



Sheriff Casey cuts the ribbon of ALIVE!'s new truck with Bishop Zach Parks
 PHOTO CREDIT: Chris Reese Revolve Solutions

Giving Thanks for a Truck

by Jose Amaya, Program Operations Director

You've probably seen one of the ALIVE! trucks on the road bringing food donations from local grocery stores to the warehouse or moving pallets of food and supplies to distribution sites all over the city. You might be surprised to learn that we also need to rent trucks 12 times a month to meet our food and furniture donation delivery programs' needs. This happens most often on the last Saturday of the month when we are operating two large volume grocery distributions and sending out as many as three trucks to collect furniture donations.

Thanks to the generosity of the Alexandria congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we've received essential support

This generous gift from the Alexandria congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will greatly expand our ability to deliver fresh, healthy food to our neighbors in need.

in securing large food donations to help meet our community's needs. Since 2020, they have organized truckload-sized shipments of shelf-stable food donations from Salt Lake City to ALIVE!'s warehouse in Old Town — each delivery containing roughly 40,000 pounds of food. Their partnership recently reached

a new milestone when, at the end of 2024, ALIVE! was surprised and grateful to receive one of the Church's 26-foot refrigerated delivery trucks. A truck like this would have cost ALIVE! about \$150,000 if we bought it brand new. This generous gift will greatly expand our ability to deliver fresh, healthy food to our neighbors in need.

Since it is required for food to remain at proper temperatures during transport, refrigerator trucks are essential in the transportation of food donations that must be kept cold. This new vehicle will more than double our refrigerated truck capacity and the temperature sensitive food that we can collect, joining the fleet of four box trucks that ALIVE! uses to transport roughly 2 million pounds of food each year.

These vehicles are a vital part of how ALIVE! is able to maximize the amount of donations we can bring in and also the essential way we move large volumes of food into the community where it is needed the most. Donated trucks and volunteers to help with driving keep our transportation costs down as it means we have to rent fewer trucks to get the job done and can handle higher payloads. Thanks to the financial support of our community we are able to make all this happen and bring daily essentials to our Alexandria neighbors in need.

ALIVE! CONGREGATIONS

Agudas Achim Congregation
 Alexandria Bahá'í Community
 Alexandria Church of the Nazarene
 Alfred Street Baptist Church
 Alleyne AME Zion Church
 Basilica of St. Mary
 Beth El Hebrew Congregation
 Beulah Baptist Church
 Beverley Hills Community United Methodist Church
 Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
 Christ Church
 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
 Church of St. Clement
 Church of the Resurrection
 Commonwealth Baptist Church
 Community Praise Church
 Del Ray United Methodist Church
 Ebenezer Baptist Church
 Emmanuel Episcopal Church
 Fairlington Presbyterian Church
 Fairlington United Methodist Church
 First Agape Baptist Community of Faith
 First Baptist Church of Alexandria
 First Christian Church of Alexandria
 First Church of Christ, Scientist
 Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
 Goodwin House Alexandria Memorial Chapel
 Grace Episcopal Church
 Hill City Church
 Immanuel Church-on-the-Hill
 Meade Memorial Episcopal Church
 New Life International United Methodist Church
 Oakland Baptist Church
 Old Presbyterian Meeting House
 Old Town Community Church
 Redeemed Church of Christ
 Roberts Memorial United Methodist Church
 Russell Temple Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
 St. James United Methodist Church
 St. Joseph Catholic Church
 St. Paul's Episcopal Church
 St. Rita Catholic Church
 Sixteenth Tabernacle Beth El
 Third Baptist Church
 Trinity United Methodist Church
 Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington
 Victory Temple Missionary Baptist Church
 Washington Street United Methodist Church
 Westminster Presbyterian Church
 Zion Baptist Church

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

ALIVE! works hard to maintain the safety net in Alexandria by providing essential food, emergency financial assistance, and other supportive services to Alexandrians experiencing financial insecurity. Last year alone we provided the equivalent of 1.7 million meals for such Alexandria residents in need. Currently, we are providing groceries to a little more than 20,000 people each month by supplying 17 food pantries, two brick and mortar food hubs open four days a week, and seven monthly partner groceries distributions in food insecure neighborhoods across the city. Our programs support after school meal programs for students, grocery home delivery for seniors and people living with disability, and financial assistance for residents of our city who need supplemental support to meet their household budgets.



In this issue of *ALIVE!Wire* you'll see how ALIVE! is striving to intentionally meet the needs of the people we serve. That takes shape in a few different ways. From focus on using our resources efficiently and effectively, to improving volunteer engagement and training, and to centering clients in all we do. Each aspect is an important piece in the tapestry of how our community responds to the daily needs of people who are in search of support so that they can move from crisis to stability.

Even as we work to expand our efforts we, like many other nonprofits, are looking for sources of funding to meet possibly even greater needs in our local community. As costs increase and we see new clients turn to our services, we will be challenged to serve all. What we can say confidently is that we will do as much as we can, to help as many people as possible with whatever we have. Your help can make a difference.

I hope that you see your own involvement reflected in one or more of the stories in this edition of *ALIVE!Wire* and I invite you to imagine how you can help us in our mission. Taking actions like volunteering at our food hubs, organizing a food drive, or contributing financially will make a meaningful impact on the lives of many people who live, work, and raise a family in our City.

Rolf Blank
 President

Each month, roughly 100 volunteers distribute groceries like eggs, bread, meat, fresh produce, and shelf stable items at ALIVE!'s Last Saturday Food distributions. **Alfred Street Baptist Church** and **Community Praise Church** consistently organize groups of 10-12 volunteers to assist at the "Chick" Armstrong Recreation Center and the William Ramsay Recreation Center. These distribution sites serve about 650 households on the last Saturday each month (roughly 2,600 people!).

CONGREGATIONAL
 CORNER

Called to Compost

by *Tim Enright, Program Manager*

We pride ourselves on making the most out of every donation we receive. Between our 17 food pantry partnerships, two ALIVE! Food Hubs, the daily grocery home delivery program, and five monthly distribution events we must be able to make sure that we get essential food out as quickly as possible to the people who need it the most. To do that we rely on a lot of donated food that must be sorted, stored, or sent out for immediate use.

Sometimes when we inspect donations from a food drive we find damaged items that can't be used or fresh bread donated from a local grocery store didn't make it in time to be usable. Instead of putting these items in the trash, ALIVE! followed the example of the City of Alexandria's curbside composting pilot, and now these items are collected through our weekly composting program.

Because of our partnership with Monster Organics, a company that operates the curbside composting business, we have been able to divert spoiled items from the trash and into useful soil. In the first year of this program we have been able to divert 17,728 pounds of organic material from the trash. From a greenhouse gas equivalency standpoint this composting effort is the equivalent of not driving 17,871 miles.

By working to make the most out of every donated item through composting we aren't just being responsible stewards of our environment. We are also maximizing the benefit to our clients. Monster Organics donates hundreds of pounds of planting soil to the ALIVE! Community Garden in Del Ray each year. The results have been stunning as this soil nurtures the peppers, tomatoes, eggplants, and other fresh herbs and vegetables that we are able to offer to our neighbors.

The next time you are walking by the Del Ray Food Hub, we invite you to wander through the garden and imagine how a dented can of green beans has found new purpose as the soil that is growing nutritious produce for Alexandrians in need.



If you would like to explore composting use ALIVE!'s referral code to receive a discount on your subscription:

tinyurl.com/29ymhdag



Empty Bowls, Full Hearts

by Lynn Jordan, Volunteer

Eighth Annual Empty Bowls Alexandria Fundraiser Raises Record-Breaking Donations

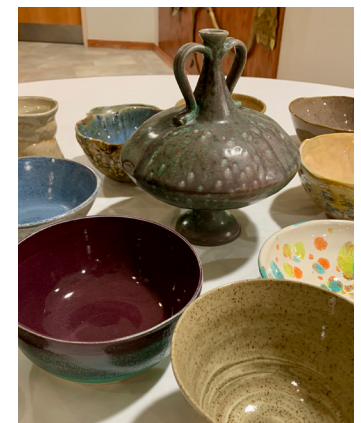
Every month, 20,000 people in our community depend on ALIVE! for food, housing, and financial assistance. Events like Empty Bowls Alexandria are one of the ways we raise funds and awareness of ALIVE!'s programs to make our work possible. The first Empty Bowls Alexandria event was held in November 2015 and raised \$37,000. This year, the 8th Empty Bowls Alexandria was held on March 8th and raised more than \$77,000 from a combination of ticket sales, sponsorships, and donations!

More than 200 people attended the event held at Beth El Hebrew Congregation, and enjoyed food donated by local restaurants:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Beeliner Diner | Hops & Shine |
| Benny DiForza's Pizza | Jet's Pizza |
| Bread & Water Company | Lena's |
| Buzz Bakeshop | Los Tios Grill |
| Cameron Café | Maribeth's Bakery |
| Chadwicks | Matt and Tony's All Day Kitchen & Bar |
| Chalkboard | Pork Barrel BBQ |
| Dairy Godmother | Right Proper Brewing |
| Daniel O'Connell's Irish Restaurant & Bar | Shorty's Deluxe |
| Del Ray Café | Spice Kraft Indian Bistro |
| Effingham Manor & Winery | Sweet Fire Donna's |
| Great Harvest Bakery | Taqueria El Poblano |
| | Taverna Cretekou |

Musical entertainment was provided by the **Alexandria Citizens Band**.

Special thanks to **Mayor Alyia Gaskins** for her welcoming remarks, **Beth El Hebrew Congregation Cantor Jason Kaufman** for leading the blessing and to our Honorary Co-Chairs: **Lauren Fisher**,



Del Ray Business Association; **Mary Ann Burstein**, West End Business Association; and **Morgan Babcock**, Carlyle Council. Another thank you to our Community Champion Sponsor, **The Jen Walker Team**, and our ongoing gratitude for the many ALIVE! volunteers who helped make the event happen.

VOLUNTEER HONOR ROLL

by Amorita Quintanilla, Volunteer Coordinator

In the 56 years that ALIVE! has been a part of our community's safety net, there have been volunteers working to make every aspect of our work possible. Volunteers drive the trucks to pick up donations from local grocery stores and bring them to the warehouse and then back out into the neighborhoods to distribute food. Volunteers sort food drive donations, pack pallets of food, and load up deliveries to pantries and distribution sites. Volunteers plan fundraising events, coordinate furniture donations, serve on the board, provide language interpretation, and more than we can ever list here.

Your time matters to us and all you do, from the sorting of bread, to the organizing of an event, what you do is important to ALIVE! and more important to the people we serve who rely on you. If you are one of the nearly 4,000 people who have signed up to volunteer with ALIVE! since 2021 we want to say thank you. Here's a list of some of the volunteers who have contributed outstanding volunteer service with ALIVE! in the last three years.

Kayne Addison	Faith Crawford	Benjamin Hubbert	John Nickens II	Kathryn Spang
Stephanie Akiwowo	Carolina Crelier	Lynn Introcaso	Anthony Norwood	Lauren Sparks
Patricio Alltuna	Kaitlyn Cresent	Tyra Jackson	Nathaniel Obinwa III	Michael Spatz
Josephine Andrews	Swarnali Das	Denielle Jandres	Albert Osam	Samuel Stevens
Marsha Ansel	Suvra Das	Allison Johnson	Tania Paiz	Denise Stevens
Ayesha Anwar	Nikodimos Desalegn	Jamie Jones	Allison Paytas	Andrea Stoycheva
Nicolas Aparicio	Stefana Dimova	DeShane Jones	John Perlman	Larry Sullivan
Dorothea Arnold	Mary Eileen Dixon	Samantha Jones	Susan Pollack	Cathryn Summers
Nelofar Asetanekzai	Wanda Dougherty	Lynn Jordan	Jenna Presta	Leslie Thornton
Yasamin Asetanekzai	Alexander Douglas	Thomas Kallarackal	Charlene Pritzker	Thu Hue Tran
Tenesae Asfaw	Kristine Dunne Maher	Kim Kendrick	Robert Pusey	Nina Trocky
Cole Ashcraft	Jimmy Edwards	Arline Kerrigan	Richard Ragland	Marco Van Doeveren
Dereje Asress	Katrina Edwards	Sirak Kiros	Megan Rattliff	Steven Varrecchio
Francoise Aubry-Kendall	Brian Ellis	Suzanne Kratzok	Yolanda Rivera	Jorgelina Villagomez
Nancy Ault	Lauren Ellison	Man Lama	Lenwood Roberts	Oleksandr Vorobiei
Karl Bach	Denisse Estrada	Maurice Lane Jr	Pedro Romero	Leah Wade
Sheila Bailey	Carrie Fairmon	Brandon Latham	Judith Royce-Cohen	Janice Walton
Dinae Balbontin	Cordell Fields	Nina Lawrence	Madeline Rubenstein	Cherry Waziri
Noah Beamon	Steven Fischer	Sue Leibert	Jessica Ruble	Megan White
Janese Bechtol	Samantha Fontenelle	Marjorie Leong	Lucas Samuel	Katherine Wiley
Brooke Beezley	Nancy Foote	Nancy Lopez	James Sanchez	Jeffrey Wojcik
Spencer Beloin	Glory Fortuna	Ahmad Lutfi	Tina Sanders	Kimberly Womble
Matt Bieschke	Heather Frazier	Don MacDonald	Deborah Schaffer	David Wynne
Ashley Biggs	Tom Fulham	Suzette Manduley	Peter Schirtzinger	David Yee
Wendy Billett	Laurese Gerald	Frances Marquez	Barbara Seaman	Abbie Yirrah
Tom Birner	Madelyn Giblin	Brian Marvin	Rosalba Semidey	Nick Zahn
Stephanie Blackmon	Candace Gibson	Jennifer Mason	John Shockley	<i>If your name isn't here,</i>
Robbin Blaya	Brea Gladney	Damenica McAlister	Victor Silva Leon	<i>make sure you're signed up</i>
Sydney Bonner	Steve Glomb	Ann McCracken	Todd Simpson	<i>in our volunteer database,</i>
Nya Bradshaw	Alexandra Gordon-Forbes	Kim McShea	Hersh Singh	<i>Volgistics. Registration takes</i>
Qiana Brewer	Siobhan Gordon-Mould	Erik Medrano	Faith Smith	<i>only a moment and can be</i>
Robert Britton	Catherine Gray	Louise Meng	L'Allegro Smith	<i>found by clicking the</i>
Elon brumfield	Adrienne Griffin	Gabriela Mercado	Alpha Sowe	<i>"Get Involved" tab on the</i>
Winifred Brumskine	Pedro Guerra	Zane Midani		<i>ALIVE! website.</i>
Ann Brunk	Vanessa Gutierrez	Kari Mirchandani		
Eden Buba	Kevin Hagmeier	Francine Mitcham		
Lora Buzinkai	Andrea Hamre	Kim Molthen		
Han Calamug	Sharon Hanson	Afif Monis		
Kelly Canales	Joe Harrington	Bryant Morris		
Kelly Carpenter	Mike Hart	Joan Moser		
Tiffany Carter	Mursal Hashimi	Lloyd Moss		
Simona Cipra	Ayman Hassan	Jennifer Moustgaard		
Herve Claude	Aidan Heinsius	Richard Mumford		
Lisa Clausen	Jessica Hernandez	William Murphy		
Carolyn Connors	Christopher Hilborn	Son Nguyen		

Last year, **Episcopal Church of the Resurrection** made a donation of \$20,000 to ALIVE! as part of their 60th anniversary celebration. This has helped fund ALIVE!'s Food Program and specifically provides food for the West End Food Pantry, one of the 17 local food pantries that ALIVE! supports.

CONGREGATIONAL
CORNER

NOURISHING YOUNG MINDS: Supporting Alexandria's Students

by Michelle Lockwood, Development Director

At ALIVE!, we believe that no child should have to worry about where their next meal will come from. That's why our partnership with Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) is so important — together, we're making sure students across our community have the food they need to thrive.

For many families in Alexandria, especially those in Title I Schools, where the Federal government provides funding for low-income families, or those living in neighborhoods with high rates of food insecurity and economic disparity like those served by Cora Kelly and William Ramsay Elementary Schools, putting food on the table can be a daily challenge. When children don't have enough to eat, it's harder for them to focus in class, stay energized, and feel secure.

Each weekend, ALIVE! provides supplemental groceries to 300 students across five schools, filling their backpacks with easy-to-prepare meals, snacks, and juices. These kid-friendly food bags ensure children have the nutrition they need to stay energized and focused when they're away from school. For many families, these weekend bags are a lifeline, offering comfort and stability during uncertain times.

But our support doesn't stop there. Last winter break, when social workers at Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology, George Washington Middle School, and William Ramsay

Elementary School reached out for assistance to ensure kids had food over the extended school breaks. Thankfully, ALIVE! helped fill this need by delivering additional food to 1,200 students across three schools. These extra provisions help ensure that no child is left hungry when school doors close.

ALIVE! also provides critical logistical support to Mount Vernon Community School, ensuring their internal food distribution program has the space and resources needed to succeed.

And for families at Cora Kelly School and William Ramsay Elementary School, our community-wide food distributions offer fresh groceries and connections to vital services that ease the burden for parents working hard to provide for their children.

ALIVE! also helps keep the pantry at Alexandria City High School stocked and works closely with Community in Schools for their distribution at Francis Hammond Middle School on a regular basis.

Through each of these efforts, ALIVE! is more than just a provider of food — we're a partner in ensuring Alexandria's children can grow, learn, and thrive. Every meal we deliver is a reminder that our community stands together to support its youngest members.

Your support makes this possible. Together, we're helping children focus on what they do best – being kids.



ALIVE!'s Newest Partnership with DASH

by Karl Bach, Director of Communications

Starting in March, ALIVE! will be featured on posters inside the 125 DASH buses that travel through the City of Alexandria. These posters invite the community to get involved by volunteering with ALIVE!, reminding passengers that together, we can make Alexandria a stronger, more connected community. Next time you're on a DASH bus, we hope you'll look up — and be inspired to lend a helping hand.

DASH has always been a key partner in connecting people in our community with resources to help meet their daily needs. And they have featured ALIVE!'s food distribution locations on their websites with indicators about which bus lines serves each location and even provided ALIVE! with a list of all the routes that come to our locations. Many of our clients do not have cars, and rely on DASH for their daily transportation needs. We hope that together we can be connected in new ways.



Thank you to **Beth El Hebrew Congregation** for hosting the recent Diapers & Wipes Drive! Hundreds of diapers were brought over to ALIVE!'s warehouse in Old Town Alexandria where volunteers sorted and prepared these items for delivery to the ALIVE! Food Hubs. If you'd like to learn more about donating diapers, food, furniture, reusable grocery bags, or purchase items from ALIVE!'s online donation tool, please visit: alive-inc.org/donate-items/

CONGREGATIONAL
CORNER

ALIVE! Strives to Provide Culturally Appropriate Foods

by Lynn Jordan, Volunteer

Ideally, when people facing food insecurity visit an ALIVE! food hub or food distribution site, they will find common food staples as well as foods that are unique to their culture. ALIVE! strives to be respectful of clients' dietary restrictions and we don't want to give something to someone who cannot eat it. When we source food, we try to meet the needs of the community we are serving as best we are able. For example, we offer some halal foods upon request, but do not put them in the same refrigerator as pork products.

Halal meat is prepared in accordance to Islamic faith tradition. For meat to be considered halal, it must come from an animal that is permissible to eat (e.g., cow, chicken, sheep, goat) and must be slaughtered according to Islamic guidelines. Non-halal meat cannot be substituted when halal meat is not available, so ALIVE! ensures other appropriate foods are offered, for instance eggs instead of non-halal chicken, and culturally familiar vegetarian proteins such as lentils and dal. Freshwater fish don't require the same slaughter practices as halal meat, but food must be culturally appropriate—for example tuna fish is halal, but it may not be familiar to people from mountain areas.

Most plant-based foods, grains, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables are considered halal as long as they are not prepared using non-halal utensils or contaminated with non-halal substances such as food additives like gelatin (made from hooves of cattle and pigs) and lard (pig fat) or sprayed with non-halal chemicals.

Although ALIVE! tries to include a halal section at its food hubs and distribution sites, it is challenging to do so. Building relationships with suppliers who specialize in culturally relevant products allows us to better serve our clients.

For several years, ALIVE! has partnered with Alexandria based Islamic Relief USA (IRUSA), and is grateful for their donations of food and volunteer support. Examples of this partnership have included donations of food prepared at an annual event on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day with students from Episcopal High School, and the donation of Halal turkeys for home delivery clients and people receiving baskets for Thanksgiving. IRUSA also donates bags of high protein food that simply require hot water to eat to help supplement food basics. Each year, members of the ALIVE! staff join local faith leaders and community partners for



IRUSA's Alexandria Interfaith Ramadan Iftar. In addition to sharing a meal to break the daily fast during Ramadan, attendees reflect on the values of gratitude and giving in our community.

Kesha Abdul-Mateen, IRUSA Programs Manager, notes that they partner with organizations that align with their mission to eradicate hunger and would like to continue to work with ALIVE!. She says that although halal food is a requirement for Muslims, it is good food for everybody.

Tim Enright, ALIVE! Program Manager, agrees that more organic types of foods appeal to non-Muslims, but because halal foods are limited, we need to ensure they are available for Muslim clients.

Yasamin Asetanekzai, the Former West End Food Hub Assistant Service Navigator, and now volunteer, knows about the importance of providing halal foods. She notes that about 40-50 people come to the food hub every day, most from Morocco and Afghanistan. She indicates that halal foods are often not available, so when they are, they go fast. Foods such as fresh and canned produce and eggs are acceptable but provide too few options. ALIVE! wants to provide more halal foods to meet the increasing need, but meat and other items are generally hard to obtain.

If you'd like to support ALIVE! by donating shelf stable culturally appropriate food or contributing financially, please visit: alive-inc.org

ALIVE! *Wired*

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Neighbors Helping Neighbors



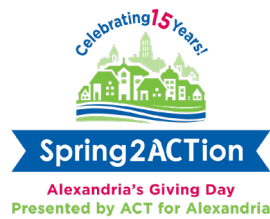
The oldest and largest organization preventing food and housing insecurity in Alexandria, ALIVE! serves 20,000 individuals each month through three key programming areas: **Food, Housing, and Financial Assistance.**

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

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Mark Your Calendars for **Spring2ACTion** on April 9th!



Early giving begins March 26th. Last year, 360 people contributed more than \$82,000 to ALIVE! and this year we set a goal of raising at least \$90,000. This event comes at a time when our region may be facing increased needs, and every dollar will make a difference.

Visit spring2ction.com to learn more
and make your donation today!