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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 876

Offered February 6, 2017

*Commending Diane Kelly.*

Patrons—Rasoul, Austin, Boysko, Cole, Hope, Keam, Plum, Simon and Ware; Senators: Ebbin and Spruill

WHEREAS, after 29 years as an indefatigable crusader for mental health issues, Diane Kelly retired as executive director of Mental Health America of Roanoke Valley in 2016; and

WHEREAS, a native of Botetourt County, Diane Kelly graduated from Lord Botetourt High School and Hollins College (now Hollins University), where she majored in politics; and

WHEREAS, founded in 1947 by local citizens, Mental Health America of Roanoke Valley (MHARV) is the oldest organization in the Roanoke community dedicated to providing education about mental health and resources for treatment; and

WHEREAS, Diane Kelly was working in the financial aid office at Hollins College in the 1980s when she was asked to join the board of MHARV, and later, when she was president-elect of the MHARV board, she stepped into the role of executive director when there was a vacancy; and

WHEREAS, Diane Kelly was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at the age of 35, and she became determined to teach others that with the right treatment and support, individuals with mental illness can live full, productive, and enjoyable lives, and be of service to those around them; and

WHEREAS, through her leadership at MHARV, Diane Kelly worked to bring mental health insurance equity to Virginia, mental health courts to the Roanoke Valley, and increase the number of inpatient beds for children and adolescents; and

WHEREAS, during Diane Kelly's tenure, MHARV opened a free clinic to treat uninsured adults, and today it treats almost 200 individuals annually, giving hope for a rewarding life to many local residents and their families; and

WHEREAS, Diane Kelly helped write Virginia's Comprehensive Services Act and then delivered the votes needed to get it passed; as MHARV executive director she was constantly looking for ways to remind lawmakers that mental health is critical to all health; and

WHEREAS, through MHARV's Mental Health First Aid classes, Diane Kelly taught more than a thousand people, including human resources professionals, health care workers, clergy, probation officers, judges, and social workers, what to do when encountering someone who is in crisis; and

WHEREAS, Diane Kelly is one of the most effective mental health advocates in the Commonwealth, and, in 2016, she was honored with the DePaul Community Resources' Women of Achievement Lifetime Award for her energetic and persistent advocacy on behalf of the mentally ill; and

WHEREAS, in retirement, Diane Kelly hopes to find more time for her love of music and piano, and she will no doubt remain active in her community; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Diane Kelly on her retirement after 29 years as executive director of Mental Health America of Roanoke Valley; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Diane Kelly as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her life's work in pursuit of better treatment and care for people living with mental health issues.

INTRODUCED

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