

Thank you to all who gave, participated, and assisted in the Good Neighbors, Christmas Food Basket and Angel Tree Children's Gifts Project. In your own way, you helped share and experience the true meaning of Christmas! Best wishes and may 2020 be your greatest year ever. From your friends at the Norris Area Good Neighbors.

The Norris Area Good Neighbors continued its tradition of providing food and children's gifts to nearby families to help make their Christmas more joyous. The entire community was involved! **In total, 126 households, 296 individuals, were aided this holiday. One hundred thirteen households comprised of 283 individuals were provided food baskets. Forty one of these families also received Christmas gifts for 101 deserving children. And, thirteen seniors received food vouchers.**



The three elementary schools and the middle school collected a **record setting 184 milk crates, almost 6,000 items of cans and packaged goods.** Norris Middle School classes helped fill the boxes joyously and enthusiastically.



Students and staff (some dressed as Santa and his Elves) from Anderson County High school delivered the food baskets to the Norris Gardens Apartments and to the vehicles of people that came to pick up their toys and baskets.



GOOD NEIGHBORS SIGNUP FOR 2020 is at the Norris Religious Fellowship Church, 49 Dogwood Rd., Saturday, October 24, 2020 from 9 to 11 am. Bring ID, proof of address, and household income or Food Stamp card. Please write out requests for children's gifts, including sizes.

FOR FOOD DURING THE YEAR: The Norris Area Food Pantry is at the Norris United Methodist Church. Bring ID, proof of address, and household income or Food Stamp card. Food Pantry signups begin at 8 am on the fourth Thursday of each month starting in January.

GOOD NEIGHBORS DEPENDS ON DONATIONS: Please send to Good Neighbors, c/o NRF, PO Box 267, Norris TN 37828, 865-494-7131.

"Sometimes, We Can All Use a Good Neighbor"



Work on the 2019 project actually started in November, 2018, when the tub flats for the next year are normally ordered from the supplier. At the same time, the Leadership Team set the date and time for the 2019 signup which was October 26, from 9 to 11 am. (Flyers announcing the 2019 registration were given to recipients of the 2018 baskets for them to mark their calendars.)

In September (2019), the Leadership Team, comprised of representatives from area churches and schools, met to set the distribution date and times which hinge on the date Thanksgiving falls. Also at this meeting, the Leadership Team reviewed 2018 accomplishments, financial reports, and coordinated procedures. Announcements were then sent out to assure that potential qualified households know about the registration date. And, space was reserved at the Norris Religious Fellowship.

Following the October 26 registration, databases and lists were prepared, quantities of food to be ordered, based on family size, were calculated, angels were prepared and labeled with the children's gift requests, and schools were contacted to confirm food drive and student participation. The food and gifts are handled by separate teams who converge at the Fellowship prior to distribution day so as to deliver the food and gifts at the same time. There are two teams, but we are all still Good Neighbors.

Two weeks before Thanksgiving, Angel Trees went to area churches to be taken by members who obtain the gifts listed on each angel. On the Monday after Thanksgiving (December 2), empty milk crates (from the Norris Area Food Pantry) were distributed to Andersonville Elementary School, Fairview Elementary School, Norris Elementary School, and Norris Middle School for their food drives. Also the work schedule, dates, times, type of work, need for trucks, and so on, were sent out and helpers lined up.

The second Monday after Thanksgiving, (December 9) the food order was placed with the Second Harvest Food Bank of East Tennessee with whom Good Neighbors is a seasonal partner. (Good Neighbors complies with all their requirements for training, safe food handling and storage.) Also an order for fresh produce and staples, was placed with Archers Food Center who has cooperated with Good Neighbors for many years. Besides being convenient and accommodating, Archers also stores the perishables and accepts the food vouchers which Good Neighbors offers to residents of Norris Gardens Apartment.

On Thursday, December 12, the Norris Area Food Pantry provided a driver, truck and trailer to pick up the four pallet loads from Second Harvest which were then unloaded by the "heavy lifters." Friday morning the heavy lifters picked up the food from Archers and then picked up the crates of donated food from the schools. By Friday afternoon, all the food had been stored in the Fellowship Church, and the flats folded into tubs.

Saturday morning (December 14) volunteers from the Fellowship and community sorted the donated food, within two hours! The record setting 184 milk crate-equivalents of mostly canned goods needed to be sorted, labeled, and counted to facilitate filling the tubs and boxes of cans. (Then, all the food, crates, and boxes were moved to make room for the Fellowship Christmas party on Sunday.) By Sunday noon, all Angel Tree gifts have been delivered to the Angel Tree team for organizing. Sunday evening, the tubs were laid out and labeled according to family size and a path marked on the floor for the cartloads of items to follow when filling the tubs. To the extent possible, each commodity was labeled as to how many items, each family size receives.

Early Monday morning (December 16) volunteers, including two teachers and 18 energetic students from the Norris Middle School formed teams to fill the tubs with purchased food and also fill boxes of sorted canned goods (heavy duty cardboard, 4-gallon milk boxes were donated by Ingles on Emory Road and hauled by the Food Pantry). Donated canned goods are packaged separately in the cardboard boxes so the tubs would be of manageable weight. With everyone pitching in, this job was accomplished in just over two hours, including recycling cardboard and disposing of trash. The bagged Angel Tree gifts for each requesting family were brought to the Fellowship by the Angel Tree team that afternoon in readiness for distribution on Tuesday. Each tub held a reusable grocery bag and a holiday greeting that included the date and times for the 2020 signup.

And early Tuesday morning (December 17), the Angel Tree team, check-in clerks, distribution coordinator, a few "heavy lifters" and most importantly, seven enthusiastic students with six staff members (two as elves and one as Santa) from Anderson County High School's Leo Club arrived to deliver the 35 tubs and boxes of canned good to the Norris Garden Apartments. Between deliveries they carried tubs and boxes out to the vehicles of the people who came to pick up their food baskets and gifts. By noon, except for late pickups, the church was restored to normal and all food and gifts were delivered including 21 crates to the Community Action Commission and 33 crates to the Food Pantry, who also benefit from the Food Drive.