

## Program recipient shares experience, gives gratitude

Individuals contact the Help Me Hotline looking for help with a wide range of issues. Calls concerning housing, utilities, medical issues, and employment-related expenses are answered daily. Like many other callers, Julie came to the Help Me Hotline looking for help with moving. However, like many who face unexpected life events, several challenges prevented her from what seemed a fairly simple change, and she needed a little help overcoming the obstacles standing in her way.

**Main issue:** Julie called the Help Me Hotline because she needed to move. In November, she was given notice her grandson would enter the foster system if she could not assume guardianship of the two-year-old. Already the guardian of his five-year-old sister, she immediately began the legal process, hoping she could have both the children with her for the upcoming holidays. Shortly into the process, she found her grandson could not move into the apartment she was living in with her granddaughter as Child Services requires children of different sexes to have separate bedrooms.

**“Without the help, I would not have been able to move and get my grandson home with me and his sister.”**

**Related difficulties:** In addition to finding extra funds to cover moving and deposit expenses, she was anxious about keeping up with bills after being temporarily unemployed. She also worried about feeding, clothing, and caring for another person on her limited income. Would she qualify for rental assistance or help with a deposit for a larger home? Was utility help available and would she qualify? And what about the upcoming holidays?

**Assistance provided:** The in-house annual Adopt-A-Family program was the first referral given by Help Me Hotline Specialists. After visiting with Julie to assess her situation, staff referred her to Community Housing Management, where she was able to locate a new home, and Community Action Partnership for utility assistance so she could focus her funds on her upcoming first month's rent. The agency also pledged funds through the Emergency Assistance program to cover her \$690 deposit. The family was adopted through Adopt-A-Family; not only did the adopters provide gifts, they also donated funds toward her first month's rent. Much of what was given to the family were items for the children, including toys and clothing, both which were needed and helped cut down on expenses.

**Client feedback:** “Without the help, I would not have been able to move and get my grandson home with me and his sister. Things are great. He is a happy little boy and a joy to be around. I have never been in a position where I have needed help. I want to thank everyone for all their assistance in helping get him home before Christmas.”

## Shoe distribution set

AFL-CIO Community Services is once again organizing the Soles for Christ shoe program. The program 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.

Shoes can be dropped off at the agency, 1203 N. 6th St., through Friday, August 14th. 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.

### 2020 Program Dates

Distribution will be on Monday, August 17, from 8 am - 4 pm and again on Tuesday, August 18, from 8 am - 6 pm.

### Donation suggestions

- ▶ New tennis shoes are best, 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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**June 18: Super Saturday Sale** – We've held back the good stuff for one day only 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 to 2 pm, 1203 N. 6th St.



**August 17-18: Soles for Christ distribution** – Shoes will be given out on a first-come, first-served basis, Monday 8 am - 4 pm and again on Tuesday, from 8 am - 6 pm.

**August 8: Trivia Night** – Come test your knowledge at our trivia contest. Doors open at 6 pm, play begins at 7 pm, Pony Express Museum, 914 Penn St. Each player is \$20, with a 10 person team maximum.

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

**Return Service Requested**

Printing services provided by Cookman Printing



AFL-CIO Community Services and United Way Partnership

AFL-CIO Community Services

Spring 2020



**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.

NONPROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
AFL-CIO  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES  
PERMIT NO. 76

# Help Me Headlines



AFL-CIO Community Services

Spring 2020

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

816.364.1131

www.helpmenow.org

## Pandemic stresses need for local donor support

While the COVID-19 virus has impacted absolutely everyone throughout the United States, non-profits may see the most long-term repercussions of this pandemic. When finances are affected and businesses and households have to make hard decisions, charitable donations are usually the first eliminated. While understood, it could not happen at a worse time because the need for assistance increases exponentially at these times as well.

We know deciding which causes to support in the coming months will be difficult. Because AFL-CIO Community Services is not an affiliate of a national organization, it relies solely on local funding to support the eight programs it administers. Without your support, the agency could not continue to provide services for our community members who need it.

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.

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 donations are used to support programming. To provide a better picture of how funds are used, please consider these highlighted common program values. To assist with these valuable programs, please return your donation in the included remittance envelope or visit helpmenow.org to donate online.

\$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 services 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

# 2019 Annual Outcomes

**13,497**  
unduplicated  
contacts

- 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 2019, the agency had 13,497 contacts, made 5,591 referrals, and advocated on behalf of 3,213 clients.
- Anyone can search the Help Me Hotline online by visiting [www.helpmenow.org](http://www.helpmenow.org).

**Help Me Hotline**

816.364.1131  
800.365.7724

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



**18,465**  
free clothing &  
household items

- 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 pickups for those donors who cannot deliver.

**Lions RECYCLE For Sight**

In 2019, 145 applicants qualified for eyewear.

**\$12,000**

**\$45,638**

- Of the 789 families that applied for the program, 278 households had \$0 income.
- The majority, 88 percent (690 families), are at 100 percent or below poverty guidelines; 6 percent (51 families) are up to 35 percent above poverty guidelines; and 3 percent (21 families) are 36 percent or more above poverty guidelines.
- In 2019, 829 different adopters provided assistance to the families. This included, 155 individuals/families; and 119 businesses/organizations. There were 555 undesignated monetary donations made to the program to help cover the cost of food baskets, gift cards and vouchers for families.

**2,398**  
individuals  
applied in 2019

**963**  
adults  
**1,261**  
children  
**174**  
seniors



**diaperdepot**

**4,702**  
diapers given  
**\$1,458**

- Parents are able to get diapers and wipes through the program up to four times each year. Quantities 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 diapers on 114 occasions, for 68 households.

**Emergency Assistance**  
Fund to the people when you can't

The four most common funding needs of 2019 were: sewer bills, electric bills, water bills, and rent.

**\$12,107**

**306**  
individuals

- 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.
- The agency coordinates all available funds from the community and then pays the amount needed or adds any additional funds needed.

**Soles for Christ**  
Shoe Program



**1,120**  
pairs of shoes  
**\$28,000**

- 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.
- Every child that comes to the distribution receives shoes.
- The first year, 210 pairs of school shoes were distributed.
- In 2019, the program utilized 81 volunteers performing 493.5 hours of service.

In 2019, 3,415 volunteers donated 3,415 hours toward agency programs

**\$81,948**

## Seasonal Services

- Heart Warmers is a new partnership for the agency created by R.J. Jackson; it was created to provide space heaters to those in need during the cold weather months.
- To combat summer heat, fans are donated by KCP&L and air conditioners are donated by the public.
- In 2019, 75 heaters, 34 fans and 1 air conditioner were distributed to 57 households, which included 78 adults, 15 seniors and 58 children.



**151**  
individuals  
**\$1,780**

## 2020 Attainable Goals

**1** GOAL: Reach at least 20,000 individuals through the Help Me Hotline or through the website application, CommunityPoint.  
VALUE: Approximately \$7 per call for services  
FUNDS NEEDED: \$140,000

**2** GOAL: Supply at least 125 families with diapers through the Diaper Depot program.  
VALUE: Approximately \$25 per package  
FUNDS NEEDED: \$3,150

**3** 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

**4** GOAL: Give at least 1,200 pairs of new tennis shoes to students through the Soles for Christ shoe program.  
VALUE: \$25 per pair of shoes  
FUNDS NEEDED: \$30,000

**5** GOAL: Serve 4,200 people with free clothing, household items, and furniture through the Fab-U-Less Finds voucher program.  
VALUE: Approximately \$13.50 per person, per voucher.  
FUNDS NEEDED: \$56,700