



## *Better Together*

Thank you for your membership in the Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce. With the challenges that were placed upon us in 2020, the Chamber's mission speaks volumes: Promoting the area as "the ultimate destination to live, work, play and prosper."

This year's Chamber theme is *Better Together*. As I look back on all that's happened in 2020, I believe more strongly than ever in these words. The devastating downtown fire, COVID-19, racial injustices and political campaigns have changed us all in profound ways.

Five years ago, we moved our family to Alexandria. Like many who have moved their families into new communities, we were filled with excitement, hope, anxiety and stress – all at the same time. We were excited to be a part of a community where we felt surrounded by positive, friendly souls wherever we went, whether it was school, medical facilities, retail establishments, religious activities and so forth. The feel then and even more obvious now is that we know and support our neighborhoods (home/business/community).

The Alexandria Area's thriving, diversified business community and nonprofit sector are supportive of each other. It was evident in 2015 when we first became part of this community but was even more obvious in 2020. From the outpouring support for those who lost their homes and/or businesses in the downtown fire, to the support towards our medical and rescue professionals, to wrapping ourselves around those who are facing the financial and mental crisis which COVID-19 created.

We are grateful to live in a community where supporting one another is not only a practice but an expectation. Tragedy is never welcomed, enveloping us in grief. But it provides an unintended outcome – bringing us closer together with a common bond. It causes us to focus more attention on supporting friends, family, neighbors (home/business/community). The many initiatives that came about because of COVID-19, such as restaurant and retail gift card purchases during forced closures, community mask making and distribution efforts, drive by birthday celebrations, PPE sharing, increased donations for our nonprofits, all created a sense of unity.

Unity is critical. My hope and invitation is that we aim to see beyond our individual scope to the bigger picture. How can the Alexandria Lakes Community be Better Together? Let's live and lead by giving more than receiving. Together we can face and overcome the tough stuff. Easy no, essential yes.

When we lift each other up, we lift our community up. 2021 will again be a chance to discover our collective potential... Better Together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn Jenc". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Lynn Jenc, 2021 President**  
Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce