



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

Long-Time Telephone Volunteer Retires

A Tribute to Betty Gill

Betty Gill recently and reluctantly resigned from being a Fish Hotline phone volunteer. For more than five years Fish has depended on Betty's faithful and compassionate listening to Hotline callers with their requests for food, clothing and holiday dinners. Known as the front-line workers of the organization, phone volunteers are the voice and heart of Fish. Betty fulfilled her duties as often as one day a week, and most recently from a Nursing Home!

I had the privilege of speaking with Betty about her involvement with Fish and learned what a treasure she is. Disabled at age 18 with a spinal cord injury, she sought out volunteer opportunities with Cranford - Fish in the 1970's acting as Secretary and phone volunteer until marrying and moving to the Piscataway area. Lucky in love, she married Ed Gill, the postmaster of Dunellen NJ, and became a member of the Presbyterian Church of Dunellen where she found out about Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area.

Betty spoke lovingly of her husband and their 25-year marriage. Subsequent to her husband's death, Betty began volunteering as a phone volunteer with Fish.

Betty expressed concern that she now is placing a burden on others to fill her volunteer spot. I assured her that someone would respond to the call to help. Perhaps you would like to fill in for Betty and carry on the as a front-line volunteer one day a month.

On behalf of the Fish organization, clients and the community she served so well, we extend our sincere gratitude and best wishes to you, Betty, a woman of distinction. May God bless you and keep you in the shelter of His arms.

*Kelly McHale on behalf of
Fish, Inc., Steering Committee*

What Do We Need?

Let There Be Light. The four-foot, two-bulb fluorescent light fixtures in our food room are now old enough to vote. With 19 fixtures in the room, we usually have one or two that need to be repaired. The problem is that repair parts for fixtures this old are getting hard to find. We would like to replace these fixtures with new ones to eliminate this on-going problem. However, our expenses have been running a bit higher than our income lately. Is there anyone who would like to help out by donating 19 fixtures at about \$40 each? Is there a licensed electrician who would help by donating their services for installation? If so, please call Lisa in our Food Room at 732-968-7925. If you call when we are not open just leave a message and Lisa will call you back. If we get more than one reply, that's not a problem. The four-bulb fixtures in our Clothing Room are just as old and kind of dim.

Van Driver Urgently Needed. The Food Room needs a volunteer van driver for the Food Program. We need someone who could be on-call, Monday through Saturday, 8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, must be at least 21 years of age, have a clean driving record, and be able to lift 60 lbs. If you can help, or would like more information, please call the Hotline, 732-356-0081 and leave a message for Lisa.

Clothing. Are your children outgrowing their summer clothes? Fish can still use summer clothing for children and teens. Also, clean, washable back-to-school clothes for children of all ages, and for men and women, are welcome. Washable winter coats are always needed as early as October. Bring donations, in clean plastic bags, to the Clothing Room during the regular hours the room is open. To make special arrangements for drop-off, call the Hotline, 732-356-0081.

Telephone Volunteers. If you can help, please call the Hotline and leave a message for Debbie.

Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area 44th Annual Meeting

On Thursday, May 8, 2014, the 44th Annual Meeting of Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area was held at First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen. The meeting opened with prayer by Ned Halteman. President, Phil Cox welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all the volunteers for their efforts, saying that without them to help Fish serve the clients in our communities, Fish could not fulfill its purpose.

Rick Couch gave the annual Treasurer's Report. Overall, donations were up slightly over 2012 and Program expenses were lower. However, other expenses for 2013 were higher, resulting in higher expenses overall.

Program chairpersons and committee chairpersons gave their annual reports (below.) After some discussion from the floor, the meeting was adjourned with a closing prayer by the Reverend Kathryn Riss.

Program Chairpersons Reports

Clothing Room: Gerry Halteman, Chairperson. The Clothing Room continues to operate Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, and the third Saturday morning of every month.

About 1,100 families currently are on the Clothing Room list. The length of time these families need the services of Fish is varied. The program is grateful for the many donations to help meet the needs of the clients. Gerry thanked the many corporations, businesses, scout troops, churches, schools and individuals who did clothing collections and made monetary donations for the purchase of new items needed. She also thanked the clothing room volunteers, drivers, and those who shop for new items needed by the clients.

Every year is a busy year for the Blanket program. Gerry thanked Bishop Ahr High School and many churches and corporations that gave brand new blankets and bedding, plus those who gave monetary donations. Fish supplied bedding to about 800 families, and about 25 families leaving the Fish Hospitality Program.

Sneakers are supplied primarily to families experiencing homelessness, fire, flood, or other kinds of disaster. Over 200 pairs of new sneakers were provided in 2013. In addition, Fish purchased about 150 \$25 gift cards from Payless Shoes to distribute to families in need.

Telephone Volunteers: Deborah Turton, Chairperson. I became chairperson for the phone volunteers in February of 2013. At that time we had six regular volunteers. During the year we welcomed three new volunteers and one returning to the program. Volunteers man the hotline one, two, or three times a month, depending on their availability. All are very reliable and willing to man the hotline whenever they are needed. Volunteers represent Our Lady of Fatima Church and New Durham Chapel.

New volunteers are invited to my home for hands-on training sessions. In this way I am able to meet each one and work with them in person as we answer calls. First, we call the answering service so I can introduce the volunteer to the service and retrieve the messages together. Then we return the client's call so that everyone can hear the conversation and learn how to handle the needs of the client. The volunteer can take over the calls when they are ready, with me right there to help, if need be. Each volunteer is given a set of instructions on the program and is encouraged to have a notebook to log in calls. They also have a MCFOODS book so they can refer callers from outside our service area to other food pantries.

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to serve God and Fish.

Holiday Toy Program: Lisa Couch, Chairperson. The program had a busy and successful year. Donations were received from many individuals, businesses, houses of worship, and civic groups. Some gifts were stored and used in Easter baskets or birthday bags distributed during the year. This year a Holiday party for our youngest clients was hosted by Piscataway Elks at St. Frances Cabrini church hall. The Elks also provided small gifts for those who attended. We extend our thanks to the many who donate to this program. Thank you for sharing your blessings.

Food Room – Lisa Couch, Chairperson. In 2013 the Food Room had 539 registered clients, including families, senior citizens, and children. Client visits to the Food Room totaled 3,319 for the year. The Food Room receives food commodities from the Community Food Bank through state and federal government food programs. We are also supported by the monthly collection done outside of Acme Supermarket in Middlesex. Monthly and weekly donations are received from many area churches, libraries, corporations and civic groups.

We welcomed four new regular volunteers to the Food Room in 2013. Our Food Room volunteers are extremely dedicated individuals who keep regular volunteer hours and can always be counted on. Our work could not be done without their dedication.

During holiday seasons, volunteers from Merck, Christ United Methodist Church, and US Foods helped prepare and distribute food bags. We are grateful to these organizations for their participation.

The number of new clients rises each day, the need for food is great, and we are thankful to each one who helps by either volunteering time or donating to our mission.

Fish Hospitality Program. – Emily Mlinarovich reported on behalf of the Director/Social Worker. In 2013 twenty-two family units were sheltered by the Fish Hospitality Program. Seventeen families (39 guests) moved out in 2013. Nine of those families moved into rental apartments; six families went to live with relatives or friends; and two families went to another shelter. Five families (11 guests) remained into 2014.



New Market Baptist Church has a Long History of Helping Fish.

Fish would like to thank the First Baptist Church of New Market for its ongoing support over the years. The church sponsors a monthly food collection at the Acme Supermarket in Middlesex on the third Saturday of every month. This began in the 1970s.

Many volunteers are involved in the third Saturday Acme Supermarket collection. They include members of the Baptist church, as well as people from other church congregations. Groups such as Boy Scout Troops, the Methodist Church Youth Group, AA and others have participated. Many individuals also have helped, including several Fish volunteers. Steve Glowacki, a member of the Fish Steering Committee, along with members of his family, oversees the transfer of the food from Acme to the Food Room in Piscataway.

Recently the Rev. J. Kenneth Mart, Retired Pastor of the church, recalled some of the many joyful moments he has experienced over his years volunteering during those food drives. On one occasion, a person came out of the store with her cart fully loaded. She had even filled up the child-seat. She took her own groceries out of the child-seat, and gave the rest to Fish.

Another time, someone pulled up outside the Acme, motioned for the Fish volunteer to come over to the car, and gave a \$50 cash donation. In both of these instances, the people were former clients of the Food Program. Once, a man came up to the food drive volunteer to return some of the food he had received from the Food Room as a Fish client. He was not able to use it, and didn't want the food to go to waste.

Reverend Mart also found great joy in the children; especially when parents would teach their children how to shop for and donate food to the Food Collection.

The Baptist Church has supported Fish, Inc. in many other ways, as well. Volunteers collected Christmas gifts and toys for the Holiday Toy Program. In years past volunteer drivers delivered food to clients in Plainfield, South Plainfield, New Market, Middlesex, Bound Brook, and New Brunswick. In the late 1970s New Market Baptist Church offered the basement of Friendship Hall to be used as the Food Room for Fish.

We thank God for the many ways that we have been blessed through the efforts of the members of First Baptist Church of New Market. We pray for God to continue to bless them and their ministry here in Piscataway.

Look for more about Friendship Hall in the next issue of the Fish Newsletter.

Condolences

We are sad to learn of the recent death of one of our former volunteers, Jane Gleason. Jane served on the Steering Committee as Corresponding Secretary 2001-2002. She also served as a Telephone Volunteer. Fish would like to extend our deepest sympathy to Jane's family and friends.



Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As a regular feature in our newsletter, we wish to recognize some of the many groups and individuals in our communities who have supported Fish programs that help those in need. Thank you to the following who have donated recently:

Thank you to the family and friends of Matthew and Maureen Laughlin who offered donations, in their memory, to Fish, Inc.

Thank you to the Mangone family who recently donated two truckloads of clothing to Fish, Inc. We offer special thanks to the Youth Group of Our Lady of Fatima Church, and one of the extraordinary

ministers of Holy Communion, for moving the clothing from the Mangone home to the Clothing Room.

Tom and Margo Pisack donated the two benches placed outside the Food Room for the clients who waiting that area.

We thank the many churches that support the work of Fish with food collections, toy collections, and other activities. Among them are: the First Baptist Church of New Market, which sponsors a monthly food drive at Acme supermarket in Middlesex; Our Lady of Mt. Virgin, Middlesex for monthly food donations; Our Lady of Czestochowa for food donations; Our Lady of Fatima, Piscataway for weekly donations; The First Presbyterian Church of Dunellen; St. Luke's Evangelical Lutheran, Dunellen; Christ United Methodist, Piscataway; St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church in Hillsborough; St. John the Evangelist in Dunellen; St. Frances Cabrini Church, Piscataway; North Branch Reformed Church, Bridgewater; and Wesley Methodist Church, South Plainfield.

On behalf of the people we serve, we thank everyone for their generosity. May the Lord continue to bless you, each and every one.

And finally, a special thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the Fish Newsletter.

Judy Cox, editor

Coming Up

Friday, August 22 – Food Room closed.

Monday, September 1 – Friday, September 5 – Food Room closed for Vacation.

Beginning in September – The third Saturday of each month, September through June, the Food Room and Clothing Room will be open from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Beginning in October - 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.



The Last Word

For assistance, or to contribute or volunteer, call the **Fish hotline: 732-356-0081**. For more information about Fish, Inc., visit our website: **www.fishdunellenarea.org**. The Fish Newsletter is available on our website. Or if you would like to receive a copy of the Newsletter online, send an e-mail to newsletter@fishdunellenarea.org.

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