



Arlington Food Assistance Center

"Feeding Our Neighbors In Need"

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Julie Reynes, who built the beautiful planters that grace the porch entrance of AFAC. They will be planted with flowers and herbs later this fall and will be enjoyed by our staff, clients, volunteers and visitors.

John Sittig, who for many years assisted has AFAC Treasurer George Keller. John is now stationed in Baghdad working as a computer comptroller for the U.S. Army.



You can donate online to AFAC. See our website for details. www.afacinfo.org

AFAC CLIENT GROWTH

In the past few months, AFAC has experienced a double-digit increase in the number of clients qualifying for the free groceries we provide. In the summer, the number of clients served weekly was up over 25 percent compared with the same period in 2006. The rate of growth declined slightly in October, but it was still in the 15-18 percent range.

For example, in the first week of October, AFAC served 730 clients, a 17-percent increase from the same week in 2006. So far, we have been able to provide food to all the families each week, but we face the real challenge of doing so for the foreseeable future. This growth means that AFAC will need more donations of food and money and increased volunteer time to feed our neighbors in need.

Two points about the clients we serve: They are not just the working poor – those who work fulltime but don't earn enough to support their families. Rather, they include all ages, from the retired couple

with not enough income to continue living in Arlington to preschool children, and people of a wide variety of races and nationalities. All of them depend on AFAC for healthy groceries each week. AFAC's clients come to us through referrals from Arlington county social service agencies, churches and other agencies.

There are likely many reasons for this growth in the number seeking help from AFAC. While unemployment in Arlington is still very low, there has been a downturn in construction work. Another possible cause is that more families in Arlington are trying to remain here for whatever reason. A move to an area with lower-cost housing may mean increased transportation costs, more difficult access to health care or less desirable schools for children.

In short, the growing demand for food from AFAC means greater reliance on support from our many donors of all kinds. Please remember the need.

2007 CROP WALK

The 26th annual CROP Walk on Saturday October 20th saw about 150 enthusiastic adults, youth, children and dogs complete the six-mile walk to fight hunger both around the world and here in Arlington. Church World Service uses the money raised to provide food relief, drill wells and help improve farming methods. AFAC is the designated recipient of the 25-percent local share of the total raised. Last year that came to over \$10,000. Results for this year aren't final yet, but the initial results are encouraging. More churches participated, and more funds were raised online.



CROP Walk participants receive brief instructions at Arlington Forest United Methodist Church before setting out on their walk.

AFAC BOARD MEMBERS

Jim Whelan, Chair
Sue Covucci, Vice Chair
Koji Hirota, Secretary
George Keller, Treasurer
Eileen Conoboy
Cindy Irving
Andrew Lee
Edd Nolen
Sandy Robinson
Nancy Schindler
William Shumann
Karen Taylor
Andres Tobar
Tony Trombly

AFAC STAFF MEMBERS

Nancy Cude, Volunteer Coordinator
Wusu Dumbaya, Driver
Alvin Faggins, Warehouse Assistant
Michael Hazel, Lead Driver
Puwen Lee, Volunteer Associate
Christine Lucas, Executive Director
Charlotte Merriam, Operations Director
Koube Ngaaje, Food Drive Coordinator
Wendy Salomon, Program Data Coordinator
Kieth Shivers, Warehouse Assistant
Bernard Rodgers, Driver
Mario Vargas, Warehouse Manager

CATALOGUE FOR PHILANTHROPY SELECTS AFAC

The Catalogue for Philanthropy has selected AFAC to appear in its 2007-08 catalogue for the Greater Washington area. The Catalogue is a 64-page book sent each November to about 30,000 individuals, small foundations, philanthropic advisors and other groups who use it to help determine which organizations will receive contributions.

AFAC is one of 68 organizations out of almost 250 applicants selected for the Catalogue's fifth edition. The Harman Family Foundation sponsors the Catalogue, and AFAC is honored to be included.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The magic wand that we at AFAC, and in fact all nonprofit organizations, have is our volunteers. We rely on our volunteers for every facet of helping feed our needy neighbors. At our annual meeting in June, we recognized all volunteers by honoring our Volunteers of the Year. For those of you who were unable to attend our annual meeting, let me recognize our Volunteers of the Year here:



- The Letter Carriers have for many years conducted a food drive for AFAC. This year the food drive in May generated 14,000 pounds of food. For their long and generous service the Arlington Letter Carriers and Curtis Glasper were given our Community Partner of the Year Award.

- Bill Arvidson has devoted more than 15 years of service to AFAC doing whatever had to be done at the time. This year we recognized his longstanding contribution by giving Bill our Individual Volunteer of the Year Award.

- There are many groups that volunteer at AFAC year in and year out. The Clarendon United Methodist Church has for many years supplied teams of volunteers and, in addition, provide a site for our Saturday food distribution in North Arlington. This year we honored the Clarendon United Methodist Church with our Group Volunteer Award.

When we think of volunteers we must acknowledge the contribution of our Volunteer Coordinators, Nancy Cude and Puwen Lee. Nancy and Puwen have mastered the tasks of directing up to 17,000 volunteer hours in a year. It is a job that takes skill, endurance and community spirit -- plus a sense of humor. Many thanks to you both.

Thank you, our supporters. We are truly grateful for the generous and continuing support of hundreds of individuals and churches, businesses, non-profit organizations and government agencies for your help and encouragement.

Sincerely,

Jim Whelan

AFAC'S PLANT A ROW PROGRAM GENERATES PRODUCE FOR THE HUNGRY

One day in early August, when temperatures hovered in the mid 90s, two donations came through AFAC's doors. One was a basket of eggplants, potatoes, cucumbers and zucchini from the gardeners of St. Mary's Episcopal Church; the other a peck of fresh figs harvested from a family's backyard trees.

These donations were responses to AFAC's invitation to local gardeners last spring to "please plant an extra row of vegetables to feed the hungry in Arlington or donate any excess from a bumper crop." Staff member Puwen Lee, a former Master Gardener and AFAC's Plant A Row Coordinator, says "The spirit of Plant A Row responds to the natural instincts of gardeners. We take pride in what we grow and want to share it with our neighbors. The idea is direct, simple and wonderful -- a seed that you plant will produce food that you can share with someone who needs it."

Plant a Row for the Hungry (PAR) is a project started by the Garden Writers' Association of America in 1995. By 2005, an estimated 10 million pounds of vegetables and fruit had been donated by gardeners to their local food banks and pantries.

Fresh produce is essential to good health and well-being. The growing number of clients at AFAC increases our need to find more donated produce. This summer, we once again got

unsold produce at the Arlington County Courthouse Farmers' Market and received gleaned vegetables and fruit from the Mid-Atlantic Gleaning Network (MAGNET).

As the word spreads about Plant A Row, we hope that teachers who run schoolyard gardens will consider planting an extra row, that local residents with unused plots will consider turning them over for AFAC volunteers to garden, and that individuals and groups will glean in fields and orchards with MAGNET for AFAC. Two local churches are exploring developing AFAC gardens on their properties next spring.

Want to get involved in the PAR project? Please contact Puwen Lee at afacpuwen@aol.com or (703) 845-8486. Free seeds will be available in the spring. Any donation is welcome.

AFAC thanks our community partners in the PAR effort: Northern Virginia Agricultural Extension Service, Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Lake Valley Seeds of Boulder, Colorado, the community gardeners at Lang Street, Barton Street and Ft. Barnard gardens; students at the Science Focus and Key elementary schools and the many green thumbs throughout Arlington who planted a row.

VOLUNTEERS CITED

At its Annual Meeting, AFAC cited three dedicated volunteers for their service. Those honored are:

Bill Arvidson was named Volunteer of the Year for over 15 years of service in distribution to client families and for regular use of his tool kit.

Clarendon United Methodist Church is the Group Volunteer of the Year for its monthly food bagging and distribution teams and for hosting our weekly Saturday morning distribution site for clients in North Arlington.

Curtis Glasper and the **Arlington branch of the National Association of Letter Carriers**

are the Community Partner of the Year. They've conducted an annual food drive for 12 years, which has brought in over 160,000 pounds of donated groceries.

In addition, the AFAC Board recognized 15 volunteers for their years of service. The Board also warmly thanked **Fred Jones** as he completed his six-year term on the Board, including serving two years as Chair.

WHAT A SUMMER VOLUNTEER LEARNED

- BY CASSIE MASTROSTEFANO

When I began volunteering at AFAC last summer, I thought I was the only teen who was willing to set aside her time to help others. I felt like Mother Theresa helping those who needed me. At first, that made me feel wonderful. However, as I began thinking about it, I realized that I wasn't being selfless at all. Much to my dismay, I realized I was more selfish than any other volunteer at AFAC. Unlike the other teens, I wasn't working to satisfy others or fulfill a commitment; I was doing this for me, so that I would feel good about myself at the end of the day. Yes, I was doing the work, but for all the wrong reasons.

**...I KNEW THAT I NEEDED TO VOLUNTEER
FOR THE PEOPLE WHO NEEDED MY HELP.**

This thought troubled me for a while until I decided to act on it, which actually required more decision than action. I adjusted my views and dove back into the work for all the right reasons. I knew that I needed to volunteer for the people who needed my help, the people that AFAC were all about. I started working up front with the clients instead of hiding myself in the back. Interacting with the people who come into the center made me see that greater picture. These people weren't to be pitied; I shouldn't feel like a saint setting my precious time aside to help them. What I did didn't set me apart from other people -- it was simply the right thing to do.

As I discovered that my aims weren't as pure as I thought they were, I stepped down from the pedestal I'd created for myself and go to know those I was working with. After talking with the other volunteers I saw that they were fun and interesting, not selfish people who hated every moment they had to be there. Sure a lot of them were prompted to volunteer, but the majority chose to work at AFAC, where you must work hard, sweat and get a little dirty, instead of filing paperwork or taking on a "cushy" job somewhere else.

I also realized that the people who come into AFAC are individuals no less important than I. The only difference is that they had run into hard luck and had enough pride and self-confidence to take the help that came their way. I loved working at AFAC. Sure there were a couple things I didn't enjoy -- who would like sorting sweet potatoes or cleaning bathrooms? Every job comes with ups and downs. I know I didn't value every second of time I spent there, but I probably should have. Everything I did at AFAC was effort spent on someone else.

After I had my change of heart, I thoroughly enjoyed setting up the counter in the morning because I knew that what I was setting out was greatly appreciated. My efforts went towards fighting hunger in Arlington, and benefiting those who came into AFAC. I know that there is nothing better I could have done with the mornings I spent at AFAC; my only regret is that I wasn't able to stay longer and help more.

One of 28 teen summer volunteers, Cassie Mastrostefano is a senior at McLean High School.

WE OWN THE BUILDING

In a major move to help continue its mission of feeding the needy in Arlington, AFAC has purchased the building in South Arlington where it has leased the first floor for ten years. Owning the building assures that we will have a building that meets our specific needs as a non-profit food pantry.

Upon learning last fall that the building was for sale, AFAC became concerned that a new owner might force us to move. A search showed there was no other light industrial space available then in Arlington that meets our needs -- a loading dock, warehouse and refrigerated space to store food, and space for clients, volunteers and staff.

Therefore, the Board decided to explore buying the building. After several months of research and negotiations with the seller and lender by the Board's Building Committee, the sale closed on June 20, AFAC's 19th anniversary.

"Buying the building really adds to our abilities to continue serving the growing numbers of families who need the food we supply," said Jim Whelan, AFAC Chair. "All of us at AFC are grateful to the Building Committee chaired by Sue Covucci."

The price of the 8,000-square-foot building was \$875,000. Before the purchase, Arlington County did the required Property Condition Assessment at no cost, and Arnold and Porter of Washington provided free legal services. BB&T provided a mortgage at a competitive rate.

FUNDRAISING

Many organizations and businesses in Arlington recently made donations to AFAC. They include:

Northern Virginia Alliance League. This group of 42 women selects a single Arlington charity each year to receive the funds it has raised. For the 2006-07 year, NVAL selected AFAC to receive \$23,500, and it has also selected us as the recipient in 2007-08. Founded in 1957, NVAL believes that selecting a single charity has more impact than making smaller gifts to many organizations.

Kiwanis Club of South Arlington raised \$2,500 for AFAC at a reception at Our Lady Queen of Peace Church. Club President Andres Tobar called it "a good first effort to appeal to the civic as well as the religious community to support AFAC."

Arlington Rotary Club gave \$1,500, which will buy a case of cereal each week for a year on behalf of each speaker in the club's weekly series.

National Hunger Awareness Day. More than 40 Arlington schools, businesses and government agencies donated more than 10,000 pounds of food on National Hunger Awareness Day, June 5. Also, AFAC's fourth Annual Restaurant Night saw 13 local restaurants donating a portion of their dinner sales that evening as about 500 people dined out in support of AFAC. The Crate&Barrel store at Market Common in Clarendon donated \$1,750, five percent of its sales that day, to AFAC.



Helen Lydon of NVAL (right) presents AFAC Executive Director Christine Lucas with a check for \$23,500.



Celleste Kilmer (left) and Kelly Funaro, managers of the Crate&Barrel in Clarendon, present a check for \$1,750 to AFAC Chair Jim Whelan.

Long & Foster's Arlington office for the tenth year in a row selected AFAC as the beneficiary of its Community Service Day. Led by Kathy Wilson, the agents there raised over \$10,000 and a significant amount of food for AFAC.

SUMMER TEENS

AFAC thanks our Summer Teens who came and worked in the warehouse and offices during their summer vacation. The 28 teens donated a total 585 hours of their summer hours to AFAC! For their hard work, dedication & enthusiasm, our thanks go to:

**ELI AUERHAN • LINDSAY BORYAN • WILL BRENNAN
ANNA CLABAUGH • JACK CONROY • MIKE CROZIER
STEPHEN CROZIER • CAMILLE DANVERS • DANIEL DEANE
IAN FEENEY • ERIKA FERNANDEZ • JIM GALLATIN
ALEX JIANG • ANDREW LEINBACH • MICHAEL LORANGER
CASSIE MASTROSTEFANO • ANITA MONAT-EDELSTEIN
JENNI NGUYEN • LINDSAY PALMER • ELYSE PEARSON
ALEXANDRA PILL • ELLIOT ROSEN • PHOEBE ROSEN
MALCOLM SAVAGE • ALEX SPINELLI • ANDREW STUMP
KEVIN TROUTMAN • ALEC WILLIAMS**

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ARLINGTON, VA 22206



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HOW TO HELP

There are many ways to help AFAC, including:

Volunteering. There are many opportunities available for individuals, families and groups during both day and evening hours. For more information, please call Nancy Cude, Volunteer Coordinator, at (703) 845-8486 or email her at afacnancy@aol.com.

Organizing a food drive. Collecting non-perishable food for AFAC is helpful at any time but particularly appreciated during the Thanksgiving – New Year holiday period. Possible venues include your workplace, congregation or community organization.

For more information and help in organizing a food drive, call Koube Ngaaje at (703) 845-8486 or email afackoube@aol.com.

Donating money. One may do so online at www.afacinfo.org or through the United Way (#8354) or the Combined Federal Campaign (#19265) at work. You may also send a check to AFAC at PO Box.6261, Arlington, VA 22206.

More information on how to help us is at www.afacinfo.org.

Please designate AFAC #8354 in the United Way campaign or #19265 in the CFC.



Feeding Our Neighbors In Need