

AWCA Newsletter

October 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last month, we gathered for our fall Membership Meeting at the beautiful home of Sarah Trimmer. The setting was the perfect backdrop for introducing eleven wonderful new members to our Alliance. It has been some time since we have welcomed so many outstanding women at once, and it filled the evening with a special sense of energy and excitement. With their addition, our membership has now reached its maximum capacity of 80, reflecting the continued growth and vitality of our organization.

Seeing our Alliance flourish in this way is inspiring, and I am certain our founders would be proud of what we have accomplished together. These new members bring fresh perspectives, enthusiasm, and friendship. I know they will quickly feel at home as they join us in our many activities—social gatherings, community service, the annual benefit, and others—and enjoy the lasting connections we build along the way.

It is both a privilege and a joy to serve as your President during such a vibrant year. Thank you all for your dedication and spirit as we continue to strengthen our bonds and serve our community.

Warmly,

Peggy

2025 – 2026 MEETINGS

Here are the dates and hostesses for our remaining 2025-2026 meetings

Thursday December 4 – Erin Tripodi

Wednesday February 11 – Katie Reed

Wednesday June 3 – Kathleen McKenna

BOOK GROUP



Tuesday, October 28 at 7:30 PM

Home of Amy Reif

2745 11th Street N, Arlington 22201

Our first book of the season will be ***All the Colors of the Dark*** by Chris Whitaker. Part love story, part mystery, part coming of age tale, the book has been described as a powerfully affecting piece of literary fiction. I think we will have a very interesting discussion about both the story and the author's writing style. We will also select the remaining books, so please come and share your suggestions even if this book does not appeal to you.

RSVP to aekreif@gmail.com

The AWCA Book Group is just getting under way. Please consider joining us if you love to read.

We are a very chill group with lively and interesting discussions. We meet just five times a year, and you don't have to commit to reading every book or coming to every meeting. Even if you hated the book, haven't finished the book, or just want to learn more about it, please join us!

If you would like to be added to the book group email list for updates on dates and the books we'll be reading, please send an email to Amy Reif: aekreif@gmail.com

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We have put together some information for you, to answer your questions about the AWCA, now in our 32nd year! Please see the next page for that, and for everyone, please read the bios of our eleven new members, on pages 2 – 5.

AWCA 101

Who we are and what we do

- **We have four social/general membership meetings a year**, usually scheduled in September, December, February, and May or June. All active members are required to attend at least one meeting each year.
- We also have monthly programs, which are planned and announced by the **Programs Committee**. Past programs have included museum tours (The Philips Collection and The Kreeger), cooking classes, and dinner in Shirlington followed by a cabaret performance at Signature Theater—among other fun events. Look for email blasts and announcements in the newsletter.
- Every year, the **Community Support Committee** selects a beneficiary to receive the funds raised at our annual fundraising event. The **Annual Benefit** party is held in May each year, usually at a member's home.
- The **Volunteer Services** Committee does regular donation drives to collect a variety of items needed by groups in the community. Past drives have included school supplies, dental hygiene items, and gift cards.
- **Dues** are \$175 year, which includes the member's ticket for the annual benefit.
- A member can switch to a **Sustainer membership** after five years as an Active member.
- **The Arlington Women's Civic Alliance was founded in October 1993** by Pat Ragan, now an AWCA sustaining member. While living in San Marino, California in early 1993, she had joined a local women's organization that was very stimulating. When she and her family moved back to Arlington less than six months later, Pat got together with her Arlington friends and suggested they create the Arlington Women's Civic Alliance (AWCA) to network, socialize, and provide community support.



MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS

Susan Cochran, a certified public accountant and graduate of Virginia Tech, served for over 25 years as a trusted advisor to high-net-worth family offices, specializing in accounting and estate and legacy planning. Originally from Fauquier County, she's been an Arlington resident since 1988. Since retiring from the Clark Construction family office in 2023, she has embraced a more personal pace of life. Still consulting on a part-time basis, she is now enjoying newfound time to take walks with her dog Remy, volunteer at AFAC, travel, and once again take up the fun and frustrating game of golf.



Zeina Chouman El Eid grew up in a lively family of six, where the kitchen was always full of stories, aromas, and laughter. Those early days inspired a lifelong passion for food

and community. After years of working in hospitality and traveling the world, she found a new home in Arlington and opened Zazzy, a Lebanese-inspired restaurant that brings those traditions to life. Beyond work, she loves traveling, interior design, cooking, and creating spaces where people come together and connect.



Bonnie Hamilton can be seen on most weekday mornings walking down Glebe Road on her way to work as director of retail at Washington Golf & Country Club. She has been involved in various nonprofits

including the Arlington Free Clinic and St. Mary's Episcopal Church. Fun fact: Years ago, Bonnie met Christopher Reeve, who played Superman. In the movie, his life was saved by Miss Teschemacher who removed the Kryptonite from his neck. Bonnie's maiden name is Teschemacher, and Christopher Reeve thanked her for saving him.



Shannon Haynes grew up and went to college in North Carolina. She lived in DC after graduation, moved to Richmond to work for a time in advertising, and came back to DC when she got married. She and husband David

have two girls — Caroline, in 10th grade, and Emory, in 12th. Over the years, she has served on the school PTA, been the Swim Team Rep for WGCC, and volunteered with the Arlington Free Clinic. In her free time, she plays tennis, cooks, and travels!



Autria Lindsay is originally from Texas, born and raised. After graduating from Texas A&M University (go Aggies!), she moved to DC to work as a news broadcaster. On a blind date, she met her husband, Paul Lindsay,

and they have lived in the DC/Arlington area for about eight years and have two girls. Her older daughter Eliza is a 1st grader at Jamestown Elementary, and her 3-year-old daughter Kit is in preschool at Early Years. Away from work, she supports the Global Down Syndrome Foundation, The Arlington Free Clinic, and, when not working or shuttling kids around, she enjoys playing tennis as much as possible. Fun Fact: She's played tennis with both John McEnroe and Pete Sampras. (Autria and Pete won!)



Teresa Mason A longtime Arlington resident of over 20 years, Teresa grew up in Connecticut, New York, and South Carolina before settling in our area with her husband Sean Epstein and their three children: Lila (sophomore

at Yorktown) and twins Lincoln and Stella (8th graders at Dorothy Hamm). Teresa's career spans 14 years as a pediatric oncology and emergency medicine nurse, followed by 13 years as a healthcare regulatory attorney. She finds community service incredibly important and has held roles with the PTA at both Taylor Elementary and Dorothy Hamm, served as the Donaldson Run

swim team representative, and was on the board of Friends of Lombardi.



Jody McGarry, along with her husband Dennis, have proudly called Arlington home for the past 36 years. Originally from Northeast Ohio, Jody has embraced the vibrant community of Arlington. Together, Jody

and her husband are the proud parents of boy/girl twins who attended Arlington County Public Schools: Tuckahoe, Swanson, and Yorktown. Their son Kyle is in the US Coast Guard reserve after several years of active duty and is currently stationed in Hawaii. Their daughter Emily is a marketing executive at Banana Republic in San Francisco. On the professional side, Jody is a 20-year employee at the Boeing Company, where she works in Global HR, often juggling various time zones. When she is not busy with work, Jody enjoys traveling, camping in their RV, gardening, reading, and, recently, playing mahjong.



Alicia Pizzi, originally from the northeast (Connecticut and Massachusetts), has lived in Arlington for almost 20 years. After graduating from Dickinson College, she lived in New York City, where she worked in

finance and received an MBA from NYU. Relocating to DC was a welcome move, and she and her husband Mike have enjoyed raising their family here. She has had the opportunity to volunteer at their church and their children's

schools and scout troops, and enjoys working with youth and the community. Alicia is excited to join the AWCA to work with this group to volunteer and support the Arlington community.

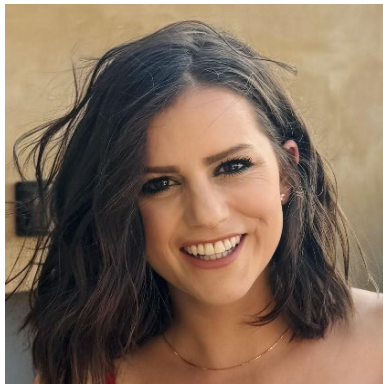


Karen Romness was born in Rochester, MN, where she met her husband—at the Mayo Clinic. They moved to Virginia and have lived here for 36 years. They have three wonderful children, Joey,

33, who lives in Seattle; Nicole, 31, who lives in Colorado; and Daniel, 28 who lives in Virginia (Yay!). Karen worked at Mobil Oil in their marketing department until she had her first child and then chose to be a stay-at-home mom. She volunteered at all the schools her children attended and was in the Medical Society Alliance for almost 20 years. Currently she is a member of the Dominion Guild. Karen loves to play tennis and pickleball but mostly enjoys spending time with family and friends. Fun fact, she is a fraternal twin, and her husband is an identical twin.

Mindy Souvannavong was born in Fairfax and was raised just outside of Fredericksburg in Spotsylvania county. She moved to Rosslyn in 2011 to live with her then boyfriend/now husband Rick, who is a partner and patent attorney at Sterne, Kessler, Goldstein, Fox in DC. Mindy and Rick have two kids, Penelope, a 5-year-old kindergartener at Innovation Elementary and Wes, a 2 1/2- year-old at Westover Baptist. Mindy is a nurse by training with a graduate degree from GWU in Healthcare Quality Improvement. She worked in healthcare management at a large private practice before transitioning to being a stay-at-home mom. She volunteers as an after-school tutor at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Fredericksburg. She also volunteered at Hope House of Fredericksburg, doing painting and construction projects for a homeless shelter. And she is the Fundraiser Chair at Westover Baptist

Preschool. She enjoys spending time with her family, traveling to the Jersey shore and Finger Lakes, live music, dancing, drinking wine and martinis, cooking, trying new restaurants, spending time with girlfriends, and reading books! Fun Fact: She grew up on farm, so she knows how to shoot a gun, plant a garden, and pluck a chicken!



Lyndsey Williams is the daughter of Angie Wilcox and the sister of Erin Tripodi. After a number of years away, going to college in Nashville and spending

her young married years in Dallas and Boston, she found her way home. Inspired by her mother to give back, she has been active in Junior League in two cities and served as gala chair for a young women's organization in Dallas supporting a local women's shelter. She and her husband Mitchell live in Westover with their son Carson and daughter June.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES

Ellen Sher recently received a Certificate of Appreciation from Jillian Thorp, Supervisor of the Arlington County Foster Family and Adoption Services Team, in recognition of our generous donation of school supplies.

MEMBERSHIP

Please contact Carrie Branon or Erin Langley if you would like to sponsor a friend to add to our waitlist.

carriembranon@yahoo.com
eedemp@hotmail.com

2025 – 2026 OFFICERS

President: Peggy Richardson

Vice President/Benefit: Nicki Ferramosca & Erin Tripodi

Secretary: Katie Reed & Val Smolinski

Treasurer: Emily Kiggen

Membership: Carrie Branon & Erin Langley

Programs: Amelia Gay, Stephanie Carpenter & 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: Kathleen McKenna, Tammy Holleman & Basma Paget

Website: Stephanie Carpenter

Parliamentarian: Angie Wilcox

MEMBER NEWS

Susan Duke has a new granddaughter! Her daughter Katelyn Prominski and husband Max Baud welcomed Wilhelmina Livingston (Willa) Baud on July 29, 2025, weighing 8 lbs. 5 oz. Willa joins her brothers Kingston (7) and Presley (3).

Nancy Snell just returned from visiting her new granddaughter! Her daughter, Laura (Dellinger) Lancaster gave birth to a 9-lb baby girl on September 2, 2025. Laura and her new husband Jarrod Lancaster named her Lainey Jane. Laura and Jarrod were married December 6, 2024, in Ft. Mill, South Carolina. Lainey is Laura's fourth child and Nancy's ninth grandchild.

Email Blasts: Important Note

- **Make sure your email replies are received**

Do not reply directly to the periodic AWCA email “blasts” that announce upcoming programs, volunteer opportunities, Book Group meetings, and the like. If you hit “reply” when the sender is Arlington Women’s Civic Alliance (arlingtonWCA@gmail.com), your email will languish in an *unmonitored* AWCA account. No one will see your reply.

We use this account to *send* the email blasts, but members each use their own email addresses to *receive* email.

Instead, **reply by sending a new email to the address(es) provided** in red-highlighted text or accompanying the names of the Committee Chairs who authored the email. We don’t want anyone to misdirect and miss out!

AWCA WEBSITE

awcava.org

Questions about the next meeting, group activity, or volunteer opportunities? Wondering how or when to pay your dues? Book Group details? How to make a donation?

Check out our newly updated website!

awcava.org Password: goawca

THANKS

Thanks to Carrie Branon and Erin Langley for compiling the bios of our new members, to our new members for sending in their photos and bios, to Janis Wear for copyediting and proofreading, and to the following board members and members for their contributions to the newsletter:

Basma Paget, Tammy Holleman, and
Kathleen McKenna

Amy Reif

Ellen Sher



October 10, 2025

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.

AWCA Volunteer Opportunities with Arlington Organizations

Aspire! Afterschool Learning

<https://www.aspireafterschool.org/>

Aspire expands learning opportunities to help historically underserved 3rd through 8th grade students in South Arlington fulfill their potential through afterschool and summer learning programs. Aspire is committed to closing the opportunity gap and offers our programs at no cost to families.

In May 2025, as a result of funding cuts, Aspire lost its crew of AmeriCorps volunteers. The Aspire Board is working hard to ensure that no children are left behind as a result of these cuts and has received commitments from its current and former board members for a \$100,000 matching gift fund.

Bridges2independence

Bridges2.org

Bridges operates Arlington County's emergency family shelter, known as the Sullivan House, which has approximately 45 beds across 10 separate apartment units. It is a temporary solution for those with little or no resources. While there, families receive intensive case management.

- Volunteer opportunities range from simple donations, assisting at community outreach programs, event drives, and helping at the Sullivan House food pantry – individually or as a group.

The Clothesline for Arlington Kids

Clotheslinearlington.org

The Clothesline's mission is to collect new and clean, gently used quality clothing from the community and distribute it free of charge to low income school-aged children in a welcoming space.

There are many ways in which you can volunteer to help the Clothesline. We have tasks to help the mission including:

- Sorting and preparing clothing for display
- Working with customers in the store
- Picking up clothing from various drop-off locations
- Organizing clothing drives at neighborhood schools
- Administrative tasks for the store

AFAC

Afac.org

- AFAC's [Sponsor Purchased Food \(SPF\)](#) initiative enables your group to sponsor healthy food for AFAC families and prepare that food for distribution. With SPF, volunteering, fundraising, and team-building come together to help feed our neighbors in need. Whether you're sponsoring 2,000 pounds of healthy food or 10,000, we need your team to join our team! SPF events can be scheduled on weekdays or weekends. AFAC can bring the SPF to your team or we can host your team here at our warehouse.

Meals on Wheels

Mealsonwheelsarlington.com

Meals on Wheels of Arlington, Virginia is a largely volunteer organization delivering meals to homebound residents in Arlington, Virginia. Meals are prepared by a commercial caterer, packed in individual thermal coolers, and delivered to our staging area at First Presbyterian Church in Ballston at around 11 am.

- Volunteer drivers report to the MOW dispatcher at the church and pick up their meals and route books with detailed route instructions. Meals for a week at a time, 5 fresh and 5 flash frozen, are delivered on Wednesdays. Some of our volunteer drivers are associated with churches, synagogues, civic groups, and companies which 'adopt' one or more routes and provide drivers on a regular basis.

Path Forward

Pfva.org

PathForward's mission is to transform lives by delivering housing solutions and pathways to stability. There are myriad ways to volunteer whether in-person or remotely, in groups or as an individual.

- There is a kitchen at the Homeless shelter center located adjacent to the courthouse building where you can help serve meals or drop bagged meals off. They are always collecting bed bundles, hygiene kits, food, and clothing.
- HBMP – prepare/drop off 50 bagged meals for distribution.

Doorways for Women and Families

Doorwaysva.org

Doorways creates pathways out of homelessness, domestic violence, and sexual assault leading to safe, stable, and empowered lives. Volunteers do everything from frontline service to fundraising. Without volunteers, Doorways couldn't deliver the life-changing services and lasting results it does. Fundraising and monetary donations are great ways to assist this important organization.

- To volunteer at the shelter, a one year commitment is required as well as a mandatory 40-hour training due to the very specialized work they do.

The Salvation Army

salvationarmynca.org

The Salvation Army serves families and people in crisis living throughout the National Capital Area of DC, Maryland, and Northern Virginia. Whether it is a hot meal, help paying a bill, or a more long-term obstacle, the team is ready to serve anyone in need.

- The Angel Tree Program is a unique holiday assistance program that connects Sponsors with needy children "the Angel" so children can receive needed items and some special gifts at Christmas.

AHC (Affordable Homes and Communities)

ahcinc.org

Founded in 1975, AHC Inc.'s mission is to produce and preserve high quality affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families in the mid-Atlantic region and to build strong futures for our residents through onsite educational programs.

- Volunteer opportunities include making snack bags and gift bags for students and seniors and then deliver to one of the AHC community centers. * Easy and impactful. There is a sign-up genius link on the website.
- Tutoring students at various grade levels or assisting with college readiness. This would require an ongoing commitment of one hour/week for a designated period of time and would take place at one of the AHC community centers.
- Bi-monthly delivery of produce boxes.
- The website has a ton of information about volunteer opportunities available as well as information about volunteer application and training if necessary.

Arlington Public Schools

Apsva.us

Volunteer & Partnership opportunities include:

- Individual opportunities: reach out to a particular school to find out their volunteer needs.
- Community partnerships: resource, service, and strategic partnerships. Something AWCA may consider is "adopting a school" each year and working in partnership with the school to meet the needs through service (backpack buddy program) or financial support (amazon school wish list). We do this now in the beginning of every year.

Arlington Education and Employment

Program – adult ESL program volunteers

Reep.apsva.us

- REEP (Arlington Education and Employment Program) volunteers have a desire to help immigrants from all cultures and backgrounds gain the tools that allow them to thrive in a new country. By sharing their everyday knowledge, volunteers make a profound difference in immigrant students' lives in America. At

the same time, volunteers gain a rare insight into a different part of their community and the chance to interact with people from a variety of countries and cultures.

- Support opportunities include donating money for school supplies directly or through the Amazon Wishlist. Easy!
- Online or community center classroom teacher, assistant teacher - 1.5 hrs/week commitment for 3 month semester.

AWLA (Animal Welfare League of Arlington)

awla.org

The AWLA was founded in 1944 by volunteers and is still going strong after 75 years. Volunteers contribute valuable resources – time, knowledge, talent, skills, and leadership – that further infuse AWLA with energy and passion in service of our organizational mission: to improve the lives of animals and people.

- Volunteer opportunities include walking dogs, interacting with cats, feeding the animals, laundry, cleaning kennels, transporting animals and handling them at adoption events.
- There is a volunteer waitlist but once your location on the waitlist is reached, they will send you an email with information to sign up for a New Volunteer Orientation. Orientation spaces are offered in order of when the interest form is submitted.
- Once you attend orientation you can start volunteering! Most volunteer jobs require training. Training consists of a mix of at home videos and in-person instruction.
- There are also teen volunteer opportunities.
- Fun fact: there is a walk-in dog walking program – but call first!!

Lost Dog & Cat Rescue

lostdogrescue.org

<https://www.lostdogrescue.org/volunteer/other-opportunities/#gallery-2>

(volunteer opportunity brochure link)

- Lost Dog Café opened in Arlington's Westover neighborhood in 1985. Lifelong

animal lovers, Ross & Pam, started rescuing dogs early in their business career. It began with a few dogs being rescued from local shelters. Employees at the Café were soon fielding calls from dog adopters in between orders without missing a beat; and the rescue mission became part of the Lost Dog culture. In 2009 Lost Dog Café opened a second location on Columbia Pike and soon followed with McLean (2011), Dunn Loring (2013), and Alexandria (2015). All Lost Dog Café locations are owned and operated by former employees and members of the Lost Dog Café family who are well versed and committed to carry on Ross and Pam's dedication to good food, good beer, great customer service, and a deep-rooted love for animals that embody the Lost Dog Café way.

- Volunteers are needed daily to socialize with animals, help care for them, and take them out for a dogventure. Volunteers can also transport animals to vet visits and adoption events.
- New volunteers are always welcome! A volunteer orientation teaches you about the processes and procedures for interacting with the animals at the Rescue Care Center