

Community Christmas program collecting items for Riverbend community

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EAST ALTON — There is less than one week remaining in United Way's 27th annual Community Christmas donation drive benefiting local individuals and families in the RiverBend area. Program volunteers will collect donation boxes located throughout the community next Thursday, December 15 to sort and deliver donated items to 15 local nonprofits. To locate a donation box near you, visit www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2016.

This morning, a dozen community volunteers gathered at Toys 'R Us in Fairview Heights for Community Christmas' annual Shop Til You Drop Day, purchasing hundreds of gifts and toys to give to children this holiday season. John Feder Trucking donated a large truck to help transport the thousands of items purchased. Freer Auto Body also hosted a Cookies and Cocoa event Thursday evening, collecting donations from the community and providing hot chocolate and cookies. The Freer family's annual Christmas in July event this summer raised more than \$33,000 for United Way's program.

More photos from Shop Til You Drop can be found [here](#).

This year, the top needs in the community are for new blankets, towels, household items and diapers. Other items collected through the program include non-perishable food items, new and unwrapped toys for kids of all ages, new clothes, coats and winter essentials like socks, hats, gloves and scarves, baby formula and personal care items. In addition to collecting items, monetary donations are also accepted and will be used to purchase items on the donation list that are in short supply or not collected. Donations can be made online at www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2016.

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.