

May 2016

Celebrating 49 years
of service to the
St. Louis community



AROUND

THE

CIRCLE

The Circle Of Concern Food Pantry Newsletter

CURRENT NEEDS:

- Jelly
- Cereal
- Condiments, Sauces
- Cooking Oil
- Canned Chili
- Laundry Detergent
- Bar Soap

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.

Many Working Together

Andy and Annie* had reached the end of their rope. The new job that brought them to St. Louis abruptly ended. With no money and no local family to rely on, the pair found their only refuge under a tarp, sleeping in the open in an area park with temperatures in the 30s. Annie was desperate to find another job; Andy was desperate to keep her spirits up, even as he struggled with a chronic illness that had already claimed both of his legs.

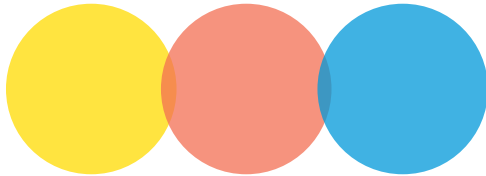
A police officer from a local municipality spotted the couple in the park, picked them up and paid the cost for a night at a nearby hotel. Circle shared food with the family, and the hotel manager picked up a second night at the hotel as several local organizations got to work to help Andy and Annie find safety, shelter and hope.

After many phone calls and a few dead ends, the full picture of assistance came together. Along with the hotel assistance from the

police officer and hotel manager, Circle was able to supplement the food with additional time at the hotel, as did St. Vincent de Paul at St. Paul's Catholic Church. St. Vincent de Paul at Sacred Heart arranged for transportation to the St. Louis bus station and bus tickets that would take them to relatives in Kansas City. With the help of many partners, Andy and Annie found their way home and the hope they could get there.

For this couple—and many more clients every week—the Circle logo represents the many individuals and organizations that work together to make life better for those who need help in west St. Louis County. The process usually begins with meeting the basic need of food. Once that need is met, we begin to explore other ways we can help, as well as other organizations that step up where we can't. Together, Circle and other concerned partners can support neighbors in desperate need and help them on the road to recovery.

Feeding Families is Just the Beginning



Thinking Outside the Circle

Manchester United Methodist Church

Christmas in May might sound like a folksy ad campaign. Here at Circle, though, reflecting on Christmas in May is just another way to celebrate ways the men and women of Manchester United Methodist Church work on Circle's behalf throughout the year.

The cornerstone of that effort is the Church's popular Christmas tree lot. In 2015, the lot sold out of more than 1,500 trees, raising \$5,000 for our food pantry. Throughout the year, the church also supports Circle with food collections by the choir and the congregation, through the bike ministry that shares refurbished bicycles with our clients' children and even by sharing storage space when Circle evacuated under the threat of historic flooding!

Circle has long been fortunate to count many of our local churches among our closest friends. Like the trees sold by the men of Manchester United Methodist, these friendships are evergreen!

Save the Date

Bunco Fun-Raiser
July 16

Run Circles
Around Hunger 5K
September 17

Visit
circleofconcern.org
to register and for
more information!



Letter
Carriers
Food Drive
Saturday,
May 14!



FEBRUARY SERVICES



FOOD PANTRY

Number of people fed = 1,853
Number of bags distributed = 3,102
Number of families = 631
Cost (@\$53.57) = \$83,087.07



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

35 families received
\$5,683.00 in financial services



VOLUNTEERS

187 volunteers shared
2,183 hours

Learn More About...

Food Stamps

SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamp), benefits have been in the news lately. Here's what's happening:

SNAP benefits—formerly known as food stamps—have been tied to employment for decades in the United States. After the recession began, however, the work requirement that had existed for many years was waived in many areas, as state and federal governments acknowledged that jobs were hard to come by.

Now, as the economy is improving, Missouri is one of 22 states that have reinstated work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents, or ABAWDs. ABAWDs need to have a job to receive more than three months of benefits. The rule does not apply to adults who are pregnant, have dependent children or who are unable to work for physical or mental health reasons.

To learn more about SNAP and Missouri's work requirements, visit dss.mo.gov and click on Access Food Stamps.

A Note from Cyndi

During a recent conference call led by Empower Missouri's Hunger Task Force, the director of Missouri's Family Support Division, Julie Gibson, assured participants (representing a host of organizations serving low-income families) that her agency is poised to help those who recently lost Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. It is projected that 60,000 Missourians will be impacted due to changes in the program. The agency will be offering "wrap around programs" designed to "... put people on a career pathway."

That is an approach that we have long embraced at Circle. Through our coaching and case management, Circle has worked to help families move beyond their current circumstances toward opportunities and programs that support self-sufficiency. Our job mentorship program further supports these efforts, as devoted volunteer mentors are paired with those motivated to chart a path out of poverty.

We want to thank the volunteers who make these efforts possible; and we want you to know that *we are in need of more mentors!* If you are interested in learning about this program, and possibly becoming a mentor, please give us a call at 636.861.2623.



GIRL SCOUTS

Special thanks to local Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri! Your April Showers personal care collection makes life easier for the families who come to Circle!





Circle Of Concern Food Pantry

Feeding Families is Just the Beginning

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

**What's an
ABAWD?**

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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

- May 9 **Golf Tournament**
- May 14 **Letter Carrier's Food Drive**
- May 28, 30 **Closed for Memorial Day**
- June 27 **General Membership Meeting**
7:30, St. Mark Presbyterian
(601 Claymont, Ballwin)
- July 15 **Bunco Night**
- August 6 **Back To School Distribution**

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