

AROUND THE

Circle Newsletter

Circle of Concern
Food Pantry



The Best Investment

💡 *Education is the key to opportunity.
It's a ticket out of poverty.* 💡

~ George H.W. Bush

the beginning of civilization—that education provides the surest path out of poverty—has guided Circle of Concern's Scholarship program since at least 1968.

This program is beloved. It has fueled the hopes and advanced the dreams of more than a thousand young people and adult clients over the years. A long-ago flood destroyed some early archives, but we know that Circle has invested far more than \$1 million in post-secondary education over the years.

Where do our scholars study? In recent years, scholarship recipients have attended universities as far ranging as Northeastern in Boston, Northwestern in Chicago and Southern Methodist in Dallas. Most attend much closer to home, at Mizzou, St. Louis Community College, Rankin Technical College, Maryville and beyond. Adult clients have raised their income potential through college courses, professional certification and testing programs and by earning their GEDs. No matter where they go, our scholarships have helped keep their eyes on the prize.

Awarding a scholarship is one thing. Knowing that award is having a lasting, quantifiable impact is another. We recently reviewed data from years of scholarship recipients, and we are happy to report that our students take their educations—and their dreams—very seriously. According to Circle's Executive Director, Cyndi Miller, "We found that 54-58 percent of our scholars graduate, compared to 53 percent nationally. Also, while the national average grade point average (GPA) is 3.15, our scholars' GPAs average 3.6!"

The common wisdom found in President Bush's quote and shared by esteemed leaders from

Current Needs:

- Cereal – **CRITICAL**
- Soup – **CRITICAL**
- Canned Vegetables – **CRITICAL**
- Snacks – **CRITICAL**
- Canned Pasta
- Jelly – **CRITICAL**
- Laundry Detergent
- Dish Soap
- Size 6 Diapers
- Pullups 4T - 5T

The deadline for high school seniors to apply for a Circle Scholarship is July 2. For more information about the application process and income/eligibility requirements, visit circleofconcern.org today.



Circle of Concern
FOOD PANTRY

*Feeding Families is
Just the Beginning*

continued on page 2

A Note from Cyndi

Recently, our staff had the unique opportunity to participate virtually in the largest national gathering of hunger advocates. Feeding America and Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) jointly hosted the National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference in Washington, D.C. in March.

We gained new perspectives on “food deserts,” child hunger, the root causes of hunger, the challenges of serving those in rural America, and other hunger issues. There were a number of sessions related to SNAP – the Supplementary Nutritional Assistance Program, often referred to as “food stamps.”

At Circle, we understand how SNAP helps our client families. What we don't often think about is the economic impact of SNAP. Not only does the program help to boost nearly 40 million Americans out of poverty, it contributes greatly to local economies. For every dollar spent on the program, \$1.50 to \$1.80 is generated in economic activity. For every \$billion spent, 9,000 – 17,000 jobs are created. Finally, of every \$1 spent, 15 cents goes to a farmer.

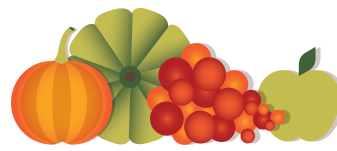
Another takeaway from the event was one advocate's plea to those who need food assistance, but fear the perceived stigma tied to the program. He says, “SNAP is not welfare. It is a *nutrition program*...” designed to help seniors, children and veterans, and others who are struggling. The program increases access to healthy, fresh foods – so critical to the health and wellbeing of all.

Cyndi

Planning Ahead

The future can change in an instant, but planning gives comfort in a changing world.

If estate planning is on your to-do list in 2021, will you consider including Circle of Concern in your will or trust? For more information about how to extend your legacy and impact into the future, talk to your financial planner or contact cyndi@circleofconcern.org.



harvest moon

No Trivial Thing

Good news! Circle will host our Harvest Moon Trivia Night on Friday, September 17...and this time it's VIRTUAL!

All the rage in St. Louis event circles, virtual trivia is all the fun of gathering with your smartest friends and favorite table snacks, without the crowds and inability to hear. And the event proceeds still support the food pantry and wrap-around programs that assist our clients through their struggles.

Worried the technology for virtual trivia is too much hassle? Never fear! We'll guide you through a seamless night of fun and factoids.

Watch this space for more information, or go ahead and register to play today by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/HarvestMoonTrivia>

The Best Investment *cont. from page 1*

Further, our scholarship committee has implemented strategies to support our awardees – including renewable scholarships and the assignment of Circle mentors, who check in with students throughout the school year. Miller adds, “With these investments, we anticipate that our student graduation rates will climb even higher than they are now.”

Far from a handout, a Circle scholarship offers a true hand-up for a serious student – the opportunity to follow a dream. “Our goal is to help these truly exceptional students to complete their education and to gain stable, sustaining employment,” says Miller.



★ In 2020 ★

*a year of smaller work groups
and curbside service*

our volunteers **14,336**
contributed **hours of service**

valued at \$372,162

They are rock stars!



April Showers

When it rains, it pours! Many thanks to Girl Scout troops from Rockwood Summit High School, Sacred Heart and Valley Park who collected 22,000 shampoo, toothpaste, deodorant, feminine hygiene items and so much more for our clients. Personal care items cannot be purchased with SNAP (food stamps), so these Scouts are making life better for Circle families. Thank you!



Holiday Joy Starts Now



To ensure safety for our clients, volunteers and donors, Circle will once again put gift cards to good use in our Thanksgiving Basket and Holiday Adoption programs in 2021. These cards will purchase turkeys, special family ingredients, and cherished gifts for hundreds of families that have entered their second year of hardship, thanks to the pandemic or other challenges.

Over the next few months, we'll share more about this Holiday Joy appeal. At any time, you can visit <http://weblink.donorperfect.com/HolidayJoy2021> to make a gift, or mark Holiday Joy on your check's memo line.

With your help, each of Circle's families will experience all the warmth and joy of the holiday season. On their behalf, thank you!

Are We Connected?



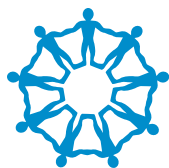
Follow us on Facebook for up-to-the-minute info on what's happening at Circle. And share your email address if you'd like to receive email blasts and alerts in your Inbox. Thank you!

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

112 St. Louis Ave.
Valley Park, MO 63088
Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT
AUTO
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ST LOUIS, MO
PERMIT NO. 3252

Learning and
Growing!

Board of Directors:

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Charlotte Bukowski
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Frank Haase
Brandi Hamm
Virginia Pearson
Edie Quick
Cindy Wolk

We share many donations with our clients:

- Food, Canned and Packaged
- Fresh Garden Produce
- Dry Pet Food, Litter
- New Blankets, Hats, Gloves

Donations are accepted:

Monday..... 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Tuesday..... 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Thursday..... 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Important Dates:

July 2	Application Deadline for Student Scholarships myscholarshipcentral.org
July 5	Circle Closed in Observance of Independence Day
July 26	Virtual Board Meeting Contact cyndi@circleofconcern.org for information
September 6	Circle Closed in Observance of Labor Day
September 17	Harvest Moon Virtual Trivia Night!

Remember

Your monetary gift or food donation can qualify for MO Food Pantry Tax Credits.
Contact juliet@circleofconcern.org to find out more.



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

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