

AROUND THE Circle Newsletter

Circle of Concern
Food Pantry



Hope For—and In—the Future

Now and then at Circle, we get a glimpse of the future of kindness in our community...

“...could a little fifth grader like me help?”

A teacher in the Rockwood School District sent a note recently, telling us that her 5th grade class read the book, “What Do You Do With An Idea?” which closes with the line “What do you do with an idea—you change the world.” After exploring concepts like empathy, grit, self-control, embracing diversity and integrity, one of her students, Taylor, had an idea about poverty and reached out to us with questions about how to help. Among questions about our services and how many people are served, Taylor asked for advice about how to prevent poverty.

That’s a very big question, Taylor. Circle’s Client Services Director, Niki Vandable, offered advice that is valuable to everyone:

First, learn...and then share what you learn. Some families do not come to Circle because they don’t know who we are, what we do or if they are eligible for our services. You could be the key to families getting what they need to get help and step out of poverty.

Second, have kind, non-judgmental conversations about seeking help if you know someone in need. A big deterrent to some people getting help is a sense of shame or stigma about “being poor.” Societal judgement sometimes assumes that those who are struggling “don’t have enough grit to successfully overcome their problems,” or “they aren’t smart enough to get a good job,” or “poor people are lazy.” Families that need help might not ask for it to avoid being judged. This is especially harmful because the sense of shame detracts from the true causes of poverty, like chronic illness without insurance, loss of job due to corporate decisions or many other external factors. By urging people to seek help at Circle, each person is bolstered to address internal and external issues.

Thank you, Taylor, for your questions and for getting a good head start on changing our world for the better.

Current Needs:

- Snacks
(see story in this issue)
- Peanut Butter / Jelly
- Canned Chicken
- Dinner “Helpers”
- Cereal
- Tomato Products
- Bar Soap
- Razors
- Body Wash

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.



Circle Of Concern
FOOD PANTRY
Feeding Families Is Just the Beginning

*Feeding Families is
Just the Beginning*

A Client Story

Brian* is a foodie. At a recent appointment, he regaled the intake volunteer with a run-down of how he used the food from his Thanksgiving Basket. The turkey was broken down into its pieces, each prepared in some wonderful way with other ingredients from the Basket over the next week, including making soup stock from the bones and all the vegetable peels and scraps. "I ate like a king," he exclaimed!

As Brian stood up to go to the pantry to get his regular food allotment, the volunteer noticed that his worn jeans seemed to be more holes than denim, so much so that he needed to wear thermal undergarments underneath for coverage. She asked why he didn't submit a wish list for clothing in our Holiday Adoption program. His answer? Brian said that when he comes to Circle, he sees people who need help much more than he does. Besides, he said with a smile, he's fine. He eats like a king!

**Name changed for privacy*

Blanketing With Love

Many good things happen in December at Circle. One of those is a visit by Gail Taylor, bringing with her this year 101 hand-crocheted blankets she made, each wrapped in ribbon with a sweet candy cane. Thank you, Gail, for these warm expressions of care for our families!



Snow Day!



Safety rules when snow flies. Because our clients, volunteers and staff come from far flung corners of our service area and beyond, Circle closes due to inclement weather when the Parkway, Rockwood and/or Valley Park school districts close for bad weather. No

worries, though. We work hard before and after bad weather hits to be sure no one is left without food.

Call 636.861.2623 and press "8" during bad weather or in the event of other emergencies to find out if we're open.

NOVEMBER STATS

Pantry

Number of people fed = **1,699**
Number of families fed = **584**
Number of bags distributed = **2,820**
Value of bags = **\$81,173.70**

Financial Assistance

44 families received
\$5,848.28 in financial assistance

Volunteers

163 volunteers shared **2,067** hours

Snack Time

What do we mean when we ask for Snacks in our Current Needs? Here are some ideas:

Saltines and snack crackers

Granola and protein bars

Shelf-stable pudding cups

Nuts

Raisins (dried fruit)

Boxes of microwave popcorn packets



While we don't actively ask for chips, candy, cookies and other snacks often considered less healthy, our clients are often happy for the special treat of Girl Scout cookies, seasonal candy and other goodies that just taste so good!

A Night to Remember!

It was truly a magical evening on November 4th, when corporate and community friends; and current and former board members, staff and volunteers all joined to celebrate Circle of Concern's 50th Anniversary of service to the West St. Louis County area. We were just overwhelmed by the good will and generosity felt throughout the ballroom at Forest Hills Country Club.



Nearly 300 guests and volunteers participated in the evening, supporting an exciting balloon raffle, live auction and fund-a-need effort. Ryan and Dana Dean of KSDK-TV emceed the event. Members of The Original Knights of Swing, along with KMOX Radio's Maria Keena entertained guests with jazz favorites.



Missouri State Representative Jean Evans presented a Missouri House of Representatives Resolution congratulating "...all those dedicated individuals affiliated with Circle of Concern, upon this very special anniversary event." The event raised over \$100,000, supporting Circle's programs and client families and funding the purchase of a new van that will be used to transport food donations from area grocers and community food drives.

We sincerely thank our sponsors, our committee, guests and donors for making the event a night to remember!

Cyndi

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Circle of Concern FOOD PANTRY

Feeding Families is Just the Beginning

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Valley Park, MO 63088
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Our 51st Year Begins!

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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.

Important Dates:

February 16	Verified Food Pantry Tax Credit forms mailed by this date
April 20	4th Annual Bunco Fun-Raiser Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
May 21	14th Annual Charity Golf Tournament Aberdeen Golf Club, Eureka
September TBA	Trivia Night and Auction



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STAFF DIRECTORY 636.861.2623

Cyndi Miller, Executive Director cyndi@circleofconcern.org ext. 117

Juliet Holden, Senior Director juliet@circleofconcern.org ext. 106

Michelle Lepak, Pantry Director michelle@circleofconcern.org ext. 107

Niki Vandable, Client Services Director niki@circleofconcern.org ext. 108