



Tenants' & Workers' Support Committee Triennial Report 2002-2004

President's Message

Three years allowed us to achieve one of our long desired goals – the purchase of a building and creation of the new Arlandria Community Center. This was possible thanks to the efforts of our Board of Directors, organization Director, staff and all of our members, especially our teen members. The truth is, everybody has helped, and we finally have the Center.

Before discussing the Arlandria Community Center, I want to recognize another very important accomplishment, which is the Living Wage law in Arlington County. In 2003, Arlington joined Alexandria in improving the salaries of hundreds of workers who now enjoy a worthy wage. This makes us enormously proud, and it is very satisfying to know that once again the Tenants' & Workers' Support Committee, citizens and labor unions, elected officials and people of faith, were behind this achievement.

Turning to the theme of the Community Center: the building and center which we have worked so hard for has a number of objectives. One of those is to improve the standards of living of low-income people through the development of broad social programs that benefit the entire community – particularly for our young people, who are the citizens of tomorrow. In the Center, we will have a pre-school classroom, a teen lounge, and space for workshops and meetings. Cultural events, orientations for people of all ages on diverse themes – people are going to come for a wide variety of reasons. We will enter the technology era with computer classes in our new technology center. There will be a space to showcase the dancing that the members of our youth group have undertaken in each of the last two youth summer institutes.

Our Arlandria Community Center will be a foundation in our struggle for autonomy – since the

powerful are trying to force us out and destroy what we have worked for. Our challenge is to keep struggling to unite ourselves, regardless of color or origin. Our goal is that the community may have more access and democratic participation in diverse fields – for example in housing and immigration. We will have connections with other organizations to keep fighting for the rights of workers, especially for day laborers who are picked up by contractors to work and then not paid. Our Health Committee will continue working to reduce people's medical debts, training health promoters, offering free medical tests and screenings, and struggling to gain improved conditions through working agreements for low-income people who need to go to the hospital.

We live in difficult times as a result of the war in Iraq. War is a general threat to all, and because of this we have to be very careful as we vote for the leaders who have the power to decide the destiny of this country, as well as other nations in the world.

I invite everyone to join our struggle and our cause. We want you to join us to continue achieving the goals we have laid out, to become more knowledgeable about how the system functions, and to become more politically aware. When we are politically aware, we know what is good and what is bad.

If you are interested in joining us, all you have to do is say "yes." We invite everyone to join our organization and become part of the great family of the Tenants' & Workers' Support Committee. We do our work with love, with conviction, and with strength. Join the Committee in the struggle!

Amalia Ruiz
President

Looking Forward

Eighteen years ago we started the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee to stop the planned evictions of almost 10,000 residents of the Arlandria neighborhood of Alexandria. We had but a general vision of social justice and our long-term planning involved thinking about next week. But we fought hard, and we learned. Each year is now marked by major victories – I write this note from the newly opened Arlandria Community Center. Each big victory is comprised of thousands of little ones. For instance, to win the community center hundreds of youths and adults rallied, dozens met with city officials, and our low-income members and supporters donated over \$100,000 in small donations.

In the context of U.S. militarism, global war and aggression, it is clear that we have much more to do—to paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., the bombs in (Iraq) are exploding in the streets of Northern Virginia. The unprecedented rise in housing prices and the corresponding housing crisis in our region is directly fueled by almost 200 billion dollars in post-9.11 spending on so-called “homeland security” (surveillance) and international security (war).

Together with our supporters, members and allied organizations we need to develop a new vision for the future of Northern Virginia. This new “common sense” needs to address the needs that we all have – housing, mass transit and traffic, and reclaiming public space and personal time (to build the kind of community's that we want and deserve.

Women, particularly women of color, have always been at the core of our emancipatory struggles. In all of our work, women have always taken the lead – whether we're fighting against rat-infested apartments, to reinstate a suspended student, or to win health care for childcare providers. The leaders of the Tenants' and Workers' Support Committee have taught the membership and the connected communities at large that the struggles for dignity, for respect, for well-being, for equity, here and now, always have women of color at the center. We operate from the belief that if we create a just society for women of color, we will create a just society for all.

As we've turned eighteen, we have reflected on our work and the principles that will be guiding us in the coming years; we are striving to create a society that is:

Democratic – People need to make the decisions that impact their lives. Dozens of decisions that impact our community are made with minimal consultation or concern and virtually none with wholesale community involvement. Apartments are sold, rents are raised, shopping malls are planned, a fragile community is threatened with destruction, and we are told that there is nothing we can do. Democracy must break through the boundaries that

private owners and even government officials hide behind. We must explicitly challenge those boundaries. Democracy is not a club for the privileged few – it is for everyone.

Participatory – The society we are creating must acknowledge the different histories, cultures and conditions of all who live here, and we must work to create structures so that all can participate in a meaningful way. While many support these principles in theory – practice is often more difficult. Voting is important – but what about the rest of the year? We entrust elected officials, but is that enough? How can we encourage greater civic participation all the time – and really enrich the democratic process? Are public meetings accessible to non-English speakers? Is there transportation and childcare for those who want to participate? Is there a tangible sense that our voice (and each voice) matters and leads to authentic participation? Finally, has time been considered? Can we create a society where all who are interested have the time to participate? We are committed to winning the changes to create a society “where every cook can govern!”

Innovative – We are looking for new solutions to old and new problems. For example, we live in an economically integrated region but the social needs of low and moderate-income communities (mostly in the inner suburbs) must be linked with the wealth that is hidden in the region (mostly in the outer suburbs). In addition, we are looking for ways to link increased status and economic stability of family childcare providers with the needs of many women and families for accessible and affordable quality childcare. We are working with community members, business owners and county officials to create a new model of day laborer organization in Culmore. We see our Arlandria Community Center as a hub where community groups, unions, people of faith and our members can work, socialize and struggle together – we'll be linking service to organizing and organizing to building regional power.

Please join us to carry this vision forward – together we can build a new movement, a new majority and a new society – that is democratic, participatory, and innovative – for all.

Jon Liss
Executive Director

Democracy, Participation, Innovation

Activities and Accomplishments

Over the past three years, the Tenants' & Workers' Support Committee has emerged as one of the Washington metropolitan area's leading organizations in the areas of low-income community organizing, civic participation, leadership development, and social and economic justice.

From 2002-2004, we worked with nearly 5,000 low-income people through a variety of programs including community and worker organizing, leadership development, parent involvement, public policy, civic engagement, health services and other activities. By supporting low-income people to participate in democratic decision-making and advocate for innovative institutional change, our work benefited over 30,000 low-income people in Northern Virginia in 2002-2004.

Through cooperative homeownership, higher wage jobs, greater access to affordable health care, sustained parent involvement in public schools, youth leadership development and a host of other beneficial outcomes, the Tenants' & Workers' Support Committee is affecting the lives of thousands of low-income people of color – and gaining greater institutional accountability and progressive social change.

During the past three years, our organization leveraged over \$20 million in housing, health care, childcare, education, community assets and other benefits for low-income people – ten dollars for every dollar we spent! This is the power of community organizing for social change – and these are the benefits of social and economic justice for all.

The TWSC garnered several national and regional awards in 2003. TWSC leaders Sheryl Bell, Jon Liss, Silvia Portillo, Edgar Rivera, and Amalia Ruiz were jointly awarded the prestigious **Leadership for a Changing World Award** of the Ford Foundation and Advocacy Institute. Staff member Silvia Portillo received the **Community Health Leadership Award** of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, for her leadership in expanding uninsured community access to health care. And our Unity Campaign leaders received the 2003 **Washington Area Women's Foundation's Leadership Award** for success in raising wages and improving working conditions of family childcare providers in Alexandria.

Community Organizing for Social and Economic Justice

The **Healthy Community Program** expands and improves uninsured access to affordable, culturally competent health care through community health promotion, participatory research, community organizing, and advocacy. From 2002-2004, we:

Advocated for and won a 35% discount on the bills of uninsured patients at Inova Health Systems.

Advocated for the elimination \$650,000 in medical debts and improve cultural competency at Inova Alexandria Hospital.

Won \$800,000 in budget increases at the Baileys Clinic in Culmore, reducing the fourteen month waiting list at the public health clinic to four weeks.

Facilitated the participation of over 300 uninsured community members in efforts to expand and improve uninsured access to health care in Northern Virginia.

Trained and developed 75 immigrant community health promoters and advocates in Alexandria and Fairfax County.

Provided 2,500 uninsured immigrants access to the services of our program and partner agencies, including health fair exams and screenings, clinic days, referrals to providers, case management, translation, medical debt cases, and advocacy.

Access to Health Care Makes a Difference

"When I went to the Committee it was to have my blood pressure checked. The doctor told me that I had a very serious problem in my arteries and that it was urgent that I go to the Baileys Clinic.... From there, I was referred to Fairfax Hospital where they operated on my heart.... if I had delayed in going I wouldn't be alive today.

I am forever deeply grateful to the Committee's Health Project for having saved my life and the other marvelous things they accomplish."

Adelaida Torres, uninsured Fairfax County resident

Parents United Will Never Be Defeated

"The Education Project is a means for us, for parents, to know how the education system functions in the city of Alexandria so that together we win educational reforms...One of the most important gains of our parents' group is that we don't feel afraid to go to the schools of our children and seek fair and just treatment." Santos Vega, TWSC Education Project

The Education Project seeks to reduce the achievement gap in public schools through the democratic participation and involvement of majority, low-income African American and Latino immigrant parents in the educational system. From 2002-2004, we:

- Organized a group of 75 low-income, Latino and African American parents who were actively involved in campaigns to improve Alexandria's public schools.
- Provided parent involvement training to 125 immigrant and African American parents
- Accompanied and supported 45 families to reduce the unjust suspensions or expulsions of their child.
- Forged collaborations and increased parent involvement in three public schools – Mt.

Vernon Community School, Cora Kelly School, and George Washington Middle School.

Organized parents who led a campaign which, by a 3 to 1 margin, approved a new, year-round school calendar at Mt. Vernon Community School.

Conducted a year-long participatory research project with 25 parents, resulting in a detailed proposal to increase public investment in parent involvement as a means of reducing the achievement gap in Alexandria public schools.

Recruited and oriented parents of over 150 children at the **21st Century Community Learning Center** at Mt. Vernon Community School, an after-school tutoring program run by the Campagna Center.

Valuing our Community's Youth

I have really liked being part of Alexandria United Teens. As a young person I have learned that we are important in the community and that we are being taken into account. And it's very important to know that yes, we can do something good for the community and at the same time for ourselves. Susie Salgado, President, Alexandria United Teens

Alexandria United Teens empowers and supports dozens of young women and men, girls and boys ages 12-18 through leadership development, after-school tutoring, civic participation, community service, and cultural and recreational activities. From 2002-2004, we:

Rallied youth support for the Arlandria Community Center – over 150 Latino and African Americans teens turned out for community forums to present their plans.

Twelve teen leaders participated in meetings with local and national elected officials and grantmakers, helping to raise \$475,000 in grants and subsidies for the Arlandria Community Center.

80 teens participated in annual Summer Institutes, including workshops and classes on culture, dance, mural painting, and civic leadership.

Eight teen leaders conducted a participatory research and action project on the minority achievement gap leading to a campaign to hire two additional academic counselors at Alexandria's T. C. Williams High School.

Six teens helped elementary school students in a peer homework help program benefiting 45 children at the Arlandria-Chirilagua Housing Cooperative.

Six teens participated in the Future Leaders of Society program of the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region.

Arlandria Community Center

Over the course of the past three years, the TWSC's major local effort was the creation of the **Arlandria Community Center**, a multi-cultural community center designed to meet the multiple civic participation and human service needs of low-income people of Alexandria and other Northern Virginia jurisdictions. The Center is a major victory for the Arlandria community and a building block in our regional efforts to preserve low-income affordable housing, strengthen economic and cultural diversity, and halt uncontrolled gentrification and displacement.

The Center, officially opened in December 2004, is located at 3801 Mt. Vernon Ave. in the Arlandria neighborhood of Alexandria. The 5,400 sq. foot building houses a multi-use community room, a teen activity room, a technology center, the offices of the TWSC, and non-profit and commercial rental offices.

The TWSC received financial support for the creation of the Center from leading partners including the City of Alexandria, the Meyer Foundation, Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, U.S. Representative James Moran, and our community lender, BB&T Bank.

Since our founding in 1986, the TWSC has been the principal community-based organization of low-income residents of Arlandria. Over the years, we have supported neighborhood residents for significant improvements in the community, most notably the resident-owned, 282-unit **Arlandria Chirilagua Housing Cooperative**. We've helped win new playground facilities. We are the primary community sponsor and organizer of the annual **Arlandria-Chirilagua Summer Festival**, attracting thousands of the neighborhood's and region's residents for Alexandria's premiere Latino community festival.

"The Arlandria Community Center is important for the entire community. It will be a space for youths and adults to work together to build our community." Juana Vega-Campos, Alexandria United Teens and 2004 Vice President, TWSC Board of Directors.

Organizing Low-wage Workers for Racial and Economic Justice

Living Wage Jobs – Over the past three years, the TWSC built broad public support for public policies, including living wage laws, which promote economic justice and the democratic participation of low-wage workers, religious congregations, trade unions and community organizations.

In Arlington, together with the ad hoc Arlington Living Wage Coalition of faith-based and labor activists, we won a living wage law in 2003 that provides all Arlington municipal employees, including school board employees, as well as a majority of outsourced workers, a minimum hourly wage of \$11.00.

As a result of the new law, total wages of the lowest-paid municipal and outsourced workers in Arlington County will increase by an estimated \$700,000 annually.

Total wages of the lowest-paid municipal and outsourced workers in Alexandria were increased by \$450,000 annually as a result of the 2000 living wage law we helped to create.

With local elected officials and our statewide allies (including the Virginia Organizing Project and VA AFL-CIO), we went to Richmond and successfully defended our living wage laws against legislators who sought to ban them statewide.

Childcare Providers

We organized African American and immigrant family childcare providers in Alexandria to advocate for improvements in the city's child care system – and to gain respect, dignity and economic justice. In 2002-2004, our Unity Campaign:

- Organized 150 home-based providers in a campaign for publicly subsidized, childcare provider health insurance coverage
- Gained \$350,000 in annual increases to the city's childcare provider reimbursement budget
- Helped create new Alexandria Department of Human Services policies and procedures governing home-based childcare providers, including due process, rights to appeal DHS administrative decisions, rights to bilingual notification, and other significant measures
- Expanded low-income family access to subsidized child care by advocating for and winning an increase in the eligibility limit to 250% of poverty levels.

Childcare Providers Earn Respect Every Day

“As a woman of color and working-class, I believe we childcare providers should be treated fairly; we should make a decent wage, and we should be respected. When we help other families to get out to work, we help make the economy work.”

Sheryl Bell, President, Unity Campaign of Childcare Providers

“I have a family, wife and kids. I work seven days, twelve to sixteen hours a day. It's very hard to survive now...I don't see my kids sometimes for three or four days.” Alexandria taxi driver

Taxi Drivers

Area taxi drivers and hotel workers were among the hardest-hit work sectors following the post-9/11 economic recession in our region. Our strong ties to area labor unions and community service funds helped us channel over \$250,000 in emergency assistance to 500+ economically impacted hotel workers and taxi drivers.

During this period, we began organizing efforts for racial and economic justice in these, low-wage, multinational immigrant worker sectors. Out of these organizing efforts sprang the Alexandria United Taxi Driver Organization, a new TWSC chapter which in 2003 and 2004 organized over 200 Alexandria taxi drivers to participate in meetings, hearings,

commissions and delegations to City Council with the goal of ending monopoly control of Alexandria's regulated taxi industry and gaining respect of drivers' fundamental economic human rights.

As a result of their dedicated leadership and commitment to finding common ground among the diverse constituencies of drivers and the riding public, AUTO was on the verge of winning major reform of Alexandria's taxi regulation code in late 2004, with details to be finalized in early 2005.

Among other likely changes, drivers will be allowed to change companies; earn a living wage; and form their own cooperatively owned taxi company.

Day Laborers

Late in 2003, the TWSC joined with the Virginia Justice Center (VJC) to organize and develop the leadership of day laborers in the Culmore area of Fairfax County. Day laborers are among the region's most vulnerable workers, suffering from non-payment of wages and other abuses of labor rights. With strong community and business support, the TWSC and VJC are working to promote the active participation of dozens of day laborers in a community-led planning effort to create a county-funded day laborer worker center in Culmore.

Audited Financial Statements¹

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| REVENUE AND SUPPORT | | | |
| Grants | \$671,376 | \$451,077 | \$709,104 |
| Gifts and Donations | 28,246 | 27,912 | 80,657 |
| Contracts | 18,857 | 50,625 | 71,111 |
| Interest | 3,549 | 1,674 | 907 |
| Membership | 15,449 | 17,129 | 13,223 |
| Rental Income | --- | --- | 16,411 |
| Miscellaneous | <u>22,765</u> | <u>32,012</u> | <u>24,975</u> |
| Total Revenue and Support | <u>760,242</u> | <u>580,429</u> | <u>921,092</u> |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| Program Services | | | |
| ACHC – Cooperative | 15,991 | 7,811 | |
| Alexandria United Teens | 55,823 | 55,729 | |
| Education Project | 123,993 | 78,597 | |
| Healthy Community Program | 91,630 | 78,580 | |
| Living Wage Jobs | 70,268 | 30,802 | |
| Regional Organizing | 139,125 | 125,311 | |
| September 11 Relief | 133,773 | 14,245 | |
| Taxi-Drivers | --- | 16,525 | |
| Unity Campaign of Childcare Providers | 79,875 | 54,489 | |
| Workers' Support | <u>---</u> | <u>74,817</u> | |
| Total Program Services | <u>710,418</u> | <u>536,906</u> | <u>559,368²</u> |
| Supporting Services | | | |
| Management & General | 110,289 | 120,640 | 150,004 |
| Fundraising | <u>3,347</u> | <u>21,697</u> | <u>21,067</u> |
| Total Supporting Services | <u>113,636</u> | <u>142,337</u> | <u>171,071</u> |
| Total Expenses | <u>824,054</u> | <u>679,243</u> | <u>730,439</u> |
| Change in Net Assets | (63,812) | (98,814) | 190,653 |
| Net Assets, Beginning of Year | <u>259,517</u> | <u>195,705</u> | <u>96,891</u> |
| Net Assets, End of Year | <u>\$195,705</u> | <u>\$ 96,891</u> | <u>\$287,544</u> |

¹ Financial statements were audited by the public accounting firm of David L. Bruins, CPA, CFP, Alexandria, Virginia. Financial statements are available for public review in the administrative office of the TWSC, 3801 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria, VA 22305.

² Due to a change in accounting procedures, 2004 program services were calculated by expense category, rather than project area. The breakdown of program services in 2004 was as follows: Salaries and Benefits - \$417,515; Occupancy - \$63,081; Program Expenses - \$26,790; Professional Services - \$17,482; Equipment & Supplies - \$10,610; Telephone - \$5,482; Travel - \$9,183; Printing - \$4,754; Other - \$4,571.

2004-2005 Board of Directors

Amalia Ruiz, President

J. Carlos Lara, Vice President

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Jon Liss, Executive Director

Silvia Portillo, Community Organizer

Amalia Quiñones, Community Organizer

Edgar Rivera, Community Division Coordinator

Elsa Riveros, Grassroots Fundraiser

Alicia Ruiz, Worker Organizer

David Staples, Development Coordinator

Evelin Urrutia, Community Organizer

Major Funders 2002-2004

We wish to acknowledge the grants and awards of the following:*

\$100,000+

Community Foundation for the National Capital Region and Common Ground Fund

Ford Foundation and Advocacy Institute

The Meyer Foundation

Public Welfare Foundation

Tides Foundation

\$75,000+

Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation

Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers

\$50,000+

Catholic Campaign for Human

Development Catholic Legal Immigration Network

Discount Foundation

Edward W. Hazen Foundation

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Needmor Fund

Norman Foundation

Open Society Institute

United Way of the National Capital Region

\$25,000+

AFL-CIO Union Community Fund

VA 21st Community Learning Center

Center for Community Change

Consumer Health Foundation

Golden Rule Foundation

Hill-Snowdon Foundation

Jewish Fund for Justice

New World Foundation/Phoenix Fund

\$10,000+

The Access Project

Gannett Foundation

Spring Creek Foundation

Washington AIDS Partnership

Washington Area Women's Foundation

\$2,500+

Alexandria Commission for the Arts

Ivakota Association

Weissberg Foundation

*Funding levels reflect total of grants and awards received during the three-year period

Business, Labor, Religious, and Individual Donors 2002-2004

We thank the following for their generous financial and in-kind contributions:*

\$5,000+

Laborers International Union Local 11
Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO
Painters District Council 51

\$2,500+

Arlandria-Chirilagua Housing Cooperative
BB&T Bank
Bancomercio de El Salvador
Burke & Herbert Bank
Community Empowerment Organization
Jack Taylor's Alexandria Toyota

\$1,000+

Avisos, Inc.
Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 96
Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church
Eagle Cashing Center, Inc
Embassy and Consulate of El Salvador
Fashion K City
Huascaran Restaurant
Madison Auto Repair Shop
Sun Trust Bank
Super K Center
Law Office of Michael J. Miller
24 Express

\$500+

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689
Arlandria Express
Beatriz International Hair Salon
Beverly Hills United Methodist Church
Communication Workers of America Local 2222
La Feria Latina

Grace Ministries
Iglesia Metodista Gracia Unida
Ironworkers Union Local 5
Motophoto
North West Hardwood Floors
Law Offices of Paul Samakow.
Parking and Service Workers Union Local #27
El Pulgarcito Restaurant
St. Elmo's Coffee Pub
Standard Parking Employees of Alexandria
Sujo, Inc.
TNT Distributors

\$250+

Big Wheel Bikes
Campagna Center
Center for Third World Organizing
Checks Cashed
Child and Family Network Center
Chirilagua Hair Salon
Chirilagua Market
East West Mortgage Co.
Holy Family Catholic Church
International Association of Bridges
Langley Hill Friends Meeting
Jefferson Spine Center, PC
MANNA, INC
Northern Virginia Central Labor Council
Po Siam Thai Restaurant
RIA Telecommunications
Rising Hope United Methodist Church Mission
Teleflexys Corporation
United Payphone Services Corporation
Virginia AFL-CIO
Virginia Commerce Bank

* Funding levels reflect total contributions received during the three-year period

In addition to the donations and membership dues of over 1,500 members and supporters, we would like to acknowledge the following for their major gifts, pledges and in-kind contributions:*

\$10,000+

Anonymous
Paul Fiscella
Dan and Sammie Moshenberg**

\$5,000+

Jon Dapogny, Attorney
Virginia Johnstone**

Melanie Jones & Charles “Buck” Jones
 Stuart Liss, Architect
\$2,500+
 Robert Musser

\$1,000+
 Glen Pransky & Terry Snyder
 Jean Sweeney

\$500+
 Devan Alexander Burnett
 Ernest Clark
 Mark Colley & Debra Harsch
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 Ruth Dinzey
 Adam Ebbin
 Margaret Howe
 Jon Liss & Vicki Menjivar
 Judith & Stuart Liss
 Victoria Rader
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 Holly Sloan & Colby Smith

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\$250+
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 Richard & Eileen Melia
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 Patrick & Ann Murphy
 Jonathan & Kasia Newman
 Robert Patrician
 Roy Rosenzweig
 Carlos Ruiz
 Christina M. Stevens
 Marie Jean Van Ness

** Funding levels reflect total giving received or pledged over the three-year period*

*** Denotes pledge*

Please excuse the omission or misspelling of any names. Send corrections to the address below.

The Tenants' & Workers' Support Committee is a democratically-controlled, grassroots organization committed to winning social and economic justice and power for low-income people of Northern Virginia – tenants, workers, women, immigrants, Latinos/as, African Americans, and youths.

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www.twsc.org