

FISH OF WESTMINSTER, INC – 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

FISH OF WESTMINSTER was established in 1970 by a group of Westminster Christians, called to express their love and concern for their neighbors. In the early days, FISH was the emergency service referral network for the entire city. As the city grew and matured, and more social services became available, FISH evolved in two neighborhood food pantries, then into one food pantry as a result of the COVID pandemic – at Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC).

FIDH of Westminster was able to continue to provide neighbors with needed food, hygiene supplies, and cleaning supplies. We were able to remain open in 2022 with excellent support from WPC staff and members as well as the Tri-County Health Department using a drive-through food distribution model.

In 2022, FISH of Westminster:

- Assisted **5,442 people** (a 13% increase over 2021),
- Aided **1,522 families**,
- Provided **55,380 meals**,
- Supported **1,060 homeless individuals** (200 via food pantry/960 via outreach) with food and hygiene products as well as cold weather gear.

We were able to provide 132 December Holiday Food Bags to our clients including \$25 gift cards. The bags included canned and packaged food items; homemade cookies donated by members of the WPC and WUMC congregations, friends, and the sisters of P.E.O. Chapter HX-Westminster/Thornton. Each bag had sufficient food to feed a family of 4 one large holiday meal based around ham or turkey or homemade tamales. Families received multiple food bags if they had more than 4 members. We were also able to provide \$10 gift cards to 13 homeless for the holidays.

FISH of Westminster provided food and hygiene kits to 200+ unhoused visitors to the food pantry. Food for homeless kits was primarily provided by our Church of Latter-Day Saints of Westminster Stake partners. In addition, FISH of Westminster provided over \$4,188 worth of hygiene goods and supplies such as headlamps, underwear, gloves, and socks for the homeless in our area. Since 2020, we have partnered with Alan Farb to meet the needs of the homeless in our area. Mr. Farb walks the homeless camps weekly with various volunteers, talking to people and distributing goods, water, and food as well as gift cards when they are available. In

2022, he connected with 960 clients. His efforts are also supported by Westminster and Adams County.

In 2022, we received a one-time only \$5,000 food credit from Food Bank of the Rockies to purchase culturally responsive food for our diverse clientele. We have integrated what we learned in this program into our on-going food box program with unique specialty items. We also received additional funds and support to translate our written materials into Spanish. We also were able to translate some of our program materials into Ukrainian and Arabic.

In 2022, we established a new program in partnership with the Front Range Community College TRIO Upward Bound Program located at Westminster High School. Snack items and hygiene products are provided to food insecure students participating in this program. The 45 students in this program are the first generation to plan go to college and receive training and coaching to develop the skills needed to apply and navigate the college experience, requiring they stay later than normal after school.

Over the past few years, FISH of Westminster has been maturing as a community organization – enhancing or developing new partnerships within the community, establishing an Internet presence, and developing effective communication tools. Because of the coronavirus pandemic and people’s desire to help those experiencing food insecurity, the results of these efforts included:

- Financial contributions from local businesses including Murdochs Ranch and Home Supply;
- Financial donations from throughout the community, beyond the members of the two sponsoring congregations and long-term sponsors; and
- New volunteers from within the community who were recruited through the FISH of Westminster Internet page (<https://fishofwestminster.org>).

Long-time partnerships also continued with:

- Valente’s Italian Deli and Bakery,
- Local scout troops/ships, and
- Grocery Rescue (a Food Bank of the Rockies program) partnerships with King Soopers and Kum & Go, which resulted in donations of bakery goods, meat and dairy products, canned and boxed items, produce, and non-food items.

The primary government funding sources for FISH of Westminster in 2022 were:

- City of Westminster Human Services Grant and
- City of Thornton Human Services Grant.

Three fundraisers for FISH were held in 2022. Our Annual Afternoon Tea resulted in a profit of **\$2,000**. Reach for Change resulted in **\$150** in donations. Souper Bowl Caring raised **\$325** plus food donations.

Due to the pandemic, few groups were able to meet in order to coordinate food drives. One Cub Scout pack in Westminster and Thornton gathered almost 2,000 food items for FISH during a fall food drive.

FISH of Westminster is an entirely volunteer organization with volunteers ranging from 17 years old through 92 years old. These volunteers make it possible to keep our doors open. The **42 volunteers** donated **2,175 hours** in 2022.

We again partnered with WPC and the Tri-County Health Department to host a COVID Vaccine Bus multiple times over the second half of 2021. In 2022, 500+ COVID vaccines and flu shots were given by the staff at the bus. We plan to continue to host the COVID Vaccine Bus in partnership with Tri-County Health Department/Colorado Department of Public Health and Education until such time as they no longer offer this service.

Thank you to everyone who has supported FISH of Westminster, Inc. throughout 2022!

FISH of Westminster, Inc. is a proud partner of the Food Bank of the Rockies.