

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

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# VOLUNTEER VIBES

<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/DCRSvolunteers>

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## WHAT'S THE TEA?

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### *REFLECTION, RESILIENCE, AND HEART.*

As we observe Black History Month, we honor the Black leaders, families, and community members whose advocacy, service, and perseverance that has helped shape Howard County and beyond. Their legacy reminds us that strong communities are built through connection, compassion, and collective care, values that are at the heart of the work we do at DCRS.

February is also American Heart Month, a time to focus on heart health and overall wellness. At DCRS, supporting residents' well-being goes beyond services, it includes creating opportunities for prevention, education, and healthy aging. Through programs like wellness initiatives, nutrition support, and active living opportunities, we continue working to ensure residents have the resources they need to live healthier, more fulfilling lives.

This month, we celebrate both the history that grounds us and the health that sustains us. Whether through volunteering, participating in wellness programs, or supporting neighbors in need, DCRS remains committed to helping Howard County residents grow, thrive, and live with dignity. We hope the stories and spotlights in this issue inspire you to reflect, reconnect, and continue making an impact... together.



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# ROOTED IN HISTORY, COMMITTED TO SERVICE

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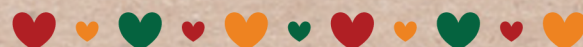
She is a leader. She is intentional about service to the Howard County community. She is committed, experienced, dedicated, and a hard worker, but more importantly, she is giving and serving.

Mae is often asked why she remains so deeply involved in community work, and her answer is simple: it's who she is. For Mae, volunteering has always been about connection. It's never been about titles or positions, it's about people.

A native of Washington, D.C., Mae has lived in Columbia, Maryland for 54 years and is the proud mother of one son, Terrence C. Beale. She is a well-known and highly respected civic and community activist in Howard County and has received numerous commendations recognizing her leadership and contributions to civic, community, and social causes. Mae is especially skilled at leading cross-functional, cross-cultural, and cross-generational teams, always bringing care, attention to detail, and intention to everything she does.

Mae's journey with DCRS began in 2017, during her time as President of the Southeastern Howard Laurel Chapter of The Continental Societies, Inc. Her first connection to DCRS came through an email from Debbie Yare, who shared a flyer for a Diaper Drive running from August 28 through September 30, 2017. Mae's chapter collected so many diapers that a flatbed truck was needed for delivery. That moment sparked a lasting partnership, Debbie later invited Mae to serve as a board member of the Early Childhood Advisory Commission (ECAC).

Since then, Mae and her chapter have participated annually in the Discovery Fair, sponsoring activities and securing the Dental Van, which provides free dental screenings for children ages 2-12 and connects families with local dentists.



Mae has also volunteered with the East Columbia 50+ Center, welcoming first-time visitors and helping direct them to activities and resources. In addition, Mae has consistently supported the MLK Day of Service, hosted by OHRE, reading to children, collecting food, making crafts for cancer patients, registering attendees, and ensuring the day truly reflects the spirit of service and unity.

Black History Month holds deep meaning for Mae. It is a time to honor the ancestors whose shoulders we stand on those who endured slavery and countless injustices yet never gave up. Despite setbacks, mistreatment, and systemic barriers, they persevered, paving the way for future generations.



Mae recalls being especially inspired by the 2018 election, when Howard County elected its first African American County Executive, Sheriff, and State's Attorney. Her proudest moment, however, was witnessing the election of President Barack Obama as the first Black president of the United States. In those moments, Mae felt a renewed sense of responsibility: to serve, support, and ensure that progress was protected through community engagement and volunteerism.

No matter the role; supporting, advocating, mentoring, planning programs, running meetings, or simply being present, Mae approaches service with one guiding belief: **every voice matters.**

While she gives generously of her time and energy, Mae believes she receives just as much in return; wisdom, encouragement, motivation, inspiration, perspective, and a renewed sense of purpose. Each experience reinforces how fortunate she is to serve alongside passionate individuals who deeply care about their communities.

Mae believes representation matters in community work, but she also emphasizes that identity alone doesn't determine how you show up as a volunteer. What truly matters is intention. From her perspective, anyone can serve meaningfully if they are committed to giving and showing up for others with care and consistency.

Mae's advice to anyone considering volunteering is simple and honest: start with an organization you genuinely like, and don't be afraid to recognize when something may not be the right fit. Knowing when to "hold and when to fold" is part of the journey.

She shares her story not to highlight herself, but to celebrate what's possible when people commit to one another. Service, she believes, is never a solo journey; it's a shared one. And she remains grateful every day for the opportunity to contribute, learn, and continue to strengthen the community she calls home.

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## HEART HEALTH IN MOTION: CYCLE2HEALTH

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Did you know...heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., but regular physical activity can significantly lower the risk. Just 30 minutes of moderate activity like cycling, can help strengthen the heart and improve circulation. Staying active not only supports your physical health but staying active supports mental health. And working out with friends, neighbors or peers, can increase motivation and help reduce isolation, which is linked to better heart health outcomes. Maintaining heart health as we age doesn't require high-intensity workouts or competitive fitness goals. Cycle2Health (C2H), sponsored by the Howard County Office of Aging and Independence and led by trained volunteers, offers older adults a welcoming, low-pressure way to stay active while supporting cardiovascular health and overall well-being.

Cycle2Health provides weekly group bike rides from early May through late October, with weekday morning rides departing from locations across Maryland. Riders gather before each ride to meet one another, review safety protocols, and hear an overview of the planned route. This approach helps ensure participants feel comfortable, informed, and connected, never like they're riding with strangers.

Each ride is carefully planned with safety and accessibility in mind. Ride leaders review helmet use, hydration, equipment needs and identify regroup points along the route where riders can pause, rest, and rejoin the group. Routes are previewed in advance to ensure safe conditions, and weather is closely monitored, with rides canceled during unsafe conditions such as extreme heat, high winds, or rain. Ride leaders receive CPR training, and many also complete first aid training.

Designed specifically for older adults, Cycle2Health offers five effort levels, allowing participants to choose a pace that matches their fitness level and comfort. Many ride leaders are older adults themselves, bringing lived experience to how rides are planned and led. The program emphasizes meeting riders where they are, with no pressure to perform or keep up, participants set their own goals.



Cycling plays an important role in maintaining heart health as we age. As a low-impact cardiovascular activity, it helps strengthen the heart, improve circulation, lower blood pressure, and support healthy cholesterol levels. Because it is enjoyable and sustainable, cycling also helps participants stay consistent with physical activity, one of the most important factors in long-term heart health.

Beyond physical benefits, Cycle2Health supports mental and emotional well-being. Group rides create opportunities for social connection, reduce isolation, and encourage motivation through shared experiences. Participants often report improved energy levels, better mood, increased confidence, and a greater sense of community. Riding together also allows participants to explore parts of Howard County they may not otherwise see, deepening their connection to the county as a whole. Ride season is not complete without the annual end-of-season celebration, a close-knit celebration with everyone eager to catch up and talk.

Programs like Cycle2Health strengthen both individual health and community connection, helping older adults remain active, engaged, and independent while supporting lifelong heart health.

Thinking about joining?

New riders are welcome to try a ride before registering for the season. One ride can be the first step toward a healthier heart and a stronger sense of community. Visit [www.howardcountymd.gov/C2H](http://www.howardcountymd.gov/C2H) for more information.

