

Important Adopt-A-Family Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER

Nov 2 — Adopt-A-Family applications begin
Nov 6-9 — Donation boxes distributed
Nov 9 — Adoption applications ready for review
Nov 10-11 — Adoption Trees distributed to stores **V**
Nov 27-30 — Thanksgiving Holiday, offices closed

DECEMBER

Dec 5 — Last day for adoption applications
Dec 9 — Radio Telethon with Q-Country 92.7
Dec 12 — Gift Room set-up **V**
Dec 16 — Food Baskets assembled & ready for pick up **V**
Dec 16 — Gift Room opens **V**
Dec 17 — Last Day to deliver gifts to AAF offices
Dec 18 — Shopping Day for nursing home residents & disabled adults **V**
Noon, Dec 24 — Conclusion of AAF program
Dec 25-31 — Christmas Holiday, offices closed

JANUARY

Jan 1 — New Years Day observed, offices closed

V — 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 12 through noon on Christmas Eve.



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A program of AFL-CIO Community Services

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

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Help Me Headlines



AFL-CIO Community Services

November 2015

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

Dear Friends,

I have always been a Christmas person. Like most folks, the holidays are a happy, festive time for me. We Christmas enthusiasts love buying things for our children and grandchildren. We enjoy time with our extended family, who seldom have time to gather outside of the holidays. We look forward to the turkey and trimmings, even if we don't really like all the cooking. (At least I don't.) Yet while I anticipate the holidays with family and friends, my heart is also heavy because I am very aware of the many families in our community who do not have the same joy during the holidays. Because of my job, I am in direct contact with a majority of the families in our community who feel anything but joy during the holidays.

For many of the families that apply during the Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program, the holidays are a stressful time of anxiety and fear. There are illnesses, financial crisis and times of trouble that do not go away just because it's Christmas. They worry where the gifts will come from, they fear seeing family because there is no food for a meal. They turn to our program so they can give gifts to their children and bring a small time of joy to their family. Without help, they have nothing to celebrate. For that reason, we are again reaching out to you.

Since 1983, 71,326 individuals have been able to experience the spirit of Christmas because of the kindness and generosity of people like you. Last year, 868 families (2,784 individuals) received assistance through the Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program; the number of applicants for the past five years have been right around 900, so we are expecting similar numbers for the 2015 Christmas season.

Please make the Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program part of your holiday tradition by adopting a family in need or donating to the program. There are several ways to participate in the program, and those options are outlined in this newsletter. To join in the Adopt-A-Family program this year, please call 816-364-1131, fax 816-364-2304, email adopt@helpmenow.org or make a monetary donation with the included envelope. Donations can also be made online at helpmenow.org.

Is there a better way to celebrate the season of giving than by bringing joy to others?

Penny B Adams

Penny B Adams
 Director



A program of AFL-CIO Community Services

Top Collection Box Sponsors of 2014

It might just be nickels and dimes, but the change collected at the more than 70 collection boxes throughout the city adds up to a Merry Christmas for the people assisted by our agency during the holiday season.

These top 15 locations raised more than half of the total funds collected. They include:

- 1st)** Casey's General Store, 2332 S 22nd St;
- 2nd)** Casey's General Store, 401 E Hyde Park;
- 3rd)** Kovac's, 7014 King Hill;
- 4th)** Little Caesar's Pizza, 2120 Mitchell Ave; Break Time, 402 N Woodbine;
- 5th)** Riverside 66, 430 Frederick;
- 6th)** Casey's General Store, 2423 N Woodbine Rd;
- 7th)** Little Caesar's Pizza, 3304 Ashland Ave;
- 8th)** Imperial Gas, 811 S. 6th St;
- 9th)** Kovac's, 2202 Frederick;
- 10th)** Mitchell Park C Store, 1300 S 11th St.;
- 11th)** Filler Up Guys, 4510 SE US Hwy 169;
- 12th)** Culver's, 3910 N Belt Hwy; Crumbly Burger, 2701 Frederick Ave; and
- 13th)** Original Pizza & Pasta, 3702 Frederick Ave.

AFL-CIO Community Services

November 2015

We would like to thank these volunteers for their continued support:

- | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sarah Albers | Denise Caywood | Connie & Rick Harris | Rochard Lawrence | Kevin Peterson | Branis Tadic |
| Adrianna Aarons | Teresa & Carley Chase | Norma Harris | Kelsea Leidy | Thyne Pettis | Janice & Jim Talley |
| George & Pam Albert | Sandee Chesser | Richard Hawkins | Ella Lembke | Kara Powelson | Chelsea Teater |
| Vicki Ausmus | Tracy Christie | Jeff & Kaleigh Hayes | Katherine Lewis | Jolie Pritchett | Nancy Thom |
| Lucy Barble | Jodi & Johnnie | Jessica Helfrey | Kay Limle | Mary Prothero | Kim Thomas |
| Billie Bartley | Chriswiser | Brady Hensley | William Littlewood | Diane Redden | Hollie Thompson |
| Mike & Becky Barton | Jon & Joy Colestock | Donna Hickok | Karla Long | Ellen Remick | Jerry & Ruth Thornton |
| Karen Bettis | Misty Cooley | Vanessa Hoffman | Remi Loubek | Lisa Reynolds | Clinton Turner |
| Barbara Bigelow | Kalynn Copenharve | Joyce Hook | Quinn Mace | Joyce Roberts | Amy Tomlinson |
| Olga & Wayne Bisig | Lori Cordonnier | Renia Huff | Patty Mason | Rita Roupe | Marilyn Tomlinson |
| Lanette Bocquin | Skip & Savannah Crisp | Becky & Bailey Hughes | Brian & Michaela Maxwell | Larry & Jeanne Sample | Mark Troutman |
| Nick Boyd | Patt Davenport | Alexandrea Hyde | Darrick Incho | Linda Sawyer | Becky Turner |
| Bill & Kathy Brinton | Shyan Dredge | Gabrielle Isom | Chris & Emily Dreier | Sharon Schultze | Ed & Gail Tyler |
| Kenny Brooks | Elizabeth Eastin | Lisa Foster | Jackson | Candy Sheehan | Mike & Cynde Veale |
| Jessica Buckley | Ruth Ann Bunker | Anne Frank | Sheryl Janeski | Linda & Bernard Sheffer | Nathan Wallace |
| Carol Bunge | Debra Burnett | Lisa Gabriel | Marcia & Randy Johnson | Natalie Simpson | Michael Wambold |
| Ruth Ann Bunker | Katie Burnett | Mary George | Mary Jones | Rick & Deb Smith | Craig Westbrook |
| Debra Burnett | Rachael Burns | Terisia Grabel | Pat & Floyd Jones | Skyler Smith | Carrie Weyer |
| Joanie Burton | Malisa Calloway | Deby Grechus | Ray Kellogg | Cindy & Marty Soper | Marcus Whitney |
| Jon & Andrea Carr | Sidnee Carr | Candace Greever | Terra Greiner | Ronda Speer | Lisa Wisneski |
| Stacy & Emily Dreier | Elizabeth Eastin | Edie & Marilyn Griggs | Brianna Haberyan | Michelle Stagner | Staci Wright |
| Carol Bunge | Ruth Ann Bunker | Debra Burnett | Rachael Burns | Darren Steele | Thelma Wyrick |
| Debra Burnett | Katie Burnett | Rachael Burns | Joanie Burton | Dominic Sterzinger | Frederick & Donna Ziegler |
| Rachael Burns | Joanie Burton | Malisa Calloway | Jon & Andrea Carr | Mark & Lauren Struthers | Lori Zillner |
| Joanie Burton | Malisa Calloway | Jon & Andrea Carr | Sidnee Carr | | Lacy Zoubeck |
| Stacy & Emily Dreier | Carol Bunge | Ruth Ann Bunker | Debra Burnett | | |
| Elizabeth Eastin | Ruth Ann Bunker | Debra Burnett | Rachael Burns | | |
| Lisa Foster | Debra Burnett | Katie Burnett | Rachael Burns | | |
| Anne Frank | Katie Burnett | Rachael Burns | Joanie Burton | | |
| Lisa Gabriel | Rachael Burns | Joanie Burton | Malisa Calloway | | |
| Mary George | Joanie Burton | Malisa Calloway | Jon & Andrea Carr | | |
| Terisia Grabel | Malisa Calloway | Jon & Andrea Carr | Sidnee Carr | | |
| Deby Grechus | Jon & Andrea Carr | Sidnee Carr | Cameron Carson | | |
| Candace Greever | Sidnee Carr | Cameron Carson | Crystal Cary | | |
| Terra Greiner | Cameron Carson | Crystal Cary | | | |
| Eddie & Marilyn Griggs | Crystal Cary | | | | |
| Brianna Haberyan | | | | | |
| Myrlo Hall | | | | | |

"The best way to find yourself, is to lose yourself in the service of others." — Ghandi

If you are a volunteer and we excluded you from this list, please let us know so we can update our files.

2014 ADOPTTEES

Single mom struggles to provide

This single mother and her two children were living with her grandmother to help with expenses and her care until she passed away in 2013. Shortly after, the family home caught fire and they lost most of their possessions. Unbeknownst, she moved her family to a high-crime area. Their rental was broken into and her tires were slashed on several occasions. Recently, she moved again; this time into a small loft to save funds and keep her family safe. She works a full-time job outside the home, but there is never anything left after bills are paid. There are some days that she goes without food so her children do not have to. More than anything, she would like to bring some good into her children's lives after they have had so many recent struggles.

Senior needs help so she can help others

Age and distance has made the holidays a lonely time for this St. Joseph senior. She used to volunteer to stay active, but her health has limited her abilities and most days are spent at home alone. She still makes dolls for children and other sewing items when she can to share with those who are not so fortunate. It makes her feel good to still be able to put her talents to good use. Her wish list includes material, lace and ribbons so she can continue to make items for others. Unfortunately, these expenses do not fit into her budget so she was hoping to be adopted.

Mom wants to help daughter

This first time applicant and single mother of two cannot work because of health issues. Her main concern is her daughter, who is experiencing difficulties of her own that include bullying and multiple suicide attempts. Her daughter is in counseling and has improved, but it is a daily struggle for her. Because she has a very limited income, she needs help providing for her children this Christmas season. She is hoping she can give her daughter something positive to focus on that can help with her recovery.

Mother to be has nothing

Young and pregnant, this applicant is on her own and expecting her first child after the New Year. She has found housing, but cannot move in for a few weeks, so she has been staying with friends for days at a time before moving on to the next. She is looking for work but cannot find anything because of her pregnancy. She desperately needs help preparing for her new baby and getting some basic household necessities.

Getting with 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 \$50- \$75, based on size, and will be available for pick up starting December 16.

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 Wal-Mart South, 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 purchased with donated funds to provide those who are not selected by an adopter the opportunity to purchase gifts at a local discount store for family members. Cards 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, 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 December 15. A large basket can be purchased for \$75, and a smaller version will be available for \$50.

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: Wal-Mart South, K-Mart and any Walgreens or Dollar General locations.

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 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.

FAQ's

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 \$30 to \$50 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.

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 **Monday, November 9**. 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 from a store or through our agency. Our agency will have holiday food baskets available for pick up starting **Wednesday, December 16 for \$50-\$75 each**. The deadline to order food baskets is **Tuesday, December 15**. 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 chose to remain anonymous. If adopters choose anonymity, gifts should be delivered to our agency no later than **Wednesday, December 16**. Our staff will contact the family to make arrangements.

If you would like to make your selection in person, please visit our office from 8 am to 5 pm beginning **Monday, November 9**. 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 our agency?
 When will the basket be needed?
 • 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?
 What is the delivery date?

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