City To Receive ARPA Federal Grant Funds

Takoma Park is a proud recipient of federal grant funds to support our response to, and recovery from, the COVID-19 public health emergency. The City will receive a total of $17.4 million from the federal government, through the State of Maryland, in grant funds resulting from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. These funds are to be used over the next five years to respond to acute pandemic response needs in the community, support populations hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, lay the groundwork for an equitable economic recovery, and fill government revenue shortfalls resulting from the public health emergency.

In 2021, $3.9 million in ARPA funds were budgeted by the City Council for emergency rental assistance, food security, community engagement, administrative staffing, administrative oversight, and revenue loss. Staff recommendations for the use of the remaining ARPA balance of $13,495,100 were presented to the community and the City Council at the meetings of January 18 and January 19, 2022, respectively.

The final ARPA Spending Plan will reflect Council and public feedback. City Council will vote on the final spending plan on February 2 (first reading of ordinance) and February 9 (second reading of ordinance).

Staff recommendations include the following areas of investment:

• 50% of ARPA funds are recommended to be used to assist the City’s most vulnerable residents and businesses;
• 36% of ARPA funds are recommended to be used to invest in City facilities and public infrastructure;
• 14% of ARPA funds are recommended to be used to support
The City Council will continue to meet on Zoom in February. Individuals interested in receiving a weekly Council agenda and committee calendar update by e-mail can sign up by sending an email to clerk@takomaparkmd.gov.

**CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS**

- **Wednesday, February 2, 7:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, February 9, 7:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, February 16, 7:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, February 23, 7:30 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, March 2, 7:30 p.m.**

**CITY BOARD, COMMISSION, AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- **BOARD OF ELECTIONS**
  - **Thursday, February 10, 7:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **COMMISSION ON LANDLORD-TENANT AFFAIRS**
  - **Wednesday, February 16, 6:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE**
  - **Thursday, February 24, 7:00 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **GRANTS REVIEW COMMITTEE**
  - **Tuesday, February 8, 7:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **NUCLEAR-FREE TAKOMA PARK COMMITTEE**
  - **Tuesday, February 8, 7:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **POLICE CHIEF’S ADVISORY BOARD**
  - **Monday, February 28, 7:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **RECREATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**
  - **Thursday, February 17, 7 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **SUSTAINABLE BANKING AND INVESTMENTS TASK FORCE**
  - **Monday, February 7, 7 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)
  - **Monday, February 21, 7 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **TREE COMMISSION**
  - **Wednesday, February 9, 7 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **YOUTH COUNCIL**
  - **Saturday, February 6, 3:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)
  - **Sunday, February 20, 3:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

- **ADA NOTICE**
  - **Tuesday, February 8, 7:30 p.m.** (Remote/Virtual Meeting)

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

**Notice of Public Hearing on Redistricting Plan**

*Wednesday, February 9, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.* on Zoom

The City Council is reviewing draft ward maps and will be adopting a redistricting plan in February. Residents are encouraged to review redistricting information on the City website and follow discussions at City Council meetings as the draft maps are revised and a final map is prepared for adoption at takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/redistricting. The adopted map will be effective for the November 8, 2022, City Election.

A public hearing on a proposed redistricting plan has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 9, at 7:30 p.m. The hearing and subsequent City Council meeting will take place on Zoom. The sign-up link will be available at takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/current-and-past-agendas.

You must sign up before 5 p.m. on the day of the hearing. Comments and questions may be sent to Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, at jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov or call 301-891-7267.

**Notice of Traffic Calming Public Hearings**

*Wednesday, February 23, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.* on Zoom

Residents of the following streets have petitioned to have traffic calming installed:

- 7900 Block of Glenside Drive
- 6700-6800 Block of Prince Georges Avenue
- 6400-6500 Block of Fourth Avenue

The City Council will hold public hearings on the proposed traffic calming at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 23. The hearings and subsequent City Council meeting will take place on Zoom (in the above order). Interested residents are encouraged to sign up to speak at the public hearings. The sign-up link will be available at takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/current-and-past-agendas.

You must sign up before 5 p.m. on the day of the hearings. Comments and questions may be sent to Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, at jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov or call 301-891-7267.

**CITY ELECTION**

*Tuesday, November 8, 2022*

2022 is an election year in Takoma Park. The Nominating Caucus is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. Election day is Tuesday, November 8. This year’s election will be conducted by mail. A complete election calendar is available on the City website. Contact Jessie Carpenter, jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7267 for additional information.
Recycling

Non-Recyclable Material by Percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical Waste</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Waste</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction mats</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bubble wrap</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Containers with Liquids</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chip bags</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper non-recyclable</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCC non-recyclable</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clamshell containers</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trash</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the non-recyclable materials, 28% were clamshell containers.

Routes and manually separating the materials into categories. A total of 8,448 pounds of waste was sorted into 31 different groupings. Acceptable recycling made up 7,919 pounds and non-recyclable materials made up 530 pounds of the load. When compared to the national average of 17% as measured by the Recycling Partnership, the City’s 6% contamination rate is impressive and a testament to each resident’s dedication to creating a more sustainable City.

The study determined that other aspects of the City’s recycling program are more consistent with the industry standard. For instance, fiber made up the largest number of recyclable materials with 39% of the total being paper and 28% being cardboard. This follows the industry average of roughly 60%-70%. Unsurprisingly, glass had the next highest volume at 23%, followed by plastics (5%) and metals (4%).

Contaminates were more interesting. Of the 530 pounds of non-recyclable materials, 145 pounds or 28% were clamshell containers. Clamshells are a type of plastic container most often used in food containers – think of the clam like clear plastic containers from your local grocery store used for strawberries and blueberries. Often these clamshells are made of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and technically recyclable; however, many Material Recycling Facilities (MRFs) – including the Prince George’s County MRF where the City’s recycling is processed – do not accept clamshell containers. Clamshells are rejected for several reasons, but primarily because they are difficult to sort and process, as a result, when they are included in a recycling load, they typically end up in the wrong recycling bale. Recycling facilities sell bales of like recyclable material and receive the best price for bales of the highest quality.

When compared to the national average of roughly 60%-70%, unsurprisingly, glass had the next highest volume at 23%, followed by plastics (5%) and metals (4%).

Recycling facilities sell bales of like recyclable material and receive the best price for bales of the highest quality.
BUILDING COMMUNITY

Stories to Tell: Chronicling Takoma Park’s Black History

In 2019 Historic Takoma launched an initiative to collect the stories of African American families who settled in Takoma Park beginning in the 1920s and ’30s through subsequent decades, forging their own cohesive community despite racial and economic discrimination. The challenges of this increased demand have made it difficult for new riders to get bikes. The beauty of Takoma Park’s free annual iCan Shine Bike Camp is that it focuses on creating a safe and encouraging environment to teach individuals with disabilities how to ride bikes. All riders must, however, bring their own personal bikes to use during the camp. We recognize that safety during the pandemic and the national bike shortage will present some challenges, limiting the capabilities of many new riders from participating. For other regional iCan Shine Bike Camp opportunities outside of Takoma Park, visit www.icanshine.org/programs/find-a-program. We hope to see you in 2023!

DON’T WAIT TO GET HELP

The City of Takoma Park can help City residents in need of emergency assistance with housing matters (eviction and foreclosure), utility disconnections, food insecurity, prescription assistance, and other emergency needs. For more information, contact the Department of Housing and Community Development at 301-891-7119 or email at housing@takomaparkmd.gov.

Takoma Park’s 2022 iCan Shine Bike Camp

Unfortunately, this year’s iCan Shine Takoma Park Bike Camp has been canceled. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, bike ridership has increased tremendously in our city, region, and nation. Although we are happy to see this positive transportation alternative trend, the challenges of this increased demand have made it difficult for new riders to get bikes. The beauty of Takoma Park’s free annual iCan Shine Bike Camp is that it focuses on creating a safe and encouraging environment to teach individuals with disabilities how to ride bikes. All riders must, however, bring their own personal bikes to use during the camp. We recognize that safety during the pandemic and the national bike shortage will present some challenges, limiting the capabilities of many new riders from participating. For other regional iCan Shine Bike Camp opportunities outside of Takoma Park, visit www.icanshine.org/programs/find-a-program. We hope to see you in 2023!

City of Takoma Park FY23 Community Grants Application Opening This Month

The Community Grants Program funds projects that provide greater access to the arts, sciences, technology, economic development, and engineering in Takoma Park. This grant program is open to non-profit organizations and business associations and provides up to $10,000 in financial support. Although not required, the City is encouraging applications for programs that connect arts and sciences with skills that promote job-readiness for Takoma Park residents. The online application will close March 11, 2022. Interested parties should register for a free account on the Community Grants page found at takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/grant-programs/community-grants. Previous online applicants will be notified automatically.

To see if your organization is eligible for funding, visit takomaparkmd.gov/government/housing-and-community-development/grant-programs/community-grants to review our guidelines on the Community Grants Page. For more information, please contact Jennifer Hale, Grants Coordinator, at JenniferH@TakomaParkMD.gov.

Lee Jordan with local children

CARE

Caring About Residents Everyday

A program directed at our residents who live alone with special needs, or just need to be checked on each day.

CARE is another way we can give back to the community and take care of those in need.

To learn more about the program, or to register, visit www.takomaparkmd.gov/police under Services & Programs

Stories to Tell: Chronicling Takoma Park’s Black History

In 2019 Historic Takoma launched an initiative to collect the stories of African American families who settled in Takoma Park beginning in the 1920s and ’30s through subsequent decades, forging their own cohesive community despite racial and economic discrimination. The team that came together for this effort — which includes an oral historian, a documentary filmmaker, and community members with their own knowledge and skills — has focused on conducting oral histories with older residents (current and former) who grew up in Takoma Park. A 10-minute film on the legendary Lee Jordan provides a sampling of these conversations. (See the film, Mr. Lee: the Life & Legacy of Lee Jordan, along with Historic Takoma’s 2020 Black History program, including comments and testimonials from audience members, on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-5rilJkXZc&dl=1.) The Stories from the African American Community Team is working to develop and produce several short videos drawing from the oral histories and additional research focusing on various topics and themes. These will be accessible online for use in schools, home viewing, and screenings across the city. The team also plans to produce a book featuring the edited oral history narratives. And the full videotaped oral histories will be available through Historic Takoma’s archives. This work has been made possible by funding from Takoma Park’s Community Grants Program with additional support from the Maryland Humanities Council. For more information, visit historictakoma.org/focus-area-african-american.
Celebrate Black History Month with Takoma Park Arts

Black history and the arts are inextricably linked, wound together through the indelible contributions of Black artists, musicians, authors, actors, dancers, and filmmakers. The Takoma Park Arts cultural series, which is organized by the City’s Arts and Humanities Division, celebrates those contributions during Black History Month and throughout the year with free events featuring the talents of local Black artists and entertainers.

Some of our upcoming events have been postponed or shifted online due to concerns about the pandemic. Please join us on Feb. 10 for the online premiere of our next Vintage Movie Night. Many former events can be viewed on our YouTube channel at artsevents.takomapark-md.gov. You also can get more info and sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at takomaparkmd.gov/arts.

Vintage Movie Night: Whitewashing U.S. History
Online premiere on Feb. 10, 8 p.m.
YouTube link at artsevents.takomapark-md.gov

Archival film enthusiast Richard Hall will share his curated selection of mid-20th century classroom film clips from an era when the experiences of Black people and indigenous people were almost never seen or heard. As state legislatures pass new laws that are reactions against a true accounting of America’s racist past, take a journey back in time to the not-so-good-old days when filmmakers and educators erased the history of minority groups and celebrated white founders and pioneers.

Black Voices in Verse Poetry Reading
bit.ly/BlackVoicesinVerse

This timely poetry reading features three Black poets whose powerful work challenges the status quo and pervasive racism in the United States. Saida Agostini is a queer Afro-Guyanese poet whose work explores the ways that Black folks harness mythology to enter the fantastic. Her poetry has been featured in Barrelhouse Magazine, the Black Ladies Brunch Collective’s anthology, and other publications. Kyle Dargan is an associate professor of literature and assistant director of creative writing at American University as well as the founder and editor of POST NO ILLS magazine. Emily Kombe is majoring in public policy at the University of Maryland. She was introduced to slam poetry five years ago and uses the arts as a vehicle for social justice.

Vintage Movie Night: Black Artists and Musicians
bit.ly/BlackArtistsandMusicians

The amazing talents of Black musicians and artists are featured in vintage short films spanning half a century. You’ll see 1940s newsreels, musical hits starring Duke Ellington and Bessie Smith, a history of jazz, a profile of famous Black artists, and much more. Don’t miss this chance to see and hear how Black musicians and artists have shaped American history.

Poetry from Behind Bars Poetry Reading
bit.ly/PoetryfromBehindBars

In the “land of the free,” the United States has the highest incarceration rate in the world, but the people behind bars are more than just numbers. In this moving poetry reading, Poet Ambassadors from the Free Minds Book Club read poetry they wrote while incarcerated in the D.C. jail or federal prisons. Their poignant words reveal the human costs of our prison-industrial complex and the power of poetry to offer redemption and healing.

Voices of Woodlawn Poetry Reading
bit.ly/VoicesofWoodlawn

In a unique collaboration, three Black poets and a white poet from the D.C. area share their moving poetry about the troubled history of Woodlawn, a former 2,000-acre plantation in Alexandria once owned by George Washington where more than 90 enslaved people were forced to work. The poets include Sylvia Dianne “Ladi Di” Beverly, Hiram Larew, Diane Wilbon Parks, and Patrick Washington accompanied by harmonica player Cliff Bernier. This timely poetry reading connects Black history through the centuries from slavery to the Black Lives Matter movement.

A Night of Guitar Music with Yasmin Williams
bit.ly/YasminWilliamsConcert

Yasmin Williams has become a star with her untraditional acoustic, finger-style guitar playing. Her Takoma Park Arts concert at the Takoma Park Community Center in 2020 was one of our most popular events, which has been viewed more than 17,000 times on YouTube. Williams uses various unique techniques, including alternate tunings, lap tapping, and a violinist bow. She has been featured in the New York Times and on NPR as well as other media outlets. You can hear more of her music at yasminwilliamsmusic.com.

A Night of Guitar Music with Yasmin Williams
bit.ly/YasminWilliamsConcert

Yasmin Williams has become a star with her untraditional acoustic, finger-style guitar playing. Her Takoma Park Arts concert at the Takoma Park Community Center in 2020 was one of our most popular events, which has been viewed more than 17,000 times on YouTube. Williams uses various unique techniques, including alternate tunings, lap tapping, and a violinist bow. She has been featured in the New York Times and on NPR as well as other media outlets. You can hear more of her music at yasminwilliamsmusic.com.
RECREATION

SPECIAL EVENT
12th Annual Mid-Winter Play Day
Attention! Attention! Yes, that’s right. Let’s Play America and the Takoma Park Recreation Department have teamed up to present to you the 12th Annual Mid-Winter Play Day! Come join Let’s Play America and the Takoma Park Recreation Department for a fun afternoon of indoor play. Free fun for all. It’s time for you to let your hair down, put on your comfy clothes, and get ready to play! To see a full listing of activities and performances, www.letsgoplayamerica.org. See you there!
Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
All Ages
Sunday, 1-4 p.m.
February 13
Free

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CITY RESIDENTS
Scholarships that were approved for 2021 have now expired. If you would like to continue receiving the discounted rates toward future enrollments, be sure to reapply for 2022. And if you haven’t applied before, now is the time! Visit takomaparkmd.gov/recreation/recreation-scholarships or stop by our office to receive a copy of the application.

SPRING BREAK
Spring Break Camp: Nature Explorers
Come experience the great outdoors with Takoma Park Recreation. Join us for a week of hikes, crafts, games, and fun. Find out why the sun is so important; water is essential to all living creatures, and how trees play an important part in daily life! Participants will meet at the Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Participants must bring masks, lunches, snacks and labeled water bottles. Space is limited; sign up early. Paperwork will need to be completed prior to the first day of camp. Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
5-12 years
1 Week Session
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
April 11-April 15
Resident: $40 / Non-resident: $50

Soccer Camp
This camp, run by a soccer coach, will provide children with the opportunity to improve their soccer skills. Some conditioning exercises and drills will be a part of the camp’s daily schedule. Participants should bring a non-perishable lunch, water bottle, and a towel.
Takoma Park Recreation Center
7315 New Hampshire Avenue
5-12 years
1 Week Session
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
April 11-April 15
$200

Spring Break Camp Before & After Care
This option is available for families who require or desire additional activities beyond the regular camp hours. Activities include games, outdoor play, and sports (available for Soccer Camp at the Recreation Center and Spring Break Camp at the Community Center). Space is limited to participants in Spring Break Camps. Paperwork will need to be completed prior to the first day of the program.
Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
5-12 years
1 Week Session
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
April 11-April 15
Resident: $40 / Non-resident: $50

DANCE
Ballet & Stretch
This beginning ballet class focuses on stretching strategies using ballet foundations. Participants will learn ballet terminology, ballet technique and balancing. Instructor: Charonne Butler
Heffner Park Community Center
42 Oswego Avenue
5-11 years
Saturday, 10:30-11:15 a.m.
February 12 - April 2
Resident: $35 / Non-resident: $45

Hip-Hop Dance
Join this virtual Hip-Hop Dance Class that focuses on fitness and rhythm. And you get to have lots of fun. These family friendly moves invite you to bring a friend to create, dance and move virtually anywhere.
Instructor: Charonne Butler
Heffner Park Community Center
42 Oswego Avenue
5-11 years
Saturday, 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
February 12 - April 2
Resident: $35 / Non-resident: $45

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT
Power Hour
Take advantage of our homework power hour focusing on academic support. We are the perfect balance of academics and fun. Students are given quiet time to complete homework or to read. Staff is available to assist and can review the completed assignments. Registration is not required.
Takoma Park Community Center
Teen Lounge
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 6-12
Ongoing Monday-Thursday
3:30-4:30 p.m.
Free

CAMP
Spring Break P.R.E.P.S. Week
Spring Break P.R.E.P.S. (Planning and Researching for Educational and Professional Success) week is about assisting teens in planning for their future. During this week, teens will be able to participate in discussions to get a sense of life after high school. Whether it’s your goal to go to college or pick up a trade, we’re going to explore your options. Come with questions, an open mind, and a bag lunch! Before and After care are available for an additional fee.
Takoma Park Community Center
Teen Lounge
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 6-12
Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.–4 p.m.
April 11-15
Resident: $135 / Non-resident: $150

ADULT
ART
Make a Tile-Paint a tile
This class will be making tiles and decorating bought bisque tiles. The tiles will be made and designed of flowers or leaves or lace pressed into the clay. Many objects can be used; it’s the student’s choice. The bisque tiles will be painted, stumped and/or stenciled. The instructor will have many of these to be used. The tiles will be fired and glazed, and colorful permanent tiles will be taken home. There will be a $10 materials fee that will be due to the instructor on the first day of class for clay, boards, glazes, and bisque tiles.
Instructor: Alice Sims
Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Art Studio
16 & Up
Saturdays, 11 a.m.–12 p.m.
February 12-March 12
Resident: $20 / Non-resident: $30
Materials Fee: $10

Painting Exploration
In this beginner class, participants are encouraged to try different materials and methods as well as explore some of the basic elements of design in their work. Participants will try still life and landscape as well as painting from their imaginations. We will examine paintings by other artists and give helpful feedback to one another in a comfortable setting. Grab a brush and come by the studio to explore painting! A nonrefundable $35 materials fee is due to the instructor on the first day of class.
Instructor: Caroline MacKinnon
Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Art Studio
16 & Up
Fridays, 10-11:30 a.m.
Session 1: through March 4
Session 2: March 11-April 28
Resident: $40 / Non-resident: $46
Materials Fee: $35

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Writing Life Stories
Do you want to share important life experiences through your writing? Our stories are part of what makes us human. Whether you are a lifelong writer or a beginner, this class is for you. It will help you jump-start your memories, organize your ideas and edit your work. We use the book Writing the Memoir by Judith Barrington. Bring a notebook to each class and be ready to have fun!
Instructor: Barbara Rosenbll
Welcome New Recreation Department Staff Member, Haven Rhodd!

The Recreation Department is pleased to welcome a new addition to our Get Out and Play Crew! Take a few moments to get to know Haven, who joins us as the Youth Success Coordinator.

Q: Tell us a little about yourself and your hobbies.
A: My name is Haven Rhodd, and I grew up in Prince George's County, Maryland. I graduated from the illustrious North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University with a BA in psychology in 2018. Since then, it has been my personal mission to be a positive influence on my community, and I have always sought out opportunities to do so. My hobbies include cooking, playing the Sims, and obessing over fitness. I have a passion for cooking nutritious foods that also taste good and fuel me to get a great workout. I also love to garden, travel, and my hobbies include cooking nutritious foods that also taste good and fuel me to get a great workout. I also love to garden, travel, and music.

Q: What recreation programs were you involved in growing up and how do you feel they shaped who you are now?
A: I was not involved in any recreation programs growing up, however, I did participate in extra-curricular activities such as the Student Humanitarian Organization and marching band. While in marching band, I played the clarinet for about two years before switching to the trumpet. While in marching band, I played the clarinet for about two years before switching to the trumpet. While in marching band, I played the clarinet for about two years before switching to the trumpet.

Q: What are you most excited about regarding your new position?
A: I am most excited about becoming an active member in the community. During the pandemic, I have really missed working with the youth and their families as well as planning programs and events for community members to enjoy. I am passionate about enhancing the lives of others, so it is very exciting to have a position in which I can do that again.

Q: What inspires you to continue your work with teens and young adults?
A: It inspires me to know that I can serve as a level of support that is different from parents and teachers but still necessary. The work that I do allows me to be a friend, a mentor, or even a family member for these young people. I love that I can serve as the person I wish I had when I was growing up.

Q: What do you enjoy so far about the City of Takoma Park?
A: What I have enjoyed so far about the City of Takoma Park is the familial feel within the community. Everyone seems to want to help each other, which is really refreshing. I am looking forward to working here and learning more about Takoma Park.
I am thrilled to introduce our new Youth Services Manager Librarian, Verónica Rivera-Negrón (she/her/ella), who started working with us in January. Please help us welcome Verónica to Takoma Park!

— Jessica Jones

I name is Verónica Rivera-Negrón, and I will be serving the City’s diverse communities as the Library Manager for Children and Young Adult Services. I love stories.

Verónica Rivera-Negrón

Listen to this!

By Kati Nolfi, Children’s Librarian

Consider this: New Year, No Diet

If that sounds good to you, check out the Food Psych Podcast with Christy Harrison. Harrison is an anti-diet registered dietician, certified intuitive eating counselor, and author of the book Anti-Diet: Reclaim Your Time, Money, Well-Being, and Happiness Through Intuitive Eating. There are many intuitive/mindful eating podcasts now, but when Food Psych began in 2013, Harrison was a pioneer. Her guests are experts in topics ranging from yoga to antiracism to navigating the medical system and more. Her podcast can be rough listening sometimes, when guests recount difficult histories with food and eating, but it is also a trove of useful information. As the recent Atlantic article stated, “resolutions are not the vibe of 2022.” This is a good time to try something different.

INFORMATION LITERACY

From page 1

COVID-19 pandemic, thinking it would cause a shortage and medical personnel would not have enough; there were shortages of protective materials in the beginning, but as the science of the virus came to better focus, it was clear that masks were absolutely essential for protection. Public reaction was swift, and many people began making masks to help mitigate the shortage, and production ramped up. The knowledge around this issue continues to evolve.

INFORMATION LITERACY

Do your own research: Google and Wikipedia. One problem in discerning information is semantic. The word research is used for many different levels of inquiry from scientific research into diseases to looking up the definition of a word with which we’re unfamiliar. Using Google is fine for a general inquiry and frequently takes you to a Wikipedia page as part of its results. Wikipedia is a user-edited encyclopedia and thus is subject to problems of bias. It does its best to address these issues, but it’s not perfect. Wikipedia is a good starting place. The example given at the beginning of this article, Critical Race Theory, was adequately addressed by looking at Wikipedia. The article was clearly scholarly and had many sources and footnotes. Those sources and footnotes are a good indicator of the reliability of an article.

When a scholar is beginning a re-

INFORMATION LITERACY

CALAENDAR

We’re continuing to offer many great library programs – weekly and monthly – via Zoom. To participate, go to https://zoom.us, click on “Join a Meeting,” and put in the Meeting ID (and Meeting password, if any) listed with each program. Registration isn’t required for these programs, but if you are registered, we will send reminders as well as notices of any changes or cancellations. To register, go to www.tinyurl.com/tplibraryevents; please use your browser first to ensure you get the most updated information. Also, please make sure you register for the “Zoom” version of these programs.

PROGRAMS: To keep up with all our programs, go to www.tinyurl.com/tplibraryevents.

Zoom Circle Time: Join Ms. Kati every Wednesday morning at 10:30 a.m. for an online Circle Time via Zoom. To participate, go to https://zoom.us, click on “Join a Meeting.” Then put in this Meeting ID: 995-4901-8825 and Meeting Password: 179851. At Circle Time, we sing songs, have fun with fingerplays and rhymes, and do lots of dancing and movement exercises.

Zoom Comics Jam: Once a month, generally on the second Wednesday at 4 p.m. The next date is February XX. Please register for Zoom Comics Jam at www.tinyurl.com/tplibraryevents; we’ll send an email with the next date to all registered. The Meeting ID for Zoom Comics Jam is 734-913-6285. No Meeting Password needed.

Zoom Spanish Circle Time: Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. To participate in Zoom Spanish Circle Time, go to https://zoom.us. Then put in Meeting ID: 959-5178-6547 and Meeting Password: 789725.

Zoom Scribbler’s Cabal: Fridays at 4 p.m. Meeting ID is 734-913-6285 (same as Comics Jam), no Meeting Password needed.

INFORMATION LITERACY

Friends’ Big Book Club

Reminder: The FTFML Big Book Club will read Palace Walk by the Egyptian novelist Naguib Mahfouz this spring. There will be three or four sessions of discussion, which will include an introductory presentation. It is available as an audiobook on Hoopla and the library has several copies.
search project, they will go further than Wikipedia, of course. They will begin by searching academic databases for their topic, reading those articles, and further researching the footnotes and references given by those articles. This way researchers can be sure they are not either covering well-worn ground or furthering incorrect information. This type of research is best aided by a research librarian who is familiar with the literature in any given field of study.

Another use of the word research is the clinical trials and laboratory experiments conducted by scientists. This kind of research is based on the foundations laid by prior research as well as the preliminary research done by searching databases. When the results of this kind of research are submitted for publication, the study undergoes peer review, where other researchers in the same or a similar area review it and recommend (or not) the research for publication.

For most of us, when we research a topic, we just want to see what Google or Wikipedia says. However, if we want verified, reliable information, we should go to such resources as Encyclopedia Britannica, Oxford Reference resources, and others, all of which are available through the library’s website. Your tax dollars have paid for access to these resources.

There are other valuable resources online for checking facts and quelling rumors. One of the best is Snopes.com, which began as a fact-checker of urban legends but has expanded into a trusted source of information. Another is Politifact.com, which as its name implies, verifies political information, including statements made by politicians or pundits. It is sponsored by the Poynter Institute, a non-profit school for journalists.

Speaking of doubt. This brings us to two important caveats as we think about how to navigate the oceans of mis- and dis-information on the internet and in our conversations.

1. Cynicism and nihilism are the by-products of a chaotic and unreliable information environment. To throw one’s hands up and surrender, to find oneself saying “they all lie” or “they all cheat and steal” is as damaging to our info-ecosystem as spouting the tenets of the newest cult. To be critical is not the same as adopting a posture of manufactured cynicism. Criticism shines light, and it does not promote hopelessness, which is the real goal of many purveyors of disinformation. Cynicism and hopelessness do not work to make things better.

2. Critical thinking does not exclude marginalized or minority voices. The insights from racial, ethnic and gender minorities have been excluded, deliberately and otherwise, from much of public discourse. Our tools of discernment and fact-checking must become habits of thought, like looking both ways before crossing a street. The good news is that the more people there are being careful with information, the easier the job becomes because we share reliable and credible sources.

Library Director Jessica Jones contributed to this article.

**RECREATION**

**From page 7**

**55+**

**ART**

Painting (flowers)

Brighten the winter days and get creative with paint. Enjoy the supportive and positive atmosphere to learn at your own speed. Instructor: Alice Sims

Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Art Studio
55 & up
Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–12 p.m.
February 9–March 2
$5

**DANCE**

**55+**

Belly Dancing

In this easy-to-follow class, we’ll explore the foundational techniques of Middle Eastern belly dance known as “raqs sharqi” and learn the gentle movements of hip circles, shimmies, figure eights and more. Great dance exercise! Instructor: Joan Atkinson, Elena Faye Dance

Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Dance Studio
55 & Up
Thursday, 10-11 a.m.
Through March 31
$5

**DROP-IN**

**Line Dance**

New Tuesday class added. Line Dancing is an enjoyable social activity that provides great physical and mental exercise. It helps to strengthen bones and muscles. It also increases stamina and flexibility as well as supports weight loss and stress reduction. No experience necessary. Instructor: Barbara Brown

Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Dance Studio
55 & Up
Tuesdays, 10:30–11:30 a.m.
Through March 22
$5

**BINGO**

Come try your luck and win a prize. No registration required. Host: Paula Lisowski

Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Senior Room
55 & Up
Tuesday, 12-2 p.m.
February 22
Free

Library Director Jessica Jones contributed to this article.

**A note to readers:** The authors posted references, footnotes, and some expanded content on the library website, including links to reliable sources of information along with some amusing illustrations and memes. Go to www.takomapark.info for more information.

---

**February 2022 Takoma Park News**

---

**Takoma Park Community Center**

7500 Maple Avenue

**Let’s Play America invites you to join us for our 12th Annual Mid-Winter Play Day**

**Sunday, February 13th, 2022**

1 pm - 4 pm

**Free play event for all ages!**

Outdoor Games!

Indoor Activities!

Free Refreshments!

Performances!

Follow us on Social Media

@letsplayamerica | @america_plays | Let’s Play America

Contact us: info@letsplayamerica.org | www.letsplayamerica.org
The total number of deaths for children from 2021 was 23. The grand total since 1998 is 906. On average, 38 children die in hot vehicles each year across the country. Remember if you are out in your vehicle, everyone goes with you and lock the vehicle.

**Safety Message**
The extreme cold weather is here. Here are a few safety tips:

- Make sure you have working smoke alarms on all levels of your home and check them monthly.
- Never leave lit candles unattended. When you leave the room, take it with you or put it out.
- Space heaters - make sure they are three feet from furniture, etc.
- Generators - Never use them in your home or garage.
- Finally, never leave cooking on the stove unattended.

---

**Maryland fire deaths**
Starting out in 2022, 2 people have died compared to 8 in 2021. Your one number defense in the event of a fire is having working smoke alarms on all levels of your home. Test them monthly!

**Hot vehicle deaths**
The total number of deaths for children for 2021 was 23. The grand total since 1998 is 906. On average, 38 children die in hot vehicles each year across the country. Remember if you are out in your vehicle, everyone goes with you and lock the vehicle.

---

**COVID-19 vaccines and tests:**
- Need to get vaccinated? Visit www.vaccines.gov/search. This website allows you to select the manufacturer (e.g., Pfizer, Moderna, etc.), location, and sites with available appointments.
- Need to check if you have COVID? Effective January 19, 2021, the White House announced that “Every home in the U.S. can soon order four free at-home COVID-19 tests. The tests will be completely free—there are no shipping costs, and you don’t need to enter a credit card number.” (www.covidtests.gov) Test should be delivered by the U.S. Postal Service mail in 7-12 business days after ordering.
- More news good: Effective January 15, insurance companies and group health plans must cover the full cost of at-home COVID-19 tests for a maximum of eight tests per individual covered. (See hhs.gov and search free COVID-19 vaccines and tests:)

---

**What to do:**
- Stay off roads if possible. If trapped in your car, then stay inside and contact police and your emergency contact list.
- Make sure you have water and other supplies in the car.
- Limit your time outside. If you need to go outside, then wear layers of warm clothing. Watch for signs of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Make sure you have working flashlights, batteries, and fully charged cell phones, and have the phone numbers for police and your emergency contact list.
- Battery-powered or fuel-powered generators are prohibited in the city. They can cause carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Bring a few extra blankets and other supplies in the car.
- Keep a portable radio with you.
- If your tests did not arrive or were junk, cancel the credit card payment and send a report to reportfraud.gov.

---

**Editor’s note**
Look for this icon next to newsletter articles that you can read online in other languages. This feature allows users to click on the link for the article, look in the esquina superior derecha de la página web junto a la barra de navegación y seleccionar el idioma que desee con el cuadro desplegable.

---

**Passport Services**
Passport Services are available by appointment only Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Takoma Park Community Center on the second floor. Appointments are required and can be scheduled by emailing sofia@takomaparkmd.gov or calling 301-891-7100. Masks are required at the City building. Passport service hours are subject to change without notice. Whenever possible, office closures will be announced on Facebook, Twitter, and the City’s website. For additional information, visit takomaparkmd.gov/services/passports.
Mansa Kunda Brings West African Fare to Takoma Park

By Sean Gossard

Hatib Joof wanted the tastes, smells, and hospitality that he knew from his native country of the Gambia, but when it came to West African fine dining in the region, there was an obvious shortcoming. "There was a vacuum that I had to fill because at the time there wasn't a fine-dining West African restaurant," Joof said. "There was always some hole-in-the-wall place for the cuisine, but not for the dining experience. I thought that we were missing out on literally introducing the cuisine and hospitality to America."

So, in January of 2019, he opened Mansa Kunda, which translates to ‘kingdom’ in Mandinka, at 8000 Flower Ave. to bring the flavors of Western Africa to Takoma Park. Featuring fresh West African ingredients like the African Baobab fruit, one of the most nutrient-rich foods on the planet; shito, a Ghanaian hot pepper condiment; and tamarind, a sour tropical fruit often used in Indian curries and chutneys, Mansa Kunda quickly gained an adoring fan-base, being named one of The Washington Post's 10 Best Casual Dining Restaurants for 2019.

"The food, in most cases, is unorthodox," said Joof, the former operations manager at Spring Mill Bread Company in Takoma Park. "It took a while for me to take our menu and extract the items that I wanted from around the region and to be able to cook 90% of the dishes as vegan or vegetarian. I am a vegetarian of over 20 years. It was very important to me to solve the problem of making sure that everyone who walks into the door is fed and satisfied."

Joof says getting the flavors correct is vital to him, but there are some obstacles to overcome regarding shipping and importing certain ingredients. "Authenticity is very, very important to me," he said. "You try as hard as you can to maintain the taste and quality of the food. There are some things that aren't allowed to enter the U.S., so some things may be different, but we find a way to work it out."

Operating the restaurant got a bit more difficult after that first year when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. For Joof, the pandemic has been both extremely challenging and a chance to learn. "We had a full year of business bliss in 2019," Joof said. "It was an excellent year for the first time around, but then by March 2020, when the pandemic hit, I honestly thought it would only be three or four months and we’d weather the storm, but it’s been two years."

But through weathering that storm, Joof has learned to be resilient in what’s commonly a very difficult industry, even without a global pandemic. "I used the pandemic as a learning tool to see where the mistakes were being made and where I could improve," Joof said. "I learned a lot on how to maneuver myself on people’s experience with the cuisine."

For Joof, the location at 8000 Flower Ave. in Takoma Park was an incredibly important one. "I'm hoping that with this location, which is in a residential area, that I am creating a resemblance of ‘Cheers,’ where people don’t have to drive and they can take an evening walk to come grab a glass of wine and dessert and enjoy themselves," he said. "The location used to be a convenience store for 10 years before I got my hands on it. And to me it was a blank canvas."

Staying in Takoma Park was particularly essential for his restaurant. "I chose Takoma Park because I found that this is the only place, I would risk this venture knowing that my shortcomings would be overlooked," he said. "You have more curious here, more warm and more appreciative in most cases."

Despite fighting through a global pandemic just over a year after opening, Joof remains confident that his restaurant is filling a special desire for the area by offering high-quality dishes from a region he’s passionate about. "There’s something so gratifying about having an idea, conceptualizing it, bringing it to fruition, watching it germinate and having someone come in from as far as Pennsylvania, saying ‘I’ve read about your restaurant’ and they sit down and dine and you can see satisfaction on their faces. That’s a drug you can’t find anywhere; it’s something you create."

To check out Mansa Kunda’s menu, visit mansakunda.com.

Mansa Kunda opened at 8000 Flower Ave. in January 2019. Mansa Kunda serves West African fare along with a wide selection of wines.

CONTACT INFORMATION FOR EMERGENCIES AND/OR SERVICES

For any storm-related emergencies, to include any injury, tree into a structure, or downed power lines that could still be electrified, call 911.

To report trees down in the roadway blocking traffic, call the Takoma Park Police Department at the non-emergency number, 301-270-1100.

For power outages and to check estimated restoration times, call Pepco at 1-877-737-2662 or visit their power outage webpage at https://www.pepco.com/Outages/CheckOutageStatus

To report downed branches and other debris in the public right of way - roadways or sidewalks - contact Takoma Park Public Works at publicworks@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7633.

For issues with cable lines or internet, call your service provider.

Covid-19 Testing

Walk-ins are welcome
No appointment necessary

What You Need To Know
- Our drive thru provides rapid results. You take the sample yourself. Test kits are PCR tests. Results are ready in 1-2 days.
- We do require a government ID or a voter’s order.
- Testing is free. If you have insurance, we will ask for the information, but there are no co-pays or deductibles.
- We treat patients of all ages. If you bring young children, we may ask you to help them get tested.

Takoma Park Recreation Center
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Montgomery County Testing

February 2022
Takoma Park News ▶ Page 11
CITY CAREERS

The City of Takoma Park recruiting includes all career staff, part time or temporary staff, interns, and more. The list of open positions changes frequently, so please check takomaparkmd.gov/careers regularly for up-to-date information. The most recent available positions are:

• Childcare Director to lead Morning Addition & Afternoon Addition at the Community Center and Before and After the Bell at the Rec Center
• Senior Accounting Assistant to provide support to the Finance Department, in the areas of accounts receivable, accounts payable, and payroll
• Contractual Instructors to teach a variety of classes for the Recreation Department which may be held virtually, in person at the Community Center, Rec Center, or outdoors at area parks

Applications, and details about these and other open positions can be found at takomaparkmd.gov/careers. The City of Takoma Park is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. We strive to be a diverse workforce that is representative of the residents we serve and the area in which we live. We are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment where employees of diverse backgrounds can thrive and make a positive impact in the services we provide.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR CITY RESIDENTS

Scholarships that were approved for 2021 will expire at the end of December 2021. If you would like to continue receiving the discounted rates toward future enrollments, be sure to reapply for 2022. And if you haven’t applied before, now is the time! Visit takomaparkmd.gov/recreation/recreation-scholarships or stop by our office to receive a copy of the application.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

City of Takoma Park’s 12th Annual Mid-Winter Play Day
Organized by the nonprofit Let’s Play America assisted by the TP Recreation Department
Sunday, February 13, 1 – 4 p.m. Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue
Everyone deserves to play, people of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds. This indoor/outdoor event will have activities inside and out. When inside, all attendees and volunteers will wear masks. Performers in the Auditorium will include the Takoma Park Community Band, the Chicken Lady, a comedy half hour, Dance Exchange, and Simon Says with Congressman Raskin. Outside activities will include double dutch, floor hockey, hula hooping, hopscotch, corn hole, and four square. Attendees will be able to enjoy these inside activities: dress-up, balloon game, decorate a cookie, board games, face painting, playing with boxes, playing with play dough, recreation room games, yoga heights (mini yoga sessions), and giant checkers, chess, and connect four. Free refreshments will be provided by the Co-op, Giant Food, Target, and Starbucks. Volunteers may email Pat theplaylady@gmail.com or text her at 301-928-9962. Later this month, teen volunteers will be able to sign-up on the Montgomery County Volunteer website. Teens will volunteer from 12 – 5 p.m.
www.letsplayamerica.org

Meeting of the Minds
Meeting of the Minds is a meeting-of-the-minds event for ages 6 and up. Registrants will receive an email with log-in details just prior to the presentation. Registration is required per connection. Advanced online registration is required by 5 p.m. February 25. No onsite registration is available. montgomeryparks.org/events/meeting-of-the-minds

Takoma Park Youth Council Winter Clothes Drive
The Takoma Park Youth Council is collecting new and gently used coats, gloves, hats, sweaters, and other warm clothes. Items can be dropped off when facilities are open at the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, or the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue. The clothing collected will be donated to Adventist Community Services, which will make the items available at their free thrift shop at 501 Sligo Avenue, Silver Spring.

Historic Takoma Reading Room
Sundays (first and third) 7328 Carroll Avenue
Visitors will have access to reference books on Takoma and Maryland history, the collection of Takoma Voices and City newsletters, historical journals, and more. Historic Takoma is also hosting the Maryland Reference Collection of the Takoma Park Maryland Library during Awareness Week, join Climate Action Coffee and the City of Takoma Park for a free lunch and learn panel discussion and Q & A on invasive plant species, featuring speakers Corinne Stephens, Sara Tangren, Jesse Buff, and Lily Fountain, who will provide an overview of invasive plant species in our region, why we should care about them, how to identify them, what you can do to remove them, and what is being done in Maryland at the legislative level to curb their spread. Register at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/252041842937

Docs In Progress
Doc In Progress is offering programs ranging from beginner filmmaking and storytelling workshops to workshops for emerging filmmakers looking to polish their skills in camerawork, editing, and more. For more information, visit www.docsinprogress.org/filmmakers.