

# Riverbend Residents Receive Thanksgiving Meals from Local Organizations and Sen. Erica Harriss

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter  
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ALTON - State Senator Erica Harriss partnered with Meridian Health and Alton's Crisis Food Center to hand out 150 turkeys and hams to Riverbend residents.

From 1–3 p.m. on Monday, Nov. 20, 2023, cars lined the block around Crisis Food Center, located at 21 East 6th Street in Alton, to receive 75 hams and 75 turkeys in honor of Thanksgiving. Harriss noted that she enjoys days like this when she can work directly with constituents in her district.

“Springfield is a big place,” Harriss said. “There’s only so much control you can have, whereas here back in the district, we have a whole lot more control over how much we can be helping people in the community. That was one of the things when I came in in January, I said, ‘Okay, as much as we can do locally and have an impact on, we’re going to go for and make that a big effort.’”

Crisis Food Center chose people in the community to receive the food. Volunteers from Crisis and members of the Meridian and Harriss teams worked together to pass out food and keep the line moving through the full two hours.

Jeffrey Isbell, a community advocate for Meridian Health, explained that the organization is giving out approximately 4,000 turkeys and hams throughout Illinois this month. This aligns with Meridian’s mission to support community members who need help paying for medical care.

“Meridian is the largest state-sponsored healthcare organization,” Isbell said. “Within the state of Illinois, almost a million members statewide are on a managed care . We cover all their insurance needs so there’s absolutely no out-of-pocket, whether it’s for a doctor’s visit or a surgery or prescription, and it’s for low-income populations or those with complex medical needs.”

To find out more about Meridian Health, including how to utilize their services, [visit their official website at ILMeridian.com](#). Harriss also encourages people to [contact her office](#) for questions about state legislation and other assistance programs; you can check out [her website at SenatorEricaHarriss.com](#).

“Just a reminder that we’re here to help,” Harriss added. “Please call, and we’re happy to try and help you ourselves or send you in the right direction.”



