

NEWS

VOLUNTEER CENTER OF BERGEN COUNTY, INC.

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Volunteer Center Seeks Donors to Fill Gift Requests

The Volunteer Center of Bergen County is looking for companies, religious and civic groups, chambers of commerce and other community organizations, as well as individuals and families, to participate in its annual **All Wrapped Up Holiday Giving Program**.

Information for potential donors wishing to make contributions can be found at www.bergenvolunteers.org; click on Holiday Programs.

On-line registration opens on October 19, 2009, to coincide with the Entertainment Industry Foundation's national promotion, "iParticipate", which will highlight service and volunteering. Major broadcast networks will spotlight community service through scripted programming, segments and Public Service Announcements, reinforcing the idea that great change begins with small choices and one decision to change leads to others.

Participation in **All Wrapped Up** can be a decision for good. Needy children and families, troubled youth, lonely seniors and disabled adults could be passed over this holiday season unless generous donors come forward to offer assistance.

No matter how limited—or unlimited—donors' resources are, those who have the desire to help this holiday season can be matched with an individual, family or agency that needs assistance.

"The economic downslide means that we have many more requests for help this year," says Janet Sharma, executive director of the Volunteer Center. "We are asking groups of all kinds to step up and help those in need. We've already received a record number of requests from social service agencies for their clients. This is a great project. Groups can collect gifts or raise funds to help others have the kind of joyful holiday that may not otherwise be possible."

Each year, the number of requests increases an average of 50 percent over the previous year, making the need for more donors essential. “We’re hoping organizations will sign on early, so no one will be left out,” continues Ms. Sharma. “Imagine a child with no present to open, or a lonely person not being remembered during the holiday season. You can make a difference.”

All Wrapped Up has two components: **Adopt-a-Family** and **Heart to Heart**.

For **Adopt-a-Family**, the Volunteer Center has already received gift requests for more than 700 families, ranging in size from two to seven people, and that number is expected to grow. Donors will be given a family profile, with specific gift requests that could include clothes, toys or household items. Donors should plan to spend about \$50 per family member. Donors may also provide gift certificates to stores or supermarkets.

Donors with limited budgets or those who would like to focus on one needy person may help an individual through the **Heart-to-Heart** program. The Volunteer Center has already received, over 1,000 requests for assistance were submitted for seniors, lonely or disabled adults and children. Donors are asked to provide supermarket gift certificates, clothing and gifts for the individual they select and should plan to spend approximately \$50.

Non-profit agencies are currently submitting profiles of needy individuals and families to the Volunteer Center. The Volunteer Center, in turn, is compiling lists of groups and individuals willing to help. Donors will have no direct contact with individuals or families; all gifts will be delivered to and distributed by the non-profit organization.

To participate in the program, visit the Volunteer Center’s website at www.bergenvolunteers.org, click on Holiday Programs, Information for Donors and complete and submit the appropriate form. When match-up begins on November 2, donors will receive profiles with specific gift requests. For more information, call Debbie Emery at (201) 489-9454 Ext. 118.

“We are hoping that many donors will sign up early so **All Wrapped Up** can help even more people,” concludes Ms. Sharma.

All Wrapped Up is sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Bergen County. The Volunteer Center strengthens the community by connecting people with opportunities to serve, operating model volunteer programs, building capacity for effective volunteering, and participating in strategic partnerships that meet community needs. For more information about

All Wrapped Up or to inquire about other volunteer opportunities, visit the website at www.bergenvolunteers.org, or call (201) 489-9454.

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