

Lake Township FISH

Est. 1972

JANUARY—VOL. 6

ISSUE 1

Editor: Jan Moore-Dwenger

Recap of Nov. - Dec.

Food Orders	493
Housing - 7	\$2195
Electric - 6	\$1292
Gas - 6	\$480
Heating Oil - 3	\$1116

FISH'S Food For Thought

Greet now the swiftly changing year with joy and penitence sincere.
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace another year of grace!

-----Jaroslav Vajda

Happy New Year!

In the last paragraph of November's FISH newsletter, we reviewed the awesome "ride" Lake Township FISH had had in 2013. It was quite a busy year and by all indications, we "ain't seen nuthin' yet!" The five biggest changes that are coming in 2014 are:

- A new Director
- A larger clientele base
- A new computer system that gives more accurate tracking information about the pantry operations.
- A seemingly wider recognition throughout the community of what FISH is and does.
- Adding a third time every week for distribution of groceries.

To explain further, Kami Sommers is stepping down in May to spend more time with her children. Under her fine leadership of five years, she has added new dimensions to this assistance organization by helping: redesign part of the former Hartville Hardware to give the FISH pantry a new, enlarged space; partner with the Akron-Canton Food Bank; extend the boundaries for eligibility for those receiving groceries; select an Advisory Council for FISH; and define a mission statement for Lake Township FISH with this Council. The plans for these changes were started in 2012 and finalized in 2013.

How has all this impacted the organization and the community at large? Since the move on February 5, 2013, when FISH opened at the new site, to the end of December, 2013, 2130 food orders were distributed which is over 3 times more than for the same period in 2012. FISH has also given over \$3900 more in financial help (restricted to those who reside in Lake Township) in 2013 than in 2012 to those in need. FISH was able to give over 100 turkeys to clients at Thanksgiving and provided Christmas gifts for 21 families.

The new computer system is being facilitated in conjunction with the Akron Canton Food Bank and will provide FISH with more statistics to help operate the program more efficiently.

With Lake Township FISH being a part of the Gentle Brook complex, it is more visible to the public, and the activity that has surrounded the redesigning of this building has provided more publicity through the local media resulting in even greater involvement by schools, churches, individuals, organizations and local businesses.

The ripple effects of some of these changes plus ones such as reductions in food stamps and unemployment benefits have resulted in the Advisory Council recommendation of adding another shift to accommodate the growing number of clients needing groceries. This is still in the process of being evaluated to determine when the new shift might happen.

FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

- *Soups*
- *Helper meals*
- *Noodles*
- *Deodorant*
- *Facial Tissues*
- *Cleaning Products*

While there have been many changes over the last several years, many areas will remain the same in 2014.

FISH will continue the partnership with the Akron-Canton Food Bank. Many of the groceries are at a low cost and some free, the variety is great, with the availability of fresh and frozen fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy products. To keep the supply of groceries on the shelves, in addition to purchasing from the ACFB, FISH also buys groceries at local retail stores using coupons, and continues to organize brown bag drives from churches, schools, and organizations. With this diligence to be good stewards of all the monetary and grocery donations, each food order, worth about \$150, is costing FISH approximately \$17.

FISH will continue getting free bakery items from the Agape Bread Ministry to distribute to the clients. This past year over 8000 items were given.

Pizza Hut donates pizzas and pastas weekly to the food pantry and supplied over 2000 in 2013. This, too, will continue in 2014.

For several years, FISH has had two main fund-raising events: the 5K Run/Walk in July done in conjunction with the Lake Local Athletic Association and the Annual Benefit Dinner at the Hartville Kitchen in September and these have been scheduled for 2014.

FISH will again be seeking sponsors at several levels. If you are currently a sponsor, please consider renewing and if you would like to become a sponsor, please call the FISH Hotline for more information (330-877-1845).

In 2014, with the exception of the new director's stipend, no monies are spent for workers for this organization.

Lake Township churches, businesses, schools and individuals have supported FISH generously and dependably for over 40 years. The following are examples of this during the last quarter of 2013:

-Romeo's Pizza offered a challenge to Lake schools in December to supply a pizza party for the classes that donated 100 or more cans of food for FISH. Lake Center Christian accepted that challenge and FISH was the recipient of 3500 grocery items in one month!

-Grace United Church of Christ provided toilet

tissue throughout 2013.

-Enervest employees donated 1750 cans of food in December.

-Maple Grove Mennonite Church supplied the money for the Thanksgiving turkeys.

-Trent Hershman and Kathy Gopp from Edward Jones collected toys, gloves and mittens at Christmas.

-SPSI donated many food items for the holidays.

-Lake Elementary had their annual collection before Thanksgiving and donated over 2500 grocery items.

The following were sponsors and provided Christmas gifts for community families at Christmas: Adventure Place, Jeff & Lisa Zellers, River Tree Christian Church, Dan & Barb Dutcher, Karen & Dan Drake, Brenda and Chuck Heisroth, Sarah and John Chambers, Judy Ford, AJ and Jen Geiser, Maple Grove Mennonite Church, Uniontown United Methodist Church, St. Jacob's Lutheran Church, Jim and Michele Varga, Lake Community Credit Union (Grocery collection at Thanksgiving and sponsored 4 families at Christmas), Shear Shop, Hartville Mennonite Church, Buckeye Plumbing, St. Jacob's Community Church, and Kathryn Penny & Family.



In 2014, with the growth of this assistance program, there will be the need to generate even more income and resources to keep Lake Township FISH solvent. Here are some ways you can help:

-Donate grocery coupons to the pantry for our Coupon Shopper to buy needed groceries at retail stores at great discounts.

-Save Acme register tapes. This offer ends Feb 8, 2014 and Julia Besenyodi, who does the tallying, will take them until Feb. 16, so be sure you get them to the pantry by this date.

-Encourage your church or organization to include in its budget a line item donation regularly to FISH.

-Participate in FISH fund-raisers.

-Have a soup collection at your church on "Souper Bowl Sunday," Feb. 2, 2014. At this point, FISH needs a replenishment of soup - any kind, dry or canned!

Lake Township FISH

PO Box 611
Hartville, OH 44632
330-877-1845

Kami Sommers
laketwpfish@gmail.com

Faithfully

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Serve

Him

Happy FISH Tales

This is one of several thank you notes FISH received for the Christmas presents given by FISH sponsors:

Dear FISH,

I want to thank each and every one of you. I had surgery on the 19th and it went good. I only have to do 30 days of radiation. I have breast cancer. I appreciate everything you gave me. You are God's angels and are filling his work. When you have little money each month, it doesn't go very far. I'm doing better because of you. Hope you all have a wonderful Christmas with family and friends. Bless each one of you.

Family O

Clients Give Back!

FISH clients brought in hundreds of Labels and Box Tops for Education which were given to Lake Center Christian, Lake Elementary and Hartville Elementary Schools. These will be turned in for cash to provide needed equipment for the schools. Thank you clients!

As we enter 2014, we can look back on what many of us have considered a miracle, this organization we call Lake Township FISH. Its mission, "**Living Christ's love by serving our neighbors**" has been practiced over and over. We ask for your prayers and help for this assistance program to continue. Thank you for your generosity in the past and in this New Year.

Prayer - Please remember to pray for FISH. As we grow we face more challenges and need God's guidance in everyone circumstance. Please pray for our clients; for peace, wisdom, health and guidance. Please pray for our volunteers; for patience, understanding and blessings. Please pray for our leadership; the clergy, the advisory council, supervisors, client coordinator and director. Please pray for God to bless them with wisdom and strength in all they do. Thank you!

"as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. "

2 Corinthians 1:11

Living Christ's Love by Serving OUR Neighbors!

Sponsored By:

Andy & Jill Pressler, Forever Lawn, Hartville Hardware, Hartville Kitchen, Hartville Marketplace, Ramsburg Insurance, Tom & Jan Dwenger, Countryside Plumbing, D.R. Miller Design Build, Dutcher Door, Hartville Health and Wellness, Uniontown Lions, Yoder-Bontrager Insurance, Consumers National Bank, Family Eyecare Center, MJ Miller and Co., and Senior Sitters L.L.C.—Thank you to all these sponsors for their support.