

BELOVED COMMUNITY NEWS

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

2020 has been a year of much challenge, much change and some serious disruption in our lives. While the COVID vaccine gives promise to a magical reset in 2021, let's not forget that hope resides elsewhere too. Over the past 10 months we have witnessed a community unite across sectors to support those in need—that gives us hope. Witnessing the good will of so many people in Asbury and the wider community using their skills, time and energy to lend a hand with food distribution, mentor students, support English language learners, knit warm hats, donate winter coats, books and school supplies, and the list goes on—that gives us hope. Hope grows from a group of 70+ people engaged in open and honest conversations on racism and what can be done about it. And when our public officials endeavor to do the right thing—as demonstrated by the recent County Council vote on

SLES—we feel hope. This newsletter focuses on the hopeful acts of so many people to whom we express our deep gratitude.

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., taught us how change occurs: If we see cruelty, inequality, or injustice we need to ask ourselves the questions - “Why is that?” “Am I a part of that?” “Am I willing to do something about it?” “Are there sacrifices I am willing to make to change it?” That’s not always easy. But that is how progress is made. Change requires serious disruption.

Listening + Partnership + Persistence = South Lake Elementary Triumph

“Through listening, partnership and persistence, our community’s voice was finally heard. This win proves that it is possible to have a positive impact on embedded systemic injustices. In the words of former President Obama, Yes we can!” – Celeste King, Principal, South Lake Elementary School

their continued support for the school and did the hard work of re-examining the budget with the added impetus to do so through an equity lens. “We need to make sure we are delivering for those students,” Rice said. And deliver they did! By September 2023, SLES students will return to a reconstructed school. Bravo to the Council, the Board of Education, Superintendent Jack Smith, SLES staff, PTA, AIM, GBCI volunteers and many other community advocates!



A community meeting at SLES to discuss school reconstruction

South Lake Elementary School (SLES) staff, parents, students and community partners have reason to celebrate. On December 1, the County Council voted unanimously to put South Lake Elementary School reconstruction back on schedule. After postponing the completion date in May, school staff, the PTA and community advocates, including Action in Montgomery (AIM) and GBCI, continued to advocate for SLES. Councilmembers, including Craig Rice, expressed

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With Gratitude

We are deeply grateful for the many people who have donated their time, energy, gifts, books, calendars, etc., over the past months. In addition to your help with our neighborhood food distribution, you've helped us donate over 2000 books, dozens of winter coats, a few computers, and even hand-made hats!



Asbury resident Clara Smith put her dexterous hands to work and knitted 70 hats in a glorious array of colors, all donated to the Linkages to Learning program for local children and youth.

Art Inspires Hope

Some of you will remember the collaborative art project that grew out of GBCI's summer Wellness Workshops, where we shared our collective sentiments about being "Alone Together." Until we can be "together together," we offer you a glimpse of your artistic collaboration!

We look forward to being together in the new year, resuming our monthly in-person meetings and gathering with our friends off-campus. Until then, look for us for every 4th Tuesday of the month when we will continue to hold our Monthly Meetings AND look out for notices about a first-ever membership-wide GBCI meeting via Zoom. Blessings and good health to all.



Alone Together

December Monthly Meeting on AVTV
Vital Conversations About Race
 Tuesday, December 22, 1-2:00 pm

GBCI MONTHLY MEETINGS
 Livestreamed for off-campus viewing
www.youravtv.com/gbcilive.htm
 For on-campus viewing
 AVTV channel 975

VOLUNTEER

Help us build community and nurture hope!

Can you spare 1 hour/month or 1 hour/week?

A range of volunteer opportunities available!

Open Volunteer Position	Time Commitment
Mailbox Stuffers— 2 people/building	1 hr per month
GBCI Welcomers— 2 people/building	1-2 hr per month
Virtual Mentors	1.5 hrs/week

Call 301.216.4090 or email mbulatovic@asbury.org

Thank you for being a part of the Beloved Community!