



HelpMe Headlines

AFL-CIO COMMUNITY SERVICES

1203 N. 6th St., St. Joseph, MO 64501 www.helpmenow.org

Area need pushes expansions, drives agency programming

Most businesses actively search for ways to grow and expand their reach. Growth means more sales, which means profit increases. For social service agencies, growth isn't always a good thing as it typically indicates an increase in need, or more individuals who cannot meet their own needs.

In the past year, the agency has seen a marked increase in need across all programming. The Help Me Hotline saw a 13 percent increase in calls during 2022; Adopt-A-Family had an increase of more than 100 families. Soles for Christ saw its largest increase since COVID shuttered the school shoe program, with participation increasing by 217 children for 2022. Seasonal Services provided more fans and space heaters than any time in the program's history, with 237 households served in 2022.

The Diaper Depot and Lions Club Eyeglasses had so many unfilled requests in 2022, the agency is taking steps to extensively expand both programs. Through the Lions Club partnership, the program will continue to serve uninsured clients, and will add services for children; it will also serve those who are between Medicare/Medicaid prescription renewals. The Diaper Depot expansion will move from an emergency supply program to a supplemental program, providing participating households with up to two-thirds of a child's diapers per month for up to three years.

Unfortunately, expansions for social services carry the same price tag as any business, but do not hold the same profit-potential – unless those profits are measured in community health and welfare. Gratefully, our agency programs can 'profit' from community and donor support, and we are hopeful we can once again rely on our generous supporters to invest in these program expansions. *See Agency on Pg 2*

Soles for Christ moves for 2023

AFL-CIO Community Services is preparing once again for the Soles for Christ shoe distribution, which offers shoes to children from pre-school to 12th grade living in Andrew, Buchanan, DeKalb and Clinton counties in MO, as well as Doniphan County, KS. Unfortunately, the 2023 event will not be held at the St. Joseph Civic Arena, as it has the past two years, because of conflicts with arena updates. The program is still planned for August 8 and 9, from 9 am – 7 pm daily; this year it will be held at St Joseph Scottish Rite, 515 N. 6th St. *See Soles on Pg 2*

Donation suggestions

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

UPCOMING events

JUNE 3: Spring into Summer Sale – Prepping for warmer months will never be cheaper than the deals you find at Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store. For every \$25 you spend, you'll earn \$5 in Fab Funds for your next visit. 10 am – 2 pm, 1203 N. 6th St.

JULY 20 - 25: Christmas in July Sale – Ho-Ho-Hot holiday discounts at Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store. For every \$25 you spend, you'll earn \$5 in Fab Funds for your next visit. 9 am – 5 pm, 1203 N. 6th St.

AUGUST 8 & 9: Soles for Christ distribution – Shoes will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis. Tuesday & Wednesday 9 am – 7 pm, St Joseph Scottish Rite, 515 N. 6th St.

SEPTEMBER 23: Fall into Savings Sale – Get ready for those cooler months while saving your cold, hard cash at Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store. For every \$25 you spend, you'll earn \$5 in Fab Funds for your next visit. 10 am – 2 pm, 1203 N. 6th St.

NOVEMBER 1: Adopt-A-Family Program Begins – Applications will be available for the 2023 program; forms can be downloaded from the website, helpmenow.org, or picked up at the agency, 1203 N. 6th St.

DECEMBER 1 & 2: Family Day Out - Adopt-a-Family benefit event – Craft and vendor event, with food and Santa too. More than 75 vendors! Friday, 4 – 8 pm; Saturday, 8 am – 3 pm, St Joseph Rec Center

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

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AFL-CIO COMMUNITY SERVICES

SPRING 2023



GIVE FUNDS The success of all agency programs is due to the generosity of community members and businesses that provide financial support. By making an unrestricted monetary donation or becoming a business/corporate event sponsor, 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 2022, volunteers distributed 998 pairs of 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 830 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 Lions 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 and the Help Me Hotline/Online can be found on the newly updated website at helpmenow.org. Information on programs are updated regularly through the website and Facebook pages. Please "like" us to keep up on the latest news, share information with your friends and to show support for the agency programs. In addition to the AFL-CIO Community Services Facebook page, there are individual pages for Adopt-A-Family Christmas, Soles for Christ and Fab-U-Less Finds.

❖ One pair of shoes through Soles for Christ **\$25**

❖ I&R services for 7 individuals **\$50**

❖ Free items for family of six on Fab Finds voucher **\$100**

❖ Gifts for family of four through Adopt-A-Family Diaper Depot **\$250**

❖ One month rent for family to remain in home **\$500**

Area need pushes expansions, drives agency programming

From Agency on Pg 1
The Lions Club eyeglasses program is supported through donations made to local Lions Clubs and through participation in Lions-sponsored events, such as the pancake breakfast and annual fruit sale.

Donations made during this year's annual campaign can be specific or general; with general donations directed to programs of most need at the time of the donation. To provide a better picture of how funds are used, please consider the highlighted common program values to the left and below. To see the impact made each year by supporters' donations, please review 2022 program outcomes shared on pages 3-5 of this newsletter.

In addition to the Diaper Depot and Lions Club Eyeglasses, Community Services administers four other perpetual programs and two annual programs. Year-long programs include: Help Me Hotline Information & Referral, Fab-U-Less Finds thrift store, Seasonal Services and Emergency Assistance. Annual programs are Adopt-A-Family Christmas and Soles for Christ.

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

\$1000

- ❖ Diapers for 40 infants with Diaper Depot
- ❖ Box fans for 50 families through Seasonal Services
- ❖ 60 days of access to Community-Point database needed for Help Me Hotline Information & Referral
- ❖ Eyeglasses for 4 individuals through Lions Club program

Soles for Christ moves for 2023 distribution event

From Soles on Pg 1
Shoes will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis. Children must be present to receive shoes. A full list of program requirements can be found on the agency website at helpmenow.org and on the Soles for Christ program's Facebook page.

Donors can contribute to this pro-

gram by giving new tennis shoes, monetary donations or by volunteering during the distribution days. NEW shoes can be donated at the agency, 1203 N. 6th St., until Friday, July 28th. Hours for drop off are 8 am – 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Monetary donations are also welcome, and all donations are tax deductible.

Volunteers for the program would help size and fit children with their shoes, keep stock organized or help with family registration.

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.



❖ 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).

❖ 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 2022, the agency had 32,607 contacts, made 8,627 referrals, and advocated on behalf of 2,591 clients.

❖ Anyone can now search the agency's database through Help Me Online by visiting www.helpmenow.org.

32,607
unduplicated contacts

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

\$5,612
in funding provided
assistance for **101**
individuals

- ❖ The four most common funding needs of 2022 were: gasoline/automotive/transportation, electric bills, sewer bills and gas bills.
- ❖ There are no boundaries, no eligibility guidelines and no fees for this 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.



❖ Of the 816 families that applied during the 2022 program, 255 households had \$0 income.

❖ The majority, 79 percent (647 families), are at 100 percent or below poverty guidelines; 18 percent (144 families) are up to 35 percent above poverty guidelines; and 3 percent (25 families) are 36 percent or more above poverty guidelines.

❖ In 2022, 723 different adopters provided assistance to the families. This included, 252 individuals, families, businesses, and organizations. There were 471 undesignated monetary donations made to the program to help cover the cost of food baskets, gift cards and vouchers for families.



2,602
individuals adopted

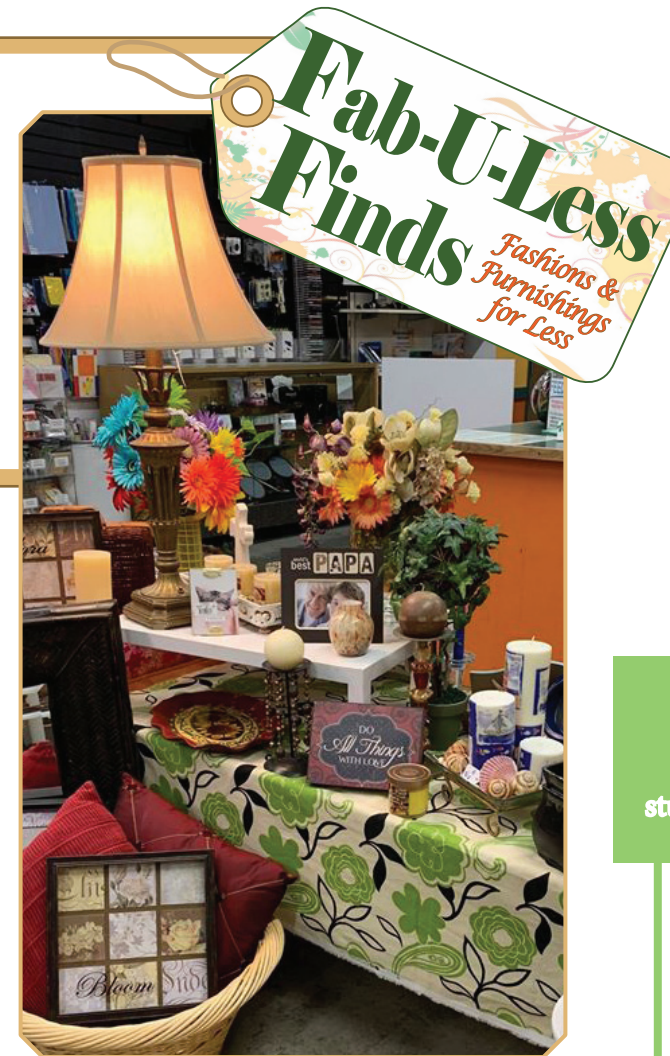
91,500 individuals have been served by Adopt-A-Family since 1983.

1,003 adults
1,394 children
205 seniors



\$37,270
in funding provided
assistance for **2,553**
individuals

- ❖ The Fab-U-Less Finds 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 pick ups for those donors who cannot deliver.
- ❖ The voucher program served 2,553 people in 2022, providing 11,020 free items, including clothes, household, furniture and medical supplies.



❖ Parents are able to get diapers and wipes through the program up to four times each year. Quantities are based on availability.

❖ A few 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 diapers to 126 children, and provided 147 units of adult incontinence supplies, at a total value of \$549.

1,545
items provided



In 2022,
240 volunteers donated
1,948
hours toward agency
programs

\$46,752
value



❖ In 2022, 61 individuals applied for glasses, with 20 receiving a pair.

❖ Nearly 2,700 people have applied for a pair of glasses critical for work, injury avoidance and optic health.

❖ This program is a group effort: Family Guidance provides funding for eye exams; local optometrists provide the exams and fit clients for glasses; the three local Lions Clubs fund it as a group; and Community Services administers the program.



\$1,160
value of glasses

998
students given shoes

\$24,950
value

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

❖ Every qualified child who comes to the distribution receives shoes. Shoes are purchased if the correct size is not readily available.

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

❖ In 2022, the program utilized 138 volunteers performing 743 hours of service.



\$6,055
in funding provided
assistance for **586**
individuals

❖ Heart Warmers is a partnership for the agency. Created by R.J. Jackson, the program provides space heaters to those in need during the cold weather months.

❖ To combat summer heat, fans are donated by Everygy and air conditioners are donated by the public.

❖ In 2022, 123 heaters, 131 fans and 4 air conditioners were given to 237 households, which included 586 individuals.

1 GOAL: Expand the Diaper Depot program into a supplementary, rather than emergency, program; serve at least 40 children with at least 50 percent of monthly diapers.
VALUE: Approximately \$50 per child

FUNDS NEEDED: \$20,000

2 GOAL: Provide Christmas gifts to 750 families through the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program.

VALUE: Approximately \$75 per person, based on a yearly average of 2,500 individuals.

FUNDS NEEDED: \$187,500

3 GOAL: Increase participation in Lions Club Eyeglasses programs to more than 60 completed applications.

VALUE: Approximately \$125 per person.

FUNDS NEEDED: \$7,500

4 GOAL: Acquire box truck or pick up to replace 20-year-old truck used for donation pickup and deliveries to support Fab-U-Less Finds Thrift Store and Voucher program.

VALUE: Approximately \$125,000 in donated items.

FUNDS NEEDED: \$45,000 - \$75,000