



# *Family and Community Education Hi-lites*

*December – February 2021*  
[www.mdafce.org/mcfce.htm](http://www.mdafce.org/mcfce.htm)

---

Montgomery County Association for Family and Community Education Newsletter

---

“The ballot is stronger than the bullet.” Abraham Lincoln, Former U.S. President

## Happenings

### December 2020

- 5 10:00 am – Noon **DROP OFF** for FCE Blanket Making and Sock Drive  
Extension Office parking lot
- 8 9:30 am **Cookie Exchange and Crafts, CANCELLED**
- 15 **Send yearly reports and Outreach forms to Jeanne Purich**

### January 2021

**Note: NO Association Meeting This Month**



- 1 **New Year’s Day Celebrated – Extension Office Closed**
- 7 10:00 am – Noon **DROP OFF** for FCE Blanket Making – Extension Office parking lot

### February

Collect “Birthday Monies” (1 penny for each year of member’s age or a \$1 to keep your age anonymous!)  
This will be delayed until we can meet in person.

- 1 **Hi-Lites and Look What’s Happening Deadline**
- 6 10:00 am – Noon **DROP OFF** for FCE Blanket Making and Valentines  
Extension Office parking lot
- 9 9:45 am **Association Meeting.** and Valentine Craft (garage) **CANCELLED**
- 26 10:00 am **Executive Board Meeting** – Zoom meeting

### March

- 5 10:00 am – Noon **DROP OFF** for FCE Blanket Making – Extension Office parking lot
- 9 9:45 am **Covid Mental Health** and Association Meeting **CANCELLED**

**Free trees for homeowners.** The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is looking for places to plant shade trees, including in the yards of single-family homes, around parking lots and in multi-family communities. Know of a densely-developed area, a spot lacking in trees or a location needing shade? DEP will plant the trees and provide maintenance guidance — all for free! Learn more at [treemontgomery.org](http://treemontgomery.org).

# PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

## COVID Restrictions

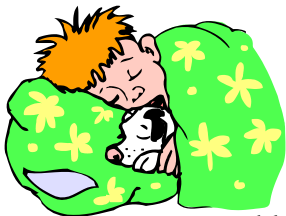
We are still under restrictions due to the virus. We have planned informative programs for 2021, but at least for the first quarter of 2021, we will not be able to initiate them. At this time, the Extension office remains closed through April 1, 2021. I will keep you informed of all updates through the monthly "notes" that are being sent by email. With that in mind, if you know your friend does not have email, please call them and keep them in the loop also. As you will read in this newsletter, FCE is still very active, providing Outreach to the community. We will get back together and be able to resume our programs and in-person sessions. Hang in there; the days may be getting shorter and darker, but FCE is still shining, working for you and the community.

## Reports Very Important

In order to complete our State FCE reports by December 31<sup>st</sup>, we need your outreach hours. Outreach hour report forms for your outreach hours was included in the October Notes email. It should be returned to me by December 15<sup>th</sup> by either email or snail mail. If you have questions on how to obtain or fill out your Outreach Form, please contact me.

## FCE Blanket Making DROP OFF only

**December 5, 2020 Saturday 10 AM - Noon**  
**January 7, 2021 Thursday 10 AM - Noon**  
**February 6, 2021 Saturday 10 AM - Noon**  
**March 5, 2021 Friday 10 AM - Noon**



This year we have made 900 blankets and 381 hats for children. Can you believe we are starting our 20<sup>th</sup> year? It remains a rewarding, fun project and a joy to see all the blankets. This year, due to COVID, we have been working with MCPS to provide Student Service Learning (SSL) hours to students. Normally students have to attend a session to receive hours but the MCPS coordinator has agreed to allow the students to do their blanket making totally at home. We have 80 students

signed up to receive hours of which 40 have sent in pictures of their work and 26 have dropped off completed blankets. We have awarded 532.5 SSL hours so far. All of this is as of the November 6<sup>th</sup> drop-off. We expect many more blankets in December, which is why we have decided to do every other drop off on a Saturday (until we can meet in person).

We are always looking for more yarn; if you know of anyone who is cleaning out their closet, keep us in mind.

## Handbooks

The Handbooks are being distributed with this newsletter. Since we are not meeting in person, it was decided to mail both the newsletter and the handbook together to save postage costs. The Handbook is a very useful, quick reference to keep you updated and to enable you to contact your local and state officers. The handbook explains FCE programs (i.e. Pennies for Friendship, ACWW etc.) and most importantly keeps you informed of county and state events and programs.

## SOCK DRIVE

We have 2 new places to donate blankets (more about that later) and for Christmas I would like to do something additional. **A sock drive.**



Socks are the most requested items for those in need. And how wonderful it would be if we were able to give a child a pair of socks along with a blanket. So if possible, if you can donate a pair of socks (child or adult - we do service teenagers as well) and drop them at the **December 5** blanket drop off time, (or at my house prior to December 5) that would be wonderful!

## Cookie Exchange

**December 8, 2020 CANCELLED**

We will really miss having our Christmas lunch as well as all those cookies to eat!

## February is Birthday Month

Happy Birthday! to everyone. Since we are not meeting, we will delay collecting pennies for each of your birth until we can meet in person.



## VALENTINES

### February 9, 2021 CANCELLED

Although our meeting to craft Valentines is cancelled, you can still make Valentines. If you make some at home and bring them to the **February 6 blanket drop off**, we will distribute them with our blankets. Not only will it be a welcome surprise for a child but it will give you something to do in the long cold days of January.



## Covid Mental Health

### March 9, 2021 CANCELLED

Mental Health and laughter is so important at this time. Even though we can't have our planned program, remember to laugh every day, read something funny, watch a sit-com, or scroll the internet for YouTube videos. Call a friend. It all helps.

## Membership

Thank you for renewing your memberships. We appreciate your continued support even when there are no in person group programs. FCE and its members are working for you and the community. We continue with our blanket project, we collected school supplies and delivered them to 3 locations, and we are doing a sock drive (see page 2). We also presented our Scholarships to Montgomery College. So membership does make a difference. And we are happy to welcome new member – Generosa Collins and rejoining member Sue Steadman. Please continue to recruit new members. And when you do, you and your recruit will be entered into a drawing for free registration at the Maryland FCE Annual Conference October 18 & 19, 2021. We all know someone we can invite to be a member.

We no longer are collecting bottle caps. But we will take soda can tabs, magazines, stamps, printer ink cartridges and of course yarn and fabric.

Stay well and safe. Remember to smile even under your mask because your eyes will tell that you are smiling. Have a good Holiday season even though it will be different.

Jeanne Purich, President

## BLANKETS, BLANKETS, BLANKETS

Even though we are not meeting in person, our blanket project is up and running. As stated in the President's Paragraphs, we have many students participating and are receiving many fleece as well as crocheted and knitted blankets.

We have teamed up with SHEPPARD PRATT that has been giving Mom's with new babies a blanket as part of their new Mom Kit. Another program is The Hope for the Holidays which helps families with children. We received warm thanks from Jill McDowell, Volunteer & Community Engagement Specialist at SHEPPARD PRATT. I included her email in the "October Notes".



Another place we donated blankets is to Gabriel Project Center of Montgomery County. This is a volunteer organization that helps pregnant mothers in the county. In the past 3 months, they had 60 new clients. It has been very difficult for the new moms because of loss of income due to the coronavirus. The project also provides assistance with co-pays for prenatal care and new baby supplies. Diane and Budne Rienke, Coordinators were very grateful for our donation. Thank you Rusty for establishing this outlet for FCE.

We delivered blankets to MedStar Montgomery and Children's Hospital.

We are looking for other worthy outlets for our blankets and baby hats, so if you know of any and have a contact, please let me know. Jeanne

## PUT ON YOUR OWN OXYGEN MASK FIRST



This phrase is familiar to anyone who has ever taken a plane trip: In case of emergency, put your own mask on before trying to help anyone else. Is it an emergency yet? For those of us juggling work, family life, homeschooling and either lack of privacy or isolating loneliness for the past nine months, the answer might be ‘yes’. Add cold weather possibly curtailing outdoor activities, plus the potential for the flu and possibly more Covid-19, and we inch closer to an affirmative answer.

According to my New England sister-in-law, there are only two seasons in Vermont: Winter and Winter’s Coming. Do you have a plan yet for what looks to be a difficult winter? If not, please consider creating one. Here are some ideas to help you plan

First and foremost is self-care. Like the oxygen mask analogy, you won’t be able to care for others if you aren’t taking care of yourself. There’s a TV commercial currently airing that shows a young mother arriving home to children-generated mayhem. She tiptoes back slowly into the garage before anyone notices she’s home and relaxes in the peace, quiet, and comfort of her luxury SUV. If this 5 to 15-minute break is enough to refresh you, go for it! If you need something else, create it. Whether it’s crafting, reading, playing music, or watching ‘The Princess Bride’ – again, there must be a reasonable way for you to disconnect and restore your self-worth and individual peace of mind.

There are numerous web sites dedicated to a ‘Thought for Today’. These can be religious, funny, famous inspiring quotes, encouragements, or daily thoughts for folks with addictions (<http://www.hazeldenbettyford.org/thought-for-the-day>), too many to count. Find one that speaks to your own needs and read it first thing in the morning. The ‘Chicken Soup for the Soul’ books offer true short stories probably written by ‘real’ people in your current situation: For Women, For Caregivers, etc.

Open the blinds and let sunlight in. Bring fresh flowers into the house. If you can’t have a pet, try a fish. Bettas (Siamese Fighting Fish) require minimal care and are absolutely beautiful. You can only have one per bowl – very low maintenance and so soothing to watch.

Cold weather often brings cravings for comfort foods, even in the best of times. For all of us who have been stress-eating already, I suggest the ‘Skinny Taste’ or ‘The Girl on Bloor’ web sites. The folks behind these sites have taken comfort food and adapted recipes to create soul-satisfying lower calorie/lower fat versions of some of your favorites. My crock pot has been getting a workout with different soup recipes. I decant the soup into single-serving containers, freeze them, and always have something healthy available.

The most common suggestions for stress reduction I’ve been reading about are meditation and/or exercise. There are multiple programs on line, and something for everyone. Even starting with one-three minutes/day on a regular basis will help you feel that you’re doing something positive for yourself. Increase the time as you’re able. I’ll start if you will!

The other especially important action you can take is to stay connected with people. Particularly if you live alone. A trip to the grocery store can feel like a visit to the State Fair these days. Call or email someone you haven’t been in touch with for a while.



Chances are they’re lonesome too! Write a letter. When was the last time you received mail that wasn’t a bill or a solicitation? You can really make someone’s day. Which could lead to them contacting you back, etc. Have your grandchildren ever received a letter from you? They are so used to texting, a hand written letter may be a treat. You could write one a month; maybe tell them about your life at their age. It is great way to start a history of your family. There are plenty of online lectures, seminars, book clubs, TED talks and concerts available. Use YouTube to learn a new skill that you’ve always wanted to try.

And if none of this works for you, take a nap or re-read the Harry Potter series. (The good guys still win).



A study in the September issue of the Journal of the American Medical Association noted that the uncertainty and stresses of the pandemic has led to symptoms of depression that are three times higher

than before the virus hit. If you feel you are at risk, please speak with your doctor. For example, thyroid problems often mimic symptoms of depression. It's important to rule out physical causes of mood changes. But if you're familiar with depression or have previously suffered episodes during your life, a simple quiz might point you in the right direction.

I'll suggest two reliable web sites:

<https://www.everydayhealth.com/depression/5-questions-doctors-ask-when-screening-for-depression.aspx> and

<https://screening.mhanational.org/screening-tools/depression>. If the results point in that direction, it's definitely time to call your doctor.

If there are any questions, thoughts, or plans to self-harm, the 24/7 365 Hotline number is 800-273-8355. They are very kind, caring people. Yes, I've called them. It's all anonymous (until now, for me). There's no shame in asking for help when you need it. You're worth it. If you don't believe you're suicidal but are anxious enough to want to talk with someone, there's the Montgomery Crisis Hotline, at 240-777-4000. Another resource is [www.linesforlife.org](http://www.linesforlife.org). Their categories include a Lonely Seniors' Line, a Drug and Alcohol counseling service, a Youth Line, and a division for depressed Military personnel, whether active or discharged.

Winter's coming. It won't be anything like winters we've experienced before. We might be Zooming Thanksgiving in 2020, but we can look forward to a better, healthier, and more peaceful 2021. I hope this time next year we'll be saying, "Remember last year when . . .?"

Stay safe and healthy. Please take incredibly good care of yourself.

Best wishes,  
Susan Goldberg

harmony51480@aol.com

## Hugs from Frann

### The Ranch:

The Ranch now has 40 men (and there is a waiting list) in the program for alcohol and opioid addiction. Jason Barth, LCPC-S, is the new Executive Director. Joyce the Office manager retired. If you have sports or other male oriented magazines, (Men's health, Popular Mechanics, etc), please consider donating them to the ranch. They have a need for Flannel PJ's, paper shower shoes, under wear, t-shirts and socks\*.

### Stamps:

Thank you for saving postage stamps and picture post cards. (Remember to leave a bit of the envelope showing around each stamp.) Asbury Village appreciates your caring about their worthwhile project.

### Scholarships

Our two scholarship recipients are Lee Cristo and Crystal Zebra. Virtual classes at MC will continue until spring.

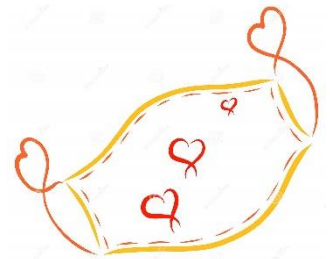
Frann Peters

301-253-2589

\*Items can be brought to blanket drop offs.

## MASKS

A great big thank you to all the mask makers and distributors. We have used 6 rolls of 70 yards each of elastic plus fabric ties and more elastic. We have made over 2,500 masks, adult and children's size. They have been distributed to health care workers, government workers, food pantries, churches, friends and families. Some have even gone to other states.



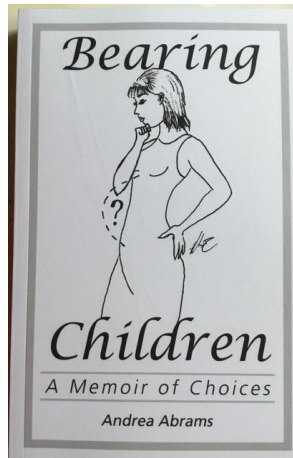
© dreamstime.com

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead

## BOOK REVIEW

### *Bearing Children: A Memoir of Choices*, by FCE member, Andrea Abrams



MCAFCE's own Andrea Abrams has recently published a book that is available through Amazon ([www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)) for \$6.99. It is called "*Bearing Children: A Memoir of Choices*" (258 pages). Almost all women during their lives have to deal with at least one of the issues and choices that Andrea describes in her book from her own experience. She writes honestly and clearly, with objectivity and perspective. "*Bearing Children*" is not a tract; it is a memoir that Andrea hopes will help other women make informed choices in their lives.

Andrea's personal history as a woman and a social worker uniquely put her in position of knowing a great deal about birth control, infertility treatments, adoption and child protective services. She was also able to counsel women about abortion decisions and rape victims. She could see that no one wants to be a bad person or means to be a bad parent. She learned that advising people in crisis is folly if you do not understand their situation. She could see the many challenges in raising children, especially for parents who are single or impoverished or who have slid into unhealthy coping mechanisms like drug addiction. She could see how ignorance of possible consequences and failure to plan ahead complicate women's lives enormously. And she could see that if women aren't allowed to make their own choices about childbearing, everyone suffers — the children along with their mothers and society.

The first part of *Bearing Children: A Memoir of Choices*, covering the period before Andrea started her own family, focuses on her

career as both a volunteer and a paid social worker in the fields of abortion counseling and child protective services.

The second part of the book discusses the period after Andrea wished to have her own children, and covers her experience with infertility treatments, adoption, and raising a child who is different. Many women have these experiences, but few go into them knowing what to expect. This is what Andrea would like to change. Knowledge is power. Andrea wants each woman to be able to make her own decisions about her body and about having children, based on knowledge and understanding what one's choices are.

Reviewed by Kathie Mack

## TROOP UPDATE



Unfortunately, nothing has changed at this time.

Treat the Troops and Operation Shoebox are abiding by Covid-19 policy. Operation Shoebox always had about 300 people gathering in one huge community center every Monday to pack the boxes. There were less people for Treat the Troops, but all gathered in one place as well. Treat the Troops was my source for military names.

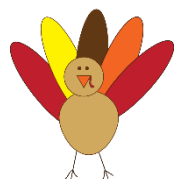
It makes me sad that we have to suspend the good works that these two organizations, plus ours, have been doing for years.

Hugs,  
Maddi Klein  
[maddik@comcast.net](mailto:maddik@comcast.net)

301-774-8088

## Holiday Hacks

- Have pumpkin pie instead of pecan pie. Even with a dollop of whipped cream, you'll cut calories and sugar by at least a third.
- Break physical activity up into smaller chunks so it's easier to schedule, like walking 10 minutes several times a day.
- Schedule some "me" time every day—a nap, dog walk, or hot bath to get your energy back for the next celebration.



## THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS



The spirit of Christmas means different things to different people, sometimes defined in terms of an attitude, philosophy, or a

warm and fuzzy feeling. For others Christmas and the spirit of Christmas is nothing more than another holiday and time off work, a get together with family and friends, or the buying and receiving of gifts.

But the real Spirit of Christmas has a deep spiritual meaning and serves as a source of inspiration and of spiritual renewal, as well as a shot of faith in the arm for both believer and the church.

Now, there are a variety of attitudes and emotions on display during this time. Some say that these reflect the spirit of Christmas such as hope and joy, but are these the true Spirit of Christmas?

And while we really don't want to catch the Christmas spirit, what we do want to catch are the attributes of the Holy Spirit known as the fruit of the Spirit.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23a NIV)

To add one more to this list, it's the attribute of giving, because on Christmas we celebrate the greatest gift ever given, and that is, God's gift of His Son, Jesus Christ.

And while all these attributes are great, they aren't the real Spirit of Christmas. The real Spirit of Christmas is no One less than the Holy Spirit. This is what heaven declared.

Contributed by Dennis Lee on Dec 15, 2019

“Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible”.

Francis of Assisi

## I REMEMBER

I remember the corned beef of my childhood,  
And the bread that we cut with a knife,  
When the children helped with the housework,  
And the men went to work not the wife.

The cheese never needed a fridge,  
And the bread was so crusty and hot,  
The children were seldom unhappy,

I remember the milk from the bottle,  
With the yummy cream on the top,



Our dinner came hot from the oven,  
And not from a freezer; or shop.

The kids were a lot more contented,  
They didn't need money for kicks,  
Just a game with their friends in the road,  
And sometimes the Saturday flicks.

I remember the shop on the corner,  
Where biscuits for pennies were sold  
Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic?  
Or is it...I'm just getting Old?

Bathing was done in a wash tub,  
With plenty of rich foamy suds  
But the ironing seemed never ending  
As Mum pressed everyone's 'duds'.

I remember the slap on my backside,  
And the taste of soap if I swore  
Anorexia and diets weren't heard of  
And we hadn't much choice what we wore.

Do you think that bruised our ego?  
Or our initiative was destroyed?  
We ate what was put on the table  
And I think life was better enjoyed.

*Author, Unknown...*

**If you can remember those days...  
Continue to enjoy your Retirement.**

# Citrus Shortbread Cookies

**Prep:** 25 mins, **Cook:** 10 mins, **Additional:** 4 hrs, **Total:** 4 hrs 35 mins

**Servings:** 24, **Yield:** 2 dozen, **Bake :**350° for 10 minutes till firm not brown



## Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup butter, softened
- ¾ cup confectioners' sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 1 tablespoon grated orange zest, or more to taste
- 2 cups sweetened dried cranberries, chopped

## Directions

- Combine flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl; set aside. Beat the butter and confectioners' sugar with an electric mixer in a large bowl until smooth. Stir in the vanilla and almond extracts and orange zest. Mix in the flour mixture until just incorporated. Fold in the cranberries; mixing just enough to evenly combine.
- Divide the dough into 2 equal portions, then roll into logs about 7 inches long. Wrap each log in wax paper or plastic wrap, and chill in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours.
- Remove wax paper, and cut the cookie dough into 1/2-inch slices. Arrange the slices on a baking sheet about 1 inch apart.

## Nutrition Facts - Per Serving:

153 calories; protein 1.2g 2% DV; carbohydrates 20.2g 7% DV; fat 7.8g 12% DV; cholesterol 20.3mg 7% DV; sodium 72mg 3%

**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EXTENSION  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE  
18410 MUNCASTER ROAD  
DERWOOD MD 20855**

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**

