

College Park City-University Partnership Homeownership Program



Four successful years and over 50 homebuyers!

IN THIS REPORT

The College Park City-University Partnership is working to implement the University District Vision 2020, which calls for a sustainable, vibrant university community where people who work in College Park also live in College Park.

The College Park City-University Partnership's Homeownership Program, launched in summer 2015, is part of a multi-faceted approach to stabilize neighborhoods, reduce commutes, and improve the economy. It provides \$15,000 ten-year forgivable loans for down payment or closing costs to full-time, benefits-eligible employees of the University of Maryland and the City of College Park who are purchasing a home in the City of College Park as their permanent residence.

When a homebuyer is purchasing a home that has been previously rented, foreclosed or in short sale status, or for the purchase of any house in College Park by City of College Park employees, police, firefighters and EMTs who are employed in the State of Maryland, they are eligible to use the City's \$5,000 New Neighbor Grant program together with ours through a streamlined process. When a homebuyer qualifies for both programs, they can receive funding from both under the umbrella of the Partnership's Homeownership Program. The outcome of this streamlining is 10 former rental properties that converted to principal residences for a term of 10 years.

In its fourth year, the Program hit a 50th homebuyer milestone, and surpassed that. An event was held to celebrate this milestone with homebuyers, members of the press and leadership from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, UMD, the City of College Park and the County. Speakers at this event included DHCD Secretary Kenneth C. Holt, UMD President Dr. Wallace Loh, 21st District Sen. Jim Rosapepe, and Mayor Patrick Wojahn. District 3 County Councilmember Dannielle Glaros was in attendance along with homebuyers such as Christina and Ryan Kenny, Jessica Fish, Mark Fuge, Valerie Hoy, Caro Williams Pierce, Eric Byrd, Laura Hood, Kristen Olsen, and Kishore Palaniraja – and their families.

The Program continues in a strong fashion, having a big impact. As of the end of Fiscal Year 19, 53 homes were sold total, and there are 126 full-time residents now living in College Park. We are beginning to see the results: The percentage of UMD employees living in College Park has jumped from roughly 4 percent to just under 6 percent. Homebuyers are often out in the community, participating in City, University and Partnership events.

This program is made possible by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Community Legacy grant award, and matching grants from the City of College Park and the University of Maryland.



Thanks to



Choosing College Park

Program Partners

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The Year Ahead

Choosing the City of College Park

The Homeownership Program is advancing our community goal to be a top 20 university community. College Park has 18 unique neighborhoods. It has events, amenities and things people want: from amazing trails and schools to MOM's Organic Market, Smile Herb Shop, Stripe 3 Adidas, OpenBarre Studios, Numi Yoga, Target Express, the College Park Tennis Center, the College Park Aviation Museum, good, unique restaurants like the Board and Brew, Vigilante, Old Maryland Grill, Bagel Place and Bagels N Grinds – and more! The City is an up and coming cultural arts hub with the new MilkBoy ArtHouse, and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

The City is vibrant and fun, and our work together with the City, University, County, State and community, in many areas, is making College Park an even more attractive place to both work and live.

Some examples of this work include promoting local schools and their programs – including the Prince George's County Board of Education decision to boost access to the public charter school, College Park Academy, for local kids. A "Green Schools" Initiative to help all schools serving College Park children become green schools is underway – and Hyattsville Middle School just became a certified green school

We are also working on a host of place-making initiatives. In summer 2018, we worked with M-NCPPC, SHA, the Lakeland Community Heritage Project, College Park Arts Exchange, Imaginex, the University of Maryland & the City of College Park to place an artistic lighting installation on the Baltimore Avenue bridge over the Paint Branch stream and murals on the underpass walls, essentially transforming a major connection between the University and community. Now, we are working to place a mural on the building above Qu Japan. An Outdoor Performance Series that occurs Mondays and Fridays is supported by a collaboration between the Partnership, the College Park Arts Exchange, the City of College Park, the University of Maryland's School of Music, the UMD Office of Community Engagement, and the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

We know this place-making is starting to work as the Partnership's efforts were recently recognized in the *Washingtonian Magazine* as College Park was named the Washington-area's biggest turn around in July 2018.



Our homebuyers, in exit interviews for the program, have told us that the reasons for using the program and moving to College Park include being close to work, frequenting local businesses, spending more time with family and friends, access to natural amenities – like Lake Artemesia and bike trails – and participating in the community.

College Park is an energetic, and exciting, city and a smart place to live. We are promoting our community's many assets, and combined with the Homeownership Program, we are successfully bringing more people who work in College Park to recognize our many attributes and live here.



The Partnership partners with entities to bolster its Program, increasing the incentive for homeowners choosing College Park:

College Park Tennis Club: The College Park Tennis Club offers a six-month free tennis club membership. This includes a beginner training program (Rally in 10) for folks who have never played tennis and want to try it. This package is valued at \$600.

Maryland Mortgage Program: Anyone who qualifies for the State program can receive an additional \$2,500 in down payment/closing cost assistance because of our relationship with MMP.

Community Partners

The City of College Park New Neighbor Grant Program. Offers a \$5,000 incentive for purchasing homes are former rentals, foreclosed or are in short sale status – or for purchase of any house in College Park by City of College Park employees, Police, firefighters and EMTs who are employed by the State of Maryland or Prince George's County.

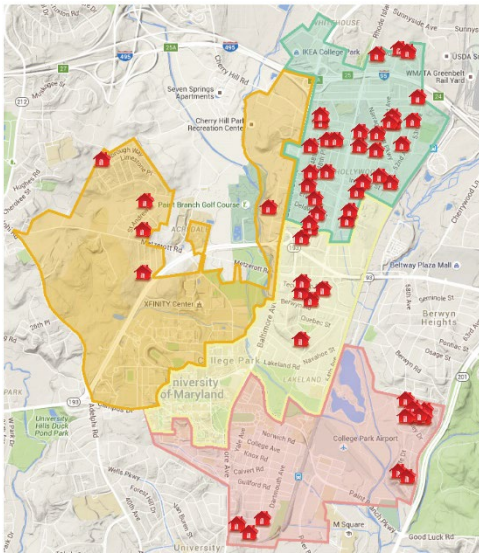
Capitol Title. Capitol Title offers participants a \$500.00 closing cost credit off Settlement Fees if they settle with Capitol Title and purchase an Owner's Title Insurance Policy.

McKay Mortgage Company. The McKay Mortgage Company is offering participants in the Homeownership Program a free home appraisal, free pre-approval and free credit analysis.

Blue Note Title. Blue Note Title, Inc. offers participants in the Homeownership Program a \$500.00 discount on settlement and title services (with the purchase of Owner's Title Insurance). Military, teacher, and other discounts may also apply. Spanish-speaking settlements are available.

OpenBarre Studios. OpenBarre Studios offers home buyers one month of unlimited classes per adult on the title. The month should be started within 90 days of the sale date. Try a variety of classes including but not limited to \$5 Happy Hour Barre, Arms & Abs, Barre Stretch, Date Night Barre, Mom Strength, Barre Cardio Circuit, and many more! This membership is valued at \$99.

WHERE HOMEBUYERS MOVED



The program has landed new homebuyers in all four council districts and 11 neighborhoods across the City of College Park

FACTS ABOUT THE PROGRAM

126

New residents in College Park

72%

Expressed that they would usually walk, bike or use public transportation to get to work.

68%

Are first-time homebuyers.

66%

Are new employees 0-4 years

\$78,188

Average employee salary

\$17.9M

In home sales

Each house that has been purchased by a University or City employee represents a home that is owner-occupied and contributes to neighborhood stability – adding to the City’s economy, increasing the local retail market, and improving commuting patterns. Each university employee living locally has more opportunity to participate more fully in the University and the community and becomes an ambassador to their colleagues to consider living in our community.

PROGRAM DATA

From July 2018 to June 2019, **fourteen UMD employees** moved into College Park using our program.

Seven houses were sold in council district three, six were sold in council district one, and one was sold in council district four. There were no homes in FY’19 sold in council district two, but there were 3 in FY’18.. **Three former rentals were purchased in conjunction with the City’s New Neighbor Grant program in FY’19.**

In total, the program has added **126 new people to College Park** – 96 adults and 30 children. **One-third of all of the children moved in FY’19.** There are now seven couples that are dual UMD-career couples, meaning both work at the University.

In the first two years, 73 percent of people utilizing our program were first time home buyers and 64 percent were new employees. **This year, there was a more equal split. 57 percent of the employees were new (between 1-3 years), and 40 percent were first time homeowners.**

Like last year, **most of the people who used our program were brand new to the City.** While most lived in the DC-Metro area prior to purchasing in College Park, we also saw an **uptick in moving from various locations across the country.**

In the first two years, there was a pretty equal mix of professors and staff members, with each being about half. This year, that continued: half were faculty and half were staff. **In FY’19, 3 of the people who used our program graduated from the University.**

The salary range for FY’19 homebuyers was \$48,001 to \$175,000, averaging \$89,961, which is 51% higher than last year.

Each home purchased through this program represents neighborhood stability with homeowners invested in the community.

The Program is having a positive impact attracting UMD employees to live in College Park.

The Multiple Listing Services (MLS) as provided to us by a local realtor, shows there were 130 houses sold in FY’19 and 10.7 percent were through this Program. Of total homes sold in College Park between FY’16 and FY’19 combined, 8.3% percent were sold through our program and are likely to be owner-occupied for a term of ten years.

5.8% of all UMD employees live in College Park

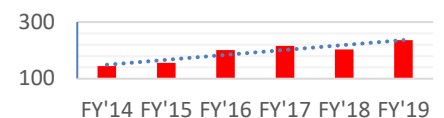
According to the University’s Department for Administration and Finance, 5.8 percent of all UMD employees live in College Park. This is up from roughly 4 percent when we started the Program.

We are continuing having an impact on new employees who move to Maryland, with 624 moving into Maryland, 11.9 percent of these employees chose to live in College Park in FY’19. This is like last year, according to the University’s Human Resources office. In FY’19, 113 new and continuing employees moved to College Park, and of those, 14.2 percent were UMD employees using this program.

Additionally, the effort for more faculty and staff to move to College Park is having a broader effect for local living. 10.3 percent of all employees live within the “university district” which includes College Park, University Park, Riverdale Park, Berwyn Heights, portions of Hyattsville, Greenbelt, Adelphi and College Heights Estates.

Overall, the number of UMD employees who have been moving to Prince George’s County continues to steadily grow after jumping nearly 50 percent over the last 5 fiscal years.

Number of new UMD Employees Choosing Prince George’s County



50th HOMEBUYER MILESTONE



On Monday, June 10th the College Park City-University Partnership celebrated the Homeownership Program's 50th homebuyer milestone. Leaders from Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, University of Maryland, State of Maryland, City of College Park, Prince George's County, Program Partners, and Homeowners attended. This included DHCD Secretary Kenneth Holt, UMD President Dr. Wallace Loh, State Senator Jim Rosapepe, City Mayor Patrick Wojahn, and District 3 County Councilmember Dannielle Glaros. Homebuyers spanning the program – from the first homebuyer to the latest homebuyer – were in attendance, resulting in 20 people who purchased homes in College Park through this program participating in the event. Program partners such as the University Human Resources department, McKay Mortgage and Prosperity Home Loans also attended.

Eric Olson, Executive Director for the Partnership, kicked off the event with a short video about the Program and its success. Secretary Kenneth Holt conveyed his support for this Program as part of Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development's "homeownership month."

President Loh talked about how this Program is part of a strong University collaboration with the City and how the vision for strengthening ties should continue. "As the City grows and thrives, so will the University." Mayor Wojahn explained how things are getting better, but it hasn't always been this way and thanked everyone for this partnership and Sen. Rosapepe thanked staff for making this Program work, be successful, and strong. Following brief remarks, a reception was held.



See pictures from the event and watch the Program's progress video:
collegeparkpartnership.org/50thhomebuyermilestoneevent/

HOMEBUYER PROFILES

"When you are applying to work at various research universities, you really are applying to move to one of those locations – so the benefit of this program was very attractive in helping us make the decision of what university to land at."

Developed to increase the number of employees living near work, strengthen College Park's neighborhoods, improve the local economy, and reduce commutes, the interviews of our home buyers exemplify the success of this program.

Goal: Reduced commutes – 72 percent of all homebuyers indicated that they would usually bicycle, walk or take public transportation to work.

Goal: Improve the local economy – Many of the home buyers indicated that they were looking forward to frequenting the City's businesses.

Goal: Stronger neighborhoods – 10 former rental properties were purchased through our program. Because our program has a loan term of 10 years, there is a strong likelihood these homebuyers will stay in College Park and these homes will not become rental properties.

Goal: Campus connected to community – the Partnership has held several community events in which several homebuyers have participated signaling that by living close, they are able to participate in the community.



To read more about our homebuyers, please visit
collegeparkpartnership.org/homeownershipprogram/homebuyers

HOME BUYER #40 - HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD JESSICA FISH, ALISON RAY AND FINN



Jessica and Alison were living in Austin, Texas where Jessica had been employed with the University of Texas, doing post-doctoral research, and Alison was at a government

environmental post. As Jessica was completing that research, she learned of a position at the University of Maryland in the School of Public Health's Family Science division. When Jessica knew she would be hired as an assistant professor, they started thinking about the move to the area.

After living in Austin, where they could bike or take the bus to work, they wanted to live close to the University and be part of the community. They looked everywhere; Silver Spring, Laurel, Berwyn Heights, Beltsville, Greenbelt – but “the location of this home, which is also close to the Metro, really made this the right house for us – plus the neighborhood seemed really nice. There’s a park in almost every direction for Finn, who just started walking, to go to.”

Alison found out about the Homeownership Program after doing some research about living in College Park on the City's Collegeparkmd.gov website and she forwarded the information to Jessica. As they started looking for homes, they used a local realtor who was familiar with the College Park market and the Program, and they also found a lender who had used the Program previously, “so that made it easier to understand the home buying process, this program, and to learn about the College Park area.”

Jessica also thought the main focus of her work really meshed well with the Program – “my work is community based, so working here, in the community I live in, was an important and enticing opportunity.” Upon their move, which took place a couple of weeks after closing and just before the University school year started, Jessica and Alison agreed that knowing they had a home in a good neighborhood close to work and with access to transportation, improving public education, recreation, and a budding foods/arts scene “gave us a wonderful peace of mind as we moved across the country.”

Jessica and Alison both love learning a new city, and from what they've seen so far, as Jessica put it, “there's no reason College Park shouldn't be at the top of everyone's list.”

HOME BUYER #41 - HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

JOHN AND TIENNA HAMPTON, SOLEIL AND DESTIN



John Hampton has been a University of Maryland Police Department officer for the last 11 years. Because of this, as a law enforcement officer, he was able to couple the Homeownership

Program Loan with the City's \$5,000 New Neighbor grant.

John and Tienna decided to start looking for homes after their recent wedding – and started looking in Silver Spring. As John put it, “We were not necessarily looking in College Park at first, but I had heard about the program a while ago, and thought I'd check in to it.” Tienna, a local hair stylist, also heard about the program through word of mouth – “I had a client who used to work with the City, and when I told her that we were looking for a home, she mentioned I should look into this program.” So, they did.

Upon confirming they could use the program, they sent the information to their realtor and lender – and began looking in

College Park, “we saw this house and knew it was the right one for us,” explained Tienna, “we didn't have to look too much – and we knew buying now would make sense with all the investment happening in College Park. Our realtor kept telling us this place is booming!”

John explained that he would sometimes run or bike to work, “I like to run, actually – living with a short commute has been great – I could jump on the hiker-biker trail and be at work in 15 minutes.” Of course, John now has a UMPD take-home vehicle, so he may not run all the time, but the fact it's a possibility is a bonus, “being able to get to work quickly is important to me.”

John, as a long-time police officer, has seen a lot of the positive changes in the City. They both mentioned they were looking forward to the cool unique amenities like MOM's Organic Market. “I really like living in College Park, actually – it has a small town feel even though there's a big university here.”

HOME BUYER #42 - CALVERT HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD GENE FERRICK AND JOANN PROSSER



Gene Ferrick and Joann Prosser are both long-time University employees. Joann has worked in Resident Life since 2002 and has a PhD in Counseling Psychology from the University. Gene has worked for the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences since 1997. They lived in Bowie for the past 20 years, but, as Joann

says, “we loved our community, but we didn’t love the commute.” They knew College Park well, by working on campus for many years, but also because Joann’s sister’s family and her mom live in the community. Her mother – and other friends – had been encouraging Gene and Joann to make the move to College Park for several years. At first, because they loved their Bowie neighborhood, they didn’t want to move, but the idea grew on them. Joann’s mother asked all her College Park neighbors if they would be selling their homes any time soon and served as match-maker when she learned that a neighbor would be moving. Gene and Joann have been warmly welcomed by everyone on their block – residents of the street have regular potluck dinners and are a tight knit group. Joann points to how much has changed around the University. She says, “College Park has experienced so much revitalization in the last decade and is a fun place to live.” Gene remarks how he goes to MilkBoy ArtHouse at least once a month and attends “Science on Tap”

lectures there featuring University scientists talking about their research over good food and beer. He notes how Milkboy Arthouse “is a fun place for Happy Hour.” Joann remarks that “the ability to be a life-long learner is extraordinary” living in College Park and working at the University.

Both Joann and Gene are looking forward to much more by living in College Park. They love attending events at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center on campus, and Gene wants to attend more football games. He also says he’s “excited about Riverdale Park’s Town Center Market, where he looks forward to joining his brother-in-law and others who gather on Thursday nights.” Gene notes Town Center Market is conveniently “just down the bike path.” They also plan to join the Adelphi Pool, where many neighbors spend their summers. Both will commute to campus by walking or biking. Gene’s new morning routine involves biking to the Ritchie Coliseum gym, working out, and then going to work. The couple has two parking passes but will be dropping to 1 – and may get rid of both altogether. “The commute is amazing,” says Gene, while Joann notes “our quality of life has greatly improved – we each gained 40 minutes of our day back by eliminating our commutes.”

They found the Homeownership Program easy to use and their only regret is they wished they had moved to College Park sooner. “Make the leap,” Joann recommends to those considering moving to College Park.

HOME BUYER #43 - COLLEGE PARK ESTATES SARA MITCHELL AND NICHOLAS CUMMINGS



Sara and Nick are both graduates of the University of Maryland and have been in the College Park area for over 20 years, recently renting in Berwyn Heights. “We love living close to work!”

Sara has worked for two years as a visiting senior faculty specialist in the College of Computer, Mathematical & Natural Sciences Department of Astronomy. And Nick also works locally on contract at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt.

They heard about the Homeownership Program when they started thinking about settling into owning a place – and found it through a Google search. They knew they wanted to stay in the area and were eager to find something to call their own, as Sara mentioned, “When you rent, you don’t get a

chance to really make the home your own – you can’t plant a garden for example ...” or as Nick chimed in, “you can’t change the water heater or lights to be more sustainable or efficient.”

Upon confirming that the program would work for them, it “provided a huge benefit and jumpstarted our search for homes in College Park.” As Nick explained, “one thing that people who work at UMD don’t realize is that the City’s neighborhoods are ‘hidden gems’ – there is more to College Park than just Knox Road.”

So, during their search, they looked in a variety of neighborhoods and eventually found their perfect home in College Park Estates, which Sara and Nick described as a “nice, quiet neighborhood, with lots of access” to places they enjoy – like Lake Artemesia, local bike trails, and restaurants like the Board and Brew and downtown College Park’s Marathon Deli, Kung Fu Tea and NW Chinese. “College Park has really grown its foodie scene, and that’s exciting for us,” explained Sara.

HOME BUYER #44 -LOCUST SPRINGS NEIGHBORHOOD

KRISTEN OLSEN AND WILLIAM KNOWLES



Kristen started at the University of Maryland's Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center as a Guest Experience Coordinator four years ago. Roughly a year into her employment, the

Partnership's Executive Director was invited to brief Clarice staff on all the developments happening in College Park and the Partnership's newly launched Homeownership Program. Kristen remembered hearing about the program, but as she wasn't interested in buying at the time, set it aside.

Fast forward 3 years, and she and William decided to start looking for a place closer to the University and something that would be a "better commute" for William – who is a jazz musician and has work in both downtown DC and in

Alexandria. Said Kristen, "We had been living close to Rock Creek Park in DC – and when we started looking at places, we were looking for a place that had a good commute for both of us – and the commute from Rockville/Bethesda was a nonstarter for us."

Upon embarking on their search and learning that the program was still active, they decided to focus on College Park. As William mentioned, "without the program, we wouldn't be in College Park – we were looking in the Route 1 corridor, maybe – but the program really pushed us to look in College Park."

Kristen and William moved to the DC area from Milwaukee, and they explained that living near Rock Creek Park was amazing for all the trails, and activities nearby. "Now, in College Park, since we know there's such a good trail network here, we're excited to enjoy the trail and finally visit Lake Artemesia."

HOME BUYER #45 -YARROW NEIGHBORHOOD

THOMAS AND ROBERT MCMULLEN



Thomas McMullen works as the executive assistant to the Provost in the University's Office of the Senior Vice President and the Provost – and has been working there for 20 years. His son, Robert McMullen, attended

the University of Maryland and received both undergraduate and graduate degrees. He's been working in the A. James Clark School of Engineering's Institute of Systems Research as facilities coordinator since 2015 while he achieves his master's degree.

Thomas had heard about the program because "everyone talks about it" – but he wasn't sure where to find information about the program, so he walked down to the College Park City Hall. There he received information about the Partnership's Homeownership Program and also learned about the City's New Neighbor Grant program which provides \$5,000 for folks purchasing former rental properties, foreclosures, or are EMTs, police officers or teachers – which can be coupled with the Partnership's \$15,000 program. As

this house was a former rental, he was able to combine the programs.

Upon learning about the program, they began to earnestly look in College Park for a home, "it made us keep looking in College Park! What I wanted was a brick home, with a yard and a garage – and that you can find here," explained Thomas. Another draw for Thomas was the history found in College Park, "the neighborhoods here have amazing history; just down the road here in Yarrow is the "Marenka House," which is on the National Historic Register because it is a mid-century modern home built in homage to the Frank Lloyd Wright principles of organic architecture."

Both Thomas and Robert commute to work by driving in. They share a car pool pass and "this new commute is just superb – about 5 minutes door to door." As they settle into their new home, they are excited for the new Lidl grocery store coming to Baltimore Avenue and attending more events on campus. As a bicycle enthusiast, Thomas is looking forward to continue using the trail network more frequently and said, "yes, Robert – you need to check out the trails, you can explore anywhere from right here in College Park."

HOME BUYER #46 - COLLEGE PARK ESTATES LEILANI BATTLE AND RAYMOND BLOCHER



Leilani is an assistant professor in the Department of Computer Science at the College of Computer, Mathematical, and Natural Sciences at UMD. Raymond is a software developer and engineer for a Boston-based company.

Leilani and Ray made the move to College Park by way of Seattle, after Leilani completed her PHD at MIT in Boston and then did a one-year post-doc at the University of Washington. Said Leilani, “We made the move to Maryland based on my academic and research interests that I found at the University of Maryland.” After a couple of months and living in an apartment building in College Park, they started thinking about planting roots. Leilani and Ray are a one-car household and didn’t want to live too far away. So, they started looking at College Park neighborhoods.

They heard about the Program through the new faculty orientation on campus, and then talked with a colleague at work – a previous home buyer, Tamara Clegg – who

HOME BUYER #47 - COLLEGE PARK ESTATES CARO WILLIAMS PIERCE AND JORDAN THEVENOW-HARRISON



Caro Williams-Pierce starts as a tenure-track assistant professor in the College of Information Studies in August 2019. She and her husband Jordan move to College

Park from Albany, NY – though they have lived, gone to school, and worked in Indiana, Maine and Wisconsin.

Caro heard about the Homeownership Program during her first phone interview for the position. Then, when she came to the university for a full interview, she explained that “the representatives on the hiring committee spoke highly about the Program and one of them, Beth St. Jean, who had used the Program before took me on a tour of College Park.”

Jordan chimed in, “When you are applying to work at various research universities, you really are applying to move to one of those locations – so the benefit of this program was very attractive in helping us make the decision of what university to land at.”

recommended the Program. When they found College Park Estates, Leilani said they determined it was the right area because “I love City life, but Ray wanted to live somewhere quiet. College Park has both proximity to a big city [Washington, DC] but also quiet neighborhoods, so moving to here made sense – it hit all the living requirements for us.”

Leilani is an avid proponent of being able to walk or bike to work. “I love the commute,” said Leilani, “as a one-car household it is fantastic that I can get to work by walking or biking. Plus, I know how long my commute will take every day and it’s not dependent on any traffic.” They also love the fact that they are not far from Lake Artemesia, and “the Paint Branch Trail is amazing – and quiet, where you can find a good place to read a good book.” Going forward they are looking forward to being able to go into D.C. for various events, explore local trails, or even stay home. As for any advice to give other UMD employees, Leilani mentioned that “it’s a good idea to get advice from people who live in College Park and know the City. People who live here seem to really like it.” And, as Ray mentioned, “it’s especially good to live here if you value your time as an important resource: by living in College Park you are close to everything.”

They decided to start looking at homes in College Park – and instantly fell in love with the home they found in College Park Estates. Said Caro, “the home is just beautiful – there’s a screened in porch, it has a perfect layout for us, and it’s right by the bike path that takes me directly to the University and connects us to things which will be fun to explore – like Lake Artemesia.” Jordan owns an educational software company and his office is mainly virtual, but “I love the fact that we are so close to Washington because I like to go to galleries and intellectual events. But I’m glad we’re not in the City itself, because for one thing, DC seems about 10 degrees warmer than College Park on any given day. And, just look outside from our porch – it is all green!”

During their stay for the full day interview, Caro and Jordan, ended up going to the Board and Brew and said that also helped them decide that College Park would work out for them, said Caro, “the waiter came up to me and explained that he would be my game sommelier for the evening. And I thought, ‘this place gets me.’” So, going forward Caro plans to bike to work as much as possible and “we may get e-bikes – that’s the goal.” Caro is excited for the farmers markets and checking out local co-ops. Jordan is, because they are buying furniture now, excited for the proximity of IKEA and Costco. “We are just really excited to plant roots here and our cats, Skunk and Grimalkin, are already settled in.”

HOME BUYER #48 -COLLEGE PARK ESTATES

CHRISTINA, RYAN, AND AURORA KENNY



Christina and Ryan moved to College Park from Baltimore City as Christina became the Director of Development for the University's School of Public Policy, in the University Relations department.

Christina had heard about the Homeownership Program when she was hired. When learning the expectations of the position – some nights, weekends, conferences – and figuring they had just moved into a home in Baltimore City and had a baby, Christina had a revelation. “I thought to myself, ok, now that I have this job, I’ll commute and will give it a year...but after a couple of 90 minute commutes home, I was done. We needed to live closer.”

After that last long commute, Ryan and Christina discussed moving to College Park, “We had friends that live in College Park and they kept raving about the City. So, Ryan suggested we just move.” Ryan added “Yes, and since I’m a pilot and fly out of Reagan [National Airport] frequently, this location actually works better for us both.”

Once they decided to make the move, they looked at a few homes in College Park.

“This program really pushed us to look in the City of College Park, and without it we wouldn’t be able to move,” explained Ryan.

Upon looking they found College Park to be full of excellent, interesting, not well-known neighborhoods – and they discovered several homes that could work, but “we really love this neighborhood.” Christina described the friendly atmosphere, “as soon as we moved in, our neighbors all came to introduce themselves! And even last weekend when I had a conference and we had grandparents watching Aurora, they would go on walks and people would say hi.”

As they get settled in Ryan and Christina are looking forward to going to lectures and events on campus like football games, running to work, checking out the College Park Aviation Museum, “and the Herbert Wells Ice Rink – before Aurora was born, Ryan was saying that he wanted her to play ice hockey, so now we are just about 5 minutes from an ice rink. It’s perfect.” As Christina said, “this program is surprisingly easy to use, and living close to a university and in a great City provides so many experiences that you wouldn’t otherwise have – we’re really excited to be part of this.”

HOME BUYER #49 -HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

TERRY WHELTON



Terry has been working with the University Alumni Association as an executive manager for 8 years. She heard about the Homeownership Program at a presentation developed by Maria Cabnal Hernandez – who herself purchased a house in College Park through the program – and

which was attended by the Partnership’s Senior Program Associate, Valerie Woodall, and Prosperity Home Mortgage agent, Romy Espino.

Terry moved from the neighboring community of Adelphi, Maryland where she rented a house, but she was ready to

move because “this area is amazing and it’s changing so much in a positive way.”

When she decided to move, she looked at a number of neighborhoods within the City, but she “chose Hollywood because of the convenience, the house itself and the price.” Because she’s lived in the area for the last 10 years, she has favorite restaurants and shopping spots – so, “that will continue, but now I’ll have even more convenience to explore more places with friends.”

When it comes to using this Homeownership Program, Terry said, “Do it – move to College Park; this program is great and living so close to work allows you to choose how you get around: whether to use your car, bicycle or even walk – you can do that here.”

HOME BUYER #50 -HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD DAVID, CAROLINA AND ISABELLA REESE



David is the Coordinator for the Office of Veteran Student Life at the University of Maryland. Carolina works at the Virginia Hospital Center.

They had been living in Arlington, and when he

started at the University about a year ago, would metro up to work – which took about 45 minutes. Carolina was close to work but when they started to look for homes, they started having to look further south in Virginia, which would have doubled David’s commute and made Carolina’s 45 minutes. “So, we started looking over at the Maryland side.”

David had heard about the Program from his orientation, and also heard from other people like Laura Hood who had used the program to move to College Park. “And that really narrowed our search,” remarked Carolina, “we looked at townhouses in Greenbelt, but when there’s \$15,000 available to live in the City limits as opposed to other nearby neighborhoods, it is worth looking only at College Park.” “This house had an open house the day we were touring College Park with our realtor – and we loved it,” explained David, “we went to Proteus Bicycles and MOM’s after we looked at the house ... we were living in Oregon awhile back, and this area really feels sort of like Oregon, with real community.”

Carolina added that “Arlington is nice, but it’s sort of transient and congested so it’s hard to get around and to spend time with people.” Their daughter, Isabella, plays Ice Hockey and most of her games are at Laurel or regionally – but always further north. “We never go south!” Both Carolina and David skate, and David coaches his daughters’ team, so this move will also shave 45-minutes from their weekend car time.

Now that their commutes are flipped, David mentioned he’d likely be commuting by bike to work, or maybe running and taking the bus, “The car will be the last option for me.”

Carolina won’t mind the commute as much now because she really likes this move. In fact, one day she was in an elevator with a colleague at work and they were talking about commutes. Her colleague explained that she commutes from College Park, so Carolina responded that she was moving to College Park. Her colleague responded, “I love living there, it’s awesome!”

Carolina and David are really happy they took part in this program – they are excited to discover the trail network, being involved more on campus, and getting to know people in the community. “It’s a great benefit. It’s a tangible effort that really makes a difference, and as an employee, it makes you feel like part of the university community,” explained David.

HOME BUYER #51 -COLLEGE PARK WOODS

AMRO HASSANEIN



Amro is an environmental engineer working within the food-energy-water (FEW) nexus. He has worked for the University for roughly three years in the

Department of Environmental Science and Technology. He started as a post-doctorate associate in 2016 and is now an assistant research scientist.

He first came to the University as part of a fellowship in 2015, and when he came for the first time, he “fell in love with it.”

Said Amro, “UMD is considered one of the top universities – not only in the USA but also the world for science and research, and when we were here for my fellowship, my wife,

kids and I decided that we should live in College Park.”

They looked for houses only in the City of College Park because the Homeownership Program influenced them to do so, but chose the specific neighborhood of College Park Woods because of the proximity to campus, “and the beautiful, quiet, neighborhood.”

As he and his wife and children get settled in, they are looking forward to meeting neighbors, going to the playground, and importantly – a very short commute. As Amro explained, “I used to take the car or the University shuttle – and it would take about 20 minutes. Now, I will bike, and it takes about 8!”

Homebuyer #52 - HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD

TARA BROWN



Tara is an assistant professor in the Teaching and Learning, Policy and Leadership Department of the University of Maryland's College of Education.

She is moving to College Park from Delaware. She had started with the University in 2003 – but went to Massachusetts in 2005. When she returned in 2013, she originally lived in Greenbelt, “so I’m familiar with this neighborhood.”

After commuting to and from Delaware two hours every day,

she decided to move closer.

She heard about the Program from her former student, and now University employee, Bruk Berhane – a homebuyer who used the program. “He told me about the Program and that it was very easy to use so I decided to look for homes in College Park instead of say Riverdale Park or Greenbelt.”

Tara usually drives to work, but said that since parking options on campus are not great that she might take the Metro one stop from the Greenbelt Station to the College Park Station, “I might walk – the train is right there.”

As Tara settles into her new home, she is looking forward to extra time with friends, going to Smile Herb Shop and Fishnet, and most important, “more time not in a car.”

Homebuyer #53 - CALVERT HILLS NEIGHBORHOOD

ANAHI ESPINDOLA AND URS WEBER



Anahi is an Assistant Professor in the Entomology Department of the College of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences. Urs is a massage therapist and an

avid vegetable grower who volunteers at Eco City Farms in Edmonston and Smile Herb Shop in College Park.

Although Anahi is from Argentina and Urs is from Switzerland, they moved to College Park from northern Idaho – where Anahi was doing research. When she applied for the position at UMD, she discovered the Homeownership Program while she was researching the benefits of different universities, “when I was looking in the beginning at where to land, I saw this Program was a potential option for us as we moved across the country and filed it away,” mentioned Anahi.

When they first moved, they rented a house in University Park. After living in University Park for a year, they decided to purchase a home in the same area. Said Urs, “We loved the University Park/Calvert Hills area – the big oak trees here are

amazing: They draw imagery from Robin Hood, and there is a great trail network.”

Anahi is a bike commuter; she doesn’t want to drive to work. They both wanted to minimize driving altogether in their daily lives, and they also like being walking distance to the Metro station. So, while they looked at homes with Realtor Jean Pirovic in Berwyn Heights, Hyattsville, Riverdale Park, University Park, and Greenbelt – they determined being in College Park and right by the Trolley Trail was perfect for them.

Another professor who lives in University Park mentioned to Anahi that the Program assists employees who move into College Park and so they asked about that. Jean Pirovic and Romy Espino at Prosperity Home Mortgage both knew about the Homeownership Program, “So it was very easy for us to use the program.”

As they settle in, they are looking forward to doing more of the things they love about the area: biking or walking to the Riverdale Park farmers market, checking out arts events at the Old Parish House, using the Trolley Trail and overall trail network in College Park and the region, going to MOMs Organic Market, walking to get coffee, and more. “We’re so happy to be here close to shops, close to work and with great options for getting around!”

THE YEAR AHEAD

The Partnership's Homeownership Program is a tremendous success. We are proud of this work.

Encouraging University and City staff to plant long-term roots in the community revitalizes the community surrounding the workplace, making it more attractive to customers, businesses, visitors, students, community members, and future staff recruits. The impact is found in higher home and property values, more activity surrounding home rehabilitation, and an increase in the economic tax base that helps increase the number of businesses that can stay open when students are on break or graduate. These factors are what will make the City a more vibrant university community where employees interact on a regular basis and ideas are shared in the City as well as on campus.

Continuing this momentum is vital to achieving the University District Vision, which calls for more than 4 percent of UMD employees living in College Park.

The University District Vision 2020 plan is being implemented to make College Park a top 20 college town. One of the most influential metrics the Partnership is working to address is the number of faculty and staff living within the City.

The priority in the next year for the City-University Partnership's Homeownership Program is to get to get close to 75 homebuyers or more and over 150 people living in College Park because of this program. We'd also like to continue increasing the dispersion of homes. Although the northern areas of College Park have both the most number of homes and, according to data provided by a local realtor, the most home sales in College Park, we'd like to make sure homes in Districts 2, 3 and 4 continue to be owner-occupied through our Program. Finally, we'd like to increase the use of our streamlined program with the City that if a homebuyer qualifies for both programs, they can receive funding from both entities through our program. We will be looking at other ways to increase our reach.

Our work to promote College Park's residential assets, local schools and community amenities will continue to be a big part of this year's focus.

We know that more UMD employees are choosing College Park – we've increased from 4 percent to almost 6 percent of University employees living in College Park, and 10.3 percent of UMD employees live within a 5-mile area around College Park. But, we have more work to do. We still have over 80 percent of all UMD employees living outside of the College Park area.

The College Park City-University Partnership thanks – very much – the Department of Housing and Community Development, the University of Maryland and City of College Park for supporting this program. This is an important investment that continues to stabilize the community with new home buyers and their families. This program has been a success thus far and we believe the year ahead will prove to be even more impactful.



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