

Goodfellows

P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037 · 248-788-5899

Annual Fundraising Newsletter, Fall 2025 Edition

CHANGE

By Iris D. Johnson, *Southfield Goodfellows President*

The one constant in this world is change. I first became aware of this phrase at a company where I once worked: “You know the ‘C’ in C_____ is for change,” they would say. Change could be positive, such as a new addition to the family. Or it could be negative, such as the loss of a job. I was always told, and I still believe to this day, that everything happens for a reason. It’s all in Divine order. Of course, it is quite difficult to see the purpose of a negative change when it first happens. It was at those times that I took solace in the Serenity Prayer:

*“God, grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change;
Courage to change the things I can;
And the wisdom to know the difference...”*

Not so long ago, I found myself stressed and overwhelmed. I was being pulled in many different directions. There was just so much to do and so little time to do it. I sometimes joked that I was much too busy to have a job. And then one day... I wasn’t. There is truth in the old adage, “Be careful what you wish for.” I had the time to fully dedicate myself to the most important part of my life, my family, but it came at a cost. I feared how this would affect my family, financially. This was also a setback to my self-esteem. Though we shouldn’t, we often associate who we are with what we do (our jobs). When I reflected on my situation, there were subtle and not so subtle nudges that I was supposed to make a change, but I made excuses instead. Now, the change was no longer in my control.

It took some time, but I did find the purpose in this event I once perceived as a tragedy. I changed my way of thinking. I realized that it was meant for me to be the caregiver for a family member. After all, she needed me more than the job needed me. Yet another purpose of this change was to continue my college education and pursue a new career. It’s never too late to reinvent yourself. Where there wasn’t before, there was hope. I had been given a second chance. Through it all, I found myself surrounded with support from family, friends, and even strangers. I was open and accepting of their assistance and their love- a life lesson from years ago. When someone comes to your aid as your blessing, accept their help, as it might be the catalyst that will place you on your new path. Not accepting it impedes your development and blocks the blessing of the giver.

Many families face life-altering changes and crossroads. It could be the loss of a job, an illness, or a host of other concerns. Some are going through these difficult times at this very moment. They are feeling unsure and saddened. They feel there is no hope. Reach out to someone today. Embrace them, comfort them. The lyrics to the ‘70’s classic song, Lean on Me, seem to sum it up. There are points in all of our lives when we need someone’s help and someone needs ours. Let’s be the change in someone’s life today.

Please be a blessing to others and share with them what you can this holiday season. A monetary gift of any size would truly help our cause. Remember, true abundance isn’t measured by what you have, rather by what you give. Please make your check or money order payable to the Southfield Goodfellows and mail it to: P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037-2336. If you prefer to donate securely online, go to www.southfieldgoodfellows.org. Thank you for caring. Be blessed, Merry Christmas 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/gift cards.

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 in August) 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: <https://www.cityofsouthfield.com> or go to our website at <https://www.southfieldgoodfellows.org>.

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 16, 2025. **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 Gift 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 them as 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. Johnson



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. The newsletter is one of our main sources of revenue.

Last year, we raised over \$10,700 to purchase gift cards for 528 Southfield and Lathrup Village residents in need.

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 nonprofit organization, made up of everyday people like you and your neighbors.



What do we do?

We raise funds to assist low-moderate 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 Gift Giving Tree Program



The Gift Giving Tree Program has been one of our top fundraising efforts during our 79-year history. The Southfield Goodfellows, with the assistance of our generous supporters, were able to provide gift cards to 251 children and their families.

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 child recipient. The ornaments with wish lists will be 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 to be 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 very generous participants purchase everything on a child’s wish list. It is noted that we can only accept newly purchased items. The Gift Giving Tree Program assures that a Southfield and Lathrup Village child on our recipient list receives a new gift for the holiday.



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 2024, the Southfield Goodfellows distributed several finely dressed dolls.

Volunteer participation in this program continues to be outstanding.

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 and monetary contributions from the following supporters:

- Southfield Human Services for application processing
- Gift Donor Companies/ Organizations/ Individuals: City of Southfield, TEKsystems, Karen Sleboda, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Lathrup Village Women’s Club, Lawrence Technological University, DeRoy & Devereaux, Southfield Education Association, Southfield-Lathrup Village Optimist Club, Church of Transfiguration, Deborah Arndt, and our many Newsletter Donors and Supporters for their generous donations
- City of Southfield Parks & Recs for donating office space used as our gift distribution center
- Special Thanks to Mayor Kenson Siver, Rhonda Terry, City of Southfield Employees, Southfield Firefighters, Southfield Parks & Recs, Southfield Emergency Management, and Future Reproductions
- Beverly Johnson for providing clerical assistance to the President
- The volunteers who distributed gifts and gift cards on the Distribution Day

Thanks and appreciation to others we might have forgotten to mention. 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.

Schedule of Events

Aug. 29	Send press release to TV, Cable 15, radio, and newspapers
Aug. 29	Mail applications to previous recipients, churches, and senior citizen apartments
Aug. 29	December Holiday Assistance Application available on Human Services and Southfield Goodfellows websites
Aug. 29	Mail applications to schools for distribution to students
Oct. 16	Final date for submitting applications – 4 p.m. sharp
Dec. 2-4	Pick up and receive new toys and gifts from donors
Dec. 6 & 7	Volunteers sort and package gifts at the Distribution Center
Dec. 13	Distribution Day (volunteers >13 years old)

Officers, Directors, Coordinators, and Board Members

President Iris D. Johnson
Vice President MaryAnn O’Rourke
Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary..... Beverly Johnson
Treasurer Beverly Hawks
Director of Newsletter Sydnee Thompson
Directors of Toys and Gifts MaryAnn O’Rourke

Coordinators:
Dolls Beverly Tucker
Human Services Rhonda Terry
Web Master Shakela Smith

Board Members:
Deborah Arndt
Nikki Phillips