



CBCC Ends with Final Gifts to Neighborhood Nonprofits

BY RUTH HAMILTON AND RICK BARDACH

More than twenty years ago, in June 2005, a broad group of leaders in ANC6D were convened by Mary Jacksteit of Search for Common Ground to ask how we were preparing to negotiate community benefits from all the development planned in our area. So began a long process of organizing in the community, led by ANC commissioners, Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA) leaders and others. The Near SE-SW Community Benefits Coordinating Council (CBCC) was incorporated in 2009 with the goal of being the entity to solicit and receive benefits from the various developments that were then just getting underway in Southwest and Near Southeast.

CBCC hosted a number of major community gatherings to determine priorities. Those included fighting displacement issues around the Arthur Capper

redevelopment across South Capitol Street; advocating the Build First priority for an expected Greenleaf redevelopment, as well as fighting for resident job placements during construction and inclusion of affordable housing.

The community wanted more opportunities for our youth. When the DC United arrived in Buzzard Point, a community benefits agreement (CBA) included important benefits for school soccer programs and nonprofit fundraising opportunities.

Residents wanted protection of our green spaces. In response, CBCC brought about construction of the 3rd Street SW and I Street SW park at the intersection of public and private housing and now fronting the beautiful Southwest Library. The development of the Randall School saw a CBA related to funding arts programs at what we hoped would be a revitalized community center at

the Randall Recreation center. The ANC and residents will still be working for the promised community center in any redevelopment in the lots at 4th Street SW and M Street SW.

In 2015, a new nonprofit based near Southeast took on CBA management and in Southwest, a community foundation was also started to receive philanthropic and CBA funds. The CBCC Board continued to meet frequently over the next five years with some successful results. When the coronavirus pandemic impacted the nation, CBCC became inactive and did not reactivate in any meaningful way thereafter.

As a result, the four CBCC directors remaining in 2025, Rick Bardach, Barbara Ehrlich, Rhonda Hamilton and Ken LaCruise, welcomed former board members Ruth Hamilton and Paul Taylor, along with well-known Southwest

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KIDS CORNER

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Neighborhood Group Seeks to Restore Diamond Teague Park in Near Southeast

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

Local nonprofit, Systems Supports for Social Stability, Inc., is calling on residents and city leadership to help restore the tiled memorial at Diamond Teague Park and safeguard a cherished piece of community history.

Diamond Teague Park — the 39,000-square-foot public plaza at First Street SE and Potomac Avenue SE on the Anacostia River, just across from Nationals Park — was named in memory of Diamond Teague, a young DC resident devoted to environmental justice and community service before he was tragically taken from us.

Today, the memorial tiled tribute honoring Diamond stands unfenced



Courtesy of Sumayya Lane

Diamond Teague Park at 100 Potomac Avenue SE.

and vulnerable, and has fallen into disrepair.

"This memorial is more than art — it's a tribute to resilience, hope, and the future of our community," said Sumayya Lane, CEO and founder of Systems Supports for Social Stability, Inc. "Our youth deserve strong role models — they crave opportunities to showcase their talents, creativity, courage, and dedication to making society better."

The organization is urging immediate action to repair and restore the ceramic-tiled, diamond-shaped memorial back to its original condition and install protective fencing or barriers to guard against further vandalism.

The group also envisions the trans-

See "Diamond Teague," page 8



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Ward 6 Mutual Aid Needs Your Support

BY KATRINA AVILA

Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid (SYC/W6MA) is dedicated to prioritizing the safety, well-being, and dignity of our neighbors. From the start, we've worked to make sure community members have what they need—food, cleaning supplies, school materials, digital devices, household items, clothing, and more. A big part of this work happens through partnerships with grassroots organizations across the city that uplift and invest in Black and Brown communities, including our long-standing collaboration with Christ United Methodist Church (CUMC) in Southwest DC.

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of donors and volunteers, we're able to keep providing critical support to neighbors facing hardship. These partnerships show the power of



community solidarity and what it looks like when we truly care for one another.

Interested in Supporting Your Community? Here's How You Can Get Involved with Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid:

Support Our Unhoused Neighbors:

Help provide essential supplies to ensure our unhoused neighbors in Washington, DC can thrive this winter. Browse and purchase items from our Wishlist at bit.ly/sycw6ma-tentlist. Have questions? Feel free to email us at info@serveyourcitydc.org for more information.

Volunteer as a Virtual Tutor: Join Serve Your City/Ward 6 Mutual Aid's *Free School for Unlimited Youth* program, which offers FREE virtual tutoring for Black and Brown K-12 students across Washington, DC. We're seeking dedicated college students, graduate

students, and professionals to tutor in various subjects. Interested? Sign up at bit.ly/sycvolunteertutor or contact us at youthenrichment@serveyourcitydc.org to learn more.

Your involvement can make a lasting impact—join us today!

Support Our Work

Your financial contributions are crucial in sustaining our efforts. By donating online at bit.ly/sycw6ma-donate, you directly strengthen our support for Christ United Methodist Church's (CUMC) 5000 Food Ministry and help address food access challenges in Southwest DC. Your generosity enables us to purchase essential food items in bulk, maximizing our impact and extending our reach to those who need it most.

Stay Updated on Our Work Across DC

For the latest updates on our programs and initiatives, visit serveyourcitydc.org.

Local Disaster Preparedness Organization Wins National Award

BY SOUTHWESTER STAFF

The U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers selected DC's Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) as the Voluntary Organization of the Year.

DC VOAD is a 26-member coalition of local disaster relief nonprofits led by Southwest resident and native Washingtonian Ben Curran. Curran also chairs SW Strong!, the emergency preparedness and response task force of Southwest Neighborhood Assembly (SWNA).

"DC VOAD's dedication, creativity, and inclusiveness make it an outstanding example of what it means to serve a community before, during, and after a disaster. We are honored to recognize them as this year's Voluntary Organization," the organization said in a press release.

Over the past year, DC VOAD has led a diverse range of community-driven preparedness initiatives, all free and volunteer-led. This included gathering 30 nonprofits to engage hundreds of residents at Arena Stage, a blood drive for the Red Cross, a DC Flood History Walking Tour, and the launch of the Embassy Disaster Preparedness Series, starting with a session co-hosted with the Australian Embassy.

DC VOAD also offers member training with a strategic approach focused on the five key phases of disaster: work—prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response, and



Courtesy of Ben Curran

Ben Curran accepts the 2025 Voluntary Organization of the Year Award from the International Association of Emergency Managers.

recovery. This past year included in-depth workshops on mass care shelter operations and volunteer and donations management, tailored to members, including many who are new to disaster work.

DC VOAD's response efforts have been equally impactful—supporting Emergency Reception Centers during large-scale events, managing donation operations during the Bowen Road fires, and providing emergency supplies and coordinating feeding efforts during the January 2025 air crash near Reagan National Airport.

They have built a network of nearly 1,000 engaged individuals who receive curated monthly updates filled with resources, training, and local opportunities—always grounded in the motto: Think Globally, Act Locally. Their bimonthly community lunches, often joined by public safety leaders, build relationships across neighborhoods and agencies. With a richly diverse membership, including faith-based, secular, and disability inclusion organizations, DC VOAD works to ensure accessibility and equity in every effort.

The Southwester

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Southwester Staff

- Editor-in-Chief: Melissa Silverman
- Managing Editor: Una Yarsky
- Photo Editor: Fredo Vasquez
- Advertising: Beth Hall and Kelly Thomas
- Distribution: Perry Klein
- Calendar: Maya Renee
- calendar@thesouthwester.com
- Design & Layout: Electronic Ink
- Printer: Print Innovators



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VS. CHI



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SEP. 19 | 7:30 PM
VS. CLT



SATURDAY
MAY 16 | 7:30 PM
VS. STL



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VS. RBNY



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Westminster Rev. Brian Hamilton Honored with “Neighbor Award” for Community Contributions

BY GUY ALDRIDGE

The 2025 Brickie Awards ceremony was hosted on December 4. The yearly Ward 6 celebration, hosted by Councilmember Charles Allen and sponsored by a range of local small businesses, was started by Allen’s predecessor Tommy Wells and has been continued every year by the current Ward 6 DC Councilmember.

There are several award categories in which residents and organizations can be nominated. From Southwest, Rev. Brian Hamilton of Westminster Presbyterian Church on 4th Street SW was presented with the Neighbor Award. Hamilton was recognized not only as a “beloved pastor” but as a “pillar of the Southwest community.”

Hamilton plans to retire in 2026. In his three decades in Washing-

ton, he has made Westminster “not only...a worship home for many, but...a community hub for countless neighbors, regardless of their faith,” Allen’s office said.

Many Southwesters are familiar with Friday Night Jazz and Monday Night Blues at the church, which has “expanded its ministry into the surrounding neighborhood to take on serious community challenges.” This outreach has ranged from providing resources and training to take on substance abuse to building affordable housing for families and seniors.

Other Brickie recipients honored on December 4 were Capitol Hill Schools Parents Football League, Atlas Performing Arts Center, DC government employee Maude Holt, civic organization Free DC, and *Capitol Hill Corner* editor Larry Janezich.

Making Noise For A Free Dc

BY ELIZABETH EARLY

If you have passed by the corner of 4th and M Streets SW in the evenings, you may have heard pots clanging, whistles blowing, and voices calling out “Free DC.” This is part of a nightly demonstration organized by members of the Free DC community.

I have lived in Southwest DC my entire life. As a DC resident, I’ve also been disenfranchised my entire life. When I learned in school that one justification for DC not being a state was our proximity to the federal government, it didn’t make sense because I already knew we were powerless. It didn’t matter that I could walk to the Capitol from my house; I still couldn’t talk to anyone inside and expect to be heard.

That feeling of being powerless has stayed with me my entire life, even as I advocated for DC’s statehood. I always felt like I was shouting into the void, unseen and unheard. Many of the people who needed to hear me — my fellow citizens with voting representation — didn’t even know we weren’t a state. They didn’t know we were disenfranchised or that taxation without representation didn’t end in 1783. Many still don’t know.

When the president deployed the National Guard in DC on August 12, I got angry — angrier than I had been in



Courtesy of Jackson Maxwell

Elizabeth Early calling for a Free DC.

a long time. But here was this opportunity to finally be seen. To be heard in the most basic sense. So I started making noise. Every night, at 7:00 p.m., I stand at the corner of 4th and M Streets SW, just a few blocks from where I grew up, with other neighbors, calling for a Free DC. We bang pots, blow whistles, and shout into bullhorns. This form of political protest has a name, *cacerolazo*, and a history that goes back at least two centuries. It’s part of a global tradition of resistance, and in Washington, DC, where residents still lack full control over our laws and budget, this nightly protest is a response to that lack of power.

And what has unfolded has been a gift. I have met neighbors I would never have otherwise. I have become involved as a volunteer with Free DC, an organization that I believe can

See “Noise,” page 15

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Courtesy of Pam Troutman

Waterfront Village builds connections among seniors in Southwest DC.

Waterfront Village Builds Connections for Local Seniors

BY PATRICIA JOHNSON

After 40 years in Kentucky, Michelle and Richard Freed left their former home and bought a place in Southwest DC. They were eager to establish new relationships and to enjoy the advantages of living in a walkable area where they could easily access museums, stores, and restaurants. A neighbor told them about Waterfront Village, a non-profit for members over 60 looking to age in place.

"The Village gave us a way to settle in," says Michele. The Freeds enjoyed a wide variety of social, educational, and cultural programs and acknowledged that the Village provided them a place where they could build new friendships.

Yet, the Village is far more than a social club. Volunteers provide rides to medical appointments, pick up prescriptions, and assistance in navigating tech issues. It wasn't long after Cindy Stevens moved to Southwest that she confronted a cancer diagnosis, and she received support and care from her new Village community. "I felt the warmth," says Stevens.

"Challenges that come in the second half of life are our specialty," says Executive Director Pam Troutman. "We have a lot of fun together, but being together as we navigate the tough times, that is worth its weight in gold for our members."

The office at St. Augustine's Church, next to the Wharf, allows members easy access to many on-site programs and activities. Monthly meditation, book club, coffee hours, picnics, holiday events, and other social activities make for a full calendar. The Village has engaged wonderful partners in the community, including restaurants that host monthly happy hours and men's lunch gatherings. A 10 Year Anniversary Dinner is scheduled for April 16th, but every event this year will reflect a fresh and new approach. "There will be a lot of exciting new offerings," says Troutman.

Guided by a devoted Board of Directors, the Village would not be able to serve the community without the support of its many volun-

teers, partners, and donors. From the SWBID and the businesses on the Wharf, to the local firefighters and Commander Hall from the First Police District, to the owner of Good Company Doughnuts, to our members themselves, a vibrant Village has evolved.

The heart of the Village are the members. Richard Lang, a former Air Force Colonel who runs the annual Army Ten-Miler, is the Village tech support team leader. He never says no to finding a solution to a computer that isn't cooperating or a phone that isn't connecting. "The Village gives me a purpose. It's a win/win. Providing information to other members is a way of giving back. It also allows me to meet a lot of interesting people here in the neighborhood," says Lang.

Deb Greenbush had very specific reasons for joining the Village, "I joined because I don't have any kids or family. I wanted a safety support system." Deb can often be seen riding her bike on her way to her work as a DC Tour Guide. Ellen Spencer, a longtime Southwest resident, leads the Village Book Club, one of the earliest affinity groups that formed. The Village meditation group is led by member Gail Frances, who is a mosaic artist who has studied in Italy.

"Village programs are member-driven," says Troutman. "We rely on the collective knowledge of our 200 plus members to offer the best and most engaging programs."

Twice a year the Village offers a class called "Future Framework: Getting your Ducks in a Row" offering information on how to get organized, connect with lawyers, service providers, financial planners, or get care at home. The class covers topics from difficult conversations with loved ones to decluttering to password management. The class will be offered virtually in February and you can visit the Village website at dewaterfrontvillage.org to sign up.

Although there is a lot of practical knowledge, the heart of the Village is really about connection. Everyone deserves to have someone in their corner. Waterfront Village provides

See "Connections," page 9

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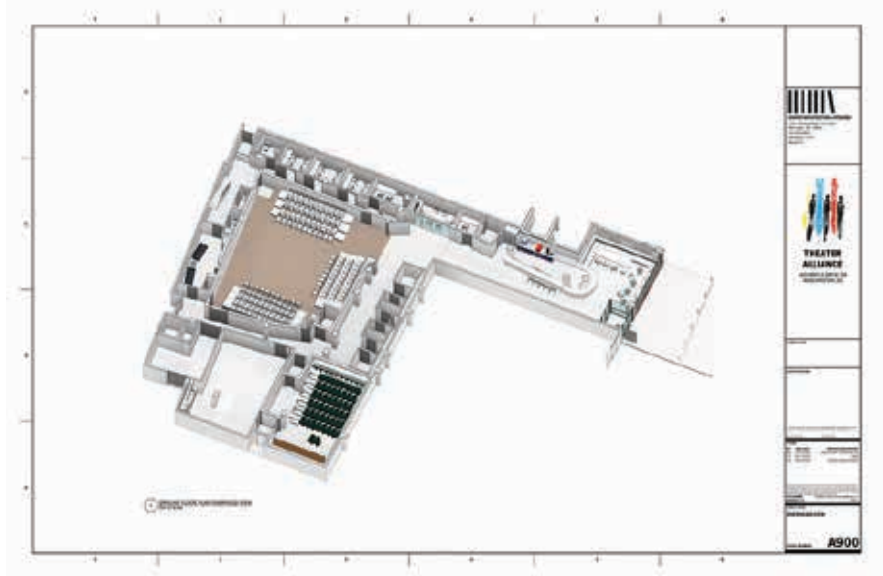
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Courtesy of Theater Alliance

A rendering of the new Theater Alliance arts hub.

Theater Alliance Announces Permanent Home on Maple Drive SW

BY MELISSA SILVERMAN

After a year of success as a Southwest pop-up, Theater Alliance is making 240 Maple Drive SW into a permanent home, transforming a formerly empty retail space into an arts hub that will support other cultural organizations with a new collaborative model.

A \$4.5 million capital campaign will support the reimagining of the 9,000 square foot space into a long-term, fully equipped arts center featuring two theaters — a 140-seat flexible black box and a 60-seat cinema and performance space — as well as a rehearsal hall, reception space, scene shop, artist co-working spaces, and a civic engagement center.

Known for socially conscious, civic-minded productions, Theater Alliance has roots on H Street NE and in Anacostia, but is now focused on the future in Southwest DC. Over the past year, the company used the temporary space to produce five shows, host the Hothouse New Play Festival, welcome more than 5,000 patrons, and employ over 130 local artists.

“This project is about much more than bricks and mortar — it’s about creating long-term infrastructure that strengthens our city’s cultural ecosystem,” said Shanara Gabrielle, Executive Artistic Director of Theater Alliance in a press release. “We’re establishing a shared home for multiple DC arts organizations and the communities we serve — designed to expand access, deepen collaboration, and drive sustainable impact. This is what meaningful investment in culture and community looks like.”

Designed to be a multi-organization arts hub, Theater Alliance intends for the project to support the broader arts and nonprofit community. Based on principles of solidarity economics and collective stewardship, the organization envisions a hub that will house multiple arts-focused nonprofits operating strategically to share resources, space and support.

The organization sees this model as a blueprint for sustaining and growing the arts, and aims to foster collaboration that strengthens sustainability, reduces barriers, and expands impact.

DIAMOND TEAGUE

Continued from p. 1

formation of the waterfront park into a vibrant hub for community gatherings with events such as outdoor concerts, open-mic nights, youth arts and crafts displays, and environmental-justice programming.

The renewed park will serve not only as a memorial sanctuary, but as a living statement of unity, culture, and community pride.

“Diamond was a symbol of hope, service, and environmental justice,” said Lane. “Restoring this memo-

rial and activating the waterfront ensures his story continues to uplift future generations.”

To meet the goal of honoring Diamond’s legacy by making the park a safe, inclusive, and creative public space for all DC residents, the group plans to secure funding through public grants, private donors, and community fundraising.

“We are calling on neighbors, local businesses, and city leaders to come together,” said Lane.

For more information contact Systems Supports for Social Stability, Inc. at info@fymproductions.org.



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visit dcwaterfrontvillage.org for updates

New Year's Resolutions For Writers

BY MARGARET GEORGE

Why, when you long to write, want to write, and enjoy writing, is it so hard to actually do it? *I want to write a short story...I have a great idea for a novel...an essay...*

Procrastination is the bane of every writer's life! Here is a new recipe to try for January 2026.

Make this project your secret. Telling people about it creates too much pressure and takes the fun out of it.

Set up a special writing place where you do only that. It might be a favorite chair, a table near a window, it needn't be large, only that it is dedicated space. If possible, it should be private.

Set a timer--2 hours or 500 words, whichever comes first. When the timer starts ticking, it acts as a trigger to get you started. Of course you can vary the time and number of words for yourself, the ones above are what works for me.

Do this every day in January, find your time of day when you feel most creative to write if possible. But you

needn't be inspired to write, just get the words down.

Have some atmosphere boosters, props like souvenirs, art work, herbal potpourri, or music, to set the mood and connect you to your creative self.

Tell yourself, "This doesn't count, it's just an experiment," which frees you from premature judgement and lets your imagination soar.

Don't reread and revise until you get to the end of the month (or whatever time period you've chosen). Then you will be able to read and judge it like an outsider.

All these hints will help you feel it's fun and not something to dread as a chore, so you will look forward to it, and voilà! At the end of the month you will have established a routine that works for you. Success!

Margaret George is a Southwest resident and New York Times bestselling author of historical fiction. See her latest books at margaretdgeorge.com.

CONNECTIONS

Continued from p. 6

that assurance.

"It's fantastic," says Katherine Crump-Wiesner. "It's not just for when you are frail and isolated, it's for when

you are looking for those connections to keep you involved and connected in place for the long haul."

If you would like to get involved, learn more about membership, or volunteer, call 202-656-1834 or email the Village at info@dcwaterfrontvillage.org.

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Guest Opinion

Lansburgh Park Community Mural Brings a Ghost River to the Surface

BY ANDREA LIMAURO, EARTH COMMONS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

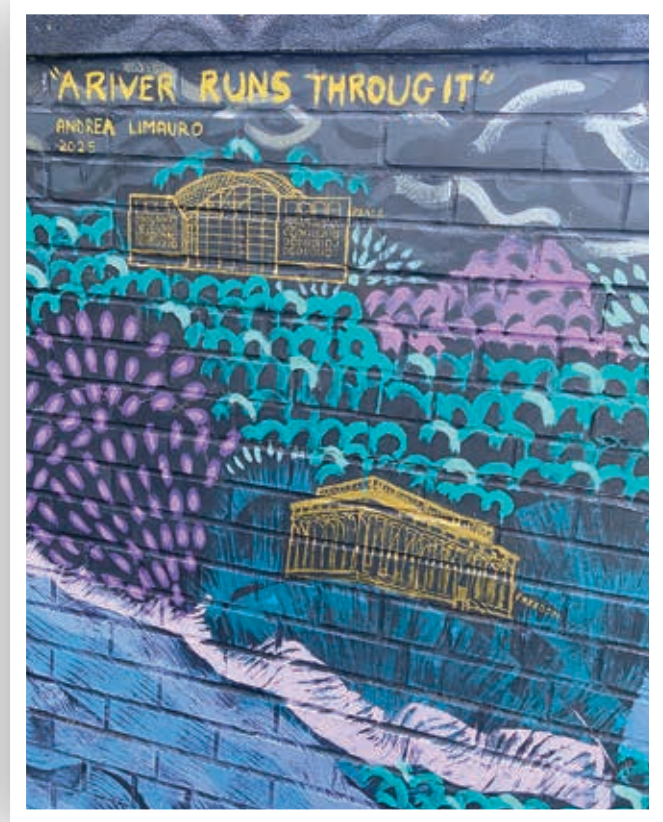
The following piece is excerpted from "A River Runs Through It," originally published by Earth Commons.

A "ghost" creek that no one can see runs through Southwest DC. Residents live, drive, and play on top of it and its vast floodplain. Even those who live in or near the buildings and landmarks named after it often don't know about its existence. To see James Creek, one must know which manhole under which street to lift — because for over a hundred years, the creek has been buried in a dark brick tunnel. The brook that once poured from springs south of Capitol Hill gently flowed down as a tributary to the Anacostia River. It is now out of sight, and on dry days, it is a trickle more than a creek. However tiny, invisible, and seemingly trapped underground, this branch of the Anacostia River poses a risk for Southwest residents.

With intense precipitation and



A new community mural at Lansburgh Park.



Courtesy of the Author

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storms, "ghost" rivers, waterways that have been buried under human development, can reemerge from underground hiding and deluge the surrounding area.

The James Creek floodplain, the natural "breathing space" that waterbodies need to expand and contract with seasons, precipitation, and tides, now cuts through the fully built-out Buzzard Point peninsula and Southwest, increasing flood risk for thousands of residents.

The District plans to increase the community's resilience to flood risk by redesigning three parks - Randall, Lansburgh, and King Greenleaf - and the streets that connect them into a network of blue-green infrastructure and "sponge" parks; open spaces designed to purposely absorb and store large quantities of stormwater and floodwaters.

The added bonus of the design process was the opportunity to work with the community on updating the spaces to be more responsive to the communities' recreational needs when the community is not flooding. This is most apparent in the re-design of a portion of Lansburgh Park, the main sponge park in the community-wide network, which will feature a large central bio-swale with a nature and public art trail around it, as well as an expanded stage area for hosting popular local events like community picnics and concerts.

The art of painting risk and resilience

While it will take a few years to fully implement the flood resilience plan, I decided to paint my latest mural, "A River Runs Through It," in Lansburgh Park this past October. This mural is the third of my "A Climate of Future Past" series. As with my previous two climate murals—"The River and the Town" and "Endless Summer"—the artwork location is significant, as it is symbolic both of risk and its solution. The third mural is painted over the longest wall in the park which runs parallel and over the buried James Creek and in front of the future sponge park. The wall's location made it the perfect setting for a painting about the main climate risk for many communities in the fall: flooding from storms. "A River Runs Through It" is a tribute to James Creek and the communities that have lived and thrived in its floodplain for centuries.

I had several goals for this mural. The mural is painted along a 230' long and 7' tall brick wall that separates the future sponge park area of Lansburgh Park from the noise (and emissions) from the adjoining District of Columbia Motor Vehicle Inspection Station. First, I had to figure out how to organize and compose the artwork on a wall so long and skinny.

I used the long L-shape of the wall, as well as its direction perfectly aligning with the shape of the peninsula, to design a landscape of the Southwest quadrant from the National Mall and

See "Mural," page 13



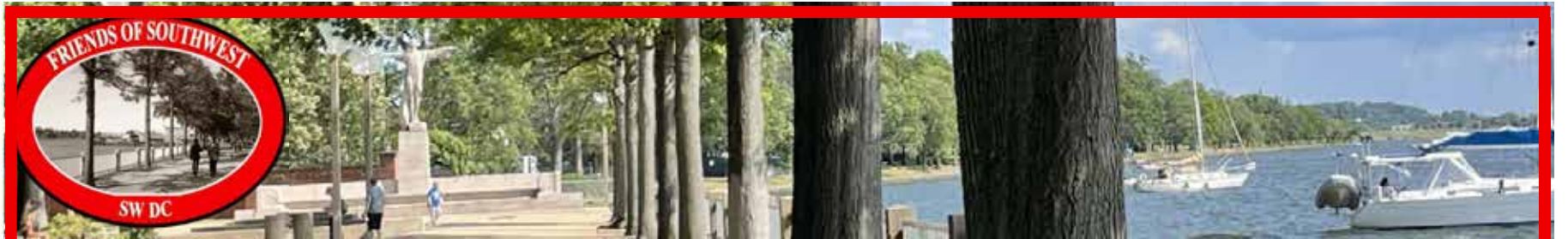
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Over 25 years of helping Southwest!
Honoring our 2025 grant recipients!

- *Alpha Phi Alpha/OHA - SW Day and school supply drive*
- *Arena Stage - scholarships for SW kids to Camp Arena Stage*
- *Children's chorus of Washington - SW student participation*
- *Christ United Methodist Church - SW food pantry*
- *Coralie Farlee Graduate Scholarships for SW scholars*
- *DC STORM - trip to Norfolk for SW youth*
- *EmmaUS - trip to Harriet Tubman Home for SW kids*
- *GOODProjects - learning hub for SW families*
- *James Creek Residents Council - food pantry, Thanksgiving dinners and Winter Wonderland*
- *Jefferson Middle School - Voices of Now Program*
- *Living Classrooms - events at Dent House Community Center*
- *SW Community Center - SW Family Fun Day*
- *SW Comm-Unity Forum - SW Day and Toys-for-Tots*
- *SW Community Partnership - future SW envisioning project*
- *SWNA - college scholarships*
- *SWNA - tent for SW market*
- *Theater Alliance - discount tickets for SW residents*
- *Waterfront Village - subsidized memberships and support for seniors*

Thanks for your good work for Southwest!

You can help, too!
Please donate to support your neighbors

Friends of Southwest DC
P.O. Box 44434
Washington, DC 20026
FriendsofSWDC.org



KID'S CORNER

By Ella Goodman

Each month check out the most recent issue of the paper for activities and games to help you discover SWDC! Have a suggestion? Email us: editor@thesouthwester.com. Check out next month's issue for the answers!

Spot the difference!

Can you spot the differences in the two scenes below?



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____



Answers from December 2025 issue

Differences: The star is a different color in the picture on the right, the girl is wearing a Santa hat in the picture on the right, there are three more stockings in the picture on the right, the dreidels are different in the picture on the right, there is another present in the picture on the right, there is a glass of milk in the picture on the right.

WORD SEARCH: HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

J F E E G F R O W V S E M U E
 C Z L M P H Q L I B R G I B B
 S B D B B O C J I F E N D M L
 H W P S Y F H O V Y L A N O E
 H H Y Y K A Q X N W K H I W Z
 E Z W Y O R Y W W P R C G I Z
 N O I T U L O S E R A Y H G R
 L G B L E D N W B D P R T I X
 T M F A T Z V K E L S U T M B
 F O D N H Q X E G R J Y L Y C
 X O U L L A B O C S I D O F P
 S O C E L E B R A T E F H K Y
 C M J B X P H B A A W R U R J
 S Z C P U Y O U Y A I C I U W
 V B J N N V D O I I R P U Z G

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| CELEBRATE | CHANGE |
| COUNTDOWN | DISCO BALL |
| FIREWORKS | HOPE |
| MIDNIGHT | PARTY |
| RESOLUTION | SPARKLERS |

Jokes!

Why can't you trust an atom?
Because they make up everything!

What becomes wetter as it dries?
A towel!

What do you call a sleeping dinosaur?
A dino-snore!

Write Your Own Joke!

If you would like to submit a joke to *The Southwester*, email it to editor@thesouthwester.com

HIPS Ward 6 "Hot Spot Project" Enters Its Second Year of Community Support

BY JOHNNY BAILEY, HOT SPOT MANAGER

HIPS' Ward 6 place-based outreach program—known locally as the "Hot Spot Project"—is entering its second year of service, partnership, and community-centered care. Modeled after the highly successful effort in Shaw, the goal of this project is simple but powerful: build real relationships, measure real impact, and meet people where they are.

By hiring staff from the neighborhood who know the community and shaping programming through town halls and roundtables, HIPS ensures support is not only accessible but tailored to the needs residents identify.

The Hot Spot model centers on holistic care. Staff work daily to sup-

port neighbors through a wide range of services, including overdose prevention, recovery navigation, counseling, and linkage to treatment. Over the past year, at least 70 people were successfully connected to some form of treatment—whether through Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT), support groups, or referrals.

In its first year, the Waterfront pop-up created two weekly support groups at the Southwest Library on Wednesdays: a Grief Support Group (5-6 PM) and a Substance Recovery Group (6-7:30 PM). Staff also partnered with Good Company to host outreach events, provided Narcan and de-escalation trainings, and helped community members navigate various service systems. Through weekly ID

testing, collaboration with C3 Cares, and multiple clinic meet-and-greets, the team worked to make healthcare and social services easier to access.

The impact is far-reaching:

- 15 overdose reversals performed by staff
- 604 doses of Narcan distributed, empowering neighbors to save lives
- 1,334 meals and snacks provided
- Hundreds of hygiene kits, winter items, and blankets distributed
- 188 micro-counseling sessions held
- 5 community members employed, with additional interns and volunteers trained
- Close collaboration with James Creek, SWBID, Theater Alliance, Westminster Church, and others
- Ongoing efforts to keep public spac-

es clear of discarded syringes

As the project enters its second year, HIPS aims to deepen relationships and expand offerings. Plans include a winter clothing giveaway at the library, continued support groups, and new programming shaped directly by community voices. The team strives to be present not only during moments of crisis but during moments of connection, celebration, and collective problem-solving.

Residents, partners, and long-time neighbors are encouraged to share-ideas, needs, or concerns. Community input guides everything the Hot Spot Project does.

For suggestions or collaboration inquiries, reach out at johnny@hips.org.



One New Years Resolution

BY KITTY FELDE

I just returned from the Guadalajara International Book Festival, sharing my Fina Mendoza mysteries in Español with Mexican readers. I was blown away.

More than 900,000 people attended the Guadalajara International Book Festival - or FIL - last year. This year, organizers are expecting to top a million. To put that in perspective, the National Book Festival draws “tens of thousands” of people, according to the Library of Congress, about a tenth the size. The convention halls in Guadalajara are PACKED with people, holding books, talking about books, buying books.

And here’s the surprising thing: the average age at the book festival is under 30! And they are just as excited about books as are attendees at Comi-Con about the latest Marvel movie.

Why?

At Guadalajara’s festival, two full days are set aside just for school kids. Outside the convention center, there’s a massive traffic jam of buses, all stuffed with middle and high school kids. The book festival is an annual field trip for schools all over the region. That translates into a culture

of reading, of celebrating literature. That’s why you see so many 20-something couples wandering around the exhibits on the other days of the festival. It’s become a hot date, the place to be seen!

Why isn’t this a tradition here? Why not partner with DC public schools to bring school buses of kids to the festival, adding a Friday session dedicated to school kids all over the DMV.

But we are blessed here with many book festival options in 2026: The Gaithersburg Book Festival is set for May 16th at Bohrer Park. Northern Virginia’s Fall for the Book Festival will be back at George Mason University October 6th through 10th. Neither the National Book Festival nor the Baltimore Book Festival have announced dates for 2026, but both usually hold them in late summer/early fall.

If your child’s school isn’t bringing your young reader to a festival, plan your own field trip. Make it an annual event that will make reading and book festivals a joyful habit that will last long into the future.

Kitty Felde writes The Fina Mendoza Mysteries series of books for kids 7-12, set on Capitol Hill.

MURAL

Continued from p. 10

the Tidal Basin, through the Federal Rectangle, Southwest and ending on the Buzzard Point.

I wanted the artwork to feel like a celebration of the entire Southwest quadrant of the city. For this, I selected about three dozen landmarks, buildings and historical figures that have left a mark on the area. These include a mix of national monuments and buildings as well as landmarks with more local significance.

I also wanted the artwork to speak to flood risk and flood resilience, so the mural depicts the peninsula during a storm that revives James Creek and floods the floodplain and Lansburgh Park.

The final goal for the artwork was to make the park feel more welcoming, large and open. Lansburgh Park was designed to be surrounded by buildings, light industrial uses and walls, making the center of the park, where the “sponge” feature will be built, feel very enclosed and walled in. By painting plant forms, organic shapes, and colors, I created the illusion of the park extending beyond the wall. Now, the longest wall in the park blends into the rest of the landscape and makes the park feel bigger and more open.

I decided to paint the mural with the assistance of volunteers from the community to honor and recognize the long tradition of civic organizing

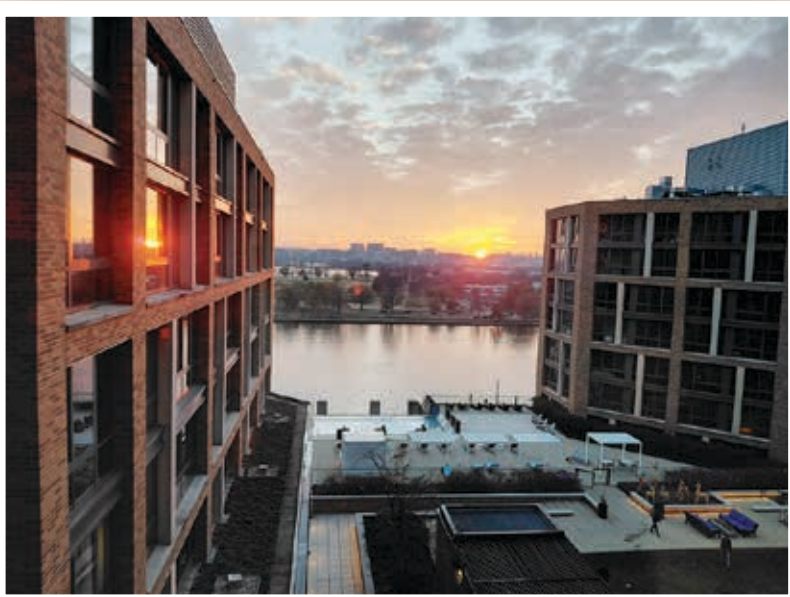
in Southwest.

To complete “A River Runs Through It,” I worked with the local non-profit Good Projects and the Southwest Business Improvement District (SWBID) to recruit student and resident volunteers. It took about 50 hours of painting outside over 6 days for 25 residents, the parks’ urban farmers, local high schoolers from Richard Wright High School, and staff from the SWBID and the Department of Parks and Recreation, and me to complete it.

The dedication, time, and effort that residents and students put into the mural, the pride with which they created art for their neighbors, and the community that was created through the project are all reminders of the importance of building up a community’s social capital. The social networks that support the growth and resilience of a community are an important but often forgotten piece of the climate resilience puzzle. At a time when extreme individualism reigns, it is a good reminder that individual resilience is often only possible within a resilient community.

“A River Runs Through It” was made possible with the generous support of the SW Business Improvement District. Other supporters include the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, Good Projects, Richard Wright High School and students, the Lansburgh Parks Farmers, as well as a year-long fellowship from Earth Commons.

Photo of the Month



Sunset reflection by the Potomac

Courtesy of Passion Julinsey

If you would like to submit a photo for consideration as Photo of the Month, email it to editor@thesouthwester.com

Deadline Approaching! Submit to The Southwester Photo Contest

The Southwester is sponsoring our first annual photo contest. Photographers are invited to submit 1-3 photos taken in Southwest DC during calendar year 2025 by January 10, 2026.

Submissions can be sent to editor@thesouthwester.com or via direct message on Instagram @thesouthwester.

The images chosen as grand prize winner, runner-up and third place winner will be published in the February edition of The Southwester. We are proud to announce our panel of judges from local cultural organizations are:

- Hana S. Sharif, Artistic Director, Arena Stage
- Katrina Ingraham, Senior Manager of Communications and Marketing, DC History Center
- Fredo Vasquez, The Southwester Photo Editor



The grand prize winner will also receive a gift certificate for the best night out in Southwest DC - dinner at Station Four and a show at Arena Stage. Thank you to Station Four and Arena Stage for your support of The Southwester.

LOG ON TODAY!

www.swna.org · www.TheSouthwester.com

Southwester Community Calendar | January 2026

Please check the web references or telephone numbers in the listings for details
Southwest Neighborhood Library events are at <https://tinyurl.com/5n8c929r>



SW Library
Events

MON 5th, 3:30 - 4:30 P.M., EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH A MICROSCOPE: We will explore different sizes and shapes through the world of a MICROSCOPE for this fun 1 hour program event. 13 - 19 Years Old (Teens) | 5 - 12 Years Old (Kids/Tweens), Adults are all welcome. **SW Library, 900 Wesley Place, SW**

MON 5th, 12th, 26th, 10:30-11:30 A.M., BUILDING BLOCKS. Children up to 5 and their caregivers are invited to a play date themed around building, knocking down, and building back up again. **SW Library**

TUES 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, 10:30 - 11:00 A.M., FAMILY STORY TIME is a great way to further your child's lifelong love of reading and learning! Birth - 5. **SW Library**

TUES 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, 12:00 - 1:00 P.M., FILM DISCUSSION- A friendly conversation circle prompted by a short film. Join a discussion with your neighbors & fellow library users. Films are not listed. **SW Library**

TUES 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th, 3:30 - 5:30 P.M., TWEEN/TEEN TIME, FREE TIME. Every Tuesday, join us after school to hang out with friends, play games, or work on craft projects. Tween/Teen Free Time programs are intended only for library attendees aged 11 through 19. **SW Library**

WED 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th, 2:00 - 7:00 P.M., GRIEF COUNSELING from Healthy Innovative Processes (H.I.P.S.), Information table 2:00 - 5:00 P.M., Grief Support Group 5:00 - 6:00 P.M. & Smart Recovery 6:00 - 7:30 P.M. Adults. **SW Library**

WED 7th, 21st, 3:30-4:30 P.M., LEGO GeoSMART: Kids/Tweens. Join us for a fun 1hr activity building Legos and GeoSmart magnetic pieces with creative minds. For kids/tween ages 5 thru 12. Kids under 9 must be accompanied by a caregiver. **SW Library**

THURS 8th, 22nd, 1:00 - 2:00 P.M., Coffee & Conversation. Customers are invited to join a casual conversation with other library customers. Coffee and light refreshments provided. Adults. **SW Library.**

THURS 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, 1:00 - 2:00 P.M., BABY LAP TIME. These 20-30 minute story times are specially designed for infants from birth until they begin walking, along with their grown-ups! **SW Library**

THURS 8th, 15th, 22nd, 29th, 3:00 - 6:00 P.M., TEEN LOUNGE. Join our Teen Lounge where you can play video games, do some crafts, or just hang out with your friends after school. **SW Library**

THURS 8, 5:30 - 7:30 P.M., GAME ON DOMINOS! ADULTS & SENIORS Play classic board games, checkers, Uno, dominos, backgammon and Scrabble during this fun 2-hour event. **SW Library**

THURS 15, 5:30 - 7:30 P.M., GAME ON SPADES! ADULTS & SENIORS Play classic board games, checkers, Uno, dominos, backgammon and Scrabble during this fun 2-hour event. Adults. **SW Library**

FRI 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, 10:30 - 11:30 A.M., SENSORY PLAYTIME. Join us in the Children's Room every Friday for fun sensory play. We'll provide the materials, just bring your imagination! Birth - 5. **SW Library**

SAT 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st, 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M., YOGA Weekly yoga class for adults. Chair

yoga 11:00 A.M.- 11:30 am & Mat yoga 11:45 A.M.- 12:45 P.M. Adults. **SW Library**

SAT 10, 4:00 - 5:00 P.M., PAPER SNOWFLAKE CRAFT. Join us in the Children's Room to cut out and decorate paper snowflakes. For children 1 and up. Younger kids will need help painting from a caregiver. **SW Library**

SAT 10, 7:00 P.M., FAITH & FILM. Monthly zoom presentations every 2nd Saturday. Join the Faith and Film Club to view and discuss timely and thought-provoking films. All invited. Club members will receive film titles, summaries and zoom link: Contact **Westminster Church** office at: wpcdcoffice@gmail.com

SUN 11, 3:00 - 4:00 P.M., MYSTERY BOOK CLUB. Read *Detective Aunty by Uzma Jalaluddin* and meet us in Conference Room 1 to chat about it over donuts, ask for a copy at the Southwest Library, reference desk. **SW Library**

MON 19, 10:00 A.M. SOUTHWEST MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. PRAYER BREAKFAST. Reflections and Music. Brunch Served. All are Invited. Free to the Public. **Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 I Street SW**

TUE 20, 7:00 P.M., ANC 6D BUSINESS MEETING. Please contact the office at 6d@anc.dc.gov, if there is a concern you'd like to raise at a business meeting. Also submit a 3-minute maximum transcript of your community concern at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. Link to join and a draft agenda will be posted prior to the meeting on <https://www.anc6d.org/virtual-meetings/>

WED 21, 12:00 NOON - 2:00 P.M., THE SOUTHWEST WATERFRONT AARP CHAPTER, Extends A Special Invitation to our Community to attend our Monthly Chapter Luncheon Meeting and Speaker Series. **Guest Speaker-Ward 6 Council Member, Charles Allen** will join us for a Community Conversation. Program: An Open Discussion on Important Community Matters. The Luncheon Meeting is open to the entire Washington, D.C. Senior Community, their families, friends, and neighbors. Lunch Available: Cost: \$5.00 Location: River Park Mutual Homes, 1311 Delaware Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20024. For further information, contact Betty Jean Tolbert Jones, 202-554-0901, or jonesbettyjeantolbert@gmail.com

SAT 24, 1:00 - 2:00 P.M., WHY AM I SO TIRED - THE CHANGE OF LIFE BOOK CLUB. January's selection is "*What Fresh Hell is This? Perimenopause, Menopause, Other Indignities and You*" by Heather Corinna. **SW Library**

SAT 24, 4:00 - 5:00 P.M., WATERCOLOR WINTER HATS. Join us in the Children's Room to make watercolor winter hats! We use white oil pastels, watercolor paints, cardstock, and yarn to make fun pom-pom beanies. **SW Library**

MON 26, 6:00 - 7:30 P.M., SOUL LINE DANCE WITH SEAN. Move your body while learning new steps and practicing some favorites. Sponsored by the **Friends of the Southwest Library.** Seniors/Adults. **SW Library**

MON 26, 7 - 9 PM, SWNA COMMUNITY MEETING. Ensuring Public Safety in Southwest." Ward 6 Councilmember Charles Allen, Diane Groomes of Wharf Public Safety, and others. Arena Stage. See announcement on page 6.

WEEKLY, BI-WEEKLY

AL-ANON SWAN: SOUTHWEST, Tuesdays, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. This fellowship is open to all those affected by a loved one's drinking. **St. Augustine's Episcopal Church.** <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/find-an-al-anon-meeting>

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. Mondays: Informed; Tuesdays: Life Saver Big Book; Wednesdays: New Beginners; Thursdays: Out to Lunch; Fridays: T.G.I.F. at Noon. (**St. Dominic Catholic Church, 630 E Street SW**) or Wednesdays: Creative Arts, 7:00 (**St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, 555 Water St SW**). This fellowship is open to all men and women who desire to recover from alcoholism. You will be welcome; for more <https://aa-dc.org/meetings/t-g-i-f>

BLUES MONDAYS, 6:00 - 9:00 P.M., Various Blues musicians and singers are featured each Monday. \$10 cover and food for sale, (cash/credit card accepted). Schedule at <https://westminsterdc.org/blue-monday-schedule>. **Westminster Presbyterian Church, 400 I Street SW**

BREAD FOR LIFE - BREAKFAST, Sundays, 8-8:45 A.M., St A's offers a free hot breakfast to go. Our breakfast includes eggs, cheese grits, sausage, juice, and pastry. If you would like to volunteer with Bread for Life, please contact Virginia Mathis, lead organizer and kitchen manager, for the program at thor081828@hotmail.com. Visit our website at www.staugustinesdc.org/bread-for-life. **St. Augustine's Episcopal Church, rear door located at 6th St & Maine Ave. SW**

BREAD FOR LIFE - COMMUNITY MEAL, 1st & 3rd Wednesdays, 4 - 6:00 P.M. Hot meal served at St. Augustine's. All are welcome for a hot meal, community, and a dash of hope. Everything made with love. Dine in or take out. Donations welcome, but not required, nor expected. If you would like to help with this please contact St A's at (202) 554-3222 or visit our website at www.staugustinesdc.org. We hope to see you, so please come join us for a delicious meal at **St. Augustine's Episcopal Church**

BIBLE TIMELINE STUDY GROUP, 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 7:00 P.M. in the Parish Meeting Room. **St. Dominic, 630 E Street SW.** www.stdominicchurch.org/

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL, 9:30 A.M. St. Augustine's Episcopal Church. Children ages three and older are invited to join our loving and lively Sunday School where they are introduced to a loving God who welcomes and cares for all. Through biblical stories, art, music and holy play, our children are nurtured in their natural spirituality to grow as the "littlest members" of a community of faith. 555 Water Street, SW. You can reach us at (202) 554-3222 or www.staugustinesdc.org

CONFESSION (Sacrament of Reconciliation) in the Church. Monday-Friday, 11:45 A.M. - 12:10 P.M., Thursday, 7:00 - 7:45 P.M., Saturday 4:30 - 5:00 P.M., Sunday- 9:45 - 10:30 A.M. **St. Dominic, 630 E Street SW, www.stdominicchurch.org/**

DORCAS CLOTHING CLOSET, clothing pick up and drop off every 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month, 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. Enter in the back of the church, white gate in the alley across from Apple Tree School. Donate gently used Fall and Winter clothes. **5000 Food Ministry food distribution** in front of the church every 2nd and 4th Saturdays of the month. in front of **Christ United Methodist Church, 900 4th Street S.W.**

CALENDAR

Continued from p. 14

HYBRID GODLY PLAY (Sunday School), Sundays 11:00 A.M. - Noon, Ages 4-12. Fun sessions including videos-and interactive activities about the life and teachings of Jesus. **Westminster Presbyterian Church** <https://westminsterdc.org/>

HYBRID SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE, Sundays, 11:00 A.M. - Noon. All welcome to share in inspiring worship! **Westminster Presbyterian Church**. <https://westminsterdc.org/>

JAZZ NIGHT IN SW, Fridays, 6:00 - 9:00 P.M. Various Jazz musicians and singers are featured each Friday. \$10. Admission & Food for sale (c/cc accepted). **Westminster Presbyterian Church** <https://westminsterdc.org/>

KADAMPA MEDITATION CENTER, Weekly Drop-In Meditation Classes. Each class includes guided meditations and practical advice from Buddhist teachings to help you reduce your stress and anxiety & increase your peace of mind and positive qualities. Everyone is welcome. Mondays: 7:00 P.M., Meditation & Modern Buddhism. Starts January 26th. Tuesdays: 6:00 P.M., Rest & Reflect, Wednesdays: 7:00 P.M., Living with Purpose, Thursdays: 6:30 - 7:00 P.M. Unwind the Mind. 7:15 P.M., Meditation & Modern Buddhism, Sundays, 10:00 A.M., Morning Meditation. **Location: Kadampa Meditation Center, 1200 Canal St, SW. See our class schedule at www.Meditation-DC.org.**

SPECIAL EVENTS

Jan 1: Beginners' Meditation Retreat: Mental Detox with Buddhist Meditation Teacher Sanema Naomi Hardrick

Jan 3-4: A Peaceful Heart, A Peaceful World: Meditations on Loving Kindness

Jan 12: 7:00 P.M., Free Talk and Open House: Tools for Meditation

Jan 16: 7:00 P.M., Friday Night Lecture: Clear Sky Mind with Guest Teacher Gen Kelsang Demo

Additional information and updated class

schedule information can be found at www.Meditation-DC.org.

NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS, Wednesdays, 7:00 - 8:00 P.M. Contact **Westminster Presbyterian Church** for more information at wpcdcoffice@gmail.com

RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH PROTEIN PANTRY, 2nd Sundays, 11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M. All are welcome! For more details contact rsbc@riverside.org. **Riverside Baptist Church, 699 Maine Ave SW**, <https://riversidedc.org/>

SEATED YOGA, Mondays and Fridays 11 A.M.-Noon. Gentle movements to increase flexibility, strength, balance & endurance, adapted for all body types. Careful instruction promotes proper breathing, meditation, positive thinking, & deep relaxation. \$5.00 donation suggested. **Westminster Presbyterian Church**. Any questions? Email instructor, **Pamela Wilson**, wilsonpj108@gmail.com

SENIOR HELP DESK, Mondays-Thursdays, 12:00 - 3:00 P.M., our Senior Help Desk, a community-powered initiative that brings generations together through technology and service. This program isn't just about tech support, it's about **empowerment**. Through the Help Desk, we're giving our youth real-world experience by putting their technology skills to work in service of our senior neighbors. From password resets to device troubleshooting and software setup, our students, affectionately called **Techies**, are learning, growing, and building meaningful relationships across generations. Whether you're a senior in need of support or someone who wants to see the magic of youth and wisdom in action, we invite you to stop by. This is community care at its finest. All services are free. (202) 503-4423 www.SWAcademydc.org. Email: Helpdesk@SWAcademydc.org

ST. DOMINIC CATHOLIC CHURCH, Saturday Vigil: 5:00 P.M., SUNDAY MASS, 8:00 A.M. and 10:30 A.M. All are welcome and encouraged to respectfully and prayerfully visit our church, at any time when it is open. **St. Dominic Catholic Church, 501**

6th St. SW. www.stdominicchurch.org or Office@StDominicChurch.org

ST. AUGUSTINE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH. Sunday Worship Service 9:30 A.M. Faith is strengthened when it is celebrated with others. Everyone is welcome, exactly as they are, for exactly who they are. Worship is followed by a coffee hour filled with fellowship, warmth, community, and good food! 555 Water Street, SW. You can reach us at (202) 554-3222 or www.staugustinesdc.org.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH. TUESDAY EVENING PRAYER 6:30 P.M. We gather for Evening Prayer each Tuesday at 6:30 P.M. via Zoom. You can reach us at (202) 554-3222 or www.staugustinesdc.org. Please join us!

SUMMA STUDY GROUP. 1st and 3rd Mondays at 7:00 P.M., in the Parish Meeting Room of **St. Dominic, 630 E Street SW**

WASHINGTON STAMP COLLECTORS CLUB (WSCC) meets at 7:00 P.M., on the **First and Third Wednesdays** of every month at **Christ United Methodist Church**, 900 4th Street, SW. Visitors are always welcome to take part in our meetings. Ring the church's doorbell at the Eye St. entrance to enter the meeting. January (1st Wednesday meeting of the month): Officer nominations
January (3rd Wednesday meeting of the month) club elections and stamp talk (TBD)
<https://www.dcstampclub.org/>

ZOOM RESISTANCE BIBLE STUDY, Tuesdays, 6:30 P.M., Westminster Presbyterian Church, Discuss timely issues on Jesus and Social Justice. For Zoom link, contact: rbswestminster@gmail.com

VIEW OUR ONLINE CALENDAR AT WWW.SWNA.ORG

Submit Calendar events to calendar@thesouthwester.com by the 15th of the month preceding the month it is scheduled.

CBCC

Continued from p. 1

resident, Martin Welles, to serve. Together they planned the disbursement of remaining funds, assigned existing CBCC CBAs to the ANC, and on December 16, voted to dissolve the organization.

The board of the CBCC made a final distribution of funds in its account. The following gifts, totaling \$110,000, were distributed in early December:

- \$20,000 to the SWNA Scholarship Committee for the college or vocational training scholarships to Southwest DC students;
- \$19,000 to the Southwest Community Forum for its targeted work with justice-impacted youth and their families, including enrichment opportunities in arts and culture, and other community events

that help build bridges among public housing residents and different generations;

- \$12,000 to support the highly regarded, weekly *Jazz Night in DC* and the *Blue Monday Blues* programs run by the Southwest Renaissance Development Corporation (SRDC) in Westminster Presbyterian Church;
- \$10,000 to Waterfront Village for their Membership Subsidy program to enable some low-income older adults to participate fully in the programs and services provided;
- \$10,000 to Friends of SW for their trusted discretionary support of varied non-profits in our community;
- \$7,500 to both the Amidon-Bowen Elementary School and Jefferson Middle School PTAs with \$2,500 designated for the arts program,

\$2,500 for music programs, and \$2,500 discretionary;

- \$4,000 to SWNA, earmarked for *The Southwester*, with suggestion of possible partnership with the Richard Wright PCHS's Journalism and Media program;
- \$4,000 to Friends of the Southwest Library for their enrichment programs and other support of this great neighborhood institution;
- \$2,000 to Richard Wright Public Charter High School for their Journalism Program;
- \$2,000 to the newly incorporated Pearl Escape Project to support its 2026 programs to build our collective memory of the historic 1848 attempted escape by 77 enslaved persons from the Southwest waterfront;
- \$2,000 to each of the Resident Councils of the five public housing communities in Southwest - James

Creek, Syphax, Greenleaf Mid-rise, Greenleaf Senior, and Greenleaf Garden Extension - to help them support their residents; and,

- \$2,000 to the SWDC Community Center to support its continued efforts to keep hope alive for a long-promised community center. With the recent sale of the lots at 4th and M Streets, the fight for a community center in Southwest will continue.

Many leaders from across the broad spectrum of ANC6D served on the CBCC board or partnered with it through the last two decades. The massive redevelopment that changed our communities also developed stronger community leaders, organizations and institutions actively working for the good of all our residents. Thanks to CBCC directors, volunteers and supporters for the part they played in this continuing story.

NOISE

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bring real change for this city's residents. I've made new friends. And I learned recently that through the complex maze of social media, I have been

educating people I didn't even know I was connected to about DC and the denial of our constitutional rights.

This is a silver lining in a very dark cloud. Though this fight is really still just beginning, it's important to grab onto the joy when we can. I will keep

making noise with my neighbors. I need to remind myself not to get complacent, so this doesn't become normal. And if I can remind even one other person each day of that same truth, then it is worth it.

Elizabeth Early is an educator and a

lifelong Southwest DC resident. She has been active as a volunteer with Free DC since August of this year. For neighbors who want to learn more about the Free DC Project or explore ways to get involved, including upcoming orientations, visit FreeDCProject.org.

