

# Volunteers Delivering the Gift of Human Kindness

Holiday Express Yearbook

Season 2007



Heartwarming memories and personal relationships are formed between people who probably would never cross paths if it were not for Tim McLoone's desire, in 1993, to do something about the impartiality of misfortune.

Bringing music, food, gifts and genuine friendship to the physically and mentally disabled, the homeless, those living with AIDS and others in need, is what the family of volunteers known as Holiday Express does during the holiday season. With more than 600 volunteer "elves" supporting the mission throughout the 2007 season, the human spirit is lifted in more ways than we all can imagine.

2007, an ambitious fifteenth season, took our merry troupes to 54 events; 48 to the gathering places of clients, and six public performances for our loyal families, friends, fans, sponsors and supporters.

Some days we had piggyback shows at two different locales, which means our troupe de jour is gathered for about an eight-hour day. One day there were three back-to-back sets in

the morning at one event – and then an additional event elsewhere in early evening. Even on the days of the NJPAC and Count Basie performances, there was always an earlier client event!

Many days had two buses traveling in different directions, filled with two sets of band members and elf volunteers. That also means two trucks that leave an hour or so before the buses carrying the supplies, boxes of gift bags, food and one of a few dedicated drivers. Later on, when the band begins playing



Continued on Page 4



### To All Of Our Supporters

I suppose that one of these years I will have to stop proclaiming that “this was the best season ever” ...but it was. Because of the advance work done by Amy Robinson, the organizational planning done by Don Pignataro and our office, the preparation performed by all of our volunteers, and much larger musical contingents (particularly the Rick Brunermer-led horn section), we had amazing experiences wherever we went. It never matters whether we are throwing parties at Friends House in New York City for 40 people, or serving Christmas Eve Brunch for 700 at St. John’s Soup Kitchen in Newark (while a second group was feeding nearly 400 in Asbury Park!), the experiences are always the same – pure joy! Many thanks to our hundreds of volunteers who just make it all happen.

And speaking of thanks, our family would like to especially thank all of you who fretted over our boy, Jack, this past year. We were always aware of your support and concern and not a day went by that someone didn’t ask about him, give us a gift, or tell us they were offering prayers for his recovery. As I write this, I am happy to tell you that , although he faces two more years of chemotherapy, he is back in school and doing his primary job – aggravating his brother and sisters.



*Don*

### Update/Don Pignataro Holiday Express Executive Director

The greatest joy in carrying out the mission of Holiday Express is reflected in the faces of those we visit. As we gear up for a productive 2008, we pause and remember 2007. Memories our volunteers have from the event season are varied and personal. You pretty much have found the purest form of joy, when Santa or the Grinch appears and you see the wide eyed expression of a child who can’t speak. When a homeless man, who wouldn’t make eye contact earlier, laughs at a rhythm-less Disco Santa, you laugh too. The genuine, non-verbal sentiments we receive are heartwarming. For those who experienced an event for the first time this season, there is almost an audible “click” when the personal connection occurs. Our volunteers are wonderful people; they provide the passion that motivates the success of our mission and fuels the growth of the organization.

My sincere thanks to all the people who support Holiday Express in so many different ways. We are humbled to be a small part of matching the values of Holiday Express supporters with the values, mission and vision of the organizations we have grown to know. In many ways, your relationship with us is a means to express your personal concern for those special individuals we touch.

As it was once said, “Giving opens the way for receiving”. I hope we can continue to enhance each others’ lives.



***It is the mission of Holiday Express to deliver music, food, gifts, financial support and friendship to those with the greatest need for the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year.***

#### Newsletter Committee

Jill Weiss – Editor/Graphic Design  
Don Pignataro, Amy Robinson – Contributing Editors  
Photos by Scott Longfield and HolEx friends  
Holiday Express is a volunteer, non-profit, non-sectarian, registered 501(c)(3) organization.

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### 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](mailto:holidayexpress@comcast.net) or call (732) 544-8010. Thank you.

### Hutchins, Farrell, Meyer & Allison – Enduring Giving Partners by Bob Hutchins

As an active supporter of a number of charities that he had in common with Tim McLoone about ten years ago, Bob Hutchins became interested in Holiday Express.

After learning about Holiday Express from Tim, I immediately saw it as a great opportunity for my CPA firm, Hutchins Farrell Meyer & Allison, to include Holiday Express in our HFMAssist Program. This company program supports and pays our employees to go out into the community and volunteer with the organizations about which they feel passionate.

In that first year, we were Giving Partners for five events. In addition, I hosted a party for the Holiday Express Volunteers at a restaurant I owned in Red Bank after the Tree Lighting, and invited all my HFMAssist volunteers. It was great and we have annually sponsored three events since then.

For me, the best part of being a Giving Partner is the chance to be part of the event. Over the years, I have been a food server, busboy, meeter-greeter and even a “Disco Santa.” My favorite role is simply being there to talk to people and let them know they are important; to encourage them to sing, dance or laugh; or just talk with them. The most important gift Holiday Express Volunteers bring is dignity to people who attend these events.

The shopping for the gifts we will donate is most often done by our employees, sometimes by phone or internet. We also contact the charity; and, if they have the exact item picked out, we simply pay the

bill. Sometimes we just write a check if their “Wish List” is less than the minimum amount we give to each charity.

My most memorable Holiday Express experience happened a few years ago. HFMA was the Giving Partner for an organization serving people with physical disabilities. We had purchased the gift before attending the actual event. While at the show, there was a young women in a wheelchair who did not seem to be enjoying much of anything. I sat next to her and attempted to start a conversation. It was difficult but eventually, when encouraged by her case worker, the young women opened up. I was able to get her to dance in her wheelchair with me and we were best friends for that entire event. Her case worker told me that the girl loved computers but only had about one hour weekly to use the organization’s PC. On Christmas Eve, myself and another employee drove to Newark and brought her a new computer, monitor and printer. Dressed in our Santa hats, we set it up for her and showed her how to access email and perform a few other tasks. This was the best Christmas Eve I can remember – and since then I try to attend a Christmas Eve event every year.

After all this time, being a Giving Partner is part of our annual holiday tradition here at HFMA. I have recommended to friends and clients that they do the same.

I also enjoy bringing my family to shows. Being a Giving Partner and attending the Holiday Express event is the best Christmas gift I give to myself.

### 2007 GIVING PARTNERS

- Number of organizations with wish lists: 58  
Number of organizations with giving partners to date: 44  
Total number of Giving Partners: 31  
New Giving Partners: 9
- Gifts Given
- Fax Machine
  - Tetherball set
  - Developmental Trike
  - DVD Players and DVDs
  - 20 Watches
  - Ping Pong Table
  - Digital Camera and Printing Dock
  - 4 Rocking Chairs
  - 2 Computers
  - Reflection Bench
  - Projection Screen
  - All-in-One Printer Scanner, Fax and Copier
  - Karaoke machine
  - Ice Cream Maker
  - Adaptive Power Wheelchair
  - 2 Camcorders
  - 2 Multi-Disc CD Players
  - Checks totaling \$7,980
  - Wooden Sandbox
  - 2 Little Tykes Cars
  - Microwave
  - 2 Twin Beds
  - 2 Bureaus
  - Folding Tables
  - Driveway Sealcoating
  - Eight \$25 Borders Gift Cards
  - Retractable Awning
  - Coats
  - 5 DVD/VCR Players
  - Stereo System
  - 1 Wii Game System
  - 1 Nintendo Game System
  - 8 Printers
  - Fax Machine
  - Pots, Pans, Dishes, Flatware
  - Sheets and Towels
  - Clothes Dryer
  - Photo ID Badgemaker
  - TV
  - Acoustic Tone Generator
  - 2 Bagel Toasters
  - Softballs, Bats, Gloves, Tote Bags
  - Swimming Goggles
  - Trendelenberg Stretcher
  - Educational Books and Videos
  - Balance Kit
  - Computer Software
  - Handtrucks
  - Canopy



## Lifting the Human Spirit

Santa Clause is Coming To Town, some of these drivers morph into the big guy with the red and white hat and the beard.

Holiday Express is lucky to have some talented musicians who also lead the band on days Tim cannot clone himself. Jim Celestino, Rick Brunermer and BethAnne Clayton all have the stunning capacity to sound just like Tim when they tell his jokes!

Most days Fred is our trusty bus driver. Fred always shares a warm greeting with arrivals. He has been part of the team since 1995, and we all feel blessed by his patience, self-confidence, twinkling eyes and sturdy driving.

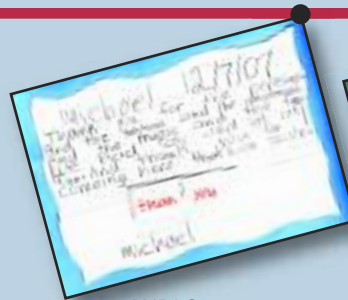
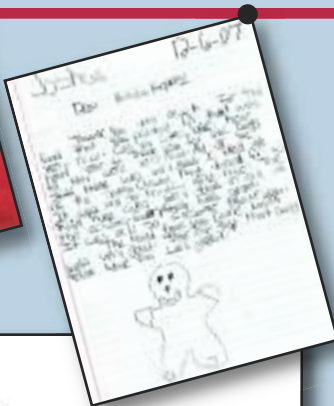
The mood on the bus might be quiet in the beginning – for a New York minute – and then the festivities always begin. Thanks to the amazing multi-tasking talents of Donna Edington, Program Director, we are always abundant with yummy choices of snacks, breakfast, lunch, dinner and dessert. We can also shop, since Donna usually has tickets to our public events, Tour Shirts, CDs, Glitter Shirts, DVDs and maybe a fun item of the day. She also carries one of everything, just in case... no matter how obscure an item might suddenly be needed at an event, Donna carries at least one in her bag of tricks!

As we arrive and Fred opens the door, everyone goes into Energizer Bunny mode, with a common purpose to put on the best show ever – and it magically happens – each and every event always **is** the best show ever!

When the band performs the lively old Jackie Wilson song, *(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher* – the common joy in the room definitely lifts everyone's spirits – and we are all grateful for the gift that has been created in these few hours.

# LETTERS! We Get Letters!

## WE GET LOTS AND LOTS OF LETTERS!



**NJPAC** – “We saw you at NJPAC and you were great as always ...we look forward to your concert every year. We have been coming for seven years, and it's now an annual family affair! We really enjoy going to NJPAC because it's smaller and you can hear better. We believe in this group and that you make every single friend feel GREAT about themselves.”  
– Lynn Nelson, Hawthorne, NJ

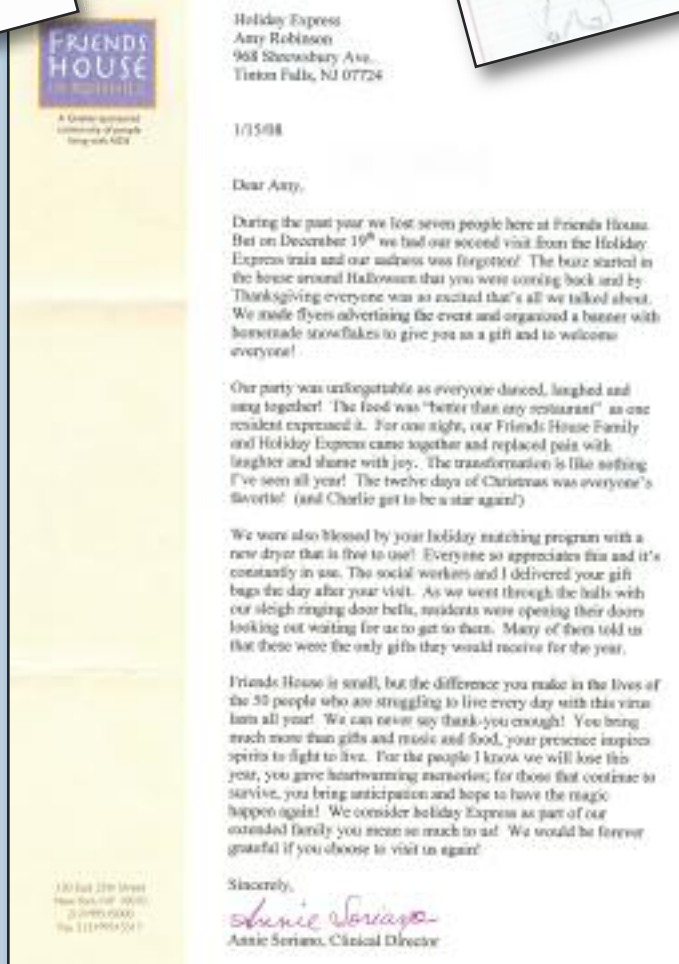
In a Holiday Express season with 54 shows, it's often the tender kudos and thank yous that help energize our volunteers, musicians and staff to keep on keepin' on.

This year brought in loads of creative and heartfelt acknowledgements. They arrive in the form of letters, cards, posters, a scrapbook, and from the Holiday Express website guestbook and blog. They are drawn and authored by children, adults, seniors – guests, clients, facility staff – our many friends and fans. So we're saying a big thank you right back at 'cha and showing off some of the treasures we recently received.

**Bonnie Brae** – “Thank you so much for coming and cheering up our holiday spirits! THANK YOU!!”  
– Resident of Bonnie Brae

**Eva's Village** – “This Christmas and holiday season you have truly been the angel on the doorstep to all of the hungry, homeless and addicted that come to Eva's Village for comfort and hope. Your very generous gifts of music, joy and enthusiasm filled so many hearts with the wonder of the season. For many of our clients, this is the best Christmas they have ever had.”  
– Sister Gloria Perez, Executive Director

**Somerset Hills Residential Treatment Center** – “What a wonderful party! Thank you, thank you, thank you! All we heard today, from both the boys and staff, was, 'WOW.' Your volunteers were wonderful; what a hard-working group. I'll be listening to you on WPLJ. Have a wonderful and quiet Christmas and New Year.”  
– Val Fornelius, Staff Member of Somerset Hills Residential Treatment Center



### HAGEDORN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Dear Holiday Express,

I have worked in the Recreation Department at Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital for 28 years, where we plan special monthly parties for our patients. Our parties are always great – we have decorations, entertainment and refreshments – and a lot of interaction with our patients. But during these 28 years, I have never experienced anything like I did this past December!

Having heard Holiday Express a while back at the Rockefeller Tree Lighting, and then on the Big Joe Henry 101.5 Extravaganza, I got in touch with Amy Robinson, who came to meet with me at Hagedorn. I felt things were looking good. Then I received a call saying Holiday Express had committed to an event for Hagedorn in December – and I started planning – everything had to be perfect!

Our Administration, Recreation and Hospital staff were all very excited and we all worked together to make this day happen for our patients. From the minute the Holiday Express volunteers began arriving in our auditorium, I had butterflies in my stomach. They thought of everything – bringing instruments, costumes, gifts, raffle prizes and more. Soon our auditorium was packed with Holiday Express elves, the band, Hagedorn staff, the Grinch, Frosty, Santa and Mrs. Clause – and patients who filled every seat in our auditorium. The volunteers danced, laughed and talked with everyone. Every patient received a gift bag with a blanket, Holiday Express shirt, hat and loads more – about 20 gifts in each bag.

Many exciting and great things happened at the event. One of our patients, who is very quiet and doesn't interact with anyone, was singing into the microphone. Another patient, who doesn't leave her unit, heard the music and asked to go to the auditorium. She stayed for the entire show, sang and had a great time. Even some of our usually-reserved staff were laughing, singing and enjoying themselves. We were energized, entertained and interacting with the most talented, caring and giving group I've ever met! Holiday Express demonstrated the true meaning of the Holiday season.

Many of our patients are still talking about the show and the new colorful blankets on their beds. They wear their Holiday Express shirts and hats proudly. You brought so many smiles and such joy to our hospital. You are all such gifted and blessed individuals for doing what you do. Thank you to everyone involved with Holiday Express. Keep spreading the joy and love. Hopefully, others will practice your mission because “Nobody Ought to be Alone on Christmas.”

Sheryl Cooper  
Assistant Supervisor/Volunteer Coordinator

**University Behavioral Health** – “I wanted to say THANK YOU! Clients came in with smiles today. They all were talking about what a great time they had yesterday. You have officially marked the beginning of the holidays for all the clients, the staff and especially for me. Thank you for being such special, caring people.”  
– Jackie Durham, Staff Member of University Behavioral Health



**Alpha School**

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AFFILIATED WITH LAKEWOOD SCHOOL, CAYBAST, N.J. & HARBOR SCHOOL, LAKEWOOD, N.J.

December 21, 2007

Dear Mr. McLoone,

I have never been so happy to write a thank you note to anyone in my life. It was such a privilege to have you and your team of volunteers come to our school on Friday, December 14th. We had heard so many great things about your organization but we did not really know what to expect. The events of the day far exceeded any expectations that we might have had.

It was amazing to watch the students and staff respond to all of you as the event proceeded. Children who are often shy and non-responsive were up and moving due to the efforts of you and the volunteers. I never saw my staff so involved with our children. To watch their enthusiasm and sheer joy was a wonderful experience for me.

Everyone here is still talking about the day. You can hear a lot of people saying that it was one of the best days they ever had in their lives. It certainly was one of the best days that we ever shared at Alpha School. When someone asks me what it was like to have Holiday Express at our school, it is impossible to explain it in words. It is something that you have to experience to understand.

Please let everyone who came with you to our school, know how much we enjoyed their time with us. We appreciate all the effort and care that was given to us. It really touched our hearts. When you and the band and the singers sang “Your Love is Lifting Me Higher,” I really felt that all of our spirits had been lifted higher than they ever have been before.

In the words of Kenny Ausubel, “Each of us has a spark of life inside us, and our highest endeavor ought to be set off that spark in one another.” Thank you for setting off so many sparks in us. We hope that we set off some in your as well.

With Deepest Thanks,

*Monica Walsh DeTuro*

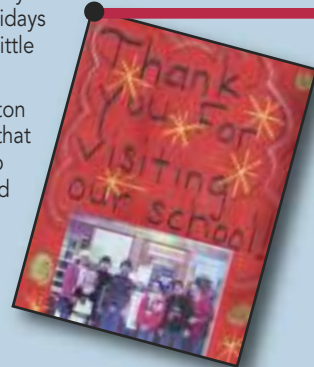
Monica Walsh DeTuro  
Principal

**Children's Center of Monmouth County** – “Thank you to Holiday Express for visiting the Children's Center on Tuesday! My son has not stopped talking about the concert since he attended it. He sings all the songs and gives us the full details of the show. This has truly been a gift to us because he is autistic and has a difficult time expressing himself. Your show has been the highlight of this Christmas season. Thank you for your dedication, generosity and good spirits!” – Liz Smith, Middletown, NJ

**CPC Behavioral Health** – “Another year and still rockin'! Thank you so much for your dedication to our clients and always striving to make their holidays something that they look forward to. The effort and enthusiasm that all of the members give whole heartedly is an amazing testimony to the Holiday Express commitment that ‘nobody ought to be alone on Christmas.’”  
– Kathleen Dell, Program Manager and John Mans, CEO

**Alpha School** – “I attended the show at the Alpha School and all I can say is WOW!!! What a terrific show! The band was excellent! You brought so much joy to the children at the school. It was so heart warming to see them all have such a great time. I have to give an extra shout out to Melissa, who my son Jimmy really took a liking to. Happy Holidays to you all and thanks for making ours a little brighter!” – Carol Liik, Manchester, NJ

**Rivington House** – “The party at Rivington House was great. The staff has told me that they have never seen our ‘penthouse’ so crowded, with the residents so interested and engaged in the show. Thanks for the great show and Happy Holidays.”  
– Sheree Starrett, MD Medical Director





## Judith Reuter on *Diving In*

I think I first heard Holiday Express by attending concerts at the Count Basie Theater and the Red Bank Tree Lighting. Hearing Holiday Express perform doesn't compare to actually participating with this group.

I first became involved with the organization about seven years ago. My friend Peg Ford was recruiting volunteers from my daughter's dance studio, Dance Plus, to be Elves at a Holiday Express event at Eva's Kitchen. There were so many girls who wanted to participate that my friend asked if I would help with transportation and I said "sure." I had no idea what I was about to experience!

When we stepped inside Eva's, the girls were directed to dress in Elf costumes replete with red and green elf hats, some with elf ears on them! Holiday Express volunteers had set up an Arts and Crafts station for the children attending the event and our girls would be helping the children make crafts. I wound up helping blow up red and green helium balloons to form an archway over the musicians. Later I carried out trays of dinners to our guests and distributed them to those in attendance.

The band played for two hours with lots of audience participation. Gifts were given out, and after clean up we departed. I participated each year after that either at an event or in the warehouse assembling gift bags.

This past year was the first year that both of my children were no longer living at home and I decided to dive in and get involved. I was invited to the October General Meeting by my friend, Joan Mercer, who has been involved with Holiday Express for many years. At that meeting, I circled round the tables of sign-up sheets and put my name on several lists. The next day when I tallied it up, I had signed up for 17 events!



While I had some idea of what my commitment



entailed since I had previously volunteered in the warehouse and at a few events, I really had no idea of what was going to unfold for me personally. No one stands around and twiddles their thumbs when they volunteer at a Holiday Express event. You just roll up your sleeves and do what it takes to get the job done.

And what gets done is first rate! Each and every event is extremely organized and runs like a well-oiled machine. This is due to having so very many volunteers who've been with Holiday Express a long time. These people bring such good will to so many guests throughout the holiday season by really reaching out and touching them – and I mean physically touching them. The Elves and musicians roam, and sometimes run, about the room serenading the guests. The singers go into the audience and elicit participation with their hand on a shoulder and the microphone under a chin. We couldn't begin to know the adversities these people have been through in their lives, but in that moment they are being feted and filled with the true spirit of the season.

What's remarkable is that I thought I was going to bring something to these events – but I left each one feeling much more fulfilled than when I came.

While I have many, many extraordinary moments from my volunteer experiences,

the most memorable has to be at St. John's this past Christmas Eve day. My husband had participated in several events with me, and so had my daughter, but for this Christmas Eve I really wanted my entire family there, including my son, Dan, who has autism.

At the end of the Special Olympics event, I introduced my son to Tim and explained that Dan was going to be helping out on Christmas Eve. My son then

had a great idea and told Tim that he would like to help out by playing in the band. Tim asked him what

instrument he played and my son replied that he wanted to play his African drum. There was a pause and then Tim said "Sure, we'll make it work." And worked it did! I spoke with several of the musicians to alleviate some of my anxiety – but it quickly became clear that *I was the only one* who was anxious about this!

Seeing my son so happy was the most memorable moment for me because I know that he doesn't often get a chance to feel that joy. Holiday Express is a remarkable group of people who not only talk the talk, but also walk the walk, and I feel privileged to be able to be a part of this.

Sometimes I think that Tim McLoone had a dream, and we all now have a way of expressing the good will that we want to extend to others by participating in that dream. I don't think my holidays will ever be complete without being a part of Holiday Express.



## Walking the Dog

*It's true I picked up Andy and Susan Edelman on the street in our neighborhood while they were walking their Shih Tzu, Livie. It's also true that lucky me became her pet sitter. Shortly after, I ran into Andy and Susan walking to the beach. We had a four-sentence conversation. One about their company, Trimco Display; one about Holiday Express; and one about their five children, particularly son Tyler, who has multiple disabilities including Cerebral Palsy; and daughter Liza, challenged by mental illness and addiction. The last sentence was Andy and Susan saying a resounding yes to becoming part of the Holiday Express community.*

–Jill Weiss

Susan and I are new to Monmouth County. Last Spring we were out walking our dog in the neighborhood when we stopped to talk to a woman also walking a dog. One thing led to another and Jill Weiss introduced us to Holiday Express. It just proves that you meet the nicest people walking your dog!

What a wild and wonderful experience for our first season as members of the Holiday Express Team.

At the General Meeting we were so excited by the enthusiasm and spirit of the other volunteers that we decided to jump right in. Fortunately, our business relationships allowed us to participate immediately by donating a variety of products such as Holiday Decorations for the Dinner Dance and a Gift Basket for the Silent Auction. Through friends at Frito Lay, and great follow up by Amy Robinson, Frito Lay donated a variety of their products for the Holiday Express events.

Participating in the actual Holiday Express programs were as rewarding and enjoyable as anything we had ever been involved with. The Gateway School in Carteret created a very personal experience for us since most of the clientele were challenged in a similar manner to our son, Tyler. Dancing, singing and laughing with them was very emotional. For Susan, being able to participate in the Christmas Eve Day event at Trinity Church in Asbury Park was probably the most heart warming since another of our sons, Alex, who lives in Fort Lauderdale, was able to join us. For me, it was any event that I was able to dress as Frosty. I must admit, hugging and being hugged in that costume is an awesome feeling.

After hearing our stories, our daughter Liza, who has battled mental illness for over 20 years, and is now a Peer Counselor and Supervisor at Day Top Village in Elmer, New Jersey, wants to know when Holiday Express can visit her facility!



## Meet Christina

*Christina Liccardi, Office Manager, is the newest addition to the small Holiday Express staff located in the office at the Warehouse. Her original introduction came at the request of former co-worker and Holiday Express Board Member, Helen Doyle. Christina attended the Board Meetings to take minutes. Now she has her own desk and participates in the coordination of what it takes to produce Holiday Express.*



I have had the pleasure of knowing about the Holiday Express organization for quite some time now, but since October of 2007 I am honored to be an employee and be a part of this amazing group of tireless volunteers and talented musicians.

I started working in the office just about a week before the annual Dinner Dance and I was amazed by what I saw. Everyday, at least 15 to 20 different people would come to the warehouse either delivering beautiful gifts for the auctions or just showing up to volunteer their time on whatever we needed that day. As time went on, I soon realized that this continues every day, not just for the Dinner Dance, but for the entire season! I watched the volunteers come in the mornings and afternoons and work above and beyond what most people would ever work for a volunteer organization. They packed thousands upon thousands of gift bags for hours on end. Their dedication astonished me each and every day.

Finally, after hearing about all the wonderful events that preceded it, I attended The School for Children event in Eatontown. It was like nothing I have ever experienced before. As I got there the band was setting up and the children started to come into the room to take their seats. Volunteers were greeting the children with warm smiles and golden halos. It was such an amazing sight to watch all of these children dance and sing. I managed to help out on the floor for the "Twelve Days of Christmas" and I had the nicest young man help me with *Eight Maids A Milking!* I can't remember the last time I had so much fun singing that song. The most memorable moment though was when Santa Clause came out. I was so moved by the reactions. Children smiling and hugging Santa, their eyes were so bright and full of spirit. For a little while, there were no handicaps or disabilities and because of Holiday Express, these children have such a special memory. I will never forget that event or what I felt that day.

My faith in human kindness and the generosity of people was restored this Christmas season. How many people can say that? Anyone that has ever experienced Holiday Express can. Thank you for letting me be a part of it.



# HOLIDAY EXPRESS 2007 SEASON ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## SPONSORS

Special thanks to our Sponsors and Patrons  
for their generous support of Holiday Express and the clients we serve.

<b>Holiday Express</b> <b>Fifth Annual Golf Classic</b> <b>July 30, 2007</b> <b>Presenting Sponsor</b> <b>NETJETS</b>  <b>Red Bank Town Lighting</b> <b>November 23, 2007</b> <b>Presenting Sponsor</b> Perricone Family Charitable Trust <b>Stage Sponsor</b> Shore Point Distributors & Coors Light  <b>Holiday Express Benefit Concert</b> <b>New Jersey Performing Arts Center</b> <b>December 6, 2007</b> <b>Presenting Sponsor</b> <b>NETJETS</b> <b>Media Sponsor</b> The Star-Ledger <b>Santa Sponsor</b> Emerson Radio Corporation  <b>Stage Sponsor</b> Wachovia <b>Presenting Sponsor</b> NetJets  <b>Sound &amp; Light Sponsors</b> Inserra Supermarkets, Inc. PSE&G Rider Insurance Company ShopRite  <b>Curtain Sponsors</b> Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey Garden State Check Cashing Moretrench American Company The Curtiss-Wright Corporation The New York Giants  <b>Patrons</b> American Bureau of Shipping Armorica Sales, Inc. Commerce Bank	<b>McWilliams Forge Company, Inc.</b> <b>Union Dry Dock &amp; Repair Company</b> <b>W. J. Casey Trucking &amp; Rig Company, Inc.</b> <b>Village Supermarket, Inc.</b> <b>York Insurance Services</b>  <b>Holiday Express Benefit Concert</b> <b>Count Basie Theatre</b> <b>December 18, 2007</b> <b>Presenting Sponsor</b> Citi  <b>Sound &amp; Light Sponsor</b> Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Diaco <b>Curtain Sponsors</b> Birdsall Services Group, Inc. Verizon  <b>Patron Sponsors</b> Newport Capital Group Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Palmeri The Pat Scire Family Foundation Smith Gatta Gelok Weshnak Family Foundation  <b>Holiday Express Performance at</b> <b>Blythedale Children's Hospital</b> <b>December 20, 2007</b> New York Mercantile Exchange  <b>Holiday Express Benefit Concert</b> <b>Count Basie Theatre</b> <b>December 20, 2007</b> <b>Presenting Sponsor</b> Two River Times <b>Stage Sponsors</b> Donjon Marine Company, Inc. Ray Catena Motor Car <b>Curtain Sponsors</b> Circle BMW K Hovnanian Homes  <b>Patrons</b> ASA Apple, Inc. David Burke's Fromagerie Mr. & Mrs. James Scatuorchio
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## SPECIAL SUPPORTERS

<b>Comcast</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 8000 pairs of gloves donated</li><li>• Feature article in Comcast magazine mailed to 150,000 customers</li><li>• Bill insert mention of Holiday Express website and mission to 1.4 million customers</li><li>• 1-hour concert aired two times on CN8</li><li>• Giving Partner at 12 events</li></ul> <b>Jersey Mike's Subs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Feeding thousands at the events</li><li>• Featuring Holiday Express on soda cups</li></ul> <b>Lowy's</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over 2,000 moving boxes donated</li></ul>	<b>Sickles Market and Bob Sickles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All proceeds donated from the annual Wine and Cheese Tasting Event</li></ul> <b>Berkshire Blankets</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over 2000 comforters and blankets donated</li></ul> <b>Guest Supply</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over 100,000 personal care items</li></ul> <b>Trimco Display</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decorations for Dinner Dance</li></ul> <b>Eventure Inc.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Video and Performance Production</li></ul> <b>Carol and Gordon Stillwell</b> Extra Special Thank You
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## Holiday Express Serves Food to Over 10,000 People in Need



Did you know that we serve food at almost every event? From full course restaurant style meals to snacks and desserts, an "event" usually includes serving food and drinks to those we visit. Chicken, turkey, meatloaf, pastas, vegetables, bread and desserts are typical sit-down meals while pizza, subs and chips are staples at many places. Drinks include soda, water and juice boxes. Whether we serve on china or paper, our event volunteer elves deserve many thanks for exhibiting their pouring, serving and clean-up skills. While this portion of an event doesn't receive much press in articles about Holiday Express, it is greatly appreciated by those who are fed and is a substantial part of the event planning. A very special thank you to Jack Readie for coordinating the food and beverage needs for all the events.

Thank You to the restaurants, specialty shops and suppliers of food and paper products for everything you donated. Your generosity allows Holiday Express to treat people with dignity as we serve them a meal or dessert at an event.



## STATISTICS

<b>54 Events in 35 Days</b> 11 New Venues 2 Events cancelled due to construction and bad weather <b>6 Public Performances</b> Dinner Dance, NJPAC, 2 Count Basie Shows, Big Joe Henry Show at Jenkinson's, Red Bank Town Lighting, <b>600+ Volunteers – Warehouse, Events and Musicians</b>  <b>Volunteer Time and Tasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 300 Adult and Junior Volunteers worked in the Warehouse during November and December in morning and afternoon shifts</li><li>• These volunteers put in approximately 8,500 hours sorting donations, packing gift bags, loading trucks, assembling boxes and flattening cardboard (we have lots of cardboard!)</li><li>• Over 15,000 Gift Bags were packed</li><li>• Unisex bags – 5,204, Men's bags – 5,270, Women's bags – 2,864, Children's bags – 1,935</li><li>• Most gifts were packed in a special Holiday Express logo duffel, tote or backpack</li><li>• At an average cost of \$40 per gift bag, the value of the Gift Bags for the 2007 season totaled in excess of \$600,000</li></ul>	<b>Events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An average of 16 Volunteer Elves attended each event</li><li>• All Events were coordinated by an Event Manager and an Assistant Event Manager</li><li>• An average of 15 musicians performed at each event</li><li>• 4 hours is the total time to produce each event, including travel</li><li>• At 54 events, the Elves and Musicians volunteered over 6,700 hours in 35 days and traveled 2,000 miles</li><li>• More than 300 gifts were raffled off, including iPods, warm clothing, toys, housewares, bikes, watches, personal CD players and sports equipment</li><li>• "Wish list" items fulfilled through the Giving Partners Program were valued at over \$40,000</li><li>• Over 10,000 meals were served and drinks poured</li><li>• Thousands of golden halos were donned, faces painted, hands tattooed and songs sung</li><li>• Countless (and priceless) boos for the Grinch, hugs for Frosty, Elmo and Rudolph, and wide-eyed smiles for Santa</li></ul>
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## • RESTAURANTS • SPECIALTY SHOPS • • SUPPLIERS •

<b>Jersey Mike's Subs</b> <b>Peter and John Cancro</b> Approximately 3500 guests 25 events with 1200 giant subs  <b>Merri-Makers</b> <b>Rick Bott</b> 500 guests Bowery Residents' Committee Eva's Village Friend's House  <b>Salt Creek Grille</b> <b>Steve Bidgood</b> 75 guests St. Paul's Homeless Shelter  <b>Windmill</b> <b>Steve Levine</b> 75 guests CPC Residential, Park Place, TASP, Habcore	<b>Gourmet Picnic</b> <b>Suzette O'Brien</b> 400 guests Joan Valentine House Aslan Youth Ministries Spring House West Side Community Center Volunteers of America Horizons Epiphany House NJ Blind Citizens St. Paul's Count Basie Theatre Friends House Count Basie Theatre  <b>McLoone's Pier House/Rum Runner/ Favorites</b> 2000 guests Medallion Care Sister Jean's Soup Kitchen St. John's Soup Kitchen Trinity Church Soup Kitchen
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**Additional Generous Suppliers**  
**Entenmanns** – desserts, donuts and cakes  
**Frito Lay** – chips  
**Ronstan Paper** – plates, cups, utensils, and napkins  
**Wakefern** – water and soda  
**Paul Diomedé** – slushies



## What is a Gift Bag?

Not only does Holiday Express bring the Christmas spirit to all those we see, but we also distribute essential items that are greatly needed. At every place we visit, everyone in attendance receives a gift bag from us. Event Managers confer in advance with the contact at each facility and pass along suggestions to the Warehouse Elves, and the contents of each gift bag are carefully thought out to match the needs of the individuals. The Warehouse Elves then work extremely hard to make sure all 15,000+ bags get packed with loving care.

Gift bags often include what we call a "Toiletry Kit," which consists of shampoo, conditioner, soap, lotion, lip balm and a washcloth. It also includes a toothbrush, toothpaste, shower gel, deodorant and due to special donations, adult and teen make-up kits. These personal care items are put into a clear plastic bag and tied with a festive, colorful ribbon. As you can imagine, making over 10,000 of these kits takes a lot of time!

Clothing items are just as important to our clients; and in the gift bags, we include warm fleece blankets, wool hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks, ponchos, slippers, T-shirts, and baseball hats. Of course, besides receiving the necessities, our clients need to have some fun as well! Other items in the gift bags are: activity books, beanie babies, coloring books, crayons, markers, pens, pencils, pads of paper, playing cards, reading books, wallets, change purses, and naturally, stuffed animals. All of the items are placed into either a duffel or tote bag, or for the children, a backpack; and sometimes in a special Holiday Express drawstring bag.

So to all of you out there who donate, volunteer and support Holiday Express, please feel confident that you are helping those in need. Your contributions are one of the biggest parts of this organization; and, without all of you, none of this would be possible. So thank you for all you do!





Season 2007

It is the Mission of  
Holiday Express to deliver  
music, food, gifts, financial support  
and friendship to those with the greatest need for the gift of  
human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year.





# 2007 Holiday Express

# Events And Highlights

**May 10**

**Matheny Medical and Education Center Prom** – What a night! The residents of Matheny were beautifully dressed as they entered the ballroom at the Skylands banquet facility in Randolph, NJ. Holiday Express volunteers pushed wheelchairs around the dance floor as the Holiday Express musicians performed fun and familiar dance tunes. A great time was had by all.

**May 24**

**Passaic County Elks Cerebral Palsy Treatment Center High School** – This prom was a first-time event for Holiday Express. Both the students and the band had a fabulous evening.

**June 7**

**Millburn Regional Day School Prom** – The gym was beautifully decorated by the faculty at Millburn Regional Day School. The kids enjoyed two hours of music provided by Holiday Express. This was a terrific party!

**July 1**

**Holiday Express Scholarship Winners Brunch** – This first-time event was held at McLoone's Pier House in Long Branch. The Scholarship Committee brought together Scholarship Winners from 2000, the year the scholarship program first started, all the way to 2007. We celebrated the first six graduations since the beginning of this program. It was a wonderful opportunity for the committee to talk with the scholarship winners and hear how they have been doing in college.

**July 28**



**Annual Summer BBQ at St. John's Soup Kitchen** – The tent was decorated in a red and white picnic theme this year. The Holiday Express volunteers helped prepare and serve hot dogs, hamburgers, beans, potato salad, watermelon and of course, ice cream sandwiches. The Holiday Express

band provided fun entertainment to the more than 400 homeless that were served that day. Even Mayor Corey Booker showed up. We look forward to this joyful event every year!

**July 30**

**5th Annual Golf Classic** – This annual event, sponsored by NetJets, was held at Manasquan River Golf Club. The tournament brought in \$64,000 for the Scholarship fund. *We're happy to announce the 2008 Golf Classic is scheduled for July 21st.*



**November 9**

**11th Annual Dinner Dance** – This was our last dinner dance but we went out with a bang! We raised over \$100,000. *We will be replacing this event with our first Clambake at Merri-Makers at the Water's Edge in Sea Bright, September 14, 2008. We hope to see you there!*



**November 23**

**Red Bank Town Lighting** – Even though it was a very cold evening, the faithful fans and supporters of this great event were out in force. Holiday Express played to a crowd of more than 6,000. We love this kickoff to the holiday season.



**November 16**

**Sickles Market Wine & Cheese Event** – This annual fundraiser put together by Bob Sickles and his staff at Sickles Market in Little Silver raised more than \$100,000 for Holiday Express. A sincere thank you to Bob and his staff for this wonderful event.

**November 27**

**Passaic County Elks CP Adult Treatment Center** – All the volunteers could feel the anticipation of our guests as we entered the room to this new event. They couldn't wait for the music to start. They had heard a lot about Holiday Express and couldn't wait to start dancing ...and dance they did! From the second the band started, an excitement erupted in the room. We had a "Love Train" of wheelchairs circling the room and I'm not quite sure who had a better time, us or them! Thank you for your warm welcome, Passaic County Elks CP Adults!

**November 28**



**School For Children** – Comcast, our very generous Giving Partner for this event, sent representatives Denise Daniels and Robert Clifton to experience first-hand the difference Holiday Express makes in the lives of both students and staff! Denise expressed, "We are so happy to be Giving Partners, you folks bring such joy during the holidays, and we are privileged that we can be a small part of it."

**December 1**

**Woodbine Developmental Center** – Comcast Giving Partner representative, Barry Taylor, enjoyed the annual festivities at Woodbine. Dancing and raffle prizes are always a big part of this annual event.



**December 3**

**Eva's Village** – Holiday Express horn player, Tony Perruso, and his co-workers from AG Edwards made another appearance as the Giving Partners for Eva's Village. This friendly group always pitches right in with our volunteers to serve a delicious

hot holiday meal catered by Rick Bott of Merri-Makers. Every year, we entertain an entirely new audience at Eva's – and every year you can almost reach out and touch the transformation from skeptical to dancing in the aisles. Holiday Express Rocks ...and so does Eva's!

**December 4**

**Somerset Hills Residential Treatment Center** – This facility is home to more than 120 teenage boys who have experienced severe emotional trauma and physical abuse at home and chronic failure in school. The boys had a very positive response to all the volunteers, characters and music provided by Holiday Express. They really seemed to have a great time. We truly appreciate them opening up their doors to us. Thank you, boys!

**December 14**

**Alpha School** – Cherokee and Parker, volunteer Laura Ewart's therapy dogs (see story on Page 17), made an appearance and were a big hit with many of the special needs children at the school. Both the staff and the students really enjoyed the party and hope to see us again in '08!

**December 4**

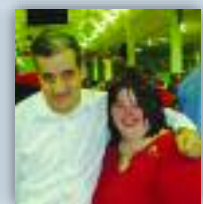
**Hagedorn Psychiatric Hospital** – This being another first-time event, we were not sure what to expect. The crowd was quiet at first, but as the party got rolling so did the patients. The expressions on the caregivers' faces said it all. They were laughing and crying as they pointed out certain patients who were up dancing and singing. "You have no idea what this all means to us. Many of these patients don't ever say a word and now they are singing along with the music. "Thank you, thank you!" exclaimed one of the workers from the hospital. *You are more than welcome!*

**December 9**



**Crystal Lake** – Many thanks and a big WOW! to Pat Bertoti and the Activities Department. Pat and her helpers surprised Holiday Express with their creation of a beautiful hand-crafted scrapbook of memories from all the years Holiday Express has been visiting this favorite facility. Pat has been photographing these events for a long time. There are pages devoted to favorite songs, characters,

and even band members! During the 2007 event, with everyone looking on, Pat joyfully presented the scrapbook to Event Manager, Tony Cosentino. The scrapbook has a new home in our Warehouse Office, so please ask to see it when you stop by!



**December 12**

**Special Olympics of Staten Island** – This event, held annually at the enormous George Cromwell Recreation Center, brought in Special Olympians from far and wide, even on a nasty night. Everyone enjoyed the Jersey Mike's Subs, drinks, chips and dessert – followed by an evening of dancing and appearances by the "one and only" Santa and Mrs. Clause.

**December 17**

**Sister Jean's Kitchen** – The chefs from McLoone's Pier House, Sal and Rachel, outdid themselves with a gourmet meal for the more than 400 people in need that were served at this soup kitchen. We had never been here before, but felt very welcomed by the crowd. They seem to really enjoy the food, gifts, music and fun. We appreciate them opening up their doors to us.

**December 19**

**Rivington House** – This AIDS facility that houses more than 150 people is located in downtown Manhattan. The patients seemed to really enjoy the attention given to them by our wonderful volunteers. The staff was moved by the response of their patients to the music. It put a smile on all of our faces. This show was added to our list following a serendipitous encounter, after 40 years, of two people from Bradley Beach at a 60th birthday party.

**December 22**



**Eliza Shirley Shelter** – We had a small group attend this first-time party, but a great time was had by both the adults and children. The youngsters were able to run around the gym, get their faces painted and make crafts. Many little guests also got to play and sing with the band on this special afternoon. The parents of these children were able to relax and enjoy watching their kids have a wonderful time. We hope that we contributed to making their Christmas a little more special.





# More Than We Could Hope For!

By Ann DeStefano

Senior, Communications High School

*Tuesday, December 11th was to be another seemingly normal school day. However, for myself and three other students at Communications High School, it became a day where we all learned a little bit more about ourselves, the power of giving, and the importance of perspective.*

I had coordinated a field trip with Holiday Express to film the group at their event for The Children's Center of Monmouth County. The students at this facility were developmentally disabled, both psychologically and physically. When we left school that morning, I could tell this was going to be an experience my classmates and I probably never had before.

Our high school, a magnet high school which centers on teaching all mediums of communication, always taught us to be journalists first and foremost. As journalists, we are never to get emotionally involved with the story. So with this attitude myself and my classmates Matt Scuteri, Chelsea Whittemore, Eric Dietel, and Television Production Teacher, Jennifer Cornine, set out in the school's Suburban to film what we expected to be a news piece.

We got to the Children's Center as Holiday Express was setting up. We, too, set up our equipment focusing on an angle for the story. Musician Jerry Paschin was gracious enough to give us our first interview. He mentioned how playing with Holiday Express gave him perspective on the truly important things in life. Our second interview was with founder Tim McLoone. He also mentioned how Holiday Express gave him a perspective on life. I sensed a trend as I conducted more interviews. Maureen Staub gave us our final interview, also mentioning the perspective factor; and knowing we had a great story, we were ready to wrap for the day.

On a whim, we decided to stay for a song or two to see Holiday Express in action. As we stood in the corner of the room, watching all the children's faces and the joy they exuded, we began smiling and dancing along. Mr. McLoone started to encourage the children to sing and dance and we continued to stand in the corner, watching and smiling.



Elves Matt Scuteri, Eric Dietel, teacher Jennifer Cornine, Ann DeStefano and Chelsea Whittemore from Communications High School.

Next thing we all knew, Mr. McLoone was calling us up to sing and dance. All looking at each other, we immediately ran up towards the stage. Next thing we knew we were dancing all over the place. As time passed and we became more involved in the show, we were asked to be "Elves," which is a big part of being an official Holiday Express volunteer. There was no hesitation before all four of us, and even our teacher, agreed to sport the elf costume.

For hours, we danced and sang with the children to holiday songs, loving every single minute of it. Eric Dietel, a senior from Little Silver, commented on his feelings about being an Elf. "We all got to help make a difference, instead of just watching, and I think we were all better for it," he said.

As for the rules of journalism, senior Matt Scuteri of Manalapan shed some light. "Dancing around with Holiday Express was the most fun way to break the rules of journalism. It was great to be part of such an amazing and benevolent organization and to see the joy in the kids' faces when the music started to play," he said.

Dietel added, "Being at the Holiday Express event to cover the story started out as uncomfortable because we weren't a part of the goodness present there; we were just recording it. The fact that the band reached out to us, and invited us to

participate and help spread cheer was wonderful."

Senior Chelsea Whittemore of Middletown, another Elf, left the day with unbridled enthusiasm. "Participating with the Holiday Express was one of the best days I've have ever had," she said.

"After we were asked to be a part of all the fun, I couldn't believe how great I felt. It was a whole new look at things and I am so glad I got to take part in it," Whittemore continued.

Agreeing with my classmates, I too felt a changed person. My aunt, who suffers from mental disabilities, was in the back of my mind the whole time I was there. To reach out to the children and forget about what problems I think I may have, was a great way to understand my aunt more and realize that I don't actually have any serious problems to be concerned about. Rather, I learned that I could focus my energy on helping people, just like Holiday Express does.

"We really have 'no problems' and we should be grateful for what we do have. It was a fantastic and inspiring day for me," Scuteri said.

As for next year, there is no question the Communication High Elves will return.

"I'm definitely going back next year, I've never felt holiday cheer like that in my life," Dietel said.

Whittemore, too, had feelings to share. "It was the greatest feeling to see all the kids with a smile on their faces," she said.

At the end of the day we did get our news story finished. However, what we left with was more than a tape with footage. We left with pure happiness for we all knew that by just being Elves, we had indeed made a child smile that day.

# Warehouse Activity Resembles Santa's Workshop

Boxes and bags, cardboard and plastic, carts and hand trucks, November and December, coffee and water, bagels and candy, morning and afternoon, adults and juniors, quiet and loud – these pairings help define the organized chaotic atmosphere of the Holiday Express Warehouse Workshop.

For Season 2007, more than 300 adult and junior elves volunteered more than 8,500 hours handling about 400,000 inventory items with the purpose of putting together over 15,000 gift bags .

Maureen King and Lynn Jackson lead the morning crew that numbers more than 100 helpers. These elves range from young adults to octogenarians. Folding scarves, removing packaging and making toiletry kits (our name for a bag filled with personal care items) are among the many daily tasks necessary to prepare for the human assembly lines. Some days there are just a few elves, other days there are so many that the holiday music – which plays continuously and contributes to the festive nature at the Warehouse – is drowned out by the laughter and conversation of these new friends.

The afternoon Workshop environment is a sharp contrast from the morning civility. Marilee Celestino and Joan Mercer orchestrate a gang of dedicated, hard-working junior elves. One day we had over 70 youths! Thousands of bags are packed, boxed, labeled by event name and queued up for truck loading. Boxes need to be assembled – they come flat and require precise folding per the diagram on the box – and stacked awaiting their turn to receive the gift bags; which, this year, included backpacks and duffel bags adorned with the Holiday Express logo.

The Warehouse Workshop is fun and rewarding. Marilee and Joan always keep the kids engaged in the process, and know the importance of communicating the needs of many different people. Since the guests at our events are special in their own way, and this bag may be the only gift they receive this holiday season, the contents of each bag is most important.

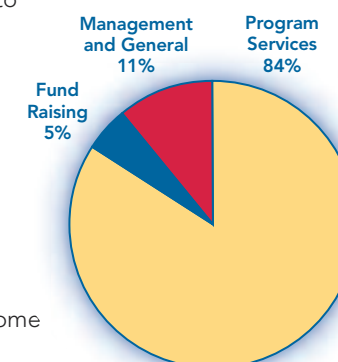


## Holiday Express Financial Information

Holiday Express, Inc. is a non-profit, registered 501(c)(3) organization, with a mission to deliver music, food, gifts, financial support and friendship to those with the greatest need for the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year. Contributions to Holiday Express, Inc. are deductible for Federal tax purposes.

For the fiscal year ending April 30, 2007, Holiday Express, Inc.'s support and revenue totaled \$1,397,407.

Of that amount 84% was available to support the organization's Program Services. Fund-raising costs for the year were 5% of total income and 11% of income went to Management and General.



## Please Join Our Email List

Interested in receiving Holiday Express news, event announcements and season information by email? If the answer is "yes," simply send an email to our Office Manager, Christina Liccardi and she will add you to our database. Please include all important contact information. Send email to:

[clliccardi@holidayexpress.org](mailto:clliccardi@holidayexpress.org)

You can also visit our website at [www.holidayexpress.org](http://www.holidayexpress.org) and click on CONTACT US on the home page and submit your information.



GRATEFUL THANKS...

TO Jersey Mike's Subs

In keeping with its corporate mission – to give back to the communities which it serves – **Jersey Mike's Franchise Systems, Inc.** donated \$15,000 to Holiday Express. The donation was presented at the 2007 Season wrap-up celebration at McLoone's Pier House on January 14. "Holiday Express brings more than great music to the audiences they perform to, they bring the gift of hope. They inspire individuals at a time when they may need it most." shared Peter Cancro, CEO of Jersey Mike's. "We're proud to support them." In addition to this donation, the Cancros and Jersey Mike's donated over 1200 giant subs which were served at Holiday Express events. Every year, Peter and John Cancro generously support our Golf Outing and Dinner Dance and we gratefully thank their dedicated, friendly staff for their efforts.



TO Sickles Market



The annual **Sickles Market Wine & Cheese Tasting** Fundraiser to benefit Holiday Express raised over \$100,000 this year! Larry and Paulette Roberts were honored for their substantial and continuing community service. The Roberts were presented the Sickles Market Crystal Good Apple Award by last year's recipient, Brian Pasch, at the event held Friday, November 16, in the festively-decorated greenhouse. Like Brian, Larry and Paulette reside in Red Bank and are well known for their charitable contributions and their passion for food and fine wines. Larry is retired from Merrill Lynch and serves on many charitable boards including serving as Chairman of the Children's Cultural Center. Paulette recently retired as President of Meridian Health Affiliated Foundations in central New Jersey. She also serves on several charitable boards including Monmouth Historical Foundation and the Two River Theater Company.

"We hold the annual Sickles Market Wine & Cheese Tasting Fundraiser because we believe in supporting a healthy community, and that means helping those folks who are sick, poor and isolated," said Bob Sickles. "Holiday Express does a phenomenal job of bringing joy and hope to those folks who need it most. My friends Larry and Paulette

have given this area a lot of support, and of course, great wine and food experiences in their home. We thank everyone for pitching in. It's what makes this area so special."

*Holiday Express is deeply grateful to Bob Sickles, his staff who volunteer their time and the generous party goers who made this evening a huge success.*

A Big Woof for Holiday Express

By Laura Ewart

This past season was our first with Holiday Express and we attended one show at the Alpha School in Lakewood. I was very happy to attend the event, it was a wonderful experience and the dogs enjoyed it as well. They love all of the attention!

Cherokee is my Beagle/Jack Russell Terrier mix. I adopted Cherokee from Jersey Shore Animal Shelter when he was about ten weeks old. He's five years old now, and has been a certified therapy dog for four years this March. He is a fantastic therapy dog, he loves children and is very calm and gentle with older or very ill or disabled people.

Parker is my English Springer Spaniel. I adopted Parker through a very unfortunate event in my life, my father's passing. He turned three years old recently and has been a certified therapy dog for one and a half years. Parker is also a wonderful therapy dog, he is very sweet and silly. He loves children as well, and is bouncy and excitable which makes people laugh and smile.

We visit Community Memorial Hospital in Toms River twice a month. In the past, we have worked at library programs, fairs and visited nursing facilities. We also participate and work at several dog walks during the year. We are thrilled about being part of Holiday Express.



I work as a forensic accountant at Cowan, Guteski & Co, PA in Shrewsbury, and was introduced to Holiday Express through a partner at the firm, Lynne Broza. Lynn is very dedicated to Holiday Express – and a dog lover. We brainstormed the idea together and it turned out to be a great one!!

My sister came to the Alpha School event with me to help out with dogs. Her name is Lindsey and she really likes attending visits and events with me and the dogs when she can. She really enjoyed the show and has already volunteered to help me out at more shows next year.

Hearing about how much we loved the show, my mother has also volunteered to help out at shows next year, so Holiday Express will be seeing more of us.

When Cherokee and Parker are not working as therapy dogs, they are regular dogs. They love to run and swim and get into trouble! They hike with me every weekend and we camp in the Catskills and Adirondacks as much as we can in the summer. We also take classes in competitive obedience, rally and agility with Ann Scripko at Clever K9 Dog Training Center in Lakewood.



In addition to all the dancing, eating and socializing that you would expect at a Holiday Express event, many of our clients enjoy participating in special activities that add to the festivities.

Who Doesn't Love Glitter and Glue?



"Depending on the event, we also entertain our clients with face painting, tattoos (temporary, of course!) and crafts," said Jeanne Cosentino, our Crafts Coordinator. Favorites in the face painting department are snowmen, hearts, trees, wreaths and stars. We have many talented volunteers who love the one-on-one time spent with our guests.

Crafts are always a big hit. Pipe cleaners and beads are favorites, and we are always amazed at the creativity of the clients. They make anything from bracelets and ornaments to beaded tiaras. Then there's the glitter and glue – which is used for popsicle stick snowflakes, Christmas trees, foam mittens and stockings – you name it, we'll glitter it!

For clients who are not able to make their own crafts, we have a supply of pre-made crafts. The felt mice and Santa heads are assembled by many volunteers. And, when local youth groups are looking for Community Service, these are some of the things they can do to help Holiday Express prepare for the upcoming events.



Of the approximately 50 events we did this year, 32 had raffles. There were almost 300 gifts raffled off. The gifts ranged from \$150 (iPods) on down – warm clothing, toys, housewares, watches, bikes, personal CD players and sports equipment. The smallest event had two raffles; the largest 20.

"The value and types of gifts were largely determined by the person in charge of each place we went," said Ann Robinson, who coordinates the raffles for each event. "They had great suggestions for what their

Raffles are a Hit at Many Events



population would appreciate; in some cases they asked for less than what we would normally give because of some reselling problems. In one case, they returned a bicycle because there was no safe place for a child to ride it. We were most often able to give them what they wanted thanks to Value City practically giving things away this year," recalled Ann, who is a great shopper.

*A great big thanks to Ann for all her admirable shopping skills and efforts!*



# Helping Holiday Express Deliver Volunteer Spotlight

*Volunteers give more than time and talent; they give that something special that is theirs alone. Each moment spent entertaining, dancing, hugging, listening and comforting creates memories that are unique to each individual. As long-time volunteers, Rick and Rocky have memories of their own – warm, tender, and enriching the collective Holiday Express story.*

## Rick Brunermer

*"I was at the very first Holiday Express event, way back in ...well, let's see, the saxophone was invented in 1846, the ear plug about two weeks after that, and I found myself playing it and wearing them on the first show only 147 years later in 1993!" Such is the humor of this saxophonist, section leader and horn arranger.*



It was a phone call one fateful day – from Fearless Leader Tim McLoone – a phone call which changed my life. Tim asked me if I could find a few horn players who would do a bunch of gigs during the busiest time of the year – for free. A rather bold question, but that's why we love him! Well, I always enjoy a challenge, at least I did when I was younger, so I got the nod from horn men Tommy Labella, Doug Dehays, and Danny Burke, and off we went. Good people. Some of the best in the business.

My responsibility with the band is herding cats, the cats in the horn section that is. I'm also involved with the Scholarship Group, which awards three new \$5,000 scholarships each year. Each scholarship is renewable for four years. It's the part of my involvement of which I'm the most proud.

These days, I teach about 20 private students, one of whom, Rick Levin began playing at some Holiday Express events this past season.

I don't want to sound like a slacker, but honestly, the most challenging thing for me about being part of Holiday Express is getting up early enough to meet the tour bus 34 days in a row. Two shows a day separated by long bus rides wears a body down after about three weeks.

I am a 1976 graduate of University of Miami, with a Bachelor of Music Merchandising. I am very occasionally an adjunct professor at Monmouth University, and I have the very good fortune to play in two of the finest bands in the land. Line Drive, of which I am a

founding member, is in our 28th year ([golinedrive.com](http://golinedrive.com)). Cashmere is an equally slamming enterprise. ([barryherman.com/meet-our-bands.asp](http://barryherman.com/meet-our-bands.asp)).

Although my dad is not what you'd call a singer, he is a big country music fan, and usually had the music of someone like Eddie Arnold or Roger Miller playing in the garage as he built his 2-seater, experimental airplane, a Pazmanny PL1 from plans, not a kit! I'm convinced my dad could build anything.



My mom, however, was a fine lyric soprano, performing occasional recitals in my home town of Marion, Indiana. She used to sing me to sleep at night. But she sang so loud, I never

could. Just kidding, Mom. I'm so proud of both of them.

There have been dozens and dozens of what we call "Holiday Express moments" – things that happened during an event involving a client, things which have touched our hearts. Maybe no one else witnessed my particular moments, but we've all had them. But for me, the thing which has affected me the most and for which I am most grateful is the new perspective on my life which Holiday Express has given me. "There but for the grace of God go I" is the phrase which comes to mind at every show we do. Like all of us, I complain about the problems and minor inconveniences which occur in my ever-so-abundant life, but after being with Holiday Express, I am able to contrast my life with the lives of the clients we serve, say a quiet prayer of thanks, and change my attitude. I am very blessed, and I'm very happy to be able to give something back.

Thanks Tim, for allowing me this great opportunity to work off some of that bad karma! It's a wonderful experience to give of myself to help others. God bless you and your family.



## Rocky Falotico

I first heard about Holiday Express in 1998 from my cousin Theresa, who had tickets to a Count Basie concert. As I watched the ten-minute film that ran before the concert began, I was immediately hooked. I was also impressed by the performers, not only by their singing and musical talents, but by the fact that they looked like they were really having fun on stage. The next day I called another one of my cousins, Patricia (one of Mary Robinson's best friends), to see if she had any information about joining. She gave me a newsletter. I called the volunteer number and as they say, the rest is history.

I am a local being born and raised in Fair Haven. I have two older brothers and my father owned a luncheonette in town. My mother, Mary, who also helps at Holiday Express events, was the school nurse at the local public schools.

I got my nickname from my father whose name was Rocky. When I turned five, I started working for him putting the newspapers together on Sunday mornings. The customers always called me "Little Rock" since I was the youngest. The name has stayed with me ever since!

I am the Girls' Athletic Director and a Physical Education teacher at the Rumson Country Day School, as well as the field hockey and softball coach. I enjoy golfing, gardening, reading and doing counted cross stitch. I also love doing puzzles of all sorts.

I have been a member of the Fair Haven Volunteer Fire Company, First Aid and Auxiliary for 25 years. I am also an Emergency Medical Technician, and have taught first aid and CPR for more than fifteen years. I was the first female First Aid Captain in the history of the squad, and have served as President of the First Aid and Auxiliary. Currently, I am the secretary for both the First Aid and Fire Company. This past January, I was made a life member of the first aid squad.

I have been a Holiday Express volunteer for nine seasons. I have worked in the warehouse putting gift bags together. At events I have done games, crafts, and food. I am also an Assistant Event Coordinator. However, my favorite thing to do is dressing up as a costume character. I have been a Disco Santa, an Elf, Rudolph, the Grinch, Frosty, Big Bird, a Christmas tree, Elmo, and the Cookie Monster. It is so much fun seeing the smiles on the faces of the children and adults when I am dressed up. It almost seems like something magical happens the minute you walk into the room.

My most memorable moment – and I have hundreds of them – had to be my very first event back in 1999. It was a show for Special Olympics. I was absolutely brand new, a little nervous because I didn't know anyone, and totally clueless. I had been assigned to do the games and crafts; and, when I started working at the games and a young girl came up to me. She was so beautiful. My heart immediately went out to her. I hardly noticed that she was also bald. As she started playing, you could see the concentration on her face. She was working so hard trying to get the bean bag through the hole and she finally made it. She then turned to look up at me, and on her face was the greatest smile I had ever seen. Throughout the rest of the event she and I were buddies. When I

moved over to the craft table, she followed me. I think she must have made ten snowmen that day. I went home that night and told my mother that joining Holiday Express was the best thing that I have done. I was hooked from that day on. I will always remember that little girl.

The majority of the people we see during the season cannot verbally express how they feel. All you have to

do is look into their eyes and you can see the smiles radiating out. Then there are the kids and adults rocking and dancing to the music in their wheelchairs. That is always fun to see, but the thing that stands out the most to me are the family members. For a few crazy hours their loved ones are allowed to be exactly who they are and not be judged because they put three noses on a snowman. They seem so happy when one of us touches their severely disabled child's hand to put on a tattoo or that we just take the time to acknowledge that we also care. That, to me, is the true meaning of Christmas.

I always tell this story about my first year as a Holiday Express volunteer. When I went to my first season kick-off organizational meeting in October, I literally knew only three people in the room. By the January wrap party, there were only three people that I *didn't* know. It is one big outstandingly crazy family trying to make a difference in the world one event at a time. I am so glad to be a small part of it. As I said before, it is the best thing that I have ever done. I am so glad that I went to that first concert.



Thank You, Rick and Rocky, for your many years of service!



*We deeply appreciate your generosity – without it, Holiday Express could not deliver.*



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