This Year’s BBQ, Boots & Bingo – “A Hooting Good Time!”

In the words of one guest, Arlington Thrive’s second annual fall family fundraiser was “not only a hooting good time, but an essential fundraiser to support the awesome work that helps the most vulnerable in Arlington.”

Gwen McQueeny, Vice President of Virginia Services for Volunteers of America Chesapeake, added, “My daughter and I loved attending the family-friendly affair – face painting, BBQ, bounce houses, and so much more! I am thankful for Arlington Thrive and the work they do everyday!”

BBQ, Boots & Bingo, which drew nearly 200 guests, took place at the Columbus Club of Arlington on Saturday, September 16. “The turnout was terrific!” said Arlington Thrive Executive Director Andrew Schneider. “We were pleased to have even more support from the community this year, including several new sponsors.”

Guests enjoyed delicious barbecue from Rocklands and hot dogs and hamburgers cooked by members of the Columbus Club of Arlington. While it was officially fall, the summer-like weather made everyone appreciate cool treats from the ice cream truck even more than usual! Bingo was popular with attendees of all ages, and children enjoyed a moon bounce, face painting and crafts, including spin art and rock painting.

A special thanks goes out to all of the volunteers who helped make the event possible, especially event committee member Denise Hlavaty for organizing the fun games and decorations this year!

Clockwise from top: Gwen McQueeny, Vice President of Virginia Services for Volunteers of America Chesapeake; Candy Fowler, Arlington Thrive Board President; with Kathleen Gilles Seidel; Bret Brock, of Brock Realty with Andrew Schneider, Arlington Thrive Executive Director.
Letter from the Executive Director

Each month, Arlington Thrive helps over 200 individuals and families with same-day emergency financial assistance. As you know, this assistance ranges from small amounts of help for a SmarTrip Card so a formerly homeless person can get to their new job, to help paying a medical bill or buy new glasses, to rental assistance in the thousands of dollars. For me, personally, it is hard to keep it all in perspective at times – to fully understand the anxiety these families experience and the relief and gratitude they feel when they are helped by Thrive.

Like so many in our community, I also struggle with the knowledge that, despite the affluence that abounds in our community, many people still face challenges to meet their basic needs. Arlington is one of the wealthiest counties in the United States, but we still have 30% of our school students on free and reduced lunch and more than 30,000 of our neighbors living at or near poverty. In addition, the national debates over immigration, spending priorities, and taxes all put additional stresses on our neighbors in need, while the recent natural disasters significantly expand the demands on available assistance dollars.

This past summer, at the end of a wonderful family vacation, our car broke down 600 miles from home. Because of our excellent auto insurance, credit cards, and valid drivers’ licenses, we were able to rent a car and make it home having only been delayed by a few hours (the car wasn’t so lucky). Yet this minor inconvenience for me gave me pause. How would a family without the same resources that we take for granted have handled a similar situation? Far from home, stranded, not enough money to solve their immediate crisis?

This experience made me so grateful and aware of the opportunities and advantages that I have every day. It also made me incredibly grateful for the assistance that Arlington Thrive provides to Arlingtonians every day. In this day and age, the news can sometimes be overwhelming, including the uncertainty in the public policy landscape and what impact it will have on Arlington and even Arlington Thrive. Yet through it all, you – our friends, supporters, and donors – are standing with us helping our neighbors in need. Because of your support, Arlington Thrive continues and will continue to play a vital role in the social safety net. Thank you.

I wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season.

Sincerely,
Andrew Schneider
A Summer Experience to Remember

By Chandler Copenheaver

This summer I had the pleasure of interning with Arlington Thrive. As a rising senior at Penn State from south-central Pennsylvania, I took a leap of faith interning in a city I’ve never been to at an organization I had never heard of. I was paired with Thrive through a Penn State internship placement program, and as soon as I spoke to the Thrive staff in my interview I knew Thrive was an organization that shared my passion for community engagement. After the fastest and busiest nine weeks of my life, I know without a doubt I made the perfect choice by accepting my internship offer with Thrive.

It’s almost as if I came at the critical hour for Thrive; between my hiring and my first day, two vital team members left Thrive. With a staff of two and an intern taking on a workload meant for four people, I became the de facto interim operations manager. Thanks to Thrive’s Executive Director, Andrew Schneider, I was entrusted with responsibilities and opportunities I couldn’t imagine having until five years after graduating.

Over the course of the past nine weeks I was able to help Thrive rework the check distribution process to assist our clients earlier in the day and with a wider pick-up window, while dialing back the staff hours required to process requests by automating certain manual steps in the system. These changes will not only ensure that the individuals Thrive serves are receiving the emergency funds they need faster, but also free up Thrive staff time that can now be used towards increased fundraising efforts. I also established new workflow and data management systems that will streamline Thrive’s operations and give staff more time to focus on Thrive’s mission.

I can proudly say that my time at Thrive has prepared me to succeed in the world of nonprofit management and communications, but even more importantly, it allowed me to make an important impact on Arlington’s community. I’m extremely grateful for the experience I’ve had here, and it will remain with me long into the future.

For Fiscal Year 2017, Arlington Thrive provided $749,925 in emergency financial assistance through our various programs. We helped 2,187 people remain safe and secure in their homes. All of our clients are considered low-income, and 80% make less than $20,000 per year.

For the year ending June 30, 2017, Arlington Thrive’s donated income was $1,062,652. Income from Arlington County totaled $564,560, and income from all other sources was $498,087.

In May 2017, Arlington Thrive received $750,000 from Dr. Mitchell Davis to establish a fund for medical and dental assistance. Each year Arlington Thrive may use up to 5% of the fund’s value to support Thrive’s Daily Emergency Assistance Fund.
Thank You to Arlington Thrive’s Generous Donors
July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017

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S & S Productions, Inc.
Thrive Welcomes a New Operations Manager

Joyce Patry, our new Operations Manager, comes to us from the corporate world. Currently enrolled at George Mason University for her MBA, Joyce formerly owned and operated her own business. Originally from New Hampshire, Joyce has been in the DC region for about three years.

Get to Know Shandra Niswander, Arlington Thrive’s Director of Development

How long have you been part of Arlington Thrive?
I have had the privilege of raising funds for our neighbors in need at Arlington Thrive for over four years now. Our dedicated and generous donors and volunteers truly represent what is so special about Arlington and our caring community.

What do you most enjoy about the job?
Building deeper relationships with Arlington Thrive’s donors, volunteers, and supporters in the community energizes me on a daily basis. I’m also thankful for my professional fundraising colleagues who truly embody the spirit of philanthropy. They inspire me each day as we go about our work to help others enrich our community.

How has Arlington Thrive gotten you more involved in the community?
I am a 2017 graduate of Leadership Center for Excellence’s Signature Program, Leadership Arlington. This year, I am volunteering my time as a Resource Director for Leadership Arlington’s Class of 2018. I was recently inducted as a member of the Arlington Optimist Club where I will be leading the effort to rejuvenate the annual Respect for Law program luncheon. On a professional development note, I joined the DC Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and am working on membership recruitment for an AFP NOVA Affinity Group. Finally, I am studying to obtain my CFRE (Certified Fund Raising Executive) credential next spring.

Remembering Charlie Klein

This past May, we were sad to learn of the passing of long-time Thrive supporter Charlie Klein after a long battle with cancer. The son of one of the organization’s founders, John Klein, Charlie served Thrive as a faithful volunteer for almost 40 years. We appreciate his legacy of commitment and service.

Thrive Fills the Gap

Mary F.* struggled with severe depression for many years. She had once been a successful attorney, but mental illness took her out of the work force for almost 10 years. Her doctors finally found the right medication to relieve her symptoms, but it was very expensive – roughly $300 per month. While she could usually rely on Medicare and Medicaid to cover the costs of medical care and prescriptions, the medication she desperately needed to maintain stable mental health was not covered. With the help of emergency funds from Arlington Thrive, Mary was able to pay for her medication and begin looking for employment again. Today, Mary is back at work as an attorney and is thriving in her life and career!

*name changed for privacy
Upcoming Events:

Register for the Arlington Turkey Trot

You can support Arlington Thrive by participating in the Arlington Turkey Trot, which will take place on Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2017. This year will mark the 12th running of the Arlington Turkey Trot, which has raised over $460,000 for local nonprofit organizations since its inception in 2006.

For more information and to register, go to http://www.arlingtonvaturkeytrot.org/. Not a runner? You can walk or stroll, or serve as a volunteer. We need many volunteers to help with set-up and clean-up, pass out water during the race, and serve as course marshals. Contact Thrive Director of Development Shandra Niswander at niswander@arlingtonthrive.org or call 703-558-0035 if you can help.

Giving Tuesday is November 28

You’ve all heard of “Black Friday” and “Cyber Monday,” the frenzied days of shopping that follow Thanksgiving Day. Do you know about “Giving Tuesday,” which will take place on November 28 this year? We hope you’ll kick off a charitable holiday season by making a donation to Arlington Thrive on that day. It’s a great way to share your blessings with neighbors who need your help – not only during the holiday season but every day of the year. It’s easy to donate – just click on the link we will provide on the Arlington Thrive Facebook page throughout the day.