



# HOLIDAY EXPRESS<sup>®</sup>

LOOKING BACK ON THE 2013 SEASON



DELIVERING THE GIFT OF HUMAN KINDNESS

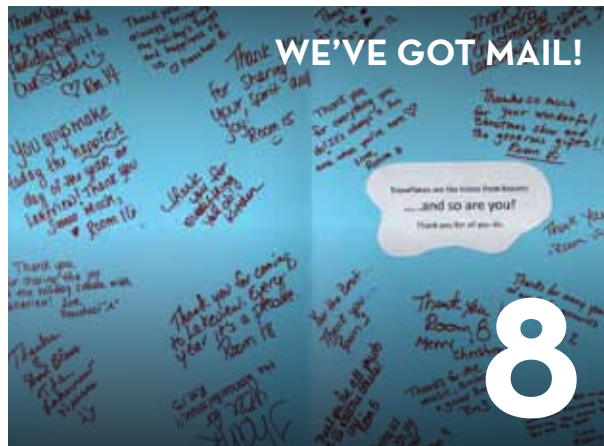
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## MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Holiday Express to deliver music, food, gifts, financial support and friendship to those with the greatest need for the gift of human kindness during the holiday season and throughout the year.

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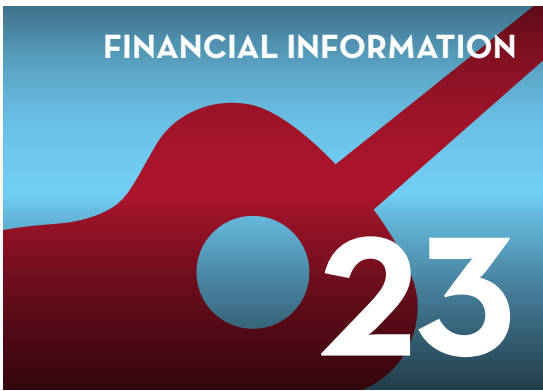
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# MESSAGES FROM TIM & DONALD



MESSAGE FROM TIM MCLOONE

**Y**ou would not think that — more than two decades into this adventure called “Holiday Express” — there would be much change, but during our 21st season, it appeared that much of the world discovered us for the first time. I was astonished at the number of media requests that we received. There were so many news crews, magazine profiles and other media reporters asking about us that I actually lost track of how many I had done and would be genuinely surprised to hear someone say, “I saw that story about Holiday Express on TV last night.”

Much of the credit goes to our media consultant, Krista Newbert, as well as our hardworking office staff, but the rest goes to all of you who have been spreading the word for these many years. I have always felt that one of the reasons the media likes us is that we have truly never done this for the attention, so I guess it just took them a little more time to find us. Of course, the best part of this newfound attention is that it will make it easier for us to continue our mission going forward.

Thanks to all and keep sharing the good news,

Tim McLoone  
*Founder*



MESSAGE FROM DONALD PIGNATARO

**M**usic is the connection that brings together and enhances the lives of thousands of distinct souls during a Holiday Express season. Our volunteers often wonder if the audience is listening, yet over and over again, a smile from a once-expressionless face shouts out: they heard everything! Those priceless moments are the result of heartfelt dedication and substantial contributions.

Throughout this past year, countless examples of kindness and generosity demonstrated how you, our selfless volunteers and supporters, are the strength of this organization. Since 1993, Holiday Express has been providing musical entertainment, gifts, food, friendship and fun to an underserved and often forgotten community of special needs individuals. Those individuals get a chance to escape the obstacles they face when our collection of talented, committed and caring volunteers bring something wonderful into their lives through music and human interaction. The connection made with isolated individuals of all ages contributes to the nurturing spirit of community so necessary to help raise awareness about the

people and organizations we visit and respect.

We also welcome the continuous support of our generous donors. You can be confident we are committed to the high standards expected and we will continue to make a difference in the lives of those we visit. You matter; you have invested with us, and our work must prove we are worthy of your investment. The greatest pleasure received in return is seeing the joy you put on the faces of those we serve; it gives us all a purity of purpose. I thank you for being there for those in need and for allowing us to continue on with our mission.

Donald Pignataro  
*Executive Director*

# PLACES TO GO AND PEOPLE TO SEE: HOLIDAY EXPRESS ACROSS THE MILES

Below is our 2013 schedule of events and the 63 audiences we visited – sometimes two or even three on the same day – as our army of volunteers traveled far and wide to deliver the gift of human kindness to those who needed it most.

NOV 12	The Deron School	Union, NJ
NOV 13	North Jersey Developmental Center	Totowa, NJ
NOV 14	Mount Carmel Guild – Union County ICMS	Linden, NJ
NOV 15	Cerebral Palsy of North Jersey	Mountainside, NJ
NOV 17	Greystone Park Psychiatric Hospital	Morris Plains, NJ
NOV 18	Mental Health Association of Morris County ICMS	Mountain Lakes, NJ
NOV 19	Ocean Mental Services	Toms River, NJ
NOV 20	High Point School	Morganville, NJ
NOV 20	Spectrum for Living	Rockleigh, NJ
NOV 21	The Children's Therapy Center	Midland Park, NJ
NOV 22	St. Joseph's School for the Blind	Jersey City, NJ
NOV 23	Mercy Home	Brooklyn, NY
NOV 24	Crystal Lake Healthcare & Rehabilitation	Bayville, NJ
NOV 25	The Center for Educational Advancement	Flemington, NJ
NOV 25	Catholic Charities – Partners in Recovery	Trenton, NJ
NOV 26	Woodbine Developmental Center	Woodbine, NJ
NOV 26	Ancora Psychiatric Hospital	Ancora, NJ
NOV 29	Red Bank Town Lighting	Red Bank, NJ
DEC 2	Passaic County Elks Cerebral Palsy High School	Clifton, NJ
DEC 2	Eva's Village	Paterson, NJ
DEC 3	Regional Day School at Jackson	Jackson, NJ
DEC 3	Trinitas Regional Medical Center – Brother Bonaventure Residents	Elizabeth, NJ
DEC 4	Medallion Care	Clifton, NJ
DEC 4	Passaic County Elks Cerebral Palsy Adult Training Center	Clifton, NJ
DEC 5	Norman A. Bleshman Regional Day School	Paramus, NJ
DEC 5	Woodbridge Developmental Center	Woodbridge, NJ
DEC 6	The Children's Center of Monmouth County	Neptune, NJ
DEC 6	Harbor School	Eatontown, NJ
DEC 7	Hudson Milestones	Jersey City, NJ
DEC 7	Eastern Christian Children's Retreat	Wyckoff, NJ
DEC 8	Matheny Medical & Education Center	Peapack, NJ

DEC 8	Children's Specialized Hospital – Toms River Campus	Toms River, NJ
DEC 9	A. Harry Moore School	Jersey City, NJ
DEC 9	CPC Behavioral Healthcare, Park Place, Booker Behavioral Health, & Community Connections	Asbury Park, NJ
DEC 10	Hawkswood School	Eatontown, NJ
DEC 10	Passaic County Elks Cerebral Palsy Elementary School	Clifton, NJ
DEC 11	Community Care Behavioral Health	Freehold, NJ
DEC 11	NJPAC Benefit Concert	Newark, NJ
DEC 12	Easter Seals	Lincroft, NJ
DEC 12	Straight & Narrow	Paterson, NJ
DEC 13	Alpha School	Jackson, NJ
DEC 13	Millburn Regional Day School	Millburn, NJ
DEC 14	Children's Specialized Hospital – Mountainside Campus	Mountainside, NJ
DEC 15	St. Francis Inn Soup Kitchen	Philadelphia, PA
DEC 15	Hunterdon Developmental Center	Clinton, NJ
DEC 16	Gateway School	Carteret, NJ
DEC 16	Ladacin Network	Wanamassa, NJ
DEC 17	Trenton Area Soup Kitchen	Trenton, NJ
DEC 17	Trenton Psychiatric Hospital	West Trenton, NJ
DEC 17	Somerset Hills Residential Treatment Center	Warren, NJ
DEC 18	Center for Vocational Rehabilitation	Eatontown, NJ
DEC 18	Audrey Hepburn Children's House	Hackensack, NJ
DEC 19	Lakeview School	Edison, NJ
DEC 19	Count Basie Theatre Benefit Concert	Red Bank, NJ
DEC 20	Blythedale Children's Hospital	Valhalla, NY
DEC 20	University Behavioral Healthcare	Piscataway, NJ
DEC 21	Oasis – A Haven for Women and Children	Paterson, NJ
DEC 21	New Lisbon Developmental Center	New Lisbon, NJ
DEC 22	Vineland Developmental Center	Vineland, NJ
DEC 22	Lyons House – Center of Recovery and Hope	Lyons, NJ
DEC 24	St. John's Soup Kitchen	Newark, NJ
DEC 24	Trinity Church Soup Kitchen	Asbury Park, NJ
DEC 24	St. Ann's Soup Kitchen	Newark, NJ

# HOLIDAY EXPRESS MOMENTS

It seems that each and every event brings what our volunteers have come to know and cherish as “Holiday Express moments” that leave indelible impressions in our hearts. We share a few of this year’s magical moments...



It stopped me in my tracks and I couldn't help but wonder what it was they prayed for. Was it simply a poignant thank you for that one meal? A request to have another one like it sometime soon? Or was it a prayer for something more — a plea for a place to spend the cold night, a safe place to live, health for themselves, hope for their children, sorrow for whatever it was in their life that had led them to this time and place? No matter what their circumstances, I was awed by the fact that something deep within them still stirred at the sound of the holiday music and something ingrained even deeper still, probably from childhood, led them to say a silent, respectful prayer at that moment when a meal was served to them.

For the rest of us, there is nothing truer than this: “If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.”

*Joanne C.*

**S**t. Francis Inn, which ministers to the poor and homeless, is located in one of Philly’s poorest, roughest neighborhoods, and by the time the bus pulled up, there was a line of people waiting outside for their chance to come in, get warm, and have a meal. Throughout the afternoon, among the hundreds of

guests who arrived, I was struck by the number of guests who silently and inconspicuously prayed. I’d spot them here and there, closing their eyes, folding their hands and bowing their heads before they’d take a bite of the hot meal that had been carefully placed before them.

**O**ne particular show that touched me to the core this year was the CVR party. I always try to work the back rows once the show gets started, because those folks may be the “overlooked” ones. One gentleman who caught my eye seemed completely into his own

thoughts, totally removed from the dancing and music. I asked him if he wanted to dance and he did look at me, but made no response, then looked forward again. I bid him a happy holiday and turned and began dancing with the enthusiastic crowd. A few minutes later, I felt a



tap on my back. I turned and there was my intended dance partner, still silent and expressionless, but ready to dance. We joined hands and I practically bubbled over, telling him I was so happy he joined me. He danced the entire song and then, when it was over, sat back down, retreating into his original state, just looking ahead.

It hit me right between the eyes that I might have been one of these individuals attending the CVR party in this capacity because, when I was 47, I had a ruptured brain aneurysm. The dear Lord guided some fantastic neurosurgeons, spared my life, and brought me back to my original state, but it was a very big possibility that I might have died, or been altered and perhaps not have the cognitive

ability that I was born with. The thought panicked me for a moment, but then all I had to do was look around, take in what was happening, and I was instantly put at ease. If I had been a client at CVR, I would be fine because the wonderful people who make up Holiday Express would have made sure of that.

*Nancy M.*

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**S**omerset Hills Residential Treatment Center is a residential facility for boys up to age 18 who were physically, sexually, and/or emotionally abused. All were either removed from their homes or had no homes to begin with. Due to lack of funding and myriad other problems, the facility was due to close its doors at the end of 2013 - only a week or two after the Holiday Express party. We were told prior to our arrival that everyone, including the boys, knew of the impending situation.

While the mood was initially somber, the boys started to become more engaged as the music blared and the usual Holiday Express silliness took hold. We discovered we had some talented singers in the house - including one boy who had not spoken a word during his entire stay at the facility, yet sang along with the band at the top of his lungs. There were also some real heartbreaking moments when some of the boys approached individual Holiday Express elves and asked to come home with us.



At Holiday Express events, we see so many people who are down on their luck, thrown into an unfortunate circumstance, or born with a disability that makes life impossibly hard. Yet, like the boys at Somerset Hills, for two hours, these folks are able to sing and dance and let us

hug them and show we care - a reminder that no matter how bleak, sad, or hard life gets, we still have so much to be thankful for and how important it is to share some human kindness.

*Anonymous*

## HOLIDAY EXPRESS MOMENTS

(continued from previous page)



**M**y favorite event is the Lyons Center for Recovery. I don't know why it is, but the mix of veterans and the folks from Jespy is really kind of magical. Each provides that missing piece of the puzzle for the other one. There are so many moments that are very emotional for me: when the veterans say the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of God Bless America, the joy of one of the raffle winners as he showed me his prizes. I'm awed by the dignity of the veterans and feel lucky to be afforded the opportunity to thank them for everything they did for our country.

As the daughter of a veteran, I know how proud they are of their service and how deeply personal their patriotism is. I am honored that I was able to do some small thing to make their holiday a little brighter and let them know they are not forgotten.

*Phyllis M.*

## WE'VE GOT MAIL!

There's a reason why they're called love letters: these are excerpts from just some of the messages we receive from the people we love so much...

“ Sometimes you know an angel only by the miracles that are bestowed upon your doorstep. This Christmas and holiday season, you have truly been the angel on the doorstep to all of the women and children who came to Oasis for comfort and hope. Your gift of the wonderful show you put on for our afterschool program children filled so many hearts with the wonder of the season. For many of our clients, this is the best Christmas they have ever had. Your generosity and kindness to them this holiday season was truly outstanding.”

Sister Gloria Perez,  
*Executive Director*  
Oasis, A Haven for Women and Children

“ I cannot thank you enough for letting us become part of the Holiday Express family this year. Our clients had an amazing time. Fun, great, joyful and memorable were words used by clients and staff to describe the party. Every one of your volunteers were attentive, involved, and it was obvious they truly cared. You should be very proud of them and what Holiday Express means to those who are touched by your generosity and kindness. Our clients love to dance and they did not disappoint the band. They were a captive audience, dancing and singing to every song. The only lull was when the chocolate chip cookies were being served. I had to gently explain to the band members how difficult it is to compete with chocolate chip cookies.”

Liz Sullivan, Director,  
*Adult Activities*  
Hudson Milestones

“ We cannot begin to express our thanks for the remarkable event and donations you made possible for the children on our Long Term Care Unit in Toms River. We are so grateful! It is individuals and groups in the community that make the holiday season at Children's Specialized Hospital a huge success. Having others show compassion and kindheartedness for our children ensures that each and every one of them experiences a truly wonderful holiday. On behalf of







the patients, their families, and the staff, we would like to thank you for your devotion, commitment, hard work and above all, your compassion that continues to put smiles on the faces of our children. Please extend our gratitude to all those that helped make this event and Giving Partner donations possible. Thank you for partnering with us to provide a magical holiday for each child!

BobbiJo Pansier,  
*Therapy Supervisor,*  
 and Carolyn Romond,  
*Recreation Therapist*  
 Children’s Specialized Hospital, Toms River

the Easter Seals  
 New Jersey  
 mission to enable  
 individuals with disabilities or  
 special needs and their families to live, learn, work  
 and play in their communities with equality, dignity and  
 independence by partaking in this event with you. It was  
 such a joy to see even our most withdrawn consumers  
 having the opportunity to interact at the party – be it by  
 clapping their hands, rocking in their chairs, swaying to  
 the music or the smiles on their faces.

Nicole McManus,  
*Service Coordinator*  
 Easter Seals New Jersey

“I am writing to thank you for an outstanding day Holiday Express gave to our consumers last week. It was truly a memorable party that all of our consumers enjoyed. The dedication and thoughtfulness in the party planning, food, music and gifts by all the Holiday Express volunteers surpasses anything I could have imagined. Holiday Express’ kindness touched the lives of our consumers this holiday season, especially for those who may not have had an opportunity to experience such a joyous event. Our consumers are still talking about the party and how much fun it was for them. Holiday Express contributed to

“We would like to thank you all for our wonderful Holiday Express holiday party for the Audrey Hepburn Children’s House of Hackensack University Medical Center! Our appreciation for your group and the amazing party they put together cannot be expressed in words. Our children and families had a fabulous time and they danced the night away.

Michelle Mroz and staff  
 Audrey Hepburn Children’s House

# BEHIND THE SCENES: WARMING UP THE BAND AND FILLING UP THE SHELVES

Although the Holiday Express season of events takes place from mid-November through late December, our warehouse hums with activity long before the season starts, as the band – all professional musicians who join forces to volunteer their time and talent – comes together to rehearse and an army of volunteers and donors works to stock the shelves...





## STAY UPDATED AND KEEP IN TOUCH

Our needs are continually being updated – and so is our collection of photos, stories, events and other news we'd love to share! The best way to learn all the latest from Holiday Express throughout the year, and how to help, is to visit our website at [www.holidayexpress.org](http://www.holidayexpress.org) or look for Holiday Express on Facebook. Not on Facebook? Not a problem! You can link directly to our page right from our website.

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF HOLIDAY EXPRESS

On the day of a typical Holiday Express event — although our days are not quite “typical” — our volunteers are busy rockin’ round the clock!



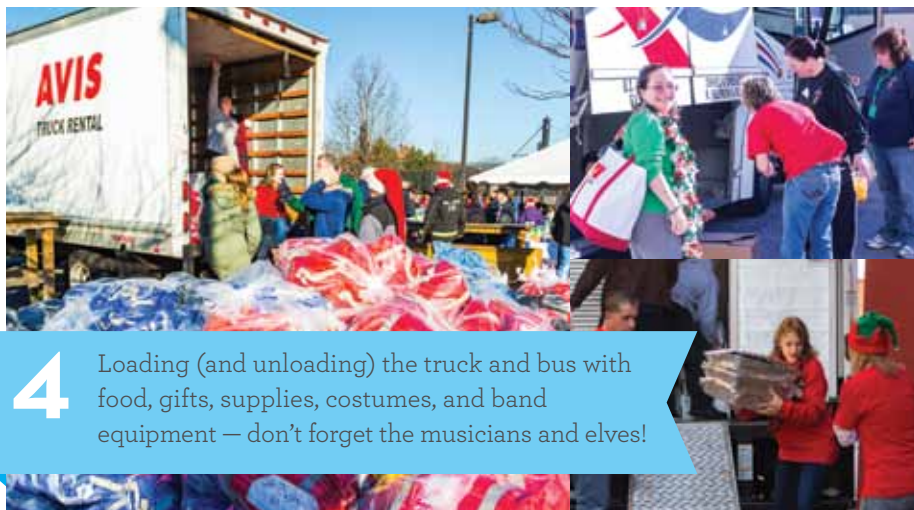
**1** Organizing and packing gift and raffle bags with requested items and special surprises!



**2** Preparing all the food and fixings for yummy meals to be served!



**3** Getting ready to spread some cheer with fun tattoos, face painting, and handmade craft items!



**4** Loading (and unloading) the truck and bus with food, gifts, supplies, costumes, and band equipment — don't forget the musicians and elves!



**5** The wheels on the bus go ‘round and ‘round; on the road again!



**6** Decking the halls and creating a festive setting for our very special audiences!





7 Tune up the band and cue music!



8 What's a party without something good to eat?



9 Gift bags, raffle prizes and Giving Partners are some highlights of the day — and the gifts that keep on giving!



10 There's no telling who will show up from our cast of characters!



11 Smiles and hugs: this is what it's all about!

# NOTES FROM THE ROAD

Some perceptive ponderings among the many posted in an online blog this season by our talented musical elf, Matt S., after performing at dozens of events...



**NORTH JERSEY DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER, TOTOWA, NJ:** This is a facility for developmentally disabled adults, and in a lot of ways, it's sadder because a lot of these people don't have much, if any, family to speak of. For some in the crowd, this WAS Christmas. The gifts we gave them might be the only ones they receive. There was one woman in a wheelchair who tried to motion me over. Usually people will try to grab the mic, but this woman didn't - instead, she grabbed my hand. When the song was over, I looked at her and she had a tear running down her cheek. Wow. I hope we were able to bring her a little bit of happiness.



**CEREBRAL PALSY OF NORTH JERSEY, MOUNTAINSIDE, NJ:** Our crowd was filled with people who were wheelchair-bound with cerebral palsy and had trouble controlling their motions and communicating. Too

often you see people who are very competent mentally yet trapped in their wheelchairs, but that didn't stop this enthusiastic bunch. I'm amazed at the capacity of the human spirit to look past bleak scenarios and have fun, no matter what the circumstances. How can I complain about anything? Everyone, no matter what their situation, deserves at least a couple hours of unbridled joy. And I'm happy to be a part of something that brings it to them.

**GREYSTONE PARK PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, MORRIS PLAINS NJ:** I was a little apprehensive that this would be a tough crowd to win over. But then the first man was rolled in on a wheelchair with a huge smile on his face and clapping with anticipation and I knew it would be okay. Poor Santa got mobbed by people just wanting to give him a hug. I can't help but smile at how people of all ages react when they see Santa come out. I think many of the people we see look at him as someone who loves and cares for them no matter what. To see him right there, hugging them or giving them a high five, is really magical. We all need something like that in our lives.

**CRYSTAL LAKE HEALTH & REHABILITATION CENTER, BAYVILLE, NJ:** The vast majority of the clients here were wheelchair-bound, and although the crowd couldn't get up and dance, you could see they were enjoying the party. The powerful combination of good music and simple human kindness is what Holiday Express is all about. I can't quite explain it, but it's a deep connection that happens between volunteer and client. During the infamous "12 Days of Christmas," I was assigned the five golden rings, which means I have to pass out five yellow hula hoops and get everyone to yell "FIVE GOLDEN RINGS" as loudly and obnoxiously as possible. So I asked my group, "who wants a golden ring?" An older woman named Marjorie waved me over, took my hand and whispered, "all I want is this. I said "okay, I can do that," as I held her hand and didn't let go...

**PASSAIC COUNTY ELKS CP HIGH SCHOOL, CLIFTON, NJ:** Today's word of the day is "love" because that was the overwhelming feeling in the room. At every event, we always take a moment to recognize the caregivers; the people who dedicate their lives to helping the people we see every Christmas. Tim always says that we do what we do for a couple of hours

during the holiday season, but it takes a special type of individual to do it year 'round. The caregivers are the unsung heroes and really embody the holiday spirit. There were tons of faculty and staff in the room and they weren't just standing off to the side watching the party. They were dancing and hugging their students, singing and clapping with them. You could tell they loved them like they were their own kids. Normally, I feel a little sad leaving an event because it's uncertain what the next 364 days will

bring for the people we see. But not today. These kids are in good hands and it's all thanks to these caregivers.

.....  
**TRINITAS REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER, ELIZABETH, NJ:** I wanted to take a second to talk about who Holiday Express general volunteers — the folks that aren't in the band — because too often I run into people who can't quite wrap their heads around the whole thing ("You do this for FREE?" "You do HOW MANY

events?" "You mean you just do this EVERY YEAR?"). It takes a special kind of person to be a general volunteer. Tim always says that the band gets all the attention because we make the most noise, but the volunteers are what make this thing happen. Today, I was setting up and had a chance to turn around and watch the pre-show happenings. The volunteers were bustling around serving food to all the guests and giving them party favors, but it was the little things that caught my eye.





I saw one volunteer walking with his arm around one of the guests and holding him like she never wanted to let go. There was another volunteer just sitting down at one of the tables chatting with one of the guests. And, while this was going on, food was being served and gift bags — pre-packed at the Holiday Express warehouse by even more volunteers — were being carried in. The room was decorated with balloons and ribbons and other festive things. All done by volunteers. During the show, the volunteers were wheeling the guests out on the floor, moving them to the music and dancing with the ones that could. There was hugging and

hand holding and tears being shed by both guests and volunteers. The key that makes everything work here in Holiday Express world is simple dignity. The volunteers who are out there with the guests every single day treat them with the dignity that they deserve as human beings. For those two hours — whether you're a guest or a volunteer and regardless of where you come from — we're all exactly the same. I think the guests sense that from the volunteers and it helps them loosen up and enjoy themselves a little more. So to all the general volunteers: it's amazing to watch what you guys do day in and day out, and the seemingly unending supply

of compassion and holiday cheer is inspiring. It's an honor to work with you all.

.....

**EASTERN CHRISTIAN CHILDREN'S RETREAT, WYCKOFF, NJ:** At Eastern Christian, there were many families on hand to enjoy the music and the fun with their relatives who happened to be residents. It was a beautiful thing to see guests in their wheelchairs surrounded by mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters, but that familiar pang of sadness came right along with it. As is with the case with so many of the other places we go visit, the residents are there because



their families can't give them the care they need. I can't even imagine the kind of pain this causes. It's a stark reminder that when we visit the marginalized in society and celebrate the holidays with them, it isn't just for the guests. It's for the families and caregivers, too.

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**A. HARRY MOORE SCHOOL, JERSEY CITY, NJ:** Let's talk about "This Little Light of Mine." It's become a staple song at our events and Tim always dedicates it to the caregivers and families in the audience who do the important work of "keeping the little lights shining" in all of the people we see. As we were playing the tune, I looked out and saw some teachers and staff members holding the kids in their laps and in their arms, gently singing "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine" to them. Wow. You could tell these teachers loved their students like one of their own. Such tenderness and love.

.....

**CHILDREN'S SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL, MOUNTAINSIDE, NJ:** Some of the kids were so severely disabled, it was hard to tell if the music meant anything to them. But every now and then, there was a look of acknowledgement or a slight smile that reassured me we were still getting through to them. In the sadness, there is always hope. Sheldon, one of our singers, unleashed the greatest "This Little Light of Mine" to date and I gave in to the emotion during the



grand "Alone on Christmas." It was a beautiful moment to look out into the crowd and sing that simple but powerful chorus. At the end as we were leaving, I was stopped by a couple who were there with one of the kids. "What is this?" they asked. "Who started it? Where do you get your funding?" I chatted with them about Holiday Express and the volunteers and the work we do. They seemed impressed. Maybe we will see that couple on the bus next year?

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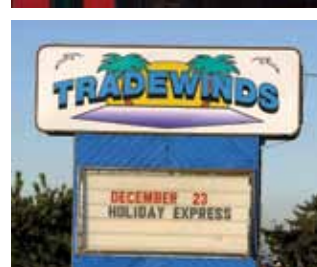
**ST. JOHN'S SOUP KITCHEN, NEWARK, NJ:** Today's word of the day is "dignity" and at our grand finale event, we tried to treat everyone with it. The people who lined up to get into our show today ranged from very poor to homeless. We don't know what happened that they fell on such hard times, but we aren't there to judge or draw conclusions. We are there to make sure that, even for a short time, these people have a nice hot meal and a little Christmas celebration

to go with it, no matter what their situation might be. I had a few moments walking back to my car to reflect on this season as a whole. I say a lot that Holiday Express changed Christmas for me (and the rest of the volunteers, as well) but it really has. It has made me realize how truly lucky I am to be able to simply go home for the holidays because there are far too many who won't have that opportunity. This is what Christmas is for me now. And I couldn't be happier about it. After every show this season, someone would come up to us and say "thank you" and I would always reply with "No, thank you. We love it." We volunteer a lot of our time, but Tim always says that we get so much more out of it than the people do in some cases. And it's very true. Thank you to all of those who we played for this year for reminding all of us what Christmas is all about. And so we part ways again, Holiday Express. Until next year. Merry Christmas, friends.

*"And on to the next!"*

# TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE SHARING FUN: A LOOK BACK ACROSS THE YEARS

Faces and fashion may change, but the feelings endure and the gift of human kindness never gets old. Now in our 21st season of Holiday Express, we remember when...



# PAYING IT FORWARD

Volunteers come to Holiday Express in diverse ways; often, those we serve join us in serving others after they themselves have been touched by a Holiday Express visit...



**W**hen Geri Brewer's daughter turned 21 and aged-out of her special education school in California, Geri found herself searching all over the country for another program experienced in treating patients with Lesch-Nyhan syndrome, a rare disorder where the body produces too much uric acid, resulting in neurological problems. Geri's search took her to the Matheny Medical and Education

Center in Peapack, New Jersey. She and her daughter, Rasheedah Mahali, paid a visit to the facility and immediately knew that this was the place. Rasheedah fit right in, making the cross-country relocation much smoother, and the Matheny community soon became her extended family.

In December 2001, mother and daughter were introduced to Holiday Express at the annual party, and both were wowed by what they saw. "I was totally blown away! They entertained the Matheny community like they were performing for VIPs at Madison Square Garden. They put their heart and soul

in every song." A nurse who sang in her church choir and at weddings, Geri immediately "knew I wanted to be a part of this wonderful group of people." Her life and work schedule got in the way until 2012, when she became a Holiday Express member. Geri just finished up her second season as a singer with the band. She tries to do at least ten events a season and marvels at the overwhelming reception Holiday Express receives at every stop.

Rasheedah is now 34, doing well at Matheny, and looks forward each year to Holiday Express' annual visit. One of Geri's proudest moments is playing there and having her daughter in the audience. While Rasheeda found a new home at Matheny, Geri says, "I feel like I have found my extended family, too, through Holiday Express."

# FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS



We are reminded every day that life is short. Treasure the people you have in your life, because you never know when your time together will become beloved memories. In October 2013, we said a sudden goodbye to our talented

Holiday Express "sound guy" and friend, Jack Koza. He and his crew have been with us for more than thirteen

years, and Jack truly understood what Holiday Express was all about.



In February, 2014, we also bid a sad farewell to Rich Spahr, who shared the Holiday Express spirit as our Santa and trusted truck driver for many years.

They will be greatly missed.

# FOOD FOR THE SOUL

At Holiday Express events, we not only serve up music and merriment, but we serve thousands of meals, as well – with help from some fabulous supporters.

**T**his past 2013 Holiday Express season, **Jersey Mike's Subs** donated an incredible 4,410 delicious subs, which brought many smiles to those we served. We love Jersey Mike's Subs!

The Holiday Express mission receives amazing support from the **McLoone's Restaurants**, chefs, staff, and family. They helped with our Giving Partners program, our Benefit Clambake, and in many other ways – including the

donation of more than 2,500 delicious “sit-down” holiday meals to the people we visited this season. At McLoone's Restaurants, the art of philanthropy starts from the top and trickles down. We can't thank them enough!

This season, **WindMill** generously donated 600+ delicious hot dogs, together with condiments. Show your support to this amazing local New Jersey company. Many thanks to WindMill!



# SPONSORS

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COUNT BASIE THEATRE — DECEMBER 19, 2013

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## HOLIDAY EXPRESS CONCERT

RED BANK TOWN LIGHTING  
NOVEMBER 29, 2013

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Jersey Mike's Subs

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# SUPPORTERS

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Big Joe Henry  
Circle of Love bracelet makers at Easter Seals  
Craft makers at Equestra  
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Capital One

## CIRCLES OF LOVE



**Gina Harris**, a creative jewelry artisan, helped our friends at Easter Seals in Wall, NJ create bracelets to

be gifted in the 17,000 swag bags given to the guests we visited this season. The materials for the fashionable jewelry were donated by Travel Leaders in Neptune, NJ. The beautiful bracelet symbolizes the "Full Circle of Love."

# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

The impact of our mission and how we accomplish it:

## EXPENSES

TOTAL: \$1,148,708

**\$153,573**

Special Events  
Performances

**13%**

FUNDRAISING

**\$76,300**

Administrative  
Insurance  
Technology  
Utilities  
Supplies

**7%**

MGMT & GEN

**80%**

PROGRAM

**\$918,835**

Mission goods  
and services  
Gift bag items  
Transportation  
Sound  
Food  
Warehouse space  
Scholarships

ESTABLISHED  
IN  
**1993** | USING  
**1,600**  
VOLUNTEERS ANNUALLY

DISTRIBUTING MORE THAN  
**275,000**  
GIFT BAGS SO FAR

RECEIVING  
**NO**

GOVERNMENT FUNDING,  
DUES, OR FEES

PERFORMING MORE THAN  
**923**  
MUSICAL EVENTS IN  
**7** STATES  
TO DATE | SERVING AN  
UNDERSERVED  
POPULATION-  
THOSE WITH A  
DIVERSITY OF  
SPECIAL NEEDS-  
FOR FREE

**63** IN **43**  
EVENTS : DAYS

**20,000**  
ENTERTAINED AND FED

**5** NEW  
ORGANIZATIONS

## REVENUE

TOTAL: \$1,122,004

**1%**

OTHER

**\$8,299**

Sales

**16%**

PERFORMANCES

**\$175,879\***

Count Basie  
NJPAC  
Red Bank

**14%**

SPECIAL EVENTS

**\$161,664\***

Golf Outing  
Clambake

**40%**

IN-KIND

**\$453,050**

Gift bag items  
Goods  
Food & Beverages  
Advertising

**29%**

DIRECT  
PUBLIC  
SUPPORT

**\$323,112**

Financial  
donations  
Grants  
Foundations  
Awards

Source:  
Audited Financials,  
IRS Form 990

\*net of direct costs



# HOLIDAY EXPRESS®

968 SHREWSBURY AVENUE  
TINTON FALLS, NJ 07724

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## SAVE THE DATES!

7.21.14 – ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC



**RED BANK  
TOWN  
LIGHTING**

NOVEMBER 28

**NJPAC**

DECEMBER 11

**COUNT BASIE**

DECEMBER 18

9.14.14 – SUNSET BENEFIT CLAMBAKE



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