



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS



October 2023

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT FISH?

Greeting Fellow FISH Family!

Fall is now officially here and the lower humidity and cooler temperatures are welcomed! The number of clients served have leveled out since the summer, but the overall number of clients served are significantly higher than last year.

Our dedicated volunteers have successfully met the challenges the increased numbers have presented. However, the gap between funds donated and our expenditures continues to widen. We understand that everyone, everywhere is feeling the effects of these changing financial times. Jeff Deel, who is our Coordinator-Grant Applications board member, is diligently beating the bushes for potential sources for additional monetary support for FISH.

We deeply appreciate all our community does for FISH to help those who are experiencing food insecurity and in need of clothing and housewares. Every dollar and every food item donated helps our mission to serve others.

Thanks for all you do! We will continue to serve those in need with kindness and respect.

Joe Benedetti
President



Note from a Client

i was helped yesterday and i just want to say thank you i have 4 children one disabled and my mom and you just helped us out so much we love the items you gave us. May God Bless You All

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Donate



312 Second Street
Williamsburg, VA 23185
757-220-9379
www.fishwilliamsburg.org
fishwilliamsburg@gmail.com

Check out a most Innovative Fundraising Event for FISH!



For the entire week of November 4-10, 14 teams (each having its own cockpit simulator) will fly in unison 24 hours a day, circumnavigating the world in about 45 flight legs. What is intriguing is that the WorldFlight Virginia (WFV) Team has a website where they will be live streaming the activities in the cockpit and the view out the window. This provides an opportunity to see how things operate in a 737-800 cockpit including live virtual ATC communications and procedures. The simulator is a full-scale replica of the real thing.

WFV has selected FISH to be the beneficiary of all funds raised during the 2023 event. Each member of the WFV crew makes a personal contribution to FISH. Crew members also solicit donations from friends and acquaintances. For more details, check out <https://www.worldflightvirginia.net/>



Fred (L) and Jeff Deel, FISH Director & Grants Coordinator (R) preparing for takeoff from the San Diego "airport".

How can you enjoy? Click "[View Live Event Here](#)"

How can you donate? Click "[Donate Here](#)"

FISH is privileged to have this opportunity offered by simulator designer and builder, Fred Kurasiewicz. Fred is the husband of Barbara Kurasiewicz who has been a long-time, enthusiastic FISH supporter and volunteer.

The simulator is located in Williamsburg. Donors who contribute \$100 or more are invited to observe the cockpit operations in person November 5-11. To arrange, email fkuras@cox.net.

Spread the word about this exciting new fund-raiser for FISH!



Proceeds from 32 years of
 The Costume Sale @ W&M
 Sponsored by Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM)

THE Costume Sale

**Thursday
 October 26
 10 AM – 5 PM**

W&M Sadler Center
 Tidewater A & B

Cash – Credit – Venmo

Below thrift store prices!

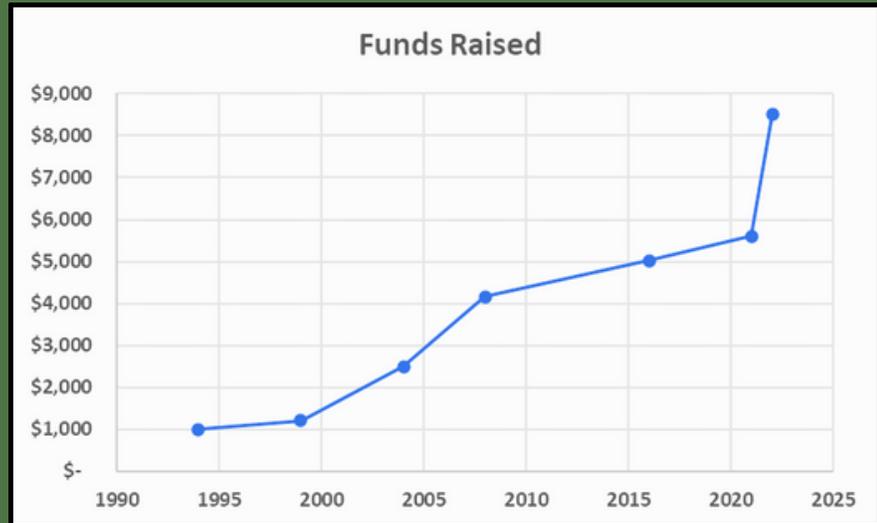
- ★ Costumes for all ages
 - ★ Formals, Tuxes, Furs
 - ★ Vintage & Global Fashions
 - ★ Jewelry, Purses, Accessories
- & MORE**

Twilight Sale
 Wednesday, 10/25
 8 PM – 11 PM

All proceeds benefit **FISH**
 Local Food Pantry & Clothes Closet

Free reserved parking adjacent to the Sadler Center.

Twilight Sale starts an hour earlier
 this year - 8:00 PM



Even during COVID in 2020,
 the online event brought in \$1200!

Bravo to our community and campus volunteers who
 spend endless hours, year after year, devoted to this
 fun and fruitful event!

See You There!



Thanksgiving Closing

Notices

FISH will be closed on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday,
 November 22, 23 & 24



Donation Receipts

If you have not received a thank you for your donation, it may
 be that we received your donation from a third party without
 identification of the actual donor. If you are missing a receipt,
 please write us at fishwilliamsburg@gmail.com.

Williamsburg Lodge NO. 6 Awards FISH

The Masonic Lodge of Williamsburg bestowed their Community Builders Award on FISH, Monday, October 9.

The award to the President and Volunteers of FISH is *In Recognition of Outstanding Service to the Community, This Award is Given and Heartfelt Gratitude is Expressed For Significant Efforts Toward Making the Community A Better Place in Which to Live.*

After dinner, Maura Rush, FISH Director and Food Donations Coordinator, shared the FISH story in a visual presentation.

We are honored to receive this award and be given the opportunity to share our goals and challenges with the members. This Lodge donates faithfully each month, and we especially thank Peter Booker for his support in coordinating the collection and delivery of these donations.

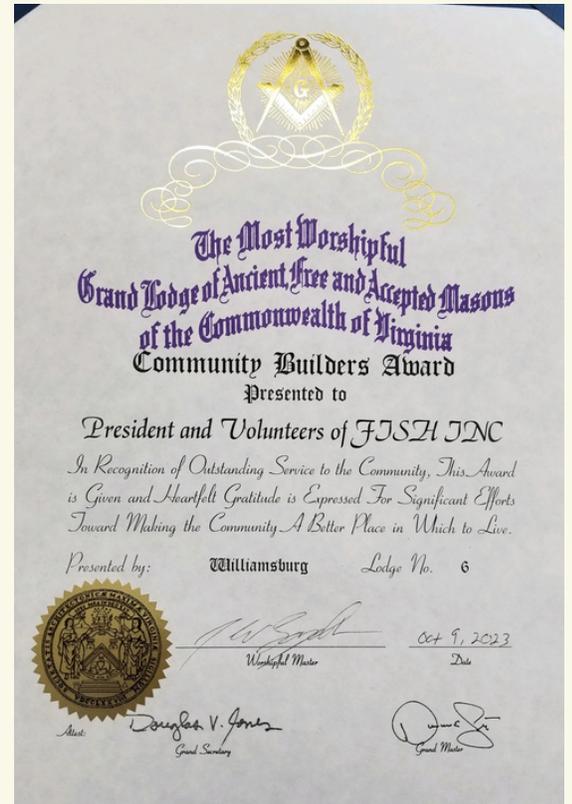


Accepting the award from Worshipful Master Joe Langdale (L) is FISH President Joe Benedetti (R).



L-R: Worshipful Master Joe Langdale, FISH President Joe Benedetti, Maura Rush, FISH Director, Kathleen Pock, FISH Newsletter Editor, Peter Booker, Past Master.

The framed award will hang in the Reception-Pantry area at FISH.



FISH helping FISH !!

FISH Window Cleaning donated the cleaning of our windows-- Inside and outside of both buildings! The crew did a terrific job in record time, plus they brought a food donation with them!!

L to R: Andy Foret, Lawrence Whitaker, Brian Montz

...we can see clearly now...



Thank You

Community Volunteers Make a Difference

Donations come in various forms. Our regular volunteers donate their time to serve our clients. In addition, local organizations donate their time to assist. There's a long history of community volunteers assisting our Clothes Closet. Billie Johnston, former Clothes Closet Coordinator and Board Director, worked with volunteers from local church groups to prepare clothing for the clients until the program was paused during the pandemic. The tradition has been revitalized this year.

Every Tuesday, community volunteers from local churches and organizations help prepare clothing for clients. These volunteers inspect clothing items for cleanliness and functionality including buttons and zippers. They size, make labels for the items, and either fold or hang them. The few hours per week that these volunteers donate to this task make a significant difference and allow the regular volunteers to focus on other tasks, including guiding clients as they select clothing for themselves and their family members.

We couldn't get all the clothes ready for clients without the assistance from these special community volunteers. The churches helping us by donating time to prepare clothes include Williamsburg United Methodist, Walnut Hills Baptist, St. Martin's Episcopal, Our Saviour's Lutheran, Mount Vernon United Methodist, Williamsburg Baptist, Bruton Parish Episcopal, St. Stephen Lutheran, and Saint Bede Catholic. Organizations supporting their employees to donate their time include Spring Arbor Senior Living and WJCC Schools. The Clothes Closet appreciates the time donated by all these community volunteers and the dedicated regular volunteers.



Volunteers from Williamsburg United Methodist Church help monthly to prepare ladies nightwear and lingerie.



Managers from Spring Arbor Williamsburg, who assist twice monthly, are outside the Billie Johnston Conference Room.

Williamsburg Garden Club



Melinda Morgan (right) of the Williamsburg Garden Club brought in about 40 bags of essentials. Ruth Bott (middle) and Ginger Miller (left) helped unpack and shelf.

Yoga Class Donation

On September 16 at **8:00 a.m.**, Cathey Sadowski, FISH Director & Secretary, represented FISH at a donation-based yoga class. The attendees brought food, clothing and \$250+ cash!

Thanks to Lisa Neun who also helps with the annual Costume Sale, and Jessica Ruff, yoga instructor, for creating this opportunity! And thanks to the Frothy Moon Brewhouse for the friendly class location and helpful staff. One more "thanks" to Cathey for attending!



MANY THANKS

Longhill Woods

Ginger Miller's food drive in her neighborhood, Longhill Woods, was a big success!



Temple Beth El



Temple Beth El donated 30+ bags of groceries and much needed items on September 25.

Right: Jill Whitten, Delivery
Left: Maura Rush, Director & Food Donations Coordinator



Grocery Grab of the Month

How about adding one item every month to your grocery shopping list for FISH?

While we are low on many items, this month we need canned chicken.



The Grocery Grab collection box is inside the back door of the Food Pantry.

Many thanks in advance from the Food Pantry Coordinators, Jill Holroyd and Maura Rush.

A Caring Heart and a Listening Ear



FISH Clothing volunteers never lack for something to do. During the morning, we are typically able to clear the donation room (at least once) and do some sizing. That changes after lunch when there is often a steady stream of donations. It is not unusual to leave at the end of the day with the donation room full.

As with the Pantry, Clothing has experienced a sharp rise in the number of clients. There are usually a few clients visiting the Clothes Closet during the morning. The clients requesting clothes normally increase sharply during the afternoon.

To provide optimal focus and care, we try to limit access to the Clothes Closet to only one client at a time. However, we don't always have that luxury. One day toward the end of August, we had four clients waiting to get in the Clothes Closet, while three more were in the Clothes Closet selecting clothes. It's difficult to provide an exceptional experience for our clients under those conditions.

However, no matter how busy Clothing volunteers are, they always try to have a caring heart and listening ear. Donated clothes often have a personal story such as the death of a loved one, recent illness or weight loss, or a neighborhood or church clothing drive. We do our best to listen and care.

This is especially important for our clients while in the Clothes Closet. Many are dealing with or overcoming struggles. Many readily share their personal stories with the Clothing volunteers. We always try to truly care and listen so that FISH can help them make their lives just a little bit better. They are so appreciative of the assistance that FISH provides.



-- Dan Fontaine

Welcome New Volunteers!

- Judy De Primo
- Lisa Neun
- Lorraine Masuoka

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.

HELPING HANDS

Jo Ann Mertens
Pantry



Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. I volunteered for about 6 years at the Community Services Referral Network (CSRN), an organization that qualified the FISH clients before they walked next door to FISH, which is how I met Billie Johnston. Then I met Martha Buell in the Belk Department Store one day. She asked and I agreed to volunteer, and have continued ever since.

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

A2. Most of my life I have helped or supported those who are in need, finding that more rewarding than anything else. I don't judge, and I try to utilize all my resources in the community which include contacts in several organizations—Probation, Colonial Behavioral Health, Social Services, and others. Selfishly, when I am working with them, I feel so much better than sitting at home not doing anything. It is a win-win for me.

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

A3. There have been so many rewarding times. I do remember a man coming in who had just lost his wife and another volunteer and I spent time trying to comfort him. I also appreciate how we help the homeless and they seem so grateful. I know many of the clients who have been in jails and prisons due to my previous work and one woman came in and remembered me. She recalled that I gave her a food card when she was on probation.

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

A4. When I retired from the Department of Corrections after 40 years, I wrote a book because I broke barriers for women there. Then upon moving to Williamsburg in 2000 to be near my family, I worked at the domestic violence shelter, was a part-time probation officer, and helped in the regional jail to prepare those getting ready to be released. I also volunteered at the Newport News Police Department in Economic Crimes to help the victims of scams.

I have spent my life helping others, and raised a son alone who is now a scientist at NASA. I have had a very rewarding life, and want to keep busy as long as I can.

Editor's Notes:

After reading Jo Ann's spotlight submission, I was curious about the book she modestly mentioned. A search led me to "One Woman, Three Prisons: The Rise Within the Ranks June 1966 -June 2000". I have her permission to mention it. Even the overview is fascinating.

FISH clients are no longer pre-qualified. A client's request for assistance is sufficient.