



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter ***June 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.*

Our friends at Flagler Care Connect could really use some volunteer drivers to do home deliveries of food. If you are interested in helping once a week, please contact them at 904-819-3070.

Announcement:

The Board of Directors of Epic-Cure Inc. takes great pleasure – and even more pride – in announcing the admission of **Monica Ortiz-Sanchez** as our newest member of the Board of Directors.

Please join us in welcoming Monica to this important role, one for which she is uniquely qualified. And, when you see her, please do not be bashful about congratulating her!

The vote in favor of her joining the Board was unanimous.

Monica's demonstrated dedication to the Epic-Cure cause and her expertise in dealing with complex systems with the added wildcard of human interactions in stressful circumstances made our decision easy, indeed. Daily, she masterfully embodies the ethos of Epic-Cure, dealing everywhere and always with patrons and volunteers with generosity of spirit, gentle kindness, unflinching grace, and the deepest respect for preserving and raising the dignity of all with whom she comes into contact. This is the most important thing.



If this description makes her seem like a pushover, well think again. We mentioned that she is expert in managing complex systems and can prove it. Monica previously worked for the New York City Department of Education where she became the Principal of one of the most violent schools in the Bronx. She was tasked with turning it around and then phasing it out. She did turn it around, working with a population of 4,000 students, 200+ teachers, a cabinet of 10, and supporting staff of over 20. In two years, she turned a failing school into a performing school. Monica oversaw the eventual phasing out, and, all the while, she lived an unwavering belief in students' ability to succeed provided they are given the opportunities and resources to do so.

We look forward to all the good she most assuredly will do while serving the good people in the Epic-Cure family. Welcome to the Board, Monica!



Operations:

We are starting to make connections with truck drivers and rejected pallets. Just this month we received 2,310 pounds of sweet potatoes and 1,394 pounds of popcorn. I know it's not much, but if we all keep spreading the word that we will take anything, it will pay off.

What do you do when you get 39,150 pounds of potatoes? You share. Thanks to the Wilson Family Farm and University of Florida, we had potatoes at almost every distribution for 3 weeks straight AND we were able to share 16,000 pounds with other agencies in Putnam and St. Johns Counties.

- ◆ Family Worship Center
- ◆ Helping Hands of Welaka
- ◆ First Baptist Church of Interlachen
- ◆ St. Vincent De Paul
- ◆ Shepherd's Haven
- ◆ AmVets
- ◆ SEFB
- ◆ Rodeheaver's Boys Ranch
- ◆ St. Monica's
- ◆ Interlachen Soup Kitchen
- ◆ St. Vincent De Paul



Looks like our step-up transformer for the Palatka freezers is schedule to arrive by 6/10. Using grant money from No Kids Hungry, we have purchased a used industrial generator for the Palatka warehouse. We are seeking a second used generator to serve as a backup.

We thank Marty Tobin for installing a new plastic curtain in our Palatka walk in refrigerator. We are looking forward to saving money on electricity. Great job and thanks so much, Marty.

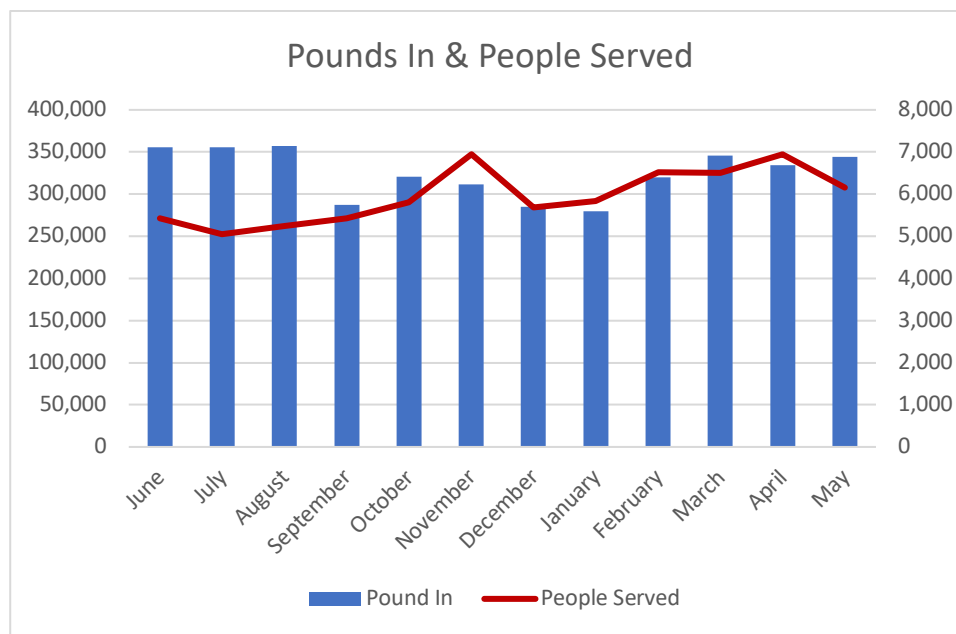
Here's something to make you happy: On Friday 5/27 (Memorial Day Weekend), it was the 2nd time the **Ryder mechanics** worked late into the night to get our truck back on the road. They had the parts sent by FedEx, which arrived Friday morning. *They completed the repairs at 10:00 pm Friday night.*

With our little fleet of 2 trucks, we compete for their attention with accounts that operate significant fleets. We also compete with Ryder's own fleet of trucks, trucks that generate revenue for them. We are very fortunate that they always treat us as a priority because they know what we do.





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



Notes on the graph:

The Importance of Refrigerated Trucks with Lift Gates and Volunteer Drivers...

You can't wait for food to come to you. You've got to be proactive in sourcing and be willing to go get it!!!

Now that we have been sending our leased Ryder truck to do the pickups regularly from Waste Not Florida, you can see the difference our making it easier for their volunteers who pack the food has resulted in. Rather than packing bakery products in grocery bags, we can now take rolling towers of bread.

Month	Total
January	4,539
February	1,759
March	6,714
April	4,112
May	11,115
Grand Total	28,239

To optimize the trips, fuel costs, and access more food, we've been doing more multi stop pickups when we go to Jacksonville 2 to 3 times a week. Stops include Farm Share, Waste Not and Feeding Northeast Florida. If we did not have the refrigerated truck and willing drivers, we would have had 120,000+ pounds less of food in Putnam County in the last 3 months and that is just from those 3 sources. Layer in Southeastern Food Bank and farms and it would be significantly higher.



Speaking of finally making connections to rejected pallets from truckers, we got a call from George at the Family Worship Center on 5/24. Pie in the Sky received a call that Walmart had rejected 6 pallets of sweet potatoes. Problem was that the semi-truck didn't have a lift gate. Well, we did and used it as a ramp for the pallets to be offloaded from the semi onto our truck. We were able to then lower the pallets to the ground and share with both agencies. As a result, all our patrons enjoyed the bounty of perfectly good sweet potatoes that week.

As always, we work non-stop to find new food sources. They are out there. With annual food waste in 2019 estimated at 108 billion pounds (source: ReFED) and Feeding America reporting that they and their national partner agency networks rescuing only 4.7 billion pounds, 4% of 108 billion, in 2021, we have a long way to go. That 4.7 billion was up from 4 billion in 2020 and 3.6 billion in 2019.

Sustain U.

Notes from Wendy Lantz on the 5/21 Hope 4 Veterans cooking class:

We have the privilege to meet with Hope 4 Veterans on Saturday. These beautiful women have either served in our arm forces or they are married to a veteran. Together we prepared two delicious, healthy dishes and shared a meal together.

I would just like to remind everyone the importance of sitting down and sharing a healthy meal with those that you love. On my recent trip to Ukraine, it is part of the culture that every time you meet someone new that you sit down and share chai (tea) or a meal together. They are very present oriented culture. This was painful for me because I'm type A personality and future oriented! I learned so much about the Ukrainian people, and their struggles- which are unimaginable! I developed friendships that will last a lifetime. This was a valuable lesson for me, and I am working on doing better in my own home. Sunday night family dinners are officially back in session!

Sharing this meal with them, not only do these women have a heart to serve and mentor each other, they are looking for additional ways to serve their own community. They were interested in supporting our efforts to end food waste, end food insecurity, and mentor at risk youth through our Sustain U cooking classes. What an encouragement to see these beautiful, strong women serve each other and their communities. Thank you for sharing a meal with us! Most of all, thank you for your service to our country!



Our Epic Volunteers:

To hear about ongoing volunteer opportunities, please join our Facebook Volunteer Group. Charity Roberts, our volunteer coordinator, posts details about our needs every week. You can reach her at charity.roberts@epic-cure.org if you have any questions.

We are proud of our volunteers. To a person, they share the Epic-Cure ethos: no matter what the job, they get it done right and with good grace in their hearts and deeds. Not all the jobs are easy. None of them are glamorous. But every job matters to those we serve. We love our volunteers. They make this thing happen!



We'll share pictures next month of cooking classes that began at [The ARC of St. Johns](#) on 5/31 thanks to Lisa Chismark (see volunteer spotlight) and Candy Johnson. We are very pleased that our new students are also new volunteers at the warehouse packing dry goods for home deliveries.







Volunteer Spotlight

By Janet McNabb



Where can we find Mike and Lisa Chismark when they're not helping at Epic-Cure? Well, we'd have to check the beach to look for Mike who might be running, surfing, or riding his bike. For Lisa, check the kitchen. She's probably baking.

However, they are frequently busy at Epic-Cure. Mike helps by driving the Epic-Cure truck or his own vehicle to pick up on Tuesday morning at Winn-Dixie or every other Monday at the KeHE

to deliver to the warehouse. He occasionally makes the run to Palatka or anywhere Sunny needs him to go. Every fourth Friday finds him at the Armstrong First Baptist Church at the community distribution. Quite a change from his Navy or FedEx flying days.

Mike and Lisa join forces every Tuesday teaching junior high kids cook skills in the Epic-Cure SUSTAIN U program. From 4-6:00 pm selected recipes are prepared, the group enjoys eating it together, and then the kids make the same meal and take it home for their family to enjoy. This continues every Tuesday at Woodlawn with the same kids for 8 weeks. A new group will start in June. The cost is ridiculously low because the recipe ingredients are supplied by the warehouse stock. Lots of meals for little money. Sometimes at zero cost!

Besides the Woodlawn program, SUSTAIN U is also being taught at the Boys and Girls Club. More promising young people who just might join the culinary industry one day, besides developing a sense of self-esteem in the ability to feed their families.

Lisa has her doctorate in genetics and is a nursing professor with a special interest in Sickle Cell disease. Her expertise comes in handy with the residents at Woodlawn, where several residents suffer from this devastating disease. She does patient education, and she and Mike have helped some of the residents connect to other community services. We discussed how difficult it is to navigate the system. So frequently when applying for services the path is to "apply online". Easier said than done.

We all agreed that Sunny and Charity have a certain way of asking people to do things that makes it impossible not to say "Sure! I can do that!". And that is the frequent response from Mike and Lisa.

Thank you, for being part of the Epic-Cure team!



Fun(draising):

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.

Date	Account	Amount
08/16/2021	Amazon Smiles	13.21
11/22/2021	Amazon Smiles	25.39
05/31/2022	Amazon Smiles	76.30
		\$ 114.90

Nice progress here.
Thanks so much!

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.

- Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org



Inspiration:

Please watch the documentary

“Wasted: The Story of Food Waste.”

You can watch it on Amazon or Netflix.

Or you can "check out" a DVD at our warehouse.