

Langley's Latest



Keeping you **informed** about how we're making a **difference** in people's lives . . .

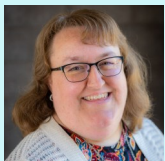
Spring 2025

Reflecting on Our Season of Action a note from the Executive Director

Spring has flown by! Thank you so much for coming to our Livin' on a Spare Bowling Benefit in early April. This event is so much fun, it's a highlight of my year to connect with our entire community of residents, participants, families, and supporters. My favorite memory from this year's event was seeing our residents and community support participants enjoy themselves with an activity that many of them enjoy; several of our individuals participate in a bowling league at Bowlero Annandale on Saturdays throughout the year. Seeing everyone have a good time together in the community reminds me why our mission and vision are so important to the well-being of the 41 individuals we serve and their families.

Other events this spring have reminded us, and me especially, why building a rich, full life is important and valuable for all. This winter, we were informed about some tough proposals included in the Fairfax County FY26 Budget, eliminating or reducing funding for vital services for adults with developmental disabilities. In March, we shared with you about ways to advocate for our community through our Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month campaign and in the winter edition of Langley's Latest. As we wait for the final Fairfax County Budget's approval, please read The Importance of a Rich, Full Life, which shares the bravery of one of our longtime community support participants, Dana, who volunteered to speak at the Board of Supervisors' public hearings in early April.

Thank you to each of you who advocated on our community support participants' behalf in April by either speaking at the public hearings or sending an email or letter to your Supervisors. When we all come together, we can make change happen and create a trusted community where adults with developmental disabilities and their families can thrive. I hope you will join us at our open house on Thursday, June 26, from 4 to 8 pm, with a short program from 6 to 6:30 featuring our main speaker, The Arc of Northern Virginia's executive director, Melissa Heifetz.



Maureen K. Gum
- Maureen

Livin' on a Spare Bowling Benefit Raises Over \$16,000 for Our Mission!

Oh! We've got each other, and that's a lot for Langley's lifelong community!

Thank you so much to our friends, families, and community who came out on a blustery spring day to our Livin' on a Spare Bowling Benefit! We have heard from many of our attendees that they had a wonderful time connecting with friends, family, and our individuals. We are so grateful to our sponsors and community, who raised over \$16,000 for our individuals and programs. We love hosting this event, as it's a time for our community to gather in support of our mission, all while having fun.

LIVIN'
on a
SPARE
Bowling Benefit



Because everyone **deserves**
the chance to live a **rich, full life...**



2070 Chain Bridge Rd., Ste. G40
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Livin' on a Spare Bowling Benefit cont'd.

Thank you to our all our wonderful sponsors, Supervisor Walkinshaw, Bowlero Annandale staff, Leandra Finder, outstanding balloon animal artist, Sylvia Lett, wonderful face painter, Jacob Skebeck Photography, volunteers Nawal Abouelala, Kristine LaViscount, Kristine Soltis, Sheritta Taylor, of the Junior League of Washington, Board member Jean le Masurier, and our Development Committee for making this a wonderful event. Check out our event pictures using this QR Code!



Tune into the JLW: League of Extraordinary Women Podcast



Since 1988, Langley has had a deep partnership with the Junior League of Washington (JLW), which partnered with the Junior League of Northern Virginia (JLNV) to open our Junior League home. Since then, JLW has served our community in many ways, including hosting a weekly book club at Trinity UMC for Langley's individuals. Book club is a weekly highlight of many individuals' weeks, and promotes continuing education and literacy for adults with developmental disabilities.

Scan this QR code to listen to the Langley episode now. You will need a Spotify account to tune in.

JLW: *League of Extraordinary Women* podcast, which can be streamed on Spotify. In its inaugural year, *League of Extraordinary Women* will feature the League, partners, and work within the community, and the May episode will feature Langley Residential Support Services! Tune in on your drive home, during your workout, or wherever you listen to podcasts now!

In September 2024, JLW launched the

The Importance of a Rich, Full Life

April 22, 2025 – Fairfax County, VA – On a warm spring day in late April, crowds gather outside the Fairfax County Government Center. It's the first of three days of public hearings for the Fairfax County FY26 Budget. As the breeze picks up, two women slowly walk toward the front of the building, preparing for the evening ahead: Dana, a longtime Langley community support participant, and Anika, a Langley Direct Support Professional. Meeting them is Langley's executive director, Maureen, and communications manager, Emily.

"It's busy, the parking lot is full", Dana says while walking up. It's expected to be a long night, with some saying to be prepared to be at the hearings until midnight. Our small group notes the camera crews preparing in front of the building to speak to local advocates attending the hearings before heading inside. The lobby and the Board room are packed with Fairfax County residents of all ages, from as young as 6 months old to older adults who note they have lived here for 6 decades or more. All are waiting to be heard by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors. Our small group of Langley advocates settles into seats in the auditorium while we wait for our turn to speak.

As we wait, Dana shares, "This isn't my first rodeo. I spoke in front of the Supervisors in 2013 for ServiceSource when our jobs were at risk." Dana has worked with ServiceSource for the last 30 years as a mail clerk at the Department of Commerce. ServiceSource provides many services for people with disabilities, including job skills training and employment services, connecting those who may have barriers to employment to find work with dignity and respect. Like Langley, it, too, has faced threats to programming that supports vulnerable populations to thrive.



Our group is at the hearings to speak on behalf of all adults with developmental disabilities in Fairfax County who use drop-in services, a program that empowers individuals living out in the community on their own or with others to thrive. The proposed Fairfax County FY26 Budget includes cuts to funding for multiple programs supporting individuals with developmental disabilities, such as drop-in services, transition support for graduating seniors, reductions in self-directed services, and respite services. These programs are essential supports that help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families thrive.

As we continued to wait, our group realizes the budget hearing has not started yet, despite waiting patiently for an hour. Finally, the budget hearing begins at 5:00 p.m., an hour later than expected, and by 5:30, with five speakers in, Dana says, "I just don't think I can stick it out this long. I know it's supposed to be a long night [we were numbers 91 and 93], but I don't think I can stay." Anika and Maureen remind her that speaking at the public hearing is her decision, and we are so thankful she has come to help represent Langley, but if she wants to go home, she can. After a few minutes of back and forth, our group decides to get dinner before Dana goes home for the evening to prepare for work the next day.



We quietly shuffle out of the Government Center, back into the spring evening, and see groups of students and parents being interviewed by local news stations. "We could speak to them, a reporter from Fox gave me his card inside. It would be faster." Dana quips. We decide against it and three of us pose for a picture in front of the building before heading to California Pizza Kitchen, one of Dana's favorite spots, for dinner.

At the restaurant, our group spends time catching up with one another and reflecting on Dana's best memories with Langley. In her speech, Dana wrote, "I used to do a lot of things with Langley, like going to the movies, the mall, trips, picnics, potlucks, talent shows, bowling, and Kings Dominion." While waiting for our dinner, we ask her about her trip to Kings Dominion, and she further shares about another Langley trip to Busch Gardens Williamsburg and Water Country USA. "It was a two-day trip. One day at Busch Gardens and the next at Water Country USA, but we got rained out halfway through. So, we were given the choice to stay or drive back home and see a movie. Some people chose to stay, but I chose to go back home." Dana shared. In the last 20 years, funding for adults with developmental disabilities has transitioned from community-focused funding supports, which provided funding for trips like the ones Dana recalls, to the health and safety supports Langley now provides.

The Importance of a Rich, Full Life *continued*

In both our residential and community support programs, Langley individuals and Direct Support Professionals work on daily living skills such as grocery shopping, cooking, managing finances, and monitoring health and wellness, and community access skills such as accessing community resources, using transportation, time-management skills, and maintaining social relationships. Dana wrote in her speech about how Anika supports her to thrive, mentioning their grocery store trips and cooking lessons. On Mondays, Anika and Dana visit the grocery store and spend the evening together, with Anika supporting Dana in achieving her goals. You may recall seeing Dana at the grocery store on our previous website. "I remember we were in the grocery store, and they told us we couldn't take pictures in there and had to leave," Dana chuckles while we wait for our pizzas to arrive. Getting kicked out of a store isn't a typical evening for Dana or Anika, but it's a funny memory showing one of the ways Anika supports her in living independently.

As our dinner winds down, the Fairfax County FY26 Budget comes back up, and the elimination of drop-in services is discussed. In the weeks leading up to the public hearing, Langley staff wrote letters to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board of Directors, and the Health and Human Services Council, with our concerns about the FY26 Budget's impact on drop-in services. "My Mom and I have talked about it. We're not really sure," Dana mentions a bit more quietly about what she would do if drop-in services was eliminated. Our group reassures her that there are advocates like Langley and on the Board of Supervisors who are pushing for solutions that will keep drop-in services accessible to individuals like her. After our dinner is finished, our group heads off in different directions. Dana and Anika go home, and Maureen and Emily head back to the public hearings.

Around 9:00 pm, Maureen and Emily spoke in front of the Board of Supervisors about the proposed cuts to drop-in services. Both emphasized the need for professional supportive services for adults with developmental disabilities, without which, or without a clear transition plan moving forward, puts this group at great risk of isolation and exploitation. Funding for drop-in services is important to people like Milton, who says he's not a big talker, but will keep you rooted in your seat and conversation for an hour longer than you thought you'd be, or Heather, who is so proud of her job and the awards she's received for her work with the federal government, or Tania, who deeply loves her faith community at Vienna Presbyterian Church, or Dana, who bravely volunteered to speak on all their behalf at the public hearings.

Before leaving the podium, Maureen read out parts of Dana's speech, which you can read in full below:

I like having my own apartment and living on my own. My counselor takes me to the grocery store once a week, she helps me cook, and she helps me make good choices. I like working with Anika Cunningham. She also helps me budget my money. I have a good relationship with her. I used to do a lot of things with Langley, like going to the movies, the mall, trips, picnics, potlucks, talent shows, bowling, and Kings Dominion.

Betsy Schatz, who also worked at Langley, helped with the mission week at my church. This year, for mission week, I hiked 4 miles to help Haiti. She was a very special person in my heart.

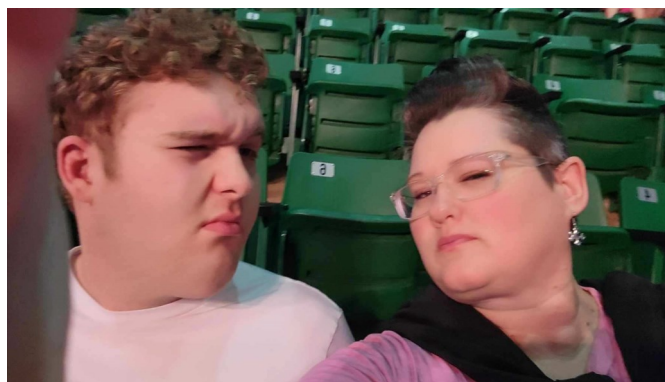
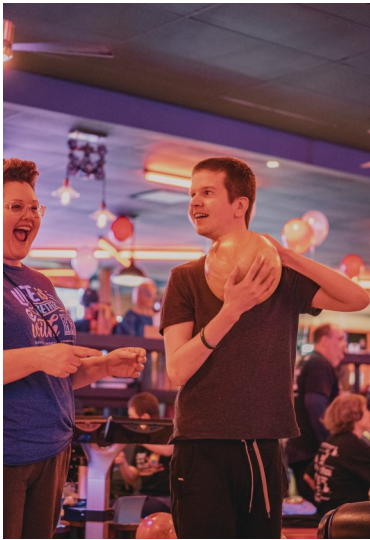
I would like to stay with Langley because it helps me be independent on my own. I have a good job at the Department of Commerce. I take the subway and bus to work every day because I don't drive. I get myself up during the week for work. I have been with Service Source for 30 years. My job is working in a mailroom. I do mail runs and delivery packages, and I help in the customer area. I stock the supplies for the customers. I stock and distribute Code Federal Regulations.

I have been with Langley from 1995 to 2025. It is very hard with a handicap to do things without a counselor because some of us don't drive a car, and it is very hard for us. I try to be independent, but I still need Langley for help. Please keep Langley around for us. I like being with LRSS. The staff is great with us.

Early 2025 has shown our lifelong community the fragility of the importance of a rich, full life. At Langley, we persist and find joy in the wins that seem small to some, but are so big to our community, like communicating a need or learning to make pizza. Our asks to our community have been different this year, asking you all to speak on behalf of our community and the 41 individuals we support to your local, state, and federal elected officials. Thank you for your support and for believing everyone deserves the chance to live a rich, full life. Thank you on behalf of Dana, Milton, Heather, Tania, and more, who rely on Langley to support them as they achieve their goals and live their lives. Despite our efforts, drop-in services may be changing. We hope it does not, but if it goes away, there needs to be a path for Dana, Milton, Heather, Tania, and many others to continue to live with dignity and respect out in the community they love.

Langley Happenings – Out & About in the Community

With the weather warming up, Langley's individuals took advantage of getting out and into the community: bowling, playing soccer in the backyard, watching the circus, and visiting friends and family.



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YouTube

You're Invited—Langley Open House!

Join Langley on Thursday, June 26, from 4 to 8 pm for our Open House!

Tour our new office space and gather to celebrate our trusted community where adults with developmental disabilities and their families can thrive.

The Langley Open House is free to attend! All are welcome; bring family and friends with you to celebrate a new chapter in Langley's history.

Light refreshments will be served with a short program from 6 to 6:30 p.m. highlighting The Importance of a Rich, Full Life, featuring speaker The Arc of Northern Virginia's Executive Director, Melissa Heifetz, and Langley leadership.

RSVP at www.lrss.org/events by June 16, 2025!



Langley Residential Support Services
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