

# AROUND THE Circle Newsletter

Circle of Concern  
Food Pantry



## A Note from Cyndi

### Hunger Isn't Seasonal

Like many organizations, we use print advertising, social media and other means to share our story—about who we are, what we do, and who we serve. If you've followed us for a while, you've likely seen our messaging reminding our community that "Hunger isn't Seasonal." It came from the observation that donations, especially food donations, slow to a trickle during certain months of the year, while the need marches steadily onward.

Our busiest months for food and cash donations are November and December, when many donors are moved by the joy of the holiday season to give to others. It's a bustling, busy time for our staff and volunteers, and we are often moved ourselves by the goodness of our community.

But our client households struggle throughout the year. In fact, last year at Circle of Concern, we served an average of 737 households each month. But during the summer months, we saw an average of 775 households visiting our pantry.

While we can't say for sure what causes the uptick, it's possible that families with children struggle more during these months, due to the cost of additional meals prepared at home while children are out of school, the cost of daycare, and perhaps higher utility bills, brought on by the heat and humidity of St. Louis area summers.

In our budgeting for 2025, we've allocated some additional funds to re-stock our warehouse during those leaner months when the need is higher, but we can't do this alone. If you are wondering how to help, here are some ideas:

Share this story with your office team, your kids' sports team or your neighbors. Perhaps as a group you might organize a food drive to "feed a family," or maybe even two or three! You might consider making a cash gift mid-year, which

### Current Needs:

- Pasta Sauce
- Dinner Helpers
- Canned Fruit
- Crunchy Peanut Butter
- Condiments - Ketchup, Salad Dressing, Salsa, Mayo, BBQ Sauce
- Snacks (8-12 Servings/Package)
- Size 5 and 6 Diapers
- Baby Wipes
- Feminine Care 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.



Circle of Concern  
FOOD PANTRY

*Feeding Families is  
Just the Beginning*

continued on page 2

## Faith, Food & Football: *A friendly competition to help those in need*



Manchester United Methodist Church is an active partner whose members support our mission in a variety of ways. Most recently, they used the excitement of the Super Bowl to rally some friendly regional competition, resulting in a collection of nearly 700 pounds of nonperishable foods for Circle of Concern families!

"We were thrilled to turn the excitement of the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl appearance into an opportunity for generosity," says Will Koehl, Director of Communications and Marketing for MUMC. "When the Missouri and Great Plains Conferences challenged their Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey counterparts to a friendly food drive competition, we eagerly accepted the call to serve."

Pictured are MUMC members, Diane and her husband Tom who delivered the collection items.

Securing reliable food donations is essential to ensuring that we can meet the needs of the families we serve. Partnering with established food suppliers like Sysco, one of the largest global food distributors, provides significant advantages for Circle. While a good portion of the food we offer comes from community donations, consistent access to wholesome essentials like milk, frozen meats, apples and potatoes can be a challenge.



"With a partner like Sysco, we're able to purchase these items so that we can offer a variety of quality selections for our clients," says Virginia Pearson, Director of Nutrition and Operations for Circle. "Our reps work with us to get the best possible price so we're able to stretch every dollar that is donated, and they have also connected us with options like chickpeas and tofu to meet the diverse needs of everyone we serve."

Sysco stays involved in other areas of our organization too. Recently, they tested recipes with our clients, offering samples during client appointments. They are also frequent supporters of our annual golf tournament.

Circle's high level of service wouldn't be possible without our generous donors and partners like Sysco! "Thanks to the support from our community, we're able to purchase these meal staples, plan our budget and make sure wholesome foods are available for every client," Virginia said. We are grateful for this collaboration to assist our neighbors in need with the utmost quality and efficiency.

If you'd like to be a part of this partnership to provide wholesome foods, please visit [circleofconcern.org](http://circleofconcern.org) to make a donation or to see how you can get involved.

## Hunger Isn't Seasonal *cont. from page 1*

enables us to buy the additional milk, eggs, produce and proteins that we need to feed those extra families. Finally, you might think of becoming a monthly donor. It's an easy way to contribute a little more, and to ensure that Circle has the resources to help struggling families year-round.

However and whenever you choose to support Circle, please know that your contributions are important, and we value your trust in our mission!

Gratefully,

*Cyndi*

Cyndi Miller  
Executive Director

***"The volunteers and the staff are absolute Angels they are incredible people and they do incredible things to help people in our community. Scheduling an appointment is easy, the process is easy to get assistance and everyone there just is full of love."***

***- Kim, a Circle Client***



## Making a Lasting Impression

A client recently sent us a note saying his freelance work had picked up, and that he no longer needed help with food or other Circle programs. He went on to say that, *"Circle is a gift to the community... Thank you for everything. You helped me during one of the lowest points in my life!"*

Stories like this would not be possible without your support. You can continue making a positive impact on our mission by creating a legacy gift in your will. Legacy gifts cost nothing today but support feeding the hungry in our community in 2025 and beyond. Use the free will-writing tool to get started by scanning the QR code, or visiting [circleofconcern.org](https://circleofconcern.org) for more information.

Do you already have plans to support Circle? Please complete our Gift Intention Form to let us know. We'd love to share a token of our gratitude. Your legacy of generosity will leave an indelible mark on families and individuals in need for years to come.

If you have any questions about the form or the planned giving process, please reach out to us at [circle@circleofconcern.org](mailto:circle@circleofconcern.org). Thank you for your continued support and commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

### Renew your sense of purpose

Take a leap today to make a lasting impact on tomorrow. Scan the QR code for more info or visit [circleofconcern.org](https://circleofconcern.org).



Circle of Concern  
FOOD PANTRY

FREEWILL



## Client Budgeting Class

We're happy to report that our recent budgeting class was a success! We hosted seven clients in a financial literacy workshop at Circle of Concern. Board Member and Financial Advisor, Andrea Trapet, lent her expertise, presenting budgeting fundamentals. Our clients learned vital money management skills, and we could see their commitment to personal growth and betterment. It was an enriching experience for everyone, deepening our partnerships to help each other. We hope to offer similar classes again soon.

## Fighting Food Waste

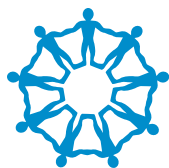
Food waste can be a familiar challenge for some families. A brown banana on the countertop, a past-due jar of mayo or a bag of lettuce that's gone bad. At our pantry, we take steps to ensure that food is used efficiently and responsibly, minimizing waste while maximizing support for the families and individuals we serve.

One of our key practices is the "FIFO" method (first in, first out), which ensures that older items are distributed first and don't expire while still on the shelves. We also purchase only what is needed, based on the number of families that are expected to visit the pantry. This helps prevent both excess inventory and unnecessary waste, as we are able to predict and manage the flow of food.

We encourage clients to take extras when certain products are nearing their "use by" or "purchase by" dates. By offering this surplus food in a timely manner, our clients can fill their cabinets a little more and enjoy the items before they expire. When we receive an overabundance of perishable foods, such as bread, dairy products, and vegetables, we share with other food pantries in the area. Additionally, instead of throwing out discarded food in the regular trash, we toss it in our compost bin to be used for our onsite garden or give to Betty's Bunny Rescue for rabbit food.

By managing our inventory, distributing food in a timely manner, and collaborating with others, we aim to reduce our food waste as much as possible and ensure more food reaches those who need it most.





# Circle of Concern FOOD PANTRY

112 St. Louis Ave.  
P.O. Box 444  
Valley Park, MO 63088  
Address Service Requested

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AUTO  
U.S. POSTAGE  
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**Hunger Isn't Seasonal**  
.....  
**April 2025**

## Board of Directors:

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Andrea Trapet

## We share many donations with our clients:

- Food, Canned and Packaged
- Fresh Garden Produce
- Dry Pet Food, Litter
- Personal Care Items

## 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** to find out more.



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

## Important Dates:



**January 2 -  
June 24**

**Now accepting applications for  
2025 Student Scholarships**

**April 18 & 19**

**Circle Closed for Spring Holiday**

**May 10**

**Stamp Out Hunger  
Letter Carriers' Food Drive**

**May 19**

**Circle of Concern 19th Annual  
Golf Tournament**  
Hosted by St. Mark Presbyterian Church

## STAFF DIRECTORY

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