

Helping Alexandria's seniors who prefer to remain—independently—in their own homes



AHA team exults at “nerve center” for Spring2ACTION, Del Ray Café. Clockwise from left: Treasurer Chriss Nielsen, Executive Director Cele Garrett, Board Member Penny Roberts, Maggie Stauffer, Terri Deerr, Barry Stauffer and Vice Chair Jane King. Many other leaders and members visited during the day. (Photo by Jen Heinz, AHA marketing manager.)

AHA Exceeds Expectations On “Giving Day”

Hours before the midnight close of Alexandria’s annual giving day called Spring2ACTION, AHA Executive Director Cele Garrett looked up from her laptop computer and announced, “I think we have made it.”

Actually, much more than “made it.” By the time mailed checks and additional pledges were tallied, AHA had gifts totaling \$25,263, far above the goal.

“What a wonderful gift this is to AHA in the very month that we celebrate our sixth year in operation,” Garrett, who spearheaded the AHA effort, said. AHA Chair Barbara Rosenfeld called the result “spectacular—just spectacular.”

Weeks before April 5, the AHA officers, staff,

members, volunteers and supporters were spreading the word and preparing for the “giving day.” Why do we participate? Dues from memberships cover less than half AHA’s costs of providing services and care to members and the overhead of an office.

Villagers and others dropped by the day’s nerve center throughout the day. The effort by AHA began at 8 a.m. with positioning of the AHA banner at the front of Del Ray Café. Garrett and Marketing Manager Jen Heinz timed the matching grants for maximum effect throughout the day and into the night. By around 9 p.m., we had made the goal—and gifts were still coming in.

Alexandria Community Trust, manager of the citywide effort, reported that the 158 nonprofits that participated attracted gifts of \$1,592,459 from more than 9,000 donors. At Home in Alexandria placed 22nd in number of donors and 15th in total dollars. AHA also won one of the special random prizes—\$100 extra for a gift at 10 p.m. from M. Emmet Rosenfeld, Barbara Rosenfeld’s son.

The icing on the fundraising cake was that the café owners, Margaret and Laurent Janowsky, donated a portion of their proceeds to the AHA cause. Their staff members were attentive all day to the needs of the AHA team occupying a first-floor dining room. Many villagers stopped by for a meal or a sip and to encourage the team. Treasurer Chriss Nielsen provided champagne.

John Porter, originator of Spring2ACTION, visited briefly, making the rounds of several nonprofits.

See More Photos of Spring2action on P. 2

Matching Gift Donors Spur Contributions

AHA expresses its appreciation to Matching Gift donors who helped bring contributions over the top: Pete Crouch; Chriss Nielsen and Tom Crowley; Bob Eiffert and Michael Curry; Louise and Mike Kenny/Jan Pomerantz/ Everett Wilcox; Jane King; Mason Hirst Foundation; Maggie Moose; Steve and Pam Nelson/Annie and Bill Stat; Penny Roberts/Linda Langley/Mary Jayne Swanson; Barbara Rosenfeld; Shelli Ross; Bill and Teddye Clayton; and the AHA “office divas,” Cele Garrett, Monica Estabrooke, Bernice Courtenay and Jen Heinz.

Spring2ACTion Photos



Cele Garrett with owner Laurent Janowsky and hostess Tatiana Gold



Executive Director Cele Garrett and Board Member Bob Eiffert discuss results and strategies.



ACT's John Porter visits AHA on his rounds of nonprofits.



On a break: L to R: Ruth Arnold, Operations Co-Manager Monica Estabrooke, Cele Garrett, and Marketing Manager Jen Heinz



Cele Garrett with visitors Mary Henely and Mary's Boy Scout son Thomas



Chair Barbara Rosenfeld, L, chats with Spring2ACTion visitors Maggie Moose, Maggie's friend Nancy Eli-Raphel and author-journalist Martin Tolchin.

A Reminder of Some Helpful Programs

At Home in Alexandria is once again collaborating with Goodwin House at Home on three programs designed to inform people about interactions with doctors and hospitals.

The programs will be held at Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads, 3440 Jefferson St., Falls Church, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the following dates:

Wednesday, May 3: "Getting the most out of your doctor's visit." A physician discusses a doctor's approach to older patients.

Wednesday, May 17: "Who's Got Your Back?" The role of geriatric care managers, medical advocates and service facilitators.

Wednesday, June 7: "Your Hospital Stay and Beyond." Case-management directors from Virginia Hospital Center discuss the details of hospital admission and discharge.

Sessions are free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served and valet parking is available.

Clayton Wins Annie B. Rose Award

By Bob Eiffert

Vice Chair, Commission on Aging, AHA Board Member

The Alexandria Commission on Aging's Annie B. Rose Lifetime Achievement Award goes this year to AHA volunteer Bill E. Clayton and one other recipient.

The award recognizes achievements over a lifetime of public service, enhancing the community and advancing social justice concern for the aging.

The award honors the superior example of the late Annie B. Rose for her lifetime of service. The daughter of a slave, Mrs. Rose became a leader in black education and advancement of black history. She founded the Commission on Aging.

Clayton was honored for many years of service in the community, most recently as a volunteer with At Home in Alexandria (AHA). He was involved in the development of AHA over six years ago and has volunteered serving its members since it opened in 2011. He was named a Living Legend in 2011 for his years of civic involvement.

At AHA, Clayton edits the monthly newsletter, serves on the Board of Directors and volunteers as a driver for medical and other appointments. He has taken a keen interest in the well-being of those he transports and has become skilled at recognizing when an individual needs special help to maintain independence. He will help with home repairs and even volunteers to shovel snow for members who need it. Clayton exemplifies the meaning of "service."

AHA member Carol Downs nominated Clayton for the award, which will be presented by Mayor Allison Silberberg on Tuesday, May 9 at 5:30 p.m. in the Vola Lawson Lobby of City Hall, 301 King Street, open to the public and followed by a reception.

AHA Embarks on Effort To Update Strategic Plan

The AHA Board of Directors has initiated a planning effort to update its 2015 strategic plan.

Led by Board Member Bob Eiffert, a team of board members and others is working to devise a three-to five-year plan, specifying the sequence of activities required to achieve the plan's priorities. The effort will prepare a work matrix to set goals and strategies, the organizational capacity to meet those goals, and an assessment of what and whom we need to fulfill the plan.

Five subcommittees will consider what we have done and what we need to do in the areas of:

- Programs
- Services
- Financial sustainability
- Membership recruitment and
- Governance.

The goal is to have the planning matrix completed by the fall.

Anyone with expertise and an interest in those areas should contact Bob Eiffert at michaelandbob@comcast.net or 703-862-4399.

The effort is basically designed to measure AHA's results in the major things we want to do—and what membership support we need to do them.

Chair Barbara Rosenfeld has asked committee chairs and members to give their thoughts on both matters—what they think is needed and how they and their committees want to achieve the goals.

"We are seeking a way to define measurable results," Eiffert told the board, explaining the planning process and its hoped-for results.

AHA to Celebrate Sixth Anniversary on May 25

Proud of its accomplishments but mindful of challenges ahead, At Home in Alexandria plans its Sixth Anniversary Celebration for 2 p.m.-4 p.m. Thursday, May 25.

The milestone will also recognize the addition of Cameron Station to AHA's service area in Alexandria: the venue for the celebration will be the Cameron Club Great Room, 200 Cameron Station Boulevard: Turn into Cameron Station from Duke Street and go partway around the circle at Brenman Park Drive.

At the anniversary event, members of AHA will describe the benefits of the nonprofit. Each AHA member who plans to attend is asked to bring a guest—most especially among the residents of Cameron Station.

There will be a brief bit of business but the overwhelming idea is to mark six years, meet some Cameron Station residents and tell the story of the village movement and in particular the AHA story of helping Alexandria's senior citizens. Babs and Elliot Waters, residents of Cameron Station, are helping plan the celebration.

AHA Vice Chair Jane King said, "We want people to bring a friend, so that we can celebrate with them the sense of community that AHA fosters." Chair Barbara Rosenfeld said to Board and advisors, "I hope all of you will celebrate with us and assist us in reaching out to the new—for us—community where the celebration will take place."

Cameron Station is a major part of the January expansion of AHA boundaries. A densely residential and compact area, Cameron Station's demographic makeup is of considerable interest to AHA for generating new memberships.



What's Up With AHA Members, Associates and Volunteers

AHA has its own poet laureate: **Betty Jo Middleton**. She was one of six poets, chosen from an entry list of 47, whose poems were featured on DASH buses and the King Street Trolley as part of April's National Poetry Month celebration, sponsored by Alexandria Transit Company and the Alexandria Office of the Arts. Herein Betty Jo's poem:

Observation

Boat moves slowly down the river,
Plane swoops low across the sky,
Busses, trolleys, cars go by, as we
Sit still amongst them, you and I.

Spreading the word: **Sandy Heistad** brought her daughter, **Wendy**, to Happy Hour. "She was curious about . . . this AHA group I talk about so much," Sandy said. "She loved the people she met and had a very nice time." Another ambassador for AHA.

Ernie Lehmann, a co-founder of AHA, is mending from surgery on a foot.

Operations Co-Manager **Monica Estabrooke** has a new puppy, successor to the white ball of fluff that went to Dog Heaven recently.

Mary Page "Frisky" Hickey will have one of her paintings exhibited at London's Garden Museum. Frisky will attend the opening reception in May.

Helen Desfosses lectured to the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute on "Trump's First 100 Days: Accomplishments and Challenges."

VOLUNTEER CORNER

Cats are so-o-o generous. **Penny Roberts** tells of the time her cat surprised her with the "gift" of a mouse.

Treasurer Chriss Nielsen's cat was not so considerate. Chriss tells of the time she could not find the cat. Finally, she looked around outside. No luck. When she returned to her home, there was the cat, Chriss says, sitting there with this look on its face: "Where have YOU been?"

Memory sometimes is a problem, but not for **Alice Cohan**. During Spring2ACTion, Cohan was among a group of AHA people in Del Ray Café when a group of restaurant guests arrived. Alice quickly recognized retired **Brig. Gen. Wilma Vaught**. The two have worked together on women's issues.



Alice Cohan

An **AHA volunteer team of several buddies** exulted in helping with some major milestones in April in the life of one member: The team helped her move to a more comfortable place and decorate it to her liking, helping her through surgery and recovery, helping her through the long process of improving her hearing and sometimes braving downpours in driving to doctors.

The **Hills, Ken and Winnie**, are planning to move in late June to a Continuing Care Retirement Community, "Buckingham's Choice," in Adamstown, Md., near Frederick. Winnie is former treasurer of AHA and Ken a volunteer, doing a variety of chores for the cause. Ken and Winnie gave an AHA program detailing their research on facilities for the aging.

News From the Board of Directors

"Membership, membership— that's my mantra now," Treasurer Chriss Nielsen said at a Board meeting, upon looking over the slow growth in memberships. Her remarks echoed a repeated theme among AHA leaders: Membership has grown only marginally, falling repeatedly behind AHA goals. "Recruitment and renewal remain a concern," Nielsen told the Board.

As of this writing, membership totaled 162, including new Member Leslie Reed and Associate Members Gretchen and Richard Klimoski and Jerry Kirks.

Executive Director Cele Garrett has had repeated recent invitations to speak about AHA to various groups. She and Chair Barbara Rosenfeld urged members to contact their professional or civic groups and appear on programs to tell the AHA story.

Several from AHA will be attending the November national conference of Village to Village Network, the umbrella organization over the more than 200 villages in the United States. The conference Nov. 6-8 in Baltimore will feature keynote addresses by Dr. Peter Rabins on Alzheimer's disease and by Maryland Secretary on Aging Rona Kramer, and "breakout sessions" for villagers to exchange ideas. **Interested in attending?** Contact Executive Director Cele Garrett at AHA 703-231-0824 or cele@athomeinalexandria.org

Jen Heinz, AHA's new marketing director, has led AHA into social media, attracting a rapidly expanding list of Facebook followers and enabling AHA to reach thousands of people with written and video posts. "She is doing a fabulous job," Garrett said of Heinz.

Marking its sixth anniversary, AHA is now considered a "mature" village, Rosenfeld said, "doing quite well in comparison with other villages and we face many of the same issues that others do." Looking ahead, Rosenfeld announced Pam Nelson will chair the annual gala, set for Oct. 22. The past chair of the gala, Linda Langley, will assist Nelson, as will other members of the Development Committee.

Rosenfeld and the Development Committee are soliciting volunteers to help plan and organize the gala. Subsequent newsletters will add details of the event, AHA's most festive of each year.

The Story of a Successful American Indian Entrepreneur

Vicki Vasques, who serves on the AHA Advisory Council, told an AHA audience April 23 of her building a hugely successful small business helping American Indian groups. She is president and CEO of Tribal Tech, LLC.

The program was another in the Conversation With series organized by Virginia Martin, and took place in Vasques' stunning, Indian-themed home in Old Town. The program attracted 12 AHA villagers.

Vasques, who is part Diegueño of the San Pasqual Band of Mission Indians, in California, was once declared American Indian Woman of the Year. (The Diegueño designation refers to San Diego.)

Her background includes federal service under five different presidents and an unsuccessful run for state delegate. She started her own business in 2000 and built it into a large operation obtaining contracts to carry out programs in health, education, technical assistance and grants management for American Indian tribes.

Vasques is proud of her 30 years as an advocate for the American Indian.

Holder of a Bachelor of Science degree from Cal State in Fullerton, Vasques obtained teaching certification from UC/Irvine. She serves on several boards of nonprofits dedicated to education and health care.

Initially a teacher, Vasques came to Washington with the administration of Ronald Reagan. She worked in "both DOE's" —Education and Energy.

Inc. Magazine once called her company one of the nation's fastest-growing. It was built from a modest start into one with scores of workers and millions in revenue. Most of the contracts it acquires are in health, education and energy, she said.

The firm does contract work for the Office of Indian Education and federal efforts in minority business. For the Department of Education, the firm is participating in a five-year study of public schools on Indian reservations.

One challenge for the tribes and those who work with them, she said, is that youngsters who are schooled outside their reservations, go back to them and find no jobs available.



Vicki Vasques

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Monica Estabrooke and Bernice Courtenay

Have You Met a Truffle Grower?

Well, meet one—in fact, meet the past president of the U.S. Truffle Growers' Association.

Patrice Martin is the Conversation With speaker May 21, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., in the Alexandria House home of Marianne Ginsburg. Martin was president of the unusual group from 2013 to 2015.

The NATGA, as its members refer to it, has as its mission "to support truffle growers in their cultivation efforts, and to educate the public about truffle cultivation ... (and) promote awareness, growth, and development of the truffle industry in North America."

Truffles may be trifles for some or extravagances for others, but the association points out that truffles "have graced the tables of kings, tyrants and noblemen for centuries."

Truffle prices vary wildly, up to thousands of dollars per pound. A **truffle** is the fruiting body of a subterranean Ascomycete fungus, if you really, really wanted to know.

CONTACT US

At Home in Alexandria
3139 Mt. Vernon Avenue
Alexandria, VA 22305
703-231-0824

aha@athomeinalexandria.org
www.athomeinalexandria.org