

# United Way's Community Christmas program collects more than 32,000 items for local people

December 19 2016 1:26 PM





EAST ALTON — This year, the Riverbend community donated 32,979 items for United Way's 27<sup>th</sup> annual Community Christmas program. The items collected include new toys, non-perishable food, baby and personal care items, and winter essentials like coats, hats, gloves and scarves.

This year's drive concluded last week when dozens of volunteers collected donation boxes from dozens of local businesses and sorted the items for distribution to 15 local nonprofit agencies. The agencies estimate that more than 8,000 people in the Riverbend area will be helped this holiday season through the program.

"We are so grateful again this year for the Riverbend community, who came together to brighten up this holiday season for so many neighbors in need," said Martha Morse, 2016 chair of the Community Christmas Committee and business development representative for 1<sup>st</sup> MidAmerica Credit Union. "The outpouring of generosity from our community is incredible. Thank you to all of the businesses who hosted collection boxes and donation drive events, and everyone who donated this year."

The 15 agencies distributing the items include: Boys and Girls Club of Alton; Caritas Family Solutions; Catholic Charities of Madison County; Catholic Children's Home; Centerstone; Children's Home and Aid; Crisis Food Center, Inc.; Illinois Center for Autism; Lutheran Child & Family Services; Oasis Women's Center; Operation

Blessing; Riverbend Community Food Pantry; Riverbend Head Start & Family Services; and The Salvation Army – Alton.

The following are supporters of United Way's Community Christmas program: Freer Auto Body, Feder Trucking, Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery, Alton School District, Edwardsville School District, and the more than 100 local Riverbend businesses and churches who hosted a donation box.

### *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](http://www.HelpingPeople.org).