

ALIVE! Wire

Winter 2012



President's Message



Working Together

Sometimes my neighbor works in my yard by himself (he says this frees up my time to devote to ALIVE!), but he says it's more fun when we work together – raking leaves, cleaning gutters, mulching. I agree.

Similarly, a considerable part of the enjoyment of working to address some of the troubling issues facing our fellow Alexandrians comes from working with other ALIVE! volunteers, who are such special people. In addition, coordinating our resources with those of other groups in the City, including the City itself, to provide services efficiently and effectively is a rewarding experience, as is interacting with those who need our services.. I find it especially heartwarming when clients or former clients of ALIVE! contribute, however they can, as a way of saying thanks for our services or just to participate in an effort that they know, from personal experience, is worthwhile.

Also, it is satisfying that ALIVE!'s various programs are often able to work together to help clients move beyond their difficult situations and become independent and more productive than their current circumstances may permit. ALIVE! House has taken in Child Development Center (CDC) families, and, at times, ALIVE! House families have turned to the Family Emergency Program for financial assistance. The CDC has employed ALIVE! House residents, and the Furniture and Housewares Programs have helped launch graduates of ALIVE! House who are moving into their own homes and assisted CDC families with household needs. The Last Saturday Food Distribution Program not only provides food to thousands of Alexandrians regularly, but housewares are also offered at the distribution sites, along with medical and other services.

Right now ALIVE! is facing some significant funding and operational challenges. The focus of federal funding for shelters has changed, which could mean that there will be no such funding for ALIVE! House going forward. (Please see related article on page 4.) Uncertainty remains regarding government-provided

Capital One Throws a Party!

On Wednesday, October 17, volunteers from Capital One joined students and staff from the ALIVE! Child Development Center (CDC) for a Fall-Themed Art Party involving music, dance, crafts, and art activities. From the smiling faces all around, it was clear that a good time was had by all.

Sponsored by Capital One, as part of its One Week associate volunteer initiative, the Art Party brought 18 Capital One associates together with CDC students in a variety of activities designed to stimulate creativity. The Capital One associates helped the students use a wide variety of materials to complete art projects, and even got down on the floor with them to engage in "arm-dancing," an activity that combines music appreciation with movement. In addition to providing volunteers, Capital One contributed all the supplies used for the party.

One Week is an annual, week-long event in which Capital One responds to the needs of the communities in which it operates by making the time and talents of its associates available to organizations serving the community.



President's letter continued on page 3

Notes from the Executive Director

As we get this edition of *The ALIVE! Wire* ready to go to press, everyone is wondering how Congress and the Obama Administration are going to avoid the looming “fiscal cliff.” The uncertainty, the inability to plan for the near term as well as the more distant future, is the most troubling for all, including small non-profits. And, it’s no different for ALIVE!

At our ALIVE! Child Development Center, the Alexandria Office of Early Childhood Education was not approving any new families from the waiting list for early childhood subsidies and, thus, we were not able to accept any new children receiving the subsidy. (The CDC cannot afford to absorb the full tuition amount for very low income families.) This caused us to close one classroom and lay off one teacher and one assistant teacher, something we were very reluctant and very sorry to have to do. The freeze having just been lifted, we’re hoping to get new families as soon as January and, hopefully, reopen the last classroom.

The fiscal situation at ALIVE! House is a bit precarious at the moment, too, due to the uncertainty of exactly how the “Housing First” guidance will play out. Our policy has always been to provide a continuum of care for our clients, taking them from homelessness and providing a home-like atmosphere for them and their families, while working on the related issues that made them homeless in the first place. (See the related, more complete story later in this issue.)

I send my best holiday wishes to our many friends and supporters of ALIVE! **Ken**

In Memory



ALIVE! has lost another of our longest serving volunteers with the passing of Don Mela who died on December 5th. Don and late wife Doris were “original” ALIVE! volunteers, going back practically

to the beginning days of ALIVE!. They were the Congregational Representatives on the ALIVE! Board of Directors from Beth El Hebrew Congregation for many years. Doris served as our Corresponding Secretary for 15 years and Don helped with Furniture, worked in the Family Emergency office, always walked in the CDC Walkathon, and so much more. Don often provided entertainment with his accordion at the Step ALIVE! picnic and other venues. They were truly dedicated and will be sadly missed.

Thanks, Reunions!

Reunions, a specialty shop in the Centre Plaza Shopping Center, collected over 500 pounds of canned and packaged food for ALIVE! from their customers during the month of October. In addition, the shop donated 5% of October sales to ALIVE! Pictured above center is Reunion’s owner, Barbara Watts, flanked by ALIVE!’s President, Ellen Brown, and Executive Director, Ken Naser.



HELP WANTED!

Manager: Food Drives

The Food Program is looking for an individual to serve as its Manager of Food Drives. This volunteer would coordinate ALIVE!’s participation in food drives conducted by other organizations (e.g., the postal workers’ Stamp Out Hunger drive). This involves coordinating food collection by the outside agency, transporting it to ALIVE!’s warehouse, sorting and storing it -- all done by volunteers. Fortunately, ALIVE! has participated in these food drives for years; so the Manager for Food Drives will have the experience of other committee members and seasoned volunteers to draw upon.



ALIVE!

President: Ellen Brown, Community Representative
Vice President: Deborah Patterson, Washington Street UMC
Treasurer: Rick Glassco, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
Recording Secretary: Eric Winakur, Agudas Achim Congregation
Kenneth D. Naser: Executive Director
Kathy Richards: Editor, ALIVE! Wire



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1000 Pairs of Feet Can’t be Beat!

Over 1000 friends of ALIVE! House participated in the 2012 Fannie Mae Help the Homeless program to raise operating funds. Their participation in Community Walks – Acacia Rock and Stroll, Grace Episcopal School, St. Rita School, St. Mary’s School, West End Congregations and East End Congregations – earned a \$10,000 bonus in addition to the registration fees. Major donors were: \$2,000 each from Fairlington United Methodist Church and Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill; \$1,500 each from Fairlington United Methodist Men and NVCC*; \$1,208 from members of Beth El Hebrew Congregation, \$513 from members of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House, as well as an anonymous donation of \$5,000. Final figures are not yet in, but it looks as if the total will provide over one third of the FY2013 ALIVE! House budget. Thanks to all who made it all possible!

**The NVCC donation was made online through the Help the Homeless website so we don’t have contact information. We would love to be able to thank you. Please contact the ALIVE! office at 703 837-9321.*



(L) Susanne Arnold, St. Rita Catholic Church, and Nataki MacMurray, Sixteenth Tabernacle, give out Help the Homeless Shirts for the East End Congregations Walk.



(L-R Background) Susanne Arnold, Ellen Brown and Ken Naser register walkers at the Acacia Rock and Stroll.

President’s letter continued from page 1

child care fee subsidies for CDC students in light of possible sequestration. Finally, the Furniture Program recently learned that it will be losing the warehouse space currently made available to us by the City.

You may be thinking that dealing with these issues doesn’t sound like fun at all. But overcoming challenges can be rewarding. ALIVE! has overcome similar obstacles before, and we can do it again – working together.

Warm wishes to you all for a happy holiday season.

Ellen Brown



TURKEY TROT WINNER!

The 2012 Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving morning at George Washington Middle School was a hit once again as volunteers sorted and boxed over 2000 pounds of food for ALIVE!’s pantry. Pictured, (L-R) Shiho Fujii, Gerry and Addie Hebert receive a check for \$5,000 from the Del Ray Business Association to support ALIVE! programs. Thanks to all who helped make the morning a success.

ALIVE! House Happenings:

By Kevin Heanue, Progam Chair

ALIVE! House, since its founding in 1972 as an ALIVE! Program, has provided shelter and supportive services to at-risk women and their dependent children. We have had a remarkable record of success in helping mothers who are confronting homelessness, financial distress, spousal abuse, substance abuse, medical problems, potential loss of their children, or combinations thereof. We place equal attention on the children, trying to ensure that their educational, physical and social needs are on a par with those of children in more stable environments. In a related fashion, we provide a supervised short-term environment for mothers who need guidance and assistance before living on their own.

ALIVE! member congregations have been very supportive of ALIVE! House. Through financial assistance and volunteer participation in many activities, they are vital in helping us fulfill our mission. We also have had strong support from the City of Alexandria and related state and federal programs. The Fannie Mae “Help the Homeless Walkathon,” with heavy volunteer support, have covered a significant part of our budget.

Now things are changing. For many years federal “homeless” funding guidelines were based on a “continuum of care” approach. Under this system, ALIVE! House takes in clients and works with them to overcome their problems until they achieve self-sufficiency and move on to independent living. Clients do not pay rent and must accept certain services and meet certain expectations related to behavior and savings.

More recently major funding sources moved to a “housing first” model. Pioneered in New York City and San Francisco, this model has been successful in moving chronically homeless persons into independent apartments and then offering supportive services related to their problems. Under the “housing first” model, the person or family moves into permanent housing, with some help with rent, and then is offered, but does not have to accept, services.

Unfortunately, for the women with dependent children that ALIVE! House serves, this model appears to have problems. The issues of women with children are more complex and call for programs that address family units. These families require more intensive support, more mentoring, parenting skills, and a concentrated period of skill development. Our ALIVE! House Director, who has bachelor and master’s degrees in social work, and our Resident Manager, who is working on her Master’s degree in social work, provide



seven day, night and day support and oversight for residents of ALIVE! House.

Due to this change in funding focus, currently ALIVE! House programs are not receiving federal assistance. In addition, Fannie Mae, because of its financial difficulties, has had to scale down its Help the Homeless program. For example, there was no walk on the mall this year, and agencies such as ALIVE! had to organize individual community walks. It is not clear whether Fannie Mae will be continuing to provide the financial and logistical support to the homeless community that they have in the past.

Regardless, ALIVE! House will continue to serve our target clientele. We also plan to work with sister non-profits in the City that serve the homeless and are having similar eligibility problems.

ALIVE! House
Wish List

- Paper Towels
- Bathroom Tissue
- Dye/Perfume Free Laundry Detergent
- Dye/Perfume Free Fabric Softener Sheets
- Cleaning Supplies
- Dish Liquid Detergent
- Liquid Hand Soap

The Cluttered Purse

By Nicole Goodman, Director of ALIVE! House

When Tesafay came to ALIVE! House for an intake interview she was asked to bring several documents for herself and her children. She arrived 40 minutes late with an average sized purse on her shoulder, hair uncombed, and wrinkled clothes. When asked to produce the requested documents, Tesafay stood, lifted her purse, and emptied the contents all over my desk. Among the make up, clothes, and gum, there were several pieces of crumbled paper. About 20 minutes into Tesafay’s process of smoothing out every wrinkled piece of paper to find the documents, she looked out the window and yelled, “They’re taking my car!” and ran out of the door. Tesefay had parked her car in a private driveway and it was being towed.

Tesafay was referred to ALIVE! House by her Pastor. Six months ago she was laid off from her job of 4 years as a security guard. She had been looking for work but was unable to find anything that paid enough for her family to live on. Tesafay had 11-year-old twin daughters. The family was originally from a small country in East Africa. Tesafay had been in the United States for over 7 years, to earn money to send home to her mother who was caring for her daughters. Around the same time that she was laid off, Tesafay’s aging mother became very ill and was unable to care for the girls. Tesafay used her savings and credit cards to finance immigration expenses to move her daughters to the United States. We soon discovered that Tesafay’s barrier to living independently was that she lacked basic organizational skills and often didn’t take the time to think through decisions.

During her 6-month stay at ALIVE! House, Tesafay learned to create a budget and a debt reduction plan. She was able to pay off over \$7,000 of credit card debt. She learned how to organize and maintain order of her living space. She also learned to consider pros and cons before making decisions. During her 4th month at ALIVE! House, Tesafay was awarded a Housing

Choice Voucher. Although she wanted to remain at ALIVE! House and realized she had more to learn,

Tesafay could not pass up the opportunity for permanent subsidized housing. ALIVE! House staff helped Tesafay locate and apply for an apartment, get furniture and other supplies, and access local community resources. ALIVE! House staff continued to work with Tesafay by conducting monthly home visits and having weekly phone conversations.

This fall, exactly one year after Tesafay came to ALIVE! House, she stopped by to say hello. She was wearing slacks and a blouse, and her hair was immaculate. She stood, lifted her purse, and emptied the contents all over my desk. There was a planner, two ink pens, a small make up bag, and a pack of tissue. Tesafay and I shared a laugh and afterwards she had this to say:

“I don’t know where I would be without ALIVE! House. You guys helped me so much! I learned how to pay my bills and how to save money. I make friends. I get what I need from the neighborhood. Thank you. And the people gave toys and clothes to my children. We got everything we needed. Thanks be to God for ALIVE! House and all the people who help.”

Tesafay is currently working full-time as a home health aid; her twin girls are now 12 years old and thriving; and she is completely debt free! The family checks in with ALIVE! House often. Tesafay has volunteered by babysitting for other residents during evenings and weekends when she isn’t working.



Then 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



CFC Code:
44658



United Way Code:
8352

Thanks and Giving

By Linda Coleman,
Chair, Family Emergency Program

I hope Marlo Thomas won't mind if I "borrow" the title of her fundraising campaign for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, "Thanks and Giving," but I can't help but think of that phrase when I think of Brenda Stone and her friends and associates of Keller Williams Realty in Old Town.

Last Thanksgiving, ALIVE!'s Family Emergency Program (FEP) partnered with Keller Williams, who provided 60 Thanksgiving dinners to low-income families in Alexandria. This year, as was Brenda's goal, 125 families received Thanksgiving dinners. FEP worked with David Wynne of the Alexandria City Public Schools and others to identify those families that would receive the dinners. Keller Williams Realty did the fundraising, bought the turkeys and all the "fixin's," and made the deliveries.

This is just one more way that those of us at ALIVE! work with others in our community to give back to our neighbors who are less fortunate.

Above and right Bags and bags of Thanksgiving meals wait to be delivered by the Keller Williams "team."



Food Program Wish List

Canned Meat
Tuna
Canned Spaghetti Sauce
Canned Fruit
Peanut Butter
Grape Jelly
Complete Pancake Mix
(needs only water)
Syrup
Dried Milk
Rice
Dried Beans
Baby Food
Crackers
Jell-O
Coffee and Tea
\$Money to buy fresh eggs and meat\$



AARP Delivers!

For the second year in a row, AARP employees from their Washington, DC office participated in AARP's "Day of Service" on September 11, delivering food from ALIVE!'s Family Emergency Program to people in need in Alexandria. Pictured (left to right) loading their car are Nancy Thompson, Kristian King, and Steve Lotterer.

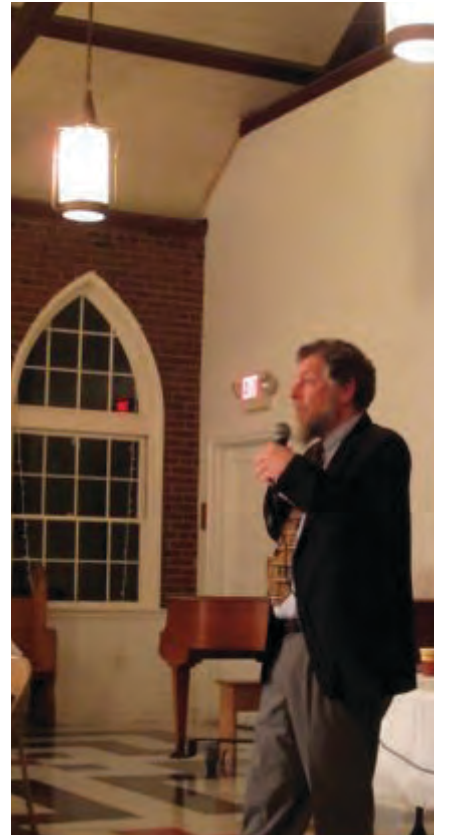
CDC Wish List

\$375 to Pay for a Bus for a Trip to the Zoo
\$100 for Play Ground Toys
Boy's and Girl's Underwear sizes 3T to 6
Rolls of Contact Paper
Staplers and Pens
Cleaning Supplies:
Sponges
Dawn Dish Soap
Bleach
Lysol Spray

Annual Potluck Celebration



ALIVE!'s Annual Recommitment and Volunteer Recognition Potluck was held on October 2nd this year at Emmanuel Episcopal Church. Rabbi Brett Isserow (pictured), from Beth El Hebrew Congregation, was the guest speaker. President Ellen Brown thanked all of the volunteers, whose time and energy make our programs possible. The photograph of people serving themselves from the buffet illustrates the wonderful selection of dishes. Thanks to Emmanuel Church and all who helped.



FANNIE MAE BACKPACKS FOR KIDS

Fannie Mae employees (right) loaded an ALIVE! truck with backpacks for school children. The organization's employees collected the backpacks for distribution at the August 25th Last Saturday Food Distribution just in time for the students to be ready to go back to school. The young lady in pink (left) is modeling the one she received. Thanks to all who helped with this project.



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

ALIVE! Wire



ALIVE!, founded in 1969, is a non-profit organization devoted to helping Alexandrians facing emergency situations or long-term needs become capable of assuming self-reliant roles in the community. ALIVE! has grown from a handful of organizations and volunteers to a vigorous organization of 42 congregations and hundreds of volunteers.

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

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

Winter 2012 Calendar

JANUARY

- 8 ALIVE! Board Meeting – 7 pm** at Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road
- 26 Last Saturday Food Distribution:** Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey High Rise
- Food Collection:** Downtown Baptist, Ebenezer Baptist, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, and St. Rita Catholic Church
- Furniture Collection:** Emmanuel Episcopal, First Baptist and St. Rita Catholic Church.

FEBRUARY

- 5 ALIVE! Board Meeting - 7 pm**
- 23 Last Saturday Food Distribution:** Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center and Ladrey High Rise
- Food Collection:** Beth El Hebrew Congregation, Del Ray UMC, Emmanuel Episcopal, Fairlington Presbyterian, Alexandria Assembly of Baha'is, Roberts Memorial UMC, and St. Andrews UMC
- Furniture Collection:** Beverly Hills UMC, Church of God and Saints of Christ Sixteenth Tabernacle, and Fairlington Presbyterian

MARCH

- 5 ALIVE! Board Meeting - 7 pm**
- 30 Last Saturday Food Distribution:** Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey High Rise
- Food Collection:** Alexandria Church of the Nazarene, Alfred Street Baptist, Beverly Hills Community UMC, Church of St. Clement, Commonwealth Baptist, St James UMC, Third Baptist, and Washington Street UMC
- Furniture Collection:** Old Presbyterian Meeting House, First Agape Baptist Community, and St. Mary's Catholic Church