



Newsletter

September-October 2021

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is my first newsletter submission as president of FISH, Inc., and I want to start with a sincere thank you to Gene Bruss, whose exemplary performance during possibly the most turbulent period in our long history provided us all with a sense of confidence as we confronted first the COVID-19 pandemic, and then the imminent loss of our FISH facilities on Waller Mill Road. Gene's quiet, confident leadership fostered policies that kept our volunteers and their families safe while enabling us to continue our selfless support to the underserved in our community. He did a remarkable job and will be an absolutely hard act to follow.

While the Spring saw an upswing in vaccinations and a decrease in deadly COVID-19 statistics, the "Delta variant" and other permutations of the virus have shown us that we must continue to remain vigilant. I pledge to you that the safety of our FISH family will remain our first priority, and we'll take any steps necessary to meet that goal.

Now, the big question: When and where will we be in the future? We have found a promising location at 312-314 Second Street in the City of Williamsburg. There are zoning adjustments that still have to be approved by the city government. We have an expert attorney guiding our efforts and are confident that we'll be successful, but it

is a lengthy process. There are key meetings with the City in September and October, and if we are successful, we anticipate beginning the next steps, e.g., demo, minor construction and finally a move in the December time frame. Fingers crossed because this estimate assumes no unforeseen issues.

Your board of directors have all been a source of encouragement and sage advice to me, and I truly appreciate their constructive suggestions. Mike Motes, our Treasurer, Cathey Sadowski, our Secretary, and Martha Buell, our Volunteer Coordinator, have all been particularly supportive of the new guy, and I marvel at their dedication and willingness to go the extra mile every day for FISH.

Finally, I want to thank each of you, whether you serve in the Pantry or Clothes Closet, for all that you do for our wonderful organization. When you see a function or activity that can be improved, reach out to me with your analysis of the issue and your proposed solution. This is OUR organization and I promise to carefully consider all of your suggestions. Thank you for the opportunity to lead FISH, Inc. I promise my best effort each day.

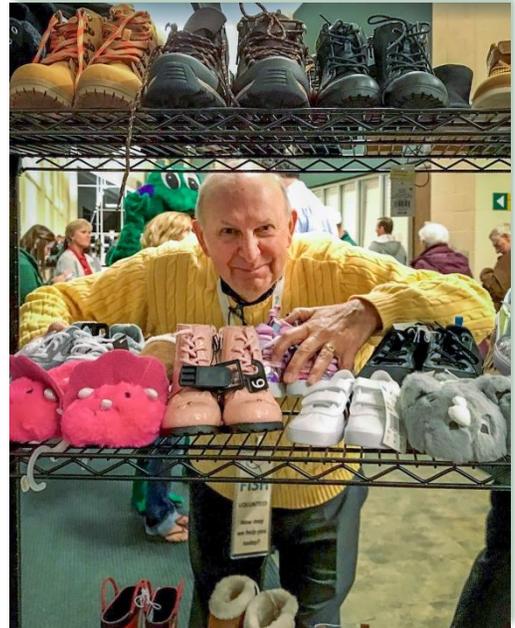
Jack Trotter
President

Special Thanks to Gene Bruss

Gene Bruss has provided 8 years of dedicated service to FISH, especially as President for the past 5.5 years. Gene's need to step down to devote time to his family is understandable, but a great loss to our organization. His commitment to FISH was so strong that he continued to serve a half-year to provide continuity during the pandemic.

Under Gene's leadership, the FISH organization:

- began participating in AmazonSmile--an opportunity for having money donated to FISH when you order from Amazon.
- expanded its footprint in the community by supporting several area organizations, such as the Williamsburg Community Kitchen, United Way, Williamsburg House of Mercy, and St. Olaf Food Pantry. It also provided weekend food for middle school and Head Start children.
- added Donate Now capabilities to the website to encourage online donations.
- increased outreach in the Summer Feeding Program to provide food for youngsters throughout the summer and crockpots to families in motels.
- participated two years in the Shoeless Showdown at William and Mary's Kaplan Arena. Anyone bringing a new pair of shoes received free admission to the game, a coupon for a free Chick-fil-A sandwich, and two tickets to another game. FISH collected 610 pairs of shoes in 2019.
- channeled significant donations (over \$35,000) to other organizations that had paid staff and were able to remain open during the pandemic.
- started and continues to provide food for families in motels.



Gene also oversaw the buildout of the new physical space in 2019, and was instrumental in searching for an imminent new location.

While these words don't adequately express our appreciation, Gene, **thank you** for your dedication and service to FISH!

Meet Our New President

While Jack Trotter is a familiar face at FISH, it is always interesting to know the paths that others have traveled before arriving at this organization.



Jack graduated from The Ohio State University and was commissioned as a Signal Corps officer in the Regular Army in 1966. His military education included the Signal Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, Ranger School, the Radio Officer Course, US Army Command and General Staff College, and the United States Army War College as a War College Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He was also selected as a Congressional Fellow in 1986 and served in the office of Senator John W. Warner (R-VA) from 1986-1987. In addition to his BA (History) degree from Ohio State, he also has an

MA (Political Science) degree from the University of Cincinnati. He served on both the Army Staff and the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He served two tours in Germany, as well as tours in Vietnam, the Philippines and Okinawa, Japan where he commanded the 1140th Signal Battalion. His almost 29-year career concluded at the State Department where he served as the Defense Liaison Officer for Communications. He retired as a Colonel.

Retiring from the Army in 1995, he was employed by Lockheed Martin and the Computer Sciences Corporation, both at the Director level. Retiring from these endeavors in 2007, he served as an Emergency Response Officer for the Red Cross and on the Board of Directors, Anne Arundel County Library System, both in Annapolis, Maryland.

Jack married Hollis Parks in December, 2012, and they moved to Williamsburg in 2013. He and Holly share five grandchildren and live in Ford's Colony. They began volunteering at FISH in 2014. Jack is also active in the James City County Lions Club and recently completed a term as its President.

We look forward to FISH's future under Jack's leadership!

LIKE us on Facebook

[Williamsburg FISH Inc](#)

Welcome, Julie...

Julie Adie, a FISH pantry volunteer since 2013, has been appointed to fulfill Holly Trotter's term on the Board of Directors through December, 2021. Julie has resided in Williamsburg since 2007, when she moved from Norfolk to take care of aging and ailing parents. In Norfolk, she worked first as an insurance defense lawyer, followed by a career as an asset manager for a national commercial real estate portfolio and as Director of Real Estate Development for ODU. Julie became involved with FISH on the recommendation of a family friend, involved in the founding of Williamsburg FISH. Julie is an avid reader of mysteries and American history; enjoys cooking for friends; and, of course, volunteering.

...and thank you, Holly

Holly Trotter has resigned from the Board of Directors since her husband, Jack, is now the President of FISH. Both Holly and Jack will continue as Food Co-ordinators and volunteers. Holly has overseen the expansion of FISH services to clients, including fresh eggs, Food Lion gift cards, and the Soap-N-Suds laundromat cards.

Holly, we appreciate the time you devoted to the Board, and are happy that you will still be around to bless us with your dedication, energy and smile!

NEW VOLUNTEERS

Donna Koenig
Gale Rushworth

Thank you for choosing FISH!

Editor's Note:

Thank you, Olivia Buell, for your generous gift of time and talent to FISH as newsletter editor over the past 3 years! We wish you success in your studies at the University of Virginia. Yes, you made your grandmother (Martha Buell) proud!

DONATIONS

Ford's Colony Killer Whales Swim Team



Members of the Killer Whales, Ford's Colony's Swim Team, recently conducted their First Annual Killer Whale FISH Donation Drive over the period of July 12-24. They collected over 32 bags of food and clothing to help the underserved in our community. Pictured at FISH are Killer Whales Jimmy Jacobs, Liam Arne and Shawn Arne.

Food Lion Feeds



The Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation recently provided a \$2,500 grant to Williamsburg's FISH, Inc. Shown above are FISH Food Coordinator Holly Trotter (center) with Food Lion Store Manager JoAnn DeBolt (left) and Assistant Manager Silvia Martinez (right). Also shown are FISH volunteers (left to right) Jack Trotter, Dan Fontaine, Dick Young and Tony Zotto.

Thank you for your generosity!

Online donations may be made by

Donate

clicking the  button on our website.

All donations directly support FISH services to our neighbors in need.

Visit our website:

<https://williamsburgfish.weebly.com>

REPORTS

<p>The Pantry Report 1/1/21 - 6/30/21 (6-month report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 1,153 unique persons received help from FISH at least once during this period✓ 420 bags of emergency groceries were delivered for persons living in motels <p>Eligibility cycle: We have returned to a 30-day eligibility cycle, providing at least six days of groceries no more often than every 30 days, unless there are extenuating circumstances.</p>	<p>The Clothes Closet Report 1/1/21 - 6/30/21 (6-month report)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ 400 persons were clothed, including 156 children✓ 74 households received housewares <p>Eligibility cycle: Clothing - 4 months Housewares - 12 months</p>
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*** TEMPORARY HALT ON CLOTHING DONATIONS ***

As FISH prepares to make a transition to a new location, we need to put a temporary stop to clothing and houseware donations, effective September 1.

The generosity of donors in recent months will allow us to provide needed clothing for the next few months while we prepare for moving. We know this is an inconvenience, but hope that donors will bear with us until we have our new shelves and racks ready to accept additional donations and store off-season clothing.

We are still gratefully accepting donations of nonperishable foods, toiletries, and financial gifts.

We appreciate all our caring volunteers.

Jack Trotter
President

In Memoriam: Lee Kueser



Leota Ann Coughlin Kueser (Lee) volunteered at FISH for over 25 years, 12 of those years as Volunteer Coordinator. Lee and her family prepared hundreds of grocery bags annually for St. Bede's Lenten food drive for FISH.

Lee is preceded in death by her husband, Frank, who was the treasurer of FISH for over 20 years.

From her obituary: "Lee's radiant smile, halo of white hair, twinkling brown eyes and big heart will never be forgotten."

A Prayer for FISH Members

Our Father, we pray your blessings on this gathering,
And your guidance in our deliberations this day.
Make us effective in working for the advancement of our organization,
As we devote our energies to increasing its usefulness.
We pray for the sick, poor, hungry and homeless,
Here, and all over the world.

Make us sincere, kind and tolerant of the opinions of others.
Guide us in the solutions to our problems.
Help us to do our best in the work we have chosen,
And to be considerate of the feelings of our fellow volunteers and recipients.
Enable us to live that we may individually and as an organization
Glorify His name. Amen.

*This prayer was composed by a volunteer who served FISH faithfully for many years.
The author preferred to remain anonymous.*

2021 Closures

January 1	New Year's Day	Friday
January 18	Martin Luther King Day	Monday
February 15	Presidents' Day	Monday
May 31	Memorial Day	Monday
July 5	July 4 observance	Monday
September 6	Labor Day	Monday
October 11	Columbus Day	Monday
November 24	Closes at Noon	Wednesday
November 25 & 26	Thanksgiving Holiday	Thursday & Friday
December 24	Christmas Eve	Friday
December 31	New Year's Eve	Friday

Board of Directors and Officers:

Jack Trotter, President, Director & Food Co-Coordinator
 Joe Benedetti, Vice President & Director
 Mike Motes, Treasurer & Director
 Cathey Sadowski, Secretary, Director & Data Management Coordinator
 Billie Johnston, Director & Clothing Coordinator
 Dan Fontaine, Director
 Jeff Deel, Director & Grant Applications Coordinator
 Jill Holroyd, Director & Mobile Food Pantry Coordinator
 Julie Adie, Director
 Martha Buell, Director & Volunteer Coordinator
 Martha Dean, Director
 Maura Rush, Director



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