



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2025

Supporting the DUNN LORING, MERRIFIELD, OAKTON & VIENNA Areas

Organized in 1969, supported by churches, civic organizations, businesses, and individuals, the Committee for Helping Others (CHO) provides simple, loving, charity to persons in need of goods and services that they are unable to provide for themselves or obtain from government sources.

Chairman's Note:

My dad has a saying: *People can deal with good news, people can deal with bad news, but people cannot deal with the unknown.* There is a lot of unknown going around this area right now. I have heard anecdotal stories from friends, business associates, and other nonprofits. I suspect a number of you have as well. Things are tough for many folks.

I wonder if this is how our clients feel. Uncertainty, difficult situations, and the unknown future. I hope that part of why CHO is here is to help provide a little support, maybe a little good news, to those dealing with unknowns.

If you are aware of someone dealing with some uncertainty right now, and think they could use help, please let them know we are a resource for those in need.

In addition to our Food Pantry and Clothes Closet, remember that CHO can provide a limited amount of financial assistance for rent, medical bills, or utilities if the individual lives in Vienna, Oakton, Merrifield, or Dunn Loring. They just need to call 703-281-7614 and leave a message in Box # 3. Another resource you can suggest is Fairfax County Coordinated Services, 703-222-0880.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR EVENTS THAT SUPPORT CHO!

VIVA!VIENNA! May 24-26

Join the Rotary Club's traditional Memorial Day fundraiser in downtown Vienna, with rides, games, food and more. You can also volunteer to help at <https://vivavienna.org/volunteer/>.

OLGC Gift Card Collection: Sept.13-14

Grocery and gift cards for Giant, Walmart, Target, Lidl, as well as donations, will be collected for the Christmas Store on September 13 and 14 outside Our Lady of Good Counsel (OLGC) before and after all Masses. In addition to donations, we'd welcome volunteers to collect.

CROP Hunger Walk: October 5

This year's CROP Hunger Walk is **Sunday October 5**, in the early afternoon. Part of an effort of Church World Services to support international and local hunger relief efforts, the Walk moves throughout part of downtown Vienna, lasting about 1-1 ½ hours. CHO receives part of the proceeds.

You can register to join the Walk on October 6 or make a monetary donation on the **Vienna Crop Hunger Walk** website, which should be available later this year. For more information on the Walk or to volunteer, contact Lisa Hechtman from Emmaus United Church of Christ, Vienna, at lhechtman@gmail.com.

Christmas Store Report

Over 172 families were helped through our Christmas Store program, including the 109 attendees at the Store itself, young mothers at New Generations, and seniors living at Tysons Towers. Over 142 bikes were collected, repaired, and distributed, with an estimated value of over \$5,000.

Thanks to Vienna Presbyterian Church for use of their space, to Antioch Christian Church and Bikes@Vienna for help with the bike drive, to the churches and others that collected gift cards during the year, and to those organizations that have contributed toys. We had over 50 volunteers on the day of the Store, and 60 others helped with setup. Thanks to all volunteers for their great work.

Last year we provided gift “bundles” – see pictures on the right - consisting of a major “WOW” toy – e.g., a large Lego set or a big doll – and some smaller ones. It looked very festive and made our distribution process easier, although it required more preparation and volunteers beforehand.

This year’s Store is on Saturday, December 6. Volunteers are needed on Friday, December 5 for set-up and on December 6 as escorts; contact volunteer@cho-va or call 703-281-7614 # 5.

Please: Prepare Early for Next Year’s Christmas Store !

We ran short of toys for the 2024 Christmas Store for the first time in years! Although we distributed gift cards so no one went away empty-handed, we hope to avoid that next year. But it will be a challenge. This year’s store is on December 6, the weekend right after Thanksgiving weekend, so we’re asking those of you who collect toys or sponsor toy collections, please think about preparing and delivering your gifts early. This helps with our own planning and gives us time to prepare the gift bundles.



ACTIVITY REPORTS

FOOD CLOSET: During the first three months of 2025, we helped 117 families (about 418 people) and gave out \$1100 in food cards. We need 2 lb. bags of white rice, Laundry Detergent, Dish Soap, Cooking Oil, Canned Fruit, Shampoo, Toothpaste. Call 703-281-7614 box # 1 to arrange for food donations.

FURNITURE: The Furniture Program collects and distributes gently-used furniture from the sheds on Mill Street on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month. Over the first three months of 2025, about \$1330 of furniture has been distributed to 13 clients. Needed items are beds, tables, and chairs.

CLOTHES CLOSET: The Clothes Closet collects and distributes clothing on Mondays, 9:30 – noon. Call 703-679-8966 to make an appointment or to donate. About 122 individuals came to the Closet in the first three months of 2025. In addition to household items like pots and pans and dishes, we also need toys, clothing for Children sizes 2T, 3T, 4T, 5, 6, 8, 10-14, and clothes for Teens, Women’s large and extra-large tops, Men’s small, medium, extra-large shirts, and Men’s pants sizes 29, 30, 32, 34, 36.

EMERGENCY SERVICES: Provide rent, fuel, utility, dental, medical, and other emergency costs. Our main costs are rents and utilities, For the first three months of 2025, we provided \$46,315.13 in-area emergency aid, and \$1,247.56 out-of-area aid, to 115 in-area households and 22 out-of-area households.

SPOTLIGHT: GREEN HEDGES SCHOOL

In 1942, Frances and Kenton Kilmer, children of international artists, founded Green Hedges School to provide a learning environment emphasizing excellence in core subjects while reflecting appreciation for the arts, languages, and cultural and religious diversity. Located on Windover Avenue in Vienna, this coed independent school educates children from age 2 (in Montessori-style preschool classes) to grade 8. In addition to academic pursuits, students work with a variety of Vienna organizations including Rustic Love, Historic Vienna, and Meadowlark Gardens, to foster an understanding of community involvement, the arts, and nature.

CHO volunteers are familiar with these students, who have collected gifts for the CHO Christmas Store during the past 10-15 years through their Giving Tree project, spearheaded by the school's 5th Graders. We always enjoy seeing the children arrive on the day before the event with their toys and gifts. Students also have made homemade ornaments for the Store and participated in other ways. And over the years, different grades have hosted much-needed food drives for CHO.

The students also organize food drives and bake sales for organizations such as Food for Others and World Central Kitchen, and have put together bags for SOME (So Others May Eat). Middle School students regularly sort and box food at Food for Others. Other activities include connecting with older generations, such as making valentines for the residents of the Sunrise Community Living Center. We at CHO encourage fostering the concept of service in younger generations, and we are happy to see Green Hedges' efforts in this regard and to be recipients of their goodwill.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES WITH CHILDREN

CHO works with a wide variety of volunteer networks, and the Fairfax County Department of Family Services asked us to publicize some volunteer opportunities with children. For those free on *weekdays*, The Department's **Body Safety Program** needs volunteer classroom instructors to help elementary students with the tools they need to prevent or interrupt child abuse. Apply online at bit.ly/BodySafeVol or contact the Body Safety staff at DFSBodysafety@FairfaxCounty.gov or **703-324-7459**. For those free on *weekends*, the county's **BeFriend-A-Child** program provides an opportunity to mentor a child. go to bit.ly/DFSBAC for more information.

WE LOVE VOLUNTEERS!

A good way to deal with life's daily frustrations is to focus on someone other than yourself by volunteering. Our volunteer coordinator, Erinn Connor, is happy to find a project suited to your time and talents. Call her at 703-281-7614 and leave a message in box # 5, or send a message to volunteer@cho-va.com.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION: If you wish to receive a copy of the newsletter by email rather than paper, let us know by emailing us at cho@cho-va.com. *Email copies help save us printing and postage costs and are in **color!***

DONATION ADDRESS: Please send donations to CHO's Post Office Box – P.O. Box 233, Vienna VA.22183. Do not send donations to any other address provided to you. You can also give online at cho-va.com.

**CHO
PO BOX 233
VIENNA VA
22183**

**PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 1349
Merrifield, VA**

Yes, I'd like to support CHO. Enclosed is my check for

I'd like to volunteer for

My name and address are

Send to CHO, P.O>Boc 233, Vienna VA 20183

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