

United Way's Community Christmas program collects thousands of items for local people

December 12 2017 1:24 PM



**COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS**



EAST ALTON — This year, the Riverbend community donated more than 32,000 items for United Way's annual Community Christmas program. The items collected included new toys, non-perishable food, baby and personal care items, and winter essentials like coats, hats, gloves and scarves. (Photos available for download [here](#)).

Freer Auto Body in Godfrey led this year's efforts with enormous cash and item donations. Freer has been a business leader in the campaign for several years. This year's drive concluded late last week when dozens of volunteers spent the day collecting and unloading donation boxes from dozens of local businesses and sorting the items for distribution to 16 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.

"I've always known the Riverbend community was generous, but it is really remarkable to see this generosity translated through United Way's Community Christmas program, when boxes are overflowing and there's barely room to walk in this room because so many people gave this year," said Martha Morse, 2017 chair of the Community Christmas Committee and business development representative for 1st MidAmerica Credit Union. "Once again, we'd like to thank all of the sponsors, businesses, volunteers and donors for supporting our neighbors and giving them a brighter holiday season."

The 16 agencies distributing the items include: 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 Blessing; Riverbend Family Ministries; Riverbend Head Start & Family Services; The Salvation Army – Alton; Village of Royal Lakes.

The following are supporters of United Way's Community Christmas program: Freer Auto Body, Feder Trucking, Main Street United Methodist Church in Alton, Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery, The Telegraph, Alton School District, Edwardsville School District, Roxana School District, Alton's PACUP Program and more than 60 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.