

**How did Stone Soup get started?** At the urging of local clergy and service agencies, Basic Needs Action Team (including many community agencies) was formed May 1996, to determine the better way to meet the needs of disadvantaged and low-income community members. It was decided they would best be served by opening a community based thrift store where the general public could donate their gently used goods for resale or donation to individuals and families.

**They determined our mission was “To engage the community in supporting families and individuals by providing access to quality used clothes, household items, and furniture in a convenient, dignified manner”.** Basic Needs Inc. of South Washington County became a 501(c)(3) non-profit, to do business as Stone Soup Thrift Shop, and opened in September 1997.

Stone Soup is beginning the 16<sup>th</sup> year of serving those in need. The economic downturn is bringing more families through our doors. Many families lacking the resources to obtain basic needs or adequate clothing and are referred to Stone Soup by local community and Social Service agencies, and churches.

We offer “all the clothes you can fit in a grocery bag for \$8.00” some days for much less. Coupons on Cottage Grove Rainbow and CUB Foods register receipts lower the price to \$3.00!

Households with limited or fixed incomes shop at Stone Soup, and benefit from the fine quality of donated gently used items. **Every month over 1,700 shoppers come to find basic needs at affordable prices.** Those referred to us who are unable to afford the store's low prices are given what they need.

During 2010, Stone Soup provided over \$108,904 of free goods to those in need. This represented 49% of the store's inventory. **Last year (2011) this trend increased to \$147,294 or 57% of the store's** inventory. Included were dishes, bedding, and other items weighing 10,678 lbs. plus 349 pieces of furniture, all provided to them at no charge. This served 615 children, 574 adults, 53 seniors, \*walk-in customers, community churches, and agencies, to become a bigger part of Stone Soup's service operation in today's tough economy. Of those served, 143 persons were homeless.

\*On special days as customers entered the store there are bins and shelves filled with a variety of free usable items. Children love this, usually finding toys they can take home.