

# NEWS AND UPDATES

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It is time to say goodbye to 2025. Usually, we look forward to tossing out the bad at the end of the year, reflecting on the good, and hoping for only positive things in the year ahead. However, we are not naïve. We know the coming year will continue to bring many challenges. Over the past year, we have seen significant cuts to criminal justice programming, housing, and substance use treatment, and we will continue to feel those effects in the months ahead.

Nonetheless, we are still making our resolutions, and we wanted to share them with you.

First, we will continue standing beside people on their journey home, helping them access healthcare, education, opportunities for meaningful employment, and critical financial support. Second, we promise to keep listening to the needs of our community and the individuals we are lucky enough to walk alongside, ensuring we provide what they need, not what we assume they need. There is a difference. Third, we will continue our work inside detention facilities, supporting people as they prepare to transition to the community with respect, connection, and care. Fourth, we commit to strengthening and expanding alternative sentencing options, including community service and diversion programs, that offer restorative pathways and keep people connected to their families and communities. Fifth, we will continue to advocate locally and statewide for greater investment in our people and communities.

Most importantly, we promise to continue to feel and bring joy in 2026, not only as an act of resistance, but also as a way to sustain one another, strengthen our community, and honor our shared humanity. Whether through hosting events, spending time with our Ambassador of Happiness and therapy dog Charlie, or simply learning about one another's hobbies and days, we must find moments of celebration and light. That is what will keep us all going.

And finally, if you consider supporting OAR as you make your year-end gifts, we promise it will go to the critical work of journeying alongside individuals and families impacted by the criminal legal system in Arlington, Alexandria, Falls Church, and surrounding jurisdictions across our region.

Happy New Year, friends. We hope to see you soon,

The OAR Collective

## Virginia Senator Barbara Favola Honored OAR of Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church



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Arlington, VA- On December 17th, Virginia State Senator Barbara Favola presented a commendation in honor of OAR's 50 years spent serving the community. For 50 years, OAR of Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church has journeyed with those affected by the criminal legal system along with their loved ones. The organization supports alternative sentencing programs, including community service and diversion that keep people out of jail as well as and providing assistance to those returning to the community from incarceration, helping people find jobs, access health care, and support their families.

When it started 50 years ago, OAR of Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church hoped that it would not need to exist by 2025. But racial and economic injustice still exist, which means that joy, and justice remain elusive. OAR, therefore, is still here fighting and working, and members of the OAR Collective are honored to work alongside so many in this community.

Senator Favola, who represents Virginia's 40th District, has been in the State Senate since 2012. In office, she has consistently stood up for racial justice, pushed to reform the criminal legal system, and supported investments in programs that build communities up rather than tear them down. As the Chair of the Senate Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee, she has supported legislation to reform the state's inhumane prison system and develop programming to ease people's return to their homes and community.

"We are honored to serve the Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church community, and are humbled to be recognized by State Senator Barbara Favola," OAR Executive Director Elizabeth Jones Valderrama said. "We could not do this critical work without the support of our Collective and Board members, representatives, community, funders, volunteers, and partners. With everyone's support we know our partnership will continue to grow for however long OAR needs to exist. We are especially grateful that today, we can celebrate justice, joy, liberation, and a vision for a better future."

## Virtual Zumba Gold Party!



# Virtual ZUMBA GOLD PARTY



Treat yourself to a joyful workout while supporting OAR!



**Saturday,  
December 27**  
7:30PM EST



Hosted by Elizabeth, OAR's Executive  
Director and  
Certified Zumba Instructor

Join us for OAR's virtual Zumba Gold class, led by Elizabeth, our Executive Director and certified Zumba Instructor. This low-impact, accessible class is open to all and offers a fun way to move while supporting OAR's work with individuals and families impacted by the legal system.

All proceeds directly support our programs, including alternative sentencing, diversion, and reentry services that help create a more racially just and liberated community.

Register today and join us for an evening of connection, movement, and purpose. After registering, you'll be directed to the fundraising page to contribute what you can.

**Make your year-end gift today**



*year end*

**GIVING**

**MAKE YOUR YEAR-END GIFT**

## CHARLIE'S CORNER



Hi, it's Charlie, OAR's Ambassador of Happiness. As the days grow colder, I'm thinking about warmth, both the kind you feel in a cozy space and the kind that comes from care, kindness, and connection. I'm sending you love and warmth for the season.

-Charlie

## Give With Confidence



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