

Goodfellows

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

Annual Fundraising Newsletter, Fall 2026 Edition

FULL CIRCLE

By Iris D. Johnson, *Southfield Goodfellows President*

Over the years as a Southfield Goodfellows board member, I have had the pleasure of meeting and working with some wonderful people, both volunteers and recipients. We've laughed, we've cried, we've made connections. One gift distribution day, I was approached by a volunteer and was immediately concerned. She seemed upset. She was teary-eyed and yet she was smiling. My concern turned to joy as she explained why she was so emotional. Recently, her mother revealed to her of a time when their family went through a rough patch. She and her brother were never the wiser. Her Mom went on to explain why they shielded them from their financial troubles. "Children should be protected from such worries", she told her. They sought organizations that could help get them back on their feet and make life a little easier. One such organization was the Goodfellows. Mom spoke of the kindness of strangers. How they made Christmas, that year, seem like any other they had before. The children received so many gifts- toys, games, and clothing. Also, there were gift cards which were used for necessities and a traditional holiday meal with all the trimmings. The Goodfellows has had a special place in their hearts. In that moment, our new volunteer said she knew she wanted to show her gratitude. So that same year, she was determined to provide that same support, that same feeling of hope to parents and joy to children, that her family received. Not only did she volunteer, but she also adopted a family with two children; a family just like hers when she was a girl. We are a community. We look out for one another. Giving back is just the right thing to do. We are better together.

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. 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 15, 2026. ***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.southfield-goodfellows.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 \$11,800 to purchase gift cards for 457 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 non-profit 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 80-year history. The Southfield Goodfellows, with the assistance of our generous supporters, were able to provide gifts to 212 children and gift cards to 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 2025, the Southfield Goodfellows distributed nearly 50 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, Sip Social Club, Superior Industries, AT&T-Michigan Bell Telephone Company and Deborah Arndt
- Newsletter Donors for their generous monetary 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, and Future Reproductions
- Thanks to the volunteers who dressed and wrapped dolls.
- Thanks to the volunteers who sorted, packed and/or distributed gifts and gift cards to the families

Thanks and appreciation to others we might have forgotten to mention. Please know that we could not do this without you!

Schedule of Events

Aug. 18	Send press release to TV, Cable 15, radio, and newspapers
Aug. 31	Mail applications to previous recipients, churches, and senior citizen apartments
Aug. 31	December Holiday Assistance Application available on Human Services and Southfield Goodfellows websites
Aug. 31	Mail applications to schools for distribution to students
Oct. 15	Final date for submitting applications – 4:00 p.m. sharp
Dec. 8-9	Pick up and receive new toys and gifts from donors
Dec. 12 & 13	Volunteers sort and package gifts at the Distribution Center
Dec. 19	Distribution Day (volunteers >13 years old)

Officers, Directors, Coordinators, and Board Members

President	Iris D. Johnson
Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary.....	Beverly Johnson
Treasurer	Beverly Hawks
Director of Newsletter	Sydnee Thompson
Directors of Toys and Gifts	Iris D. Johnson
Directors of Dolls	Beverly Tucker
Coordinators:	
Human Services	Rhonda Terry
Web Master	Shakela Smith
Board Members:	
	Deborah Arndt

WE WISH TO EXTEND A VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL VOLUNTEERS WHO HELPED MAKE THIS EFFORT POSSIBLE.