



2022/23 ANNUAL REVIEW

# Bethesda

A world in one neighborhood.

BETHESDA.ORG





## From the Executive Director



As we compiled this Annual Report and reflected on this past year, from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, I continue to be filled with gratitude for the dedication and passion displayed by our Bethesda Urban Partnership (BUP) team, and I am also excited for the future of downtown

Bethesda. BUP is proud of the work we do to promote and maintain the downtown as one of the most vibrant destinations in our region. Guided by our Board of Directors, we are very fortunate to serve a community of hard-working retailers, restaurants and local businesses that have made our downtown successful. Complemented by new and longtime residents, we are continually looking for new ways to bring excitement and livability to our downtown.

In early 2023, we began the process to complete our next five-year Strategic Plan. This important Plan comes together with feedback from our constituents including residents, visitors, business owners, developers and our County partners. Several round table discussions were held, and an online survey was available and promoted to the community at large. Finding out what our community wants to see for the future of downtown Bethesda is of the utmost importance to us. BUP worked closely with our consultant, P.U.M.A. (Progressive Urban Management Associates) to write a Plan that positions downtown Bethesda for the future and sets the marketing, maintenance and mobility priorities for our team.

During the summer of 2023, we welcomed some new initiatives including Free Fitness in the Parks at Elm Street Park and Concerts for Kids at the Bethesda Streeterly.

Additionally, we enjoyed seeing many local residents and visitors enjoying the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival, Summer Concerts, Bike to Work Day, Bethesda Outdoor Movies and more. The annual "Savor Bethesda" Restaurant Week proved to once again be a favorite program for our residents and restaurants alike.

"Paint the Town" welcomed a new mural on the Old Georgetown Road/Woodmont Avenue parking garage in downtown Bethesda. Through a partnership with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Maryland-National Park and Planning and the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District, we were honored to have local artist The Jah One enhance this public space with his original art entitled, "New Day."

Development continues to progress in downtown Bethesda and Marriott International opened its corporate headquarters and new hotel in the summer of 2022. Additionally, the Avocet and AC Hotel opened while other projects such as 7500 Old Georgetown Road, 4915 Auburn Avenue, 7000 Wisconsin Avenue and the Metro Tower at the corner of Wisconsin Avenue and Hampden Lane are all well underway.

As we celebrate our achievements over the last year, we are looking forward to an exciting future for downtown Bethesda. We will continue to focus on our community of residents, local businesses, developers and artists as we work towards the best Bethesda and fulfilling our motto of "A World in One Neighborhood."

Sincerely,

**Jeff Burton, Executive Director**  
**Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc.**





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## From the Board Chair



I am honored to serve as Chair of the Bethesda Urban Partnership Board of Directors, an organization I have had the pleasure of being a part of for many years. As I assume the position for the July 2023 - June 2024 term, I would like to thank our community for its continued support

of downtown Bethesda. As a resident of downtown Bethesda, I welcome the opportunity to lead an organization that focuses on the downtown's livability, walkability, public spaces, great restaurants and shops, cultural programming and more.

As a team, we are dedicated to promoting Bethesda's terrific amenities, while also supporting and marketing our local business community. The people, well-manicured streetscapes, unique restaurants, favorite retailers, arts venues and more, in addition to the superb location in the Greater Washington, D.C. area, continue to make Bethesda the ideal location to live, work, play and do business.

Our Board has produced our next five-year Strategic Plan which was written with valuable feedback from visitors, business owners, employers and developers. Input from the community at-large as well as comments from our Board and staff informed our goals for the next five years, and has positioned BUP and downtown Bethesda for the future.

Bethesda's culturally rich community, designated as a Maryland Arts & Entertainment District, is one of the many reasons residents, visitors and developers alike come to downtown Bethesda. We have had the opportunity, along with our valued corporate partners and Montgomery County, to install several new public art murals throughout downtown Bethesda as part of our "Paint the Town" program. These projects provide color, vibrancy and original art to enliven our downtown landscape, and we look forward to bringing new public art to our downtown in the coming year.

The future continues to look bright as new projects are completed, and new businesses and residences open. Recent additions to downtown Bethesda include the new Marriott International headquarters and hotel as well as the AC Hotel and Avocet Tower.

I am grateful to have the privilege of working alongside the BUP team and my Board colleagues as we remain dedicated to maintaining, supporting and promoting all that Bethesda has to offer. As Chair, I look forward to another successful year working with our constituents and fulfilling our best strategic vision for downtown Bethesda's future.

Best regards,

**Marian Block, Chair**  
**Bethesda Urban Partnership**



# Operations & Funding



The Bethesda Urban Partnership, Inc. (BUP) was established by Montgomery County in 1994 to market and maintain downtown Bethesda. Throughout the last 29 years, BUP's 30 employees who work in marketing, maintenance/field operations, administration and mobility management have continued to promote and support the beautiful and vibrant downtown.

The BUP team maintains the public spaces in downtown Bethesda and creates initiatives and marketing programs to welcome and engage residents, visitors and artists as well as promotes local businesses.

A dynamic neighborhood within the Greater Washington, D.C. area, Bethesda offers a variety of restaurants, retailers, entertainment venues and events. BUP's marketing team manages unique and exciting programming, including community festivals and arts events, as well as highlights the many destinations throughout the downtown. BUP also manages field operations, Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS), the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District and the Bethesda Circulator.



## Bethesda Urban Partnership Staff

**Jeff Burton**

Executive Director

**Stephanie Coppola**

Director of Marketing & Communications

**Chiqui Laboy**

Office Manager

**Jason Liu**

Marketing & Events Manager

**Jeff Oyer**

Director of Finance

**Susanna Parker**

Marketing & Communications Manager

**Emma Quinn**

Marketing & Communications Manager





BUP is operated by an eleven member Board of Directors comprising residents, businesses and developers appointed by the County Executive. The organization is funded primarily by revenue generated from the Bethesda Parking Lot District fees, in addition to the commercial Urban District property tax. Private sponsors partner with BUP on events such as Taste of Bethesda, Summer Concerts and the Bethesda Fine Arts Festival.

### Bethesda Circulator

The Bethesda Circulator is a helpful mode of transportation for those looking for an easy and free way around town. The buses are on route Monday-Friday, 7am -11pm and Saturday, 10am -11pm. The route services north to Battery Lane and south to Bradley Boulevard and includes 20 stops at popular Bethesda destinations including the Metro, public parking garages, restaurants and shops. In 2023, Bethesda Transportation Solutions introduced a new Circulator App that tracks the real-time location of the buses along the route.



### Bethesda Urban Partnership Board of Directors July 2023 – June 2024

#### Executive Committee

**Chair:** Marian Block, *Residential Representative from within the Urban District*

**Vice Chair:** Katya Marin, *Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board Representative*

**Treasurer:** Christopher Smith, *Stonebridge Associates, Inc., Optional Method Developer Representative*

**Secretary:** Dan Schlaff, *Residential Representative from Close Proximity to Urban District*

#### Board Members

Jane Fairweather, *The Jane Fairweather Team, Small Business Representative*

Apoorva Gandhi, *Marriott International, Optional Method Developer Representative*

Mylene L. Ortiz Luis, *The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce Representative*

Adam Murphy, *Mon Ami Gabi, Small Business Representative*

Cherian Thomas, *Residential Representative from Planning Area*

Evan J. Weisman, *The Donohoe Companies, Optional Method Developer Representative*

Peter Fosselman, *Director, Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center (Ex-Officio)*





# Maintenance



The dedicated BUP Maintenance Team removes trash, sweeps streets, mends sidewalks, trims trees, plants flowers, and more to keep the downtown refreshed and inviting. Always an important task, the team continued to brighten Bethesda during a time when there was an increased emphasis on outdoor gathering.

Additionally, the team is charged with the upkeep of important public gathering spaces in downtown Bethesda including Veterans Park, located at the corner of Norfolk and Woodmont Avenues; and the Norfolk Avenue Streeterly, located on Norfolk Avenue, between St. Elmo and Cordell Avenues. Residents and visitors alike enjoy these spaces for lunch, dinner, coffee dates and more. The Norfolk Avenue Streeterly is also home to the weekly Summer Concerts and Bethesda's Winter Wonderland.

During FY'23, the maintenance team managed and pruned 1,200 trees, took care of 35,000 flowers and 180,000 sq. ft. of turf, as well as removed trash and litter seven days a week.





The team also assists with on-site needs at BUP events and manages maintenance requests at Gallery B, Studio B and Triangle Art Studios. The team is certified in First Aid, CPR and AED.

### Ask Me Team

The Ask Me Team is on duty Wednesday – Sunday and can be found around town ready to help patrons. The Ambassadors are available to provide emergency assistance, give directions and assist with the downtown's maintenance needs. The team also helps at BUP's events and have been an integral part of managing The Streeterly on Norfolk Avenue.



### Maintenance and Ask Me Team Members:

Eli Banks, Field Operations Manager  
 José Castro, Maintenance Supervisor  
 John Mattingly, Ask Me Team Supervisor  
 Tito Castro, Trash Removal Team  
 Datrell Childers, Street Sweeper  
 Manuel Constanza, Landscaper  
 Francisco Cuellar, Ask Me Team  
 Adan Díaz-Reyes, Urban Beautification Squad  
 José Gaitán, Urban Beautification Squad  
 Jorge Hernandez, Landscaper  
 Darren Lewis, Ask Me Team  
 Melvin Muñoz-Macoto, Landscaper  
 Julian Musel, Ask Me Team  
 Celio Peña, Landscaper  
 Marlon Reynolds, Ask Me Team  
 Oscar Rodrigues, Trash Removal Team  
 Martir Salmeron, Landscaper  
 Jaime Villanueva, Landscaper  
 Felix Villatoro, Landscaper





# Marketing



BUP's marketing team has the exciting task of promoting downtown Bethesda as a destination for dining, shopping, the arts and a place filled with the best amenities outside your front door for downtown dwellers. BUP's website, [www.bethesda.org](http://www.bethesda.org), e-newsletter, social media posts and free printed guides are great resources to learn more about the restaurants, retailers and venues throughout the downtown.

In the fall of 2022, the BUP team began working on planning for the future. As part of the reauthorization process with the Montgomery County Council, BUP is required to do a five-year Strategic Plan. As such, BUP contracted with Progressive Urban Management Associates (P.U.M.A.), a Denver-based real estate economics and planning firm specializing in strategic planning for downtown partnerships across the country.







To formulate the plan, several roundtable discussions were held in early 2023 with our constituents including downtown residents, visitors, local business owners, County partners and developers. Additionally, an online survey was conducted for feedback from the community-at-large and we received more than 1,200 responses. BUP worked closely with P.U.M.A. to write a Plan that positions downtown Bethesda for the future and sets the marketing, maintenance and mobility priorities for our team.

To promote Bethesda as an ideal home for people and businesses, BUP worked with the startup **Vistity** to create a virtual tour of downtown Bethesda and its amenities. This virtual tour, hosted on Bethesda.org, uses a mixture of drone footage and street-level photography to give users a 360-degree view of downtown Bethesda. The tour highlights venues and destinations in Woodmont Triangle and Bethesda Row while showcasing local restaurants and retailers, and arts venues.

The well-loved addition of the **Norfolk Avenue Streeter**y that was introduced in June 2020 continued throughout 2022 and 2023, with special event programming, concerts, and plenty of seating for Bethesda residents and visitors to enjoy outdoor dining, happy hour and more in downtown Bethesda.

The popular **Friday Summer Concerts** continued into 2023, and attracted happy crowds who enjoyed live music, dinner and dancing to start the weekend. The summer season kicked off with AfroPop group Elikeh, followed by other popular local groups including The 19<sup>th</sup> Street Band and La Unica. New in 2023, was free **Concerts for Kids** on Friday afternoons!

Free **Outdoor Movies** returned to Woodmont Triangle for three nights in July 2022 showcasing a classic summer film, a favorite musical and a recent comedy.



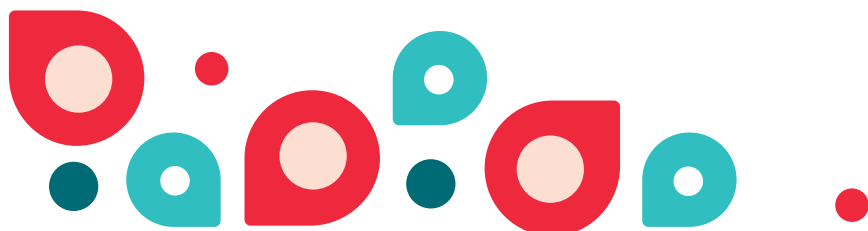




Another new initiative for 2023 was the free **Fitness in the Parks** events held in Elm Street Park. In June and July, participants were invited to free classes with Barre3 Bethesda, Corepower Yoga, Urban Boxing Bethesda, Serpentine Dance Studios and Crossfit Bethesda. After class, participants could learn more about the studios and take home some custom swag!

Dogs were not left out of the fun! In partnership with Montgomery Parks, BUP hosted **Yappy Hour and Pop-Up Dog Parks** at Elm Street Park in October 2022 as well as the summer of 2023. The Maintenance and Ask Me teams constructed play areas for large and small dogs on both sides of the park's plaza. Dogs were able to run, play and socialize, while owners enjoyed music from local bands, and food from downtown Bethesda restaurants including Dog Haus Biergarten and Smoke BBQ. Local pet retailers Bone Jour, Bond Vet and Atlas Doghouse also participated in the Yappy Hour events.

Due to Hurricane Ian, BUP was unable to hold Taste of Bethesda in October 2022. However, the popular **Savor Bethesda Restaurant Week** was back for its third year. Restaurant Week ran from February 16-26, 2023 and featured great deals. Participating downtown restaurants offered special pricing at \$10, \$20 or \$35. BUP promoted the culinary week, encouraging patrons to check out the deals and support their favorite restaurants. We also had the opportunity to partner with FOX 5 DC, and bring some of our restaurants to their live shows for chef demonstrations and more promotion of our beloved restaurant community.







BUP continued its support of restaurants and retailers with the E-gift card **Bethesda Bucks**. The Bethesda Bucks program continued to grow, adding a dozen new participants and selling \$10,000 worth of gift cards used at local establishments.

**Bethesda's Winter Wonderland** made its return to Woodmont Triangle at the Norfolk Avenue Streeterly on Saturday, December 3, 2022. Parents and children flocked to the Streeterly to celebrate the holiday season from 1-4pm. The event began with an ice sculpting demonstration followed by choir performances from Academy of the Holy Cross, Chevy Chase Elementary, Our Lady of Lourdes, Stone Ridge School, Walt Whitman High School and Walter Johnson High School. As the groups sang seasonal classics, kids visited with Santa Claus and made crafts, while adults and children alike enjoyed hot drinks and sweet treats from vendors Dog Haus, Smoke BBQ and The Red Bandana Bakery.





## 2023 Local Writer's Showcase

### Essay Winners

Cecilia Ferrara, *Rockville, MD, 1st Place*  
 Krysten Jenci, *Chevy Chase, MD, 2nd Place*  
 Elizabeth Minihan, *Woodbridge, VA, 3rd Place*  
 Tina M. MWP, *Rockville, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Thu Nguyen, *Gaithersburg, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Carol Solomon, *Montgomery Village, MD, Honorable Mention*

### High School Essay Winners

Emily Rivera, *Albert Einstein High School, 1st Place*  
 Kiersten McClure, *Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, 2nd Place*  
 Luna Nash, *Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, 3rd Place*  
 Winnie Chan, *Benjamin Banneker Academic High School, Honorable Mention*  
 Sophia Hall, *Holton Arms School, Honorable Mention*  
 Allison Xu, *Walter Johnson High School, Honorable Mention*

### Short Story Winners

Eve Cantler, *Washington, D.C., 1st Place*  
 Caroline E. Wellbery, *Bethesda, MD, 2nd Place*  
 Elisabeth Schmeissner, *Bethesda, MD, 3rd Place*  
 Perry Beamer, *Takoma Park, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Susie Chen, *Potomac, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Brandyn Pantano, *Gaithersburg, MD, Honorable Mention*

### High School Short Story Winners

Claire Buchanan, *Holton-Arms School, 1st Place*  
 Allison Xu, *Walter Johnson High School, 2nd Place*  
 Meredith Abramson, *Poolesville High School, 3rd Place*  
 Olov Berg, *Winston Churchill High School, Honorable Mention*  
 Sophia Hall, *Holton-Arms School, Honorable Mention*  
 Dena Shao, *Thomas Wootton High School, Honorable Mention*

### Poetry Winners

Margaret Flaherty, *Takoma Park, MD, 1st Place*  
 Debkayna Mitra, *Washington, D.C., 2nd Place*  
 Radhika Tyagi, *Bethesda, MD, 3rd Place*  
 Angelin Donohue, *Gaithersburg, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Claire McGoff, *Silver Spring, MD, Honorable Mention*  
 Mary O'Melveny, *Washington, D.C., Honorable Mention*

### High School Poetry Winners

Paavani Lal Das, *Richard Montgomery High School*  
 Cody Herwald, *Walter Johnson High School*  
 Ganeev Kaur, *Thomas S. Wootton High School*  
 Mia Koppel, *Richard Montgomery High School*  
 Kelly Ren, *Thomas S. Wootton High School*  
 Allison Xu, *Walter Johnson High School*  
 Chelsea Zhu, *Richard Montgomery High School*



The **2023 Local Writer's Showcase** once again honored writers throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland and Virginia. Over 700 pieces were submitted to the Bethesda Essay, Short Story and Poetry Contests. Thirty-seven writers were recognized and \$5,350 in prize money was awarded. The top prize winners also received classes and memberships to The Writer's Center as well as had their work published in *Bethesda Magazine*.

On March 9, 2023 the Poetry Awards and Reading was held in person at The Writer's Center and featured readings by this year's winners as well as professional poets E. Ethelbert Miller, Adam Chiles, and KaNikki Jakarta. The Showcase continued on March 10<sup>th</sup> at The Hyatt Regency Bethesda with the Essay and Short Story Reading featuring this year's winners.

Produced by the Bethesda Urban Partnership, the Local Writer's Showcase was sponsored by Moco 360 Media (*Bethesda Magazine*) and The Writer's Center, with support also provided by The Trawick Foundation and Hyatt Regency Bethesda.





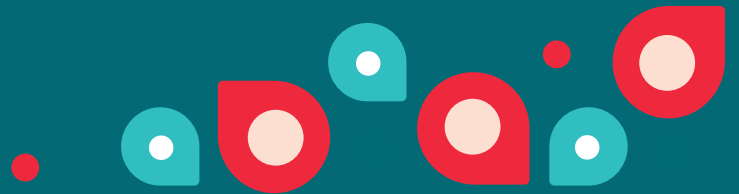


## Online and Social Media

Bethesda Urban Partnership's website is a helpful resource for information about Bethesda, including restaurant and retail guides, upcoming events and more. Additionally, the weekly e-newsletter, also a handy Bethesda tool, has a continuously growing list of subscribers. BUP shares both BUP-specific, downtown Bethesda updates and promotion of local retailers and restaurants on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. A focus of 2023 was using short videos to highlight the constituents of downtown Bethesda and Bethesda Urban Partnership Events. These videos received great traction and were viewed over 60,000 times and shared to hundreds of accounts.



facebook.com/BethesdaUp  
@BethesdaUp  
@BethesdaBup





# Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District

The state of Maryland designated downtown Bethesda as an Arts & Entertainment District effective July 1, 2002. Special tax incentives benefit artists, arts enterprises and developers that are located within the Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District. Downtown Bethesda received its third re-designation in July 2022 to continue its work in promoting the arts in downtown Bethesda.

## Initiatives

The Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District produces high quality arts and cultural programming that benefits residents, businesses and tourists and supports the community's growth and vitality. Events produced by the Arts & Entertainment District highlight local artists, writers, filmmakers and performers and provide them opportunities to show their work in the community. These programs also promote Bethesda's artistic and cultural resources and attract nearly 1,000 artists and more than 30,000 attendees each year.



## Bethesda Arts & Entertainment Board of Directors; July 2022 – June 2023

### Executive Committee

**President:** Judy Gilbert, *Artist and Local Resident*

**Vice President:** David Goldberg, *Union Hardware*

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Jad Donohoe,  
*The Donohoe Companies*

### Board Members

Cathy Bernard, *Local Resident*

Arlene Begelman, *Local Resident*

Jane Fairweather, *Jane Fairweather Team/  
Long & Foster*

Suzanne Firstenberg, *Artist and Local Resident*

Richard Greenberg, *Greenhill Companies*

Mark Kramer, *Kramer Architects*

Leslie Lane, *Local Resident*

Jan McNamara, *Imagination Stage*

Patrick O'Neil, *Lerch, Early & Brewer*

Zachary Oxman, *Artist and Local Artist*

Wendy Susswein, *Local Resident*

Peter Fosselman (*Non-voting*), *Bethesda-Chevy  
Chase Regional Services Center*





A new **"Paint the Town"** mural on the Old Georgetown/ Woodmont Avenue Garage was completed by The Jah One, of Washington, D.C. in July 2022. This new mural entitled, **New Day**, is a portrait of the artist's mother to celebrate her and everything she has done for their family. According to The Jah One, "Too often we honor people when they aren't around to hear it. In a more relatable way, **New Day**, is about us coming out of a long historical pandemic. We lost a lot, and much has changed forever. Hopefully we spent our time in isolation thinking about what's truly important to us and now we are focused on those things with a new, more grateful perspective on the future."

This installment of "Paint the Town" was made possible thanks to partners including the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission.

BUP manages **Gallery B**, a nonprofit art gallery that features monthly exhibits by regional artists, and hosts the exhibitions for the annual Bethesda Painting Awards and The Trawick Prize. The spring 2023 exhibit lineup began with "ScentS of it All," by the Art4Us Artists Coop. The lineup also included "Variety Show: A Photo Ensemble" by Creative Platform, a photography group featuring nine photographers, and exhibit [c'est l'art] by Michael Hyman, Susan Washington, Dana Ellyn and AI Code. In May, The Black Art Today Foundation exhibited their latest show, "Black Art: In the Presence of LIGHT."

BUP also manages **Studio B** and **Triangle Art Studios**, studio spaces that serve as both work and exhibit areas for local artists. Studio B features artists Linda Bartley Button, Judy Gilbert, Shanthi Chandrasekar and Sara Leibman. At Triangle Art Studios, visitors can find artists Maruja Quezada, Barb Siegel and Stephen Estrada.

**Triangle Art Studios** has a gallery space to feature the artwork of the resident artists as well as guest artists. In December 2022, Gallery Gifts Pop-Up Shop featured the work of 11 local craft artists, including 2D and 3D fiber artworks by Maria Simonsson, lathe-turned wood items by Jeff Struewing, and hand-painted cards and journals by Lynda Slayen. In May 2023, Barbara Mandel's, "Picturing Paris" explored Paris in oil paints reflecting her recent trip to France.

The Studios were also opened for a returning event, the **Bethesda Art Walk**. These popular events guide attendees between Triangle Studios, Gallery B, Studio B, and the Waverly Street Gallery, and allow guests to view the work in each space and speak directly to artists. The Arts & Entertainment District held Art Walks on September 9 and December 9, 2022, as well as, April 14 and June 9, 2023.





# Bethesda Arts & Entertainment District



The **11th annual Bethesda Film Fest** featured seven short documentaries made by local filmmakers. The selected films, including one by a young filmmaker, were screened at Imagination Stage on March 24 and 25, 2023. Each screening was followed by a Q&A session with the filmmakers, moderated by Andrea Passafiume, Associate Producer for the Tribeca Film Festival, and Jay Korff of WJLA-ABC7. The event was also generously supported by Bruce and Leslie Lane; Bernard Family Foundation; The Donohoe Companies; Jane Fairweather Team; Suzanne Firstenberg; The Greenhill Companies; David Goldberg; Lerch, Early, and Brewer; Jan McNamara; Oxman Studios and Wendy Susswein.

The **Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards** honors the region's best songwriters from Maryland, Virginia and Washington, D.C. Founded by Bethesda resident Cathy Bernard in honor of her uncle Fred Ebb, the annual contest awards a \$10,000 Grand Prize and a \$2,500 Young Songwriter prize. The 2023 competition once again celebrated songwriting with a live concert at The Bethesda Blues & Jazz Club on April 21, 2023. The concert featured performances by the five grand prize and three youth finalists, and the winners were announced at the conclusion of the show.

## 2023 Bernard/Ebb Songwriting Awards Grand Prize Winner

Josh Lay, Owings Mill, MD

## Young Songwriter Winner

Elizabeth Lane, Alexandria, VA



## 2023 Bethesda Film Fest Films

*Amor* – by David Rochkind of Washington, D.C.

*East of the River* – by Amin El Siwi and Phillip Bouknight of Washington DC

*The Legacy of Lee's Flower Shop* – by Kamilah Thurmon of California, MD

*Never Again Para Nadie* – by Justin Reifert & Dan Frank of Washington, D.C.

*Portrait of MasVusi* – by Lindsey Aranson of Bethesda, MD

*Rooted Wisdom: Nature's Role in the Underground Railroad* – by George Burroughs, Lauren Giordano and Anthony Cohen of Cordova, MD

*what if it wasn't a joke* – Youth Film by Grace Sutherland of Baltimore, MD







The 18<sup>th</sup> annual **Bethesda Fine Arts Festival** welcomed 100+ artists to Bethesda's Woodmont Triangle along Auburn and Norfolk Avenues on Saturday, May 13 and Sunday, May 14, 2023. One of downtown Bethesda's largest events, this festival welcomes 20,000 annual attendees to browse and purchase original fine art produced by some of the country's most talented artists. Artists are juried into this festival, and travel to Bethesda from throughout the country. Featured artwork includes painting, photography, jewelry, sculpture, furniture, glass, ceramics and more. Festival goers are also entertained by live music, and can purchase food from downtown Bethesda restaurants while enjoying all of the original artwork.

**The Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards** final exhibit was on display at Gallery B September 8 – October 2, 2022. The show featured artwork by eight finalists who were selected by Alexis Assam, Regenia A. Perry, Assistant Curator of Global Contemporary Art at The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VFMA); Thomas James, Visual Arts Curator at Creative Alliance in Baltimore, MD; and Maria del Carmen Montoya, Assistant Professor of Sculpture and Spatial Practices, Director of Graduate Studies, M.F.A. in Fine Arts and Social Practice, Studio Arts Program.

In early spring 2023, a commemorative exhibit featuring winners of the past 20 years of The Trawick Prize was held at the American University Museum at Katzen Art Center. The Emerald Award was awarded to WonJung Choi, the 2022 The Trawick Prize "Best in Show" winner.

In June 2023, the **19<sup>th</sup> annual Bethesda Painting Awards**, also founded by Bethesda resident Carol Trawick, was held at Gallery B from June 8 – July 2, 2023. Eight finalists were selected by the competition's panel made up of Lillian Hoover, artist, 2019 finalist of Bethesda Painting Awards, and 2012 Best in Show Winner of the Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards; Hedieh Javanshir Ilchi, artist and 2015 finalist of Bethesda Painting Awards; and John Lee, Associate Professor of Painting at College of William & Mary.



## Bethesda Fine Arts Festival

### Best in Show Winner

Ruth Becker – *Mixed Media*

### Judges' Choice Award Winners

Cassie Taggart – *Painting*

Michael Jury – *Furniture*

Rezgar Mamandi – *Ceramics*

Kate Norris – *Mixed Media*

Julian Maturino & Leah Lynn – *Glass*

Fred Mertz – *Photography*



## 2022 Trawick Prize: Bethesda Contemporary Art Awards Winners

### \$10,000 Best in Show

WonJung Choi, Richmond, VA

### \$2,000 Second Place

Robert Mertens, Staunton, VA

### \$1,000 Third Place

Caryn Martin, Baltimore, MD

### \$1,000 Young Artist

Evie Metz, Henrico, VA



## 2023 Bethesda Painting Awards Winners

### \$10,000 Best in Show

Nicole Santiago, Williamsburg, VA

### \$2,000 Second Place

Stephanie Cobb, Washington D.C.

### \$1,000 Third Place

Katherine Fleming, Arlington, VA

### Young Artist Award

Lindsay Mueller, Arlington, VA







TRANSPORTATION  
SOLUTIONS

# Bethesda Transportation Solutions



Bethesda Transportation Solutions (BTS) was established in 2000 to help manage the traffic in downtown Bethesda by marketing local, state and federal commuter benefits programs and tax incentives to employers and local residents. BTS promotes multimodal transportation such as rail, bus, carpools and biking with the goal of reducing the number of Bethesda employees and residents who drive alone to work.

Each year BTS hosts one of the largest **Bike to Work Day** events in the Washington, D.C. region. The 2023 downtown Bethesda Bike to Work Day was almost back to pre-COVID-19 participation levels with cyclists, event table partners and speakers actively involved. There were over 470 registrants in Bethesda, the largest “Pit Stop” in Montgomery County. Several local businesses were on-site at the event including: BellRinger, Bethesda Green, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail, Griffin Cycle, Pedego Electric Bikes Bethesda, Potomac Pedalers, Silver restaurant, Terrapin Bicycles, The St. James Performance Club and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

Baked goods were donated by The Red Bandana Bakery and Bethesda Bagels. Silver restaurant provided coffee and yogurt parfaits, Eat the Change provided iced tea and

DrinkMore Water donated water. Prizes were donated by Fully Promoted, Griffin Cycle and Mon Ami Gabi.

The **Walk & Ride Challenge** tasks participants, including teleworkers, to incorporate walking into their day and were asked to record their steps. The top three teams were all from the employer American Society of Health-System Pharmacists. Individual participants also competed in weekly challenges to win prizes, including gift cards to local businesses.

The BTS **Cool Commute Contest** was a new event created by BTS in 2022 to encourage commuters to walk and bicycle to work during winter months. In 2023, commuters submitted 15 photo entries of their walking and biking commutes to win gift certificates. Participants provided positive feedback, stating that they walked and biked more often and enjoyed new bicycle lanes on Bethesda Avenue.





The BTS **Earth Month Contest** was a new event created by BTS in 2022 to encourage downtown Bethesda employees and residents to enjoy springtime in Bethesda with a focus on transportation themed places. The 2023 event centered on the Bethesda Circulator, with participants answering three detailed questions about the Circulator vehicles and stops. Two diligent commuters answered the questions correctly, winning gift certificates to local businesses.

BTS continued to assist employers with filing an online **Transportation Demand Management Plan** with MCDOT (Montgomery County Department of Transportation). The team collaborated with The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce and reached out to new employers to secure new and voluntary Plans. Additionally, the team connected with employers at several local Chamber events and meetings throughout the year to promote BTS services and secure new sponsors for BTS events. Each year, BTS nominates Bethesda employers to the Metropolitan Council of Governments, Commuter Connections Awards Ceremony for recognition of outstanding commuter benefits programs. In 2023, BTS and MCDOT received an award for outstanding outreach and assistance to Bethesda employers.

As part of the Developer **Traffic Mitigation Agreements** required by MCDOT, BTS provided transportation and commute information to properties in Bethesda. An electronic Bethesda transportation guide was sent to residential properties to encourage new residents to consider multimodal options in Bethesda. BTS also monitored pedestrian safety concerns associated with construction projects in Bethesda and communicated the information to the public.

BTS worked with MCDOT and MDOT to promote several **new initiatives and updates** in 2022-2023, including the County Bike Donation program, the County FareShare transit subsidy program, Bethesda adult bicycle education classes, the County Shared Streets program, Ride On service changes, MDOT Purple Line updates, separated bicycle lane construction in downtown Bethesda. BTS also helped promote Metro, parking and traffic updates.

BTS used direct mailing, emails, social media, an e-newsletter and their website to **communicate with employers, commuters and property managers**. BTS created an electronic "Bethesda Transportation Options" brochure for residential property managers highlighting downtown Bethesda transportation options. The BTS e-newsletter was sent to over 2,600 recipients each month.

On Car Free Day, which was held September 22, 2022, more than 4,000 people pledged to consider other transportation modes. This was an increase over last year's number of 2,993 pledges. Over the course of these various events, BTS usually assists over 2,000 commuters annually and places more than 25 people into carpools.



### **Bethesda Transportation Solutions Staff**

Kristen Blackmon, Director

Brandan Stuckey, Marketing & Outreach Manager

Allison Kemp, Customer Service

### **BTS Advisory Committee**

#### **Nominated by The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce:**

Michael Catudal, Capital Business Collective

Meagan Sexton, Edward Jones Investments

Carla Young (Chair), The Greater Bethesda Chamber of Commerce

#### **Nominated by the Western Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board:**

Thomas Clash, Bethesda, MD

Kevin Finn, Bethesda, MD

Kathleen F. Krause, Bethesda, MD

Steven Teitelbaum, Bethesda, MD

#### **Appointed by BUP - Bethesda Employer with 50 or More Employees:**

Sal Attanasio, Buchanan & Mitchell

Brian Goldblatt, The Donohoe Companies

#### **Appointed by BUP - Bethesda Employer with Fewer than 50 Employees**

Amanda Smith, Bainum Family Foundation

#### **Non-Voting Members**

James Carlson, Montgomery County Department of Transportation

Joseph Cox, National Institutes of Health

Ryan Emery, Naval Support Activity Bethesda

Peter Fosselman, Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center

Commander Amy Daum, 2D Commander Montgomery County Police

Iftin Thompson, Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission







# Bethesda


URBAN PARTNERSHIP



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