

HelpMe Headlines

AFL-CIO Community Services

Spring 2013

1203 N. 6th St. St. Joseph, MO 64501 816-364-1131 www.helpmenow.org

Dear Friends,

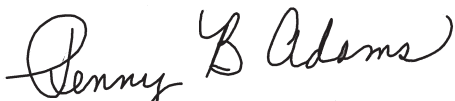
Spring is the time we all start getting outside. We garden, exercise, fish and go to the ballgame. It's a chance to get out of the cave we've been hiding in all winter. (And what a winter! Snow in May!) As you know from previous newsletters, we have been struggling with a way to raise funds to support the many programs we administer at AFL-CIO Community Services.

Recently, the staff and board decided on a month-long set of events — aptly named “Christmas in July” since we are so easily recognized for our Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program. Christmas in July will be a month-long FUNdraiser, with several events held weekly during the month of July, including a trivia night, Zumba event, toy drive and Mustang's Baseball night. An event listing including times and dates can be found inside this newsletter. We are hoping you can turn out for at least one of the funfilled events to help support the many programs of AFL-CIO Community Services. And if you can't attend, you can still support the agency by making a donation in the enclosed envelope.

Another big change for the agency is the re-launching of our primary program, the Information and Referral Service (I&R). Through a joint project between our agency and a student team from the Missouri Western State University Marketing Department, we found that clients did not realize the I&R Service was provided by our agency. While they came to our agency for Adopt-A-Family or to visit the Community Clothes Closet, they did not realize our agency was also the place they called for assistance with other issues. To better promote the program and to make it easier to recognize, the I&R service is now the **HELP ME HOTLINE**.

While providing the same referral services, the Help Me Hotline is a easily recognizable moniker that better indicates the actual services provided. (It is also easier to say!) This new branding strategy will hopefully create a stronger client awareness and make it possible for us to assist even more area residents. There is a much more detailed description of the Help Me Hotline service inside this newsletter.

Thank you so much for being a supporter of AFL-CIO Community Services and all of its programs.



Penny B. Adams
Director

Presidential Prose

We are hoping that the Christmas in July events will become a tradition for the agency. We planned a variety of events that hopefully will give all our supporters one or two (maybe even three) things they enjoy doing. The best FUNdraisers make it enjoyable for the donors as well.

Just to give you an idea of what your FUNds will be doing, consider these examples:

If you donate one \$10 toy, not only do you have the chance of winning \$500, you are helping more than 400 children celebrate the holidays through the Adopt-A-Family program.

If you spend \$10 at our Zumba event, in addition to some healthy exercise, you helping to provide a prom dress to a young lady from a local high school through Cinderella's Closet or a pair of shoes to an elementary student through Soles for Christ.

If you play trivia, your \$15 donation gets you some mental exercise and help provide a senior with better vision or a newly employed person a pair of glasses so they can do their job well through the Lions Club eyeglasses program.

If you want to go to the Musatangs game, you'll get a \$1 discount off the clubhouse price and you'll be helping the agency as well.

And all you have to do is come have FUN with us!

Becky Hughes
Board Chairperson

Help Me Hotline

A new name for a great program

When confronted with a personal problem, many people find it is very difficult to ask for help. When a person does realize they need help, the first place they should call is the "Help Me Hotline," AFL-CIO Community Services newly named Information & Referral program (I&R). There is nothing more frustrating than to finally make that call, be told, "Sorry, we don't help with that type of need" and then be referred to another agency. After three or four times of hearing this, a person usually gives up and the problem goes unresolved. By making our agency the first call, we can eliminate this type of frustration.

The Help Me Hotline is a 24-hour I&R service directing persons needing information/assistance to appropriate health and human services. Services can be accessed by phone, walk-ins, emails, written correspondence or through referrals by other social service agencies.

Our organization creates and maintains a database of programs and services then disseminate that information through a variety of ways to individuals and the community. We continually monitor availability of these services.

When a person calls or walks into the office, they are asked many personal questions: name, address, county, social security, date of birth, phone, names and ages of other members of the household, amount and source of income, military info, disabilities, any forms of assistance they are receiving, schools attending, and many others. All this information is recorded into the database and kept confidential. Based on their need and the information they supplied, the call specialist helps the person understand their situation and make informed decisions about possible solutions with ultimately a referral(s) given. The caller is instructed exactly what agency (ies) to call, any contact names, phone numbers, and an explanation of what service they provide.

Once a referral is given, the client is instructed to make the call. Our goal is to empower the caller to handle their crisis. In some cases, the agency places the call on the client's behalf. This is done when the agency believes the client is unable to comprehend what they are being told, if they are just too overwhelmed, or if they have no phone or funds for a pay phone. If we are not certain that the client will meet guidelines, or not positive that the agency we are referring the client to has funds at that moment, we will call the agency first and confirm before giving the information to the client.

The last thing they are told, if there is a problem and they are not assisted as our agency stated, is to call us back immediately. We guarantee we will look into the situation and see why they did not receive the help. Occasionally, a person does call back because they were denied services. In most cases, it was a mistake due to lack of communication. They did not say or talk to the correct person, did not supply the correct information, or

the agency they were referred to made a mistake. The problem is usually resolved with a phone call by our agency.

Our agency fills the gap. The client's particular need determines where a referral is given. Often, they need the help immediately. To save time, and be sure that every possible resource was explored, the agency has developed an "Urgent

Needs Email" that is dispersed to all the social services agencies, organizations, and churches

that provide any sort of assistance to the public. This form of correspondence is used frequently and has produced great results. Many times, the agency responding to the request is not one that normally provides the type of assistance being requested.

In 2012, 117 emails were sent to hundreds of recipients resulting in 52,400 total messages sent.

In 2012, the agency received 15,276 telephone contacts, 8,036 walk-ins and 1,966 calls from other agencies on their clients' behalf. These contacts served 27,259 individuals, including 1,604 senior citizens and 8,602 children. More than 11,970 referrals directed clients to the appropriate programs to assist with their needs in 2012.

Help Me Hotline



816.364.1131
800.365.7724

Soles
for
Christ
2013 Shoe Program

This year's event will be held
August 12 & 13, 2013.

Donations of new tennis shoes
would be greatly appreciated.
To donate or volunteer, please call
816.364.1131 or come to
1203 N. 6th St.

2011 Annual Outcomes

Community Clothes Closet

The Community Clothes Closet, located in our building at 1203 N. 6th St., offers reasonably priced, new and gently-used clothing and household goods to the public. The program also provides a convenient, tax-deductible means of recycling gently-used or new clothing and household goods.

In 2011, more than 1,400 individuals donated 595,700 items to the Clothes Closet, with 278,462 items distributed back to the community. Of those, 8,912 were given free, and 269,550 were given to other agencies. A total of 1,042 adults, 43 seniors and 711 children received free clothing or household goods.

Free clothing vouchers are given to clients who show need or have vouchers from partner agencies. Clients can also volun-

teer and earn \$6 an hour in credit to be spent towards clothing or household goods.

One of the lowest priced thrift stores in the area, the Clothes Closet offers special discounts, including Senior Citizen Wednesdays, 1/2 price and bag sales. Merchandise is added daily, so there is always something new to find.

Donations can be made any time the Clothes Closet is open, Monday through Saturday. Pick ups are also available on Wednesday and can be scheduled by calling the office at 364-1131. All donations are tax deductible and a receipt can be given at the time of drop-off.

Cinderella's Closet

A collaboration between the St. Joseph Junior League and Community Services, Cinderella's Closet allows young ladies the opportunity to dress the part for special events such as high school prom, college formals and military balls. With this program, they are able to participate in a coming-of-age ritual that many of us take for granted; it is an opportunity for creating memories that last a lifetime.

Donated dresses, shoes, jewelry, and other accessories are available and free to the girls twice a year, both in the spring and fall, coinciding with high school and college events.

For many of the parents who find themselves responsible for this cost it provides much needed financial relief.

In the three years that the agency has partnered with the program, 650 dresses have been distributed. In 2012, Cinderella's Closet provided more than 220 young women a dress for their special day.

Soles for Christ

Established by members of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in 2003, Soles for Christ has been partnered with our agency since its inception. The program provides a new pair of shoes to school-age children at the beginning of the school year.

The program has two goals: boost the child's self-esteem and enthusiasm for school and to aid many parents who struggle to afford new shoes and other costs associated with the beginning of the school year. For some families, the shoes provided by this program are the only new shoes their child(ren) ever receives.

Since 2003, more than 6,640 pairs of shoes were given to area children and Soles for Christ has grown into a joint effort between the agency and several churches in the St. Joseph area.

In 2012, 1103 children from 462 households received a new pair of shoes. This year's event will be held August For information on the 2013 distribution, please see the information box on the page to the left.

Lions Club Eyeglasses

Since 2005, Community Services has teamed up with the area Lions Clubs to distribute glasses to adults without insurance or medical assistance. Because of the program, over 1075 people have been supplied a pair of free glasses within the past eight years — glasses critical for work, injury avoidance and optic health.

In 2005, Lions Clubs approached our agency and asked if we would manage the application process for the program when the Division of Family Services could no longer work with the organization. While the Lions Clubs could not afford to compensate our agency for our service, we decided to accept the job because of the numerous calls we receive requesting help with eyeglasses.

Without our agency's assistance, many people in the community would go without eyeglasses; we felt our participation would be well worth the time when considering the recipients' benefits. In 2008, Family Guidance became an additional partner to the program by funding eye exams. Since 2005, 1,078 St. Joseph residents were given glasses. In 2012, 194 applicants qualified for assistance.

Adopt-A-Family Round-Up

After 29 years, the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program has helped more than 65,000 people celebrate during the Christmas season.

In 2012, a total of 902 families, consisting of 3,010 individuals, were given assistance during the 8-week program. These families were from Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Caldwell, Clinton, Daviess and DeKalb counties in Missouri and Doniphan County in Kansas. Families consisted of 1,290 adults, 123 senior citizens, and 1,648 children.

The program provides assistance in several ways: community adoption, food baskets, gift room visits and gift certificates.

— A **community adoption** occurs when a family, individual or business provide gifts, gift certificates or food items directly to an applicant.

— **Food baskets** are provided by community adopters and purchased with other monetary donations. They are filled with the supplies needed to feed a family for Christmas dinner, along with some basic food staples.

— Items for the **gift room** are collected at sponsoring stores, through walk-in donations made by community members, and throughout the year in the AFL-CIO Community Clothes Closet. Applicants who are not adopted by community adopters are able to “shop” for gifts for their family members.

— **Gift certificates** are purchased with donated funds to provide those who are not selected by a community adopter the opportunity to buy gifts at a local discount store for family members. Cards are also used to purchase gifts for elderly and disabled adoptees who are not adopted in the community.

If you were an adopter or donor during the 2012 program, please accept our thanks again. Your continued support is invaluable.



CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Toy Drive: June 29 - July 27th - Because the number of toys available to families in the gift room during the Adopt-A-family Christmas program is so limited, it was decided that a drive would be helpful. For every toy of a \$10 value or more, donors are given a ticket. At the end of the month, a \$500 winner will be drawn. Toys will be accepted the entire month at all events and daily at the office, 1203 N 6th St.

Zumba: July 13th - from 9 to 11 a.m. Exercise for your health and our welfare. We have secured the Firefighters Hall so we will have plenty of room. It will be \$10 per person. To make a reservation, call 364-1131.

Mustangs night: July 20th - Come out and cheer the Mustangs on to their next championship title at their last home game of the season. Game time is 7 p.m. If we sell 250 tickets, we get a portion of the proceeds; at 350, we get half of the 50/50 drawing. For \$6 tickets, or to donate tickets to the Noyes Home, please call 364-1131.

Trivia night: July 27th - Come test your knowledge at our holiday trivia contest. 7 p.m., Firefighters Hall. Each player is \$15, with a 10 person per team maximum. Bring your own snacks and drinks. There will also be a silent auction and 50/50 drawing.

Come to any or come to all of these great FUNraisers.
AFL-CIO Community Services can really use your support!



**Forget the
pig and the
turkey too!**



**Now we've
got big bucks
for you!**

Any time you spend more than \$5 in the Community Clothes Closet, you can enter to win a \$10 gift card. Drawings will be made the last day of each month. The more you shop, the better your chances!

2012 Community Supporters

Supporter

Donna Jean Boyer
Cathedral of St. Joseph
Bill Green
Jack & Carole Fennel
Wayne & Mina Linker
Karla Long
Ursula Barbara Lundberg
Sandra Moles
Carl Nelson
Barbara Snook
H J & K M Schroth
Yurkonis Family Living
Trust

Super Supporter

Amalgamated Transit
Union Local #847
Shelda Carson
Kurt & Nancy Janicek
Sheila Murray
Glen & Marcia Porter
Shirley Ann Simmons
Chuck Tripp

Shining Supporter

Festival of Sharing
Shirley J Ford
Virginia Landis

Donald & Mary Sedlacek
Charles J Steele
Wyatt Park Christian Church
Womens Fellowship

Spectacular Supporter

AT&T Group
Clark & Nancy Hampton
Holheimer Charitable Trust
King Hill Christian Church
King Hill Christian Church
CWF
Laborers Local 579
Optimist Club of East Hills

Our Lady of Guadalupe
Parish
Plumbers & Pipefitters
Local Union #45
RS Electric Resource Group
Mary Anna Smith
St John Charismatic
Episcopal Church
St Paul Lutheran Church
Jan Strop

A full listing of Adopt-A-Family supporters will be included in the fall newsletter. If we excluded any other supporters from our thank yous, please let us know so we can update our files.



**YES! I want to become a Community Supporter
of AFL-CIO Community Services'
24/7/365 Program and will be looking for my
membership card in the mail.**

Name _____

Address _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership Support Levels:

Standard \$24; Super \$48; Shining \$96; Spectacular \$240; \$500; \$1000; Other \$ _____

Check, # _____ Credit Card # _____ Exp Date _____ Type _____

My Employer has a matching gift program

I am interested in making an endowment gift; please contact me.

Please contact me. I would like to help with the following volunteer projects:

Clothes Closet; Soles for Christ; Adopt-A-Family Christmas; Other special events

Every member counts. Thank you for your support!

Please call 364-1131 to make a donation or
mail this form and your payment to:

AFL-CIO Community Services
Attn: Membership Committee
1203 N. 6th St.
St. Joseph, MO 64501



AFL-CIO Community Services and United Way Partnership

AFL-CIO Community Services is a 501(a)(1) nonprofit organization.
Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

AFL-CIO Community Services
1203 N. Sixth St.
Saint Joseph, MO 64501

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AFL-CIO Community Services and United Way Partnership

AFL-CIO Community Services

May 2012

ADOPT-A-FAMILY

Volunteers are the most consistent element when determining the recipe for success for non-profits. Almost every program we administer at Community Services relies on volunteer support. Each program has different needs. If you are looking for volunteer opportunities, you will hopefully find a good fit with our agency. The following is a brief description of the volunteer opportunities for each program and the dates we are needing assistance this Summer and Fall.

Clothes Closet — Sorting and displaying donated items; picking up donated items each week — volunteers are needed year-round

Soles for Christ — Distribution of shoes to children; some paperwork to track donations August 2 & 3, 2012, to sort shoes; August 6 & 7, 2012, for distribution

Cinderella's Closet — Distribution of dresses to high school and college-age females; cleaning and repairing dresses — October 20, 2012, for Military Ball; other appointments on a call-in basis.

Adopt-A-Family — Gift pick up from retail sponsors twice each week during seasons for elderly and disabled individuals; food basket assembly; shop-at-home set up and shopping assistance; delivery of gifts to elderly and disabled individuals; arrange appointments for gift room visitors; gift delivery to families — November to December each year; dates will be announced in the Fall newsletter.

Clothes Closet Facebook page is used to announce special sales, offer glimpses of current bargains and highlights contest winners. If you are looking for a bargain, this is a great place to visit.



Adopt-A-Family — During the holiday season, our Facebook page provides adopters and community supporters a chance to track our daily adoption numbers and provides information for adopters, donation locations and program office hours.

AFL-CIO Community Clothes Closet — The AFL-CIO Community Services — Our website includes descriptions of our programs, service information, agency history and directions to our office. Facebook provides up to the minute updates on our programs, events and any special occasions in the office.

Adopt-A-Family — During the holiday season, our Facebook page provides adopters and community supporters a chance to track our daily adoption numbers and provides information for adopters, donation locations and program office hours.

FIND US ONLINE

AFL-CIO Community Services can be found online at www.helpnet.org. In addition, many of our agency programs have their own Facebook pages. Information on our programs are updated regularly through our website and Facebook pages. Please "like" us to keep up on the latest news and to show your support for our programs. If you prefer to get our newsletter online, please email us at atl-mail@helpnet.org and include online newsletter in the subject header. We will add your information to our online distribution list.