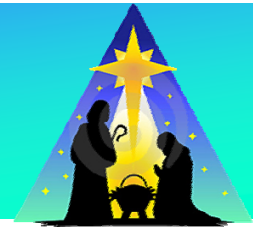


Christmas 2008

The Day Radiates for All of Us...We Give Thanks



Martin House has a privileged role as the mover and connector of so much good will. Positive, effective action leaves us tired and wonderfully joyful, and satisfied!

Imagine the Martin House Community, under the leadership of Gloria Phillips, inviting the families of the Wilbur section who were in need or were short of Christmas gifts for their children, to come and sign up with us.

Over the years, we have gained a rapport with many Catholic churches and their parishioners, businesses, their employees, and individuals. Through the leadership of each organization, we were able to connect each group with families in need and coordinate the collecting and transporting of many gifts.

This is not magic; let me share our journey. Martin House began its Christmas sharing in 1972. Mr. David Bixel of happy memory, organized the first gift drive at St. Joseph's High School in Metuchen. They sent a school bus, a van, and a car full of secondhand toys to the Martin House. Squibb in New Brunswick sent new toys, which were left over from their company Christmas party. We organized and assembled all of the gifts at the Greenwood Methodist Church. Forty families showed up. Being a rookie, I took each person's name, said religiously appropriate things, and concluded with, "We have a number of secondhand gifts and some new gifts...you may have two used gifts and one new gift for each child..." "Please, just respect each other." Then, we let all the families in. It was a mess; a learning experience never to be repeated!

Thirty-six years later, Ms. Gloria Phillips from the Martin House Clothing Store spoke with all our community volunteers. They were encouraged to intercede for themselves and other families in need. Then she arranged for two days between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. for families in Trenton's Wilbur section to sign up.

After Gloria and her team gathered all their names, she emailed, faxed, called and sent the names of the families and children to our sponsors. The recipients of these lists of names, generous and hard-working leaders in their churches and businesses, then recruited donors to fulfill the children's numerous requests. **All of this is just amazing!**

All our participating Martin House families were given a time to pick up their special Christmas gifts. We had between 20-30 families, adults only, come every two hours between 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. for two days, December 18th and 19th. Robert Donaldson, Executive Director of the Learning Center, generously let us use the gymnasium and canteen from December 14th to 19th.

We had all the completed gift requests, properly numbered and delivered to us in large construction bags. In this way, as the families picked up their gifts, we were able to avoid gift comparisons. What is given as a gift to the specific numbered family is what is given to the family. We cannot calculate the generosity extended from each donor. We simply make the connection. And in fact, we are edified and grateful to all for the gifts shared.

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Our Lady of Sorrows – St. Anthony's: wrapped gifts were received, organized, accounted for and delivered to Martin House.



Gloria Phillips who diligently, among great confusion and multitudes of demands, organized the entire Christmas sharing event. She, with her team, conducted all the interviews, gathered all the family names and their multiple requests and was the director of the distribution.



Representing OLS-St. Anthony (seated) are Kellie Malloy Foerter and Mary Vanderhoof, parishioners and members of the Social Concerns committee. They checked in all donors and organized all gifts correctly.



Gloria Phillips and her main team with the organized gifts.



Extra, unmarked gifts are wrapped and used to respond to last minute needs.



First gathering of 20 to 30 families to receive their personally given gifts.



Later, families and gifts being coordinated and appropriately distributed

Through your great generosity, cooperation, work and diligence we shared with 533 families and approximately 1,800 children. A special effort was made for the 15 families who reside in our Transitional Housing, Doorway to Hope, our pre-school which has 65 children in attendance and our after-school program, comprised of approximately 60 children.

In all this free good will, only 23 families were missed! Thankfully, we found others to respond to these families' needs. We received in this effort more gifts, gift cards and donations. We were able to respond to all of them! Additionally, nine small gift bags came in. With this help, we were able to fill these bags out with additional gifts, that we had collected to respond to such last minute needs.

Certainly we were tired, but with you, wonderfully joyful and satisfied. We thank the good Lord in making us one in His Family, under God, our Father.

Jr. Brian



The families leave with their Christmas sharing gifts. The only thing better than the gifts is the generosity and effort to make it happen. We thank God and all for their great and true spirit on celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ.



Thank you to our generous contributors!

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