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Furniture Bank Operations Curtailed

After a full day of deliveries on Saturday, April 19, the Furniture Bank of Arlington (FBOA) will reduce its operations to one weekend per month. While the AMEN's Board of Directors regrets this decision, budgetary constraints required this course of action. AMEN wishes to acknowledge the dedicated work of Huseyin Cakar who has served as the Furniture Bank foreman for almost two years. Plans for the Bank's operations after April 19 have not been finalized but will rely solely on dedicated volunteers for its work. Please consider volunteering at the Furniture Bank! For more information, you may email fboa@verizon.net.

FBOA foreman Huseyin Cakar and volunteer Jason Smith ready to make a furniture delivery.



Volunteers Mike Beckman, Ken Matzkin, Molly Donegan and Sonia Santiago worked at the Furniture Bank on April 19, the Arlington Chamber of Commerce Volunteer Day.

The AMEN Corner

is published twice annually by
 Arlingtonians Meeting
 Emergency Needs, Inc.
 P.O. Box 7429
 Arlington, Virginia 22207
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AMEN is a Family Affair for the Vances

Scott and Liz Vance have over many years been committed to the work of AMEN even while busy with two young children and demanding careers. Liz has a photography business, *Oh Baby Photography*, and Scott is a principal and tax attorney with *KPMG*. Liz served as an AMEN volunteer and later served on the AMEN Board for several years including a term as President before and as she raised her children. Scott currently sits on the Board and serves a valued role as Treasurer. Beyond their significant contributions as volunteer members of the Board, the Vances have generously shared their professional success with AMEN. They sponsored more than 600 grade school students to walk in the 2007 Help the Homeless Walk. Liz's business offered free photography sessions over one weekend and asked clients to donate to AMEN in place of her professional fee. Vance children Ian and Josie have also participated in several AMEN Help the Homeless Walks. While their volunteer time with AMEN is now more limited, Scott and Liz Vance have pledged to remain committed to supporting AMEN. We thank them and applaud them for all they have done.

AMEN Board Selects Officers

At its March meeting, the AMEN Board elected officers for a one-year term. They are President Steve Telkins, Vice-President Vicki Shteir-Dunn, Secretary Sherry Foster and Co-Treasurers Scott Vance and Edie Smolinski.

Message from the Executive Director

The economy is in a downturn, and some economists have dared to say there is a recession. The unemployment rate is up. A gallon of gas and a gallon of milk both cost more, taking a much higher proportion of a low income family's budget. Not surprisingly, in times like these, people on fixed incomes and low wage earners suffer more than others. Those with little education or minimal job skills find it harder to acquire and to keep jobs. During the second half of 2007, there was a 17% increase in the number of persons seeking emergency financial assistance from the County's Department of Human Services and the increase in requests continues.



A recession can even have a psychological effect on those with secure jobs and income sources. They tend to hold onto their expendable income, rather than spend it. They purchase less and give less to charity. No one can fault such prudent behavior but it does have unintended consequences. At a time when the disadvantaged and poor need more help than ever, charities like AMEN have less income and can offer less help. Most days, the Daily Emergency Fund volunteer receives as many as ten requests from social workers that cannot be filled because funds allotted for the day are depleted. As you can read in a separate story, AMEN is cutting back its Furniture Bank operations after April 19.

During this time, I am asking you to consider your Arlington neighbors who are feeling the effects of this economic downturn more than most. Please give generously to AMEN so that we can help your, and our, neighbors. Thank you for your support of AMEN's work.

Thank you,
Geraldine Shannon

Welcome to New Daily Emergency Fund Volunteer

Geri Hirai has joined the Daily Volunteer group. Thanks to long-time volunteer Betty Vertiz for recommending her, and thanks to volunteer Ellie Karro for training Geri. Anyone who has an interest in volunteering should call the AMEN Office at (703) 558-0035.

Barry Shillito Joins Board of Directors

Barry Shillito joined the AMEN Board of Directors in the summer of 2007. Shillito is currently Assistant General Counsel for Forensic Audits and Special Investigations at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). Prior to 1994, Mr. Shillito was Corporate Counsel for SAIC in San Diego. Before 1992, Mr. Shillito was a partner in the Washington office of the Pittsburgh law firm Eckert, Seamans, Cherin and Mellott. Shillito is married and lives in South Arlington.

We welcome a new AMEN Staff Member

Dolores Coutts recently joined AMEN as the financial and administrative staff person. Previously she had been with the Caterpillar dealer finance co-op for 20 years. Dolores lives in Arlington with her husband, Richard Long, and son Michael who attends Yorktown High School. Their eldest son, Sean, is finishing his second year at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. In her leisure time, Dolores enjoys reading, gardening and theatre.



New Location for Pick-up of Daily Emergency Fund Checks

Clients may pick-up their Daily Emergency Fund checks in the first floor lobby of the County DHS Building, 3033 Wilson Blvd., Arlington. The closest Metro station is Clarendon on the Orange line. Mr. Charles Klein will be there to disburse approved requests Monday through Friday, 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

2007 Help the Homeless Program a great success for AMEN

AMEN earned \$52,373 from the Fannie Mae Foundation through its efforts to encourage students and adults to participate in mini-walks in the fall of 2007. Eight Arlington schools participated: they are elementary schools Taylor, Key, Oakridge and McKinley, Williamsburg Middle and the Swanson Middle School Pep Band. AMEN was pleased to include in the fall walks for the first time Gunston Middle School and Glebe Elementary School. Numerous AMEN supporters also joined in a family walk through Lubber Run Park in October. Over 1000 participants walked on behalf of AMEN!

Also for the first time, AMEN created a Help the Homeless Partners category for significant donors which generated additional income from the Foundation. These funds are particularly welcome support for AMEN since, as our Executive Director notes in this newsletter, emergency needs are high yet donations have fallen. We are so grateful to the Fannie Mae Foundation for providing this opportunity to AMEN. In 2008 we hope to engage additional schools in this worthwhile program, particularly because it raises the level of awareness of Arlington residents of all ages to the problem of homelessness.



**October 2007 walk
Through Lubber Run Park**



**At the AMEN mini-walk: Board Member
Barbara Smucker and Cakar family
members Sukran, Rabia, and Meliha
holding Dinezhan.**

Acknowledging a Major Donor-Dr. Mitchell Davis

Since 2006, Dr. Mitchell Davis, has made several large gifts to AMEN to provide emergency medical, dental and prescription assistance for needy Arlington residents. AMEN Board President Steve Telkins said, "Without Dr. Davis' generosity, AMEN would be severely curtailed in its ability to carry out its mission. The AMEN Board is most grateful for his continuing generosity."

Dr. Davis contacted AMEN in 2006 after reading about the organization in *Washingtonian* magazine. Dr. Davis knew his donations to AMEN would have great impact as they are matched 2-to-1 by the County and because AMEN's administrative costs are very low when compared to many other charities. AMEN is indebted to Dr. Davis' continuing giving and his compassion for and understanding of the emergency needs of our community.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE DRESS FOR WORK SUCCESS PROGRAM

Since 1988, AMEN has managed the Dress for Work Success (DWS) program. Women who have completed the *Arlington Works* program run by the Arlington County Employment Office are eligible for the program which provides for them new clothing needed for job interviews and employment. Referrals from the Employment Office are sent to AMEN Board member and DWS coordinator Pearl M. Hicks, who accompanies the clients to shop for the clothing. In the past year, the program has provided clothing for 29 women clients and indirectly also helped 47 children in the process.

THE AMEN \$20 CHALLENGE

If you and every person reading this newsletter contribute just \$20,
AMEN can ensure that

- 50 Arlington families can avoid eviction
- 100 Arlington families keep their lights on
- 250 Arlingtonians can fill their prescriptions

PLEASE DONATE NOW



**Arlingtonians Meeting
Emergency Needs, Inc.**

P.O. Box 7429
Arlington, VA 22207

Return Service requested

CFC Campaign #30709
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