



Clients Appreciate ALIVE! Furniture Program

The ALIVE! Furniture Program is made possible through a partnership of four parties.



The donors who want items no longer needed but still in good condition to go to new homes. The clients who are willing to take pre-owned items into their homes and make them their own. The many organizations which refer interested clients who are residents of the City to the program. And last but not least, the volunteers whose efforts make the connections happen through coordination of both donor and recipient and by physically collecting donated furniture and delivering the items from one owner to the next.

One recent client remarked that the scheduling and delivery was fantastic, and the volunteers were very helpful. Grateful for the help received since she was new to the City and had no furniture, she said she is very comfortable now. She recommends the program for anyone who needs furniture to do it—that it helps! Another recent client noted that everything about her furniture delivery went great, and that she appreciates the ALIVE! Volunteers who made this happen. She heard about the program through word of mouth, and said it is the place to go if someone is in need.



The ALIVE! Furniture Program is completely managed by volunteers who strive to provide a prompt response. Capacity is limited by time, number of volunteers, the availability of items at any given time, and the need to match donations for the week. The goal is same-day delivery of donated furniture. ALIVE! volunteers pick up and deliver donated items on Saturdays from 8 am – 1 pm. Volunteers are not professional movers, but they do exercise care when moving furniture.

You can donate items to the ALIVE! furniture program. Visit our website to read about what items are accepted and how the program works, and complete the online form to make your donation request. The ALIVE! furniture program depends on volunteers to pick up and deliver donated items to families in need. Sign up to volunteer today! For more information, contact the ALIVE! Furniture Program at furniture@alive-inc.org

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring is a time of year often filled with change. As the weather begins to warm and our city is filled with the flowering trees and plants we all take a moment to reflect on the evolving needs of our community.

One change that we've seen in our food distribution programs is the return to indoor distributions for the Last Saturday events. Thanks to our amazing partners at the City of Alexandria Recreation Centers we have moved back inside to increase the comfort of the people we serve and our teams of volunteers. These Last Saturday events continue to be critical places for our community to access essential grocery items.

One thing that hasn't changed is the high demand for support—20,000 people each month. Over the coming months ALIVE! will be developing a new strategic plan to determine how best to maximize our resources and partnerships provide the greatest amount of help to those who need it the most. Initial conversations, data, and surveys with the clients we serve has highlighted that most people only seek food assistance once a month, and that a growing percentage are seeking food assistance more frequently. It also points to a need for expanding evening and weekend hours, ALIVE! Food Hubs and more opportunities to connect with programs that provide additional support services.

ALIVE!'s ability to sustain the high numbers of people we've seen in recent years is directly tied to the partnerships and support of people and organizations in the City of Alexandria. I hope that you will continue to support ALIVE! during Spring2ACTION on April 24th by contributing to this online day of giving.

Sincerely,

Rolf Blank
President



IN MEMORIAM

Mary Stowe Boyd

Mary Stowe Boyd (79) passed away quietly in her home on August 24th following a prolonged illness.

Mary was a long time volunteer with ALIVE! Helping to pack groceries in the ALIVE! Family Assistance program, and her record of service to our community will continue to inspire others to follow her example to uplift those in need.

Mary spent her career on Capitol Hill, first as a staffer for Senator Robert Stephens, of Georgia, and then as the Calendar Clerk for the House of Representatives Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. Her hobbies included skiing and golfing, and she was an avid bridge player.

She left a generous bequest as her legacy to ALIVE! to be used to support our ongoing work in our community.



Composting Helps ALIVE! Grow

If you attended ALIVE!'s Empty Bowls event in March you may have seen some compost bins. Wondering why? When Jay Walton founded Monster Organics to promote environmental sustainability in and around his hometown of Fairfax, Virginia, he never imagined he'd end up giving back to the same organization he'd supported as a child – until the ALIVE! Food program approached him to help compost their waste. “Many years ago, I was a Boy Scout and I did Scouting for Food,” he said. “It was cathartic for me to come full circle and support this organization I had known growing up.”

For ALIVE!, the composting program filled a long-standing need for a better way to dispose of food waste. “We process a lot of donated food through the warehouse, and unfortunately some items come to us open, damaged, or expired, so they don't meet our use guidelines,”

said Timothy Enright, ALIVE!'s Program Manager. “We wanted to make sure we were reducing our waste in every way we could.” Composting, a process which uses bacteria to convert organic waste into a nutrient-rich soil additive that can fertilize plants, could not only dispose of ALIVE!'s food waste but use it to benefit gardening and other environmental projects. Monster Organics' roots in Alexandria made them an ideal partner, Enright explained, because “we were looking for someplace locally focused that could give back to the people we serve and solicit donations from.”

“We wanted to make sure we were reducing our waste in every way we could.”

**TIMOTHY ENRIGHT
ALIVE! PROGRAM MANAGER**



Volunteers at ALIVE!'s warehouse in Old Town divert food waste to compost.

In January of 2024, Monster Organics provided compost bins to ALIVE!'s South Payne Street warehouse and Del Ray Food Hub, and trained staff and volunteers in how to use them. “We used the mantra, if it grows, it goes,” Walton said. Most of the waste put into the compost bins is plant- or animal- based food, but paper and cardboard can be composted as well, especially if they are too soggy or greasy to be recycled. ALIVE!'s volunteers were excited to take part in training for the new composting initiative. “There's a palpable excitement from volunteers and staff to be able to divert the little spoilage that ALIVE! has into a more sustainable process,” said Walton. Since the compost bins were delivered, volunteers have spent some afternoons opening cans and containers of expired food to compost the contents. “Everyone seems to be excited about having this option that's good for the planet,” Enright said. He added that volunteers who are new to ALIVE! will find the compost bins easy to use, but they “should be prepared to get their hands dirty!”

Once the compost bins are full, Monster Organics picks them up and delivers them to a processing plant where their contents are turned into compost. ALIVE! will be using 300 gallons of soil reclaimed by composting for the Spring planting of the Del Ray Food Hub's community garden. This will help add fresh vegetables and herbs to the selection of items that ALIVE! offers to clients from this Food Hub.

Many Alexandrians have home composting bins, but partnering with Monster Organics has several

Composting Helps ALIVE! Grow, continued

advantages for ALIVE! compared to running a composting program on their own. Monster Organics' bins are larger than the bins provided by the city, and Monster Organics picks up compost from ALIVE's locations each week, saving time and effort for the volunteers and staff. They also report the weight of each pickup to ALIVE!, helping them track their spoilage (in the first month of the composting program, ALIVE! produced around 600 pounds of compostable food waste). Finally, Monster Organics' composting process can accept some food items which can't go in regular compost bins. "It's generally inadvisable to put animal meat and fats into home composts because it could attract pests or transfer bacteria to the soil," Enright explained. "But because [Monster Organics'] industrial process is higher temperature, they can accept meat and animal fats that would not normally be compostable." This versatility comes in handy at ALIVE!'s warehouse, allowing volunteers to compost expired meat products such as pre-made chicken or steak dinners.

The composting program at ALIVE! is still in its initial phases, and Enright anticipates that more bins may be installed at the warehouse, food hub, or other locations

as staff identifies the need. Walton hopes that composting at ALIVE! could inspire volunteers to compost at home and otherwise improve their own environmental sustainability. Monster organics is a good option for people who want larger bins and wish to compost animal waste.



"A lot of composting is little changes, like scraping your plate into the compost bin instead of into the trash," he said, but those little changes add up: "30 to 40 percent of our waste is food. If we're able to divert that, it can have such an impact." ALIVE! staff are also enthusiastic about the program's impact on the environment. "Everyone benefits from spoiled produce being disposed of quickly and properly and in a way that returns it to the environment rather than having it sit around waiting for trash day," Enright said. "It benefits the whole city."

Did you know that Stamp Out Hunger is one of ALIVE!'s most successful food drives?



ON THE SECOND SATURDAY IN MAY:

- Place a bag of nonperishable food next to your mailbox.
- Your letter carrier will handle the rest!

This community outreach event results in 10,000 to 15,000 pounds of food collected each year. Donations of non-perishable food items can be left next to your mailbox on **Saturday, May 11**, and local letter carriers will collect these food donations as they deliver mail along their postal routes. ALIVE! thanks the Alexandria Branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers for their ongoing support of this important partnership. Food donations may also be made directly at the ALIVE! Warehouse at 801 South Payne Street. A list of suggested and most needed food items can be found on our website.

Empty Bowls Raises \$61,000 for ALIVE! Programs

The Empty Bowls fundraiser was created in 1990 to give artists and art students in Michigan a way to give back to the community. The charitable event invited people to share a simple meal of soup and then to take home an empty handmade artisanal bowl, as a reminder of the bowls that go empty due to hunger. The idea for a project that aims to raise funds to help fight hunger on a local basis spread from there.

Started by Joan Moser, ALIVE! Past President, this year, ALIVE! hosted its 7th annual Empty Bowls Alexandria on March 1st. This annual event offers an opportunity for community members to come together to acknowledge food insecurity in Alexandria and support the mission of ALIVE!, while enjoying an evening of food, music, and art. Approximately 150 attendees gathered at the Virginia Theological Seminary to share food donated by generous neighborhood restaurants, and together we raised more than \$60,000.

Thank you--to all who attended the event, the wonderful volunteers who helped make it happen, the Alfred Street Baptist Church for the decorations, the musicians from the Alexandria Citizens Band, who provided entertainment for the evening, the artists for their beautiful handmade bowls, congregations who donated baskets for the silent auction, and to our sponsors and donors including our Community Champion sponsor, the Jen Walker Team.



How Can You Help Housewares?



Did you know that ALIVE! connects Alexandrians in need with essential home goods in addition to food? Donations of new or gently used pots and pans, flatware, can openers, linens, and small appliances in working order and more can be dropped off at the front desk of Elancé at Old Town (400 N. Washington St) daily from 10am-3pm.

In 2022 and 2023 the ALIVE! Housewares program delivered essential items to 203 households. 42% of requests for assistance came from families who recently moved into new housing from a temporary shelter, and 20% of deliveries went to families who were resettled from refugee programs.

Recently, ALIVE! distributed carloads of houseware items at the Last Saturday Food Distribution at Leonard “Chick” Armstrong Recreation Center. Thank you to everyone who continues to donate items and to Fairlington United Methodist Church for hosting the storage closet for donations.



ALIVE! is proud to be the Anchor Beneficiary of Old Town Festival of Speed & Style on May 19th.



The Old Town Festival of Speed & Style, presented by Burke & Herbert Bank, will be held on the 200-400 blocks of King Street, and the 100 blocks of North Royal and North Fairfax from 10am-3pm. At the festival, you will be able to view dozens of rare and exotic cars up close, made famous by their speed, performance and elegance. There will also be a presentation of style, fashion, live music, and more than 40 local merchants! Learn more at:

www.festivalspeedstylealex.com

Food as Medicine

Soon after Dr. Jack Geiger, a two-time Nobel Peace Prize awardee, founded the nation's first community health centers in the 1960s, he was criticized for prescribing food for malnourished Mississippi children. When the Mississippi Governor accused him of misusing pharmacy funds, Geiger responded, "the last time I looked in my medical textbooks . . . the specific therapy for malnutrition was food."

It has long been known that poor diets are responsible for innumerable causes of disability and death. For example, though obesity was defined as an epidemic over 40 years ago, the number of states with an obesity rate at or above 35% doubled over the past five years to 19. One in 10 Americans have diabetes, one in three will be diagnosed with cancer, and nearly half of Americans suffer hypertension, a primary cause of heart disease and stroke. In Virginia, over 10% of the general population, and 13% of children, live in poverty. Not surprising, approximately 10% of Virginians are diagnosed with diabetes. Treating diabetic Virginians has been estimated at \$8.4 billion, or roughly \$500 million more than what the state spends annually on Medicaid. Two-thirds of Virginians are obese or overweight, 34% of children are, and one-third of Virginians experience high-blood pressure levels.

Largely for these reasons, the White House in September 2022 convened a conference on hunger, nutrition and health – only the second such meeting since 1969. The conference announced five strategies,



including integrating nutrition and health, to accomplish the administration's goal to reduce diet-related diseases and death.

In January, the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) held its first "Food Is Medicine" summit during which the department defined five related operating principles including facilitating easy access to healthy food across the health continuum and community and uniting diverse partners to build sustained and integrated solutions.

In 2023, Virginia's Medicaid program covered 15% of the state's 8.6 million residents: one in eight adults and three in ten children. Medicaid coverage will decline significantly or by roughly 10% as states this year complete unwinding enhanced federal Medicaid coverage provided during the pandemic.

Malnutrition and other sociomedical causes explain to a high degree the prevalence of disease and life expectancy. Access to a blend of nutritious food is vital for healthy communities, and ALIVE!'s programs that provide healthy foods to local pantries, at ALIVE! Food Hubs, and distribution events play an important role in health outcomes for our neighbors in need. ALIVE! also continues to be involved with other stakeholders and food providers to identify ways people can access food to encourage more discussion around the "food as medicine" topic along with the city and Capital Area Foodbank and our local hospital systems.



ALIVE! *Wire*

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Nonprofit Organization
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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 **49 faith organizations** and thousands of volunteers, partners and supporters.

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Did you know that ALIVE! serves roughly 20,000 people each month in the City of Alexandria who need essential grocery items?

Support ALIVE! during Spring2ACTion on APRIL 24, 2024

Neighbors Helping Neighbors
ALIVE!
Food - housing - support

MORE THAN A FOOD BANK

- Furniture Program
- Houseware Donations
- Financial Assistance
- Transitional Shelter

Support ALIVE! during Spring2ACTion!
April 24, 2024

Spring2ACTion
Alexandria's Giving Day
Presented by ACT for Alexandria

In addition to providing food to 14 local food pantries, ALIVE! distributes food at outdoor events and at two brick and mortar Food Hubs. Anyone in need can pick up fresh bread, eggs, meat, produce, and shelf stable items.

ALIVE! is more than just Alexandria's food bank. We are proud to help provide food, transitional shelter, financial assistance, housewares & furniture, and connection to support for Alexandrians in need.

Donate today!



Visit spring2action.org to start your own fundraiser to support ALIVE! or make a gift.