



Fish Newsletter

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Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area

Serving our neighbors since 1970

PO Box 8565, Piscataway NJ 08855-8006

Hotline: 732-356-0081

www.fishdunellenarea.org

Arbor School Country Store

The Arbor School Country Store in Piscataway has been a source of love and care for others through Fish, Inc.- Dunellen Area for many years. Each year, just before Christmas, students in the 4th grade organize a store that offers goods for sale to all the students and staff at the school. The store is open only for one day. But, it is always well stocked with special goodies and small items that the children of the school donate to stock the store. Then the students and staff at the school purchase the items as gifts for family or friends.

The students work hard on this project every year because the money that is received by the store is given to Fish, Inc to help their neighbors have a brighter holiday. For more than 25 years the store has contributed well over \$1,000 each year to Fish, Inc. to be used to buy food, shoes and warm clothing for people who can not afford them. This past year the total contribution by the Arbor School Country Store was \$1,435.

Fish is grateful to all the students of Arbor School who have helped their neighbors as they learned to set up and run a business to benefit others. Special thanks go to Mrs. Charlotte Wright, who initiated this great learning opportunity many years ago, and to Mr. Roger Nepton, who has carried on the tradition for the past two years.

We pray that God will bless each student and the faculty at Arbor School because of their great love to others. Have a great school year!

Submitted by Gerry Halteman

Welcome, New Telephone Volunteers

We would like to welcome three new Telephone Volunteers to the program. Valerie, Eileen, and Kelly join the seven other volunteers who return calls received at the Fish Hotline. May God bless your service to those who need our help.

There is always a need for more telephone volunteers. Monday through Friday calls to the Hotline are returned by volunteers who serve from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., one day a month, returning calls from their homes. Some volunteers serve more than once a month. If you are interested in becoming a telephone volunteer call the 732-356-0081 to find out more about it.



Coming Up ---

Beginning October 1 – Donations of new, unwrapped toys for the Christmas Toy Program will be accepted. Toys may be brought to the Fish Food Room during regular operating hours.

November 18-22, and November 25 – Thanksgiving Food Baskets will be distributed, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon, at the Food Room.

November 26-30 – Food Room closed. It will reopen Monday, December 2, at 9:00 a.m.

Ongoing – Third Saturday of each month, September through June: Food Room and Clothing Room will be open, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area Annual Meeting

The 43rd Annual Meeting of Fish, Inc., on May 13, began with a prayer of Thanksgiving given by Ned Halteman. Twenty people were in attendance. President Phil Cox welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending.

Those assembled honored Merkie Chamberlin and Bob Mitchell, two of our long-serving volunteers, who retired in 2012. Ned Halteman told about Bob's accomplishments over the years and presented him with a plaque thanking him for his many years of service as Food Room Chairman. Bob said that the new chairperson, Lisa Couch, is doing a nice job, and thanked all the Food Room volunteers. Gerry Halteman presented a plaque to Muriel Chamberlin for her 43 years of dedicated service to Fish. She is one of the original steering committee members. Merkie advised, "If you feel God is calling you to do something, do it. You will be blessed."

The Minutes of the 2012 Annual Meeting were approved.

Rick Couch presented the Treasurer's Annual Report. Donations were down and expenses were higher this past year, mostly due to an increase in requests for help from Hurricane Sandy victims. Fish was able to meet the higher expenses, and remains financially stable at this time.

The Program Chairpersons and Committee Chairpersons gave their Annual Reports.

The membership elected officers to serve two-year terms, until May of 2014. Those elected are: President, Phil Cox; Vice President, Lisa Couch; Recording Secretary, Carol Papi; Corresponding Secretary, Kelly McHale; Treasurer, Rick Couch; Assistant Treasurer, Edward Halteman; and Trustee, Jerry Garguilo.

The meeting was adjourned and Gerry Halteman offered the closing prayer.

The next Annual Meeting will be Monday, May 12, 2014.



Clothing Program Report

Gerry Halteman, Chairperson, reported that the third Saturday openings of the Clothing Room continued to run successfully for a second year. Regular weekday hours are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Clients are permitted to visit the Clothing Room three to four times a year, by appointment.

Hurricane Sandy in October kept the volunteers exceptionally busy helping families who came to this area to stay with family or friends. They had lost everything. Through many groups and individuals, God supplied what we needed to help them. The Clothing Room currently serves about 1,100 families. We are continually grateful for the many donations of clothing that allow us to meet the needs of our clients.

Gerry thanked the St. Vincent de Paul Society of St. Joseph church, which provides families in North Plainfield and Plainfield with food and clothing. This has decreased our workload by at least 500 families.

Gerry offered a special thank you to the many corporations, businesses, scout troops, churches, schools, and individuals who ran clothing collections and made monetary donations to purchase new items such as sneakers, socks and underwear. A big thank you to Phillip Lopa for donating the use of a storage unit, and to Dave Szymanski for transporting large amounts of clothing to and from the storage space. Gerry offered her personal thanks to all the clothing room workers: Bonnie, Margaret, Marie, Kay, Lilian, Maureen, Jean, Sherley, Ponchita, Jean, Edith, Karen, Carolyn, Angie, Lucy, Sally, Cecila, Yesenia, Martha, Ketki, Eileen, Susan, Virginia, Eleanor, Joann, Margo, Jean, Martha, and Kiana; to Karen who does data entry; to Art and Eileen who shop for new sneakers, socks and underwear; and to Dawn, who delivers to families unable to get to the Clothing Room.

Blanket Report: Due to the severity of the flooding from "Sandy," Fish had an overwhelming number of requests for blankets. Gerry thanks Bishop George Ahr High School, Continental Airlines, and many churches and corporations that gave brand new blankets, plus those who gave monetary donations. Fish was able to provide bedding to all the families who requested our help. In all, about 800 families received blankets in 2012. Twenty-five families leaving the Fish Hospitality Program were also

supplied with blankets as needed.

Sneaker Report: The Sneaker Program is primarily for families experiencing homelessness, fire, flood, or another kind of disaster. This program distributed over 150 pairs of brand new sneakers this year. About 250 cards in the amount of \$25 each were purchased from Payless Shoes to distribute to families in special need.

Food Program Report

In 2012, the Food Room served, on average, 260 clients per month. There has been a steady increase of new clients signing up for assistance.

Registered clients from Piscataway, Dunellen, Middlesex, South Plainfield, Edison, Highland Park, and Green Brook are allowed to visit the food room once a month and receive two bags of food as well as some type of meat. A third bag with foods for a holiday meal and fresh produce is added during the Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

The Food is donated by individuals, houses of worship, corporations, schools, and civic organizations. Additional items are purchased, as needed, from ShopRite, Aldi, and the Community Food Bank of New Jersey. Free Government commodities are also provided through the Food Bank.

Dedicated volunteers give many hours of service to our program, well beyond the regular operating hours. Chairperson Lisa Couch gave sincere appreciation and thanks to Bob, Steve, Clyde, Leo, Tom, John, Jim, Jerry, Ed, Dolores, Cindy and Joe.

Holiday Toy Program Report

In 2012 the Holiday Toy Program provided toys and gifts to approximately 800 children from Piscataway, Dunellen, Middlesex, South Plainfield, Edison, and Highland Park.

Chairperson, Lisa Couch, thanked those individual, corporate, civic, and religious supporters who provided generous donations of new toys and clothing. Among them are corporations such as NJBiz, IEEE, Colgate Palmolive, and NCS Technologies; churches, such as Our Lady of Fatima, St. Frances Cabrini, All Saints Lutheran, and St. John the Evangelist. The quality gifts these donors supply make the Toy Program outstanding, and their generosity cannot be measured.

Lisa thanked Gerry Halteman for use of the clothing room for toy distributions and Debbie Turton for scheduling the pick-up appointments; and especially her family for their support and patience.

Carol Papi reported on her involvement with a program run with Ozanam Shelter in Edison, which provided toys and gifts for about 21 children at the shelter. A generous donation from a co-worker at Greenbaum, Rowe, Smith & Davis LLP, allowed Carol to provide holiday gifts to ten additional children from Lisa's program. Carol encourages anyone who would like to involve their firms to sponsor gifts for children, to do so.

Telephone Volunteers Report

Fish maintains a 24-hour hotline through a paid answering service. Monday through Friday hotline calls are returned by our telephone volunteers. Volunteers usually serve one day a month, returning calls from their homes. A few serve multiple days per month.

Fish thanks our dedicated volunteers Debbie, Blanche, Betty, Art, Doreen, Mona, and Lisa who serve so faithfully. Our volunteers are the first line of contact with Fish. We are always looking for dedicated volunteers to serve in this capacity. Debbie Turton has assumed the responsibility of Telephone Volunteers Chairperson. Lisa has served as chairperson for the past two and a half years.

Computer Committee Report

Dave Casterline continued to provide installation and technical support for the various computers and office equipment of Fish Inc., as well as for FISH Hospitality Program, Inc. Dave has developed spreadsheets which will provide statistics that are needed for reporting to the Food Bank of New Jersey and the U.S. Government. Dave also receives and routes inquiries on our website to the appropriate program chairperson.

Currently the main work of the committee is to publish and maintain our website, www.fishdunellenarea.org. The site currently contains the following information about Fish: annual meeting notice and printable flyer, contact information, current pamphlet about Fish, Donations, History of Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area, How the Fish Movement began; Newsletters (since Spring, 2005), services provided (food, clothing, etc.). More information will be added to the web site as required.



Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

To continue our ongoing feature, we wish to recognize some of the many groups and individuals in our communities who have conducted activities to benefit Fish. Thank you to the following who have donated recently.

The Allstate Foundation awarded Fish, Inc. a Good Hands Fund grant of \$5,000. This grant provides money for organizational recovery from Sandy. We also thank David Basile of Allstate for his work with Fish and for nominating us for this grant.

Future Business Leaders of America at Piscataway High School, raised \$6,000 for the benefit of Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area. We also thank Dave Szymansky of the Piscataway Rotary, and Nancy Ostrowski, PHS advisor for the FBLA for their support and hard work.

The Catholic Daughters of America donated \$5,000 to Fish in January of 2013.

Arbor School's Fourth Grade students' Country Store raised \$1,435 for Fish.

Brownie Troop 80326 conducted a food collection for the Food Room.

Thank you to the many churches in our communities who continue to support the work of Fish. Among them are: St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran, Christ United Methodist, Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of Mt. Virgin, St. Frances Cabrini, St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Hillsborough, and St. John the Evangelist. *(editor's note: We apologize for omitting St. John's Church in our last issue. They are long-time supporters of Fish.)*

Bishop Ahr High School in Edison, continues to support Fish with annual Thanksgiving turkey collections, winter coat drives, and the like.

We are so grateful to each and every one of you. May the Lord continue to bless your efforts.

A View from the Other Side

This message was hand delivered to the Food Room earlier this year:

My Friends at Fish in Piscataway,

We can't thank you enough for the works that you do.

You sacrifice your time to get out of your bed regardless of the weather. You dress to come to provide us with the food. You always provide us with beautiful smiles.

We all don't want to be in this position but we are just going through.

May God continue to bless all that you do.

Thank you again.

*Love,
A grateful client*

What Do We Need?

The Clothing Room needs back to school clothes, children's clothes, adult clothes; and Children's WASHABLE winter coats. We start giving out coats in October because the families that come then will not be able to return until January. Last year there were 700 calls to the Hotline in December. We always need comforters, blankets and sheets; bedding of all kinds and sizes.



The Last Word

For assistance, or to contribute or volunteer, call the Fish hotline: **732-356-0081**. For more information about Fish, Inc., please visit our website: **www.fishdunellenarea.org**.

Judy Cox, Editor

Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area qualifies as a nonprofit corporation and is exempt from Federal Income Tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code. All contributions are tax deductible. We follow IRS requirements for receipts.