



Fish Newsletter

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Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area

Serving our neighbors since 1970

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What's it like to be a Clothing Room volunteer?

We asked one of our faithful volunteers in the Clothing Room.

Cecilia has been a volunteer in the Clothing Room for four years. She works three mornings each week sorting clothes by sizes and separating them into containers of boys', girls' or women's clothing. Cecilia likes helping people in need and their families. "They appreciate what we do," says Cecilia.

Born in West Africa, Cecilia came to America as a small child in the early 1970's. She has two children and three grandchildren. She enjoys coming to the Clothing Room. "It is a good program," she says, "helping people, especially those who are affected by flood; the homeless; and people without jobs. Gerry is very nice and the people are friendly."

Cecilia also helps some of our elderly and home bound clients who are unable to come to the Clothing Room. She selects goods for them in their sizes and delivers the items to their homes.

Gerry Halteman says, "Cecilia is a delightful person, she always has a smile, is very kind and helpful to the clients and is a very caring person. In the winter time Cecilia takes clothes to homeless men who live outdoors. I can tell she loves seeing that these men have some heavy clothes for the cold winter days."

We at Fish thank Cecilia for her kind spirit, her hard work and compassion for our clients.



Food Room will Open Every Third Saturday

In addition to their regular weekly hours, beginning September 15, the Food Room will be open the **third Saturday of each month**, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., except during July and August.



What Do We Need?

"Bottled" Juices, peanut butter, jelly, cereal and soup.

Volunteers Are Urgently Needed

Fish is currently in need of several volunteers to help keep our programs running. If you can volunteer, please call the Fish Hotline: **732-356-0081**.

Fish Telephone Hotline Volunteers are needed to answer calls from persons who need help or information about Fish. Volunteers call in to the answering service about once per hour during the day to receive messages; return client calls to set up appointments with the Food Room or the Clothing Room; or determine what assistance is needed and contact the appropriate person. Some of the volunteers work a day every week, some take one day per month or multiple days per month. Even someone who could work a day every other month, or be on call as a substitute would be appreciated. Please call the Fish Hotline and ask for Lisa. She will provide information about what we need and how the system works.

Experienced van drivers are urgently needed, capable of lifting 60 lbs. Drivers must have a clean driving record. Help is needed Monday through Saturday to make morning pick-ups at Costco and any afternoon pickups at the Hillside Food Bank or local supermarkets and businesses. We need drivers who can commit to a specific day of the week as well as those who can act as substitutes or fill-ins. For more information or to volunteer, call the Fish hotline and leave a message for Lisa.

Facilities manager. Fish is also in need of a volunteer to be responsible for maintenance of our facility. Ideally, this person should have a background in facilities maintenance with knowledge of electrical and heating systems and be able to perform minor repairs when needed. This person will coordinate with outside contractors as necessary and perform lawn maintenance and mowing during the summer months. Please call the Fish Hotline if you can help.



Fish, Inc. Annual Meeting Report

This year the annual meeting of Fish, Inc., Dunellen Area was held the second Monday, May 14, 2012. There were seventeen people in attendance.

Treasurer's Report. Rick Couch reported that in 2011, receipts were approximately \$1,700 more than expenses for the year. Fish is financially stable at this time.

Clothing Program. Gerry Halteman, Program chairperson, noted that the Clothing Room is now open every third Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m., thanks to Sally, a new volunteer. This is in addition to the regular Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday hours, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Approximately 50 families come to the Clothing Room every week. The program provided clothes to approximately 3,500 children and 1,000 adults this past year; about 1,300 families. Gerry offers a special thank you to the many corporations, businesses, scout troops, churches, schools and individuals who did clothing collections and made monetary donations to purchase new items such as sneakers, socks and underwear. Gerry is grateful for all the clothing room volunteers, as well as those who work outside the clothing room to pick up donations, deliver to shut-ins, and purchase new articles of clothing.

Blanket Program. Hurricanes Lee and Irene caused an overwhelming number of requests for blankets last year. Fish was able to purchase about 300 new blankets. Several corporations, churches and many individuals either bought new blankets or donated used ones. Fish supplied about 600 families with blankets, including 25 families from the Fish Hospitality Program.

The Sneaker Program helps the homeless and those who experience fire, flood or other disasters. This program distributed 125 pairs of brand new sneakers. Also, 151 gift cards of \$25 each were purchased from Payless Shoes, and distributed to families with special need.

Holiday Toys. The past year saw significant change for the New Brunswick Program run through the Raritan Valley Baptist Church of Edison. Cathy Kobilis stepped down as chairperson. Carol Papi, a member of the Fish Steering Committee, was able to continue the program on a smaller scale. Fish is grateful to Cathy and her family for their many years of dedicated service on behalf of Fish to the people of Edison and New Brunswick. Carol Papi will assist the Fish, Inc. Christmas Toy program in the future by providing toys to the Ozanam Shelter in Edison.

This year the Toy Program provided some children's Easter baskets in the Food Room. Christmas toy donations appropriate for the spring and summer season were used to make the baskets. Fish provided eight baskets through the Food Room as well as one basket for a client of Fish Hospitality.

Lisa Couch, Toy Program Chairperson, acknowledged the generosity of the personal, corporate, civic and religious friends of Fish, plus several local churches for their generous donations of new toys and clothing.

Telephone Volunteers. Acting Telephone Chairperson, Lisa Couch reported that the program lost three dedicated volunteers last year. Fish extends condolences to the families of Jessie Long and Mary Mahon. These ladies were extremely dedicated, long time telephone volunteers. Currently, there are seven permanent volunteers who usually devote one day a month to telephone duty, returning calls from their homes. Two volunteers serve one day each week. Most are parishioners at our local churches. Their care and compassion for those seeking help is invaluable and is to be admired.

Food Room: In 2011 the program served an average of 260 walk-in clients, plus more than 200 people in three senior communities, each month. Clients are able to visit the food room once a month and receive two bags of commodities as well as some type of meat. A third bag is added for the three holiday meals, and includes fresh produce. Chairperson Bob Mitchell extends his sincere thanks to all those who support the program, including many houses of worship, corporations and civic organizations, as well as individual donors. Bob thanks the food room volunteers for their many hours of service well above and beyond our regular operating hours.

Fish Hospitality. Fish continued to assist guests of Hospitality by providing clothing, blankets, and food to guests, as needed. Christmas, Easter and birthday gifts were also supplied.

The next annual meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2013.



Coming Up ---

Sept. 3: Fish is closed for the Labor Day holiday.

Sept. 3-9: Food Room and Clothing Room will be closed for maintenance.

Sept. 10: Clothing Room will re-open at 9:00 a.m. Food Room will re-open at 9:00 a.m.

Sat., Sept. 15: Food Room will be open 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. Clothing Room will be open 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Beginning October 13: Clients' requests for **Christmas Toys** will be accepted. Requests must be made on the form available through the Food and Clothing rooms.



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.