



School News



Catch a play this fall

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) fall play season starts with **Westlake High School's** production of "Little Shop of Horrors," at 7 p.m., Nov. 10-11. The show is rated PG-13 and might not be suitable for younger audiences. **Thomas Stone High School** remains in spooky season with "In a Grove: Four Japanese Ghost Stories," which explores the supernatural history of a bygone village. The shows are 6:30 p.m., Nov. 16-18. Also, during the weekend of Nov. 16-18, **Henry E. Lackey High School** will stage "DNA," a play that delves into bullying and peer pressure with a dash of crime drama. The PG-13 rated show starts at 6:30 p.m. each evening. **North Point High School** is performing "A Midsummer Night's Dream," 7 p.m., Nov. 16-18. Tickets are available at <https://nphs7040.ludus.com/>. **Maurice J. McDonough High School** is preparing "Curtains," a musical comedy whodunit. The shows are 7 p.m., Dec. 1-2, and 2 p.m. Dec. 3. The show is a teen edition of the show and is rated PG. Get tickets at mhsdrama303.booktix.net. **La Plata High School** is taking a trip "Into the Woods," at 6:30 p.m., Dec. 7-9. Visit **St. Charles High School** to meet some pig in "Charlotte's Web," Dec. 8-10. Shows are at 7 p.m., Dec. 8-9, and 2 p.m. Dec. 9-10. For tickets, go to www.gofan.co. **The College of Southern Maryland** goes creepy and kooky with "The Addams Family," 7:30 p.m., Nov. 10, 11, 17 and 18. On Nov. 12 and 19, shows are at 3 p.m.



Honoring veterans

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is honoring staff members who served in the U.S. military. For Veterans Day, schools often recognize staff members who are veterans and invite community members to events honoring military service. This year, CCPS encouraged staff members who are military veterans to share a photo and information about their stint in the service. To view a slideshow featuring CCPS staff, visit the [CCPSTV YouTube channel](#).

North Point grads recognize mentors

North Point High School graduates were recently named Philip Merrill Presidential Scholars at the University of Maryland, College Park.

Maryland seniors Aliah Brown and Mary-Anne Onianwah — both 2020 North Point graduates — are among 20 students named as Merrill Scholars for 2023-2024. The program honors the university's most successful seniors and the mentors who have encouraged and inspired them in kindergarten through 12th grade and college.

Aliah Brown

Brown, who is studying government and politics in the College of Behavioral and Social Sciences, named Anna Newton, a North Point social studies teacher, as a mentor. Newton coaches North Point's mock trial team and met

Brown when she joined the club. "From my very first year on the team, she had unwavering faith in my potential, and her guidance motivated me to work harder, both inside and outside the courtroom," Brown said.

Newton remembered Brown as a student with ambition and drive. "She had this quiet confidence in the belief that putting in hard work will lead to success," Newton said. She said watching students grow and achieve their goals is the ultimate validation for a teacher. "When I found out Aliah chose me



Aliah Brown

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School psychologists met earlier this week at the Starkey building for a lunch in celebration of National School Psychology Week.

Celebrating National School Psychology Week

National School Psychology Week (NSPW) is Nov. 6-10, 2023 and this year's theme is Let's Grow Together. Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) thanks each school psychologist for their dedication to CCPS students and employees and their many contributions to the school system.

Some school psychologists got into the field to help children like they were. "I became a school psychologist because I wanted to help troubled kids like me," Matthew Scott, school psychologist at Arthur Middleton Elementary School, said.

There are 44 school psychologist positions in the school system all of which focus on providing psychoeducational testing, behavior consultation, behavior health assessments, behavior plan development, academic support, intervention recommendations, and parent consultation according to CCPS supervising school psychologist Michael Blanchard, PsyD.

"I was a kid who saw a school psychologist when I was young. [My school psychologist] made a very predominant impact on me and made me want to become one," Jason Anson, school psychologist at Gale-Bailey and Mt. Hope/Nanjemoy elementary schools, said.

Learn more about CCPS school psychologists at <https://bit.ly/3QPa7IP>.

Coats of kindness

Pupil personnel workers (PPWs) Zarina Ameen, left, Pam Jenkins, Ronnie Richmond II and Monica Cherry, along with James Blakeney, community school coordinator at Eva Turner Elementary School, gather donated coats for students who need them. [New winter coats](#) were collected in a community drive coordinated by members of the Charles County School Bus Contractors Association (CCSBCA). The coat drive resulted in a donation of more than 250 coats for children. PPWs and community school coordinators on Nov.



1 selected coats for students attending their respective schools to hand out. By the end of the day, all coats had been sorted based on size, picked up by CCPS staff and were on their way to their new owners.

Principal, teacher of the year noms due Dec. 15

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is looking for nominees for its annual [Principal of the Year](#) and [Teacher of the Year](#) award programs.

Principal of the Year

The Principal of the Year Award honors exemplary leaders for not only their leadership, but for their commitment to providing an exceptional learning environment for students. The principal chosen for the honor will also represent CCPS as the county finalist for *The Washington Post* Principal of the Year award. Nominations are due by 2 p.m., Dec. 15. For more details about the nomination process, click here. Deadline for submission

of nominations is 2 p.m., Friday, Dec. 15.

Teacher of the Year

CCPS is accepting nominations for *The Washington Post* and Maryland Teacher of the Year awards programs. Nominated teachers will be considered as honorees in either one or the other awards program. Additionally, all schools and centers should submit one teacher nominee annually. The deadline for nominations is 2 p.m., Friday, Dec. 15. Additional information about the nomination process is posted on the MyCCPS staff section of the school website of www.ccboe.com.

For more details on the awards programs, contact Rachel Svites at 301-934-7242 or rsvites@ccboe.com for more details.

Sign up to help the United Way of Southern MD

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) partners with United Way.

Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) is again partnering this school year with the United Way of Southern Maryland. CCPS has a long-standing history as a United Way partner. Prior to the pandemic, school system employees supported the annual United Way giving campaigns.

Between now and Dec. 15, CCPS staff can opt to donate through a one-time pledge or payroll deduction. The United Way of Southern Maryland supports more than 30 local human service agencies in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties.

To support, CCPS staff can make a one-time donation or pledge through CCPS payroll deduction. One-time donations can be made online at <https://www.unitedway-southernmaryland.org/pledge-card-charles-county-public-schools>. Staff can also use the online form to set up payroll deductions. The CCPS donation campaign runs through Dec. 15. Payroll deduction through United Way will start in January with the Jan. 5, 2024, paycheck.

For more information about the United Way and how to donate or enroll in the payroll deduction program, visit the [MyCCPS](#) page of www.ccboe.com.

and read what she wrote about my impact on her academic career, I felt tears of joy,” Newton said. “I’m truly honored.”

Brown named Justine DeCamillis, Ph.D., assistant director of justice and legal thought with the university’s MLAW programs, as her college-based mentor.

MaryAnne Onianwah

Onianwah, an information science major in the College of Information Studies, said former North Point teacher Glenn Stergar helped give her the confidence to continue in the field of technology. “In high school, being a woman of color in my technology class was tough,” Onianwah



MaryAnne Onianwah

said. “Glenn Stergar ensured that I pushed myself and gave it my all,” she said. “He had faith that I could become a leader in the technology industry and his mentorship helped me realize these goals.”

Stergar, a Cisco Networking Academy instructor who retired in 2022, said the process of getting into the academy is a rigorous one with only 18 students from Charles County gaining entrance each year. “MaryAnne was a pioneer and one of the first students of the Class of 2022 to earn her [Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician] CCENT Certification,” Stergar said.

She was also one of four North Point students selected to participate in the school’s



MaryAnne Onianwah, left, Anna Newton and Aliah Brown attend the Philip Merrill Scholars Awards program held by the University of Maryland, College Park. The program recognizes select students’ mentors in kindergarten through 12th grade and those who mentor them in college. Newton, a social studies teacher at North Point, was Brown’s mentor in high school. Onianwah named Glenn Stergar as her mentor from North Point. Stergar, who is retired, was unable to attend the ceremony.

computer internship program in her senior year and represented the school in SkillsUSA and Cyber Patriot competitions. “I know she is on her way to becoming a leader in technology as she focuses on being a people-centered technologist,” Stergar said.

He said it was humbling to have received accolades for being a mentor to his former student. “It is an extremely nice way to begin my retirement,” he said, adding, “MaryAnne’s ambition and work ethic always made my job as her teacher-mentor easy and extremely rewarding.”

Ana Ndumu, assistant professor in the university’s College of Information Studies, was

Onianwah’s selection as her college mentor.

The late Philip Merrill, a publisher and philanthropist, created the scholars program to build a community of scholars, faculty members and teachers of students in kindergarten through 12th grade who recognize the importance of teaching and mentoring, according to information provided by the University of Maryland.

Each year the University of Maryland honors outstanding seniors and confers on them the designation of Merrill Presidential Scholars. The scholars are selected by the academic colleges and schools with undergraduate major programs.

What is considered public information regarding staff?

Under the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA), some information about public employees is considered public information. All Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) staff are considered public employees.

Under MPIA and through a formal request, any individual can request public information about any CCPS staff member, including the employee’s job title, work location, CCPS email address, dates of employment and salary.

These items are not considered a part of an employee’s personnel record, which includes confidential information that may not be re-

leased to the public under the MPIA.

CCPS routinely receives requests for CCPS staff information, typically from media outlets or agencies that support transparency in government spending at the federal, state and/or local levels. Please be mindful that staff salary and other information related to a position with CCPS is considered public information.

Additional information about MPIA is <https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/Pages/OpenGov/piaManual.aspx>. CCPS has a public information page on its website at <https://www.ccboe.com/about/public-info-media/public-information-act-requests>.

School News is published by
Charles County Public Schools
301-932-6610
301-934-7220
Fax: 301-932-6651

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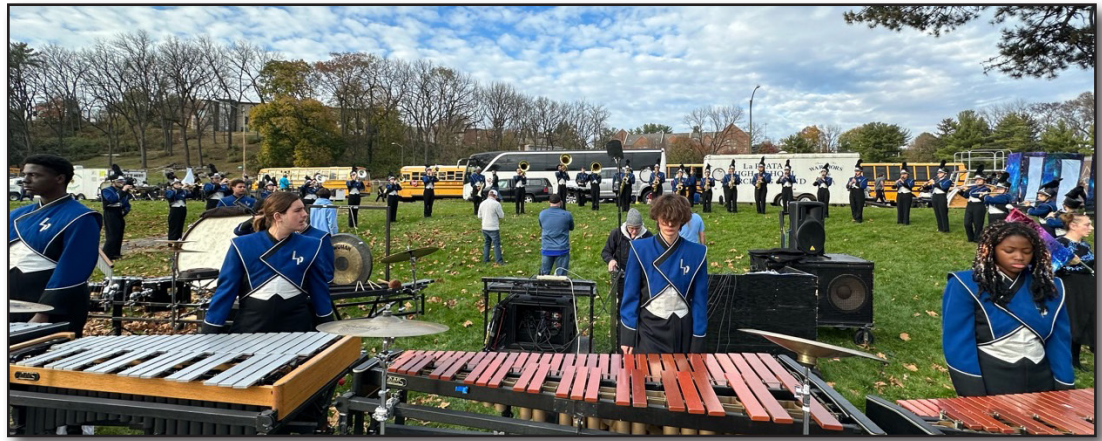
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The Charles County public school system does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age or disability in its programs, activities or employment practices. For inquiries, please contact Kathy Kiessling, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (students) or Niki M. Majors, Title IX/ADA/Section 504 Coordinator (employees/ adults), at Charles County Public Schools, Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, P.O. Box 2770, La Plata, MD 20646; 301-932-6610/301-870-3814. For special accommodations call 301-934-7230 or TDD 1-800-735-2258 two weeks prior to the event. CCPS provides nondiscriminatory equal access to school facilities in accordance with its Use of Facilities rules to designated youth groups (including, but not limited to, the Boy Scouts).

Personnel

Secretary to the Director of Student Services — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. A high school diploma or general education degree is required. Two years demonstrated administrative/secretarial experience is required. Apply by Nov. 21.

Behavioral health clinician — Jesse L. Starkey Administration Building, 12-month position. Licensure by relevant State Board of Examiners/Department of Health required. Minimum of three years of experience working in the human services field; educational setting preferred. Apply by Dec. 3.



There are blue skies ahead for La Plata High School’s Marching Band which recently nabbed awards at the USBands A Class National Championships held in Allentown, Pa., earlier this month.

The La Plata band marches on

The La Plata High School Marching Band recently competed in the USBands A Class National Championships Nov. 4 in Allentown, Pa. The team competed in the IIAA group. Over the past two years, the team has gained new members, a new band instructor and competed in the 2A class of state championship for the first time.

“The kids had a wonderful season,” Wesley Harler, band teacher at La Plata, said. This season the band won three competitions and competed in the state championship for the first time since 2017. This is Harler’s second year working at La Plata and he has already seen the payoff of hard work that the students have completed.

Since 2016, La Plata has competed in the USBands competition. The band recently swept the competition in the 2A Maryland and Virginia State Championships on Oct. 28 at Stevenson University. The championship included bands

from Maryland, Virginia and Delaware. The marching band and color guard soared above the competition with a score of 87.9. This year’s show is titled, “Into the Cosmos” with music written by Rob Stein, the drill design by Justin Presley and the color guard design by Ashton Gordon.

“We have really special team of students, parents and staff at La Plata and I am so grateful for our success this season,” Harler said. “The season is a direct result of the countless hours of hard work by the amazing students, the staff that share their talents with the kids, a team of dedicated parent volunteers that get the kids where they need to be and make sure they are looking good and our awesome bus drivers.”

North Point, Maurice J. McDonough and Westlake high schools are other competing Charles County Public Schools (CCPS) schools with marching bands.

Calm the holiday chaos with some free assistance

You already know that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, ComPsych GuidanceResources, can assist staff who are having issues with stress, depression, anxiety, workplace difficulties, substance abuse, marital problems, family or parenting conflicts, grief, violence and unhealthy lifestyles.

But did you know? The EAP can also assist with:

- Finding child and elder care.
- Hiring movers or home repair contractors.
- Divorce, adoption, family law, wills and

trusts.

- Retirement planning, taxes.
- Relocation, mortgage and insurance.
- Budgeting, debt and bankruptcy.

For additional information call toll-free at 1-877-465-0865. The TTY phone number is 800-697-0353. Online tools are available at www.guidanceresources.com. To create an account, click Register and use the web ID: CCPSEAP.

To learn more, [click here](#). To view a video on the program and its benefits, [click here](#).