



FRIENDS OF GUEST HOUSE RECEIVES SOJOURNER TRUTH LOCAL ACTIVIST AWARD

Recognizing our work in service to women of color, Friends of Guest House received George Mason University’s Sojourner Truth Local Activist Award: one of four for 2018, presented at this year’s Sojourner Truth Lecture on Feb. 19.

Delivering the address was the 2018 Sojourner Truth Lecturer, Sybrina Fulton, a social justice activist and mother of Trayvon Martin. She is also the author, with Tracy Martin, of *Rest in Power: The Enduring Life of Trayvon Martin* (2017).

Each year, two university departments, Women and Gender Studies and African and African American Studies, co-sponsor the lecture series and awards to recognize issues and work “at the intersections of race and gender”—presented each spring during Black History and Women’s History months.



Residents and staff attend Feb. 19 Sojourner of Truth Lecture at George Mason University.

help the reentering women of
Friends of Guest House
through



Spring2Action
Alexandria's Giving Day
Presented by ACT for Alexandria

April 11 ... early giving starts!
April 25 ... 11:59 pm ... last chance!

DONATE ONLINE HERE:
www.spring2action.org/organizations/friends-of-guest-house

GEDS HELP TURN DREAMS INTO PLANS

When they entered the Friends of Guest House Residential Program, Krystal, Hollye, Adonis, Diane and Ashley lacked high school diplomas. Now, a few months into the program, all five are working hard toward their GEDs (General Equivalency Diplomas)—hoping to open doors to higher education and careers.

Residential participants receive intensive help: our locally-unique 24/7

transitional residential program, mental and physical healthcare, job and life skills training through our Workforce & Life Development (WLD) Program, and legal and other supports. Their plates are full!

Yet these five women have added the hard work of GED prep. Weekday afternoons, they have 2-hour sessions with our volunteer tutors; the tutoring is here at Friends of Guest House. Weekday evenings, they take the bus a couple of miles to T.C. Williams High School for 3-hour GED preparation sessions in math, science, social studies and English. But if they pass the GED exam, it’ll all be worth it. Krystal hopes for a career in elementary education, Hollye as an addiction counselor, Adonis in communication technology. Diane and Ashley also have career aspirations—in addition, Ashley wants to show her children the value of education.

“When a dream has resources and a work ethic, it’s no longer a dream,” says WLD Program Coordinator Tina Kelly. “Instead, it’s a plan. And these women have plans for success.”

Residents of Guest House gather round the dining room table for time with their English Tutor, a volunteer from Virginia Theological Seminary





After an action-packed day, Elizabeth, a Friends of Guest House client, knits to help unwind. A new skill she learned thanks to Project Knitwell!

FRIENDS OF GUEST HOUSE TEAMS UP WITH PROJECT KNITWELL

CLIENTS LEARN KNITTING AS ONE WAY TO COPE WITH STRESS

What do you do when you're stressed? Overeat? Crawl under the covers? Reach for a drink, or a smoke? Incarceration-to-community reentry can be overwhelmingly stressful, so Friends of Guest House helps our clients learn positive ways to cope—such as knitting.

At first glance, it may seem simplistic. But “knitting is a proven wellness tool,” says Michelle Maynard, executive director of Arlington’s Project Knitwell. “It can foster a sense of pride and productivity, engender a sense of community, provide a positive alternative to negative behaviors and help people cope with stress.”

Recently, we teamed up with Project Knitwell to offer our Residential clients a weekly knitting class. Project Knitwell donates the knitting materials, and its volunteers teach the class.

The knitting class is one form of indirect therapy (yoga is another) that is part of our Workforce and Life Development Program, which also offers direct therapy as well as “hard” and “soft” work skills.

DIGNITY

FORMERLY INCARCERATED GUEST HOUSE WOMEN ADVOCATE FOR INCARCERATED WOMEN'S DIGNITY

In early March, Virginia H.B. 83— which “directs the State Board of Corrections and the Director of the Department of Corrections to each adopt and implement a standard to ensure the provision of feminine hygiene products to female prisoners and inmates without charge”—unanimously passed the Virginia House of Delegates and State Senate. It is now with the governor, who is expected to sign it into law.

Advocating for the bill were members of the Friends of Guest House Speakers Bureau, most of whom are current or former clients. We worked with BRAWS (Bringing Resources to Aid Women’s Shelters), which has been fiercely pushing for the bill.

Friends of Guest House women were natural advocates for this bill. In written testimony to the House, they shared frank

stories about the insufficiency of feminine hygiene products—and the assault on their dignity—while incarcerated.

In this case, and in others before, formerly incarcerated women are pursuing leadership roles in the community and advocating for change!



Friends of Guest House clients advocate on Capitol Hill, at the national level, building on their success with Virginia H.B. 83—seeking no-cost feminine hygiene products for incarcerated women.

BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Denise Tordella joined the Friends of Guest House Board 13 years ago and has truly “walked the walk” in that role. She’s embraced her oversight responsibilities, currently as Vice Chair of the Board. She’s a generous funder and advocate. And she contributes professionally—as a trauma-informed mental health and substance abuse counselor.

“I started with Friends of Guest House,” recounts Denise, “providing clinical consultation to the staff about delivering trauma-informed and gender-responsive care to the residents.” She also works with the staff on their own self-care. An Alexandria-based licensed professional counselor, her area of clinical specialization is integrated, trauma-informed, mental health and substance abuse treatment.

“My goal is to educate people about the incredible barriers women face as they re-enter the community, especially related to stigma and shame and support women with the resources and tools they need to be successful.”

"RECONNECTING TO THE COMMUNITY BY CONNECTING WITH A MENTOR"

Incarcerated and reentering women commonly experience loneliness and isolation. A Friends of Guest House mentor can be a powerful, positive connection. And national studies show that mentoring—while incarcerated or after release—lowers re-offense rates by about 35%. Friends of Guest House offers both.

"PRE-RELEASE ARLINGTON COUNTY (AND EXPANDING!)"

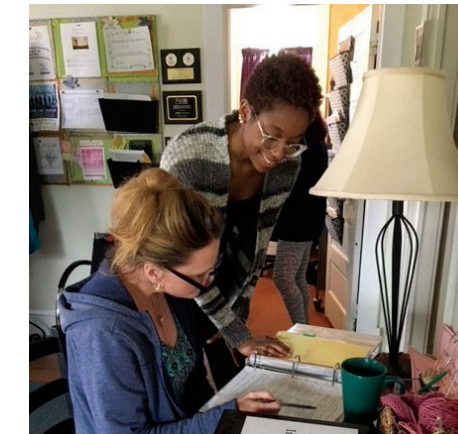
Since 2012, at the Arlington County Detention Facility, Friends of Guest House has offered a Pre-Release Mentoring Program to women who are close to their release dates. The women and their mentors meet weekly. They talk one-on-one and in groups, discussing all kinds of issues and learning new ways to approach challenges. The mentor-mentee relationships often continue post-release, tapering off as the women stabilize. Our mentors are trained volunteers.

So far, the Arlington program has served more than 90 women!

This year, with support from The Dominion Guild and local corrections agencies, we will expand pre-release mentoring to Alexandria—and hope to expand to Fairfax County during 2019.



Hollye and her mentor Patsy after dinner and a movie. All 26 Friends of Guest House residents are assigned a mentor.



Skylar helps Melissa with her weekly schedule. Mentors set goals with our clients, listen without judgement, and teach new skills as clients transition from incarceration.

"POST-RELEASE THE FRIENDS OF GUEST HOUSE RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM"

Women entering our Residential Program after release from incarceration are also offered mentors, who work with them one-on-one in any number of ways: they may focus on a specific goal (financial literacy, educational tutoring, etc.) or just be “someone to talk to” in addition to our staff. The benefits are the same as pre-release: with mentors, Residential Program clients have wider community networks and lower recidivism rates long-term.

Depending on individuals’ needs, Residential mentor-mentee “pairs” may continue when clients move on to independent living in our Aftercare Program. We hope, soon, to offer mentors to our Outreach Program clients (women who moved directly from incarceration to the community).

To volunteer as a mentor, contact our Mentor Coordinator, Terry Kras, at terryk@friendsofguesthouse.org.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

ALLYSON NOBLE GROCERY SHOPS!

“I must have driven by Guest House a million times,” recounts Allyson. “We’re neighbors. About three years ago, I did a little research and found the mission spoke to me and wanted to help. I started to volunteer.

“At first, I was a GED tutor and mentor. After my second child was born, I didn’t have as much time—so I became a grocery shopper. It works well for my schedule: it’s somewhat flexible, and I can bring my kids along if I have to.

“Help with things like grocery shopping is so important at Guest House, because it allows the staff to focus on their primary responsibilities: the residents. Otherwise, when there’s no one else to shop, a staff member has to do it.

“I love it! Everyone is so nice and so appreciative. It fits with my life. I know I’m helping. And it’s also nice to slowly involve my children—my son helps me unload sometimes—so they can learn the importance of volunteering, too.”

Thank you, Allyson (and kids)! We have many volunteer opportunities. If you’d like to help, contact Terry at volunteer@friendsofguesthouse.org.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS PANELIST AT NATIONAL WOMAN'S PARTY EQUALITY SALON

Friends of Guest House Executive Director Kari Galloway joined two other leaders of women-centered nonprofits as a panelist at the National Woman's Party's Equality Salon, "Local Nonprofits in a Global City" (Feb. 2018)—held at the historic Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in Washington, DC. A fourth non-profit leader, Kathy Sibert of Arlington's A-Span, moderated the panel

Kari and colleagues spoke about their challenges and successes as leaders in the DC region. They also discussed their organizations' challenges and opportunities.



Notably, of the other three organizations present, one addresses domestic violence, one addresses sexual violence, one addresses homelessness—and Guest House addresses all three issues, because all three (and more) are the challenges our clients face.

Executive Director Kari Galloway with co-panelists Indra M. Henard, Executive Director of the DC Rape Crisis Center, and Lee Ann De Reus, Executive Director of DV LEAP, as well as the moderator, Kathy Sibert, President/CEO of A-SPAN.

TWO NEW STAFF FOR TWO NEW PROGRAMS

Always growing, always creative, Friends of Guest House introduces, not “just” new staff—but the new programs they were hired for.

Trauma affects almost every incarcerated and reentering woman and almost every Friends of Guest House client. For decades, we've been thankful to the many outside groups and practitioners providing trauma treatment. Now, we can offer that help in-house through our first Clinical Director: Dr. Angel Daniels, a licensed clinical psychologist who specializes in evaluating and treating trauma, especially sexual abuse, violence and exploitation.

If you have a criminal record, you usually can't turn things around without a job—



Tina Rae Kelly



Dr. Angel Daniels

but you usually can't get a job if you have a criminal record. And you deserve a living wage, and advancement potential, and a chance at building a career. Our groundbreaking Workforce & Life Development Program, piloted last year, addresses all those issues and more. Expanding that program is the boundlessly creative, boundlessly energetic Tina Rae Kelly, a longtime teacher and marketer who joined us in December.



WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

DOZENS OF APPLICATIONS CONTINUE TO POUR IN

On average we receive 25 applications per week. All 26 beds of the Residential Program are full and we don't have any openings available until June.

We love the opportunity to help so many women move beyond who they were to become who they want to be. But we need your support to expand our program to serve more women on the path to change.

Visit friendsofguesthouse.org/work-with-us/why-donate/to-donate.

GET INVOLVED WITH GUEST HOUSE

Volunteers, mentors and donors are always appreciated. Donations can be made via our website: www.FriendsofGuestHouse.org or by using the enclosed remittance envelope. Donations to Friends of Guest House—a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization (Federal tax ID #51-0201327)—are deductible to the full extent of the law.



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