



2019 HOLIDAY AID PROGRAM FINAL REPORT

Program Description:

The Holiday Aid Program provides eligible Greenwich residents with food, clothing and gifts at Thanksgiving and Christmas or Chanukah. For individuals or families to qualify for Holiday Aid, their income must not exceed 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. Under these guidelines, a family of four with an income of \$4,292 or less is eligible for services. The amount for an individual is \$2,082.

During Thanksgiving and Christmas or Chanukah, smaller families receive certificates or gift cards redeemable for groceries at ACME or Stop & Shop in Greenwich. The values of each year's gift cards are determined by the amount of donations received. Food baskets are often awarded to larger families of four or more people, but depending on the number of donated baskets, families of 3 or 2 also receive one.

At Christmas/Chanukah, new hats, mittens, and scarves, and a variety of gifts such as toys or clothing are also provided for children fourteen and under.

Our Generous Donors:

The Holiday Aid program would not be possible without the generosity of concerned citizens, churches, community organizations, and businesses. The Department of Human Services staff work with these individuals and groups as well as the Department of Human Services Fund Board to provide aid to Department of Human Services clients on low or fixed incomes.

Community Expectations:

The Greenwich residents who contribute to our Holiday Aid program represent the intense community interest in ensuring that all members of the community participate fully in the celebration of the holidays. They enthusiastically support holiday projects through their churches, the workplace, and various organizations, and make individual contributions of cash, food, or other gifts.

In return they expect our Department to identify the eligible residents, refer them by age and gender for proper clothing and gift selection of donated food baskets and other tangible donations with specific families and their needs.

Some donors recognize the need for more than the traditional items of toys and food (though important). They show their concern by meeting some special needs that will make a difference in clients' lives throughout the year and possibly for years to come. The Department appreciates the generosity of all community donors, and enjoys its effective public-private partnership with them that permits all Greenwich residents, regardless of circumstances, to enjoy the holidays as they are traditionally celebrated in our country.

Program Operation:

Much of our work consists of coordinating community efforts to help disadvantaged residents at the holidays. This year continued to be challenging, due to high volume of eligible residents, as well as the economic environment.

The Community Gifts Coordinator receives referrals from Department Case Management staff on behalf of clients identified as having little or no means of celebrating the holidays. Clients may receive assistance at Thanksgiving and/or Christmas or Chanukah, depending on need and the amount of donations received. Some seek help for one holiday only.

The activities of the 2019 Holiday Aid program are summarized below.

Achievements This Year:

A total of \$23,075 was available in donations this year, \$5,535 or 32% more than last years \$17,540. Included in this total is \$7,550 in Stop & Shop and Shop Rite gift cards as described below. See Appendix A for a list of Holiday Aid donors.

Thanksgiving Project:

We served 416 unduplicated households, 12 more than last year's 404. The households consisted of 1,027 individuals, 42 less than last year's 1,069. We issued 194 ACME or Stop & Shop food cards, an increase of 29 food cards or 18% from last year, totaling \$4,485. This was \$1,185 or 36% more than last year's \$3,300. The Thanksgiving food cards were funded by a combination of a generous allocation from the Salvation Army, Greenwich Service Unit and existing cards held in our Dept. 222 food baskets (239) last year were delivered by various groups. One donor, Suzanne Diddel, also donated and delivered 20 additional baskets to Greenwich residents who are not our clients (families that were referred by school social worker/psychologist). That was in addition to her 20 baskets for our clients. Please see Appendix B for a list of Thanksgiving contributions.

Christmas and Chanukah Project:

This year, 480 unduplicated households were served, compared to 446 last year. The households were comprised of 1,180 individuals, 10 more than last year. We issued 428 \$25 or \$30 ACME or Stop & Shop gift cards, an increase in cards of 69 over last year's 359. The cards totaled \$11,125. \$2,910 more than last year's \$8,215. Most households served at Christmas/Chanukah are also served at Thanksgiving.

Donors contributed 52 holiday baskets or wish list packages, 35 less than last year. Some families of three or four received food baskets, usually reserved for families of 5 or more. In addition to food, some baskets contained books, gifts, and other items. See Appendix C for Christmas basket donors.

Specialized Christmas/Chanukah Giving:

In addition to the types of assistance mentioned above, some groups and individuals specialized ways of giving.

For the first year, an employee and some residents at Hill House decided to sponsor an Angel Tree for seniors. They called it the Oak Tree Project. They accepted referrals for clothing and/or small household items from almost 100 of our senior clients, which we distributed to several groups on the community where they had set up small giving trees. Several Dept. Case Managers also helped deliver. They recruited the Firefighters and the EMS employees to deliver the gifts to the clients in the middle of December. It was a great success, and the clients expressed so much appreciation for being remembered. They are excited to do this project again next year, but learned from the experience and will make some changes to streamline the process.

A church which has been a holiday donor for years went above and beyond their generous norm this season. For many years, The Second Congregational Church has provided many food baskets and gifts to clients at Christmas. This year the church parishioners once again were asked to donate funds, which would be used to purchase food cards. The generous outpouring resulted in a donation to our Dept. of \$6,200 in Stop & Shop gift cards! They also sent us a check for \$2,500 to be used for the 2020 Campership Program.

And Suzanne Diddel, mentioned above in the Thanksgiving section, gave us \$1,250 in Shop Rite cards.

The annual Toy Distribution Project, co-sponsored by the Department and the Greenwich Housing Authority at Agnes Morley Heights, served 255 (out of a total of 359 eligible) unduplicated children, 58 or 19% less than last year's 313. Children 14 and under received new toys, mittens, hats or scarves, books, stuffed animals and other gifts. The number of toys each child received was determined by the number of toys donated, and the number of children comprising each age group. Donations were considerably higher in 2019. A little over 1,300 items were donated.

For many years the distribution has been successfully organized by randomly assigned appointment times to participating families; five one-hour periods on the Saturday before Christmas. The flow was a smooth, steady stream of clients throughout the day.

See Appendix D to Toy distribution volunteers and Appendix E for toy donors.

Angel Tree Project:

The Department was fortunate to have six agencies or groups and a few individuals who wanted to participate in the Angel Tree Project.

All the agencies coordinated their Angel Trees in about the same way. The Department submitted referrals including age, sex, size and needed clothing items (mostly jackets, sweaters, shoes and boots), for each child, age zero to seventeen. Most of the agencies also accepted toy requests. The "angel" was then chosen, the gift shopped for, and the gift returned to us wrapped. The distribution occurred at Town Hall during the week before Christmas.

We are extremely grateful to the following who participated in the project: St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church, (135 items), Greenwich Municipal Credit Union (213), First Presbyterian Church (125), St. Barnabas Church (70), Members Credit Union (20), Salon H (63). Individual donors also donated 5 gifts.

Altogether 631 gifts (754 last year) were donated to 435 children through the Angel Tree project. Everyone involved was understandably very pleased. See Appendix F for Angel Tree volunteers.

Salvation Kettle Drive:

The Army allocates funds from its local Christmas Kettle Drive to support some of our programs and other services in the community. The Kettle Drive raised \$3,443 this year, \$1,013 or 23% less than last year's total of \$4,456. The Retired Men's Association of Greenwich participated at ACME in Riverside.

Per Salvation Army policy, 10% must be sent to Army headquarters in Hartford. This leaves \$3,099 in Greenwich.

Out of the total, \$1,444 came from one sight on Greenwich Ave., Betteridge Jewelers. This is \$243 or 14% less than last year's \$1,687.

The Community Coordinator assumes most of the recruiting for the Kettle located on Greenwich Avenue. Coordinator Alison Brush again coordinated the Kettle Drive for this site, using volunteers from the community, friends and a few families who rang together and sang Christmas Carols. The combined volunteer hours for all groups, on four weekends and some weekdays, totaled 35, 12% more than last year. A total of 19 volunteers rang bells this year, (3 more than last year).

The Community Gifts Coordinator visited Betteridge Jewelers, where the kettle was to be placed to gather information on store hours, kettle storage, etc. She took responsibility for collecting money at the end of each day from the kettle, managed all recruitment, and coordinated this and all other holiday projects.

Submitted by:

Alison Brush

Community Gifts Program

January 14, 2020

APPENDIX A
2019 HOLIDAY AID PROGRAM DONATIONS
(46 Donors)

Mrs. Lucelle Auger	Mrs. Lillian London
Mr. Gerald Baruno	Mrs. Margot Mabie
Mrs. Deborah Berner	Mr. & Mrs. William Mahoney
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Bingle	Mr. John Margenot
Mrs. Ann Blumensaadt	Mrs. June Marks
Mrs. Adrienne Holmes-Bradford	Mrs. Bev Marx
Byram Veterans Assn. Women's Auxiliary	Mrs. Shirley Marzullo
Mrs. Lauren Caputo	Mrs. Susan Mirza
Mrs. James Carroll	Mr. Ronald Napoli
Mrs. Lynne Carvette	N.L.A.P.W. CT Pioneer Branch
Christ Episcopal Church	Mr. George Nelson
Diamond Hill United Methodist Church	Mr. Peter Orthwein
Mrs. Sophie Dowling	Mrs. Jacqueline Raffa
Ms. Theresa Giacomo	Mr. & Mrs. William Riddle
Mrs. Anne Greene	Susan Ryder/Michael Tierney
Mrs. Linda Grunow	Kim & Martin Sand Foundation
Mrs. Marilyn Harris	Mrs. Katherine Simon
Mrs. Linda Hartig	Mrs. Suzanne Seton
Mrs. Margaret Heap	Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Soule
Mr. & Mrs. Ron Howard	Mr. Robert Stricker
Ms. Caryn Jacoby	Mr. Andrew Summa
Mrs. Anne Ivanhoe	Mrs. Jean Treacy
Mrs. Robert Lichtenfeld	Mrs. Catherine Wan

APPENDIX B

THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS

Community Donors (9) Baskets (222)

Suzanna Diddel & Family	20	Ladies Auxiliary of Byram Vets	4
Maria Garzona	1	Ladies Auxiliary of Cos Cob	7
Greenwich Academy	40	Little Bethel AME Church	4
Greenwich Firefighters	12	St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church	50
Greenwich High School	84		

APPENDIX C

CHRISTMAS OR CHANUKAH FOOD BASKET

Community Donors (13) Baskets and Wish Lists (52)

Christa Civitello	1	Nicole Heath	1
Kathy Derene	6	Marsha Mifflin	1
Maria Garzona	1	Karen Morgenbesser	1
Greenwich Academy	32	Stonepoint Capital	3
Lower School		Molly Zola	1
Faris Abi Naber	Wishlist 1		
Vincent DiGiovanni	Wishlist 1		
Eleni Henkel	Wishlist 1		
Darlene Winkler	Wishlist 2		

APPENDIX D
TOY DISTRIBUTION PROJECT
(15) Volunteers

Mrs. Ampara Arboleda
Ms. Sandra Bria
Mr. Roderick Brush
Mrs. Lidia Calderon
Mrs. Nelvia Crespo
Mrs. Virginia Inocencio
Mrs. Marleny Jimenez
Mrs. Mary Jimenez

Mrs. Teresita Laredo
Mrs. Virginia Meza
Mrs. Marlene Ramos
Mrs. Alicia Reyes
Mrs. Idalia Rodriguez
Mr. Fernando Ruiz
Mr. Mickey Slater

APPENDIX E
TOY DISTRIBUTION
(12) Donors

Mrs. Joann Benvenuto
CNG Co. & Union Local 380
Greenwich Country Day School
Improved Order of Redmen
Ivy, Barnum and O'Mara
The Smith Family

Mrs. Anne Leonhardt
St. Mary Church Social Concerns
Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Sheridan
Ms. Jean Treacy
Toys for Tots
The White Family

APPENDIX F
ANGEL TREE PROJECT
(3) Volunteers

Mr. Roderick Brush
Ms. Angelique Keyes
Mr. Fernando Ruiz