



The Honorable Valerie Nicholas has been a Laurel history maker since her appointment to the Laurel City Council in 2011. She is the first and only African American woman to serve in the role, to date. A highly spiritual woman, Valerie said, she saw an ad in the Laurel Leader for the Council seat vacancy, upon the resignation of former Councilwoman Gayle Snyder and God said, Valerie make your petition. Even though she had doubt, she did and she was appointed. From that date to this, she has remained undefeated for re-election. Valerie continues to make history as the first African American to hold the Council At - Large position since 2019 and her 2020 nomination as the first African American woman to serve as City of Laurel Council President.

Valerie is a compassionate community servant and considers her role as a “labor of love and legislation”. 2011 was an inspirational year for her, as in addition to adjusting to her new role as Councilwoman, she also revived her non-profit, *Love Is Not Enough, Inc.*. This organization was born from her own painful experiences of Domestic Abuse, from a young girl to adulthood.



Laurel Historical Society Celebrates Women's History Month and Salutes Contributions and History Makers in Our Community

The work she does in the name of her organization is her way of turning her pain into purpose and honoring the grace she feels from God, to live to tell her story. Though Valerie works fulltime as a Patient Advocate at the new Adventist HealthCare White Oak Medical Center; she is up every morning at 3:00 am with a full trunk of groceries, toilet paper, toiletries, masks, hand sanitizer and more, to make deliveries to people in need; before going to work. She has established strong donation partnerships over the years and now has two full storage units of supplies. In April of 2020 Valerie's organization received its first Maryland state grant. She is now able to deliver service throughout the state.

Prior to Valerie's life pivot to City Council and business owner, she worked for the Federal Government for 20 years, until her resignation, to selflessly become a full-time caregiver to her brother undergoing dialysis treatments, over 17 years; until his passing. Before her current role at Adventist HealthCare Medical Center, she worked 8 years at the former Laurel Regional Hospital, as a Chaplain, Volunteer Recruiter, and Patient Advocate.

Valerie says that most people don't turn to her for help with getting a street paved or adding a stop sign. Most of the time, people turn to her for help with housing assistance, employment, job readiness, food, help with utility bills, transportation, and other basic needs. She makes it her mission to leave people better than she found them. She has been called the “Wounded Healer”.

Valerie considers it an honor to reside in and serve the City of Laurel. She points to the Main Street Business Grants and the City-wide public Wi Fi, that is so critical to those without access, among her most proud legislative accomplishments. Valerie is ready to continue making history in and out of Laurel.

Sunday March 20, 2021 LHS Interview ~AVF