

Grassroots Alexandria Monthly Newsletter

March 21, 2017

From the Steering Committee

At the February meeting, we adopted a mission statement and established a steering committee. The steering committee consists of Zeina Azzam, Glenn Klaus, Jonathan Krall, Ashley Robbins, Sarah Stott, and Kate Watters. Because of schedules and travel, the steering committee hasn't met yet.

Healthcare Team

The focus of the Healthcare team is to preserve the Affordable Care Act. Locally we are drafting a resolution supporting the ACA to bring before the Alexandria City Council in April. We are coordinating with City residents respected in the health field, other Indivisible groups, national organizations, and the City's Health Department. On a national level we are encouraging residents to contact our Members of Congress to oppose the Republican health bill. We are also making videos of people who support the ACA and sending them to our Members of Congress and Republican Virginia Members of Congress.

Vulnerable Communities Team

Team members met with the organization Tenants and Workers United to explore ways to work together. Volunteers agreed to work on the following issues: 1) ensuring that ICE agents do not enter Alexandria City Public Schools premises without a warrant; 2) expanding the "Hate Free Virginia" project by reaching out to businesses in Del Ray; 3) responding to ICE actions in real time by arriving at the scene to help and to film arrests; 4) pressuring police to provide data about stops and arrests to further transparency in demographic data, especially regarding minorities; and, 5) working with ACPS to develop a restorative justice program for their students.

Anti-Fascist Team

GrA's Anti-fascist team organized our third rally at the intersection of King and Patrick Streets. It took place in March 12. This week we started to change tactics as we began to pursue a legal campaign against the National Policy Institute's failure to register as a charity in Virginia yet accepting over \$50,000 in charitable contributions. Alexandria's Commonwealth's Attorney is looking into legal action. Working with the landlord to evict Spencer is also a distinct possibility. We are planning a strategy meeting to occur in the next month to determine a longer range plan.

LGBTQ Team

Before our first LGBTQ team meeting, members researched where Alexandria stands on LGBTQ policies and reached out to local advocacy groups in Northern Virginia. Our most pressing focus is protecting transgender students' rights in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), including bathroom access and anti-bullying programs. We had the honor of having longtime activist for LGBTQ students and President of FCPS Pride, Robert Rigby, attend our meeting. He gave us great insight into what challenges students have faced since the election and how we can complement existing groups' efforts to protect LGBTQ students. Over the next month we will be speaking with ACPS's Superintendent,

reaching out to Alexandria City's LGBTQ Commission, and we will continue outreach with local LGBTQ organizations.

Environmental Stewardship Team

The Environmental Stewardship group is continuing to reach out to city officials and elected officials. We have a meeting set up with Vice Mayor Wilson on April 1 with members of the team. We will ask him about environmental priorities in the city and specifically the situation with the sewers. Our strategy is to understand the city's position, what other organizations in the city are doing on the sewage issue, and find our niche. In addition, we are looking into other ways and strategies to protect the Potomac River. April 8th is the Potomac River Cleanup, and we hope to have a group participate in that—either alongside Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment or with Potomac River Keepers.