As of this Writing...

Monthly newsletters are normally not the place to discuss fast-breaking events. In this issue, though, we’d like to take you behind the scenes of how Circle is facing down the public health concerns raised by the spread of the Covid-19 coronavirus.

In a step that is likely familiar, our first task was to stock every work area with disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer and ask all volunteers, staff and clients to use them diligently. The dwindling supplies of these products make this challenging, but we also urge everyone to go old-school and to put soap and water to good use! We also, as always, urge anyone who is sick to please stay home!

Looking beyond our doors to what others in our community and country are doing has been an exercise in walking the tightrope between not wanting to panic and wanting to do our part in protecting all our stakeholders from danger. According to our executive director, Cyndi Miller, “Treating our clients with dignity is of the utmost importance. It is also our solemn responsibility to ensure a safe environment in which to provide our services.” As of this writing, we have developed a phased plan to fulfill our mission to assist our clients while respecting the changing nature of the impact of Covid-19:

- For the time being, clients will meet with a volunteer when they arrive, but volunteers will “shop” for them and roll groceries out to their vehicles.
- If the situation continues to escalate in our area, we will forego the face-to-face visit with a volunteer and provide food-only curbside service to dramatically limit the number of people entering the building.
- And finally, if Circle must shut down for a period of time due to a virus diagnosis for a staff member, volunteer or client, we will follow the guidance of health authorities on appropriate measures and work toward a safe re-opening.

As the headline of this article suggests, these are our plans at this writing. By the time you read this, unforeseen circumstances might shift the plan. What will NOT shift, however, is our commitment to our clients and others who make our work possible. Circle of Concern will navigate this public health issue as it has navigated difficult times - floods, economic crises, manpower challenges - in the past. With informed planning and a belief in our ability to serve our neighbors, all shall be well at this writing and into the future.
Golf Notice

In light of current events, the 16th Annual Circle Charity Golf Tournament has been cancelled. Players and sponsors who have already signed up will be offered their funds back and invited to donate to Circle. Many thanks to all who normally support this entertaining day on the links!

The golf tournament is one of two large Circle fundraisers that support our programs. As we anticipate a rise in the number of families that need our services, we will appreciate your generous contribution that makes these services possible. Monetary gifts qualify for the 50 percent Missouri Food Pantry Tax Credit.

Golf Notice

7 to 10 Days

Each month, Circle’s food pantry shares an estimated 7 to 10 days’ worth of food with our clients. How does the assortment of packaged goods, produce, dairy, meat and bread stack up against recommended servings in the different food groups? Our friend and former intern, Becky, took a look...

Becky assumed a couple of variables. First, she made calculations using Circle’s average family size—2.5 people—consisting of an adult female, and older child and a younger child, which reflects the most common household we serve. Second, she gathered food according to our normal allotment based on a day with the least supply of donated “extra” food to choose from (the amount of donated fresh produce we receive fluctuates with the season).

With the help of the choosemyplate.org website, Becky calculated that our normal allotment of food meets guidelines for all the food groups but one. When we don’t have much donated produce, there’s a chance a family will receive less fruit than is generally recommended.

Thank you, Becky, for your thoughtful research and many thanks to you, our friends, for your financial support that allows us to provide the array of foods to our clients.

Grateful Thanks

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.
Alphabet Soup

If you are at least 70 ½ and have an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), you are required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) each year. Taking that RMD in the form of a Qualified Charitable Distribution or QCD, can give you a tax advantage, as the distribution will not be taxable. Talk to your financial adviser to see if a QCD to Circle will benefit you.

Words fail us as we try to express how much we love our volunteers! Whether during ordinary weeks or during extraordinarily challenging ones, we are beyond grateful for the kindness, commitment and constancy of our more than 300 scheduled volunteers and the hundreds more who step up just when we need them.

Please join us in celebrating Circle volunteers during National Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 19 to 25 (and every other week of the year!).

Scholarship Central

May 1 is the deadline for young people to apply for new or recurring Circle scholarships at myscholarshipcentral.org. This program is open for college or trade education-bound young people in our service area whose families qualify for Circle services. Please share with any high school seniors or previous scholarship recipients you know!

For Information

Please take a moment now to follow Circle of Concern on Facebook. During times of challenging and fast-moving news, you’ll find updates from Circle on Facebook and on our website, circleofconcern.org. Thank you!

THINGS

1

We’re sticklers about hand sanitizer, soap and disinfecting wipes, and we use all of them often.

2

Donated food from grocery stores is transported in our van under thermal blankets to maintain a food-safe temperature until it is in the hands of our clients.

3

Our volunteers access crisis de-escalation training, technology and staff support to bolster their ability to work safely during difficult times.

…About Safety at Circle
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:

April 10-11 Circle closed for Easter holiday
April 25 Girl Scouts “April Showers”
                Personal Care Drive
May 1 3pm Deadline to apply for 1st Time
       and Recurring Youth Scholarships
       myscholarshipcentral.org
May 9 ‘Stamp Out Hunger’ Letter Carrier’s
       Food Drive Collection Event
May 23-25 Circle Closed for Memorial Day Weekend
September 18 Harvest Moon Trivia Night
           at Andre’s West in Fenton

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

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