Riverside’s Support for the Arcadia Center for the Needy
163 S Orange Ave, Arcadia

The Arcadia Center for the Needy is in DeSoto County which is the one of the poorest counties in Florida. It has no paid staff and is run by one main volunteer, James, with the assistance of other volunteers. The Center operates out of an old building in Arcadia which they recently purchased. They rent out some of the space within that building to other social agencies.

Riverside contacts for the Center are Diane Hutchins and Jill and Paul Attack.

Q. What services does the Arcadia Center provide?

• The main focus of the Arcadia Center is to ensure everyone in need gets at least one meal per day. They begin handing out bagged lunches at 5 am from Monday thru Friday.
• Clients do not come into the Center due to insurance regulations. They are served from the front door of the building.
• They work with area churches and other agencies to distribute all goods donated to them to those in need.

Q. Who does the Center serve?

• 200 people a day in the summer, 400 in the winter.
• Some farm workers arrive by 5 am Monday to Friday.
• Many of the clients served by the Center are homeless.
• On Fridays families are given a bag of groceries to last through the weekend.

Q. Where does the Center get the food?

• Donations of cash, canned goods, etc. Several local RV parks are involved.
• Additional food is purchased from the All Faiths Food Bank as needed.
• Volunteers at the Arcadia Center do not have the capability to cook food. However, they have microwaves for warming donated food, such as surplus from Riverside events.

Q. What do they do with the cans collected in Cannery Row?

• Most are used at the Center. Volunteers heat individual portions of beans and provide them at the door, particularly on cold mornings.
• Some are used by area churches for group meals for the needy.
• They can also be requested by Center clients for community gatherings such as funerals.
Q. What do they do with cash donations?

- They supplement food requirements and supplies.
- Some donations go towards much needed capital improvements to the building to meet safety and public health standards.

Q. What do they do with non-food donations.

- Everything is used. Items are put outside the Center on tables for people to take as needed. Items not likely to be used by the Center clientele are given to other agencies or sold through Habitat for Humanity.

Q. How does Riverside currently help?

- Cannery Row (first two weeks of March)
- Donation box for surplus goods, clothing, sundries, food
- Cash donations

Q. Can I volunteer at the Center?

There are two ways to volunteer:

- Two volunteers are needed each morning from approximately 7am to 11am. If you are interested in committing to a weekly slot, please let us know.
- Drivers and helpers are needed for weekly trips to the Center to deliver the goods donated at Riverside. Please see the sign up sheet in the breezeway.

Q. What are their specific needs?

Lists will be available on the notice board. Items which are always needed include:

- money for bread, peanut butter, bologna (They go through 100 loaves of bread per day.)
- empty prescription pill containers for filling with shampoo, soap, etc.
- small sandwich bags (foldover top and Ziploc)
- plastic grocery bags (folded)
- diapers (infant - adult)

Q. Why can’t they use surplus fruits and vegetables?

- Arcadia does not have the storage ability to keep and distribute quantities of fresh produce.

Q. Can they use my surplus furniture?
• Unfortunately the Center does not have the space or manpower to store and distribute large pieces of furniture. They will no longer be taking large pieces.
• You can call Habitat for Humanity or other agencies and make arrangements to have furniture picked up from Riverside. They have paid staff and have the capability to receive such goods and distribute or resell them.

Q. What about appliances and bicycles?

• TVs, microwaves and bicycles are much appreciated.

Q. What about clothes?

• Although no clothing donations are turned away, the biggest need is for shoes of all sizes and young men’s clothing (small sizes). The churches in town are geared more towards clothing for young children. The Center does keep a supply for those who request it at the door. Socks and underwear for all ages are always in great demand.