

www.ashtonheights.org

Tree Canopy – Arlington and Ashton Heights By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

We are dedicating our February Ashton Heights meeting to two presentations on Arlington tree canopy. Our lead off speaker is Mary Margaret Whipple. Whipple is a former Democratic member of the Senate of Virginia, representing the 31st district from 1996–2012. She was the Chairman of the Senate Democratic Caucus, and she was the first woman to hold a leadership position in the Virginia General Assembly.

She was appointed to the Arlington School Board in 1976 and served as chair from 1978–79. Whipple served on the Arlington County Board from 1983–95, and was chair in 1986. While on the County Board, she served as the Arlington representative to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority Board in 1985 and from 1988– 1995, serving as chair in 1990.

One of her signature issues was preservation and enhancement of

Arlington's tree canopy. Aside from being a force in Arlington and Virginia, I wanted her to bring her insight and history of why this issue is important - and why it has been a force in both Ashton Heights and Lyon Park from the very beginning. I hope to lure our early AHCA leaders to this meeting as well to add perspectives.

She will be followed by Brooke Alexander, who is the Chair of AHCA's Tree Canopy and Native Plants Committee and is widely known for her expertise. I have encouraged her to share her experience and perspective with Civic Associations throughout Arlington, and of course with the Arlington County Board and various Arlington County Commissions and Advisory Boards.

Tree Canopy has taken on added significance in our modern lives as Arlington becomes more dense and

> urbanized -- and as a result more noisy and more polluted.

As I mention to you before when I move into my one Sears bunga 1984, I was to Arlington's a to cut down my silver ma because it re the "end of it Instead, I hire arborist to co and root feed the tree. And when I added my second Continued on page 3 February 2025

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., February 19, 7 - 9 p.m.

Clarendon United Methodist Church 606 N. Irving St.

as well	7:00 p.m.	Come early to see a tree
		canopy display, to sign
kander,		the Ashton Heights tree
юру		preservation petition to
s		the County Board and help
ave		setup.
ience	7:30 p.m.	Scott Sklar, President and
ions		Committee reports
e with		
rious	7:45 p.m.	Mary Margaret Whipple,
ł		former County and School
		Board member, and
		long time State Senator,
		will discuss the history
		of our re-forestation/
d		afforestation efforts. She
- and as		is a major reason that we
e noisy		have a golden age of tree
olluted.		coverage to look back to.
and	8:20 p.m.	Brooke Alexander, Chair
ned re,	-	Ashton Heights Tree
ed		Canopy and Native Plant
story		Committee will share what
alow in		can be done in the short
told by		and long term to help
arborist		restore our tree canopy
1		and save our big trees.
aple		Learn about our planting
eached		blitz plan (read more on
ts life."		pages 6 and 8).
red an	9:00 p.m.	Adjourn
ome in	5.50 p.m.	nujourn



Alan Tober and Scott Sklar with their over 80-year old silver maple trees

Editor's Note: View the newsletter in <u>full color</u> at <u>www.ashtonheights.org</u>! Articles for the <u>March 2025</u> newsletter issue are due by February 21st. Send submissions to: <u>amylmiller4@gmail.com</u>.

Join or Renew your AHCA Membership!

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/

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President's Column, continued from page 1

story, I made sure the construction equipment did not go over the roots.

In 2025, this 87 year old tree survived the Arlington Arbortists prediction, living an additional 40 years and going. She drops bushels of seeds, called whirlers, twisters, helicopters, or whirligigs every year filling two green bins.

But let me put on my professor's hat on and give some facts:

• A large tree can take in from 50 – 150 gallons of water per day – the best and most cost effective approach for stormwater management,

• A large tree can reduce traffic noise and other sounds from 5-8 decibels and evergreens, because they have leaves all year, if they're planted together can reduce noise up to 15 decibels. Large trees can also significantly reduces street light from cars and overhead street lights.

• A large tree can absorb 0.616 metric tons of carbon (the longest-lived greenhouse gas in the atmosphere)

• Trees planted on the east, west, and south sides of your home reduce home cooling costs. By positioning trees in just the right way around your yard, it can cut up to 25% of a household's annual electricity usage. This has been validated in my monitored house and rear office building.

• Trees have the ability to directly absorb and sequester pollution and can temporarily catch pollutants in the air. The <u>National Park Service</u> states that "trees absorb

gaseous molecules in the air. Tiny pores on the tree leaf surfaces called stomata take in air that includes toxic pollutants. This means that pollutants like SO2, NO2, CO, and ozone are permanently converted inside the leaf." Trees can also "remove particulate matter by catching them temporarily. With rain or precipitation, the particulates can be dissolved in the stormwater runoff or transferred to the soil." While no mitigation device solves air pollution, the scale and value of city trees in this regard is dramatic. "

And note, there are many studies validating that trees reduce "heat islands" which are becoming a problem in urban areas as our climate warms – especially on streets, parks, parking lots and playgrounds.

And when I added four trees to my existing four large trees, the amount and diversity of wildlife is incredible – especially birds of all types – with the larger birds on treetops and then virtually every other kind of bird that lives or flies through this area. And, of course, squirrels, fireflies, et al. Some of my best times are sitting on my neighbor Patrick Lueb's back porch in the evening looking at the hundreds of fireflies on his back tree – incredible!

I hope to see you and your family at our February meeting. Tree canopy has many benefits and significantly saves money and adds to the quality of our lives.

Reference articles:

https://www.deeproot.com/blog/blog-entries/clearing-the-air/

https://www.epa.gov/heatislands/using-trees-and-vegetationreduce-heat-islands

Ask Us About Green Burial

oday, many families are choosing green burial, where their loved one is shrouded or placed in a wicker biodegradable casket. We use flowers from our meadows and Memorial Rose Garden for a ceremonial flower placing at the graveside service. Our staff is very knowledgeable about this environmentally friendly burial option. We can help you decide if green burial is the right choice



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Restaurant Review -Pirouette Café and Wine Shop By Vinh and Susan Nguyen

Website: <u>www.pirouette.cafe</u> 4000 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA 22203 <u>cheers@pirouette.cafe</u>

Pirouette approaches both its food and wine offerings with high care and personal touch. Owners Philippe and Jackie Loustaunau take tremendous pride in curating both their wine shop and their restaurant, and you can find either or both of them personally overseeing your experience on any given night.

The space is split about equally between the two operations, with a large tasting table dividing the space underneath a cheerful custom mobile. The design vibe is modern industrial, made friendly and warm with plants and splashes of color.

The wine shop stocks over 200 wines, with a strong French presence (of course) and many small production labels not found in the average high-volume store. Prices are reasonable, with many highly regarded labels safely under \$100. You can peruse the shelves, get helpful suggestions from Philippe, pick your wine, and even have it corked at your dining table for no fee. Enthusiasts can join the Wine Club, attend Wine & Cheese events, and sign up for educational tastings such as "Wine Confidence" or talks with industry experts.

Happy hours are 3-6 p.m. and are enlivened with live Jazz on Wednesdays. This was our first experience at Pirouette and we enjoyed it tremendously. The place was full and buzzing with energy, with happy patrons enjoying a glass (\$10) or the 3-wine flight (\$22) from a curated selection which changes every few weeks. We greatly enjoyed our charcuterie plate, prosciutto chips, Tuscan white bean dip, and homemade crackers. The glazed pork belly was

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delicious but too rich for one person to finish (so make sure to share).

The kitchen is helmed by Adam Hoffa, a veteran of celebrated local restaurants. The compact menu features inventive creations celebrating local seasonal ingredients.

The Caesar salad





Photos courtesy of the Pirouette Cafe website

offered an intriguing and fresh take by featuring kale instead of romaine lettuce, although we were not as fond of the pickled peppers. Cobia crudo was a home run, with a sweet and tangy citrus and pineapple broth base and a touch of smoked roe providing an umami kick. The roasted honeynut squash dish was well-executed and enjoyable. We did not try the mac & cheese croquettes but that's definitely on the list for next time. The tri-tip steak was cooked well and the accompanying rosti delicious, but we would have preferred a more hearty cut to stand up to the 2 excellent red wine choices. The rabbit – wrapped in prosciutto as a "porchetta" – combined a soft texture with a hazelnut gremolata to provide balance.

Pirouette's ambitious concept of celebrating both wine and food at a high level is a welcome addition to the neighborhood. The enthusiastic response we witnessed during our visits is a good sign of even better things to come.

Ellie-Palooza – Benefitting Better Future 4 U By Adrie Custer

Randy and I have lived in Ashton Heights since 1978. My daughter, Alex, and my son, Zach, were both born and raised here. Last March, as I was holding my 1-year-old granddaughter, Ellie, she suddenly quit moving, stopped breathing, and began to turn blue. Her eyes were open but she was totally non-responsive. I screamed for my husband. As he started rescue breaths, I called 911.

Ellie began breathing again after about 2 minutes and the paramedics arrived soon after. She had already had 7 similar events since mid-January and our medical community was stumped as to their cause. Following the March event, and the subsequent 10-day hospital admission filled with a barrage of medical tests which provided no explanation, we finally got an answer after a complete genetic workup.



Left: Ellie in her new sled on Christmas morning; Right: Ellie with her parents, Alex and Jimmy

She was diagnosed with an extremely rare genetic condition called HNRNPU Neurodevelopmental Disorder (HNRNPU-NDD). It turns out that Ellie is one of 350 people in the world who have a non-inherited mutation of her HNRNP-U gene.

As part of her condition, we now know that when Ellie spontaneously stops breathing, she's actually having a rare type of seizure. She has had 11 of these seizures in the last year despite now being on daily seizure medication. These events are obviously very scary for her parents and caregivers (like her grandparents!), but also very dangerous, as her vital organs aren't receiving oxygen flow during the time that she is unresponsive. In addition to the seizures, Ellie has developmental delays in her gross motor movements, as well as in her speech and language. But despite the challenges she faces, Ellie is a happy, playful near 2-year old who loves music (and dancing!), giraffes, mac and cheese, playing in the water, and being silly in the mirror. At this point we don't know what other impacts this condition will have on her life, but we do know that she deserves the very best, and a chance at treatment is the best way to give her that. That potential for treatment will require more research though, and research requires funding.

Better Future for You (BF4U) is a global advocacy group raising awareness and funds for research for HNRNPU-NDD. Currently,

Columbia University in NYC and the University of Sheffield in the UK are researching HNRNPU-NDD. But as with most rare disorders, funding is limited. The families of children with these disorders have realized that we must do our own fundraising.

With that said, our family is hosting a fundraiser for BF4U on Saturday, February 22, at the Lyon Park Community Center from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We are calling it "Ellie-Palooza" in honor of our little darling. It's an Open House style event with activities

lie with her parents, Alex and Jimmy House style event with activities for all ages, food trucks (Rocklands and Scuttlebutt Bakeshop), a DJ, dancing, and a raffle and silent auction. Beer and wine will be available (as well as nonalcoholic beverages).

We ask that you, our neighbors, consider doing two things:

- 1. Visit <u>BF4U.org</u> to learn about HNRNPU-NDD (and perhaps donate)
- 2. Go to <u>www.zeffy.com/ticketing/ellie-palooza</u> to buy a ticket for the event.

All proceeds go directly to BF4U.org which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with tax EIN: 93-2977129. We look forward to seeing you there.

Fantaye Chekol Elder care, CNA

Fantaye Chekol was a caring, loving, dedicated, certified nurse for Ashton Heights neighbor, Mary Lawler, for over 9 years. Fantaye is interested in a new live-in caretaker job.





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Going – Going – Gone! By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair

Goodbye to the Willow Oak at 5th and Jackson Street. One more of Ashton Heights' giant canopy trees has been taken out. Our large canopy trees together make life here in Ashton

Heights better. People are enraged and saddened, and want to know what can be done? They've been inspired to poetry!

Alas, this tree is gone. But let's use it to gather together and build momentum to save our big trees and plant more trees. Trees that will be big in 100 years. Do this for our grandchildren – together we can make a huge difference!

Start at the February Civic Association meeting on Feb 26. Come at 7, and see the displays and sign the petition to the County Board. Listen to Mary Margaret Whipple's talk about Arlington's tree history and her part in it. Then we get to work. Brooke Alexander will present (1) what can be done with current tools; (2) tools that would be useful to have in the future; and then (3) solicit a small army to do those things.



We need grant writers, researchers, organizers, people willing to talk with their neighbors, places to plant trees, volunteers to water trees, doctors and lawyers, graphic designers, post

> makers, distributors, Miss Utility callers, printers, web whizzes, writers, and lobbyists, including you!

> This poem was mounted near the former tree site, author unknown.

The old oak, once a king of the glen, Now lies broken, a sorrowful sight to see, It's branches, once reaching to the heavens, Now scattered like tears upon the green.

A thousand whispers in the wind's soft moan, Echoes of stories that once filled the air, The spirit of the forest, now deeply known, A grief that lingers, a burden to bear.

The axe's bite, a mark of cruel greed, A wound upon the heart of the land so old, Where once the wild creatures freely did feed, Now silent echoes, a tale to be told.

Photo courtesy of Toby McIntosh



Smile, You've Been Caught Speeding Community Safety and Security Corner By Christina Schultz

You may have recently received a surprise in the mail – a \$100+ speeding ticket with a photo of your vehicle. Arlington County has enacted a 20mph speed limit in school zones when lights on the speed limit sign are flashing. Signs alerting drivers to the presence of the speed cameras are located 1,000 feet in advance of each camera. Eighteen speed cameras have recently been installed to enforce this speed limit. The cameras are only operational when the lights are flashing during the 30 minutes before school arrival and the 30 minutes after departure times. Digital images and video footage of vehicles traveling above this posted limit are recorded and sent to a contracted company for review. Once validated, the company submits the footage to the Arlington County Policy Department. An officer then reviews the footage to determine if a speeding violation has occurred. Violations are normally sanctioned for those driving 31 mph or higher in these zones. Tickets for violations, which include a civil fine of a \$100 and an administrative fee, are sent to the vehicle's registered owner, regardless of who was driving the vehicle. A ticket does not affect insurance, add driver license points, or impact drivers on court or DMV probation.

The goal of these efforts is to improve transportation safety within school zones by reducing the likelihood of crashes, particularly when students arrive and leave school. This initiative, known as PhotoSPEED, is part of Arlington County's Automated Safety Enforcement Program and supports the County's Vision Zero program. Automated speed enforcement devices have only recently come to the Commonwealth. In 2020, Virgina enacted legislation to permit speed cameras in school and work zones. In January 2022, the Arlington County Board subsequently adopted changes in the County Code to bring speed cameras to school zones in accordance with state requirements. The cameras' locations (see box) were determined by which school zones would benefit most. The first ten cameras were installed in August 2024 with eight more added in December 2024. Warning periods of one month were granted for the following respective month before tickets were issued. County staff will assess the safety

impacts of the camera to continually improve the PhotoSPEED program.



Between September 26 and November 25, 2024, 10,721 tickets were issued for speeding

violations from the original ten cameras. This has set social media ablaze. Drivers have reported receiving tickets outside of school hours when the lights were not flashing. Others have stated they received tickets for going 25mph in these zones. Tickets arrive about three weeks after the infraction, causing some drivers to receive multiple fines before being aware of the issue. One person posted being told by a county employee that the speed limit in any school zone in Arlington is 20 mph at all times whether the sign is flashing or not. In any case, there is confusion over signage and regulations. To contest a ticket, you must request a court date or complete an affidavit found on www.violationinfo.com. For questions on parking tickets, you can contact a county representative at 703-228-7978 or submit a parking ticket inquiry form on the county website. For more inquires on the PhotoSPEED program, you can email the Special Operations section at ACPDSOS@arlingtonva.us. And don't forget to drive safely and slowly!

Locations of PhotoSPEED program cameras (map can be found <u>here</u>):

- NB 1300 block of N. Kirkwood Road
- WB 5800 block of Wilson Boulevard
- SB 400 block of N. George Mason Drive
- SB 600 block of S. Carlin Springs Road
- SB Unit block of S. Carlin Springs Road
- SB 1900 block of S. George Mason Drive
- NB 1900 block of S George Mason Drive
- SB 1200 block of S. George Mason Drive
- EB 4500 block of Washington Boulevard
- EB 5200 block of Yorktown Boulevard
- NB 700 block of N. George Mason Drive
- WB 5800 block of Little Falls Road
- WB 4100 block of Lorcom Lane
- SB 2500 block of S. Arlington Ridge Road
- EB 5800 block of Williamsburg Boulevard
- SB 1000 block of N. McKinley Road
- EB 3500 block of 2nd Street S.
- NB 1600 block of N. Veitch Street





Tree People! Save the Date: Wed March 12, 7-8pm. Combined Meeting with Lyon Park By Brooke Alexander, Native Plant and Tree Canopy Committee Chair

Why does the new County Urban Tree Canopy Assessment show that the Ashton Heights (AH) tree canopy increased from 2014-2023? We will be exploring this question. To my eye, we have lost tree canopy in this time frame. Do you think we have gained or lost canopy in the last 10 years?

The latest Arlington Tree Canopy study was released Sept 2024, based on the 2023 canopy. View the study <u>online</u>.

This study reported:

- 1. Both the County (35%) and Ashton Heights' (36%) tree canopies were significantly lower in 2023 than the last measurement in 2016.
- 2. Previous assessments (AH 2008 48%; and AH 2016 40%) were inaccurate (too high) according to the study, so the County has thrown these out.
- 3. To identify a trend, the 2024 study generated data from 2014 (AH 33%) and 2018 (AH 35%) in addition to 2023 (36%). These data showed a trend of increasing tree canopy in Ashton Heights, albeit lower than the previous numbers. These numbers are also lower than the Forestry and Natural Resources goal. Also note that these revisions only going back as far as 2014.

In 2023, the County Board adopted the new Forestry and Natural Resources Plan (FNRP) as part of the County Comprehensive Plan. The highest priority in the FNRP is "1.1.1 Re-establish and



maintain at least 40 percent canopy tree canopy County-wide through conservation and tree planting programs". Both the County and Ashton Heights canopies are lower than the plan's #1 priority of 40% tree canopy. Furthermore, in order to get 40% over the county, we need 50 or 60% tree canopy in residential areas (per Arlington Urban Forest Manager).

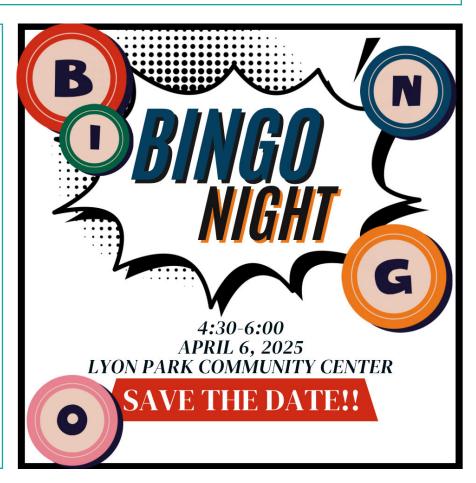
Vincent Verweij, Arlington's Urban Forest Manager, will attempt to help us reconcile the 2024 study with our observations. We together will look at specific locations within Ashton Heights and Lyon Park on the interactive map based on the 2024 Tree Canopy Assessment. And Mr Verweij will look at the change in our tall canopy trees (those over 40 feet). This may explain the discrepancy! Come join us.

This presentation will be held at the beginning of Lyon Park's monthly meeting, Wednesday, March 12 at the Lyon Park Community Center from 7-8 p.m. Ashton Heights residents, and ATAG (Arlington Tree Action Group) members are invited. The presentation will be held at the beginning of the meeting, so you won't need to sit through their business meeting. If you're interested in exploring the results of the County's latest canopy study, please come!

Save the Date – Upcoming Events

Here are just a few events coming up in our area.

- WL Theatre presents <u>A Midsummer</u> <u>Night's Dream</u> February 6-8.
- The Ballyshaners 42nd <u>Alexandria</u> <u>St. Patrick's Day Parade</u> will be on March 1.
- The Lyon Park Blood Drive will be held March 4 from noon to 5 p.m.
- The <u>National Cherry Blossom</u> <u>Festival</u> will take place March 20-April 13. The <u>Kite Festival</u> is on March 29 and the <u>National Cherry</u> <u>Blossom Parade</u> is on April 12.
- The Friends of the Arlington Public Library <u>Spring Book Sale</u> takes place April 3–5 at Central Library.



Lyon Park Plant Sale – Save the Date!

Despite the cold and snow, spring is not far off when it comes to gardening. To help you with early season garden planning, mark your

calendars for this year's Lyon Park Plant Sale. The sale will be held on **SATURDAY, APRIL 19, from 11 am – 2 pm** in Lyon Park. Look for us under the tent, rain or shine!

The plant sale features favorite, primarily native plants donated from Lyon Park and Ashton Heights gardeners, so you know they'll grow well for you in your garden. We'll have plants that love sun, plants that love shade, houseplants and more. Most plants will be \$5.00.

Deborah Barber will host Dig-Your-Own from Lyon Park's flourishing native plant gardens during the plant sale.

PLEASE plan to donate potted up-and labeled-plants to the sale, but don't share anything on the Arlington list of invasive plants. Check this link: <u>https://arlingtonva.s3.amazonaws.</u> com/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2013/10/Invasive-Plant-List-2-19-15.pdf you're not sure. We can only be successful in raising funds for Community Center maintenance if we have plants to sell! Bring donations to the park by 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 19.

QUESTIONS? Contact Susan Bell at sibell703@outlook.com

Love your Library? Support the eCollection!

Friends of the Arlington Public Library (FOAL) needs your help to advocate for permanent funding for the popular OverDrive eCollection. The collection's popularity is evident, with eBooks and audiobooks circulating 1 million times in FY23 and increasing by 43% to 1.5 million in FY24. Valued for its 24/7 online accessibility, OverDrive helps connect individuals who cannot visit the library, those with vision or learning disabilities, or who learn better through listening. The library's OverDrive eCollection has been supported by one-time funding for the past five years.

FOAL is a nonprofit dedicated to enhancing literacy and community engagement through Arlington Public Library. You can help by becoming a member, volunteering, shopping at book sales, or joining the FOAL Board. FOAL also advocates for library funding, including support for the OverDrive eCollection, which provides eBooks, audiobooks and digital magazines.

Thank you for supporting FOAL's mission to build a strong, vibrant, and engaged community through our local library.



Annual Valentine's Day Cupcake Sale Lyon Park Community Center

Enjoy this annual event at the Lyon Park Community Center.

> Friday, February 7 4 to 6 p.m.

Saturday, February 8

8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

- At least 14 flavors
- A delicious neighborhood tradition
- Email jywickrph@aol.com to preorder or volunteer to bake or frost!

Four Ways to Support the Library

From the Friends of the Arlington Public Library



Sabores By Oliver Fry, age 10

Website: <u>www.saboresva.com</u> 2401 Columbia Pike, Arlington VA

Sabores is a South American tapas restaurant where they serve a bunch of different types of South American foods. Sabores is Spanish for "flavors".

Tapas means small plates. Instead of serving one big plate for all your food or a couple big plates, it's a bunch of smaller plates. I personally think this is a great restaurant. There are some things there that

interest me and some things that might appeal more to a grown up audience. I have been there approximately four times and each time I try something new. And trying new things is a big deal for me because I'm usually pretty picky.



If you are a kid, here are some things from their menu that might interest you: chicken fingers, arepitas, quesadillas, tacos and chorizo. And here are some things that my family and I have tried that might interest adults: croquetas,

feijoada and churrasco steak. Every time we go there the service is absolutely incredible, the manager and pretty much all of the workers are awesome, and I think one time one of the workers was really nice to my sister who is learning Spanish and helped her practice. A personal thing I wanted to include is the fact that I really like mango flavored things and I wanted to mention that the mango juice they make is SUPER GOOD.

They also serve a variety of different desserts. My favorites are the passion fruit cheesecake and the chocolate mousse served to look like a potted plant. In conclusion I think Sabores is a great restaurant that you should try.

Monthly Recycling Tip By Amy Miller

Do not place lithium batteries in the trash or recycling carts!

Did you know that lithium batteries can ignite fires? Take them to the Household Hazardous Materials facility at 530 31st Street South. You can dispose of alkaline and zinc carbon batteries in regular household trash. Learn more.

Condensed information from a Solid Waste Bureau flyer from 2024.



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Casey O'Neal Associate Broker 703-217-9090 casey@caseyoneal.com www.caseyoneal.com Compass Real Estate

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<u>the cost of the services</u>
to enhance your home's
value. Visit our website for
details.
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KIDS, INC.

Our local youth are ready to help when the household hands are not enough. If you would like to be added to this list, please send updates to Ann Felker: <u>gr8est9@gmail.com</u>. Include your child's name, birth year, contact information and list the jobs that they are interested in being contacted for hire.



Please consult the newsletter that is posted to the Ashton Heights listserv or the hand-delivered newsletter for a full list of kids who are available for hire!

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