

ALIVE! Wire

Winter 2014



President's Message



Season's Greetings

This is a season of holidays for many and, as we come to the end of the year, it is also a time to reflect on our lives and the lives of those around us. To all of you who are supporters of ALIVE! and to all in our community, I send warm wishes of the season, and I wish you peace. "Peace" can mean different things to different people, but surely all the definitions suggest something good and powerful. One very dedicated ALIVE! volunteer always ends her emails with "Peace," and receiving her messages gives me a positive feeling – a sense of the goodness of life. That is what I wish for you.

I also want to thank you for your compassion and generosity this last year. You have made our work possible and helped many thousands of our neighbors.

At ALIVE!, our hope for the upcoming year is to expand the services we provide to address the still unmet needs of those who are experiencing difficult financial situations in Alexandria. To accomplish this goal, we have strengthened our staff and are exploring avenues for raising additional funds. Further, we are renewing our efforts to spread the word throughout the community about all the services ALIVE! offers – food, financial assistance, furniture and housewares, early childhood education, and transitional housing. We want those in need of our services to know ALIVE! is available to help them and those who are interested in volunteering or supporting ALIVE! financially to be aware of the range of opportunities to assist that we offer. Finally, we would like you to know that we are continually reviewing our practices and procedures so that you can be assured that the resources you entrust to us are being managed prudently.

Together we can do more to help the children, women, and men in Alexandria in the coming year. As you read this issue of the Wire and learn more about what's been happening at ALIVE!, consider how you may wish to become more involved in service to others. Also, please encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to participate and experience with us the gift of giving.

Best wishes and peace in the new year.
Ellen Brown

38th Annual Alexandria Turkey Trot

The 38th Annual Alexandria Turkey Trot, run by the DC Road Runners Club and the Del Ray Business Association, took place on Thanksgiving morning at George Washington Middle School.

This year, there were over 5500 registrants and, despite the wind and the cold, most came out to support ALIVE! while working up their Thanksgiving appetites. Runners contributed to ALIVE! by bringing non-perishable food items and making cash donations. The total amount collected from runners was \$657. Volunteers who did not participate in the run, helped by collecting, sorting, and boxing approximately 1200 pounds of food. The Del Ray Business Association made a very generous contribution of \$6,000 to support ALIVE!.

Thanks to the DC Road Runners Club, the Del Ray Business Association, and all who helped make the morning a success!



Above l-r: ALIVE! volunteers Donald Campbell and John Hiruta help sort and pack the 1200 pounds of donated food.

Collaborative Effort Brings Thanksgiving Meals to Alexandrians in Need

Deliveries on November 26 brought smiles to many faces. Brenda Stone, Christine Woods, their colleagues at Keller Williams Realty, and volunteers from affiliated companies, raised over \$8000 dollars to provide Thanksgiving baskets to more than 300 families in Alexandria.

Volunteers from the Family Emergency Program worked together with Alexandria City Public School social workers to identify recipients. Of the turkeys distributed, 75 were provided by Poor Roberts Charities. Thank you to all who made this effort possible.



Notes from the Executive Director - Ken Naser

Interfaith



I am a member of an organization called The Interfaith Alliance which “celebrates religious freedom by championing individual rights, promoting policies that protect both religion and democracy, and uniting diverse voices to challenge extremism.” While that is a much broader mission, focusing more on policy and advocacy, than the mission of ALIVE!, I think there are some similarities.

One of the characteristics of ALIVE! that I and many others find appealing is the interfaith nature of our membership – bringing together many different faith traditions to work on an issue that we all believe in: helping our neighbors in need. Whether it is from Proverbs 22:9 (*A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor*) or Matthew 25:44-45 (*They also will answer, “Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?” He will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me”*), or the Quran 76.8-9 (*And they give food out of love for Him to the poor and the orphan and the captive: [saying] “We only feed you for Allah’s sake; we desire from you neither reward nor thanks”*) - the call is there.

We strengthen and encourage one another when we recognize and celebrate the many things we have in common and those we can agree on.

Whatever your tradition, I send my best holiday wishes to our many friends and supporters.

Ken

Joint Effort to Provide Free Flu Shots



Nurses and staff from the Public Health section of the Alexandria Health Department were assisted by volunteers from the Medical Reserve Core in giving free flu vaccines at ALIVE! Last Saturday Food Distribution sites. Between

the shots given at Cora Kelly at the September LSFDF and those given at the Church of the Resurrection site in October, approximately 400 vaccines were administered. We thank the Alexandria Health Department and the Medical Reserve Core for caring about Alexandrians in need and for coming out to our LSFDF sites this fall.



Vice Mayor, Allison Silberberg, and ALIVE! Executive Director, Ken Naser, kick off cold and flu season by getting their flu shots at the ALIVE! Last Saturday Food Distribution (LSFDF).

Thank you, Bank of America!

The Bank of America Foundation donated \$10,000 to the ALIVE! Family Emergency Program to help alleviate the suffering caused by poverty. We are so appreciative of their generosity, their dedication to those in the City of Alexandria, and their continued support of ALIVE!.

Bank of America 

Special CDC Visitor Donates Time and Supplies

ALIVE! is always appreciative of young citizens who choose to volunteer their time to help neighbors in need. Henry Drembus, a special young man, chose the ALIVE! Child Development Center (CDC) for his Bar Mitzva service project. During the spring, Henry came to visit the youngest group of students on a weekly basis. Each time he came, he read a terrific book aloud to the children, and his visits quickly became a highlight of each week! During the summer, Henry also collected cleaning supplies from Agudas Achim Hebrew Congregation and donated them to the CDC in July. The Child Development Center thanks Henry for his time and dedication to our students.

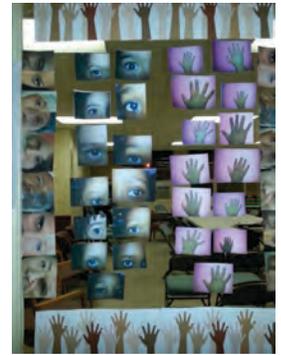


The CDC Celebrates Multi-Cultural Week

Celebrating the increasing diversity of its student body, the CDC observed November 11-15 as Multi-Cultural Week. During the week, the students discussed differences and similarities among various cultures in physical features (eye, hair, and skin colors) as well as types of foods eaten, homes lived in, and games played.



The high point of the week occurred on the evening of Thursday, November 14, when students and their families were invited to a multi-cultural pot luck dinner. All were encouraged to bring food representative of their native countries and to dress in their native attire. Those attending feasted on pupusas from El Salvador, bread from Ethiopia, flan from Peru, butter from Ireland, as well as fried chicken and apple pie from the United States. Parents, students, and staff proudly showed off clothes from Ethiopia, El Salvador, Chile, and Peru, while display boards provided maps, pictures, and interesting details about a variety of countries.

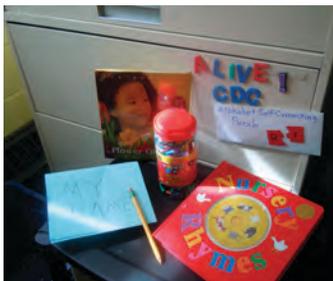


Parents especially enjoyed playing an "Eye-and-Hand-Spy" game. Each classroom had a display of the children's eyes and hands. Parents had to guess which set of photos belonged to their child.

They did a great job of recognizing their own children, but found it much more challenging to guess the eyes, hands, and feet of the staff!

The evening also provided a good opportunity to recognize and thank Carrie Diggins who recently celebrated her 22 year anniversary with the CDC. Over that period, "Miss Carrie" has prepared hundreds of children for kindergarten with love and devotion. Her long tenure has been a blessing to ALIVE!, the CDC, and all the children and families who have been a part of it.

"The Gift of Literacy" Comes to the CDC

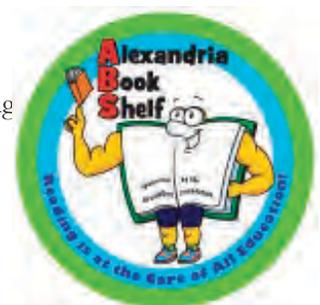


On Thursday, October 8, CDC parents gathered for the annual "Gift of Literacy" program. Pam Blankenship, CDC Director, led this popular program, which focuses on the importance of parents reading to their children and provides advice on how best to do this, along with tips for other pre-literacy activities that they can engage in with their children. Each family received a "Literacy Kit" that included a book with a CD of nursery rhymes, a Caldecott-award winning book of their choice, a self-correcting alphabet puzzle, a set of magnetic letters and numbers, and other items useful for pre-literacy activities.



In the spring, a similar program will be held, focusing on how parents can help their children with math and science skills. These programs are part of a series of regularly-scheduled Parent Circle meetings which also provide parents with information about topics such as behavior management, household budgets, and kindergarten transition.

Literacy programming at the CDC is enhanced by the efforts of another Alexandria-based nonprofit, the DreamDog Foundation, whose mission involves instilling a lifelong love of learning in children. Through its Alexandria Book Shelf program, age appropriate books are made available to CDC children for enjoyment in the classroom and even to take home. The CDC is very grateful to DreamDog for all its contributions.



CDC Wish List

- 3 6' x 9' Library Area Carpets @ \$130.00 each
- 1 Art Drying Rack @ \$110
- 20 Math and Science Readiness Kits @ \$34.00 each

Please consider ALIVE! this year when making your United Way/CFC contributions.



CFC
Code:
44658



United Way
Code:
8352

Amanda Neer Joins the ALIVE! Team

We are pleased that, after a broad search and much competition, Amanda Neer has been selected as the new Director of ALIVE! House. She comes to us having progressed over the past five years in the City of Alexandria from case worker to social worker to family services specialist. Her education includes a BS in Social Work from Elizabethtown College and an MS in Social Work from George Mason University. She also is fluent in Spanish, having studied in Spain and worked in Costa Rica. Welcome, Amanda!



Friends Share Their Love of Literature with LSF D Clients

The Friends of the Beatley Central Library, founded in 1985, is non-profit organization comprised of community members who aim to “support the operation, continuance and development of the Library within the diverse community of Alexandria to enrich the cultural and educational life of its residents.” Following their fall book sale, the Friends generously donated the remainder of their children’s books to ALIVE!’s Last Saturday Food Distribution Program, providing well in excess of 100 books. The books were given to families with young children at the Church of the Resurrection LSF D site, and the distribution was wildly successful. Clients were thrilled, and the children waiting in the food line were excitedly telling

the LSF D volunteers all about the books they received. ALIVE! thanks the Friends for their generous donation and hopes to collaborate with them again in the future. Special thanks to Eileen Bradley, President of the Friends of the Beatley Central Library, for her part in this special event.

Generosity is ALIVE! at Reunions



Reunions, a specialty shop offering distinctive antiques, home furnishings and gifts, is a long-time supporter of ALIVE!. This fall, owner Barbara Watts, once again, emptied the piggy bank that sits on the check-out

counter and donated its contents to ALIVE! The donation received this year is almost double the amount collected last year! Thank you Barbara Watts and all the generous Reunions shoppers who contributed. We truly appreciate your support.

ALIVE! House Wish List

The Virginia Theological Seminary has made a major contribution towards our need for household goods. We thank VTS for their generous support now and over the years.

We are about to welcome new residents into ALIVE! House and would appreciate new or lightly used sets of extra-long sheets and pillow cases (the ones often used in college dorms). Also, we would appreciate four place settings of dishes and flatware. ALIVE! House provides new residents with these household items upon their arrival and allows them to take the items when they leave.

Fannie Mae Help the Homeless 2013



Thank you, friends of ALIVE! House who participated in the 2013 Fannie Mae Help the Homeless program. Over 500 friends registered, and their participation in community walks -- the Acacia Rock and Stroll and congregation walks-- earned a bonus from Fannie Mae in addition to registration fees.

Final figures are not yet in, but we are grateful for all those who contributed to this effort to raise operating funds and support the FY 2014 ALIVE! House budget. Thanks to all those who made these events possible!

Westminster Congregation participants enjoy hot chocolate and refreshments outside of ALIVE! House after the walk.

I Can See Clearly Now

By Linda Coleman, Chair, Family Emergency Program

Surely some of you remember the song, "I Can See Clearly Now," by Johnny Nash. It shot to the top of Billboard's "Hot 100" Chart in 1972. Indulge me, if you will, while I quote some of the lyrics:

*I can see clearly now, the rain is gone
I can see all obstacles in my way
Gone are the dark clouds that had me blind
It's gonna be a bright, bright sun-shiny day.*



The song comes to mind today as I'm thinking about literally hundreds of youngsters—low-income students in the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS)—whose path to a good education is hampered because they have uncorrected vision problems. Their families can't afford to pay for eye exams and eyeglasses because they struggle to pay their rent, keep the utilities turned on, and put food on the table.

But don't these visually-impaired kids deserve a chance to have their vision corrected -- to be able to see better and, thus, have an easier time learning in their classrooms? These kids surely know if it's a "bright sun-shiny day." But they can't "see clearly." And the "obstacle in their way?" **POOR EYESIGHT!**

The ALIVE! FEP is working with some wonderfully dedicated ACPS social workers and health professionals to help as many visually impaired, low income students as we can. We're just beginning this endeavor. We're just beginning this endeavor. Knowing that 95% of the FEP FY 2014 budget (\$260,000) that has been used so far this year has gone to help Alexandrians in need to help pay their rent or utility bills, there is so very little left for other financial needs. If we want these kids to have a brighter future, we need to do something! There is help from others: nonprofits that help the visually impaired and professional eye care establishments that have outreach programs. But those programs have limitations. And they usually won't pay all costs in particularly challenging cases...or won't, perhaps, pay for replacement eyeglasses.

I learned just yesterday from an ACPS social worker of a student whose family was facing eviction from their apartment. While the family was not at home, the landlord moved all their belongings to the street, including the child's school books, homework...and his eyeglasses. The family was left with nothing but the clothes on their backs. The social worker was able to get the student replacement school books and even some clothing, but she was unable to find anyone who would pay for replacement eyeglasses.

Another ACPS social worker works entirely with students in the T.C. Williams International Academy. There are upwards of 500 students in that program. Approximately 95% of those students are from low-income families. And many of them have vision problems that go uncorrected. Think of their challenges! They may just be learning to speak English. Many may be in a living situation where they are separated from immediate family members. Many may have anxieties that their school social workers help them cope with. Add to that the fact that their vision is impaired. It just seems like a bridge too far for some of these kids, doesn't it?

Well, maybe ALIVE!'s supporters can't be there to teach them English, help them sort out their fears and anxieties, or be the parent that isn't living with them because he or she is back in their home country. BUT, we can help them take steps to improve their vision!

If you are reading this article and want to join ALIVE! and the ACPS in helping these students to be able to literally focus on a pathway to a better, more productive life, then please consider sending a donation to ALIVE! earmarked for "Students Seeing Clearly." Thank you!

Alexandrians Receiving Food from ALIVE! Between September 1, 2013 and October 31, 2013

	Households	Individuals
September	708	2408
October	735	2280

Food Program Wish List

Canned fruit
Rice
Peanut butter
Jelly
Tuna
Canned meat
\$ Money to buy fresh eggs and meat \$

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



God's Work. Our Gifts.

ALIVE! Holiday Gift Giving

Don't know what to give a friend or family member for the holidays? Would you like to reduce the frenzy of gift-giving? Would you like to share your faith and blessings with those less fortunate around you while honoring a friend or relative? By purchasing a gift through ALIVE!, you are directly benefiting families in Alexandria who need your help.

Playground Upgrades \$100+



We all know that playgrounds are lots of fun for kids, but did you know that they are educational tools as well? This gift helps our preschoolers get everything they need to learn and grow.

Optical Exam \$79



Eye exams are critical for seniors, but they are often put off to pay for rent or food when resources are scarce. This gift pays for an eye exam for a low-income senior.

Utilities \$75



Rising utility costs can be the difference between stability and homelessness for low-income families. Keep a neighbor warm this winter by giving this gift of help with utilities.

Holiday Food Basket \$50



Imagine a family, gathering around a holiday meal--enjoying this gift of nutrition, togetherness, and celebration--thanks to your generosity.

Gas \$50



You can literally provide the fuel for our efforts to deliver furniture to families in need. This gift provides enough gas to pick up and deliver donated furniture to twelve families.

Work Clothes \$50



Help a homeless single mom dress for success by purchasing a gift card for professional clothes and shoes.

Medication \$50



Senior citizens who are struggling to make ends meet sometimes go without medication they need. This gift provides a co-payment for a senior citizen who cannot afford to fill prescriptions.

Pots & Pans \$45



Purchase a starter set of pots and pans for a family who is moving out of a shelter into an apartment with nothing of their own.

Books \$40



You can help foster a life-long love of reading for a child who may never have owned a book of his own. Access to books boosts children's long-term education and kindergarten readiness.

Healthy Snacks \$35



Healthy snacks keep ALIVE! preschoolers focused and ready to learn throughout the day, while helping them develop good eating habits. This gift provides two nutritious snacks for a whole class.

Finger Paint \$30



Give the gift of creativity with a set of finger paints and paper for the children in our Child Development Center, helping to prepare them for kindergarten success.

Meat & Cheese \$29



ALIVE!'s Last Saturday Food Distribution program purchases groceries for 19 cents per pound from a local food bank. This gift provides 150 pounds of meat and cheese for families in need.

Cleaning Supplies \$25



Give this gift to a woman who is learning to be responsible for living on her own. This gift provides cleaning and laundry supplies for a family who is transitioning out of ALIVE! House.

Fare Cards \$10



Open the door to a brighter future for a formerly homeless young mom who needs metro transportation to a job interview or class.

Eggs \$10



\$10 really makes a difference when it is used to buy a dozen eggs for ten families in need as a primary source of protein.



ALIVE! Holiday Gift Order Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Gift Item	Quantity	Cost	Total
Grand Total:			

Instead of a gift selection, we would like to make a contribution in the amount of \$ _____ to be used where it is most needed.

ALIVE! is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation. Your donation is tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowable under the law.

*Please note that these gifts are examples of the types of items that ALIVE! will provide to families. ALIVE! may not necessarily purchase the items in the quantities sold, but will utilize all funds donated for the benefit of families in need in Alexandria.

Purchasing a Gift:

1. Review the list of items.
2. Fill in the order form.
3. Make a check payable to ALIVE!
4. Send your order form and check to ALIVE!, 2723 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22302.
5. For each item you purchase, you will receive a holiday card and an insert describing your chosen gift via mail. When you receive these items, give them out as your holiday gifts to your recipients.

The Community is ALIVE! with Food Drives

Between July and October of this year, ALIVE! provided food to individuals in need 9,294 times. The need is there, and the community worked together to provide assistance this fall.

On November 9, at the close of the Boy Scout Food Drive, approximately 8,000 pounds of food collected by local Boy Scout groups was delivered to the ALIVE! food warehouse. Jean Moore (Food Chair), Beth and Donald Campbell, Kathy and Jeff Madison, and Chris and Scott Newsham worked together with volunteers from the Nu Xi Zeta Chapter of the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority and volunteers from the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity to unpack and sort the food. We at ALIVE! are appreciative of all the volunteers who contributed to this effort and of the Boy Scouts' support of ALIVE! and commitment to helping our community.

In October and November, the Food Program received a number of sizable donations from food drives run by local Alexandria organizations and businesses. Significant contributions were delivered by Alexandria Renew Enterprises, Agudas Achim Hebrew congregation, Parkside of Alexandria Condominiums, Jamieson Condominiums, National Industries for the Blind, First Baptist Church, Christ Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church, Alexandria Gymboree, the eighth grade class at Blessed Sacrament School, Carlyle Condominiums, Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, Giant on Van Dorn, O'Keeffe & Company, Wiley Wilson, Inova Transitional Care Management Program, Future Business Leaders of America from T.C. Williams High School, Francis C. Hammond Middle School III, and John Adams Elementary School.

Donations continue to stream in, and we thank all food drive managers, participants, and community members for their dedication to providing for neighbors in need! Please keep the ALIVE! Food Program in mind all year-round, as we provide food for approximately 2,300 hungry Alexandrians in need each month.



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E-mail: alivetoo@aol.com

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

ALIVE! Wine



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, 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 2014 CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 7 ALIVE! Board Meeting:** 7:00 PM, First Baptist Church 2932 King St.
25 Last Saturday Food Distribution: Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey Senior High Rise
Food Collection: Downtown Baptist, Ebenezer Baptist, Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill, St. Rita Catholic
Furniture Collection: St. Rita, First Baptist, Emmanuel Episcopal

FEBRUARY

- 4 ALIVE! Board Meeting:** 7:00 PM, St. Rita Catholic Church, 3815 Russell Rd.
22 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: Beverley Hills Community UMC, St. Mary's, Fairlington Presbyterian

MARCH

- 4 ALIVE! Board Meeting:** 7:00 PM, Fairlington Presbyterian, 3846 King St.
29 Last Saturday Food Distribution: Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey Senior 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, Sixteenth Tabernacle