

Just over one week left to help local people through United Way's 26th Annual Community Christmas program

December 2 2015 3:34 PM



**COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS**



EAST ALTON — Just over one week remains in **United Way's twenty-sixth annual Community Christmas donation drive** to benefit the Riverbend community. As Christmas draws near, time is dwindling to drop off donations to one of more than 100 boxes placed in businesses and organizations around the area. The boxes will be available for donation drop off until Thursday, December 10, when they will be picked up for sorting and then distributed to receiving agencies on Friday, December 11.

Donations needed include:

- **Toys for children of all ages**
- **New clothes, undergarments & socks**
- **New coats for all ages**
- **Diapers, formula & baby essentials**
- **Blankets, Towels**
- **Winter hats & scarves**
- **New gloves & mittens**
- **Personal items (hygiene essentials)**
- **Non-perishable food items**
- **Household items (cleaning supplies, paper towels, toilet paper)**

All items and monetary donations for Community Christmas stay right here in the Riverbend to help local families in need. Items received will go to the following 17 agencies this year:

1. **Boys & Girls Club of Alton**
2. **Caritas Family Solutions (Christian Social Services)**
3. **Catholic Charities of Madison County**
4. **Catholic Children's Home**
5. **Centerstone (WellSpring Resources)**
6. **Charity Works**
7. **Children's Home and Aid**
8. **Crisis Food Center, Inc.**
9. **Illinois Center for Autism**
10. **Lutheran Child and Family Services**
11. **Oasis Women's Center**
12. **Operation Blessing**
13. **Riverbend Community Food Pantry**
14. **Riverbend Family Ministries**

- 15. Riverbend Head Start & Family Services**
- 16. Salvation Army**
- 17. Village of Royal Lakes (Concerned Citizens)**

Those who wish to donate can drop off items at any location that has a Community Christmas box or at the United Way office during regular business hours, located at 707 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 270, East Alton, IL. For a complete list of box locations, visit United Way's website at www.HelpingPeople.org/Events.

Community Christmas is also accepting cash donations. Monetary donations should be sent to the Southwest Illinois Division of United Way of Greater St. Louis: 707 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 270, East Alton, IL 62024 and marked as Attn: Community Christmas. Monetary donations will go towards buying items on the donation list that were not received in large quantities or for certain age groups.

Last year, Community Christmas collected 17,116 items that were distributed through 15 agencies. The Community Christmas Committee hopes to once again hit the 17,000 item count for donations to help more than 6,000 families in need this holiday season.

Thus far in 2015, just a few examples out of dozens of the community's generosity to help one another through Community Christmas include: the hundreds of items collected at Freer Auto Body's eighth annual Cookies and Cocoa for Christmas on December 1, the opening night of Christmas Wonderland at Rock Springs Park which collected dozens of items and raised \$250 for the program thanks to the Grandpa Gang, and Edwardsville attorney Keith Short, who donated \$1,500 to the program.

Dawna Gilbreath, Community Christmas coordinator, said, "We are so incredibly grateful for the outpouring of support from these individuals and from the hundreds of other businesses and residents who support Community Christmas. There is still time to give and help those in need this holiday season, so please, keep helping if you are able. Each and every gift goes a long way towards making this holiday season bright for our Riverbend residents."

For more information, call United Way at 618-258-9800 or visit www.HelpingPeople.org.

About United Way of Greater St. Louis

United Way of Greater St. Louis mobilizes the community with one goal in mind — helping people live their best possible lives. Located throughout 16 counties in Missouri and Illinois, United Way helps one in three people in the region build a foundation for a good quality of life through basic needs, education, financial stability, health and strong

communities. For more information, contact 314-421-0700 or visit www.HelpingPeople.org.