

Giving Partner Program

One of the hallmarks of Holiday Express is its ever-expanding "Giving Partner Program." This Program matches Holiday Express donors with specific charitable organizations so the needs of these charities can best be served.

The Giving Partner Program is designed to provide a charity with items it needs, but is often unable to acquire. By requesting that each charity provide a "wish list," Holiday Express is able to find an appropriate donor or donors to fulfill the wish list. This matching of donors with charities forges a relationship between the charitable organizations and the benefactors that support them, making them true "partners" in the program.

Peg Ford, our Giving Partner Coordinator, works her magic year after year by matching not only businesses, but also individuals and families with each charity's wish list.

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

Hutchins, Farrell, Meyer & Allison – Enduring Giving Partners

by Bob Hutchins

As an active supporter of a number of charities that he had in common with Tim McLoone about ten years ago, Bob Hutchins became interested in Holiday Express.

After learning about Holiday Express from Tim, I immediately saw it as a great opportunity for my CPA firm, Hutchins Farrell Meyer & Allison, to include Holiday Express in our HFMAssist Program. This company program supports and pays our employees to go out into the community and volunteer with the organizations about which they feel passionate.

In that first year, we were Giving Partners for five events. In addition, I hosted a party for the Holiday Express Volunteers at a restaurant I owned in Red Bank after the Tree Lighting, and invited all my HFMAssist volunteers. It was great and we have annually sponsored three events since then.

For me, the best part of being a Giving Partner is the chance to be part of the event. Over the years, I have been a food server, busboy, meeter-greeter and even a "Disco Santa." My favorite role is simply being there to talk to people and let them know they are important; to encourage them to sing, dance or laugh; or just talk with them. The most important gift Holiday Express Volunteers bring is dignity to people who attend these events.

The shopping for the gifts we will donate is most often done by our employees, sometimes by phone or internet. We also contact the charity; and, if they have the exact item picked out, we simply pay the

bill. Sometimes we just write a check if their "Wish List" is less than the minimum amount we give to each charity.

My most memorable Holiday Express experience happened a few years ago. HFMA was the Giving Partner for an organization serving people with physical disabilities. We had purchased the gift before attending the actual event. While at the show, there was a young woman in a wheelchair who did not seem to be enjoying much of anything. I sat next to her and attempted to start a conversation. It was difficult but eventually, when encouraged by her case worker, the young woman opened up. I was able to get her to dance in her wheelchair with me and we were best friends for that entire event. Her case worker told me that the girl loved computers but only had about one hour weekly to use the organization's PC. On Christmas Eve, myself and another employee drove to Newark and brought her a new computer, monitor and printer. Dressed in our Santa hats, we set it up for her and showed her how to access email and perform a few other tasks. This was the best Christmas Eve I can remember – and since then I try to attend a Christmas Eve event every year.

After all this time, being a Giving Partner is part of our annual holiday tradition here at HFMA. I have recommended to friends and clients that they do the same.

I also enjoy bringing my family to shows. Being a Giving Partner and attending the Holiday Express event is the best Christmas gift I give to myself.

2007 GIVING PARTNERS

Number of organizations
with wish lists: 58

Number of organizations with
giving partners to date: 44

Total number of
Giving Partners: 31

New Giving Partners: 9

Gifts Given

Fax Machine

Tetherball set

Developmental Trike

DVD Players and DVDs

20 Watches

Ping Pong Table

Digital Camera and Printing Dock

4 Rocking Chairs

2 Computers

Reflection Bench

Projection Screen

All-in-One Printer Scanner, Fax and Copier

Karaoke machine

Ice Cream Maker

Adaptive Power Wheelchair

2 Camcorders

2 Multi-Disc CD Players

Checks Totaling \$7,980

Wooden Sandbox

2 Little Tykes Cars

Microwave

2 Twin Beds

2 Bureaus

Folding Tables

Driveway Sealcoating

Eight \$25 Borders Gift Cards

Retractable Awning

Coats

5 DVD/VCR Players

Stereo System

1 Wii Game System

1 Nintendo Game System

8 Printers

Fax Machine

Pots, Pans, Dishes, Flatware

Sheets and Towels

Clothes Dryer

Photo ID Badgemaker

TV

Acoustic Tone Generator

2 Bagel Toasters

Softballs, Bats, Gloves, Tote Bags

Swimming Goggles

Trendelenberg Stretcher

Educational Books and Videos

Balance Kit

Computer Software

Handtrucks

Canopy