

HILLBROOK HILITES



Hillbrook-Tall Oaks Civic Association (HTOCA) Newsletter

September 2021

FALLING INTO FUN IN HILLBROOK-TALL OAKS: UPCOMING EVENTS PLANNED

We are sad to announce that we have canceled this year's annual Block Party. Due to the rising risk of COVID-19 transmission to younger residents of our neighborhood who are not vaccinated, the HTOCA Board of Directors voted at its August board meeting not to hold the annual potluck event this September in an abundance of caution and concern.

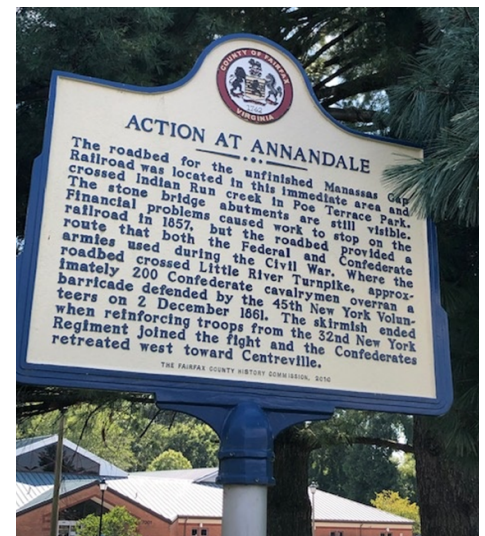
We are still full systems go, however, for a slew of other anticipated events and fundraisers to keep us all busy this fall. We promise to continue bringing the neighborhood together - safely - for some fun and community spirit. Mark your calendars for the following upcoming events:

- **eWaste Recycling Event: Saturday, September 18** - organized by **Steve Boyd** and sponsored by the HTOCA Board, Patriot Shredding will visit from noon to 3 p.m. to haul away neighbors' discarded electronics. *See page 2 for details, including a list of items Patriot will accept.*
- **Monthly Food Trucks: Sunday, September 26** - not one but TWO trucks will be onsite 4:30-7:30 p.m. near Kingston & Silver to dish out meat and veggie cheesesteaks (DC Steakholders) and frozen custard with all the toppings (iScream). Thanks to **Kurt Diercksmeier & Laurelie Wallace** for organizing this year's successful food truck events.
- **Halloween Party & Oktoberfest: TBD** - we are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will determine whether we will hold this annual favorite for kids (and kids at heart). Stay tuned.

And here are some new clubs and events that are back by popular demand:

- **HTOCA Garden Club:** New neighbor **Betsy Martin** will resurrect this club for monthly meetings, speakers and outings. *See page 6 for more details.*
- **Fall Giving Drive:** In the spirit of Thanksgiving, neighbors **Katie Clary & Laurelie Wallace** are planning another event during the first two weeks of November to benefit the Annandale High School Pantry during the first two weeks of November. Details to follow.

For more information or to get involved, email hillbrooktalloaks@gmail.com or check out our new Facebook Group, Hillbrook Tall Oaks Civic Association.



In This Issue...

- Electronics Recycling Event
- Oak Tree Die-Off Continues
- Fire & Storms Wreak Havoc
- Women's Wellness Group Update
- Back-to-School Updates
- Garden Club Seeks Members
- Food Trucks Recap
- Annual Membership Drive
- Meet the HTOCA Board Officer and Director Candidates

...and more!

GOT JUNK? E-RECYCLING EVENT ALMOST HERE

Got old electronics cluttering up your closets, attics and junk drawers? Stuff you swore you'd get rid of that is still sitting there years and for some of us (ahem), decades later?

HTOCA is hosting its first-ever e-waste disposal event for neighbors on Saturday, September 18, to help us all dispose of these broken and outdated materials in a safe and environmentally-conscious manner. Respondents to a neighborhood poll earlier this year showed overwhelming interest in this event, which we hope to make an annual tradition.

Patriot Shredding will bring a truck to Silver Lane near the Dodson Drive intersection from noon to 3 p.m. to help dispose of those unwanted e-waste items collecting dust in every corner of our homes.

Here is a list of what Patriot will take off our hands:

- Hard drives
- CDs
- DVDs
- VCRs
- USB SD cards
- Keyboards and mice
- Data tapes
- Telephones
- Mobile Phones
- Tablets
- Modems
- Routers
- Tube and flat-screen televisions
- Computer monitors and speakers
- Printers
- Copiers
- Scanners
- Faxes



If you have any items note listed above or questions related to what Patriot Shredding will accept, please visit www.patriotshredding.com. Note: This event will happen rain or shine unless weather poses a risk to community residents and Patriot's staff, at which point we will reschedule.

DYING OAKS CONTINUE TO BE A PROBLEM

There continues to be a large die-off of oak trees in Hillbrook-Tall Oaks. A survey of the neighborhood indicates that approximately 100 trees have been lost, and many of them still standing awaiting removal. A majority of the trees are 100+ years old, too. White oak trees, particularly chestnut oaks, are most affected.

A combination of factors are contributing to the death of these trees, including periods of drought and excessive rainfall over years that have stressed some trees. The main culprit, however, is the ambrosia beetle, which bores into the trees and compromises the tree's vascular system. Red oaks and other tree species are affected by this invasive insect.

Residents with oak trees should consult a certified arborist to obtain an assessment of tree health and the best treatments to prevent further tree loss. Infested trees should be removed as soon as possible to protect healthy trees. Visit <https://extension.umd.edu/resource/ambrosia-beetles-trees>] [Ambrosia Beetles on Trees | University of Maryland Extension \(umd.edu\)](https://extension.umd.edu/resource/ambrosia-beetles-trees).

WOMEN'S WELLNESS GROUP ENJOYS A BUSY SUMMER OF SWEAT & SOCIALS

The **Hillbrook Tall Oaks Women's Wellness Group**, which exists to build community with a focus on wellness, has had a busy few months.

The group hosted a Women's Appreciation Brunch in May and its own Olympics on July 31 to commemorate 150 workouts since the group started. Neighbor Karen Exell crushed the *Summer Sweat Challenge* to earn gift card to a local favorite, Silverado.

The group enjoyed a Summer Wine Tasting (*pictured below*) at neighbor Katie Clary's house on August 28 to sample rose wines.

Along with hosting community social events, the Wellness Group meets for walks in the neighborhood as well as yoga and meditation on Saturday mornings at 8:30 a.m. monthly. If you're interested in receiving email communication about the group or attending a wellness class or social event, please reach out to the group's facilitator, **Alisha Martinez** (alishamartinez@gmail.com or 617-290-0728).

The next scheduled walk is on **Saturday, September 11**. The group will meet outside of Exit 2 at Poe Middle School at 8:30 a.m. and then walk toward the Starbucks at the Bradlick Shopping Center. Everyone is welcome.



*Women's Wellness Group Wine Tasting, L to R: Thurraya Kent, Andrea Stanley, Liz Tsegaye, Alisha Martinez, Tammy Murphy, Katie Clary, Lauren Erera, Marly Parra, Betsy Martin
Photo courtesy of Alisha Martinez*

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GET SOCIAL WITH HTOCA !

We have created a new group on Facebook: www.facebook.com/groups/htoca.

The group will serve as HTOCA's official Facebook channel for announcements, so please join us for the latest news, community events and other happenings around the neighborhood. We'll welcome posts from neighbors in this new group, which has replaced the previous community channel.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL UPDATES: ANNANDALE HIGH SCHOOL PTSA

Annandale High School's (AHS) VP of Membership Rai Kent, a Hillbrook-Tall Oaks neighbor and parent, sent this update on all things Atoms:



Greetings from the AHS PTSA. After more than a year of virtual and hybrid learning, we were thrilled to welcome our students back to the classroom in person on Monday, August 23. Our return to school was featured on WJLA ABC-7 and National Public Radio Station WAMU 88.5's show "Consider This." This year's school year presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities that we as a PTSA can address – with the support of the strong Annandale community.

Our PTSA strives to support the families, teachers, staff and a student body comprising more than 65 countries and more than 60 spoken languages. To meet the needs of our dynamic student body, we strive to bring home, school and community together through programs and special activities. Whether or not you have a child attending AHS, we invite you to become part of Annandale High School's PTSA. There are many ways you can support your neighborhood high school.

For example, the **AHS Food Pantry** is a vital resource for AHS families in need. During the pandemic, the pantry provided food, supplies and comfort to promote food security within our community. The pantry accepts food, pantry, personal hygiene items and monetary donations from individuals and neighborhood drives, including the **successful Make All Residents Charitable Heroes (M.A.R.C.H)** event organized by HTOCA and neighborhood volunteers earlier this year. A second event is planned for this fall.

Grab your Monopoly board and start prepping now for our upcoming **Monopoly Tournament**. This annual event was canceled last year due to the pandemic, but we look forward to gathering safely in November to find Annandale's next Monopoly champion. Once again, we are also partnering with Papa Johns for a **Pizza Night Fundraiser** that runs every Thursday through June 2022. Use code AHS4010 to save 40% on your pizza.

These are just a few ways to show your support. Perhaps you'd like to attend a high school sporting event (annandaleatoms.net), band concert (annandalebands.org), play, or orchestra concert. No matter your area of interest, we welcome your support and engagement. **Check out the PTSA website at www.annandalehsptsa.org** for helpful links, more school news and details for joining us at our PTSA meetings – our next meeting is Tuesday, September 21 at 7 p.m. You can also find us on Twitter @AtomsPTSA, Facebook and Instagram. We look forward to connecting with you soon!

DODSON FIRE, FALLEN TREES CAUSE DAMAGE

At about 5:00 p.m. on Saturday August 28, the Annandale Fire Department along with other Fairfax County fire crews responded to a fire report at 5017 Dodson Drive. According to one fire crew member, the call was prompted by smoke generated from an appliance in the basement of the home. Dispatched to the scene were **two pumper trucks, two hook and ladder trucks, an ambulance, and a fire battalion vehicle**. The resident was at home at the time and was not hurt. Likewise, there did not appear to be any serious damage to the home.

Several neighbors have reported **property damage as well as fallen trees and limbs from several heavy wind, rain and thunderstorm events this summer**, including the remnants of Hurricane Ida. Properties on Dodson, Winter and Kingston all received damage from fallen trees and are undergoing repairs. Luckily no one has reported any injuries from these storms.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL UPDATES: MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

MSNV Director of Marketing and Communications Andreka Johnson sent this update:

Since 1962, families across the Washington Metropolitan area have called the Montessori School of Northern Virginia home. As the first Montessori school in the Commonwealth, MSNV is an established leader in providing authentic Montessori education.

Since MSNV opened its doors on Pacific Lane in 1968, we have spent decades dedicated to our mission of guiding children to love learning, love one another, and to love the world around them. Accredited by both the Virginia Association of Independent Schools and the American Montessori Society, MSNV now spans two campuses. Our majestic wooded and meadow settings are the perfect backdrop for the creativity and learning that take place daily on campus. We feel fortunate that so many years ago our early families had the vision to create such a special place.



Photo courtesy of MSNV

Now at the dawn of a new school year we stand ready to welcome students to a devoted faculty and staff, a community ready to support them, and a school that will quickly become their home away from home. **Thank you to the Hillbrook neighbors for continuing to welcome MSNV and our families into the community where you live, work, and play.**

FOOD TRUCKS RECAP & CONTINUATION

The neighborhood had an exciting spring and summer with cuisines around the world. Our Saturday Food Trucks line-up included:

- DC Slices (Pizza) in April
- Tacozilla (Tex-Mex) in May
- Rocklands (BBQ) in June
- Bon Me (Vietnamese) in July
- Virginia Grill (Middle Eastern/Indian) in August

For September, we will shift to Sunday for our first food truck of the fall. Please mark your calendars for Sunday, September 26 from 4:30pm-7:30pm, where we will host DC Steakholders, which will serve cheesesteaks, chicken cheesesteaks, veggie sandwiches, chicken tenders and fries; as well as a pop-up dessert table with vanilla and chocolate custard and sundaes from iScream.

Given these events' popularity with neighbors and the fantastic turnout, we plan to hold these monthly events through the fall.

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BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND: THE GARDEN CLUB

Calling all green thumbs! We are resurrecting the popular Hillbrook-Tall Oaks Garden Club.

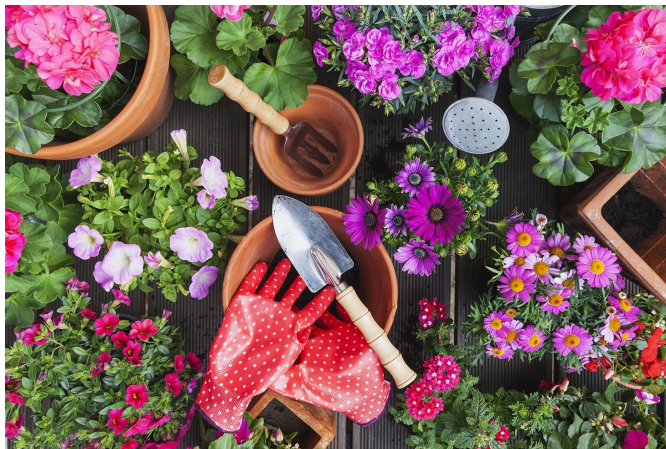
New neighbor **Betsy Martin**, who moved to Silver Lane just a few months ago, is looking forward to restarting the club. All you need is an interest in gardening and in maintain our neighborhood's beauty.

Betsy is looking for interested group members as well as ideas on topics of interest and when to meet. Here is what she has outlined so far:

- Meet at a member's home on the second week of every month
- Two-hour meeting proposed: first hour for discussion/program, second hour for social time & garden stroll
- Proposed discussion topics welcome; here are some ideas so far:
 - Gardening/yard/landscape challenges and ideas
 - Coordinating plant and tool swaps/donations
 - Scheduling community service projects: entrance decorations, area cleanups, yard help
 - Service recommendations: landscapers, tree care, nurseries, catalogs, local events calendar
 - Meet a master gardener, local garden heroes, floral arrangers, tales from global garden travelers, and garden visitor assistance: birders, pollinator helpers, etc.

Every quarter or as interested, the group could also host a field trip to local spots like Mark Winkler garden, Meadowlark or Green Springs Garden, or regional visits to places like Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens in Richmond, Oatlands, or George Washington's River Farm.

Much like the popular Women's Wellness Group, Betsy also suggests that the group host holiday events and parties for all members. She's also considering joining up with other local garden clubs for ideas-sharing. **Interested in joining this new group?** We would like to know your meeting time preference as well as suggestions, comments and ideas! **Please reach out to Betsy at 571-242-5873 or betsybmartin@gmail.com.**



TIPS ON TACKLING INVASIVE, NON-NATIVE IVY

English ivy may look pretty, but this non-native vine can wrap around tree trunks and grow to heights of 20 feet or more. Trees covered in ivy may weaken over time as the vine deprives them of key nutrients. Ivy also provides shelter to predatory, disease-bearing insects. The sheer weight of ivy can thwart the growth of young trees. Keep your large trees healthy to avoid expensive tree removal costs.

To kill ivy, you can break the feeder stems with clippers or break them by prying underneath stems with a large flat-blade screwdriver. Take care not to puncture the tree bark while doing so. Cut or break ivy stems at two points spaced about two inches apart. For more information, visit: [Ivy Damage To Trees - How To Remove English Ivy From Trees \(gardeningknowhow.com\)](https://gardeningknowhow.com)

ANNUAL HTOCA MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

We need your support to continue providing a great experience for you and the community!

As our new membership year begins on October 1, we invite all neighbors to join the neighborhood association, Hillbrook-Tall Oaks Civic Association (HTOCA). Every household in our community enjoys the benefits of the many activities and services HTOCA provides, all brought to you by a team of neighbors who volunteer their time to make Hillbrook-Tall Oaks a wonderful place to live.

Volunteers on the **Welcome Committee** reach out to new residents to help them quickly feel a part of our close-knit community. This spring and summer the committee has already welcomed six new neighbors on Cherry, Kingston, Pacific and Silver.

Every resident on our email distribution list also receives a copy of our periodic newsletter and email notifications with important news and announcements. We invite everyone in the neighborhood to participate in social activities that we host throughout the year, including the **Ice Cream Social** in June, **food trucks** (partially subsidized by HTOCA) throughout the summer and fall, **Block Party** (September), and **Oktoberfest/Halloween** (October).

During the pandemic, HTOCA has made special efforts to keep us connected and safe, including a **coordinated neighborhood reachout**, **food and pantry drives**, a **parade to celebrate the class of 2020**, an **Earth Day cleanup**, and the upcoming **electronics recycling** event on September 18.

There are also less visible but equally important ways that HTOCA engages and advocates on our community's behalf. These include **tracking changes in county zoning that impact neighborhoods**, **monitoring zoning enforcement**, **interacting with county planning offices regarding local development**, **labeling storm drains to discourage dumping**, and **contacting local authorities such as VDOT** to maintain our roads, storm drainage, signs, and other services. We work hard to help preserve the quality of life in Hillbrook-Tall Oaks and greater Annandale.

Our activities bring neighbors together, provide fun for local families, and strengthen the ties that bind Hillbrook-Tall Oaks' residents as a true community.

So if you haven't already done so, please send your annual \$25 dues no later than September 30 to ensure we can continue with our good work on your behalf. You may pay by check, cash or credit card to the address below, or you can visit www.htoca22003.org and click the "Pay Now" button to submit your dues payment. Note that there is an additional \$1 PayPal processing fee if you choose to pay online.

Your annual membership contribution will help us continue strengthening our community and making Hillbrook-Tall Oaks a lovely place to live, work and play. Thank you!

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HTOCA Board of Directors

P.O. Box 1112

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ANNUAL BOARD ELECTIONS: 2021-2022

Our fiscal year comes to an end on September 30, so it's time to elect your next HTOCA Board of Directors. Here are biographies for this year's 13 director and officer candidates, which includes both new and long-time neighbor volunteers.

Please look for a ballot coming to your inbox to vote no later than September 15!

OFFICER CANDIDATES



President: Al Sample - Al and his wife, Dory, have been active members of the neighborhood since their arrival in 1990. He has been on the HTOCA Board for four years, and currently serves as its president. Professionally, Al is Adjunct Professor of Environmental Science and Policy at George Mason University and a member of the National Academy of Sciences Board on Agriculture and Natural Resources.



Vice President: Kurt Diercksmeier - Kurt and his wife, Ashley, moved to the neighborhood in late 2015 and have since added a son, Lukas. Originally from Wisconsin, Kurt strictly adheres to the stereotype of beer, cheese, and the Green Bay Packers. Both love to travel and look forward to doing more as soon as possible. Since moving to VA in 2012, he has worked in IT Management at the US Securities and Exchange Commission. A member of the HTOCA board for five years, he is currently VP.



Treasurer: Bob Selim - Bob and Rena Selim moved into Hillbrook-Tall Oaks in 1993. Their daughters attended local Fairfax County public schools from Columbia Elementary through Poe Middle School and Annandale High School. Bob worked at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History for 15 years, then went out on his own to help develop and write exhibitions for history museums around the country. After a couple of years of retirement, he thinks it's time to pitch in and contribute more to our civic association. Most days, you can see him walking his dog Murray around.



Secretary: Lauren Erera - Lauren has served as the HTOCA Secretary since 2018. A longtime Virginia resident, she and her fiancé, Marc Henderson, have lived in Annandale since 2016. As secretary Lauren has been responsible for developing the Hillbrook Hilites newsletters, producing the most recent version of the Neighborhood Directory, and keeping monthly Board meeting minutes. She also oversees the Welcome Committee. A University of Richmond, graduate and Jersey Shore native, Lauren is principal of a marketing agency and frontline sales consultancy. In her spare time she enjoys photography, travel, reading, and appreciating our "wild" neighbors.

ANNUAL BOARD ELECTIONS: 2021-2022

DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



Chelsie Bain - Chelsie, Greg and their 2-year old Malinois moved to the neighborhood in July 2020. Prior to moving, they lived in Arlington from 2012, where Greg is from. Born and raised in Indiana, Chelsie moved to the DC Metro area for a post-internship "I'll just stay for a couple of years" position. She started her Arlington neighborhood's now annual block party, which became a huge success. She and Greg "sparked" Halloween and Christmas decorating contests. Chelsie has been an active volunteer for APAH's after-school reading and enrichment program. She enjoys dog training and canine enrichment, hiking and enjoying the outdoors, live music and cheering for the Nats, Colts and WVU Mountaineers.



Caterina Lillis - Residents since 2018, Caterina and her husband have been blessed to foster local children in recent years. They have 2 small dogs and love gardening. An accountant for DHS with a background in Public Administration, mathematics and auditing, she was a steward for a Federal Union for three years and enjoyed representing two sides of conflict and resolving differences. In her spare time, she volunteers for Arlington Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, and the Little Theatre of Alexandria. Her goals are to preserve the quality of life here, build upon it with improvements where and when needed, maintain or improve street safety, monitor proximity and interactions with local businesses, and keep our sense of community alive.



Clausen Krzywicki - Clausen and his late wife moved to Hillbrook Tall Oaks in 1989, on the corner of Dodson and Winter. Thirteen years later they moved two blocks down the street to the other end of Winter. They raised their two children here. In the past Clausen served on the HTOCA Board as Director, Secretary-Treasurer, and Vice-President, during two different stints. Now retired from a senior position in the Federal Government, he is willing to serve again.



Mark Crawford - Mark currently serves on the HTOCA Board of the Hillbrook-Tall Oaks Civic Association as a director. Previously he served as president of HTOCA for three years, vice president for one year, and as a director. He has been active in neighborhood affairs since moving to Hillbrook-Tall Oaks in 1988. His goals for HTOCA for the coming year include preserving the quality of life in the neighborhood, zoning integrity, safety for all residents, and monitoring the condition of the Annandale business district.

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DIRECTOR CANDIDATES, continued



Dave Brundage - Dave and his wife, Mary Anne, have lived in Hillbrook-Tall Oaks for more than thirty years. They raised three children who still live in the area and have three grandsons. Dave has stayed active in various groups of public service including many years teaching and then retiring from Fairfax County Public Schools. His involvement in organizations working for public welfare and members' benefits has included a civic association presidency years ago while living in south Arlington County. As both a teacher and performing musician, Dave has membership in three unions, serving on two of their boards. He looks forward to continued participation in HTOCA activities.



Steve Boyd - Steve has lived in Tall Oaks since December 2011 with his wife, Hilary Lewis-Boyd. They have a shepherd mix dog (Jesse Jane aka Jesse Monster aka "JM" for short). Steve has worked for Armedia LLC, an enterprise content management (ECM) consulting services company, for 12 years on its Infrastructure Team. Steve graduated from Virginia Tech in 1990 with a Liberal Arts and Sciences degree. He was born in Baltimore, but spent most of his life growing up in Upper Marlboro, MD (PG County). His hobbies include photography, comic books, riding his Harley Davidson Crossbones and working on his lawn. He likes to watch the Baltimore Orioles, the Indianapolis Colts, and Virginia Tech football and basketball.



David Decker - A county resident since 1988, David moved here last August from Tysons Corner after falling in love with the serenity of this park-like neighborhood. He is interested in serving to help preserve what is truly a gem in the midst of all the hubbub. David's professional background is in human resources and payroll management at both profit and non-profit organizations. A working musician "back in the day," David retains a passion for jazz and tries to keep fit by spending time cycling and taking walks. His community work includes six years as treasurer of a condo board and member of that association's Neighborhood Watch team. David looks forward to meeting more neighbors and making new friends here.



Karen Grunstra - Karen, her husband, Larry Kim, and their American Bulldog, Eggroll, joined the Hillbrook-Tall Oaks community this summer from Alexandria and are eager to meet neighbors! Recent newlyweds, they have returned to Larry's hometown to build their first home together. Karen moved to the DC area to pursue a career in international trade policy and now dreams of one day opening a flower shop coffee bar. Larry is a Senior Principal Success Manager with Salesforce and can be spotted in the early hours of the morning heading out to his favorite local fishing hole. A Garden State native, Karen is a graduate of Marist College and holds a Master's Degree from the University of California San Diego. She volunteered as a mentor for four years with Casa Chirilagua in Alexandria and has fundraised for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Karen is eager to get to know neighbors and future friends by sharing her passion for community-building.



Laurelie Wallace - Laurelie and Kevin moved to Kingston Drive in 2019. Natives of Fairfax County, Laurelie has been involved in many local community organizations over the years, including two years as Board Chair of a community center board. After teaching in Arlington County for five years, Laurelie currently works for a non-profit organization in DC. Kevin is the owner of Gilligan Contracting, a general contracting and remodeling firm in Northern Virginia and DC.