

FISH NEWSLETTER

July-August 2015

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As current FISH volunteers we enjoy being members of a 40-year old organization with an excellent reputation. A reputation established by hundreds of volunteers who preceded us. I am, deeply impressed and grateful for those who founded FISH and the many people who have worked tirelessly to ensure the continuation of its vital mission.

Thank you to Sally Fisk, Karen Berquist and numerous current and prior FISH volunteers who are working with Sally and Karen to document the first 40 years of FISH's history. Initial documentation is to be completed by the end of July. Expect to see and hear more about this through local media starting in September.

The current operating environment is challenging. Although our community partners continue to be generous, our resources, in terms of FISH volunteers and donations of food and clothing, are sometimes stretched thin. Over the past three years, the number of clients provided food has increased by 55%. The cost of supplying groceries to our clients exceeds \$1,800 per week. In two of the last three years, expenses have exceeded donated income. Given our predecessors had the foresight to establish a savings account, FISH continues to be able to serve our community.

One method of reducing expenses is to get as much food as we can from the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank. During the first six months of 2015 we saved \$1,725 by obtaining 2,815 pounds of food from the foodbank. Thank you to Ed Dodson and Tom Phalen. We recently learned that FISH will be able to increase our number of Foodbank shoppers from three to eight. With eight shoppers we project an annual savings of \$9,000. We desperately need to cut costs, but these savings will only occur if we get five additional volunteers to make one trip per month to foodbank. Please contact me about this opportunity to help those in need in our community. (donwbutts@gmail.com, 757-258-4855)

The demand for services is expected to grow in coming years. The Board expressed its commitment to using available workspace more effectively by recently approving the installation of new shelving units in the food storeroom/office. Funds have been donated to purchase the supplies needed for the shelving units. We are in the process of finding a group to donate their time and talent to build the shelving units. Plans are developed for more effectively using available space in the pantry. The Board will consider implementing those plans after renovation of the food storeroom/office is completed. Thanks to Jim Miller for developing the workplace efficiency plans.

FISH is blessed with dedicated volunteers and generous donors. Together we will meet the challenges facing us and continue to provide food, clothing and housewares to those in need in our community.

Donald Butts