

AROUND THE

# Circle Newsletter

Circle Of Concern  
Food Pantry



## Take the Credit!

Your support of Circle Of Concern throughout the year makes everything we do possible. Between now and the end of the year, you have the chance to contribute to the impact of our programs...and earn important tax benefits for your gifts at the same time!

When you give a gift of food or money (including stocks) to Circle, you qualify for Missouri Food Pantry Tax Credits (FPTC). Beyond the federal deduction you receive, these credits directly reduce the amount you pay for your state income taxes. With a simple form verified by Circle, you can earn up to \$2,500 in tax credits when you give up to \$5,000. Couples filing jointly can earn up to \$5,000 in credits when they give up to \$10,000.

To make things easy for you, we will proactively prepare, sign and send the verified form to every donor who gives at least \$100 in cash during 2017. The forms will be mailed at the end of January 2018, in plenty of time for your tax preparer to submit with your state income tax return by April 15, 2018.

The benefit of the Food Pantry Tax Credit extends far beyond the tax benefits you'll receive. Some of our friends have shared that, after applying the credit and deductions to reduce the "cost" of their gift, they were able to give more to improve the lives of local families that rely on Circle.

To support Circle's holiday programs—or to make a year-end gift to improve the life of a local family—visit [circleofconcern.org](http://circleofconcern.org). The good you do will come right back to you!



## Current Needs:

- Snack Foods - **CRITICAL**
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly
- Tomato Products
- Canned Chicken
- Canned Mixed Vegetables
- Razors
- Body Wash
- Bar Soap
- Conditioner

## OUR MISSION:

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

## OUR VISION:

Improving every life in our community by reducing hunger and poverty.



*Feeding Families is  
Just the Beginning*

**Before Christmas, bring the contents to Circle or another local food pantry. FYI - Circle is open until 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 23!**

## Reverse Advent Calendar

The Reverse Advent Calendar has made the rounds on social media for a few years. It's a great way to introduce children to the idea of sharing during the holidays while counting down to the big day.



What is a reverse advent calendar? It's a basket, a box or any container. Each day during December or during the season of Advent, a nonperishable food item is placed inside, maybe with a conversation about the value of giving. Before Christmas, bring the contents to Circle or another local food pantry. FYI - Circle is open until 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 23!

What a wonderful way to instill in children a lifelong love of sharing!

## We Need You...

### ...for Holiday Family Adoption!

As we've reported, Circle will not hold Toy Day this year and will instead include many more families in our Holiday Family Adoption program. This way, more children and adults will receive holiday gifts and greetings directly from their own wish lists!

The process is easy. Visit [circleofconcern.org](http://circleofconcern.org) to request one or more families to adopt or sponsor. Want to sponsor a single senior citizen? OK. Want a family with little children? We can do that, too! Will accept any family because you want to ensure families at Circle can enjoy the joy of the season? We can help!

Once you've shopped from the wish lists of each member of your adopted family, you'll simply bring the wrapped gifts (unwrapped for the children, please) to Community Christian Church in Manchester on Tuesday, December 12.

If spreading happiness gives you joy, please visit [circleofconcern.org](http://circleofconcern.org) to adopt a family and make special dreams come true!

## Sign Post

Many thanks to Sign Of The Arrow, the philanthropic arm of the St. Louis Alumnae Club of Pi Beta Phi, for a generous grant of \$2,000 to support our scholarship program. By helping low-income young people and adults access college, trade programs and other higher learning, this St. Louis institution is investing in a hopeful future for our region. Thank you.



*Cyndi Miller and Barb Woehle, Circle volunteer and member of Pi Beta Phi*





# Overheard at the Pantry Desk

“I look so forward to your fresh milk.”

“Mommy? Can we get an apple?”

*Little boy with big eyes spying a tray of apples on the counter*

“I will be grilling peppers tonight thanks to Circle. They are far too expensive for me to buy.”

“I wish I would have known about you guys three years ago when I was homeless.”

*A vendor making her first business call to Circle*

“Everyone at Circle is so nice and not judgmental.”

“I could not make it without Circle's help.”

“Circle is lifesaving and so caring. I don't know what I would have done for the past year and a half having 4 kids without Circle.”

“I am very thankful to the many stores that contribute to Circle.”

“When you first come to Circle it is a very humbling experience. The people who volunteer are the most wonderful people. They make you feel so comfortable & are very helpful to walk you through the process. We are all in this together.”

“...no words...overwhelmed...”

*First-time client, single mother of three who thought she would receive one bag of food and loaf of bread as she received a shopping cart full of groceries*

“Such a help financially & it helps you manage your money.”



## September Stats:

Number of people fed = **1,800**  
Number of bags distributed = **2,914**  
Number of families = **618**  
Cost = **\$83,879.49**

**Financial Assistance**  
**38** families received **\$7,016.00** in financial assistance

**Volunteers**  
**169** volunteers shared **1,863** hours

# The Value of Venting



Gratitude abounds this time of year. More than maybe any other time, we are reminded of all the good things we have, all the blessings in our lives. Sometimes, though, things aren't so good. There are struggles, losses and hardships that are hard to look past. It's at times like this when it helps to talk—to vent—about what's going on.

Clients of Circle come to us because circumstances leave them unable to cover all the necessary costs of life without a little help. During each visit, they talk with an intake volunteer. It's during these visits that many clients are able to air their concerns, fears, anger and sadness.

Being able to safely vent painful emotions can help in several ways:

- Bottling up negative emotions takes a toll on health – physical, mental and emotional. The relief from airing negative emotions can ease those stressors.
- When emotions are high, venting can restore the emotional equilibrium. When things are calm, it's easier to figure out answers to problems.
- Talking to someone who is removed from the problem, such as a Circle volunteer, can move the conversation from “misery loves company” along to a more productive exchange about ways to handle the problem and see it clearly with less emotion.

We are grateful for our compassionate, caring volunteers!

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## Remembering a Circle Leader



With great sadness, we share the news of the passing of our great friend and community cheerleader, Jerry Caesar. Jerry passed away on September 1, leaving behind beloved family, countless friends and a legacy of generosity and kindness that has touched the lives of too many former and current Circle clients to count.

As president of our Board of Directors, Jerry led the way through the recent recession. As the number of clients we served climbed, Jerry was instrumental in obtaining funds for and building our new facility that has allowed us to serve thousands of people every month. Jerry

was also a compassionate intake volunteer, a smiling face at our annual Thanksgiving Basket program, a dedicated golfer at the annual golf tournament hosted for Circle by his church, St. Mark Presbyterian, and so much more.

Most of all, Jerry was our optimistic, smiling friend, and we miss him.

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## Letter of the Law

From the year they turn 70 ½, everyone must take a Required Minimum Distribution, or RMD, from their Individual Requirement Accounts, or IRAs. Fortunately a Qualified Charitable Distribution, or QCD, can satisfy all or part of the RMD. Further, donations made directly from an IRA to a charity such as Circle Of Concern can be donated without the donor having to count the distribution as taxable income. Contact your financial planner or tax preparer before December 31 to see if a QCD to Circle using an RMD from your IRA can benefit you!



# Thinking Outside the Circle

## Dewey's Pizza School - Ellisville

Just like Alice, friends of Circle went through the looking glass... into the heart of Dewey's Pizza School in Ellisville, all to benefit Circle Of Concern! On a recent Sunday, 80 guests visited this West County restaurant to learn the secrets of some of the most popular pizza in St. Louis.

Dough tossing was mostly successful—only one crust hit the floor!—but the whole experience was informative and delicious! Our guests enjoyed their personal pizzas and salads, and the event raised \$2,200 for Circle's food pantry.

Thank you to our guests and to the DewMore philanthropy crew at Dewey's for a great afternoon in pizza wonderland!



## Campership Round-Up



Summer has yielded to falling leaves and cool temperatures, but the impact of Circle's Campership program lingers on. In 2017, 105 children of Circle clients attended a camp or activity of their choice, growing as a result of their experiences.

Our campers' families were so happy with their children's accomplishments!

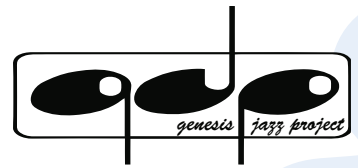
One mother reflected on an important feature of the program, "It was great to be able to pick what to do." Poverty can reduce choice and individuality; the opportunity to select an activity based on a child's interest and abilities means a lot to our Circle kids.

If you have fond memories of summer camp and would like to help a child experience the fun, consider a gift to Circle designated for the Campership program. The children will remember it forever.

*~ He learned to swim  
~ She learned to dive and to swim the backstroke  
~ She was a junior counselor and learned to work with younger children and assume responsibility  
~ He went to Boy Scout camp and built a camp fire  
~ She played in a youth orchestra and loved it!*



# Genesis Jazz Project



The third time is another charm!

For the third year, the Genesis Jazz Project—a group of the St. Louis area's finest jazz musicians—is holding a concert to benefit Circle, with a slight change. This year, the Project will be joined by the award-winning Lafayette High School Jazz Band and the concert will take place at Lafayette to accommodate the growing crowd of fans of this hot ticket.

This event is the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Plan to join us for a smooth evening of the smoothest jazz to ease you into holiday hoopla!

**Tuesday, November 21  
7:00 p.m.**

**Lafayette High School Auditorium**

(17050 Clayton Road, 3.5 miles west of Clarkson Road)

Admission: nonperishable food items or a suggested \$10 donation

## Service Above Self



Many thanks to members of the Des Peres Rotary Club for their hugely successful autumn Daily Essentials Drive! The club brought to Circle 78 huge bags of paper good, diapers, detergent and—new this year—pet food



to help meet daily needs of the families we serve. Food is critical, but these items also are needed every single day at Circle!

A special “hats off” to students of Parkway's Fern Ridge High School for supporting the drive. The students prepped the 520 plastic shopping bags distributed by packing them with an informational flyer about the drive and rolling them, ready to be thrown to homes in Des Peres neighborhoods.

Thank you for your service and for caring about Circle families!

*Betty Struckhoff and  
Joan Shaver*

## Our Four-Legged Friends



Food for people is, of course, our first concern at Circle. Because being able to keep and care for a treasured pet when the going gets tough nourishes the spirit, Circle also accepts donations of dog and cat food to share with our clients.

We often receive large bags of popular chows, which are then divided into smaller bags to help many families. One Eagle Scout candidate collected 1,250 pounds of bagged dog and cat food, along with pet litter and cans of cat food.

The next time you pick up food for your fur-baby, please consider picking up a bag for families who need it to keep their cherished pets.

# A Note From Cyndi

As I look back on this eventful 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year, I'm struck with wonder and gratitude. Circle is simply blessed beyond measure.

Our volunteers arrive ever-faithfully to sort and bag food, answer phones, make appointments and counsel clients. Others tirelessly call on businesses and retailers, seeking donations for our first-ever gala celebration. Some take on leadership roles, increasing their work load and responsibilities. These selfless saints make our work possible.

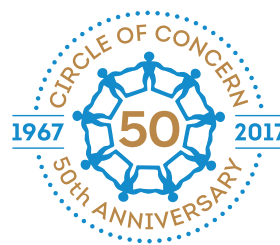
I'm thankful for the three talented women who join me in making up our staff, and a Board of Directors that listens and leads.

I'm grateful for the groups, businesses and faith-based organizations that so generously support our work; I can't thank enough the individuals and families that give. *We have a generous and caring community.*

And finally, I'm humbled by our program participants who take time to send a note of thanks, and by those who, with candor, share their personal stories. Because they do so, many will better understand, and others will know they are not alone.

*Thank you for being a part of our Circle. May you have a blessed holiday season!*

Cyndi



## Confetti Roasted Root Veggies

Nothing is as homey with dinner than a helping of simple roasted vegetables. Roasting softens and mildly sweetens most produce into the best version of themselves!

- 2 large russet or Yukon Gold potatoes, washed and skin-on
- 2 large sweet potatoes, washed and skin on
- 2 carrots, peeled
- 2 parsnips, peeled
- 2 large onions, peeled and quartered
- 8 large cloves of garlic, peeled
- ½ tsp. chopped, dried rosemary or thyme
- 2 tbs. olive or vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 2 tbs. Butter (optional)

Preheat oven to 400\*. Spray a large rimmed cookie sheet with vegetable spray and place in oven for 10 minutes as it preheats.

Cut potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots and parsnips into one-inch chunks. Toss with garlic, onion quarters, herbs, oil, salt and pepper in a large bowl.

Carefully remove hot cookie sheet from oven and spread vegetables on it in a single layer. Return pan to oven. Roast for 45 minutes, turning veggies every 15 minutes. At 45 minutes, poke potatoes and carrots with the tip of a knife. Vegetables are done if the knife pierces easily. If not return to oven for 15 minutes.

Taste for salt. Serve as is or toss with a little butter, if desired.

## Important Dates:

November 6-18

**Volunteer Opportunities for Thanksgiving Baskets**

November 16

**Old Newsboys Day**  
Get Cash – Give Generously!

November 21

**Genesis Jazz Project Concert**  
Lafayette High School

November 23-27

**Circle Closed for Thanksgiving**

November 30

**FINAL Deadline** to sign up as **Holiday Adoption Sponsor**

December 12

**Holiday Adoption Gift Drop-Off**

December 25-26

**Circle Closed**

December 27-29

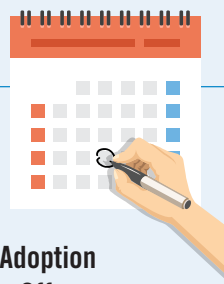
**Circle open 9 a.m. to noon**

December 30-Jan 1

**Circle Closed**

December 31

**Last day gifts qualify for Food Pantry Tax Credit**





# Circle Of Concern FOOD PANTRY

*Feeding Families is Just the Beginning*

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

Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
Paid  
St Louis MO  
Permit 175

**Double Issue!  
Busy Days at Circle!**

## Board of Directors:

**Steven Ernst**  
*PRESIDENT*

**Lana Biondo**  
*VICE PRESIDENT*

**Matt Claflin**  
*TREASURER*

**Michael Bauer**  
*SECRETARY*

**Karen Aubuchon**  
**Frank Haase**  
**Sue Hoffman**  
**Maria Keena**  
**Doug Paul**  
**Alva Rozar**  
**Greg Shoemaker**  
**Jason Sinclair**  
**Carol Vandable**  
**Amy Vollmer**

## We share many donations with our clients:

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

## Donations are accepted:

Mon, Tue, Fri..... 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Wednesday ..... 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.  
Thursday ..... 9 a.m. - noon  
Saturday..... 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

## Fall Cleaning Tips

It's that time of year when many people clean house for the holidays. Unfortunately, family cast-offs often end up at Circle's doors, and we either can't share them because of health codes or because we just don't have the space or programs to pass them along. Please take the following gently-used or unneeded items to these fine organizations:

### Clothing and household goods -

St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Stores - [svdpstlouis.org](http://svdpstlouis.org)  
Savers Thrift Store - [savers.com](http://savers.com)  
Goodwill Stores - [mersgoodwill.org](http://mersgoodwill.org)

**Medical Equipment** - St. Louis Helps - [stlhelp.org](http://stlhelp.org)

**Furniture** - St. Vincent de Paul - [svdpstlouis.org](http://svdpstlouis.org)



**"LIKE US"** on Facebook and visit us online at [www.circleofconcern.org](http://www.circleofconcern.org).

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**Niki Vandable**, Client Services Director ..... [niki@circleofconcern.org](mailto:niki@circleofconcern.org) ..... ext. 108