

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Since our physical move in mid-March and our formal dedication on April 9, our new facilities at 312-314 Second Street have been bustling with activity. Food and clothing requests are slowly increasing and we're seeing a number of new clients that we believe is due to our greater visibility on Second Street. We're certainly not where we were in pre-pandemic 2019, but we're getting there.

Our volunteer force is also growing at a formidable rate. As you know, during the height of the pandemic, we lost many dedicated and capable volunteers who either had pre-existing health conditions that increased their vulnerability, or had loved ones at home that they didn't want to expose unnecessarily. We didn't want them to leave, but we understood completely. Since our relocation, we've been fortunate to attract many new volunteers to both the Food Pantry and the Clothes Closet. These committed folks have hit the ground running, learning how FISH operates, how we interact with our clients, and how they can truly make a difference. We're blessed to have them. A special thank you to Martha Buell, our Volunteer Coordinator, who has been our point person on engaging potential volunteers and telling them the FISH story.

I'd like to highlight two initiatives that I think are special. First, we've started a complete review of our internal policies and procedures that detail how we support and interact with our clients. Drafts of the proposed revisions to these documents have been produced and are being reviewed to ensure completeness, clarity and continuity. By the end of May, the documents will be submitted to your Board of Directors for review. I anticipate that we'll have finished products by July 1.

The second initiative was not home-grown but is really exciting. The Bicycle Co-Op of Williamsburg, an all-volunteer non-profit like FISH and a down-the-street neighbor, has asked for our help identifying those individuals who have no other transportation option other than walking or the bus and would use a bike as primary transportation. These eligible folks would be provided a refurbished bike, at no cost. We're limited to two referrals per week but this could be a game-changer for our walking clients.

Finally, this week we learned that two volunteers and one spouse tested positive for COVID-19. In an abundance of caution, I'm asking that all of our volunteers and clients resume wearing masks while on the FISH campus. If clients or volunteers don't have masks, we'll provide one for them. I recognize that this may be an inconvenience, but local numbers are creeping up and we are in proximity to clients, particularly in the Clothes Closet, and we have to be safe for each other. We'll re-evaluate this policy in four weeks.

Regards,
Jack

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fishwilliamsburgnews@gmail.com



OPEN HOUSE- DEDICATION CEREMONY

The Open House and Dedication Ceremony for FISH's new location at 312 Second Street was held on April 9. We were honored to have the Founders and local business and government supporters attend.



Ribbon Cutting

L to R:
FISH President Jack Trotter
Founder Nancy Lubrano
Early Volunteer Andrea Richardson
Founder Ling Ngo
Vice Mayor W. Pat Dent
Founder Marian Bennett



Honoring the Founders



Dedicating the New Location



Touring the Facilities



Open House



At an earlier open house for the Volunteers, we tapped to the music of The Stairwells, a men's a cappella group from William & Mary.



Thanks to everyone who made this move happen!

Donations



The Williamsburg Host Lions Club donated a Trex Bench to FISH at its new location at 312-314 Second Street. This bench was earned by the club members collecting 500 pounds of soft plastic. We thank the Food Lion located at 5251 John Tyler Highway for recycling the plastic.

A special thank you to the club members and to those in the community who made this happen! Pictured left to right are Lions Leslie Stockman, Judy McDede, Pat Kerr, Paul Kerr and FISH President Jack Trotter.



For years, a generous supporter of FISH has provided holiday and Mother's Day baskets for our clients to brighten their days.

An appreciative mother wrote:

The girls are especially excited about the wonderful Easter baskets that we are saving for Easter Morning.



90 birthday party bags were donated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

St Bede Catholic Church collected and delivered over 540 bags of food the weekend of March 19-20.

On Saturday, April 16, Habitat for Humanity ReStore celebrated their 10th anniversary in Williamsburg and asked FISH to participate in this celebration/fundraiser.



DJ Montague Elementary School contributed 129 bags of food.

Donations



Maya Rubin conducted a food drive as a school project for a Sociology Class, approaching Trader Joe's for bags, designing a flyer, distributing it throughout her neighborhood, and introducing her classmates to FISH!

Great initiative, Maya!



We thank the Kiwanis Club of Williamsburg for a great effort in collecting food for FISH, and thank all who helped unload and stock the food.

In addition to 421 bags of food, the club also collected \$264.02, plus a raffle ticket valued at \$25.

thank you

DONATION IDEAS:

FOOD: non-perishable goods

CLEANING & HYGIENE PRODUCTS: detergent, bar soap, toothpaste

CLOTHING AND SHOES: new or gently used, all sizes and ages

SMALL HOUSEWARES: bedding, towels, kitchenware, etc.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS:

Donations may be made by:

- checks payable to FISH, Inc.,
- or through your bank,
- or online via the Donate button on the website at

williamsburgfish.weebly.com

Donate



100% of your financial contribution will be used to serve client need.

Nonprofit broadening its services to help more in Williamsburg community

By Sian Wilkerson
Virginia Gazette • Apr 14, 2022 at 6:00 am

A reprint of a [Virginia Gazette article](#) written by Sian Wilkerson and published April 14, 2022.

For close to 50 years, FISH Inc. has been providing food, clothing and necessities to people in need in the community.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the company, which is entirely made up of volunteers has endeavored to broaden its reach, looking for more ways to help the community.

More recently, FISH got involved with providing healthy snacks to students in the Individualized Student Alternative Education Program in Williamsburg-James City County schools.

"When they come to class, they don't have to be hungry," FISH vice president Joe Benedetti said. "They can have granola bars, we have stuff that we supply them, not just sugar, but healthy snacks that they can eat while they're there because if they come in and they're starving, they're not going to be able to learn as well."

According to Carrie Stedman, who teaches in ISAEP, better known as the GED program, the snacks are an instrumental part of the program's success.

"You can't learn if your basic needs aren't being met, and food is a basic need," Stedman said. "We have to provide our students with the opportunity to eat if they're hungry."

Many of the students have "a lot of more complicated needs than students in the traditional setting as far as food insecurities, home insecurities, you have students that are working to help support the family, their parents might have mental illness, they might have mental illness, some have children of their own, so we just have a lot of basic needs that have to be met before we can try to help them get their education," Stedman said.

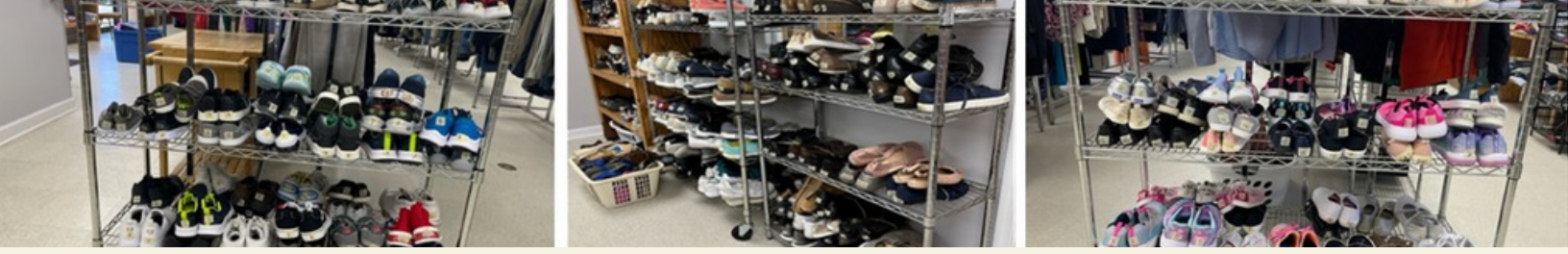
FISH has also begun delivering food monthly to nearly 80 families in motels, and contributes to the Williamsburg Salvation Army's "Third Thursday" mobile food pantry, the Summer Meals for Kids program as well as helping to maintain supplies at the William & Mary Campus Food Pantry.

"People at FISH are committed to serving the community," Benedetti said. "What makes FISH unique is if you donate a dollar, and I can say this with complete confidence, that dollar is going to go to somebody in need. If you donate a can of beans, and when you donate your clothes, ... it all goes out to people in need."

For Benedetti, who has been with the organization for 14 years, "FISH is, and I know I'm biased, but when you retire, when people say they want to volunteer, this is it. You're seeing people, you're helping people that really are in need."

When FISH makes its upcoming move to a new location at 312 N. 2nd Street, it's "going to be an amazing opportunity to be able to serve the community even better," Benedetti said.

In a thank-you note from Carrie Stedman and Ben Swenson: "Your generosity is helping neighbors who need every advantage they can get to achieve an indispensable milestone--a high school equivalency credential. The simple gift of food is changing lives."



FISH Focus

Sue Williams in her Shoe Empire

Sue Williams has devoted many hours and years to sorting and prepping shoes for clients.

Thanks to our donors and C&F Bank's children's shoe drive, FISH has an abundance of shoes for our clients!

VOLUNTEERS

Welcome

New Volunteers

- Andrea Damin
- Barbara Williams
- Deanna Isemann
- Jeshua Branch
- Kathleen Martucci
- Kathy Panaswich
- Lori Buie
- Lucy Kunkle
- Nancy Pingley
- Nora Lowery
- Roseanne Hundley
- Valsa Thattil

Thank you for choosing FISH!

Volunteers Leaving

- Carol Park
- Mary Andersen
- Mia Peri left for Med School



We value your contribution and wish you a bright future.



A special shout out to the volunteers who ably helped John Ellis receive over a thousand pounds of non-perishable food in the past six weeks from the W&M Men's Gymnastics Team, Windsor Meade, the Williamsburg Kiwanis, Lafayette High School and St Bede's. Well done!