

Meet Carlee Hicks Community Closet Assistant

If you frequent the Community Closet or have attended events like February's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner or our Dine for a Cause, the face on the left may look a bit familiar. Pictured here with one of her Closet supervisors, Jodi Ragland, this young lady is Carlee Hicks, sophomore at Louisa County High School and one of the most recent additions to the LCRC team.



Carlee began as a summer intern last June and has stayed on through the school year, working

in the Closet every-other-Saturday. Carlee has also worked as support staff at LCRC events in the past.



In her role at the Community Closet, Carlee assists with donation intake, sorting and organizing inventory, stocking racks, helping maintain a visually appealing environment, and assisting customers.

Her role with the Community Closet is Carlee's first job, and she has thoroughly enjoyed working with LCRC staff and volunteers, Closet donors, and customers. "Wendy and Jodi are so kind and accommodating. They've been so patient with me. I like being able to help people in the community, and I've been able to gain work experience in such a friendly, supportive environment. It really is a perfect first job," Carlee said.

Stop by to see Carlee and check out what the Closet has to offer on the first and third Saturday of the month from 9 am-1 pm.

Thank you, Carlee, for being part of our team!

We're so grateful to the good folks at Louisa United Methodist Church, who graciously allowed us to host our 2025 Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in their Fellowship Hall.

Louisa UMC is a strong supporter of LCRC throughout the year, so it was fitting that our event celebrating our incredible volunteers was hosted there. A special thanks to their pastor, Reverend David Palmer.



Many thanks to Clark Construction, who in observance of Women in Construction Week, asked if they could team up with LCRC to give back to the community while they were here working on a commercial project in Mineral. Pictured are the team members who came out to lend a hand in January and March.



Gratitude Report

Spring 2025



FROM LCRC



Greetings Friends,

What a busy year 2025 has been so far! As always, we have much to be thankful for. Though challenging times persist for the families we serve, we are incredibly fortunate to have the ability to provide the food and services our neighbors need most.

During the last quarter of 2024, we served more than 1,800 families each month through the Community Cupboard. Those numbers, which do not include our other programs, are the highest enrollment the Cupboard has ever seen. Then January brought weather that made life even harder for families in need. Extended school closures following winter break left households struggling to make groceries stretch without the school meals so many families rely on. To make matters worse, many of these parents have jobs that are weather-dependent or were unable to get to work due to road conditions or lack of childcare.

To give you a glimpse into how desperate the situation was for many families—and the impact of your support—I want to share my experience of the second weekend in January. The rush began Friday afternoon when an assistant principal at a local elementary school called for help for a family of seven, including five children, who had shared a can of corn for lunch during the school closures. These folks were in desperate need. On Saturday, I was back at the office to gather groceries for a homeless family of four with two preschool-aged children. I met with two additional families who were nearly out of food on Sunday. Things didn't slow down after the weekend, with Monday bringing in another family of seven who were down to their last rations. Thankfully, LCRC was able to get these families the food they needed, and our capable staff enrolled them in our programs moving forward.

Among this year's triumphs so far has been our Kindness Bag project, which began as an informal response to the increase in homelessness our clients were reporting. We often get donations of personal hygiene items, socks, and other essential supplies, and we give them out as needed. However as we began to see more and more families reporting homelessness, we realized it made sense to formalize an outreach plan—involving our community partners—to provide these items for those experiencing a housing crisis. **We expect the Kindness Bag Project to officially launch in the coming weeks!**

We look forward to continuing to be here and ready for our Louisa County neighbors through whatever the rest of 2025 brings their way. We want to sincerely thank YOU, our readers, for your support of our work. Your interest and commitment to our cause has more of an impact on the lives of our neighbors in need than you can possibly imagine.

With our sincerest gratitude for your unfaltering support,

Lloyd Runnett, Executive Director



The Reason We Do What We Do

Shared by Cathy Portner, LCRC Office Manager

"Helena Nyman runs a local grief support group, and we collaborate often—she is always looking to connect those in need with available resources in the community. Recently she called me to ask if the Emergency Food Pantry would be able to provide food for a mom whose refrigerator had gone out. The family had lost all the fridge's contents. Mom had recently lost her husband in a car accident and had three children attending Helena's grief sessions.

I let Helena know that we could definitely supply food, but I just couldn't stop thinking of this family. This mother had been through so much and couldn't seem to catch a break.

I reached out to Melissa Larsen, a local entrepreneur who remodels apartments. Melissa had contacted LCRC during a summer heatwave to let us know that she often has air conditioners and other appliances that she would be happy to donate to people in need. Wendy in our Community Closet and I had put several clients in touch Melissa for appliance needs, and I was hoping Melissa might have a refrigerator in storage.

Melissa didn't have a refrigerator at the time, but still jumped at the chance to help this family. She considered starting a fundraiser for them, but realized a quick solution would make things as stress-free as possible. So Melissa purchased a new refrigerator and had Lowe's deliver it to the family's home.

I called Helena to update her, not knowing that the mother happened to be standing beside her when she took my call. When I explained Melissa's plan, I heard the absolute **JOY** in Mom's voice when she exclaimed, "God is good!"

Helena reached out to see if she could get this family food, and now they had food AND a fridge to put it in. People like Helena, Melissa, and this mom are the reason we do what we do here at LCRC. It truly brightened my day to be a part of this. We really have such an amazing community."



HELP FUND THE FRIDGE!

Planned refrigeration addition will provide much-needed cold storage space and facilitate our fight against hunger for years to come.

Cathy's "fridge" story at left is the perfect lead-in to the news of our capacity-building campaign to increase LCRC's cold storage space. In order to have fresh food available for these neighbors in need—and take advantage of the significant availability of cold food donations from large donors such as Walmart—we find that we no longer have enough temperature-controlled storage for normal surges in client numbers.

In fact, this past fall, we were forced to run our refrigerated trucks to have adequate cold storage space. Although this is not the first time we've used our trucks for temporary food storage, the sustained need we face

confirms that a permanent solution is now necessary.

The goal of this year's fundraiser is to fund an addition to Warehouse 3 that will include a 24' x 24' refrigeration unit and the necessary framework to guarantee protection from the elements, provide maximum energy efficiency, and ensure optimal temperature control.

Our fundraiser begins now, and we want to thank you—our amazing supporters—for your help in making this critical addition a reality. It will grant LCRC the ability to continue meeting the needs of neighbors like the grieving parent of whom Cathy spoke, and many more in the years ahead.



We are delighted to announce that gifts will be matched up to \$50,000 through June 30! We are so grateful for this generous support that allows our donors to double their donation. Take a photo of the QR code (on the perfectly chilled orange juice bottle) and it will take you to our website where you can give to help fund the fridge!

New Initiative Makes a Difference for Nursing Home Residents

Inspired by the acts of #Kindness for which Louisa County is known, Rochelle Myers turned to her resident council at Louisa Health and Rehabilitation Center (LHRC) to see if they would be interested in spreading some kindness of their own. "I was speaking with residents about giving back to the community because our community does so much for us," she said. "They loved the idea, so I reached out to Lloyd to see if this was something we could possibly do. He loved the idea too!

"Living in a nursing home is hard on a lot of our residents. Being able to volunteer gives them a sense of purpose and responsibility. It reminds them of when they worked, back in the day," Rochelle continued.

Daniel "Danny" Brooks is one of the residents who bags canned and dry goods for our clients through this initiative. "When they first suggested it to me, I loved it," Brooks said. Peter Dickson, a Michigan native and former firefighter/EMT, said his favorite part of volunteering for us is having the chance to help people in need.

Jesse Jones, who worked for the City of Charlottesville for 27 years, agreed with his fellow volunteers. "I've been working all my life, and it keeps me going." Like Jones, resident John Lewis is used to staying busy, having previously worked at Hairfield Lumber Company for nearly 60 years in addition to spending many years doing farm work.

As a Regional Lead/Recreation Director for Medical Facilities of America, Rochelle (the smiling blonde in the photo at bottom left!) hopes to inspire other locations to give their residents a similar opportunity to make a difference. "The effect it has on the group of residents that I bring to volunteer has lifted the spirits of many at our facility," she said.

Kudos to LHRC for making a difference in the lives of their residents—and giving them the chance to make a difference in the lives of others!



Our exclusive philanthropy group, The 100 Donor Circle, has not reached its goal. Join today and you'll be a key partner in our mission to never turn away anyone who comes to us truly in need. Email Carrie at louisaresource@gmail.com to learn more!



On June 28, the family of Board Chair Earl Mielke will again host the Lake Anna Sprint Triathlon. This event supports our Annual Matching Campaign, with "Fund the Fridge" as this year's goal. Many thanks to the Mielke and Harbert families who organize this annual event in support of LCRC!

