

OPINION

Partnerships That Make a Difference

Strategic partnerships with businesses, community organizations, benefit public good and fill gaps since government cannot do it all.

A few weeks ago, the Connection was lucky enough to be included in a group of Fairfax County organizations honored for their efforts in giving back to the community.

Fairfax County and the Fairfax County Public Schools recognized their business and community partners for their continued contributions to the community at the Celebrate Partnerships awards ceremonies on May 21 at the Mason Inn. More than 55 businesses and community groups were nominated for these annual awards which focus on individuals and groups who partner with the County and FCPS to give back to the community.

The mission: "The Office of Public Private Partnerships (OP3) develops partnerships between the business community and local community organizations that address critical

needs in Fairfax County. ... to stimulate positive change in the community and encourage civic involvement and responsibility. One of the goals of OP3 is to bring together resources between the public and private sectors to effectively transform the quality of life in the community."

Those efforts in the county and in the schools were on display at the awards. It was remarkable to hear about how partnerships between organizations, schools, businesses led to thousands of hours of volunteer work and millions of dollars raised. The benefits are tangible, significant and a part of what makes Fairfax County a leader in many areas.

The Connection award was based significantly on our special edition on homelessness in Fairfax County, but also cited the Connection's dedication to covering the com-

munities we serve.

This year Anthony Griffin was given a special award for his work with partnerships. Other business honorees include MV Transportation, Helios HR, Nadar por Vida, Great Falls Friends and Neighbors, Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce and Doug Brammer of Verizon.

The event was attended by more than 380 people who heard from Fairfax County Chairman Sharon Bulova; Fairfax County Schools Chair Janie Strauss; Jorge Haddock, Dean of the School of Management, George Mason University; Fairfax County Executive Ed Long, and Superintendent of Schools Jack D. Dale. To find out more, visit <http://www.fairfaxcountypartnerships.org>

— MARY KIMM,

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Partnering with Communities

The Connection was nominated by Dean Klein, Executive Director of the Fairfax County Office to Prevent and End Homelessness, and the award springs from the Nov. 13 special edition coverage about the complex challenges of the homeless in Fairfax. Coverage of the issues included a "moving array of impactful photos and informative articles" that conveyed the scope of the challenges faced by those who are homeless in our community and the collaborative work of Partnership to End Homelessness. The award also cited other examples of the Connection's community partnership including "weekly highlights of neighborhood school activities and events, Thanksgiving story called 'Season of Giving' that featured 12 gifts that give back to the community, and extensive coverage of the Stuff the Bus Food campaign."

Media/Communications Partner, Connection Newspapers
In photo, Sharon Bulova, Victoria Ross, Mary Kimm, Deb Cobb, Ed Long.



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Blue Ribbon Mentoring Program. Louise Archer Elementary School with Coldwell Banker, Northwest Federal Credit Union and School Staff Members.

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