

School update planned for Talbot council

The Talbot County Council will hear an update today on the planned Easton Elementary School project. Talbot County Public Schools Plant Operations and Maintenance Manager Kevin Shafer will go over current progress, budgeting and design elements.

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PHOTO BY BARB SAUERS

Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot presented Matthew Peters with the 2018 William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award for Talbot County on March 12. Pictured, from left, are Peters' family, parents Robert and Judy Peters of Mohnton, Pennsylvania; Peters; Franchot; and Peters' sister and brother-in-law, Melissa and Michael Micriotti of Newcomb.

Peters honored for service

By **CONNIE CONNOLLY**
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EASTON — Matthew Peters' two decades of service to those in need was honored on Monday, March 12, with the William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award.

Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot presented the award to the director of the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center (ChesMRC) at an afternoon ceremony attended by about 50 local leaders at the Eastern Shore Conservation Center in Easton.

"I'm thrilled to be here to present the ... award to Matthew Peters," Franchot said. "Matt, you exemplify the principles that Schaefer did."

Schaefer believed in helping everyone who asked for help, and that it was government's duty to do so, Franchot said. "He cared about people."

"That's what we're honoring today," Franchot said. "Matt cares, and his staff



PHOTO BY CONNIE CONNOLLY

Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot, left, greets Talbot County leaders who attended Matthew Peters' award ceremony at the Eastern Shore Land Conservation Center on March 12.

cares, and the board cares. And it's a lifelong commitment Matt has had."

Recipients of the annual award are selected from each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.

Peters joined ChesMRC in 2012 after having spent 13 years working and living in rural Guatemala. He also served in the Peace Corps

from 1999 to 2001. He is known to the immigrant community simply as "Mateo."

"Mateo and his staff do unbelievable work," said Rob Etgen, president of the board of directors for ChesMRC. "It really is some

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of the most inspiring actions happening on the Eastern Shore in a long time.”

Peters’ parents, Robert and Judy Peters from Mohnton, Pennsylvania attended. His sister and brother-in-law, Melissa and Michael Micriotti of Newcomb, were also on hand.

Melissa Micriotti is ChesMRC’s director of finance and administration.

Representatives from the offices of U.S. Sens. Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, both D-Md., and U.S. Rep. Andy Harris, R-Md.-1st, extended congratulations to Peters.

Franchot highlighted some of Peters’ accomplishments. Reading from the printed tribute, Franchot said, “Matthew’s accomplishments in Guatemala included recruiting and training more than 1,000 international volunteers, managing a 150-acre ecological preserve, building and managing a community library and developing educational programs focusing on natural resource management.”

“He has made it a priority to help the immigrant community on the Eastern Shore. God bless you for that,” Franchot said. “Whether it’s



PHOTO BY BARB SAUERS

Matthew Peters, director of the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center in Easton, poses with his William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award, along with Comptroller Peter Franchot and the ChesMRC board of directors on March 12.

counseling, translation services, legal advice ... your dedication cannot be underestimated or overstated. Matt embodies the altruistic motives ... of the William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award.

Franchot paraphrased the French philosopher Alexis de Toqueville’s recognition of the uniqueness of American volunteerism. In his writings, “he goes into some detail about how America has developed ... the tremendous ethic of people

helping other people.”

Franchot created the award in 2012 to honor the legacy of public service exemplified by the former Maryland governor, comptroller and Baltimore City mayor.

Franchot said he also had a “parochial interest since I happen to be the Maryland tax collector.” As Maryland’s population grows older, “we need young people to come on into our state — we need tens of thousands of them simply to



PHOTO BY CONNIE CONNOLLY

Matthew Peters, director of the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center in Easton, accepts the William Donald Schaefer Helping People Award on March 12.

keep the economy going,” he said.

Franchot said that a recent study his office commissioned “underscores the importance of being an open and welcoming state for anybody, but particularly young people.”

“So Matt, in addition to doing the right thing on a person-to-person basis, trust me, the tax collector really supports you,” Franchot said, as the audience laughed.

“On behalf of the county we want

to thank Matt for what he and his organization has done,” Talbot County Council President Jennifer Williams said. “As we know, our demographics are changing, and without you and the work you are doing many of our residents would be struggling.”

Williams told Peters that even for those who are still struggling, “You’re making the path easier.”

“We really appreciate how you’ve partnered with various Talbot County departments,” Williams told Peters. “It’s wonderful to see you in that private-public partnership, and we really thank you for being a part of that.”

Talbot County Sheriff Joe Gamble said that Peters and his staff had just finished training all of the deputies in cultural competency.

“The training was very eye-opening for our deputies and very well-received,” Gamble said. “I think it’s really a model for law enforcement in our state and across our country. I really appreciate you and appreciate the work that’s being done here.”

Honorees are selected based on their demonstration to improve the community, to promptly respond to a citizen problem through effective government intervention, to directly aid those most vulnerable in society or to establish a public-private partnership to improve the lives of fellow Marylanders.

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