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RAVENSWORTH PLANTATION, VA.

*The Official Publication of the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association, Inc.  
Springfield, Virginia*

December 2015

**The Ravensworth *Farmer***

Issue 3

**HOLIDAY LIGHTS**

A quick peek at the yard of 5309 Inverchapel Road before Thanksgiving suggested that holiday lights would be popping out all over. Holiday lights judging will most likely be held between **December 14 and 19**, weather permitting. Results will be posted on the Ravensworth Farm Facebook page. (Though the Facebook page is not an official part of the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association, it is an integral part of community communication and much quicker for reporting judging results than *The Ravensworth Farmer's* January edition.) If you want to check out lights outside the neighborhood, take a peek at [www.fairfaxchristmaslights.com/](http://www.fairfaxchristmaslights.com/) for more places to see.



**UPCOMING EVENTS**



Holiday Lights Judging  
December 14—19

Winter Outerwear Drive—  
Supervisor Cook's Office  
until December 17

Redskins vs. Eagles Tailgate Party at the Pool  
December 26

See pg. 17 for a list of more Events.

**MESSAGE BOARDS ARE NOT  
HYDRANTS**

The Ravensworth Farm Civic Association puts up message boards with notices about community events. Please note that these are message boards and not fire hydrants. Pet owners, please don't allow your dogs to do their business on the RFCA's message boards. It's very discouraging to those volunteers who set up, move, and store the message boards to find them sprayed.



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Article 1, Section 3, of the Civic Association's By-Laws provides that the Association shall be strictly non-partisan, non-political, and non-sectarian. Accordingly, the invitation of elected officials and other public figures to speak at Association meetings, and the inclusion of paid political or commercial advertisements in the *Farmer* or in the attached flyers, do not constitute endorsements by the Association.

## RAVENSWORTH FARM CIVIC ASSOCIATION

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President	Kevin Joyce	703-587-7989	prez@ravensworthfarm.org
1st Vice President	VACANT		vp1@ravensworthfarm.org
2nd Vice President	VACANT		vp2@ravensworthfarm.org
Recording Secretary	Ginger Rogers	703-321-1151	recsec@ravensworthfarm.org
Corresponding Secretary	VACANT		
Treasurer	Heather Scott		treasurer@ravensworthfarm.org

### STANDING COMMITTEES

Public Service (Streets / Sidewalks)	Tom Terry	703-209-2675	rfnw@ravensworthfarm.org
Schools & Education	Jill Mowbray Maria Dastur	703-865-8368	bjm820@hotmail.com mariacdastur@gmail.com
Green Committee	Jim Hickey	703-321-8535	
Membership & Communications	Elissa Myers	703-321-7590	
Zoning Committee	Ellen Eggerton	703-321-4948	

### SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Entrance Committee	Marti Terry Brenda Soares Margaret Kinder	703-209-4424 703-321-7856 703-764-9576	
Hospitality	Jacqueline Fix Ruth Hartman	703-321-3048 703-321-8063	hospitality@ravensworthfarm.org
New Neighbors	Pam Ryan	703-447-6283	pkryan74@gmail.com
Cultural Committee	Spanish Korean	Dinora Gonzalez Seo Pani	703-321-0160 703-321-8081
Directory	Coordinator Advertising	Stephen Beste Katherine Craig	703-321-9110 703-321-3149
<b>Farmer</b>	Editor Preparation Printing, Flyers Distribution Advertising	Sara Ortiz Susan Deyampert Laura Asiello Jacqueline Fix Katherine Craig	703-321-8757 703-321-3150 703-321-7840 703-321-3048 703-321-3149
Neighborhood Watch	Tom Terry	703-209-2675	rfnw@ravensworthfarm.org
Community Organizations			
PTA President, Ravensworth ES	Jodi Constantino		president@ravensworthpta.org
Pool President	Rob Hannam	703-321-7398	
Green Thumb Garden Club	Ursula Schuttinga	703-321-3535	
Golden Ravens	Joan Crofford	703-321-7809	

## Association Meetings & Deadlines 2015 - 2016

MONTH	BOARD MEETING	<i>Farmer</i> DEADLINE	FLYER DEADLINE	DELIVERY	EVENTS
December	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	Holiday Lights Judging
January	6	6	7	30	
February	3	10	4	Mar. 5	
March	2	2	3	Apr. 2	Mar. 31—RFCA Meeting
April	6	6	7	May 7	May 7—Yard/Plant Sale
May	4	2	5	21	May 26—RFCA Meeting

**General and Board Meetings and Events are held at Community of Christ Church on Inverchapel Road unless otherwise noted. Meetings are 7:30pm unless otherwise announced.**

### GREEN THUMB GARDEN CLUB

So it turns out we had a Master Gardener from Green Spring Gardens come to our November meeting at Laura's home to discuss Renovation Tips for our gardens. MG Sandra Tarpinian came with a slide show and lots of helpful information to renovate our gardens covering a variety of situations including out-growing our spaces, wrong plant...wrong place, aging gardeners, changing landscapes over time. Sandra was very informative, and we all enjoyed her talk as well as the goodies provided by our hostesses, Agnes and Ruth. By the time this *Farmer* reaches your doorstep we will have had our annual Holiday Tea and Gift Exchange at Kay's home. Can't wait to report on it in the next *Farmer*.



On January 6th, we will be meeting at Ursula's home to hear a talk on Birding and Native Plants. On February 3rd, we will be meeting at Nancy J's home to hear about Insect Control. On March 2nd, we will be meeting at Doddie's home and then heading up to Ravensworth Elementary School to check out the renovations. I am so looking forward to this field trip.

New members are always welcome at our meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, September through June, usually at 10:00 am, unless otherwise noted. Please contact our President, Ursula, at 703-321-3535 for further information.

### HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM GOLDEN RAVENS

We are a place for senior citizens of Ravensworth Farm to gather and enjoy some warm company of neighbors on the fourth Wednesday. Sometimes we eat out and sometimes we eat in, but in or out, there is always something to enjoy. Sometimes we are enlightened by an engaging speaker, but mostly we just have a good time visiting with each other. So if your social calendar needs a boost why not call for the latest news and updates. It doesn't hurt, really, and we will set out a chair for you. For upcoming details and programs, call Joan Crofford at 703-321-7809.

### TAILGATING AT THE POOL

Attention Neighbors!

The pool will host a Tailgate Party for the Redskins/Eagles game on Dec 26. Come and cheer on your fave team or just come for the fun! Nachos, hot dogs, and beer keg cups will be available for purchase to support the pool.



Sign up for email blasts or check back to the Ravensworth Farm Facebook page for further details as the date approaches. This event is for members and non-members. All are welcome. We hope you can come!

### WINTER OUTERWEAR DRIVE



The Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce has launched its 2015 Winter Outerwear Drive to support area residents. The drive will be accepting new or like-new winter outerwear, winter hats, new scarves and gloves for all ages, new children's coats, and gently-used blankets. Supervisor Cook's office behind the Kings Park Library will be serving as one of the collection locations until December 17.

An advertisement for R. K. Morris Painting & Remodelling Contractors, Inc. The background is a collage of construction-related items: a hammer, a paintbrush with green paint dripping, a yellow triangle, and architectural blueprints. The phone number "703\*987\*7139" is prominently displayed at the top. The company name "R. K. MORRIS Painting & Remodelling Contractors, Inc." is written in bold black text. At the bottom left, it says "Richard Morris 703\*987\*7139". At the bottom center, it says "LICENSED BONDED INSURED". At the bottom right, it says "rkmpaint@hotmail.com".

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**Painting & Remodelling**  
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## **KNOCK KNOCK, RING RING - BLOCK CAPTAINS CALLING**

Answer the door! It's your block captain. Your block captain should be at your door before the end of January asking you to join or renew your membership in the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association. Your \$10 membership (what a bargain!) helps cover the cost of writing, printing, and delivering this newsletter to all 858 homes in Ravensworth Farm eight times per year.

It also covers the cost of updating and printing the Ravensworth Farm Community Directory each year. The Directory is only available to members. In addition to providing the names, addresses and phone numbers for your neighbors, the Directory provides you with emergency numbers (for when your internet is dead), and useful non-emergency numbers. It contains the history of Ravensworth Farm and the Covenants and Restrictions associated with the neighborhood. It even contains contact information for youth looking to work! If you need a teen to babysit, pet sit, shovel, rake, or wash your car, just \$10 gets you a copy of this coveted list.

In addition to The Ravensworth Farmer and the Ravensworth Farm Directory, the Civic Association also funds:

- three informative general meetings per year,
- community-wide costume parade and Fall Festival,
- holiday decoration judging,
- summer picnic/BBQ/bash,
- maintenance of the plants and signs at the three community entrances,
- donations to the Scouts and the school,
- advertising of the spring community-wide yard sale,
- community large-trash-items clean-up day every spring, and
- many other activities and community-care needs.



If you aren't a member, join now by contacting Elissa Myers at [elissa@elissamyers.com](mailto:elissa@elissamyers.com), or answer the door when your Block Captain comes knocking. It would be great to welcome every one of our 858 households into the Civic Association!

## **HYPOTHERMIA SHELTER PROGRAM PROVIDES REFUGE**

For Fairfax County's chronically homeless and vulnerable men, women and children, the frigid winter temperatures can be frightening and life-threatening. Last winter, the county's Hypothermia Shelter Program provided more than 1,000 homeless community members with a warm and safe place to stay. The program is a partnership of the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness with local nonprofits and faith-based organizations.

For information on how you can get involved with this critical program, call the Office to Prevent and End Homelessness at 703-324-2307. If you see someone unsheltered in freezing temperatures, call 703-691-2131.

*Source: Golden Gazette, December 2015 Published by the County Of Fairfax, Virginia Department of Family Services Fairfax Area Agency On Aging*



## **NEW NOISE ORDINANCE**

There's a new noise ordinance on the books that will silence things like loud late night parties and early morning leaf blowing. The regulations will become law on Feb. 17, 2016.

The Board of Supervisors approved the new county code November 17. The code replaces the previous noise ordinance, along with interim rules passed while a more comprehensive set was crafted.

While the code is new, the regulation of noise isn't. Fairfax County had very similar rules in place before, but they had to be rewritten as a result of a Virginia Supreme Court decision.

The rules also follow the principle that noise should be limited at night but allowed during the day.

The law prohibits noises during specific hours, including:

- Loudspeakers/Amplifiers
- Noise Heard In Other Homes
- Power Lawn Equipment
- Fixing Cars
- Collecting Trash
- Loading/Unloading Trucks
- Dog Parks
- Animal Barking, Howling, Etc.
- Athletic Fields



The new noise law also sets maximum decibel levels for residential, mixed use, commercial and industrial areas. Some noises are excluded from regulation, including generators used in emergencies, snow removal, cars on the road, Metro trains and police or fire sirens.

*For complaints, here's who to contact:*

During daytime hours (Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., Friday 9:15 a.m. – 4 p.m.), you should contact the Department of Code Compliance at 703-324-1300.

At night, call the Police Department's non-emergency number, 703-691-2131.

To enforce the law, the county may seek civil and criminal penalties against violators, as well as court orders to prohibit current and future noise. Civil penalties start at \$250, rising to \$500 for subsequent offenses. Criminal convictions would be a misdemeanor.

*Why Is There a New Ordinance?*

Fairfax County undertook an overhaul of noise rules due to a Virginia Supreme Court ruling. The court ruled against the City of Virginia Beach's nuisance noise provisions. Their rules based enforcement on a subjective, "reasonable person" standard, instead of decibel measurements. Because Fairfax, along with other Virginia governments, used similar criteria, the county rewrote its law.

For more information or details on the new rules, visit the Department of Planning and Zoning's Noise Ordinance Amendment web pages at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpz/zoning/noiseordinance/> or call 703-324-1314.



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## **ELDER LAW—VETERANS, DON'T DELAY** **(3-YEAR LOOK-BACK IS IMMINENT)**

*By Evan H. Farr, Elder Law Attorney*

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) helps veterans and their families by providing supplemental tax-free income through the VA Special Pension with the Aid and Attendance benefit. Currently, the Aid and Attendance benefit is a needs-based program, and at this time there is no penalty for applicants who divest themselves of assets immediately before applying for benefits.

As it stands, veterans who are unable to perform IADLs (Instrumental Activities of Daily Living), such as bathing, dressing, toileting, etc., without assistance are eligible to receive Aid and Attendance benefits. In addition, the VA presumes eligibility for Aid and Attendance if the veteran is in nursing home care. However, earlier this year, the VA proposed to amend its regulations governing entitlement to Aid and Attendance as follows:

- **Look-back period:** A 3-year look-back will be imposed on transfers of assets, including gifts to persons, trusts, or purchases of annuities. Benefits could be denied for up to 10 years due to transfers. All gifts in the look-back period will be presumed to have been made to qualify for benefits. And there will be no allowance to give money to your church, for a wedding gift to a grandchild, etc.
- **Widow's penalties:** These will be almost twice as long as veteran's penalties. For example, if a veteran gave away \$50,000, he or she would get a 28-month penalty. That is, he or she wouldn't qualify for benefits for 28 months. A widow would be penalized for 44 months.
- **Clear net worth limit:** One good feature of the new rules is that they will establish a clear net worth limit (currently suggested to be \$119,220, which is Medicaid's maximum community spouse resource allowance in 2015) but where for Medicaid this amount is an asset limit, for the Aid and Attendance it combines both annual income and assets. This amount would be indexed for inflation by adjusting it at the same time and by the same percentage as cost-of-living increases provided to Social Security beneficiaries.
- **Exempt primary residence:** The VA would exempt the claimant's primary residence and surrounding land (up to 2 acres) from being included as an asset. However, if the residence is sold, the proceeds will count toward net worth unless they are used to purchase another residence within the same calendar year.
- **Monthly pension sunset date:** The regulations set November 30, 2016, as the sunset date for the \$90 monthly pension that has been allowed to veterans or spouses who receive Medicaid-paid nursing home care.
- **Independent living facilities:** The new rules would provide that, generally, payments to facilities such as independent living facilities are not medical expenses nor are payments for assistance with Instrumental Activities of Daily Living such as cooking, cleaning, and bill paying. However, there would be exceptions for disabled individuals who require health care services or custodial care.

Regulation changes are coming, and some experts believe they could take effect as early as January 1, 2016. Proposed changes by the Department of Veterans Affairs will severely restrict the benefits available to those who have not properly planned. Veterans should consider investigating their options quickly, wrapping up any pending cases and filing them with the VA prior to the implementation of these regulatory changes.

**NOTE:** This article is not intended as legal advice and no one should rely upon it without consulting legal counsel. If you have an elder law question, email Evan Farr at [evanfarr@farrlawfirm.com](mailto:evanfarr@farrlawfirm.com) or call 703-691-1888.

*Reprinted from Golden Gazette, December 2015 Published by the County Of Fairfax, Virginia Department of Family Services Fairfax Area Agency On Aging.*

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**CONDOLENCES**

We extend our condolences to the family of longtime resident Boyce Rogers who passed away in mid-November.

**WELCOME NEW NEIGHBORS**

If you have new neighbors, tell Pam Ryan. If you are a new neighbor- welcome! Please tell Pam you're here so that one of her committee members can stop by with information and some goodies. Pam Ryan (703-447-6283, pkryan74@gmail.com).

**MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS - BE A BLOCK CAPTAIN**

Block captains deliver pre-paid Directory orders and sign up new Civic Association members and deliver Directories on the spot. Forty of your neighbors volunteered last year. However, many streets didn't have active block captains so membership was down- resulting in a significant reduction in budget for Civic Association activities. Sign up for a block near you or be adventurous and visit the other side of the neighborhood! Contact Elissa Myers to be a block captain- 703-321-7590 or elissa@elissamyers.com.



CLASSIFIED ADS may be placed in The *Farmer* at no cost to Ravensworth Farm residents. Classified ads may be placed by sending them to rfcfarmer@ravensworthfarm.org or to PO Box 1020, Springfield, VA 22151. The classified ad section is a service to Ravensworth residents and is not intended for business or commercial use. Ads for house sales, commercial services, etc. will be run in this section once. If you wish to repeat your ad, you will need to purchase advertising in The *Farmer*.

<p><b>HOLIDAY PET CARE</b></p>	<p>Ravensworth resident with extensive dog sitting experience available to pet sit, walk, care for, and spend time with your pets while you are away during the holidays or at work. References available upon request. Please call or text Jubilee Pet Care at (713) 834-2731.</p>
<p><b>FREE</b></p>	<p>Multiplex Exercise Chair as seen on television....cost \$150. Free...just come and get it. 703-321-9268</p>
<p><b>HELP DC HOMELESS</b></p>	<p>Usable clothing and shoes, blankets, canned foods, etc., collected by a charitable foundation for the winter needs of homeless folks in D.C. Call for free pickups 703703-321-9268. For details, visit www.Kassirfoundation.org.</p>
<p><b>WANTED</b></p>	<p>Good used furniture for needy low income families in the Annandale area. Needed are beds, dressers, kitchen tables &amp; chairs, sofas, love seats, end tables lamps and TV's. Unfortunately, we cannot take sleep-sofas. Call Bill Sinclair at 703-321-7529 or the Annandale Christian Community for Action warehouse at 703-256-1991 Call the warehouse ONLY on Saturday mornings.</p>

**BOY SCOUT TROOP 991 - OUTDOOR ADVENTURES!**

# TROOP 991

Springfield, Virginia

Thank you Ravensworth Community!! On November 14, Troop 991 picked up over 1,530 pounds of dry goods from around the neighborhood to support Scouting for Food – well done! Again, thank you for your generous donations!!

The boys have planned a fall full of excitement. We'll be staying a night aboard the Battleship USS Wisconsin, learning about our World War II heroes and experiencing how battleship sailors lived and worked. Come join us for our next adventure! Boy Scouting: 6th – 12th grade boys. Visit us Wednesday nights - 7:30pm @ Kings Park Elementary School Scoutmaster Bill Mitchell @ 703-321-8072 or mitchwt@cox.net.

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## Community of Christ

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(703) 321-0507 (church)  
(703) 409-1920 (pastor)  
Co-Pastors: Ralph Couey and Hannah Lynch

**Sunday Services:**  
9:30 a.m. Classes for all ages  
10:45 a.m. Worship Service

**Please join us for these community activities:**  
Children's Playground  
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**Becky Ralston**  
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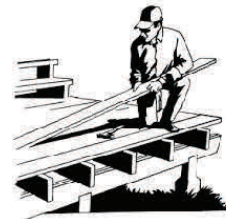


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## **EVENTS**

Something to add? Email [RFCAFfarmer@ravensworthfarm.org](mailto:RFCAFfarmer@ravensworthfarm.org) or call 703-321-8757 to add to the calendar of events.

### **\*\*Dec. 14-19 - Holiday Lights Judging**

Dec. 12 & 13 - **Bethlehem Walk** @ Parkwood Baptist Church, Braddock Rd across from Kings Park Drive, [parkwoodbaptist.com](http://parkwoodbaptist.com)

Dec. 15 - Registration deadline for **Genealogy Lock-In: Nine Topics in Six Hours**, to be held January 9, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. \$20 To register, call 703-768-4101. Bring lunch and arrive by 9 a.m. Hollin Hall Senior Center, 1500 Shenandoah Rd., Alexandria.

Dec. 15 - 7-8 p.m. **Fireside Café**. Listen to beautiful music provided by Robinson Strings while sipping your personally created hot cocoa concoction. Free. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Rd., Burke. To register, call 703-249-1520.

Dec. 16 - 1:30 p.m. **Where to Turn for Support Services**. A multitude of services are available right here in Fairfax County from help choosing a nursing home to advice on transportation options. A panel discussion will help you navigate your choices. Free. Insight Memory Care Center, 3953 Pender Dr., Fairfax. To RSVP, call 703-204-4664.

Dec. 18 - last day of school before Christmas break

Dec. 24 - **Christmas Eve Service**, Community of Christ, 5610 Inverchapel Rd, 7pm

Dec. 25 - **Christmas Day**

Dec. 26 - **Redskins vs. Eagles Tailgate Party at the Pool**, free, members and non-members welcome

Dec. 29 - 10-11 a.m. **Tai Chi at the Library** Come experience the benefits of Tai Chi. Wear comfortable clothes that allow movement. Free. Burke Centre Library, 5935 Freds Oak Rd., Burke. To register, call 703-249-1520.

Dec. 30 - 2-3 p.m. **Holiday Concert**. Enjoy traditional Celtic music blending songs and dance turns in a lively entertaining presentation. House tour included. Refreshments served in the 18th century kitchen. Limited seating. \$12. Sully Historic Site, 3650 Historic Sully Way, Chantilly. To register, call 703-222-4664.

Jan. 1 - New Year's Day

Jan. 4 - School resumes

Jan. 18 & 19 - No School

Jan. 27 - Parent Program: **Kindergarten Readiness Parent Seminar**, Wee Center, Braddock Rd across from Kings Park Drive, please RSVP, [weecenter.com](http://weecenter.com)

Feb. 5 - No School

Feb. 12 - 7pm - **Oldest Story Ever Told: Cinderella Stories From Around the World**, Herndon High School, ages 3+, \$10

Feb. 13 - 10am - **Oldest Story Ever Told: Cinderella Stories From Around the World**, Herndon High School, ages 3+, \$10

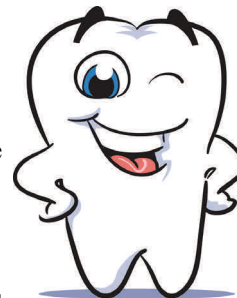
## **TEETH MAY BE ABLE TO REPAIR THEMSELVES**

University of Florida Health Science Center; 28 Oct 2015

Holiday candy could put your teeth in a scary state, but researchers are looking into an eerie new technique that could be used to repair decaying teeth in the future. Could you imagine if teeth could regenerate?

Using human dental stem cells and lasers, Harvard University scientists were able to prompt parts of teeth in rodents to regrow. They placed the stem cells in holes in molars and then used a low-light laser to coax the cells into action. They covered the teeth with temporary caps and waited.

Within 10 weeks, the cells had filled the holes with a slightly morphed version of dentin, a hard material that is similar to bone and makes up most of a tooth's structure.



Con't Pg. 20

# **CLC**

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## **TEETH MAY BE ABLE TO REPAIR THEMSELVES (CON'T)**

*Con't from Pg. 20*

If the same method works in humans, it could bring about a drastic change in dentistry and perhaps in many other aspects of medicine. Teeth, bones and tissue may be repaired with the zap of a laser instead of more invasive techniques like drilling. And researchers could be one step closer to finding a way to help people regenerate entire organs rather than requiring a donor organ.

A major draw of the technique is that it doesn't introduce anything foreign into the body. And, since lasers are already widely used in dentistry and medicine, researchers believe this self-regenerating method could be incorporated quickly if it proves to be safe and effective in people.

Medical lasers have been used as far back as the 1960s. In low-level light doses, they can stimulate a number of biological processes, including skin repair and hair growth. Interestingly, higher-level light doses can do the opposite, removing skin and hair.

The Harvard researchers are now planning phase two of their study, when they will begin studying whether this therapy will work in people.



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## **COUNTY VOLUNTEER NEEDS**

Fairfax County's Volunteer Solutions program needs Meals on Wheels drivers and co-coordinators throughout the county, especially in Reston/Herndon and Alexandria. Korean Meals on Wheels routes need drivers throughout the county. Meals on Wheels volunteers may choose to drive weekly, biweekly, monthly, or be a substitute. Meals are delivered Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

### *Volunteer Solutions also needs:*

- Drivers for grocery shopping, errands, and medical appointments;
- Respite care volunteers to give caregivers a break;
- Drivers to pick up and deliver Ensure. Schedules are flexible.



### *Opportunities at Senior Centers:*

- Zumba Gold instructors in Annandale and McLean;
- Chair exercise and art instructors in Annandale;
- Art, mosaic, pottery, jewelry-making, and basic guitar instructors in Annandale and Alexandria;
- Ballroom, line dance, country-western, and African-style dance instructors in Alexandria;
- Beginning Italian instructor in Alexandria;

### *Opportunities at Adult Day Health Care Centers:*

- Licensed hair stylist 2x/month in Alexandria;
- Front desk volunteers, Mondays and Thursdays, 3:30-5 p.m. in Alexandria.

For more information on any of the Volunteer Solutions' opportunities, call the Volunteer Intake Line at 703-324-5406, email [VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov](mailto:VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov), or go to [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions.htm).

Reprinted from Golden Gazette, December 2015 Published by the County Of Fairfax, Virginia Department of Family Services Fairfax Area Agency On Aging

## **LAUNDRY PODS DANGEROUS TO SMALL CHILDREN**

Univ. of Florida, Shands Healthcare 17 Mar 2015

Maybe you've seen the new detergent products called laundry pods. They hit the U-S market in early 2012. Each pod is about the size and shape of a charcoal briquette. It contains a dollop of brightly colored liquid detergent, just enough for one load of laundry, sealed in a thin membrane that dissolves in water. For people on the go, laundry pods make it a little easier to wash clothes. However, these products can be dangerous to small children.

An article in a recent issue of the journal Pediatrics spells out the details. In 2012 and 2013, U-S poison-control hotlines took more than seventeen-thousand calls involving children under age 6 who were exposed to these products. It's believed that many of these unfortunate tykes mistook a laundry pod for a package of candy or juice and broke the membrane while handling or chewing it. About 750 of these children were hospitalized. One of them died.

In 80 percent of the cases, the victim swallowed detergent. Many of the other exposures involved detergent getting into the lungs or eyes. About three-quarters of the cases involved children aged 2 years or less. Boys and girls were equally likely to be victims. At least one manufacturer has responded by changing the containers for its laundry pods, making them opaque and more child-resistant. However, there doesn't appear to be any effort to change the pods themselves.

The study authors suggest that households with children under 4 avoid laundry pods altogether and stick with traditional detergents. There's also a more basic solution — keeping kids away from household chemicals. After all, cleaning products may come and go, but childhood curiosity is here to stay.

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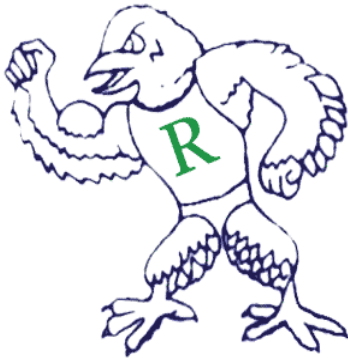
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