



Food Pantry and Clothing
Serving the Community Since 1975

NEWS



September 2025

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The hot summer will soon be just a memory for us all. Pumpkins and fall decorations are in every grocery store. At FISH, we are also preparing for the fall season as the Clothing Closet stays busy with back-to-school needs. The Food Pantry has been collecting Thanksgiving items throughout the year. We're ready with cranberry sauce, stuffing, and gravy to include in our Holiday bags.

October means the Thrift Extravaganza will soon arrive. Save the date—October 21-22 (see page 4). This annual event results from a year of saving and sorting for the benefit of FISH. Many volunteers come together to make this huge sale happen in the Sadler Center at William & Mary. Come and find your perfect Halloween costume, vintage item, or maybe some Christmas decorations you didn't know you needed. There's truly something for everyone!

Eggs are a great source of protein and can be used in many ways. The price of eggs has been very high lately, and some weeks we have been unable to provide eggs for our clients. One volunteer recently donated 50 dozen eggs--a much-appreciated surprise for our clients!

Our 50th Anniversary Celebration is on September 21. What a wonderful way to honor our volunteers, who are the reason FISH has thrived in the Greater Williamsburg area. **Thank you** to all volunteers, past and present, for your role in making FISH what it is today. We couldn't have done this without every single one of you!

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Donate



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*For it is
in giving
that we receive.*
Saint Francis of Assisi

Acknowledgements & Announcements

FISH 50th Anniversary History Committee

FISH is celebrating its 50th Anniversary with an event for volunteers and special guests on September 21, 2025. To help prepare for the event, Cindy Tocci, Celebration Chair, created a History Committee tasked with researching FISH's evolution. The committee included Dan Fontaine, Marje Peterson, Sue Voigt, and Elizabeth Knight. Elizabeth, a recent graduate of James Madison University, selected FISH for her summer internship, aiming to build a career in non-profit organization law.

Elizabeth conducted comprehensive research at the William & Mary library and through online sources, collecting numerous articles and photographs that chronicled FISH's progress over the past five decades.

Dan, Marje, and Sue bring a combined 60 years of FISH volunteer experience. Dan conducted interviews, organized committee work, and created historical materials for the celebration. Marje researched FISH's early history, selected articles and photos for the celebration, and found a picture of the building that housed the Clothing Closet in the 1980s. Sue documented client transportation from 1985 to 2015. This information was used to craft a cohesive narrative.

The committee developed a timeline highlighting significant milestones by decade, along with graphs illustrating the growth of community financial support, the number of meals provided, and clothing distributions. These materials will be presented on posterboards at the anniversary event. Celebration tables will be organized by decade and will feature relevant articles and images for attendees to view.

As a final step, the History Committee updated the website's FISH History to provide a more detailed account, covering from the 1969 Reader's Digest article, "A Friendly Neighbor Called Fish," to the present, when more than 250 volunteers support FISH.

The efforts of the History Committee will be archived and can be used for grant applications, community relations, and as a baseline for future FISH history updates.

-- Dan Fontaine



From left: Marje Peterson, Dan Fontaine, and Susan Voigt. Inset: Elizabeth Knight



Another Way to Donate to FISH -- RMD



If you are in the age group where it is mandated that you take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA or 401(k), you need to do this annually by December 31.

If this amount goes to a non-profit organization, it is not considered income for tax purposes but does count towards your RMD.

Please check with your tax advisor, if you have any questions.

If you are considering donating to FISH and want your donation to support our new home, please note "**Capital Campaign**".

Thank you.

Acknowledgements & Announcements

The FISH - Student Connection

For many years, FISH representatives have attended various fairs to introduce students to our operation and provide them with opportunities to get involved.

This year, Cathey Sadowski (L) and Susie van Rijn represented FISH at the **W&M Service Carnival**. They interacted with 72 students: several registered to help at the upcoming sale and even translate at FISH; many more stopped to snap a pic of the poster for the Extravaganza. Several staff members also visited the table, including President Katherine Rowe, who we thank for capturing this photo.



Susie van Rijn (pictured) and Joanne Stark attended Student Welcome Day on August 21 at the **Virginia Peninsula Community College**.

-- Courtesy of Joanne Stark
Pantry & Clothing Volunteer

Bonnie McNail and I attended the **757 Back to School and Community Give Back** event sponsored by **Real People Educating Others (RPEO)** on August 23 at Lafayette High School.

The event provided resources, including filled backpacks, free haircuts, and information from community service agencies, to help students.

465 children and 233 adults received school supplies, and many learned about FISH.

-- Susie van Rijn, Director & Special Events Co-Coordinator



Special Thanks to College Volunteers

Volunteers are the driving force behind FISH's mission to improve the well-being of the economically insecure persons within the Greater Williamsburg area.

While FISH's volunteer base predominantly consists of seniors, the organization embraces the vitality and enthusiasm of younger volunteers. Over the years, college students from local educational institutions have offered their available time to volunteer at FISH. Often seeking community service hours or simply drawn by the joy of assisting others, these students bring fresh perspectives and unique skill sets.

Though college students represent a small fraction of FISH's volunteer base, their contributions are significant and deeply appreciated. Every hour spent volunteering reflects a commitment to uplifting others, and FISH acknowledges the impact these students make. -- Dan Fontaine

Note: FISH shares nonperishable food and hygiene products with the **W&M Campus Food Exchange** which is accessible to students, staff, and faculty with food insecurities (and their dependent family members) when school is in session.

A Campus Thrift Extravaganza

Make an Impact!

We all know that FISH volunteers and supporters make an impact daily. Once a year, students with the Catholic Campus Ministry, along with other campus organizations, make an extraordinary impact raising funds for FISH through The Costume Sale, now rebranded as A Campus Thrift Extravaganza.

What does it take to create a Pop-Up Thrift Extravaganza? One full-sized moving van, 60 campus and community volunteers, 8 intense hours of setup, and a lot of good humor.

Our 2025 event is weeks away. Consider supporting us as a volunteer, sharing publicity with neighbors, attending with a friend, or entering the online raffle (details coming soon).

Last year, a lucky FISH volunteer won a bundle of cash in the 50/50 raffle. This year, we're adding three seasonal baskets overflowing with treats.

Join the high energy and excitement at the Twilight Sale, 7-11 p.m. on Tuesday, October 21, or come for a quieter, chill experience the next day, Wednesday, October 22 (10 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.). Reserved parking is available beside the Sadler Center, 200 Stadium Drive on the W&M campus.

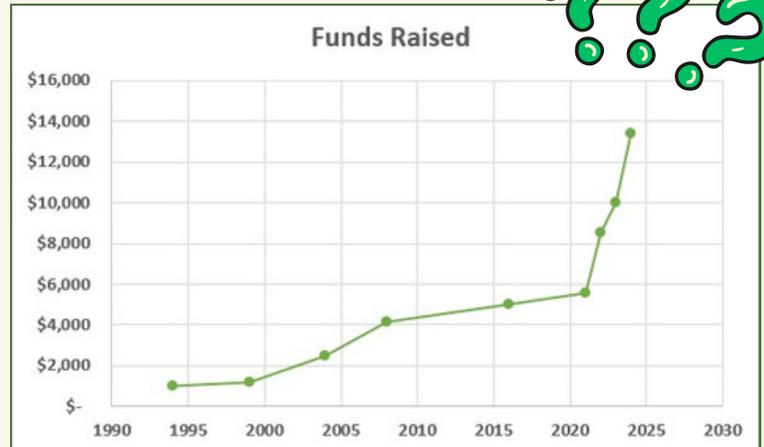
Waiting for you will be vintage clothing and accessories, top labels, jewelry, collectibles, and attic treasures--all below thrift-store prices!

-- Karen Berquist, Campus Thrift Extravaganza Coordinator

JOIN THE FUN?

To register to help with the sale, please [click here](#) or contact Susan Zickel at Zickelva@gmail.com or 757-784-6561.

Click on the photo below to see the fun we had last year. (under 3-minute video)



We raised \$13,400 in 2024. Let's make a bigger impact in 2025!

Thrifting Comes to Campus

WHEN: TUESDAY, OCT. 21, 7PM - 11PM
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 22, 10AM - 5PM

WHERE: SADLER CENTER, TIDEWATER A & B

WHAT: COSTUMES, FORMAL WEAR, VINTAGE, GLOBAL, JEWELRY, & MORE ALL BELOW THRIFT STORE PRICES!

Sign up to volunteer:

All proceeds benefit FISH
FOOD PANTRY AND CLOTHES CLOSET

Acknowledgements & Announcements

National Nonprofit Day

National Nonprofit Day is observed annually on August 17 to recognize the important work of nonprofits in a community and their impact on the economy. It is an opportunity for the community to meet local nonprofits.

Frothy Moon Brewhouse hosted the event attended by Cindy Tocci, Director & Clothing Closet Co-Coordinator, and Susie van Rijn, Director & Special Events Co-Coordinator, representing FISH. The upbeat occasion allowed the ladies to meet many locals and spread the word about FISH's mission.

Every day is a Gift

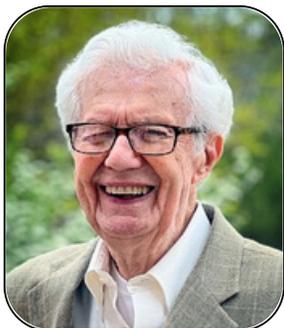
Remembering



Ruth Fraser

Ruth was a new volunteer and was eager to use her Spanish translation skills at FISH.

[Full Obituary](#)



Jim Miller

Jim was a former FISH volunteer as well as a donor who resided at WindsorMeade.

[Full Obituary](#)

We offer our deepest sympathies to the families of Ruth and Jim, and are grateful to be remembered in their obituaries.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Some of the "Old Clothing Crew" surprised Billie Johnston at Spring Arbor on her birthday, September 15. Billie, one of the longest-serving FISH volunteers, was instrumental in leading and refining the clothing operation.

Welcome New Volunteers

- Abby Knox (returning)
- Catherine (Kitty) McCarthy
- Christina Jean
- Fran Contucci (returning)
- Leighann Smigielski
- Linda Sakevich
- Sandra Milburn

Donations

PORCH Communities

Kingsmill's donation in August broke all **PORCH** records weighing 1,476 pounds!

We are grateful to Linda Whittaker for rallying her neighbors to support FISH in such a giving way. Three daughters from one family picked up the donations and gained volunteer hours at Walsingham Academy. Another resident and her daughter created flyers and distributed them on neighboring streets, then later picked up donations.



The **First Colony** neighborhood has joined the PORCH movement and FISH welcomed their wonderful donation. Many thanks to Amber DeVore (right) and her helper for this donation.



-- Maura Rush, VP & Food Donations Coordinator

Saint Bede Catholic Church



Left: Maura Rush, accepting donation
Right: Jim Carini and Sam Samorian

Jim Carini of **Saint Bede's** Knights of Columbus and Sam Samorian, Director of Development, conducted an amazing food drive for FISH donating 771 bags, equivalent to 11,565 pounds of food. Our team of volunteers once again donated part of their weekend to stock the shelves in record time.

Special thanks to Bob Stanzione and Steve White, who made multiple round trips, loading and transporting the donation. We are so fortunate to have such a great team!

-- Maura Rush, VP & Food Donations Coordinator

WAAR



The Community Engagement Committee of the **Williamsburg Area Association of Realtors®**, organized a donation drive for FISH and delivered 10 carts loaded with food, 3 carts of clothing and several bedspreads. We are grateful for their generous support.

Thank You

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

FISH Food Pickup Crews



From left: Dan Fontaine, Dick Young, Steve White and Frank Mazzei

L-R: Bob Delo, Tony Zotto, Robert Hopkins, Dan Fontaine, Ford Moseley, Frank Mazzei, Bob Stanzione, Jeff Bennett, Dick Young, and Mark Prosser

Ford Moseley (L) and Amir Kouhestani unloading bread.

While many donors bring their contributions directly to the FISH Pantry, a significant portion of donations is collected from various sources across the region. This is where the Food Pickup Crews become indispensable. The teams operate as a flexible and reliable network of volunteers who are always ready to respond to both scheduled pickups and unexpected requests.

Some of the key contributors and their roles include:

- **Monday Morning Team:** A dedicated group of volunteers—Jeff Bennett, Bill van Elburg, Bob Delo, Dan Fontaine, Robert Hopkins, Frank Mazzei, Ford Moseley, Jim Nebgen, Mark Prosser, Bob Stanzione, Steve White, Dick Young, and Tony Zotto devote about three hours every Monday morning picking up cases of food from the **Midtown Row Food Lion** and unloading it at FISH. Their teamwork and flexibility are essential, with some using personal vehicles to carry overflow when the van is full. Special mention goes to Ford, who uses his pickup truck to transport bread and cheese orders, and to Mark, Tony, and Bob S., who help with van overflow as needed.
- Bob Delo, Robert Hopkins, Bob Stanzione, and Steve White collect large contributions coordinated by **PORCH Communities** from several neighborhoods.
- John Ellis and Bob Voigt use their pickup trucks to transport laundry supplies and hygiene products from James-York Plaza's **Dollar Tree**. They are known for maximizing every load, yet sometimes make multiple trips.
- Maura Rush and Jill Holroyd pick up donations from **Olive Garden** and **Column 15 Cafe and Roastery**.
- Jill Holroyd and Bob Stanzione, often joined by other volunteers, use the FISH van to collect produce from farms, sometimes traveling as far as Richmond to secure fresh fruits and vegetables for the Food Pantry.
- Lindsay Lilly and Marci Kaplan-Lips pick up weekly donations from **Trader Joe's** and **Harris Teeter-Lightfoot**, and ensure the pantry is stocked.
- **James City Lions Club** members (led by Marla Boren) utilize the van to pick up food items for FISH at the **Virginia Peninsula Foodbank** in Hampton.
- Amir Kouhestani recently began collecting donations from the new Monticello **Wawa**, helping expand the Pantry's food supply from local stores.

The FISH Food Pickup Crews stand as a testament to the power of community, collaboration, and compassion. Their work is largely behind the scenes, yet it is critical to the success of FISH's mission.

-- Dan Fontaine