



Keeping Up With Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center

Since 1984, Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC), a not-for-profit group of resident-volunteers, has supported Alexandrians with mental disabilities and their families through advocacy, education and fundraising to meet social, vocational and emergency needs.

FALL 2015 FUND DRIVE

FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM



The People We Serve

Of the 5,000 Alexandrians served by the Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) last year for whom income is known, 88 percent have annual family incomes of \$25,000 or less. Alexandrians of all ages receive mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse services. Of the CSB's clients, 28 percent are children under the age of 18.

Friends is a 501(c)(3) volunteer organization. Friends supports clients of the CSB. The CSB oversees the City's publicly funded services for Alexandrians with mental illness, intellectual disability or a substance dependency. CSB programs are implemented by the City's Department of Community & Human Services (DCHS). Visit www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS for more information.

Friends also supports community education projects with the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria Anti-Stigma HOPE Campaign, special activities for CSB consumers and West End Wellness Center members, and supplemental equipment and furnishings for CSB residential facilities.

Consider a Donation

Please make your check payable to Friends of the AMHC and mail to Friends, 720 N. Saint Asaph St., Alexandria, VA 22314. You will receive a receipt. Help us be green by including your email address.

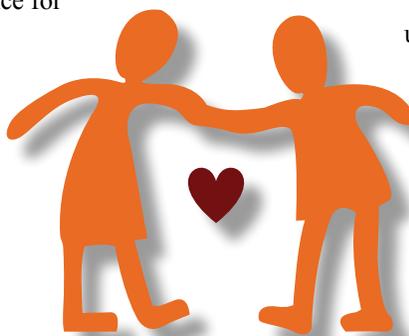
To donate online, go to Razoo.com

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

Your Donations Are Working For People in Need

FRIENDS IS PROUD to engage in advocacy and anti-stigma events such as *Art Uniting People*, the *Recovery Month Celebration*, and *Mental Health Awareness Week*, but our primary focus remains direct monetary assistance for CSB clients who experience extraordinary or emergency needs. Here are a few examples of assistance that Friends has been able to provide in the last six months due to the generous support of our donors.

Because most health insurance does not cover dental treatment, unexpected dental expenses can quickly outpace the limited budgets of people on fixed incomes. The addition of new prescriptions beyond those already budgeted often has the same effect. For persons with mental illness, the additional stress caused by unexpected expenses can be particularly harmful.



Over the past sixth months, Friends has paid \$300 of the \$750 dental bill of a person with a monthly income of less than \$1,000, and \$100 of the \$500 dental bill of another CSB client.

The loss or absence of a contributing breadwinner can also be a source of great difficulty for families already affected by mental illness. Friends recently provided \$150 for personal care needs of a woman and her two children after child support payments were not received for over two months, and \$250 help with rent for another family who lost a father's income because he was jailed for domestic violence. When a client's wife was ordered bedrest because of a high-risk pregnancy, the client worked less in order to care for his wife and child. Friends paid \$418 of the family's rent to avoid eviction. ♥

DCHS's Community Services Board Initiates New Programs

TRAILS

The City of Alexandria was one of eight localities to receive state funding to serve individuals aged 16-25 who have experienced their first episode of psychosis. The Transitioning Adults into Successful Living (TRAILS) program includes assertive outreach and engagement to identify young people in need of services. Treatment is phase-specific and provided by a multi-disciplinary treatment team using a shared decision-making model. The goal is to assist young adults and their families in achieving their emotional and personal goals and to facilitate access to services. Funding for this program began last year and the program is currently enrolling clients, with an expected capacity of 30-35 individuals. All clients actively seek/maintain employment, and/or are enrolled in college.



CIT Assessment Center

Alexandria will soon be home to a Crisis Intervention Team Assessment Center, which will allow police officers to bring people experiencing psychiatric symptoms to an assessment site at Inova Alexandria Hospital Emergency Department, a therapeutic, non-criminal-justice location where a mental health evaluation can be made. The site will be staffed 24/7 by security guards trained in mental health crisis intervention. This will allow police officers to execute quick and safe transfers of custody for individuals being held under an Emergency Custody Order and will encourage officers to bring persons in for treatment rather than incarceration. ♥



MH Priorities For the City

The Alexandria Community Services Board (CSB) of the Department of Community and Human Services has identified five funding priorities for FY 2016-2018:

1. Enhanced crisis response (top priority)
2. Local administrative costs related to Medicaid waivers
3. Medical detoxification
4. Reintegration services for high-risk youth and adults
5. Peer recovery support services

Assuming that these priorities were not changed during the City's legislative process (newsletter content was submitted before the process ended) and were approved by City Council on November 10, they will be part of the package of funding requests that the City submits to the 2016 General Assembly. ♥

AT A GLANCE

November 16 & 18
Mental Health First Aid
(MHFA) Training*
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

November 28
Art Uniting People exhibit
moves to the Durant Center
1605 Cameron St.

December 10
Art Uniting People Reception
at the Durant Center
1605 Cameron St., 6 p.m.

February 22 & 23, 2016
MHFA Training *
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.

April 20, 2016
Spring2ACTion
Online Giving Day

May 10 & 12, 2016
MHFA Training*
2:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.

* MHFA training is free and held at
4480 King St., Room 514.
To register, go to
www.alexandriava.gov/DCHS

FRIENDS BOARD MEMBERS

Mary C. Ray, Co-Chair
Daniel Sweeney, Jr., Co-Chair
Marian Wiggins, Treasurer
Robert Bovey
Margo Chisholm
Susan Drachsler
Margee Eife
Libby Eife-Johnson
Afework Eshetu
Rebecca Grueneberger
Betty Livingston
Caitlin Sweeney
Susan Thompson

HONORS AND IN MEMORIAM

Friends received recent
donations in honor of:
Paul and Cathy Schmidt

Friends received recent
donations in memory of:
Bruce Thompson

THANK YOU TO LOCAL BUSINESSES SUPPORTING 2015 ART UNITING PEOPLE

Financial Support

Jack Taylor's
Alexandria Toyota/Scion

Refreshments & Gift Certificates

Best Buns Bread
Company in Shirlington
Giant in Alexandria Commons
Harris Teeter in Old Town
La Madeleine on King Street
Monroe's on Commonwealth
Avenue in Del Ray
Royal Restaurant on
N. Saint Asaph Street
Safeway in Bradlee
Shoppers Food and
Pharmacy in Potomac Yard
Sugar Shack on
North Henry St.
The Warehouse Bar
and Grill on King Street
The Wharf on King Street

The Big Picture: Challenges and Solutions

ON OCTOBER 4, the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Alexandria welcomed Dr. Thomas Insel, Director of the National Institute of Mental Health, who shared his view of mental health and treatment in the U.S.

Dr. Insel's presentation contained both bad news and good news. He noted that neuropsychiatric disorders remain our nation's number one cause of medical disability, and they begin earlier in life than other causes. Mental illness is also a major source of mortality, with suicide accounting for three times as many deaths as homicide in 2013. And while the nation has witnessed reductions in the rate of homicides and traffic fatalities, the suicide rate is accelerating. In terms of total dollars expended, the World Economic Forum in 2011 concluded that mental illness cost families and governments more than diabetes, respiratory diseases, and cancer combined.

Despite this discouraging background, Dr. Insel found several reasons for optimism:

Legislative Initiatives: In addition to the Mental Health Parity Bill of 2008 (which requires insurers to provide the same level of benefits for treatment

of mental illness, if covered, as for physical illness) and the Affordable Care Act (which defines mental health care as an "essential benefit, eliminates consideration of preexisting conditions, and expands coverage), the proposed Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act (H.R. 2646), which enjoys bipartisan support, will address many of the remaining deficiencies.

Collaborative Care: Increasingly, delivery of services is accomplished by teams comprising primary care staff, patients and their families, and appropriate specialists to help manage ongoing chronic diseases.

Scientific and Technological Advances: The cost of sequencing a human genome has been reduced spectacularly, so that diagnosis and treatment of many diseases can be more readily enhanced by taking into consideration each person's individual genome. Smartphones and web resources will increasingly help people manage diseases, especially in areas where access to health care is limited. ♥

To view the video of Dr. Insel's talk, go to the Westminster Presbyterian Church's website at www.wpc-alex.org/article419384.htm.



A Successful Year for Art Uniting People

ART UNITING PEOPLE, *A Celebration of Creativity, Recovery and Mental Health* has had a successful year, appearing in more venues than ever, in more parts of the city.

Beginning on June 9 with a full exhibition of over 100 pieces at City Hall, for the first time ever, the show moved to St. Elmo's Coffee Pub on Mt. Vernon Avenue where it remained from July 28 until September 8. Visitors to the popular Del Ray coffee pub commented that they were previously unaware of the program.

In October, the art was divided and shown at three different locations. About 20 pieces remained at St. Elmo's until the end of the month. Others went to the gallery at The George Washington University Graduate Education Center in Alexandria, where the display was open to the public and also used by the graduate students in art therapy. A third group went to Beatley Library through October as

part of the library's annual Mental Health Awareness Week celebration. The exhibition was the focus of an October 14 workshop led by Dr. Jordan Potash, an art therapist and professor at GWU. He gave a lecture on the history and purpose of art therapy and he and his graduate students asked audience members to choose their favorite piece of art and respond to it by making their own art.

The next exhibition will open on November 28 and run through March 2016 at the Durant Center for the Arts, located at 1605 Cameron Street. A reception will be held on Thursday, December 10, at 6 p.m.

This year, also for the first time, the art was judged and five winners were chosen representing five different media. For photos of the award-winning art and other photos of the various exhibitions check out www.artunitingpeople.wix.com/artunitingpeople or look up the Facebook page for the Mental Health Anti-Stigma HOPE Campaign. ♥

Friends Seeks Fundraising Guidance

Although we appreciate your generous donations, Friends of the AMHC needs to enhance its fundraising efforts and is seeking guidance. Board members Susan Drachsler and Susan Thompson will form an ad hoc committee of community members to help them come up with new ideas, new leads and new

methods for bringing in funds for Friends.

The only qualification needed to participate is a belief in Friends' mission and a desire to help. If you would like to attend an initial get-together, please contact Friends at friendsofamhc@gmail.com. Those who volunteer to attend will determine a meeting time and date. ♥



HELPFUL INFO & NUMBERS

Mental Health Insurance Information
Jayne Baldwin of Enroll Virginia
703.364.9456

**Intake for Adult
Mental Health,
Intellectual Disability &
Substance Abuse Services**
703.746.3535

**24/7 Emergency
Mental Health Services**
703.746.3401

