

Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce

34th Annual Community Awards Banquet

Wednesday, April 25, 2018 from 6 to 9 pm

At **Hollywood East Café**, 11160 Veirs Mill Road, Westfield Wheaton Mall, Wheaton, MD 20902

2018 Award Winners

The 2018 Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Tribute Award: **Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad** (Gam Wijetunge, President of WVRS accepting)

Since 1955, WVRS has protected the public's health and safety in Wheaton by responding to medical emergencies, fires, car crashes, and any other type of emergency where people need help. In 2017 the volunteer firefighters, EMT's, and paramedics logged over 80,000 hours of volunteer service and responded to over 10,000 emergency 9-1-1 calls for service. Since their first call for service in July 1955, they have had five different stations before moving into their current home at the corner of Arcola and Georgia Avenues in November 2013. For 63 years they have responded to most of the major emergencies in the national capital region including: the 1982 Air Florida crash, the 1996 MARC/Amtrak train collision, the 9/11 attacks, the DC sniper shootings, and the 2016 Flower Branch apartments explosion and fire. The 250 volunteer members partner with Montgomery County career firefighters to ensure that the county's busiest rescue company continues to respond to every emergency 24/7.

Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Awards

Luisa Montero introducing Ron Franks, M-CCAB Chair, presenting

The Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Citizen of the Year: **Dan Thompson, Founder Wheaton Arts Parade**, has been representing residents on WUDAC and is also a member of the M-NCPPC

Urban Parks Advisory Group. WUDAC had a desire for a Fall event to complement June's Taste of Wheaton. A parade was suggested, but due to budget and staffing constraints, the Wheaton Urban District could not take this on. When Dan retired after a 29-year career with the federal government working primarily on international environmental cooperation, he committed to spend his first year of retirement to make a parade happen. He created a non profit, Wheaton Wonders, got a grant, partnered with Einstein HS Arts Academy, started a Meetup group, a Facebook page, a website, and got Westfield Wheaton's support – which included an “Arts Factory” space for the creating and storing floats. He engaged high school students across the county to compete in a competition for the parade logo used on posters and t-shirts, and a series of workshops to help artists and non-artists create parade-able art. He began strategically networking and through his excitement and dedication began weaving together support from different strands of the community: school, business, civic association, government and nonprofits. He raised enough public and private funds for the parade that it could be offered as a free artists' showcase.

The 2017 Wheaton Arts Parade attracted thousands of spectators to view more than 50 artists, art groups, community organizations and businesses parade up Georgia Avenue to the festival near Veterans Urban Park. The festival included artists and arts organizations displaying and selling their work in a tented exhibition area. In addition, community organizations and government departments promoted their art-related programs. There was continuous entertainment on two stages including music, dance and readings. A film tent offered panel discussions with local filmmakers, and a food court included some of Wheaton's favorite restaurants. Because of the 2017 success, a second parade is being organized – a new logo design was created and a new award was presented. Dan showed that we can all be artists and have fun. The 2018 Parade and Arts Festival will be on Sunday, September 23, from 10 am - 5 pm.

MCCAB Civic Association of the Year GFNCA President Mahmoud (MJ) Jardaneh, Vice President Jim Epstein and Sara Cabrera, Public Outreach and Government Liaison accepting

The Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Civic Association of the Year: Glenmont Forest Neighbors Civic Association (GFNCA) is a non-profit organization established in 2009 out of concerns about deteriorating infrastructure; abandoned and neglected homes; increasing amounts of litter, illegal dumping, and graffiti in the neighborhood; depressed and unheard community issues by county leadership; and a rapidly disappearing green canopy. In 2017 GFNCA saw a marked growth in their involvement with the diverse community of 1200+ households it serves. Projects planned, developed, and fulfilled helped bring together the community and had a significant impact on increasing communication. Projects included a clean-up of the Judson Road median; an event in cooperation with MHP called Blooming the Neighborhood, which included providing planters stenciled with the community logo, potting soil, and plants to neighbors to demonstrate neighborhood pride; a community-wide block party; and building a float representing the neighborhood in the Wheaton Arts Parade & Festival.

GFNCA regularly attends meetings with several County and State agencies, and advocates on behalf of the community to develop a walkable, safe neighborhood, collaborating with the DGS to establish a new neighborhood park. These meetings have helped ensure quicker response times and resolution to area concerns. GFNCA was awarded a grant to fund and develop additional outreach efforts, including community workshops addressing common community concerns and the installation of multiple lend-a-book libraries in the neighborhood. They currently have scheduled a May 22 Meet the Candidates Forum for all 7 County Executive candidates in coordination with the WK Chamber. The GFNCA board participated in a national NeighborWorks conference, bringing back information and skills.

Wheaton Urban Citizens Advisory Board Awards

Ron Franks, WUDAC member presenting

The Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee Business Leader of the Year: La Familia Peredo (or the Peredo Family) – Maria Peredo, President/Owner, Fernando Peredo, co-owner, and Agustina Peredo, Chef – owners of 3 Wheaton restaurants.

In May 2008 the Peredos established Kantutas Restaurant, specializing in authentic Bolivian cuisine. Maria's personable customer service and a variety of dishes with a fresh Andean touch have made this little gem of a restaurant a destination. In September 2015, the family opened Unplugged Sports Bar and Restaurant at 11305 Georgia Avenue. Unplugged has a capacity for 200 people and includes three distinctive areas. The Activity Area for dancing/Karaoke and ping pong, the Dining area and the Patio, as well as two VIP areas and a stage for business and social events.

Their third business, La Union (for a place to be united) Restaurant and Catering, opened May 2017 at 11238 Georgia Avenue, offering a variety of dishes from the US, Central and South America. Each family member brings valuable assets to the businesses. Agustina, Maria's mother, the chef, provides vision, initiatives and many years of cooking experience. Fernando, Maria's brother, is the marketer and promoter with hands-on experience as a bartender and chef assistant. Maria is the administrator and key innovator, doing accounting work and floor management, with charisma and enthusiastic customer service. The Peredo family team leads a great enthusiastic staff that focuses on making sure clients come back and are delighted with the food and the service.

The Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee Best Property Improvement of the Year:
AVA Wheaton / Accepting: Swayzine Bryant, Community Manager, and Christine Angi

AVA Wheaton is a brand new living space at 2425 Blueridge Avenue in Wheaton, on the corner of Georgia and Blueridge Avenues, where the BB&T Bank building had been. AVA opened in August 2017 offering 319 apartments – studio, one, two and three bedroom options. Both inside and out, AVA Wheaton brings together both convenience and charm. Their landscaped lounge courtyards, pool, fitness center, bike repair shop and storage, pet spa and the streetside landscape add up to an attractive addition to the Wheaton scenery. These apartments are designed with sustainability in mind – meeting the LEED Silver requirements, so residents can live in an environment that is lighter on the planet and its resources. AVA markets their proximity to metro, access to local transportation routes, and Wheaton local restaurants and shopping as part of their attraction.

Montgomery County Police - 4th District

Lieutenant Brian Dillman, Deputy Commander 4th District presenting
Sergeant David M. Smith, Supervisor 4th District presenting award

The 4th District Police Public Safety Award: Officer Charles Heffley has been an extremely diligent and dedicated officer to both the Wheaton Station and the entire community that he serves. Within the last year or so he has been involved in numerous significant incidents throughout the community, and has provided lifesaving emergency medical care as a first responder on calls ranging from stab wounds to cardiac arrest. He has played a significant role in making arrests of violent offenders in some high-profile cases. He works tirelessly on a day-to-day basis enforcing traffic law, which includes arresting intoxicated drivers, drug dealers and people in unlawful possession of a firearm. In addition, he has somehow found time to participate in local community outreach within the county.

Within the past two years he has accomplished these criminal enforcement efforts: Criminal Arrests 24 (Statement of Charges), Warrant Arrests / DCS Obtained 23, Warrants Served 11, Search Warrants 1, Criminal Citations 36, Civil Citations 45, Juvenile Arrests 14. Overall Traffic Enforcement / Impaired Driving Enforcement within the last several years: Warnings issued 1,170, Equipment Repair Orders issued 308, Traffic citations issued 727, Intoxicated / Impaired Drivers Arrested 19. Heffley is an incredible young officer who has a true passion for police work and serving others. He is quiet, respectful and humble never seeking recognition for his work. He goes to work every day and gives maximum effort to support his fellow officers and his community. The residents of Montgomery County are fortunate to have an officer like Charles Heffley looking out for their well-being.

Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad

President Gamunu (Gam) Wijetunge presenting

The Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad Public Safety Officer of the Year Award:

Fire Fighter Julio Deras began his service with the WVRS in 2009, shortly after graduating high school, and is currently an active firefighter and ambulance driver. He is also enrolled as a student in the paramedic program at the Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy. In 2017 WVRS Life Member Benton “Ben” Mull passed away, and Julio was among a cadre of members that was present to help honor Ben at his funeral. Shortly afterward Julio volunteered to help lead the formation of a new WVRS Honor Guard. As captain, he has led the WVRS Honor Guard in several public events, including the Wheaton Arts Parade. Julio leads the WVRS’ efforts to honor our traditions, history, and volunteer spirit. He is an exceptional role model for the future of the WVRS.

Kensington Volunteer Fire Department

Fire Chief Jayme Heflin presenting (also KVFD President Sajad Ali)

The Kensington Volunteer Fire Department Public Safety Award: Master Fire Fighter Kevin Tighe joined in 2010 as a new challenge after retiring from the Metropolitan Police Department. His leadership skills, self-motivation, and passion for all things Fire Department-related served him well as he moved quickly up the ranks. As a Master Fire Fighter, he is well-known as the “jack of all projects” in the KVFD. Serving as the Station 5 Representative on the Board of Directors, he often completes building update projects before, during, and after his shift. Consistently volunteering for three shifts a week and filling in on others in times of staffing needs, he also serves as the Thursday night shift officer. During his shifts he guarantees all training and drills are completed, checks in on those who are new to keep them on track, and cooks – it is guaranteed to will eat well as a member of the Thursday night crew!

Finding he didn't have enough to do in his spare time after retirement, in 2012 he "un-retired" and went back to MPD as a detective for another six years, during that time never wavering in his dedication and commitment to Kensington. As of March 2018, he is officially “re-retired” from MPD and continuing this second phase of retirement with the same dedication and pride he did back in 2010. On April 14 2018, at the 93rd Annual KVFD Awards Banquet, Kevin made Department history by winning the Fire Chief’s Award, President’s Award, and Auxiliary Award; never in Department history has someone won two of the three in the same year, let alone all three.

Einstein High School

Kate King, Staff Development Teacher presenting

The Einstein High School Teacher of the Year Award: Ms. Sarah Shipley is completing her 6th year of service at Einstein, and teaches all the freshman AP US History classes. Most teachers want to teach higher level courses because it is a challenge to teach first year high school students in their first AP course. Early on, when Ms. Shipley realized that her approach did not work, she modified her entire approach to incorporate skill development with content. Her efforts have paid off: test scores have only increased since she took over three years ago. In addition she can measure her success as a teacher by the relationships she forms with her students. Ms. Shipley is one of the teachers that makes kids feel safe and valued. She is quick to smile and greet them in the halls, celebrate their accomplishments, listen with compassion to their problems and laugh at their goofy antics.

The Einstein High School ESOL Student of the Year Award: Abdoul Rachid Abdoulaye Idi Moussa is a graduating senior. He started as a freshman and has exhibited unprecedented growth in speaking, listening, reading and writing on an advanced level in just 3 years. He has been named to the Honor Roll several times, as well as earning straight As. He attributes his success to his teachers who have helped him a lot, but his teachers say that he stands out among his peers for his diligence, hard work, kindness and respectful attitude. Abdoul is involved in the International Honors Council and helps other ESOL students do their homework. He plans to study at Montgomery College next year and major in civil engineering because he enjoys math and wants to work outside.

The Einstein High School Student Community Service of the Year Award: Sarai Diaz is a senior who has earned over 1,000 student service hours, primarily working at Linkages to Learning. The program serves low-income students and their families in obtaining the health and educational services they need to become successful in school and the community. She has also volunteered during summer school and at her church, planting gardens and organizing donated materials. Sarai has learned a lot

about herself through her volunteering experiences including how to balance school, work and community service. She takes AP courses and has been on the Honor Roll several times over the past two years. As a result of her service experiences, she might explore careers in teaching or pediatric nursing, because she has enjoyed working with children. Her empathy and calming energy will bring her success in any career she chooses. Sarai has been accepted to several schools, and is considering attending Notre Dame of Maryland University, enrolling in their community service program.

John F. Kennedy High School

Keir Lewis, Assistant Principal presenting

The Kennedy High School Teacher of the Year Award: Meron Ogans has been a Mathematics teacher for the past 5 years. She attended Kennedy when she moved to the US from Ethiopia at the age of 14. Meron graduated in 2003, then received a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Morgan State University. Soon after college, she married and had three wonderful boys. After taking time off as a stay-at-home mom, she wanted to enter the field of education. Her passion for teaching comes from seeing students learn in everyday settings. She loves teaching in a student-centered environment where students are engaged and enthusiastic about the subject, and loves hearing the thrill in students' responses about mastering skills they previously thought were too difficult. These successes allow her to create more situations that foster a similar kind of learning environment. Her philosophy of teaching is that students are able to learn and reach higher standards through the involvement of teachers by providing an engaging classroom environment that fosters meaningful relationships.

The Kennedy High School ESOL Student of the Year Award: Samuel Penate is a first-generation graduate who enrolled in MCPS in 2014. In three years he impressively progressed from ESOL level 1 to Honors English 12. He has taken additional English classes after school to improve his proficiency, and this year he has challenged himself even further by enrolling in AP and IB classes. Samuel is extremely well-rounded and is involved in extracurricular and community service. He has earned over 400 SSL hours and is an active volunteer at the Kennedy HS Family Markets.

The Kennedy High School Student Community Service of the Year Award: Abbie Talmoud is an outstanding student, and a member of Kennedy's signature program – The Leadership Training Institute, and has been the LTI student of the month, and on the honor roll. Outside of school she is an NCSY Board member and a part of the Yesodot Leadership team. She is passionate about dance and in fact, many of her SSL hours have been earned assisting in dance classes. In addition, she has volunteered at summer camps and tutored ESOL students after school. This year Abbie had an internship with Congressman Jamie Raskin's office. Her experiences have taught her that she enjoys teaching and loves to be of service to others.

Wheaton High School

Pamela Krawczel, Assistant Principal presenting

The Wheaton High School Teacher of the Year Award: Daniel Bates is finishing up his fourth year, where he teaches PLTW Aerospace Engineering, AP Physics C, and Multivariable & Vector Calculus. Before finding his way to teaching, Mr. Bates worked as a systems engineer for Boeing, building UAV helicopters, and as a line cook in Los Angeles and Washington, DC. He was raised in DC-Metro Maryland, graduated from Montgomery Blair in 2001, and received his bachelors degree in Course 8 (Physics) at MIT. In his spare time, Mr. Bates sings with local community choir Six Degrees Singers,

and crafts elaborate meals with his toddler. Mr. Bates is also thrilled to be taking the Wheaton Science Bowl team to the National competition in Chevy Chase in late April.

The Wheaton High School Student ESOL Student of the Year Award: Carlos J. Rodriguez Amaya

is a senior who was born and raised in the small town of San Rafael Obrajuelo in La Paz, El Salvador. In 2014, about three months before his high school graduation, he was forced to leave his country because of dangerous circumstances due to the increase of gang activity. This was a devastating moment since he wasn't able to achieve what he had worked hard for. Carlos learned English quickly, and in 2016 took the WIDA Test and passed with a high score. He exited ESOL and moved straight to English 11. This opened many doors for him, and gave him the opportunity to become a volunteer dance instructor at Holiday Park Senior Center since 2015; a special learning experience teaching Latin dance to elderly people – something he loves. Carlos enrolled in Honors classes, even though it would be more challenging. With dedication and effort, he earned good grades and maintain good standing in school. His senior year is finally here after four long years of effort and sacrifices, and he can achieve his dream of graduating. Looking back, he's glad this all happened, because it made him a stronger person, who can overcome any obstacle that comes his way.

The Wheaton High School Student Community Service of the Year Award: Aresema Workneh

is a graduating senior in the Biomedical Sciences Academy. She plans to study nursing next year at Washington Adventist University. Aresema has earned over 1100 hours of Student Service Learning to date, primarily supporting senior citizens at NMS Healthcare. Her hours also include work in homeless shelter programs and elementary schools.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year: Moses Wright, Block Advisors Tax and Business Services

Block Advisors has generously partnered with the Chamber for a series of informative lunchtime programs catered by and hosted at their offices. Moses Wright, Multi-Unit Office Leader, is the main point of communication between the business community, client services and field operations. With an average of 15 years of tax experience, their tax advisors have the knowledge and expertise to handle even the most complicated tax scenarios. They dig deep to deliver personalized expertise to meet unique tax prep needs. Many of their tax advisors are CPAs, tax attorneys, or enrolled agents – the highest credential the IRS awards.

Block Advisors has a proactive approach with programs such as: Advisor Match, an expanded analysis of a client's unique tax situation to pair them with the right tax specialties; Appointment Readiness Program – a call before appointments to better understand and review documents, along with access to a personalized tax prep checklist; and 365 Tax Plan – customized with recommendations to reduce tax obligations and achieve goals more effectively. Their office is open year-round to provide advice and support beyond tax season, including assistance on IRS underreporting notices or tax penalties, offering Tax Identity Shield® which takes steps to detect and reduce tax identity theft risk and providing access to tax identity restoration assistance for victims.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award: All Eco Design Center

is a family-owned and operated – by Dave Taghipour – certified green business servicing MD, VA & DC with a fully-furnished showroom at 2662 University Blvd, West in Wheaton. Offering the greenest, most unusual and beautiful products on the market and providing solutions for residential, office or commercial projects – with expertise in affordable and sustainable remodeling. They coordinate projects from conception to completion to maximize the benefits of green remodeling and

reduce costs, while also being beneficial for the planet. All Eco was one of the first Montgomery County Certified Green Businesses, and they are members of various local green certifications and groups, such as: US Green Building Council, One Montgomery Green, Energy Squad, and Bethesda Green.

Some of the ways they are committed to being green: all lighting is provided naturally by solar tube or through energy saving LEDs; they reuse and recycle shipping materials, boxes, paper, junk mail, plastic and metals; all office paper is 100% post-consumer recycled and FSC-Certified; they re-purpose waste materials from projects with local organizations like Community Forklift; they volunteer their time and expertise in the community and strive to reduce their impact on the environment.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce President's Award: Janet Yu, owner of Hollywood East Café does many things to help make our community a better place, besides having great Hong Kong-style cuisine. She teamed up with All Eco Design Center during the early stages of her interior build-outs, resulting in one of the most environmentally-friendly businesses in Wheaton. The design included eco friendly carpeting, water-saving fixtures in restrooms, recycled ceramic tiles, and energy-saving kitchen equipment and lighting systems. The electricity the café uses comes from renewable energy sources through a Clean Currents Contract, and they are increasing their use of local sustainable food sources.

Ms. Yu is very active in the community and contributes her time to the growth and well being of Wheaton and the larger community. Janet is an active member in several organizations, including the DC Chapter of Les Dames d'Escoffier International, an organization of women leaders who create a supportive culture in their communities to achieve excellence in the food, beverage and hospitality professions. Through LDEI, Ms. Yu works with D.C. Central Kitchen to mentor young at risk women.

Janet's parents immigrated from China in 1948 and settled in the county, where her mother opened a restaurant in Silver Spring. Janet grew up in her mother's restaurant kitchen, and helping her make her signature almond cookies. She has been in the restaurant business for over 20 years. Janet also operates Red Blossom Kitchen, a shared kitchen in Silver Spring, and launched her Mama Goon's cookie business there, using her mom's recipe. She named the cookies after her mother (Goon was her mother's last name, Janet's maiden name). Janet's mother passed away from Alzheimer's disease, and Janet's dream is to someday be able to afford to donate a portion of every Mama Goon cookie sale to Alzheimer's research.

The Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Appreciation Award: Vicky Surles, Wheaton & Kensington Chamber of Commerce Administrator, was surprised with the Chamber Appreciation Award. She has a background in both fine arts and graphic arts, and has served in the Chamber for 12 years. She is responsible for producing the bi-monthly newsletter, weekly e-notices, event flyers, Annual awards Dinner program, and the annual Community Guide. She also does billing, event planning, and website updates & maintenance. Vicky has represented the Chamber in various activities such as the Wheaton Arts Parade and manned the Chamber booths at outdoor festivals such as the Taste of Wheaton, and the Kensington Labor Day Festival. It is through her hard work and dedication that the Chamber remains an efficient, viable and well-respected organization.