

**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 12**. 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 17 for \$75 each**. 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 **Wednesday, December 17**. Our staff will contact the family to make arrangements.

To help with selection, our staff will need the following information. Upon completion, please email, call, fax or mail the form to our agency. We will then send you a variety of info 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 our 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 Fax: 816-364-2304 helpmenow.org



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

Printing services provided by Cookman Printing



Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 AFL-CIO
 COMMUNITY
 SERVICES
 PERMIT NO. 76

Inform Refer Connect



AFL-CIO Community Services

November 2014

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

Presidential Prose

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, 880 families (2,890 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 2014 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

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



In deciding to get involved in an organization, it can be for a number of reasons: you agree with its cause, you have similar affiliations, personal experience, etc. There are many ways we can become "involved."

For me, I worked in the same building as Community Services before getting familiar with the programs, joining the board, and now serving as chair. As my relationship with Penny and her staff grew, so did my respect for the programs and people who did this good work.

By good work, I don't mean that the staff is efficient or detailed-oriented. I mean that they are compassionate and believed in the cause they served: to help those in need.

I may be biased, but I believe in the purpose of Community Services. I believe this agency does everything it can to help those who need it. The Adopt-A-Family Christmas Program is a great example of this good work.

To be a great non-profit, it takes the support of a great community. Please join me in making a donation to this great cause and show your support for the work that they do.

Lastly, please accept my thanks from one supporter to another for being at our side over the years. They couldn't do all the good work they do without you.

Becky Hughes
 Board Chairperson

AFL-CIO Community Services

November 2014

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

- | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Barb Bahr | Cheryl Deeken | Geoff Heckman | David Latta | Ken & Connie Newton | Cindy & Marty Soper |
| Bethanie Bassett | Holly Dewar | Donna Hickok | Ray Leatherwood | Marie Nigh | Kitty Spalford |
| Dawn Benner | Rosa Diaz | Ben Hilby | Liz Lehman | Adrian Nolan | Ronda Speer |
| Barb Bigelow | Jon Edward Dredge | Roy Hinton | Cheryl Leverette | Deosdado Ojeda | Caelyn Spiegel |
| Olga Bisig | Carol Duke | Krissy Hirter | Valeria Linville | Sharon Page | Valerie Steele |
| Lanette Bocquin | Christina Dunn | Vanessa Hoffman | William Littlewood | Sandy Peltman | Dominik Sterzinger |
| Jon & Andrea Carr | Amanda Espirito | Marcia Holcomb | Angela McKinnon | Garry Pittman | Mark Struthers |
| J.D. Carrell | Kendal Evans | Rhonda Honce | Mark McMain | Randy Praiswater | Lisa Stull |
| Carole Caw | Lisa Gabriel | Debbie Hueser | Ursula McMillian | Mary Prothero | John Swiastyn |
| Teresa Chase | Ann Garrison | Darrick Inscho | J. McVey | Anita Radmer | Laney Taylor |
| Joni Christgen | Tina Gasper | Andrea Jacobs | Mindy Marsh | Ellen Remick | Lelonia Taylor |
| Angie Church | Shirley Golden | Pam Jamison | Diana Massing | Angela Reynolds | Matt Taylor |
| Dave Clark | Connie Gorman- | Sheryl Janeski | Marlene Mathison | Jeremy Reynolds | Melinda Thomas |
| Nancy Clisbee | Jackson | Andrea Jennings | Brian Maxwell | Ed Roberts | Ruth Thornton |
| Jon & Joy Colestock | Terisia Grable | Marcia Johnson | Karon Milbourn | Joyce Roberts | Gail Tyler |
| Julie Coon | Terra Greiner | Hazel Jones | Vince Millan | Carmen Romo | Charisse Vaughn |
| Vicki Conor | Marilyn Griggs | Nichole Jones | Jennifer Miller | Shelly Roush | Mike & Cynde Veale |
| Lori Cordonnier | Tamara Grubb | Pat Jones | Jill Miller | Tom Russell | Josh Wagers |
| Jane Crabtree | Myrlo Hall | Dean Kerns | Tiffany Miller | Sharon Schultz | Nathan Wallace |
| Savannah Crisp | Connie Harris | Denise Kerns | Linda Minear | Shelby Schultz | Kori Weddle |
| Skip Crisp | JoAnna Harris | Helen King | Serena Mitchell | Lynda Sherman | Chip Weekly |
| Barry Crum | Norma Harris | Patti Knorr | Denise Montemayor | Deborah Smith | Craig Westbrook |
| Nathan Crum | Bobbie Harrison | G Kobzaj | Elsa Morris | Gail Smith | Linda White |
| Pam Crum | Sarah Hatten | Bob & Sharon | Kathy Morris | Kaitlin Smith | Marcus Whitney |
| Lori Davis | Jeff Hayes | Koranda | Carol Moya | Rick Smith | Brenda Williams |

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

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 have to 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.

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 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 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 a family be adopted in memory/honor of someone?
Absolutely. Honorary adoptions are handled in the same way as any other adoption and the family is told they were adopted in honor of the named donor. The honoree will also be sent a certificate of notification.

Q If I don't have enough time to shop for a family can I still participate?
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.

Q What type of items are needed for the gift room?
We get a large number of gifts for young children, but struggle with providing enough for teens from 13 to 18. Cologne, CDs, DVDs, MP3 players, video games, hair products, hygiene sets, purses, wallets, and tennis shoes are all good items for this age group.

Did you know...

If your club or charitable organization donates toys during the holiday season, you might be able to get a discounted rate from Mattel Toys. You can find out more about this discount program or sign up at www.matteltoystore.com/discount-programs.aspx



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 clothing, toys 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. Gifts can also be purchased at any sponsor stores including Wal-Mart South, K-Mart, and all Walgreens and Dollar Generals. Purchases at sponsor stores will be held for our staff to collect.

Adopt-A-Family Glossary of Terms:

AAF — Abbreviation for the Adopt-A-Family Christmas program; keeps staff hands from cramping when they have to type entire name.

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.)

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 \$75 and will be available for pick up starting Wednesday, December 17.

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.

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.

Gift Cards — Cards 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 cards for adoptees through our agency by calling 364-1131.

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.

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 AAF 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.

Christmas Tree Locations

You can help AAF every time you shop. 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.

Please visit these stores during the holiday season: Wal-Mart South, K-Mart and all Walgreens and Dollar General locations.



Top 15 Collection Box Sponsors of 2012

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 12 local businesses were responsible for more than half of the total money collected in the boxes during the 2013 holiday season.

- 1st) Casey's General Store, 2332 S 22nd St 2nd) Kovac's, 2202 Frederick Ave.
- 3rd) Casey's General Store, 401 E Hyde Ave
- 4th) Kovac's, 7014 King Hill Ave
- 5th) Crumbly Burger, 2701 Frederick Ave
- 6th) Imperial Gas, 811 South 6th St
- 7th) (Tie) Shell Gas Station, 909 Alabama & Original Pizza & Pasta, 3702 Frederick Ave
- 8th) Break Time, 402 N Woodbine Rd
- 9th) Little Caesar's Pizza, 3304 Ashland Ave
- 10th) Barbosa's East, 4804 Frederick Ave
- 11th) Little Caesar's Pizza, 2120 Mitchell Ave.

Important AAF Dates to Remember

NOVEMBER

Nov 1-2 — Donation boxes distributed
Nov 3 — Adopt-A-Family applications begin
Nov 7-8 — Adoption Trees distributed to stores V
Nov 12 — Adoption applications ready for review
Nov 27-30 — Thanksgiving Holiday, offices closed

DECEMBER

Dec TBA (4 or 10) — Radio Telethon with Q-Country 92.7
Dec 5 — Last day for adoption applications
Dec 16 — Food Baskets assembled V
Dec 16 — Gift Room set-up V
Dec 17 — Food Baskets ready for pick up & Gift Room opens V
Dec 17 — Last Day to deliver gifts to AAF offices
Dec 19 — Shopping Day for nursing home residents & disabled adults V
Noon, Dec 24 — Conclusion of AAF program
Dec 25-28 — Christmas Holiday, offices closed

JANUARY

Jan 1 — New Years Day observed, offices closed

Tired of mail?

To receive our newsletter online please notify us by email at afl-mail@helpmenow.org. We would be happy to send an email version for your convenience (and to save a little on postage for our agency.)

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.

PAST APPLICANTS

A deserving son...

A single mother in her late 40s applied to be adopted because she wanted to show her son how grateful she was for his support. Because she had been ill, suffering from two strokes that left her legally blind, she has had to rely on her 17-year-old son to become the caregiver and head of household in most capacities. He cooks, cleans, does laundry, prepares her medications and gets her to all her doctor appointments....all while he is in school, completing his high school education and working a part-time job to help the family make ends meet. Without her son, she would not be able to care for herself and she has no way of showing him her appreciation because there is no money left each month after household expenses and medications are paid. She only wants her son to have a nice holiday and to know she is thankful to have such a wonderful son.

A lonely place...

She had outlived all her family. Her husband, parents, six siblings were all gone before her. She now lives in a nursing home and her caretakers and a few other residents are her only friends. She spends her time living in times past, watching classic films that remind her of better times. She really doesn't want anything, she just needs help with a few essentials like soap, shampoo, new slippers and maybe a lap blanket to take off the chill. She would really just like the company, someone to visit with...someone who cares.

A single mother of four...

Raising three children of her own, this 27-year-old mother also took in her former step-son to give him a stable environment. Three of the children have health issues and require special care, so it is hard for her to get many hours in at work. She works just under 30 hours a week, and that doesn't always cover all the utilities each month. She is doing the best she can to keep her family going, but there is no way the kids will have gifts under the tree. The money is just not there. With all they go without during the year because they just don't have the money, she would like them to at least have a nice Christmas. She is applying in hopes that someone will help her children where she cannot.

A family in crisis...

He was diagnosed with stage-three brain cancer and she took off work to care for him. It cost them her job and the only paycheck coming into the house. They had his Social Security check, but it only paid the basics and didn't always cover the bills. He was living by the grace of God, having been given three months to live in February of that year. Their Christmas gift was the fact he was still with them in November, but they were worried about Christmas for their children. At ages 10, 7 and 5, the children were already stressed enough by their father's illness and the emotional toll it had taken on the family. The parents wanted what might be their last Christmas together to be a special one. The only way they could give their children gifts was to apply for assistance.