

ALIVE! Wire

Spring 2018



Increasing Access to Food for Alexandrians Living with Hunger

When ALIVE! was founded in 1969, hunger relief efforts were quickly identified as a critical priority in the City of Alexandria. ALIVE!'s first policy on food assistance was as liberal as possible. When someone called asking for food, ALIVE! assumed a dire need. In those early days, you would find ALIVE! volunteers personally delivering food, during the day and in the evening, to their neighbors in need. Almost 50 years later, that dedication to service remains the backbone of the ALIVE! Food Program.

Today, ALIVE! is the largest food provider serving Alexandrians living with food insecurity. In those early days, volunteers made space for stored food in their basements and freezers. In 2018, with the generous in-kind support of the City of Alexandria, the ALIVE! Food Warehouse serves as a collection and sorting facility for feeding thousands of Alexandrians each month, 12 months a year. However, it is not a distribution site.

As it was in 1969, food distribution is only made possible by the dedicated support of our volunteers, partners and supporters.



Over the course of the last 18 months, the ALIVE! Food Program has undergone tremendous growth to increase access to free, nutritious food for children, families and individuals living with hunger in Alexandria. While the Last Saturday Food Distribution program remains highly effective for mass food distribution, in response to emerging trends and the changing needs of the Alexandrians we serve, the ALIVE! Food Program has expanded to distribute food throughout the entire month. Last month, ALIVE! distributed more than 50,000 pounds of food to Alexandrians living with food insecurity: 30,000 pounds at the three Last Saturday Food Distribution sites; and, 20,000 pounds through the new community-based weekly delivery programs.

"How do we get more food out?" is the rallying call of John Perlman, the volunteer who serves as the ALIVE! Food Warehouse Manager. The success of the new initiatives takes us back to our roots and our founders' vision of the Alexandria community coming together in a grassroots effort to provide essential services for its most vulnerable members. Every week, there are food deliveries taking place at ALIVE! partner sites across the City, including local faith organizations, Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), government housing and fellow social service agencies. These weekly community-based food distributions have increased accessibility to free food for Alexandrians living with hunger. Barriers that may have prevented our neighbors from attending Last Saturday Food Distributions – transportation and childcare issues, work schedules, for example – are eliminated when food is available in neighborhoods, faith homes and local schools.

As the numbers illustrate, the response to the new distribution program has demonstrated how important it is that ALIVE! evolves and grows in response to the ever-changing needs of our diverse community. On a recent Tuesday morning two of our program partners shared their thoughts on the importance of weekly community-based distributions. "Write this in big capital letters,"



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Message from the President & Executive Director

Patrick Anderson and Diane L. Charles

"If not us, then who?" "If not now, then when?" As we celebrate National Volunteer Month this April, ALIVE! salutes the thousands of volunteers who have responded to the call to serve with caring and compassion. You are living examples of a proud tradition of volunteerism that runs strong in the City of Alexandria. Through your selfless dedication of time, talents and treasures, you have touched the lives of our neighbors in need and we are very grateful.

ALIVE! was founded in 1969 by inspired volunteers and leaders who recognized that the way to break the cycle of poverty is through service, compassion and love. Almost 50 year later, we are now the stewards of that vision. It is humbling, but we have been entrusted with something meaningful, impactful and life-changing. At a time when many are suffering, scared and fragile, we have been called upon to serve as champions for our most vulnerable neighbors. Thank you for responding to that call.

For the more than 13,500 Alexandrians who live in poverty, the fight to alleviate their suffering begins with us. Rooted in community, ALIVE!'s volunteers are the backbone of this organization. United in service, ALIVE!'s volunteers and supporters are putting food on tables, keeping roofs over heads and utilities on, helping to meet other emergency needs and creating brighter futures by providing educational opportunities and transitional housing for at-risk families.

Thank you for allowing ALIVE! to stay true to a mission of caring and service that has spanned five decades. In 2018, we have heard the call and, blessed by your service and support, we can respond. Thank you for all you do.

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



April is Volunteer Appreciation Month!

Thank You!

ALIVE!'s work is only made possible by our amazing volunteers. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to alleviating suffering from poverty and hunger in the City of Alexandria! Please join us in celebrating YOUR impact in serving our neighbors in need.



Sunday, April 22nd

Open House
at the ALIVE! Food Warehouse
2pm to 5pm
801 South Payne St., Alexandria, VA 22314

Wednesday, April 25th

ALIVE! Volunteer Appreciation Night
at Port City Brewery
5pm to 8pm
3950 Wheeler Ave., Alexandria, VA 22304



ALIVE! • 2723 King Street Alexandria, VA 22302 • 703-837-9321 • info@alive-inc.org • fb.com/alive4alexandria • www.alive-inc.org

FOOD. SHELTER. EMERGENCY HELP. EDUCATION.

Food - Hunger *continued from page 1*

said Janet Thompson of Meade Memorial Episcopal Church. "FABULOUS. It is needed and hugely beneficial – especially for families." One of the original ALIVE! Member Congregations, Meade Memorial has been a leader in hunger relief, providing daily lunches to Alexandrians living with hunger. With food provided by ALIVE!, Ms. Thompson and the volunteers at Meade Memorial operate a food pantry on Thursdays and Fridays. During a food delivery to James K. Polk Elementary School, ACPS Social Worker Terry Wright pointed to one young student and said, "See how the little girl smiled at me? It's because she saw this food coming in and knew what it meant."

The ability to increase the quantity of food we are distributing is only made possible by the generous support of our community. Food drives, donated food and financial gifts provide much needed resources that are making an immediate impact. Alexandria's grocery stores have become valuable partners. Last fall, the three City of Alexandria Safeway stores raised almost \$10,000 to fight childhood hunger through the "Hunger Is" campaign and, on the first Saturday of each month, you can find student volunteers from Episcopal High School collecting food donations at the Safeway store at Bradlee Center. The Giant stores at Duke Street and Potomac Yards have embraced the "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" campaign and provide thousands of pounds of meat, fresh produce and other food items every month. These stores also serve as Saturday food collection sites, manned by volunteers from Alexandria Country Day School, Port City Brewery, Emmanuel Episcopal Church as well as individual supporters and other ALIVE! friends. "The ALIVE! Food Program continues to grow and flex its operations to reach more people, more frequently," says Charlotte Martinsson, ALIVE! Food Program Chair. "Our partnerships across the community have proven a vital way to provide food assistance directly to the people who need it."



If you would like to become an ALIVE! food distribution site, volunteer with the ALIVE! Food Program or host a food drive, contact us at info@alive-inc.org or (703) 837-9321.

Thank You from the ALIVE! CDC

Kathie Boling, ALIVE! Child Development Center Director

Spring is a very special time at the ALIVE! Child Development Center (CDC). Warmer weather not only means new opportunities for outdoor learning and exploration, it is also a time to reflect on just how much learning and development has taken place since last September. In what feels like the blink of an eye, the students in our BLUE Room are now preparing to enter kindergarten – loaded with many learning experiences, both social and educational, that will help them succeed. School readiness is a process that starts long before kindergarten begins. This year, 98% of our students began the school year identified as “at-risk” for school failure. Through access to early

education, these children have been acquiring skills that will give them a strong start to the exciting world of learning that lies ahead.

At the ALIVE! CDC, the start of spring also means the annual *StepALIVE!* Walkathon is just around the corner. This is such an important event for our community. For 37 years, *StepALIVE!* has provided the funding that makes the ALIVE! Tuition Assistance Program possible. We serve children from low-income, working families - the average annual income for our families is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and 83% are eligible for the Federal Child and Adult Care Food Program. Many of our families have

additional adults living in the household to share the cost of Alexandria housing prices. For these families, the cost of full-day, year-round nationally accredited early education and care is beyond their reach, but desperately needed for their children to succeed.

With declining government funding, now more than ever, Alexandria’s children need our support. The assistance provided by *StepALIVE!* is truly life-changing for the children and families served by the ALIVE! CDC. We are so grateful to the community for ensuring *StepALIVE!*’s continued success!



37TH ANNUAL

StepALIVE! Walkathon

TO BENEFIT THE ALIVE! CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

REGISTER ONLINE
at www.alive-inc.org or onsite at StepALIVE!

Walk for Alexandria's Children!

Since 1972, the ALIVE! Child Development Center (CDC) has provided high-quality early education and day care to children from low-income, working families. **Now more than ever, Alexandria's children and families need our help.** We hope you'll join the community in supporting them at the **37th annual StepALIVE! Walkathon.**



365 days a year, ALIVE! provides **food, shelter, emergency help** and **early education** for struggling individuals and families. In 2017, ALIVE! served **14,500 Alexandrians.**

WHEN: Sunday, May 6, 2018

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Registration and T-Shirt Pick-Up Opens at 1:15 pm

WHERE: Registration, Start & Celebration

First Christian Church

2723 King Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22302

WHAT: 5K or 5-Mile stroll

through Old Town Alexandria followed by a catered picnic, live music and raffle

WHY: 100% of our current families receive tuition assistance.

StepALIVE! helps provide the funding that puts top-notch, accredited early education and day care within reach for those who couldn't otherwise afford it.

HOW: Register as a walker, form a team or make a donation and join us on Sunday, May 6th. www.alive-inc.org

REGISTRATION FEES:

\$25 Individual Walker (\$30 at event)

\$10 Children 6 – 13 and Seniors 70+

FREE Children under 6

Virtual Walkers and Donations are very welcome and appreciated! All donations are tax-deductible.



ALIVE!

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www.alive-inc.org

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Neighbors in Need: Housing Affordability in Alexandria

Cheryl Malloy, Affordable Housing Committee Chair

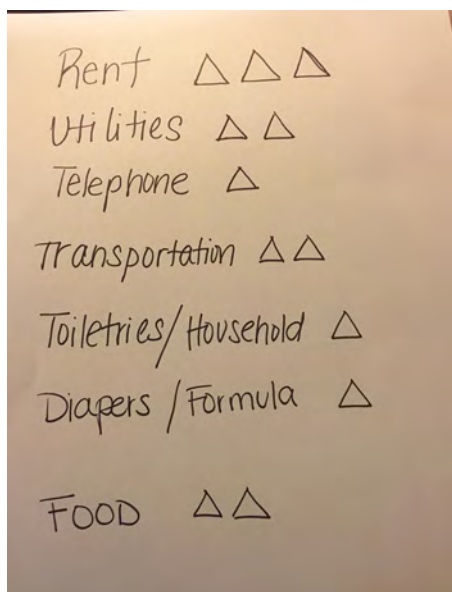


Have you ever wondered:

Why do we have a housing crisis in the City of Alexandria and what can I do to advance solutions?

Where does someone go for immediate housing assistance?

How does someone get help with rent or utility payments?



These and many other questions were answered at a Community Housing Forum hosted by ALIVE! at Washington Street United Methodist Church. Amanda Isaac, Director of ALIVE! House, moderated a panel consisting of housing and financial assistance experts and providers in Alexandria who offered insight on the needs in Alexandria and how families can receive assistance from City agencies and local faith-based groups. Michelle Krockner, Executive Director of Northern Virginia Affordable Housing Alliance; Jessica Lurz, Director of Office of Community Services at the City of Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services; and Maureen McCarty, Counselor at Christ Church Lazarus Ministry provided information and answered questions to approximately 30 participants from the community.

Participants heard important information on how to help lower-income families as they struggle to remain housed or find housing. Handouts were provided that describe: 1) City programs for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness, 2) how to access financial assistance for rent and utilities, 3) where food and meals programs are provided, and 4) the need for more affordable housing and a recent proposal to increase City funding for workforce housing.

We all believe that no one should have to choose between putting food on the table and paying rent. What we also need to keep in mind is the importance of housing as a foundational need in people's lives. Without a home, everything else falls apart. Safe, decent, affordable homes provide family stability, resulting in better educational outcomes for children, health improvements and income stability. In addition, affordable housing supports the economic vitality of our community. Lower paying jobs in restaurants, hotels and retail are a vital part of our economy and help power our economic engine. Both the companies and the workers benefit if these employees are able to live near where they work.

If you would like to learn more or receive copies of the handouts, please contact Cheryl Malloy, chair of ALIVE!'s Affordable Housing Committee, at cpm@malloyassoc.com.



A Unique and Heart-Warming Guided Tour of Alexandria

Mike Mackey, Furniture Chair

I love spring in Alexandria. Lilacs budding and scenting my back yard; the plethora of flowers, trees, and bushes sprouting - colorfully and bountifully. The Farmer's Market; a thousand things to do; catching a Nats game. It's spring.

Among these favorites is a near and dear, always-unique, guided tour of the town that I have grown to love.

One of my favorite views in springtime is from the driver's seat in one of the two, large ALIVE! trucks, on a mission, along with a team of helpers; criss-crossing from Old Town to Del Ray to the West End and stops in between, as our team of volunteers picks up donated furniture from generous families and drops off the items to families in need. After doing this for over a decade, I think I have been on every street and alley in Alexandria.

The fun begins at 8am most Saturday mornings - a coordinator and two drivers meet with a group of volunteers from one of the 44 ALIVE! congregations in our area or helpers who simply live in the area and want to give back. There is laughter, there is friendship, there is strategizing. The end result: a couple who might have trouble unloading a sofa is greeted by the team and is told, "This sofa is going to someone today". A person relocating is relieved to know that the bed that they are donating will be in the home of a family that has no furniture. A look on the faces of a mom and dad gratefully receive the team and watching as son or daughter gleefully bounce upon their new bed; replacing a stack of blankets which served to make do. With every furniture delivery, a bag of non-perishable food is provided. Sheets and bedding accompany; courtesy of the ALIVE! Housewares Program.

The ALIVE furniture ministry has existed for decades due to the goodwill of Alexandrians who are generous enough to donate furniture items and other Alexandrians who are good enough to let someone know that they need a hand; all supported by like-minded and like-hearted volunteer helpers. The Furniture Program is always looking for more volunteers - we go out every weekend; mostly on Saturdays (or an occasional Sunday). We meet at 8am and caravan behind the ALIVE! trucks. Volunteers serve many roles - from helping to coordinate online, to driving, to helping on the day of. One does not need to be able to lift furniture, but we do need that, too. Volunteers of all backgrounds and abilities lift beds, sofas, pillows, lamps; they hold doors; they cheer and support. As you can imagine, it is sometimes tricky and challenging - but the teams make it happen. Donors are able to get help removing that sofa, bed, table and chairs from their house; recipients have a table to enjoy a meal upon, a sofa on which to relax, a bed on which to sleep. We are done by lunch.

Please join. Congregations are encouraged to adopt 1 or 2 weekends out of the year. We also need drivers, coordinators or extra hands who might be willing to help out, on occasion. I keep an email list of folks willing to help out once in awhile. Maybe once every month or so? I joined about a decade ago. I'll never not do it.

This spring, I will catch the Cherry Blossoms, will buy a muffin, a coffee and fruit at the Farmer's Market, and will ride the bike trail. I'll catch the Nats.

And ... I'll be driving the ALIVE! truck with a small group of volunteers for one of the best springtime activities and views around. One of Alexandria's most unique, guided tours.

Please join sometime. Mike: furniture@alive-inc.org.



ALIVE!

2723 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22302
703-837-9300

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
[@alive4alexVA](https://fb.com/alive4alexandria)

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Support ALIVE!

MASON
HIRST
Foundation

Wednesday, April 25th

12:01AM - 11:59PM

<https://www.spring2action.org/organizations/alive4alexandria>

**ALIVE! has been blessed to receive \$15,500
in 2018 Spring2ACTION matching funds.**

We need your help to ensure that we receive these funds.

Please make a tax-deductible donation to
ALIVE! through Spring2ACTION on April 25th.
We **must raise \$15,500** to match these funds.

All donations go directly back into our community. \$31,000 equals life-changing assistance for our neighbors in need. Please ask your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues to join you in supporting ALIVE!