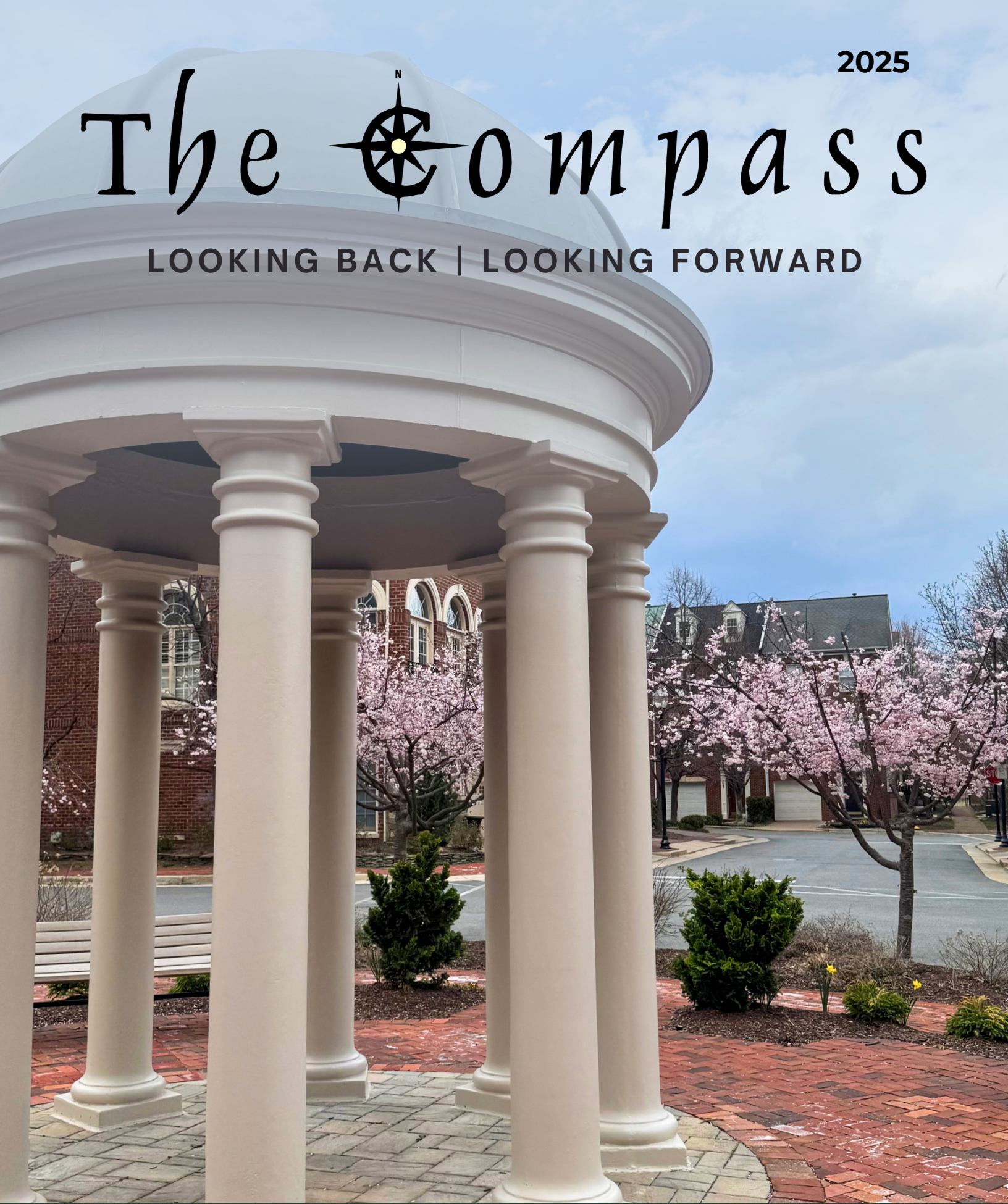
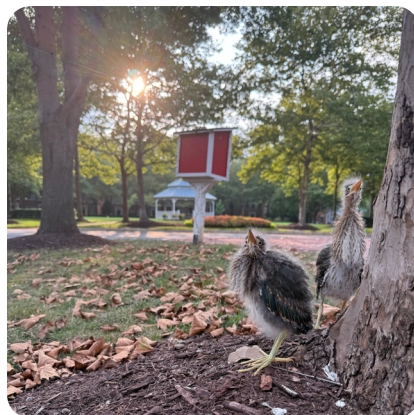
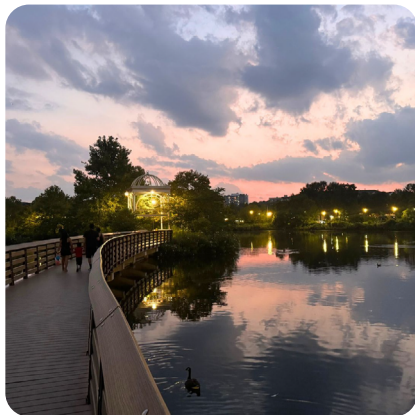


2025

The compass

LOOKING BACK | LOOKING FORWARD





Letter from the Editor

Dear Cameron Station Residents,

I am so pleased to be the Editor of *The Compass* and to present the 2025 end-of-year printed edition. Cameron Station is a neighborhood where one feels a strong sense of community, and this issue of *The Compass* is a look back and a look forward to the many reasons this is such a special place to live.

As a newer resident, I was drawn as much by the friendly people I met as by the quaint brick-lined streets. As I settled into my new home, I began to meet neighbors and frequent local businesses. I learned so much just by reading the weekly emailed *Connection* – fitness classes, neighborhood events, volunteer opportunities, and a personal favorite, Wine Wednesday. I could not believe the number and variety of ways this community connects. This issue of *The Compass* not only reminds us of fun and friendship, but also highlights the efforts of the various committees and their volunteers that help bring us all together. The community spirit is strong in Cameron Station, and I am grateful to everyone who worked hard to make these experiences happen.

Along with a look back at 2025, *The Compass* is also looking forward with fun year-end things to do, restaurants to try, along with holiday traditions and recipes to try throughout the year. Look for details on neighborhood awards, upcoming events, community calendars and schedules. Gather the family, phone a friend, and come join in the fun. This is what makes Cameron Station a special place, so enjoy all that we have to offer.

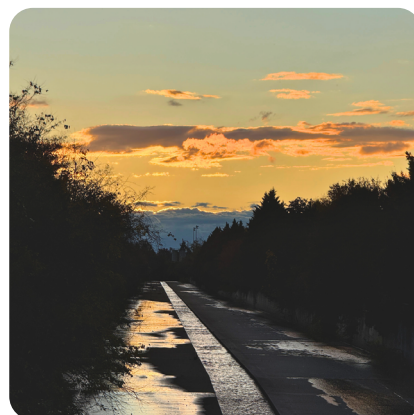
Getting this edition of *The Compass* to print was a labor of love, which would not have been possible without a lot of planning and hard work (not to mention the copious cups of coffee!) Special thanks to our neighbors who wrote articles, shared photos, and provided recipes or traditions; we appreciate each and every one of you. Our hope is that you enjoy these contributions as much as we enjoyed sharing them.

I am looking forward to meeting more members of the community and making memories in 2026. Wishing you a healthy and happy holiday season, however you choose to celebrate.

Sincerely,

Carmen Mead

Carmen Mead, *The Compass* Editor



Cover photo courtesy of Cameron Station resident Tamara Davis. Thank you for capturing our community so beautifully, and a heartfelt thank-you to all the residents who shared their photos throughout the year.

Leading the Community

Board of Directors & Officers

Email: boardofdirectors@cameronstation.org
Megan Christensen, President
Joan Lampe, Vice President
Liaison: Financial Advisory Committee
Brendan Hanlon, Secretary
Liaison: Cameron Club Facilities Committee
Sarah Barnes, Director
Liaison: Communications Committee
John Stowe, Director
Liaison: Common Area Committee
Brian Sundin, Director
Liaison: Architectural Review Committee
Dan Ogg, Director
Liaison: Activities & Events Committee
Takis Taousakis, Treasurer

Committees

Activities & Events Planning Committee (A&E)

Email: events@cameronstation.org
Andrew Yang, Chairperson

Architectural Review Committee (ARC)

Email: arc@cameronstation.org
Tom Linton, Chairperson

Cameron Club Facilities Committee (CCFC)

Email: facilities@cameronstation.org
Ray Celeste, Chairperson

Common Area Committee (CAC)

Email: commonarea@cameronstation.org
Martha Romans, Chairperson

Communications Committee (ComCom)

Email: communications@cameronstation.org
Tricia Hemel, Chairperson

Financial Advisory Committee (FAC)

Email: fac@cameronstation.org
Takis Taousakis, Chairperson

Cameron Station Civic Association

Email: cameronstacivic@gmail.com
Sunny Pietrafesa, President

Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School PTA

Email: president@tuckertigerspta.org
Carlecia Cobbins, President

Cameron Station Community Association

Managed by: CAMP Management
Corporate Office: 703-821-2267
Management Office: 703-567-4881
Steve Philbin, General Manager
Email: sphilbin@gocampmgmt.com
Patrice Johnson, Assistant Manager
Email: pjohnson@gocampmgmt.com
Avante Thomas, Covenants Administrator
Email: athomas@gocampmgmt.com
Juana Michel, Administrative Assistant
Email: jmichel@gocampmgmt.com
Mark Bondurant, Facilities Manager
Email: mbondurant@gocampmgmt.com

Cameron Station Sub-Associations

Cameron Station Condominium "The Residences"

Managed by: CAMP Management
Management Office: 703-751-5002
Manager: Gina Henry, camcondo@ciramail.com
Board Email: Cameronstation400@gmail.com

Carlton Place Condominium

Main Street Condominiums

Managed by: CAMP Management
Management Office: 571-363-4048
Manager: Lindsay Chickering,
MNSTRCON@CiraMail.com

Condominiums at Cameron Station Boulevard Oakland Hall Condominium

Managed by: CMC; Corporate Office: 703-631-7200
Manager: Gita Lainez, glainez@cmc-management.com
Asst. Mgr: Shantree Greene,
Shantree.greene@cmc-management.com
Board Email for Condos at Cameron Station Blvd:
condos-at-cameronstationboard@googlegroups.com

Woodland Hall Condominium

Managed by Gordon James Realty
Phone: 240-630-5118
Manager: Matias Mazzei, matias@realtymanager.org
General Email: support@gordonjamesrealty.com
Board Email: BoardWHHOA@gmail.com

Community Retailers Contact Info

Bright Start Learning Center

(703) 370-8414 Building 4920
(703) 461-0457 Building 4915
(703) 566-9149 Building 4910

Cameron Station Dental Care

(703) 461-3000

Cameron Cafe

(703) 212-8211

Pawsh Dog Wash

(703) 566-9044

Cameron Station Dry Cleaners

(703) 823-0606

IndoChen

(703) 419-3160

In the Spotlight

The Mark Pillow Community Spirit Award



The Mark Pillow Community Spirit Award was created in 2006 in memory of neighbor Mark Pillow, who passed away the previous year. Mark was a kind and generous community volunteer, who embodied the spirit of Cameron Station and made it a better, brighter place to live.

The Pillow Award honors neighbors who add to the quality of our lives in so many different ways. There are those who help the entire community by lending a hand at community events, volunteering on committees, serving on the Board of Directors or the Cameron Station Civic Association. Cameron Station could not function without these dedicated volunteers.

Other neighbors help on a more personal level by taking care of pets and plants when we travel, offering rides to medical appointments, driving us to the airport, checking on us when we're ill - finding small ways to make life easier through ordinary, essential, day-to-day neighborliness that makes such a difference in our lives.

This year's winner is **Pat Sugrue**, who also received the award in 2007. Her volunteerism, generosity, and leadership reflect the very essence of this honor. Begin thinking now of which neighbors you would like to recognize with this very special award in 2026.

Cameron Station Residents Recognized by Chamber of Commerce

This year, two Cameron Station residents were recognized by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the community.

Cassie Page was named a 2025 "40 Under 40" honoree for her leadership, creativity, and community spirit. A graduate of Bishop Ireton High School, Cassie has already made a lasting impression in Alexandria through her dedication to service and her positive influence on those around her. In Cameron Station, Cassie is known for helping neighbors troubleshoot tech issues and volunteering to walk their dogs. Whatever role Cassie takes on, she brings to it energy and purpose.



Mindy Lyle was honored as part of the Chamber's inaugural "40 Over 40" class, recognizing her extensive experience in business development, communications, and marketing strategy. Known for her civic engagement and leadership throughout Alexandria, Mindy's recognition highlights her continued commitment to excellence and community service. Since moving to Cameron Station in 2000, Mindy has been deeply involved in the neighborhood, serving on the Board of Directors and sharing her experience and expertise on a variety of community issues. She is also a passionate advocate for underserved families, and for many years has spearheaded the Samuel Tucker Adopt-a-Family program.



Cameron Station is proud to celebrate both Cassie and Mindy for their well-deserved honors and for the inspiration they bring to our neighborhood.

Pride of Ownership 2025

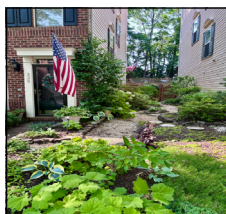
Every spring, the Common Area Committee recognizes residents whose creativity and dedication enhance the beauty of Cameron Station. Judged on neatness, plant choice, and overall appeal, this year's gardens showcased exceptional care, thoughtful design, and community

pride. Congratulations to the 2025 Pride of Ownership winners and honorable mention for their outstanding efforts.

Inspired by your neighbors' gardens? Spring is just three months away, so now is the perfect time to start planning your own outdoor space for the 2026 competition. With a little creativity and care, your garden could be among next year's Pride of Ownership winners.



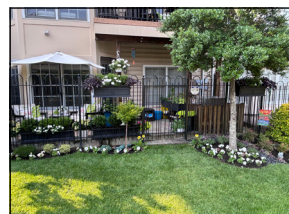
281 Cameron Station Boulevard
A small condo garden bursting with color and charm, earning the most nominations.



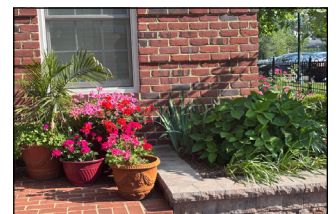
335 Helmuth Lane
A shaded retreat with lush plants, rich textures, and a peaceful stone path.



5228 Tancreti Lane
Manicured turf, a stone terrace, and vibrant blooms create a standout display.



5159 Brawner Drive
Every inch is beautifully planted, front and back, with in-ground and container plants.



472 Ferdinand Day Drive (Honorable Mention)
A bright, imaginative end-unit garden where every space is put to use.

In the Spotlight

Volunteer of the Year Award



In 2016, the Volunteer of the Year Award was instituted to recognize residents who have made a significant and positive impact on our community by volunteering their time and energy, regardless of years of service.

The 2025 winner is **Susan Klejst**, chair of the Welcome Subcommittee of the

Communications Committee. Her consistent leadership, commitment to welcoming every neighbor, and her ability to strengthen the bonds that hold our community together perfectly capture the quote that inspired this award:

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."

Alexandria Update from Mayor Gaskins

Alyia Gaskins is not only the mayor of our city, but also a Cameron Station neighbor and friend. Here she provides an update on how Alexandria has fared in 2025.

Policies and Programs

Since the Alexandria City Council's installation ceremony on January 2, 2025, the City Council has moved decisively to enact policies and programs to help improve the quality of life for residents.

- In April, the Council unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2026 **operating budget of \$956.5 million**, maintaining the real estate tax rate, while also advancing investments in essential city services such as public safety, flood mitigation, early childhood support, and transit.
- The Council also passed a **\$2.08 billion Capital Improvement Program**, which will provide support for new schools, parks, fire stations, and City Hall.
- Recently, S&P Global Ratings and Moody's Ratings reaffirmed the city's top **bond ratings of "AAA" and "Aaa"** respectively. In its credit highlights, S&P Global cited "well-embedded, comprehensive policies that govern budgeting...and a culture of long-term planning."

Economic Strength

A top priority for the Council is continuing to enhance our economic strength and diversifying the city's revenue streams.

- The Council is partnering with the Alexandria Economic Development Partnership (AEDP) to create a **new economic development plan**. It has been 15 years since our city has had a comprehensive economic development strategy. The previous strategy spurred significant economic development wins, including the Potomac Yard Metro, the Virginia Tech Innovation Campus, the Landmark Mall redevelopment, and transformation of the waterfront.
- In September, we celebrated the **expansion of Systems Planning and Analysis**, a major economic development win for the city. This West End business is investing \$15 million to create new, modern, and collaborative workspaces for their employees and is creating nearly **500 new high-quality jobs**.

Real Estate Redevelopments

As I'm sure you have noticed by the nearby cranes and construction vehicles, there is a lot of activity happening around our community.

- The 52-acre former **Landmark Mall site** is being transformed into a 4-million-square-foot mixed-use community anchored by the new Inova Alexandria, with new public infrastructure that includes streets, sidewalks, streetlights, sewer lines, stormwater inlets, and open-space landscaping.
- **The former Vulcan Materials site** will include new townhomes and a public park with playgrounds.
- The long-vacant office building, **5001 Eisenhower**, is being converted into residential housing with a mix of workforce units, new retail spaces, and open space, as well as dedicated community space.

Together these developments will bring more options for shopping, dining, and services, more open space, and more walkable streets and transit options closer to Cameron Station.

Looking to the Future

As we look forward to the future, the Council is actively engaged in scenario planning to evaluate the impacts of the government shutdown and other changes at the federal level on our city. The city is committed to supporting residents, businesses, and others impacted by recent federal changes. Residents can find resources on the city's webpage, www.alexandriava.gov.

Every policy proposal and/or development project goes through an extensive review to evaluate impacts and mitigate unintended consequences. With your input, we can ensure this growth is sustainable, equitable, and beneficial for all of us. To facilitate more engagement opportunities, this year I launched the Mayoral Youth Forum, the Mayor's Interfaith Council, and a new Resident Roundtable Series where residents can share their issues, concerns, and ideas with me. Email me at Alyia.gaskins@alexandriava.gov if you want to learn more.

This year has been very busy for Alexandria. As a planner and a public health strategist, I understand that where we live has a profound impact on our health and well-being. My family and I moved to Alexandria over a decade ago. We chose to live here because it just felt right, the parks were abundant, the people were kind, and there were so many unique small businesses and places to explore. Two kids and a beagle later, Alexandria is not just where we live - it's our community, and together I look forward to continuing to build a safer, stronger, healthier future every day.



Through the Lens



Food Truck Fridays



Game Nights



Art Lecture



Red Cross CPR Event

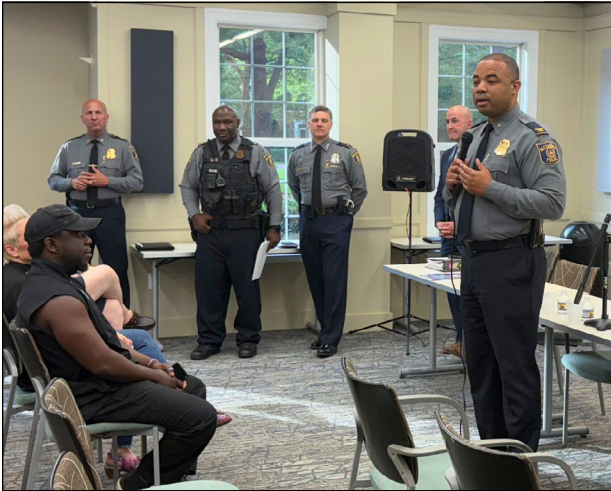


Yard Sales



Spring Eggstravaganza

2025 in Focus



Safety Talk with APD



Ice Cream Social



July 4th



Petting Zoo



Meet & Greet



Through the Lens



Pool Party



Halloween Party

2025 in Focus



Annual Meeting



Holiday Party

2025 By the Numbers

14

COMMUNITY
SOCIAL
EVENTS

49

THE COMPASS
BLOG POSTS

470

INSTAGRAM
PHOTOS
POSTED

152,420

FACEBOOK
POST VIEWS

\$49,406

TTM INTEREST
EARNED

17

PROPOSALS
APPROVED FOR
ENHANCEMENT,
REPAIR, AND
MAINTENANCE OF
COMMON AREAS

COMMUNITY POLL
RESULTS:

WHERE DID
OUR
NEIGHBORS
LIVE BEFORE
CAMERON
STATION?

84

TREES &
SHRUBS
PLANTED

400

POOL PARTY
ATTENDEES

2

COMMUNITY
YARD SALES

36%
ALEXANDRIA

36%
OUT OF STATE

22%

ELSEWHERE IN
THE DMV

4%
OUT OF THE
COUNTRY

3

WINTER
STORMS
REQUIRING
CLEANUP

YTD
EXPENSES

1.4%

LOWER THAN
REVENUES

343

SQUARE FEET
OF BRICK
SIDEWALKS
REPAIRED

152

EXTERIOR
MODIFICATIONS
REVIEWED
THIS YEAR

COMMUNITY POLL RESULTS:

WHERE ARE OUR NEIGHBORS' HOMETOWNS?

34%

EAST COAST +
VIRGINIA

20%

WEST COAST

20%

SOUTH

14%

MIDWEST

12%

OUTSIDE OF
U.S.

41,401
INSTAGRAM VIEWS

50%
STREAMING
ONLY

COMMUNITY POLL
RESULTS:
HOW ARE OUR
NEIGHBORS
WATCHING TV?

COMMUNITY POLL RESULTS:

HOW LONG HAVE OUR NEIGHBORS LIVED IN CAMERON STATION?

12%
LESS THAN
1 YEAR

30%
1-5 YEARS

29%
6-10 YEARS

14%
11-20 YEARS

15%
21+ YEARS

4

PRIDE OF
OWNERSHIP
WINNERS

116

DAYS THE
POOL WAS
OPEN

14,458

THE COMPASS
BLOG ARTICLE VIEWS

1

GAZEBO
RENOVATED

<1%

AVERAGE
MONTHLY
DELINQUENCY
RATE

52

FOOD
TRUCK
FRIDAYS

2

POCKET
PARKS
ENHANCED
THROUGH
REDESIGN,
VEGETATION
CLEAN-UP,
AND TURF
RESORATION

COMMUNITY POLL
RESULTS:

DO OUR
NEIGHBORS
HAVE PETS?

38%
DOG

37%
NO PETS

25%
CAT

9,522

AVERAGE TOTAL
MONTHLY USAGE OF THE
FITNESS CENTER & POOL

140

FAMILIES
WELCOMED

23,653

GOOGLE SEARCHES FOR
CAMERON STATION

Our Community Partners

Bright Start Learning Center

Two Decades of Excellence in Early Childhood Education!

Celebrating their 20th anniversary, Bright Start Learning Center (BSLC) proudly continues its legacy of nurturing and educating children ages 6 months to 5 years. They've successfully maintained their accreditation by the National Early Childhood Program Accreditation (NECPA) since 2021,



demonstrating an unwavering commitment to quality and adherence to research-established guidelines and accreditation standards. This year, BSLC was honored with a Virginia Quality Birth through 5 years of age (VQB5) Honor Roll certificate from the Virginia Department of Education and the Division of Early Childhood Care. This prestigious recognition highlights their exemplary interactions with infants and toddlers, affirming their dedication to providing an outstanding foundation for early development.

According to Director Vanita Williams, while public acclaim comes from accreditations and certificates, the smiles and joy of satisfied parents truly demonstrate Bright Start's value.

"At Bright Start Learning Center," said Director Williams, "we are dedicated to fostering growth from within, empowering our diverse and dedicated staff to continuously learn and apply their knowledge. Our team views themselves as caring surrogates, deeply committed to providing the same loving attention and support that parents would. We believe this commitment extends beyond academic knowledge, as our staff consistently gives of themselves to enrich the lives of the children in their care."

To support this, management at BSLC offers educational opportunities for professional development and advancement. Going forward, BSLC aims to engage more children in social, cognitive, and gross motor development through educational and structured play, by incorporating extracurricular activities such as music and language acquisition programs.

"In the upcoming year," Director Williams explains, "we are committed to sustaining exceptional work in child care. At BSLC, we cultivate a vibrant family atmosphere, fostering strong bonds between teachers, parents, and staff. We provide a nurturing space where children can thrive academically, socially and emotionally."

Neighbors are encouraged to schedule a personal tour to learn more about their unique approach and observe the dedicated educators in action. Contact them directly to arrange your visit and experience the Bright Start difference - 703-370-8414 or info@brightstartva.com.

Cameron Cafe

It's been a good year for our coffee shop. In the gourmet section, owner Dayan carries unique beers, wines, and snacks, with seasonal changes in gourmet inventory. The Portuguese Vinho Verde wine has been a well-received new addition in 2025.

Their best-selling sandwich is their delicious Chicken Salad, and the Smoked Salmon Bagel has developed a following. Best-selling wines are Pinot Grigio and Rosé. Blueberry and Chocolate Muffins win bakery points. The busiest times are when the morning coffee crowd appears, and later in the day when Bright Start lets out. The patio, cheerfully appointed with flowers and bright umbrellas, is enjoyed by all when weather permits.



The Cafe hosted a number of wine tastings in 2025 and will continue to do so in the upcoming year. The live music events (approximately once a month) have been successful, featuring a variety of music genres and strongly supported by the community. The musicians enjoy playing our little venue and are eager to return. Wine Wednesday continues to thrive, and Game Night is held monthly.

Homemade soups return for the winter, and they'll continue to offer their array of boozy coffees. Dayan and staff would like to thank Cameron Station neighbors for being wonderful friends, creating a Cameron Cafe family with a friendly vibe and a sense of togetherness. The hope is for all to feel at home and welcome!

Cameron Station Cleaners

Cameron Station residents have had the good fortune of having a dry-cleaning establishment in the neighborhood since the first retailers opened in our community over two decades ago. The current owners are heading into their third year with us, but have over 20 years of experience. They are proud of their environmentally friendly dry cleaning process, using non-toxic chemicals that avoid hazardous waste. Their award-winning alterations are available to individuals, as well as large groups, such as wedding parties. They are happy to report to neighbors that their prices have remained consistent, and invite you to take advantage of their convenient service.



Cameron Station's

NEIGHBORHOOD DISCOUNTS

CAMERON CAFE
4911 Brenman Park Dr.



10% off

Gourmet Corner Products Only (includes wine)

VALID UNTIL MAY 31 2026

CAMERON STATION CLEANERS
4903 Brenman Park Dr.



10% off

Dry Cleaning Only with \$50 Minimum

VALID UNTIL DEC 31 2025

MEDITERRANEAN BAKERY AND CAFE
352 S. Pickett Street



10% off

10% Discount Off Entire Purchase

VALID UNTIL DEC 31 2025

CITY KITCHEN
330 South Pickett St.



15% OFF any Entree Monday thru Wednesday

Dine in Only
Not Valid with any other promotion or discount

VALID UNTIL JAN 1, 2027

LA CASA RESTAURANT
4551 Duke St.



10% off

Dine-in & Take-out (excludes wine, beer & alcohol)

VALID UNTIL MAR 31 2026

THE BACKYARD BIRD FEEDER
3225 Duke St.



20% off

One Bird Feeder 1 per Customer

Coupon must be presented at time of purchase

VALID UNTIL MAR 31 2026

REYNOLDS STREET BAR & GRILL
34 S Reynolds St.



Your local neighborhood bar & grill

20% off

Appetizers Only

VALID UNTIL JUN 30 2026

SHOOTER MCGEE'S
5239 Duke St.



15% off

Entrees Only/ Dine-in Only

Not valid with any other discount or promotion

VALID UNTIL JAN 1 2027

Our Community Partners

The West End Farmers Market

For the past 17 years, the Cameron Station community has enjoyed the convenience of a farmer's market, right on the edge of our community. The West End Farmers Market, run by the Williams family, is located in the south parking lot of Ben Brenman Park, and every Sunday, from 8:30am to 1pm, dozens of vendors exhibit their wares. There is a variety of products to choose from, including farm-fresh produce, baked goods, popcorn, flowers, jewelry, crafts, coffee, clothing, and more. There are also booths from non-profits, including Believe, a local charity established by members of the Williams family and friends. The City of Alexandria provides a composting station, which is very popular with Cameron Station residents. And to add



to the pleasure of shopping, Antonio and his saxophone entertain every week.

The big news of 2025 is that the West End Farmers Market is **now open all year long**, meaning seasonal specialties are always at your door. Take a Sunday stroll to the West End Farmers Market to find your favorite vendors, discover some new ones, listen to some tunes, meet up with friends and neighbors, and get your week off to a great start.

Cameron Station Dental Care

Dr. Tikreeti is beginning his third year in the neighborhood. Currently operating with a staff of six, he hopes to grow the practice moving forward.



Dr. Tikreeti's practice incorporates the latest 3-D technology and is transitioning to a paperless environment. Dr. Tikreeti treats patients of all ages and offers full dental services (root canals, extractions, implants, veneers, etc.). His patients come from Cameron Station and surrounding areas. He provides free second opinions, and you can conveniently book online.

You certainly can't beat the convenience of an office just a short walk from most homes in the neighborhood. Dr. Tikreeti wants to give Cameron Station healthier smiles, and keep you smiling!

IndoChen

IndoChen has experienced another successful year, supported by regular customers as well as new ones. A few new items have been added to the menu to augment the already delicious offerings. In 2025, IndoChen also hosted a number of private parties and participated in Alexandria Restaurant Week.



With the winter season approaching, we can look forward to the return of Mulled Wine, Brandy Cider, and a unique take on the Singapore Sling – the American Sling. A Super Bowl celebration is scheduled for February.

Masti (which means "fun") is their newest restaurant, now open in the Hyatt at Reston Town Center. In Cameron Station, the owners are

considering whether to subdivide the IndoChen footprint to create a more intimate space.

IndoChen owners and staff would like to thank the neighbors who are always very supportive, and they look forward to continuing to serve us in 2026.

Pawsh Dog Wash

Pawsh celebrated its Fifth Year Anniversary this past September. Their business continues to grow with more clients from Cameron Station, and they always enjoy meeting the new families who move into our neighborhood.



In 2025, Pawsh was awarded Northern Virginia Magazine's Best Pet Care in Grooming for the third year in a row! In 2026, they are hoping to offer more events, more personalized experiences, and more local business partnerships.

Cameron Station's

NEIGHBORHOOD DISCOUNTS

INDOCHEN
4906 Benman Park Dr.



10% off
DINE-IN ONLY
10% DISCOUNT OFF FOOD

VALID UNTIL MAR 31 2026

PAWSH DOG WASH
4907 Brenman Park Dr.



\$10 off
\$10 off All Services

NO EXPIRATION

NOTHING BUNDT CAKES
4553 Duke St.



BOGO
Buy One Bundtlet, Get One Free

- Alexandria Location Only
- Limit One Coupon per Customer
- Must present original coupon at time of purchase

VALID UNTIL DEC 31 2026

ALDO'S ITALIAN KITCHEN
2850 Eisenhower Ave.



10% off
DINE-IN OR CARRY OUT
Mention Cameron Station for 10% off

NO EXPIRATION

LOS TOLTECOS
4111 Duke St.



15% off
Show Coupon for 15% off
Excludes wine, beer, mixed drinks

NO EXPIRATION

PHD SALON & SPA
3640 King St. #A



\$15 off
Full Services

VALID UNTIL APR 1 2026

SOLEIL SALON & SPA
50 S. Pickett St. Unit #21



20% off
All Facials, Permanent Make-up, Microblading, Laser Hair Removal and Soleil Signature Spa Package
INCLUDES: Mani-Pedi, Anti-Aging Facial, Signature Massage & Lunch. (Reg. \$200)

VALID UNTIL APR 30 2026

BLISS NAIL & LASH LOUNGE
5130 Duke St. Unit #3



10% off
Refer a friend
Both of you get 10% off

VALID UNTIL APR 30 2026

Community Partners

Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School

Rising Together for Our Tucker Tigers

The Samuel W. Tucker Elementary PTA is proud to be part of the Cameron Station community and to live up to our goals of supporting critical academic needs, giving families a voice on important issues, and building a strong, inclusive, and welcoming school community. We invite all families and neighbors to join us in making a difference for Tucker's students.

This year, the Tucker PTA has leaned into our commitment to literacy, creativity, advocacy, and connection. We proudly sponsored a schoolwide **Read-A-Thon**, joining a nationwide Rise Up and Read campaign that rewards minutes read and celebrates the joy of reading. Every classroom participated, inspiring students to see themselves as part of something bigger while strengthening a lifelong love of books.



instructional aides, and programs that support student well-being. We know that when our schools are fully funded, our students thrive.

The PTA celebrated self-expression through the annual **Reflections Art Contest**, this year centered on the theme "I Belong." Students are encouraged to share what belonging means to them through visual art, music, writing, and dance - which is a reflection of Tucker's inclusive spirit.

Community-building remains at the heart of everything we do. This fall, our **Movie Night on the Blacktop** brought together more than 300 attendees for an evening of fun, laughter, and connection under the stars. Our focus this year is on hosting more free family events, ensuring that everyone in our school community can participate, even in a challenging economic environment.

We also want to thank the Cameron Station community for your engagement during the **City of Alexandria's school redistricting process**. The initial plan would have split our neighborhood between two schools. Because of your letters, emails, and advocacy, our community remains intact, and all our children will continue attending Tucker together. This outcome reflects the power of a unified voice.

We are especially grateful to the Cameron Station community for your ongoing support throughout the year, from attending events and volunteering your time to participating in fundraisers like restaurant nights and advocating for our students. Your engagement strengthens our school and reminds us what it means to be a true community.

Finally, we are deeply grateful to our local business partners for their sponsorships, restaurant nights, and member discounts. Your support allows us to continue investing in Tucker's students and teachers.

Together, we are building more than programs...we are building community, pride, and opportunity for every Tucker Tiger.

To learn more, visit <https://tuckerpta.givebacks.com> or follow us on Facebook @Samuel Tucker Elementary PTA.



The **Outdoor Learning Garden** at Tucker is a space where students can engage with nature, explore science hands-on, and experience the joy of learning beyond the classroom. This vibrant addition to our school was made possible through the leadership and fundraising efforts of the PTA, in partnership with Lancaster Landscapes and dedicated community volunteers. This year, the garden produced melons, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes, giving students a firsthand look at how food grows from the ground to their plates. Thanks to a few steady volunteers - and continued support from Lancaster Landscapes - the garden remains a thriving, living classroom and an important part of Tucker's educational experience.

Our advocacy continues with the **"Fully Fund Education" campaign**, which amplifies parent and community voices to protect vital school resources, including teacher funding,

Thank You to Our Restaurant Night Partners!

The Tucker PTA is grateful to our local restaurants for supporting our school through dining fundraisers:

Aldo's Italian Kitchen • Los Tios Grill (Van Dorn) • Taco Bamba • Taste of Asia • Chuck E. Cheese • Lebanese Taverna • Paisano's

Your generosity helps fund teacher grants, student programs, and family events at Tucker!

Cameron Station's

NEIGHBORHOOD DISCOUNTS

CAMERON STATION DENTAL CARE
181 Comay Terrace



\$150

X-RAYS, EXAM, REGULAR PREVENTATIVE CLEANING AND FREE ORTHODONTIC CONSULT

For New and Non-Insured Cameron Station Residents ONLY

VALID UNTIL DEC 31 2026

LIMO INTERCONNECT
www.obsidianride.com



Black Car Service Holiday Rates

DCA: \$55
IAD: \$85
BWI: \$115

- Price is one-way TO or FROM Airport
- Must set up an account and REGISTER/BOOK at ObsidianRide.com
- Note: CAMERON STATION RESIDENT in note section.
- Contact: PATRICK 571.237.5551

VALID UNTIL JAN 2 2026

VIRGINIA VACUUMS
3640 King St. #A



20% off
Vacuum Bags

\$10 off
Vacuum Repairs

\$50 off
\$500+ New Vacuums

VALID UNTIL JAN 31 2026

TIKI GARDEN THAI STREET FOOD
4527 Duke St,



10% off

PER TABLE/
DINE-IN ONLY

Includes Food & Drink

**Must present coupon
Alexandria location only

VALID UNTIL FEB 15, 2026

LOS TIOS GRILL
241 S. Van Dorn St.



20% off

Mon - Fri
Dine-in only

Excludes wine, beer, mixed drinks

VALID UNTIL MAR 31 2026

TASTE OF ASIA
362 S Pickett St



10% off

Take Out Orders Only

VALID UNTIL MAR 31 2026

THAI LEMON RESTAURANT
506 South Van Dorn St

Thai Lemon Restaurant

4 spring rolls with \$20 minimum purchase

Dine-in and Take Out Orders

VALID UNTIL JAN 31 2026

SHOP LOCAL

Every meal, coffee, and purchase from our nearby restaurants and businesses helps Cameron Station thrive. Thank you for supporting local!



#LoveWhereYouLive

Serving Others

Adopt-a-Family

For the past 26 years, the Cameron Station Community has helped those less fortunate have a Merry Christmas through the "Adopt-a-Family" program. Neighbors have "adopted" hundreds of families from Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School, who without our help might not have any Christmas celebration at all.

In order for families to participate in this program, their needs are screened by the social worker and principal at Tucker Elementary. Wish lists from the children are compiled in November, and families are then "adopted" by Cameron Station residents, as well as by local businesses and organizations. In 2025, 75 families needed help. Monetary donations and gift cards were also accepted.

We have neighbor Mindy Lyle to thank for helping coordinate this program for our community for more than a decade. If you would like more information about this wonderful Christmas tradition, please email mindylyle@gmail.com.



Alexandria Tutoring Consortium

The Alexandria Tutoring Consortium (ATC) has been matching community volunteers with early elementary school students in need of reading help since 1997. In that time, ATC has helped over 4,000 children learn to read – starting with 80 kids in four Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) in 1997-1998 and now serving 300 children in all 14 ACPS elementary schools this school year. ATC has been a part of the Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School community for many years, tutoring there when the school opened in 2000 until 2011, then returning under the leadership of ATC Book Buddies Coordinator and Cameron Station neighbor Debbie Glenn in 2018. Dozens of Cameron Station residents have been involved as volunteers and donors, and at least 14 residents are tutoring this year. Tucker's tutoring roster is full, but if you'd like to help a child at another school learn to read, visit www.alexandriatutors.org.



Fire Safety Training

In May 2025, the Carlton Place Condos hosted Fire Emergency Preparedness Training sessions for their residents, provided by the Alexandria Fire Department's (AFD) Community Outreach Coordinator. Topics discussed included an overview of the AFD history and resources, various aspects of fire safety, what to do if there is a fire, and related resources such as Smart 911. The residents were provided with two dates to select from, and both were well attended. If you are interested in coordinating a future Fire Safety event for your neighbors, family, or friends, more information can be found in *The Compass* blog.



Friends of the Beatley Library

The Friends of the Beatley Central Library have had another terrific year! This all-volunteer, non-profit group raises funds to support our central library. Although the City of Alexandria pays for the building maintenance and staff salaries, the Friends group provides almost all the needed support for the programs for children, teens, and adults. Through their 2025 spring and fall book sales, the Friends raised \$66,818 for the library. These funds paid for programs such as tai chi classes, guest author appearances, the Hispanic Heritage Fiesta, a petting zoo, knitting starter kits, Girls Who Code, and entrepreneurship classes for teens.



Now, now that the lengthy construction to address needed building repairs is complete, the Friends were able to help make significant improvements to the interior reading garden. Stop by to see the new indigenous plants! And stay tuned for new reading garden furniture, as well as smaller right-sized tables for the interior.

Cameron Station residents continue to support the Friends in many ways. They have donated gently used books, become members of the group, or donated their volunteer time to sort the donated books and work at our book sales. In addition, several residents serve on the Board of Directors. Many thanks to all who participate!

If you believe in the importance of well-funded libraries and want to learn more about becoming a member of this dynamic group, or how to volunteer, see beatleyfriends.org.

Community Bike Drive

Residents looking to give new life to unused bicycles found the perfect solution this spring. A community Bike Drive took place April 26-May 2, 2025, the week immediately following the spring community yard sale. More than 20 bikes of all kinds and conditions, including scooters and assorted accessories, were collected and donated to a local bicycle cooperative, where the bikes and scooters were refurbished and repurposed. If you would like more details about the Bike Drive, including helpful information on how to host a drive (which could be a great service project for a Scout looking for ideas!), please refer to *The Compass* blog.



Serving Others

The Cameron Station Give & Take Pantry

In November 2025, residents of Cameron Station came together to launch the Give & Take Pantry, a simple neighbor-to-neighbor way to share pantry goods, reduce waste, and support one another during the holiday season. Set up in the Cameron Club Lobby, the table quickly filled with non-perishable items, all available for anyone in the community to give or take as needed.



The pantry became a quiet yet powerful reminder of the generosity that defines our neighborhood. From families donating extra groceries to neighbors finding just what they needed, the spirit of sharing was on full display. Items not claimed were donated to ALIVE! Food Bank and Tucker Elementary Food Pantry, ensuring that every contribution made a difference.

StepALIVE! 2025 Walkathon

In October of every year, residents of Cameron Station join hundreds of other Alexandrians to support ALIVE!, the City of Alexandria's oldest and largest safety net organization, by participating in the annual StepALIVE! Walkathon. Proceeds from the event are used to provide food, shelter, emergency financial assistance, furniture, and housewares to struggling Alexandrians.



The 44th annual StepALIVE! took place on October 19. Kicking off at George Washington Middle School (GW) for the first time and walking on new routes through city neighborhoods, participants returned to GW for live music, snacks, a raffle, and the awarding of prizes to teams participating in the event. Although fewer in number than last year when the Cameron Station team won an award as the community team with the largest number of supporters, this year's Cameron Station Striders helped make StepALIVE! the most successful ever, raising nearly \$125,000.

Learn more about ALIVE! at www.alive-inc.org.

Operation Gobble Gobble

Operation Gobble Gobble, now in its 16th year, is a Cameron Station community-wide Thanksgiving project that provides families at Samuel W. Tucker Elementary with grocery gift certificates for Thanksgiving meals. The goal has been to provide 100 families with \$100 gift certificates, and for some years, this goal has even been surpassed, thanks to the generosity of neighbors, local businesses, philanthropic organizations, and the school community. Any additional funds are contributed to the Tucker Adopt-a-Family program.

The 2025 donation was made to Tucker Principal Jerylen Daniels on November 14, 2025. Thanks to neighbors Donna Kenley and Kay Brown for spearheading this important annual project.



Goodwill Donation Drives

Cameron Station wrapped up a successful year of giving with two Goodwill Donation Drives. One took place in April and the other in October. Both were timed perfectly around the community yard sales. The April drive occurred just hours after the sale, while the October event followed the weekend after, making it easy for residents to donate leftover items.

The April drive collected an impressive 4,826 pounds of gently used goods, filling the Goodwill truck with clothing, household items, books, small appliances, electronics, computers, CDs, DVDs, and video games. The October drive brought another strong turnout, showing that Cameron Station neighbors continue to turn small acts of generosity into a big community impact.



Every donation supports Goodwill of Greater Washington's mission to provide employment services and job training programs throughout the region. Each box and bag contributed helps create opportunities for others in the community.

In 2026, we plan to host Goodwill again following the community yard sales. For the exact dates and times, check the weekly *Connection* for details. Thank you to everyone who donated and made both drives a success.

Snow Removal Volunteers

Winter is fast approaching and with it comes the possibility of snow. While the first snowfall always brings a sense of calm and beauty, it also reminds us of the importance of helping one another during winter weather. For some, snow can mean difficulty getting to work, attending appointments, or simply leaving their homes safely.

The Cameron Station snow removal contract covers the clearing of community roads and common areas, leaving driveways and private walkways the responsibility of individual residents. That is where our volunteers come in, filling the gap with kindness and teamwork. During snow events, volunteers mobilize across the community, often working in pairs or small groups to help neighbors safely navigate the area.

If you would like to be added to the volunteer list or paired with a "snow buddy" this season, please email managers@cameronstation.org. It is a meaningful way to give back and help keep Cameron Station safe.

Our thanks go to the volunteers who step up each winter to help their neighbors. Your efforts ensure Cameron Station remains safe and accessible for everyone.



Do you have an idea for Serving Others? Email cameronstationcares@gmail.com to share your thoughts and help keep our community kindness growing.

Beyond Our Community

Cameron Station Civic Association: Your Advocate Past, Present and Future

The Cameron Station Civic Association (“Civic Association”) is a volunteer organization formed in 2000 to disseminate relevant information to residents, influence City of Alexandria officials, and ensure we have a prominent voice in city policies and decisions that have an impact on our quality of life and/or property values.

Among the many projects the Civic Association played a significant role in since our inception were the following:

- Halting city plans to put the Wilson Bridge staging area near our community;
- Getting the city to install speed tables in Ben Brenman Park;
- Getting the city to reprogram the traffic lights on Duke Street and Cameron Station Boulevard to make street crossings safe;
- Getting a tot lot built in Ben Brenman Park;
- Getting the city to require the Virginia Paving Company to make environmental upgrades and commit to vacating its premises by January 1, 2027 (given its nearly two dozen past city, state, and federal environmental violations);
- Getting the city to enforce violations by tractor trailers parking on South Pickett Street, near the back entrance to Cameron Station;
- Persuading the city not to make the zoning changes issued under its Zoning For Housing initiative passed in 2023, applicable to the Coordinated Development District (“CDD”), which governs what can be built within our community;
- Stopping a developer from building a huge apartment building on the east side of Cameron Station Blvd., where there are now townhomes.

This year we were successful in:

- Getting the city to locate a bikeshare station on the grass near the intersection of Ben Brenman Drive and Somerville Street rather than, as city staff wanted, in the street blocking traffic on Ben Brenman Drive;
- Getting the city to stop contractors at Landmark Mall from blocking all but one car lane on Duke Street going towards I-395;



- Getting wonderful speakers for our membership meetings this year, including Congressman Don Beyer, Alexandria Mayor Gaskins, city Council members Aguirre, Chapman, and Elnoubi, and Police Commissioner Tarrick McGuire. Going forward, and among other things, we will continue to monitor and comment on the following currently active city projects:

- Duke Street Land Use Plan: that whatever plans for redevelopment occur along Duke Street do not unnecessarily adversely impact traffic and density along Duke Street;
- Housing 2040 Master Plan: that changes are not made to the application of RMF zoning in locations near Cameron Station, or require parking minimums for new development projects, or expand density in exchange for additional affordable housing beyond the 30% increase already allowed;
- West End High-Crash Intersection Safety Audits: that this project does not result in more car lanes being removed, particularly near the intersections of South Van Dorn Street and Edsall Road;
- Maintenance and repair of the overpass bridge into Ben Brenman Park from Duke Street: that this project is completed by the deadline of January 2026;
- Virginia Paving Company departure: that city staff is checking to see what progress has been made by the asphalt plant on its required departure in 2027.

As a result of an enormous amount of hard work covering more than two decades, the Cameron Station Civic Association is one of the most prominent and respected civic associations in the city. In order to maintain this status, we need to continue to grow and add new voting members as well as officers and directors to the organization. While every resident and business owner is automatically a member of the Civic Association, you need to become a voting member to vote on Civic Association matters or become an officer or director. Please refer to the Civic Association on the community website for more information at: <https://cameronsation.org/categories/our-neighborhood/civic-association>.



Beyond Our Community

West End Neighborhood Development



Passport Mini

Development on the West End is progressing at warp speed. Several projects are underway, creating significant traffic challenges at Walker Lane, I-395, and Duke Street. The good news is that they will not last forever.

- The building at **5001 Eisenhower**, formerly known as Victory Center, has been vacant since 2005. After several tries to position this building as an office environment, it is now being repositioned as housing. The building will be converted to approximately 377 rent-controlled apartments including workforce and affordable units. There will also be a city community space. Future construction on the 9.7-acre site will include approximately 450 new market-rate homes, associated spaces, a day care, and retail space. Conversion of the existing building should take a year and a half.
- **Passport Mini** is currently under construction for a showroom addition. This project will double the size of the showroom and workspace, creating an enhanced customer experience. The addition is scheduled for completion the first quarter of 2026.
- **INOVA Hospital** and **WestEnd** are currently under construction. The on-site infrastructure is complete, and the hospital is still on schedule for completion in 2028. Several other projects, including an affordable housing building and market-rate townhomes, have been approved and are in the permitting process.
- **Landmark Overlook** at the corner of Duke and Walker streets, is now in the infrastructure development stage. The property has been cleared, debris removed, and water, sewer, fiber, and roads are being built into the site. This project will include two-over-two condo units, with some reserved for affordable purchase, a multi-family building, and commercial sites.



INOVA Hospital and WestEnd



5001 Eisenhower



Landmark Overlook

Carla's Winter Picks

By Carla Besosa

Entertainment is there to improve people's quality of life. After your basic needs, there's entertainment.

-Satoru Iwata

ALEXANDRIA

Dec. 31 First Night Alexandria
Dec. 5-21 (Fri., Sat., Sun.) Holiday Market at Del Ray Artisans Gallery

ALDEN THEATER (McLean)

Dec. 20 Sounds of the Season: A Lil' Maceo Holiday
Jan. 4 Furia Flamenca: A Trip to Spain
Jan. 18 Barron Ryan Trio: There Rises Light in the Darkness

ATLAS THEATER (DC)

Through Aug 19, 2026 The Gay Men's Chorus of Washington: Sing Out! - A Piano Bar Open Mic (FREE)

BETHESDA THEATER (Bethesda)

Dec. 12 Kirk Whalum
Dec. 12, 13 Motown & More: A Holiday Celebration

BIRCHMERE (Arlandia)

Dec. 4 Don McLean - A Starry Starry Christmas
Dec. 20 A John Waters Christmas
Dec. 22 Christmas Brass Spectacular
Dec. 26 Voices of Motown Christmas Show

Dec. 27 A Very MAYSA Christmas
Dec. 31 New Year's Eve with Seldom Scene
Jan. 21 Herman's Hermits
Jan. 24 Who's Bad - Michael Jackson Experience

BLUES ALLEY (Georgetown)

Dec. 10, 17 Eric Felton performs "Ellington's Nutcracker"
Dec. 12, 13 David Benoit Quartet
Dec. 18, 19 Veronneau's Snow Time

CREATIVE CAULDRON (Falls Church)

Dec. 5-21 *Madeline's Christmas*
Dec. 10-18 Holiday Cabaret Series
Jan. 10-Feb. 1 Passport to the World of Music

1st STAGE THEATER (Tysons)

Dec. 4-21 *Birthday Candles*
Feb. 19-Mar. 8 *Between Riverside and Crazy*

GALA THEATER (DC)

Dec. 12-14 *The Other Side Story*
Feb. 5-Mar. 1 *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*

GMU CENTER FOR THE ARTS (Fairfax)

Dec. 13 American Festival of Pops Orchestra: Holiday Pops - Songs of the Season
Dec. 14 Vienna Boys Choir
Feb. 7 Mark Morris Dance

JAMMIN JAVA (Vienna)

Dec. 19 A Very Rockabilly Christmas
Dec. 22-23 Todd Wright's 23rd Annual Santa Clause F@%! Christmas Spectacular
Dec. 31 New Year's Eve Dance Party
Jan. 8 Dead Letter Office - R.E.M. Tribute

KENNEDY CENTER (DC)

Dec. 12-14 *The Little Prince*
Dec. 14, 20, 22 Washington Chorus: A Candlelight Christmas
Dec. 16-Jan. 4 Monty Python - *Spamalot*
Dec. 18-21 NSO: Handel's Messiah
Dec. 20, 24 A Family Christmas
Jan. 7-17 Shen Yun
Jan. 15-17 The Rite of Spring

LITTLE THEATER OF ALEXANDRIA (Old Town)

Dec. 6-20 *A Christmas Carol*
Feb. 7-28 *School of Rock*

MGM (National Harbor)

Dec. 19, 20 Cirque Dreams Holidayze

PROVIDENCE PLAYERS (Falls Church)

Dec. 12-21 *A Sherlock Carol*

MOUNT VERNON (Alexandria)

Dec. 12, 13, 19, 22, 23 Mount Vernon by Candlelight
Dec. 20, 21 Christmas Illuminations

ROUNDHOUSE THEATER (Bethesda)

Dec. 3-Jan. 4 *Rules for Living*
Feb. 11-Mar. 15 *Nothing Up My Sleeve*

THE STATE THEATER (Falls Church)

Dec. 19 Holiday Tribute to Elvis Presley
Dec. 20 Trial by Fire - Tribute to Journey

STRATHMORE (Bethesda)

Dec. 12 BSO: Cirque Nutcracker
Dec. 13 A Candlelight Christmas
Dec. 14 Bela Fleck & The Flecktones
Dec. 20 National Philharmonic: The Messiah
Jan. 17 Swan Lake
Feb. 2 Yo-Yo Ma
Feb. 4 David Foster & Katherine McPhee
Feb. 14 BSO: Reimagined - Vivaldi's Four Seasons
Feb. 20 BSO: La Vida Loca

SIGNATURE THEATER (Shirlington)

Nov. 4-Jan. 25 *Fiddler on the Roof*
Dec. 9-Feb. 1 *In Clay*

WOOLLY MAMMOTH (DC)

Nov. 13-Dec. 21 *ho ho ha ha ha ha*
Feb. 3-Mar. 1 *The World to Come*

December Days to Celebrate!

By Carla Besosa

"Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning but a going on, with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us."

-Hal Borland

December 10: NATIONAL LAGER DAY - We have two neighboring breweries: *Aslin* and *Port City*. In the lager realm, *Aslin* offers Old Town Lager, Alba 08, Festbier, and Aslin Lager. *Port City* brews Pizza Night and Golden Lager.

December 13: NATIONAL DAY OF THE HORSE - Why not trot on down to *The Light Horse Restaurant and Bar* in Old Town?

December 14: CHORAL DAY - All together now, let's sing Simon & Garfunkel's *A Hazy Shade of Winter* (yes, The Bangles redid it two decades later):

Seasons change with the scenery

Weavin' time in a tapestry

Won't you stop and remember me?

December 15: NATIONAL WEAR YOUR PEARLS DAY - Sources say pearls are currently enjoying a major comeback as a trendy but

timeless accessory for people of all ages and genders, shifting from classic to cool. Barbara Bush, you had it right!

December 17: NATIONAL SYRUP DAY - Syrup makes me think of pancakes; pancakes make me think of diners. Take your pick: *Van Dorn Diner*, *Executive Diner*, *Beeliner Diner*, or *Silver Diner*. Okay, IHOP isn't exactly a diner, but the proximity and 24-hour availability give it credibility.

December 18: NATIONAL RE-GIFTING DAY - Do your part - recycle! Just don't re-gift to the person who gave it to you.

December 20: GAMES DAY - Most popular non-electronic games include Chess, Checkers, Monopoly, UNO, Solitaire, Blackjack, Tag, Hide & Go Seek, and Charades. There is no better place to play than at Game Nights at the Cameron Club and Cameron Cafe.

December 21: NATIONAL FRENCH FRIED SHRIMP DAY - Good discovery: the Fried Shrimp appetizer at La Casa is sufficient to make a meal.

December 30: BACON DAY - I immediately thought of breakfast, BLTs, and Kevin!

Want to keep celebrating all year long? Visit *The Compass* blog for monthly Days to Celebrate in 2026.

Taste of the Town

By Carla Besosa, Cameron Station Foodie

"Life is too short to eat bad food."

-Me

We are lucky to be in an area where new restaurants are constantly popping up, and we are afforded choices from many cultures. This year I have experienced several new venues I will share with you.

Thai Lemon, 506 S. Van Dorn St.

This Van Dorn Station restaurant replaced Thai Lemongrass. Don't let the name similarity fool you. You'll find new owners and a new menu (Grandma's recipes). I give it a thumbs-up on the food and the staff. Come support this young couple who are trying to make their restaurant dreams come true.

El Fogon, 7554 Telegraph Rd.

This new spot in the Hayfield Shopping Center is getting noticed for its fresh, fast, and tasty offerings (no ABC license). You order at the counter, and your food is delivered to your table. Their Birria Tacos are delicious! With any order you can substitute a flour tortilla or a lettuce wrap.

Kajiken, 6550-K Little River Tpke.

Kajiken replaced Foxfire Grill in Pinecrest Plaza. They feature soba noodles, and everything is fresh and made-to-order. Your meal resembles a deconstructed bowl of ingredients that you mix to blend the flavors. The staff is very gracious and informative.

Helena's Mexican Restaurant, 5735 Telegraph Rd.

This has become a regular go-to for me. Helena's is a family-owned business, and Alexandrians are all for supporting them. Fresh ingredients, well-prepared, are served by friendly waitstaff. They even have a small bar, and a Happy Hour 2-6pm, Tue.-Fri. My favorite has been their Birria Quesatato - shredded, braised beef with Oaxaca cheese, cilantro, and onion. Very tasty!

Tiki Garden Thai, 4527 Duke St.

These are our new neighbors in the Foxchase Shopping Center. Their food is delicious, the staff accommodating, and you can't beat the convenience. Though they occupy a relatively small footprint, they generously accommodate large parties with ease - we've had as many as 28! There's a small, six-stool bar - a fun place to sample the tasty bar bites. (Try Chive Dumplings and Satay Lemongrass.)

Founding Farmers, 461 Swann Ave.

At the southern end of the Potomac Yards area, you'll find the latest incarnation of the famous Founding Farmers. This farm-to-table favorite has a lot to offer. They have a diverse menu and highly trained staff. The place is attractive and offers you convenient validated parking. Visit the Bakery & Cafe in the morning, or come for Happy Hour, Mon.-Fri. 3:30-6pm.

Farmhouse Tuscan, 7879 Heneska Loop

Located near the Hilltop Wegmans, this new Italian-themed venue replaced the former Green Turtle. The restaurant is sizable, with an expansive bar and patio seating. Live music in the bar Thurs.-Sat. pairs well with the half-price, hand-tossed pizzas during Happy Hour. My favorite pizza is The Holler - marinara, fresh mozzarella, smoked pepperoni, spicy Italian sausage, farmhouse bacon, and hot honey...YUM! The menu contains much

variety, staff members are pleasant and well-informed, and Sunday brunch is available.

Valletta Port, 682 N. St. Asaph St.

This new Mediterranean restaurant, located adjacent to the Old Town Trader Joe's, replaced the former Sunday in Saigon. I've eaten there three times and will continue to do so. Their Turkish/Mediterranean/European blend of offerings is available for brunch, lunch, and dinner. Happy hour is offered at the bar noon-6pm. Patio seating is also available.

Thanida Thai Restaurant & Bar, 1210 N Fayette St.

Thanida is boasting a new location at the north end of Fayette St. Located on the ground floor of a high-rise, it's more of a deliberate destination than a drive-by find. Their authentic Thai menu includes Thai Street Food offerings. Happy hour is Mon.-Thurs., 4-7pm, at their unpretentious little bar.

YET TO TRY

There are other new establishments which I have not yet tried:

Maman, 701 King St. - French-inspired bakery & cafe.

Pupatella, 700 Slaters Ln. - VPN-awarded pizza (Verace Pizza Napoletana), and other great appetizers, salads, panini, desserts, and kids' meals.

Cooper Mill, 10 Duke St. - Pizza by the slice/pie and other offerings.

Timorian Afghan Restaurant, 5774 Dow Ave. - Located next to Crafty Crab, they serve breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Pak Soll Izakaya & Bar, 1909 Mount Vernon Ave. - Japanese/Asian fusion, replacing Zuki Moon, with a redesigned interior and reimagined menu.

Chili Wok, 3829 Mount Vernon Ave. - Located in Alexandria, next to M.O.M., this new Chinese establishment is receiving thumbs-up reviews.

Umiya Sushi, 30 Duke St, 3000 Duke St. - Replacing the old Generous George's (aka: Coming Soon! - Yates' Pizza), Umiya offers two tiers of all-you-can-eat menus, plus à la carte items. I'm hearing positive reviews.

Tortas & Tacos/La Chiquita, 529 E. Howell Ave. - Food Truck turned brick and mortar, this Del Ray location replaced Bark Social.

Home Grown, 1600 King St. - In the new Archer Hotel, Home Grown provides locally sourced dishes for breakfast, brunch, and lunch.

AKB Hotel Bar, 1602 King St. - Replacement for Brabo Tasting Room. Happy hour served 4-6pm, Mon.-Thurs.

a.lounge+bar, 625 First St. - Hotel AKA, in North Old Town, houses this whimsical bar/lounge/patio with a "mamacloud" floating above.

Hotel Heron, 699 Prince St. - This hotel can be found at the corner of Prince & Washington streets. The Heron is home to the **Francis Hall cocktail lounge**, the **Good Fortune rooftop bar**, and **Kiln**, an upscale restaurant.

SAY BYE-BYE

The following businesses are no longer with us: **Dolce & Bean**, the wonderful chocolate/coffee boutique at 2003 Mount Vernon Ave.; **Samurai Hibachi** in Foxchase Shopping Center; **Glorious Days Grill** in Alexandria Commons.

Celebrating the Holidays ...

It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year... for Football!

From Bob Cox

Some people wait all year for the holidays, but for me, the real season worth celebrating is college football season, and my team is The Ohio State Buckeyes. Even if you are not a Buckeye fan, few things feel more festive than a stadium alive with roaring crowds and marching bands, and a kitchen filled with snacks ready for kick-off. Game days are filled with traditions, good food, and friendly rivalries, which sounds like a holiday gathering to me!

While some believe the Super Bowl or World Cup is the ultimate football holiday, my favorite is the grand finale of college football, the College Football National Championship, and the next one is on **January 19, 2026**. Here's to hoping this is our year, made even sweeter by the perfect chocolate-dipped peanut butter treat, the Buckeye candy.

Classic Buckeyes Recipe:

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 4 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 6 oz. semi-sweet melting chocolate or almond bark

Preparation

Step 1. Mix peanut butter, butter, vanilla, and powdered sugar until smooth.

Step 2. Roll into 1-inch balls and chill for about 30 minutes, until firm.

Step 3. Melt chocolate according to package directions, then dip each ball, leaving a small "eye" of peanut butter showing.

Step 4. Place on wax paper and chill until firm. Enjoy!



Mardi Gras Memories: From Shoebox Floats to the Real Thing

From Tricia Hemel

As a kid growing up in New Orleans, Mardi Gras was, of course, my favorite holiday. It meant a week off from school, endless parades, and plenty of king cake. But what I loved most was getting to be creative and a little messy by making my own float out of a shoebox. I covered it with glitter, construction paper, and beads until it sparkled from every angle. It was the ultimate craft project and the perfect stage for my 1970s Barbie, who always rode proudly as the Queen of Mardi Gras. Then one year, my family had the opportunity to ride and build a real-life float for a parade that rolled through the streets of New Orleans on Mardi Gras Day.



With more than 100 floats, this was something truly exciting.

For weeks, families gathered in the evenings and on weekends to build our float and sew costumes, while we kids got to stay up late and play. Our float's theme was "Going to the Chapel." The adults dressed as brides and grooms, and the kids were groomsmen and bridesmaids. Each family had its own color, and ours was pink, which my sister and I loved. On parade day, we were up at 3am, rolled at 3pm, and didn't make it home until well after midnight. By the time the parade finally started, we were exhausted but too excited to care. We tossed beads to the crowd shouting, "Throw me something, mister!" while "Going to the Chapel and we're gonna get married..." played on repeat for what felt like forever. (Let's just say I've heard it enough for a lifetime.) The experience was truly magical and one I'll never forget.

Most people will never ride in a Mardi Gras parade, but you can still celebrate like a local. In 2026, Carnival season kicks off on **January 6 (Twelfth Night)** and runs through **Fat Tuesday (Mardi Gras Day), February 17**. It's the perfect excuse to make your own float and reign as king or queen of your very own krewe.

Recipe for a Mardi Gras Shoebox Float

Supplies

- Shoebox (with lid, of course)
- Construction or wrapping paper, tissue paper, or anything colorful you can find
- Beads, feathers, pipe cleaners, garland, pom-poms, or whatever sparkles at the craft store
- Acrylic paint or markers
- Figurines, toys, or something with that "wow" factor for your float's centerpiece
- Four pencils or wooden rods (if you want to add a roof)
- Glue, tape, scissors, or a hot glue gun if you're feeling brave
- And yes... glitter. Lots and lots of glitter.

Preparation

Step 1: Turn the shoebox upside down to form the base of your float.

Step 2: Cover it in paper, tissue, or paint, whatever calls to your inner artist.

Step 3: Add your decorations...the more over-the-top, the better!

Optional: Add a "roof" using pencils or rods to hold up the lid.

Step 4: Parade your creation proudly around the house and shout, "Throw me something, mister!"

Decorating Tip: Use the traditional Mardi Gras colors: purple for justice, green for faith, and gold for power to give your float that authentic New Orleans flair. So, grab a shoebox, some glitter, and *laissez les bons temps rouler!*

All Year Long

A Valentine Favorite: Duck Breasts with Cherry and Port Sauce

From Cathy Crawford

This recipe is quick, flavorful, and beautiful. Serves two as a main dish for a celebratory or romantic evening.

Ingredients

- Two 5-6 oz. duck breast halves or one 12-16 oz. duck breast half
- 1 Tbsp. chilled butter
- ¼ cup finely chopped shallot (about 1 large)
- ½ cup low-salt chicken broth
- 8-10 halved, pitted, sweet red cherries, fresh or frozen, thawed
- 2 Tbsp. tawny Port
- 1 Tbsp. honey

Preparation

Step 1: Using a sharp knife, score the skin (not the flesh) in a diamond or cross-hatch pattern (½ inch intervals). Sprinkle breasts with salt and pepper. Let sit for 15 minutes, then dry the breasts with a paper towel.

Step 2: Heat a non-stick pan on medium-high heat (no need for butter/oil). Place duck breasts skin-side down in hot pan, then immediately reduce heat to low to maintain a very low sizzle for about 15 minutes. (This technique browns the skin, while rendering much of the fat under the skin.) Turn skin-side up and continue at low heat for 5 minutes.

Step 3: Pour off all but 2 Tbsp. drippings from the pan. Add shallot and stir over medium heat for 30 seconds.



Add broth, cherries, Port, and honey. Increase heat to high; boil, stirring often, reducing liquid to a glaze, about 3 minutes. Whisk in 1 Tbsp. cold butter. Season sauce to taste with salt and pepper.

Step 4: Thinly slice duck. Fan slices out on plates. Spoon sauce over the meat. Add whatever sides you prefer.

Step 5: Pour some wine, light some candles, and enjoy.

Spring Festival

From Caitlyn Sun

The Spring Festival, also known as Chinese New Year, originates in China and has become the universal lunisolar New Year across East and Southeast Asia, including Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The widespread observance of the Spring Festival as a major public and cultural holiday in these areas shows a fusion of Chinese heritage and local diversity.



The origin of Spring Festival began as a way to ward off a mythical beast called *Nian* (Year), which would come on the eve of the new year to attack villagers and their livestock. The customs of staying up late on New Year's Eve, setting off firecrackers, hanging red lanterns, and decorating homes with red couplets have been established when people discovered that *Nian* feared loud noises, bright lights, and the color red.

The celebration of Spring Festival lasts from the Kitchen God Festival on the 23rd of the 12th lunar month to the Lantern Festival on the 15th of the 1st lunar month, with the

culmination of a grand family reunion dinner and staying up late (*ShouSui*) on New Year's Eve. The traditional foods for the Spring Festival celebration are symbols of good wishes and blessings for the coming year. Some examples are:

- Dumplings (*Jiaozi*): represent wealth and fortune because the shape of dumplings resembles ancient Chinese gold ingots.
- Fish (*Yu*): represents abundance and surplus because the Chinese word for "fish" sounds like the words for "abundance."
- Glutinous rice cakes (*Niangao*): represent prosperity and advancement because the meaning of "Niangao" is "year high," which symbolizes achieving higher status, success, or growth with each coming year.
- Sweet rice balls (*Tangyuan*): represent family unity and togetherness because of their perfect round shape and conclude the New Year celebrations on the Lantern Festival.

Thus, these foods are more than festival dishes but edible blessings shared among family members to welcome a year filled with joy and good fortune.

In 2026, the Spring Festival begins with the **Kitchen God Festival on February 10**, welcomes the **Year of the Horse on February 17**, and concludes with the **Lantern Festival on March 3**.

Celebrating the Holidays ...

King's Day in The Netherlands

From Caroline Boomaars

Every year on April 27, the people of The Netherlands celebrate the birthday of King Willem-Alexander. This tradition started on August 31, 1885, on the fifth birthday of Princes Wilhelmina (later Queen Wilhelmina, the current King's great-grandmother). As of April 30, 1949, (the birthday of then-recently-crowned Queen Juliana) the birthday of the head of state is a national holiday and celebrated by having flea markets, music festivals, parades with decorated bicycles, traditional Dutch games and, most importantly, dressing up in the nation's national color: orange. The King and his family visit a different city every year and join in the festivities. First and foremost, King's Day is a celebration for children. One of the traditional Dutch games for children is *koekhappen*; children are blindfolded and try to bite into a slice of *peperkoek* that hangs from a string. *Peperkoek* tastes a little like pumpkin spice cake. The first recipes for this Dutch cake date back to the 16th century. The average Dutchman eats about two kilos of this cake per year.



Ingredients

- 250g rye flour
- 150g plain flour
- 250g dark brown sugar
- 200ml milk
- 100ml syrup
- 100g melted butter
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 Tbsp. *speculaas* spices (4pt cinnamon, 1pt cloves, 1pt nutmeg, 1pt coriander, 1pt anise, 1pt ginger, 1pt cardamom)

Preparation

Step 1: Pre-heat the oven to 320°. Grease a baking tin and dust it with flour.



Step 2: Mix in a large bowl: rye flour, plain flour, dark brown sugar, baking powder, salt, and *speculaas* spices.

Step 3: Add milk, syrup, and melted butter and mix it all together until it is a smooth batter. Pour the batter into the baking tin.

Step 4: Bake the *peperkoek* in a pre-heated oven for 50 to 60 minutes. Let the *peperkoek* cool down in the tin.

Sooji Halwa

From Manorma Malik

In India, we serve Halwa for all religious, festive occasions, and celebrations. You can find the ingredients at Ginger and Spice next to Lidl, or even some at LA Mart.

Ingredients

- ½ cup sooji (fine cream of wheat)
- ½ cup ghee (clarified butter)
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 tsp. besan (gram flour)
- ¾ cup milk and ¾ cup water
- Optional: cardamom powder, saffron, almonds, cashews, raisins

Preparation

Step 1: Melt 2 tps. ghee in a heavy bottom pan, add almonds cashews and fry on medium-low heat until nice and crunchy.

Step 2: Remove the nuts, then add raisins and fry until puffed and drain.

Step 3: In the same pan add the rest of the ghee. When warm, add sooji and fry stirring constantly until all moisture evaporates.

Step 4: Add the besan and continue cooking the sooji to a deep golden color.



Step 5: While the sooji is frying, heat the milk and water in another pan to a boil, stir in cardamom and sugar until it is melted.

Step 6: Add the liquid to the sooji, being careful as it will splatter. The mixture will thicken as the sooji absorbs the liquid.

Step 7: Lower the heat to low and cover for a few minutes until the ghee starts to separate.

Step 8: Add the nuts and serve warm or room temperature.

All Year Long

Gazpacho de Verano de Mamá

From Vince Mantero

I grew up spending my summers in Sevilla, Spain, where gazpacho originated as a way to stay cool in the summer heat. This is my mom's recipe, and no other version ever tastes quite as good.

Ingredients

- 9 tomatoes
- 1 cucumber
- 1 green pepper
- 1 small yellow onion
- ½ clove garlic (you can add more if you like)
- ½ loaf French bread (stale is better)

- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. paprika

Preparation

Step 1: Cut bread into bite-sized pieces and wet with water.

Step 2: Peel the cucumber

and cut up tomatoes, green pepper, onion, and garlic.

Step 3: Add all ingredients in a blender (may have to do in two batches). Once mixed, add to bowl with ice cubes and keep in the refrigerator.



Summertime Potato Salad

From Jo Ellen Joseph

I received this recipe from my graduate school roommate, and started making it when my husband returned from Viet Nam. It has become a summertime staple for my family and friends...easy to make and so delicious!

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. potatoes (6 medium). I use Yukon Gold or small Red Skin.
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 tsp. salt
- ⅛ tsp. pepper
- ¼ cup Italian salad dressing
- ½ cup mayonnaise (or half mayo/half sour cream)



- ½ cup chopped celery (optional)
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, diced

Preparation

Step 1: Wash potatoes. Heat 1-inch salted water (1/2 tsp. salt to 1 cup water) to boiling.

Step 2: Add unpared potatoes and cover tightly. Heat to boiling and cook 30-35 minutes or until tender.

Step 3: Drain, cool, and peel potatoes. (Note: Leave skins on red skin potatoes). Cut into cubes.

Step 4: Combine potatoes in bowl with onion, sprinkle with salt and pepper, mix with Italian dressing.

Step 5: Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours or until thoroughly cooled.

Step 6: Just before serving, add mayo and toss gently until potatoes are well-coated. Stir in celery and eggs.

My Sister's Autumn Chunky Tomato Basil Bisque

From Tricia Hemel

This past September, while I was recovering from surgery, my sister made me this rich, creamy soup. It is a hug in a bowl and the perfect comfort food for crisp autumn days.

Ingredients

- 6 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped
- ¼ cup butter, cubed
- 3 cans (14½ oz each) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
- ¾ cup loosely packed basil leaves, coarsely chopped
- 3 tsp. sugar



- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 1½ cups heavy whipping cream

Preparation

Step 1: In a large saucepan, sauté the celery, onion, and red pepper in butter for 5-6 minutes or until tender. Add tomatoes and tomato paste; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 40 minutes.

Step 2: Remove from the heat; stir in basil, sugar, salt, and pepper; cool slightly.

Step 3: Transfer half of the soup mixture to a blender or food processor; gradually add cream; process until puréed.

Step 4: Return to the pan; heat through (do not boil).

Celebrating the Holidays ...

3-Layer Brownies: Our Halloween Tradition

From Shaina and Ian Gaines

Halloween is a favorite holiday in our family, and every year we celebrate with a special homemade treat. This Instagram recipe, discovered a few years ago, has become a family



favorite. It's easy, delicious, and so fun to bake that it now appears several times throughout the Halloween season. It has officially become part of our Halloween tradition.

Ingredients

- Brownie mix
- Halloween sugar cookie dough
- Halloween Oreos
- Sprinkles

Preparation

Step 1: Line a muffin pan with cupcake liners.

Step 2: Place sugar cookie dough in the bottom of each liner, then add an Oreo cookie on top.

Step 3: Spoon brownie mix over the Oreo, add sprinkles, and bake for about 25 minutes, or until they look done.



Mauby (A Centuries-old Caribbean drink)

From Shaa Briscoe

Ingredients

- 1 oz. sweet marjoram
- 1 oz. rosemary
- 4 (3-inch) mauby bark
- 1 orange (fresh orange peel)
- 3 lbs. sugar
- 1 oz. anise

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg
- Optional: 2 star anise & juice of lime
- 1/2 Tbsp. cake yeast
- 1 gal. water

Preparation

Step 1: Boil bark and herbs in one quart of water to make bitters.

Step 2: Fill another container with the gallon of water and sweeten with sugar.

Step 3: Add the bitters, then toss mixture with a ladle.

Step 4: When the mixture begins to foam, add the yeast.

Step 5: Strain through a cheesecloth and bottle. Let stand overnight.

Wings

From Shaa Briscoe

Ingredients

- Turkey wings
- Thyme, salt, pepper, garlic powder, onion powder

- Chicken broth
- Mushroom soup

Preparation

Step 1: Season turkey wings with thyme, salt, pepper, garlic powder, and onion powder.

Step 2: Brown the wings five minutes on each side.

Step 3: Place in crockpot and cover with chicken broth. Cook on high for three hours.

Step 4: Remove wings. Add mushroom soup to crockpot and cook on high for half an hour. Serve over wings.



Noche Buena: A Family Tradition

From Sandi Mason

Our family celebrates Noche Buena, or "The Good Night," a Cuban and Spanish Christmas Eve tradition centered around family, faith, and food. Once a late-night feast served before midnight Mass, our version now begins after a sunset service so everyone can join in.

The menu has changed over the years from the classic roast pork to tenderloin with roasted potatoes, carrots, and always peas. However it is served, Noche Buena remains a joyful gathering that reminds us that

the more people at the table, the more love that is shared.

Mojo Marinated Pork Tenderloin

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. pork tenderloin
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup fresh orange juice
- ¼ cup lime juice
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. oregano
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation

Step 1: In a bowl, whisk together garlic, orange juice, lime juice, olive

oil, cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper. Step 2: Place tenderloin in a resealable bag or dish and pour the marinade over it. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight for the best flavor.

Step 3: Preheat oven to 400°F. Remove pork from the marinade and sear in a skillet over medium-high heat until browned on all sides.

Step 4: Transfer to a baking dish and roast for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the internal temperature reaches 145°F.

Step 5: Let rest for 5 minutes before slicing. Serve with black beans, rice, and roasted vegetables.



All Year Long

Bourbon Sweet Potatoes

From Shaa Briscoe

Ingredients for Sweet Potatoes

- 3 cups mashed sweet potatoes
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1 to 1 1/4 tsp. Maker's Mark bourbon
- Cinnamon to taste

Ingredients for Topping

- 1/2 cup brown sugar

- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup or less butter, softened
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans

Preparation

Step 1: Combine the first 7 ingredients in a mixer and pour into a 2-quart baking dish.

Step 2: Mix topping ingredients together and sprinkle on top of the sweet potatoes.

Step 3: Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 20 minutes, until bubbly.



Holiday Goat Cheese Dip

By Noosha Hussain

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tsp. brown sugar
- 3 tsp. honey (divided)
- 1 tsp. orange zest
- 1/2 cup dried cranberries
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts
- 8 oz. goat cheese
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 2 tsp. salt
- Orange zest to top

Preparation

Step 1: Place a pan over medium heat.

Step 2: To the pan add butter,



brown sugar, 2 tsp. honey, and orange zest.

Step 3: Whisk together until combined, and sugar has dissolved (about 2-3 mins.).

Step 4: To the pan add dried cranberries and walnuts and stir to combine.

Step 5: In a separate bowl, combine softened goat cheese, cream cheese, and 1 tsp. honey, and season with salt.

Step 6: Scoop the cheese mixture into a serving bowl and top with the walnut mixture. Serve with crackers or bread.

Ann's Holiday Punch

From Meredith Aquila

This recipe is from my aunt's mother who used to make it for her annual Christmas Eve parties. It's a sweet, bubbly punch without alcohol so all of us could enjoy it. I always looked forward to it, and now I sometimes make it for New Year's Eve.

Ingredients

- 1 gal. cranberry juice
- 46 oz. pineapple juice
- 12 oz. frozen orange juice
- 2 liters ginger ale (2x1 liter bottles)
- 1 qt. lime sherbet

Preparation

Mix all of the ingredients together. If the punch bowl gets too full, just add more ginger ale when bowl gets low...start with one liter of ginger ale at a time.





Management: Making It Happen

Thanks to General Manager Steve Philbin for this update.

Management has been working diligently with the Board of Directors and its advisory committees to complete projects on time and within budget. The following is a list of accomplishments related to day-to-day operations and projects that have been completed throughout FY25:

- **Reserve Study:** The Level I Reserve Study was completed.

A Level I Study is almost created from scratch. The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) and management worked together to assess the community and worked with a Reserve Specialist who created the study based on current costs and inflation. Virginia Law requires this study to be completed every five years.

- **Gazebo:** The Cameron Station Boulevard Gazebo in the Circle, which was not in the budget for this fiscal year, was repaired and painted. The rotted wood was replaced with a South African mahogany that should last many years.

- **Streetlights:** We continue to complete an LED retrofit program on the community streetlight poles. As the lights are reported to be out through management inspections, Signal88 reports, and resident communications, the LED heads and photocells are replaced. We have replaced approximately 90 heads per year. This will continue until all heads are replaced.

- **Park Bench Slat Replacement:** This is the third year of park bench slat replacement. It will continue for approximately 1-2 years. The bench slats have a 50-year parts warranty.

- **Brick Sidewalk Repair:** Approximately \$28,000 is budgeted each year to repair the common area brick sidewalks, as inspections and resident communications indicate trip hazards. Community tree roots cause a significant amount of this repair work. This work continues throughout the year. Please report any trip hazards (with pictures) to the following email: managers@cameronstation.org.

- **Fire Hydrants:** Regular inspections of community street fire hydrants are inspected through a pressure test, assessment for leaking/dripping hydrants, and other direct inspection requirements. We completed year #3 and will start the inspections again in FY27. All inspection reports are sent to the Alexandria Fire Department.

- **Linear Park:** Management initiated the replacement and removal of dead trees in the Linear Park at Cameron Station trail, in collaboration with the City of Alexandria Landscape Architect, as well as the Common Area Committee (CAC). With help and insight from our city representative, we have successfully removed many dead trees from the Linear Park trail, with plans to replace a total of 50-60+ trees over the course of the next couple of years.



Avante Thomas, Patrice Johnson, Mark Bondurant, Juana Michel, Steve Philbin

- **Pocket Parks:** The Helmuth Lane/California Lane park and the Brawner Place park were recently upgraded. As the tree canopy and pocket parks within Cameron Station age, the focus is to upgrade the parks as budgeted per the Reserve Study.

- **Pergolas:** Repair work and painting of the Carlton Place Condominium (Donovan Drive) and Bessley Place pergolas in the parks occurred this summer.

- **Pool Furniture:** New pool furniture was purchased this

year. The Cameron Club Facilities Committee (CFC) and management worked diligently to survey residents and invite residents to submit input on the furniture style and color scheme. The furniture arrived in early June, and the furniture looks great.

- **Exercise Equipment:** The CCFC, Health Fitness, and management purchased exercise equipment for the Cameron Club Fitness Center. The purchases were based on resident input, age of the equipment, usage, and the supporting reserve study.

- **Committee Budgets:** The Common Area Committee (CAC), Cameron Club Facilities Committee (CCFC), Activities & Events Committee (A&E), and Communications Committee (ComCom) are within their approved 2025 budgets and will remain within budget based on the current financial reporting.

- **Receivables:** The community receivables are less than 1%. The industry standard reflects a 3-5% delinquency rate.

- **Budget:** The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC), Board of Directors, and management worked together to approve the FY26 budget with a 2.78% increase.

- **Financial Surplus:** As of October 2025, the CSCA financials indicate a surplus that should continue through the end of the year.

Deck the Halls of the Cameron Club

Celebrate the season by adding your creative touch to our festive "Holiday Gallery Garland"! After finishing your coloring page, bring it to the Cameron Club and hang it proudly in the hallway with the clothespins provided for everyone to enjoy.

Need more pages? Extras are available at the management office or can be downloaded anytime from *The Compass* blog. **Let's Deck the Halls!**



It Takes a Committee

Activities & Events Planning Committee

The Activities & Events Planning Committee (A&E) organized a variety of events this year. From traditional staples to new ideas, there was something for everyone.

Game Night kicked off the year at the end of January. There were several Game Nights held throughout the year. Eventually, mahjong was incorporated into the mix. Committee members introduced this game to newcomers and played with seasoned veterans as well.

A&E also held a couple of art lectures, starting in March. Led by Cameron Station resident Tosca Ruggieri, residents were able to hear about the Etruscans and René Lalique. March also saw the return of Trivia Night. Held near Saint Patrick's Day, topics included music, science, TV & movies, sports, history, and St. Patrick's Day.

The first major event of the year was the annual Eggstravaganza in April. This included an Egg Hunt, bunny petting, a visit from the Spring Bunny, and performance from the Cameron Station Pom Squad.

To celebrate July 4th, Cameron Station residents participated in the annual Patriotic Parade. This consisted of a stroll down the Linear Park, ending at the Cameron Club, where BBQ was served.

The annual Pool Party was held in August. This is one of the biggest events of the year, with attendance around 400 people. The party included a DJ and music by the pool, a face painter, a balloon artist, BBQ, cool drinks, and ice cream.

A&E rounds out the year with the annual Halloween party, Saturday, October 25, and the Holiday Party Sunday, December 7. Updates on future events can always be found in the weekly *Cameron Connection*... be sure to subscribe if you haven't already.

The Activities & Events Planning Committee would like to thank our sponsors, Aaron Podolsky and Irina Babb, for their generous support for some of the larger events. A&E would also like to thank all the residents who volunteered at events throughout the year. Looking ahead, A&E hopes to plan another memorable and fun-filled year in 2026.

Architectural Review Committee

Homeowners occasionally will want to make an exterior modification or improvement to their lots in order to add value to their property and add curb appeal. A majority of these changes are guided by Cameron Station's Design and Maintenance Standards (DMS). The Architectural Review Committee (ARC) is responsible for reviewing homeowner applications for exterior modifications and improvements to help ensure that these changes conform to the DMS, thereby maintaining the aesthetic of Cameron Station.

The ARC meets on the third Wednesday of each month to review pending applications, as well as to hear from any homeowner who may have a question or concern regarding the

ARC or the DMS. This year, as of October, the ARC had reviewed over 125 applications. A majority of these applications pertained to landscaping improvements, as well as roof and/or window replacements.

All residents who have applied for the ARC review are encouraged to attend the meeting in which their application will be discussed. This can help the ARC review the application if there are questions that need to be addressed.

The ARC consists of seven volunteer residents who typically serve a term of two years. Interested in becoming an ARC member? The ARC is currently looking for candidates to fill some planned vacancies. Help make a difference...get involved!

The ARC looks forward to continue working with residents in 2026 to help maintain the charm and character of Cameron Station.

Cameron Club Facilities Committee

The Cameron Club Facilities Committee (CCFC) had another banner year with so many great things happening to make our clubhouse, fitness center, and the pool a great experience for all our residents both young and older.

Our usage numbers the last several months are finally back to our pre-pandemic numbers. This is quite gratifying as it means our residents are now more comfortable in getting back to using our great facility to either get fit or maintain their fitness.

We continue to upgrade our fitness equipment when it makes sense to do so. Our 10 complimentary fitness classes remain popular among our residents.

Our superb fitness director, Psy Scott, has supported our residents in an outstanding manner for 10+ years. His efforts have been tireless, and Psy has shared his wealth of knowledge on many aspects of fitness and nutrition to the hundreds of residents we serve. He has also taught hundreds of classes and trained thousands of our residents. To say that Psy has left an indelible mark on Cameron Station is an understatement.

Unfortunately for us, Psy has decided to take a new career path. There is no way we can offer enough thanks for his herculean efforts. Psy's departure is a big loss to our beloved community. We wish him well in his future endeavors.

I want to thank our great CCFC members who are Vice Chair Dan Ogg, Recording Secretary David Palmer, and Paul King. Our Board of Director's liaison, Brendan Hanlon, has been a great liaison, offering sage advice time and time again. Tim Regan recently left after a number of years on the committee and did a noteworthy job leading our annual Operating Budget recommendations.

The support we have received from the CAMP management team – Steve Philbin, Patrice Johnson, and Juana Michel – has also been outstanding.

Our Facilities Manager, Mark Bondurant, continues to do great work both in and around the Cameron Club and throughout our entire neighborhood. I am so proud and grateful for this stellar team, who are totally committed to serving our cherished residents.

I wish all of you and your beloved families a very Happy Thanksgiving and blessed holidays.

- *"Your body can stand almost anything. It's your mind that needs convincing."*
- *"It's not about being better than someone else, it's about being better than you used to be."*
- *"A little progress each day adds up to big results."*
- *"Take care of your body. It's the only place you have to live."*

Common Area Committee

The Common Area Committee is pleased to report on a productive year enhancing our community's beauty, function, and value, a mission guided by the input of our neighbors and the community's long-term maintenance and improvement needs.

Looking Back at our 2025 Accomplishments

- **Pocket Park Renovations:** Completed the renovation of two pocket parks, Helmuth Lane and Brawner Place, to address declining greenery and ensure they meet community standards.
- **Seasonal Plantings:** Oversaw the planting of seasonal flowers at key locations, including the community entrance, the traffic circle, and near the clubhouse.
- **Community Walk-throughs:** Conducted regular community walk-throughs to proactively identify issues related to turf, trees, shrubbery, and drainage.
- **Drainage Remediation:** Addressed and successfully remediated drainage problems in several locations throughout the community.
- **Euonymus Shrub Planting:** Planted new euonymus shrubs at the ends of California and Col. Johnson lanes to enhance their appearance.
- **Brick Walkway Refurbishment:** Raised and leveled several brick walkways, improving the safety and connectivity between our community and the Linear Park.
- **Community Consultations:** Worked directly with affected homeowners on proposals to renovate two pocket parks and install a new conservation garden.
- **Irrigation Assessment:** In collaboration with the Financial

Advisory Committee, engaged an irrigation expert to comprehensively map and document our community's existing irrigation systems, resulting in detailed recommendations for improved efficiency, effectiveness, and maintenance.

- **Pride of Ownership Awards:** Hosted the annual Pride of Ownership awards, recognizing homeowners who have put exceptional effort into their landscapes.
 - **Committee Membership:** Welcomed Linda Stowe to the committee, who replaced outgoing member Sarah Markel.
 - **Looking Ahead to 2026**
Building on our work this past year, a primary focus for the committee in 2026 will be to continue our efforts to maintain and improve our beautiful common areas. We look forward to tackling the following projects:
 - **Irrigation System Plan:** Develop a detailed plan to replace and improve our community's irrigation system. This will be guided by the upcoming recommendations from the irrigation specialists and ongoing conversations with the Board and the Financial Advisory Committee.
 - **Pocket Park Refurbishments:** Continue to assess and improve our pocket parks, with plans to refurbish one or two to address areas of declining vegetation and enhance their beauty and functionality.
 - **Continued Common Area Management:** Manage our common areas, focusing on replacing and trimming declining trees and conducting ongoing reviews of areas needing attention.
- We are grateful to our fellow residents for their continued support and input. We look forward to another year of working to maintain and improve the beautiful common areas that make Cameron Station such a wonderful place to live.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee (ComCom) had a productive 2025, keeping Cameron Station residents informed, connected, and engaged. We updated the community website to ensure information stayed current and easy to access, and we assisted management with *The Cameron Station Connection*, which is delivered to inboxes each Friday evening, and continues to be a trusted source for updates, reminders, and neighborhood news. The *Compass* blog highlighted community stories and captured the spirit of Cameron Station. Our social media provided timely updates and, thanks to residents who volunteered their photos, showcased the beauty and energy of our neighborhood.

ComCom also supported community-wide efforts in meaningful ways. We created a digital map for the Fall Yard Sale,

helped organize the Bike Drive, and partnered with committees and management to help promote events, city and civic updates, and seasonal information such as pool hours, shuttle service, and fitness classes. We also hosted two Meet & Greets, open to all residents, giving both new and longtime neighbors the chance to connect and learn more about life in Cameron Station.

A highlight of the year was creating this special printed end-of-the-year edition of *The Compass*. Produced by a dedicated team of writers, editors, and volunteers, it reflects the pride and spirit of our community. This year, we also began developing analytics to better understand engagement with our communications, an effort that will expand in 2026.

ComCom is always open to suggestions and welcomes new ideas. If you have an interest in communications, please reach out – we would love to add you to our team!

Financial Advisory Committee

The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) advises the Board of Directors on issues affecting the financial position of the Cameron Station Community Association. We have been very fortunate to have a robust, financially sound community. The FAC reviews the annual audit and tax returns as prepared by the Association's independent audit firm and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. For several years, we have had a clean audit with only minor accounting adjustments necessary. Following is a look back at some of the FAC's 2025 activities and our plans for 2026.

Throughout the year, on a monthly basis, the FAC meets and reviews the financial statements prepared by CAMP, our management company. The reviews are line-by-line and focus on the month's actual vs. budgeted expenses, as well as year-to-date and year-end projections and variances. Items with

variances to date of greater than \$3,000 or 10% require additional scrutiny and discussion. The FAC reviews the expenditures and commitments of the other Master Association committees and is available to assist other committees, as requested, regarding budget and/or other financial matters.

The FAC is responsible for updating the community Reserve Study and maintaining the appropriate balances for the Repair and Replacement Reserve Fund (R&R Fund). The FAC is responsible for recommending the investment strategy for the R&R Fund, as well as the Operating Reserve Fund. In 2025 we are projecting \$33,000 in interest income on our R&R Fund balances and \$12,750 in interest income on our Operating Reserve Fund.

The FAC reviews the annual budget as prepared by the managing agent and makes recommendations to the Board of Directors. The 2026 budget (including reserve contributions) will be in the range of \$3.0 million.

Planning Ahead: 2026 in Cameron Station

2026 is shaping up to be another year full of community events, activities, and opportunities to connect. This guide is your place to start planning ahead, whether that means attending a community gathering, joining a new fitness class, or capturing moments for the photo challenge. Keep this list of dates close by, and remember to check the online calendar throughout the year for the latest updates.

2026 Dates to Remember

Mark your calendars for a year packed with community events and important meetings!

Events

MARCH 13	Trivia Night
MARCH 18-23	Spring Library Book Sale
APRIL 11	Spring Meet & Greet
APRIL 4	Eggstravaganza
APRIL 18	Spring Yard Sale
JULY 4	Patriotic Parade
AUGUST 8	Pool Party
SEPTEMBER 19	Fall Yard Sale
SEPTEMBER 23-28	Fall Library Book Sale
OCTOBER 17	Fall Meet & Greet
OCTOBER 31	Halloween Party
DECEMBER 6	Holiday Party

Meetings

BOARD OF DIRECTORS	Last Tuesday of month
ACTIVITIES & EVENTS	First Wednesday of month
ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW	Third Wednesday of month
CAMERON CLUB FACILITIES	Second Thursday of month
COMMON AREA	Second Monday of month
COMMUNICATIONS	Second Wednesday of month
FINANCIAL ADVISORY	Monday before Board meeting
CIVIC ASSOCIATION	Feb 4, Mar 4, May 6, Sep 2, Nov 4

Dates can change, so stay updated through the weekly *Cameron Station Connection*, our social pages, or the website calendar - link here!



Where 2026 Goals Take Shape

Make 2026 a year of health and movement at the Cameron Club Fitness Center. Managed by HealthFitness, the Fitness Center is a welcoming and dynamic space designed to support all levels of fitness, from those just beginning to residents who already have an established routine.

The Fitness Center team keeps the facility running smoothly, answering questions, maintaining equipment, and encouraging residents to explore new workouts. Their goal is to make fitness accessible, enjoyable, and part of everyday life at Cameron Station.

The Fitness Center itself offers everything you need to stay active, including treadmills, ellipticals, bikes, rowing machines, free weights, and functional training areas. There is also a dedicated zone for stretching, cool down, and recovery. If you are in the mood for something different, the full basketball court is open for practice, pickup games, or just shooting hoops. And when summer arrives, the outdoor pool is available for swimming laps or a refreshing dip.

In addition to the equipment, the Fitness Center provides a diverse range of weekly classes that bring neighbors together. Options include yoga, Zumba, boot camp, and strength training. You can find the 2026 class schedule on the next page.

From cardio to courtside, everything you need for a healthy 2026 is waiting for you at the Cameron Club Fitness Center!

2026 Cameron Club Fitness Class Schedule

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:30 am - 11:30 am Stretch & Core Core-strengthening with stability balls, weights, and stretching for flexibility	8:30 am - 9:30 am Yoga II Gentle, slow yoga focused on relaxation and breathing	10:30 am - 11:30 am Stretch & Core Core-strengthening with stability balls, weights, and stretching for flexibility	9:00 am - 10:00 am Gentle Yoga Relaxed yoga with soft movements and breathing focus	10:30 am - 11:30 am Total Body Weights Strength training for toning and metabolism boost	9:00 am - 10:00 am Zumba * Fun, easy-to-follow dance workout with fast and slow rhythms
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Vinyasa Flow Yoga Flowing yoga, moving smoothly with your breath	6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Boot Camp Intense, full-body workout for strength and endurance	6:30 pm - 7:30 pm PomSquad Fitness High-energy dance with pom-poms for fun and toning	6:30 pm - 7:30 pm Boot Camp Intense, full-body workout for strength and endurance		

Note: Fitness classes are free for residents unless otherwise noted. Full class details are in the Neighborhood Amenities section at www.cameronstation.org. Find schedule changes, cancellations, and Fitness Center updates in *The Connection* and on the website.

When summer arrives, the outdoor pool offers lap swimming five days a week from 6:00 am to 9:00 am, regardless of federal holidays. General pool hours are 10:30 am to 8:30 pm, seven days a week. Aqua Aerobics is offered on Saturdays from 9:00 am to 10:00 am while the pool is open.

Snap & Win! 2026 Community Photo Challenge

Your photos capture the heart of our community, from blooming gardens to festive events, and everything in between. Share your favorite snapshots in our Community Dropbox for a chance to win fun prizes throughout the year!

How It Works

- Snap a photo you'd like to share.
- Scan the QR code or use the Dropbox link (always available in *The Connection*). Both will take you directly to the upload folder.
- Drop your photo straight from your phone into the folder.
- Be sure to include your full name when entering.
- Each photo equals one entry. The more you share, the more chances you have to win.

Scan me



Prizes

- All residents are eligible.
- Photos will be chosen at random each quarter in March, June, September, and December.
- Winning photos will be announced in *The Connection*, and winners will receive a picture-perfect prize!

Photos submitted may be featured in *The Compass* blog, *The Connection*, *Cameron Station* social media, and in the printed end-of-year issue of *The Compass*.



200 Cameron Station Blvd
Alexandria, VA 22304

Stay Connected!

Keep up with everything happening in Cameron Station. Whether you prefer quick updates or detailed news, we've got you covered:



Website

Find all the details you need, including contact info and a calendar of all events.



The Connection

Get up to the minute updates in your inbox every Friday. Don't miss out. Sign up below!



The Compass

Get the latest news and stories from your neighbors delivered to your inbox.



Facebook

Your go-to for news and updates. Stay informed with the latest community info.



Instagram

See the beauty of our neighborhood and get highlights on what's happening.

