

# NEWS AND UPDATES

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## You are part of a community rooted in care and connection

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As Fair Chances Month comes to a close, we want to take a moment to thank you. Truly, thank you. Your support, your care, and the ways you continue to show up for this work mean more than we can fully express.

We are deeply grateful for how you were part of our 2026 Liberation Gathering, whether you joined us live, contributed, shared the event with others, or held this work in your heart. It was a powerful and moving reminder of what it means to be in community together. If you were not able to join us or would like to revisit the moment, you can now watch the recording and be part of the experience.

As the world can feel heavy at times, we hope you remember that you are not alone. You are a valued part of this community, and we hope you feel the connection and the care that surrounds this work. You make it possible for us to journey alongside the individuals and families we walk with every day. Because of you, people are finding joy, connection, and hope. Thank you for making this shared journey possible.

We are also encouraged by recent changes in Virginia that will directly impact many of the individuals and families we walk with. New record sealing laws (<https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title19.2/chapter23.2/>) will help remove barriers to

employment and housing for people with past records and continue to move systems toward more supportive reentry. Governor Spanberger signed legislation to gradually raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour by 2028, creating greater economic stability for many families. And she also signed legislation to create a paid family and medical leave program that will expand support for individuals and families in the years ahead. These steps matter deeply and reflect the kind of future we are all working toward together.

As we look ahead, we are excited to share upcoming events and ways to stay connected. We are so grateful to be on this journey with you, and we wish you all the very best.

The OAR Collective

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Liberation Gathering

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The recording of our 2026 Liberation Gathering is now available. Thank you to everyone who contributed to such a meaningful gathering. We invite you to take a moment to watch and reflect with us, and we hope it offers a sense of connection.

## "Reforming Criminal Justice" Extra Mile Event

What would it look like to create a more just criminal legal system? Join us along with the Center for Youth & Family Advocacy to explore restorative justice, alternative sentencing, and what it means to return to the community.



# EXTRA MILE

Let's talk about Criminal Justice Reform over lunch:

- ✓ Restorative Justice
- ✓ Alternative Sentencing
- ✓ Re-entry Challenges

**30 APRIL 2026 11:45 AM**

MCLEAN BIBLE CHURCH - ARLINGTON  
1310 N COURTHOUSE  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22201

HOSTED BY ARLINGTON BRIDGE BUILDERS

**CYFA**  
CENTER FOR YOUTH & FAMILY ADVOCACY

**OAR**



REGISTER TODAY <https://www.bridgebuildersva.org/extra-mile>

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Inside OAR Tour

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*You're Invited*  
**INSIDE OAR TOUR**

**WELCOME CENTER | THURSDAY, APRIL 30**



We warmly invite you to tour OAR's newly renovated Welcome Center and experience the space where our shared vision of justice, joy, and liberation comes to life. Thursday, April 30 (see registration link below)

During your visit, you will:

Explore our refreshed and reimagined Welcome Center.

Learn how OAR journeys with individuals and families impacted by the criminal legal system, creating pathways to opportunity through our programs

Hear how our community journeys alongside individuals and families to build stability, hope, and opportunity

This is more than a tour of a space. It is an opportunity to see how dignity, restoration, and hope are woven into everything we do.

You will also be greeted by our Ambassador of Happiness, therapy dog Charlie, who brings joy to our Welcome Center each day.

Space is limited, and registration is required. We look forward to welcoming you and sharing how, together, we are building a community rooted in justice, joy, and liberation.

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Spring2Action

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THANK YOU

Celebrating 16 Years!



**Spring2ACTion**

**Alexandria's Giving Day**  
**Presented by ACT for Alexandria**

What a Spring2ACTion! We are so grateful for your generosity and the many ways you showed up to support this work.

## Community Data Walk with the Commonwealth Attorney's Office



Arlington County | City of Falls Church

**Parisa Dehghani-Tafti**

Commonwealth's Attorney

# Pathways to Progress

On-site discussions with representatives from the  
Commonwealth Attorney's Office

### Saturday

May 16, 2:00–4:00 PM

Falls Church Community Center  
Senior Center  
223 Little Falls St, Falls Church, VA 22046



### Sunday

May 17, 2:00–4:00 PM

Arlington Mill Community Center  
Room 527  
909 S. Dinwiddie St, Arlington, VA 22204

## Arlington County & Falls Church

Residents Invited  
to Interactive Data Walk  
on Local Prosecution  
and Diversion Programs.



**REGISTER NOW**



We invite you to join us at Pathways to Progress, a free and interactive community data walk. This experience explores how prosecution decisions shape our communities, highlighting local data, diversion efforts, and policy changes led by Commonwealth's Attorney Parisa Dehghani-Tafti.

We will be part of this event, and we would love for you to be there with us as we reflect on what it means to create more supportive pathways and keep people connected to the community.

ARLnow.com Features OAR's Liberation Gathering



[News](#)

## Criminal justice organization spotlights local efforts at annual 'Liberation Gathering'

By **Scott McCaffrey**

Published April 17, 2026 at 9:15AM | Updated April 18, 2026 at 6:10PM



OAR executive director Elizabeth Jones Valderrama at 2026 Liberation Gathering (screenshot via OAR)

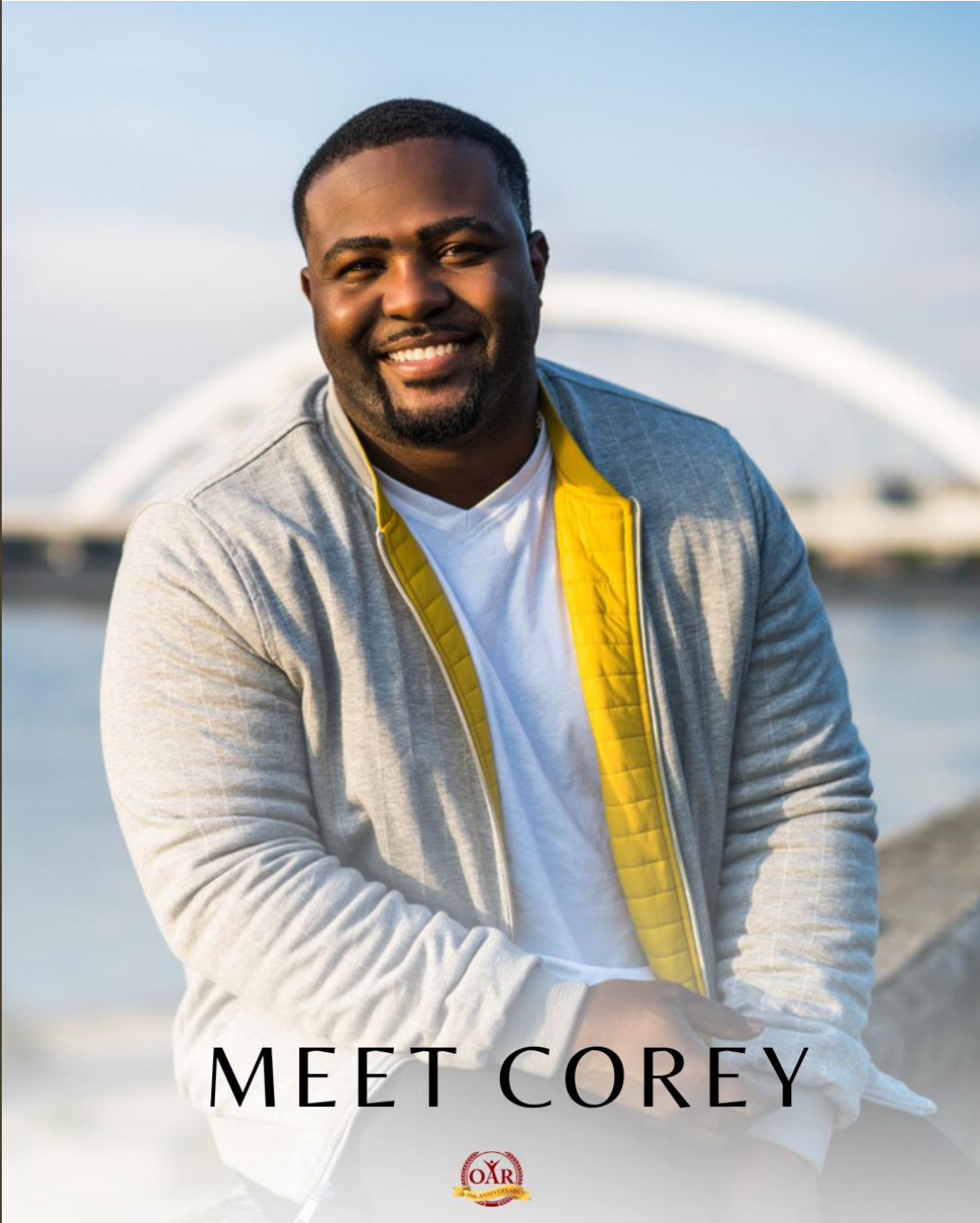
We're grateful to ARLnow.com for this thoughtful feature on OAR's 2026 Liberation Gathering: A Virtual Celebration of Justice, Joy, and Liberation. The story reflects the heart of our work, advancing community service, diversion, and alternative sentencing pathways while journeying with individuals during incarceration and continuing alongside them after release.

Together, this work moves us toward a community where those impacted by the criminal legal system experience equal civil and human rights. Thank you to everyone who was part of the Gathering, and to all who continue to walk alongside this mission.

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Participant Story

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MEET COREY



Before Corey\* returned to the community, we had already begun journeying with him.

Through pre-release support, OAR worked alongside Corey to prepare for his return with intention and support. Because of you, we were able to welcome Corey with the support he needed from the very beginning.

Together, we made sure Corey had a safe place to stay, secured his identification documents, connected him to treatment and medical appointments, and provided him with clothing, food, and transportation. Instead of facing those first days alone, Corey returned to the community with stability and connection already in place.

There were still moments of uncertainty and barriers to navigate. And, with determination, Corey continued to move forward. Step by step, he stayed committed to building the life he envisioned.

Today, Corey is working and building something new for himself and the people he loves. He is finding joy in everyday moments, in having what he needs, and in knowing he belongs.

His story is a reminder of what is possible when we journey with one another from the very beginning. During Fair Chances Month, we are reminded that everyone deserves not just a second chance, but a fair chance to return to the community with support, connection, and hope.

*\*Please note OAR uses an Ethical Storytelling Philosophy that respects the dignity and protects the privacy of each person we work with. We do not use the actual names, photos, or videos of OAR participants to protect their privacy.*

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## Charlie's Barks of Wisdom



Hi, I just wanted to thank you for being part of this community. I see so much care in the ways people show up for one another, and it means a lot. As you go about your day, I hope you find a moment to pause, take a deep breath, and find a little bit of joy too. I'll be cheering you on, tail wagging.

-Charlie

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## Give With Confidence



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## Our Contact Information

OAR of Arlington, Alexandria and Falls  
Church

P. O. Box 41030

Arlington, VA 22204

703-745-5441

<http://www.OARonline.org>

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