

## Best of Braddock Awards and Recognition

Wednesday, July 13, 2016

Picnic Supper at 6 PM, Awards Presentation at 7 PM

### Citizens of the Year

#### Casey McCollum

Olde Forge/Surrey Square CA

For a decade, Casey has worked with the local rescue group, A Forever Home Rescue Foundation, fostering dogs. She takes in mostly pregnant dogs and puppies, which requires a huge amount of time and effort, and are among the hardest to place. She also fosters dogs that are rescued from hoarding situations or puppy mills, providing them an oasis of peace for them to recover on their way to finding permanent homes. While it is often said that dog is man's best friend, Casey's compassion, dedication and unconditional love for rescued dogs has proved that she is truly a dog's best friend.

#### Glen Erickson-Bell

Chapel Hill CA

For the past five years, Glen Erickson-Bell has been the self-proclaimed steward of Oak Hill Park, a 10 acre park located just north of Braddock Road, performing minor clean up and maintenance tasks. The Robertson/Robinson family cemetery is located within the park. In October 2015, in an email sent to Elizabeth Crowell, he asked that attention be paid to the park. December 2015, after not having received any response from the Park Authority and frustrated by a lack of maintenance to the park grounds, he enlisted members of the Friends of Accotink Creek to determine how to "finally get this park added back to the general maintenance schedule." This ultimately led to the formation of the Friends of Oak Hill Park. Perhaps the efforts of Glen Erickson-Bell and his involvement with the Friends of Oak Hill Park can best be summed up in the fact that residents are beginning to use the park again now that the trails are clear, the trash has been picked up, and the Park Authority has begun paying attention to the park more than it has in the past. This is the story of a local citizen who cared about his community and called on local government to address specific issues. When he did not get the answer he believed he should have gotten, he persevered and convinced both his neighbors and local government representatives that the issues were both real, and important, and worthy of their attention.

## Club or Organization

### Holy Spirit Transportation Ministry

Richard and Mary Chobot formed the Transportation Ministry at Holy Spirit Church to help those who need rides to medical appointments or procedures. They set up a list of volunteers and contacted them when rides were needed. This is such a caring and needed service that helps so many. At times, Richard and Mary have kindly helped others not in the Parish, and occasionally have taken people shopping, as well. These two, and their volunteers, provide a much needed service to the community and should be lauded for this.

### Boy Scout Troop 1965

The troop, chartered by the Lake Braddock Community Association, are active and involved members of the Braddock District. In keeping with the Scout mission to be a good citizen and community member, the troop performs numerous service projects in and around the Lake Braddock Community every year, and routinely contribute to local assistance programs in the county. In the past year, the 40 Scouts Troop 1965 have completed multiple service projects, ranging from conservation projects to constructing simple structures for area schools and sports clubs. They collectively volunteered over 800 hours in those efforts. They routinely support the community's semi-annual clean-up days, and the Scouts, their leaders and their parents always support the Lake Braddock Community Picnic and Carnival held each Labor Day weekend. The commitment of these Scouts and the adult volunteers who lead them is to be commended and certainly makes them worthy of recognition as what is the Best of Braddock.

### Staff, Volunteers and Friends of Kings Park Library

Those who have used the Kings Park library in the past can sense the added intensity and volume of patron use in the last two years. With the closure of Pohick Library for renovation, Fairfax residents have immensely increased their use of Kings Park Library. All of the staff, including those who transferred to Kings Park from Pohick, the volunteers and the Friends of Kings Park Library have worked diligently to meet the tremendous demand. The result has been a very smooth operation. For the size of the facility (a local library rather than a regional library) activity could have been overwhelming. However, all parties who work and support Kings Park Library patrons have made it work. And, the level of activity seems only to continue to rise. These are the people who have made Kings Park Library one of the most cherished in the County. Those patrons who have been using the library lately probably do not understand exactly how much work and adjustments have been made to accommodate the extra traffic and circulation involved. Now it is difficult to find a room that is not in use with a special program or a special group. Sometimes it is difficult to find a parking space on the library grounds. Yet, it all seems to work out, thanks to the dedicated work of the staff, volunteers and Friends of KINGS PARK LIBRARY, and the outstanding coordination and work of all parties involved in providing exceptional service in a time of great demand make them deserving of being recognized as the Combined Organizations making a difference in Braddock District.

## Friends of Oak Hill Park

In late December 2015, after not having received any response from the Park Authority and frustrated by a lack of maintenance to the Oak Hill Park grounds, Glen Erickson-Bell enlisted members of the Friends of Accotink Creek to determine how to “finally get this park added back to the general maintenance schedule.”

Further, he began talking with neighbors and acted upon an idea to establish the Friends of Oak Hill Park to bring together the communities that border the park for a collaborative support effort. On Thursday January 21st, 2016, with four other core members, he informally organized the Friends of Oak Hill Park, set out the following agenda and established the first meeting date.

The Friends of Oak Hill Park had their first meeting at Braddock Hall on Monday February 29th at 7:00 PM with support from Friends of Accotink Creek and Friends of Lake Accotink Park in attendance, where a set of actions were agreed upon between the Friends group and the Park Authority and put into motion.

On March 4th, the Friends established a Facebook page. Mr. Erickson-Bell met with Leslie Gerhard, FCPA, and attended Invasive Management Area training so that he could execute an IMA plan in Oak Hill Park to remove invasive English Ivy vines that were threatening a number of trees. He then conducted several independent IMA workdays. On May 5th, Mr. Erickson-Bell again met with Leslie Gerhard in Oak Hill Park and identified a site for a Native Planting Project in the Fall as part of the IMA Site requirements

On Saturday April 2nd, the Friends of Oak Hill Park participated in the Braddock District Wide Accotink & Pohick Watershed Clean Up, along with sister Friends groups – Friends of Accotink Creek, Friends of Lake Accotink Park, Friends of Long Branch Stream Valley, Friends of Royal Lake, Friends of Woodglen Lake, Friends of Rabbit Branch Park, and Friends of Audrey Moore RECenter.

The Friends of Oak Hill Park had about 30 volunteers converge on the park to remove trash and take on the monumental task of cutting away invasive English Ivy vines attacking the many pine trees in the park. 10 or so volunteers who took it upon themselves to haul away trash that had been dumped in the park and 20 or so volunteers that volunteered for the IMA workday. This was the first clean up and Invasive Management day as an organized Friends of Oak Hill Park group, and it was a resounding success.

On May 3rd, Mr. Erickson-Bell lead an FOHP work-party to remove years of road debris to include broken car parts and glass shards along the Braddock Road sidewalk bridge over Accotink Creek.

The Friends of Oak Hill Park are highly deserving of Best of Braddock recognition.

## Young Person of the Year

Bonnibelle Bishop

Olde Forge/Surrey Square CA and Woodson HS

Bonnie is 15 and a rising sophomore at Woodson HS, and has been involved in community service since elementary school days when she participated in Laps for Learning every year. In middle school she increased her active community service by baking cookies for the police and firefighters, volunteered to clean-up the pool property, delivered community newsletters and serving on Student Council. She's a gymnast at Cardinal Gymnastics, where she was awarded their Best Sportsmanship Award in 2015, and competes for Woodson HS. She swims for her local Brandywine Barracuda Swim Team, and has continued to be active in community service as she entered high school. In January of this year, Bonnie was selected as Miss Virginia Junior Teen America. Miss Teen America is a pageant program that focuses on community service and state-wide stewardship for teen girls. Her responsibilities include representing Virginia throughout the year at community service events, special appearances at teen and children's events, and promoting her platform of Anti-Bullying. Over Memorial Day Weekend, she participated in events for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) – a support program for teens who have lost a parent during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. She has also supported this year's "Evening of Hope" fundraiser for NIH Children's Hospital, where she met and became friends with Connor, a patient at NIH, with whom she exchanges emails and has promised to visit when he returns for his next rounds of treatments. This has caused her to volunteer for other NIH events. In April she (in league with her mother) helped provide support for a family of five who were devastated by a home fire. They acted as a central donation point, and collected over \$500 in cash, gift cards for new items, and several cartons of clothing, shoes, bedding, toys and other household items to ease the adjustment for a family that suddenly found itself homeless. Whether in her own neighborhood or at a large national hospital, Bonnie's desire to serve others with enthusiasm and energy has produced positive results. The Braddock District is proud to honor her as Young Person of the Year.

## Special Recognition

Paula McKinley  
Olde Forge/Surrey Square CA

In a demonstration of community spirit, Paula McKinley has led the Olde Forge/Surrey Square effort recognize neighborhood veterans and active duty service members on multiple occasions. For Memorial Day and 4<sup>th</sup> of July, the neighborhood has picnics and parades of which they are very proud. But perhaps most striking for those two holidays is the mile long display of flags lining the main streets in the community. Over 800 flags are placed every 10 feet on both sides of the street. Paula purchased the flags herself, and personally oversees the efforts of the volunteers placing the flags. The display has resulted in so many compliments from so many people – some of whom chose to live in this Braddock District neighborhood based on their favorable impression. Paula certainly deserves recognition as an example of what is the Best of Braddock.

Ron Luxenburg  
Lake Braddock

Sometimes it's the little things that count. Ron is a friendly, happy neighbor whom people enjoy seeing and they would like to recognize him for a special kindness. This past winter, when it snowed so heavily and no one wanted to leave their houses, Ron was out clearing the snow with his plow clearing the snow from the cul-de-sac and then generously cleared off all the driveways and walkways without ever being asked and refusing payment. While some neighbors brought over cookies in appreciation, the Tanyu family felt he deserved more than that. So, for the care and concern he shows for others in the community, the Braddock District is happy to recognize Ron Luxenburg as part of what is the Best of Braddock.

Don Wallace

While Don lives just across Burke Road in the Springfield District, several of the many things he volunteers his time for are in the Braddock District or benefit Braddock District residents. He sings with the Wakefield Chorale, volunteers on the Northwest Federal Credit Union Credit Committee, is a reader with Read Across America, cooks for the Little River UCC Friday Night Out program, and serves on the board of Food for Others. Since 2008, Don has provided presentations to organizations whose programs about the need to donate food for thousands of individuals in Northern Virginia who do not have enough to eat. In those presentations, to the Burke Racquet and Swim Club and the Philanthropic Educational Opportunity folks, Don committed to the collection and transfer of any donated food to the Food for Others warehouse. This has now become a regular effort every month, which has now collected over nine tons of food for those in need. The amount of donated food increases each year. The Braddock District and BDC have chosen to give him special recognition for what he does for those in the Braddock District.