

# Spotlight on Community Living

Wednesday, July 6, 2016

Serving D.C. residents who are age 18+ with a disability or age 60+ and their caregivers

Vol 5, No 8

## Executive Director's Message

Laura Newland

The DC Office on Aging is proud to announce that one of our very own, **Aurora Delespin-Jones**, Program Manager, won the **15th Annual Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation Award for Distinguished DC Government Employees**. The Cafritz Awards are designed to recognize and reward outstanding performance and exemplary service by DC government employees.

Aurora has worked for District government for more than 30 years and with the DC Office on Aging (DCOA) for 12 years. She is the foundation of our mission driven agency. She has been here through major transitions, supporting the agency to ensure that DCOA provides the best services to District seniors, people with disabilities and their caregivers.

Aurora has dedicated her entire career to District government and represents DCOA at

its best: dedicated, passionate, creative, and collaborative. As a District, we're only as good as our employees, and I'm proud that Aurora's hard work has been recognized.

One of the things I most admire about Aurora is that she's a living testament to what we're able to achieve when we marry expertise with a true care and concern for our District seniors. She understands the importance of listening—really listening—and putting in the hard work of changing how we do things if that's what it takes to meet seniors where they're at.

Speaking of listening and learning what seniors want, DCOA needs your help to design a new program for FY 17! Mayor Muriel Bowser has been very supportive of villages in the District and she knows how critical it is to engage the community in order to achieve the goals of creating a true age friendly DC.

The District senior village movement has been a model of healthy, active aging in our community at the grass roots level. Villages facilitate access to community support services and connection to on-going civic engagement. Most villages are created and run by their members, who pay an annual fee for membership. Each village is uniquely designed and meets the specific needs of their neighborhood. Since the first village opened in 2002—Beacon Hill in Boston—more than 160 Villages have opened in the US providing full-service programs to nearly 25,000 older adults. The District is proud to have ten villages serving various communities across the District, and poised to launch at least three more within the next few years.

During the development of the FY 2017 budget, the Council added a \$250,000 enhancement to DCOA's budget to support the

village movement, which was supported by the Mayor. The intent of the funds is to promote the development and sustainability of villages, particularly in underserved communities, with some of the funds dedicated to subsidizing memberships for low-income neighbors. As the DC Office on Aging (DCOA) develops plans for allocating the funds, we'd love to hear from you on how villages can support you more, and how we can use District funds to help villages grow sustainably.

Begin by answering these questions:

- District seniors: How would you use funds to improve access to village membership and services?
- Community-based organizations: How would funds best support efforts to serve village members or neighbors?

Please send your thoughts,

ideas, questions, and concerns to [askthedirector.dcoa@dc.gov](mailto:askthedirector.dcoa@dc.gov) by Friday, August 5, 2016.

Thanks for taking the time to express your thoughts and ideas. It's important to us that the community has an opportunity to share how DCOA services can best meet their needs. To learn more about villages and to find a village near you, visit DCOA's website at <http://dcoa.dc.gov/service/senior-villages>.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Last, but certainly not least, please join me in congratulating our **2016 Ms. Senior DC, Billie LaVerne Smith**. Ms. Smith is a resident of Ward 4 and will be representing the District of Columbia at the national Ms. Senior America in Atlantic City later this fall. I also want to thank our 2015 Ms. Senior DC, Wendy Bridges, for her service to the District's seniors during her reign!

## WE HAVE A WINNER!

**Billie LaVerne Smith**, a resident of Ward 4, was crowned Ms. Senior DC! She impressed the judges with her skills on the piano when she played "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" from SOPHISTICATED LADY by Duke Ellington and Bob Bassie. The judges also awarded her Best Interview based on their conversations with the 10 contestants. First Runner-up in the contest was Jessica Haynes-Franklin who was also the winner of the Best Evening Gown Award. She elegantly wore a white lace evening gown during the evening gown segment of the contest. Second Runner-up was awarded to Dr. Judyan Andrews who sang the tune "Teach Me Tonight." Third Runner-up was Elynore Hooker Herron who



also was awarded Best Salesperson for her ad and ticket sales, Elynore used a slide show to depict her original historical writing on "Queens" during the talent segment. Winner of the contestant award for Ms. Congeniality was Elvera Patrick from Ward 8. Pictured from left to right Rebecca Washington, Leanteen Hoston, Elvera Patrick, Iris Johnson, Ms. Senior DC Billie LaVerne Smith, Third Runner-Up Elynore Hooker Herron, Second Runner-Up Ju-

dyan Andrews, Diane "LadyDi" Mackey, First Runner-up Jessica Haynes-Franklin and Jenise Jo Patterson.

The Ms. Senior DC Pageant was presented by the DC Office on Aging, the DC Seniors Cameo Club and the Office on Aging Senior Service Network. Pictures from the event can be viewed from the agency's website and social media pages. Follow DCOA @DCAgingNews on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for more information.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR – JUNE

**5th** – Join the DC Caregivers Online Chat at Noon to discuss "Unresolved Issues in Family Caregiving." Logon to <http://dcoa.dc.gov/page/caregiver-chat> [1] at noon or visit at your convenience and hit replay to see the chat. For more information, contact [linda.irizarry@dc.gov](mailto:linda.irizarry@dc.gov) or call 202-535-1442.

**19th** – Join the DC Caregivers Online Chat at Noon to discuss "Long-Term Care and Tips for Caregivers." Logon to <http://dcoa.dc.gov/page/caregiver-chat> [1] at noon or visit at your convenience and hit replay to see the chat. For more information, contact [linda.irizarry@dc.gov](mailto:linda.irizarry@dc.gov) or call 202-535-1442.

**21st • 10 am-12 pm** – Train to become a DCOA Ambassador, An initiative to train community residents about the programs and services offered by the DC Office on Aging and its Senior Service Network. The ambassadors serve as points of contacts for distributing information about the programs and services available to seniors, people living with disabilities and caregivers in their wards and communities. To register, call 202-724-5622 or email [Darlene.nowlin@dc.gov](mailto:Darlene.nowlin@dc.gov).

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE MAYOR'S FIFTH ANNUAL SENIOR SYMPOSIUM!

This year, attendees can register online or receive a ticket at one of our six senior wellness centers. Look out for registration information soon.

This year's event theme is "**Healthy Homes. Healthy Hearts. Healthy Living.**" The symposium will feature workshops on topics including: senior health and wellness, housing, accessible transpor-

tation, technology, elder justice, effective ways to access government resources, and more.

### Mayor's Fifth Annual Senior Symposium

**Date:** Thursday, August 4, 2016

**Time:** 8:45am-3:00pm

**Location:** Paul Laurence Dunbar Senior High School  
101 N Street, NW