



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS



August 2023

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FISH?

Greetings Fellow FISH Family!

The summer has been one of many challenges! The temperatures have been unusually high and so have the demands on food, clothing and housewares. As always, our wonderful group of volunteers have continued to serve our clients with efficiency, kindness and respect.

The FISH Board of Directors recognizes the concerns voiced by the volunteers and is continually working to resolve them in a timely manner. The safety and well-being of the staff and clients will always be a priority.

Your generous contributions of time, money and resources make it possible for us to operate seamlessly during these ever-changing times.

Thanks again for all you do to support FISH as a positive presence in our community.

Joe Benedetti
President

Posted this month:

**Due to the increased cost of food purchases
for the Pantry...**

**Effective September 1, 2023, FISH will be
suspending the Food Lion Gift Cards.**

Thank you for your support.

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A Grateful Family

An Afghan mother and daughter sent FISH separate nice notes and photos wearing outfits received during a Clothes Closet visit.



Zohal
I really appreciate your hard work and kindness and wonderful communication with the people. Your staff are honest with huge love. I really love you all.

I send you this picture. I wore this dress from FISH to a big ceremony. Everyone liked it. I send my happiest day to you, and I enjoy the dress too.

Zahra
Hello to all members in FISH. I want to share my happy day that I had in my school. I got an award, and I wear the clothes that I got from FISH. Thanks for really good way helping people with smiley and kind heart. I really appreciate all the members that work in FISH.



Thanks to Gene Bruss and Dan Fontaine for sharing this moving experience. In Dan's words, "I resisted assisting clients in the Clothes Closet for years. I regret that! It is by far my greatest joy of being a FISH volunteer!"

Community of Faith Mission

is a faith-based emergency shelter program that serves those experiencing homelessness in the Greater Williamsburg community during the coldest months of the year. Yet this summer it collected more than 5,000 items in a very successful food drive to support Williamsburg House of Mercy, Grove Outreach, St. Olaf Food Pantry and FISH.



MJ (Bruton Parish) and Kate (WUU) delivered 120 bags to FISH which were collected and coordinated at Smith Memorial Baptist Church.

Once again, an amazing collaboration of local organizations in the greater Williamsburg area, for which we are grateful!

Recently, the **King of Glory Lutheran Church** consignment sale presented un-sold children's clothes to FISH; the smaller sizes were shared with the House of Mercy.

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.

Williamsburg-James City County Public Schools Give Back



District leaders who volunteered in the morning with Cindy Tocci (R)



Afternoon volunteers

Annually in July, the WJCC seeks volunteer opportunities for their leadership teams across the district in their WJCC Gives Back Week.

FISH was honored to have the assistance of two teams organized by Courtney Hoffpaur, Family & Community Engagement Specialist. This is a mutually beneficial event, as not only did FISH receive much needed help in sorting and preparing items for the Clothes Closet (CC), but the leaders received a guided tour of our facility (including the Pantry) by Cindy Tocci, Clothes Closet Co-Coordinator. They were impressed at the variety of items we provide, and how clients are escorted through the CC, as if they have a personal shopper or shopping friend. They never imagined all that FISH offers, and were surprised at the amount of work that goes into prepping items for our clients.

During the visit with the district leaders, we discussed how FISH can better serve students whose parents can't make it to FISH during the hours we are open. We are grateful to the WJCC for this generous gift of assistance, plus the opportunity to illuminate and dialogue.



Spanakopita and risotto? Just a few of the fun food items FISH received in a donation from Busch Gardens this month. They had some surplus items (including frozen peas and lima beans) that we were able to obtain for our clients.

A huge Thanks to Busch Gardens!



We Have the Dates!

Mark your calendars!

The William & Mary Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) announced dates for their 2023 "The Costume Sale, a Campus Thrift Extravaganza".

- Wednesday, October 25 for Setup: 1 p.m. - 8 p.m. and the Twilight Sale: 9 p.m. - 11 p.m.
- Thursday, October 26 for the daytime sale: 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

All proceeds go to FISH, and last year the CCM raised \$8,400.

This two-day event is preceded by 12 months of preparation, starting at the Clothing Closet sorting tables and continuing with carefully packing clothes in labelled boxes. Occasionally, a very special item receives mending or stain removal. We are grateful to all who make this possible.

Once again, a special thanks to Austin Moschler, owner of the VA Moving Company, who will donate a moving truck and driver before and after the event.

Interested in helping this fundraiser for FISH? In September, we will post a sign-up sheet on the Conference Room side table. Please consider helping:

- Tuesday evening, October 24 at FISH to line up boxes for loading the next day. Time TBD.
- Wednesday, noon, October 25 at FISH to load boxes onto the moving truck.

One simple way to help is to let friends and neighbors know about this Fun-draiser!

Costumes, formals, vintage and global fashions marked "FUNDRAISER" can be donated through September 30.

Karen Berquist
Costume Sale Coordinator



Joan Owen is our Snow White
(no Grumpy in sight)

T-shirts from Harley Davidson, the Hawks, and the Dave Matthews Band.
Some lucky person will be thrilled to be Snow White!



Models (L-R): Janis Walby, Lori Forcucci, and Elizabeth Phipps

MAKING AN IMPACT

Laura Arndt, Food Pantry



Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. When I was relocating to Williamsburg, I knew I wanted to volunteer at an organization in support of the hunger crisis. When I researched online and found FISH, I was impressed by the longevity and overall mission, and I knew it was a place where I would be able to make an impact in the community.

I did a small tour with the Volunteer Coordinator, Martha Buell, and was quickly blown away by how organized and efficient the system was in the Food Pantry. I was excited that I would be able to jump in and volunteer with a minimal learning curve. All of the volunteers seemed very happy to be there as well.

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

A2. The overall attitude of kindness on the volunteer side and gratefulness from those in need is a much-needed reminder in life to continue supporting people around us. Every time I volunteer at FISH, I leave with a renewed sense of empathy and gratitude.

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

A3. Every time an anonymous volunteer brings the holiday gift baskets, it's always such a wonderful thing to see an unexpected mother or father be able to present their children with an extra beautiful present. This is one of my favorite things that I see happen quite frequently at FISH.

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

A4. I have two small children and I hope one day I can bestow a sense of community and aiding those in need. Volunteering at FISH led me to start working with my neighborhood philanthropic group in 2022 where we support a number of local and national charities, and that is very exciting!

Note: Laura also works with the 11th Hour Service which donated \$500 to the Meals on Wheels Summer Meals for Kids program (see [June 2023 FISH newsletter](#)).