



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS

February 2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow FISH Volunteers:

Last month, I described a supply chain upon which we depend for food purchases as “bent”, where week in and week out we couldn’t depend confidently that we would receive what we ordered. Bear in mind that food purchases constitute 85-87% of the food we provide to clients, with the remainder coming from donations. Inflation, while no longer in double digits, remains a significant negative factor.

An additional threat to our clients is that temporary benefit increases to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enacted by Congress during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide protection against food insecurity will end on February 28, 2023, in accordance with the requirements of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023. While this new act will benefit needy children during the summer months, beginning in 2024, most of SNAP families have at least one adult who may be adversely affected now. Many of our clients may not have understood the “temporary” nature of the benefit increases.

This month, I want to update you on some of the initiatives that we’re taking to try to lessen the impact the SNAP roll-back, inflation and supply-chain issues have had on our clients. You may recall that the Board of Directors agreed to an increase in the amount of food provided to our clients and on January 23, revised “Quantity Guidelines” were placed in effect. These increases were across the board and positively affected all family sizes resulting in providing about 27 meals (9 days) rather than our previous 21 meals (7 days). LWell, the dietitian nutritionist firm that evaluated our previous food offerings very positively last summer, will be asked to comment on this enhanced program.

In addition to increases in distribution amounts, FISH agreed to support a Greater Williamsburg Outreach Ministry (GWOM) initiative in stocking “Care Closets” at Lafayette High School and Berkeley Middle School, providing healthy snacks and necessary clothing items for young people in need. FISH has continued to support the College of William & Mary Campus Food Exchange with non-perishable food items for students, as well as our “Motel Initiative” that provides food to approximately 80 persons living in local motels.

The single biggest reason that we can support these and other similar programs is due to the incredibly generous Greater Williamsburg community in which we live and volunteer. We are privileged to work in such a loving and giving environment.

Warmest regards,
Jack Trotter
President

IN THIS ISSUE

[FISH Makes a Difference](#)
[Page 2](#)

[Donations](#)
[Page 3 - 4](#)

[New Volunteers](#)
[Donating Made Easy](#)
[AmazonSmile Ending](#)
[Page 4](#)

[Volunteer Spotlight](#)
[Page 5](#)

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

Sharing a Laugh

A multi-generational family needed some winter clothes, so the father and his mother visited the Clothes Closet.

The icebreaker laugh happened immediately when our volunteer looked at the client form and saw that the mother's age was listed as 33 instead of 83. Her son, recently retired, joked that she should select age-appropriate clothing and she quipped back, "Which age"?

The fun continued as clothes were selected for the family, especially when I was putting together her outfits. Towards the end of their visit, I helped her find a cardigan sweater and a scarf to complement her new tops and dress. She kept saying how beautiful the items were. I replied that she, at 83, will look so pretty she might catch a gentleman's eye. She laughed and her son's humorous response was "Mama, at my age, I'm not going to start calling some man, Daddy." We all had a belly laugh.

The interactions with clients are about so much more than just giving clients clothes and food.

So Grateful!

A client and her partner were homeless and recently were able to move into an apartment. They had literally nothing.

As she walked through the Clothes Closet and selected clothing, shoes, and housewares, she had a big smile and was so grateful. We got a laugh, when the item that thrilled her the most and gave her a little shout of joy, was an ice cube tray. You never know what that special item might be.

We are blessed to have such a warm group of volunteers and such nice, grateful clients. You can't help but have a warm feeling after being able to help a client like her.

Happy Valentine's Day, Billie!

Dan Fontaine, on behalf of her many FISH Clothing friends, surprised Billie Johnston with a Valentine's Day card, flowers, and her favorite Reese's Cup candy. Billie is one of the founders of the Clothes Closet and is much loved by her many friends, as shown by this Valentine's Day surprise!

Billie is at Spring Arbor and loves company. Stop by and visit!

Thanks to Cindy Tocci and Dan Fontaine for these contributions to the newsletter and our lives!



Theta Phi Sigma Christian Sorority



While this sorority has supported charities in large cities such as Richmond and Virginia Beach, this is the first time it has supported a Williamsburg charity.

They were very impressed with what they saw at FISH and will be back.

*Welcome
Thank You*



L-R: President Valerie Morgan and Deborah Padgett, Secretary of the Micah Epsilon Chapter

St. Martin's Episcopal Church

Representatives of St. Martin's outreach program recently presented a generous donation, plus their volunteers assisted Cindy Tocci, Clothes Closet Co-Coordinator, two days with sizing and preparing clothing items for the Closet's shelves. What an amazing group!

Pictured here is Jack Trotter, FISH President, receiving the check. To the right of Jack is Patti MacGillivray, Clothes Closet Co-Coordinator, plus the wonderful St. Martin's volunteers.

Your generous donation will really help those in the Williamsburg, James City and York counties, as we have experienced an increase in the number of households needing food and clothing.



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.



Donations

Warm Coats Donated



The William & Mary Campus Food Exchange held a coat drive and collected over 15 warm winter coats.

What a thoughtful and generous effort to give back and to meet the needs of the FISH clients.

Donating Made Easy

Online donations may be made by clicking this Donate button

Donate



or scanning this QR code



To scan a QR code:

- Open your cellphone's camera.
- Focus the camera on this QR code.
- Follow the instructions on your phone screen to complete the action.

Amazon ended the AmazonSmile program on February 20, 2023.

Thank you to our donors who made the conscientious effort to shop through AmazonSmile for FISH's benefit!

Stay tuned for our Amazon Wish List.

Another convenient option is to donate through the [Target Wish List Registry](#).



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

Welcome

New Volunteers

Anne Koren
Bob Delo
Jan Russell
Janice McGuire
Renee Goode

Thank you for choosing FISH!

Volunteer Spotlight

WHAT REALLY MATTERS

Don Butts

Food Pantry, Food Delivery and Foodbank Shopper

Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. In 2005, I had an opportunity to start working four days a week leaving my Fridays open to do something else. I really wanted to serve my community in some way. My faith has been instrumental in guiding me throughout my life and the good Lord has always taken care of me. It was time for me to put to use my talents and abilities to help others and give back. After some research, I chose FISH because hunger relief efforts were important to me, and because I liked the fact that it is an all-volunteer organization.



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

A2. Almost every time I serve at the front desk in the Food Pantry, I encounter someone who really needs food or other items and is very appreciative for what they receive. It is also an opportunity for me to be reminded of how blessed I am, and how trivial some of my personal "concerns" are. My problems are not problems at all compared to what others are going through. It makes you stop and think what really matters the most, and what is the priority in that moment.

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

A3. While volunteering at the front desk, a woman called who was in an emergency situation involving herself and her child and needed clothing. They had rapidly left their home due to an abusive family crisis. There was no time to gather any of their personal belongings, and they couldn't return to their home. Due to her vocation, she knew she would be able to find work in a short period of time and would be able to provide for herself and child. But for the immediate future, they just needed clothes. She came in that day and was able to get what they needed. It felt really good to be the volunteer who helped them select their clothes that day.

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

A4. I started volunteering at FISH about 18 years ago, and through the years have served in various positions to include President and Vice President of our Board of Directors. Around seven years ago my wife, Jean, and I started shopping on behalf of FISH at the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank, one of our community partners. I currently coordinate the efforts of eight Foodbank shoppers, and Jean recently started volunteering in the Food Pantry. We also help the fourth Friday team distribute food to the homeless living in local hotels.

I am retired USAF after 26 years. I also volunteer with the James City Lions Club.