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2017 Creative Aging Festival Brings Over 60 Arts Activities to Fairfax Senior and Community Centers



Emmanuel (Kofi) Dennis presents African Drumming and Poly Rhythms during the 2016 Creative Aging Festival.

Fairfax County, VA – The Arts Council of Fairfax County is delighted to partner with Fairfax County for the 2017 Creative Aging Festival during the month of May, coinciding with Older Americans Month. The Creative Aging Festival celebrates older adults' participation in the arts across Fairfax County through visual, music, theatre, dance, literary, and culinary arts activities.

Over sixty free, interactive events are planned at twenty-one senior centers and community centers throughout the county to engage residents and visitors in the arts, showcase the achievements of senior artists, and highlight the positive benefits of the arts as we age. Offerings include:

- Improv with Next Stop Theater Company where participants can learn the art and fun of acting without a script at the Hollin Hall Senior Center and the Little River Glen Senior Center.
- Acoustic Mississippi Delta blues music with Curtis Blues, a multi-instrumentalist musician and educator, at the Pimmit Hills Senior Center, Bailey's Senior Center, South County Senior Center, and Sully Senior Center.
- Movement, Dance, and Healing with Annetta Dexter Sawyer, a local performing and teaching artist, at the Lorton Senior Center.
- African Drumming and Poly Rhythms with Emmanuel (Kofi) Dennis where participants can learn songs, stories, and history while drumming ancient African beats at the Kingstowne Center for Active Adults and Pimmit Hills Senior Center.
- Storyteller Candace Wolf, an innovative teacher and oral historian, at the Little River Glen Senior Center.
- Senior Paint Day with Abracadoodle where participants produce original artwork on canvas and learn about art and the creative process at the Sully Senior Center.

“Drumming has a capacity to stimulate both hemispheres of the brain in order to bring about a whole body experience that creates focus as well as balance,” said Kofi Dennis, an African percussionist and Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist with 30 years of experience teaching all levels and ages. He is returning to the festival after first presenting African Drumming and Poly Rhythms during the 2016 Creative Aging Festival. “The festival is an incredible opportunity for older adults to stimulate their mind and explore their creativity.”

“We are thrilled to collaborate with the County for a third year on the Creative Aging Festival. Arts programs are vital for older adults to sustain well-being and quality of life through social engagement, physical and mental health, and aesthetic fulfillment,” said Linda S. Sullivan, President & CEO of the Arts Council of Fairfax County. “We hope this festival will continue to improve arts accessibility for this important County demographic.”

“The Creative Aging Festival blossomed out of Fairfax County’s 50+ Action Plan’s Arts Initiative. We look forward to hosting this festival each year to support, enliven, entertain, educate and engage our 50+ community,” said Julie Ellis, the Director of the Hollin Hall Senior Center for Creative Retirement and founding organizer. “We’re proud to see how the festival activities celebrate the arts and positively impact the growing population of older adults in Fairfax County year after year.”

The Creative Aging Festival supports Fairfax County’s 50+ Community Action Plan’s Arts Initiative to promote arts programming for and by older adults. Core objectives include encouraging older adult participation in the community’s many public and private arts programs; promoting public understanding of the benefits of older adult participation in the arts; and providing awareness to the broader community about the existing arts services for older adults in Fairfax County as well as the benefits these programs can have for diverse audiences. This year’s Creative Aging Festival is presented by the Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services in collaboration with the Arts Council of Fairfax County.

To find an event at a senior center or community center near you, visit http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/news/2017_creative_aging_festival.htm.

About the Arts Council of Fairfax County

The Arts Council of Fairfax County fosters a dynamic and diverse arts scene throughout Fairfax County. We ensure the arts thrive by providing vision, leadership, capacity-building services, advocacy, funding, education, and information. The Council distributes over \$500,000 annually through competitive grants and awards to arts organizations and artists of all disciplines. The Arts Council of Fairfax County is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and Fairfax County’s designated local arts agency. It is funded in part by Fairfax County, corporations, foundations, individuals, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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