



SENIOR  
LEADERSHIP  
TEAM

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Chief Executive  
Officer

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**Chuck Thompson**  
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## October 2020

### ***Office of the President/CEO***

The President/CEO has been invited to serve on the Fiscal Year 2022 Spending Affordability Advisory Committee (SAAC) for Howard County, Office of the County Executive. The President/CEO has served on this committee every year since 2015.

Howard Community College (HCC) is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. HCC opened on 12 October 1970, with 594 students, who attended all of their classes in one building. Today, HCC is a nationally recognized community college, with more than 26,000 students from Howard County and around the world. More information on HCC's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary is available at [howardcc.edu/50](http://howardcc.edu/50).

Speaking of Howard Community College, all of us at CA extend "congratulations" to Dr. Kathleen Hetherington, President of HCC, for her selection by *The Daily Record* as one of Maryland's ***Most Admired CEOs for 2020***.

The "[BikeAround Downtown](#)" event, jointly hosted by the Downtown Columbia Partnership, Columbia Association, and the Merriweather District, will be held the weekend of 24 and 25 October. The 7.8 mile course starts and ends in ColorBurst Park in the Merriweather District, and moves along the paths in Downtown Columbia and the Village of Wilde Lake. Participants are asked to wear a helmet, wear a mask, and follow the rules of the road. [Register here to participate](#).

Columbia was named the fifth best place to live in America by *Money Magazine* in its annual "Best Places to Live" list. This year, *Money Magazine* looked at towns and cities of at least 25,000 and put the greatest emphasis on economic factors such as employment opportunities, supply and demand for homes, cost of living, quality of schools, racial and economic diversity, and health and safety.

### ***Department of Administrative Services***

#### Highlights

The Human Resources (HR) Division has begun a comprehensive review of CA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts. The review includes an assessment of educational resources, participation in virtual conferences, conducting surveys, engaging team members in listening sessions, and other planned steps that have yet to be finalized.

### Highlights (cont'd)

CA celebrated Global Customer Experience Week in recognition of our team members for the outstanding customer service and for the customer experience they work hard to provide for our members.

### Challenges

We were recently informed that our data center vendor is shutting down in 45 days the site where CA's data center is located. We were able to get an extension on that termination from 15 November 2020 to 31 December 2020. Regardless, the time frame is tight. Relocating our data center was a project that we were planning to initiate in January-February 2021. We brought back two team members from 50% furlough to 100% hours and are accelerating the planning to move the data center. At this point, we believe the 31 December deadline is achievable.

### Opportunities

The Finance and Information Technology Divisions are working through the transition from our current merchant services provider to Daxko Payment Services, the payment processing module of Spectrum NG, the customer services application. The new service should provide a more integrated process for staff to manage credit card and ACH payment transactions.

## ***Department of Sport and Fitness***

### Highlights

#### Tennis

Demand for private and semi-private lessons with CA coaches continues to increase. The Tennis Team delivered 304 lessons between 16 September and 8 October.

Fall Junior and Adult programs have over 235 participants enrolled in the programs. All programs are held indoors at Long Reach Tennis Club and Athletic Club Indoor Tennis Center.

Fall Fun outdoor leagues began on 28 September and continue through 31 October. More than 200 participants play matches every evening and all day on the weekends at the Owen Brown Tennis Center.

The Racquet Club at Hobbits Glen closed for the season on 14 October to begin capital renovations to courts 1-4.

#### Aquatics

The Clippers ran their first virtual meet on 2 and 3 October at the Swim Center. More than 200 athletes completed a total of 468 swims, of which 269 were best times.

#### Golf

On Wednesday, 23 September, two Women's Golf Leagues, the 9-hole Tuesday League and the 18-hole Wednesday League, held a joint charity tournament. Members were invited to give donations to one or both of the selected charities. Together, the leagues collected \$1,230.00 for the Howard County Food Bank and \$1,075.00 for Grassroots Crisis Intervention.

### [SportsPark/SkatePark](#)

The SportsPark continues to thrive since reopening to the community. Mini golf usage is up 40% and batting cage use is up 5% in September when compared to the same month to 2019. And, October's numbers are currently trending up. Demand for skateboarding lessons continues to increase, with approximately 15 lessons delivered from 16 September through 9 October.

The SportsPark is open from 11:00 am - 7:00 pm on Wednesdays for parents to bring their children during the day for an outdoor physical activity. On Wednesday, 7 October, we had 140 individuals visit the SportsPark.

### [Haven on the Lake](#)

During September, Haven on the Lake had 469 virtual engagements with members and non-members via its House Call, Yoga Challenge, and other online classes. Due to the success of these virtual programs, more will be scheduled in upcoming months.

### [Athletic Club and Personal Training](#)

The two Aqua Arthritis classes at the therapy pool at the Athletic Club have been so successful that a third class was added on 2 October.

On 20 September, the Personal Training team launched TRIBE @ Home Season 6, from CA's TRIBE Team Training program. Each registered participant will have 7 workouts sent to them weekly. We are hoping to transition to a hybrid model for TRIBE Team Training for Season 7 in November.

### [Columbia Gym](#)

Columbia Gym resumed its martial arts program on 1 October. Basketball for "one" began on 5 October.

### [Supreme Sports Club](#)

Supreme Sports Club successfully resumed modified public roller skate sessions, with modifications, on 3 October. We also resumed individual player use of the basketball hoops on 5 October, and had more than 26 reservations the first week. KidzEscape is offered on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

### [Ice Rink](#)

On 2 October, the Ice Rink opened for public skate sessions, which are limited to 25 skaters on the ice. On 7 October, the "Stick & Puck" and freestyle programs for CA members and the general public resumed.

Also on 7 October, the Ice Rink hosted its first full day of youth activities, including sessions for figure skaters, hockey players under 13, high school age hockey players and a midday public skate session. More than 50 skaters took advantage of the ice time. This weekly Wednesday schedule will continue until the Howard County School System resumes its normal school days.

### [Challenges](#)

Our biggest challenge is continuing to increase attendance at our facilities and participation in our programs, given the many challenges of the environment in which we are operating.

### Opportunities

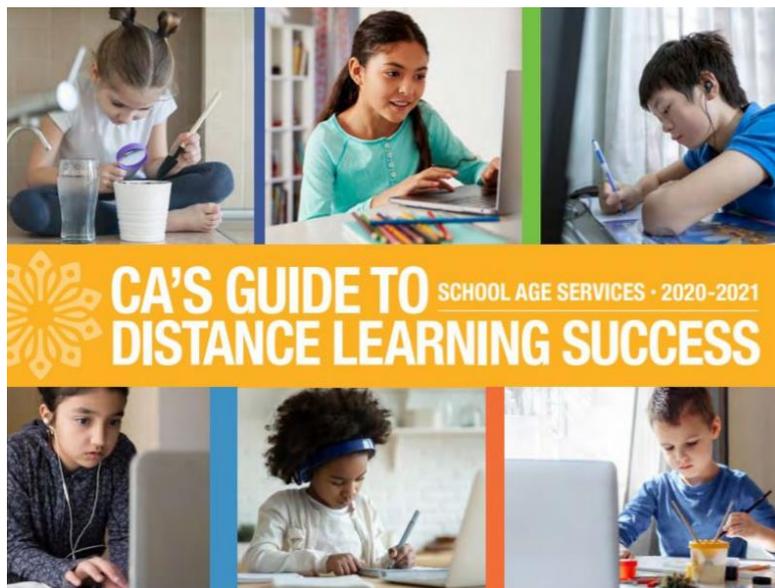
As of the beginning of October, the vast majority of our programming is available to the community. This is a big milestone for us, as we now have programming for all of the different user groups. Each facility/program is managed per the applicable restrictions, but we do have the ability to serve even more of our community.

## ***Department of Communications and Marketing***

### Highlights

As we continue to make more of our services and programs available, the Communications & Marketing (C&M) team is working to reconnect with many and even increase CA's outreach to the community and beyond.

- [School Age Services \(SAS\) has been a major focus for the C&M team.](#) As one of our most successful programs, we strive to ensure parents that the steps we have implemented at the participating schools are comprehensive, with a focus on doing everything possible to keep children safe, supervised, and socialized during this time of distance learning. We have provided resources for families to help them navigate this difficult time.
  - We've created CA's *Guide to Distance Learning Success*, a colorful resource filled with expert advice from our very own team members. Parents can sign up to receive the e-book by submitting their email address to CA on one of our newly-created landing pages. Those landing pages address concerns about being a working parent, safety precautions, and academic support at our programs.



- We have also started a [CA Parents' Corner blog](#) with tips posted twice a week.

- Another immediate area of focus for the C&M team has been the Department of Sport & Fitness (S&F), specifically sharing information with members that emphasizes the extent to which CA works to create a healthy and safe environment in our fitness facilities.
  - We are developing a social media presence for each S&F facility to better deliver relevant information to our members.
  - We also plan to use Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to place ads and track the reach and success of this strategy.
  - One crucial step in this strategy is creating viable content that features our staff and their expertise. We have developed a robust content calendar to add value to our website and put our awesome team in the spotlight. The ultimate goal is transferring those resources into leads.

### Challenges

- Unfreezing and increasing memberships continue to be a challenge we work to address.

## ***Department of Open Space and Facility Services***

### Highlights

#### Watershed

CA Weed Warriors and the Long Reach Watershed Committee held a “Pull and Plant” in open space areas off Stone Cutter Road. Using protocols for social distancing and face masks, volunteers pulled invasive weeds and replanted the areas with native plants.

The CA Rain Garden Cost Share program installed three rain gardens in Long Reach. The current grant funding limits the program area to the Dorsey Run watershed and Kendall Ridge neighborhood in Long Reach.

#### Facilities

The following projects were completed in September:

- The Other Barn interior finishes upgrades, including the installation of flooring and carpets in upstairs and downstairs areas. Repairs were made to the silo roof to eliminate leaks.
- The kitchen at the Hawthorn Center was remodeled with new cabinets, countertop, appliances, and other equipment.

#### Open Space

The final round of aquatic weed harvesting at all three lakes will be completed the week of 19 October 19. Several tree planting projects will be completed in October and November to replace trees removed due to the emerald ash borer.

### Capital Improvements

The Wayover Way and Shaker (Donleigh) Ponds, located in the Village of Kings Contrivance, S1, A1, Lot 330, are now dedicated to the County and the Deed of Easement and maintenance agreements have been fully executed. The maintenance agreements move structural maintenance and sediment removal of the Wayover Way and Shaker (Donleigh) ponds from CA to Howard County.

### Energy Management

New HVAC equipment was installed at the Other Barn in the Village of Oakland Mills.

Staff continue to install UV sanitizing air purifiers and HEPA air filters in CA facilities to help improve air quality.

Planning is underway for other capital improvements projects, which will include new HVAC units at the Talbot Springs Neighborhood Center and the Teen Center.

## ***Department of Community Services***

### Highlights

#### School Age Services

School Age Services (SAS) is working with C&M to promote and increase enrollment in the SAS program. Projects that soon will be available to the public include a Distance Learning Informational Video, Blogs, e-books, parent testimonials, and the new SAS Landing Page.

SAS Programming: With an online return to classes this school year for the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS), the SAS team is doing what it has always done...be flexible! As a part of our internal preparations for the virtual return to learning, SAS directors and managers participated in training offered by HCPSS to provide guidance and support for child care providers caring for students during these unprecedented times. In addition to its support of students and curriculum from several counties in our area, the SAS program continues to provide age- and developmentally-appropriate recreational programming to children in our care. Current favorites include collaborating with nature art experiences, STEM challenges, drawing tutorials, and participating in Asphalt Green's Recess Enhancement Program (REP).

#### Columbia Archives

October is Archives History Month and, as part of its celebration, Columbia Archives will launch its online database, designed to provide web access to the Archives' collections. In conjunction with the launch of the online database, we will be announcing the Archives' updated name change to **Columbia, Maryland Archives**. The addition of "Maryland" to the name will clarify the purpose of the Archives, which is to serve as the repository of information related to the history of the community of Columbia, Maryland.

#### Columbia Art Center

Columbia Art Center will reopen with its newly reorganized, COVID-compliant studios on 14 October. The Art Center's fall session of programs includes several sampling workshops and mini classes, including advanced fused glass, advanced watercolor, stained glass, and a weekly homeschool program.

### **Columbia Art Center (cont'd)**

As part of its ceramics program, the Art Center is offering series passes to continuing students, an opportunity for these students to reserve time on the potter's wheels or use the glaze studio for glazing their bisque ware. The ceramics studios are redesigned to comply with proper social distancing practices.

### **Youth and Teen Center**

Rene Buckmon, manager, Youth and Teen Center, attended a webinar entitled "*Transitioning Youth Programs to an Online Platform and Maintaining Engagement.*" Hosted by the Montgomery County Collaboration Council for Children, Youth and Families, the webinar provided best practices from agencies across the state that have successfully changed their in-person programs to virtual programs, keeping youth engaged throughout.

National "Lights on Afterschool" Day is 22 October. The Youth and Teen Center and the Columbia Art Center will offer a safe and socially distant event that day, to include having solid pre-painted rocks of various colors on which youth can write words of hope, kindness, inspiration and encouragement. The rocks can be kept, given to someone, or even placed in the community for someone to discover. Fun "grab and go" Fall Slime kits will also be available. This is a STEM activity and a way to engage youth with their parents at home.

## ***Office of Planning and Community Affairs***

### **Highlights**

Office of Planning and Community Affairs (OPCA), with assistance from the Finance Division, determined the development potential of all CA assets. This new data will help CA understand better the value of our holdings and the ways in which these holdings possibly can be used in the future.

Additionally, October marks National Community Planning Month. Although not what was originally envisioned a year ago, CA is posting online trivia on social media throughout the month to help share fun facts about Columbia's planning history.

### **Challenges**

We are about half way through the New Town Planning & Visioning workshops. The consulting team is now entering into the phase of workshops where we focus on CA's goals and how each would be prioritized.

### **Opportunities**

The village community associations ("villages") have reconvened their monthly meetings, following a lengthy COVID-hiatus. Participation in these meetings will enable OPCA to gain added awareness of and assist, where applicable, with the needs and concerns of the villages, as each attempts to adjust to COVID-impacted operations.

## ***Thought of the Month***

"Being wrong might hurt you a bit, but being slow will kill you."

Jeff Bezos  
CEO, Amazon