



**oakland mills**  
we value connections

## ***Oakland Mills Revitalization***

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### **Activities and Successes**

#### **Community Vibrancy Committee**

- ✓ The volunteers of the **Music and Arts Subcommittee** have organized and sponsored several highly successful events:
  - “Taste of the Arts” highlighted local art and musical talent. This March 2006 event included artists displaying and selling their work, a wine and cheese reception, a concert of classical music, and dessert and coffee. About 150 people attended.
  - “An Evening of Jazz,” In August 2006 featured Lavenia Nesmith, an OM resident, and her jazz quintet. The energy and quality of talent was amazing. People were turned away at the door after tickets sold out (240 capacity).
  - “Lavenia Nesmith: Back by Popular Demand” in December 2006 was a great success with about 180 people in attendance.
  - “A Tribute to Mahalia Jackson” concert, co-sponsored in March 2007 with the OM Interfaith Center, was a one-woman drama recreating the life and work of the great gospel singer.
  - “Joanne Juskus” in Concert in May 2007 presented the talents of a local OM singer and musician to an audience of families and music lovers.
  - “Sharon Clark in Concert” presented in October 2007 brought the incredible talent of a jazz singer who has sung at the Kennedy Center and for the President of the United States.
  - “An Evening of Jazz with Bonnie Harris” in December 2007 featured the incredible talents of jazz vocalist.
  - “An Afternoon with Steve Taylor” on September 9, 2007, showcased the talent of an OM painter and introduced about 200 people to his work.
  - “Beyond the Desk...The Artistic Expressions of Reggie Smith” presented the paintings of OMCA’s own front desk manager in February 2008.
  - A monthly “Art Night” provides an opportunity for local artists to bring their works-in-progress and be creative in the presence of others.
  - The 2007 Free Family Movie Series was sponsored by John & Angela Toner of Providence Real Estate.
  - A 2008 Independent Movie Series is planned.

- A 2008 Free Family Movie Series is planned. Movies were selected via a vote by the community via an online survey.
  - The “Jazz in the Mills” Music Series kicks off in June 2008.
  - A Fall Visual Arts Series kicks off in September.
  - A Poetry reading is planned for 2008.
  - The Music and Arts Committee is working through a visioning process for the Music and Arts presence in Oakland Mills.
  - The committee is working on partnering with HoCoPoLitSo.
  - The committee has formed a relationship with the HOCO Arts Council.
- ✓ The **Master Plan Subcommittee** created A Master Plan for the Village Center, and results are already being realized:
- A 50,000 square foot office complex is planned for the former service station site. The community facilitated contact between Exxon and General Growth Properties to lift a deed restriction that would limit the use of the former station site.
  - Village Center Master plan was created, approved by the community and other stakeholders, published in a color bound hard copy, and posted online.
  - Presentations of the Master Plan were given to the County Executive and all Howard County Council members in face-to-face meeting held in March 2007.
  - A presentation of the Master Plan and the process used to create it was given to a Wilde Lake committee looking at ways to fill the vacancy left by the departure of its grocery store.
  - OM received a 100K Community Enhancement Grant from Howard County to create an enhanced public space along the segment of Robert Oliver Place between the Barns and the Oakland Mills Interfaith Center. The plaza will include a community art project.
  - The major property owners have committed to moving forward with a signage package that was developed pro bono by a resident with expertise in environmental graphics. The Department of Planning and Zoning has been acting in an advisory capacity for this project.
  - Significant renovations are being done on the Stevens Forest and Verona Apartments.
- ✓ The **Support Business Subcommittee** worked with merchants to help support current businesses in Oakland Mills.
- Resident Survey: A survey of Oakland Mills residents, to better understand issues and concerns regarding the use of businesses and facilities in our Village Center, elicited 500 responses. We are using the information gathered to help make changes that will attract new businesses and more customers to the Oakland Mills Village Center.
  - Merchant Survey: Members surveyed each merchant to identify areas of concern and ideas for the Master Plan
  - Members meet with Food Lion and other merchants regularly, working to support the businesses in the Village Center.

- ✓ RWD Technologies has donated online survey capabilities and web board online discussion group capabilities to the Oakland Mills revitalization.

### **Housing Committee**

- ✓ A Home Improvement Contractors Directory has been produced and is online on the OMCA website.
- ✓ Two model homes were purchased and renovated in Oakland Mills so that community members can see the possibilities of home improvement in Oakland Mills. The 1<sup>st</sup> home located at 9551 Woodblock Row underwent minimum renovations. The 2<sup>nd</sup> of the OM Revitalization Model Homes Project (9518 Pamplona Road) underwent a complete makeover.
- ✓ The OM Housing Action Committee led a group of volunteers as hosts/hostesses for the Open House of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Model Homes Project within Oakland Mills (9518 Pamplona Road). This 2-week Open House (5/21/07-6/2/07) welcomed 275 individuals/attendees.
- ✓ The Oakland Mills Community Association participated as a vendor at the 1<sup>st</sup> *Come Home to Howard County Housing Fair* on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at Oakland Mills High School.
- ✓ Members of the Housing Action Committee met with Stacy Spann, Howard County Director of Housing & Community Development to discuss possible Art Space involvement in OM, lower cost housing, and art workshop space for artists.
- ✓ Several well-attended and highly successful Landlord Training sessions have been held and more are planned.
- ✓ A very well attended realtor reception and bus tour introduced local realtors to Oakland Mills' many assets.
- ✓ A wonderful exhibit of photos taken by residents depicting the beauty of Oakland Mills was displayed in The Other Barn.

### **Safety Committee**

- ✓ The creation of a community policing office in the village by the Howard County Police Department has significantly reduced crime.
- ✓ Community Watch Training was provided to community members through a partnerships with the Enterprise Foundation and the Howard County police Department. Some have even been held as neighborhood events at people's homes or during block parties.
- ✓ Improvements to Pedestrian Path/Bridge to Town Center: County and community stakeholders worked on a comprehensive plan of maintenance and improvement to the pathway, obtained an additional trash receptacles, a more effective system of communication to remove offensive graffiti in an expeditious manner, and repairs on our bridge's foot lights. We have partnered with entities such as cub scouts, Sheriff's Department, Teen Center and area churches on four clean-up initiatives.

### **Education Committee**

- ✓ Members mobilized support in favor of full-day kindergarten and testified at the County Executive's Citizens' Budget Meeting for the FY2006 budget. We also rallied support and testimony in opposition to the House of Delegates bill that would have allowed local school boards to opt out of full-day kindergarten.
- ✓ College-Bound Athlete Event was held in conjunction with the Teen Center. About 25 parents and students attended the workshop, intended to make sure that college-bound athletes were properly prepared for college was The panel included an SAT prep professional and a college NCAA athletic director.

**Quality of Life Committee** (*new committee name: consists of former Education & Safety committees*)

- ✓ The pathway from OM to Town Center was repaved for walkers and riders.
- ✓ The Quality of Life Committee collected over 75 books, puzzles, and games for the students at Stevens Forest Elementary School
- ✓ The Quality of Life Committee solicited behavioral incentives (gift cards) from Pizza Hut for Oakland Mills Middle School.

**Multi-committee/Community Organizer**

- ✓ OM Revitalization Progress Summit held. OAKLAND MILLS residents who are *actively involved, were* formerly involved, *or who wish to become* actively involved in the revitalization of Oakland Mills were asked to lend us their INPUT! 45 residents joined us in February 2007 for a presentation that highlighted things that we accomplished thus far and concerns that needed to be discussed, critiqued, and refined.
- ✓ A partnership with UMBC was developed with assistance from our Community Vibrancy Action Committee co-chair. A professor and a class of graduate students from UMBC (The Teen Team) are working with Oakland Mills as a community psychology project to determine the needs of teens within the Village of Oakland Mills. They interviewed teens and stakeholders and will be making recommendations on ways to integrate teens better into the community and help them reach their fullest potential.
- ✓ A coalition (Apartment Complex Collaborative) between the Community Organizer and the apartment complex managers was formed to help address safety, lighting, and other issues in the apartment complexes within OM.
- ✓ Branding Initiative – Residents gathered to 'define' Oakland Mills. The Oakland Mills "branding" work group developed 6 core values: (*Education, Diversity, Home Value, Nature, Location, & Vibrant Community*) and an overall theme surrounding: "Oakland Mills: We Value connections"
- ✓ The community facilitated the return of the Farmer's Market to the Oakland Mills Village Center. The timeframe of the market evolved from Tuesdays (9am-12noon) to the present, Sundays (9:00am – 1pm).
- ✓ CA representative & Time Banking Program Specialist, Audrey Curry Garven gave a presentation to our Street Captains in May 2007.
- ✓ The Columbia Bank continues to partner with us to provide free credit training, preparation for homeownership and other financial health seminars for tenants at the apartment complexes.

- ✓ “She Reminds Me...” Essay (Women’s History Month) Contest for Oakland Mills Middle & High School students. Two winners were selected from OM Middle School; each received gifts from the Downtown Locker Room & certificates from Princeton Sports.
- ✓ Presentation on volunteer retention and recruitment was made by Mickey Gomez of The Volunteer Center serving Howard County
- ✓ The Oakland Mills Community Association held a reception to recognize Jim Alvey of the Community Vibrancy Committee, Charlie Bailey of the Master Plan Committee and Marcia White, Chair of the Music & Arts Committee as the 2007 Volunteers of the Year.
- ✓ Several areas of open space were designated for beautification. Thousands of flowers and were planted near Stevens Forest Elementary School, along the pathways, in cul-de-sacs and in several other sites. This beautification/open space sub-committee has involved many scouts and elementary school students in the projects.
- ✓ The community participated in the Leadership Howard County landscaping project at Stevens Forest Elementary School.
- ✓ A “Spring Into Summer” Party for residents was held in the courtyard of The Other Barn. Residents danced to the rhythms of the Trinidad North Steel Drums, a father & son duo.
- ✓ A “My Home, My Village” poster contest for 5<sup>th</sup> graders awarded a winner from each school a \$100 savings bond from Columbia Bank.
- ✓ The Oakland Mills adult kickball team, The Revitalizers, participated in the inaugural season of the league in Howard County.
- ✓ A village-wide monthly “Art Night” has been instituted to bring artists together to work and talk.
- ✓ Eagle Scout John Balon cleaned and restored the Cooke Family Cemetery, an historic site within Talbot Springs. With the help of his fellow boy scouts and other volunteers, John improved the cemetery with a clean up, plantings and mulch, tree and weed removal, and tombstone repair.
- ✓ The Oakland Mills was a sponsor of the 1<sup>st</sup> Howard County Youth Summit held at Marriotts Ridge High school in April 2007...Ben Hunter, the Community Organizer participated as a planner as well as a note taker for the breakout sessions at the summit.
- ✓ The Oakland Mills Association Board of Directors held a reception to honor the many revitalization partners who contribute financially as well as in-kind to the revitalization of Oakland Mills. The afternoon event included food & beverages, certificates of appreciation presentation and musical entertainment by Jazz vocalist, Lavenia Nesmith.
- ✓ Ascend One donated an \$8000 grant to Stevens Forest Elementary for a Financial Literacy program
- ✓ Kaiser Permanente donated \$5000 to Stevens Forest Elementary School and Talbot Springs Elementary School
- ✓ OM Principals meet monthly with OMCA and with one another
- ✓ Apartment Complex Managers meet regularly with OMCA and one another

## **Improved Communication and Connection**

- ✓ The Street Captains program, a grassroots-driven initiative to distribute information via door-to-door interaction among neighbors, has blossomed to nearly 90 streets/apartments covered and it is still growing. Over 1500 calendars/fliers are distributed each month.
- ✓ The *OMeNEWS*, OMCA's e-mail newsletter, and the *Revitalization News* reach over 600 homes weekly.
- ✓ 50 Oakland Mills residents joined the OMCA Board of Directors, revitalization volunteers, and county officials & personnel for the 1<sup>st</sup> OMCA Community Connections Gathering at the Fire Rock Grill (restaurant located in the OM Village Center). It was an enjoyable evening for all in attendance; they got to meet new residents, engage familiar faces, eat & drink, and most of all gather to shoot the breeze/get to know one another outside of the revitalization & community affairs.
- ✓ The Music & Arts Committee & John Toner of Providence Realty co-sponsored Cinema Near the Courtyard: Connecting neighbors to neighbors and you to FREE movies! FREE movies were offered on Fridays during the months of July & August.
- ✓ We are in the developmental stages with a design firm to create Oakland Mills marketing tools: brochures for realtors, potential residents, and new residents to get a snap shot of the village.
- ✓ The OMCA website is currently being updated by local company eCity Design Group