Louisa Life

July 31 - August 27, 2020 • ONE COPY FREE

During Covid-19:

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Louisa Life

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General: Louisa Life is published monthly by Valley Publishing Corp. A total of 6,000 copies are circulated throughout Louisa County. One copy is free, additional copies are \$1 each payable in advance to the publisher.

Subscriptions: Copies will be mailed for the subscription price of \$40 per year. Please mail a check and a note with your name and address to: *Louisa Life* Subscriptions Dept., P.O. Box 59, Palmyra, VA 22963.

Submissions, tips, ideas, etc.: Louisa Life encourages submissions and tips on items of interest to Louisa County citizens. However we reserve the right to edit submissions as deemed necessary and cannot guarantee they will be published. Email the editor: *valleyeditor1@gmail.com*

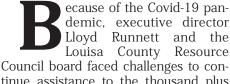
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Casey Lawhead adds last minute items to carts ready for pick up by clients. Photo courtesy of Pat Wilson *Cover designed by Marilyn Ellinger*



tinue assistance to the thousand plus clients who rely on the food that helps them avoid hunger. This spring, job loss, fear of the virus and dwindling food supplies increased the numbers applying as well as limited the available of items. Fortunately, the resource council was up to the task.

"First, we had to set new policies and procedures that were consistent and safe for our clients, volunteers and staff," said Runnett. "The thought of closing never crossed our minds."

The facility quickly adhered to CDC and state mandates. Initial protocols required clients to drive-thru, but that has since been replaced by a window check-in and curbside pickup which will probably become a permanent alternative. The greatest increase for assistance came in late March and early April, a period when delivery of food from Feed More (USDA) and corporate supporters, particularly Wal-Mart, were basically nonexistent.

"We saw recently unemployed people who would not normally need help. We used GAP (Grocery Assistance Program) which is non-government assistance," said Runnett. "Once these clients received government assistance, our numbers dropped back as they were no longer eligible. June and July numbers were about normal for the season."

The LCRC faced the predicament of over two weeks with no additional supplies and increasing numbers. Discounted costs to purchase food doubled. Thankfully, the faith-based community and private donors continued to be generous and, over the past several years, the council had appropriated funds to increase warehouse storage and purchase numerous walk-in freezers.

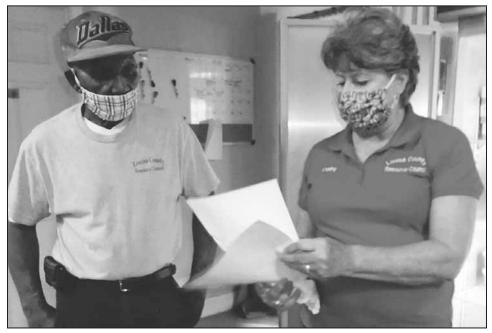
"We had the ability to store and rotate stock. We tested that," said Runnett. "If you had come in at the end of the first week in April, you would have seen that we had distributed about everything. That was the day that Wal-Mart brought us its first load in two-anda-half weeks. USDA caught up soon after."

With schools closed, hungry children

The Lake Anna Life & Times is an insert and is not affiliated with Louisa Life. The contents of Lake Anna Life & Times are the responsibility of its publisher. By Pat Wilson Correspondent

During Covid-19

Meeting the Challenge to Feed the Hungry



Milton Wrenn, warehouse manager, and Cathy Portner, office manager, discuss an inventory list.

were a major concern for the council. Snacks and non-perishable food for the monthly backpack were difficult to acquire. The council worked with Randy Herman, director of nutrition for the county's public schools, who had obtained grants to hold a summer project to feed youth in Louisa County. No matter what schedule students experience in the fall, Runnett promises that the backpack program will continue although distribution may be handled differently.

Runnett anticipates an increase in demands in the fall and the council is discussing actions to deal with that challenge. Future plans could potentially include expanding remote location distribution, adding evening hours weekly and closing the Resource Lane site on Fridays for in-depth cleaning and restocking. The council's goal is to conveniently reach as many county residents needing support as possible.

idents needing support as possible. "Since the GAP program does not depend on government assistance, we can be flexible and we want to help those who are trying to help themselves," said Runnett. "We welcome those needing assistance to reach out to us."

FEEDING THE COMMUNITY

Just under 30 percent of Louisa County residents deal with some level of hunger. The elderly and disabled, as well as families on fixed incomes, are the most vulnerable. The Louisa County Resource Council has a goal to curb the situation for as much of this population as possible.

"A University of Virginia study about four years ago indicated that we are serving only about half the people who are eligible," he said. "Not only can we help feed those residents who qualify under USDA guidelines, but also lowincome workers who comprise about nine percent of our population. Using the federal poverty levels, we find that just under a third of residents are eligible for one of our programs."

With side-by-side and walk-in refrigerators and freezers, along with three warehouses, the Resource Lane facility distributed close to one million pounds of food in 2019. Clients come periodically to load their vehicles from carts filled with fresh, frozen and canned items.

As a 501(3)C entity, LCRC depends, in part, on financial support from individuals, churches, civic groups, businesses, and corporations like Dominion Energy. Additionally, the resource council receives funds from local foundation grants and a budget appropriation from Louisa County government. Walmart Distribution Center is LCRC's largest food donor, although other local grocery and convenience stores are generous with excess groceries. Last season Hunters for the Hungry donated 6,000 pounds of venison and local vineyards supplied surplus grapes after harvesting.

ing. "Last year Walmart donated close to a quarter of a million pounds of food," said Runnett. "We employ a limited staff to keep expenses down and rely on our faithful volunteers to pick up, unload, inventory, and sort and bag groceries. Last year volunteers clocked over 1100 hours each month, a number which has more than tripled in the last five years. We encourage youth groups to assist, as this is a legacy for future generations. We are truly blessed by a generous community that allows us to keep expenses at a minimum."

A Breath of Fresh Air – The Louisa Arts Center Re-Opens

By Carol Barfield Correspondent

fter being closed since the middle of March, the Louisa Arts Center is up and running again! Karen Welch, executive director, has diligently followed the best CDC guidelines to provide a safe experience for a soft reopening.

On Friday, July 10th, Music and Wine at Sunset returned to delight people eager to enjoy life and some outdoor entertainment. On the terrace and surrounding lawn areas, all tables and chairs were placed 6 feet apart. Patrons were asked to bring their own food or choose to support local businesses with a take-out order to enjoy while listening to the musicians. The Cold North, a father/daughter duo from Centerville, entertained over 50 people who enjoyed listening to great music, even joining in on several songs. These events will continue on 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month from 6-8 pm.

With the kind and generous sponsorship of Edge Concrete Company and Harris Electric Company, all four Music and Wine events have been funded to enable the center to offer these events for free. Mark your calendars! David Davol is slated to perform July 24, Dan Trull on August 14, and Rick Hollowell on August 28th.



From left: Meagan DuBois, Ann Wren, Mary Howard, Jackie Smoot, Karen Welch, Pat Amrein, Bonny Geris and Corey Fischer. The sign was made by Graphic Garage in Troy. Photo courtesy of Louisa Arts Center.

The Purcell Gallery has also re-opened, featuring "Common Threads", an exhibition showcasing local quilters. The Gallery is open Tuesday through Friday from 12-2 pm. Three beautiful quilts from the exhibit are available to be raffled off. Tickets are a steal at only \$1 each, and proceeds will help support the Gallery.

Karen is sincere in her desire to protect the staff, volunteers and patrons. "It hasn't been easy. I started with a 33-page COVID-19 safety report from the CDC as a guide and got it down to 17 pages to then produce a one-page bullet list for patrons. We had a routine before our events, and now we are cleaning more than is required at high-traffic and touch points. Sanitizing bottles are spread throughout the facility. Limited numbers of people are allowed in at one time, and there are 6-foot stickers to help people social distance, as well as roped off 'wait here' signs for the restrooms to conform to best practices.'

Attention parents! The summer camps are also starting up again and are structured to limit contact and follow CDC guidelines. Although children under the age of 10 are not required to wear masks,

See Re-Opens Page 6

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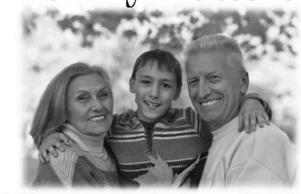
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Hungry from page 2 Community Cupboard

Monthly, over 1,200 income-eligible county families are given a generous allotment of canned and fresh foods, usually including meat, dairy and fruit. Some food is issued through the USDA Feeding America program, while other items are donated from local sources.

Volunteers routinely assist warehouse staff with sorting and bagging non-perishables. Each weekday, staff and volunteers work together to gather food for distribution and welcome LCRC clients who come to pick up their monthly allotments. With the computer-based information, workers can determine the amount and type of food for which a family is eligible and what suits that family's needs. The goal is to provide items for healthy, nutritious home-cooked meals.

GROCERY Assistance Program GAP is a monthly allotment of food

GAP is a monthly allotment of food provided for those with incomes above the government-assisted poverty level but who struggle to afford healthy food for themselves or their families. Often on limited fixed incomes, these residents must sometimes decide between paying bills, such as electricity and medical, or buying groceries. GAP is independent of government guidelines and distributed food does not come from the USDA.

EMERGENCY FOOD PANTRY

County families experiencing an unexpected crisis are eligible to receive a week's supply of groceries at no charge. If necessary, the request can be extended for as long as twice a month for a period of six months.

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CHILDREN'S FEEDING PROGRAM

In partnership with Louisa County Public Schools, the CFP distributes non-perishable food to children who are at risk of hunger when school is not in session.

• Additional information about eligibility guidelines for LCRC programs or for referral to county-provided services is available at the LCRC office just north of the intersection of Chalk Level Road and Davis Highway between the towns of Mineral and Louisa (147 Resource Lane). Cathy Portner, office manager, can be contacted at 540-967-1510 during office hours, Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. LCRC maintains a website, louisaresoure.org, and an email address, louisaresource@gmail.com.





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Executive director Karen Welch waring her LAC mask.



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In Camp Bravo, children use individual instruments and are seated apart. In Sight and Sound class, children learn tech support, lighting and sound. Although no members of the public are allowed to attend the final performance, a digital copy will be available for distribution—Karen and her team find creative ways to maximize enjoyment and safety!

Bigger challenges are ahead for the Arts Center and staff. Artists are booked for September, and the staff are trying to come up with creative solutions to the questions: How flexible can the artists and the Center be—can we hold the concerts outdoors? Although the governor says that in Phase III theaters can be open if masks are worn, limiting capacity and attempting to seat people six feet apart will be a challenge. Also, if people need to use the restroom, they can't pass others to leave. Despite these issues, Karen relates, "I am happy to say that all artists that could not perform from last season have been rescheduled into the 2020-2021 schedule, which gives us a very packed season!" Artists are given deposits, but contracts have been revised to include pandemic language: "If we are unable or it is unsafe to hold the event, we will have to cancel."

Moving forward, Karen wants to concentrate on innovative ways to entertain the public...small art classes and wine tasting events are two ideas in the works. "The longer we wait, the stronger and safer we will be, so my mantra is–'longer is stronger.' We don't want to re-open only to shut down again. We are all fed up personally and professionally. Although the initial fear may have lessened and we desperately want to get back to normal, the virus hasn't gone away. We are all working with restrictions and we really miss our patrons!"

Like many who have been making their way through the new COVID-19 landscape, Karen has had personal challenges. Both her family in the United Kingdom and her husband's family in Australia are doing well—they wore masks early and self-isolated, going out only when absolutely necessary, but no one knows when they will be able to be together again since flying is not yet an option.

The Arts Center closed in mid-March with no revenue coming in—a situation familiar to businesses around the country. Karen has been working with a team and director to source grants, funds and loans. She has taken advantage of the Cares Act Payroll Protection Program to keep staff at the Art Center employed, including the apprentice from Louisa High who is working to fund her college education. They also are receiving support from the Virginia Commission of the Arts and through private and individual donations.

Just as people have been trying to support their favorite restaurants and local businesses in creative ways, the Arts Center would appreciate help with their new campaign, "Birdies for Charity". Through this PGA tours initiative, funds are enhanced creatively, with Townebank and Dominion Energy as supporting non-profits. When a patron sponsors an event or donates to the Arts Center, they should make checks out to "PGA TOUR Charities, Inc." with 'Louisa Arts Center' in the memo line and send the donation to the Arts Center-- P.O. Box 2119, Louisa, VA, 23093. By doing so, an additional 10% will be added to the gift making their donation go further. Gifts large and small from those who can contribute will help keep the arts alive locally and will enable the Arts Center



to bridge the gap--and that is something we all need now more than ever!





Dan Trull.

Rick Hollowell .

With the generous sponsorship of Edge Concrete Company and Harris Electric Company, all the music and wine events have been funded to enable the center to offer these events for free. Mark your calendar for Dan Trull on August 14, and Rick Hollowell on August 28th.





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Louisa Arts Center Has Reopened

Music and Wine at Sundown



Dan Trull - August 14



Rick Hollowell - August 28

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businesses by ordering carry out.



Common Threads

This exhibit will include work from quilters within our Central Virginia community. Three quilts will be raffled off at \$1 per ticket, with all proceeds going to support the Purcell Gallery Committee.

Birdies For Charity

We have a unique opportunity to participate in a charitable fundraising program offered by the Dominion Energy Charity Classic until October 21. The program, Birdies for Charity, presented by TowneBank, will pay us a 10% bonus on any donations we generate! If you are planning to donate to the Arts Center this year, we ask that you send your donation to the Louisa Arts Center through the Birdies for Charity program and make it go 10% further!

