



## Alleged sexual assault comes to light

**Parents frustrated with district's handling of Minnie Howard incident**

BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

Back in October 2021, an alleged multi-assailant sexual assault took place on the Minnie Howard campus and at the time Alexandria City Public Schools did not notify parents. After the

incident came to light last week via National Review, a conservative editorial magazine, ACPS parents have criticized the district for handling the situation in a manner that left them in the dark.

Most recently, the City of Alexandria released a statement on March 18 in

SEE ASSAULT | 12



PHOTO/CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Many parents are criticizing ACPS for failing to notify them after an alleged sexual assault took place on the Minnie Howard campus in October 2021.

### INSIDE

#### Health & Wellness

Understand allergy treatment options in time for spring.  
Page 15

#### Close to Home

Couple finds less is more in Old Town condo.  
Page 16



COURTESY PHOTO

Since ASA's move to professionalize its operations in 2011, rec league teams have done away with custom colored jerseys in favor of unified red and blue colors for each game.

## STILL KICKING AT 50

**The story of Alexandria Soccer Association's half century**

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Drive around Alexandria for five minutes and it's impossible to miss it. It's on the bumpers of countless cars and on fields across the city. An emblem in the shape of a shield, with a red soccer ball and fearsome crimson beast with a leonine body and snakelike tail, reminiscent of an English family crest – with "Alexandria" emblazoned in

blue on top.

It's the symbol of the Alexandria Soccer Association, a community athletics nonprofit in which entire generations of Alexandria families have participated in recreational and travel league teams. Over the course of its 50-year history, which ASA is celebrating this year after delaying the event due to the pandemic, ASA has evolved from an entirely volunteer-run provider of youth soccer to a professionalized organization with paid coaches and full-

time staff.

Still firmly based in grassroots community involvement, ASA has expanded its reach and legacy across the city. Between 2010, when ASA hired its first full-time executive director, Tommy Park, and 2021, ASA increased participation in its programs from 1,000 to about 6,000 players.

The Alexandria Times spoke with ASA's directors, coaches and players to look

SEE SOCCER | 6



## Vibrant Senior Living in All Seasons

Call 1-800-746-1459 or visit [RetirementVirginia.com](http://RetirementVirginia.com).



**Erickson**  
SENIOR LIVING™

**ASHBY PONDS  
GREENSPRING**



## A new day at River Farm

**After near sale, future of historic site looks brighter**

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Blooming flowers and new buds are not the only signs of renewal at historic River Farm this spring. After more than a year of strife within River Farm's board of directors, including the looming possibility that the property would be sold, the future is looking a little brighter for George Washington's former property.

River Farm, a sprawling piece of land that now serves as the headquarters for the American Horticultural Society, became the unlikely centerpiece of a year-long dramatic saga when the AHS board put the property up for sale in September 2020. At the time, the organization claimed the sale of the Potomac River-side site would benefit its national horticultural mission.

Opposition to the sale

SEE RIVER FARM

| 10



PHOTO/CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Flowers bloom in River Farm's gardens.



PHOTO/MICHELLE GOLDCHAIN

The City of Alexandria recently unveiled its newest public art installation, "I Love You," which will be on display through November 2022. For the full story, turn to page 7.

### INSIDE

#### Crime

Police investigate first homicide of the year.

Page 3

#### Homes

Maintain kitchen appliances with proper care.

Page 16

## ACPS seeks SRO funding

**Hutchings requests another year to decide future of safety program**

BY CODY MELLO-KLEIN

Superintendent Dr. Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D. asked the School Board to extend funding for the school resource officer program, which places police officers in the city's middle and high schools, for another year to provide time to determine the program's future. City Council will make a final determination on funding during its budget process next month.

According to Hutchings, the reason for the extension, which would take funding through June 2023, is to provide Alexandria City Public Schools with the opportunity to form a school law enforcement advisory group. The

SLEP advisory group would analyze the SRO program and ACPS' relationship with the Alexandria Police Department before presenting a proposal for the district's bi-annual memorandum of understanding with APD in December.

"We are not anticipating that [advisory group] process to go beyond June of 2023, but we do know at this point there would be no way that we could form that group, have them meet, have them make recommendations prior to the city's budget cycle ending and also prior to the existing funding for SROs concluding as of June of 2022," Alicia Hart, ACPS' executive director of facilities and

operations, said at the March 24 School Board meeting.

The advisory group will form, meet and make recommendations about the future of ACPS' partnership with law enforcement; conduct community engagement; allow "the respective elected bodies time to make a sound determination" about the future of the SRO program

based on the SLEP advisory group's recommendation and maintain continuity of security until a final decision is made about SROs. The advisory group will be made up of city and ACPS staff, students, parents and other



ALICIA HART

SEE SRO

| 9



## Bringing home 4,000 beagles

**Alexandria shelter helps rescue pups from abusive breeding facility**

BY KASSIDY MCDONALD

The Envigo breeding and research facility in Cumberland, Virginia has been found guilty of violating

federal regulations during the past two years, forcing 4,000 beagles to be removed and rehomed.

According to an update from People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals' undercover investigation, Senior U.S. District Court Judge Norman K. Moon "permanently

barred Envigo from any activity requiring [a federal Animal Welfare Act] license" at Envigo's Cumberland facility, which includes experimenting on animals.

Federal authorities now have 60 days to remove the 4,000 dogs, give them to the Humane Society of the United States and find them new homes. Many Northern Virginia rescues are a part of the Humane Society's network, and have received

SEE **BEAGLES** | 4



Puppy Bixby plays with his toy.

PHOTO/ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA



One beagle receives a bath after arriving at the AWLA.

PHOTO/ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA



PHOTO/7NEWS

ACPS parents have pushed school officials to heighten security at schools, especially at the high school and middle schools.

## ACPS ups security

**Officials implement new security measures as school year begins**

BY LIANA HARDY

Amid pressure from concerned parents, Alexandria City Public Schools officials have increased security at school campuses by adding new measures to prevent a repeat of the violence from the 2021-22 school year.

Superintendent Gregory Hutchings, Ed.D., whose last day with the district was yesterday, announced that ACPS will now require students and

staff to have an identification card present at all times. Additional school security officers are also in place to keep students from leaving campus without permission.

These new measures for the 2022-2023 academic year apply to ACPS middle and high schools, and Alexandria City High School will implement a new staggered dismissal process to prevent students from congregating outside of the school. Hutchings also said ACPS officials will continue to make sure every school is a "closed campus," mean-

ing that students are not allowed to come and go without permission, including during lunch time.

ACPS staff is committed to ensuring that all students feel safe at school, according to Alicia Hart, the chief of facilities and operations at ACPS.

"Our schools remain safe spaces. Safety and security is a top priority for ACPS and our commitment to safety can be noted in our most recent update regarding safety processes and student wellness measures," Hart said.

Conversations about school safety increased after ACHS

SEE **ACPS**

| 8

### INSIDE

#### Schools

School Board debates grading policy changes.

Page 9

#### Community

Meet the city businesses that have been around for more than 25 years.

Page 11

## Pass down what matters most

We help build your generational wealth with real estate so you can offer your loved ones a lifelong asset.

Schedule a call to begin planning for your future (and theirs)

LIZLUKE.COM

THE LIZLUKE TEAM  
of Long & Foster Real Estate

LONG & FOSTER REAL ESTATE

