



## *Celebrating Alexandria's Women Who Are Impacting the Community*

**Beverly Anderson**

**Business Manager, St. Joseph Church**



Sometimes caring for others leads to forgetting about caring for yourself. That's the hard lesson Beverly Anderson learned recently after suffering a mild stroke and the vital message she wants to get out to everyone. As St. Joseph Church's Business Manager for the past 15 years, she is inundated with requests for help from congregation members, in addition to all the small, nuanced details that go into running a very community centered church. Add caring for sick

family members, and the result is well, stress leading to system overload. "This is a very stressful time,' she notes.

"The community is really close to my heart," she says. " But now," she adds laughing, "I take a day off." During the days when the weather was picture perfect, she and her husband actually went to a park and just enjoyed the glorious day. "You have to take time for yourself."

While it scrambled, the church did not cease operating because she was not there. She has learned to let other people do things. She has help with phone calls and providing assistance.

St. Joseph's Church is a CCNA stakeholder partner.

In addition to serving the community with food pantries and providing financial and other resources, twice a year St. Joseph holds a clothes giveaway. Last year, people lined up for blocks to get their children clothing for the spring and summer months. On Saturday, April 26<sup>th</sup> from 10am to 2pm, St Joseph is holding its annual Spring Clothing Giveaway.



## **Mary Lee Anderson**

### **Executive Director of Senior Services for Alexandria (SSA)**



For 40 plus years, Mary Lee Anderson has called Alexandria home, raising two daughters. “I feel pretty rooted here,” she laughs. Starting out in international relations with a telecommunications company so many years ago, she feels her business background helps her be an effective leader, having overseen million-dollar budgets and large staffs.

Also essential, she notes, is having a passion for the work. As a caregiver for her mother and later her mother-in-law, she learned firsthand what older adults need: conversations, social interactions so they don’t feel lonely, as well as the practical side of aging in place, or going into an elder care facility, and all that getting older entails, but mainly so they don’t feel forgotten. “Connections are so important.”

SSA provides a comprehensive list of resources for seniors and their caregivers. The same applies to the myriad programs it offers such as information, education, transportation, friendly visitor program, groceries to go, volunteer opportunities, and more.

Meals on Wheels, one of its most well-known programs, delivers hot and cold meals to seniors every day. And on any given day, Mayor Aliya Gaskins, Vice Mayor Sarah Bagley, or any of the City Council members could be the ones delivering those meals. Mary Lee is not shy in her recruitment efforts to get drivers. During severe weather, the police, the sheriff’s office, or fire department transport the meals, so seniors do not miss a day.



**Gwendolyn Day Fuller**  
**Retired Educator and a Grandma**



Gwendolyn Day Fuller, a retired teacher, and the proud daughter of Ferdinand T. Day – Virginia’s first African American School Board Chair – carries her college philosophy with her wherever she goes: “Learning is lifelong. Everyday there is something we can learn if we’re open to it.” Though she laughs remembering her father’s mantra of “Better to keep up than catch up” as she recalls too many times, especially during her younger days, when she was in catch up mode.

Still today, her passion remains to engage young people with the world around them. Sitting on a panel recently before high school students and residents of Goodwin Living Alexandria, a retirement community, she described how peaceful and almost surreal it was as a young, Black college student attending the March on Washington and listening to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Those remembrances sparked real and engaged conversations between the generations afterwards.

Involved with many community groups, she is also a past Board Member of CCNA.

As a grandmother, she feels there is a lot of wisdom to be passed along to younger generations, which has led her to create GrandMa’s Table.