

AROUND THE CIRCLE

CIRCLE OF CONCERN OUR COMMUNITY'S CHARITY

MAY 2010



Kid Bags

In a couple of weeks school doors will be locked for the summer. That means parents will have to replace those free school lunches their children received.

Again this summer, Circle will share Kid Bags with families with school age children. The specially packed bags of 'kid friendly' items will be distributed from Memorial Day until schools re-open in mid-August. We will share 2,000 bags this summer.

To fill the bags Circle is seeking...

- Cereal
- Mac & Cheese
- Jelly & Peanut Butter
- Canned Pasta
- 100% Fruit Juice Boxes & Bottles
- Nutritious Snacks

Circle is also looking for activity books, small games, crayons and coloring books, etc to add in the bags.

You can bring items for the Kid Bags to Circle, or, you can make a special gift to buy the items.

April Services

Food Pantry

1,600 people fed with 2,614 bags of food
\$62,173.99 worth of donated food shared

Financial Services

\$4,397 aid to 41 families.

Volunteer Support

196 gave 1,978.5 hours of their time

Scholarships Awarded

The judges have spoken! Our panel of volunteer judges screened applications, interviewed finalists and have selected 23 graduating seniors as winners of 2010 Circle Of Concern Scholarships. The students shared \$37,000 in scholarship grants. Congratulations to:

John Barnabee

Parkway South High
The Bob Stone Scholarship

Julianne Bauer

Eureka High
The St. Martin's Scholarship

Connor Cylkowski

Marquette High
The Jane Bedell Scholarship

Brianna Goldstein

Parkway North High
The Walter Beranek Scholarship

Ahad Hosseini

Parkway North High
The Fannon Thompson Scholarship

Allegra Merriweather

Parkway West High
The Arlene Frazier Scholarship

Cara Schubbe

Marquette High
Rockwood Retired Teachers Scholarship

Kayla Skinner

Parkway South High
The Delta Tau of ESA Scholarship

Leah Wagner

Valley Park High
The Sam Palazzolo Scholarship

Hunter Linker

Parkway West High
MECS Scholarship

Jasmine Parks

Parkway South High
MECS Scholarship

Ashley Benson

Valley Park High

Emily Chang

Parkway North High

Michelle Jones

Rockwood Summit High

Stephanie Kawula

Parkway South High

Aisha Khan—Valley Park High

Shana Kneip—Valley Park High

Bria Lawson—Fern Ridge High

Jonathan Moran

Rockwood
Summit High

Kellie Richardson

Parkway South High

Kristopher Richardson

Parkway South High

Marta Roberst

Westminster Academy

Kayla Schmidt—Marquette High

This year's winners were honored at the Annual Scholarship Award Luncheon held May 6th at Trinity Lutheran Church. (Thanks to the good people at Trinity and friends at Trivent Financial for helping make this event a success.

Special thanks to the judges-Jean Campbell, Nancy Parker, Becky and Randy Pierce, Larry Quick, Carl Quicksall & Barb Staniszewski.

Volunteer Needs @ Circle

Are you interested in volunteering at Circle?

If so join us for our Volunteer Orientation Sessions to find out just what being a volunteer here is all about.

Sessions will be held the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 6pm. (They should be about a half hour long.)

Space is limited, so reservations are required.

Additional sessions may be added as needed.

Check out our website for more information on the volunteer program!

volunteer.circle@att.net

The People We Help

Some families need Circle's help for a long time.

Marie has come to Circle for most of the past decade. She and her youngest child have mental health issues severe enough that they get Supplemental Security Income payments. Those checks and Food Stamps are all the household has to pay the bills.

In the past Marie went from one abusive relationship to another. She has avoided that mistake in recent years, but her former husband has never paid child support for their two kids.

Over the years Marie has learned to keep tight rein on her expenses. For example,

she doesn't have a car. That limits her mobility, makes it hard for her oldest child to look for work, and, means that often she needs a cab ride to get her groceries home from Circle.

Despite watching what she spends, Marie has needed help paying her utility bills. She also depends on Circle's Holiday Program for gifts for her girls and the youngest child receives school supplies for the new school year. And, each month Marie visits Circle for food.

Willow and Sam are just shy of their golden years: Getting there will be a struggle.

Sam has worked in construction all his adult life. For a long time that meant he didn't work very much.

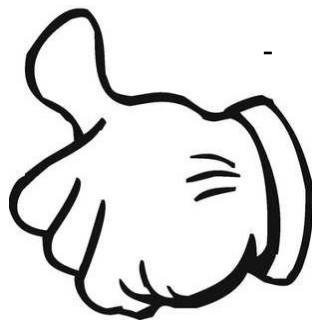
Willow has severe rheumatoid arthritis. She has also developed a number of phobias, including a fear of letting the last child at home (age 20) walk to the bus line to get a job. Complicating matters, Willow never finished grade school. The paperwork required to file for disability and handle the other everyday challenges of being poor is a struggle.

Sam's pride created another obstacle. He didn't want his family to get Food Stamps or other handouts.

Circle helped the family with food and we paid on a utility bill. We share information on Vocational Rehabilitation and other disability programs.

Good News Department

- The good people at the **Meramec Bluffs Town Hall** raised \$1,550 for Circle.
- **Macy's "Bag Hunger"** Campaign collected food and funds for Circle's pantry. Thanks to the team members at Chesterfield Mall for their support.



Repeat Boutique Benefits Circle



In late March friends at Lafayette High School held a re-sale day for prom dresses: The Repeat Boutique helped scores of young ladies get like-new dresses and raised over \$1,000 for Circle's food pantry.

Organized by Lafayette counselor Deborah Parker and her daughter Lacey, the event also had a raffle for a "Prom Updo Hairstyles."

From the President

As a direct result of the added space in our new center, various new client services are being implemented at Circle.

This year, for the first time, Circle had tax return services available to our clients. This effort was initiated and implemented by our Treasurer, Sally Edmiston. AARP volunteers completed over 170 tax returns during March and April. With commercial tax services charging individuals over \$200 per return, it was a needed and appreciated service. We fully intend to continue this as an annual program.

Committee has been busy establishing other ideas to benefit clients. The committee is headed by Emily Fishman and includes Janice Hartman, Nancy Parker, Pat Shannon and myself.

Currently we are working to establish programs to provide career planning, legal counsel and financial training. We want to give our volunteers new services that will provide greater support in specific areas of need.

Other ideas the committee is currently pursuing includes mammogram services on site and discounts for kids haircuts at local shops.

Circle's New Services

~Jerry Caesar

Modern Comics

Long ago I heard a famous man say he always read the newspaper comic strips first thing every morning: They made the depressing news in the rest of the paper easier to take.

On the first Tuesday in April *Hi & Lois* showed the real estate agent mom talking to a harried soul: "The bank foreclosed on our house," the man said. "So, are you looking for a new job?" Lois asked. "No, a place to crash," he replied. The last frame showed his car with a forlorn family inside and possessions tied to the roof.

Part of my job is to send information to our local media about what's happening at Circle. As you've read in recent newsletters, every month this year we are feeding more people than the comparable month last year. The number of families needing help to keep utilities on or the rent paid is also up significantly this year.

I've shared this news with our friends in the media. Many, especially those at our very local papers, regularly find room for our information. I appreciate their help and their friendship.

I have friends in the regional media too. They are personally supportive of Circle's work and understand why we face record demand. Alas, another story about food pantries and poverty is hard to sell to editors. (One reporter told me his boss likes stories that get to the happy ending in 90 seconds or less.)

Now, I understand that record number of families needing food and other aid is by its nature depressing. And, most of the time we don't have the big happy ending at Circle.

What we do have are countless minor success: A family gets food, a senior stays warm, a child gets a birthday present or a person gets those eyeglasses they've needed for several years. These little victories aren't glamorous but they do add up.

I strongly believe that the public needs to know the painful details of what so many of our neighbors are facing.

Perhaps if Circle doesn't get air time or newspaper ink we out to turn to cartoonists. They have followers who appreciate their work. Plus, comic strips seem to do a good job of holding up a mirror to our society.

As the pointed headed boss in *Dilbert* recently put it, "We've been doing great since we redefined success as a slowing of failure." Didn't someone in Washington say that too?

Glenn Koenen

Dancers Collect Food for Kids

Young people at five area dance studios coordinated a special food drive for Circle, collecting "kid friendly" items for the Kid Bags. Each studio selected a different thing to bring:



Wildwood Dance Studio —Jelly
Dance Inc.—Peanut Butter
St. Louis Ballet Co. —Canned Pasta
Renee Johnson's Dance Studio—Cereal
Dance Floor —Juce Boxes

In recent months friends have made special gifts to Circle Of Concern honoring important people in their lives.

The person honored, or their family, are notified of Memorials and Honorariums. (The amount given is not shared.) Gifts are used for the purpose requested by the donor.

Honorariums

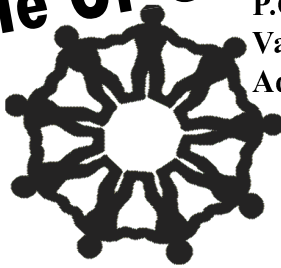
Jennifer R. Bratburd
Dr. Kevin Enger
Megan Fogarty
Kay Folsom
Phil Hamel
Ted & Pat Heitmeyer
Marilyn Killian
Nicole Kingert
Courtney Klose
Glenn Koenen
Katie Omahen
Ray Powers
Rev. John H. Robinson
Betty Verser
Kate Voit
Barb Woehle
Gayle Woolf

Memorials

Carol Berger
Dorothy Biggs
Terry Callahan
Dodie Clark
June Crandall
Jacqueline Draine
Jim Durbin
Albret Emmenegger
Corinne Esnaeault's Mother
Lance Ewing
Ruth & Pird Fox
Riette Frank
Linda Glassner's Father
Molly Gleason
Jim Golden
Anne Gossage
Tony Johnson
Donald Kaufman
Harvey Levy
Irwin (Cotton) Lindner
Sylvester Liss
Margaret Love
William Luedde
Patricia Mahmood
Betty Lucille Mertz
Claude Miracle
Richard J. Moder, Sr.
Hannah Marie Mueller
Frank Nutt
Joan Oppliger
Sam Palazzolo
Patricia Park
Louisa Pass
Helene Patton
Dan Peterson
James Pingel
Peggy (Plant)
Richard Sage
Archie & Catherine Seguin
Jennie L. Soule
Richard Spencer
Uta Tillisch
Jim Weber
Ruth Westhues
Jane Willson



Circle Of Concern



P.O. Box 444
Valley Park, MO 63088-0444
Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
VALLEY PARK, MO
PERMIT NO. 444

Circle Of Concern our community's charity

Mission Statement:

Circle Of Concern feeds the hungry and provides long-term and emergency assistance to low-income families in western St. Louis County. We create opportunities for needy families to re-establish themselves as productive members in our community.

112 St. Louis Ave. * Valley Park, MO 63088 * 636.861.2623

www.circleofconcern.org

Open every Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9:30 am—2 pm

1st, 2nd, & 3rd Wednesday Evenings 4 pm-7 pm

2nd, 3rd, & 4th Thursday Afternoons 1pm-5 pm

2nd, 3rd & 4th Saturdays 9:30 am-2 pm

**Donations are accepted weekdays 9 am-3 pm
and Saturday mornings.**

Executive Director Glenn Koenen	Pantry Director Linda Johnson	Director of Programs/Volunteers Emily Fishman
---	---	---

This edition of Around the Circle was mailed on May 12, 2010

Circle Of Concern is a member of:

Chesterfield Chamber of Commerce Fenton Area Chamber of Commerce West County Chamber of Commerce
Interfaith Partnership Metro St. Louis Food Pantry Association Valley Park Business Association

Put Your Thinking Caps On...

Save the date!! Saturday July 31st Circle will host our first annual Back To School Trivia night. Registration will be on our website before Memorial Day weekend.

Space is limited and tables seat a group of eight. We'll have a number of silent auction items and other raffles.

If you would like to help out we'll need volunteers as well as items to auction off!

Contact Emily at emily.circle@att.net

