



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Harford's Glassman Administration Earns Three National Association of Counties Awards for Innovation; "Sensory Trail" Wins Best in Category

BEL AIR, Md., (May 8, 2019) - The National Association of Counties (NACo) has recognized Harford County with three awards in 2019 for innovative and effective county government programs. The administration under County Executive Barry Glassman was honored with a Best in Category Award for the Harford County Sensory Trail, and with Achievement Awards for the Second Chance Job & Resource Fair and the Mental Health + Safety community education program. This year's awards mark the Glassman administration's second national Best in Category Award and nine total NACo awards over the past four years.

Opened in April 2018, the Sensory Trail at Schucks Regional Park in Bel Air is a place where all children, regardless of their cognitive or physical ability, can come to play. The one-tenth of a mile trail showcases 10 interactive stations, including: nine-foot chimes for two octaves of solo or group music; a roller table for pinch-free tactile sliding; multiple drums and xylophones of various sizes; and various brightly colored panels at kids' eye level for lots of sensory stimulation. Each station utilizes principles and best practices for adaptive playgrounds and minimizes the overstimulation that often occurs at traditional playgrounds. As a result, Harford County's more than 2,700 youth with disabilities can enjoy an outdoor playground that increases their opportunities for skill development, social interaction and fun! The Sensory Trail is the first of its kind in the region and Harford County is the first governmental entity to initiate such a project. The trail is also an outstanding example of a public-private partnership, with local

businesses and community organizations sponsoring nine of the stations. Due to its exceptional results and unique innovations, NACo chose Harford's Sensory Trail for its Best in Category Award for Parks & Recreation.


Harford County's Second Chance Job & Resource Fair was recognized with a 2019 NACo Achievement Award in the Criminal Justice and Public Safety category. The first of its kind in the county, the fair provided a one-stop shop for individuals with past criminal charges. Nearly one-third of working age Americans have a criminal record, and the obstacles for ex-offenders to successfully re-enter the community are nearly insurmountable. This leads to recidivism, generational incarceration, poverty, unemployment, substance abuse, fatal overdose, and ongoing crime. Therefore, successful reintegration is vital to ensure public safety and a strong economy, and the impact is exponential when incarcerated individuals are parents to minor children. In Harford County, there are more than 3,000 children with a parent under criminal supervision. The fair held in October 2018 helped to break down barriers to employment, housing and recovery services for ex-offenders, and connected individuals seeking a second chance with life-changing opportunities. Hosted in cooperation with community partners, including the Susquehanna Workforce Network, Harford County Sheriff's Office, Harford County Division of Maryland Parole and Probation, Harford County Health Department, Maryland Legal Aid, and Harford County Bar Foundation, the fair provided a vast array of resources and human services including substance use treatment, faith-based support, mediation, credit counseling, record expungement and legal advice. The fair drew 200 attendees and resulted in 119 job interviews, 50 expungement applications, and training and employment readiness classes for 77 individuals.

Harford County's third NACo award for 2019 was for a community education program in response to tragic shootings, both locally and in the national news. In 2016, Harford County was shocked by the line of duty deaths of two Harford Sheriff's Office deputies, followed by two local workplace shootings and a March 2018 school shooting in Maryland's St. Mary's County. Empowering citizens to peacefully resolve conflict and help others in crisis, the county created a series of free classes entitled Harford County Mental Health + Safety. The program offered classes in suicide prevention, conflict resolution, mental health awareness, CPR and Stop the Bleed training, and related presentations on mental health programs in Harford County Public Schools and the Harford County Sheriff's Office. The series brought together trainers from within the county government and partner agencies to teach citizens as young as 12 how to recognize warning signs and build bridges to mental wellness in their families, their neighborhoods and in the community. Offered for the first time in the spring of 2018 and again in the fall, the program reached 199 citizens. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive from attendees, who rated the program an average of 4.6 out of five for effectiveness.

“All three of these innovative programs demonstrate how local government can lift up families and improve our citizens’ lives,” County Executive Glassman said. “I am proud of my team for creating these opportunities in Harford County and working with our partners to build a more inclusive and supportive community.”



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