

## The Pathfinder

### Artful Living: Empowerment

Join us at our 2018 **Artful Living** event, an evening of Art, Wine and Strengthening Our Community, with Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival. The event is Saturday, April 21, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Sherwood Center in Fairfax City. Our theme this year is "Empowerment."

Enjoy the delightful sounds of Batida Diferente while perusing works by local artists in our juried art show and sampling fine wine, craft brews, and delicious appetizers from Dolce Vita. All art work will be offered in a silent auction, with Britepaths receiving a percentage of the sale price. We will also enjoy a live auction and fund-a-need appeal. Proceeds from the evening will benefit Britepaths' programs and the Spotlight on the Arts Scholarship Fund.

**Thank You to Our Sponsors and Underwriters!** Human Touch, LLC; Ken and Linda Kozloff; Hamilton, Petrocelli, Sprissler & Sands, LLP; Mr. Glenn Hediger and Ms. Nancy McLernon; Team Freiman at Morgan Stanley; Miller Consulting Group, LLC | Accounting Services; Giant Food; Loren and Birgit Hershey; Catherine Read and Tom Greeson; and Printing Underwriter, L&M Printing.

**Discounts for advance registration!** Register and learn more at: [britepaths.org/Art](http://britepaths.org/Art).



#### Mission

Britepaths provides our Fairfax County area neighbors in need with short-term safety-net services and empowers them to work toward long-term self-sufficiency.

#### Services

- Stabilizing Families
- Building Resilience
- Seasonal Supports

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*"My financial mentor helped me to make a budget and debt repayment plan, to track my spending and to make better financial decisions. All in all, I don't know where I would be right now without Britepaths." — Ms. G, Britepaths Client*

### New Initiatives in 2017 Empowered Our Families

Britepaths launched some exciting new initiatives in 2017 to empower our clients to *help themselves* to better futures. We are encouraged by the results so far, and looking forward to expanding our reach in 2018.

#### **Financial Empowerment Center (FEC) at South County:**

The United Way of the National Capital Area and Fairfax County gave Britepaths a grant to manage the new FEC at the South County Government Center in Alexandria. Starting in July 2017, the FEC provided free Financial Coaching to 80 community members, and 121 clients attended classes or workshops in 2017. Britepaths has four employees at the FEC who are working to expand outreach and offerings, and grow our base of volunteers to assist even more clients in 2018.

**3 Cups of Coffee®:** This short-term mentoring program launched last March. It matches professionals with job-ready clients who meet over "three cups of coffee" in six weeks and create a customized plan that identifies career goals and job possibilities while building networking connections.



*Clients speak to FEC at South County Director Maria Jose Cantoni.*

Britepaths assisted 21 clients in 2017, and is seeking more mentees for the program.

**MPower Loans:** Britepaths launched the MPower Loans program with donated funds in 2017, and provided these zero-interest loans to four clients who were invited to apply based on their demonstrated commitment to budgeting. A committee approved their applications. The goal is to help clients tackle a pressing financial burden or pay for an education initiative to help them improve their financial outlook as they work toward self-sufficiency. They are all making monthly payments on their loans.

See "2017 By the Numbers" on page 2 to learn more about the impact of our Programs last year.

## DéShaun is Fulfilling Her Goals

*“I jumped at the opportunity for guidance, but Britepaths gave us so much more!”*



When we first met DéShaun and her husband Dajuan in January 2016 at our free Financial Counseling Clinic at UCM of Alexandria, they were each working more than one job, but still struggling to support their young sons and pay for all their necessities.

DéShaun (*second from right with Britepaths staff*) had already started planning and tracking their spending carefully, but they really took off once they met with

our volunteer Financial Counselor Didi. They enrolled in our Financial Mentoring Program, and then moved over to our Project BRIDGE Program. Didi became their mentor. After many months of hard work and discipline, they have paid off several debts, built their savings, and have graduated from our program because they are ready to make it on their own! Their journey also inspired DéShaun to pursue new career opportunities.

We are so proud of DéShaun and Dajuan, and grateful to Didi for helping them fulfill their plan. It is because of YOUR support that families like DéShaun and Dajuan's are able to succeed. Thank You!

Read their story at: <http://bit.ly/BritepathsStories>.

## Holiday Joy: Delivered!



W2 Communications employees wrap gifts for children in families they sponsored through our Holiday Program.

It is always heartwarming to see how our community comes together to help our neighbors in need at the Holidays!

Thank you to everyone who helped Britepaths ensure that 551 individuals and families in need in the Fairfax County area were able to enjoy Thanksgiving and December holiday meals and gifts for their children during the 2017 Holiday season.

In addition to many individuals and families, the employees and members of more than 100 companies, government offices, associations and community organizations joined together to sponsor families or donate. Learn more about our “Holiday Heroes” and view photos at: [britepaths.org/news/Holiday2017Thanks](http://britepaths.org/news/Holiday2017Thanks).



Fairfax County Supervisor Sharon Bulova and Congressman Gerry Connolly visited volunteers at Britepaths' Stuff the Bus Food Drive.

## Thanks for Helping Us Stuff the Bus!

Britepaths is grateful to all who supported us at our Stuff the Bus food drive on February 10 at Shoppers in Fairfax City. And a big thank you to Fairfax County Board Chairman Sharon Bulova and Congressman Gerry Connolly for joining us at the event! We raised 900 pounds of food and pantry supplies, valued at \$1,548, and \$1,480 in gift cards and monetary donations. Thank you to Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, the Office of Public Private Partnerships, MV Transportation and Shoppers for making this possible! A special thank you to Volunteer Fairfax's Volunteers for Change for staffing our drive.

## 2017 By the Numbers

Thanks to YOUR support, Britepaths was able to make a real difference for our families in 2017! In addition to the generous outpouring of donations we received, 1,080 volunteers donated 8,953 hours of their time. We assisted:

- 750 people with Financial Education.
- 177 Financial Empowerment Ctr. clients.
- 210 families with Financial assistance.
- 289 families with Food Bridge assistance.
- 20 Project BRIDGE families.
- 21 3 Cups of Coffee clients.
- 31 Naomi Project moms.
- 551 families with Holiday Assistance.
- 2,540 students with School Supplies.

## Gearing Up for Back to School 2018

Our annual Collect for Kids Back to School Program to assist local students in need begins in late June. We are seeking donations, program sponsors and backpack collection sites. Contact Joanne Walton at 703.273.8829 or [jwalton@britepaths.org](mailto:jwalton@britepaths.org).

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