



COMMUNITY LODGINGS

*Opening Doors to Independence*

## **Mission, Values, and History**

### **Mission**

Community Lodgings' mission is to lift families from homelessness and instability to independence and self-sufficiency through affordable housing, transitional housing and youth education programs.

### **Values**

To have a world where all families have access to housing, education and resources to achieve and sustain independence and productivity

### **History**

Since Community Lodgings was founded by eight Episcopal churches in 1987, our goal has been to build the foundation for a better life for Alexandria's working poor and families transitioning from homelessness to self-sufficiency. The eight churches underwrote the purchase of Community Lodgings' first apartment building – located on Notabene Drive in the Arlandria/Chirilagua neighborhood – in an effort to end homelessness in the city.

With continued ecumenical support, four additional apartment buildings were purchased in the neighborhood to increase affordable housing options as a means of addressing the dramatic increase in family homelessness of the mid-1980s. Community Lodgings' affordable housing gave Alexandria's most vulnerable families fresh options, thus altering the housing equation in Alexandria.

Today in Alexandria, families still remain homeless and many more area families struggle to make ends meet. With 45 apartments available at below-market rent (of the 45, five are set aside for transitional housing for homeless families at or below 30% of the area median income), Community Lodgings gives disadvantaged local families access to affordable housing while also offering high-quality supportive services to families transitioning to self-sufficient lives.

In addition to housing, Community Lodgings provides children and parents with an educational foundation for success. Since 1998, when we first opened computer literacy and English Language Learner (ELL) classes to adults, we have committed ourselves to improving outcomes for families in the community at risk of homelessness, gang involvement, substance abuse, inappropriate sexual activity and emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse. In 2002, we opened

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the community-based Fifer Family Learning Center to meet the needs of the surrounding Arlandria-Chirilagua community. We introduced our Youth Education Program. Elementary, middle and high school students – all living below the poverty threshold – now attend free daily out-of-school-time programs and summer programs, meet with tutors and mentors, learn valuable life skills, and participate in various enrichment and recreational activities. Over the years, we have expanded to three centers in the neighborhood, expanding our capacity to up to 125 children and increasing instructional time for at-risk children and services to their parents. Throughout the year, Community Lodgings partners with different city organizations and nonprofits to provide workshops for students, including topics such as writing and creating your own book, nutritious cooking and anti-bullying.

Community Lodgings is Arlandria-Chirilagua’s best resource for helping families reach self-sufficiency. With trusted bilingual staff, committed volunteers and quality services, we serve more than 300 families every week. Spur Local recognizes us as “one of the best small charities in the Greater Washington region”.

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