

August 2016

Celebrating 49 years
of service to the
St. Louis community



AROUND THE

CIRCLE

The Circle Of Concern Food Pantry Newsletter

CURRENT NEEDS:

Each of these items is **CRITICAL**, as our shelves are more bare now than any other time of the year.

Cereal
Dinner "Helpers"
Pasta Sauce
Mac & Cheese
Canned Pasta
Canned Chicken
Disposable Razors
Shaving Cream

CIRCLE OF CONCERN

feeds the hungry and provides assistance to low-income families living in west St. Louis County.

We envision improving every life in our community by reducing hunger and poverty.

Tangible Impact. Changing Lives.

Since Circle's inception in 1967, this organization has helped more than 500 young people attend college, contributing \$1 million dollars toward tuition. The program has been our belief in action that education is the surest way to break the cycle of poverty in a family.

That benefit isn't limited to investing in education in young people. Just over two years ago, Circle launched the adult scholarship program, providing small education grants to our clients who need job certifications or licenses, GED prep and testing or select college classes to complete a degree.

The growth of the new program has been, in a word, explosive! In the first six months of 2016, alone, we have awarded 13 scholarships to clients, twice the number awarded in the program's first two years. More than the growth, though, the impact on our clients has been life-changing. One

**"An investment
in knowledge pays
the best interest."**

—Benjamin Franklin

woman needed one more class to complete her Registered Nurse degree; she is now employed in this critical profession. One client had an accounting degree but had never been able to take his certification exam; he is about to realize his dream and add "CPA" after his name. Another woman

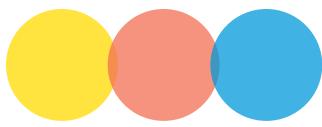
needed just a few more college credits to be able to teach art at the high school level; she's almost there.

These families—and many more—will soon no longer need Circle's assistance, thanks to the help they received from Circle in completing their educational goals.

The popularity of the program has led to a predictable challenge; every dollar budgeted for adult scholarships has been awarded by the midpoint of 2016. Will you consider investing directly in the working future of clients at Circle by making a gift to underwrite \$1,000 adult scholarships?

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Feeding Families is Just the Beginning



A Client Story

Sharon* is a busy mom. She's got a part-time job, volunteers at her childrens' school and leads two local civic committees. She's also a client at Circle who relies on our food pantry, Back To School program, and other programs. Her husband has been laid off from two different jobs in the past few years. Even when he found a job (that paid a percentage of his previous salary), the cost of childcare made it more cost-effective for her to work only part-time hours for a minimal wage.

There's something else you should know. Sharon is smart. She knows that by investing her few free hours in her childrens' activities through her volunteer work, she's demonstrating to them the value of hard work, productivity and making the community stronger for everyone. She's keeping her family stable through turbulent times and staying optimistic that, through her contacts and activity, things will get better sooner rather than later. Sharon will likely only need food and programs from Circle for a short time, but it's certain that she will leave here telling the story of a local resource that makes lives better. *name changed

Tangible Impact. Changing Lives.

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The clients who apply for these funds are motivated and eager to go to work. By showing your confidence in their future, that future is more assured.

To support this program, please note Adult Scholarship on the memo line of your check, or write that phrase in the Tribute Name field when making a gift at circleofconcern.org. Or call Cyndi at 636.861.2623 x117 to talk about endowing a scholarship in the name of an education champion you'd like to celebrate.

Thinking Outside the Circle

Daniel Boone Library Branch

Circle wraps the families we serve with care...and we have been able to do that literally with the help of our good friends at the Daniel Boone branch of the St. Louis County Public Library! Every month or two, a stack of colorful, handmade afghans and throws arrives at Circle to be distributed to our clients. The bright colors and skilled work are distributed during clients' intake appointments when they come to pick up groceries and go home with something more.



To date this year, the group has knitted or crocheted more than 50 afghans. By themselves, they are a warm, wonderful sight to behold. In the hands of a client who has chosen a beautiful piece of handiwork, they are a true gift of comfort and care to people who need it.

Thank you, friendly yarnsmiths from the Daniel Boone Library!



Pizza is our Friend!

MOD Pizza, a relative newcomer to the market, is sharing 100 percent of the pizza proceeds with Circle from the opening of their new Ellisville store, to the tune of \$2,190. Thank you, and stay MOD!



JUNE SERVICES

FOOD PANTRY

Number of people fed = 1,902
Number of bags distributed = 3,101
Number of families = 636
Cost (@\$53.57) = \$89,262.29
Kids bags distributed = 320



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

36 families received
\$5,070 in financial services



VOLUNTEERS

188 volunteers shared
1,980 hours



5K RUN/WALK

benefiting

CIRCLE OF CONCERN FOOD PANTRY

Are you ready to make a difference in the lives of hungry families? Then hit the trail on Valley Park's scenic Meramec River Trail on September 17 to Run Circles Around Hunger! Timed for runners or perfect for a casual walk with family and friends - all proceeds benefit Circle Of Concern's food pantry and programs for our neighbors.

Music by School of Rock • Food • Fun • CrossFit Warm-Up

WHEN: Saturday, September 17, 2016

TIME:

7 a.m.	Check-In
8 a.m.	CrossFit Warm-Up
8:30 a.m.	5K Run/Walk Start
9-10 a.m.	Music, Food & Fun
9:30 a.m.	Winners Presented

WHERE: Arnold's Grove Trail Head Park
4 Meramec Station Road
(Hwy 141 & Marshall)
Valley Park, MO 63088

COST:
\$25 per person
(Children 10 & Under FREE*)
* T-shirt not included in free registration

- Race is chip-timed for Runners
- Register by August 26 to guarantee t-shirt
- Packet pick-up at Circle on September 14 from 3 to 7 p.m. or at event check-in

REGISTER NOW!

Register online at www.circleofconcern.org or complete the following info for each participant and mail to: **Circle Of Concern, Attn: Alva, 112 St. Louis Avenue, Valley Park, MO 63088**

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Runner or Walker? (circle one)

T-shirt size (Adult S - XXXL available): _____ Age: _____

Payment: VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER CHECK

of Participants _____ x \$25 per participant = \$ _____ (*Teams of 10+ only \$20 each*)

Card # _____ Exp Date _____ Security # _____

Can't Attend But Want to Help?

Register online or use this form with VIRTUAL next to your name. All the T-shirt, none of the sweat!

Thanks to our Platinum Sponsor!



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®

Run Circles Around Hunger 5K Run/Walk



September 17, 2016
Arnold's Grove Trail Head, Valley Park

Promote your business or family by **sponsoring** this 3rd Annual Run/Walk.

You'll also help feed your community by supporting the food pantry and programs of Circle Of Concern, serving local families in need since 1967.

Sponsorship Levels

- Platinum Sponsor** \$2,500
 - *Prominent Company Name and Logo Placement on Race Shirts and all Race Materials, Print Ads and Race Signage*
 - *On-Site Booth Space*
 - *10 Race Entries for your Company Team*
 - *Circle Newsletter Ad*
 - *Social Media Recognition*
- Gold Sponsor** \$1,000
 - *Logo on Race Shirts and Print Ads*
 - *Race Signage*
 - *On-Site Booth Space*
 - *Circle Newsletter Ad*
 - *Social Media Recognition*
- Silver Sponsor** \$ 500
 - *Logo on Race Shirts, Race Signage and Print Ads*
 - *Social Media Recognition*
- Bronze Sponsor** \$ 250
 - *Listing on Race Shirts and Print Ads*
 - *Social Media Recognition*

Call Cyndi at 636.861.2623 x117 or email
Cyndi@circleofconcern.org to sponsor

Sponsorship

Sponsor online at circleofconcern.org or

CHECK YOUR SPONSORSHIP LEVEL BELOW

Name: _____
Company Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Sponsor Level:

- Platinum Sponsor** \$2,500
- Gold Sponsor** \$1,000
- Silver Sponsor** \$ 500
- Bronze Sponsor** \$ 250

VISA Mastercard Discover Check

Amount Due: _____

Card # _____

Exp Date _____ Security # _____

Signature _____

Email your logo to Cyndi@circleofconcern.org.

Circle Of Concern * Attn: Cyndi
112 St. Louis Avenue * Valley Park, MO 63088
circleofconcern.org



Summertime To-Do List:

Summer at Circle is all about children! Three key programs heat up the season for our kids...

Summer Kid Bags provide kid-friendly foods for children who, during the school year, receive free or reduced meals. During the summer, those meals go away, and our clients often struggle to stretch their groceries for daytime meals. By providing cereal, string cheese, canned pasta, fresh fruit and other easy-to-prepare meals. We'll share 800+ Kid Bags by Labor Day.

Summer Opportunities, or Camperships, help children attend camp, join team sports, learn to swim, study an instrument or other summer enrichment. At the end of the summer, they go back to school with stories to tell of the fun they had! 80 children will spend a summer in smiles!

Back To School prepares children to learn when summer comes to an end. The school supply distribution puts grade-appropriate supplies into brand new backpacks, giving nearly 700 children the confidence they need to kick the school year off right!

To support Circle's programs for children, contact Niki at niki@circleofconcern.org to see where you can make the biggest impact.



Registration is Open!

Run Circles Around Hunger with us at our 3rd annual 5K run/walk on September 17 in Valley Park. Send in the enclosed registration form or visit circleofconcern.org to register easily and safely online. See you on the trail!



Jelly Jamboree!

Bring jelly and jam to the Chesterfield Football Association's Jelly Jamboree football tournament—with the

Ascension Athletic Association soccer tournament—anytime on Saturday, August 13! Come to the Chesterfield Athletic Complex to stock Circle with this most-needed item for our pantry shelves; stay for the liveliest, most committed youth athletes you've ever seen!

A Note from Cyndi

Often, I think many of us have a mental picture of what poverty and hunger look like. But, for those of us who work and volunteer at Circle of Concern, we know that struggle comes in many forms, and that circumstances can bring any one of us to a place where we *just need help*. A catastrophic injury or illness can be the catalyst that takes a functioning, working, self-sufficient individual to the brink of homelessness. The break-up of a marriage can destroy a family's finances. An economic downturn can ruin a small business, and lead to struggle for multiple households.

The struggle within isn't always obvious. Sometimes, for example, that mom getting into the nice minivan in Circle's parking lot is actually climbing into the only shelter she and her family will have to spend their nights until they can find an affordable place to stay. Across the country, and yes, *even here in West County*, individuals and families that once were doing well are now living in their cars. Circle will assist these families without judgement, sharing food, short-term financial support and programs to help them get *beyond their current circumstances*.



Circle Of Concern Food Pantry

Feeding Families is Just the Beginning

112 St. Louis Ave.
Valley Park, MO 63088
Address Service Requested

Presort Standard
US Postage
Paid
St Louis MO
Permit 175

Cyndi's Note ~ *The Hidden Struggles*

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DONATIONS

We share many donations with our clients:

- Food, Canned and Packaged
- Fresh Garden Produce
- Dry Pet Food, Litter
- School Supplies, Toys
- Blankets, Hats, Gloves
- More!

Donations are accepted:

Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri..... 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wednesday..... 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Saturday..... 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.



"LIKE US" on Facebook
and visit us online at
circleofconcern.org



IMPORTANT DATES

August 13	Jelly Jamboree at Chesterfield Athletic Complex with the Chesterfield Football Assn. and Ascension Athletic Assn.
September 3, 5	Closed for Labor Day
September 17	3rd Annual Run Circles Around Hunger 5K
September 26	General Membership Meeting 7:30 p.m. St. Mark Presbyterian (601 Claymont, Ballwin)

STAFF DIRECTORY

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Michelle Lepak, Pantry Director, michelle@circleofconcern.org	x106
Niki Vandable, Client Services Director, niki@circleofconcern.org	x107
	x108