

2021 HOLIDAY AID PROGRAM FINAL REPORT



Program Description:

The Holiday Aid Program provides eligible Greenwich residents with food, clothing and gifts at Thanksgiving and for the Winter Holidays. For individuals or families to qualify for Holiday Aid, their income must not exceed 300% of the federal poverty guidelines. Under these guidelines, a family of four with an income of \$6,550 or less is eligible for services. The amount for an individual is \$3,190.

As the pandemic continued, the activities of the 2021 Holiday Aid Program continued to be modified. Social distancing recommendations made it challenging for donors that typically donated holiday baskets, although there was an increase of donated baskets delivered than in 2020. The annual Toy Distribution and Angel Tree projects had to be cancelled due to indoor space restrictions and limitations.

Donors embraced the idea of gift cards and they came through in a huge way. They provided gifts cards for Thanksgiving to ACME, Stop and Shop and Shop Rite and four groups and an individual provided baskets. During December, some baskets were donated, along with gift cards to ACME, Stop & Shop or Shop Rite. Angel Tree and toy donors contributed gift cards mostly to Target and Walmart. The total value of all cards donated (not including the cards purchased through the Department's Foundation and the Salvation Army) was \$28,175! These cards were used throughout the holiday season, with many remaining for client use throughout the year. The outpouring of generosity is heartwarming. The details of these generous donations are listed later in this report.

For the Winter holidays, new hats, mittens, scarves and a variety of gifts such as toys or clothing were also provided for children seventeen and under.

Our Generous Donors:

The Holiday Aid program would not be possible without the generosity of community members, 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 strong 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, various organizations and make individual contributions of cash, food, gift cards or other gifts. In return, our Department identifies eligible residents, refer them by age and gender for clothing and gift selection or donated food baskets and other donations specific to each family and their needs.

Donors also recognize the need for more than traditional items of toys and food. They show their support by meeting 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 its collaborative public-private partnership that permits all Greenwich residents, regardless of circumstances, to enjoy the holidays as they are traditionally celebrated in our country.

Program Operation:

The majority of our work consists of coordinating community efforts to help disadvantaged residents during the holiday season. This year continued to be challenging, due to high volume of eligible residents and the restrictions due to the pandemic.

The Community Coordinator receives referrals from the Department's Case Management staff on behalf of income eligible clients. Clients may receive assistance at Thanksgiving and/or the Winter Holidays, depending on need and the amount of donations received.

The activities of the 2021 Holiday program are summarized below.

Achievements This Year:

A total of \$33,255 was available in donations this year, \$685 or 2% less than last years \$33,940. These funds, raised by the Department's Foundation, were used to purchase gift cards for distribution in December. See Appendix A for a list of Holiday Aid monetary donors.

Thanksgiving Project:

We served 454 unduplicated households, 78 more than last year's 376. The households consisted of 991 individuals, 127 more than last year's 864. We issued 321 ACME, Shop Rite or Stop & Shop food cards, a decrease of 3 food cards, about the same as last year. The cards were of various denominations, depending on the size of the household. Total value of the cards used for Thanksgiving was \$16,400. This was \$7,125 or 30% less than last year's \$23,525. A large portion of the Thanksgiving food cards were funded by a generous allocation from the Salvation Army, Greenwich Service Unit (\$5,000 in value). 133 food baskets (52 last year) were delivered by four groups and one individual. Please see Appendix B for a list of Thanksgiving contributions.

Winter Holidays Project:

This year, 493 unduplicated households were served compared to 447 last year. The households were comprised of 1,106 individuals, 15 more than last year. We issued 412 ACME or Shop Rite gift cards, 71 fewer than last year. Almost \$18,000 in ACME cards were purchased with donated funds through the Department's Foundation. The total value of the cards used for Christmas was \$22,625, \$3,015 less than last years' total of \$25,640. Households served during the Winter Holidays were also served at Thanksgiving.

Donors contributed 81 wish list packages or baskets, 62 more than last year. The packages contained food or food cards and specifically requested items for their children. See Appendix C for Christmas basket, wish list and gift card donors.

Specialized Winter Holidays Giving:

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

For the third year, the residents and employees at Hill House decided to help seniors in the community. As they did last year, they held a fundraiser and with the proceeds purchased \$25.00 CVS gift cards. The residents addressed Holiday cards and sent them with a gift card to 202 of the Department's senior clients. Many clients expressed gratitude and were touched by being remembered.

A church, which has been a donor for years was again extremely generous this season. The Second Congregational Church parishioners once again were asked to donate funds, which would be used to purchase food cards. The generous outpouring of support resulted in a donation to our Department of \$4,725 in ACME gift cards!

A group of friends who, prior to 2020, got together and took several of our family wish lists, shopped for the items and delivered the packages to the very grateful families. They resumed the project this year and provided wish list gifts to 35 families.

Two groups gave food cards in addition to their regular donation; one at Thanksgiving and one in December. Greenwich High School gave 28 \$25 cards along with their baskets and Baskets for Heaven (Suzanne Diddel and her husband) gave 30 \$50 cards in December along with the 60 cards at Thanksgiving.

A couple in the community that have been donating 50 toys for children for many years donated and brought to our Department 25 soccer balls and 25 jewelry making kits.

Toy Distribution and Angel Tree Projects:

As previously mentioned, the Toy Distribution and Angel Tree Projects had to be cancelled once again due to the pandemic. Fortunately, all of our previous Angel Tree and some of the Toy Distribution donors participated, as well as a new one. The results were very successful, so much so that every child between the ages of 0-17 (who's family did not receive a wish list package) from the participating Holiday Aid recipients received two \$25 cards; one for a clothing item and one for a toy. That's 347 children!

See Appendix D for gift card donors who are usually our Angel Tree and Toy donors.

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 \$1,849 this year, \$235 or 15% more than last year's total of \$1,614. The Retired Men's Association of Greenwich participated on one weekend at the ACME in Riverside and raised \$306 of the total.

Per Salvation Army policy, 10% must be sent to Army headquarters in Hartford. This leaves \$1,664 in Greenwich.

The majority of the total came from one site on Greenwich Ave., Betteridge Jewelers (\$1543). This is \$71 or 4% less than last year's \$1,614.

The Community Gifts Coordinator assumes the recruiting for the Kettle located on Greenwich Avenue. Coordinator Alison Brush coordinated the Kettle Drive for this site, using volunteers from the community and a family who dressed up in festive outfits and rang together. The combined volunteer hours for all groups, on four weekends and some weekdays, totaled 21, 40% more than last year. A total of 13 volunteers rang bells this year, (4 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 12, 2022

APPENDIX A
2021 HOLIDAY AID PROGRAM DONATION
(56 DONORS)

Mr. Gerald Baruno
Mrs. Phyllis Behlen
Mrs. Deborah Berner
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Bingle
Mr. Jim Blake
Mr. Edward Bloom
Mrs. Ann Blumensaadt
Mrs. Adrienne Holmes-Bradford
Ms. Mary Beth Brown
Mrs. Patricia Cameron
Mrs. Laurel Caputo
Mrs. Leigh Carpenter
Mr. and Mrs. S&F Daftaur
Mr. James Elrod
Ms. Theresa Giacomo
Mrs. Swan Grant
Mrs. Linda Hartig
Mrs. Margaret Heap
Mrs. Eleni Henkel
Mrs. Barbara Huth
Mrs. Joan Insigna
Mr. Mark Larsen
Mr. Robert Lichtenfeld
Mrs. Lillian London
Ms. Cynthia Lyall
Mrs. Margot Mabie
Mr. Patrick Macaluso
Mr. William Mahoney

Mrs. June Marks
Mrs. Bev Marx
Mrs. Susan Mirza
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Mifflin
Mr. Henry Morgenbesser
Mr. Ronald Napoli
Mr. George Nelson
Mr. Jonathan Nelson
Mr. Peter Orthwein
Mrs. Catherine Paglia
Mrs. Jacqueline Raffa
Mrs. Nina Resteri
Mr. Arthur Ribak
Mr. Daniel Rosen
Royce Family Foundation
Mr. Michael Ryan
Kim & Martin Sands Foundation
Mrs. Katherine Simon
Ms. Bree Smith
Mr. Chris Stroup
Dr. Russell Turk
Mrs. Jean Treacy
Mr. Marco Viola
Mrs. Catherine Wan
Mrs. Phyllis Winham
Mrs. Allison Wolowitz
Mrs. Marianne Wyman
Mrs. Martha Zola

APPENDIX B

THANKSGIVING FOOD BASKETS AND GIFT CARDS

Community Donors (11)

Baskets (133) Gifts Cards (364)

Baskets

Greenwich Academy 40
Greenwich Firefighters 12
Greenwich High School 76
Ladies Auxiliary of Byram Vets 4
Maria Garzona 1

Gift Cards

Greenwich High School 28
Ladies Auxiliary of Cos Cob 6
Little Bethel AME Church 15
St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church 55
Suzanne Didell – Baskets from Heaven 60
Salvation Army Greenwich Service Unit 200

APPENDIX C

CHRISTMAS OR CHANUKAH BASKETS, WISH LISTS, AND GIFTS CARDS

Community Donors (17)

Baskets (31)

Greenwich Academy Lower
School 30
Maria Garzona 1

Wish Lists (50)

Stonepoint Capital – 4
Christa Civitello – 1
Gap, Inc. – 2
Laura Geffs and Friends – 35
Angie Hartofilis – 1
Dylan Horowitz – 2
Dan Sammartino – 1
Mary Silva – 1
Anita Wood & Parks &
Recreation Employees – 1
Yale Medicine Urology
Dept. – 1
Molly Zola – 1

Gift Cards (284)

St. Paul's Roman Catholic
Church – 55
Baskets from Heaven – 30
First Lutheran Church – 10
Second Congregational
Church – 189

APPENDIX D

GIFT CARDS FOR NEW CLOTHING AND TOYS

Donors (9)

Gift Cards (748)

Joann Benvenuto – 3

Burning Tree Country Club – 2

First Presbyterian Church – 114

Greenwich Municipal Credit Union – 401

Judy Ruttkamp – 1

Member Credit Union – 20

Little Friends Day Care – 32

St. Barnabas Church – 163

Salan H – 12