



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS



March 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Let the warm breezes of March blow! February was quite the winter month as FISH was closed four days due to inclement weather. We follow the Williamsburg James City County (WJCC) school schedule for weather-related closings.

FISH was a strong contender in the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission (GWOM) Heart for the Hungry fundraiser. The goal of collecting 1,000 pounds of donated food in the month of February for a \$1,000 reward was too hard to pass up, and our faithful donors quickly responded. On Day 3, we reached the 1,000-pound goal, and even though that was the maximum match, we kept recording to see how many pounds of food came in during February -- 5,189 pounds. Thanks to everyone for this impressive response!

FISH will be helping Williamsburg House of Mercy with their Mobile Food Pantry Pop-ups on March 21 and April 25 at the Williamsburg Community Chapel. It is a pleasure to see the families come through the line and get excited about the items available to them.

If you are fortunate enough to spot our FISH van around town, please check out our new decals on it. Wright Signs did a wonderful job at a discounted rate, and an anonymous couple liked the work so much they picked up the cost. Thanks to everyone involved - the van looks great! (see page 4)

And a huge **Thank You** to Robert Hopkins, our IT Specialist who has been busy coding, donating and setting up several new computers and monitors. All of Robert's hard work will help our Front Desk, Data Entry and Recordkeeping perform faster and smoother. Thank you, Robert.

Thank you to all of our Volunteers who tirelessly make FISH an easy place for those in need to obtain necessary items.

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thanks
for your
support

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Donate



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Asheville Hurricane Helene Relief by Bob Stanzione

Our son, Rodney Rooks (center), who lives in Luray, Virginia, was touched by a Facebook post about the many families in the Asheville, NC area left homeless by Hurricane Helene and in need of all types of supplies. Nine families, including Rodney, his wife, Susette, and our adult grandchildren, rallied many others in Luray to support an effort to bring supplies to the devastated area.

The first trip was in October 2024. They drove nine pickup trucks (three with trailers in tow) of supplies to the ravaged area. They stopped by a local church to see where to drop off the supplies. Pastor Danny Honeycutt, and his brother, Mike, of the Cornerstone Covenant Church, in Hudson, NC, became their local points of contact.



Since October 2024, the group has made 10 trips to the area with at least three pickups loaded with supplies. On their last trip, they delivered 18 full propane tanks for heating and cooking. Their supplies included tents, sleeping bags, cooking grills, tools, medical supplies, blankets, food, water, clothes, crockpots, etc. When I asked Rodney why he was doing this, he said he tries to follow the example I set for him, and he believes that other communities should assist a community in need if they are able.

The FISH Clothes Closet provided Rodney with 4 large boxes and 13 large bags of clothes and is on standby to give more. He personally delivered the FISH donation to the Cornerstone Covenant Church where several families, some with children, were waiting.

This donation warmed not only their bodies but their hearts. They were all surprised, many with tears in their eyes, that a community located hundreds of miles away, with no direct link to them, would contribute so generously.



On behalf of our son, the Honeycutts, and the many recipients of this generous donation, Linda and I extend our appreciation and gratitude to FISH volunteers and donors.

Bob and Linda Stanzione multi-task as FISH volunteers. Bob is a Director and Facilities Coordinator, on call for building maintenance issues; plus he's on the Trader Joe's food delivery team, and serves in other roles as needed. Linda also is willing to serve as needed, and currently covers important administrative tasks that she can do at home.

Acknowledgements & Announcements

Editor's Note:

I'm continually amazed at the creativity of our volunteers, donors and community. Below are examples of projects/actions others have taken that support the FISH mission. If you have other examples, please send them to me at fishwilliamsburgnews@gmail.com.

-- Kathleen Pock

More Children's Book Resources

A Special Thanks to Tricia Byrne, Food Pantry volunteer, for obtaining children's books for our young FISH clients.

Tricia volunteers at a library in Northern Virginia where she lives parttime, and has been bringing children's books from there. Her passion led her to revive the Kids Book Nook when we opened at our Second Street location.



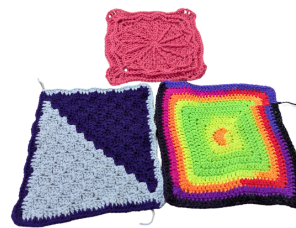
Tricia is a good example of how our volunteers stay alert to needs and resources.

-- Martha Buell, FISH Volunteer Coordinator

10x10's make a Blanket

Marci Kaplan-Lips, Assistant Food Purchasing Coordinator, has made four blankets to donate to FISH since she began volunteering here in 2022.

Her latest project is to increase productivity by involving many women in the community who crochet 10"x10" squares that Marci combines to make a blanket. "The more squares I get, the more blankets we can make."



A Different Collaboration

A new opportunity to collaborate with another organization presented itself this month.

FISH provides food and clothing items to the Care Closets of three local schools--Berkeley, Lafayette, DJ Montague--and recently the **Kiwanis Club of Colonial Capital** (KCCC) adopted a mission to do the same for Hornsby Middle School.

Lindsay Lilly, Director and FISH Food Purchasing Coordinator, accompanied Bob Holmberg, of the KCCC, on a shopping trip to suggest items to purchase. Bob's handwritten note reads, "Thanks to FISH for your generosity with your recent shopping trip with me. The amount of food we were able to deliver to Hornsby Middle School was very much appreciated by the staff."

The Art of Mending

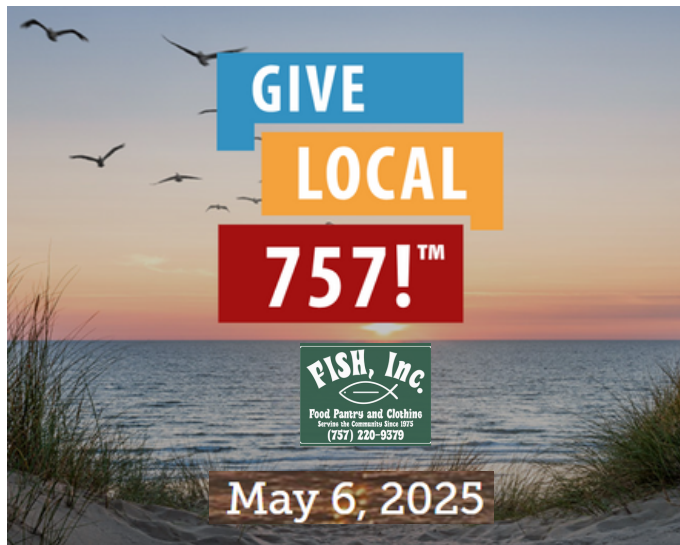
It is not widely known that the Clothes Closet volunteers go far beyond providing clothes by cleaning, pairing, sizing, and mending items so that the client has an uplifting experience.

When Vicki Henninger saw a girl's sweater missing pearls from the collar, she recalled she had loose pearls at home. She restored the beautiful sweater to be like-new.

Vicki (sitting) and Barbara Eddins (standing) mend a lot of clothes with the sewing machine donated by a generous donor. Both have created throw pillows with donated fabric.



Acknowledgements & Announcements



For the second year, FISH has the opportunity to participate in the **GIVE LOCAL 757!** initiative on **May 6**. This giving day helps non-profit organizations, such as FISH, raise unrestricted funds to help fund our mission.

Last year you helped us exceed our \$5,000 goal by 138%. Please help us exceed again this year by telling your friends and family about the important work we do, so they can be a part of making a difference.

Get ready to give! Mark your calendars and set your alarm clocks! On **May 6**, visit [givelocal757.org](https://www.givelocal757.org) and make a donation to FISH. All giving will start at 12:01 a.m. and end at 11:59 p.m. on May 6, so make sure to get your gift in on time!

Check out the monetary prizes that FISH could win at: <https://www.givelocal757.org/prizes>

Thank you in advance for participating and supporting FISH!



As mentioned in our February newsletter, the FISH van is crucial to our community outreach.

When our van's magnetic signs deteriorated, **Wright Sign Service** (Toano) replaced them with more durable decals and at a discount.

Thank you, Ray and staff, for excellent workmanship and for supporting FISH.



On March 7, Patti MacGillivray, Director and Clothing Co-Coordinator, and Jill Holroyd, President, represented FISH at **Empty Bowls Virginia Peninsula**, a fundraiser showcasing pottery bowls, held in Hampton.

Patti and her pottery group made about 300 bowls for the sold-out affair as a take-home treat.



Welcome

- Cindy Crossan
- Henry Marina
- Jacqueline Torre
- Joan Parr
- John Scudi
- Patricia Bradshaw-Scudi

New Volunteers

Donations

New Zion Baptist Church

The Missionary Ministry of **New Zion Baptist Church** sponsored a crockpot and small appliance drive for FISH during the month of February. Besides crockpots, donations included electric skillets, toasters, instant pots, pressure cookers, pots and pans, and various kitchen utensils and housewares.

President Karen Stokes spearheaded the successful drive and reports that donations are still arriving. Our church is always ready and willing to serve our community.

Ministry members who are also FISH volunteers are Cynthia Holloway, Gwen Hester, and Tracy Parris.

--Tracy Parris, FISH Director (not pictured)

Top Left to Right: Karen Stokes, President ; Cynthia Holloway, Vice President. Bottom L to Right: Ginia Anderson; Gwen Hester



CLUBWAKA



Krystina Collins, League and Social Manager for **CLUBWAKA**, conducted another successful food drive to benefit FISH. Thank you to all the sports teams that participated!

Brandon Woods



Busy volunteers unloaded and sorted the generous donation from **Brandon Woods** neighborhood.

Melissa Fletcher (below) and Kim Tinsley (not pictured) donated an abundance of cake mixes with icing, pancake mixes with syrup, and muffin mixes.

Many thanks to them for providing tasty treats.



Thank You

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

Community Volunteers in the Clothes Closet

The Community Volunteers in March are from the **King of Glory Lutheran Church**. In addition to sending a team of volunteers every Tuesday morning to help prepare children's clothes for the Clothes Closet, the Church invited us to pick up clothes, jackets, and shoes from their Children's Consignment Sale. Many of the items have already found new owners.

Thank you to King of Glory Lutheran Church.

-- Cindy Tocci, Director & Clothing Co-Coordinator

Brief Background: Years ago, our dear Billie Johnston had church volunteers from a variety of churches help us, but that all stopped with the Pandemic. After we re-opened, Cindy Tocci reconstructed the program by inviting a church each month to send volunteers each Tuesday. Some churches send the same volunteers every week and others send a mix of repeat volunteers and new ones.

Cindy starts each session with an overview of FISH and a tour of the Clothes Closet. These volunteers are always impressed with the selection that we have for our clients, and often get ideas of items they can bring from home to donate (like purses or jewelry). This is a mutually beneficial program--the churches love to help and learn about FISH, and we get assistance, and often the church representatives become new FISH volunteers and/or supporters.



Monticello Woods

This is a belated acknowledgement of the donation from the **Monticello Woods** neighborhood. Residents Leslie Neely (left) who is also a FISH volunteer, and Donna Simpkins (right) collected and delivered 45 bags--all in the busy month of December.

We are grateful for this neighborhood and their enthusiastic effort and kind support.

St. Patrick's Day - Easter - Birthdays

Our creative, generous donors keep us stocked with baskets and fun items for our clients. This year we had Irish Spring hygiene packages, as well as Easter baskets, plus the complete birthday party packages that put a "spring" in the step of all recipients.



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Grateful Donors

Susie van Rijn

Director, Food Pantry, Clothes Closet



Susie is one of our newest Board members, elected January 2025. She serves with a smile everywhere, not only on the Board, in the Pantry and Clothes Closet, but representing FISH at events. We are fortunate she chose FISH!

Q1. Why did you choose to volunteer at FISH?

A1. I have been involved in programs to help alleviate hunger since college. In October 2022, I retired from employment with the local Department of Social Services in Fairfax and Prince William County. Two days later, my husband and I moved to Toano. I knew I needed to do something, and I liked FISH's mission statement and volunteer status. When I met with FISH's Volunteer Coordinator, Martha Buell, we discovered we had worked for the same agency in Fairfax at different times, so it seemed like FISH was a perfect fit!

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

A2. Life is challenging for many of our clients. Deciding between money for rent, utilities, food, and clothing can be difficult. I appreciate that we offer "no-strings-attached" help -- no questions asked. If the client says they need help, we are there. I also think the connection with other volunteers is a tremendous reward for volunteering here.

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

A3. I volunteer both in the Food Pantry and the Clothes Closet. So many clients appreciate our help. I have been thanked and blessed so many times. I also want to mention how grateful our donors are. I met a family whose Christmas tradition is to gather with their parents/grandparents, and instead of buying gifts for cousins, they shop for food and donate to FISH. This includes small children, teenagers, and adults. The entire family comes in to deliver the donation. Churches and individuals show up unexpectedly with donations because they heard somewhere we needed items. Often in Clothing, a family brings clothing from a relative who died. That is never a fun task, but I think they feel better giving to FISH because we are local.

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

A4. When relocating, my husband and I chose the Williamsburg area since it was near our children and grandchildren in Richmond. While I still enjoy reading and other activities, FISH has become my "hobby".