

Goodfellows

P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037 • (248) 788-5899

Annual Fund-Raising Newsletter, Fall 2016 Edition

THE RIGHT THING TO DO

By Iris D. Thompson, *Southfield Goodfellows President*

I am a firm believer that everything happens for a reason, so it was not by chance that I came to be a part of the Southfield Goodfellows. A few years ago, I found myself flipping through the newspaper and an article read that volunteers were needed to assist in the distribution of holiday packages and food. Being no stranger to volunteerism, my teenage son and I jumped at the chance to help. From the moment we arrived, we felt welcomed and that day ran like a well-oiled machine. We were so impressed that we decided to become a part of the organization permanently; but more than that, it was the right thing to do.

This organization has a special place in my heart and when I shared my Southfield Goodfellows experiences with family and friends, I learned that they, too, had affection for the organization. Close family members shared fond memories of the Goodfellows saving many a Christmas, providing presents and food when there otherwise would be none. Each holiday season, I find myself surrounded by family and good tidings and I know I am blessed. This is my wish for everyone- a holiday spent with the ones you love... a holiday without the fear of hunger or poverty... a holiday with gifts and delicious food... a holiday of joy... a holiday that is care-free.

I have lived and worked in the Southfield/Lathrup Village communities for years. The people I've met over the years (and even the ones I haven't) are dear to me. I'm proud of the fact that I'm an active member of a group that helps provide for some of those wonderful, beautiful people. Many members of our Goodfellows are also residents of Southfield, but several live many miles away and drive from cities as far as an hour away to get here and support our mission. It would be easier to stay at home; to concern ourselves only with the here and now and to differentiate between our problems and "other people's problems." It would be easier to come home from another hard day at the office, put our feet up, and spend the rest of the evenings watching the newest sitcoms. It would also be easier (not to mention relaxing!) to sleep in on the weekends rather than pack and stack boxes, wrap gifts, etc... but the Southfield Goodfellows has never been about what's easy. Here at the Southfield Goodfellows, we do what we do because it is the right thing to do, and most importantly: **It is truly our pleasure to serve.**

...Of course, it would be impossible to do what we do without the support of our generous donors and countless volunteers. Local businesses and even private citizens supply us with assistance for the food and the gifts we distribute to the families.

On my very first Mother's Day, my husband and two month old son gave me a houseplant. I hung it in our kitchen window so it could receive a healthy amount of sunlight and I watered it twice a week. Once a month, I threw in a little plant food. Over time, it grew and grew to the point that I had to trim it. The cuttings I gathered were then placed in glasses of water to encourage them to take root. Later, I potted and placed them in two other rooms; they not only added to the decor, but also produced purer air to breathe.

But as more time passed, I forgot to water them as often as I used to. The leaves drooped and shriveled-up. I neglected to feed the plants each month, while the original plant no longer grew at its faster rate and therefore did not require trimming. When I gave it care, it flourished. But when I neglected it, it withdrew. Our community operates in the same way. The economy has not been kind to most. Families have been forced to make difficult decisions in their day to day lives. Minor changes – such as canceling the lawn service, going without cable, forgoing the air conditioner – fail to make a noticeable dent, and so some have been forced to make more drastic changes such as skipping meals, selling a car, or even worse: losing their homes.

We help our fellow man because we are all the same, equal in our desire and our right to be secure in heart, body, and mind. I recall to the old adage, "Do unto others as you have them do unto you." Or to paraphrase: "Treat people right." No matter what harsh realities life throws at us, we can be safe in the fact that we still have each other.

When you give, you get back so much more in return. It's not just the good feeling you have, it's the sense of knowing that every seed you plant has the potential to blossom on its own.

Help us to bless others, would you? Could we count on your monetary support again to serve the less fortunate living in the cities of Southfield and Lathrup Village, who need our help? Through God's grace and your generosity, we would be able to accomplish this daunting task of serving hundreds again this Holiday Season.

Are you employed? Do you have a place you can call home? Do you have clothes, especially, warm clothing in the winter? Do you have enough food to eat? Do you have a bed to sleep in each night? Did you wake up this morning? If you can answer, "yes" to any of these questions then you are blessed whether you realize it or not. Please be a blessing to others and share with them what you can this holiday season. A monetary gift of \$50, \$75, \$100 or more would truly help our cause for others; however, **no monetary gift is too small.** Remember, true abundance isn't measured by what you have; rather, it is measured by what you give. Please make your check or money order payable to the Southfield Goodfellows and mail it to PO Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037-2336. If you prefer to donate securely online, go to www.southfieldgoodfellows.org. Thank you for caring. Be blessed and Happy Holidays! If you have any questions or need additional information please call and leave a message on our 24-hour voice mail at (248) 788-5899.

Who qualifies for assistance?

The Southfield Goodfellows receive confidential recommendations from social workers, school personnel, religious institutions, police and fire departments, and concerned citizens to identify both families and individuals in need of assistance in the Southfield and Lathrup Village communities. All qualified applicants receive food boxes and/or food/gift cards (if funds are available).

The City of Southfield Human Services Department pre-screens each application for eligibility based on federal poverty guidelines as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

We encourage applicants to pick up an application (starting immediately in September) from the Southfield Human Services Department located at 26000 Evergreen Road, Southfield, Michigan 48037. You may call their office at (248) 796-4540 for directions.

Website access is available at: <http://www.cityofsouthfield.com/DK/HumanServices/tabid/201/Default.aspx>, or go to our website at <http://www.southfieldgoodfellows.org/application.html>.

Applications for consideration from **Southfield and Lathrup Village residents only** must be submitted, with the required documentation, no later than 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 27, 2016. **No exceptions!**

How can you help?

There are plenty of opportunities for the community to participate in assisting the Southfield Goodfellows – you can:

- Donate money to the Southfield Goodfellows for the purchase of clothing gift cards for children and food gift cards for families, to supplement the items collected and purchased.
- Sponsor a "Giving Tree" – the Southfield Goodfellows will provide your organization with paper holiday ornament tags, each listing the first name, age and gender of a specific child in the community – to purchase new items or select from a suggested wish list.
- Sew, purchase, knit or crochet doll clothes – the Southfield Goodfellows purchase dolls, which individuals and/or groups then dress for gifts.

Any one of these activities is a great way for either groups or individuals to lend a helping hand. To help the Southfield Goodfellows or for further information, contact: **Southfield Goodfellows, P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037, (248) 788-5899 or visit our website at www.southfieldgoodfellows.org**



Iris D. Thompson



How do we raise funds?

As an all-volunteer non-profit organization, the Southfield Goodfellows Organization solicits charitable contributions in a number of ways.

Each year we solicit donations from area businesses and residents. In the fall the Southfield Goodfellows Newsletter is sent to homes and businesses in the Southfield and Lathrup Village area. On the Monday after Thanksgiving, the Southfield Goodfellows Newspaper is sold. The newsletter and newspaper are our main sources of revenue.

Last year, we raised nearly \$18,000 to purchase food, clothing, and gifts for 1,200 Southfield and Lathrup Village residents in need.

This year, the Southfield Goodfellows Newspaper will be sold throughout Southfield and Lathrup Village on Monday, November 28, 2016.

Additional charitable contributions are gladly accepted anytime, through our website at www.southfieldgoodfellows.org, or by mailing checks or money orders (payable to Southfield Goodfellows) to Southfield Goodfellows, P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037. The Southfield Goodfellows may be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by leaving a message on our voicemail at (248) 788-5899.

Who are the Goodfellows?

The Southfield Goodfellows Organization is an all volunteer non-profit organization, made up of everyday people like you and your neighbors.

What do we do?



We raise funds to assist low income families with or without children and seniors in the Southfield and Lathrup Village communities, during the December Holiday Season. The Southfield Goodfellows also provide assistance to individuals year-round through the City of Southfield Human Services Department Urgent Needs Program.

Why do we do it?

Our main motivation is the desire to assist families in our community who are experiencing short or long-term financial difficulties, during the December Holiday Season. Our primary goal is to assure that no child or senior in Southfield or Lathrup Village is forgotten during the holiday season.

How did it start?

In 1946 a small group of concerned citizens of Southfield Township, which still had the ambience of a small town, recognized the need to assist a small number of families for the holiday season. This group chose to pursue their mission by emulating the traditional Goodfellows program. Since those early beginnings, Southfield and Lathrup Village each became incorporated cities whose needs have grown along with their populations.

The Giving Tree

The 2015 “Giving Tree” participants included twenty-five businesses, organizations, churches and individuals. The “Giving Tree” activity continues to be an exciting part of our program, as it has been for many years. The Southfield Goodfellows work with volunteers to create paper holiday ornaments. Each ornament includes the first name, age, gender, and a wish list of suggested items for the specific recipient.



The ornaments and wish lists are forwarded to churches, businesses and other organizations for distribution to their employees/members, who wish to participate in the program. All that is required is that there be at least one newly purchased and gift wrapped (or gift bagged) item for each child. The ornament is then attached to the gift so that it

can be routed to the appropriate child on distribution day. Anyone wishing to provide more than one item from the wish list is more than welcome. We have had some generous participants purchase everything on a child’s wish list. Just remember, we can only accept newly purchased items.

The “Giving Tree” program assures that a Southfield and Lathrup Village child on our recipient list receives a new gift for the holiday. In 2015, the Southfield Goodfellows, with the assistance of generous gift donors, was able to provide 461 children with toys and gifts. The “Giving Tree” program has been well received.



Schedule of Events

- October 10th** Mail applications to previous candidates, recipients, churches and senior citizen apartments
- October 10th** December Holiday Assistance Application available on Human Services and Southfield Goodfellows websites
- October 10th** Mail applications to schools for distribution to students
- October 27th** Final date for submitting applications – **4:00 p.m. sharp**
- November 1st thru December 2nd** Volunteers sort and pack food boxes at the Distribution Center
- November 28th** Sell Goodfellows Newspapers
- November 29 thru December 2nd** Pick up and receive new toys and gifts from donors
- December 6th & 7th** Deliver to senior buildings
- December 3-4 & 10-11** Volunteers sort and package gifts at the Distribution Center
- December 17th** Distribution Day (volunteers must be no younger than 14)

Dolls, Dolls, and More Dolls!

The Southfield Goodfellows Organization has some of the most gorgeous well-dressed dolls around. Each year, in families receiving assistance from the Southfield Goodfellows, girls ages 4 to 10 can elect to receive a doll along with their other holiday gifts. Once the choice is made, the Southfield Goodfellows, along with their volunteer elves, go to work sewing, knitting, and purchasing items for dressing the dolls.



Work begins in late summer, when the dolls are purchased by the Southfield Goodfellows. Volunteers from the Girl Scouts, churches, businesses, and individuals temporarily adopt the dolls and accept responsibility for dressing them (the dolls are delivered in their panties, shoes and socks).

The dressed dolls are returned to the Southfield Goodfellows doll coordinator by Thanksgiving with some of the most beautiful outfits that one can imagine; all donated by the volunteers. In 2015, the Southfield Goodfellows distributed 110 finely dressed dolls. Volunteer participation in this program continues to be outstanding.



Southfield Goodfellows Food Campaign

The Southfield Goodfellows distributed 18.5 tons of food – donated food from Forgotten Harvest, as well as purchased food from Gleaners Community Food Bank. Food collected in 2015 served 1,061 recipients consisting of 413 families – 232 senior families and families without children and 181 families with 461 children living in Southfield and Lathrup Village.



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 Human Services Rhonda Terry and Harold Shriman
 Web Master Shakela Smith

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Deborah Arndt
 Nikki Phillips

Thanks and Appreciation

We are extremely grateful to those who so generously continue to support the accomplishments of the Southfield Goodfellows. It takes countless hours of preparation to assure the success of this organization. Sincere thanks and appreciation for in-kind contributions from the following supporters:

- ❖ Moses Fram of Lion Investment Group for the use of the Distribution Center
- ❖ Jim Ratza of Utica Rent-All for delivery and pickup of tables and chairs, Joe Nato of Powers Distributing and Glass Recyclers for donation and delivery of the food packing boxes, Waste Management for the dumpster; Meijer and Sam’s Club for shopping carts and flat beds, respectively
- ❖ Southfield Fire Department for newspaper sale assistance and toy/gift pick up, Southfield Emergency Management Department for distribution day traffic control, and Southfield Human Services for application processing
- ❖ Forgotten Harvest and Gleaners Community Food Bank for their assistance with food for recipients
- ❖ The Southfield Public and Charter Schools for their participation in various fundraisers and toy drives
- ❖ Apostolic Ministries, Bank of New York, City of Southfield, Denso, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, First Baptist Church, ImageSoft Inc., John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, Karen Sledoba, Lathrup Women’s Club, Lawrence Technological University, Michigan First Credit Union, Open Market, Plunkett Cooney, DeRoy & Devereaux, Roloni’s Boutique, SKBK –Sotherby’s, Southfield Education Association, Sullivan Ward Asher Patton, Vibe Credit Union, MaryAnn O’Rourke, Simone Miller, AARP- Southfield Chapter, Debbie Arndt, and First Mercury Financial Corp. for their generous donations of toys and gifts
- ❖ Renee Bryant, Beverly Tucker and John Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church, Mary Haraway, and Denise Ruff for being doll dressers
- ❖ Special Thanks to Meadowbrook Insurance and Church of Transfiguration
- ❖ Beverly Johnson for providing clerical assistance to the President
- ❖ The building owners and managers for newspaper sales day, the volunteers for newspaper sales, the doll wrappers, gift sorters and packers, the food sorters and packers, and the many distribution day participants

Thanks and appreciation to others we might have forgotten to mention, including those who provide assistance after this publication. Please know that we could not do this without you!

We wish to extend a very special thanks to all volunteers who helped make this effort possible.