

# Faith in Action\*\*

## GIFT OF GIVING

Each year, with the help of our volunteers, parishes, and communities — Catholic Social Services is able to make a difference in the lives of so many. The goal of CSS is to brighten the holidays for many families who would otherwise go without. Over the years, CSS has helped countless families and individuals with food, clothing, toys, and shelter; and this year is no exception, with over 900 families seeking help during this holiday season. None of this would be possible without the dedicated volunteers and staff, who help bring this amazing endeavor to life, and, of course, the generosity of so many.

In light of all that has occurred over the past year, and of course, with utmost regard for the safety of our staff, volunteers, and the community, CSS will once again provide gift cards to those families in our programs. The suggested gift cards are Walmart, Target, and Amazon and can be any denomination. These gift cards allow families to have items delivered directly to them or via contactless pick-up at the stores. In addition to the gift cards, CSS also provides new toys and games for children and winter gear for young and old alike. Working with local agencies, we strive to make the holidays a much happier and promising time for everyone who knocks on our door. We definitely have “room” for those who need our help.

**From all of us here at Catholic Social Services—Merry Christmas!**

### *A Christmas Prayer—The True Gifts of Christmas*



The gifts I'd leave beneath your tree,  
Aren't those that you can touch or see,  
No toys meant just for pointless play,  
But gifts to bless you every day.  
The gift of friendship warm and true,  
Is one that I would leave for you.  
Good health and happiness and cheer  
To keep you smiling through the year.  
The gift of peace that comes from God,  
With prayer to guide each path you trod.  
And when your heart has lost its song  
The gift of hope to cheer you on.  
These are the gifts I'd leave for you.

—Kay Hoffman



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Behind the Scenes.....	2
Celebrating a Birthday.....	2
Volunteer Opportunities .....	2
Parker School .....	3
Reasons to Volunteer.....	3
Community in Action .....	4
The Winner Is** .....	4

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Volunteers:** We need your help to update your information, Email: [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org) or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.
- **Happy Birthday** to all our volunteers who celebrated a birthday in November and will be celebrating in December. We would love to honor and recognize YOU! Email your name and birthday to [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org) or call 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111.





## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES...

*Bilingual speakers to translate and interpret for clients.*

*Food Pantry Volunteers.*

*Volunteers to sort and organize donations at various sites.*

*Volunteers to serve our shelter guests and help with laundry.*

*Food preparers, cooks, servers, greeters, and clean-up crew for the Soup Kitchen .*

*There are many more opportunities throughout our agency and its sites.*

*You can also help by organizing a donation drive at your parish, school, or organization. Call us at 508-674-4681 to find out how you can help.*

For more information,  
contact Rose Mary Saraiva,  
Volunteer Coordinator  
at 508-674-4681 Ext. 1111 or via  
email at [rsaraiva@cssdioc.org](mailto:rsaraiva@cssdioc.org)



## BEHIND THE SCENES

The **Donation Room** serves as the clearinghouse for all the brand new donated items that come into Catholic Social Services at various times throughout the year. Of course, the busiest time is now, during the holiday season.

Keeping everything organized is a fete in of itself, but fortunately, we have a group of dedicated volunteers who make it look easy. These volunteers come in on a weekly basis and get right to work sorting and organizing donations that may have come in the previous week. In addition to stocking the shelves in the donation room, they also help gather the items on a families wish list. They “shop” for brand new clothing, coats, and any other accessories they may need, as well as new toys if there are children in the mix. This “shopping” occurs any time a need arises throughout the year.

The volunteers who maintain that room recognize that each new donation comes with the intention of the giver, and the receiver gets a new item that not only fills a need, but belongs solely to them—instilling a sense of self-worth and dignity that are often the unspoken consequences of poverty. Our volunteers work to provide and restore a sense of worth and wellbeing with each new item handpicked for the intended recipient. This personal touch may be the reason these volunteers always have a smile on their face, even when the task seems daunting.

When asked why they do it, the answers varied. They do it to give back, because they themselves have been blessed and feel it is time to share those blessings. One volunteer said, “It feels good and I enjoy doing it.” Another ventured to say it gets her out of the house, gives her something to look forward to each week. They all agreed that they have made new friends because of their volunteer service and it gives them a chance to socialize. It affords them an opportunity to meet new people who share a common goal—helping others. One comment made me smile, that this was another check-off item on their way to heaven.

As they spoke among themselves, they all agreed that they definitely get back so much more than they give. By freely giving of their time and talents, they feel a overwhelming sense of gratitude and a deep feeling of being duly blessed. Even though they believe they are “fulfilling their duty to help others” it goes way beyond being an obligation—bringing an abundance of joy and fulfillment into their own lives. Who are these volunteers? This group of dedicated volunteers are: **Christine Abrabasz; Nina Amaral; Maria E. Araujo; Maureen Beaudoin; Lisabeth Botelho, and Beverly Therrien.**

In addition to these volunteers, there have also been countless others who have helped out at various times for specific events. Whether is was for a day, a week, or months, the work and effort they put in is very much appreciated. This helps make the task of preparing the items for our “Gift of Giving” program, other events, or “shopping list” fulfillment, a lot easier and efficient.



### Celebrating a December Birthday:

**Louise F.— December 2**  
**Kristen M.—December 8**  
**Maria A.—December 16**

**Maria C.—December 5**  
**Barbara N.—December 14**  
**Alexa C.—December 28**

**Kelsi S.—December 30**





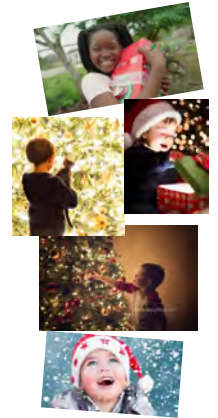
## "GIFT OF GIVING" - PARKER SCHOOL

It has been a difficult year for many individuals, and many families are facing the reality that Christmas may be a bit bleak this year for their children. A group of teachers at Parker School in New Bedford won't let that happen. Generally the teachers will shop for those children, whom they know will have little or nothing at Christmas, but this year has been especially challenging, and there is a much greater need for help.

The teachers became aware of what we did with the "Give Back" - Friday program in New Bedford and asked if we could help the students at the school. Christine Abrabasz, one of our volunteers who has a personal connection with the school, has become Santa for these students. With the wish list of what the students hoped to get for Christmas, Christine was able to get a least one toy per child - making the holidays a bit brighter for those children who may have otherwise gone without. Thank you Christine for being a beacon of hope.

*"Selfishness make Christmas a burden; Love makes it a delight. The joy of brightening a child's heart creates the magic of Christmas."*

~~William Carey Hones



*"Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you." — Steve Maraboli*

### Volunteer Notes

I volunteer at a local chocolate shop. They didn't need any help, but I wouldn't take 'no' for an answer!



### Volunteers



...always lend a hand

AND



...are there when you need them

3

## REASONS TO VOLUNTEER DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Maile Proctor, Volunteer Match Blog

**#1: You have more time.** Many people are off work or home for the holidays—this could be the start of something new.

**#2: You can give someone (or a Family) a warm meal.** You can do your part to ensure that others get a nice warm meal.

**#3: Volunteering spreads holiday cheer.** Think about those who don't have family near to spend time with.

**#4: You can lead by example.** Share your plans to volunteer and explain why you want to be of service. Help your family, especially younger members, understand some of the benefits of volunteering.

**#5: Make it a family affair.** Volunteering is an excellent way to spend time with family and make a difference.

**#6: You'll get back just as much as you give.** "Performing good deeds for others, even in as little as a 10-day span, has been reported to boost happiness and life satisfaction."

**#7: You can try something new.** Who knows, you might even discover a new hobby or passion, or you may stumble upon some hidden talent!

**#8: Volunteering builds personal relationships.** Volunteering is one of the best ways to connect with your community, make new friends, and boost your social skills, which is important for both adults and children.

**#9: It helps you appreciate what you have.** Helping someone in need can put things into perspective. It is an eye-opening experience that helps us count our blessings and realize the things we should be grateful for. Volunteering can help you adopt an attitude of gratitude.



YOU WERE BORN  
WITH THE ABILITY TO  
CHANGE SOMEONE'S  
LIFE, DON'T EVER  
WASTE IT.



## Community in Action - St. Mary School



St. Mary School in Mansfield held a clothing drive for the entire month of October. They collected hats, gloves, undergarments, and blankets. Thank you St. Mary School community for your generosity and compassion.

## AND THE WINNER IS...\*\*

After months of being simply known as the Volunteer Times, we finally have a name for our Newsletter.

We had many great submissions and after tallying up the votes, we give you:

***“Faith in Action”***

**Congratulations to our winner!**

**The person who submitted the winning name has asked to remain anonymous.**

For the winning entry into the contest, the winner would receive a \$100 gift card. The participant has asked that it be donated to the “Gift of Giving” program in memory of their deceased loved ones.

**We thank you all for submitting a name for the contest.  
There were all fitting monikers for our newsletter.**