Health Check 2013

On November 4, the Health Check 2013 health fair took place at the Langley Park Community Center. The doors were supposed to open at noon, but by then the large space was already fairly crowded. And shortly after noon, the attendance was so great that it was hard to move around. It may have been the most successful ALP-LPCC health event in a decade.

There were blood pressure checks, dermatology examinations, glucose tests, flu shots, HIV tests, oral and dental health checks, spine checks, advice for teens and pregnant women, information about a wide variety of problems, consultations, chair massages, and much much more. There were even zumba sessions!

One unexpected provider showed up and another didn't show—fair exchange. But the score of provider organizations that participated were well prepared to offer health services needed in the area. We had Johns Hopkins Hospital, Suburban Hospital, Maryland School of Dentistry, Maryland School of Pharmacy, CCI, Maryland Center, Adventist Health, CASA’s Health Program, Doug Sims Chiropractor, Maryland Physicians Care (Healthy Groove), Identity, Maryland Health Connector, Montgomery College Nursing Program, NARAL, PGC Department of Health, TAYA, Walgreens, Healthy Futures, MMYC/LAYC, Amerigroup, and more. Wow!

What wonderful supporters: Anis, Norma, José, Doug, Julia, Jana, Yevgeniy, Therese, Clemencia, Kathy, Amber,

Some People Still Deny Global Warming!

A terrible storm hit the New Orleans area a few years ago. More recently, a terrible storm hit the New Jersey shore and lower Manhattan in New York City. A few days ago, a powerful typhoon leveled most of a city in the Philippines. Many scientists state that global warming is causing the frequent powerful weather upheavals, but some Americans can’t come to believe the science—just like some people don’t believe in evolution or that the Holocaust happened. But with water rising thanks to the warming, the future of lower Manhattan and Miami Beach and perhaps part of Washington D.C. will in this century be in jeopardy. We’d better start believing and then severely cutting amount of polluting gases from coal and oil and other substances that enter our atmosphere—if we care about the future of our Planet Earth.

The Fight to Preserve Langley Park

As readers, residents, and businesspeople know, the twin forces of change—The Purple Line and the Sector Plan—are likely to cause significant changes in the Langley Park area, including widespread gentrification and displacement. Do you shop at Red Apple? Eat at Woodlands? Maybe not for long as higher rents force many small businesses out. And in any case, many of the regular customers are likely to be displaced. But there are efforts to preserve the Langley Park area as a vibrant working class immigrant neighborhood. Two of the leaders of the effort are Jorge Sactic (pictured) and Zorayda Moreira. Of course, Action Langley Park is also involved in the effort.

Delegations are being sent to state and county offices. The first just went to Annapolis, and its members included CASA’s Gustavo Torres and Zorayda Moreira, Langley Park business association leader Jorge Sactic, the U. of Maryland’s Gerrit Knaap, and others.

"Health Check" continues on Page 3
Bishops on Immigration

In a November letter to House Speaker John Boehner, Cardinal Timothy Dolan, president of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that immigration reform is “a matter of great moral urgency that cannot wait any longer for action.” He urged the House to “address the issue as soon as possible, ideally prior to the end of the calendar year. ... As a moral matter, our nation cannot continue to receive the benefits of the work and contributions of undocumented immigrants without extending them the protection of the law. Keeping these human beings as a permanent underclass of workers who are unable to assert their rights or enjoy the fruits of their labor is a stain on the soul of the nation.” So the Bishops join the chorus of those who want a good comprehensive immigration bill, but apparently Speaker Boehner listens to the Tea-Party faction rather than the Bishops and a majority of the members of the House of Representatives. Is he politically fearful or plain evil?

Note: The Hill newspaper is running a two-part article on how immigration legislation died. Check it out at http://thehill.com/homenews/senate/189917-how-immigration-died-%E2%80%94-part-1. Try not to cry.

Get to Work!!

The House of Representatives’ Republican majority whip told demonstrators in his Bakersfield office last week that the 16 days remaining on the House calendar this year were too few to take up immigration reform because it was such a complex issue. Well, there are more than 40 days left in the year, so how about the House working as hard as most of the rest of us? Stay until the work is done, even if it requires flying home the day before Christmas and returning the day after? Or how about locking the House in its chamber (with some toilet access awarded for good behavior) until a reasonable bill is past?

Who’s Making Public Decisions?

The quality of some government decisionmakers surely is below what should be our nation’s standards. Three examples: Justice Scalia contemptuously described the landmark civil rights legislation known as the Voting Rights Act as the “perpetuation of racial entitle-

ment.” But we know that African-Americans, Latino/as, and others have been discriminated against by officials. And the North Carolina voting decisions make that clear. Ah Rand Paul, the senator who created his own ophthalmology board (presumably to avoid an established one) and widely plagiarizes. And Georgia Representative Paul Broun, who said that evolution, embryology and the Big Bang theory are “lies straight from the pit of hell” meant to convince people that they do not need a savior. And these people are making decisions impacting us. Ugh!

Obesity and Poverty

A report on obesity prepared by the Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health reveals that in the highest income families, the rate of childhood obesity is a bit over 20%, but in the lowest-income families, that rate is more than double—over 40%. (The national and Maryland figures are about 31%) How can that be? One factor is the availability of nour-

ishing fruits and vegetables for some of us: available re-

proximity and price. Another is the parents’ knowledge of healthful versus filling food. The Langley Park area has many grocery stores with fruits and vegetables; the residents are lucky. But knowledge of food quality may be lacking, and it should be introduced to children in school as well as adults in ESOL classes. Fat: so what? Answer: additional health challenges such as diabetes and heart trouble. That should be a powerful warning.

Don’t We Teach Civics?

A 2012 survey of American citizens found that only one-in-three of the respondents could pass the civics portion of the immigrant naturalization test given by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Not an impressive record, considering that 97% of immigrants applying for US citizenship are able to pass the test. Here are some of the citizen respondents’ results: 85% of respondents could not define “the rule of law”; 75% did not know the function of the judicial branch; 71% were unable to identify the Constitution as the “supreme law of the land”; and only 58% knew that the first 10 amendments are called the Bill of Rights. Maybe such a void of knowledge is related to extremist voting in recent years? Maybe “we the people” has fallen from grace, to be re-

placed by “they the enemy.”

Immigrant Teens Are Criminals! ??

Criminology researcher Alex Piquero and colleagues at UT Dallas find that data do not support the widespread perception that immigrants or foreign-born individuals are more likely to commit serious crimes or be-

come serial criminals. Indeed, the native-born counterparts have high criminal involvement. Studies show that crime involvement increases rapidly among successive generations of immigrants. Risk of persistent offending is greatest among those with high levels of assimilation who reside in disadvantaged contexts, particularly

Langley Park Area Has a Cyber Café!

Yes, it’s true. It’s called @Cyber Café Llc, and it’s located in La Union Mall, 1401 University Blvd., unit G-32. The bilingual Spanish-English staff offers lessons, services, even business cards. Tel. 301.476.6106. (No: this is not a paid advertisement, just an area update.)
among the second generation youth.

What is the reason for the lack of criminal involvement amongst first-generation immigrants? The reason apparently is a family unit that is very protective and instills a feeling of “privilege” to immigrant children for being able to live in the U.S. “Immigration is not a bad thing. The crime problem in America is not an immigrant problem. It’s an American problem.” (The research report is in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence, October 2013)

**Help for Depressed Mothers**

A recent report indicates that “weekly home visits that provide short-term, relationship-focused therapy, can relieve depression among low-income minority mothers. Faced with the dual demands of motherhood and poverty, as many as one fourth of low-income minority mothers struggle with major depression. But the stigma associated with mental illness, coupled with limited access to quality treatment, prevent the majority of these struggling women from receiving help.”

Even in the face of poverty and personal histories of abuse or violence, such help can have far reaching benefits. "The series of convenient, one-hour therapy sessions relieved depression in participants much better than standard clinic-based care. The study participants also continued to improve eight-months after the treatment ended, regaining a sense of hope and control over their lives and reporting feeling more connected to and supported by others." And a bonus: there are benefits not only for mothers, but also for their children.

Source: The efficacy of interpersonal psychotherapy for depression among economically disadvantaged mothers, Development and Psychopathology 25 (2013)

**Prejudice and Gun Ownership**

A report has just been issued that indicates a positive correlation between (a) prejudiced views such as “people of color are morally inferior to Euro-Americans” and (b) gun ownership. Interesting. There is no indication that the prejudicial view causes people to buy guns, or that buying guns leads one to be prejudiced. But apparently the two characteristics tend to occur together. If so, does that mean people of color are in danger? After all, some people wish the morally inferior were not around.


**Legal Counsel Needed**

Each year, thousands of New Yorkers—parents, siblings, employers, workers and students—face detention and the possibility of deportation without the assistance of legal counsel. These New Yorkers are isolated from their loved ones and confront the possibility of long-term and, in some cases, permanent separation from their communities.

New York City through the New York Immigrant Fam-ily Unity Project (NYIFUP) is launching the nation’s first program that provides legal services for detained immigrants facing deportation. Approximately 60% of New York residents facing deportation for being in the country illegally do not have attorneys to represent their interests. The pioneering program is funded through the NYC council and is available for NYC immigrants who cannot afford legal counsel. NYC is committing an initial investment of $500,000 for the program; it is expected to help nearly 200 immigrants—but alas, there are about 900 detained indigent immigrants in NYC annually.

This program must be expanded and must spread across the country. To be thrown out of the country without legal representation sure violates American legal standards. Hey, Maryland! Hey, Prince George’s County. Let’s adhere to American values.

Sources: http://www.hispanicallyspeakingnews.com, populardemocracy.org

**A What?**

“I go to Alexandria in Virginia for work every day, and it’s clean. There’s no trash, the homes are old, but the lawns are mowed. … Then I drive through my neighborhood, and I see trash and Christmas decorations up all summer long … . Other people say Prince George’s is a slum.” That’s what Emily Hickey of Lanham said a few days ago to county officials at a “listening session” at Eleanor Roosevelt High School.

There are different standards of cleanliness in the metro area and around the world. Your editor remembers escorting a friend from Finland around Manhattan. She said, “The sidewalks and streets are very dirty.” I was surprised because I was so used to the situation that I didn’t really notice. In Prince George’s County, there are several hundred thousand residents with low incomes living in neighborhoods where there are too-few trash containers and insufficient beautification. In some immigrant areas, people come from countries where tossing trash on the street is normal. So if change is to take place, education and infrastructure are starters.

There’s also a need for improved streetscape work along University Boulevard. How about reviving the project that was designed some years ago?

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**Rain Check Rebate Workshop**

**November 20**

Do you want to get paid to clean up stormwater runoff and beautify your community? Some Prince George’s County residents have already qualified for cash rebates simply by installing “green” stormwater management practices. If the answer is yes, come to the November 20 workshop to learn more. The program provides cash rebates to residents and businesses for managing rainwater runoff on their property. The workshop will explore the best management practices covered by the program, including rain barrels, rain gardens, cisterns, tree planting, permeable pavement or pavers, pavement removal, and green roofs. The date is November 20, the time is 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., and the place is College Park City Hall, 4500 Knox Road. For information, call 311.
Elmer, Vivian, Michelle, Manuela, Carina, Elliot, and many more. From all: Thanks! Gracias!

The staff of the Community Center and Action Langley Park organized the event. Special praise must go to Center Director Lourdes Sulc; her gentle and successful managerial skills are remarkable. From all: Thanks! Gracias!

One reason for the success was extra promotional activity thanks to the contributions of the Adelante youth organization (thanks Emily Putzer), the Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative team (thanks Loretta Tillery), Center Director Lourdes Sulc, MNCPPC community relations specialist Nydia Ocasio, and others. From all: Thanks! Gracias!

And there’s more to come. Mark your calendars for 4 May 2014 starting at noon when Langley Park Day takes place in and adjacent to the Langley Park Community Center. It includes a health fair plus dance and musical performances, children’s games and activities, food and craft vendors, and more.

Were you at Health Check 2013? If so, do you have any suggestions for future events? One suggestion we received was to have a couple of food vendors nearby. Another was to provide maps of the event site so that people could more easily navigate the area.

Did you take any good photos of the event? If so, please share them with BLP and those in the ALP network.

Mark your calendar for Langley Park Day on 4 May 2014!

The Adelante program is community-based with multi-level interventions designed to address the co-occurrence of risky behaviors among Latino youth in the Langley Park area. Adelante is part of a larger health disparities center that is funded by NIH and located at George Washington University. The overarching goal of Adelante is to build community, family and individual assets as a way of preventing youths’ risky behavior. To do this, Adelante combines a set of community-wide program components that are available to youth and families in the Langley Park area, and a more targeted set of program components for high-risk Latino high school and middle school students and their families. Information: 301.495.0441

Should We Learn from Oklahoma?

Many of the readers of this newsletter may have a somewhat negative image of Oklahoma. Yes, it has a good NBA basketball team, and yes there is a lot of farmland. But aren’t the people who live there “okies”—a term once quite prevalent? Well, maybe it’s not so simple. A lead article by Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times (10 November 2013) is about a program in that state that should be emulated everywhere in the USA.

“Every 4-year-old in Oklahoma gets free access to a year of high-quality prekindergarten. Even younger children from disadvantaged homes often get access to full-day, year-round nursery school, and some families get home visits to coach parents on reading and talking more to their children. The aim is to break the cycle of poverty, which is about so much more than a lack of money. ...

“Research suggests that high-poverty parents, some of them stressed-out kids themselves, don’t always ‘attach’ to their children or read or speak to them frequently. ... Mountains of research suggests that early childhood initiatives are the best way to chip away at inequality and reduce the toll of crime, drugs and educational failure. Repeated studies suggest that these programs pay for themselves: build preschools now, or prisons later. ...

“Oklahoma also supports home visits so that social workers can coach stressed-out single moms (or occasionally dads) on the importance of reading to children and chatting with them constantly. The social workers also drop off books; otherwise, there may not be a single child’s book in the house. ... researchers find sharp gains in prereading, prewriting and prearithmetic skills, as well as improvements in social skills. Some experts think that gains in the ability to self-regulate and work with others are even more important than the educational gains—and certainly make for less disruptive classes. [One researcher] estimates that the benefits of Oklahoma’s program will outweigh the costs by at least a ratio of 3 to 1.” Maryland??

Who is the person, apparently a movie star, pictured to the right? There will be a reward for the first person who identifies his full name and current place of employment.

(Photo obtained from Facebook.)
PG Fire Chief Marc Bashoor  
**Has Tips for Safety During the Holidays**

- Keep your family and overnight guests safe with a working smoke alarm on every level of the house, in each bedroom, and in the halls adjacent to the bedrooms. Test smoke alarms monthly, and replace batteries at least once a year.
- Overnight guests should be instructed on your home’s fire escape plan and designated meeting place for your family.
- Have a fire extinguisher available not more than 10 feet from the stove, on the exit side of the room.
- A standard Class ABC multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher is recommended. Know how to use your fire extinguisher.
- Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
- Keep the kitchen off limits to young children and adults who are not helping with food preparations. This will lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps.
- When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. Clothing can catch on fire and jewelry can become entangled with pot handles, causing spills and burns.
- Cook on the back burners when possible, and turn pot handles inward so they don’t extend over the edge of the stove.
- Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is being cooked. Unattended cooking is the number one cause of home fires and fire-related injuries in Prince George’s County. According to the USFA; cooking is the leading cause of all Thanksgiving Day fires in residential buildings at 69 percent. Nearly all of these cooking fires (97 percent) are small, confined fires with limited damage.
- If you use a deep fryer, please, exercise extreme caution and follow manufacturer instructions. The report from the USFA found that these cooking devices accounted for about 1% of Thanksgiving Day fires.
- Keep Thanksgiving decorations and kitchen clutter away from sources of direct heat.
- Candles are often part of holiday decorations. The Fire/EMS Department strongly encourages the use of battery powered candles and discourages the use of candles with an open flame. If you use candles; they should never be left burning when you are away from home, or after going to bed. Candles should be placed where children will not be tempted to play with them, and where guests will not accidentally brush against them. The candleholder should be completely non-combustible and difficult to knock over. The candle should not have combustible decorations around it.

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**Congratulations!**

**ACTION LANGLEY PARK CONGRATULATES THE NEW MISS UNIVERSE, GABRIELA ISLE. SHE IS ALSO MISS VENEZUELA—THE SEVENTH VENEZUELAN TO WIN THE CROWN IN THE MISS UNIVERSE PAGEANT, THE THIRD IN THE LAST SIX YEARS! THE CONTESTANT FROM SPAIN FINISHED SECOND FOLLOWED BY MISS ECUADOR. NO WONDER MANY PEOPLE WANT TO LEARN SPANISH!**

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**Kevin’s Words of Wisdom**

According to news reports, PGCAES head Kevin Maxwell had this to say at a recent meeting: “If you want to be successful, you can’t tolerate mediocrity.” Alas, *mediocris* in Latin means moderate, halfway up the mountain. Most of us are half way up the mountain, thus many of us are not at the mountain top. Indeed, few of us reach the top. So most teachers* and students are halfway up too. If we exclude the mediocre, there won’t be many teachers* and there won’t be many students. Let’s hope that those teachers who are at the top can communicate with the mediocre masses in the middle.

*Teachers include professors

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**Richard Cohen’s Reality Words**

“People with conventional views must repress a gag reflex when considering the mayor-elect of New York — a white man married to a black woman and with two biracial children.”

Those were Cohen’s words in his opinion column in the Washington Post (11 November 2013) that have been fiercely and widely criticized as a slur on many Americans. And polls report that over the past half-century, stated tolerance of biracial couples has increased dramatically.

But surely negative attitudes towards African-Americans and Latino immigrants still prevail. Do Cohen’s critics think that we are now free of prejudice? That many people, looking at a biracial couple (especially dark-light), don’t have negative thoughts or thoughts of pity? There is more progress to make in the USA.

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**AFFORDABLE CARE ACT**

The Open Enrollment period for the Affordable Care Act (also known by the poorly chosen nickname “Obamacare”) runs until 31 March 2014. Remember, if you want the health coverage to begin 1 January 2014, you have to sign up by December 15.


As everyone knows, there have been computer software problems with the state and national health sites. But if the reader experiences such problems, then telephoning is the way to proceed. The number is 1855.642.8572.

Our photo is on the Maryland web site. Look how happy the two are because (maybe) they have just signed up for affordable health insurance. Surely, this is not a posed promotional photo!??
ESL for Life and Work at PGCC

Prince George’s Community College now offers ESL for Life and Work, a series of courses for intermediate and advanced ESL students. The courses include ESL for Small Business, Computer Skills, Pronunciation, and Conversation. Classes meet at locations throughout the county. Upcoming registration sessions are:

- Thursday, December 12, 6:30 pm, Northwestern High School, 7000 Adelphi Road, Hyattsville
- Friday, December 13, 9:30 am, Redeemer Lutheran Church, 3799 East West Highway, Hyattsville
- Monday, January 13, 6:30 pm Langley Park McCormick Elementary School, 8201 15th Ave., Langley Park

For more information, email TransitionESL@pgcc.edu or call 240-508-7204.

FREE TUTORING

For middle and high school students

College students from George Washington University provide free tutoring every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Maryland Multicultural Youth Center (a sibling of the Latin American Youth Center in D.C.) at the organization’s offices at 7411 Riggs Road, Suite 418. Telephone (301) 431-3121. No advanced registration is necessary. Just show up...and learn.

FREE MATH HELP

The “Count On Us” mathematics show provides live homework assistance. During the show, viewers can call in questions at 301 772-0080 or email cou@pgcps.org. The program is on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4 to 6 p.m. on Comcast 96 and Verizon 38.

MONTGOMERY COLLEGE

Smart Start Information Session

At the Takoma Park - Silver Spring campus (7625 Fenton St.), the session takes place on December 10 starting at 5:30 p.m. The location is the Student Services Building, Room 329. Learn about the enrollment process, get financial aid and registration information, tour the Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus. Information: terre.thomas@montgomerycollege.edu.

PURPLE LINE FORUM: LIGHT RAIL

Purple Line NOW! is hosting a forum with Maryland’s Gubernatorial Candidates on Tuesday, December 10 at the Performing Arts Center on the Silver Spring/Takoma Park campus of Montgomery College. The focus is the light-rail Purple Line. PL/N is still issuing invitations to candidates but so far it has confirmations from Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, Delegate Jolene Ivey speaking on behalf of Attorney General Doug Gansler, Delegate Ron George, and Delegate Heather Mizeur. Tickets are free, but space is limited so you must reserve your seat(s) in advance—by completing an easy ticket form—access at http://www.purplelinenow.com. The Forum begins at 7:00 p.m. (but PL/N asks that people be in seats no later than 6:45 p.m.), will last about an hour.

Note: Light-rail is a modern streetcar; it is not a bicycle.

What & When

Here we list upcoming ALP activities and other events that are called to our attention. Have an event to list? If so, send information well in advance to actionlangleypark@yahoo.com.

2013

November 20—the last Crossroads Farmers’ Market for the year. It’s 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the back parking lot of 7676 New Hampshire Avenue—one block east of Langley Park. We wish the market could be year around, but alas snow doesn’t mix well with some crops. So take advantage now!

Every third Saturday of the month—Free Community Dinner & Food Distribution at St. Michael & All Angels Church, 8501 New Hampshire Ave., 5 to 6:30 p.m.

November-December—Enrollment continues for the Affordable Care Act via the Maryland Health Connection. The Affordable Care Act will make health insurance affordable, but you have to enroll. See box at the bottom of Page 5.

November 16—How to Get into College, at Stamp Union at the University of Maryland, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. In Spanish (with a little English). See box in left column.

November 16—PG Parent Town Hall, at the Metro Points Hotel (8500 Annapolis Road) in New Carrollton, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Free breakfast, lunch, and child care! Information at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wn119Wuw9tc.

November 16—Health Insurance, Market Place Enrollment. 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Largo Student Center of PG Community College. For information to pre-register, call 301.909.7061.

November 23—Pottery Show and Sale, at the Langley Park Community Center from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. The work of regional potters will be for sale at an affordable price.

December 7—Takoma Park Alternative Gift Fair, noon to 4 p.m. at the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, 310 Tulip Ave. More information at http://www.aggw.org.

December 10—Purple Line forum. See box in left column.

December 11—Langley Park’s Transforming Neighborhoods Initiative holds an open session with area residents and businesspeople urged to attend and to provide feedback on the steps taken and the plans for future steps. It’s from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at the Langley Park Community Center.

December 12—ESL for Life and Work at PGCC. Also December 13 and January 13. See box at top of adjacent column.

2014

Happy New Year!

April 26, 2014—Maryland Day at the University of Maryland, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lots to do, lots to see!

May 4, 2014—Langley Park Day, a festival of music, dance, information, and food plus a major health fair. Noon to 3 p.m. for the health fair indoors, until 4 p.m. outside for the performances, children’s activities, and more. In and adjacent to the Langley Park Community Center.

May 30, 2014—High Point graduation at the Comcast Center on the U. of Maryland campus, 1:30 p.m. Northwestern’s is May 28 at 1:30 p.m.

Attention health professionals: The health fairs in Langley Park, which take place in November and May, always need health professionals with special screening and/or consultation skills. Can you and will you help?

DOCS IN PROGRESS: The Docs in Progress is an organization that encourages making documentaries and then screens them. The schedule for the current “community stories festival” is at the below address. Some of the documentaries, including one on the Crossroads Farmers Market (“At the Crossroads”), will soon be on YouTube. Further information is at http://docsin progress.org/events/142/community-stories-festival.