

## This year's **Marian Van Landingham Lifetime Achievement Award** goes to **Patricia (Tricia) Rodgers**.

The **Marian Van Landingham Lifetime Achievement Award** is given to an Alexandria community member who has served this community consistently over his or her lifetime. Nominees have served one or more agencies in many different capacities and can include people who have served on boards, commissions, and in organizing roles.

Tricia has been a consistent advocate for economic security and health equity her entire life, using policy, systems change, and programs to make a difference. Tricia devotes countless hours to improving the health and wellbeing of people who live in our community through both her direct actions, and by serving as a trusted advisor and mentor to key leaders in the City. Tricia has been committed to this work for 40 years, and she continues to be an outspoken volunteer and advocate, pressing for better community conditions for all residents.

Tricia serves on the Public Health Advisory Commission since 2016; is a member of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria Steering Committee for the past 10 years; and just started to join the Board of Directors for Goodwin House. She also served a year on the Community Health Assessment Steering Committee to develop a plan for Alexandria.

While many of Tricia's contributions are connected to her day job, including most recently as the Program Officer for the Northern Virginia Health Foundation, she always went above and beyond to volunteer and advocate outside of her official role.

For example, Tricia successfully advocated for Alexandria's Old Town/Market Square and the Four Mile Run farmers' markets to accept food stamps (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) so individuals and families could more easily afford fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, she spearheaded the development of a working group that assessed the strengths and weaknesses of Alexandria's emergency food system to ensure that individuals and families have better access to food, especially healthy food, during times of crisis. The resulting work led to the launch of Hunger-Free Alexandria and funding from City Council to support the ALIVE! food center.

Tricia has also been a leader of efforts for improving the quality and quantity of play spaces in Alexandria, so children and youth have more opportunities for active play and exercise. For example, through her leadership, the Alexandria Childhood Obesity Action Network (ACOAN)—a workgroup of the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria—sponsored a community-wide assessment of public and private play spaces. ACOAN awarded small grants to improve the quality of some of the playgrounds in Alexandria. She was also instrumental in developing and advocating for an Alexandria play space policy which was adopted by the Alexandria City Council in October 2013. This policy provides a comprehensive framework for addressing the unique needs, importance, and benefits of play spaces in our City. Tricia's work on ACOAN was also critical for supporting the creation of a City breastfeeding resolution and policy for employee and public breastfeeding spaces.

Tricia's role on Alexandria's Community Health Assessment Steering Committee in 2018-2019 was critical to ensuring that the process was rigorous, centered equity, and asked the hard questions that ultimately led to better data collection. Similarly, in her current work with the Public Health Advisory Commission, she advocates addressing the root causes of health inequity even when it is challenging or seems impossible. Tricia monitors state legislation and budget items for the Commission, raising opportunities for advocacy and informing City Council. She is especially dedicated to improving access and quality of dental care for all residents, including

those who are uninsured and underinsured. Her active work with Virginia Health Catalyst has supported the passage of Virginia's adult expanded Medicaid dental benefit, created significant additional access for Alexandrians.

Even after retiring from her job in 2021, Tricia continues to lend her expertise to a number of nonprofits to advance their programming and address root causes of disparities such as structural racism. She also continues to serve as a mentor and advisor to health department staff and other community leaders on how to advance key policy and systems change issues.

Tricia even brings this perspective of anti-racism work and equity into her faith. She supports her church's—St. Paul's—efforts to address the source of community disparities and shift away from just a charity model to a more activist model. She has helped to bring in speakers and education to help other parishioners understand the opportunities to make a difference in this space.

Throughout the COVID-19 response, Tricia's service as a Medical Reserve Corps volunteer was critical. When the Alexandria Health Department was standing up its COVID call center, Tricia was in the office, calming residents over the phone and helping them to navigate consistently changing information. Then, when vaccines were available, she was on the front lines there too, serving as a vaccinator assistant. Tricia worked with nurses, pharmacists, and doctors to prep residents for their vaccines, ensuring they got the right paperwork, and the clinician had the necessary supplies.

In 2010, she worked with Alexandria Redevelopment Housing Authority (ARHA) to create 16 garden plots for adult residents and a children's garden at the Ruby Tucker Center at Hopkins and Tancil Court, and leveraged her volunteer work contacts to provide gardening education for the adults and kids living there.

Over the past few years, she has used her volunteer role as a Master Gardener with the Virginia Cooperative Extension to better demonstrate the connection between gardening and mental health benefits. She develops training and technical assistance to healthcare systems and even long-term care facilities to create therapeutic programs using gardening. She was recently appointed to the board of the Goodwin Living Foundation. Beyond her board responsibilities, she is a volunteer therapeutic horticulturist at Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads.

It is amazing to see how Tricia can use her varied skills and passions to improve health and empower residents.

Tricia is a fearless advocate who has worked for decades to address the physical, mental, emotional, and dental needs in our community. Alexandria is a healthier place because of her dedication to equity and commitment to ensuring that ideas turn into action.

Thank you, Tricia, and congratulations!

**This year's Joan White Grassroots Volunteer Service Award goes to Kendra Burlingame, who volunteers with the Stop Child Abuse Now's Alexandria/Arlington CASA Program.**

This award is given to one or more volunteers who have selflessly committed time, energy, and skills to help organizations further their missions.

The Alexandria/Arlington CASA Program is a program of SCAN of Northern Virginia, a non-profit organization. The organization is committed to advocating for the best interest of children involved in the Alexandria Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court process. The Alexandria/Arlington CASA program recruits, trains, and supervises

highly trained community volunteers dedicated to advocating for the needs of abused and neglected children, as well as other children in juvenile dependency proceedings. The program promotes safe, permanent homes for children and seeks to educate the community concerning the needs of abused or neglected children.

Kendra has forever changed six children's lives as she advocated for their best interests in court, with child welfare, in school, and with their caregivers. She visited children wherever they were placed, sometimes two hours away, because she knew that changing placements can be frightening, and it helped to see that familiar face that promised to stick with them until they reached permanency. Part of an advocate's job requires that they maintain objectivity—not always an easy thing to do when a child has been hurt. Kendra remains judgment-free regardless of the acting-out behaviors so common for our children who have experienced trauma. While other adults see the negatives, Kendra always finds the positives because every child should have the opportunity to be their best self. Each of those six children was set up to succeed in school, which will improve their outcomes as adults. Her open-mindedness reminds stakeholders not to judge individuals by their worst moments or actions during the lowest point in their lives.

Since being sworn in 2017, Kendra has tirelessly devoted over 800 hours to advocating for six children from three different families. She is a fierce champion for children facing academic challenges and struggles in school. In the often difficult transitions these children undergo, moving between schools with each placement change, Kendra remains a steadfast anchor. She attends every school meeting, ensuring each child receives the necessary services and academic support, and ultimately finds permanency in a secure, nurturing environment.

Kendra's impact goes beyond statistics; she has indelibly altered the lives of these six children, advocating fiercely for their best interests in court, with child welfare agencies, at school, and with their caregivers. Regardless of the distance or difficulty, Kendra goes the extra mile, visiting children wherever they may be placed, providing a familiar face in times of uncertainty. An essential aspect of advocacy is maintaining objectivity, especially in the face of children who have endured trauma. Kendra exemplifies this, remaining non-judgmental in the presence of challenging behaviors and recognizing the inherent potential in every child. While others may focus on the negatives, Kendra consistently finds the positives, believing in the power of nurturing each child's innate abilities. By advocating for their needs, she ensures these children are equipped to thrive academically, laying the foundation for brighter futures as adults. Kendra's open-mindedness serves as an important reminder to stakeholders, urging them not to define individuals by their darkest moments. Instead, she emphasizes the importance of recognizing and nurturing each child's potential, even in their most challenging moments. Through her unwavering dedication, Kendra embodies the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to flourish and succeed, regardless of their past experiences.

Kendra qualifies for this award due to her unwavering dedication and tireless advocacy for six children from diverse backgrounds, ensuring their best interests are prioritized in court, child welfare agencies, schools, and with caregivers, while embodying a non-judgmental and open-minded approach that focuses on nurturing each child's potential and providing them with the support needed for academic success and a brighter future.

**The Youth Volunteer Service Award goes to Maddy Sleeter, who volunteers with the Friends of the Mt. Vernon Trail, an all-volunteer run 501c3 working to improve the trail.**

This award is given to a young person, age 12-18 years old, who has selflessly committed time, energy, and skills to help an organization further its mission within the Alexandria community.

“Maddy volunteers every Saturday, and she is a consistent and dependable volunteer. Due to her commitment to the organization, she officially became their first Youth Volunteer Leader in the organization. This has elevated her to have leadership responsibilities during volunteer events such as managing other volunteers and overseeing the safety of volunteers working on the Mount Vernon Trail. Maddy has served as a role model for other youth who come to volunteer events. Since she started volunteering, the agency has seen an increase in the number of youth volunteers attending our events and giving back to the Mount Vernon Trail.

During volunteer events Maddy helps in three main ways. One is helping improve the trail by removing invasive species, trimming low hanging branches and leaf blowing sidewalks. She has also volunteered after storm cleanups including clearing the trail of fallen trees and snow removal. She also helps in the logistics of operating a volunteer event. This includes ensuring tools are collected after the event and loading supplies onto the bike. Lastly, Maddy helps in educating newer volunteers in identifying invasive species and the importance of invasive species removal. Maddy's volunteer work will have a lasting impact on the Mount Vernon Trail for many years to come.

Maddy is an outstanding youth volunteer and very deserving of this award. Maddy isn't volunteering because she has to, she volunteers consistently because she cares. We have seen Maddy grow and excel as a leader while coming to our events. When we give her a task we never have to check over her work because we know it was done correctly. She takes pride in her volunteering and is a great environmental representative of the organization and the City of Alexandria. I can't wait to see what she accomplishes in life because I know it will involve making the world and environment a better place.” Nomination provided by Cameron Taylor

Congratulations and thank you, Maddy, for serving!

**The RSVP Volunteer Service Award goes to the Capital Caring Health Team, Mary Emerick, Laura Robertson, and Mary Beth Cockerham.**

This award is given to a volunteer/s 55+, who has used their skills and interests to make a valuable, lasting impact in our community.

Capital Caring Health's Mission is to provide patients and their families with advanced illness care of the highest quality.

All three support the agency's mission to provide compassionate and comprehensive advanced illness care, ensuring patients and families experience quality of life, dignity, and support throughout their healthcare journey. They do so through various tasks including spending time with patients in their final moments, utilizing their skills and unwavering compassion to advocate for and support hospice patients, assisting with administrative tasks, and actively participating in the recruitment of additional volunteers through interviews.

“In the Alexandria community, Mary's impact as a hospice volunteer is profound. She has provided crucial support for bereaved families, offering solace during challenging times. Mary's creation of caring bears for the loved ones who have transitioned serves as a tangible and heartfelt reminder of her dedication to bringing comfort to those in grief. Through her compassionate efforts, Mary has undoubtedly contributed to the healing and well-being of the Alexandria community. Her military and social work background provides unwavering support and advocacy for patients in the Alexandria community. Her unique contributions, including hand-sewn pillowcases for Veterans and caring bears for bereaved families, exemplify a remarkable dedication to making a lasting impact through compassion and creativity.

Laura's impactful contributions to the community are vividly demonstrated in instances like the vigil request where, recognizing the patient's solitude during their final moments, she proactively volunteered to sit with them, ensuring they were not alone and offering compassionate support during a challenging time. Laura leverages her background knowledge and experience in information technology to streamline volunteers' processes. Her exceptional engagement in diverse activities showcases the depth of her unique and invaluable impact on the community.

Mary Beth exemplified her commitment to volunteering when she personally delivered Thanksgiving meals to families in hospice, alleviating one significant burden during a challenging time. She utilizes her skills and interests to create a lasting impact through pediatric deliveries, patient support, and compassionate bereavement calling for those navigating loss in our community.” Nomination provided by Keya Early

Congratulations and thank you for helping people in need.

### The Business Philanthropist of the Year Award goes to the Zebra Press

The Business Philanthropist of the Year Award is given to an Alexandria business and its' leader in recognition of extraordinary commitment to volunteerism and financial support to the Alexandria community.

The Zebra in Alexandria, Virginia is an ALL GOOD NEWS printed tabloid, and is the city's largest publication with 30,000 doorstep-delivered copies to residences and businesses all over town. The paper has been serving Alexandria for years, promoting important causes to help others in Alexandria. Their only good news bring smiles to people and organizations. Contributions like the Zebra's are vital for agencies like Volunteer Alexandria to engage others in service and share details about our community. Mary Wadland and her team have donated their skills and time to edit stories, create ads, and post events on their online paper. Mary has donated over \$30,000 annually to VolALX alone encouraging people to volunteer for an organization in Alexandria. The Zebra Press has been an example of being a good corporate citizen and Mary has shown how business can give back to a community it serves. We appreciate you! CONGRATULATIONS and thank you for serving to make a difference!

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Above & Beyond recognition is given to those who were nominated for an award because of their outstanding service to an agency or for donating 250+ hours. Here are the awardees:

**Alison Fitzgerald** volunteered with Alexandria Choral Society.

**Anne & Richard Simpson** volunteered with Alexandria Choral Society.

**Analeigh Dacas** volunteered with the Alexandria City Public Schools.

**Anastasia Schroeder** volunteered with Community Lodgings Inc.

**Gabrielle & Ryleigh Barnes-Thomas** volunteered with the Alexandria City Public Schools.

**Giselle Caruso** volunteered with Great Harvest Bread.

**Constance Whiteside** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Deborah Bombard** volunteered with Wilderness Kids Alexandria.

**Demian Brady** volunteered with Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington (Look Again Resale Shop).

**Diana Rodriguez** volunteered with Volunteer Alexandria.

**Diane Spitaliere** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Dorene Steadman** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Emily Barone** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria

**Fred Phelps** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Gregory Snyder** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Hayley Kindron** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Janet D'Angelo** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Judy Curran** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Kathy Brasse** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Maria Lewan** volunteered with Capital Caring Health.

**Melissa Visek** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Michael Goodman** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Michele Brooks** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Pat Davis** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Paul Curran** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Renee Cianciolo** volunteered with 4-H Youth Development.

**Richard Mobley** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Robin Richard** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Sandy Garlick** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Sophie** volunteered at Alexandria Seaport Foundation.

**Stephanie Andrews** volunteered at Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

**Steve Posner** volunteered with Visit Alexandria/Alexandria Visitor Center.

**Suzanne Leitner-Wise** volunteered with 532YOGA.

**Victoria Zambrano & Abby Gerstein** volunteered with the Alexandria United Teens Homework Help Program.

**Walt Jarrett** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Yan Wiramidjaja** volunteered at Travelers Aid-DCA.

**Yatzari Trujillo** volunteered with Community Lodgings Inc.