



# ALIVE! Wire

Alexandrians Involved Ecumenically

Fall 2009

## ALIVE! Responds

One of the things I love about ALIVE! is the way it responds to a challenge. As a small nonprofit organization ALIVE! has the flexibility to adjust to changes in the community's needs—both gradually over time and quite quickly, when necessary. ALIVE! program managers seem to have developed a knack for continuous program improvement, when necessary even re-designing programs to ensure responsiveness to client needs. For example:

- Linda Coleman, Chair of ALIVE!'s Family Emergency Program, stays in close contact with agencies such as the Alexandria Department of Human Services' Office of Community Services, to be sure that ALIVE! provides monetary assistance to those in greatest need, at appropriate levels of assistance per case, and for the most urgent purposes (ranging from rent payments to avoid eviction, to utility payments to prevent cut-offs, to assistance to people unable to afford medication prescribed for chronic illnesses). Type of assistance and maximum level of assistance per case vary over time in response to the challenges faced by the community.

- Over the past ten years, Susanne Arnold, ALIVE! House Chair, has guided the evolution of the small, homelike ALIVE! House shelter as it has intensified its case management services. Now Alexandria's social workers frequently choose ALIVE! House as the optimal shelter for reunification of homeless mothers and children who have been separated by difficult circumstances.

- During the past year Jean Moore, ALIVE!'s Food Chair, has worked hard to respond to sharply increased demand for food and disappointing lapses in food supplies, successfully expanding ALIVE!'s Last Saturday Food Distribution program to serve more people.

Your support has made this level of responsiveness possible, allowing ALIVE! to enhance its services to better meet the need. Thank you.

*Diana Day, President*

## Our 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Continues!



(L to R) volunteers Tom Balmer, Lisa Marie Kelly, Barbara Cooley, Gerry Hebert and Cisco Fabian help display the ALIVE! 40th Anniversary banner at the July 25 Last Saturday Food Distribution (LSFD) at Cora Kelly Recreation Center.



And at right, Suzanne Lamb, ALIVE! Assistant Food Chair (sixth from left) is surrounded by volunteers in front of the banner and Anniversary Sponsors sign at the August 29<sup>th</sup> LSFDF at Ladrey Senior High Rise.

## A Celebration of ALIVE!'s Founding

Tuesday, October 6, 2009

6:45 pm Gathering

7:15 pm Program and Pot Luck Dinner

Grace Episcopal Church  
3601 Russell Road  
Alexandria, VA

## Notes from the Executive Director



Ken Naser,  
ALIVE!'s Executive Director

In this issue, there is a lot that speaks to how ALIVE! responds to the needs of the community. I totally agree with that - it's been that way for the 40 years of ALIVE!'s existence. But, if you look further into our involvement in the community, you'll see that there is just as much responsiveness FROM the community when the need is great. Look at the picture of the Military Officers Association of America's campaign for ALIVE! and their outstanding response this year. Better than ever! And, they have been a consistent partner since 1991. That is true commitment.

Take a look too at the response from Whole Foods Market. Almost since they've had a presence in Old Town, they've committed to ALIVE! and our food delivery system to the community. Oct 21 is another time that they will make a huge commitment to all of those in need within our Alexandria Community. Come out and shop at Whole Foods Market in Old Town on Oct 21. We'll all benefit!

Just today, I picked up a large donation of food items from the Landmark Macy's store's "Bag Hunger" campaign and nearly \$1,400 in employee contributions which will be matched dollar for dollar by their corporate headquarters. This is their 3rd year of "Bag Hunger" and they are doing a terrific job with kick-offs, bake sales, raffles, etc. to make it a success. What a great demonstration of

local workers making a contribution to meeting local needs.

And, don't forget our friends at APTA (American Physical Therapist Association.) All year long, they quietly host book sales, craft fairs and individual contributions to ALIVE! They also have a wonderful employee that runs the Marine Corps Marathon each year and gets pledges from his co-workers for contribution to ALIVE! in support of his efforts. That is commitment. And, that is responding to the need of the community you live and work in.

We are so appreciative to all of those in our community - inside and outside of ALIVE! - who make it work.

Ken

## Military Officers Association of America – Increases Support

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) wrapped up their summer campaign for ALIVE! in July. Since 1991, MOAA has run a special employee fundraising campaign dedicated to ALIVE! and the community we serve. This year they raised over \$8,300! Thanks so much to all who participated.



CFC  
Code: 44658



United Way  
Code: 8352

## HOUSEWARES HELP MAKE IT HOME

What would you do if you had to start your home over from scratch? Your house has been destroyed by fire or a spouse has become so abusive you've left with your children and nothing else. You are starting over with no furniture or dishes, utensils, cookware or glasses, no sheets or towels or any of those "comforts of home" we all take for granted.

If you live in the City of Alexandria you could be referred by Social Services or one of ALIVE!'s member congregations to get help. The Wire has often reported on ALIVE!'s Furniture Program and all it does to provide those in need with living room and bedroom furnishings. The Housewares Program, chaired by Addie Hebert, now prepares "starter kits" that are included with the furniture delivered to those who have nothing. The kit includes pots and pans, dishes and glasses, utensils as well as sheets and towels. Housewares volunteers also handle specific needs when requests are referred. And on the last Saturday of the month, there are volunteers at both the Cora Kelly Recreation Center and Church of the Resurrection sites with housewares for the people who are receiving food from ALIVE!'s Last Saturday Food Distribution.

All of the housewares that we supply are donated by people who want to help support this important program. And there are lots of reasons that people have things to share. Some people are downsizing or moving and cleaning out cupboards, some are clearing out homes after a relative or neighbor has passed away, while others just have extra sheets, towels or a toaster that they no longer need.

This summer we got over one thousand sheets, blankets and spreads from a hotel that was buying all new bedding and donated the used linens to ALIVE! for those in need. On July 3<sup>rd</sup>, a bride and groom at Fairlington United Methodist Church wanted to avoid wasting paper at their reception and be as "green" as possible, so they used email and a web site for invitations and communications and asked for friends to donate plates, flatware and table linens for the big event. Then they filled in what they needed for the reception by purchasing used items from thrift shops. At the reception, each place at the tables had flatware which had been wrapped in a napkin and tied with a tag that explained that they support ALIVE! and that, following the reception, they were donating all the dishes and tableware to the Housewares Program "As a gift to our Guests."

As fast as these things come in, Addie Hebert and her fellow volunteers are placing them in homes that can use them. There is always someone in need. Addie has a small area downstairs at Fairlington United Methodist Church, 3900 King Street, where people can leave their donations. She sorts, organizes and packs up the starter kits that go with furniture and gets things ready for the Last Saturday Distribution. On the last Saturday of the month she is usually at work at the Cora Kelly site while Beth McFarland and Marty Bentley, of Fairlington Presbyterian Church, take the donations to the Church of the Resurrection. Hundreds of people at each location are able to choose items that they need for their homes. It's a great opportunity to give and it's fun to see so many happy people!



(L to R) Fairlington Presbyterian Church members, Beth McFarland and Marty Bentley and Addie Hebert, Fairlington UMC, Chair of ALIVE!'s Housewares program, coordinate the donations of housewares at both Cora Kelly and Church of the Resurrection in conjunction with Last Saturday Food Distributions.

## CDC Class of 2009!



Sixteen children from the Child Development Center's Blue Room class were graduated on June 19<sup>th</sup>, to the delight of parents, teachers and friends! It was a lovely ceremony and fun celebration. These children are well prepared to enter Kindergarten this Fall.

### CDC WISH LIST

3 lap top computers for teachers to use in classrooms

New, unopened packages of children's underwear, both boy's and girl's, sizes 2 through 10

New children's sneakers for preschool children  
2 1/2 to 5 years of age -- boy's & girl's sizes small/ S (starting at size 6) to large/L (sizes up to 1 1/2)

### FOOD PROGRAM WISH LIST

Canned Meat and Tuna Fish  
Fruit Flavored Gelatin  
Spaghetti Noodles  
Peanut Butter and Jelly  
Powdered Milk  
Complete Pancake Mix  
(needs only water)  
Syrup

## 34th Annual Turkey Trot!

ALIVE! continues a great family tradition on Thanksgiving morning, November 26<sup>th</sup> from 8:15 to 10:15 AM at the Cora Kelly Recreation Center, at Reed and Commonwealth Avenues, in Alexandria. Runners support ALIVE! by bringing non-perishable canned food to donate. Volunteers who aren't running are needed to help pack and sort the donations for our food pantry. Lots of help is needed—the more there are, the quicker we finish. On-site registration for the five mile race starts at 8:30 and advanced registration details are available from the D. C. Road Runners Club. For more information or to volunteer, please call the ALIVE! office at (703) 837-9321.



## Don't Miss ALIVE! Day at Whole Foods!



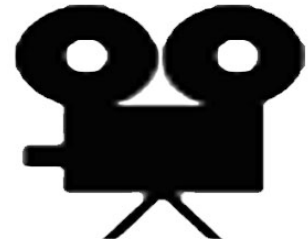
The Whole Foods Market at 1700 Duke Street in Alexandria (near the Carlyle Place Apartments) will donate 5 percent of their sales on October 21<sup>st</sup> to ALIVE! So don't miss the chance to shop for good healthy food that day and help ALIVE! at the same time!

## SAVE THE DATE:

October 20, at the GW Masonic Memorial.

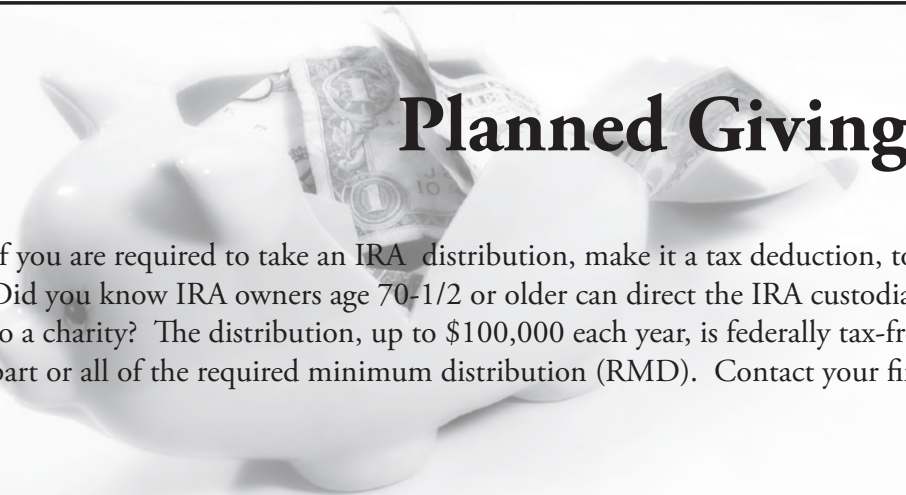
A movie screening of the documentary "Fresh" about locally grown, healthy food along with a panel discussion with local chefs and Joel Salatin from the acclaimed Polyface Farm. Tentative start time will be 7PM. The panel discussion will be moderated by City Councilman Rob Krupicka.

Proceeds from the event will go to ALIVE! to support buying fresh, local food for our food programs



## Planned Giving

If you are required to take an IRA distribution, make it a tax deduction, too! Did you know IRA owners age 70-1/2 or older can direct the IRA custodian to make a distribution directly to a charity? The distribution, up to \$100,000 each year, is federally tax-free and can be used to satisfy part or all of the required minimum distribution (RMD). Contact your financial advisor for more details.



## Last Saturday Food Meets the Challenge

So what advice would Jean Moore, ALIVE! Food Chair, offer to anyone managing a non-profit operation facing sharply increasing demand and unreliable supply? “Plan, organize, bargain, buy, improvise – and then pray!” she said with a smile.

ALIVE!’s Last Saturday Food Distribution (LSFD) program distributes bags of groceries at three different sites in the City of Alexandria on the last Saturday of each month. Through this program, ALIVE! seeks to serve the ever-increasing numbers of Alexandria’s families in need that qualify under federal income guidelines. The food distributed includes canned and packaged goods, as well as fresh bread, meats, and produce. Clients are referred for food by their social workers at public and private agencies, and by ALIVE!’s affiliated congregations.

This program normally serves 1200 to 1600 people per month, with demand fluctuating with the seasons (lower in summer and higher in fall and spring). However, a year ago, as ALIVE!’s clients were affected by the deepening recession, more and more people were referred for Last-Saturday food assistance. Starting in October 2008, the number of people needing extra help with food at the end of each month began to exceed prior-year levels by 35% or more.

Then on March 28 the program faced an unforeseen and dramatic spike in demand when 2770 people needed food. (Even now that this unusual spike has passed, Last-Saturday Food demand continues to significantly exceed last year’s levels.)

At the same time the need for food was increasing, food supplies became problematic. The U.S. Department of Agriculture used to provide as many as 14 to 15 different surplus food items every month. That number now fluctuates greatly -- as it did in July, sometimes to as few as six or seven items. In addition, grocery stores have been finding efficiencies by cutting back on their orders of fresh foods. This has reduced the cost of spoilage for the stores – but it also has reduced the amount of leftover bread and produce available for donation to local food banks such as ALIVE! .

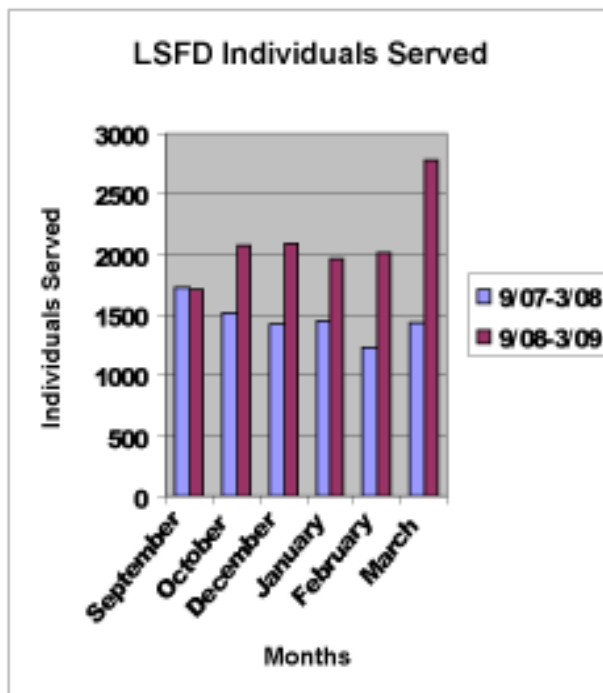
Faced with challenges such as these, how can ALIVE! respond? The LSFD program is managed and operated entirely by volunteers. How do they do it? According to Jean Moore, they do it by constantly adjusting demand forecasts and buying more food from the Capital Area Food Bank and other sources to heavily supplement the food donations that ALIVE! receives. Luckily, ALIVE!’s donors have been supporting this effort with increased contributions of both food and cash.

To accommodate the larger crowds at food distribution sites, ALIVE! has lengthened its hours of operation when necessary and at one site has assured anxious clients that anyone arriving by 11 AM will receive food. To deliver on that promise, ALIVE! volunteers learned to calibrate carefully the amount of food given out early in the morning, to ensure that food will be available for the 11 AM arrivals. And, when surprised by especially large numbers of clients at the last minute, volunteers



Lines were long at the Last Saturday Food Distribution at Cora Kelly Recreation Center in February.

have run out to the ALIVE! food warehouse to obtain and distribute immediately food that had been set aside for a later month. “While robbing Peter to pay Paul is not an ideal way to operate” said Jean Moore, “we have always been blessed by unexpected donations that have bailed us out. Just put your faith in prayers.”



*“ I heard the voice of the Lord, saying,  
Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?  
Then said I, Here am I; send me.”      Isaiah 6:8*

## ALIVE! House Happenings . . . Spotlight on Our Graduates!

*The following was received from Elena, a strong, independent and vivacious young woman, who had spent the last few years wondering who she had become, where she was going, and if life would ever be o.k. again. While she yet recovers – moving ahead one day at a time, Elena has gained the confidence to move on from the safe haven of ALIVE! House. Stronger, exhibiting even greater independence and a love for life that she didn't know she could have, Elena is clearly immersing the victor over her circumstances. She and her son now reside in a beautifully renovated apartment in a Fairfax County transitional housing program. As she moves along, well on her way toward self-sufficiency, ALIVE! House will provide a minimum of 6-months follow-up and remain a resource of encouragement and support.*

*Dimitri Warren, Director of ALIVE! House*



I have to say “THANK YOU” to Ms. Dimitri right now, in the beginning of this letter, for her patience with me. “THANK YOU – AGAIN and AGAIN!”

My son and I arrived at the ALIVE! House on October 26, 2008. I was ambivalent about the decision I had made at the time. I was already at a Domestic Violence (DV) Shelter . . . but another “shelter situation?” “I can afford my housing,” I kept telling myself . . . Why go to

another shelter?” I decided to give it a try and went for the interview. But, coming from a DV situation - the detective, photos, humiliating questions, Child Protective Services & Department of Human Services - I was tired and reluctant to talk to anybody else about the situation. All I wanted was **to be left alone**, and NEVER have to talk about it again. I did not want another person to be involved.

I remember clearly how it started. I was terrified – I would not cooperate for two weeks – I had no time at all – working two jobs and juggling childcare providers for my son, trying to make sure that my son and I had everything, constantly questioning if I had made the best choice for us. I was tired – always tired! Ms. Dimitri kept saying, “Elena – just slow down and relax. We’re here to help you . . . this is what we do!” But her advice certainly did not seem helpful at the time – Quit one of my jobs!? Change my childcare arrangements?! Report my expenses?! Turn in 70% of my income?! She clearly did not understand . . . she couldn’t understand! Boy was I very wrong!

The first thing Ms. Dimitri did was the referral to the ALIVE! CDC – the very best thing for my son and me. He loves his “school” and that was a huge stability factor for him. I

was in such a panic about finances and learning how to budget at the same time that I had no idea how unstable we were. A lesson well learned!

In September 2008 I left my house with virtually the clothes on my back, so I had no fall or winter clothing. I did not mention it to Ms. Dimitri, but she noticed and asked if I needed any help with clothing. I did not even expect that kind of help at all. Besides, I am very particular about my style. But, in no time I was fully and elegantly equipped. Just as if I shopped myself. And, I got many, many compliments about the attire that she had picked for me.

After the first two weekly meetings I came to the conclusion that I could talk to Ms. Dimitri and she could help. And, she did put me together. I can not begin to tell you how she patiently put all the broken pieces together. I came to the ALIVE! House as a person who was scared of the new day, and graduated as a person who cannot wait to see the sunrise and what the new day has for me. I know it is because of Dimitri, Ben, and Susanne’s attention.

Susanne - I am so impressed with your memory, wisdom, and attendance. You always remembered our needs and would ask me if they had been met. You have provided a lot of emotional support to me, and I learned a lot from you.

Ben - Not only were you a positive male figure for my son, but a person equipped with professional knowledge, yet modest about it. You provided me with a bag of helpful advice – how to raise a boy and for that I am forever thankful to you.

Every need that my son and I had was addressed by ALIVE! House. I received the support I did not expect. All the referrals were so helpful. All I can say is that I met people who care about me and my son, because they do – no other reason – they just do – they just care.

Dimitri, Ben and Susanne, my sincere gratefulness to you. GOD BLESS, Elena

### WISH LIST

- Laundry detergent
- Household cleaning supplies
- Dining table pad for a 48” round table
- Office copy & printer paper
- Dell 1110 Laser Printer ink cartridges

**Volunteers Needed** [Some of these require a committed time period (ie: mentoring) but others are one time, occasional opportunities to help. If you would like to volunteer, please call Susanne Arnold 703 683-5138.]

- Childcare provider for parent weekly meetings
- Supervising children’s programs & field trips
- Drivers to take residents to medical appointments, grocery shopping, etc.
- Mentoring/Tutoring
- Help the Homeless fund-raising program

## STEP UP FOR ALIVE! HOUSE

It's time, once again, to support our shelter in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Fannie Mae "Help the Homeless" program. Encourage your congregation, neighbors and friends to sign up for the Walkathon and join the ALIVE! House group on the National Mall on Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Youth \$15 (25 and under) Adults \$25 (26 and older), More registration details available on our web site: [alive-inc.org](http://alive-inc.org).

If you can't walk, please consider sponsoring a House resident or student by writing a check for \$15 or \$25 made out to Help the Homeless and mailing it to ALIVE! House, 125 South Payne Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Or you can organize your own "mini-walk" in your community. This is the only time during the year that ALIVE! House asks for your financial help. These funds provide over one fourth of the annual House budget.

For further information or to schedule a speaker for your group, please call Susanne Arnold at 703 683-5138 or email her at [susannearnold@verizon.net](mailto:susannearnold@verizon.net). See you there!

FannieMae.  
help the  
homeless



Above: Shoppers browse the whole block in front of ALIVE! House during this year's sidewalk sale.



Right: Susanne Arnold, program chair of ALIVE! House, points out some great buys to ALIVE!'s President Diana Day and board member Mike Oliver at the House's annual sidewalk sale which was held June 6<sup>th</sup> and raised over \$5000 this year.

ALIVE!  
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E-mail: alivetoo@aol.com

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Alexandria, VA  
Permit Number 567

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ALIVE!, founded in 1969, is a nonprofit organization devoted to helping Alexandrians facing emergency situations become self-sufficient members of the community. ALIVE! has grown from a handful of organizations and volunteers to a vigorous organization of 41 congregations and many volunteers.

ALIVE! offers Alexandrians in need help through ALIVE! House Shelter, Furniture, Housewares, Food Pantry, Family Emergency, Child Development Center and Last Saturday Food Distribution Programs.

Contact ALIVE! at  
703- 837-9300  
E-mail : alivetoo@aol.com  
www.alive-inc.org

## Fall 2009 Calendar

### October

- 6 Celebration of ALIVE!'s Founding: 6:45 PM; Grace Episcopal Church, 3601 Russell Road. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recognition
- 20 Showing "Fresh" film. GW Masonic Memorial . Proceeds to benefit ALIVE! Food programs
- 31 Last Saturday Food Distribution: Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center and Ladrey Senior High Rise

Food Collection: Alexandria Church of the Nazarene, Beth El, Del Rey UMC, Downtown Baptist, Fairlington Presbyterian, First Christian, Meade Memorial Episcopal, St. James UMC, & St Mary's Catholic  
Furniture Program: Fairlington UMC, St. Joseph's, St. Mary's

### November

- 10 Board Meeting: 7 PM; Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 323 S. Fairfax Street
- 26 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Turkey Trot, Thanksgiving morning, 8:15 to 10:15, Cora Kelly Recreation Center. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recognition

Food Collection: Blessed Sacrament, Christ Church, Church of the Resurrection, Convergence, Good Shepherd, Grace Episcopal, Trinity UMC, and St. Joseph's Catholic, St. Paul's Episcopal, Westminster Presbyterian  
Furniture Program: Christ Church, Church of St. Clement

### December

- 1 Board Meeting: Agudas Achim Congregation, 7 PM, 2908 Valley Drive. 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Recognition
- 12 Last Saturday Food Distribution: Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey Senior High Rise

Food Collection: All donations are gratefully accepted  
Furniture Program: First Christian and Good Shepherd Lutheran.

### ALIVE!

President: Diana Day, Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington  
Vice President – Cheryl Malloy, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
Treasurer --Rick Glassco, Immanuel Church-On-The-Hill  
Recording Secretary – Jann Masterson, Convergence: A Creative Community of Faith  
Corresponding Secretary – Vivian Webb, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Community  
Kenneth D. Naser – Executive Director  
Kathy Richards – Editor, ALIVE! Wire