

Partners sought to host boxes for annual Community Christmas program

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**COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS**



The annual Community Christmas donation drive, sponsored by United Way and The Telegraph, is looking for partners to host a donation box to collect items for those in need during the holidays. The program kicks off on Tuesday, November 4, with boxes being delivered to dozens of participating businesses, schools, churches and other organizations throughout the Riverbend.

All it takes to be a donation drop-off location is to have one or more boxes located in the main entrance or another easily accessible area where anyone can drop off items during business hours. The boxes are provided courtesy of Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery and are of no cost to host organizations. Those interested in hosting a box can contact United Way at (618) 258-9800.

"Every year, this community's generosity continues to amaze me," said Mary Jo Kratschmer, 2014 Community Christmas chair. "This program takes a lot of hard work to pull off, but I am always re-energized when I see the lengths people are willing to go to in order to help families in need throughout the Riverbend. In fact, last year we even had a 16 year old girl who asked for people to bring donations to Community Christmas to her birthday party rather than gifts for herself."

Community Christmas runs from Tuesday, November 4, when boxes will be delivered to participating organizations and will wrap up on Thursday, December 11, when boxes will be collected and taken to a central location for sorting. Donations to be placed in the boxes include non-perishable food items, new clothes for all ages, new winter weather necessities like gloves, hats and scarves, blankets, baby care items, hygiene items, cleaning supplies and of course new toys. Cash donations are also accepted and should be sent to United Way at 707 Berkshire Blvd., Suite 270, East Alton, IL 62024 and marked as Attn: Community Christmas.

Last year, Community Christmas collected more than 16,000 items for the community. Donations received will go to support 15 local agencies to help those in need of these items during the holiday season. Dawna Gilbreath, Community Christmas coordinator, said that these 15 organizations rely on the donations from United Way's Community Christmas to help more than 6,000 people in the area to have a great holiday.

Besides needing business and organizations to host donation boxes, volunteers for a variety of activities are also essential to the success of Community Christmas. All volunteer opportunities include prepping the boxes with festive signs and labels, delivering boxes to host sites, picking up donation-filled boxes once Community Christmas comes to a close, and sorting and loading the thousands of items donated for pick-up by the agencies.

For those interested in hosting a box, volunteering or for more information, call the Southwest Illinois Division of United Way of Greater St. Louis at 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

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