

"Federation Corner" column
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September MCCF program on the Affordable Care Act

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The program for the Monday, September 9 meeting of the Montgomery County Civic Federation will be a discussion of the implementation of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) in the State of Maryland. The ACA was signed into law by President Obama back on March 23, 2010.

There will be two participants on the panel at the MCCF meeting. The first speaker will be Ms. Uma S. Ahluwalia, Director of the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services. Ms. Ahluwalia holds a master's degree in social work from the University of Delhi in India and a specialist post-master's in health services administration from George Washington University

The second speaker on the MCCF program panel will be Leslie Ford Weber. Ms. Weber is Senior Vice President of Government and Community Relations at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda.

According to the online site Wikipedia, the ACA aims to increase the quality and affordability of health insurance, lower the uninsured rate by expanding public and private insurance coverage, and reduce the costs of health care for individuals and the government. Internet users can access the Wikipedia entry for the ACA at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patient_Protection_and_Affordable_Care_Act

The ACA provides a number of mechanisms to increase coverage and affordability, including mandates, subsidies, and insurance exchanges. The law also requires insurance companies to cover all applicants within new minimum standards and offer the same rates regardless of pre-existing conditions, or gender.

As always, this MCCF program will allow for a lively dialogue between the panelists, and plenty of time for audience members to follow-up with the speakers during a Question and Answer session following the presentations. So come and learn all the fine points of how this new system mandated by the ACA will be implemented in Maryland, and how it may affect you and your family members.

Immediately prior to the program, the Civic Federation will present representative from the Intergenerational Bridges program with a Community Hero award. Intergenerational Bridges is a mentoring program for ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students in elementary, middle, and high school.

Many of the students are recent immigrants, and the goals of the program are to help students adjust to life in the United States, to develop students' English skills, and to boost students' self-esteem. Volunteers meet with the same student each week to spend time talking, reading, and playing games in English. Lesson plans, materials, and on-site supervision are provided by staff from the Jewish Council for the Aging (JCA) Heyman Interages Center.

Over the last twenty-five years, Interages programs have brought together 30,000 children and older adults in over 100 schools and 50 senior facilities.

On Tuesday, September 10, adults age fifty and over are invited to a JCA volunteer open house to learn about opportunities in the 2013-14 school year to make a difference in the life of a child. The

open house will be held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Jewish Council for the Aging, located at 12320 Parklawn Drive in Rockville.

For helping enrich the lives of students and seniors alike, the Montgomery County Civic Federation recognizes the staff and volunteers of Intergenerational Bridges as this month's Community Hero.

NOTE: the program for the September 9 meeting of the MCCF will be "Implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Maryland." The meeting will begin at 7:45 pm in the first floor auditorium of the County Council Building in Rockville. As always, the public is invited and encouraged to attend. Free parking is available on the lowest level of the garage located behind the Council Building, which can be accessed from Monroe Street or from Jefferson Street heading east from I-270.

The views expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect formal positions adopted by the Federation. To submit an 800 to 1000 word column for consideration, send as an email attachment to montgomerycivic@yahoo.com