

AWCA Newsletter

January 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear AWCA Members,

All of us in this wonderful organization are committed to our Arlington community, a commitment we show through the friendships we make and nurture through AWCA and by hosting our annual benefit to help other Arlington nonprofits. With our benefit just a few months away, it's not too soon to start thinking of new and fun ways to meet our fundraising goal. After all, the benefit is our major opportunity each year for true impact on the important organizations we choose as our beneficiaries.

You can help do this in a couple of ways. You can volunteer for our [Silent Auction Committee](#), the silent auction being our primary fundraising vehicle. See page 2 for information on how to contact either of our benefit co-chairs, Erin Tripodi or Nicki Ferramosca.

You can also start thinking of items and services you'd like to donate—you can make a gift basket of special foods, give a lesson or two in an area you have expertise in, or donate event tickets (Nats games and Wolf Trap concerts and shows are perennial favorites). And of course, you can make a donation! As we know, it will take all of us sharing our many and diverse talents to put on an outstanding benefit!

For more [information on our beneficiaries](#) this year, please read Sarah Trimmer's descriptions of their work on page 4.

And one more thing: We'll soon be asking for volunteers for our [Nominating Committee](#), so please let me know if you'd like to serve AWCA in that way.

Thanks for all you do!

Peggy

FEBRUARY MEETING

Wednesday, February 11

7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Our **next Membership Meeting** will be at the home of

Katie Reed

3629 N. Vermont Street
Arlington 22207



AWCA Annual *Benefit*

Nantucket Nights

Friday, May 1 at 6:30 p.m.

In the merry month of May! **Mark your calendars!**

Shannon Hayne's home
3301 N. Albemarle Street
Arlington 22207

Silent Auction Committee



If you'd like to be part of the benefit Silent Auction Committee, please contact one of our co-chairs—

Erin Tripodi erintripodi@gmail.com

Nicki Ferramosca nferramosca@gmail.com

BOOK GROUP Calling All Readers!



Monday, March 2 at 7:30 p.m.

We will discuss *Dream Count* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. This novel is about the lives of four interconnected African women. It explores themes of love, identity, and the immigrant experience through their struggles and relationships.

Location: We will meet at Diane Greenlee's house, 3512 Utah Street, Arlington 22207.

To RSVP to a meeting or to opt in to the Book Group, please email Amy at aekreif@gmail.com. We are always happy to welcome new members!

If you would like to read ahead, in April, we will discuss *Buckeye* by Patrick Ryan. Date and place TBD.

All are welcome to join our group. We are always happy to see you, even if you have not finished or read the book! And you don't need to commit to coming regularly. It's fine to attend only one meeting a year.

If you would like to be added to the book group email list for more frequent updates on dates and the books we'll be reading, please email Amy Reif: aekreif@gmail.com And If you are no longer interested in being on the Book Club mailing list, let Amy know that as well.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Message from Ellen Sher –

Our goal this year is to do volunteer activities with all ages, from infants to seniors. We have been meeting with different groups to see what their needs are. If you have any ideas or would like to help in planning an activity, please contact Ellen Sher at Esher10554@aol.com.

Ariel Blessed provided detailed reports on our collective efforts so far this year—

- In September, our annual back-to-school drive collected bags and boxes full of school supplies to support **Arlington Foster Families**.



Erica Serano – Arlington County Foster Families Program – with some of our donations of school supplies for fall 2025.

- In November, we hosted **Arlington Thrive** Executive Director Melanie Anderson and Director of Operations Joyce Lombardo at Ellen Sher's home. We had a great time learning about all the ways their fabulous organization directly helps Arlingtonians in need, and we gathered grocery bags full of food so Arlington Thrive could make Thanksgiving meal kits for local families. In addition, our members donated \$300 in grocery store gift cards.



Karen King, Ellen Sher, Melanie Anderson (Arlington Thrive), Ariel Blessed



Karen King, Michelle Cohen, Diane Greenlee

- In December, we continued our support of the **Arlington Foster Care Resource Team's** annual holiday party, for our third year. Thank you to Pat Silverman, Amelia Gay, Karen King, Bit Krill, Diane Greenlee, and Melanie Barton for volunteering to help set up for the party and clean up afterwards. In addition to volunteering time, our members donated over \$1,800 in gift cards for the older kids and some toys for the younger children! Your generosity helped give Arlington children a very special party and holiday season.

Thanks also to everyone who couldn't be there in person and donated to the event instead!

On the next page is the message we received from the program to thank us for helping to put on the party.



MEMBERSHIP

Carrie Branon and Erin Langley report that we currently have 80 Active members, 22 Sustaining members, and 7 aspiring members (on the waiting list).

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

AWCA Annual Benefit

2026 Benefit Recipients Selected

We are so excited to help Arlington seniors with the funds we raise from the 2026 benefit! You can read about the two wonderful organizations we have selected below. In addition, we will reserve \$2500 for a grant for Arlington Thrive to distribute diapers to Arlington families in need. You can read more about their diaper program here—<https://arlingtonthrive.org/diaper-insecurity-the-hidden-crisis-affecting-arlingtons-families/>

Arlington Neighborhood Village

ANV is a membership service which helps seniors age safely in their own homes by providing volunteer-driven practical help and social connection. Services include transportation for

appointments and events, running errands, assistance with household tasks, technology support, and companionship. ANV serves 455 members ages 58-102, with 42% receiving financial aid to ensure income never prevents access to support. Donations support the general fund for operating expenses/events and the financial aid fund for qualified members.

Culpepper Garden

Culpepper Garden is a nonprofit, senior living community providing high-quality affordable housing programs and services to older adults on fixed and very low incomes. It maintains three independent senior living buildings with 346 apartments in a caring community. Donations help support various needs such as supplies for resident activities and events, technology assistance to help seniors stay engaged and connected, and fuel for the community bus, which provides transportation to medical appointments and other vital services. Volunteer opportunities are available for social activities, maintaining community gardens, and hosting food drives for the on-site food pantry.

-- Sarah Trimmer and Jen Irvin

AWCA WEBSITE

awcava.org

Questions about the next meeting, group activity, or benefit information? Wondering how or when to pay your dues or purchase guest tickets for our benefit? Book Club details? How to make a donation? Latest volunteer opportunities?

Check out our amazing new website!

awcava.org

Password: goawca

You'll find all relevant and timely information on the landing page—no more searching through past emails. Follow the links for more details.

Questions or contributions, please contact Stephanie Carpenter stephbcarpenter@gmail.com

MEMBER NEWS

We don't have any member news this month. Remember, you can send in your news any time, and we'll keep it for the next newsletter.

AWCANewsletter@gmail.com



2025 – 2026 OFFICERS

President: Peggy Richardson

Vice President/Benefit: Erin Tripodi & Nicki Ferramosca

Secretary: Katie Reed & Val Smolinski

Treasurer: Emily Kiggen

Membership: Carrie Branon & Erin Langley

Programs: Stephanie Carpenter, Amelia Gay & Angie Wilcox

Community Support: Jen Irvin & Sarah Trimmer

Volunteer Services: Ariel Blessed, Ellen Sher & Pat Silverman

Newsletter: Maureen Caughran

E-Blasts: Janis Wear & Mary Panke

Hospitality: Tammy Holleman, Kathleen McKenna & Basma Paget

Website: Stephanie Carpenter

Parliamentarian: Angie Wilcox

THANKS

Thanks to the following board members and other members for their contributions to the newsletter.

Peggy Richardson

Amy Reif

Carrie Branon and Erin Langley

Ellen Sher and Ariel Blessed

Erin Tripodi and Nicki Ferramosca

Janis Wear

Sarah Trimmer and Jen Irvin

Tammy Holleman and Basma Paget

Stephanie Carpenter

On the next couple of pages, enjoy photos from our fabulous December 2025 holiday meeting/party!

January 19, 2026

AWCA Newsletter

Published four times a year

Editor: Maureen Caughran

Submissions: AWCANewsletter@gmail.com

Please share your news with us, happy or sad, so that we can celebrate with you or provide support. Examples could include: a new baby, grandbaby, job change, graduation, engagement, wedding, accomplishment, award--whatever you'd like to share.

Please send your news to AWCANewsletter@gmail.com and put MEMBER NEWS in the subject line.



Angie Wilcox, Lyndsey Williams , Erin Tripodi

Ariel Blessed
Nicki Ferramosca
Basma Paget
Donnetta Duncan





Foreground, left to right: Nicki Ferramosca, Teresa Mason, Cindy McCool, Basma Paget, Shannon Haynes. Background: Sally Duran, Maureen Caughran.



Foreground, left to right: Melanie Barton, Kate O'Neill, Candy Fowler, Ariel Blessed, Tammy Holleman, Danielle Pfifferling, Emily Kiggen, Nicole Hobbs. Background left: Diane Greenlee.