

Newsletter - DC Chapter Bridge

Friday, September 11, 2026



There is something comforting about watching September arrive. This seasonal shift brings a new routine and fresh plans. As I am embracing what the current season offers, the world slows down, and everything looks amazing.

I love watching the trees' leaves as they naturally turn yellow; the golden hues and cooler breeze bring a peaceful transition – a reminder of quiet time and more

satisfaction. I appreciate the beauty of nature more deeply without dwelling on what has already gone.



This landscape is more promising because it makes me feel happy and grounded. I can take up things that matter to me without worry. A big part of this routine is the sense of anticipation it gives me. It is a feeling I am looking for: something fresh that keeps me curious about my surroundings – one that has both fun and novelty. I am rejuvenated and renewed by what works best in life. The season encourages me to reset my plans – with more clarity about my healthy goals. I structure my days around personal activities (i.e., cooking, reading books, and other meaningful tasks). This plan is more intentional about what matters and letting go of what doesn't. As a result, I restore my sense of self and find joy in the little things the current season offers. Just as one season ends and another begins – carrying memories and new experiences – life blossoms with possibilities.

In the summer, I did not get this chance because I was too busy to balance personal and family responsibilities. When fall approaches, I usually reimagine my meal plan with

healthy ingredients, socialize, set up a new wardrobe, and focus on health, the house, and any intellectual task. In my meal prep, I enjoy unfamiliar flavors that excite and surprise me. Pumpkins and winter citrus are available in fall and winter; I rediscover their unique flavors.



In the same vein, I chose my favorite book. Reading helps me clear my mind, stay active, or get connected to the world of knowledge. I comprehend a new perspective beyond my own. These healthy habits allow me to escape from the monotony of routine, which can so easily breed

boredom – one that can result in unnecessary fog in our thinking and keep us anchored in our comfort zone rather than learning something fresh and exciting.

With this habit, I return to each new day refreshed and have more engaging conversations with myself what comes next. I spend my day without missing anything in life.





In September, I also organize the DC Chapter Bridge annual flagship event. This space brings us closer to the community and is intellectually stimulating – one that is deeply embedded in the way we experience culture, taste, and creativity, all coming alive at once. For this, I identify a talented voice that offers a unique learning experience for everyone - while everyone has a good time.

This year, the DC Chapter Bridge keynote speaker, Laurie A. Watkins, inspired us to hold community

conversations that encourage women to seek health and fitness advice from high achievers.

Her book offers good advice on managing stress and getting healthy! For example, she advises that we should eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince, and dinner like a pauper. She strongly encourages exercise, healthy food, rest, and relaxation, which are linked to emotional and mental health. In this event, she strongly encouraged building smart habits to uplift our spirits. Whether we choose to go to therapy, consult a trainer, or hire a babysitter, we can't do it alone. According to her, it's impossible to be successful on your own. You must recruit people around you, and if you don't have the resources, then ask friends. Don't be afraid to reach out to someone and ask for help. You can't do this kind of thing alone. None of us can.

Her meaningful advice marked an important milestone for our community, reminding us to care for ourselves and nurture our own well-being through meaningful connections, healthy food, and exercise.



Laurie A. Watkins is an esteemed author and global speaker – contributing to major news networks, podcasts, and panels, and a wellness and mental health advocate. She is based in Washington (you can contact Laurie at: hello@laurieawatkins.com).

Vendors List and Bios:

Isabel Quintana (Spain):



Isabel Quintana is originally from Spain. After a career in infrastructure and finance living in several countries, moving to the U.S. inspired her to focus on family, creativity, and her passion for bringing people together around the table.

That passion led her to create Boxford Home, a home-based home-textile business specializing in tablecloths, placemats, runners, napkins, bread baskets, and coordinating accessories. Using beautiful coated fabrics primarily from Spain that are liquid- and stain-repellent, Isabel combines style with everyday practicality. Her goal is to create warm, inviting tables where family and friends can gather, connect, and make lasting memories.

Fayha Fatima Zia (Pakistan):



Fayha Fatima Zia is an author from Reisterstown, Maryland, and the youngest of four children. The daughter of Pakistani immigrants, she attends the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore. In her free time, Fayha enjoys traveling, reading, writing, playing tennis, watching TV, and playing the sitar, an Indian classical instrument. Her first book, *The Truth*, explores the theme of friendship, reflecting on the important role friendship plays in her own life.

Gurpreet Kaur (India):



Gurpreet Kaur is the Founder and Curator of Saaj by G, a contemporary South Asian jewelry brand that blends cultural heritage with modern style. After more than 15 years in Data & Analytics, including leadership roles, Gurpreet transitioned from the corporate world to pursue her passion for entrepreneurship and grow Saaj by G full-time.

Through thoughtful design and curation, she brings traditional South Asian craftsmanship to today's lifestyles, creating jewelry that is elegant, versatile, and rooted in culture. Her vision is to create modern heirlooms that celebrate identity, preserve artistry, and share the beauty of South Asian jewelry across cultures, generations, and occasions.



Faryal Ahmad (Pakistan):

Faryal Ahmad brings together a strong background in finance, a passion for real estate, and a commitment to giving back. After a career spanning more than two decades in finance and financial analysis, including leadership roles, she transitioned into real estate, where she is now a licensed REALTOR® in Virginia and Maryland. She enjoys helping individuals and families navigate buying, selling, and investing in real estate with confidence and care.

Beyond her professional work, Faryal is passionate about women's empowerment and supports small-scale, home-based handicraft initiatives that provide opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Pakistan.

At heart, Faryal is deeply family-oriented and feels most at home surrounded by the people she loves. She lives in McLean, Virginia, with her beloved husband, two teenage sons, and three very spoiled and adorable cats. When she

isn't working, she treasures time with family and friends and staying connected to her community.

Acknowledgments to Andrea Bernardo, Arti Duggal, Florence Kando Fraval, Mariam Gomez, and Nida Jamal. Your support as DC Chapter Bridge Board Members has been invaluable, and I am truly grateful.

DC Chapter Bridge would love to welcome you to our next gathering in September 2027. For more information, please contact Shaziah Zuberi at:

dcchapterbridge@gmail.com

Website: www.tasteofpakistaninfusion.com









