



April 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Winds of Pollen! I do love spring, but do not like the allergies and yellow pollen on everything in sight.

The Easter Bunny might not deliver colored eggs this year, as we have stopped purchasing them for our Food Pantry due to rising costs. While eggs provide excellent protein for our clients, we are being cost-conscious, and hope prices become more reasonable soon.

It's our Second Year for Give Local 757 -- a fundraising event held throughout the 757 area code. Please see the notice on page 2. We appreciate your support.

Recently, Maura Rush, Tracy Parris, and I met with the Tri-County Pastors' Council, which is composed of several churches in the Greater Williamsburg Area. We discussed FISH, our 50th Anniversary, and where FISH is headed in the next 50 years.

A special thank you to Robert Hopkins, who has been training our Front Desk volunteers on our new computer system. I've heard many positive comments on how the new software streamlines our data entry and recordkeeping. Robert, we appreciate your patience in training all of us.

We had a wonderful visit from Ling Ngo's family. Ling was one of the original founders of FISH in 1975 when the small group handled rides to medical appointments and provided emergency food and clothing. It is always a joy for us to hear how FISH began 50 years ago, and for their family to learn how FISH operates today. We are grateful for their continued support of FISH.

Save the Date! We are celebrating FISH's 50th Anniversary on Sunday, September 21, to honor our volunteers, past and present. If you know of any past volunteers, please share this date with them and let Dave Banks (dfbanks@earthlink.net) know their contact details.

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Donate



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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!

NEEDED

Spring & Summer
Clothes
Shoes
Jackets
Accessories
for Adults & Children



Director Tracy Parris creates sample outfits that inspire clients and adds a retail-shopping vibe to their experience.

Roadside Beauty

Our multi-talented Nora Lowery shares her love of art and beauty by creating seasonal hanging baskets to decorate the sign poles in our front yard.



Nora, thank you for seizing an opportunity to make everyone's day brighter, even the people who pass on the street.

Read more about Nora in our [May 2023 Newsletter](#).



Clothing and housewares donations need to be clean, and food items need to be unopened and not expired.



New Volunteers

Connie Gianulis
Gordon Jackson
Stephanie Hearne
Susan Daly

Welcome

Acknowledgements & Announcements

Next-Gen Donors and Volunteers

Cindy Tocci, Director & Clothing Co-Coordinator

As an all-volunteer organization that depends on donations, retirees have primarily operated FISH over the years. Observers may question: Who will take over? The answer: Someone always steps up. We can point to many examples of young volunteers with a commitment to helping others arriving at the right time -- when we needed them most.

Kayla Diggs collected children's shoes and socks for her participation in a Jeremiah Project LEAD 4:12 event. In addition, she had a painting party with friends where they decorated plain canvas bags for the shoes with images and inspirational sayings.

To the right is a slide from a PowerPoint presentation that Kayla created to encourage others to participate and give.



Ben Rutter, a **Walsingham Academy** student, held an outerwear drive. He collected 20 large bags of lightweight jackets and raincoats from the school's families. Many of the items are for children.

Nine members of the Youth Group from **Williamsburg Baptist Church** volunteered their time. After a tour of the Clothes Closet and Food Pantry, they folded children's socks and underwear donated by the church and other donors.

Thanks to these young donors and volunteers for helping others.



Too often we underestimate the power of a touch,
a smile, a kind word, a listening ear,
an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring,
all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

– Leo Buscaglia

WindsorMeade - A Giving Community

For at least 10 years, **WindsorMeade** (WM) has conducted a spring drive for FISH. This year, the residents collected 25 crates of food, many household items and small appliances, and \$3,800. In addition, a resident couple donated \$25,000 in memory of Chuck Buell, in honor of WM residents who volunteer at FISH, and to celebrate the 50th anniversary of FISH.

Currently eight residents, including myself, volunteer at FISH: Karen and Tony Annoni, Gale and Jim Turi, Linda Baker, Susan Gregg and Mark Anderson. Previously there were at least another eight residents who volunteered, including Mary Kafes who worked alongside our dear Billie Johnston two or more days a week for 26 years!

Thank you all for your kind spirit and generosity.

-- Martha Buell, Volunteer Coordinator

Delivering and accepting (L-R):
Elwood Fields & Earl Randall, WM
Lindsay Lilly, Director & Food Purchasing Coordinator
Mary Alice & Ken Joss, Volunteers



Unloading the van are WM team members Earl Randall(L), and Elwood Fields (R), with Martha Buell.

*Together,
we make a
Difference*

Creative Giving & Sharing

There are many sources of donations. Here are some interesting and unexpected ones:

- **Grove Christian Outreach Center** received treats from Camp Peary's clean-out of its vending machines and kindly shared them with FISH.
- A local timeshare donated 15 boxes of toothbrushes, toothpaste, and such that will be used to build holiday baskets.
- Our Clothes Closet shared 10 suits with **Boots to Suits**, a non-profit organization in Richmond that aids veterans transitioning to the workplace. On her way to visit family in Richmond, Susie van Rijn, Director, dropped off the items and had a tour of their facilities. The organization was pleased to receive the items.
- **Fords Colony** Crafter's Club, which provided winter knitted hats and scarves, is creating cloth tote bags for infant clothes and accessories. New moms can use totes to carry items home and use afterwards as diaper bags.
- Donors give us jewelry in various conditions. Pam Pickett (L) and Nora Lowery (R) clean all the pieces and prepare them for display in our Clothes Closet. When they come across a broken piece, they either fix it or get creative in reusing it to make new pieces.



Donations

Clara Byrd Baker Elementary

The food drive conducted by the students from **Clara Byrd Baker Elementary** under the leadership of Alison Grygalonis, teacher, and Ashley Green, school counselor, was incredible with more than 3,500 food items donated to support the clients of FISH. It took two trips with the FISH van to bring the donation to our waiting volunteers.

Congratulations to the teachers and staff for inspiring the students to conduct such a wonderful food drive.

-- Maura Rush, VP & Food Donations Coordinator



Photo provided by WJCC Schools

Click [here](#) to read a detailed account of this noble mission in the April 10 issue of WYDaily.



Walsingham Lenten Collection

Jill Holroyd and Bill Dean accepted the donation from **Walsingham Academy** that Kevin Murphy delivered. Kevin made three trips to bring it all to FISH before Easter.

Many thanks to the wonderful students and teachers for supporting FISH and our clients.

-- Maura Rush, VP & Food Donations Coordinator



The Ngo family, Catherine, Reggie and Bernie mentioned in the President's Message, were happy to pose in front of the Mother's Day baskets, particularly as we reminisced about their mother/wife, Ling, one of the founders. Also pictured are Jill Holroyd, President (L) and Maura Rush, VP (R).

The baskets, made by Linda Hakim and Cindy Manos, will brighten the day for our clients once again. The artistry is amazing and a joy to behold!



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

Everyone's Story is Different

Karen Lee Food Pantry



My name is Karen Lee, and I have been volunteering at FISH for approximately 10 years. When I first moved to Williamsburg as a retiree in 2010, I was looking for opportunities to volunteer in the community. I had worked for a food pantry in Charlottesville and had heard a lot about FISH from new friends in Williamsburg, so I decided to check it out. At the time, there were no regular volunteer slots available, so I ended up volunteering with the Community Resource Center of United Way, a referral agency for FISH. Eventually, I became a FISH substitute and then part of a regular monthly team working in the Food Pantry, which has continued to this day.

One of the things I like most about volunteering at FISH is the camaraderie among the volunteers. I have met people I would not have met in my day-to-day activities and formed lasting friendships. My days at FISH are typically busy and sometimes stressful, but our team makes the time enjoyable. Not only are FISH volunteers hardworking and reliable, but they are often very fun to work with!

Although there are days when I'd prefer to spend my time bagging groceries, you will typically find me at the front desk. As we know, there is no "typical" FISH client, and I continue to be surprised and humbled by those we serve. I may see grandparents raising grandchildren, multi-generational families, unhoused individuals from local hotels, single parents trying to make ends meet, or new Williamsburg residents looking to make a fresh start. Everyone's story is different, and I usually come home with at least one story that stays with me.

When I am not at FISH, I enjoy a full range of activities and interests. My husband and I enjoy traveling, spending time with family and friends, and outdoor activities like tennis or walking. I am active in my church. I sing in a couple of choral groups, and look forward to my weekly Mah-Jongg game! I feel blessed to be able to do so much and take advantage of all Williamsburg has to offer.

As the Greater Williamsburg Community's needs have grown, FISH has expanded to meet those needs. I have seen many positive changes, and I am proud to be associated with an organization that is led and staffed by so many dedicated and compassionate volunteers. It makes me feel good to know that we make a difference in the lives of the people who come through our doors.