



A TAPESTRY *by Michael Diffley, Former Chairman of the ALIVE! Furniture Program*

I see our world as a tapestry. God is, of course, its creator; but He invites us to be co-creators by giving us each a few threads to weave into the tapestry.

But who teaches us how to sew, and how do we know where our threads fit in the larger work-in-progress? To me the answer to those questions is simple: organizations like ALIVE! This aptly named organization has given me the workspace, the tools and, most importantly, the guidance of master craftsmen and women who have been contributing to the tapestry for nearly 50 years.

The recent passing of Joe Krafft has given me reason to reflect on a couple of ALIVE!'s master craftsmen. Joe was one of them. He was also one of the founding fathers of ALIVE!'s Furniture Program. So by the time I arrived on the scene in 1987, Joe had seen 18 years of good Saturday morning furniture runs and bad; plans come together and plans fall apart; days with a dozen cheerful volunteers to share the work and days with none. His threads in the tapestry shine bright with patience, generosity, forbearance and steadfastness. His was a special grace that brightened any circumstance. To him, there were no "bad" Saturday mornings. While I would be griping about a dozen perceived problems, Joe would be quietly devising solutions. I don't know whether this special grace of his came from his hobby of maintaining

a small fleet of Model A Fords or whether it came from a place deep in his genes. All I know is that without his example, I would not have lasted a month in ALIVE! . . . let alone decades.

But - forgive me, Saint Paul - if I were to volunteer for decades without love, what would it matter? So along comes another master: Will Willis, Deacon at Alfred Street Baptist Church. A story tells it all:

Many years ago, I was tying down a load of furniture in ALIVE!'s little red pickup truck when I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned to find a homeless couple in unwashed clothes much the "worse for wear". I felt myself recoil and I'm sure the couple sensed how uncomfortable I was. Just then, Will came around the truck, immediately assessed the situation, and began speaking to the couple. All they wanted was information on how to contact social services in the city.



continued on page 3

Message from the President & Executive Director

Patrick Anderson and Diane L. Charles

When our neighbors are lacking the most basic necessities of life – food, housing, essential services and educational opportunities – our entire community suffers. In May of 1969, these were the concerns that weighed upon the small group of Alexandrians who had gathered at Fairlington United Methodist Church. Representing a diverse group of local faith organizations, the attendees quickly recognized the importance and power of collectively working together to alleviate the suffering of poverty and hunger. With the shared vision of convening the community to serve its most fragile members, seventeen interfaith congregations – Protestant, Jewish, Baha'i Faith and Catholic – came together in the spirit of collaboration and selfless leadership to create ALIVE!

During the first year, committees were established to focus immediate efforts in the areas of greatest need. With egos checked at the door, ALIVE!'s members and supporters focused not on "people and personalities" but on "activities and accomplishments." They led by example, sharing their treasures, talents and time in service to their fellow neighbors. Over the generations, ALIVE!'s role has evolved and grown dramatically, but the founding vision and aims remain the same. As a united community, we can be the difference in the lives of our neighbors in need. We can provide them with stability and hope during times of crisis and offer support and caring as they work to break the cycle of poverty and build stronger futures.

This spring, we sadly lost several members of the ALIVE! family including one of our founders, Joe Krafft. Working alongside his beloved wife Alice, Joe was boots-on-the-ground from day one. For more than 48 years, Joe's dedication to the work and mission of ALIVE! has inspired many – and touched the lives of many, many more. He was selfless in his service and was one of our greatest advocates. He recognized the power of community and encouraged and empowered others to join him at ALIVE! At the time of his passing, Mike Diffley was moved to share the story of his relationship with Joe and his other ALIVE! mentor, Deacon Will Willis. We feel blessed to share it with you in this issue of the *ALIVE! Wire*. At a time of uncertainty for many, may the greatness and vision of the ALIVE! Founders provide clarity and inspiration for us all.



Thank you to everyone who supported ALIVE! during Spring2ACTION. We needed you and you were there. Together, with the matching gifts, we raised over \$55,000!

Your gifts are already making a huge impact in the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors - providing food, shelter, emergency help and education for those who need our help the most. THANK YOU!



Helping Our Neighbors in Need
PROVIDING FOOD, SHELTER, EMERGENCY FUNDS & EDUCATION

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

In Times of Crisis, ALIVE! Provides

For Elizabeth*, the broken down car was more than just an inconvenience. When the garage called with an estimate for repairing her car, she found herself in tears. Elizabeth is no stranger to hard work and faces challenges head-on. Her life is a careful balancing act as she provides for herself and her two young sons. She is employed full-time but struggles each month to make ends meet. Covering the basic needs – housing, food, medical bills, utilities, child care for her youngest son – stretches her paycheck to its limit. At times, she has turned to ALIVE! for food assistance but she prides herself on being self-sufficient and breaking the cycle of poverty for her children.

The unexpected car repair spelled disaster. One that could lead to loss of employment, loss of child care and possible eviction. That's where ALIVE! stepped in. When we were contacted by the City of Alexandria's Office of Community & Human Services, ALIVE! was able to provide one-time emergency financial assistance to help Elizabeth pay her rent. With that support, she was able reallocate a portion of her rental budget to cover the car repairs. When she needed help and didn't know where to turn, our community was there for Elizabeth and her young family.

ALIVE! is the largest provider of emergency financial assistance in the City of Alexandria. Rent, utilities and medical expenses are the areas where emergency financial support is most often needed. In June, ALIVE! received 99 requests for assistance and was able to fund 78.

The ALIVE! Financial Assistance Program is dependent on private donations. Your generosity provides the little extra help that Elizabeth and other Alexandrians living with poverty need to stay on the path to financial stability. Thank you for joining us in serving our community in such a meaningful way. For more information on ALIVE!'s important work, contact us at info@alive-inc.org. To make an online gift to ALIVE!, visit us at www.alive-inc.org. *Names have been changed.

Volunteer with ALIVE! and Change Lives

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities:

Every Saturday, 8am to 12noon: Furniture Collections & Deliveries

Last Saturdays of each month, 8:30am to 12noon: Last Saturday Food Distribution at the Church of the Resurrection, Cora Kelly Recreational Center and Ladrey Hi-Rise Senior Center

Special Events: Volunteers are needed for the 3rd Annual *Empty Bowls Alexandria*.

For more information, contact Pat at volunteers@alive-inc.org or visit <https://alive-inc.volunteermatrix.com>.

Tapestry

continued from page 1

As I watched Will talk to the couple, I made some mental notes: First, in interpersonal interactions, what people want most is to be treated with the respect they deserve as human beings; Second, I wanted someday to be as comfortable with people of all backgrounds as Will Willis. Perhaps today I am. If so, credit goes to my mentors and friends at ALIVE! who taught me how to sew.



Deacon Willis, pictured right, and his nephew Carlton volunteering at this Spring's StepALIVE! Walkathon.

Food Happenings for ALIVE!

How to Feed a Community

Did you ever wonder if the cans of food you left on your doorstep for the Boy Scouts or your postal carrier really made a difference? Yes, they absolutely do. With one out of five Alexandrians struggling to put food on their tables, it takes a community to alleviate hunger. A can of food, a non-perishable item donated at one of our Saturday collections at Giant and Safeway or your support of a food drive organized by your office, local school or congregation is almost immediately received by a neighbor living with food insecurity.

ALIVE! distributes over 650 tons of food each year. We feed over 2,000 Alexandrians every month. The donated food we receive through local drives and collections provides much-needed “shelf stable” non-perishables that we supplement with produce, meat, eggs and other items purchased at-cost or wholesale. The ALIVE! Food Warehouse serves as a donation, collection and sorting facility. From there, food is distributed across our community with the support of over 900 volunteers and ALIVE!’s community partners. In addition to Last Saturday Food Distribution and our home delivery program, we provide food to local food pantries and partnering agencies including the City of Alexandria, faith organizations, local schools, community groups and fellow non-profits so they can feed the hungry in their immediate neighborhoods.

ALIVE! may be the oldest and largest hunger relief organization in the City of Alexandria but, it takes the entire community to feed our neighbors in need. If you are interested in hosting a food drive or becoming an ALIVE! Food Partner, contact us at info@alive-inc.org or (703) 837-9321.



ALIVE! received more than 16,000 pounds of donated food from the 2017 Stamp Out Hunger campaign.



Destiny, one of our local letter carriers, delivering Stamp Out Hunger donations.

ALIVE! volunteers worked late into the night sorting Stamp Out Hunger food donations.



We partner with the Alexandria Sheriff's Department so deputies will have food available in their cruisers to dispense during their rounds.



"It needs doing." ALIVE! Food Partner Mary Scott stepped up to organize a food pantry at Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. ALIVE! provides food for Meade Memorial's Thursday Food Distribution. The church also offers daily lunches to neighbors suffering from food insecurity.

Volunteers Provide Heart and Soul by Amanda Issac, ALIVE! House Director

365 days a years, the mothers of ALIVE! House are working hard to break the cycle of poverty and build better futures for their children. The majority of our families arrive at ALIVE! House having experienced great trauma. As they work to overcome the challenges and barriers to self-sufficiency, ALIVE!'s volunteers are there, offering guidance, friendship and much needed resources.

Our neighbors offer support in many and varied ways. From the diaper, food and supply drives that keep our shelves stocked to organizing special projects and events, the community is there for our families year-round. May was a perfect example of the community in action. It began with our families and their mentors from the Church of God and Saints of Christ Sixteenth Tabernacle enjoying their monthly "Tea with Aunties". On Mother's Day, ExtraOrdinary Birthdays honored one of our young mothers as an "ExtraOrdinary Mom" for all of her hard work and determination. They were also here to make sure that Hella, one of our youngest residents, had the very best 2nd birthday party. On Saturday the 22nd, our block was closed for the annual Sidewalk Sale. Co-chaired by former ALIVE! House Chair Susanne Arnold and our next door neighbor Ann Matikan, volunteers donated hundreds of hours to make the event a success.



An ExtraOrdinary Birthdays party at ALIVE! House.



South Payne Street was turned into a market for the 2017 Sidewalk Sale.

Volunteers from New Life Christian Church assembled new furniture and took a break from the renovation projects for a quick photo opp.



While our program was founded in 1971, our historic home is 207 years old. The one-time grant from the Phillip Graham Fund provided much needed funding to update and renovate each family's bedroom, but it was our volunteers who provided the heart and soul for the project. With ALIVE! House Chair Ron Jerdonek providing leadership (and elbow grease), volunteer groups from Agudas Achim, Ashby Ponds, New Life Christian Church and Howard University spent their weekends tearing up carpet, laying floors, cleaning, painting, and putting together new furniture. Then, our friends at Convergence volunteered their time and artistic talents to completely transform the children's playroom. We look forward to sharing photos and that story in the next issue of *ALIVE! Wire*.

For families who have faced such adversity in their lives, knowing they have the support of a loving, caring community provides the encouragement and motivation they need to not only face life's challenges, but succeed.

ALIVE! House Wish List

- Sheets (twin)
- Blankets/Comforters (twin or full)
- Pillows
- Laundry Detergent
- Trash Bags
- Toothpaste
- Smart Trip Cards

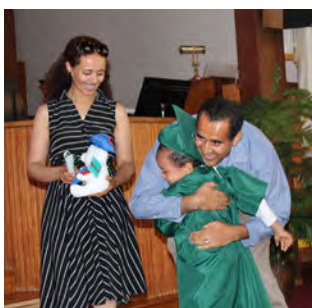
Donations or Questions: Please contact Amanda at (703) 684-1430 or alivehousedir@alive-inc.org.



One Step Closer to a Brighter Future

With your incredibly generous support, a brighter future is now one step closer for the children and families served by the ALIVE! Child Development Center. The 36th Annual StepALIVE! Walkathon was a great success, raising over \$80,000 for ALIVE!'s tuition assistance program. One hundred percent of our current families are receiving this life-changing assistance.

Together, we are making a real and lasting difference in the lives of children from low-income, working families. The direct impact of your gifts could be found on Friday, June 23rd at the 2017 ALIVE! Child Development Center Graduation. It was a joyful day filled with promise as families, friends and the ALIVE! staff celebrated this important milestone with our very proud students. For many of the parents, the socio-economic barriers to providing their children with high-quality, nationally accredited early education and childcare were staggering. Families who once worried that their children would be left behind were filled with gratitude knowing that their children will arrive at Kindergarten on Tuesday, September 5th ready to learn and succeed. Thank you for all you do to break the cycle of poverty and build brighter futures for Alexandria's children.





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Agudas Achim Congregation
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Beverly Hills Community United Methodist Church
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Christ Church
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Church of the Resurrection
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Grace Episcopal Church
Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
St. Joseph Catholic Church
St. Mary Catholic Church
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Saint Rita Catholic Church
Third Baptist Church
Trinity United Methodist Church
Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington
Washington Street United Methodist Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church



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ALIVE! Wire



Founded in 1969, ALIVE!
is the largest and oldest
private social safety net
for Alexandrians living in
poverty. Our work focuses
on four areas: Food, Shelter,
Emergency Help and
Education.

Contact ALIVE! at
(703) 837-9321
E-mail: info@alive-inc.org
www.alive-inc.org
fb.com/alive4alexandria
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Coming together to alleviate the suffering caused by poverty
and hunger.

Food. Shelter. Emergency Help. Education.

SAVE THE DATE!

The 3rd Annual Empty Bowls Alexandria 11.18.17

Event Sponsorships and Volunteer Opportunities are Available.

Contact us at info@alive-inc.org or 703.837.9321 for details.

