



# Deeper Dive

Community Updates from the Hilton Head Island Deep Well Project

## A Year of Extraordinary Challenge

### Fill the Well

This year has been especially challenging for Deep Well, as well as for many folks in our county. Working islanders have faced rising prices and higher costs for housing and daily living as incomes have not kept pace with expenses. Following the highest relief aid Deep Well has ever provided due to the pandemic in 2020-21, we finally caught a break in 2022, with most aid volumes normalizing. But the numbers tracked up again in 2023 and have continued to soar in 2024, with some programs like our 5-day-a-week food pantry returning to the height of COVID levels. High food and housing costs, exacerbated by the higher interest rate environment, are hitting local families hard. When people are hurting, Deep Well's phones ring all day long.



### As Deep Well works tirelessly to provide aid to our struggling neighbors, our Well is running low.

In July 2024, for example, Deep Well's food pantry pumped \$71,000 worth of food into our community, serving between 900 – 1000 people. We've never seen volumes like this in the middle of summer when the tourism season is in full swing. Consider: jobs are plentiful, and workers can pick up extra hours. When we see numbers like this in July, estimating how much aid we will need to provide in January is daunting.

If you'd like to help "Fill the Well," we welcome your gifts of food for the Pantry, new toys for the Santa Shop, or financial gifts (stock, checks, IRA distributions). And a special thank you to our almost 300 volunteers who donate their precious gift of TIME to help our community and power Deep Well's programs.

**THANK YOU!**



### -Ready to learn

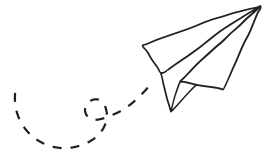
Deep's Well's annual School Readiness program ensures that low-income Hilton Head students have all the school supplies and proper uniforms required by our local schools. Brand new clothes, backpacks, binders and composition books are the first steps in nurturing optimism and love of learning. This year's program ran from July 1 to late September. We were able to provide 2,220 uniform shirts to 444 children this year, plus a big bag full of all the recommended school supplies for their grade level by the Beaufort Country School District. Best of all, a local family foundation has already stepped up to almost fully fund this program in 2025! Great way to start the school year.



### You've got mail!

- If you're viewing this newsletter update via your electronic inbox....AWESOME!
- But if it was in an envelope delivered to your physical mailbox by the US Postal Service, we need your email address!
- Deep Well strives to keep our volunteers, donors and community up to date on our activities. You are our partners!
- We're trying to conserve as much of our budget for direct client services as possible. Emailing all communications is an important money saver – 73 cents per envelope just for the postage!

**SHARE YOUR EMAIL WITH US!**



Email [aaantunez@deepwellproject.org](mailto:aaantunez@deepwellproject.org) to assure you get timely and important communications via email from Deep Well.

## welcome New DW Staffer!

### Adriana Antunez Joins Deep Well

Deep Well's new Operations Coordinator Adriana Antunez has already made a difference in enabling us to better help our neighbors. Adriana supports our Livable Housing program, coordinates Project Safe and Town of HHI Sewer Grant applications, and oversees Deep Well's Furniture program. Along with administrative support, Adrianna also works closely with our office volunteers assisting Spanish-speaking clients.

Adriana holds a Bachelor of Family Science and Human Development degree, with a concentration in Family Services. She relocated to the Lowcountry in 2023 from New Jersey with her fiancé who is serving in the United States Marines Corps. Her parents migrated to the United States from Honduras. Adriana's experience working with welfare agencies and federal/state programs such as SNAP and TANF will enable Deep Well to better assist our neighbors in need.



# MOST NEEDED PANTRY ITEMS

## General Pantry Food Needs

- \*Mac&Cheese, salmon, tuna, chicken
- \*unsalted nuts/seeds, diced tomatoes
- \*Dry beans and lentils, farro
- \*dry milk packets, coffee, tea, cereal
- \*Instant, unflavored oatmeal packets
- \*Ketchup, mayo, pasta & sauce
- \*Ranch dressing, canned mixed veg
- \*Olive oil, vegetable oil, stew, chili
- \*Peanut butter & jelly/jam, crackers
- \*Small flours, small sugars, canned fruit
- \*Taco kits, salsa, rice & refried beans

**Christmas:** corn, beans, peas, rice/potato/pasta sides, yams, sweet potatoes, muffin mixes, mustard, pineapple, mac&cheese

## Fall 2024 Wish List The Deep Well Pantry

[pantry@deepwellproject.org](mailto:pantry@deepwellproject.org)



## Personal Care

Toilet paper, tissue boxes, paper towels, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, razors and shaving cream, period pads, adult bladder pads, laundry pods, floss, bar soap, lotion

## Thanksgiving:

Stuffing, corn, mac&cheese, corn muffin/bread mix, canned yams/sweet potatoes, cranberry sauce/jelly, gravy, mashed potato mix

## Drop Off

80 Capital Drive, Hilton Head, SC  
M-F, 9 am-4:45 pm

## Online



## CIRCLES FAMILIES ACHIEVE BIG GAINS

Our first group of Circles Leaders has reached the 18-month mark and they have made significant strides in leading their families toward self-sufficiency.

Positive changes have been seen in mental health, self-confidence, enhanced budgeting skills and financial knowledge, and better employment. Household income, one of the most tangible benchmarks, has been particularly impressive with incomes increasing 61%. This compares to the national Circles average income growth of 47% across all 65 chapters in 25 states.

Circles' second group of families has achieved a 100% basic training graduation rate as they reach the mid-point in their journey. Close to one hundred Circles volunteers will be welcoming a third group of families in early 2025.

# 47%

Family income growth (National average after 1 year in Circles)

# 61%

Circles Hilton Head average family income growth



## Volunteer Spotlight: The Santa Shop Elves

The calendar may say October, but our Santa Shop Elves have been doing prep work since, well, December 26, 2023!

While Deep Well Project registers, organizes and hosts the annual Santa Shop in mid-December each year, the beloved institution is truly powered by our community.

Generous individuals, businesses, churches and civic organizations who run toy drives to collect new items, along with almost 100 seasonal volunteers, embody the true spirit of the holiday season.

Close to 800 Hilton Head Island children from low-income families have received gifts from our Santa Shop for each of the past two years. Registered parents are assigned a shopping day and time to visit the Santa Shop in mid-December. Aided by our Elves, parents select gifts for their children ages 1-12, choosing from stacks of books, games, toys, sporting goods, stocking stuffers and practical new clothing.

Join us in celebrating the holiday season. The 2024 Santa Shop Wish List is posted at [www.deepwellproject.org](http://www.deepwellproject.org). From December 2-11, toys can be dropped off at Deep Well, M-F, 9-5. Or shop Amazon online and ship the items directly to Deep Well Project, Attn: Santa Shop, 80 Capital Drive, HHI, SC 29926.



October 30 is the last day Deep Well can accept furniture/appliance donations until January 2, 2025.

Visit our website to make a credit card donation [deepwellproject.org/donate](http://deepwellproject.org/donate)  
The Deep Well Project • 80 Capital Dr. Hilton Head Island, SC 29926 • 843-785-2849