



SOUP'S ON Volunteers at Detroit's Capuchin Soup Kitchen range from individuals (left) to groups, such as the Girl Scout troop at lower right. Hungry children and seniors (top right photos), as well as everyone in between, find solace at the charity, one of many in metro Detroit needing contributions.

The Greatest Gift

Whether it's time, money, or goods, contributions are desperately needed as metro Detroit charities scramble to brighten the holidays for those in bleak circumstances // By Aleene Jinn Hang

Movies, greeting cards, ads, and store-window displays tell us that December is the month of laughter, joy, love, and gift-wrapped delight.

But for many, "the Christmas season can be tremendously discouraging," says Salvation Army Maj. Norman Marshall. This is the time of year when some people are "faced with either loneliness or the failure to provide for [their] family," Marshall says. With Michigan's unemployment rate topping the nation, metro Detroit charities are desperate for help. Marshall says 34 percent of Detroit residents live in poverty.

That figure is especially critical in light of research showing that the holidays "can be extremely stressful for poor families and may lead to an increase in abuse, neglect, depression, and stress," says Jeannie Grant of The Children's Center.

Last year, a Salvation Army study found a 292-percent increase in the services provided to Detroit suburbanites. "For the first time on a growing scale, individuals who have put money in the Christmas

kettle and helped the Army historically are now asking for our resources," Marshall says.

This season, charitable organizations are urging people to add the needy to their shopping lists. "Last year, we were not able to help everybody who came to us for assistance," says Kathy Moran of Focus Hope. "The economy hasn't gotten any better, so it's probably going to be worse this year."

The Red Kettle is among the most familiar of charitable symbols. And, as The Salvation Army's Marshall says, "Every penny makes a huge difference." Beyond the financial aid, he says, the holidays offer a "unique opportunity to really impact people's lives when psychologically they could really be down."

If that weren't reason enough, it helps to remember that most charitable donations are tax deductible. There's another benefit, of course, one that's best expressed by a bit of classic wisdom: 'Tis better to give than receive.

Following is a small sampling of the many metro Detroit organizations that would be happy to receive contributions of time, money, and goods this month and all during the year.

CAPUCHIN SOUP KITCHEN

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen's Caps, Coats, and Kids Program: Keep the youth of metro Detroit warm by donating cozy outerwear. This program provides winter clothing to 800 at-risk families and 2,400 children. Pickups can be arranged through the Capuchin Services Program by calling 313-925-1370, ext. 100. Drops-offs accepted at Capuchin Services, 6333 Medbury, Detroit.

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen's children program: The program is in need of books (hardbound and paperback) for all ages and reading levels. Especially needed are multicultural stories and dictionaries. The program also needs socks and jigsaw puzzles (200 pieces or fewer.) Drop off at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, 4390 Conner, Detroit.

Cash donations: Mail to Capuchin Soup Kitchen, C/O St. Joseph Center, 1820 Mount Elliott, Detroit; 313-579-2100, cskdetroit.org.

FOCUS HOPE

Family to family: Volunteers are asked to provide a holiday meal and gifts for children. Focus Hope en-

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courages volunteers to contact the family in advance to see what items are most essential and to make arrangements for delivery. Deadline to adopt is Dec. 14. To sign up, call: 313-494-5500.

Share with a senior: Provide a holiday meal to elderly people in need. Volunteers are sought to provide a warm meal and gift to a low-income senior. Please contact the senior to see what he or she needs and to arrange delivery of food. Donations can also be delivered on Dec. 8 as part of Focus Hope’s Special Holiday Delivery. To sign up, call 313-494-5500.

Special holiday delivery: Volunteers are needed to pack and deliver boxes of food for low-income senior citizens in metro Detroit. Those interested should arrive at Focus Hope’s Central Warehouse, 6500 E. Davison, Detroit (8 a.m.-noon) on Dec. 8.

THE HEAT AND WARMTH FUND (THAW)

THAW provides emergency assistance to low-income families, individuals, and senior citizens throughout Michigan’s 73 counties. Benefits go to people in danger of losing essential heat or electricity. Donors may send a check made out to THAW Fund at 1212 Griswold, Detroit, 48226, or charge a gift using VISA, MasterCard, or American Express by calling 313-226-9392, or visit thawfund.org.

CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL OF MICHIGAN

Snowpile: This year, more than 200 children will spend their holidays in the hospital recovering from serious illnesses and injuries. For more than a decade, Children’s Hospital of Michigan has put together Snowpile, which is the chance for parents to select free toys, games, books, and other gifts for their ailing young ones. To make a contribution, call Deanna Scanlon at 313-745-5364, or e-mail dscanlon@dmc.org.

Adopt-a-family: Make a difference this holiday and sponsor a low-income family. Contact Janet Nunn at 313-745-5289 or jnunn@dmc.org for details.

MICHIGAN HUMANE SOCIETY

The society cares for more than 100,000 animals each year at its three centers (Detroit, Rochester Hills, and Westland).

The shelter and cruelty investigation need a new high-quality digital video camera (six-plus megapixels), canned dog/cat food, rawhide chews, moist dog/cat treats, cat toys (non-porous), clay cat litter, stainless-steel food bowls, towels, and office supplies. Cash donations, including memorials or honorariums, are also welcome. Call 1-866-MHUMANE or michiganhumane.org.

THE SALVATION ARMY (TSA)

Army Red Kettle campaign: Known as the largest social services provider (other than governmental aid), The Salvation Army is responsible for providing more than 9,316 meals a day, shelter for 2,137 each night, and, during winter months, distributing more than

5,000 items of warm clothing. At holiday time, TSA gives more than 216,341 gifts to children and seniors. Kettles and bell ringers will be out at more than 300 area locations, including Macy’s, Kroger, Sam’s Club, Wal-Mart, Walgreen’s, and Michaels, as well as other sites. Bell ringers are needed for that effort, which runs Nov. 16-Dec. 24. For more information on other volunteer opportunities and to make cash contributions, call 877-SAL-MICH or salmich.org.

THE CHILDREN’S CENTER

Founded in 1920, The Children’s Center provides guidance clinics throughout Michigan to help address the emotional, behavioral, and mental challenges facing needy youngsters. More than 5,000 children and families are served by The Children’s Center. To help children by adopting their families, call 313-262-1220.

COALITION ON TEMPORARY SHELTER

(COTS) Breakfast with Santa: Since 1982, COTS has been aiding the homeless by providing shelter, meals, and other services that help people regain independence. On Dec. 15, COTS will host its second annual Breakfast with Santa at the Fisher Building in Detroit. From 9 a.m.-1 p.m., children can enjoy face-painting, crafts, dancing, music, breakfast, and a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. Contributions of \$3-\$6, plus one unwrapped new toy are needed. Call or e-mail Lynn Wihelm at 313-576-0206 or lmwassoc@aol.com for ticket and sponsorship opportunities.

Wish list: The shelter needs new unwrapped toys, school supplies, board games, towels, bed sheets, blankets, comforters, canned foods, dishes, pots, pans, trial-size soaps, deodorant, shampoo, clothing, and many more items. Donations are accepted Mon.-Sat., 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at 26 Peterboro, Detroit; 831-3777, ext. 223.

SOUTHWEST SOLUTIONS

Toys for children: With almost 800 children in the family literacy program, the group is in need of volunteers to help with holiday parties for the families enrolled. The organization also prepares gift bags filled with hats, mittens, and boots for preschool-age children.

Adopt-a-family: Southwest Solutions provides apartments for low-income families and, as part of that housing effort, seeks sponsors to adopt a family this holiday season.

Clubhouse for adults with mental illness: Hats and gloves are needed for those who use the Fisher Clubhouse, a work and social program for people with severe and persistent mental illnesses.

Go-getters program: Seventy-five Christmas dinners are served to the homeless and those with a mental illness. The program is in need of food donations as well as gift-bag items (gloves, hooded sweatshirts, personal hygiene products, and other basic goods). Volunteers are needed for assistance three to four days

before the holiday and on the actual delivery day.

For all programs, contact Mary Madigan at 313-849-4902, ext. 2, or mmadigan@swsol.org. Programs run from Dec. 1-21.

GLEANERS COMMUNITY FOOD BANK

Cure Hunger Here Gleaners holiday campaign: This year, together with Kroger and Charter One Banks, Gleaners will have people stationed at 12 locations to collect food and funds through Dec. 8, from 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Also, from Dec. 1-31, at 50 grocery-store sites, shoppers may opt to add \$1, \$3, or \$5 to their grocery bill, which will go directly to Gleaners. During the same period, donations also will be accepted at all Huntington National Banks. For more information and store locations: gcfb.org, 866-GLEANERS.

MEALS ON WHEELS

Holiday Meals on Wheels: The Area Agency on Aging 1-B must raise more than \$60,000 to provide warm and nutritious meals to the elderly this holiday season. Meals during this season are delivered on Christmas, Hanukkah, and New Year’s Day. Most of the senior citizens who receive meals are alone and without family and friends to celebrate with. The cost of a meal is \$6, and volunteers rather than paid drivers deliver more than 90 percent of the food. To contribute: 800-852-7795, aaaib.com.

JEWISH FEDERATION OF METROPOLITAN DETROIT

Federation’s Mitzvah Day: On Dec. 25, the Jewish Federation and the community come together and volunteer at area soup kitchens, nursing homes, children’s homes, and other places of need so that non-Jewish volunteers may be at home with their families. To register: jewishdetroit.org/mitzvah; 248-205-2569.

MANY OTHER CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS ALSO NEED CONTRIBUTIONS AND TIME. HERE ARE A FEW:

- > UNITED WAY, unitedway.org
- > BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, bgca.org
- > LIGHTHOUSE OF OAKLAND COUNTY, lighthouseoakland.org
- > COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN, cfsem.org
- > ADULT WELL-BEING SERVICES, aubs.org
- > NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE ORGANIZATION, nso-mi.org
- > GOODWILL INDUSTRIES, goodwill.org
- > YAD EZRA KOSHER FOOD PANTRY, yadezra.com
- > TOYS FOR TOTS, toysfortots.org
- > SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, svdpusa.org