



The President's Corner

By Mavi Conner

A brand new year has started and new opportunities to dream and achieve are here! I hope the beginning of 2023 has treated you well; remember to take action on self care and never forget that you are a priority!

For our organization, we are in the second half of the Club year. I can't wait to see all our plans blossom with your kind help and support.

If you are still trying to find your favorite thing to do with us, consider joining a committee.

A majority of them are via zoom and the leads are always in need of a helping hand.

We are gearing up to engage with and support our community in big ways, and we want to ensure that our membership feels that connection — especially with other members. We want you to feel the love and to keep in mind that when you join the FMSC you have found an extended family. Please let us know how to help you and support you better. We are here for you!



Children's Holiday Party 2023

Member Snapshot

This month we are focusing on Member Care



Ashley Jones

Director of Member Support

Current Neighborhood:
Meuse Forest

Ask Me About:
I love to talk about group fitness, books, crocheting, and music.

Hopes for the New Year:
Being more present. I want to soak in everything that happens this year and not just glide by in everything happening around me and my family.

Dream Vacation:
Seeing the Northern Lights in Norway!





MISCHIEF IN MARYLAND
Rejuvenate Your Outings
By Laura O'Leary

Heading into the new year is a chance for appreciation for the years behind us and rejuvenation and excitement for what lies ahead. It's also a time when those winter blues start to creep up on us. There's no better way to kick off the new year and take a break from routine than by taking a quick day or weekend trip with your spouse, family, or friends!

Head out to Wisp Resort for an unforgettable weekend. Soak in the stunning mountain views, go snow tubing, sip cocoa by a roaring fire, or ride their mountain coaster! There's a little something for all ages. 



If you're not quite ready to let go of the magic of the season, swing by Frederick, MD for their Sailing Through the Winter Solstice event. See hundreds of boats lit up in an extraordinary floating light display! Grab a bite to eat at a nearby restaurant or check out my favorite Frederick restaurant A.K.A. Friscos. You really can't go wrong with any of their dishes, but the Alcatraz sandwich and the Exploded Potatoes are my go-to!

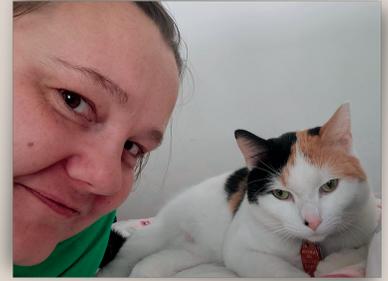


"Color on the Creek" is the fundraising portion of the event for dozens of local charities. \$1/vote

Feel the love blossom in the air as you embark on a journey through the restaurants of Annapolis during Restaurant Week! Sample your way through curated menus, at a reduced price, and spend some quality time with your spouse or on a day date with friends.



Note: Restaurant Week is February 25 - March 5



Bee Zoll-Johnson
Director of Hospitality

Current Neighborhood:
Severn, just 15 minutes from base

Ask Me About:
I'm always happy to show pictures of our cats, so definitely ask about them or I'm happy to talk about Turkish Dizis, K-Dramas and/or food.

Hopes for the New Year:
My words for 2023 are collect & anchor. I'm hoping to streamline my focus & efforts, and learn the power of 'No,' instead of having too many irons in the fire between my different volunteer opportunities.

Dream Vacation:
To bring my kids to Disney or a longer trip to Europe, where I can show them different places in Ireland, Germany & Switzerland.

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December 2022 MMU
"Winter Wonderland"

What I Want You to Know . . . About Living with Anxiety

By Maria Ross

I always read about anxiety and heard stories about it, but I never imagined I'd experience anxiety at some point of my life. How do I even explain to you the unexplainable, unknown feeling we feel? Anxiety feels heavy . . . just the same way as it sounds. How do I even practice the breathing technique everyone talks about when I can't even breathe on my own during an anxiety episode?

It just randomly kicks in. Anxiety does not care if you are having breakfast, showering, or even if you are asleep. And yes, the first thing that comes to your mind is, Oh my God, is this it for me? All your fears hit you at once. Tears come down. The body shaking comes in.

Affirmations for anxious days

@what.is.mental.illness

I am capable of solving any problems that face me

I have the ability to overcome anxiety

I am free of anything that weighs me down

My mind is clearing and I am in control

The feelings of panic are leaving my body

An episode might look like this:

Wait... I'm dizzy, I feel very hot, wait... I'm not feeling well, I tell myself. My head is spinning and I feel like I'm about to faint. I need air; I need fresh air... Why am I shaking? I need to calm down, people are watching... Okay, maybe I need to breathe. Hold tight, hold tight... Please, not right now; I am at the store... These heart palpitations are insane; am I having a heart attack?! Please not right now. I feel so disoriented. 1,2,3, inhale, exhale... let's do it again. Okay, that feels good... never mind, I need to throw up. I can't do that here... "Excuse me ma'am, are you okay? Do you need some help? Are you by yourself?" a stranger asks. "Yes, I am by myself. Please keep an eye for my kid. I think I'm having an anxiety episode." I say, embarrassed as the stranger shows concern and tries to help me in any way possible.



Accepting and fighting your anxiety battle silently doesn't make you weak or any different from anyone else in the room. Asking for help, accepting our life situation and fighting against it makes you very brave and you should be proud of that, because I'm very proud of you. I feel for you and I understand the struggle. I want you to know you are not alone. I'm also part of the 264 million people suffering anxiety around the world.

You are not alone; we are together in this.

How to Help Someone with Anxiety



November 2022 MMU - "Happy Friendsgiving"



WILDERNESS WONDERS

Winter Gardens are for the Birds!

By Jennifer Denton

The new year has dawned bright and fresh, welcoming new projects and the very beginning of garden season.

Winter and the advent of the new year bring some great bird watching opportunities. Many insects are more scarce so birds rely upon berries and seeds to get them through the cold months. You and your family can use this opportunity to make some easy bird feeders and see how many local species will gather for a meal in your own backyard.

My family likes to use toilet paper tubes, peanut butter and bird seed with some string. First, coat the toilet paper tube in some peanut butter and then roll in bird seed. Loop the string through and tie the ends to hang it up. If nut allergies are an issue, you can substitute the peanut butter for some Crisco mixed with a little flour until it's the consistency of peanut butter.

If you're a gardener, consider adding some beautiful native plants to your garden this year. Some great examples are berry-producing shrubs like Grey Dogwood, or vines like Virginia Creeper. Just take care to familiarize yourself with the differences between Virginia Creeper and Poison Ivy so that you don't go grabbing the wrong one! Another tip for vines is keep an eye on them and make sure to prune them back frequently from areas you don't want them in. It's not called Virginia Creeper for nothing!

You can also try out this local bird checklist and see who comes to visit.

Happy New Year and Happy Bird-watching!



The Chesapeake Native Plant Center is a great resource



Local Bird Checklist: (Clockwise from top left)

- Eastern Cardinal
- Robin
- Downy Woodpecker
- Carolina Chickadee
- Blue Bird
- Canada Goose
- Great Blue Heron
- Mallard
- Crow
- Blue Jay



Keep faithfully filling your bird baths! Cold temps or not, birds are still around and they need water for preening their feathers. Sunny locations and simple ice-breakers like ping pong balls can help.



Hungry gals queue up to dig into dinner at the December MMU



Sasha Ticali-Hernandez, Emily Gershing, Mallory Noble and Jennifer Denton at the December MMU



New Year, New Beginnings

By Dawne Lee

Hooray for 2023!

A new year means 365 days of new opportunities. But what does that look like for you? There are several different schools of thought on this. There are those who make resolutions, or some may choose a theme word for the year, while others look to connect and choose accountability buddies. Do any of these sound fun to you? Let's explore them further and find out.

We have all heard the age-old question, "What's your New Year's resolution?" This is probably the most well-known way to begin the new year. It's usually a goal (or multiple goals) that a person makes in an effort to change something about themselves or their lives that they are unhappy with. These goals can range from simple ones, such as remembering to complete chores everyday, to really deep ones such as, getting sober or making amends. They then spend time—maybe even the rest of the year—working towards this goal.

Another approach is with a theme word. This is where a person chooses a meaningful word such as: Hope, Kindness, Health, etc. They then use this word as a focus for the rest of the year. As an example, if a person were to choose "charity" then their year would be spent doing activities and making choices that align with this theme. They would probably make donations, volunteer their time, or just generally do things that help others.

There is also the method of choosing accountability buddies. This one actually works well in conjunction with the other methods. A person still has to have something that they are working on or towards. The difference is that an accountability buddy helps them with this. There are different ways that a person can be an accountability buddy for you. You can tell someone what your goals are and ask them to help you stick to them. They then would follow up with you to make sure you're making progress and motivate you to keep going. This kind can be friends, family, co-workers, religious leaders, and personal trainers or coaches. There is another kind though, this one connects with a person on a much deeper level. This accountability buddy is when two people make an agreement to help each other get through the year. Their job is to check in and make sure that you are doing okay mentally, emotionally, and physically. They are each other's protectors, confidants, and life coaches. This person is usually someone that you have a very strong feeling of trust with.

All of these are great ways to make the coming year a good one and it's never too late to get started. Check out the QR codes to the right to get inspired!



Cassie Smith
Membership Director

Current Neighborhood:
Pasadena, MD

Ask Me About:
Real Estate!

Hopes for the New Year:
I hope all our personal and professional goals are met!

Self-care Recommendation:
Meditation

Dream Vacation:
Italy

Goals for Grabs!



Free Classes with Harvard



Group Fitness at Gaffney
Most drop-in classes are just \$5.



Explore a new hobby
with JoAnn Fabrics



Practice your language
skills with Duolingo



Re-connect with nature
via Maryland hiking trails



Embracing Winterschlaf

By Bee Zoll-Johnson



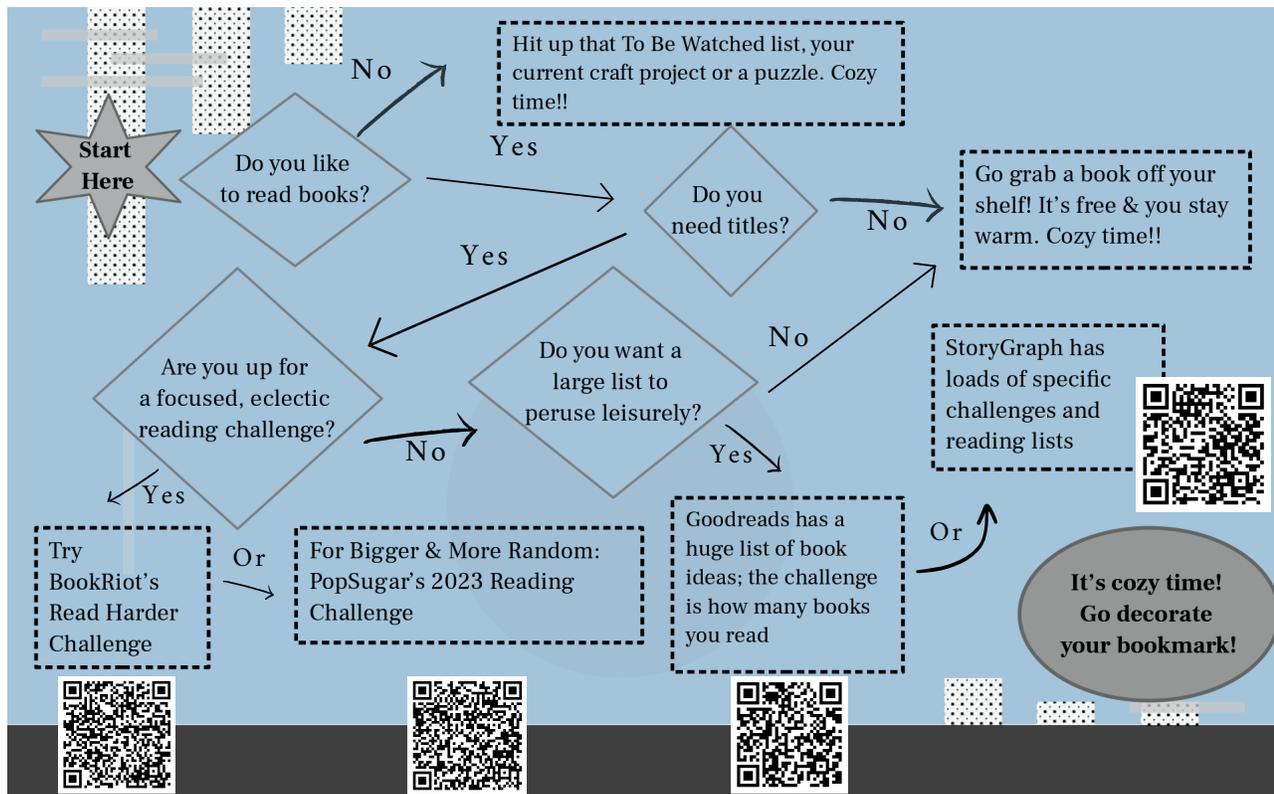
Happy 2023! For those of you kicking it off with a fresh burst of energy, new year's resolutions, and so forth—amazing! More power to you. I, however, would like to make a case for resting and recharging via hibernation. The German word Winterschlaf literally translates as “winter sleep,” which is basically hibernation, right? And really, after all the stresses (positive or negative) of the last month, why not take some time for yourself?

Here’s how I plan to spend my January: not leaving my home; just chilling out. If you want, indulge in some pampering or enjoy some reading. Actively say 'NO' to plans, work on your sleep hygiene (did you know that was a thing?), make yourself a 'To Be Watched' list and get busy watching.

With a kitten or two nearby and a book in hand, I raise my warm cuppa tea to you. Check out the decision tree below to see if you’re game to join me with a Reading Challenge. Or join in on February 20th at the FMSC Book Club to discuss *The Key to my Heart* by Lia Louis? No matter how, I hope you enjoy some rest this month.



Color a wintry bookmark for your *Winterschlaf* enjoyment!



"Under the Sea" with the Children of Fort Meade

By Stephanie Oberbeck

As the sun set on Pershing Hill Elementary on Friday, December 2nd, volunteers were busy decorating, unloading gifts, and laying out crafts for the event to come. By noon the following day, hundreds of children would attend one of the largest annual outreach programs in the Fort Meade Spouses' Clubs' Calendar: The Children's Holiday Party.

In its 15th year, after two years of socially distanced celebrations, The FMSC's Children's Holiday Party resumed in-person operations on Saturday, December 3rd 2022. Our team of volunteers had been preparing since March to transform the building into a holiday "Under the Sea," and their hard work culminated in an event that would serve over 300 military families.

FMSC Member and CHP attendee Emily Gershey volunteered during setup, helping to install and create seascapes designed by the decorations committee and made from paper, insulation spray foam, and pool noodles.

"Volunteering my time to decorate for the Children's Holiday Party brought joy to me during the holiday season. Seeing the look on my boy's and the other children's faces as they saw everything decorated just melted my heart. I love being able to give my time to help create something magical for all members of the community."



Dolphins & waves, coral & urchins transformed a school gym to the ocean floor



In addition to being submerged beneath the waves with innovative decor, registrants who attended received goodie bags, wrapped gifts from the FMSC, and gifts from Santa. They could create themed crafts, learn more about the local library, and even escape a sea monster in our obstacle course. Everyone was welcomed to have their photo taken with Santa, and each family left with this year's challenge coin.

All of this was provided absolutely free of charge for the families of Fort Meade.

"We love being able to provide this fun holiday opportunity to the families of Fort Meade," said Vice President and Event Coordinator Wilma Potts. "The creativity and commitment that this event requires demonstrates that FMSC volunteers share a passion for giving back to the community; and what better time than during the holiday season. Thank you to the volunteers who made this event a success, and thank you to everyone who attended - we're so happy to have celebrated the holidays with you, together, Under the Sea."



The Grinch & Santa, crafts & games, presents & fun for hundreds of kiddos

HAVING FUN WITH THE FMSC!



Dawne is ready to celebrate!



Carrie & Elisabeth rocked the velvet dresses



The Holiday Dinner was a festive treat during a busy season!



Sasha's festive dress



Beth, Mischa, Michelle & Ashley

Monthly Meetups are great for catching up on Club business, enjoying food together & getting silly!



Wilma & Mavi are giddy to discuss constitution updates



Mindy & Stephanie



Bee, Jen D. & Meghan at Friendsgiving MMU



We See You, Post Thrift Shop!

By Meghan McDonald Carlson

As the new year charges forward and we dutifully make plans in our colorful or chic new planners, don't forget to pencil in some time at the Post Thrift Shop. By dedicated volunteers regularly donating their time, the Post Thrift Shop is able to generate the funds to support our outreach efforts like the CHP (see page 6) and our Scholarship Program.

For more information on the FMSC Scholarships & applications



I found this lovely quilt rack for a mere \$7!

And now a worn family quilt gets a new lease on life as cozy decor!

WE ARE ACCEPTING DONATIONS DURING OPEN HOURS ONLY

SORT, BAG/BOX, & LABEL ALL DONATIONS. UNLOAD YOUR OWN VEHICLE THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR, AND BRING YOUR ITEMS TO THE DONATION ROOM.

PLEASE ALERT US TO OVER-SIZED ITEMS, AND WE WILL MEET YOU AT THE BACK DOOR.

DONATION RECEIPTS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

TUESDAY - THURSDAY

9 AM - 2 PM

1ST SATURDAY OF THE MONTH

9 AM - 1 PM

2ND AND 4TH WEDNESDAYS OF THE MONTH

6 PM - 9 PM



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How To Consign at the Post Thrift Shop

- Sign up for an appointment on Signup Genius
- Complete consignment contract & the item list
- Bring 10 in-season items (be sure to check our unaccepted items in the contract).
- Label each of your items with item number, date, account number, description, and price before your appointment.
- On the day of your appointment bring in your contract and items to the thrift shop. The consignment clerk will go over your contract and items with you and give any further details needed.
- Items can be consigned for 30 days, at the end of 30 days you can re-consign, pick up, or donate your items.
- When items sell, the consignee will get 50% and Post Thrift Shop will get 50% on the consignment price.



Consignment info and appointment scheduler



Eager to share about the treasure you discover? Send some details and a picture to Photopublications@FortMeadeSpousesClub.org and you might be featured in an upcoming issue of The Pinch's "Post Thrift Shop Finds."



GIFT WRAPPING FUNDRAISER: HUGE SUCCESS!



Meredith, Dawne, Mindy, Maria, Alexa & Emily staffing the PX gift wrapping table

By the Numbers

Available Wrapping Shifts: 11

Available Wrapping Hours: 32

Total Hours Volunteered: 247.25 hours

Total Profit Raised: \$2948.25



Meghan, Alexa & Mindy



Dawne, Jen D., Laura, Mavi, Ashley, Meredith, Bee & Mindy are ready to wrap!



Mallory joins Mindy & daughter Sophia Gift wrapping is a family affair for the Rodriguez Family!



Bee, Mallory, Tonya & Meghan closed out the wrapping season on Christmas Eve

Thank you!



Some Upcoming Dates

- Jan. 24 & Feb. 28
TS Volunteer Luncheon
- Jan. 25 & Feb. 8, 22
TS Open Nights
- Jan. 26 & Feb. 23
TS Work Nights
- Jan. 30
Spirit Night @ Bubba's 33
- Feb. 4
TS Bag Sale
- Feb. 16 - MMU

Social Clubs:

- Jan. 28 & Feb 13 Playdate Club
- Feb. 6 - Cooking Club
- Feb. 20 - Book Club
- Feb. 24 - Wine Club

Save the Date!

April 29 - Clean Up! Fort Meade

Contact Stephanie Oberbeck for access to the Google calendar

FORT MEADE FOOD PANTRY

HOSTED BY THE FORT MEADE SPOUSES' CLUB



- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FREE GROCERIES INCLUDE: | AVAILABLE TO: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • canned goods • grains • non-perishable items | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • those with a Military ID • all ranks • all service statuses |

located INSIDE the Post Thrift Shop at 392 Llewellyn Ave.

OPEN EVERY THURSDAY
11AM - 1PM

If you or your family require aid immediately, please contact:
outreach@fortmeadespousesclub.org



The Pinch is the product of the FMSC's Photography & Publications Committee with Meghan McDonald Carlson at the helm as Director.

Join us!

photopublications@fortmeadespousesclub.org