Before Sunset...

Days are getting shorter. There’s still a lot we can do, but there’s no denying that sunset is coming.

Here at Circle of Concern, we’re paying attention to the shorter days because, to us, the sunset has a special meaning. We know that, on December 31, 2019, Missouri’s Food Pantry Tax Credit program is scheduled to sunset. This means that, unless this valuable credit program that encourages valuable donations to food pantries, homeless shelters and soup kitchens is extended, donors will no longer have a state tax credit incentive to care for our neighbors in need of food.

This tax credit program gives 50 percent of the value of gifts of money or food (up to certain limits depending on if you file singly or jointly) back to the donor in tax credits that directly reduce your state tax bill. It’s a pretty simple process, too – you make a gift to Circle this year, you get a signed verifying form from Circle next January and you submit the form with your state tax return by April 15 of next year.

The existence of this credit program has inspired such kindness. Some friends who have traditionally given a certain amount each year began doubling their gifts because they received a 50 percent return, thanks to the credits. Others who used to bring food are magnifying their giving by writing checks, too. It’s a win-win-win for Circle, for our donors and for our clients.

We invite you to contact your state representatives with your thoughts on the value of keeping the Food Pantry Tax Credit. (If you aren’t sure who your state reps are, visit www.mo.gov and click on “Look up your legislator” or call the League of Women Voters of Missouri at 314.961.6869.)

Thank you for your gifts to Circle. The families we serve benefit from every dollar you share with us. If the Food Pantry Tax Credit allows you to help more, please spread the word and keep giving until the sun goes down!
Hunger Takes No Holiday

Snapshot – in July of 2018, for every 100 children in Missouri who had needed and received free or reduced meals during the preceding school year, only 8.5 percent of those children received summer meals through summer nutrition programs of the National School Lunch Program.

The newly released “Hunger Doesn’t Take a Vacation” summer nutrition status report, published by the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC.org) offers several reasons for this, each of them sobering. Lack of distribution sites, lack of transportation to sites and ineffective communication about the program all contribute to the fact that millions of American children don’t get enough to eat in the summer. The free and reduced-cost meal safety net that many rely on during the school year frays and falls away when school isn’t in session, leaving children struggling with empty bellies during the summer months.

The picture is bleak, but Circle, for its part, works hard to offer a sunnier view to children in west St. Louis County. The children of our clients receive what we call Summer Kid Bags. Families receive their regular supply of groceries at their regular appointments plus, if they have school-age children, an additional one or two large bags of kid-friendly food to ease the summer hunger gap. These bags include more fresh fruit, peanut butter, mac and cheese mixes, soup, string cheese and so much more.

This summer, Circle shared 822 Summer Kid Bags, up from 758 in 2018. With the dedicated work of the Kid Bag committee—led by Mary Jo Helbig and Cathy Stamm—families know they can rely on Circle to help feed their children wholesome foods to carry them through their holiday.

Summertime Hero

Circle offers three key summer programs for children, costing approximately $38,000 (not counting product donations): Summer Kid Bags, Camperships and Back To School. Be a Summertime Hero to hundreds of Circle children by donating to these vital programs. Our children thank you!

From Your Family to One of Ours

Visit circleofconcern.org to adopt a Circle family for the holidays. It will warm your heart!

Coupon Club Appeal

We Need Your Coupons! Our friends need your help!

Woodlawn Chapel’s Coupon Club Mission Team strives to reduce local hunger by clipping coupons, stretching dollars and shopping for Circle. This energetic team shops every week for items on sale and those needed by Circle.

Coupon Club is thrilled to announce that it recently achieved an exciting milestone! In its eight years of couponing for Circle, it has donated more than $100,000.00 in products, purchased with only $30,000. Combining Woodlawn’s congregational donations with coupons, store sales and world-class shopping has made a huge difference for Circle families!

You can help this thriving mission do even more for Circle in its ninth year. Call our friends, Karin Bentele (314-591-1791), Judy Simms-Brown (314-527-9385) or Woodlawn Chapel Presbyterian Church (636-458-3009) to talk about ways you can help. And please mail any grocery coupons to:

Coupon Club
Woodlawn Chapel
16520 Clayton Rd
Wildwood, MO 63011

RMD Reminder

Are you at least 70 ½?
Have you taken your RMD yet?
Did you know you can take it as a QCD and reap tax benefits?
Call Cyndi at 636.861.2623 x117 to learn more.
In addition to the regular groceries we provide to our client families each month, Circle of Concern provides a Thanksgiving Basket to all of our clients and their families for Thanksgiving dinner. Your gifts of food and funds help us offer Thanksgiving dinner to 550 families plus share food with nearly 2,000 people each month.

Thanksgiving Items:
Your **Cash Donation** helps us purchase turkeys!

- Cornbread Mix
- Boxed/Bagged Stuffing
- Cranberry Sauce
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Pumpkin
- Jello Gelatin
- Turkey Gravy (Canned)
- Chicken/Turkey Broth
- Canned Vegetables (peas, carrots, mixed veggies)
- Yams/Canned Sweet Potatoes
- Canned Milk (evaporated or sweetened condensed)
- Large Foil Roasting Pans

**BAKING BAGS!**
Is your group looking for a project? We need Baking Bags! Each bag should contain a minimum of the following (estimated cost $15):
- Flour
- Sugar
- Baking Powder
- Baking Soda
- Vegetable Oil
- Vanilla Extract
- At Least One Baking Spice (i.e. cinnamon)

**Everyday Needs:**
- Peanut Butter
- Jelly and Jam
- Dry Pasta
- Pasta Sauce
- Dinner “Helpers”
- Cereal
- Canned Pasta
- Snack Foods
- Dry Potatoes/Beans/Rice

Drop off food at Circle by Wednesday, November 20, 3 p.m.
112 St. Louis Avenue in Valley Park
THANKSGIVING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Join Circle of Concern in reaching out to needy families in our community this holiday season. You or your group can help by hosting a food drive and collecting food, contributing money to purchase fresh produce and turkeys or volunteering time to the Thanksgiving Basket Program! If you would like to volunteer for our thanksgiving program, please complete the form below. To learn more, call 636.861.2623 x107 or email Barb at woehle@sbcglobal.net.

Please CIRCLE your shift(s) below:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>VOLUNTEER DRIVERS (must have current vehicle insurance, valid driver’s license and must be able to lift 30+ lbs)</th>
<th>WAREHOUSE Volunteer at Circle (must be able to lift 30+ lbs. and be 16 years or older)</th>
<th>ON-SITE PREP Volunteer- St. John’s UCC 15370 Olive Blvd. in Chesterfield (All children’s groups must be 8th grade or older)</th>
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<td>All Driver Shifts are 9a.m.-noon</td>
<td>Monday (November 18) 9 a.m.-Noon Noon-3 p.m.</td>
<td>Lunch Provided Thursday (November 21) 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.</td>
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<td>Monday (November 11)</td>
<td>Tuesday (November 19) 9 a.m.-Noon Noon-3 p.m.</td>
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<td>Tuesday (November 12)</td>
<td>Wednesday (November 20) 9 a.m.-Noon Noon-3:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m.-7 p.m.</td>
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<td>Wednesday (November 13)</td>
<td>Thursday (November 21) 9 a.m.-Noon</td>
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<td>Thursday (November 14)</td>
<td>Friday (November 22) 9 a.m.-Noon Noon-3 p.m.</td>
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**Sign up to Volunteer TODAY before your preferred volunteer shift is filled!**

I/We can help between November 11 - 23, 2019 at Circle and/or St. Johns UCC, 15370 Olive Blvd. in Chesterfield

Complete and return by mail to: Circle of Concern Attn: Thanksgiving Baskets 112 St. Louis Avenue Valley Park, MO 63088 Or fax to 636.861.2296

On-site & Distribution Vols: Barb at woehle@sbcglobal.net

Volunteer Drivers & Warehouse: michelle@circleofconcern.org

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Back to School 2019!

More than 730 children are stocked up to start school, thanks to the hard work and dedication of our Back To School committee (Linda Kovis and Kathy Kruger, chairs), and our cherished supporters. It was a lively morning, fueled by happy faces of children with fresh supplies!

Special thanks to Maritz for underwriting gift cards for children to buy specialized supplies they need and to The Crossing church and BASF for their enormous donations of stuffed backpacks. To everyone who made this event possible, thank you!

Overheard in the Pantry

Raised voices get our attention here at Circle. Too often, they signify someone struggling. Recently, though, a woman’s high voice on the pantry floor had us all celebrating. The sole provider for herself and her teenaged daughter, she had lost her job in February and has sent out more than 200 job applications since then, with no responses. She was desperate. Her phone rang on her way to her Circle appointment; the voice on the other end of the line offered her a job! After shouting out “hallelujah,” she called her daughter at school with the good news. Joyful news and joyful sounds!

At a large food drive recently, our volunteers thanked a woman who carried two large bags of groceries to our collection table. She leaned in close and said, “Circle helped me a few years ago, and I’ve been looking for a chance to give back. Thank YOU.”

During September, Dalie’s Smokehouse is offering a Circle Round-Up, benefiting our food pantry. Stop by for delicious barbecue and round up your bill to nearest dollar. Every penny helps!

Thank You, NCL!

Many thanks to the mothers and daughters of the National Charity League who have volunteered at Circle’s food pantry. We have long appreciated their help making our special events extra special, but the assistance in the pantry was over the top. We appreciate you!
The Turn of the Seasons

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:

- September is National Hunger Action Month
  - September 1-30: Round-Up Your Bill at Dalie’s Smokehouse Benefiting Circle 2951 Doughtery Ferry
  - September 13: Harvest Moon Trivia Night at Andre’s West, Fenton
  - October 31: Holiday Adoption Sponsor Commitments Due
  - November 20: Thanksgiving Food Donations Drop-Off Deadline at Circle

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

STAFF DIRECTORY

- 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
- Stephanie Moreland, Volunteer/Special Events Director: stephanie@circleofconcern.org ext. 113
- Niki Vandable, Client Services Director: niki@circleofconcern.org ext. 108