



ALEXANDRIA GANG PREVENTION COMMUNITY TASK FORCE

SUMMER GREETINGS

ISSUE 2 | 07/2024

DEAR ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY,

As we enjoy the warmth of summer, I am excited to share updates from the first half of 2024. Our team, partners, and community have made significant strides as we continue our mission to create a gang free community. In this newsletter, we highlight key achievements, successful programs, and community-driven initiatives that are making a positive impact. Together, we're helping to build a brighter, safer future for our communities.

JUNIOR CITY

The first Junior City Academy was successfully launched in April 2024. This academy, modeled after the City Academy, is specifically for young people ages 13 – 17. Throughout the course of six weeks, 12 middle and high school students visited City Hall, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office, the Alexandria Police Department, the Offices of Zoning and Code Administration, Transportation & Environmental Services, Court Services, and the Alexandria Fire Department. The goal was to help to demystify authority figures and build a sense of comradery for the kids that participated, while introducing them to a potential career path. Of the youth that participated, 70% became more familiar with city departments, 40% reported being more comfortable with city officials or authority figures, and 60% reported being more knowledgeable about accessing city resources.



Junior City Academy graduates recognized by City Council on May 14.

G.R.E.A.T.

The Alexandria Court Services Unit, in collaboration with the Sheriff's Office, launched its first iteration of the G.R.E.A.T. (Gang Resistance Education and Training) program. This evidence-based program, endorsed by the Department of Juvenile Justice, aims to immunize youth against delinquency, violence, and gang membership by fostering positive relationships with law enforcement. Through a curriculum taught by probation officers, participants learn essential life skills, including goal setting, empathy, community pride, violence prevention, conflict resolution, decision-making, and problem-solving. The program is currently only offered to youth on probation, and the first cohort is expected to graduate on July 30!



Junior City Academy visits Alexandria Fire Station 206.



Students engage with Officer Ignacio to learn about law enforcement.

PILLARS

The Pillars Series is based on seven pillars: Goal Setting, Relationships, Responsibility, Self Confidence, Discipline, Service, and Leadership. To help deliver the message the task force enlisted successful individuals from many arenas to lead a discussion, we bookended the second series at Casa Chirilagua with D.C. United soccer players, along with participation by a real estate professional, professional musician, and fitness trainer. The Pillars series provides a blueprint for success so the youth can be a Pillar of their Family, their Community, and their Future. Following the series, about half of the participants surveyed reported a heightened passion for a specific personal or professional goal.



D.C. United visits with Pillars youth participants at Casa Chirilagua.

Prevention Program Spotlight

Roberto Gomez, a dedicated Alexandria Gang Prevention Task Force member, is implementing a groundbreaking workforce development and monitoring program at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center (NVJDC).

In collaboration with NVJDC's Executive Director, Johnitha McNair, Roberto and his team at Even Scale launched a one-month project working with up to 10 NVJDC Department of Juvenile Justice residents to train them with entry-level trade skills.

Furthermore, early discussions have been initiated with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to establish guaranteed wages for these NVJDC participants upon returning to society. This approach aims to enhance the marketability of these individuals by offering them valuable skills to help them reintegrate successfully into the workforce.

By removing barriers that often lead individuals to gang life and court involvement, Roberto Gomez and his team are committed to creating a supportive environment that fosters positive change and empowers individuals to make better choices for their future.



This unique pre-apprenticeship program allows young men and women to build viable careers, earn a livable wage, and pursue economic self-sufficiency.

Visit Cornerstone Craftsman at www.cornerstonecraftsman.org for more information.

UPCOMING

Our next AGPCTF meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 18 at 6 p.m. at the Charles Houston Recreation Center.



BUILDING YOUR POWER

BUILDING YOUR POWER LAUNCHES THIS FALL

The Alexandria Court Services Unit (CSU) Crime Prevention Team, a CSU Intake Officer, and Alexandria City Public Schools have joined forces to support predominantly male students in grades 7 and 8 at Francis C. Hammond and George Washington Middle Schools. Targeting youth showing signs of disengagement through attendance, behavior, and substance use issues, this initiative pairs students with paid adult mentors, typically college-aged individuals. These mentors will work one-on-one with youth to develop the social, emotional, and academic skills necessary for their success.

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT ON AUGUST 6

On August 6, Alexandria will be part of a nationwide celebration for National Night Out. This event offers a unique chance for residents and public safety organizations to collaborate in fostering community policing and crime prevention initiatives. Typically, Alexandria's festivities feature block parties, ice cream socials, and cookouts. This year, in honor of Alexandria's 275th anniversary, additional City agencies will also be involved. For details on activities in your neighborhood, check with your civic association or property management.



POLICE - COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNITY COOKOUTS

Due to the July heat wave, cookouts were postponed to:

September 10 @ Princess Square

September 17 @ Mt. Vernon Rec Center

September 24 @ Southport Apts.

ALEXANDRIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE 2024
the Power of YOU

The Alexandria Youth Leadership Conference empowers emerging young leaders by providing training opportunities and connecting them to resources in their community.

DATES

- AUGUST 6 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.
- AUGUST 7 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.
- AUGUST 8 11 A.M. - 5 P.M.

REGISTER BELOW!

LOCATION

DEL PEPPER COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER
4850 Mark Center Dr.
Calestania / 1st Floor

REGISTRATION REGISTER BY AUGUST 2

Click or scan the QR Code to register for this event!

Questions? Contact felicia.parks@alexandriava.gov or call 703.851.6163.
For accessible disability accommodations, contact info@alexandriava.gov or call 571.504.1204, Virginia Relay 711.

ALEXANDRIA YOUTH LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Rising 9th through 12th graders residing in the City of Alexandria are invited to register for the annual Alexandria Youth Leadership Conference. This year's conference will be held August 6 and 7, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., and August 8, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m., at the Del Pepper Community Resource Center (4850 Mark Center Dr.) Participants who attend the conference in its entirety are eligible to receive a \$20 gift card! If you know of youth interested in attending, please have them register [here](#) by August 2. The Youth Leadership Conference aims to empower young leaders by offering training sessions and connecting them with community resources. It is hosted by the Alexandria Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy, the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center, the Alexandria Library, and the Substance Abuse Prevention Coalition of Alexandria.