

**The Alexandria Commission on Aging**

**Annual Report**

**To**

**the Alexandria City Council**

**for**

**FY 2018**



Respectfully Submitted

By

Barbara (Babs) Waters, Vice Chair

on behalf

Bob Eiffert, Chair

**August 2018**

**The Alexandria Commission on Aging Annual Report  
to the  
Alexandria City Council  
for  
FY 2018**

**Alexandria City Council**

The Honorable Allison Silberberg, Mayor

The Honorable Justin Wilson, Vice Mayor

The Honorable Willie F. Bailey, Sr. Councilman

The Honorable John T. Chapman, Councilman

The Honorable Timothy B. Lovain, Councilman

The Honorable Redella S. "Del" Pepper, Councilwoman

The Honorable Paul C. Smedberg, Councilman

**Commission on Aging Members**

(No new members and no term expirations)

Bob Eiffert, Chair

Babs Waters, Vice Chair

Michael Kreps, Secretary

(Officers were re-elected at the May 2018 meeting to serve in 2019)

Mary Lee Anderson

Charles Bailey

Sharon Dantzig

Tiffany Del Rio

Alan Dinsmore

Joan Dodaro

Carol Downs

Cedar Dvorin

Christine Fulgencio

Staff support: Debbie Ludington, DCHS

David Kaplan

Pat Killeen

Jane King

Jim Lindsay

Jan Macidull

Mary Parker

Councilwoman Del Pepper

Denise Mackie-Smith

**Commission on Aging Liaison Commissions and Organizations**

Department of Community and Human Services

Division of Aging and Adult Services

AARP

At Home in Alexandria (AHA)

Alexandria Adult Day Services Center

Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities

Alexandria Commission for Women

Alexandria Human Rights Commission

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

Goodwin House

INOVA Alexandria Hospital

Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria

Senior Center at Charles Houston

Senior Services of Alexandria

St. Martin de Porres Senior Center

Successful Aging

Alexandria Police Department

Virginia Hospital Center

Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities

Arlington County Commission on Aging

The Alexandria Commission on Aging (COA) is comprised of 21 members appointed by the Alexandria City Council. According to City Ordinance, the Commission is responsible for **“identifying the needs of the elderly, developing overall planning to meet those needs, evaluating service delivery plans as implemented, and advocating on behalf of the elderly.”** In 2017, the full Commission met ten times, the executive committee met eleven times. The COA’s standing committees met numerous times to address the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan on Aging approved by the Council in 2012.

The original seven goals listed below, represent the framework for the Strategic Plan on Aging approved in 2012 and serve as a guide for the FY17- 18 Commission on Aging Annual Report. It also provides a model for the AARP/WHO Age-Friendly Community Plan which was completed by the Commission on Aging in 2018.

### **The City of Alexandria: Member of the AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities**

As is demonstrated in the following reports on its priorities and accomplishments, the COA has been committed to a strategic approach to advocating on behalf of the older residents of Alexandria. Following the City Council’s approval of the “Alexandria of Our Future, a Livable Community for All Ages, Strategic Plan on Aging, 2013 to 2017,” the COA has focused intently on the plan’s goals, based on the characteristics of a livable community, refined them as needed, and developed a committee structure that enabled it to concentrate steadily on the priorities essential to meeting the goals.

Because the current plan ended in 2017, the Commission sought the approval of the Mayor and City Council to join the AARP/WHO Network of Age-Friendly Communities, which provides the Commission a framework for planning its advocacy goals on behalf of older residents for 2019 through 2021. The AARP/WHO role is to assure a sound planning and evaluation process for creating an age-friendly plan, but in no way do the two organizations determine the goals that the city chooses. The Mayor and City Council, following recommendations of the Commission on Aging and a broad range of stakeholders, made the final determination of the plan’s contents.

The Strategic Plan on Aging approved by the City Council in 2012 was developed after intensive efforts to gain the understanding of the needs of aging residents in the City. It has become apparent, however, to DAAS, The COA, the Alexandria Council of Human Services Organizations (ACHSO) and many other organizations in the City that a more robust analysis and response to the needs of older minority residents is needed.

The diversity of Alexandria’s population is one of the City’s defining characteristics. Because aging may pose a variety of special challenges to minority populations, diversity is a major and cross-cutting priority for Alexandria’s Age-Friendly Plan, and will be reflected in the “domains” that AARP/WHO recommend as the essential elements of an Age-Friendly Community.

AARP/WHO define the characteristics of age-friendly communities (or livable communities), which comport with the characteristics as articulated in the City's current plan, as domains, and include the following domains:

**Outdoor Spaces and Buildings:** Availability of safe and accessible recreational facilities and other spaces and buildings.

**Transportation:** Safe and affordable modes of private and public transportation.

**Housing:** Availability of home modification programs for aging in place as well as a range of affordable and accessible, age-friendly housing options.

**Social Participation:** Access to leisure and cultural activities, including opportunities for older residents to socialize and engage with their peers as well as with younger people.

**Respect and Social Inclusion:** Programs that promote ethnic and cultural diversity, as well as multigenerational interaction and dialogue.

**Civic Participation and Employment:** Paid work and volunteer activities for older residents and opportunities to engage in the formulation of policies relevant to their lives.

**Communication and Information:** Access to communications technology and other resources so older residents can connect with their community, friends and family.

**Community Support and Health Services:** Access to home-based care services, health clinics and programs that promote wellness and active aging. as noted above,

### **Goal 1: Communications and Outreach**

**Goal One: Communication about programs and services available to older Alexandrians and adults with disabilities is readily accessible to all in a variety of formats and languages and is presented in many and diverse venues**

#### **FY 2018 Accomplishments:**

- Participated in Diversity Committee listening sessions held at St. Martin de Porres Senior Center, Charles Houston Senior Center, Annie B. Rose House, and The Fountains.
- Provided information about programs and services each month for *Aging Well in Alexandria* newsletter that is distributed to approximately 70 congregations in Alexandria.
- Developed a short survey for use in focus groups.
- Expanded Communications Committee from three to six members (including additional COA member, SSA staff and a current Senior Ambassador) to gain additional ideas, input and

insight into accomplishing Committee goals.

- Committee member is interviewing local pharmacists and grocery store managers over the summer regarding the type of information that might be helpful to distribute to their older customers and their families, and to see if a permanent “senior information corner” might be established.
- Committee member (SSA staff) conversed with Meals on Wheels staff to identify what issues have surfaced concerning the needs of seniors who utilize Meals on Wheels (transportation is a primary need).

**FY 2019 Priorities:**

- Contact Human Resources Departments in local companies and government agencies to provide information to employees who may be caregivers.
- Develop a packet of information for local pharmacies and grocery stores to distribute to older residents and their families.
- Interview a social worker or legal services staff for an article about power of attorney, POST, contingency plans and what one can do before a crisis arises

**Goal Two: The Senior Ambassador Program is implemented in communities throughout the City.**

**FY 2018 Accomplishments:**

- Utilizing the findings of Committee member who is a Senior Ambassador in Committee’s plan of action.
- Communicated with Diversity Committee to better understand the needs of older persons whose primary language is Spanish (need for information in English was expressed for use by family members).

**FY 2019 Priorities:**

- Host a panel discussion featuring panelists from diverse communities to better understand “what aging looks like” in diverse communities - what the Committee needs to be aware of in terms of being more culturally competent and aware; where and how people access information; and appropriate ways of disseminating information; and what we can learn about aging from other cultures.
- Utilize work through faith communities and other community organizations that provide information and services to older residents.
- Provide packet of information to businesses that serve diverse communities.
- Identify leaders within diverse communities who may be interested in becoming Senior Ambassadors.

**Goal 2: Housing**

In preparing for the Age Friendly Community planning process, AARP conducted a survey of older Alexandrians to assess their perceptions of “livability” in eight domains. In the Housing section, Alexandria’s lowest scores were in overall housing costs and housing accessibility. Affordable housing ranked as the greatest need in the City. Affordable assisted living also ranked highly.

Alexandria's new housing development focuses primarily on upper-income young families, in buildings that lack modifications and neighborhood amenities needed for aging in one's home. The demand for affordable housing continues to rise, especially for those on fixed incomes, i.e., seniors. Challenges to older home owners include rising property taxes on previously lower-value properties as well as rising market rate rents.

#### **FY 2018 Accomplishments:**

- **Active involvement on and collaboration with City-sponsored groups addressing housing affordability.** Bill Harris continues to represent the COA's Housing Committee on the Housing Affordability Advisory Committee. Mary Parker serves on Alexandria Commission on Persons with Disabilities and chairs its Housing Committee. Bob Eiffert served on the City/Schools Facilities Task Force. Jan Macidull served on the Resolution 830 Advisory Group.

Through close working relations with City officials and staff, the Commission influenced the addition of affordable accessible living units in the City's Housing Master Plan. A major cooperative accomplishment by the Commission, with City support, has been the development of criteria to use when the Commission reviews development projects that could include affordable assisted living and/or assisted living units. (See Goal 3.) The Housing Office is also expanding its annual apartment and condo survey and resource list to include criteria important to adults seeking housing amenities helpful to seniors and those with disabilities.

- **Collected and analyzed Alexandria's senior-related housing data.** In 2016, Alexandria's 60+ population was 22,733. 29.6% were non-white. 2,686 residents age 55+ lived in poverty. Of those ages 65+, 3,906 had a disability. These statistics suggest a strong need for affordable housing and assisted living.

Alexandria continues to lose affordable housing units. Since 2000, the number of market rate affordable rental units declined by 90%, from 18,218 to just 1,749 in 2016. There are 568 subsidized senior and disabled independent living units in the City. Affordable assisted living for middle- and lower-income seniors is almost non-existent. (Monthly market rates begin around \$6000.)

Fewer than 6% of the rental housing units in Alexandria are affordable to households earning 50% of the Area Median Income that, for the Washington metro region, ranged in 2017 from \$46,380 for a one-person household to \$66,180 for a four-person household. (The full Area Median Income in 2018 is \$117,200.) The average rent for two-bedroom apartments in Alexandria increased by 104% from 2000 to 2018. The increase in assessed value of residential property in the City rose 187% during the same period. Owner-occupied units' median monthly costs went down slightly to \$2217 from \$2380. These levels of expense cannot be afforded by many older middle and lower-income residents living on fixed incomes. Hunger Free Alexandria reports an increasing demand at its food banks as the percentage of monthly funds needed for housing rises. Out-migration by low- and middle-income seniors continues to be a concern.

- **Explored ways City housing funds are and can be set for housing that does or could include the elderly** Both ownership and rental housing continue to be constructed in the City; however, most of the new supply is not affordable to persons with incomes at or below 60% AMI. The future demand for new affordable units is reported by the Northern Virginia

Affordable Housing Alliance to be approximately 60,000 by 2023, Alexandria's Affordable Housing Trust Account develops about 75-100 units per year. Formal meetings with the Offices of Housing, Planning and Zoning, and ARHA were held to explore ways housing for the elderly can be incorporated into new and renovated facilities/sites as well as existing and new profit and not-for-profit development projects promoted and ultimately approved by the City. The Committee advocated in public sessions for developers to build "housing for a lifetime" that meets livability and universal design standards suitable for all ages and abilities.

- **Explored as well as reviewed and commented on development projects that do or could include the elderly.** With the Office on Housing, the COA monitored and provided input on development projects that could include senior residences, including ARHA redevelopment projects, Church of the Resurrection, Fairlington Presbyterian Church, Sunrise - Washington Street, Silverado Memory Care, , and a proposed assisted living/memory care facility in Potomac Yards. Results: Two units proffered at 60% market rate at Silverado Memory Care; two auxiliary grant units for 40 years at Sunrise North Washington Street; and negotiations underway to secure a developer contribution of multiple assisted living /memory care units for low income residents in the proposed Potomac Yard facility.

## **2. Prevent the unnecessary and/or unwanted institutionalization of seniors who could remain in their homes by supporting DAAS, Senior Services, and AHA in their information and service outreach efforts to managers and residents of Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities**

### **Accomplishments:**

- Senior Services of Alexandria, DAAS and AHA continue to support "senior corners" in libraries and "naturally occurring retirement communities" (NORCs) to provide ongoing educational resources to seniors and their caregivers.
- In addition, Senior Services of Alexandria has launched a formal Senior Ambassador Program that actively involves DAAS and AHA in training naturally occurring retirement community (NORC) residents so they may serve as resources to their fellow residents. This program is now in over two dozen ownership and rental naturally occurring retirement communities in Alexandria.

COA officers provided overviews of existing opportunities for aging in place to governmental, not-for-profit and profit-making organizations. These included the role of the COA and the AARP/WHO Age Friendly Community Project.

## **3. Work with key organizations and individuals to incorporate "housing for a lifetime" features in new housing and redevelopment of existing housing**

### **Accomplishments:**

- Drafted criteria to use in discussions with developers of multi-family housing in Alexandria. Significant input was provided by ACPD, AHAAC, not-for-profit housing developers, multi-family architects, the Office of Housing (especially Code Enforcement). The criteria focus discussion with developers and other groups on housing suitable for a lifetime as well as housing and assisted living which are affordable for middle and lower income residents.
- In collaboration with AARP, COA members presented several AARP Homefit Workshops that describe ways residents can modify their homes to maximize accessibility, functionality and safety as they age.

- COA members visited New Hope Housing in Fairfax County to see how universal design features have been incorporated in their short- and long-term group housing, in this case primarily for seniors who are homeless.
- Hosted the Northern Virginia Housing Expo.

**4. Advocate for and track the impact of City Property Tax and Rent Relief Programs for elderly and disabled on these groups**

**Accomplishments:**

- The COA continues to work with City Council and others to maintain these programs that enable older, less affluent residents to stay in their homes as they age. In FY 2018, 832 households with an older adult and 59 adults with a disability were served by the City Property Tax Relief and Deferred Program. This compares with 890 and 56 adults in FY 2017.
- In the Rent Relief Program, 88 households with 126 individuals were served, compared with 79 households and 113 individuals in FY 2017. Eligibility criteria for this program have changed since 2014 as have the subsidy levels for those participating, resulting in higher subsidies and fewer participants.

**FY 2019 Priorities**

The Commission will transition to four new goals in “Alexandria’s Age Friendly Plan for A Livable Community,” while continuing its unfinished work in the preceding four goal areas.

**Goal One:** The City and community stakeholders study the feasibility of adding accessory dwelling units to existing housing as an option to increase the stock of affordable and accessible housing in the City and complete a report for submission to City Council.

**Goal Two:** Develop public and private mechanisms to enhance availability of affordable assisted living in Alexandria.

**Goal Three:** Work with key organizations and individuals to incorporate “housing for a lifetime” features in both new and redeveloped housing.

**Goal Four:** Prevent the unnecessary and/or unwanted institutionalization of those who could and would prefer to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

**Goal 3: Transportation**

**A variety of mobility options, including pedestrian-safe streets, make moving in and around the City and region possible for Alexandrians of all ages and abilities.**

Alexandria citizens expect that, when they depart their residences, whether as a pedestrian, a cyclist, or a driver, they will safely complete their trips. In order to reach this standard people and places need to be integrated in the planning, construction, operation, and maintenance of the City's transportation networks. This helps not only to provide for that standard of safety but, equally important, helps balance modes of transportation, support the economy and our diverse cultures,

and natural environments. Support of mobility options also includes streetscape amenities such as benches, public bathrooms, and safe and walkable sidewalks (no more brick pavers) and intersections that can be safely navigated by users who may require extra time to cross. Enhanced mobility options also require expansion of pedestrian-friendly lighting into residential areas. The Alexandria Transit Company's DASH bus service, along with Metro Access and Alexandria DOT paratransit provide important building blocks for the advancement of these mobility options. Ensuring Transportation for Those Who Don't Drive (AARP June 29, 2011) makes the critical connection: "...unless people have safe, convenient, and affordable transportation options, they will be stuck at home or will be at greater risk on the roads than they need to be. Having access to transportation is critical to staying connected to family and friends and pursuing day-to-day activities, both those that are essential and those that enhance the quality of life."

### **FY 2018 Accomplishments**

- Briefed City Complete Streets Coordinator on walk audits for Age Friendly Communities.
- Completed walk audits for Age Friendly Communities report on high impact pedestrian streets and intersections.
- Participated in Age Friendly Communities workshop to develop recommendations for Age Friendly Communities Transportation domain.
- Completed written report for Age Friendly Communities Strategic Plan for Transportation domain.
- Provided a list of questions for Alexandria Chief of Police presentation to Commission on Aging.
- Invited new DASH Bus General Manager to address the full Commission at its February meeting to discuss his priorities for the system and the city's upcoming transit visioning study.
- Successfully advocated for discounted senior fare on DASH bus during off peak hours on weekdays and all day on weekends. The discounted fare took effect on July 1, 2018.

### **FY 2019 Priorities**

- Work with the Commission on Aging to implement first year outcomes for the attainment of the Vision Zero goal of zero persons killed or severely injured by 2028 by monitoring the application of Complete Streets guidelines where safety issues have been identified.
- Continue to work with Vision Zero staff and Complete Streets coordinator to insure adequate levels of budget support for continued implementation of Complete Streets design guidelines and attainment of year one engineering priorities for Vision Zero.
- Monitor Vision Zero home page and dashboard to insure that systems track and respond to safety issues that require timely and accessible citizen information.
- Participate with Ad Hoc Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and Alexandrians for Safe Streets to extend monitoring of City activities relating to Vision Zero and Complete Streets.

## **Goal 4: Community Services and Health, Wellness and Safety**

**Community Services and support for Health, Wellness and Safety accommodate the expectations and needs of aging Alexandrians and support their caregivers.** Recreation is included because it so clearly supports wellness.

The accomplishments for some aspects of this goal are largely attributable to the Division of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS) in the Department of Community and Human Services.

### **FY 2018 Accomplishments**

- The Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan for a Livable Community was posted on the website and readers were encouraged to post comments via the website.
- The *Directory of Resources for Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities* was updated and 1,000 copies of the updated Directory were distributed.
- The Division of Aging and Adult Services website was updated to include additional information on VICAP.
- The DAAS brochure was translated into four additional languages [Amharic, Farsi, Korean and Spanish] and all were distributed.
- DAAS created a brochure for Adult Protective Services and several neighborhood brochures for the DAAS Senior Trolley program.
- Staff presented information about services available to Alexandria elders in several venues, including recreation centers, the Senior Academy sponsored by Senior Services of Alexandria, Senior Law Day, and the Alexandria PRIDE forum at the Beatley Library. Topics included housing, transportation, home care, mental health, legal services, Medicare and adult protective services.
- Participated in the Northern Virginia Fall Prevention Alliance sponsored by Marymount University and Goodwin House.
- Worked with Senior Services of Alexandria to develop a Senior Ambassador program that identifies and utilizes informal community leaders to inform and educate Alexandrians about available aging services; provided initial and ongoing training to the 35 Ambassadors, as needed.
- Utilized new Care Coordinator for Elderly Virginians Program funds from the State to provide Options Counseling and Specialized Outreach to older Alexandrians. This program is ongoing.
- Established a nursing position within the Division of Aging and Adult Services; recruited and initiated training of the nurse.
- Systematized volunteer recruitment and training for some of the Division's programs that use volunteers, that is, VICAP, guardianship and data management through Peer Place.
- 62 low-income incapacitated persons were served by guardians/conservators in FY2018 through the City's guardianship program, an increase of 22% over FY 2017 and an increase of 114% since FY2016.
- Added an additional individual to serve as a volunteer guardian/conservator for incapacitated and indigent Alexandrians who had no family or friends able to serve.
- Four staff gained certification in person-centered counseling.
- VICAP staff assisted 325 residents resolve specific Medicare issues and reached 347 attendees through interactive Medicare events, including tips on Medicare fraud prevention.
- Secured a new Personal Emergency Response System contractor that uses GPS service allowing people to use it outside the home. The equipment also detects and reports falls.
- Adjusted grocery shopping transportation routes based on store availability and rider preference.
- Hosted and co-sponsored the 32nd Annual Northern Virginia Caregivers Conference attended by 300 caregivers and 50 vendor representatives.
- Discount fares purchased through the Senior Taxi Yellow Card program enabled 403 elders to take 8,425 trips, and the program added 88 new riders. The cost to the rider will remain the same; however, the amount of discounted fares will increase.

- Conducted 151 emergency consultations, an increase of 69 percent from 89 in FY2016; recruited and trained a DCHS mental health therapist to assist with the emergency consultations.
- Co-sponsored the 10th Anniversary Celebration of RAFT, the Regional Older Adult Facilities Mental Health Support Team.
- Supported the Commission on Aging in finalizing its Alexandria Age Friendly Plan for a Livable Community.
- Purchased assisted listening devices for use at Commission meetings, following investigation into appropriate devices.
- Developed an emergency contract for temporary staffing at the Adult Day Services Center. This was the best way to assure that the Center stayed in compliance with the required staffing ratio. Following its success, developed a Request for Proposals for a permanent contract.
- Served on a panel as part of the spring regional Suicide Prevention Conference.
- Collaborated with the City's Housing Office to identify and assess eligibility of prospective residents for the two discounted units at the Silverado Memory Care, Assisted Living Residence.
- Worked with the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria - a citizen-led coalition of non-profit organizations, schools, municipal agencies, local businesses, government, community leaders and concerned citizens who come together to promote and preserve a healthier Alexandria.
  1. Promoted four (4) Prescription Drug Take Back Days.
  2. Co-sponsored the 2017 Annual Health Fair on October 28, 2017.
  3. Endorsed the Alexandria Health Department efforts to attack the opioid epidemic.
  4. Recognized gun violence as a significant public health concern.

In recreation:

- Better promotional materials created, including Power Plus brochure: publication specific to programs and activities for individuals 55 years and over.
- Added pickleball open-play hours and outdoor tennis courts lined for pickleball.
- A Matter of Balance classes offered at recreation centers.
- Expanded fitness and recreation classes offered at recreation centers – walking groups, weight training, line dancing, stretch it out, lunch 'n learn.
- Expanded social activities and events offered at recreation centers.
- Parks upgraded to ADA standards for accessibility.

**FY 2019 Priorities**

- Support the Commission in the implementation of the Age-Friendly Plan.
- Utilize new Older Americans Act funds to establish a Chronic Disease Self-Management Education program for older Alexandrians.
- Continue to expand the Division's ability to conduct capacity assessments.
- Expand the number of guardians and conservators who serve DAAS clients.
- In accord with the Alexandria Age-Friendly Plan, prepare detailed justifications for new mental health therapist and case manager for older adults with serious mental illness for the FY 2020 budget process.
- Evaluate applications for Homemaker-Personal Care program; select one or more home care companies, establish program, and explore the feasibility of using Peer Place for communication with the agency.
- Explore the feasibility of utilizing software to plan routes for the Senior Trolley program.
- Accept two replacement buses for the Senior Trolley program and investigate the possibility

of keeping one of the existing buses to be used as back-up.

- Coordinate work with the Fire Department's new program to work with older Alexandrians who fall and contact the Fire Department.
- Support the Department of Community and Human Services in establishing a single physical location for the majority of departmental programs.
- Bring the Alexandria Adult Services and Adult Protective Services into the No Wrong Door network by transitioning electronic recordkeeping from ASAPS to Peer Place.
- Explore the feasibility of accepting service referrals through the DAAS website.
- Reach out to older residents about health and community services, with special attention to minority communities.
- Support the Commission on Aging in building a team that takes the initial steps to create a Dementia-Friendly Alexandria.

### **Goal 5: Economic and Workforce Development**

**The important contributions of older Alexandrians to the city's economy are recognized and the innovative entrepreneurship of older residents is encouraged.**

The Commission's Economic Development Committee oversees this goal area.

#### **FY 2018 Accomplishments**

##### **Seniors as Consumers:**

- Expanded the senior discount program, the "**Silver Service Card**", which offers discounts to Alexandria residents 60+ years old, 41 businesses have signed up for the program and outreach efforts continue. Over 1250 Cards have been distributed by Senior Services of Alexandria and At Home in Alexandria.
- Worked with the Housing Committee to create a senior "wish list" for housing that can be used to identify apartment/condo complexes in the City that meet the criteria.

##### **Priorities for FY2019:**

- Priority area for the coming year will be to expand the number of participating businesses, which can offer whatever discount plans work best for them. Silver Service Card holders are encouraged to go to the websites of SSA, AHA and the City's DAAS, where they will learn more about programs and services for seniors and find links to the sites of participating businesses. The goal is to encourage seniors to be active, and enhance social interactions while patronizing local businesses and supporting our economy.
- Work with the City's Office of Housing on the project to identify housing that meets the agreed standards and share the information with the community in the 2019 edition of the City's apartment guide. The goal is to make it easier for seniors considering moving to evaluate their options in Alexandria, and keep them here.

##### **Senior Employment**

The Commission on Aging successfully advocated for hiring of a part-time senior employment specialist for the Workforce Development Center.

The City of Alexandria Workforce Development Center (WDC)

- Maintains representation on the Commission on Aging's Economic Development

Committee.

- Participated in two Senior Academies - presented programs and services.
- Participated in the JCA 50+ Employment Expo-hosted a table and facilitated a specialty workshop on site
- Maintains the 50+ Employment Corner on the WDC Web Page.
- Offers workshops accessible to the 50+ population, including specialty workshops geared towards the 50+ population.
- Works to attract employers with an equal interest in hiring qualified candidates from the 50+ population.
- Has worked to strengthen and develop partnerships with the Department of Aging and Rehabilitation Services and the National Council on Aging, with representatives from each embedded within the Center.
- Continues to share job opportunities for distribution to respective constituencies of the Senior Services of Alexandria, the Commission on Aging and AARP.
- Referred two qualified candidates to fill positions within Senior Services of Alexandria's Meals on Wheels and DOT Paratransit Programs - both of whom were hired.

#### **Priorities for FY2019:**

The COA will work with the WDC to demonstrate the success of the senior employment specialist and advocate for the job to be expanded to full time in the FY 2020 budget process.

WDC will work to increase employer awareness and incentives to employ 50+.

### **Goal 6 Quality of Life/Advocacy**

**The quality of life of all Alexandrians is enhanced by the many volunteer activities of its older residents and their continued involvement in the social and civic life of the City.**

(Commission advocacy is included under quality of life because its overarching goal is to promote the ability of residents to age comfortably and affordably in the City and remain engaged in the community.)

The strategic plan's goals for quality of life, which are civic engagement, volunteer opportunities, and meeting the expectations of the boomer generation, are realized in part through very close collaboration of the Commission, At Home in Alexandria, Senior Services of Alexandria, AARP and DAAS. These organizations are familiar with the needs and desires of older residents and work together to meet them. The groups have powerful tools, from a variety of communications strategies to organizational strength. Their collaboration yields great benefits.

The Commission's Advocacy Committee plays a key role in analyzing budgets and legislation to assure that the needs of older Alexandrians are recognized and preserved.

#### **FY 2018 Accomplishments**

- The Commission was pleased with the City Manager's proposed FY2019 budget, which did not cut services in DAAS, Tax Relief or Rent Relief. There were two considerations that the COA expressed:
  1. A study of DASH bus fares to see if there could be the possibility of a senior discount on fares.
  2. The COA supported Councilwoman Del Pepper's proposed addition of a half-time

position in the Employment Center dedicated to assisting older workers to find employment. The Commission was pleased that the City Council adopted a comprehensive budget that included the half-time position for older workers in the Employment Center and a study of the DASH fare structure.

- The COA presented the NVAN Legislative Platform to the City's Legislative Director in September 2017 and it was included as a support item in the City Council's Platform for the Virginia General Assembly in 2018.
- The COA worked with City Housing staff to respond to a new development proposal by Sunrise Senior Living to develop a new assisted living facility on North Washington Street. The COA advocated at both the Planning Commission and City Council for the inclusion of two Auxiliary Grant units for very low-income residents in the new facility. The developer ultimately agreed after City staff agreed to a slight increase in the overall number of beds in the facility.
- The COA Housing Committee met with developers of a proposed new Silverstone development for senior housing in Potomac Yard. The Committee and the COA made recommendations for the inclusion of low income Auxiliary Grant beds in the planned community.

### **FY 2019 Priorities**

- Closely monitor the City budget process throughout the year.
- Work with the Northern Virginia Aging Network (NVAN) to develop its annual state legislative platform and assure its endorsement by the City Council.
- Meet with City Council members as necessary on proposed budgets and specific aging issues.
- Testify before the City Council on matters relevant to older residents and their families.

### **The COA Diversity Committee Report**

The mission and goals of the Committee are to expand the diversity within the membership of the Commission, especially representatives from the African American community who represent the largest and most historically established minority community in the City. In addition, the Committee conducts outreach to other diverse communities (Hispanic, Asian, Ethiopian, LGBTQ, military, those with disabilities, and others) in hopes of identifying community leaders to establish senior ambassadors who can provide information to older residents and refer them to appropriate supports when needed. The Committee views this as an ongoing process to establish long-term and meaningful relationships between the COA and the various diverse communities. This will also be relevant in fulfilling the "Respect and Social Inclusion" domain that is part of designating Alexandria as an Age-Friendly Community.

### **FY 2018 Accomplishments**

- Four Diversity Committee members successfully completed the SSA's Senior Ambassador training and are now serving as Senior Ambassadors.
- Conducted 10 listening sessions with senior groups at community centers and in residential buildings.
- Conducted 2 listening sessions in Spanish.
- Coordinated translation of DAAS pamphlets from English to Spanish and distributed the

pamphlets during the Spanish listening session.

- Participated and facilitated in the day-long & follow-up Age Friendly planning workshop at the Hermitage with stakeholders from Northern Virginia.
- Diversity committee member Alan, in collaboration with Bruce Hightower, President of the Arlington Gay and Lesbian Alliance (AGLA), co-hosted a community forum.
- Met with Erica Kleiner Callaway to establish future listening sessions with the Welcoming Congregations Committee outreach for older LBGQT residents.
- Increased the diversity within the Committee (African American, Latino members).
- Added a member representative from Senior Services Alexandria to the Diversity Committee.
- Met with Audrey Davis at Alexandria Black History Museum as a venue to host a listening session.
- Participated in AARP and Senior Services of Alexandria community forum, "Making Alexandria a Livable Community for Seniors", and discussed with seniors the progress made in transforming Alexandria into a livable community.
- Met with community leaders at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and Alfred St. Baptist Church to schedule a listening session to facilitate a better understanding of what the COA does and what services are provided by the City for seniors.
- Met with Councilman Chapman, member of the Departmental Progressive Club, Inc. and communicated with President Greene and former President, Julian Haley and member Bill Euille.
- Reached out to three Ethiopian churches, Amanuel Ethiopian Evangelical, Antosokia Ethiopian Evangelical and Kidane Mihret Orthodox Church, to open talks for a listening session.
- Spoke with Duncan Solace, Senior Associate at New Heights Ethiopian Community Development Council, to set up a listening session.

#### **FY 2019 Priorities:**

- Increase the current number of Diversity Committee members who represent diverse communities by 2018.
- Support the Senior Ambassador program.
- Increase the number of COA members who attend events sponsored by organizations and faith communities that represent a diverse community.
- Engage aging service providers to enhance readiness to work with LGBTQ clients, by providing marketing materials, participating in LGBTQ community events and providing sensitivity training on LGBTQ issues for staff, volunteers and leadership.
- Use videos such as Gen Silent to reach out to the LGBTQ community and establish contact with SAGE.
- Hold regular COA meetings in venues where there is more opportunity to reach diverse communities.
- Sponsor "listening sessions" between senior groups and COA members.
- Schedule follow up to listening sessions to provide updates and feedback.
- Sponsor joint listening / information sessions between senior groups and COA members of Fairfax County and Alexandria Division of Aging and Adult Services.
- Visit African Community Wellness Fair and distribute senior-related information.
- Work with citizen organizations that provide services to the older residents of the Chirilagua neighborhood.
- Establish relationships within the Korean and other Asian communities.  
Reach families with older members through the Alexandria Public Schools.

## **Annual Commission on Aging Awards – 2018**

Each year the Commission selects recipients for four awards to individuals and organizations that have demonstrated extraordinary service to benefit older Alexandria residents. The Commission was pleased to have the Mayor present the awards at a ceremony before a City Council meeting on May 08, 2018.

The Annie B. Rose Lifetime Achievement Award for exemplary accomplishments that spanned a lifetime of public service and that were devoted to significantly improving life for older residents was awarded to Mary Hamil Parker, PhD.

Dolores Viehman received the Lois Van Valkenburg Excellence in Aging Award for an Individual for outstanding contributions to elevating the quality of life for older adults in Alexandria within the past year.

The Public Service Award, which recognizes a City of Alexandria employee who has advanced, improved or otherwise contributed to making Alexandria a more livable community for all ages during the course of his or her work, was awarded to Margaret Orlando

The 2018 Excellence in Aging Award for an Organization was presented to Hermitage of Northern Virginia.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks to all who served in various capacities as volunteers contributing to and promoting the work of the Commission on Aging this year.

A special thanks to the various City Staff members who continue to provide on-gong support in thoughtful ways as well as a professional manner, especially:

- Terri Lynch
- Debbie Ludington

Additionally, we owe a special debt of gratitude to the Mayor and members of City Council for their annual investment of personal and practical support. In doing so, you have enabled the Commission on Aging to help make a positive contribution in helping ensure Alexandria remains a livable City where its residents' quality of life ranks among the highest in the Commonwealth and the Nation.

