

Annual Youngstown-Porter Christmas Baskets program a success

Community effort exemplifies area's spirit of giving

More than 150 contributors help make program a success

Organizers of the annual Youngstown-Porter Christmas Baskets program held its distribution of Christmas gifts and food boxes to more than 60 area families in the River Region last weekend.

The following letter of thanks to the community was submitted to the Tribune-Sentinel by Rita Rolfe, chair of the Youngstown-Town of Porter Christmas Baskets; and Janet Brooks, director of children's gifts.

Dear Youngstown /Town of Porter Community Members and Friends,

The holidays are a time of generosity, giving, harmony and peace. The 2021 Youngstown/Town of Porter Christmas Basket Program certainly exemplifies the meaning of the Christmas season.

Individuals and groups in our community, including churches, businesses and organizations provided gifts, food and food gift cards for 66 needy families, including 126 children. This is a significant increase of recipients due to this year's collaboration with the Ransomville Care-N-Share Pantry.

The Christmas Basket program also experienced an increase in community participation. Gifts and donations kept coming

through the doors of the Youngstown Village Community Center during our week of preparation. The St. Bernard's Roman Catholic worship site and the Youngstown First Presbyterian Church donated gifts from their Christmas Angel Gift Trees. St. John's Episcopal Church members purchased a \$20 Tops Supermarket gift card for each family, and St. John Lutheran Church also donated. Tops DiMino Markets provided 50 \$10 gift cards.

School children from St. Peter's, and Lewiston-Porter School children and elementary retired teachers and staff collected gifts for children. Girl Scout Troop No. 74152 filled Christmas stockings for many needy kids and leaders of Troop No. 70283 provided food gift cards.

Boy Scout Troop No. 829, with the help of their leaders and parents, once again held a food drive that helped fill 60 big boxes of food.

Our civic groups stepped up with donations of money and hours of help. The (Youngstown) Lions Club, an important supporter of the program, gave gifts and gift cards for teens as well as a generous donation of their man/woman-power. Members of the Youngstown Yacht Club provided Thanksgiving turkey dinners for 12 fortunate families, and their generous monetary donation was

used to purchase jackets, boots and diapers for many needy children.

Local individuals we call "Angels" purchased individual gifts or money for gifts for needy children. A local "Special Santa" also provided a very large number of toys and games. Local businesses donated money and collected food in boxes placed at their business locations.

A host of volunteers wrapped and packaged during the previous week, and delivered all of the donations on Saturday, Dec. 18. Members of the U.S. Coast Guard and the Wilson Central School basketball team assisted, getting all the many bags and boxes of food and gifts in drivers' cars for delivery. We can't forget to give a big shout-out to the many volunteers who worked behind the scenes to make it all happen, including all of our amazing steering committee members.

The Youngstown/ Town of Porter Christmas Basket program is truly a total community endeavor. It features the very best of the caring residents of our area. It is heart-warming to witness the outstanding generosity and cooperation of so many. A big thank you to all of the more than 150 contributors and to everyone who worked so hard to make this year's project a huge success.



Volunteers gathered nonperishable foods and gifts for more than 60 families. (Submitted photos)



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