

MOUNT VERNON VOICE

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Serving Mount Vernon, Lee, and Alexandria

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Staff photo/Steve Hunt

Vegas Theme Featured at UCM Gala

State Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30th), center, tries his hand at the blackjack table at UCM's Viva Las Vegas gala Saturday. Playing beside him are gala co-chair Colleen Haddow and emeritus board member Charles King. See more photos pages 6 and 7.

Officer Involved in Fatal Crash with Pedestrian

A Fairfax County police officer was involved in a fatal pedestrian crash on Saturday around 11 p.m.

An investigation determined that the officer was traveling northbound on Beulah Street near Old Beulah Street and as he approached the intersection, with a green light, a 26-year-old man stepped into the roadway, against the green light, police reported.

"Unable to avoid a collision, the police cruiser struck the pedestrian," police stated.

The officer immediately stopped, reported the incident to dispatch and requested an ambulance to respond. The man was transported to the Inova Franconia-Springfield Healthplex with life-threatening injuries.

He succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced dead at 11:44 p.m.

Police supervisors, detectives from the Crash Reconstruction Unit, Internal

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County Homeless Count Down but Still Over 1,000

By MARY PADEN

Contributing Writer

The number of homeless people in Fairfax County decreased by 145 this year over last, declining from 1,204 in 2015 to 1,059 in 2016, according to figures released recently from the annual January count of homeless people throughout the nation organized by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Fairfax County data show an increase in older homeless people.

Since 2008 when the count started, homelessness in Fairfax County has decreased 42 percent, with 776 fewer people counted as homeless on one night in January 2016 than on one night in January 2008.

The "Point-in-Time" count is taken in January because more homeless people tend to come to shelters, where they can be surveyed, in the winter rather than sleeping in tents, cars, or doorsteps.

Sherry Edelkamp, volunteer coordinator of the Ventures in Community Hypothermia Shelter at Rising Hope Church which houses up to 24 homeless individuals a night in the Route 1 corridor during the winter, said she thought the number of homeless people had been "a little lower this year," especially the numbers of temporary

homeless and veterans.

"Last year we still had many people who were

homeless because they had lost their jobs, but many of them have been able to find work and save up to find a place to stay. Additional programs for vets have helped them find housing."

At Good Shepherd Housing & Family Services, Inc., a nonprofit located on Route 1 and funded by private, state and federal funds through the county, demand remained steady this year.

"We have not experienced a drop in demand for our affordable housing," said Good Shepherd Housing President and CEO David Levine.

"We mainly serve unstably housed or homeless families in our housing, about 83 percent of all of our clients," he said. "While the county's Point-in-Time homeless count reported a decline in family homelessness, we still have a waiting list for much of our housing, which includes many families."

Dean Klein, director of the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, is scheduled to speak on the homeless count and Fairfax County's network of hypothermia shelters at the regular meeting of Ventures in Community, an association of local faith communities that operate the Rising Hope hypothermia shelter, on Wednesday, April 6, at 11:30 a.m.

In an earlier statement, Klein said contributing reasons for the reported decline in homelessness include a countywide emphasis on homelessness prevention and housing availability, as well as a unified approach to homeless services with the county's nonprofit and community partners.

Klein's office noted that the Fairfax County data show an increase in older homeless people: 139 single adults — 29 percent of

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Staff photo/Steve Hunt

Ron Fitzsimmons, center, was named the Community Champion for the Mount Vernon District by Volunteer Fairfax. Presenting the award were Volunteer Fairfax CEO Elise Neil Bengtson and Mount Vernon Supervisor Dan Storck.

Alice's Kids Founder Wins Award

Alice's Kids is a non-profit organization that provides short-term financial assistance to children with an immediate need. Relying on referrals from school staff, charitable organizations, government social workers and churches, Alice's Kids provides children with a gift card, typi-

cally between \$25 and \$50, to purchase a needed item through a process which allows the child to keep their anonymity.

Ron Fitzsimmons, President and Executive Director of Alice's Kids, named for his mother, has been named the 2016

See Award Page 10

Pets of the Week

Dobi is a senior male domestic short hair. Animal ID #A067240



Dobi



Frazier is an adult male boxer. Animal ID #A067039

Frazier

Bess is an adult female domestic short hair. Animal ID A067239



Bess



Cosmo is a senior male shah tzu. He has early kidney disease and is on a prescription diet. He also has a heart murmur and is on heart medication. Animal ID #A066978

Cosmo

The Hollin Hall Animal Hospital is proud to sponsor the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria's Pets of the Week. For information on adopting this week's pets go to www.alexandrianimals.org. (703) 746-4774



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www.hollinhallanimalhospital.com

COMMUNITY LIFE



Courtesy photo

Two Men and a Truck help move donated furniture for Good Shepherd Housing clients.

Local Movers Volunteer for GSH

When a homeless family finally gets a roof over their heads, the expense of moving to a new home and buying furniture can break the family's budget, notes Good Shepherd Housing and

Family Services director of development Candice Bennett.

"Enter TWO MEN AND A TRUCK, a local moving business, along with generous donors who, downsizing their own homes, offered up rooms of furniture," said Bennett.

One Good Shepherd Housing family of six was homeless for eight months after losing their home due to overcrowding, she said. Today, not only do they have a full dining room set that could seat the entire family for meals, but sofas, chairs, bedroom set and more.

The problem was the furniture was 80 miles away and they didn't have the money to pay for movers. And so the call went out to TWO MEN AND A TRUCK. Northern VA/DC General Manager Zach Killdall said the company has always believed in giving back to their community.

"When Good Shepherd Housing called and asked us to help their clients out who were in desperate need of furnishings after being homeless, we didn't hesitate to help," he said. "We are proud to be a part of a community like Mount Vernon, which comes together to support families in need."

For more information on donating furniture to Good Shepherd Housing, go to www.goodhousing.org or call Bennett at 703-768-9404, ext. 113.

