

Goodfellows

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

Annual Fundraising Newsletter, Fall 2022 Edition

LOOKING FORWARD

By Iris D. Johnson, *Southfield Goodfellows President*

This time last year, I announced the ongoing hiatus for our Gifts and Food programs with every expectation that the pandemic would be over in a matter of months. Boy, was I wrong! Although COVID has been somewhat defanged by the vaccine rollout and virus variants that are less severe, there is still a risk that vulnerable elders, young children, and other immunocompromised people could get seriously ill if they catch it, especially if they catch it multiple times. One infection is bad enough, but the risks compound with each bout, including the risk of long COVID, where you continue to have disabling symptoms for over four weeks after the initial infection. Some people have been struggling with long COVID for years at this point. For that reason, this year our Food and Gifts programs remain on pause. We know how hard this must be for our families with children: It's hard for us, too. But safety is paramount to the Southfield Goodfellows, so we have no choice but to hope that this year will be the actual, factual LAST year of the COVID pandemic. For our 2022 giving season, the following changes are still in effect:

• **The distribution of nonperishable food boxes and gifts for children ages 18 and under has been temporarily discontinued. Instead, all gift cards and monetary gifts received prior to this year's Distribution Day on Saturday, December 17, will be distributed to our recipients.**

• **Financial donations will be allocated to recipients in the form of gift cards.**

• **Our annual Newspaper Sale has been cancelled for 2022.**

We understand that these changes will likely be disappointing to our families who have counted on our assistance for many years. The directors have determined, however, that it would be unreasonable to ask volunteers to pack food and gifts in a small, enclosed space when COVID-19 infections are more likely in this type of environment. This way, families in need will still be able to purchase essential items for the winter holiday season while continuing to social distance and minimize unnecessary contact with people outside of their households as much as possible.

In this unprecedented time, a strong sense of community is both more important than ever before and also more difficult to maintain. If there is anything I have learned through my years of volunteering with The Southfield Goodfellows, however, it is that nothing is impossible when we allow genuine compassion and empathy to guide our steps. Nothing is too large an obstacle when we work together, and every small ripple of kindness holds the potential to collectively transform into mighty waves. If you are fortunate enough to be gainfully employed or otherwise financially secure, please consider donating. Even \$1 will drastically increase our impact this holiday season, and our families will thank you.

If you have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 or any other events, please know that we are with you in spirit even if we cannot be together in person, and we are actively coordinating with our volunteers, donors, and the cities of Southfield and Lathrup Village to ensure that we can assist as many families as possible, as safely as possible. As I have mentioned previously, it has been an honor to be your president for the past eleven years, and I pray that we weather this storm as quickly as possible so that The Southfield Goodfellows continue to provide the vital resources that our community needs in the years to come. Thank you so much for your dedication now and into the future.

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 of supporting our families who are struggling financially and emotionally. Remember: True abundance isn't measured by what you have, but 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, and Happy Holidays! If you have any questions or need additional information, please call and leave a message on our 24-hour voicemail at 248-788-5899.

Additionally, we encourage our supporters to consider applying for a Director or Board Member position. Currently, we are in dire need of long-term, continual assistance with our Food, Toys and Gifts, and Newspaper Distribution programs as well as our Recording Secretary and Corresponding Secretary positions. The surest way to help us gain and maintain momentum in our giving operations is to join our ranks, so please contact us via our website or voicemail if you or someone you know would be interested.

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 grocery store gift cards (if funds are available). *In 2021, only gift cards were provided.

The City of Southfield Human Services Department prescreens 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, MI 48037. You may call their office at (248) 796-4540 for directions.

Website access is available at: <http://www.cityofsouthfield.com/departments/human-services>, 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 13, 2022. 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 gift cards for families.
- Purchase gift cards by contacting us at 248 788-5899 to arrange for pickup or delivery

This is a great way for either groups or individuals to lend a helping hand. To help the Southfield Goodfellows or to receive further information, please contact us via mail at Southfield Goodfellows, P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037; phone at (248) 788-5899; or our website at www.southfieldgoodfellows.org.



Iris D. Johnson



How do we raise funds?

As an all-volunteer nonprofit organization, the Southfield Goodfellows 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 \$31,000 to purchase gift cards for 591 Southfield and Lathrup Village residents in need.

Unfortunately, because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the related health risks, the 2022 Newspaper Sale has been cancelled.

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 P.O. Box 2336, Southfield, MI 48037. We may be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week, via our voicemail at (248) 788-5899.

Who are the Goodfellows?

The Southfield Goodfellows Organization is a volunteer nonprofit 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's Urgent Needs Program.

Why do we do it?

Our main motivation is the desire to assist families in our community that are experiencing short- or long-term financial difficulties during the Christmas Holiday Season. Our primary goal is to assure that no child or senior in Southfield or Lathrup Village is forgotten during this special time of year.

How did it start?

Over 70 years ago, Southfield Township 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 have become incorporated cities whose needs have grown along with their populations.

The Giving Tree

The 2021 "Giving Tree" participants included nine 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. In previous years/pre-pandemic, the Southfield Goodfellows worked with volunteers to create paper holiday ornaments. Each ornament included the first name, age, gender, and a wish list of suggested items for the specific recipient.



The ornaments and wish lists were forwarded to donor organizations for distribution to their employees/members who wished to participate in the program. All that was required is that there be at least one newly purchased and gift wrapped (or gift bagged) new item for each child. Anyone wishing to provide more than one item from the wish list was more than welcome.

We have had some very generous participants purchase everything on a child's wish list.

With COVID-19 cases still high and expected to rise again during the fall and winter, we decided that the best option would be to have recipients drive up, staying safely in their vehicles, to receive gift cards. The Southfield Goodfellows, with the assistance of our generous supporters, were able to provide gift cards to 235 children.

It is our sincere hope that we will return to our normal operation of providing food, gift cards, and gifts for the children in 2023.



December 17: Distribution Day



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 ensure the success of this organization. Sincere thanks and appreciation for in-kind contributions from the following supporters:

- Southfield Human Services for application processing
- Gift Donor Companies/Organizations/Individuals: Bank of New York, City of Southfield, Denso, ImageSoft Inc., Lathrup Village Women's Club, Lawrence Technological University, DeRoy & Devereaux, MacArthur K-8 University Academy, Vibe Credit Union, and our many Newsletter Donors and Supporters for their generous donations
- Special Thanks to Mayor Kenson Siver, Rhonda Terry, City of Southfield Employees, Southfield Firefighters, Southfield Parks & Recs, DTE Foundation, and Future Reproductions
- Beverly Johnson for providing clerical assistance to the President
- The participants who braved the cold to distribute gift cards and direct traffic on Distribution Day

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!



Officers, Directors, Coordinators, and Board Members

- President Iris D. Johnson
- Vice President MaryAnn O'Rourke
- Recording and Corresponding Secretary..... Beverly Johnson
- Treasurer Beverly Hawks
- Director of Food Acquisition & Distribution Fulton Smith
- Director of Newsletter Sydnee Thompson
- Director of Newspaper Publication Sydnee Thompson
- Director of Toys and Gifts MaryAnn O'Rourke

- Coordinators:**
- Dolls Beverly Tucker
 - Human Services Rhonda Terry
 - Webmaster Shakela Smith

- Board Members:**
- Deborah Arndt
 - Nikki Phillips
 - Jacqueline Hall
 - Mechelle Robertson
 - Orza Robertson

Please Give Generously

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

