

BELOVED COMMUNITY NEWS

Gaithersburg Beloved Community Initiative (GBCI) at Asbury Methodist Village (AMV)

With Gratitude and Praise for Partnerships:

GBCI was born out of collaborations and partnerships with the Gaithersburg community, schools, non-profits, faith communities, foundations, and community and youth groups. Partnerships are in our DNA. Partnerships are how GBCI has grown over the last 12 years. Partnerships give power and purpose to the intergenerational spaces we create that promote social justice, build transformational relationships, and improve lives. With gratitude and praise for over 30 community partnerships, this issue highlights some of GBCI's partners with whom we worked this Fall 2023. From the depths of who we are, WE THANK YOU.

Giving Thanks for New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance *By Candy Warner*



New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance

NNIA (New Neighbor Interfaith Alliance) serves the immigrant community in Gaithersburg, Rockville, Germantown, and other nearby growth areas. GBCI is one of the 24 faith communities and local organizations who are supportive of NNIA efforts. This Fall GBCI had several events with NNIA families and volunteers. In September, we held a tea at Asbury for the NNIA Monthly Women's

Circle which gathered the New Neighbor moms to talk and connect with volunteers and each other. The intent was to offer the women an opportunity to experience feelings of togetherness and connection by taking part in a ritual with deep cultural roots. After tea, the Williamsburg Clothes Closet opened its doors to the community, and the women were delighted to select what they liked from items of clothing that were donated to the clothes closet. The ample selection of available clothing allowed each woman to take home at least two shopping bags full of clothes. Many thanks to Barbara Brennan and Kay Allanbach and her compatriots who brought such smiles to the women. A week later, many of the New Neighbor families and volunteers attended GBCI's Community Day at the event tent at AMV. It was a beautiful fall day!



NNIA Families and Volunteers at GBCI Community Day, September 2023

At the October NNIA information meeting for volunteers, we learned that NNIA is currently serving 143 immigrants and refugees: 25 Afghan families, and 2 Syrian, 11 Guatemalan, 2 Ethiopian, and additional families from Ukraine, Haiti, Iraq, Colombia, and Peru. In early November, one Afghan family presented their harrowing detailed talk at St. Francis Parish about their arrival to the United States via South America. NNIA welcomed them to Montgomery County and found them housing, food, clothing, and helped them survive.

For more information:

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Top: Thanksgiving Food serving line, children and a full room of families waiting to eat, GBCI Volunteers Carol Watkins, Dennis Warner, John Ruthrauff at the Welcome table. Above: Game and Toy table

On the Sunday before Thanksgiving, GBCI helped provide a space (Rosborough Community Rooms) for a second annual Thanksgiving meal for mostly the Afghan community and other immigrants from NNIA. 140 people came to the meal where three Halal Turkeys were served, and side dishes made by NNIA, delighted those in attendance. The children enjoyed an art, crafts, & games table. GBCI provided the space, physical arrangements, and volunteer greeters & helpers to make the afternoon a great success. Thank you so much to all GBCI members who helped. Here are some of our happy helpers and eaters. GBCI gives thanks to NNIA, our partner who enables us to welcome and build community with our newly arrived immigrant and refugee friends and neighbors. Thank you, NNIA!

Gaithersburg High School Makeover Madness with JCA Heyman Interages Center

Are you in need of a manicure or hair style before the holidays?

Well, look no further!
The Gaithersburg High School Cosmetology students are looking forward to seeing you for a variety of different services.



Hair & Nail Services

In partnership with JCA Heyman Interages Center and GBCI, Gaithersburg High School is hosting **Makeover Madness** event at the "Salon at Gaithersburg High School" where cosmetology students will provide hair and nail services to interested individuals.

WHEN: Wednesday, December 13th from 11:30am-2:00pm
WHERE: Gaithersburg High School *Asbury Transportation Provided*

SERVICES: Manicure \$8 &up; Hand & Arm Massage \$10 &up; Paraffin Wax Treatment \$12 &up; Shampoo and Style \$15 &up; Shampoo, haircut, style \$15 &up; Trim \$10 &up and more!

All services are performed by students under supervision of licensed educators. Everything about your experience is designed to grow our students into amazing professionals in the beauty industry.

If you are interested in making an appointment for December 13th please contact Rebecca Cole at GBCI, x4090 rebecca@gaitersburgbelovedcommunity.org

Thank you for supporting the next generation of cosmetologists!

An Applause for MCAEL and Mujer Fuerza y Coraje for Increasing English Literacy in Montgomery County

A rich discussion on English literacy in Montgomery County happened at GBCI's November Monthly Meeting with guest speakers: Kathy Stevens and Grace Karambiri from Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy (MCAEL), Milagro Flores, founder of Mujer Fuerza y Coraje and English Conversation Coordinator, Mirna Zetino, Mujer Fuerza y Coraje member and student in GBCI's English Conversation program, and Allyson Owers, AMV volunteer in the English Conversation program. **MCAEL** is Montgomery County's literacy coalition working to strengthen and build adult English language learning programs to further individual and family success at work, school and in the community. GBCI has benefited greatly from MCAEL's resources and trainings, and relies on MCAEL's network to connect students to additional English classes in the county. **Mujer Fuerza y Coraje**, or Women of Strength and Courage, is a community group of hundreds of Latina women members that connects and supports women and children in the Gaithersburg area. GBCI's English Conversation program would not be where it is today without the partnership with Mujer Fuerza y Coraje. Milagro and Mirna spoke about their commitment to learning English to be role models for their children and expand work opportunities.



Grace Karambiri (back left) and Kathy Stevens (left center) with Milagro Flores (right center), Mujer Fuerza y Coraje leaders, and GBCI English Conversation volunteers at the November Monthly Meeting on Nov. 17



They both shared that they have not only learned a lot from the volunteer instructors, but they have gained so much through the relationships that have grown from coming to the class. "The students come to English class and find what is like a family," Milagro said. Allyson Owers, an AMV resident who helps lead the beginner English class, shared how showing up to volunteer once a week in the class has greater impact than one would think. Students are not in many English-speaking spaces, so the conversation exchange is productive and fun. Volunteers learn a lot from the students, too. Hats off to all the leaders who are working to improve English literacy here in the Gaithersburg and across Montgomery County!

New Partnership with Carl M. Freeman Foundation

GBCI is grateful for the team at the Carl M. Freeman Foundation who are committed to facilitating, supporting, and promoting innovative community-based leadership and giving in Montgomery County. GBCI was recently awarded a FACES grant to support the Early Steps and Food programs. Thank you, Carl M. Freeman Foundation!



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Reader's Theater Script-Writing Project with Next Generation Arts



Next Generation Arts Council is an inclusive, collaborative youth theatrical arts company whose mission is **to fuel lifelong passion for and participation in the arts**. Their programs are youth driven, providing opportunities both on stage and off to hone skills that apply in life far beyond the theatre. NGAC aims to create a supportive environment where participants have significant creative and practical input in selecting, arranging, and carrying out all our activities. College and early career members may also serve on our Board of Directors to help shape the organization's vision and future.

In October, GBCI was delighted to collaborate with NGAC on the **Reader's Theater Script-Writing Project** with South Lake Elementary School Mentoring program. NGAC's high school and college students, several of whom write and direct as well as perform, had a blast taking the younger children's ideas and turning them into short plays. The students and mentors will be performing their skits at **GBCI's Mentoring Showcase on December 15th at 6:30pm** in the Hefner Auditorium at Asbury Methodist Village. ALL ARE WELCOME. We look forward to seeing the next generation of young actors perform and we give thanks to NGAC's high school and college young people who are an inspiration to all! We hope you can join us on December 15th.

Upcoming Events

- **December 15, 2023-**

MENTORING SHOWCASE

The December Monthly Meeting will be a ***special evening meeting***

December 15th from 6:30-8:00pm
Hefner Auditorium
Asbury Methodist Village campus
301 Odendhal Ave., Gaithersburg, MD

The showcase will feature students and mentors from GBCI's three mentoring programs presenting Reader's Theater performances, an art exhibition, and short story readings.

ALL ARE WELCOME. We hope you can join us and the families for an exciting evening celebrating the students' creative talents. *Refreshments will be served.*

GBCI PRESENTS

SHOWCASE OF THE INTERGENERATIONAL MENTORING STARS

Come see the talented performers and shining stars from GBCI's three mentoring programs as they present Reader's Theater performances, an Art Exhibition, and short story readings!

FRIDAY
15 December, 2023

START FROM
06:30pm

Hefner Auditorium | Asbury Methodist Village

301 Odendhal Ave, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 | 301-216-4849