There’s a show on TV called, “American Ninja Warrior,” where men and women compete by completing a very challenging obstacle course. They have to climb, jump and swing through various obstacles to reach the finish.

I have worked for nearly 3 years with people here at Bishop Sullivan Center who are looking for employment and the image of an obstacle course truly fits. The obstacles that our clients face are not walls, narrow planks, or swinging ropes, but they might as well be. Here are some of the obstacles that our clients face in finding work: no car, no money even for a bus pass and a need for a nice set of clothes for an interview, hygiene products (soap, shaving cream, toothbrush and paste), picture ID, eyeglasses and proper work attire (work boots, for example). Many also have less than a high school education.

I visualize our clients’ job-seeking obstacle course this way:

Last year, more than 400 people found jobs with the help they received in our Jobs Program. So far this year, another 220 people have found work. Everyone that enrolls in our program is assigned a Job Counselor. Besides help with resumes and job applications, the Job Counselors provide assistance with other issues that make it difficult for clients to find and keep stable employment. Since January of last year, our Job Counselors have helped their clients by providing 826 articles of clothing, more than 1,500 hygiene kits, more than 21,000 bus passes, plus help with haircuts, photo IDs, eye glasses, prescriptions, and a wide range of other things that our clients need to help them get a job.

The little things that most of us take for granted become big things for anyone who doesn’t have them. Lack of any one of these things can be the difference between getting a job and being declined for a job. That’s why we help and that’s why we thank you for your donations.

A Most Unusual Obstacle Course

By Wayne Dohlman, Staff
“More Month than Money”  
Supplemental Food Helps

I visited a 70 year old woman a week ago who is still living in the home in which she grew up. Retired now and with multiple health issues, she said that many times there is “More month than money.” She meant that some months her bills were more than her social security check could cover.

She asked if there was any way we could get her extra food each month to help ease her bills. So, we added her to the list of some 25 seniors to whom we bring food each month.

This woman is one of many we help with food each month whether it is through our two food pantries, soup kitchen or home deliveries. Thanks to you we are able to help these people for whom there is more month than money.

Tax Credits Available for Donations to Bishop Sullivan Center

The State of Missouri, in its effort to support people in need of food, offers a tax credit – better than a mere deduction – to any Missouri tax-filer who donates money to a food pantry in Missouri. Bishop Sullivan Center operates two large food pantries, and therefore, donations here qualify.

The state has set aside a little more than a million dollars to give back to such donors. According to the Missouri Department of Revenue website, “Any taxpayer (individual, corporation, or trust) that makes a donation of cash or food supplies to a food pantry may receive a credit of up to $2,500 per taxpayer per year. The taxpayer may take a credit of 50 percent of their donations.” For more details go to our website, www.bishopsullivan.org and link to the State of Missouri’s website or consult your tax advisor.