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THE DINNER BELL

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF



OUR MISSION:

TO ALLEVIATE FOOD INSECURITY THROUGHOUT ST. MARY'S COUNTY

OUR VISION:

A ST. MARY'S COUNTY FREE FROM HUNGER



WHAT'S INSIDE:

- *WHY IS A.L.I.C.E. HUNGRY?*
- *WELCOMING JAMES BELL*
- *GET INVOLVED WITH FEED ST. MARY'S*

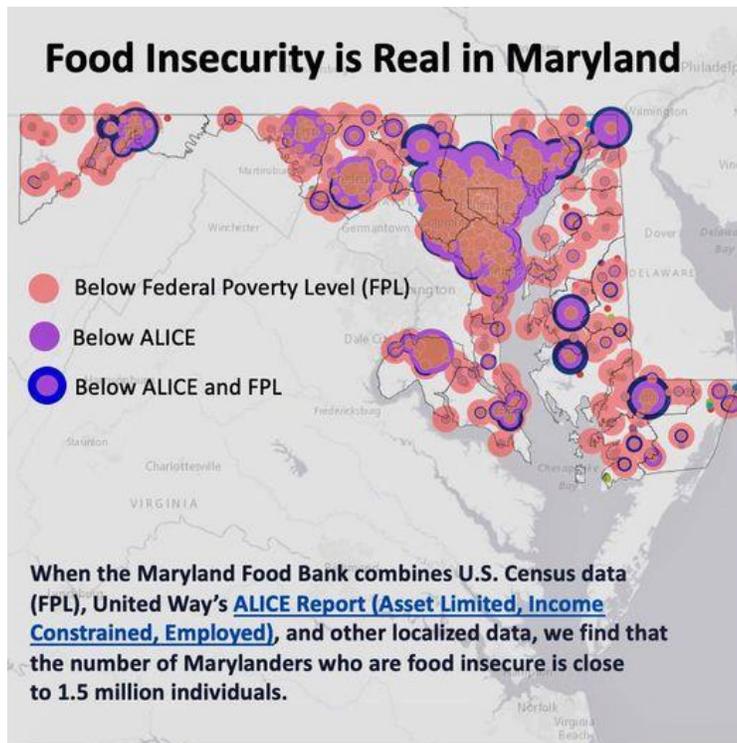
WHY IS A.L.I.C.E. HUNGRY?

Most times, when we referred to Alice we would be talking about a person, but when communities talk about A.L.I.C.E. we are discussing a group of people. A.L.I.C.E. stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed and represents the community's working poor. The face of hunger continues to change through the years and in today's environment it includes a lot of people who have jobs but are unable to meet all of their fiscal obligations. Even though our A.L.I.C.E. residents are employed, they do not have the financial foundation to pay all of their bills much less provide for some of their needs. Those who fall under A.L.I.C.E. find themselves facing some unique challenges. First, they must make decisions about how to make it from paycheck to paycheck. Will they pay their rent or their childcare costs this month? Will they be able to purchase groceries or medication this

week? In years past expenditures such as cellular phones or household internet were considered luxuries, but in today's economy and, especially during the pandemic, they have become necessities and cannot be cut without potentially catastrophic consequences. While finances can be a challenge, even the presence of resources may not provide all the answers. People with day jobs may not be able to take time off their jobs to visit food pantries open a few hours on weekdays. Parents working non-traditional jobs may not be able to find childcare open when they need it. Now, with many public schools being conducted virtually, a new burden has been added to some parents because they may not have the flexibility to work from home and those who work from home may not have the educational or technological skills to assist with this new version of home schooling. Through the years, we have found that it isn't just the young who are struggling, even senior citizens who are working parttime jobs or living on a fixed income are finding it harder and harder to make ends meet.

While it is easy to identify the problems affiliated with A.L.I.C.E. our challenge is finding the answers. Most of us are involved in working with people dealing with food insecurity, but here are a few things we can do:

- **Be aware of the changing nature of hunger in our community.** Hunger doesn't just impact the homeless and unemployed, it presents challenges to a large number of people. When our communities realize the growing problem, we can respond with real solutions.
- **Consider offering non-traditional support options.** Food pantries, childcare facilities and home health care agencies that extend their hours into the evening or offer services on the weekend can take some of the pressure off of those who need flexible scheduling.
- **Volunteer your time to help provide support services.** Often, services are limited because of the lack of volunteers. The more people who volunteer to work at a food pantry, afterschool program, soup kitchen or food drive the more opportunity to expand the outreach.
- **Donate to organizations that support A.L.I.C.E. individuals and families.** Financial donations provide direct and indirect support to the people who need it.



SPOTLIGHT ON OUR NEWEST FSM STAFF MEMBER – JAMES BELL



We are excited to welcome James Bell to the Feed St. Mary’s family. James has been active in making a difference in St. Mary’s County through his volunteer work and his association with God’s House of Refuge in Lexington Park for years and now he formally joins FSM as the Assistant Warehouse Manager. He is retired from the Navy and was instrumental in founding God’s House of Refuge. James will be working with Wayne Millen to meet the needs of the community and FSM partners. Please join us in welcoming James to Feed St. Mary’s!



**Would you like to donate to Feed St. Mary’s?
It is as simple as a click of the mouse!**

To become a volunteer visit: <https://feedstmarys.org/volunteer>
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**TOGETHER, WE WILL
FEED ST. MARY’S**

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Greatly Appreciates
its Operational Sponsors**

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