



Food Pantry and Clothing  
Serving the Community Since 1975

# NEWS



March 2026

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The balmy breezes of March are wafting, and with those breezes, all of us who suffer from spring allergies are struggling. But FISH is thriving as we have been busy with several activities this month.

Susie Van Rijn and Patti MacGillivray represented FISH at the Empty Bowls Virginia Peninsula annual fundraiser in Hampton on March 6. More on this on page 2.

In February, the Greater Williamsburg Outreach Mission (GWOM) held "Heart for the Hungry", an annual weigh-in of food donations for local food pantries. Our goal was to receive \$1,000 for the first 1,000 pounds of donated food. FISH weighed donations throughout the month, and we received 12,185 pounds of food in February. A huge **Thank You** to all who donated, as well as to the volunteers who weighed it all!

Where does a very cute pup named Lakelyn spend his days?  
At Williamsburg Jewelers, of course! See page 4 for his picture.

And when you purchase an older building for renovation, sometimes you find family treasures. Check out page 3 to discover what we found.

Enjoy these sunny days in March!

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Donate



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# Acknowledgements and Announcements

**THE #250FOODDRIVE**  
A Revolutionary Goal for Food Stability

In 1776, a revolutionary idea was born. In 2026, we are continuing that legacy by proving that our greatest strength is how we care for one another. The #250FoodDrive is a community-wide mission to collect 250,000 lbs of food between March and September. It's more than a collection; it's a commitment to the dignity and stability of every neighbor in the Greater Williamsburg area.

**Where the Food Goes**

This is a unified effort to stock the shelves of our local frontline hunger-relief agencies. All donations directly benefit:

HOUSE OF MERCY | FISH, INC. | ST. OLAF | Grove Christian Church Center

FISH is a partner beneficiary in the **#250FoodDrive**—a community-wide mission to collect 250,000 lbs of food between March and September. The project is spearheaded by the Williamsburg House of Mercy (WHOM).

Script: In 1776, a revolutionary idea was born. In 2026, we are continuing that legacy by proving that our greatest strength is how we care for one another.

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**THE #250FOODDRIVE**  
A Revolutionary Goal for Food Stability

Scan for More Information

Scan for more information and to donate.

See drop-off locations and times for shelf-stable donations at: <https://williamsburghouseofmercy.org/250fooddrive/>



Susie van Rijn (right) and Patti McGillivray described the **Empty Bowls Virginia Peninsula** event on March 6 as a delightful experience of tasting soups and accompaniments, silent-auction bidding, and mingling to live music. Over 800 ceramic bowls were donated for the annual event. (Patti made some of them.) Funds raised go for local hunger relief, and FISH is one of three beneficiaries. Attendees received a handcrafted bowl—a great memento of the evening, as well as a reminder of food insecurity.



## Volunteering Helps Me Grow as a Person

I'm grateful to FISH for opportunities that enrich my volunteering and personal growth. Volunteering in the Clothes Closet is very rewarding because I get to help our clients find clothes for their families—whether it's for daily use, church, school, work, or special events such as a wedding or family reunion.

Every time I help someone, it's a chance to make their day a little better and help them feel more confident. Noticing how much this means to them motivates me to continue helping with kindness and grace.

— Dan Fontaine



# Acknowledgements and Announcements

## Accepting Spring & Summer Clothing

We are now accepting clean, new and gently-used clothes, jackets, shoes, and accessories appropriate for warmer weather. We have both warm and cool-weather clothing for clients during March and early April to accommodate changes in temperature. If possible, please keep your heavy sweaters, coats, woolen hats, scarves, and gloves until the Fall. Thank you!

-- Cindy Tocci, Director and Clothing Co-Coordinator



## VINTAGE@FISH WANTED



Do you have an eye for Vintage?

We want to identify and honor the vintage clothing and accessories donated!

Many are worthy of special care and are popular at the WM Campus fundraiser.

Help identify and curate the remarkable vintage era items we receive!

Contact Karen Berquist, 757-880-1284, for details.



## Unexpected Treasure

When you buy an older building, you never know what you will find. FISH's new location this fall will be 7129 Pocahontas Trail, which was Sammy and Nick's Restaurant years ago.

This door with the names etched in the glass was found on the property, and FISH gifted the door to Dean Canavos, Sammy's son and the owner of the Capitol Pancake House.

What a family treasure for Dean to receive!

-- Jill Holroyd, President



## Fabricated Chickens?



FISH was the lucky nonprofit that benefited from a culinary competition by the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging, and Travel Association of Richmond. The organization held a competition among its culinary students to see who could cut up a fresh chicken the best.

Susie Van Rijn picked up the chickens, which were cut and judged. Later, FISH distributed the fresh chickens to 38 families! The term "fabricated chickens" comes from cutting them into portion sizes.

-- Jill Holroyd, President

# DONATIONS



Jim Winthrop from the **Williamsburg Presbyterian Church** delivered a benevolence check accepted by FISH volunteer, Cindy Robotti.

**Williamsburg Jewelers** had a February discount sale, exclusively for those who donated to FISH. Here is Michael Fagan, owner, Jill Holroyd, and everyone's favorite, Lakelyn.



*Thanks For  
Your Generosity*

Kimberly Kay brought lots of peanut butter for our Food Pantry that was collected at the **King of Glory Lutheran Church** consignment sale. More on page 5.



JoAnn DeBolt (center) and Dan O'Neal (left) from Food Lion presented Lindsay Lilly, FISH Director and Food Purchasing Coordinator, with a generous check as a result of a **Food Lion Feeds** grant application.



*Diligence is the mother of good luck. --Benjamin Franklin*

# DONATIONS

## Luck of the Clothes Closet

We are especially lucky this month to receive donations from businesses, churches, and other organizations, in addition to many donations from individuals.

Special thanks go to:

- **Marriott Vacation Club** for bringing us more than 100 white dinner and salad plates, cereal bowls, and mugs. Our volunteers boxed them up in sets for families of 4, 5, and 6.
- **Divin' Off the Dock** in West Point for contributing many items to our selection of women's dresses and tops. Their items are always popular with our clients.
- **Girl Scout Troop 1201** for raiding their own closets and those of family members and friends to collect jackets for children and teens. The troop members went an extra step to clean, fold and label the jackets with sizes like we do so the items were ready for our clients. (Photo)
- **William & Mary Law 3L Class** (3rd-year-students) for collecting jackets and coats for young men and women. The collection was in memory of one of their classmates who was always generous and thinking of others.
- **Lucky Brand Jeans** at the Premium Outlets for donating hundreds of jeans, shorts, tops, and dresses for older teens, women and men. Included in the donation were accessories. (Photo)
- **King of Glory Lutheran Church** for inviting us to pick up clothing and shoes that remained after their semi-annual Children's Consignment Sale. We got many girls' dresses and boys' pants for adolescents.
- **Williamsburg Estate Services** for donating houseware items on a regular basis. We really appreciate the kitchen appliances, bakeware, utensils, and dishes.
- **Patriots Colony** and **Williamsburg Landing** for collecting clothing, accessories (including purses), and housewares.



*Alix and Sara Martin from GS 1201 are preparing jackets for our clients.*



*Lucky Brand employees Nadia and Owen delivering a portion of their donation.*

The Community Volunteers from the **King of Glory Lutheran Church** have been busy preparing children's clothing on Tuesdays in March. We are lucky to have them donate their time.

*-- Cindy Tocci, Director and Clothing Co-Coordinator*



Watch Video

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### LEAVING A LEGACY

**Marian Bennett, Clothing & Costume Sale**  
**Will Bennett, Costume Sale**



Do you connect volunteering at FISH with leaving a legacy?

Leaving a legacy is intentionally passing on your values, memories, and assets to make a lasting, positive impact on future generations or causes you care about.

By volunteering at FISH, Marian Bennett has passed to her children the importance of sharing food and clothing with those in need. Her sons and daughter were involved as youngsters and continue giving to others. Her grandchildren follow her example when helping with the Thrift Extravaganza (Costume Sale) each October.

Marian began with five Saint Bede's ladies in 1975. In the early days, they primarily provided clothing. "I never thought about it. My children were young, so I had kids' clothes to pass along. It was food that I had in my kitchen that others could use."

Will Bennett, Marian's son, recalls people dropping off food and clothes at their house, and his family driving to trailer parks and apartments to share. When he was a bit older, he remembers telling his friends who called to "Keep it short" on days when his family was "On Call" for FISH. People needing help would call the assigned volunteer's home phone, so the Bennetts had to keep the line free that day. He also nostalgically remembers the many trips the family made to the attic to store dressy and business clothes for the Costume Sale.

Marian and Will have channeled lots of love into the Costume Sale, a huge fundraiser for FISH that requires year-round effort, especially long hours every October. Will organizes the Scouts to clean up after the sale, which includes packing unsold items and returning them to the FISH building. His daughter, Claire, and son, Andrew, also set up and break down the displays at the sale. "I love that I can pass this experience to my children." Will also juggles to entertain the earlybirds for the Twilight Sale. "They line up around the corner for the start of the sale. Juggling makes it festive."

**Now here's the amazing part:** One day, Marian was babysitting for Karen Berquist, the current Costume Sale Coordinator. When Karen overheard Marian taking a "FISH call", she inquired. Long story short, Marian introduced Karen to FISH, and today FISH benefits from 3 generations of Bennetts and 3 generations of Berquists. All three generations are friends who meet annually at the Costume Sale. (Read about the 3 generations of Berquists in the [January 2025 newsletter](#), "Many Hands, Light Work".) Husbands Rick Bennett (deceased) and Rick Berquist worked for years storing and transferring items between buildings.

**From Will:** Apart from the Costume Sale, I love all the connections FISH has with other community programs, such as the [Bike Co-Op](#) and [House of Mercy](#), aiming to expand the care for a person's needs.

**From Marian:** I'm glad I started with FISH, and that my kids are involved. It makes me feel good to have them look beyond themselves. I'm amazed at how FISH has grown. It's great that so many people in the Williamsburg area recognize the importance of sharing and caring for others.