

Important Adopt-A-Family Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER

Nov 5 — Adopt-A-Family applications begin
 Nov 14 — Adoption applications ready for review
 Nov 12-16 — Adoption Trees distributed to stores ▼
 Nov 22-23 — Thanksgiving Holiday, offices closed

DECEMBER

Dec 5 — Radio Telethon with Q-Country 92.7
 Dec 8 — Last day for adoption applications
 Dec 14 — Food Baskets assembled ▼
 Dec 15 — Food Baskets ready for pick up
 Gift Room set-up ▼
 Dec 17 — Last Day to deliver gifts to AAF offices
 Gift Room opens ▼
 Dec 18 — Shopping Day for nursing home residents
 & disabled adults ▼
 Dec 20 — Deliver gifts to nursing home residents
 & disabled adults ▼
 1 pm, Dec 22 — Conclusion of AAF program (tentative)
 Dec 25-26 — Christmas Holiday, offices closed
 Dec 27-31 — Offices closed to public
 Jan 1-2 — New Year's Holiday, offices closed

▼ — volunteers needed If you would like to volunteer for any of these projects, please call 364-1131 and ask for Becky. Volunteers are needed everyday from December 14 through noon on Christmas Eve.



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AFL-CIO Community Services
 1203 N. Sixth St.
 Saint Joseph, MO 64501

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Help Me Headlines



AFL-CIO Community Services Fall 2018

1203 N. 6th St. St. Joseph, MO 64501 816-364-1131 www.helpmenow.org

Dear Friends,

Since the Adopt-A-Family program started 35 years ago, 76,220 individuals have been adopted for the holidays. Every year, this community comes through for those who struggle during the holiday season. At the end of each season, the agency sends thank you letters out to adopters and donors, but we do not spend nearly enough time considering the remarkable efforts of the 16,000 groups, families and organizations that have made it possible for those individuals to have a holiday every year since 1983.

Our adopters are families large and small. They are generations of a family that come together to adopt because they have no needs of their own. They are young couples just starting out and buying gifts for children, like the ones they hope to have someday. They are work groups who come together to provide for several families when alone they could not do as much. They are local business owners who know that helping their neighbors is as important as selling items to them. They are church groups that share in their beliefs to make the world better for others. They are individuals who were adopted as children, or in years when times were tough, who come back to return the kindness that was given to them. They are the families mourning the loss of another family member who want to give happiness to other families when they cannot bear the thought of celebrating themselves. They are this program's best – and only – hope in guaranteeing that the families who apply for help actually get it.

I personally want to thank anyone who has donated to the Adopt-A-Family program these past 35 years. Whether you have adopted, donated items, volunteered or made monetary donations, YOU are the reason we get to keep helping others. You have made it possible for our staff to see thousands of relieved smiles and tears on the faces of parents who have applied over the many years we have been administering this program. We have gotten more hugs than we can count from adopted families as they pick up their gifts. We have gotten to be some of Santa's most-dedicated helpers – all because of you.

Please continue to make Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program part of your holiday tradition and if you have never adopted before, please consider becoming a donor. You have no idea how many lives you can touch with a simple kindness.

Penny B Adams
 Penny B. Adams, Director



Every dime helps Christmas program

While it might seem like small change to most, the coins collected at nearly 100 collection boxes throughout St. Joseph and Savannah adds up to a Merry Christmas for individuals assisted by the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program. In the past four years, the agency has been able to collect almost \$25,000 in loose change that has helped to provide gifts for seniors, disabled adults and families that would not have otherwise received gifts because they were not selected by a public adopter. A long-standing addition to the program, the boxes allow individuals to donate a little at a time as they visit local businesses. They can be found in a variety of places, including grocery stores, boutiques, banks, restaurants, convenient stores, gas stations, auto repair shops, and specialty shops. Over the years, more than 200 locations have hosted the boxes and directly contributed to the program's success. The agency is looking for new collection box locations for the 2018 holiday season. We do not ask the businesses to solicit customers for change, but to leave the box in an area that makes it highly visible and encourages donations. It is an no-maintenance investment for businesses, as agency maintains the boxes and assumes all financial responsibilities. If you are interesting in hosting a collection box or have any suggestions for businesses that may be interested, please contact the agency at 816-364-1131. See pg 2 for more on Every dime

Funding shortages prevents mailing of Thank You postcards

Because of unresolvable expense issues associated with printing and postage, it has been determined that Thank You postcards will no longer be sent to adopters from the families they select through the Adopt-A-Family program. We have considered many replacement options for the Thank You postcard system we had been using, however, the anonymity that many adopters chose has made many options non-feasible including online cards, or e-cards, and direct adopter/adoptee communications. Many adopters will still receive cards and thank you letters from the families they choose to have direct contact with. However, those who remain anonymous or do not share contact information with adoptees, will no longer receive agency-facilitated postcards from the gift recipients. The agency will continue to mail its annual thank you letters to all who participate in the program; please do not mistake the lack of a postcard thank you for a loss of appreciation. Our adoptees would not be able to celebrate the holidays without your generosity and we believe they sincerely appreciate all that is done for them. In discontinuing this small part of the program, it allows the agency to better focus its funding on ensuring that all applicants are provided for and that we are able to help as many as possible for the holiday season.

Every dime helps Christmas program with adoptions

Continued from pg 1
 In 2012, the agency created the Master Elves traveling trophy in honor of the staff at Casey's General Store at 22nd & Walnut. The staff at Casey's raised more than \$2,500 for the program three separate years, setting an all-time record for the 15 year contest. Now the trophy is awarded to the business that raises the most funds each year. Currently, Sav-On Furniture Mart holds the trophy for their efforts during the 2017 holiday season. These top 14 locations raised more than 65 percent of the total funds collected in 2017.
1st) Sav-On Furniture Mart; **2nd)** Casey's General Store, 22nd & Walnut; **3rd)** Green Hills, 7014 King Hill Ave; **4th)** Green Hills, 205 W Main St, Savannah; **5th)** City Star, 22nd & Frederick; **6th)** Goetz Credit Union; **tied for 6th)** Riverside 66, 5430 Frederick Ave; Imperial Gas, 811 S 6th St; **7th)** Casey's General Store, 401 E Hyde Park; **tied for 8th)** Jax Mart; Alabama & Lake Ave; Casey's General Store, 2423 N Woodbine Rd; **9th)** Little Caesar's Pizza, Ashland Ave.; **tied for 10th)** Lino's Original Pizza & Pasta, East Hills Mall; Jesses' Last Stop, Hwy 71.
 We thank these businesses for their continued support and exceptional effort.

AFL-CIO Community Services Fall 2018

Designer decor at thrift shop prices!

Perfect for your White Elephant event!

Don't forget our UGLY SWEATERS!

1203 N 6th St — 816.364.1131. — on facebook at @aflciofabulelessfinds

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Terms to know for the program

Adoptee/Applicant – Local residents who cannot afford to buy holiday gifts for their family members due to circumstances outside of their control including job loss, illness, financial setbacks or other unforeseen events.

Adopter – Community members who provide Christmas gifts for those in the community that cannot afford to provide gifts for their family members. Adopters consist of individuals, families, businesses and other groups. (Adopter forms can be found on pg 3.)

Collection Boxes – Cash donation boxes located throughout the area at 70+ vendors, including service stations, retail, dining and banking institutions. Donations are collected weekly through the giving season. Donations are used to supplement the AAF program.

Food Baskets – Filled with the supplies needed to feed a family for Christmas Dinner, along with some basic food staples. Food baskets can be purchased from our agency for \$60- \$80, based on size, and will be available for pick up starting December 15.

Gift Room – A “store” located in our building used to provide gifts for families that are not selected by adopters. Gifts are collected at sponsoring stores, through walk-in donations made by community members, and throughout the year in the AFL-CIO Community Clothes Closet.

Gift Trees – Located at K-Mart and all Walgreens and Dollar General locations throughout the city, gift trees have gift suggestion “ornaments” donors can use to buy gifts that are collected by our agency throughout the giving season.

Gift Vouchers – Vouchers are purchased with donated funds to provide those who are not publicly adopted the opportunity to purchase gifts for family members. Vouchers are also used to purchase gifts for elderly and disabled adoptees who are not adopted publicly. Donors can purchase gift vouchers for adoptees through our agency by calling 364-1131.

Helpers/Elves – Volunteers who work within our agency during the holiday season by taking applications, sorting gifts for the gift room, delivering gifts to families, helping adopters select families, preparing food baskets and collecting gifts from sponsor retailers. To volunteer for the program, please call 364-1131.

Santa Claus – Someone who embodies the concept of providing happiness to those around them through acts of selflessness and giving. Also has strong attraction to the color red, reindeer, chimneys, snow, and cookies and milk. Must have twinkling eyes and rosy, red cheeks.

Getting involved with Adopt-A-Family as easy as 1 — 2 — 3

Adoption – If you choose to adopt a family or individual through the program, you will be able to experience firsthand the excitement of shopping for each family member and meeting the adults when delivering their gifts. (Or we can make the deliveries for you if you’d rather be anonymous and have Santa take the credit.) Gift cards can also be given as gifts if preferred.

Monetary Donation – If holiday time is at a premium or funds are limited, another option is making a monetary donation. This donation will be used to purchase gift cards and provide gifts for those who are not adopted by an outside adopter. Donations can be made on our website at helpmenow.org or by calling 364-1131. We accept debit and all major credit cards.

Donation Items – Donations of new clothing, toys, stocking stuffers, hygiene products and household items are placed in our gift room for applicants to shop for family members. Items can be dropped off at our offices after Nov. 1. Items may also be purchased through participating stores and collected by an agency representative. See article below for additional details.

Don't forget Christmas Dinner

In addition to holiday gifts, food baskets make a wonderful gift for the families that apply for adoption during the holiday season. The agency has food baskets available for purchase through Wednesday, December 12. A large basket can be purchased for \$80, and a smaller version will be available for \$60.

Baskets may vary, but will include the following: a turkey or ham, potatoes, canned vegetables, stuffing, butter, rolls, fruit, and some type of dessert, which may be cookies, pie or candies. For additional information about food basket options, please contact the office at 364-1131.



Gifting that comes with Free Delivery

By visiting any of our retail sponsors and purchasing a gift from their gift tree, you will be helping to create inventory for our gift room. Each tree is covered in ornaments that include gift suggestions for several different age groups.

Participating stores collect the gifts at the register and an agency representative collects them regularly throughout the holiday season. Please visit these stores to support the gift room: K-Mart, all Walgreens and Dollar General locations in St. Joseph.

Are you a thrifty shopper?

Put your bargain-hunting skills to good use by buying much-needed, teen-related items for our Gift Room.

We get a large number of gifts for young children, but struggle with providing enough for teens age 13 to 18. Cologne, CDs, DVDs, MP3 players, video games, hair products, hygiene sets, purses, wallets, or tennis shoes are all good items to purchase for this under-provided age group.

Q Do I have to wrap all the gifts?
We find wrapping the gifts should be determined on a case by case basis. If the parents are planning on using the gifts as something from Santa, many times they like them unwrapped. On the other hand, some parents enjoy surprise gifts they might be given. Generally, elderly recipients like unwrapping gifts. We suggest talking to your family to help you decide.

Q How do I know they aren't getting help somewhere else?
All regional organizations that sponsor a holiday program report to our agency; we have a database that tracks all adoptions. If we find a family applied with more than one agency, they have to select one program or it is determined for them. Any fraudulent actions result in immediate removal from the program.

Q What if my budget doesn't cover the family I'm interested in?
You are welcome to find someone to partner with to provide for the family, or we can do it for you. We may be able to find a separate party to provide a food basket or additional household items that are remaining.

Q Can I participate anonymously?
Yes. You can select a family, shop for them and bring the items to our office to be delivered. The families will not be told anything about anonymous adopters.

Q If I don't have enough time to shop can I still help a family?
You can shop for general items and bring them to our offices, where we will try to match them with a family or add the items to our gift room inventory. You can also make a monetary donation to help purchase gift cards and food basket items. Food baskets include items for a Christmas Dinner and can be purchased for \$60-\$80, based on size, through Wednesday, December 12.

ADOPT-A-FAMILY CHRISTMAS PROGRAM HOW TO ADOPT A FAMILY OR INDIVIDUAL

Adopters have a variety of options. Families with children, adult individuals, senior citizens or multi-generation families are available and adopters can select as many families as they would like. Once the type of family has been determined, adopters review info sheets for several families fitting the criteria. Info sheets include clothing, shoe sizes and other items on each family member's wish list. Reviews can be done by email, fax, at our office or by mail. Families will be available for review starting **Wednesday, November 14**. After reviewing, adopters should notify the agency which family(ies) they would like to adopt.

If adopting a family with children we ask adopters to provide at least one new gift for each child. If adopting a young child, preferably the gift would be a toy. Gifts for the parents are at the adopter's discretion. Family holiday food baskets are also available. (Please note on the application if the family requested food.) If adopting an individual or a senior citizen, we ask the adopter to provide either a gift or a food basket. Adopters determine how much more they would like to provide.

Adopters have the option of giving gifts, gift certificates and/or holiday food baskets. If gifts – adopters shop for the gifts. (Wrapping gifts is optional.) If giving gift certificates or holiday food baskets – they can be purchased privately by you or through our agency. Our agency will have holiday food baskets available for pick up starting **Saturday, December 15 for \$60-\$80 each**. The deadline to order food baskets is **Wednesday, December 12**. A food basket consists of the traditional Christmas dinner food items.

You are welcome to make contact with the family to let them know of the adoption. They should be able to provide any additional information needed. It is also good to set a time and date for delivering gifts. Adopters can also choose to remain anonymous. If adopters choose anonymity, gifts should be delivered to our agency no later than **Monday, December 17**. Our staff will contact the family to make delivery arrangements.

If you would like to make your selection in person, please visit our office from 8 am to 5 pm beginning **Wednesday, November 14**. If you prefer to make your selection digitally, please provide the following information. Upon completion, please email, fax or mail the form to our agency. We will then send you a variety of information sheets to review.

Today's date _____ Date info needed by _____
 Send info to me by: Email Fax Mail I will come to office to review
 Name: _____
 Organization/Department: _____
 Address: _____ Box # _____
 City & Zip: _____
 Phone: Work _____ Ext _____ AM/PM Cell _____ Home _____
 Email Address _____ Fax: _____ Work or Home _____
 I plan to adopt a total of # _____ families.
 I want to review the following types of families:

- Family with Children - # of children- _____ Ages - _____ (ex: 5-15 yrs; infant; any)
 With the following Parents - Mother Dad Both parents
- Adult Individuals - # of individuals - _____ Male Female Both Ages - _____
- Senior Citizen - # of seniors - _____ Male Female Both

Upon reviewing the info sheets and selecting a family(ies), please have the following information:

- What is being provided for the family: toys, clothing, food, gift certificates, etc.
- If supplying food, will it be purchased from agency?
 Will the food basket be delivered to family or through agency?
- If supplying gift certificates, will they be purchased through the agency? What is the dollar amount?
- Will gifts be delivered to the family or agency?

AFL-CIO Community Services
 1203 North Sixth St. St. Joseph, MO 64501
 Phone: 816-364-1131 Email: adopt@helpmenow.org Fax: 816-364-2304
 helpmenow.org



FAQs

Q What is the family selection process?
There are several steps. First, you should determine the number and type of family(ies) you are interested in – elderly, single-parent, large family, disabled – characteristics important to you. Secondly, come to or contact our office by fax, phone, website or email, and we will provide a variety of applicants who meet your criteria. Step three is selecting family(ies) and getting your choices back to us as soon as possible. Please keep in mind each family under your review will not be shown to other adopters. Your quick response makes it possible for us to get all the families adopted. Once your decision is made, we will need to know a few basic details, such as delivery information and type of assistance you're providing.

Q How much does it typically cost to adopt a family?
The amount spent on each family is completely up to you. The only thing we ask is each child receive one new gift. If you are buying two to three items for each member, a good estimate is \$50 to \$70 per person depending on age.

Q Do I buy for everyone on the list?
There are no requirements on buying for the entire family. Many times parents will indicate they do not want gifts for themselves. We do ask that all children under 18 are given at least one new gift.

Q Do I have to buy all items on the list?
Not at all. Some items on the list are included strictly to offer additional gift ideas, such as kitchen or bathroom items, that might be needed by the family. There is no requirement to buy those.

Q What if I have questions about the family's gift list?
You can call the family directly or call our agency if you'd rather be anonymous and we will contact them. (Please be sure to talk to an adult as some do not tell their children they are being adopted.)

Q Can I meet the family I adopt?
After you chose your family, you are welcome to contact them directly to make arrangements. If they are willing to meet (and most are), you can work with them on a date and time.

Q What if I can't reach my family?
Many times families do not have a phone of their own or they may lose service. If you cannot contact them through the message number on the information sheet, contact our offices at 364-1131 and we will assist you in reaching them.