

# Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families (SMVF)

Newsletter: December 2025

**Happy December!** As we celebrate the holidays, let's remember our military families and those who are serving. This season can be challenging for many — with grief, deployment, financial strain and other stressors. We encourage you to engage with the **SMVF** (Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families) community by offering support, understanding and resources to help military families enjoy the holiday season despite any challenges.

Check out the resources, events, community highlights and military information in this month's newsletter.

## LENDING A HELPING HAND FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Clothing Drive:** Winter clothes for homeless and at-risk Veteran's during the winter.

[soldiersangels.org/operation-warm-winter/](https://soldiersangels.org/operation-warm-winter/)

**Holiday Meals:**

[operationhomefront.org/holiday-meals-for-military/](https://operationhomefront.org/holiday-meals-for-military/)

**Holiday Toy Drive initiatives:**

[MilitaryFamily.org](https://MilitaryFamily.org)

[Operationhomefront.org](https://Operationhomefront.org)

**Toy Drive – Hospitalized Military Children in Walter Reed**

Saturday, December 20, 1 p.m. to Friday, May 15 at 6 p.m.

[Register Here](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Army v. Navy Game Day**

Saturday, December 13, 9 a.m.-7 p.m..

[Register Here](#)



Scan to learn more  
about SMVF

[alexandriava.gov/go/4966](https://alexandriava.gov/go/4966)



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMUNITY &  
HUMAN SERVICES**



# Year-End Wrap Up

## **“An Amazing Time at the Fair,”** by Nerina Cella

On Thursday, March 8, I had the privilege of joining the community for an essential event and sharing information about the mental health and substance use treatment services offered through the ACSB Same Day Access program. I attended the free Arlington Resource Fair for Federal Workers and Contractors, hosted by Rep. Don Beyer, his staff, Mayor Gaskin and other council members. Community services boards from Arlington County, the City of Alexandria, Fairfax County and the City of Falls Church also participated. The event was held at Wakefield High School.

I spoke with attendees interested in how screenings are conducted for service members, veterans and their families. I explained the initial screening process and highlighted the role of the SMVF coordinator, who can provide interim case management when needed.

The fair featured close collaboration with programs such as the Arlington Housing Program (eviction and foreclosure prevention), Neighborhood Health, Volunteer Alexandria, Enroll Virginia, postpartum services, Legal Services of Northern Virginia, Fairfax Coordinated Services Planning, the Arlington Employment Center, Inova Cares for Families and others. Together, these organizations offered tools to help community members navigate a challenging and uncertain employment climate. This pop-up event provided access to unemployment assistance, housing support, eviction prevention, tax preparation help, food aid, behavioral health and substance use resources, and information on federal workers' rights.





# Community Highlights

Human resources representatives were also available to discuss job openings within each CSB. Many who stopped by my table were exploring job opportunities in the community. I had the pleasure of meeting current and former federal employees and engaging in thoughtful conversations about challenges in Alexandria, including food insecurity, affordable housing, employment barriers, reentry support after incarceration, reducing recidivism and better serving marginalized communities.

I had some dialogue with current staff members at Arlington and Fairfax CSBs, who shared the main barriers to adequate housing, childcare, employment, and food based on client contact at the start of 2025. Community members I met were feeling confused, lost, and experiencing a season of uncertainty. Some attendees had already been laid off, were currently on leave, or were waiting to hear when their last day at work would be. I sympathized with everyone I connected with and provided a range of community provider resources.

I also met and took photos with City Manager Jim Paragon, Congressman Don Beyer, Mayor Gaskins, and Councilman Aguirre. We discussed how pop-up events like this are vital to maintaining community unity during challenging times.





# Let's Get Cookin'

As we prepare for the holidays, senior therapist Paola N., has taken a resource page from the Department of Veteran Affairs, highlighting a recipe for Cranberry- Glazed Turkey Meatballs!

Check out the **U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs nutrition page**, for more recipes!



## Cranberry-Glazed Turkey Meatballs

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 30 minutes | Total: 45 minutes

Yield: 5 servings | Serving Size: ~4 meatballs

### Ingredients

1 pound lean ground turkey (90% lean or higher)

1 egg, lightly beaten

½ cup old fashioned (rolled) oats

½ cup finely diced onion

¼ cup lowfat (1%) milk

1 tablespoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon ground thyme

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon ground black pepper

Zest from 1 lemon (Optional)

### Glaze

1 (14-ounce) can whole berry cranberry sauce (or 1½ cups homemade cranberry sauce)

½ cup low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth

1 tablespoon honey

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, gently toss together the ground turkey, egg, oats, onion, milk, garlic powder, thyme, salt, pepper, and lemon zest (if using).
3. Use 2-tablespoon cookie scoop (disher) to divide the mixture up and roll into balls. Place the meatballs onto a baking sheet.
4. Bake the meatballs until they reach an internal temperature of 165°F, about 25-30 minutes.
5. While the meatballs are cooking, add the glaze ingredients to a small saucepan (pot).
6. Place the pot over medium-high heat, bring to a rapid simmer, and stir as needed until the glaze is slightly thickened, about 5-7 minutes. Keep warm over low heat until the meatballs are done cooking,
7. Toss the meatballs with the glaze and serve, or place the glazed meatballs in a slow cooker set to warm and serve from the slow cooker.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 290 | Total Fat: 8 g | Saturated Fat: 2.5 g  
Sodium: 345 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 34 g | Dietary Fiber: 2 g | Protein: 21 g

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



VA

U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



# Community Resources

## Resources for financial assistance and student interest free loans:

It's that time of year when high school students start applying to college and exploring ways to finance their education through student loans, scholarships, and other resources. We would like to introduce these opportunities to our SMVF students.

The **Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)** offers grants to support career development and community outreach programs through the MOAA Foundation (TMF), benefiting 50,000 uniformed service members and veterans each year. For information on the 2026 New Student Application – Education Assistance Program, follow this link. Applications opened on Nov. 1, 2025, and close on March 1, 2026.

## 2026 New Student Application - Education Assistance Program - MOAA Charities

2026 New Student Application - Education Assistance Program

### Welcome to the Education Assistance Program 2026-27 Application for New Students

*\*This application is for new students who have not yet received funding from our program. If you have previously been awarded funds, please fill out the renewal application.*

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Before you begin your application, please review the following information:

#### General Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for an interest-free loan, you must meet the following requirements:

- 24 years of age or younger (your 24th birthday must be on or before March 1, 2026)
- If parent is military officer-
  - All children of officers are eligible
  - Parent must sign up for a paid MOAA membership if child is selected to receive financial assistance and continue the membership until the child is no longer in the program.
- If parent is enlisted military personnel-
  - Parent must be active duty, Reserve, National Guard, or retired. No membership is required. **Children of former enlisted personnel are not eligible.**
- High school or college GPA must be 3.0 or higher.
- Children attending U.S. military academies and academy prep schools are not eligible.

*\*Paid MOAA membership is not required to submit an application. However, if your sponsor is a military officer, an active paid membership is required to receive your disbursements.*

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#### Program Timeline

Please pay attention to your email and MOAA communication channels for updates.

**November 1 - March 1:** Application opens

**Spring:** Finalists are notified and must complete additional paperwork.

**August:** Disbursements are sent out by August 31.

*\*Exact timelines vary every year based on a variety of factors. Due to the legal requirements of distributing loans, it is vital that students complete all necessary paperwork early in order to avoid delays.*

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For questions about eligibility, please email us at [edassist@moaa.org](mailto:edassist@moaa.org). To learn more about our programs, [click here](#).

**APPLY**

Opens  
Nov 1 2025 12:00 AM (EST)

Deadline  
Mar 1 2026 11:59 PM (EST)