



# Community Christmas program now collecting items for Riverbend community

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EAST ALTON — United Way's annual Community Christmas donation drive began earlier this month when donation boxes were delivered to dozens of participating businesses, churches, schools and organizations throughout the Riverbend area. The program is collecting items through December 6 for local people in need this holiday season. To locate a donation box near you, visit [www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2017](http://www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2017).

This year, the top needs in the community are for new coats, blankets, household and personal care items. Other items collected through the program include non-perishable food, new and unwrapped toys for kids of all ages, baby formula and diapers, and new clothes, socks, hats, gloves and scarves.

All of the items collected will be distributed to the following 16 local agencies, who've estimated needs this holiday season for more than 8,000 people in the Riverbend community:

- 100 Black Men – Alton Branch
- Boys and Girls Club of Alton
- Calhoun County Council for Senior Citizens
- 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
- Oasis Women's Center
- Operation Blessings

Riverbend Family Ministries  
Riverbend Head Start Family Services  
Salvation Army

Village of Royal Lakes (Concerned Citizens). In addition, monetary donations are also accepted and will be used to purchase items in short supply or not collected. Donations can be made online at [www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2017](http://www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2017) or can be mailed to United Way at 707 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 270, East Alton, IL 62024, marked Attn: Community Christmas.

“Many children, seniors and families rely on United Way’s Community Christmas program for food, winter clothing and toys so that they can have a bright holiday season,” said Martha Morse, 2017 chair for Community Christmas Committee and business development representative for 1st MidAmerica Credit Union. “Last year, Community Christmas collected a record 32,000 items, and I’m confident the community will come together once again to help our neighbors in need. We’re already off to a great start with Freer Auto Body’s Christmas in July event that raised \$40,000 for this year’s program.”

In addition to donating items, volunteers are needed for a variety of opportunities, including shopping for toys, picking up donation-filled boxes and sorting thousands of items. Those interested in donating items, hosting a box or volunteering can visit [www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2017](http://www.helpingpeople.org/christmas2017) or call 618-258-9800.

### **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).