



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

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LWVFA'S Housing Positions Seek Improvements For Homeless or Those Inadequately Housed

This month's program takes a look at the affordable housing positions that LWVFA has discussed, reached consensus on, and honed over a period of years. The program folks would like you to look them over now, decide if they are adequate or how you would add to or change them. To help with your discussion, they have provided updated information about affordability, the effects of inadequate housing on community resources, and the agencies that are currently handling housing issues. Enjoy this thorough updating of where we are and where we need to go.

Calendar

June 2013

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1-2 | LWV-VA Convention |
| 4 | Last day to vote absentee by
mail for June primary |
| 7 | LWVNCA Board meeting |
| 8 | Last day to vote absentee in
person for June primary |
| 8 | Briefing and At-Large meeting |
| 10-13 | Unit meetings |
| 11 | Primary election |
| 12 | Skyline Plaza election |
| 14 | Flag Day |
| 14-17 | LWVUS Council |
| 16 | Father's Day |
| 18 | FCPS last day |
| 19 | Board meeting |

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Presidents' Message



June – How did it arrive so quickly? It may be the end of LWVFA's program calendar year, but it's not the end of the activity of our League. During June, we have our interesting unit meetings with many units celebrating a good year with potluck lunches and yearly fundraisers. The new and old Board meets, eats, and exchanges information during the June 19 meeting. In July and August, we have a retreat where we do a lot of talking and planning for the coming year - what are the program topics and in which month, what is needed for the fall elections (who will do what?), what ideas do we have for creating more publicity and attracting new members.

June is also the time when we give an official thank you to all the members who volunteered during our 2012-2013 year. Did you serve on the Board or in an off Board position? Did you help at a condo or community election that raised funds for LWVFA? Did you register voters? Did you help with League logistics – arrange general or annual meetings, produce publications, or chair units and set up unit meetings? Did you attend unit meetings and add to the discussions? Did you contribute more than your dues? Did you hand out LWVFA literature? Did you answer the League phone and give out information? Did you ask others (businesses and individuals) for money for our publications? Did you observe governmental meetings and give reports on their activities? Did you help make League financial decisions? Did you check our league website or our Facebook page and see the effort to keep them current? Each of these activities and others is important. We could be specific and give the names of everyone who has been of help this year; but, if we all did a part, then we would name over 200 individuals who make up LWVFA. **We want to thank each of our volunteers again and again!**

Julie and Helen

Keep Powering the Vote in 2013! (Reminder)

Compiled From LWVUS.org Website

It might not be a presidential election year, but we can all keep working together to Power the Vote. Elections are going on nationwide this year, and Leagues are at the center of helping voters get registered, get the facts, and get to the polls. With that in mind, we challenge you to consider the following activities in 2013:

1. Host at least five registration drives at diverse locations, with one of them on National Voter Registration Day, September 24 (details coming soon).
2. Host a candidate forum or debate in your community.
3. Pursue an online voter's guide on VOTE411.org.
4. Meet with your local elections officials to discuss what worked and what didn't during 2012.
5. Identify five media contacts and communicate regularly. Keep them in the loop about local voting-related developments.
6. Follow up with everyone you meet (registrants, volunteers, online networks, etc.) and remind them about upcoming elections.

Domestic Violence Hotline
(703) 360-7273

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2012 - 2013

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Please e-mail address corrections to the office
or call 703-658-9150

“Preparing for the Unexpected “ Presentation Highlighted the League’s Annual Meeting

By Diane Blais

Forty-four members and their guests attended the LWVFA Annual Meeting at the Springfield Hilton Hotel on April 27 that featured a presentation by Marcelo Ferreira, Community Engagement Specialist at the Fairfax County Office of Emergency Management (FCOEM). He spoke on “Preparing for the Unexpected” and answered in a knowledgeable manner the many questions of attendees.

He distributed FCOEM’s two-page “READY & RESILIENT” pamphlet that has a planning guide so that families can “survive/recover/revive” emergencies. “READY & RESILIENT includes websites and telephone numbers that might prove important in an emergency.

Ferreira emphasized the importance of having a plan that includes an out-of-town contact, well-maintained emergency kits (for home, work and car), and staying informed. Besides using portable radios, our local fire stations and the CEAN (Community Emergency Alert Network) are good sources of information. The importance of community members checking on other community members was mentioned.

Ferreira described the new Fairfax County Emergency Center and County efforts to prepare for emergencies. Attendees left more aware of what to do and motivated to prepare for possible future emergencies.

Co-president Julie Jones welcomed special guests, including Ann Sterling, who has been nominated to be president of LWV-VA. Sterling called to the podium the Fairfax members who have been nominated to serve on the LWV-VA Board: Sue Worden, Olga Hernandez and Lois and Ron Page.

In the absence of Treasurer Bill Thomas, Therese Martin presented the Treasurer’s report for both the General Fund and Education Fund and answered questions. Members voted to adopt both proposed budgets as well as the proposed bylaw changes. Olga Hernandez withdrew her name from the Nominating Committee’s slate of officers; the amended slate of officers and directors was elected by acclamation.

Among the directions given to the Board before the meeting closed was a pep talk by Franette Bell, age 97, to continue doing what we are doing so well.

Possible Topics for Next Year are Being Considered

Program co-chairs Judy Helein and Karole McKalip are in the process of planning unit discussion in 2013-2014. The following topics are under consideration:

- Election Laws: Supreme Court and Voting Rights and/or Changes in Virginia Law
- Education: School Budget Process
- Immigration
- Reduction in Gun Violence
- Environment: Fracking-Water/Water Conservation
- Libraries

- Transportation
- Criminal Justice: Sheriff’s Department
- Domestic Violence
- Mental Health/Community Services Board
- Meals Tax
- Reapportionment/Redistricting

Selection of topics for the year will depend heavily on people agreeing to research and write articles. If you are interested in working with other League members to write a VOTER article for unit discussion, give Judy Helein a call at (703) 725-9401 or send her an email at judithhelein@aol.com.

Member Help Needed to Represent League at Criminal Justice Advisory Board Meetings

Therese Martin has continued to be the LWVFA representative on Fairfax Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB) although schedule conflicts have prevented her from attending many of its meetings during this past year. The CJAB meets on the first Wednesday evening of each month (except for July and August). She has asked for assistance and requests members who are interested to contact her about becoming an alternate representative or assuming the position of League's representative to the board.

Since the LWVFA has been a supporter of OAR – Opportunities, Alternatives and Resources – under its local justice positions for over 35 years, members should know a few facts about this community-based nonprofit organization. In a nutshell, OAR offers opportunities, alternatives and resources for persons involved with the criminal justice system, with a mission rooted in “restorative justice.” (See the LWV-VA positions for more information on restorative justice.)

OAR's programs and services for Fairfax, Loudoun and Prince William counties fall under three main

categories:

- **Diversion.** Alternative sentencing and court programs and violence intervention,
- **Pre-Release Education and Training.** Skills development and impact of crime program of restorative justice for the County's Adult Detention Center inmates, and
- **Post-Incarceration.** Transitional and family services, VASAVOR (wrap-around program of services for serious and violent offenders re-entering the community) and employment services.

During the past fiscal year: 3,322 clients were served, 122 volunteers provided over 6,400 hours of service; 1,116 people attended skills classes; 293 clients were provided with employment related services during incarceration and after release; 83 clients obtained employment; 42 clients were provided with a mentor; 914 clients were placed in community service; 991 families were assisted by information, referrals, outreach and support; and 721 clients were offered direct assistance to avert a crisis.

Volunteers are needed to assist inmates, those formerly incarcerated, and their family members. For more information, contact the OAR volunteer coordinator at 703-246-3033, or visit the OAR website at www.oarfairfax.org.

Notes From LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara

Membership on the Rise! The member recruitment efforts going on around the country are paying off. Since January, our membership numbers have increased steadily each month! We are a stronger, healthier and more vibrant organization because of our great issue, educational and advocacy work. League volunteers in our communities and the state and national coaches who are supporting this growth through the Membership and Leadership Development (MLD) program and everyone actively asking people to join with the League should be applauded—keep it up!

Celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the National Voter Registration Act and League Efforts to Defend Voters' Rights May 20, 2013 marks the 20th anniversary of the NVRA. As we await the Supreme Court's decision and the fate of this landmark legislation, that the League fought so hard to get enacted, help raise awareness about

the importance of the NVRA and the League's efforts to protect voters' rights.

League Offers Comments to EPA Science Advisory Board On May 7, 2013 the League offered comments to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Science Advisory Board on the study of the potential impacts of hydraulic fracturing on drinking water resources. The comments were delivered on behalf of LWVUS and 18 different state Leagues.

League to Co-Sponsor U.S. House Briefing on Clean Air Act LWVUS will be cosponsoring a briefing for U.S. House members and their staff on the Clean Air Act and climate change on May 20, 2013. The briefing will include a panel of speakers from across the spectrum leading a discussion about various topics and answering questions.

LWVFA'S Housing Positions Seek Improvements For Homeless or Those Inadequately Housed

By Judith Helein and Karole McKalip

Do most area jurisdictions have enough affordable housing for all residents? The reply to that question by low- and moderate-income people may often be "No." Later this year the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area will be looking at the housing positions of the League of Women Voters at the national and local levels. The purpose of this month's article is to review and examine those positions and present members with the status of affordable housing in Fairfax County.

The *Washington Post* recently published a profile (April 21, 2013, by Michael Laris) of a 59-year-old homeless, disabled man who lives in Fairfax County. His earlier work life contributed to a pulmonary disability. A learning disability prevented him from completing high school. His monthly Social Security income (\$710) plus \$35 in food stamps are not enough to pay for a one-bedroom apartment in the county, for which the average rent is more than \$1,200. He currently rents a small room (for \$400 a month) in a friend's apartment. In the past, "he has slept on a sheet of cardboard outside a grocery store in Vienna, behind Kmart in Fairfax, and in a plywood shack in the woods in Tysons Corner...the disabled and poor still struggle to find housing and some face homelessness even as they hold down jobs." His priority is finding a safe place to live. "I've been living in Fairfax since I'm 13," he said. "I should be able to find something here."¹

LWVFA Housing Positions

The Human Resources position statement of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area supports equal opportunity for education, employment and housing; promotes provision of services for the elderly; works to ensure adequate, affordable and appropriate housing for low- and moderate-income families and individuals; supports a wide range of housing arrangements for mentally disabled adults; and supports permanent shelters for homeless families and individuals. LWVFA is concerned about the continuing insufficiency of housing for low- and moderate-income persons.

LWVFA emphatically supports the principle of open occupancy. (1976)

The LWVFA is emphatic in its conviction that the County/City should assume the responsibility to see that adequate housing is provided for the low-income families in Fairfax County/City who cannot afford housing that meets minimum

standards for health and safety; to this end:

- Supports establishment of assisted housing programs using federal funds.
- Advocates that changes in building codes, construction techniques and subdivision should be made to encourage the building of more low- and moderate-income housing. These changes should apply to all housing.
- Believes the Housing Income Code should be a positive tool to help individuals improve their housing. The goal should be the improvement of housing conditions, not the displacement of people. We believe displacement should depend upon the availability of better alternative housing.
- Believes assisted housing programs should include leasing and acquisition, as well as building of new housing.
- Favors a variety of housing types built of good materials in an attractive manner. The housing should be in small concentrations on sites scattered throughout the County/City.
- Believes assisted housing programs should be conducted in such a way as to make people and the housing involved an integral part of their neighborhood.
- Believes the County/City should work with blighted areas to work out comprehensive feasible solutions to their housing and housing-related problems.
- Supports implementation of an affordable dwelling unit ordinance, which would require developers to dedicate a portion of their developments to low- and moderate-income housing. (amended 1994)

- Supports programs to challenge the concerns and misconceptions that work against establishment of low- and moderate-income housing. (1976)
- Believes that local government should establish a linkage program through which commercial developers can contribute to low- and moderate-income housing. (1990)
- Believes that local government can encourage the production of low- and moderate-income housing by allowing developers of that housing to “fast track” through the system of applications and rezoning and inspections. (1990)

The LWVFA strongly believes that the responsibility for housing mentally disabled adults must be shared by the various levels of government, the families, and private organizations. The LWVFA further believes that: A wide range of housing arrangements to suit the various degrees of mental disability should be available. The government should assist financially in meeting the housing needs of the mentally disabled. (1985)

The LWVFA believes that:

- Permanent shelters should be maintained to meet the needs of homeless families and individuals. (Amended 1994)
- Responsibility for providing these shelters should be shared by local government and the private sector; however, the major responsibility for providing and maintaining shelters rests with the government. (1985)

The LWVFA believes that non-profit housing groups have a vital role to play in the provision and maintenance of low- and moderate-income housing. We support their efforts and believe that local government should act as a clearinghouse for grants, loans and information and encourage and assist these organizations.

The LWVFA strongly believes that local government should establish policies which:

- Encourage the distribution of low- and moderate-income housing throughout the county.
- Encourage the development of low- and moderate-income housing in or near employment centers.
- Preserve and maintain the existing low- and moderate-income housing stock. (1990) ²

Measuring Affordability

According to the Center for Housing Policy in its October 2010 publication, “Rental Housing Affordability,” the studies reviewed in this brief agreed that, for a number of reasons, the supply of low-cost rental units nationally is not sufficient to meet the demand. As a result, a significant number of households spend more than they can afford on housing costs. There is no consensus, however, on the most appropriate way to measure housing affordability.

- Percent of income – This is the most common method of measuring affordability; it involves comparing a household’s monthly housing costs (including utilities) to its pre-tax income to see if the ratio surpasses a threshold level. The threshold currently stands at 30 percent for the purposes of most federal housing programs. In other words, in order to be affordable, housing costs and utilities must not consume more than 30 percent of a household’s monthly income. When housing expenditures consume more than 50 percent of income, households are considered to have a “severe” cost burden.

- Housing- Transportation – While traditional measures of housing affordability include only the direct expenses associated with owning or renting a home (rent or mortgage payments plus utility costs), a more comprehensive approach accounts for the full costs of place: housing, utilities, and the transportation costs incurred in getting to work and around town. A study by the Center for Housing Policy found that at distances of 12 to 15 miles from employment centers, increased transportation costs for low- and moderate-income households start to outweigh their savings on housing; as a result, “the share of household income required to meet these combined expenditures rises.”

- Residual income approach -- This approach uses rent or mortgage payments as a starting point, and then evaluates the income left over after housing expenses have been paid to determine if the remaining funds are sufficient to afford other basic needs. The residual income approach is more complicated to apply, requiring greater knowledge - of individual household circumstances (i.e. how many children) and local costs for other necessities (e.g., variations in transportation costs) in order to accurately assess the adequacy of households’ residual incomes. It also may underestimate the affordability problems of households with additional expenses (e.g., larger households or those with a member who has a chronic health condition). ³

Homelessness in Fairfax County

Homelessness is a real problem in the Fairfax County-Falls Church community. On January 25, 2012, there were 1,534 people who were literally homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. 697 of them were single individuals and 837 were people in families.

- People in families accounted for nearly 55 percent of all persons counted.
- More than 75 percent of children in homeless families were under the age of 11.
- 59 percent of adults in homeless families were employed.

These numbers come from the annual Fairfax-Falls Church community 2012 Point-in-Time Survey. The annual Point-in-Time Survey of Homeless persons in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community follows the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) reporting guidelines and covers people who are literally homeless – those who are in shelters, in transitional housing or unsheltered living on the street. The count does not include people who live in temporary arrangements but do not face immediate loss of shelter, who self-pay to live in a motel, or youth who are staying temporarily with others but who do not have a permanent stable residence. The numbers also do not include formerly homeless persons who now live in permanent supportive housing or persons who live in permanent housing but are receiving supportive services to maintain housing stability and prevent homelessness. Fairfax-Falls Church has the second largest number of people who are homeless in our region. Only in Washington, D.C., are there more people without homes.

Low incomes and expensive housing are the main reasons for homelessness in our community. It is impossible to pay for an apartment when earning minimum wage (\$7.25/hr.) – even if you work 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

- The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$1,134.
- A family must earn \$22.25 an hour to afford a one-bedroom apartment.
- 82 percent of homeless families earn less than \$14.24 an hour.

Violence against women and poor health are also reasons why people are homeless. The Point-in-Time survey on homelessness reports:

- 40 percent of all persons in families were homeless due to domestic violence, an increase from 35 percent in 2011.

- Close to 65 percent of single individuals who are homeless suffer from serious mental illness and/or substance abuse, an increase from 60 percent in 2011, and many have chronic health problems and/or physical disabilities. Even if a person with a disabling condition receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the average monthly income is only \$674 or about 15 percent of what he or she would need to afford a one-bedroom apartment.

Many apartment complexes, landlords and owners require a renter to have a **good credit record**. Divorce, medical issues, poor decision making and other factors can lead to deterioration of credit and prevent people from securing housing.

Lack of transportation can hinder one's ability to work, take one's children to day care or doctor's appointments or to other essential places that contribute to stability. The result is often catastrophic and can lead to homelessness.⁴

Community Plan

In February 2007, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors endorsed the Blueprint for Success: Strategic Directions for the Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community. A strategic road map was created by the Planning Committee to End Homelessness, in partnership with the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church and with local government agencies, nonprofit organizations, faith-based communities and businesses.

In April 2007, the Board of Supervisors appointed a 95-member Implementation Committee to develop the plan to prevent and end homelessness based on the strategies outlined in the Blueprint for Success. The Implementation Committee included representatives from housing development organizations, business and financial institutions, health care and mental health providers, faith-based communities, employment services, nonprofit service providers and public agencies - the broad range of community partners that can prevent and homelessness. On March 31, 2008, the Board of Supervisors officially adopted the plan.

This plan proposes a true community partnership as the most effective way to create and sustain the community leadership that will be required to end homelessness within 10 years. As the community transitions from a system that was designed to manage homelessness to one whose goal is to eliminate homelessness, the Implementation Committee

believed that success in ending homelessness required even more participation from all sectors of the community.

The five organizational elements of the Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness include:

1. The Governing Board – An executive level collaborative leadership group to provide the high-level policy direction, community visibility, overall accountability, and resource development capability necessary for the successful implementation of the plan to end homelessness.
2. The Office to End Homelessness – Administratively established within the Fairfax County government to manage, coordinate, and monitor day-to-day implementation of the plan to end homelessness, assure coordinated execution of the work of the Interagency Work Group, be the staff to the Governing Board, track success, communicate with the larger community, and coordinate with the Consumer Advisory Council.
3. The Interagency Work Group – An operational management group whose membership is drawn from community-based agencies, governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, nonprofit agencies, other critical community institutions, and for-profit developers. Coordinates to make the operational policy, process, and budgetary decisions necessary to appropriately align their organization's efforts with the implementation plan to end homelessness.
4. The Consumer Advisory Council – An advisory group of persons who are formerly homeless, currently homeless, and persons at risk of becoming homeless. The consumer Advisory Council incorporates the expertise and voice of homeless persons in all levels of implementation, evaluation, and revision of the plan.
5. The Foundation for the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness – A nonprofit foundation to raise new monies and to serve as an independent charitable conduit of new funding necessary to support the implementation of the plan to end homelessness.⁵

Housing Comes First

The Fairfax-Falls Church community adopted a new approach to ending homelessness, called Housing First.

What makes this approach different from traditional emergency shelter or transitional models is that people who are homeless are placed into permanent housing first along with supportive services. This approach takes people as they are, in part because housing is a basic right. Put simply, housing comes first then services. This means housing becomes the first step in moving out of homelessness, not the last.

Currently, shelters are being used as long-term housing. This is expensive. It doesn't solve the problem and it doesn't help families to become self-sufficient. There are two main benefits to Housing First.

- 1) Quicker road to self-sufficiency.

When a person is homeless, his/her only focus is to find the next meal and a place to sleep. It is hard to do anything else like find a better-paying job or get an education. Housing First gives working families and single individuals stability. This allows them to do the things that help them be self-sufficient more quickly. Research also shows that having permanent housing reduces drug and alcohol use for single adults who have been chronically homeless.

- 2) Cost savings for taxpayers

Taxpayers save because Housing First reduces the amount of public services used. Overall, putting people who are homeless in permanent housing results in:

- 85 percent reduction in emergency detoxification services.
- 58 percent reduction in emergency room visits.
- 50 percent decrease in jail time
- 50 percent increase in earned income.

Cities, counties and states using Housing First are saving money:

- Denver saved \$3.4 million over two years.
- Seattle saved \$3.2 million in one year.
- State of Maine saved \$944 per person per year.

Housing First also reduces the number of people who are homeless. Other cities and counties have proved that Housing First works. Here are just a few examples:

- 57 percent drop in family homelessness over four years in Westchester County, NY
- 79 percent drop in homelessness over 14 years in Miami
- 46 percent drop in family homelessness over four years in Columbus, OH
- 43 percent drop in family homelessness over two years in Hennepin County, MN
- 28 percent drop in homelessness over three years in San Francisco ⁶

Making It Work

Once in housing, people receive services according to their needs. Receiving these services is voluntary. The federal stimulus funds available in FY 2010 enabled our community to launch a new prevention and rapid re-housing model called HOST (Housing Opportunities Support Teams). As a community we are working to build additional capacity in HOST.

The HOST model is designed to be flexible to respond to community needs. The community case manager is at the core of each HOST to coordinate and manage all prevention and supportive services needed in a particular region of the community. Community case managers work with a team of partner service providers to rapidly and permanently re-house homeless/unsheltered individuals and families and to prevent precariously housed individuals and families from becoming homeless. Additional support service providers often include housing locators, benefit workers, employment or educational specialists, mental health providers and mentors, as well as members of neighborhood faith-based and volunteer-based organizations.

The first job of a HOST is to identify and coordinate housing opportunities that are appropriate to the household's situation, including the services necessary to keep people in their existing homes. Once housed, services are again coordinated and delivered. This provides homeless and at-risk members of the community with a more seamless experience. Housing Opportunities Support Teams are often physically co-located in a site where multiple support services are provided and in parts of the community where potential consumers of HOST services reside or are frequent in number. These teams maintain contact with people who are placed into housing, even if they are not receiving services, to make sure that everything is going smoothly

for the resident and the neighborhood.

Doing Things in a New Way

Housing locators are an essential piece in the new HOST model of homeless services delivery. The Housing First philosophy addresses urgent needs of homeless people by: conducting triage and assessment, engaging clients to determine their individual housing and service needs, and then rapidly moving clients into housing as quickly as possible. All activity and services must not only be coordinated but truly integrated.

The housing locators are trained to find and secure safe, suitable and stable housing for their clients. They typically have a professional background in property management, leasing or real estate and are then trained to work with people facing homelessness. Their knowledge of the local housing market is a tremendous asset to their homeless clients. Like paid rental agents, housing locators know where to find housing that is affordable for their clients and are capable of engaging property owners to secure apartments successfully. Partnering with housing locators is ideal for landlords who want to manage their property themselves but also want the security of having a vetted tenant with support from HOST staff.

Housing locators in the Fairfax-Falls Church community are coordinated and supported via the Housing Locator Program through Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services. They coordinate the efforts of shelter staff and other public and nonprofit agencies who are involved in shelter diversion and rapid re-housing. The Housing Locator Program unifies this effort through establishing a system-wide approach, a cohesive marketing strategy, a common housing locator database and ongoing training.

During 2011, the community partnership focused on improving and monitoring the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) data quality to ensure that the data was timely, reliable and met Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the community partnership standards.

Preventing Homelessness

Prevention is the single most cost effective and humane intervention for addressing homelessness. Many people who become homeless could have remained in their homes and returned to self-sufficiency with some limited assistance. Illness, job loss, car breakdown and other factors cause

individuals and families to fall into a downward spiral that may result not only in the loss of housing but also the loss of self-esteem, security, personal possessions and even relationships. In 2009, more than 100,000 people in the community were spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing, making them just one paycheck away from homelessness.

Rather than waiting for a person to lose so much, prevention efforts seek to intervene sooner and mitigate the damage that homelessness causes. For many years our community has prevented homelessness by providing emergency housing payments for people experiencing a crisis and by providing ongoing housing subsidies to the most vulnerable in our community. This assistance is available through a network of nonprofits, faith-based communities, Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing authority (FCRHA) and other government agencies.

In FY 2011, on more than 10,000 occasions, emergency housing payment assistance was provided, which often prevented families and individuals from falling into homelessness. 838 people received short-term housing payment assistance, paired with supportive services, through the Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-housing Program (HOST). 18,786 people received a long-term housing subsidy through the FCRHA and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board to help them remain in their homes

Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal of Fairfax County is that by December 31, 2018, every person who is homeless or at risk of being homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community is able to access appropriate affordable housing and the services needed to keep them in their homes.

Fairfax County's publication, Preventing and Ending Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community SNAPSHOT 2011, shows the community's progress toward three high-level goals.

- Goal: The total number of people who are homeless and not in permanent housing decreases every year over the next 10 years, from 1,800 persons in 2007 to the goal of ending homelessness in 2018. **The decrease since 2007 is 13.94 percent.**
- Goal: The number of people who are chronically homeless and not in permanent housing decreases every year over the next 10 years, from 372 persons

in 2007 to the goal of ending homelessness in 2018. **The decrease since 2007 is 30.65 percent.** On January 26, 2011, there were 258 people who were chronically homeless in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. In general, a chronically homeless person is an unaccompanied disabled individual who has been continuously homeless for over one year or homeless on four episodes over a time frame of three years.

- Goal: The time it takes a person who is homeless to access appropriate housing is 90 days or less. The decrease from 2010 was 16 percent. In Fiscal Year 2010 (July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010) the average length of time in homelessness for families and individuals was 322 days. **In Fiscal Year 2011 the average length of time in homelessness was reduced to 270 days.**
- During all of FY 2011, the community served 2,982 people who were literally homeless, down from the 3,076 served in 2010.

Creating Housing

Preserving and increasing the supply of affordable, permanent housing resources are necessary to implement the Housing First approach. This involves working with landlords; dedicating some housing resources, such as assistance with rent, to individuals who are homeless; developing new housing types, such as small efficiency apartments; and increasing the supply of housing targeted to people with special needs. Changes also will need to be made to land use, zoning and tax incentive policies.

The Interagency Housing Options Committee supports our community's effort to create 2,650 new affordable housing units for persons who are literally homeless or at risk of homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church community. All of the housing units will reflect a variety of housing including new construction, tenant-based vouchers and private and public affordable housing resources. The target for FY 2011 was to secure 228 units; the community was able to secure 196 units that are now occupied. The shortfall of 32 units was added to the total for the 10-year cumulative housing targets.

In June 2011, Fairfax County selected a nonprofit collaborative led by Northern Virginia Family Service (NVFS) as the provider for the new Bridging Affordability program. The program is an integral component of the

county's Housing Blueprint and over a three-year period will provide more than \$3.5 million in long-term rental subsidies to homeless individuals and families in Fairfax County as well as households on the county's affordable housing waiting lists.

The NVFS collaborative includes nine nonprofit organizations: Northern Virginia Family Service; Alternative House; FACETS; Good Shepherd Housing and Family Services; New Hope Housing; Reston Interfaith; Shelter House; United Community Ministries; and Volunteers of America Chesapeake.⁷

Fiscal Year 2014 Budget

Over the past several years, the Board of Supervisors has heard about the importance of housing services supports and, in particular, the need for employment services that are specific to residents who are homeless. The recent "100,000 Homes" effort and interviews with persons who are homeless revealed that many individuals have jobs but still cannot escape homelessness. Individuals with few skills or little experience find limited opportunities for jobs that pay a living wage. Additionally, many persons who are homeless have barriers including limited transportation, reduced access to educational training and job support programs. In today's competitive environment, the difficulties of job seeking for individuals who are homeless can be almost insurmountable barriers to employment. Since the employment model has not yet been developed, staff has been directed to work to develop one, using existing services as a model. An initial investment of \$200,000 is included in the FY2014 budget.⁸

Due to the federal budget sequestration and based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as to anticipated reduced funding levels for the year, the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has notified applicants and partners that the FCRHA will suspend new leasing in the federal Housing Choice Voucher program until further notice. Individuals and families currently leased up under the program are not expected to be affected. Effective immediately, no new vouchers will be issued to those on the waiting list or referred to HCD. Families who have been awarded vouchers but have not submitted a Request for Tenancy Approval as of April 1, 2013, will have their vouchers rescinded. According to HUD, the federal budget sequester in the Fairfax County Housing Choice Voucher program alone will result in an approximate \$2.5 million cut.⁹

Conclusion

The County clearly faces challenges as it confronts the issue of affordable housing in this period of cutbacks and shortfalls. Competition for limited resources among the various County programs can be expected to continue in the near future. However, finding solutions to helping all of its citizens find decent housing surely will help the County as it works to alleviate problems in other human needs area.

Footnotes

1. *Washington Post*, April 21, 2013, Michael Laris, "Those Who Need Housing in Fairfax Face Tough Times Because of Sequester"
2. LWVFA, Here We Stand, LWVFA Full Positions with Other League Positions In Brief, 2011
3. *Center for Housing Policy and National Housing Policy and National Housing Conference*, October 2010, Rebecca Cohen, Keith Wardrip and Laura Williams, "Rental Housing Affordability – A Review of Current Research"
4. 2012 Point In Time Count, Preventing and Ending Homelessness, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Partnership, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/homeless-in-our-community.htm
5. Ending Homelessness, Implementation Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community, Volume 1: Housing First Approach, Approved by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, March 31, 2008
6. Housing First to Prevent and End Homelessness, Preventing and Ending Homelessness, 2013, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless/housing-first.htm
7. Ending Homelessness in the Fairfax-Falls Church Community, Snapshot 2011, www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless
8. Special Bulova Byline, The Fiscal Year 2014 Budget, April 2013
9. Keeping Fairfax Affordable, special Report: Sequestration and Housing Choice Vouchers, March 29, 2013, www.e-fairfax.org

Questions For Group Discussion on Affordable Housing:

1. Should the federal and/or local governments be involved in solving the problem providing of low-cost housing? Who should be involved?
2. Comment on the strategies that the County is using to help those in need of affordable housing. What do you think are the most effective actions? Least effective?
3. What are the obstacles to the development of affordable

housing in Fairfax County?

4. What actions can county citizens take to alleviate the problems?
5. Do you have any recommendations for change to housing policies at the national or local level?
6. Do you have any recommendations for League (national or local) action?

SB 1004 Passed by VA General Assembly, Gives Rights to Abused Women

By Barbara Nunes, Domestic Violence Chair

A pleasant surprise during this General Assembly session in Richmond was the passing of SB 1004, which allows victims of domestic violence to be released from their lease. In the past, victims who had obtained protective orders but felt unsafe living in their homes and wanted to move would not be able to be released from their leases. If they left an apartment, they might be sued for rent even if no longer living there--not an uncommon occurrence. The new legislation will prevent it.

Under the legislation, a woman will be able to give her landlord 30 days notice in writing of her status of survivor and request her lease be terminated. She must have a protective order or show her abuser has been convicted of domestic violence.

"Women or any survivor of domestic violence or sexual violence will no longer have to choose between staying in an unsafe home and running the risk of having judgments and bad credit scores follow her to her next location," according to Christine Marra, an attorney with the Virginia Poverty Law Center.

One of the leading causes of homelessness among women is domestic violence, Marra added. This is especially true in Fairfax, where many cases have been documented, she said, and the new law will allow victims to get out of unsafe situations and on with their lives.

Getting the legislation passed was a collaborative effort with several organizations in addition to the Virginia Poverty Law Center, including the Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Action Alliance and Virginia Association of Realtors.

2013-2015 Program Planning Responses from Virginia Leagues and Task Forces

By Linda Rice, LWV-VA Program Director

Nine Leagues and one MAL Unit participated in the program planning process for the 2013-2015 LWV-VA biennium. The Task Forces (Government, Natural Resources and Social Policy) also gave recommendations in regard to major expansion (restudy/update), minor expansion (editorial edits for consistency, clarity and grammar), no change, or elimination of the current positions as listed in the 2011 edition of LWV-VA's Positioned For Action.

Responses from the task forces and local Leagues regarding LWV-VA current positions are shown in Summary of Responses by Position Title, listed by individual positions found on page 24 of the state League web site at <http://www.lwv-va.org/files/thevoter/lwvvavoter_spring13.pdf>.

Summarizing the votes for major/minor expansion, positions receiving total votes, in descending order, are as follows:

- 6 Mental Health, Justice Positions;
- 5 Women's Rights
- 4 Adult Domestic Violence, Water Supply;
- 3 Child Care, Children at Risk, Education, Land Use
- 2 Election Laws, Transportation, Air Quality, Smoking in Public, Civil Rights for Felons;
- Delegation of Power, Fiscal Policy
- Reapportionment / Redistricting

Note: Fairfax's concern about Uranium Mining was considered as a vote for expansion of Water Supply/Distribution.

Think Green . . .

Recycled paper can also be made into paper towels, notebook paper, envelopes, copy paper and other paper products, as well as boxes, hydro-mulch, molded packaging, compost, and even kitty litter. (EPA, 2008)

LWVNCA Approves 2014 Program, Including a Retreat and Educational Panels

By Julie Jones, Co-President

At its annual meeting, the LWVNCA reaffirmed their purpose and approved their program for 2014. The LWVFA was represented at the May 4 Convention by Helen Kelly, Julie Jones, Sidney Johnson, Anne Thomas and Susan Cash. Olga Hernandez, Sherry Zachry and Barbara Ewalt were representing Fairfax on the LWVNCA Board.

The purpose of LWVNCA shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government, and to act on selected governmental issues of a metropolitan, regional or interjurisdictional nature such as energy, water and transportation.

Based on responses from the local Leagues, no new studies were approved. Instead four ideas were proposed and approved by the convention. They are:

1. Schedule a day-long retreat for members of local Leagues (recommended by LWV Arlington)
2. Host two educational panels on the following topics
 - a. Decriminalization of drugs/marijuana
 - b. Reciprocal commuter tax

3. Review LWVNCA positions for possible updates and edits
4. Provide information regarding topics and speakers that may be available for presentations at local events based on program ideas and information collected from local Leagues.
 - a. Make this information available through the LWVNCA website.
 - b. Include speakers that may be available to make presentations on the LWVUS Agriculture Study due out in late 2013.

In addition to the business session, the group heard a presentation on “The Paradox of Gender Equality: How American Women’s Groups Gained and Lost Their Public Voice” by Kristin A. Goss, Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke University. Kristen, Arlington League’s incoming president, also spoke briefly on gun control legislation.

Howard County won the Naumann Award with candidate’s interviews posted online. Virginia Long (LWVFA) was elected president, Olga Hernandez secretary and Barbara Ewalt a director.

Former League Member Authors History Book

Former LWVFA member, and noted local historian Rita Koman has authored *Manassas Mosaic, Creating A Community*, available at the Manassas Museum, 9101 Prince William Street, Manassas, VA 20110, (703)-368-1873. The book highlights the creation of the city in the aftermath of the Civil War, and how the region was affected by the devastation of the conflict.

Rita was active in LWV as Fairfax co-program chair and on the Fairfax and State redistricting committee. She taught secondary American history and government for 18 years. A member of the Organization of American Historians, Ms Koman is now a consultant and researcher living in Manassas.

National League Sends Letter to President Obama on Campaign Finance Reform

LWVUS joined other reform groups in sending a letter to President Obama expressing deep concern about the nation’s corrupt campaign finance system. The letter expresses extreme disappointment and frustration with the President’s failure to provide meaningful leadership or to take effective action to solve this problem facing our country.

Domestic Violence Hotline
(703) 360-7273

Wednesday, June 12, 2013

11:30 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.¹

*League of Women Voters
Day at Hopsfrog Grille*



5765 Burke Centre Parkway. Burke VA 22015
Telephone: (703) 239-9324 www.hopsfrog.com

- High quality, intimate restaurant
- Good food, friendly people
- Reasonable Prices
- 10 % of all food revenue goes to the League

* Come out and join the fun - Mark your calendar *
* Bring your friends; Bring your neighbors *
* 50-50 drawing (need not be present to win) *
* Other fun things planned *



A Fundraiser Sponsored by the Fairfax Station Unit, LWVFA

¹ Note: the restaurant is fairly small so consider avoiding peak times if you can.

This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

Topic: Affordable Housing

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the "At Large Meeting" and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of May 1, 2013, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

Saturday, June 8

10:00 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

Packard Center
4026 Hummer Rd.
Annandale 22003
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401

Monday, June 10

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

Hunters Crossing Classroom
Spring Village Drive
Springfield 22150
Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

Tuesday, June 11

10:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CC)

Sully District Gov. Center
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.
Chantilly, 20151
Contact: Olga, 703-815-1897

Wednesday, June 12

9:30 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon Dist. Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria 22306
Contact: Louise, 703-960-0073

9:30 a.m. McLean (MCL)

Star Nut Gourmet
1445 Laughlin Ave.
McLean 22101
Contact: Peggy, 703-532-4417 or
Sharone, 703-734-1048

11:30 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

Hopsfrog Grill
5765 Burke Centre Pkwy.
Burke 22015
Contact: Lois, 703-690-0908

6:15 p.m. Dinner Unit (DU)

Yen Cheng Restaurant
Main Street Center
9992 Main Street 22030
Contact: Tin, 703-207-4669

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)

Reston Art Gallery at Heron House
Lake Anne Village Center
Reston 20190
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

Thursday, June 13

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

2615 John Milton Dr.
Herndon 20171
Contact: Rona, 703-476-5758

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

7827 Anson Ct.
Springfield 22152
Contact: Anita, 703-451-1048

1 p.m. Fairfax City/Vienna (FX-V)

Oakton Regional Library
10304 Lynhaven Pl.
Oakton 22124
Contact: Bobby, 703-938-1486 or
Liz, 703-281-3380

7:45 p.m. Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)

Paul Spring Retirement Community
Mt. Vernon Room
7116 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria 22307
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820

Have a Great Summer!

The VOTER will return in the fall.



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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June, 2013

Julie Jones, Co-President

Helen Kelly, Co-President

Ron Page, Editor

Liz Brooke, Coordinator

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Dues year is July 1 through June 30. Current dues year ends June 30, 2014.)

Membership Category: Individual \$65 ____; Household (2 persons–1 *VOTER*) \$90 ____; Donation \$ ____
Student \$32.50 ____; (Coll. Attending ____)

Membership is: New ____; Renewal ____; Reinstate ____; Subsidy Requested ____

We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.

Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check payable to LWVFA Ed. Fund.

Please Print Clearly!

Name _____ **Unit** _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip + 4** _____

Phone (H) _____ **(M)** _____ **E-Mail** _____

Thank you for checking off your interests:

<input type="checkbox"/> County Govt	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence

Mail to: LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403