Planning and Planting

If 2017 was a year to look back at Circle of Concern’s first 50 years, 2018 is a year to look forward. And our board of directors, staff and other stakeholders are liking the view!

At the heart of this look ahead is a critical strategic planning process we’re conducting. With guidance from a group that helps nonprofit organizations look at the big and small picture, we are taking stock of the things we do and how we do them, as well as the environment in which we function. Who else does work similar to Circle’s program? How can we work together efficiently to meet current and anticipated needs of our clients? What do we need to sustain the level of service we provide?

These aren’t rhetorical questions. They are designed to focus our perspective on where we want to be one, two, five years down the road. By the time the planning process is done, we’ll also have a living document to guide us on how to get there…and adapt as needed along the way.

Warren Buffett once said, “Someone’s sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.” Over the past 51 years, our donors, volunteers, clients and partners have planted more trees in the form of compassionate programs than we can count. Each one is giving shade and comfort in the form of food, assistance and hope to the families we serve today. Thank you for planting for tomorrow.
When We Call…..
… you answer! And our Circle families are so grateful for you!

As the Pantry Director of Circle, part of my job is to keep an eye out for things we’re running short of and spread the word. Part of my joy is to see firsthand how you respond to that word. Here are just a few ways you’ve met our needs and those of our clients:

- Personal care items and over-the-counter remedies can feel like a luxury to families struggling to make ends meet. When we included ibuprofen in the Needs list of a recent newsletter, you brought us THREE milk crates of bottles of this common pain reliever. We see the relief in peoples’ eyes when they see the bottles on the shelf. (We are now running low on regular aspirin.)

- For many summers, our clients could count on the kindness of a particular donor who purchased box fans and a few window air conditioners (for clients with medical issues). When that donor passed away, we weren’t sure if we would be able to provide this hot-weather help, but we spread the word. Many of you pulled up to our door with brand new fans and A/C units; we were overwhelmed … and our clients were relieved. Your kindness inspired a local church – Living Word in Wildwood – to take up this cooling ministry this year.

- Snacks feel like an extra. We get that, which is why our snack shelf looks a little sparse sometimes. But it’s also a normal part of food life. When we recently put out a call for things like protein bars, crackers, nuts and other healthier snacks, you chipped away at the list and filled the shelf. You also gave enough packaged cookies and snack cakes to satisfy more than a few sweet cravings and gave a treat to families that don’t get them very often.

Thank you for really reading our newsletter, in general, and our list of Needs, in particular. When you help stock us with critical items, you make life easier for our client families every day.

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Tax Credit Questions?

We have been told that some of our donors have had their Missouri Food Pantry Tax Credit forms returned. If this happens to you, please contact juliet@circleofconcern.org or cyndi@circleofconcern.org; or give us a call as soon as possible – 636.861.2623. We can help!

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Stamp Out Hunger!

Don’t forget – the 2018 Letter Carrier’s Food Drive will take place on Saturday, May 12!

Our local letter carriers will distribute specially-marked grocery bags to your home the week of May 6. Please fill with unexpired canned and boxed (unbreakable) foods and leave on your doorstep before 7 a.m. on May 12. Your letter carrier will pick up the groceries, which will be shared with hungry families across the area. Last year, the Ballwin and Valley Park post offices, alone, collected more than 60,000 items that helped feed Circle families well into the summer. Thank you for sharing your kindness with your neighbors-in-need again this year!

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General Stats for March 2018

Shared food with 1,670 people (579 families)

- 31 families received $5,713.87 in financial assistance

- 173 volunteers shared 1,841 hours
**Client Story**

**We love to share good client news!**

Our client, Ellen,* works full-time at a local service company and is also a client of The ARC, an organization that promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Ellen is a joy to know; she comes to her appointments here with a perpetually upbeat attitude and is always prepared to meet with her intake volunteer. Apparently, her attitude and conscientiousness shine everywhere. Two months ago, Ellen was given a raise at work. Last month, she was voted Employee of the Month and received a cash prize. We just learned that she will soon receive a Super Hero Award from The ARC.

Congratulations, Ellen, for your cheer and attitude. We applaud you!

*Name changed for privacy.

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**Form Your Foursome Today!**

Our slate of golfers is filling up fast! Join us for premier golf on Monday, May 21 in the 14th Annual Circle of Concern Charity Golf Tournament, presented by Orthopedic Specialists and hosted by St. Mark Presbyterian Church.

Register for challenging golf, breakfast, lunch, an amazing live auction and great fun by visiting circleofconcern.org today. The links await at beautiful Aberdeen!

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**Happy Birthday, Brown Bag Café**

Michelle Lepak, Circle’s Pantry Director, joined a panel discussion on hunger and local services as part of the celebration the 5th birthday of the Brown Bag Café at Meramec Community College. We are proud to partner with this student food pantry and help ease food insecurity for college students.

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**Dream House Boutique**

Many thanks to our friends at the Dream House Boutique for the food drive and Girls Night Out event they hosted for Circle. Big bags and boxes of food will stock our shelves, and more than a few of us at Circle will sparkle up the office with the beautiful jewelry and pretties we found at the store. If you visit the Dream House to thank them for their support, please don’t leave with that one-of-a-kind mixed metals pendant necklace. One of us has our eye on it...

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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.
- Wed: 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Thu: 9 a.m. - noon
- Sat: 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Important Dates:

- May 12: Letter Carrier’s Food Drive
- May 21: 14th Annual Charity Golf Tournament
  Aberdeen Golf Club, Eureka
- May 26-28: Circle Closed for Memorial Weekend
- June 8-10: Ballwin Days
  Visit the Water/Soda booth benefitting Circle!
- June 23: “Moana” - Movie in Buder Park
  with PB&J Drive
  Hosted by Maitland & Associates, 7 p.m.
- September 8: Say Cheese! Trivia Night
  Trinity Lutheran Church in Chesterfield

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

STAFF DIRECTORY

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