



**FISHERMAN'S
MARK** SOCIAL SERVICES

HELP WHEN HELP IS NEEDED

**2023
OUR IMPACT**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PRESIDENT, BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

As 2022 drew to a close, Fisherman's Mark experienced unprecedented levels of activity at our Free Market. We believed we survived the pinnacle of need for the Fisherman's Mark program participant community. We assumed that all records were permanently broken and that as 2023 got underway, participation would return to normal.



In reality, 2023 turned out to be another record breaking year for the Free MARKET. Inflation flared up, resulting in rising prices for food, housing and basic necessities, which put additional pressure on community members who were already at-risk. Our Free MARKET numbers continued to rise throughout the year as families and individuals struggled to make ends meet. Drive by the market on any given day and you might see families and individuals, young and old, of all races, from all walks of life, enter the doors of our Free MARKET. In many cases, they would otherwise be forced to go without the life-sustaining products that Fisherman's Mark provides each month.

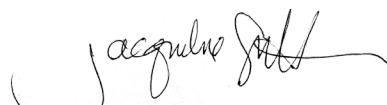
Inflation and rising prices have a ripple-effect that stretches beyond basic food and household items and we saw the record Free MARKET numbers spill over to our other programs. Our social services department, as well as those receiving Lambertville Academy tuition assistance and scholarships, experienced a dramatic spike in activity in 2023. Our social worker worked tirelessly to provide assistance where needed. In many cases, the clients we helped might have otherwise slipped dangerously through cracks of the social safety net.

In spite of the dramatic increase of community members in need throughout 2023, Fisherman's Mark was staffed, well-funded and prepared to meet the challenge. Our generous donors stepped up with both financial and in-kind donations. Our community partners got creative and provided in ways they hadn't before. Fundraisers of all kinds throughout Lambertville and beyond were organized, sometimes without our knowledge; a vanload of groceries, or a generous check would be delivered to our doorstep with nothing expected in return.

2023 taught us a valuable lesson about the times we are living in and we will make no assumptions about 2024. With the help of our kind supporters, we will be prepared for whatever the coming year brings. The following pages provide a detailed snapshot of YOUR impact throughout 2023. Fisherman's Mark couldn't exist if we didn't live in a community that comes together to take care of its most vulnerable neighbors and we're eternally grateful for your generous support.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!


Jennifer Williford
Executive Director


Jacqueline Griffith
President, Board of Trustees

Board of Trustees: Jacqueline Griffith | Nigel Brown | Jose Falconi
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OUR CORE VALUES:

- INTEGRITY
- BELONGING
- EMPATHY
- INSPIRATION

OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

Help when help is needed can mean so many different things. It can mean help with preschool tuition for the single mother starting a new life. It can mean meal delivery by a friendly, familiar face to a disabled man living alone. It can mean a leg up during a particularly difficult and challenging time. Fisherman's Mark has a program or service for all of these needs. Whether food support, education or social services, they are delivered to the individual or family with kindness, compassion and understanding. Our ability to provide these services is made possible by the Fisherman's Mark community of supporters:

DONORS

Donations come in all shapes and sizes from financial donations large and small to donations of food, school supplies, holiday gifts, and gift cards. Every contribution makes a difference to our operations and to our program participants. 2023 was a challenging year and we met the demand thanks to the generosity of our donors.

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

We are fortunate to be in the company of philanthropic organizations throughout the area. Local grocery stores donate excess food products weekly, area farms donate fresh produce throughout the harvest season, businesses plan and run fundraisers and food drives, or offer their talent and space for our programs. (See "Zero Waste Program" on the next page!)

VOLUNTEERS

Fisherman's Mark's team of volunteers are a community unto themselves. They make time in their busy lives to assist with everything from Free MARKET shopping assistance to answering phones at our administrative offices, from gardening to collating school supplies. In 2023 they launched their own "Making Our Mark" newsletter, keeping each other informed of all the various volunteer opportunities throughout the organization.

STAFF

The Fisherman's Mark staff consists of four full time and five part time staff members who keep our daily operations running smoothly. Individually, their exceptional experience and skills provide innovative leadership and creativity to our work. Collectively they are smart, dedicated, and willing to do what it takes to make sure our community thrives.

THANK YOU TO ALL DONORS, PARTNERS, VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY!

OVER
5000
VOLUNTEER HOURS
RECORDED IN 2023



**WE DELIVER
IMPACT
IN THE MOST
COST EFFECTIVE
MANNER**

FOOD SUPPORT

2023 proved to be a record-breaking year for our many Food Support Programs. Inflation resulted in rising prices for food, housing and basic necessities, which put additional pressure on community members who were already at-risk. Our Free MARKet numbers rose throughout the year. On any given day, families and individuals, young and old, of all races, from all walks of life, lined up and waited to enter the Free MARKet. In many cases, they would otherwise be forced to go without the life-sustaining products that Fisherman's Mark provides.

“

I'm so thankful for Fisherman's Mark. Pablo delivers what I need right into my apartment. Because of my disability, I couldn't carry the groceries even if he put them in my lap.

*~ William,
Mobile MARKet
program recipient*

”

WILLIAM'S STORY

William is a Lambertville native and a weekly recipient of the Fisherman's Mark Mobile MARKet program. He is a longtime resident of the area who graduated from South Hunterdon High School in 1975. His first job out of school was a shipping clerk at an electronics store in town and William recalls making \$2.25 per hour back then. In 1990, when he was thirty-three years old, he received the devastating news that he had multiple sclerosis. Several years later he could no longer stand on his own and William was forced to retire from his position at a toy company. In 2005 he was one of the first residents to move into a low-income housing facility in Lambertville. These days he's unable to walk and bound to his wheelchair, which makes everyday living a challenge.

William's first encounter with Fisherman's Mark was when he sought out our help with his income taxes. Barbara Petty, the then Executive Director, filled out the necessary tax forms and included a page-long letter to the IRS explaining that William was permanently disabled, which qualified him for additional tax benefits. That assistance made all the difference to him and opened the door to other services offered by Fisherman's Mark.

These days, William participates in our Mobile MARKet food delivery service. Fisherman's Mark volunteer, Phil, calls him on Thursday mornings to retrieve his weekly shopping list. It consists mostly of basic food items such as eggs, fruit, vegetables, canned goods, and sometimes household items like laundry detergent, or personal items like deodorant. William also receives home cooked meals through our Zero Waste Program, which he calls "outrageously good" (his favorite thus far has been the lasagna). If he ever receives excess items, William shares them in the community room so that other residents can benefit.



MOBILE MARKET

{ 787 DELIVERIES }

The Mobile MARKET delivers food items to our homebound program participants. A shopping list is acquired by phone, the items are gathered, then brought and delivered to their door by a Fisherman's Mark staff member.



ZERO WASTE PROGRAM

{ 800 MEALS PREPARED + 175 PIES! }

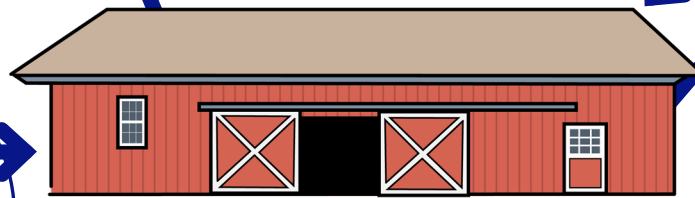
The Zero Waste Program ensures that donated fresh produce ends up on tables and not in the waste stream. Excess donated produce is prepped and cooked at the HollyHedge kitchen, packaged and delivered back to the Free MARKET for distribution.



DONATIONS

{ 100+ TONS OF MARKET SUPPLIES! }

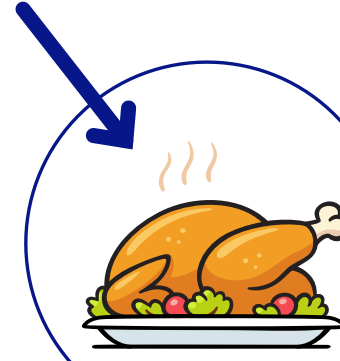
Food is sourced from local markets, area farms, organized food drives, or purchased through financial donations from food banks at a greatly-reduced cost.



FREE MARKET

{ 7,200 VISITS }

The Free MARKET offers a store-like environment where, with the help of volunteers, program participants acquire food, personal hygiene and household items at no charge.



FLY PROGRAM

{ 1,000 LUNCHES DISTRIBUTED }

The FLY (Feeding Local Youth) Program provides healthy weekend lunches throughout the school year, and weekday lunches throughout the summer to children who qualify for free or reduced lunch.

HOLIDAY MEALS

{ 500 MEALS DELIVERED }

The Holiday Meal Program distributes meal staples for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter so that all of our neighbors have the means to celebrate with abundance.

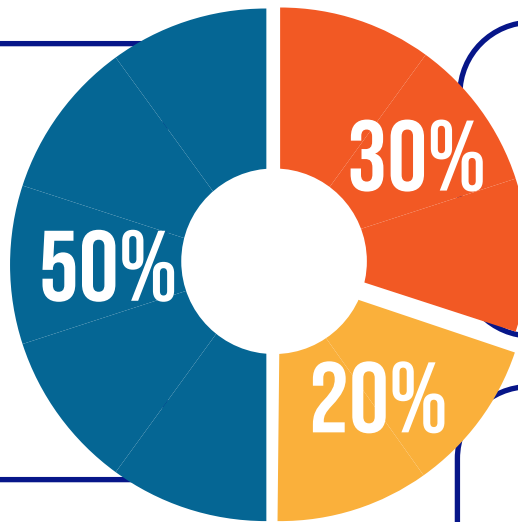
SOCIAL SERVICES

Fisherman's Mark as an organization doesn't give out food stamps or housing vouchers. We don't provide medical insurance, shelter or transportation. However, our neighbors come to us to help identify, understand and navigate the assistance available to them. Forms and applications can be daunting to anyone, but to an individual with a language barrier, a disability, hearing or vision loss, mental health issues, or any number of other challenges, complicated paperwork can pose an obstacle to receiving the benefits they

need and deserve. Our social services manager not only assists with County, State and Federal assistance programs like SNAP benefits or county housing vouchers, she digs deeper to determine if there are other charitable agencies that might be able to help. Agencies such as NORWESCAP, Family Promise of Hunterdon, Safe in Hunterdon, Untied Way of Hunterdon, The City of Lambertville, and local churches are just a few of the agencies with which Fisherman's Mark connects as partners in helping our clients stay safe and housed with their basic needs met. When something goes wrong, she takes it a step further to advocate for their rights, or represent them when they cannot speak for themselves.

ASSIST

- Transportation issues
- Filling out paperwork
- Follow up
- Explaining benefits
- Reading mail
- Translation
- Companionship



CONNECT

- Housing opportunities
- County, state and federal assistance
- Fisherman's Mark services
- Other charitable & social service agencies

ADVOCATE

- Court appearances
- Meeting representative
- Communicaitons with Decision-Makers

DIANA'S STORY

Diana first came to Fisherman's Mark in 2020 after she had been diagnosed with cancer. She needed her husband's care and help with their four children. The couple immigrated to the US from Peru as teenagers, and didn't have a family or other safety net to cover the loss of her husband's income. Fisherman's Mark provided assistance to fill the gap. Diana was overwhelmed with the compassion shown to her and her family of six.

Fast forward to 2023. Diana's husband lost his job, and, to make matters worse, their car broke down. Fisherman's Mark stepped in and covered the cost of the repair, and provided grocery store and gas gift cards, giving them the breathing room they needed until her husband could secure a new job which he did in September.

Life isn't perfect: Diana continues to have other medical challenges, and her husband works a nightshift job, but they feel fortunate to be part of such a generous community. Diana utilizes the Free MARKET regularly in order to ease the financial burden of rent, utilities and other expenses.



EDUCATION

Under the Fisherman's Mark umbrella, is the nationally accredited Lambertville Academy Early Childhood Learning Center. The Academy offers the rare combination of excellence in education with affordability. It provides a rich learning experience from age two to pre-Kindergarten, as well as summer camp for elementary students. Approximately 10% of the students receive tuition assistance with the help of Fisherman's Mark scholarship programs.

“

Everyone at Fisherman's Mark has been caring, compassionate and respectful. We were treated with dignity during one of the darkest moments of our lives.

”

*~ Diana,
Social Services
program
recipient*

JUSTINE'S STORY

Justine is a single mother of a creative, cat loving 4th grader. In 2019, Justine and her daughter were living in Ohio with a friend, sharing expenses and making ends meet when their situation suddenly changed. Through no fault of her own, Justine was forced to find an alternative living situation. With little disposable income and few viable housing options, she reached out to her aunt and uncle in Lambertville. They graciously invited Justine and her daughter to move in with them.

Justine was ready to look for work as soon as she arrived, but had no one to watch her daughter while she did. Unemployed, she did not qualify for State aid for childcare. Enter Fisherman's Mark. Justine's daughter was granted a Jim Hamilton Camp Scholarship for summer childcare at Lambertville Academy, giving Justine the time she needed to secure a position. Now employed, she qualified for much-needed state aid to help make ends meet.

Fast forward to 2023: Justine and her daughter are thriving. Justine recently received a promotion at her job. However, there's a twist: She makes less than \$1,000 per year over the amount that qualifies her for State assistance. Fisherman's Mark helped cover cost of summer camp through the Jim Hamilton Camp Scholarship bridging the gap and providing a safety net for Justine and her daughter.



“

If it wasn't for Lambertville Academy and the Jim Hamilton Camp Scholarship, I wouldn't be able to keep my job. I am so thankful for all that this community has provided for my daughter and me. She is so happy at Lambertville Academy, and I am employed and able to provide for both of us.

*~ Justine,
Lambertville Academy parent* ”



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60 Wilson Street
Lambertville, NJ 08530

THE MISSION OF FISHERMAN'S MARK IS TO STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY.

With responsive programs and services that promote stability, health, and education, Fisherman's Mark is an advocate for positive change in the lives of our neighbors and their families.

Fisherman's Mark is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) social services organization based in Lambertville, NJ. For over 43 years, we have offered help where and when needed in Hunterdon County and beyond. Our doors are open to all who stand in need of assistance, whether senior citizens, veterans, single mothers and fathers, individuals with disabilities, or newly-arrived immigrants. Our staff and volunteers are guided by our core values of intergrity, belonging, empathy and inspiration.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In addition to neighbors coming to us for food support and social services, Fisherman's Mark reaches out into the community to understand needs that we might not otherwise be aware of. We then expand our scope and design programming to address those needs. Los Puentes or "the bridges", connects Fisherman's Mark with the local Latino community, many of whom are immigrants and non-native English speakers. We learned of a gap in English as a Second Language education, and In 2023 we launched a much-needed ESL program. In partnership with Hunterdon County, two levels of classes are underway with a total of 29 students enrolled. We plan to continue these classes through 2024 and beyond.



“Last year, Hispanics became the largest minority in the country. Only one in every five students in higher education is Hispanic. Many of them come from rural South and Central America where they didn't have access to formal education. So not only are they learning English, but having a classroom experience gives them the confidence and motivation to keep learning.

~ Ricardo Zapata,
Director of Operations ”