

# ALIVE! Wire

Fall 2015



## President's Message



A year ago, I wrote my first article for the Wire. As I look back on the year, there is so much that I want to share with you about every day with ALIVE! I continue to be inspired by the actions of our program chairs, volunteers, staff and our clients. I am humbled by the courage, determination and sacrifice of all our staff and volunteers. I have observed

that volunteers and staff garner all their resources - both physical and spiritual - to meet the challenge at hand.

When faced with some of the difficult situations we encounter, a lot of people might run for the exits, try again another day or wait until they had all the right tools. Not our staff and volunteers. They find a way that will work to meet the needs of the community. There are never too many flights of stairs or a doorway too small for our furniture volunteers to get the bed or sofa to the family who needs it. It is never too hot or too cold in the food warehouse to keep the volunteers from sorting, organizing and boxing food because they know the difference that food will make to someone who is hungry. Our Family Emergency volunteers never waiver when they are in a dank hallway delivering food to a homebound elderly person. Our CDC teachers never shirk the challenge of giving the children a firm foundation for learning. And our ALIVE! House staff never gives up on helping the residents get on the path to independence.

It is our neighbors who need our services who inspire and motivate our staff and volunteers. The people we serve often face insurmountable obstacles. Many have risked everything just to get here. They are tenacious, hard-working and determined that their children have a better life. We see these children reach adulthood, go to college, join the armed services, start their own families, volunteer, care for the elders and start their own journeys.

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## ANSWERING THE CALL!

### TOM FULHAM AND CRAIG STEVENS

Although Ken Naser retired in December, his impact is felt in many ways around ALIVE! Take the new Family Emergency Program Chair, Tom Fulham. Thanks to Ken (and his wife Cris), Tom was



recruited to be an FEP volunteer in the summer of 2014. This was after a couple of retirements. The first retirement came after 20 years in the Navy, including time at Desert Shield and Desert Storm where he executed the Navy's logistics plan. Tom and his wife, Marcia, have grown adult triplet children. Fast forward to after their graduation from T.C. Williams High School when Dad was granted permission to volunteer at the school - with the Scholarship Fund of Alexandria. That volunteer position turned into a job - for 10 years. After that retirement, when Tom arrived at FEP to deliver food, his real volunteer days began. On

July 1<sup>st</sup>, Tom was promoted to the Chair of the Family Emergency Program. His sense of humor and adventure are already quite a part of this very valuable program. Welcome aboard, Tom!

Craig Stevens and his wife Leslie just sent their daughter off to college in Illinois and it will be a different world with just their son living at home. All members of the Stevens family have been actively involved in community outreach through Fairlington United Methodist Church. Craig served as the ALIVE! representative for Fairlington several years ago and developed a solid understanding of ALIVE's vital role in the community. Asked to come back to ALIVE! as the Chair of the Personnel Committee, Craig graciously accepted. In his day job, Craig's work is centered around executive searches and helping people and companies make smart career decisions and choices. Craig is a founding Partner of Cabot Consultants, a firm that specializes in executive searches. ALIVE! is honored to have Craig's human resources expertise, ALIVE! passion and strong relationship-building skills on our leadership team. He also serves on the Board of the Campagna Center. Welcome back to ALIVE!, Craig!



## Notes from the Executive Director - Diane Charles



Statistics can draw some stark pictures: Nine percent of Alexandria's residents and more than 15% of its children live in poverty. Many more families are close to the edge. Thousands of Alexandrians, as many as 1 in 5, live in households struggling to make ends meet. Fifty nine percent of Alexandria's public school students qualify for and receive free or reduced price school meals at school. ALIVE! exists to help families who are living through some of these challenging statistics.

Just a year ago, a report published by the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria's Childhood Obesity Action Network affirmed that thousands of Alexandrians regularly experience food hardship – irregular access to affordable, healthy meals. Any crisis can push these families over the tipping point – an illness, loss of a job, inadequate childcare, domestic violence, or an increase in housing costs. The rising cost of living in Alexandria means that more and more families are making nutritional sacrifices for themselves and their children just to make ends meet. ALIVE!'s

Food and Family Emergency Programs give our Alexandria neighbors the extra help they need financially for rent or utilities and food when meals are limited.

In order for ALIVE! to continue to be of assistance to struggling Alexandria families through our emergency programs, we need to ensure the funding is there to pay for these critical needs. ALIVE! invites the Alexandria community to support those in need on November 14, 2015 at the inaugural ALIVE! Empty Bowls Alexandria fundraiser. This is an opportunity for the community to join ALIVE! in raising funds to ensure the emergency food and financial programs can continue to support those most in need.

Empty Bowls is an international grassroots program encouraging local artists and organizations to work together to raise hunger awareness and help feed those who are hungry in their own communities. ALIVE! Empty Bowls Alexandria attendees will enjoy a simple, delicious meal together and receive a one-of-a-kind bowl handmade by Northern Virginia Community College Fine Arts Department.

Empty Bowls Alexandria will be hosted by ALIVE! on November 14, 2015 at the Durant Arts Center in the Upper King Street neighborhood of Old Town Alexandria. Proceeds will benefit ALIVE!'s Last Saturday Food Distribution and the Family Emergency Programs, which provide emergency food monthly at distribution sites and weekly through deliveries.

Bringing the community together over a simple meal – with the proceeds benefitting those who need help as they strive to be self-sufficient – is what ALIVE!'s Empty Bowls Alexandria event is designed to be. Please save the date and stay on the lookout for more information about this opportunity for so many of us to reflect on the statistics on our own community, while raising funds that enable ALIVE! to have an impact.



### GRANTS UPDATE

During the months of June, July and August 2015, ALIVE! was pleased to be awarded the following grants;

- City of Alexandria - Alexandria Fund for Human Services - \$30,000 to support the ALIVE! Food and Family Emergency Programs
- International Monetary Fund (IMF) Civic Fund - \$12,600 to support ALIVE! House
- Office Depot - \$500 to support the Child Development Center
- Ivakota Association - \$21,000 to support Food and Family Emergency programs, the Child Development Center, and ALIVE! House

A hearty thank you to these generous funders who make it possible for ALIVE! to continue our important work.

*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



GREATER WASHINGTON

## Advocating for Affordable Housing

“The lack of affordable housing is the ground zero of need in the city, influencing every other issue that service providers work to address.”

This statement from a recently released needs assessment published by ACHSO (Alexandria Council of Human Services Organizations) eloquently states what ALIVE! has seen for years as we assist low-income families in Alexandria. It is because of this need that ALIVE! established an Affordable Housing Committee during our strategic planning process in 2011 and 2012. That Committee has been meeting over the past three years, pursuing our mission “to represent the needs of our clients to those in positions that could influence the availability of affordable housing in Alexandria.”

The Affordable Housing Committee is the first committee within ALIVE! to focus on advocacy and we have been working incrementally, and with other groups within Alexandria, to utilize our knowledge of the needs of our clients as well as our voice as a well-known provider of housing and services to low-income families. This year our focus has been on working with the Partnership to Prevent and End Homelessness as well as the Economic Opportunity Commission to further affordable housing preservation and development in the City.

We have lent our expertise and our voice to efforts including:

Asking City Council to increase funding in the FY16 City budget for: rent relief for seniors and persons with disabilities, homeless prevention services, and the Alexandria Fund for Human Services, as well as establish a significant, reliable source of revenue to preserve and produce housing for households with extremely low incomes.

Asking the City to preserve a City-owned townhouse on Aspen Street as affordable housing. The property had previously been used to house chronically homeless individuals, but had been closed due to lack of funding and was slated for sale to the highest bidder.

Asking the Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority (ARHA), in its redevelopment of five public housing properties, to make its highest priorities in selecting proposals from private partners: assisting households who currently live in these properties to return to the redeveloped apartments; and maintaining at least the current number of units as affordable to extremely low income families in the long term.

Pointing out to ARHA the many issues low-income families who receive vouchers have with using those vouchers and offering to work with ARHA on improving the process and the success of these families in finding suitable housing in Alexandria.

Supporting ARHA’s efforts to redevelop Ramsey Homes to provide suitable housing for the families who currently live in the property and develop additional workforce housing on the site.

These actions are consistent with ALIVE!’s advocacy policy approved shortly after the Affordable Housing Committee was formed, and, where appropriate, have all been approved by the Board and/or Executive Committee.

The Affordable Housing Committee is also exploring how we can reach out to those who want to know more about affordable housing issues in Alexandria and provide them with the information they need to advocate effectively. If your congregation has a mission committee or other group that would like to learn more about affordable housing issues in the City or learn how to advocate for low-income families, members of the Affordable Housing Committee would be pleased to come talk to your congregation or group. Just contact Diane Charles ([diane.charles@alive-inc.org](mailto:diane.charles@alive-inc.org)), Cheryl Malloy ([cpm@malloyassoc.com](mailto:cpm@malloyassoc.com)) or John Bohm ([jfbohm@gmail.com](mailto:jfbohm@gmail.com)). Also if you would like copies of the letters to the City or ARHA outlined above or additional information on any of those issues, please contact Cheryl or John.

If you know anyone who would like to participate in the work of the Affordable Housing Committee, we are always open to more people to join our efforts.

**Cheryl Malloy and John Bohm**  
**Co-Chairs, ALIVE! Affordable Housing Committee**

### President’s letter continued from page 1

You can share in this remarkable experience. Volunteer for one or more of our programs. We all are busy; there are so many commitments that it seems impossible to find the time. I encourage you to take the first step: give yourself the gift of volunteering with ALIVE!

Deborah Patterson



Support ALIVE! House by sponsoring Amanda in her participation in the Marine Corps Marathon on October 25, 2015. Be sure to make your donation now as Amanda trains for this big race!

Donate via Amanda’s Fundraising Page: <https://www.razoo.com/story/Alivehouse>



## Child Development Center *by Mary Eileen Dixon, CDC Chair*

### ALIVE! CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER SEES STARS AGAIN

July 7 was a red letter day for the ALIVE! Child Development Center. On that day, the Center received word that it had been awarded a four star quality rating by the Virginia Star Quality Initiative for the third consecutive rating period. This rating places the CDC in the 95th percentile for high-quality early childhood education programs in Virginia. Moreover, the CDC is the only program in Alexandria to achieve this 4-star rating three consecutive times. Each VSQI rating is good for a three year period.

Pam Blankenship, CDC director, credited this remarkable achievement to effort, dedication and teamwork on the part of her staff.

The Virginia Star Quality Initiative (VSQI) is a voluntary system to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs that families consider for their children. Programs that choose to participate are assessed in 4 key quality areas: interactions between teachers and children; qualifications of teachers; structure, including class size and teacher-to-child ratios; and the program's environment and instruction. Within each area, programs are awarded points which then are added cumulatively for a rating between one and five stars.

All of ALIVE! salutes the CDC for this singular accomplishment! We are very proud of the quality care and education provided to our young students by Pam and her staff and are delighted to see this recognition.



### Relink Your Harris Teeter VIC Card Today!

It is the beginning of a new school year! Are you looking for a way to support the ALIVE! CDC? The Harris Teeter TIE (Together in Education) program makes it easy. Harris Teeter's TIE program is a fundraising effort that supports local public and private schools. When you purchase select Harris Teeter brand products using your VIC Card, a percentage of those purchase dollars can go to the school of your choice.

If you would like to support the CDC while you shop, simply link your VIC card with the ALIVE! CDC (TIE school code #6383). A cashier can link your card for you at checkout, or you may link it yourself by visiting [harristeeter.com](http://harristeeter.com) and clicking on "Together in Education." Cards must be relinked at the beginning of each school year.

Thank you for supporting the CDC!



## ALIVE! House *Amanda Isaac, ALIVE! House Director*



### CONGRATULATIONS! ALIVE! HOUSE FAMILY MOVES TO HER OWN HOME!

Maria came to us with her four children just before Christmas 2013. She was very quiet and shy, and her kids were little – 6 years, 3 years, 2 years and 1 year. They had been through a lot, including an abusive partner/father, the loss of her mother, and finally the loss of their home and most belongings. Maria was struggling to work, provide for the kids, get needed medical treatment for kidney disease and cope with all the loss.

Maria came to ALIVE! House, at first very wary of others and staff. Over time, she began to trust and accept help. She accepted services for herself and her kids and opened up about her past. She continued to look for more work and committed to learning English to help herself and the kids. Maria was extremely devoted to her children and making sure that they were happy and healthy.

The kids were a delight as we watched them grow. The younger ones began talking, and they were always full of smiles. Our *Reading Connection* volunteers were always impressed by them: so well-behaved, so curious, and always improving each week with their reading and/or speech.

The entire family grew tremendously from the first day of walking through our doors to the last day of moving to their new home. We are extremely grateful for the volunteers who helped this family succeed and all of the ALIVE! and City of Alexandria programs who provided support. She was able to “shop” at ALIVE!’s Housewares Program, and ALIVE!’s Furniture Program supplied her with all the furniture needed to furnish her home. It certainly does take a village – a village of ALIVE! House supporters!

### ANOTHER ALIVE! HOUSE FAMILY MAKES MOVE TO PERMANENT HOUSING!

The Mom is 26 years old with two boys (5 and 3 years). She is also pregnant and due in October to have a little girl, Emma.

She has done very well at ALIVE! House following up on therapy, parenting, money management, and applying for school to begin a career. She is still working, and she began the process to go back to school for a degree in radiology.

She has been very proactive and committed to improving her situation for herself and her children.

She has what they need for their new home, but she has very little for the baby. We are requesting gift cards to get baby items or any donations for little Emma.

She is going to need:

- **Bassinet or pack and play**
- **Diapers/wipes**
- **Clothes (onesies, hats, socks, etc)**
- **Blankets**
- **Burp cloths**
- **Towels**
- **Bottles**
- **Car seat**
- **Stroller**
- **Diaper bag**



Please be in touch with Amanda Isaac, Director of ALIVE! House ([alivehousedir@alive-inc.org](mailto:alivehousedir@alive-inc.org)), to coordinate any donations.

Thank you!



ALIVE! House was awarded the 2015 Optima Health Family Care Faith-Based Initiative - Outstanding Community Service Award in June. Amanda Isaac, ALIVE! House Director, accepted the award, pictured and given by representatives of Baptist General Convention of Virginia and Optima Health.



## ALIVE! Food Program *Charlotte Martinson, Food Program Chair*

Food Program activity can slow down somewhat during the summer months due to a seasonal decrease in both major food drives and in client attendance to Last Saturday Food Distributions, but this summer has been an exception. The Food Program has been engaged in several new or additional activities aimed at increasing productivity and enhanced partner relationships.

Developing new partner relationships and expanding older ones has been a significant focus, with some of the efforts to date including:

- Working with Alfred Street Baptist Church to coordinate ALIVE! participation in their upcoming *Feeding Five Thousand* event;
- Learning from Fairfax County Food for Others about developing a children’s weekend food backpack capability;
- Providing food to some of the smaller food pantries in the Hunger Free Alexandria coalition; and
- Visiting the Bishop’s Storehouse of the Church of Latter Day Saints’ to learn about their operations - and receiving a very generous donation!
- A major effort this summer has been preparing the ALIVE! Food Warehouse for the expanded space being provided by the City of Alexandria. This has involved rearranging and clearing room for renovation of the new spaces, and working extensively with the City of Alexandria General Services and ALIVE!’s Family Emergency Program to plan the renovation and prepare to execute the final move.

Other Food Program activities have included:

- Developing and implementing a new LSFDF client referral form to streamline the client referral and registration process;
- Beginning development of a volunteer data base to better track availability of volunteers and keep them better informed; and
- Working with the Capital Area Food Bank to gain access to digital invoice data to better manage food ordering and provide for increased budget analysis.

The busy Summer is coming to an end - but we are looking forward to an even more active and fruitful Fall.



	Households	Individuals
<b>June</b>	<b>590</b>	<b>2149</b>
<b>July</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>2550</b>



More than **13,500** of Alexandria's residents live **IN POVERTY.**  
 As many as **1 in 5** are struggling to put food on the table.  
**EMPTY BOWLS ALEXANDRIA** is a **NEW** opportunity to feed our neighbors.



#EmptyBowlsAlexandria

*Empty Bowls is an international grassroots program encouraging local artists and organizations to work together to raise hunger awareness and help feed those who are hungry in their own communities. Attendees will enjoy a simple, delicious meal together and receive a one-of-a-kind bowl handmade by students of Northern Virginia Community College Arts Department.*

ALIVE!'s Inaugural  
**Empty Bowls Alexandria**  
 November 14, 2015 @ 6:00 PM  
 Durant Arts Center in Old Town Alexandria

Proceeds will benefit ALIVE!'s food programs, including:

- **Last Saturday Food Distribution**, which distributes groceries to more than 2,000 individuals per month at three sites around Alexandria on the last Saturday of each month, and
- **The Family Emergency Program**, which delivers groceries five days a week to more than 120 disabled, elderly, or homebound people each month.



ALIVE!, Inc. 2723 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22302  
 703-837-9300 • info@alive-inc.org • www.alive-inc.org

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**ALEXANDRIA FOOD CENTER DEDICATION**  
 Friday, October 16, 2015  
 9:00-10:00 AM

801 S. Payne Street  
 Alexandria, VA 22314

**hunger free ALEXANDRIA**

www.hungerfreealexandria.com

**ALIVE!'s Furniture Program** volunteers stay extremely



busy by picking up furniture from many generous donors and delivering it to those in need. Mattresses are still in high demand!

**Volunteers** start young for ALIVE! through their



lemonade stand for the **CDC!** \$85 was raised in one afternoon by some very energetic ALIVE! supporters!



2723 King Street  
Alexandria, VA 22302  
703-837-9300  
www.alive-inc.org  
E-mail: info@alive-inc.org

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 43 congregations and hundreds of volunteers.*

*ALIVE! offers Alexandrians in need help through its 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: info@alive-inc.org  
www.alive-inc.org

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

## Fall 2015 Calendar

### OCTOBER

- 6 ALIVE! Annual Recommitment and Volunteer Recognition Potluck Dinner:** 6:30 PM,  
Fairlington UMC, 3900 King Street, Alexandria, VA 22302
- 16 Alexandria Food Center Dedication,** 801 S. Payne St., Alexandria, VA 22314; 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
- 31 Last Saturday Food Distribution:** Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center,  
and Ladrey Senior High Rise
- Food Collection:** Beth El, Del Ray UMC, Downtown Baptist, Fairlington Presbyterian, First Christian,  
Meade Memorial, St. James UMC, and St. Mary's
- Furniture Collection:** Fairlington UMC, St. Joseph's, Good Shepherd

### NOVEMBER

- 10 ALIVE! Board Meeting:** 7:00 PM,  
St. Mary's Catholic Church, Lyceum, 313 Duke St., Alexandria, VA 22314
- 14 Empty Bowls Fundraiser,** Durant Recreation Center,  
1605 Cameron St., Alexandria, VA 22314 6:00 PM - 9:00PM
- 26 39th Annual Turkey Trot:** Thanksgiving morning, 9:00 AM  
George Washington Middle School, 1005 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301
- There will not be a Last Saturday Food Distribution November 2015.**
- Food Collection:** Blessed Sacrament, Christ Church, Church of the Resurrection, Good Shepherd,  
Grace Episcopal, Trinity UMC, and St. Joseph's, St. Paul's, Westminster Presbyterian
- Furniture Collection:** Christ Church, St. Clement, St. Mary's

### DECEMBER

- 1 ALIVE! Board Meeting:** 7:00 PM,  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 100 W. Luray Ave., Alexandria, VA 22301
- 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 Collection:** Good Shepherd, St. Joseph's, First Christian