

Barrio de Langley Park

A Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
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Langley Park Day 2011

What a wonderful day! The songs and dances were excellent, the health fair screened and counseled hundreds of people, the children were occupied with a variety of game and art activities, a great clown paroled the area on stilts and a unicycle, and many agencies and associations provided information.



Dentist at Work While Mom Watches

Lots of health conditions were checked, including cholesterol, blood pressure, oral health, kidney function, HIV status, vision, and more. There was lots of information about a wide

range of health conditions, including family planning and many illnesses, and there were instructions on how a woman check's for breast cancer and a man checks for testicular cancer.

Suggestions? ALP welcomes suggestions for improving Health Check 2011 in November and Langley Park Day 2012 in May.

The performers brought the spirit of the audience to El Salvador, Panama, south Texas (Selena), plus vigorous contemporary urban USA.

The weather was a bit unkind. For more than a week, the forecast for May 1 was sunny with a few clouds. Then mention of a late afternoon sprinkle entered the forecasts. But on May 1, there were off and on sprinkles; that forced a



Ancient Rhythms

staff member to mop the stage and most members of the audience not to sit on the wet seats. But standing

LP Day" continued on Page 2

FROM A SPEECHWRITER'S PEN Speechwriting for Councilman Will Campos

"Welcome to all the men and women, and their children too. I'm happy to see such a good turnout.

"As most of you know, a Sector Plan has been developed for the Langley Park area anticipating the arrival of the light-rail Purple Line in about six or seven years. And that Sector Plan is flawed because it calls for demolishing most of the area's affordable apartment houses so that they can be replaced by mixed-use mixed-income apartments and condos. There is no firm commitment to replacing any demolished apartment with another one so that families are not displaced.



"I don't want even one family to be forced out of its apartment as the result of the Sector Plan. Times are difficult enough already. And so, working with my colleagues on the Council, I have submitted a letter to the county's Department of Planning asking the planners to rework the plan so that there is little or no displacement as the result of development encouraged and permitted by the plan. I know that there are many opportunities to reach the goals of new construction without demolishing what is there now. No demolition must be our goal, because we care for each and every resident and businessperson in our district.

"And now I will take questions."

Note: The writer is not a speechwriter for Councilman Campos. Rather, this speech is based on his dream that the Langley Park area will not be bulldozed in accordance with the Sector Plan that makes it possible to replace most of the current apartment houses with middle and upper-middle income residents and businesses—with no provision for keeping a culturally rich working-class community together.

COUNTY PLANNERS

"There was a perception that the planning board spoke only to the development community," said Samuel J. Parker, Jr., AICP, chair of the Prince George's County Planning Board. "Over the last four years, we've been proactive in engaging the community and have tried to turn things around."



Apparently, Sam Parker, a good person, doesn't know how little "engaging" took place with the residents and small businesspeople of the Langley Park area before the "bulldozer friendly" Sector Plan was drawn up. Planning Director Fern Piret lets us in on the secret: "We are doing everything we can to make sure development is ready to go at Metro stations when developers become interested. There should be no impediment to investment." So now we know: The heck with residents and small businesspeople; they will not be "impediments!"

was okay to hear music and watch dance.

Special thanks must go to Lourdes Sulc, the Acting Director of the host Langley Park Community Center. She and her crew (including many volunteers) managed the indoor and outdoor spaces to maximize access and enjoyment.



Pictured to the left is Maria George. She sings the songs of Salina, and her powerful voice makes one think that somehow, Salina has inherited her body, at least for this afternoon. Thanks, Maria!

Pictured below is Karen McLane, founder of the Ancient Rhythms dance troupe and school. Artistic Director McLane began studying the art of Middle Eastern Belly Dance over twenty years ago, and she has performed as a soloist in hundreds of shows the world over.



The big animal pictured below wore a costume that refers to one of the health companies present at the festival. Maybe there's a person inside?



One of the truly dedicated service organizations at the University of Maryland is "Beyond These Walls." Not only did the members provide games and art for children at the festival. Weekly, they also teach art and reading to children and English to adults.



The "Colours" performance group, above, is anchored at Northwestern High School (the closest high school to Langley Park), and it performs widely. The group has been a regular participant at Langley Park Day for almost a decade. Founder Jason Cook writes: "The Colours Arts in Education Program is an ensemble performing arts program designed to strengthen a student's academic, leadership, interpersonal, and artistic skills. The program does not audition students in order to be a part of the experience." Check out the Colours web site at http://www.colours.org/about_us.htm.



The Panamanian dance group, Grufolpawa Panamanian, performed beautiful older traditional dances as well as more contemporary ones.

And below are three photographs taken by Denitza Simpson (reproduced here with permission). Thanks, Denitza!

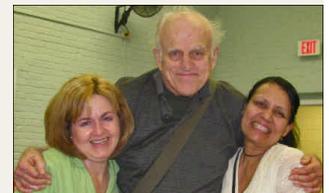


The health professionals were kept busy as they screened, counseled, and more.



Marvelous entertainer Mandy the Clown walked on stilts, road on a unicycle, and in other ways entertained with joy.

Among the performers, health professionals, and local residents who came to the festival, there was a lot of good feeling that on occasion led to some very nice hugs!



NEWS AND NOTES

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

As many officials and residents in Prince George's County know, there are many opportunities for development around the Metro stations. (The future Purple Line stops are not considered to be Metro stops because the Purple Line will be light rail, not heavy rail.) The *Washington City Paper* (28 April 2011) comments:



"If government real estate needs were still growing, the 15 largely empty Green, Orange, and Blue Line stations in Prince George's County would be great candidates for new federal offices—which would also make a difference for economic development. Despite dubious successes like the Census Bureau in Suitland,* a big federal tenant is the kind of thing that can—

if handled well—inspire confidence in the private sector to invest there as well.

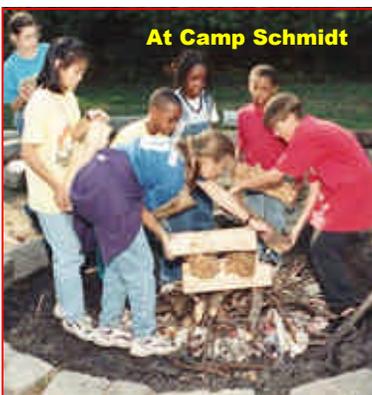
"If GSA piles on land it already owns, those Metro stations will remain unused. Complicating Prince George's desperate attempts to land federal tenants is the government's \$34-per-square-foot rent cap in Maryland. GSA is allowed to spend \$4 more per square foot in Virginia, and \$15 more in D.C., making Prince George's Metro-proximate real estate a hard sell; the only properties that fit under the cap are far from transit."

*What's the problem with Census in Suitland? One issue is crime; many Census workers would never walk or even drive to a nearby business because of the area's high crime rate.

HERE AND THERE

Bad Cops Reinstated? Several years ago, two county police officers beat and pepper-sprayed an uncooperative Latino motorist at a traffic stop. One of the officers mocked the driver's accent. So "racism" may have been a factor. The misbehavior of the officers cost the county \$125,000 in a settlement. And now, the officers have "undergone training" and been reinstated. Everyone makes mistakes, and perhaps the beating, spraying, and ethnic slurring constitute no more than a "mistake." It must be said in a slight defense of the officers that the accosted man was very uncooperative. But should lack of cooperation lead to beating and spraying? There's a video of the confrontation at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/video/2009/03/03/VI200903030303034.html>. Let's hope the officers don't beat and spray an uncooperative Latino driver in the future.

Schools' Camp Schmidt Revived? The School System operates an outdoor education center, but a draft of the coming year's school budget cut its funding. So no outdoor adventure for thousands of children. But wait: Superintendent Hite has announced that some of the funding will be restored. That's not enough, and so there will be a charge to students for participating. Let's hope poor children will be subsidized. Furthermore, the staff cut will reduce the quality of the program. Maybe half a



At Camp Schmidt

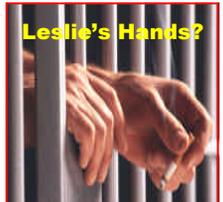
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loaf is better than none. Hopefully, a few more dollars will be found.

Great Teacher! The Council of Chief State School Officers has announced that it selected Michelle Shearer as USA's teacher of the year. Shearer teaches at Urbana High School in Frederick, Maryland. The 14-year veteran of classrooms was recognized for "her passion, her embrace of technology, and her focus on teacher-student interaction." Congratulations!!

Housing Prices: From 2009 to 2010, average housing prices in zip code 20783 dropped 16% to \$185,870. That's slightly more than the county average. The only county area with many sales that showed a gain is Clinton, zip 20735.

Mrs. Jack Johnson: The hearing scheduled for this week at which Council member Leslie Johnson was expected to enter a guilty plea in connection with the corruption probe has been postponed, federal prosecutors report. So she's still not behind bars despite the toilet and bra actions. Is this Be Kind to Crooks Week?



Leslie's Hands?

IMMIGRATION—THE PRESIDENT

Representatives Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., and Charles Gonzalez, D-Tex. (chairman of the Hispanic Caucus) both say that Obama can use the powers of his office to halt the deportation of parents of U.S.-born children, as well as of undocumented children who were brought here by their parents. Why not act? An example of administrative action is the deferral of deportations on humanitarian grounds. Thousands of undocumented people have their deportations deferred every year for various reasons. Many of them obtain work permits while their deportation is on hold. But the parents of the US-born? The undocumented children? Many people await a positive step by President Obama—in the hope that he does not decide that helping Latino/as would be harmful to his reelection bid.

INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS

A new report by the Migration Policy Institute is entitled "Immigrants in the United States: How Well Are They Integrating into Society?" It was issued in May of this year. From the report: "Even though immigration is intertwined with the history of the United States, fears about immigrants' ability to integrate remain an area of concern. Yet an examination of immigrants' integration across five major indicators—language proficiency, socioeconomic attainment, political participation, residential locale, and social interaction with host communities—shows they are integrating reasonably well. Remarkably, the process has unfolded almost entirely without policy intervention. The author examines the laissez faire policy approach to integration, raising concerns about how the state of public education and size of the US unauthorized population may remain powerful barriers to immigrants' full social, economic, and political integration."

Over time, members of current immigrant families integrate well, just as earlier waves of sometimes stigmatized immigrants have done. The MPI report shows that only 35% of Latino/a immigrants speak English well, but in the second generation the figure jumps to 88% and in the third generation to 92%.

Integration is sometimes hampered by actions of the local government. For instance, the local government might agree to participate in the Secure Communities program and implement it beyond the focus of undocumented criminals. Or it might not provide an immigrant neighborhood with a fully realized community center, thus leaving residents without a central place for socializing and various other activities. It might remove a principal popular with immigrant children and their parents. The list of potential marginalizing acts is long.

The full report is at <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/integration-Jimenez.pdf>

College of Physicians Calls for Better Immigrant Care

A physician's ethical obligation to treat all patients who need care is a challenge when it comes to the nation's immigrant population, according to the American College of Physicians. Too often, the debate about how to control access to the nation's borders clashes with immigrants' need for access to medical care by generating mistrust and blocking basic health services. ACP Past President J. Fred Ralston Jr., M.D. comments:

"Currently, immigrants, both documented and undocumented, face many barriers to adequately accessing badly needed health care. Access to health care should not be restricted based on immigration status."

The ACP is calling for a national immigration policy on health care that would balance the country's need to control its borders with the costs of denying care to immigrants, says a position paper released this past April 7.

Immigrants can buy private health insurance, but many work low-wage jobs that lack employer-sponsored coverage. They cannot afford to pay for their own health care and often live in fear of being reported to authorities for seeking medical attention, Dr. Ralston comments. [*That is clearly the case in the Langley Park area.*] Immigrants are about 13% of the U.S. population but make up a third of the uninsured. Most legal immigrants can't qualify for Medicaid until they have been in the U.S. for five years. [*What a vicious component of immigration and health care law. Do we really want sick people coughing in our face, touching us with dangerous bacteria, etc.? Is money the only human value in the USA?*] As a result, many turn to charity clinics, community health centers and hospital emergency departments.

Costs of denying care

Limited options cause many immigrants to delay medical care until there is an emergency. Delaying treatment for communicable diseases, in particular, is costly and potentially harmful to others, said David Ansell, MD, professor and vice president of clinical affairs at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.

In emergency cases, the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act requires hospitals to screen and stabilize all patients, and many immigrants—both legal and illegal—qualify for Medicaid coverage for emergency care.

Limited Access

In the Langley Park area, an estimated 90% of the residents have not seen a health care professional for at least two years. Why? Cost is important, but so are immigration status concerns and time constraints.

When accessing health care, one challenge is communication. There is considerable research indicating that communication between patient and health professional is often inaccurate, leading to wrong diagnoses and other health care failures. Thankfully, the USA is training bilingual health professionals

Note: Much of the above article is "borrowed" from "A Call for Better Immigrant Care," C. Krupa, *amednews*, 2 May 2011. Material in italics was written by the BLP editor.



BASIC INFORMATION

ACTION LANGLEY PARK

The nonprofit 501c3 organization, Action Langley Park, is a coalition of residents, businesspeople, workers, academics, church leaders, and others. It was founded in 1998 to improve the quality of life of residents in and near Langley Park. The means include services, information-sharing, and advocacy. The organization's service/event activities focus on a Fall "Health Check" and a Spring "Langley Park Day." Meetings of the organization take place about every other month, usually on Thursday evenings at the Langley Park Community Center. All meetings are open, and participation is encouraged. For information, send an email to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

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This neighborhood planning newsletter is edited and published by Action Langley Park, with a supportive link to the Langley Park Project of the University of Maryland. (Editor, Bill Hanna) It appears irregularly, but approximately every two weeks. Submissions and suggestions are welcome at actionlangleypark@yahoo.com. Back issues of BLP will soon be available on the web.

HAPPENINGS

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that come to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.



May 5, 6, 7—Physics is Phun at 7 p.m. at the University of Maryland's physics lecture halls. The topic for these sessions is "Seeing the Light," and the discussion and demonstration will focus on what is light, what do lenses and mirrors do, and how does the eye work? These sessions are for all ages: from elementary school children to senior citizens. And it's all free. For further information, call 301 405-6045 or visit the web site www.physics.umd.edu/lecdem.



May 14, Legal Orientation in Spanish, 1-3 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. The foci will be child custody, divorce, and child support.

May 21, Mis Quince Program, 6-10 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. This is the final event of weeks of exploration and instruction, and it should be exciting. As many readers know, Quinceañera is the celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday in parts of Latin America ... and parts of Langley Park!

May 21—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution at the St. Michael and All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave. in upper Langley Park. From 5 to 6:30 p.m. This is a monthly event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month, e.g., June 18 and July 16. For information, call 301 434-4646.

June 30—Action Langley Park meets at 7 p.m. in the Langley Park Community Center. The main agenda item will be planning ALP's work for the coming year.

August 2, National Night Out Celebration, 3-5 p.m. in and around the Langley Park Community Center. Music, games, and friendly police officers.

Langley Park Day Thanks to Health Fair contributors: So many individuals and organizations contributed to the success of Langley Park Day 2011 that it is impossible to recognize all of them in this space. However, let us mention Adventist Health, American Kidney Fund, Amerigroup, Healthy Groove, Hispanic Institute for Blindness, Identity, Lourie Center, Clemencia Vargas and the Maryland School of Dentistry, Ligia Peralta and the Maryland School of Medicine, Montgomery College Nursing Program, Elmer Carreno and the Prince George's County Dept. of Health, Michelle Hathaway and Suburban Hospital, Molly Love and TAYA, Danitza Simpson and the Adelphi/Langley Park Family Support Center, Planned Parenthood, Priority Partners, the USDA, and so many more. Again, thanks!