



RESCUE MISSION NEWS

2016 Holiday

A PUBLICATION OF BRIDGEPORT RESCUE MISSION

Let There Be JOY!



When they first come through our doors, the homeless men, women and children in our care may find it hard to remember the last time they felt a sense of joy in their lives. Despair, guilt and heartache often describe what they're feeling inside.

Through your financial gifts, volunteer participation and compassionate prayers you can *let there be joy* for our neighbors who are hurting this holiday season and beyond.



www.BridgeportRescueMission.org

SERVING THE HUNGRY, HOMELESS AND ADDICTED OF COASTAL FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Get Connected

Dear Friend,

One of the things I enjoy most about being a grandparent is watching the joy and wonder my grandchildren experience as they see, learn and do new things.

Here at Bridgeport Rescue Mission, I see many of the same emotions in the lives of the men and women who are working to overcome addiction and homelessness or to build a stable future for their children. As they experience God's love and grow in their relationship with Him, their hearts are filled with joy when they learn of His grace and compassion . . . and their spirits are filled with wonder at His power to change their lives.

Your support allows our ministry to be a place where hurting people experience joy every day, in so many ways—from the comforts of nutritious food and safe shelter to opportunities for purpose-filled lives. And especially during the holidays, your gifts of time and treasure provide activities and gifts that bring to those in our care the childlike joy we all look forward to.

Thank you for your steadfast support this holiday season and into the new year. Your partnership truly brings joy to my heart as well. God bless you.

Blessings,

Rev. Terry Wilcox
Executive Director



Beth and her younger daughter enjoy their weekly time together.

A Mother's Journey to JOY

Beth had a comfortable life with her husband and two young daughters. She had given up her job to be a stay-at-home mom, but depression set in. "That's where the drinking started," she shares. As a result of her addiction, she separated from her husband and was unable to care for her children. When they went to live with relatives, her destructive behaviors only grew worse. She called us for help, and we told her to come right away. "The Mission gave me the opportunity to get out of the hopeless situation I was in," she says.

Beth's story continues in the Christmas letter you'll receive from us in just a few weeks. You'll learn how God is restoring her life, her faith and her relationships, and giving her a joy she's never known. Don't miss this opportunity to read how your gifts are making an impact in this mother's life this holiday season, and that of so many other men, women and children.

"Alcohol had come in and out of my life, but had never been that important to me," says Beth, a graduate of our New Life Program for women. "I understood an alcoholic was someone who had to drink all the time, and if they didn't, they were miserable. I thought that didn't apply to me, but it became that way before I knew it. That's the trick of the disease."



For Executive Director Terry Wilcox, one of the great joys of each holiday season is seeing men and women in recovery discover new hope through God's grace.

Bridgeport Rescue Mission

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Executive Director

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All stories and photos in this newsletter are of students and guests at Bridgeport Rescue Mission.



Fighting Poverty
from the Inside Out
and Serving the
Hurting and
Homeless of Coastal
Fairfield County

Show Compassion in Action this Holiday Season

We Need Turkey Teams!

Each year we need tons of turkeys to include in our **Great ThanksGiving Project** fixings bags and to prepare the thousands of meals we serve throughout the holiday season. Our Turkey Teams—who collect turkeys by the truckload or donate funds to purchase them—are a fun way for families, friends, companies and congregations to help their neighbors in coastal Fairfield County.

Our goal this year is 3,000 turkeys! If you and your group would like to take part, simply buy 12- to 15-pound frozen turkeys and deliver them to our Donation Center, 1069 Connecticut Avenue, Unit 2B, in Bridgeport, Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or your team can donate \$20 for each “virtual” turkey you would like to contribute. Simply visit **BridgeportRescueMission.org**, go to our donation page and click on the “virtual turkey” option.

For more information on forming a Turkey Team, please email Donna Romano at **DRomano@BridgeportRescueMission.org**.



Help Bridgeport Rescue Mission provide a joy-filled holiday experience for the homeless men, women and children in our shelters and for struggling neighbors in the community who might otherwise be forgotten.

Last year's Turkey Teams raised \$22,800 collectively! A special shout-out goes to Congregation Beth El, Trumbull Facebook Groups United, and S.S. Norden Club—these groups did a great job of garnering support from their friends and associates!



Fill Bedtime Bags for Kids

Fill a Christmas gift bag (or one you've decorated yourself) with the following items for a boy or girl: a bedtime storybook*; a small stuffed animal; a child's toothbrush and toothpaste; and a washcloth and mild soap. Also include a note with a message of encouragement.

*We suggest "The Gift of the Christmas Cookie: Sharing the True Meaning of Jesus' Birth" or "The Berenstain Bears and the Joy of Giving."

Blankets for Struggling Neighbors

We'll distribute **Bedtime Bags** along with warm blankets to more than 500 families in need. Your donations of new or gently used blankets, quilts and comforters will be truly appreciated.

Write Us In as Your United Way Gift Designation

During the annual United Way fall campaign at your workplace, consider directing your contributions to Bridgeport Rescue Mission as your designated charity. If you're using E pledge, simply use the "search agencies" field and click on or type in our name!

To Help Even More

Check with your HR department to see if your company matches employees' gifts and/or the value of volunteer hours. Your holiday or year-end donation could be doubled!

Please see Page 4 for drop-off and delivery instructions!

Help Shop for Our Holiday Foods

As you do your own holiday shopping, please take our grocery list with you too! We need the items below to fill the Thanksgiving Pantry Boxes we'll distribute to struggling families and to prepare the meals we'll distribute from our Mobile Kitchens. We'll also use these foods to prepare special Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for our New Life Program students, along with our homeless and working-poor neighbors in Bridgeport and South Norwalk.

Please deliver your food contributions to our Donation Center, 1069 Connecticut Avenue, Unit 2B, in Bridgeport, Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Thanksgiving Food Needs

- 12- to 15-pound frozen turkeys
Or simply contribute \$20 for each "virtual turkey" you would like to donate by making gifts online at BridgeportRescueMission.org or sending your gift in the envelope provided with this newsletter.
- Canned green beans, corn and peas
- Canned sweet potatoes
- Stuffing mixes (not croutons)
- Gravy mixes

Christmas Food Needs

- Peanut butter and jelly in plastic jars
- Pasta and canned pasta sauce
- Boxed macaroni and cheese
- Rice
- Canned fruits
- Gravy mixes
- Canned vegetables
- Canned sweet potatoes
- Canned tuna, chicken and ham
- Whole, frozen hams
- Canned soup (all kinds)
- Beans (baked, red, white or dry)
- Chef Boyardee meals
- Cereal (cold, hot or instant)
- Ramen noodles

If you're unable to shop, your financial contributions are a blessing too! An envelope is enclosed for your convenience.



Please clip and use as you shop or share list with others.

WE NEED COATS

15,000 in all!

We will give away nearly 15,000 gently used coats and other winter-wear items to families and individuals in need.

Encourage your Sunday school class, synagogue, work group or civic organization to hold a drive for gently used items for children and adults:

- * **Coats in all sizes**
- * **Hats, gloves and scarves**
- * **Winter boots of all sizes**

Then deliver them to our Donation Center, 1069 Connecticut Avenue, Unit 2B, in Bridgeport, Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please contact Courtney Pandolfi at 203-333-4087, ext. 112, or CPandolfi@BridgeportRescueMission.org for more details and to let us know you can help!



“It’s been a blessing to me personally to be part of the coat distribution. A warm coat is a basic that we all need and when I see the appreciation and excitement in the eyes of the moms and kids—and the homeless men—as we help them select a coat, it truly warms my heart. I’ve been fortunate in my own life and I’m grateful for this opportunity to give back.”

—a returning coat-distribution volunteer

“My kids outgrow their coats so quickly and I can’t afford to buy new ones. It’s such a relief to know they can get good coats that fit at the Mission’s Thanksgiving coat distribution.”

—a grateful mother



More *Holiday* Compassion in Action



Calling for Bakers

Families, businesses, churches and synagogues!

Bake your favorite cookies and other sweet treats and deliver them to the Mission for our holiday activities.

Give Backpacks of Love for Shelter Guests

Fill backpacks with the items listed below. These practical gifts provide comfort and warmth for the homeless men and women in our care.

- ♥ Bath towels and washcloths
- ♥ Winter hats, scarves and gloves
- ♥ New packaged underwear for men and women (sizes M-2X)
- ♥ Gloves
- ♥ Christmas chocolates

We never have enough of these!

Please deliver your filled **Backpacks of Love, Bedtime Bags for Kids and Blankets for Struggling Neighbors** to our Donation Center, 1069 Connecticut Avenue, Unit 2B, in Bridgeport, Tuesday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more details on these and other holiday activities, contact Courtney Pandolfi at 203-333-4087, ext. 112, or CPandolfi@BridgeportRescueMission.com.



CORPORATE Compassion in Action

Gold Sponsors for our *Great ThanksGiving Project*:



Other vital partners:

- Barrow Street Capital
- Grafton Data Systems Bizmark
- Robert D. Scinto, Inc.
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- Anholt Services (USA), Inc.
- Citizens Bank
- Mercedes-Benz of Fairfield Cannondale Business Solutions

Year-End Giving

The holiday and year-end season is a critical time for the Mission. We humbly ask you to consider a special cash gift—above and beyond what you typically share at this time—to help us prepare to meet growing and changing needs in the year ahead.