

**Grassroots Alexandria**  
**August 2017 Newsletter**  
*Janet Murphy – August 21, 2017*

**Steering Committee Meeting – by Jonathan Krall**

While we decided to take a break from the general Monthly meeting this month, the steering committee did meet. One thing we'd like to do is set up a Treasury function, to cover ongoing expenses. Once we find a trusted volunteer and set this up, we may have a donation bin at the next monthly meeting. Ongoing expenses include the web site and printing costs.

**Healthcare Team – by Sarah Stott**

The Healthcare Team is concerned about possible changes to the Affordable Care Act, Medicare and Medicaid. The team drafted a resolution for the Alexandria City Council in support of the ACA with improvements, Medicaid Expansion in Virginia and Medicare. We met with the Mayor and three City Council members, all of whom support the resolution. The City's Public Health Advisory Commission (PHAC) has discussed the resolution three times, and at their July meeting made edits that will be voted on at their August meeting. The PHAC plans to submit the resolution to the City Council for adoption at one of the Council's September meetings. We will try to get media outlets to cover the event. We have asked the Healthcare for all Virginians (HAV) Coalition to publicize the resolution around the Commonwealth and the Country encouraging other cities and counties to draft their own resolutions using ours as a model. Our team is also part of the Northern Virginia Healthcare Coalition, which was hoping to put on a healthcare forum in Loudoun County in October. The forum has been cancelled for now.

The team has protested against changes in federal laws and administrative rulings that will make healthcare less available to all. We are following the lead of such groups as Families USA, Indivisible, and MoveOn on the national level and on the state level are working with Virginia Organizing and the HAV Coalition.

**Update!! Great News!** Alexandria's Public Health Advisory Committee (PHAC) passed our healthcare resolution at their Aug 17th evening, our fifth meeting with them. They are now forwarding it to the City Council for a vote hopefully in September. We met with the Mayor and four of the council members about the resolution and they all support it. We hope to see the last two members in the next two weeks. Thanks to Barbara Murray, Cedar Dvorin and Gillie Campbell for being persistent and smart and to the rest of the Healthcare team for showing up to meetings and giving lots of ideas to keep this and other efforts going. In particular thanks goes to Abdel-Rahman Elnoubi, Michael Cook, and Maureen Murphy.

The resolution basically does three things: It says that 1) the City Council supports quality and affordable health care services for Alexandrians and expanded Medicaid in Virginia. 2) It opposes efforts that will leave Alexandrians less able to afford or attain quality health care services, and opposes repeal of the ACA and cuts or changes to Medicaid or Medicare, and 3) it requests that the PHAC keep City Council informed of proposed federal and state changes that would impact health care services.

*Upcoming: We hope there'll be cause for a champagne celebration when the City Council votes! The Healthcare for all Virginians Coalition (and maybe Virginia Organizing as well) promises to spread our resolution around the Commonwealth so other jurisdictions can use our resolution as a model. If more jurisdictions pass similar resolutions, it should influence the General Assembly members who voted against Medicaid Expansion in Virginia.*

**Vulnerable Communities – by Zeina Azzam**

The Vulnerable Communities team has been tracking media coverage of events in the wake of the Charlottesville protests. Several team members are engaging in the semi-monthly rallies outside Richard Spencer's offices, which are organized by the Anti-Fascism team. We have decided to read ON TYRANNY (by Timothy Snyder) and discuss it at our next meeting, after one member gave an overview of the book and its

relevance for our work. We have also been engaging further with Tenants and Workers United and NAACP-Alexandria regarding the police data transparency initiative—to push for passing an ordinance in City Council to require the collection and sharing of police data with the community. Members of the team plan on visiting City Council members, one-on-one, in September to make the case. The team also invited Christopher Harris, president of NAACP-Alexandria, to speak at the next Grassroots Alexandria meeting.

### **Environmental Stewardship Team - Kate Watters**

In August, members of the environmental stewardship team sent comments to the Bureau of Ocean and Environmental Management about potential offshore drilling for oil on the Atlantic shelf. We also are waiting to hear if we have been selected to participate in the ad hoc committee on sewage in the city of Alexandria.

We have also joined the Virginia Climate Change Coalition and are sharing information with other climate change groups throughout the Commonwealth.

*Upcoming: The team is looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to represent Grassroots Alexandria at the environmental policy commission meetings, which should start up again in September. Those interested should contact Kate ([katewattersga@gmail.com](mailto:katewattersga@gmail.com)).*

### **Communications Team – Jonathan Krall**

The web site has been updated since the last newsletter, with a page for all of the past newsletters. We've also held sessions to show Communications Team Staff and other Grassroots Alexandria Team Leaders how to access and update the site. Other team functions, the Facebook groups, the Googlegroups, Instagram, and this newsletter, are all in working order.

*Upcoming: We need volunteers to produce photos for the Instagram feed and to help manage the team.*

### **Anti Fascist Team - by Jonathan Krall**

The Anti-Fascism Team has been busy producing new fliers to hand out at our twice-monthly protest. We've also been working to better describe our mission and to recommend action to our supporters.

Based on the National Research Council report on Mass Incarceration, we produced a flier to hand out at protests. Based on the book, "On Tyranny: Twenty lessons from the twentieth century," we came up with three recommended actions: Support Democracy, Support Civil Rights, and Support the Free Press. The specifics of each action are on the Anti-Fascism Team web page. This was edited to go on a flier to be handed out at the protests.

*Upcoming: At this stage we have good support for the team, but could use volunteers to reach out to the media, reach out to other groups, to lead teach-ins, and to help manage the team.*

No report from LGBTQ team this month.

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