

AROUND THE

# Circle Newsletter

Circle of Concern  
Food Pantry



## A Message from our President – A Look Back and a Look Forward

Hello Circle Friends,

As you may know, each year at this time we take a look back at the previous year to reflect, assess where we are and plan for the future. It's a great time to serve as President of the Board for Circle of Concern!

Last year was the first post-pandemic calendar year since transitioning from curbside services to in-person services and client-choice shopping. With our staffing and volunteer corps fully trained and in place we were able to focus more fully on client programs, nutrition education, DEI work, facilities, and emergency preparedness.

We expanded our services to a new community – High Ridge, following an expansion into Kirkwood in 2022. With an eye to serving all, our pantry staff brought ever more variety to our purchased foods, incorporating more seasonal produce, vegan items, new protein and dairy items, and also much-needed diapers and hygiene products. Our Garden Greens Committee had another banner year – harvesting over 1500 pounds of produce just steps away from our pantry.

We gratefully accepted a bounty of fresh vegetables from other community gardeners, including some of our faith-based supporters; and began a partnership with the Missouri Department of Corrections and the Restorative Justice Program.

Nutrition education continued through monthly “featured foods” and easy recipes using low-cost, seasonal and accessible foods. To support our staff and volunteers, we coordinated trainings in de-escalation and trauma-informed care. We continued to support our client families providing counseling sessions through St. Louis Counseling and Provident Behavioral Health.

### Current Needs:

- Pasta Sauce
- Dry Pasta
- Condiments - Ketchup, BBQ Sauce, Salsa, Salad Dressing, Mayonnaise
- Women's Incontinence Pads and Pull Up Briefs
- Children's Pull Ups

**“None of this would be possible without our staff and volunteers – those who managed and supported client programs, and those who raised the dollars and resources to make it all possible.”**

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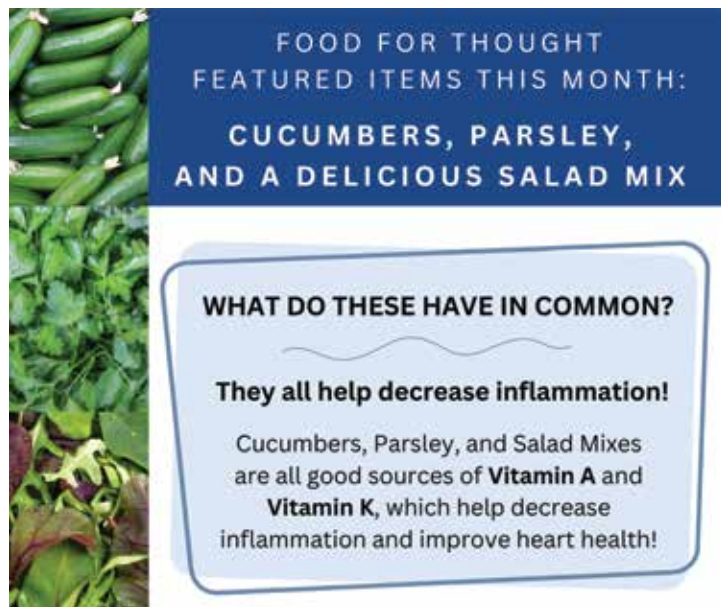


Circle of Concern  
FOOD PANTRY

*Feeding Families is  
Just the Beginning*

## 2023 By the Numbers

- Approximately **630 families** visited our client choice pantry each month. Overall, **3,516 people** from **1,214 households** received services last year.
- **817 “Kid Bag” disbursements** brought kid-friendly foods to more than **1,424 students** during summer break.
- **295 households** received emergency financial assistance (typically for rent or utilities) totaling nearly **\$123,000**; helping each to remain safely housed.
- **27 area students** earned scholarships for college or trade programs setting each on a productive and hopeful path to independence; while **20 adults** earned scholarships to improve job skills and earning potential.
- **33 households** participated in counseling sessions through our mental health program.
- **96 children and youths** experienced the joy of summer camp, sports or music lessons; and other enriching programs.
- **493 kiddos** from kindergarten to college, were outfitted with backpacks, binders calculators and more through our Back to School program.
- **416 children** felt extra special on their special day, thanks to our Birthday Club and “Birthday Bobbie!”
- **581 families** received gas cards through a generous, charitable bequest.
- **712 households** enjoyed traditional Thanksgiving staples including sweet potatoes, cranberries, a frozen fruit pie and much more; and had the freedom to purchase a turkey, ham or other protein option with a \$30 grocery gift card.
- **608 households–2,171 individuals**–received retail gift cards through our Holiday Program.
- Approximately **200 committed, caring volunteers** donated **21,769 volunteer hours!**



Director of Nutrition and Operations, Virginia Pearson, has created monthly education around wellness options for our clients, called Food For Thought, like the graphic above.

## President's Message

*cont. from page 1*

We developed a comprehensive emergency plan and trained our staff and key volunteers in CPR and first aid. Our strategic plan calls for an assessment of our grounds, buildings and facilities, and with that came pantry improvements aimed at increased safety and capacity.

We conducted an in-depth client survey (as we've done biannually since 2017.) We learned that our programs are valued and needed; and that many of our clients struggle with health concerns. Single parent households, seniors and those living with a disability continue to be the largest groups we serve.

Of course, through all of this we delivered client programs – we've summarized the impact of those efforts in the side-bar.

None of this would be possible without our staff and volunteers – those who managed and supported client programs, and those who raised the dollars and resources to make it all possible.

It's been such an honor serving on Circle's Board of Directors these last five years, and now as I move through the remaining eight months of my tenure, I reflect on Circle's growth and look forward to continued progress and positive change for the community we serve.

Sincerely,

*Allison*

Dr. Allison Love  
President, Board of Directors

## How Can I Help?

By new staff member, **Tim Elwell**

That's the question I like to ask myself when I approach any situation. Growing up playing sports and continuing with basketball at Maryville University (in the early 2000s), I've enjoyed the collaboration and results a team can accomplish. Now, joining the staff at Circle of Concern as the Communications and Development Manager, I carry on that question with this exceptional team.



My family and southwest Missouri roots guided my interest in helping others. Most recently, I served as the fundraiser for AmeriCorps St. Louis, a nonprofit focusing on the development of the next generation of leaders in the areas of environmental conservation and disaster response. While there, I helped build partnerships and expanded the network of resources for communities in need. Notably, the area that became a focus for me was the services we provided for the unhoused community. In addition to the AmeriCorps program, the organization offers weekly shelter services including showers, meals, clothing and case management for the unhoused individuals and families in the downtown St. Louis area. Creating relationships with these individuals was rewarding and revealing. As I saw the need for support, my interest continued to grow in assisting those least served, last served and never served.

"How can I help?" has become a self-motto which led me to Circle of Concern. As I begin my journey here, I hope to increase the support for clients and build upon the impact that the staff and incredible volunteers have established. I look forward to interacting with all of you in the Circle community and sharing progress of our guests on their path out of poverty. **Please stop by, call or email anytime! 636-861-2623 x106 - tim@circleofconcern.org**

*Tim and his wife Lauren live in Ellisville with their two cats, Clover and Willow.*

## Drive-Thru Food Drive April 25th

Please visit us and give a shout out to the wonderful King of Kings Lutheran Church volunteers who will collect food for our neighbors on **Thursday, April 25th from 4:00 pm - 6:30 pm at Circle of Concern**. If you would like to help, you may simply "drive and drop" donations at our warehouse (112 St. Louis Avenue in Valley Park.) Volunteers will collect the items from your trunk, and you'll be on your way! Currently, we are in need of pasta sauce and dry pasta, peanut butter and jelly; and condiments, like ketchup and salad dressing.

**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.**

## St. Mark's Driving Support for Golf Tourney

For many years, Circle has shared a special relationship with St. Mark Presbyterian Church, presenting one of our community's most popular golf tournaments. Last year, St. Mark was directly responsible for valuable sponsorship connections, 18 volunteers, three VERY active committee members and 12 golfers... with another 44 golfers recruited by St. Mark folks. Current Golf Tournament Chair, Bob Stewart, applauds the goodwill it raises for the community and the extraordinary volunteers that help make it a fun day on the course.

Coming up on Monday, May 20, Orthopedic Specialists and St. Mark will present the 18th Annual Tournament at Eureka's Aberdeen Golf Club. Registration includes a fun day of golf, food, drinks, auctions and fellowship with other community supporters. But most importantly, special outings like this one provide an opportunity for our community to invest in the work that Circle does on behalf of low-income families. **All proceeds from the tournament support our client programs.** You're invited to join us in assisting local families and children in need. Sign up today by scanning the QR code or visiting [circleofconcern.org](http://circleofconcern.org).

18th Annual Golf Tournament  
Hosted by St. Mark Presbyterian Church

**MAY 20**

REGISTER NOW

Presented by  
Orthopedic Specialists



# Circle of Concern FOOD PANTRY

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Valley Park, MO 63088  
Address Service Requested

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## Year in Review April 2024

### Board of Directors:

**Allison Love**  
*PRESIDENT*

**Cindy Wolk**  
*VICE PRESIDENT*

**Mark Barbee**  
*TREASURER*

**Bridget Guffey**  
*SECRETARY*

Brian Boeglin  
Thomas Chibnall  
Aaron Froehlich  
John Heskett  
Karen Korn  
Edie Quick  
Andrea Trapet

### 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.  
Sat ..... 9 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Your monetary gift or food donation can qualify for MO Food Pantry Tax Credits. Contact [Circle@circleofconcern.org](mailto:Circle@circleofconcern.org) to find out more.

### Important Dates:



- February 14 - June 21** Now Accepting Applications for 2024 Student Scholarships
- April 8** Solar Eclipse Day  
Circle open 9am-1pm
- April 13** April Showers Collection by the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri
- April 25** King of Kings Drive-Up Food Drive at Circle
- May 11** Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive
- May 20** Circle of Concern 18th Annual Golf Tournament  
Aberdeen Golf Club in Eureka



**"LIKE US"** on Facebook and visit us online at [www.circleofconcern.org](http://www.circleofconcern.org).

### STAFF DIRECTORY

**636.861.2623**

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