

Keeping Up With Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

Since 1984, Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC), a not-for-profit group of resident-volunteers, has supported Alexandrians with mental disabilities and their families through advocacy, education and fundraising to meet social, vocational and emergency needs.

SPRING 2016 FUND DRIVE

FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM



The People We Serve

Of the 5,000 Alexandrians served by the Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) last year for whom income is known, 88 percent have annual family incomes of \$25,000 or less. Alexandrians of all ages receive mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services. Of the CSB's clients, 28 percent are children under the age of 18.

Friends is a 501(c)(3) volunteer organization. Friends supports clients of the CSB. The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for Alexandrians with mental illness, intellectual disability or a substance dependency. CSB programs are implemented by the City's Department of Community & Human Services (DCHS). Visit www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS for more information.

Friends also supports community education projects with the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria and other health-related agencies and non-profits, special activities for CSB consumers and West End Wellness Center members, and supplemental equipment and furnishings for CSB residential facilities.

Consider a Donation

Please make your check payable to Friends of the AMHC and mail to Friends, 720 N. Saint Asaph St., Alexandria, VA 22314. You will receive a receipt. Help us be green by including your email address.

To donate online, go to Razoo.com

If you would like to make a donation in memory of or in honor of someone, include a note with your contribution.

Imagine Walking in These Shoes

IT IS NOT always easy to know what others are experiencing, but your donations to Friends over the past six months have helped people facing situations that are not difficult to envision:

► **IMAGINE** you are an immigrant family on a low fixed income whose oldest child was born with a debilitating condition. The child, now accepted and happy in high school after having no formal education in his native country, needs winter clothing and shoes. Donor generosity allowed Friends to provide \$300 to clothe the child.

► **IMAGINE** you are a family with a new baby, paying for a crib, diapers, formula, baby clothes and a car seat in order to bring her home from the hospital. After these purchases, your family is \$500 short on this month's rent. Collaborating with other area charities, Friends makes up the shortfall.

► **IMAGINE** you have recently been released from jail and are looking for a job, but need emergency dental treatment because of a painful tooth abscess. Friends provides \$100 to offset part of the dental clinic's costs in providing treatment.

► **IMAGINE** you are retired on a low fixed income and need immediate transportation to medical appointments and grocery shopping because your car's transmission is shot. Friends funds the \$25 fee so that you can participate in the City's Senior Taxi program.

► **IMAGINE** you are in any one of these situations and you or a member of your family are also living in recovery from a mental illness or substance dependency, or living with an intellectual disability.

The list of ways we help goes on, with assistance made available thanks to the generosity of our Friends donors. ♥



“Spring2ACTion” on April 20 for Friends!

Help us expand community support with your donation

WHETHER through word-of-mouth or social media, we hope you will encourage a friend, neighbor or colleague to donate to Friends on April 20 through Spring2ACTION, the Alexandria Community Trust's (ACT's) annual day of community online-giving.

Requests have more than doubled for help with DCHS clients' special and emergency needs. Expenses for clients' basic needs have risen too.

As Friends' Spring2ACTION ambassador, you can share the message that recovery is possible through treatment and community support. All donations, both large and small, will help Friends support recovery.

Please help us reach out to the community by sharing the following information.

► You can find Friends' Spring2ACTION donation site by googling Spring2ACTION. Razoo.com and typing “Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center” into the search box or

2ACTION day, April 20.

► Every donation, even the minimum \$10 donation required by Spring2ACTION, will help Friends achieve its mission. (The average request for assistance over the past three months has been \$183.30.)

► Donors may choose to click on an additional button to cover service fees charged by Razoo and ACT. By paying an extra eight percent, plus \$.30 per transaction, the donor's total gift will go to Friends.

by going directly to www.bit.ly/friendsoftheAMHC.

► Early Spring2ACTION donations can be made starting March 20. While charged to the donor immediately, these early donations will appear on Friends' Razoo page on Spring-



► Non-profits participating in Spring2ACTION can win cash prizes for raising the most money, having the most donors, or by having a donor selected at random. Every online donation on April 20 can help make Friends a winner! ♥

AT A GLANCE

April 20, 2016
Spring2ACTion
Online Giving Day

May 10 & 12, 2016
MHFA Training*
2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

* MHFA training is free and held at
4480 King St., Room 514.
To register, go to
www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS

Honors and In Memoriam

Friends received recent donations in honor of:

Susan Drachsler
Gabriel Duer
Mary Lewis
Sara Manner
Ann and Charlie Parker
Angela Starrs
Susan Thompson
Veterans of the U.S. Armed Services

Friends received recent donations in memory of:

Judith Krasnow
Lance Marshall

FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS

Daniel Sweeney, Jr., Chair
Marian Wiggins, Treasurer
Rebecca Grueneberger, Secretary
Robert Bovey
Margo Chisholm
Susan Drachsler
Margee Eife
Libby Eife-Johnson
Afeework Eshetu
Betty Livingston
Elizabeth McDaniel
Mary C. Ray
Val Reilly
Susan Thompson

THANK YOU TO LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORTING 2015 ART UNITING PEOPLE

Financial Support

Jack Taylor's
Alexandria Toyota/Scion

Refreshments & Gift Certificates

Best Buns Bread
Company in Shirlington
Giant in Alexandria Commons
Harris Teeter in Old Town
La Madeleine on King Street
Monroe's on Commonwealth
Avenue in Del Ray
Royal Restaurant on
N. Saint Asaph Street
Safeway in Bradlee
Shoppers Food and
Pharmacy in Potomac Yard
Sugar Shack on
North Henry St.
The Warehouse Bar
and Grill on King Street
The Wharf on King Street

Highlights of Alexandria's Mental Health Services in 2015

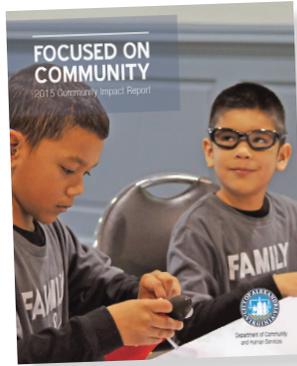
THE DEPARTMENT of Community and Human Services 2015 Community Impact Report highlights mental health services provided to Alexandria residents last year.

► **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Outpatient Services** served 1,017 individuals, providing individual and group mental health therapy to 595 adults, substance abuse counseling to 332 adults and mental health services to 90 older adults. Of those participating in services, 88 percent became higher functioning.

► **Emergency Services**, which provides 24-hour crisis intervention to individuals having a serious mental health and/or substance abuse problems, served 850 individuals, with an additional 674 interventions provided at the jail and 67 geriatric emergency interventions.

► **The West End Wellness Center** served 144 individuals. The Center offers psychosocial rehabilitation for adults with severe mental illness through skill building classes, recreational and socialization activities; family support and education; and pre-vocational and vocational services to support job placement.

You can read about these and the City's other mental health and substance abuse services online at www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS. ♥



Advocating for Mental Health Care

OVER THE past several months, Friends, through NAMI's action alert system, urged lawmakers to increase spending and services for mental health care.

Among other issues, we advocated to expand jail diversion services; increase permanent supportive housing; expand access to crisis response and stabilization services; and give family members a chance to be involved in the treatment process when a loved one is being evaluated for emergency custody, temporary detention, or involuntary admission. ♥



CIT Assessment Center opens in Alexandria

ON MARCH 1, the City of Alexandria opened a Crisis Intervention Team Assessment Center (CITAC) as part of the City's ongoing effort to help individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.

CITAC is located in the Emergency Department of Inova Alexandria Hospital. Police take individuals who are in crisis to CITAC, where they can be safely evaluated by a mental health clinician and referred to resources to best meet their needs. The individual can readily address immediate mental health and medical issues, which can lead to diversion from jail.

In addition to providing a confidential and respectful environment for psychiatric evaluation and referrals to necessary resources, CITAC procedures allow police officers to return to patrol duties more quickly. Typically, when an individual is experiencing a mental health crisis and is in police custody, the evaluation process takes up to eight hours. CITAC will

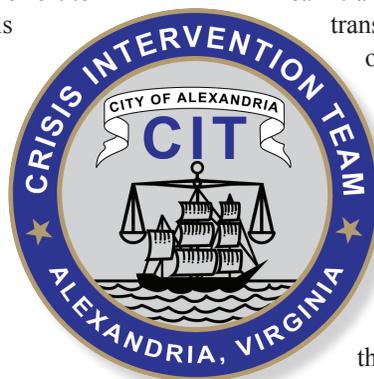
allow police officers to transfer custody to a CITAC hospital security officer who has completed a 40-hour Crisis Intervention Team training. Once the

transfer of custody occurs, the police officer is able to return to patrol duties while the individual in crisis continues to receive the assistance they need.

Across the country, CIT training and assessment locations have increased the number of persons who are referred successfully to treatment and away from the criminal justice system.

In Alexandria, more than 400 first responders have completed the 40-hour CIT training, which provides them with the education and practice to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and the ability to respond compassionately and effectively.

CITAC is funded by an annual grant of \$217,792 from the State Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. ♥



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CIT Team in the News

AT ITS annual awards luncheon on March 15, the Alexandria Crisis Intervention Team recognized five City employees for their skill in dealing with individuals whose disruptive or suicidal behavior suggested the possible influence of mental illness or substance use disorders.

Honorees were Officers Tarek Helmy and Frank Powers of the Police Department, Deputy Darold Crawford of the Sheriff's Office, Communications Officer Kanasha Foster of the Department of Emergency Communications, and Paramedic Chip Myers of the Fire Department.

These City civil servants, as well as many of their coworkers, are effectively putting to use training that aims to improve emergency response to persons who are displaying behaviors that may stem from possible mental illness or substance use disorders so that crisis situations may more likely be defused and less likely wind up in the criminal justice system. ♥