



Friends of Guest House Fundraiser Busboys and Poets

June 1 • 4251 S. Campbell Ave. Shirlington

Join us from 3-5 in the Robeson room for a poetry reading by Alumnae and Residents. Former residents will be selling their homemade jewelry. Busboys and Poets will donate 5% of the revenue from dinner sales (5 pm to midnight) to Friends of Guest House. Additional donations gratefully accepted.

Please designate 8583 in the United Way campaign or 69155 for the Combined Federal Campaign (CFCNCA)

Friends of Guest House
One East Luray Avenue
Alexandria, Virginia 22301

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DONATIONS NEEDED

As you probably already know Friends of Guest House relies heavily on donations. But perhaps not all donations need to consist of cleaning out our closets. At Guest House we do get a lot of clothing donations and they are very much appreciated, but do you have any idea how much laundry detergent it takes to keep those clothes clean? Our 10 residents are responsible for doing their own laundry and Guest House provides the detergent. We can all imagine what it would be like to have 10 daughters at home doing laundry.

The same goes for all kinds of items we take for granted in our daily lives. Deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and lotion are all necessary to give the women a good start on the way to finding jobs, housing and a feeling of self worth. The cost of all of this is enormous. With budget cuts, our resources are more limited so if you are thinking of making a donation to Guest House, think about these items. The women are always grateful for any donations. Please consider donating travel size (i.e., from hotels) toiletries to homeless shelters rather than to Guest House.

Save the Date!
Saturday, July 24

Aftercare Graduation

11 am - 1 pm

Alfred St. Baptist Church
Lower Chapel

Board of Directors

Peter Lunt
Chair

Sharon McMichael
Treasurer

Marjorie Quint-Bouzid

Theresa Caragol

Donjette Gilmore

Carlton Willis

Kari Galloway
Executive Director

Emma Waller
Deputy Director



PJ, Edye, Senator Yvonne Miller, Terry, Callie and Kari in Senator Miller's Office in Richmond

Friends of Guest House Speakers Bureau

The women have been very busy sharing their stories this year. We have spoken to students and professors of Howard University, George Mason University and Westwood College. We are able to communicate ideas from a live perspective to the students who will be in real life situations finding answers and offering assistance to people who are living the lives the women lived before they came to Guest House. It is exceedingly beneficial for these college students to see a face with a story; to realize that the work they are entering is a demanding, rewarding career that is totally focused on another human being.

To the ladies of Guest House,

"Whatever happened in the past, your beauty, grace, eloquence and honesty are awe-inspiring. You are each someone in possession of qualities and a character that all of us would do well to aspire to. Very Best Wishes, Bryan-George Mason University."

We spoke at several middle schools in Washington DC and Northern Virginia and with children in the Support on Suspension Program and SOHO Program. These are the groups the women enjoy the most. They want the teens to know that talking about issues in their lives is the right thing to do. The women offer words of warning and words of hope. The speakers do not make this a "scared straight" program but rather connect with the students in a way that shows them that they care and opens their eyes to the consequences of bad decisions made at an early age. They demonstrate that with determination and faith in yourself you can walk away from trauma, a new and better you.

At the beginning of the 2010 Congressional Session the Speakers Bureau went to Richmond to watch the process that is our state government. The trip down to Richmond to speak with legislators gave the women priceless access to those in a position of power, something they have rarely experienced in their lives. One woman said after spending time running from office to office all day, "I can't believe that we can just walk in and visit all of them (the legislators) any time we want!" The Guest House speakers visited the offices of the bill sponsors and relevant committee members, offering both support for the bills and testimony to personalize the legislation. They also visited the offices of members who opposed the legislation. The staff they met with were impressed that these women were advocating for legislation that did not directly impact them but rather others who would follow them.

Speakers Bureau

The Speakers Bureau is a volunteer-based program that gives the women of Guest House the opportunity to tell their personal narratives to community groups, youth groups, students, and legislators. By sharing a very candid view of their life experiences and the hardships they have had to overcome, these women provide a greater understanding of the lived circumstances that both teaches and empowers. It is a relatable and inspiring experience for all in attendance.

Some of our previous speaking engagements include:
The Virginia General Assembly
City Center Public Charter Schools Washington, DC
Fairfax Partnership for Youth SOS Program
Alexandria Court Services SOHO Program
Facilitating Leadership for Youth
National Non-Profit Congress
Catalogue for Philanthropy
George Mason University
Howard University
Giving Circle of Hope
Juvenile Court System

If you are interested in inviting the Speakers Bureau to your school or organization, please contact Terry Kras

703-549-8072

terry@friendsofguesthouse.org

"I would like to once again thank you and the residents for coming to Howard University and presenting in my Mental Health class. I think this visit will give them some more insight into the field of social work as they prepare to graduate and with clients."

"As (George Mason University) graduate students we often get caught up with papers and deadlines. Your visit served as a reminder on why I came to social work — I wanted to make a difference even if it was in one person's life."

"We are beginning a girls-only group which will focus on team building, leadership, and a time for discussion — this was something the girls requested during our debriefing of your group. Thank you for sharing your stories!"

Please visit our website to find out more about Friends of Guest House

www.friendsofguesthouse.org



Alumna Terry Garrett, Executive Director Kari Galloway, US Congressman Jim Moran, Alumna Courtney Mason

Guest House Alumna Courtney Mason Volunteers with NVMVC

The following story was originally published in the The Northern Virginia Multicultural Volunteer Recruitment Committee (NVMVC) newsletter.

Volunteerism can find people through many different avenues. For some it is a learned behavior from their parents or faith communities. For others it is found after they have been the recipients of someone else's willingness to give. In our volunteer spotlight this month, Courtney found volunteerism through a requirement she was ordered to conduct through the court. Though initially her service was required, she now finds that she truly enjoys volunteering and says that she "loves how it feels to know that [she] is a part of helping others in [her] community." Courtney finds the positive feedback she receives for putting forth an effort of 100% a great motivator and feels appreciated by both the agency and the recipients of her service. Courtney's favorite activity thus far has been volunteering at the Senior Citizens building in Old Town Alexandria, stating that "it is an experience that I truly enjoy. It is a joy to help those that are sick and shut in. For those who were disabled, we actually deliver the food to their front steps. The fact that I can help take the weight off of someone else's shoulders is excellent!" Meeting new people from different backgrounds has also been a plus. As an African-American, Courtney believes that volunteering in a formal setting, such as with a nonprofit or public agency doesn't cross the minds of those in her community often. She feels that the main reason for this is that "most people in her community are busy trying to get their education or trying to find a way to become more financially stable." No matter how you find volunteerism, know that once you try it, it's hard to weigh the gifts you will receive for your efforts.

* The Northern Virginia Multicultural Volunteer Recruitment Committee (NVMVC), a partnership of individuals and agency representatives, conducts outreach and volunteer engagement efforts to enhance the quality of government and nonprofit projects and events by recruiting and recognizing volunteers that represent the vibrant, culturally diverse makeup of our community.

Total Woman Program

An exciting new program has begun on Wednesday nights at Friends of Guest House. It is Total Woman, a title that aptly describes its purpose.

Friends of Guest House residents go from incarceration to Guest House (for an average of only four months), then to the AfterCare Program where they live mostly on their own. This is a fast, dizzying track — especially if your goals and living arrangements are completely different from your past life. To make this transition workable in such a short space of time, we felt we had to come up with a plan just as fast paced. So Total Woman was born. Many new situations the women will face from interviewing for jobs, resume writing, dressing well on a tight budget, making and sticking to a budget, eating healthy, exercising and staying safe while living on your own are presented in separate sessions.

The program is divided into sessions. We found knowledgeable and skilled volunteer specialists in each area to be presenters. We have a yoga instructor for exercise, a physician's assistant for health issues, and a budget analyst for developing budgets. Sessions are:

- Healthy eating
- Jobs (finding, keeping and loving your job)
- Health and exercise
- Budgets and legal advice
- Hair and clothes
- Organizing your life
- Personal safety
- Home tips (maintaining your living space)

Volunteers come in most days to assist women with topics that have been presented through Total Woman. They are equipped to help with resumes, tutor for GEDs, help with job searches, and prepare the women for life outside the walls of Guest House.

Although in its infancy, we have completed the first 8 sessions and have begun the second set of sessions. The residents have been enthusiastic and all say they look forward to Wednesday evenings. As a Pilot Program, Total Woman is constantly being assessed. Our goal is giving Friends of Guest House residents the many tools needed to live a productive, comfortable life.

Thanks to many donations of time, expertise and items, Total Woman is off to a good start.

THANKS!

Great BIG thanks to two VERY special board members who stepped down this year from service. Erika Byrd and Dick Schwartz were with us during the renovation and since we re-opened Guest House in spring 2004. We appreciate their passion and dedication and wish them both the very best."

Thanks to the Alexandria Symphony for tickets for residents and staff to attend their final performance of the 2009-2010 season. A beautiful afternoon of wonderful music was enjoyed by all!



Volunteering at Friends of Guest House

Friends of Guest House has some very special needs for volunteers. Did you know that we have a volunteer who goes to the grocery store every week to shop for food for the residents of Guest House? Sometimes she goes on vacation or has other responsibilities, so we really could use a back up for her. Also, we are able to get food from some of the area food banks, but we need someone to pick it up. It would be so helpful (and cost effective) to have a person(s) for this job. Only once or twice a month is needed for the food bank run and being on call for the grocery shopping would never require more than one day a month.

Also needed are people (this would be a great group project) to help plan day trips for the women of Guest House. The residents would benefit from the many cultural experiences readily available in our area. This would necessitate planners and people who can also be drivers. This rewarding project would not involve a weekly commitment. Most project planning can be done at home. Do you or your group want to take on a worthwhile and exciting project? If so, this is the one for you.

We also are interested in beginning a mentoring program. More commitment is required for this project. If you are a good listener, a caring, forward looking person, and like to see people succeed, mentoring might be exactly the right place for you.

To find out more contact Audrey Stahl at audrey@friendsof-guesthouse.org or 704-549-8072. I would love to talk with you further about our program.

An excerpt from an interview with Eric Waskowicz

Guest House is finally ADA compliant! After 35 years of operation we now have wheelchair access. Please read below how this wonderful gift took place!

I was asked to look around for projects we could do outside the church that would give kids the experience of helping other people and acting out the love of Jesus. The obvious other goals were having a lot of fun working together, and getting the good feeling you get from building something very tangible. One of our kids, a high school junior walked around that Sunday afternoon saying, "I never built anything before. This is so cool!"

Terry, you didn't ask me "what gave you the nerve to think your group of kids could build a 26 foot ramp which was totally up to code and ADA standards?" The nerve came from Mike Jenkins, who is a Deacon with the Episcopal Church in western North Carolina, the Appalachian foothills. Mike leads an organization called Towel Ministry (<http://www.towelministry.org> which for the past thirty years (almost as long as Guest House) has been doing home repair ministry to poor and disadvantaged folks, mostly in rural areas. Mike has been involved with hundreds of handicapped ramps, most of them built by kids, often at weeklong summer camps based at churches in North Carolina. Mike drove up from North Carolina with a vanload of tools to lead our "Towel Weekend." Mike said we could do it, and we believed him. And we told Kari Galloway we could do it, and she believed us. And then we did it. That's kind of incredible.

Carlisle Bean, the only member of our church who is 6'6" and an architect, designed the ramp and produced some very nice hand-drawn plans. Guest House is considered a commercial location so this ramp had to be designed to be very strong, and Lisle did a great job.

I almost forgot. Possibly the highlight of the weekend for many of us was having some of the women from Guest House for dinner on Saturday night, along with Kari Galloway (Director of Friends of Guest House), her husband Paul and Emma Waller (Deputy Director). I really enjoyed having conversations with women who were joyful about the opportunity they were taking hold of with both hands. I was so impressed by their stories of personal achievement, and also by the support they were getting from Guest House.

**We're Grace Episcopal Church at
3601 Russell Rd, Alexandria, Va.
<http://www.GraceAlex.org>**