

AROUND THE Circle Newsletter

Circle of Concern
Food Pantry



The Value of Food

Food is serious business at Circle of Concern. We welcome more than \$1 million worth of food donations each year from our community. The lion's share of cash donations we receive is used to purchase wholesome foods like milk, eggs, meat, fruits and vegetables to supplement shelf-stable choices. Once the food comes in our doors, we're serious about how we share and account for it.

The accounting is daunting. Households receive a quantity of food based on how many people are in the family. For example, a family of four receives two large grocery bags full of soup, cereal, peanut butter, jelly, pasta, canned meat, condiments and much more – a consistent array of items that will last the family for 10-14 days. We then add in milk, eggs, potatoes, carrots, onions, apples, oranges and bananas, chicken, hot dogs, ground turkey and ground beef, plus toilet paper, soap and some personal care items.

Sharing with nearly 2,000 people each month in approximately 600 families of varying sizes and living situations means we pack seven different sizes of bags and give multiple bags for larger families. For example, a client experiencing homelessness with no access to refrigeration will receive a different amount and type of food than a family of 9 in a stable housing environment.

All told, in January 2018, we shared \$88,265.96 worth of food in the food pantry.

When all the figures are calculated, though, the real value lies elsewhere. As Claire, a client's daughter, shared in a thank-you note recently, "Thank you for everything you do for us ... like giving us food for our family to make dinner. You are a life saver."

You and your support of Circle are valuable. Thank you.

“ In January
2018, we shared
\$88,265.96 worth
of food. ”

Current Needs:

- Condiments of all kinds!
- Jelly – **CRITICAL**
- Tomato Products
- Canned Chicken
- Peanut Butter
- Rice/Dry Beans/
Dry Potatoes
- Body Wash
- Bar Soap – **CRITICAL**
- Razors
- Ibuprofen – **CRITICAL**

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 Letter from the Board President

It's been a long winter, with no guarantees that the cold and snow are completely gone, but here at Circle of Concern, things are bright!

I've begun this year as Board President energized by the enthusiasm of celebrating 2017—our 50th year of serving West County families. The impactful programs we offer—the food pantry, scholarships, emergency financial assistance, holiday programs and more – were bolstered by many opportunities to tell our story and that of our clients. We made new partnerships to ensure we are reaching as many people in need as possible. A Bunco party, 5K run/walk and a golf tournament both raised more friends and funds than ever before.

Capping the year, we held our first-ever gala event to celebrate the anniversary of our founding in 1967. An event like that has many moving parts, and, while I'm most proud of the service we provide year in and year out, this event was a powerful sight to behold! So many guests, sponsors, volunteers, staff, auction and raffle donors and vendors came together to do Circle proud. We raised more than \$100,000, enough to buy a new van to pick up donations (replacing the one with 300,000 miles) and still leave the lion's share to fund the food pantry and other programs.

After looking back over the years, we are now looking far forward. This spring, we are embarking on significant strategic planning to ensure Circle is poised to provide ever more meaningful assistance to families.

Along with good news, we always keep our eyes on potential challenges. Prices of fresh food can change quickly; we shop frugally and maintain strong vendor relationships. We pay attention to decisions made far from our doors in Jefferson City and Washington D.C. that could impact the number of families that will need our programs. We continually look for ways to engage new volunteers, new donors, new friends.

Through opportunities and challenges, we will rely on the commitment of our 395 active volunteers, our amazingly skilled and committed staff, our community partners and our donors and friends to get things done. It's easy to say and absolutely true – our work can only happen with the assistance of many people who value strengthening our community by helping our neighbors one at a time.

I'll close this letter the way I began it – reflecting on all that's bright. During the November gala, as the live auction and Fund-A-Need efforts bore fruit for our programs for families, I stood in the back of the room. From wall to wall, paddles rose again and again in the golden glow of the ballroom, each time affirming what we at Circle know. When we shine a light on the needs of our neighbors, our community responds with kindness and generosity. Thank you for being a light of hope.

Lana Biondo
President, 2018

Circle by the Numbers

What Did You Do?!

In 2017, **YOU** changed lives. By supporting Circle's food pantry and other programs, you made the following possible:

3,365 people (unduplicated) were fed throughout the year from
1,179 families (unduplicated)
31,418 bags of food were wheeled out of our building
756 Kid Bags fed nearly 1,000 children through the summer
337 families received Financial Assistance to keep the lights on and more
22 young people received college scholarships to set them on a productive path and
13 adult clients received scholarships to improve their job skills
106 campers learned, played and grew from summer enrichment camperships
629 kiddos were outfitted with paper, pens and more at Back To School
378 children felt extra special on their special day, thanks to Birthday Club
393 tables were topped with Thanksgiving feasts
479 families – 173 more than 2016! – were adopted by 272 sponsors via Holiday Adoption

General Stats for January 2018

People Fed - **2,003**

47 families received financial assistance

179 volunteers shared **2,269** hours

Bunco Q&A

We're excited to welcome you to the 4th annual Jelly Roll Bunco Fun-Raiser. April 20 is the big night at a new location – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 327 Woods Mill Road in Manchester (across from Costco). If you've never played this great girls-night-out game, you might have questions we can answer!



I've never played Bunco before. Can I still come?

Yes! If you can throw, roll or shake a few dice, you can play Bunco.

All of my friends are on vacation, homebodies or giving the dog a bath, so it would be just me. Can I still come?

Yes! In Bunco, you move through the game with lots of different people, so you don't need to bring a team.

My guy wants to stay home. Can I still come?

Yes! This is a girls-night-out event featuring fun, good food and a silent auction.

The cost is only \$20 per person; all proceeds will buy jelly and other foods for Circle's food pantry. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., with play starting promptly at 7 p.m. Seats will fill up fast, so register today at circleofconcern.org.



We are in desperate need of new or gently-used **pre-kindergarten books** for our lobby shelves. If you have some to share, please bring them by during regular donation hours on the back page of this newsletter. Thank you!

Camper's Choice

Circle's beloved Campership program is kicking off, and we invite you to help make a child's choice a reality.

Each year, Circle provides a summer "scholarship" for the children of our clients to attend a summer enrichment of their choice. A ball team, music lessons, swim lessons or a traditional camp setting – in a world where poverty restricts so many choices, these young people get to choose activities that spark their passions and imagination.

If you have fond memories of summer activities, please consider making a gift to Circle and indicating "For Camperships" to help our children choose and thrive.

Quick as a Link

The 14th annual Circle of Concern Charity Golf Tournament will be here before you know it!

Save the date for

Monday, May 21 at

Aberdeen Golf Club in Eureka.

Visit discoverstmark.org/Events for more information about playing.

CURRENTLY SEEKING SPONSORS!

Join our Presenting sponsor, Orthopedic Specialists, in supporting this event.

Available levels run from \$3,000 to \$150; all tournament proceeds help stock Circle's food pantry shelves and its other programs for families. Contact Cyndi at cyndi@circleofconcern.org for more information about sponsoring.

Pantry Pairs

Do you want to conduct an easy food drive for Circle? Consider enlisting your neighbors, co-workers, book club or other group to donate **Pantry Pairs** – two foods that go together like peas and carrots! Here are some ideas:

Peanut Butter & Jelly

Pasta & Sauce

Mustard & Ketchup

Tuna & Mayonnaise

Flour & Sugar

Jello & Canned Fruit

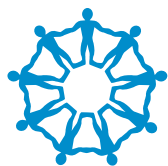
Canned Chicken & Rice Mix



Be Your Guest!

Does your church or group welcome speakers? Circle is happy to visit and share our story...and the stories of families that rely on our services.

To schedule a visit, contact Juliet at juliet@circleofconcern.org with possible dates.



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

State
of the
Circle

Board of Directors:

Lana Biondo
PRESIDENT

Greg Shoemaker
VICE PRESIDENT

Michael Bauer
TREASURER

Amy Vollmer
SECRETARY

Karen Aubuchon
Steven Ernst
Frank Haase
Sue Hoffman
Maria Keena
Dolores Rodenberg
Alva Rozar
Jason Sinclair
Carol Vandable

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:



March 30, 31	Circle Closed for Easter Weekend
April 20	4 th Annual Bunco Fun-Raiser Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
April 23	Youth Scholarships Application Deadline - 3 p.m.
April 28	Girl Scouts' April Showers Collection
May 12	Letter Carrier's Food Drive
May 21	14 th Annual Charity Golf Tournament Aberdeen Golf Club, Eureka
September TBA	Trivia Night and Auction



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

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