

Giving Partner Program

One of the hallmarks of Holiday Express is its ever-expanding "Giving Partner Program." This program matches Holiday Express donors with specific charitable organizations so the needs of these charities can best be served. The Giving Partner Program is designed to provide a charity with items it needs, but is often unable to acquire. By requesting that each charity provide a "wish list," Holiday Express is able to find an appropriate donor or donors to fulfill the wish list. This matching of donors with charities forges a relationship between the charitable organizations and the benefactors that support them, making them true "partners" in the program.

Peg Ford, our Giving Partner Coordinator, works her magic year after year by matching not only businesses, but also individuals and families with each charity's wish list. If you would like to become involved with Holiday Express as a Giving Partner, please email Holiday Express at holidayexpress@comcast.net or call (732) 544-8010. Thank you.

Melissa Marshall Creates A Giving Partner Luncheon

During September of 2008, I attended the first annual Holiday Express Clambake as guests of Silver Sponsor Val and Tom DeFelice of Circle BMW. Prior to the evening, I read about the event and looked at the Holiday Express website. At the Clambake, I was overwhelmed by the variety of talent, all donating their time, and the support for people to come together to provide funding for so many organizations in need of holiday cheer.



for me, and made my event idea much more gratifying. It became very personal by actually meeting the people that we would be helping.

On December 14, 2008, seventy-five women attended a luncheon at The Mill in Spring Lake Heights. Most

people had heard of Holiday Express, but weren't sure what it was. I had a poster on display which explained the Holiday Express mission, and Don Pignataro was on hand to talk about the organization. I feel that this gathering brought an awareness of Holiday Express and the Giving Partner Program to all of us.

Each ticket sale provided funds to purchase new pots and pans, and other kitchen items, for Spring House. Each guest also brought a new unwrapped gift for a boy or girl up to age four (and those who could not attend also sent donations). We were able to fill an entire sleigh! Sher took the unwrapped gifts that were collected that day, and brought them to Spring House.

One of the mothers at the luncheon has a son who attends School For Children, and she had no idea that Holiday Express was behind the Christmas event that is held there each year. She said that it is her son Griffin's favorite day of the year. She was brought to tears when she met Don Pignataro in person and had the opportunity to thank him.

Russ and I live in Sea Girt with our two boys, Liam, 7 and Luca, 4. I look forward to all and any fundraising that comes my way. We really can make a difference, supporting local friends and neighbors in need. We are also providing a healthy

Before the night was over, I had introduced myself to Don Pignataro and requested to be involved. Fundraising has always been a passion of mine, and in the past few years I have hosted a number of events for The Garden Academy, a school for autistic children. The generosity of those who attend is inspiring, and I have met wonderful people along the way: printers, restaurant staff, boutique owners, and so many more.

I received a call from Peg Ford, Coordinator of the Giving Partner Program. I told Peg about my idea for a holiday luncheon for women, and she partnered me with Spring House, whose "goal is to provide shelter to homeless young mothers and their children while enabling the women the opportunity to gain self-sufficiency while living in a safe, supportive environment."

On November 30, my husband and I attended the Holiday Express event at Rumson Country Day School, where Spring House was one of the groups in attendance. I was introduced to Sher Van Fossan, Executive Director, and the mothers and children who are currently in the program. That day was so emotional

2008

GIVING PARTNERS

Number of organizations with wish lists: 55

Number of organizations with Giving Partners: 31

New Giving Partners: 6

Gifts Given

Solar Birdbath

Commercial Pots and Pans

Flat Screen TV

Winter Coats

Elasto-Gel Therapy Wraps

Wheelchair Swing

Super Sensitive Switch

Tactile Board

Vibrotube

Gem Sphere Reward

Flat Screen Wall Mountable TV

Mega 4 in a Row Game

Small Textured Wall

Reading Pen II

FH Farmhouse Portable Greenhouse Kit

Wii Game Systems

Relationship Series Set

Adaptive Pinball Machine

Movie Projector and Screen

Bunn 2 Pot Coffee Maker, Commercial

Home Depot Gift Card

(2) Canon 1.07 mp DVD Camcorders

Dance, Dance Revolution Game and Pad

Borders Gift Cards, \$25 increments

Denny's from Heaven Gift Cards, \$25 increments

MacBook 13" 2.4 Ghz Intel Core 2 Duo Piano

(7) Casio 7.2 mp Digital Cameras

Dell Computer and Monitor

Karaoke Machine

(3) 100 Cup Coffee Pots

Heavy Duty Hand Truck

Commercial Sinks & Kitchen Equipment

Sports Equipment

Several Financial Donations

environment for our children by making them aware of people less fortunate.

I have recently been approached by a group of high school students interested in hosting an event of their own for Holiday Express. They too will have the experience of a lifetime!

I have already committed to hosting the event again on December 6, 2009! There is nothing more fulfilling.