

**NEW PARENT'S GUIDE  
TO GEORGE MASON HIGH SCHOOL**



*Prepared by the GMHS PTSA*

**School Year 2011 - 2012**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction and Welcome to GMHS</i> .....	2
2011 – 2012 PTSA Officers.....	3
Welcoming Committee Resource Parents.....	3
Parent’s Guide to GMHS .....	4
Parent’s Guide to the GMHS PTSA.....	10
Month-by-Month Guide to GMHS.....	11
Guide to the Falls Church City Community.....	13
Falls Church City School Board and City Government.....	16
Link to Businesses, Churches, and Religious Organizations in the Falls Church City Community.....	17

## INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO GMHS

All of us in the GMHS PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association) welcome you as a new parent to the GMHS community. We believe that the strength of our school system lies in ***all*** of us—our administration, our teachers, our students, ***and*** our parents.

Many of us have been where you are now—new to the community and not sure where to find answers to the many questions that you have about GMHS and the City of Falls Church.

You may already know a lot about the Falls Church City Schools. The City of Falls Church, contained in just two square miles, was founded as an independent city in 1948, primarily for the purpose of operating its own school system. The *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* magazine have rated GMHS one of the most challenging high schools in the Washington, D.C. area and in the nation.

In this guide, we hope to give you the “inside scoop” on what we wish we had known when we moved here. It includes information about the academic programs and the school schedule as well as information about what it’s like to live here and to be a parent in this community.

**2011-2012 PTSA OFFICERS**

- President: Susan Earman 703-538-5528  
[sueearman@verizon.net](mailto:sueearman@verizon.net)
- 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President: Martha Mothershead  
[mothershead.law@gmail.com](mailto:mothershead.law@gmail.com)
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- Secretary: Chrissie King
- Treasurer: Maryellen Trevisan  
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**WELCOMING COMMITTEE RESOURCE PARENTS**



The following PTSA members have volunteered to take phone calls from new parents. Please feel free to call them with all of your questions. They can answer not only school-related questions but also those about the City of Falls Church and its businesses, doctors, dentists, restaurants, etc. They may even know of other parents with special interests that match yours.

Cecily Shea, 703-538-4455, [cec.shea@cox.net](mailto:cec.shea@cox.net)  
Susan Earman, 703-538-5528, [sueearman@verizon.net](mailto:sueearman@verizon.net)

**IMPORTANT GMHS CONTACTS**

- Mr. Tyrone Byrd, Principal.....703-248-5505
- Mr. Tim Guy, Assistant Principal.....703-248-5595
- Mr. Ken Siekman, Assistant Principal.....703-248-5515
- Ms. Amy Kurjanowicz, Dir. of Counseling.....703-248-5525
- Clinic: Ms. Sandra Patricio.....703-248-5530

## PARENT'S GUIDE TO GMHS

**Website** - The PTSA web page is located on the school's website at [www.georgemasonptsa.org](http://www.georgemasonptsa.org)

**Academic ranking**—As of the 2000-2001 school year, George Mason High School no longer ranks its senior class students according to their cumulative GPA. There is no valedictorian or salutatorian—only “honor graduates”. The school will validate percentile rankings with colleges if needed for special scholarship opportunities. This non-ranking policy has been adopted by many high schools and has caused no problems for GMHS students during their college admission process.

**ANGC (All-Night Graduation Celebration)**—The ANGC is an annual post-graduation alcohol-free celebration, held the night of graduation. Junior and Senior parents organize and parents of all grades chaperone the event, which is held at an off-school site. The event requires a great deal of planning and fundraising, and volunteers are always needed. Contact the PTSA 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President or look on the PTSA website [http://www.georgemasonptsa.com/All\\_Night\\_Grad\\_U3DH.html](http://www.georgemasonptsa.com/All_Night_Grad_U3DH.html) , for more information.

**Athletics**—GMHS has a very active athletics program, involving a high percentage of students. Many of our teams have claimed numerous district championships; some have won regional and state championships as well. Please check the GMHS athletics website at [www.masonathletics.org](http://www.masonathletics.org) for all sports information.



There are three main seasons throughout the school year, with the following sports in each season:

***Fall:*** boys' JV and varsity football, girls' and boys' JV and varsity cross country, girls' JV and varsity volleyball, coed JV and varsity cheerleading, coed varsity golf.

***Winter:*** boys' JV and varsity basketball, girls' JV and varsity basketball, coed JV and varsity wrestling, coed JV and varsity cheerleading, girls' and boys' varsity swimming.

***Spring:*** boys' JV and varsity baseball, girls' JV and varsity softball, girls' and boys' varsity tennis, girls' and boys' varsity track and field, girls' and boys' JV and varsity soccer, and boys' and girls' JV and varsity lacrosse.

All teams, except lacrosse which is in the Concord District and field hockey, currently compete in the Virginia High School League (VHSL) A Bull Run District, an area including Falls Church City and Clarke, Madison, Prince William, and Rappahannock Counties and the cities of Manassas Park and Strasburg. Pre-season and non-league games are often held against local AA and AAA schools. Because several of these schools are quite a distance from Falls Church, it is a good idea for parents to arrange carpools to away games.

Fall sports teams hold their tryouts during the first weeks of August (except for golf which begins in July), and some coaches require that students be present during this first week in order to make the team. **If your child plans to participate in a fall sport, check with the team's coach before scheduling your family vacation.**

Participants in all sports must have a health physical completed and on file with the coach before they will be allowed to try out for a team. Pick up a physical form from the athletics department or download one from the web [www.masonathletics.org](http://www.masonathletics.org).

Be sure to enter your child's game and practice schedule on your personal calendar. Try not to schedule family trips over winter and spring breaks until you see this schedule, as games and practices are sometimes scheduled during these breaks.

Vicki Galliher, ACSM, our athletic trainer, is available to all athletes during after-school hours. Contact the Athletic Director, Tom Horn ([hornt@fccps.org](mailto:hornt@fccps.org) , or 703-248-5598), for more information regarding the GMHS athletic department or for a copy of the Guide to Athletics at GMHS.

The Athletic Boosters very actively supports the GMHS athletic program. Its website is [www.masonathletics.org](http://www.masonathletics.org).

**Back-to-School Night**—This event, generally held in mid-September, is a well-attended event at GMHS. It offers parents the opportunity to spend small blocks of time with each of their child's teachers and hear the teachers' policies and expectations for their students. A notice of the date and time for this event appears in the August school mailing.

**Block System and Student Schedule**—The GMHS school day is divided into "blocks", most of which last about 100 minutes. Most blocks are held every two days, making the school schedule operate on a two-day cycle. Some classes are held every day for shorter periods of time. Teachers and students in the past have agreed that having longer blocks of time in each class allows for more focused study. Some students also feel that, because homework for most classes is due only every other day, they are better able to manage an increased workload.

**Communications from School**—The school posts a newsletter to its website twice quarter—at interims and at report cards. This newsletter includes an updated school schedule, new policies, and general school news. Check the GMHS website frequently, too, for updates.

**Contacting School Staff**—Each teacher and administrator at GMHS has his/her own telephone extension number, email address, and mailbox in the main office. You may access the email/ telephone directory at [www.fccps.org/gm/GMHS/contact-us.htm](http://www.fccps.org/gm/GMHS/contact-us.htm) . You may also dial the main school telephone number, 703-248-5500, press 2 for a staff directory, and follow the instructions. Most email addresses follow the same pattern: staff member's last name followed by the first initial @fccps.org. Please allow teachers one business day to respond to emails and phone messages.

**Counseling (or "Guidance") Department** - The counseling department at GMHS is available to address your student's academic, emotional, and social needs.

Each student is assigned a counselor. One of the major roles of the counselor is to assist the student and parent in creating a four-year high school plan that allows the student to pursue his/her college and career goals. Counselors also register and schedule students for classes, coordinate the scheduling of teacher conferences for parents, and guide families through the entire college admissions process.

Judy Becker, Coordinator of Student Services, is available to students who require more in-depth discussion and exploration of personal issues. In addition to individual counseling, she coordinates and oversees several Student Support Groups, with topics including anger management, grief and bereavement, and improving social skills.

Judy Bracken, Career Support Specialist, maintains up-to-date information on colleges and scholarships in the Career Center. She is available to assist students and parents with using the computer search programs and other materials (college catalogs, scholarship applications, etc.) in the Career Center.

The Counseling Office Secretary is a good first contact when you are not certain about where to go for help with a specific concern.

For a more detailed explanation of the counseling department services access:  
[www.fccps.org/gm/GMHS/counseling/counsel.htm](http://www.fccps.org/gm/GMHS/counseling/counsel.htm)

**CP (College-Preparatory Program)**—The CP program is the traditional college-preparatory program, designed to prepare students for college academics.

**Directory** - The Athletic Boosters publish a directory of all high school students. The directory is free with a booster's membership or can be purchased separately.

**Driver Education**—GMHS offers the classroom portion of driver's education during part of each student's physical education course in his or her sophomore year. After completing the classroom course, in order to receive a driver's license, each student's family is responsible for arranging and paying for behind-the-wheel training from a local driving school.

**Early Release Days** - Approximately two Wednesdays each month (generally the second and fourth Wednesdays), GMHS students are released at 1:45 pm. This shortened school day allows teachers and staff time for meetings and planning educational activities. The school calendar in the August mailing will list these early release dates and the associated bus schedules.

**Emergency E-Mail Notification** – The information for school cancellation and emergency announcements are made on the school division website at [www.fccps.org](http://www.fccps.org), Falls Church Community (Cox Channel 12, Verizon Channel 35, RCN Channel 2), the parent information line (703) 248-5500, ext. 3113 and local commercial television and radio stations. Emails are also sent out using the email address given when the student registers for school.

When snow falls overnight, a decision on whether to close schools is generally made by 5:30 a.m., and the information is made public as quickly as possible.

**ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Department**—English for Speakers of Other Languages courses are designed for the non-native speaker of English with limited English proficiency. Screening tests are given at registration to determine student placement. High school credits are provided for ESL classes.

**Fine Arts Programs** - George Mason High School is proud of its art, music, and theatre departments, and each holds several events for parents and the community during the school year. Look for notices and articles in school newsletters and calendars, the school's website, the *Falls Church News-Press* and [www.fallschurchtimes.com](http://www.fallschurchtimes.com).

**Honor Code** - In September 2003, GMHS instituted an honor code that requires students to pledge that they have not given or received unauthorized help on assignments or tests. The pledge is printed in each student's agenda and on the school web site.

**IB Program**—The IB (International Baccalaureate) program at GMHS is one of the oldest IB programs in the country.

Offered at GM in lieu of the traditional AP (advanced placement) programs found in many high schools, it challenges students to undertake advanced level work in many subject areas. For a thorough explanation of GM's IB program, contact the IB coordinator, Asheesh Misra, or go to: [http://www.fccps.org/gm/ib\\_program/internationalbaccalaureate.html](http://www.fccps.org/gm/ib_program/internationalbaccalaureate.html). Students planning to

pursue the IB program begin to make adjustments in their academic schedules as early as the ninth grade in order to have the prerequisite classes required for some classes. All students at GMHS are allowed to participate in the IB program. While some students elect to study for the full IB diploma, many students take IB courses only in their areas of special interest. GMHS places great importance on challenging all students on an individual basis.

**International Dinner**—The annual International Dinner, a highlight of the school year, is usually held in early March. It is co-sponsored by the student International Club, the foreign language and ESOL departments and the PTSA. Look for information in the PTSA newsletter and school mailings for information about how to volunteer. All families are encouraged to enjoy this event, whether or not they have “international” backgrounds.

**Late Bus**—George Mason High School provides late bus service for students involved in after-school activities. This bus leaves school at 4:05 pm. There is no late bus on early release Wednesdays.

**Lockers**—Students receive lockers through a lottery during the first week of school. Since GMHS is spread out, it is best if your student chooses a locker close to his first class. Many of the lockers are small, so be sensitive to the space issue. Thin layers work better than a bulky coat.

**Lunchtime**—The high school has four lunch periods. Everyone has an assigned lunchtime, and, for the most part, each student is expected to eat in the cafeteria. Those who bring lunches may purchase milk and other drinks from the cafeteria. The cafeteria offers a debit system for students. Look for further information on this debit system in the school’s August mailing.

**Mustang Ambassador Program** – This program, begun in the 2005-06 school year, matches selected upper class students with grade 8 students to help them make a successful transition to high school.

**Mustang Block** – Each day the students have a 31-minute block of time to interact with the teacher(s) of their choosing. The *Mustang Block* is especially designed to give all of the students an opportunity to expand learning, foster relationship building, and provide a respite in an otherwise hectic day. The students will be assigned to a homeroom where they will meet for the first few minutes of *Mustang Block*. During this time, they will be provided with guidance and support for the effective use of the *Mustang Block*. Students will have the remainder of the time to utilize as they see fit. Students who demonstrate the capacity to manage this time effectively will have that autonomy for the entire year. Those who experience difficulty will be restricted in their choices. These restrictions may be made by teachers, administrators, or based on parent request.

**Parent Activities**—The PTSA holds monthly meetings on the first Wednesday of the month and co-sponsors the annual International Dinner. The counseling department and the IB Coordinator hold informational programs and parents’ nights for each academic class (e.g., Freshman Parents’ Night).

**Parent Organizations**—

**PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association)**—Contact one of the officers to obtain more information about the GMHS PTSA. Membership information is mailed to all families in August, and membership forms are also available at <http://georgemasonptsa.com/Forms.html>.

**Athletic Boosters**—The George Mason High School Athletic Boosters Association is a nonprofit organization whose purpose is to provide support to our student athletes through many activities. This organization is also a resource for parents and community members interested in GM athletics. Boosters also sell the Mason logo Spirit Wear to all Mason students and families. Membership and volunteer forms will be included in the school's August mailing. Membership includes the high school Student Directory and access to discount game passes. For more information visit our website: <http://www.masonathletics.org>.

**Band Boosters** – This organization raises funds for band equipment and provides general support for the band and chorus programs in FCCP schools. Members help coordinate private lessons for students during after-school hours.

**Picking Up Students**—The school asks that you drop off and pick up students on the Haycock Road side of the building during regular school hours. Establish names for pick-up areas with your student for after-school hours. There are “main” entrances and gyms on both sides of the building, and it can be confusing.

**Principal Walk-In Meetings**—One morning each month from 7:00 am - 7:45 am, Principal Ty Byrd meets informally with parents. Check school newsletters for the time and place of these meetings.

**Report Cards and Grading System**—The school year is organized into four quarters. Report cards are sent out about one week following the end of each of these quarters.

Interims report on your student's progress during the first half of the quarter. The interim grade does not go into a student's permanent record, but serves as an update for parents and students. Interim reports and report cards are sent home with the student except the fourth quarter report card, which is mailed to the student's home about one week following the end of the school year.

The GPA (grade point average) on the report card is only for that quarter. A cumulative GPA is calculated by averaging all semester grades from the beginning of ninth grade to the current semester and can be obtained from the guidance department. (Classes taken for high school credit in middle school, generally foreign language, social studies, and mathematics courses, are also included in the GPA.) Grades are awarded points as follows: A=4.0, B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0. IB classes are awarded points on a different scale: A=5.0, B=4.0, C=3.0, D=2.0.

**School Calendar**—Be sure to enter the school calendar on your personal calendar early in the school year. Also check the school website and newsletters for events that are added during the year. If your child will be involved in extracurricular activities, encourage him or her to learn the schedules for these activities as early as possible—before you make family plans. Since all school systems in the area operate on different school calendars, athletic events, Model UN conferences, etc. are often scheduled on professional days, during our spring break, etc. This is especially true if your child is an athlete.

**School Dress Code**—Our school does not have a formal dress code. The administration asks that students refrain from wearing clothes that would distract students from accomplishing their schoolwork. Call the school if you have any specific questions.

Students generally wear jeans, khakis, t-shirts or nicer tops, and, occasionally, skirts/dresses. Student athletes are asked to “dress up” for away athletic contests in nicer slacks and shirts (and/or skirts/nice slacks for female athletes).

**School Policies** - The August mailing from the school office contains information regarding school policies. In addition, the Student Agendas given to students at the beginning of each school year contain a full copy of the Student Code of Conduct. Contact the school office at 703-248-5500 if you have questions regarding any of these policies.

**Semester System** - GMHS operates on a semester system. Even though a class may continue for a full year, one final semester grade is given in January and another in June. Each of the two quarter grades contribute 40% toward the semester grade with the exam grade contributing the other 20%. Official transcripts list semester grades, and semester grades are used to calculate grade-point averages.

**Special Education** - Special Education services are provided for all GMHS students found eligible to receive them. The FCCPS system prides itself on its inclusive program, which places students with mild to severe disabilities into regular classes with special assistance as appropriate. For more information, contact Ms. Elizabeth Mackie, the Director of Special Education, at 703-248-5630.

**Student Directory** - To get the student directory for the current school year, you must join the Athletic Boosters or purchase a directory separately. A membership form will accompany the school's August mailing.

**Student Life** - George Mason High School provides many extra-curricular activities for its students. Most of these clubs and organizations meet after school from 3:00 pm to 3:40 pm, and sports generally begin their practices at 3:45 pm. This makes it possible for students to be involved in both athletics and other activities.

Many activities allow a student to be involved for only part of the year. In most cases, students wishing to become involved in an activity simply need to show up at an organizational meeting. Dates and times of many organization's meetings can be found on the activity bulletin boards outside of classrooms.

**Clubs and Organizations** - Check out the school's website for a full listing of GMHS's many student activities, clubs, and organizations. A GM teacher or staff member sponsors each organization or activity.

**Dances** - Informal dances are scheduled periodically during the school year. They are held in the evening at school on Friday or Saturday night.

**Homecoming** - Homecoming weekend usually occurs in October and includes a pep rally, football game, and formal dance. Special Spirit Week activities are held each school day during the week leading up to the Homecoming weekend.

**Student Government** - GMHS has an active SCA (Student Council Association).

**Student Publications** - GMHS student publications include *Lasso*, the online newspaper, *Tempo*, the annual literary magazine, and *The Mustang*, the student yearbook.

**Teacher Mini-Conferences** - Twice each year, the school holds mini-conferences in the Mustang Café from 7:45 am – 9:30 am. All teachers are present, and parents are allowed to speak to individual teachers for 3 minutes each. This length of time is appropriate for introductions and short updates. On these days, the school opening time is delayed by two hours. Conferences to discuss concerns or issues requiring more time can be arranged by making appointments with teachers.

## PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE GMHS PTSA

Become involved in the GMHS Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) to get to know other parents and school officials. The cost of membership is \$7.00 per year per adult or student and covers administrative costs and national/state PTSA dues. We depend upon donations and fundraising projects to raise funds for PTSA projects. Meetings are generally held the first Wednesday of every month, usually at 7:30 p.m. in the Media Center. Refer to the PTSA E-Letter and the PTSA website for information about upcoming meetings.

**ANGC** - The ANGC (All-Night Graduation Celebration) is an annual post-graduation alcohol-free celebration, held the night of graduation.

**Budget Watch** - A PTSA parent volunteer monitors the development of the FCCPS Budget and keeps us informed of special funding requests and needs at meetings and through e-mails.

**Committees** - Much of the work of the PTSA is done in parent-led committees. There is always a need for more volunteers on these committees. See "volunteer opportunities" below for more information about how to offer your help in the PTSA.

**Contacting PTSA Officer or Committee Chairs** - See listing of officers or check the PTSA website for committee chairs.

**E-Letter from PTSA** - The PTSA has an email system as a way to notify its members of important events and issues, PTSA news, meeting reminders, and volunteer opportunities. To receive these emails, sign up at [www.georgemasonptsa.com](http://www.georgemasonptsa.com) and click on the E-Letter Sign Up tab.

**Fundraising** - The PTSA engages in fundraising efforts each year in order to raise funds to carry out special projects. Our primary objective is to promote the educational programs at GMHS. Please check our E-Letter and website for more information.

**International Dinner** - Helping the International Club to organize the school's annual International Dinner, which celebrates the multi-cultural diversity at GMHS, is one of the most important services that the PTSA offers to the overall school community.

**Membership** - Your membership in our PTSA gives added power to our advocacy at the local, state and national level. Membership dues are only \$7.00 per member.

**Teacher Appreciation Week** - In May, the PTSA organizes special Teacher Appreciation Week activities. The PTSA also shows its appreciation for teachers and staff throughout the year.

**Volunteer Opportunities** - A PTSA volunteer form is mailed out to every household each August along with membership information. Volunteer forms can also be found on the PTSA website. The school and PTSA need volunteers both during and after school hours. Many new families find that volunteering is a great way to meet new people and to make friends. Please send your volunteer form as soon as possible.

## MONTH-BY-MONTH GUIDE TO GMHS ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS



**August**—Fall sports (football, girls' volleyball, and cross country) tryouts begin the first full week in August; if you have a student in one of these sports, DO NOT schedule your family vacation for this month.

Expect mailings from the school office and PTSA this month, and set aside time to go through them thoroughly and carefully when they arrive.

New Student and New Parent Orientations occur the week before school begins. Teachers begin work this same week of the month.

**September**—School begins the day after Labor Day.

The first PTSA meeting is held the first Wednesday after school begins at 7:30 pm. GMHS Principal

Ty Byrd talks about the start of school and reports on plans for the new school year.

Back-to-School Night, usually held in mid- to late-September, is a major event at GMHS. Come meet your student's teachers and learn about your child's new classes.

**October**—PSATs are held this month. Sophomores and Juniors take the PSAT during the school day. Homecoming events, usually held in October, dominate one week of the month.

**November**—Fall sports end (district, regional, and state tournaments), and winter sports begin.

**December**—Students are busy with projects and tests. Winter break is late in the month.

**January**—First semester exams are held for 4 days in mid- to late-January.

**February**—Winter sports end (district, regional, and state tournaments), and spring sports begin.

**March**—The International Dinner is usually held early in the month. All families are encouraged to enjoy this popular event, whether or not you have "international" backgrounds.

**Late March/Early April**—**Spring break!**—Spring break is a great time for junior parents to take their juniors on a tour of colleges they may be interested in applying to next fall.

**May**—This is a busy month. State Standards of Learning (SOL) and IB exams, Junior-Senior Prom, and spring sport tournaments all take place. The PTSA celebrates Teacher Appreciation Week. The PTSA nominating committee presents its slate of officers for next year.

**June**—Final exams and graduation (including Baccalaureate, Senior Dinner, and the All-Night Graduation Celebration) dominate. The PTSA elects new officers for next school year. Rising full diploma IB senior students are required to write their extended essay over the summer. If your child plans to participate in any sports next year, be sure to schedule a doctor's appointment for his or her health physical. Virginia High School League (VHSL) rules require that every athlete have this physical on file at the school before the student tries out for a team, *regardless* of whether he/she is selected for the team.

**July**—Have a GREAT VACATION! Enjoy the city's Farmer's Market, 4<sup>th</sup> of July activities, and Concerts in the Park. Golf practice starts later this month.

**NOTE:** *Other events traditionally scheduled every year include the Fall International Club Picnic, Musical and Play, Winter and Spring Concerts, Mr. and Ms. Mason, and JV (Junior Variety) Show.*



## GUIDE TO THE FALLS CHURCH CITY COMMUNITY

**AAUW Used Book Sale**—Most years, the AAUW (American Association of University Women) sponsors a used book sale in the spring at the Falls Church City Community Center. Look for information in the *Falls Church News-Press* or for banners across Rt. 7 Broad Street announcing the event.

**Arbor Day**—The third Saturday of April each year, Falls Church City sponsors special Arbor Day activities in Frady Park. It includes a historical reenactment of the original 1892 ceremony along with a present-day tree planting.

**Attic Treasures Sale**—The Falls Church Village Preservation and Improvement Society (VPIS) holds its Attic Treasures Sale on the first Saturday in May. It is a large indoor “yard sale” featuring household items, tools, toys, plants, and silent auction. See the VPIS website at [www.vpis.org](http://www.vpis.org) for more information.

**Cherry Hill Park**—Cherry Hill Park is Falls Church City’s main park. It includes the Cherry Hill Farmhouse and Barn, the Gage House, City Hall, and the Falls Church City Community Center. It contains a large picnic shelter, playground, and tennis courts and can be accessed from both the Community Center/City Hall parking lots and street parking on Park Avenue. It is the site of many group picnics and events, including the GMHS International Club fall picnic and city-sponsored concerts and festivals. For information regarding renting the shelter, or about other Falls Church City parks, contact the Department of Recreation and Parks at 703-248-5077.

**City Hall**—The governmental offices for the City of Falls Church are located in its City Hall at 300 Park Avenue. For information about the city government, city vehicle registration, etc., visit City Hall or check out its website at [www.fallschurchva.gov](http://www.fallschurchva.gov).

**City Walks**—These one-hour walks, held on the third Saturday of each month (except April and October), provide local historic, civic, and architectural information on the different neighborhoods in the City of Falls Church.

**Community Center**—The Falls Church Community Center, at 223 Little Falls Street, houses the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Falls Church City Senior Center. It contains a full-size gymnasium, classrooms, meeting rooms, and outdoor tennis courts. It shares parking lots with Falls Church City Hall, and Cherry Hill Park. The public can rent meeting rooms.

**Concerts in the Park**—Each summer, VPIS and the Falls Church City Department of Recreation and Parks sponsor the Concerts in the Park series, held on Thursday evenings beginning at 7 pm. Bring a blanket, and relax to good music while enjoying a picnic dinner with friends and other members of the community. For dates and performing musicians, go to [www.vpis.org](http://www.vpis.org), or contact the Department of Recreation and Parks at 703-248-5077.

**Falls Church City Government**—Falls Church City government offices are located at 300 Park Avenue. The city is governed by an at-large elected seven-member City Council. Council meetings are normally held the second and fourth Mondays of every month and are broadcast on Cox Channel 12, Verizon Channel 35, and RCN Channel 2. Falls Church City police and sheriff's department are also housed in City Hall. The Falls Church City Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department is located on N. Washington Street.

For a voter registration application or for voting information in Falls Church, visit the City Registrar's Office, Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm.

Check out the city's website for more information, [www.fallschurchva.gov](http://www.fallschurchva.gov) for more information about City government.

**Falls Church News-Press**—This privately owned newspaper is dedicated to the Falls Church area and is widely read. New parents wishing to learn about the community and school events (especially the athletic teams) should familiarize themselves with this newspaper. It is distributed free of charge at many businesses in the community on Thursday, and is delivered to each home's driveway on Thursday or early Friday morning.

**Falls Church Times**— [www.fallschurchtimes.com](http://www.fallschurchtimes.com) is an online community newspaper that has information regarding sports, schools and the city.

**Farmer's Market**—Falls Church City boasts one of the best farmer's markets in the Northern Virginia area. It is held on Saturdays from 8 am to 12 noon in the City Hall parking lot (Park Avenue side). It offers fresh produce, baked goods, plants, and other items.

**Home Concert Series**—This concert series features professional musicians performing classical, jazz, or ethnic music in the intimacy of Fall Church City's historic homes. All proceeds support the musicians. For information about upcoming concerts, go to the VPIS website at [www.vpis.org](http://www.vpis.org).

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Activities**—Falls Church City holds its own July 4<sup>th</sup> celebration each year, culminating in a fireworks display at the GMHS athletic field complex. Independence Day readings are held at noon in City Hall by the Village Preservation and Improvement Society.

**Mary Riley Styles Library**—The only Falls Church City library is the very popular Mary Riley Styles Library at 120 N. Virginia Avenue. It sponsors reading programs for preschool children during the school year, and a large reading program for elementary and middle school aged children during the summer months. Falls Church residents are also allowed to obtain library cards at Fairfax and Arlington County libraries. Go to any of these libraries to obtain a library card and information about their programs.

**Memorial Day Activities**—Memorial Day is a special day in Falls Church City. Festivities begin with the Don Beyer 3K run (or walk) at 9 am and end with the annual Memorial Day Parade down Park Avenue.

**Recreation and Parks**—The Falls Church City Department of Recreation and Parks is headquartered in the Community Center near City Hall. This building also houses the Senior Center and Teen Center. It offers a wide array of activities for city residents of all ages. There are classes for all ages, ranging from preschool ballet lessons to adult education courses. They organize the very popular youth leagues in basketball, soccer, and softball, as

well as adult leagues in volleyball, basketball, and softball. The Recreation Department can also provide referrals for sports at the select level and for other sports and activities in the Northern Virginia area. Call them at 703-248-5077 for further information.

**Recycling Extravaganza**—In addition to the weekly curbside recycling program, the City of Falls Church also offers additional recycling opportunities. On the fourth Saturday in April and the second Saturday in September of each year, volunteers are on hand from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm at the City’s Recycling Center on Gordon Road to collect donations of textiles, computer parts, used bicycles, and metal from city residents. Call 703-248-5176 to help out with the event or to ask questions about the weekly curbside collection.

**Spring and Fall Cleanups**—On the third Saturday of April and the first Saturday in October, volunteers from throughout the community gather at the Community Center at 9:30 am to organize into teams. These teams walk along commercial areas of the city, picking up litter along the way. Everyone meets back at the Community Center at 11:30 am for a large free picnic and celebration. Sponsored by the Department of Environmental Services and the Falls Church Environmental Services Council. Call 703-248-5176 for more information.

**Tinner Hill Festival**—This annual street festival celebrates African-American culture and the founding of the first rural branch of the NAACP in the country. Tinner Hill is located on the 500 block of S. Washington Street. Check website for more information [www.tinnerhill.org](http://www.tinnerhill.org).

**Watch Night**—“Watch Night”, the City of Falls Church’s New Year’s Eve celebration, is free of charge and open to the general public from 8 pm – 12 midnight. It features multi-cultural entertainment at the “Downtown Crossroads” at the intersection of Broad and Washington Streets.

## FALLS CHURCH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Central Office  
800 W. Broad Street, Suite 203  
703-248-5600  
[www.fccps.org](http://www.fccps.org)

School Board meetings occur on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month and are held in the City Council chambers. Residents who wish to address the School Board may do so by attending a School Board meeting and filling out a speaker's slip. Each speaker has a 3-minute time limit. The School Board may also be contacted by emailing School Board Secretary, Marty Gadell [gadellM@fccps.org](mailto:gadellM@fccps.org).

### **School Board Members**

Pat Riccards—Chairman  
Susan Kearney—Vice Chairman  
Rosaura Aguerrebere  
Charlotte Hyland  
Greg Rasnake  
Kieran Sharpe  
Joan Wodiska

## FALLS CHURCH CITY GOVERNMENT AND SERVICES

Contact City Hall  
300 Park Avenue  
703-248-5001  
[www.fallschurchva.gov](http://www.fallschurchva.gov)

City Council meetings are held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of the month and are held in City Council chambers. Residents and interested parties who wish to address the City Council need to attend a City Council meeting and fill out a speaker's slip. Each speaker has a 3-minute time limit. City Council may also be contacted by emailing the city clerk at [cityclerk@fallschurchva.gov](mailto:cityclerk@fallschurchva.gov).

### **City Council Members**

Nader Baroukh—Mayor  
David Snyder—Vice Mayor  
Johanna Barry  
Robin Gardner  
Ira Kaylin  
Ron Peppe  
Lawrence Webb

**FOR A LIST OF BUSINESSES, CHURCHES AND  
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS  
IN THE CITY OF FALLS CHURCH**

Contact the Chamber of Commerce  
703-532-1050

[www.fallschurchchamber.org](http://www.fallschurchchamber.org)