfax, central Fairfax serving families who live in the County, and the Falls Church area.

OBITUARIES

In loving memory Robert (Bob) Schoening



December 24, 1942 - October 22, 2022  
US Navy veteran, expert in dangerous marine biology, scuba diver, avid collector of seashells, Robert (Bob) Charles Schoening passed away Saturday, October 22, 2022 with his wife at his side. Bob was Program Director of the USCG Drug Program and was active on the Fairfax City Council. His military services will be at Fort Sam Houston, November 18, 2022. His full obituary is at <https://www.schertzfuneral-home.com/obituary/Robert-Schoening>.

In loving memory Franklin L. Musser

Franklin L. Musser, 88, died October 25, 2022. He was born April 23, 1934 in Rural Retreat, Virginia to Mr. and Mrs. F. H. Musser.

Upon graduating from Rural Retreat High School, he attended National College, Roanoke, VA, Computer Learning Centers, Falls Church, VA and the University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

He worked for numerous Federal Governmental agencies, including the US House of Representatives and retired from the Federal Government in 1994 as a Paralegal.

He was a member of St. Stephens United Methodist Church, Burke, VA.

He is survived by a daughter, Jane E. Musser Blackburn (Michael) and three granddaughters: Sara, Charlotte and Madalyn, all of Midlothian, VA.

A graveside service will be held in Rural Retreat, VA at Mountain View Cemetery. Burial will be private. Lindsey Funeral Home, Rural Retreat, VA is handling arrangements.

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