

# Important Adopt-A-Family Dates to Remember

**NOVEMBER**  
**Nov 1** — Adopt-A-Family applications begin  
**Nov 4-9** — Donation boxes distributed  
**Nov 14** — Adoption applications ready for review  
**Nov 14-15** — Adoption Trees distributed to stores **V**  
**Nov 24-27** — Thanksgiving Holiday, offices closed

**DECEMBER**  
**Dec 3** — Last day for adoption applications  
**Dec 7** — Radio Telethon with Q-Country 92.7  
**Dec 16** — Food Baskets assembled **V**  
**Dec 16** — Last Day to deliver gifts to AAF offices  
**Dec 17** — Food Baskets ready for pick up  
**Dec 17** — Gift Room set-up **V**  
**Dec 19** — Gift Room opens **V**  
**Dec 20** — 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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AFL-CIO Community Services  
 1203 N. Sixth St.  
 Saint Joseph, MO 64501

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# Help Me Headlines



AFL-CIO Community Services Fall 2016

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

Dear Friends,

In preparing for this letter, I find myself thinking holiday thoughts. Sometimes I hum Christmas songs, other times I count my personal blessings. This year, generosity kept coming to mind; not as the ideal that is prevalent during the holiday season, but the actual generosity of our donors and adopters over the years. Since 1983 when the program began, 73,727 individuals have been adopted for the holidays through the Adopt-A-Family program. What we don't speak of enough are the more than 15,000 groups, families and organizations that have made it possible for those individuals to have a holiday at all.

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 in the 29 years I have been involved with the agency. Whether you have adopted, donated items, volunteered or made monetary donations, you are the reason I get to keep helping others. You have made it possible for our staff to see hundreds of relieved smiles and tears on the faces of parents who have applied. We have gotten more hugs than I 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

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



## Employment law presents challenges

While the agency supports the expansion of the new overtime laws announced by the Department of Labor, it does require some changes to our operations. Because of financial limitations, the agency does not have the ability to pay overtime. This will restrict the number of hours the offices can be staffed during seasonal programs. The Adopt-A-Family program is the most significant of all the programs we administer and will be most affected by these changes. We are planning to stagger employee schedules to provide longer operational days, but there will be some staff limitations during those times. We are asking adopters and donors to please keep this in mind as we work with you to accommodate your needs. We know that without adopters, we do not have a program; we have always done our best to help you in your desire to help others. Unfortunately, we now need your help and understanding as we face these changes and adapt to the new legal requirements put before us. As of this November, our new hours of operation will be: Monday through Friday 8 am to 6 pm; Saturdays 9 am to 1 pm, Nov. 19 and Saturdays in December.

## Small change makes big impact

It might just be nickels and dimes, but the change collected at nearly 100 collection boxes throughout St. Joseph and Savannah adds up to a Merry Christmas for the people assisted by our agency during the holiday season. The boxes are a long-standing addition to the Adopt-A-Family program that allow individuals to donate a little at a time as they visit their local grocery store or gas station. They can be found at a variety of establishments, including, but not limited to, 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 success of the Adopt-A-Family program. For the businesses that have boxes, the process is simple: 1) The boxes are small and can be placed on the counter near the registers; 2) There is no solicitation required since the boxes are clearly marked and advertise for themselves; and 3) A representative from the agency empties the locked boxes regularly. 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 two years in a row, setting an all-time record since the collection boxes were implemented more than 10 years ago. The trophy is awarded to the business that raises the most funds each year during the drive from Nov. 6 to Dec 24. They are allowed to keep the trophy until the following year's winner is announced. Currently, the Apple Market at 36th & Frederick holds the prize. Any business that is interested in having a box can call 816-364-1131 with questions or to make arrangements.

### Top box locations

These top 17 locations raised more than half of the total funds collected. They include:  
**1st)** Apple Market, 903 N 36th St;  
**2nd)** Apple Market, 3734 Pear St;  
**3rd)** Apple Market, 2300 Mitchell Ave;  
**tied for 4th)** Apple Market, 7014 King Hill Ave; Green Hills, 205 W Main St, Savannah;  
**5th)** Cash Saver, 2202 Frederick Ave;  
**tied for 6th)** Cabana Grill, 2131 St. Joseph Ave; Break Time, 402 N Woodbine Rd;  
**7th)** Little Caesar's Pizza, 3304 Ashland Ave;  
**tied for 8th)** Casey's General Store, 22nd & Walnut; Imperial Gas, 811 S 6th St;  
**9th)** Culver's, 3910 N Belt Hwy;  
**10th)** 1st Bank of Missouri, 602 Edmond St;  
**11th)** Riverside 66, 5430 Frederick Ave; and **tied for 12th)** Ray's Green Hills, 3225 N Belt Hwy; Apple Market, 402 Price St, Savannah; and Break Time, 204 US Hwy 71, Savannah.

AFL-CIO Community Services Fall 2016

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

- |                     |                      |                       |                        |                     |                     |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Yadiel Leon Acosta  | Janet Collins        | Edgar Pineda Granados | Dean & Denise Kerns    | Cheri Morton        | Kwin Staheli        |
| Sarah Albers        | Mark Compton         | Luke Green            | Helen King             | Brenda O'Meara      | Darren Steele       |
| George Albert       | Mark Conley          | Candace Greever       | Sharon & Bob           | Ken & Connie Newton | Dominic Sterzinger  |
| Ray Allen           | Shirley Cooper       | Terra Greiner         | Koranda                | Michael Nielson     | Mark Struthers      |
| Kate Arthur         | Lori Cordonnier      | Myrlo Hall            | Natalia Guerra-Landrau | Kristi Nikes        | Jan Stullebean      |
| Scott Baker         | Vanessa Culver       | Abigail Hansen        | Leslie Lane            | Mike Northup        | Zade Sutton         |
| Billie Bartley      | Dallas Davidson      | Sister Harley         | Randi Lenander         | Whitney Norton      | Michael Tabor       |
| Mike & Becky Barton | Karie Davis          | Norma Harris          | Dino Lincoln           | Lochlan Phillips    | Ruth Thornton       |
| Nicole Bayless      | Ben Dean             | Patsy Hawk            | Karla Long             | Kara Powelson       | Harley Tratchel     |
| Barbara Bigelow     | Cheryl Dcekan        | Gayle Hayes           | Kevin Macnado          | Mary Prothero       | Pamela Trickey      |
| Makayla Bigham      | Diane Delaney        | Jeff Hayes            | Tess Matagi            | Teri Ramsey         | Donna Trierweiler   |
| Olga Bisig          | Naomi Trinidad       | Donna Hickok          | Brian Maxwell          | Diane Redden        | Allison Tschannen   |
| Lanette Bocquin     | Delgado              | Vanesa Hoffman        | Mark McCann            | Lisa Reece          | Becky Turner        |
| Krystal Bowen       | Gabriel Pineda       | Jeremiah Hollars      | Rindy McCartney        | Kathy Reinhold      | Gail Tyler          |
| Jasmine Briedwell   | Dominguez            | Scott Howell          | Christy McFarland      | Lisa Reynolds       | William Tyler       |
| Kathy Brinton       | Jennifer Donahoo     | Debbie Hueser         | Bob & Ursula           | Joyce Roberts       | Mike & Cynde Veale  |
| Margie Brown        | Janice Eaton         | Becky & Bailey Hughes | McMillian              | Debbie Roebkes      | Amy Ward            |
| Carol Bunge         | Cinda Elias          | Alexandrea Hyde       | Doug Mersmann          | Amanda Ross         | John & Joyce Warden |
| Ruth Ann Bunker     | Beth Evans           | Darrick Inscho        | Karon Milbourn         | Antonia Ross        | Jean Warren         |
| Rachael Burris      | Stephaney Ferguson   | Servilio Izquierdo    | Jill Miller            | Jeanne Sample       | Carrie Weyer        |
| Ron Campbell        | Fred & Fredis Flores | Andrea Jacobs         | Valarie Miller         | Linda Sawyer        | Kathy Whitley       |
| Jon Carr            | Sister Fuhrman       | Pamela Jamison        | Paulette Million       | Brec Schreck        | Jamie Wigginton     |
| Sidnee Carr         | Sister Garay         | Marcia Johnson        | Marsha & Stormie       | Candy Sheehan       | Linda Wilkerson     |
| Spencer Carr        | Tom Gebken           | Sue Johnson           | Milne                  | Brianna Sidwell     | Sue Winchester      |
| Jackie Clamas       | Shirley Golden       | Pat Jones             | Lindsey Minton         | Natalie Simpson     | Connor Wood         |
| George Clinton      | Shannon Grable       | Kitty Karr            | Megan Molloy           | Shannon Simpson     | Donna Ziegler       |
|                     |                      |                       |                        | Dick Sipe           | Lori Zillner        |
|                     |                      |                       |                        | Drew Skinner        |                     |
|                     |                      |                       |                        | Deb Smith           |                     |
|                     |                      |                       |                        | Cindy & Marty Soper |                     |
|                     |                      |                       |                        | Kitty Spafford      |                     |

“Alone we do so little; together we can do so much” – Helen Keller

# 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 \$50- \$75, based on size, and will be available for pick up starting December 17.

**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 December 9. 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: 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 \$50-\$75, based on size, through Friday, December 9.

# 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 \$40 to \$60 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 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 17 for \$50-\$75 each**. The deadline to order food baskets is **Friday, December 9**. 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 **Friday, 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 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?

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 Phone: 816-364-1131 Email: adopt@helpmenow.org Fax: 816-364-2304  
 helpmenow.org

