

District News

SPORTS FOR ALL, FOREVER!

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A Christmas Wish

Giving Out Love and Support on Greenmount Avenue



Since the riots of 1968 the Greenmount Avenue corridor has suffered from urban decay, and abandoned homes and crime. In 2002 the area experienced a resurgence of upper, middle and low income housing when it became a part of Station North, one of twenty arts districts in Maryland. Artists and art businesses were attracted to the area.

Station North holds the distinction of being designated an arts and entertainment community with plans calling for further transformation.

The area attracted Johns Hopkins employees who as a part of the LiveNearYourWork program, received up to \$17,000 in closing costs to purchase housing. Commuters from Washington, D.C and families that wanted to live in the city also moved in.

Station North is within walking distance of Penn Station and the Maryland Institute of Art on the West and includes Greenmount Avenue on the east and just south of North Avenue. The community is racially mixed with average home prices between \$184.00 and \$320.00.

East Baltimore Midway, the community beginning just North of North Avenue, is still experiencing the effects of the riots with urban decay, abandoned homes, gangs, and a high rate of robberies, shootings, drugs, and deaths. Average home prices, in the low income- predominantly African American community, ranges between \$20,000 and \$24,000.

Many of the community's residents reside in sub-standard or subsidized housing. Located in this community of many challenges is the Greenmount Recreation Center, which is often a refuge from the criminal element, a place to receive educational assistance, a place of free food distribution, a safe location for recreational activity, and a meeting place for community groups.

On December 24th the Center held its annual *A Christmas Wish* program that provided coats, food baskets, and toys to over 200 of the community's kids. Neither the gifts, food nor apparel were bought out of the Center's budget. They all came exclusively from friends of staff, members of the community, former attendees of the two recreation centers who are now adults, and organizations that have had a long standing relationship with program organizers.

Gifts were donated by military families from as far away as Afghanistan. Baltimore native and rookie free safety for the NFL's Chicago Bears Adrian Amos, Jr. donated autographed footballs and bicycles that were delivered by his father Adrian Ames, Sr. "If you work hard and persevere, it will pay off," Adrian Ames, Sr. told kids. Maryland District AAU distributed jackets that were donated by the AAU National Office. "I got a championship jacket," one kid said as he wrapped the jacket around himself.

A Christmas Wish has been providing Christmas for kids for 24 years. The program originated in the East Baltimore Midway neighborhood at the Cecil Kirk Recreation Center where it was developed and directed by Recreation Leader Joyce Venable.

"A group of kids were sitting around discussing what they were going to get for Christmas," Joyce said. "Among them was this



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MD District to Host 8-Under Boys Basketball National Tournament

The Maryland District Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) has partnered with Wicomico County Recreation, Parks and Tourism to host the AAU Boys Basketball National Tournament for eight year olds and under. The tournament, which will be held July 5-10, 2016, will be the first national championship to be held in the Maryland District.

This tournament represents the first time ever that the AAU Maryland District is hosting a national tournament. The tournament will feature teams from around the country competing for the title of National Champion.

A \$100 discount and free practice time will be given to early registrants.



Local teams that play in the Maryland District Tournament will receive an additional discount to participate in the National Tournament.



Teams are guaranteed five games and fans will participate in half-time contests with prizes. All games will be played in one location-under one roof and teams will receive discounted lodging. The top eight teams will receive free jackets and have access to an on-site arcade, laser tag arena. The tournament site is only 25 miles from Ocean City.

Attempts have been made to communicate with organizations and teams that participated in the 2014 State Championships to invite them to participate in the tournament. If you have not heard from us, call 410-340-0635 or visit www.marylandaau.org.



January is National Mentoring Month

Think back to your growing up... What adult came alongside you to encourage and inspire you? Where would you be today without their influence?

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sweet and lovable kid who was the child of a single parent mother who was a drug addict. I knew this kid was not going to have a Christmas. So, I asked my friends to adopt one of my kids for Christmas. In the first year, thirty five kids who would not have had a Christmas had one through A Christmas Wish."

Joyce was transferred to the Greenmount Recreation Center in 2012 where she and Center Director Terri Fulp continued and expanded the program. "The delight and appreciation on the faces of these children brought me to tears. Without this program, many of them were not going to have Christmas," said Terri Fulp.

Carl Stokes, City Councilman for the 12th District that includes Greenmount West and East Baltimore Midway presented the gifts to the kids.

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