



KEEPING UP WITH Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center



FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM

ABOUT FRIENDS

OUR MISSION

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center (AMHC) provides financial help and hope to Alexandrians receiving City services for mental health conditions, substance use disorders, and developmental disabilities.

OUR APPROACH

Friends is a non-profit organization founded in 1984 with the knowledge that community makes a significant difference for those living with a mental health condition, developmental disability, or substance use on their path to recovery.

Friends' primary goal is to provide a financial safety net for 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, such as housing, medicine, dental care, transportation, social and educational activities, and basic life necessities.

Additionally, Friends supports the City and other partners working to advance mental health throughout Alexandria— those who strengthen the safety net; improve mental health awareness and advocacy; reduce stigma; and enhance training for CSB staff.

Mental Health Matters More than Ever in 2025: Help Fellow Alexandrians by Donating to Friends Today

A new fiscal year (FY) brings new beginnings and new challenges. In FY 2025 Friends spent \$67,000 with incoming donations of \$38,000. This leaves Friends with \$11,000 for the emergency needs of Alexandrians who receive services through the CSB. This disparity between income and expenses was largely driven by the \$34,000 Friends has spent on rent assistance this year. Other expenditures are for medical/dental needs, utilities, food and clothing, furniture, transportation, childcare and camps for children, and job training.

The good news is that eligibility for rental assistance through the Office of Community Services, which is housed alongside the CSB in the Department of Community and Human Services, has expanded. Previously one condition of eligibility was that the client had received an eviction notice. Now, clients may apply for OCS assistance sooner, which will help abate requests to Friends. However, there are new emergent needs driven by the reduction of SNAP benefits (food stamps) and other social safety net services that rely on federal funding. While Friends cannot take the place of those programs, we expect more requests in areas such as food, medical and dental needs.

To meet these needs, Friends will need to replenish its coffers. Spring2ACTion on April 9, 2025 is our largest fundraiser. In the last several years we raised just over \$20,000 in donations and this year we will need to exceed that goal to help support community members in the coming months.

Early Giving for Spring2ACTion begins on March 26, 2025 and you can donate at: spring2action.org/donate?campaign_id=228939

On behalf of Alexandrians in recovery, thank you for supporting Friends!

Mental Health Resources for those Experiencing Job Loss:

The City of Alexandria has resources to assist individuals with employment, housing, food and childcare. Visit alexandriava.gov/FederalWorkers.

Unemployment compensation for federal employees is available for individuals who were laid off. Individuals apply through the state of their last duty station. See the fact sheet: oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/unemcomp.asp



Spring2ACTion

Alexandria's Giving Day
Presented by ACT for Alexandria

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ABOUT THE CSB



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

In 2018, the CSB served 4,363 Alexandrians of all ages through mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse services. Historically, of those for whom income is known, nearly half have had annual family incomes of \$15,000 or less. In 2018, 25% were under age 20. The CSB is part of the Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS).

Highlights of People Served

This year, Friends is proud to have come to the assistance of many residents. Here are the stories of three people whose lives were positively affected by your generous donations.

Olivia is a child with a severe developmental disability living with a sibling and a single mom, both who also have health challenges. Olivia was denied sufficient Medicaid funding for the in-home support she had been receiving, which would have led the family to crisis. The day before services were to be stopped, her social worker contacted Friends for help. We came through without a moment to spare with funds to fill the one-week gap until her new services would begin.

Jonathan was entering a youth residential program and needed additional clothing, including a winter coat and hygiene products. Friends was able to quickly provide these items setting Jonathan up for success in the residential program.

Sylvia has struggled with substance use disorder and homelessness for years. She stabilized on medication treatments and had been consistently accessing therapy and job services for a year. She landed a full-time job with benefits and needed professional attire. Friends fulfilled this request to support Sylvia's success in the community.

SPOTLIGHT ON TWO CITY EMPLOYEES

Friends could not function without the work and advocacy of the case managers and therapists who serve CSB clients. This Spring, we spotlight two wonderful employees:

Katie Aliberti

Where do you work in CSB?

I am the therapist supervisor for the TRAILS program, which is they City's first episode psychosis program for young adults.

When did you start?

I started working for the City of Alexandria in 2018.

What do you find most rewarding about what you do?

I love working with adolescents and young adults who are just beginning to become independent. Often, we get to see our clients graduate from high school or college and begin working and living on their own for the first time.

How do you use Friends in your job?

I am constantly amazed by the ways that Friends has helped so many of my clients. The flexibility that Friends offers has allowed us to assist our clients with housing, education, health care access, and transportation. Friends is a valuable resource for my clients who are working to reach goals of independence.

What effect has Friends had on the residents you serve?

Friends assisted with paying for dental implants for one of my clients after he had an accident in which he lost several teeth. This loss affected his ability to speak clearly as well as his confidence and motivation. With Friends assistance, he was able to receive permanent dental implants that increased his confidence and allowed him to pursue his goal of working.



Sonnja Brown

Where do you work in CSB?

I work in the Center for Children and Families.

When did you start?

I started in February 2020.

What do you find most rewarding about what you do?

I find it most rewarding to assist families in strengthening their bonds and partnering with caregivers in a personal way. I enjoy problem-solving alongside families to support their needs.

How do you use Friends in your job?

I use Friends to support families' financial needs, researching community resources together first to see what options are available. Often, Friends is the only option for families in crisis or struggling to meet children's basic needs.

What effect has Friends had on the residents you serve?

Friends has had an incredible impact on the families we serve, providing critical support in times of need. From helping youth with seasonal clothing, activity-related attire, and camp or activity fees, to assisting families in stabilizing housing, and keeping utilities on off—Friends has been a lifeline. The organization also supports families in meeting job requirements by providing uniforms, shoes, and job certifications. One mother described the assistance as **"a gift from heaven without judgment,"** reflecting the deep and meaningful difference Friends makes in the lives of those it helps.



Friends Advocacy Goals for 2025

While bed space in psychiatric and crisis units is always a priority for Friends, this year we are focused on maintaining Medicaid at its current funding levels.

Medicaid is a government program that may be on the chopping block. Medicaid does not just support older adults, it supports individuals with mental health, intellectual and developmental disabilities as well as children and families. Cutting funding harms the most vulnerable populations. Please let Congress and your state representatives know that Medicaid funding must be preserved.

NEED HELP IN A CRISIS? Call 24 Hours a Day

- Adult Protective Services | 703.746.5778
- Adult Protective Services State Hotline | 1.888.832.3858
- Child Protective Services | 703.746.5800
- State of Virginia Child Protective Services | 1.800.552.7096
- Substance Use Disorder Residential Treatment
703.746.3636
- Domestic Violence | 703.746.4911
- Emergency Mental Health Services | 703.746.3401
- Sexual Assault | 703.683.7273



IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Mental Health Insurance Information
Enroll Virginia
703.364.9456

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

24/7 Emergency Mental Health Services
703.746.3401

DONATE TO FRIENDS

Donors may send a check of any amount to:

Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center
4850 Mark Center Dr.
Floor 8, Room 8160
Alexandria, VA 22311

ONLINE DONATIONS

givebutter.com/friends-of-the-alexandria-community-mental-health-center
or
givegab.com/nonprofits/friends-of-the-alexandria-mental-health-center/campaigns/FriendsoftheAMHC

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.

HELP US BE GREEN!

Send us your email address at FRIENDSOFAMHC@GMAIL.COM





Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center
4850 Mark Center Dr.
Floor 8, Room 8107
Alexandria, VA 22311

Who are Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center?

Friends of the AMHC is a Board of volunteers who make sure that your donations go directly to the needs of Alexandrians in the form of direct financial assistance, education, or training for community members.

You may donate online or by mailing a check in any amount to:

**Friends of the Alexandria Mental Health Center
4850 Mark Center Drive
Floor 8, Room 8160
Alexandria, Virginia 22311**

Consider choosing Friends of the AMHC through the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC). To learn more, please visit our website at friendsofamhc.org

GET HELP NOW: Suicide Prevention Resources

- **CrisisLink: 703.527.4077** or text **"CONNECT"** to **85511**
- **Crisis Text Line:** Text **"HOME"** to **741741**
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.8255** · For deaf and hard of hearing, use your preferred relay service or dial **711**, then **1.800.273.8255** or chat with someone 24/7 through **Lifeline Chat**
- **Red Nacional del Suicidio: 1.888.628.9454**
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline Veterans Crisis Line: 1.800.273.8255**, Press 1 or text **838255**, or chat confidentiality with someone online 24/7 through **Crisis Chat**
- **Emergency Services, Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services: 703.746.3401**
- **The Trevor Project, LGBTQ+ Youth: 1.866.488.7386** or **TrevorText**, a confidential and secure resource that provides live help for LGBTQ youth with a trained specialist, over text messages: Text **START** to **678-678**. Chat with someone online 24/7 through **Trevor Chat**

Volunteers Needed!

Friends is an all-volunteer Board that provides support to the Alexandria CSB. We are looking for individuals who could commit up to 10 hours a month to Friends activities. For more information, email Anna Dvorchik at friendsofamhc@gmail.com

