

## My wife Cindy and I volunteer at Alive for the monthly distribution of food

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ALIVE is the name of the organization in Alexandria, VA that for 25 years has served food and other care to those that have found themselves in a challenging situation economically. Over the past 2 years, my wife Cindy and I have joined the volunteers at Alive for the monthly distribution of food to many that have been adversely impacted by life, including the pandemic from March of 2020.



We discovered that there was a need for drivers that could handle the large 16-foot box trucks that could deliver food and supplies to the food distribution sites. Cindy reached out to the Alive organizers and the rest is now history in the making.

As it turns out, the truck pick-up location is 30 miles from our home, and with the need to have food delivered to the distribution site by 7:30 AM, both Cindy and I have to be up before dawn so we can make our truck deliveries on time. So, out we go in separate cars to pick up our trucks, come rain or shine. While I've driven the big box Ryder trucks in the past related to moving from home to home, Cindy had not had that experience. However, as she has always been throughout her life, being undaunted and without reservation, she mounted her truck cabin and negotiated the traffic in Alexandria to her appointed delivery site.

October 30th was the latest Alive food distribution project in the parking lot of Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA). Actually, not only do Cindy and I drive the trucks, but we also work with the volunteers at the site to distribute up to 50 pounds of food to each family car that drives through for pick-up. It is a very joyful experience to work with the volunteers who are trying to serve others during a time of special challenge.



Jim is the NOVA site leader and is very experienced in coordinating volunteers during the distribution process. Not only is he experienced, but he also has a heart for giving and serving. Thus, he is adept at preparing the new volunteers to have the right attitude towards the drive-through clients they will be serving. For example, as cars come through the very long line for food pick-up, some cars are very high-end. Jim cautions the volunteers not to form any

negative impressions, as he explains that "due to the adverse impact due to the pandemic, that any particular family could be on the verge of having their vehicle repossessed due to an inability to make payments." Another point is to always smile even while wearing a mask. The clients can see it in your eyes and be comforted.



Since October 30th was the day before Halloween, we had been encouraged to come dressed in Halloween costumes. Cindy came as Madame C J Walker (the 1st American female self-made millionaire), and I came as Frederick Douglass (the famous 19th-century abolitionist). We had lots of fun as we greeted the clients warmly who in turn expressed sincere gratitude.

By way of reflection, when Cindy and I first connected with the Alive food distribution program, there were close to

500 cars coming through for food pick-up. The better news is that this last distribution day, there were closer to 250 cars. Alive is concluding that because the economy has improved in the country, people have returned to work and, therefore, there are fewer challenges with the communities being served. Let's pray that that is the case throughout the country.

Wherever we are, let's find basic ways to serve others.