



Serving the Local Community for over 50 years

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FAIRFAX FISH, INC.

(FOR IMMEDIATE SYMPATHETIC HELP)

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 1, 2020 - MARCH 31, 2021

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For Immediate Sympathetic Help (FISH) is a volunteer, ecumenical outreach community-based organization founded over 50 years ago. For the Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2021, Fairfax FISH was comprised of 14 churches located in the vicinity of Fairfax City, Virginia. The following is a list of the FY 2020-2021 participating churches:

Christ Evangelical Lutheran	Little River United Church of Christ
Expectation Church	Lord of Life Lutheran
Good Shepherd Episcopal	Providence Presbyterian
Fairfax Baptist	Holy Spirit Catholic
Fairfax Community Church	St. Mary of Sorrows Catholic
Fairfax Presbyterian	St. Peter's In The Woods Episcopal
Fairfax United Methodist	St. Stephen's United Methodist

FISH serves the needy of Fairfax

FISH provides funds and volunteers to serve the needy and elderly in the greater Fairfax City area of Fairfax County. FISH responds to requests for life's necessities: food, clothing, and financial assistance for delinquent rent, mortgage, utility bills and prescriptions. Requests for assistance are passed on to us by the Office of Coordinated Services Planning (CSP) which is part of the Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services. CSP social workers screen clients to verify information and to determine whether they qualify for assistance by FISH and other community based organizations. CSP can be reached at (703)-222-0880.

Financial assistance from FISH is limited to once per year (occasional exceptions are granted). Food, gasoline, and prescription requests may be filled more frequently according to need. The FISH governing council sets a monetary limit for each category; these limits are reviewed monthly by the Council and can be adjusted as necessary. For clients whose need is greater than FISH limits can satisfy, CSP is usually able to put together a "package" of funds donated by several different groups along with FISH to fulfill a rent or utility request. Payments are made by the FISH Treasurer to landlords and utility providers, not directly to clients.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response

This fiscal year, FISH volunteers were intensely involved with helping our community during the pandemic. In addition to instituting special precautions and procedures to minimize the risk of exposure by volunteer drivers, the FISH clothing closet and several church food pantries were temporarily closed due to COVID protocols.

As the economic fallout of the pandemic began to affect the community, FISH was one of several community based organizations chosen by Fairfax County to administer extraordinary federal, state, and county assistance programs. In addition to our normal programs and funding stream, FISH received \$1 million to help execute the federal government's Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act Basic Needs Supplemental Funding Program. These funds were used for long term direct housing and utilities assistance to help eligible families impacted by the pandemic remain in their homes. For our Fiscal Year ending March 31, 2021, FISH was able to financially help 616 households consisting of 2,178 adults and children, including CARES Act recipients.

Funding for FISH

FISH is an all volunteer organization that receives financial support through its member churches, individual and corporate donors, and donations through the United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign. Since July 2018, we have applied for and received grant funds through the Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool (CCFP.) This year our CCFP grant amount was increased twice thanks to the county's confidence in FISH volunteers. As mentioned above FISH received a special grant of \$1 million for direct housing and utility assistance to those impacted by the pandemic. This very generous county assistance has enabled FISH to touch many more families than in previous years. FISH's "overhead" expenses are very low--typically 92 % of donations go directly to help those in need in the community, but because of the special CARES Act grant, this year's figure was 99%. The FISH Council feels that an external audit is an important tool for responsible financial control, and thus undergoes a formal audit *every* year. The audit cost is the most significant part of the organization's few overhead expenses.

Food Ministry

FISH delivers food to families referred to us by CSP, almost always on the same day. Dedicated FISH volunteer drivers obtain staple items from the food pantries maintained by several of our member churches and supplement it with perishables (milk, eggs, produce, etc) from supermarkets, as well as with diapers and/or baby formula. This year, volunteer drivers creatively faced the challenges of poorly stocked supermarkets, closed or restricted food pantries, and extraordinary "no contact" delivery procedures compelled by the risk of exposure to the virus. Yet each delivery was tailored to the particular needs of the client. This fiscal year, FISH completed 173 deliveries in the area, ranging from single recipients to families of seven!

Clothing Ministry

For 45 years, FISH has operated a Clothing Closet, staffed by dedicated volunteers, in space provided by Fairfax Presbyterian Church. Although some controls are in place, a CSP referral is not required to visit and use the Clothing Closet. On March 12, 2020, the closet was temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations have been abundant during the shut-down when families took this time to purge their closets and give away items. Over 20 phone calls from donors were received during this time. Despite the absence of regular Clothing Closet operating hours and patronage, we have continued to share our abundance by providing bags of clothing to other charities in need of clothing to give. During the winter, we opened the Closet at night to accommodate several church-run hypothermia shelter groups. Thus, even though the Closet remained closed throughout the entire Fiscal Year, we still managed to serve many

families in need, including a family of 8 that suffered a house fire. Thanks to the energy and dedication of clothing closet volunteers and the excellent cooperation of Fairfax Presbyterian Church, a special one day event in October 2020 provided 60 families with winter clothing.

Other Assistance

Fairfax FISH continued to fund a gasoline ministry in Fairfax County, in cooperation with area service stations. This year seven clients were assisted with emergency gas “fill-ups” which enabled them to get to their places of employment and to access sources of vital community services. We also assisted three individuals to meet their emergency prescription needs.

FISH’s Impact

Because of its charter, governing policies, and philosophy, FISH serves those who are helping themselves and struggling to overcome temporary impediments to stability and self sufficiency. A FISH client may be someone who has finally started a new job but doesn’t have enough gasoline to make it to work until the first payday. Or working mothers and fathers facing the distressing choice between paying the electric bill and providing adequate food for their families until the food stamps kick in. Because of FISH’s short-term immediate relationships with clients, it is often difficult to measure long term results. We can see the immediate success of our assistance: the client avoids eviction; the utilities are not shut off; the family has enough food; the pharmacy could fill the critical prescription. And occasionally we get insights in the form of thank you calls and letters from clients and their families expressing heartfelt appreciation for FISH’s help with their rent or their utilities in a time of critical need.

There is a synergy at work also: if FISH helps, others are also ready to help. For example, landlords may be more willing to work with a tenant on a back rent payment plan if they see that FISH has assisted. Because of our close relationship with Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services, we are confident that FISH is reaching the most needy members of our community, and that our assistance helps leverage a much broader community effort. The continuing fight against the economic and social effects of the pandemic has exponentially increased the impact of Fairfax FISH on the community.

FISH Volunteers

Special appreciation goes out to the nearly 110 FISH volunteers for their dedication and faithfulness to the program in difficult conditions of the pandemic. This year FISH volunteers dedicated 7,829 hours and drove 3,458 miles serving members of our community.

The FISH Council

Fairfax FISH is governed by a Council composed of one representative from each member church. Expectation Church joined the Council in late 2020 and quickly assumed an active role in the full range of volunteer functions. The Council's elected officers for 2020-2021 were: Larry Velte, Chair; Malcolm (Mac) Mercer, Vice Chair; Faye Quesenberry, Vice Chair; Valerie Bates, Treasurer; and Patti Mueller, Secretary.

How to reach Fairfax FISH

Fairfax FISH does not have a central office. We have an answering service at (703)-978-0280 which is checked by a Council member daily. Our website is www.fairfaxfish.org. Fairfax FISH

can be contacted via email at fairfaxfish@yahoo.com. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 2254, Fairfax, VA 22031-2254.

FISH Financials

The attached tables, extracted from our latest audit, reflect FISH's income, the financial support provided to clients, and our operating expenses.

FISH will continue to serve the community

Fairfax FISH will continue to strive to meet the challenges of assisting those in need in our community. As our fiscal year closed the social and economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect our community, and extraordinary assistance programs are ongoing. FISH is poised and ready to receive additional funds and serve as a direct and responsive conduit for mortgage, rental, and utility assistance as a follow-on to the original CARES Act program. We are proud of our organization, its caring and dedicated volunteers, and our many loyal supporters throughout the community. It is indeed a blessing to be a part of an organization that for over 50 years has been making a real difference in our area.



Lawrence R. Velte
Council Chair
August 30, 2021

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
For the Years Ended March 31,

	<u>2021</u>	<u>2020</u>
Contributions and Grants	\$ 1,154,705 *	\$ 119,124
Expenses		
Program Expenses	1,110,565	90,970
Management and General	9,326	8,770
	1,119,981	99,740
Total Expenses		
Change in Net Assets	34,814	19,384
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	59,074	39,690
	\$ 93,888	\$ 59,074
Net Assets at End of Year		

Notes: * Includes \$1,000,000 grant for direct assistance under the CARES Act.
The latest Audit available covers April 2020 to March 2021.

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

For the Years Ended March 31,

	2021		
	Management		
	<u>Program</u>	<u>& General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Housing	\$ 1,034,592	\$ -	\$ 1,034,592
Utilities	56,498	-	56,498
Groceries and other	18,757	-	18,757
Medical and dental	497	-	497
Gasoline	221	-	221
Insurance	-	1,695	1,695
Professional fees	-	4,125	4,125
Office supplies	-	1,643	1,643
Telephone	-	833	833
Miscellaneous	-	559	559
Bank Charges	-	471	471
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 1,110,565</u>	<u>\$ 9,326</u>	<u>\$ 1,119,891</u>

	2020		
	Management		
	<u>Program</u>	<u>& General</u>	<u>Total</u>
Housing	\$ 63,007	\$ -	\$ 63,007
Utilities	17,360	-	17,360
Groceries and other	9,849	-	9,849
Medical and dental	450	-	450
Gasoline	304	-	304
Insurance	-	1,628	1,628
Professional fees	-	4,025	4,025
Office supplies	-	1,650	1,650
Telephone	-	914	914
Miscellaneous	-	321	321
Bank Charges	-	232	232
Total Expenses	<u>\$ 90,970</u>	<u>\$ 8,770</u>	<u>\$ 99,740</u>

Note: The latest Audit available covers April 2020 to March 2021.