



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter

August 2022

Open Invitation – if you volunteer in St. Augustine, we'd love to have you join us in Palatka, and if you volunteer in Palatka, we'd love to have you join us in St. Augustine.

Volunteer Management Software

We have begun the implementation of our new volunteer management software. “**Get Connected**” by Galaxy Digital which will take volunteer management, engagement, recruitment, communication, and reporting to a whole new level.

If you are one of our treasured veteran volunteers or a new volunteer looking to meet new friends, help others, and change the world, please register – click here: [The Epic-Cure Volunteer Site](#).

If you have any questions, please contact us at: volunteer@epic-cure.org.

Operations

It has been a long time in the works, but we are down to only two weeks until the electrical work in Palatka will be completed. Our three 45' freezer containers will be operating, and we will be a fully functional emergency management food facility with our generators and propane tank hooked up. It is time to increase efforts with cold storage facility food rescue, an intermittent resource that sometimes provides large amounts of food.

To increase our capacity to transport food, we exchanged our leased 16' refrigerated truck for a 26' truck. That will increase our hauling capacity from 6 pallets to 10 pallets on each run, expanding and making more efficient our food transportation capabilities.

We just added a permanent weekly distribution every Friday at Beulah Baptist Church in Crescent City. That brings us to:

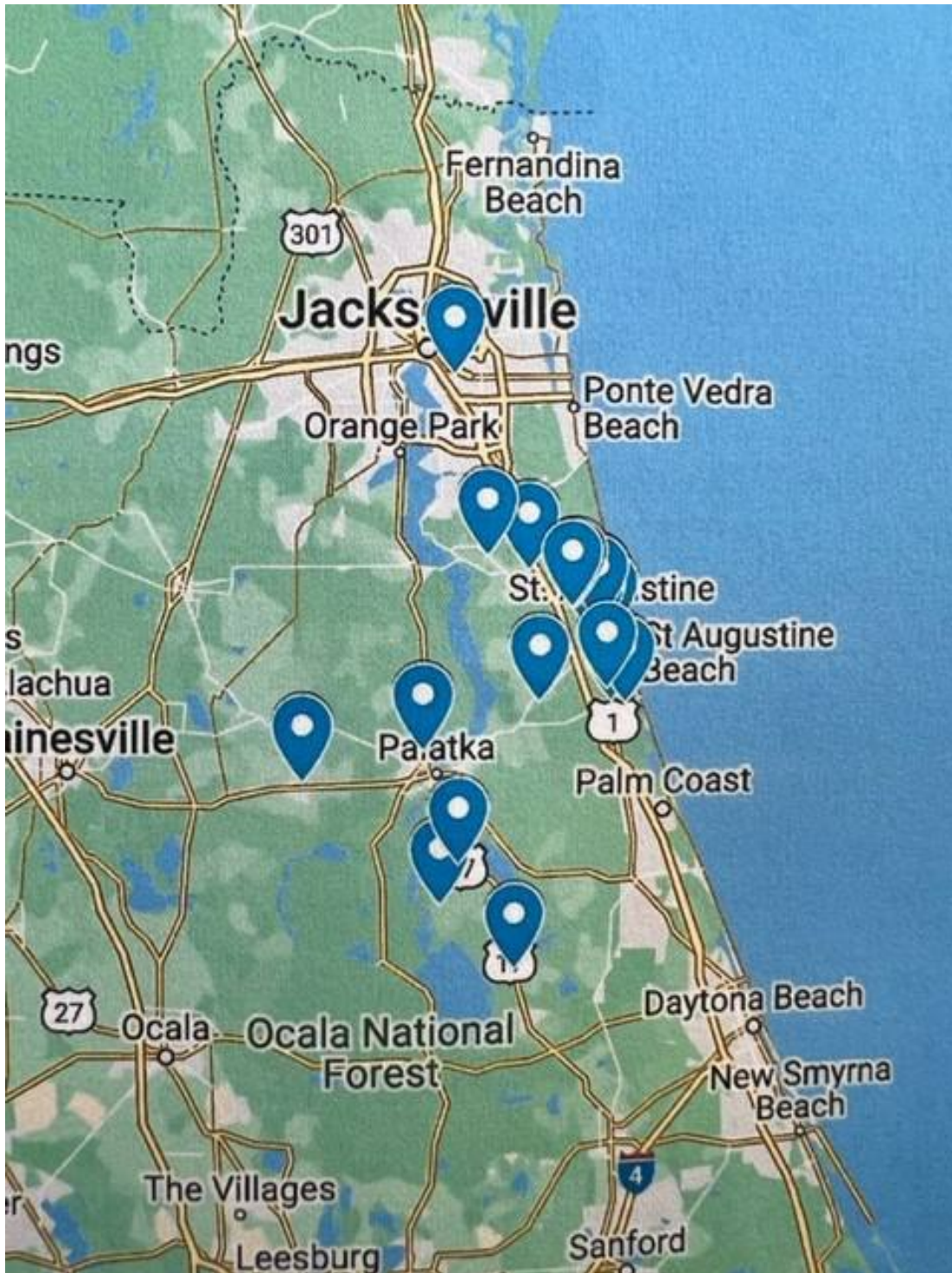
16 locations weekly
4 locations every other week
4 locations every month

Why are mobile food distributions so important?

Families in need of food assistance often struggle with reliable transportation and money for gasoline, so bringing food closer to our patrons is a critical mission at Epic-Cure.



We collect patrons' zip codes. To thank the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for their continued donations of food and household goods, we planned to post a map showing how far their generous donations reached over the last three weeks; however, 89 zip codes was a bit much to display! It is easier to show the distribution sites – 89 is a lot of zip codes.





H₂O: It's summer, which means we receive a lot of bottled water donations. When the cases do not look perfect, consumers won't buy them. So far this year, 85,000 pounds of bottled water were donated to Epic-Cure. Given that some of our patrons do not have drinkable water in their homes or have their water shut off for non-payment, water is a valued commodity.

But 85,000 pounds! That just us as one little non-profit rescuing food. Imagine the waste countrywide – including the plastic!

"A man's got to know his limitations." Guided by the wisdom of Dirty Harry, we try not to limit ourselves to specific areas of food collection and distribution. "Limits are so limiting" (Sunny Mulford). Other than what gets dropped on our doorsteps, we try to focus on areas we feel we can have the greatest impact: by rescuing the most food and helping as many people as we can with that food.

While we just found that we have the potential to rescue vast quantities of soda (we never say "no"), we focus on getting the most we can of food with the best nutritional value. What we are focusing on now is getting access to rejected truckloads of food and rescuing food from farms.

The long (not short, sorry) stories about why: On July 16th, Pie in the Sky called because a driver had six pallets of cut watermelon, mangos, pineapples, and cantaloupe all dated July 21st. Because the "sell by" dates were so close, the food was rejected by Trader Joe's. That trucking company did not want to see it go to waste, so we used our lift gate as a ramp and shared two pallets with Pie in the Sky and Family Worship Center. Thank goodness they took that much – our St. Augustine refrigerator was full. AmVets picked some up Saturday the 23rd in the evening, and we distributed the rest over the next week at all our St. Johns distribution locations.

Out of curiosity, we looked it up. At \$4.49 per item, the retail value of the donated fruits was \$26,401.

We did a Facebook post about that rescued truck load. In response to that post, Jennifer and Jesus Arias De Rosado, the owners of Open Heavens Logistics located near Treaty Park/Family Worship Center on 207, contacted us. They wanted to do what they can to help Epic-Cure. They have a semi-trailer and a flatbed trailer and want to put their equipment and services (all volunteer) at our disposal whenever we have loads that do not require refrigeration to be picked up. They will also share our information with other truckers and trucking companies – they know this is a common occurrence. Their generosity is heartwarming.

We subscribe to the ReFED newsletter (<https://refed.org/>). Recently, they had more information about 2023 proposed food waste reduction legislation. There is a lot of information in their "The Food Law and Policy Clinic Opportunities to Reduce Food Waste in the 2023 Farm Bill Report," but a few things really resonated with us.

- The 2018 Farm Bill allocated \$50 million annually to support grants of up to \$500,000 under these programs. This allocation includes funding for "new business opportunities and marketing strategies to reduce on-farm food waste," which is responsible for 21% of the United States' total food waste.
- Food donation can be an expensive and time consuming process. Donors sometimes allocate substantial time and money to harvest, package, transport, and deliver food products to donees. Farmers and food businesses may often find it less expensive or onerous to till under or send surplus food to landfills instead of donating it.
- For smaller companies, such as small- and mid-sized farmers and independent food businesses that operate on a low-profit margin, a deduction is not an effective incentive because taxable income may already be quite low. Farmers also may not claim an enhanced tax deduction because it requires too much record-keeping.



- The ongoing reliance on landfills to manage organic waste is problematic for several reasons. Landfills continue to be overburdened by organic waste (which makes up around 24.1% of municipal solid waste in landfills by weight), and states and cities are running out of space to store their waste. Moreover, as food items decompose in landfills, they release harmful greenhouse gases (methane) at alarming rates. Municipal waste landfills are the third-largest source of human-created methane emissions, accounting for 15.1% of methane created by humans in the United States in 2019 and 8% to 10% of all global anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions from 2010 to 2016.
 - Anthropogenic? It simply means that it comes from human activity.

Free Health Screenings!

Care Connect+ Health Screenings will be at Epic-Cure Inc.'s food distribution on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month – August 4th and 18th – from 3:15 p.m. until 5:45 p.m. at 2745 Industry Center Rd. #1, Saint Augustine, FL 32084. Services offered by Care Connect+ and Wildflower Healthcare are free biometric screenings, including checking blood pressure, blood sugar, and cholesterol levels. In just 15 minutes with one finger prick, you will have your results. There will be a health coach on-site to go over these numbers with you. [Learn more here.](#)

Check out the article that Epic-Cure Board Member Wendy Lantz contributed to this newsletter – see page 6.

We had our 2nd ever restaurant donation of excess produce in July. The Floridian Restaurant realized on a Friday that they received more produce that they would be able to use over the weekend, so they call us. Thirty minutes later, Mike was on his way to do the pickup.





One week, we were a little stressed about having enough produce for our patrons in Putnam County, so we made the call to L&M Farms to see if they had any surplus produce. They donated 2,000 pounds of potatoes, which everyone appreciated.



New Sources

After the announcement of the launch of our [Fresh Food Connect program](#), we got a call from the Ace Hardware in Palatka. The manager of their garden department said she has home gardeners that ask all of the time what they can do with their surplus produce. So, they will advertise our program there AND they are setting up a bin to collect used plastic bags for us!!

Fresh Food Connect is an app that enables home and community gardeners to donate a portion of their fresh grown produce to support local hunger relief efforts.

Hazel Robinson and Arthur Culbert in a planning meeting for the Fresh Food Connect program ...



Food Is Medicine Campaign

By Wendy Lantz
ARNP, FNP-C, CEN

There are many individuals in our community who are food insecure and struggle to access healthy, nutrient-dense food. Those who suffer from chronic diseases and our at-risk population are often told what not to eat and become frustrated and confused about what they should eat based on their prescribed diet. There is an easy and inexpensive way to improve the health and wellness of our patrons and our community.

As part of our community health improvement initiatives, we have begun a prescriptive food pharmacy, in partnership with Epic-Cure, Inc., Feeding Northeast Florida, Care Connect, and Wildflower Clinic. This partnership will give patrons access to fresh fruits and vegetables, along with a variety of healthy prepackaged foods. The food will be stocked and presorted for those who participate in the program. And of course, this is all for FREE! This food is in addition to, not in lieu of, the food they receive while shopping at the warehouse.

BACKGROUND

What we eat is the main culprit behind many chronic diseases. Diet related diseases (such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes) are both the number one cause of preventable death and the number one cause of disability in the United States. Poor dietary habits, particularly low intake of healthy foods, is the leading risk factor for



mortality and morbidity. American diets are high in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fat commonly found in processed foods, which are bad for our health. As a result, people have become sicker with increased rates of heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. A diet rich in leafy greens, beans, nuts, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, combined with an active lifestyle, is the best medicine to help prevent these chronic diseases.

Food is the problem, but food can also be the solution.

Using food as preventative medicine can keep us healthy. Eating a healthier diet can help prevent and treat the most common of these debilitating conditions.

PRESCRIPTIVE FOOD PHARMACY

Patrons have the opportunity to participate in a free biometric Screening which are provided for free by volunteer clinicians from Care Connect and Wildflower Clinic. They are invited to come to one of our scheduled clinics or set an appointment to meet with one of our Health Coach. During that initial appointment, we will collect health screening data, including blood pressure, lipid profile, glucose, and BMI. Not only will participants have access to a weekly supplemental food that help them improve their health status, they will also have the opportunity to participate in free health coaching as part of the Buckingham Smith Grant. The health coach is Registered Dietitian employed by Care Connect includes 6 sessions over the course of 6 months that can be in person or online. As part of the healthcare team, both the patron and RD/Health coach will work together to develop SMART goals related to their health and wellness. Based on their prescribed diet, the RD will help them select the foods they need to meet their goal and comply with their prescribed diet. After their initial health screening, the patron will be able to return weekly to pick the fresh proteins, vegetables and an assortment of diabetic friendly and health healthy food. After 6 months, we will ask the individual to repeat the health screening so we can track the impact of having access to free nutrition services and free healthy food.

Did I mention the food is FREE to patients and FREE for participants?!? The only requirement for food distribution is that we collect demographic information and report the weight of the food dispersed.

Additionally, Rachel McCandless, our representative from Feeding Northeast Florida, is a Registered Dietitian and professor and the University of North Florida, has several interns that she would like to use to help us manage this program, maintain the food pharmacy, and conduct the health screenings.

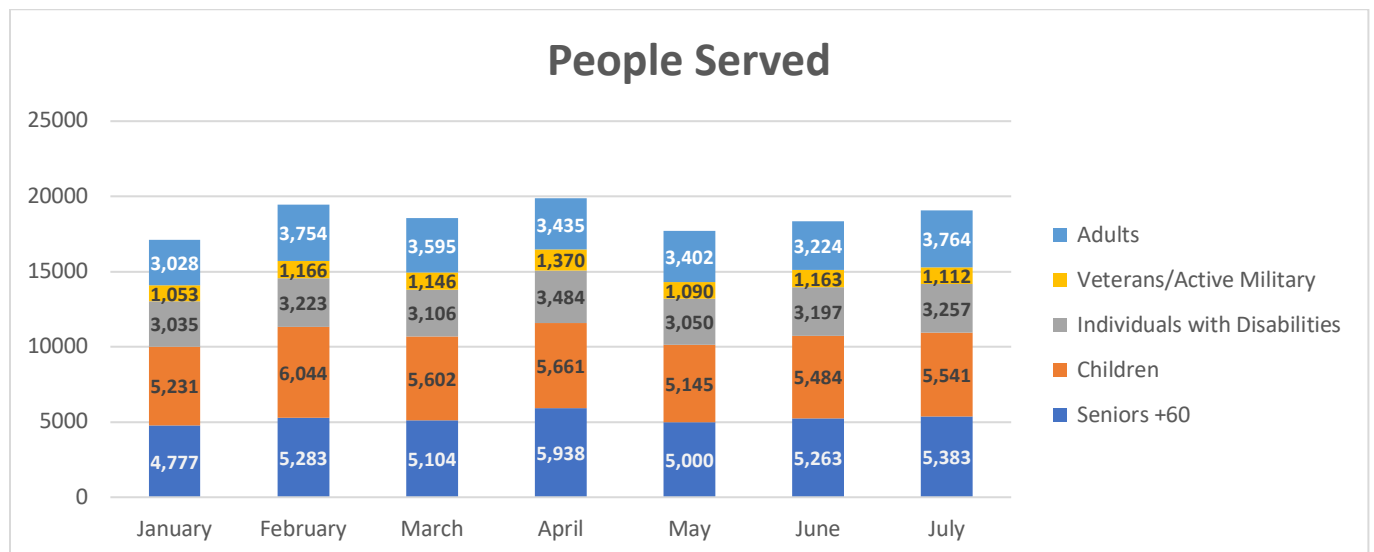
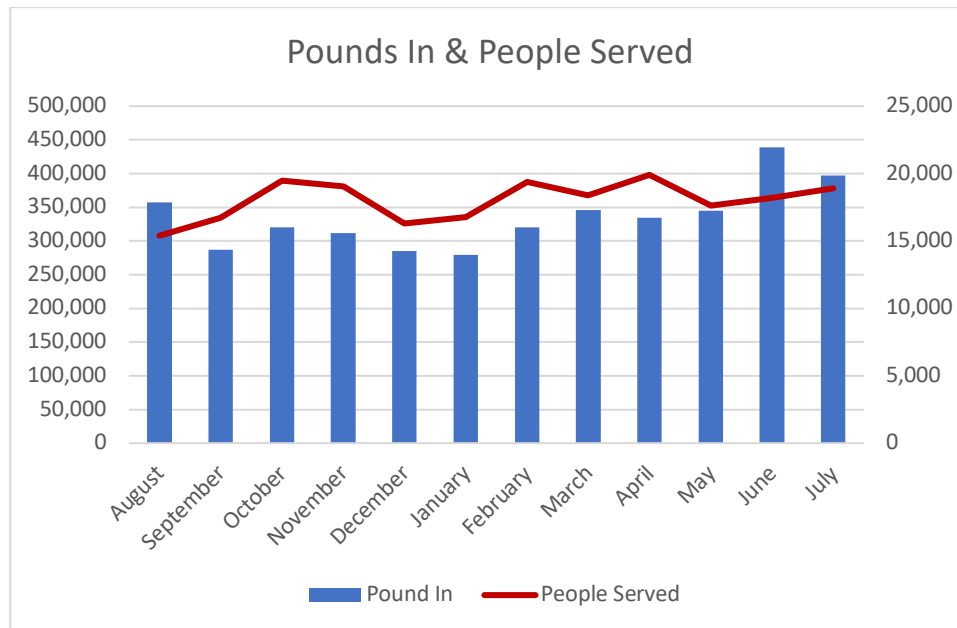
SUMMARY

The concept of food as medicine is important for us to grasp as epicureans. If chronically ill people eat a nutritious diet, they may need less medications, reduce emergency room visits, require fewer hospital admissions, and live longer, healthier lives. Patrons can improve their health status and expand their understanding of nutrition and health. Food acts as medicine—to maintain health and prevent diseases. According to the Food is Medicine coalition, Food Is Medicine interventions consist of healthy foods that are tailored to meet individuals' specific health needs affected by diet. We have the opportunity to provide FREE healthy food to our patrons while helping them reach their health related goals and improve the health and wellness of our community.

Wendy Lantz
Member, Board of Directors
Epic-Cure Inc.



Here is our PIPS (Pounds In & People Served) graph



Notes on the graphs:

Sourcing more food is always at the forefront of our daily efforts. But to be able to take the food, you have to be able to store it properly. We are already communicating our increased storage and transport capacity to all our sources and are asking them to help spread the word.

The draft of our flyer to hand out at truck stops to raise awareness that we and our partners in NE Florida can accept rejected loads will be completed soon.

For the People Served by category chart, we wanted to see if there were any noticeable changes in the demographics, but it appears to remain consistent.



Sustain U.

On July 26th, we wrapped up our summer cooking classes for the kids at the Boys and Girls Club and Woodlawn Terrace. It is hard to say which class they liked the most. How do you pick from French Toast (Classic and Rollups with Bananas and Nutella), Eggs Benedict, Learning to Fry and Flip Eggs, Café Au Lait and Beignets, Homemade Granola Bars and Smoothies. We had to drink the Café Au Lait out of plastic bowls because we ran out of cups, but no one cared. And look at the smile at successfully flipping the egg!







In September, we will begin an eight week BBQ cooking class series every Monday evening at the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic in Jacksonville - Centerstone. We must convert the space below into a working kitchen with six stations.



To do that we need some equipment. If you are interested in helping outfit the kitchen, our wish list with items less than \$10 up to a \$600 oven we need is:

[Click Here to Donate for the Veterans' Cooking Class](#)

Our Epic Volunteers

Please look out for emails about our new volunteer online platform.

To hear about ongoing volunteer opportunities, please join our Facebook Volunteer Group. Feel free to inquire about opportunities to volunteer using this link: Volunteer@epic-cure.org

The entire Epic-Cure family would like to thank Charity Roberts for all her hard work coordinating our volunteers over the past three years. We will miss her sorely and wish her well in her future endeavors. Thank you, Charity! Yours was a huge contribution to Epic-Cure's growth and ethos centering on dignity and respect.



Volunteer Spotlight

By Ken Mulford, Guest Volunteer-Spotlight-Shiner



Today, we highlight one of Epic-Cure's superstar volunteers, Team Leader Abigail Jordan. I trust that you will forgive a little sentimentality in this profile: Sunny and I have watched with great interest and enduring admiration as Abigail's warm heart has revealed itself to the volunteers and patrons of this little charity.

I remember Abigail's first day as a volunteer. She picked a doozy of a day to start: a Thursday distribution at the Saint Augustine warehouse, where we have more than 200 families shopping over two and a half hours. "Frenetic" describes the energy and the activity on Thursdays in Saint Augustine. Luckily, another of our superstar volunteers Charity Roberts took Abigail under her wing. Abigail describes Charity as being indispensably helpful on that initiation day, personally providing her with a safe, supportive environment amidst the (occasional) chaos of a large scale food distribution. Ever nurturing, we can never thank Charity enough for the enormity of her contributions to Epic-Cure (a profile for another issue).

Today, Abigail is not just a regular volunteer but also an important and effective Team Leader at Epic-Cure. To our delight, she has easily grown into this leadership role. So, let's look more closely at this remarkable woman, shall we?

At 18 years old, she is one of our youngest Team Leaders. A recent graduate of Saint Augustine High School, Abigail will attend Flagler College this Fall (classes start August 26th, and she will move into campus housing shortly before) where she wants to major in secondary education. She wants to teach high school math – loves Algebra. (Here is a fun one for you Abigail, one the philosophy student in me cannot resist: Is math invented or discovered? Follow this link for curiosity's sake: <https://www.sfu.ca/~rpyke/cafe/livio.pdf>.)

Abigail looks forward to college life and the greater independence it entails. She cannot wait to meet new people and wants to join some clubs so she can enjoy new experiences and meet new people. One club that she wants to join is intriguing: The Spirit Club. It is not exactly what one might think, at least on first blush. It is not dedicated to school spirit. Instead, the spirit it points to is paranormal. Yep, ghosts. "Who you gonna call?" She also hopes that the wonderfully quirky Quidditch Team will fly again. Finally, Abigail wants to join the college's Pride Alliance, a community service oriented resource for students to learn of issues in the LGBTQ+ community and to perform acts of local community service and raise money for charities.

Thankfully, Epic-Cure is not losing Abigail to this aggressive college calendar! She will continue to volunteer her valuable time and effort with us. She says that she loves "being around energetic, fun, nice, and supportive people," the Epic-Cure team. As always, we will welcome her with broad smiles, kind words, and all the support that is humanly possible.

I asked Abigail an important question: What are your goals for your first year in college? Her answer blew me away. Abigail wants to push out of her comfort zone, be more independent, and conquer her anxieties. She explained that she suffers anxiety disorder. It is impossible for me not to marvel at this woman, her courage, and her grace under pressure. Put yourself out there, Abigail. You are an inspiration to Sunny and me. We are all blessed to know you. We all love working with you. We are proud to be your friends and happy you are with us.



Fun(draising)

We received wonderful news from the Foundation Source that one of their donors is willing to match any donations received between now and Monday, August 15th, up to a total of \$4,000. If you'd like to see your gift have a greater impact, now is the time!

Donations can be made through our website at www.epic-cure.org or they can be mailed to 2745 Industry Center Rd. #1, St. Augustine FL 32084.

**** Because we are a 100% volunteer organization, our costs are low. So, for every \$1 we spend on operational expenses, we return a value of \$30 to the communities we serve. ****

The Shine a Light 5K For Ukraine was a success. We were able to raise over \$16,000 for the 3 boots on the ground charities (World Central Kitchen, A Ripple, Medic-Corps) working to help the families of Ukraine. We learned a lot and will take this experience to come back bigger and better next year.



The organizers and friends of the Shine a Light 5k Run for Ukraine



Our Ukrainian friends, shining!



The 5k Winners!



Amazon Smile and Epic-Cure: If you are an Amazon shopper and do not have a charity you are supporting with your purchases, please consider choosing Epic-Cure and login to Smile.Amazon.com when shopping. One percent (1%) of all purchases goes to support the charity you choose.

Upcoming Epic-Cure events and Fundraisers

Please mark your calendars.

Epic-Cure's First Annual "Skins Game"

September 15, 2022

A golf event at The Yards (formerly the Oak Bridge Club)
254 Alta Mar Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
All net proceeds benefit Epic-Cure

The Second Annual Epic-Cure Golf Classic

October 17, 2022

The Ponte Vedra Inn & Club – Ocean Course
Dinner and Open Bar Reception follows at the Surf Club Patio
200 Ponte Vedra Blvd, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
www.birdease.com/EpicCureGolf
All net proceeds benefit Epic-Cure

The Maine Event

November 5, 2022

Co-sponsored by The Rotary Club of Saint Augustine Sunset
The Saint Francis Barracks
82 Marine St, St. Augustine, FL 32084
<https://staugustinesunsetrotary.com>
Net proceeds to benefit Epic-Cure and The Rotary Club of Saint Augustine Sunset, equally

Please help us spread the word about these fundraising events. They are fun, indeed.



Awareness:

- This is large and bold for a reason...

An easy, impactful way that you can help us is to please ...

Save And Drop Off Your Grocery Store Plastic Bags.

You will help reduce waste by allowing us to re-use them.

You will be saving us money by reducing the number we have to purchase.

FYI – we have not had to buy plastic bags in over a year thanks to you all. Before, we were spending about \$150 a month on bags. Great job everyone!

Transparency:

Anyone who wishes to see *Epic-Cure's financial statements* need only ask.

- Our CPA-Audited fiscal year 2021 financial statements have been released and are available upon request.
- Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org