

Memorandum

To: City of Fairfax Mayor and City Council

From: Diane Monnig, City Representative to the Fairfax Area Disability Services Board

Re: Quarterly Report January-March 2024

Date: April 22, 2024

- Bonnie O’Leary of the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC) presented “Acoustics: Why They Matter” that discussed the importance of considering acoustics in public spaces. Fairfax County strives to encourage residents of all ages and disabilities to age in their own communities, to take advantage of everything the County has to offer. Improving acoustics in public spaces where seniors congregate, and in private facilities such as retirement communities, our older adults will be able to engage in more socialization and participate in community life more fully.
- The DSB will continue to promote education related to curbside voting. VA bills passed that ensure curbside voting is available to anyone with a disability, not only physical disabilities.
- The DSB discussed the VA bill passed to allow people with disabilities, their parents and caregivers who serve on boards, commissions, and advocacy groups can participate 100% remotely.
- Fairfax County’s Land Development Services is conducting a survey to determine the nature and extent of available accessible, off-street parking within Fairfax County. Survey responses will help to provide a more informed view of accessible parking as the county considers and evaluates future options. The survey was open until April 15th.
- Members of the DSB are currently working with staff from the County’s Human Resources Agency and Supervisor Walkinshaw’s office to brainstorm ideas to support the hiring of people with disabilities by County Government.

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Anita Light, Fairfax City Representative to the Fairfax County Coordinating Council Of Aging and Adults with Disabilities
Re: Quarterly Report from the CCAAD, January to March 2024 and Fairfax Villag in the City, January to March 2024
Date: April 21, 2024

This report will cover Q1 of 2024.

The CCAAD committee met in person for January 10, 2024, and March 13, 2024 meeting. In addition, the Social Connections Sub-committee of the CCAAD also met January 3, 2024, February 7, 2024, and March 6, 2024.

This report also includes a summary of activities of the Fairfax Village in the City for January-March, 2024.

At the January 2024 CCAAD meeting, the following presentations were made:

Arts for Life’s Encore Creativity for Older Adults Program. Mary Ann East, Director, presented. Encore Creativity is a program of choral organizations for adults fifty-five and older. Nationwide over 1,500 singers and seventeen conductors are part of forty-three ensembles that include Encore Chorales (community choirs), Encore ROCKS (pop and rock choirs), Sentimental Journey Singers and Melody Makers (for those with early to mid-stage cognitive and aging disabilities and their caregivers). Groups in Fairfax County include “Melody Makers” at Insight Memory Care, and a “Sentimental Journey Singers Ensemble” at Bradley Creek. Studies have shown that participation in the arts, and in particular singing, improves language skills, increases focus and engagement, and improves circulation and oxygenation. More information can be found here: [Sing With Us | Encore Creativity](#)

Dementia Friendly Fairfax – No Wrong Door Report. Jessica Peters, Assistant Director, Insight Memory Care, presented. A Dementia Friendly Community is one that is inclusive, one where all, including those with dementia, can achieve a high quality of life. The program of Dementia Friendly Communities has grown from just 8 in 7 states in 2015, to more than three hundred Dementia Friendship Communities in 2017. The goal is to have Dementia Friendly Communities in all states. Dementia Friendly Fairfax started in July 2019 through a partnership with Goodwin Living, Fairfax County, and Insight Memory Care Center. The Dementia Friendly Fairfax initiative is included in the Board of Supervisors SHAPE (Shape the Future of Aging) Plan to better serve older adults in Fairfax County. Participants in the program are known as Dementia Friends. Dementia Friends participate in a one-hour Dementia Friends Information Session offered by a Dementia Friends Champion or pair of Champions. A Dementia Friend learns five key messages about dementia and what it is like to live with dementia. The Dementia Friend in turn converts their understanding of Dementia into practical actions that can help someone with dementia living in their community. More information can be found here: [Insight: Dementia Friendly Initiatives \(insightmcc.org\)](#)

Brain Health and Stronger Memory Program at Goodwin Living. Jessica Fredericksen, Director of Brain Health at Goodwin House Senior Living presented. The Goodwin Living Mission is to support, honor and uplift the lives of older adults and the people who care for them. The Stronger Memory program at Goodwin House is designed to help those experiencing mild cognitive challenges or an early diagnosis of dementia. The program consists of simple activities practiced daily to engage the working memory and trigger brain activity in the prefrontal cortex, which research indicates might help stabilize or improve cognitive functions. Stronger Memory exercises are reading aloud, writing by hand, and doing simple math, each to be done at least five days a week, ten minutes each. Free Stronger Memory workbooks are available at www.StrongerMemory.org. One can learn about starting a Stronger Memory program by emailing: StrongerMemory@GoodwinLiving.org. Participants in a 2021-2022 George Mason University Research study of Stronger Memory on average reported their memory as been better after completing 12 weeks of the program. Compared to their pre-program scores, after 12 weeks of the Stronger Memory program, the participants had better total cognitive scores and better scores on the recall portion of the Mini-MoCA (the Montreal Cognitive Assessment). It was further determined that Stronger Memory may have an even more significant impact on participants with mild cognitive impairment. More information can be found here: [Packets - Goodwin Living](#)

I did not attend the March meeting as I was out of town. A report on this meeting will be included in the Q2 report.

The Social Connections Committee met January 3, 2024, February 7, 2024, and March 6, 2024

The primary work of the committee during this quarter continues to be kept informed of the progress of the development of the SHAPE Plan and its impact on the work of the Social Connections Committee. Also, extensive work was completed on the social isolation key messages document that will be included in a Social Isolation Awareness Campaign that is also in support of SHAPE and the CCAAD Strategic Plan.

Information was presented on the Improving Measurements for Loneliness and Isolation Act sponsored by Representatives Mike Flood (R-NE) and David Trone (D-MD) and Senator Pete Ricketts (R-NE). The bill would establish a working group to formulate recommendations for standardizing the measurements of loneliness and isolation, an important step to help address isolation and loneliness and consistent with recommendations of the U.S. Surgeon General and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Isabella Solano, the founder of a non-profit called Herralink. Herralink works to bridge the gap between generations by connecting high schoolers with residents in retirement homes. Especially those who may not have someone to regularly visit them. Committee members are encouraged to contact her group. <https://www.herralink.com>

The CCAAD Steering Committee approved the Social Committee's key messages statement, and this message has been accepted by the P committee of SHAPE as one short term strategy to move forward on. SHAPE has a timeline to present a first-year plan to the BOS in May. The key messages statement is attached.

Fairfax Village in the City Advisory Board met January 24th, February 28th, and March 27th.

Primary activities include the following:

- The Advisory Board planned for the April 12th “Home for Life” Expo during these months. All Board members volunteered for some aspect of the Expo – putting the program together and getting it printed, coordinating volunteers, planning for the food, helping to set up and man the Village table during the Expo, manning the Welcome table, taking photos, making presentations, and the various other tasks needed to make this event a success. This year we have 36 exhibitors along with the Safety Trailer from the Fairfax Fire and Rescue Department. We have four speakers who will share information on the importance of social connections, how to stay safe in one’s own home, how to declutter your home, and how to understand dementia. We have seven sponsors who have provided resources for us to have healthy snacks and lunches for all the participants. We are offering door prizes this year and will have our own Village bags that have our logo on them.
- The Board agreed to conduct a Village Member Satisfaction Survey and a team consisting of two Board members and three city staff was convened to develop the survey and help with administering it. The survey should go out in April with a due date 30 days out and results should be compiled by June 2024.
- The Village bylaws were revised in late December-early January and were approved by the Board on February 28th.
- A Friday Morning Speaker Series was established. The program in February was on “Solo Aging” conducted by Steve Gurney with Positive Aging Sourcebook. Approximately 65 people attended.
- As of March, the Village met the goal of increasing our membership by 50% - 88 members in all. We also increased our volunteer numbers by 35% to have 46 volunteers. The volunteers were instrumental this winter in shoveling snow for several of our members.

MEMORANDUM

TO: City of Fairfax Mayor and City Council

FROM: Andre Lee, Fairfax City Representative to the Fairfax County Advisory Social Services Board (ASSB)

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report from the ASSB, November 2023 through January 2024

DATE: January 17, 2024

The ASSB continues to monitor the formation and implementation of social welfare programs, hearing from representatives of the Department of Family Services (DFS) to provide feedback on its various service performances and future plans. The ASSB continues to meet in person – although it did so virtually in February due to members' schedules – and has done the following:

- **In January**, Director Becketts continued the discussion about engaging with an outside consultant for strategic planning to better inform how we advise and to structure board activities.
 - Discussion continues on how the ASSB can (legally) transition to a more active position of providing guidance from the current posture of primarily consuming information from DFS.
- DFS in partnership with Chief Equity Officer, led by Toni Zollicoffer, is putting out a report on the status of women and girls in the county, with UVA providing an overview of the research on March 22.
- Chair Laura Martinez was re-elected unanimously.
- Yonas Wondwossen, Director of Childcare Assistance and Referral, and Flor Philips, Division Director of Early Childhood, introduced the Childcare Assistance and Referral program.
 - The program offers a number of resources and is housed within DFS to serve around 5800 children in 2023, in partnership with other organizations. In FY25, ARPA funds are drying up, which could have a significant impact on the programs. While encouraged by the Governor's commitment to maintaining current funding levels for early childhood education, there was no verbiage to address future families coming into the program.
 - Chair Martinez will send a note to Melanie Fenwick requesting the appropriate language be recommended for addition to the report.
- **In February**, Vice Chair Ray McGrath and Secretary Julian De Phillips were officially reelected without opposition.
- Kristi Dooley, OD and Training Consultant, met with the ASSB to help with strategic planning, with a particular focus on distinguishing the roles/purpose of the Human Services Council vis-à-vis the ASSB.

MEMORANDUM

- Alycia Blackwell, Deputy Director of DFS Programs and Services, provided an overview of legislative updates on bills that directly impact DFS (specifically, how the kinship bill related to easing the burden of kin taking care of youth when there's a safety issue has bipartisan and gubernatorial support).
- Erica Winslow, a community member making public comment, engaged the ASSB about the ongoing problem with how parents who are good faith reporters of child abuse are still penalized (losing custody and child support while saddled with supervised visits that cost money).
 - Director Becketts stopped Erica's exposition due to her exceeding her time and suggested Erica contact the steering committee and submit her concerns to the DFS Director's office directly.
- Mary Ottinot, another community member, serves on the VA behavioral health advisory council and highly recommended the DFS to offer popup sessions and townhalls where citizens from around the county can come to voice concerns (i.e., independent processes separate from the county government).
 - Director Becketts took note of the suggestion for consideration.
- **In March**, Director Becketts shared that UVA's aforementioned research overview will also be broadcast on Channel 16 from 2 to 5 pm ET on Friday.
- The director also announced that the ASSB will unlikely be affected the Fairfax County's current reevaluation of its BACs.
- The Medicaid unwinding (where folks need to be informed of the need to reapply) is proceeding positively.
 - 93% of cases have been completed.
 - Approximately 2,000 cases are left (about 2 weeks of work) remain.
 - The state of Virginia is currently in the batch process of deleting all old case files, but the director reassured the ASSB that a majority of these cases were due to losses of employment during the pandemic and many of those people have since regained employment; plus, everyone receives notice and has time to resolve the issue before they are deleted.
- Arogya Singh, Budget Manager, offered a quick report on the FY25 Budget.
 - Chair Martinez committed to creating a highlights video and letter on behalf of the ASSB; ASSB member Ben Zuhl offered his recording studio to help produce the chair's video.
 - Tentatively, Director Becketts will provide guiding talking points by April 2, ASSB will provide feedback by April 5, and Chair Martinez's will provide the video as testimony sometime between April 15 through 18.
- **In April**, the scheduled ASSB meeting was canceled due to lack of quorum.

MEMORANDUM

To: City of Fairfax Mayor and City Council

From: Jim Gillespie, City Representative to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Re: Quarterly Report, January – March 2024

Date: April 22, 2023

- CSB services to children, youth and families are being expanded through standing up two new teams. The first team, providing MAT (Medicated Assisted Treatment), is funded through opioid abatement dollars and located in the South County Human Service Center. The second team will be based in three non-traditional locations, most likely in the Hybla Valley/Gum Springs, Herndon, and the Falls Church areas. The teams will provide outpatient treatment and case management for mental health and substance use issues.
- Governor Youngkin has initiated the "One Pill Can Kill" campaign, which is set to have a significant and extensive rollout across various platforms, such as social media and public service announcements. The campaign primarily addresses fentanyl overdoses and is specifically targeted toward a younger population, including middle schoolers.
- CSB Service Director of Intensive Community Treatment and Discharge Planning Bob MacMurdo presented an overview of his division which provides intensive services for adults with chronic mental health issues. He typically works at the Gartland Center, where he is part of the management team overseeing the following programs: Assertive Community Treatment (ACT), ICT, the Program for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH), and finally Discharge Planning.
- A substantial portion of the governor's FY25 proposed budget is allocated to crisis services, emphasizing regional funding distribution. Services provided through funds allocated to any individual locality within a region will be accessible to Fairfax residents. The General Assembly agrees, but the "fresh start" of the budget process announced on April 18 makes an expansion of crisis services uncertain.
- In Governor Youngkins' budget are funds to at long last eliminate the Priority One Waitlist for Developmental Disability waivers, over a period of three years. The General Assembly is also in support, but the April 18 budget "fresh start" add an element of uncertainty. Although this would be very positive development, implementation challenges include lack of provider capacity, inadequate rates and the need to hire 70 support coordinators in Fairfax alone. The CSB is collaborating with the ARC of Northern Virginia for adapted content, virtual events, FAQs on the public website, and designated staff for handling inquiries.

- Efforts are underway to identify suitable buildings for a comprehensive Youth Crisis Center.
- Through state support the CSB has funding to add an additional 300 certificates for permanent supportive housing for individuals with serious mental illness over the next three years (see attached). Beginning May 2024 certificates will be awarded on a monthly basis through August 2026. The process will start with 8 certificates per month increasing to 10 until at least 300 units are filled.



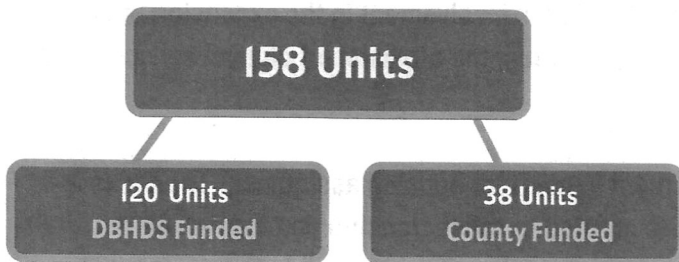
FAIRFAX - FALLS CHURCH

Community
Services Board

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING EXPANSION

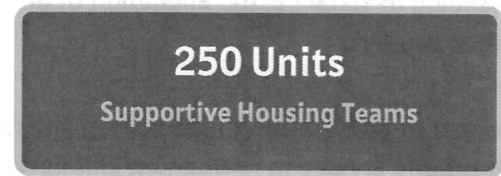
for individuals with Serious Mental Illness

Current

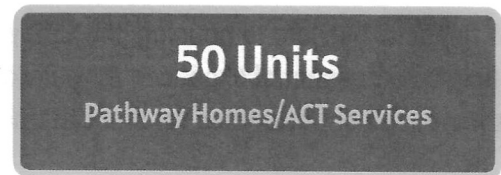


Expansion

\$20M Agreement Between DBHDS, FCRHA and CSB



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Roles of the CSB:

- **Screen and Refer**
Utilizing priority access from state hospitals, temporary residential settings, and chronic homelessness
- **Administer Client Assistance Funds**
Includes security deposits, first month's rent, furnishings, etc.
- **Expansion of Permanent Supportive Housing Staff**
Three Critical Time Intervention Specialists, three Behavioral Health Specialists, and access to nursing
- **Provide Engagement, Support and Facilitate Connections to Resources**
Clinical support services, housing coordination, and additional community resources

Rollout Schedule:

2-3 Year Process to Allocate 300 Certificates

Beginning May 2024, certificates will be awarded on a monthly basis through August 2026. The process will start with 8 certificates per month increasing to 10 until all 300 units are filled.

MEMORANDUM

To: City of Fairfax Mayor and City Council

From: Jim Gillespie, City Representative to the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board

Re: Quarterly Report, October – December 2023

Date: April 22, 2023

- CSB services to children, youth and families are being expanded through standing up two new teams. The first team, providing MAT (Medicated Assisted Treatment), is funded through opioid abatement dollars and located in the South County Human Service Center. The second team will be based in three non-traditional locations, most likely in the Hybla Valley/Gum Springs, Herndon, and the Culmore areas. The teams will provide outpatient treatment and case management for mental health and substance use issues.
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- A substantial portion of the governor's FY25 proposed budget is allocated to crisis services, emphasizing regional funding distribution. Services provided through funds allocated to any individual locality within a region will be accessible to Fairfax residents.
- In Governor Youngkin's budget are funds to at long last eliminate the Priority One Waitlist for Developmental Disability waivers, over a period of three years. This provision will likely pass. Although this is a very positive development, implementation challenges include lack of provider capacity, inadequate rates and the need to hire 70 support coordinators in Fairfax alone. The CSB is collaborating with the ARC of Northern Virginia for adapted content, virtual events, FAQs on the public website, and designated staff for handling inquiries.
- Plans remain on track for a late spring opening of a new youth Crisis Response Center in Chantilly,, and efforts are underway to identify suitable buildings for a comprehensive Youth and Adult Crisis Center.

Spring 2024
FCPL Board of Trustees Outreach Committee Talking Points

National Library Week is April 7-13, 2024

- This year FCPL celebrated National Library Week by highlighting the new and the old, as well as the library's 85th anniversary.
- The City Council proclaimed National Library Week at its April 9 meeting.
- There was a prominent display in the Government Center Lobby April 6-12 with Library Administration and Access Services hosting a library card drive in the lobby during business hours that week.
- April is FCPL's annual Read and Feed event, encouraging community members to donate shelf-stable food products to their neighbors in need. Bins are available through the end of April.
- Prominent days during National Library Week include:

Monday, April 8: Right to Read Day is a National Day of Action in support of the right to read.

Tuesday, April 9: National Library Workers Day, a day for everyone to recognize the valuable contributions made by library workers.

Wednesday, April 10: National Library Outreach Day, a day the dedicated library professionals who are meeting their patrons where they are.

Thursday, April 11: Take Action for Libraries Day, a day to rally advocates to urge members of Congress to protect the freedom to read.

Light Pollution Monitoring Kits

- FCPL's latest addition to the Library of Things will launch in early April.
- In a partnership with Fairfax County Park Authority and Dark Sky International, 25 Light Pollution Monitoring Kits, also known as Dark Skies backpacks, are citizen science kits that will allow borrowers to measure light pollution at various locations using common constellations and then participate in global data reporting. Learn more at bit.ly/FCPL_LightPollution.
- The kits contain:
 - Sky Quality Meter (SQM-L): Hand-held meter for measuring sky brightness and instructions.
 - Red LED Flashlight: Designed to guide user to viewing areas without disrupting night vision or nocturnal animals.
 - Planisphere (English and Spanish): Rotating star finder to help you identify the constellation you'll need to find, based on the date.
 - Globe at Night Data Entry Sheet

Poetic Musings Poetry Contest

- From April 1-May 5, 2024, teens (ages 13-18) and adults (19+) can submit a rhyme, free verse or haiku via our online submission form.
- Winners receive a \$50 Visa gift card and certificate and will be awarded/invited to read their poem at our Poetry Celebration on June 27. Learn more: bit.ly/FCPL_Poetic.

Upcoming Events

- **FCPL is partnering with Fall for the Book to bring author, Chris Bohjalian, to the Sherwood Center on April 26 at 7:30 pm**
- **Books and Puppets with Kevin Sherry – May 4** from 10-10:45 a.m. at Burke Centre Library. Children’s author and illustrator of *I’m the Biggest Thing in the Ocean*, *Yeti Files* and other popular titles will entertain children ages 4-10 with songs, puppets, and stories. Learn more at bit.ly/FCPL_KevinSherry.
- FCPL will help our communities celebrate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and Jewish Heritage Month in May as well as Pride and Immigrant Heritage Month in June. Be on the lookout for more information as we get closer to those months!

Let's Cultivate a Culture of Connection Together
CALL TO ACTION: ENGAGE IN SOCIAL CONNECTION!

OVERVIEW:

The current public health epidemic of social isolation and loneliness has profound economic, health, and social impacts on communities. Dr. Vivek Murthy, Surgeon General of the United States, addressed this national challenge in an advisory in May 2023 and proposed a multifaceted model to remediate the crisis for the US from the national to the local level. Dr. Murthy calls for “cultivating a culture of connection”. The CCAAD is embracing this task to raise awareness about the public health crisis for the Fairfax area older adults and adults with disabilities. The CCAAD seeks to work collaboratively locally to counteract the economic, mental /physical health, and social impacts caused by social isolation and loneliness. By actively implementing Dr. Murthy's model focused not only on physical and mental health but also on “social health,” we aim to cultivate a vibrant culture of connection so our county can thrive. We also seek to increase volunteerism and community involvement. Social health strengthens our community's ability to provide exceptional services and support. We also seek to improve the collective health and well-being of all. Through a grassroots campaign, we invite our constituencies to join us in shaping a culture that uses the lens of social connection for all actions, ensuring a positive, strong, and prosperous community. Note: [Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#), The US Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community, May 2023, is the source for all statements presented here.

Did You Know?

Health and Personal Well-being: Social isolation and loneliness will reduce your life expectancy!

Social connection is a fundamental human need as essential to survival as food, water, and shelter. If one is isolated, it can increase the risk for anxiety, depression, and dementia and can be just as deadly as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. There is a medicine hiding in plain sight: Social Connection. Just like our physical and mental health, our 'social health' is critical to our well-being.

Our community thrives with connection: Engaged individuals give rise to healthier communities!

Human beings are biologically wired to connect. Communities with higher levels of social connection who unlock the power of volunteerism have significantly better health and well-being outcomes. Engagement of residents in community, activities, day programs and civic service including intergenerational activities will produce more vital communities. Incidentally, a major consequence in communities with higher levels of engagement includes a lower incidence of violence and a decrease in healthcare costs.

Economic impact: Connected communities experience higher levels of economic prosperity!

An analysis of economic factors in the U.S. found that connected and engaged communities were able to experience resilience against unemployment, to support job and educational opportunities, to build partnerships, and to influence socioeconomic mobility of its citizens. At a local level, social isolation costs increase taxes that are needed to pay for programs and services for older adults. These savings can be applied to programs serving adults with severe and multiple disabilities, a population that is historically underfunded and underserved.

CALL to ACTION: We all have a responsibility to build social connections in our community to address social isolation. It starts with you!

At some level, each individual's purpose must be to become engaged in strengthening connections within their community. We can make the negative impacts of social isolation and loneliness disappear by taking these actions:

- cultivating values of respect, kindness, service and commitment to one another,
- modeling connection in positions of leadership and influence, and
- expanding conversations on social connection in our schools, workplaces, day programs and communities.

Increasing community engagement through individuals volunteering will decrease the amount of isolation and loneliness found in both the volunteer and in those who receive direct volunteer services. Dr. Murthy says, “Together, we can build a country that's healthier, more resilient, less lonely, and more connected.”

Social isolation is life depriving; social connection is life affirming.

As everyone connects, Fairfax thrives!