

FISH Food Bank
December 2018
Coordinators Newsletter

In my family when you find a penny in an unexpected place, it means that someone in heaven is thinking about you and sending you a special blessing. The other day when I was walking I discovered not one but three pennies along my route, it seems that I have three different angels sending me special blessings.

While the FISH Food Bank is not an angel, many of our clients feel like they are receiving a special blessing of food. This summer and fall I have discussed a trend of increasing numbers of homeless clients. In addition to this, I am now seeing a new trend of individuals who have not needed our services in several years but are now coming back to the FISH food bank. There are a large number of cards being renewed that were issued in 2016 or earlier. I am seeing a good cards as far back as 2010 and 2011 being reissued.

The other night I was talking with one client who had a 2010 card. I shared with her that we are seeing a lot of people who are needing food help that have not been in for several years. She replied with a tear in her eye "but it is so embarrassing." We tried to share with her that we are here to help people through the rough times.

Another client who had not been in for over a year shared with me that he had been able to pick up some extra hours at work, then they cut his SNAP allotment from \$400 to \$90. He has two kids and just needed the extra help.

I feel like it is a blessing to be able to help families that really need the help. Last week we had a new family come to the food bank and this reminded me why we do what we do. It was a young family with a father, mother and young child. They do not have a permanent address and basically are couch surfing. When I was explaining when they could food and if they are totally out they can always come back, the Mom shared that they were trying to make it without any help but their little girl was getting sick because she did not have enough to eat. Luckily, someone had told them that we were a good resource for them.

Thank you to everyone for helping FISH share the blessing of providing food to Hood River County families in need. Wishing you and your family a joyous holiday season. I hope you will be able to spend special time with family and friends.

Billie Stevens
FISH Food Bank

FISH Food Bank Holiday Closures

Because of how the holidays fall, FISH will be closed the following dates to allow volunteers to spend time with their families.

Hood River Food Bank and Parkdale Food Bank will be closed:

Monday, December 24

Monday, December 31

Cascade Locks Distribution date changed to:

Wednesday, December 19

Saturday, December 22

FISH FOOD BANK DUTY ROSTER

Hood River Site--Weekday

January – May 2019

FOR THE WEEK OF CONGREGATION SERVING

January 2 – 4	Riverside Community
January 7 – 9 – 11	St. Mark's Episcopal
January 14 – 16 – 18	St Mary's Catholic
January 21 – 23 - 25	Spirit of Grace Church
January 28 – 30 – Feb. 1	Shepherd of the Valley
February 4 – 6 – 8	Valley Christian Church
February 11 – 13 – 15	Immanuel Lutheran Church
February 18 – 20 – 22	Unitarian Fellowship
February 25 – 27 – Mar 1	Riverside Community
March 4 – 6 – 8	St. Mark's Episcopal
March 11 – 13 – 15	St. Mary's Catholic
March 18 – 20 – 22	Spirit of Grace Church
March 25 – 27 – 29	Shepherd of the Valley
April 1 – 3 – 5	Valley Christian Church
April 8 – 10 – 12	Immanuel Lutheran Church
April 15 – 17 – 19	Unitarian Fellowship
April 22 – 24 – 26	Riverside Community
April 29 – May 1 – 3	St Mark's Episcopal
May 6 – 8 – 10	St Mary's Catholic
May 13 – 15 – 17	Spirit of Grace
May 20 – 22 – 24	Shepherd of the Valley
May 27 – 29 – 31	Valley Christian Church

Extra Help During the Holidays

FISH is so lucky to have many wonderful volunteers and they are showing up to help prepare the sites during these busy times.

But the one day we will need a lot of extra help the Hood River site is after the High School Food Drive. The drive will not be delivered to FISH until December 21, so that means we will not be able to get the food put away until Wednesday, December 26. We will start around 8:15 am and work until we get the food put away, or until everyone gets tired. So if you want to work off your Christmas dinner, plan to stop by the Hood River FISH and lend a hand. I have not heard if Parkdale will have food to put away, so you will need to check with Glenna to see if she needs help.

Weather Reminders

Each year I like to remind everyone the FISH Boards policy on what to do when the weather/roads are bad.

It is a general policy of the FISH Board that the FISH Food Bank does not close, if at all possible. While we want all the volunteers to be safe, our clients do not listen to the radio so it is hard to get the information out that FISH is closed. Consequently, they tend to come to get food, even if the weather is bad.

If you coordinate the volunteers for your group, I would recommend that you identify a few volunteers who do not mind driving in bad weather and alert them if it looks like the weather will be bad. It may not take a full crew but clients do come. We know the grocery stores are busy when a storm is coming, they also come to FISH too.

Each group that distributes food needs to have a plan as to what you would do if the roads are bad. Then you need to keep in close contact with me, so I know what is happening and if we need to make alternate plans. My cell phone is 541-490-5109.

FISH Board Meeting—December 12

The December FISH Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 12 at 12:00 Noon at the Hood River FISH Site. The meetings are open and anyone who would like to attend is welcome.

Thanks to Everyone for their Generosity

The FISH Board would like to thank all volunteers for their help throughout the year. Helping others is always on people's minds this time of year but the volunteers at FISH give year around. Each month it takes about 175 different volunteers to prepare the FISH sites and help with the distribution of food. It would not be possible to do what we do without the help of everyone!

We have been able to spread a little extra joy this time of year because of generosity of people from our community. For example one of the clients had cute little teddy bears in her garage so she donated them to FISH. Many happy little children will be able to cuddle up to these cute guys. In Cascade Locks there were many beautiful hand knitted hats that were given for our clients. The Hood River Valley Evening Garden Club donated festive Christmas bouquets and the OSU Master Gardeners will be providing wreaths they have made.

Then we do not want to forget that our local grocery stores give an opportunity for individuals to give extra this time of year. Safeway has a cash system that people can add to their bill and then purchase turkeys, potatoes, gravy and stuffing for our clients. Rosauers have the Rosauers Bags shoppers can purchase that are full of wonderful food.

A very special thank you to everyone.

Important Dates to Put on Your Calendar

December 6 & 21 Oregon Food Bank Truck delivery, 8:00 AM, Hood River FISH Tucker Road Site.

December 12 FISH Board Meeting, 12:00 Noon, Hood River FISH Site

December 26 Sorting food from the HRV High School Food Drive, 8:30 AM, Hood River FISH Site.

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."

*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from the Hood River County FISH Food Bank*