



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 2010 FUND DRIVE

www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa/friends.html

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.

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

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center, Inc., is a 501(c)(3), non-profit volunteer organization. Friends supports clients of the Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB). The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for Alexandrians with mental illness, intellectual disabilities or a substance dependency problem. CSB policies and programs are implemented by the City's Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa for more information.

Friends also provides support for community education projects with the Partnership for A Healthier Alexandria, special activities for CSB consumers and West End Club members, and supplemental equipment and furnishings for CSB residential facilities.

Friends Board Members

Robert Bovey
Michele T. Cole
Susan Drachsler
Margee Eife
Libby Eife-Johnson
Brigitte Guttstadt
Betty Livingston
Margaret Moore
James Porter
Tiffany Sanchez
Dan Sweeney, Jr.
Claudia Waller

Help Friends Reduce Stigma

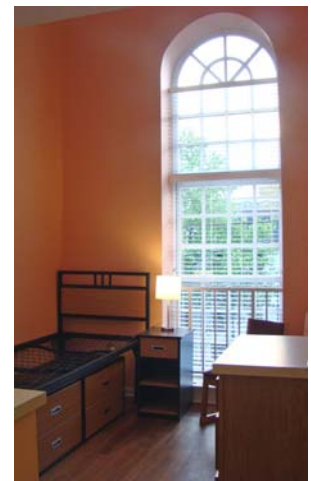
Bring Change 2Mind, a mental health public service campaign featuring actress Glenn Close, is the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria's theme for its 2010 Anti-Stigma HOPE Campaign. The HOPE Campaign will include a series of free events that foster understanding and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. You can make a difference in our community by participating in the campaign with your friends and neighbors in the following ways:



- Show the Bring Change 2Mind public service announcement on a laptop at a civic, social or religious group meeting. If you are unable to access the internet, you can request a DVD of the video. A folder of supporting materials is also available by emailing Carrie.Fesperman@vdh.virginia.gov or calling 703-838-4400 ext. 263.
- Bring your family and friends to see *Canvas*, a PG rated film full of hope and humor. Starring Marcia Gay Harden and Joe Pantoliano, the film is an accurate and sympathetic portrayal of mental illness and the effects it can have on a family. The free showing, followed by a discussion, will take place on Thursday, May 27 from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. at the Masonic Temple. More information is available at www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa.
- Select a book or film with a mental health theme for your book group. A list of recommended titles will be available at Alexandria libraries in late-May, and at www.healthieralexandria.org.
- Attend the fall showing of *Minds on the Edge*, a filmed discussion among a panel of distinguished individuals about mental health issues. Join the conversation as local officials discuss responses to these issues in Alexandria. Check www.healthieralexandria.org in late-September for details.

Safe Haven

The Safe Haven is opening this spring. The program will provide permanent housing and supportive services for up to twelve chronically homeless Alexandrians with mental illness and sometimes co-occurring substance dependency. Friends advocated for this important program and contributed a special fund created by donors in memory of Friends' board member Bruce Thompson. Additional donations to Friends, including a contribution from the Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community, have helped Safe Haven prepare for its new residents. Visit www.alexandriava.gov/mhmrsa for more information about the Safe Haven.



Right: One of 11 bedrooms in three separate apartments inside the Safe Haven.

Donations Make A Difference

The following note arrived in the Friends' mailbox from a Community Services Board client receiving Acute Care services. His car was involved in a "hit and run" incident, and he was having trouble seeking recompense to repair the damages.

I would like to thank the "Friends of Mental Health" for the recent monetary assistance so that I could get my car repaired and on the road in order to resume my training and my work. A lot of organizations were not able to help and I really appreciate what you did for me to help me get my life on track. ... This is more important than just a regular car repair. It's the key to my success since I need my car to resume my training for my Commercial Driver's License. This will help me get a job that will support me and my family members in the future. ... I appreciate it very much and have nothing but good thoughts. Thanks to you all I will be able to succeed in what I'm doing.

Here are some other ways Friends' donors have helped CSB clients. Whether the need is great or small, Friends works to maintain the wellbeing, recovery and hopeful spirit of CSB clients.

- Friends purchased a bus ticket for a West End Club member to visit her father in North Carolina. Her father was dying from prostate cancer and she had not seen him since 1985.
- Friends purchased books for a residential client who is taking a course in information technology. The client was able to save up for the class, but could not afford the textbook. Friends also paid for another client to take a GED course.
- Friends paid for a client to have an evaluation, diagnosis and surgery on his larynx through VCU Medical Clinic in Richmond. Friends paid \$300 and the client was able to afford the remaining \$188.
- A client who was abused by her husband was able to secure her own apartment. While she could afford the rent, she was unable to pay the additional security deposit. Friends collaborated with local churches to pay the security deposit.
- When a teen client was able to return home from a residential treatment program, he moved into a small apartment with his mother and four siblings. Friction developed when he and his brother tried to share a crowded bedroom. Friends helped the family purchase bunk beds to relieve this situation.

Spring 2010 Honorees

Since the Spring 2009 newsletter, donations were made to Friends in memory of Judy Krasnow, Bruce Thompson, Lois Van Valkenburgh, Homer Walkup, Dr. Herb Weinshank, Harvey Wiener and Charles Willis. Donations were made in honor of Bob and Rosalind Bovey, Libby Eife-Johnson, Jason Jackson, Greg Moore and Mary Riley.

Special Thanks

Friends extends heartfelt thanks to individual donors and the following community-minded organizations:

The Mason Hirst Foundation for awarding Friends a 12 month-grant to help CSB clients with special needs and emergency needs and to help underwrite community education programs.

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth for providing a grant for substance abuse prevention programs in City of Alexandria Public Schools.

The Goodwin House Foundation for including Friends in their Matching Gift Program.

The Brookville-Seminary Valley Civic Association for purchasing trauma recovery workbooks for young CSB clients participating in the System of Care and Home Based Services programs.

ASAP Printing & Graphics in Del Ray for donating materials and services for a Friends mailing.

CSB staff who coordinated a silent auction at their holiday party and donated themed gift baskets.

Give Back Alexandria, an initiative of the Alexandria Community Trust, for their support from 2007-2009.

Friends welcomes the opportunity to explore partnership projects with other organizations to fulfill such needs as materials for parent workshops, help with fundraising events or the donation of goods for the CSB's geriatric clients during the holidays. Contact Dan Sweeney at dlsweeney@comcast.net for more information about partnering with Friends.



A CSB therapist working with children in a System of Care program.