

United Way's Community Christmas seeks partners to host donation boxes

by Brittany Kohler, Content Manager
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EAST ALTON — [United Way's](#) annual Community Christmas donation drive 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 3, 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 your place of business that are accessible for clients, visitors or employees to drop off items during normal business hours. The boxes are provided courtesy of Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery and are of no cost to businesses hosting a box. Those interested in receiving a box can contact United Way at (618) 258-9800.

Megan Allen, Phillips 66 Wood River Refinery community affairs coordinator and 2015 Community Christmas chair, said, “My introduction to the program last year was a really inspiring experience. Seeing the generosity of the community and local businesses in their overflowing boxes filled with donations made me proud to be a part of this incredible holiday drive. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve as the new 2015 Community Christmas chair and am looking forward to diving in to make it a success once again for the community.”



**COMMUNITY
CHRISTMAS**



Community Christmas runs from Tuesday, November 3, when boxes will be delivered to participating organizations and will wrap up on Thursday, December 10, 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, towels, 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 17,116 items](#) for the community and distributed these items to 15 local agencies. Donations received this year will go to support 17 local agencies to help those in need.

Dawna Gilbreath, Community Christmas coordinator, said that these 17 organizations greatly rely on the donations from the program to help those in the area have a great holiday. “Last year, Community Christmas was once again able to help more than 6,000 people throughout the Riverbend thanks to the generosity and support of the community,” she said. “The letters of thanks we saw from families and kids who received some of the items were so moving and heartwarming...it makes all of the hard work that goes into this program feel all the more rewarding.”

Besides needing businesses and organizations to host donation boxes, volunteers for a variety of activities are also essential to the success of Community Christmas.

Opportunities include prepping the boxes with festive signs and labels on November 2, delivering boxes to host sites on November 3, picking up donation-filled boxes once Community Christmas comes to a close on December 10, and sorting and loading the thousands of items donated for pick-up by the agencies on December 10 and 11.

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.