



DOVE TALES

the newsletter of Dove, Inc.

Please follow
our blog - <http://doveinc.blogspot.com>
www.doveinc.org



September 2017

Barbara Blakey
Editor

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Dove, Inc.
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Decatur, IL 62522
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Dove's Mission
Dove is a coalition of religious organizations, volunteers, and advocates that seeks to coordinate efforts to address unmet human needs and social injustices

Dove works for justice, equality and understanding among all people.



***"Aging Out Loud
Color You Wonderful!"***

RSVP

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

Thursday, September 21, 2017

Doors Open • 10:00 a.m.

Program • 0:30 a.m.

Tabernacle Baptist Church
650 N. Wyckles Road, Decatur

featuring

- R.O.S.E. Awards
- Guest Speaker,

Ken Frye, Director, Scovill Zoo

- "Surprise" Entertainment



Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon

It is that time of year again and the RSVP Advisory Council has been hard at work planning this year's Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. The luncheon is scheduled for September 21, 2017 and invitations have been mailed. If you reported hours of service for July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 you should have received the invitation and R.O.S.E. Award nomination forms in the mail. Be sure to RSVP to your invitation and get those nomination forms in to us soon. You can nominate more than one person (male or female), station, or couple - just write each nomination on a separate piece of paper. If you have not or are unsure if you qualified for this year's event, please give our office a call at 428.6616.

Charlie Gillaspie
RSVP Program Director

DOVE, INC.

Leadership Team

Christine Gregory
Executive Director

Tammy Wilcox
Assistant Director

Barbara Blakey
Director of Volunteers & Community Relations

Teri Ducey
Domestic Violence Program Director

Darsonya Switzer
Homeward Bound Program Director

Program Leadership

BABES •

Beginning Awareness Basic Education Studies
Sandy Laesch, Program Coordinator

Children's Clothing Room
Sandy Harmison, Coordinator

DAX • DeWitt County Assistance eXchange
Jennifer Tolladay, Coordinator

DeWitt County Food Pantry
Jennifer Tolladay, Coordinator

Domestic Violence Program
Teri Ducey, Program Director
Jennifer Tolladay, DeWitt County Coordinator
Mary Hughes, Moultrie County Coordinator
Susie Kensil, Shelby County Coordinator

Homeward Bound
Darsonya Switzer, Program Director

MAX • Macon County Assistance eXchange
Rev. Shane Hartman, Coordinator

RSVP • Retired & Senior Volunteer Program
Christina Gillaspie, Program Director
Sheryl Whisman, DeWitt County Coordinator

Letter from the Executive Director of Dove, Inc.:

Coordinating Efforts to Address Unmet Needs and Social Injustices.

Christine Gregory, Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Have you met an RSVP Volunteer recently? I'll bet you have, even if you don't know it. You see, this wonderful group of people fifty-five and older who want to engage and have a meaningful impact in our community, is all around us.

RSVP has been with Dove since nearly the beginning. Using our experienced community volunteers, programs have improved lives, supported community initiatives, helped people, and engaged retired and senior community members. Our community has benefited from this labor of love in well-run events, programs, museums, parks and the zoo – to name just a few. They have enjoyed countless support systems at our hospitals and social ministries. In short, we have been blessed by the quiet RSVP Volunteer heroes teaching all of us what it means to care for our neighbor. Thank you for being at the heart of Dove's work.

To explore how you can grow with us towards the future, please reach out to our Volunteer & Community Relations Director, Barb Blakey. Dove, Inc. is only as strong as its member organizations, volunteers, and advocates. Thank you for working to make our home a community of neighbors with hope for anyone in need.

Sincerely,
Christine Gregory

NEWS

from the Domestic Violence Program

I didn't have to think twice to know exactly what I first wanted to say from the Domestic Violence Program. On behalf of all our staff, volunteers, and all the clients we serve, and even those we have yet to serve, I will begin with a HUGE THANK YOU, to Howard Buffett and his entire Foundation, for his very generous gift of \$1,000,000 to Dove's Domestic Violence Program!!! What a happy occasion it was when this information was shared with members of the Dove Board of Directors in by Mr. Brian Byers, on behalf of Mr. Howard Buffett!! I will personally say that tears flowed down my face – tears of overwhelming happiness!!! We are so very blessed by this generous gift and forever grateful!! The program certainly has been through its many financial struggles and challenges in the last 2 years plus, without having a state budget, which resulted in many cutbacks, including a hiring freeze. Being a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week program, staff have

really been pushed to their limits in just trying to cover the Shelter in order for us to stay open. We went for a period of time where we even had to end our catered food program arrangement with the Good Samaritan Inn. Thankfully, with the help from Charlie Gillaspie, Director of the Retired, and Senior Volunteer Program and many of her wonderful volunteers who generously donated casseroles for us during the month of June, as well as other individuals in the community who also donated money and food to our program, we were able to make it through. We have been without our full time Children's Specialist, as well as our full time 2nd Shift Shelter Specialist, for months. It has certainly taken its toll, and so, to say that this gracious donation comes to us in the most perfect timing, is a huge understatement!!!

I cannot overlook thanking our friend, Sheriff Tom Schneider, who helped make all this possible. You are a true friend to us and to our community, and you have made

our lives and the lives of so many others better by your impact in being the person you are.

We look forward to what lies ahead in the future of Dove and the Domestic Violence Program. Our agency is proud to honor our mission in our continued strides of addressing the unmet human needs and social injustices of those we serve and working toward justice, equality and understanding among all people.

God bless you, Howard Buffett, Sheriff Tom Schneider, Brian Byers and the entire Howard Buffett Foundation!!

Sincerely,

Teri Ducey, Director
Dove Domestic Violence Program





27TH ANNUAL HERITAGE & HOLLY TOUR

Dove, Inc. is honored to have been selected to carry on the traditions of the Annual Heritage & Holly Tour. NWRAPS, Near Westside Restoration and Preservation Society, has hosted this event for 26 years. The annual tour focuses on architectural treasures, local history and Decatur community restoration. When looking for an organization to be the event's future sponsor, NWRAPS approached their neighbor, Dove, Inc. Dove, Inc. Governing Board President, Rev. Jason Butterick, states, "It's a good fit, focusing on restoring area homes and families inside and out." Dove, Inc. plans to continue the event as an annual fundraiser to support local programs.

The Heritage & Holly Tour will continue to bring area history to light and feature area historic homes and businesses. The Trolley will be available to transport visitors to sites on the tour. New this year will be a bit of the rich history of Dove and its programs. Donna Williams, who has organized the tour for more than a decade, and

other NWRAPS members will continue to consult and volunteer through the transition.

The 2017 event will be held the weekend after Thanksgiving, Friday, November 24, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. and Saturday the 25th, from noon to 6:00 p.m.

Please watch Dove's website www.doveinc.org for other locations that will join the Anna B. Millikin Home / Dove, Inc. location for the tour.

If you are interested in volunteering for the event or showcasing your Historic West End home, please contact Dove at 428.6616 or email dove@doveinc.org.

This Dove, Inc. fundraiser will support all the programs at Dove, and the many outreach programs.



Press conference announcing the 2017 Heritage and Holly Tour

\$18 ADVANCE TICKETS

TICKETS WILL BE ON SALE
NOVEMBER 1 - NOON, NOVEMBER 22
AT THE FOLLOWING SITES:

- Dove • 302 S. Union Street
- Dove/Homeward Bound • 788 E. Clay Street
- Land of Lincoln Credit Union • 4850 E. Prosperity Place
- Land of Lincoln Credit Union • 3130 E. Mound Road
- Land of Lincoln Credit Union • 2890 N. Oakland Ave.
- Land of Lincoln Credit Union • 151 N. 22nd Street
- Land of Lincoln Credit Union • 1435 N. Water Street
- Novel Ideas • 480 E. Main Street
- Wildflour Artisan Bakery • 256 W. Main Street

online now at

tickets

\$20 TICKET AVAILABLE AT
THE FIRST LOCATION EVENT DAYS

Our thanks to...

from the Domestic Violence Program



Monsanto Employees, Illiopolis, spent a morning this summer, heading out to area agencies to volunteer. This group did an amazing job at the Shelter, cleaning up the Children's play area landscaping and the streetscape on Union Street. It looks amazing! Thanks to all for the hard work!

Thanks to staff members of BabyTALK Early Head Start who volunteered in the Children's Play Area at the Shelter. BTEHS spent an afternoon of their orientation week, going out into the community, to learn more about and to lend a helping hand to their partner agencies.

Thank you to the association of boaters for their donation to our Shelby County Domestic Violence Program, from their annual event on Lake Shelbyville. Their support is greatly appreciated.

NEWS

from the Domestic Violence Program

• • • Susie Kensil, Shelby County Coordinator, assisted with facilitating two training workshops for the statewide Arrest Grant. The first was held August 3, for Probation Officers from Christian, Montgomery and Shelby Counties. On August 17, a training was presented at the Cowden Fire Department for EMTs and First Responders from southern Shelby County. Both workshops focused on the basics of Domestic Violence and best practices in both disciplines.

• • • Would you like to become a HERO?? The DeWitt County CADV (Committee Against Domestic Violence) is looking for local individuals who are compassionate and want to help by joining our committee. We meet monthly on a Thursday for one hour. The committee is responsible for assisting the program with our annual Candlelighting Ceremony, providing education and awareness about domestic violence to the DeWitt County community, and various fundraisers throughout the year. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Jennifer Tolladay at 935.6619.

• • • We are so looking forward to not only being able to stabilize our program again, but to have the opportunity to be able to hire for a few extra positions, as well. We will soon be filling the two positions that have been on a hiring freeze of Children's Specialist, 2nd Shift Specialist, Receptionist, Shelter Specialist – a full time day position, as well as an additional 2nd shift Specialist, and a Multi-County Rural Advocate.

• • • Please join us in congratulating Jennifer Tolladay in being selected as one of the 25 individuals to be accepted into ICADV's 2nd Leadership Academy! CONGRATULATIONS!!



PLEASE JOIN US!

LUNCH FUNDRAISER
TO SUPPORT THE
DEWITT COUNTY
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
PROGRAM!

SEPTEMBER 8,
10:00 A.M. TO 6:00 P.M.
& SEPTEMBER 9,
10:00 A.M. TO 2:00 P.M.

CLINTON IGA
PARKING LOT

STOP BY AND GRAB A LUNCH!

PORK CHOP LUNCH, \$6
RIBEYE LUNCH, \$7

THE LUNCHES INCLUDE THE
SANDWICH OF YOUR CHOICE,
CHIPS AND A DRINK.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Cruise 11 will be on Sunday, September 10, 2017 at Central Park, in downtown Decatur. Assistance is needed again this year with the registration of the car show. Two more volunteers are needed for the second shift from 10:00 a.m. to NOON. Give Charlie a call at 428.6616 if you would like to help this year.

The offices of Andy Manar will be hosting a fall Senior Fair at the Senior Center on September 20, from 10:00 a.m. until NOON. RSVP would love to have a couple volunteers 'man' our booth for that period of time. If you are interested, please give Sandy or Charlie a call at 428-6616.



Volunteer Organizational League

The next Volunteer Organizational League (VOL) meeting is September 12, Noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Rock Springs Conservation District offices. Anyone who has contact with volunteers are welcome to attend. Come share with your fellow volunteer managers!! Bring your sack lunch and come learn from each other.

No RSVP needed - just show up!

Domestic Violence

Shelter Needs:

- Prepaid Gasoline Cards
- Gift Cards from Aldi's or Walmart
- 9 V- AA & AAA Batteries
- Healthy snacks for children's groups
- Juice boxes/drinks for children's groups
- New Strollers
- Lice Treatments
- Large Hairbrushes
- Disinfectant Sprays
- Toilet Paper
- Paper Towels
- Dust Pans
- Dishwasher Detergent Pods
- Antibiotic Ointment

Please drop any donations to the Shelter at 302 S. Union, Decatur, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., M-F.

DomesticShelters.org

Another way to donate to the Shelter is from this website. Purchase what you want and it is sent directly to the Shelter.

You can also find this link on the website www.doveinc.org

Thank you to Big D's & Save a Lot for their weekly bread donation to our food pantry!!

To learn more about becoming a Dove Member Congregation or to schedule a speaker for your congregation please contact Barb Blakey, Director of Volunteers & Community Relations at 428.6616 or dove@doveinc.org

DeWitt County Food Pantry

803 W. Leander, Clinton

Open
Tuesdays & Thursdays
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

The Food pantry has seen an increase of households needing assistance. As a result we run out of food much faster now. If anyone would like to donate food or diapers to our pantry, we would greatly appreciate your gift.



BABES



A BABES volunteer training is scheduled for Thursday, September 7, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The training includes information about Beginning Awareness Basic Education Studies history, the importance of drug and alcohol prevention programming for K-3rd grades, and how to present the BABES program in area schools through the use of puppets and scripted information.

If you are interested in becoming a BABES volunteer, please contact Sandy Laesch to register by September 1. You can reach her at 428.6616 or slaesch@doveinc.org.

Dean Simcox Conference Center, 302 S. Union, Decatur

Thanks to staff members of BabyTALK Early Head Start who helped Sandy get the puppets ready for the fall semester. BTEHS spent an afternoon of their orientation week, going out into the community to help their partner agencies and to learn more about them. And we had a great time learning more about BabyTALK.

BABES Volunteer Meeting

To start out the school year a Volunteer Meeting was held in August. BABES volunteers are dedicated, caring role models for the children they encounter in the classrooms. It never ceases to amaze me that 15 volunteers reached 1,573 students with the 6-week program and gave 360 hours of their time. I am honored to be the coordinator of such awesome volunteers. Thank You!

Thank You to:

- Macon County-United Way of Decatur & Mid-Illinois helping fund the BABES Program 2017-2018 school year
- Exelon Generation Clinton Power Station for again printing all of the BABES program materials for this school year
- DeWitt County 708 Community Mental Health Board for their support
- Thanks to United Way Day of Action Volunteer
- Thanks to Linda Natereli for updating school contacts

Sandy Laesch, BABES Program Coordinator

Coffee Time at Panera's

Volunteers - come and relax, share, gather information, and enjoy your favorite brew. If you would like to find out more about BABES and meet volunteers, please feel free to join us.

Upcoming dates are:

- Monday September 11
- Tuesday October 10

We meet at Panera's, anytime between 9:00 to 10:00 a.m.

Thanks to Linda Natereli for making calls to make sure we had the most up-to-date contacts for each school.





St. John's Episcopal held a '47 items' drive in recognition of Dove's 47th Anniversary. Thanks to all who brought in their donation!

Left - the blessing offered over the items collected at the baptistry.

Right - Fr. Swan dropping the items off to the Shelter



Our Thanks To:



Rosella Young of Illiopolis Christian Church hosted a collection for Dove for the 47th Anniversary. Her goal was to collect a dollar for each year, but they, of course went way over. Rosella also made a card signed by the members. Thanks to all for the sweet remembrance of the anniversary.



100th Home Sale

Dove was thrilled to be the recipient of the \$2000 check in the Glenda Williamson 100th Home Charity Give-Away. Checks were presented to all the groups at the Decatur Celebration. We have 1000s to thank for voting for us daily! And thanks to everyone at Glenda Williamson Realty.

YOU CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE

Our program is in need of volunteers!!! Please consider signing up for this upcoming training! Learn about all the facets and dynamics that surround domestic violence – such as legal options, power and control, effects the domestic violence environment has on children, safety planning, the correlation between animal abuse and domestic violence, how spiritual abuse affects victims, teen dating violence, etc. Learn ways how you can take a stand against domestic violence in your community! We need you!!

Teri Ducey
Domestic Violence Program
Director

Dove's Domestic Violence Education & Volunteer Training

Why is this happening?

What causes domestic violence?

How do we stop it?

What happens to the perpetrator?

What happens to the victim?

Will justice prevail?

What can I do?

Dove's program is always in need of volunteers • to assist in answering our hotline, covering the shelter, clerical tasks, assisting with orders of protection, co-facilitating support groups, and more

After taking this training, you CAN do something!

Location •••

Dove, Inc. / Anna B. Millikin Home, 302 S. Union, Decatur

Dates & Times ••• (Please note change of dates for this Fall Training)

Monday - Thursday afternoons, 1:00 to 5:00 p.m.

October 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 & 18, 2017

How to Register•••

•Complete a phone interview by noon, Friday September 22, call 217.428.6616

•Attend registration meeting on Wednesday, September 27 at noon, \$150 training fee, some scholarships available.

Mark your calendars – October is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Our annual Candlelighting Ceremony will be held on Thursday, October 12th. Please plan to attend this powerfully emotional ceremony where we grieve for those who have suffered and died from domestic violence, as well as celebrate with the survivors and recognize those who work hard at putting an end to this horrible unjustified crime! Keep an eye on Dove's website at www.doveinc.org, as well as our Facebook and Twitter pages, for more details.

Teri Ducey, Domestic Violence Program Director

Please join us on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 7:00 p.m., for our annual Candlelight observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. We will meet at First United Methodist Church, 205 West Main Street in Shelbyville for a service to honor victims and survivors of domestic violence, and to thank those who fight daily to put an end to this crime. Please come to lend your support to these victims and to those who work to help them. We plan a short but meaningful service as we do our part to return peace and harmony to our world.

Susie Kensil, Shelby County Coordinator

We at the DeWitt County Dove office would like to invite you to our annual Candlelighting Ceremony in October. It will be on Monday, October 9, at 7:00 p.m. Our annual Candlelighting Ceremony is to remember those who are suffering from domestic violence and to celebrate those who have broken free from abuse. We also like to acknowledge those in the community who go above and beyond to help those who are suffering.

Jennifer Tolladay, DeWitt County Coordinator



*Please join us
at one or all of these
Annual Events,
in recognition of*



October - Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Shelby County Candlelighting Ceremony
Thursday, October 5, 7:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
205 West Main Street, Shelbyville

DeWitt County Candlelighting Ceremony
Monday, October 9, 7:00 p.m.
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
502 N. Monroe Street, Clinton

Macon County Candlelighting Ceremony
Thursday, October 12, 7:00 p.m.
Decatur First United Methodist Church
201 W. North Street, Decatur

Moultrie County Candlelighting Ceremony
Thursday, October 26, 7:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
216 W. Jefferson Street, Sullivan

NEWS FROM HOMEWARD BOUND



SEEKING ENTRANCE INTO THE HOMEWARD BOUND PROGRAM?

Walk-in applications will be taken on Wednesdays and Fridays between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. at the Homeward Bound office, 788 E. Clay, Decatur.

All others can call 362.7700 for an appointment.

HOMELESS ADVISORY COUNCIL
CONTINUUM OF CARE
(HAC/CoC) MEETING

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
1:30 P.M.

PLEASE PLAN ON ATTENDING!

MEETINGS LOCATION:

HOMEWARD BOUND OFFICE, 788 E. CLAY STREET, DECATUR

CONTACT:

DARSONYA SWITZER, 362.7700 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

SOAR (SSI/SSDI OUTREACH,
ACCESS AND RECOVERY)
COMMITTEE MEETING!

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
10:00 A.M.

LOOKING AHEAD!

NATIONAL HUNGER &
HOMELESSNESS
AWARENESS WEEK EVENTS

BOX CITY
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10
MILLIKIN UNIVERSITY QUAD

ALLEGIANCE CONCERT
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 3:00 P.M.
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

THANKS TO
MENARDS
FOR COLLECTING
BACK-TO-SCHOOL ITEMS!

RSVP NEWS



How do you get a project completed FOR RSVP members without asking RSVP members for help? You ask for a United Way Day of Action Volunteer! Thanks to Donn Ella, seen here with staff Sandy Laesch and Charlie Gillaspie, preparing the invitations to the RSVP Appreciation Luncheon.

Donn Ella also helped with the Back-to-School needs for the BABES Program.

Coupons for Overseas Military Families

We are excited to announce that as of August 2017, with your help, RSVP has shipped more than 1,637,246 coupons to our needy families overseas. Thank you!!

9-11 Day of Service & Remembrance

This year our RSVP Advisory Councils for Macon and DeWitt Counties are honoring Veterans being served at the Decatur V.A. Clinic and Danville Hospital, as part of our 9-11 Day of Service and Remembrance.

We are seeking donations of new jigsaw puzzles, like-new books (paperback or hardcover welcome), and 2017 and 2018 Calendars (wall or pocket). These items are used by Veterans for leisure, entertainment, or for tracking medical appointments.

Help us honor our area Veterans by dropping your donation off at 302 S. Union St., lower level parking lot entrance please. Donations required by September 8, 2017.

Give Charlie a call at

423.6616 if you have any questions

MAX

MACON COUNTY ASSISTANCE
EXCHANGE

LOCATED INSIDE OF
DECATUR FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
201 W. NORTH, DECATUR

OPEN MONDAY - THURSDAY
1:00 TO 3:00 P.M.

HELPING WITH EMERGENCY
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
FAMILIES/INDIVIDUALS
IN NEED

WARM NEIGHBORS ♥ COOL FRIENDS

WNCF is located in the MAX office for MACON and DEWITT Counties. Below are the 2016-2017 Income Guidelines for Weatherization and Bill Payment Assistance. Families must show proof of income. A family's monthly gross income must fall between the ranges below, based upon family size, to qualify.

Family Size 30-Day (Gross) Monthly
Income Range Must be between:

1	\$1,485 - \$2,970
2	\$2,003 - \$4,005
3	\$2,520 - \$5,040
4	\$3,038 - \$6,075
5	\$3,555 - \$7,110
6	\$4,073 - \$8,145
7	\$4,591 - \$9,183
8	\$5,111 - \$10,223



Children's Clothing Room

Open
Monday - Thursday - 1:00 to 3:30 p.m.



*located inside of
Prairie Avenue Christian
Church
2201 E. Prairie, Decatur*

*Good, used, free clothing!
Sizes from infants to
teenagers.*

For ease of making a donation of children's clothing, a shed is located south of the church in the parking lot.



We are also seeking donations of new socks and underwear, in all sizes, especially to help families with back-to-school needs.

Children's Clothing Room

The Children's Clothing Room is also looking for sponsors to see us through the upcoming year. We served over 2700 children last fiscal year and the need is still great. This can be as simple as holding a donation drive for new socks and underwear for the kids, donating a few hours of time, or monetary donations. If your organization or group would like to help, give Sandra a call at 428.6616 and select the month your group would like to sponsor.



Thanks to staff members of BabyTALK Early Head Start who helped Sandy Harmison and the Clothing Room Volunteers get the Clothing Room ready for the fall season. BTEHS spent an afternoon of their orientation week, going out into the community to help their partner agencies and to learn more about there services.

**LOOKING AHEAD!
2017 COATS FOR KIDS DRIVE
OCTOBER 11 - NOVEMBER 30**





In September or October, we meet with representatives from other Macon County agencies who help individuals and families, such as BabyTALK, Child 1st Center, Macon Resources, the Decatur-Macon County Senior Center, and many others. We hand out basket referrals to each representative, who then take them back to their office and discuss with other case managers which families are most in need this year. They talk

Believe it or not, it's almost the time of year that people either love or love to hate. There's not much in-between when it comes to the Christmas holiday.

Here at Dove, we're starting to get ready for one of our annual projects: Christmas Baskets. Those of you who are already familiar with our agency and the work we do are probably already aware of this program. Maybe some of you have donated gifts or hats and gloves. Maybe some of you have even volunteered during Baskets Week, or by helping to deliver baskets to the families signed up with the program.

But just in case, here's a rundown of how it works.

First of all, we partner with Northeast Community Fund for this project. They provide all the food, and they will collect toys and gifts (all new) for the whole year leading up to Christmas. Toys start coming to Dove in the Fall.

to those families, fill out the referral, which includes a list of things the individuals like, and hope to receive for a present, as well as listing the clothing size for each person, and what the family is most in need of. Then they turn the referral into Dove. The basic info gets transferred onto a spreadsheet (names, address, phone number, age/gender of the children).

During this same time frame, we do our own referrals for clients in our different programs: Domestic Violence, MAX, RSVP, and Homeward Bound. We do not accept phone call inquiries for people wanting to receive baskets who are not clients. They must contact their own case managers for this, if they are working with another agency. This process takes several weeks.

All of our client names and info also get added to the spreadsheet mentioned above. We then cross-compare our list of names with other agencies in the area who provide

Christmas Baskets, including Salvation Army, St. James Church, and Catholic Charities. This way, if a family is being served at another agency already, we can take them off our list and serve another family who isn't signed up for a basket somewhere. We like to help the most people possible!

Then comes Baskets Week. We take all of the donations we've received to the First United Methodist Church, who has been our gracious host for this extremely busy, chaotic time, for over 13 years. Northeast Community Fund sends their trucks with the toys and gifts they've collected to the church, as well. We then begin the process of separating gifts by age group, sorting the clothing into neat organized stacks by gender and size, and assess what we've got and what we still need. Our spreadsheet comes in very handy here again, because it gives us the exact count of how many five-year-old boys we're serving, and how many teenage girl gifts are needed, etc. If our count is higher than the gifts, we send out volunteer shoppers to go buy the amount of gifts per age group still needed.

After we have enough gifts for all the kids (we serve up to age 17), and things are sorted and organized, our staff and volunteers begin to assemble each family's gift bag. We put everything in large black garbage bags, so that when each basket is delivered, the kids can't see what's inside. Every family also receives at least one roll of wrapping paper (more, if the family is larger), tape, a Christmas card, a bag of hygiene supplies, and a homemade stocking for each member of the family. Children's and teen's stockings

are filled with little toys and candies, adult stockings are not. Each person in the family also receives a hat and gloves – which is the only thing we can guarantee people get, since we operate solely based on donations.

Meanwhile, back at 302 South Union, our RSVP program calls each and every family expecting a basket from Dove and Northeast Community Fund, reminding them of the delivery date and time frame, to assure someone is there to answer the door when the volunteers arrive with the basket. We could not do what we do without their help – because it is a crazy time of year and people forget.

Then agencies deliver their baskets, and volunteers deliver the rest. This year our "general delivery" day happens to be a Saturday, and we're going to need a lot of volunteers to deliver baskets, so please mark your calendars for Saturday, December 23. We'll begin at 8:30 a.m. in the morning and go until everyone's received their baskets.

As you've probably realized by now, this takes a lot of time and effort and most importantly – volunteers. We will be needing volunteers the entire week of December 18th to sort, count, shop, and fill baskets, so please consider helping make someone's Christmas a little brighter – and your own, as well. Stay tuned for more information on Christmas Baskets in next month's newsletter!

Angie Williams
Christmas Baskets Coordinator