

GREAT NEIGHBORHOODS



- Photos by ndrew Harnik/Examiner

Middleridge: It's more than a neighborhood, it's a community

By **Tiffany Danitz Pache**
Special to the Examiner

With its substantial homes and wide and winding leafy streets, Middleridge inspires such interest that realtors have waiting lists of potential buyers who want to move to the Fairfax County neighborhood.

"I have people call me and they are waiting for a certain style home to come on the market," said resident and Long and Foster Realtor Sheila Adams, who added that other realtors call asking when something might come up for sale. "It is a demanding area, a beautiful, tree-lined, quiet community. I just love it, I'll probably die here."

Adams isn't the only person who feels that way about the west county neighborhood, which sits just south of the intersection of Ox Road and Zion Drive. In fact, many of the original owners of the homes built in the

1970s still reside there, making turnover slow. Civic Association President Catie Morales grew up in Middleridge and waited for one of the 578 homes to come on the market before moving back.

"Me and my husband had to bide our time before we could get back in," she said. Just as they were planning to move into a different area, "a house became available and I told him I'd rather live here than in one of those McMansions."

In a normal year, there are probably 10 to 15 homes sold in the neighborhood, Adams said. "When the market was hot, we had people standing in line waiting for these houses." Lately the inventory of homes for sale has been low.

At the height of the market, prices rose to close to \$650,000, but lately they have settled back down and now range from \$490,000 to \$600,000, with the median sold price hovering right around \$550,000. The majority has at least four bed-

rooms, said Adams.

The affordable prices the square footage and make Middleridge an attractive neighborhood for young families.

Built by the Foster Brothers, there are four models that span the neighborhood: a Colonial style with family room and large fireplace called the Payne House; a four-bedroom rambler with expansive kitchen called the Braddock; a split-level Colonial called the Carter and a split foyer that can be built out to include six bedrooms called the Stafford.

When the homes were first built, farms surrounded them. The country setting provided many mature trees lending to an attractive landscape that has remained wooded. The neighborhood is encircled by a 54-acre undeveloped park and has Woodglen Lake Park on its west flank and Fairfax Club Estates on its southern tier.

"This was the boonies in the sev-

enties," Morales said. "There were a lot of trees and every backyard was wooded. ... Every house had something. Foster Brothers did a good job."

She recalled her childhood in the neighborhood fondly and is thrilled her daughter is able to have some of the same experiences.

"The ice cream man still comes down the street and plays [the Scott Joplin rag] 'The Entertainer,'" Morales said. "This is my favorite time of year in my community because everyone is outside again."

The neighborhood has a very active civic association that organizes events throughout the year. At Halloween, the kids parade to the park in their outfits and compete for the best costume. There are also prizes for the best holiday decorations, and Santa Claus bounds down the hilly streets in a truck to amuse the children.

Adams sums it up: "This is a fabulous neighborhood."

