



**Media Announcement
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

December 28, 2016

**Outpouring of gifts made “Christmas with Mercy” for
underprivileged children an unprecedented success**

MANASSAS, Va. –

The week before the annual “Christmas with Mercy” program on December 10 at House of Mercy (HOM), the staff was uncertain if there would be enough gifts. Three hundred fifty two kids from 97 families were to be provided Christmas presents, yet only about half that number of gifts were donated by December 3.

Thanks to a last minute appeal by way of print publications around Northern Virginia, hundreds of gifts arrived through the day of the event. “It was truly a Christmas miracle,” said Executive Director Ann Cimini. “The gifts poured in; so much, in fact, we were able to share our bounty with other organizations in the area,” she continued.

In total, 81 families and 324 children benefitted from the annual event, started in 2010 as a reminder to HOM client families to cherish the birth of Jesus Christ, the greatest and best gift.

Felice Hilton, Assistant Director of HOM, stated that the other agencies who received gifts due to the generosity of last minute Christmas present donors included Georgetown South Community, a mobile home community located on Tayloe Drive, the charity branch of All Saints Church, and a small local Baptist church. “We have been so blessed, it is only fitting that these gifts continue providing happiness to children in our neighborhoods.”

Volunteers worked over 270 hours (and staff and long-term volunteers an additional 160 hours) in order to present this high-quality, magical day when client parents come to HOM to “shop” for Christmas gifts for their children. “Gifts are a way for people to show their love for each other. So it’s important for our client parents to have the ability to show love for their children by providing gifts. These are presents the parents select based on knowledge of their children’s personalities, which makes the gift giving more special,” said Felice Hilton, Assistant Director of the House of Mercy.

All shoe donations were kept by HOM for the annual school shoe program in late summer.

House of Mercy offers thanks to these organizations, in addition to the *hundreds* of individuals throughout northern Virginia who responded to the need for gifts and volunteers: Holy Trinity Parish (Gainesville), All Saints School (Manassas), Our Lady of Hope Parish (Sterling), Hibernians of St. Mary of Sorrows (Fairfax), Benedictine Sisters of Virginia (Bristow), 40 & 8 of the American Legion (Manassas), Long & Foster Bull Run Plaza, ECPI University (Criminal Justice department), and Virginia Realty Group (RE/Max).

Children qualify for gifts based on their enrolled parent's participation in the numerous free classes available at HOM. The classes include Personal Money Management, ESL, and Cooking and Nutrition.

For more information about House of Mercy's programs or how to register as a client or to donate financially, email help@houseofmercyva.org or call 703-659-1636.

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CAPTION: Moms and their "elves" look for the gifts their children will love. Due to unprecedented gift donations, five organizations, including House of Mercy, received gifts for underserved kids.

