



**Food Pantry and Clothing**  
Serving the Community Since 1975

# NEWS



**April 2024**

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello everyone!

Lasagna! Sourdough bread! Ground beef! Baguette! Getting hungry yet? FISH is now receiving food items from Harris Teeter through the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank's Neighbor-to-Neighbor Food Rescue Program. With the pantry items we are able to pick up from Harris Teeter, combined with the food we receive from Olive Garden through the Food Donation Connection Harvest Program (March 2024 newsletter), we are able to provide even more food to our clients than before. The VP Foodbank has been such a blessing by creating programs that help us feed those in need. Thank you, VPF!

But where to safely store these frozen breads and soups? We now have a brand-new freezer to store these wonderful donations. The freezer is from a grant from the Williamsburg Health Foundation (page 3).

Also new is our U.S. flag flying in our front yard, courtesy of our landlords, CW Enterprises. Thank you for our new flag.

The Clothing Closet received a very large donation from "tiny THREADS, **BIG** Impact". Read all about this on page 6 of the newsletter. Thank you, Dr. Hyun Lee.

April 23 is the GiveLocal757 day, a 24-hour period of giving to nonprofits throughout the Virginia Peninsula region. Please consider donating to help FISH continue with the amazing things we currently do. This can only continue with assistance from you folks--our loyal donors. Thank you!!

If your organization or group is in need of a speaker, we can help. Please contact Maura Rush ([maurarush@hotmail.com](mailto:maurarush@hotmail.com)) or me for more information.

Thank you to everyone at FISH--all volunteers, supporters, donors! We could not do the work we do without your help.

Jill Holroyd  
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**Donate**



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# Acknowledgements & Announcements



This year, FISH has the opportunity to participate in the **GIVE LOCAL 757!** initiative on April 23. This giving day helps non-profit organizations, such as FISH, raise unrestricted funds to help fund our mission.

We need your help! Please help us reach, and perhaps exceed, our goal of \$5,000! Please tell your friends and family about the important work we do, and ask them to join us in helping to make a difference.

Get ready to give! Mark your calendars and set your alarm clocks! On April 23, visit [givelocal757.org](https://www.givelocal757.org) and make a donation to FISH. All giving will start at 12:01 a.m. and end at 11:59 p.m. on April 23, so make sure to get your gift in on time!

Check out the monetary prizes that FISH could win at: <https://www.givelocal757.org/prizes>

Thank you in advance for participating and supporting us!



## 5th Annual Golf Tournament



**Date:** Monday, April 29, 2024  
**Times:** 12:00 Registration  
1:00 Shotgun Start  
5:30 Dinner  
**Where:** Kingsmill Resort River Course  
1010 Kingsmill Rd, Williamsburg, VA  
**Format:** Captain's Choice

The deadline to register is April 12, 2024.

FISH is one of four Headliners in 2024 that will receive benefits from this event.

For more information and to register, follow this [link](#) to the website.

We need volunteers to help with registration, hot dog stand, etc., so please contact either Maura at [maurarush@hotmail.com](mailto:maurarush@hotmail.com) or Jill.

### New Board Member

Jan Gibeling graciously agreed to fill the Board member term, vacated by Julie Adie, until 12/31/2024.

### New Volunteers

Colleen Becker and David Schoch

### Sharing

Once again Grove Christian Outreach Center has shared their wealth of food with us--a bountiful gift from one nonprofit to another. Thank you, Holly Trotter and Don Butts, for picking up this food.

FISH will be sharing prom attire and party dresses for Grove's second year of a prom clothing giveaway.

# Acknowledgements & Announcements

## New Freezer

Here is our new 48 cubic ft freezer purchased with a grant from the Williamsburg Health Foundation. We gave our old refrigerator to the Salvation Army.



## New Paper Shredder



We are so appreciative to Bill and Martha Dean for donating a new shredder for the Front Office after they saw some of us struggling to revive an old one!

Also, thank you, Bill and Martha, for picking up diapers monthly from the Diaper Bank in Chesapeake!

## Williamsburg Community Foundation

### 19 Nonprofits Awarded Grants



On March 28, the Williamsburg Community Foundation awarded grants to 19 local nonprofits, including FISH.

The grant for FISH was \$1,000 for hygiene supplies for clients visiting the Food Pantry. This grant was made possible by Mary and Hunt Berryman.

We are grateful to the Berrymans and the Foundation for their caring attitude and support!



Yesterday a single woman (nine months pregnant) came into FISH for her groceries. When we gave her the gift basket for her first Mother's Day, she was practically speechless. Then we were able to get a tote bag full of baby essentials including shirts, socks, receiving blanket, etc. This time she was almost moved to tears, and so was I. She couldn't thank us enough.

Isn't this why we volunteer at FISH?

-- Micki Schwartz

To further support this community and as part of its year-long 25th Anniversary celebration, the Williamsburg Community Foundation is awarding a surprise \$2,500 grant to a local nonprofit each month!

# Acknowledgements & Announcements



## Volunteer Bonding



Monday Clothes Closet volunteers took a break to watch the eclipse (L).

Then we enjoyed Monday dinner at Food for Thought after our busy day (R). We are planning to get together monthly on the second Monday.

-- Courtesy of Joanne Stark

## Client Smiles

Helping clients in the Clothes Closet is a unique experience. We welcome them with a smile and exchange first names to help make their time with us more enjoyable. We ask them if they are looking for anything special, which sometimes evolves into them sharing a personal story. I would like to share recent experiences that put smiles on both my face and the clients.

I had a gentleman that shared that he did not have an outfit to go to his youngest daughter's wedding. He helped me get his measurements, and we laughed as I suggested some outlandish and stylish items for his outfit. He was concerned about only taking clothing that he needed in his size and to leave for others what he didn't need. He thanked me several times on his way out and left with a huge smile. He knew that he would look nice for his daughter.



The second experience was extra special for a client. We stop serving clients in the Clothes Closet at 3:00 p.m. The FISH receptionist called shortly after that time saying that a client came in and wondered if we had a microwave. I shared that microwaves rarely were donated but that I would check and call her back. A clothing volunteer had recently cleaned and tested a microwave. I called reception back, and I could hear the client screaming with joy! I suggested that we provide the microwave as a "special gift" and not count it against her next visit for housewares. The client had a huge smile and told me how happy they were that we had one. Her joy was like a special present for me!

-- Dan Fontaine

*If you have personal experiences and/or pictures to share from when you volunteer, please send to [fishwilliamsburgnews@gmail.com](mailto:fishwilliamsburgnews@gmail.com). Thank you.*

# Donations

## WindsorMeade

The WindsorMeade donation filled our linen and housewares sections nicely. Bus driver, Jim (R), delivered:

- 75 bags of food
- 40 large bags of sheets and towels
- 4 large boxes of pans and small appliances
- 6 suitcases on wheels

Here is Jim pictured with the clothing and housewares volunteers who received the donation.



## 1st Advantage Federal Credit Union



Jill Holroyd, President (center), gladly accepted a check from Liana Kropff (L) and Karen Kornish (R).

## Williamsburg Baptist Church



Faye Redding (left) and Kay Cheves delivered beautiful Easter baskets for children prepared by the Williamsburg Baptist Church.

*Our sincere thanks to Dan Fontaine, with contributions from Maura Rush, Karen Berquist, Cathey Sadowski and others, for the update of FISH History to bring it current (see page 7).*

*We will retain the earlier history and photos, archived and accessible, because we cherish those memories.*

# Donations

## tiny THREADS, BIG Impact

The tiny THREADS, **BIG** Impact program donates children's clothing to local organizations in Hampton Roads to make a difference in the lives of others.

On April 4, Dr. Hyun Lee, a South Korean-American, donated 3,000 units of clothing, an increase in number and sizes over previous years. The clothes were manufactured in her family's factory in South Korea. FISH received 506 items for children 12 months - 14 years with the majority for older children, as we requested.

The event was hosted by the United Way Virginia Peninsula in Yorktown and included speeches by Dr. Lee and Senator Locke (Senate District 23). Other recipients included House of Mercy, Grove Christian Outreach Center, Salvation Army, LINK, Catholic Charities, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



Holding the sign: Dr. Hyun Lee (R) and her sister

FISH volunteers who picked up the donation: Cindy Tocci (center, back row) and Gayle Justice (far right, second row).

Not pictured: Many volunteers who happily prepared the clothing for our Clothes Closet.

## Girl Scout Troop 1060

Thank you to GS Troup 1060 for donating 120 boxes of delicious cookies, and to Seraphina and her mother Jennifer, troop leader, for delivering them!



## DJ Montague Elementary School



Mrs. Tighe's 2nd grade students from DJ Montague Elementary School learned about Ramadan and decided to help people who are hungry. They set up the food drive at school, made posters, and decorated boxes to collect all of the food.



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## A HISTORY OF FISH - WE'VE COME A LONG WAY

In 1975, a handful of volunteers from Saint Bede Catholic Church began a program of "neighbors helping neighbors" patterned after one that originated in England a decade earlier and using the early Christian symbol of a fish. The services offered were food, clothing, hot meals, emergency babysitting and, occasionally, overnight lodging.

By the early 1980s, requests for help had escalated, and the original volunteers found that other churches were also trying to meet such needs; a coordinated effort was established. The food pantry remained at Saint Bede and a clothing closet was set up at the Williamsburg Baptist Church. Volunteers and donations came from many different churches, but the program remained one of personal service to the emergency needs of our neighbors.

Transportation for medical appointments and treatments began when the Society of Friends began working with FISH in the early 1980s. An answering service referred calls for food and clothes to a daily volunteer, who made selections and delivered items. Ride requests went to the transportation scheduler, who contacted a list of volunteer drivers.

The Clothes Closet outgrew its church quarters in 1986, and moved to a house on Burns Lane, owned by the First Church of Christ, Scientist; there it remained for the next nine years. In 1987, the food pantry and distribution center moved to a house owned by the Unitarian Universalist Church on Ironbound Road. FISH incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1992, becoming a free-standing agency, still staffed solely by volunteers.

In 1995, FISH moved to the Historic Triangle Community Services Center on Waller Mill Road, which was created by donations from local governments, churches, civic organizations, businesses, and hundreds of individuals. Clients were now able to choose their own clothing and pick up their food. The FISH transportation service was moved into the Peninsula Agency on Aging's RIDES program in 2015.

The COVID-19 Pandemic was an especially challenging time for FISH. While the Board kept FISH open as long as it could, many factors contributed to the eventual closing in March 2020. Because we were left with food in our Pantry, we decided to donate to St. Olaf's Food Pantry, Salvation Army, and House of Mercy. Many of these organizations have paid staff and remained open.

FISH reopening in the Fall of 2020 was gradual and focused on the safety of our volunteers and clients. Our volunteers masked, used sanitary wipes, and took forehead temperatures. The guidance was constantly monitored and relaxed as the understanding of how the virus spread evolved.

FISH reopened on a limited schedule with a "no contact" form of food distribution. We also stopped taking donations of food and clothing to limit risk to our volunteers. It quickly became difficult to find volunteers for the Pantry. Another major problem was the supply chain dried up. Grocery stores would no longer fill our orders. FISH purchases from Food Lion were limited to only what they had extra. Boxed.com was used to buy unavailable food with limited success. To limit contact, masked Pantry volunteers filled the bags and brought the shopping cart to the clients in the parking lot. Sanitary wipes were used to wipe down the cart after each delivery.

Clothing volunteer safety did not allow us to accept used clothing donations. Beginning October 2020, clients requesting clothing were helped on Tuesdays and Thursdays by appointment only and only one person at a time. Both the client and clothing volunteer wore masks. Once health guidance indicated that it was safe, clothing and food donations were once again accepted, using the clothing donation door.

In March 2022, during the final stage of the pandemic, FISH moved to its current location at 312 Second Street, Williamsburg. The new location has separate food and clothing buildings to better serve our clients. The increased space has enabled FISH to expand the refrigeration equipment (provided by two grants) and to store more meat and vegetables for our clients. Our Second Street campus is more visible, increasing community awareness of our services.

From a tiny group of volunteers serving one or two clients a week, FISH has grown to over two hundred volunteers caring for the emergency needs of thousands of people a year who live in the greater Williamsburg area. FISH depends entirely upon a caring community for food, clothing, household items, and financial donations. We have no paid staff. Volunteers elect a 12-member Board of Directors, and the Board elects its officers and coordinators. Volunteers come from all walks of life in the community, and we never forget that we are serving neighbors.

-- Dan Fontaine - March 24, 2024

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Volunteering 101

**Grace Quagliano**  
**Clothes Closet**

*Even if volunteering is encouraged or required as a part of schooling, we are grateful to Grace and all of the students who have chosen FISH to fulfill this aspect of their educational experience.*



#### **Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?**

A1. First, volunteering is something that is encouraged in Physician Assistant schools. Second, I grew up in a church and volunteered a lot, plus I assisted in clothing shelters with a couple from my church. So that's why FISH caught my eye.

#### **Q2. What do you find most rewarding about volunteering at FISH?**

A2. My favorite part is working with the other volunteers in the Clothing Closet. It's also great to know that this clothing is going for a good purpose. I like seeing the donors and am interested in the reasons they have clothing to donate.

#### **Q3. Do you have a specific experience while volunteering at FISH that you would like to share?**

A3. I have not worked directly with clients, but I like to clean, so I enjoy cleaning and prepping sheets, blankets and household appliances. This is very satisfying to me.

#### **Q4. Is there anything else you would like others to know about you?**

A4. Currently, I am a fulltime senior at William & Mary majoring in kinesiology to become a Physician Assistant. I work at Williamsburg Urgent Care as a scribe; and if I have free time, I spend it reading or with my friends.