

St. Francis Human Concerns Department along with Family Support Services would like to take this time to thank the community residents, volunteers, and businesses that made the “Gift of Warmth” project possible this year. Our community assisted 280 families who struggle to provide their 700 children with warm clothing this winter. The “Gift of Warmth” project provides children living within our community warm clothing, coats, blankets, comforters and footwear. All families are signed up within the Human Concerns department by our hardworking volunteers beginning in November. Gift tags are then placed within the community at St Francis Community Center, St. Francis Church, Murphy’s Market, Farias Surf & Sport, Old Causeway, Mud City, The Local, ScoJo’s, Causeway Chiropractic and Dr. Todd and Cynthia Schmoll’s Family Medicine Office. We would like to thank these businesses for their partnership in making this project a success.

We would like to thank the countless residents who purchased gifts, gift cards, or provided monetary donations; along with community organizations and businesses who sponsored families. Our special thanks to the Hands Department Store for helping us transport gifts from the community center to the distribution site with the Hands truck filled to the brim with thousands of gifts.

We would also like to take this time to mention the Catholic Campaign for Human Development grant through the Diocese of Trenton for awarding our project additional funding support. This year, we were fortunate to have students from OCVTS - MATES Academy return for the third year to help us pack and sort the gifts in record time. This helped to expedite the countless hours it takes to organize all of the families’ gifts. We are so grateful for their assistance.

We are thankful for ongoing and new community partners, who donated funds and sponsored entire families in support of the project. We wish to recognize the following community partners for their commitment to our project: LBI Rotary Club, Brant Beach Yacht Club, The Hunger Foundation of Southern Ocean County, Mirage Men’s Club, the staff at Home Depot – Manahawkin, Stafford Township Lions Club, St. Francis Parish’s Adult and Youth Choirs, the St Francis Counseling Department staff, the Zion Church, and The Jetty Rock Foundation.

The generosity of our community is made clear by the hundreds of bags of gifts that are organized and dispersed each year to help struggling families provide gifts of warmth to their children. Thank you to the southern Ocean County community for your generous donations and your continued support of our programs.

Amy Mackenzie, LSW
Family Support Services Program Director