

FISH Food Bank
October 2018
Coordinators Newsletter

As I work with the list of client each month, I get a feel for general trends in the client population. The one trend that I am seeing is an increase in the number of individuals we classify as homeless. I decide to go back and look at some figures to see if what I think I am seeing is really what is happening. Taking just a quick look it appears that in 2014 about 14% of our clients had the classification of homeless. In 2017 the number grew to about 18% and so far in 2018 it is about 20% of our clients.

So what living situation puts the clients into the homeless classification? This is just a general term we use for many different living situations, but basically if they do not have a permanent physical address, then we classify as homeless. It may be the person or family that is living in their car or it could someone camping in the forest. The women living in the Women's Shelter use this as well as the Native American's who are living in the In-Lieu Camp Sites.

Because the number of homeless clients is on the rise, it is not unusual to have a variety of families come for food at one distribution. For example one night last summer when I was working the desk, a young man who had aged out of the foster care system and was living in a tent came for help. Then there was a family living in the camper from Mid-West. When I asked why they decided to stay in Hood River, the answer was, "That is where our car died." There was a couple from one of the In-Lieu sites and the women was being treated for colon cancer. Finally there was a young lady from the Women's Shelter.

When working with people who are experiencing homeless, we need to try to be respectful. I always hate to ask if they are homeless. So I did a little bit of research and found a good catch phrase to use, I am now trying to ask if they are experiencing homelessness as opposed to asking if they are a homeless person.

This past year we have tried to be more sensitive to this issue and that is why we place the green dot on cards of families who can take only a limited amount of food. The green dot allows them to return during the month. We are reaching more and more of the clients who have limited food capabilities.

Billie Stevens
FISH Food Banks
541-490-5109

High School Helpers:

In Hood River, Julia Oseguera helped all through the school year last year but stopped during the summer to work a summer job. Now she is back helping since school has started. She tries to help every Monday. So you can plan on her helping on the Monday night distribution. She does speak Spanish so that is a plus. Please welcome her and put her to work.

In Parkdale we have several high school students helping. The most active high schoolers in Parkdale are Estefani Reyes, Marileisi Castillo, Briana Santillan, Sarah Santillan, and Sergio Santillan.

They are all a big help. Especially since they are all Spanish speakers.

Doors at the Hood River Site

It is important that the last person out from distribution checks that all the doors are locked. There are three things you need to make sure happens:

1. The outside door to the waiting room area does not always shut all the way. Once you have locked the door, you then need to pull on the push bar to make sure the latch is fully engaged. They need to try and adjust the door but it is not as simply as it sounds. So it is important you double check the door and make sure the latch is fully out.
2. Door between the waiting room and the shopping area needs to be locked when you leave the building. The meeting room is being used almost every day and they have access to the waiting room area because of the bathrooms. We do not want them to have access to the shopping area so it is very important that you make sure the lock is pushed in and the door cannot be opened from the waiting room area.
3. I have noticed that sometime that the lock on door between the warehouse the outside does not get fully locked. The key is only partially turned and the door is not fully locked. So be sure when locking this door you turn the key all the way and the push bar is in full position.

Thanks for taking extra caution in making sure the FISH building is fully secured when you turn out the lights.

Spirit of Grace/FISH Garden Activities

They are still harvesting produce from the garden. Today we received some nice looking cucumbers. Sidney the garden coordinator has planned a fun event to celebrate

the garden. She would love to have both FISH Food Bank volunteers and garden volunteers join in the celebration:

Harvest Celebration & Volunteer Appreciation Potluck

When: SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2018 5-8 PM

Where: FISH GARDEN 1130 TUCKER RD HOOD RIVER 97031

Why: Help celebrate this year's bountiful harvest and the volunteers who made it possible!

ALL ARE WELCOME

PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE

Questions: contact Sidney at FISHGARDENVC@GMAIL.COM or find them on Facebook.

Fall Family Festival

Sidney is also coordinating a Fall Family Festival for the clients of FISH. It will be on Saturday, October 6 at the FISH Food Bank/FISH Garden. The children will be able to pick a pumpkin from the pumpkin patch, there will be games, fun activities, food and drinks.

It is for the whole family and it is free. She is having it during the time of distribution, so we are hoping our families will come get food then go the festival in the garden area. The Juntos (a high school group who also distribute food at FISH) have offered to help. Should be a fun, so feel free to drop by and watch the little ones pick their pumpkins.

Library Display on FISH

Thanks to Yvonne Ellsworth for organizing a display on FISH for the Hood River Library. The display will be up all the month of October, if you are in the area you should stop by and see what she has put together.

Did you know that FISH will be 50 Years old in 2019? This is a start of a yearlong celebration.

Grocery Bags

Thanks again for all the wonderful grocery bags that are being donated. I had a conversation the other day that made me stop and think. A gentleman was telling me that he always brings his grocery bags to FISH. He said, "You know because when the clients take their food home, it just looks like they have been to the grocery store." He is right, it is a respect thing. No one wants to shout to the world "I go the food bank",

so when their grocery bags look like they have been to the grocery store it removes that stigma.

Hood River Crop Walk

We received a great report on the Columbia Gorge Crop Walk that was held on September 22. Kathy Holmson HRVCC, shared this note with me:

Thanks to our Columbia Gorge CROP Walk planning committee we had another successful CROP Walk last Saturday!

We had 54 walkers/participants from 6 area churches

Total collected: over \$6,200 with more pledges still coming in. That's over \$1,000 each for our WGAP and FISH Food Banks and the remainder going to Church World Service global hunger projects.

Let people who want to help fight hunger in our Columbia Gorge communities that it's not too late to donate. We will collect donations until October 19. At that time we will meet for our final wrap up of Columbia Gorge CROP Hunger Walk, 2018.

If you have more donations you want to send in before October 19, you can mail them:

c/o Valley Christian Church
975 Indian Creek Road
Hood River, OR 97031

Or drop them by the church--check with me to be sure I'm around to meet you (hrvchurch@gmail.com or 541 386-2608).

Thank you again for all your work and dedication.

FISH Board Meeting-October 10

The October FISH Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 10 at 12:00 Noon at the Hood River Tucker Road FISH Site. The meeting is open and anyone who would like to attend is welcome.

Important Dates to Put on Your Calendar

October 10 FISH Board of Directors meeting, 12:00 Noon
October 11 Oregon Food Bank Truck Delivery, 8:00 AM
October 25 Oregon Food Bank Truck Delivery, 8:00 AM

“This institution is an equal opportunity provider.”