In This Issue
2017 Year in Review and a Look Ahead
Staff News - Happy Retirement to Beena Pandey
Friends of Chantilly Library - Generous Gifts
Web Corner: Two to Explore Again
Income Tax Filing Assistance
Name Change: Friends of Access Services
Friends Helping Friends
Reading Round-Up
VisionWalk- Foundation Fighting Blindness
‘Tour of the Eye’ with the POB
Staff News (Part 2)
Tax Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities
Department of Family Services Programs
Contact Us

2017 Year in Review and a Look Ahead
By Rose Asuquo, Branch Manager, Access Services

Happy New Year!

As we navigate the winter season in Fairfax County, I would like to reflect on the year 2017 and its impact on the programs and services provided by Access Services, Fairfax County Public Library.

Access Services is proud to announce that in the past year, some of the things we accomplished include: new and exciting partnerships with government agencies and nongovernmental organizations; an innovative and well attended assistive technology fair, an audio described movie screening series; the Access Services Collection update project, multisensory solar eclipse exhibits and programs; a Tour of the Eye series in partnership with the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington; and outreach at various events. We have also provided continued support to our VIP groups, book clubs and deposit sites.

2017 ended with some staffing changes. I am sad to announce that Beena Pandey retired in December. We at Access Services thank her for her years of service; and the wonderful outlook and professionalism that she brought to our office.

This year our main focus is on outreach. In addition to other projects in the pipeline, some of the things that we are working on include system wide accessibility initiatives that will ensure comprehensive accessible library services for citizens of Fairfax County and the Cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. For your informational needs, Access Services is delighted to introduce our new and improved website available at the Access Services website. We have started 2018 with plans in place for innovative programs and services to reflect the needs of our patrons; and we are also expanding our collection courtesy of a generous donation from the Friends of Chantilly library.

As usual, I implore you to help spread the word about Access Services library programs and services. You are also welcome to share
Staff News - Happy Retirement to Beena Pandey

2017 ended on somewhat of a bittersweet note for the staff of Access Services. Our long-time Circulation Manager, Beena Pandey, has retired. Beena worked for the county for 32 years, for the Library system for thirty and with Access Services the last 16 years. Beena is the essence of a public library employee and a never-to-be-duplicated (almost) all-knowing manager of all things Access Services. Her ready smile, calm demeanor and steady professionalism were available to all as she tirelessly worked to find solutions for whatever problems the day presented.

To say we will miss Beena is an understatement and to say that we wish her nothing but the best as she starts this new journey does not adequately convey our feelings.

Beena, we salute you and your inexhaustible spirit and hope to diligently follow the path you have so successfully blazed. All the best, the Access Services Team.

Friends of Chantilly Library - Generous Gifts

Access Services has been the recent recipient of two very generous donations from the Friends of Chantilly Library. The first donation came to Access in November and was for $10,000. It was followed by a second one for $5,000. Portions of these generous gifts will be used for outreach and collection development initiatives such as enlarging the Access Services audio-described DVDs.

Web Corner: Two to Explore Again

This month I wanted to highlight the redesigned web pages for all of
Fairfax County.

The county websites look new, modern and are, hopefully, resident-focused with the most important information highlighted. The websites feature a responsive design that can be updated continuously. On many pages there is also an opportunity to complete a satisfaction survey.

There are two websites that ‘Web Corner’ has featured before. The first is the Department of Family Services website for Older Adults and the second is the Fairfax County Public Library website. There is so much good information on these sites that they are worth another look in their new formats. Remember to see ALL the information that is available scroll down the entire length of the page.

**Department of Family Services – Older Adults**  Can you find information about the county’s senior centers? Here’s a hint, to find the county senior centers look in the left hand column and click on the link.

**Fairfax County Public Library**  Can you find the Access Services page? Using the left hand column, click on Branches – Location, click on Access Services. (If you don’t see a left hand column, click on the ‘red’ menu button.)

Check out the websites and let us know what you think.

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**Income Tax Filing Assistance**  
As we approach April 15 (This year, actually, Tuesday, April 17) there are FREE resources available to help some citizens prepare their taxes. Various branches of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) are offering tax help in co-ordination with either AARP or the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs.

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program offers free help in preparing and filing state and federal income tax returns. This service is offered in cooperation with the IRS and provides free tax assistance services for low- and middle-income taxpayers, with special attention given to those aged 50 and over. The VITA program offers free income tax preparation and filing
services to families and individuals who earned less than $54,000 in 2017. IRS-certified volunteers will ensure you receive the maximum tax refund and help determine if you are eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The VITA program is organized by Fairfax County Department of Family Services.

Please visit the following Web pages to learn which library branches offer these ‘tax help’ programs, and what days and times they are being offered; tax information help
tax help calendar format
You can also call your local library branch to find the help you need.

Name Change: Friends of Access Services
The Friends of Access Services has changed its name to Access Services Advisory Group. This was done to better reflect its mission of being an advisory panel for Access Services. The members of the Group participate in outreach activities in order to target potential AS customers, and advocate for the needs of Access Services clientele. They are a very friendly group and invite anyone interested to come to one of their quarterly meetings and check them out.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday April 25 at the Fairfax County Government Center. The room number and exact time are still to be determined. If you are interested, please contact Access Services at 703-324-8380 for more information. All are welcome!

Friends Helping Friends
(Submissions by members of the Access Service Advisory Group)

Even as they have changed their name to the Access Services Advisory Group, the idea and the column of ‘Friends Helping Friends’ will remain the same. The helpful tips and shared experiences are always presented from the user’s point of view. As stated above, these friends are
a group of customers and other interested parties, who serve as an advisory panel for Access Services. They exchange practical and useful information and believe that other AS customers and/or LOUD AND CLEAR readers can benefit from these exchanges.

The Friends Helping Friends column has been appearing in LOUD AND CLEAR since 2014 and has touched on a variety of topics. We hope you have found them as interesting and informative as we all have. It is so beneficial for us to share and learn from one another. At a recent meeting, we discussed how nice it would be to hear from some of the people reading these Friends Helping Friends articles. So, we invite you to do just that.

You can give us feedback about an article, suggest a topic or, even send in a contribution yourself on something you feel is in keeping with the spirit of this column. If you are a new customer or, have not had a chance to read past issues, you can find some older LOUD and CLEAR issues online at: Access Services LOUD and CLEAR Newsletter. The issues are available in both audio and PDF formats.

Please send your comments and suggestions to: access@fairfaxcounty.gov, ATTN Ken, or via regular mail to Access Services, Ken Plummer, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 123, Fairfax, VA 22035.

In this issue the topic of free computer assistance is explored.

Free Help for Computer Problems
(Microsoft and Apple Products)
Cheryl Piper, President, Access Services Advisory Group

Microsoft Products

Do you ever wish you had your own private computer geek? When something doesn’t work on your computer, have you ever had to wait for a couple days to get a family member or friend to help you? Have you ever wished someone could help you adjust the font size or type, change the color of the background, or maybe enlarge the whole screen for you? Do
you wish you had someone to help you install a new device like a camera or scanner? Well, sometimes wishes do come true.

If you use Microsoft Windows or Microsoft Office, help is just a phone call away. Microsoft has a Disability Answer Desk just for you. Better yet, it is free, for those who have a disability that affects how they use a computer, for instance low vision, hand problems, etc. They screen calls by first asking what assistive technology you use on your computer. If you use none, simply give your disability and the types of things you customize on your computer, or would like to have customized on your computer, to accommodate your limitations. This can be as simple as enlarging text or needing a certain type of font for contrast. Should they need to come into your computer to work, they will be able to verify this.

The Microsoft Disability Desk provides help with both complex problems as well as very basic questions like how to use your email or how to enlarge or otherwise change your font size permanently. For instance, if you cannot easily read your email because it comes in such a tiny script, and every email comes in a different format, they can help you so that you can receive every email in exactly the way that is easiest for you to read. They can help you permanently enlarge it, find a font that works well for you, give you higher contrast by bolding the letters, or even change the color of the font or background so you could see it better. In Word, they can permanently change it so that each time you type, the letters come out in the way that you can most easily see them.

I have also used them with some really complex problems when my computer has crashed and I haven’t known why. In these situations, they give you as much time as needed to rectify the problem. I have had them working on my computer as long as 6-7 hours per day for a couple consecutive days for major repairs or reinstalls of the operating system or office suite. All this is at no charge.
They work by either walking you through how to fix a computer problem yourself, or, through a few easy steps, enter in your computer and fix the problem, or make the changes themselves. It is up to you. If they enter the computer, they do so in a very safe and secure way. You are always asked to close any personal information, and you are in control of letting them into your computer, and ending the session at any time. When you end the session, they can no longer have access to your computer. When they are in your computer, you can watch, listen to your screen reader or both, and know everything that they are doing.

Increasingly, companies like Microsoft are offering their own versions of screen readers. Microsoft’s version is narrator. If you want the computer to read text to you, by using Microsoft’s narrator, the disability service desk can show you how to set this up. They also have their own zoom features and can permanently set up any size text you may need.

As a frequent user of the Microsoft Disability Desk, I would like to pass on a few things to keep in mind. First, if you call back about the same issue, you cannot get the same technician. What you can do is give them your case number for that problem and the new technician can read the earlier notes regarding the problem. Second, when you call in, you are interacting with Level 1 technicians. This is fine for basic problems, but their skill level really varies regarding anything more complicated. Some are really, really good, and others only follow a written template and if it doesn’t work they are lost. A Level 2 technician cannot be brought in until at least 3 different Level 1 technicians have worked with you and not solved the problem. Third, the Level 1 technicians may or may not be really familiar with your specific assistive technology beyond a basic knowledge. If you are having a problem with specific assistive technology that is not manufactured by Microsoft, like JAWS or Dragon, it is better to call the manufacturer of the software. Fourth, when one of the Level 1 technicians has to do something
more complex, like totally repair/reinstall your entire office suite, you will lose your customization. Again, some technicians are very savvy and will see what customization you have before beginning this process, and others will not. You have to really be an advocate for yourself. Before permitting them to begin the process, tell them that they need to pay attention to the customization so they can return it to its original state. Fifth, depending on the time of day, you can get technicians from the other side of the world, usually the Philippines. Occasionally, a technician may have a very thick accent making it difficult for you to understand them. This hasn’t happened often to me, but on one occasion, I had to end the conversation and call back to get a different technician. With all this said, I still find Microsoft Disability Desk extremely helpful and cost-efficient. Unfortunately, when a person uses assistive technology, the chances of the computer running into problems is a lot higher and so this is a very convenient way to rectify computer problems.

The phone number for the Disability Answer Desk at Microsoft is: 800-936-5900. They are open Mon-Fri from 6 AM-10 PM Pacific Standard Time and Sat/Sun from 7 AM-6 PM Pacific Standard Time. They can also connect by video phone for those using American Sign Language at 503-427-1234, from 8:30 AM-5 PM Mon-Fri.

**Apple Products**
I am not familiar with Apple products, but another member of the Access Services Advisory Group is very familiar with them, and has given me information on these products which I have summarized below.

Like Microsoft, the Apple Accessibility Team also provides free service and support for all Apple products including the iPhone, Macintosh PCs, and the iPod. Similar to Microsoft, they can run software that allows them to “see” your iPhone or computer screen and they can also run diagnostic software, if necessary. They can also provide some assistance customizing
your computer or other device. One of their accessibility features is Voice Over, which comes with all their products free of charge. It is easy to activate and uses speech to tell you what is on your screen at any time, as well as where your finger is on the screen. A magnifier feature also comes free with Apple products. I am told that Apple offers excellent tutorials preinstalled on their iPhone, Mac computers, etc. which explain these and other accessibility features.

The Apple Accessibility Team may be reached by telephone or email. The email address is: accessibility@apple.com. The telephone number is: 877-204-3930.

Again, the Access Services Advisory Group is requesting your input. You can give us feedback about an article, suggest a topic or, even send in a contribution yourself on something you feel is in keeping with the spirit of this column.

Please send your comments and suggestions to: access@fairfaxcounty.gov, ATTN Ken, or via the U.S. Mail to Access Services- Ken Plummer, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 123, Fairfax, VA 22035.

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**Reading Round-Up**

It’s not too late to celebrate Valentine’s Day with a look at some recently recorded romance novels or to learn about some of the Winter Olympic sports (at least according to Ken). Spring cleaning is just around the corner. And with that we offer this potpourri of titles.

Spring Cleaning

**Mess** Barry Yourgrau **DB 83251**

An ultimatum from his girlfriend motivates a New York writer to finally
tackle his hoarding. Chronicles his research into hoarding, his attempts to tackle his issues through therapy and support groups, and his eventual decluttering efforts. 2015.

**Year of No Clutter**  Eve O. Schaub  DB 88767

The author of this memoir confronts her problem of holding on to too many possessions and creating general clutter in her house. As she tackles the worst offender, which she dubs the "Hell Room," she examines the motivations behind her fierce desire to cling to so many things. 2017.

**The Life-changing Magic of Tidying Up: the Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing**  Marie Kondo  DB 80607


Romances

**The Day of the Duchess**  Sarah MacLean  DB 88495

Three years after she left her husband, the Duke of Haven, Seraphina returns to seek a divorce. Haven still needs an heir, so he agrees to release her only if she finds him a replacement wife. Some strong language and some explicit descriptions of sex. 2017.

**The Duchess Deal**  Tessa Dare  DB 88943

The Duke of Ashbury needs a wife, but he believes regular courtship is out of the question because of the extensive scarring he bears from the war. He proposes marriage to a seamstress, expecting a marriage of convenience. Some strong language and some explicit descriptions of sex. 2017.

**Dating You Hating You**  Christina Lauren  DB 88942

Rival talent agents Evie and Carter meet at a Halloween party and seem to click. That makes it awkward when they show up for work to find
their agencies have merged and they are now competing for the same job. Strong language and some explicit descriptions of sex. 2017.

Winter Olympics

**The Winter Olympics** Ron C. Judd **DB 72184**

Olympics journalist chronicles the Winter Games from the first in 1924 to 2006. Explains the intricacies of competition on ice (luge, bobsled, skeleton, curling, figure skating, hockey, speedskating) and on snow (Alpine cross-country and freestyle skiing, biathlon, ski jumping, Nordic combined, snowboarding). Provides behind-the-scenes accounts and profiles major athletes. 2008.

And one more

**Fire and Fury: inside the Trump White House** Michael Wolff **DB 89802**

Journalist examines the first nine months of President Trump's administration. Discusses, among other things, the staff's opinions of Trump, the reasons for FBI director James Comey's firing, the story behind Trump's claims of being wire-tapped by President Obama, and the state of White House strategies following Steve Bannon's departure. Unrated. Commercial audiobook. 2018.

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**VisionWalk- Foundation Fighting Blindness**

Changing Lives One Step at a Time

The Thirteenth Annual Northern Virginia VisionWalk takes place at Cameron Run Regional Park on Sunday May 6, 2018. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and the walk starts at 10:00 a.m. The park is located at 4001 Eisenhower Ave., Alexandria VA 22304.

VisionWalks are the signature fundraising events of the Foundation Fighting Blindness and are held throughout the country. Over 10 Million Americans are affected by blinding retinal diseases including macular degeneration, retinitis pigmentosa and Usher syndrome. The Foundation Fighting Blindness is working to find treatments and cures for these
devastating diseases. This event provides support, information and resources to community members.

For more information contact Kelsey Miller at (410) 423-0645 or email her at KMiller@FightBlindness.org.

‘Tour of the Eye’ with the POB
The Access Services branch of the Fairfax County Public Library and the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington (POB) have scheduled two additional locations for the ‘Tour of the Eye’ programs this spring. One program will be at the Oakton Library on Monday, April 2 from 1:00 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. The second will be held on Monday, May 14 at the George Mason Regional Library also at 1:00 p.m. Each program will take place in the library’s meeting room.

Join a local professional vision specialist, as we discover the structure of the eye from the front to the back and learn about four major aging eye diseases: cataract, diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, and age related macular degeneration.

This just in! At Oakton, on Monday, April 2, Dr. Suleiman Alibhai will be the low vision specialist.

Staff News (Part 2)
Jerry Herrera has been appointed to the position of Circulation Manager at Access Services. He has been a Reader Advisor at AS the last two years. Previously, he had been the circulation manager at the Burke Center Community Library. He has been with FCPL for 18 years. Jerry brings a strong customer service background with him to the position and a fresh enthusiasm for the many programs that Access Services is doing and for those we may do in the future. Access Services is in good hands.

Branch Manager, Rose Asuquo, will be attending the orientation training program that the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) has for all new employees during the week of March 5-March 9.

Ken Plummer, Outreach Manager has been a member of the Library
Staff Strategic Planning team. The committee was charged with creating a new vision, mission and value statements that will serve as guides for the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) for the next three to five years. The committee finished their work in December and will look for ways to integrate their work into all phases of the library in the coming weeks.

The vision statement is as follows:

FCPL is the essential (re)source to inform, engage, and inspire our community.

The library’s mission is: We build community and promote literacies through programming, community spaces, technologies, and collections of educational and recreational resources.

What we value-- We are anchored by the following values which guide us in our vision and the fulfillment of our mission:

Collaborative- we build meaningful relationships.
Community Focused- we reflect and celebrate our community.
Service Oriented- we provide excellent service in every transaction.
Learning Focused – we promote educational and personal growth.
Innovative – We embrace and encourage innovation and creativity.
Adaptable – we anticipate and embrace change.
Positive – we express a genuine attitude of enthusiasm.

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Tax Relief for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors has been hosting a series of free tax relief workshops. More are scheduled at several locations throughout the county. Real estate and vehicle tax relief is available for older adults over 65 years of age and people with disabilities who meet
certain qualifications. For example, the qualifications for real estate tax relief are that the gross income from all sources of the owners of the dwelling and any relatives of the owners who reside in the dwelling may not exceed $72,000.

**Workshops for 2018 tax relief**

Staff from the Fairfax County Department of Tax Administration (DTA) will be at the locations listed below to assist with filling out the application form, as well as answering questions. The schedule is by district and you may contact your supervisor’s district office number for more information on a workshop.

For an application, call 703-222-8234; in Español 703-324-3855, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday.

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**Department of Family Services Programs**

Access Services is happy to share information about these upcoming programs.

Fairfax County’s free Family Caregiver Telephone Support Group meets by phone on Tuesday, March 13, 7-8 p.m. Share your experiences, gain support and get important information without having to travel. Register at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults) and click on Telephone Support Group. Call 703-324-5484, TTY 711.

Fairfax County offers a free program providing support and education to caregivers of older adults from Thursday, March 15-April 12, 1-3 p.m. at Sunrise Assisted Living of Fair Oaks, 3750 Joseph Siewick Dr., Fairfax. Find out more at [Fairfax County Services for Older Adults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults) and click on Caring for You, Caring for Me Program. Call 703-324-7577 or 703-324-7210, TTY 711.
The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging meets on Wednesday, March 21, 1-3 p.m. at the McLean Government Center, Community Room, 1437 Balls Hill Rd., McLean. The public is welcome to attend and join in the comment period that begins each session. Find out more at Fairfax Commission on Aging website. Call 703-324-5403, TTY 711 for meeting access needs.

Contact Us
If you have questions, comments or suggestions concerning the Loud & Clear newsletter, please call Ken Plummer at 703-324-8389. You may also e-mail him at access@fairfaxcounty.gov.