

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the leaves change and the air turns crisp, I find myself reflecting on the journey we've undertaken this year. It is with immense gratitude that I bring you our Fall Newsletter, not just as an update but as a heartfelt acknowledgment of the incredible support that has fueled our mission.

At Friends of Guest House, we believe in the power of transformation, and your unwavering commitment to our cause has been nothing short of transformative. With every step, you have joined us in empowering women on their path to rebirth, and I am excited to share some of the highlights from the past months with you.

First and foremost, I want to express my deepest appreciation to our generous donors. Your contributions have been the cornerstone of our success. Whether it was a one-time gift, a recurring donation, or your valuable time and skills, you've made a tangible impact on the lives of the women we serve.

As I look ahead, I am excited about the initiatives we have in store for the coming months, especially our upcoming graduation ceremony (see page 3 for details). Your continued support will help us expand our reach and impact, providing even more women with the tools they need to reintegrate into society successfully. - Sonja



CONGRATULATIONS 2023 GRADUATES! SEE DETAILS ON PAGE 3





FIELD TRIPS

For the past year, Guest House has been busy! With the world beginning to open up post-COVID-19, staff, residents, and alumni have enjoyed multiple field trips to events like heading to the movie theatre to watch “Barbie” along with taking in local attractions, including the Circus, baseball games, basketball games, soccer matches, the Smithsonian Museums, and the Botanical Gardens. Not only are these pastimes fun, but they also play a pivotal role in reconnection to the community for our residents - one of our five pillars of success. Reentry at Guest House includes building new connections, memories, and interests in a safe environment.

A special thank you to our **Peer Support Specialist, Venus Yarbough**, who has utilized contributions from the **Fenwick Foundation** to plan these amazing outings. We are excited to continue to offer field trips like these to our residents throughout the fall and into the coming new year!

OUR MISSION

To provide formerly incarcerated women the structure, supervision, support, and assistance they need to move beyond who they were to become who they want to be.



WELCOME FUND

We understand the importance of feeling comfortable and confident upon arrival at Guest House. That's why we were thrilled in June to introduce the 'Welcome Fund' - a new initiative that provides funds to new residents to purchase unique essential items to make their stay more comfortable. From undergarments to hair care products, we've got our women covered so they can go buy exactly what they need. Because we all know that every arrival should be a warm and welcoming experience.

Thanks to our friends at the Christopher W. Brown and Mimi Conger Fund for kicking off this effort with a \$5,000 matching grant. For more info, visit - friendsofguesthouse.org/welcome-fund

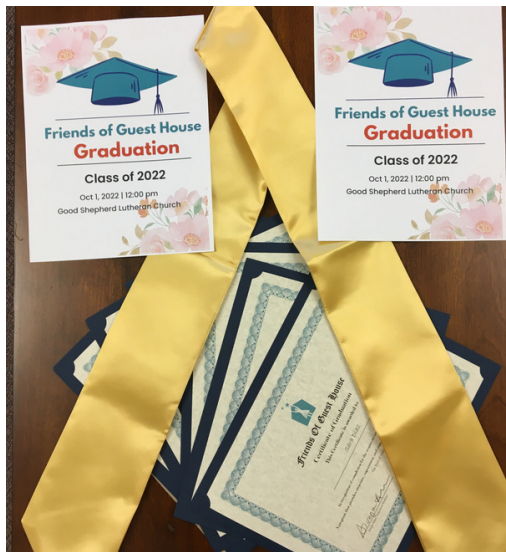
CONGRATULATIONS 2023 GRADUATES!

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On October 28, 2023, we will celebrate 26 graduates! This is our biggest graduating class yet. In honor of the hard work of our new alumni, we are holding a ceremony at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 10:30 am. We welcome our past alumni, current residents, staff, and community members to attend this event and take part in congratulating the women of Guest House.

This year's event will feature multiple speakers, including from our new Alumni Council (see page 4 for details). To add to the pomp and circumstance, we will host a musical performance, showcasing original works from our Doc Song project, a part of Promote Harmony, led by director Mimi Bornstein. These songs were written by some of this year's graduates and share their stories in a beautiful way.

As per tradition, all graduates will be presented with diplomas and graduation regalia, a prayer blanket from our friends at Good Shepherd, flowers, and pearl earrings by the Kiwanis Club. The pearl earrings are a special Gift from Nugget Jewelers and Kiwanis Club to represent a challenge or difficulty- that transforms into something to be admired. We liken this to what our graduates have faced- they were faced with something intensely difficult, and they created something unique and beautiful.



The 2023 Graduates include women who have (or are scheduled to) completed both our Residential and Aftercare Programs successfully this calendar year. These women hail from all over Virginia, and range in age from 25 to 65. Here are a few milestones that illustrate the successes they've accomplished so far:

- Pursued Higher Education/ Professional Certificates.
- Leased their own apartment or found other stable housing.
- Found Reconnection with loved ones.
- Secured employment and/or got promoted at work.

Congratulations to the Class of 2023, let your light shine bright!





ALUMNI COUNCIL IN FULL MOTION

In 2023, Friends of Guest House formed our first-ever Alumni Council. This effort affords our program alumni a leadership role within the organization as they identify opportunities for graduates to participate in Guest House's successful execution of its mission.

The Council's first Alumni Picnic was held in July with over 30 women in attendance. We have also elected our council officers, Terri Morton and Chasidy Deskins, as Co-Chairs. In addition to special events like our Alumni Picnic, our alumni have been hard at work establishing a strong relationship with the Arlington Community Federal Credit Union (ACFCU). They have cemented a speaker series on Financial Education to begin in the month of October. This series will include topics like Credit, Budgeting, and Credit Unions. These initial sessions will conclude with individual financial coach sessions for the participants.

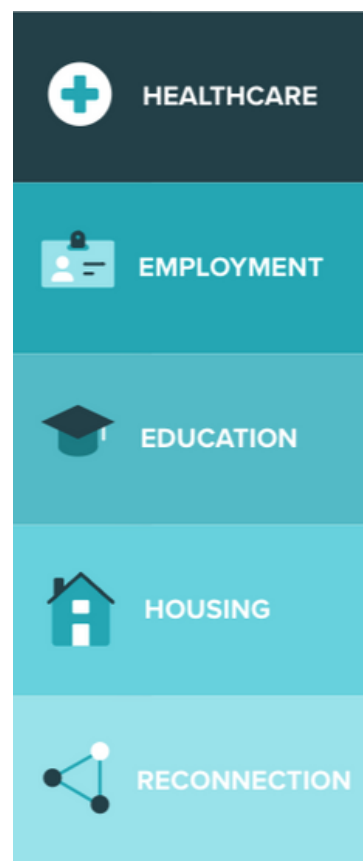
In the coming year, we plan to host more of these trainings to empower all Guest House women.

THE NEED

At Friends of Guest House we provide reentry support that is both comprehensive and tailored to each woman's unique needs.

We do so by focusing on the "five pillars of livability": healthcare, employment, education, housing, and family/community reconnection.

Guest House is the **ONLY** group in Northern Virginia that provides 24/7 reentry support for women and is the largest reentry program in the state.



WAYS TO GIVE

Invest in the women of Guest House if you want to give second chances, help end systemic cycles of poverty and incarceration, and envision a world where your past does not define you.

Your donation directly funds holistic programming with trained staff who motivate and empower our clients.

Large or small, your donations to Friends of Guest House deepen meaningful change in our local communities. Donors, like you, are committed to transformative community change, joining our mission and believing that:

Every woman who has been incarcerated deserves the tools, education, and chance to become who they want to be.



DONATE BY MAIL

Return the enclosed remittance envelope with a check



DONATE ONLINE

Use the QR Code to be connected to our online platform, or visit our website at www.friendsofguesthouse.org

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Monthly donors ensure every client receives the tools, education, and second chance she deserves. Use the QR code and make sure to select "Monthly."



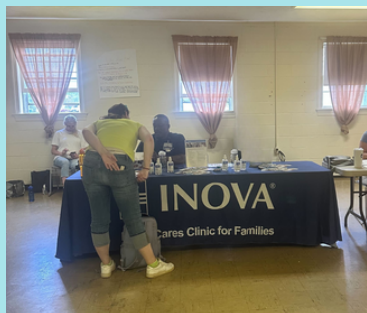
STOCK AND IRA

To make a stock/ IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution gift, notify your broker/ financial advisor of your intention and Guest House via info@friendsofguesthouse.org.



BEQUESTS BY WILL

Many people choose to leave a legacy gift to Friends of Guest House so they can support second chances for women committed to change with the Legacy they leave behind. All it takes is a quick phone call to your lawyer to add Friends of Guest House as a charitable designation in your will. If you include Friends of Guest House in your plans. Our Legal Name: is Friends of Guest House, Inc., and our Federal Tax ID: 51-0201327.



HEALTH AND WELLNESS FAIR

In June 2023, Guest House hosted our very first Health and Wellness Fair. We welcomed nine organizations to share valuable health information and resources with our women.

A special thank you to INOVA, Brain Injury Services, National Breast Cancer Foundation, Alexandria Fire Rescue, Doorways, Vote Riders, Alexandria Fire Department, Alexandria Health Department, and Alexandria Opioid Work Group for being a part of our inaugural event.

Residents and staff alike were able to visit tables and get resources like NARCAN, blood pressure readings, information on women's health, and much more.

We plan to have an event like this, including more community resources, every year. Opportunities and partnerships like these are a great way we can strengthen our Health pillar. If you have an organization or office that you'd like to participate, please contact development_marketing@friendsoguesthouse.org.

ART SHOW

It's no secret that the women of Guest House are talented, but they really get to showcase their skills at our Annual Art Show, which takes place at Principle Gallery in April.

This year, we displayed wonderful works curated by our Art Therapy Intern, Sair Lazzaro, and our Workforce and Life Development Coordinator, Melanie Brumfield.

Our theme was entitled "Envision." Each piece of art was centered around each individual's definition of the word and what it means to them.

Pieces such as a colossal mobile- which incorporates individually crafted strands of beadwork, a knitted quilt created in collaboration with Project Knitwell, embroidery, poetry, photography, and recorded music were featured at the show, along with presentations by the artists themselves! A special thank you to Principle Gallery, who has been an incredibly generous host to us for years, and to our artists who shared their work with the community.

It's not too early to mark your calendars, our art show is an open, free event that happens every mid-April, come and stop by!



We envision a world where
your past does not define
your future.



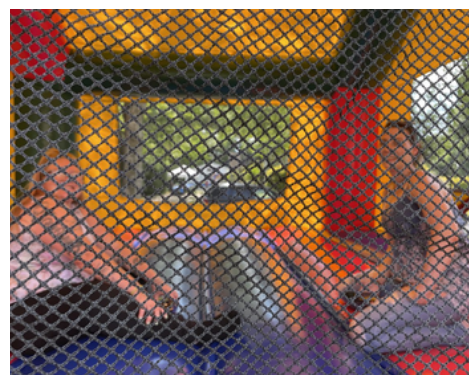
Friends & Family Day

On September 9th, Friends of Guest House celebrated our second Friends and Family Day - complete with a bounce house, face painting, carnival games, and a cookout. We gathered together for a day of end-of-summer fun.

A special thank you to our volunteers, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Saint James UMC, and ALIVE! for making this event a success! Current residents were able to share the day with their loved ones alongside, staff, past staff, volunteers, alumni, aftercare residents, and neighbors. Over 50 attendees made the event a great success!

Friends and Family Day is the perfect example of our commitment to our livability pillar of "reconnection." For women in particular, family/community reconnection is one of the most important factors in successful reentry. Women who are reunited with their families, most notably their children, are less likely to return to prison. Friends of Guest House offers parenting classes so women can start to learn the tools and skills they will need to return to their children's lives. In addition, building a strong, supportive community helps women to succeed post-incarceration.

Residents were able to reconnect with their loved ones, connect more with new friends, and reconnect with themselves in a fun and safe environment!



Want to stay engaged in our work? Want to hear more great stories?
Connect with Friends of Guest House



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@FriendsofGuestHouse



@ReentryAdvocacy



@FriendsofGuestHouse

2023

By Starr E. - Guest House Alum

2023

You won't devour me
I will rise and conquer
I won't accept defeat
I refuse to budge
You won't knock me off my feet
I will remain sober
I'll take my story to the world
I will be a brand new girl
I'm not saying I'll be perfect
That would be insane
But I'll do my best
And stay inside my lane

2023

This year of new beginnings
Though I'll have ups and downs
I'll have a happy ending
When times get hard
I'll pick a new card
And if I fail
I will prevail
I know bad things happen
But I don't have to let them win
This is my year
I let my New Life Begin



Friends of
GUEST HOUSE

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