



All photos in this report card are from 2019 & 2020

### Even in this pandemic, amazing things still continue to happen under our roof - thanks to you...

When the pandemic hit the world, and they closed Italy last March, we knew we were in a global crisis. Immediately, we thought how will we remain healthy, keeping our doors open while working on frontline services for those who depend on us? How will we fund the organization, as well as needing to purchase food as life shut down, as we depend on donations? And my greatest fear - how will we keep the FISH Homeless Shelter staffed if staff falls ill?

With medical advisement, we have rearranged the dorm rooms to socially distance, we created isolation areas, and developed our "Team Stay Healthy" protocols.

We continue to provide hope and build morale. And some weeks we find ourselves stretched with the addition of area residents who are furloughed or lost their jobs and have families in need of our FISH Food Pantry.

Yet we'll share we have been blessed with many angels and heroes who have miraculously appeared during the pandemic! We have been thrilled by numerous great deed doers: there are mask makers; health care providers who helped rearrange the Shelter's sleeping areas and advised us on health and safety protocols; brave staff and volunteers; amazing (rescuing) financial donors - individuals, businesses and groups, and Foundations; friends, schools, church and civic groups and organizations, businesses and Food Rescue US who have delivered grocery donations and gift cards for the FISH Food Pantry, including turkeys galore; Godsend shelter meal providers; Christmas toy elves and holiday cookie bakers; the Litchfield Distillery making hand sanitizer and then donating people's contributions to FISH making up for the loss of our annual fund raisers and covering the cost of running operations here for a month(!); warm clothing donors for our giveaway; and at the worst of times in the spring - hearts and rainbow pictures from children to bring us smiles.

There have been so many shining in their godness and generosity - stepping up to help us since March. Thank You!

## FISH FACTS IN 2019-2020

### We at FISH NWCT...

see daily the very human, social welfare challenges of families, individuals and veterans facing life crisis. We strive to restore the confidence and self-worth of those who are the most vulnerable and seek our help.

### FISH Food Pantry

- 91,197 meals distributed (year ending 9/30)
- 643 families enrolled to receive food, representing 1,509 individuals

### FISH Emergency Homeless Shelter (35 beds)

- Total # of bed nights = 7703
- Permanent housing was found for 53 shelter households
- Total Served: 70 adults, 17 veterans, 16 children = 103 Total Residents

## A MESSAGE from a FISH Shelter resident

My name is Michael Samele, and I am a disabled Vietnam Veteran. I have been a resident at the FISH House for six months as I await my placement into an apartment. During this time the workers and staff have been great, and their security and cleaning regime against the virus have been even better.

So far everyone at FISH has remained safe, and not come down with the Coronavirus. I have breathing difficulties so everyone is masked and distancing as best as we can in our communal living space. At the same time staff has done all they can to make the shelter homey, decorating for every season and holiday and providing special meals.

I'm thankful to be in the FISH Shelter during this time of the virus, being kept as safe as possible. And since Vietnam, I have never been made to feel as proud of serving as I do living at FISH. They truly respect Veterans.

So know if you ever become homeless, FISH is the place to go.