



Ashton Heights News

www.ashtonheights.org

October 2025

Ending 2025 in Ashton Heights

By Scott Sklar, President, AHCA

As we enter Autumn – with cool mornings and warm weather, leaves beginning to turn, school sessions in full swing – the beauty of our area is in full form.

Our signature issue this summer and fall has been our tree canopy campaign. Our amazing Tree Canopy committee circulated a tree canopy petition, which was signed by 609 individuals and then presented to the Arlington County Board on October 18th. We won a grant from the State of Virginia, which made possible the offering of 120 tree whips to AH neighbors. Our tree canopy effort has been embraced by the coalition of 23 civic associations working together on MMH/EHO, density, and lot coverage issues.

Our broad coalition of civic associations, established to address the Equal Housing Opportunity (EHO) has grown, become more sophisticated, and has seen results. We formed the coalition to address the Arlington County Board's interpretation of Missing Middle (MMH), which they later morphed into EHO, and which is now lodged in court fights. As one who believes in opening up housing to lower-to-middle incomes, I was disappointed that the Board's

approach did not do that and has not resulted in that. Instead it allows two-to-six units per lot, routinely near or over one million dollars – far out of reach to young families and to service workers in healthcare, teaching, and other first responders.

Additionally, AHCA has had some great monthly meetings – including October where we had five candidates running for Arlington County Board. At that session, MMH/EHO was brought



Ashton Heights Civic Association October meeting.
Photo courtesy of Brooke Alexander.

up with the five taking different perspectives. As the moderator, I did point out over 150 cities/counties have more proven and successful MMH approaches.

There are localities forming non-profit

investment trusts and cooperatives which buy up old bungalows, upgrade them to meet modern building codes, maximize water and energy efficiency (to lower carrying costs), and sell them for smaller profits to buyers who meet established income thresholds. Maybe, just maybe – we can preserve tree canopy, slow McMansions, and increase access to homes by those who aid and protect all of us in the county.

As you all know, watching 10th Street being prepared for two new buildings at The Beer Lot and the Joyce Motors

Continued on page 7

AHCA Monthly Meeting Wed., November 19, 7 – 9 p.m.

**Clarendon United
Methodist Church
606 N. Irving St.**

7:00 p.m. Mingle and chair setup

7:30 p.m. Melania Flores is hoping to register Ashton Heights as a Pollinator Pathway. Come find out why our pollinators are declining, their importance to our ecosystem, and how neighbors together can create a better pollinator habitat. What are the arguments against allowing the County to vacuum up your fallen leaves?

Brooke Alexander, Co-Chair of the AHCA Tree Canopy Campaign, will share an update. She will describe our glorious moments in front of the County Board and, importantly, lead a discussion on where Ashton Heights want to go from here.

9:00 p.m. Adjourn

Got an idea for a speaker or topic for 2026? Email VP of Programs, Dave at porgschu@verizon.net

REMINDER: As of press time, we still have **37 FREE** canopy trees to place. Contact treecanopy@ashtonheights.org for a free consultation.

Deadline: November 20.



Editor's Note: View the newsletter in **full color** at www.ashtonheights.org! If you have an idea for an article, reach out, we'd love to have you. The next issue will be the **January 2026** newsletter issue – submissions are due by **December 14th**. Send submissions to: amylmiller4@gmail.com. Thanks in advance for your contributions.

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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WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DAY

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13
AT 9:00 AM**

Columbia Gardens Cemetery invites you to participate in our 7th Wreaths Across America Day! Please volunteer with family, friends and neighbors to place Remembrance wreaths on the gravesites of more than 1000 veterans at Columbia Gardens. To sponsor the purchase of Remembrance wreaths, please order by December 1st.

Together, We Remember, Honor and Teach.



To volunteer or sponsor wreaths, scan this code.

Questions? Call us at 703.527.1235 or visit columbiagardenscemetery.org
Columbia Gardens Cemetery | 3411 Arlington Blvd. | Arlington, VA 22201



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Tree Canopy Petition goes to the County Board

By Ann Felker, Petition Coordinator, AHCA Tree Canopy Campaign

The AHCA Tree Canopy Petition, a seven months-long effort, captured 609 individual signatures and was presented in a binder of arboreal aspirations to the County Board on Oct 18.

Standing with me were: Celeste Szewczyk, Susan Robinson (Lyon Park), Linda Scott, Dave Schutz, Ken Matzkin, Kathy Rehill (Donaldson Run), Elizabeth Grossman (Arlington Forest) and Brooke Alexander. There were representatives of the 23 Arlington Civic Associations who have been sending the same message to the County Board.

We also presented a dot map highlighting every Ashton Heights home that signed the petition, so there was a visual picture of the widespread support for our ask – lower the allowed lot coverage, incentivize presentation of old trees, and leave space for new and necessary trees. Our dot map revealed that apartment dwellers are ardent tree supporters too. Trees are a proxy for human comfort. Margaret Fibel gave invaluable assistance putting our final package together for the Board presentation.

Street level analysts who ran nine POP UP petition signing tables in the final seven days of our campaign met an

enthusiastic, multi-generational cohort of 243 passing pedestrians who wanted to send the same message. Thanks to Deena Ackerman, Rick and Valerie

Troiano, Sylvia Rordvedt, Glynis Lough, Heather Schildge, Caroline Rogus and daughter Eleanor, Celeste Szewczyk, Dana Mueller, and Brooke Alexander.

Precisely 200 neighbors signed the virtual petition– an innovation that our listserv moderator, Glynis Lough, developed to allow write-in voting from their devices. Another 166 signatures were gathered at a variety of events from the Bunny Hop to block parties to the Lyon Park 100th Anniversary picnic. Our valiant block captains, and summer walkers Mary Hibbits, and Ron Rosenberg, who visited

neighbors in sweltering July/July heat to offer tree plantings and other tree related information brought in the real “I want a tree or two” crowd. And, yes, we painstakingly eliminated those heartfelt duplicates!

The most encouraging part of gathering these signatures was the universal enthusiasm our neighbors have for enhancing our current situation and touching the future with wildlife supporting, shade providing, stormwater absorbing mental-health encouraging, air-quality enhancing TREES!



Brooke Alexander and Ann Felker
Photo courtesy of Linda Scott



Meet Your Neighbor: Clarissa's Garden

By Erika Derr

On the corner of Lincoln and Eighth Streets, five-year-old Clarissa Barton has turned her yard into an Ashton Heights wonder. Towering twelve-foot sunflowers and giant orange pumpkins sprang from seeds she planted with her dad, Patrick, and her ever-helpful assistant, Farm Barbie.

The garden's beginnings were humble—and a little chaotic. Last fall, local squirrels dined on the Bartons' pumpkins and discarded the seeds around the yard, setting the stage for this year's "volunteer" vines. Clarissa's own gardening journey began at age four, quite serendipitously. She and her dad saved seeds from cantaloupes and habanero peppers they had purchased at the grocery store and planted them in the yard. The cantaloupe vines took over and produced more than forty melons, a success that encouraged bigger ambitions.

In the frosty early spring, the Bartons mulled over what would bring the biggest smiles come August; Clarissa had the answer. Inspired by her preschool "Sunflower Room," and with a little help from the seed packets delivered by the Easter Bunny, Clarissa planted watermelons, corn, pumpkins, and—naturally—sunflowers. Rabbits were a challenge at first, but marigolds helped keep them at bay. Still, six pumpkin seeds managed to survive—enough to produce a lawn-sized patch of "Big Moons," some weighing nearly sixty-five pounds.

The sunny, sloped corner lot proved perfect for their crops: more than 1,500 habanero peppers, watermelons up to twenty-eight pounds, noble corn stalks, and, of course, majestic sunflowers: a season's worth of color and joy! Neighbors often stopped to admire the blooms or snap photos beside the giant gourds and flowers at all times of day and night.

Now that the days are shorter, the vines have started to wither, and Clarissa and Patrick have turned to painting and carving pumpkins in the spirit of the autumn holidays. No doubt Clarissa will be dreaming of next year's garden and counting on the Easter Bunny to bring more magical seeds.

Photos top to bottom, courtesy of Patrick Barton. The sunflower garden in full bloom. Clarissa and her pumpkin patch and the final fruits of her labor.





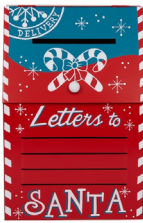
Join us on Sunday, December 14, 2025 at the Lyon Park Community Center for our Children's Holiday Party



Children's Holiday Party (with Santa) 1pm – 3pm

Bring your families, friends, and neighbors, to our children's holiday party. Join us for photos with Santa, hot chocolate, activities, treats, and holiday cheer!

Volunteers and cookie donations are needed for the Children's Holiday Party. If you can help, email Paul Showalter at LyonParkEvents@gmail.com or Darcy Rosenbaum at Darcy.Rosenbaum@gmail.com.



Lyon Park "Letters to Santa"

Santa has arranged for a special "Santa Mailbox" that will appear in Lyon Park to collect all the letters children write to Santa. The "**Letters to Santa**" mailbox will be located on the porch at 818 N Danville Street, Arlington, VA 22201.

Santa will also collect letters at our holiday party. Santa reads every letter he receives. Remember to include the child's name and address.

Restaurant Review: bb.q Chicken By Oliver Fry

3503 Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22201
Website: bbqchicken.com

bb.q Chicken is located near the Virginia Square metro. They serve Korean style chicken with many different flavor options. I went there with my mom and my dad. When we walked in we noticed it had a lot of TVs playing K-pop dances and some playing sports programming. There was music playing but surprisingly it was not K-pop music. The atmosphere was energetic with things like LEDs and vibrant music.

The people working there were friendly and helpful but the food did take a while. The flavors of chicken we tried were honey garlic, cheesling, secret sauce and golden original. Honey garlic and secret sauce were too spicy for me but my parents enjoyed them. I liked the golden original and the cheesling because they were more of a fit for my taste buds.

I also tried the milkshake dessert and it came in a pouch. I personally would give this place about a three and a half out of five stars, but some adults who like a bigger variety of foods may rate it higher. In conclusion, I think this place is great and you should definitely check it out.



Scrapping Cybersecurity Protections

Community Safety and Security Corner
By Christina Schultz

Just down the street from Ashton Heights on Glebe Road is another government office that is currently being dismantled. Under his first term, President Trump signed into law the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Act of 2018, which elevated a small directorate within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to formally establish the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). Under his second term, Donald Trump, angered by CISA's past debunking of his unfounded election fraud allegations, has ordered his administration to scale back the agency.

What is the Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency?

CISA, a branch of DHS, is responsible for safeguarding the nation's cybersecurity and critical infrastructure at all levels of government. It coordinates cybersecurity initiatives with U.S. states and works to defend government systems from both private and nation-state cyber threats, ranging from website defacement and denial-of-service attacks to espionage and system destruction. Since its establishment in 2018, CISA's responsibilities have grown to include protecting the census, managing National Special Security Events, overseeing the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, enhancing 5G network security, safeguarding elections, and fortifying the U.S. power grid against electromagnetic pulses (EMPs). Additionally, through its Office for Bombing Prevention, CISA leads national efforts to counter improvised explosive device (IED) threats.

How is CISA being dismantled?

Over the past nine months, the administration has taken a three-pronged approach to gutting CISA. First, funding has been terminated for election security programs, including those that monitor foreign influence, foreign election disinformation, and foreign attempts to break into critical infrastructure like voting systems and electrical grids. Additionally, the government has canceled contracts that provided penetration testing and other cybersecurity support for state and local election systems. The third tactic

is shrinking CISA's workforce by laying off some staff and ordering others to either take new jobs elsewhere or leave the agency. Already reeling from the loss of a third of its workforce since Trump took office in 2025, DHS has laid off an additional 176 CISA employees, since the federal government shutdown on October 1, citing their past work combating election misinformation. Over the past several months, DHS has also reassigned CISA employees to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Federal Protective Service, which guards immigration centers and other federal facilities. Many of these new jobs are across the country from where CISA staff live. Refusing these orders can be considered grounds for termination. By some estimations, staffing is expected to be reduced from 3,200 employees in January to fewer than 1,000 by the end of the year to meet the administration's goal of cutting back the agency.



What are the risks of scrapping CISA?

While the full consequences of canceled programs and staff reductions remain unclear, they could include diminished support for critical infrastructure systems and a reduced readiness to counter evolving nation-state and criminal threats. While DHS Secretary Noem promised to prioritize a "comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to cybersecurity," there seems to be a disconnect between this public messaging and what is happening to CISA. Lawmakers from both parties and cybersecurity experts who collaborate with CISA warn that the Trump administration's reductions have undermined U.S. cyber defenses, especially as adversaries like China and Russia escalate their attacks on American networks. DHS leadership contends that these concerns are misplaced, maintaining that it continues to work with the private sector and support state and local governments in addressing cyber threats, while asserting that the recent changes to CISA are necessary to correct what it views as overreach during the Biden administration. What is certain is that the cyber environment has dramatically shifted under Trump.

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President's Column – continued from page 1

sites – we will have major construction for the next two years. This sets the stage for our next fight on the horizon to push for a park around and atop the Arlington firehouse at 10th Street North. As with the tree canopy campaign, this fight will set the stage for what kind of community we want for the next generation – one packed between mega cement structures, or a community integrated with nature, open spaces, outside community events, and of course lower noise and pollution.

By the time you're reading this, we've likely had our Halloween celebration, and our legacy N. Jackson Street promenade of displays with over 1,000 viewers. AHCA with resident help, was able to again get police presence at the event to deter aggressive drivers and others. I want to thank, N. Jackson Street residents for giving of themselves, for what has become one of the several "go to" events on this fun day.

These quality-of-life issues, in part, have in some way lured each and every one of us who has moved to Ashton Heights. And those qualities are, in part, what has attracted us here – to stay here, add to our homes, and create a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

I thank all of you for your efforts, listserv comments, and just being great neighbors, colleagues, friends, and even scary trick-or-treaters.

Happy Fall and 2025 to each and everyone.



SAVE THE DATE — LYON PARK PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Saturday January 31, 2026

8:00 to 10:30 a.m.

***Coffee and coffee cake will be served from
10:00 to 11:00 a.m.***

Adults: \$15

Kids ages 4 – 10: \$5

Kids 3 and under are free

If you would like to volunteer, please contact

Trish Montgomery at

lyon.park.pancake.breakfast@gmail.com

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Save the Date – Upcoming Events

Here are a few events coming up in our area. Underlined events are links in the online version.



- [Dia de los Muertos Celebration](#) will take place on November 1 on the lawn of the Museum of Contemporary Art from 5 to 8 p.m.
- The [Fall 2025 E-Care](#) event will take place on Saturday, November 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event is at 1425 N. Quincy St. New for Fall 2025: Arlington County's Solid Waste Bureau is accepting gently used Halloween costumes for future costume swap events. Bikes for the World is also back, accepting donations of unwanted bicycles, bike parts & accessories, and portable sewing machines.
- [Let Us Give Thanks: Gratitude Gathering in the Park](#) on November 11 from 5 to 6 p.m. As Thanksgiving and the holiday season nears, join the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington in the Metropolitan Park for an hour of nourishing stillness, inner warmth, and gentle reflection.
- Get your tickets to see [Into the Woods](#) at the Washington-Liberty High School. The show runs November 20–22, 2025.
- Register for the [JBLF 5K and Family Carnival](#) that takes place on Saturday, November 22 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- Register for the [20th anniversary Arlington Turkey Trot](#) that takes place on Thursday, November 27 at 8 a.m.
- There are many area holiday arts & crafts festival that will take place this year. Here are a few to keep in mind: [DC Holiday Market](#) at Dupont Circle (11/14–12/23), [39th Annual Holiday Craft Show at Fairfax HS](#) (11/15–11/16), [Merry Market](#) at the Knights of Columbus (11/18 and 11/19), [Mosaic Holiday Village Weekends](#) (11/22–11/23; 12/13–12/14), [McLean Holiday Art & Crafts Festival](#) (12/5–12/7), [Holiday Gift and Craft Show](#) at the Falls Church Community Center (12/6–12/7) and the [Old Town Alexandria Christmas Market](#) (12/13)
- Support local children's theatre – [Encore Stage and Studio's Jingle Bell Jam](#). Shows take place December 5–14 at Gunston Theatre Two.
- [A Very Village Holiday](#) takes place Saturday, December 6 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Village at Shirlington. It's a festive event featuring a market, food and drinks, music and more.
- Celebrate the nativity of our Lord at [Faith Lutheran Church](#)! There are two service times on December 24th. The 4:30 PM service will be more family friendly and streamlined while 7:30 PM will be more traditional. Both will include candle lighting and special music. We will have one worship service on Sunday, December 28th at 10 AM, which will feature Christmas lessons and carols with holy communion.

Featured Tree: The 700 Block of Nelson Street and Ron Rosenberg

By Brooke Alexander, Tree Canopy Campaign Co-Chair



Ron Rosenberg is the son of a landscape architect and grew up with an appreciation for trees. In 2009, he became a certified Master Naturalist and Tree Steward. He served as Ashton Heights' first Tree Canopy Fund (TCF) Coordinator from 2009-2012. In that time, he coordinated the installation of 47 native trees, of which 14 were planted in the duplexes surrounding Gumball Park.

This summer, Ron returned to championing trees in Ashton Heights when he joined the Tree Canopy Campaign, soliciting signatures for AHCA petition effort, and serving with me as a consultant to neighbors on the placement of our free tree canopy campaign trees. (By the way, at press time, we have 37 trees still available to place in Ashton Heights. Be in touch for a free consultation by contacting us at TreeCanopy@AshtonHeights.org)

This month's featured tree is located on the 700 block of N. Nelson Street, where Ron placed most of the canopy trees. Many of the original owners have moved on, but their tree legacy remains. These trees are now 20-25 years old, contributing to our neighborhood tree canopy, and adding value to the homes there. Walk by and see these trees:

- 701: northern red oak
- 702: swamp white oak
- 708 and 709: black gum
- 710: pin oak
- 719: red maple

In 2016, five years after his large red maple tree had to be removed, Ron installed a white oak in his front yard at 705 N.

Nelson. His kids named it Oakie Dokie! See Ron and Oakie Dokie in the photo.

We are grateful for Ron's tree stewardship as our first TCF Coordinator, and as a participant in AHCA's current Tree Canopy Campaign. And we are grateful to the current stewards of the canopy trees in the 700 block of N. Nelson Street. All of our canopy trees benefit all of us.



What's Ahead for Maury, Herselle Milliken, and Gum Ball Parks? The Three Urban Parks Project!

By Adam Segel-Moss, Community Engagement Manager, Arlington County Department of Parks and Recreation

Arlington County is kicking off the master planning process for the [Three Urban Parks Project](#) this fall, 2025. [Maury Park](#), [Herselle Milliken Park](#), and [Gum Ball Park](#) are being envisioned together with the goal of creating more cohesive and complementary experience. The effort will explore ways to better connect these three parks, enhance recreation and natural areas, and reflect the needs of the community.

Get Informed and Share Your Thoughts!

Visit the [project webpage](#) to learn more and sign up for latest updates. Also be sure to **SAVE THE DATE** for upcoming opportunities for community feedback:

- November 20: Open House from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Museum of Contemporary Art Arlington (MOCA), to be followed by an online feedback form. [RSVP for the event here](#).

- November 22: Walking Tour of the Three Urban Parks project.

Details can be found on the project webpage. Visit Arlingtonva.us/ThreeUrbanParks today or scan the QR code below.



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Update: AHCA Tree Canopy Campaign

By Brooke Alexander, Tree Canopy Campaign Co-Chair

Our mission is to Preserve Today's Canopy and Plant Tomorrow's! We've made progress. We've delivered our petition to the County Board (see article on page 3) and we have 83 trees allocated.

But we have more to do!

In the short term, we have 37 more free trees to give away. If you are interested, contact TreeCanopy@AshtonHeights.org by November 20 for a free consultation. This will complete the 120 free trees we were granted by Virginia Department of Forestry.

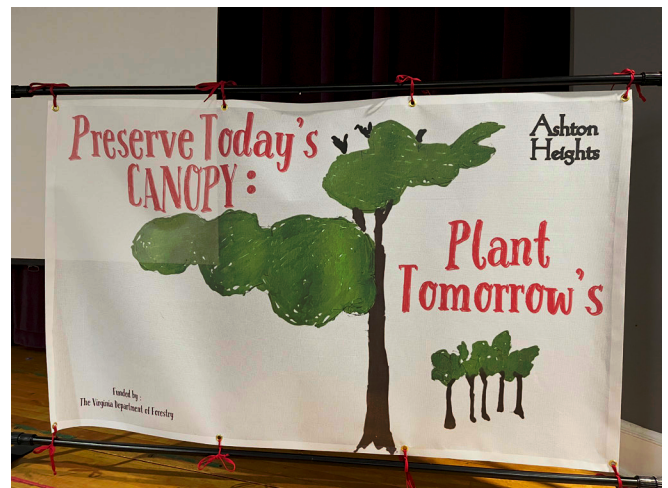
In the long term we hope to plant 1,200 trees. To get to 40% tree canopy coverage in Ashton Heights, which is the average canopy coverage plan adopted by the County Board in 2023, we need 13 more acres of canopy.

But that won't be enough. County staff indicates that low density neighborhoods like Ashton Heights need 50-55% coverage in order to balance the high density corridors. To get there we need 61 more acres of trees in Ashton Heights.

In order to be able to plant trees, we need places to plant trees, which means keeping the plantable areas that we currently have and putting trees in those locations. This is the basis for

our County Board petition ASK of reducing the allowed lot coverage.

We will explore options for accomplishing our goals at the November 19, 2025 AHCA meeting. Join us – and bring your ideas – our grandchildren will thank you!



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: gr8est9@gmail.com. Include your child's name, birth year, contact information and list the jobs that they are interested in being contacted for hire.



Dog walking



Pet sitting



Babysitting



Leaf raking



Plant watering



Yard work



Snow shoveling



Parents helper



Technology



Mail collection

Icons courtesy of flaticon.com

**Please consult the newsletter that
is posted to the Ashton Heights
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