

## MULTICULTURAL SERVICES INITIATIVE

In September 2000, the City launched a Multicultural Services Initiative to ensure that Alexandria's culturally diverse residents have access to City services and resources and become active participants in government. The City published the first edition of its Quick Guide to City Services (in Spanish) and began distributing it to the community in August 2002.

## ENGLISH-AS-A-SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Last year, more than 2,000 people enrolled in ESL day and evening classes at five locations - T.C. Williams High School, Francis Hammond Middle School, the Stonewall Jackson Building, William Ramsay Recreation Center and the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.



## YOUTH NIGHTS

The Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities continued to sponsor Saturday night events for students in grades 6 through 8 and 9 through 12 because of their popularity during FY 2001. Over 1,600 students attended these events at recreation centers throughout the City, which included splash parties, roller skating parties, comedy nights and a teen talent show. During January, 225 youth in grades 9 through 12 worked with Recreation staff to plan "2002 Live," which featured youth bands and deejays and was held at the Mount Vernon Recreation Center.

## CHILD CARE FEE SYSTEM

In FY 2002, City Council set aside an additional \$1 million in the budget for the Child Day Care Fee System. As a result, the fee system waiting list was completely eliminated and all eligible families were served as they applied.

## Did You Know?

## TAX RELIEF FOR ELDERLY AND DISABLED

In February, City Council approved a substantial increase in benefits in this program, which targets low income renters age 65 and over or persons with total disabilities. Beginning in FY 2003,



\* On December 15, community members gathered at the Vola Lawson Animal Shelter to create 400 hand and pet paw prints in the sidewalk as part of the most successful fundraiser in the Animal Welfare League history, raising more than \$40,000 for shelter construction.

\* For the first time, Fort Ward Museum offered a summer camp for kids that featured marching and drilling, arts and crafts activities, period reenactments, 19th century games, music and songs. During the week the children made a quilt, learned about the underground railroad, wrote in their soldier journals and made models of the fort.

\* Fort Ward Museum received a \$28,371 State grant for costs of conservation of the fort walls, which require stabilization to preserve the northwest bastion.

households with incomes up to \$25,600 per year can qualify for monthly rental assistance on a sliding scale ranging from a maximum of \$200 per month (\$2,400 per year) for households earning under \$12,800 per year down to \$100 per month (\$1,200 per year) for households earning between \$21,000 and \$25,600 per year. Previously, households with incomes below \$18,000 per year received a lump sum payment of \$1,500 per year to help offset their rental expenses.



City Council increased the real estate tax exemption from \$2,358 to \$2,684 for qualified elderly and disabled residents, an amount equal to the City's average residential real estate tax bill for 2002. Household income limitations for citizens wishing to obtain a deferral of real estate taxes on their homes have been increased from \$40,000 to \$62,000. The interest rate on real estate taxes deferred under the program has been reduced from 8% to 5%.

### TEEN PREGNANCY

Using \$100,000 in funding provided by City Council, the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP) began an aggressive advertising and media campaign to promote public awareness about teen pregnancy prevention. The first edition of the biannual ACAP magazine for youth was published and distributed in fall 2002.

### VOLA LAWSON ANIMAL SHELTER

The City's new

animal shelter, approved by Council in 1999 and located at 4101 Eisenhower Avenue, was dedicated on May 18, 2002. The shelter is named after Alexandria's former City Manager, Vola Lawson.



### Did You Know?

\* JobLink continued to expand and improve services to persons with disabilities who are seeking employment by conducting an accessibility study and being designated as the resource for the City and all its departments for obtaining Braille and other alternative formats.

### NEW HEALTH DEPARTMENT FACILITY

Following a City-funded facilities needs assessment in April 2001, and City Council approval of funds in the FY 2001-2006 Capital Improvement Program, the Alexandria Health Department will relocate its main health facility from its site at 517 N. St. Asaph Street to a six-story office building located in the West End of the City at 4480 King Street. The proposed renovation and relocation, which will provide ample parking, and a convenient location to serve the majority of its customer base, will be completed by mid 2004. The Community Services Board's day programs for persons with mental illness (the Clubhouse) and persons with substance dependence will be co-located at this site.

## SKATEBOARD PARK

During the past year an area at Lucketts Stadium was identified as the location for the new 10,000 square foot City skate park. In September, the Planning Commission and City Council approved the special use permit for the park. Over the next few months staff will be working with interested citizens to determine the skating amenities and park layout which will be completed by spring 2003.

## TEEN CENTER WORK GROUP

A City group is looking at the needs of teenagers in Alexandria and reviewing the possibilities of a teen club, run by a not-for-profit group and/or a private enterprise. A survey conducted at Minnie Howard and T.C. Williams High School and responses from 500 students identified specific activities that are of interest to the teens in a club setting.



\* The Youth Employment Program partnered with the Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) and T.C. Williams High School to develop a pilot summer work experience program for 12 youth with disabilities who will have a job coach and DRS supportive services.

\* Nearly 70% of childcare centers in Alexandria are accredited through the National Association for the Education of Young Children, while the average nationally is about 7%. For this reason, Alexandria was named recently by the Ladies Home Journal as the number one City for childcare in the country.

\* The 2002 Successful Aging Expo welcomed 200 guests with workshop session topics such as Maintaining Memory, Managing Stress, Travel, Stroke and Cosmetic Make-overs.

\* City Council approved the expansion of the Duncan Branch Library in the Del Ray neighborhood, completing a ten-year cycle which included building the new Charles E. Beatley Central Library, and expanding and renovating the Barrett and Burke branches.

\* The Alexandria Library now has a Spanish Internet public access terminal in all four Libraries.