



ALIVE! *Wire*

www.alive-inc.org

SUMMER 2021

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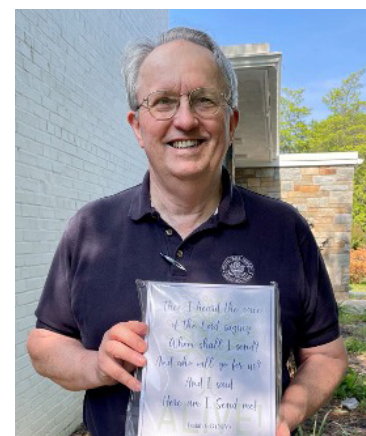
Family Assistance Chair

Mollie Lambert took the reins as Family Assistance Chair in July 2021 after being mentored by Tom Fulham.

“Tom’s organizational and people skills and ability to go with flow to make things work have been tremendous assets,” Mollie commented. Tom will continue to stay involved.

Newly retired in December 2020 from public accounting, specializing in non-profits, Mollie found it difficult to find volunteer opportunities during the pandemic until she turned to ALIVE!. Familiar with the organization from her membership with Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill and StepALIVE!, she began volunteering with ALIVE! in January 2021 by bagging food for ALIVE! distributions and assisting with housewares. Enthusiastic about the “fantastic” Family Assistance volunteers who staff the front desk and deliver the food, Mollie noted that some have been helping for over 15 years.

Mollie is pleased to announce the ALIVE! Executive Board’s decision that, as of June 2021, Family Assistance will provide more monetary assistance for rent, utilities, and medical and dental expenses: cash assistance of \$1,000 per client twice a year, up from \$500 per client twice a year.



Tom Fulham at the Family Assistance Meet-and-Greet event on May 25, 2021.

Spring2ACTion 2021

ALIVE! raised \$103,329 with 492 donors at Spring2ACTion on April 28, 2021. The amount raised placed ALIVE! at #4 on the Leaderboard out of 156 participating organizations.

Local businesses supporting ALIVE! at Spring2ACTion included **ESP Tea & Coffee, Del Ray Business Association, Red Barn Mercantile, Penny Post, and Alexandria Little League**. Matching grants came from the **Mason Hirst Foundation, the Rita Susswein Gottesman Fund, and the Silverwood Family Fund**.

Spring2ACTion prizes won:

2nd Place – Large Organization (\$500k+)

Most Donors Prize for \$750

3-4 pm Winner – Power Hour Prize for \$500



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

When I walked into ALIVE! Executive Director Ken Naser's office in early 2011 looking for significant volunteer involvement, little did I expect that 10 years later, I would be taking over from Eric Winakur as President of ALIVE!. I feel very honored to do so.

Although I had not previously volunteered with ALIVE! during earlier residences in Alexandria, I had always been tremendously impressed by the work it did in the City. So, when I arrived back in Alexandria and was looking to get involved, reaching out to ALIVE! made sense.

In addition to being impressed by ALIVE!'s mission, I knew that it was based on two principles which were very important to me. I was looking for an interfaith organization, one which gave members of various faiths the opportunity to work together for a common purpose. I was also looking for an organization which gave volunteers multiple opportunities for involvement at various levels. The concept of neighbors helping neighbors has always resonated with me. ALIVE! filled the bill on both counts.

My involvement has not disappointed me. Instead, my respect for the organization, for the work it does, and for the people involved with it has only deepened. I have been very gratified to be part of an organization which has done so much good for so many. It has also given me an opportunity to get to meet and work with some of the finest people I have ever known, both staff and volunteers.

And never have I been more impressed by the work that ALIVE! does than since March 2020. The way that the organization has responded to the challenges presented by Covid has been nothing short of amazing. We owe a great deal to the leadership of Jenn Ayers, her staff, and the

committed volunteers who not only kept the organization going but flourishing.

We are emerging from Covid a changed organization. We have a larger budget, a bigger staff, many new volunteers, and are viewed by the City in a different light. Hopefully we are arriving at a time when we can settle into and become more comfortable with those changes.

I am very excited about the upcoming months. With the support of the City, we have the opportunity to serve and relate to our clients in a new and better way. With funding from the American Rescue Plan (and while continuing our traditional monthly mass distributions as well as neighborhood pop ups and provision of food to various pantries and other outreach efforts), we will be establishing two Neighborhood Food Centers ("Food Hubs") in areas of high need. Clients will be able to visit these convenient locations at times that are convenient to them and will be able to choose what they walk away with. Moreover, at these locations, ALIVE! staff and volunteers will work with clients to make sure that they are availing themselves of services and benefits that they need and are eligible for.

In this era in which a spotlight has been shone on the disparities and inequities that exist in our society, it is clear that ALIVE!'s outreach to our struggling neighbors is more important than ever. It is our hope that with this more focused effort and client-centered approach, ALIVE! will come closer to realizing its vision of alleviating the suffering caused by poverty and dramatically improving the lives of those in need in the City of Alexandria.

Mary Eileen Dixon

Mary Eileen Dixon



ALIVE! House Sidewalk Sale

\$4,000 was raised at this year's Sidewalk Sale on June 19, 2021. Thank you to the community for donating items on the June 5th Donation Drop-Off Day and for shopping the sidewalk sale.

Fairlington United Methodist Church lent its upper parking lot for the drive-by donation drop-off day, and **Fairlington Presbyterian Church** stored all donations. Volunteers received, sorted and priced items; and worked on-site at the June 19th sale.

Goodies Frozen Custard & Treats join in by donating donuts whose sales went directly to the event proceeds.

A special thank you goes to the Sidewalk Sale Committee:

Margaret Dhillon, Beth McFarland, Elizabeth Dorton, and Susanne Arnold.

Congregational Reps in Action:

ALIVE! member congregations designate one congregational representative, and sometimes an alternate, as voting members of the ALIVE! Board of Directors. Meet some of our congregational representatives and read their stories.

Ann Marie Hay, congregational representative for **Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington**, began volunteering 30 years ago to increase her involvement in the community, tackling various ALIVE! roles over the years such as **Recording Secretary** and volunteer. “I’ve been fortunate in life and have had advantages others do not have; I want to contribute to make our community a little bit fairer,” says Ann Marie. This former Peace Corps volunteer has been teaching English as Second Language (ESL) for the past few years. One family stands out: a hotel housekeeper originally from El Salvador, who came on last Saturdays accompanied by two high-school-age daughters. When she attended Ann Marie’s ESL class, the daughters tagged along to encourage their mother. The last news of this family Ann Marie heard before the pandemic hit was that the older daughter had been accepted to the University of Mary Washington.

Diana Day has served ALIVE! for more than 30 years on management committees, as a congregational representative for **Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington (UUCA)**, **ALIVE! Secretary, Vice President, and President**. The City of Alexandria does not have a Unitarian Church, so she attends UUCA. Because she was impressed by ALIVE!’s assistance to Alexandrians in need, Diana requested that UUCA affiliate with ALIVE!, to which the UUCA Board of Trustees agreed. “Several years ago, I had the opportunity to know a mother at ALIVE! House who ‘graduated’ from its multifaceted program to live independently with her little boy. She had immigrated to the United States with her husband but found herself trapped in an abusive relationship, without the means to break free. At first hesitant and quiet, over time she blossomed as she recognized her capacity to succeed as a valued employee, as a mother and as a capable head-of-household,” shared Diana.

Scott Ponsor was first a volunteer from **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** for the ALIVE! Furniture Program. Wanting to be more involved in his community, Scott decided to be his church’s congregational representative for ALIVE!. “ALIVE! is a credit not just to the churches within it but to the City of Alexandria and I’m proud to be a part of it,” says Scott.

Michael Hill, church representative, says of ALIVE!, “We see the character of Christ in ALIVE! as it looks outward to see who it can help; the **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints** is grateful to offer its service whenever it’s needed.” Working the last shift at the June 19th Sidewalk Sale, Michael handed out ALIVE! information cards observing that buyers were more motivated to purchase items and make contributions once they learned ALIVE! House benefited from the sale. The Young Men’s Group from the church had a hand in loading the donation truck.

CONGREGATIONAL CORNER:

ALIVE! relies on the support and partnership of its member congregations. There are many different ways to support ALIVE! that align with each congregation’s values and interests. Here are some examples of our member congregations supporting ALIVE!.

- **Fairlington United Methodist Church** weekly gleaning for ALIVE! Food
- **First Baptist Church** food drive for ALIVE!
- **Good Shepherd Lutheran Church** monthly share the plate
- **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints** boys youth group loading trucks of donated housewares items for the ALIVE! House Sidewalk Sale (*below*)



- **Old Town Community Church** monthly food distributions with ALIVE!
- **Trinity United Methodist Church** youth group cleaning up ALIVE! grounds and playground (*below*)



- **Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington** share the plate for ALIVE! Food and AEPP

SPOTLIGHT ON: VOLUNTEERS

Congratulations to two amazing ALIVE! volunteers, **Charlotte Martinsson** and **John Perlman**, who were recognized during National Volunteer Week, April 18-24, 2021, for their dedicated service to ALIVE! and the Alexandria Community! Each year, Volunteer Alexandria recognizes volunteers in the community at its **Volunteers are the Heart of Alexandria** event. Both have been dedicated



Charlotte Martinsson - RSVP Volunteer Service Award
ALIVE!



John Perlman - The Joan White Award
ALIVE!

Vonda Delawie has been an ALIVE! volunteer since 2009, mostly at Last Saturday Food Distributions and more recently with the Housewares Program. Vonda is keenly aware "how hard ALIVE! works to meet unforeseen food security needs under enormously difficult circumstances." This inspired her and other



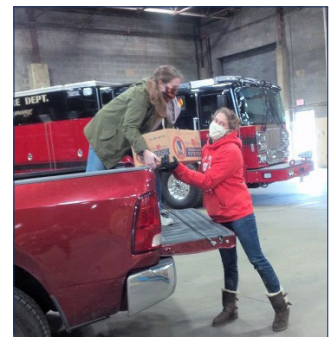
Vonda Delawie

to working in the ALIVE! Food Program for many years, and doing many other amazing things to support people in need. Charlotte is a member of ALIVE!'s Executive Board, and John Perlman is a member of ALIVE! Early Education and Food Program Committees.

Alexandria Citizens Band members to dedicate their June 25th spring concert to ALIVE!. You can watch the concert of "Big Screen Movie Music" favorites on YouTube or Facebook.

After COVID hit, **Old Blue BBQ** owner Kelly Lloyd and manager Rachel Kuldell packed meals and participated in ALIVE! food distributions. At one point the grocery boxes were light on fresh produce so they purchased additional fruit and vegetables to make up the difference. Old Blue BBQ began offering individual barbecue deliveries in May 2020, followed by selling barbecue at the West End Farmers Market and other local farmers markets.

Old Blue BBQ's generosity extended to supporting ALIVE! by donating \$10 per family meal purchased in January-February and May 2021, raising \$430. Additionally, the company provided 75 boxed hot meals at an ALIVE! pop-up food distribution at Charles Houston Recreation Center in February.



Kelly Lloyd and Rachel Kuldell
of Old Blue BBQ

Madelyn Giblin, with Communities in Schools of NOVA at Francis C. Hammond Middle School, has partnered with ALIVE! for the past 4 years. She began volunteering in May 2020 as a way to stay connected with her students during the pandemic-caused school closure. "I love the camaraderie of the grocery walk-up line, seeing the clients who come early to help us mark out the line, the volunteers who know which families prefer which items — and all the thoughtful conversations. I see what a lifeline the food distributions and other ALIVE! programs have been for families whose lives had been completely upended by the pandemic; it was such a relief to them to be able to say, 'See you at the next distribution!'"



Madelyn Giblin

Michael Spatz, retired Air Force family practice physician with a second career in consulting and healthcare management, and his wife Doris started food packing at the ALIVE! warehouse and then volunteered for the biweekly weekend food distributions at Cora Kelly Elementary School. Michael says, "The clients are very appreciative for what ALIVE! provides, and it's also great to see the demand decrease as the virus winds down, federal assistance was provided, and now the economy is on the upswing."



Michael Spatz

Alexandria Can't Do It Without ALIVE!

First made aware of ALIVE! about 25 years ago, **Mayor Justin Wilson** noted that his work on the Alexandria City Council broadened his appreciation of the extent of ALIVE!'s reach into the community, and that gratitude turned into an embrace in 2020 when the City and ALIVE! partnered to successfully serve food insecure people during the pandemic.

"The City did not lack for money during COVID, but it is hard to spend money when programs don't exist," Wilson said. "ALIVE! was able to take City funding and quickly scale up to meet an unprecedented demand for food."

The mayor recounted last year's heartbreak of receiving a steady stream of warning notices informing his office of massive layoffs in hotels, restaurants, and other businesses.



Volunteer at pop-up food distribution at Morgan Properties on July 19, 2021.

"I understood the pain of people who lost jobs would spiral from the worker to his wife and the children. ALIVE! working with the City and other non-profits gave people a glimmer of confidence that they would get through this."

"ALIVE!'s operations were life saving for thousands of individuals who lost jobs and did not have enough food and other critical resources," said **Kate Garvey, Director of Alexandria Department of Community and Human Services**. "Without Executive Director Jenn Ayers and her team's commitment and responsiveness, we could not have done it; it made a huge impact on the wellbeing of so many residents in the City."

Longtime City employee and ALIVE! Volunteer, David Wynne, agrees with the mayor's assessment:



Volunteers at a Saturday food distribution at Cora Kelly Elementary School on May 29, 2021.

"The father of a recently arrived Venezuelan family showed up monthly at ALIVE! food distributions; then as the family climbed the rungs of the immigration ladder and got decent jobs, they were able to afford a second-hand van. Once he had the van, he offered to volunteer at food distributions as a way of paying back even though it would cut into income from his second job on the weekend."

"ALIVE! is one of the first phone numbers I memorized as a case manager," recalls David, "so it's been 31 years that my clients have been supported by ALIVE!."

According to David, the strength of ALIVE! is being a local, community-focused charity, staffed by knowledgeable Alexandrians who listen and are willing to experiment with food distributions to serve hard-to-reach populations. "Certain ALIVE! volunteers and staff went out of their way to be supportive: **Linda Coleman** took time to ask questions about the trends I was seeing in the community. **David Ewing** has also been a huge support."

Inspired by the difference ALIVE! makes, David started helping out at the Last Saturday Food Distributions in 2018.



David Wynne at a Saturday food distribution at William Ramsay Rec Center on July 17, 2021.

LOCAL BUSINESSES FUNDRAISING FOR ALIVE!

Jersey Mike's Subs

\$8,841.57 March Month of Giving (pictured at right)

ESP Tea & Coffee

online business fundraiser at Spring2ACTion

Blue Room Studio

25% of print sales from Del Ray Matchbook Art Competition

Reimagined Taste of Old Town North

percentage of passport sales

Old Blue BBQ

donate \$10 per family meal purchased

Goodies Frozen Custard & Treats

donuts for Sidewalk Sale

Fibre Space

sale proceeds of Crochet Czar enamel pins

Whiskey & Oyster

donate 10 cents per oyster

Coldwell Banker Realty

\$1,702 and food drive (pictured below)



Pop-up distribution at Casa Chirilagua on June 23, 2021

Neighborhood Pop-Up Food Distributions

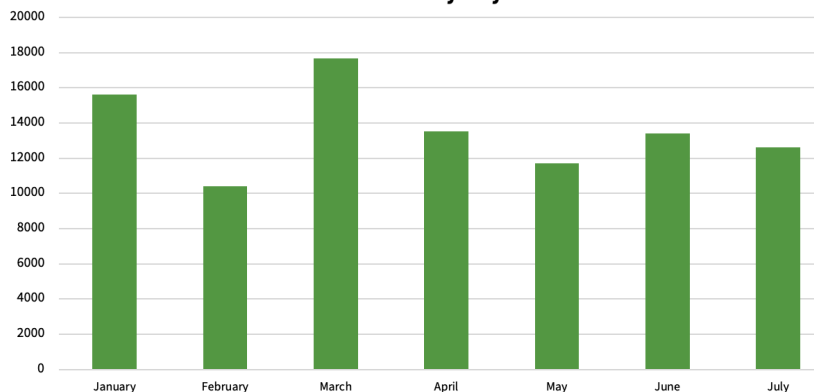
The number of food seekers has been starting to decline in 2021 as people regain jobs or receive stimulus checks. The number of individuals served at ALIVE! food distributions dropped from 18,000 in March to between 13,500 and 11,700 in April through July.

The decreasing number of people served may signal a change in the number of those made food insecure by the pandemic. However, 66% of the food-insecure population in our area are employed but still not making enough to feed their households, according to the Capital Area Food Bank 2021 survey.¹ However, the course of the pandemic and its effects on the rate of food insecurity remain uncertain.

To make food more accessible, ALIVE! is increasing the number of distributions in neighborhoods with the highest levels of food insecurity. By being hyper local, ALIVE! increases its chances of reaching people by making it easier for them to access food without having to travel. Large distributions will also continue every month and the ALIVE! Food Program Advisory Committee reviews distribution attendance statistics with staff regularly to identify ways to move food to people most in need.



Individuals Served January-July 2021



¹ Svenson, Kyle. "The new face of hunger: Hispanic, employed, but still struggling to feed the family." The Washington Post, www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-vi/2021/06/27/foodbank-report-2021

Preventing Eviction One Application at a Time

“It’s been a rough go,” said Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership (AEPP) Case Manager and ALIVE! staff member Shelley Miller on air with National Public Radio (NPR) All Things Considered on July 8th. “Nobody was prepared for this on any level, any front.”

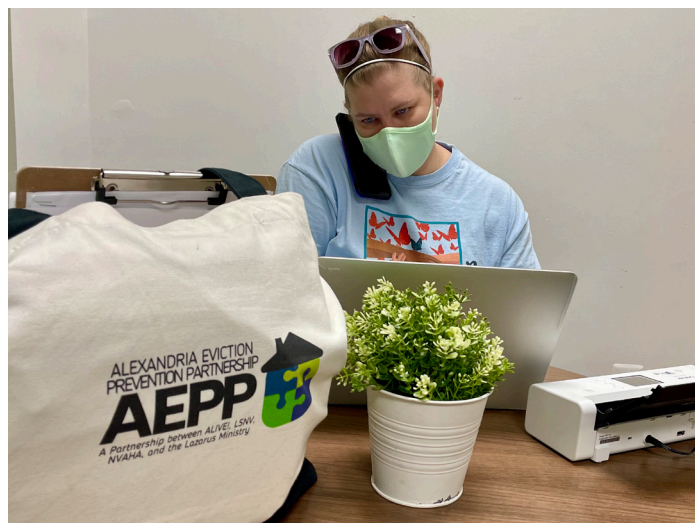


Erika Gaitan, AEPP service navigator and ALIVE! staff member.

Navigating a cumbersome system to access rent relief remains the biggest challenge. In the NPR interview, Shelley and her colleague Service Navigator, Erika Gaitan, recounted how a man, facing eviction the next day, carried an envelope stuffed with papers to an AEPP outreach event at Casa Chirilagua. He owed \$10,000 in back rent prompting Shelley to email his landlord for his lease. The submission

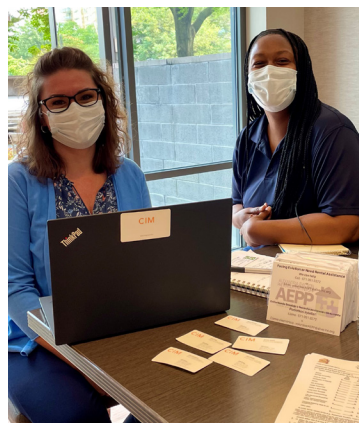
problem was identified (the application was incomplete) and corrected. His application was later approved, just in time to cancel his eviction.

AEPP connects Alexandrians with rental assistance resources, which includes helping both eligible landlords and tenants collaborate to apply for Virginia Rent Relief Program funding; this federal assistance can cover 100% of the rent for up to 15 months. To be eligible, tenants must show they were directly or indirectly affected by COVID: e.g., lost their jobs, experienced a reduction in work hours, or forced to quit to take care of home-bound children.



Shelley Miller, AEPP case manager and ALIVE! staff member.

Outreach to spread awareness about how AEPP and other community partners can help is a team effort facilitated by the efforts of many organizations including, the City of Alexandria Department of Community & Human Services, the City of Alexandria Office of Housing, member congregations, non-profits such as ALIVE!, and landlords. The NPR story noted that alliances of tenants, landlords, and agencies to prevent evictions, like the network put in place by AEPP, are rare. A majority of tenants and small landlords don’t even know about the emergency rental assistance program.¹



Danien Johnson, AEPP Director and ALIVE! staff member, at AEPP outreach event at Southern Towers.

As word spreads, the Partnership is seeing more tenants earlier in the process and before they get eviction notices from their landlords. However, most cases are still too close for comfort, according to Shelley. As of the end of May 2021, Alexandria had assisted 3,458 households.²

Even though the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention eviction moratorium expired on July 31, 2021, money remains in the pipeline to continue the Virginia Rent Relief Program.

¹ Choi, Jung Hyun, Daniel Pang, and Laurie Goodman. “With Just a Month Left of the Eviction Moratorium, Many Mom-and-Pop Landlords and Tenants Are Still Unaware of Federal Rental Assistance.” Urban Institute, www.urban.org/urban-wire/just-month-left-eviction-moratorium-many-mom-and-pop-landlords-and-tenants-are-still-unaware-federal-rental-assistance

² Miles, Vernon. “Mayor releases figures for ongoing eviction crisis in Alexandria.” ALXNow, www.alxnow.com/2021/06/01/mayor-releases-figures-for-ongoing-eviction-crisis-in-alexandria

ALIVE! *Wire*

Neighbors Helping Neighbors



The oldest and largest private safety net for Alexandrians living in poverty and with hunger, ALIVE! serves thousands of individuals each month by providing **Food, Shelter, and Emergency Help.**

Founded In 1969, ALIVE! is comprised of **47 faith organizations** and thousands of volunteers, partners and supporters.

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 @alive4alexVA

ALIVE!
2723 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22302

Nonprofit Organization
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Alexandria, VA
Permit Number 567



DONATE TO ALIVE!

Every donation has an immediate impact on the lives of people struggling with poverty and hunger in the City of Alexandria. Your donation supports ALIVE!'s emergency services and long-term resiliency programs.

Consider a donation of \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, or \$1,000 to these funds:

- Greatest Need
- ALIVE! House
- Family Assistance
- Food
- Housewares
- Furniture
- Alexandria Eviction Prevention Partnership (AEPP)



VOLUNTEER FOR ALIVE!

ALIVE! is a volunteer-based organization. We depend greatly on our volunteers to deliver ALIVE! services to the Alexandria community. Corporate groups, service hours, schools, and days of service are all welcome.

Discover the role that's right for you.

Sign up online at www.alive-inc.org or email volunteer@alive-inc.org



Step**ALIVE!**
Walkathon

SAVE-THE-DATE

for StepALIVE!
October 17, 2021