



HCA Public Meeting – Thursday, February 20, 2025: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
We Achieve Center / 10501 New Hampshire Avenue
Topic: Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft and Scams
Speaker: Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection Volunteer Mr. Lou Levy

HCA is delighted to welcome Mr. Lou Levy, an expert on identity theft and scams, to our next public meeting, where he will speak about these urgent matters and answer your questions. Identity theft and scams, such as recent text messages falsely stating that you have unpaid tolls, are concerns for us all, and it is essential to know how to better protect ourselves. Refreshments will be available.

February 20 Itinerary

7:00 – 7:30: Meet and Greet
7:30 – 8:30: Presentation and Questions
8:30 – 9:00: HCA Business Meeting

HOLIDAY PARTY A SUCCESS!

For the first time since the COVID pandemic began in 2019, HCA was thrilled to resume hosting the Hillandale Holiday Party on Sunday, December 8, 2024. The event was held at the We Achieve Center and was attended by almost 100 people, who enjoyed a vast buffet of turkey, ham, potatoes, potluck side dishes, and desserts. And—of course!--**Santa** who arrived on a fire truck and he and Mrs. Claus met one-on-one with all the children! Attendees voted for their choice of a new HCA logo (as seen above). **THANKS** to everyone who made this such a fun event!

TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS IN HILLANDALE

Several changes have been made that are improving pedestrian safety and traffic flow around Francis Scott Key Middle School and Cresthaven Elementary School:

- **Four-way stops** at Schindler Road intersections with LaGrande Road, West Nolcrest Drive/Ruppert Road, and Gatewood Avenue (*note: this is a correction to the printed HCA Bulletin that was mailed to Hillandale residents in February 2025*).
- **ACA-compliant pedestrian ramps** at the three intersections listed above.
- **A pedestrian refuge island and crosswalk** at Schindler Court.
- **A three-way stop** at the intersection of Cresthaven Drive and Royal Road.

Please be extra vigilant when approaching the intersections with the new stop signs—some drivers are still adjusting to these additions and occasionally failing to stop.



These key improvements in pedestrian safety are in addition to those which Councilmember Kristin Mink promoted and saw through to completion in 2023, which greatly enhanced pedestrian safety near Cresthaven Elementary School:

- **A four-way stop** at the intersection of Cresthaven Drive and LaGrande Road.
 - **Ladder-painted crosswalks and ADA-compliant ramps** at the intersection of Cresthaven Drive and Royal Road.
- We applaud Councilmember Mink and Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) for their work in adding these improvements in pedestrian safety around our local schools. HCA advocated for all these fixes and we are grateful MCDOT listened to our requests and agreed to implement them.

New Hillandale Listserv

As an alternative to Nextdoor and other social media, HCA has started a listserv for Hillandale residents. This listserv, which is located at <https://groups.io/g/HCAgroup>, can be a great way to stay connected with each other and share information that matters to us here in Hillandale—for instance, *what will we do this spring if and when invasive spotted lanternflies show up in our yards?*

Before joining, participants must review and agree to the listserv terms of use:

- **Be Respectful and Civil:** Treat others with kindness and respect. Personal attacks, name-calling, and hostile language are not permitted. Focus on the issue, not the person.
- **Stay On-Topic:** Posts should be relevant to the neighborhood or community-related topics. Avoid off-topic discussions that don't serve the group's purpose.
- **No Rants or Venting:** Constructive feedback is welcome, but angry rants or inflammatory remarks should be avoided. If you need to express frustration, do so calmly and respectfully.
- **No Political or Religious Debates:** To maintain a neutral space, avoid political or religious arguments. Posts related to local policy or community issues should be handled respectfully.
- **Avoid Excessive Self-Promotion:** While sharing services or local businesses is fine, excessive promotion, spam, or irrelevant ads are discouraged. Limit self-promotion to once per month unless otherwise permitted.
- **Fact-Based Posts:** When sharing news, especially safety-related or sensitive information, ensure it is accurate and verified. Misinformation or unverified rumors can cause unnecessary anxiety.
- **No Personal Disputes:** Don't use the listserv to air grievances with specific individuals or neighbors. Handle personal conflicts offline or privately.
- **Report Problems Privately:** If you notice an issue with a post or member, report it to the moderators directly rather than engaging publicly.
- **Respect Privacy:** Do not share other people's personal information without their permission. This includes phone numbers, addresses, and other private details.
- **Moderation Enforcement:** Moderators have the final say in enforcing these rules. Members who violate them may be warned, have posts removed, or be removed from the group entirely.

RECENT POLICE BRIEFINGS

October 29, 2024: At the Hillandale Community Meeting, Third District Police Commander Jason Cokinos spoke to attendees about public safety in Hillandale and emphasized the fact that Hillandale is low-crime area surrounded by areas of higher crime. He noted that most crimes committed in Hillandale often involve people who know each other, unlike other jurisdictions where crime against random individuals is more common. In addition, much of the crime in Hillandale is property crime, such as car break-ins, car thefts, and shoplifting, which continues to increase and pose a challenge to local stores. Crime hotspots in Hillandale also include Francis Scott Key Middle School—but this is in part because simple assaults that are reported can include something as minor as pushing.

Commander Cokinos also noted the continuing shortage of fifty officers in the 3rd District and said that MCPD offers a \$20,000 sign-on bonus as a hiring incentive. Discussions are also ongoing about expanding the use of

drones to White Oak, as they can be deployed quickly after a 911 call and can help officers reach crime scenes more quickly and coordinate with patrols in real time.

He summarized several common-sense strategies to mitigate crime:

- Be aware of your surroundings and report unusual activity.
- Lock your vehicle and avoid leaving valuables in sight. Never leave your vehicle running unattended.
- Consider using auto-theft prevention devices such as steering wheel locks.
- Ensure adequate nighttime lighting around your home and install security cameras.
- Coordinate with neighbors to help watch your home when you are away.

October 18, 2024: At an event organized by Hillandale United (which is not part of HCA), Sergeant Michael Sears presented an informal briefing at Third District Headquarters about vehicle safety and auto theft. He noted that auto thefts are down both in the immediate vicinity as well as in the wider area and shared common-sense strategies to reduce the chance of auto theft. Participants had questions and observations about options to help recover a stolen vehicle, such as Lojack, Apple Air Tags, and similar programs. A bonus gift for those who attended: a free steering wheel-brake lock!

November 4, 2024: At another informal event organized by Hillandale United and held at Third District Headquarters, Police Lieutenant Vincent Galladora discussed Montgomery County's Drone as First Responder (DFR) Program. He explained that the DFR Program uses drone technology to offset staffing shortages in Montgomery County, which currently has around 180 vacancies in its police force. The DFR Program has an impressive response time—an average of 70 seconds—and is often the first unit on the scene after an incident has been reported. So far, drones have assisted in locating more than 300 suspects who were arrested, including suspects in assaults, auto thefts, and shoplifting. MCPD currently has operational drone sites in Wheaton, Gaithersburg, and downtown Silver Spring, and another may open soon in Bethesda.

These police drones now have a range of only 1.2 miles, because they must be under continuous visual control—much different than military drones, which are larger, fly longer distances, use AI to become entirely autonomous, and are far more expensive than the devices police departments can afford. Cameras on drones record only the call itself and not the trip to the call. Drones answer only to calls and are not sent out randomly. There are no proactive patrols. In addition, drones use no audio or facial recognition, and are not deployed at citizen protests.

The DFR briefing was attended by a number of Hillandale residents and the invited guest representative from the Woodmoor/Four Corners civic organization. Also attending was Montgomery County Councilmember Kristin Mink and her staffer, Mr. Chris Wilhelm.

(For additional information about Hillandale United, please contact HCA Public Safety Advisor Jai J. Green at publicsafety@hillandale-md.org)



Is your dog one of Hillandale's Top Dogs? What about your cat?
Send us a photo so we can share!

Sadie alerts Lariston Lane residents about all UPS, Fedex, Amazon, and USPS trucks who drive up the street—unless she is asleep. A dog needs her rest.

Please support the Hillandale Citizens Association (HCA)

Mission: Working to make Hillandale a better, safer, and more enriching environment for you and your families.

Public Forum: Providing information about community developments and addressing neighborhood issues that concern you--our public meetings are often attended by Montgomery County staff and representatives.

Advocacy: Advocating for the Hillandale community before the Montgomery County Council and other venues.

Social Events: Sponsoring events for the Hillandale community such as National Night Out and the Holiday Party.

Your membership dues are virtually our sole source of income and support all these HCA activities and the HCA Bulletin, which is mailed free to all Hillandale households. Whenever a community Directory listing all residents is issued, members receive it free. Please join today by filling out this form and mailing a check to the address listed below, or you can pay your dues in person at the next public meeting. **Thank you!**

HILLANDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (HCA) Membership Application (please print clearly)

Last Name _____ DO NOT list my name in Directory ____

First Name(s) _____
Please add a listing for any additional last name (No added cost for this listing) _____

Additional Last Name _____ Additional First Name(s) _____

Hillandale Street Address _____

Telephone Number _____ DO NOT list my phone number in Directory ____

Email Address _____ DO NOT list my email address in Directory ____

Dues for a Household membership in HCA are \$20 per year or \$40 for two years

_____ I have enclosed \$20 for dues for the calendar year 2025

_____ I have enclosed \$40 for dues for the calendar years 2025 and 2026

Please make checks payable to Hillandale Citizens Association, Inc. and send your check with this completed

form to: Hillandale Citizens Association (HCA) / P. O. Box 4001 / Silver Spring, MD 20914

You can also use PayPal to pay dues: go to www.PayPal.com, or click on the link provided on the Hillandale website at www.hillandale-md.org.

SPRING IS ALMOST HERE!

