

Volunteers

Delivering the Gift of Human Kindness

Issue 10 Fall 2003

10th Anniversary



Annual Dinner Dance

Experience the Spirit of Holiday Express

Sunday, November 23rd is destined to be filled with the magical aura of the Holiday Express experience. That's because it's the date of the 2003 Annual Dinner Dance, a black tie affair featuring exquisite cuisine and world-class music. This year's event, commemorating the organization's 10th anniversary, will have a unique twist: guests will get a glimpse into what actually occurs when Holiday Express visits client organizations.

"We felt that many supporters may come away from the dinner dance without having an understanding of just what we do," explains Jane Denny, chair-person of the dinner dance. "This year, we wanted to create a smaller version of a typical Holiday Express party so guests can see how we interact with clients."

Guests can waltz from the dance floor to the Christmas Village, where there will be face painters and craft tables with volunteers demonstrating their arts. Event managers and

musicians will also be on hand to describe the programs and day-to-day happenings. The goal is to have dinner dance guests gain a greater appreciation for the important work that makes a difference in the lives of thousands of people.

Through the dinner dance, Holiday Express hopes to convey that contributions at every level help increase the number of beneficiaries that can be reached.

For their corporate citizenship, Berkshire Blankets of Ware, MA will be recognized with the Mary Robinson Crystal Star Award. Berkshire has been a consistent supporter of Holiday Express by donating thousands of fleece blankets each year.

In addition, individuals who "build tables" by sharing the word about Holiday Express and filling dinner dance

tables with friends will be recognized in the program for helping to make the event a fundraising success.

(continued on next page)



Dinner Dance Committee Members prepare for 10th Anniversary Dinner Dance: (from left) Kate Sharkey, co-chair; Michele Macchia, Donna Edington, Program Director and Jane Denny, co-chair.





Tim and a volunteer from Better Beginnings in Stamford, CT, the site of the first Holiday Express event.

Each time I write these messages to all of you, I try to emphasize what's changing or new with Holiday Express. This time, as our 11th season is upon us, I am reminded of why that first little band of volunteers began this journey that has taken us to so many places we never could have imagined – we all just care about what happens to other people. Well, those “other people” are out there waiting for us. I think we all underestimate the impact we have on their lives...through their memories.

I know that our 50 show schedule is absurdly demanding, so we must be even more dedicated than ever before. We also have a lot of new people with us this year who will need to be “shown the ropes” – and then will go on to teach us new ways of doing things.

Be strong...they're expecting us.

It is the mission of Holiday Express to deliver music, food, gifts and friendship to the mentally disabled, those living with illnesses such as cancer and AIDS, the homeless, the isolated elderly and others in need of the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year.

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Special Thanks to Bessie Halsey, HoEx Webmaster
Photos by Scott Longfield and HoEx friends

Holiday Express is a volunteer, non-profit, non-sectarian, registered 501(c)(3) organization.

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Annual Dinner Dance (continued from page 1)

“The dinner dance is the traditional start of another season of giving,” notes Tim McLoone, president and founder of Holiday Express. “The evening allows us to show our deep appreciation to the Holiday Express family of supporters and volunteers who have made the past 10 years possible. Without them, our mission to bring supplies, food, and cheer to the sick, lonely, and isolated would not be realized.”

The day after the dinner dance, the elegant trappings will be replaced by the stark reality of far-from-glamorous settings where individuals wait for the hand of friendship and a sign of hope. And Holiday Express will answer the call, taking to the road to tirelessly visit approximately 50 organizations in less than a month.

The Annual Dinner Dance will be held in the elegant Ocean Place Resort Hotel from 5:00 pm to 10:00 pm on Sunday, November 23. Tickets are \$175 each and are tax deductible. To play a role in lighting the way for a landmark 2003 holiday season, for information on purchasing tickets or making a donation, please contact Holiday Express at 732-544-8010 or holidayexpress@comcast.net.

Holiday Express Documentary Debuts at Two River Film Festival

A short preview of the documentary “Rock and a Heart Place – Holiday Express’ Christmas Odyssey” was screened as part of the Two River Film Festival. The ten-minute short was screened at the Clearview Cinema in Red Bank on October 12th. Holiday Express is pleased to be a partner of the Two River Film Festival’s inaugural year.

The Two River Film Festival is a non-profit organization dedicated to bringing quality films and film-related programs to Monmouth County residents and students. It’s mission is to expand our community’s cultural and educational opportunities by sharing quality independent films; creating new programs for understanding media; and raising funds to support arts and education programs throughout Monmouth County.

For more information and to see the entire schedule of fine films, check out the website at:

<http://www.tworiverfilmfestival.com>.

LETTERS

We would like to hear from you!

Please send your questions and comments to:

holidayexpress@comcast.net

(Subject: Letters to the Editor). Thanks!

Giving Partner Program

More Than Corporate Giving

*Sure, it's easy to say:
"Make a wish!"
But do wishes
ever come true?
Thanks to
Holiday Express,
more than 45 charities,
agencies and hospitals
can say,
"Yes!"*

With contributions from large businesses, as well as from private individuals, Holiday Express, through its **Giving Partner Program**, continues to grant those wishes and provide support in a meaningful way to those who need our help in a number of communities throughout the tri-state area.

The Giving Partner Program matches Holiday Express donors to specific charitable organizations so that the needs of these charities can best be served. To accomplish this goal, Holiday Express requests a "wish list" of items each charity needs, but somehow never seems to obtain, and then finds the appropriate donor or donors to fulfill those wish lists.

This matching of donors-to-charities is an effective way to build relationships between the organizations and the benefactors that support them, thus creating true "partners" in this program.

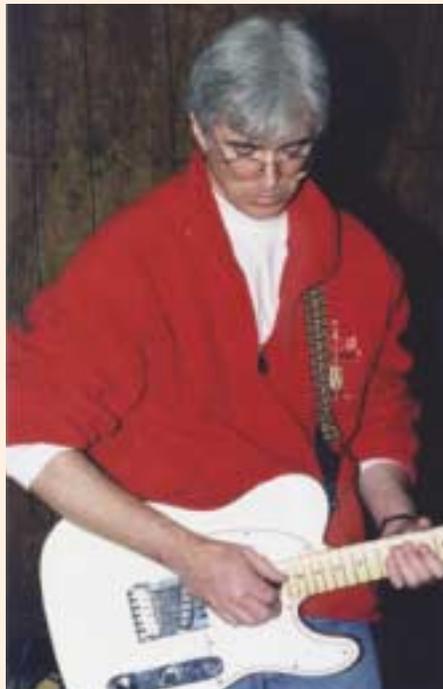
The Giving Partner Program relies not only on the support of its corporate donors, but also on the support of its individual and small group donors as well. In fact, half of the donations made through the Giving Partner Program are contributed by individuals, families, and small local businesses – not large corporations.

Jeff MacPherson and his coworkers at **Murphy Realty Preferred Homes**, a real estate agency based in Monmouth County, NJ, are among the many individuals and small group donors that participate in the Giving Partner Program. Jeff, a real estate agent, husband and father, and songwriter, is also a Holiday Express volunteer.

We recently asked him to talk about his involvement with Holiday Express and the Giving Partner Program as an example of how anyone can offer support and make a special holiday for some deserving people.

How and when did you become aware of Holiday Express and the Giving Partner Program?

I've known most of the people associated with Holiday Express for a long, long time, and for many years I'd go to the shows with my family. In 1997, the year my son, Sam, was born, I decided to join the



organization and was instantly moved by the mission. The Giving Partner Program was an extension of that involvement. Fans of Holiday Express are always asking how they can help. For me, the Giving Partner Program was the perfect answer.

What made you decide to become a Giving Partner?

My life is very blessed and I have a lot of generous friends. My boss, Jerry Murphy, offered to provide any assistance that Holiday Express needed, which included soliciting my fellow workers for contributions. Jerry also told me he'd match whatever I collected. Honestly, as a salesman, I can tell you it's not a hard sell. As I said, folks in this area are very generous.

With what charity did you partner? What were their needs and how did you supply them?

We've been involved with a few different groups. I think the first one was the **Cerebral Palsy Center** in Ocean. We got them a small refrigerator. One of the other great joys of this kind of work is meeting the people who provide these services. The people who do it every day.

How has becoming a Giving Partner impacted your life?

Oh, it's just another way of realizing that you reap what you sow. The return on this kind of work is far greater than the effort on my part. For instance, last year for my company's annual meeting, we decided to purchase as many winter coats as we could for **St. John's Church** in Newark. The Christmas Eves I've spent there are among the best of my life. I called Barbara Maran at St. John's and asked if they had a feeling about what sizes we should buy. She said, "We don't need coats, coats we got. What we need is a shop vac and some big 30 to 40 gallon pots for soup." So that's what we brought to the show. It's so easy and it makes for a great Christmas. I've often heard Tim tell an audience that we are the lucky ones. That says it.

What would you say to someone who's considering becoming a Giving Partner?

I'd say, "Why wouldn't you do this? It answers a need for the clients, it provides a vehicle for employees to participate in something wonderful and it's truly not about profit or recognition, but simply about thanking the Lord for giving you another day to do something with what you got."

If you'd like to become involved with Holiday Express as a Giving Partner or Volunteer, please email Holiday Express at holidayexpress@comcast.net or call (732) 544-8010.



2003 Gift Bags



WISH LIST



This year Holiday Express will perform over 50 shows at soup kitchens, homeless shelters, AIDS hospices and for others in need. We bring each guest we visit a special gift bag custom packed according to their needs. We will deliver 13,000 gift bags this year! This is a list of items we would like to give:

large candy canes

gum, lifesavers, mints

granola bars, breakfast bars, protein bars

small packages of cookies, crackers

Pez candy

juice boxes

toothbrushes and toothpaste

lip balm

shampoo

bar soap, wash cloths

hand lotion

hair brushes, combs

small packages of tissues

playing cards, paperbacks

puzzle books, activity books

stretch gloves

men's large insulated woolen gloves

knitted scarves, woolen hats

thermal underwear and undershirts

unisex sweatshirts, sweatpants, size L or XL

Kid's stuff

coloring books, activity books,
comic books

crayons, markers, colored pencils

any baby care products

Every show has several "raffles." Our clients are given tickets for a chance to win a fun prize. Our **Prize Wish List** is really unlimited but some of the things that have been successful in the past include:

Walkman or any personal music gadget

boom boxes

watches

small appliances

bikes, scooters

gift cards

movie passes

sports team parkas



COUNT BASIE CONCERT

Tickets now on sale for the annual fundraising concert!

Friday, December 19

8 PM

Count Basie Theatre

99 Monmouth Street

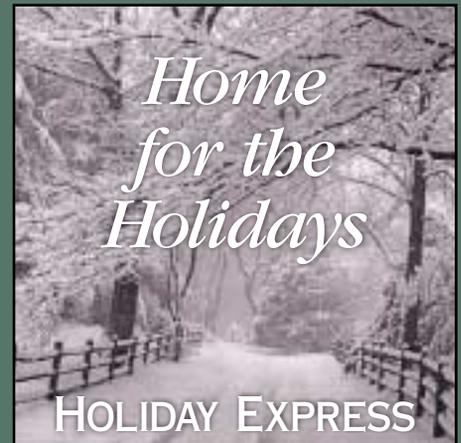
Red Bank

(732) 842-9000

<http://www.countbasietheatre.org>



NEW HOLIDAY
CD COMING
THIS SEASON!



Additional Fundraising Concert Just Announced!

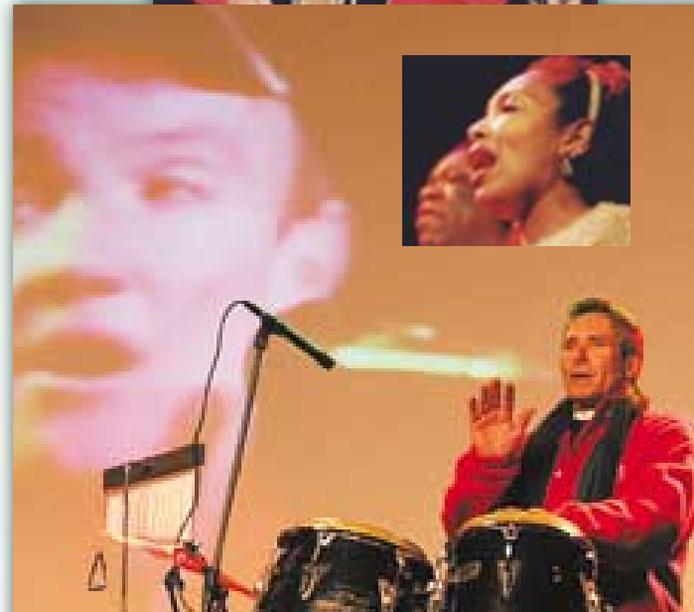
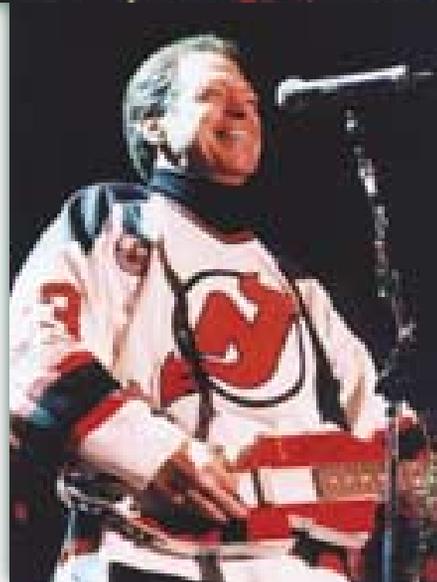
Holiday Express at CONVENTION HALL ON THE BOARDWALK IN ASBURY PARK

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

For Information, call (732) 544-8010

The latest CD release, Home for the Holidays, offers a quieter, more mellow holiday sound, evoking memories of "home." After all, it was recorded at home at Red Bank's Retromedia Sound Studio, near the Count Basie. Other tracks such as "Carol of the Bells" were recorded live at St. George's-By-the-River Church in Rumson.

Look for the new CD at Jack's Music in Red Bank and online at www.holidayexpress.org.



A Volunteer Speaks from the Heart

by Al Lundgren



Her name was Dorothy, and we met her on a rainy day at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

As all who have been there know, we first break up into groups and visit the wards. My daughter, Anna, and myself were in a group with Bobby, Amy, Doug and several other people. When we went into Dorothy's room she was lying there with a very sad face, and was obviously very sick. However, when we started singing, she seemed to come alive with the sound of music.

She moved her head back and forth to the beat and seemed to be mouthing the words. We were all very sad when we had to leave her room, but were very surprised when she was wheeled into the main hall for the group singing. I sat next to her as the singing began, and realized that, although she was in great pain, she was still singing along with all of the songs. At the break, many people came over to her, because she just seemed so special. But the special part was yet to come – *The Twelve Days of Christmas!*

Dorothy wanted to be in the group that sings "Two Turtle Doves," and each time Amy and the microphone came to her part, she sang out loudly "TWO TURTLE DOVES!" In between, she was still in much pain and had to be massaged by the helpers there. But, she never missed her part! Many clients have sung *The Twelve Days of Christmas* before and since, but she was one of the bravest singers ever to sing for Holiday Express! Everyone who met Dorothy that day, including Anna and myself, will never forget her and hope that she is feeling better today and always. This is why we are all thankful and blessed to do the work of Holiday Express.

Helping Holiday Express Deliver

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Delores Holmes I remember a time when Holiday Express stored donation items in a space the size of a garage. Now, after a short and intense 10 years of keeping the promise to make life better for someone less fortunate, those items have expanded from garage to warehouse. It's a thing to boast about – but won't be – because of the reality of it.

The need for space to maintain the items keeps growing. There are so many more people who need to be fed, kept warm and encouraged. We depend on the public to help us stock the warehouse, and volunteers of every age make sure it's delivered. The Holiday Express band may lift spirits with a musical touch, but there's a huge amount of work being done behind the scenes too, by some volunteers we seldom see. They're stocking shelves, carrying boxes, packing and driving trucks, stuffing gift bags, and doing all the things that help Holiday Express meet the need.

Two of those individuals are **Colin O'Leary** and **Ryan Murphy**. They emulate what volunteerism is all about: steadfastness, diligence, hard work and dedication to making a difference.

Joan Mercer & Merilee Celestino We are delighted that the Volunteer Spotlight is recognizing two of our younger warehouse workers. Few people realize how many Junior Volunteers are involved with Holiday Express. Last year alone more than 450 kids and teens packed the majority of the 13,000 gift bags we distributed. They also helped sort inventory, stock the shelves, input computer info, and load and unload the truck daily. We have volunteers managing their own projects and older kids supervising younger ones. On a good day (and they're all good), it's loud, chaotic, productive and fun.

Colin and Ryan have both worked in the warehouse for many years. They are easy-going and always willing to jump in and help. Not only are they hardworking and conscientious, but they even laugh at our stupid jokes! We congratulate them on their well-deserved recognition.

Food Drives Continue Mission to Deliver



The Holiday Extensions program presses on with the lofty goal of restocking local soup kitchens. "Recent drives such as last summer's Stone Pony concert and a few from schools and scouts all went to St. John's in Newark and St. Mark's in Keansburg," said Amy Robinson, Executive Administrator. "The Colts Neck Scouts helped, Red Bank Catholic, St. Leo's Church and Oak Hill Academy."



The Stone Pony concert offered an opportunity to hear HolEx musicians perform with their own bands as well as make donations to "Feed the Hungry."

There is so much more to be done. Please contact us for ways you can help: holidayexpress@comcast.net or (732) 544-8010.

Jane Denny From the time he was ten years old, Ryan has been a natural for community service. While at The Rumson Country Day School, he participated in every activity we had with an enthusiasm and sensitivity that belied his age. As a 7th and 8th grader, he became a member of the school's Community Service Leadership Board, which plans, organizes and facilitates the community service program for the children. He was the recipient of the Class of '94 Community Service Award Winner as a 7th grader – quite a feather in his cap! There was, however, a special place in his heart for Holiday Express, as it is for the whole Murphy clan. He spent countless hours in the warehouse helping Joan and Marilee pack for the shows. He was a junior volunteer at many shows, taking on the role of master elf, being the number one helper behind the scenes and bringing smiles to all the guests. Last year, Ryan worked at the Annual Dinner Dance and will do so again this year. He and his fellow student dance volunteers were instrumental in greeting guests, selling gift auction tickets and helping us with the auction buyout. His commitment is natural and genuine and will be with him always. We are so fortunate to have him in our HoEx family.

Ryan Murphy

Volunteer since 1998

HoEx Responsibility

Help out at the warehouse and shows.

Bio

I was chosen as the recipient of the Class of '94 Community Service Award Winner as a 7th grader! I am a sophomore at Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School and work as a busboy at Salt Creek Grille in Rumson.

Family

My dad and sister sing in the band and my mom helps out in the Holiday Express office.

Challenges

Not being able to go to every show.

Most Memorable Holiday Express Moment

When I wore the elf costume and made the children smile.



Colin O'Leary

General warehouse volunteer

HoEx Responsibility

General warehouse worker. For my Eagle Project, I coordinated the three phase reorganization of Holiday Express warehouse (Summer 2003): (1) shelving assembly, (2) organization and inventory, and (3) preparation for the upcoming season.

Bio

I got involved through Cub Scouts and through my dad's involvement with Holiday Express. I attend Regis High School.

Extracurriculars

JV soccer, Hearn (speech and debate society), Gaelic Society, Medical Science Club, Amate Vitam (pro-life club), and Boy Scouts.

Hobbies

Skiing, tennis, sailing, and swimming.

Family

All of my family volunteer for Holiday Express. Dad: Richard, HoEx lawyer and general warehouse volunteer; Mom: Kelly; Sisters: Caitlin and Colleen; and Brothers: Conor and Casey are all general warehouse volunteers.

Challenges

The coordination of the reorganization of the Holiday Express warehouse this summer. The magnitude of the planning



and implementation of this task was quite daunting to me initially, but I was fortunate to have the aid of numerous experienced Holiday Express volunteers.

Most Memorable Holiday Express Moment

Volunteering with my family at a local Holiday Express concert several years ago is my most memorable Holiday Express moment to date. My family and I worked serving food to the concert attendees. I will never forget the gratefulness and happiness on the faces of those whom I served. They were not the only ones benefiting from the concert, however; I too, benefited from this experience. It has given me a sense of appreciation for my community, family and friends. It was

very rewarding to help others who were in need. Most importantly, this experience helped reinforce and encourage volunteerism in my life.

Colin assembles pallet rack shelving with his Dad, Rich, and warehouse workers from Machinery & Technology Group.





News from the Elves: **New Warehouse Shapes Up**

The new warehouse is ready to handle this 10th year of helping the needy. "Thanks to lots of volunteers who kept showing up on Saturday mornings with power tools and expertise, we now have a real warehouse," said Joan Mercer, Gift Coordinator. "It's an awesome place for busy elves."

Special thanks to **Dick Denny** for the blueprint drawing, **Carl Schwarz** for heading up the muscle team and connecting us with **Karl Danckwert** of **Machinery & Technology Group**, which provided us with industrial strength pallet

shelving at a minimal cost. Special thanks also go to Bud from Monmouth Building Center who donated a significant contribution of lumber.

Joan also added, "Colin O'Leary, Junior Volunteer extraordinaire, worked closely with all the above." (*Read more about Colin in Volunteer Spotlight, page 6*)

Inventory is arriving daily, however, hats are still needed (fleece or knit, pull-on, one size warms all). Any donations will be happily accepted. For more information, please contact the warehouse at (732) 544-8010.



Trudy Parton checks measurements with Karl Danckwert and warehouse crew.



Warehouse workers prepare to install new shelving: Karl Danckwert and two friends from Machinery & Technology Group with "Rocky" Falotico, Ryan Murphy, Colin O'Leary, Marilee Celestino, Carl Schwarz, Rich O'Leary, Joan Mercer and Mark Murphy.

We deeply appreciate your generosity – without it, Holiday Express could not deliver.



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