DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND HUMAN SERVICES

THE NEWS YOU NEED | THE PEOPLE YOU WORK WITH

Connect

JULY/AUGUST 2016

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Don't Let Your Commute Get You Down

Find alternatives to get to work--and how you *do* your work.

Commuting got a little more complicated when Metro's Safe Track Initiative got underway earlier this summer, so we've compiled some alternatives that might make your commute a little easier.

SafeTrack is a work plan to improve the safety and reliability of the MetroRail system, cramming three years' worth of track work into less than a year. As part of the plan, 15 "Safety Surges"—long-duration track outages in key parts of the system due to major projects—will involve single-tracking and complete closures of parts of the system, resulting in reduced service and passenger capacity.

As a result, a lot of people are finding different ways to get to work—and even if you don't use the Metro, you will probably feel the impact on your own commute, if you haven't already.

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Achieving Our Vision

DCHS Director Kate Garvey

The Department of Community and Human Services envisions a community in which residents enjoy a sense of well-being, safety and self-sufficiency. Does that vision speak to you and the work that you do every day?

There are times when this vision may seem very distant. Sometimes we find ourselves focusing on responding to crises or dealing with a significant amount of day-to-day transactional work. Another challenge to connecting with a vision such as this is that it can seem impossible to achieve; the concept that all the residents of our City would arrive at a place where all key sectors of life are strong and secure is a powerful, but lofty one.

We know that both the people we serve and our organization face challenges every day. For our clients, progress can be made on one front—like a treatment or employment goal—but then barriers emerge on maintaining adequate housing. For our organization, we can make progress on communication and transparency and then regress in the areas of bullying and follow-through.

Our work is an ongoing process, and it reflects the ebb and flow of the lives of the people we serve and the culture and practices of our organization. This is long-term work that we must invest in and commit to daily.

It is critical that we have a clear pathway towards achieving our vision and that we each know what role we play in that work. The work that we have been doing with the Office of Performance and Accountability in the development of a dashboard for our performance has helped illustrate where some of our shared work resides.

For example, in order to achieve **safety** with the individuals we serve, we are focused on child and adult protection, emergency services and preventing family violence and sexual assault, among other strategies. This work is done across the Department with multiple types of interventions.

In making progress toward achieving **self-sufficiency**, we are enrolling families in benefits, preventing homelessness and assisting in the acquisition and retention of employment.

With regard to **well-being**, our work arcs from early childhood, assuring that young children enter school fully ready and reducing engagement in risky behavior in youth through meeting adults' treatment goals and improving functioning to seniors so they can remain in the community.

It is clear that our collective work, both direct service and internal organizational supports, enables us to move toward achieving our vision. It is in the unified approaches and collaboration that our potential for success grows exponentially.

As we recognize the interrelatedness and interdependence of our work, we are able to build better systems to assure that the individuals and families we serve have access to a comprehensive, unified service system that leads to a sense of well-being, safety and self-sufficiency.

Director's Corner

DON'T LET YOUR COMMUTE GET YOU DOWN — CONTINUED FROM PG 1

Fortunately, the City of Alexandria and other localities are working together to provide resources to help their employees and other commuters.

Finding alternatives on the road

Alexandria has free fares and increased frequency of buses during some surges. They've also added new Capital Bikeshare stations, carsharing and taxi areas and additional traffic control at key intersections as well adjusted work on major roads. (For more information about these options and efforts, see www.alexandriava.gov/SafeTrack.)

In Fairfax County, the Fairfax Connector is providing limited Metrobus shuttle service to replace trains between shutdown zones and supplemental express service on existing routes or on rush-hour shuttles. They also encourage commuters to subscribe to commuter alerts and offer ridesharing and bus connection assistance (www.fairfaxcounty.gov/safetrack).

Due to limited budget and staffing, the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), a multi-jurisdictional agency representing Prince William, Stafford and Spotsylvania Counties and Manassas and Fredericksburg, is making only minor accommodations and encourages commuters in its area to register with its free OmniMatch program, which helps residents find carpools and vanpools.

Loudoun County will be adjusting its bus schedules during safety surges and encourages its residents to learn more about commuting options, like carpools and vanpools. Maryland's Montgomery County is also enhancing bus services and providing free bus shuttles between affected stations as well as offering free consulting from Commuter Services (www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/safetrack).

Finding alternatives at work

In addition to finding different ways to get *to* work, you might also consider different ways to *do* your work—like alternative schedules and telework options.

Alternative schedules can involve compressed schedules where employees work longer but fewer work days in a pay period, allowing them to work their full amount of hours in less than 10 work days. Another option can involve flexible arrival and departure hours.

The Employee Telework Program gives employees flexibility by allowing them to work outside of the office on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis—be it at home or some other location.

Even before the SafeTrack initiative, employees were increasingly taking advantage of this program, says Information Technology Services (ITS) Help Desk Manager Smail Farid.

"We are seeing more and more interest," says Farid, including an increase in requests for mobile devices like smart phones and tablets.

Services like high speed internet connections, broadband cell phone coverage and Skype for Business allow employees to do their jobs and remain in contact with co-workers outside of the office.

"You can telework from anywhere if you have internet access, from your home to a coffee shop," says Farid.

ITS works individually with and provides support to individuals who telecommute, from helping them assess their technology options and evaluate computers and equipment they already own to providing access to software, equipment and remote connections—as well as troubleshoot problems.

"Employees can call the help desk anytime there is an issue during daytime work hours," says Farid.

If you are interested in alternative schedules or teleworking, talk to your immediate supervisor. If you are eligible to perform some or all of your job duties at home, complete the Telework Agreement located on the AlexNet Human Resources website or the DCHS Human Resources SharePoint page under Miscellaneous Forms; forward it to your immediate supervisor and department head for signature.

Alternative work schedules, teleworking, ridesharing, car-sharing, Dash, Metrobus, VRE—all of these options help reduce congestion on the roads and make everyone's commute easier. If you've never considered an alternative to your current commute, this is a good time to take advantage of your options.

Consider using one or a combination of these alternatives to your current commute.

- **Amtrak and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) don't use MetroRail tracks, so their schedules and capacity aren't affected—and both stop at Alexandria Union Station (110 Callahan Dr.) across from the George Washington Masonic Temple.**
- **Alexandria has over 39 miles of on-street and off-street bike lanes. If you don't have a bike, check out Capital Bikeshare's growing number of stations—which could have stations near your work place. During SafeTrack, Capital Bikeshare is offering single rides of up to 30 minutes for $2, in addition to the existing membership options. For more information about biking to work in the Washington Metro area, see CommuterConnections.**
- **DASH Bus provides service through Alexandria and connects to MetroRail, MetroBus, Fairfax Connector and other regional bus partners.**
- **Register online at NuRide or at Commuter Connections' RideShare and coordinate with other commuters to find a commute buddy or create a carpool or vanpool.**
- **Consider services like ZipCar or Enterprise CarShare, car-sharing services that provide auto reservations to its members by the hour or day. Alexandria has multiple car-sharing locations and recently added a new area at the Braddock Road Metro Station.**
- **See if your position is eligible for alternative work schedules or teleworking. Alternative work schedules allow employees to work longer but fewer work days in a pay period or involve flexible arrival and departure hours. The City's Employee Telework Program gives employees flexibility by allowing them to work outside of the office on a full-time, part-time or temporary basis—be it at home or some other location. Talk to your immediate supervisor to see if your position is eligible.**

~Portions of this list were taken from www.alexandriava.gov/SafeTrack

A Welcomed Change is Coming

Learning management system to affect all employees

Effective October 17, 2016 State Social Service programs that use the Knowledge Center will begin using the new, improved and renamed, Virginia Learning Center (VLC).

Effective November 1, 2016 and thereafter, all DCHS employees will utilize VLC for:

▶ ***Training***: Completing DCHS-required training, registration and scheduling, self-tracking and supervisory-tracking of requirements and related. Information about completed live trainings (not done online) will be recorded in VLC. City of Alexandria training offered through Human Resources will be also recorded in VLC, although registration process will remain the same.

▶ ***Training Administration***: Scheduling of classes by DCHS staff instructors, setting locations, tracking sign up, automated reminders, changes, training attendance and related.

The VLC will replace the training and position requirement functionality within the Department's Training and Personnel System (TPS) and entirely replace the use of MyLearningPointe, the current online learning platform used in parts of DCHS. The change will occur in stages with TPS overlap for approximately six months. MyLearningPointe is being phased out and will be defunct by December 2016. This change will affect all employees in varying degrees to include 1) direct line employees, all of whom have required trainings 2) supervisors 3) staff instructors 4) employees reporting for licensing or other accountability measures.

Among the benefits are:

▶ ***Working Smarter***: Reduced data entry and elimination of Excel spreadsheets, coordination of class schedules/registration/changes with fewer errors, automated class reminders, attendance tracking and notifications of upcoming/expired requirements.

▶ ***Empowering the Employee***: Employees will see all of the training they need, what they have signed up for, locations, etc. on a single page. They can access training at times convenient for them and stop and restart trainings. The Department can also create its own training in the system. Employees who report to licensing can access needed info and supervisors can track employee training status.

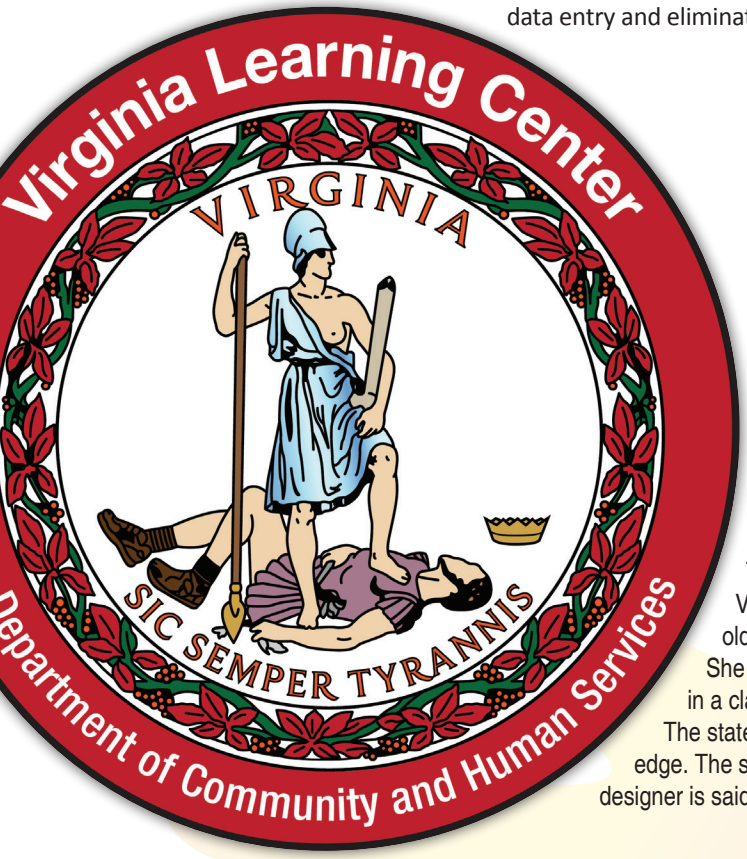
▶ ***Merging Disparate Systems***: VLC will perform the functions of what is currently TPS, MyLearningPointe, monthly training calendars produced manually with associated Excel spread sheets, data entry, numerous emails and calendar entries, and more.

Employees will be affected in various ways depending on their position and program. It is anticipated that most employees will adapt easily so long as they know where to go to meet their training needs, are comfortable using the system and/or utilize training to learn the system, and can access support as needed.

Staff training instructors and those seeking data for licensing will enjoy the largely increased functionality. Currently, employees in DCHS State Social Service Programs have been using the Knowledge Center successfully. For these staff, the VLC experience will be different from what they are seeing, but familiar, so there will be less of a transition.

Some supervisors who are accustomed to TPS may have concerns and they have been considered throughout the process. Storing and accessing personnel data about employees will still be maintained in TPS. The hope is that staff will see the value of VLC and adapt to find for themselves the benefit and future potential. All employees will find it more useful than current processes once they are familiarized.

Employees will learn more at their team meetings, through guidance sheets, and lunch-and-learns. Currently there is a VLC page on SharePoint with short training videos. Stay tuned!



What's with the state seal image? It's so graphic.

The VLC uses the state seal of Virginia, which features the Roman goddess Virtus standing over a defeated opponent. Virtus is dressed in Amazonian garb, (in older versions one or both breasts were exposed) and holds a spear and a sword. She represents the virtues of heroism, righteousness, freedom and valor. She stands in a classical victor's pose over a fallen tyrannical foe, whose crown lies on the ground. The state's motto "Sic Semper Tyrannis" (Thus Always to Tyrants) appears at the lower edge. The seal was approved at Virginia's 1776 Constitutional Convention, and the principal designer is said to have been George Wythe.

Using Art Therapy With Youth at Risk

The Youth and Family Team and the Court Service Unit collaborated to offer an art therapy group to court involved youth. The summer art therapy program, the first of its kind for the CSU, helped to not only provide a unique, structured and therapeutic experience to the youth but also brought awareness to the benefits of art therapy. The groups met for two hours weekly June 28 through August 9, participating in art therapy experiences developed to help build self esteem, self awareness, healthy communications and expression and positive coping skills. The participants engaged in plaster casting, acrylic drip paintings, watercolor self portraits and, as the final project, a chalk mural outside of the Courthouse (photo, right). *~ By Lauren Yoder*

Connecting With Leadership

Leadership Team reaching out to committees Department-wide

The Leadership Team (LT) has formalized a process to hear from employees who represent committees and workgroups throughout DCHS. On the first and third Tuesdays of each month, LT, which meets weekly, will receive presentations from members of a select committee. Presentations may include updates on initiatives, challenges faced, recommendations and requests for LT action or support.

On August 2, the Change Agent Team, temporarily charged with reviewing training processes, funding and availability in order to suggest strategies to increase equity and opportunities more broadly, shared with LT their recommendations. See the summary.

Groups that have already appeared at LT through this new and additional method of information sharing include the committees for Policies and Procedures and Cultural and Linguistic Competence. In the lineup for future presentations are: A New Lease on Life, Civility, Ethics and Family Engagement committees, among others. See a listing with descriptions of all DCHS work groups and committees (link), and stay tuned- you may be invited to come! Email ellen.lamm@alexandriava.gov for more information.

As a reminder, LT holds open meetings on the first Tuesday of the month. Director Kate Garvey sends out an email reminder and agenda. For those who cannot attend in person, look for the Skype invitation and tune in.

Secretary Bill Hazel (blue shirt) takes notes during Open Leadership Team meeting.

Health and Human Services Secretary Visits DCHS

Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Services Bill Hazel visits with leadership and staff during the July 5 Open Leadership Team Meeting. The Secretary of Health and Human Resources oversees twelve state agencies which provide often-vital services to Virginians. Individuals with disabilities, the aging community, low-income working families, children, caregivers and the provider network are supported through the work of this Secretariat.

Throughout the discussion, Hazel emphasized the value of finding ways to work together across jurisdictions and make communication and cooperation smoother between his office and agencies across the state. He often asked questions about practices in the Department and shared the experiences of other agencies in Virginia.

Helping Skilled Immigrants Rebuild Their Careers in the U.S.

DCHS Workforce Development Center works with regional partners to host workshop

More than 270 skilled immigrants participated in "Rebuild Your Professional Career in the U.S.," a workshop held at the Schlesinger Center in Alexandria on August 5.

The event—the first of its kind to be held in Alexandria—was sponsored by the DCHS Workforce Development Center (WDC), Fairfax County Skillsource Center, Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services, Lutheran Social Services and Northern Virginia Community College Alexandria Campus, who provided the venue.

During the five hour workshop, participants learned effective strategies to rebuild their professional careers, how to navigate certification and licensing procedures for utilizing education and professional experience earned abroad and networked with employers and service providers—all of which have personal meaning to Daniel Mekibib, Employment and Training Program Manager at WDC.

"I attended a similar event at Johns Hopkins University Bethesda campus when I was a recent immigrant several years ago," recalls Mekibib, who helped organize the workshop. "It helped me find my first job in the U.S."

Participants included skilled immigrants participating in workforce programs at WDC and other unemployed or underemployed individuals residing in Alexandria and Northern Virginia at large. The majority of participants came to the United States within the last two years from various parts of the world, including Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America.

The workshop featured 27 speakers from six industries including 12 employers. The speakers included immigrants who had gone through the job search process and landed a job in their profession, employers that had open positions and recruiting agents who were able to explain resumes, applications and interview do's and don'ts.

Mekibib gave opening remarks during the plenary session and WDC Employment and Training Specialists Ralph Critten and Savannah Hill each moderated panels during Industry Focus breakout sessions (like the one pictured above).

Two events like this one were previously held in Fairfax County. Response to the event was positive, with discussion of making the workshop an annual event.

Mayor Silberberg Celebrates Older Adult Art Exhibit at City Hall

On June 21, Mayor Allison Silberberg attended a special reception at City Hall celebrating an exhibit of paintings and artwork by older adult artists who are participants at the Adult Day Services Center (ADSC).

The event was hosted by the City in collaboration with the Arts for the Aging, Inc. (AFTA). The artists were participants in an AFTA program at ADSC, which offers services to seniors 55 years and older who may need assistance and who may not want to or cannot stay at home alone during the day.

AFTA and ADSC have partnered for almost two decades to provide art workshops led by AFTA Teaching Artist Carol Siegel. AFTA is dedicated to engaging older adults through immersion in visual, musical, performing, literary and intergenerational arts programs, which increase memory, emotional well-being and social bonds vital to older adults, especially those who feel isolated due to physical and cognitive impairments.

In her opening remarks, Mayor Silberberg underscored the value of the cooperation between AFTA and ADSC in making a difference in the lives of Alexandria residents who are aging. Speaking to the artists in attendance, the Mayor also expressed her gratitude for their contributions to art and the City.

"You are a blessing to us in Alexandria," the Mayor said. "Now it is our turn as your city to honor you."

Karla Kombrink, a participant at ADSC and one of the artists in attendance who also spoke at the event, reflected that creating her self-portrait for the exhibit enabled her to see the beauty of aging.

"Art is a powerful expression of who we are, appreciating our lives and our loves," she said.

The exhibit at City Hall was the latest of many partnership projects between AFTA and ADSC, including art exhibits at the Alexandria Black History Museum and the Joan Hisaoka Healing Gallery in Washington, D.C. and an intergenerational art and music experience with piano students at Episcopal High School.

"ADSC exemplifies AFTA's commitment to serving seniors," said AFTA Program Director Brandi Rose, who along with Siegel was presented with bouquets of sunflowers by ADSC Therapeutic Recreational Leader Jackie McCord.

"We come together to help seniors realize their potential," said Therapeutic Recreational Specialist Kim Davis of ADSC's cooperation with AFTA. "We want them to know there is so much they are able to do. They don't have to stop dreaming."

The exhibition, which included paintings, self-portraits, sculptures and other works of art, was on display in the Vola Lawson Lobby through the end of June.

Mayor Allison Silberberg (right) talks with ADSC participants and artists Maebell Sanders (left) and Karla Kombrink (center).

Top left: AFTA Teaching Artist Carol Siegel, Therapeutic Recreational Specialist Kim Davis, AFTA Program Director Brandi Rose and Therapeutic Recreational Leader Jackie McCord.

Poster Draws Attention to Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

On August 11, staff and clients at the Substance Abuse Center and Detox Center gathered in the lobby to hang a hand-made banner to celebrate National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month.

Millions of Americans live with mental health and/or substance use disorders, and more than 50 percent of adults with mental illness don't receive the care they need, according to 2014 data from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Although there is no racial, ethnic or cultural association with the prevalence of these disorders, communities of color face significant mental health inequities and greater barriers in getting the treatment they need. African American, Asian and Latino adults are all roughly 35 percent less likely to receive treatment for their mental illness because of accessibility issues according to The Central East Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network.

The banner, created by clients and staff at the facilities on Mill Road, features written expressions of how different cultures say "welcome," which were contributed by staff from across the Department.

Mental Health Team Leader Jennifer Miller shared that staff and client response has been very positive. The banner inspired good conversations about the importance of acknowledging culture in recovery and the value of acknowledging monthly awareness efforts like this one.

For more information about National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month and how access to mental health treatment can be improved for communities of color, see Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MinorityMentalHealthVA).

Program to Take Non-Traditional Approach

The Department of Community and Human Services was awarded state funding to introduce a new evidence-based program to help individuals with mental illness recover.

The Program for Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) is a service delivery model providing outreach and engagement, intensive case management, nursing and psychiatric services, substance abuse assessment and treatment, work and education related services, crisis intervention, family support and education to individuals with a serious mental illness and/or co-occurring (MH/SA) disorders who, because of reasons related to their illness, are often reluctant to engage in services or have been unable to achieve recovery on their own.

Services are delivered almost entirely in the community as these individuals have a demonstrated history of difficulty engaging in traditional office-based mental health services.

The primary goal of PACT is recovery, not case management. The program promotes individual empowerment through the acquisition of resources and skills that help individuals manage their mental health and substance misuse to reach an increased level of independence in the community. Services are characterized by a team approach, in vivo services, time unlimited services, shared caseloads, intensive flexible service delivery and fixed point of responsibility.

PACT services will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year. Program capacity is 80. Highlights of PACT services include:

- Ongoing assessment to ascertain the needs, strengths, goals, preferences and abilities of the individual;
- Case management;
- Individual supportive therapy;
- Support for wellness self-management, including the development and implementation of individual recovery plans, symptom assessment, and recovery education;
- Skills training;
- Vocational services to help find and maintain employment; and
- Direct support to help individuals secure and maintain affordable housing that is integrated in the broader community, to obtain legal and advocacy services, financial support, money-management services, medical and dental services, transportation, and natural community supports.

Program staff will be composed of a team of interdisciplinary supervisory and direct service staff who work together to address the needs of individuals. There will be a minimum number of employees to maintain an employee to individual ratio of at least 1:10. Performance Indicators for the program will focus on efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, satisfaction and positive stakeholder engagement.

Implementation plans and recruitment is currently underway, and PACT looks to be operative by mid-2017.

DCHS Star Awards

JUNE SUPER STAR NOMINEES

Adult Services Group: Alexandra Campos Martin, William Lyne, Linh Harbes-Thai, Elizabeth San Pedro, Regina McGloin and Miriam Elwell

TRAILS Group: Nicole Rohrer, Andres Acosta, Kyah Khalsa, Anjuli Jindal, Teklu Bedane and Connie Juntunen

Group: Constance Speight and Humaira Hotaki

CFF/Adult Group: Steve Frutos, Kirimi Fuller, Lina Cuda, Lib Gilliam, Lisa Ton, Stephanie Morrow and Debra Evans

JUNE STAR AWARD NOMINEES

Vicky Diggs, Martha Torres, Shaheen Akhtar, Rebecca Olatunji, Grace Ogbonlowo, Beverly Cooper, Richard Sostre, Marcelin Mondo, Sherry Ricci, Patricia Mantilla, Shawnta Coble and Yoshabel Velazquez

JULY SUPER STAR NOMINEES

None

JULY STAR AWARD NOMINEES

Jodie Lancaster, Sue Ellen Mawhinney, Mary Valad, Gustavo Cubas, Tammie Wilson and Becky Tavenner

Star Award Nomination Form:
survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/DCHS-Star-Award-Nomination-Form

Super Star Nomination Form:
survey.alexandriava.gov/s3/DCHS-Superstar-Award-Nomination-Form

Foster Care Grads Picture Their Futures

Alexandria and Arlington's Independent Living Programs joined together for a special evening to celebrate 2016 high school, vocational and college graduates who receive foster care and independent living services.

Children and young adults in foster care do not always have a network of family and friends who traditionally throw graduation parties and purchase gifts to celebrate their success and help prepare graduates for future endeavors.

The June 27 ceremony—themed "Picture Your Future"—honored the achievements of seven Alexandria and six Arlington young adults.

Of Alexandria's graduates, one earned a bachelor's degree from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, three earned associate degrees from Northern Virginia Community College and three earned high school diplomas.

The three NOVA graduates were participants in Great Expectations, a nationally recognized program that helps Virginia's foster youth earn the post-secondary credentials they need to achieve an independent and successful life (www.greatexpectations.vccs.edu). Two of the graduates are continuing their studies at George Mason University.

The event featured an inspirational speech by Chauncey Strong, a foster care alumni and current employee of the Fairfax County Department of Family Services. Also in attendance were Renee Garnett, the Independent Living Specialist from the Virginia Department of Social Services, and numerous DCHS administrators and staff.

The graduates received gifts provided through generous community donations, including a handmade string quilt from Creative Chicks with Babes, a group of moms in the community. The gifts were possible through the work of Alexandria resident Christine Coussens, who has fundraised for older youth in foster care over the past five years. *~by Lanie Dosland*

Awards Honor Leadership, Excellence

On June 7, Project Discovery Advisory Board members honored over 50 T.C. Williams High School students with recognitions and scholarships totaling over $45,000.

Project Discovery, a state program housed in and managed by DCHS Office of Youth Services, is a college access program that prepares and motivates low-income and/or first-generation college-bound students to pursue opportunities in post-secondary education. The program works with 80 students in grades 9-12, helping them negotiate the process of preparing for and applying to college, providing workshops, career planning, tutoring, trips to colleges and scholarships. Each year, 90 percent of the graduating seniors matriculate to two- and four-year colleges.

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of four $4,000 scholarships to Sharolyn Burt, Cameron Graves, Sara Marfo and Ajuanae Nelson. The special awards were made possible through the generous donation of Jay McCargo, president of ARServices.

Also during the event, student officers Reem Hilal (president), Sidrah Hamid (vice president), Zyara Wilson (secretary), Nuhamin Dejere (treasurer), Simone Haskins and Calla Zane (Advisory Board student representatives) were recognized for their outstanding leadership.

Twenty-two students were recognized for good attendance, and four were recognized for their service to the community. Nine students were recognized for their award-winning essays in the monthly Writing Competition, sponsored by Tomorrow's Black Men, in conjunction with Project Discovery.

Four seniors and four alumni students were awarded $400 and $500 book scholarships. The seniors included: Amal Bouh, Sharolyn Burt, Durdana Shah and Calla Zane. The alumni receiving book scholarships were: Tiarra Andrews-Owens, Amen Hailegiorgis, Mckayla Robinson and Yahya Yaziji. Project Discovery President, Reem Hilal, received the Natalie S. Vaughn Award, named in memory of the long-time Alexandria educator.

For more information about Project Discovery, see www.alexandriava.gov/ProjectDiscovery.

Team Gives Rap at Beauregard Event

On July 21, DCHS hosted an ice cream social event at 1900 Beauregard for the agencies and staff members who share the 2nd floor, including the Center for Alexandria's Children, Community Services Board and DCHS' Child Protective Services, Early Childhood Division and Preschool Prevention Team. The goal of the event was to update everyone on shared efforts about emergency and safety planning as well as provide a time for everyone to get to know each other better as colleagues and friends. The highlight was a star performance by the Community Wraparound Team-you can view it in Department Wide Photos in the DCHS Information folder!

SPECIAL SERIES

DCHS CENTER PROFILES

Over four issues, Connect is highlighting the services and programs of each center in DCHS. While it is not a comprehensive list of all services and programs, we hope it will be helpful to you as a DCHS staff member. This is the fourth installment.

ADULT SERVICES | CHILD SERVICES | ECONOMIC SUPPORT | OPERATIONS

CENTER FOR OPERATIONS

CONTRACTS & GRANTS

Serves as a liaison to the Purchasing Department and provides guidance regarding a variety of procurement activities to include development of scopes of works for competitive and informal solicitations for the purchase of goods and services. Also works with the City Attorney's Office to advise staff on the development and monitoring of interagency and community partnership agreements. Additional duties include managing the Alexandria Fund for Human Services post–award performance review process and serving as the clearinghouse for grant applications, contracts and other documents requiring the City Manager's signature. **703.746.5664**

CUSTOMER CALL CENTER

Assists callers and potential clients with DCHS services. Customer Call Center receptionists direct calls to appropriate DCHS personnel and external resources and answer questions about resources, procedures, benefits and status. Customer Call Center Case Workers assist callers with locating DCHS services, act as liaisons to find community referrals or assistance within the Department, screen and make referrals or appointments for Community Services, establish case records, monitor caller progress and conduct follow-up interviews. **703.746.5700**

FACILITIES

Monitor and maintain all DCHS staff, residential and tenant properties. Address staff facility issues including custodial, inventory, surplus, reorganizations, planning and security for eight staffed space areas. Respond to emergencies and work order requests for 18 ID homes and four MH residential group homes. Manages Permanent Supportive Housing leased homes made up of 36 addresses for 74 tenants. Also participates in emergency management planning with the Office of Emergency Management, including the DCHS Continuity of Operations each year. **DCHSFacilities@alexandriava.gov**

FINANCE

Responsible for all fiscal oversight and management of the agency's more than $90 million annual operating budget. **703.746.3677**

HUMAN RESOURCES

Provides employees with support for all personnel actions and other responsibilities ranging from recruitment to FMLA to employee relations while continually seeking out methods to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of how DCHS gets business done. **703.746.5665**

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Transforms mental health, substance abuse and developmental disability data into meaningful information in order to assist managers in answering program-related questions. Collects data and reports to various stakeholders on outcomes related to efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility, and client and stakeholder satisfaction with services. Also responsible for reporting data related to Performance Contract DCHS holds with the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. **703.746.3591**

TECH SERVICES

Enables DCHS to meet its critical business needs by improving agency responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency through innovative research and providing secure, reliable and integrated technology solutions while delivering excellence in customer service. **703.746.6090**

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR

Oversees the entire Department which employees more than 650 staff with a budget of 90 million.

Communications
Produces and provides public information through channels such as the website, eNews, social media, news releases, program brochures and other print deliverables that educate and increase access to services and participation in DCHS initiatives. Fosters internal communication through the production of an employee newsletter and utilizes mechanisms or processes that support the flow of information and the production of consistently professional materials. **703.746.3484**

Organizational Development and Equity
Focuses on increasing organizational health and effectiveness. Key values include respect and inclusion, collaboration, authenticity, self-awareness and empowerment. Focuses on Department-wide initiatives and areas of employee and change engagement, coaching, team building, diversity and inclusion, performance management, organizational design, workplace culture and learning and development. An equity focus ensures equitable client access to resources, services and opportunities regardless of gender, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, culture or language; intercultural development and cultural and linguistic competency trainings help achieve equity outcomes. **703.746.3385**

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

Responsible for all social service, mental health, intellectual disability and substance abuse programs.

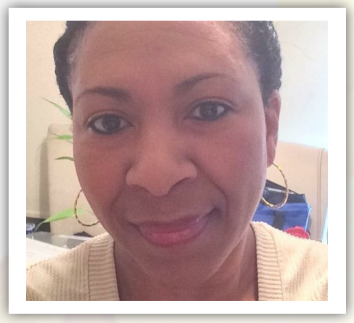
Quality Assurance
Oversees and provides training to Behavioral Health programs (MH/ID/SA) clinical staff in the documentation of clinical practices in the electronic health record. Formulates recommendations for changes in program policies, procedures, content, methods and/or management processes and prepares new or revised policies and procedures. Coordinates quality improvement activities and monitors program compliance for all required licenses, certifications, and regulatory entities. Also monitors and ensures completion and documentation of safety drills per licensing and accreditation requirements. **703.746.3517**

Hello & Goodbye

NEW STAFF

SYED AHMED

Syed Ahmed joined DCHS as a Fiscal Officer with the Office of Adult Services.

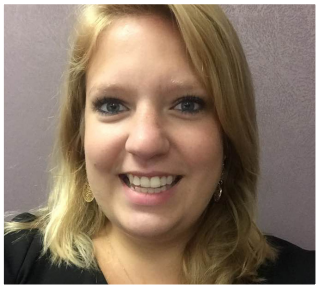


PAM AUSTIN

Pam Austin joined DCHS as the new Aging and Disability Resource Coordinator. Almost two years ago, she moved to the DMV area from Massachusetts. Pam has a M.Ed. in Psychological Studies and over 15 years of experience in working with seniors and individuals with disabilities. She is family oriented and enjoys every moment created with her husband and sons. Pam is excited and thankful to have found a career with Aging and Adult Services.

SAVANNAH HILL

Savannah Hill recently started with the VIEW team as an Employment and Training Specialist at the Alexandria Workforce Development Center. Savannah received her B.A. and M. S. in



Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University and worked previously with Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services as a case manager. She is passionate about humanitarianism, cultural diversity and aiding immigrants in the United States in their journey towards self-sufficiency. She looks forward to the opportunities of serving Alexandria residents in their employment and training needs.

SAMANTHA HUFFMAN

Samantha Huffman is a Case Worker with the Psycho-Social Rehabilitation team at the West End Wellness Center for. She moved to the DMV from North Carolina a year and a half ago and started in homeless services with a private company in Alexandria. She transferred to DCHS with the hopes of continuing her education and experience with the SMI/ SA population. She graduated from Winston Salem State University 10 years ago with an

Staff Recognition

On July 8, Governor Terry McAuliffe appointed Director of Developmental Services Phil Caldwell to the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities.

The mission of the board is to create a Commonwealth that advances opportunities for independence, personal decision-making and full participation in community life for individuals with developmental and other disabilities. The Board engages in advocacy, capacity building and systems change activities through outreach, training, technical assistance, supporting and educating communities, barrier elimination, system design/redesign, coalition development and citizen participation, informing policymakers, demonstration of new approaches, services and supports to community-based service delivery.

Lisette Torres, Coordinator of the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy (ACAP), was honored by the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce as one of 40 Under 40 Award recipients at a banquet on July 28.

The 40 Under 40 program was established by the Chamber to recognize tip men and women, age 40 and under, engaged in a variety of fields including business, technology, nonprofit management, civic life, public service, education and the arts, who are shaping Alexandria for the future.

As ACAP Coordinator, Torres manages the community coalition focusing on preventing adolescent pregnancy by providing education to the community, collaboration among diverse organizations and leadership opportunities for youth. Outside of work, Torres mentors a young girl with the Space of Her Own Mentoring Program and lives in Alexandria with her husband and son.

undergraduate degree in psychology, and she has worked in mental health services ranging from community support services to psychiatric hospitals to group homes. "This work is truly my passion," says Huffman, who eventually would like to join a missionary group in a third world country. "The people we serve are my inspiration."

ELIZABETH JARAMILLO

Elizabeth Jaramillo joined DCHS as a Residential Counselor with the Detox Center.

JACQUELYN LAINEZ

Jacquelyn Lainez joined DCHS as part time Administrative Support with Substance Abuse Outpatient Services.

CARLOS LOPEZ

Carlos Lopez is a part time Residential Counselor with Detox Services.

DENISE LOWERY

Denis Lowery recently joined OCS as an Intake Caseworker. She has a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Southern California. She currently resides in Suitland, Maryland with her fiancé, eight year old daughter, two dogs and one cat. She enjoys spending quality time with family and friends.

YEMESRACH MEHARI

Yemesrach Mehari is a Residential Counselor with the Center for Children and Families.

CLARA ROBERSON

Clara Roberson is the new Family Services Specialist Supervisor (previously Homeless Services Coordinator) for the Office of Community Services. She joins the team with six years of homeless services experience. In that time she had the opportunity to work with youth, adults with mental health challenge and veterans. In her spare time, Clara enjoys watching movies of all genres, reading suspense novels and spending time with family and friends. She is excited to join the City of Alexandria and be a part of the excellent services offered to the residents.

SOCHITL RODRIGUEZ KAUFFMAN

Sochitl Rodriguez Kauffman joined DCHS as part time administrative Support with the Center for Adult Services.

YOCASTA RODRIGUEZ

Yocasta Rodriguez is a Supervisory Administrative Analyst in the Finance Unit. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from George Mason University and has 10 years of work experience in the accounting field. She started with the Department in April 2015 as a Manpower temporary placement and was instrumental in assisting with the CSA fiscal invoice backlog and handling vendor inquiries. In March 2016, she took over the total duties of this position and began her permanent position in June.

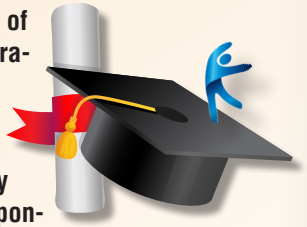
JOB CHANGES

La'Keisha Flores is the Psychiatric Administrator for Psychiatric Services. **Jacqueline Juarez** is the Medication Only Unite Case Manager with Mental Health Outpatient Services. **Anne Kamau** is a Senior Therapist with the Detox Center on Mill Road. **Alexandra Kearney** is a full-time Residential Counselor at the Detox Center. **Damian Lane** is an Eligibility Fraud Specialist with the Center for Economic Support. **Donielle Marshall** is a Family Services Specialist II with the Adult Protective Services team. **Rolanda Tate** is Fiscal Officer 1 and is located at 2525 Mount Vernon. **Dena Wilson** is a Clinical Recovery Coach with Comprehensive Recovery Team. **Wendell Wu** is a full time Clinical Psychiatrist at 720 N. St. Asaph. Maricel Young is a Therapist with Mental Health Outpatient Services.

RETIREMENTS

Margaret Dhillon, a Family Services Supervisor, retired July 29 after 33 years with the City. **Laurie Ferreri**, a Senior Therapist with Substance Abuse Outpatient Services, retired July 27 after 26 years with the City. **Ruth Hoehne**, a Family Services Specialist Supervisor with DDF, retired on June 30 after 40 years with the City. **Ward Pivec**, a Human Services Benefits Specialist with the Center for Economic Support retired June 30 after 10 years with the City.

Education Milestones



Tomas Cabrera earned his Master of Social Work, with a clinical concentration, on May 13, 2016 from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU). Presently, Cabrera works as a Family Service Specialist I with the Early Childhood Division (ECD). He is responsible for regulating, coaching, training, providing guidance and support to all home family child care providers serving City's families. With the support and encouragement of his direct supervisor, Lillian Vagnoni, and division chief, Carol Farrell, Cabrera continues to grow and develop professionally in his current position. In addition, he is also pursuing his clinical licensure with Adult Protective Services, where he has recently completed an internship. Cabrera is passionate about fitness and also works as a part time personal trainer for a local gym in the Washington, D.C. area.

Danny DeJesus, a Human Resource Technician with DCHS, earned his Master of Science in Human Resource Management from Argosy University.

News You Can Use

DCHS SOFTBALL TEAM TAKES THIRD PLACE

The DCHS Softball Team took third place in the City Cup Coed Softball League competition and tied for third place in the Final City Employees Cup Series Overall Standings. DCHS employees also fielded teams for the kickball last fall and basketball during the winter season.

The Alexandria Police Department team took first place in softball, with the Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities team taking second. The Rec team took first in the Overall Standings, with the Police Department team taking second.

From left: Sara Ebbers; Duane McGraw (back); Joseph Davis; Octavius Fulton (back); Cathy Bartholomew; Charles Watson (back); Juan Gonzalez; Joseph Ernest (back); and Diana Tracey (some team members aren't shown in this picture).

CLC TRAININGS

Two new modules of Culture and Linguistic Competence training are scheduled for October 5.

▶ ***Module 3: Culture—Everybody's Got It*** will cover definitions of culture and explore the dimensions and broad characteristics of culture which influence interactions. By the end of the session, participants will have an increased awareness of their own cultural identity.

▶ ***Module 4: Communicating Culturally*** will explore common culturally based barriers to communication and strategies for communicating effectively with foreign nationals and non-native speakers of English. During the session, participants will share some of their cultural background with another participant and practice strategies for communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds.

The 90 minute trainings run back-to-back, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please contact Allyson.Coleman@alexandriava.gov.

GET VOICEMAIL BY EMAIL

Would you like to get your voicemail messages sent directly to your email inbox? Now you can—with the City's Voicemail to Email, a new business tool for Alexandria employees.

The service sends your voicemail messages as an audio file attachment (.wav) to your email. When you receive

a voicemail by email, you click on the wav file and press the play button to hear your messages. In addition, you can also be alerted by text when you receive a voicemail—just click the link in the text and enter your desk phone password to hear the message.

You'll also receive information about messages including the date, time, number, name (if the call is a City internal number) and the duration of each message. You can listen to the messages at your convenience and save messages for future reference.

If you are interested in the Voicemail to Email feature, please go to the DCHS SharePoint page and scroll down towards the bottom of the main page (alexandriava1.sharepoint.com/sites/DCHS) to the Voicemail to Email list. Click on New Item and add the required information.

NEW DCHS WIFI

The City Wifi is now available in DCHS Offices located at 1900 N. Beauregard, 2355 Mill Road and 4401 Ford Ave.

The WiFi network has two sides, Private (CoA) and Public (CoA_Guest).

The Private side is be for internal use and intended for use by city employees with city issued computers. In order to connect your laptop, you must connect to the CoA WiFi network using your network login credentials (firstname.lastname and password). Once you authenticate you should have access to city network resources and will be subject to the same network access policies as your wired connection.

The Public side is intended for use by visitors, non City-issued laptops and for all handheld devices such as iPhones and iPads. The CoA_Guest network only has access to the Internet. It does not have access to internal city resources. While it doesn't require a password, it does require that the user accept the usage policy.

This wireless network replaces all existing DCHS wireless networks at these locations.

TUITION ASSISTANCE GETS EASIER

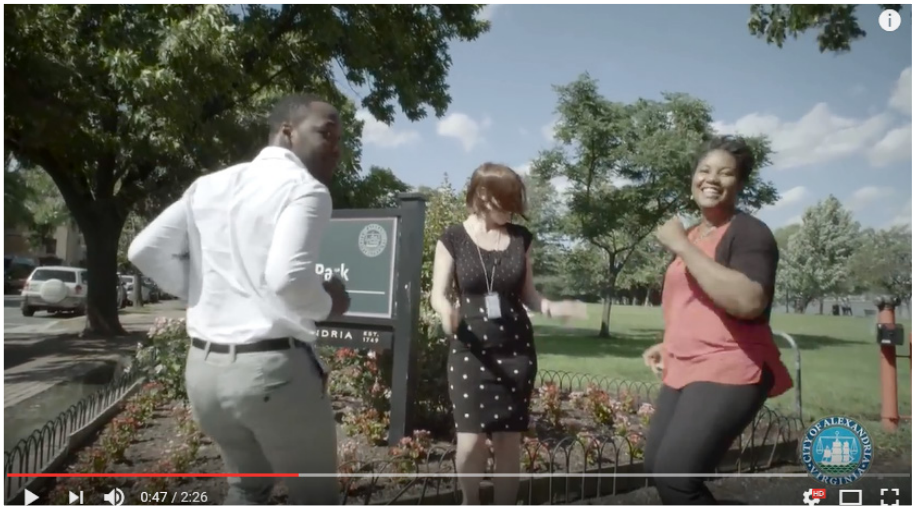
There is no longer a need to fill out two separate forms for Tuition Reimbursement and Employee Professional Development request. The Educational Funding Request Form is now being accepted for both. The revised form can be found by searching forms By Department on AlexNet (alexnet.alexandriava.gov/Forms) or by clicking "Tuition Reimbursement Program" under Quick Links on the Human Resources page (alexnet.alexandriava.gov/HR), where you will also find more information about the programs.

Connect

Connect seeks to inform DCHS employees about programs, services and changes within the Department. It also introduces you to one another on a more personal level, recognizes employee and team accomplishments, and helps foster relationships between programs and employees across DCHS. It features program activities and special events and helps keep you informed on departmental initiatives.

We are always looking for news and ideas for stories. If you have an idea for a story or content, contact Carmen Andres at carmen.andres@alexandriava.gov or call 5753.

To report significant errors in this newsletter, please email carmen.andres@alexandriava.gov



City Employees on the Run

Alexandria's Town Crier and City Employees took the Running Man Challenge to show some of the many people and positions in the City's local government workforce. Watch the video at youtu.be/FPBZPI8eQ-A.