

www.ashtonheights.org

September 2023

Off to a Busy Start By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

I hope you enjoyed the summer – vacations, working in the yard, appreciating the extra rain (making up for our partial drought), and spending time with family and friends.

We have a series of ongoing issues that have not slowed down over the summer.

One issue -- speeding traffic and trucks going through our traffic circles and zooming through our neighborhoods. Good news! The county has installed sensors and counters on N. Jackson St. and N. Kenmore St. per our request. Once the data is collected, we can consider solutions to slow traffic and redirect trucks.

Small picture

Signs have begun to be installed on traffic circles, such as the one recently on N. Jackson St.

Big picture

A community letter, backed by an AHCA letter, went to County Manager Mark Schwartz on the super high parking-lot lights at the new CVS at N. Kenmore St. and Wilson Blvd. The lights shine endlessly at night onto the abutting houses around CVS. County Manager Mark Schwartz walked the site on April 24th. Hopefully, this will lead to lowering the lights, installing larger light shields and maybe, some taller bushes around the parking lot perimeter.

Neighbors near Dunkin Donuts and WBM Motors have been complaining about large rats in the area. The County has sent inspectors and they agree. WMB has fixed their bins and AHCA sent a listserv request that neighbors stop passers-by from throwing food and trash in them. Dunkin Donuts leaves their trash bin tops up, so if you see that, please go in and ask them to close them (or contact the County).

AHCA is working with the county to install "No Truck Parking" signs at the corner of Irving and 10th Streets to guarantee better sight lines for both pedestrians and turning vehicles.

Our Development Committee (Co-chairs: Jack Spilsbury, Alexander Tuneski) is tracking the buildings being built on our borders with Clarendon, and follow-up to the Missing Middle Housing vote.

Our Transportation Committee, (Chair: Patrick Lueb), is following up on traffic circle and traffic calming efforts mentioned earlier.

Continued on page 3

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., Sept. 20th, 7 - 9 p.m.

Clarendon United Methodist Church 606 N. Irving St.

7:00 p.m. Mingle and chair setup

7:30 p.m. Scott Sklar, President and Committee reports

7:40 p.m. Ted Hobart, AH resident,

will share his stories of running marathons in every U.S. state and

overseas

8:00 p.m. Ashton Heights

Transportation -- Discuss traffic calming issues and county monitoring of N. Kenmore St., N. Jackson St. and N. Irving St, as well as proposed state plans for formal left turn off of Route 50 onto N.

Irving St.

9:00 p.m. Adjourn





Editor's Note: View the newsletter in <u>full color</u> at <u>www.ashtonheights.org!</u> Mark your Calendar - articles for the October 2023 issue are due by <u>September 22nd</u> (<u>PLEASE BE TIMELY!</u>) Send submissions to: <u>amylmiller4@gmail.com</u>.

AHCA Membership Sign-up and dues payment form

Ashton Heights Civic Association annual dues are \$15/household or \$10/ individual member. Register for two years for \$25/ household.

Anyone who resides or owns property in Ashton Heights and is at least 18 years old may join and then vote at AHCA meetings.

Pay your dues online:

https://ashtonheights.org/about-ahca/join-ahca/

Advertise with us!

The Ashton Heights newsletter is distributed to 1,200+ households 8 months of the year. Our readers enjoy supporting local businesses. If you know of a local business that would benefit from advertising in the Ashton Heights newsletter, please email: newsletterads@ashtonheights.org.

Business card: \$60 1/4 page: \$85 1/2 page: \$145 Full page: \$245 Full back page: \$295 One page insert: \$325

2023 - 2024 AHCA Volunteers

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President's Column -- continued from page 1

Our Tree Canopy and Native Plants Committee Chair Brooke Alexander, is following-up on tree planting and preservation.

And our Stormwater lead, Chris Lewicki, is coordinating information on the new county efforts to add fees to our water-sewer bill on impermeable areas.

Many issues were juggled this summer and I am sure these and other issues will grow -- so check the AHCA Committee list in this newsletter and e-mail the chairs and co-chairs with questions or to join in the fun.

The way we increase livability and protect our quality of life – is to be engaged, and AHCA is set up for you to do just that …so stay involved and in-touch.

I hope to see you at our first AHCA fall meeting the third Wednesday of the month, September 20th at 7:30 p.m. at the Clarendon United Methodist Church social hall. Please bring in a new neighbor during our social networking time at 7 p.m., so we can introduce and get to know them.

I want to thank everyone for their dialogue on the listserv, your time on our committees, and for being such great neighbors. See you in September.



ASHTON HEIGHTS'
NEIGHBORHOOD

Farmers Market

Barrett Elementary 4401 N Henderson Road Saturdays 8 am – 12 noon April – November

For updates and market offerings, follow us:

<u>alubberrunfm</u> <u>AlubberRunFM</u> <u>www.lubberrunfarmersmarket.org</u>















Saturday, October 21 | Noon to 3:00 pm Columbia Gardens Cemetery Grounds

A fun-filled celebration for children and adults:

- Paint a pumpkin
- See how honey is made from our beekeeper
- Go exploring with the Agents of Discovery App
- Learn tips for growing roses from our rosarian
- Get planting advice from the Tree Stewards of Arlington
- Enjoy delicious refreshments and more!

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Ashton Heights Team Place 18th at Odyssey of the Mind World Finals By Logan Fry

This year, a team of mostly Ashton Heights children

competed in a competition called Odyssey of the Mind.

Odyssey of the Mind is a creative problem solving program where competitors are given a choice of prompts/problems and have to come up with solutions and skits within about 5-6 months.

The Thomas Jefferson team worked very hard to come up with a solution for their assignment, which was problem number four. In problem four, teams had to build a structure made of only balsa wood

and glue. This year, there was a twist. Teams had to make a structure that separated into three pieces and could be assembled again without glue.

Luckily the team had an amazing builder, Lilly Rizzi. She

worked day and night to build and critique her structures. Hard work pays off and her structure was able to hold 507 pounds!

Other team members worked on other aspects of the project. Charlie Kunze made most of the props by hand,

while the other members, Maddie Roark, Liam Eberly, and Logan Fry worked on painting the props, making the script, and costume design. Overall, everyone pulled their weight and contributed a lot to the effort.

The team competed at a regional level, and then against all of the problem four teams in Virginia!

Lilly, Maddie, Liam, and Logan went all the way to Michigan to compete against teams from all over the world. Charlie Kunze, and their coaches, Kara

McPhillips and Patrick Kunze were unfortunately unable to join them. The team worked hard throughout the trip and placed 18th of 47. Everyone on the team deserves lots of accolades and recognition for all of their hard work.



Photo (L-R): Patrick Kunze, Charlie Kunze, Liam Eberly, Maddie Roark, Lilly Rizzi, Logan Fry, Kara McPhillips

Volunteer for the Lyon Park 2023 Food Truck Festival!

The food truck festival is back and funds raised through beverage sales will go to park maintenance. Volunteers are needed to make this happen.

Please either contact Aaron Schuetz at <u>ajschuetz@yahoo.com</u> or sign up through the SignUpGenius link: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0944ACAB23A7FACE9-2023#/

SUBSCRIBE TO THE ASHTON HEIGHTS LISTSERV TODAY!

So much happens in between issues of newsletters. Don't miss out on important information; subscribe to the Ashton Heights listery today.

Email: main+subscribe@ashtonheights.groups.io or email etlyon410@gmail.com. Always include your full name and street address and we'll get you set up to be "in the know."

Did you know that you can set your preferences on how you receive email from the listsery? If you're worried about receiving too many emails or missing out, some options include:

- Individual messages
- Full digest (up to 12 messages grouped together in one email)
- Daily summary (one email each morning containing only the list of topics posted to the group the previous day)
- No email (receive no email, but view messages on the groups.io website)

Kudos to the Newsletter Delivery Team

By Julie Mangis and Bea Camp

As we begin our 2023-24 newsletter season, we would like to express our thanks to the neighbors who assist with delivering the AHCA Newsletter to each Ashton Heights household eight months a year.

The mid-level team includes: Nese & John Gundelsberger, Phyllis Charles & Nancy Carey, Jim Richardson, Jim Abramson, Ann & Tim Felker, and Randy Custer. They each receive about 200 newsletters which they hand over to block captains, the ones who go door-to-door.

Our block captains are: JB & Roger Jenkins, David Lippert, the Donose family, Robert & Susan Williams, the Mazas, Harro & Janie Wulf, Merrill D. Boone, Jane Collins & Liz Harter, Lisa Shimberg, Karen Tober, Jim Serfis, the Fagerstroms, the Sweeneys, Betsey Lyon, Tom Iveson, Debby Chin, Jean & Eric Miller, Jackie Steven & Jason Horowitz, Ken Matzkin, David Johnson, Jan Vranich (and her neighbor Wendy Frankel), Thane Culver, Wes McAdam, Mary Dunn Wojanis, Trisha Gruesen, Jennifer DeGross, Carol Rosa, Betsy & Greg Morse, Nancy Van Doren, Jennifer

Dowling, Karen Lange, Dana Halkowski, Jodie Flakowicz, Mark Eichorn & Laura Mazzerella, Celeste Szewczyk & John Mueller, Brooke Alexander, the Naas family, Nancy Hopper, the Haltiwangers, the Bravermans, the Cummings, Jennifer London, Peter de Boor, Susan Weinbeck, Jim O'Brien, Diane



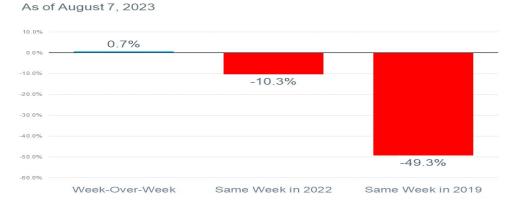
Lechmanik and Chris Armstrong. That's a lot of community support! .

This month. Jennifer Lane and Paul Levett are taking over a N. Nelson Street route that was ably handled by Chase Huntley and Heather Holsinger over the past couple of years. Thank you Chase and Heather! We also thank Mindy Boyagian for handling Karen Lange's route while Karen recuperated from a broken ankle a while back.

Well done team and thank you!

You may have heard housing inventory is low right now, but you may not fully realize just how low or why that's a perk when you go to sell your house. Compared to the same time last year, supply is down roughly 10% – and it was already considered low at that time. Supply is almost 50% lower than 2019. Wondering if it still makes sense to sell your house? The short answer is, yes (circumstances of course apply)

Inventory Is Still Historically Low



If you have questions about the market and when might be the best time to plan for a move, let's connect so you have a professional's advice. Put my 38 years of local market expertise to work for you and those you care about!

Casey O'Neal, Compass Real Estate -- 703-217-9090 (cell)



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September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month! Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

Suicide is a leading public health problem in the United States, responsible for over 48,000 deaths in 2021. This translates to 1 death every 11 minutes. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people aged 10-14, the third leading cause of death among those aged 15-24, and the 12th leading cause of death overall in the U.S.

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated the situation – suicide rates increased 36% between 2000–2021. These deaths reflect only a portion of the problem. Every year, millions of Americans, regardless of age, gender, or background, seriously think about suicide, or plan/attempt suicide. Suicide and suicide attempts have lasting impacts on individuals, families, and communities. Suicidal thoughts, although common, should not be considered normal and often indicate more serious mental health issues.

Here are a few startling national statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):

- 79% of all people who die by suicide are male.
- More women than men attempt suicide, but men are four times more likely to die by suicide.
- 46% of people who die by suicide had a diagnosed mental health condition but research suggests that 90% may have experienced symptoms of a mental health condition.
- The highest rates of suicide in the U.S. are among American Indian/Alaskan Natives, followed by non-Hispanic whites.
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth.
- Transgender adults are nearly nine times more likely to attempt suicide at some point in their life compared to the general population.
- Nearly six out of every 10 gun deaths in the U.S. are suicides; having access to a firearm triples one's risk of death by suicide.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in local jails.

In our own neighborhood, we are not immune. Suicide is the tenth leading cause of death in Virginia. According to Arlington Public Schools, a significantly higher number of student suicide risk assessments were conducted in the 2021-22 academic year compared to the previous year. In addition, one in 10 high schoolers seriously contemplated suicide last year, with comparably high rates among middle school students.

The good news is that suicide is preventable and we can

all help. Research shows that people who have suicidal thoughts feel relief when someone talks to them in a caring way. By raising awareness about suicide as a serious public health problem and discussing this stigmatized topic, we can shift public perception to acknowledge and talk about suicide. We can help spread



information so that individuals, family, and friends have access to the resources they need to discuss suicide prevention and seek help. For additional information, check out the CDC and NAMI websites.

Need help? Know someone who does?

Contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline if you are experiencing mental health-related distress or are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support. Connect with a trained crisis counselor. 988 is confidential, free, and available 24/7/365.

- Call or text 988
- Chat at <u>988lifeline.org</u>
- Visit the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline for more information at <u>988lifeline.org</u>.

Additional Suicide Prevention Resources:

(From the Arlington County website)

- How to help yourself, or a friend:
 <u>Suicide Prevention Flyer</u>; Para ayudarse a sí mismo o un amigo:

 Suicide Prevention Flyer in Spanish
- Arlington County Emergency Mental Health Services 703-228-5160
- Crisis Link: Call 703-527-4077 or text "Connect" to 85511
- VeteransCrisisLine.net 1-800-273-8255 press 1, text to 838255, or chat online now
- LGBTQ Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386
- Trans Lifeline: 1-877-565-8860
- National Hopeline Network: 1-800-442-4673 (HOPE)
- <u>National Institute of Mental Health</u> Information Resource Center 1-866-615-6464



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A Note from Clarendon Presbyterian Church

After over 3 years of hosting contactless monthly food and toiletry drives for Bridges to Independence and New Hope Housing, this mission of the church is coming to an end as we focus on other ways of supporting these local mission partners.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TREMENDOUS SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!

OUR LAST DRIVE WILL BE: Saturday, September 9th from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

We encourage you to directly support Bridges to Independence (<u>bridges2.org</u>) and New Hope Housing (<u>www.newhopehousing.org</u>)

Speak Up: Vote November 7 or Early in Arlington By Betsey Lyon

Election Day 2023 is officially on November 7, when polling places will be open from 6 a.m. through 7 p.m. throughout Virginia. What's your polling place? It varies by the voter's current address, and in Ashton Heights and Lyon Park, it's one of four places: https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/polling-place-lookup/. Or, simply search "where do I vote in Virginia." If you've moved since the 2022 election, Virginia requires you to update your address, the only way you may vote where you now live on Election Day.

Planning on being out of town on November 7? Vote early. Three early voting locations in Arlington are available: Courthouse, at the Bozman government building, September 22 – November 3, with later October options at Walter Reed and Madison Community Centers. Details: https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Early-Voting. Voters who favor vote-bymail can request ballots from the Virginia Elections website: https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation/Lookup/absentee.

Who's on the ballot? Virginia keeps elections lively EVERY year. This year's off-off year election (no race for President, Governor, or federal legislators) offers you eight positions on the ballot in Arlington: State Senate, State House of Delegates, Clerk of Court (elected every eight years), Commonwealth's Attorney, Sheriff, Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, County Board (two seats), and School Board. Our full state

legislature is up for re-election in 2023, with Senators holding four-year terms and House delegates serving two-year terms. Locally, our electeds serve four-year terms, except our Clerk of Court, a position elected every eight years. County Board members are



elected in staggered terms, with two positions on the ballot this year.

What is the Voter Registration deadline in Virginia? The deadline in Virginia is October 16 to register to vote or update an existing registration for the November 7, 2023 General Election standard ballot.

Can I register when I show up to vote in Virginia? Yes, you can show up at your official polling place and register to vote on Election Day, or at an Early Voting location, and your ballot will be provisional until your eligibility is validated. It's an option, especially for new residents, but do understand provisional ballot /same-day registration information in advance: https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Voter-Registration/Same-Day-Registration.

How old must I be to register? Eligible Virginia residents who will be 18 by November 7 can register to vote. Start at <u>rockthevote.org</u> or watch for scheduled League of Women Voters registration events at local high schools.

Arlington Elections: https://vote.arlingtonva.gov/Elections.

Meet Your Neighbor -- Pastor CJ Valenti By Erika Derr

On the day they left Minneapolis to start their new chapter in Arlington, the Valenti family said goodbye to nine inches of snow,, and were greeted with 87 degree temps. In trading cold winters for hot summers, the Valenti's -- CJ and Mike, and children Theo and Phoebe -- left one strong community for another.

As the new pastor of Faith Lutheran Church, CJ and

her family are adapting to the neighborhood not simply as residents, but as leaders in the faith community and stewards of one of the neighborhood's familiar institutions.

"Faith Lutheran is a church that has a lot of resources, and they aren't afraid to share them," says Pastor CJ. She was drawn to the role in part because of the way that Faith Lutheran lives out its mission, Rooted and Reaching Out in Love.

From the partnership with Virginia Health Center and monthly Goat Yoga classes, to the longstanding preschool (spots still available!), Faith Lutheran is a mainstay of Ashton Heights. Pastor CJ embraces

this chance to be part of the broader community. In her pastoral work, CJ is inspired by the story of the miracle of the feeding of five thousand; "Jesus reminds us that there is extra if you share, and Faith Lutheran really supports that. What a fun place to be!"

Fun indeed! The Valentis have enjoyed becoming part of the neighborhood. Theo attends one of Faith Lutheran's preschool classes, which has been a great way to meet new friends. They regularly walk their dog around the neighborhood, keep tabs on their geriatric cat, and are anticipating a new addition to their animal family: chickens! Not only will they enjoy fresh eggs, but the new hens will also be a fun learning project for the preschool students.

While CJ's role as the new Pastor was the impetus behind the Valenti family's move, they are delighted to be in Arlington and have spent the last few months exploring their new surroundings. From exploring Arlington's parks and trails, traveling to nearby beaches and Shenandoah campgrounds, and enjoying local favorites like El Paso Cafe and Doña Azucena's, the Valenti's are getting to know their new hometown. The recent summer storms and power outages helped reinforce what a special community this is. "When the power went out, at first there was a moment of panic," recalls CJ, "but then we started getting text messages

(with offers to meet up in a neighbor's yard). Everyone brought something to grill. The next night, there were even more people!" This spirit of sharing and watching out for each other resonated deeply for the Valentis.

Now in her twelfth year as a pastor, CJ is inspired to continue her practice of faith rooted in generosity, abundance, and hope. Originally from Ohio, she studied music and social work, and began her career in community outreach as an Americorp volunteer working with unhoused communities in Washington, DC. She attended seminary in Philadelphia, and interned with St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Arlington, Massachusetts where she met Mike.



CJ and family having dinner at Rocklands BBQ

During her time as a pastor in Minnesota, she served three congregations and shepherded one through the difficult process of holy closure. Her training as a social worker prepared her for some of the most significant work of pastoring, including the challenges facing individuals and communities. Her daily work as pastor includes a great variety of work, from hospital visits and social justice marches, to writing and delivering sermons on Sundays and weekly visits with the preschool classes.

"Pastors have the incredible opportunity to show up in these beautiful spaces that are hard and holy," reflects CJ. This abiding faith and community spirit make her, and her family, a joyful addition to Ashton Heights.

Have you Heard of "Specialist" Bees? By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Coordinator

Geranium maculatum (wild geranium).



Most people are aware that monarch butterfly caterpillars only eat milkweed leaves. Monarch are specialists on milkweed. We are learning that this is not an anomaly. Many insects have a dependent relationship to certain plants. 'Specialist bees' only eat pollen from a narrow range of plants. For example, the specialist bee, *Andrena distans*, only feeds its young pollen from one species of plant,

The mid-Atlantic states have about 400 different species of native bees. Many of them are specialists on a narrow range of (native) plants. Without their particular native plants, these specialist bees are absent. To save our native bees, plant flowers that feed the specialist bees. Generalist bees will also be able to feed on these plants.

Let's look at the particulars of *Geranium maculatum* and *Andrena distans*. Here is a <u>link to a photo</u> of *Andrena distans*. For those reading this on paper, search "USGS Bee Inventory and Monitoring Lab/Flickr", then "Andrena distans". All of Sam Droege's Flickr pictures are in the public domain. Sam is one of a handful of native bee experts in the country, and my

former boss. His photos are definitely worth a look.

Geranium maculatum is native to the woodlands of eastern North America (see line drawing). It has pale rose-purple flowers 1-1/2 inches in diameter, which bloom in the spring. It is clump forming, with basal leaves; the flower stalks (also with leaves) reach about 2 feet high. It grows best in light shade, moist to dry conditions, and rich loamy soil (but will grow in our clay). It functions as a border, or a ground cover. Plant a bunch of them, so the bees can find them!

Besides being the only food that Andrena distans feeds their babies, other bees use the pollen of Geranium maculatum; 21 species of lepidoptera eat their leaves; songbirds and chipmunk eat their seeds. If you're interested in purchasing G. maculatum, one source is Earth Sangha: www.earthsangha.org/ wpnlist.



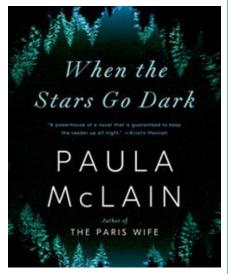
When the Stars Go Dark by Paula McLain By Denise Cormaney

Follow all her reviews at @findyourgoldenhour on Instagram

FOUR STARS!

I read this because a.) I've read her other novels (all historical fiction) and really enjoyed them, and b.) several book people I follow got advance copies and raved about it. I didn't pay too close attention to the details of the story before I picked it up.

Had I known what it was about, I likely wouldn't have read it. The subject matter is dark (the abduction and abuse of young girls). There are no horrific details here, nothing that feels exploitative or sensationalized, but even without gory details, the impact of this story is intense. I tend to be a sensitive reader when it comes to this kind of thing.



All that said, I read it and I'm giving it four stars. McLain is a talented writer, and she's given us her most personal novel yet. In the author's note she shares her connection to the main character: she too was abandoned by both parents and raised in foster care. Her deep understanding of trauma and its lasting impact comes through these pages. It's a good book! Just know going in that it's not a light read.

Kids, Inc. Info By Ann Felker

A "For Sale" sign on any street tells us that new people will change the neighborhood, a basic fact of our life near a churning urban market. Since the pandemic, there is another pop-up sign that speaks about change but on a smaller scale, like an empty bedroom. In May, our local high schools planted "Class of 2023" signs in front of every appropriate house. Great joy and bit of nostalgia as we think of an empty(ier) nest. Anyway, this year, Kids Inc., bids a hearty congratulations to Ella Bomberger, Azat Hartman, Ellie Rosenberg, Cady Shenk, Sofia Sleigh, Rachael Spitzer, Grace Van de Meulebroecke, and Pia Wilson. Farewell.

Luckily, we have heard about some new personnel for our Kids, Inc. community. Conveniently, the September Kids, Inc. page in the newsletter can be torn off and posted on your refrigerator door for instant access whenever you need help with babies, pets, lawns, sidewalks, gardens, house plants and new technology! The contact is usually a telephone number, but potential customers can call the number (after school hours) if texting is not a skill.

Clues for employers

- Every parent approved the listings. They report
 that their young entrepreneurs are ready to
 go to work in Ashton Heights. Year of birth is
 included to help match the level of expectation
 with the level of maturity. Keep in mind that kids
 who put their names forward are go getters and
 they like a challenge.
- Names and skills are listed, but each employer works out pay procedures with the young entrepreneur. Small business at a micro level.
- Be clear about job expectations. Write them down and include your address. Kids might have two jobs at once.
- Never give a bare key that can easily be mixed up with other keys. Attach a small, noisy, shiny object to distinguish the key. Do not put the house address on the key.
- Kids, Inc. is not on the NYSE, but it makes a difference in our neighborhood. Thanks to all who participate.



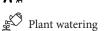
KIDS, INC.

Our local youth are ready to help when the household hands are not enough.

Send updates to Ann Felker: gr8est9@gmail.com



Dog walking



Pet sitting

Yard work



Babysitting

Snow shoveling









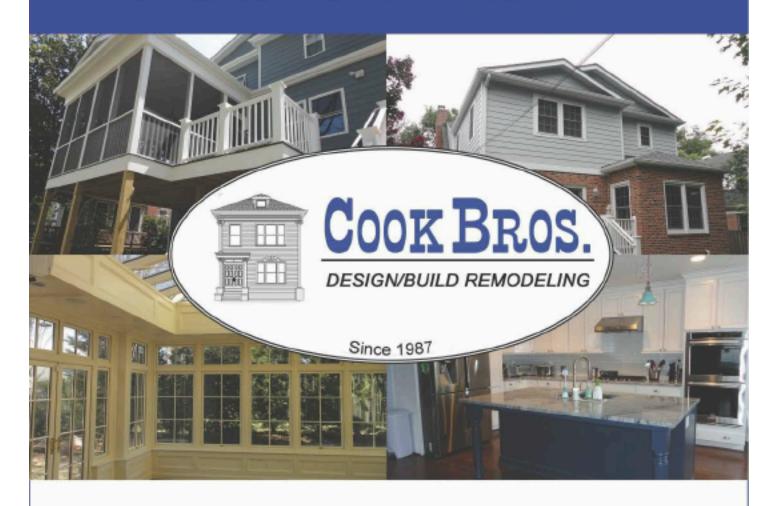
Mail collection

Icons courtesy of flaticon.com

The Kids, Inc. listings are not published online for privacy reasons. To access the full list, please see the September issue posted on our neighborhood listserv or consult your issue that's delivered to your home!

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