

**RIVERBENDER.COM**

# **Community Christmas Program Now Collecting Items for Riverbend Community**

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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EAST ALTON - United Way's annual Community Christmas kicked off this month with more than 70 boxes at participating businesses, churches, schools and organizations throughout the Riverbend area. The program collects items through December 11 for local people in need this holiday season. A list of participating locations hosting a box is available at [HelpingPeople.org/Christmas2019](http://HelpingPeople.org/Christmas2019).

This year, the top needs in the community are for blankets, household and personal care items, new coats and other clothing items. Other items needed by local agencies include non-perishable food, new toys for kids of all ages, baby formula and diapers, and new socks, hats, gloves and scarves.

All of the items collected will be distributed to the following agencies to help people in the community during the holiday season and beyond:

100 Black Men - Alton Branch  
Boys and Girls Club of Alton  
Caritas family Solutions  
Catholic Charities of Madison County  
Catholic Children's Home  
Centerstone  
Children's Home & Aid  
Crisis Food Center  
Illinois Center for Autism  
Oasis Women's Center  
Operation Blessing  
Riverbend Family Ministries  
Riverbend Head Start Family Services  
Salvation Army  
Madison County Urban League  
Village of Royal Lakes

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 [HelpingPeople.org/Christmas2019](https://www.HelpingPeople.org/Christmas2019) or mailed to United Way at 707 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 270, East Alton, IL 62024, marked Attn: Community Christmas.

"The Riverbend area is made up of so many generous local businesses, schools, and churches, and everyone truly comes together for Community Christmas, which helps more than 8,000 people each year," said Maura Wuellner, director of the Southwest Illinois Division of United Way. "These gifts not only brighten the holidays for children and families, but also help meet their basic needs, like coats and hats that ensure people are warm all winter long."

In addition to donating items, volunteers are needed for a variety of opportunities, including picking up donation-filled boxes and sorting the thousands of items donated. Those interested in donating items or volunteering can call 618-258-9800 for more information.

There are still donation boxes available for businesses and organizations to host. Those interested in requesting a box can 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).