

What My Community Means to Me...

Written by Herndon Elementary School Students in 1970

By Barbara Glakas

September is here and so comes the start of another school year.

Built in 1961, Herndon Elementary School sits on Dranesville Road, on land that was formerly open fields, no doubt once part of a larger swath of farmland.

Once the school opened the students moved from their former school on Locust Street into their shiny new school on Dranesville Road expressing appreciation for all its updated amenities. During that time period, in the 1960s and 1970s, the Town of Herndon itself was experiencing growing pains due in part to the construction of Dulles Airport which was dedicated in 1962, a year after Herndon Elementary School opened. Development abounded in Herndon with new housing developments and stores, something that was not lost on the students. Regardless, the students had genuine, positive feelings about their Herndon community.

In 1970, a teacher at Herndon Elementary School encouraged students to write papers on what their community meant to them as individuals. These papers were published in a former newspaper called *The Herndon Tribune* on May 1, 1970. Below are some samples of what the students wrote.

PAMELA C.: "To me my community is a place of development; new streets, new and more developed houses and stores. Education is fulfilled completely, unlike other towns [that] have few good schools. This community of ours is one we should be proud of. We are supplied with food, clothing and housing. Even though in the short few months I have lived here I have learned to take part in special events and in the love of Herndon. With the guarded protection of our Policemen, Fireman, etc., we are able to have clubs, sports and even say our own thoughts without having something violent happen. Yes, I think our community is a more dependable, safe and a happy place to live in."

MARK G.: "My community it helping me grow bigger, stronger and more intelligent every day. Our school is one of the few with a Science Laboratory, helping me understand more of the wonders of science. It lets me experiment and explore on my own. The school gym has many facilities for sports, building my body, physically and mentally ... I have good sportsmanship and the coaches stress this. Even though I have not been here long, I am enjoying every minute of it. Herndon is a beautiful town, and the people keep it green. The fire and police departments are always on the alert. Though a small town, the people of Herndon try to keep their children occupied with sports, and all sorts of clubs. The people of Herndon are courteous ad polite, and I have many friends. I hope I may live here for many years. There are only two complaints I

have. I think people should donate more money to the church and that we should have more work being done to fix up the houses in the new and old developments.”

MARK T.: “When someone says ‘community’ one would probably think of a group of people or houses. But it is more than just that. It means a group of people working together to make the community safer, cleaner and a better place to live. My community means that I will have police and fire protection. It means I’ll have proper education and recreational facilities. It means I’ll have efficient public services. But most of all it means that I can learn the value of contributing to society and helping others.”

MITZI E.: “I like Herndon mainly because the people are so friendly. At the church I go to we have get-togethers very often. I also like it because the Herndon Elementary School has a gym, science lab, music room and a nice library, which many schools don’t have. At the First Baptist Church we are learning sign language for the deaf. It is very fun and interesting. We are lucky to live near such a nice airport too. It is very famous and pretty. I’m glad we are getting a new Hardee’s, but I wish the builders would hurry up and finish it.”

The Hardee’s restaurant was formerly located at the southwest corner of Elden and Monroe Streets, now the location of the Anita’s restaurant.

About this column: “Remembering Herndon’s History” is a regular Herndon Patch feature offering stories and anecdotes about Herndon’s past. The articles are written by members of the Herndon Historical Society. Barbara Glakas is a member. A complete list of “Remembering Herndon’s History” columns is available on the Historical Society website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org.

The Herndon Historical Society operates a small museum that focuses on local history. It is housed in the Herndon Depot in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street and is open every Sunday from noon until 3:00. Visit the Society’s website at www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org, and the Historical Society’s Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory> for more information.

Note: The Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday. If you have an interest in local history and would like to help, contact HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com.