



## The President's Corner

By Mavi Conner

In the last edition of The Pinch for this Club Year I want to first congratulate the newly elected and appointed members of the Executive Board and the Board of Directors. I am beyond excited for the future of our Club and to watch the new leadership thrive. As I pass the torch, I couldn't be happier with the people chosen to receive it. I am proud of them and I know they will be fantastic!

To the current Joint Board, THANK YOU! Your hard work and dedication inspires us all to continue to push our organization to be the best resource for our community. To all our members, thank you for your trust. This year

was an experience I wouldn't trade for anything. I will continue to serve to the best of my abilities. I love this Club completely.

The efforts of the Executive Board, Board of Directors, and dedicated FMSC membership are the reason why our Club is once again the Fort Meade Volunteer Organization of the Year. (See page 7!) I am proud and delighted to receive this acknowledgment. This honor highlights not only the benefits our community receives from us, but also the amazing people in th FMSC. How beautiful it is to have this tangible love and recognition from the community we work so hard for.

Thank you for being here!



April MMU - A Day at the Races!

## Member Snapshot

This month we are focusing on Newer Members



**Pamela Thomas-Gamero**  
Fancy New Member

Current Neighborhood:  
Annapolis

Ask Me About:  
My dogs

Maryland Recommendation?  
Maryland Meadworks! Fun spot for Sunday brunch & mead tasting :-)

Favorite (Recent) Book:  
The Great Alone by Kristin Hannah



# Bringing back Clean Up! Fort Meade

By Dawne Lee

It's back! That's right, our annual Earth Day tradition, "Clean Up! Fort Meade" was once again held at Burba Lake. Since our pandemic pause prevented us from gathering in 2020 and 2021, the Fort Meade Spouses' Club Outreach Committee continues to revive this event. Kudos for their great success!

Showcasing both a commitment to our community and our pride in the base that connects us, this event is a very important part of the club's outreach efforts. Community members are encouraged to sign up and work together in a base-wide clean up effort removing trash and unwanted debris. Participants compete as teams or individuals to see who can clean up more. Raffle prizes were also awarded this year with a ticket being given for each bag of trash or large item collected. Members of the Fort Meade Spouses' Club and their families worked to staff collection points and supply stations across the base in a well-oiled team effort.



Dawne & Tonya are ready to fuel the volunteers!

Every year this event never fails to delight, with many participants finding the most unusual things in their efforts. There have been bicycles, scooters, vacuums, furniture, and more. This year there were even a couple discarded soccer goals, an old tire, and an interesting "toy" that made a few of us blush.

All in all, the cleanup really delivered and Fort Meade is now free of a significant mound of trash. A huge shout out goes to all of those who participated. Way to clean up, all!



The big haul!



Volunteers of all ages attended



## Sydney McGovern Cheery Newer Member



*Current Neighborhood:*  
Gambrills

*Maryland Recommendation?*  
Going to the beach at Ocean City or taking the train into D.C. for the Botanical Gardens

*What do you love about Spring?*  
The warm weather

## Lauren Cramer Shimmering Newer Member



*Current Neighborhood:*  
Glen Burnie

*Maryland Recommendation?*  
The Shops at Savage Mill have some of the best antiques and general shopping to be had.

*Maryland Request?*  
Babysitters! I want to go on a date

*Ask Me About:*  
Best ways to preserve family mementos for future generations

Cont'd on Page 4



**WILDERNESS WONDERS**

**Wild Summer: A 100-Day Challenge**

*By Jennifer Denton*

It's becoming the time of year when we think about picnics and sports, walks and seaside adventures. Summer vacation is nearly upon us with its emphasis on outdoor fun and family togetherness. There are about 100 days between Memorial Day and Labor Day -- days we can use to refresh and re-wild our and our family's lives. It is a huge advantage for people to get outdoors, specifically because it benefits us in many ways. Being outside helps us communicate better and reduces stress, as well as improving our physical and mental health.

During these 100 days, I challenge you to spend one hour outdoors each day. There are a ton of activities you and your family could try during this time, like Berry Picking at Larriland farms! It's nearly strawberry season and there is nothing better than fresh local strawberries and shortcake. Another local activity you might try is packing a lunch and heading to Patapsco Valley State Park. Military members receive free admission and if you're feeling adventurous you could brave the Swinging Bridge or hike to Cascade Falls within the park's Orange Grove area. The Hilton area has a fabulous, shaded tire playground.

There are many other resources and ideas out there if you can't think of something but also, remember it's okay to simply enjoy a walk in your neighborhood or chalk art in the driveway. Just get outside!

More Maryland Summer Fun ideas



Fruit Harvest Calendar for Larriland Farms

Fun ways to track your hours



**Cinco de Mayo**

*By Maria Ross*



Mark your calendar: Celebrate Mexican Independence on September 16th



The Battle of Puebla has been annually re-enacted since the 1930s

Cinco de Mayo is a day we celebrate our Mexican heritage by commemorating The Battle of Puebla. In 1861 Mexican President Benito Juarez faced a financial hardship and paused debt repayment with some European countries. France, Britain, and Spain sent their naval forces to Veracruz, Mexico and demanded payment. Mexico was able to negotiate with Britain and Spain but France escalated and sent over 6,000 French troops toward the capital.

The French soldiers encountered Puebla, a very small, fortified town in central Mexico. With all that going on (including France pressing for a new government/country to be established) Benito Juarez was able to recruit over 2,000 loyal Mexicans to defend Mexico. This Battle of Puebla on the 5th of May 1862 lasted from sunup to sundown. When France finally gave up around 500 French troops and less than 100 Mexican troops had died.

Cinco de Mayo is the day loyal Mexicans got together and defended themselves from the French.



**MARYLAND SAFETY MINUTE**

**Water Safety is for Everyone**

*By Meghan McDonald Carlson*

Did you know 5th graders in Anne Arundel County schools undergo a drown-proofing program? Did you know 69% of children under the age of 5 years were not expected to be in the water at the time of a drowning? Let’s prepare NOW so we can all have safe, fun summers!

Swim lessons are great, but they’re only a *layer* of protection. This isn’t a quick ability and skill that is simply achieved over a handful of weeks. You need to log hours and hours practicing with your kids—and stay vigilant!

- Select (or rotate) a “water-watcher” at group functions and parties. This is an adult who is not distracted by cooking or electronics or gossip to specifically maintain eyes on the swimmers.
- Vigilance at the beach can look like an adult bringing up the rear as everyone’s exiting the water. Don’t take a chance that a little one is underestimating the ocean behind your back while you’re hyper-focused on the youngest child.
- Put your kids in bright bathing suits! Lock the fence around the pool or deadbolt the door to the backyard. Make sure extended family know your rules for pool safety.

And talk to your children. No one goes into the water without permission. Tour the area around the water together. It’s easy for us to quickly assess varying depths but for a child accustomed to a beach-entry pool, the step beyond the “sun shelf” in an unfamiliar pool into deeper water can be quite dangerous.



**Jessica Yang**  
**Spunky New Member**

*Current Neighborhood:*  
Meuse Forest

*What do you love about Spring?*  
The beautiful weather

*Favorite part about a previous duty station?*  
Hurlburt Field in Florida is such a beautiful, family-friendly area with so many beaches

*Maryland Request?*  
Family-friendly summer activities

*Favorite Book:*  
Trylle Series by Amanda Hocking

**Water Safety Day**  
FREE COMMUNITY EVENT @  
NORTH ARUNDEL AQUATIC CENTER  
7888 Crain Hwy South, Glen Burnie MD 21061  
**Saturday, May 20th from 10AM-2PM**  
Bring a swimsuit and towel, and be prepared to learn how to safely enjoy activities in and around the water this summer.



*Jen D. and Marchonda get excited about the unique earrings at the April MMU*

## What I Want You to Know . . . About Homeschooling

By Tara Varney

First of all, it is a luxury. I bet you'll never guess what I have to say about that. Okay, okay. Stop rolling your eyes. I know you've heard so much about homeschooling over the last few years. Today, I want to bring you a new perspective. A little twist if you will.

Did you know that we have all homeschooled our children at some point in time? Yep, it's true. Remember teaching them the alphabet? Counting? How to tie their shoes? How to make their beds or clean up after a meal? Have you encouraged your child to practice repeatedly on an instrument, for a sport, or with multiplication tables? Have you had a good conversation with them about their day or some event they attended? Have you found them the tools they needed to learn something new such as coding or drawing? Yes, it is that simple. These are all examples of ways you homeschool your child even if they are in public school.

Now that I have you reminiscing, do you remember how frustrating it was at times to teach these basic things? Maybe little Suzy was a whiz at number counting to 100 before she was 2 years old, but she could not memorize her alphabet until she was 5. Maybe tweenager Mikey would mumble and grunt his way through a conversation with you but now he is quite vocal in the topics he has opinions about. I bet you were super-proud the moment those things started coming together. So the "luxury" of homeschooling doesn't seem quite the same once you start thinking about the things you have taught your child and all that went into those life lessons.

With every choice we make as parents, and as people, there are benefits and sacrifices. For most of us, our end goal is to help in the creation of a productive member of society. This looks different for everyone but the core often remains the same. I want my child to go out into the world

and be a person they can be happy with, standing on their own two feet.

There are days I long to bring home that paycheck that would allow us to spend a little more freely, or chit-chat with office co-workers instead of talking about Minecraft *again* with a seven-year-old. There is the space I crave, distance from the children that I seem to never find. But that's all a part of the childrearing process and a subject for another day. We all make sacrifices for what we see as benefits for our future. Sometimes the sacrifices are obvious and sometimes they are unseen by the naked eye. Whether you choose to go to work and send your children to school or work while homeschooling or not to work for a paycheck, your choices frame your life. Trust in yourself as a parent and a person. Those choices might not be easy but the intention for a better tomorrow is always worth it. Homeschooling is a luxury. It is. Working is a luxury. The school system is a luxury. At the end of the day, the REAL luxury is having the choice to build our lives as we would like them to be.



The 2022-2023 Post Thrift Shop Council



Sydney, Michelle P., Jessica & Maria at the April MMU



## Empowering Fort Meade Through Giving Back:

### Bringing Together Compassion and Community Support

By Stephanie Oberbeck

The Post Thrift Shop, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has been tirelessly working to give back to the military community through funding outreach projects led by the Fort Meade Spouses' Club.

#### Supporting the Fort Meade Community

The Post Thrift Shop is more than just a thrift store; it is a catalyst for change within the Fort Meade community. Since its inception over 60 years ago, the organization has focused on giving all its profits back to the military community through a range of initiatives. In recent years, its partnership with the FMSC has led to funding scholarship programs and events such as Clean Up! Fort Meade and the Children's Holiday Party. The Post Thrift Shop has consistently sought ways to improve the lives of those serving our country and their families.

#### A Year of Remarkable Giving

The Post Thrift Shop's dedication to giving back has not faltered in the wake of the pandemic. Through their hard work and unwavering commitment, they have managed to donate an astounding \$16,500 to the Fort Meade Spouses' Club in 2023. Additionally, they have contributed over \$10,600 worth of items to other nonprofits in the area, providing essential resources and support where it is needed most.

#### How You Can Make a Difference

The success of The Post Thrift Shop and its impact on the Fort Meade community would not be possible without the support of individuals like you. There are several ways you can get involved and contribute to this cause:

1. *Donate:* Consider donating gently used items or monetary contributions to The Post Thrift Shop. Your donations will directly support their outreach projects and initiatives, making a tangible difference in the lives of military personnel and their families.

2. *Shop with Purpose:* When you're in need of shopping for clothing, household items, or other essentials, visit The Post Thrift Shop. Every purchase you make contributes to their mission of giving back to the community. And you can score a great deal, too!

3. *Spread the Word:* Share the inspiring story of The Post Thrift Shop with your friends, family, and colleagues. By spreading awareness, you can encourage others to support this worthy cause and create a ripple effect of generosity.

4. *Volunteer: We need YOU!*

This is one of the simplest and most impactful ways to aid in our cause. We believe the best way for our initiatives to be successful is for the community to actively be involved. This is an easy and efficient way of contributing to the great work we do at Post Thrift Shop. Get in touch with any questions about how you can volunteer your time today.

#### Working Together Compassionately

As we celebrate the extraordinary work of The Post Thrift Shop, let us reflect on the power of compassion. Through their unwavering commitment, they are creating a positive impact on the lives of military personnel and their families at Fort Meade. It is through these collective efforts and support that we can build a stronger, more connected community.

Visit [postthriftshop.org](http://postthriftshop.org) for store hours, volunteer info, and FAQs!



Join hands with The Post Thrift Shop today – together, we can make a difference that will be felt for years to come.

# Fort Meade Volunteers of the Year 2023



## FORT MEADE SPOUSES' CLUB Organization of the Year



**MSGT Nicholas Potts**

Fort Meade Spouses' Club  
Active Duty Volunteer  
of the Year



**Wilma Potts**

Post Thrift Shop  
Civilian Volunteer  
of the Year



**Cacey Hixon**

Post Thrift Shop  
Youth Volunteer  
of the Year



**The Conner Family**

Post Thrift Shop  
Volunteer Family  
of the Year

## Monthly meet-ups are always festive & informative!



Andrea & Mallory are a jockey and her horse at April's MMU: "A Day at the Races"



After helping set up for the MMU, Heather relishes a job well done



Dawne, Mindy and Lauren are feeling lucky



Tonya presents Jenn S. with a prize



By Stephanie Oberbeck



## Aries – March 21 - April 19

"Headstrong" is a compliment. Be a magnet: attract what you like & repel negativity. Simplify to maximize your return on investment! ☀️ Your fiery energy is sure to attract attention, whether you're lounging on the beach or starting a water balloon fight. Don't let your competitive spirit get out of control, or you might find yourself in a race to see who can eat the most hot dogs. Remember to stay hydrated, wear plenty of sunscreen, and try not to swallow any pool water while showing off your cannonball skills. You're sure to make a splash!



## Taurus – April 20 - May 20

You know the true value of things, but as the Bard said, know thyself. Lean into your personal journey: scream into the void and explore your inner galaxies. ☀️ Your summer will be filled with sunshine and laughter, but be warned: don't let your stubborn nature make you cling onto that old pool floatie for too long, or you might just end up on the other side of the pool. Remember, it's okay to indulge in some ice cream, just be sure to share with your friends, or they might not reciprocate.



## Gemini – May 21 - June 20

Adaptable is the watchword, but take time to process. Level up, reflect, reinvent. Self transformation can be healing. Change is coming. ☀️ Your summer will be filled with opportunities to socialize and make new connections, but be careful not to overdo it on the margaritas at the beach bar or you may end up spilling more than tea. Remember, just because you can do a backflip off the diving board doesn't mean you should. Keep your wits about you and enjoy the sunny skies!



## Cancer – June 21 - July 22

Don't let your comfort keep you in a rut. Prepare yourself to give and receive love by removing that mask you're wearing--you'll be reborn! ☀️ You may feel like you're in hot water, but don't worry, it's just the pool! Your sensitive nature may have you feeling crabby, but a day at the beach will renew you. Just remember to apply sunscreen liberally, unless you want to end up looking like a tomato. Your lucky beach accessory? A giant inflatable unicorn floaty, because who says crabs can't have fun too?



## Leo – July 23 - August 22

Alright, charmer, we know you're a star, but don't forget to reflect on what matters most to YOU. Hustle less, meditate more. Define yourself without external labels. ☀️ This summer, you'll radiate more energy than the sun and everyone will want to bask in your warmth. Whether you're lounging by the pool or hitting the beach, you'll make waves with your charismatic personality. Be careful not to get too hot-headed, or you might end up with a sunburn that rivals your fiery temper. Stay hydrated, wear sunscreen, and keep your cool.



## Virgo – August 23 - September 22

Perfectionism is exhausting. Accept change. Reevaluate. It's okay to change your mind. Learn to flow. Remember to breathe while you embrace the limelight. ☀️ The stars predict you'll have the urge to be more spontaneous, but don't worry, your inner control freak won't let you stray too far from your color-coded schedule. You'll spend most of your time applying sunscreen and checking weather reports, but don't forget to let loose and enjoy the sunshine! Just try not to over-analyze every decision, especially when it comes to choosing between an ice cream cone or a Popsicle. Trust me: both will bring you joy.



## Libra – September 23 - October 22

You can't always be the diplomat. Trust the process. You can put your needs first. Preserve your energy; your time to shine is almost here. ☀️ As a Libra, this summer promises to be one of balance and harmony. You'll find yourself drawn to the beach, where you'll spend hours perfecting your sandcastle skills (much to the envy of nearby children.) Your social life will be bustling, with barbecues and pool parties galore. Just be careful not to get too caught up in your own reflection in the sunglasses of your admirers - remember to give them a chance to speak too!



Baby Shower Honorees The Stenberg Family with Hospitality Director Bee





**Scorpio – October 23 - November 21**

Your season of transformation is at an end. Celebrate your growth. Say yes to some peace. You manifested this, accept it without suspicion. ☀ Your magnetic personality will attract a swarm of admirers like a picnic attracts ants. Just remember to bring extra bug spray, because you don't want to end up with too many love bites. Watch out for that pesky Mercury in retrograde, or you might find yourself falling for a lobster roll instead of a human. Stay cool, stay hydrated, and enjoy the ride - just don't forget to fasten your seat belt!



**Sagittarius – November 22 - December 21**

Spontaneity and enthusiasm go hand in hand, but you can be impulsive while respecting your own boundaries. Progress can be slow, but you're still moving forward. ☀ This summer you will feel the urge to explore new horizons and seek adventure, but unfortunately Mercury will be in retrograde causing all your travel plans to go haywire. Don't be surprised if you end up lost in your own backyard or accidentally book a vacation to the wrong continent. Just embrace the chaos and remember that sometimes the journey is more important than the destination, even if that journey involves getting lost in your own hometown. Happy trails, Sagittarius!



**Capricorn – December 22 - January 19**

You're playing the long game. Don't let the bastards break your focus, you know your worth. You may be resilient, but healing looks good on you. ☀ You may be feeling the heat this summer, but don't worry, it's just the sun and not your boss breathing down your neck. While you may be tempted to spend your days hiding in your air-conditioned office, remember to take a break and soak up some vitamin D. Just be careful not to fall asleep on the beach and wake up looking like a lobster.

**Summer Scorcher Horoscopes Cont'd**



**Aquarius – January 20 - February 18**

Big-hearted Aquarian — you're not elusive, you're just self reliant. Communicate your needs instead of focusing on the collective. Treat yourself. ☀ This summer your love life will sizzle hotter than the sand on the beach. But be careful not to get too caught up in the heat, or you may find yourself in a sticky situation. Remember, sunscreen is your friend and hydrate, hydrate, hydrate. If all else fails, just blame it on the retrograde and enjoy the ride!



**Pisces – February 19 - March 20**

Get out of your own head. Cultivate your confidence and self expression. Try on some main character energy, but clear space to receive blessings. ☀ This summer you may feel like a fish out of water at times, but don't worry - that just means it's time to take a break from the beach and hit up the nearest poolside bar. And remember, just because you're a water sign doesn't mean you have to stay submerged all season - try out some land activities like beach volleyball or sandcastle building. Just watch out for those pesky seagulls!



  
**The Annual Easter Egg Hunt had crafts & plenty of eggs!**  






# MEET OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECT!



## Some Upcoming Dates

- May 23rd  
Installation Ceremony
- May 24th & June 14th & 28th  
TS Open Nights
- May 25th & June 22nd  
TS Work Nights
- May 27th -  
Member Appreciation Night
- May 30th -  
CHP Meeting
- June 3rd - TS Bag Sale
- June 18th - MMU

## Social Clubs:

- May 20th - Playdate Club
- May 26th - Virtual Breakfast Club
- June 5th - Cooking Club
- June 19th - Book Club

Contact Stephanie Oberbeck for access to the Google calendar

From left to right: Cassie Smith, Meredith Hixon, Wilma Potts, Mavi Conner, Ashley Jones, Stephanie Oberbeck, and Sasha Ticali. The incoming E Board will kick off the new club year in June

# THRIFT SHOP COUNCIL ELECTION RESULTS



- President: Mavi Conner
- Vice President: Cassie Smith
- Secretary: Jen Denton
- Publicity: Sasha Hernandez- Ticali
- Budget Coordinator: Meredith Hixon
- Volunteer Coordinator: Mallory Noble
- Parliamentarian: Stephanie Oberbeck

# Thank You Teachers

For encouraging and inspiring



For seeing their potential



The Pinch is the product of the FMSC's Photography & Publications Committee. This issue was curated & edited by Meghan McDonald Carlson.

Join us!

photopublications@fortmeadespousesclub.org

**FORT MEADE FOOD PANTRY**  
Presented by The Fort Meade Spouses' Club  
EVERY THURSDAY  
**11.00 AM - 1.00 PM**

LOCATED INSIDE THE POST THRIFT SHOP AT 392 LLEWELLYN AVE.

AVAILABLE TO ALL RANKS AND STATUS WITH A MILITARY ID

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE NEED PLEASE CONTACT OUTREACH@FORTMEADESPOUSESCLUB.ORG

**SAVE THE DATE**  
THE CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY PARTY IS  
**OUT OF THIS WORLD**

December 2nd, 2023