

# Upcounty Community Resources Named Small Business of the Year

The Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber (GGCC) awarded Upcounty Community Resources (UCR) as the recipient of the 15th Annual Small Business of the Year Award (SBY) on December 9, 2021, as a part of their Annual Celebration Dinner & Awards Ceremony. The award was presented to UCR Executive Director Jenn Lynn by AJ Nwoga with M&T Bank.

"We are honored to give this award to Upcounty Community Resources," said Marilyn Balcombe, GGCC President / CEO. "They are a great asset in our community."

The Small Business of the Year Award recognizes small businesses, which are a vital part of our economy and community. The award is presented to the small business that demonstrates success, community involvement, and excellent customer relations.

The Upcounty Community Resources was founded by a group of parents trying to find inclusive and enriching activities for their adult children with disabilities. These parents recognized the need for continued education and skills practice after the children completed their education. Seven years later UCR is serving five hundred families in our community.

The UCR programs teach employment, independent living, social & emotional skills practice in large and small groups, pro-



(l:r) State Senator Cheryl Kagan; Jenn Lynn, Upcounty Community Resources; AJ Nwoga, M&T Bank; and Marilyn Balcombe, Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber award Lynn with the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber's 15th Annual Small Business of the Year Award at the Celebration Dinner & Awards Ceremony on December 9, 2021. Photo Credit: Hilary Schwab Photography

vides therapeutic art & music programming, as well as three respite programs. They boast a professional rock band, entrepreneurs, young professionals, talented artists, and advocates among their membership. They are proud to serve people who want to succeed through a variety of disabilities and meet them where they are and build on their gifts.

Community involvement & relationship building is important to UCR. Since the majority of the UCR programming happens within the community, UCR needs to ensure that their members are welcomed in their neighborhoods and businesses. By forging relation-

ships with local businesses, working within their establishments, mutually beneficial bonds form.

Part of the success of UCR is the ability to offer programs to their members for low to no cost. Scholarships are awarded every semester, and no one is left out of the program due to their inability to pay. They take their job of enriching the lives of the Upcounty's most vulnerable residents very seriously. They fiercely protect their participants, advocate for their needs on all levels of local, state, and national efforts. They are much more than a 'small business,' they are a family.

OPT

## FORUM

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### Why Attend This Candidate Forum

The Candidate Forum is an opportunity for becoming faithful citizens. As Anthony Bosnick wrote in the December issue of *OPT*, there are three reasons for "Becoming Faithful Citizens."

1. "Lay people are called to participate in the political life of the society around us." Mr. Bosnick cited papal encyclicals and "Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship" issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops since 2007 and available on its website: [www.usccb.org/search?key=Forming%20Consciences%20for%20Faithful%20Citizenship](http://www.usccb.org/search?key=Forming%20Consciences%20for%20Faithful%20Citizenship).
2. "...we have seen the positive impact it (lay participation) has had on the governmental officials in Montgomery County."
3. "A third reason for our work is that we are transforming the world in Christ. ...Our work is part of the new evangelization, in line with the call of the popes since Paul VI nearly fifty years ago."

### Not Our First Rodeo

Like our well attended 2018 Candidate Forum at Saint Jude,

each candidate will have equal time to address questions based on Catholic Social Teaching that emphasizes giving priority to the needs of the materially poor and vulnerable. More specifically the candidates will be asked about 1) Affordable Housing amid a crisis for low-income households, 2) Policing and Incarceration Alternatives, 3) Environmental Concerns/Climate Change, 4) Food Insecurity and 5) Barriers for Immigrants. Spanish translation will again be provided.

### Not New but Improved

Unlike our Forums in 2010, 2014 and 2018, to accommodate those who are not able to attend in person, the Forum will be livestreamed and archived. As planning continues for the Candidate Forum the Justice & Advocacy Council needs to thank Joe Dempsey and Teresa Villanueva

of Catholic Charities and Ellen Donnelly of Saint Jude Regional Catholic School. The cosponsors are working with parishes in Montgomery County to publicize the Candidate Forum including parish bulletins, websites and e-mail messaging.

### Join us in our work

The next Justice & Advocacy Council virtual meeting is Wednesday, March 23, at 7pm. For more information and to receive a link for the meeting, please get in touch with Larry Couch at [lawrencecouch1@gmail.com](mailto:lawrencecouch1@gmail.com).

Chris Farrell is a parishioner of Saint Andrew Apostle Catholic Church in Wheaton and a former member of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. His email is [mayorofarcola@gmail.com](mailto:mayorofarcola@gmail.com).

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**CANDIDATE FORUM**  
COUNTY EXECUTIVE of MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
COSPONSORED by CATHOLIC CHARITIES  
and  
JUSTICE & ADVOCACY COUNCIL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
TUESDAY, APRIL 26, 2022, 7-9 PM  
THE SHRINE OF SAINT JUDE  
12701 VEIRS MILL ROAD, ROCKVILLE MD 20853  
USE METRO BUS Q ROUTES FROM ROCKVILLE  
OR WHEATON STATIONS  
ATTEND IN-PERSON OR VIRTUALLY

## ZURKOWSKI

Con't from page 1

pendence and completely parish-focused mission were responding to a hunger by parishioners for local news and creative parish responses to emerging issues. He was right. While a small number of pastors chose to prohibit parish participation, most parishes enthusiastically joined and continue to participate. Tens of thousands of Montgomery Catholics read the six annual *OPT* issues each year. By 2005, Paul's mission was achieved, and he turned the successful small business over to Larry and Kathleen Hamm who continue *OPT* and Paul's legacy.

After founding *OPT* in 1991, Paul's vision of Catholic engagement turned to the role Catholic businesses could play in local Catholic education and community engagement. He convened a few likeminded Catholic business leaders with last names like Fitzgerald, Cahill, Kane, Coakley and others who established the Catholic Business Network of Montgomery County (CBN-MC), the first organization of its kind in the area and one of the first in the nation. Its mission is to engage Montgomery County Catholic business leaders in support of Catholic education and youth activities. CBN members help Catholic youth activities as advisors, funders, and advocates. They are a reliable corps of leaders to which Catholic schools and parishes can turn for assistance in many practical ways. By 2010, Paul was able to celebrate CBN's success as he moved on to other ventures. Since it began in 1991, CBN-MC has raised 1.6 million dollars for Catholic schools.

Paul recruited Chuck Short as a volunteer occasional columnist in 1992. In 2005, Chuck began writing for each of the six editions published each year. He continues to reflect with *OPT* readers each edition. He remembers Paul as "inspiring in his commitment to Catholic community...a clear and vivid view of servant leadership for each Catholic, especially business and community leaders." He goes on, "Through *OPT* and CBN-MC, I believe Paul has enhanced Catholic opportunity for many in our community. By honoring me with the opportunity to write for *OPT*, he enabled me to grow and live in greater spirituality."

Larry Hamm was working in the Washington office of McGraw-Hill Information Systems in 1979 when

he first met Paul, who was President of the Information Industry Association (now the Software and Information Industry Association). They worked together professionally for many years. Smart, handsome, and charming, Paul was perfectly cast as an association executive. Larry recalls that Paul had that one all-important attribute, "he genuinely liked people. He was always interested in finding out about what interested you." And he liked and understood the information business.

After Paul recruited both Larry and his wife Kathleen to be volunteer parish editors for his start-up inter-parish newspaper, Larry asked Paul how he got the idea for *Our Parish Times*. It seems that *OPT* was not his first information-product venture. While at the University of Wisconsin Paul supported himself in part by publishing monthly listings of events and activities surrounded by thumb-nail ads of the local businesses which were distributed free at all the dorms. "It's all about building community. If we recognize the priests, teachers, administrators, and lay leaders – the heavy lifters – that make our parishes and schools work, parishioners will want to read every issue and Catholic businesses will want to advertise their products and services." That was thirty years ago. *Our Parish Times* and CBN-MC are Paul's legacy to his local faith community.

As mentioned in the obituary on page 9, Paul is credited with having coined the term "information literacy." He first used it in 1974 in a proposal to the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Paul's concept was expanded upon and is now recognized as key to critical thinking about mass media and to active and informed citizenship. "Information maven Paul Zurkowski" gave the keynote address at the first European Conference on Information Literacy in Istanbul in 2012. The now annual international conference and the semi-annual *Journal of Information Literacy* are Paul's legacy to his profession.

When Larry last saw him, over lunch several years ago, Paul rhapsodized about philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's notion of radical or spiritual energy and how it was now being equated to information or 'information content' by contemporary scholars.

Requiescat in pace.

OPT

## Support the Gabriel Project of Montgomery County's Virtual Lenten Baby Shower

The Gabriel Project Cluster of Montgomery County, an all-volunteer nonprofit organization serves mothers and their families in crisis pregnancies. In the past, several supporting churches have held Lenten Baby Showers for our client families. Because of COVID, this year we are asking for support via our website, [www.gpmoco.org](http://www.gpmoco.org). Click on our Amazon wishlist and choose from any number of items. You may also support the Gabriel Project by mailing a check to: Gabriel Project Cluster of Mont. County Inc., PO Box 626, 2001 Veirs Mill Road, Rockville, MD 20848-0626.

