

Media Announcement

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Christmas with Mercy” program helps provide a meaningful Christmas for Children

MANASSAS, Va.



Children listen to the Nativity story at the 2015 “Christmas with Mercy” gifting program. The House of Mercy’s program is unabashedly Christian, celebrating the gift of Christ’s love. Betsy Woytko, left, tells the story of Jesus’ birth in a manger.

House of Mercy has launched its sixth consecutive “Christmas with Mercy” program for the children of qualified clients. Individuals and community organizations provide gifts as a special Christmas donation for the children who receive food and clothing aid from the House of Mercy (HOM).

Staff and volunteers of HOM are planning the gifting program for more than 350 low-income children who are eligible to receive free gifts this year by virtue of their parents taking four consecutive classes. Relying upon the kindness of the community, House of Mercy is nevertheless anticipating a shortfall of gifts in 2016.

Children qualify for gifts based on their parent's participation in the numerous free classes at HOM, which are available also to the greater Manassas community free of charge. The classes have included Personal Money Management, ESL, Cooking and Nutrition and faith formation.

"We rely on individuals and civic groups who abhor the idea of a gift-less Christmas for any child," said Ann Cimini, Executive Director of HOM. "This is especially true for us who celebrate Jesus Christ's selfless gift to humanity of Himself. It is through this lens we recognize how special each of us is to Jesus. It is in this spirit we provide gifts to kids who might not otherwise receive a gift," she continued.

HOM Assistant Director Felice Hilton added, "The local economy has remained fairly flat, with no jobs growth or an increase in purchasing power. This has created an even more pronounced negative impact for the families we serve. According to 'Feeding America', forty-nine percent of people living below poverty level in Prince William County earn too much money at low-paying jobs to be eligible for government assistance. They turn to faith based agencies like House of Mercy for supplemental food and assistance."

"We love to welcome groups and individuals to help with the annual event. People may visit our website then follow the link to our SignUpGenius page, to sign up online for their volunteer job and time. Volunteer slots start on Wednesday December 7 and end with the event on Saturday December 10 when our client parents come to the gift distribution," continued Hilton.

Gifts are accepted at the HOM Donation Center during regular donation hours. The Donation Center is located at 8162 Flannery Court, Manassas. Gifts must be received at HOM by Thursday December 8. Because client children might be receiving only one gift, HOM requests the gifts to be valued in the \$20-\$25 range.

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

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