Barrio de Langley Park

A Neighborhood Planning Newsletter Published by Action Langley Park
Issue Number 219, October 2011

MARYLAND DREAM ACT

In early October at the University of Maryland, State Senator Victor Ramirez, Kim Propeack, and others were on a panel to talk about the Maryland legislation that passed and is currently being blocked by an anti-DREAM group. Victor led the effort in the Senate, and Kim was a forceful advocate from the outside. Given the likelihood of a referendum, the outcome will probably be decided in November 2012 when the state's citizens will vote on the issue.

Senator Ramirez

Here's the beginning of a May 12 editorial in the *Washington Post*: "Maryland is the latest state to extend college tuition breaks [i.e., those living in-state get in-state tuition rates] to undocumented immigrants who graduate from state high schools, provide tax returns going back five years, prove their academic mettle by completing two years of study in a community college. … The measure is a tough, fair and sensible way to help make college affordable for students who grew up in Maryland but, often through no fault of their own, lack legal status in this country. Beyond helping them, it would help Maryland by providing credentials to talented young people who would be prepared to contribute to the state's economy."

Will the young people brought to the USA as small children be punished because of their parents' pursuit of a better life for the family? We should know in just more than a year from now.

WHEN WILL LANGLEY PARK GET A REAL COMMUNITY CENTER?

The Langley Park Community Center is marginally a real community center. After all, the small two-wing L-shaped former elementary school building has as the tenant of the northwest wing the Senior Center (that often does not have any senior from Langley Park) and as the tenant of the east wing regional administrators who have region-wide responsibilities.

The staff of the Senior Center appears too often to be uncooperative with the LPCC staff, e.g., not sharing some of their at-the-time unused space; and the administrators refuse to relocate—and therefore they are blocking the use of their space by organizations and LPCC for neighborhood-focused activities.

There are in LPCC some classes and a day-care program (fees required), and thankfully Action Langley Park (and some

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THE DISRUPTED LIVES
OF PGCPS TEACHERS FROM THE PHILLIPINES

It is hard to avoid the view that the Prince George's County Public Schools system exploited more than 1,000 teachers brought in from the Philippines and then forced out because the system did not play by the rules established by the federal government for such hires. The result: many lives disrupted and perhaps diminished. What is the county doing to help? The only compensatory action, apparently, was a $4k payment the federal government ordered the system to pay each teacher.

The situation the teachers are facing has been the subject of an extensive article in *Education Nation* on msnbc.com (20 September 2011).* Below are some highlights.

"As teacher Maria Ursula Raymundo stared out at the desert landscape bouncing past, she found herself thinking about where she would have been if her life hadn't been turned upside-down by a bureaucratic nightmare: On bus duty at the suburban Maryland elementary school where she had taught P.E. for four years.

"Instead, she was traveling the desolate back roads of Arizona and New Mexico in a van with a group of fellow Filipino teachers, hoping to find a school that would give them jobs before their American dreams vanished once and for all.

"'It's about your life … changing suddenly without warning,' said Raymundo, a 47-year-old from Manila, recalling the recent job-search expedition across the U.S. 'We are not citi-

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NEW PRINCIPALS FETTED

High Point High School and Northwestern High School have new principals. At High Point, it is Sandra Jimenez; at Northwestern, it is Edgar Batenga. Both of them bring intimate familiarity with the Latino/a population to their jobs. Of course, their jobs will not be easy: the standardized scores and graduation rates are poor, and orderliness has sometimes been a problem. But we are optimistic about these schools' futures.

High Point's Sandra Jimenez with CASA's Gustavo Torres

In early October, CASA de Maryland gave the two principals a welcome party. Most appropriate: Thanks, CASA. Lots of county VIPs were there, including the head of the school system and the Chief of Police. ALP snuck in too. We wish the two principals safe and successful sailing.

NEWS AND NOTES

POLITICS

Happy But... Alston, Currie, Johnson, Johnson, et alia. Here's a comment from the *Gazette* (30 September 2011) that can make one happy and sad: "While the careers of two Prince George's politicians accused of abusing their offices may hang in the balance, the county's political sway should remain largely intact, experts say." Happy: the "sway" is intact. Sad: "abusing their office." Let's hope that the troubles of 2011 will never be repeated and Rushern Baker will demand transparency and honesty.

Refocus Federal Spending? That's the reason for the coalition called "Fund Our Communities, Bring the War Dollars Home." The coalition of community groups in Maryland is said to be "part of a growing nationwide movement to cut military spending and fund domestic needs."

TAKE THOSE SIGNS DOWN

Maryland advertisers (The Clutter Crew) have three months to remove their illegally placed advertisements from state roads and highways before MSHA fines kick in. Thank goodness; the roads of the county are splattered with ugly signs stuck in the earth, hanging on telephone polls, planted in road mediums, etc.

IMMIGRATION

Lawyers: Be careful! There are many lawyers as well as non-lawyers who will willingly assist a customer, but not all of them know the immigration field and some are no more than hustlers looking to take an immigrant's money. So be careful! One way to find a member of the relevant professional organization is to go to the American Immigration Lawyers Association "find an immigration lawyer" web site. Its address is http://www.ailalawyer.com.

Diversity Fraud: A friend of ALP, living outside the USA but wanting to return, received a "notice" that is fraudulent. Here is a portion of what he received (the XXX is to protect his privacy):

"Your registered name XXX is included to show this message originated from U.S. Department of State. U.S. Department of State notifies XXX of being selected as a winner of the Diversity Visa program. You are one of the 50,000 winners selected by the computer random draw from the 12.1 million entries registered in the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program . The Diversity Immigrant Visa program is a United States congressionally-mandated lottery program for receiving a United States Permanent Resident Card. It is also known as the Green Card Lottery. U.S. Government helps you with the accommodation and offers you Health Insurance (Freedom HSA Direct Individual Health insurance for 1 year), Dwelling (Apartment in any city you prefer, 1 bedroom for 3 months), a guaranteed job (in the field that you are currently qualified so you can start working even from the first week you arrive in the United States and get paid as U.S citizen.) and education (for U.S. Students or Higher Education through EducationUSA. It includes transfer to a U.S college or University so you can continue your educational study. United States Permanent Resident Card Granted! - Waiting for payment of processing fee $879."

Of course, this sounds too great to be true unless it is a message from the heavens! But wait: in the message there was no promise for a beautiful or handsome spouse and lovely children plus a bank account with, say, $100k! ALP checked the Department of State web site, and it states: "Any email that states you have won the Diversity Visa Lottery is fake. The Department of State has never sent emails to notify individuals they have been selected, and The Department of State will not notify Diversity Visa 2012 (DV-2012) winners by email. Emails indicating that you have won the diversity visa are fraudulent."

NOTE: The next round of the real visa lottery has been launched. See BLP page 3.

IN ALABAMA

[E]ffective immediately, state and local police must arrest and detain anyone they suspect of being in the country illegally. Schools are required to determine the immigration status of students and provide it to district officials. And immigrants caught without proper identification can be charged with a crime. Alabama's law is cruel and unnecessary.

—From an LA Times editorial (30 Sept 2011)

"Anyone they suspect"—you know, those people with brown skin who don't speak English like a good Alabaman. "Without proper identification"—but not the good White folks of Alabama who might have forgotten their driver's license or passport one day.

—Comments by the BLP Editor.

The Justice Department has now asked a federal appears court to block the Alabama law.

COMMITTEE OF SOLIDARITY MONSIGNOR ROMERO

On October 1, a 10th anniversary dinner and awards ceremony took place at the Washington Ethical Society in D.C. As many readers know, Oscar Arnulfo Romero y Galdamez was a bishop—and then Archbishop—in El Salvador until he was assassinated in 1980 while celebrating Mass. And during his funeral, dozens of people were shot, purportedly by soldiers in the governing regime's army. He was a great champion of human rights during an era when a vicious regime reigned in the country.

What is especially tragic is that the assassin was linked with the School of the Americas, a USA training school that has been connected to the killing and torturing of many people in Central America and elsewhere thought to be left-of-center and therefore (in the minds of some) communist. The training manuals used "taught repressive techniques and promoted the violation of human rights throughout Latin America and around the globe. The manuals contain instructions in motivation by fear, bounties for enemy dead, false imprisonment, torture, execution, and kidnapping a target's family members." The Pentagon has admitted that these manuals were a "mistake." Mistake??? It's a tragic time in history.

NORTHWESTERN HS CHOIR

Congratulations to the high school's choir for being selected to participate in the Ihlombe! South African Choral Festival. The event takes place in South Africa during July 2013! One hundred students and alumni from the school's choir, under the direction of Ms. Leona Lowry, will perform five concerts: in Pretoria, Soweto, Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Stellenbosch. Want to hear and see this fine choir? Then attend the Fiesta Latino on October 20 at 7 p.m. at the school.

THE GREEN CARD LOTTERY

The so-called "green card lottery" raises lots of hopes and dashes the hopes of many applicants. Nevertheless, it may well be worth a try. After all, millions play the lottery in the USA. Here are paragraphs from an article by Bernard Wolfsdorf and Rahul Soni that appeared in Immigration Daily. Wolfsdorf has prepared a fairly detailed set of guidelines for applications. It is at http://www.wolfsdorf.com/articles/DV%20-%20Reasons%20Why%20Attorney%20Processing%20can%20be%20Helpful%20%282011%29.pdf.

"The U.S. green card lottery opens on October 4, 2011 and applications can be submitted until November 5, 2011. This year the U.S. government will register over 100,000 potential immigrants and issue 50,000 green cards to lucky "winners". Unfortunately, as with many government programs, the diversity immigrant visa program is deceptively simple, and has numerous pitfalls. Rigid technical requirements disqualify many applicants. So-called lucky "winners" face the biggest challenge after they are notified they have been selected. Of the 100,021 registrants, slightly more than half will end up disappointed when they discover they are unable to obtain a green card. Some are mortified when they are refused tourist or student visas because they expressed immigrant intent. Every year half of the lottery "winners" end up unsuccessful in their quest to attain a green card because of the "lottery within a lottery". Hundreds of potential "winners" are stranded because they are unable to make it to the finish line by September 30, the deadline to complete immigrant visa processing. The DV program is a "Cinderella visa", which expires at midnight on September 30, the end of the government fiscal year.

"To apply for the green card lottery, basic eligibility criteria must be met. An applicant must have the equivalent of a U.S. high school diploma, defined as, "a formal course of elementary and secondary education comparable to completion of twelve years' elementary and secondary education in the United States." "Winners" can also qualify by proving two years of work experience in an occupation, which requires at least two years of education, training, or experience within the past five years. This can be very tricky as an understanding of Department of Labor Occupational Codes is critical to qualifying. If "winners" do not meet the educational requirement, they can meet this standard by documenting qualifying work experience obtained within the past five years. Another challenge is the fact that lottery "winners" are sequentially processed based on their rank serial number. Those with high winning numbers have as little as thirty or sixty days to undergo rigorous medical, security, financial, and other eligibility screening. Sadly, many with high numbers do not make it."

LANGLEY PARK IN THE WASHINGTON POST

Washington Post **writer Luz Lazo has written an interesting, lengthy article about Langley Park. The article's subtitle clearly captures the prevailing issue in the neighborhood: "Purple Line brings promise and fears of change." The fear is "the elimination of affordable housing" leading to displacement. Lazo quotes St. Camillus Rev. Jacek Orzechowski: "We welcome efforts that would strengthen economic development…. However, we believe that it will be morally wrong to [develop] in a way that will result in massive displacement." Be sure to read the full article; the address:**

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/in-langley-park-purple-line-brings-promise-and-fears-of-change/2011/09/16/gIQAnAkmAL_print.html

WHAT IF THE U.S. ISSUED PAPERS TO THOSE WHO DON'T HAVE THEM?

Two members of the Center for American Progress have tried to calculate the impact of issuing papers to the undocumented immigrants in the USA who do not have criminal records. That's more-or-less equivalent to the so-called "comprehensive immigration reform." Here is there assessment:

ADDITIONS TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY

1. **$1.5 trillion**—The amount of money that would be added to America's cumulative gross domestic product—the largest measure of economic growth—over 10 years with a comprehensive immigration reform plan that includes legalization for all undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States.

2. **3.4 percent**—The potential GDP growth rate over the past two years if comprehensive immigration reform had gone into effect two years ago, in mid-2009.

3. **309,000**—The number of jobs that would have been gained if comprehensive immigration reform had gone into effect two years ago, in mid-2009. A GDP growth rate of 0.2 percent above the actual growth rate translates into, based on the relationship between economic growth and unemployment, a decrease in unemployment by 0.1 percent, or 154,400 jobs, per year.

4. **$4.5 billion to $5.4 billion**—The amount of additional net tax revenue that would accrue to the federal government over three years if all undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States were legalized.

Revenue generated by immigrants

5. **$4.2 trillion**—The amount of revenue generated by Fortune 500 companies founded by immigrants and their children, representing 40 percent of all Fortune 500 companies.

6. **$67 billion**—The amount of money that immigrant business owners generated in the 2000 census, 12 percent of all business income. In addition, engineering and technology companies with at least one key immigrant founder generated $52 billion between 1995 and 2005 and created roughly 450,000 jobs.

WE ALSO WANT YOUR GRADUATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS!

Forty per cent of all Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants and/or their children. So why don't we pass legislation that will enable all foreigners who earn graduate degrees in the USA to stay permanently in the USA—and to gain citizenship? Or are we trying to create global competition?

TAXES GENERATED BY IMMIGRANTS

7. **$11.2 billion**—The amount of tax revenue that states alone collected from undocumented immigrants in 2010.

Negative consequences of mass deportation

8. **$2.6 trillion**—The amount of money that would evaporate from cumulative U.S. GDP over 10 years if all undocumented immigrants in the country were deported.

9. **618,000**—The number of jobs that would have been lost had a program of mass deportation gone into effect two years ago, in mid-2009. A mass deportation program would have caused GDP to decrease by 0.5 percent per year, which, based on the relationship between economic growth and unemployment, translates to an increase in unemployment by 0.2 percent, or 309,000 jobs, per year.

10. **$285 billion**—The amount of money it would cost to deport all undocumented immigrants in the United States over five years.

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other nonprofits) is allowed to meet in LPCC every few months and also use the building, in organizational-cooperation with the LPCC staff, for special events such as Langley Park Day. The current director, Lourdes Suc, does her best given the constraints.

The Langley Park area needs a real community center. Perhaps it will never grow to look like the Long Branch Community Center, but at the least all of its space should be available to a population that does not have the resources to pay for a range of social and recreational activities. Many area residents don't even have an automobile to take them to such activities.

Probably the greatest need is for much more space for teens when not in school. When the teens are out of school, they seek activities, but the kinds of activities that would appeal to the parents are for the most part not available. Do we want the teens to turn to gangs for excitement?

Maybe this situation, harmful to the LPCC, will someday change. We read in the *Gazette* (29 September 2011): "The public is invited to comment on the proposed $258 million budget for the Prince George's County Planning, Parks and Recreation Departments for fiscal 2013 at a forum [that took place before this issue of BLP was published). The commission also will accept written comments through **October 13**, which may be addressed to Elizabeth M. Hewlett, chairman, Prince George's County Planning Board, 14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive, Upper Marlboro MD 20772. Comments also may be faxed to Hewlett at 301-952-5074.

So if you think that the Langley Park area needs and deserves a real community center where young people can gather after school and weekends, and perhaps a health clinic can be established, let Ms. Hewlett know. Or do the planners hope to tear LPCC down and replace it with condos?

"Disrupted" continued on Page 4

zens, we are not green card holders … it's not like you just pack your things and you move onto the next street or ... state, our home is (thousands of) miles away.' …

"The teachers — most of them from the Philippines, but also from Chile, Colombia, India and the Caribbean — found out by email in April that the school district might not be able to sponsor them again amid a Labor Department investigation of its participation in the federal H-1B program, which allows employers to bring foreign workers into the country temporarily to fill specialty occupations. …

"The H-1B program mandates that employers pay certain fees incurred when they use the program. 'Instead of paying these fees, (the school district) required the foreign teachers to pay them. As a result, the teachers' earnings were reduced below the amount legally required to be paid,' the Labor Department said in April.

"The news threw the teachers' lives into disarray. As their visas began expiring, they faced a stark choice: Drop their lives in Maryland to crisscross the country looking for jobs — even though they technically don't have the right to work in the U.S. until they find a new sponsor — or go back to their homelands. It also had serious financial implications. Some had sold land and homes in their native countries or taken out high-interest loans to be able to afford the move to the U.S. Some also had moved their families to Maryland and had bought homes and cars."

*The full article is at http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/44708445/ns/today-education_nation/t/foreign-teachers-american-dreams-vanish-flash/#.ToZ3wc2ftBk.

Interested in the cultural and other challenges faced by the Filipina teachers? Then be sure to see the POV video about Baltimore. The address: http://www.pbs.org/pov/learning/full.php

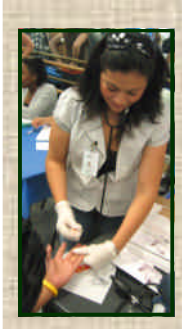
Health Check 2011

On November 6 from noon to 3 p.m.
At the Langley Park Community Center
1500 Merrimac Drive
Langley Park, Maryland
Organized by LPCC & Action Langley Park

This annual event offers a wide range of health checks, information, and advice—and it's all free!

There will be doctors, nurses, chiropractors, dentists, and other health specialists. Their contributions to your health will all be free!

Professionals will come from such health organizations as the Maryland School of Medicine, the Maryland School of Dentistry, Identity Inc., Suburban Hospital, the Adelphi - Langley Park Family Support Center, Adventist Health Care, Doug Sims Chiropractic, Hispanic Institute for Blindness Prevention, Hispanic Nurses, Montgomery College Nursing Program, and others!



Center 301 4454508, ALP 301 4054005
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LANGUAGE LEARNIN'

Parlez-vous Francais? Oui! Habla Espanol? No! That's the PG school system answering questions about immersion schools in the county. For about two decades, the county has had French immersion. But no Spanish immersion! Surely it's time for Spanish. Let's get with it!!

OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEENS

Learn Languages Overseas! Know a teen who is crazy about learning languages? The State Department sponsored NSLI-Y (National Security Language Initiative for Youth) provides full scholarships to high school students to study seven critical languages overseas for a semester or an academic year. Languages include Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Russian and Turkish. No prior knowledge of the language required. More information and application are at www.nsliforyouth. The deadline for applications for 2012 is **November 3**.

Study STEM at UMBC: For the Meyerhoff Scholarship Program, the University of Maryland, Baltimore County is currently accepting nominations from all high-achieving high school seniors who plan to pursue undergraduate studies in Science, Technology, Engineering and/or Mathematics (STEM). Awards range in amounts from $5,000 up to $22,000 per year for up to four years. To be eligible, students must have at least a "B" average in college-preparatory mathematics and science courses, outstanding SAT scores, and a genuine interest in science. Go to http://www.umbc.edu/meyerhoff/ for more information. The application deadline is **October 15**.

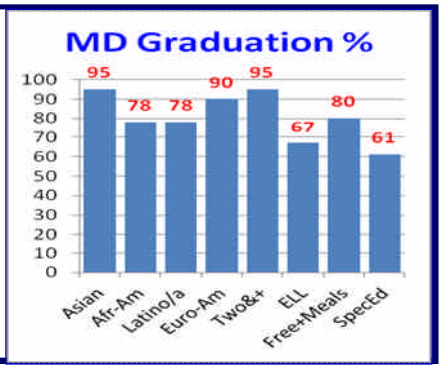
Study Critical Languages Overseas: Know a teen who wants to learn languages? The State Department sponsored National Security Language Initiative for Youth provides full scholarships to high school students to study seven critical languages overseas for a semester or an academic year. Languages include Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Persian, Russian and Turkish. No prior knowledge of the language required. More information and the application are at www.nsliforyouth.org. The deadline for applications for 2012 is November 3rd.

Enjoy Music and Dance: The program, "Bridging the Musical Spectrum 2011," celebrates music and dance at the University of Maryland's Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Concert Hall— on **October 8** at 7 p.m. Youth admission: $9. The evening will feature national and regional musicians as well as young artists eager to make an influential mark in the performing arts. Vocal Stylist Morris Wilson, through his unique interpretation, will pay tribute to the legendary rhythm and blues legend–the late Luther Vandross. He will be accompanied by The Fame Orchestra. For more information, call 301.405.2787 or email info@fameorg.org.

Plan Your Future: "Planning for Future Success, Helping High School and Middle School Students Plan for Future Educational and Career Opportunities" is the title of Congresswoman Donna F. Edwards's Third Annual College and Career Fair on Saturday, **November 5**, from 8:30 a.m. to1:00 p.m at the Silver Spring Civic Center; One Veterans Place, Silver Spring. The event is open to all; those attending do not have to live in Edwards's congressional district. If interested, RSVP to 4mddistrict@mail.house.gov with College Fair in the subject line. For additional information, contact Selena Mendy Singleton at 301-562-7960 or by e-mail at selena.singleton@mail.house.gov.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES

State graduation rates are slowly climbing, but the race/ethnic rates are still very unequal. So the great challenge remains. Local: High Point=75% (Latino/a=69%); Northwestern=69% (Latino/a=65%).



WHAT AND WHEN

BARRIO DE LANGLEY PARK

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. The Editor is 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.

BLP is read in the United States, Canada, and Mexico! Maybe elsewhere too! If you have friends or associates elsewhere in Maryland or the USA or elsewhere who are interested in immigration issues, please pass BLP along or let us add the person to one of our email lists.

For information about Action Langley Park, a nonprofit 501c3 organization, email actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

CALENDAR

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.

Wednesdays—the Crossroads Farmers' Market on the 7676 New Hampshire Avenue space operates from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. Lots of fresh fruit, vegetables, and more—even music!

October 15—Foreclosure Prevention Class organized by Sowing Empowerment & Economic Development (SEED). Spanish 10 a.m. to noon; English 1 to 3 p.m. At 6201 Riverdale Rd. (Suite 200), Riverdale, MD. Information: 301 458-9808x139.

October 15—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 regular event; it takes place every third Saturday of the month. For information, call 301 434-4646.

October 19—Transit-oriented development, 6:30-8:30 p.m., a discussion led by Will Campos and others. At the CSC Building, 7900 Harkins Rd., Lanham (by the New Carrollton Metro). The idea of transit-oriented development (TOD) is to create mixed use (residential, retail, offices) density around Metro stops so that fewer people will need to use an automobile to go from home to work or to shop. They can walk, or if there are greater distances, they can take the Metro. Bethesda and Silver Spring are nearby examples. Of course, the challenge is to care tenderly for those residents and businesspeople who are displaced by the development.

October 20—The Northwestern High School Choir presents Fiesta Latino at 7 p.m. at the school. (Also see Page 2, above.)

November 6—Health Check 2011 from noon to 3 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. This annual event provides free screenings for many potentially harmful health conditions; high blood pressure, rotting teeth, HIV, diabetes, and more. Yes, it's free!

December 8—Action Langley Park Meeting takes place at the Langley Park Community Center from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Everyone welcome! Let us know how the area can be improved, and let us try to help with the improvement. But ALP has to know the needs! So please participate!

May 6—Langley Park Day 2012 from noon to 4 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center. There will be music and dance performances; a major health fair checking vision, HIV status, blood pressure, and more; food and craft vendors; children's art and games; and more.