

Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival

By Jill Graziano Laiacona

If you live in Fairfax, you know the signs when spring has finally sprung—flowers are in full bloom next to Old Town Hall, Mason students are clad in shorts and tees, the soccer fields and baseball diamonds are full—and the Spotlight on the Arts Festival returns to the City of Fairfax, showcasing the best of the visual and performing arts right in our own backyard.

Ellen Brouwer, Spotlight co-chair, said this year's festival features exciting new events and participating organizations, as well as favorites that have been part of the festival for the past 26 years.

"The Spotlight on the Arts Festival will include more than 50 different events over 19 days, making it the premier spring arts festival in Northern Virginia," Brouwer said. "We have chosen to present a selection of diverse performances and exhibitions that will appeal to audiences of every age and artistic interest."

Founded in 1985 as a partnership between the City of Fairfax and George Mason University, the 26th annual Spotlight on the Arts Festival kicks off on Friday, April 15, with the inaugural Mayors' Ball, hosted by Fairfax Mayor Robert Lederer and former Mayor

John Mason in collaboration with Spotlight at the Stacy C. Sherwood Community Center, a state-of-the-art facility that opened to the public in February 2011.

The Sherwood Center will host numerous events throughout the three-week festival, including Polka 'Til Ya Drop by the Alte Kameradan German Band; A Little Night Music, presented by Washington International Piano Arts Council; Jump for Joy, a big-band swing concert featuring the Woodson High School Band and Music for a Lazy Sunday Afternoon by the Main Street Community Band.

The Sherwood Center will also be host to A Royal Affair, a breakfast celebrating Prince William and Kate Middleton's nuptials, presented by the Woman's Club of Fairfax and Fairfax Ladies Lunch Group.



The Main Street Community Band

"The Sherwood Center gives a new dimension to the size of the audiences and the events that we can now accommodate," said Jo Ormesher, executive director of Spotlight on the Arts. "It complements all of our other

Community College's Annandale Campus, George Mason University's Center for the Arts and more.

This year's festival will also spill outdoors with a new event called Paint the City, which gives both professional and amateur artists the opportunity to capture the landscapes, architecture and landmarks within the City of Fairfax while residents observe their works in progress.

"Paint the City is a fantastic new venture, and given that we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of Fairfax, what better way to honor the city than capture our beautiful cityscape?" Ormesher said.

Ormesher and the other festival organizers are thrilled with Spotlight's increasing popularity and hope that this year's festival will attract even more people than in

years past. "With our new venues and participants, Spotlight continues to grow and develop along with the City of Fairfax," Ormesher said. "It is truly reflective of our community and we are proud of the involvement and commitment our residents have shown to make this festival successful year after year."

In addition to the Sherwood Center, the Spotlight network includes Old Town Hall, theSPACE at Old Town Plaza, the Civil War Interpretive Center at Historic Blenheim, Truro Church, Fairfax Museum, the Auld Shebeen, Fairfax and Woodson high schools, the Ernst Center at Northern Virginia

venues, giving us a wide range of spaces that are unique, historic, traditional and now state-of-the-art. We have the ability to run numerous events concurrently throughout the city."

For more information on the 26th annual Fairfax Spotlight on the Arts Festival, please visit www.fairfaxspotlight.org.

Community Conscience

By Steve Rorke

Once again, the Lorton community members have shown how generous they are. The Lorton Community Action Center (LCAC) recently made an appeal for donations to purchase meat and the community responded with more than \$4,000 in donations and gift cards. Grocery stores have stopped providing us with meat due to better planning on their parts for selling inventory. So I say thank you for your generosity.

Other good news comes from the Giant supermarket on Ox Road. The manager has decided to donate excess food to LCAC once again. As you may remember, Giant stopped donating food to nonprofits several years ago. But the manager at this store has decided to stop that practice and to once again provide LCAC with food.

Why does LCAC need food and where does it go?

- During the last six months, LCAC served 472 families comprising 1,678 individuals;
- the vast majority of these families have school-age children and infants;
- the number of families coming to LCAC is increasing and will continue to increase as government revenue shrinks;
- for every \$10 contributed to LCAC, we are able to purchase 67 pounds of food from the Capitol Area Food Bank;
- 347 families are currently registered to receive food from LCAC each week; this number includes 707 adults and 601 children;
- LCAC provides 25,000 pounds of food per month.

As you know, the efforts to cut government spending are increasing. LCAC receives

17 percent of our funding from the Fairfax County's Community Funding Pool. The funding for the pool could be reduced by \$600,000 if the federal government cuts this funding. Several of my fellow nonprofit executive directors are speaking with the county's Board of Supervisors to encourage them to maintain funding for the Funding Pool at current levels no matter what the federal government does. I hope you share our position on this issue.

These are difficult times. Gasoline prices climb higher and higher, the world is in revolt and Japan has been devastated. Radiation is escaping from nuclear plants. But our lives go on. The presence of hunger among our fellow citizens is very real and food prices are increasing. Thank you for your generosity and for supporting LCAC's efforts to serve those in need.

Steve Rorke is executive director of the Lorton Community Action Center.



BUSINESS BRIEF

Supporting Veterans with Survival Bracelets

Jewelry By Design in Woodbridge has launched a new campaign called From Soldier To Soldier, designed to raise money for wounded veterans and their families.

The campaign is based on the sales of a designer version of the survival and friendship bracelets worn by many U.S. and allied soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For every bracelet sold at Jewelry By Design, \$25 will be donated to Homes For Our Troops and other organizations supporting returning wounded veterans and their families.

The bracelets in the field are braided

by the soldiers with parachute cord. They are known as survival bracelets, because they can be unraveled and the paracord can be used for many purposes in a pinch. They are also exchanged among the soldiers as friendship bracelets. Often a uniform button is sewn on and used as the clasp.

The designer version has a sterling silver clasp shaped like a uniform button and is extremely tightly braided. Sterling silver and gold-plated sterling silver heart clasps with and without a small diamond are also

available.

Jewelry By Design can be reached at 703-580-8880 or www.jbd4u.com.



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