

# KEEPING UP WITH Friends

of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM

FALL 2025

## ABOUT FRIENDS

### OUR MISSION

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC) provides financial help and hope to Alexandrians receiving City services for mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities.

### OUR APPROACH

Friends is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 with the knowledge that community makes a significant difference for those living with a mental health condition, developmental disability, or substance use on their path to recovery.

Friends' primary goal is to provide a financial safety net for Alexandrians receiving mental health services from the City's Community Services Board (CSB). Friends uses donations to provide help and hope to these individuals and their families for special and emergency needs, such as housing, medicine, dental care, transportation, social and educational activities, and basic life necessities.

Additionally, Friends supports the City and other partners working to advance mental health throughout Alexandria—those who strengthen the safety net; improve mental health awareness and advocacy; reduce stigma; and enhance training for CSB staff.

## CALL TO ACTION! THE NEED IS GREAT. HELP FELLOW ALEXANDRIANS BY DONATING TO FRIENDS TODAY!

A new fiscal year brings new beginnings and new challenges. In FY2025 Friends spent \$89,334.10, utilizing reserves from the pandemic and incoming donations of \$65,200.54. This leaves Friends with few resources for the emergency needs of Alexandrians who participate in services through the CSB. For the first time, Friends declared a one-month moratorium, to last from October-November 2025, on requests for assistance. This disparity between income and expenses was largely driven by the \$41k Friends spent helping people avoid eviction. Other expenditures were for medical/dental needs, utilities, transportation, childcare and camps for children, and job/educational training. The good news is that rent requests are down significantly as other sources of funding have become available. However, the need for funding for other needs remains high as Alexandria feels the effect of furloughs, inflation and escalating costs of medical care. Friends is asking its supporters to dig deep to replenish our coffers as we move toward winter and the end of the calendar year go help Friends' primary goal of providing a financial safety net for Alexandrians receiving services from the City's Community Services Board (CSB).



## SAVE THE DATE! CALLING ALL CAREGIVERS

Care for the Caregivers: Finding Your Community Supports Saturday November 15 from 10 a.m. to Noon at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center (4850 Mark Center Drive)

Friends of the AMHC is proud to present this free event for Alexandrians providing caregiving to family and friends in our community. Caregivers have an important job, but it can be isolating. Caregivers often neglect their own health and well-being as they strive to keep up with the demands of their role.

# ABOUT THE CSB



The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for Alexandrians with mental health conditions.

In FY 2024, the CSB served 4,425 Alexandrians of all ages through mental health, developmental disability and substance use services. Historically, of those for whom income is known, nearly half have had annual family incomes of \$15,000 or less. The CSB is part of the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS).

## FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS

**Anna Dvorchik**, Chair

**Elizabeth A. "Betty" Livingston**, Outreach

**Annette Santiago**, Client Liaison

**Ian Ring**, CSB Liaison

**Monica Rusk**, Treasurer

**Vera Sarkis**, Social Media

**Hon. Allison Silberberg**, Outreach

**Lindsey Lawson Battaglia**, Advocacy

**Adam Bloom-Paicopolis**, Website

**Matthew Aliberti**, Grant Writing

**Lindsay Clarke**, Grant Writing and Outreach

**Tess Clarke**, Outreach and Communications

**Andre Bizier**, Outreach

This event focuses on helping caregivers find the support they need in our community. Learn about maintaining physical, nutritional and emotional well-being and the supports that are offered by the City of Alexandria and private businesses that serve Alexandria.

We are lucky to have Nancy Fagan & Tippi Geron of Continuum Care Strategies that provides geriatric and behavioral health care management services; Adrien Cotton, Wellness Expert, Ashley R. Johnson, Division Chief, Aging & Adult Services, Department of Community & Human Services; and Remi Rory, nutritionist and owner of MNE Fitcamp as presenters at this event.

Healthy refreshments and beverages will be provided. The event and parking are free but donations to Friends are welcome. Tickets are available: [givebutter.com/piUF14](https://givebutter.com/piUF14)



## HIGHLIGHTS OF PEOPLE SERVED

This year, Friends is proud to have continued coming to the assistance of our residents. Here are stories of Alexandrians whose lives were positively affected by Friends and your generous donations!

### FRIENDS SUPPORTS A PARTICIPANT IN RECOVERY COURT

The Alexandria Recovery Court (ARC) stands as a beacon of hope for individuals navigating addiction recovery and legal struggles. ARC believes that everyone deserves a chance at recovery, and that by supporting individuals in overcoming their challenges, we contribute to a safer and more vibrant community. Their goal is to empower participants to become law-abiding, healthy and productive members of the community. To achieve this, they not only provide intensive treatment but also comprehensive services that address the greater issues that accompany addiction.

Martin, a participant in Alexandria's recovery court, needed help paying for one month of daycare. That assistance was essential to allow Martin to look for employment and continue his treatment and court obligations. Providing Martin with this assistance made it far more likely that he will become a productive member of his community.

### FRIENDS SUPPORTS TEEN MENTAL HEALTH

Friends had the opportunity to provide lunch for students who participated in Spanish language support groups at Alexandria City High School. Groups made services more accessible for teens who might not be able to access them outside of school hours. Being able to provide



lunch alleviated time restrictions as well as supported anonymity for those who wished to participate. The groups helped DCHS therapists build trust with the students and facilitated a more natural liaison into important conversations during stressful times for many, particularly Hispanic youth.

Anonymous surveys filled out by the students after each session indicated they felt safe, heard, supported, and that the group was a space they could talk about various life stressors, including adapting to life in the US.

## FRIENDS SUPPORTS HOUSING DURING UNEXPECTED PAY GAP

Allison is an hourly worker at an Ability One job site. The job site has a strict COVID policy that prevents workers from coming in if they test positive. Allison tested positive for Covid-19 and was out of work for a lengthy period. Friends paid her rent for one month until she was able to return, relieving her housing insecurity during a time of illness and uncertainty.

## Spotlight on a City Employee

Friends could not function without the work and advocacy of the case managers and therapists who serve CSB clients. This Fall, we spotlight...

### Darrel Brown



#### Where do you work in CSB?

I'm the Supported Education and Employment Specialist for the TRAILS program, which helps adolescents and young adults experiencing their first psychotic episode build skills to work, study, and live independently.

#### When did you start?

I've been with the program for two years.

#### What do you find most rewarding about what you do?

Helping individuals gain independence through employment and education to build a stable future.

#### What is the hardest part of your job?

Finding resources for clients whose temporary needs fall through system gaps.

#### How have you used the support of Friends in your job?

FRIENDS has funded laptops for classes and helped clients cover essential bills to maintain access to vital services.

#### What effect has Friends had on the residents you serve?

Clients deeply appreciate FRIENDS' support, and I'm very grateful to have them as a resource.

## IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Mental Health  
Insurance Information  
Enroll Virginia  
703.364.9456

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Intake for  
Adult Mental Health,  
Developmental Disability,  
and Substance Use  
Treatment Services  
703.746.3535

.....

24/7 Emergency  
Mental Health Services  
703.746.3401

## DONATE TO FRIENDS

Donors may send a check of  
any amount to:

**Friends of the Alexandria  
Mental Health Center**  
4850 Mark Center Dr.  
Alexandria, VA 22311

#### ONLINE DONATIONS

**friendsofamhc.org**  
or

**givebutter.com/friends-  
of-the-alexandria-  
community-mental-  
health-center**

## SHARE FRIENDS!

Before you recycle this  
newsletter, please help  
us enlarge our circle of  
Friends. Pass it on to a friend,  
neighbor or family  
member who may wish to  
support Friends' mission.

## HELP US BE GREEN!

Send us your email address at  
**FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM**





**Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center**

4850 Mark Center Dr.  
Alexandria, VA 22311

## Friends Advocacy Goals for 2025

While bed space in psychiatric and crisis units is always a priority for Friends, this year we are focused on maintaining Medicaid at its current funding levels.

Medicaid is in the news these days as a government program that may be on the chopping block. Medicaid does not only support older adults, it also supports individuals who have mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities including children and families. Cutting Medicaid funding directly harms our most vulnerable populations. Please let Congress and your state representatives know that Medicaid funding must be preserved

## Need Help in a Crisis? Call 24 Hours a Day

- **Adult Protective Services** | 703.746.5778 or **APS State Hotline** | 1.888.832.3858
- **Child Protective Services** | 703.746.5800 or State 1.800.552.7096
- **Domestic Violence** | 703.746.4911
- **Substance Use Disorder Residential Treatment** | 703.746.3636
- **Emergency Mental Health Services** | 703.746.3401
- **Sexual Assault** | 703.683.7273

## Suicide Prevention Resources

- Call or text 988 24 hours/7 days a week. Chat online at 988va.org
- The Trevor Project, LGBTQ+ Youth: 1.866.488.7386 or TrevorText, a confidential resource that provides live help over text messages: Text START to 678-678. Chat with someone online 24/7 through **Trevor Chat**.

## How to Give to Friends

Friends of the AMHC is a Board of volunteers who make sure that your donations go directly to the needs of Alexandrians in the form of direct financial assistance, education, or training for community members.

**Donate online** or mail a check in any amount to:

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center  
4850 Mark Center Drive Rm. 8107  
Alexandria, Virginia 22311

Consider choosing Friends of the AMHC through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

To learn more, please visit our website at **[friendsofamhc.org](http://friendsofamhc.org)**

## Volunteer Opportunity

Friends is looking for more board members. We are an all-volunteer group that provides support to the Alexandria Community Services Board. Commitment requires up to 10 hours a month for Friends activities. For more information email Anna Dvorchik at [friendsofamhc@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofamhc@gmail.com).

*Thank  
You!*

For those who give to Friends, **thank you** from the bottom of our hearts! If you are just hearing about Friends, we hope you will include us in your charitable planning.