

ALIVE! Wire

Winter 2016



President's Message



This is a season of high contrasts. We are entering the darkest part of the year, while at the same time it is a season filled with the holidays that bring light and hope to people of all faiths. While some exhaust themselves with shopping for the perfect gift, others

struggle to provide basic necessities for their families.

It is a time of mystery. How did those candles remain lit for 8 days? How is it that a baby born in a manger became the source of belief to many religious groups? But it can be a time when we struggle against the tide of commercialism and the need to strengthen core beliefs.

What does it mean that we live in a place where we don't see the suffering? What can one person do about it? What can one organization do about it? It is easy to get caught up in the lists, recipes, trips, parties and obligations of the holidays. Sometimes we lose sight of the real opportunities for action that are just and good that make this season special.

So I am opening a window of opportunity to all readers: don't forget why we celebrate the holidays. Whatever holiday you celebrate, it is a time when humanity says "no" to the darkness and does something about it.

I invite you to say "no" too. Say no to excessive consumption of all stripes. Say no to the exhaustion of commercialism. Say no to anything that takes you away from the people you love and the time you want to spend with them. Say no to being part of a community that doesn't care about the people who live in a different neighborhood. Say no to ignoring your

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ALIVE's Empty Bowls Alexandria Starts an Annual Tradition!



ALIVE!'s inaugural **Empty Bowls Alexandria** event on Saturday, November 14th, brought together over 130 people to raise awareness and funds to feed people in Alexandria who are hungry. Over \$30,000 was raised to support ALIVE!'s Last Saturday Food Distribution and Family Emergency Programs. At the Durant Arts Center in Old Town, guests at ALIVE!'s **Empty Bowls** event enjoyed a delicious meal of soup, bread and desserts provided by 12 of Alexandria's restaurants. ALIVE! is grateful to all the sponsors and restaurant partners that made the event such a success. Jen Walker Real Estate Team, Mercedes-Benz of Alexandria and Whole Foods – Old Town were the



lead financial sponsors of the event. (See the list of all sponsors.) Northern Virginia Community College Alexandria Fine Arts Department and their ceramics students crafted and provided unique bowls for each attendee. The Alexandria Department of General Services/Old Town Farmers Market were also partners for the event. Lively and engaging music was provided by the Shrinemonsters from Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill Episcopal Church.

Thank you to all who attended or made financial contributions. Your part really ensured the financial success of this event. Be sure not to miss it next year!

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Alexandria Pastry Shop Balducci's Bilbo Baggins Bittersweet Café & Catering Buzz Bakery & Lounge Carluccio's Great Harvest Bread Hard Times Café Harris Teeter Old Town Los Tios Grill Taverna Cretekou Tempo Restaurant

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

NOVA
Northern Virginia Community College
Alexandria Fine Arts Department

CITY OF ALEXANDRIA
City of Alexandria

OLD TOWN ALEXANDRIA
Farmers Market

#EmptyBowlsAlexandria

Notes from the Executive Director - Diane Charles



This is the time of year that we are most thankful and often reflective. Think about the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* in which George Bailey is able to see what the world would be like without him. In fact, George learns that he has actually made quite a difference in the lives of many people around him. How true this is for so many ALIVE! people! Think of **Pam Blankenship**, ALIVE!'s Child Development Center Director, who is retiring this year after eight years at the helm of ALIVE!'s gem of a preschool. Pam's early childhood passion and wizardry has ensured that the CDC received designation as a four-star Virginia Star Quality Initiative Program for three consecutive rating periods, and is also fully NAEYC accredited. Pam will be missed, but the early childhood arena in Northern Virginia will still benefit from her involvement as a teacher and mentor. Think of **Susanne Arnold** who was recently recognized by Volunteer Alexandria when she received the 2015 Grass Roots Volunteer Service Award for her commitment to serving those most in need through St. Rita's Church, ALIVE!, Catholic Charities and Carpenter's Shelter. Susanne chaired the ALIVE!

House Committee for over 10 years, making sure ALIVE! House was the warm, supportive environment that enabled families to transition to self-sufficiency. There are so many ALIVE! individuals who make differences every day in the lives of fellow Alexandrians.

ALIVE!'s enhanced partnership with the City of Alexandria has *made a difference* in the way ALIVE! operates its Food and Family Emergency Programs. In October, the expanded warehouse space was dedicated with a formal ribbon cutting, bringing together over 50 volunteers, community leaders and elected officials. ALIVE!'s Family Emergency Program now operates out of 801 South Payne Street, along with the Food Program and the storage of nonperishable, frozen and refrigerated food. This expanded warehouse improves the implementation of these two programs in many ways, especially by allowing ALIVE! to collect and provide more food for those who need it - more often. This expanded warehouse space also means and symbolizes much more. In conjunction with **Hunger Free Alexandria**, ALIVE! will now be the central collaborator for all the food pantries and food programs operating here in our City. This enables any and all food providers to have access and space in this warehouse to store and sort food, and when needed, clean produce. When significant donations of food are made, we will all now have a place to store it until we can put our distribution operations into action. When our Alexandria donors, residents or businesses wish to hold food drives or participate in gleaning for any of the food programs in Alexandria, there is now a place to ensure we can adequately accept the food. This warehouse is that catalyst that will enable our food programs to collaborate - to address hunger in Alexandria in a significantly unified way.

Yes, in reflection, there is much to be thankful for.

KNOW OF AVAILABLE WAREHOUSE SPACE (1,000 – 2,000 SQ. FT.) THAT IS IN NEED OF FURNITURE?

ALIVE!'s donated storage space for the Furniture Program by Graham Holdings has ended and we are in search of space once again. If you know of any warehouse space, please contact ALIVE! or Mike Mackey, Furniture Program Chair.



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neighbors who need your help.

Take a deep breath, exhale, and then think deeply about who you want to be in this community. If we all say "yes" to things that matter for all the members of our community, we can change things. It isn't easy. It may require re-thinking some assumptions.

Think about what you can do. If you shut your eyes and think about it, saying "yes" to supporting ALIVE! in helping your neighbors in need, you could make this the most authentic, most memorable holiday yet. And that is real cause for celebration.

Happy Holidays.
Deborah Patterson

*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

ANNUAL RECOMMITMENT & RECOGNITION

ALIVE!'s 46th Annual Potluck Recommitment and Recognition Potluck Dinner held on October 6, 2015 at Fairlington United Methodist Church drew in many volunteers, including Harry and Ann Williams, who were part of the group who founded ALIVE!



New Congregational Representatives to ALIVE!'s Board

Sarah Orndorff is one of the congregational representatives from Emmanuel Episcopal Church, where she has been a member since 2007. She credits her grandmother with instilling in her the importance of helping others. Service to the community, whether it was taking food to someone who could not leave the house or restoring a neglected cemetery, was as much a part of her life as spending time with her granddaughters who often accompanied her to these duties. Sarah now works for the State Department and, with her fiancé, is excitedly planning their February 2016 wedding.

Laura Macone is Sarah's co-representative from Emmanuel Episcopal. Originally from Falls Church, Laura spent ten years in the Boston area for college and after-college before returning to this area. She's been in Alexandria since 2009. She works as a social worker at Dominion Hospital in Falls Church and also part-time with the Alexandria Sexual Assault Center where she does individual and group therapy. When she interned in Alexandria for her masters degree in social work, she became a member of the Commission on Aging, representing those who care for elderly parents and relatives. Her social work connection seems a natural connection to the work that ALIVE! does.



40th Annual DRBA Turkey Trot Supports ALIVE!'s Food Programs

Over 5,700 runners were on the streets of Del Ray on Thanksgiving morning to run the annual Del Ray Business Association's annual Turkey Trot 8K race. This year, the race celebrated its 40th anniversary and the tradition of every runner bringing canned food items for ALIVE!'s Food Program - a tradition that ALIVE! values. The Del Ray Business Association also presented a check for \$5,000 to ALIVE! to help purchase fresh eggs, produce and meat that are all necessities for Alexandria's residents who are struggling to make ends meet. ALIVE! collected 46 banana boxes of food from this year's Turkey Trot runners, as well as \$689 in cash donations. ALIVE! appreciates DRBA's generous partnership, as well as the runners who bring food to the race!





CDC Says Goodbye to “Miss Pam”

December 18 is a bittersweet day for the ALIVE! Child Development Center. It is the day of the CDC's annual holiday party, always a festive event full of excitement and cheer. This year it had even more special significance. It was the day Pam Blankenship, the Center's Director for the last 8 years, retired.

“Miss Pam”, as she is known to children and parents, arrived at the Center in 2007. With a Master's Degree in Education with emphasis on early childhood and special education and experience as an early childhood classroom teacher, curriculum and training specialist, and early education program director, she was well prepared to take over direction of the CDC. Moreover, her outgoing personality and evident love of the very young made her a wonderful fit for the program.

Under her direction, the CDC, an early care and education program serving children from low income working families, has thrived. Pam has successfully led the program through two accreditation processes by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and we are awaiting word of a third reaccreditation, following a recent site inspection by that organization. During the same period, the program also has earned 4 star ratings by the Virginia Star Quality Initiative for three consecutive rating periods. The CDC is the only program in Alexandria to achieve this 4-star rating three consecutive times.

Thinking over her years at the Center, Pam attributes her success to teamwork, saying that she takes pride in having been able “... to bring together a successful team, both staff and volunteers, of smart, hard-working, dedicated professionals who take pride in providing on-going high-quality care and education to the children and families served by the ALIVE! CDC.”

Pam is leaving a wonderful legacy at the CDC. The Center, and ALIVE!, are sad to see her leave. We recognize, however, that it is the right decision for her and for her family. Happily for the young children of the area, she is not leaving the early education area completely. She will continue to teach college-level courses and act as a technical advisor to programs being evaluated by the Virginia Star Quality Initiative. We are very grateful to Pam for all she has given to the CDC and its students and wish her the best in the next chapter in her life.

NAEYC Accredited! Again....

ALIVE!'s Child Development Center has learned that the CDC has achieved a new, five-year term of NAEYC (National Academy for Early Childhood) Accreditation! The official letter states: “The administration, teaching staff, and families of ALIVE! Child Development Center are all to be congratulated for continuing to uphold the mark of quality represented by the NAEYC Accreditation system.”

Congratulations to all of those involved in making the CDC such a high quality program for the children and families it serves. A special thank you to CDC Director Pam Blankenship for bringing her passion to the children and the CDC!

Grants Update

During the months of September, October, and November 2015, ALIVE! was pleased to be awarded the following grants:

Bank of America

- \$10,000 to support all ALIVE! programs

Washington Forrest Foundation

- \$5,000 to support the CDC

WalMart

- \$500 to support Food & Family Emergency Programs

A big thank you to these generous funders!



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



ALIVE! HOUSE DIRECTOR COMPETES IN MARINE CORPS MARATHON & RAISES FUNDS

"I've learned that finishing a marathon isn't just an athletic achievement. It's a state of mind; a state of mind that says anything is possible." - John Hanc, The Essential Runner

It was an easy decision to run the Marine Corps Marathon for ALIVE! House. I love to run, and I've done marathons before on my own. This time was different: this is a great race, and I would be able to run, raise awareness and funds for a program I believe in. Training was long and difficult, but the residents always seemed interested in hearing about it -- how far I ran and the questioning look in their eyes as they thought of how far they thought they could run, or it sparked discussions about activities they have done or want to do. When I had to stop in unexpectedly all in my running gear, the kids would wonder: where was I running and why? It always sparked fun conversations. It also sparked conversations with others in the community who maybe had never heard of ALIVE! House.

When I got to the race, it was raining. I had to get through security to reach the start line. The first few miles are always the most difficult for me. Running long distance is more mental than physical, especially at that point when you're only at mile 3, and you know you have to run 23.2 more. At some point, I got into my zone. Yet, around mile 19, I hit a wall. I started to realize how much my body ached, my feet hurt, and I still had 7 miles remaining. Mentally, I pushed myself, reflecting that I already ran 19 miles, so 7 more was easy. By mile 23 or so, I was almost back in my groove, but ready to be finished. The sun came out, and it was beautiful outside. Even more spectators are at the end, and the support helps me finish strong.

In so many ways, this race is symbolic of the lives of ALIVE! House families. When they first get here, it's tough. There are always ups and downs, but the important thing is that they keep going and finish. Everyone hits a wall or low point. What matters is how they can pick themselves up and keep going. Most need support to do that, just like I needed those spectators throughout this race. When they leave here and get to permanent housing, their journey continues. They have goals that go beyond their stay here.

The journey to raise awareness about the value of ALIVE! House continues, as well as the need for funding to support its programming. Federal funding may be gone, but it's still a critical program in the City of Alexandria, as evidenced by the number of homeless or unstably housed families. The *Point-in-Time* count in January 2015 estimated the number family members who were homeless was 108 individuals - 71 of them children. That is 108 too many. I ran 26.2 miles, and raised \$3,500. It's not everything, but it's a start.



ALIVE! House Director Amanda Isaac gets a warm congratulations from her daughter Cadence just after completing the Marine Corps Marathon in October.

ALIVE! House Wish List

Disinfectant spray
Toilet Paper
Laundry detergent
Bleach
Cleaners: Bathroom/
Kitchen
Metro cards

Susanne Arnold Honored

Susanne Arnold was honored with the 2015 Grassroots Volunteer Service Award by Volunteer Alexandria for her selfless work, committing time, energy, and skills to help people in need in Alexandria. Susanne was unable to duck this recognition, but she did accept the award under the auspices that she is merely the 'tip of the ice burg' in linking families in need to available services. ALIVE! appreciates all Susanne continues to do throughout our community.



Marion Brunken, Volunteer Alexandria Executive Director, Mayor Bill Euille, and Volunteer Alexandria Board Member, Allen Lomax honor Susanne Arnold with the Award.

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

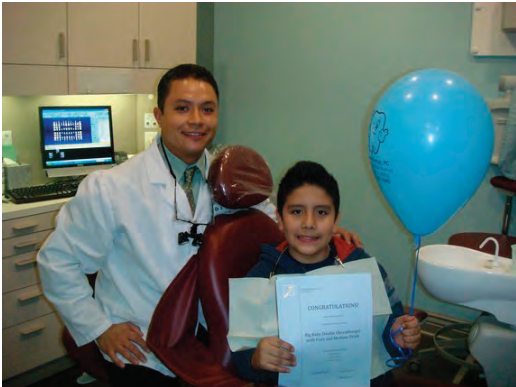


CFC
Code:
44658



United Way
Code:
8352

Smiles for Our Students (SOS)



Once again ALIVE! is being asked to help the students of low income families in the Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS). In response to this need ALIVE! is starting a new endeavor: **Smiles for Our Students (SOS)**. This project will assist uninsured students with true dental emergencies and preventive care.

This year it seems there is a larger number than usual of students coming to the ACPS social workers with dental emergencies. Students who come to Alexandria from other countries often lack health insurance as their families struggle to get jobs, housing and establish some kind of financial security. It is exactly these students who often have long neglected teeth or poor dental care in their home countries. Many students (especially in the high school) suffer in silence until the pain becomes too much. Then attendance and school work is affected, and the family has some tough financial choices to make.

Uninsured students normally turn to free dental screening clinics, which are great, but seldom provide a complete solution. The next recourse is low cost, sliding scale dental clinics such as our own Neighborhood Health and the regional Northern Virginia Dental Clinic, which recently relocated to Merrifield. These non-profits have modest copays of \$25 for children under 18, and \$50 for adults (Neighborhood Health) or \$40 (Northern Virginia Dental Clinic). Even with these modest costs, some families are challenged to make the payment, especially when dental care is ongoing, as in the case of a root canal and crown, or dentures. By working with these non-profit partners, a little goes a long way!

If you 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 **Smiles for Our Students (SOS)** on the check memo line.



Volunteer Alexandria's Youth Volunteer Connection Program gathered at the expanded ALIVE! Alexandria Food Center on Saturday, October 31st to learn about the food programs of ALIVE! and decorate canvas bags for the clients of ALIVE!'s weekly food deliveries.

ALIVE! In Memoriam

Barbara O'Keefe, long time Last Saturday Food Program (LSFD) volunteer passed away on October 22, 2015. Barbara volunteered with the LSFD program from the very early days when the distribution was held at Beverly Hills UMC. She continued on throughout the years and was a regular volunteer at the Cora Kelly Last Saturday site.

Barbara registered the new clients with care and respect. But she did more than just register clients. Barbara made a connection as a supportive friend with many of the clients and knitted items for them and their families. She was fun, witty, smart, and hardworking and dedicated to helping those in need in our community. She will be missed by all of the clients who she helped so lovingly and by all of us who volunteered and learned so much from the example she set.



Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) President, Vice Adm. Norb Ryan, Jr., accepts the ALIVE! Star Award from ALIVE! Executive Director, Diane Charles, for MOAA's long-term partnership with ALIVE! Also pictured: Jennifer Greiner, ALIVE! Development Director, Michel Au Buchon, MOAA ALIVE! Campaign Chair, Col Ana Smythe and Chris Amos, MOAA ALIVE! campaign floor captains. MOAA has been a long-standing financial partner of ALIVE! MOAA staff recently donated over \$10,000 to ALIVE!'s programs.

ALIVE! Food Program *Charlotte Martinsson, Food Program Chair and John Perlman, Warehouse Manager*



Once again, an amazing collaboration transpired in September with Alfred Street Baptist Church and ALIVE! to Feed the 5,000.



The Alexandria Food Center was dedicated on October 16, 2015. The ribbon cutting included ALIVE! Executive Director Diane Charles, Associate Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Ross Kane, Mayor Bill Euille, Councilwoman Del Pepper, Congressman Don Beyer. Behind them are Councilmember John Chapman, State Senator Dick Saslaw, City Manager Mark Jinx (hidden), Alexandria Director of General Services Jeremy Pike and Delegate Charniele Herring.



Mayor Bill Euille greets Reverend Donald Fest of St. Joseph's Catholic Church at the Warehouse Dedication.

Alexandrians Receiving Food from ALIVE!

	Households	Individuals
September	691	2430
October	629	2632

Hooray For The Boy Scouts



On November 14th, Boy Scouts throughout the Alexandria area delivered nearly 8,300 pounds of food to the ALIVE! Food Center warehouse, which we will use for our Last Saturday Food Distributions and other projects.

Afterward, more than 30 volunteers sorted the food into 234 full banana boxes and shelved it all within an amazing two and one-half hours.

The first scouts arrived around 9 a.m., and by 10:30, truckloads and carloads of bags, boxes and bins of food began to pour into the warehouse, and the flood of food didn't stop for another two hours. Teams of wonderful volunteers arrived shortly afterward and like a well-oiled machine, sorted food into 234 boxes and shelved it all in record time.

Of course, everyone snacked throughout the day on pizza supplied by Domino's on North Henry Street.

The food arrived just in time to begin stocking our shelves for the winter, but as always, it will be enough to sustain a well-rounded distribution for only a few months. Our congregations always help replenish the supply, which we hope will grow by leaps and bounds as we move to feed even more adults and kids throughout Alexandria.

Thanks again, Boy Scouts and all of the wonderful volunteers who made the food drive an amazing success.

Food Program Wish List

- Canned Meat and Tuna
- Canned Spaghetti Sauce
- Dry Pasta Noodles
- Peanut Butter, Jelly
- Soup
- Canned Fruit, Canned Vegetables, Canned or Dried Beans
- Cereal, Rice
- Baby Food
- Crackers
- \$ Money to buy fresh eggs and meat \$

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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 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
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Winter 2016 Calendar

JANUARY

- 5 **ALIVE! Board Meeting**, 7:00 PM Beth El Hebrew Congregation, 3830 Seminary Road, Alexandria, VA 22304
- 30 **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 Church
- Furniture Collection**: St. Rita, First Baptist Church, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Beverly Hills UMC

FEBRUARY

- 2 **ALIVE! Board Meeting**, 7:00 PM Agudas Achim Congregation, 2908 Valley Dr., Alexandria, VA 22302
- 27 **Last Saturday Food Distribution**: Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey Senior High Rise
- Food Collection**: Beth El Hebrew Congregation, Del Ray UMC, Emmanuel Episcopal, Fairlington Presbyterian, Alexandria Assembly of Baha'is, Robert's Memorial UMC, St. Andrew's UMC
- Furniture Collection**: Beverly Hills Community UMC, St. Mary's, Fairlington Presbyterian, OPMH

MARCH

- 1 **ALIVE! Board Meeting**, 7:00 PM St. Rita Catholic Church, 3815 Russell Road, Alexandria, VA 22305
- 26 **Last Saturday Food Distribution**: Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreation Center, and Ladrey Senior High Rise
- Food Collection**: Alfred Street Baptist, Beverly Hills Community UMC, Church of St. Clement, Commonwealth Baptist, St. James UMC, Third Baptist, Washington Street UMC
- Furniture Collection**: First Agape Baptist, Sixteenth Tabernacle, OPMH