



Creative Partnerships with HomeAid National Capital Region

by Kat Zoppo, BSN, RN, MPH

ALIVE! House has been operating for more than 40 years, but the most recent renovation of this transitional shelter was in 2005. Recently, HomeAid National Capital Region, an organization that connects regional builders and housing industry professionals with nonprofits, completed a major renovation for ALIVE! House. Richmond American Homes and 21 other trade partners donated their time and expertise in renovating the ALIVE! House and the project was completed in just under 8 weeks! The estimated budget for the ALIVE! House renovation was more than \$110,040, but thanks to this partnership ALIVE! spent roughly \$6,000.

Through ALIVE! House, we are able to provide transitional housing to three families for up to 24 months. ALIVE! Client Services Director, Erika Gaitan, remarked how she's seen families transitioning into permanent housing struggle with challenges ranging from finding stable employment to domestic abuse. Thanks to HomeAid, the renovations of ALIVE! House will expand and improve ALIVE!'s ability to provide a safe and welcoming space for the families who need temporary housing.

Working together helps us be more cost effective in serving more families, which means we can serve our community better.

ERIKA GAITAN
CLIENT SERVICES DIRECTOR

Jennifer Ayers, ALIVE!'s Executive Director, reflected on the house renovation, stating "Now, what was an institutional space has been transformed into



HomeAid and Richmond American Homes organized 21 trade partners to make ALIVE! House Renovations

a dignified and beautiful space that people can call a home. Our goal is to move people from a place where they are at risk and hurting to a place that in two years they can leave and hopefully never have to go back to being homeless again. Thanks to HomeAid we now have a dignified and homey space, especially for the children who live here."

Erika recalled that from the beginning of their partnership in September 2023, HomeAid has made a massive impact HomeAid and Richmond American Homes organized 21 trade partners to make ALIVE! House renovations for ALIVE!. HomeAid has chipped in by providing benches for the food hub in Del Ray as well as holding the annual Builders for Babies Diaper Drive for families living in the Alexandria area. She expressed her appreciation for the organization, stating, "They're a great partner and have always been willing to help us when they can. Working together helps us be

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The ALIVE! Board has been working to develop a new Strategic Vision. Developing this vision has involved meeting and gathering data from clients, community partners, staff, community leaders, volunteers, and supporters to assess and set priorities for the organization. This is especially important as we move away from the pandemic and have acknowledged a need to connect people to services for longer-term stability. In other words, we hope to work more directly on serving clients holistically, by amplifying our work beyond food and crisis management and finding ways to continue to connect people to all they need. Whether that's furniture and housewares, or to another organization that may provide an important linkage to job training, eviction prevention, or childcare. There are many key things that have emerged from this plan, but ultimately, it's about becoming more effective and efficient at meeting the client needs and focusing more directly on how best to serve clients to help them reach a point where they can move from crisis to stability and eventually to a place where they may thrive.

We know that there is still a great and growing need for the help ALIVE! provides, and the only way that we will sustain these critical programs is because of volunteers and supporters like you!

I hope that you will consider supporting ALIVE! by signing up for the StepALIVE! Walkathon on October 20th as we gather to raise awareness of food and housing insecurity in our community and how we can work together to help our Alexandria neighbors in need.

Thank you!



Rolf Blank
President



Report Shows Increased Level of Food Insecurity

by Karl Bach, Outreach & Communications Director

According to a new report from the Capital Area Food Bank, 36% of Alexandria residents who were surveyed did not know where their next meal was coming from at some point during the past 12 months. Across our region, the report shows a 5% increase in rates of food insecurity compared to 2023.

Reports like this reflect what ALIVE! is seeing as we work to fill the gap for Alexandrians who need assistance securing basic grocery items. Our service numbers have remained consistently high with roughly 20,000 people seeking food or other types of assistance from ALIVE! each month.

In the 2024 Hunger Report, Capital Area Food Bank points to the compounding forces that contribute to increased levels of food insecurity in our community, including the cumulative impacts of inflation, lagging wage growth, and the decrease or ending of pandemic era assistance programs.

These conditions have led to food insecurity rising most sharply among the middle class, at the median household income levels (about \$121,000). Overall 76% of people experiencing food insecurity are employed and nearly a third of food insecure adults have a college degree or higher. This means that many who we see only have ALIVE! as they may not qualify for supportive services elsewhere.

When we see trends in reports like this that mirror what we see in our community, it underscores the importance of our work to support our neighbors in need. We must thank and continue to work through ALIVE! member congregations and volunteers and encourage everyone from local businesses to schools to host food drives. Lastly, our decision makers at every level need to ensure that they craft policies that ultimately enhance assistance and alleviate the conditions driving food insecurity.



Creative Partnerships with HomeAid, *continued*

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more cost effective in serving more families, which means we can serve our community better. That's what I think partnerships are about."

Here's a showcase of some of the work HomeAid has done for ALIVE!:

- **HomeAid connected ALIVE! with Van Metre Homes to construct benches and raised planting beds for the ALIVE! Food Hub in Del Ray.** This has allowed ALIVE! to grow fresh produce onsite for our Alexandrian neighbors.
- **This year, HomeAid's Builders for Babies Diaper Drive collected nearly 760,000 diapers and wipes throughout Northern Virginia.** About 20,000 of those diapers and wipes were donated to the ALIVE! for distribution at Food Hubs.
- **HomeAid assisted in providing a Care Day to the ALIVE! Administrative Office** where volunteers helped paint to give the space a fresh and inviting feeling.
- **HomeAid assisted in renovating ALIVE! House which includes three residential units, as well as a staff office space, a resident common area, and a half bath for staff.** This space provides up to 24 months of transitional housing and support for women and families.



FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HOME DELIVERY

Did you know that ALIVE!'s Family Assistance Program delivers food to Alexandrians who aren't able to visit one of the food hubs or grocery distribution events? Upon referral from a recognized organization or ALIVE! member congregation, volunteers bring essential food to families in need 5 days a week. If you are looking for a regular volunteer opportunity contact volunteermg@alive-inc.org or sign up online at:

www.alive-inc.org/we-need-volunteers-alexandria-va/

Volunteer Alexandria Coordinates Successful 2nd Annual Community Food Drive

by Lynn Jordan

Neighbors helping neighbors is effective not only when people are moved to generosity, but also when they are supported by coordination and partnerships. ALIVE! has literally reaped the benefits of a community food drive for the second year in a row, under the direction of Marion Brunken, Executive Director of Volunteer Alexandria (VolALX).

Food donations were collected at a variety of local businesses, non-profit organizations, churches, libraries, and other locations throughout the City during the month of July. Marion said “Our 2nd annual Food4ALX was a success because together, we exceeded our goal and collected more than 35,000 pounds of food. It is amazing and heartwarming how this community comes together to help those in need. Volunteers, businesses, individuals and groups, young and old, came together to make this food drive a success. We can’t thank them enough.”

The need for food assistance is ongoing and ALIVE!

Our 2nd annual Food4ALX was a success because together, we exceeded our goal and collected over 35,000 pounds of food.

**MARION BRUNKEN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
VOLUNTEER ALEXANDRIA**

seeks contributions throughout the year to provide food for VolALX to make this event successful. VolALX also donated a percentage of sponsorships to ALIVE! This year top donors included: Passport Auto Group, United Bank, Lisa Groover, and The Hoffman Center.

Anjolaoluwa Fashanu,
ALIVE!’s Food Program



Paige Fawehinmi with United Bank and ALIVE! Warehouse Staff celebrate exceeding the Food4ALX food drive goal.

Manager, said, “there’s always a constant need to have food available so ALIVE! can continue to function effectively and provide food to community members in need.” This was Anjolaoluwa’s first large food drive since starting with ALIVE! in April 2024, and she thinks it went well. She noted that Alexandria City High School student volunteers helped to collect food donations and learned a lot about food insecurity. Anjolaoluwa said another “really, really cool” aspect of the food drive was that her mother, who works for United Bank, led the bank’s efforts for the food drive and made it one of the top providers.

The community’s donations help ALIVE! to reduce its expenses and provide a variety of food to people who need food assistance and rely on ALIVE! to serve as a safety net. Non-perishable food donations are welcome throughout the year and can be delivered directly to the ALIVE! Warehouse at 801 South Payne Street Monday- Friday 9am-4pm and on Saturdays 9am-Noon.

VolALX not only coordinated volunteers for the food drive, they also regularly promote ALIVE!’s various volunteer opportunities on their website. See if there’s an opportunity that meets your schedule—no matter the time of year! www.volunteerallexandria.org

ALIVE!'s Furniture Program is Transformational—Literally and Figuratively!

by Lynn Jordan

Furniture donations help fill empty spaces within four walls and help families feel more at home; they also allow volunteers to see how they are making a difference for our Alexandria neighbors.

ALIVE! is fortunate to have great volunteers who team up each Saturday morning and some Sundays. ALIVE! sends out these teams of volunteers to collect donations of a variety of furniture (beds, sofas, tables, chairs, etc.) and deliver them to Alexandria families who need them.

Some Saturdays, there are enough volunteers and drivers to send out two trucks. This means ALIVE! is able to help twice as many families get connected essential furniture. Thank you to everyone who volunteers and to all the donors who sign up online to have furniture picked up.

Volunteers have delivered furniture to many families, including a family of recent immigrants from Afghanistan who needed a dining room table and chairs, a woman who was recently homeless who needed a chair and ottoman because her medical condition requires her to elevate her feet, a mother of two who had been sleeping on an air mattress who received a bed and dresser, and another mom who is battling cancer and had been waiting to receive a bed from us. They are all people who ALIVE! volunteers are honored to meet; neighbors helping neighbors!

Nancy Lopez, ALIVE! Furniture Program Chair, says, “On most Saturdays, the furniture team walks into at least one almost empty client apartment. It’s a great feeling when you can bring all of the items needed to furnish a living room, a bedroom, or both! People’s eyes light up when they see an empty room turn into a furnished space. It just feels more like a home.”

ALIVE! volunteers have met people who lost everything due to a variety of situations, such as: domestic violence, leaving temporary housing, having a U-Haul with belongings inside



towed away, bed bug infestations, or because they are refugees recently resettled from their home country.

Nancy noted a recent delivery experience that was for a family where the kids were sleeping on hardwood floors with just a blanket. Mom was at work when ALIVE!'s furniture volunteers delivered two beds. A few minutes after we left the home, she sent a text message that the kids were so happy and excited about their new beds! “Thank you and God bless you!” she texted.

After delivering a sofa and loveseat to someone who needed them, a first-time volunteer was struck by the impact that our furniture donations have. He said, “This is amazing work you are doing! You do this every weekend?”

If you want to do amazing, life-changing work and help transform empty apartments into comfortable homes, join us to move furniture, drive trucks, or manage donation schedules. It’s a great weekend activity for the whole family! Sign up on the ALIVE! website to spend a Saturday making a difference with the Furniture Program, or any of ALIVE!'s programs.

ALIVE!'s New Online Store for Food Donations



Food drives are an important way for ALIVE! to receive the resources we need to help support our community. Sometimes bringing items to a collection point or to the warehouse isn't convenient for everyone. That's why ALIVE! recently launched an online store in partnership with YouGiveGoods. This allows donors to purchase specific items like diapers and baby wipes, hygiene items, and food for the after school meals program from our wishlist without ever leaving the house. Items are even bulk shipped directly to the warehouse at the end of the month to cut down on transportation costs. If you are someone who has ever forgotten to make a grocery run before a company food drive or left items at home on the day of a drive this option might be for you!

Learn more about selecting items online at: www.alive-inc.org/donate-items

The Journey of Each Food Donation

by Kat Zoppo, BSN, RN, MPH

Between April and June of 2024, ALIVE! received approximately 51,885 pounds of donated goods, equating to an estimated \$52,000, from 11 retail stores, with Giant providing more than a third of all donations. But picking up donations from a local grocery store is just the start of the journey each item takes.



RECEIVING DONATIONS

ALIVE! receives food donations from numerous sources including food drives, companies, individuals and even online donations through the ALIVE! website. These are typically shelf stable items.

ALIVE! staff and volunteers also collect and purchase food from various vendors, such as grocery stores, USDA, and Capital Area Food Bank. These items are then sent to a warehouse for sorting and processing.



INVENTORY CYCLE

While in the warehouse, all food items (canned, fresh, frozen) are put on a scale and weighed in pounds. Food items are checked in accordance with USDA food regulations and guidelines

to make sure they are safe for consumption. Food items that don't meet these regulations and guidelines are composted.

Food items are marked with the date it was received, the food's expiration date, and the donor type (individual, organization, grocery store). This information is kept in an inventory database and is regularly tracked. The food items are then sorted by food type and shelved or moved out for distribution to clients.



DELIVERY HAND-OFF

Staff drivers and volunteers receive a food list from the food distribution site and collect the food items that the site will need for the following day.

Food items are recorded on an order form that is signed by both the delivery driver and receiving person from the food distribution site.

Then the food items are logged out the inventory database to ensure accurate recording.



DISTRIBUTION SITES

ALIVE!'s two Food Hubs are among the most utilized food resources for the Alexandria community. Community members can choose either of the hubs based on convenience. The

food hub sites receive deliveries five days a week.

Through the ALIVE! Family Assistance Program, staff and volunteers deliver food clients who aren't able to visit a distribution site. Clients typically receive a combination of US Department of Agriculture-supplied food and donated food. Between 100 and 200 clients are served each month through this program.

ALIVE! provides food to approximately 4,500-5,000 households in Alexandria per month. This requires roughly 300 volunteer shifts plus staff time to distribute food to our neighbors in need.

DELIVERY TO DISTRIBUTION SITES



Food items are delivered by ALIVE! staff and volunteers to designated food sites such as food hubs, pantries, and community member homes. This includes over 12 pantries, schools, and recreational centers.

ALIVE!'s Pillars of Giving

Each month, ALIVE! helps connect Alexandrians to food, housing and financial assistance services. This work could not happen without donations from generous supporters. That is why we're excited to announce the launch of three **giving recognition programs**:

I donate each month to ALIVE! because we have a responsibility to make sure people in our community don't go hungry.

KAREN STREICH,
ALIVE! SUSTAINING SUPPORTER



Sustaining Supporters is our giving recognition program for donors who give a donation each month. These monthly contributions help sustain ALIVE! and operate as a dependable and stable resource for the organization. These donors help ensure that our clients are always taken care of and our doors are always open.

ALIVE! has been a part of my life since 1975. I was drawn to its interfaith mission and the way the volunteers served our community. In nearly 50 years, I've seen ALIVE! deliver what is most needed to our neighbors. That's why ALIVE! is in my will.

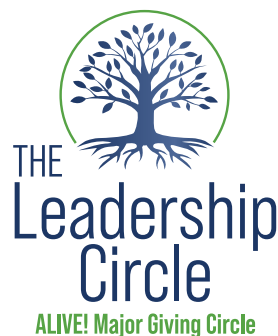
KEN D. NASER, ALIVE! VOLUNTEER,
FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
AND ITS FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2005- 2014,
AND 1969 SOCIETY MEMBER



The 1969 Society recognizes donors who have made the decision to leave a part of their legacy with ALIVE! in their estate plans. Our organization was founded in 1969 by caring individuals who wanted to help their Alexandrian community. By becoming a member of the 1969 Society, you can be assured that ALIVE! will carry on your intentions and our founders' intentions to make Alexandria a community for everyone.

I have been volunteering with ALIVE! for the past 20 years, and I know first-hand what a difference it makes in the lives of our neighbors.

VONDA K. DELAWIE,
ALIVE! CONGREGATION REPRESENTATIVE,
LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBER



The Leadership Circle honors our major donors who have made cumulative contributions of \$1,000 or more over the course of the year. These donations make a significant impact on our capacity - they can pay for the internet at the ALIVE! House, help us fuel the ALIVE! trucks, or other routine costs. Sustaining Supporters who give \$84+ each month also qualify for the Leadership Circle.

Benefits for our **SUSTAINING SUPPORTERS** include email updates each month and an invitation to the ALIVE! Donor Appreciation Event. For more information on or to become a Sustaining Supporter, contact Katie Fuller, Development Associate, at kfuller@alive-inc.org or (571) 351-3272.

Benefits for **THE 1969 SOCIETY** and **THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE** include quarterly update letters, invitation to an annual update call with the ALIVE! Board President or Executive Director, and a guided tour of ALIVE! Facilities. For more information on or to become a member of either (or both!), contact Michelle M. Lockwood, Development Director, at mlockwood@alive-inc.org or (703) 457-0384.

ALIVE! *Neighbors*

Neighbors Helping Neighbors



The oldest and largest organization preventing food and housing insecurity in Alexandria, ALIVE! serves 20,000 individuals each month through three key programming areas: **Food, Housing, and Financial Assistance.**

Founded in 1969, ALIVE! is supported by a 17 member staff, 50 interfaith congregations and thousands of volunteer, partners and donors.

703-837-9300
info@alive-inc.org

www.alive-inc.org

   @alive4alexandria
 @alive4alexVA

ALIVE!
2723 King Street
Alexandria, VA 22302

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Take a Step Towards Ending Food and Housing Insecurity with StepALIVE!

On Sunday, October 20th, supporters of ALIVE! will gather to raise funds and awareness around economic disparity in Alexandria at the StepALIVE! Walkathon. ALIVE! serves more than 20,000 Alexandrians each month and StepALIVE! supporters are a key part of ensuring we can continue our work.

We hope you can join us by registering to walk, forming your own team, or donating online. See more at: alive-inc.org/stepalive