

Clearinghouse

Community Services

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February, 2012



Van Buren Students Sponsor “Empty Bowls”

The Van Buren High School Art Club and the FCCLA are working together to help children on the “Meals For Kids” program. The students invite you to join them for a soup dinner that is unlike any other you’ve ever attended. This dinner will be served in bowls made by Van Buren students, and your meal will be prepared with donated food collected by Van Buren students. When the meal is over, you get to take your bowl home with you as a reminder of all the hungry families in our area. Of course, the best

part of the event is that all the money the students raise will be used to provide “Meals For Kids” food to students in the Van Buren school district.

Tickets are \$15 and may be purchased at the door. The meal will be served from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the Commons area of Van Buren Senior High School, 2001 East Pointer Trail. If you would like more information about the Empty Bowls program, please call the school at 730-6683, or visit their web site at www.vbsd.us/vbhs.



King Elementary Kindergarteners celebrate a job well done with popcorn from Arvest Bank and Goody’s Yogurt coupons.



King K-Kids and Student Council met with Amanda Rice (center), who coordinates the “Meals For Kids” program at Community Services Clearinghouse, at King Elementary School in Van Buren.

KING ELEMENTARY FOOD DRIVE

King Elementary School in Van Buren held their 3rd annual Yummo Can Food Drive to benefit our Emergency Food Pantry in January. The school’s K-Kids and Student Council helped their classmates collect 2,178 non-perishable items.

The Kindergarteners won the competition between classes and were honored for collecting more food than any other grade. As a reward for their hard work, Arvest Bank provided each class member with a bag of popcorn, while Goody’s Frozen Yogurt gave the children coupons for an 8 ounce yogurt.

We thank King Elementary students for support of our Food Pantry.

A Message From Our Director



Clearinghouse Executive Director, Rick Foti, addresses a group of students from Christ The King School during a January visit to the Clearinghouse. The students collected food for our food pantry and packed bags for the "Meals For Kids" program as part of Catholic Schools Week.

"We were asked to do this because of our reputation for being fair, above-board and using procedures that produce a clear paper trail....."

When I make presentations to groups, I always try to focus on our three main programs: Financial Assistance, Food Assistance and Meals For Kids. The fact is we spend a great deal of time doing other things. Among those, casework takes the majority of time. Helping people find programs and opportunities so that they no longer need our assistance is the goal of our casework. Occasionally, we are asked to handle money that has been collected or donated for a specific person,

in to handle donations, offers of goods and services, telephone calls and emails. An account was established for the family at Arvest, and we became the custodians of the account.

Since then, we have handled dozens of calls and emails, watched the account grow, and tried to take care of the immediate needs of the family. Follow-up news stories also kept the public informed about progress. The generosity was overwhelming, including a Rogers citizen who took it upon himself to be an angel for the family and manage their various needs. As of this writing, the family has been able to pay back taxes on the property to avoid losing it, Dad has a job in Fort Smith, and they are getting ready to move into a very nice mobile home set up on their property. Little by little, their lives are returning to normal.

We certainly can't take credit for all that has happened for this family, but we are glad to have been able to do our part. Thanks go to the good people of the area who opened their hearts and their billfolds to help a family in need.

Rick Foti,

Executive Director

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family, or reason. We are asked to do this because of our reputation for being fair, above-board, and using procedures that produce a clear paper trail of the funds. Another reason, of course, is that as a 501 c 3 organization, donations to us are tax deductible.

Most recently, we have been asked to handle the financial contributions to a Crawford County family who has fallen on hard times. We were first contacted by channel 40/29 to see if we knew a family needing some community assistance. We had just met the family here at the Clearinghouse, and realized that they needed far more than we could supply by ourselves. The first news spot about this family caused an outpouring of support much greater than the television station could handle. That's when we were called



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Community Services Clearinghouse



Living History



Vendors



Choctaw Dancers



Free Historic Tour

Heritage Festival IV

Hope you've marked your calendar for the fourth annual Heritage Festival April 13 and 14 in downtown Fort Smith. Here's what's new this year (so far!):

- Heritage Dinner Friday night in Immaculate Conception Parish Hall.
- Wells Fargo Stagecoach in the Immaculate Conception parking lot. Have your photo taken in the stage!
- Children's area set up around the Wells Fargo stagecoach.
- First Lutheran Church is added to the "Heritage Trail" bus tour.
- Exhibition Choctaw dancers in Pendergraft park.

And don't forget our returning favorites:

- Free trolley rides provided by the Fort Smith Trolley Museum.
- Learn all about how Ft. Smith supported the Gold Rush at the National Historic Site.
- Take a free tour of the Ft. Smith Museum of History.
- Guided tours of Miss Laura's Visitor Center will be available to Heritage Festival guests.
- The Petting Zoo will be back in Pendergraft Park.
- The Clayton House will hold special events for Heritage Festival guests.
- Ride in a mule-drawn wagon.
- Watch real old west style shoot-outs presented by the Lawbreakers and Peacemakers.
- A Living History from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Garrison Avenue.
- Food and craft vendors.

Want to be part of the fun? We still have room for vendors, and volunteers. Just give us a call at 782-5074 and we will be happy to include you in our events. Heritage Festival is a fund-raiser for our summer "Meals For Kids" program. Your support and sponsorships are appreciated.



Cherokee Nation Youth Choir



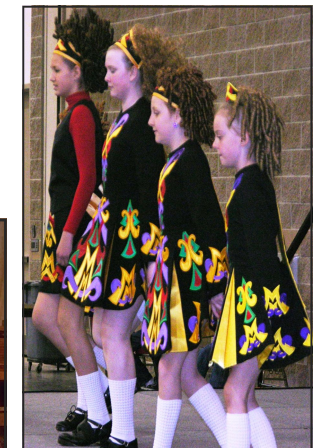
Free Wagon Rides



Petting Zoo



Old West Shoot-outs



Irish Dancers



Focus On Casework Services

Sometimes even the healthiest, most hard-working families cannot imagine the nightmare that will soon become their reality. The family we're going to tell you about was doing fine and looking with joy toward the birth of a son when something totally unexpected changed not just their plans, but their lives.

Mom and Dad had decided this should be their last child, so Mom was scheduled for a tubal ligation after delivery. There was a serious complication during the surgery that put our young client into intensive care for several weeks. So serious was her condition that her physician says it may be a year before she can return to work.

There were, of course, medical expenses for the young family. Mom continues to require several prescription medications to help with her healing. All of this is a burden

on what suddenly became a single-income family.

The Clearinghouse was able to help by paying an OG&E bill for the young family. We also provided them emergency food and what items we had for their newborn son. They have a long battle ahead, but we will help every way we can.

We thank you for your support of the programs that allow us to offer assistance to families in need. We invite you call us at 782-5074 if you have questions about our agency or the programs we operate.



What a surprise! Students from Christ The King Church in Fort Smith visited the Clearinghouse on January 30th as part of their celebration of Catholic Schools Week. Along with volunteering to pack food for our "Meals For Kids" program, they also brought cases of donated food they had collected during "Macaroni Madness!" What a great idea. The students collected macaroni for our Emergency Food Pantry and delivered hundreds of boxes when they made their visit to the Clearinghouse. Thanks to their effort, our clients will have a wonderful side dish added to their food packages when they visit our Pantry. We thank all the students at Christ The King for their hard work and willingness to support our Clearinghouse programs.

January, 2012, Program Totals

The Clearinghouse received 538 requests for assistance during the month of January. Of those, 417 were requests for food through our Emergency Food Pantry. Fifty families made their first visit to the Clearinghouse in January, accounting for 27 children never before served through our Pantry.

Our Meals For Kids program currently serves 2,121 children in public schools across western Arkansas and eastern Oklahoma. The program provides take-home food each Friday to students who are identified by their counselors as being "at risk" for hunger in their homes.

The donation of food collected through the "Mom's Day of Prayer" event at Immaculate Conception Church was a great help to our "Meals For Kids" program. We thank everyone who attended and donated.



Financial donations /

DONATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY, 2011

Churches

Central Baptist Church
 Community Bible Church
 First Baptist of Barling
 First Southern Baptist Church
 First United Methodist Church/ CC
 First United Methodist Church/
 Seekers
 Heritage Methodist Church
 Immaculate Conception Church/
 The Knit Wits
 Immaculate Conception Church
 Immanuel Baptist Church
 Jenny Lind Baptist Church
 Rye Hill Baptist Church
 Seventh Day Adventist Church
 St. John's Episcopal Church
 St. Michael Catholic Church
 St. Scholastica Monastery
 Trinity Episcopal Church
 Victory Temple Church

Donald and Alice Dean
 Katy DeJaeger
 Gary Doss
 Mary Anne Warren Erlinger
 Rick and Sondra Foti
 Jacqueline Frizzle
 R. G. Garner
 Kenneth and Velmar Greene
 Michael Helm
 Michael and Barbara Helm
 Cathy Henry
 Robert and Bobbie Hill
 Caroline Jones
 James and Linda Joyce
 Donjre Logan
 Hershel & Mardell McClurkin
 Mr. & Mrs. Stanley McDermott,
 Julie Moncrief
 Donna Moreton
 Mike and Ida Moore
 Laura Parker
 Brenda Partin
 Deanna Paschall
 Patrick Plunkett
 Judith Helen Pratt
 Anne Sayers

Richard & Peggy Spears
 Suzanne Tripp
 Terry Upchurch
 Kay Voss
 John & Martha Weber
 Ann Scott Winters
Business/organizations:
 AOG
 City of Fort Smith
 M & E Marketing, Inc.
 Moms Day of Prayer
 OG&E
 Prudential Ulmer Real Estate, Inc.
 Saint Edward Mercy Foundation
 Saint Edward Mercy Clinic
 Jean Marie Baldner Shields Trust
 United Way of Ft. Smith Area

Donations of Services & Goods

First Lutheran Church
 First Presbyterian Church
 Hackett United Methodist Church
 Shady Grove Baptist Church
 St. John's Episcopal Church
Individual Donors:
 Carrie Carmack
 Sam & Laurie Klein

Patti Pinter
 G.H. Porter, Jr.
 Kay Pope
 Floyd & Sue Robison
 Darlene Shamp
Business/ organizations:
 Arkansas Blood Institute
 Auntie Ann's
 Calico County
 Christ The King School
 CiCi's Pizza
 CV's IGA
 Eureka Pizza
 Extension Homemaker Club
 Ft. Smith Public Library
 Golden Corral
 Good Samaritan Clinic
 Hackett High School
 Mercy Crest Retirement Home
 Mom's Day of Prayer
 Panera Bread
 The Rice Depot
 Seb. Co. Extension Council Club
 Starbucks
 Truong Son Asian Center

Financial Donations/

Individuals:

Marilyn Blaylock
 Katherine Croom

Want to support a Clearinghouse program? Simply fill out this form and mail to:

Community Services Clearinghouse

P.O. Box 1522

Fort Smith, AR 72902



Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Area code) _____ Number: _____ Email: _____

Would you like to designate your donation for:

Meals For Kids Working Family Assistance Emergency Food Pantry Heritage Festival

PayPal donations may be made at: www.cscclearinghouse.org

The Clearinghouse is a 501(c)3 organization. Our tax id: 71-0592441

A tax receipt will be supplied for all donations.