

# Mount Vernon Gazette

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Commander Major Mike Kline (center) and Karen Shaban of the Fairfax County Office of the County Executive greet neighbors and public safety staff at the block party in Engleside on Tuesday evening.



Pat Padberg serves up another hot dog straight from the grill.

## In the Weeds

Some are concerned maintenance has reached crisis point.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE GAZETTE

Don't like the grass growing in the median? According to a recent press release from the Virginia Department of Transportation, you don't have to wait for state transportation officials to take care of it. You can take care of it yourself by volunteering to help out with roadside maintenance.

"While we have stretched our mowing cycles the last few summers to save money in this diffi-

cult economy, the safety of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians remains our first priority," said Robert Prezioso, acting state maintenance engineer, in a written statement. "We encourage those who wish to adopt a highway to contact VDOT to receive the proper safety instruction and materials before they do any work near traffic."

Enter the red tape. According to a memorandum released earlier this month by Lee District Supervisor Jeff McKay, a hard frost

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## National Night Out

Residents and public safety staff mingle.



Ethan Lucas begins work on a page in the fire safety coloring book.



Freda Unger joins neighbors Craig and Donna Thompson at the party.

## Lesser Than Expected

Long-awaited vision for Route 1 corridor has yet to materialize.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE  
THE GAZETTE

Of all the studies that have been done about revitalizing the Richmond Highway corridor, one stands out as being particularly visionary — even if little of it has come to fruition. Back in the summer of 1997, the county commis-

sioned a report that was prepared by Robert Charles Lesser & Co. titled "Revitalization Analysis for Richmond Highway." Known as the Lesser Report, the 130-page document now reads like a roadmap to a destination that has yet to materialize — an urbanized Richmond Highway corridor that's

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## One Step Away from Being Hungry and Homeless

Benefit concert to support those in need on Route 1.

BY GALE CURCIO  
THE GAZETTE

William Rose had it all — a wife, a family, a house and two cars. He got himself in a jam, got picked up by immigration and now he has nothing.

"My house is gone, my marriage is gone, my job is gone — I have zero," said Rose.

While Rose is not technically homeless because he is staying

with friends, he feels that he is "homeless in a sense." Because his paperwork (green card and Social Security card) was taken when he was released from a year in jail, he is unable to find a job.

Once a receiving manager for Giant Food, Rose is now volunteering in the food pantry at Rising Hope Mission Church. He had heard about the church earlier in the year when he was staying with friends nearby and decided to check out some of the programs.

He started volunteering with them and taking advantage of some their programs. Although he no longer lives nearby, he comes from Fredericksburg every Tuesday to receive donations and stock the food shelves. While he is entitled to take some of the food for himself, he prefers to leave it for those "who really need it."

Rose gets by doing some odd jobs, but he really needs his papers back. The Rev. Keary Kincannon is trying to help and he

has a court-appointed attorney as well. Roses' father and brothers, who came to the country over 20 years ago, are all citizens.

"Once I get my documents back, I am good to go," said Rose. "I paid my dues and know that I have one

my chance. There will be no more trouble."

"William had a legal green card to be a permanent worker," said Kincannon. "He was also on the

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# One Step Away from Being Hungry and Homeless

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path to citizenship. His papers have not been returned to him and as a result he cannot get hired anywhere. A definite injustice. "You don't find anyone who works harder and is good with people than William." I'd consider hiring him if it was legal."

**A FESTIVAL** for the Hungry and Homeless on the Route One Corridor will be held on Aug. 6, to focus attention on the ever-growing needs of people like Rose and others who are helped by places like Rising Hope Mission Church.

The day will begin at 1 p.m. in the parking lot of Rising Hope Mission Church, 8220 Russell Road, with a festival of resources to assist the homeless and needy. Social Service providers from all across the area will be present with food, clothing, medical care, job counseling, and other resources to help the homeless. Rising Hope is asking the general public, who do not need these resources, to bring non-perishable food items and clothing to replenish their food pantry and clothing closet.

The afternoon will include: Mt. Gilead Full Gospel Church mobile hot-food trailer; The Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network (MAGNET) with bins of fresh farm produce to distribute to the hungry; K.I. Services, Inc. with their community trailer for HIV Testing & Counseling; The New Hope Housing Medical Mobile Outreach Program (MMOP); Mount Vernon Mental Health Homeless Services; Mount Vernon Evening Lions Club - Sight and Hearing Van; UCM's Workforce Development Center; The Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness; Laurie Mitchell Employment Center (LMC); Crowns of Life Gospel Band; and Griff the Comedian. Others are still being lined up for a festival of services to assist the homeless and needy.



**William Rose is hoping to get back on his feet with some help from Rising Hope Mission Church.**

Jeff Majors, internationally known jazz and gospel composer, musician and harp master, will be present all day assisting Kincannon as Rising Hope tends to the needs of those locked out of jobs and housing because of life's circumstances. The day will culminate with a benefit concert featuring Majors and his National Tour for the Homeless at 8 p.m. at Bethlehem Baptist Church, 7836 Fordson Road.

This is the second annual event presented



**Sharon Emory and Deborah Allers serve the noon-time lunch at Rising Hope Mission Church.**

by Rising Hope to support the fight against homelessness along the Route One Corridor. The benefit concert itself is free to the public in exchange for a can of food. An offering will be collected at the concert to fund the homeless programs administered by Rising Hope. Last year Grammy award winner and Oscar nominee James Ingram made a surprise appearance at the event.

Majors has been bringing his "National Tour for the Homeless" to churches across the United States since 2007. Known for his "Sacred Series," Majors has created a spectrum of selections from modern music to classical hymns. He has played his harp for the funeral of Civil Rights leaders such as Coretta Scott King and Dorothy Height.

**THELLA JACOBS** also lost everything — a job working for the government, a house, and a car. Yet, the thing that hurt the most was that she lost the support of her family. "It started when I lost everything and ended up in Eleanor Kennedy Shelter," said Jacobs. "The feelings that I had — that I didn't just lose material things but my family as well. There was nobody to support me or take me in. I felt like a hole opened up and dropped me in. The calvary was not coming. It was the worst time in my life."

Jacobs found help at Rising Hope. She had heard about the things that Keary was doing and decided to check it out.

"He [Keary] is a great 'white boy,'" said Jacobs. "I felt like I was part of a group."

Jacobs started getting help, but then she had a heart attack and couldn't work. She was getting ready to go downhill again and ran into Keary at the Shopper's Food Warehouse.

"I was at a crossroads — I would either go to church on Sunday or go back to D.C. or get lost," said Jacobs.

Jacobs made the decision that would ultimately save her life — she came back to Rising Hope. She has reconciled with her family and now has her own condo and car.

"I came to Rising Hope and grabbed hold



**Thella Jacobs and Marilyn Cole have lunch at Rising Hope Mission Church.**

of the faith," said Jacobs. "The power of prayer and love of family made me come back to Rising Hope. If I went back to where I came from I would not have made it. I come [here] all the time now and little by little, things got better and better. Thank God I didn't go in the other direction."

Jacobs comes in for the noon prayer facilitated by Vanisa McCormick and the free lunch that is provided every day.

**MARILYN COLE** also takes advantage of the noon prayer and lunch. She comes to Rising Hope every day and volunteers. Cole had been living in the Kennedy Shelter after she pulled a muscle and couldn't get a job doing housekeeping. Her name wasn't on the lease of her apartment and she ended up living in the shelter.

She has been going to the South County Center to apply for jobs and receives help from Jennifer Mann, who runs the Skill Source Center.

"I want to further my education," said Cole. "I am almost 50 years old and I have a learning disability, but I have always desired to be educated — one step at a time."

Ironically, in the past, Cole had been a minister helping other people and said, "I don't like living in the shelter, but this has humbled me. We are a true family [at the shelter]. There are some true survivors there."

**FOR NEARLY 15 YEARS**, Rising Hope Mission Church has been serving the spiritual and physical needs of the homeless and needy on the Route One Corridor south of Alexandria. Because two-thirds of this small United Methodist congregation has been homeless at some time in their life, they have a desire to help others who find themselves cut-off and cut-out of the mainstream.

"The miracle happening at Rising Hope is that those we came to serve and heal are finding their healing as they serve others in need," said Kincannon.

The church stocks and manages a food pantry that feeds over 1,400 people every week. The free lunch program serves over 1,600 hot meals every month. They maintain a clothes closet which serves all ages and distributes household items to over 200 families in the community every week, free of charge. Emergency referrals, job counseling, and 12 Step Recovery classes are just a few of the other services offered by the church. Over the course of a year Rising Hope serves the needs of over 8,000 people in the Route One Corridor.

Kincannon started the ministry in the trunk of his car; counting the car, Rising Hope has had seven different locations. This year, they served 9,000 members — 3,000 of those are homeless.

"We want people to know that we are here," said Kincannon. "The ministries are bursting at the seams. There is a tremendous need — you don't realize how much need there is and how many people are living on the edge. Many husbands and wives work two jobs and still can't make it. We would love to get a lot more people involved with us to help us find a larger place. I'm convinced that when you get people in the community involved, that's the best way. Out of those connections, things happen. People get jobs; doctor's office offer services. Some of our best financial support comes from our volunteers."

Kincannon is pleased that other social service agencies are participating in the festival, and said, "One of the wonderful things about his area is that the supporting agencies work together. Come on out and support us this weekend and learn more about Rising Hope."

For more information, contact Rev. Keary Kincannon @ 703-472-6100 or Sharon Emory @ 703-360-1976 or email [Info@risinghopeumc.org](mailto:Info@risinghopeumc.org). Contact Rising Hope at 703-360-1976 for tickets or further information.

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