

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & EVENTS

Human and Health Services

Welfare Reform. The City initiated welfare reform eight months ahead of the State's April 1, 1996, deadline for Northern Virginia. The City's program, *Alexandria Works!*, placed 595 participants in jobs from April 1996 through June 1997, including 84 from the Center for Employment Training (CET). Since being retained by the City to provide skills training for Alexandria welfare recipients, CET has matched its job training to the needs of private employers. Current training offered by CET includes automated office skills, printing and graphics, shipping and receiving, building maintenance, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning. In September 1996, the Employer Advisory Committee of the *Alexandria Works!* Coalition and the Department of Human Services sponsored a Job Fair at the Alexandria campus of Northern Virginia Community College. Twenty-two employers participated in the Job Fair, which resulted in 15 *Alexandria Works!* recipients gaining full-time employment. Additional job fairs are being planned.

Human Services Committee. This committee of City Council, consisting of Vice Mayor Euille, Council Member Rich, City Manager Vola Lawson, and City staff has met regularly since the fall of 1995 to review the organization and operation of all City human service programs. During FY 1997, the Committee commissioned a number of studies and forwarded recommendations for change to City Council, including:

- ❖ Consolidate homeless and emergency service programs. City Council in February 1996 approved the Committee's recommendation to consolidate 11 City programs providing housing, homeless and emergency services under the Office of Economic Opportunities within the Department of Human Services (DHS). The change is designed to reduce duplication of effort and to provide lower income residents with access to multiple services at one location.

- ❖ Consolidate homeless and emergency shelter programs. A review by DHS concluded that both shelter



Alexandria seniors take on students from Northern Virginia Community College in a fast-paced game of volleyball at the City's Nannie J. Lee Recreation Center.

Early Childhood Development. The City's Office for Early Childhood Development (OECD) expanded the number of children receiving financial assistance with child care services from 836 in June 1996 to 1,092 in June 1997. Eight of the 18 child care programs serving at-risk children in the City (including Head Start and Network Preschool, each with three sites) have achieved accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Five other programs are preparing for accreditation. The OECD worked with the Children's Foundation of Washington, D.C., on Project Opportunity, a program providing training, job placement and on-going support and monitoring for mandated welfare reform participants interested in child care as a career. City Council approved \$90,000 from the Children's Fund towards start-up costs for two new infant/toddler classrooms to provide quality child care services for children of welfare reform participants.

Adult Day Health Care Center. In December, the Center moved into its newly renovated quarters in the City's Lee Center. The facility was designed for day care use and includes new dining and activity rooms, a lounge, a new commercial kitchen, fully accessible bathrooms and laundry, a covered patio and administrative offices. Founded in 1986, the program serves up to 24 frail elderly Alexandrians.

programs are needed.

❖ Expand and improve child day care programs. Studies completed by the Social Services Advisory Board and the Early Childhood Commission led City Council in 1997 to expand the Child Day Care Fee System in FY 1998 by about \$330,000 using increased federal funding under the new Child Care and Child Development Fund; convert the financing of extended day care provided by the Campagna Center from a City contribution to a per child subsidy; strengthen the City's commitment to quality early childhood programs through training and evaluation; increase collaboration between the City and Schools through development of a memorandum of understanding on space usage and evaluation; and add staff to the office for Early Childhood Development to serve the increasing number of eligible families.

❖ Close the Alexandria Residential Care Home (ARCH), a ten-bed group home on North Columbus Street for frail elderly adults. The Commission on Aging recommended to the City Manager that the ARCH remain open. In May, City Council approved full funding for the Residential Care Home in the FY 1998 Budget.

❖ Contract out for senior transportation services. Agency on Aging staff reviewed whether continued operation of the senior transportation system by City staff was cost effective, compared to private sector alternatives. With City costs found to be comparable to the private sector, staff recommended that the City continue providing the service. The Commission on Aging endorsed the staff recommendation.

❖ Revamp the process for making contributions to non-profit human service organizations. At the Committee's recommendation, City Council changed the human services contributory budget process to a block grant process. Effective with the FY 1999 budget, City Council will set an aggregate amount of funding and staff will issue a Competitive Request for Grant Proposals. To facilitate this change, Council established an 18-member task force, including representatives of non-profit groups, to develop the process, to set priorities for human service funds and to make recommendations on issues such as whether funding would be multi-year or single-year and whether funds could be used for operations or limited to programs. The Task Force will

Arlandria Health Center for Women and Children.

After this popular neighborhood health center's federal grant ended in September 1996, a partnership of private and public agencies managed to secure \$221,000 from private and public grants, including the federal government, and \$100,000 each from the City of Alexandria and the State government. This will enable the clinic, at 3804 Executive Avenue in Arlandria, to continue operating for the remainder of FY 1997 and into FY 1998. Alexandria Neighborhood Health Services, Inc., a new private non-profit organization, was formed in 1996 to secure ongoing funding and to coordinate health services for the future. The center provides health services to an average caseload of 1,300 women, infants and children, and handles over 5,100 patient visits a year.

Teen Pregnancy Prevention. Virginia Health Department Statistics for 1995 (latest data available) show 366 teen pregnancies in Alexandria, an increase from 322 in 1994. The Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program provides life-skills training to at-risk youth between the ages of nine and 17 who live in areas of the City identified with a high incidence of teen pregnancy. The program supports five neighborhood-based prevention projects and delivered pregnancy prevention services, including health care, mentoring, cultural and recreational activities, career-shadowing, and volunteer opportunities, to more than 200 youth in FY 1997.

Walk to Fight Breast Cancer. Over 150 City residents received free mammograms as a result of the October 1996 Walk to Fight Breast Cancer. A project of the City Manager's Breast Cancer Awareness Committee and coordinated by the Office on Women and Inova Alexandria Hospital, the annual Walk brings together community groups and City agencies to promote early detection and to raise money for the Alexandria Breast Cancer Fund at the Hospital. The Fund provides free mammograms for uninsured and underinsured women who live in Alexandria. The 1997 Walk is scheduled for 8:00 a.m., Saturday, October 25 at Cameron Run Regional Park.

HIV/AIDS. Ninety-one new cases of AIDS and 40 new cases of HIV infection were reported in 1996 in Alexandria. There were 43 AIDS-related deaths in the City in 1996. Since 1982, there have been 620 reported AIDS cases in the City of Alexandria and 379 AIDS-

report to Council in October.

Public Assistance Programs. Due to an improving economy and local welfare reform efforts, City residents receiving Temporary Assistance To Needy Families (TANF) formerly Aid to Families with Dependent Children continued to decrease in FY 1997. The average monthly TANF caseload decreased to 1,166 households, a 21% decrease from FY 1996. The average monthly food stamp caseload decreased slightly to 2,912, a 3% decline. The average monthly Medicaid caseload rose slightly to 3,991. In May, the City awarded a contract to Cost Containment Inc. to implement a new method of issuing food stamps. As of August, food stamp recipients are able to pick up their food stamps at authorized sites in the City rather than redeeming Authorization-to-Purchase cards at banks or City Hall. This will allow more flexible hours for working Food Stamp recipients.



Todd Kamber, General Manager of Generous George's Positive Pizza & Pasta Place, interviewed prospective employees at this year's Youth Job Fair sponsored by the City, the Chamber of Commerce and the Commission on Employment.

Jobs for Youth. Since 1993, the Summer Jobs for Alexandria Youth Program (SJAY) has helped economically disadvantaged youth obtain jobs in the private sector. Sixty-nine employers participated in the 1996 summer program by hiring 101 youth and providing monetary contributions or donating in-kind services. The Summer Jobs for Alexandria Youth program is sponsored by the City, the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce, and the Alexandria Commission on Employment and is managed by the City's Office of

related deaths reported. HIV infection continues to rise faster among women, African-Americans, persons who inject drugs and heterosexuals. The Alexandria Health Department provides an array of services, including: testing for HIV infection; partner notification services for persons diagnosed with HIV infection; comprehensive services for 150 low-income residents, including primary medical care, case management, dental care, drug assistance, and nutritional counseling and nutritional supplements. The Health Department also contracts with Hopkins House for AIDS outreach and prevention services. Based on recommendations by Alexandria's Task Force on AIDS, City Council supported legislation to increase funding for new treatment therapies (protease inhibitors) through the Virginia Department of Health's AIDS Drug Assistance Program. With AIDS Task Force support, City Council in June 1996 created a part-time administrative position within the Health Department to coordinate the efforts of public and private service organizations working to complete an AIDS work plan.

Alexandria Children's Comprehensive and Enhanced Service System (ACCESS). The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse continued implementation of this five-year federally funded model research demonstration project. One of 22 grant sites in the U. S., ACCESS provides services to seriously emotionally disturbed children and their families. In FY 1997, ACCESS provided transition support and aftercare services to assist five seriously emotionally disturbed children move from institutions to group homes. Data gathered on 102 children who received services suggests that ACCESS is improving children's mental health and reducing behavioral problems.

Mental Retardation Services. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse (MH/MR/SA) in FY 1997 provided 94 children and adults with mental retardation services and support funded by Medicaid, as compared to 81 in FY 1996. Fifteen students with mental retardation completed publicly funded special education programs in June, compared to nine the previous year. Mental Retardation Services staff helped these students to plan their transition to adult services or employment. Through the Parent-Infant Education Program, MH/MR/SA also served 194 infants and toddlers whose

Employment Training (OET). In 1996, the U.S. Department of Labor selected OET's Summer Jobs program as a national model of a successful partnership between local government and the business community. In January 1996, City Council approved a year-round Jobs for Alexandria Youth Program, including both a summer and a school-year component. The program placed 35 youth in part-time jobs during the school year.

Youth Services Study. Representatives from public and private organizations and City boards and commissions issued a comprehensive Youth Services Study in May. The report discusses demographic and economic shifts that have dramatically altered the profile of Alexandria's youth population since 1970. The study found that the City's large number of programs for youth would benefit from greater coordination and closer linkages to youth policy goals. To ensure accountability, the study proposes a series of benchmarks by which the community can be held responsible for desired and measurable outcomes. It also recommends an annual Report Card on the community's progress in addressing youth issues, and a new Youth Policy Commission to coordinate youth service policy goals citywide. The Study has been distributed to community groups, City boards and commissions, and community agencies for review and comment. At the public hearing meeting on September 13, City Council will receive public comments on the study.

development was slower than expected, compared to 152 in FY 1996. An additional 42 infants and toddlers received case management services through the program, compared to 34 in FY 1996.

Drug Treatment Services. A total of 763 persons, including 91 juveniles, received outpatient substance abuse services and another 132 adults received residential treatment in FY 1997. The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services awarded a continuation grant of \$53,381 to the Community Services Board to provide substance abuse education and treatment services to 123 youth who have been involved with the court system.