

AROUND THE

Circle Newsletter

Circle of Concern
Food Pantry



Looking Forward

As I reflect on this year, the memory that bubbles to the top is that of a squealing embrace between a long-time volunteer and one of our clients. Each had missed—and worried about—the other over many months. The hug happened during our recent “re-opening” for in-person, best-practice case management and client-choice shopping.

Our journey back to re-opening was a careful one. We implemented every safety measure – air filtration systems, masks, vaccine requirements for staff and volunteers, new security equipment, and protocols that change with the CDC Covid community levels. Our staff and key volunteers developed and implemented multi-pronged, weeks-long training activities, and welcomed both new and seasoned volunteers back to Circle. They prepped our client families for the transition. The pantry was deep-cleaned and re-set.

This was no small undertaking!

There were other transitions this year. Over the course of several months, three of our valued team members left for new opportunities. Niki, Stephanie and Michelle each made their mark at Circle. Together they helped to bolster client and volunteer programs; brought “choice” to our clients through the pantry and other services; and they enabled us to deliver critical services – even through the scariest days of the pandemic. We are grateful for their time here, and we wish them well.

We welcomed new staff members – Nancy, Jenny, Beth and Virginia. Each brings new insights and skills, and they too are making an impact for our clients and our volunteers.

“ Our purpose is to always serve our client families in the most meaningful ways. ”

Current Needs:

- Pasta Sauce
- Canned Tomato Products
- Peanut Butter
- Rice
- Dry Beans
- Boxed Potatoes
- Dinner “Helpers”
- Body Wash
- Women’s Incontinence Products
- Household Cleaning Supplies
- Size 1 Diapers & Baby Wipes
- Cold / Flu OTC Medications



Circle of Concern
FOOD PANTRY

*Feeding Families is
Just the Beginning*

continued on page 2

End-Of-Year Giving

Along with making menu plans and holiday gift lists, many of us are making end-of-year giving plans. When you make yours, please consider including Circle of Concern.

Your gifts always make a big impact on the lives of families we serve. They can also make a big impact on you, thanks to the popular Missouri Food Pantry Tax Credit (FPTC). These credits directly reduce the amount you pay for your state income taxes. With a simple form verified by Circle, you can earn up to \$2,500 in tax credits when you give up to \$5,000. Couples filing jointly can earn up to \$5,000 in credits when they give up to \$10,000. **To make things easy for you, we will proactively prepare, sign and send, by February 1, the verified form to every donor who gives monetary gifts totaling at least \$200 in 2021.** That way, you'll have plenty of time to file your return by the April 15 deadline.

As we've seen in recent years, when claims for credits exceed the \$1.75 million in credits available held by the state, the state apportions the credits among all tax payers that qualify. Here at Circle, we want to assure you – the tax credits are still valuable, and your gift is **always** 100 percent appreciated by our clients.

Please consider supporting Circle this holiday season. The good you give comes right back to you through FPTC! Contact juliet@circleofconcern.org or cyndi@circleofconcern.org to find out more.

Holiday Adoption is a Gift!



Circle families are planning warm holidays, thanks in part to your support of the Holiday Adoption program. If you haven't yet sponsored the season for the children, seniors, veterans, single parents or others who rely on Circle services, it's not too late.

Just visit circleofconcern.org and click on Holiday Adoption on our homepage to make a donation. Your gift will ensure we can provide a \$50 gift card for every member of every client household. Your support means peace for families.

On their behalf, thank you!

Putting the Garden to Bed



Circle's Garden Greens program closed with a bountiful harvest of beautiful produce and abundant gratitude. We grew 1,590 pounds of fresh food—melons, eggplant, beans, pepper, herbs, okra, tomatoes and more—a 65 percent increase over last year's harvest of 960 pounds!

Thanks to the following Garden Greens sponsors who seeded the project – St. Louis Composting, Greenscape Nursery, Lawn Co. & More, Valley Park Elevator, Crowder Construction, Webster Groves Herb Society.

And thanks to the following volunteers who generously donated their thyme – *Jesse Bean, Mike Berni, Carolyn Brennell, Jim Brockman, Jean DeGrand, Mary Duenke, Tim Gannon, Chris Grater, Kate Gregor, Ted Harrel, Julie Jaffe, Denise Livingston, Cynthia Moore, Jerry Ortinau, Larry Quick, Mark Stock, and Charles Stout.*

Looking Forward, *cont. from front page*

Our board and staff ushered in a new strategic plan, setting the priorities for the next few years: Increasing access and reaching new families who need our support; growing our capacity to serve, through trainings, DEI work and partnerships; and finally, optimizing the use of our facilities and space, as we strive to serve more families.

Our purpose is to always serve our client families in the most meaningful ways; offering wholesome, garden fresh foods, impactful case management, counseling, career coaching, and choice and dignity for those we serve.

We look forward to 2023 and all that it brings!

Wishing you peace and the happiest of holidays,

Cyndi

Cyndi Miller
Executive Director

Thanks to our Readers

In this season so full of requests and appeals, all of us at Circle of Concern would like to give *you*, our readers, something – our sincerest appreciation for your support, your encouragement and your trust as we ALL work together to care for our neighbors. You represent the best of this season throughout the year. Thank you!



No Trivial Thing

Many thanks to the players, volunteers and vendors who made our 2022 Harvest Moon

Trivia Night a huge success! Special thanks to our sponsors who make the whole event possible: Vaccaro & Sons Produce, Armanino, West Newsmagazine, Kiwanis of Crestwood – Sunset Hills, Block Hawley, Quik Trip, Crowder Construction and very special friends who support the programs of Circle without recognition and with great generosity!

We appreciate all the community drives that have helped fill the pantry shelves. We especially thank these recent members of the **Tons For the Table Club!**

Eureka High School collected **6.97 tons** of canned and packaged food.

West County Rotary's Daily Essentials drive brought in **one full ton** of personal care, cleaning and paper products.

The Crossing responded to recent need with **3.08 tons** of nonperishable food items.

OUR MISSION:

Circle of Concern feeds the hungry and provides assistance to low-income families living in our community.

OUR VISION:

Improving every life in our community by reducing hunger and poverty.

Kind of a Big Dill!

Have you discovered Pickleball yet? If so, you'll want to gather your favorite picklers and sign up today for **Dink It! for Families in Need** – a pickleball event benefiting Circle!

Hosted by Ignite Pickleball, Dink It! is a social round robin on Saturday, February 4 from 6 to 10 p.m. at the Missouri Pickleball Club in Fenton. The cost is only \$40 per player (\$20 per non-player); registration includes 3 hours of organized play, music, food and drink, a cash bar and fun and games.



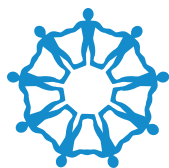
Never played but are pickleball-curious? No problem! Register as a \$40 Learn To Play player, and instructors will teach you all you need to know to be a pickler.

All proceeds of Dink It! will support the food pantry and other programs of Circle. Events like this combine fun and philanthropy...our Bread & Butter, if you will. Sponsorships are also available!

Register now by aiming your phone's camera at the QR code, then clicking on the link; or visit ignite-pickleball.com/event-registrations and click on **Dink It!** We'll see you on the court!



The Birthday Club is looking for birthday wrapping paper for children! We welcome complete rolls and packages to celebrate birthdays for children to age 11. Thank you!



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

*Warm Holiday Wishes
& Bright New Year
Dreams to You!*

Board of Directors:

Dolores Rodenberg
PRESIDENT

Allison Love
VICE PRESIDENT

Cindy Wolk
SECRETARY

Bernie Hillermann
TREASURER

Mark Barbee
Mayank Chaudhary
Thomas Chibnall
Aaron Froehlich
Brandi Hamm
Virginia Pearson
Edie Quick

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:

Mon, Tues, Fri 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wed 9 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
Thurs 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Important Dates:

December 21	Holiday Adoption final day
December 23-26	Circle closed for Christmas
December 27-30	Circle open 9 a.m. to 12 noon
January 2, 2023	Circle closed for New Years
January 30	Board Meeting, details TBA
February 4	Dink it! Pickelball Event Learn more at circleofconcern.org



~ 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.

STAFF DIRECTORY

	636.861.2623
Cyndi Miller , Executive Director	cyndi@circleofconcern.org ext. 117
Juliet Holden , Senior Director	juliet@circleofconcern.org ext. 106
Virginia Pearson , Director of Nutrition	virginia@circleofconcern.org ext. 107
Nancy Bauer , Volunteer/Special Events Director	nancy@circleofconcern.org ext. 113
Jenny Lawrence , Program Director	jenny@circleofconcern.org ext. 108
Beth Niezing , Donor Relations Administrator	beth@circleofconcern.org ext. 112