



KEEPING UP WITH Friends

of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

FALL 2018
FUND DRIVE

A not-for-profit group of resident-volunteers supporting Alexandrians with mental disabilities and their families through advocacy, education and fundraising to meet social, vocational and emergency needs.

FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM

BACKGROUND MASTHEAD GRAPHIC BY FREERIK



What is Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center?

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1984 on the knowledge that community makes a significant difference for those living with a mental health condition on the path to recovery.

Friends offers a safety net for low-income 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. Donations also enable Friends to support social activities at the West End Wellness Center and to engage the broader community through anti-stigma events.



What is the Community Services Board?

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

In 2017, the CSB served 4,374 Alexandrians of all ages through mental health, developmental disability and substance use disorders services. Of those for whom income is known, 49% had annual family incomes of \$15,000 or less. In 2017, 26% were under the age of 21.

The CSB is part of the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS).

INSIDER VIEW SERIES

Friends Helps Social Workers Hold Safety Net Meet Asta Lynch, LCSW

Since 2000, Asta Lynch, LCSW, Adult Intake and Mental Health Outpatient Team Leader at the Department of Community and Human Services, has worked with thousands of low-income Alexandrians with mental health conditions. She has seen firsthand the challenges of not only providing therapy, but trying to piece together funds and support for the basic life needs of some of our city's most vulnerable residents.

"Friends is an important safety net," says Lynch. "We're trying to connect people to the resources they need to recover and thrive, and unfortunately, there are things we just can't cover—whether it's transportation or unanticipated medication or help with utilities or housing. That's when we turn to Friends."

Lynch oversees a team of therapists who provide one-on-one counseling to more than 500 people a year. The majority of people they treat have been determined by the state to have a "serious mental illness." This could be major depressive disorder, schizophrenia or other highly challenging conditions that have severely impacted their income and basic quality of life.

Lynch also supervises the City's Adult Intake Unit, which assesses those who come in for care and refers them to the right services. The team meets about 1,000 clients a year. It would seem to



Adult Intake and Mental Health Outpatient Team Leader Asta Lynch

many an overwhelming job, yet Lynch says after all these years it's still "endlessly fascinating and fulfilling."

We asked Lynch for a few examples of how Friends' support makes her job easier and her clients' lives better:

► **Access to medical care:** Clients often have other physical health conditions in addition to mental health, which can have a dramatic impact on their recovery and overall well-being. Those who are uninsured and underinsured can only get access to specialists by traveling down state, so Friends helps cover transportation.

► **Getting and keeping jobs:** The City may help clients find employment, but they often lack funds for the right clothes or transportation

to and from work. So they call Friends.

► **Supplementing housing costs:** Disability funds may pay for rent, but not a security deposit. Friends helps bridge the gap.

► **Medications:** Medicaid covers some but not all medications or deductibles. Again, Friends is there to fill the gap.

"One of the things we most appreciate about Friends is that we can get the funds within 24 hours of making the request," says Lynch. "When someone is struggling or about to lose out on an opportunity, that can make all the difference."

Luckily for Alexandrians in need, Lynch and her team are also there year after year to ensure they get high quality support. ♥

DONATE TODAY!

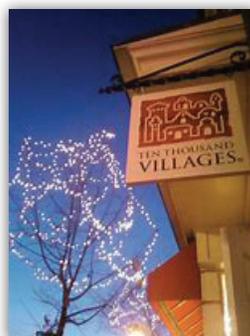
WWW.GIVEGAB.COM/CAMPAIGNS/FRIENDSOFAMHC

OR write a check payable to Friends of the AMHC and mail to 720 N. Saint Asaph St., Alexandria, VA 22314

If you would like to make a donation in memory of or in honor of someone, please include a note.

Shop and Support Friends this Holiday Season

Make your holiday gift giving especially meaningful this season by joining us on **Thursday, December 6, from 7-9 p.m.** for a shopping event at **Ten Thousand Villages, 915 King Street**. The store will donate a percentage of every item sold that evening to Friends of the AMHC. Please help us expand our visibility by telling others and by bringing friends to the event. We'll be there to welcome you with light refreshments and stories of how your generosity makes a difference.



Ten Thousand Villages is known for its distinctive, handcrafted home décor, accessories and gifts made by more than 130 artisan groups in over 38 countries. It is one of the world's oldest and largest fair-trade organizations and works to establish buying relationships in places where artisans are under or unemployed, and in which they lack other opportunities for income. Every item purchased that evening will provide a more secure income for the artisan and help Friends of the AMHC. ♥

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Giving Tuesday
November 27

Ten Thousand Villages Shopping Event for Friends
December 6, 7-9 p.m.

Free Mental Health First Aid Training
January 29 and 31, 1-5 p.m.
April 9 and 11, 1-5 p.m.
Registration required at www.survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/MHFARegistration

HELPFUL INFO & SUPPORT

Mental Health Insurance Information
Enroll Virginia
703.364.9456

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

24/7 Emergency Mental Health Services
703.746.3401



FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS

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HELP US BE GREEN!

Send us your email address!
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How Your Support Changes Lives

Providing alternative medicine for a patient in need

A 91-year-old Adult Services client was suffering from crippling peripheral neuropathy. She couldn't continue conventional medication, because it made her dizzy and tired and at risk of a fall. Her primary care physician suggested an herbal medication, lipoic acid, with which his patients had experienced success. The bottle costs \$75 and lasts two months. The client was eager and hopeful to try this medication, so Friends made it possible.

Helping a client bridge the gap on the way to a new job

A client receiving services from the Comprehensive Recovery Team was hospitalized, lost her job, and was left unable to pay her rent. After being discharged from the hospital, she obtained another job, and yet still needed to cover the rent in the interim. Together with several other donors, Friends helped subsidize her rent, keeping her employed and on track in her recovery.

Supporting Recovery

A client in the Substance Use Outpatient Program recently lost her job of 11 years. She is currently in recovery and actively seeking employment. Friends was able to fill the most basic need for a bus pass to attend therapeutic meetings and continue her search for employment. ♥

Community Groups Help Friends

Friends was thrilled to receive grants this year from the **Mason Hirst Foundation** and the **Rotary Club of Alexandria**. We were also delighted when the **Pew Charitable Trust's Employee Matching Gifts Program** matched a gift by one of our supporters. As one of the **Goodwin House Foundation's Matching Partners**, Friends gratefully receives matching funds when a Goodwin House resident makes a donation. These organizations make a huge difference in the lives of low-income Alexandrians who are participating in the City's mental health services, and Friends is very proud to acknowledge their support. ♥

Support Friends on Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday is a global day of giving that harnesses the collective power of individuals, communities and organizations to encourage philanthropy and to celebrate generosity worldwide.

This year's Giving Tuesday is on November 27th, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. It kicks off the giving season by inspiring people to give back.

To show that mental health is a priority, donate to Friends on this national day of giving. Send a check payable to Friends of the AMHC, to **Friends, 720 N. Saint Asaph Street, Alexandria, VA 22314** or donate online at www.givegab.com/campaigns/FriendsoftheAMHC. ♥



Why Support Friends? A Donor Speaks Up

"I give to Friends because I know what a huge difference a seemingly small thing can make in the outlook of someone with a mental disorder who is lacking the "wherewithal" to cope with meeting their own immediate needs. The fact that the need for this help is screened, or determined, by a mental health professional adds to the credibility of the huge service that Friends provides. And it's, as you know, a lot more cost-effective than not eliminating a stressor that might exacerbate a mental condition." – Diane Singer

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.