SOHO SERVES



When a Black Hawk helicopter fatally collided with American Airlines Flight 5342, hundreds of Alexandria's emergency responders raced to the scene. After the around-the-clock recovery effort, SOHO mentors stepped up to honor & support these community heroes.

From left to right: Executive Director Linda Odell, Board President Courtney Dixon, Mentors Debi & Michelle, Director of Programming Maddie Nance, friend of SOHO Stephanie, Assistant Program Manager alumni Michelle & Jenny, and mentor Erika pose with AFD servicemembers.



SOHO mentors know a thing or two about creating safe, empowering spaces. When we learned that the Alexandria Fire Department (AFD) was planning a brunch on behalf of their first responders, we eagerly offered to contribute. The AFD staff needed an opportunity to release stress, celebrate their efforts, and share fellowship with the only people who can truly understand what they endured during the recovery- their fellow team members. SOHO strives to provide trauma-informed mentoring, and foster the emotional safety needed to process and heal from trauma in a supportive group atmosphere. It was our honor to extend this mission to AFD heroes.

The first responders who attended the brunch were enveloped by a community of care. SOHO volunteers warmly greeted each person as they arrived, served brunch with a smile, and sent every attendee home with a "Love, SOHO" cupcake. By sharing a comforting meal, coping with humor, learning about tools to heal from trauma, and petting therapy dogs, the AFD staff enjoyed a morning that was all about them. As attendees mingled and relaxed, they took turns decorating 67 heart balloons on a SOHO-designed banner, paying tribute to the 67 victims they served by bringing their families closure. Thank you, Alexandria Fire Department.