

Williamsburg-area nonprofits seek help to help others



Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels is raising funds to provide food for seniors, veterans and disabled adults for the holidays. (Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels)



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With Christmas just weeks away, Williamsburg-area nonprofits are gathering food, toys and more to help those in need during the holidays.

The Williamsburg Health Foundation recently gave \$130,000 to address an increase in demand for assistance, primarily food. The funding will help organizations in the Williamsburg area provide access to nutritious food and essential resources, but the need is always there.

“Community partners have shared the significant increase in the number of people seeking assistance, more than 30% in some cases, as families struggle to keep food on the table this fall,” said Deanna Van Hersh, WHF’s president and CEO.

Here are a few places that need help this holiday season:

Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels

Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels is holding its annual holiday fundraiser, raising funds to provide meals to seniors, veterans and disabled adults. All monetary donations will be used to provide nutritious meals.

The fundraiser comes at a critical time, said Catherine Upton, the organization’s executive director. With the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising costs in food and everyday essentials, many seniors are having to choose what to spend their money on, Upton said. That includes medication.

“No one should have to choose between eating and staying healthy,” Upton said. “This fundraiser is more than a tradition; it is a lifeline. Together, we can ensure that every senior or disabled individual has access to nutritional food.”

The nonprofit is taking donations online and by mail. To make a donation, visit williamsburgmealsonwheels.com. Checks can also be mailed to Williamsburg Area Meals on Wheels, P.O. Box 709 Williamsburg, VA 23187.

Grove Christian Outreach Center

Grove Christian Outreach Center takes food donations at all times, not just during the holidays, according to Matt Pollino, the center’s nonprofit development manager. Donations are accepted during business hours, four days a week.

The Gathering Place, the nonprofit’s free grocery market that stocks fresh food, dry and canned goods as well as various hygiene items, is also open to those in need.

The outreach center wants to make sure the community is always taken care of, Pollino said. “Especially during the holidays, this can be a very difficult time of year.”

The outreach center is also hosting its annual toy drive for children, who are treated to a Christmas party later this month. The drive is asking for various toy types, such as soft toys and board books for ages 3 and younger, dolls and action figures for ages 4 to 7, Lego and craft sets for ages 8 to 12 and headphones and self-care items for ages 13 to 17.

To view the center’s Amazon holiday wish list or for more information, visit amzn.to/4rDnSL1, facebook.com/GroveChristianOutreachCenter and groveoutreach.com. The center is located at 8800 Pocahontas Trail in the Grove community.



Grove Christian Outreach Center is collecting toys for its annual toy drive. (Guernsey Tingle)

Norge Dental Center and FISH Inc.

After donating 270 items to FISH Inc. for Thanksgiving, Norge Dental Center is [still accepting nonperishable items](#) for the Christmas season. Visitors can drop off donations during the center's working hours or after hours via the donation bin on the porch at 7450 Richmond Road.

FISH is also welcoming donations throughout the holiday season, said Maura Rush, the group's vice president. The nonprofit accepts both food and monetary donations, as well as children's pajamas and underwear.

Donations to FISH can be dropped off from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at 312 2nd St. Checks can be made payable to FISH Inc., 312 2nd St., Williamsburg, VA 23185.

A Way Home

A Way Home, a giving initiative supporting families across the Peninsula who are facing housing instability, domestic violence or emergency transitions during the winter months, launched Friday and runs through Jan. 1.

The effort was launched by York County Commonwealth's Attorney Krystyn Reid and is being supported by the United Way of the Virginia Peninsula along with commonwealth attorneys Nate Green of Williamsburg and James City County, Anton Bell of Hampton and Howard E. Gwynn of Newport News.

Requested items from the initiative include blankets, towels, hygiene items, cleaning supplies and children's items such as coloring books and small toys. Items should be new. Donations can be dropped off at United Way, 101 York Crossing Road, Yorktown, VA 23692.

Have a holiday fundraiser going on? Let us know at kimberly.root@virginiamedia.com.

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