

Shoe distribution moved as precaution, dates set

AFL-CIO Community Services is making novel plans for the 2021 Soles for Christ shoe distribution, including a move to a larger venue and a schedule change from the traditional Monday - Tuesday format.

This year's distribution will be held at the St. Joseph Civic Arena, 100 N 4th St., as a precaution against potential COVID-related issues, including avoiding large crowds, social distancing limitations of the traditional agency space, and providing means to extend and spread out those waiting in line. To cut down on daily attendance numbers, the formerly two-day event is being extended to three days and will run from Tuesday, August 17th, through Thursday, August 19th.

This will be the 19th year for the perpetual program that offers shoes to children from pre-school to 12th grade living in Andrew and Buchanan counties in MO, as well as Doniphan County, KS.

Donors can contribute to this program by donating new tennis shoes, making monetary donations or by volunteering during the distribution days.

NEW shoes can be donated at the agency, 1203 N. 6th

St., through Friday, August 13th. Hours for drop off are 8 am – 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

Volunteers for the program would help size and fit the children with their shoes, keep stock organized, or help with family registration. Monetary donations are welcome, and all donations are tax deductible.

If interested in volunteering or to make a donation by phone, please contact our office at 816.364.1131. Donations may also be made online at helpmenow.org or by mail.

2021 Program Dates

Distribution is scheduled for:

- ▶ Tuesday, Aug. 17, 8 am – 4 pm
- ▶ Wednesday, Aug. 18, 8 am – 6 pm
- ▶ Thursday, Aug. 19, 8 am – 1 pm



Donation suggestions

- ▶ NEW tennis shoes, as schools do not allow flip-flop, dress or slip-on styles to be used in gym class.
- ▶ Shoes needed include toddler 5 - 10, youth 11 - 6 and all adult sizes
- ▶ Monetary donations are used to purchase shoes when we run out of a size and for special needs.

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

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AFL-CIO Community Services

Spring 2021

1203 N. 6th St., St. Joseph, MO 64501

816.364.1131

www.helpmenow.org

Help Me Headlines



We were lucky. In comparison to other, larger cities, St. Joseph did not see the level of chaos created by the COVID pandemic found in other areas of the country. Instead St. Joseph saw devastating flooding in its Southside, moderate infection rates, and anticipatory cutbacks that left many unemployed or underemployed. Luckily, federal funding and unemployment programming has helped many individuals and businesses remain on their feet. However, the next several months are going to prove challenging as we begin to return to the new version of normal.

Many economists have warned the real financial and economic challenges still lie ahead as businesses work to recoup losses from last year and attempt to rebuild lost reserves. These challenges affect more than business owners, and usually makes the largest impact on the employees who lose wages because of hourly cutbacks or loss of employment.

That's where we come in and why the services the agency provides are such a vital part of the rebuilding process. The agency provides a variety of services, many of which are unique to our community and provide assistance that cannot be found elsewhere. Our primary program, the Help Me Hotline, is utilized by both social service providers and those needing assistance, making it essential to our community. The Help Me Hotline provides information and referral service to all of Northwest Missouri and Northeast Kansas. Through this service, anyone needing assistance can call to get up-to-date information on all available area resources for assistance. It saves time and resources for both those needing assistance and coordinating agencies because it eliminates fruitless searches and conserves area agency resources.

The wealth of national COVID resources make it seem help is literally a phone call away, however many programs have very particular guidelines and require applicants to fill specific demographics to receive assistance. Unfortunately, some others are not help at all and are actually taking advantage of those who need assistance. Families who have been directly

...See Post-pandemic p 2

\$25 ❖ One pair of shoes through Soles for Christ
❖ 12 items for a single parent and child from Fab-U-Less Finds
❖ One tank of gas for a person to get to work for week

\$50 ❖ Referral services for 7 individuals (avg. \$7 per call)
❖ A medical prescription with Emergency Assistance
❖ Five space heaters through Seasonal Services
❖ A case of diapers through Diaper Depot

\$100 ❖ 40 items for family of six from Fab-U-Less Finds
❖ Holiday gifts for a teen through Adopt-A-Family
❖ Four pairs of shoes for Soles for Christ
❖ An air conditioner unit for one household

\$250 ❖ Referral service for 35 individuals (avg. \$7 per call)
❖ Holiday gifts for family of four or five through Adopt-A-Family program
❖ Cases of diapers for 5 infants with Diaper Depot
❖ A pair of glasses through the Lion's Club

\$500 ❖ One month rent for family to remain in home
❖ 240 items for 40 homeless individuals from Fab-U-Less Finds
❖ Twenty pairs of shoes for Soles for Christ
❖ Holiday gifts for a family of five through Adopt-A-Family program

\$1000 ❖ 60 days of access to CommunityPoint online database needed for referral services
❖ Box fans for 50 families through Seasonal Services
❖ Diapers for 40 infants with Diaper Depot
❖ Glasses for 4 individuals through Lion's Club

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 12: Sunny Time Sale – We've held back the good stuff for one day only at Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store. Door prizes every 30 minutes.

10 am to 2 pm,
1203 N. 6th St.



August 17-19: Soles for Christ shoe program distribution – St. Joseph Civic Arena, 100 N 4th St. – Shoes will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis, Tuesday, 8 am – 4 pm; Wednesday, from 8 am – 6 pm; and Thursday, 8 am – 1 pm.

Post-pandemic reality requires local support, community effort

...from p 1

affected by the COVID pandemic can call the agency to quickly find accurate and reliable local support and avoid the demoralizing pain of eviction, the overwhelming stress of shut-off notices, and the gnawing ache of hunger. Instead of aimlessly searching while deadlines loom, answers can be quickly found by calling the Help Me Hotline.

In addition to the Help Me Hotline, Community Services administers five year-round programs and two annual programs. Year-long programs include: Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store, Lions Club eyeglasses, Diaper Depot, Seasonal Services, and Emergency Assistance. Annual programs are Adopt-A-Family Christmas and Soles for Christ.

All of the agency programs are independently funded; they rely on donor support to exist. By donating to AFL-CIO Community Services, you are directly supporting these programs and your fellow St. Joseph residents. To provide a better picture of how funds are used, please consider these highlighted common program values, found in the graph on pg 1.

To assist with these valuable programs, please return your donation in the included remittance envelope or visit helpmenow.org to donate online.

AFL-CIO Community Services

Spring 2021



SHOW YOUR SUPPORT



GIVE FUNDS The success of all AFL-CIO Community Services programs is due to the generosity of community members and businesses that provide financial support to agency programs. By making an unrestricted monetary donation, you are allowing us to respond to the program with the most current needs. Because many of the programs are seasonal, a monetary donation ensures the success of the programs rather than restricting the funds to a limited period of use. To make a donation, visit the agency website at helpmenow.org, complete and return the included donation envelope or call 816.364.1131.



GIVE YOUR TIME Volunteers are the backbone of many agency programs. In 2019, volunteers distributed shoes to school-age children through the Soles for Christ program; helped sort and distribute clothing and household essentials in the Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store; and adopted, shopped for and distributed Christmas gifts to nearly 790 families living in the St. Joseph area through the Adopt-A-Family program. The options for volunteering are endless and we can always find a match for your talents. To give time, please visit the agency website at helpmenow.org or call 816.364.1131.



GIVE GIFTS The opportunities and the options for giving are numerous for donors interested in giving items, and every item received goes to good use. New and gently used clothing and household items are always welcome in the Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store. We are happy to pick up yard sale leftovers, or take items you can no longer use when you do your Spring or Fall cleaning. Diapers and wipes are always needed for the Diaper Depot; used eyeglasses can be donated to the Lion's Club eyeglasses program; and new shoes can be given to the Soles for Christ shoe program. Donate by calling 816.364.1131.



GIVE ONLINE AFL-CIO Community Services is online at helpmenow.org. In addition, many of the agency programs have their own Facebook pages. Information on the programs are updated regularly through the website and Facebook pages. Please "like" us to keep up on the latest news and to show your support for the agency programs. In addition to the AFL-CIO Community Services Facebooks page, there are pages for Adopt-A-Family Christmas, Soles for Christ, and Fab-U-Less Finds.

2020 Annual Outcomes

Help Me Hotline
816-364-1131
800-365-7724

- ❖ Callers are provided resources for basic needs including food, shelter, healthcare, mental health, employment, education and seasonal assistance (tax preparation, school supplies, heating/cooling centers) through this perpetual program.
- ❖ Callers reach a trained, caring Call Specialist who assesses the needs of each person and searches a database with more than 8,000 services to connect callers with the help they need.

- ❖ In 2020, the agency had 14,555 contacts, made 6,578 referrals, and advocated on behalf of 2,650 clients.
- ❖ Anyone can search the Help Me Hotline online by visiting www.helpmenow.org.

It's free.

It's confidential.

It's available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

2,303
volunteer & service hours

Fab-U-Less Finds
Fashion & Furnishings for Less



In 2020, 83 applicants qualified for this perpetual eyewear through program.



\$7,950

- ❖ The Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store's perpetual voucher program allows each household to receive six free items per person within the household, four times a year.
- ❖ The store is open to the public and relies on donations for its inventory; the store offers pickups for those donors who cannot deliver.

13,257
free clothing & household items

\$28,575

- ❖ Of the 748 families who applied for the annual program, 196 households had \$0 income.
- ❖ The majority, 90 percent (671 families), are at 100 percent or below poverty guidelines; 6 percent (47 families) are up to 35 percent above poverty guidelines; and 3 percent (22 families) are 36 percent or more above poverty guidelines.
- ❖ In 2020, 943 different adopters provided assistance to the families. This included, 161 individuals/families; and 196 businesses/organizations. There were 586 undesignated monetary donations made to the program to help cover the cost of food baskets, gift cards and vouchers for families.

More than 86,700 individuals have been served through Adopt-A-Family since 1983.

2,431
individuals applied in 2020



970 adults
1,297 children
164 seniors



- ❖ Parents and adults are able to receive diapers and wipes through this perpetual program up to four times each year. There are no eligibility guidelines and no fees for this service. Quantities given to families are based on availability.
- ❖ Two years ago the agency added adult incontinence supplies to the inventory. Many older adults struggle with this issue. Being on a fixed income makes buying these items a difficulty for elderly individuals.
- ❖ Last year, the Diaper Depot provided 4,547 diapers to 280 children. Additionally, 268 units of adult incontinence supplies were provided to adults, at a value of \$268.

diaperdepot

4,547
diapers given
\$1,409



306
individuals

The four most common funding needs of 2020 were: prescriptions, sewer bills, water bills, and gasoline.

\$5,000

- ❖ There are no eligibility guidelines and no fees for this perpetual service.
- ❖ The agency uses emergency funds for the people that "fall through the cracks" like car payments, insurance, and repairs, phone bills, medical needs and other necessities required to exist. The agency tries to fill those gaps.
- ❖ The agency coordinates all available funds from the community and then pays the amount needed or adds any additional funds needed.



114
pairs of shoes

\$2,850

Soles for Christ
Shoe Program

- ❖ Children in pre-k through 12th grade, living in Buchanan and Andrew counties in Missouri and Doniphan County in Kansas, are eligible to receive a free pair of new tennis shoes through this annual program.

- ❖ Every child that comes to the distribution receives shoes.

- ❖ The first year, 210 pairs of school shoes were distributed.

- ❖ In 2020, the distribution event was cancelled because of COVID. Despite the cancellation, 53 area households were served, with 114 children receiving a pair of shoes, at a total value of \$2,850.

- ❖ For 2021, the distribution event will be held at the St. Joseph Civic Arena as a precautionary measure to prevent any potential COVID-related issues regarding social distancing. More information can be found on pg 2 of this newsletter.

Seasonal Services

- ❖ This perpetual program provides weather-appropriate items to individuals and families through local partnerships.
- ❖ Through a partnership with Heart Warmers, space heaters are given to those in need during the cold weather months. To combat summer heat, fans are donated by Energy and air conditioners are donated by the public.
- ❖ In 2020, 41 heaters, 67 fans and 6 air conditioners were distributed to 57 households, at a value of \$2,094.



114
units given

\$2,094

- 1 NO DAYS LOST:** As an essential service, the agency remained open during the duration of the COVID shut-down and was able to continue all perpetual program services without any interruption. During the most vulnerable times, clients were given items at the door to protect both clients and agency staff.

- 2 NEW PARKING LOT:** Despite potential COVID delays, the agency parking lot replacement was completed as scheduled. Anyone who has been here in the past few years knows that was a major improvement!

- 3 COVID-CAPABLE ADOPT-A-FAMILY:** Revamped and completed a normally client-intense Adopt-A-Family program season despite having a COVID outbreak among staff members.

- 4 75 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:** This year, the administrative staff reached a combined work experience of 75 years, with Executive Director Penny Adams celebrating 32 years of service to the organization.

- 5 FUNDING GOALS MET:** During uncertain times, with no way to anticipate results, the agency was able to reach fundraising goals set for 2020 programs. This was accomplished through the generosity and support of numerous St. Joseph businesses and community members.

2020 Program Highlights