

December 2016

Celebrating 49 years
of service to the
St. Louis community



AROUND

THE

CIRCLE

The Circle Of Concern Food Pantry Newsletter

CURRENT NEEDS:

All items are important
and helpful. Some needs
are critical:

Canned Fruit – CRITICAL
Canned Mixed

Vegetables – CRITICAL
Rice/Dry Beans/Dry Potatoes
Snack Items
Canned Pasta
Canned Chicken
Chili
Canned Stew
Chicken & Dumplings
Bar Soap
Baby Wipes

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.

Making Real Change

Our donors, volunteers and community partners ensure that Circle of Concern stands ready to serve—whether it's responding to a recession impacting our nation, a natural disaster impacting our region, or personal hardships affecting our neighbors.

And while our goal is to *be here*, for as long as we're needed, we want our services to truly impact those we serve. *Real change* is what we're seeking. So we've been "digging in" this year, taking a closer look at our programs, surveying our clients and the volunteers who work most closely with them, examining similar organizations, building assessment tools and dreaming about the future.

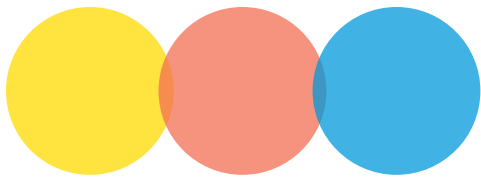
At our core, we are a food pantry offering wholesome foods, so that our neighbors in need don't go hungry. Do we affect change through our pantry? Yes. 94% of our clients report that the food we share enables them to direct their very limited dollars toward other critical expenses, like utilities, medicine and healthcare. Our pantry, along with our emergency rent and utility assistance program, helps to keep families safe—and intact.

Our newly formed Pantry Committee will soon examine ways to better serve our homeless population and those with special dietary needs. Circle's Program Committee has initiated

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Feeding Families is Just the Beginning



A Client Story



This thank you note, representative of so many we receive, says: "Thank you. We both just wanted take the time and tell you how very grateful we are for all the wonderful things you have truly done for us. Thank you."

Take Credit for All You Do!

Give by December 31 and get back!

Gifts of money and food to Circle Of Concern are eligible for Food Pantry Tax Credits, giving back up to 50 percent of your gift in credits that directly lower your Missouri income tax bill. And you can still claim your donation for a federal tax deduction!

Individuals can earn up to \$2,500 in credits when they donate \$5,000 in cash or food. Couples filing jointly can earn up to \$5,000 in credits for gifts of \$10,000.

For more information about the MO Food Pantry Tax Credit programs, contact Juliet at Juliet@circleofconcern.org or call 636.861.2623 x106.

Thinking Outside the Circle



Des Peres Rotary Club. Pictured (l to r): Dave Galli, Paul Shaver, Dave Forrest. Not pictured: Bill Wiley, Chuck Ainsworth, Jim Harris, Phil Hellwege, and Jim Smith

Des Peres Rotary

Daily Essentials can mean different things to different people. Coffee, a newspaper, a good workout, alone time—we all have something that must be part of our every day. Well, thanks to the Des Peres Rotary, Circle has items on hand that truly are every person's daily essential—bathroom tissue! For the fifth time, our friends in Des Peres have canvassed neighborhoods collecting those paper and personal care products that we really can't do without, such as toilet paper, soap, laundry detergent, diapers and more. These are all items a family-in-need cannot buy with assistance like SNAP (food stamps) but are critical every day.

This fall, the group filled 86 HUGE storage bags with hundreds of these items that will help our families meet that daily need...and the Rotary plans another drive in the spring. Thank you, Des Peres Rotarians; you have, daily, become essential to us!



OCTOBER SERVICES



FOOD PANTRY

Number of people fed = 1,892
Number of bags distributed = 3,092
Number of families = 628
Cost = \$89,003.22



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

38 families received
\$6,254 in financial services



VOLUNTEERS

189 volunteers shared
2,005 hours

Making Real Change

continued from page 1

regular meetings and training sessions for our Reception, Intake and Case workers. In 2017, we hope to fund formal training in Motivational Interviewing—an evidence-based approach that helps clients to set and work toward personal goals.

Circle's staff and volunteers work to meet our clients' immediate needs, but also to move them beyond their current circumstances, to a place of stability and self-sufficiency. For many years we've awarded college scholarships to financially eligible high school seniors in hopes that through education, we can break the cycle of poverty. We remain committed to this effort; so much so, we've expanded the program to our adult clients in recent years; and due to an overwhelming response, we're committing more dollars for scholarships in 2017.

Circle's Career Mentorship Program pairs eager clients with working and retired professionals for personal coaching and career planning. As we "dug in" to this program this year, we formalized training, expectations and support for our mentors. Inspired by the client success stories coming from this program, we now strategize ways to grow client participation throughout the coming New Year.



We look with excitement to this holiday season and the client events that bring hope and happiness; and we look to 2017, Circle's 50th Anniversary. As we work to provide strong programs and make real change in the lives

of client families, we will be raising funds and awareness, and celebrating all that is "Circle." We thank you for being an important part of our history and we invite you to be a part of our future too.

Gratefully,
Cyndi Miller
Executive Director

 *Peace and Joy of the
Season to You All*



Run Circles Around Hunger Was a Huge Success!

**Thanks to
our 5K Sponsors!**



EXPRESS SCRIPTS®

GOLD



SILVER



BRONZE



**Save the date for our next 5K
on September 16, 2017!**

As fall rolls into winter, it's a good time to remind our friends of Circle's Inclement Weather policy. Circle closes when any of the school districts in our service area —Parkway, Rockwood and Valley Park—close due to the weather. If you ever have a question about whether Circle is open when the weather is bad, call 636.861.2623 and dial 8.



Circle Of Concern Food Pantry

Feeding Families is Just the Beginning

112 St. Louis Ave.
Valley Park, MO 63088
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Outside the Circle –
Daily Essentials!

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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

December 10 **Circle open to Donors
during Toy Day**

December 23-26 **Circle Closed**

December 27-30 **Circle open 9 a.m. to noon**

December 31 **Circle Closed**

December 31 **Last day gifts qualify for
Food Pantry Tax Credit**

**Donate safely online at circleofconcern.org
until 11:59 p.m. on December 31.
Drop off donations to our facility by Noon
on Friday, December 30.**

STAFF DIRECTORY

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