



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS



December 2023

Greetings Fellow FISH Family!

As the year is coming to a close and the holidays are upon us, it is time to reflect on the many gifts for which we at FISH are thankful.

- We are thankful for the gift of being at 312 Second Street.
- We are thankful for the gift of volunteers who are dedicated to service and have a true passion to help others.
- We are thankful for the gifts of food, clothing and housewares that help those in need.
- We are thankful for the monetary gifts that are given by individuals and organizations. These generous gifts make it possible for FISH to pay the rent, maintain the facility, and buy food and clothing.

We are grateful for all the gifts that FISH has been given.

Warmest regards,
Joe Benedetti
President

IN THIS ISSUE:

[Thank You - Jack](#)
Page 2

[New Adopt-a-Shelf Program](#)
Page 3

[Annual Meeting & Announcements](#)
Page 4

[Donations](#)
Page 5-8

[Volunteer Spotlight](#)
Page 9

Donate



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A Letter of Thanks From the FISH Family to Jack Trotter

Every now and then an extraordinary volunteer emerges at FISH. Jack Trotter is one of them. As we near our 2nd anniversary at our Second Street location, let's reflect on how Jack led FISH to become a premier nonprofit in the Williamsburg area.

Jack was elected president in the midst of the pandemic when the existing president had to step down due to family health reasons. At that time, the existing FISH home on Waller Mill Road was in doubt. The building had been sold, and it appeared that FISH's space would be reduced as the client base was growing.

That initiated an effort to team up with a commercial real estate agent to identify a new location that would accommodate many criteria, not the least of which being location, space, and budget. After several months of searching and a few site visits, a two-building complex on Second Street in Williamsburg was selected. Jack was in the middle of all of it - before, during, and after.

Jack tirelessly identified and addressed a myriad of tasks that allowed FISH to relocate to Second Street in about 3 months. Here's a peek behind the curtains at how Jack led our effort to relocate.

With assistance where needed, he developed a phased moving plan and addressed: lease negotiations; contractor negotiations for work scope, bidding, price, and oversight during construction; building internal arrangements and city approval; conference room configuration and construction, including obtaining chairs at no cost; shelving and storage arrangement; Internet/Wi-Fi and telecommunications; handicap access; parking lot resurfacing, spaces, and lighting; trash and recycling collection; building cleaning; building pest control; lawn service; purchase of additional wire food storage shelving, commercial coolers/freezers, a clothing dropbox, and washer/dryer; client waiting area configuration and seating; coordinated a phased move; and reopening plan. He did all that while also leading the weekly food pickup crew and serving as the maintenance manager and FISH president.

As we handle our ever-increasing workload and manage our dramatically increasing client base, we really should pause to recognize and be thankful for the leadership of Jack Trotter. It was in no small part that through his efforts we can effectively provide hygiene products, clothing, and household items to our neighbors who are in need.

From the very grateful family of FISH volunteers, thank you, Jack, and happy holidays!



Left: Jack leading the Open House and Dedication Ceremony for FISH's new location at 312 Second Street.

Right: While Jack appears to be "dumpster diving", he actually was trying to tamp down the trash to get more in!

Proof that our President will do most anything for FISH!





Adopt-a-Shelf Program

A Fun Way to Donate



FISH extends an invitation to you to help supply our clients with the food items they need by adopting a shelf. This opportunity is for the three months of February, March, and April 2024 which are our low-donation months. Throughout the year, FISH purchases 85% of the food. By selecting one of the options below, you will be helping to defray the costs involved in stocking our shelves. Know that you are helping to serve those in our community who rely on FISH, and your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Please complete this form and either email it to fishwilliamsburg@gmail.com or mail to FISH, 312 Second Street, Williamsburg, VA, 23185 by Monday, January 22, 2024.

Please mark which shelf/shelves you would like to fill:

Shelf Options:

- Laundry detergent - \$45 per month - Total \$135
- Cereal - \$75 per month - Total \$225
- Applesauce - \$100 per month - Total \$300
- Spaghetti (Pasta) - \$112 per month - Total \$336
- Spaghetti Sauce - \$140 per month - Total \$420
- Veggies (Corn, Peas, Beans etc.) - \$145 per month - Total \$435
- Beef Stew - \$285 per month - Total \$855
- All gifts are welcome. You may prefer to write in an amount to cover other food items not listed on shelves above, such as peanut butter, fruit, rice. \$ _____

Contact Details

Contact Name: _____ Phone #: _____

In honor/memory of _____ Email: _____
(if applicable): _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Payment Details

FISH is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. 100% of your financial contribution will be used to serve client needs and is fully tax deductible.

I will be paying by:

- Check
- Credit/Debit Card
- Money Order



Signature

Date



Announcements & Acknowledgements

Annual Meeting & Election of FISH Board of Directors to 2024 – 2026 Terms Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting of Volunteers on the afternoon of Wednesday, January 10, 2024. We will begin with refreshments at 4:00 p.m., and the meeting will convene at 4:30 p.m. All FISH Volunteers are invited to this time of fellowship and celebration. This will be an opportunity to vote on new Board members, hear a year-end review, and ask questions and make suggestions.

Thank You, Ben Swenson

Our gratitude to Ben Swenson, Freelance Correspondent, for excellence in spotlighting the post-COVID challenges of FISH and other local nonprofits in "Helping the Helpers in a time of need". If you missed it, please [click here](#) to read the November 22 *Virginia Gazette* article.

Translators Needed

Our need for translators in all languages (especially Spanish) is growing.

To learn how you can assist, please contact Martha Buell, Volunteer Coordinator, at mtonka@cox.net

From the Treasurer

2023 Tax Letters:

The FISH Treasurer will mail tax letters, recognizing the total of your 2023 monetary donations, after the first of the year.

Historically, FISH issues only one receipt per year, covering the total amount donated.

Where to send checks:

Please use the new mailing address when donating by check:
312 Second Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185

Welcome New Volunteers

- Ford Moseley
- Harriett Shuck
- Jenny Landen
- Kirsten Legg
- Maitee Guerra
- Nicole Fleming
- Paula Lynn
- Susan Gregg
- Wilma Caban-Carcabona



Holiday Closings

Monday, December 25, 2023 - Christmas
Monday, January 1, 2024 - New Year's Day

Thank You



Mission Statement

FISH, located in Williamsburg, Virginia, is an all-volunteer nonprofit agency providing food, hygiene items, clothing, and basic housewares assistance to residents in need in the Greater Williamsburg area since 1975. FISH depends solely upon the generosity of a caring community for volunteers, donations of goods for our clients, and financial support. FISH serves its clients regardless of their race, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or age.

Every Pair Counts

Students of two classes in the **Williamsburg Montessori School, Lower Elementary**, conducted a clothing drive for children's socks and underwear. Students, ages 6 - 9, went beyond collecting the items by keeping a tally of all items and preparing the items for clients.

Cindy Tocci, Co-Coordinator of the Clothes Closet, was invited to the school to teach the students how to fold and label the socks and underwear. She left with a carload of items.

One student shared the tallies of items collected by one of the two classes. The second class collected about the same amount. The students were very proud of what they accomplished. As one student reported, "We did great, and we know that every pair will help someone."

Class	Boys	Girls
Class 10	14	10
Class 15	13	33
Class 10	6	33
Class 10	34	10
Class 10	70	43
Total socks	129	86
Total underwear	43	10
Total everything	172	96

Children's Holiday Fund

We received \$3,500 from the Children's Holiday Fund which is part of the Peninsula Community Foundation. The grant is for jackets and hoodies for kids.

Left to right: Gregory Lawson, President of the sponsor, Peninsula Community Foundation (PCF); Jeff Deel, FISH Grants Coordinator; Michael Monteith, CEO of PCF.



Smith Memorial Baptist Church

Josh Riley, Youth Pastor, at Smith Memorial Baptist Church brought members of the Youth Group to FISH to see where their food drive items were going.

Great idea, Josh, and great work by the students who conducted the food drive!



Bruton Parish Episcopal Church



We greatly appreciate Bruton Parish's annual tradition of bringing 175+ bags of food to FISH on the Saturday after Thanksgiving!

Many FISH volunteers gave time on the holiday weekend to sort and shelve this large donation.



William & Mary Undergraduate Admissions

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions at W&M came with a generous contribution.

Waller Mill Elementary

Wonderful staff from the Waller Mill Elementary School ran a successful food drive for FISH. The second grade won, but they are all winners to us!



St. John Baptist Church Toano

This gentleman brought an impressive donation from this congregation.



D.J. Montague Elementary

Students and their teachers, Jonelle Karasow and Stephanie Koontz, conducted the Student Council Association food drive, collecting about 300 bags.



A Lil Bit Helps

Maya Rubin, a student at Lafayette High School conducted a food drive in her community called "A Lil Bit Helps". She brought in lots of needed food today.



Remember Maya from her Sociology Class project in the [May 2022 newsletter?](#)

Two Rivers Women's Golf Association

The Two Rivers Ladies' Golf Association celebrated the holidays with a luncheon and generous contribution to FISH.

Maura Rush, FISH Director and Donations Coordinator, attended and spoke about FISH's mission.



New Town Coats 4 Kids

Eden Glenn and Gale Hyatt organized the drive "New Town Coats 4 Kids". They donated about 30 much needed jackets.

Cindy Tocci, Clothes Co-Coordinator, gave them a tour of the Clothing Closet.





Ford's Colony Ladies Golf Assn

After I spoke to the Ford's Colony LGA about FISH, I gladly accepted a \$2950 donation from these very generous lady golfers.

-- Maura Rush, FISH Director & Donations Coordinator

Williamsburg Dukes

This James Madison University alumni group, Williamsburg Dukes, made a donation to FISH that was delivered by Brandon Lapitina.

Here is Brandon, with his grandmother, Sue Williams, a long-time FISH Clothing volunteer who is also known as "The Shoe Lady" (see the [May 2022 newsletter](#)).



Powhatan Secondary Food Drive



Teri Collins conducted a food drive in the Powhatan Secondary neighborhood and brought us 126 bags of food and hygiene items.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church

in Norge, organized a special collection of 30 bags of groceries which were delivered by Gina.



VA Beer Company

Our neighbors in The Edge, the Virginia Beer Company, donated food and smiles for this holiday season.



Spring Arbor Senior Living

Spring Arbor focused on a food drive this month, and Kenneth Gibson delivered the very generous donation.



Reed and Nancy Atkins donated over 200 protein drinks and snack bars to FISH.

Amidst the excitement and activity of receiving and shelving donations, the volunteers always try to get a picture and basic information. Any omissions are not intentional.



Christmas Baskets and Stockings

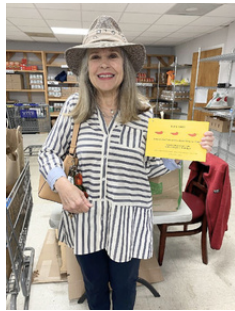
Aren't these gorgeous? Beauty and goodwill delivered once again by the anonymous donors who expend hours collecting items and assembling these uplifting baskets and stockings for our clients.

... hearts of gold ...



Governor's Land at Two Rivers

Dorothy Jeffress gathered 30 bags from her neighborhood in Governor's Land after a chili gathering.



Abbott Realty

Abbott Realty donated 40 bags of food plus a \$50 check.



Promenade@5

Randi Myers and Slade brought a great donation of 30 bags of groceries from the Promenade@5 planned community.



Cox-Powell

Once again, the Cox-Powell Corporation collected a fabulous food donation!



St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church

Michael Thompson, a representative of Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, donated many bags of winter clothes collected by the members of the church.



The church has held collections of clothing and food several times during the year.

They also post in their bulletin What FISH Needs Most from our website.

St. Stephen Lutheran Church



Jim and Virginia Ivey (left), members of the Social Ministry Coordinating Committee of St. Stephen, held a clothing drive and delivered children's jackets and other clothing items to FISH volunteer Barbara Riebe (right).

St. Stephen also provided a generous monetary donation, and had members volunteer to size children's clothes during November.

Volunteer Spotlight

FRIENDS IN FISH PLACES

Mary Ellen Theroux, Clothes Closet



Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. I heard about FISH through my church, Saint Bede. I had quit my job earlier to stay home and take care of my Dad. When he passed away, I took his clothes to FISH and while I was there asked about volunteering. I met Billie Johnston. She called me the next day and asked if I wanted to work Mondays. I said "Yes", and I've been working Mondays and Thursdays now for 20+ years.

Q2. What do you find most rewarding about FISH?

A2. Although I don't work with the clients, the work we do in sorting and sizing is a core part of FISH. It takes a certain type of person to do this work. I've watched people who thought they wanted to volunteer and never return after one day. When I first started, I liked the idea that we were helping people in emergency situations and those in need. The most rewarding part is the very special people one works with and the many friendships you make while at FISH.

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

A3. Yes. Last year we surprised Billie Johnston, our long-time leader in the Clothes Closet, with a birthday party at Spring Arbor where she now resides. It was wonderful to see so many past and present volunteers come to celebrate her special day with her.

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

A4. In the past few years, four of my friends have come to volunteer at FISH. They knew I worked there and asked many questions about what we did. That gave me the opportunity to explain our goal and what we do. They are now co-workers in the Clothes Closet and Food Pantry.

Note: All bed linens are inspected for cleanliness, measured and folded as sets. Each set is tied together with yarn and is labeled with its size.