



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS

April 2023



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow FISH Volunteers:

On Saturday, April 15, we held our combined annual meeting, Board election and celebration of the one-year anniversary of our move to our new home on Second Street. We had a crowd of volunteers, refreshments and a fun raffle with some interesting, donated prizes. Congratulations to David Banks, Jeff Deel, Jill Holroyd and yours truly who will serve on the Board for terms that will end on December 31, 2025. Of special note is the retirement from the Board of Billie Johnston, who leaves the Board after many years of dedicated and exemplary service. We are deeply indebted to Billie for her quiet leadership and sage advice to all of us. Special thanks to Cathey Sadowski, Maura Rush, Joe Benedetti, Martha Buell, Martha Dean, Holly Trotter, Julie Adie, Patti MacGillivray and Cindy Tocci who organized the event. Well done.

Announced at the event was a Summer Meals for Kids program, sponsored by the Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels and supported by FISH and other area charities. FISH will be collecting snack-size cookies, Rice Krispies Treats, pudding cups, no-sugar-added fruit cups, applesauce, raisins, chips, cheese and crackers, pretzels, 100% juice, etc. to place in children's lunches. Please read the labels of your donations to ensure that NO NUTS are included, and avoid peanut butter snacks or snack bars with nuts. A collection box for your donations is located at the rear of the Food Pantry. If you'd rather write a check, donations should be made payable to FISH with "Summer Meals for Kids" or "SMKS" in the memo line.

Finally, the crew that gathers every Monday at 9:30 a.m. to haul purchased food from the Food Lion next to Sal's by Victor is looking for a few good men to augment our existing numbers. They deliver the food to FISH, unload it, and place it on the shelves. Trust me, this requires little intellect but places a premium on upper body strength and a sense of humor. If you're interested, please contact our boss, Holly Trotter, at hollis.parks@gmail.com to enlist. She'll work within your schedule if you can't participate every week.

Warmest regards,
Jack Trotter
President

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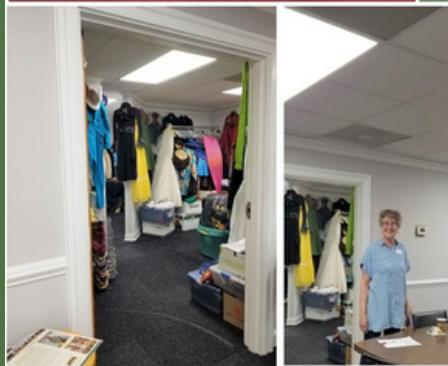
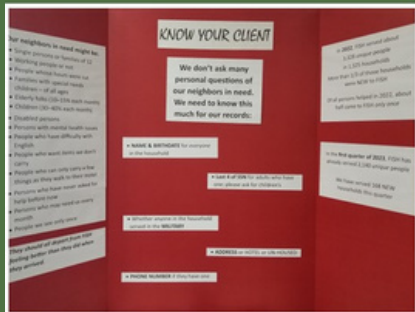
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Annual Meeting of Volunteers & 1st Anniversary on 2nd Street



Typical Weekly Food Pickup

Please contact
Holly Trotter at
hollis.parks@gmail.com
if you can help.



Greater Williamsburg's Power of Synergy

The Greater Williamsburg Area's synergy (the combined power of groups working together being greater than the power of each working separately) is impressive! We witness this synergy in the enthusiastic cooperation of local organizations helping provide for less fortunate neighbors.

A realistic example is:

- A client family visiting FISH may receive food, a Food Lion gift card, clothing, household items and toiletries. (Instead of a family, this may be a person released from the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail and brought to FISH by Faith in Action.)
- If the client is in immediate need of a good meal, we connect them with Williamsburg House of Mercy and advise them how to get there.
- While there, if they need a place to stay, they can receive counseling and shelter as a result of a partnership between House of Mercy and the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission (GWOM).
- If they are housed in one of the several residential hotels, we give them a crockpot from the Crockpot Ministry.
- If they need transportation, we give them a coupon for a refurbished bicycle from the Williamsburg Bike Co-Op.

Before any of this could happen, here are some behind-the-scenes collaborations:

- James City Lions Club members drove to the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank, selected food items, then re-stocked the FISH Pantry. (A team of seven Lions rotate weekly trips to the foodbank.)
- FISH delivered commercial-sized cans of food which cannot be used for families to the House of Mercy lunch program.
- FISH volunteers cleared garages and donated old bicycles to the Bike Co-Op to restore.

Other great examples are in the following article on page 4, "[FISH Collaborates with Other Nonprofits](#)".

Also, "Standing at the Edge of a Hunger Cliff", a recent article in the Lions Club magazine, shows the cooperative effort of Williamsburg organizations. <https://lionmagazine.org/articles/standing-at-the-edge-of-a-hunger-cliff/>

Thank you Greater Williamsburg Area volunteers, donors, and organizations!

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

Ms. Eleanor O. called to express her gratitude for our being here. She said, "Everyone that she has dealt with was always so kind and helpful, and to please pass along her sentiments to everyone."

-- Bill Dean



FISH Collaborates with Other Nonprofits

FISH is always looking for opportunities to collaborate with other nonprofits within the greater Williamsburg community. Here are a few recent initiatives:

- Proclaiming Grace Outreach is a faith-based non-profit organization serving New Kent County and Upper James City County. They provide a holistic approach to the needs of their community by supplying food, clothing, and other services to help the disadvantaged and those with economic hardships. They recently shared with a FISH volunteer that they needed swimsuits to offer for sale in their Grace Village Thrift Shop. This is an item that we don't typically save and are now saving to support their mission. One of our volunteers lives close to their store and will drop off swimsuits as we accumulate them.
- Williamsburg House of Mercy (WHOM) provides a safe and welcoming environment for area homeless to find respite, receive services, and work toward ending their homelessness, emergency assistance, and supportive services. Its vision is for a community where no one will ever have to spend a night on the streets or in the woods because they cannot find or afford safe housing. WHOM frequently has families in need of infant clothing. FISH saves our surplus infant clothing to share with the House of Mercy.
- The Grove Christian Outreach Center (GCOC) serves the physical and spiritual needs of the poor and disadvantaged in the Grove area of James City County. It provides food pantry resources, a clothing closet, and financial assistance to residents living in the Grove community. GCOC is having a prom clothing giveaway this year. Since FISH saves this type of clothing to support our annual costume sale, we found in our inventory a dozen tuxedos, a half-dozen gowns, and some men's and women's formal shoes that we delivered to Grove to support their giveaway.



Proclaiming Grace Village Thrift Shop



Dan Fontaine with Lucy Gellerman from Grove Christian Outreach

In an effort to allow customers to see full circle how their operation works and who they benefit in the community, New2you President, Suzanne Maggio, invited a FISH representative to their 10-Year Anniversary Celebration and National Customer Appreciation Day on April 18. Cathey Sadowski represented FISH and was able to chat with the patrons about FISH's role and collaboration with the local community. Great idea, Suzanne! Thanks, Cathey!



Williamsburg Community Foundation Grants FISH \$5,000 for Children’s Shoes

At their Grant Award Luncheon on Thursday, March 23, the Williamsburg Community Foundation (WCF) presented FISH with a \$5,000 check for our Footwear for Growing Feet initiative. FISH was among 27 organizations receiving grants at the event. Nancy Sullivan, WCF President and CEO said, “Williamsburg is fortunate to have a great number of caring individuals who are so generous with their gifts to our community.”

The Footwear for Growing Feet project focuses on FISH’s continuing need to provide durable, daily-use shoes, primarily sneakers, for school-aged children. The proceeds of this grant will supplement the supply of shoes that are provided by our generous donors during the year.

Children’s sneakers are in high demand from families that visit our Clothing Closet. School-aged kids’ feet grow at a tremendous rate and active children are rough on shoes. Families often need more than one pair of shoes for each child every year. Research shows that ill-fitting and worn-out shoes have detrimental effects on children's overall well-being and ability to learn. This grant will help FISH achieve its goal to be able to provide families with a pair for each child every 4 months.

Thank you, Williamsburg Community Foundation.

Cindy Tocci, Director & Clothes Closet Co-Coordinator
Jeff Deel, Director & Grants Coordinator



Donating Made Easy

Online donations may be made by clicking this Donate button



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.

Williamsburg Baptist Church



Delivering 30 Easter baskets for children of FISH clients are (left to right) Kay Cheves, Faye Redding and Cathey Sadowski, who is also FISH Director and Secretary.

Queens Lake Ladies Night



April Showers Bring May Flowers

Let's "Shower" FISH with Hygiene supplies!

Collecting soap, body wash, shampoo, dental & other hygiene supplies for FISH. Cash/check donations also accepted. To read more about FISH, located in the Edge District, visit fishwilliamsburg.org.

"QLCA Ladies Night is a 'shower' for FISH for hygiene supplies. Everyone always enjoys supporting FISH!"

-- Ann Brown-Hailey

Hickory Neck Episcopal Church

The Hickory Neck Episcopal Church in Toano generously and consistently donates monthly.

This month's donation of 30 bags was extra large because the youth group collected soup specifically for FISH.



Consistent donations help us budget what we will need to purchase to meet client needs. Thank you!



The group collected \$110 + several bags of much needed toiletries.

Thank you for your generosity and ongoing support of FISH!

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.

Volunteer Spotlight

IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNITY

Barbara Riebe
Clothes Closet

Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. Before COVID, I was a volunteer providing caregiver respite care through the Williamsburg United Methodist Church. I was looking for another place to volunteer in the community and my sister recommended FISH. I liked the idea that FISH helps local residents who are in need, is locally staffed, locally run, and we are ALL volunteers!

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

A2. First, I love working with the other volunteers! They all have so much compassion. I have lived in Williamsburg for 22 years but only since working at FISH do I truly feel like I am part of a community. I really enjoy connecting with the clients when they are choosing clothes and housewares. Their gratitude is overwhelming. Sometimes we laugh and have a good time; other times I sense a need for them to talk, so I listen to their stories and do my best to help them in that moment. It really gives me a sense of accomplishment when whomever I am helping finds exactly what they need. I enjoy putting together head-to-toe outfits based on their requirements and preferences, if we have what they are looking for. It doesn't matter whether it is for a job interview, church or a funeral.



Another reason I love FISH, is that nothing goes to waste. If we can't use something for our clients, then we share it with another charity in the community. For example, plastic bags go to the James City Lions Club, worn towels go to the Heritage Humane Society, and if another nonprofit we partner with needs something, we gladly help.

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

A3. I have been surprised by the range of clients we serve - out of work, yes, but also displaced by house fire, black mold or other circumstances. I recently had an older client who was distraught and shocked that she and her family were in a position where she needed help from the community. It was really important to truly listen to her and determine what she needed at that exact moment while providing assurance that we were there to help her.

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

A4. I am a native of Newport News but moved to the deep south for 20 some years. I moved back to this area in 1995. I worked at the Williamsburg Regional Library as a Collection Development Librarian for 18.5 years and retired in 2018.

I make mobiles for fun and gifts. I also like to read, swim, garden, go on long walks with my dog, Ibis, and take long naps with my cat, Christen. Both animals are Heritage Humane rescues.